In this short but historically significant article, written just a week after the previous one in this collection, Rosa Luxemburg was the first to refer in the West-European socialist press to a ‘revolutionary situation in permanence’ in Russia. As in her previous article, she discounts the significance both of Father Gapon and of Russia’s ‘liberal heroes’, instead attributing the spirit of the revolutionary outbreak to years of agitation on the part of Russian Social Democracy. Contrary to the views of Michał Luśnia – already criticised in this volume by Karl Kautsky in his essay on ‘Revolutionary Questions’ – Luxemburg also clearly rejoiced in the fact that the uprising had rapidly spread from St. Petersburg to several other major urban centres in Poland, Ukraine, and the Baltic region. Like Trotsky and Parvus, she expected the revolution to become permanent not merely in the sense of embracing all the peoples and regions of the tsar’s empire, but also in terms of infusing a formally bourgeois event with the vital content of class-conscious proletarian struggle.

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1 Luxemburg 1905f, pp. 610–14.
2 [See Schwarz 1967, pp. 246–54.]
‘After the First Act’

A week ago we wrote about the Revolution in Petersburg. Now it stretches over almost the entire empire. In all the large cities – in Moscow, Riga, Vilna, in Jelgava and Liepaja, in Yekaterinoslav and Kiev, in Warsaw and Łódź – proletarians have responded to the Petersburg butchery with a mass strike (in Warsaw with a general strike in the literal sense of the word) and have energetically proven their class solidarity with the proletariat on the Neva.

To borrow Marx’s words, as the ‘thoroughness’ of the action has grown, so too have the numbers of the masses involved.

In Petersburg the uprising of the proletariat was spontaneous, and the signal for it was given by an accidental leader [Father Gapon] even when the goals, the programme and the political character of the uprising, as a sufficient number of reports have already confirmed, were directly determined by the intervention of Social-Democratic workers. In the rest of the empire, and especially in Poland, the authorship and leadership of the movement were from the outset in the hands of Social Democracy. To be sure, even here this did not mean that Social Democracy conjured up the mass strike of its own accord and at its own discretion. Rather, it had to adapt everywhere to the impulse of the workers, whose excitement sprang up with the very first rumours and reports of the Petersburg events, and who instinctively resorted to actions in solidarity. But it was Social Democracy that immediately gave

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3 [Luxemburg 1905c, pp. 477–84. See the previous document this anthology.]
4 [Latvian cities (In German: Mitau und Libau).]
5 [St. Petersburg is situated on the Gulf of Finland at the mouth of the Neva River.]
6 [The reference is to the section on ‘Spirit and Mass’ in chapter VI of The Holy Family by Marx and Engels:
   If the Revolution, which can exemplify all great historical ‘actions’, was a failure, it was so because the mass within whose living conditions it essentially came to a stop, was an exclusive, limited mass, not an all-embracing one. If the Revolution was a failure it was not because the mass was ‘enthusiastic’ over it and ‘interested’ in it, but because the most numerous part of the mass, the part distinct from the bourgeoisie, did not have its real interest in the principle of the Revolution, did not have a revolutionary principle of its own, but only an ‘idea’, and hence only an object of momentary enthusiasm and only seeming uplift. Together with the thoroughness of the historical action, the size of the mass whose action it is will therefore increase. (Marx and Engels 1845, p. 82.)]