1883–1886. After Tikhomirov’s defection to the old regime, Lavrov and several other émigrés during the 1890s organized a group called “The Old Narodovoltsy” (the latter word is the plural of narodovolets, which means “member of The People’s Will”). Individuals and groups in Russia never gave up the hope that the Executive Committee might be revived. Some simply took over the technique of terror and tried to carry on the unfinished work of The People’s Will—namely the assassination of Alexander III.

A young man named Alexander Ulianov became involved in an attempt on the life of the tsar in 1887 and was hanged for it. His younger brother, Vladimir, later known as Lenin, was drawn into the revolutionary movement largely as a consequence of Alexander’s execution. Oddly enough, Lenin destroyed the party that was the real heir to The People’s Will—the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

The revolutionary actors of the 1870s did not disappear once and for all. Some returned to play major roles in the formation of new parties in the 1890s. Their dedication to the revolutionary cause had epic proportions. Twice or thrice arrested already, a few lived to see the revolution take the Jacobin direction that they had feared it would take. The heroic period of revolutionary narodnichiestvo can be considered closed by 1883, but it is impossible to make a neat summary of the movement. An epitaph is easier: It was magnificent, but it was not revolution.

5 / THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA THROUGH 1905

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REVOLUTIONARY FRONT

The years 1881–1896 in Russia can be described as a period of apparent remission of the malady of revolution. In much the same way that Nicholas I had succeeded in forcing the revolutionary movement into private hideaways where the revolutionary spirit was sustained and nourished, Alexander III’s reactionary policies—his reign is often described as an era of counterreforms—forced the radical intelligentsia to resume modest tasks of enlightening the masses and helping them in their day-to-day lives. In the cities, krushkovshchina (an era of circles) prevailed. Little circles of populists, some of whom called themselves narodovoltsy, tried to rebuild what had been crushed, but their practical activity resembled that of the Chaikovtsy in the early 1870s and the Lavrovists in the mid-1870s. Indeed, the spirit of preparationism, of Lavrov’s early revolutionary essays, closely corresponded to the mentality of a large segment of the intelligentsia and the growing workers’ intelligentsia of this period, just as did Lavrov’s eclecticism. Early Russian Marxism and left liberalism were both nourished by the predominantly populist radical intelligentsia. The populists reached out to both in order to carry on their struggle to liberate the working classes. The same was true for the countryside, where the populist theorist Abramov’s doctrine of “small deeds” and Lev Tolstoy’s Christian populism sustained the morale of the radical intelligentsia who worked in the villages.

However, just like the tsars before him, Alexander III was unable to reverse the cultural, social, and economic processes that continued to erode the autocracy’s support in educated society,
and at last, to destroy its popular support. His last two ministers of finance, L. A. Vyshnegradskii (1887–1892) and Sergei Witte (1892–1903), the latter serving Nicholas II as well, pursued a policy of forced industrialization that altered the complexion of both the cities and the countryside. The burdens imposed upon the peasants in the form of direct and indirect taxes, the policy of forced exports, Witte’s tariff policies, and his successful bids for foreign loans and investment permitted Russia to enter an era of rapid industrial expansion. Large numbers of the rapidly increasing industrial proletariat (still a small percentage of the total population) were employed in large factories and herded into ghettos in the major cities of the empire. In spite of instances of relatively benevolent paternalism on the part of some factory owners, intervention in favor of the workers by the Russian government, and efforts by the government to gain control of the labor movement, Russian industrialization created social problems which far exceeded the government’s resources to cope with them. Nonetheless, historians have speculated that the policy of forced industrialization might have succeeded but for external disasters: the unsuccessful Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 and especially the Russian failures in World War I. In view of the incredible ineptitude of Nicholas II and his government, it is more reasonable to speculate that a different kind of revolution might have occurred at some other moment in his reign. Setting aside these speculations, in historical perspective what did happen looks very much like an unsuccessful gamble by the two ablest servants of the last reigns—Witte and Peter Stolypin—who believed that the autocracy could pursue a ruthless policy of modernization and simultaneously preserve its own position vis-à-vis the larger society. In fact, the empire did not modernize quickly enough to maintain its position in international politics, and the social and economic disequilibrium of the decades that preceded 1917 created an almost perpetually explosive internal situation.

The revival of the revolutionary intelligentsia during the 1890s and its complex development during the twentieth century were, for the first time, tied to social movements of considerable magnitude and genuine revolutionary potential. Indeed, elements within the revolutionary intelligentsia tended to lag behind the spontaneous movements in the urban and rural masses. Ideological and tactical adjustments were often made hastily to meet the needs of the moment. The debates of earlier revolutionary generations about the role to be played by the various participants in a nonexistent revolutionary front now became crucial calculations in rapidly unfolding revolutionary situations. That is not to say that the new intelligentsia factions were necessarily more correct, and that their ideologies were better guides to an understanding of the historical events in which they participated. Rather, all revolutionary factions had real constituencies and faced real opportunities for influencing mass behavior. In this new historical environment, the latest social and revolutionary theories of the intelligentsia were proven not so much correct as useful. They were useful because they inspired some members of the intelligentsia with the confidence and zeal that permitted them to adapt themselves to revolutionary situations and to act as astute manipulators rather than passive or fearful observers. Tactical flexibility, leadership skills, and the desire for real power and control over the revolutionary situation were far more important assets than the new and old theories that the intelligentsia ferociously debated. Although these qualities had been present in earlier generations of the revolutionary intelligentsia, they had been expended fruitlessly in an uncongenial historical environment.

When revolutionary factions subordinated tactics to elaborate and long-standing theoretical formulas, they tended to lose sight of the need of the moment and suffer defeats. One can spend long hours mulling over questions about the intrinsic superiority or inferiority of a given system of ideas for a revolutionary situation without coming to a definite conclusion. Complicated formulas could tell the revolutionaries what kind of revolution Russia should have, who should come to power, and what form the new government should take. These formulas were unquestionably important but often tended to restrain action. The great victories of revolutionary factions occurred when their leaders were able to find ways to adapt ideology to crisis conditions. After every major tactical adaptation such leaders made a correlative ideological adjustment. The populists had practiced this flexibility for years and continued to do so during the last
phases of the revolutionary movement. Russian Marxists, who struggled for years before they were able to make converts in the intelligentsia, soon spread out over a wide spectrum of positions.

Recent scholarship dramatizes the extent to which Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries collaborated once they got beyond the most intense period of ideological schism in the 1880s. The Socialist Revolutionaries, like many of the earlier populists, explicitly blended peasants and urban workers into a common "toiling" mass, and the Social Democrats came to appreciate the importance of the peasants in revolutionary struggle, particularly after 1902. Local groups collaborated in revolutionary projects despite the incessant clamor from abroad, where émigré theoretical leaders tried to maintain their factions' distinct boundaries. It is not too surprising that at any given moment a revolutionary subgroup belonging to a major "ism" could be temperamentally and strategically closer to a subgroup belonging to an alien "ism" than to fellow Marxists or populists. Thus, for the purpose of revolutionary action, Bolsheviks and left Socialist Revolutionaries might form an alliance against Mensheviks and right Socialist Revolutionaries.

Revolutionary theoreticians of all stripes had to define the historical moment and the roles of different social groups in the revolution to come. The problem of historical phases was a basic issue in an increasingly tortuous set of problems that the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia now shared with European socialist parties. During the 1870s, the revolutionary intelligentsia had operated under the assumption that the working classes were differentiated by location and employment but that all were imbued with revolutionary and socialist instincts. By the 1890s the intelligentsia was bitterly divided over the question of the role of the urban proletariat and the role of the peasants in the coming revolutions. It was not just a matter of who would be the vanguard at a given phase in the revolutionary process. The Marxists did not believe that the peasants were the true carriers of socialism. To them, the peasants had "petit-bourgeois" aspirations, and the populists were a petit-bourgeois party. Marxist factions created ever more complicated formulas describing the distribution of progressive and antiprogressive social forces, the roles envisioned for each of them in the revolutionary struggle at a given historical moment, the nature of the revolution to occur, and the political superstructure that would reflect new economic and social relationships. Several kinds of evidence were adduced to support the complicated revolutionary vision of the Marxists—economic theory, contemporary economic statistics, European revolutionary history, theories of class behavior, and class behavior as exhibited in contemporary situations—while their opponents defended themselves with quite similar modes of argument and demonstration. Marxism did not replace populism, but rather competed with it for recruits from the intelligentsia. Meanwhile, the radical liberal tradition gathered strength and competed with both of them. During the two final revolutionary crises in 1905 and 1917, several revolutionary parties, although bitterly divided internally, searched for alliances dictated by theoretical formulas and tactical considerations. Let us first examine briefly the theoretical bases of the competing ideologies.

Marxism, after all is said and done, bases itself upon the Hegelian theodicy. Marxists saw reason and order emerging from the seeming confusion of historical phenomena. Passions, struggle, violence, and suffering played a large part in the unfolding of human consciousness. For Marx, the theory of immiserization and of inevitable economic crises under capitalism led to an optimistic conclusion—to revolution and the victory of the proletariat. Thus, capitalism was neither an unqualified good nor an unqualified evil. It was good so long as it progressively transformed the technology of production, increased human mastery of the environment, and thus provided the basis for the next, higher stage of human development. Until that moment it had to be endured, but here was a major source of controversy. There was no certain way of knowing when the moment had arrived, and when one should refuse to suffer the bourgeoisie any longer. Nor was there any certainty about how the new phase would appear. Marx and Engels had made concessions to the variations of economic, social, and political development in several nations. They believed on the one hand that the proletariat might acquire power by legal means in some nations, and on the other, that a socialist seizure of power could occur in a nation like Russia, where bourgeois institutions had not yet developed, and where in-
dustrialism was still incipient. Marx accepted the populist assumption that Russia might pursue a more direct path to socialism, but only in the event of a general European revolution. He was certainly not dogmatic about Russia’s need to endure a period of bourgeois institutions, and was therefore spiritually closer to the Bolshevik wing of Russian Marxism than to Menshevism.

