



The 1905-07 Russian Revolution as a 'Moment of Truth': An Overlooked Contribution from Menshevism

Thatcher, I. (2021). The 1905-07 Russian Revolution as a 'Moment of Truth': An Overlooked Contribution from Menshevism. *Revolutionary Russia*, 34(2), 175-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2021.1984064>

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

Published in:
Revolutionary Russia

Publication Status:
Published (in print/issue): 29/12/2021

DOI:
[10.1080/09546545.2021.1984064](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2021.1984064)

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

General rights
Copyright for the publications made accessible via Ulster University's Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
The Research Portal is Ulster University's institutional repository that provides access to Ulster's research outputs. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact pure-support@ulster.ac.uk.



The 1905–07 Russian Revolution as a ‘Moment of Truth’: An Overlooked Contribution from Menshevism

Ian D. Thatcher

To cite this article: Ian D. Thatcher (2021) The 1905–07 Russian Revolution as a ‘Moment of Truth’: An Overlooked Contribution from Menshevism, *Revolutionary Russia*, 34:2, 175-195, DOI: [10.1080/09546545.2021.1984064](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2021.1984064)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2021.1984064>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 04 Oct 2021.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 113



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

Ian D. Thatcher

THE 1905–07 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AS A 'MOMENT OF TRUTH': AN OVERLOOKED CONTRIBUTION FROM MENSHEVISM

This article is the first exposition of a projected five-part Menshevik study of social forces in the Russian Revolution of 1905, only four volumes of which appeared in 1907 covering reaction, the proletariat, the peasantry, and the liberal and democratic bourgeoisie. This collective effort marked perhaps the first attempt to present an overall analysis of the revolution from within one perspective, that of the Menshevik variety of Russian Marxism. Despite the centrality of perceptions of revolution to participants and future historians of Russian socialism and of 1905, this project has been largely overlooked. This is to be regretted, for the volumes contain interpretations now familiar on the nature of the 1905 revolution and why it failed. Furthermore, there is continuity between the works and authors of 1907 and the subsequent (1909–14) much more famous Menshevik history of social movements in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Teodor Shanin described Russia's revolution of 1905–07 as its 'moment of truth' after which activists from monarchists to Marxists rethought their outlooks and programmes.¹ Shanin's work is a truly magisterial achievement in a 'sociologically informed history' that quite rightly stresses the 'way the experience of the 1905–07 revolution reconstructed the cognition of a political generation'.² This is particularly significant in the context of Russian revolutionaries who perceived themselves as part of a historical process in which current events were placed within a theoretical framework incorporating past-present-future. A 'correct' theoretical comprehension of reality was crucial not only to understanding the 'now' and whence it issued, but also to knowing how best to prod 'History' forward to progress, whether this be a form of liberalism or socialism. Russian liberal conceptions of the 1905 revolution were presented in Petr Struve's journal *Poliarnaia zvezda*.³ Most commentary and analysis, however, issued from a variety of left and Marxist perspectives. These included a pamphlet from the sociologist and economist A. A. Isaev (1851–1924),⁴ and newspapers, journals and collections from factions of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDRP).⁵

As soon as the 1905 revolution was seen not to have reached the revolutionary expectations of some commentators, there was a shift from journalism and reportage written immediately under the impression of unfolding events to works that were much more reflective and 'historical' in nature. The latter of necessity could appear from 1906 to 1907 onwards and even this was not that far removed from the revolution. Nevertheless, for revolutionaries so steeped in 'History' as a living process, it was perhaps natural to consider the historical meaning and significance of events so soon after their apparent conclusion. In these 'histories', ideology remained central and they thereby were also part of unfolding political polemics. 'Control' of the past was integral to current power politics and programmes for the future.⁶

This article seeks to rescue from historical obscurity what was undoubtedly one of the most profound, ambitious, and largely overlooked,⁷ first attempts to comprehend and analyse the 1905 revolution as a historical event. This was issued in 1907 under the editorial collective of the Mensheviks V. Gorn,⁸ V. Mech,⁹ and F. Cherevanin.¹⁰ This was a projected five-part examination of social forces in the revolution, only four volumes of which appeared, covering reaction (Mech), the workers (Cherevanin), peasants (N. Savarenskii, P. Marev, and Gorn), and the liberal and democratic bourgeoisie (Mech).¹¹ There was thus a welcome and rare focus on the 'right' as well as 'left' constituencies. The absence of the missing volume, Gorn's promised general account of the revolution, is keenly felt as it would have added significantly to the contemporary articles and pamphlets on this topic.

There are numerous difficulties for a historian investigating these volumes. There is no correspondence between the editors, so one cannot investigate the inner history of how the project was conceived – on whose initiative, and so on. There is no indication of the print run. Circulation and readership are largely unknown, although the concluding section of this article does try to measure some 'impact' from several limited contemporary reviews. That said, some of these receptions, especially Trotsky's, served to obscure rather publicize the series.¹² The volumes issued from self-identifying Mensheviks, but it does not appear to have been an officially-sponsored Menshevik project. The published volumes carried no stamp bearing party or factional allegiance. The correspondence of the leading Mensheviks and internal party documents shed no light. Some of the authors in the series are unknown. No biographical or further bibliographical information could be found on Savarenskii and Marev, who contributed sections to the volume on the peasantry. These essays appear to be their only published writings and they seem to have played no further role in the revolutionary movement.

In the absence of wider documentation, we are forced to rely on the preface to the first volume, which is the only source for a collective editorial explanation. The series aimed to 'elucidate the ... basic social processes which taken as a whole constitute the Russian Revolution ... the most important aspect of which is to comprehend the development of this great national battle as a unified, connected process within one broad, whole, detailed picture'.¹³ The authors admit that this would have been best undertaken by a single researcher, but the vast quantity of material would have made this a task of many years. It was therefore decided to divide up the work, a division suggested by the social processes themselves. On the defensive side were social forces positive about the autocracy that provided political and economic advantages to the exploiting classes. On the attack were three basic social forces: the peasantry,

the progressive bourgeoisie, and the proletariat, the latter being the most dangerous from the point of view of tsarism. While the series would aim to be objective, the authors caution that social science had yet to achieve the same level of 'objective analysis' as other scientific disciplines. In particular, the authors are Marxists and specifically a variety of Russian Marxism that had come to be known as Menshevik. Furthermore, there may be some repetition across the volumes and even on occasion contradictions, but such differences as may emerge would be left to the reader to adjudicate.

Although very brief, the preface gave a fair evaluation of the series' intentions and potential limitations. The attempt to be objective is evident in the references to a documentary source base that included contemporary newspapers, pamphlets, programmes, and official statistics. Frequent explanatory footnotes lend the volumes a scholarly tone and appearance. The volume on the peasantry, in particular, employs reproductions of hand drawn as well as printed graphs, and tables of economic, social, and political data. There is also a serious attempt to apply an analysis across the Russian empire to capture how there was no single and unified process affecting *all* social forces simultaneously in all locations. There is a keen awareness of both the limitations of the current statistical and investigation base, and of how the evidence suggested that general trends played out differently according to local conditions and contexts. This noted, it is surprising that the national movements are not considered as factors in the revolution in their own right. The emphasis throughout is on social forces as economic categories. There was also a strong 'subjective' element to the analyses, and this is more in evidence in some volumes than in others. In particular, Cherevanin's volume on the proletariat was by the nature of its subject far more likely to have a 'polemical' edge as it discussed RSDRP party literature and party leadership as much as the workers. It is for this reason that Cherevanin's volume attracted most of the contemporary reaction, included being singled out for translation into German.

