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**The London Congress of the
Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party
(Notes of a Delegate) 1**

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The London Congress is over. In spite of the expectations of liberal hacks, such as the Vergezhszkys 2 and Kuskovas, 3 the congress did not result in a split, but in the further consolidation of the Party, in the further unification of the advanced workers of all Russia in one indivisible party. It was a real all-Russian unity congress, for at this congress our Polish comrades, our comrades of the Bund, and our Lettish comrades were for the first time most widely and fully represented, for the first time they took an active part in the work of the Party congress and, consequently, for the first time most directly linked the fate of their respective organisations with the fate of the entire Party. In this respect the London Congress greatly contributed to the consolidation and strengthening of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

Such is the first and an important result of the London Congress.

But the importance of the London Congress is not confined to this. The point is that, in spite of the wishes of the liberal hacks we have referred to, the congress ended in the victory of "Bolshevism," in the victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy over the opportunist wing of our Party, over "Menshevism."

Everybody, of course, is aware of the disagreements among us on the role of the different classes and parties in our revolution and of our attitude towards them. Everybody knows, too, that in a number of pronouncements the official centre of the Party, which is Menshevik in composition, took a stand in opposition to the Party as a whole. Recall, for example, the case of the Central Committee's slogan of a responsible Cadet ministry, which the Party rejected in the period of the First Duma; the case of the same Central Committee's slogan of "resumption of the session of the Duma" after the First Duma was dispersed, which was also rejected by the Party; and the case of the Central Committee's well-known call for a general strike in connection with the dispersion of the First Duma, which was also rejected by the Party. . . . It was necessary to put an end to that abnormal situation. And to do this it was necessary to sum up the actual victories the Party had achieved over the opportunist Central Committee, the victories which fill the history of our Party's internal development during the whole of the past year. And so the London Congress summed up all these victories of revolutionary Social-Democracy and sealed the victory by adopting the tactics of that section of Social-Democracy.

Consequently, the Party will henceforth pursue the strictly class policy of the socialist proletariat. The red flag of the proletariat will no longer be hauled down before the spell-binders of liberalism. A mortal blow has been struck at the vacillation characteristic of intellectuals, which is unbecoming to the proletariat. Such is the second and no less important result of the London Congress of our Party.

The actual unification of the advanced workers of all Russia into a single all-Russian party under the banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy—that is the significance of the London Congress, that is its general character.

We shall now pass to a more detailed characterisation of the congress.

I

The Composition of the Congress

In all about 330 delegates were present at the congress. Of these, 302 had the right to vote; they represented over 150,000 Party members. The rest were consultative delegates. The distribution of the delegates according to groups was approximately as follows (counting only those with right to vote): Bolsheviks 92, Mensheviks 85, Bundists 54, Poles 45 and Letts 26.

As regards the social status of the delegates (workers or non-workers) the congress presented the following picture: manual workers 116 in all, office and distributive workers 24, the rest were non-workers. The manual workers were distributed among the different groups as follows: Bolshevik group 38 (36 per cent), Menshevik group 30 (31 per cent), Poles 27 (61 per cent), Letts 12 (40 per cent) and Bundists 9 (15 per cent). Professional revolutionaries were distributed among the groups as follows: Bolshevik group 18 (17 per cent), Menshevik group 22 (22 per cent), Poles 5 (11 per cent), Letts 2 (6 per cent), Bundists 9 (15 per cent).

We were all "amazed" by these statistics. How is this? The Mensheviks had shouted so much about our Party consisting of intellectuals; day and night they had been denouncing the Bolsheviks as intellectuals; they had threatened to drive all the intellectuals out of the Party and had all the time been reviling the professional revolutionaries—and suddenly it turned out that they had far fewer workers in their group than the Bolshevik "intellectuals" had! It turned out that they had far more professional revolutionaries than the Bolsheviks! But we explained the Menshevik shouts by the proverb: "The tongue ever turns to the aching tooth."

Still more interesting are the figures of the composition of the congress showing the "territorial distribution" of the delegates. It turned out that the large groups of Menshevik delegates came mainly from the peasant and handicraft districts: Guria (9 delegates), Tiflis (10 delegates), Little-Russian peasant organisation "Spilka" (I think 12 delegates), the Bund (the overwhelming majority were Mensheviks) and, by way of exception, the Donets Basin (7 delegates). On the

other hand, the large groups of Bolshevik delegates came exclusively from the large-scale industry districts: St. Petersburg (12 delegates), Moscow (13 or 14 delegates), the Urals (21 delegates), Ivanovo-Voznesensk (11 delegates), Poland (45 delegates).

Obviously, the tactics of the Bolsheviks are the tactics of the proletarians in big industry, the tactics of those areas where class contradictions are especially clear and the class struggle especially acute. Bolshevism is the tactics of the real proletarians.

On the other hand, it is no less obvious that the tactics of the Mensheviks are primarily the tactics of the handicraft workers and the peasant semi-proletarians, the tactics of those areas where class contradictions are not quite clear and the class struggle is masked. Menshevism is the tactics of the semi-bourgeois elements among the proletariat.

So say the figures.

And this is not difficult to understand: it is impossible to talk seriously among the workers of Lodz, Moscow or Ivanovo-Voznesensk about blocs with the very same liberal bourgeoisie whose members are waging a fierce struggle against them and who, every now and again, "punish" them with partial dismissals and mass lockouts. There Menshevism will find no sympathy; there Bolshevism, the tactics of uncompromising proletarian class struggle, is needed. On the other hand, it is extremely difficult to inculcate the idea of the class struggle among the peasants of Guria or say, the handicraftsmen of Shklov, who do not feel the sharp and systematic blows of the class struggle and, therefore, readily agree to all sorts of agreements against the "common enemy." There Bolshevism is not yet needed; there Menshevism is needed, for there an atmosphere of agreements and compromises pervades everything.

