One Step Forward, Two Steps Back
Workers of All Countries, Unite!

Lenin
One Step Forward, Two Steps Back
(The Crisis in Our Party)
Publishers' Note

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When a prolonged, stubborn and heated struggle is in progress, there usually begin to emerge after a time the central and fundamental points at issue, upon the decision of which the ultimate outcome of the campaign depends, and in comparison with which all the minor and petty episodes of the struggle recede more and more into the background.

That, too, is how matters stand in the struggle within our Party, which for six months now has been riveting the attention of all members of the Party. And precisely because in the present outline of the whole struggle I have had to refer to many details which are of infinitesimal interest, and to many squabbles which at bottom are of no interest whatever, I should like from the very outset to draw the reader’s attention to two really central and fundamental points, points which are of tremendous interest, of undoubted historical significance, and which are the most urgent political questions confronting our Party today.

The first question is that of the political significance of the division of our Party into “majority” and “minority” which took shape at the Second Party Congress and pushed all previous divisions among Russian Social-Democrats far into the background.

The second question is that of the significance in principle of the new Iskra’s position on organisational questions, insofar as this position is really based on principle.

The first question concerns the starting-point of the struggle in our Party, its source, its causes, and its fun-
damental political character. The second question concerns the ultimate outcome of the struggle, its finale, the sum-total of principles that results from adding up all that pertains to the realm of principle and subtracting all that pertains to the realm of squabbling. The answer to the first question is obtained by analysing the struggle at the Party Congress; the answer to the second, by analysing what is new in the principles of the new Iskra. Both these analyses, which make up nine-tenths of my pamphlet, lead to the conclusion that the “majority” is the revolutionary, and the “minority” the opportunist wing of our Party; the disagreements that divide the two wings at the present time for the most part concern, not questions of programme or tactics, but only organisational questions; the new system of views that emerges the more clearly in the new Iskra the more it tries to lend profundity to its position, and the more that position becomes cleared of squabbles about co-optation, is opportunism in matters of organisation.

The principal shortcoming of the existing literature on the crisis in our Party is, as far as the study and elucidation of facts is concerned, the almost complete absence of an analysis of the minutes of the Party Congress; and as far as the elucidation of fundamental principles of organisation is concerned, the failure to analyse the connection which unquestionably exists between the basic error committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod in their formulation of Paragraph 1 of the Rules and their defence of that formulation, on the one hand, and the whole “system” (insofar as one can speak here of a system) of Iskra’s present principles of organisation, on the other. The present editors of Iskra apparently do not even notice this connection, although the importance of the controversy over Paragraph 1 has been referred to again and again in the literature of the “majority”. As a matter of fact, Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov are now only deepening, developing and extending their initial error with regard to Paragraph 1. As a matter of fact, the entire position of the opportunists in organisational questions already began to be revealed in the controversy over Paragraph 1: their advocacy of a diffuse, not strongly welded, Party organisation; their hostility to the idea (the “bureaucratic” idea) of building
the Party from the top downwards, starting from the Party Congress and the bodies set up by it; their tendency to proceed from the bottom upwards, allowing every professor, every high-school student and "every striker" to declare himself a member of the Party; their hostility to the "formalism" which demands that a Party member should belong to one of the organisations recognised by the Party; their leaning towards the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, who is only prepared to "accept organisational relations platonically"; their penchant for opportunist profundity and for anarchistic phrases; their tendency towards autonomism as against centralism—in a word, all that is now blossoming so luxuriantly in the new Iskra, and is helping more and more to reveal fully and graphically the initial error.

As for the minutes of the Party Congress, the truly undeserved neglect of them can only be explained by the fact that our controversies have been cluttered by squabbles, and possibly by the fact that these minutes contain too large an amount of too unpalatable truth. The minutes of the Party Congress present a picture of the actual state of affairs in our Party that is unique of its kind and unparalleled for its accuracy, completeness, comprehensiveness, richness and authenticity; a picture of views, sentiments and plans drawn by the participants in the movement themselves; a picture of the political shades existing in the Party, showing their relative strength, their mutual relations and their struggles. It is the minutes of the Party Congress, and they alone, that show us how far we have really succeeded in making a clean sweep of the survivals of the old, purely circle ties and substituting for them a single great party tie. It is the duty of every Party member who wishes to take an intelligent share in the affairs of his Party to make a careful study of our Party Congress. I say study advisedly, for merely to read the mass of raw material contained in the minutes is not enough to obtain a picture of the Congress. Only by careful and independent study can one reach (as one should) a stage where the brief digests of the speeches, the dry extracts from the debates, the petty skirmishes over minor (seemingly minor) issues will combine to form one whole, enabling the Party member to conjure up the living figure of each prominent
speaker and to obtain a full idea of the political complex-
on of each group of delegates to the Party Congress. If the writer of these lines only succeeds in stimulating
the reader to make a broad and independent study of the
minutes of the Party Congress, he will feel that his work
was not done in vain.

One more word to the opponents of Social-Democracy. They gloat and grimace over our disputes; they will, of
course, try to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet,
which deals with the failings and shortcomings of our
Party, and to use them for their own ends. The Russian
Social-Democrats are already steeled enough in battle
not to be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue,
in spite of them, their work of self-criticism and ruthless
exposure of their own shortcomings, which will unques-
tionably and inevitably be overcome as the working-
class movement grows. As for our opponents, let them
try to give us a picture of the true state of affairs in their
own “parties” even remotely approximating that given
by the minutes of our Second Congress!

May 1904                           N. Lenin
a) The Preparations for the Congress

There is a saying that everyone is entitled to curse his judges for twenty-four hours. Our Party Congress, like any congress of any party, was also the judge of certain persons, who laid claim to the position of leaders but who met with discomfiture. Today these representatives of the "minority" are, with a naïveté verging on the pathetic, "cursing their judges" and doing their best to discredit the Congress, to belittle its importance and authority. This striving has been expressed most vividly, perhaps, in an article in Iskra, No. 57, by "Practical Worker", who feels outraged at the idea of the Congress being a sovereign "divinity". This is so characteristic a trait of the new Iskra that it cannot be passed over in silence. The editors, the majority of whom were rejected by the Congress, continue, on the one hand, to call themselves a "Party" editorial board, while, on the other, they accept with open arms people who declare that the Congress was not divine. Charming, is it not? To be sure, gentlemen, the Congress was not divine; but what must we think of people who begin to "blackguard" the Congress after they have met with defeat at it?

For indeed, let us recall the main facts in the history of the preparations for the Congress.

Iskra declared at the very outset, in its announcement of publication in 1900,* that before we could unite, lines of demarcation must be drawn. Iskra endeavoured to make the Conference of 1902 a private meeting and not

* See Collected Works, Vol. 4, pp. 351-56.—Ed.
a Party Congress.* Iskra acted with extreme caution in
the summer and autumn of 1902 when it re-established
the Organising Committee elected at that conference. At
last the work of demarcation was finished—as we all
acknowledged. The Organising Committee was constituted
at the very end of 1902. Iskra welcomed its firm establish-
ment, and in an editorial article in its 32nd issue declared
that the convocation of a Party Congress was a most ur-
gent and pressing necessity.** Thus, the last thing we
can be accused of is having been hasty in convening the
Second Congress. We were, in fact, guided by the maxim:
measure your cloth seven times before you cut it; and
we had every moral right to expect that after the cloth
had been cut our comrades would not start complaining
and measuring it all over again.

The Organising Committee drew up very precise (for-
malistic and bureaucratic, those would say who are now
using these words to cover up their political spineless-
ness) Regulations for the Second Congress, got them
passed by all the committees, and finally endorsed them,
stipulating among other things, in Point 18, that “all de-
cisions of the Congress and all the elections it carries
out are decisions of the Party and binding on all Party
organisations. They cannot be challenged by anyone on any
pretext whatever and can be rescinded or amended only
by the next Party Congress.”*** How innocent in them-
selves, are they not, are these words, accepted at the
time without a murmur, as something axiomatic; yet
how strange they sound today—like a verdict against
the “minority”! Why was this point included? Merely
as a formality? Of course not. This provision seemed nec-
 cessary, and was indeed necessary, because the Party con-
sisted of a number of isolated and independent groups,
which might refuse to recognise the Congress. This pro-
vision in fact expressed the free will of all the revolu-
tionaries (which is now being talked about so much, and
so irrelevantly, the term “free” being euphemistically
applied to what really deserves the epithet “capricious”).
It was equivalent to a word of honour mutually pledged

* See Minutes of the Second Congress, p. 20.
** See “Announcement of the Formation of an ‘Organising
Committee’” (Collected Works, Vol. 6. p. 307).—Ed.
*** See Minutes of the Second Congress, pp. 22-23 and 380.
by all the Russian Social-Democrats. It was intended to
guarantee that all the tremendous effort, danger and expen-
se entailed by the Congress should not be in vain, that the
Congress should not be turned into a farce. It in advance
qualified any refusal to recognise the decisions and ele-
cctions at the Congress as a breach of faith.

Who is it, then, that the new Iskra is scoffing at when
it makes the new discovery that the Congress was not
divine and its decisions are not sacrosanct? Does that
discovery imply “new views on organisation”, or only
new attempts to cover up old track?

b) Significance of the Various Groupings
at the Congress

Thus, the Congress was called after the most careful
preparation and on the basis of the fullest representa-
tion. The general recognition that its composition was
correct and its decisions absolutely binding found expres-
sion also in the statement of the chairman (Minutes,
p. 54) after the Congress had been constituted.

What was the principal task of the Congress? To create
a real party on the basis of the principles and organis-
ationsal ideas that had been advanced and elaborated by
Iskra. That this was the direction in which the Congress
had to work was predetermined by the three years’ activ-
ities of Iskra and by the recognition of the latter by
the majority of the committees. Iskra’s programme and
trend were to become the programme and trend of the
Party; Iskra’s organisational plans were to be embodied in
the Rules of Organisation of the Party. But it goes without
saying that this could not be achieved without a struggle:
since the Congress was so highly representative, the par-
ticipants included organisations which had vigorously
fought Iskra (the Bund⁵ and Rabocheye Dyelo⁶) and or-
ganisations which, while verbally recognising Iskra as
the leading organ, actually pursued plans of their own
and were unstable in matters of principle (the Yuzhny
Rabochy group⁷ and delegates from some of the com-
mittees who were closely associated with it). Under these
circumstances, the Congress could not but become an
arena of struggle for the victory of the “Iskra” trend.
That it did become such an arena will at once be apparent to all who peruse its minutes with any degree of attention. Our task now is to trace in detail the principal groupings revealed at the Congress on various issues and to reconstruct, on the basis of the precise data of the minutes, the political complexion of each of the main groups. What precisely were these groups, trends and shades which, at the Congress, were to unite under the guidance of *Iskra* into a single party?—that is what we must show by analysing the debates and the voting. The elucidation of this is of cardinal importance both for a study of what our Social-Democrats really are and for an understanding of the causes of the divergence among them. That is why, in my speech at the League Congress and in my letter to the editors of the new *Iskra*, I gave prime place to an analysis of the various groupings. My opponents of the “minority” (headed by Martov) utterly failed to grasp the substance of the question. At the League Congress they confined themselves to corrections of detail, trying to “vindicate” themselves from the charge of having swung towards opportunism, but not even attempting to counter my picture of the groupings at the Congress by drawing any different one. Now Martov tries in *Iskra* (No. 56) to represent every attempt clearly to delimit the various political groups at the Congress as mere “circle politics”. Strong language, Comrade Martov! But the strong language of the new *Iskra* has this peculiar quality: one has only to reproduce all the stages of our divergence, from the Congress onwards, for all this strong language to turn completely and primarily against the present editorial board. Take a look at yourselves, you so-called Party editors who talk about circle politics!

Martov now finds the facts of our struggle at the Congress so unpleasant that he tries to slur over them altogether. “An *Iskra*-ist,” he says, “is one who, at the Party Congress and prior to it, expressed his complete solidarity with *Iskra*, advocated its programme and its views on organisation and supported its organisational policy. There were over forty such *Iskra*-ists at the Congress—that was the number of votes cast for *Iskra*’s programme and for the resolution adopting *Iskra* as the Central Organ of the Party.” Open the Congress Minutes, and you will find that the programme was adopted by the votes
of all (p. 233) except Akimov, who abstained. Thus, Comrade Martov wants to assure us that the Bundists, and Brouckère, and Martynov demonstrated their “complete solidarity” with *Iskra* and advocated its views on organisation! This is ridiculous. The fact that after the Congress all who took part became equal members of the Party (and not even all, for the Bundists had withdrawn) is here jumbled with the question of the grouping that evoked the struggle at the Congress. Instead of a study of the elements that went to make up the “majority” and the “minority” after the Congress, we get the official phrase, “recognised the programme”!

Take the voting on the adoption of *Iskra* as the Central Organ. You will see that it was Martynov—whom Comrade Martov, with a courage worthy of a better cause, now credits with having advocated *Iskra*’s organisational views and organisational policy—who insisted on separating the two parts of the resolution: the bare adoption of *Iskra* as the Central Organ, and the recognition of its services. When the first part of the resolution (recognising the services of *Iskra*, expressing solidarity with it) was put to the vote, only thirty-five votes were cast in favour; there were two votes against (Akimov and Brouckère) and eleven abstentions (Martynov, the five Bundists and the five votes of the editorial board: the two votes each of Martov and myself and Plekhanov’s one). Consequently, the anti-*Iskra* group (five Bundists and three Rabocheye Dyelo-ists) is quite apparent in this instance also, one most advantageous to Martov’s present views and chosen by himself. Take the voting on the second part of the resolution—adopting *Iskra* as the Central Organ without any statement of motives or expression of solidarity (Minutes, p. 147): forty-four votes in favour, which the Martov of today classes as *Iskra*-ist. The total number of votes to be cast was fifty-one; subtracting the five votes of the editors, who abstained, we get forty-six; two voted against (Akimov and Brouckère); consequently, the remaining forty-four include all five Bundists. And so, the Bundists at the Congress “expressed complete solidarity with *Iskra*”—this is how official history is written by the official *Iskra*! Running ahead somewhat, we will explain to the reader the real reasons for this official truth: the present editorial board of *Iskra* could and would have been a real Party edito-
rial board (and not a quasi-Party one, as it is today) if the Bundists and the “Rabocheye Dyelo”-ists had not withdrawn from the Congress; that is why these trusty guardians of the present, so-called Party editorial board had to be proclaimed Iskra-ists. But I shall speak of this in greater detail later.

The next question is: if the Congress was a struggle between the Iskra-ist and the anti-Iskra-ist elements, were there no intermediate, unstable elements who vacillated between the two? Anyone at all familiar with our Party and with the picture generally presented by congresses of every kind will be inclined a priori to answer the question in the affirmative. Comrade Martov is now very reluctant to recall these unstable elements, so he represents the Yu-
zhny Rabochy group and the delegates who gravitated towards it as typical I-skra-ists, and our differences with them as paltry and unimportant. Fortunately, we now have before us the complete text of the minutes and are able to answer the question—a question of fact, of course—on the basis of documentary evidence. What we said above about the general grouping at the Congress does not, of course, claim to answer the question, but only to present it correctly.

Without an analysis of the political groupings, without having a picture of the Congress as a struggle between definite shades, the divergence between us cannot be understood at all. Martov’s attempt to gloss over the different shades by ranking even the Bundists with the I-skra-ists is simply an evasion of the question. Even a priori, on the basis of the history of the Russian Social-Democratic movement before the Congress, three main groups are to be noted (for subsequent verification and detailed study): the I-skra-ists, the anti-I-skra-ists, and the unstable, vacillating, wavering elements.

c) Beginning of the Congress.
The Organising Committee Incident

The most convenient way to analyse the debates and the voting is to take them in the order of the Congress sittings, so as successively to note the political shades as they became more and more apparent. Only when absolutely necessary will departures from the chronological order be
made for the purpose of considering together closely allied questions or similar groupings. For the sake of impartiality, we shall endeavour to mention all the more important votes, omitting, of course, the innumerable votes on minor issues, which took up an inordinate amount of time at our Congress (owing partly to our inexperience and inefficiency in dividing the material between the commissions and the plenary sittings, and partly to quibbling which bordered on obstruction).

The first question to evoke a debate which began to reveal differences of shades was whether first place should be given (on the Congress “order of business”) to the item: “Position of the Bund in the Party” (Minutes, pp. 29-33). From the standpoint of the Iskra-ists, which was advocated by Plekhanov, Martov, Trotsky, and myself, there could be no doubt on this score. The Bund’s withdrawal from the Party strikingly bore out our view: if the Bund refused to go our way and accept the principles of organisation which the majority of the Party shared with Iskra, it was useless and senseless to “make believe” that we were going the same way and only drag out the Congress (as the Bundists did drag it out). The matter had already been fully clarified in our literature, and it was apparent to any at all thoughtful Party member that all that remained was to put the question frankly, and bluntly and honestly make the choice: autonomy (in which case we go the same way), or federation (in which case our ways part).

Evasive in their entire policy, the Bundists wanted to be evasive here too and postpone the matter. They were joined by Comrade Akimov, who, evidently on behalf of all the followers of Rabocheye Dyelo, at once brought up the differences with Iskra over questions of organisation (Minutes, p. 31). The Bund and Rabocheye Dyelo were supported by Comrade Makhov (representing the two votes of the Nikolayev Committee—which shortly before had expressed its solidarity with Iskra!). To Comrade Makhov the matter was altogether unclear, and another “sore spot”, he considered, was “the question of a democratic system or, on the contrary [mark this!], centralism”—exactly like the majority of our present “Party” editorial board, who at the Congress had not yet noticed this “sore spot”!

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Thus the Iskra-ists were opposed by the Bund, Rabocheye Dyelo and Comrade Makhov, who together controlled the ten votes which were cast against us (p. 33). Thirty votes were cast in favour — this is the figure, as we shall see later, around which the votes of the Iskra-ists often fluctuated. Eleven abstained, apparently not taking the side of either of the contending “parties”. It is interesting to note that when we took the vote on Paragraph 2 of the Rules of the Bund (it was the rejection of this Paragraph 2 that caused the Bund to withdraw from the Party), the votes in favour of it and the abstentions also amounted to ten (Minutes, p. 289), the abstainers being the three Rabocheye Dyelo-ists (Brouckère, Martynov, and Akimov) and Comrade Makhov. Clearly, the grouping in the vote on the place of the Bund item on the agenda was not fortuitous. Clearly, all these comrades differed with Iskra not only on the technical question of the order of discussion, but in essence as well. In the case of Rabocheye Dyelo, this difference in essence is clear to everyone, while Comrade Makhov gave an inimitable description of his attitude in the speech he made on the withdrawal of the Bund (Minutes, pp. 289—90). It is worth while dwelling on this speech. Comrade Makhov said that after the resolution rejecting federation, “the position of the Bund in the R.S.D.L.P. ceased to be for me a question of principle and became a question of practical politics in relation to an historically-evolved national organisation”. “Here,” the speaker continued, “I could not but take into account all the consequences that might follow from our vote, and would therefore have voted for Paragraph 2 in its entirety.” Comrade Makhov has admirably imbibed the spirit of “practical politics”: in principle he had already rejected federation, and therefore in practice he would have voted for including in the Rules a point that signified federation! And this “practical” comrade explained his profound position of principle in the following words: “But (the famous Shchedrin’ “but”!) since my voting one way or the other would only have significance in principle (!) and could not be of any practical importance, in view of the almost unanimous vote of all the other Congress delegates, I preferred to abstain in order to bring out in principle (God preserve us from such principles!) the difference between my position on this question and the position of the
tions (adoption of the programme, or endorsement of Iskra without motives stated), or else when it was a question of the sort of statement which was not in itself a direct committal to a definite political position (recognition of Iskra’s organising work was not in itself a committal to carry out its organisational policy in relation to particular groups: rejection of the principle of federation did not preclude abstention from voting on a specific scheme of federation, as we have seen in the case of Comrade Makov). We have already seen, when speaking of the significance of the groupings at the Congress in general, how falsely this matter is put in the official account of the official Iskra, which (through the mouth of Comrade Martov) slurs and glosses over the difference between the Iskra-ists and the “Centre”, between consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats and opportunists, by citing cases when the anti-“Iskra”-ists, too, voted with us! Even the most “Right-wing” of the opportunists in the German and French Social-Democratic parties never vote against such points as the adoption of the programme as a whole.

The second type of voting (B) covers the cases when the Iskra-ists, consistent and inconsistent, voted together against all the anti-Iskra-ists and the entire “Centre”. These were mostly cases that involved giving effect to definite and specific plans of the Iskra policy, that is, endorsing Iskra in fact and not only in word. They include the Organising Committee incident*; the question of making the position of the Bund in the Party the first item on the agenda; the dissolution of the Yuzhny Rabochy group; two votes on the agrarian programme, and, sixthly and lastly, the vote against the Union of Russian Social-

* It is this vote that is depicted in Diagram B; the Iskra-ists secured thirty-two votes, the Bundist resolution sixteen. It should be pointed out that of the votes of this type not one was by roll-call. The way the individual delegates voted can only be established—but with a very high degree of probability—by two sets of evidence: 1) in the debate the speakers of both groups of Iskra-ists spoke in favour, those of the anti-Iskra-ists and the Centre against; 2) the number of votes cast in favour was always very close to thirty-three. Nor should it be forgotten that when analysing the Congress debates we pointed out, quite apart from the voting, a number of cases when the “Centre” sided with the anti-Iskra-ists (the opportunists) against us. Some of these issues were: the absolute value of democratic demands, whether we should support the oppositional elements, restriction of centralism, etc.
Democrats Abroad (Rabocheye Dyclo), that is, the recognition of the League as the only Party organisation abroad. The old, pre-Party, circle spirit, the interests of opportunist organisations or groups, the narrow conception of Marxism were fighting here against the strictly consistent and principled policy of revolutionary Social-Democracy; the Iskra-ists of the minority still sided with us in quite a number of cases, in a number of exceedingly important votes (important from the standpoint of the Organising Committee, Yuzhny Rabochy and Rabocheye Dyclo)... until their own circle spirit and their own inconsistency came into question. The “divisions” of this type bring out with graphic clarity that on a number of issues involving the practical application of our principles, the Centre joined forces with the anti-“Iskra”-ists, displaying a much greater kinship with them than with us, a much greater leaning in practice towards the opportunist than towards the revolutionary wing of Social-Democracy. Those who were Iskra-ists in name but were ashamed to be Iskra-ists revealed their true nature, and the struggle that inevitably ensued caused no little acrimony, which obscured from the less thoughtful and more impressionable the significance of the shades of principle disclosed in that struggle. But now that the ardour of battle has somewhat abated and the minutes remain as a dispassionate extract of a series of heated encounters, only those who wilfully close their eyes can fail to perceive that the alliance of the Makhovs and Egorovs with the Akimovs and Liebers was not, and could not be, fortuitous. The only thing Martov and Axelrod can do is keep well away from a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the minutes, or try at this late date to undo their behaviour at the Congress by all sorts of expressions of regret. As if regrets can remove differences of views and differences of policy! As if the present alliance of Martov and Axelrod with Akimov, Brouckère, and Martynov can cause our Party, restored at the Second Congress, to forget the struggle which the Iskra-ists waged with the anti-Iskra-ists almost throughout the Congress!