The spiritual content of Marxism deserves comment. For all of its atheism, its emphasis on scientific analysis, and its elevation of prosaic economic data to a position of primacy and the centerpiece of a theory of historical change, Marxism attracted passionately moralistic types. The reasons are not difficult to discern. The system propounded by Marx and Engels promised that History, however devoid of divine inspiration, would reward the proletariat for its suffering by making it the carrier of progress. The proletariat, like the chosen people of the Old Testament, or like the saved in Christian doctrine, would enter the kingdom of socialism; the bourgeoisie would not. The last would be first. Perhaps shared moral and emotional impulses inspired both Judeo-Christian and Marxian teaching. Marxism might even be seen as a secular rationalization and extension of the Judeo-Christian tradition. On the other hand, the resemblance between the two doctrines may be adventitious, in that many intelligentsia doctrines have a “family resemblance.” In either case, Marxism readily satisfied the hunger for social justice of people raised in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

History, of course, has shown that in its many permutations Marxism appealed to a great many people raised in other traditions, too. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it has inspired masses of people undergoing the painful early stages of industrialization. According to one view, it thrives in different cultures because it addresses the psychological needs of populations experiencing the stress of a transitional historical moment. Marxism ambivalently affirms the value of modernization and industrial production without abandoning nostalgia for a premodern world less controlled by the cash nexus and production. Despite its defects in predicting historical change, Marx

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1870s had been called Marxists, although they had tended to see
the urban proletariat as only one segment of the exploited
masses and had not assigned it any special role. Leading popu-
lisit theoreticians had found in Marx’s writings not so much
praise for the historically progressive role of bourgeois capital-
ism, as blame for its ruthless, exploitative character.

When several members of the Black Repartition, the narodnik
faction that had split off from Land and Freedom in 1879, emi-
gated and converted to Marxism, they displayed all of the fervor
of proselytes. During the 1870s it had been virtually impossible
for Russian revolutionaries to abandon their faith in the peas-
ants without abandoning their revolutionary optimism. Now,
under the guidance of G. V. Plekhanov and the “Liberation of
Labor Group” (1883), Russian Marxism began to take root in
Geneva, Switzerland. Plekhanov repudiated the idea of Russia’s
unique path to socialism, even while recognizing the peculiar-
ties of Russia’s historical development in relation to the rest of
Europe. Indeed, unlike former narodnik comrades who had
drawn optimistic conclusions from their vision of Russian his-
tory, Plekhanov, Paul Akseifrod, Lev Deich, and Vera Zasulich
of the Liberation of Labor Group concluded that Russia would not
lead but follow Europe to socialism. Plekhanov was not entirely
free of the idea of the virtues of backwardness, but his emphasis
was quite different. He declared that Russian backwardness had
modified the character of the bourgeoisie and the development
of bourgeois institutions, but that Russia could not skip the
bourgeois phase of historical progress. This pitilessly “objec-
tive” vision embraced the inevitability of the destruction of the
peasant commune, the transformation of the peasants into land-
less proletarians, and their exploitation by industrial capitalists.

Plekhanov’s first major theoretical articles appeared in the
course of a bitter debate with the Russian émigré group that
published The Messenger of the People’s Will. Socialism and the
Political Struggle (1885) and Our Differences (1885) attempted to
redirect the revolutionary movement and to demonstrate that
the peasant socialism advocated by The People’s Will was nei-
ther possible nor desirable according to Marx’s scientific social-
ism. Plekhanov attacked the entire range of populist doctrine
from epistemology to revolutionary strategy. In some ways, his
theoretical formulations pointed back to the 1860s. His hard-
headed objectivism and materialism were far more complicated
than Chernyshevskii’s and Dobroliubov’s, and his conclusions
quite different from theirs, but like them he believed that he was
liberating the intelligentsia from fantasies. However, in the 1880s
and 1890s acceptance of a materialistic and objectivistic outlook
signified a step back from the revolutionary aggressiveness of the
narodni, and a shift in emphasis toward conscious obedience to
immutable historical laws. In Russia this meant acceptance of
the priority of the bourgeois revolution. Plekhanov’s belief that Russia’s backwardness might permit its intelligentsia
and proletarian class to avoid some of the defeats suffered by
the European proletariat and thus hasten the downfall of capital-
ism was an important concession in the direction of voluntar-
ism but was still retrograde relative to revolutionary populism.
Plekhanov gave the intelligentsia an important role in the forma-
tion of proletarian consciousness in spite of his professed belief
that the class struggle and class consciousness issued inevitably
from objective conditions. This too was a concession to voluntar-
ism. Indeed, such attempts to introduce factors that somehow
acted from “above” upon the objective material conditions which,
according to Marx’s theory, produced proletarian class con-
sciousness, were akin to the “idealist” heresies which Plekhanov
condemned in the “utopian” socialism of his opponents.

On balance, it is correct to see Plekhanov as a fixed point of
Marxist orthodoxy in the Russian Social Democratic move-
ment. There is little question but that his theoretical acumen and liter-
ary talent provided Russian Marxism with a firm foundation.
When inevitable right- and left-wing heresies (leanings toward
trade unionism, evolutionary liberalism, or ultrarevolutionism)
appeared among Russian Marxists, Plekhanov threw his weight
to one side or the other, sometimes allying himself with groups
that were far from orthodox. Nonetheless, he remained com-
mitted to the idea of two revolutions (a bourgeois revolution
followed by a socialist revolution), a commitment which, not un-
expectedly, made him an ally of the liberal Kadet Party during
the revolutions of 1917 and an opponent of the ultrarevolutionary
Bolsheviks. Plekhanovism and related strains of Menshevism,
however, proved to be too inflexible and too artificial for a truly
revolutionary situation. Plekhanov's orderly and optimistic historical vision led him into personal tragedy during his lifetime, the tragedy of his revolution going astray, and he himself being treated like a political criminal, but even his Bolshevik opponents posthumously conceded him a secure place in the apostolic succession of revolutionary theorists.

A sketch of Plekhanov's views is the merest introduction to the complex and extended history of Russian Marxism; the entry of Marx's ideas into Russia created a maze of philosophical, historical, economic, and sociological problems for the intelligentsia. Suffice it here to say that in the 1880s and 1890s Plekhanov and his major theoretical collaborator, Paul Akselrod, succeeded in adapting the views of Marx and Engels to Russian conditions. Early Russian Marxism had a pessimistic timetable in comparison with revolutionary populism, but it offered the Russian intelligentsia the certainties of science, the security of an international movement, and hope for at least an abbreviation of the bourgeois phase of historical development. On the other hand, the populists' urgent concern for the immediate suffering of the masses, their dedication to individualism, their emphasis upon the free exercise of human will, their attachment to smaller and (to them) more humane forms of association and economic organization continued to have great appeal. Marxist theories were assailable by populist critics, and the populists had a number of emotional advantages, among them a long martyrology and the recent memory of The People's Will, not to speak of the continuing appeal of terror. It took several historical shocks in the 1890s to permit Russian Marxists to proselytize successfully among the intelligentsia.

The first shock came in 1891–1892. The great famine and widespread typhus, typhoid, and cholera epidemics of this period confirmed what all oppositional elements in Russia knew—that a large segment of the peasant population lived on the verge of extinction, and that the Russian government's economic policies were indirectly responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths. Both the spectacle of mass suffering and the government's appeal to Russian society in November 1891 for the organization of philanthropic work in the affected regions of European Russia revived the spirit of active opposition in society. As in the preceding reigns, the crisis provoked a surge of public opinion and the revival of demands for reform. The new revival (1891–1894), although issuing from a crisis of lesser dimensions than those during the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II, created great expectations in educated society and the formation of a liberal-populist alliance. It was organized by none other than Mark Natanson, who had returned from Siberia with a number of other populist veterans. During its brief existence, "The Party of the People's Right" was less significant as a revolutionary party than as a symptom of the temporary weakening of the sectarian spirit within the intelligentsia during the early 1890s. This in turn was evidence of both the sheer numerical expansion of the educated and politically conscious elements in Russian society and the diversion of intelligentsia interest toward secondary but more immediately (or so it seemed to them) obtainable political goals. The Party of the People's Right began to form simultaneously with the regrouping of the literary forces of populism around Nicholas Mikhailovskii and his newly acquired journal, Russian Wealth. (After the creation of circles in several cities and the issuance of a number of pamphlets and proclamations in the period 1891–1894, Natanson's organization was destroyed by arrests in April 1894.) Mikhailovskii, who had allied himself with the Party of the People's Right, offered the younger generation, many of whom still hoped for the resurrection of the Executive Committee, a liberal-constitutionalist program. His journal and other populist organs such as The Week and The New World were divided over the strategies of populism and the proper path to socialism. Russian populism, having lost its sectarian spirit, also lost much of the theoretical appeal it had possessed for radical youths. Thus, during the period 1891–1894, the liberal-populist alliance stimulated the younger generation to look elsewhere for a consistent mode of radical thought.

Furthermore, the behavior of the peasants in 1891–1892 tended to confirm the Marxist view of the peasantry as a backward rather than progressive social group. The peasants proved to be either inert or hostile to the intelligentsia philanthropists who came to the villages to help them. Once again, this somewhat different kind of Going to the People disappointed populist-inclined radicals. To be sure, this was not a death blow either to
liberal populism or to revolutionary populism. But it did help to prepare the way for competing systems of thought.

The real impetus for the development of Marxism came from the spontaneous development of the workers’ movement, first in the western areas of the Russian Empire—Poland, Lithuania, and White Russia—and then in Great Russia. The turning point came in 1895–1896, when the liberal-populist campaign for constitutional reform bumped up against the inflexible conservatism of the new tsar, Nicholas II, and his government, and when the surge of industrialization began in the reign of Alexander III yielded its first large-scale and extended strike movement. What had been a small and little known socialist sect trying to foster revolutionary class consciousness among the urban factory workers and to convince the intelligentsia that Marxism was the true socialist gospel was soon transformed into the nucleus of a revolutionary party. But acceptance of Marxism was only one of several responses within the intelligentsia to a rapidly changing historical environment.

Revolutionary populists, having conceded that during the 1890s the industrial proletariat was a more revolutionary force than the peasants, were forced into a defensive position. During the early 1890s the revolutionary intelligentsia had been so weak and disorganized that doctrinal disagreements had seemed less important than the pooling of resources and techniques in a common effort to further the struggle of the urban workers. In the nonsectarian atmosphere of this period the narodovoltsy in St. Petersburg had worked together with early Social Democratic circles, although their aims and methods were different. The narodovoltsy still felt that they were the true heirs of the strongest and most legitimate revolutionary party in Russia and did not yet see the Social Democrats as a real threat. The early populists and original narodovoltsy, after all, had never drawn a sharp line between the working class in the villages and the working class in the cities. Despite the fact that they tended to see the Social Democrats as nonrevolutionary, the narodovoltsy of the 1890s had sufficiently moderated their own position to accept the Marxists as colleagues. After 1894–1896, when Russian Marxist theoreticians began a major assault upon the populists, two hostile camps formed.

