The History of the Russian Revolution

Leon Trotsky

Volume One

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Notes on the Text

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PREFACE

During the first two months of 1917 Russia was still a Romanov monarchy. Eight months later the Bolsheviks stood at the helm. They were little know to anybody when the year began, and their leaders were still under indictment for state treason when they came to power. You will not find another such sharp turn in history especially if you remember that it involves a nation of 150 million people. It is clear that the events of 1917, whatever you think of them, deserve study.

The history of a revolution, like every other history, ought first of all to tell what happened and how. That, however, is little enough. From the very telling it ought to become clear why it happened thus and not otherwise. Events can neither be regarded as a series of adventures, nor strung on the thread of a preconceived moral. They must obey their own laws. The discovery of these laws is the author's task.

The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historical events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business - kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new rgime. Whether this is good or bad we leave to the judgement of moralists. We ourselves will take the facts as they are given by the objective course of development. The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny.

In a society that is seized by revolution classes are in conflict. It is perfectly clear, however, that the changes introduced between the beginning and the end of a revolution in the economic bases of the society and its social substratum of classes, are not sufficient to explain the course of the revolution itself, which can overthrow in a short interval age-old institutions, create new ones, and again overthrow them. The dynamic of revolutionary events is *directly* determined by swift, intense and passionate changes in the psychology of

classes which have already formed themselves before the revolution.

The point is that society does not change its institutions as need arises, the way a mechanic changes his instruments. On the contrary, society actually takes the institutions which hang upon it as given once for all. For decades the oppositional criticism is nothing more than a safety valve for mass dissatisfaction, a condition of the stability of the social structure. Such in principle, for example, was the significance acquired by the social-democratic criticism. Entirely exceptional conditions, independent of the will of persons and parties, are necessary in order to tear off from discontent the fetters of conservatism, and bring the masses to insurrection.

The swift changes of mass views and moods in an epoch of revolution thus derive, not from the flexibility and mobility of man's mind, but just the opposite, from its deep conservatism. The chronic lag of ideas and relations behind new objective conditions, right up to the moment when the latter crash over people in the form of a catastrophe, is what creates in a period of revolution that leaping movement of ideas and passions which seems to the police mind a mere result of the activities of "demagogues."

The masses go into a revolution not with a prepared plan of social reconstruction, but with a sharp feeling that they cannot endure the old rgime. Only the guiding layers of a class have a political program, and even this still requires the test of events, and the approval of the masses. The fundamental political process of the revolution thus consists in the gradual comprehension by a class of the problems arising from the social crisis the active orientation of the masses by a method of successive approximations. The different stages of a revolutionary process, certified by a change of parties in which the more extreme always supersedes the less, express the growing pressure to the left of the masses so long as the swing of the movement does not run into objective obstacles. When it does, there begins a reaction: disappointments of the different layers of the revolutionary class, growth of indifferentism, and therewith a strengthening of the position of the counter-revolutionary forces. Such, at least, is the general outline of the old revolutions.

Only on the basis of a study of political processes in the masses themselves, can we understand the role of parties and leaders, whom we least of all are inclined to ignore. They constitute not an independent, but nevertheless a very important, element in the process. Without a guiding organisation, the energy of the masses would dissipate like steam not enclosed in a piston-box. But nevertheless what moves things is not the piston or the box, but the steam.

The difficulties which stand in the way of studying the changes of mass consciousness in a revolutionary epoch are quite obvious. The oppressed classes make history in the factories, in the barracks, in the villages, on the streets of the cities. Moreover, they are least of all accustomed to write things down. Periods of high tension in social passions

leave little room for contemplation and reflection. All the muses even the plebeian muse of journalism, in spite of her sturdy hips have hard sledding in times of revolution. Still the historian's situation is by no means hopeless. The records are incomplete, scattered, accidental. But in the light of the events themselves these fragments often permit a guess as to the direction and rhythm of the hidden process. For better or worse, a revolutionary party bases its tactics upon a calculation of the changes of mass consciousness. The historic course of Bolshevism demonstrates that such a calculation, at least in its rough features, can be made. If it can be made by a revolutionary leader in the whirlpool of the struggle, why not by the historian afterwards?

However, the processes taking place in the consciousness of the masses are not unrelated and independent. No matter how the idealists and the eclectics rage, consciousness is nevertheless determined by conditions. In the historic conditions which formed Russia, her economy, her classes, her State, in the action upon her of other states, we ought to be able to find the premises both of the February revolution and of the October revolution which replaced it. Since the greatest enigma is the fact that a backward country was the *first* to place the proletariat in power, it behoves us to seek the solution of that enigma in the *peculiarities* of that backward country that is, in its differences from other countries.

The historic peculiarities of Russia and their relative weight will be characterised by us in the early chapters of this book which give a short outline of the development of Russian society and its inner forces. We venture to hope that the inevitable schematism of these chapters will not repel the reader. In the further development of the book he will meet these same forces in living action.

This work will not rely in any degree upon personal recollections. The circumstance that the author was a participant in the events does not free him from the obligation to base his exposition upon historically verified documents. The author speaks of himself, in so far as that is demanded by the course of events, in the third person. And that is not a mere literary form: the subjective tone, inevitable in autobiographies or memoirs, is not permissible in a work of history.

