

# The Anniversary of the Lena Massacre [1](#)

*January-February 1913*

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Comrades!

A year has passed since 500 of our comrades were shot down on the Lena. On April 4, 1912, 500 of our brothers in the Lena goldfields were shot down for declaring a peaceful economic strike, shot down by order of the Russian tsar to please a handful of millionaires.

Gendarme Captain Treshchenko, who perpetrated this massacre in the name of the tsar and who received high awards from the government and generous rewards from the gold-mine owners, is now frequenting aristocratic bars and waiting for an appointment as a chief of a department in the Secret Service. On the spur of the moment a promise was made to provide for the families of the murdered men, but this turned out to be an insolent lie. A promise was made to introduce state insurance for the workers on the Lena, but it turned out to be a fraud. A promise was made to "investigate" the affair, but actually even the investigation made by their own envoy, Senator Manukhin, was hushed up.

"So it was, so it will be," was the Minister-butcher Makarov's retort from the floor of the Duma. And he proved to be right: the tsar and his ministers were, and will be, liars, perjurers, shedders of blood, a camarilla which carries out the will of a handful of brutal landlords and millionaires.

On January 9, 1905, faith in the old, pre-revolution autocracy was killed by the shooting in the Winter Palace Square in St. Petersburg.

On April 4, 1912, faith in the present, "renovated," post-revolution autocracy was killed by the shooting on the distant Lena.

All those who believed that we were already living under a constitutional system, all those who believed that the old atrocities were no longer possible, became convinced that this was not so, that the tsarist gang was still lording it over the great Russian people, that the Nicholas Romanov monarchy was still demanding for its altar the sacrifice of hundreds and thousands of Russian workers and peasants, that the whips and bullets of the tsar's hirelings—of the Treshchenkos who were displaying their prowess against unarmed Russian citizens—were still swishing and whistling all over Russia.

The shooting on the Lena opened a new page in our history. The cup of patience was filled to overflowing. The sluice gates of popular indignation were burst open. The river of popular anger began to flood. The words of that tsar's flunkey Makarov, "So it was, so it will be," poured oil on the flames. Their effect was the same as that produced in 1905 by the order of that other bloodhound of the tsar, Trepov: "Spare no bullets!" The labour movement began to surge and foam like a stormy sea. The Russian workers retaliated to the Lena shooting by a

united protest strike in which nearly half a million joined. And they held aloft our old red banner on which the working class once again inscribed the three chief demands of the Russian Revolution:

*An eight-hour day—for the workers.*

*Confiscation of all landlords' and tsar's land—for the peasants.*

*A democratic republic—for the whole people!*

A year of struggle lies behind us. Looking back we can say with gratification: a beginning has been made, the year has not passed in vain.

The Lena strike merged with the May Day strike. The glorious May Day of 1912 inscribed a golden page in the history of our labour movement. Since that time the struggle has not waned for a moment. Political strikes are spreading and growing. In answer to the shooting of the 16 sailors in Sevastopol, 150,000 workers came out in a revolutionary strike, thereby proclaiming the alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the revolutionary armed forces. By means of a strike, the St. Petersburg proletariat expressed their protest against the trickery with the elections to the Duma from the workers' curiae. On the day of the opening of the Fourth Duma, <sup>2</sup> on the day the Social-Democratic group moved an interpellation on the insurance question, the workers of St. Petersburg organised one-day strikes and demonstrations. And lastly, on January 9, 1913, as many as 200,000 Russian workers went on strike in honour of the memory of the fallen fighters, calling on all democratic Russia to launch a fresh struggle. Such is the main result of 1912.

Comrades! The first anniversary of the Lena massacre is drawing near. We must make our voices heard on that day in one way or another. It is our duty to do so.

We must show that we honour the memory of our murdered comrades. We must show that we have not forgotten that bloody April 4, just as we have not forgotten Bloody Sunday, January 9.

We must mark the Lena anniversary everywhere by meetings, demonstrations, collections of money, and so forth

And let the whole of working-class Russia on that day join in one mighty shout:

*Down With the Romanov Monarchy!*

*Long Live the New Revolution!*

*Long Live the Democratic Republic!*

*Glory to the Fallen Fighters!*

***The Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.***

Reprint and Distribute  
Prepare to Celebrate the First of May !

Written in January-February 1913

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The leaflet "The Anniversary of the Lena Massacre" was written by J. V. Stalin in Cracow in January-February 1913. It was copied by hand by N. K. Krupskaya, was duplicated on a hectograph and sent to Russia, where it

was distributed in St . Petersburg, Kiev, Moghilev, Tiflis and other towns.

2. The Fourth State Duma was opened on November 15, 1912.

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