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# On the Russian Revolution : The Petrograd Workers and the Fall of the Old Régime - IV - Chapter Five

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## Chapter 5: The February Revolution in the Factories

Although the workers lacked a clear conception of the political arrangements immediately to follow upon a successful insurrection, they had very definite ideas about the social and economic benefits the revolution should bring. In their conception of the revolution, the political task of establishing

democratic freedoms was integrally bound up with specific socio-economic reforms. 'Will political freedom [alone] aid [the workers to live] in human fashion?' asked a worker delegate at the 5 March session of the Petrograd Soviet. '[It is necessary] to secure the minimum conditions of existence, the eight-hour day, a minimum wage. With the old conditions still in existence, freedoms are useless'. [1]

The social content of the workers' conception of the revolution included three basic elements: the eight-hour day, a significant improvement in wages and conditions, and the 'democratisation of factory life'. In their minds, these were part and parcel of the democratic revolution; they were not seen as a challenge to the capitalist system or to the fundamental rights of private property.

The entrepreneurs, however, did not share this view. To them, 'social' meant 'socialism'. Harking back to 1905, they were inclined to see the worker as a basically anarchist element who would move on to socialist experiments at the first opportunity. The French ambassador, Paléologue, recalled a conversation in June 1915 with the prominent banker and industrialist A. I. Putilov, in which the latter described the coming revolution as 'horrifying anarchy, endless anarchy, anarchy for 10 years'. [2] This fear of the unleashed masses had been, in fact, a major reason for the bourgeoisie's weak and indecisive opposition to the autocracy. In a speech before a March conference of the Council of Private Railroads, Nekrasov, Minister of Communications and a well-known 'leftist' in liberal circles, tried to assuage these apprehensions.

*"There is no need to be frightened by the fact that social elements are now beginning to appear. One should, rather, strive to channel these social elements in the correct direction.... The essential thing is the rational combination of the social moment and the political, and by no means to deny the social moment, to fear it.... What we must achieve is not social revolution but the avoidance of social revolution through social reform."* [3]

This, indeed, was the initial strategy of the Petrograd industrialists: to make concessions with a view to calming the workers and gaining time until the revolutionary enthusiasm abated. But it is obvious from the very purpose of Nekrasov's talk that the owners and the workers were from the outset far apart on the 'social' issue.

In a sense, the position of the Soviet EC majority paralleled that of the entrepreneurs in its desire to keep separate the economic and political aspects of the revolution and to postpone the struggle for socio-economic reforms until the revolution was politically consolidated. The Menshevik Rabochaya gazeta stated this explicitly:

*"Our revolution is a political one. We destroy the bastions of political authority, but the bases of capitalism remain in place. A battle on two fronts - against the Tsar and against capital - is beyond the forces of the proletariat. We will not pick up the glove that the capitalists are throwing down before us. The economic struggle will begin when and how we find it necessary."* [4]

## **The Eight-hour Day**

The eight-hour day, one of the Social-Democratic 'Three Whales', was a demand that was very dear to the workers. Economic on the face of it, workers and capitalists alike considered it equally political. On 19 March, the workers of the Moscow Military-Industry Factory declared: 'We consider the establishment of the eight-hour day not only an economic victory but we see it as a fact of enormous political significance in the struggle for the liberation of the working class'. [5] 'We have secured the eight-hour day and other freedoms', asserted the Conference of Factories of the Artillery Authority. [6]

The question of ending the general strike was first raised at the 5 March session of the Soviet. The chairman, Chkhaidze, stated in his report that although Tsarism was not yet totally destroyed, it had been beaten sufficiently for work to begin, with the understanding that if the need arose all would leave the factories again. He recognised that the workers could not continue under the old conditions and promised that the Soviet would begin working out new ones as soon as production resumed. This report provoked 'passionate debate' [7] during which five workers and five soldiers took the floor. The workers insisted that the strike continue until the eight-hour day and better work conditions were won, one of them complaining that 'many have forgotten about many promises - they do not speak of the longstanding slogan of the proletariat, the eight-hour day'. In the name of the world proletariat, he called upon the assembly to take the decision to introduce this reform. [8] The soldiers, however, demanded an immediate end to the strike.

The vote was 1170 to 30 to return to work. In part, the size of the majority reflected the resolution's promise immediately to work out economic demands to be presented to the owners. But in part, it also reflected the workers' concern for the unity of revolutionary democracy, their fear of losing the support of the soldiers, who were understandably worried about war production.

It soon became clear, however, that the Soviet's resolution was out of step with the dominant mood in the factories. A Soviet agitator explained: 'When I told them of this decision, in my heart I felt that we could not do this: the workers cannot win freedom and not use it to ease the burdens of their labour, to fight capital'. [9] A number of factories simply refused to submit and protested what they felt to be the undemocratic nature of the decision. The organisational committee of the Moscow District Soviet resolved (27 to 10 with 2 abstentions):

*"Taking into account the decision of the Soviet of W and SD on the immediate return to work, a decision taken without preliminary discussion in the localities by the workers and soldiers themselves, we find that this resolution is incorrect and therefore we have decided to postpone the resumption of work for two days and immediately to raise the question for re-examination by the Soviet. In addition, the Moscow District Committee finds it necessary to begin immediately the reorganisation of the Soviet W and SD."* [10]

At the Military-Medical Preparations Factory the workers called the decision 'premature and autocratic' and decided to continue the strike. [11] When a Menshevik-Defencist maintenance mechanic at one textile mill called for a ten and a half hour day in solidarity with the Allies, asking the workers to consider what their English comrades 'would think, one of the women replied: 'We have sacrificed so much. Do we really have to wait for instructions from abroad'? The meeting resolved to end the strike only after securing the eight-hour day. [12] Of the 111 factories reporting to the Petrograd Society of Factory and Mill Owners, only 28 had resumed work by 7 March, the date set by the Soviet. [13]

It is worth noting that it was by no means the more politically radical factories that evinced the greatest opposition to the Soviet's decision. In fact, the Bolshevik PC reported on 7 March that 18 factories in the Vyborg District, a majority, were working. [14] The Lessner Factories voted by 7000 to 6 to return to work even though the Soviet's decision was considered premature.

*"But in the aims of the coordination and unity of all of the revolutionary forces of the country, we obey the decision of the Soviet W and SD and declare that on the first call of the representatives of the workers and soldiers we will leave work for further struggle on the basis of the fundamental slogans of the proletariat and peasantry - eight-hour day, republic and confiscation of all land for the benefit of the peasantry."* [15]

One can clearly see at work here the strong sense of discipline of the skilled workers. It is also

reasonable to assume that the skilled elements of the working class were more conscious of the need for unity against the threat of counterrevolution than the less skilled, less urbanised workers, whose militancy on economic issues in 1917 stood in contrast to their general political inertness. [16]

In fact, most factories eventually heeded the Soviet's call but only after introducing the eight-hour day on their own initiative, in 'revolutionary fashion' (yavochnim poryadkom), by simply quitting after eight hours or demanding time-and-a-half for 'extra'. On 8 March, the Petrograd District Soviet concluded after hearing reports from the factories:

1. that the decision of the Soviet W and SD on the return to work met with strong resistance on the part of the proletariat of the Petrograd side and that this decision was carried out in very unharmonious fashion
2. the resumption of work in the majority of cases was and is being accompanied by the introduction of the eight-hour day and a number of other improvements of labour. [17]

Few factories actually agreed to forgo the eight-hour day. The state-owned Promet Pipe Factory resolved that 'the eight-hour day can be introduced only gradually, in any case, not immediately'. [18] At the Nevskii Machine-construction and Shipbuilding Factory in the Nevskii District the workers voted not to introduce the reform 'because of the circumstances of the present time'. [19] Both factories were moderate socialist strongholds in 1917.

