

# Documents for HIST447

## Revolutionary Russia, 1905-1921

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### I. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (1848)

A specter is haunting Europe — the specter of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power? Where is the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact:

I. Communism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power.

II. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Specter of Communism with a manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London and sketched the following manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

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### Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians

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The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolized by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacturer no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry; the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of the whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an

armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune<sup>(4)</sup>: here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany); there taxable “third estate” of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacturing proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment”. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigor in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man’s activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized the means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralization. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments, and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier, and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground — what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organization of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted in it, and the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society, with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeois and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed — a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital. These laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery, and to the division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labor, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labor increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by the increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of machinery, etc.

Modern Industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labor, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labor of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labor, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the laborer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class — the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants — all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual laborers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operative of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labor, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage, the laborers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeois. Thus, the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labor, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The increasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon, the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there, the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a

political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarian, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organization of the proletarians into a class, and, consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus, the ten-hours' bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all time with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles, it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling class are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the progress of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are only so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The “dangerous class”, [*lumpenproletariat*] the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the condition of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; modern industry labor, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of the feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern laborer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the process of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed

by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labor. Wage-labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

Source: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>

## II. Vladimir Ilich Lenin: *What is to be Done?* (1902)

*At the time when he wrote "What is to be Done," Lenin was a young Russian emigre recently returned from Siberian exile and living in Geneva, Switzerland. His work on the Russian Social Democratic newspaper "Iskra" (The Spark), brought him into the center of a debate raging in European Marxist circles over the "revisionist" ideas of Eduard Bernstein. The problem was all the more urgent for Lenin since some Russian Marxists, known as "economists," were advocating Bernstein's approach, arguing that the Social Democratic party in Russia should focus on legal activities aimed at improving the economic well being of the working class. Lenin's response was the long pamphlet "What is to be Done," a vigorous polemic in which he sketched out a new vision of a Marxist revolutionary party. The following are excerpts from the larger work.*

It is no secret that two trends have taken form in the present-day international Social-Democracy. The conflict between these trends now flares up in a bright flame, and now dies down and smolders under the ashes of imposing "truce resolutions." The essence of the "new" trend, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete dogmatic" Marxism, has been presented clearly enough by Bernstein, and demonstrated by Millerand.

Social-Democracy must change from a party of the social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of symmetrically arranged "new" arguments and reasonings. Denied was the possibility of putting Socialism on a scientific basis and of demonstrating its necessity and inevitability from the point of view of the materialist conception of history. Denied was the fact of the growing impoverishment, the process of proletarianisation and the intensification of capitalist contradictions; the very concept, "*ultimate aim*," was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completely rejected. Denied was the antithesis in principle between liberalism and socialism. Denied was *the theory of the class struggle* on the grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society, governed according to the will of the majority, etc.

Thus, the demand for a decisive turn from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less resolute turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism....

He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new "critical" trend in socialism is nothing more nor less than a new variety of *opportunism*. And if we judge people not by the glittering uniforms they don, not by the high-sounding appellations they give themselves, but by their actions, and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that "freedom of criticism" means freedom for an opportunistic trend in Social-Democracy, the freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, the freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into Socialism....

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This thought cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity... Our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it is yet far from having settled accounts with other trends of revolutionary thought, which threaten to divert the movement from the correct path.... The national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world.... *The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory....*

The systematic strikes [of the 1890s in St. Petersburg] represented the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo. Taken by themselves, these strikes were simply trade union struggles, but not yet Social-Democratic struggles. They marked the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers, but the workers were not, and could not be, conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system, i.e., theirs was not yet Social-Democratic consciousness. In this sense, the strikes of the nineties despite of the enormous progress they represented as compared with [earlier] "revolts," remained a purely spontaneous movement.

We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. By their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement, it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia; Hence, we had both the spontaneous awakening of the masses of the workers, the awakening to conscious life and conscious struggle, and a revolutionary youth, armed with the Social-Democratic theory, eager to come into contact with the workers;

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the only choice is--either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn away from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology.

The political struggle of Social-Democracy is far more extensive and complex than the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government. Similarly (indeed for that reason), the organization of a revolutionary Social-Democratic party must inevitably be of a kind *different* from the organisation of the workers designed for this

struggle. A workers' organization must in the first place be a trade organization; secondly, it must be as broad as possible; and thirdly, it must be as little clandestine as possible (here, and further on, of course, I have only autocratic Russia in mind). On the other hand, the organizations of revolutionaries must consist first, foremost and mainly of people who make revolutionary activity their profession (that is why I speak of organizations of revolutionaries, meaning revolutionary Social-Democrats). In view of this common feature of the members of such an organization, *all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals*, not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession, in both categories *must be obliterated*. Such an organization must of necessity be not too extensive and as secret as possible....

