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57338

NAME OF AUTHOR/NOM DE L'AUTEUR C. ELIZABETH A. BROWN
TITLE OF THESIS/TITRE DE LA THÈSE STRONGHOLD OF REVOLUTION A
HISTORY OF THE PUTILOV WORKS, 1868-1917
UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITÉ CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/
GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE MA
YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE DEGRÉ 1978
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"Stronghold of Revolution:

A History of the Putilov Works, 1868-1917"

submitted by C. Elizabeth A. Brown, B.A. Honours,

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts.

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STRONGHOLD OF REVOLUTION:
A HISTORY OF THE PUTILOV WORKS, 1868-1917.

by

C. Elizabeth A. Brown

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Institute of Soviet and East European Studies
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Ottawa, Canada
25 November 1977

ABSTRACT

The Putilov Works and its huge labour force -- the "Red Putilovites" -- figure prominently in Soviet "mythology" of the Russian workers' movement and the Great October Socialist Revolution. In general, Western historians have recognized, to a more limited degree, both the industrial importance of the plant and the significance of its role in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917. The present study undertakes a closer examination of the history of the factory and its workers from 1868 to 1917. In October 1917, 1,500 Putilovites supported V.I. Lenin in his bid for power. Economic and social conditions, administration and government policies, and activities of various revolutionaries are considered for their impact on the evolution of the Putilov labour force from a group of loyal and acquiescent employees into a revolutionary proletariat. The actual role of the Putilov workers and the economic history of the factory are also presented in some detail.

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Introduction

On 18 September 1976 Leningrad's famous Kirov Works received yet another high Soviet state award — on this occasion the Order of Peoples' Friendship. In presenting the award, M.A. Suslov, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, remarked on the history of the factory, formerly called the Putilov Works, as follows:

The Kirov Works ... reflects the glorious history of the revolutionary struggle of the Petersburg proletariat and its self-denying labour in the construction of socialism. The Putilovites, as the workers of your factory were called formerly, were always to be found in the forefront of revolutionary events. They took an active part in strikes and in the armed struggle of the proletariat in 1905. The Putilovites deserve considerable merit for the overthrow of tsarism and the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. V.I. Lenin called the Putilovites the vanguard of the Revolution. When the fate of our proletarian revolution of 1917 was being decided, the Putilovites stood decisively on the side of Lenin's party.¹

With these remarks Suslov reiterated Soviet historiography's long-standing line on the factory and its workers' movement — a subject of fundamental importance to a régime which claims its authority as the representative of the ruling working class. Indeed, the Putilov Works, as one of Russia's largest and most revolutionary factories in 1917, was a natural focus for Soviet historians instructed to record the birth of their state. As early as 1925, a Society for the History of the Factory of "Red Putilovites" was created which began to collect materials under the direction of the Communist Party.

¹ Izvestiia, 18 September 1976, p. 2, col. 2.

In 1931, an academician by the name of A.M. Gorky initiated a series of works on the histories of various factories which was to include one volume on the Putilov Works. An "authors' collective" of twenty-five historians, writers, workers and Old (Putilov) Bolsheviks set about their task with a large collection of documents, secondary literature, memoirs and the written and oral recollections of hundreds of Putilovites. The volume, a 632-page tome entitled Istoriia Putilovskogo zavoda, 1789-1917, first appeared in 1919, with subsequent editions in 1941 and 1961. In the introduction to the third edition, the authors express the desire:

to show the role of the Putilov Works as an industrial force, as a school for technicians and a school for revolutionaries; to show the role of the factory as an educator of class and revolutionary consciousness in the workers, and as an organizer and participant of the civil war.²

The introduction of the Istoriia also touches on some of the more important features of the factory's labour movement, illustrating those points mentioned by Suslov above: firstly, that the Putilov workers were intensely revolutionary and always to be found in the forefront of revolutionary events (from their strike in January 1905, through the troubled years of 1912-1914, to their February 1917 strike and the "colossal role"³ they played in the storming of the Winter Palace that same year); and secondly,

2 M.I. Mitel'man, B. Glebov and A. Ul'ianskii, Istoriia Putilovskogo zavoda, 1801-1917, (Moscow, 1961), (p. 6)

3 Ibid., p. 7.

that the Putilovites openly followed Lenin from as early as 1905,⁴ making their factory a recognized "stronghold of Bolshevism" by 1917.

An essentially identical analysis is to be found in the scores of monographs and journal articles on the Putilov (Kirov) Works, the Petersburg proletariat and the Russian workers' movement in general published in the Soviet Union since the mid-1920's. Many of these works, especially those published from 1930 to 1955, are superficial and one-sided, as well as repetitious. Since 1956 the scholarly quality of Soviet historiography has generally improved, however surprisingly little has been added to the prevailing interpretation of the history of the Putilov Works.

A study of the Putilov Works by a Western historian has yet to appear in print. Such fundamental works as Nicholas Riasanovsky's A History of Russia and Leonard Schapiro's The Communist Party of the Soviet Union do not even mention the factory by name, although several more narrowly-focused studies recognize the industrial importance of the plant,⁵ and mention both the Putilov strikes which

⁴ Ibid., p. 7. We read that "in 1905-1906 V.I. Lenin was inseparably linked with the Putilov Social-Democratic organization and often attended meetings of Putilov Bolsheviks". This seems rather inconsistent with the contents of a letter written in January 1905 by N.K. Krupskaya from Lenin in Geneva to the Petersburg Committee in which she remarks: "We learned from the foreign papers that the Putilov plant was on strike. Do we have any connections there? Will it really be impossible to get information about the strike?" Quoted in S.M. Schwarz, The Russian Revolution of 1905, (Chicago, 1967), p. 67.

⁵ See A.C. Sutton, Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development 1917 to 1930, (Stanford, Calif., 1968); R.E. Zelnik, Labour and Society in Tsarist Russia: The Factory Workers of St. Petersburg, 1855-1870, (Stanford, Calif., 1971).

preceded the revolutions of 1905 and February 1917 and the role of Putilovites in the October Revolution.⁶ The Putilov labour force of 1870 has been described as "grateful and acquiescent ... obedient and eager to learn, receptive to the Gospel, and anxious to praise the Tsar".⁷ The same workers by mid-1917, however, are characterized as "profoundly socialistic and collectivist, ... ready to strike and fight again at a moment's notice to defend what the [February] revolution had won and move ahead to the goal of workers' control of industry".⁸ The factory itself is labelled a "stronghold of Bolshevik influence",⁹ but no one undertakes to describe how this dramatic transformation came about.

This study will examine the history of the Putilov Works and its labour movement with a view to determining those factors which contributed to the development of this "classic ... revolutionary proletariat".¹⁰ It can be argued that the hardships of industrial life at the turn of the century pushed the Putilov labour force onto a course of confrontation through strikes and other presentations of

6 See P. Avrich, The Russian Anarchists, (Princeton, N.J., 1967); R.V. Daniels, Red October. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, (New York, 1967); S.S. Harcave, First Blood: The Russian Revolution of 1905, (New York, 1964); A. Rabinowitch, Prelude to Revolution, (Bloomington, Indiana, 1968); S.M. Schwarz, The Russian Revolution of 1905, (Chicago, 1967); A.B. Ulam, The Bolsheviks, (New York, 1968).

7 Zelnik, p. 339.

8 Daniels, p. 11.

9 Ulam, p. 344.

10 Daniels, p. 11.

mainly economic demands; and moreover, that the intransigence of both the factory administration and the Russian political system encouraged the expansion and radicalization of this course, immediately after 1905 and from 1912 to its culmination in revolution in February 1917. After the February Revolution, the Provisional Government also proved unable to redress the workers' fundamental grievances which resulted in Putilov support of Lenin's Bolshevik Party in the October Revolution.

Special attention will be paid to the role of the Bolsheviks and, to a lesser degree (because of the general lack of source material), to that of other revolutionary groups at the factory. While the Bolsheviks were not as influential and central on many occasions as Soviet historiography contends,¹¹ the importance of party members in politicizing worker demands and in radicalizing the workers' movement to a certain degree before 1917 is incontestable. Attention will also be given to the actual role of the Putilov Works labour force in the revolutions of 1905 and February 1917 in order to illustrate the continuation of the workers' elemental radicalization under economic pressures. Finally, the economic history of the factory will be presented in some detail because such information is completely unavailable in English-language sources elsewhere.

An attempt has been made to be as comprehensive as possible in dealing with the social, economic and political history of the Putilov Works, but it is obvious that complete detail for the years 1868 to 1917 is impossible in a paper of

11 For example, in the introduction to the Istoriia Putilovskogo zavoda. 1801-1917.

this nature. The February Revolution of 1917 appears to constitute something of a logical cut-off point for a detailed examination of the Putilov labour movement. Moreover, it is felt that events of February to October have already been presented in numerous Western accounts on which, in fact, the final chapter of this paper is heavily based.¹²

The Library of Congress system of transliteration has been employed throughout this paper. All dates are given in the 'old style' (thirteen days behind the Georgian Calendar) unless otherwise indicated. Russian terms of measurement employed are: desiatina, which is equal to 2.7 acres; and pud, which is equal to 16.38 kilograms.

When this study was originally proposed, it was hoped that material might be unearthed in Soviet archives, and in other primary sources, which would support a new interpretation of the questions raised above. Unfortunately, permission to use the Leningrad State Historical Archives was received only three weeks before my scheduled departure from that city. The brief examination which this allowed produced little more than several administrative circulars of 1904 to 1916 and some strike statistics for 1913. Moreover, a visit to the factory grounds and the Museum of the Kirov Works in the I.I. Gaz Palace of Culture, while interesting, also offered little in the way of new information for this thesis.

¹² Chapter four also relies heavily on a series of articles by N.P. Paialin on the Putilov Works in 1917 which appeared in Krasnaia letopis' in 1932.

Finally, an investigation of the little-used Menshevik and trade union press of the 1906 to 1914 period, offered fewer original insights than had been hoped.

Nevertheless, there are compelling reasons for this restatement of the history of the Putilov Works and its labour movement. Strikes at this factory in January 1905 and February 1917 sparked the outbreak of what would become nation-wide revolutions. In October 1917, Lenin made his bid for power with the active support of at least fifteen hundred armed Putilovites. The Russian Revolutions of 1917 must be listed among the most significant events of modern history. Our insight into these momentous upheavals surely would be enhanced by a deeper understanding of one such key actor as the labour force of the Putilov Works.

Growth and Development, 1868-1904

In 1801, on the island of Kronstadt, a small publicly owned cast-iron foundry began operations for the production of artillery shells. Unprofitable from the start, the factory was eventually sold to the Ogarev family in 1848. Ogarev moved the factory to a new site in the Narva district of St. Petersburg, but even this attempt to stimulate productivity failed, and Ogarev himself was soon bankrupt. The factory was taken over by an English company for a short while, but by 1865 it had been shut down.¹

At about this time the government of Alexander II was becoming increasingly interested in military self-sufficiency and preparedness, including the expansion of Russia's existing railroad network. Domestic production of rails and rolling stock acquired a new priority and the government was willing to invest heavily to encourage the development of industry. In 1868 N.I. Putilov, an aspiring St. Petersburg industrialist, persuaded the government authorities to give him their largest order for rails.² Furnished with a generous advance, Putilov was able to purchase the former Ogarev foundry and to convert it into a huge rail producing enterprise. The new Putilov Works was initially successful, soon manufacturing two million puds of steel-capped iron rails per annum. These steel-capped

1 For more detail on the factory's early years, see P.N. Stolpianskii, Zhizn' i byt Peterburgskoi fabрики za 210 let ee sushchestvovaniia, 1704-1914 gg. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925), pp. 151-152; Mitel'man, et al., Chapter 1.

2 Baron A.I. Del'vig describes Putilov's original proposition and the terms finally agreed upon in Moi vospominaniia, Vol. IV, (Moscow, 1913), pp. 351-352.

rails were Putilov's own invention, and their popularity contributed to the early success of the factory. The rise of the Putilov Works to the position of the largest and one of the most successful of Russian enterprises by 1900 was not achieved without several setbacks, however. The economic history of the factory from 1868 to 1904 will be outlined below.

Putilov, a nobleman of the Novgorod guberniia who had obtained a highly specialized technical education during his years as a civil servant in the Naval Ministry, proved to be a talented, energetic and enterprising industrialist. Many years after his death, Putilov was described as "a remarkable person ... whose boldness, energy and organizational talents astonished his contemporaries".³ By the end of the decade, Putilov was able to realize enough profit to cover the government advance and to amass a considerable fortune. By nature "a big dreamer and optimist" however, he was not satisfied with these achievements and conceived the idea of building a port to attract Petersburg's import and export trade.⁴

Putilov envisaged the dredging of a deep canal from the island of Kronstadt to a sand-bar situated near the factory. At this spot a spacious port would be dug out, deep enough for the lowest-riding ships, and able to handle not only foreign trade but also Russian goods arriving either

³ M. Levitskii in K stoletiiu putilovskogo zavoda, (St. Petersburg, 1902), p. 16.

⁴ Del'vig, Vol. IV, p. 352.

by the Neva River or by the Moscow railway line. To facilitate the latter Putilov also planned to construct a small railroad network linking the port with the south-eastern section of the Neva, the Moscow, Baltic and Warsaw lines and the Putilov Works itself, as well as with the Nevskii Machine Works and other outlying factories.⁵

Putilov was not occupied solely with this scheme, however. When he acquired the factory in 1868 it had consisted of one mechanical workshop divided in two — one part located in a two-story stone building, the other in an adjoining wooden building — and two other workshops (containing presses, mechanical scissors, planing and rolling machines) located in a two-story building with an adjoining wing housing a drilling machine downstairs and a warehouse upstairs. Near these buildings were three platforms where draughts of bridges could be prepared, and not far away was a barracks for about five hundred workers.⁶

In the first two years of his ownership Putilov concentrated on expanding these facilities and thereby the capability of his factory. Puddling furnaces for the production of puddle iron, and a small Bessemer converter for the production of cast-steel, both used to manufacture rails, were installed in the rolling workshop.⁷ In 1870, having

⁵ Zelnik, p. 220.

⁶ Krasnyi putilovets, 125 let, 1801-1926, (Leningrad, 1927), p. 12.

⁷ Cast steel from the Bessemer converter was also used in the production of artillery shells which were manufactured in Putilov's own special way and which were originally extremely competitive. Ibid., p. 14.

received orders for bridges, steam engine and train wagon parts, railroad instruments etc., Putilov decided to build his own forge, and also undertook the construction of a stone mechanical workshop. Unfortunately, Putilov ran out of money, and construction on the mechanical workshop was halted.

Indeed, the enterprising industrialist soon found himself in dire financial straits. Having sunk so much capital into the construction of the port and linking railroad network in 1871 and 1872, there was not much left for investment in the factory itself, and production began to fall off.⁸ Scrambling for funds, Putilov decided to form a company. The obshchestvo Putilovskikh zavodov (Putilov Works Company), with Baron A.I. Del'vig as chairman of the board, was able to elicit backing from a number of Moscow bankers. Its charter appeared on 24 October 1872.⁹ Putilov himself continued on as the overall manager of the factory.

In his memoirs, Baron Del'vig recalled the early years of the newly incorporated Putilov Company as a constant struggle.¹⁰ Although it realized some profits during the

⁸ Del'vig, Vol. IV, p. 355.

⁹ Stolpianskii, p. 156.

¹⁰ Del'vig, Vol. IV, pp. 355-378. In fact, one participant of the Russian Industrial Congress of 1870 cited the uncompetitiveness of the Putilov Works to illustrate the weakness of Russian industry in general. According to A.T. Velikhov, the so-called success of the Putilov factory was based entirely on government favours which included buying the factory's products at a price considerably higher than their real value. He concluded that the factory was incapable of maintaining itself independently as a rail producer and at best could exist only as a major repair facility. Cited in Zelnik, p. 309.

first sixteen months of its existence, these soon began to fall off. The factory continued to receive some lucrative contracts, but according to Del'vig, the profits were wasted by mismanagement.¹¹ He tells of the endless credit seeking and loan dodging which ensued until, bitterly regretting the day he became involved with the Putilov Works Company, Del'vig resigned his post. At that time Putilov began to flounder seriously. Early the next year, 1877, a significant majority of his company's shares reverted to the State Bank which, at that time, became the de facto director of the Putilov Works.

Under state directorship, the factory began to expand once again. In 1877-78, a Bessemer workshop was built with two new converters to produce steel for wagon and engine springs and other parts, as well as for rails. Also during this time the level of the main square of the factory was raised to lessen the danger of flooding; and most importantly, a branch-line built at public expense finally joined the factory with the railroad network initiated by Putilov.¹² By the end of the 1870's the Putilov Works was among the largest and most important metallurgical factories in Russia. The new decade began inauspiciously however, with the death of Putilov in April 1880, and a few years later the factory was again deep in economic difficulties.

¹¹ Del'vig, Vol. IV, pp. 368-372.

¹² Krasnyi putilovets, pp. 15-16.

The Putilov Works continued to manufacture rails but demand for them was falling and by 1883 a huge surplus of more than four million puds of unused rail had accumulated in the factory warehouses. The rails were mortgaged to the State Bank which subsequently decided to release its control over the plant. In May 1883 the factory was bought by a syndicate, Brianskii i Varshavskii stalnii zavod (the Briansk and Warsaw Steel Works), which hoped to be able thus to paralyze a strong competitor. The factory's output was not allowed to exceed a value of 300,000 rubles per month, but happily for the new owners, it still managed to make profits because of the high price obtaining for rails.¹³ In the next few years the demand for rails fell drastically, however, as a result of the overall slowdown in Russian railroad construction. In 1885, Briansk and Warsaw sold out their shares in the factory and a new, independent Putilov Works Company was organized.

During the 1880's over seventy percent of the gross product (including rails, tires, boxcars, wheels, cisterns, etc.,) of the Putilov Works was directly related to the railroad industry.¹⁴ In 1886, the company's profits fell from 690,155 rubles to 296,730 rubles, and in the next two years it suffered losses, despite an overall reduction in output, and investments of 4,800,000 rubles in 1887 and

¹³ Stolpianskii, p. 156.

¹⁴ Moreover, the percentage would be much higher for the years 1800-1885. See Ia. Zhukovskii, "Ekonomicheskoe razvitie putilovskogo zavoda", Problemy marksizma, 1932, nos. 9-10, p. 137.

4,330,000 in 1888.¹⁵ This was a result not only of the rapidly decreasing orders for rails and other railroad equipment but also of the introduction in 1887 of government tariffs on coal, iron-ore and cast-iron. The policy was designed to protect home industries from foreign competition, but it was particularly harmful to the Putilov Works which depended to a significant degree on foreign raw materials.

By 1886-87 the Putilov Works was facing an economic crisis as serious as any in its history. At the beginning of 1888 the company had a debt (the result of having to obtain working capital through bank credits because of an inability to sell its products) to three banks — the Petersburg, International and Russian (State) Banks — which totaled 1,527,787 rubles. The debt grew to 1,711,060 by the end of the year,¹⁶ forcing the company to develop new areas of production and new (i.e., domestic) markets. A three-part scheme was devised to improve this dismal financial picture including: (i) increasing the company's bond capital, (ii) establishing monopolistic prices for steel and iron on the domestic market, and (iii) expanding military production.¹⁷

15 Ibid., p. 137. Not only was production curtailed. The activities of the Bessemer workshop were suspended completely, and, with no hope of receiving new orders, the factory kept several shops busy with repair work to its own equipment.

16 Ibid., p. 138.

17 See Zhukovskii, *Problemy marksizma*, nos. 9-10, pp. 138-140; *Krasnyi putilovets*, pp. 16-17; Stolpianskii, pp. 158-160, for further detail on these strategies.

In order to increase bond capital the company decided to issue bonds valued at 2.5 million rubles. Unfortunately these bonds were not as successful as was hoped, and in the end, only 500,000 rubles was realized. The company had considerably more success with its second plan. By 1886 the market prices of iron and steel had fallen below cost prices because of the acute competition between Petersburg metallurgical factories.. That same year the Putilov Works entered an agreement with the Petersburg Iron-rolling Works to market profiled iron in the capital and the Baltic region at monopolistic prices. The agreement, satisfactory to both partners, was extended for an indefinite length of time in 1887, and was joined by the Petersburg Fine-wire Works in 1888.

Production of iron and steel for the domestic market received a new emphasis at the Putilov Works during these years. While the average amount of iron and steel processed from 1883 to 1886-87 comprised only 4.4 percent of the factory's total output, over the next three years it grew to an average of 21.4 percent.¹⁸ Moreover, the metallurgical workshops were improved by the construction of new buildings to house them and the introduction of more modern machines to produce top quality steel and iron. Simultaneously, the Putilov Works successfully began to emphasize another area of production — military supplies.

¹⁸ Krasnyi putilovets, p. 17.

In 1888 the factory filled a government order for 16,000 shells valued at 134,350 rubles.¹⁹ This was followed by orders for twelve-inch armour-piercing shells, hydraulic rests for six-inch guns, and gun carriages. In connection with the latter, an assembly workshop for machine production built in 1889 was significantly enlarged and re-equipped (with financial help from the State Bank), and re-named the gun carriage - artillery shell workshop. The Putilov Works also developed its ties with the Naval Department during this period, receiving orders transferred from the Baltic Shipbuilding Factory for one thousand tons of ship steel, and an independent order for two gun boats.²⁰ By 1890-91, goods manufactured for military departments accounted for eleven percent of the factory's gross product.²¹ In the following decade, and with continued government support, the Putilov Works increased the scope of its military production.

In 1890-91 the crucible steel workshop built two years earlier was enlarged as its product was an important part of artillery shell manufacture. The 'nineties also saw the construction of a pressing plant, a shooting range, and a gun workshop, which had to be expanded and re-equipped before the end of the decade, and yet another reconstruction of the gun carriage - artillery shell workshop.²² This new

19 Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 140.

20 Krasnyi putilovets, p. 17.

21 Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 140.

22 Stolpianskii, p. 160.

construction accounted for approximately fifty percent of the factory's capital expenditure during the 1890's.²³ At the same time the factory was filling new orders for the Naval Department: between 1890 and 1893 six torpedo-boats and two battleships were built. Military production at the Putilov Works continued to expand until 1899-1900, but this was not the only area of growth during that prosperous decade.

The boom in Russian railroad construction in the 1890's and the simultaneous leap in demand for domestic products (as a result of the new protective tariffs of 1891) were reflected in the rapid growth of railroad-related production at the Putilov Works.²⁴ Armed with an influx of

23 Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 147.

24 The 1891 tariffs were not as harmful as those of 1887 to the Putilov Works which had developed indigenous sources of raw materials over the decade. In 1895 it founded a small iron-processing works to extract iron ore from the Olonets guberniia and also developed the Vialliamiaki coal mines. Both enterprises grew considerably during the second half of the 'nineties. Zhukovskii also notes certain beneficial effects of the 1891 protective tariffs. For example, the following table shows the increase in tariffs on goods also produced by the Putilov Works:

Goods	Tariffs	
	1868	1891
iron	20 - 50	50 - 150
rails	20	90
steam engines	75	300
blacksmith & boiler goods	100	255

Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 141, pp. 144-145.

state orders and state capital,²⁵ the Putilov Company immediately set about increasing the factory's capacity for rail industry production. The following facilities were constructed: a steam engine workshop (1892-93), a steam engine assembly shop (1893), a copper foundry, girder shop, design shop and forge (1893), a wagon assembly shop for passenger cars (1896-99), and to complement it, a saw mill, a lumber finishing shop and several lumber driers (1897-99). In 1893 the cast-iron copper foundry and the shaped steel foundry were rebuilt; the old Bessemer workshop was reopened and soon operating at full capacity.