The distinguishing feature of the third type of voting at the Congress, represented by the three remaining parts of the diagram (C, D, and E), is that a small section of the “Iskra”-ists broke away and went over to the anti-
“Iskra”-ists, who accordingly gained the victory (as long as they remained at the Congress). In order to trace with complete accuracy the development of this celebrated coalition of the Iskra-ist minority with the anti-Iskra-ists, the mere mention of which drove Martov to write hysterical epistles at the Congress, we have reproduced all the three main kinds of roll-call votes of this type. C is the vote on equality of languages (the last of the three roll-call votes on this question is given, it being the fullest). All the anti-Iskra-ists and the whole Centre stand solid against us; from the Iskra-ists a part of the majority and a part of the minority break away. It is not yet clear which of the “Iskra”-ists are capable of forming a definite and lasting coalition with the opportunist “Right wing” of the Congress. Next comes type D—the vote on Paragraph 1 of the Rules (of the two votes, we have taken the one which was more clear-cut, that is, in which there were no abstentions). The coalition stands out more saliently and assumes firmer shape*: all the Iskra-ists of the minority are now on the side of Akimov and Lieber, but only a very small number of Iskra-ists of the majority, these counter-balancing three of the “Centre” and one anti-Iskra-ist who have come over to our side. A mere glance at the diagram suffices to show which elements shifted from side to side casually and temporarily and which were drawn with irresistible force towards a lasting coalition with the Akimovs. The last vote (E—elections to the Central Organ, the Central Committee, and the Party Council), which in fact represents the final division into majority and minority, clearly reveals the complete fusion of the Iskra-ist minority with the entire “Centre” and the remnants of the anti-Iskra-ists. By this time, of the eight anti-Iskra-ists, only Comrade Brouckère remained at the Congress (Comrade Akimov had already explained his mis-

* Judging by all indications, four other votes on the Rules were of the same type: p 278—27 for Fomin, as against 21 for us; p. 279—26 for Martov, as against 24 for us; p. 280—27 against me, 22 for; and, on the same page, 24 for Martov, as against 23 for us. These are the votes on the question of co-optation to the central bodies, which I have already dealt with. No roll-call votes are available (there was one, but the record of it has been lost). The Bundists (all or part) evidently saved Martov. Martov’s erroneous statements (at the League) concerning these votes have been corrected above.
take to him and he had taken his proper place in the ranks of the Martovites. The withdrawal of the seven most “Right-wing” of the opportunists decided the issue of the elections against Martov.*

And now, with the aid of the objective evidence of votes of every type, let us sum up the results of the Congress.

There has been much talk to the effect that the majority at our Congress was “accidental”. This, in fact, was Comrade Martov’s sole consolation in his Once More in the Minority. The diagram clearly shows that in one sense, but in only one, the majority could be called accidental, viz., in the sense that the withdrawal of the seven most opportunist delegates of the “Right” was—supposedly—a matter of accident. To the extent that this withdrawal was an accident (and no more), our majority was accidental. A mere glance at the diagram will show better than any long arguments on whose side these seven would have been, were bound to have been.** But the question is: how far was the withdrawal of the seven really an accident? That is a question which those who talk so freely about the “accidental” character of the majority do not like to ask themselves. It is an unpleasant question for them. Was it an accident that the most extreme representatives of the Right and not of the Left wing of our Party were the ones to withdraw? Was it an accident that it was opportunists who withdrew, and not consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats? Is there no connection between this “accidental” withdrawal and the struggle against the opportunist wing which was waged throughout the Congress and which stands out so graphically in our diagram?

One has only to ask these questions, which are so unpleasant to the minority, to realise what fact all this talk

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* The seven opportunists who withdrew from the Second Congress were the five Bundists (the Bund withdrew from the Party after the Second Congress rejected the principle of federation) and two Rabocheye Dvoro-ists, Comrade Martynov and Comrade Akimov. These latter left the Congress after the Iskra-ist League was recognised as the only Party organisation abroad, i.e., after the Rabocheye Dvoro-ist Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad was dissolved. (Author’s footnote to the 1907 edition—Ed.)

** We shall see later that after the Congress both Comrade Akimov and the Voronezh Committee, which has the closest kinship with Comrade Akimov, explicitly expressed their sympathy with the “minority”.

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about the accidental character of the majority is intended to conceal. It is the unquestionable and incontrovertible fact that the minority was formed of those in our Party who gravitate most towards opportunism. The minority was formed of those elements in the Party who are least stable in theory, least steadfast in matters of principle. It was from the Right wing of the Party that the minority was formed. The division into majority and minority is a direct and inevitable continuation of that division of the Social-Democrats into a revolutionary and an opportunistic wing, into a Mountain and a Gironde, which did not appear only yesterday, nor in the Russian workers’ party alone, and which no doubt will not disappear tomorrow.

This fact is of cardinal importance for elucidating the causes and the various stages of our disagreements. Whoever tries to evade the fact by denying or glossing over the struggle at the Congress and the shades of principle that it revealed, simply testifies to his own intellectual and political poverty. And in order to disprove the fact, it would have to be shown, in the first place, that the general picture of the voting and “divisions” at our Party Congress was different from the one I have drawn; and, in the second place, that it was the most consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats, those who in Russia have adopted the name of Iskra-ists, who were in the wrong on the substance of all those issues over which the Congress “divided”. Well, just try to show that, gentlemen!

Incidentally, the fact that the minority was formed of

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*Note for Comrade Martov’s benefit. If Comrade Martov has now forgotten that the term “Iskra-ist implies the follower of a trend and not a member of a circle, we would advise him to read in the Congress minutes the explanation Comrade Trotsky gave Comrade Akimov on this point. There were three Iskra-ist circles (in relation to the Party) at the Congress: the Emancipation of Labour group, the Iskra editorial board, and the Iskra organisation. Two of these three circles had the good sense to dissolve themselves; the third did not display enough Party spirit to do so, and was dissolved by the Congress. The broadest of the Iskra-ist circles, the Iskra organisation (which included the editorial board and the Emancipation of Labour group), had sixteen members present at the Congress in all, of whom only eleven were entitled to vote. Iskra-ists by trend, on the other hand, not by membership in any Iskra-ist “circle”, numbered, by my calculation, twenty-seven, with thirty-three votes. Hence, less than half of the Iskra-ists at the Congress belonged to Iskra-ist circles.
the most opportunist, the least stable and consistent ele-
ments of the Party provides an answer to those numerous
objections and expressions of doubt which are addressed
to the majority by people who are imperfectly acquainted
with the matter, or have not given it sufficient thought.
Is it not petty, we are told, to account for the divergence
by a minor mistake of Comrade Martov and Comrade
Axelrod? Yes, gentlemen, Comrade Martov's mistake was
a minor one (and I said so even at the Congress, in the
heat of the struggle); but this minor mistake could (and
did) cause a lot of harm because Comrade Martov was
pulled over to the side of delegates who had made a whole
series of mistakes, had manifested an inclination towards
opportunism and inconsistency of principle on a whole
series of questions. That Comrade Martov and Comrade
Axelrod should have displayed instability was an unim-
portant fact concerning individuals; it was not an individ-
ual fact, however, but a Party fact, and a not altogether
unimportant one, that a very considerable minority should
have been formed of all the least stable elements, of all
who either rejected Iskra's trend altogether and openly
opposed it, or paid lip service to it but actually sided time
and again with the anti-Iskra-ists.

Is it not absurd to account for the divergence by the
prevalence of an inveterate circle spirit and revolutionary
philistinism in the small circle comprised by the old Iskra
editorial board? No, it is not absurd, because all those in
our Party who all through the Congress had fought for
every kind of circle, all those who were generally inca-
\[\ldots\]
Makhovs, etc., etc. You can tell a man by his friends—the proverb says. And you can tell a man's political complexion by his political allies, by the people who vote for him.

The minor mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod was, and might have remained, a minor one until it became the starting-point for a durable alliance between them and the whole opportunist wing of our Party, until it led, as a result of that alliance, to a recrudescence of opportunism, to the exaction of revenge by all whom Iskra had fought and who were now overjoyed at a chance of venting their spleen on the consistent adherents of revolutionary Social-Democracy. And as a result of the post-Congress events, what we are witnessing in the new Iskra is precisely a recrudescence of opportunism, the revenge of the Akimovs and Brouckères (see the leaflet issued by the Voronezh Committee*), and the glee of the Martynovs, who have at last (at last!) been allowed, in the detested Iskra, to have a kick at the detested “enemy” for each and every former grievance. This makes it particularly clear how essential it was to “restore Iskra’s old editorial board” (we are quoting from Comrade Starover’s ultimatum of November 3, 1903) in order to preserve Iskra “continuity”...

Taken by itself, there was nothing dreadful, nor critical, nor even anything abnormal in the fact that the Congress (and the Party) divided into a Left and a Right, a revolutionary and an opportunist wing. On the contrary, the whole past decade in the history of the Russian (and not only the Russian) Social-Democratic movement had been leading inevitably and inexorably to such a division. The fact that the division took place over a number of very minor mistakes of the Right wing, of (relatively) very unimportant differences (a fact which seems shocking to the superficial observer and to the philistine mind), marked a big step forward for our Party as a whole. Formerly we used to differ over major issues, such as might in some cases even justify a split; now we have reached agreement on all major and important points, and are only divided by shades, about which we may and should argue, but over which it would be absurd and childish to part

* See Collected Works, Vol. 41, pp. 80-82.—Ed.
company (as Comrade Plekhanov has quite rightly said in his interesting article "What Should Not Be Done", to which we shall revert). Now, when the anarchistic behaviour of the minority since the Congress has almost brought the Party to a split, one may often hear wisecracks saying: Was it worth while fighting at the Congress over such trifles as the Organising Committee incident, the dissolution of the Yuzhny Rabochy group or Rabocheye Delo, or Paragraph 1, or the dissolution of the old editorial board, etc.? Those who argue in this way are in fact introducing the circle standpoint into Party affairs: a struggle of shades in the Party is inevitable and essential, as long as it does not lead to anarchy and splits, as long as it is confined within bounds approved by the common consent of all comrades and Party members. And our struggle against the Right wing of the Party at the Congress, against Akimov and Axelrod, Martynov and Martov, in no way exceeded those bounds. One need only recall two facts which incontrovertibly prove this: 1) when Comrades Martynov and Akimov were about to quit the Congress, we were all prepared to do everything to obliterate the idea of an "insult"; we all adopted (by thirty-two votes) Comrade Trotsky's motion inviting these comrades to regard the explanations as satisfactory and withdraw their statement; 2) when it came to the election of the central bodies, we were prepared to allow the minority (or the opportunist wing) of the Congress a minority on both central bodies: Martov on the Central Organ and Popov on the Central Committee. We could not act otherwise from the Party standpoint, since even before the Congress we had decided to elect two trios.

I cannot help recalling in this connection a conversation I happened to have at the Congress with one of the "Centre" delegates. "How oppressive the atmosphere is at our Congress!" he complained. "This bitter fighting, this agitation one against the other, this biting controversy, this uncomradely attitude!..." "What a splendid thing our Congress is!" I replied. "A free and open struggle. Opinions have been stated. The shades have been revealed. The groups have taken shape. Hands have been raised. ... A stage has been passed. Forward! That's the stuff for me! That's life! That's not like the endless, tedious word-chopping of your intellectuals, which stops not because the question has been settled, but because they are too tired to talk any more...." The comrade of the "Centre" stared at me in perplexity and shrugged his shoulders. We were talking different languages.
the Congress was not great, neither was the practical conclusion we drew from the struggle between these shades: the conclusion amounted solely to this, that two-thirds of the seats on both bodies of three ought to be given to the majority at the Party Congress.

It was only the refusal of the minority at the Party Congress to be a minority on the central bodies that led first to the “feeble whining” of defeated intellectuals, and then to anarchistic talk and anarchistic actions.

In conclusion, let us take one more glance at the diagram from the standpoint of the composition of the central bodies. Quite naturally, in addition to the question of shades, the delegates were faced during the elections with the question of the suitability, efficiency, etc., of one or another person. The minority are now very prone to confuse these two questions. Yet that they are different questions is self-evident, and this can be seen from the simple fact, for instance, that the election of an initial trio for the Central Organ had been planned even before the Congress, at a time when no one could have foreseen the alliance of Martov and Axelrod with Martynov and Akimov. Different questions have to be answered in different ways: the answer to the question of shades must be sought for in the minutes of the Congress, in the open discussions and voting on each and every issue. As to the question of the suitability of persons, everybody at the Congress had decided that it should be settled by secret ballot. Why did the whole Congress unanimously take that decision? The question is so elementary that it would be odd to dwell on it. But (since their defeat at the ballot-box) the minority have begun to forget even elementary things. We have heard torrents of ardent, passionate speeches, heated almost to the point of irresponsibility, in defence of the old editorial board, but we have heard absolutely nothing about the shades at the Congress that were involved in the struggle over a board of six or three. We hear talk and gossip on all sides about the ineffectualness, the unsuitability, the evil designs, etc., of the persons elected to the Central Committee, but we hear absolutely nothing about the shades at the Congress that fought for predominance on the Central Committee. To me it seems indecent and discreditable to go about talking and gossiping outside the Congress about the qualities and actions of
individuals (for in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred these actions are an organisational secret, which can only be divulged to the supreme authority of the Party). To fight outside the Congress by means of such gossip would, in my opinion, be scandal-mongering. And the only public reply I could make to all this talk would be to point to the struggle at the Congress: You say that the Central Committee was elected by a narrow majority. That is true. But this narrow majority consisted of all who had most consistently fought, not in words but in actual fact, for the realisation of the Iskra plans. Consequently, the moral prestige of this majority should be even higher—incomparably so—than its formal prestige—higher in the eyes of all who value the continuity of the Iskra trend above the continuity of a particular Iskra circle. Who was more competent to judge the suitability of particular persons to carry out the Iskra policy—those who fought for that policy at the Congress, or those who in no few cases fought against that policy and defended everything retrograde, every kind of old rubbish, every kind of circle mentality?

o) After the Congress.

Two Methods of Struggle

The analysis of the debates and voting at the Congress, which we have now concluded, actually explains in nuce (in embryo) everything that has happened since the Congress, and we can be brief in outlining the subsequent stages of our Party crisis.

The refusal of Martov and Popov to stand for election immediately introduced an atmosphere of squabbling into a Party struggle between Party shades. On the very next day after the Congress, Comrade Glebov, thinking it incredible that the unelected editors could seriously have decided to swing towards Akimov and Martynov, and attributing the whole thing primarily to irritation, suggested to Plekhanov and me that the matter should be ended peaceably and that all four should be “co-opted” on condition that proper representation of the editorial board on the Council was guaranteed (i.e., that of the two representatives, one was definitely drawn from the Party majority). This condition seemed sound to Plekhanov and me,
for its acceptance would imply a tacit admission of the mistake at the Congress, a desire for peace instead of war, a desire to be closer to Plekhanov and me than to Akimov and Martynov, Egorov and Makhov. The concession as regards "co-optation" thus became a personal one, and it was not worth while refusing to make a personal concession which should clear away the irritation and restore peace. Plekhanov and I therefore consented. But the editorial majority rejected the condition. Glebov left. We began to wait and see what would happen next: whether Martov would adhere to the loyal stand he had taken up at the Congress (against Comrade Popov, the representative of the Centre), or whether the unstable elements who inclined towards a split, and in whose wake he had followed, would gain the upper hand.

We were faced with the question: would Comrade Martov choose to regard his Congress "coalition" as an isolated political fact (just as, si licet parva componere magnis,* Bebel's coalition with Vollmar in 1895 was an isolated case), or would he want to consolidate this coalition, exert himself to prove that it was Plekhanov and I who were mistaken at the Congress, and become the actual leader of the opportunist wing of our Party? This question might be formulated otherwise as follows: a squabble or a political Party struggle? Of the three of us who on the day after the Congress were the sole available members of the central institutions, Glebov inclined most to the former answer and made the most efforts to reconcile the children who had fallen out. Comrade Plekhanov inclined most to the latter answer and was, as the saying goes, neither to hold nor to bind. I on this occasion acted the part of "Centre", or "Marsh", and endeavoured to employ persuasion. To try at this date to recall the spoken attempts at persuasion would be a hopelessly muddled business, and I shall not follow the bad example of Comrade Martov and Comrade Plekhanov. But I do consider it necessary to reproduce certain passages from one written attempt at persuasion which I addressed to one of the "minority" Iskra-ists:

"...The refusal of Martov to serve on the editorial board, his refusal and that of other Party writers to collaborate, the refusal

* If little things may be compared to big.—Ed.
of a number of persons to work on the Central Committee, and the propaganda of a boycott or passive resistance are bound to lead, even if against the wishes of Martov and his friends, to a split in the Party. Even if Martov adheres to a loyal stand (which he took up so resolutely at the Congress), others will not, and the outcome I have mentioned will be inevitable....

"And so I ask myself: over what, in point of fact, would we be parting company?... I go over all the events and impressions of the Congress; I realise that I often behaved and acted in a state of frightful irritation, 'frenziedly'; I am quite willing to admit this fault of mine to anyone, if that can be called a fault which was a natural product of the atmosphere, the reactions, the interjections, the struggle, etc. But examining now, quite unfrenziedly, the results attained, the outcome achieved by frenzied struggle, I can detect nothing, absolutely nothing in these results that is injurious to the Party, and absolutely nothing that is an affront or insult to the minority.

"Of course, the very fact of finding oneself in the minority could not but be vexatious, but I categorically protest against the idea that we 'cast slurs' on anybody, that we wanted to insult or humiliate anybody. Nothing of the kind. And one should not allow political differences to lead to an interpretation of events based on accusing the other side of unscrupulousness, chicanery, intrigue, and the other nice things we are hearing mentioned more and more often in this atmosphere of an impending split. This should not be allowed, for it is, to say the least, the nec plus ultra of irrationality.

"Martov and I have had a political (and organisational) difference, as we had dozens of times before. Defeated over Paragraph 1 of the Rules, I could not but strive with all my might for revanche in what remained to me (and to the Congress). I could not but strive, on the one hand, for a strictly Iskra-ist Central Committee, and, on the other, for a trio on the editorial board.... I consider this trio the only one capable of being an official institution, instead of a body based on indulgence and slackness, the only one to be a real centre, each member of which would always state and defend his Party viewpoint, not one grain more, and irrespective of all personal considerations and all fear of giving offence, of resignations, and so on.

"This trio, after what had occurred at the Congress, undoubtedly meant legitimising a political and organisational line in one respect directed against Martov. Undoubtedly. Cause a rupture on that account? Break up the Party because of it?? Did not Martov and Plekhanov oppose me over the question of demonstrations? And did not Martov and I oppose Plekhanov over the question of the programme? Is not one side of every trio always up against the other two? If the majority of the Iskra-ists, both in the Iskra organisation and at the Congress, found this particular shade of Martov's line organisationally and politically mistaken, is it not really senseless to attempt to attribute this to 'intrigue', 'incitement', and so forth? Would it not be senseless to try to talk away this fact by abusing the majority and calling them 'riffraff'?

"I repeat that, like the majority of the Iskra-ists at the Congress, I am profoundly convinced that the line Martov adopted was wrong, and that he had to be corrected. To take offence at this
correction, to regard it as an insult, etc., is unreasonable. We have not cast, and are not casting, any ‘slurs’ on anyone, nor are we excluding anyone from work. And to cause a split because someone has been excluded from a central body seems to me a piece of inconceivable folly.*

I have thought it necessary to recall these written statements of mine now, because they conclusively prove that the majority wanted to draw a definite line at once between possible (and in a heated struggle inevitable) personal grievances and personal irritations caused by biting and “frenzied” attacks, etc., on the one hand, and a definite political mistake, a definite political line (coalition with the Right wing), on the other.

These statements prove that the passive resistance of the minority began immediately after the Congress and at once evoked from us the warning that it was a step towards splitting the Party; the warning that it ran directly counter to their declarations of loyalty at the Congress; that the split would be solely over the fact of exclusion from the central institutions (that is, non-election to them), for nobody ever thought of excluding any Party member from work; and that our political difference (an inevitable difference, inasmuch as it had not yet been elucidated and settled which line at the Congress was mistaken, Martov’s or ours) was being perverted more and more into a squabble, accompanied by abuse, suspicions, and so on and so forth.

But the warnings were in vain. The behaviour of the minority showed that the least stable elements among them, those who least valued the Party, were gaining the upper hand. This compelled Plekhanov and me to withdraw the consent we had given to Glebov’s proposal. For if the minority were demonstrating by their deeds their political instability not only as regards principles, but even as regards elementary Party loyalty, what value could be attached to their talk about this celebrated “continuity”? Nobody scoffed more wittily than Plekhanov at the utter

* This letter was written on September 13, 1903 (New Style). (See Collected Works, Vol. 34, pp. 164-66.—Ed.). I have only omitted what seemed to me irrelevant to the matter in hand. If the addressee considers what I have omitted important, he can easily repair the omission. Incidentally, let me take this opportunity to say that any of my opponents may publish any of my private letters should they think a useful purpose will be served by it.
absurdity of demanding the "co-optation" to the Party editorial board of a majority consisting of people who frankly proclaimed their new and growing differences of opinion! Has there ever been a case in the world of a party majority on the central institutions converting itself into a minority of its own accord, prior to the airing of new differences in the press, in full view of the Party? Let the differences first be stated, let the Party judge how profound and important they were, let the Party itself correct the mistake it had made at the Second Congress, should it be shown that it had made a mistake! The very fact that such a demand was made on the plea of differences still unknown demonstrated the utter instability of those who made it, the complete submersion of political differences by squabbling, and their entire disrespect both for the Party as a whole and for their own convictions. Never have there been, nor will there be, persons of convinced principle who refuse to try to convince before they secure (privately) a majority in the institution they want to bring round to their standpoint.

Finally, on October 4, Comrade Plekhanov announced that he would make a last attempt to put an end to this absurd state of affairs. A meeting was called of all the six members of the old editorial board, attended by a new member of the Central Committee.* Comrade Plekhanov spent three whole hours proving how unreasonable it was to demand "co-optation" of four of the "minority" to two of the "majority". He proposed co-opting two of them, so as, on the one hand, to remove all fears that we wanted to "bully", suppress, besiege, behead or bury anyone, and, on the other, to safeguard the rights and position of the Party "majority". The co-optation of two was likewise rejected.

On October 6, Plekhanov and I wrote the following official letter to all the old editors of Iskra and to Comrade Trotsky, one of its contributors:

"Dear Comrades,

"The editorial board of the Central Organ considers it its duty officially to express its regret at your withdrawal from participa-

* This Central Committee member arranged, in addition, a number of private and collective talks with the minority, in which he refuted the preposterous tales that were being spread and appealed to their sense of Party duty.
tion in Iskra and Zarya. In spite of the repeated invitations to collaborate which we made to you immediately following the Second Party Congress and several times after, we have not received a single contribution from you. The editors of the Central Organ declare that your withdrawal from participation is not justified by anything they have done. No personal irritation should serve, of course, as an obstacle to your working on the Central Organ of the Party. If, on the other hand, your withdrawal is due to any differences of opinion with us, we would consider it of the greatest benefit to the Party if you were to set forth these differences at length. More, we would consider it highly desirable for the nature and depth of these differences to be explained to the whole Party as early as possible in the columns of the publications of which we are the editors.*

As the reader sees, it was still quite unclear to us whether the actions of the "minority" were principally governed by personal irritation or by a desire to steer the organ (and the Party) along a new course, and if so, what course exactly. I think that if we were even now to set seventy wise men to elucidate this question with the help of any literature or any testimony you like, they too could make nothing of this tangle. I doubt whether a squabble can ever be disentangled: you have either to cut it, or set it aside.**

Axelrod, Zasulich, Starover, Trotsky, and Koltsov sent a couple of lines in reply to this letter of October 6, to the effect that the undersigned were taking no part in Iskra since its passage into the hands of the new editorial board. Comrade Martov was more communicative and honoured us with the following reply:

"To the Editorial Board of the Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P.
"Dear Comrades,

"In reply to your letter of October 6 I wish to state the follow- ing: I consider all our discussions on the subject of working together on one organ at an end after the conference which took place in the presence of a Central Committee member on October 4, and at which you refused to state the reasons that induced you to withdraw your proposal to us that Axelrod, Zasulich, Starover, and I

* The letter to Comrade Martov contained in addition a reference to a certain pamphlet and the following sentence: "Lastly, we once more inform you, in the interests of the work, that we are still prepared to co-opt you to the editorial board of the Central Organ, in order to give you every opportunity officially to state and defend your views in the supreme institution of the Party."