I assert: 1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organization of leaders maintaining continuity; 2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously drawn into the struggle, forming the basis of the movement and participating in it, the more urgent the need for such an organization, and the more solid this organization must be (for it is much easier for demagogues to side track the more backward sections of the masses); 3) that such an organization must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; 4) that in an autocratic state, the more we *confine* the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and to have been professionally trained in the art of combatting the political police, the more difficult will it be to wipe out such an organization, and 5) the greater will be the number of people of the working class and of the other classes of society who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it;

Our worst sin with regard to organization is that by our *amateurishness we have lowered the prestige of revolutionaries in Russia*. A person who is flabby and shaky on questions of theory, who has a narrow outlook, who pleads the spontaneity of the masses as an excuse for his own *sluggishness*, who resembles a trade union secretary more than a spokesman of the people, who is unable to conceive of a broad and bold plan that would command the respect even of opponents, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art - the art of combating the political police - why, such a man is not a revolutionary but a wretched amateur!

Source: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1964), v. 5, pp. 352-353, 354-355, 369-370, 374-375, 389, 452-453, 464.

Translation revised and edited by Nathaniel Knight

Source: [http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Lenin,\\_What\\_is\\_to\\_be\\_Done](http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Lenin,_What_is_to_be_Done)

### III. St. Petersburg Workmen's petition to the Tsar (22 January 1905)

Sire,—

We working men of St. Petersburg, our wives and children, and our parents, helpless, aged men and women, have come to you, O Tsar, in quest of justice and protection. We have been beggared, oppressed, over-burdened with excessive toil, treated with contumely. We are not recognized as normal human beings, but are dealt with as slaves who have to bear their bitter lot in silence. Patiently we endured this; but now we are being thrust deeper into the slough of rightlessness and ignorance, are being suffocated by despotism and arbitrary whims, and now, O Tsar, we have no strength left. The awful moment has come when death is better than the prolongation of our unendurable tortures. Therefore, we have left work, and informed our employers that we shall not resume it until they have fulfilled our demands. What we have asked is little, consisting solely of that without which our life is not life, but hell and eternal torture.

Our first petition was that our employers should investigate our needs together with ourselves, and even that has been refused. The very right of discussing our wants has been withheld from us on the ground that the law does not recognize any such right, and our demand for an eight-hours day has been dismissed as illegal. To fix the prices of our labour in concert with ourselves, to adjudge upon misunderstandings between us and the lower administration of the factories, to raise the wages of unskilled work men and women up to a rouble a day, to abolish overtime, to take better care of the sick, to instruct without insulting us, to arrange the workshops so that we might work there without encountering death through draughts, rain, and snow: all these requests have been condemned by our employers as unlawful, and our very petition treated as a crime, while the wish to better our condition is regarded as a piece of insolence towards the employers.

O Emperor, there are more than three hundred thousand of us here, yet we are all of us human beings only in appearance and outwardly, while in reality we are deemed devoid of a single human right, even that of speaking, thinking, and meeting to talk over our needs, and of taking measures to better our condition. Any one of us who should dare lift his voice in defence of the working class is thrown into prison or banished. The possession of a kindly heart, of a sensitive soul, is punished in us as a crime. Fellow-feeling for a forlorn, maltreated human being who is bereft of his rights is consequently a heinous crime. O Tsar, is this in accordance with God's commandments, in virtue of which you are now reigning? Is life under such laws worth living? Would it not be better for all of us working people in Russia to die, leaving capitalists and officials to live and enjoy existence?

Such is the future which confronts us, Sire, and therefore we are gathered together before your palace walls. Here we await the last available means of rescue. Refuse not to help your people out of the gulf of rightlessness, misery, and ignorance. Give them a chance of

accomplishing their destiny. Deliver them from the intolerable oppression of the bureaucracy. Demolish the wall between yourself and the people, and let them govern the country in conjunction with yourself. You have been sent to lead the people to happiness; but happiness is snatched from us by the officials, who leave us only sorrow and humiliation. Consider our demands attentively and without anger. They have been uttered not for evil, but for good; for our good, Sire, and yours. It is not insolence that speaks in us, but the consciousness of the general necessity of escaping from the present intolerable state of things. Russia is too vast, her wants too manifold, to admit of bureaucrats alone governing her. It is absolutely necessary that the people should assist, because only they know their own hardships.