The revival of revolutionary populism did not occur in St. Petersburg, but in provincial capitals in the Volga region and the Ukraine. The leaders of the new movement were émigrés, veterans of revolutionary populism who returned to European Russia from Siberian exile during the 1890s, and young recruits who began their activities in the provinces. Like Russian Marxists during the mid- and late 1890s, revolutionary populists tried to form a party but did not possess either central leadership or a unified program. While Russian Marxists were experiencing their first bitter internal divisions over the heresies of economism and revisionism, revolutionary populists were still groping for a new theoretical foundation. The theoretical revamping of revolutionary populism was not possible until the period 1902–1906, when large-scale agrarian disturbances renewed the populists’ faith in the peasants as a revolutionary force. Recent scholarship, however, stresses their ability to compete successfully with their Social Democratic colleagues in urban centers and factory settings.¹

During the final phase of revolutionary populism, Victor Chernov was its dominant, indeed its only noteworthy theoretician. As if to symbolize the passing of the prophetic mantle, Chernov was present at Peter Lavrov’s death in Paris in February 1900. Lavrov had given his final blessing to the “League of Agrarian Socialism,” which was later amalgamated with the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Chernov’s “constructive” (as opposed to utopian or scientific) socialism has never impressed students of social thought as a well constructed and coherent theory. Chernov labored very much within the subjectivistic tradition of Lavrov and Mikhailovskii, emphasizing ethics rather than pure knowledge, but strenuously attempting to assimilate his ethical vision of freedom and individuality to scientific thought. In order to establish the validity of ethical sociology, Chernov drew

upon new schools of epistemological and sociological thought in addition to earlier populist authorities. He was influenced by the neo-Kantian empiricocriticism of Richard Avenarius and Ernst Mach, and Lester Ward's dynamic sociology. The voluntarism deeply imbedded in the theoretical foundations of populism was reasserted in Chernov's revision.

Like Lavrov, Chernov was a Catholic socialist, trying to avoid an exclusively peasant or proletarian orientation. Thus, he did not see any inconsistency in referring to Marx and Engels as his teachers, while at the same time perpetuating the populist vision of the peculiarly socialist character of the Russian peasantry. Chernov's ideas about Russia's special path also centered around the peasant commune and its fortunate ignorance of the conceptions of private property that Europeans had inherited from Roman law. However, unlike the earlier populists, Chernov had to take into account economic and social changes that had not only eroded the villages but had created an entirely new industrial sector in Russia. Chernov no longer saw Russia moving directly into the socialist phase. In this respect, he showed the influence of both Marxism and liberal populism. Yet he still clung to the populist faith that the village could be secured from the worst ravages of capitalism and thus ease Russia's entry into the phase of socialism. Regard for the small producer and small-scale agriculture, another deep populist bias, was incorporated into Chernov's projected postrevolutionary period.

The Socialist Revolutionary Party's program devised by Chernov was two-phased in that it envisioned a period in which the land would be socialized and cultivated by individual users or collectives. This phase would be followed by the socially and economically more advanced period of collective cultivation. The Socialist Revolutionaries' two-phase scheme was further complicated by the exclusion of industry from the process of socialization during the first phase. They proposed a dichotomous system in which agriculture would be socialized but industry privately owned (the urban land would be owned by municipalities). The socialization of industry would be deferred until the phase of full agricultural collectivization. Thus, the Socialist Revolutionaries' revolutionary goals reflected the fact that they were still, above all, agrarian socialists. While they were unwilling to see the peasants expropriated and proletarianized for the sake of large-scale production, the Socialist Revolutionaries were willing to accept the necessity of the continuance of industrial capitalism. It should be emphasized, however, that SR (the abbreviated form of Socialist Revolutionary) doctrine, modified though it was by Marxian theory and a notion of historical stages, still attracted impatient types prepared to attack the tsarist regime at any moment and with any possible means. The left wing of the party quickly asserted itself, and such "maximalist" personalities remained within the Socialist Revolutionary Party even after a Maximalist faction formally broke with the mainstream SRs in 1906.

The third major radical party that emerged during the last reign, the Constitutional Democrats, or Kadets, were associated less with the masses than with the expanding stratum of Russian professionals. The leaders of the left liberal movement during the late 1890s and after were often scholars from the urban intelligentsia, cosmopolitan men of culture. Some of them were defectors from the Marxist or populist camps. Unlike the Marxists and populists, the left liberals did not establish strong ties with an exploited social class which it felt to be its special constituency. Nonetheless, Russian left liberalism did have considerable popular appeal because of its advocacy of democratic constitutionalism and its commitment to social welfare. Many of the ideas of liberal populist and revisionist economists were incorporated into the program of the Kadet Party.

The theoretical leaders of Russian left liberalism during the period of the rise of the major oppositional parties (1898–1905) were Peter Struve and Paul Miliukov. Struve was a former "legal Marxist" who had played an important role in the debate between Marxists and populists in the mid-1890s. He had undergone an ideological evolution characteristic of a number of legal Marxists, from a scholarly variety of Marxism to Kantianism, and to Christianity. There is little question but that both philosophical and theological thought in Russia of the Silver Age, the extraordinarily diversified and creative cultural epoch that approximately coincided with the reign of Nicholas II, exceeded in sophistication and creativity the somewhat stale and sectarian varieties of ethical sociology and optimistic materialism of pre-
ceding intelligentsia generations. However, philosophical idealism often signified a lack of the combativeness and party spirit necessary for the ensuing struggle. Left liberalism, especially through the legal Marxists (Struve, Nicholas Berdiaev, S. N. Bulgakov, and S. L. Frank), became associated with a cosmopolitan variety of Westernism, which later tried to incorporate aspects of Russian national experience into a program of revolutionary change.

Paul Miliukov, a prominent historian, was the political leader of the left liberals. Miliukov belonged to a positivistic rather than Marxist or idealist school of thought, but this did not prevent him from joining Struve in an effort to organize the left liberal opposition into a party. Under the spur of Miliukov's radicalism, the left liberal organ Liberation (Stuttgart 1902-1904, Paris 1904-1905) and its organizational affiliate in Russia, "The Union of Liberation," attenuated their ties with the more moderate varieties of gentry liberalism based upon the zemstvos. Like the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries, the Union of Liberation had as its most immediate goals the destruction of the autocratic state and the establishment of a democratic constitution.

Operating as they did in a mass society and in an atmosphere of mass discontent, the three illegal parties very soon began to subordinate abstract theorizing to tactical and organizational matters. They were all faced with the problem of harnessing and guiding the numerous forces that had been unleashed by the government's economic, social, political, and cultural policies. Several distinct movements emerged, each of them interacting with the others during the most severe crises of the old regime, in the period 1904-1917. This resembled the previous interaction of several movements during the formation of revolutionary fronts in earlier periods of crisis such as 1856-1863 and 1878-1882. However, during the period 1904-1917 several new factors gave the revolutionary fronts a far more threatening character.

The first factor was the sheer size of the movements. The rate of population growth in the Russian Empire, especially in European Russia, exceeded that of any of the major European powers. The population of imperial Russia grew from 73,648,000 in 1861 to 169,759,000 in 1916. Although some of the growth can be accounted for by imperial expansion, population grew much faster than the capacity of Russia's urban and semiurban industrial centers to absorb it. At the turn of the century between 70 and 80 percent of the population was engaged in agriculture, and at the outbreak of World War I the agricultural population was still three to four times as large as the nonagricultural population. Despite the fact that Russia's urban population approximately tripled between 1861 and 1914, more than 85 percent of the Russian population still lived outside the jurisdiction of municipal governments and was officially rural in 1914.

However, there was a high degree of geographic industrial concentration in the empire and an unusually high degree of labor concentration in industrial enterprises. Almost half of Russia's industrial labor force in 1914 worked in enterprises that employed 1,000 or more workers. Even more significant is the fact that between 1906 and 1914 the government's economic and social policies (embodied in Stolypin's agrarian reforms of 1906-1911) led to a sudden increase in the industrial labor force. The average Russian industrial proletarian was quite young, even before we add the sudden influx of new hands mentioned above. St. Petersburg was the most developed Russian proletarian center in that the vast majority of its labor force was permanently employed in industry. In addition, St. Petersburg was strongly affected by the mass of new labor recruits, and on the eve of the revolutions of 1917 displayed in extreme form the social tensions that characterized European Russia as a whole.

By 1917 economic and social differentiation in the countryside had created a large mass of peasants who could no longer subsist on the land, yet could not be absorbed by industry. Moreover, the numerous peasants who did enter the industrial labor force just before World War I were newly experiencing proletarian life and were not at all reconciled to it.

The other significant social group (it is no longer historically appropriate to speak of estates, although estates continued to exist as legal entities after they had lost most of their social significance) was vaguely called "society." It consisted of the educated public who saw themselves as spokesmen for the nation, rather than for officialdom and the autocracy. By the turn of the
century there were considerably more educated Russians outside the official apparatus than in it. The census of 1897 revealed that 1,384,143 persons in Russia had received either secondary or higher education. Only 10 percent of them had received higher education of any sort. More than 80 percent of the highly educated and about 70 percent of those who had received secondary educations lived in urban centers. A large number of educated persons who chose rural life did so out of a sense of dedication to the masses. They were employed by the zemstvos and became known as the “third element” to distinguish them from the state and local officials (the former appointed, the latter elected) who administered the zemstvos. The third element was responsible for much of the radical ferment at zemstvo conferences and at the meetings of professional societies and unions (profsoiuzy). Meetings, exhibits, and banquets sponsored by professional organizations and zemstvo conferences provided the basic framework for “society’s” organized oppositional activity in 1904–1906. In spite of its relative numerical insignificance, “society” became an important revolutionary force in the first Russian revolution.

