Nikolai Aleksandrovich Rozhkov (1868-1927): historian and revolutionary

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Chapter Seven

Rozhkov 1905-1927: Menshevik and Historian
Rozhkov applied his theoretical ideas not only to Russia's history but also to the contemporary political situation in which he found himself. From his student days, Rozhkov involved himself in socialist politics and the 1905 Revolution filled him with hope that Russia was about to enter the modern era. The defeat of the 1905 Revolution caused Rozhkov to ponder more deeply the implications of his historical research for Russia's political development. It was Rozhkov's positivist view of history that led him first to join the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (R.S.D.L.P.) and to leave this faction for its Menshevik rival. In his last major historical works, Rozhkov attempted to demonstrate how his Menshevik political views were consistent with his positivist interpretation of history. Rozhkov's conclusions would shape his destiny and are the subject of this chapter.

Rozhkov's historical writing and political activism exercised a significant influence upon each other. It was not until about 1905 that he began to incorporate Marxist ideas into his historical writing. When Rozhkov made the decision to join a political party he threw in his lot with the Bolshevik faction of the R.S.D.L.P. In 1903, the party had split into Bolshevik and Menshevik factions as much because a leadership battle between Lenin and Martov as any differences in policy. By 1905, Lenin offered an analysis of the political situation in Russia along the lines that the Russian bourgeoisie were
too weak and conservative to challenge autocratic government. The working class, therefore, would have to exert pressure on the bourgeoisie to force the latter to take a more radical stance against Tsarism and in this way facilitate the development of capitalism. In 1905, Lenin did not have in mind a socialist government in Russia but rather a government in which workers played a role during the bourgeois revolution while, at the same time, beginning the preparations for the future political advancements of the workers.

It is not difficult to see why Rozhkov was attracted to Lenin's analysis of the Russian political scene up until 1905. Rozhkov welcomed the 1905 revolution as the democratic revolution that would pull Russia into its capitalist phase of development, in turn paving the way for socialism. Rozhkov recalled how a literary-propagandist group, which was in fact an extension of the intellectual circle formed round Pravda, emerged in the summer of 1905. Besides Rozhkov and Skvortsov-Stepanov, the group consisted of Pokrovskii, V.M. Friche, P.G. Dauge, S.I. Mitskevich, M.G. Lunts, V.la. Kanel', L.M. Mikhailov, P.N. Maliantovich, B.A. Zhdanov, S.la. Tseitlin, K.N. Levin, I.G. Naumov and others.

Rozhkov joined the Bolshevik faction as a direct result of his involvement with the literary-propagandist group.¹ He believed that his experience with the group

¹ N.A. Rozhkov and A. Sokolov, O 1905 gode: vospominaniiia (Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1925), p. 15.
brought him even closer to the practical problems of politics. Rozhkov recalled that his decision to join the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party came seven years after Struve had warned of the weakness of the bourgeoisie in Russia and at a time when he himself had reached the "conviction that the revolutionary character of the Russian liberal bourgeoisie could not be counted upon". Rozhkov accepted the Bolshevik position of this period that the democratic revolution would have to be led by the workers and that there would have to be working-class participation in any revolutionary government that emerged during 1905.

At about the same time that Rozhkov joined the Bolshevik Party, all conferences organised by the Pedagogical Society were halted by government decree. The Board of Administration of the History Department together with the Board of Administration of the Society of Russian Technical and Rural Economy [Obshchestvo Russkogo Tekhnicheskogo i Sel'skogo Khoziaistva], "which shared the same fate", drafted a formal protest as a result of which Rozhkov was arrested for "a short period of time".

On release, Rozhkov continued to educate and lecture in private houses, discussing, he claimed, "contemporary problems from a Social Democratic point

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3 Rozhkov, Avtobiografiia, p. 163.
of view". In 1905 and 1906 Rozhkov was an active member of the Moscow Bolshevik Committee and it was at his instigation that, in the autumn of 1905, in accordance with a decision of the Moscow Committee, a general meeting of Moscow University students voted that the university should "open its doors" for the purpose of "public political meetings".