Refuse not to succour your people; give orders without delay to representatives of all classes in the land to meet together. Let capitalists and workmen be present; let officials, priests, physicians, and teachers all come and choose their own delegates. Let all be free to elect whom they will, and for this purpose let the elections to the Constituent Assembly be organized on the principle of universal suffrage. This is our principal request, on which everything else depends. It is the best and only plaster for our open wounds, without which they will ever remain open and hurry us on to death. There is no one panacea for all our ills; many are needed, and we now proceed to enumerate them, speaking plainly and candidly to you, Sire, as to a father. The following measures are indispensable.

In the first section are those which are directed against the ignorance and disfranchisement of the Russian people. They include —

- (1) Freedom and inviolability of the person, liberty of speech, of the press, of association, of conscience in matters of religion, and separation of Church and State.
- (2) General and obligatory education by the State.
- (3) The responsibility of Ministers to the nation, and guarantees for the legality of administrative methods.
- (4) Equality of all persons, without exception, before the law.
- (5) The immediate recall of all who have suffered for their convictions.

In the second section are measures against the poverty of the nation.

- (1) The repeal of indirect taxation, and the substitution of a direct progressive income-tax.
- (2) Repeal of the land redemption tax. Cheap credit, and a gradual transfer of the land to the people.

The third section comprises measures against the crushing of labour by capital.

- (1) Protection of labour by the law.
- (2) Freedom of working men's associations for co-operative and professional purposes.

- (3) An eight-hours working day and the limitation of overtime.
- (4) The freedom of the struggle between labour and capital.
- (5) The participation of representatives of the working classes in the elaboration of a bill dealing with the State insurance of workmen.
- (6) A normal working wage.

Those, Sire, constitute our principal needs, which we come to lay before you. Give orders and swear that they shall be fulfilled, and you will render Russia happy and glorious, and will impress your name on our hearts and on the hearts of our children, and our children's children for all time. But if you withhold the word, if you are not responsive to our petition, we will die here on this square before your palace, for we have nowhere else to go to and no reason to repair elsewhere. For us there are but two roads, one leading to liberty and happiness, the other to the tomb. Point, Sire, to either of them; we will take it, even though it lead to death. Should our lives serve as a holocaust of agonizing Russia, we will not grudge these sacrifices; we gladly offer them up.

Source:

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_St.\\_Petersburg\\_workmen%27s\\_petition\\_to\\_the\\_Tsar,\\_January\\_22,\\_1905](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_St._Petersburg_workmen%27s_petition_to_the_Tsar,_January_22,_1905)

## **IV. Manifesto on the Improvement of State Order (“October Manifesto”) 17 October 1905**

We, Nicholas II, By the Grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., proclaim to all Our loyal subjects:

Rioting and disturbances in the capitals and in many localities of Our Empire fill Our heart with great and heavy grief. The well-being of the Russian Sovereign is inseparable from the well-being of the nation, and the nation's sorrow is his sorrow. The disturbances that have taken place may cause grave tension in the nation and may threaten the integrity and unity of Our state.

By the great vow of service as tsar We are obliged to use every resource of wisdom and of Our authority to bring a speedy end to unrest that is dangerous to Our state. We have ordered the responsible authorities to take measures to terminate direct manifestations of disorder, lawlessness, and violence and to protect peaceful people who quietly seek to fulfill their duties. To carry out successfully the general measures that we have conceived to restore peace to the life of the state, We believe that it is essential to coordinate activities at the highest level of government.

We require the government dutifully to execute our unshakeable will:

(1.) To grant to the population the essential foundations of civil freedom, based on the principles of genuine inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.

(2.) Without postponing the scheduled elections to the State Duma, to admit to participation in the duma (insofar as possible in the short time that remains before it is scheduled to convene) of all those classes of the population that now are completely deprived of voting rights; and to leave the further development of a general statute on elections to the future legislative order.

(3.) To establish as an unbreakable rule that no law shall take effect without confirmation by the State Duma and that the elected representatives of the people shall be guaranteed the opportunity to participate in the supervision of the legality of the actions of Our appointed officials.

We summon all loyal sons of Russia to remember their duties toward their country, to assist in terminating the unprecedented unrest now prevailing, and together with Us to make every effort to restore peace and tranquility to Our native land.

## **V. Imperial Manifesto of 3 June 1907**

We proclaim to all Our faithful subjects:

Since the time of the dissolution of the first State Duma, the government has, in accord with Our orders and instructions, undertaken a consistent series of measures to bring peace to the country and establish a proper course for affairs of state.