University students, although an even more insignificant group numerically than “society,” also played a disproportionately large role. Despite the reactionary character of Count I. D. Delianov’s tenure as minister of education (1882–1897), the process of democratization of the student body proceeded apace. In 1900 there were 16,335 students in eight Russian universities. By 1912 there were 34,538 in nine universities and almost 39,000 more enrolled in thirty other institutions of higher learning. Fourteen of them in St. Petersburg and seven in Moscow. In addition, by 1912 28,274 women had enrolled in the program of higher courses designed for them. The pressures of modernization forced the regime to encourage enrollment in specialized institutes that prepared students for roles in a developing economy. The contrast in growth between these institutes and the more established universities can be seen in the shift in enrollment between 1912 and 1914: during this period the number of male university students remained stable, but the enrollment in specialized institutes increased dramatically to roughly 58,000. Approximately 34,000 women received higher education in special courses, and a smaller number in institutes. By 1914 almost 39 percent of the students in Russia’s nine universities were of working class or peasant origins, as well as 64 percent of the students in five higher state technical institutes. Furthermore, attempts to restrict student corporate activity played into the hands of the radicals in the student body, who converted illegal student organizations into affiliates of radical parties.

The student bodies of the expanded system of higher education in the major university cities were sufficiently large to cause serious disturbances and could occasionally provoke sympathy demonstrations by the proletariat. Finally, the brutal suppression of student demonstrations and mass expulsions in the period 1896–1901 (the movement was especially massive in 1899–1901) aggravated the situation. Expelled students who were not impressed into the army (an expedient employed by Nicholas II during this period) often became revolutionary agitators, propagandists, and terrorists. Thus, the universities and technical institutes, as in earlier periods, were important centers of recruitment for revolutionary parties. Still, compared to the mass worker and peasant movements and movements for national autonomy that developed in the first decades of the twentieth century, their importance was diminished.

The exacerbation of the nationalities problem within the Russian Empire was another important factor that spurred on the mass movements during the reign of Nicholas II. Between 55 and 60 percent of the inhabitants of the Russian Empire in 1897 were non-Russians. Of these, the Ukrainians, Turkic peoples, Poles, and Belorussians were the most numerous. The movements of greatest historical moment arose in Poland and the Ukraine, where the ruthless policies of cultural russification pursued by Alexander III and Nicholas II encountered the growing spirit of nationalism. Nationalism pervaded the borderlands. In the northwest, small ethnic groups aspiring to nationhood, such as the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, felt themselves to be culturally superior to their imperial oppressors. So too, in the south, Armenians and Georgians, though not numerous, looked

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back to a glorious past. The aspirations of the Moslem Turkic peoples in the south and east, and the mingling of different ethnic, racial, and religious communities in the southern and eastern borderlands created enormous complications. The Russian imperial government played an ambiguous role: at times it protected ethnic minorities against their more numerous and sometimes hostile neighbors, while at other times it suppressed national aspirations. The long-standing hostilities between, for example, Armenians and Azeri Turks points up the dilemma of the small nationalities and the ambiguous role of the Tsarist regime. Russian imperial governments played a protective role vis-à-vis Christian Armenians, whose superior socioeconomic status exacerbated the tensions between them and the more numerous Moslem, Turkic peoples in the area that became Azerbaijan.

The special position of the Jews in the Russian Empire created a very distinctive role for them. The discriminatory legislation against Jews and continuing persecution led to an unusually high level of Jewish participation in the revolutionary movement. This, of course, only added to the regime's hostility toward them. Faced with the alternatives of Zionism and emigration, introversion in their own communities, assimilation and a slow struggle for equal rights within the Empire, or a cosmopolitan revolutionary identity, many Jewish youths made the last choice. From this last category came important figures such as Trotsky and Martov, as well as some of the leading terrorists during the last three decades of the old regime.

More generally, all of the aggrieved minorities contributed leading figures to the revolutionary movement out of proportion to their numbers. These “marginal” groups played important roles at key moments during the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 and became special targets for the Okhrana (reorganized secret police), for chauvinist movements, for lynch-minded mobs such as the Black Hundreds, and for punitive expeditions by Cossacks. The benighted security forces of the regime expressed special contempt for and suspicion of Poles and Jews. It is not surprising that oppressed minorities had a greater stake in the success of revolution, and therefore were suspected by counterrevolutionaries of harboring motives of revenge. The ethnic composition of the first postrevolutionary government suggests the extent to which “marginals” had attained central positions in revolutionary parties. Oddly enough, the early Soviet regime’s liberal employment of non-Russians resembled the practice of Russian imperial administrations. One found a disproportionate number of individuals of non-Russian ethnic background in elite positions during the old regime, too. The frequent amalgamation of nationalism with socialism, and the alliances formed by nationalists with the revolutionary parties after the turn of the century, created problems for both the old regime and the revolutionaries.

Given the extraordinary breadth and diversity of the oppositional groups, and the growth of underground organizations desiring to exploit and direct mass discontent, the major task before the Russian government was the prevention of the formation of a united revolutionary front. Even the repeated use of troops in the cities and countryside failed to quell mass discontent at the turn of the century. In retrospect, a wise counterrevolutionary policy would have entailed timely concessions to discontented groups and the creation of a broad and stable coalition of loyal forces. The old regime had several long-standing advantages—deep religious and national loyalties—that it could exploit. It commanded a widespread and reasonably effective network of security police, in addition to the regular army. As shall be seen, however, the old regime's attempts to manipulate the masses ultimately played into the hands of the revolutionaries.

On their side, the revolutionary parties, while fending off the police and trying to keep their own organizations from disintegrating into bitter factions, had to create tactics, programs, and slogans appropriate for mass movements. This task proved to be beyond the powers of all but the most astute manipulators, for at critical moments the masses always seemed to be demanding either too little or too much. The revolutionary intelligentsia's task was complicated by the extension of literacy to about one-third of the male population of the Empire at the turn of the century. On the one hand, this development led to the formation of an intermediate social stratum between the revolutionary intelligentsia and the illiterate masses that served as a medium of
transmission for revolutionary ideas, and even as a source of leadership. On the other hand, the new, educated stratum of workers and peasants (often referred to as the worker or peasant intelligentsia) sometimes rebelled against the leadership of the revolutionary intelligentsia, still largely recruited from the upper strata of Russian society. Nonetheless, the higher cultural level of the masses ultimately facilitated the work of the revolutionary parties and reduced the barriers that had separated the intelligentsia from them in earlier periods of the revolutionary movement.

We encounter several extremely difficult problems in studying the history of the relationship of revolutionary parties to mass movements. It is possible to discover real affinities between party programs and the aspirations of definite social groups. However, as historical scholarship advances, these affinities often prove to be limited to subgroups of a significant social entity, such as the urban proletariat, and are also discontinuous. Uneven development is the rule, rather than the exception, during the process of modernization. To paraphrase a prominent labor historian, modernization created “not an increasingly solid and uniform proletarian continent but a continually changing archipelago of working class categories.” Thus, it is not totally inaccurate to say that the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party expressed the aspirations of the urban proletariat, but a statement of this sort glosses over the sometimes bitter struggle of revolutionary parties and factions, each of which appealed to different subgroups within the urban proletariat at different historical moments. Furthermore, the revolutionary parties and factions had aspirations that superseded those of any mass movement. While the parties had total programs, the mass movements had only partial, though radical goals. If the major revolutionary parties displayed a bias for a workers’ revolution or a peasants’ revolution, they did so because it suited their larger vision of social regeneration. It later became quite clear that leaders of revolutionary parties would not concede anything to the masses that they felt would jeopardize their ultimate goals. Thus, the revolutionary intelligentsia parties and factions represented their own aspirations as well as those of the masses. The history of Bolshevik manipulations, concessions, and repressions is the clearest demonstration of this proposition.

The problem of leadership is possibly the most complex and interesting of all, for the character of the leaders of the revolutionary factions determined to a significant extent their success or failure in the upheavals of 1917. Neither Lenin’s, Chernov’s, Julius Martov’s, nor Miliukov’s behavior during the crucial months of 1917 and 1918, when policies, slogans, and actions had immediate consequences for the maintenance or creation of a power base, can be explained by their devotion to an ideology alone. Their decisiveness (or lack of decisiveness) and the decisions that they did make reflected very definite personality traits. Willingness to accept mass violence (concretely as well as abstractly), confidence that disorder can be brought under control once unleashed, and a strong desire to assert that control—a real desire for power—are deeply rooted in personality rather than ideology. The spectrum of positions in the minimalist or maximalist, Jacobin or anti-Jacobin programs of the revolutionary factions already reflected not only tactical adaptation, but the transformation of ideology by personality. The study of leading personalities becomes especially germane when examining the Social Democrats, whose leaders had a major impact on the shape of Russian history during and after 1917.

Both Marxist circles and labor organizations affiliated with them appeared in the non-Russian western areas of the empire before becoming a significant phenomenon in Russia proper. The first Russian Marxist circles were strongly influenced by the Jewish workers’ movement in Poland, Lithuania, and White Russia. The “Bund,” as the Jewish workers’ union was later called, had itself been influenced by the Polish socialist movement. Veterans of these earlier movements could thus point the way to the first important Russian Marxist organization. For example, Martov, later the leader of the Menshevik movement, began his practical work in Vilno and applied what he had learned there in St. Petersburg. On Agitation, a pamphlet jointly

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prepared by Martov and Alexander Kremer early in 1894, was widely disseminated and accepted as a practical guide for Russian Social Democratic circles in the period 1894–1896. The new Social Democratic tactic was related to the old one of enlightenment and propaganda in much the same way that Lavrovist preparationism had been related to Bakuninist insurrectionism. The authors of *On Agitation* believed that the workers’ consciousness of their class interests and goals would emerge out of their daily struggle with their oppressors. Resembles to Bakuninism can be seen in the following passage:

The ground is now prepared for political agitation. This agitation finds a class organized by life itself, with a well developed class egoism, with an awareness of the common interests of all who toil, and of the opposition of these interests to the interests of all other classes. A change in the political structure is only a matter of time. One spark—and the accumulated inflammable material will burst into life.5

*On Agitation* emphasized the “logic of things” and thus seemingly reduced the role of the critically endowed intelligentsia. However, the pamphlet displayed awareness of the danger that the workers could be manipulated by the bourgeoisie, and the fully conscious intelligentsia was still visualized as the vanguard of the working-class movement.