No less interesting is the national composition of the congress. The figures showed that the majority of the Menshevik group were Jews (not counting the Bundists, of course), then came Georgians and then Russians. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the Bolshevik group were Russians, then came Jews (not counting Poles and Letts, of course), then Georgians, etc. In this connection one of the Bolsheviks (I think it was Comrade Alexinsky 4) observed in jest that the Mensheviks constituted a Jewish group while the Bolsheviks constituted a true-Russian group and, therefore, it wouldn't be a bad idea for us Bolsheviks to organise a pogrom in the Party.

It is not difficult to explain this composition of the different groups: the main centres of Bolshevism are the areas of large-scale industry, purely Russian districts with the exception of Poland, whereas the Menshevik districts are districts with small production and, at the same time, Jewish, Georgian, etc., districts.

As regards the different trends revealed at the congress, it must be noted that the formal division of the congress into five groups (Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Poles, etc.) retained a certain validity, inconsiderable it is true, only up to the

discussion on questions of principle (the question of the non-proletarian parties, the labour congress, etc.). When these questions of principle came up for discussion the formal grouping was in fact cast aside, and when a vote was taken the congress, as a rule, divided into two parts: Bolsheviks and Men-sheviks. There was no so-called centre, or marsh, at the congress. Trotsky proved to be "pretty but useless." All the Poles definitely sided with the Bolsheviks. The overwhelming majority of the Letts also definitely supported the Bolsheviks. The Bund, the overwhelming majority of whose delegates in fact always supported the Mensheviks, formally pursued an extremely ambiguous policy, which, on the one hand, raised a smile, and on the other, caused irritation. Comrade Rosa Luxemburg aptly characterised the policy of the Bund when she said that the Bund's policy was not the policy of a mature political organisation that influenced the masses, but the policy of shopkeepers who are eternally looking forward to, and hopefully expecting, a drop in the price of sugar tomorrow. Of the Bundists, only 8 to 10 delegates supported the Bolsheviks, and then not always.

In general, predominance, and rather considerable predominance, was on the side of the Bolsheviks.

Thus, the congress was a Bolshevik congress, although not sharply Bolshevik. Of the Menshevik resolutions only the one on guerilla actions was carried, and that by sheer accident: on that point the Bolsheviks did not accept battle, or rather, they did not wish to fight the issue to a conclusion, purely out of the desire to "give the Menshevik comrades at least one opportunity to rejoice." . . .

II

The Agenda Report of the Central Committee

Report of the Group in the Duma

As regards political trends at the congress, its proceedings can be divided up into two parts.

First part: debates on formal questions, such as the agenda of the congress, the reports of the Central Committee and report of the group in the Duma, i.e., questions of profound political significance, but linked, or being linked, with the "honour" of this or that group, with the idea "not to offend" this or that group, "not to cause a split"—and for that reason called formal questions. This part of the congress was the most stormy, and absorbed the largest amount of time. This was due to the fact that considerations of principle were forced into the background by "moral" considerations ("not to offend") and, consequently, no strictly defined groups were formed; it was impossible to tell at once "who would win," and in the hope of winning over the "neutral and polite," the groups plunged into a furious struggle for predominance.

Second part: discussion on questions of principle, such as the question of the non-proletarian parties, the labour congress, etc. Here "moral" considerations were absent, definite groups were formed in conformity with strictly defined trends of principle; the relation of forces between the groups was revealed at once, and for that reason this part of the congress was the calmest and most fruitful — clear proof that keeping to principle in discussion gives the best guarantee that the proceedings of a congress will be calm and fruitful.

We shall now pass to a brief characterisation of the first part of the congress proceedings. After a speech by Comrade Plekhanov, who opened the congress and in his speech urged the necessity of agreements "as occasion arises" with "the progressive elements" of bourgeois society, the congress elected a presidium of five (one from each group), elected a credentials committee and then proceeded to draw up the agenda. It is characteristic that at this congress, just as they did at last year's Unity Congress, the Mensheviks furiously opposed the Bolsheviks' proposal to include in the agenda the questions of the present situation and of the class tasks of the proletariat in our revolution. Is the revolutionary tide rising or subsiding and, accordingly, should we "liquidate" the revolution or carry it through to the end? What are the proletariat's class tasks in our revolution which sharply distinguish it from the other classes in Russian society? Such are the questions which the Menshevik comrades are afraid of. They flee from them like shadows from the sun; they do not wish to bring to light the roots of our disagreements. Why? Because the Menshevik group itself is split by profound disagreements on these questions, because Menshevism is not an integral trend; Menshevism is a medley of trends, which are imperceptible during the factional struggle against Bolshevism but which spring to the surface as soon as current questions and our tactics are discussed from the point of view of principle. The Mensheviks do not wish to expose this inherent weakness of their group. The Bolsheviks were aware of this, and in order to keep the discussions closer to principles, insisted on the inclusion of the above-mentioned questions in the agenda. Realising that keeping to principles would

kill them, the Mensheviks became stubborn; they hinted to the "polite comrades" that they would be "offended," and so the congress did not include the question of the present situation, etc., in the agenda. In the end, the following agenda was adopted: report of the Central Committee, report of the group in the Duma, attitude towards the non-proletarian parties, the Duma, the labour congress, the trade unions, guerilla actions, crises, lockouts and unemployment, the International Congress at Stuttgart, 5 and organisational questions.