** Comrade Plekhanov would probably add: "or satisfy each and every claim of the initiators of the squabble" We shall see why this was impossible.
should join the editorial board on condition that we undertook to elect Comrade Lenin our 'representative' on the Council. After you repeatedly evaded at this conference formulating the statements you had yourselves made in the presence of witnesses, I do not think it necessary to explain in a letter to you my motives for refusing to work on *Iskra* under present conditions. Should the need arise, I shall explain them in detail to the whole Party, which will already be able to learn from the minutes of the Second Congress why I rejected the proposal, which you now repeat, that I accept a seat on the editorial board and on the Council...

"L. Martov"

This letter, in conjunction with the previous documents, clarifies beyond any possible dispute that question of boycott, disorganisation, anarchy, and preparations for a split which Comrade Martov (with the help of exclamation marks and rows of dots) so assiduously evades in his *State of Siege*—the question of loyal and disloyal methods of struggle.

Comrade Martov and the others are invited to set forth their differences, they are asked to tell us plainly what the trouble is all about and what their intentions are, they are exhorted to stop sulking and to analyse calmly the mistake made over Paragraph 1 (which is intimately connected with their mistake in swinging to the Right)—but Comrade Martov and Co. refuse to talk, and cry: “We are being besieged! We are being bullied!” The jibe about “dreadful words” has not cooled the ardour of these comical outcries.

How is it possible to besiege someone who refuses to work together with you?—we asked Comrade Martov. How is it possible to ill-treat, “bully”, and oppress a minority which refuses to be a minority? Being in the minority necessarily and inevitably involves certain disadvantages. These disadvantages are that you either have to join a body which will outvote you on certain questions, or you stay outside that body and attack it, and consequently come under the fire of well-mounted batteries.

Did Comrade Martov’s cries about a “state of siege” mean that those in the minority were being fought or governed unfairly and unloyally? Only such an assertion could have contained even a grain of sense (in Martov’s eyes), for, I repeat, being in the minority necessarily and

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*I omit what Martov replied in reference to his pamphlet, then being republished.*
inevitably involves certain disadvantages. But the whole comedy of the matter is that Comrade Martov could not be fought at all as long as he refused to talk! The minority could not be governed at all as long as they refused to be a minority!

Comrade Martov could not cite a single fact to show that the editorial board of the Central Organ had exceeded or abused its powers while Plekhanov and I were on it. Nor could the practical workers of the minority cite a single fact of a like kind with regard to the Central Committee. However Comrade Martov may now twist and turn in his State of Siege, it remains absolutely incontrovertible that the outcries about a state of siege were nothing but “feeble whining”.

How utterly Comrade Martov and Co. lacked sensible arguments against the editorial board appointed by the Congress is best of all shown by their own catchword: “We are not serfs!” (State of Siege, p. 34.) The mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, who counts himself among the “elect minds” standing above mass organisation and mass discipline, is expressed here with remarkable clarity. To explain their refusal to work in the Party by saying that they “are not serfs” is to give themselves away completely, to confess to a total lack of arguments, an utter inability to furnish any motives, any sensible reasons for dissatisfaction. Plekhanov and I declare that their refusal is not justified by anything we have done: we request them to set forth their differences; and all they reply is: “We are not serfs” (adding that no bargain has yet been reached on the subject of co-optation).

To the individualism of the intellectual, which already manifested itself in the controversy over Paragraph 1, revealing its tendency to opportunist argument and anarchistic phrase-mongering, all proletarian organisation and discipline seem to be serfdom. The reading public will soon learn that in the eyes of these “Party members” and Party “officials” even a new Party Congress is a serf institution that is terrible and abhorrent to the “elect minds”.... This “institution” is indeed terrible to people who are not averse to making use of the Party title but are conscious that this title of theirs does not accord with the interests and will of the Party.

The committee resolutions enumerated in my letter to
the editors of the new *Iskra*, and published by Comrade Martov in his *State of Siege*, show with facts that the behaviour of the minority amounted all along to sheer disobedience of the decisions of the Congress and disorganisation of positive practical work. Consisting of opportunists and people who detested *Iskra*, the minority strove to *rend the Party* and damaged and disorganised its work, thirsting to avenge their defeat at the Congress and sensing that by honest and loyal means (by explaining their case in the press or at a congress) they would never succeed in refuting the accusation of opportunism and intellectualist instability which at the Second Congress had been levelled against them. Realising that they could not convince the Party, they tried to gain their ends by disorganising the Party and *hampering all its work*. They were reproached with having (by their mistakes at the Congress) caused a crack in our pot; they replied to the reproach by trying with all their might to *smash* the pot altogether.

So distorted had their ideas become that boycott and refusal to work were proclaimed to be "honest methods" of struggle. Comrade Martov is now wriggling all around this delicate point. Comrade Martov is such a "man of principle" that he defends boycott... when practised by the minority, but condemns boycott when, his side happening to have become the majority, it threatens Martov himself!

We need not, I think, go into the question whether this is a squabble or a "difference of principle" as to what are honest methods of struggle in a Social-Democratic workers' party.

After the unsuccessful attempts (of October 4 and 6) to obtain an explanation from the comrades who had started the "co-optation" row, nothing remained for the central institutions but to wait and see what would come of their verbal assurances that they would adhere to loyal methods of struggle. On October 10, the Central Committee addressed a circular letter to the League (see League Minutes, pp. 3-5), announcing that it was engaged in drafting Rules for the League and inviting the League

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* Mining Area resolution (*State of Siege*, p. 38).
members to assist. The Administration of the League had at that time decided against a congress of that body (by two votes to one; *ibid.*, p. 20). The replies received from minority supporters to this circular showed at once that the celebrated promise to be loyal and abide by the decisions of the Congress was just talk, and that, as a matter of fact, the minority had positively decided *not to obey* the central institutions of the Party, replying to their appeals to collaborate with *evasive excuses* full of sophistry and *anarchistic* phrase-mongering. In reply to the famous open letter of Deutsch, a member of the Administration (p. 10), Plekhanov, myself, and other supporters of the majority expressed our vigorous "protest against the gross violations of Party discipline by which an official of the League permits himself to hamper the organisational activities of a Party institution and calls upon other comrades likewise to violate discipline and the Rules. Remarks such as, 'I do not consider myself at liberty to take part in such work on the invitation of the Central Committee', or, 'Comrades, we must on no account allow it [the Central Committee] to draw up new Rules for the League', etc., are agitational methods of a kind that can only arouse disgust in anyone who has the slightest conception of the meaning of the words party, organisation, and party discipline. Such methods are all the more disgraceful for the fact that they are being used against a newly created Party institution and are therefore an undoubted attempt to undermine confidence in it among Party comrades, and that, moreover, they are being employed under the cachet of a member of the League Administration and behind the back of the Central Committee" (p. 17).

Under such conditions, the League Congress promised to be nothing but a brawl.

From the outset, Comrade Martov continued his Congress tactics of "getting personal", this time with Comrade Plekhanov, by distorting private conversations. Comrade Plekhanov protested, and Comrade Martov was obliged to withdraw his accusations (League Minutes, pp. 39 and 134), which were a product of either irresponsibility or resentment.

The time for the report arrived. I had been the League's delegate at the Party Congress. A mere reference to the
summary of my report (p. 43 et seq.)* will show the reader that I gave a rough outline of that analysis of the voting at the Congress which, in greater detail, forms the contents of the present pamphlet. The central feature of the report was precisely the proof that, owing to their mistakes, Martov and Co. had landed in the opportunist wing of our Party. Although this report was made to an audience whose majority consisted of violent opponents, they could discover absolutely nothing in it which departed from loyal methods of Party struggle and controversy.

Martov's report, on the contrary, apart from minor "corrections" to particular points of my account (the incorrectness of these corrections we have shown above), was nothing but—a product of disordered nerves.

No wonder that the majority refused to carry on the fight in this atmosphere. Comrade Plekhanov entered a protest against the "scene" (p. 68)—it was indeed a regular "scene"!—and withdrew from the Congress without stating the objections he had already prepared on the substance of the report. Nearly all the other supporters of the majority also withdrew from the Congress, after filing a written protest against the "unworthy behaviour" of Comrade Martov (League Minutes, p. 75).

The methods of struggle employed by the minority became perfectly clear to all. We had accused the minority of committing a political mistake at the Congress, of having swung towards opportunism, of having formed a coalition with the Bundists, the Akimovs, the Brouckères, the Egorovs, and the Makhovs. The minority had been defeated at the Congress, and they had now "worked out" two methods of struggle, embracing all their endless variety of sorties, assaults, attacks, etc.

First method—disorganising all the activity of the Party, damaging the work, hampering all and everything "without statement of reasons".

Second method—making "scenes", and so on and so forth.**

* See Collected Works, Vol. 7, pp. 73-83.—Ed.

** I have already pointed out that it would be unwise to attribute to sordid motives even the most sordid manifestations of the squabbling that is so habitual in the atmosphere of émigré and exile colonies. It is a sort of epidemic disease engendered by abnormal conditions of life, disordered nerves, and so on. I had to give a true
This “second method of struggle” is also apparent in the League’s famous resolutions of “principle”, in the discussion of which the “majority”, of course, took no part. Let us examine these resolutions, which Comrade Martov has reproduced in his State of Siege.

The first resolution, signed by Comrades Trotsky, Fomin, Deutsch, and others, contains two theses directed against the “majority” of the Party Congress: 1) “The League expresses its profound regret that, owing to the manifestation at the Congress of tendencies which essentially run counter to the earlier policy of Iskra, due care was not given in drafting the Party Rules to providing sufficient safeguards of the independence and authority of the Central Committee.” (League Minutes, p. 83.)

As we have already seen, this thesis of “principle” amounts to nothing but Akimov phrase-mongering, the opportunist character of which was exposed at the Party Congress even by Comrade Popov! In point of fact, the claim that the “majority” did not mean to safeguard the independence and authority of the Central Committee was never anything but gossip. It need only be mentioned that when Plekhanov and I were on the editorial board, there was on the Council no predominance of the Central Organ over the Central Committee, but when the Martovites joined the editorial board, the Central Organ secured predominance over the Central Committee on the Council! When we were on the editorial board, practical workers in Russia predominated on the Council over writers residing abroad; since the Martovites took over, the contrary has been the case. When we were on the editorial board, the Council never once attempted to interfere in any practical matter; since the unanimous co-optation such interference has begun, as the reading public will learn in detail in the near future.

Next thesis of the resolution we are examining: “...when constituting the official central bodies of the Party, the Congress ignored the need for maintaining continuity with the actually existing central bodies....”

This thesis boils down to nothing but the question of the personal composition of the central bodies. The “minority” preferred to evade the fact that at the Congress picture of this system of struggle here, because Comrade Martov has again resorted to it in its full scope in his “State of Siege”.

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the old central bodies had proved their unfitness and committed a number of mistakes. But most comical of all is the reference to “continuity” with respect to the Organising Committee. At the Congress, as we have seen, nobody even hinted that the entire membership of the Organising Committee should be endorsed. At the Congress, Martov actually cried in a frenzy that a list containing three members of the Organising Committee was defamatory to him. At the Congress, the final list proposed by the “minority” contained one member of the Organising Committee (Popov, Glebov or Fomin, and Trotsky), whereas the list the “majority” put through contained two members of the Organising Committee out of three (Ivanov, Maksimov, and Glebov). We ask, can this reference to “continuity” really be considered a “difference of principle”?

Let us pass to the other resolution, which was signed by four members of the old editorial board, headed by Comrade Axelrod. Here we find all those major accusations against the ‘majority’ which have subsequently been repeated many times in the press. They can most conveniently be examined as formulated by the members of the editorial circle. The accusations are levelled against “the system of autocratic and bureaucratic government of the Party”, against “bureaucratic centralism”, which, as distinct from “genuinely Social-Democratic centralism”, is defined as follows: it “places in the forefront, not internal union, but external, formal unity, achieved and maintained by purely mechanical means, by the systematic suppression of individual initiative and independent social activity”; it is therefore “by its very nature incapable of organically uniting the component elements of society”.

What “society” Comrade Axelrod and Co. are here referring to, heaven alone knows. Apparently, Comrade Axelrod was not quite clear himself whether he was penning a Zemstvo address on the subject of desirable government reforms, or pouring forth the complaints of the “minority”. What is the implication of “autocracy” in the Party, about which the dissatisfied “editors” clamour? Autocracy means the supreme, uncontrolled, non-accountable, non-elective rule of one individual. We know very well from the literature of the “minority” that by autocrat they mean me, and no one else. When the resolution in question was being drafted and adopted, I was on the
Central Organ together with Plekhanov. Consequently, Comrade Axelrod and Co. were expressing the conviction that Plekhanov and all the members of the Central Committee "governed the Party", not in accordance with their own views of what the interests of the work required, but in accordance with the will of the autocrat Lenin. This accusation of autocratic government necessarily and inevitably implies pronouncing all members of the governing body except the autocrat to be mere tools in the hands of another, mere pawns and agents of another's will. And once again we ask, is this really a "difference of principle" on the part of the highly respected Comrade Axelrod?

Further, what external, formal unity are they here talking about, our "Party members" just returned from a Party Congress whose decisions they have solemnly acknowledged valid? Do they know of any other method of achieving unity in a party organised on any at all durable basis, except a party congress? If they do, why have they not the courage to declare frankly that they no longer regard the Second Congress as valid? Why do they not try to tell us their new ideas and new methods of achieving unity in a supposedly organised party?

Further, what "suppression of individual initiative" are they talking about, our individualist intellectuals whom the Central Organ of the Party has just been exhorting to set forth their differences, but who instead have engaged in bargaining about "co-optation"? And, in general, how could Plekhanov and I, or the Central Committee, have suppressed the initiative and independent activity of people who refused to engage in any "activity" in conjunction with us? How can anyone be "suppressed" in an institution or body in which he refuses to have any part? How could the unelected editors complain of a "system of government" when they refused to "be governed"? We could not have committed any errors in directing our comrades for the simple reason that they never worked under our direction at all.

It is clear, I think, that the cries about this celebrated bureaucracy are just a screen for dissatisfaction with the personal composition of the central bodies, a fig-leaf to cover up the violation of a pledge solemnly given at the Congress. You are a bureaucrat because you were appointed by the Congress not in accordance with my wishes, but
against them; you are a formalist because you take your stand on the formal decisions of the Congress, and not on my consent; you are acting in a grossly mechanical way because you cite the "mechanical" majority at the Party Congress and pay no heed to my wish to be co-opted; you are an autocrat because you refuse to hand over the power to the old snug little band who insist on their circle "continuity" all the more because they do not like the explicit disapproval of this circle spirit by the Congress.

These cries about bureaucracy have never had any real meaning except the one I have indicated.* And this method of struggle only proves once again the intellectualist instability of the minority. They wanted to convince the Party that the selection of the central bodies was unfortunate. And how did they go about it? By criticism of Iskra as conducted by Plekhanov and me? No, that they were unable to offer. The method they used consisted in the refusal of a section of the Party to work under the direction of the hated central bodies. But no central institution of any party in the world can ever prove its ability to direct people who refuse to accept its direction. Refusal to accept the direction of the central bodies is tantamount to refusing to remain in the Party, it is tantamount to disrupting the Party; it is a method of destroying, not of convincing. And these efforts to destroy instead of convince show their lack of consistent principles, lack of faith in their own ideas.

They talk of bureaucracy. The word bureaucracy might be translated into Russian as concentration on place and position. Bureaucracy means subordinating the interests of the work to the interests of one's own career; it means focusing attention on places and ignoring the work itself; it means wrangling over co-optation instead of fighting for ideas. That bureaucracy of this kind is undesirable and detrimental to the Party is unquestionably true, and I can safely leave it to the reader to judge which of the two sides now contending in our Party is guilty of such bureaucracy.... They talk about grossly mechanical methods of achieving unity. Unquestionably, grossly mechanical methods are detrimental; but I again leave it to the

* It is enough to point out that Comrade Plekhanov ceased to be a supporter of "bureaucratic centralism" in the eyes of the minority once he put through the beneficent co-optation.
reader to judge whether a grosser and more mechanical method of struggle of a new trend against an old one can be imagined than installing people in Party institutions before the Party has been convinced of the correctness of their new views, and before these views have even been set forth to the Party.

But perhaps the catchwords of the minority do mean something in principle, perhaps they do express some special group of ideas, irrespective of the petty and particular cause which undoubtedly started the "swing" in the present case? Perhaps if we were to set aside the wrangling over "co-optation", these catchwords might turn out to be an expression of a different system of views?

Let us examine the matter from this angle. Before doing so, we must place on record that the first to attempt such an examination was Comrade Plekhanov at the League, who pointed out the minority's swing towards anarchism and opportunism, and that Comrade Martov (who is now highly offended because not everyone is ready to admit that his position is one of principle) preferred completely to ignore this incident in his State of Siege.

At the League Congress the general question was raised as to whether Rules that the League or a committee may draw up for itself are valid without the Central Committee's endorsement, and even if the Central Committee refuses to endorse them. Nothing could be clearer, one would think: Rules are a formal expression of organisation, and, according to Paragraph 6 of our Party Rules, the right to organise committees is explicitly vested in the Central Committee; Rules define the limits of a com-

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* Nothing could be more comical than the new Iskra's grievance that Lenin refuses to see any differences of principle, or denies them. If your attitude had been based more on principle, you would the sooner have examined my repeated statements that you have swung towards opportunism. If your position had been based more on principle, you could not well have degraded an ideological struggle to a squabble over places. You have only yourselves to blame, for you have yourselves done everything to make it impossible to regard you as men of principle. Take Comrade Martov, for example: when speaking, in his State of Siege, of the League Congress, he says nothing about the dispute with Plekhanov over anarchism, but instead informs us that Lenin is a super-centre, that Lenin has only to wink his eye to have the centre issue orders, that the Central Committee rode roughshod over the League, etc. I have no doubt that by picking his topic in this way, Comrade Martov displayed the profundity of his ideals and principles.
mittee’s autonomy, and the decisive voice in defining those limits belongs to the central and not to a local institution of the Party. *That is elementary*, and it was sheer childishness to argue with such an air of profundity that “organising” does not always imply “endorsing Rules” (as if the League itself had not of its own accord expressed the wish to be organised on the basis of formal Rules). But Comrade Martov has forgotten (temporarily, let us hope) even the ABC of Social-Democracy. In his opinion, the demand that Rules should be endorsed only indicated that “the earlier, revolutionary *Iskra* centralism is being replaced by bureaucratic centralism” (League Minutes, p. 95), and there, in fact—Comrade Martov declared in the same speech—lay the “principle” at issue (p. 96)—a principle which he preferred to ignore in his *State of Siege*!

Comrade Plekhanov answered Martov at once, requesting that expressions like bureaucracy, Jack-in-office, etc., be refrained from as “detracting from the dignity of the Congress” (p. 96). There followed an interchange with Comrade Martov, who regarded these expressions as “a characterisation of a certain trend from the standpoint of principle”. *At that time*, Comrade Plekhanov, like all the other supporters of the majority, took these expressions at their real value, clearly realising that they related exclusively to the realm, if we may so put it, of “co-optation”, and not of principle. However, he deferred to the insistence of the Martovs and Deutsches (pp. 96-97) and proceeded to examine their supposed principles from the standpoint of principle. “If that were so,” said he (that is, if the committees were autonomous in shaping their organisation, in drawing up their Rules), “they would be autonomous in relation to the whole, to the Party. That is not even a Bundist view, it is a downright anarchistic view. That is just how the anarchists argue: the rights of individuals are unlimited; they may conflict; every individual determines the limits of his rights for himself. The limits of autonomy should be determined not by the group itself, but by the whole of which it forms a part. The Bund was a striking instance of the violation of this principle. Hence, the limits of autonomy are determined by the Congress, or by the highest body set up by the Congress. The authority of the central institution should rest on moral and intellectual prestige. There 1, of course,
agree. Every representative of the organisation must be concerned for the moral prestige of its institution. But it does not follow that, while prestige is necessary, authority is not. ... To counteroppose the power of authority to the power of ideas is anarchistic talk, which should have no place here” (p. 98). These propositions are as elementary as can be, they are in fact axioms, which it was strange even to put to the vote (p. 102), and which were called in question only because “concepts have now been confused” (loc. cit.). But the minority’s intellectualist individualism had, inevitably, driven them to the point of wanting to sabotage the Congress, to refuse to submit to the majority; and that wish could not be justified except by anarchistic talk. It is very amusing to note that the minority had nothing to offer in reply to Plekhanov but complaints of his use of excessively strong words, like opportunism, anarchism, and so forth. Plekhanov quite rightly poked fun at these complaints by asking why “the words Jauresism and anarchism are not permissible, and the words lèsemajesté and Jack-in-office are”. No answer was given. This quaint sort of quid pro quo is always happening to Comrades Martov, Axelrod, and Co.: their new catchwords clearly bear the stamp of vexation; any reference to the fact offends them—they are, you see, men of principle; but, they are told, if you deny on principle that the part should submit to the whole, you are anarchists, and again they are offended!—the expression is too strong! In other words, they want to give battle to Plekhanov, but only on condition that he does not hit back in earnest!

How many times Comrade Martov and various other “Mensheviks”* have convicted me, no less childishly, of the following “contradiction”. They quote a passage from What Is To Be Done? or A Letter to a Comrade which speaks of ideological influence, a struggle for influence, etc., and contrast it to the “bureaucratic” method of influencing by means of the Rules, to the “autocratic” tendency to rely on authority, and the like. How naïve they are! They have already forgotten that previously our Party was not a formally organised whole, but merely a sum of separate groups, and therefore no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between

* From the Russian menshinstvo—“minority”, as “Bolshevik” comes from bolshinstvo—“majority”.—Tr.
these groups. Now we have become an organised Party, and this implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower Party bodies to higher ones. Why, it positively makes one uncomfortable to have to chew over such elementary things for the benefit of old associates, especially when one feels that at the bottom of it all is simply the minority's refusal to submit to the majority in the matter of the elections! But from the standpoint of principle these endless exposures of my contradictions boil down to nothing but anarchistic phrase-mongering. The new Iskra is not averse to enjoying the title and rights of a Party institution, but it does not want to submit to the majority of the Party.

If the talk about bureaucracy contains any principle at all, if it is not just an anarchistic denial of the duty of the part to submit to the whole, then what we have here is the principle of opportunism, which seeks to lessen the responsibility of individual intellectuals to the party of the proletariat, to lessen the influence of the central institutions, to enlarge the autonomy of the least steadfast elements in the Party, to reduce organisational relations to a purely platonic and verbal acceptance of them. We saw this at the Party Congress, where the Akimovs and Liebers made exactly the same sort of speeches about "monstrous" centralism as poured from the lips of Martov and Co. at the League Congress. That opportunism leads to the Martov and Axelrod "views" on organisation by its very nature, and not by chance, and not in Russia alone but the world over, we shall see later, when examining Comrade Axelrod's article in the new Iskra.

p) Little Annoyances Should Not Stand in the Way of a Big Pleasure

The League's rejection of the resolution declaring that its Rules must be endorsed by the Central Committee (League Minutes, p. 105) was, as the Party Congress majority at once unanimously noted, a "crying violation of the Party Rules". Regarded as the act of men of principle, this violation was sheer anarchism; while in the atmosphere of the post-Congress struggle, it inevitably
created the impression that the Party minority were trying to "settle scores" with the Party majority (League Minutes, p. 112); it meant that they did not wish to obey the Party or to remain within the Party. And when the League refused to adopt a resolution on the Central Committee statement calling for changes in its Rules (pp. 124-25), it inevitably followed that this assembly, which wanted to be counted an assembly of a Party organisation but at the same time not to obey the Party's central institution, had to be pronounced unlawful. Accordingly, the followers of the Party majority at once withdrew from this quasi-Party assembly, so as not to have any share in an indecent farce.