The very profound problems inherent in Marxist theory for any group trying to play the role of a revolutionary vanguard are already evident in *On Agitation*. Marx’s theory did encourage faith in the inherent logic of things as opposed to abstract logic or consciousness. Yet the revolutionary spirit of Marxism, always in tension with the Marxist faith in an inexorable dialectic, spurred revolutionaries to take immediate action—to intervene in the historical process. *On Agitation* thus served the militant, voluntarist side of Marxism. When in 1895–1896 this realization fully dawned upon them, the more impatient types (including Lenin) within the Social Democratic movement adopted the strategy of the day-to-day struggle against the bourgeoisie and the government.

The period 1894–1896 is of special interest to historians because it embraces the beginning of Lenin’s career as a Social Democrat, his first contacts with Martov, and his first efforts at practical work. In Soviet historical writing Lenin is always credited with startling prescience, and early organizations and movements with which he was associated are accorded far greater historical impact than they actually had. In unmasking Soviet historiography Western historians have sometimes tended to go to the other extreme. Thus, there is some historical dispute about Lenin’s position in the group of St. Petersburg Social Democrats (called the *stariki*—the elders) which merged with a group led by Martov in October 1895, and in December began to call itself “The St. Petersburg Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class.” The real impact of the activities of the Union of Struggle on the large-scale strike movement of 1896–1897 has also been debated.

In any case, Lenin missed the main action of the period 1896–1897, when the textile workers in St. Petersburg organized two massive, extended strikes. Lenin, Martov, and most of the other leaders of the St. Petersburg Social Democratic organization were arrested in December 1895 and January 1896. The agitation and strike support carried on by the Union of Struggle after the arrests were conducted by the remnants of the organization. Despite the arrests, the Social Democratic movement derived a sense of confidence and real achievement from its association with the strike movement. The Social Democratic agitators, whatever their real influence on the strikers, felt that their strategies were working and that the process of radicalization of the workers was proceeding according to their vision. This confidence proved to be premature. The divergence between the aspirations of the workers and those of the Social Democratic intelligentsia leaders became increasingly apparent towards the turn of the century. The journal *The Workers’ Thought*, first published by K. M. Takhterent and later guided by August Kok, between 1897 and 1901 became the major organ of the workers’ independence movement.

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The Social Democratic movement was not only troubled by an intelligentsia-worker split, but by defections from the revolutionary orthodoxy established and sustained by Plekhanov and Akselrod. The development of a real movement and participation in it forced some Marxists to reexamine their theoretical assumptions. Some of them developed the idea of the spontaneous struggle for economic concessions into the heresy which became known as “economism.” Expressed mainly in E. D. Kuskova’s “Credo” (1899) it called for the separation of economic from political movements. While the workers were to pursue their economic goals, the Social Democratic intelligentsia was to reinforce the liberal opposition. “Credo” appeared almost simultaneously with Eduard Bernstein’s more important revisionist heresy, which represented an abandonment of revolutionary Marxism for evolutionary, legal socialism. Revisionism was a symptom of the success of the German Social Democratic movement. To a militant socialist in a country without a constitution or legal parties, whose working class had only recently won an eleven-and-a-half-hour working day, Bernstein’s doctrine could hardly seem appropriate. Yet some of the most important theoreticians in the Marxist movement, Peter Struve being the leading figure, defected from the Social Democratic camp altogether and became proponents of left liberalism.

Economism and revisionism forced the orthodox to marshal all of their literary forces for a counterthrust. The several essays and organs of the heretics, although representing several shades of opinion, were attacked with equally bitter invective. In 1900, the orthodox camp (Plekhanov, Akselrod, Zasulich, Martov, Lenin, and Alexander Potresov) began to publish their own journal, The Spark (Iskra). However, the exponents of the political struggle and intelligentsia leadership were by no means temperamentally or theoretically uniform. Although his colleagues on The Spark were not immediately or fully aware of it, Lenin was not simply expressing the orthodox belief in the political struggle and fear of the hegemony of bourgeois liberalism over the working class. He was developing a theory of the hegemony of the conscious Social Democratic intelligentsia over the “spontaneous” and blind working-class movement. Lenin’s radical distinction between the conscious intelligentsia and the blind masses, and his ideas about the composition and role of a Social Democratic party, were unique in the orthodox camp. Although Lenin’s position was fully exposed in What Is to Be Done? a pamphlet published in 1902, its full implications did not dawn upon his colleagues until July–August 1903, at the Brussels–London founding congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party.

The split that occurred at the congress had immense historical significance, for Lenin emerged as the exponent of a distinct revolutionary tendency—Bolshevism. The event, which had been planned as a reaffirmation of orthodoxy, proved to be a bid by Lenin to convert the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party into a narrow, tightly disciplined, highly centralized party of professional revolutionaries. Although noteworthy for its programmatic debates and the various maneuverings of The Spark’s supporters against a collection of opponents (the most powerful of which were associated with the economist publication The Worker’s Cause and the Bund), the true significance of the congress lay in the mutual recognition of “hards” and “softs” that profound differences separated them. The “softs,” led by Martov, though not always outvoted, at the congress became known as the Mensheviks (members of the minority), while Lenin’s “hards” became the Bolsheviks (members of the majority). The titles were not true indications of the relative strength of the two factions. In the months that followed the congress, it became increasingly clear that Lenin had isolated himself from the leading figures in the Social Democratic movement—Martov, Plekhanov, and Akselrod. The Menshevik movement embodied on the one hand the fear of a premature mass uprising and the establishment of a new authoritarianism and on the other a desire to prepare the way for a proper revolution by the gradual transformation of the spontaneous workers’ movement into a broad, conscious revolutionary party.

Trotsky, still a political novice, who had joined The Spark in 1902 and whom Lenin had cultivated as an ally, now turned his brilliant pen against Lenin. The Mensheviks complained that Lenin’s methods would replace the proletariat by an organization of professional revolutionaries, but Trotsky, seeing in
Lenin's brand of Jacobinism a kind of "substitutionism," made the point most dramatically, succinctly—and prophetically:

In the party's internal politics these methods lead, as we shall further see, to this: the party organization "substitutes" itself for the party, the C.C. [Central Committee] "substitutes" itself for the party organization, and, at last, a "dictator" substitutes himself for the C.C.6

While the Social Democrats were squabbling among themselves, events within Russia were creating an ever more complex revolutionary situation. Unlike earlier periods of revolutionary history, the new period does not permit narrow focus upon the activities of one major party and its problems. The mass movements of the period 1899–1904 precipitated the formation of the two other major parties—the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Kadets—and quickened the development of the anarchist movement, now led primarily by disciples of Peter Kropotkin.

In 1899 the student movement assumed mass dimensions. The labor strikes served the students as a model for their strike of February 1899, in which there participated an estimated 13,000 students enrolled in about thirty institutions of higher learning. The government's attempt to intimidate the students failed. While the student movement of 1899 had begun in St. Petersburg, that of 1900–1901 began in Kiev, after 183 students were inducted into the army in accordance with the government's new repressive rules. In February 1901 there were large-scale street demonstrations in Kharkov, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. In the former two cities, factory workers joined the students, but in St. Petersburg the demonstrators were exclusively students and "society." The government's brutal handling of demonstrators in these and numerous other urban demonstrations that followed only aggravated the situation. By 1902 students, workers, and "society" comprised a kind of revolutionary front. Furthermore, it was a politicized front, in that students and workers had gone beyond

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6 N. Trotsky, Nashi politcheskie zadachi (Geneva, 1904). p. 54. Trotsky used the initial "N" in his pseudonym at this time. His real name was Lev Bronstein.

...demands for academic freedom and economic improvement to demands for political freedom. The latter was, of course, a longstanding demand of "society." Unified, disciplined, and coordinated leadership was impossible during this period. Programs were still being disputed, local groups tried to assert their autonomy, and firm loyalties to the nascent parties and their programs had not spread beyond the still relatively small cadres operating in the industrial centers and university cities.

The revolutionary situation that began to take shape in 1899 acquired a new complexion when the agrarian rebellions of 1902 in Poltava, Kharkov, and Saratov provinces breathed life into revolutionary populism. In the late 1890s work in the villages was still carried on by isolated groups of revolutionary populists and zemstvo workers with few ties and little means to carry on their propaganda and agitation. However, by the turn of the century a combination of economic circumstances aided and abetted by administrative bungling created a favorable environment for revolutionary activity in the black earth region. Revolutionary populists gravitated toward the Volga and the black earth zones in the Ukraine.

After 1901 there was a larger supply of propagandists—many of them students expelled from the universities during the student uprisings of the period. The students sometimes had ties with veterans like Katherine Breshkovskaja, who had been arrested in the going to the People but had returned to European Russia from Siberian exile in the 1890s. She and a group of students from the agricultural school near Saratov resurrected old populist brochures and distributed them to scattered groups working in the villages. In addition to Socialist Revolutionary propaganda and agitation, the peasants were exposed to the ideas of the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party, one of the several new nationalist and socialist groups that were forming at the turn of the century. Ukrainophile circles received propaganda brochures from Lvov and translated them into Ukrainian.

Although the peasants accepted some of the socialist ideas propagated by the students, traditional loyalty to the tsar was still strong. Just before the rebellion in 1902 started in Poltava, familiar rumors about golden deeds and manifestoes signed by
the tsar began to circulate. The tsar's agents were rumored to be in the countryside preparing to lead the peasants against the landlords. Nonetheless, the Socialist Revolutionaries were encouraged to believe that the peasants had outgrown their hostility toward the revolutionary intelligentsia and were becoming a more conscious revolutionary force. This was especially true of the movement in Saratov province. Revolutionary Russia, the organ of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, expressed renewed optimism about a revolutionary peasantry.

In addition to their work among the peasants the Socialist Revolutionaries revived the tradition of political assassination. For this purpose they created the "Fighting Organization," a group devoted to terror. In the same way that terrorism had developed after Zasulich's exploit, the Fighting Organization was not really launched until an expelled student took revenge for the government's brutal handling of his comrades by assassinating N. P. Bogolepov, the minister of education. This was the first in an extended series of political assassinations, some of them conducted by SR organizations, others by free-lance assassins motivated by a desire for revenge. The most notable early exploits of the SRs were the assassinations of D. S. Sipiadin (1902) and V. K. von Plenhe (1904), both ministers of the interior, the latter one of the most widely hated men in Russia.