The matter was finally resolved on 10 March when the Soviet and the Petrograd Society of Factory and Mill Owners reached an agreement which included the eight-hour day. That the owners saw this as only a temporary concession, hoping to recoup their losses at a later date, was made clear at the 16 March meeting of representatives of Petrograd-based firms with the Minister of Trade and Industry, A. I. Konovalov. The meeting, in fact, never got around to its stated agenda because of the amount of discussion the reform generated. B. A. Efron, Chairman of the Society, stated flatly: 'The agreement reached in Petrograd is a real concession for the regulation of work life in the capital, and the workers themselves [!] consider that in the present circumstances it is only temporary'. He spoke against the possibility of limiting the workday to eight hours, arguing that the owners simply could not afford to pay time-and-a-half. The conferees, with the concurrence of Konovalov, resolved that 'Now is not the time to introduce the eight-hour day. One must approach this question very carefully'. [20]

The position the moderate Soviet majority found its expression in a *Rabochaya gazeta* editorial of 10 March cautioning the workers against those calling for the eight-hour day. It reminded them of 1905 when the same demand helped to drive the bourgeoisie away from the revolution, resulting in a lockout that proved disastrous to the movement. The editorial proposed first to consolidate the workers' political position and only then to proceed with the economic struggle.

However, the workers' action on this issue showed how alien this mode of thought was to them. A revolution stripped of its social content, even as a temporary tactic to cement the alliance with census society, was simply not worth the candle. In this, at least, the workers from the outset were in accord with the Bolsheviks, who urged the Soviet to enact the eight-hour day at once. [21]

## Wages

After the revolution the workers expected 'to live in a manner befitting a workman and a free citizen', wrote the journal of the Textile Workers' Union. [22] 'The conditions of predatory exploitation that existed in the feudal system of Russia cannot exist in the new Russia', declared the

Nevskii District Soviet. [23] A decent wage was thus yet another social demand of the revolution. Although the eight-hour day increased hourly wages by 20-28 per cent it did not satisfy many workers. Only a week after the agreement of 10 March, the PSFMO noted that it had not succeeded in calming the workers, that various demands continued to be made, and first of all wage demands. [24]

According to the 1918 Industrial and Professional Census, in 28 Petrograd factories that were in continuous operation in 1913-17, the average wage rose 120 per cent between 1913 and 1916. Strumilin, the Soviet economist, calculated in the 1920s that the average wage of January 1916 represented 84 per cent of the pre-war average real wage; that of February 1917-55 per cent. [25] Volobuev notes that, according to calculations of workers' organisations in 1917, calculations that initially went unchallenged by the PSFMO, the cost of living had quadrupled during the war. Hence, he concluded, the almost tripling of the nominal wage still meant a 25-30 per cent average decline in the real earnings. [26]

But this was only the average. According to the owners, unskilled male workers in February-March 1917 were earning 2.25-3.5 rubles a day. The owners of the Langezipen Factory themselves admitted in March that to live 'on three rubles is already a matter of extreme ingenuity'. [27] The plight of the unskilled workers was especially urgent, and they were pressing hard. Petrov, a worker from the Treugol'nik Rubber Factory (10 133 women and 5205 men) [28] pleaded before the Soviet on 20 March:

*"Conditions of labour at the Treugol'nik Factory are lousy. Wages don't correspond to the quality of work. The women received 1.35 rubles a day - the majority are married and the wives of soldiers, and it is difficult to live on that. Men received 2.40 - very low. During the revolution we put forth demands and the administration seemed prepared for concessions. But wages are no better. The women - 2.35 and the men - 3.35.... Now, I'd like the Soviet to ask the EC to immediately set to work on an economic reform. Comrades, we cannot live like this any longer. The high cost of life is terrible, and a family can't live on 3.35. To calm the workers we had to tell them that reforms are being drawn up. But we don't even know whether that's true or not."* [29]

At the Putilov Shipyards the connection between the revolution and the wage demands was especially clear, as the factory's delegate pointed out to the meeting. In mid-February, the economic situation had become so critical that the workers finally presented the administration with their demands, declaring:

*"We'll hold out whatever the cost, because we cannot go on living like this. But it suddenly turned out that the whole of Petrograd came out for this struggle... The government was overthrown... Before us the question arose - to return to work or to continue the strike. The Soviet W and SD gave the order that we must begin work. We obeyed and at the same time presented our demands."* [30]

Where wages had been especially low, the situation was extremely volatile. A Bolshevik worker from the state-owned Admiralty Shipbuilding Factory reported:

*"You know what sort of anarchy exists there now. You know how the workers were squeezed there until now, and, having achieved certain political freedoms, they are using them to the full... They tell the director: Either you agree to what we say, do what we demand, or get out... One day we take a decision. Next day they learn that another plant decided something different and they demand the same.... In one day five or six changes, and each day work almost stops and not infrequently actually does stop as the workers assemble and discuss... Do the workers have grounds to be agitated? Yes. At the Admiralty Shipbuilding Factory a good half of the workers made 1.18 rubles for 9 hours. There is no doubt that no one can live on that wage, and as a result they are forced to work 16 hours*

*a day and are so exhausted that any day they are ready to quit. During the war, they say, they already struck two times, and many of the leading workers were sent to the front, and now they're ready for a third."* [31]

All speakers asked for one thing – the enactment of a minimum wage. The delegate from the Putilov Shipyards concluded:

*"And so we want a commission to be formed here to investigate the situation and enter into negotiations with the administration, which together with the entrepreneurs, under the flag of patriotism, stripped the worker naked, since they all believed that a worker is created in order that they drink his blood drop by drop, squeeze out all the juices, and then throw him overboard like a useless object. Now, comrades, it isn't so: When the workers have awoken from their sleep of toil, they demand a just wage and put forth just demands, and the entrepreneur cries – 'Help, they're robbing us!' Comrades, you probably don't share their horror. You understand the situation of all the workers and you will probably tell them: No. You oppressed the workers, you fleeced them, and in the future you have to pay only that which the labour is worth."* [32]

One cannot avoid the conclusion that for the workers the February Days were more than a political action directed against autocracy but equally an economic strike against capital. Immediately upon returning to the factories, the workers presented their wage demands and once again, on this economic issue, the unskilled workers were especially militant. At the Kersten Knitwear Mill (2193 women and 335 men), [33] where wages were low even for the textile industry, about 2000 workers gathered in the yard and decided on the following demands:

- (1) the immediate removal of the head of the knitwear department as 'not corresponding to his appointment', 'he deals with the workers in a coarse manner'
- (2) the immediate introduction of the eight-hour day and a general raise of 50 per cent, pending a review of the wage rates
- (3) payment for the days of the revolution
- (4) wages to be paid every fortnight
- (5) defective goods to be sold to the workers at cost in limited quantities
- (6) overtime to be voluntary and paid at time and a half
- (7) the right to hold meetings without the permission or presence of foremen or representatives of the administration.