The individualism of the intellectual, with its platonic acceptance of organisational relations, which was revealed in the lack of steadfastness over Paragraph 1 of the Rules, thus in practice reached the logical end I had predicted even in September, that is, a month and a half before, namely, the point of disrupting the Party organisation. And at that moment, on the evening of the day the League Congress ended, Comrade Plekhanov announced to his colleagues on both the Party's central institutions that he could not bear to "fire on his comrades", that "rather than have a split, it is better to put a bullet in one's brain", and that, to avert a greater evil, it was necessary to make the maximum personal concessions, over which, in point of fact (much more than over the principles to be discerned in the incorrect position on Paragraph 1), this destructive struggle was being waged. In order to give a more accurate characterisation of Comrade Plekhanov's right-about-face, which has acquired a certain general Party significance, I consider it advisable to rely not on private conversations, nor on private letters (that last resort in extremity), but on Plekhanov's own statement of the case to the whole Party, namely, his article "What Should Not Be Done" in No. 52 of Iskra, which was written just after the League Congress, after I had resigned from the editorial board of the Central Organ (November 1, 1903), and before the co-optation of the Martovites (November 26, 1903).

The fundamental idea of "What Should Not Be Done" is that in politics one must not be too stiff-necked, too harsh and unyielding; that it is sometimes necessary, to
avoid a split, to yield even to revisionists (among those moving towards us or among the inconsistent) and to anarchistic individualists. It was only natural that these abstract generalities should arouse universal perplexity among *Iskra* readers. One cannot help laughing when reading the proud and majestic statements of Comrade Plekhanov (in subsequent articles) that he had not been understood because of the novelty of his ideas and because people lacked a knowledge of dialectics. In reality, "What Should Not Be Done" could only be understood, at the time it was written, by some dozen people living in two Geneva suburbs whose names both begin with the same letter. Comrade Plekhanov’s misfortune was that he put into circulation among some ten thousand readers an agglomeration of hints, reproaches, algebraical symbols, and riddles which were intended only for these dozen or so people who had taken part in all the developments of the post-Congress struggle with the minority. This misfortune befell Comrade Plekhanov because he violated a basic principle of that dialectics to which he so unluckily referred, namely, that there is no abstract truth, that truth is always concrete. That is why it was out of place to lend an abstract form to the perfectly concrete idea of yielding to the Martovites after the League Congress.

Yielding—which Comrade Plekhanov advocated as a new war-cry—is legitimate and essential in two cases: when the yielder is convinced that those who are striving to make him yield are in the right (in which case honest political leaders frankly and openly admit their mistake), or when an irrational and harmful demand is yielded to in order to avert a greater evil. It is perfectly clear from the article in question that it is the latter case the author has in mind: he speaks plainly of yielding to revisionists and anarchistic individualists (that is, to the Martovites, as every Party member now knows from the League Minutes), and says that it is essential in order to avert a split. As we see, Comrade Plekhanov’s supposedly novel idea amounts to no more than the not very novel piece of commonplace wisdom that little annoyances should not be allowed to stand in the way of a big pleasure, that a little opportunist folly and a little anarchistic talk is better than a big Party split. When Comrade Plekhanov wrote this article he clearly realised that the minority represented
the opportunist wing of our Party and that they were fighting with anarchistic weapons. Comrade Plekhanov came forward with the plan to combat this minority by means of personal concessions, just as (again *si licet parua componere magnis*) the German Social-Democrats combated Bernstein. Bebel publicly declared at congresses of his Party that he did not know anyone who was so suspectible to the influence of environment as Comrade Bernstein (not Mr. Bernstein, as Comrade Plekhanov was once so fond of calling him, but Comrade Bernstein): let us take him into our environment, let us make him a member of the Reichstag, let us combat revisionism, not by inappropriate harshness (*à la* Sobakevich-Parvus) towards the revisionist, but by “killing him with kindness”—as Comrade M. Beer, I recall, put it at a meeting of English Social-Democrats when defending German conciliatoriness, peaceableness, mildness, flexibility, and caution against the attack of the English Sobakevich—Hyndman. And in just the same way, Comrade Plekhanov wanted to “kill with kindness” the little anarchism and the little opportunism of Comrades Axelrod and Martov. True, while hinting quite plainly at the “anarchistic individualists”, Comrade Plekhanov expressed himself in a deliberately vague way about the revisionists; he did so in a manner to create the impression that he was referring to the Rabocheye Dyelo-ists, who were swinging from opportunism towards orthodoxy, and not to Axelrod and Martov, who had begun to swing from orthodoxy towards revisionism. But this was only an innocent military ruse, *

* There was never any question after the Party Congress of making concessions to Comrades Martynov, Akimov, and Brouckère. I am not aware that they too demanded “co-option”. I even doubt whether Comrade Starover or Comrade Martov consulted Comrade Brouckère when they sent us their epistles and “notes” in the name of “half the Party”.... At the League Congress Comrade Martov rejected, with the profound indignation of an unbending political stalwart, the very idea of a “union with Ryazanov or Martynov”, of the possibility of a “deal” with them, or even of joint “service to the Party” (as an editor; League Minutes, p. 53). At the League Congress Comrade Martov sternly condemned “Martynov tendencies” (p. 88), and when Comrade Orthodox subtly hinted that Axelrod and Martov no doubt “consider that Comrades Akimov, Martynov, and others also have the right to get together, draw up Rules for themselves, and act in accordance with them as they see fit” (p. 99), the Martovites denied it, as Peter denied Christ (p. 100: 167
a feeble bulwark that was incapable of withstanding the artillery fire of Party publicity.

And anyone who acquaints himself with the actual state of affairs at the political juncture we are describing, anyone who gains an insight into Comrade Plekhanov’s mentality, will realise that I could not have acted in this instance otherwise than I did. I say this for the benefit of those supporters of the majority who have reproached me for surrendering the editorial board. When Comrade Plekhanov swung round after the League Congress and from being a supporter of the majority became a supporter of reconciliation at all costs, I was obliged to put the very best interpretation on it. Perhaps Comrade Plekhanov wanted in his article to put forward a programme for an amicable and honest peace? Any such programme boils down to a sincere admission of mistakes by both sides. What was the mistake Comrade Plekhanov laid at the door of the majority? An inappropriate, Sobakevich-like, harshness towards the revisionists. We do not know what Comrade Plekhanov had in mind by that: his Witticism about the asses, or his extremely incautious—in Axelrod’s presence—reference to anarchism and opportunism. Comrade Plekhanov preferred to express himself “abstractly”, and, moreover, with a hint at the other fellow. That is a matter of taste, of course. But, after all, I had admitted my personal harshness openly both in the letter to the Iskra-ist and at the League Congress. How then could I refuse to admit that the majority were guilty of such a “mistake”? As to the minority, Comrade Plekhanov pointed to their mistake quite clearly, namely, revisionism (cf. his remarks about opportunism at the Party Congress and about Jaurèsism at the League Congress) and anarchism which had led to the verge of a split. Could I obstruct an attempt to secure an acknowledgement of these mistakes and undo their harm by means of personal concessions and “kindness” in general? Could I obstruct such an attempt when Comrade Plekhanov in “What Should Not Be Done” directly appealed to us to “spare the adversaries” among the revisionists who were revisionists “only because of a certain inconsistency”? And if I did not believe

“Comrade Orthodox’s fears” “regarding the Akimovs, Martynovs, etc”, “have no foundation”).
in this attempt, could I do otherwise than make a personal
concession regarding the Central Organ and move over
to the Central Committee in order to defend the position
of the majority? I could not absolutely deny the feasibil-
ity of such attempts and take upon myself the full onus
for the threatening split, if only because I had myself
been inclined, in the letter of October 6, to attribute the
wrangle to "personal irritation". But I did consider, and
still consider, it my political duty to defend the position
of the majority. To rely in this on Comrade Plekhanov
would have been difficult and risky, for everything went
to show that he was prepared to interpret his dictum that
"a leader of the proletariat has no right to give rein to
his warlike inclinations when they run counter to political
good sense"—to interpret it in a dialectical way to mean
that if you had to fire, then it was better sense (consider-
ing the state of the weather in Geneva in November) to
fire at the majority.... To defend the majority's position
was essential, because, when dealing with the question
of the free (?) will of a revolutionary, Comrade Plekha-
nov—in defiance of dialectics, which demands a concrete
and comprehensive examination—modestly evaded the
question of confidence in a revolutionary, Comrade Plekha-
nov—in defiance of dialectics, which demands a concrete
and comprehensive examination—modestly evaded the
question of confidence in a revolutionary, Comrade Plekha-
nov—in defiance of dialectics, which demands a concrete
and comprehensive examination—modestly evaded the
question of confidence in a revolutionary, Comrade Plekha-

* Comrade Martov put it very aptly when he said that I had
moved over avec armes et bagages. Comrade Martov is very fond
of military metaphors: campaign against the League, engagement,
incurable wounds, etc., etc. To tell the truth, I too have a great
weakness for military metaphors, especially just now, when one
follows the news from the Pacific with such eager interest. But,
Comrade Martov, if we are to use military language, the story goes
like this. We capture two forts at the Party Congress. You attack
them at the League Congress. After the first brief interchange of
shots, my colleague, the commandant of one of the forts, opens the
gates to the enemy. Naturally, I gather together the little artillery
I have and move into the other fort, which is practically unfortihed,
in order to "stand siege" against the enemy's overwhelming numbers.
I even make an offer of peace, for what chance do I stand against
two powers? But in reply to my offer, the new allies bombard my
last fort. I return the fire. Whereupon my former colleague—the
commandant—exclaims in magnificent indignation: "Just look, good
people, how bellicose this Chamberlain is!"
has nothing to do with devotion to the revolutionary idea”, Comrade Plekhanov apparently forgot that we must also reckon with the free will of the majority of the Party, and that it must be left to the practical workers to determine the extent of the concessions to be made to the anarchistic individualists. Easy as it is to fight childish anarchistic nonsense on the literary plane, it is very difficult to carry on practical work in the same organisation with an anarchistic individualist. A writer who took it upon himself to determine the extent of the concessions that might be made to anarchism in practice would only be betraying his inordinate and truly doctrinaire literary conceit. Comrade Plekhanov majestically remarked (for the sake of importance, as Bazarov used to say) that if a new split were to occur the workers would cease to understand us; yet at the same time he initiated an endless stream of articles in the new Iskra whose real and concrete meaning was bound to be incomprehensible not only to the workers, but to the world at large. It is not surprising that when a member of the Central Committee read the proofs of “What Should Not Be Done” he warned Comrade Plekhanov that his plan to somewhat curtail the size of a certain publication (the minutes of the Party Congress and the League Congress) would be defeated by this very article, which would excite curiosity, offer for the judgement of the man in the street something that was piquant and at the same time quite incomprehensible to him,* and inevitably cause people to ask in perplexity: “What has happened?” It is not surprising that owing to the abstractness of its arguments and the vagueness of its hints, this article of Comrade Plekhanov’s caused jubilation in the ranks of the enemies of Social-Democracy—the dancing of the cancan in the columns of Revolutionsnaya Rossiya.*

* We are having a heated and passionate argument in private. Suddenly one of us jumps up, flings open the window, and begins to clamour against Sobakeviches, anarchistic individualists, revisionists, etc. Naturally, a crowd of curious idlers gathers in the street and our enemies rub their hands in glee. Other of the disputants go to the window too and want to give a coherent account of the whole matter, without hinting at things nobody knows anything about. Thereupon the window is banged to on the plea that it is not worth while discussing squabbles (Iskra, No. 53, p. 8, col. 2, line 24 up). It was not worth while beginning in “Iskra” on a discussion of “squabbles”, Comrade Plekhanov—that would be nearer the truth!
and ecstatic praises from the consistent revisionists in Os-
vobozhdjeniye. The source of all these comical and sad mis-
understandings, from which Comrade Plekhanov later tried so comically and so sadly to extricate himself, lay
precisely in the violation of that basic principle of dialects:
congrete questions should be examined in all their concreteness. The delight of Mr. Struve, in particular, was
quite natural: he was not in the least interested in the
"good" aims (killing with kindness) which Comrade Ple-
khanov pursued (but might not achieve); Mr. Struve wel-
comed, and could not but welcome, that swing towards the
opportunist wing of our Party which had begun in the new
Izka, as everybody can now plainly see. The Russian bour-
geois democrats are not the only ones to welcome every
swing towards opportunism, even the slightest and most
temporary, in any Social-Democratic party. The estimate
of a shrewd enemy is very rarely based on sheer misunder-
standing: you can tell a man's mistakes by the people who
praise him. And it is in vain that Comrade Plekhanov
hopes the reader will be inattentive and tries to make out
that the majority unconditionally objected to a personal
concession in the matter of co-optation, and not to a deser-
tion from the Left wing of the Party to the Right. The
point is not that Comrade Plekhanov made a personal
concession in order to avert a split (that was very praise-
worthy), but that, though fully realising the need to join
issue with the inconsistent revisionists and anarchistic in-
dividualists, he chose instead to join issue with the major-
ity, with whom he parted company over the extent of the
possible practical concessions to anarchism. The point is
not that Comrade Plekhanov changed the personal com-
position of the editorial board, but that he betrayed his po-
sition of opposing revisionism and anarchism and ceased
to defend that position in the Central Organ of the Party.

As to the Central Committee, which at this time was the
sole organised representative of the majority, Comrade
Plekhanov parted company with it then exclusively over
the possible extent of practical concessions to anarchism.
Nearly a month had elapsed since November 1, when my
resignation had given a free hand to the policy of killing
with kindness. Comrade Plekhanov had had every oppor-
tunity, through all sorts of contacts, to test the expedience
of this policy. Comrade Plekhanov had in this period pub-
lished his article "What Should Not Be Done", which was—and remains—the Martovites’ sole ticket of admittance, so to speak, to the editorial board. The watchwords—revisionism (which we should contend with, but sparing the adversary) and anarchistic individualism (which should be courted and killed with kindness)—were printed on this ticket in imposing italics. Do come in, gentlemen, please, I will kill you with kindness—is what Comrade Plekhanov said by this invitation card to his new colleagues on the editorial board. Naturally, all that remained to the Central Committee was to say its last word (that is what ultimatum means—a last word as to a possible peace) about what, in its opinion, was the permissible extent of practical concessions to anarchistic individualism. Either you want peace—in which case here are a certain number of seats to prove our kindness, peaceableness, readiness to make concessions, etc. (we cannot allow you any more if peace is to be guaranteed in the Party, peace not in the sense of an absence of controversy, but in the sense that the Party will not be destroyed by anarchistic individualism); take these seats and swing back again little by little from Akimov to Plekhanov. Or else you want to maintain and develop your point of view, to swing over altogether to Akimov (if only in the realm of organizational questions), and to convince the Party that you, not Plekhanov, are right—in which case form a writers’ group of your own, secure representation at the next Congress, and set about winning a majority by an honest struggle, by open controversy. This alternative, which was quite explicitly submitted to the Martovites in the Central Committee ultimatum of November 25, 1903 (see State of Siege and Commentary on the League Minutes*), was

* I shall not, of course, go into the tangle Martov created over this Central Committee ultimatum in his State of Siege by quoting private conversations and so on. This is the “second method of struggle” I described in the previous section, which only a specialist in nervous disorders could hope to disentangle. It is enough to say that Comrade Martov insists that there was an agreement with the Central Committee not to publish the negotiations, which agreement has not been discovered to this day in spite of a most assiduous search. Comrade Travinsky, who conducted the negotiations on behalf of the Central Committee, informed me in writing that he considered me entitled to publish my letter to the editors outside of Iskra.

But there was one phrase of Comrade Martov’s that I particularly liked. That was the phrase “Bonapartism of the worst type".
in full harmony with the letter Plekhanov and I had sent to the former editors on October 6, 1903: either it is a matter of personal irritation (in which case, if the worst comes to the worst, we might even “co-opt”), or it is a matter of a difference of principle (in which case you must first convince the Party, and only then talk about changing the personal composition of the central bodies). The Central Committee could the more readily leave it to the Martovites to make this delicate choice for themselves since at this very time Comrade Martov in his profession de foi (Once More in the Minority) wrote the following:

"The minority lay claim to only one honour, namely, to be the first in the history of our Party to show that one can be 'defeated' and yet not form a new party. This position of the minority follows from all their views on the organisational development of the Party; it follows from the consciousness of their strong ties with the Party's earlier work. The minority do not believe in the mystic power of 'paper revolutions', and see in the deep roots which their endeavours have in life a guarantee that by purely ideological propaganda within the Party they will secure the triumph of their principles of organisation". (My italics.)

What proud and magnificent words! And how bitter it was to be taught by events that they were—merely words.... I hope you will forgive me, Comrade Martov, but now I claim on behalf of the majority this "honour" which you have not deserved. The honour will indeed be a great one, one worth fighting for, for the circles have left us the tradition of an extraordinarily light-hearted attitude towards splits and an extraordinarily zealous ap-

I find that Comrade Martov has brought in this category very appropriately. Let us examine dispassionately what the concept implies. In my opinion, it implies acquiring power by formally legal means, but actually in defiance of the will of the people (or of a party). Is that not so, Comrade Martov? And if it is, then I may safely leave it to the public to judge who has been guilty of this “Bonapartism of the worst type”: Lenin and Comrade Y, who might have availed themselves of their formal right not to admit the Martovites, but did not avail themselves of it, though in doing so they would have been backed by the will of the Second Congress—or those who occupied the editorial board by formally legitimate means (“unanimous co-optation”), but who knew that actually this was not in accordance with the will of the Second Congress and who are afraid to have this will tested at the Third Congress.
lication of the maxim: 'either coats off, or let's have your hand!'

The big pleasure (of having a united Party) was bound to outweigh, and did outweigh, the little annoyances (in the shape of the squabbling over co-optation). I resigned from the Central Organ, and Comrade Y (who had been delegated by Plekhanov and myself to the Party Council on behalf of the editorial board of the Central Organ) resigned from the Council. The Martovites replied to the Central Committee's last word as to peace with a letter (see publications mentioned) which was tantamount to a declaration of war. Then, and only then, did I write my letter to the editorial board (Iskra, No. 53) on the subject of publicity.* If it comes to talking about revisionism and discussing inconsistency, anarchist individualism, and the defeat of various leaders, then, gentlemen, let us tell all that occurred, without reservation—that was the gist of this letter about publicity. The editorial board replied with angry abuse and the lordly admonition: do not dare to stir up "the pettiness and squabbling of circle life" (Iskra, No. 53). Is that so, I thought to myself: "the pettiness and squabbling of circle life"? ... Well, es ist mir recht, gentlemen, there I agree with you. Why, that means that you directly class all this fuss over "co-optation" as circle squabbling. That is true. But what discord is this?—in the editorial of this same issue, No. 53, this same editorial board (we must suppose) talks about bureaucracy, formalism, and the rest.** Do not dare to raise the question of the fight for co-optation to the Central Organ, for that would be squabbling. But we will raise the question of co-optation to the Central Committee, and will not call it squabbling, but a difference of principle on the subject of "formalism". No, dear comrades, I said to myself, per-

** As it subsequently turned out, the "discord" was explained very simply—it was a discord among the editors of the Central Organ. It was Plekhanov who wrote about "squabbling" (see his admission in "A Sad Misunderstanding", No. 57), while the editorial, "Our Congress", was written by Martov (State of Siege, p. 84). They were tugging in different directions.
mit me not to permit you that. You want to fire at my fort, and yet demand that I surrender my artillery. What jokers you are! And so I wrote and published outside of Iskra my Letter to the Editors (Why I Resigned from the "Iskra" Editorial Board),* briefly relating what had really occurred, and asking yet again whether peace was not possible on the basis of the following division: you take the Central Organ, we take the Central Committee. Neither side will then feel “alien” in the Party, and we will argue about the swing towards opportunism, first in the press, and then, perhaps, at the Third Party Congress.

In reply to this mention of peace the enemy opened fire with all his batteries, including even the Council. Shells rained on my head. Autocrat, Schweitzer, bureaucrat, formalist, super-centre, one-sided, stiff-necked, obstinate, narrow-minded, suspicious, quarrelsome.... Very well, my friends! Have you finished? You have nothing more in reserve? Poor ammunition, I must say....

Now comes my turn. Let us examine the content of the new Iskra’s new views on organisation and the relation of these views to that division of our Party into “majority” and “minority” the true character of which we have shown by our analysis of the debates and voting at the Second Congress.

q) The New Iskra
Opportunism in Questions of Organisation

As the basis for an analysis of the principles of the new Iskra we should unquestionably take the two articles of Comrade Axelrod.** The concrete meaning of some of his favourite catchwords has already been shown at length. Now we must try to leave their concrete meaning on one side and delve down to the line of thought that caused the “minority” to arrive (in connection with this or that minor and petty matter) at these particular slogans rather than any others, must examine the principles behind these

** These articles were included in the collection “Iskra” over Two Years, Part II, p. 122 et seq. (St. Petersburg, 1906). (Author’s note to 1907 edition.—Ed.)
slogans, irrespective of their origin, irrespective of the question of “co-optation”. Concessions are all the fashion nowadays, so let us make a concession to Comrade Axelrod and take his “theory” “seriously”.

Comrade Axelrod’s basic thesis (Iskra, No. 57) is that “from the very outset our movement harboured two opposite trends, whose mutual antagonism could not fail to develop and to affect the movement parallel with its own development”. To be specific: “In principle, the proletarian aim of the movement [in Russia] is the same as that of western Social-Democracy.” But in our country the masses of the workers are influenced “by a social element alien to them”, namely, the radical intelligentsia. And so, Comrade Axelrod establishes the existence of an antagonism between the proletarian and the radical-intellectual trend in our Party.

In this Comrade Axelrod is undoubtedly right. The existence of such an antagonism (and not in the Russian Social-Democratic Party alone) is beyond question. What is more, everyone knows that it is this antagonism that largely accounts for the division of present-day Social-Democracy into revolutionary (also known as orthodox) and opportunist (revisionist, ministerialist, reformist) Social-Democracy, which during the past ten years of our movement has become fully apparent in Russia too. Everyone also knows that the proletarian trend of the movement is expressed by orthodox Social-Democracy, while the trend of the democratic intelligentsia is expressed by opportunist Social-Democracy.

But, after so closely approaching this piece of common knowledge, Comrade Axelrod begins timidly to back away from it. He does not make the slightest attempt to analyse how this division manifested itself in the history of Russian Social-Democracy in general, and at our Party Congress in particular, although it is about the Congress that he is writing! Like all the other editors of the new Iskra, Comrade Axelrod displays a mortal fear of the minutes of this Congress. This should not surprise us after all that has been said above, but in a “theoretician” who claims to be investigating the different trends in our movement it is certainly a queer case of truth-phobia. Backing away, because of this malady, from the latest and most accurate material on the trends in our movement, Comrade Axela-
rod seeks salvation in the sphere of pleasant daydreaming. He writes: "Has not legal Marxism, or semi-Marxism, provided our liberals with a literary leader? Why should not prankish history provide revolutionary bourgeois democracy with a leader from the school of orthodox, revolutionary Marxism?" All we can say about this daydream which Comrade Axelrod finds so pleasant is that if history does sometimes play pranks, that is no excuse for pranks of thought on the part of people who undertake to analyse history. When the liberal peeped out from under the cloak of the leader of semi-Marxism, those who wished (and were able) to trace his "trend" did not allude to possible pranks of history, but pointed to tens and hundreds of instances of that leader's mentality and logic, to all those characteristics of his literary make-up which betrayed the reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature. And if Comrade Axelrod, setting out to analyse "the general-revolutionary and the proletarian trend in our movement", could produce nothing, absolutely nothing, in proof or evidence that certain representatives of that orthodox wing of the Party which he so detests showed such-and-such a trend, he thereby issued a formal certificate of his own poverty. Comrade Axelrod's case must be weak indeed if all he can do is allude to possible pranks of history!

Comrade Axelrod's other allusion—to the "Jacobins"—is still more revealing. Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the division of present-day Social-Democracy into revolutionary and opportunist has long since given rise—and not only in Russia—to "historical parallels with the era of the great French Revolution". Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy everywhere and always resort to the terms "Jacobinism", "Blanquism", and so on to describe their opponents. Let us then not imitate Comrade Axelrod's truth-phobia, let us consult the minutes of our Congress and see whether they offer any material for an analysis and examination of the trends we are considering and the parallels we are discussing.