Of necessity this article will consist largely of an exposition of the four published volumes. This is a worthwhile exercise for several reasons. In the 1905 revolution, Menshevism, as other factions of the RSDRP and beyond, became entranced with the idea of 'permanent revolution', that Russia was on the verge of an upheaval that would signal the transition to socialism.¹⁴ These volumes mark a turn within Menshevism against that. They are thereby an important but overlooked moment in the history of this faction. Furthermore, in conception they represent, admittedly on a much smaller scale, a forerunner to the subsequent and more well-known Menshevik history *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX-go veka* (1909–14).¹⁵ Second, a knowledge of these volumes expands understanding of the range and depth of then current responses to Shanin's 'moment of truth'. In the numerous studies of 1905, surveys of contemporaneous discussions of how Russians conceptualized their revolution have concentrated on the 'big thinkers' typical of Shanin's selection (Stolypin, Zhordaniia, Trotsky, and Lenin).¹⁶ It is a valid part of the historian's work to bring underused and unknown sources to more general attention. Third, although these volumes were not written with future 'scholarship' in mind and it would be unfair to judge them on how far they remain valid in the light of decades of subsequent studies, the concluding section points out that they are fertile sources for an analysis of the 1905 revolution. Indeed, their conclusions about why the revolution failed in the sense that it did not overthrow the autocracy – chiefly the fact that the main

strands of opposition to tsarism remained separate from and within each other in rhythm and intensity, never unifying into one concerted assault on the autocracy – are repeated in modern scholarship. In this sense they are of continued relevance and worth.

Reactionary forces

The opening paragraph of Mech's book describes its subject as the darkest aspect of the revolution: the movement of reaction and the pogromist counter-revolution. According to Mech, the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of Western Europe had not witnessed the level of mass brutality consciously engineered by the forces of reaction in Russia. Nevertheless, moral outrage and disgust should not hinder the research and analysis of these barbaric forms of struggle. To this end, Mech proposes first a sociology of reaction to be followed by an account of its political forms.

Undoubtedly, for Mech, the large landowning aristocracy was the firmest social support base for the autocracy. In this instance, the class interest was evident, for tsarism protected their estate privileges. To the landowning elite could be added the section of the wealthy industrialists whose factories and profits were tied to the feudal order. The industrial elite was, however, internally divided. Nationalist reactionaries argued for the protection of indigenous industry, but high tariffs were not to every industrialist's advantage. In 1905, large capitalist liberalism became renowned, but there were also industrialists such as the Moscow-based A. I. Guchkov who were counter-revolutionary, opportunistic conservatives. The large industrialists were thus an important but not as reliable an ally of reaction as the large landowners. There were then groups of a secondary order: career bureaucrats in the state administration, the upper echelons of the police, the armed forces, and the Orthodox Church. In service to the regime, these groups were dependent upon the survival of reaction. The Orthodox Church, for example, was a landowner and an integral part of the state administration. Mech also noted that an institutional culture of hierarchy and order lent these groups a reactionary character. At the same time, hierarchy made the upper echelons firmer reactionaries than those at the bottom where there could be far less enthusiasm for the autocracy. Mech was keen to promote subtlety in analysis and not see groups as homogenous.

Taking the 'firm reactionaries' as a whole, Mech noted their minority in the Russian population, around 4–5 million against 130 million. If it came down to numbers alone, the autocracy would have been doomed long ago. Further recruitment to reaction, according to Mech, came from a varied mixture of 'intermediate' layers that lacked full class consciousness, were bound to backward or isolated forms of economic activity, and were cut off from the two main forces of an emerging bourgeois order, the large industrialists and the proletariat. Not yet a conscious part of the bourgeois society in the making, the intermediate groups lacked knowledge and faith in the new order and thus tended to conservative outlooks. In the towns, the lumpen proletariat, lower middle-class merchants, artisans and their hired hands, and so on, could be recruited to reaction, especially if they blamed the revolution for any economic downturn. In the villages, especially in the most economically backward areas and where landlord-peasant relations were not antagonistic, the old beliefs of monarchism

and loyalism held firm. Reaction could thus appeal to sections of society whose real interests lay with the liberation movement, but who could be called upon to rally to counter-revolution precisely because of their social conditions:

The inter-relations of these two types of reaction is evident. The first force is the hard reactionaries and its leadership; the second is their means, the masses whom they call to their service, enrolled from appropriate groups. Their combination, with their different and even contradictory social interests, is consequently the product of well-known propaganda and organisation that is introduced into the backward environment with its particular psychological temperament. Thereby is founded mass reactionary parties, unions, and the Black Hundreds.¹⁷

It was, however, according to Mech, the emergence of modernization and its discontents that forced reaction into politics as a way of opposing the liberation movement. Mech noted the contradictions inherent in reactionary, right-wing politics. To construct mass parties suggests certain freedoms that are denied in an autocracy, so to found even a reactionary party went against the very principles of the regime. Furthermore, the act of founding a right-wing party suggested that the regime was no longer able to defend itself, nor the interests of the right-wing party. There is thereby an implicit admission that the autocracy is weak and in need of support or saving. It was considerations of this kind that for Mech meant that the forces of reactionary politics in the first Russian revolution were the outcome of reacting to events, and that they never managed to coalesce into highly-organized, centrally-directed political parties.

Reactionary politics was thus entered into cautiously. The first reactionary groups, according to Mech, were quasi-government, conspiratorial organizations formed in the 1880s to oppose revolutionary terror, such as the 'Holy League' and the 'Union of Active Struggle Against the Revolution', alongside a number of reactionary, patriotic hunting groups and nationalist cultural bodies. For Mech, these were not political parties, for they were narrow in their focus and were essentially hired by the government for propaganda purposes. Nevertheless, despite claims to 'legality', they also engaged in violence, including in a series of pogroms in the 1880s. It was the revolution that forced reaction into more overtly political campaigns to render more active support to the old order.

For Mech, the politics of the right in the revolution had been much less studied and comprehended than the liberation movement. For example, the differences within the latter between liberals, various Marxists and anarchists were known and understood. There were also, Mech pointed out, differences within right-wing politics, even if to a lesser extent than within the liberation camp, for the right-wing attracted a more spiritually impoverished recruit and a 'lower spiritual level always entails weaker differentiation, less individualism'.¹⁸ Nonetheless, following the Imperial Rescript of 18 February 1905 that gave a legal basis for political activity around a consultative assembly, the right began to organize openly. There emerged two main but differing reactionary parties: the Monarchist Party and the Union of Russian People (*Soiuz russkikh liudei*).

Founded in April 1905, the Monarchist Party, according to Mech, represented the most extreme form of reaction, with a predominantly aristocratic membership. Its

ideals derived from the highly conservative rule of Alexander III (1881–94). It rejected outright the notion of popular representation that would sound the death-knell for autocracy and backed rule of a bureaucracy under the tsar. For the Monarchist Party, the concessions of 1905 – the election of a Duma, citizen rights, and so on – were irrational within an autocracy. The Union of Russian People differed from the Monarchist Party in that it was a conglomerate of individuals and groups – largely nationalist and anti-Semitic in the capital and in the provinces – that coalesced loosely around the Union of Russian People banner. They were only subsequently to form a unified party. It wanted to turn the clock much further back in Russian history; its ideal was Muscovite Rus', a national-democratic natural-patriarchy in which there was direct contact between tsar and subjects via the *Zemskii sobor*. The Union of Russian People despised the modern state, rejected bureaucracy and attacked all foreign influences (above all Witte, St Petersburg, and Jews). Ultimately, the Union of Russian People was 'petty-bourgeois', 'vulgar-democratic nationalist', and 'virulently anti-Semitic', and pitted 'ignorance against the flowering of culture, the old, backward classes of the former economic order against the new and progressive, and the lower human type against the higher, more developed'. It was a 'wager on the ignorant'. Compared to the realism of the Monarchist Party, the Union of Russian People was, in Mech's estimation, 'a highly primitive form of historical utopianism'.¹⁹

Different in membership and in outlook, the Monarchist Party and the Union of Russian People were, for Mech, nevertheless complimentary rather than competing right-wing groups. They shared assumptions about the masses, for example, to whom both thought Western parliamentarianism 'alien'. That they both emerged simultaneously was not accidental, for they represented a 'division of labour' within the right.