The meeting decided to remain out until the demands were met in full. Thus, an economic strike followed directly upon the political. Production resumed on 15 March after most of the demands had been won. [34]

*"At the Skorokhod Shoe Factory (3242 women out of 4900), work began on 10 March after the administration promised a quick reply to the workers' economic demands. The average wage had been 5.72 rubles for men and 2.95 for women; the workers were asking for 10 and 7 rubles respectively and for the administration to supply work materials at its expense. When the administration agreed to only a 20 per cent rise, refusing to supply materials, the dispute went to a conciliation chamber. Here, however, the sides remained deadlocked. At this point the administration offered another 20 per cent and promised 10 000 rubles for the Leatherworkers' Union. Although the majority of the worker delegates to the chamber were inclined to accept this*

*offer, the mass of workers would not hear of it. On 20 March, an angry crowd of 500 gathered in front of the director's office and refused to leave without full satisfaction of their demands. At last, the director rang up the PSFMO, which gave him the green light to agree to the demands."* [35]

Thus, on the wage question, too, the workers showed they were not in the mood for concessions. The appeals of the more cautious elements of the Soviet leadership had little effect. [36] The feeling among the workers was that it was they, not the capitalists, who had suffered under the old régime and had made the revolution, and it was up to the latter to make concessions and display good will.

### **The Press Campaign against 'Worker Egotism'**

The unity of revolutionary democracy was quite another matter to the workers. And the test of this alliance came very soon. Already in the second half of March, the non-socialist press (especially *Rech'*, the Kadet paper, and *Russkaya volya*) began to accuse the workers of pursuing narrow egotistical interests at the expense of the war effort. The workers at once saw this as a concerted campaign of census society aimed at turning the soldiers against them. They were naturally alarmed.

Many factories, including some of the most radical, began to declare their readiness to work overtime, the eight-hour day notwithstanding. The Old Parviainen Factory (which passed a resolution for Soviet power as early as 13 April) resolved:

*"Considering the seriousness of the current moment, we consider it necessary to carry on work in full. No negligent attitudes or excessive wage demands. At the same time, we must say that the socio-economic defects, such as lack of raw materials, are a serious brake."* [37]

At the end of March, the factory committee of the state Patronnyi Factory prepared a special report on the plant's operations since the revolution for the soldiers of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. Output was down by 2.5 per cent, but this was seen as temporary and inevitable, given the revolutionary situation.

*"The workers of the Petrograd Patronnyi Factory, as true patriots of their fatherland, which is going through a difficult war, and also valuing the freedom that has been won, having frequently discussed the issue of production at their general assemblies, in refutation of the false rumours being spread by unknown persons with provocational aims, have mandated the executive committee [factory committee] to declare that, while recognising the eight-hour day as the basis, the workers will nevertheless, conscious of the coming danger, by all means try to support their brother-soldiers at the front who, together with the workers, have won freedom inside Russia, freedom which the workers guard with all their might, [and will] work unquestioningly if necessary more than eight hours up to twelve hours, and if required, even more. But the workers cannot in any case take upon themselves responsibility for the fact that work will stop for lack of fuel, metals or other materials or for other reasons not depending on the workers. Dark slander is attacking the workers from the direction of the stooges of the old régime, who want to break the unity of the workers and soldiers, who want to destroy the freedom we have won with our blood."* [38]

Soon the workers became more specific on the nature of these 'dark forces'. 'Comrade soldiers', began a resolution from the Aivaz Machine-construction Factory,

*"Rumours have been reaching us that someone is spreading the slander that the workers think only how to increase their wages and scorn the production of artillery shells, that they are busy striking. We were silent while we thought this was merely a case of idlers wagging their tongues. But now we see that by these means the landowners, fearing for their land and [the capitalists] watching over*

*their profits, want to sow discord among us, want to weaken that union of workers and soldiers, who shoulder to shoulder overthrew Tsarist autocracy and placed Russia on the democratic path of life."*

"Comrades. The enemies of democracy spread discord among us since they fear the united strength of the workers and soldiers in the Soviet W and SD. You, who have left our ranks, the lathe and hammer, and have gone to the barracks, and you comrade soldiers, declare to these slanderers that workers are applying all their energy so that work on defence proceeds at full steam.... We know of no factory in Petrograd that is striking now." [39]

In the long run, despite some initial success, the press campaign backfired, serving only to bind the workers and soldiers more closely together in opposition to census society. [40] In the factories themselves, it intensified suspicions regarding the true motives of management whenever hitches arose in production. (No doubt this was also a factor in the opposition to the 'Liberty Loan'.)

This episode revealed a considerable degree of political sophistication among the workers. They appear here not as mindless masses 'ripping off' as much as possible as quickly as possible, but as workers keenly aware of the importance of the soldiers' support and prepared to make important concessions to keep it. That this was not true in their relations with census society was, in part, due to the workers' perception of the latter's weakness. For it soon became clear that without an apparatus of repression, the power of the bourgeoisie was mainly negative in nature; it could only take the form of passive resistance or sabotage. The threat from a hostile army, on the other hand, was much more immediate.

But there was also a moral element involved, in that the revolution, in its socio-economic, and even, in part, its political aspects, was directed against census society as well as the autocracy, and to make concessions to the capitalists would have in a sense meant to compromise the revolution. The workers' class pride and traditional hostility to census society would not allow this. The soldiers, on the other hand, were a part of 'revolutionary democracy', of the people, and concessions to them did not bear the same moral significance. Besides, the soldiers had, along with the workers, made the revolution; it was felt that they had a right to make claims.

There is, in fact, evidence to indicate a rise in productivity in many factories in March and April, despite the initial disruption and the supply problems. Even N. N. Kutler, member of the Kadet Party Central Committee and a leading Russian industrialist, noted a certain 'enthusiasm for work' at the start of the revolution. [41] The Conference of Factories of the Artillery Authority in early April reported that productivity had begun to rise where the supply question was under control. At the Patronnyi Factory, which had lost almost its entire administration, production was down only 2 per cent. At the Okhta Powder Factory, instead of the former output norm of 800 puds with 30 per cent defective output, productivity was now at 900 puds with only 15 per cent defective. At the Orudiinnyi Factory output was up 28 per cent, at Opticheskii - 11 per cent, at Trubochnyi it was normal and at the Sestroretsk Arms Factory 600 rifles were being produced daily in place of the former 450. In fact, the worker delegates, for their part, attacked the Artillery Authority for poor management and demanded its abolition. [42] At the end of March, the Petrograd Committee of Medium and Small Industry also confirmed that 'in many small enterprises in Petrograd, labour productivity had not declined but has risen in spite of the introduction of the eight-hour day' [43] Similarly, the director of the Schlussemburg Powder Factory reported to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in mid-April that, although for many reasons the first week had been a difficult one, now

*"production is proceeding in a more satisfactory fashion.... The workers in a fully conscious manner take into account the current conjuncture and as far as possible are guarding the factory from any occurrences that could harm it in any way and are energetically cooperating in increasing the output of powder and explosive materials."* [44]

*Rabochaya gazeta* reported on the results of the investigations conducted by delegations from the front which had spoken to representatives of both workers and administration: in some cases productivity had risen; in others it had declined, not through the fault of the workers but for lack of fuel and materials. [45]

## **Worker - Management Relations - The Democratisation of Factory Life**

To the workers, the revolution also meant the abolition of 'autocracy in the factory', the 'democratisation of factory life'. In part, this meant simply the elimination of those elements of the Tsarist state that had penetrated the factory administration.