First example: the Party Congress debate on the programme. Comrade Akimov ("fully agreeing" with Comrade Martynov) says: "The clause on the capture of political power [the dictatorship of the proletariat] has been formulated in such a way—as compared with the pro-
grammes of all other Social-Democratic parties—that it may be interpreted, and actually has been interpreted by Plekhanov, to mean that the role of the leading organisation will relegate to the background the class it is leading and separate the former from the latter. Consequently, the formulation of our political tasks is exactly the same as in the case of Narodnaya Volya." (Minutes, p. 124.) Comrade Plekhanov and other Iskra-ists take issue with Comrade Akimov and accuse him of opportunism. Does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute shows us (in actual fact, and not in the imaginary pranks of history) the antagonism between the present-day Jacobins and the present-day Girondists of Social-Democracy? And was it not because he found himself in the company of the Girondists of Social-Democracy (owing to the mistakes he committed) that Comrade Axelrod began talking about Jacobins?

Second example: Comrade Posadovsky declares that there is a "serious difference of opinion" over the "fundamental question" of "the absolute value of democratic principles" (p. 169). Together with Plekhanov, he denies their absolute value. The leaders of the "Centre" or Marsh (Egorov) and of the anti-Iskra-ists (Goldblatt) vehemently oppose this view and accuse Plekhanov of "imitating bourgeois tactics" (p. 170). This is exactly Comrade Axelrod's idea of a connection between orthodoxy and the bourgeois trend, the only difference being that in Axelrod's case it is vague and general, whereas Goldblatt linked it up with specific issues. Again we ask: does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute, too, shows us palpably, at our Party Congress, the antagonism between the Jacobins and the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy? Is it not because he finds himself in the company of the Girondists that Comrade Axelrod raises this outcry against the Jacobins?

Third example: the debate on Paragraph 1 of the Rules. Who is it that defends "the proletarian trend in our movement"? Who is it that insists that the worker is not afraid of organisation, that the proletarian has no sympathy for anarchy, that he values the incentive to organise? Who is it that warns us against the bourgeois intelligentsia, permeated through and through with opportunism? The Jacobins of Social-Democracy. And who is it that tries to
smuggle radical intellectuals into the Party? Who is it that is concerned about professors, high-school students, free lances, the radical youth? The Girondist Axelrod together with the Girondist Lieber.

How clumsily Comrade Axelrod defends himself against the “false accusation of opportunism” that at our Party Congress was openly levelled at the majority of the Emancipation of Labour group! By taking up the hackneyed Bernsteinian refrain about Jacobinism, Blanquism, and so on, he defends himself in a manner that only bears out the accusation! He shouts about the menace of the radical intellectuals in order to drown out his own speeches at the Party Congress, which were full of concern for these intellectuals.

These “dreadful words”—Jacobinism and the rest—are expressive of opportunism and nothing else. A Jacobin who wholly identifies himself with the organisation of the proletariat—a proletariat conscious of its class interests—is a revolutionary Social-Democrat. A Girondist who sighs after professors and high-school students, who is afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and who yearns for the absolute value of democratic demands is an opportunist. It is only opportunists who can still detect a danger in conspiratorial organisations today, when the idea of confining the political struggle to conspiracy has been refuted thousands of times in the press and has long been refuted and swept aside by the realities of life, and when the cardinal importance of mass political agitation has been elucidated and reiterated to the point of nausea. The real basis of this fear of conspiracy, of Blanquism, is not any feature to be found in the practical movement (as Bernstein and Co. have long, and vainly, been trying to make out), but the Girondist timidity of the bourgeois intellectual, whose mentality so often shows itself among the Social-Democrats of today. Nothing could be more comical than these laborious efforts of the new Iskra to utter a new word of warning (uttered hundreds of times before) against the tactics of the French conspirator revolutionaries of the forties and sixties (No. 62, editorial). In the next issue of Iskra, the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy will no doubt show us a group of French conspirators of the forties for whom the importance of political agitation among the working masses, the importance of the
labour press as the principal means by which the party influences the class, was an elementary truth they had learned and assimilated long ago.

However, the tendency of the new Iskra to repeat the elements and go back to the ABC while pretending to be uttering something new is not fortuitous; it is an inevitable consequence of the situation Axelrod and Martov find themselves in, now that they have landed in the opportunist wing of our Party. There is nothing for it. They have to repeat the opportunist phrases, they have to go back, in order to try to find in the remote past some sort of justification for their position, which is indefensible from the point of view of the struggle at the Congress and of the shades and divisions in the Party that took shape there. To the Akimovite profundities about Jacobinism and Blanquism, Comrade Axelrod adds Akimovite lamentations to the effect that not only the “Economists”, but the “politicians” as well, were “one-sided”, excessively “infatuated”, and so on and so forth. Reading the high-flown disquisitions on this subject in the new Iskra, which conceitedly claims to be above all this one-sidedness and infatuation, one asks in perplexity: whose portrait is it they are painting? where is it that they hear such talk? Who does not know that the division of the Russian Social-Democrats into Economists and politicians has long been obsolete? Go through the files of Iskra for the last year or two before the Party Congress, and you will find that the fight against “Economism” subsided and came to an end altogether as far back as 1902; you will find, for example, that in July 1903 (No. 43), “the times of Economism” are spoken of as being “definitely over”, Economism is considered “dead and buried”, and any infatuations of the politicians are regarded as obvious atavism. Why, then, do the new editors of Iskra revert to this dead and buried division? Did we fight the Akimovs at the Congress on account of the mistakes they made in Rabocheye Dyelo two years ago? If we had, we should have been sheer idiots. But everyone knows that we did not, that it was not for their old, dead and buried mistakes in Rabocheye Dyelo that we fought the Akimovs at the Congress, but for the new mistakes they committed in their arguments and their voting at the Congress. It was not by their stand in Rabocheye Dyelo, but by their stand at the Congress, that
we judged which mistakes were really a thing of the past and which still lived and called for controversy. By the time of the Congress the old division into Economists and politicians no longer existed; but various opportunist trends continued to exist. They found expression in the debates and voting on a number of issues, and finally led to a new division of the Party into “majority” and “minority”. The whole point is that the new editors of Iskra are, for obvious reasons, trying to gloss over the connection between this new division and contemporary opportunism in our Party, and are, in consequence, compelled to go back from the new division to the old one. Their inability to explain the political origin of the new division (or their desire, in order to prove how accommodating they are, to cast a veil* over its origin) compels them to keep harping on a division that has long been obsolete. Everyone knows that the new division is based on a difference over questions of organisation, which began with the controversy over principles of organisation (Paragraph 1 of the Rules) and ended up with a “practice” worthy of anarchists. The old division into Economists and politicians was based mainly on a difference over questions of tactics.

In its efforts to justify this retreat from the more complex, truly topical and burning issues of Party life to issues that have long been settled and have now been dug up artificially, the new Iskra resorts to an amusing display of profundity for which there can be no other name than tail-ism. Started by Comrade Axelrod, there runs like a crimson thread through all the writing of the new Iskra the profound “idea” that content is more important than form, that programme and tactics are more important.

*See Plekhanov’s article on “Economism” in No. 53 of Iskra. The subtitle of the article appears to contain a slight misprint. Instead of “Reflections on the Second Party Congress”, it should apparently read, “on the League Congress”, or even “on Co-optation”. However, appropriate concessions to personal claims may be under certain circumstances, it is quite inadmissible (from the Party, not the philistine standpoint) to confuse the issues that are agitating the Party and to substitute for the new mistake of Martov and Axelrod, who have begun to swing from orthodoxy towards opportunism, the old mistake (never recalled today by anyone except the new Iskra) of the Martynovs and Akinovs, who perhaps may now be prepared to swing from opportunism towards orthodoxy on many questions of programme and tactics.
tant than organisation, that “the vitality of an organisation is in direct proportion to the volume and value of the content it puts into the movement”, that centralism is not an “end in itself”, not an “all-saving talisman”, etc., etc. Great and profound truths! The programme is indeed more important than tactics, and tactics more important than organisation. The alphabet is more important than etymology, and etymology more important than syntax—but what would we say of people who, after failing in an examination in syntax, went about pluming and priding themselves on being left in a lower class for another year? Comrade Axelrod argued about principles of organisation like an opportunist (Paragraph 1), and behaved inside the organisation like an anarchist (League Congress)—and now he is trying to render Social-Democracy more profound. Sour grapes! What is organisation, properly speaking? Why, it is only a form. What is centralism? After all, it is not a talisman. What is syntax? Why, it is less important than etymology; it is only the form of combining the elements of etymology...

“Will not Comrade Alexandrov agree with us,” the new editors of Iskra triumphantly ask, “when we say that the Congress did much more for the centralisation of Party work by drawing up a Party programme than by adopting Rules, however perfect the latter may seem?” (No. 56, Supplement.) It is to be hoped that this classical utterance will acquire a historic fame no less wide and no less lasting than Comrade Krichevsky’s celebrated remark that Social-Democracy, like mankind, always sets itself only such tasks as it can perform. For the new Iskra’s piece of profundity is of exactly the same stamp. Why was Comrade Krichevsky’s phrase held up to derision? Because he tried to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of tactics—their inability to set correct political tasks—by a commonplace which he wanted to palm off as philosophy. In exactly the same way the new Iskra tries to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of organisation—the intellectualist instability of certain comrades, which has led them to the point of anarchistic phrase-mongering—by the commonplace that the programme is more important than the Rules, that questions of programme are more important than questions of organisa-
tion! What is this but tail-ism? What is it but pluming oneself on having been left in a lower class for another year?

The adoption of a programme contributes more to the centralisation of the work than the adoption of Rules. How this commonplace, palmed off as philosophy, reeks of the mentality of the radical intellectual, who has much more in common with bourgeois decadence than with Social-Democracy! Why, the word centralisation is used in this famous phrase in a sense that is nothing but symbolical. If the authors of the phrase are unable or disinclined to think, they might at least have recalled the simple fact that the adoption of a programme together with the Bundists, far from leading to the centralisation of our common work, did not even save us from a split. Unity on questions of programme and tactics is an essential but by no means a sufficient condition for Party unity, for the centralisation of Party work (good God, what elementary things one has to spell out nowadays, when all concepts have been confused!). The latter requires, in addition, unity of organisation, which, in a party that has grown to be anything more than a mere family circle, is inconceivable without formal Rules, without the subordination of the minority to the majority and of the part to the whole. As long as we had no unity on the fundamental questions of programme and tactics, we bluntly admitted that we were living in a period of disunity and separate circles, we bluntly declared that before we could unite, lines of demarcation must be drawn; we did not even talk of the forms of a joint organisation, but exclusively discussed the new (at that time they really were new) problems of fighting opportunism on programme and tactics.

At present, as we all agree, this fight has already produced a sufficient degree of unity, as formulated in the Party programme and the Party resolutions on tactics; we had to take the next step, and, by common consent, we did take it, working out the forms of a united organisation that would merge all the circles together. But now these forms have been half destroyed and we have been dragged back, dragged back to anarchistic conduct, to anarchistic phrases, to the revival of a circle in place of a Party editorial board. And this step back is being justified on the plea that the alphabet is more helpful to literate speech than a knowledge of syntax!
The philosophy of tail-ism, which flourished three years ago in questions of tactics, is being resurrected today in relation to questions of organisation. Take the following argument of the new editors. “The militant Social-Democratic trend in the Party,” says Comrade Alexandrov, “should be maintained not only by an ideological struggle, but by definite forms of organisation.” Whereupon the editors edifyingly remark: “Not bad, this juxtaposition of ideological struggle and forms of organisation. The ideological struggle is a process, whereas the forms of organisation are only ... forms (believe it or not, that is what they say—No. 56, Supplement, p. 4, bottom of col. 1!) designed to clothe a fluid and developing content—the developing practical work of the Party.” That is positively in the style of the joke about a cannon-ball being a cannon-ball and a bomb a bomb! The ideological struggle is a process, whereas the forms of organisation are only forms clothing the content! The point at issue is whether our ideological struggle is to have forms of a higher type to clothe it, the forms of a party organisation, binding on all, or the forms of the old disunity and the old circles. We have been dragged back from higher to more primitive forms, and this is being justified on the plea that the ideological struggle is a process, whereas forms— are only forms. That is just how Comrade Krichevsky in bygone days tried to drag us back from tactics-as-a-plan to tactics-as-a-process.

Take the new Iskra’s pompous talk about the “self-training of the proletariat”, directed against those who are supposed to be in danger of missing the content because of the form (No. 58, editorial). Is this not Akimovism No. 2? Akimovism No. 1 justified the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in formulating tactical tasks by talking about the more “profound” content of the proletarian struggle and the self-training of the proletariat. Akimovism No. 2 justifies the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in the theory and practice of organisation by equally profound talk about organisation being merely a form and the self-training of the proletariat the important thing. Let me tell you gentlemen who are so solicitous about the younger brother that the proletariat is not afraid of organisation and discipline! The proletariat will do
nothing to have the worthy professors and high-school students who do not want to join an organisation recognised as Party members merely because they work under the control of an organisation. The proletariat is trained for organisation by its whole life, far more radically than many an intellectual prig. Having gained some understanding of our programme and our tactics, the proletariat will not start justifying backwardness in organisation by arguing that the form is less important than the content. It is not the proletariat, but certain intellectuals in our Party who lack self-training in the spirit of organisation and discipline, in the spirit of hostility and contempt for anarchistic talk. When they say that it is not ripe for organisation, the Akimovs No. 2 libel the proletariat just as the Akimovs No. 1 libelled it when they said that it was not ripe for the political struggle. The proletarian who has become a conscious Social-Democrat and feels himself a member of the Party will reject tail-ism in matters of organisation with the same contempt as he rejected tail-ism in matters of tactics.

Finally, consider the profound wisdom of the new Iskra's "Practical Worker." "Properly understood," he says, "the idea of a 'militant' centralist organisation uniting and centralising the revolutionaries' activities (the italics are to make it look more profound) can only materialise naturally if such activities exist [both new and clever!]; organisation itself, being a form [mark that!], can only grow simultaneously [the italics are the author's, as throughout this quotation] with the growth of the revolutionary work which is its content." (No. 57.) Does not this remind you very much of the character in the folk tale who, on seeing a funeral, cried: "Many happy returns of the day"? I am sure there is not a practical worker (in the genuine sense of the term) in our Party who does not understand that it is precisely the form of our activities (i.e., our organisation) that has long been lagging, and lagging desperately, behind their content, and that only the Simple Simons in the Party could shout to people who are lagging: "Keep in line; don't run ahead!" Compare our Party, let us say, with the Bund. There can be no question but that the content of the work of our Party is im-

* I leave quite aside the fact that the content of our Party
measurably richer, more varied, broader, and deeper than is the case with the Bund. The scope of our theoretical views is wider, our programme more developed, our influence among the mass of the workers (and not merely among the organised artisans) broader and deeper, our propaganda and agitation more varied; the pulse of the political work of both leaders and rank and file is more lively, the popular movements during demonstrations and general strikes more impressive, and our work among the non-proletarian strata more energetic. But the "form"? Compared with the Bund's, the "form" of our work is lagging unpardonably, lagging so that it is an eyesore and brings a blush of shame to the cheeks of anyone who does not merely "pick his teeth" when contemplating the affairs of his Party. The fact that the organisation of our work lags behind its content is our weak point, and it was our weak point long before the Congress, long before the Organising Committee was formed. The lame and undeveloped character of the form makes any serious step in the further development of the content impossible: it causes a shameful stagnation, leads to a waste of energy, to a discrepancy between word and deed. We have all been suffering wretchedly from this discrepancy, yet along come the Axelrods and "Practical Workers" of the new Iskra with their profound precept: the form must grow naturally, only simultaneously with the content!

That is where a small mistake on the question of organisation (Paragraph 1) will lead you if you try to lend profundity to nonsense and to find philosophical justification for opportunist talk. Marching slowly, in timid zigzags—we have heard this refrain in relation to questions of tactics; we are hearing it again in relation to questions of organisation. Tail-ism in questions of organisation is a natural and inevitable product of the mentality of the anarchistic individualist when he starts to elevate his anarchistic deviations (which at the outset work was mapped out at the Congress (in the programme, etc.) in the spirit of revolutionary Social-Democracy only at the cost of a struggle, a struggle against those very anti-Iskra-ists and that very Marsh whose representatives numerically predominate in our "minority". On this question of "content" it would be interesting also to compare, let us say, six issues of the old Iskra (Nos. 46-51) with twelve issues of the new Iškra (Nos. 52-63). But that will have to wait for some other time.
may have been accidental) to a system of views, to special differences of principle. At the League Congress we witnessed the beginnings of this anarchism; in the new Iskra we are witnessing attempts to elevate it to a system of views. These attempts strikingly confirm what was already said at the Party Congress about the difference between the points of view of the bourgeois intellectual who attaches himself to the Social-Democratic movement and the proletarian who has become conscious of his class interests. For instance, this same “Practical Worker” of the new Iskra with whose profundity we are already familiar denounces me for visualising the Party “as an immense factory” headed by a director in the shape of the Central Committee (No. 57, Supplement). “Practical Worker” never guesses that this dreadful word of his immediately betrays the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual unfamiliar with either the practice or the theory of proletarian organisation. For the factory, which seems only a bogey to some, represents that highest form of capitalist co-operation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organise, and placed it at the head of all the other sections of the toiling and exploited population. And Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, has been and is teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as a means of exploitation (discipline based on fear of starvation) and the factory as a means of organisation (discipline based on collective work united by the conditions of a technically highly developed form of production). The discipline and organisation which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual are very easily acquired by the proletariat just because of this factory “schooling”. Mortal fear of this school and utter failure to understand its importance as an organising factor are characteristic of the ways of thinking which reflect the petty-bourgeois mode of life and which give rise to the species of anarchism that the German Social-Democrats call Edelanarchismus, that is, the anarchism of the “noble” gentleman, or aristocratic anarchism, as I would call it. This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organisation as a monstrous “factory”; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as
"serfdom" (see Axelrod's articles); division of labour under the direction of a centre evokes from him a tragi- comical outcry against transforming people into "cogs and wheels" (to turn editors into contributors being considered a particularly atrocious species of such transfor- mation); mention of the organisational Rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark (intended for the "formalists") that one could very well dispense with Rules altogether.

Incredible as it may seem, it was a didactic remark of just this sort that Comrade Martov addressed to me in Iskra, No. 58, quoting, for greater weight, my own words in A Letter to a Comrade. Well, what is it if not "aristocratic anarchism" and tail-ism to cite examples from the era of disunity, the era of the circles, to justify the preservation and glorification of the circle spirit and anarchy in the era of the Party?

Why did we not need Rules before? Because the Party consisted of separate circles without any organisational tie between them. Any individual could pass from one circle to another at his own "sweet will", for he was not faced with any formulated expression of the will of the whole. Disputes within the circles were not settled according to Rules, "but by struggle and threats to resign", as I put it in A Letter to a Comrade,* summarising the experience of a number of circles in general and of our own editorial circle of six in particular. In the era of the circles, this was natural and inevitable, but it never occurred to anybody to extol it, to regard it as ideal; everyone complained of the disunity, everyone was distressed by it and eager to see the isolated circles fused into a formally constituted party organisation. And now that this fusion has taken place, we are being dragged back and, under the guise of higher organisational views, treated to anarchistic phrase-mongering! To people accustomed to the loose dressing-gown and slippers of the Oblo- mov circle domesticity, formal Rules seem narrow, restrictive, irksome, mean, and bureaucratic, a bond of serfdom and a fetter on the free "process" of the ideological struggle. Aristocratic anarchism cannot understand that formal Rules are needed precisely in order to re-

* See Collected Works, Vol. 6, pp. 231-52.—Ed.
place the narrow circle ties by the broad Party tie. It was unnecessary and impossible to give formal shape to the internal ties of a circle or the ties between circles, for these ties rested on personal friendship or on an instinctive “confidence” for which no reason was given. The Party tie cannot and must not rest on either of these; it must be founded on formal, “bureaucratically” worded Rules (bureaucratic from the standpoint of the undisciplined intellectual), strict adherence to which can alone safeguard us from the willfulness and caprices characteristic of the circles, from the circle wrangling that goes by the name of the free “process” of the ideological struggle.

The editors of the new Iskra try to trump Alexandrov with the didactic remark that “confidence is a delicate thing and cannot be hammered into people’s hearts and minds” (No. 56, Supplement). The editors do not realise that by this talk about confidence, naked confidence, they are once more betraying their aristocratic anarchism and organisational tail-ism. When I was a member of a circle only—whether it was the circle of the six editors or the Iskra organisation—I was entitled to justify my refusal, say, to work with X merely on the grounds of lack of confidence, without stating reason or motive. But now that I have become a member of a party, I have no right to plead lack of confidence in general, for that would throw open the doors to all the freaks and whims of the old circles; I am obliged to give formal reasons for my “confidence” or “lack of confidence”, that is, to cite a formally established principle of our programme, tactics or Rules; I must not just declare my “confidence” or “lack of confidence” without giving reasons, but must acknowledge that my decisions—and generally all decisions of any section of the Party—have to be accounted for to the whole Party; I am obliged to adhere to a formally prescribed procedure when giving expression to my “lack of confidence” or trying to secure the acceptance of the views and wishes that follow from this lack of confidence. From the circle view that “confidence” does not have to be accounted for, we have already risen to the Party view which demands adherence to a formally prescribed procedure of expressing, accounting for, and testing our confidence: but the editors try drag us back, and call their tail-ism new views on organisation!
Listen to the way our so-called Party editors talk about writers’ groups that might demand representation on the editorial board. “We shall not get indignant and begin to shout about discipline”, we are admonished by these aristocratic anarchists who have always and everywhere looked down on such a thing as discipline. We shall either “arrange the matter” (sic!) with the group, if it is sensible, or just laugh at its demands.

Dear me, what a lofty and noble rebuff to vulgar “factory” formalism! But in reality it is the old circle phraseology furbished up a little and served up to the Party by an editorial board which feels that it is not a Party institution, but the survival of an old circle. The intrinsic falsity of this position inevitably leads to the anarchistic profundity of elevating the disunity they hypocritically proclaim to be past and gone to a principle of Social-Democratic organisation. There is no need for any hierarchy of higher and lower Party bodies and authorities—aristocratic anarchism regards such a hierarchy as the bureaucratic invention of ministries, departments, etc. (see Axelrod’s article); there is no need for the part to submit to the whole; there is no need for any “formal bureaucratic” definition of Party methods of “arranging matters” or of delimiting differences. Let the old circle wrangling be sanctified by pompous talk about “genuinely Social-Democratic” methods of organisation.

This is where the proletarian who has been through the school of the “factory” can and should teach a lesson to anarchistic individualism. The class-conscious worker has long since emerged from the state of infancy when he used to fight shy of the intellectual as such. The class-conscious worker appreciates the richer store of knowledge and the wider political outlook which he finds among Social-Democratic intellectuals. But as we proceed with the building of a real party, the class-conscious worker must learn to distinguish the mentality of the soldier of the proletarian army from the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who parades anarchistic phrases; he must learn to insist that the duties of a Party member be fulfilled not only by the rank and file, but by the “people at the top” as well; he must learn to treat tail-ism in matters of organisation with the same contempt as he used, in days gone by, to treat tail-ism in matters of tactics!
Inseparably connected with Girondism and aristocratic anarchism is the last characteristic feature of the new Iskra’s attitude towards matters of organisation, namely, its defence of autonomism as against centralism. This is the meaning in principle (if it has any such meaning*) of its outcry against bureaucracy and autocracy, of its regrets about “an undeserved disregard for the non-Iskra-ists” (who defended autonomism at the Congress), of its comical howls about a demand for “unquestioning obedience”, of its bitter complaints of “Jack-in-office rule”, etc., etc. The opportunist wing of any party always defends and justifies all backwardness, whether in programme, tactics, or organisation. The new Iskra’s defence of backwardness in organisation (its tail-ism) is closely connected with the defence of autonomism. True, autonomism has, generally speaking, been so discredited already by the three years’ propaganda work of the old Iskra that the new Iskra is ashamed, as yet, to advocate it openly; it still assures us of its sympathy for centralism, but shows it only by printing the word centralism in italics. Actually, it is enough to apply the slightest touch of criticism to the “principles” of the “genuinely Social-Democratic” (not anarchistic?) quasi-centralism of the new Iskra for the autonomist standpoint to be detected at every step. Is it not now clear to all and sundry that on the subject of organisation Axelrod and Martov have swung over to Akimov? Have they not solemnly admitted it themselves in the significant words, “undeserved disregard for the non-Iskra-ists”? And what was it but autonomism that Akimov and his friends defended at our Party Congress?