In the 1905 revolution, Mech pointed out that the reactionary forces did not attract a mass following. Numbers at right-wing demonstrations, for example, lagged well behind those of the liberation camp. The right did not manage to match the liberation movement in organization or broad tactical leadership. The right remained dispersed and localized around particular events rather than centralised and continuous, despite the noted increase in right-wing group political activity. However, thanks to the government, the right had an impact beyond its presence in society. This derived largely from its links to certain elements within the state administration. For Mech, the state was divided between bourgeois autocrats of the Witte type and feudal autocrats of the Plehve mould. In times of dire emergency, the tsar would call upon the bourgeois autocrats, as he did in 1905 to reach a compromise with society to quell discontent. However, the feudal autocrats would seek to undermine such progressive deals, including using the right-wing groups. After the October Manifesto, for example, the feudal autocrats organized pogroms via the police and army on a previously unseen scale in terms of violence and victims. Here the Black Hundreds were active participants, rallying the socially insecure, isolated petty bourgeois and *lumpen* elements. Indeed, pogroms such as that at Belostok (Białystok) in June 1906 were best understood, for Mech, as an 'official' Black Hundred campaign.²⁰

Despite support from the state, Mech pointed out that the right proved to be ineffectual in the elections to the First Duma at which there was next to no representation from the reactionary groups. For Mech, this was a consequence of the right's narrow,

sectional approach. In response, the right unleashed a campaign against the Duma. In April 1906, for instance, the Second All-Russian Congress of the All-People's Russian Union declared that 'the Duma as elected can in no wise be taken as a genuine reflection of the beliefs of the Russian people'.²¹ In the following month, the All-Russian Congress of the United Nobility called for the Duma's dispersal and the promulgation of a new electoral law. Indeed, the Stolypin administration was seen by Mech to favour the right and to draw upon its resolutions to make official policy, of which he gives several examples, including: (1) the Duma's dispersal was demanded by, amongst others, the All-People's Russian Union on 7 July 1906; (2) the increase in guards for landowners was demanded by a series of meetings of landowners, aristocrats and reactionary land unions; (3) military-field tribunals were demanded by 'true Russian' organizations beginning with the congress of the Union of Landowners in November 1905; (4) the attack on the commune and the juridical 'liberation' of the peasants to increase individual ownership and respect for property was suggested by the Union of Landowners in November 1905; and (5) the programme on the Jewish Question, published on 14 November 1906, bore the imprint of 'true Russian' influence.²² In this way, it was the government, by crushing the revolution with armed force and the waning of the energies of the liberation movement as a consequence that led to the domination of the right. Devoid of organization and mass support, the right-wing reactionary groups were triumphant, according to Mech, thanks to the actions of the ancien regime.

In this context, at the end of Mech's narrative, the Union of Russian People (*Soiuz russkago naroda*) had become the dominant reactionary group. Founded in St. Petersburg in October 1905, it sought to unite disparate right-wing groups. By January 1906, a branch in Moscow opened. It was the third main right-wing group examined by Mech, combining in Mech's view the demagogy of the *Soiuz russkikh liudei* with the politics of the Monarchist Party. In economic policy, its nationalism sought to repulse Jewish and foreign ownership, abandon the gold standard and protect Russian industry via an independent national currency. With wealth gathered from 'dubious sources', the *Soiuz russkago naroda* extended its provincial network and published numerous newspapers and journals. Even so, a successful demonstration for the right of 7,000–15,000 in Moscow in November 1906 was still well below the crowds that gathered for liberal or socialist public displays of support.

The proletariat in the Russian Revolution

Cherevanin aims not for a comprehensive analysis of the internal development that the proletariat and its social-democratic vanguard underwent during the revolution. Despite a claim that the focus of his book is much narrower on what the proletariat did, on its direct revolutionary work,²³ much of the analysis is given over to a critique of revolutionary leadership and tactics, whether of the most advanced workers or of the Social Democrats. He adopts a chronological approach, spread over seven chapters: the reasons for the revolution; the workers' movement before Bloody Sunday; from Bloody Sunday to the October Manifesto; the October strikes; from the October Manifesto to the December uprising; the December uprising; and after the December defeat. Several dominant themes are present.

First, Cherevanin charts the impressive growth in worker organization and strike action from the end of the 1890s to the close of 1905. Under the impact of the general tense political atmosphere and military defeats against Japan, several months of 1905 witnessed leaps in worker consciousness that would normally have taken years.²⁴ Undoubtedly, for Cherevanin, the proletariat played the crucial role in the opposition to autocracy.²⁵ It pushed the liberals, for example, to even stronger democratic demands, as the professions and industrialists became convinced that the best way to contain the workers was within a parliamentary system.²⁶ At the same time, Cherevanin noted important aspects of the worker movement in 1905 that illustrated its weaknesses alongside its strengths. Above all, the Russian workers' movement was uneven in organization and consciousness across the Russian empire and lacked national co-ordination.²⁷ In the two months of strikes that occurred following Bloody Sunday, for example, the most advanced proletarian movements lay in the 'borderlands', most notably amongst Polish, Jewish, and Latvian workers.²⁸ With some exceptions – St Petersburg, Saratov – the post-Bloody Sunday strikes inside Russia were a 'classic form of economic struggle' as well as a 'semi-conscious protest against the general political situation'.²⁹ The disparity between the borderlands and the interior was evident in the May Day demonstrations that failed to materialize in the capital but were marked with mass meetings, marches and Red Banners in Poland that already celebrated May Day according to the Julian calendar, 'our 18 April'.³⁰ The unevenness in levels of worker organization and consciousness combined with the absence of national co-ordination meant, according to Cherevanin, that the intensity of worker revolt happened according to local conditions and to different timescales. Conflict in different regions thereby remained isolated and much easier for the regime to suppress. This was above all evident in the failed Moscow adventure of December 1905 that did not attract a broad response or backing outside the capital. It was also true by that time that the workers in general were exhausted after a year of struggle.³¹

Second, Cherevanin argued that the height of the success of worker action was the October strikes and the issuance of the Manifesto of 17 October. The Manifesto, which for Cherevanin took social democracy by surprise, was not the planned outcome of the worker strikes.³² These began spontaneously and developed over time in scale and in the incorporation of political alongside economic demands. Cherevanin highlighted the key role played by the railway workers, particularly the skilled educated section, and the Congress of Delegates that had been elected to the commission investigating labour protection and pensions. The October strikes witnessed new levels of worker activity and social democratic influence in Moscow, Khar'kov, and Ekaterinoslav. The unevenness in the worker movement noted earlier was still apparent, however. In Kiev and in Odessa, for instance, the workers played a more modest role.³³ It would also be a mistake, Cherevanin emphasized, to deny the role played by other social groups and forces. The government was forced into the October concession not by the workers alone, but because the regime was isolated in the urban centres. In the post-Bloody Sunday months, Cherevanin noted the professional associations, such as the Congress of Doctors meeting in Moscow in March 1905, which included radical political demands such as a Constituent Assembly based on the four-tail suffrage in their programmes. In October 1905, a host of professional groups lent their support to the strikes, urging the government to satisfy the workers' demands. This was also true

of the Kadet founding congress. The strikes were also taken up by white-collar workers, including the banks. When the minister of finance, Kokovstov, visited a bank and tried to rally bank clerks to the regime's side by asserting that one had to be able to look one's grandchildren in the eye when they asked 'during the time of trouble were you on the side of law and order?', a clerk replied to loud applause, 'and what will we say when our grandchildren ask: "were you at the time of trouble on the side of freedom?"'³⁴ Even industrialists rendered the strikers passive backing by continuing to pay wages during the strikes. However crucial, therefore, the role of the workers in October 1905, and despite the advances in organization and consciousness, the October victory for Cherevanin was won as part of a coming together of opposition streams into a blow that shook but did not overthrow the regime. The concessions were sufficient to calm the discontent and the strikes.

