

Workers of the Caucasus, it is Time to Take Revenge !

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The tsar's battalions are dwindling, the tsar's navy is perishing, and now Port Arthur has shamefully surrendered—thus the senile decrepitude of the tsarist autocracy is once again revealed. . . .

Inadequate food and the absence of any kind of sanitary measures whatsoever, are causing infectious diseases to spread among the troops. These unbearable conditions are still further aggravated by the absence of anything like decent housing and clothing. Worn and weary, the soldiers are dying like flies. And this is after tens of thousands have been killed by bullets! . . . All this is causing unrest and discontent among the troops. The soldiers are awakening from their torpor, they are beginning to feel that they are human, they no longer blindly obey the orders of their superiors, and often greet their upstart officers with whistling and threats.

This is what an officer writes to us from the Far East:

"I did a foolish thing! On the insistence of my superior I recently delivered a speech to the men. No sooner did I begin to talk about the necessity of standing fast for tsar and country than the air was filled with whistling, curses and threats. . . . I hastened to put the greatest possible distance between myself and the infuriated mob. . . ."

Such is the situation in the Far East!

Add to this the unrest among the reservists in Russia, their revolutionary demonstrations in Odessa, Yekaterinoslav, Kursk, Penza and other cities, and the protests of the new recruits in Guria, Imeretia, Kartalinia and in south and north Russia, note that the demonstrators are undaunted either by prison or bullets (recently, in Penza, several reservists were shot for demonstrating), and you will easily understand what the Russian soldiers are thinking. . . .

The tsarist autocracy is losing its main prop—its "reliable troops"!

On the other hand, the tsar's treasury is becoming more depleted every day. Defeat follows defeat. The tsarist government is gradually losing the confidence of foreign states. It is barely able to obtain the money it needs, and the time is not far distant when it will be deprived of all credit! "Who will pay us when you are overthrown, and your fall is undoubtedly imminent," such is the answer that is given to the utterly discredited tsarist government! And the people, the dispossessed, starving people, what can they give the tsarist government when they have nothing to eat themselves?!

And so, the tsarist autocracy is losing its second main prop—its rich treasury, and credit which keeps it filled!

Meanwhile, the industrial crisis is becoming more acute every day; factories and mills are closing down and millions of workers are demanding bread and work. Hunger is afflicting the tormented poor of the countryside with renewed force. The waves of popular anger rise higher and higher and dash against the tsarist throne with increasing force, shaking the decrepit tsarist autocracy to its foundations. . . .

The besieged tsarist autocracy is casting its old skin like a snake, and while discontented Russia is preparing to launch a decisive assault, it is putting aside (pretending to put aside!) its whip and, disguising itself in sheep's clothing, is proclaiming a *policy of conciliation!*

Do you hear, comrades? It is asking us to forget the swish of whips and the whizz of bullets, the hundreds of our hero-comrades who have been killed, their glorious shades which are hovering around us and whispering to us: "Avenge us!"

The autocracy is brazenly offering us its bloodstained hands and is counselling conciliation ! It has published some sort of an "Imperial Ukase"¹ in which it promises us some sort of "freedom." . . . The old brigands! They think they can feed the millions of starving Russian proletarians with words! They hope with words to satisfy the many millions of impoverished and tormented peasants! With promises they would drown the weeping of bereaved families—victims of the war! Miserable wretches! They are the drowning clutching at a straw! . . .

Yes, comrades, the throne of the tsarist government is being shaken to its foundations! The government which is using the taxes it has squeezed out of us to pay our executioners—ministers, governors, uyezd chiefs and prison chiefs, police officers, gendarmes and spies; the government which is compelling the soldiers torn from our midst—our brothers and sons—to shed our blood; the government which is doing all in its power to support the landlords and employers in their daily struggle against us; the government which has bound us hand and foot and has reduced us to the position of rightless slaves; the government which has brutally trampled upon and mocked at our human dignity—our Holy of Holies — it is this government which is tottering and feeling the ground slipping from under its feet!

It is time to take revenge! It is time to avenge our valiant comrades who were brutally murdered by the tsar's bashi-bazouks in Yaroslavl, Dombrowa, Riga, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Batum, Tiflis, Zlatoust, Tikho-retskaia, Mikhailovo, Kishinev, Gomel, Yakutsk, Guria, Baku and other places! It is time to call the government to book for the tens of thousands of innocent and unfortunate men who have perished on the battle-field in the Far East. It is time to dry the tears of their wives and children! It is time to call the government to book for the suffering and humiliation, for the shameful chains in which it has kept us for so long! It is time to put an end to the tsarist government and to clear the road for ourselves to the socialist system! It is time to *destroy* the tsarist government!