However, the fact that the author did participate in the struggle naturally makes easier his understanding, not only of the psychology of the forces in action, both individual and collective, but also of the inner connection of events. This advantage will give positive results only if one condition is observed: that he does not rely upon the testimony of his own memory either in trivial details or in important matters, either in questions of fact or questions of motive and mood. The author believes that in so far as in him lies he has fulfilled this condition.

There remains the question of the political position of the author, who stands as a historian upon the same viewpoint upon which he stood as a participant in the events. The

reader, of course, is not obliged to share the political views of the author, which the latter on his side has no reason to conceal. But the reader does have the right to demand that a historical work should not be the defence of a political position, but an internally well-founded portrayal of the actual process of the revolution. A historical work only then completely fulfils the mission when events unfold upon its pages in their full natural necessity.

For this, is it necessary to have the so-called historian's "impartiality"? Nobody has yet clearly explained what this impartiality consists of. The often quoted words of Clmenceau that it is necessary to take a revolution "en bloc," as a whole are at the best a clever evasion. How can you take as a whole a thing whose essence consists in a split? Clmenceaus aphorism was dictated partly by shame for his too resolute ancestors, partly by embarrassment before their shades.

One of the reactionary and therefore fashionable historians in contemporary France, L. Madelin, slandering in his drawing-room fashion the great revolution that is, the birth of his own nation asserts that "the historian ought to stand upon the wall of a threatened city, and behold at the same time the besiegers and the besieged": only in this way, it seems, can he achieve a "conciliatory justice." However, the words of Madelin himself testify that if he climbs out on the wall dividing the two camps, it is only in the character of a reconnoiterer for the reaction. It is well that he is concerned only with war camps of the past: in a time of revolution standing on the wall involves great danger. Moreover, in times of alarm the priests of "conciliatory justice" are usually found sitting on the inside of four walls waiting to see which side will win.

The serious and critical reader will not want a treacherous impartiality, which offers him a cup of conciliation with a well-settled poison of reactionary hate at the bottom, but a scientific conscientiousness, which for its sympathies and antipathies open and undisguised seeks support in an honest study of the facts, a determination of their real connections, an exposure of the causal laws of their movement. That is the only possible historic objectivism, and moreover it is amply sufficient, for it is verified and attested not by the good intentions of the historian, for which only he himself can vouch, but the natural laws revealed by him of the historic process itself.

The sources of this book are innumerable periodical publications, newspapers and journals, memoirs, reports, and other material, partly in manuscript, but the greater part published by the Institute of the History of the Revolution in Moscow and Leningrad. We have considered its superfluous to make reference in the text to particular publications, since that would only bother the reader. Among the books which have the character of collective historical works we have particularly used the two-volume *Essays on the History of the October Revolution* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927). Written by different authors, the various parts of this book are unequal in value, but they contain at any rate abundant factual

material.

The dates in our book are everywhere indicated according to the old style that is, they are 13 days behind the international and the present Soviet calendar. The author felt obliged to use the calendar which was in use at the time of the revolution. It would have been no labour of course to translate the dates into the new style. But this operation in removing one difficulty would have created others more essential. The overthrow of the monarchy has gone into history as the February revolution; according to the Western calendar, however, it occurred in March. The armed demonstration against the imperialist policy of the Provisional Government has gone into history under the name of the "April Days," whereas according to the Western calendar it happened in May. Not to mention other intervening events and dates, we remark only that the October revolution happened according to European reckoning in November. The calendar itself, we see, is tinted by the events, and the historian cannot handle revolutionary chronology by mere arithmetic. The reader will be kind enough to remember that before overthrowing the Byzantine calendar, the revolution had to overthrow the institutions that clung to it.

L. TROTSKY

Prinkipo

November 14, 1930.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE FOR VOLUME ONE

1774

Pugatchev Rebellion of Cossacks and peasants.

1825

Dekabrist (Decembrist) uprising against czarism led by liberal officers.

1848

The Communist Manifesto published by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: The foundation of revolutionary socialism or communism

1861

Peasant Reform; abolition of serfdom in Russia.

1864

"The International" (first international organisation of socialist workers) established by Marx and others.

1871

The Paris Commune.

1882

Plekhanov publishes first pamphlet introducing Marxian socialism into Russia.

1905

The Revolution of 1905 in Russia. First organisation of soviets by Russian workers.

(January 9) "Bloody Sunday": workers led by Father Gapon and carrying a petition to the czar [Nicholas II], are mowed down by the czar's troops.

1914

(August 1) World War begins. Germany declares war against Russia.

(November 4) Bolshevik deputies in the State Duma arrested and sent to Siberia

1915

(April) Russian revolutionary internationalist paper, *Nashe Slovo*, appears in Paris with Trotsky on the editorial staff.

(September) International socialist congress in Zimmerwald, Switzerland.

1916

(May) Second Congress of socialist internationalists at Kienthal.

1917

(January 9)- Street meetings and a printers' strike celebrate the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday"

(February 14)- The last State Duma assembles.

(February 23)- Celebration of International Woman's Day begins the revolution.

(February 24)- Two hundred thousand workers on strike in Petrograd.

(February 25)- General strike in Petrograd. Shootings and arrests of revolutionists.

(February 26) Duma dissolved by the czar [Nicholas II]. The deputies disperse but decide not to leave town.

Tens of thousands of workers in the streets.