The terrorism of the new generation was of a somewhat more complicated character than that of The People's Will. B. V. Savinkov, an SR terrorist who described the psychology of his colleagues in his memoirs, provides some understanding of the various types who were attracted to terror. A great many terrorists, both SR and anarchist, were young Jews, whose suicidal extremism can be traced to a large extent to the violent antisemitism during Nicholas's reign. The majority of acts of terror (70 percent) were now perpetrated mainly by nonintelligentsia members of the SR party. In the period 1905–1906 terror assumed a quite different character from the earlier crisis periods of 1878–1882 and 1902–1904. Not unexpectedly, with the influx of nonintelligentsia revolutionaries, it assumed a "plebian" character, with banditry, extortion, and revenge against local figures playing an ever-greater role during the revolutionary upsurge of 1905. Moreover, especially in the latter phases of the revolution of 1905, terrorism attracted Social Democrats and anarchists.7

Finally, the liberal movement quickened in response to the events of 1901–1902. One symptom of this was the first all-Russian zemstvo congress, held in Moscow in May 1902. The other important sign was Liberation's leftward movement in 1903, and the formation of the left liberal Union of Liberation in July 1903. The Union of Liberation was transformed into the Kadet (Constitutional Democratic) Party in 1905. The Kadet Party, 100, moved with the radical tide and, in its zeal to find a striking force against the autocracy, encouraged the widespread terror that emerged in 1905. In their rhetorical support for terror, the Kadets had recourse to Turgenev's poem, "The Threshold," cited earlier.8 The doctrine of "no enemies to the left," however, not only split the Kadets, but lost adherents when the Kadets emerged from their temporary intoxication with the struggle and reflected on the extent of anarchy and violence unleashed in 1905–1907.

Several conclusions can be drawn in considering the period 1899–1903. The movements of these years were a preview of the much more potent revolutionary front that would form in 1904–1905. They were large-scale, but lacked the truly mass character of the 1905 movements. The "return" of the peasants as a revolutionary force is possibly the most important single development of the period, not only because of the strengthened SR party, but because the Social Democrats were forced to fit the peasants into their revolutionary plans. Finally, the government, faced with large-scale disturbances, demonstrated that it no longer had the capacity to moderate popular movements by substituting its own paternalism for the leadership of radical groups. The failure of Colonel S. V. Zubatov's "police socialism" (1901–1903) was one clear example of this. Zubatov unions, which had been

formed with the blessing of the autocracy, joined the general strike in southern Russia in June 1903.9 Another example was the government’s convening of a conference in 1902 to deal with agrarian problems. Although Nicholas II was truly concerned about the peasantry, in keeping with his traditionalist philosophy (if one can call it that), he was of two minds about the course to be pursued in the countryside. His ambivalence was reflected in the conflict between Witte, his minister of finance, and von Plehve, minister of the interior (1902–1904). Nicholas was much closer to the archconservatives in his court and government, and eventually conceded more to them than to rational bureaucrats. Traditionalism, virulent antisemitism, and military adventurism more nearly reflected Nicholas’s own sentiments than did the hard-headed manipulativeness of rational bureaucrats like Witte. The diversion of internal discontent into government-supported antisemitism (the great pogroms of 1903 in Bessarabia, the Ukraine, and White Russia) and the channeling of national energies into the Russo-Japanese War failed no less than Cossack whips and “police socialism” to arrest the developing mass movements.

On the other hand, the newly formed revolutionary organizations had wide influence but exercised only limited leadership and control over some elements in the mass movements. This was true in both peasant rebellions of 1902 and the general southern strike of 1903. The complexities of social change and the psychology of the mass movements were such that neither the government nor the revolutionary parties were fully prepared for the events of 1905.

THE REVOLUTIONARY INTELLIGENTSIA IN 1905

In the period 1899–1904, the Russian government could restore at least external order by the frequent use of troops. This was true because most of the demonstrations, insurrections, and strikes involved hundreds, thousands, or tens of thousands and either occurred separately in time or were limited geographically. The government was aware that eventually these separate movements might merge into a revolutionary front, but could do nothing to prevent it. The defeats suffered by Russia’s armies and fleets in the Russo-Japanese War served as the catalyst for the formation of the revolutionary front of 1905.

The revolution of 1905, often regarded as a dress rehearsal for 1917, was actually something quite different. In fact, the behavior of the actors of 1917 was very much influenced by the way that they reacted to the experience of 1905. What seems extraordinary is that the leaders of the parties of 1905 were still present in 1917 to play their new roles—roles that some of them had been preparing for consciously, others unconsciously. The experience of mass violence, of revolutionary victories won and then snatched away, of leadership suddenly acquired and lost, of chances exploited or missed, could not but affect the plans of the revolutionary leaders. Above all, the revolution of 1905 confirmed Lenin’s contempt for the “bourgeois” elements who were supposed to be the immediate beneficiaries of the revolution. He changed, however, his attitude toward spontaneity. Before the revolution of 1905, for Lenin spontaneity had connoted a soft, opportunistic, slothful, and “tailist” strategy, rendering the workers susceptible to trade-unionism instead of revolution. Quite the contrary, 1905 showed that spontaneity might spark aggressive revolutionary energy and self-mobilization.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 exhibited a number of “classical” features. There was a movement from right to left. The government’s initial concessions to the right wing of the revolutionary front were insufficient appeasement for the left-wing elements. A period of relative anarchy followed, which frightened important groups and pushed them towards the right. The government’s final concessions and its ability to use its instruments of force effectively against relatively uncoordinated mass resistance permitted it to stabilize the situation at a point much farther to the right than either left liberals or revolutionary socialists had expected. In this respect, all revolutionary parties were disappointed by the outcome of the revolution of 1905.

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9 S. V. Zubatov (1864–1917), chief of the Moscow Okhrana, in 1901 created workers’ organizations under police guidance that became quite popular in Moscow in 1902. Zubatov’s efforts, however, only heightened worker militancy. He was dismissed in 1903.
It is rather difficult to pick out the beginning point of the revolution of 1905, because the several social groups involved began their pressure upon the government at different moments. One must really begin the story in January 1904, with the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. The appeals to patriotism made by the government temporarily interrupted the growth of oppositional movements. The Japanese surprise attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur and the initial defeat suffered there had the effect of unifying Russian national sentiment around the figure of the tsar.

The first real pressure upon the government during this period of respite came from “society” in the form of the zemstvo movement. Von Plehve’s refusal to confirm Dmitri Shipov in office as chairman of the Moscow provincial zemstvo in April 1904 was the first sign of the struggle between “society” and the state in this period of crisis. The assassination of von Plehve by E. S. Sazonov, a member of the SR Fighting Organization, was an important turning point in that von Plehve’s successor, Prince P. D. Sviatopolk-Mirsky, was seen as a conciliator and his appointment regarded as a concession to “society,” just as at the end of Nicholas I’s reign the articulate and politically conscious public sensed the beginning of a “thaw.” Sviatopolk-Mirsky was indeed willing to take steps gradually to integrate the zemstvo movement with existing organs of central government, thus making a move in the direction of popular representation. However, opposition to the zemstvos in the central government was too strong, and Sviatopolk-Mirsky was powerless to yield real concessions.

The government’s vacillations in its dealings with the conservative, rather Slavophile gentry liberalism expressed by Shipov proved to be inconsequential, for Shipov spoke for a relatively weak faction within the liberal movement. While the government dickered with Shipov, militant left liberalism in the form of the Union of Liberation began to assert its leadership of “society.”

Since the major revolutionary parties believed that the overthrow of autocracy and the establishment of a democratic constitution had to occur before they could accomplish their more distant goals, the program of the Union of Liberation served as a rallying point for the radical opposition. The first real cooperation between liberals and revolutionary socialists occurred at the Paris conference of September and October 1904. The conference was attended by the representatives of eight parties, the most important of which were the Union of Liberation and the Socialist Revolutionaries. The remaining parties represented nationalist and socialist movements—Polish, Finnish, Latvian, Georgian, and Armenian (two Polish parties attended). The program that they agreed upon called for the abolition of autocracy, the establishment of a democratic government, protection of national minorities in the empire, and the right to national self-determination. The Mensheviks and Bolsheviks had not yet worked out their tactical relationship to the liberal movement and did not participate in the conference. Operating under the assumption that the fall of the autocracy was imminent, they as well as the Liberationists had to find a way to make use of “society’s” organizations within Russia. Since the zemstvo movement and the professional unions had at least the opportunity to hold congresses, exhibits, and banquets, they became the primary vehicles for all oppositional groups within “society.” The second all-Russian zemstvo congress, which met in St. Petersburg early in November 1904, produced the “Eleven Theses” which, while carefully avoiding use of the word “constitution,” in effect demanded one. Shipov represented the minority, which asked for a consultative rather than legislative assembly. Neither the majority nor the minority at the congress went along with the Union of Liberation’s demand for the convening of a constituent assembly based upon universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage. The Union of Liberation’s program was set forth in the professional meetings and banquets held in a large number of cities toward the end of November 1904 precisely for the purpose of organizing political opposition. The banquet campaign was the zenith of liberal opposition in 1904.

During that same year, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were in a state of relative disorganization and had only tenuous ties with the labor movement. They engaged in hair-splitting debates about the relationship of Social Democracy and the labor movement to the coming revolution. But Social Democrats now had to move in the real world of political movements and had to choose some course of joint action with the class enemies of the proletariat. Both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks viewed the Russian
"bourgeoisie" with a mixture of contempt and fear—contempt for their weakness and cowardice, but fear of the power that they might gain over the working-class movement. Social Democrats did not believe that the bourgeoisie could bring down the autocracy without the support of the working class, yet they did not want the working class to develop any real ties with the class enemy. Thus, they stood for both support of and opposition to the bourgeoisie. The Mensheviks chose to join the banquet campaign. Lenin, having acquired his own organ, *Forward!,* with which to criticize *The Spark,* now a Menshevik organ, evinced typical hostility toward any form of collaboration with a liberal movement. He proposed the tactic of a revolutionary uprising led by the proletariat.

The tactical debate over the banquet campaign seems rather academic in view of what followed. But Lenin's unwillingness to permit the proletariat to share the banquet halls with the bourgeoisie was a clear foreshadowing of his repudiation of "diarchy" in 1917, just as the Menshevik and SR tolerance for joint action, however restricted and infused with a spirit of antagonism, foreshadowed their support for the Provisional Government in 1917. In 1905 neither Bolsheviks nor Mensheviks had sufficient control over the labor movement to determine its larger course.