A third theme of Cherevanin's book is a critique of the leadership of the advanced worker intelligentsia and the Social Democrats, whether Menshevik,³⁵ Bolshevik,³⁶ or in Soviets of Workers Deputies,³⁷ who overestimated the power and influence of the workers alone and underestimated the strength of the autocracy. Here, for Cherevanin, the workers' leaders fell victim to 'revolutionary illusions' of taking the undoubted miracles of the scale of strike action in Russia as a sign that the workers could achieve such wonders as the overthrow of tsarism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whether with or without the peasantry. Cherevanin was scathing about the writings of Trotsky, Parvus, Rozhkov, and others in the mass-circulation Menshevik newspaper *Nachalo* and in collections such as *Tekushchii moment*.³⁸

For Cherevanin, social democracy after the October Manifesto had the choice of either focusing upon the promised parliament and making this the centre of its agitation or of pursuing the immediate replacement of tsarism with a Constituent Assembly. The former tactic would have flowed from an objective analysis of how the October concession had been wrested – that is, when the proletariat had enjoyed broad social sympathy and support. It would have enabled the workers to move in the same direction as the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie, especially if the workers pursued sensible and reasonable demands in their economic struggles. Moreover, pursuing politics around a parliament would have allowed further political maturity of workers and crucially of peasants, the mass of whom lacked any comprehension of modern politics and its institutions. In this way, keeping the regime isolated and developing the opposition movement in all its aspects, the revolution would be stronger and progressing.³⁹ Instead, the hot-headed leadership, incapable of an objective analysis, pursued an inappropriate, ultra-radical programme of an immediate uprising and a Constituent Assembly. Why? In part, it flowed from a mistaken view of what had occurred in 1905. Thus, for instance, Trotsky was wrong to claim that the proletariat was in combative, revolutionary mood before 9 January. The significance of Bloody Sunday was that it broke whatever misconceptions the people still had about the 'merciful' nature of Nicholas II, only *after which* did the people become radicalized. There was still a huge difference though, Cherevanin emphasized, between being radicalized by events like Bloody Sunday and the sinking of the Russian fleet and acquiring a high level of political awareness and knowledge. The fact was that despite advances in 1905, the general political consciousness of the Russian proletariat remained low. In adopting a radical programme, the proletarian leadership denied this reality.⁴⁰ A second reason why an inappropriate tactic was pursued for Cherevanin was the dominance of the fancies of

'permanent revolution' in the leaders' mind-set. They believed that the proletariat alone could leap semi-feudal Russia directly into socialist construction. This was plainly misconceived, and the army, the peasants, the bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia were not on the revolutionaries' side. In the main, Russian society was willing to see how the compromise settlement offered by the autocracy would work. It was also exhausted by a year of struggle. Any attempt to overthrow the regime would be isolated, doomed to defeat. Indeed, according to Cherevanin, any premature uprising would play into the hands of the government who could then unleash an ultra-violent reaction. This is exactly what happened in Moscow in December 1905 when the authorities took a pseudo-uprising for the real thing all the more to come down harshly. Ultimately, the ultra-radicalism of the proletariat post-Manifesto harmed only the workers, social democracy and the liberation movement more generally. The First Duma was closed so easily, for example, precisely because social democracy, not understanding the significance of the call for a responsible ministry, attacked the 'constitutional illusions' of the Kadets more than the government, thereby cutting the workers off from supporting the Duma. The outcome was a strengthening of reaction that would most likely last for years to come.⁴¹

The peasants in the Russian Revolution

The volume on the peasants consisted of three essays that examined separate though inter-related aspects of peasant involvement in the revolution over 1905–07: the economic peasant movement (Savarenskii), peasant politics (Marev) and the role of the peasants in the revolution (Gorn). There is some overlap between the essays and much agreement amongst the authors over the general course, influence, and outcome of peasant actions. All note, for example, that the peasant movement was not a surprise, nor did it necessarily mark new forms of peasant struggle. It was in many ways the continuation of rural disturbances evident from 1902 onwards. There is consensus on the underlying economic difficulties and political repression that underpinned and motivated peasant discontent. The authors agree that the peasants did not initiate a revolution that was driven by the towns (the urban intelligentsia and the proletariat), the impact of liberal *zemstvo* political campaigns and the disastrous war with Japan. Given, however, the close ties between workers and peasants, with many workers still returning to villages periodically, collective worker action and its success made a special impression upon the peasants. Although peasants are represented as lagging behind workers in political consciousness and organization, the peasants are acknowledged as a vital constituency of the revolution. If there had been no peasant unrest, there would have been no revolution. Indeed, it is argued that before, during, and after the First Duma, the peasants were at the forefront of the revolution, after which peasant demands, actions, and reactions were central to an understanding of the politics of the revolution's end-game. The peasants are not viewed as one undifferentiated mass, but varied within the context of their region and local economy. The unevenness of the peasant movement and its adoption of different forms of protest according to a specific environment is one of the major features of the authors' analysis. Although peasants as a whole are interpreted as lacking an advanced political awareness, their economic demands and the means of their pursuit are seen as rational. Above all,

peasants revealed their determination to follow their own beliefs that land access was the key to economic success, and that land should be distributed to labouring peasants. In this sense the land question was the central issue of the Russian revolution.

Savarenskii offers a general outline of the main contours of peasant action. He identifies a steady rise of peasant disturbances from the spring of 1905 (affecting 14% of European Russia) to a peak in the autumn of 1905 (affecting 37% of European Russia) when two thousand farmsteads were destroyed at a cost of 27 million roubles. The movement then broadened further over the first half of 1906 and reached a new peak in the summer of 1906 before falling away noticeably by the autumn of 1906. This marked the revolution's defeat. Three main forms of peasant action – wood theft, seizures, and strikes – are highlighted that were largely stable. Peasant goals were predominantly economic, seeking greater resources (land, grain, wood) or better working conditions (wages, shorter hours, rent reductions). In each form of protest, restraint was displayed towards individuals – there were no personal attacks on landowners, for example – alongside a determination in seeking economic redress.

