

Parties, Power, and People: The Impact of Duma Participation on Political Parties in the Russian Empire

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Abstract: This article explores role of the State Duma in shaping the destinies of key political parties, particularly the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets) and the Bolsheviks, prior to the Russian Revolutions of 1917. Despite its failure to avert the revolutions, the State Duma was instrumental in shaping the future trajectories of the participating parties. Utilizing a framework that combines power dynamics and historical analysis, the essay scrutinizes the State Duma's role in Russian power dynamics and its impact on the future trajectories of Russian political parties. The essay provides an interpretation of the Kadets' and Bolsheviks' fates through their attitudes, idealism, and interactions with this experimental legislative body.

Keywords: State Duma, Russian Revolution, Kadets Party, Paul Miliukov, Bolsheviks

1. Introduction

The Russian Revolutions of 1917, which consisted of two upheavals in quick succession, serve as compelling case studies of the decline of liberalism and the rise of communism. As the world's first communist regime, the Russian Communist Party—known as the Social Democratic Party at the time of the revolutions—employed unique strategies to actualize Marxist ideals. Meanwhile, Russian liberals, specifically the Constitutional Democratic Party, faltered in contrast to their European counterparts.

Russian Liberalism, according to the definition of Paul Miliukov (alternatively transliterated as Pavel Milyukov), while still respecting individual liberty, the rule of law, and individual rights like classical liberalism, recognizes that individual rights are indeed generated by society [1]. This ideology was best represented by the party Paul Miliukov himself founded, the Party of the People's Liberty, also known as the Constitutional Democratic Party, or the Kadets. The party's engagement with the State Duma and how its engagement contributed to its fall as well as the decline of the whole ideology would be the subject of this analysis.

The Constitutional Democratic Party is rather homogeneous in social classes compared to other parties in the State Duma. All but one member affiliated with the party in the first State Duma were landowners, and only two landlords owned less than 540 acres of land. However, the Kadets, as the liberal party, won the racial and ethnic minority presented, such as representatives from Poland and Kazakhstan [2]. Being the majority party in the first State Duma, the Kadets' mindsets underwent

complicated changes when they were gradually losing seats in the second, and when the number of their seats plummeted in the third. Some important elements, including but not limited to Vyborg Manifesto, the Coup d'etat of 1907, alongside with their volatile attitudes toward the mass and the State Duma, would be discussed in this analysis section.

Under the harsh economic conditions in Russia due to wars and heavy taxation, many people were looking for a society that can help them get food and land to sustain their life. However, the upper class occupied most of the wealth in society so that poor people can't attain resources, like food, to sustain their life. Living in such conditions, people were eager for some reform in society to satisfy their basic needs. In such an environment, Lenin stepped out, stating he will create a huge social change in Russia, which will make the lower class people gain power in society and voice in congress meetings [3]. As a result, the Bolshevik party was established, but only as a social organization instead of a political party. To gain more power, Lenin tried to expand his party's influence in Russia through social movements, and later through expanding his party to the government—the State Duma. Due to such, Lenin's Bolshevik party was able to spread their ideas on a larger platform and to open up their sight to see through Russia's politics.

2. Literature Review

Both Western and Russian historians produced voluminous works in analyzing the decline of liberalism, as a party and ideology, in Russia during the Russian Revolutions. While Soviet historians usually attributed the fall of liberalism (and the Constitutional Democratic Party, or the Kadets) as the inevitable triumph of communism over capitalism [4]. Many post-Soviet Russian historians and western thinkers treated it differently. Melissa Kirschke Stockdale, a professor of the University of Oklahoma, wrote a biography of Paul Miliukov, attempting to interpret the way in which his characteristics influenced the decline of the Kadets party. Another historian William Henry Camberlin, discussed in his article "The Short Life of Russian Liberalism" that multiple factors together contributed to the fall of the Kadets party, including the relatively weak Russian middle class, the changed election policies, and disunited pursuits [5-7].

While the majority of the literature presented has put the focus on the party's structure or its relation with Bolsheviks, none of them have explicitly discussed the relation between the parties' vicissitudes and its participation in the State Duma. The Bolsheviks, as the later chapters of the article will show, chose to disengage from the State Duma, but the Kadets participated more. The article would attempt to argue that Kadets' engagement in the State Duma led to many factors that contributed to its decline.