During the months of September and October 1905, Rozhkov was very active organising rallies and meetings for the Moscow Committee. Rozhkov recalled that in 1905 there were so many meetings during this time that he found it impossible to give details of any one in particular. He did however remember the ludicrous picture of a policeman standing at the entrance of Moscow University, the venue for many political rallies, opening the doors for those attending the meetings and helping socialist revolutionaries and social democrats find their way around the campus.

Rozhkov's organisational skills and his ability as a speaker took him all over Moscow, as well as to other cities, including Laroslaw, Tver, Tula, Riazan, Serpukhov, Torzhok, Vladimir and Shuia. He lectured workers not only on political theory but also on matters relating to the political organisation of workers. His extraordinary ability in the field of political journalism made him an

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Rozhkov, O 1905 gode, p. 20.
invaluable member of both the literary group and the Moscow committee.

In autumn 1905, Rozhkov journeyed briefly to St. Petersburg where he assisted in the setting up of the first legal Bolshevik newspaper *Novaia Zhizn'*.\(^7\) Returning to Moscow, Rozhkov then played a key role in founding a Bolshevik newspaper there. The decision to establish a Bolshevik newspaper in Moscow was approved at a meeting of the Party Central Committee held in A.M. Peshkov's (Gorky's) apartment at the end of November.\(^8\) On the 27 November, the weekly newspaper *Bor'ba* appeared. It was financed by the publisher S.A. Skirmunt who was so convinced that the revolution was near that, according to Rozhkov, he only took out a two-year deed of purchase on the newspaper. The editorial board consisted of Rozhkov, Skvortsov-Stepanov, Pokrovskii, Lunacharskii, Bogdanov, V. Bazarov, V. Friche, M.A. Sil'vin, M. Ol'minskii, P. Maslov and others.\(^9\)

Rozhkov attended the conference of the Moscow Bolsheviks on the 5 December. He supported the call for a strike and an armed insurrection. The Moscow uprising was bloodily defeated and along with the earlier

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\(^7\) Twenty eight issues of *Novaia Zhizn'* appeared between 27 October-9 November to 3-16 December, 1905. Its official editor was the poet N.M. Minskii and the publisher was the actress and Bolshevik M.F. Andreeva. See also: N.K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (New York: International Publishers, 1960), p. 135.


\(^9\) As White pointed out in his doctoral thesis, the members of the editorial board are listed on each front page of *Bor'ba*.
suppression of the St. Petersburg Soviet signalled the fact that the Tsarist state had regained control of the situation. Rozhkov survived the brutal suppression of the Moscow insurrection. Like so many other political activists, Rozhkov had to confront the decline in revolutionary fortunes. The guarantees of civil rights and freedoms given under the October Manifesto were short-lived as radical newspapers were suppressed, many political meetings and mass rallies were dispersed and political leaders were savagely persecuted with a large number of them being sentenced to death, shot or hanged without trial or investigation.10

Rozhkov subsequently wrote: "We, the members of the Bolshevik literary-propagandist group, did not at all fall into despair immediately after the December defeat".11 For the present, Rozhkov remained free, undertaking to compile and edit a collection of articles dedicated to the idea of boycotting the Duma elections. This collection of articles was published at the end of January 1906 under the general title of Tekushchii Moment. Rozhkov claimed that the 10,000 copies sold were evidence of the success of the boycott campaign. In fact, this was to be his last major literary work on behalf of the Bolsheviks. From 1907, reflections upon


11 N.A. Rozhkov, "1906 god. (Vospominaniia)", Katorga i Ssylka, No. 6, 1925, p. 52.
the experience of 1905 and a thinking through of the implications of his historical writing caused Rozhkov to recoil from the Bolsheviks and to embrace a much more evolutionary brand of socialism.