The pre-revolutionary relationship between management and the state can only be described as symbiotic. Administrators doubled as police informers, while the police were always on call to aid in putting down strikes. During the war this partnership developed a special intimacy - activists, or for that matter anyone who dared to protest against the deteriorating conditions, faced the immediate prospect of loss of military deferment, jail or exile. Many plants had police or regular army troops stationed nearby or inside to maintain 'order'.

This state of affairs was underlined in the inquiry into the strike movement by the left fractions of the State Duma in the summer of 1916:

*"Another characteristic is the length of the strikes. Usually a strike ends in a lockout, and, moreover, this lockout takes place with the closest participation and - most intimate support of both the civil and military authorities.... Just as soon as the factory closes, the military authorities immediately begin to take workers into the army. For example at the Putilov Factory several hundred youths were sent to disciplinary battalions.... [Here] for lack of workers, soldiers are being sent, and often not specialists..."*

This noted intervention of the military authorities in favour of the entrepreneurs, characteristic of the workers' economic movement during the war, has in no way weakened the old traditional regulation of conflicts between labour and capital in which the civil authorities have long been involved in Russia.

All the conflicts of late have been accompanied by incessant repressions. Searches and arrests do not cease even for one day. The workers are afraid to elect representatives for negotiations for fear of losing their best people...

Sensing the weight of the civil and military authorities behind them, the entrepreneurs are conducting an exclusively insolent and provocative policy towards the workers.... The entrepreneurs during the war are making use of 'war methods' to subjugate the workers. The strongest weapon in their hands is the deprivation of workers subject to military service of the right to freely move from one enterprise to another.... The threat of the front - the last word in entrepreneurial tactics - is a threat which they in the end carry out willingly, transforming the front into a place of exile and forced labour." [46]

But there was also another side to the 'factory autocracy'. This was the despotic absolutism that characterised the Russian factory system. Now that the revolution had made the workers citizens, equals with the administrators in public life, they wanted to be treated as such in the factory, too. 'I felt as though I had grown up', recalled the Treugol'nik worker cited above. Workers accordingly demanded 'internal' authority for themselves in the workplace, a demand that did not deny the right of the administration to manage the technical and economic sides of production, but which gave the

workers at least an equal voice in regulating the conditions under which work was conducted. [47]

Another consequence of the February Revolution was the awakening in the workers of a certain sense of responsibility for the correct functioning of the factory. This was especially noticeable in the state factories where the workers at the start of the revolution really felt they were the boss, but it was also present in the private enterprises. It was the result of a number of factors. In part, it reflected the new sense of citizenship, and, in part, it expressed the workers' concern for defence of the revolution. But it was also the product of latent suspicion of the administration, suspicion of technical incompetence and mismanagement, but also of counterrevolutionary sympathies, suspicions that the press campaign of the second half of March only aggravated.

### **Purge of the Administration**

Returning from the battles of February, the workers almost immediately set to purging the factory administrations of 'undesirable elements'. At the very first general assembly of the Artillery Branch of the Patronnyi Factory, for example, it was unanimously resolved to 'filter the administration from foreman to general'. [48]

At times this purge took on a rather dramatic character. In many factories, usually after some discussion for and against the merits of the individual in question, a vote would be taken. If it was against him, the workers summarily tossed a sack over his head and drove him outside the gates in a wheelbarrow. This traditional mode of reprisal, frowned upon by the more conscious workers, was considered to be a mark of special disgrace. At the Putilov Works 40 administrators were removed in the course of three days, many in wheelbarrows. [49]

In the textile mills, the workers tended to be more magnanimous. In a scene typical of early March, the workers of the Thornton Mill assembled in one of the shops and called out the foremen, one by one, to give an account of themselves. The crowd shouted: 'Foreman of such-and-such department onto, the table!', and he was pushed forward. Sweating profusely, he would try desperately to justify his actions, most often claiming that he had been merely transmitting pressure from above. After promising to change his ways, he was let go. The English foremen got the worst of it because their rudimentary Russian did not allow them to understand the goings on. As for the 30 policemen on the factory payroll and the members of the administration with known counterrevolutionary views, despite the desire of a part of the meeting to deal them a good thrashing, they were merely escorted to the local militia. [50]

As heads cooled, especially in the more skilled and organised metalworking plants, the process took on a more orderly character. In the larger factories, each shop would meet and then present its list of undesirables to the central factory committee for approval. [51] This was no mere explosion of blind rage against authority. A real attempt was made to justify charges and carefully to weigh the evidence. For example, the pattern-making shop of the Baltic Shipbuilding Factory voted on 9 March by 56 to 23 with 3 abstentions to fire the shop's manager, Sadov. But at a second meeting held two days later, where Sadov was allowed to plead his case, the question was reconsidered, ending in a vote of 46 and 12 with 7 abstentions to retain him. [52] On the other hand, once the facts had been weighed and the final decision taken, the workers categorically refused to take the purged administrators back, the rulings of conciliation chambers notwithstanding. [53]

The motives given for firing these administrators illustrate the workers' conception of the revolution in the factory. The general assembly of the submarine department of the Baltic Factory discussed the case of 'master Stesyura and his activity under the old régime'.

1. At first, the question was raised as a political one and no basis was found to accuse him.

2. Secondly, the question was posed: Did he exploit labour? This question too was examined by the general assembly and the result was the following – that he liked to press the work, but at the same time he paid more for labour than other administrators...

3. Is he suited to his appointment?... There were no major disagreements... and it was found that he was acquitted on the three main questions and also on the smaller questions he was found not guilty. [54]

The second question considered was in fact broader than payment for work, an area in which, incidentally, the foremen had enjoyed wide arbitrary powers. [55] It included all manner of mistreatment of workers by the administration, especially affronts to their sense of dignity. Often mentioned in this context were 'coarse relations' with the workers, use of foul language, arbitrary and oppressive use of fining, assignment to overly strenuous work as punishment, playing favourites, etc. [56] There was thus a definite moral, as well as economic, dimension involved.

The political type of accusation was the most clear-cut. The workers of the iron boiler-making shop of the Baltic Shipbuilding Factory explained their dismissal of the manager:

*"We find that he fulfilled what were sooner the duties of a purely police administrator than those of a foreman and shop manager striving to turn the above-named shop into a house of silence or a disciplinary department where with aching heart one could hear his replies 'I'll ship you to the front! I'll use military authority!' He sent... [four names are given] and others. From the above his devotion to the old reactionary régime can be seen. To this we add that his removal had caused no harm to the shop."* [57]

But accusations were rarely limited to one type of charge. The following resolution of the riveting and chasing department of the Baltic Factory combines the political, economic and moral aspects, at the same time relating a sense of the intense emotions involved.