Throughout the decade, the Putilov Works received orders for the construction of new railway lines including the Siberian, Ural and Ussuri lines, as well as complementary orders for bridges, wagons, etc. Although competition from factories using cheaper raw materials eventually forced the Putilov Works to discontinue rail production itself in 1898, the factory concentrated on developing the manufacture of these complementary structures. A new bridge-boiler workshop, built in 1895 to satisfy the increased demand for metal construction, particularly bridges, also manufactured parts for various mechanical products including steam boilers, turning circles, bridge cranes, and smoke stacks.²⁶ At about the same time the factory undertook some machine building

25 According to Zhukovskii, state capital was invested in the form of all possible kinds of subsidies, high prices for finished products, etc. Ibid., p. 141.

26 For elaboration on this and machine building at the Putilov Works see Krasnyi putilovets, pp. 17-19; Stolpianskii, pp. 159-160; Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, pp. 143-144.

which was aimed as much at satisfying its own demands as the demands of the market. In 1897 a new mechanical workshop was constructed, significantly increasing the production of machine tools and equipment to serve the needs of the factory. Several other auxiliary services were improved as well with the construction of a central electrical station, a central oil station and a repair shop.

All this new construction required a considerable amount of space. New land was bought up around the existing buildings, and also acquired by filling in wide areas around the closest off-shore sandbars.²⁷ By 1901 the factory had spread over some 114 desiatinas of land. It was the largest factory in Russia both in output (see Table I) and in number of workers (approximately 12,500), and one of the largest of its kind in Europe (smaller only than Krupp in Germany and Armstrong in England).²⁸ It had licensing and various technical agreements with Western companies²⁹ and operated the Vidlitski Iron-processing Works and the Viallimiaki coal mines.³⁰

²⁷ Krasnyi putilovets, p. 19.

²⁸ Zelnik, p. 139; K stoletiiu, p. 15.

²⁹ Zelnik, p. 139; Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 147. These agreements evidently included artillery and other spheres of military manufacturing.

³⁰ Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, pp. 144-145.

A volume entitled K stoletiiu putilovskogo zavoda, published in 1902 in honour of the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the original factory, described the organization and administration of the Putilov Works at the turn of the century.³¹ The governing board of the factory consisted of ten members, one of whom, the factory director, headed the General Administration. This consisted of a Secretariat, Accounts Office, Registration Office, Entrance-gate Office, Supervisors' Office, Order Department, Central Store, and Dispatch Office, and involved some 118 personnel.

The factory was comprised of some thirty-eight different workshops divided into the following Departments:

- (i) Metallurgical (ii) Mechanical (iii) Wagon (iv) Artillery (v) Steam Engine (vi) Economic (vii) Factory Boilers, Machines and other Engines, and (viii) a Mechanical Laboratory. The following auxiliary institutions for the use of the workers and their families were also located on factory territory: a temporary church (with a permanent stone church under construction), a hospital, a school, a library, worker cooperative store outlets, a savings and loans bank, a theatre, a park, and several groups of living accommodations.

By 1900, the Putilov Works had evolved from an exclusively metallurgical factory to a huge enterprise involved in military production and machine building as well. The following table gives, in rubles, the output, profits and

³¹ K stoletiiu, pp. 33-35. See also Stolpianskii, pp. 161-162.

losses of the Putilov Works for the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century.³²

Table I: Output, Profits and Losses, 1885-1900.

YEAR	OUTPUT	PROFIT	LOSS
1885-1886	6,201,072	690,155	
1886-1887	6,203,490	296,730	
1887-1888	4,617,934		87,522
1888-1889	4,291,441		64,683
1889-1890	4,933,733	120,900	
1890-1891	5,419,244	215,559	
1891-1892	7,264,857 ³³	155,145	
1892-1893	10,394,085	318,489	
1893-1894	13,191,352	660,695	
1894-1895	13,869,208	666,002	
1895-1896	16,377,994	921,668	
1896-1897	19,406,059	1,136,840	
1897-1898	19,330,706	1,134,062	
1898-1899	20,321,566	1,249,574	
1899-1900	20,695,723	993,985	
TOTAL	172,518,464	8,559,804	152,205

Overall profits for the period were 8,407,599 rubles, with 1895-1900 being especially successful years. The growth of the Putilov Works was closely tied to the Russian industrial boom of the late nineteenth century. Similarly, the factory suffered when the upsurge ended in the depression of 1900 and

³² K stoletiiu, p. 25.

³³ Zhukovskii quotes a slightly lower figure as he does for 1895-1896, 1898-1899 and 1899-1900 output figures as well. Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 148.

was followed by almost a decade of relative stagnation.

The first signs of crisis at the Putilov Works were a decrease in orders and a growing underloading of the factory's workshops.³⁴ Orders for passenger-cars, steam engines and platforms were exhausted by 1901-1902. With very little prospect for new orders, the factory was forced to cut production and reduce the number of workers correspondingly. Much of what was produced amassed as surpluses, tying up the working capital of the factory. Moreover, the factory was facing tough competition from foreign firms and from southern Russian plants which had access to cheaper raw materials. Drastic measures were urgent if the Putilov Works were to continue to operate.³⁵

In order to reduce surpluses, production was decreased by the complete shut-down of both the Bessemer workshop and the Vidlitski Iron-rolling Works, and the curtailment of activities of the Viallimiaki mines. To realize existing surpluses, the factory lowered its prices for cast and scrap-iron and scrap-steel, selling them at below cost by the end of 1902. It also accepted unprofitable contracts in order to use up surplus cast-iron, thereby freeing working capital. Nevertheless, there were two profitable areas of production for the Putilov Works during the years of recession. The first was the development

³⁴ For more detail see Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, pp. 150-153; Krasnyi putilovets, pp. 19-20; Stolpianskii, p. 160.

³⁵ Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 151.

of certain machines for the domestic market, and the second was the revival of military production stimulated by the outbreak of war in 1904.

After the sharp decrease in orders for rail construction in 1902 the Putilov Works transferred its metallurgical experience early the next year to a new field, introducing the manufacture of various kinds of excavating machines including placer dredges, steam shovels and gold dredges.³⁶ At the same time, in conjunction with a decrease in repair work and in order to avoid complete suspension of the activities of the mechanical workshop, the factory initiated new areas of production there as well. These included the construction of oil-pressing, flour-grinding, cotton-cleaning and various other machines for which there was a growing demand in Russia. The production of these types of machines proved to be very profitable,³⁷ which in turn helped to offset the negative effects at the Putilov Works of the stagnation in rail industry production. The simultaneous revival of military production had an even greater impact in countering that stagnation, however.

Although the output of the Artillery Department fell after 1900, the Putilov Works still received lucrative,

36 Zhukovskii points out that these machines were originally manufactured by foreign firms (Sainens of England, Conrad of the Netherlands) for Russian use. In 1902 the Putilov Works sent a number of engineers and technicians to the factories of these firms in order to familiarize themselves with the production processes. Eventually draughts were bought, orders received, and the Putilov Works began regular production in 1903, *ibid.*, p. 153.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

subsidized government orders.³⁸ No sooner had an order for nine hundred gun carriages been filled over 1900-1903, than the factory signed a new contract for 1,600 guns and 1,800 gun carriages (of a new type just designed by two of the company's engineers) to be manufactured over the next four years, 1904-1908. Military production at the factory was given a great boost by the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. The Putilov Works received many new urgent government orders while work was speeded up on existing orders.

Increases in orders for military equipment and markets for new machine products kept the Putilov Works economically viable during the first decade of the twentieth century, but the overall picture of the factory's productivity remained a dismal one.³⁹ The highest point up till this time had been reached at the end of the 1890's with total output valued at an impressive twenty million rubles. The highest point in productivity of the following decade was reached in 1905 when output, valued at 15,600,000 rubles, only equaled that of 1896. Thus, although the Putilov Works was not hit as hard as many other factories by the 1900-1909 depression, it nevertheless suffered decreasing productivity, which necessitated cutbacks in the number of workers, the length of shifts, etc. These in turn placed further burdens on the workers and intensified their dissatisfaction which,

³⁸ Krasnyi putilovets, p. 19.

³⁹ Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 156.

arising from many sources, built steadily until it found expression in revolution in 1905. Before examining the role of the Putilov workers in that revolution, however, it will be useful to look at the general characteristics of this labour force, and at some of those sources of their dissatisfaction prior to 1905.

* * *

The abolition of serfdom and the complex and exacting terms of the emancipation settlement of 1861 resulted in a flow to urban centres of thousands of peasants in search of some kind of employment with one of the many nascent industrial enterprises. The Putilov Works was one such enterprise. Early in 1868 Russkie vedomosti informed its public that:

working people, impelled by hunger, are heading for St. Petersburg in huge crowds; with the news of the opening of operations at the Putilov iron-rolling mill, there was simply no turning back the workers who gushed in, and the factory administration was obliged to drive them away with water.⁴⁰

By 1870 the Putilov Works was employing by far the largest labour force in the country — some 2,500 workers. Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of this labour force was its continued backwardness. The Russian worker of the late nineteenth century was first of all a peasant — poorly educated, possessing inadequate

⁴⁰ Russkie vedomosti, 26 January 1868, quoted in Zelnik, p. 226.

skills, and most often maintaining close links with his native village.⁴¹ In his memoirs, Baron Del'vig recalled the "enormous" amount of money Futilov initially had to expend training workers for even the most rudimentary industrial tasks. He also noted the daily record of damage inadvertently inflicted by the workers when factory administrators were not present to supervise them. Finally, he cited Futilov's reluctance to dismiss workers, even when financial difficulties forced a decrease in production in 1871-72, because it would later be impossible to rehire those in whose training he had invested so heavily.⁴²

Moreover, the workers tended to be loyal, and acquiescent to the point of servility in the factory where the rights of the entrepreneur were identified with those of "the master in his own house".⁴³ This is clearly.

41 This point is agreed on by Soviet and Western historians. For further detail see: Akademiia nauk SSSR, Rabochii klass i rabochee dvizhenie v Rossii, 1861-1917, (Moscow, 1966), pp. 210-215, 373-375; C.E. Black (ed.), The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change Since 1861, (Cambridge, Ma., 1960), pp. 39-42; A.G. Rashin, Formirovanie rabochego klassa Rossii, istoriko-ekonomicheskie ocherki, (Moscow, 1958), pp. 560-565; M.I. Tugan-Baranovsky, The Russian Factory in the 19th Century, (Homewood, Ill., 1970), pp. 128-130; S.P. Turin, From Peter the Great to Lenin. A History of the Russian Labour Movement with Special Reference to Trade Unionism, (London, 1935), pp. 143-145; Zemsk, pp. 310-330.

42 Del'vig, Vol. IV, pp. 352, 353.

43 V. Chernov, The Great Russian Revolution, (New York, 1966), p. 128.

illustrated by the behaviour of owner and employees alike at the Putilov Banquet of 1870. Putilov was in the habit of marking the completion of each million puds of rail by his factory with a gala celebration. As the completion of the four millionth pud in 1870 happened to coincide with an industrial congress and exhibition in St. Petersburg, Putilov decided to orchestrate even more lavish festivities than usual. A detailed account of the event, described in the press as a "Russian people's industrial celebration", is to be found in P.N. Stolpianskii's history of the Putilov Works.⁴⁴

The approximately two hundred fifty invited guests gathered at 2:00 p.m. at the factory's main entrance where they were greeted by Putilov. After having their names inscribed in the guest book, the visitors were conducted on a tour of the main workshops, guided by specialists in various aspects of rail production. At the end of the tour the guests were led to a huge boiler workshop which had been rearranged as a banquet hall, strewn with flowers, and accommodating tables for the invited guests. For this glorious occasion, however, the host had decreed that tables also be set up on either side of the hall for the whole Putilov labour force, twenty-five hundred strong.

There followed a sumptuous feast lasting several hours and complete with toasts to the health of the tsar and members of the Imperial family, and of course to Putilov himself and his enormous achievements. The toasts were

⁴⁴ Stolpianskii, pp. 153-155. See also Mitel'man, et al., pp. 21-23 for a more highly embellished account.

greeted enthusiastically by the workers who applauded loudly, shouted hurrah and tossed their caps in the air. Before a series of speeches by Putilov and others began, free Bibles were distributed to the workers by ladies among the guests and were gratefully accepted. On the whole, the workers presented much the picture of a labour force that Putilov wished to paint. According to one contemporary account:

The concept of productive labour united everyone into one common family. Evidently, the workers had risen to the recognition of this truth. With a sensitivity, not always encountered among more developed circles, they conducted themselves with dignity.⁴⁵

Putilov's speech largely consisted of praise for the tremendous commercial success of his factory while attributing this success to the abilities and character of his labour force, especially that "amazing capacity of the Russian people for mechanical and, in general, for industrial work".⁴⁶ As proof of this, Putilov recounted the history of the factory's first weeks when fifteen hundred peasants from surrounding provinces had been hired over ten days and distributed at random among the various workshops. With only one experienced worker assigned as foreman to each shop, the factory managed to produce five thousand puds of rails every twenty-four hours after only eighteen days of operation. The end of this speech was greeted with cries of "bravo" and loud applause, while the workers tossed Putilov into the air.

⁴⁵ Cited in Stolpianskii, p. 154.

⁴⁶ Putilov's entire speech is reproduced in Stolpianskii, p. 154.

Putilov's confidence in the natural aptitude of the Russian people for industrial work seems exaggerated if not completely unfounded when Bel'vig's rather less biased description of their skills is recalled. Moreover, it should be noted that the Industrial Congress meeting in St. Petersburg at the time reached a consensus opinion that Russian workers in general were badly in need of technical training.⁴⁷ Less open to question at the time was the general impression of worker docility projected by Putilov at his celebration. Western and Soviet historians agree, however, that the Putilov Banquet was something of a last hurrah in the harmonious relationship between workers and entrepreneur.⁴⁸ In a fledgling industrial nation hampered by a rigid system of political absolutism which refused to allow workers the right to strike or even to form labour organizations, the harsh realities of their lives soon transformed the acquiescence and docility of the labour force into frustration, bitterness and anger. These feelings in turn provided fertile soil for revolutionary philosophies, especially those of Russian Social Democracy which focused on the workers themselves as the force for social and political change.

The tribulations suffered by the working class during the early stages of any nation's industrialization are well known to students of social history. It is beyond

47 For more detail on the Industrial Congress, see Zelnik, pp. 310-330.

48 For example, Zelnik, p. 368; Stolpianskii, p. 155; Mitel'man, et al., pp. 35-38.

the scope of this paper to examine in detail the wage structure, and living and working conditions of the Putilov labour force as they evolved from 1863 to 1905. However, in order to have a better understanding of their harsh way of life, and of those factors which served to embitter the Putilov workers over the years, these conditions will be outlined as they were near the turn of the century.

The absolute growth of the Putilov labour force closely followed the factory's economic and physical expansion which has been described above. In 1870, shortly after it began operations, the successful new enterprise boasted a force of 2,500, but with the various economic setbacks of the next fifteen years, growth of the work force was hampered by various setbacks. By 1885, when the second Putilov Works Company was formed, the factory's labour force numbered only 2,306. As the following table shows, the number of workers grew almost five and a half times over the next fifteen years with the most spectacular spurt occurring between 1891 and 1897.⁴⁹

Table II: Putilov Work Force, 1885-1903.

YEAR.	NUMBER OF WORKERS	YEAR	NUMBER OF WORKERS
1885-1886	2,306	1894-1895	6,926
1886-1887	2,373	1895-1896	8,443
1887-1888	2,2388	1896-1897	10,175
1888-1889	2,589	1897-1898	11,331
1889-1890	2,542	1898-1899	11,780
1890-1891	3,095	1899-1900	11,793
1891-1892	3,506	1900-1901	12,441
1892-1893	4,419		
1893-1894	5,975	1902-1903	10,180

Work in the factory was divided into two shifts in 1900. The day shift in the metallurgical shops and blacksmith shops lasted a gruelling twelve hours (in spite of a law passed in 1897 which forbade working-days in excess of eleven and a half hours). The same shift was ten hours in all other shops, while the night shift was six hours in length. The working day was usually shortened by two and a half hours on the eve of a holiday. Almost all the workers were paid either daily or piece-work wages.⁵⁰

Wages tended to be "extraordinarily low" in late nineteenth- early twentieth-century Russia.⁵¹ Workers in the capital received the highest wages in the country, however (averaging 313 rubles per year in 1900 as opposed to 203 rubles for the country at large), and of these, the most highly paid were the metal workers.⁵² In 1901, a survey

49 This table first appears in K stoletiiu, p. 29 and is reproduced in Rashin, p. 110, with the exception of the last figure (1902-03) which is from Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 153. Stolpianskii quotes slightly different figures for the years 1885 to 1890, p. 161.

50 Stolpianskii, p. 161.

51 The quote is from M.T. Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire, (New Haven, 1931), p. 153. See also W.H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921, (New York, 1935), p. 261; E.E. Kruze, Polozhenie rabocheho klassa Rossii v 1900-1914 gg. (Leningrad, 1976), p. 168; W. Sablinsky, The Road to Bloody Sunday, (Princeton, N.J., 1976), p. 4. The fact that the workers were forced to accept wages of bare subsistence level is attributed in part to the retention of ties to their native villages by many wage earners, in part to the continual pressure on the labour market of a pauperized peasantry, in part to the absolutist character of the tsarist system and, by the Soviet authors, in part to the desire of the entrepreneurs to exploit the labour force.

52 V.E. Varzar in Leningradskii universitet im. A.A. Zhdanova, Nauchnaia sessiia po istorii rabocheho klassa Leningrada, (Leningrad, 1961), p. 13 (hereafter: Nauchnaia sessiia). Continued on next page.

conducted among workers in the metal industries showed that the Putilov plant paid the highest average daily wage (1.85 rubles), although only about one percent of the workers made more than two rubles per day while almost seventy-five percent received less than one ruble.⁵³ The average wage for unskilled workers was about seventy-two kopeks per day, with women receiving lower wages than men.⁵⁴

In 1902 the War Ministry established a special commission to examine improvements in the life-style of the Ministry's workers.⁵⁵ According to the results of this commission's investigations, which were published in 1906, the average unmarried male worker in Petersburg had to spend a minimum of twenty-one rubles per month, the average unmarried woman — seventeen rubles per month, for the most basic necessities including food (ten and eight rubles respectively), clothing (three and two rubles), living quarters (four rubles), miscellaneous expenses such as lighting, the bath-house, laundry, mending of clothing, postal expenses, religious expenses, social and state taxes, etc. (two and a half and two rubles), and incidentals such as medicine, and

52 K stoletiiu cites the average yearly wage of all Putilov workers in 1900-1901 as 461 rubles, more than twice the average of the country as a whole — p. 29.

53 These figures are from S.N. Semanov, Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune pervoi russkoi revoliutsii, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1966), pp. 69-70. Putilov wages were quite a bit higher than the average of 1 ruble 45 kopeks per day for the eleven largest Petersburg metal works.

54 Ibid., p. 69.

55 For more information on this commission, see ibid., pp. 78-82.

family-related expenses (one and a half and one ruble). S.N. Semanov points out that this was a budget of absolute minimums, which grossly underestimated the expense of a one-room apartment in over-crowded St. Petersburg and also of clothing, and made no allowance whatsoever for the costs of relaxation (vodka and tobacco), education (including the purchase of newspapers and books), a protracted illness, fines, etc.⁵⁶ An average unskilled worker at the Putilov Works in 1900 could make twenty-two rubles a month by working every day for thirty-one days.⁵⁷ The average skilled metal-worker was much better off, however, receiving approximately forty-two rubles a month.⁵⁸

The vast majority of Putilov workers and their families constituted the basic population of a settlement of some eighty thousand which sprang up around the factory before 1900.⁵⁹ The rapid increase of the Putilov labour force in the 1890's was not matched by adequate increases

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁷ This calculation is based on the average daily wage in 1900 of 72 kopeks. It should be noted, however, that wages of factory workers increased between 1900 and 1904 when the commission's study was conducted. See Kruze, p. 169.

⁵⁸ This figure is based on a wage of 1 ruble 85 kopeks per day for an average work-month of 23 days. S. Bernshtein-Kogan calculates that St. Petersburg metal workers in 1902 worked an average of 272 days per year. Chislennost', sostav i polozhenie peterburgskikh rabochikh, (St. Petersburg, 1910), p. 153.

⁵⁹ For more information on living conditions of the Putilov workers at this time see D.G. Kutsentov, "Peterburgskii proletariat v kontse XIX veka (chislennost', sostav, polozhenie)", Nauchnaia sessiia, pp. 25-27; also Mitel'man, et al., pp. 185-197; Semanov, pp. 146-168.

in the number of apartments with the result that living accommodations were exorbitantly priced and terribly overcrowded at the turn of the century. The cost of a single room in this region ranged from one hundred fifty to two hundred fifty rubles a year (12.5 to 21 rubles per month).⁶⁰ Workers unable to find or to afford a whole room would rent a corner of a room. In fact, single-room apartments, only two percent of which had running water, averaged 3.5 occupants.⁶¹

This widely spread out workers' slum had grown up very quickly, without any overall plan, and apparently in complete disregard of existing regulations for urban construction. The sanitation medical officer for the region, Dr. A.V. Amsterdamskii, made the following remarks in his report for the year 1902:

In the last ten years twelve streets have been laid out among the kitchen-gardens near the Putilov Works Land speculators and energetic builders hurried about their business, seizing the moment, not worrying in the least about the future. Ancient parks were destroyed, artificial ponds and channels were filled in with muck and sewage, and over all this rubbish, lightly covered with earth and ashes, rose the apartment buildings In order to economize on space, the builders completely disregarded the most elementary demands of hygiene.⁶²

There were no green areas or parks in the region and no cobble-stones on the roads so the workers alternately

⁶⁰ Semanov, p. 154.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154. Semanov quotes from a 1902 report on the region: "The apartment blocks here are primarily wooden, two-story buildings, with very small apartments, overcrowded with rooms and with people living in the corners of rooms [*uglovymi zhil'tsami*]." pp. 149-150.

⁶² Dr. Amsterdamskii's report is quoted in Semanov, p. 165.

suffocated on dust or drowned in mud on their way to and from work. Moreover, the mud and dirt were tracked into living quarters and quickly became a breeding ground for disease.

Dr. Amsterdamskii was also worried about the hazard to health of living in an environment constantly polluted by dense clouds of smoke and soot from the nearby unfiltered factory smokestacks. And he called attention to the dangers of disease inherent in the community's water-system by which water was drawn directly from the Neva River and transported, without being filtered, through wooden pipes. Moreover, the sewage system was equally primitive. Sewage collected in cesspools from which underground leakage contaminated the source of the drinking water supply. Dr. Amsterdamskii concluded that "If the business of water supply and sewage remain in their present condition the development of gastric-intestinal disease is inevitable".⁶³ In fact, as Semanov notes, the crowded and unsanitary living quarters, the use of unpurified river water, the polluted air, and the poor layout of the region, in combination with long and exhausting labour at the factory, meant that frequent mass outbreaks of a myriad of diseases including typhoid fever, cholera, measles, diphtheria and even smallpox were indeed inevitable in the workers' settlement.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid., p. 168.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 142, 168.

Dr. Amsterdamskii also blamed inadequate medical services for the fact that the workers' quarter was such a frequent host to epidemics.⁶⁵ In his annual report he noted that the Putilov Works provided by far the best medical services in his region having its own drugstore, a separate dispensary, two hospital buildings with an isolation ward and three full-time doctors. Nevertheless, he concluded, three doctors with a total of seventy-seven in-patient beds could not begin to hope to satisfy the demands of twelve thousand workers and an approximately equal number of members of their families. For example, workers were often required to wait in line two to three hours or more to see a doctor, and many were reluctant to do so since this amounted to losing half a working day and consequently half the daily wage.

As in all new industrial enterprises of the nineteenth century, little attention was paid at the Putilov Works to ensuring protection of the health and well-being of the labour force in the factory. In a 1903 medical inspector's report the following comments were made: "In the iron-rolling [workshop] there is a complete lack of devices ... for the rapid removal of ferric oxide, carbon and other caustic gases from the air. The workers stand for a very long time and they are even casting in this workshop which is overcrowded by them".⁶⁶ Lack of safeguards on machinery contributed to a very high accident rate. Metal workers comprised

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 125-129 and 140-142.