In 1907 Rozhkov published his most significant political work *Sud'by russkoj revoliutsii*. In this work, Rozhkov wanted “to understand the phenomena of society and contemplate the means of solving social questions”.

Rozhkov's political views were not just connected to his historical theory but were, in fact, governed by it. As Rozhkov wrote:

> My political convictions are tightly and inseparably linked with a definite scientific theory. They were formed in relation to this theory and were elaborated and strengthened gradually as this scientific theory was painstakingly learnt. Confidence in the correctness and firmness of theoretical views that are not metaphysical, that are not alienated from reality but summarise life's phenomena, gives us the means by which we can correctly understand the way great events develop, in which we appear as witnesses and participants. This confidence also helps us comprehend the fact that political convictions, at a given moment, do not lead to a distortion of the truth. A scientific interpretation of social phenomena lies at the basis of this book.

Having acknowledged the relationship that existed between his theory of history and his political ideology,

12 N.A. Rozhkov, *Sud'by russkoj revoliutsii* (St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 3.
Rozhkov explained why the 1905 revolution failed and why a social revolution was not imminent. He began his explanation by outlining his stage view of history and, in particular, his fundamental notion that every country begins with a natural economy but moves towards a money economy. He used his historical analysis of this economic transition to explain Russia's backwardness and thus the reasons why it was not ready for revolution.\textsuperscript{14} Russia lagged some three hundred years behind western European development and, as Rozhkov put it, this difference between western Europe and Russia was of "extraordinary and primary importance".\textsuperscript{15}

He believed that the "subjective and objective prerequisites" for a social revolution did not exist in Russia. In other words, the economic preconditions for a social revolution did not exist and all the classes in society lacked the class consciousness needed to bring about a social revolution.\textsuperscript{16} Rozhkov came to the belief that before a social revolution was possible, capitalism had to be fully developed. Unlike Lenin, he supported Plekhanov's claim that capitalism had not "already become the dominant mode of production" in Russia.\textsuperscript{17}

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\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 5-10.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 106.
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Consequently, Rozhkov believed that capitalism had to be developed; it had to go beyond what he called the "predatory" level of primitive accumulation.18

According to Rozhkov, this could only be done by advocating the programme of the 1903 Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. This programme consisted of two parts: a maximum programme and a minimum programme. The maximum programme dealt with the social revolution that would bring about the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.19 The minimum programme dealt with the immediate aims of the party, namely, the overthrow of the Tsarist regime, the establishment of a democratic republic, the introduction of an 8-hour working day, the abolition of all remnants of serfdom and the restoration to the peasants of the cut-off lands [otrezki] of which they had been deprived by the landowners.20

Rozhkov maintained that the minimum programme had to be achieved first if the maximum programme was to succeed. With regard to the agrarian question, for example, Rozhkov wrote:

All the demands of the peasants and the farm labourers are thus in full agreement with the correctly understood and interpreted agrarian programme of the Second Congress. This programme, and only this programme, must be adhered to by

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18 Rozhkov, *Sud'by*, pp. 10-12.
social democracy as the minimum programme in the agrarian question.  

Rozhkov came firmly to believe that the social revolution was not a possibility in his lifetime. In fact, Rozhkov maintained that it was a long way off:

the social revolution at the present moment and in the near future is impossible. It will be conceivable and realisable only after several decades. Neither we nor our children will bring it about. It will be done by our grandchildren.

He believed that only after there had been many years of capitalist development would the social revolution be realised. The social revolution simply had to wait until capitalism reached the stage when it "would begin to shake at its foundations and commence its own decline". According to Rozhkov, only at this "certain stage" of capitalist development is the social revolution possible and, as he wrote: "I am fully convinced that such an eve [the eve of the social revolution] has still not arrived". Like many Russian socialists, Rozhkov was moving towards a more gradualist approach to Russian politics.