*"We, the workers of the... department, have unanimously resolved at our general assembly that each administrative individual who has received an order from us to immediately leave the plant is removed by us so that, because of his past criminal activity and in the future, he will not be able to enter the factory and therefore we ask that special attention be given to these people for in their being at the head of the department they were a bulwark of autocracy, occupied exclusively in oppressing our comrades. In pre-revolutionary times they were the 'rulers of the destinies' of the workers, many of our comrades, for a conversation about the freedom that has just been victorious, were placed on trial before higher authorities who immediately fired them and contacted the Military Commander to have them shipped to the front. Besides that, coarse relations, low economic rates in the factory's favour, and the miserably paid, thanks to them, piece of bread earned by our sweat, in our common opinion are weighty accusations against them which arouse in us not charity towards them but a sense of extreme scorn. On the basis of all the above, we ask the EC of the Baltic Factory to fire them immediately for there is no room for condescension here."* [58]

The struggle for the recognition of their human dignity was not a new one for the workers. The experience of 1905 and especially 1912-14 had not been forgotten. The foreman Morozov, according to his accusers, was of an 'unconscious and unfeeling nature... [He would] often come running up with insults, not taking into account the dignity of a person. He inflicted abuse of the foulest kind'. [59] Of the foreman Volkov the workers of the paint shop of the Baltic Factory wrote:

*"This is the chief culprit of our oppression and humiliation which we have suffered over the last years... Let us recall the first days after his arrival [...] of course not many of us experienced this but the voice of our comrades whom he mocked calls to us and begs for revenge. From the very first*

*days of his rule when he put on his idiot's mittens of violence, he showed his base soul. In 1915, many of our comrades suffered in their self-respect and thanks to his contrivances were thrown out of the factory in the most shameless manner... From that year began the era of our oppression. They [Volkov and his superior] forgot 1905. In 1909, he began his shameful programme of lowering rates to an impossible 8-9 kopeks, not considering the conditions of work... We all felt this horror all the time till the last days of the arbitrary rule."* [60]

Here, too, the 'exploitation' is seen most of all as a moral issue, an affront to the workers' human dignity. And, again, the evidence shows clearly that this was no elemental bunt, no anarchistic rebellion against all authority, but a decisive rejection of unlimited, arbitrary power, experienced as an insult to the workers' self-respect.

*"The last type of charge, technical incompetence, rarely appeared by itself but usually as a back-up to other arguments. For example, the department head Lyashchenko' was a 'man poorly versed in the technical tasks of his job. He was present in the shop only two or three hours a day and some days not at all'. But he was also accused of 'limitless exploitation' and 'he replied to any request with the threat of jail, and during the war - with the front. He set up a system of spies and was careful that among his aides there be none but a monarchist organisation'. [61] The general assembly of the First Power Station unanimously decided to remove its board of directors as 'henchmen of the old régime and recognising their harmfulness from the economic point of view and their uselessness from the technical'."* [62]

## **The Factory Committees**

If the purges represented the negative or destructive aspect of the democratisation process, the positive side was expressed in the workers' demand for internal autonomy in the factories. The vehicle for this was the factory committee.

The demand for elected representatives in the factory had a long history, and, in fact, several large factories already had semi-legal 'councils of elders' before the revolution. These served to represent the workers before the administration. [63] The 10 March agreement between the Soviet and the owners legalised these committees, providing for their election in all industrial enterprises. According to the second paragraph, the factory committees had the following functions: (1) to represent the workers in dealings with government and public institutions; (2) to express the opinions of the workers on questions of public and economic life; (3) to resolve questions relating to the mutual relations among the workers themselves; and (4) to represent the workers before the administration and owners on questions of their mutual relations. [64]

Where the workers overstepped the provisions of the agreement was in the area of the rather vague third point. Virtually everywhere they raised the demand for 'control over internal order' (vnutrennii poryadok). This too was not a new demand. It represented the essence of the workers' conception of the new order in the factories. To them, it amounted to 'the establishment of a constitutional regime'. [65] On 13 March, the provisional factory committee of the Radiotelegraph Factory recognised 'the need for the creation of a permanent factory committee to manage [vedat'] the internal life of the factory.... What should the above-mentioned committee decide?' The following items were presented for the approval of the general assembly:

- (1) length of the workday
- (2) minimum worker's wage
- (3) mode of payment for labour
- (4) immediate organisation of medical aid

- (5) on labour insurance
- (6) on the establishment of a mutual aid fund
- (7) on hiring and firing
- (8) resolving various conflicts
- (9) labour discipline
- (10) on rest
- (11) on guarding the factory
- (12) on food
- (13) rights, duties, elections and existence of a permanent factory committee. [66]

At the Phoenix Machine-construction Factory, the areas of concern of the factory committee included guarding the plant, regulation of wages, norms and the determination of rates, resolution of labour conflicts, the food supply, health care, and cultural and educational work. [67] Finally, a meeting of the representatives of 8000 workers of eight tobacco factories drew up the following list of demands that together represent a comprehensive statement of their conception of the new order in the factories. Besides purely economic demands, these included:

- (2) to abolish overtime and authorise it individually in each case with the permission of the central organ
- (3) to destroy the black book of the entrepreneurs
- (5) to oblige the administration to polite address with the workers
- (7) to oblige the administration to deal with the workers through their representatives
- (8) to remove from the factory elements undesirable to the workers
- (9) to conduct the hiring and firing of workers only with the agreement of the workers' committee
- (10) to abolish searches and transfer the duty of protecting the integrity of the material to the workers themselves and their representatives
- (12) to abolish fines; choice of means of influence to fall to the factory committee
- (20) to elect elders at work by the workers themselves. [68]

Thus, on the one hand, the factory committees were intended to correct the worst pre-revolutionary abuses of authority: arbitrary firings, the hiring of 'foreign elements' hiding from the draft, playing favourites, arbitrary assignment to wage categories and payment for work, arbitrary and despotic use of fines, etc. The other side of this coin was the collective assumption by the workers of those prerogatives now taken out of the competence of management. These functions constituted the 'internal life' of the factory, control over which, the workers felt, rightfully belonged to them as autonomous human beings and citizens. None of these demands were intended to deny the basic right of the administration to manage the technical and economic sides of production. Nor did the workers in practice deny this right at this stage of the revolution.

Nevertheless, in retrospect, the attitudes that lay behind these demands can be seen to form a basis out of which such a denial could grow, given the right conditions. The purge of administration itself, for example, implied the right to abrogate the rights of the administration, through dismissal, in case of failure to adhere to the workers' concept of a constitutional system in the factory or even on grounds of technical incompetence.

In March, this potential generally lay quietly hidden under the surface. The slogan of the workers' control nowhere was raised in private industry. But there were already faint hints of what lay ahead. As noted, suspicions regarding the true intentions of management were already quite widespread. The Minister of Trade and Industry admitted in March that the workers of the capital 'suspect the administration of holding up the production of goods for defence'. [69] These suspicions were politically based. The workers had not forgotten the close cooperation between the factory administration and the Tsarist state. Lockouts had been a familiar part of the capital's labour scene

and had been used as readily against political as against economic strikes. [70]

On 22 March, the representatives of the factories of the Moscow District of Petrograd, meeting to discuss the 'bourgeois press campaign', resolved to address the workers of the capital

*"with the suggestion to call meetings to clarify the causes of the industrial dislocation in their districts and then [to call] a city-wide meeting of representatives of all districts to clarify and publish these causes of the industrial dislocation and to expose those who are preventing the elimination of this dislocation."* [71]

It is obvious whom the resolution had in mind.