⁶⁶ Cited in Semanov; pp. 125-126.

twenty percent of the St. Petersburg labour force, but accounted for fifty percent of all those mutilated in job-related accidents in 1900. The average life expectancy of a Putilov metal worker in 1900 was 39.4 years.⁶⁷

In June 1903 a law which placed liability for compensation for injuries on private employers was passed. The following year the Putilov labour force numbered 11,667 and 14,407 rubles were paid out in allowances. The Putilov Works was the only factory in the capital to grant allowances totalling more than one ruble per worker, but this was still considerably less than the workers were due.⁶⁸ Another law passed in 1903 created for the first time a legal channel through which workers could petition the employer about their needs. This was the "factory elders" system.⁶⁹ Discipline remained the rule, however — the workers were completely subordinated to and dependent on the supervisory staff from the moment they entered the factory.

Discipline was maintained in the factory by a pervasive system of fines governing all aspects of internal plant life. Fines were levied at the discretion of the supervisor for all kinds of misbehaviour including improper work, shirking, lateness, smoking, excessive noise-making, fights, disobedience, playing cards and drinking alcoholic beverages. Fines averaged from 25.3 to 31.4 kopeks and were felt most by

67 These figures are from the records for 1900 of the St. Petersburg factory inspectorate cited in Semanov, pp. 128-129.

68 Ibid., pp. 114-115.

69 See Chernov, p. 129; Sablinsky, p. 31.

the unskilled workers.⁷⁰ That the metal workers were upset by the oppressiveness of the working conditions, the arbitrariness of the administration, and, particularly by abuses of their supervisors, is attested to by the fact that they began to make demands including that one or another particularly offensive member of the factory personnel be fired.⁷¹ The strike at the Putilov Works in January 1905 grew out of the refusal of the factory administration to accede to certain workers' demands including the dismissal of supervisor Tetiavkin. Before examining this incident and its consequences in greater detail, however, the development of manifestations of labour unrest at the Putilov Works prior to 1905 will be examined.

Given the nature of the workers as described above, the emphasis on discipline in the factory, and the fact that strikes and workers' organizations and associations were illegal in nineteenth-century Russia, it is not surprising that there were very few strikes or other demonstrations of worker discontent at the Putilov Works from 1868 to 1900. When such outbreaks did occur they were prompted by what the workers viewed as economic injustices. According to factory archives the first "organized strike" was held in 1872 with the basic demand being for "the issue of wages in money instead of chits for goods from local shopkeepers".⁷²

70 Semanov, p. 113.

71 Ibid., pp. 120-121. Semanov notes that these requests were not granted.

72 Cited by V. Kasparov in Stal'noi gigant (125 letie "Krasnogo putilovtza"), (Leningrad, 1926), p. 8. See also Mifet'man, et al., Chapter II, for greater detail on nineteenth-century labour activities.

The administration met this demand. Evidently, the Putilovites did not strike again until 1889, when they demanded that "the two percent of workers' wages deducted for medical needs actually be spent on these needs".⁷³

There is not much evidence of worker unrest during the 1890's — the decade of industrialization in Russia and rapid growth of the Putilov Works. Perhaps the successive waves of peasants entering the labour force acted as a conservative and backward element in its midst. Some Putilovites may have joined in discussion groups or circles and participated in 1 May political demonstrations during this decade,⁷⁴ but there were few major eruptions at the factory. Only one has been noted — a strike of the steam engine - mechanical workshop which broke out in November 1895 in support of a strike motivated by economic grievances at the Semiannikov factory.⁷⁵ With the new century came industrial recession however, and as prices began to increase and workers began to lose jobs the Putilovites became more aggressive in presenting their demands.

In the spring of 1901 thirty employees of the steam engine - mechanical workshop were arrested as "those

⁷³ Stal'noi gigant, p. 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 8. V. Kasparov claims this was the case although the few political circles which existed at the time were undoubtedly dominated by intellectuals. A photocopy of a police list dated 27 March 1879, containing the names of six workers who often held meetings with "the well-known Plekhanov" is on display in the Museum of the Kirov Works.

⁷⁵ F.M. Suslova in Nauchnaia sessiia, p. 32.

having the most harmful influence on their comrades".⁷⁶ Later the same year, disruptions broke out at the factory over the introduction of stricter controls to ensure promptness. In the future, workers were to report in at their workshops instead of the entrance-gate office. Since some shops were quite a distance from the main entrance, workers had to leave for work much earlier than before or risk a fine. Foremen were also particularly upset over these new regulations because they had been made responsible for recording arrivals and therefore had to be on the job much earlier themselves.⁷⁷ Worker disturbances increased in 1902, especially because of mass dismissals (up to one thousand Putilovites lost their jobs in the first half of 1902 alone) which accompanied the decrease in orders and production at the factory that year.

According to a Petersburg okhrana report on industrial disruptions and worker demonstrations in 1903, "The main efforts of revolutionaries were directed among the labour forces of the Obukhov and Putilov factories whose workers are the most developed and most highly schooled in ... anti-government doctrines".⁷⁸ There are several reasons why the Putilovites were among Russia's most

76 Cited in M. Gordon, "Dvizheniia na Putilovskom zavode ('Krasnyi putilovets') v 1901-1917 gg", Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII (1924), 132. For more detail, see M. Syromiatnikovoi, "Rabochee dvizhenie na zavodakh Peterburga v mae 1901", Krasnyi archiv, 1930, no. 3, 49-66.

77 Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, pp. 132-133.

78 Cited in ibid., p. 133; Stal'noi gigant, p. 60.

"developed" and most aggressively antagonistic workers.

In the first place, metal workers in general were more highly skilled and better educated than the average labourer.

Petersburg metal workers had the highest literacy rate (over seventy-five percent) of any working group in the country at the turn of the century.⁷⁹ Because of this they received larger salaries and worked shorter hours; so they had the skills, the means and the time to acquire some political sophistication. Moreover, the concentration of such a large number of workers in one huge industrial plant could only serve to alienate the workers from the management and reduce the loyalty of the labour force to the enterprise.⁸⁰ The Putilovites were bitter and antagonistic because of their wretched living and working conditions and the unwillingness and inability of the government to make any improvements. One final factor which must not be overlooked, however, is that mentioned in the okhr report itself — that the "revolutionaries" were directing their main efforts to the education and inflammation of, specifically, the Putilov work force.

The nineteenth-century Russian revolutionary tradition was rooted in the Decembrist revolt of 1825 and

79 Kruze, pp. 87-88; Rashin, p. 591; L. Haimson, "Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-1917", Slavic Review, XXIII, no. 4 (December, 1964), 637. The Putilov Works had its own school which offered day and night-time courses. These were attended by 733 children and 213 adults in 1901-1902. The factory also had a lending library for the use of the workers and their families. K stoletiiu, pp. 120-121.

80 See R. Blauner, Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and His Industry, (Chicago, 1967), p. 110.

evolved through Populism along one branch to Marxism and Social Democracy. The famine of 1891 and the dislocations, harsh conditions and injustices of the decade's industrial revolution intensified criticism of the government's inaction and incompetence. In the 1890's more and more intellectuals turned to revolutionary activity as the only possible course of action remaining against the autocracy. Social Democratic and Socialist Revolutionary groups multiplied throughout the decade. In 1898 the first self-proclaimed Russian workers' political party was created with the formation of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in Minsk.⁸¹

During the first years of the twentieth century economic recession further intensified urban pressures. Workers were still largely unorganized and unpoliticized but, prompted by economic motives, they began to strike more often and to refuse to work in support of strikes at other factories. According to R.E. Pipes, "Bolshevism came into existence in 1902 when in What is to be Done? Lenin decided that "the workers were unable to develop a Social Democratic consciousness", that this "consciousness could be brought to them only from the outside", and that "left to their own devices they could produce merely a trade union consciousness".⁸² Lenin instructed his followers to agitate among the Putilovites;

⁸¹ See J.L.H. Keep, The Rise of Social Democracy in Russia, (Oxford, 1963); R.E. Pipes, Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement 1885-1897, (Cambridge, Ma., 1963); S.M. Schwarz, The Russian Revolution of 1905. The Workers Movement and the Formation of Bolshevism and Menshevism, (Chicago, 1967); A.K. Wildman, The Making of a Workers' Revolution: Russian Social Democracy, 1891-1903, (Chicago, 1967).

⁸² Pipes, p. vii.

in his words, "the Putilov Works has great significance, the Putilov Works is a huge avalanche of the working class, and we must expand the influence of our party there at all costs".⁸³

The Putilov Works attracted the attention of revolutionaries for several reasons. First, it was in the capital city, which enhanced the potential effectiveness of its work force. Second, metal workers, more than any other type of labourers, possessed the skills and opportunities to acquire a certain degree of political sophistication (as mentioned above). Metal workers also tended to build up a relatively long length of service at the same factory which served to diminish their ties with the village and increase their "class consciousness".⁸⁴ Finally, the very size of the factory (which in itself contributed to the alienization and radicalization of its work force) made it both an easier place, in physical terms, to carry on agitation and an attractive target for propaganda. As Lenin put it: "major factories are especially important to us ... for they encompass not only a predominant number of workers but an even more predominant part of the developed working class. Each large factory must become our fortress".⁸⁵

⁸³ Cited by Bogdanov in Putilovtsy v 1905 g. Sbornik vospominanii, (Leningrad, 1931), p. 46.

⁸⁴ S. Liberstein, "The St. Petersburg Metal Workers, 1901-1905: A Sociological Study" unpublished manuscript, Carleton University, p. 10.

⁸⁵ V.I. Lenin quoted in Mitel'man, et al., p. 8.

All types of revolutionaries including Populists, Anarchists and Marxists, both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks were undoubtedly present at the Tutilov Works. There is little information available on the influence of any but the Social Democrats and specifically Lenin's faction, however. Soviet historical scholarship emphasizes the role of the intellectual Social-Democratic revolutionaries in organizing the workers and stimulating strike activity, depicting the labour force of the 1880's and 1890's as fused and led by them, and it greatly exaggerates the influence and leadership of Lenin's party after 1900.⁸⁶ Western historians, on the other hand, emphasize the small numbers of the Social Democrats, and the spontaneity and economic (rather than political) focus of the workers' strikes and demonstrations.⁸⁷

86 For example, we read that "in the course of two decades, from 1883 to 1903, the workers' movement in Russia took a huge step from Marxist circles to education according to the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party" and:

By the beginning of the twentieth century ... under the leadership of Lenin's party Russia's working class had already embarked on the course against tsarism. From the first days of its existence, the revolutionary party of Bolsheviks founded by V.I. Lenin developed its titanic work to prepare the working class for fulfillment of its role as the hegemonic power, and to lead all labourers in the struggle against tsarism, landowners and capitalists, for freedom, democracy and socialism.

in Akademiia obshchestvennykh nauk pri TsK KPSS, Ghegemonia proletariata v trekh russkikh revoliutsiiakh, (Moscow, 1975), p. 4 and p. 14.

87 For example:

The failure of St. Petersburg's Social Democratic intelligentsia to merge with labor or to acquire leadership over it must be ascribed above all to a divergence of interests. Labor was mainly concerned with intellectual and economic self-improvement, the Social

Continued on next page.

One Social Democrat actually involved in agitation at the Putilov Works described the labour force he worked with as peasants, in the majority, who had no education or an education from church schools (where the main subject was "God's law"), and who were prejudiced, suspicious and morally corrupt. In his memoirs he recalled how difficult it was for students to carry out revolutionary propaganda among the Putilovites in the 1890's. In his words, "it was impossible to identify oneself as a student without risking a beating or arrest: 'Oh, a student, a tsar-murderer [tsare-ubivets]!'"⁸⁸ This is no doubt an accurate reflection of the character of the mass of unskilled labourers recruited by the Putilov factory during the boom years at the end of the nineteenth century. However, it was not long before the majority of these outwardly obedient and religious, but inwardly coarse and violent people were soured by their new lives as industrial labourers and adopted the increasing aggressiveness of their more experienced fellows.

In 1903 and 1904 there was considerable unrest among the Putilov workers because of their onerous economic condition and the harsh rules of factory discipline.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Democratic intelligentsia mainly with politics.... the workers never yielded to the socialists' efforts to politicize their movement; nor did they concede leadership to the intelligentsia".

Pipes, p. 117.

⁸⁸ Rabinovich in Putilovtsy v 1905 g., p. 10.

⁸⁹ Kaspárov in Stal'noi gigant, pp. 62-63; Mitel'man, et al., pp. 248-254.

Clashes between workers and their supervisors, foremen and time-keepers became more frequent. Worker discontent grew and strikes were threatened. In December 1904 word spread that a certain Tetiavkin, foreman of the wagon workshop, had fired four men for belonging to the Gapon organization. The Futilovites responded with a factory-wide strike in January 1905. The strike was followed by "Bloody Sunday" which set in motion the first of the modern Russian revolutions.

The Revolution of 1905 and its Aftermath

The economic recession which descended on Russian industry at the turn of the century was alleviated in the case of defense-related industries by the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. As noted above, the Putilov Works received several lucrative and urgent new government orders while work was speeded up on existing orders. Factory output for the decade reached a high point during the war years, being valued at 15,600,000 rubles in 1905-1906. Investment in the factory also increased during these years. As the table below reveals, 1904 to 1906 accounted for fifty percent of all investment during the entire decade.¹

Table III: Investment, 1900-1909.

Investment in rubles	1900 620,000	1901 —	1902 34,000	1903 99,000	1904 388,600
	1905 398,665	1906 473,727	1907 277,025	1908 265,856	1909 76,234
TOTAL INVESTMENT: 2,500,000 rubles					

Most of this investment was used to re-equip those workshops involved in military-related production.

¹ Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 155.

during 1900-1903, the gun workshop and the new mechanical shop were enlarged and completely re-equipped to fill orders for field artillery. In 1905 a shrapnel workshop and an electric station were constructed so as to increase the production of shells and various other artillery pieces. At the same time improvements were made in the shipbuilding department; the Putilov Works manufactured two mine cruisers and a gun boat over 1905-1907. In 1906 a new building was constructed to house the company's head-office. The economic revival brought about by the war could not continue after hostilities were quieted, however. Output fell from its high in 1905-1906 to 12,600,000 rubles in 1907-1908, and remained depressed until the end of the decade.² Moreover, despite the fact that the Putilov Works enjoyed a relatively healthier economic situation from 1904 to 1907, the factory nevertheless was plagued by strikes and other expressions of labour discontent. The Putilov work force was an integral part of the developing Petersburg labour movement and an elemental actor in the revolutionary events of these years.

Dissatisfaction among the Putilovites resulting from low wages, the hardships of their living conditions and the abuses of their working conditions, turned to desperation as the autocracy continued to deny them legal means by which to appeal for redress or improvement. The fact that this state policy was likely to make the workers movement much

² Ibid., pp. 155-156; Krasnyi putilovets, p. 20.

more revolutionary was recognized among certain of the ruling circles and led to the development of that particularly Russian phenomenon which came to be labelled "police socialism". This scheme, introduced in Moscow in 1900 by Sergei Zubatov, the head of the city's police department, involved the establishment of labour organizations which, under the sponsorship and close supervision of the secret police, were to provide the workers with opportunities for mutual self-help concentrating on economic goals, and to protect them from the influence of revolutionary political parties. The plan proved popular and successful at first, and similar organizations soon spread to St. Petersburg, Odessa and other major industrial centres. However, the groups were difficult to control from the start and eventually began to organize strikes and to support strikers outside their societies. The government quickly re-evaluated its position and began to suppress the organizations. By the end of 1903 they had all been closed down, and Zubatov had been rebuked and removed from office.³

The idea of government-sponsored labour organizations was not entirely abandoned, however. The remnants of the St. Petersburg Zubatov society became the nucleus of a new organization created by an Orthodox priest, Father Georgii Gapon. In February 1904, Minister of the Interior

3 For more detail on Zubatov and Zubatovshchina see: Keep, pp. 102-106; Sablinsky, pp. 58-63 and 77-84; Schwarz, pp. 285-300 and J. Schneiderman, Sergei Zubatov and Revolutionary Marxism: the Struggle for the Working Class in Tsarist Russia, (Ithaca, N.Y., 1976).

Flebye approved the statutes of Gapon's new group, called the Association of Russian Factory and Mill Workers of St. Petersburg. Limited to workers of Russian nationality and the Christian faith, the aim of the Association, from the official point of view, was to shield the workers from revolutionary ideas and to maintain and strengthen monarchist and nationalist sentiments among them. Gapon himself, however, seems to have been an idealist genuinely devoted to improving the moral and material situation of his followers. The activities of the Association were at first mainly of a cultural or educational nature, as originally intended, but by the autumn of 1904 it had become impossible to avoid the discussion of political issues.⁴

Father Gapon's Association became very popular with the workers for, besides the congenial atmosphere, the entertainment and the tea-rooms it provided, it also gave a legal status to their meetings and discussions. The very fact that these could be held openly attracted a large number of workers who, although dissatisfied with the system, were not interested in joining revolutionary parties. By November 1904 the Association had eleven branches spread throughout the city and an enrolment of some eight thousand.⁵ The first of these branch clubhouses had been opened on 30 May 1904, in the Narva district in a renovated tavern located close by the Putilov Works. This building, which could

⁴ On Father Gapon and the Gaponovshchina see: Marcave, pp. 69-97; Keep, pp. 154-158; Schwarz, pp. 268-284 and Sablinsky throughout.

⁵ Keep, p. 155.

accommodate over two thousand, was the most spacious clubhouse, and the Narva Branch eventually became the largest and most important branch of the organization. By June it had a membership of close to seven hundred workers, the vast majority Putilovites, and it became the centre of Gapon's interests.⁶

After the initial distraction of the outbreak of war, labour discontent began to intensify in St. Petersburg as the expected quick and easy victory failed to be won. Gapon's organization had attracted both the so-called "labour aristocracy" (an economically and socially superior group of workers including metal workers) and so-called "eagles" (workers who enjoyed considerable respect and trust among their peers and who had once been members of various political parties but refrained from participating in party activities because of objections to tactics and the dominance of intellectuals in party organizations) to its leadership.⁷ As the war dragged on and the atmosphere in Petersburg grew more tense, radical elements in the Association became more vocal. Although this did not seem to arouse concern among the authorities, employers were wary of the powers of the Association which they began to perceive as a serious challenge to their authority.⁸

⁶ ~~Sablinsky~~, p. 111; V. Kasparov in Krasnyi putilovets, p. 61.

⁷ These terms and their definitions are to be found in Sablinsky, pp. 98-99.

⁸ Keep, p. 155.

The Putilov workers provided the largest single contingent of the Association membership at this time. The director of the factory, S.I. Smirnov, had originally been favourably disposed towards Gapon's organization. When the Narva Branch was first opened, he donated one hundred rubles to the society and gave it permission to use the company auditorium for a concert.⁹ Smirnov soon grew concerned about what he viewed as the trade union aspirations of the Association, however, and he was inclined to blame it for the growing militancy of workers at the plant. He was convinced that the workers, believing they had an organization behind them, were less prone to accept certain management practices, complained more, and demanded better treatment. Smirnov was steadfastly against granting concessions to workers under duress — that strikes were anathema to him is evident from his 1904-1905 directives to factory supervisory personnel and notices to the factory at large¹⁰ — and he was willing to patronize labour organizations only as long as they refrained from engaging in the struggle for economic gains. When it became apparent to Smirnov that this was precisely the goal of the Association, he withdrew his support and began to promote a rival labour organization at the factory. This organization was successful in recruiting some of the more highly paid Putilov workers, foremen and

9 I am indebted to Sablinsky for the information in this paragraph, pp. 144-145.

10 Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (LGIA), fund 1418, dela 1, 2 and 3.

other supervisory personnel. One of the new organization's most ardent supporters was A. Tetiavkin, foreman of the carpentry section of the wagon workshop.

Tetiavkin was a particularly obnoxious foreman, intensely disliked by the workers. On 4 December 1904, a certain Serguzin, one of the wagon shop's workers and a member of Gapon's Association, complained to Tetiavkin that he had not received his full amount of pay. Tetiavkin informed him he was fired and at the same time made some derogatory remarks about the Association. Three weeks later another worker, Sublotin by name, who was also a member of the Association, lost his job when he failed to show up on time for a new work assignment after missing a day due to illness. It was commonly believed at the time that two other Association members, Ukolov and Fedorov, had also been fired. These dismissals gave rise to a rumour which quickly circulated through the factory and the Association that the management intended to fire all those who were members of Gapon's organization. According to an okhrana report, the workers then turned to the Association, which called for a general meeting to be held on 27 December to discuss the Putilov problem.¹¹

At the meeting, attended by three hundred fifty participants representing all branches of the Association,

11. Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 133. Gordon's account of events is based heavily on okhrana files. See also Sablinsky, pp. 146-147; Vitel'man, et al., pp. 268-271; Putilovtsy v 1905 g., p. 60.

it was decided to send delegations to the city governor, the chief factory inspector and director Smirnov with two demands — the reinstatement of the four fired workers and the dismissal of Tetiavkin. The delegations were also to request assurances against similar dismissals of workers without just cause in the future. Sunday, 2 January, was designated as the date for the report of the delegations.¹²

On 28 December the delegations set off on their appointed missions. Father Gapon accompanied the workers sent to the city governor, Fullon, and, during a private interview in the latter's office, showed him a resolution drafted in secret at the Association meeting by its leaders. The resolution ended with a veiled threat of city-wide worker disturbances if the demands were not met. Gapon reassured the governor that the workers "do not even contemplate any threat, they simply want to help their comrades". Fullon then received the workers' delegation very amably, listened politely to their story and promised to do his best to obtain satisfaction of their demands.¹³

Things did not go as smoothly for the other delegations, however. Their reception by the chief factory

¹² For information on the meeting, see Gordon, *Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii*, XI-XII, p. 133; Mitel'man, et al., pp. 271-273; Sablinsky, pp. 148-149. The meeting received considerable publicity at the time with coverage in Russian newspapers (eg., *Rus*, 29 December 1904, *Russkie vedomosti*, 29 December 1904) and several foreign papers as well (eg., *The Times* (London), 11 January 1905, *The New York Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Manchester Guardian* also January 1905). Cited in Sablinsky, p. 149.

¹³ Sablinsky, p. 151. The quote is from Gapon's memoirs as cited in Sablinsky.

Inspector Chizhov was extremely cool. He refused to accept the complaints of the delegates and suggested that the dismissed workers come to see him themselves so he could start an official investigation. Smirnov's reception of the Association's delegation, on 29 December, was even more frigid. He also offered to conduct an investigation if the four workers in question would submit an official complaint, but he absolutely refused to recognize the slightest authority on the Association's part to meddle in the internal affairs of the Putilov factory. The meeting ended with heated arguing and threats.¹⁴ On the next day Smirnov posted a notice on the gates of the plant in which he dismissed the workers' complaints as groundless: only Sergunin had actually been fired (for faulty work); Subbotin had stopped coming of his own accord on being asked to present a doctor's note in accordance with procedures after a day's absence from work; Ukolov was to have been dismissed for unauthorized absence from work, but he was retained after making a written promise not to repeat the offense; Fedorov was still employed. In conclusion, Smirnov stressed that the Association of Factory and Mill Workers of St. Petersburg had no right to interfere in the internal life of his factory and that he therefore would neither recognize nor negotiate with any deputation from that society.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 151-153.

¹⁵ Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, pp. 133-134.