In many scholarly papers concerning the State Duma and the Socialist-Democrat party, the interaction between this major party active during the Russian Revolution is discussed. However, many limit their focus to either the State Duma or the Bolshevik party, neglecting the interaction between the two. Scholar Yarro has analyzed the rise of the Bolshevik party in his paper, "Bolshevism: Its Rise, Decline, and Fall?". His focus was primarily on the Bolshevik party's efforts to garner support from Russia's lower class through movements, using the State Duma as a platform for political expression [8]. However, though his research touched upon how the State Duma helped disseminate Bolshevik ideas and increase their popularity, it did not heavily concentrate on the interaction between the Bolshevik party and the State Duma, or on Lenin's perspective of the State Duma.

In contrast, scholar Keep, in his paper "Russian Social-Democracy and the First State Duma, (1955)" argued that the interaction between the State Duma and the socialist-democrat party during the Russian Revolution period was beneficial for their future development. However, his paper primarily dealt with the relationship between the State Duma and the Menshevik party. Although he mentioned that the State Duma did enhance the power of the Bolshevik party in Russia, he did not

fully elucidate the power dynamics of the Bolshevik party within the State Duma [9]. Most importantly, Keep only discussed the relationship between the State Duma and the Bolshevik party during the first State Duma and the Bolshevik attitude towards the Duma, but this relationship continued into the second State Duma after the Bolshevik party actually joined the State Duma. These two scholars are the main ones who focus on the State Duma or Bolshevik party during the Russian Revolution period. However, neither of them could provide a comprehensive explanation of how the Bolshevik party used the State Duma to incrementally enhance their popularity in Russia and to modify Bolshevik tactics prior to the February revolution (including in both the first and second Duma). Therefore, this paper will more specifically discuss the role of the State Duma in the rise of the Bolshevik party, the power dynamics, and Lenin's attitudes and reactions to such dynamics.

3. Power Dynamic in Imperial Russia

3.1. Power Dynamics between the State Duma, the Tsar and the Bolsheviks

Those who attempt to interpret the period between 1905 and 1917 through a traditional Western historical lens often find themselves arriving at a predetermined conclusion: that the period barely achieved anything significant. If any achievement is acknowledged, it's commonly dismissed as a mere transition from one terrible ideology to another. This view is unjustified and appears influenced by problematic frameworks like Eurocentrism, or even arrogance. Such an approach fails to offer any meaningful insights into the historical events; it is evident that these scholars have not been sufficiently reflective.

So, where can meaningful reflections be found? The answer doesn't lie in ideology. Ideologies are like oil slicks on the water's surface, preventing any inadvertent glimpse into the depths where repressed truths lie. Effort should therefore be made to bring forth reflective and courageous thoughts into our interpretative process. Schelling, in 'The Ages of the World,' aptly describes the historian as akin to a philosopher in this sense. Guided by this perspective, this essay aims to incorporate a structuralist methodology in analyzing the power dynamics among the State Duma, the Tsar, and the Bolsheviks.

3.2. Historical Significance of the Tsar

The reign of Nicholas II bears many similarities to that of his predecessor. He readily accepted the pogroms of 1881 and the inherited role of the Tsar as the national leader. By both law and tradition, the Tsar was an absolute authority. This systemic absolutism has remained largely unchanged in its outward form. However, the ruling class has experienced significant challenges since the era of Alexander II, ranging from protests and riots to attempted coups. Here, it is crucial to introduce the concept of 'the return of the repressed.' The Tsarist system in Russia is clearly a pre-modern, hierarchical, patriarchal setup where power permeates all social strata. People were typically disciplined in two ways: physically, through the army's 'iron fist,' and psychologically, through ideological indoctrination. In this setting, peasants, who constitute 80% of the population, are akin to women in a patriarchal structure, while the wealthy remain largely insulated from these concerns. The middle and upper classes, who sustain their privileges, also engage in the repression of societal fractures. Ideology serves as another tool for this repression, with the traditional belief in paternal authority deeply ingrained in the Russian psyche. Michel Foucault elucidates how this manipulation becomes possible, stating, "If I haven't forced you at all and have put you in a state of complete freedom, yet you still choose the path I have set for you, it is at that time that I begin to exercise power."