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The chief speakers on the report of the Central Committee were Comrade Martov (for the Mensheviks) and Comrade Ryadovoi 6 (for the Bolsheviks). Strictly speaking, Martov's report was not a serious elucidation of facts, but a sentimental story about how the innocent Central Committee set to work to guide the Party and then the group in the Duma, and how the "awful" Bolsheviks hindered it in its work by pestering it with their principles. Martov justified the Central Committee's slogans of a responsible Cadet ministry, "resumption of the session of the Duma," etc., etc., which the Party subsequently rejected, on the plea that the situation was indefinite and that it was impossible to advance different slogans in a period of lull. And he justified the Central Committee's misguided call for a general strike, and later for partial actions immediately after the dispersion of the First Duma, also on the plea that the situation was indefinite and that it was impossible to define precisely the mood of the masses. He spoke very little about the part the Central Committee played in the split in the St. Petersburg organisation. 7 But he spoke too much about the conference of military and combat organisations that was convened on the initiative of a certain group of Bolsheviks, and which, in Martov's opinion, caused disruption and anarchy in the Party organisations. At the end of his report Martov called upon the congress to bear in mind the difficulties connected with the work of guiding the Party in view of the exceptionally complicated and confused situation, and asked it not to be severe in its criticism of the Central Committee. Evidently, Martov himself realised that the Central Committee had grave sins to answer for.

Comrade Ryadovoi's report was of an entirely different character. He expressed the opinion that it was the duty of the Central Committee of the Party: 1) to defend and carry out the Party programme, 2) to carry out the tactical directives given it by the Party Congress, 3) to safeguard the integrity of the Party, and 4) to co-ordinate the positive activities of the Party. The Central Committee had not carried out any one of these duties. Instead of defending and carrying out the Party programme, the Central Committee, in connection with the well-known agrarian appeal of the First Duma, 8 instructed the Social-Democratic group in the Duma, with a view to ensuring the unity of the opposition and winning over the Cadets, not to try to secure the inclusion in the Duma's appeal of the well-known point of our agrarian programme on the confiscation of all (landlords')

land, but to confine itself to a simple statement about alienating the land without saying whether compensation should be paid or not.

Just think of it! The Central Committee issued instructions to throw out the extremely important point in the Party programme on the confiscation of the land! The Central Committee violated the Party programme! The Central Committee as the violator of the programme—can you imagine anything more disgraceful?

To proceed. Instead of carrying out at least the directives of the Unity Congress, instead of systematically intensifying the struggle between the parties in the Duma with the object of introducing greater political consciousness in the class struggle outside the Duma, instead of pursuing the strictly class, independent policy of the proletariat—the Central Committee issued the slogans of a responsible Cadet ministry, "resumption of the session of the Duma," "for the Duma against the camarilla," etc., etc., slogans which obscured the struggle of the Party in the Duma, glossed over the class antagonisms outside the Duma, obliterated all distinction between the militant policy of the proletariat and the compromising policy of the liberal bourgeoisie, and adapted the former to the latter. And when Comrade Plekhanov, a member of the editorial board of the Central Organ and, consequently, of the Central Committee, went even further on the road of compromise with the Cadets and proposed that the Party should enter into a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie, abandoning the slogan of a Constituent Assembly and issuing the slogan acceptable to the liberal bourgeoisie of a "sovereign Duma," the Central Committee, far from protesting against Comrade Plekhanov's sally which disgraced the Party, even agreed with it, although it did not dare to express its agreement officially.

That is how the Central Committee of the Party violated the elementary requirements of the independent class policy of the proletariat and the decisions of the Unity Congress!

A Central Committee which obscures the class consciousness of the proletariat; a Central Committee which subordinates the policy of the proletariat to the policy of the liberal bourgeoisie; a Central Committee which hauls down the flag of the proletariat before the charlatans of Cadet liberalism—this is what the Menshevik opportunists have brought us to!

We shall not dilate on the fact that far from safeguarding the unity and discipline of the Party the Central Committee systematically violated them by taking the initiative in splitting the St. Petersburg organisation.

Nor do we wish to dilate on the fact that the Central Committee has not co-ordinated the Party's activities—this is clear enough as it is.

How is all this, all these mistakes of the Central Committee, to be explained? Not, of course, by the fact that there were "awful" people in the Central Committee, but by the fact that Menshevism, which then predominated in the Central Committee, is incapable of guiding the Party, is utterly bankrupt as a political trend. From this point of view, the entire history of the Central

Committee is the history of the failure of Menshevism. And when the Menshevik comrades reproach us and say that we "hindered" the Central Committee, that we "pestered" it, etc., etc., we cannot refrain from answering these moralising Comrades: yes Comrades, we "hindered" the Central Committee in its violation of our programme, we "hindered" it in its adaptation of the tactics of the proletariat to the tastes of the liberal bourgeoisie, and we will continue to hinder it, for this is our sacred duty. . . .

That is approximately what Comrade Ryadovoi said.

The discussion showed that the majority of the comrades, even some Bundists, supported Comrade Ryadovoi's point of view. And if, after all, the Bolshevik resolution, which noted the mistakes of the Central Committee, was not carried, it was because the consideration "not to cause a split" strongly influenced the comrades. Nor, of course, was the Menshevik vote of confidence in the Central Committee carried. What was carried was simply a motion to pass to the order of the day without appraising the activities of the Central Committee. . . .

The discussion on the report of the group in the Duma was, in general, a repetition of the discussion on the preceding question. That is understandable; the group in the Duma acted under the direct guidance of the Central Committee and, naturally, criticism or defence of the Central Committee was at the same time criticism or defence of the group in the Duma.

Of interest were the remarks of Comrade Alexinsky, the second reporter (the first reporter being Comrade Tsereteli), to the effect that the slogan of the group in the Duma, the majority of which was Menshevik, the slogan of unity of the opposition in the Duma, of not splitting the opposition and of the need to march with the Cadets—this Menshevik slogan went completely bankrupt in the Duma, as Comrade Alexinsky put it, because on the most important questions, such as the budget, the army, etc., the Cadets sided with Stolypin, and the Menshevik Social-Democrats were obliged to fight hand in hand with the peasant deputies against the government and the Cadets. The Mensheviks were, in fact, obliged to admit the failure of their position and carry out in the Duma the Bolshevik slogan that the peasant deputies must be won for the struggle against the Rights and the Cadets.