And we *will destroy* it.

In vain are Messieurs the Liberals trying to save the tottering throne of the tsar! In vain are they stretching out a helping hand to the tsar! They are begging for charity from him and trying to win his favour for their "draft constitution"² so as, by means of petty reforms, to lay a road for themselves to political domination, to transform the tsar into their instrument, to substitute the autocracy of the bourgeoisie for the autocracy of the tsar and then systematically to strangle the proletariat and the peasantry! But in vain! It is already too late, Messieurs Liberals! Look around and see what the tsarist government has given you, examine its "Imperial Ukase": a tiny bit of "freedom" for "rural and urban institutions," a tiny "guarantee" against "restriction of the rights of private persons," a tiny bit of "freedom" of the "printed word" and a big warning about the "unfailing preservation of the inviolability of the fundamental laws of the empire," about "taking effective measures to preserve the full force of the law, a most important pillar of the throne in the autocratic state"! . . . Well? You had barely time to digest the ridiculous "order" of the ridiculous tsar when "warnings" began to pour down upon the newspapers like hail, a series of gendarme and police raids commenced, and even peaceful banquets were prohibited! The tsarist government itself took care to prove that in its miserly promises it would go no further than mere words.

On the other hand, the outraged masses of the people are preparing for *revolution* and not for conciliation with the tsar. They stubbornly adhere to the proverb: "Only the grave can straighten the hunchback." Yes, gentlemen, vain are your efforts! The Russian revolution is inevitable. It is as inevitable as the rising of the sun! Can you prevent the sun from rising? *The main force in this revolution is the urban and-rural proletariat, its banner-bearer is the Social-Democratic Labour Party*, and not you, Messieurs Liberals! Why do you forget this obvious "trifle"?

The storm, the harbinger of the dawn, is already rising. Only yesterday, or the day before, the proletariat of the Caucasus, from Baku to Batum, unanimously expressed its contempt for the tsarist autocracy. There can be no doubt that this glorious effort of the Caucasian proletarians will not fail to have its effect on the proletarians in other parts of Russia. Read also the innumerable resolutions passed by workers expressing profound contempt for the tsarist government, listen to the low but powerful murmuring in the countryside—and you will convince yourselves that Russia is a loaded gun with the hammer cocked ready to go off at the slightest shock. Yes, comrades, the time is not far distant when the Russian revolution will hoist sail and "sweep from the face of the earth" the vile throne of the despicable tsar!

Our vital duty is to be ready for that moment. Let us prepare then, comrades! Let us sow the good seed among the broad masses of the proletariat. Let us stretch out our hands to one another and *rally around the Party Committees!* We must not forget for a moment that *only the Party Committees can worthily lead us, only they will light up our road to the "promised land" called the socialist world!* The party which has opened our eyes and has pointed out our enemies to us, which has organised us in a formidable army and has led us to fight our foes, which has stood by us amidst joy and sorrow and has always marched ahead of us — is the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party! It, and *it alone*, will lead us in future!

A Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage—this is what we must fight for now!

Only such an Assembly will give us the *democratic republic* which we need so urgently in our struggle for socialism.

Forward then, comrades! When the tsarist autocracy is tottering, our duty is to prepare for the decisive assault! It is time to take revenge!

Down With the Tsarist Autocracy!

Long Live the Popular Constituent Assembly!

Long Live the Democratic Republic!

Long Live the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party!

Notes

[1.](#) This ukase of Tsar Nicholas II, dated December 12, 1904, was published in the newspapers together with a special government communique on December 14, 1904. While promising certain minor "reforms," the ukase proclaimed the inviolability of the autocratic power and breathed threats not only against the revolutionary workers and peasants, but also against the liberals who had dared to submit timid constitutional demands to the government. As V. I. Lenin expressed it, Nicholas II's ukase was "a slap in the face for the liberals."

[2.](#) This "draft constitution" was drawn up by a group of members of the liberal League of Emancipation in October 1904 and was issued in pamphlet form under the title: *The Fundamental State Law of the Russian Empire. Draft of a Russian Constitution*, Moscow 1904.

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