At the same time, there were groups considered 'less-than-nothing': biological women, serfs, Jewish people, Ukrainians, and so on. Though excluded or ignored from societal structures, these

groups paradoxically supported them. In essence, the negation of these marginalized categories formed the backbone of the overarching system, an operation inherently fraught with intense antagonism. Complete elimination of these subjects was impossible without physical eradication. In Russia's case, ongoing famine and military failures continuously shattered the people's collective epistemology, exposing ideological inconsistencies and inflicting repeated trauma. Compounding this was the pressure of Westernization or 'civilization,' which exacerbated existing fissures in Russia's pre-modern, blood and family-based ideology. By 1905, the Second Industrial Revolution was underway, yet Russia had not even caught up with the first. Despair spread rampantly, and the collective trauma became irreparable. Concurrently, Nicholas II enacted regressive policies, such as reintroducing serfdom—a system Russia should have abandoned decades earlier. The events of Bloody Sunday unfolded, the October Manifesto was issued, and an institution modeled after the British Parliament—known as the Duma—was established. Evidently, Nicholas II embodied the deeply-rooted ideology and wielded enormous power in early 20th-century Russia, setting the stage for the Duma's eventual failure.

3.3. State Duma and Its Power

The State Duma's role between 1905 and 1917 was both chaotic and suppressed. Established as a mirror image of the British Parliament, it carried the expectation of delivering 'liberty and democracy.' However, unlike Britain, Russia lacked a centuries-old tradition of constitutional monarchy. Due to a harsh societal hierarchy and an absent citizen class, antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the royal family was minimal, leaving the Duma devoid of a 'civil spirit.' Born prematurely, it lacked the historical consciousness needed for progressive evolution. Rigid and disconnected from Russia's pre-modern spirit, the Duma failed to resonate with the peasant class, who continued to identify with the 'big other'—a term coined by Jacques Lacan to describe an omniscient, supreme being. This deeply ingrained belief system had been established centuries before 1905. Popular discontent with the Tsar remained symbolic, not revolutionary. A true revolution requires an ideological breakdown that transforms the dominant logic and collective common sense; anything less is mere reform. Revolution begins when people no longer see themselves as part of the existing system. Tasked with replacing the old order, the Duma failed to even consolidate its own power. It quickly devolved into a fractured entity, with stark ideological divides rendering it ineffective. This allowed Nicholas II to shift the narrative, framing the struggle not as left versus right, but as internal discord among the right—between liberals and royalists. This obfuscation is typical in capitalist societies, where new ideologies are perpetually introduced to mask systemic flaws and suffering. In Russia's case, the left became the newly marginalized group. Ultimately, the Duma, originally envisioned as a progressive body, regressed into an institution that perpetuated absolutism, provided a venue for bourgeois infighting, and offered the Tsar a lifeline for another decade.

3.4. Bolsheviks as the Subversive Power

The whole movement of the Bolsheviks relies on Leninism in which Historical determinism fails. Lenin abolished the set frame of logical positivism in which practice is always restrained in a dualism of either too early one too late. In the period of 1906-1916, revolution was on the ebb. In this ebbing phase, all of the second international is waiting. Lenin believed that in such a scenario, the necessary subjective preparation phase must be led by vanguard. In other words, the maturity of the timing must rely on subjective decision-making. Lenin's return was a key event. If he did not return to Mobilize his subordinates, spreading them to the bottom of the society, the timing would never be mature enough. Lenin's subjective judgment was an impossible attempt after he exhausted all possible analytical frameworks. The spirit of history needs to be perceived during the charge of vanguard, and

the historical spirit at that time was closely related to the rise of pacifism and nationalism. The phenomenon reveals the possibility that the distinction between oppressor and oppressed is not necessarily within one's own country, but between the international community. In this way, Leninism made a breakthrough against the set framework that the second international commonly identifies, in which the high level of social development and proletariat domination were impossible without bourgeois.

It is through the movement of ideas discussed above that the Bolsheviks were mobilized. Bolsheviks were able to forge a system with incredible complexity, this complexity protects itself from invasion of other ideologies. The spirit that originated this complex structure was the intense trauma of the working class. This structure could not be compromised or repressed, because what it represented was the deepest illness accumulated throughout the tsarist system, the will of resistance, the willpower and actual power to subvert any predetermined logic. It was structured after a leap of faith, through suffering, and painful liberation. Bolsheviks had already liberated themselves, at the same time for those who were exploited and alienated, the chance for liberation was not resistible.