It was autonomism (if not anarchism) that Martov and Axelrod defended at the League Congress when, with amusing zeal, they tried to prove that the part need not submit to the whole, that the part is autonomous in defining its relation to the whole, that the Rules of the League, in which that relation is formulated, are valid in defiance of the will of the Party majority, in defiance of the will of the Party centre. And it is autonomism that Comrade Martov is now openly defending in the columns of the new Iskra (No. 60) in the matter of the right of the Cen-
tral Committee to appoint members to the local committees. I shall not speak of the puerile sophistries which Comrade Martov used to defend autonomism at the League Congress, and is still using in the new *Iskra*—the important thing here is to note the undoubted tendency to *defend autonomism against centralism*, which is a fundamental characteristic of opportunism in matters of organisation.

Perhaps the only attempt to analyse the concept bureaucracy is the distinction drawn in the new *Iskra* (No. 53) between the “formal *democratic principle*” (author’s italics) and the “formal *bureaucratic principle*”. This distinction (which, unfortunately, was no more developed or explained than the reference to the non-*Iskra*-ists) contains a grain of truth. Bureaucracy *versus* democracy is in fact centralism *versus* autonomism; it is the organisational principle of revolutionary Social-Democracy as opposed to the organisational principle of opportunist Social-Democracy. The latter strives to proceed from the bottom upward, and, therefore, wherever possible and as far as possible, upholds autonomism and “democracy”, carried (by the overzealous) to the point of anarchism. The former strives to proceed from the top downward, and upholds an extension of the rights and powers of the centre in relation to the parts. In the period of disunity and separate circles, this top from which revolutionary Social-Democracy strove to proceed organisationally was inevitably one of the circles, the one enjoying most influence by virtue of its activity and its revolutionary consistency (in our case, the *Iskra* organisation). In the period of the restoration of actual Party unity and dissolution of the obsolete circles in this unity, this top is inevitably the *Party Congress*, as the supreme organ of the Party; the Congress as far as possible includes representatives of all the active organisations, and, by appointing the central institutions (often with a membership which satisfies the advanced elements of the Party more than the backward and is more

* In enumerating various paragraphs of the Rules, Comrade Martov omitted the one which deals with the relation of the whole to the part: the Central Committee “allocates the Party forces” (Paragraph 6). Can one allocate forces without transferring people from one committee to another? It is positively awkward to have to dwell on such elementary things.
to the taste of its revolutionary than its opportunist wing), makes them the top until the next Congress. Such, at any rate, is the case among the Social-Democratic Europeans, although little by little this custom, so abhorrent in principle to anarchists, is beginning to spread—not without difficulty and not without conflicts and squabbles—to the Social-Democratic Asiatics.

It is highly interesting to note that these fundamental characteristics of opportunism in matters of organisation (autonomism, aristocratic or intellectualist anarchism, tailism, and Girondism) are, mutatis mutandis (with appropriate modifications), to be observed in all the Social-Democratic parties in the world, wherever there is a division into a revolutionary and an opportunist wing (and where is there not?). Only quite recently this was very strikingly revealed in the German Social-Democratic Party, when its defeat at the elections in the 20th electoral division of Saxony (known as the Göhre incident*) brought the question of the principles of party organisation to the fore. That this incident should have become an issue of principle was largely due to the zeal of the German opportunists. Göhre (an ex-parson, author of the fairly well-known book Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter,** and one of the "heroes" of the Dresden Congress) is himself an extreme opportunist, and the Sozialistische Monatshefte (Socialist Monthly), the organ of the consistent German opportunists, at once "took up the cudgels" on his behalf.

Opportunism in programme is naturally connected with opportunism in tactics and opportunism in organisation. The exposition of the "new" point of view was undertaken by Comrade Wolfgang Heine. To give the reader some idea of the political complexion of this typical intellectual, who on joining the Social-Democratic movement brought with him opportunist habits of thought, it

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*Göhre was returned to the Reichstag on June 16, 1903, from the 15th division of Saxony, but after the Dresden Congress he resigned his seat. The electorate of the 20th division, which had fallen vacant on the death of Rosenow, wanted to put forward Göhre as candidate. The Central Party Executive and the Regional Party Executive for Saxony opposed this, and while they had no formal right to forbid Göhre’s nomination, they succeeded in getting him to decline. The Social Democrats were defeated at the polls.

**Three Months as a Factory Worker.—Ed.
is enough to say that Comrade Wolfgang Heine is something less than a German Comrade Akimov and something more than a German Comrade Egorov.

Comrade Wolfgang Heine took the field in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* with no less pomp than Comrade Axelrod in the new *Iskra*. The very title of his article is priceless: “Democratic Observations on the Gohre Incident” (*Sozialistische Monatshefte*, No 4, April). The contents are no less thunderous. Comrade W. Heine rises up in arms against “encroachments on the autonomy of the constituency”, champions “the democratic principle”, and protests against the interference of an “appointed authority” (i.e., the Central Party Executive) in the free election of deputies by the people. The point at issue, Comrade W. Heine admonishes us, is not a random incident, but a general “tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party”, a tendency, he says, which was to be observed before, but which is now becoming particularly dangerous. It must be “recognised as a principle that the local institutions of the Party are the vehicles of Party life” (a plagiarism on Comrade Martov’s pamphlet *Once More in the Minority*). We must not “accustom ourselves to having all important political decisions come from one centre”, and must warn the Party against “a doctrinaire policy which loses contact with life” (borrowed from Comrade Martov’s speech at the Party Congress to the effect that “life will assert itself”). Rendering his argument more profound, Comrade W. Heine says: “...If we go down to the roots of the matter and leave aside personal conflicts, which here, as everywhere, have played no small part, this bitterness against the revisionists [the italics are the author’s and evidently hint at a distinction between fighting revisionism and fighting revisionists] will be found to be mainly expressive of the distrust of the Party officialdom for ‘outsiders’. [W. Heine had apparently not yet read the pamphlet about combating the state of siege, and therefore resorted to an Anglicism—*Outsidertum*], the distrust of tradition for the unusual, of the impersonal institution for everything individual [see Axelrod’s resolution at the League Congress on the suppression of individual initiative]—in short, of that tendency which we have defined above as a tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party.”
The idea of “discipline” inspires Comrade W. Heine with a no less noble disgust than Comrade Axelrod. . . . "The revisionists," he writes, "have been accused of lack of discipline for having written for the Sozialistische Monatshefte, an organ whose Social-Democratic character has even been denied because it is not controlled by the Party. This very attempt to narrow down the concept ‘Social-Democratic’, this insistence on discipline in the sphere of ideological production, where absolute freedom should prevail [remember: the ideological struggle is a process whereas the forms of organisation are only forms], demonstrates the tendency towards bureaucracy and the suppression of individuality." And W. Heine goes on and on, fulminating against this detestable tendency to create "one big all-embracing organisation, as centralised as possible, one set of tactics, and one theory", against the demand for "implicit obedience", "blind submission", against "oversimplified centralism", etc., etc., literally "à la Axelrod".

The controversy started by W. Heine spread, and as there were no squabbles about co-optation in the German Party to obscure the issue, and as the German Akimovs display their complexion not only at congresses, but all the time, in a periodical of their own, the argument soon boiled down to an analysis of the principles of the orthodox and revisionist trends on the question of organisation. Karl Kautsky came forward (in the Neue Zeit, 1904, No. 28, in the article "Wahlkreis und Partei"—"Constituency and Party") as one of the spokesmen of the revolutionary trend (which, exactly as in our Party, was of course accused of “dictatorship”, “inquisitorial” tendencies, and other dreadful things). W. Heine’s article, he says, "expresses the line of thought of the whole revisionist trend". Not only in Germany, but in France and Italy as well, the opportunists are all staunch supporters of autonomism, of a slackening of Party discipline, of reducing it to naught; everywhere their tendencies lead to disorganisation and to perverting “the democratic principle” into anarchism. "Democracy does not mean absence of authority,” Karl Kautsky informs the opportunists on the subject of organisation, “democracy does not mean anarchy; it means the rule of the masses over their representatives, in distinction to other forms of rule, where the supposed
servants of the people are in reality their masters.” Kautsky traces at length the disruptive role played by opportunist autonomism in various countries; he shows that it is precisely the influx of “a great number of bourgeois elements”** into the Social-Democratic movement that is strengthening opportunism, autonomism, and the tendency to violate discipline; and once more he reminds us that “organisation is the weapon that will emancipate the proletariat”, that “organisation is the characteristic weapon of the proletariat in the class struggle”.

In Germany, where opportunism is weaker than in France or Italy, “autonomist tendencies have so far led only to more or less passionate declamations against dictators and grand inquisitors, against excommunication** and heresy-hunting, and to endless cavilling and squabbling, which would only result in endless strife if replied to by the other side”.

It is not surprising that in Russia, where opportunism in the Party is even weaker than in Germany, autonomist tendencies should have produced fewer ideas and more “passionate declamations” and squabbling.

It is not surprising that Kautsky arrives at the following conclusion: “There is perhaps no other question on which revisionism in all countries, despite its multiplicity of form and hue, is so alike as on the question of organisation.” Kautsky, too, defines the basic tendencies of orthodoxy and revisionism in this sphere with the help of the “dreadful word”: bureaucracy versus democracy. We are told, he says, that to give the Party leadership the right to influence the selection of candidates (for parliament) by the constituencies is “a shameful encroachment on the democratic principle, which demands that all political activity proceed from the bottom upward, by the independent activity of the masses, and not from the top downward, in a bureaucratic way.... But if there is any democratic principle, it is that the majority must have

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*Kautsky mentions Jaurès as an example. The more these people deviated towards opportunism, the more “they were bound to consider Party discipline an impermissible constraint on their free personality”.

** Bannstrahl: excommunication. This is the German equivalent of the Russian “state of siege” and “emergency laws”. It is the “dreadful word” of the German opportunists.
predominance over the minority, and not the other way round. . . . " The election of a member of parliament by any constituency is an important matter for the Party as a whole, which should influence the nomination of candidates, if only through its representatives (Vertrauensmänner). "Whoever considers this too bureaucratic or centralistic let him suggest that candidates be nominated by the direct vote of the Party membership at large [sämtliche Parteigenossen]. If he thinks this is not practicable, he must not complain of a lack of democracy when this function, like many others that concern the Party as a whole, is exercised by one or several Party bodies." It has long been "common law" in the German Party for constituencies to "come to a friendly understanding" with the Party leadership about the choice of candidates. "But the Party has grown too big for this tacit common law to suffice any longer. Common law ceases to be law when it ceases to be accepted as a matter of course, when its stipulations, and even its very existence, are called in question. Then it becomes necessary to formulate the law specifically, to codify it" . . . to go over to more "precise statutory definition* [statutarische Festlegung] and, accordingly, greater strictness [grössere Straffheit] of organisation".

Thus you have, in a different environment, the same struggle between the opportunist and the revolutionary wing of the Party on the question of organisation, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy", between the tendency to relax and the tendency to tighten organisation and discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and that of the staunch proletarian, between intellectualist individualism and proletarian solidarity. What, one asks, was the attitude to this conflict of bourgeois democracy—not the bourgeois democracy which prankish history has only promised in private to show to Comrade

*It is highly instructive to compare these remarks of Kautsky's about the replacement of a tacitly recognised common law by a formally defined statutory law with that whole "change-over" which our Party in general, and the editorial board in particular, have been undergoing since the Party Congress. Cf. the speech of V. I. Zasulich (at the League Congress, p. 66 et seq.), who does not seem to realise the full significance of this change-over.
Axelrod some day, but the real and actual bourgeois democracy which in Germany has spokesmen no less shrewd and observant than our own gentlemen of Osvobozhdeniye? German bourgeois democracy at once reacted to the new controversy, and—like Russian bourgeois democracy, like bourgeois democracy everywhere and always—sided solidly with the opportunist wing of the Social-Democratic Party. The Frankfurter Zeitung, leading organ of the German stock exchange, published a thunderous editorial (Frankfurter Zeitung, April 7, 1904, No. 97, evening edition) which shows that shameless plagiarising of Axelrod is becoming a veritable disease with the German press. The stern democrats of the Frankfort stock exchange lash out furiously at the “absolutism” in the Social-Democratic Party, at the “party dictatorship”, at the “autocratic rule of the Party authorities”, at the “interdicts” which are intended “concurrently to chastise revisionism as a whole” (recall the “false accusation of opportunism”), at the insistence on “blind obedience”, “deadening discipline”, “servile subordination”, and the transforming of Party members into “political corpses” (that is a good bit stronger than cogs and wheels!). “All distinctiveness of personality”, the knights of the stock exchange indignantly exclaim at the sight of the undemocratic regime among the Social-Democrats, “all individuality is to be held in opprobrium, because it is feared that they might lead to the French order of things, to Jaurèsism and Millerandism, as was stated in so many words by Sindermann, who made the report on the subject” at the Party Congress of the Saxon Social-Democrats.

And so, insofar as the new catchwords of the new Iskra on organisation contain any principles at all, there can be no doubt that they are opportunist principles. This conclusion is confirmed both by the whole analysis of our Party Congress, which divided into a revolutionary and an opportunist wing, and by the example of all European Social-Democratic parties, where opportunism in organisation finds expression in the same tendencies, in the same accusations, and very often in the same catchwords. Of course, the national peculiarities of the various parties and
the different political conditions in different countries leave their impress and make German opportunism quite dissimilar from French, French opportunism from Italian, and Italian opportunism from Russian. But the similarity of the fundamental division of all these parties into a revolutionary and an opportunist wing, the similarity of the line of thought and the tendencies of opportunism in organisation stand out clearly in spite of all this difference of conditions.* With large numbers of radical intellectuals in the ranks of our Marxists and our Social-Democrats, the opportunism which their mentality produces has been, and is, bound to exist, in the most varied spheres and in the most varied forms. We fought opportunism on the fundamental problems of our world conception, on the questions of our programme, and the complete divergence of aims inevitably led to an irrevocable break between the Social-Democrats and the liberals who had corrupted our legal Marxism. We fought opportunism on tactical issues, and our divergence with Comrades Krichevsky and Akimov on these less important issues was naturally only temporary, and was not accompanied by the formation of different parties. We must now vanquish the opportunism of Martov and Axelrod on questions of organisation, which are, of course, less fundamental than questions of tactics, let alone of programme, but which have now come to the forefront in our Party life.

When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a characteristic feature of present-day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, amorphousness, elusiveness. An opportunist, by his very nature, will

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* No one will doubt today that the old division of the Russian Social-Democrats into Economists and politicians on questions of tactics was similar to the division of the whole international Social-Democratic movement into opportunists and revolutionaries, although the difference between Comrades Martynov and Akimov, on the one hand, and Comrades von Vollmar and von Elm or Jaurès and Millerand, on the other, is very great. Nor can there be any doubt about the similarity of the main divisions on questions of organisation, in spite of the enormous difference between the conditions of politically unenfranchised and politically free countries. It is extremely characteristic that the highly principled editors of the new Iskra, while briefly touching on the controversy between Kautsky and Heine (No. 64), timidly evaded discussing the trends of principle manifested on questions of organisation by opportunism and orthodoxy generally.

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always evade taking a clear and decisive stand, he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to “agree” with both and reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, innocent and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth. Comrade Eduard Bernstein, an opportunist in questions of programme, “agrees” with the revolutionary programme of his party, and although he would no doubt like to have it “radically revised”, he considers this untimely, inexpedient, not so important as the elucidation of “general principles” of “criticism” (which mainly consist in uncritically borrowing principles and catchwords from bourgeois democracy). Comrade von Vollmar, an opportunist in questions of tactics, also agrees with the old tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy and also confines himself mostly to declamations, petty amendments, and sneers rather than openly advocates any definite “ministerial” tactics. Comrades Martov and Axelrod, opportunists in questions of organisation, have also failed so far to produce, though directly challenged to do so, any definite statement of principles that could be “fixed by statute”; they too would like, they most certainly would like, a “radical revision” of our Rules of Organisation (Iskra, No. 58, p. 2, col. 3), but they would prefer to devote themselves first to “general problems of organisation” (for a really radical revision of our Rules, which, in spite of Paragraph 1, are centralist Rules, would inevitably lead, if carried out in the spirit of the new Iskra, to autonomism; and Comrade Martov, of course, does not like to admit even to himself that he tends in principle towards autonomism). Their “principles” of organisation therefore display all the colours of the rainbow. The predominant item consists of innocent passionate declamations against autocracy and bureaucracy, against blind obedience and cogs and wheels—declarations so innocent that it is still very difficult to discern in them what is really concerned with principle and what is really concerned with co-optation. But as it goes on, the thing gets worse: attempts to analyse and precisely define this detestable “bureaucracy” inevitably lead to autonomism; attempts to “lend profundity” to their stand and vindicate it inevitably lead to justifying backwardness, to tail-ism, to Girondist phrase-mongering. At last there
emerges the principle of anarchism, as the sole really definite principle, which for that reason stands out in practice in particular relief (practice is always in advance of theory). Sneering at discipline—autonomism—anarchism—there you have the ladder which our opportunism in matters of organisation now climbs and now descends, skipping from rung to rung and skilfully dodging any definite statement of its principles.* Exactly the same stages are displayed by opportunism in matters of programme and tactics: sneering at "orthodoxy", narrowness, and immobility—revisionist "criticism" and ministerialism—bourgeois democracy.

There is a close psychological connection between this hatred of discipline and that incessant nagging not of injury which is to be detected in all writings of all opportunists today in general, and of our minority in particular. They are being persecuted, hounded, ejected, besieged, and bullied. There is far more psychological and political truth in these catchwords than was probably suspected even by the author of the pleasant and witty joke

* Those who recall the debate on Paragraph 1 will now clearly see that the mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod over Paragraph 1 had inevitably to lead, when developed and deepened, to opportunism in matters of organisation. Comrade Martov's fundamental idea—self-enrolment in the Party—was this same false "democracy", the idea of building the Party from the bottom upward. My idea, on the other hand, was "bureaucratic" in the sense that the Party was to be built from the top downward, from the Party Congress to the individual Party organisations. The mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, anarchistic phrase-mongering, and opportunist, tail-ist profundity were all already displayed in the debate on Paragraph 1. Comrade Martov says in his State of Siege (p. 20) that "new ideas are beginning to be worked out" by the new Iskra. That is true in the sense that he and Axelrod are really pushing ideas in a new direction, beginning with Paragraph 1. The only trouble is that this direction is an opportunist one. The more they "work" in this direction, and the more this work is cleared of squabbling over co-optation, the deeper will they sink in the mire. Comrade Plekhanov already perceived this clearly at the Party Congress, and in his article "What Should Not Be Done" warned them once again: I am prepared, he as much as said, even to co-opt you, only don't continue along this road which can only lead to opportunism and anarchism. Martov and Axelrod would not follow this good advice: What? Not continue along this road? Agree with Lenin that the co-optation clamour is nothing but squabbling? Never! We'll show him that we are men of principle!—And they have. They have clearly shown everyone that if they have any new principles at all, they are opportunist principles.
about bullies and bullied. For you have only to take the minutes of our Party Congress to see that the minority are all those who suffer from a sense of injury, all those who at one time or another and for one reason or another were offended by the revolutionary Social-Democrats. There are the Bundists and the Rabocheye Dvelo-ists, whom we "offended" so badly that they withdrew from the Congress; there are the Yuzhny Rabochy-ists, who were mortally offended by the slaughter of organisations in general and of their own in particular; there is Comrade Makhov, who had to put up with offence every time he took the floor (for every time he did, he invariably made a fool of himself); and lastly, there are Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod, who were offended by the "false accusation of opportunism" in connection with Paragraph 1 of the Rules and by their defeat in the elections. All these mortal offences were not the accidental outcome of impermissible witticisms, rude behaviour, frenzied controversy, slamming of doors, and shaking of fists, as so many philistines imagine to this day, but the inevitable political outcome of the whole three years' ideological work of Iskra. If in the course of these three years we were not just wagging our tongues, but giving expression to convictions which were to be translated into deeds, we could not but fight the anti-Iskra-ists and the "Marsh" at the Congress. And when, together with Comrade Martov, who had fought in the front line with visor up, we had offended such heaps of people, we had only to offend Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov ever such a little bit for the cup to overflow. Quantity was transformed into quality. The negation was negated. All the offended forgot their mutual scores, fell weeping into each other's arms, and raised the banner of "revolt against Leninism".*

A revolt is a splendid thing when it is the advanced elements who revolt against the reactionary elements. When the revolutionary wing revolts against the opportunist wing, it is a good thing. When the opportunist wing revolts against the revolutionary wing, it is a bad business.

* This amazing expression is Comrade Martov's (State of Siege, p. 68). Comrade Martov waited until he was five to one before raising the "revolt" against me alone. Comrade Martov argues very unskilfully: he wants to destroy his opponent by paying him the highest compliments.
Comrade Plekhanov is compelled to take part in this bad business in the capacity of a prisoner of war, so to speak. He tries to “vent his spleen” by fishing out isolated awkward phrases by the author of some resolution in favour of the “majority”, and exclaiming: “Poor Comrade Lenin! A fine lot his orthodox supporters are!” (Iskra, No. 63. Supplement.)

Well, Comrade Plekhanov, all I can say is that if I am poor, the editors of the new Iskra are downright paupers. However poor I may be, I have not yet reached such utter destitution as to have to shut my eyes to the Party Congress and hunt for material for the exercise of my wit in the resolutions of commissarioners. However poor I may be, I am a thousand times better off than those whose supporters do not utter an awkward phrase inadvertently, but on every issue—whether of organisation, tactics, or programme—adhere stubbornly and persistently to principles which are the very opposite of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy. However poor I may be, I have not yet reached the stage of having to conceal from the public the praises lavished on me by such supporters. And that is what the editors of the new Iskra have to do.

Reader, do you know what the Voronezh Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party stands for? If not, read the minutes of the Party Congress. You will learn from them that the line of that committee is wholly expressed by Comrade Akimov and Comrade Brouckère, who at the Congress fought the revolutionary wing of the Party all along the line, and who scores of times were ranked as opportunists by everybody, from Comrade Plekhanov to Comrade Ponov. Well, this Voronezh Committee, in its January leaflet (No. 12, January 1904), makes the following statement:

“A great and important event in the life of our steadily growing Party took place last year: the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., a congress of the representatives of its organisations. Convening a Party congress is a very complicated matter, and, under the prevailing monarchical regime, a very dangerous and difficult one. It is therefore not surprising that it was carried out in a far from perfect way, and that the Congress itself, although it passed off without mishap, did not live up to all the Party’s expectations. The comrades whom the Conference of 1902 commissioned to convene the Congress were arrested, and the Congress was arranged by persons who represented only one of the trends in Russian Social-Democracy, viz., the ‘Iskra’-ists. Many organisations of Social-Democrats who
did not happen to be Iskra-ists were not invited to take part in the work of the Congress; partly for this reason the task of drawing up a programme and Rules for the Party was carried out by the Congress in an extremely imperfect manner; the delegates themselves admit that there are important flaws in the Rules 'which may lead to dangerous misunderstandings'. The Iskra-ists themselves split at the Congress, and many prominent members of our R.S.D.L.P. who formerly appeared to be in full agreement with the Iskra programme of action have come to see that many of its views, advocated mainly by Lenin and Plekhanov, are impracticable. Although these last gained the upper hand at the Congress, the pulse of real life and the requirements of the practical work, in which all the non-Iskra-ists are taking part, are quickly correcting the mistakes of the theoreticians and have, since the Congress, already introduced important modifications. 'Iskra' has changed greatly and promises to pay careful heed to the demands of all workers in the Social-Democratic movement generally. Thus, although the results of the Congress will have to be revised at the next Congress, and, as is obvious to the delegates themselves, are unsatisfactory and therefore cannot be accepted by the Party as unimpeachable decisions, the Congress clarified the situation in the Party, provided much material for the further theoretical and organising activity of the Party, and was an experience of immense instructive value for the work of the Party as a whole. The decisions of the Congress and the Rules it drew up will be taken into account by all the organisations, but many will refrain from being guided by them exclusively, in view of their manifest imperfections.