No less interesting were the remarks of the Polish comrades to the effect that it was impermissible for the group in the Duma to agree to joint meetings with the Narodovtsy, 9 those Black Hundreds of Poland, who have more than once in the past organised the massacre of Socialists in Poland and are continuing to do so now. To this, two leaders of the Caucasian Mensheviks, 10 one after another, replied that the important thing for the group in the Duma was not what the various parties did at home, but how they were behaving in the Duma, and that in the Duma the Narodovtsy were behaving more or less like liberals. It follows, therefore, that parties must be judged not by what they do outside the Duma, but by what they say in the Duma. Opportunism cannot go further than that. . . .

Most of the speakers agreed with the point of view expressed by Comrade Alexinsky, but, for all that, no resolution was adopted on this question either; once again from the consideration "not to offend." The congress set aside the question of the resolution and passed straight on to the next question.

III

The Non-Proletarian Parties

From formal questions we pass to questions of principle, to the questions of our disagreements.

Our disagreements on tactics centre around the questions of the probable fate of our revolution, and of the role of the different classes and parties in Russian society in this revolution. That our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, that it must end in the rout of the feudal and not of the capitalist system, and that it can culminate only in a democratic republic — on this, everybody seems to be agreed in our Party. Further, that, on the whole, the tide of our revolution is rising and not subsiding, and that our task is not to "liquidate" the revolution but to carry it through to the end — on this too, formally at least, everybody is agreed, for the Mensheviks, as a group, have so far not said anything to the contrary. But how is our revolution to be carried through to the end? What is the role of the proletariat, of the peasantry and of the liberal bourgeoisie in this revolution? With what combination of fighting forces would it be possible to carry through this revolution to the end? Whom shall we march with, whom shall we fight? etc., etc. This is where our disagreements begin.

The opinion of the Mensheviks. Since ours is a bourgeois revolution, only the bourgeoisie can be the leader of the revolution. The bourgeoisie was the leader of the great revolution in France, it was the leader of revolutions in other European countries—it must be the leader of our Russian revolution too. The proletariat is the principal fighter in the revolution, but it must march behind the bourgeoisie and push it forward. The peasantry is also a revolutionary force, but it contains too much that is reactionary and, for that reason, the proletariat will have much less occasion to act jointly with it than with the liberal-democratic bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is a more reliable ally of the proletariat than the peasantry. It is around the liberal-democratic bourgeoisie, as the leader, that all the fighting forces must rally. Hence, our attitude towards the bourgeois parties must be determined not by the revolutionary thesis: together with the peasantry against the government and the liberal bourgeoisie, with the proletariat at the head— but by the opportunist thesis: together with the entire opposition against the government, with the liberal bourgeoisie at the head. Hence the tactics of compromising with the liberals.

Such is the opinion of the Mensheviks.

The opinion of the Bolsheviks. Ours is, indeed, a bourgeois revolution, but this does not mean that our liberal bourgeoisie will be its leader. In the eighteenth century the French bourgeoisie was the leader of the French revolution, but

why? Because the French proletariat was weak, it did not come out independently, it did not put forward its own class demands, it had neither class consciousness nor organisation, it then dragged at the tail of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie used it as a tool for its bourgeois aims. As you see, the bourgeoisie was then not in need of an ally in the shape of the tsarist regime against the proletariat—the proletariat itself was the ally and servant of the bourgeoisie—and that is why the latter could then be revolutionary, even march at the head of the revolution. Something entirely different is observed here in Russia. The Russian proletariat can by no means be called weak: for several years already it has been acting quite independently, putting forward its own class demands; it is sufficiently armed with class consciousness to understand its own interests; it is united in its own party; its party is the strongest party in Russia, with its own programme and principles of tactics and organisation; led by this party, it has already won a number of brilliant victories over the bourgeoisie. . . . Under these circumstances, can our proletariat be satisfied with the role of tail of the liberal bourgeoisie, the role of a miserable tool in the hands of this bourgeoisie? Can it, must it march behind this bourgeoisie and make it its leader? Can it be anything else than the leader of the revolution? And see what is going on in the camp of our liberal bourgeoisie: our bourgeoisie is terrified by the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat; instead of marching at the head of the revolution it rushes into the embrace of the counter-revolution and enters into an alliance with it against the proletariat. Its party, the Cadet Party, openly, before the eyes of the whole world, enters into an agreement with Stolypin, votes for the budget and the army for the benefit of tsarism and against the people's revolution. Is it not clear that the Russian liberal bourgeoisie is an anti-revolutionary force against which the most relentless war must be waged? And was not Comrade Kautsky right when he said that where the proletariat comes out independently the bourgeoisie ceases to be revolutionary? . . .

Thus, the Russian liberal bourgeoisie is anti-revolutionary; it cannot be the driving force of the revolution, and still less can it be its leader; it is the sworn enemy of the revolution and a persistent struggle must be waged against it. The only leader of our revolution, interested in and capable of leading the revolutionary forces in Russia in the assault upon the tsarist autocracy, is the proletariat. The proletariat alone will rally around itself the revolutionary elements of the country, it alone will carry through our revolution to the end. The task of Social-Democracy is to do everything possible to prepare the proletariat for the role of leader of the revolution.

This is the pivot of the Bolshevik point of view.

To the question : who, then, can be the reliable ally of the proletariat in the task of carrying through our revolution to the end, the Bolsheviks answer—the only ally of the proletariat, to any extent reliable and powerful, is the revolutionary peasantry. Not the treacherous liberal bourgeoisie, but the revolutionary

peasantry will fight side by side with the proletariat against all the props of the feudal system.

Accordingly, our attitude towards the bourgeois parties must be determined by the proposition: together with the revolutionary peasantry against tsarism and the liberal bourgeoisie, with the proletariat at the head. Hence the necessity of combating the hegemony (leadership) of the Cadet bourgeoisie and, consequently, the impermissibility of compromising with the Cadets.