Similar suspicions were aired at the 20 March session of the Soviet. The representative of the Metallicheskie Factory stated:

*"We are getting declarations that although there is work in certain shops, for unknown reasons this work is not being set in motion. We are told – its turn hasn't come yet and the shops are idle. We had a meeting of elders at our factory and they reached the conclusion that they elected a commission of three which is to investigate whether there aren't abuses on the part of the administration in favour of the old régime and the Germans, and if it turns out that the work can begin, then immediately to demand of the administration that it be done. Maybe the administration won't want to submit, so it is desirable that it be issued from the Soviet W and SD that a commission be chosen immediately from the factories of all Petrograd, as earlier there was one from the War-Industry Committees. True, that commission was bourgeois, and there was only a small group of workers in it, but it is desirable that now such a commission be created with a view to control and that it conduct an inspection of all the factories in order to make sure there are no abuses on the part of the administration in holding up work. Are the declarations of the administration correct that there is no metal and coal?"* [72]

In effect, this is already a call for workers' control – control in the Russian sense of observation and inspection. But it is important to note that the speaker was asking for control by the Soviet, centralised control, and this because he felt the Soviet would have greater power than the factory committee in dealing with the administration. There was no concern here for any special rights of the local factory committee: it was a practical question of the correct functioning of the plant. Workers' control was neither in its embryonic nor in its more developed stages predominantly a movement for 'industrial democracy' as an abstract right in itself, as something intrinsically desirable. In this sense, the movement was not motivated by anarchist ideas, although the anarchists enthusiastically supported it. To the workers, workers' control meant watching over the administration in order that the interests of the workers and the revolution be protected. If a centralised body – the Soviet or a workers' state – could do it better, there was no objection.

At the same meeting, a representative from several small enterprises recounted how upon returning to work the workers found no materials. A search also turned up nothing. A few days passed, and they finally went to the respirator department where they found a small amount of tin that sufficed for their needs.

*"But they could have done that two days earlier, i.e. we could have worked three days. But instead of bothering themselves with it, through carelessness or maybe with the aim of holding up production, they did not ask about it in the respirator department.... Such a great shortcoming is their fault in that they don't want to bother about it in time. In view of this, I would also ask that they be obliged to conduct matters properly."* [73]

The motives of the workers are evident here: concern for production stemming from concern for

their livelihood and for defence of the revolution against the external enemy – all this on the background of suspicion of administrative negligence or counterrevolutionary sympathies.

Already in early April one can find isolated cases of direct intervention by the factory committees into selected areas of management, mainly the shipping of goods and materials. At the Kebke Canvas Factory, the committee reported to the general assembly on the situation at the plant where production had come to a total halt. The meeting resolved to ask the Soviet to investigate. The workers claimed that production was being held up despite initial assurances from the administration of the existence of orders worth ten million rubles and at least a year's supply of raw materials. When questioned, the administration was evasive. Meanwhile, it was learnt that canvases were being hastily packed and the loaders offered a special bonus. The administration would only say it was a matter of military security. Moreover, when the trucks came, instead of loading the canvases that had already been prepared, others were taken right off the machines. As a result of all this, the factory committee ordered that no canvases should leave the grounds and had all telephone communications from the factory cut. [74]

At a meeting of the PSFMO on 7 April, it was claimed that the administration did indeed have documents from the air force, though why it had refused to show them to the factory committee was not explained. The meeting noted similar occurrences at a few other factories, including United Cable and the Paramanov Leather Factory. [75]

But such cases of direct intervention were still very rare. Nor did the workers formulate a generalised right of 'control'. They merely reacted to the situation, as they perceived it. In other words, these were defensive reactions, not the assertion of a right for its own sake.

Still, in the foregoing, one can already see the beginnings of the movement for workers' control. It was totally spontaneous at this point, coming entirely 'from below'. The vast majority of the factory committees in March and April were led by Mensheviks and SRs, – and the Bolsheviks had not yet embraced the slogan.

The situation in the state enterprises was different and presents a special interest for what it reveals of the workers' view of their relationship to management. In many of these factories at the start of the revolution the workers, through their elected representatives, either fully took over management or actively participated in it, along with the remnants of the former administration. However, after a few weeks they retreated, yielded all executive powers, declaring their refusal to assume responsibility for production. Only the right of 'control over the administration' (i.e. observation) was claimed.

Typical was the pattern of events at the Patronnyi Factory. According to the factory committee's report to the 265<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment,

On receiving the order of the Soviet W and SD on the renewal of work beginning March 7, the workers met on the morning of March 6 in their general assembly and in view of the fact that there was no one of the higher ranks at the plant and that they could not have helped but know of the Soviet W and SD's summons on starting work at the plant since it was published in all the papers, the workers at the general assembly decided to begin work independently from March 8.

*"At the general assembly on March 7, after a preliminary discussion of the question on the shop level, it was decided not to take back the majority of officials and to begin work on the morning of March 8."*

*"To decide current and at times very complex and responsible matters in the factory, a provisional*

*executive committee was elected from representatives of the shops.... After the agreement reached with General Orlov on the election of the factory administration and the arrival of Major-General Doronin, elected by the workers to be director of the factory, the last functions of management will be liquidated.... The provisional executive committee of the Petrograd Patronnyi Factory, having fulfilled the task placed upon it as best it could, is now reorganising itself on a new basis, having transferred all executive authority to the administration of the factory, the director Maj.-General Doronin elected by the workers, and retains for itself the functions of an observing and consultative organ.” [76]*

The takeover here is portrayed more or less as a matter of necessity. However, the refusal to readmit the administration might indicate, a more positive assertion of right, besides the fact that the administrators had all been, literally, servants of the old régime. The director of the Okhta Powder Factory, for example, reported that the workers felt they ‘should and can manage all the affairs of the factory’. [77] Somewhat later, Patronnyi’s factory committee admitted that ‘at first, the tasks of the factory committee were unclear and it was forced to move gropingly. It took upon itself not only the functions of control but also the duties of administration. Such cases occurred, of course, also at other plants’. In the end, however, the committee decided to limit itself to ‘internal order’ and as for the rest – only control, in accord with the position taken by the Conference of Factories of the Artillery Authority at the start of April. [78]

The protocols of the general assembly and factory committee of the Admiralty Shipbuilding Factory shed light on the causes of this retreat. Initially, it was decided that the factory committee had the right of control, but this right was interpreted so broadly as to effectively include management. For example, the ‘technical commission’ was to examine the need to improve the equipment of the factory and make repairs, the formulation of conditions for taking on and giving production orders, questions of the size of the administrative staff, etc. The ‘control-financial commission’ was to be in charge of the movement of all orders from the moment the offer was made, the subcontracting of orders, incoming and outgoing factory funds, cash on hand, etc. On 15 March, the committee was given the additional task of purchasing all metals, instruments, etc. required by the plant. [79]

However, less than two weeks later, the factory committee decided to restrict its functions to control, in the sense of observation, though retaining the right to remove administrative personnel through a conciliation chamber, and on 7 April the general assembly resolved that the election of administrative personnel by the workers was undesirable. [80] The factory committee noting ‘the difficulties involved in conducting the affairs of the factory committee in view of the complexity and indefiniteness as well as the novelty of the situation’, laid out the entire state of affairs before the workers on 27 April:

*“Given the confused circumstances that existed at the time of its creation and the difficulties in adapting this institution for management and control, the committee was placed in a contradictory position – for in giving orders to the corresponding organ of the administration, it would thus limit itself in the sphere of broad control and also inhibit the initiative of the director of the factory, thus harming the efficiency and orderliness of execution. Practice and common sense told us that it is necessary to transfer the function of management to the factory’s director and thus to unite the entire staff into a single unitary organisation. The committee retains the right to control all of its actions up to and including removal, through the conciliation chamber, of both the factory director and individual management personnel and also the initiative in the reorganisation and reduction of their numbers.” [81]*

It seems, therefore, that in the state factories the workers did initially decide to take over management. To them, the democratic revolution meant that the state factories now belonged to the people and that they should run them. Similar attitudes existed on the railroads, where ‘the majority

of railroad workers saw the February Revolution as a popular revolution and they, therefore, could not picture it without their close and active participation. This was especially so on the question of management. 70 per cent of the railroads belonged to the Tsar. He fell. Naturally, the railroads now belonged to the people. The workers, as part of the people, should be entrusted with them. Such ideas of primitive democracy were widespread among the railroad workers.' [82] Such attitudes were also common among the employees of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraph. Here there undoubtedly was a syndicalist element. [83]

However, the workers in the state factories, as opposed to those on the railroads or in the Post-Telegraph Union, soon reached the conclusion that they did not want, at least at this stage, to run the factories. They decided this because they felt technically unprepared. Worker management was something for socialism, and that still lay in the future. Moreover, in the given conditions of economic crisis, the factory committees understood that their chances of failing and being discredited were very great. The Instructions on the Activity of Factory Committees issued by the Conference of State Enterprises of Petrograd – on 15 April stated this clearly: 'Not desiring to take upon ourselves the responsibility for the technical and administrative organisation of production in the given conditions until the full socialisation of the economy, the representatives of the general factory committee enter the administration with a consultative voice'. [84] What is clear from the foregoing, at any rate, is that the workers did equate workers' management, in one form or another, with socialism.

At the same time, despite this retreat from management, the workers in state enterprises remained more radical than those in private industry on this issue. They asserted their right of control in an overt and positive manner, independently of the specific conditions in the factory (although, it is true, in many cases the state factory administration went into hiding immediately after the revolution). On the other hand, as noted earlier, no such right was claimed in private industry nor was control instituted, except in the few isolated cases where the workers saw a direct threat to their factories.

As for the entrepreneurs, they were not about to countenance any interference with the prerogatives of management. Back in 1912 the Petrograd industrialists issued their famous 'Convention of June 1912', binding on all members of the PSFMO. Paragraph 5 called 'not to allow permanent representation of the workers in the form of deputies, elders, etc.'; paragraph 6: 'Not to allow intervention and mediating participation on the part of trade unions, societies and in general of organisations outside the factory'; and paragraph 7: 'Especially impermissible is interference in the hiring and firing of workers, in the establishment of wages and conditions of hiring and in the working out of rules of internal order'. [85] Despite various liberal pronouncements since then, this remained the practical position of the Petrograd industrialists, who even tried to establish fines for non-observance of the convention by members of the Society.

No doubt, under the impact of the revolution, and out of necessity (they could no longer lean upon the Tsarist state apparatus), their tactical stance underwent some changes. Many felt that in the given situation, it was in their interest to deal with an organised working class. Judging by the West European experience, they wanted to believe that organisation would exert a restraining influence on the workers. The director of the Nev'yansk Mines in the Urals wrote to his manager from Petrograd on 9 March:

*"I consider it superfluous to linger on these [events of the February Revolution] but I will only point out that the first act of this revolution, unprecedented in the history of the peoples of Russia, had a purely political character. On this platform, full unanimity and unity of all strata and masses of the people, who toppled the shameful old government into dust with such dizzying speed, were possible. But now the second act is opening – in this act a socialist platform is being put forward. Of course,*

*there can be no unanimity and unity on this platform. There is no doubt that under the influence of socialist ideas and propaganda at the factories many excesses are arising, directed chiefly at the participation of the workers masses in the management of affairs.*

At the Izhorskii Factory [a state enterprise] such an excess has already taken place, and a soviet of workers of 50 people was elected to manage the factory, including six engineers, who, having removed the director of the factory, Admiral Voskresenskii, began to run it. The soviet held out for several days and now they have already returned to the normal management of the factory.

In regard to this, at a closed meeting of the Council of Congresses of Mining Industrialists of the Urals, opinions were exchanged, and the conclusion was reached to go towards meeting any desires of the workers that related to their organisation (election of elders, conciliation chambers, etc.) but under no circumstances to allow intervention into management of the factory, and that it is necessary to firmly and stubbornly defend this position." [86]

The entrepreneurs were obviously as suspicious of the workers' intentions as the workers were of theirs. Although the letter might appear rather liberal and even in tune with the workers' aspirations, in actual fact the workers' conception of 'internal order' and the owners' understanding of 'management' overlapped considerably. All the elements for a spiralling sequence of reactions and counterreactions were at hand: the workers, suspicious of the administration (and often not without cause), would feel compelled to intervene; upon which the owners, feeling themselves vindicated in their suspicions of the workers' socialist intentions, would take measures, mostly economic, and especially lockouts, against the workers; upon which the workers would be spurred to even deeper intervention, and so forth. Of course, the situation was in reality even more complex because the workers believed that the entrepreneurs' policy of sabotage and lockouts was politically motivated. Soon, it would be impossible to separate the political from the economic aspects of the struggle.

The parallels between the workers' attitudes towards the state and the attitudes of workers in state factories towards management are very striking. In both cases, through their representatives the workers initially assumed full power, only to relinquish it shortly to the representatives of census society, in the first instance, and to the factory administration, in the other, in return for 'control'. The workers were not prepared to run either the state machinery or the factories. They decided, rather, not to participate at all in the administration but to exert control from the outside, partly from fear of being compromised. In both cases there was no revolt against authority as such, but a rejection of absolute authority in favour of a 'constitutional' régime.

But these 'constitutions' were not the outcome of negotiations between the workers and census society or the factory administration. They were, in fact, the workers' own programmes, their independent conception of the revolution. As long as census society and the representatives of the owners in the factories adhered to these constitutions, the workers were quite willing to leave executive power in their hands. And this is where the seeds of the future conflict lay. For the workers' current hopes notwithstanding, the coming weeks would convince them that census society would not and could not go along with their conception of the revolution.

Alongside these parallels between the economic and political spheres, one can also see a certain lack of correspondence in the degree of militancy and radicalism in each of these areas. It was in the state enterprises where the transformation of worker-administration relations went furthest. Yet, politically, these turned out to be among the most moderate workers. Similarly, it was the unskilled workers who displayed the greatest militancy in the wage struggle after the revolution.

On the other hand, one observes no extraordinary radicalism among the metalworkers of the Vyborg

District in the sphere of worker – management relations. The demands for soviet power that issued from here were not accompanied by calls to take over the factories or even for workers' control of production.

Nevertheless the very strong interconnections between the economic and political spheres, both in the workers' consciousness and in the objective reality itself, were evident from the very start. It was the desire of the moderate socialist leadership of the Soviet to keep the two separate that, in fact, underlay the first conflict between it and the worker rank-and-file. In the coming weeks these interconnections would grow into a virtual merging of the two spheres with all threads uniting in one overriding demand: 'All power to the soviets!'