Mutiny of the Guard regiments.

Formation of the Soviet of Workers' deputies.

Formation of Provisional Committee of the Duma.

(February 28)- Arrest of the czar's ministers.

Capture of Schlusselberg Prison.

First issue of *Izvestia* [Russian word for News or Information??]- "The News of the Soviet."

(March 1)- "Order No. 1" [LINK] is issued to the soldiers.

Formation of the soldiers' section of the Soviet.

First session of the Moscow Soviet.

(March 2)- The czar abdicates in favour of the Grand Duke Mikhail.

The Provisional Government is formed by the Provisional Committee of the Duma, with the support of the Soviet and with Kerensky a Minister of Justice.

(March 3)- The Grand Duke Mikhail abdicates.

The Provisional Government announces the revolution to the world by radio.

(March 5)- the first issue of *Pravda* [Truth], central organ of the Bolshevik Party.

(March 6)- The Provisional Government declares amnesty for political prisoners.

(March 8)- The czar arrested at Moghilie.

(March 14)- Address of the Soviet "to the people of the whole world" declaring for peace without annexations or indemnities.

(March 23)- Funeral of the martyrs of the revolution.

(March 29)- All-Russian conference of the Soviets. [[[Note: soviets was not capitalized, but I think an editorial error]]]

(April 3)- Lenin, Zinoviev and other Bolshevik arrive from Switzerland.

(April 4)- Lenin's "April Theses" outlining his policy of proletarian revolution.

(April 18)- Celebration of the international socialist holiday of May 1.

Foreign Minister Miliukov sends a note to the Allies promising war to victory on the old terms.

(April 20)- Armed demonstrations of protest against the note of Miliukov– the "April Days"

(April 24)- Beginning of an All-Russian conference of the Bolshevik Party.

(May 1)- The Petrograd Soviet votes for a coalition government.

(May 2)- Miliukov resigns.

(May 4)- Trotsky arrives from America, seconding the policies of Lenin.

An All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies opens in Petrograd.

(May 5)- Coalition government is organised with Kerensky as Minister of War.

(May 17)- The Kronstadt Soviet declares itself the sole governing power in Kronstadt.

(May 25)- All-Russian Congress [[[Another miscapitalization]]] of the Social Revolutionary party.

(May 30)- First conference of factory and shop committees opens in Petrograd.

(June 3)- First All-Russian [[[Another miscap]]] Congress of Soviets [[and two more]].

(June 16)- Kerensky orders Russian armies to take the offensive.

(June 18)- A demonstration called by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries turns out to be a Bolshevik demonstration.

(June 19)- Patriotic demonstration on Nevsky Prospect, carrying portrait of Kerensky.

(July 3-5)- “July Days”- semi-insurrection followed by attempted stamping out of Bolshevism in Petrograd.

Note: Russian dates are given according to the Julian calendar. Add 13 days to find the date according to the calendar that is now internationally recognised.

CHAPTER 1

PECULIARITIES OF RUSSIA'S DEVELOPMENT

The fundamental and most stable feature of Russian history is the slow tempo of her development, with the economic backwardness, primitiveness of social forms and low level of culture resulting from it.

The population of this gigantic and austere plain, open to eastern winds and Asiatic migrations, was condemned by nature itself to a long backwardness. The struggle with nomads lasted almost up to the end of the seventeenth century; the struggle with winds, bringing winter cold and summer drought, continues still. Agriculture, the basis of the whole development, advanced by extensive methods. In the north they cut down and burned up the forests, in the south they ravished the virgin steppes. The conquest of nature went wide and not deep,

While the western barbarians settled in the ruins of Roman culture, where many an old stone lay ready as building material, the Slavs in the East found no inheritance upon their desolate plain: their predecessors had been on even a lower level of culture than they. The western European peoples, soon finding their natural boundaries, created those economic and cultural clusters, the commercial cities. The population of the eastern plain, at the first sign of crowding, would go deeper into the forest or spread out over the steppe. The more aggressive and enterprising elements of the peasantry in the west became burghers, craftsmen, merchants. The more active and bold in the east became, some of them, traders, but most of them Cossacks, frontiersmen, pioneers. The process of social differentiation, intensive in the west, was delayed in the east and diluted by the process of expansion. "The Tzar of Muscovia, although a Christian, rules a lazy-minded people," wrote Vico, a contemporary of Peter I. That "lazy" mind of the Muscovites was a reflection of the slow

tempo of economic development, the formlessness of class relations, the meagerness of inner history.

The ancient civilisations of Egypt, India and China had a character self-sufficient enough, and they had time enough at their disposal, to bring their social relations, in spite of low productive powers, almost to the same detailed completion to which their craftsmen brought the products of their craft. Russia stood not only geographically, but also socially and historically, between Europe and Asia. She was marked off from the European West, but also from the Asiatic East, approaching at different periods and in different features now one, now the other. The East gave her the Tartar yoke, which entered as an important element into the structure of the Russian state. The West was a still more threatening foe – but at the same time a teacher. Russia was unable to settle in the forms of the East because she was continually having to adapt herself to military and economic pressure from the West. The existence of feudal relations in Russia, denied by former historians, may be considered unconditionally established by later investigations. Furthermore, the fundamental elements of Russian feudalism were the same as in the West. But the mere fact that the existence of the feudal epoch had to be established by means of extended scientific arguments sufficiently testifies to the incompleteness of Russian feudalism, its formlessness, its poverty of cultural monuments.