Such is the opinion of the Bolsheviks.

It was within the framework of these two positions that the speeches of the reporters —Lenin and Martynov — and of all the other speakers revolved. Comrade Martynov touched the final depths of "profundity" of the Menshevik point of view by categorically denying that the proletariat should assume hegemony, and also by categorically defending the idea of a bloc with the Cadets.

The other speakers, the vast majority of them, expressed themselves in the spirit of the Bolshevik position.

Of exceptional interest were the speeches of Comrade Rosa Luxemburg, who conveyed greetings to the congress on behalf of the German Social-Democrats and expounded the views of our German comrades on our disagreements. (Here we link together the two speeches R. L. delivered at different times.) Expressing her complete agreement with the Bolsheviks on the questions of the role of the proletariat as the leader of the revolution, the role of the liberal bourgeoisie as an anti-revolutionary force, etc., etc., Rosa Luxemburg criticised the Menshevik leaders Plekhanov and Axelrod, called them opportunists, and put their position on a par with that of the Jauresists in France. I know, said Luxemburg, that the Bolsheviks, too, have certain faults and fads, that they are somewhat too rigid, but I fully understand and excuse them: one cannot help being rigid in face of the diffuse and jellylike mass of Menshevik opportunism. The same excessive rigidity was observed among the Guesdists in France, whose leader, Comrade Guesde, stated in a well-known election poster: "Don't let a single bourgeois dare to vote for me, for in Parliament I will defend only the interests of the proletarians against all the bourgeois." In spite of this, in spite of this sharpness, we German Social-Democrats always took the side of the Guesdists in their struggle against the traitors to Marxism, against the Jauresists. The same must be said about the Bolsheviks, whom we German Social-Democrats will support in their struggle against the Menshevik opportunists. . . .

That approximately is what Comrade R. Luxemburg said.

Still more interesting was the famous letter the Central Committee of the German Social-Democratic Party sent to the congress, and which Rosa Luxemburg read. It is interesting because, by advising the Party to fight liberalism, and recognising the special role played by the Russian proletariat as the leader of the Russian revolution, by the same token it recognised all the main propositions of Bolshevism.

Thus, it became clear that the German Social-Democratic Party, the most tried and tested and the most Revolutionary party in Europe, openly and clearly supported the Bolsheviks, as true Marxists, in their struggle against the traitors to Marxism, against the Mensheviks. Of interest also are several passages in the speech delivered by Comrade Tyszka, the representative of the Polish delegation in the Presidium. Both groups assure us, said Comrade Tyszka, that they stand firmly by the point of view of Marxism. It is not easy for everybody to understand who it is that really stands by this point of view, the Bolsheviks or the Mensheviks. . . . "We stand by the point of view of Marxism"—came an interruption from several Mensheviks on the "Left." "No, comrades," retorted Tyszka, "you do not stand by it, you lie down on it, for all the helplessness you display in leading the class struggle of the proletariat, the fact that you can learn by rote the great words of the great Marx but are unable to apply them—all this shows that you do not stand by but lie down on the point of view of Marxism." Aptly put! Indeed, just take the following fact. The Mensheviks often say that it is the task of Social-Democracy always and everywhere to convert the proletariat into an independent political force. Is this true? Absolutely true! These are the great words of Marx, which every Marxist should always remember. But how do the Menshevik comrades apply them? Are they helping actually to separate the proletariat from the mass of bourgeois elements which surround it and to form it into an independent, self-reliant class? Are they rallying the revolutionary elements around the proletariat and preparing the proletariat for the role of leader of the revolution? The facts show that the Mensheviks are doing nothing of the kind. On the contrary, the Mensheviks advise the proletariat to enter more often into agreements with the liberal bourgeoisie—and thereby they are helping not to separate the proletariat as an independent class, but to fuse it with the bourgeoisie. The Mensheviks advise the proletariat to renounce the role of leader of the revolution, to cede that role to the bourgeoisie, to follow the bourgeoisie—thereby they are helping to convert the proletariat not into an independent political force, but into an appendage of the bourgeoisie. . . . That is to say, the Mensheviks are doing the very opposite of what they should be doing from the standpoint of the correct Marxist proposition.

Yes, Comrade Tyszka was right when he said that the Mensheviks do not stand by but lie down on the point of view of Marxism. . . .

At the end of the discussion two draft resolutions were submitted: a Menshevik and a Bolshevik resolution. Of these two, the draft submitted by the Bolsheviks was adopted as a basis by an overwhelming majority of votes.

Then came amendments to the draft. About eighty amendments were moved, mainly to two points in the draft: on the point concerning the proletariat as the leader of the revolution, and the point on the Cadets as an anti-revolutionary force. That was the most interesting part of the discussion, for here the complexions of the different groups were revealed in special relief. The first

important amendment was moved by Comrade Martov. He demanded that the words "proletariat as the vanguard" be substituted for the words "proletariat as the leader of the revolution." In support of his amendment he said that the word "vanguard" expressed the idea more precisely. He was answered by Comrade Alexinsky who said that it was not a matter of precision, but of the two opposite points of view that were reflected in this, for "vanguard" and "leader" are two totally different concepts. To be the vanguard (the advanced detachment) means fighting in the front ranks, occupying the points most heavily under fire, shedding one's blood, but at the same time being led by others, in this case by the bourgeois democrats; the vanguard never leads the general struggle, the vanguard is always led. On the other hand, to be a leader means not only fighting in the front ranks but also leading the general struggle, directing it towards its goal. We Bolsheviks do not want the proletariat to be led by the bourgeois democrats, we want the proletariat itself to lead the whole struggle of the people and direct it towards the democratic republic.

As a result, Martov's amendment was defeated.

All the other amendments of a similar nature were also defeated.