By this time it was clear that the Association was not having any success in its attempts to intercede on behalf of the Putilov workers. Further, its very existence as an organization was being threatened by the statements and position of the Putilov management. Smirnov's rudeness to the workers' delegation, his championing of the despised Petliavkin, and his refusal to recognize the Association's claim to represent its members elicited a strong response from the workers. In Sablinsky's words:

Despite a seeming compromise in the reinstatement of two dismissed workers, the two most active members [of the Association] had been fired. In defiance of Smirnov, the workers overwhelmingly stood behind the Assembly leadership. A great influx of new members joined the organization, including a majority of the Putilov workers. So many workers came to the branch meetings that it became impossible to control attendance, and everyone was admitted, whether they had joined officially or not.¹⁶

On 2 January 1905, about six hundred disaffected workers gathered for the meeting which had been scheduled to hear the delegations' reports.¹⁷ Chairman V.A. Inozemtsev opened the meeting with a few remarks about Smirnov's notice: Serguin, fired for incompetence, had been employed at the Putilov Works since 1890 and had been working as acting foreman on the night shift for two years; Subbotin, dismissed because of "non-attendance", had missed only one day because of illness. A factory doctor had prescribed medicine for him, but when Subbotin went the next day for a note to that

¹⁶ Sablinsky, p. 157.

¹⁷ Although Harcave places the meeting in the large hall at the Narva Branch (p. 70), Sablinsky states that it convened at the Basil Island Branch (p. 158).

effect, the doctor refused to give him one. Inozemtsev also contended that Ukolov's written promise was illegal, as workers had the right to certain short, unavoidable absences.¹⁸ Acting on a proposal by Inozemtsev, the participants unanimously voted to support their comrades "to the end". It was agreed that on the next morning, 3 January, the Putilov workers would report to the factory as usual but, instead of going to work, "would gather at the office of the plant, without shouts and without violence, to demand that foreman Tetiavkin be fired and the dismissed workers reinstated".¹⁹

Next day, at the appointed time, about twenty-five hundred Putilovites gathered in front of Smirnov's office and demanded to speak with him. Their mood had changed to one of stubborn dedication to the achievement of their demands, which they began to perceive as a "cause".²⁰ Smirnov refused to fire Tetiavkin just because the workers demanded it, but offered to re-examine the other dismissals if the workers would return to their jobs. This they refused to do. Instead, the call to strike went around the plant, and virtually the entire work force peacefully left the premises. Many of them assembled at the Narva Branch clubhouse where they were met by Father Gapon in the early afternoon. Gapon presented the strikers with a new list of grievances but,

18 Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 134.

19 An okhrana report cited in Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 134; Sablinsky, pp. 158-159.

20 Marcave, p. 71.

according to an okhrana report, "The workers decided to stand firmly by their original demands, even though the strike might be extended for an indefinite length of time."²¹

Meetings ran continuously at the Narva Branch hall for the remainder of the day, and in the evening a new delegation was selected to meet with Smirnov once again.

Father Gapon led the new delegation to its meeting with the director the next afternoon. This delegation carried a considerably expanded list of demands which included Gapon's proposals as well as suggestions voiced by workers at various meetings the day before. Among them were demands for a reduction of the work-day to eight hours; determination of rates for new items on the production line by mutual agreement between elected representatives from the shop and foremen, and these rates thereafter to be considered obligatory; establishment of a permanent committee of elected worker representatives to investigate, with the administration, grievances of individual workers; dismissal of workers only with the consent of this commission; increase of minimum daily wages for unskilled workers from sixty kopeks to one ruble for males and from forty kopeks to seventy-five kopeks for females; elimination of overtime work; payment for overtime work, if it was absolutely necessary, at time-and-a-half rates; construction of a nursery school; better medical attention, including more courtesy

21 Cited in Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 134; Sablinsky, p. 161.

from medical personnel, especially for mutilated workers; improvement of sanitary conditions in the workshops; excuse from absence of workers while on strike and agreement by the administration to pay strikers the average daily wage while the plant was closed down.²²

Director Smirnov was taken aback by the new demands which he categorically refused, along with the demand to fire Potiavkin. The delegation then returned to the Narva Branch hall where the assembled workers were informed of Smirnov's response. According to the report of an okhrana agent who was present at this meeting, the attitude of the workers was peaceful but determined while "the possibility of reducing the demands was not even discussed".²³ It was decided to make one last attempt to negotiate by sending a delegation to the board of directors of the Futilov Works Co., but meanwhile the strike was to continue.

The Association had already made preparations to extend the Futilov strike to other parts of St. Petersburg. The day before, lists of the Futilov demands had been sent to other branches and various factories, a strike committee had been organized to aid needy strikers and their families,

22 Quoted in Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 135; Mitel'man, et al., pp. 176-177 and also reproduced in Futilovtsy v 1905 g., p. 59 from Novoe vremia, no. 10364, 5 January 1905. Additional economic demands may have been for the introduction of a three-shift work-day and free medical care. See Sablinsky, p. 163 and M. Balabanov, Ot 1905 k 1917: Massovoe rabochee dvizhenie, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), pp. 4-5.

23 Cited in Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 136; Sablinsky, p. 164.

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and Association membership had been opened to all workers.²⁴ During the lunch hour a delegation of Putilovites visited the Franco-Russian Machine and Shipbuilding Works and gained their support for the protest. On the afternoon of 5 January another delegation of Putilov workers visited the Neva Branch of the Association and were instrumental in organizing a strike at the huge Nevskii Machine and Shipbuilding Works. By the end of the day, over ten thousand workers from enterprises throughout the capital had joined the strike in support of the Putilov workers.

That evening the Putilov delegation, led by Father Sapon, met with the board of directors. The directors greeted them politely and listened sympathetically to their arguments, but in the end, they made it clear that no action would be taken to redress their grievances until the workers returned to their jobs. If the strike continued, the directors warned, the plant would be shut down.²⁵ After this meeting, the workers decided not to send any more delegations. Instead, they would try to organize a general strike to support their demands. Their initial success in this regard continued over the next few days. Putilovites, and other strikers visited enterprises throughout the city calling on the workers to come out and join them. By 7 January, more than 150,000 Petersburg workers were on strike, all making practically the same demands which were based on the original Putilov

²⁴ See Sablinsky, pp. 161-162.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 166-167.

demands expanded to reflect the grievances of the entire working-class population of the capital. It was at this time that rather than the idea of presenting a workers' petition directly to the tsar was adopted. The petition, which was duly drafted, contained several political demands (including the demand for some form of popular representation, followed by an oblique reference to a 'constituent assembly' which were rejected by the more radical of Gapon's closest associates, and which were not fully appreciated by the mass of workers who ratified them.²⁶ At the same time, plans were formulated for several workers' processions to the Winter Palace to take place on Sunday, 9 January.²⁷

The workers' response to Gapon's plan was enthusiastic. On the night of 8 January Gapon spoke to a huge crowd which had gathered at the Association's Narva Branch.²⁸ The workers were excited and optimistic about the better future that awaited them once the "Little Father" had been informed of their needs. Their mood of expectancy could be sensed all night long. Early the next morning an immense crowd of Putilovites, many accompanied by their wives and

26 See Sablinsky, pp. 193-192 for more detail on the drafting of the petition.

27 For more detail see: Talabanov, pp. 9-15; A. Kats & Iu. Milonov, 1905; professional'noe dvizhenie, (Moscow, 1926); S.I. Okun', (ed.), Putilovets v trekh revoliutsiiakh, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1933), pp. 63-80; and Sablinsky, pp. 170-227. Sablinsky's book contains a comprehensive and annotated bibliography of Soviet and Western primary and secondary sources on "Bloody Sunday" and the events which preceded it.

28 Sablinsky, p. 225.

6

March, 1917, the day of the "Red Day". From the crowd in the streets, the marchers carried the various religious objects to the procession from the building and to the procession with a prophetic, religious air. The workers were successful in obtaining the [something], a large crowd and several [something] to be taken aloft. They then took the [something] of [something] from the walls of the [something], [something] and [something] at the head of the crowd of [something].

Shortly after eleven o'clock the procession set off, moving slowly and in an orderly manner along the [something] [something] [something] of the city. Father [something], [something] [something] over his [something], walked in the second rank, surrounded by his assistants. The workers sang religious and national hymns and were treated with respect by the police and the crowds which gathered to watch them along their route. As the marchers approached the Narva Gate, a triumphal arch towering over the road ahead, they could make out police and troops drawn up across their route. The workers continued to march resolutely toward the arch, however. Suddenly, when the leaders were about two hundred feet from the troops, a squadron of the Horse Grenadier Guards charged the crowd. The marchers gave way while the guards galloped through their midst, but quickly reformed and, still singing, moved forward again.

The police and military commanders at the Narva gate had orders not to let the procession through the arch. The Horse Grenadier Guards charged the crowd once more, from the rear, but again the workers' ranks broke easily

to let the riders pass through. The squadron returned to the arch and retreated behind the infantry which formed a solid line across the road. According to Sablinsky, the police intervened at this time and attempted to reason with the leaders of the procession, but to no avail.²⁹ As the workers continued to advance the bugler sounded the call to fire. Two volleys were shot into the air without effect. Then, aiming directly into the crowd from point-blank range, the troops of the 93rd Irkutsk Rifle Regiment fired a third volley. In the words of one participant:

the third volley, fired point-blank at close range, knocked down the gonfalon bearer and the police officer who was trying to halt the procession. Shouts, wails, and groans were heard; the crowd and those of us in the front ranks quickly fell to the ground. The soldiers, due to the confusion or cruelty of their commander, fired seven more volleys into the crowd until both companies, firing in turns, had emptied their clips.³⁰

When the shooting stopped, the terrified survivors rose from the ground and, those who were able, fled. Behind them lay the bodies of some forty Putilovites who had been killed and another sixty or so wounded.³¹ This scene was

29 Ibid., pp. 241-242.

30 L. Gurevich quoted by Sablinsky, p. 242.

31 Casualties suffered by employees of the Putilov Works were listed as 45 killed and 65 wounded. Okun', pp. 75-76. The majority of these casualties occurred at the Narva gate. Most Soviet sources accept 40 as the number of Putilovites killed. See I.I. Gaz, (ed.), Putilovets na putiakh k Oktiabriu. Iz istorii "Krasnogo putilovtza", (Moscow-Leningrad, 1933), p. 6; Mitel'man, et al., p. 282. Official military reports counted the number of casualties at the Narva gate as 10 dead and 20 wounded, cited in Sablinsky, p. 243. S. Marcave accepts these figures, p. 90. The total number of casualties suffered on 9 January 1905 is also a disputed figure. Sablinsky accepts the estimate of a certain

Continued on next page.

duplicated several times in various locations throughout the city that day, and eventually in the square in front of the Winter Palace itself. Afterwards, the central part of the capital was virtually in a state of open rebellion with leaderless mobs of workers breaking windows, looting, and throwing stones and debris at small groups of soldiers and policemen until nightfall. The workers were in a state of shock. One Putilovite recalled his return home after the shooting at the Narva gate. Feeling "helpless and alone like a child who has lost its father", he described the horrors of what he had seen to his wife who then aided him in removing a portrait of the tsar from the wall of their tiny room and throwing it face down in the corner.³²

This man's disillusionment was shared by many others of the St. Petersburg working-class. Stunned by the spectacle of imperial troops shooting down unarmed workers led in a peaceful and loyal procession by a holy man, they turned away from their tsar. To many Nicholas II was no longer the "Little Father", but a tyrant to be held personally responsible for the abuses of the autocratic régime. According to the somewhat exaggerated account of one Bolshevik historian:

Before this moment the Putilov workers, as a whole,

31 Soviet historian by the name of Nevskii, who puts the total number of killed at from 150 to 200 and the number wounded from 450 to 800. Sablinsky points out that while these figures may seem high, they are far more conservative than most Soviet estimates which cite figures of several thousand, p. 267.

32 From the memoirs of a certain Grigor'ev, a worker in the steam engine mechanical workshop and a Bolshevik Putilovite in Stal'noi gigant, p. 26.

had continued to cherish their belief in the tsar and they could easily allow themselves to be made fools of by the provocative activities of Gapon and his organization. But the bloody slaughter committed by tsarism on 9 January exterminated all traces of the servile past of the "Red Putilovite" workers and showed that the chief enemy of the working class was tsarism, and that all revolutionary efforts first should be directed toward its overthrow.³³

This is undoubtedly the reaction which the revolutionaries hoped for in the working masses. The Putilov strike of 3 January had developed into a general strike without the direction of political revolutionaries, however. The demands of the primarily monarchist and Orthodox workers were limited to immediate economic needs. The workers themselves, for the most part, were unconcerned with political aims and paid little heed to the slogans of Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries working among them. An okhrana agent present at the general Association meeting of 2 January which endorsed the Putilov strike, reported that when some students suggested the strikers carry red flags and demand political freedom, the chairman of the meeting replied that it was necessary to remain strictly within economic demands and not touch political matters. When the same students tried to distribute political leaflets they were stopped by the workers themselves and driven out of the club.³⁴

Two Putilov workers arrested after this meeting were carrying copies of a leaflet to the Putilov workers signed by the St. Petersburg Group of the Central Committee.

³³ Kasparov in Krasnyi putilovets, p. 62. Kasparov regarded Gapon as little more than an agent provocateur.

³⁴ See Sablinsky, p. 159.

of the RSDRP which declared that the Association was an organization of police socialism and which suggested that the workers make more serious political demands.³⁵ In a search carried out at the Putilov plant the next day, okhrana agents discovered some 116 proclamations and brochures of the RSDRP. The okhrana report does not mention the number of workers in possession of these materials but it was likely a very insignificant percentage of a work force numbering more than twelve thousand.³⁶ While the eventual demands of Gapon's petition were radical enough (including the demands for a constituent assembly, conclusion of peace, an eight-hour day, and freedom to strike and to form trade unions), and were formulated with considerable influence from socialist members of the Association leadership, the workers themselves hardly appreciated their implications. They were willing to endorse anything proposed by Father Gapon and most were simply swept along by the prevailing mood of enthusiasm and optimism.

Soviet historiography traditionally stresses the presence of Social Democratic revolutionaries, especially Bolsheviks, among the Putilov workers, and their influence in persuading the workers to make political demands. Father

35 Cited in Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 134. The Petersburg Group of the Central Committee of the RSDRP represented the Menshevik branch of the RSDRP.

36 A photocopy of this report from the chief of the Petersburg okhrana to the director of the police department, dated 4 January 1905, is on display in the Museum of the Kirov Works, I.I. Gaz Palace of Culture, Leningrad.

Gapon is characterized as an agent provocateur who was able to dupe the workers into following him on 9 January, against the predictive warnings of Bolsheviks, because of their naive but still strong belief in the goodness of the tsar.³⁷ Western historians, on the other hand, generally characterize the Social Democrats as being caught completely off guard by the Putilov strike and unprepared to take a leading role in the events which followed. They state conclusively that the Social Democrats had little direct influence on the workers at the time and exercised no leadership whatsoever in the Putilov strike, the subsequent general strike, or the 9 January procession to the Winter Palace.³⁸

Solomon M. Schwarz, a one-time Bolshevik agitator and later a leader of the Mensheviks, illustrates the disorganized state of the RSDRP at the end of 1904, and its lack of influence (especially on the part of the Bolsheviks) at the Putilov Works. Schwarz contends that the Bolshevik faction of the Petersburg RSDRP admittedly was so engrossed in fighting the Mensheviks at the time, that it completely failed to recognize the scope and importance of the Gaponovite movement among the Petersburg workers. He quotes from a

37 See Gegemona proletariata, pp. 39-40; Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, 134-136; Putilovtsy v 1905 g., p. 61.

38 See Hareave, pp. 80-82; Keep, pp. 156-158; Sablinsky, pp. 172-183. For example: "In general, the Social Democrats exercised little influence. The most that could be said is that the Party agitators, acting to a large extent on their own initiative, did share in heating the atmosphere in the streets prior to the ninth of January." Keep, p. 158.

report of the Bolshevik-dominated Petersburg Committee to the Third Congress of the RSDRP:

The strike at the Putilov plant caught the Committee unprepared. Several mimeographs were hurriedly set up. The printing group displayed incredible energy at that time.

... Before 9 January, the workers' feelings toward the Committee were extremely hostile. Our agitators were beaten up, our leaflets were destroyed, the first five hundred rubles sent to the Putilov strikers were accepted grudgingly. Nonetheless, agitation went on wherever possible. 39

This statement is supported by the memoirs of several Bolshevik Putilovites who recalled that during these days their numbers at the factory were extremely small and they had to fight Socialist Revolutionaries and particularly Mensheviks in the very difficult task of influencing the workers.⁴⁰ The position and influence of the Mensheviks at the factory was "tolerable only in comparison" to that of the Bolsheviks.⁴¹ Schwarz quotes an account by S. Somov (I.A. Peskin):

In the Narva sector, with its thirty thousand workers, for example, the whole Social-Democratic organization consisted of six or seven circles of workers of the Putilov and the Railroad Car Construction plants (five to six workers in each circle); and the work was conducted according to old-fashioned methods, with long courses in political economy and primitive culture

Factory life found no echo at all in the circles. The diffuse unrest ... that was finding expression in the powerfully developing Gapon movement, in which the yearning of the working masses for broad

39 Schwarz, p. 55.

40 See the memoirs of Putilov workers Markov and Kirillov in Putilovtsy v 1905 g., pp. 33 and 41.

41 Schwarz, p. 55.

organization and class unity was so clearly displayed, was ignored as Zubatovism. Moreover, most of the workers belonging to our circles were very young men, just out of apprenticeship and with no influence whatsoever in their factory milieu.⁴²

Bloody Sunday ended the Gaponovite movement, however, and destroyed the Association's viability as a semi-legal labour organization. This left a vacuum in the leadership of the Petersburg labour movement which the various revolutionary parties strove to fill. The Bolshevik Putilovite Markov stated in his memoirs that, after the events of 9 January, Bolshevik influence at the Putilov Works rapidly expanded.⁴³ Sidney Harcave gives a somewhat broader picture of the leanings of the Putilov workers at the time:

What happened among the Putilov workers ... after January 9 was, in many ways, typical of what was happening among all the workers. Some of them continued to adhere to the Gapon ideal of a kind of Christian monarchist trade-unionism, but their number gradually decreased; some — and their number increased — became receptive to socialist (particularly Social Democratic) propaganda, which placed the revolutionary establishment of a democratic republic ahead of the achievement of economic benefits; and others — by far the largest number — were primarily concerned with continuing the fight for economic betterment, indifferent to the form that the struggle should take but determined that it not be abandoned.⁴⁴

The strike at the Putilov Works continued on 10 January, and spread to even more enterprises whose employees, horrified by the shootings of the day before, left their jobs in protest. Although the majority of Putilov workers had

⁴² Ibid., pp. 56-57.

⁴³ Markov in Putilovtsy v. 1905 g., p. 34.

⁴⁴ Harcave, p. 111.

returned to the plant by 17 January, none of their demands had been satisfied. Bitter and disillusioned, they provided fertile soil for the agitation of revolutionaries and, moreover, they proved to be likely to quit working on the slightest provocation. The condescension and complete lack of understanding with which the tsar received a delegation of workers on 19 January was enough to set the Putilovites on strike for one day, demanding freedom of assembly and an eight-hour work day.⁴⁵

Further disturbances broke out towards the end of January. The workers decided that the only way to obtain the eight-hour day was to take it, and on 27 January they simply left their stations after eight hours. When a notice from the director was posted demanding that all employees work ten hours on threat of having the factory closed, the strikers held a meeting to formulate their demands. The introductory sentence of their petition gives a good indication of the small regard in which the workers held the management:

The workers of the Putilov factory request that

⁴⁵ For more detail on the workers' deputation to the tsar, see Harcave, pp. 121-122; Sablinsky, pp. 181-184. Among the worker-delegates were three Putilovites who had been sent to the Governor General of St. Petersburg, Trepov, from the Minister of the Interior Prince Sviatopolk-Mirskii with a note saying that they had not participated in the disturbances and were reliable. "They beg very much to be heard, and they say that most of the workers at the Putilov plant have come to their senses and would like to start working", quoted in Schwarz, p. 80. For the Putilov strike and demands, see Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 136.

the administration of the factory meet the workers' demands and not resort to different devices (such as: Tomorrow I will hang up a notice [closing the factory], or go to the board of directors, or go to the police and military), but we, the workers, expect everything and will endure the deceptions of the administration. ⁴⁶

In their petition the workers demanded: (i) a committee be established with equal representation from the workers and the factory shareholders; (ii) an eight-hour work day; (iii) minimum wages for unskilled labourers to be set at the daily rate of one ruble for men, seventy-five kopeks for women; (iv) determination of rates for new items of production by mutual agreement between the foreman and worker representatives; (v) higher rates for items already being produced; (vi) abolition of fines for absence and lateness; (vii) dismissal of workers to be determined by a committee composed of worker and administration representatives; and, (viii) polite treatment from medical personnel and imposition of the duty to make free visits to the living place of ill workers. ⁴⁷

In an attempt to appease the workers, Smirnov announced that certain of their demands would be met, including the inclusion of worker representatives on certain committees and a raise for unskilled workers to eighty or ninety kopeks per day, depending on their length of service at the factory. He refused to permit a shortening of the work day or an increase in the rates of production items, and he

⁴⁶ Quoted in Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 137.

⁴⁷ Reproduced in Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 137; Krasnyi putilovets, p. 67; Mitel'man, et al., p. 291.

would not admit the right of employees to participate in such administrative decision-making as the dismissal of workers. In response, a factory-wide strike broke out on 28 January. The factory was closed temporarily, from 29 to 31 January, but the strike continued into February. Moreover, the Putilov workers visited several neighbouring enterprises, disrupting their work and even persuading other work forces to come out on strike in their support.⁴⁸

During this time the workers presented director Smirnov with a long new list of demands, concerned primarily with improvements in their economic and personal well-being. These included demands for the eight-hour day, abolition of overtime and fines for absence, wage increases for unskilled workers, pension and bonus systems, improved sanitary conditions and medical attention, personal inviolability for worker representatives, more polite treatment from medical and supervisory personnel, and free schooling for their children. On 10 February Smirnov made several new concessions including the inviolability of worker representatives, the right to one day's absence each month without fine, various improvements in medical services, free education in the factory school, and worker representation on the committee for injury compensations.⁴⁹ In an article based on data contained in a typed list bearing the stamp of the Putilov

⁴⁸ Putilovtsy v 1905 g., p. 61.

⁴⁹ For a complete list of demands and concessions, see Gordon, Arkhiiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, 137-138; Kats and Milonov, pp. 121-122.

factory and compiled not later than 15 August 1905, B. Romanov describes the measures taken by the factory administration after the January strike to redress the workers' grievances. The factory claimed to have spent well over 250,000 rubles on such things as the payment of compensation to workers for days on strike, the construction of medical and educational facilities, and improvements in sanitation.⁵⁰ The workers returned to their jobs, but sporadic disturbances continued.

On the morning of 31 January, the Putilov workers learned of tsar Nicholas' command to establish the Shidlovskii Commission to determine the causes of worker discontent and to devise the means to eliminate them. Although elections to the Commission were not to be held until 13 February, the announcement to determine causes of discontent "without delay" was interpreted as an invitation to hold elections without delay. Russkie vedomosti contained the following item on 1 February:

On 31 January the police proposed to the large number of workers gathered in front of the Putilov plant to elect deputies then and there to take part in a special commission formed by sovereign command to determine the causes of workers' discontent The workers pointed out that they had already chosen representatives for talks with the factory management and that they could not hold new elections for lack of suitable premises, the factory being closed. ⁵¹

⁵⁰ B. Romanov, "Putilovskii zavod v ianvare-avguste 1905 g: v osvechchenii zavodskoi administratskii", Krasnaia letopis', 1925, no. 3, pp. 175-176.

⁵¹ Quoted in Schwarz, p. 89; also cited in Putilovtsy v 1905 g., p. 62.