4. Liberalism and the State Duma

4.1. Liberalism in Russia: General Overview

With regard to the power dynamics of the Russian Empire, the Constitutional Democratic party, as the major party in the first and second Duma, wielded its influences through actively participating in the Duma. To discuss their relations with and attitude toward the State Duma, and the way in which the State Duma influenced their decline, the author's intention is to focus on its reaction in the face of several key events. Subsequently, the author would interpret the changes in their attitude toward the State Duma with regard to the events in order to understand the way in which it contributed to the party's decline.

4.2. The first State Duma

Founded during the Revolution of 1905 by Paul Miliukov, a leading historian at the time, the Kadet party is to the left of the Octobrist and the right of the Social Revolutionary. Its position regarding whether to support the constitutional monarchy or the establishment of a republic was unclear during the period. However, it failed to concern the leaders of the party at that time. Through a complicated indirect election system, the Liberalist won the most seats in the first ever elected legislature in the history of Russia—the first State Duma—though it only lasted for 72 days until the order of dissolution from Tsar Nicolas the Second [10]. During the time, the Kadets were advocates of progressive land reform (in the eyes of the Tsar and the government but in the eyes of Bolsheviks it was too conservative). After the government, representing the will of the Tsar at the time, rejected their land reform proposal, the Kadets then submitted another proposal attempting to force the government into resignation. One of the Kadets' leaders, in his speech in favor of the proposal, even ended his speech with tears, saying "let the executive bow before the legislature." Although the proposal got passed almost unanimously, the government didn't resign accordingly [11].

From the actions of the Kadets party during the first State Duma, it can be reasonable to conclude that the Kadets had high faith in the establishment and was willing to engage wholeheartedly. As the major force in the 1905 unsuccessful revolution, it seemed like they did cherish their achievement. Moreover, since they were the majority in this parliament experiment and the fact that none of the parties at the time held military power comparable to the Tsar, they still held the belief that the State Duma could be the agent for further reform of the Russian Empire. Compared to the Bolsheviks that already started to focus on the workers and the peasant, an action not only related to Bolsheviks'

Marxist ideology but also their vision of preparing military forces for the party, the Kadets from the hindsight, were too confident for the State Duma.

4.3. Attitude Toward the Mass-Vyborg Manifesto

After the failure of the Vyborg Manifesto, a manifesto published as a reaction to the dissolution of the first State Duma, the Kadets lost their trust in the masses, which fostered their supports to the State Duma despite its well-known ineffectiveness and foreshadowed their future decline.

The Vyborg Manifesto, as its name suggested, is published in the city of Vyborg as an angry way to retaliate against the arbitrary and unexpected dissolution. It urged the people not to pay the taxes and to disobey the draft. It had met with “universal indifferences [12].” While there is not enough evidence suggesting the cause of the indifferences, the author of the article infers that it can be because of the impracticality of the manifesto and its lack of ability to create the sense of belonging and security for the masses if they follow the manifesto.

In hindsight, it was not only a sign of Kadets’ inexperience in dealing with the masses, but also an evidence of their leaderships’ irrationality in the face of unexpected situations. As the party of majority in the first State Duma, the Kadets did attempt to negotiate with the government after they sensed the risk of the potential dissolution of the Duma [13]. Thus, when the Duma Members were locked out from the Tauride Palace in the morning of 8th of July [14], the Kadets were shocked and then drafted the Vyborg Manifesto. The results of the failure of the Kadets party were that the party lost their trust in the masses, and chose to further their participation in the Duma and compliance with the imperial laws.

Moreover, their status in the State Duma was reduced significantly because of the Vyborg Manifesto. More than 100 of them were banned from participating in the election to the new State Duma, and the “Kadet who took their places” were “less radical and less talented than those who had their seats in the first.” However, as stated previously, the failure of the Vyborg Manifesto acted as an impulse encouraging the party to further participate in the Duma politics due to their distrust toward the masses. The leader of the Kadets, Paul Miliukov, famously claimed in a conference in Moscow that “the strain is so great that any carelessly thrown match may kindle a terrible fire, and God save us from seeing this fire. This would not be a revolution, but a terrible Russian riot, senseless and pitiless. It would be an orgy of the mob.” While this claim didn’t target the masses for not non-participation in the Vyborg Manifesto, it did show Miliukov’s attitude towards the masses. Their distrust towards the masses in sense also contributed to their lack of military forces, and underlied their eventual failure in the face of the October Revolution.