Another group of amendments was directed against the point about the Cadets. The Mensheviks proposed that it be recognised that the Cadets have not yet taken the path of counter-revolution. But the congress refused to accept this proposal and all amendments of that kind were rejected. The Mensheviks further proposed that in certain cases at least technical agreements with the Cadets be permitted. The congress also refused to accept this proposal and defeated all amendments of that kind.

At last the resolution as a whole was voted on and it turned out that 159 votes were cast for the Bolshevik resolution, 104 against, the rest abstaining.

The congress adopted the resolution of the Bolsheviks by a large majority.

From that moment, the point of view of the Bolsheviks became the point of view of the Party.

Furthermore, this vote produced two important results.

First, it put an end to the formal and artificial division of the congress into five groups (Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Poles, Letts and Bundists) and introduced a new division based on principles: Bolsheviks (including here all the Poles and a majority of the Letts) and Men-sheviks (including nearly all the Bundists).

Second, the vote provided the most precise figures showing how the worker delegates were distributed among the groups: it turned out that in the Bolshevik group there were not 38 but 77 workers (38 plus 27 Poles plus 12 Letts), and that in the Menshevik group there were not 30 workers but 39 (30 plus 9 Bundists). The Menshe-vik group turned out to be a group of intellectuals.

IV

The Labour Congress

Before describing the discussion on the labour congress it is necessary to know the history of this question.* The fact of the matter is that this question is extremely confused and unclear. Whereas on the other points of our disagreements we already have two sharply defined trends in the Party, Bolshevik and Menshevik, on the question of the labour congress we have not two but a whole heap of trends, extremely unclear and contradictory. True, the Bolsheviks take a united and definite stand: they are opposed to a labour congress altogether. But among the Mensheviks utter chaos and confusion reign; they have split up into numerous groups, each one singing its own song and paying no heed to the others. Whereas the St. Petersburg Mensheviks, headed by Axelrod, propose that a labour congress be convened for the purpose of forming a party, the Moscow Mensheviks, headed by El, propose that it should be convened not for the purpose of forming a party, but with the object of forming a non-party "All-Russian Workers' League." The Mensheviks from the South go still further and, headed by Larin, 12 call for the convocation of a labour congress with the object of forming not a party, and not a "Workers' League," but a wider "Toilers' League" which, in addition to all the proletarian elements, could embrace also the Socialist-Revolutionary, semi-bourgeois "toiler" elements. I shall not dwell on other, less influential, groups and persons, like the Odessa and trans-Caspian groups, or like those half-witted "authors" of a comical pamphlet who call themselves "Brodyaga" and "Shura." 13

Such is the confusion that reigns in the ranks of the Mensheviks. But how is the labour congress to be convened? How is it to be organised? In connection with what is it to be convened? Who is to be invited to it? Who is to take the initiative in convening it?

The same confusion reigns among the Mensheviks on all these questions as on the question of the object of the congress.

While some of them propose that the election of delegates to the congress should be made to coincide with the Duma elections and that the labour congress be thus organised by "unauthorised means," others propose to trust to the government's "connivance" or, in the last resort, to apply for its "permission," while still others advise that the delegates be sent abroad—even if they number three or four thousand—and that the labour congress be held underground there.

While some Mensheviks propose that only definitely formed workers' organisations be allowed to send representatives to the congress, others advise inviting representatives of the entire organised and unorganised proletariat, which numbers not less than ten millions.

While some Mensheviks propose that the labour congress be convened on the initiative of the Social-Democratic Party with the participation of intellectuals, others advise that the Party and the intellectuals be thrust aside, and that the congress be convened only on the initiative of the workers themselves, without the participation of any intellectuals.

While some Mensheviks insist on a labour congress being convened immediately, others propose that it be postponed indefinitely, and that, meanwhile, only agitation in favour of the idea of a labour congress be conducted.

But what is to be done with the existing Social-Democratic Labour Party which has been leading the proletarian struggle for several years already, which has united 150,000 members in its ranks, which has already held five congresses, etc., etc.! "Send it to the devil?" Or what?

In answer to this, all the Mensheviks, from Axelrod to Larin, declare unanimously that we have no proletarian party. "The whole point is that we have no party," said the Mensheviks at the congress. "All we have is an organisation of petty-bourgeois intellectuals," which must be replaced by a party with the aid of a labour congress. That is what Comrade Axelrod, the Menshevik reporter, said at the Party congress.

But wait! What does that mean? Does it mean that all the congresses our Party has held, from the first (1898) to the latest (1907), in the organisation of which the Menshevik comrades took a most energetic part, that all the colossal expenditure of proletarian money and effort involved in the organisation of these congresses—and for which the Mensheviks are as much responsible as the Bolsheviks—does it mean that all this was mere deception and hypocrisy?!

Does it mean that all the fighting appeals the Party has issued to the proletariat, appeals which the Mensheviks also signed, that all the strikes and insurrections of 1905, 1906 and 1907, which flared up with the Party at their head, and often on the Party's initiative, that all the victories achieved by the proletariat headed by our Party, that the thousands of proletarian victims who fell in the streets of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and elsewhere, who were immured in Siberia and who

perished in prison for the sake of the Party, and under the banner of the Party—that all that was just a farce and a deception?

So we have no party? We have only "an organisation of petty-bourgeois intellectuals"?

Of course, that was a downright lie; an outrageous, brazen lie.

That, evidently, explains the boundless indignation which the above-mentioned statement by Axelrod roused among the worker delegates from St. Petersburg and Moscow. They jumped to their feet and energetically answered the reporter Axelrod: "You, who spend your time abroad, are bourgeois, not we. We are workers, and we have our Social-Democratic Party, and we will not allow anyone to defame it." . . .

But let us suppose that a labour congress is held; let us imagine that it has already been held. The existing Social-Democratic Party therefore has been put into the archives, a labour congress has been convened in some way or another, and we want to organise at it a league of "workers" or "toilers," whatever it may be. Well, what next? What programme will this congress adopt? What will be the complexion of the labour congress?