The Putilov workers eventually held elections on 6 February, and at the same time drew up a list of demands to be presented to the Commission which essentially repeated and elaborated those already made to the plant director. Difficulties over elections to the Shidlovskii Commission, which in the end never materialized, resulted in several strikes at the Putilov Works throughout February. Because of this, notification of the closing of the plant for "an indefinite length of time" was given on 21 February.⁵²

Disturbances continued throughout the year.⁵³ There was a factory-wide strike on 2 April in protest of the deaths of two workers and injuries to nine others caused by the collapse of a crane in one of the workshops. On 20 April employees of the mechanical workshop struck for a twenty percent wage increase. There were disruptions in certain workshops in May, and factory-wide strikes on 20 June (in protest of the dismissal of 180 smiths, after which the factory was closed — some shops remained shut for forty-three days) and on 9 July (in protest of a clash between workers and Cossack troops outside the Putilov plant on 7 July). The administration responded to these strikes with reprisals against the workers — closing down the factory for a few days, firing all the workers and rehiring only those who signed a declaration promising to behave themselves when the

⁵² LGIA, f. 1418, op. 1, d. 2.

⁵³ For more detail see Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, 138-140; Mitel'man, et al., pp. 197-304; Okun', pp. 116-130; Romanov, pp. 175-178.

factory reopened.⁵⁴ The factory archives contain one example of such a statement signed by some thirty members of the railway wagon workshop declaring:

We the undersigned, workers in the wagon shop of the Putilov Works, notify the factory administration that we will strictly observe the factory's rules of internal order in the shop, that we will not independently quit work and we will not present any more new demands to the administration of the factory. 55

In October Russia was hit by a general strike in which the Putilovites took part. On the 18th, the day after Nicholas II announced his October Manifesto, there were violent confrontations at the Putilov plant.⁵⁶ In the morning the workers in the shipbuilding and woodworking shops seized their foremen, put sacks over their heads, took them outside and dumped them in the dirt in the street. Shortly afterwards, a large crowd of workers gathered near the chapel in the courtyard and a banner reading "Glory to the Revolution" was raised. The administration called in police and soldiers to disperse the crowd and there were several injuries. On 20 October most of the Putilovites went out on strike, and the factory was closed.

54 Notices dated 21 February, 3 April, and 18 May announcing the closing of the factory and dismissal of the workers are available in LGIA, f. 1418, op. 1, d. 2. Romanov notes two positive actions taken by the administration in response to these disturbances: certain grants-in-aid were given to those workers who were known to the administration as "peaceful and truly needy elements"; on 25 July a free cafeteria was opened, and the lunch hour was somewhat lengthened. Romanov, p. 176.

55 LGIA, f. 1418, op. 1, d. 3.

56 Krasnyi putilovets, pp. 72-73.

Lockouts were difficult times for the majority of Putilov workers. Rents could not be paid and apartments were lost. Even money for food ran short. Many workers were forced to leave the area — those who could, returned to the countryside, others less fortunate, looked for new jobs elsewhere in the capital.⁵⁷ On 21 December management announced that "in view of the complete impossibility of carrying on work because of all kinds of misbehaviour on the part of the current work force" the factory was to be shut down.⁵⁸ The lockout lasted three weeks, and then management accepted the return of a much smaller number of workers, and only those whose records showed they were not trouble-makers. Shop supervisors were asked to draw up lists of the surnames and numbers of those workers whom they considered reliable and a separate list for those who were not, in order to aid the rehiring process.⁵⁹

The conclusion of the Moscow general strike on 19 December has been singled out as the turning point of the 1905 Revolution, the point at which this revolution ceased to be an actual threat to the government.⁶⁰ The authorities had launched their counter-attack; the lockout of 21 December represented the Putilov management's switch to the offensive.

57 Memoirs of Stankevich, Putilovtsy v 1905 g., p. 37.

58 Krasnyi putilovets, p. 76.

59 Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 153.

60 Harcave, pp. 242-243.

When rehiring was concluded at the end of the lockout, only 8,172 of the more than 13,500 workers employed previously were taken on again.⁶¹ The Putilov management continued to follow this policy of deliberate underemployment and mass firings in response to worker disturbances for the next few years. For example, on 1 August 1906, the metal workers union paper carried the following item:

The administration of the Putilov Works has decided to clear the plant of undesirable elements. Beginning in June and continuing to the present time there has been an intensification of dismissals from the factory, especially in the railway wagon department. The administration acts decisively, and in answer to all worker protests and petitions, sings the same tune: "Gentlemen, the Ministry has no money and willy-nilly we have to cut down production". Doing their best to find a way out of this difficult situation for themselves and for their comrades already dismissed, the workers petitioned the director to permit them — on the example of other factories — to work in shifts for three or four days per week, or simply to give them the right to divide the work among themselves until it would be done. The administration answered everything, and answered with a refusal⁶²

A year later the paper contained a report which began:

Our workers in the new shipbuilding shop are working real wonders. God made thirty days in the month but our workers have up to forty. They are working day and night while beyond the factory gates there are thousands of their unemployed and hungry comrades ... I had the opportunity to speak with some fairly developed members of the union about this, and to the question "why do you work overtime?", I received one answer — because the administration had threatened to fire them otherwise.⁶³

61 Putilovskiy v 1905 g. p. 65.

62 "Khronika rabotnogo dvizheniya", Rabochii po metallu, no. 1 (August 1907), pp. 5-6.

63 "Rabochie dvizheniya v Peterburge", Rabochii po metallu, no. 9 (August 1907), p. 10.

The industrial crisis which lasted through the decade intensified the workers' hardships. Orders at the factory fell off and unemployment increased. Wages also fell steadily throughout this period (by 1909 they were as much as fifty percent lower than the 1905 average).⁶⁴ There were a few localized and short-lived strikes at the factory in 1906 and 1907, but the labour force was soon subdued by the mass lay-offs which continued over the next two years. The workers who remained at the factory were "forced to knuckle down" and submit to all kinds of treatment from the foremen under the threat of losing their livelihood. One employee of the steam engine mechanical workshop, corresponding with the union newspaper in 1908, described the situation in his workshop in these times of industrial crisis as unbearable. The shop foreman treated the workers rudely, and arbitrarily lowered the rates for their products from seventy-five to forty kopeks per piece, answering the workers' protests with the threat: "Times change, people change. Many of your brothers are outside the gates".⁶⁵

In summary, the Putilov workers won few concrete improvements from the Revolution of 1905. The factory administration did allow some worker representation on certain committees (such as the injury compensation committee), and some

64 V.G. Cherevkev, Zheleznyi gorod. Zavod "Krasnyi putilovets", (Moscow, 1927), p. 8.

65 A.B. in "Mestnaia khronika", Vestnik rabochikh po obrabotke metallov, no. 3 (1908), p. 12.

economic improvements, and did take measures to improve the sanitary conditions and medical and educational facilities of the plant. But certain fundamental economic demands (the eight-hour day, sufficient wage increases) were not met, and the workers were effectively subdued by management's counter-measures after 1905. On the other hand, the February campaign around the Shidlovskii Commission popularized the idea of workers' representation in factories and paved the way for the creation of trade unions.⁶⁶ A permanent factory commission of worker representatives was created at the Putilov Works where it "directed the strike struggle of the workers, drew up the demands [presented] in their name to the factory management, took part in clearing up conflicts between workers and owners, gave material help to strikers and their families."⁶⁷

Moreover, the multitude of strikes, following no pattern and usually spontaneous, which were unleashed in 1905 helped to impress the "strike habit" on the Putilov workers.

⁶⁶ Schwarz, p. 126. The metal workers trade union came into existence in April 1906. It had representatives from each raion but was strikingly more successful in the Vyborg, Vasilostrov and Neva raions than the Narva raion where the Putilov Works was located. The following membership figures were obtained for the Narva raion as a whole from the union papers:

date	number of members	Narva membership as percentage of whole
15 July 1906	650	6.8
1 Jan. 1908	695	7.4
1 Jan. 1909	697	9.8

See Rabochii po metallu, no. 1 (August 1906), p. 5; Edinstvo, no. 1 (February 1907), pp. 13-14.

The size of the factory, the pre-eminent role of its work force in the events leading to Bloody Sunday and the continued disturbances at the plant throughout 1905, attracted the revolutionaries. Although small in number, they in turn promoted the state-of-mind conducive to strikes, violence and armed uprising and provided men capable of taking over the leadership of disturbances once they broke out.

W. Sablinsky contends that the revolutionary parties won over a reasonably large following among the workers during 1905.⁶⁸ Many at the Putilov Works were attracted to Bolshevism rather than Menshevism because, in Schwarz' words, "of the two rival factions in the RSDRP, it seemed the more radical, the more decisive, the more 'revolutionary' The most dedicated, the most active young Social Democrats became Bolsheviks".⁶⁹ Even though the most radical elements were dismissed from the Putilov labour force after 1905, the experiences of that year were not forgotten. Although interested in economic gains rather than political power, at this stage, these Putilov workers bore little resemblance to the acquiescent labour force of their parents' generation.

67 Kats and Milonov, pp. 22-23.

68. Sablinsky, p. 282.

69 Schwarz, p. ix.

Growth and Development, 1910-1916

As we have seen, the general industrial depression affecting the Putilov Works lasted till the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Beginning in 1910-1911, however, the Russian economy began to recover, and in the succeeding years it enjoyed a new upsurge. Western and Soviet historians agree on this phenomenon although they draw different conclusions from it. While the latter consider the economic spurt the major objective factor underlying the revival of the Russian labour movement and the recovery of the Bolshevik Party that they perceive in these years, the former tend to see in Russia's economic development before the war a factor making for social and political stabilization. For example, Alexander Gerschenkron, although conceding that the workers' strike movement gained momentum after April 1912, asserts that the economic position of the working class was clearly improving, and "in the resurgence of the strike movement, economic problems seemed to predominate".¹

Soviet periodization of the pre-war labour movement offers two schemes. Stalinist historians pinpoint 1912 and the Lena goldfields massacre as the source of the new revolutionary upsurge in the workers' movement which, dominated by a mature, "class conscious", hereditary proletariat,

1 A. Gerschenkron, "Problems and Patterns of Russian Economic Development", in The Transformation of Russian Society, p. 60. See also, Haimson, Slavic Review, XXIII, no. 4, 632-634.

hardened by the experience of the Revolution of 1905 and directed by the Bolshevik Party, grew majestically month-by-month and day-by-day, steadily becoming more political in character and more revolutionary in temper. The second (1953) edition of Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia notes the new outbreak of revolutionary struggle which began at the Putilov Works in 1912, and the leading role played by J.V. Stalin who "worked closely" with the Petersburg Bolsheviks.²

Post-Stalin Soviet historians look further back, to 1910, for the end of the period of "cruel reaction" and the beginning of the revival of the workers' movement. The third (1970) edition of the Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia makes no mention at all of the presence of Stalin on the scene. And the third (1961) edition of Mitel'man, Glebov and Ul'ianskii's Istoriia Putilovskogo zavoda changes the dates of Chapter Six: "Revolutionary Revival" from "1912-1914", as in the first (1939) and second (1941) editions, to "1910-1914". The outbreak of war in 1914 is seen as temporarily retarding the inevitable outcome of the class struggle. Of the two Soviet periodization schemes, the Stalinist one seems to be the more valid: economic revival at the Putilov Works dates from 1910, but the strike movement did not pick up seriously until 1912.

The general revival of the Russian economy and the new period of rapid industrialization, which began about

² See entry on Kirovskii zavod, Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 2nd ed. Vol. 21, pp. 126-129.

1909-1910, had a favourable impact on the Putilov Works, providing it with home markets and new orders. For example, from January 1910 to September 1911, the fifth shipbuilding and excavator department received enough large orders to keep it operating at full capacity for three or four years. Also in 1910 the Putilov Works railroad department was awarded contracts for the construction of bridges for the Volga railway line, and another order, transferred from the Petersburg Metal Works, for metal girders to be used in a railroad bridge across the Neva. The overall value of these iron constructions reached some 2.5 million rubles in 1912. This helped to make up for cutbacks in the department's production of steam engines, which was also offset by the growth of railway wagon construction. From 1911 to 1914 the value of the wagon department's annual output (which included artillery crates and other military equipment, as well as rail cars) increased from 1.5 million to 3.5 million rubles, while the department's work force expanded from five hundred to 1,700 in one year, 1911.³

The government's military departments continued to patronize the Putilov Works, placing orders for various calibre howitzers, gun carriages, shells, etc., worth close to ten million rubles, and also valuable orders for a cruiser, a torpedo boat and several life-boats, over 1910-1911. In 1911 the Putilov Works Company contracted to supply the Russian Shipbuilding Company with several gun-boat parts

3 Krasnyi putilovets, pp. 21-23; Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, pp. 157-159.

valued at 8.56 million rubles.

As a result of the tremendous surge in shipbuilding, excavator and bridge construction, and wagon and military production in 1910-1911, the Putilov plant was soon operating at full capacity. Plans for expansion were undertaken, starting with the metallurgical department which supplied metal goods to the factory's other departments. In 1912-1913 renovations there, costing close to three million rubles, included significant improvements in the Martin workshop, the iron-rolling mill and the steel-rolling mill, and the construction of a copper foundry. Output of the metallurgical department increased significantly — from one million puds of goods in 1905-1906 to three million in 1912-1913 and six million in 1914-1915. It comprised fourteen percent of the factory's total output in 1913, as opposed to nine percent in 1902.⁴

Financing for the complete renovation of the factory was obtained from the Russo-Asiatic Bank, at the price of a certain loss of the Putilov Company's autonomy. Moreover, investment and technological agreements were concluded with the French firm of "Paul Girard"; and Putilov metallurgical engineers visited "Krupp" and other firms in Germany in order to familiarize themselves with the production of artillery and various types of military equipment at these factories. These, and other international dealings of the

⁴ Krasnyi putilovets, p. 21; Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 2-10, p. 160.

Putilov Company, were denounced as treason by some Soviet writers immediately after the war. Later Soviet historians concluded that they merely constitute evidence of the fact that the Putilov Works was becoming part of a giant international trust.⁵

Expansion of the artillery department was begun in 1910. The gun workshop, the gun carriage - shell shop and the new shell workshop were enlarged and re-equipped, and a gun turret shop was added. By 1913 the productive capacity of the artillery department had doubled. Russia's entry into the war the next year resulted in further development of this department. The existing workshops were expanded again, and several other shops, for example the Bessemer shop and the steam assembly shop, were converted for military production. Construction of an instruments workshop was begun in 1915 but the shop was not completed until 1926. The following table illustrates the artillery department's growth, in value of output and relative weight in the total factory output, over these years:⁶

Table IV: Output of Artillery Department.

YEAR	1909	1913	1914	1916
Value of Output in Millions of Rubles	1.97	10.43	15.	49.
Output as Percentage of Total Factory Output	10%	40-45%	50%	70%

⁵ See Stolpianskii, pp. 156-157; Kruze, p. 42.

⁶ Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, p. 162.

The location of the Putilov Works at the junction of sea, river, and railway routes, and the fact that N.I. Putilov had had a small port dug out for the factory in the 1870's, encouraged the company to expand its shipbuilding activities. The Putilov Company had held some discussions in this area with English firms as early as 1907, however it was not until 1911-1912 that they successfully came to an agreement with the German firm of "Blum and Foss". On the insistence of the Russo-Asiatic Bank and its French financial backers, "Blum and Foss" was not allowed to contribute any financing to the project of constructing and equipping the new "Putilov Docks". Its activities were limited to the technical sphere.

In August 1912 the Putilov Works Company authorized an immediate start on excavations for basins and canals and on raising the surrounding territory which was intended as the site of the Dock's workshops. The job was contracted out to the Dutch firm "Ackerman and Van Goren" for 2.5 million rubles. The Putilov factory produced the necessary iron constructions itself, under the supervision of "Blum and Foss" engineers and foremen. Construction was accelerated after the factory received orders for six more torpedo boats and another two cruisers in 1912 and 1913. By 1914 three workshops, an open building slip and a covered slip had been completed, at a cost of approximately fifteen million rubles.⁷

⁷ Zhukovskii quotes the cost of "materials" for the Putilov Docks at 14,878,380 rubles by 1 January 1915, Problemy marksizma, nbs. 9-10, p. 166. In Krasnyi putilovets the Putilov Works Co. Continued on next page:

Between 1910 and 1917 the Putilov Works Company expended about thirty-six million rubles on expansion and renovation of the factory's existing facilities, the construction of new workshops, and the Putilov Docks. During that time, only about thirteen million rubles were raised through the issue of new shares. The remainder was obtained through various credit arrangements, which left the company in a rather precarious financial position.⁸ Because of the importance of the Putilov plant's contribution to Russia's war effort, the government was particularly concerned that it maintain quick and efficient production. In the summer of 1915 the government ordered a review of the factory's productivity and the company's financial situation, and in January of the next year, six government agents became full directors of the Putilov Works Company. These were preliminary moves to government sequestration of the factory which occurred on 27 February 1916, — the final stage in factory ownership before the Revelutions of 1917.

On the whole, the years 1910 to 1917 were ones of considerable growth at the Putilov Works. The number of workers, not including employees of the Putilov Docks, soared from roughly ten thousand in 1911 to almost thirty thousand in January 1917. The value of buildings, equipment and other fixed capital, again not including the Docks, more than doubled over a shorter period, increasing from 17,064,636

⁷ is estimated to have spent "more than fifteen million rubles to build the Docks", p. 20.

⁸ Krasnyi putilovets, p. 25.

rubles in 1910 to 34,859,740 rubles by 1915. The following figures indicate an equally impressive rate of growth of output:⁹

Table V: Value of Output of Putilov Works, 1911-1915.

YEAR	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915
Output in Million Rubles	17.476	22.718	25.370	31.959	47.734

By the end of 1916 the Putilov Works was a huge and successful industrial enterprise employing the largest single labour force in the country. Economically speaking, its future seemed relatively secure. But in February 1917, Petrograd erupted in a popular revolution of which the Putilov workers, as in 1905, were an effective force.

* * *

The Fundamental Laws, promulgated in 1906 to provide the framework of Russia's new political system, gave the workers the right to vote in elections to the State Duma, a body which was to have true legislative function. The workers were not given the right to hold meetings or demonstrations, however, nor were they permitted their own political party.¹⁰ Trade unions were explicitly forbidden from

9 Statistics are from Zhukovskii, Problemy marksizma, nos. 9-10, pp. 166-167.

10 Kruze, pp. 96-98.

interfering in internal factory affairs, particularly in the areas of hiring, firing, and wages, by points six and seven of the government's "Industrial Regulations".¹¹ In 1914 the relationship between factory administration and the labour force was similar to what it had been at the turn of the century. Management retained absolute authority in factory life, with the power to fine or fire workers at its discretion. Letters from Putilov employees to the newspapers of the metal workers union regularly complained of the harshness and arbitrariness of workshop foremen, not only in punitive measures, but in their day-to-day dealings with the workers as well.¹² As always, foremen were especially despised for their rudeness and imperiousness.

Indeed, there had not been many improvements in the conditions of factory labour over the years. In fact, the rapid growth of the Putilov work force after 1910 resulted in serious overcrowding which, along with the inexperience of many of the new workers, contributed to increases in the number of industrial accidents and mutilations. The overcrowding also had an adverse effect on sanitary conditions at the plant, and contributed to the spread of disease.¹³

11 Ibid., pp. 99-100.

12 For example, see "Mestnaia khronika" columns in Vestnikh rabochikh po obrabotke metalla, no. 3 (1908), p. 12; Edinstvo, no. 2 (March 1909), p. 15; Metallist, no. 1 (April 1913), pp. 14-15. The growth of trade unions and the popularity of worker newspapers, along with some labour legislation did offer the labour force some protection through publicity.

13 Gaz., p. 20.

Activities in the factory were run according to a strict regimen. The workers had to show identification tickets to get onto the factory grounds, and special passes were required to move around once inside.¹⁴ Loud whistles sounded the beginning and end of the work day. The workers were supervised closely throughout the day; their presence in the shops recorded on large boards on which the numbers of those at work were posted. Two minutes before the whistle sounded to mark the end of a shift, these boards were made accessible to the workers who, after gathering up their tools, washing their hands and changing their clothes, then removed their numbers from the board and left the workshops. Worried by the sight of crowds of workers appearing at the entrance-gate office before the end of their shift in February 1914, the director issued a circular instructing all foremen and other supervisory personnel to take immediate firm measures to halt the departure of workers from the shops before the whistle.¹⁵

In 1910 the work day in Russia had been limited to ten hours, but with the great increase in orders at the Putilov Works over 1910-1914, the factory began to demand overtime from much of its labour force. By 1912, many Putilovites were working the equivalent of forty to forty-five days a month.¹⁶ As mentioned above, Russia's factory

14 LGIA, f. 1418, op. 1, ed. khran. 4.

15 LGIA, f. 1418, op. 1, ed. khran. 8.

16 Kruze, p. 121.

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owners had complete autonomy in the field of wages. At a conference of the Petersburg Society of Factory and Mill Owners, meeting in 1912, all motions dealing with the establishment of a minimum wage had been turned down. In January 1914 the average daily wage at the Putilov Works was 2.20 rubles, an increase of only .35 kopeks over the 1901 average daily wage. Salaries of metal workers in the artillery department were the highest in the factory (averaging 3.15 rubles a day), but the workers complained that their wages were lower than those received at other large factories.¹⁷ Moreover, the nineteen percent increase in average wages between 1901 and 1914 was offset by greater increases in food prices. Based on S.G. Strumilin's figures for the cost of an unskilled Petersburg worker's monthly requirements of bread, grain, meat, fat, potato and sugar, the worker faced a sixteen percent increase in food costs between 1911 and 1914 alone.¹⁸

After Russia's entry into the war, conditions at the Putilov Works deteriorated further. The labour force grew to almost twenty-five thousand in January 1916 and almost thirty thousand by the end of that year, intensifying

17 See Metallist, no. 7 (September 1913), p. 14.

18 S.G. Strumilin, (ed.), Materialy po statistike truda severnoi oblasti, (Petrograd, 1918), pp. 61-62. If Strumilin's monthly food cost figures are compared with those obtained by the War Ministry's 1902 investigation (see pages 32-33 above), the increase by 1914 is 160 percent. However, it is doubtful that the two studies were based on identical inputs, and therefore, such direct comparison may be misleading.

the overcrowding with all its attendant evils. In 1914, some eighty-three percent of the Putilov workers were ill or suffered mutilations. For the first nine months of 1915, this figure had risen to over ninety-eight percent.¹⁹ Overcrowding was aided by such things as worker inexperience, exhausting work over longer hours and decreases in the quantity and quality of available food, in producing this very high figure.

During the war Russia's economic condition deteriorated rapidly, and this, combined with an equally rapid increase in the population of the country's urban centres, resulted in critical shortages of housing, fuel and food. The growing food shortage and its consequences are graphically illustrated by the following description taken from an okhrana report on disturbances in the Putilov Works region in December 1915:

It has been observed that the women, refused meat at one butcher store, rush shouting and swearing in groups of fifty or sixty to other shops. Every day the meat sellers are subjected to more intense swearing, spitting and even attacks on their persons: 20

The workers were the hardest hit by the alarming inflation which resulted from these shortages.²¹ It has been calculated that in Petrograd in 1916 the price of food-

19 N.P. Paialin, "Putilovskii zavod v gody imperialisticheskoi voyny", Krasnaia letopis', 1932, nos. 1-2, p. 146.

20 Cited in ibid., p. 161.

21 This situation has been examined in detail by M.T. Florinsky in The End of the Russian Empire, (New Haven, Conn., 1931), pp. 157-163.

stuffs increased an average of 150 percent while the average increase in rents was 200 to 300 percent.²² Based on a study published in 1917, wages at the Putilov Works, increased approximately 107 percent over 1916.²³ Although better off than the majority of their fellow workers, wage increases did not match the rising cost of living, resulting in considerable discontent among the Putilov labour force.