A backward country assimilates the material and intellectual conquests of the advanced countries. But this does not mean that it follows them slavishly, reproduces all the stages of their past. The theory of the repetition of historic cycles – Vico and his more recent followers – rests upon an observation of the orbits of old pre-capitalist cultures, and in part upon the first experiments of capitalist development. A certain repetition of cultural stages in ever new settlements was in fact bound up with the provincial and episodic character of that whole process. Capitalism means, however, an overcoming of those conditions. It prepares and in a certain sense realises the universality and permanence of man's development. By this a repetition of the forms of development by different nations is ruled out. Although compelled to follow after the advanced countries, a backward country does not take things in the same order. The privilege of historic backwardness – and such a privilege exists – permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specified date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages. Savages throw away their bows and arrows for rifles all at once, without travelling the road which lay between those two weapons in the past. The European colonists in America did not begin history all over again from the beginning. The fact that Germany and the United States have now economically outstripped England was made possible by the very backwardness of their capitalist development. On the other hand, the conservative anarchy in the British coal industry – as also in the heads of MacDonald and his friends - is a paying-up for the past when England played too long the role of capitalist pathfinder. The development of historically back-

ward nations leads necessarily to a peculiar combination of different stages in the historic process. Their development as a whole acquires a planless, complex, combined character.

The possibility of skipping over intermediate steps is of course by no means absolute. Its degree is determined in the long run by the economic and cultural capacities of the country. The backward nation, moreover, not infrequently debases the achievements borrowed from outside in the process of adapting them to its own more primitive culture. In this the very process of assimilation acquires a self-contradictory character. Thus the introduction of certain elements of Western technique and training, above all military and industrial, under Peter I, led to a strengthening of serfdom as the fundamental form of labour organisation. European armament and European loans – both indubitable products of a higher culture - led to a strengthening of tzarism, which delayed in its turn the development of the country.

The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development* – by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of the separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken of course, in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class.

Under pressure from richer Europe the Russian State swallowed up a far greater relative part of the people's wealth than in the West, and thereby not only condemned the people to a twofold poverty, but also weakened the foundations of the possessing classes. Being at the same time in need of support from the latter, it forced and regimented their growth. As a result the bureaucratised privileged classes never rose to their full height, and the Russian state thus still more approached an Asiatic despotism. The Byzantine autocratism, officially adopted by the Muscovite tzars at the beginning of the sixteenth century, subdued the feudal Boyars with the help of the nobility, and then gained the subjection of the nobility by making the peasantry their slaves, and upon this foundation created the St. Petersburg imperial absolutism. The backwardness of the whole process is sufficiently indicated in the fact that serfdom, born at the end of the sixteenth century, took form in the seventeenth, flowered in the eighteenth, was juridically annulled only in 1861.

The clergy, following after the nobility, played no small role in the formation of the tzarist autocracy, but nevertheless a servile role. The church never rose in Russia to that commanding height which it attained in the Catholic West; it was satisfied with the role

of spiritual servant of the autocracy, and counted this a recompense for its humility. The bishops and metropolitans enjoyed authority merely as deputies of the temporal power. The patriarchs were changed along with the tzars. In the Petersburg period the dependence of the church upon the state became still more servile. Two hundred thousand priests and monks were in all essentials a part of the bureaucracy, a sort of police of the gospel. In return for this the monopoly of the orthodox clergy in matters of faith, land and income was defended by a more regular kind of police.

Slavophilism, the messianism of backwardness, has based its philosophy upon the assumption that the Russian people and their church are democratic through and through, whereas official Russia is a German bureaucracy imposed upon them by Peter the Great. Mark remarked upon this theme: "In the same way the Teutonic jackasses blamed the despotism of Frederick the Second upon the French, as though backward slaves were not always in need of civilised slaves to train them." This brief comment completely finishes off not only the old philosophy of the Slavophiles, but also the latest revelations of the "Racists."

The meagerness not only of Russian feudalism, but of all the old Russian history, finds its most depressing expression in the absence of real mediaeval cities as centres of commerce and craft. Handicraft did not succeed in Russia in separating itself from agriculture, but preserved its character of home industry. The old Russian cities were commercial, administrative, military and manorial – centres of consumption, consequently, not of production.. Even, Novgorod, similar to Hansa and not subdued by the Tartars, was only a commercial, and not an industrial city. True, the distribution of the peasant industries over various districts created a demand for trade mediation on a large scale. But nomad traders could not possibly occupy that place in social life which belonged in the West to the craft-guild and merchant-industrial petty and middle bourgeoisie, inseparably bound up with its peasant environment. The chief roads of Russian trade, moreover, led across the border, thus from time immemorial giving the leadership to foreign commercial capital, and imparting a semi-colonial character to the whole process, in which the Russian trader was a mediator between the Western cities and the Russian villages. This kind of economic relation developed further during the epoch of Russian capitalism and found its extreme expression in the imperialist war.

The insignificance of the Russian cities, which more than anything else promoted the development of an Asiatic state, also made impossible a Reformation – that is, a replacement of the feudal-bureaucratic orthodoxy by some sort of modernised kind of Christianity adapted to the demands of a bourgeois society. The struggle against the state church did not go farther than the creation of peasant sects, the faction of the Old Believers being the most powerful among them.