Some Mensheviks answer that the labour congress could adopt the programme of Social-Democracy, with certain deletions, of course; but they at once add that it might not adopt the programme of Social-Democracy and that this, in their opinion, would not be particularly harmful to the proletariat. Others answer more emphatically as follows: Since our proletariat is strongly imbued with petty-bourgeois tendencies, in all probability the labour congress will adopt not a Social-Democratic but a petty-bourgeois democratic programme. At the labour congress the proletariat will lose the Social-Democratic programme, but instead it will acquire a workers' organisation that will unite all the workers in one league. That is what, for example, N. Cherevanin, the head of the Moscow Mensheviks, says (see "Problems of Tactics"). 14

And so: "A workers' league without a Social-Democratic programme"—such is the probable result of a labour congress.

That, at all events, is what the Mensheviks themselves think.

Evidently, while they disagree with one another on certain questions concerning the objects of the labour congress and the methods of convening it, the Mensheviks are agreed among themselves on the point that "we have no party, all we have is an organisation of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, which ought to be put into the archives." . . .

It was within this framework that Axelrod's report revolved.

It became evident from Axelrod's report that agitation for a labour congress would practically and inevitably amount to agitation against the party, a war against it.

And the practical work of convening the labour congress would also inevitably amount to practical work in disorganising and undermining our present party.

And yet the Mensheviks—through the mouth of their reporter, and also in their draft resolution—requested the congress to prohibit agitation against attempts to organise a labour congress, i.e., against attempts leading to disorganisation of the Party.

It is interesting to note that, running through the speeches of the Menshevik speakers (with the exception of Plekhanov, who said nothing about the labour congress), were the slogans: "Down with the Party, down with Social-Democracy—long live the non-party principle, long live the non-Social-Democratic 'Workers' League.'" These slogans were not openly advanced by the speakers, but they ran as an undertone through their speeches.

It is not without reason that all the bourgeois writers, from the Syndicalists and Socialist-Revolutionaries to the Cadets and Octobrists—all so ardently express themselves in favour of a labour congress; after all, they are all enemies of our Party, and the practical work of convening a labour congress might considerably weaken and disorganise the Party. Why should they not welcome "the idea of a labour congress"?

The Bolshevik speakers said something entirely different.

The Bolshevik reporter, Comrade Lindov, 15 after briefly characterising the main trends among the Mensheviks, proceeded to trace the conditions which gave rise to the idea of a labour congress. Agitation for a labour congress began in 1905, before the October days, during the repressions. It ceased during the October-November days. During the subsequent months of fresh repression, agitation for a labour congress revived. During the period of the First Duma, in the days of relative freedom, the agitation subsided. Then, after the dispersion of the Duma, it grew again, etc. The conclusion to be drawn is clear: in the period of relative freedom, when the Party is able to expand freely, there is naturally no ground for agitation for a labour congress with the object of forming "a broad non-party party." On the other hand, during periods of repression, when the influx of new members into the Party gives way to an exodus, agitation for a labour congress, as an artificial measure for widening the narrow party, or replacing it by "a broad non-party party," finds some ground. But it goes without saying that no artificial measures will be of any avail, for what is needed for the actual expansion of the Party is political freedom and not a labour congress, which itself needs such freedom.

To proceed. The idea of a labour congress, taken concretely, is fundamentally false, for it rests not on facts, but on the false proposition that "we have no party." The point is that we have a proletarian party which loudly proclaims its existence, and whose existence is felt only too well by the enemies of the proletariat—the Mensheviks are fully aware of this—and precisely because we already have such a party, the idea of a labour congress is fundamentally false. Of course, if we did not have a party numbering over 150,000 advanced proletarians in its ranks, and leading hundreds of thousands of fighters, if we were only a tiny handful of uninfluential people as the German Social-

Democrats were in the sixties or the French Socialists in the seventies of the last century, we ourselves would try to convene a labour congress with the object of squeezing a Social-Democratic Party out of it. But the whole point is that we already have a party, a real proletarian party, which exercises enormous influence among the masses, and to convene a labour congress, to form a fantastic "non-party party," we would, inevitably, first of all have to "put an end" to the existing party, we would first of all have to wreck it.

That is why, in practice, the work of convening a labour congress must inevitably amount to a work of disorganising the Party. And whether success could ever be achieved in forming "a broad non-party party" in place of it, and indeed, whether such a party ought to be formed, is questionable.

That is why the enemies of our Party, the Cadets and Octobrists, and the like, so heartily praise the Mensheviks for their agitation in favour of a labour congress.

That is why the Bolsheviks think that the work of convening a labour congress would be dangerous, would be harmful, for it would discredit the Party in the eyes of the masses and subject them to the influence of bourgeois democracy.

That is approximately what Comrade Lindov said.

For a labour congress and against the Social-Democratic Party? Or, for the Party and against a labour congress?

This is how the question stood at the congress.

The Bolshevik worker delegates understood the question at once and vigorously came out "in defence of the Party": "We are Party patriots," they said. "We love our Party, and we shall not allow tired intellectuals to discredit it."

It is interesting to note that Comrade Rosa Luxemburg, the representative of German Social-Democracy, entirely agreed with the Bolsheviks. "We German Social-Democrats," she said, "cannot understand the comical dismay of the Menshevik comrades who are groping for the masses when the masses themselves are looking for the Party and are irresistibly pressing towards it." . . .

The discussion showed that the vast majority of the speakers supported the Bolsheviks.