The Second State Duma, which we convened, was called upon to facilitate, in accord with Our Sovereign will, the restoration of peace to Russia: first of all, by legislative work, without which it is impossible for the state to live or for its structure to be perfected; also, by reviewing the budget of revenues and expenditures, to ensure that the economic activities of the state are being conducted correctly; and finally, by rationally exercising the right of interrogating government officials, with a view to strengthening truth and justice everywhere.

These obligations, which We entrusted to elected deputies from the population, laid upon them a weighty responsibility and a holy duty to make use of their rights reasonably, working for the benefit and enhancement of the Russian state.

Such was Our thought and will in granting the population new foundations for the life of the state. To Our dismay, a substantial part of the membership of the Second State Duma did not justify our expectations. Many of those sent by the population did not undertake their work with a pure heart and with a desire to strengthen Russia and improve its institutions, but rather with a flagrant intention of increasing turmoil and encouraging the disintegration of the state.

The activity of these persons in the State Duma either did not under take any review at all of the sweeping measures Our government had developed, or it delayed discussing them or else it rejected them, not even hesitating to turn down laws which would punish the overt celebration of criminality or severely punish those who sow disorder in the armed forces. By refusing to discuss murders and violence, the State Duma failed to render moral support to the government in the matter of restoring order, and Russia, to her shame, continued to experience criminal sedition.

The State Duma's dilatory review of the state budget caused difficulty in the timely satisfaction of many pressing needs of the common people.

A significant part of the Duma perverted the right of interrogating the government into a means of struggle with the government and of arousing mistrust for it among wide segments of the population.

Finally there was accomplished a deed unheard of in the annals of history. The judicial authorities discovered that a whole section of the State Duma was involved in a conspiracy

against the state and the authority of the tsar. When Our government demanded that the fifty-five members of the Duma who were accused of this crime be suspended, pending the outcome of the trial, and that the most seriously implicated of them be confined under custody, the State Duma did not immediately carry out this lawful demand of the authorities, which did not admit of any delay.

All of this moved Us to dissolve the Second State Duma by an *ukaz* to the Senate of June 3; the new Duma is to be convened on November 1 of this year.

But, trusting in Our people's love for the motherland and in its statesmanlike wisdom (*gosudarstvennyi razum*), We see the cause of the twofold failure in practice of the State Duma in the fact that this legislative institution was full of members who did not truly express the needs and desires of the people, and this was due to the novelty of the situation and to defects in the electoral law.

Hence, leaving in force all the rights given to Our subjects by the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, and by the fundamental laws, We have made a decision to change only the means by which the people's elected representatives are summoned to the State Duma, so that every part of the people can have its own chosen men in the Duma.

Since it was created to strengthen the Russian state, the State Duma should also be Russian in spirit. The other nationalities of which the population of Our realm is composed should have their spokesmen in the State Duma, but they should not and will not be there in such number as to give them the possibility of decisive influence on purely Russian questions. In those border areas of the state where the population has not attained an adequate level of citizenship, elections to the State duma must temporarily be brought to an end.

All these changes in the election system cannot be enacted through the ordinary legislative route, that is, through the very State Duma whose composition We have pronounced unsatisfactory. Only the authority that granted the first electoral law, the historical authority of the Russian tsar, is adequate to abolish that law and replace it with a new one.

The Lord God had entrusted Us with monarchical authority over Our people. It is before His throne that We shall give account for the fate of the Russian realm. From this realization We derive a firm resolve to carry through to the end the transformation of Russia which we have undertaken, and so grant to her a new electoral law, which We have ordered the Senate to promulgate.

We expect our faithful subjects to follow the path We have indicated and render unanimous and ardent service to the motherland, whose sons have in all times been a solid support to her strength, grandeur and glory...

NICHOLAS

## **VI. Memorandum to the Tsar February 1914**

by Peter Durnovo (Imperial Russian Minister of the Interior)

The central factor of the period of world history through which we are now passing is the rivalry between England and Germany. This rivalry must inevitably lead to an armed struggle between them, the issue of which will, in all probability, prove fatal to the vanquished side. The interests of these two powers are far too incompatible, and their simultaneous existence as world powers will sooner or later prove impossible. On the one hand, there is an insular State, whose world importance rests upon its domination of the sea, its world trade, and its innumerable colonies. On the other, there is a powerful continental empire, whose limited territory is insufficient for an increased population. It has therefore openly and candidly declared that its future is on the seas. It has, with fabulous speed, developed an enormous world commerce, built for its protection a formidable navy, and, with its famous trademark, "Made in Germany," created a mortal danger to the industrial and economic prosperity of its rival. Naturally, England cannot yield without a fight, and between her and Germany a struggle for life or death is inevitable.