Fifteen years before the great French revolution there developed in Russia a movement of the Cossacks, peasants and worker-serfs of the Urals, known as the Pugachev Rebellion. What was lacking to this menacing popular uprising in order to convert it into a revolution? A Third Estate. Without the industrial democracy of the cities a peasant war could not develop into a revolution, just as the peasant sects could not rise to the height of a Reformation. The result of the Pugachev Rebellion was just the opposite - a strengthening of bureaucratic absolutism as the guardian of the interests of the nobility, a guardian which had again justified itself in the hour of danger.

The Europeanization of the country, formally begun in the time of Peter, became during the following century more and more a demand of the ruling class itself, the nobility. In 1825 the aristocratic intelligentsia, generalising this demand politically, went to the point of a military conspiracy to limit the powers of the autocracy. Thus, under pressure from the European bourgeois development, the progressive nobility attempted to take the place of the lacking Third Estate. But nevertheless they wished to combine their liberal rgime with the security of their own caste domination, and therefore feared most of all to arouse the peasantry. It s thus not surprising that the conspiracy remained a mere attempt on the part of a brilliant but isolated officer caste which gave up the sponge almost without a struggle. Such was the significance of the Dekabrist uprising.

The landlords who owned factories were the first among their caste to favour replacing serfdom by wage labour. The growing export of Russian grain gave an impulse in the same direction. In 1861 the noble bureaucracy, relying upon the liberal landlords, carried out its peasant reform. The impotent bourgeois liberalism during this operation played the role of humble chorus. It is needless to remark that tzarism solved the fundamental problem of Russia, the agrarian problem, in a more niggardly and thieving fashion than that in which the Prussian monarchy during the next decade was to solve the fundamental problem of Germany, its national consolidation. The solution of the problems of one class by another is one of those combined methods natural to backward countries.

The law of combined development reveals itself most indubitably, however, in the history and character of Russian industry. Arising late, Russian industry did not repeat the development of the advanced countries, but inserted itself into this development, adapting their latest achievements to its own backwardness. Just as the economic evolution of Russia as a whole skipped over the epoch of craft-guilds and manufacture, so also the separate branches of industry made a series of special leaps over technical productive stages that had been measured in the West by decades. Thanks to this, Russian industry developed at certain periods with extraordinary speed. Between the first revolution and the war, industrial production in Russia approximately doubled. this has seemed to certain Russian historians a sufficient basis for concluding that "we must abandon the legend of backwardness and

slow growth." In reality the possibility of this swift growth was determined by that very backwardness which, alas, continued not only up to the moment of liquidation of the old Russia, but as her legacy up to the present day.

The basic criterion of the economic level of a nation is the productivity of labour, which in its turn depends upon the relative weight of the industries in the general economy of the country. On the eve of the war, when tzarist Russia had attained the highest point of its prosperity, the national income per capita was 8 to 10 times less than in the United States – a fact which is not surprising when you consider that 4/5 of the self-supporting population of Russia was occupied with agriculture, while in the United States, for every one engaged in agriculture, 2 were engaged in industry. We must add that for every one hundred square kilometres of land, Russia had, on the eve of the war, 0.4 kilometres of railroads, Germany 11.7, Austria-Hungary 7. Other comparative coefficients are of the same type.

But it is just in the sphere of economy, as we have said, that the law of combined development most forcibly emerges. At the same time that peasant land-cultivation as a whole remained, right up to the revolution, at the level of the seventeenth century, Russian industry in its technique and capitalist structure stood at the level of the advanced countries, and in certain respects even outstripped them. Small enterprises, involving less than 100 workers, employed in the United States, in 1914, 35 per cent of the total of industrial workers, but in Russia 17.8 per cent. The two countries had an approximately identical relative quantity of enterprises involving 100 to 1000 workers. But the giant enterprises, above 1000 workers each, employed in the United States 17.8 per cent of the workers and in Russia 41.4 per cent! For the most important industrial districts the latter percentage is still higher: for the Petrograd district 44.4 per cent, for the Moscow district even 57.3 per cent. We get a like result if we compared Russian with British or German industry. This fact – first established by the author in 1908 – hardly accords with the banal idea of the economic backwardness of Russia. However, it does not disprove this backwardness, but dialectically completes it.

The confluence of industrial with bank capital was also accomplished in Russia with a completeness you might not find in any other country. But the subjection of the industries to the banks meant, for the same reasons, their subjection to the western European money market. Heavy industry (metal, coal, oil) was almost wholly under the control of foreign finance capital, which had created for itself an auxiliary and intermediate system of banks in Russia. Light industry was following the same road. Foreigners owned in general about 40 per cent of all the stock capital of Russia, but in the leading branches of industry that percentage was still higher. We can say without exaggeration that the controlling shares of stock in the Russian banks, plants and factories were to be found abroad, the amount held in England, France and Belgium being almost double that in Germany.