At the end of the discussion two draft resolutions were submitted to a vote: a Bolshevik draft and a Menshevik draft. Of these two, the Bolshevik draft was accepted as a basis. Nearly all amendments on points of principle were rejected. Only one more or less important amendment was accepted, viz., against restricting freedom to discuss the question of a labour congress. The resolution as a whole stated that "the idea of convening a labour congress leads to the disorganisation of the Party," "to the subjection of the broad masses of the workers to the influence of bourgeois democracy," and, as such, is harmful to the proletariat. Moreover, the resolution drew a strict distinction between a labour congress and Soviets of Workers' Deputies and their congresses which, far from disorganising the Party and competing with it, strengthen the Party by following its lead and helping it to solve practical problems in periods of revolutionary upsurge.

Finally the resolution as a whole was adopted by a majority of 165 votes against 94. The rest of the delegates abstained from voting.

Thus, the congress rejected the idea of a labour congress as harmful and anti-Party.

The voting on this question revealed to us the following important fact. Of the 114 worker delegates who took part in the voting, only 25 voted for a labour congress. The rest voted against it. Expressed in percentages, 22 per cent of the worker delegates voted for a labour congress, while 78 per cent voted against it. What is particularly important is that of the 94 delegates who voted for a labour congress, only 26 per cent were workers and 74 per cent were intellectuals.

And yet the Mensheviks shouted all the time that the idea of a labour congress was a workers' idea, that

it was only the Bolshevik "intellectuals" who were opposing the convocation of a congress, etc. Judging by this vote, one should rather admit that, on the contrary, the idea of a labour congress is the idea of intellectual dreamers. . . .

Apparently, even the Menshevik workers did not vote for the labour congress: of the 39 worker delegates (30 Mensheviks plus 9 Bundists) only 24 voted for a labour congress.

Baku, 1907

Bakinsky Proletary, Nos. 1 and 2 June 20 and July 10, 1907

*.This is all the more necessary because the Menshevik comrades who have migrated to the editorial offices of bourgeois newspapers are spreading fables about the past and present of this question (see the article "A Labour Congress," from the pen of a prominent Menshevik, published in *Tovarishch* and reprinted in *Bakinsky Dyen* 16).

Notes

1. The article "The London Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Notes of a Delegate)" was not finished. Its completion was prevented by the intensified police shadowing of J. V. Stalin in the latter half of 1907 and his subsequent arrest.
2. A. Vergezhsy—the nom de plume of A. V. Tyrkova; she was a contributor to the Cadet newspaper *Rech*.
3. E. D. Kuskova—one of the authors of the programme of the Economists known as the "Credo." In 1906-07 she was a contributor to semi-Cadet and semi-Menshevik newspapers and journals.
4. G. A. Alexinsky—a member of the Bolshevik section of the Social-Democratic group in the Second State Duma. After the London Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. he advocated the tactics of boycotting the Third State Duma.

Subsequently, he left the Bolshevik Party. After the October Socialist Revolution he became a White émigré.

5. The question of the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress (the Seventh Congress of the Second International) was originally included in the agenda of the London Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. but was subsequently withdrawn by the congress. The Stuttgart Congress took place in August 5-11 (18-24) 1907. The Bolsheviks were represented by V. I. Lenin, A. V. Lunacharsky, M. M. Litvinov and others.

6. Ryadovoi ("rank-and-filer")—the pseudonym of A. A. Malinovsky, better known as Bogdanov. (He also used the pseudonym of Maximov.) Joined the Bolsheviks in 1903, but left the Bolshevik Party after the London Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (see Note 80 in this volume). Died in 1928.

7. Concerning the split in the St. Petersburg organisation, see J. V. Stalin's article "The Election Campaign in St. Petersburg and the Mensheviks" (see pp. 14-20 of this volume).

8. Draft appeal on the land question "In the Name of the State Duma" that was drawn up by the Cadets and published on July 5, 1906, in answer to the government's announcement of June 20, 1906, concerning peasant land ownership. The Cadets urged the peasants to take no action until the Duma had finally drafted the land law. The Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., which was controlled by the Mensheviks, instructed the Social-Democratic group in the Duma to support the Cadets' appeal. The group, however, voted against it.

9. Narodovtsy (National-Democrats)—the counter-revolutionary nationalist party of the Polish bourgeoisie formed in 1897. During the revolution of 1905-07 it became the principal party of the Polish counter-revolution, the party of the Polish Black Hundreds.

10. This refers to the speeches delivered at the Fifth (London) Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. by the Menshevik deputies in the Second State Duma A. L. Japaridze and I. G. Tsereteli (see Minutes of the Fifth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., 1935, Russ. ed., pp. 250 and 354-355).

11. Guesdists—the supporters of Jules Guesde, the Left-wing Marxist trend in the ranks of the French Socialists. In 1901 the Guesdists founded the Socialist Party of France. They fought the opportunists in the French labour movement and opposed the policy of concluding agreements with the bourgeoisie and of Socialists entering bourgeois governments. On the outbreak of the world imperialist war Guesde took a national defence stand and entered the bourgeois government. A section of the Guesdists who remained true to revolutionary Marxism subsequently joined the Communist Party of France.

12. Y. Larin, also L. A. Rin, the pseudonyms of M. A. Lourier—a Menshevik Liquidator who in 1907 advocated the convocation of a "broad labour congress." In 1917 Y. Larin joined the Bolshevik Party. El (I. I. Luzin)—a Menshevik Liquidator.

13. This refers to the pamphlet *The All-Russian Labour Congress and the "Bolsheviks"* published in Georgian in Tiflis in 1907. "Brodyaga" ("Tramp")—the nom de plume of the Menshevik Georgi Eradze. "Shura," the pseudonym of the Menshevik Pyshkina, wife of Eradze.

14. Cherevanin's article on the Labour Congress was published in the Menshevik symposium *The Political Situation and Tactical Problems*, Moscow 1906.

15. Lindov—the pseudonym of G. D. Leiteisen.

16. This refers to an article by Yuri Pereyaslavsky (G. Khrustalyov). *Bakinsky Dyen* (*The Baku Day*) — a daily liberal newspaper published from June 1907 to January 1908.