As mentioned above, this labour force significantly increased in size during the economic revival and especially during the war. Implicitly supporting the Soviet contention that the Petersburg workers' movement of 1910-1917 was dominated by a hereditary, class conscious proletariat, E.E. Kruze asserts that the majority of those hired in the capital between 1909 and 1913 were experienced workers who had lost their jobs during the immediately preceding years. Kruze refers to a 1929 survey of Petrograd metal workers which revealed that only 14.5 percent of those hired between 1906 and 1913 owned land.²⁴ Nevertheless, large increases in the Putilov work force in 1914 and later meant that the factory had taken on more and more young and completely inexperienced labourers drawn from outside the city itself.²⁵ In fact, the

22 Ibid., p. 162.

23 Cited in Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', 1932, nos. 1-2, p. 177.

24 Kruze, pp. 75-76.

25 The following circular issued by the director of the Putilov plant in June 1915 illustrates the extreme to which employment of youths at the factory was carried at this time:
In view of the insufficient number of boys from 15 years of age up to staff the central and workshop offices, I give permission for these positions in the
Continued on next page.

majority were peasants who had been driven from their land in the central provinces of European Russia as a result of government agricultural legislation.²⁶ In the words of one Western historian, the Petrograd war-time labour force consisted of:

A vast mass of workers who combined with their resentments about the painful and disorienting conditions of their new industrial experience a still fresh sense of grievance about the circumstances under which they had been compelled to leave the village [and] a new generation of young workers of urban origin to lead them — impatient, romantic, singularly responsive to maximalist appeals. ²⁷

This description is particularly suited to the labour force of the huge Putilov Works, where the large numbers alone intensified the radicalism and explosiveness of the workers. Thus, it is not surprising that the strike

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- 25 offices to be filled by those aged 12 to 15 years. In order to guard their health, they will be allowed to work only the day shift and not more than 8 out of every 24 hours, with a lunch break of not less than 2 hours ...; only after attaining 15 years of age may these boys be transferred to jobs in the workshops. Shop and office foremen will be responsible for ensuring that no one under 15 years of age is employed in the shops.

IGIA, f. 1418, op. 1, d. 4. Emphasis in the original.

- 26 See Rashin, pp. 438-439. The agricultural reform legislation of 1906, 1910 and 1911, sponsored by Prime Minister P. Stolypin, was designed to break-up the peasant commune and establish a class of strong, independent, individual farmers. Stolypin's so-called 'wager on the strong' was a success to the extent that private, consolidated holdings were established by about 24 percent of formerly communal households in forty provinces of European Russia by January 1916. On the other hand, the legislation, which was complicated and often arbitrarily put into effect, deprived younger members of peasant families of all title to the land and forced them, along with the poorer peasants, to leave the countryside for the urban centres.

- 27 Haimson, Slavic Review, XXIII, no. 4, 636.

movement, which had virtually died out in the first months of the war, should flare up again as the fighting dragged on and conditions on the home front grew worse and worse.

After several relatively quiet years the Russian strike movement began to come to life again in 1911.²⁸ As noted above, the Putilov work force had been rather effectively subdued by repeated mass firings of labourers after 1908. Although the most significant worker demonstrations in the country took place in April, 1912 (in protest against the shooting of more than one hundred striking workers in the Lena goldfields), the Putilovites began the year with a strike early in February. Once re-awakened, the old habit proved impossible to halt. Calculations of the number of strikes at the Putilov Works and Docks between February 1912 and August 1914 range from 85 to 108.²⁹ By breaking down the number of strikes into those of an "economic" and those of a "political" nature (in an effort to show a steady increase in

28 1908 to 1911 were the years of relative calm in the Russian strike movement. Haimson quotes the following statistical aggregates of strikes in factories covered by factory inspection for the period 1905-1914:

Year	No. of Strikes	Year	No. of Strikes
1905	13,995	1910	222
1906	6,114	1911	466
1907	3,573	1912	2,032
1908	892	1913	2,404
1909	340	1914	3,534

Haimson, Slavic Review, XXIII, no. 4, 627.

29 The figure 85 is given by Kruze, p. 323, while the larger number is put forward by Mitel'man, et al., p. 7.

the number of the latter), Soviet historians of the Putilov Works arrive at the following tabulation:³⁰

Table VI: The Strike Movement at the Putilov Works in the Pre-War Years

	1912	1913	1914 to 19 August [new style]	TOTAL
Number of strikes	16	32	60	108
economic	9	23	37	69
political	7	9	23	39
Number of strikers	74,300	100,000	210,300	385,500
economic	15,500	16,000	28,700	59,600
political	59,210	84,900	181,600	325,700

The first strike of 1912 broke out on 6 February in reaction to new factory rules requiring the workers to report at their jobs a half-hour earlier in the mornings and a half-hour earlier after the lunch break; in effect lengthening the work day. The strike, which was generally peaceful, lasted only one day, ending when the administration agreed to repeal the new rules and also to abolish the use of worker identity tickets (although this was later reinstated).³¹ Historians of the Putilov Works claim that Putilovites took part in the general political demonstrations which followed

³⁰ This chart is displayed in the Museum of the Kirov Works, I.I. Gaz Palace of Culture, Leningrad.

³¹ Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, pp. 140-141; Kasparov in Krasnyi putilovets, p. 79.

the Lena fields massacre,³² and it is most probable that many did, despite an okhrana report of 16 April which stated that workers at the city's largest enterprises, including the Putilov Works, kept order in their factories.³³

On 1 May 1912, several thousand Putilov workers marched from the factory, "singing revolutionary songs and carrying red flags", to the Narva gate, where they were dispersed by the police.³⁴ Another "political" strike was called on 5 October to protest the government's disenfranchisement of the Putilov workers in elections to the Fourth Duma. The okhrana reported that 9,000 of the factory's 11,500 day-shift workers and all the night-shift workers quietly left their jobs and went home in an orderly manner. On the morning of 6 October, the disturbance intensified, however. Workers in the gun workshop refused to take up their jobs and began spreading out over the factory calling on their fellow workers to strike. A noisy crowd of several thousand gathered outside the shops, and several groups were heard singing such revolutionary songs as the Marseillaise. The crowd was dispersed by mounted police but the entire Putilov work force went out on strike for the remainder of the day.³⁵

32 Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, p. 141; Krasnyi putilovets, p. 180.

33 See Document no. 4 in Rabochee dvizhenie v Petrograde v 1912-1917 gg. Dokumenty i materialy, (Leningrad, 1958), p. 33. The okhrana writer admits that "it is highly possible that the workers even of these industrial enterprises could express their protest with a one-day strike any day".

34 Kruze, pp. 251-252.

35 Rabochee dvizhenie, pp. 66-67.

There were many other localized and short-lived strikes, lasting from fifteen minutes to several hours, in various workshops throughout the year. The workers demanded such things as wage increases, dismissal of an unpopular worker (the administration complied), and the hiring of more workers.³⁶ On 5 November ninety-three employees of the railway wagon department refused to work, ostensibly to protest a fifteen percent decrease in wage rates. According to the okhrana, however, the workers really hoped to lose their jobs so that they could apply for work at another factory which was expanding its business. All the strikers were fired.³⁷

Among the material on the Putilov Works in the Leningrad State Archives is a typed list of the dates, number of participants and demands of, and administration responses to strikes at the factory from January to August 1913.³⁸ The list is not dated and bears no identification other than the factory stamp. According to this list the following strikes were held for wage increases and other "economic" demands: 19 to 22 April, a strike by 600 employees of the forge workshop (after which the shop was closed until 7 May); 25 to 27 April, by 154 painters from the wagon shop (this strike was not completely "liquidated" until 31 July); 29 and 30 April, 202 boiler shop employees left their jobs (the strikers were

36 Gordon, Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, pp. 141-142.

37 Cited in ibid., p. 142.

38 LGIA, f. 1418, op. 5, d. 5.

fired and work was not resumed until 7 May); 3, 4, 6 and 7 May, 185 stokers (the strike was liquidated on 12 May); 10 to 13 June, 423 copper-smiths (the strikers were fired but some were later permitted to return to work under the pre-strike conditions); and 9 to 15 July, 109 employees of the new Martin steel workshop (the majority of the strikers were fired and work was resumed on 8 August). Firing the strikers and temporarily closing down the troubled workshop or department were the tactics most frequently adopted by the administration in response to worker disturbances. The list also identifies "political" strikes of 7,509 workers on 9 January; 6,999 workers from 14 to 17 January (after the beating of an arrested worker by police); 1,540 workers on 4 April (in commemoration of the Lena goldfields massacre); and of 8,404 workers on 1 May. According to the list, the administration took no measures in response to these disturbances.

Besides listing numerous other smaller strikes for economic improvements at the factory in 1913, Soviet historians elaborate on the 9 January, April and 1 May strikes, emphasizing their revolutionary character and the role of the Bolsheviks in organizing them.³⁹ In January and May the strikes lasted several days and were marked by large gatherings of workers (at which revolutionary songs were sung and which had to be dispersed by the police), and numerous arrests.⁴⁰

³⁹ See Gordon, Arkhiiv istorii truda v Rossii, XI-XII, pp. 142-143; Krasnyi putilovets, p. 81; Kruze, pp. 281-282; Mitelman, et al., pp. 475-480.

⁴⁰ This description of May events is corroborated by an okhrana report. See Rabochee dvizhenie, p. 105.

The April strike of the poorly paid painters of the wagon department was apparently initiated by Putilov Bolsheviks who guaranteed the painters the support of all the neighbouring workshops. Their strike for a thirty percent wage increase lasted eighty-eight days and caused rather considerable losses to the factory. The administration was forced to satisfy the painters' demands when the strike threatened to spread through the whole wagon department.

In 1912-1913 the Bolsheviks established a fairly well-organized group of party members at the Putilov plant.

According to E.E. Kruze:

At the Putilov Works ... were concentrated the most revolutionary of the underground forces; those who filled the city and regional organizations. From this source the party drew cadres for all forms of revolutionary work in all regions of the capital. ⁴¹

Wherever Bolsheviks were present in the factory they carried on Bolshevik agitation and propaganda, distributing their party leaflets, proclamations and brochures and engaging their fellow workers in political discussions. ⁴²

Generally speaking, many of the party's underground organizations were penetrated by agents of the secret police, and their ranks were often seriously depleted by arrests during this time. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks began to win the support of politically minded workers and to usurp control of

⁴¹ Kruze, p. 155.

⁴² See I.M. Frantishëv, Leningradskie kranostroiteli, (Leningrad, 1962), p. 57, for the author's recollections of such activities in the gun workshop.

the labour organizations from the Mensheviks. In late August 1913 the Bolsheviks took over the Petersburg metal workers' union. In fact, Lenin's party proved more able than any other to capitalize on the growing bitterness, alienation and explosiveness of the Petersburg workers from 1912 till the outbreak of war. The maximalist slogans especially appealed to the Putilov labour force consisting as it did of a combination of skilled and unskilled, experienced and inexperienced, but dissatisfied and radical workers.⁴³

This is not to say that by mid-1914 the majority of the Putilov workers had become Bolshevik followers or "conscious proletarians" dedicated to the political class struggle and the overthrow of the autocracy. However, the continuing deterioration of their living and working conditions and the sustained barrage of political propaganda from Putilov Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries certainly contributed to a growing dissatisfaction with the régime and an intensification of the radical mood of the majority. As indicated in Table VI above, the number and size of strikes at the Putilov Works continued to increase until the summer of 1914. Leopold Haimson provides the best general description of the mood of Petersburg workers and the direction their movement was taking at this time:

It appears that from the Lena massacre to the outbreak of war, the progress of the strike movement was characterized by an almost continuous flow in which political and economic currents were inextric-

⁴³ Haimson, Slavic Review, XXIII, no. 4, 637.

ably mixed: quite often, even the ostensible objectives of individual strikes combined political and economic demands; and even more notably, the individual waves of "economic" strikes and "political" strikes and demonstrations proved mutually reinforcing, each seemingly giving the next additional impetus, additional momentum. By the beginning of the summer of 1914, contemporary descriptions of the labor scene forcibly suggest, the workers, especially in Petersburg, were displaying a growing spirit of buntarstvo — of violent if still diffuse opposition to all authority — and an instinctive sense of class solidarity, as they encountered the repressive measures of state power and what appeared to them the indifference of privileged society.⁴⁴

This mood for revolt and feeling of class solidarity found widespread expression in July 1914. On the evening of 3 July a workers' meeting in protest against the brutal police suppression of a strike in the Baku oil fields, was held in the courtyard of the Putilov factory.⁴⁵ According to an okhrana report, some one thousand workers had gathered in the yard by 6:00 p.m., and were singing a revolutionary song. The okhrana report continued that after an unsuccessful attempt to disperse the crowd, the police agents present were bombarded with stones (one suffered a slight hand injury), to which they responded by firing several shots into the air.⁴⁶ The next day, the Petersburg daily Russkie vedomosti gave a rather different account of events, however. According to that newspaper:

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 629.

⁴⁵ Balabanov contends that the original protest meeting called for 1 July was dispersed by shouts of "police" from protectors, p. 313.

⁴⁶ See Rabochee dvizhenie, p. 213.

Before the end of the [Putilov workers'] meeting, a large detachment of police, both mounted and on foot, which had been secreted outside the factory since morning, came up to the plant. The police officers demanded that the workers disperse immediately. However, the factory gates were locked. The workers began to get worried. There was a skirmish. Two workers were killed, and about fifty people were wounded, some seriously. The wounded were picked up and carried to the factory hospital, the rest scattered through the workshops. Those workers who fell into the hands of the police were arrested and sent into a factory cordon. In all, 150 were arrested 47.

Word of the shooting at the Putilov Works spread through the factory district and the city overnight, and the next day, 4 July, between seventy and ninety thousand Petersburg labourers went out on strike.⁴⁸ The Putilov workers appeared at their shops on the morning of 5 July but the majority refused to begin work. In some workshops arguments started up over whether or not to continue the strike. The arguments became violent and three middle-aged men were injured by stones thrown by fellow workers.⁴⁹ Because of the seriousness of these and other disturbances, the factory administration ordered the plant closed.

Meanwhile, the strike continued to spread through the city as more and more workers were persuaded to support their fellows already on strike. On 7 July approximately 110,000 were refusing to work and a few days later this number

47 Quoted in Balabanov, p. 314.

48 The okhrana claimed 70,937 strikers while the workers' paper Trudovaya pravda put the figure at 89,744. Ibid., p. 314.

49 See okhrana report of 5 July in Rabochee dvizhenie, p. 220.

had increased to 117,000 according to official estimates.⁵⁰ The most serious clashes between the workers and police, Cossacks and troops occurred from 9 to 12 July. Peaceful demonstrations spontaneously turned into violent skirmishes when they ran up against police repression. The strikers stopped trams and built barricades out of overturned tram cars, wagons, telephone and telegraph poles etc., and hurled rocks at the police from behind them. Around the Putilov factory, young workers stretched thin steel wires across the roads between telegraph poles and toppled the mounted police patrolling the area.⁵¹ The violence peaked on 12 July and gradually died out, despite the appearance of a manifesto mimeographed on that day by young Bolsheviks who rebelled against the line adopted by the Petersburg Party Committee by issuing this call for an armed uprising.⁵² By 15 July order had been restored in Petersburg's factory districts. On 17 July the Putilov Works was reopened — just two days before the outbreak of war.

During the first months of the war the Russian public, including most of the labour class, rallied to the defense of the country and the support of the régime. The Putilov Works, as noted above, received tremendous new orders

50 Ibid., p. 226. These figures are probably low.

51 M. Mitelman and Glebov, "'Putilovets' v gody imperialisticheskoi voyny", Bor'ba klassov, 1934, no. 9, p. 38. See also T. Shatilova, "Rabochee dvizhenie v Peterburge v 1914 g - do voyny", Krasnaya letopis', 1927, no. 1, pp. 165-166.

52 See Haimson, Slavic Review, XXIII, no. 4, 641.

and considerably expanded its labour force. The workers' strike movement died out, dissatisfaction replaced by patriotic fervour for the time being. The rest of 1914 passed calmly at the plant. According to official reports, only 160 of 3,500 employees of the Putilov Docks held a day-long strike on 9 January 1915, while work at the Putilov factory was not disrupted at all.⁵³ In May the okhrana assessed the mood of the Putilov labour force in these words:

The most developed and conscious elements of Petrograd were gathered among the workers of the Putilov factory, ... before the war it stood at the head of the workers' movement in Petrograd. From the moment war was declared against Germany and Austria, the majority of worker-Putilovites underwent a sharp change, and patriotic feelings overcame socialist persuasions. Of course, with the passing of time this patriotic feeling has decreased significantly in comparison with July 1914 [i.e. immediately after the outbreak of war], but fairness demands mention of the unquestioning loyalty of the Putilov workers who did not even participate in such age-old traditional worker demonstrations as 1 May and the anniversary of 9 January.⁵⁴

It was not long, however, before the combination of deteriorating working and living conditions, the revival of the revolutionary parties and the war itself resulted in new outbreaks of worker dissatisfaction and a resumption of the strike movement at many factories in the capital. The growth and development of the strike movement at the Putilov Works from the spring of 1915 till February 1917 will be traced below.

⁵³ See okhrana report in Rabochee dvizhenie, pp. 286-287. Although 225 Docks employees struck in the morning, 65 of those returned to their jobs after lunch.

⁵⁴ Quoted by N.P. Paialin in "Putilovskii zavod v 1917 godu", Krasnaia letopis', 1932, no. 3, p. 147.

One strain on the relation between Putilov workers and management grew from the widespread workers' conviction, whether held rightly or wrongly, that the management was in the hands of Germans and Jews, who were actually sabotaging, or preparing to sabotage, the war effort.⁵⁵ An okhrana report described this situation as follows:

After the German declaration of war on Russia many alien subjects were removed from the works. In spite of this, relations between the workers and the German management (i.e. directors of German descent) continued to deteriorate. The workers became particularly critical of all administrative arrangements at the factory, suspecting evil intent on the part of foreigners wishing to harm the interests of Russia. The workers knew all about the malpractices of the works management and were so moved by patriotic feeling that disturbances might have occurred at any time. Thus, having learnt that the strike which broke out at the Putilov dockyard at the beginning of the war had been provoked by the former director, the German Orbanovsky, the workers warned the management that should any of the directors who were German subjects, including Orbanovsky himself, turn up at the works, they would be killed. After most influential German subjects had been dismissed from the works, production was speeded up, but some time later the fulfilment of war orders was again delayed for some reason or another. In view of this, the works management was allowed to retain those workers indispensable to production. Taking advantage of this permission, however, it started exempting from conscription not those workers who were really useful in the factory, but those whom it favoured, who were not of great use. This led to a shortage of qualified labour and further delays in the fulfillment of orders, however urgent.⁵⁶

At first, the workers' discontent seems to have been rooted in economic demands and excessive patriotic zeal. In June, ninety of 395 brick-layers in the building shop

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 154-155.

⁵⁶ Quoted in G. Katkov, Russia 1917. The February Revolution, (New York, 1967) pp. 89-90.

went out on strike demanding a wage increase to two rubles per day. The administration fired the strikers but it could not reverse the tide. From August 1915, new waves of strikes and demonstrations began to flood the Putilov Works.

On the morning of 19 August, in connection with city-wide protests against the shooting of demonstrating workers in Kostroma and Ivanovo-Voznesensk, several hundred Putilov Docks workers gathered in the factory courtyard and drew up a list of demands to be satisfied before they would begin to work. These included: (i) freedom for the five Bolshevik deputies of the State Duma, (ii) a broader scope for Duma activities, (iii) removal of naturalized citizens of German and Austrian origin (from the factory management personnel), (iv) military call-up of city police and their replacement with invalids or other persons unfit for military service, (v) freedom of the press, (vi) lowering of the voting age to eighteen, and (vii) removal of the Cossack troops surrounding the factory. Threatened with being drafted into the military, the workers returned to their jobs after noon. Although short-lived, Soviet historians regard this strike as significant because it occasioned the first political demands made since the beginning of the war.⁵⁷

On 24 August some 1,300 gun shop employees declared a strike for a fifteen percent wage increase (to keep up with increases in the cost of living) to which the factory director

⁵⁷ See, for example, B. Glebov, "Putilovskie bolsheviki v gody imperialisticheskoi voyny", Krasnaia letopis', 1934, no. 2 (59), p. 62.

agreed. On the last day of the month 290 workers from the gun carriage assembly shop initiated a strike in protest against the arrest of thirty Putilovites the night before. On 1 September the new shell shop workers demanded an eight to fifteen percent raise and at 6:00 that evening about two thousand workers held a spontaneous meeting in the factory yard. According to B. Glebov, this gathering, which lasted thirty minutes, was the first major demonstration by Putilov workers since the outbreak of the war. Glebov also noted that this meeting was not dominated by the Bolsheviks; on the contrary, one of the orators moved that the Menshevik line on participation in the War Industrial Committees be adopted.⁵⁸ The meeting was eventually broken up by police agents but not before the workers had agreed to hold a three-day strike.

The next day, 2 September, some 6,264 Putilovites from several workshops were persuaded by members of the gun shop to attend another spontaneous meeting in the courtyard of the plant.⁵⁹ The following resolutions were adopted: (i) to demand the return of the five exiled Duma members (the Bolshevik deputies), (ii) to protest the proposed prorogation

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 62. The War Industrial Committees, whose purpose was the self-mobilization of industry for national defense, were established in the summer of 1915. They consisted of representatives of government departments, the Unions of Zemstvos and of Towns, management, and labour, and they enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy. The Mensheviks favoured the participation of labour in the committees, while the Bolsheviks opposed it on the ground that the proletariat must not support a bourgeois government engaged in an imperialistic war.

⁵⁹ The figure is from an okhrana report of 2 September in Rabochee dvizhenie, p. 337.

of the Duma, (iii) to protest the arrest of the Putilov workers, (iv) to protest the government's refusal to adopt measures against the selling out of the country, (v) to protest police exemption from military service, (vi) to demand the removal of the Cossacks, and (vii) to demand a fifteen percent wage increase. After adopting these resolutions the workers sang the Marseillaise and marched out into the street with cries of "Hurrah!". The next day, the entire Putilov labour force went on strike with the exception of several alleged strikebreakers who were attacked and beaten by the other workers.⁶⁰ After three days the strikers returned to their jobs.