The main focus of Savarenskii's analysis, however, points out variations in the pace, scale, and nature of peasant protest that revealed substantial unevenness in the peasant movement. This is largely at the level of regional variation, but Savarenskii is also aware of nuances within as well as between regions, as well as within and between different forms of protest. At a regional level, for example, there was a predominance of seizures in the central agricultural region, of wood theft in the industrial and northern regions, and of strikes in the south-west. Such contrasts are explained by the structure of the regional economy: 'in northern Russia, for example, forests play a large economic role, in the south extensive grain farming predominates, while in the south-west there developed a high form of sugar-beet production'.⁴² Moreover, the curve of peasant disturbances varied according to region. In the central agricultural region, there was a rapid take-off, a levelling and then rapid decline; in the northern industrial region, a steady increase and then a less substantial fall; while in the north- and south-west, the height of peasant discontent was in the spring and summer and largely absent in the autumn and winter. There was thus no united and co-ordinated national peasant movement, and some regions and districts could be relatively quiet while disturbances raged elsewhere. There could also be some change over time in the form of protest, so for instance in the central agricultural region there was a rise in strikes in 1906 over 1905. However, the strikes in the central agricultural region were different in character from the strikes in the north- and south-west. When they took off unexpectedly in 1906, for example, the strikes in the central agricultural region bore a 'pogrom character' whereas the peasant strikes in the north- and south-west were more 'proletarian'. Here, proximity to the towns would have been important, for as Savarenskii argues it was 'thanks to close contact with towns under the influence of the workers' movement that the peasant movement of the industrial regions took on a political character'.⁴³ In the absence of central organization, co-ordination, consciousness, and programme, the peasant movement did not succeed in forcing the 'black repartition', but it did win some economic concessions from landowners and the state. For Savarenskii, the struggle would continue. Glancing ahead, he did not expect the main forms of peasant action or peasant demands to change substantially for which a rapid alteration of the economy would be required.

Marev's account of peasant politics highlighted a commitment to radical economic change (the basic peasant demand for an end to land hunger by the transfer of all land into a common fund for use only by those who work the land) alongside a much more cautious approach to politics and political change. Marev listed a range of factors that hindered the take-off of peasant politics from the isolation of villages in Russia's vast lands, their separation from urban life and culture, low literacy levels, and an absence of political activity. Even in the towns, socialists complained of a lack of cadres. The situation was much worse in the countryside from which political parties, including the recently founded Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), were largely absent. The attempt of *zemstvo* liberals, amongst others, to engage peasants in politics had failed. There was strong peasant suspicion of politics alongside a belief in the 'good tsar'. Such factors, according to Marev, restrained and conditioned peasant politics during 1905–07.

There were developments, though, and some of them significant. Much attention is given to the formation and foundation of the All-Russian Peasant Union over the latter half of 1905. This organization also helped found the Trudovik Group in the first Duma from predominantly non-party peasant deputies. Analysis of peasant voting from the first to the second Duma elections suggested a shift leftwards; in no sense did the government achieve its expectation of a conservative peasant monarchist parliament. Moreover, following the closure of the first Duma, peasants clashed with police and the army, and defended their demands at a host of peasant meetings and congresses. There were therefore good grounds to claim that 'a year of struggle had to a significant degree changed a social-economic movement in the countryside into a political movement'.⁴⁴

At the same time Marev urges against any over-estimation of political developments amongst the peasants. In particular, the utopian dreams of 'permanent revolution' were inappropriate as peasant political consciousness was completely out of step with that of the advanced workers. Peasants concentrated on private interests that differed according to the peculiarities of location. The peasants were not in a Marxist sense a universal class: 'lowering rents, wage increases, the realization of "historic rights" to land use, etc., – such were the various forms of the peasant movement in different places and even of different villages within the same area'.⁴⁵ Peasant politics was still above all characterized by disorganization, weakly articulated peasant political thought, and a reluctance to accept criticism of the tsar. As a consequence, for Marev, the All-Russian Peasant Union and the Trudovik Group avoided certain political issues – above all a republic – and engaged in 'possibilism/opportunism' over revolutionary politics. Thus, at the All-Russian Peasant Union congress of November 1905, the advocates of revolutionary violence (mainly the Saratov SR stronghold) were a distinct minority compared to the promoters of evolutionary 'within-system' reform. It would also be a mistake, for Marev, to take the All-Russian Peasant Union as representative of all peasants. It was rather 'a general staff without an army'.⁴⁶ Similarly, a closer examination of electoral results to the second Duma reveals a split in peasant voters between left and right. The former camp was not necessarily motivated by a commitment to socialism, but rather to land reform. Peasant protest around the Duma was insufficient to defend the parliaments as it was still sporadic and isolated. However much peasant politics had developed and progressed over 1905–07, for Marev it was not in itself a terminal force against tsarism.

Gorn's concluding essay on the role of the peasants in the revolution emphasized the fundamental influence of the land question and peasant demands. This impact was not necessarily intended or direct for the peasants were not politically conscious. Nevertheless, liberal and socialist parties and societies aimed to win over the peasant constituency by including calls for radical land reform in their programmes. Such demands could not be satisfied within the autocracy, so radical democratization was of necessity also promoted. In this way, peasant demands acted to radicalize the opposition movement. Gorn also noted that local politics was at its most radical, as in the Caucuses and in the Baltic, including taking over the running of local administration, when the proletarian and peasant movements united. It was in the 'Duma period' that, for Gorn, the role of the peasants in politics reached its highest point. Conflict in the Duma revolved, according to Gorn, around peasant issues, most notably land reform. Forming the majority of electors, the Dumas were 'peasant parliaments' and confounded government expectations by being revolutionary. Even socialists who triumphed the 'hegemony of the proletariat' engaged in a 'wager on the peasants' around the Duma.⁴⁷ Such a wager did not, however, pay dividends, for the regime had a more realistic evaluation of the peasant movement. It could disperse the Duma at will, for according to Gorn, 'it had learnt that the peasants were incapable of political action on an all-Russian scale and it could pick off isolated rebellions one by one'.⁴⁸ The end of the revolution in the closure of the second Duma showed the powerlessness of the main opposition forces – worker, peasant, and liberal bourgeois. The ultimate outcome of the revolution would depend, for Gorn, on the fate of the Stolypin reforms – 'a deal between the bourgeoisie, the landowners and the autocracy on the basis of a propertied constitution with exclusion clauses against socialists, workers and peasants'.⁴⁹

The liberal bourgeoisie in the Russian Revolution

Mech's survey of Russian liberalism begins by identifying its various types that straddled a broad right-left spectrum. Each type, according to Mech, was supported by a distinct social group or force. On the far right of liberalism stood the 'utopian' Slavophile liberalism of the aristocracy that sought to reunite tsar and people via the reincarnation of the feudal Land Council. Moderate propertied liberalism represented, for Mech, the large capitalist bourgeoisie and included some large landowners. It enjoyed a privileged position within tsarism, including special influence over state policy and administration. Nevertheless, it was brought into the arena of liberal opposition and political demands for some 'democratic' concessions out of unease with the autocracy's poor management of the state, evident in financial waste, an underdeveloped legal framework and senseless foreign policy adventures. Propertied liberalism was above all, for Mech, driven by commercial interests: 'a constitution was needed for the rational exploitation of bourgeois capital so the bourgeoisie became constitutionalists'.⁵⁰ This type of liberalism found its political home in the Union of 17 October. *Zemskii* liberalism was, for Mech, composed of the cultured gentry and the professional sections of the *zemstvo* administration – agronomists, land-lawyers, land-teachers, and so on. It sought a greater role for itself in society and in state administration and promoted compromise. It addressed its appeals to the state rather than to the people in the form of

hopes rather than demands. According to Mech, the *zemskii* liberals eventually formed the right-wing of the Kadet party. Although liberal *zemstvo* congresses and activities were notable over 1904–05, they never captured or represented the majority of *zemstva*. This was apparent, for Mech, in the ease with which the *zemskii* liberals were purged from the *zemstva* in the latter part of 1905. The largest liberal type was, according to Mech, made up of the bourgeois-intelligentsia. This was in turn a multifarious group of the professions that were highly educated and not bound to one social caste or interest. They were in an intermediate position between the two main forces of capitalism – the industrialists and the workers – and could try to appeal to each. The professions aimed for freedom of expression in a constitution and a parliament as aims in themselves that would guarantee their position and interests. They sought compromise and would present themselves as ‘above-class’. They were influential for their expertise played crucial roles in a developing capitalist economy. They had permeated state and society, but were still isolated from the masses and the elite. They were a broad church that was in no wise revolutionary, but in Mech’s estimation, ‘resolutionary’. They were also not of a single type, with some being political associations according to a profession and others more interested in defending a professional interest that could include a political perspective. The least developed form of Russian liberalism identified by Mech was radical liberalism. It was still not possible to clearly identify its social support as it was so poorly expressed, but Mech guessed that it would issue from the lowest and poorest layer of the professional intelligentsia. Whatever the type of liberalism, Mech cautioned that one should not confuse a liberal organization’s stated goals with its essence, for a radical shell could often hide a reactionary kernel.