As might be expected, Rozhkov, moving in socialist circles, came more and more into contact with Marxist

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21 Rozhkov, Sud'by, p. 121.
22 Ibid., p. 112. Recent events in eastern Europe seem to justify completely Rozhkov's argument. Indeed, the profound changes in eastern Europe caused by the Gorbachev Revolution have made the general Menshevik argument very plausible indeed.
23 Ibid., p. 117.
24 Ibid.
thought. For Rozhkov, both Marxism and positivism represented attempts to explain human history scientifically. The founders of Marxism believed that history moved through stages and so did Rozhkov. Rozhkov was convinced that a social revolution can only take place after a long period of democracy. This period of democracy would come about as a result of the bourgeois revolution. During this period, the proletariat struggles with the bourgeoisie to ensure the establishment of full democracy.25 As Rozhkov wrote: "The basic task of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution is to bring to a conclusion the democratic revolution [perevorot], that is, to bring about the realisation of a full and complete democracy"26 and the "task of social democracy, consequently, is to create in every possible way the situation that will make it necessary for the peasantry to have complete democracy".27 The Menshevik faction of the R.S.D.L.P. most clearly embraced a gradualist, stage-oriented conception of Russia's historical development and it was only natural that Rozhkov should gravitate towards it. Although Rozhkov did not formally break from the Bolsheviks until late 1911, his political journey from Bolshevism to Menshevism was already underway much earlier.28

25 Ibid., p. 89.
26 Ibid., p. 113.
27 Ibid., p. 114.
28 See: N.A. Rozhkov, 1905 god. Istoricheskii ocherk (Leningrad-Moscow: Kniga, 1926), passim.
As early as 1905, Lenin was moving away from his erstwhile conviction that socialism could not form part of the immediate Russian political agenda. Lenin began to argue that capitalist Europe was ready for socialist revolution and that Russia's workers might play a role in a Europe-wide revolution by overthrowing the Russian bourgeoisie. In 1907, Rozhkov's overwhelming belief in the laws of historical development and evolution, which he formulated early in his life, fitted neatly the Menshevik notion that Russia was not ready for a proletarian revolution. Rozhkov, like Martov, Axelrod, Potresov and Plekhanov, and unlike Trotsky and Lenin, who abandoned it, essentially supported the doctrine originally expounded by Plekhanov in 1883 and reiterated by him in April 1905 that "in backward Russia the coming revolution would be a 'bourgeois' revolution which would put the bourgeoisie into power". In an attempt to justify the correctness of his belief in evolutionary theory, Rozhkov wrote:

Revolution is only one of the moments of evolution when social development is accomplished at an accelerated pace. Revolution is accelerated evolution. It stands to reason that the accelerated pace will ascribe to evolution a special, unique character. Revolution will create such tumultuous phenomena as are seldom experienced in evolution. Revolution gives rise to unpredictable movement, forwards or backwards, and to astonishing zigzags. In the epoch of revolution, society as if

attempting to fill previous omissions, to make up for lost time, hurriedly sweeps and immediately replaces the old with the new. Or, putting it differently, society replaces that which would have changed only slowly and gradually in peaceful evolution.³⁰

Rozhkov claimed that the failure of any revolution only meant that the conditions that caused the revolution in the first place would exist for a while longer. He believed that the outcome of the revolutionary struggle was inevitable, it was determined by the laws of social development. As Rozhkov wrote, it did not matter whether the revolution was successful or not because: “in the end, the gains that would have been made as a direct result of the revolutionary struggle and victory would be made, all the same, sooner or later. The results of the revolution, if not immediately apparent, would be realised in time, in the years after the revolution”.³¹ As Rozhkov succinctly put it, whether society achieved change through revolution or evolution is unimportant, as “the step forward, which is accomplished by both societies, is essentially identical”.³²

In his book *The Fundamental Laws of Social Phenomena*, which was also published in 1907, Rozhkov expressed the same idea. Using the analogy of society as a living organism, Rozhkov claimed that “society, like