The armed conflict impending as a result of this rivalry cannot be confined to a duel between England and Germany alone. Their resources are far too unequal, and, at the same time, they are not sufficiently vulnerable to each other. Germany could provoke rebellion in India, in South Africa, and, especially, a dangerous rebellion in Ireland, and paralyze English sea trade by means of privateering and, perhaps, submarine warfare, thereby creating for Great Britain difficulties in her food supply; but, in spite of all the daring of the German military leaders, they would scarcely risk landing in England, unless a fortunate accident helped them to destroy or appreciably to weaken the English navy. As for England, she will find Germany absolutely invulnerable. All that she may achieve is to seize the German colonies, stop German sea trade, and, in the most favorable event, annihilate the German navy, but nothing more. This, however, would not force the enemy to sue for peace. There is no doubt, therefore, that England will attempt the means she has more than once used with success, and will risk armed action only after securing participation in the war, on her own side, of powers stronger in a strategical sense. But since Germany, for her own part, will not be found isolated, the future Anglo-German war will undoubtedly be transformed into an armed conflict between two groups of powers, one with a German, the other with an English orientation.

Until the Russo-Japanese War, Russian policy had neither orientation. From the time of the reign of Emperor Alexander III, Russia had a defensive alliance with France, so firm as to assure common action by both powers in the event of attack upon either, but, at the same time, not so close as to obligate either to support unfailingly, with armed force, all political actions and claims of the ally. At the same time, the Russian Court maintained the traditional friendly relations, based upon ties of blood, with the Court of Berlin. Owing precisely to this conjuncture, peace among the great powers was not disturbed in the course of a great many years, in spite of the presence of abundant combustible material in Europe. France, by her alliance with Russia, was guaranteed against attack by Germany; the

latter was safe, thanks to the tried pacifism and friendship of Russia, from revanche ambitions on the part of France; and Russia was secured, thanks to Germany's need of maintaining amicable relations with her, against excessive intrigues by Austria-Hungary in the Balkan peninsula. Lastly, England, isolated and held in check by her rivalry with Russia in Persia, by her diplomats' traditional fear of our advance on India, and by strained relations with France, especially notable at the time of the well-known Fashoda incident, viewed with alarm the increase of Germany's naval power, without, however, risking an active step.

The Russo-Japanese War radically changed the relations among the great powers and brought England out of her isolation. As we know, all through the Russo-Japanese War, England and America observed benevolent neutrality toward Japan, while we enjoyed a similar benevolent neutrality from France and Germany. Here, it would seem, should have been the inception of the most natural political combination for us. But after the war, our diplomacy faced abruptly about and definitely entered upon the road toward rapprochement with England. France was drawn into the orbit of British policy; there was formed a group of powers of the Triple Entente, with England playing the dominant part; and a clash, sooner or later, with the powers grouping themselves around Germany became inevitable.

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Now, what advantages did the renunciation of our traditional policy of distrust of England and the rupture of neighborly if not friendly, relations with Germany promise us then and at present? Considering with any degree of care the events which have taken place since the Treaty of Portsmouth [ending the Russo-Japanese War], we find it difficult to perceive any practical advantages gained by us in rapprochement with England. . . .

To sum up, the Anglo-Russian accord has brought us nothing of practical value up to this time, while for the future, it threatens us with an inevitable armed clash with Germany.

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Under what conditions will this clash occur and what will be its probable consequences? The fundamental groupings in a future war are self-evident: Russia, France, and England, on the one side, with Germany, Austria, and Turkey, on the other. It is more than likely that other powers, too, will participate in that war, depending upon circumstances as they may exist at the war's outbreak. But, whether the immediate cause for the war is furnished by another clash of conflicting interests in the Balkans, or by a colonial incident, such as that of Algieras, the fundamental alignment will remain unchanged.

Italy, if she has any conception of her real interests, will not join the German side. For political as well as economic reasons, she undoubtedly hopes to expand her present territory. Such an expansion may be achieved only at the expense of Austria, on one hand, and Turkey, on the other. It is, therefore, natural for Italy not to join that party which would safe guard the territorial integrity of the countries at whose expense she hopes to realize

her aspirations. Furthermore, it is not out of the question that Italy would join the anti-German coalition, if the scales of war should incline in its favor, in order to secure for herself the most favorable conditions in sharing the subsequent division of spoils. . . .

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The main burden of the war will undoubtedly fall on us, since England is hardly capable of taking a considerable part in a continental war, while France, poor in manpower, will probably adhere to strictly defensive tactics, in view of the enormous losses by which war will be attended under present conditions of military technique. The part of a battering ram, making a breach in the very thick of the German defense, will be ours, with many factors against us to which we shall have to devote great effort and attention.