Russian liberalism was, for Mech, a highly complex, diverse, and dispersed movement, and this would impact negatively on its organizational progress. There were indeed important moments in the political history of Russian liberalism that Mech follows, including the foundation of the Union of Liberation, the Union of *Zemstvo* Constitutionals, the Congress of *Zemstvo* Personnel, the banquet campaigns of autumn and winter of 1904–05, and others. The influence of liberal propaganda was an important element of the social discontent of that time and was in evidence, for Mech, in the petition of Georgy Gapon’s Assembly. Yet this was not in a positive sense, for the petition combined the expectations of liberal petitions in the goodness of tsar and the administration with radical visions of a Constituent Assembly – ‘such was the contradictory political psychology, the naïve combination of liberalism and proletarian democracy’.⁵¹

For Mech, liberalism was not a guiding force of the revolution. Some of its elements did, at times, offer important support to the revolution. For example, liberal professional organizations offered financial and other backing during the October strikes, including in resolutions. Here as elsewhere, though, liberalism trailed behind events. Overall, it was largely ineffectual in influencing the state or the masses. In part, this was a consequence of its lag in organization – it was behind the socialists in party formation, for instance. The main liberal parties were founded only after the autumn of 1905. The spectrum of liberal opinion and its opportunism meant that awkward and contested questions were avoided so that clear programmes were either not agreed or declared too late. Amongst other issues, there was, according to Mech, no agreement amongst liberals on the enfranchisement of women or on

whether Russia should be a republic, or if there should be one parliament or two. After procrastination and the defeat of the post-October 1905 worker revolts, the second Kadet congress of January 1906 settled on a 'parliamentary monarchy'. Hardly a rallying call for the masses! On the key tactical questions of the time, including whether to boycott the first Duma, the liberals followed and repeated the mistakes of the socialists in a desperate attempt to win popular appeal. Liberal success in the elections to the first Duma was a consequence not of liberal strength, but the absence of the extreme left and right. In the political struggles of the Duma period, the Kadets were blinded by 'constitutional illusions', believing that rational resolutions were sufficient to win over the state. This miscalculation was clear when the Duma was closed without consequence and the liberals were left dumbfounded and isolated: 'this unexpected blow, this sharp slap in the face to the belief in a legal outcome to the revolution ... forced liberalism out of its usual tactical somnolence. It issued the Vyborg Manifesto. It adopted a tactic for which it had not prepared the people, nor could it for it was an illegal tactic. It called upon the people to a struggle that it was itself incapable of leading'.⁵²

Liberalism could do nothing more than work within the limits permitted by the autocracy, although now devoid of its previous optimism. The main development of note, for Mech, was the types of liberalism finding firmer expression in political parties but this represented a further fragmentation. The Union of 17 October, for example, was a more openly conservative liberal party of 'pure Russia' and was clearly 'counter-revolutionary'. Right-wing liberals who did not wish to abandon their 'liberalism' so starkly were forming smaller parties such as the Party of Peaceful Renewal and the Independent Club. On the extreme left of liberalism in the autumn of 1906, the People's Socialist Party was founded. Such a divided liberalism did not offer, for Mech, great prospects for further progressive political change.

Conclusion

The four volumes of *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil* were an ambitious project for a broad Marxist social and historical analysis of the main forces of the 1905 revolution. There are weaknesses. The effort of several authors, there was no attempt at an overall synthesis or conclusion. Rarely did one volume make reference to the findings of another. There are notable contrasts between and within the volumes. Cherevanin and Mech, for example, have quite conflicting interpretations of the liberals. The former was much more positive about the progressive role of the liberals, seeing their failure as a consequence of poor revolutionary tactics from the Social Democrats. For the latter, Russian liberalism was weakened by its own divisions and delayed organizational formation. The liberals of Mech's analysis were also much more prone to compromise with the autocracy in the defence of their own class interests than the combative all-class liberalism of Cherevanin. Within the volume on the peasantry, there is a far more favourable evaluation of the Trudovik Group in Gorn's essay in comparison to Marev's.

There was a limited contemporary reception to *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil*. There was only one contemporary review that considered the four volumes together. It described each volume individually very briefly along with a word of praise or some

suggestion for expansion. For example, Mech's volume on reaction could have mentioned that Russian conservatism lagged way behind Western conservatism as an ideology and political force.⁵³ Cherevanin's volume on the proletariat received the most attention. It was translated into German, thereby receiving greater circulation and publicity than the companion volumes. In several reviews, most notably by Trotsky, it was seized upon for polemical purposes to represent a 'Menshevik theory of the revolution', lauding the power and role of Russian liberalism. This was then roundly criticized for ignoring the class struggle between socialism and liberalism and having no living connection or understanding of the tactics of a revolutionary social democracy, and indeed of the inner forces of Russian social and historical development.⁵⁴ This may have been a legitimate rebuff to Cherevanin, but it was unfair to take this single volume out of its context and take it as representative of the series as a whole.

It is understandable that the advocates of a revolution led by the proletariat would defend themselves from Cherevanin's provocative attacks, but their rebuffs did not lead to any greater attention being paid to *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil*. At the time, Lenin seems to have been unaware of its publication.⁵⁵ In 1907, he did not rouse the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks claiming hegemony over the history of the revolution as he did subsequently with the appearance of *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX-go veka*.⁵⁶ The occasional reference notwithstanding,⁵⁷ *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil* has been confined to historical obscurity, largely if not completely ignored by scholarship. This is to be regretted for while there are oversights and omissions – particularly on the national movements – the volumes richly illustrate how the conclusions of contemporaries converge with much subsequent work and analysis. The emphasis on the uneven nature of the social movements, how they varied in time and location, is central to historical explanations of the strengths and weaknesses of the revolutionary movement of 1905–07 and ultimately of how tsarism was able to survive.⁵⁸ *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil* was an important reflection on the 'moment of truth' not only for its time, but for the historical interpretations of the future that all too often repeat (if unconsciously) the evaluations of contemporaries.

Notes

1. Shanin, *Russia, 1905–07*, xii.
2. *Ibid.*, xvi.
3. For an account of Struve's writings on 1905 see, for example, Dmitriev, 'Max Weber and Peter Struve on the Russian Revolution'; and Putnam, 'P.V. Struve's view of the Russian Revolution of 1905'.
4. Isaev, *Kharakter russkoi revoliutsii*. This pamphlet offers in an important qualification to Shanin for it outlines the changes in intellectual history that were a vital pre-requisite of the 1905 revolution, particularly in the development of socialism as an ideology. It was precisely the profound changes in consciousness that not only made 1905 what it was, but also made it an event very different in character than the French Revolution of the eighteenth-century.
5. See, for example, from the Bolsheviks the monthly *Vestnik Zhizn'* issued in St Petersburg between April 1906 and September 1907, and the collections *Nevskii sbornik* and *Tekushchii moment*, and from the Mensheviks *Moskva v dekabre 1905g.* and *Rabochii Ezhegodnik*.