4.4. Attitude toward the Constitutional monarchy – The Coup of 1907

As the influences of the Kadets in the State Duma were already in decline due to the governmental ban, the Coup d’etat of June 1907 by Pyotr Stolypin furthered the decline. It was a coup since the Tsar used military forces to arrest Duma members who supposedly had parliamentary immunity. Complemented with changes in the electoral laws, the State Duma was almost deprived of all its powers, but the Kadets didn’t realize it.

The electoral laws were changed in the way that it became intentionally complicated, “tax-property” to allow only the landowners to be represented [15]. It in ways restricted the suffrage only to the “trustworthy” people, since landowners were usually conservative and didn’t want to see any structural or drastic changes that could threaten their property. The results of the third election were coherent with the intention of the electoral law change, as not only the social democrats lost around 30 of their seats (47 in the second Duma), even the Kadets lost its majority status and 42 of their 98 seats in the second Duma.

The tactics were played by the government and the Tsar that Paul Miliukov himself was allowed to join the third Duma, making him conform to the status quo even more than he was after the Vyborg Manifesto. The government considered that the Kadets' leader was "more dangerous outside the Duma than it." And the Kadets' leader did fall into the trick. His conformity was under the circumstances that he had only been put into minor committees, and while gradually losing his influence, he claimed that a revolution wouldn't happen in the foreseeable future [16]. Moreover, he supported the Octobrists for almost all of their relatively progressive proposals, and in many senses, he already led his party to stand beside the constitutional monarch, given that he always considered the mass revolution as "senseless and pitiless," and the Bolsheviks as "an ass," quoted himself. This conformity contributed to the popularity decline of the Kadets during the time, as the Bolsheviks were winning the hearts of the people as the other half of the research article argued. Besides, it also contributed to the lack of military forces of the party, which is an issue especially significant during the era of revolutions. Nicolai Kishkin's saying at the time he was arrested reflected the issue clearly; he cried "What kind of a party is it that can not send us three hundred armed men?"

4.5. Party's internal conflicts and Promise.

The sections above elaborated that, in regard to their participation in the State Duma, the Kadets lost their trust in the people and their revolutionary ideology. This section will elaborate the issues of some of their political promises, and the author believes that the causes can be their naive idealism and diverse opinions.

The Kadets, per examinations, had swift ideologies. The Encyclopedia Britannica concluded that the Kadets were "advocating a radical change in Russian government toward a constitutional monarchy like Great Britain [17]." It turned out, however, that they did have undecided wishes in the first State Duma toward the establishment of a republic. Known as a "party of professors," the Kadets shared the key characteristics of intellectuals, that they also had diversity of ideas. For example, when considering their political promise when running for the third Duma, two factions argued for whether they should ally with the Octobrists or the Social Democrats. While Paul Miliukov is known for his ability to negotiate differences, and that is also the cause of Kadets' unity compared to the separation of the Social Democrats, the conflict directly resulted in Kadets' swift standpoint in the third State Duma. Miliukov did, at the end, "share[d] Kadets' skepticism regarding the staunchness of Octobrist constitutional convictions and concern that entering any sort of bloc.....would be perceived as an endorsement of the Third of July Coup."

Moreover, some overly idealistic beliefs of the Kadets can also be resulted from their demographics. As Paul Miliukov later became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Russian Provisional Government after the February Revolution, we can see his nationalistic sentiment through his policies. As the author of his biography claimed, he always believed that Russian foreign policy should be "worthy of a great power [18]." Thus, he chose to stay in the war despite the national resentment at it. At the time he claimed his belief that Russia should commit to the "decisive victory" continuously, thousands of armed workers and soldiers demonstrated on the street of Petrograd holding the banners of "ten bourgeois ministers." Statistics also suggested that 2 million Russian had died out of the population of 164 millions, a significant amount regarding that the casualties were mainly young men [19]. Even before the February revolution, as his later deeds suggested, his unpopularity can also be related to his nationalism, which was overly idealistic in the case of World War I Russia. In regard to the Land Reform, the promises Kadets had was already less progressive compared to the one Bolsheviks had, and it was almost impossible to attain the land reform through the State Duma, due to the early reform of the first and the second Duma, and the insufficient seats they occupied in the other two Duma [20].