The real impetus for the labor movement came from an organization that had received government support, having been conceived in much the same spirit as Zubatov's earlier unions. The government still believed that it could exploit the religious and national sentiments of the working class by careful manipulation. George Gapon, a priest and former prison chaplain, became head of the St. Petersburg Assembly of Russian Factory Workers (February 1904). Toward the end of 1904, in keeping with the general tendency within Russia for mass discontent to seek legal channels, thousands of St. Petersburg factory workers enrolled in Gapon's organization. Gapon emancipated himself from Zubatov's conception of "police socialism" and pursued an independent course that eventually made him more an ally of the workers than of the government. The Social Democrats, primarily Mensheviks, and a few SRs tried to operate within the context of the Assembly meetings at the end of 1904. The simple, passionate, and direct appeal of Gapon and the workers who spoke at the organization's branch meetings (by January 1905 there were several thousand actual members and tens of thousands of sympathizers) mystified the agents of the revolutionary parties who tried to infiltrate and manipulate the Assembly. Although they spoke at the meetings and may have had some influence, it is certain that they were caught unawares by the movement and entered it only shortly before its demise. It is Gapon himself who gave his movement its peculiarly eclectic character. Gapon was evidently quite receptive to ideas, and had been exposed to the entire spectrum of liberal and radical thought. Like Zubatov, he passionately believed in his cause and his methods. Gapon's naivety and eclecticism repelled the revolutionary intelligentsia, but his effectiveness made them all the more aware of their own remoteness from the masses.

Gapon proved his loyalty to his workers when he supported their strike against the management of the Putilov works. It began on January 3, 1905, and within five days grew into a general strike embracing more than 100,000 factory workers—the vast majority of St. Petersburg's factory labor force. Throughout this period, the Assembly maintained extraordinary discipline, given the mass character of the strike. Gapon felt fully confident that he could crown the strike movement by leading a solemn procession to the Winter Palace, where he would present the tsar with a petition from the Russian people. Gapon's naive faith and the government's incompetence led to the events of January 9, which became known as Bloody Sunday. Gapon's petition was written in the old style, addressed to a paternal tsar who was asked to mitigate the awful burdens imposed upon the Russian people by tyrannical bureaucrats and exploitative capitalists. However, substantively the petition was close to the program of left liberalism, demanding the election of a constituent assembly on the basis of universal, secret, direct, and equal suffrage. It also incorporated ideas propagated generally by the socialist parties that included "measures to eliminate" the poverty of the people and the exploitation of workers by capital, an eight-hour workday, and the legalization of trade unions. The long icon-bearing columns that converged from the working-class sections of the city toward the Winter Palace on the morning of January 9 were
met at several points along the way by troops and were dispersed after being fired upon. Gapon never reached the tsar with his petition. Later in the day, troops fired upon a mob gathered on the square before the Winter Palace. Similar scenes occurred during the afternoon. After the workers had been dispersed, groups of students tried to keep the rebellion alive by building street barricades, but they were unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the events of January 9, occurring as they did against the background of an unsuccessful war and a vacillating government, signalled the entry of the masses into the revolution of 1905.

Gapon's historical role was over, although neither he nor the socialist parties who fought over him like a prize (he fled to Europe) knew it yet. At first he evidently thought that he could sustain leadership of the labor movement from abroad, now as an avowed revolutionary. After a time, however, Gapon gave up this design and returned to St. Petersburg. His moment had passed. Gapon found himself a leader without a mass following in the autumn of 1905. A complicated man who could not readily give up his projects and celebrity, he then tried to regain his standing with the tsarist authorities. His unscrupulous design to use both the police and the revolutionaries to reestablish his position ended when a group of SRs assassinated Gapon in March 1906.

The great service that Gapon rendered the revolutionary parties is not easily measured, but it is probably no exaggeration to say that no single event of the last two reigns so strongly affected the popular masses' attitude towards the tsar. The opposite of what both Gapon and the government had intended occurred, and the revolutionary parties became the ultimate beneficiaries of his movement. The masses became "political."

In the complex revolutionary situation that developed shortly after Bloody Sunday, all of the Empire's major urban centers were affected. By mid-January, hundreds of thousands of factory workers had struck and were supported by student bodies, faculties, professional organizations, industrial associations, and merchant guilds. Although the revolutionary front was not controlled or led by a single party, the left liberal program of the Union of Liberation was close to the general political tenor of "society" and was influential among the workers. The first clear sign that the government was yielding under pressure came in February, shortly after a member of the SR Fighting Organization assassinated the tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei. Nicholas issued a rescript to the new minister of the interior, A. G. Bulgygin, ordering him to establish a consultative assembly (duma). At this point, moderate concessions could not satisfy the major oppositional groups, who later boycotted elections to the "Bulygin Duma"; efforts to placate the factory workers failed; the war continued to go badly; and the peasants joined the revolutionary front on a significant scale in the summer of 1905.

As unrest continued, the government's ability to interfere diminished, and the rudimentary organizations among oppositional groups began to crystallize into wholly new kinds of sociopolitical entities. The first such entity appeared in May 1905 under the guidance of Paul Miliukov. It was the largest single segment of "society" ever to assemble under one banner. The Union of Unions, as the new organization was called, embraced fourteen "unions," mostly professional unions but also organizations representing railroad workers, clerks and bookkeepers, and civil rights causes. Next to appear was the Peasant Union, which had its first congress in Moscow in July 1905. The small number (125) of peasant and intelligentsia delegates could hardly claim to represent Russia's peasant masses, but the union can be regarded as an extension of the concept behind the Union of Unions into the countryside. Although the Union of Liberation played the largest role in creating the new sociopolitical form, the Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, and SRs continued to have influence over some of its elements.

However, the most significant development occurred in the factories. Once again, government attempts to channel the labor movement into safe organizations played into the hands of the opposition. The Shidlovskii Commission, named for its chairman, Senator N. V. Shidlovskii, in February 1905 arranged elections in the factories of St. Petersburg in order to select labor's representatives to a commission for the examination of labor problems. Unwittingly, the government was increasing the workers' experience in election procedures and accustoming them to the idea of workers' deputies. The Mensheviks and Bolsheviks were faced with their usual tactical problem: what could be gained by participation in or boycott of the Shidlovskii commis-
sion? The Menshevik vision of a broad Social Democratic labor organization, moving step by step toward revolution, at each step participating in the political process, once again contrasted with the Bolshevik preference for direct and swift revolutionary action against the government. Thus, while the Mensheviks prepared for the electoral campaign in hopes that the workers could use the Commission as a platform for political demands, the Bolsheviks were in favor of boycotting the elections. The Mensheviks assumed that, having elected their deputies to the Commission, the workers would show their solidarity with the deputies by conducting a general strike on the day the Commission’s hearings opened. As it turned out, the workers’ electors learned in advance that the Commission would not consider their demands, and so they did not proceed to elect deputies, and the general strike was called.

Even more serious tactical problems were raised by the appearance of a strong trade-union movement in 1905. Here the Mensheviks gained a distinct advantage because of their tendency to try to adjust their tactics to the spontaneous labor movement. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, at first displayed considerable tactical rigidity when confronted with spontaneous forms of labor organization, but in the hurly-burly of 1905 began adapting themselves to them.

The most significant development in the labor movement did not occur until mid-October 1905, when under Menshevik leadership the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies was formed in St. Petersburg. The Soviet emerged (as did other similar organizations) from the massive strike movement that reached its peak in the Great October General Strike. For about seven weeks, within the framework of the Soviet, representatives of the major revolutionary parties debated and discussed questions of strategy with workers’ deputies. Never before had the revolutionary intelligentsia had such a direct and open voice in the formation of the

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10 The word “sovet” means “council” in Russian. The St. Petersburg Soviet, comprised of deputies from numerous industrial establishments and representatives of the radical parties, was the leading workers’ assembly. It was widely imitated in provincial towns. Ultimately, hundreds of factories and tens of thousands of workers were represented.

11 Trotsky assumed leadership of the St. Petersburg Soviet after the arrest of G. S. Khrustalev-Nosar on November 27, 1905.
tion, the Russian revolution would have to be the prelude to a general European revolution.

Trotsky’s vision of a dictatorship of the proletariat was far more radical than anything contemplated by either Mensheviks or Bolsheviks. By narrowing the base of revolutionary power and initiative to the proletariat, Trotsky had also theoretically narrowed the revolutionary government to the party of the proletariat. The relationship between proletariat and peasantry would be that of liberator to liberated, benefactor to beneficiary. As will be seen, this one-sidedness was remedied by Trotsky’s association with Lenin in 1917. While Trotsky at first tended to be wary of allying with the peasants and feared them as class enemies, Lenin prized them as allies and emphasized the process of stratification within the peasantry that would make the poor peasants class allies of the proletariat. The real weakness in Trotsky’s theory lay in its failure to grasp fully the force of nationalism, the disunity of international socialism, and their consequences for permanent revolution.

Lenin, somewhat slower than Trotsky in 1905 to abandon the idea of two distinct revolutionary phases, believed that the soviets could become the nucleus for a provisional revolutionary government. However, this provisional government was seen as a force to be used to overthrow the autocracy rather than as a government for its own sake. Lenin believed that the soviets might serve as the means to create a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, itself a transitional type of revolutionary government containing both socialist and bourgeois elements. Lenin too was hopeful that this phase might be short, or that a European revolution might permit Russia to pass uninterruptedly into the socialist revolution. Like Trotsky, he had no patience with the liberal bourgeoisie. Lenin’s initial reaction to the soviets was consistent with his long-standing wariness toward any mass movement or sociopolitical organization that had developed spontaneously rather than at his party’s initiative. However, his flexibility distinguished him from many members of his own party, who were simply Bolsheviks and not Leninists. Lenin’s sociology of the Russian peasantry was wrong, as was Trotsky’s belief that successful European social revolutions would follow the Russian one, but their erroneous views became essential components of an optimistic outlook permitting Russian revolutionaries to justify their momentous gamble in 1917. The painful experience of lagging behind the mass movement in the early phases of the revolution of 1905, of seeing charlatans like Gapon and (to him, at least) windbags like Trotsky assuming leadership of a mass labor movement taught Lenin a valuable lesson. The vanguard would have to be able to adapt itself to spontaneity before harnessing it. The Mensheviks were more successful in 1905 than the Bolsheviks because of their predisposition toward cooperative ventures and their faith in the potentialities of sociopolitical organizations that emerged spontaneously from mass movements. They continued to believe that power would have to pass to a bourgeois party, something that Trotsky no longer believed and that Lenin professed to believe but never really wanted to happen.