6. For this point in a related but different context, see Thatcher, 'First Histories'.
7. Tiutiukin devotes two paragraphs to *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil* before discussing the 'more fundamental Menshevik work' *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie* in greater detail. See *Men'shevizm: stranitsy istorii*, 230–9. In a chapter devoted to Menshevism in the 1905 revolution, Urilov draws upon *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie* but makes no mention of *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil*; *Istoriia rossiskoi sotsial-demokratii [Men'shevizma] 3: Proiskhozhdenie men'shevizma*, footnotes 3, 5, 28, 35, 37, 71, 90, 106, 111, 118, 134, 142, and 147 to chapter 3 '1905 god'. A Western study that also overlooks *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil* despite a focus on Menshevism is Larsson, *Theories of Revolution*. Ascher is seemingly oblivious to *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil*, noting only *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie* as an attempt by Mensheviks shortly after 1905 to interpret the revolution; *The Revolution of 1905*, 3–4.
8. V. Gorn (V. G. Groman, 1874–1940): a specialist on agrarian affairs within Russian social democracy, Gorn was an editor of the Menshevik publication *Nashe delo*. Gorn acquired a reputation as a leading economist. In the First World War, he was influential within the Union of Towns. Following the February Revolution, Gorn was a leading advocate of fixed prices within the Provisional Government's food supply apparatus. In the Soviet period, he worked within state economic administration. He was arrested for counter-revolutionary activity in 1930 and put on trial in 1931. His punishment was ten years in prison.
9. V. Mech (V. D. Machinskii, 1876–1951): a Menshevik and engineer by profession, Mech was non-party after the October Revolution and worked as a teacher and instructor in Soviet educational and technical institutions.
10. F. Cherevanin (F. A. Lipkin, 1868–1938): joined the RSDRP in 1900 and became a leading Menshevik. Gave a report at the IV Congress on the armed uprising and was a delegate at the V Congress. He was a member of the Organisational Committee after the August Conference of 1912 and was a member of the editorial teams of leading Menshevik publications, including *Rabochaia gazeta* in 1917. In the February Revolution, Cherevanin is credited with being one of the first to propose the creation of a Soviet of Workers' Deputies. He opposed the October Revolution, although he remained in Soviet Russia. He was arrested in 1930, sentenced to five years imprisonment in 1931, and then sent into internal exile in 1935. He was sentenced to death and shot in 1938.
11. Gorn, Mech, and Cherevanin, eds., *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil v russkoi revoliutsii. Vyp. 1. Mech, Sily reaktivii*; 2. Cherevanin, *Proletariat v revoliutsii*; 3. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsii* [Savarenskii, 'Ekonomicheskoe dvizhenie krest'ianstva', Marev, 'Politicheskaiia bor'ba krest'ianstva', Gorn, 'Rol krest'ianstva v revoliutsii']; 4. Mech *Liberal'naiia i demokraticheskaia burzhuaziia*.
12. Trotsky wrote his review from a German translation of Cherevanin's volume. The German version did not mention the Russian series from which it was taken. The broader project would only become known to a reader who was determined to seek out Cherevanin's book in its original language. See further in endnote 54 below. The series' existence was also obscured by subsequent scholars not citing the series when using individual volumes. In an early scholarly article on the Russian Right, for example, Hans Rogger cites the title, place, and date of Mech's book, but not the series of which it was one part; 'Was there a Russian Fascism?', 398, fn. 2. I am grateful to George Gilbert for bringing this source to my attention.
13. Mech, *Sily reaktivii*, 5.

14. See, for example, Larsson, *Theories of Revolution*, 339–56; and Perrie, ‘The Socialist Revolutionaries on “Permanent Revolution”.’
15. Martov, Maslov, and Potresov, eds., *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie*. Cherevanin contributed chapters on the intelligentsia in volumes one and two (part two) and, with F. Dan, a co-authored chapter on the Union of 17 October for volume 3. Gorn wrote a chapter on the peasant movement before 1905 for volume 1. Gorn should have contributed a further chapter on the peasant movement in 1905–07 for volume two, part 2, but ‘accidental circumstances’ prevented this and the material he had gathered was used by Maslov to produce this chapter (volume two, part 2, p. 203). Mech is absent from *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie*. *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie* was conceived in late 1907 and early 1908, that is after the publication of *Bor’ba obshchestvennykh sil*. See, for example, Urilov, ed., *Iu. O. Martov i A. N. Potresov*, 106ff. There are some citations of *Bor’ba obshchestvennykh sil* in *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie*. In the latter see, for example, volume two, part 1, 46, 61, 242, 246; volume two, part 2, 105, 182; and volume three, 599.
16. For examples of analyses of theoretical conceptions of 1905 from the most famous thinkers see Avila and Gaido, ‘Karl Kautsky and the Russian Revolution of 1905’; Day and Gaido, eds., *Witnesses to Permanent Revolution*; and Pipes, ‘Max Weber and Russia’.
17. Mech, *Sily reaktsii*, 25.
18. *Ibid.*, 60.
19. *Ibid.*, 64, 66, 68.
20. *Ibid.*, 90.
21. *Ibid.*, 89.
22. *Ibid.*, 93–5.
23. Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 3.
24. *Ibid.*, 37.
25. *Ibid.*, 11.
26. *Ibid.*, 10–11, 34, 40–1.
27. In this context Cherevanin argues that even though the scale of the strike movement in Russia caught the world by surprise, Russian workers remained much less organized and conscious than West European workers who enjoyed free trade unions and political parties, 16–17.
28. Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 30, 36, 40.
29. *Ibid.*, 34.
30. It is interesting to note that Cherevanin paints the protests only in terms of socialism, not nationalism.
31. Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 73–4, 80–103.
32. *Ibid.*, 105. In general Cherevanin does not think that great events are organized but happen spontaneously – hence the unexpected success of spontaneity in October and the inevitable defeat of the planned uprising in December (64, 77).
33. Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 44–7, 53–5.
34. *Ibid.*, 50–1.
35. The Mensheviks are castigated for falling under the spell of revolutionary illusions in 1905 and when they emerged from them, they did so in a confused and half-hearted manner, for example calling for participation in elections not to elect deputies but to form organs of self-administration; Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 111.