5. Bolshevik Party and State Duma

5.1. Rise of the Bolshevik Party and the State Duma

Communism was the main doctrine of the Social-Democratic party during the Russian Revolution. Specifically, the party is divided into the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, with the former representing the radical majority and the latter representing the moderate minority. The rise of communism and the party can partially be attributed to the State Duma, although it was not a major catalyst for the communist party to consolidate its power in Russia. Nevertheless, it assisted the communist party in expanding its influence. This part will primarily focus on the Bolshevik party since it ultimately triumphed after the Russian Revolution, and its leader, Lenin, cleverly utilized the State Duma to augment his party's influence. On the other hand, the Menshevik party, despite being heavily involved in the State Duma, lost supporters from the larger lower-class population while continuing their participation in the State Duma.

The State Duma had a relatively minor impact on the rise of the Bolshevik party during the Russian Revolution. In fact, it was the State Duma that alerted the Bolshevik party to witness the corruption within the Russian imperial government, prompting their leader, Lenin, to shift his political focus from gaining power in Congress to garnering support from the Russian lower class peasants and industrial workers. As a result, the Bolshevik party succeeded due to the backing from both peasants and industrial workers, which granted them a stronger voice in Congress and the ability to advance their communist reform in Russia, culminating in their eventual success during the latter stages of the Russian Revolution. Throughout this process, the State Duma served as a conduit for the Bolshevik party to understand Russian politics and gain supporters through congressional meetings.

5.2. Entering the State Duma

The socialist-democrat party and their communist ideology did not have significant appeal for the upper class or the bourgeoisie in Russia prior to the February Revolution; instead, the party primarily consisted of lower-class people. This party was divided into two factions: the Bolsheviks (a more radical faction), and the Mensheviks (a moderate faction). This paper, however, will focus on the success of the Bolshevik party and the role the State Duma played in it. As the radical branch of the socialist-democrat party, the Bolsheviks sought a complete reform of the country. From their establishment, they promised their supporters “land and liberty [21],” which was largely appealing to the lower classes, with land appealing to the peasants and liberty resonating with a number of industrial workers in the latter stages of the revolution. Given their promise of comprehensive reform in Russia, peasants were likely to support Lenin and his interpretation of Marxism, in the hope of improving their social status and living conditions. Therefore, Lenin’s ideology was largely appealing but limited to the lower class.

One of the significant drawbacks of Lenin’s ideology was its lack of appeal to the bourgeois class, which primarily constituted the State Duma. Because Lenin and his party sought to enact a reform in Russia that would completely overhaul social statuses, the interests of the bourgeois class would be threatened. Their wealth and social status made them resistant to a radical reform of Russia, as they wished to maintain their power and position. Concurrently, Lenin was reluctant to join the State Duma, as he viewed it as an obstacle to the communist revolution. According to Lenin's understanding of communist ideals, workers and peasants were the principal forces to lead society towards his ideal communist society. Consequently, even after the establishment of the State Duma and its continued progress in policy-making and political discussions, Lenin opted out of these conversations, believing that the bourgeoisie would impede the progress of the communist reformation [22]. Hence, during the first stage of the State Duma, Lenin did not take advantage of the platform's potential: a medium

for political expression and party expansion. The lack of representation in Congress evidenced Lenin's attitude about the State Duma. Nonetheless, Lenin continued to garner support outside the State Duma and expanded his influence in society; for example, his involvement in the railway strike was part of a social movement to gain attention and followers for the communist ideology (Duma and Social Democrat). To summarize, during this stage of the Russian Revolution, the State Duma served as a hindrance to the expansion of communist ideology and redirected the Bolshevik party's focus to attracting supporters from the lower class.

The communist ideology doesn't only pertain to peasants; it eventually spread amongst the industrial worker population, significantly propelling communism into the majority in Russia. Although Lenin initially hesitated to utilize the State Duma as a platform for his political ideology, he eventually recognized the Duma's effectiveness after the conclusion of its first session. In his writings, Lenin noted the State Duma's role in gathering public opinion and how other political parties engaged in policy-making processes (Duma and Social Democrats) [23]. This realization prompted Lenin to reconsider the State Duma's role in the communist reformation in Russia. He began to perceive the State Duma as a venue for communism to expand, gathering more followers during Duma sessions, and more importantly, it provided a legal meeting place for the communist party, previously not permitted. Thus, despite concerns about the bourgeois class for drawing back communist reformation, Lenin chose to join the State Duma to propagate his belief in communist ideas. Utilizing the State Duma as a platform to express political ideas, Lenin managed to spread his communist ideology within the Duma and gained support from a new demographic - the industrial workers who held a few congressional seats [24]. Although their number wasn't large, Lenin and the Bolshevik party finally garnered some congressional supporters who could voice their political interests. As Lenin and his party increased their congressional presence, they were more likely to voice their opposition to the government and contribute to the policy-making process [25]. The Bolshevik party's rise within the State Duma demonstrates that the Duma played a role in helping the party gain influence in Russian society, ensuring their voice reached the government.