**David Mandel**

*To be continued...*

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## Footnotes

[1] Cited in Sobolev, *Revolutsionnoe soznanie*, p. 58.

[2] Cited in Mitel'man et al., *Istoriya Putilovskogo*, p. 487.

[3] *Rech'* (29 Mar 1917).

[4] *Rabochaya gazeta* (7 Mar 1917).

[5] A. Ya. Grunt, *Pobeda Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii v Moskve* (M., 1961) p. 38.

[6] LGAORSS, f. 4591, op. 1, d. 1, 1. 26. (Conference of Factories of the Artillery Authority).

[7] *Izvestiya* (6 Mar 1917).

[8] Sobolev, *Revolutsionnoe soznanie*, p. 58.

[9] *Pravda*, no. 11 (1917).

[10] LGAORSS, f. 7384, op. 9, d. 293,1.5. (6 Mar 1917).

[11] Dok. Feb., p. 230.

[12] Perazich, *Tekstili Leningrada*, p. 31 (Maxwell Mill).

[13] Dok. Feb., pp. 569-77.

[14] Ibid., p. 39.

[15] *Pravda* (9 Mar 1917). p 88.

[16] Thus, in the Moscow District, an SR stronghold well into August and September, the workers were extremely hostile to the Soviet's decision. See for example, the very strongly worded resolution of the Dinamo Electrical Factory (43 per cent female) (Ek. Pol., vol. I, p. 42), roundly condemning the Soviet and flatly refusing to return to work. LGAORSS, f. 7384, op. 9, d. 293, l. 11.

[17] Dok. Feb., p. 231.

[18] *Izvestiya* (10 Mar 1917).

[19] Sobolev, *Revolutsionnoe soznanie*, p. 61.

[20] *Torgovo-promyshlennaya gazeta* (17 Mar 1917).

[21] Peka, pp. 27-8.

[22] Cited in P. V. Volobuev, *Proletariat i burzhuaziya v 1917g.* (M., 1964) p. 64.

[23] Cited in V. I. Selitskii in *Istoriya rabochikh Leningrada, vypusk 11* (L., 1963) p. 17.

[24] Volobuev, *Proletariat i burzhuaziya*, p. 126.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-1.

[28] Ek. Pot., vol. I, p. 45.

[29] LGAORSS, f. 1000, op. 73, d. 6, l. 4.

[30] *Ibid.*, ll. 9-10.

[31] *Ibid.*, ll. 26-8.

[32] *Ibid.*, l. 11. One might note in passing that the formulation of this demand, at least from a Marxist perspective, is strictly 'reformist'.

[33] Ek. Pol., vol. I, p. 41.

[34] Suknovalov and Fomenkov, *Fabrika 'Krasnoe znamya'*, p. 63.

[35] Smirnov, *Posledni dni Utemanov*, pp. 24-6.

[36] LGAORSS, ll. 14 -15.

[37] *Izvestiya* (24 Mar 1917). In the last week in March the paper was full of such resolutions.

[38] Dok. Feb., p. 570.

[39] *Izvestiya* (31 Mar 1917).

[40] *Izvestiya*, organ of the Petrograd Soviet, in an editorial on 11 April on this 'campaign of the bourgeois press', declared: 'You try to frighten us with the spectre of civil war, but it is you who have begun it'.

[41] Volobuev, *Proletariat i burzhuaziya*, p. 157.

[42] LGAORSS, f. 4601, op. 1, d. 10, l. 33.

[43] Volobuev, *Proletariat i burzhuaziya*, p. 157.

[44] Dok. Apr., p. 468.

[45] *Rabochaya gazeta* (7 and 16 Apr 1917).

[46] M. G. Fleer, *Rabochee dvizhenie v gody voyny* (M., 1925) pp. 298-304.

[47] In many state enterprises, however, where the administrators were literally servants of the old régime, the right of 'control' over management was immediately asserted. This issue will be treated below.

[48] LGAORSS, f. 4602, op. 7, d. 7, l. 68. Similar purges occurred in Portugal after the democratic revolution of April 1974. See, for example, *The New York Times* (14 May 1974).

[49] Mitel'man et al., *Istoriya Putilovskogo*, p. 567. See also N. S. Sergeev, *Metallisty-Istoriya Leningradskogo Metallichesкого zavoda im. XXII s'ezda KPSS* (L., 1967) p. 374.

[50] Perazich, *Tekstili Leningrada*, p. 20.

[51] See Sergeev, *Metallisty*, p. 374; and M. Mikhailov, *Krasnaya letopis'*, nos 50-1 (1932) p. 189.

[52] GIALO, f. 416, op. 25, d. 5, ll. 2-3.

[53] See, for example, Sergeev, *Metallisty*; and LGAORSS, f. 4601, op. 1, d. 10, l. 33.

[54] GIALO, l. 12. Also cited in Sobolev, *Revolutsionnoe soznanie*, p. 72.

[55] Shlyapnikov, *Kanun semnadtsatogo goda*, vol. I, p. 11.

[56] See Sergeev, *Metallisty*, p. 379; and Rab. Kon., p. 45.

[57] GIALO, f. 416, op. 5, d. 30, l. 19.

[58] Ibid., f. 416, op. 25, d. 5, l. 6.

[59] Ibid., f. 416, op. 5, d. 30, l. 64.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 1. 155.

[62] Rab. Kon., p. 42.

[63] Shlyapnikov, *Kanun semnadtsalogo*, vol. I, p. 167.

[64] *Izvestiya* (11 Mar 1917). In passing, one should note the political functions assigned to the factory committees, as described in the second point. In fact, the committees regularly called meetings on political questions, organised the workers' militia and led the workers in their political actions.

[65] Maevskii, *Kanun revolyutsii*, p. 34.

[66] Dok. Feb., pp. 491-2.

[67] O. Borisov and S. Vasil'ev, *Stankostroiteli imeni Sverdlova* (L., 1962) p. 80.

[68] Sobolev, *Revolutsionnoe soznante*, p. 82.

[69] Dok. Feb., p. 484.

[70] M. Balabanov, *Rabochee dvizhenie v Rossii v gody pod'ema 1912-1914 gg.* (L., 1927) p. 31.

[71] Pravda (8 Apr 1917).

[72] LGAORSS, f. 1000, op. 73, d. 16, 1.6.

[73] Ibid., 1. 30.

[74] Rab. Kon., p. 57.

[75] Ibid., pp. 58 and 53.

[76] Dok. Feb., pp. 575-7. For the provisional constitution of the factory committee, see Dok. Apr., pp. 358-60.

[77] Cited in Sobolev, *Revolutsionnoe soznanie*, p. 66.

[78] Rab. Kon., p. 179.

[79] LGAORSS, f. 9391, op. 7, d. 8, ll. 7 and 12.

[80] Ibid., 1. 30.

[81] Ibid., f. 9391, op. 1, d. 11, 1.4.

[82] Tanyaev, *Ocherki po istorii*, p. 53.

[83] K. Bazilevich, *Professionat'noe dvizhenie rabotnikov svyazi* (M., 1927) p. 40.

[84] Dok. Apr., pp. 383-5.

[85] Balabanov, *Rabochee dvizhenie*, p. 38.

[86] Dok. Feb., pp. 479-80.