The social character of the Russian bourgeoisie and its political physiognomy were determined by the condition of origin and the structure of Russian industry. The extreme concentration of this industry alone meant that between the capitalist leaders and the popular masses there was no hierarchy of transitional layers. To this we must add that the proprietors of the principal industrial, banking, and transport enterprises were foreigners, who realised on their investment not only the profits drawn from Russia, but only a political influence in foreign parliaments, and so not only did not forward the struggle for Russian parliamentarism, but often opposed it: it is sufficient to recall the shameful role played by official France. such are the elementary and irremovable causes of the political isolation and anti-popular character of the Russian bourgeoisie. Whereas in the dawn of its history it was too unripe to accomplish a Reformation; when the time came for leading a revolution it was overripe.

In correspondence with this general course of development of the country, the reservoir from which the Russian working class formed itself was not the craft-guild, but agriculture, not the city, but the country. Moreover, in Russia the proletariat did not arise gradually through the ages, carrying with itself the burden of the past as in England, but in leaps involving sharp changes of environment, ties, relations, and a sharp break with the past. It is just this fact – combined with the concentrated oppressions of tzarism – that made the Russian workers hospitable to the boldest conclusions of revolutionary thought – just as the backward industries were hospitable to the last word in capitalist organisation.

The Russian proletariat was forever repeating the short history of its origin. While in the metal industry, especially in Petrograd, a layer of hereditary proletarians was crystallised out, having made a complete break with the country, in the Urals the prevailing type was half-proletarian, half-peasant. A yearly inflow of fresh labour forces from the country in all the industrial districts kept renewing the bonds of the proletariat with its fundamental social reservoir.

The incapacity of the bourgeoisie for political action was immediately caused by its relation to the proletariat and the peasantry. It could not lead after it workers who stood hostile in their everyday life, and had so early learned to generalise their problems. But it was likewise incapable of leading after it the peasantry, because it was entangled in a web of interests with the landlords, and dreaded a shake-up of property relations in any form. The belatedness of the Russian revolution was thus not only a matter of chronology, but also of the social structure of the nation.

England achieved her Puritan revolution when her whole population was not more than 5 millions, of whom half a million were to be found in London. France, in the epoch of her revolution, had in Paris also only half a million out of a population of 25 million, Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century had a population of about 150 million, of whom

more than 3 million were in Petrograd and Moscow. Behind these comparative figures lurk enormous social differences. Not only England of the seventeenth century, but also France of the eighteenth had no proletariat in the modern sense. In Russia, however, the working class in all branches of labour, both city and village, numbered in 1905 no less than 10 million, which with their families amounts to more than 25 million – that is to say, more than the whole population of France in the epoch of the great revolution. Advancing from the sturdy artisans and independent peasants of the army of Cromwell - through the sansculottes of Paris – to the industrial proletarians of St. Petersburg, the revolution had deeply changed its social mechanism, its methods, and therewith its aims.

The events of 1905 were a prologue to the two revolutions of 1917, that of February and that of October. In the prologue all the elements of the drama were included, but not carried through. The Russo-Japanese war had made tzarism totter. Against the background of a mass movement the liberal bourgeoisie had frightened the monarchy with its opposition. The workers had organised independently of the bourgeoisie, and in opposition to it, in soviets, a form of organisation then first called into being. Peasant uprisings to seize the land occurred throughout vast stretches of the country. Not only the peasants, but also the revolutionary parts of the army tended toward the soviets, which at the moment of highest tension openly disputed the power with the monarchy. However, all the revolutionary forces were then going into action for the first time, lacking experience and confidence. The liberals demonstratively backed away from the revolution exactly at the moment when it became clear that to shake tzarism would not be enough, it must be overthrown. This sharp break of the bourgeoisie with the people, in which the bourgeoisie carried with it considerable circles of the democratic intelligentsia, made it easier for the monarchy to differentiate within the army, separating out the loyal units, and to make a bloody settlement with the workers and peasants. Although with a few broken ribs, tzarism came out of the experience of 1905 alive and strong enough.

What changes in the correlation of forces were introduced by the eleven years' historical development dividing the prologue from the drama? Tzarism during this period came into still sharper conflict with the demands of historic development. The bourgeoisie became economically more powerful, but as we have seen its power rested on a higher concentration of industry and an increased predominance of foreign capital. Impressed by the lessons of 1905, the bourgeoisie had become more conservative and suspicious. The relative weight of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, insignificant before, had fallen still lower. The democratic intelligentsia generally speaking had no firm social support whatever. It could have a transitional political influence, but could play no independent role: its dependence upon bourgeois liberalism had grown enormously. In these circumstances only the youthful proletariat could give the peasantry a programme, a banner and leadership. The gigantic tasks thus presented to the proletariat gave rise to a urgent necessity for a spe-

cial revolutionary organisation capable of quickly getting hold of the popular masses and making them ready for revolutionary action under the leadership of the workers. Thus the soviets of 1905 developed gigantically in 1917. That the soviets, we may remark here, are not a mere child of the historical backwardness of Russia, but a product of her combined development, is indicated by the fact that the proletariat of the most industrial country, Germany, at the time of its revolutionary high point – 1918 to 1919 – could find no other form of organisation.

The revolution of 1917 still had as its immediate task the overthrow of the bureaucratic monarchy, but in distinction from the older bourgeois revolutions, the decisive force now was a new class formed on the basis of a concentrated industry, and armed with new organisations, new methods of struggle. The law of combined development here emerges in its extreme expression: starting with the overthrow of a decayed mediaeval structure, the revolution in the course of a few months placed the proletariat and the Communist Party in power.