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³⁰ Rozhkov, *Sud’by*, p. 104.
the individual, could be sick". He argued that society could be sick in two ways. He believed that society could suffer from "temporary, transient illnesses such as a growing pain, a crisis or a break originating from the temporary confusion and difficulty that occurs during the transition from one period to another". Such illnesses manifest themselves in "revolutions and all kinds of troubled times". Rozhkov believed that a "strong society" could also suffer from diseases that cause "constitutional disorders". Rozhkov claimed that society could not cope with such illnesses and that is why, in the end, it is absorbed by another society. Once again, Rozhkov maintained that progress, in the form of evolution or revolution, was inevitable. In his opinion, society had to develop in accordance with a set of historical laws and therefore, even if the revolution were defeated, "in the final analysis anyway, defeat is pregnant with victory".

In April 1908 the Tsarist imperial government once again arrested Rozhkov. This time, after twenty-five months imprisonment in St. Petersburg, he was exiled to eastern Siberia where he formally disassociated himself from the Bolshevik party. Rozhkov wrote in his autobiography that his "disagreements with

33 N.A. Rozhkov, Osnovnye zakony razvitia obshchestvennykh iavlenii (Kratkii ocherk sotsiologii) (Moscow, 1907), p. 86.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Rozhkov, Sud'by, p. 105.
38 See: Krupskaya, op.cit., p. 183.
the Bolsheviks began" in 1911-1912.\textsuperscript{39} As has already been pointed out, Rozhkov's analysis of the role of a socialist activist was already diverging from that of Lenin much earlier.

While in Siberian exile Rozhkov came round to the view that there should be a greater emphasis upon legal work to hasten the pace of Russia's political development.\textsuperscript{40} It was a view shared by many Mensheviks. This did not mean the end of illegal work although socialists would have to be careful that underground activity did not compromise or bring to a premature end their work above ground. Lenin pejoratively described as "liquidators" those who "advocated using the Duma, trade unions, co-operatives, workers' clubs and the popular press to further the workers' interests through legal means at the expense of illegal agitation and propaganda".\textsuperscript{41} Lenin argued that "liquidators" desired to liquidate the entire underground party and all that it stood for. He managed to convince the Plenum of the Central Committee, which met in the café d'Arcourt in Paris between 2-23 January 1910, to condemn liquidationism.\textsuperscript{42}

At the same time Rozhkov was coming round to the view that for the foreseeable future, the task of

\textsuperscript{39} Rozhkov, \textit{Avtobiografiiia}, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Elwood, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 134-140.
socialists was to “civilise” as much as possible the coming era of capitalism. The transition to socialism for Rozhkov was now a far-distant goal. The notion of a gradual transition to socialism was more compatible with Rozhkov’s stage-oriented theory of historical development. As Rozhkov put it, in the journal *Our Dawn* [*Nasha Zaria*] in 1911:

> The principal objective task in Russia at present is the unconditional completion of the change from grossly predatory, semi-feudal economic practices to civilised capitalism [*kul’turnym kapitalizom*]. This is absolutely beyond doubt or dispute. This not debatable. The debate is over whether Russia, at the present moment, has reached that stage when the social and political superstructure has adapted to the economic basis to such an extent that although the possibility of social upheavals is not excluded, these upheavals are not indispensable or inevitable in the near future.

Rozhkov refined his earlier conviction of the need for Russia to develop beyond the primitive capitalist accumulation phase by putting forward the theory that Russia had to experience a period of “civilised capitalist” development. The proletariat was committed to the fight for bourgeois victory. It could do nothing else because the bourgeoisie “supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat

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43 N.A. Rozhkov, “Sovremennoe polozhenie Rossii i osnovnaia zadacha rabochago dvizheniiia v dannyi moment”, *Nasha Zaria*, Nos. 9-10, 1911, pp. 31-35.

with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie". \(^\text{45}\) Inherent
in this theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution
and the subsequent rise of modern bourgeois society was
the rise of the proletariat as a class and as a political
force. Rozhkov argued that this theory implied the
existence of an early form of socialism within advanced
capitalism.