From the sum of these unfavorable factors we should deduct the Far East. Both America and Japan—the former fundamentally, and the latter by virtue of her present political orientation—are hostile to Germany, and there is no reason to expect them to act on the German side. Further more, the war, regardless of its issue, will weaken Russia and divert her attention to the West, a fact which, of course, serves both Japanese and American interests. Thus, our rear will be sufficiently secure in the Far East, and the most that can happen there will be the extortion from us of some concessions of an economic nature in return for benevolent neutrality. Indeed, it is possible that America or Japan may join the anti-German side, but, of course, merely as usurpers of one or the other of the unprotected German colonies.

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Are we prepared for so stubborn a war as the future war of the European nations will undoubtedly become? This question we must answer, without evasion, in the negative. That much has been done for our defense since the Japanese war, I am the last person to deny, but even so, it is quite inadequate considering the unprecedented scale on which a future war will inevitably be fought. The fault lies, in a considerable measure, in our young legislative institutions, which have taken a dilettante interest in our defenses, but are far from grasping the seriousness of the political situation arising from the new orientation which, with the sympathy of the public, has been followed in recent years by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. . . .

Another circumstance unfavorable to our defense is its far too great dependence, generally speaking, upon foreign industry, a fact which, in connection with the above noted interruption of more or less convenient communications with abroad, will create a series of obstacles difficult to overcome. The quantity of our heavy artillery, the importance of which was demonstrated in the Japanese War, is far too inadequate, and there are few machine guns. The organization of our fortress defenses has scarcely been started, and even the fortress of Reval, which is to defend the road to the capital, is not yet finished.

The network of strategic railways is inadequate. The railways possess a rolling stock sufficient, perhaps, for normal traffic, but not commensurate with the colossal demands

which will be made upon them in the event of a European war. Lastly, it should not be forgotten that the impending war will be fought among the most civilized and technically most advanced nations. Every previous war has invariably been followed by something new in the realm of military technique, but the technical backwardness of our industries does not create favorable conditions for our adoption of the new inventions.

All these factors are hardly given proper thought by our diplomats, whose behavior toward Germany is, in some respects, even aggressive, and may unduly hasten the moment of armed conflict, a moment which, of course, is really inevitable in view of our British orientation.

The question is whether this orientation is correct, and whether even a favorable issue of the war promises us such advantages as would compensate us for all the hardships and sacrifices which must attend a war unparalleled in its probable strain.

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The vital interests of Russia and Germany do not conflict. There are fundamental grounds for a peaceable existence of these two States. Germany's future lies on the sea, that is, in a realm where Russia, essentially the most continental of the great powers, has no interests whatever. We have no overseas colonies, and shall probably never have them, and communication between the various parts of our empire is easier overland than by water. No surplus population demanding territorial expansion is visible, but, even from the viewpoint of new conquests, what can we gain from a victory over Germany, Posen, or East Prussia? But why do we need these regions, densely populated as they are by Poles, when we find it difficult enough to manage our own Russian Poles? Why encourage centripetal tendencies; that have not ceased even to this day in the Vistula territory, by incorporating in the Russian State the restless Poles of Poznan and East Prussia, whose national demands even the German Government, which is more firm than the Russian, cannot stifle? . . .

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In any case, even if we were to admit the necessity for eradicating German domination in the field of our economic life, even at the price of a total banishment of German capital from Russian industry, appropriate measures could be taken, it would seem, without war against Germany. Such a war will demand such enormous expenditures that they will many times exceed the more than doubtful advantages to us in the abolition of the German [economic] domination. More than that, the result of such a war will be an economic situation compared with which the yoke of German capital will seem easy.

For there can be no doubt that the war will necessitate expenditures which are beyond Russia's limited financial means. We shall have to obtain credit from allied and neutral countries, but this will not be granted gratuitously. As to what will happen if the war should end disastrously for us, I do not wish to discuss now. The financial and economic consequences of defeat can be neither calculated nor foreseen, and will undoubtedly spell the total ruin of our entire national economy.

But even victory promises us extremely unfavorable financial prospects; a totally ruined Germany will not be in a position to compensate us for the cost involved. Dictated in the interest of England, the peace treaty will not afford Germany opportunity for sufficient economic recuperation to cover our war expenditures, even at a distant time. The little which we may perhaps succeed in extorting from her will have to be shared with our allies, and to our share there will fall but negligible crumbs, compared with the war cost. Meantime, we shall have to pay our war loans, not without pressure by the allies. For, after the destruction of German power, we shall no longer be necessary to them. Nay, more, our political might, enhanced by our victory, will induce them to weaken us, at least economically. And so it is inevitable that, even after a victorious conclusion of the war, we shall fall into the same sort of financial and economic dependence upon our creditors, compared with which our present dependence upon German capital will seem ideal.