In its initial task the Russian revolution was thus a democratic revolution. But it posed the problem of political democracy in a new way. While the workers were covering the whole country with soviets, including in them the soldiers and part of the peasantry, the bourgeoisie still continued to dicker – shall we summon or not summon a Constituent Assembly? In the course of our exposition this question will rise before us in full completeness. Here we wish only to mark the place of the soviets in the historic succession of revolutionary ideas and forms.

In the middle of the seventeenth century the bourgeois revolution in England developed under the guise of a religious reformation. A struggle for the right to pray according to one's own prayer book was identified with the struggle against the king, the aristocracy, the princes of the church, and Rome. The Presbyterians and Puritans were deeply convinced that they were placing their earthly interests under the unshakeable protection of the divine Providence. The goals for which the new classes were struggling commingled inseparably in their consciousness with texts from the Bible and the forms of churchly ritual. Emigrants carried with them across the ocean this tradition sealed with blood. Hence the extraordinary virility of the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of Christianity. We see even today how the minister "socialists" of Great Britain back up their cowardice with these same magic texts with which the people of the seventeenth century sought to justify their courage.

In France, which stepped across the Reformation, the Catholic Church survived as a state institution until the revolution, which found its expression and justification for the tasks of the bourgeois society, not in texts from the Bible, but in the abstractions of democracy. Whatever the hatred of the present rulers of France for Jacobinism, the fact is that only thanks to the austere labour of Robespierre are they still able to cover their conserva-

tive rulership with those formulas with the help of which the old society was exploded.

Each of the great revolutions marked off a new stage of the bourgeois society, and new forms of consciousness for its classes. Just as France stepped over the Reformation, so Russia stepped over the formal democracy. The Russian revolutionary party, which was to place its stamp upon a whole epoch, sought an expression for the tasks of the revolution neither in the Bible nor in that secularised Christianity called "pure" democracy, but in the material relations of the social classes. The soviet system gave to those relations their simplest, most undisguised and transparent expression. The rule of the toilers has for the first time been realised in the soviet system, which, whatever its immediate historic vicissitudes, has penetrated as irrevocably into the consciousness of the masses as did in its day the system of the Reformation or of pure democracy.

CHAPTER 2

TZARIST RUSSIA IN THE WAR

Russia's participation in the war was self-contradictory both in motives and in aims. That bloody struggle was waged essentially for world domination. In this sense it was beyond Russia's scope. The war aims of Russia herself (the Turkish Straits, Galicia, Armenia) were provincial in character, and to be decided only incidentally according to the degree in which they answered the interests of the principal contestants.

At the same time Russia, as one of the great powers, could not help participating in the scramble of the advanced capitalist countries, just as in the preceding epoch she could not help introducing shops, factories, railroads, rapid-fire guns and airplanes. The not infrequent disputes among Russian historians of the newest school as to how far Russia was ripe for present-day imperialist policies often fall into mere scholasticism, because they look upon Russia in the international arena as isolated, as an independent factor, whereas she was but one link in a system.

India participated in the war both essentially and formally as a colony of England. The participation of China, though in a formal sense "voluntary," was in reality the interference of a slave in the fight of his masters. The participation of Russia falls somewhere halfway between the participation of France and that of China. Russia paid in this way for her right to be an ally of advanced countries, to import capital and pay interest on it – that is, essentially, for her right to be a privileged colony of her allies – but at the same time for her right to oppress and rob Turkey, Persia, Galicia, and in general the countries weaker and more backward than herself. The twofold imperialism of the Russian bourgeoisie had basically the character of an agency for other mightier world powers.

The Chinese compradors are the classic type of the national bourgeoisie, a kind of mediating agency between foreign finance capital and the economy of their own country. In the world hierarchy of the powers, Russia occupied before the war a considerably higher

position than China. What position she would have occupied after the war, if there had been no revolution, is a different question. But the Russian autocracy on the one hand, the Russian bourgeoisie on the other, contained features of compradorism, ever more and more clearly expressed. They lived and nourished themselves upon their connections with foreign imperialism, served it, and without their support could not have survived. To be sure, they did not survive in the long run even with its support. The semi-comprador Russian bourgeoisie had world-imperialistic interests in the same sense in which an agent working on percentages lives by the interests of his employer.

The instrument of war is the army. Inasmuch as every army is considered unconquerable in the national mythology, the ruling classes of Russia saw no reason for making an exception of the army of the tzar. In reality, however, this army was a serious force only against semi-barbaric peoples, small neighbours and disintegrating states; on the European arena it could act only as part of a coalition; in the matter of defence it could fulfil its task only be the help of the vastness of spaces, the sparsity of population, and the impassability of the roads. The virtuoso of this army of serfs had been Suvorov. The French revolution in breaking open the doors of the new society and the new military art, had pronounced a death-sentence on the Suvorov type of army. The semi-annulment of serfdom and the introduction of universal military service had modernised the army only as far as it had the country – that is, it introduced into the army all the contradictions proper to a nation which still has its bourgeois revolution to accomplish. It is true that the tzar's army was constructed and armed upon Western models; but this was more form than essence. There was no correspondence between the cultural level of the peasant-soldier and modern military technique. In the commanding staff, the ignorance, light-mindedness and thievery of the ruling classes found their expression. Industry and transport continually revealed their bankruptcy before the concentrated demands of wartime. Although appropriately armed, as it seemed, on the first day of the war, the troops soon turned out to have neither weapons nor even shoes. in the Russo-Japanese war the tzarist army had shown what it was worth. In the epoch of counter-revolution the monarchy, with the aid of the Duma, had filled up the military stores and put many new patches on the army, especially upon its reputation for invincibility. In 1914 came a new and far heavier test.