The factory administration responded to these outbursts in a variety of ways. Virtually nothing was done to meet any worker demands, economic or political. In an effort to stimulate patriotic feelings among the workers, free, nationalistic concerts were given in the factory theatre. A live orchestra would play "God Save the Tsar", and the anthems of Russia's allies (with the exception of France's Marseillaise) before each production and during the intermissions.⁶¹ For the same purpose, a visit to the factory by Nicholas II himself was arranged in the fall of 1915. One active Bolshevik party worker employed in the railroad depart-

60 Ibid., p. 337, and Glebov, p. 63.

61 F.A. Lemeshev, "Na Putilovskom zavode v gody voyny", Krasnaia letopis, 1927, no. 2, pp. 5-6.

ment recalled the tsar's visit in these words:

The factory director, along with the board of directors, met the tsar when he descended from his salon-carriage. The tsar had arrived with his entire retinue from generals to body-guards. Walking through the factory accompanied by the generals, the tsar was met with cries of "Hurrah!" from members of the administration, but the workers were silent, although specifically readied in advance by the administration which devotedly repeated its "Hurrah!". 62

For the most part, however, the administration resorted to repressive measures such as firing all strikers, who were then drafted and sent to the front, or simply closing the factory for a short period of time, which also resulted in considerable hardship for the workers. The secret police were often invited to the factory to carry out searches and arrests among the workers. In this respect the administration was once again on the offensive, and these measures proved quite effective. Since the smallest strike could result in dire consequences for those involved, the Putilov workers were relatively quiet for the remainder of 1915, with only one small (825 participants) and short-lived strike of the tower shop metal workers on 21 November. The okhrana reported that on the evening of 8 January 1916, six or seven hundred workers gathered in the Putilov courtyard and were addressed by an unidentified orator who exhorted them to strike the next day. According to the police agent, there were shouts of "Down with the speaker" and "No need to strike". After the crowd dispersed, eight proclamations of

62 Lemeshev is quoted in Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', 1932, no. 3, p. 157.

the RSDRP were found.⁶³ However, there were no major disturbances at the Putilov Works on 9 January 1916.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, pressures on the workers continued to intensify with the increasing shortage of goods, falling wages, mounting military losses, and the continual agitation of the revolutionaries. On 3 February mechanics in the electrical workshop struck for a seventy percent wage increase. The administration refused to consider such a demand and appealed to the Commander of the Petrograd Military District, Prince Tumanov, who threatened to militarize the factory — that is, to mobilize all those of conscription age and employ them at their former jobs but as soldiers and under military discipline. By 5 February the strike had spread throughout the factory and Tumanov ordered the plant closed. The strikers were dismissed and subsequently had to report for military service. Management succeeded in reopening the plant on 9 February, but new wage strikes broke out a few days later. On the 15th director Meller announced wage increases from three to twenty-eight percent for employees of certain workshops. This encouraged other Putilovites to strike. On 22 February 1,740 gun shop workers demanded a raise, and later in the day they were joined by many from the shrapnel shop. Over the next two days Prince Tumanov ordered virtually the whole factory closed again for an "indefinite length of time". Over two thousand Putilovites were drafted; the

63 See okhrana report in Rabochee dvizhenie, p. 397.

64 Ibid., p. 398.

plant reopened about a week later.⁶⁵

The level of violence began to rise during the February strikes. On the 22nd some three thousand shrapnel shop workers met in the neighbouring tower workshop where they 'tried' their foreman S.I. Andrzhevskii, his assistant engineer N.V. Pukhal'skii and two other workers. All were found guilty of provocation and rolled out of the factory in wheelbarrows to the accompaniment of roars of laughter, whistles and hooting from the by-standers. On the 23rd engineer A.M. Maian's, who was particularly disliked for his rudeness, arrogance and "spying", was seized from the boiler shop and carried to the factory gate where he was rescued by the police. Another foreman, M.I. Galkin, sustained a face injury from a piece of ice thrown by a worker; and the female supervisor of one of the Dock's workshops was rolled out in a wheelbarrow by her totally female staff.⁶⁶ The okhrana regarded this degree of violence as "completely unexpected, and indicative of the extremely heightened nervous state of the workers".⁶⁷

Soviet historians claim that the February disturbances at the Putilov Works were directed by the Petersburg Committee

65 B.B. Grave, "Militarizatsiia promyshlennosti i rossiiskii proletariat v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny" in Iz istorii rabochego klassa i revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia, (Moscow, 1958), p. 424. Also Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', 1932, no. 3, pp. 165-169.

66 See Glebov, Krasnaia letopis', 1934, no. 2 (59), p. 71 and Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', 1932, no. 3, pp. 168-169.

67 Quoted in Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', 1932, no. 3, p. 174.

of the RSDRP.⁶⁸ A contemporary okhrana report also claimed that the workers' demands were changed from economic to political ones by the "Leninist" group or "Petersburg Committee of the RSDRP".⁶⁹ In fact, the Bolsheviks had influential opponents in the Mensheviks and other revolutionaries with whom they constantly struggled to win the allegiance of the Putilovites. The purely Bolshevik faction at the plant was quite small, was infiltrated by the secret police and was severely weakened by arrests after the February strikes.⁷⁰ Membership of the Narva raion branch of the Petersburg Committee numbered from 100 to 115 at the start of the war.⁷¹ At the end of 1915 the Bolsheviks had only approximately eighty underground workers in some fourteen Putilov workshops.

These men carried on their agitation faithfully, however. Bolshevik leaflets and proclamations appeared regularly throughout the factory — general anti-war propaganda as well as specific leaflets on the anniversaries of various important events of the workers' movement (9 January, 12 April, 1 May, etc.). Some party members distributed leaflets over-

68 For example, "From the beginning of 1916, not one factory strike, not one demonstration took place without the leadership of, or on the initiative of the Bolsheviks". Mitel'man and Glébov, Bor'ba klassov, no. 9, p. 42.

69 Rabochee dvizhenie, p. 437.

70 Paialin mentions the names of two okhrana provocateurs at the Putilov Works who received 30 rubles a month for services rendered and who were instrumental in arranging the arrests of many Putilov Bolsheviks after February 1916, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 174.

71 P. Petunin and M. Shurgin, Nash Kirovskii zavod. 1801-1951, (Leningrad, 1951), p. 32.

night to all the workbenches and tool boxes of their shop.⁷² Others would glue copies up on the walls of their shops, much to the displeasure of the foremen.⁷³ During the February strikes the number of Bolshevik party members must have increased at the factory because over one hundred Putilov Bolsheviks had been arrested by the end of the month.⁷⁴ In March, the Bolsheviks had to start more or less from scratch to build up their underground organization at the Putilov Works.

The February disturbances at the factory greatly upset the government ministries because of the importance of the plant to the Russian war effort. On 1 March 1916, the Putilov Works was sequestered and General Dubnitskii was appointed director. The rehiring of workers, which began on 5 March, was a slow process carried out under a very careful screening of each potential employee. By 14 March the labour force was up to about 19,500 according to official figures.⁷⁵ Many of the Putilov strikers had been called up for military service and sent to the front. They were replaced at the factory by approximately five thousand soldiers of the Tarutinski regiment. The soldiers wore full uniform in the factory and worked under military regulations and discipline. For the most part, they were not interested in revolutionary activities

⁷² Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 149.

⁷³ Lemeshev, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2, p. 9.

⁷⁴ Grave, p. 424.

⁷⁵ Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, pp. 175-176.

and did not wish to be involved in any conflict with the administration. Afraid of being sent to the front, they were pleased to be able to work peacefully in the factory.⁷⁶ F.A. Lemeshev, a Bolshevik employed in the rail department, described the situation in these words:

Under such conditions it was very difficult to carry on any kind of party work among them. The majority of these soldiers were poorly qualified, hailed from small peasant settlements and had never worked in a factory before. During strikes they would say, "We are now in military service, we cannot support the workers on threat of having to appear before a court martial".⁷⁷

Because of the significant presence of the soldiers (approximately twenty-five percent of the labour force), tight restrictions on admittance of persons to the factory grounds, and the fact that the administration did make some wage concessions (raises of about fifteen percent), spring and summer passed relatively quietly at the Putilov Works. Lemeshev describes a split which occurred in the Bolshevik organization in the factory at that time. One of the former Bolshevik leaders, followed by a group from the new shell workshop, decided to ally with the Mezhraiontsy.⁷⁸ Lemeshev admits that these two organizations existed simultaneously in the Narva district up till February 1917. Lemeshev directed another group which received official recognition from the

⁷⁶ Glebov, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2 (59), p. 72.

⁷⁷ Lemeshev, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2, p. 31.

⁷⁸ The Mezhraiontsy, or 'United Social-Democrats', were a small group which had existed in St. Petersburg since 1913 and claimed independence both of Mensheviks and of Bolsheviks.

Petersburg Committee. This circle, which numbered about fifteen by the end of March, turned its attention to the younger workers and was successful in organizing several "active and energetic groups" over the next few months.⁷⁹

B. Glebov described the Bolshevik appeal to young Putilov workers as follows:

During the war more young people began to enter the factories, including the Putilov Works. Their material position was much worse than the basic mass of workers The deteriorating working conditions, decreasing real wages and increasing numbers of the young people made them especially revolutionary during the war. The most advanced young workers quickly turned from spontaneous outbursts to organized activities and to participation in party work. Some went to the SR's; the majority — to the Bolsheviks. During the war the SR's had very little relevance, and the Mensheviks repulsed with their conciliatory "gradualist" tactics. In fact, only the Bolsheviks concerned themselves with the young people.⁸⁰

In October 1916 general worker discontent began to manifest itself more strongly. This was a result of growing shortages of foodstuffs such as sugar, fat and flour which disappeared completely from the Putilov cooperative store and were available elsewhere only at extremely inflated prices. On 27 October many Putilovites held a one-day strike to protest this situation, and at the same time to protest the sentencing on 26 October (for revolutionary activities) of two Putilov workers to prison.

⁷⁹ Lemeshev, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2, pp. 15-19. Lemeshev describes groups in the Docks and the shrapnel, wagon, tower, pipe, model, gun carriage, copper-rolling, boiler and new artillery workshops, naming 33 members "among others", pp. 20-21.

⁸⁰ Glebov, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2 (50), pp. 74-75.

On 2 November okhrana agents appeared at the factory's sick-funds office (Bol'nichnaia kassa), which served as a headquarters for Putilov revolutionaries and which was dominated by Bolsheviks at the time. Twenty-four of the office employees were arrested and the approximately seven hundred workers who appeared to collect their sick benefits were registered.⁸¹ This sparked calls for a general meeting which was held two days later when several thousand workers gathered at the usual place — by the chapel in the factory courtyard. According to the memoirs of one participant, the workers listened to speeches for over half an hour, until the police arrived on the scene. There followed a short skirmish between police and workers who had armed themselves with bricks, hammers, cobble-stones and anything else that was handy. No injuries were recorded and the workers managed to escape from the yard without any arrests.⁸² After this rather violent clash, the workers made a final attempt to negotiate economic demands with General Dubnitskii but he refused to discuss such matters with their representatives with the comment: "it is so much easier to have a conversation with older workers than with these young people".⁸³

81 For more information on the organization and role of the sick-funds office, see Glebov, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2 (59), pp. 66-68; Lemeshev, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2, pp. 21-26; Mitel'man and Glebov, Bor'ba klassov, no. 9, pp. 41-42.

82 A.V. Shevarits cited in Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 184.

83 Lemeshev, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2, p. 27.

The next day a protest strike, beginning in the tower and shrapnel workshops, quickly spread throughout the factory. The director appeared before the workers and delivered a speech exhorting them to return to their stations for patriotic reasons. The workers refused and the director threatened to close the factory. As rumours that reprisals were to be made against strikers began to circulate through the plant the workers themselves became more violent. Several shop foremen and other administrative personnel were attacked by labourers, were bundled into dirty sacks, ridden outside the factory gates on sledges or in wheelbarrows and dumped in the gutter.⁸⁴ On the next day, the factory was shut down and it remained closed for six days.

By the end of 1916 the "strike habit" was once again strongly impressed on the majority of the Putilov labour force. Strikes most often were begun for economic reasons, but political slogans were adopted readily once revolutionaries became involved. The revolutionaries were largely responsible for channelling the amorphous grievances aired by the masses into definite political demands. The majority of workers could be persuaded to rally or strike in support of their fellows or in protest against economic conditions; strikes spread easily from workshop to workshop and, in fact, often from factory to

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

factory. The demonstrators were not as interested in achieving specific political goals as in forcing economic concessions or simply joining their comrades in this type of relief of pent-up frustrations. Usually, political demands were adopted subsequently, at large often spontaneous meetings when the mass of workers could be swayed by influential orators to include political slogans, etc., in their demands.

The contention of Soviet historians that the Putilov workers were firmly aligned with the Bolshevik Party by this time is a distortion of the truth. It would be more accurate, perhaps, to say that the vast majority of workers were apolitical, willing to be led and influenced by the strong personalities of revolutionaries among them (certainly not by a studied preference for the ideology of one party over another). Delegations and committees elected by groups of workers during 1916⁸⁵ and even during 1917, as will be shown below, contained Menshevik, Socialist Revolutionary, anarchist and non-aligned representatives as well as Bolsheviks. It is true that by the end of 1916 the Putilov workers were becoming more radical (due in part, no doubt, to daily contacts with revolutionary agitation) as testified to by the ever-increasing level of violence in strikes and demonstrations, and ever more frequent armed clashes with the police. The workers were tired of the war, of food shortages, of the arrogance of their supervisors —

85 For example, see Soviet descriptions of the delegation elected by the Putilov workers to the War Industrial Committee (to which the Bolshevik faction was opposed) in Glebov, Bor'ba klassov, no. 9, pp. 64-66; Lemeshev, Krasnaia letopis', no. 2, pp. 10-11.

and it was not long before they erupted again in a strike which would have the most dire consequences for the Russian autocracy itself. Moreover, in the end only Bolshevik slogans could come close to expressing the elemental radicalism of the Putilov workers.

The Revolutions of 1917

The year 1917 in Petrograd began the way 1916 had ended — with soaring prices, food shortages, strikes and other indications of considerable social unrest. On 9 January more than half the Putilov labour force joined over 135,000 other Petrograd workers in demonstrations to commemorate Bloody Sunday.¹ Putilov workers also participated in what Alexander Rabinowitch has termed a "political strike"² on 14 February, marching down Nevsky Prospect bearing two large banners on which were printed the slogans — "Down with the Government!", "Long Live the Republic!", and "Down with the War!".³ There were also numerous wage strikes in several Putilov workshops in late January and in February.⁴ The average monthly wage for the entire Putilov labour force decreased from seventy-one rubles in December 1916 to sixty-eight rubles in January 1917, rising to only seventy rubles in February 1917. While this was a very good wage for a worker at that time, relatively speaking, wage increases were not keeping up with the increases of 500 to 600 percent (from December to February) in the price of foodstuffs.⁵

1 Balabanov, p. 419.

2 Rabinowitch, p. 25.

3 Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 170. F.A. Iemeshev recalled his fellow party workers deciding that this would be a good occasion "to call on the workers to demonstrate under the Bolshevik slogan: "Down with the Imperialist War!", Krasnaia letopis', no. 2, p. 36.

4 See okhrana reports in Rabochee dvizhenie, pp. 527-531.

5 See Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 167.

On 18 February, the gun carriage workshop employees demanded a fifty percent wage raise.⁶ The director of the Works met this demand with a categoric refusal, which prompted the workers to declare a sit-down strike. After mediation on 20 February between management and a worker delegation which included representatives from other workshops, a twenty percent wage increase was promised. On 21 February, however, the management dismissed the gun carriage workshop employees and closed down the shop. This reprisal caused the strike to spread to other workshops — in the engine shop, workers displeased with the rudeness of their foreman doused him with water and rolled him out to the dockyards in a wheelbarrow.⁷ The administration responded to these disturbances by closing the factory for an indefinite period of time. This lockout, which put the entire Rutilov labour force of some thirty thousand workers out on the street, resulted in a rapid spread of support strikes throughout the city, and contributed to the development of events which would culminate in the downfall of the Romanov dynasty.

A few days later, on 23 February, disturbances which broke out along the long lines of women waiting to buy bread developed into street demonstrations calling for the overthrow of the monarchy and an end to the war. The February Revolution had begun. Over the next few days, spontaneous worker demonstrations snowballed until the city was engulfed

⁶ G. Ratkov labels the demand "inordinate", pp. 251-252.

⁷ Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 170.

in a general strike. Crowds of workers surged across the frozen Neva from the outlying industrial suburbs into the centre of Petrograd. The situation really became menacing to the government however, only when Cossack troops sent to quell the disturbances instead demonstrated sympathy for the rebelling workers. According to the memoirs of one Putilovite, on 25 February, as the workers made their way in columns towards the Kazan Cathedral in the centre of the city, Cossacks stationed along the route conversed and joked and exchanged cigarettes with them.⁸ On the next day, several regiments ordered to disperse the demonstrators refused to do so. This disobedience on the part of the Petrograd garrison units has been cited as the crucial difference between the outcome of events in February 1917 and those of 1905.⁹

On 27 February the Fourth Duma sidestepped an imperial order to disperse and instead formed a Provisional Committee to maintain order in the capital and to persuade the tsar to abdicate. Simultaneously, a number of socialist Duma deputies and several Petrograd labour leaders proclaimed themselves a "Temporary Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies" and called on the city's enterprises to elect deputies to a new Soviet, modeled on the St. Petersburg Soviet of 1905. On 2 March the Duma Committee and the Petrograd Soviet together announced the formation of a

⁸ Ibid., p. 171.

⁹ For example, Rabinowitch, p. 28.

Provisional Government. Late that same night representatives of this new government persuaded tsar Nicholas to abdicate his throne. He stepped aside in favour of his brother who, in turn, refused the throne and declared it vacant. Thus the Russian monarchy perished and the arrangement which came to be known as "dual power" was born.

Most Western historians stress the spontaneity of the February Revolution. They describe it as a spontaneous, leaderless expression of worker dissatisfaction which was initiated by the economic situation, facilitated by the presence of large numbers of workers in the streets (beginning with the lockout at the Putilov Works), radicalized by initial successes and by increasing levels of violence, and finally ensured of success by the support of the Petrograd military units. Traditional Soviet interpretations, on the other hand, emphasize the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, although E.N. Burdzhhalov distinguishes between Bolshevik leadership at the top and the revolutionary role played by the party's "sub-élite".¹⁰ It is understandable that the top Bolshevik leadership played no immediate role in the February Revolution as the most prominent members were either in Siberia (Ia. M. Sverdlov and L.B. Kamenev) or abroad (V.I. Lenin and G.E. Zinoviev were in Switzerland and N.I. Bukharin was in New York). Burdzhhalov also recognizes the importance of other political groups, who provided some leadership during the uprising.¹¹

10 E.N. Burdzhhalov, Vtorii russkaia revoliutsiia: Vosstanie v Petrograde, (Moscow, 1967), p. 155.

11 Burdzhhalov cites the Mezhraiontsy and left SR's as being very
Continued on next page

This was the case at the Putilov Works to the extent that one Putilovite claimed the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries were the "dominant force" at the plant immediately after the February Revolution.¹²

The combined dislocations of war and revolution had the immediate effect of intensifying the critical economic situation in Russia. In the first two months after the February Revolution, therefore, the workers' main objective was to achieve rapid and tangible improvement in their personal working and living conditions. Economic demands, such as institution of the eight-hour work day, were predominant. Even demands for "worker control" did not imply a desire for power over the actual direction of production, so much as for the capability to guarantee that the workers would in fact obtain the economic gains they were most interested in, and to ensure the provision of conditions of employment that they considered satisfactory.¹³

On the other hand, Henry L. Roberts concluded from a study of the pre-revolutionary strike wave, that the primary drives motivating Russian workers were "more psychological

11 active among the workers and in fact calling for more radical action than the Bolsheviks. Ibid., p. 155. The anarchists can also be presumed to have played such a role.

12 A. Minichev is quoted in Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 181.

13 See Marc Ferro's statistical examination of worker demands through analysis of thousands of letters and telegrams of the immediate post-revolutionary period in his study of "The Aspirations of Russian Society" in R. Pipes (ed.), Revolutionary Russia, (Cambridge, Ma., 1968), pp. 144-156.

than political or economic in nature. The desire for justice, dignity, and decent treatment was the factor that carried real force".¹⁴ Indeed, the February Revolution had started as an expression of intense working class dissatisfaction, and its outcome conferred an entirely new social and political status on the Russian proletariat. The new political role of labour was played out in various types of workers' organizations which sprang up in the early days of the February Revolution including factory committees, workers' militia, trade unions and soviets. Of these it was the factory committees and militia which were the closest to the workers and thus the most readily subject to their militant radicalism which had found expression in the February Revolution.

On 10 March the Petrograd Soviet and the Society of Manufacturers concluded an agreement which provided for, among other things, the formation of factory committees and boards of conciliation at each enterprise.¹⁵ Although Soviet labour historians traditionally claim that the factory committees were inspired and led by the Bolsheviks from the start,¹⁶ available evidence does not support this view. Before Lenin's return to Petrograd on 3 April the Bolsheviks played only a minor role in the revolutionary events taking place.

¹⁴ Quoted in Pipes, p. 162.

¹⁵ For detail on the structure and mandate of the factory committees, see M. Dewar, Labour Policy in the USSR 1917-1928, (London, 1956), p. 3.

¹⁶ For example, see I. Borshchenko, The Russian Trade Unions in 1907-1917, (Moscow, 1959), p. 17.

According to Paul Avrich:

Neither the February Revolution itself, nor the factory committees that sprang from its wake, was the work of a disciplined group of radicals. Party affiliation had little to do with the elemental impulse of the laboring masses to express their grievances through syndicalistic committees. In the very center of the revolution, in "Red Peter", the factory committees, like the soviets, were composed preponderantly of members of the majority parties among the working people — the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries — or of men who belonged to no party whatever. 17

A factory committee was not formed immediately at the Putilov Works. Instead, the employees and the factory administration alike turned to the Peterhof Raion Committee to make decisions on various problems relating to the daily routine of the factory.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that of the thirty elected members of the Peterhof Raion Committee, only eight or nine were Bolsheviks. According to certain Putilovites: "During that time, the confidence of the bulk of the Putilov workers in the Menshevik-SR Soviets had not yet spent itself".¹⁹ Early in April, however, after Lenin's return to Petrograd, it would appear that "The leaders of the Bolshevik nucleus [in the Putilov Works] began to get firmly established and to win enough authority among the workers to isolate them gradually from the conciliatory parties, i.e., the Mensheviks and SR's."²⁰

17 P. Avrich, "Russian Factory Committees in 1917", Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, XI, no. 2 (June, 1963), 165.

18 Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 179.

19 Quoted by Dewar, p. 6.

20 Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 3, p. 181.

After a campaign which lasted nine days, a factory committee was eventually elected at the Putilov Works on 10 April. N.P. Paialin contends that the factory committee was created "thanks only to the categorical demands of the Bolshevik-Putilovites".²¹ The original committee consisted of ten members of whom three were Bolsheviks and three were unaffiliated with any party. The Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries and anarchists each had one representative on the committee, while the party affiliation of the tenth member is unclear.²² On 15 April it was decided to enlarge the committee to twenty-two. The new committee included: six Bolsheviks, two Socialist Revolutionaries, two Menshevik-Internationalists, one anarchist and twelve unaffiliated members seven of whom were believed to sympathize with the Bolsheviks. The elected five-member Presidium was composed of two Bolsheviks, one Menshevik, one Socialist Revolutionary, and one unaffiliated representative.²³ These figures indicate a significant reentrenchment of Bolshevik influence at the Putilov Works although not overwhelming support of Lenin's party.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 181. M. Dewar, on the other hand, sees the creation of the factory committee at the Putilov plant as the workers' response to threats of dismissal owing to a fuel shortage early in April (p. 6).

22 Paialin, *Krasnaia letopis'*, no. 3, pp. 182-183. Paialin's analysis of the party affiliation of the factory committee members is rather confused. His figures do not always add up and statement of individual affiliation is occasionally inconsistent.

23 Mitel'man, *et al.*, p. 590.

From the beginning, the factory committees were among the most militant and radical of the various workers' organizations, especially in the larger Petrograd electrical and metallurgical plants such as the Putilov Works.²⁴ This, combined with the fact that the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries clearly dominated both the Petrograd Soviet and the trade union organizations at the time, convinced Lenin to direct the Bolsheviks to foster a close association with the factory committees. The "April Theses", first delivered as a speech on Lenin's return to Petrograd on 4 April, startled and amazed the majority of his fellow Bolsheviks. However, according to R.V. Daniels, within three weeks Lenin had succeeded in persuading a majority of his followers to accept the radical tenets of his programme, which served to identify the Bolshevik Party with the most extreme demands put forward in Petrograd factories during the months that followed.²⁵ At the Seventh Party Conference, held from 24 to 29 April, the Bolsheviks adopted Lenin's three main points: (i) opposition to the war, (ii) rejection of unity with the Mensheviks, and (iii) "All Power to the Soviets!".

Having tailored their programme to the demands of the most radical working class elements, and offered their party as a vehicle for the most uncompromising continuation of the revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were rewarded with a great spurt of growth in party membership. Up to the time

²⁴ See Avrich, The Russian Anarchists, p. 147; Avrich, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, XI, no. 2, 161.

²⁵ Daniels, pp. 15-30.

of the February Revolution the party could not claim more than some twenty thousand members in the whole of Russia. By August however, the count was up to about 250,000 with approximately twenty percent of that strategically located in the capital city.²⁶ The party's appeal grew even faster in the workers' factory committees, where Bolsheviks tended to dominate by early May.