To explain the transition from capitalism to
socialism, Rozhkov developed the idea of "civilised
capitalism" which was undoubtedly influenced by the
notion of "organised capitalism" as first adumbrated by
Rudolf Hilferding in 1910 in his significant study
entitled *Finanzkapital*. Hilferding introduced the term
"organised capitalism" in essays he published after
1915 but in *Finanzkapital* he already identified the basis
of this idea. \(^\text{46}\) In the concluding chapter of *Finanzkapital*
Hilferding argued that:

Finance capital puts control over social
production increasingly into the hands of a
small number of large capitalist
associations, separates the management of
production from ownership, and socializes
production to the extent that this is
possible under capitalism ... The
socializing function of finance capitalism
facilitates enormously the task of
overcoming capitalism ... Even today,
taking possession of six large Berlin banks
would mean taking possession of the most
important spheres of large-scale industry,
and would greatly facilitate the initial


\(^{46}\) T. Bottomore (ed.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Oxford: Basil
Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1985), p. 357.
phases of socialist policy during the transition period.47

After the First World War, Hilferding most clearly elaborated this idea in a speech he made in 1927 where he characterised the contemporary era as one in which "we are moving ... from an economy regulated by the free play of forces to an organised economy".48

Convinced that the proletariat had to gain political supremacy in order to create the conditions for a successful proletarian revolution, Rozhkov argued that there existed "all the prerequisites for a slow but nevertheless certain advance of the bourgeois social and political system in Russia, with the masses bearing the pain of this advance".49 He believed that what existed at the time was "the triumph of a quite moderate bourgeois 'progressivism'" but this "progressivism, even if of the most moderate variety, will undoubtedly have to extend the all too narrow confines existing at present".50 Given this state of affairs, Rozhkov maintained that an open and broad political organisation of the workers was "objectively inevitable and necessary" in the transition to civilised capitalism and that "unless such an organisation exists the struggle is bound to assume an

48 Ibid., p. 67.
50 Ibid., p. 34.
anarchistic character, harmful not only to the working class but to the civilised bourgeoisie as well".\textsuperscript{51}

Rozhkov did not explain why the bourgeoisie became "civilised" and therefore willing to negotiate with a proletariat that only wanted to implement and fulfil objectives that were radically different to those advocated by the bourgeoisie. We may only assume that the proletariat used its newly acquired political supremacy to extract reforms, decrees and changes from the bourgeoisie. Rozhkov reiterated that this process of reform was only possible through a "civilised and planned class struggle", in other words, through the political freedom and democratic procedures established by the bourgeoisie as this was the tactic that the period of reaction dictated. As Rozhkov wrote:

There is no advocacy of any violence in this; there is not a word, not a thought about a violent revolution being necessary, because in reality, too, no such necessity may ever arise. If anyone, blinded by reactionary frenzy, took it into his head to accuse the members of such an "association" of striving for violent revolution, the whole burden of an absurd, unfounded and juridically flimsy accusation of this sort would fall upon the head of the accuser.\textsuperscript{52}

Rozhkov proposed a concrete plan for an open political workers' society [\textit{obshchestvo}] and suggested that it be inaugurated by the founding of a "political

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.
association for the protection of the interests of the working class". The programme for this association provided for "the establishment of a new society based on the public ownership of the means of production, the planned organisation of the entire economy and the abolition of class structure". However, the immediate aim of the association was:

in the political sphere, the establishment of a thoroughgoing democracy [posledovatel'noi demokratii], that is, of a universal, direct, equal and secret suffrage without discrimination based on sex, religion or nationality; of full civil liberty and of democratic local self-government. With regard to workers the aim included: the establishment of the 8-hour working day; state insurance of workers against sickness, mutilation, old age, disablement, unemployment and accidental death (at no material sacrifice to the workers) and extensive factory legislation. With regard to the agrarian question, the aim was the additional allotment of land to land-starved peasants, at no material sacrifice to the peasant directly or indirectly and the complete freedom of the forms of landownership.