However, no matter how sad may be the economic prospects which face us as a result of union with England, and, by that token, of war with Germany, they are still of secondary importance when we think of the political consequences of this fundamentally unnatural alliance.

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It should not be forgotten that Russia and Germany are the representatives of the conservative principle in the civilized world, as opposed to the democratic principle, incarnated in England and, to an infinitely lesser degree, in France. Strange as it may seem, England, monarchistic and conservative to the marrow at home, has in her foreign relations always acted as the protector of the most demagogical tendencies, in variably encouraging all popular movements aiming at the weakening of the monarchical principle.

From this point of view, a struggle between Germany and Russia, regardless of its issue, is profoundly undesirable to both sides, as undoubtedly involving the weakening of the conservative principle in the world of which the above-named two great powers are the only reliable bulwarks. More than that, one must realize that under the exceptional conditions which exist, a general European war is mortally dangerous both for Russia and Germany, no matter who wins. It is our firm conviction, based upon a long and careful study of all contemporary subversive tendencies, that there must inevitably break out in the defeated country a social revolution which, by the very nature of things, will spread to the country of the victor.

During the many years of peaceable neighborly existence, the two countries have become united by many ties, and a social upheaval in one is bound to affect the other. That these troubles will be of a social, and not a political, nature cannot be doubted, and this will hold true, not only as regards Russia, but for Germany as well. An especially favorable soil for social upheavals is found in Russia, where the masses undoubtedly profess, unconsciously, the principles of Socialism. In spite of the spirit of antagonism to the Government in Russian society, as unconscious as the Socialism of the broad masses of the people, a political revolution is not possible in Russia, and any revolutionary movement inevitably must degenerate into a Socialist movement. The opponents of the Government have no

popular support. The people see no difference between a government official and an intellectual. The Russian masses, whether workmen or peasants, are not looking for political rights, which they neither want nor comprehend.

The peasant dreams of obtaining a gratuitous share of somebody else's land; the workman, of getting hold of the entire capital and profits of the manufacturer. Beyond this, they have no aspirations. If these slogans are scattered far and wide among the populace, and the Government permits agitation along these lines, Russia will be flung into anarchy, such as she suffered in the ever-memorable period of troubles in 1905-1906. War with Germany would create exceptionally favorable conditions for such agitation. As already stated, this war is pregnant with enormous difficulties for us, and cannot turn out to be a mere triumphal march to Berlin. Both military disasters--partial ones, let us hope--and all kinds of shortcomings in our supply are inevitable. In the excessive nervousness and spirit of opposition of our society, these events will be given an exaggerated importance, and all the blame will be laid on the Government.

It will be well if the Government does not yield, but declares directly that in time of war no criticism of the governmental authority is to be tolerated, and resolutely suppresses all opposition. In the absence of any really strong hold on the people by the opposition, this would settle the affair. The people did not heed the writers of the Wiborg Manifesto, in its time, and they will not follow them now.

But a worse thing may happen: the government authority may make concessions, may try to come to an agreement with the opposition, and thereby weaken itself just when the Socialist elements are ready for action. Even though it may sound like a paradox, the fact is that agreement with the opposition in Russia positively weakens the Government. The trouble is that our opposition refuses to reckon with the fact that it represents no real force. The Russian opposition is intellectual throughout, and this is its weakness, because between the intelligentsia and the people there is a profound gulf of mutual misunderstanding and distrust. We need an artificial election law, indeed, we require the direct influence of the governmental authority, to assure the election to the State Duma of even the most zealous champions of popular rights. Let the Government refuse to support the elections, leaving them to their natural course, and the legislative institutions would not see within their walls a single intellectual, outside of a few demagogic agitators. However insistent the members of our legislative institutions may be that the people confide in them, the peasant would rather believe the landless government official than the Octobrist landlord in the Duma, while the workingman treats the wage-earning factory inspector with more confidence than the legislating manufacturer, even though the latter professes every principle of the Cadet party.

It is more than strange, under these circumstances, that the governmental authority should be asked to reckon seriously with the opposition, that it should for this purpose renounce the role of impartial regulator of social relationships, and come out before the broad masses of the people as the obedient organ of the class aspirations of the intellectual and propertied minority of the population. The opposition demands that the Government should be responsible to it, representative of a class, and should obey the parliament which

it artificially created. (Let us recall that famous expression of V. Nabokov: "Let the executive power submit to the legislative power!") In other words, the opposition demands that the Government should adopt the psychology of a savage, and worship the idol which he himself made.