"Fully realising the importance of the work of the Party as a whole, the Voronezh Committee actively responded in all matters concerning the organisation of the Congress. It fully appreciates the importance of what took place at the Congress and welcomes the change undergone by 'Iskra', which has become the Central Organ (chief organ)."

Although the state of affairs in the Party and the Central Committee does not satisfy us as yet, we are confident that by joint efforts the difficult work of organising the Party will be perfected. In view of false rumours, the Voronezh Committee informs the comrades that there is no question of the Voronezh Committee leaving the Party. The Voronezh Committee perfectly realises what a dangerous precedent would be created by the withdrawal of a workers' organisation like the Voronezh Committee from the R.S.D.L.P., what a reproach this would be to the Party, and how disadvantageous it would be to workers' organisations which might follow this example. We must not cause new splits, but persistently strive to unite all class-conscious workers and socialists in one party. Besides, the Second Congress was not a constituent congress, but only a regular one. Expulsion from the Party can only
be by decision of a Party court, and no organisation, not even the Central Committee, has the right to expel any Social-Democratic organisation from the Party. Furthermore, under Paragraph 8 of the Rules adopted by the Second Congress every organisation is autonomous in its local affairs, and the Voronezh Committee is accordingly fully entitled to put its views on organisation into practice and to advocate them in the Party.”

The editors of the new Iskra, in quoting this leaflet in No. 61, reprinted the second half of this tirade, which we give here in large type; as for the first half, here printed in small type, the editors preferred to omit it.

They were ashamed.

r) A Few Words on Dialectics.
Two Revolutions

A general glance at the development of our Party crisis will readily show that in the main, with minor exceptions, the composition of the two contending sides remained unchanged throughout. It was a struggle between the revolutionary wing and the opportunist wing in our Party. But this struggle passed through the most varied stages, and anyone who wants to find his bearings in the vast amount of literature already accumulated, the mass of fragmentary evidence, passages torn from their context, isolated accusations, and so on and so forth, must thoroughly familiarise himself with the peculiarities of each of these stages.

Let us enumerate the principal and clearly distinct stages: 1) The controversy over Paragraph 1 of the Rules. A purely ideological struggle over the basic principles of organisation. Plekhanov and I are in the minority. Martov and Axelrod propose an opportunist formulation and find themselves in the arms of the opportunists. 2) The split in the Iskra organisation over the lists of candidates for the Central Committee: Fomin or Vasilyev in a committee of five, Trotsky or Travinsky in a committee of three. Plekhanov and I gain the majority (nine to seven), partly because of the very fact that we were in the minority on Paragraph 1. Martov’s coalition with the opportunists confirmed my worst fears over the Organising Committee in-
cident. 3) Continuation of the controversy over details of the Rules. Martov is again saved by the opportunists. We are again in the minority and fight for the rights of the minority on the central bodies. 4) The seven extreme opportunists withdraw from the Congress. We become the majority and defeat the coalition (the Iskra-ist minority, the "Marsh", and the anti-Iskra-ists) in the elections. Martov and Popov decline to accept seats in our trios. 5) The post-Congress squabble over co-optation. An orgy of anarchistic behaviour and anarchistic phrase-mongering. The least stable and steadfast elements among the "minority" gain the upper hand. 6) To avert a split, Plekhanov adopts the policy of "killing with kindness". The "minority" occupy the editorial board of the Central Organ and the Council and attack the Central Committee with all their might. The squabble continues to pervade everything. 7) First attack on the Central Committee repulsed. The squabble seems to be subsiding somewhat. It becomes possible to discuss in comparative calm two purely ideological questions which profoundly agitate the Party: a) what is the political significance and explanation of the division of our Party into "majority" and "minority" which took shape at the Second Congress and superseded all earlier divisions? b) what is the significance in principle of the new Iskra's new position on the question of organisation?

In each of these stages the circumstances of the struggle and the immediate object of the attack are materially different; each stage is, as it were, a separate battle in one general military campaign. Our struggle cannot be understood at all unless the concrete circumstances of each battle are studied. But once that is done, we see clearly that development does indeed proceed dialectically, by way of contradictions: the minority becomes the majority, and the majority becomes the minority; each side passes from the defensive to the offensive, and from the offensive to the defensive; the starting-point of ideological struggle (Paragraph 1) is "negated" and gives place to an all-pervading squabble*; but then begins "the negation of the negation", and, having just about managed

* The difficult problem of drawing a line between squabbling and differences of principle now solves itself: all that relates to co-optation is squabbling; all that relates to analysis of the struggle at the Con-
to “rub along” with our god-given wife on different central bodies, we return to the starting-point, the purely ideological struggle; but by now this “thesis” has been enriched by all the results of the “antithesis” and has become a higher synthesis, in which the isolated, random error over Paragraph 1 has grown into a quasi-system of opportunist views on matters of organisation, and in which the connection between this fact and the basic division of our Party into a revolutionary and an opportunist wing becomes increasingly apparent to all. In a word, not only do oats grow according to Hegel, but the Russian Social-Democrats war among themselves according to Hegel.

But the great Hegelian dialectics which Marxism made its own, having first turned it right side up, must never be confused with the vulgar trick of justifying the zigzags of politicians who swing over from the revolutionary to the opportunist wing of the Party, with the vulgar habit of lumping together particular statements, and particular developmental factors, belonging to different stages of a single process. Genuine dialectics does not justify the errors of individuals, but studies the inevitable turns, proving that they were inevitable by a detailed study of the process of development in all its concreteness. One of the basic principles of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete. . . . And, one thing more, the great Hegelian dialectics should never be confused with that vulgar worldly wisdom so well expressed by the Italian saying: mettere la coda dove non va il capo (sticking in the tail where the head will not go through).

The outcome of the dialectical development of our Party struggle has been two revolutions. The Party Congress was a real revolution, as Comrade Martov justly remarked in his Once More in the Minority. The wits of the minority are also right when they say: “The world moves through revolutions; well, we have made a revolution!” They did indeed make a revolution after the Congress; and it is true, too, that generally speaking the world does move through revolutions. But the concrete significance of each concrete revolution is not defined by
this general aphorism; there are revolutions which are more like reaction, to paraphrase the unforgettable expression of the unforgettable Comrade Makhov. We must know whether it was the revolutionary or the opportunist wing of the Party that was the actual force that made the revolution, must know whether it was revolutionary or opportunist principles that inspired the fighters, before we can determine whether a particular concrete revolution moved the "world" (our Party) forward or backward.

Our Party Congress was unique and unprecedented in the entire history of the Russian revolutionary movement. For the first time a secret revolutionary party succeeded in emerging from the darkness of underground life into broad daylight, showing everyone the whole course and outcome of our internal Party struggle, the whole character of our Party and of each of its more or less noticeable components in matters of programme, tactics, and organisation. For the first time we succeeded in throwing off the traditions of circle looseness and revolutionary philistinism, in bringing together dozens of very different groups, many of which had been fiercely warring among themselves and had been linked solely by the force of an idea, and which were now prepared (in principle, that is) to sacrifice all their group aloofness and group independence for the sake of the great whole which we were for the first time actually creating—the Party. But in politics sacrifices are not obtained gratis, they have to be won in battle. The battle over the slaughter of organisations necessarily proved terribly fierce. The fresh breeze of free and open struggle blew into a gale. The gale swept away—and a very good thing that it did!—each and every remnant of all circle interests, sentiments, and traditions without exception, and for the first time created genuinely Party institutions.

But it is one thing to call oneself something, and another to be it. It is one thing to sacrifice the circle system in principle for the sake of the Party, and another to renounce one's own circle. The fresh breeze proved too fresh as yet for people used to musty philistinism. "The Party was unable to stand the strain of its first congress," as Comrade Martov rightly put it (inadvertently) in his Once More in the Minority. The sense of injury over the
slaughter of organisations was too strong. The furious gale raised all the mud from the bottom of our Party stream; and the mud took its revenge. The old hidebound circle spirit overpowered the still young party spirit. The opportunist wing of the Party, routed though it had been, got the better—temporarily, of course—of the revolutionary wing, having been reinforced by Akimov's accidental gain.

The result is the new *Iskra*, which is compelled to develop and deepen the error its editors committed at the Party Congress. The old *Iskra* taught the truths of revolutionary struggle. The new *Iskra* teaches the worldly wisdom of yielding and getting on with everyone. The old *Iskra* was the organ of militant orthodoxy. The new *Iskra* treats us to a recrudescence of opportunism—chiefly on questions of organisation. The old *Iskra* earned the honour of being detested by the opportunists, both Russian and West-European. The new *Iskra* has "grown wise" and will soon cease to be ashamed of the praises lavished on it by the extreme opportunists. The old *Iskra* marched unswervingly towards its goal, and there was no discrepancy between its word and its deed. The inherent falsity of the new *Iskra*’s position inevitably leads—indindependently even of anyone’s will or intention—to political hypocrisy. It inveighs against the circle spirit in order to conceal the victory of the circle spirit over the party spirit. It hypocritically condemns splits, as if one can imagine any way of avoiding splits in any at all organised party except by the subordination of the minority to the majority. It says that heed must be paid to revolutionary public opinion, yet, while concealing the praises of the Akimovs, indulges in petty scandal-mongering about the committees of the revolutionary wing of the Party.* How shameful! How they have disgraced our old *Iskra*!

One step forward, two steps back... It happens in the lives of individuals, and it happens in the history of nations and in the development of parties. It would be the most criminal cowardice to doubt even for a moment the inevitable and complete triumph of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy, of proletarian organisa-

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* A stereotyped form has even been worked out for this charming pastime: our special correspondent X informs us that Committee Y of the majority has behaved badly to Comrade Z of the minority.
tion and Party discipline. We have already won a great deal, and we must go on fighting, undismayed by reverses, fighting steadfastly, scorning the philistine methods of circle wrangling, doing our very utmost to preserve the hard-won single Party tie linking all Russian Social-Democrats, and striving by dint of persistent and systematic work to give all Party members, and the workers in particular, a full and conscious understanding of the duties of Party members, of the struggle at the Second Party Congress, of all the causes and all the stages of our divergence, and of the utter disastrousness of opportunism, which, in the sphere of organisation as in the sphere of our programme and our tactics, helplessly surrenders to the bourgeois psychology, uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat.

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the “lower depths” of utter destitution, savagery, and degeneration, the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the senile rule of the Russian autocracy nor the senescent rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army. It will more and more firmly close its ranks, in spite of all zigzags and backward steps, in spite of the opportunist phrase-mongering of the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy, in spite of the self-satisfied exaltation of the retrograde circle spirit, and in spite of the tinsel and fuss of intellectualist anarchism.
Appendix

The Incident of Comrade Gusev
and Comrade Deutsch

This incident is closely bound up with the so-called “false” (Comrade Martov’s expression) list mentioned in the letter of Comrades Martov and Starover, which has been quoted in Section J. The substance of it is as follows. Comrade Gusev informed Comrade Pavlovich that this list, consisting of Comrades Stein, Egorov, Popov, Trotsky, and Fomin, had been communicated to him. Gusev, by Comrade Deutsch (Comrade Pavlovich’s Letter, p. 12). Comrade Deutsch accused Comrade Gusev of “deliberate calumny” on account of this statement, and a comrades’ arbitration court declared Comrade Gusev’s “statement” “incorrect” (see the court’s decision in Iskra, No. 62). After the editorial board of Iskra had published the court decision, Comrade Martov (not the editorial board this time) issued a special leaflet entitled The Decision of the Comrades’ Arbitration Court, in which he reprinted in full, not only the decision of the court, but the whole report of the proceedings, together with a postscript of his own. In this postscript, Comrade Martov among other things spoke of “the disgraceful fact of the forgery of a list in the interests of a factional struggle”. Comrades Lyadov and Gorin, who had been delegates to the Second Congress, replied to this leaflet with one of their own entitled An Onlooker at the Arbitration Court, in which they “vigorously protest against Comrade Martov permitting himself to go further than the court decision and to ascribe evil motives to Comrade Gusev”, where-
as the court did not find that there had been a deliberate calumny, but only that Comrade Gusev’s statement was incorrect. Comrades Gorin and Lyadov explained at length that Comrade Gusev’s statement might have been due to a quite natural mistake, and described as “unworthy” the conduct of Comrade Martov, who had himself made (and again made in his leaflet) a number of erroneous statements, arbitrarily attributing evil intent to Comrade Gusev. There could be no evil intent here at all, they said. That, if I am not mistaken, is all the “literature” on this question, which I consider it my duty to help clear up.

First of all, it is essential that the reader have a clear idea of the time and conditions in which this list (of candidates for the Central Committee) appeared. As I have already stated in this pamphlet, the Iskra organisation conferred during the Congress about a list of candidates for the Central Committee which it could jointly submit to the Congress. The conference ended in disagreement: the majority of the Iskra organisation adopted a list consisting of Travinsky, Glebov, Vasilyev, Popov, and Trotsky, but the minority refused to yield and insisted on a list consisting of Travinsky, Glebov, Fomin, Popov, and Trotsky. The two sections of the Iskra organisation did not meet together again after the meeting at which these lists were put forward and voted on. Both sections entered the arena of free agitation at the Congress, wishing to have the issue between them settled by a vote of the Party Congress as a whole and each trying to win as many delegates as it could to its side. This free agitation at the Congress at once revealed the political fact I have analysed in such detail in this pamphlet, namely, that in order to gain the victory over us, it was essential for the Iskra-ist minority (headed by Martov) to have the support of the “Centre” (the Marsh) and of the anti-Iskra-ists. This was essential because the vast majority of the delegates who consistently upheld the programme, tactics, and organisational plans of Iskra against the onslaught of the anti-Iskra-ists and the “Centre” very quickly and very staunchly took their stand on our side. Of the thirty-three delegates (or rather votes) not belonging to the anti-Iskra-ists or the “Centre”, we very quickly won twenty-four and concluded a “direct agreement” with them,
forming a "compact majority". Comrade Martov, on the other hand, was left with only nine votes; to gain the victory, he needed all the votes of the anti-Iskra-ists and the "Centre"—with which groups he might join forces (as over Paragraph 1 of the Rules), might form a "coalition", that is, might have their support, but with which he could not conclude a direct agreement—could not do so because throughout the Congress he had fought these groups no less sharply than we had. Therein lay the tragicomedv of Comrade Martov’s position! In his State of Siege Comrade Martov tries to annihilate me with the deadly venomous question: "We would respectfully request Comrade Lenin to answer explicitly—to whom at the Congress were the Yuzhny Rabochy group an outside element?" (P. 23, footnote.) I answer respectfully and explicitly: they were an outside element to Comrade Martov. And the proof is that whereas I very quickly concluded a direct agreement with the Iskra-ists, Comrade Martov did not conclude, and could not have concluded, a direct agreement with Yuzhny Rabochy, nor with Comrade Makhov, nor with Comrade Brouckère.

Only when we have got a clear idea of this political situation can we understand the "crux" of this vexed question of the celebrated "false" list. Picture to yourself the actual state of affairs: the Iskra organisation has split, and we are freely campaigning at the Congress, defending our respective lists. During this defence, in the host of private conversations, the lists are varied in a hundred different combinations: a committee of three is proposed instead of five; all sorts of substitutions of one candidate for another are suggested. I very well recall, for instance, that the candidatures of Comrades Rusov, Osipov, Pavlovich, and Dedov were suggested in private conversations among the majority, and then, after discussions and arguments, were withdrawn. It may very well be that other candidatures too were proposed of which I have no knowledge. In the course of these conversations each Congress delegate expressed his opinion, suggested changes, argued, and so on. It is highly unlikely that this was the case only among the majority. There is no doubt, in fact, that the same sort of thing went on among the minority, for their original five (Popov, Trotsky, Fomin, Glebov, and Travinsky) were later replaced, as we have seen from
the letter of Comrades Martov and Starover, by a trio—
Glebov, Trotsky, and Popov—Glebov, moreover, not be-
ing to their taste, so that they were very ready to substitute
Fomin (see the leaflet of Comrades Lyadov and Gorin). It
should not be forgotten that my demarcation of the
Congress delegates into the groups defined in this pam-
phlet was made on the basis of an analysis undertaken
post factum; actually, during the election agitation these
groups were only just beginning to emerge and the ex-
change of opinions among the delegates proceeded quite
freely; no “wall” divided us, and each would speak to
any delegate he wanted to discuss matters with in private.
It is not at all surprising in these circumstances that among
all the various combinations and lists there should appear,
alongside the list of the minority of the Iskra organisation
(Popov, Trotsky, Fomin, Glebov, and Travinsky), the
not very different list: Popov, Trotsky, Fomin, Stein, and
Egorov. The appearance of such a combination of candi-
dates was very natural, because our candidates, Glebov
and Travinsky, were patently not to the liking of the mi-
nority of the Iskra organisation (see their letter in Sec-
tion J, where they remove Travinsky from the trio and
expressly state that Glebov is a compromise). To replace
Glebov and Travinsky by the Organising Committee mem-
ers Stein and Egorov was perfectly natural, and it would
have been strange if no one of the delegates belonging to
the Party minority had thought of it.
Let us now examine the following two questions: 1)
Who was the author of the list: Egorov, Stein, Popov,
Trotsky, and Fomin? and 2) Why was Comrade Martov
so profoundly incensed that such a list should be attributed
to him? To give an exact answer to the first question, it
would be necessary to question all the Congress delegates.
That is now impossible. It would be necessary, in
particular, to ascertain who of the delegates belonging to
the Party minority (not to be confused with the Iskra or-
ganisation minority) had heard at the Congress of the
lists that caused the split in the Iskra organisation; what
they had thought of the respective lists of the majority
and minority of the Iskra organisation; and whether they
had not suggested or heard others suggest or express opin-
ions about desirable changes in the list of the minority
of the Iskra organisation. Unfortunately, these questions
do not seem to have been raised in the arbitration court either, which (to judge by the text of its decision) did not even learn over just what lists of five the Iskra organisation split. Comrade Belov, for example (whom I class among the "Centre"), "testified that he had been on good comradely terms with Deutsch, who used to give him his impressions of the work of the Congress, and that if Deutsch had been campaigning on behalf of any list he would have informed Belov of the fact". It is to be regretted that it was not brought out whether Comrade Deutsch gave Comrade Belov at the Congress his impressions as to the lists of the Iskra organisation, and if he did, what was Comrade Belov's reaction to the list of five proposed by the Iskra organisation minority, and whether he did not suggest or hear others suggest any desirable changes in it. Because this was not made clear, we get that contradiction in the evidence of Comrade Belov and Comrade Deutsch which has already been noted by Comrades Gorin and Lyadov, namely, that Comrade Deutsch, notwithstanding his own assertions to the contrary, did "campaign in behalf of certain Central Committee candidates" suggested by the Iskra organisation. Comrade Belov further testified that "he had heard about the list circulating at the Congress a couple of days before the Congress closed, in private conversation, when he met Comrades Egorov and Popov and the delegates from the Kharkov Committee. Egorov had expressed surprise that his name had been included in a list of Central Committee candidates, as in his, Egorov's, opinion his candidature could not inspire sympathy among the Congress delegates, whether of the majority or of the minority". It is extremely significant that the reference here is apparently to the minority of the Iskra organisation, for among the rest of the Party Congress minority the candidature of Comrade Egorov, a member of the Organising Committee and a prominent speaker of the "Centre", not only could, but in all likelihood would have been greeted sympathetically. Unfortunately, we learn nothing from Comrade Belov as to the sympathy or antipathy of those among the Party minority who did not belong to the Iskra organisation. And yet that is just what is important, for Comrade Deutsch waxed indignant about this list having been attributed to the minority of the Iskra organisation, where-
as it may have originated with the minority which did not belong to that organisation!

Of course, it is very difficult at this date to recall who first suggested this combination of candidates, and from whom each of us heard about it. I, for example, do not undertake to recall even just who among the majority first proposed the candidatures of Rusov, Dedov, and the others I have mentioned. The only thing that sticks in my memory, out of the host of conversations, suggestions, and rumours of all sorts of combinations of candidates, is those “lists” which were directly put to the vote in the Iskra organisation or at the private meetings of the majority. These “lists” were mostly circulated orally (in my Letter to the Editors of “Iskra”, p. 4, line 5 from below, it is the combination of five candidates which I orally proposed at the meeting that I call a “list”); but it also happened very often that they were jotted down in notes, such as in general passed between delegates during the sittings of the Congress and were usually destroyed after the sittings.

Since we have no exact information as to the origin of this celebrated list, it can only be assumed that the combination of candidates which we have in it was either suggested by some delegate belonging to the Party minority, without the knowledge of the Iskra organisation minority, and thereafter began to circulate at the Congress in spoken and written form; or else that this combination was suggested at the Congress by some member of the Iskra organisation minority who subsequently forgot about it. The latter assumption seems to me the more likely one, for the following reasons: already at the Congress the Iskra organisation minority were undoubtedly sympathetic towards the candidature of Comrade Stein (see present pamphlet); and as to the candidature of Comrade Egorov, this minority did undoubtedly arrive at the idea after the Congress (for both at the League Congress and in State of Siege regret was expressed that the Organising Committee had not been endorsed as the Central Committee—and Comrade Egorov was a member of the Organising Committee). Is it then not natural to assume that this idea, which was evidently in the air, of converting the members of the Organising Committee into members of the Central Committee was voiced by
some member of the minority in private conversation at
the Party Congress too?

But instead of a natural explanation, Comrade Martov
and Comrade Deutsch are determined to see here some-
thing _sordid_—a plot, a piece of dishonesty, the dissemina-
tion of "_deliberately false rumours with the object of de-
faming_", a "_forgery in the interests of a factional strug-
gle_", and so forth. This morbid urge can only be explained
by the unwholesome conditions of émigré life, or by
an abnormal nervous condition, and I would not even
have taken the question up if matters had not gone to
the length of an unworthy attack upon a comrade's honour.