On 12 May Lenin himself paid a visit to the Putilov Works to address workers who had gathered to listen to V.M. Chernov and N.D. Avksent'ev explain the Provisional Government's agrarian policies.²⁷ According to the memoirs of Bolshevik Putilovite I.P. Turunen, Lenin, who arrived at the factory after the other two speakers had already departed, was "greeted enthusiastically" by the workers who "listened attentively" as he expounded on the necessity of fighting for the socialist revolution; on the necessity of seizing land from the landowners, and of workers taking over control of the factories and plants; and on ending the war and beginning the class war. Lenin "told them what they had waited long to hear from the leaders of the other parties".²⁸ It would appear that in the weeks following Lenin's visit to the factory the allegiance of the Putilov workers switched

²⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁷ Lenin's visit to the Putilov Works in May 1917 is one of those occurrences which has become a part of Soviet revolutionary folklore and is mentioned in every history of the Putilov Works and in almost every study of the revolutionary workers' movement, the Bolshevik Party, etc.

²⁸ Turunen's memoirs are cited in N.P. Paialin, "Putilovskii zavod v 1917 godu. Mai-Iiul'", Krasnaia letopis', 1932, no. 4, pp. 115-116.

abruptly from the moderate Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries to the more radical Bolsheviks — "to be sure the Putilovites still listened to speeches by Mensheviks and SR's, but they did so more critically and distrustfully."²⁹

The revolutionary mood of the Petrograd workers in general was not diffused during the spring and summer of 1917. Faced with one crisis after another, the Provisional Government proved unable to cope successfully with either the war or the severe economic problems such as depreciation of currency and rises in the cost of living which had plagued the country for the last several years and were intensified by a serious breakdown of industry in part caused by the Revolution.³⁰ This further increased the bitterness of the workers, among whom a more radical spirit was again beginning to spread.

By mid-May the Putilovites were without sufficient bread and footwear. In order to ease the shortage of necessary foodstuffs they decided at a factory-wide meeting to

29 Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 4, p. 116.

30 Florinsky, p. 247; illustrates the drastic reductions in output which practically every industry suffered during this time with the following statistics for production at the Putilov Works:

Production (in puds)	June 1916	June 1917
mild steel	240,185	69,104
cast steel	357,676	118,325
pig iron	70,301	45,279

See pp. 246-249 for more detail on the economic situation.

negotiate with the Provisional Government to acquire "plots of land for kitchen gardens for private use until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly". Although permission was eventually given, the time for cultivation of the plots had passed. At their factory meetings the Putilovites became ever more harshly critical of the activities of the coalition Provisional Government. Their demands, while still partly economic, were soon emphasizing more and more the political issues of the struggle, including the introduction of worker control over production, the nationalization of industry, the ending of the war and eventually, the transfer of all power to the soviets.³¹

Later in May the Putilovites were troubled by disquieting rumours that their factory was to be transferred to Southern Russia as part of the Provisional Government's "relief of Petrograd" scheme. By this plan Russia's war industry, which was concentrated in Petrograd, was to be saved from total destruction by advancing enemy forces, through being dispersed to various more remote areas of the country. The Putilovites immediately began to pass resolutions protesting the proposed government action and demanding that workers be given control over the large-scale industries and capital.³² Moreover, on 20 May the Putilov-gun shop employees passed a resolution demanding, in the event that the coalition government did not "unquestioningly fulfil the peoples' will",

³¹ Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 4, pp. 117-119.

³² Ibid., pp. 119-122.

that their power be immediately transferred into the hands of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.³³

At the end of May, the Putilov workers were again faced with mass dismissals, this time occasioned by a lack of fuel which threatened to close down the gigantic factory. The Putilov factory committee, meeting on 26 May, heard a report from a certain comrade Kuz'min (who had previously been sent out to search for fuel) to the effect that there were considerable quantities of fuel available at the Lakht and Lodeinii Fields.³⁴ This convinced the factory committee members that the fuel shortage was the result of sabotage by bourgeois capitalists, and that worker control over production and distribution was now necessary "in order to paralyze the disruptive work of the capitalists".³⁵ Members of the Putilov factory committee suggested convening a special conference of Petrograd factory committees to consider the issue of worker control over production and distribution. A six-man organizational bureau, three of whom were Putilovites, was established. This bureau summoned delegates from all the factory committees in Petrograd and its environs to the First Conference of Petrograd Factory Committees, which convened in the Tauride Palace on 30 May.

33 See ibid., p. 120, for the full text of this resolution which included a demand for the immediate convocation of an All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, which would become a permanent central organ. This reveals that the Mensheviks still had some influence in persuading the workers to accept certain resolutions.

34 Ibid., p. 121-122.

This First Conference was heavily dominated by Bolsheviks. The Putilov factory committee sent three delegates from the Works — two Bolsheviks and one anarchist, and two representatives of the Docks' employees — one Bolshevik, the other of unknown affiliation.³⁶ A Bolshevik resolution on workers' control was drafted by Lenin and read to the conference by G.E. Zinoviev. It called for the institution of control "by means of a series of carefully considered measures, introduced gradually but without delay, leading to the complete regulation of production and distribution of goods by the workers".³⁷ The conference eventually adopted this resolution by an overwhelming majority (297 for, 21 against, 44 abstentions), which in part indicated the success of Bolshevik efforts to gain worker support in the Petrograd factory committees during the preceding three months.

In June the revolutionary mood of the Petrograd workers was still strong. Events at the Putilov Works, wherein political demands often arose from economic conflicts, mirrored the economic and political situation of factories everywhere in Petrograd. On 20 June a meeting of the Peters-

35 This was a common enough reaction on the part of the factory committee members as labour leaders at the time generally were placing the blame for the catastrophic conditions of Russian industry on the capitalists. According to Paul Avrich: "The major cause of the economic debacle was of course the war. Yet the entrepreneurs and the workingmen placed the burden of guilt on each other". In Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, XI, no. 2, 170.

36 Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 4, p. 122.

37 Quoted in Avrich, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, XI, no. 2, 167.

burg Bolshevik Committee was informed that "unsolved labour problems in the huge Putilov factory were resulting in a sharp increase in Bolshevik support there".³⁸

Sometime between 19 June and 21 June³⁹ a strike, ostensibly in support of pay increase demands but with political overtones, broke out in one of the workshops of the Putilov factory and threatened to spread not only throughout the Works but to other factories as well. According to Margaret Dewar:

At a meeting of representatives from twenty-three factories and various workers' organizations a resolution, apparently Bolshevik-inspired, was passed, asking the Putilov workers "to restrain their legitimate indignation" and to save their forces for future action. Higher wages could only result in higher prices; the solution therefore was workers' control and power in the hands of the soviets. This clearly showed a recognition of the futility of partial economic concessions and of the imperative need for radical social changes.⁴⁰

"Radical social changes" apparently entailed the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet rule in Russia. Once again, however, the actual impetus for armed revolt was to come not from the revolutionaries but from the restless and economically deprived populace of Petrograd. On the eve of the "July Days", the arming of Petrograd workers was intensified. Putilovite Mikuliainia wrote in his memoirs of visiting the Peter and Paul Fortress

38 The report by S.M. Gessen to the Bolshevik Petersburg Committee is quoted in Rabinowitch, p. 125.

39 19 June is the date given by Rabinowitch, p. 270, while Dewar cites 21 June, p. 10.

40 Dewar, p. 10.

with co-workers during the last weeks of June, and the first days of July in order to collect weapons which were subsequently distributed among the workers' militia at the Putilov Works.⁴¹ A workers' committee in the Putilov plant had passed a resolution calling for the formation of a detachment of armed workers in order "to establish order and disarm the police in the Narva district" as early as 15 February.⁴² In early April, a detachment of Red Guards (or a "workers' militia to defend the revolution") was organized at the Putilov Works.

Soviet historians generally represent the July uprising as an essentially spontaneous expression of worker dissatisfaction and impatience with the "counterrevolutionary" Provisional Government — demonstrations to which the Bolshevik Party gave organization and direction. According to Alexander Rabinowitch, however, "source materials on the mass meetings of July 3 indicate that the ostensible objective of the July movement as it was formulated by the Anarchist-Communists and the First Machine Gun Regiment was the overthrow of the Provisional Government by armed force".⁴³

The Anarchist-Communists and the Anarcho-Syndicalists, along with the Bolsheviks, stood on the left of the

⁴¹ Exerpts from Mikuliainis' memoirs are quoted in N.P. Paialin, "Putilovskii zavod v 1917 godu. Iiul'skii dni — Kornilov — Oktiabr'", Krasnaia letopis', 1932, no. 5-6, pp. 135-136.

⁴² Cited in T. Hasegawa, "The Formation of the Militia in the February Revolution: An Aspect of the Origins of Dual Power", Slavic Review, XXXII, no. 2 (June 1973), 307.

⁴³ Rabinowitch, p. 152.

other socialist and revolutionary parties. It has been noted above that the radical factory committees which sprang up in February 1917 were the creation of workers who belonged to a variety of leftist parties or to none at all. Before long, however, the more militant workers grew impatient with the moderate socialists who supported the Provisional Government and its policy of perpetuating the war and the capitalist system. By June only the anarchists and the Bolsheviks were sufficiently radical to satisfy a growing segment of the labour population.⁴⁴

Lenin, realizing the importance of establishing a Bolshevik power base among the working-class organizations, had adopted a most radical programme in his "April Theses", and given full support to the factory committees and their demand for workers' control in industry.⁴⁵ Thus, between May and October 1917 both the anarchists and the Bolsheviks were bending their efforts toward the same goal — destruction of the Provisional Government; and their slogans — "Down with the War!", "Down with the Provisional Government!", "Control of factories to the Workers!", "Land to the Peasants!" — were often identical.⁴⁶ The only difference of opinion regarding the overthrow revolved around the question of timing. During the spring and early summer, Anarchist-Communist mili-

⁴⁴ Avrich, The Russian Anarchists, pp. 141-143.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 143.

⁴⁶ P. Avrich, The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution, (London, 1973), p. 16.

tants in Petrograd supported the idea of an immediate uprising, while the Petersburg Bolshevik Committee argued that the moment was not ripe and that any such insurrection would be easily crushed, causing irreparable damage to the party and the revolution.

On this occasion the Anarchist-Communists were in closer tune with the urban populace than were the Bolsheviks. They pushed ahead with their plans for an armed insurrection and exhorted revolt without further delay. Militant soldiers, sailors and workers, responding to the slogans of the anarchists and to their own violent and radical emotions, erupted in open rebellion in Petrograd once again, on 3 July 1917. After several days of sporadic disturbances, however, the rioters were suppressed by the Provisional Government. In assessing the role of the anarchists in the July Days, Paul Avrich concludes:

It would be an exaggeration to call the July Days an "anarchist creation", On the other hand, the role of the anarchists should not be minimized. Together with the rank-and-file Bolsheviks and unaffiliated radicals, they acted as gadflies, goading the soldiers, sailors and workers into the abortive revolt.⁴⁷

The revolt began on the afternoon of 3 July when a delegation from the First Machine Gun Regiment, which had decided to overthrow the Provisional Government, was sent to the Putilov Works to obtain the support of its huge and radical labour force.⁴⁸ The Putilov factory committee immediately

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁸ For more detail on the rebellion of the First Machine Gun Regiment, see Rabinowitch, pp. 144-153.

called a general factory-wide meeting to hear the soldiers' speeches.⁴⁹ By 5:00 p.m. the courtyard of the Putilov Works was jammed with Putilovites, soldiers and sailors from various left-wing units. Under some confusion, factory Bolsheviks tried to hold back the workers at this stage, in accordance with the orders of the Bolshevik Central Committee, but they met with little success and quickly joined the masses.⁵⁰ After a soldier from the Machine Gun Regiment finished a particularly emotional speech, one Bolshevik-Putilovite, Sergei Bogdatiev, spoke to the workers and urged them to go out into the streets. Shortly afterwards some thirty thousand Putilovites, many of whom were armed, poured into the streets, immediately investing the insurrection with ominous proportions.

Alexander Rabinowitch has pointed out that alongside the general sources of mass instability and extreme labour dissatisfaction which existed in Petrograd in the summer of 1917, most of the major rebelling elements also had particular, often very immediate grievances. In the case of the Putilov labour force he indicates the growing conviction among the workers that a long-postponed increase in the minimum wage would never be effected by the "capitalist controlled" Provisional Government. Another disrupting factor was worker opposition to the imminent shipment to the front

⁴⁹ Paialin, *Krasnaia letopis'*, no. 5-6, pp. 137-139.

⁵⁰ This was a typical reaction on the part of the Petrograd Bolshevik 'sub-élite' who, for the most part, played an immediate, active role in the uprising, even although the party's Central Committee had made no firm decision in the matter.

of part of the Tarutinski Regiment which had continued to work at the factory after the February Revolution and which, on the whole, had become quite sympathetic to the workers.⁵¹

Late that night the Putilovites, many accompanied by their wives and children, gathered in a seething mob in front of the Bolshevik headquarters which was located in the Ksheshinskaia mansion. It was evidently only at this point in time that the Bolshevik Central Committee finally decided to put itself at the head of the movement, rather than lose control of it altogether.⁵² It would have been extremely difficult for the Bolshevik leaders, despite their reservations at that time, to leave the demonstrators and their own rank-and-file without guidance. Moreover, the movement was championing Bolshevik (and anarchist) slogans and demanding that the Bolsheviks lead the overthrow of the Provisional Government. In accepting the responsibility, the Bolshevik leaders sanctioned their party members to lead the mob to the Tauride Palace to demonstrate before the Petrograd Soviet.

By the time the huge crowd of Putilovites, still accompanied by their families, arrived at the Palace (around 2:00 a.m.), the number of demonstrators in the courtyard had reached between sixty and seventy thousand. The Putilov workers sent a delegation in to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet proclaiming their determination to remain at the Tauride Palace until the latter announced its willingness

⁵¹ Rabinowitch, p. 149.

⁵² See Daniels, p. 38; Rabinowitch, pp. 162-163.

to take power and arrest the members of the Provisional Government.⁵³ Alexander Rabinowitch describes the scene outside the Tauride Palace with the following words:

The imposing mob presented its demands and waved red banners with the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" It responded enthusiastically to speeches by Trotsky and Zinoviev, who agreed that the time had come for the transfer of power to the Soviets. But the artillery, machine guns, and rifles remained silent, and the demonstrators stood or wandered about aimlessly, probably wondering at the stubbornness of the majority socialists and the indecisiveness of their own leadership. Toward dawn, frustrated, tired, and hungry, but in the understanding that they would return later in the day, the soldiers and workers drifted back to their districts.⁵⁴

For the next thirty-six hours Petrograd was embroiled in a state of mob anarchy. Armed and unarmed workers and soldiers moved through the city often clashing with police and government snipers.⁵⁵ Several hundred people were wounded in these street riots, and by the morning of 5 July, the revolutionary movement had degenerated into a number of uncoordinated actions with no definite aims. Eventually, the demonstrations were completely quelled by loyal troops summoned to Petrograd from the battle zones.

In brief, the attempt at revolution, although sizeable and threatening, failed because the Petrograd Soviet refused to endorse it, because some military units remained loyal to the Provisional Government, and finally because the

53 Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 5-6, p. 139.

54 Rabinowitch, p. 172.

55 Putilovites were involved in many such bloody incidents. See Paialin, Krasnaia letopis', no. 5-6, pp. 140-145.

government was able to discredit Lenin and the Bolsheviks, denouncing them as German agents and traitors. The government-fabricated news that the Bolshevik uprising was designed to serve German interests circulated quickly through the Petrograd garrisons and made a tremendous impression everywhere.⁵⁶ Regiments which had earlier remained neutral pledged to join in putting down the rebellion.

After the July Days the Provisional Government took forceful action against the Bolshevik organization, shutting down its press, jailing many of its leaders, and forcing Lenin and Zinoviev into hiding in Finland. After the extreme violence (estimates of the numbers killed or wounded on 4 and 5 July ran up to four hundred)⁵⁷ and frustrations of the July demonstrations, the Petrograd Workers were somewhat subdued. The Putilov-Red Guard units were largely disarmed, many of the factory Bolsheviks were arrested, and party membership fell off in response to the government's charges of Bolshevik treason. Party strongholds at the factory, such as the sick-funds office, maintained a Bolshevik presence in the plant, however. The disaffection of the Putilovites with the Bolsheviks proved to be very short-lived.

The Provisional Government still was unable to deal with economic problems of production and distribution in Russia. Inflation continued and food riots and demonstrations grew increasingly more frequent in the capital.⁵⁸ At the

⁵⁶ Rabinowitch, p. 199.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 200.

⁵⁸ See Chamberlin, pp. 267-268.

beginning of September the administration of the Putilov Works announced that seven to ten thousand workers were to be dismissed.⁵⁹ The factory committee vehemently opposed this action. A special mixed commission composed of worker representatives and members of the management was created to deal with the problem. This commission eventually agreed on the dismissal of five thousand employees. These men swelled the ranks of the city's unemployed, their dismissal contributing to the reintensification of the revolutionary mood of the workers.

Near the end of August, as the Germans advanced further on Petrograd, the Putilov workers again heard of government plans to disperse the highly concentrated Russian war industry. To the Petrograd factory committees at large, which regarded their city not only as a vital centre of industry, but also as the hub of the proletarian revolution, this evacuation plan seemed part of a scheme to disperse the revolutionary forces. The Putilov factory committee adopted a resolution expressing their fear that the capitalists were determined "to empty Petrograd — this centre of the revolution — of the revolutionary proletariat."⁶⁰

Under these conditions the workers began to seek out once again the most radical of the revolutionary parties to provide leadership, and the chief beneficiaries of this left-ward swing of labour were the Bolsheviks. In the words

⁵⁹ Dewar, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Avrich, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, XI, no. 2, 176.

of Paul Avrich:

... it was the Anarcho-Syndicalists who came closest to their [the workers'] radical spirit. But the Anarcho-Syndicalists were unable to capitalize on this temperamental kinship. They exerted an influence in the factory committees that was disproportionate to their small numbers, but because they repudiated a centralized party apparatus, they were never in a position to dominate the committees or to lead the working class on a broad scale. It was left for the Bolsheviks, equipped not only with a most effective party organization, but also with a conscious will to power that the syndicalists lacked, to capture the allegiance of the workingmen, first in the factory committees and then in the soviets and trade unions. 61

Another factor which contributed to the Bolsheviks speedy return to prominence in the labour movement was the unsuccessful attempt by General Kornilov to overthrow the Provisional Government at the end of August. This attack from the Right was interpreted by the workers as an attempt to smother the revolutionary movement and they wholeheartedly joined in a general mobilization to defend the capital. Only the Bolsheviks really gained from the "Kornilov Affair". Their leaders were let out of jail, and their followers were armed. After Kornilov's defeat the Bolsheviks retained the preponderance of military strength in Petrograd, winning ever more adherents among the increasingly radical masses.

Gradually the Bolsheviks began to gain control over the trade unions and through them, to influence the workers. This, combined with increasing support among the soldiers, eventually led to the achievement of an absolute majority by the Bolsheviks in the Petrograd Soviet on 31 August. When the

Soviet elected a new Executive Committee on 25 September the Bolsheviks won exactly one-half the total membership (with thirteen members in the Workers' Section and nine in the Soldiers' Section, as opposed to six Socialist Revolutionaries and three Mensheviks in the former and ten Socialist Revolutionaries and three Mensheviks in the latter). Thus, in mid-September Lenin was able to revive "the battle cry of all power to the soviets" and, keeping foremost in his mind the potential usefulness of armed Red Guards from radical Petrograd factories such as the Putilov Works, he began to plan for a seizure of power.⁶²

The first stumbling bloc Lenin encountered in his drive to power was the reluctance of his own Central Committee to attempt another armed overthrow of the Provisional Government.⁶³ At a meeting during the night of 10-11 October the Central Committee was eventually persuaded to acknowledge that an armed uprising was inevitable and that the Bolshevik Party should undertake to lead it, but no actual preparations or decisions with regard to timing or tactics were made. Kamenev and Zinoviev apparently felt at this time that the workers and soldiers of Petrograd were not ready for a revolution and that: "Even those [in] favour of the uprising state that the sentiment of the masses of workers and soldiers is not at all even like their sentiments on the eve of

⁶² Daniels, p. 57.

⁶³ For greater detail on this matter, see ibid., pp. 59-82.

3 July."⁶⁴

Nevertheless, Lenin pushed forward to the revolution, and when it began early in the morning of 25 October the Bolsheviks relied heavily on the workers' Red Guard units to take and to hold the most important positions. According to eye-witness Albert Rhys Williams, it was clear that Lenin felt the Putilov workers should be sent to the key trouble spots as they were among the most loyal and reliable of his followers.⁶⁵ The Putilov factory committee had set up a military commission which formed armed workers' detachments fifteen hundred strong.⁶⁶ These detachments and Red Guard units were sent to the Bolshevik headquarters in the Smolny Institute to receive their orders. Some Putilovite Red Guards and metal workers subsequently guarded the strategic Obvodny Canal while others occupied the telephone exchange and the Central Post Office.

With the storming of the Winter Palace in the early night hours of 26 October, the Provisional Government was overthrown and a Soviet government established in Petrograd. Not as many workers played a direct role in the October Revolution as had been involved in the spontaneous insurrections of February and July 1917. Nevertheless, their participation was crucial to the success of Lenin's take-over

⁶⁴ Quoted in ibid., p. 83.

⁶⁵ A.R. Williams, Journey into Revolution, (Chicago, 1969), p. 143.

⁶⁶ Borshchenko, pp. 19-20.

and the establishment of a new authority in Russia.

* * *

The label "stronghold of revolution" is not inappropriate for the Putilov Works. In February 1917, as in January 1905, revolutionary events which later encompassed the whole country were initiated by the dismissal of workers from this plant. From the beginning of the new century (with only a few years of relative calm from 1908 to 1911 and late 1914-early 1915), the Putilov labour force had proved to be one of the most explosive and revolutionary groups in Russia, and it continued to show this face throughout 1917. Economic difficulties were at the root of the mass disturbances of that year. The inability of the Provisional Government to deal with their difficulties resulted in ever-increasing radicalization of the workers' goals, and the eventual swing of the majority (from about May on) to support of the Bolsheviks and their political objectives.

It has been shown above that the workers and their factory committee stood to the left of Lenin's Bolshevik Party from the beginning of 1917. The moderate Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries dominated the Petrograd trade unions and soviets until the fall; however, the factory committees, which were much closer to the workers and represented the "elemental revolutionary forces unleashed by the fall of the tsarist régime", were originally composed largely of Bolsheviks, anarchists and unaffiliated workers. The

Bolsheviks eventually came to dominate the factory committees not because the workers were "bolshevized" or "radicalized" enough to accept the leadership of that party. Rather, it was because Lenin had been able to persuade his comrades to adopt a programme which was radical enough to win the support of the workers. The anarchists may have been in closer tune with the mood of the majority of the workers during 1917, but because they repudiated a centralized party apparatus they were unable to capitalize on this closeness to the workers. So by October the Bolshevik Party had the full support of the many thousands of revolutionary Putilov workers, and Lenin was able to rely on that support in his successful bid for power.

Between the 1870's and October 1917 the Putilovites had evolved from an acquiescent, peasant labour force into a group of violent and radical working-class rebels. The hardships of industrial life and the intransigence of both the factory administration and the Russian political system were responsible for the workers' embarkation on a strike movement from the beginning of the twentieth century. The majority of Putilovites of 1917 were of a new generation — one which had not experienced first-hand the horror, excitement and limited successes of the Revolution of 1905. Nevertheless, they had inherited a tradition of causing disturbances, a "strike habit", with which they intended to force economic improvements, polite and decent treatment and a greater degree of worker representation. This habit grew more frequent and more violent with continued use, more comprehensive with the influence of

the revolutionaries, and more radical without the satisfaction of achieving fundamental reforms. The October Revolution did not put an immediate end to this rebellious tradition.

During the difficult years of Civil War and "War Communism", when dreams for absolute worker control and political freedom failed to be realized, and the economic condition deteriorated even further, Putilovites went out on strike again and demonstrated under anti-Bolshevik and anti-Leninist slogans.

But by then, the history of Russia had taken a new course — one which the "Red Putilovites" themselves had played a

major role in making possible to set.

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