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If the war ends in victory, the putting down of the Socialist movement will not offer any insurmountable obstacles. There will be agrarian troubles, as a result of agitation for compensating the soldiers with additional land allotments; there will be labor troubles during the transition from the probably increased wages of war time to normal schedules; and this, it is to be hoped, will be all, so long as the wave of the German social revolution has not reached us. But in the event of defeat, the possibility of which in a struggle with a foe like Germany cannot be overlooked, social revolution in its most extreme form is inevitable.

As has already been said, the trouble will start with the blaming of the Government for all disasters. In the legislative institutions a bitter campaign against the Government will begin, followed by revolutionary agitations throughout the country, with Socialist slogans, capable of arousing and rallying the masses, beginning with the division of the land and succeeded by a division of all valuables and property. The defeated army, having lost its most dependable men, and carried away by the tide of primitive peasant desire for land, will find itself too demoralized to serve as a bulwark of law and order. The legislative institutions and the intellectual opposition parties, lacking real authority in the eyes of the people, will be powerless to stem the popular tide, aroused by themselves, and Russia will be flung into hopeless anarchy, the issue of which cannot be foreseen.

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No matter how strange it may appear at first sight, considering the extraordinary poise of the German character, Germany, likewise, is destined to suffer, in case of defeat, no lesser social upheavals. The effect of a disastrous war upon the population will be too severe not to bring to the surface destructive tendencies, now deeply hidden. The peculiar social order of modern Germany rests upon the actually predominant influence of the agrarians, Prussian Junkerdom and propertied peasants.

These elements are the bulwark of the profoundly conservative German regime, headed by Prussia. The vital interests of these classes demand a protective economic policy towards agriculture, import duties on grain, and consequently, high prices for all farm products. But Germany, with her limited territory and increasing population, has long ago turned from an agricultural into an industrial State, so that protection of agriculture is, in effect, a matter of taxing the larger part of the population for the benefit of the smaller. To this majority, there is a compensation in the extensive development of the export of German industrial products to the most distant markets, so that the advantages derived thereby enable the industrialists and working people to pay the higher prices for the farm products consumed at home.

Defeated, Germany will lose her world markets and maritime commerce, for the aim of the war--on the part of its real instigator, England--will be the destruction of German competition. After this has been achieved, the laboring masses, deprived not only of higher but of any and all wages, having suffered greatly during the war, and being, naturally, embittered, will offer fertile soil for anti-agrarian and later anti-social propaganda by the Socialist parties.

These parties, in turn, making use of the outraged patriotic sentiment among the people, owing to the loss of the war, their exasperation at the militarists and the feudal burgher regime that betrayed them, will abandon the road of peaceable evolution which they have thus far been following so steadily, and take a purely revolutionary path. Some part will also be played, especially in the event of agrarian troubles in neighboring Russia, by the class of landless farmhands, which is quite numerous in Germany. Apart from this, there will be a revival of the hitherto concealed separatist tendencies in southern Germany, and the hidden antagonism of Bavaria to domination by Prussia will emerge in all its intensity. In short, a situation will be created which (in gravity) will be little better than that in Russia.

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A summary of all that has been stated above must lead to the conclusion that a rapprochement with England does not promise us any benefits, and that the English orientation of our diplomacy is essentially wrong.

We do not travel the same road as England; she should be left to go her own way, and we must not quarrel on her account with Germany. The Triple Entente is an artificial combination, without a basis of real interest. It has nothing to look forward to. The future belongs to a close and incomparably more vital rapprochement of Russia, Germany, France (reconciled with Germany), and Japan (allied to Russia by a strictly defensive union). A political combination like this, lacking all aggressiveness toward other States, would safeguard for many years the peace of the civilized nations, threatened, not by the militant intentions of Germany, as English diplomacy is trying to show, but solely by the perfectly natural striving of England to retain at all costs her vanishing domination of the seas. In this direction, and not in the fruitless search of a basis for an accord with England, which is in its very nature contrary to our national plans and aims, should all the efforts of our diplomacy be concentrated. It goes without saying that Germany, on her part, must meet our desire to restore our well-tested relations and friendly alliance with her, and to elaborate, in closest agreement with us, such terms of our neighborly existence as to afford no basis for anti-German agitation on the part of our constitutional-liberal parties, which, by their very nature, are forced to adhere, not to a Conservative German, but to a liberal English orientation.

P. N. Durnovo, February 1914

Source: <https://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/classes/durnovo.html>