5.3. Exiting the State Duma

While the State Duma provided Lenin and his party with a platform to expand their power and gather followers, they still chose to leave the Duma to pursue communist reform in their country. The State Duma was loosely supervised, making political corruption and fraud inevitable. As time passed during the second State Duma, Lenin uncovered fraudulent activities and political corruption within the Duma. In his writings, Lenin asserted that the State Duma was a corrupt institution that couldn't expedite a communist revolution. He stated that communist parties should have a role in every country's congress, allowing lower-class people (like peasants and industrial workers) to participate in government and policy-making processes. However, Lenin also claimed a corrupt government couldn't assist the communist party in achieving final success in Russia. Instead, such a government could lead to the party's disorganization, suppression of party ideas and voice, and the ascendance of their rival party. Thus, despite the Menshevik party's argument that leaving the State Duma would cost the Bolshevik party its supporters, Lenin chose to exit for his party's betterment. According to Lenin, the Bolshevik party needed to focus more on amassing followers from lower-class populations outside the State Duma [26]. To further his goal amongst the general population, Lenin initiated a significant wave of populist movement amongst Russia's lower classes. He disseminated more propaganda, telling lower-class people about an ideal society where everyone could attain what they wanted, and the whole country would transform post-revolution [27]. The peasants and industrial workers had long been oppressed under the tyranny of the old regime. A burdensome taxation system and continued harsh working conditions left many peasants and industrial workers wanting a radical country-wide change favoring lower-class people's interests. Thus, the State Duma provided the

Bolshevik party with a window into Russian politics they hadn't previously had; this allowed the party to shift their focus from garnering State Duma votes to gathering supporters from the lower-class population.

After the February Revolution, the Bolshevik party continued to amass power and supporters, ultimately achieving its final success. Conversely, its rival party, the Mensheviks, couldn't survive years later due to their ineffective tactics in promoting reform. The Mensheviks primarily focused on obtaining votes from the State Duma and finding a way to introduce communism into the country while preserving the old regime's power. However, their tactics were ineffective in the current circumstances because the government was unwelcoming of communist ideas, and the lower-class people refused to maintain the old regime. As such, the Mensheviks' position created a conflict between the general population and the government with differing political interests that were too hard to reconcile [28]. Consequently, the Menshevik party later fell due to a lack of supporters. Their tactic of continuous participation in the State Duma failed to facilitate their spread of communist beliefs in Russian society, as they didn't use the Duma as a window to see through Russian political corruption and shift their focus to lower-class people. Thus, the Menshevik party's failure further validates that the Bolshevik party effectively utilized the State Duma as a temporary platform for idea expression and a window into Russian politics.

6. Conclusion

As the analysis suggests, the State Duma occupied a unique role in the power dynamics of Imperial Russia. This role contributed to the decline of liberalism and the rise of communism during the Russian Revolutions. For liberals, their undue confidence in the State Duma system played a significant role in their downfall. This trust ultimately influenced their ideologies, diminishing their faith in the general populace and thereby eroding their popularity. Their misplaced faith in systems and untimely nationalism rendered the "party of professors" ill-suited for Russia. According to the analysis, this can largely be attributed to their relationship with the Duma.

For the communists, the State Duma played a modest role in the success of the Bolshevik party during the Russian Revolution. It served as a window into Russian government and politics, introducing more people to the Bolshevik party. This exposure prompted the party's leader, particularly Lenin, to recognize the corrupt and untrustworthy nature of the Russian bourgeois social class. This realization led Lenin to focus politically on the lower class and impoverished individuals, underlining the significance of this powerful societal force in Russia. Through the successful exploitation of this force, the Bolshevik party took a significant step toward future success in history.

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