Rozhkov, like Hilferding, believed that the early phase of socialism had to exist within capitalism before socialism could be developed fully. In other words, Rozhkov labelled as "civilised capitalism" that phase of advanced capitalism that marked the transition to socialism. Civilised capitalism was that phase of

53 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
54 Ibid., p. 35.
55 See: Bottomore, Theories of Modern Capitalism, pp. 19, 67 and 69.
capitalist development when the economic process "socialized itself" or, as Hilferding put it, when the economy was transformed from being "organized and directed by the capitalists into one which is directed by the democratic state". Rozhkov maintained that the transition from capitalism to socialism, like the transition from a natural to a money economy, was a long and difficult process. Socialism could only arise after it had experienced a long period of coexistence with capitalism.

The Bolshevik N.F. Chuzhak recalled that, with regard to views on the underground and political tactics, Rozhkov was often at odds with his colleagues. Chuzhak himself often disagreed with Rozhkov but found his knowledge and experience with newspapers invaluable and, as such, worked in close collaboration with him. Lenin, on the other hand, had made up his mind about Rozhkov's "liquidationism". Lenin noted at the time:

> Painful though it is for Marxists to lose in the person of N.A. Rozhkov, a man who, in the years when the movement was on the upgrade served the worker's party faithfully and energetically, the cause must take precedence over all personal or factional considerations, and over all recollections, however "pleasant."

Lenin proclaimed that Rozhkov "most consistently substitutes liberalism for Marxism" and that "R-kov

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56 Ibid., p. 59.
57 Chuzhak, op.cit., p. 173.
presents us with an even more vivid and typically ‘professorial’ distortion of Marxism”.

Rozhkov, committed to the idea of the inevitability of the transformation of Russian social democracy “according to the European model”, began to challenge Bolshevik tactics at political meetings and organisations. However, Rozhkov’s political views during his years of Siberian exile were most vividly developed in the legal press.

In Siberia, between the years 1910-1917, Rozhkov found himself in towns like Irkutsk, Chita and Novo-Nikolaevsk. In each of these towns, Rozhkov founded and ran a series of newspapers which served as an “organising centre” and promulgated “Social-Democratic ideas and points of view on the problems of current affairs”. In Irkutsk, often working alongside Bolsheviks (N.F. Chuzhak and V.N. Sokolov to name but two), Rozhkov edited: Eastern Dawn [Vostochnaia Zaria], Voice of Siberia [Golos Sibiri], Siberian Thought [Sibirskaja Mysl’], Word of Irkutsk [Irkutskoe Slovo], Young Siberia [Molodaia Sibir] and New Siberia [Novaia Sibir].

In these newspapers he wrote numerous articles on general political and Siberian themes but in all his writings after 1910, Rozhkov put forward the argument

59 Ibid., p. 314. Rozhkov usually signed his articles as N. R-kov, N. R-ov, N.R. or he used his pseudonyms Narov and K. Lomzin.
60 Today Novosibirsk.
61 Rozhkov, Avtobiografiia, p. 164.
he had already clearly formulated in 1907. This is amply demonstrated when we examine some of the statements he made in newspapers and journals of this period. For example, in *Eastern Dawn* Rozhkov wrote: “Russia has entered the period of civilised capitalist development”\(^\text{63}\) and in *Siberian Thought* he declared: “the future, in the historical sense of the word, belongs to the civilised, big bourgeoisie [*kul’turnoi krupnoi burzhuaizii*] which is made up of all the other big bourgeois groups [*krupnoburzhuaizii gruppy*]”\(^\text{64}\). Even after the First World War had started, he wrote in *Our Cause* [*Nashe Delo*]: “all the hopes of democracy are built on the organising force of civilised capitalism”\(^\text{65}\).