Meanwhile, the movement in “society” based upon the zemstvos and professional unions partially disintegrated under the impact of governmental concessions and the fear of mass violence. The left liberals maintained their attitude of “no enemies to the left,” but several shades of liberal opinion feared a social revolution. In October 1905 Miliukov assumed leadership of the Kadet Party, which detached itself from the more moderate liberal elements in “society.” The Kadets under Miliukov had a rather ambivalent attitude toward armed revolution. They believed that up to a point the revolutionary activities of the SDs and SRs would work to their own benefit, but they themselves did not want to encourage mass violence or an armed uprising against the government. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Kadets wanted an orderly revolution—one that went just far enough to topple the autocracy and establish true democracy in Russia. This was not too far from the Menshevik idea that the revolutionary proletariat, having pushed the bourgeoisie into power, would acquiesce in bourgeois rule. Thus, the community of interest that Miliukov believed existed between his party and the Social Democrats was not wholly a fantasy. By 1917, Miliukov’s fear of revolution and anarchy had progressed to such an extent that he had become far more conservative about means to be used for the creation of a constituent assembly.
Finally, the SRs, who had played a significant role in both the Peasant Union and the soviets, continued to pursue an eclectic program with the socialization of the land as their most distinctive revolutionary goal. They did not believe in the necessity of a bourgeois revolution, but believed that their ultimate goal of socialism in both the countryside and the cities would be reached in two phases, as described earlier. In many respects, the vast jacquerie that broke out in the agricultural provinces of European Russia in the autumn of 1905 repeated the rebellions of 1902, though on a much grander scale. The SRs were quite successful in organizing the insurrections in areas where they had sunk deep roots, such as Saratov province, but had little real control over the uprisings as a whole. Agitation in the countryside issued from a variety of parties, and the peasants were easily inflamed. But they were also easily subdued by armed expeditions into the countryside. No less than for the Social Democrats and the liberals, the events of 1904–1905 created tactical problems for the SRs. In 1906 the party split into three groups—the left-wing Maximalists, who rejected the two-phase scheme proposed by Chernov and were temperamentally and doctrinally close to anarchism; the right-wing Popular Socialists who, in the spirit of "Legal Populism," tried to revive the more traditional populism that had existed before Chernov's revision, but without terror and with a longer time frame for social transformation; and the "orthodox" majority under Chernov's leadership, whose maximum program called for the achievement of socialism, and whose minimum program demanded a wide range of democratic reforms. Although quick to suspend terror in October 1905 when the government showed signs of yielding to the minimum program, orthodox SR leaders would not renounce terror as a method of revolutionary struggle and soon revived it. Terror did not prove to be a liability, and the SRs' peculiarly eclectic approach, coupled with their efforts in both the factories and the villages, gave them broader appeal than the Social Democrats. Recent scholarship suggests that they expended a great deal of
effort on the factory workers, with significant success. Splits in the SR Party in some respects paralleled those in the Social Democratic Party. As it turned out, Chernov's commitment to two phases, and his belief that a constituent assembly was a necessary prelude to the first phase, eventually made him an ally of the Mensheviks and Kadets.

The newest formulas for revolution drawn up by the factions of the major parties, their peasant land programs, and their labor programs exhibited the influence of their historical and ethical sociologies, their bias for the proletariat or peasantry, their affinity for democratic or authoritarian political structures, and their patience or impatience with the course of the revolution. The Mensheviks, "orthodox" SRs, and Kadets already revealed the commitment to democratic procedures, cooperation, and orderly historical development that led them into disaster in 1917. Trotsky and Lenin displayed the ultrarevolutionary passion, tactical flexibility, and appreciation for the use of the masses as instruments that permitted them to harness mass action to their purposes in 1917. Adventurousness and authoritarianism—willingness to see things explode into temporary chaos, the confidence that order could be restored, and the fierce desire that their party should stand at the head of the new order—were the combination of traits that distinguished Trotsky and Lenin from the other major leaders in the final revolutionary crisis. It also distinguished them from the anarchists, who certainly possessed the first trait, but not the second.

In 1905 the old regime still had sufficient resources to cope with revolution. Witte, having played the major role in extricating Russia from the Russo-Japanese War in August 1905 and in yielding up the October Manifesto giving Russia the semblance of a parliament, waited for the rebellion to subside. Nothing of the sort happened. The revolution in the cities and countryside only gained in intensity, and the period between the granting of the Manifesto and the destruction of the Moscow Soviet in December 1905 became known as the Days of Freedom. This was a preview of the "diarchy" in 1917. Soviets and revolutionary com-

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13 For example, see Michael Melancon, "The Socialist Revolutionaries from 1902–1907: Peasant and Workers' Party," Russian History 12 (Spring 1993): 2–47.
mittees in both the cities and countryside acted as local governments. Until the arrest of its leaders, the St. Petersburg Soviet was the organizational focal point of quasi-governmental activity during the Days of Freedom. However, insufficient solidarity and cooperation among the urban soviets, and the relative isolation of the agrarian revolts from the urban movement, permitted the government to reconquer both the cities and the countryside.

Numerous mutinies in the army and navy (the mutiny of June 1905 on the battleship Potemkin being the most celebrated) revealed the fragility of the regime’s authority among those who were presumably trained to respond to its commands. They were sufficiently widespread to prompt a recent investigator to write that there was “a soldiers’ rebellion akin to the workers’ and peasants’ rebellions.”

However, when the loyal troops crushed the rebellions in the major centers in December 1905, the mutinous ones quickly came into line and proved to be reliable in the later stages of repression during 1906 and 1907. Neither the authority of the state nor its power collapsed in the period 1905-1907. The Russian heartland and the borderlands, where the nationalities problem had intensified the revolution and given it added political significance for the empire, were largely subdued by the beginning of 1906.

The undemocratic character of the Duma created by the new constitution was fully appreciated by the major parties, and they responded to it in much the same way that they had responded to the idea of the Bulygin duma. Nicholas had never intended to permit the Duma to become a genuine legislature. It was designed to be an instrument dominated by social groups loyal to the dynasty. However, the first two elections revealed that the autocracy rested upon a much narrower social base than had been assumed, and the government was unable to control the Duma until Prime Minister Stolypin dissolved the Second Duma in June 1907 and issued a new election law. Not only had the government failed to convene a constituent assembly elected by universal, direct, and equal suffrage; it had also, by

Stolypin’s coup d’état, changed the election law to favor moderate and right-wing social groups.

The Kadets, the strongest party in the first Duma, failed to force the government to transform the Duma into a genuine parliament. They compounded this failure by issuing the Vyborg Manifesto, which was supposed to revive mass opposition to the government, but in effect gave the government a pretext for destroying the left liberal opposition and thus ending the threat from “society.” Terror, however, persisted on a massive scale and lingered on well after Stolypin had succeeded in crushing most of it with thousands of military courts martial and summary executions—the familiar hangman’s nooses were dubbed “Stolypin’s neckties.” The revolutionaries and the regime inflicted casualties whose magnitude suggests guerilla war rather than the limited traditional style of Russian terrorism. During 1906–1907 the total of government officials killed and wounded reached approximately 4,500, with an additional 4,710 private citizens, for a grand total of more than 9,000 casualties.

Terrorism took on the character of banditry. The anarchists practiced indiscriminate terror. The SR command structure lost control over random violence perpetrated by raw recruits with weak party ties who often acted out of a desire for personal revenge or pecuniary gain. SR Maximalists and Bolsheviks collaborated, with the Bolshevik technical expert, Leonid Krasin, supplying bombs and Maximalists supplying the terrorists. Lenin was not above using the tactic of “expropriations” (robberies of state funds) to replenish the Party’s coffers.

These tactics only served to increase the splintering of the Social Democrats. Lenin and the Bolsheviks embraced the new tactics enthusiastically, while the Mensheviks condemned them. Bolshevik association with the SR Maximalists in this period foreshadowed their alliance with the left SRs in 1917. In any case,


15 The Vyborg Manifesto was issued by mainly Kadet deputies to the Duma under the leadership of Miliukov. This appeal urged the people to refuse to pay taxes and to resist the draft as a way of protesting the dissolution of the Duma. The appeal failed.

the new tactics were a sign of desperation, and Stolypin's extraordinary measures to cope with terror were quite successful. By 1907 he had curbed SRs, anarchists, and Bolsheviks and created at least external order in the empire.

6 | THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1917

THE PRELUDE

In the years 1907–1911 the old regime regained confidence; the revolutionary parties entered a period of defeat, schism, and scandal. Peter Stolypin's policy of reform combined with repression threatened at first to undercut all of the decades of struggle and sacrifice, all of the revolutionary successes of recent years. In 1913 the Romanovs celebrated the tercentenary of their dynasty in high spirits. Nicholas II and Alexandra could still dream of passing the throne to their only son. If the history of the Russian imperial regime could be written as Greek tragedy, then this would be the moment of blindness before the final peripeteia—the reversal of fortune—that led to the fall of Tsarism. But the personal weaknesses of Nicholas II make it difficult to cast him as a tragic hero. Perhaps Stolypin, the energetic social engineer who fell to an assassin's bullet in 1911, better qualifies for the role. Stolypin was probably doomed politically anyway by Nicholas's preference for archconservatives. It is difficult to assess his grandest project—the dissolution of the peasant commune in favor of individual ownership of farms—in view of the brevity of the experiment. Moreover, Stolypin's own high-handed methods and policies could satisfy neither the left-wing parties, the centrists, nor the right in the Duma and State Council, and finally earned him the enmity of a formidable coalition. His death probably spared him from an inglorious fall. It is not clear that any statesman, however skilled, could have managed the vast problems of the multinational empire while simultaneously catering to Nicholas and Alexandra. The ensuing tragedy was borne by the huge, impoverished population enclosed in the borders of the empire—and by the intelligentsia trying to liberate it. They were the ones who paid the costs of modernization, war, revolution, civil war, and famine with millions of lives.