Just think: what grounds could Comrades Deutsch and
Martov have had for detecting a sordid, evil intent in an
incorrect statement, in an incorrect rumour? The picture
which their morbid imaginations conjured up was ap-
parently that the majority "defamed" them, not by point-
ing to the minority's political mistake (Paragraph 1 and
the coalition with the opportunists), but by ascribing to the
minority "_deliberately false_" and "_forged_" lists. The
minority preferred to attribute the matter not to their
own mistake, but to sordid, dishonest, and disgraceful
practices on the part of the majority! How irrational it
was to seek for evil intent in the "incorrect statement",
we have already shown above, by describing the circum-
stances. It was clearly realised by the comrades' arbitra-
tion court too, which did not find any calumny, or any
evil intent, or anything disgraceful. Lastly, it is most
clearly proved by the fact that at the Party Congress it-
self, prior to the elections, the minority of the _Iskra_
organisation entered into discussions with the majority
regarding this false rumour, and Comrade Martov even
stated his views in a letter which was read at a meeting
of all the twenty-four delegates of the majority! It nev-
er even occurred to the majority to conceal from the
minority of the _Iskra_ organisation that such a list was
circulating at the Congress: Comrade Lensky told Com-
rade Deutsch about it (see the court decision); Comrade
Plekhanov spoke of it to Comrade Zasulich ("You can't
talk to her, she seems to take me for Trepov,"50 Comrade
Plekhanov said to me, and this joke, repeated many times
after, is one more indication of the abnormal state of
excitement the minority were in); and I informed Comrade
Martov that his assurance (that the list was not his, Martov's) was quite enough for me (League Minutes, p. 64). Comrade Martov (together with Comrade Starover, if I remember rightly) thereupon sent a note to us on the Bureau which ran roughly as follows: "The majority of the Iskra editorial board request to be allowed to attend the private meeting of the majority in order to refute the defamatory rumours which are being circulated about them." Plekhanov and I replied on the same slip of paper, saying: "We have not heard any defamatory rumours. If a meeting of the editorial board is required, that should be arranged separately. Lenin, Plekhanov." At the meeting of the majority held that evening, we related this to all the twenty-four delegates. To preclude all possible misunderstanding, it was decided to elect delegates from all the twenty-four of us jointly and send them to talk it over with Comrades Martov and Starover. The delegates elected, Comrades Sorokin and Sablina, went and explained that nobody was specifically attributing the list to Martov or Starover, particularly after their statement, and that it was of absolutely no importance whether this list originated with the minority of the Iskra organisation or with the Congress minority not belonging to that organisation. After all, we could not start an investigation at the Congress and question all the delegates about this list! But Comrades Martov and Starover, not content with this, sent us a letter containing a formal denial (see Section J). This letter was read out by our representatives, Comrades Sorokin and Sablina, at a meeting of the twenty-four. It might have seemed that the incident could be considered closed—not in the sense that the origin of the list had been ascertained (if anybody cared about that), but in the sense that the idea had been completely dispelled that there was any intention of "injuring the minority", or of "defaming" anybody, or of resorting to a "forgery in the interests of a factional struggle". Yet at the League Congress (pp. 63-64) Comrade Martov again brought forth this sordid story conjured up by a morbid imagination, and, what is more, made a number of incorrect statements (evidently due to his wrought-up condition). He said that the list included a Bundist. That was untrue. All the witnesses in the arbitration court, including Comrades Stein and Belov, de-
clared that the list had Comrade Egorov in it. Comrade Martov said that the list implied a coalition in the sense of a direct agreement. That was untrue, as I have already explained. Comrade Martov said that there were no other lists originating with the minority of the Iskra organisation (and likely to repel the majority of the Congress from this minority), “not even forged ones”. That was untrue, for the entire majority at the Party Congress knew of no less than three lists which originated with Comrade Martov and Co., and which did not meet with the approval of the majority (see the leaflet by Lyadov and Gorin).

Why, in general, was Comrade Martov so incensed by this list? Because it signified a swing towards the Right wing of the Party. At that time Comrade Martov cried out against a “false accusation of opportunism” and expressed indignation at the “misrepresentation of his political position”; but now everybody can see that the question whether this list belonged to Comrade Martov and Comrade Deutsch could have had no political significance whatever, and that essentially, apart from this or any other list, the accusation was not false, but true, and the characterisation of his political position absolutely correct.

The upshot of this painful and artificial affair of the celebrated false list is as follows:

1) One cannot but join Comrades Gorin and Lyadov in describing as unworthy Comrade Martov’s attempt to asperse Comrade Gusev’s honour by crying about a “disgraceful fact of the forgery of a list in the interests of a factional struggle”.

2) With the object of creating a healthier atmosphere and of sparing Party members the necessity of taking every morbid extravagance seriously, it would perhaps be advisable at the Third Congress to adopt a rule such as is contained in the Rules of Organisation of the German Social-Democratic Labour Party. Paragraph 2 of these Rules runs: “No person can belong to the Party who is guilty of a gross violation of the principles of the Party programme or of dishonourable conduct. The question of continued membership in the Party shall be decided by a court of arbitration convened by the Party Executive. One half of the judges shall be nominated by the person demanding the expulsion, the other half by the person
whose expulsion is demanded; the chairman shall be appointed by the Party Executive. An appeal against a decision of the court of arbitration may be made to the Control Commission or to the Party Congress." Such a rule might serve as a good weapon against all who frivolously level accusations (or spread rumours) of dishonourable conduct. If there were such a rule, all such accusations would once and for all be classed as indecent slanders unless their author had the moral courage to come forward before the Party in the role of accuser and seek for a verdict from the competent Party institution.

Written in February-May 1904
Published in book form
in Geneva, May 1904
1 Lenin devoted several months to the writing of One Step Forward, Two Steps Back (The Crisis in Our Party), making a careful study of the minutes and resolutions of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., of the speeches of each of the delegates and the political groupings which took shape at the Congress and of the Central Committee and Party Council documents. In this work treating questions of organisation Lenin dealt a crushing blow to Menshevik opportunism. The historic significance of the book lies in the fact that in it Lenin developed the Marxist teaching on the Party, elaborated the organisational principles of the proletarian revolutionary Party and for the first time in the history of Marxism gave an exhaustive criticism of organisational opportunism showing how dangerous it is to underestimate the importance of organisation for the working-class movement.

The book gave rise to furious attacks from the Mensheviks. Plekhanov demanded that the Central Committee disassociate itself from it. The conciliators on the Central Committee tried to prevent its publication and circulation.

Despite the opportunists' attempts, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back was widely circulated among advanced workers in Russia. According to the police department, copies of the book were found during arrests and house-searches in Moscow, Petersburg, Kiev, Riga, Saratov, Tula, Orel, Ufa, Perm, Kostroma, Shchigry, Shavli (Kovno Gubernia) and elsewhere.

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back was republished by Lenin in 1907 in the collection Twelve Years (on the title page the year 1908 appeared).

The present edition contains the full text as originally published in 1904, checked with Lenin's manuscript, and all the additions made by the author in 1907.

Title page

2 "Practical Worker"—pseudonym of the Menshevik M. S. Makadyub, also referred to as Panin.
Iskra (The Spark) was the first all-Russia illegal Marxist newspaper. It was founded abroad by Lenin in December 1900 and secretly delivered to Russia where it played a vital role in the ideological rallying of the Russian Social-Democrats and the preparation for the unification of disunited local organisations in the revolutionary Marxist Party. After the split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks that took place at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903, Iskra passed into the hands of the Mensheviks (from No. 52) and began to be called the new Iskra as distinct from the Leninist old Iskra.

The Conference of 1902 was a conference of representatives of R.S.D.L.P. committees and organisations held on March 23-28 (April 5-10), 1902, in Belostok. The Economists and Bundists who supported them intended to turn the conference into the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. hoping in this way to strengthen their positions in the Russian Social-Democracy and paralyse Iskra's growing influence. However, this attempt failed owing to both the comparably narrow composition of the conference (only four R.S.D.L.P. organisations from among those functioning in Russia were represented) and serious fundamental differences that came to light at the conference. In particular, an Iskra delegate sharply objected to the turning of the conference into a Party Congress, attempting to demonstrate the incompetence and unpreparedness of such a congress. The conference set up an Organising Committee to convene the Second Party Congress, but soon afterwards the majority of its delegates, including two members of the Organising Committee, were arrested by the police. A new Organising Committee to convene the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress was formed in November 1902 in Pskov at a conference of the representatives of the Petersburg R.S.D.L.P. committee, the Iskra organisation in Russia and the Yuzhny Rabochy group.

Bund ("General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia"), formed at the Inaugural Congress of Jewish Social-Democratic groups held in Wilno in 1897, was an association mainly of semi-proletarian Jewish artisans in Russia's western regions. At the first Party Congress (1898) the Bund joined the R.S.D.L.P. "as an autonomous organisation independent only in regard to questions specifically concerning the Jewish proletariat".

The Bund was a vehicle of nationalism and separatism within the Russian working-class movement.

After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. rejected its demand to be recognised as the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat, the Bund withdrew from the Party. It rejoined in 1906, on the basis of a decision of the Fourth (Unity) Party Congress.

Within the Party the Bundists always supported the opportunist wing (the Economists, the Mensheviks, the liquidators) and waged a struggle against the Bolsheviks and Bolshevism.
6 Rabocheye Dyelo (Workers' Cause) was an Economist journal, organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, published at irregular intervals in Geneva from April 1899 to February 1902; 12 issues (nine books) appeared in all. Rabocheye Dyelo supported the Bernsteinian slogan of "freedom of criticism" of Marxism, took an opportunist stand on the tactical and organisational problems of the Russian Social-Democratic movement, denied the revolutionary potentialities of the peasantry, etc. The Rabocheye Dyelo group propagated the opportunist idea of subordinating the workers' political struggle to the economic, kowtowed to spontaneity in the working-class movement and denied the leading role of the Party. At the Second Congress of the R.S.D.I.P. the Rabocheye Dyelo-ists represented the extreme Right, opportunist wing of the Party.

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7 Yuzhny Rabochy (Southern Worker) was a Social-Democratic group formed in the south of Russia in the autumn of 1900 around an illegal newspaper of that name.

Unlike the Economists the Yuzhny Rabochy group considered the proletariat's political struggle and the overthrow of autocracy to be the prime task. They opposed terrorism, upheld the need to develop a mass revolutionary movement and carried out extensive revolutionary activities in the south of Russia. At the same time, they overestimated the role of the liberal bourgeoisie and ignored the importance of the peasant movement. In contradiction to the Iskra plan of building a centralised Marxist Party by uniting all revolutionary Social-Democrats around Iskra, the Yuzhny Rabochy group put forward the plan of restoring the Party by creating regional Social-Democratic associations. A practical attempt to carry out this plan was made through convening, in December 1901, a conference of the Party committees and organisations of the south of Russia, at which a League of Southern Committees and Organisations of the R.S.D.I.P. was formed with Yuzhny Rabochy as its press organ. This attempt, however, proved impracticable (as was the group's whole organisational plan) and following wholesale arrests in the spring of 1902 the League collapsed. In August 1902 the Yuzhny Rabochy members who remained at liberty began negotiations with the Iskra editorial board about joint efforts to restore the unity of Russian Social-Democracy. The group's statement of solidarity with Iskra was of considerable importance in consolidating Russia's Social-Democratic forces. In November 1902, the Yuzhny Rabochy group joined the Iskra organisation in Russia, the St. Petersburg Committee and the Northern League of the R.S.D.I.P. to establish the Organising Committee to convene the Second Party Congress and subsequently took part in that committee's work. However, even at that period the Yuzhny Rabochy group failed to take a consistent revolutionary stand.

The Second Congress of the R.S.D.I.P. voted to dissolve the Yuzhny Rabochy group as well as all other separate, independent Social-Democratic groups and organisations.

p. 13
The League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democracy Abroad was formed in October 1901 on Lenin’s initiative. Its task was to disseminate the ideas of revolutionary Social-Democracy and help to build a militant Social-Democratic organisation. According to its Rules, the League was Iskra’s foreign section. It recruited supporters for Iskra among Russian Social-Democrats living abroad, gave the paper material support, organised its delivery to Russia and published popular Marxist literature. The Second Party Congress endorsed the League as the sole Party organisation abroad with the status of a Party committee, and laid down that it should work under the Central Committee’s guidance and control.

After the Second Party Congress the Mensheviks entrenched themselves in the League and waged a struggle against Lenin and the Bolsheviks. At the Second Congress of the League in October 1903, the Mensheviks adopted new League Rules that ran counter to the Party Rules adopted at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. From that time on the League was a bulwark of Menshevism; it existed till 1905.

The Borba (Struggle) group came into being in Paris in the summer of 1900. It was led by D. B. Ryazanov, Y. M. Steklov and E. L. Gurevich. The group adopted its name in May 1901. The Borba group distorted Marxist revolutionary theory interpreting it in a doctrinaire and scholastic spirit and adopted a hostile attitude towards Lenin’s organisational principles of party-building. Since it departed from Social-Democratic views and tactics, engaged in disorganising activities and had no contact with Social-Democratic organisations in Russia, the group was not allowed representation at the Second Congress. It was dissolved by decision of that Congress.

Rabochaya Mysl (Workers’ Thought) was an Economist group which published a paper under the same name. The paper appeared from October 1897 to December 1902; 16 issues were published in all.

Rabochaya Mysl advocated frankly opportunist views. It opposed political struggle and restricted the tasks of the working-class movement to “the interests of the moment”, to pressing for individual minor reforms, chiefly of an economic nature. Upholding “spontaneity” in the movement, it opposed the creation of an independent proletarian party and belittled the importance of revolutionary theory and consciousness, maintaining that socialist ideology could grow out of a spontaneous movement.

In the supplement to Iskra No. 57, January 15, 1904, the Menshevik Iskra editorial board published an article by the ex-
Economist A. Martynov in which he opposed the organisational principles of Bolshevism and attacked Lenin. In the note to Martynov’s article the Iskra editorial board made a formal reservation with regard to some of the author’s ideas but approved of the article on the whole and agreed with Martynov’s main propositions.

p. 29

Otrezki (cut-off lands) were the portions of land taken by the landowners from the peasants when serfdom was abolished in Russia in 1861.

p. 37

This refers to the general redistribution of all the land (chorny peredel)—one of the slogans widespread among the peasantry of tsarist Russia.

p. 39

Jaurèsism—a political trend named after the French socialist Jean Jaurès who led the Right reformist wing in the French Socialist Party. Under the guise of the demand “freedom of criticism”, the Jaurèsists attempted to revise basic Marxist propositions and advocated class collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

p. 56

Zemlya i Volya (Land and Freedom) was a revolutionary Narodnik organisation formed in St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1876. Although it did not renounce socialism as the ultimate goal, Zemlya i Volya put forward as the immediate aim the satisfaction of “the people’s demands and desires as they are at the moment”, namely, the demand for “land and freedom”.

For the purpose of agitation among the peasantry, members of the organisation set up rural “settlements”, chiefly in the agricultural regions along the Volga and in the fertile central part of Russia. They also carried on agitation among the workers and students. Although it maintained contacts with some of the workers’ circles, Zemlya i Volya could not lead the working-class movement, since like other Narodnik groupings it denied the vanguard role of the working class. Nor did it understand the importance of political struggle, which in its view only deflected the revolutionaries’ energies from the true path and might weaken their ties with the people.

Unlike the Narodnik groups of the early seventies, Zemlya i Volya built up a close-knit organisation, based on principles of strict centralisation and discipline.

By 1879, when their socialist agitation among the peasants was having little effect and government persecution was increasing, the majority of the members began to turn to political terrorism as the principal means of achieving their ends. There were sharp disagreements over this, and in June 1879 Zemlya i Volya split into two: the adherents of the former tactics (headed by Plekhanov) formed an organisation called Chorny Peredel (General Redistribution), while the advocates of terrorism
(A. I. Zhelyabov and others) founded Narodnaya Volya (People's Will).

17 Narodnaya Volya (People's Will)—the secret political organisation of the terrorist Narodniks formed in August 1879 after the split in Zemlya i Volya. While still adhering to the Narodnik utopian-socialist ideas, Narodnaya Volya also advocated political struggle, regarding the overthrow of the autocracy and the achievement of political freedom as its major aim. Its programme envisaged a “permanent popular representative body” elected by universal suffrage, the proclamation of democratic liberties, the transfer of the land to the people, and the elaboration of measures designed to hand the factories over to the workers.

Narodnaya Volya fought heroically against tsarist autocracy. But, following the erroneous theory of “active” heroes and a “passive” mass, the organisation hoped to achieve the remoulding of society without the participation of the people, through its own efforts, through individual terrorism designed to intimidate and disorganise the government. After the assassination of Alexander II on March 1, 1881, the government was able, by savage reprisals, death sentences, and acts of provocation, to put an end to its existence.

18 Manilovism (from the name of Manilov in Gogol’s Dead Souls) —smug complacency, empty sentimental daydreaming, unprincipled philistinism.

19 This refers to an incident which took place in Hamburg in 1900 in connection with the conduct of 122 bricklayers, members of the Free Bricklayers’ Union, who performed piece-work during a strike, in violation of the instructions of the trade-union leadership. The Hamburg Bricklayers’ Union brought up the question about the strike-breaking activities of the Social-Democrat members of the group at meetings of local party organisations, to which they were affiliated; these organisations in their turn referred the matter to the Central Committee of the German Social-Democratic Party. A party court of arbitration appointed by the Central Committee condemned the conduct of these Social-Democrats but turned down the proposal for their expulsion from the Party.

20 The Congress rejected S. Zborovsky’s (Kostich’s) resolution which formulated §1 of the Party’s Rules in the following words: “Anyone who recognises the Party Programme and renders it material support and personally helps it under the guidance of one of the Party organisations, is regarded by the latter as a Party member.”

21 At the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. there were 16 Iskra members, nine of whom formed a majority under Lenin’s leadership.

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Augean stables—according to Greek mythology, vast filthy stables belonging to Augeus, king of Ellada, that were cleaned by Hercules, who performed this feat during one day. The expression Augean stables is synonymous with vast quantities of rubbish and filth or extreme neglect and disorder in public affairs or business.

The Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party was held in Breslau, on October 6–12, 1895. The Congress focussed its attention on the discussion of the draft agrarian programme proposed by the agrarian commission which was formed in accordance with the decision of the Frankfurt Congress in 1894. The draft agrarian programme contained serious mistakes, in particular, reflected a tendency to attempt to turn the proletarian party into a party of the “whole people”. Apart from opportunists, this draft was also defended by A. Bebel and W. Liebknecht, for which they were condemned by their Party comrades at the 1895 Congress.

These are Margareta’s words from Goethe’s Faust (Margareta reprimands Faust for his friendship with Mephistopheles) which Clara Zetkin quoted by memory in her speech at the German Social-Democratic congress.

Arakcheev A. A.—reactionary Russian statesman at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 19th century, whose name is associated with a period of unbridled police tyranny and jackboot law.

Osvobozhdenie—a fortnightly of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie published abroad in 1902-05 under the editorship of Pyotr Struve. Subsequently the Osvobozhdenie group was to form the nucleus of the Cadets—the main bourgeois party in Russia.

Lenin is referring here to a speech made by the Economist Akimov at the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress. One of Akimov’s objections to the Iskra draft programme was that it did not mention the word “proletariat” in the nominative case, but only in the genitive (“party of the proletariat”). This, Akimov claimed, showed a tendency to exalt the party above the proletariat.

Mountain and Gironde—the two political groups of the bourgeoisie during the French bourgeois revolution at the close of the eighteenth century. Montagnards, or Jacobins, was the name given to the more resolute representatives of the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary class of the time, which stood for the abolition of absolutism and feudal system. The Girondists, on the other hand,
vacillated between revolution and counter-revolution and their policy was one of compromise with the monarchy.

Lenin applied the term “Socialist Gironde” to the opportunist trend in the Social-Democratic movement, and the term “Mountain”, or proletarian Jacobins, to the revolutionary Social-Democrats.

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The Voronezh Committee and the St. Petersburg “Workers’ Organisation” were in the hands of the Economists and were hostile to Lenin’s Iskra and its organisational plan for building a Marxist party.

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This new member of the Central Committee was Friedrich Lengnik who came from Russia to Geneva in September 1903.

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Zarya (Dawn)—a Marxist scientific and political journal published in Stuttgart in 1901-02 by the Iskra editorial board.

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Probably two suburbs of Geneva, Carouge and Cluse, where the supporters of both the Majority and the Minority lived.

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Subakevich—a character in N. Gogol’s Dead Souls

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Orthodox—pseudonym used by the Menshevik Lyubov Axelrod.

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Bazarov—the main character in Turgenev’s Fathers and Sons.

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Together with Lenin’s “Letter to Iskra” (Collected Works, Vol. 7, pp. 115-18), Iskra No. 53 (November 25, 1903) printed an editorial reply by Plekhanov. In his letter Lenin proposed a discussion in the paper of the differences of principle between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Plekhanov rejected this, describing these differences as “petty squabbling typical of theoretical politics”.

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Revolutsionnaya Rossiya (Revolutionary Russia) was an illegal Socialist-Revolutionary newspaper first published in Russia by the Union of Socialist Revolutionaries at the end of 1900. From January 1902 till December 1905, it was issued abroad (Geneva) as the official organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

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The Central Committee’s Ultimatum to the Mensheviks was announced on November 12 (25), 1903. On October 22 (November 4), 1903, Lenin sent the Central Committee a letter in which he proposed offering the Mensheviks the following conditions: 1) co-option of three of the ex-editors on to the editorial board of the Central Organ; 2) re-establishment of the status quo in the League.
Abroad; 3) allowing the Mensheviks one seat in the Party Council. These initial conditions were not supported by conciliationist members of the Central Committee. In the letter Lenin outlined and proposed approving the main points of an ultimatum (i.e., a statement of the practical concessions the Central Committee was permitted to make to them) but delaying as yet their presentation: 1) co-option of four ex-editors to the editorial board; 2) co-option to the Central Committee of two members of the opposition to be chosen by the Central Committee; 3) re-establishment of the status quo in the League Abroad; 4) allowing the Mensheviks one seat in the Party Council. "If the ultimatum is not accepted," Lenin wrote, "it will mean war to the bitter end. An additional condition: 5) the cessation of all gossip, wrangling and talk concerning the strife at the Second Party Congress and after it." (Collected Works, Vol. 34, p. 187.) These proposals of Lenin's (except the additional condition) were somewhat toned down by the conciliators among the Central Committee members.

The day after the ultimatum, the Mensheviks, helped a great deal by Plekhanov, co-opted the ex-editors to the Central Organ editorial board, rejected the Central Committee's ultimatum and embarked on the path of open struggle against the Party majority.

40 Y—pseudonym of L. I. Galperin, a Central Organ delegate to the Party Council, afterwards co-opted to the Central Committee; he took up a conciliatory stand.

41 This reference is to the views of Pyotr Struve, leading representative of "legal Marxism" and his book Critical Remarks on the Subject of Russia's Economic Development (1894). In this early work Struve's bourgeois-apologetic thinking had been clearly discernible. The views of Struve and the other "legal Marxists" were assailed by Lenin in a paper read to a St. Petersburg Marxist circle in the autumn of 1894, entitled "The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature". This paper Lenin then expanded at the close of 1894 and the beginning of 1895, into his essay "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book" (Collected Works, Vol. 1, pp. 333-507).

42 Lenin is referring to Martov's Iskra article "Is This the Way To Prepare?", in which Martov opposed preparations for an all-Russia armed uprising, regarding them as nothing but utopian conspiracy.

43 A line from the satirical "Hymn of the Contemporary Russian Socialist" published in No. 1 of Zarya (April 1901) and ridiculing the Economists in their attempts to adapt their tactics to the spontaneous movement. This "Hymn" which was written by Martov appeared under the name of Narcis Tuporylov (Narcissus Blunt-Snout).
44 *Oblomov*—a landowner, the main character in Goncharov’s novel of the same name, an embodiment of sloth and passive vegetation.

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45 The *Dresden Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party* was held on September 13-20, 1903. The Congress concentrated on the questions of Party tactics and the struggle against revisionism. It levelled criticism at the revisionist views held by E. Bernstein, P. Göhre, E. David, W. Heine and other German Social-Democrats. However in its struggle against revisionism the Congress was not consistent enough: the revisionists were not expelled from the Party and after the Congress they continued preaching their opportunist views.

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46 The *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (Socialist Monthly), published in Berlin from 1897 to 1933, was the chief organ of the opportunists in the German Social-Democratic Party and one of the organs of international opportunism.

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47 The *Frankfurter Zeitung* (Frankfurt Newspaper) was a daily newspaper, organ of the major German stock-jobbers, which was published in Frankfurt-on-Main from 1856 to 1943. It re-appeared in 1949 as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and is now the mouthpiece of West German monopolies.

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48 “*Ministerial*” tactics, “ministerialism”, “ministerial socialism” (or Millerandism)—the opportunist tactics of participation by Socialists in reactionary bourgeois governments. The term originated when in 1899 the French socialist Millerand joined the bourgeois government of Waldeck-Rousseau.

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49 Lenin is referring here to the satirical Short Constitution of the R.S.D.I.P. written by L. Martov and published as an appendix to his article “Who’s Next” (*Iskra*, No. 58, January 25, 1904). In his constitution Martov spoke ironically about Bolshevik organisational principles and complained about allegedly unjust attitudes towards the Mensheviks. By “bullies” and “bullied” he refers here to Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

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50 *Trepov, F. F.*—Governor of St. Petersburg, whom Vera Zasulich fired at in 1878 in protest against his maltreatment of the political prisoner Bogolyubov.

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