This was the ideological baggage that Rozhkov would take with him during the revolutionary events of 1917. Having returned from Siberia, Rozhkov, like most Mensheviks, offered critical support to the Provisional Government. He even accepted a government post as Deputy Minister. Rozhkov was totally opposed to the Bolshevik coup as a premature seizure of power by socialists who had forgotten their Marx and who failed to understand the course of history. During the Civil War Rozhkov looked for signs that the Bolsheviks had come to their senses. He welcomed the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921 as evidence that Lenin was


\(^\text{64}\) N.A. R-ov, “Konsolidatsiia krupnoi burzhuaizii”, *Sibirskaia Mysl*, 10 July, 1911.

In exile in Siberia.

Rozhkov is in the middle, Tsereteli is to his left.
A meeting of university colleagues in Ekaterinburg in 1920.

Rozhkov is second from the left.
coming to realise the error of his ways and had finally accepted the necessity of a capitalist phase in Russia's revolutionary development.

Rozhkov, though, was not to play a significant role in the politics of this period. While Lenin loosened the grip the Communist Party had on the economy after 1921, the political grip was tightened. The Menshevik Party was unable to operate legally and Mensheviks found themselves persecuted in various ways, including arrest and exile. Many prominent Mensheviks left Russia but Rozhkov remained. He endured periods of periodic detention and internal exile until in 1922 he formally broke with the Mensheviks, leaving the R.S.D.L.P. altogether. Rozhkov had always been a political activist concerned with bringing propaganda to the masses rather than getting involved in the business of political administration. By 1922, it would seem that Rozhkov had lost the will to continue in the role of a politician.

The New Economic Policy did make Rozhkov much more sympathetic to the Bolsheviks and, according to some observers, he seriously contemplated a return to the Bolshevik, now Communist Party. Morokhovets wrote

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that: “Rozhkov, after leaving the R.S.D.L.P. in the autumn of 1922, did not join another party. However, he was moving closer to the Communist Party all the time”\(^{67}\)
Pokrovskii also made the statement at Rozhkov’s funeral that: “N.A. Rozhkov was literally yesterday going to return to us [the Communist Party] in a very genuine way”\(^{68}\). However, there is no evidence to suggest that Rozhkov had radically changed his political views.\(^{69}\) In fact, the contrary seems to be the case. Fedorchenko (N. Charov) recalled in 1927 that when he asked Rozhkov why he did not join the Communist Party, Rozhkov replied: “I have 25% Menshevism in me, how can I join the Party? No, I do not want to increase the opposition within the Party because it is, in my opinion, very harmful at the present time”.\(^{70}\) In his autobiography Rozhkov added that “opposition within the Party does not have any sense”.\(^{71}\)

Until his death in 1927, Rozhkov spent a lot of time in teaching at tertiary levels and working in higher educational and scientific institutions. Having recanted

71 Rozhkov, Avtobiografiia, p.165.
his Menshevism, he was allowed to teach at the universities of Leningrad and Moscow and at the Institute of Red Professors. He also became director of the Academy of Communist Education and the Moscow Historical Museum. In 1922 he was made a professor. Between 1926-1927 he co-edited the history section of the first edition of the *Grand Soviet Encyclopedia*.

On 26 January 1927, Rozhkov suffered a severe heart attack. N. Teterin recalled that Rozhkov, in times of depression, often exclaimed: "old age is coming ... it is time to die". Although he had some sort of premonition of approaching death, having told close friends on several occasions that he was going to die soon, he continued to work indefatigably until the day of his heart attack. On that day, he said to his friend Teterin that death held no fears for him and that "sooner or later one must die". A few days later on 2 February 1927, at 11.30 p.m., Nikolai Aleksandrovich Rozhkov died, leaving behind him a vast legacy of books, brochures, pamphlets and articles ranging across the whole of history.

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Maria Konstatinova ROZHKOVA (1950)
Rozhkov's second wife and Professor of Economics at Moscow University
Rozhkov's grave in Moscow's Novodevich'e Cemetery