36. Bolshevik errors included predicting that the first Duma would be a 'Black Hundred Duma' when it was not (108–109) and insisting on the term 'Kadet agreementism' even when it was evident that the Kadets were in conflict with the government; Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 115–16.
37. Cherevanin is highly critical of the St Petersburg Soviet for its campaign to introduce an 8-hour working day. In so doing it pushed the industrialists into the arms of the government and to employ tactic of 'lock-out' that effectively deprived the workers of their means of subsistence. The St. Petersburg Soviet's campaign ended in failure and its isolation even from the mass of workers was apparent from the way in which it was closed and the leadership arrested. This further weakened the workers and strengthened the government; Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 67–73, 84.
38. Cherevanin, *Proletarii v revoliutsii*, 64–6, 106.
39. *Ibid.*, 56–7, 108.
40. *Ibid.*, 27–9, 107
41. *Ibid.*, 57–9, 107–08, 118–20.
42. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 39.
43. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 55. Other factors that conditioned local strike activity are also mentioned. For example, the discussion of strikes in the Latvian countryside mentions higher literacy levels and, in 1906, the return of 'conscious' emigres from North America who hoped to receive land following the resolution of the land question by the Duma (28).
44. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 111.
45. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 90.
46. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 79.
47. Gorn cites Trotsky's writings from 1906 as an example; *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 163.
48. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 161.
49. *Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsiia*, 167.
50. Mech, *Liberal i demokraticheskaia burzhuaziia*, 43.
51. Mech, *Liberal i demokraticheskaia burzhuaziia*, 36.
52. Mech, *Liberal i demokraticheskaia burzhuaziia*, 87.
53. Charskii, "Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil."
54. See an unsigned review of Cherevanin in *Golos zhizni* (Anon., 'Cherevanin'). Trotsky penned a critical review of a 1908 German translation of Cherevanin's book that became a defence of his theory of permanent revolution. This was first published in *Neue Zeit* and then as an appendix to the 1922 Russian version that was the source for future English translations; 'The Proletariat and the Russian Revolution. On the Menshevik Theory of the Russian Revolution' in Trotsky, *1905*, 237–49. Day and Gaido seem unaware of the original Russian version of Cherevanin's book and the project of which it was just one volume. They are similarly unaware of the critique of permanent revolution in the companion volumes; *Witnesses to Permanent Revolution*, 41, 677.
55. It was only when preparing for his talk of January 1917 to commemorate January 1905 that in a letter of 20 December 1916 Lenin requested comrades to source for him 'Gorn, Mech, Cherevanin and others, collections (legal) for 1906–07 (?). The social movement in Russia or something like that. One issue about the peasantry. (Agrarian question)'. Bukharin, Molotov, and Savel'ev, eds., *Leninskii sbornik Tom 11*, 232.

56. In letters to Zinov'ev of August 1909, for example, Lenin was exasperated that Kamenev was slow in preparing a promised critical review of *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie* and when it arrived edited it closely; Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Tom 49*, 188–9. Kamenev's review was published in *Proletarii*, Nos. 47–48 & 49, 5 September & 3 October 1909. Kamenev contributed further articles to *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 14, 22 June 1910 and *Sotsial-Demokrat*, Nos. 21–22, 19 March 1911. They were reprinted in Kamenev, *Mezhdru dvumia revoliutsiiami*, 127–85. For examples of Lenin's attacks on *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie*, see *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Tom 19*, 45, 63–64, 66, 136–137, 138, 145, 146, 275, 300, 308, 360, 362.
57. There are brief references to two of the volumes in Evgen'ev, 'Dvizhushchiia sily russkoi revoliutsii', 163–4; and in Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, 301, 303. Rawson describes Mech's volume on reaction as 'useful' but 'less reliable' but offers no substantiation; *Russian Rightists*, 235.
58. See, for example, Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, 343.

Acknowledgements

For comments on previous drafts, the author is grateful to two anonymous reviewers, the editors, and to Erik van Ree and James D. White.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Ian D. Thatcher is Professor and Research Director of History at Ulster University, Coleraine. His recent published articles and essays have focused on the Provisional Government and the practice of power in 1917.

References

- Anon. 'Cherevanin, *Proletariat v revoliutsii*'. *Golos zhiznii*. St Petersburg: V. Bezobrazov, 1907: 80–86.
- Ascher, Abraham. *The Revolution of 1905. Russia in Disarray*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Avila, Paula, and Daniel Gaido. 'Karl Kautsky and the Russian Revolution of 1905: A Debate on the Driving Forces and the Prospects of the Russian Revolution in the Second International'. *International Critical Thought* 7, no. 3 (2017): 402–17.
- Bukharin, N. N., V. M. Molotov, and M. A. Savel'ev, eds. *Leninskii sbornik. Tom 11*. Moscow-Leningrad: Insitut Lenina pri Ts.K. VKP(b), 1929.
- Charskii, E. 'Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil v russkoi revoliutsii'. *Sovremennyi mir* 11 (1907): 132–4.

- Day, Richard B., and Daniel Gaido, eds. *Witnesses to Permanent Revolution: The Documentary Record*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Dmitriev, Timofey. 'Max Weber and Peter Struve on the Russian Revolution'. *Studies in East European Thought* 69, no. 4 (2017): 305–28.
- Evgen'ev. 'Dvizhushchiia sily russkoi revoliutsii'. *Sotsialist-revoliutsioner* 4 (1912): 131–76.
- Gorn, Vl., Mech, V., and Cherevanin, eds. *Bor'ba obshchestvennykh sil v russkoi revoliutsii*. Vyp. 1. V. Mech, *Sily reaksii*. Moscow: Russkago Tovarishchestva, 1907; 2. Cherevanin, *Proletariat v revoliutsii*. Moscow: Russkago Tovarishchestva, 1907; 3. Krest'ianstvo v revoliutsii [N. Savarenskii, 'Ekonomicheskoe dvizhenie krest'ianstva', P. Marev, 'Politicheskaiia bor'ba krest'ianstva', Vl. Gorn, 'Rol krest'ianstva v revoliutsii']. Moscow: A.I. Mamontova, nd.; 4. V. Mech, *Liberal'naia i demokraticheskaia burzhua-ziia*. Moscow: Russkago Tovarishchestva, 1907.
- Isaev, A. A. *Kharakter russkoi revoliutsii*. St Petersburg: A.F. Tsinkerling, 1906.
- Kamenev, L. *Mezhdru dvumia revoliutsiiami*. Moscow: Novaia Moskva, 1923.
- Larsson, Reidar. *Theories of Revolution. From Marx to the First Russian Revolution*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970.
- Lenin, V. I. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Tom 19*. Moscow: Politicheskoi literatury, 1980.
- . *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Tom 49*. Moscow: Politicheskoi literatury, 1978.
- Martov, L., P. Maslov, and A. Potresov, eds. *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v rossii v nachale XX-go veka*. 4 Volumes. St Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1909–14.
- Moskva v dekabre 1905g*. Moscow: A. P. Pechkovskii, 1906.
- Nevskii sbornik*. St. Petersburg: Epokha, 1906.
- Perrie, Maureen. 'The Socialist Revolutionaries and "Permanent Revolution"'. *Soviet Studies* 24, no. 3 (1973): 411–13.
- Pipes, Richard. 'Max Weber and Russia'. *World Politics* 7, no. 3 (1955): 371–401.
- Putnam, George. 'P. V. Struve's view of the Russian Revolution of 1905'. *Slavonic and East European Review* 45, no. 105 (1967): 457–73.
- Rabochii Ezhegodnik*. St Petersburg: Al'manakh, 1906.
- Rawson, Donald C. *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Rogger, Hans. 'Was there a Russian Fascism? The Union of Russian People'. *The Journal of Modern History* 36, no. 4 (1964): 398–415.
- Robinson, Geriod Tanquary. *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*. New York: Macmillan, 1961.
- Shanin, Teodor. *Russia, 1905–07. Revolution as a Moment of Truth. Volume 2*. London: Macmillan, 1986.
- Tekushchii moment*. Moscow: A.I. Povalskago, 1906.
- Thatcher, Ian D. 'The First Histories of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, 1904–06'. *The Slavonic & East European Review* 85, no. 4 (2007): 724–52.
- Tiutiukin, S. V. *Men'shevizm: stranitsy istorii*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002.
- Trotsky, L. 1905. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2016.
- Urilov, I. Kh. *Istoriia rossiskoi sotsial-demokratii [Men'shevizma]. Tom 3: Proiskhozhdenie men'shevizma*. Moscow: Sobranie, 2005.
- ., ed. *Iu. O. Martov i A. N. Potresov. Pis'ma 1898-1913*. Moscow: Sobranie, 2007.