In the matter of military supplies and finances, Russia at war suddenly finds herself in slavish dependence upon her allies. This is merely a military expression of her general dependence upon advanced capitalist countries. but help from the Allies does not save the situation. The lack of munitions, the small number of factories for their production, the sparseness of railroad lines for their transportation, soon translated the backwardness of Russia into the familiar language of defeat – which served to remind the Russian national liberals that their ancestors had not accomplished the bourgeois revolution and that the descendants, therefore, owed a debt to history.

The first days of war were the first days of disgrace. After a series of partial catastrophes, in the spring of 1915 came the general retreat. The generals took out their own criminal incapacity on the peaceful population. Enormous tracts of land were violently laid waste. Clouds of human locusts were driven to the rear with whips. The external rout was completed with an internal one.

In answer to alarmed questions from his colleagues as to the situation at the front, the War Minister Polivanov answered in these words: “I place my trust in the impenetrable spaces, impassable mud, and the mercy of Saint Nicholas Mirlikisky, Protector of Holy Russia” (Session of August 4, 1915). A week later General Ruszky confessed to the same ministers: “The present-day demands of military technique are beyond us. At any rate we can’t keep up with the Germans.” That was not the mood of a moment. Officer Stankevich reports the words of an engineer of the corps: “It is hopeless to fight with the Germans, for we are in no condition to do anything; even the new methods of fighting become the causes of our failure.” There is a cloud of such testimony. The one thing the Russian generals did with a flourish was to drag human meat out of the country. Beef and pork are handled with incomparably more economy. Grey staff non-entities, like Yanushkevich under Nikolai Nikolaievich, and Alexeiev under the tzar, would stop up all cracks with new mobilisations, and comfort themselves and the Allies with columns of figures when columns of fighters were wanted. About fifteen million men were mobilised, and they brimmed the depots, barracks, points of transit, crowded, stamped, stepped on each other’s feet, getting harsh and cursing. If these human masses were an imaginary magnitude for the front, for the rear they were a very real factor of destruction. About five and a half million were counted as killed, wounded and captured. The number of deserters kept growing. Already in July 1915 the ministers chanted: “Poor Russia! Even her army, which in past ages filled the world with the thunder of its victories...Even her army turns out to consist only of cowards and deserters.”

The ministers themselves, with a gallows joke at the “bravery in retreat” of their generals, wasted hours in those days discussing such problems as whether to remove or not to remove the bones of the saints from Kiev. The tsar submitted that it was not necessary, since “the Germans would not risk touching them, and if they did touch them, so much the worse for the Germans.” But the Synod had already started to remove them. “When we leave,” they said, “we will take with us what is most precious.” This happened not in the epoch of the Crusades, but in the twentieth century when the news of the Russian defeats came over the wireless.

The Russian successes against Austria-Hungary had their roots rather in Austria-Hungary than in Russia. The disintegrating Hapsburg monarchy had long ago hung out a sign for an undertaker, not demanding any high qualifications of him. In the past Russia had been

successful against inwardly decomposing states like Turkey, Poland, Persia. The south-western front of the Russian army, facing Austria, celebrated immense victories which made it very different from the other fronts. Here there emerged a few generals, who to be sure demonstrated no military gifts, but were at least not thoroughly imbued with the fatalism of steadily-beaten commanders. From this milieu there arose subsequently several white "heroes" of the civil war.

Everybody was looking for someone upon whom to lay the blame. They accused the Jews wholesale of espionage. They set upon people with German names. The staff of the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich gave orders to shoot a colonel of the gendarmes, Myasoyedov, as a German spy, which he obviously was not. They arrested Sukhomlinov, the War Minister, an empty and slovenly man, accusing him – possibly not without foundation – of treason. The British Minister of Foreign Affairs, Grey, said to the president of the Russian Parliamentary Delegation: Your government is very bold if it dares in time of war indict its War Minister for treason. The staff and the Duma accused the court of Germanophilism. All of them together envied the Allies and hated them. The French command spared its army by putting in Russian soldiers. England warmed up slowly. In the drawing-rooms of Petrograd and the headquarters at the front they gently joked: "England has sworn to fight to the last drop of blood...of the Russian soldier." These jokes seeped down and reached the trenches. "Everything for the war!" said the ministers, deputies, generals, journalists. "Yes," the soldier began to think in the trenches, "they are all ready to fight to the last drop...of my blood."

The Russian army lost in the whole war more men than any army which ever participated in a national war – approximately two and a half million killed, or forty per cent of all the losses of the Entente. In the first months the soldiers fell under shell fire unthinkingly or thinking little; but from day to day they gathered experience – bitter experience of the lower ranks who are ignorantly commanded. They measured the confusion of the generals by the number of purposeless manoeuvres on soleless shoes, the number of dinners not eaten. From the bloody mash of people and things emerged a generalised word: "the mess," which in the soldiers' jargon was replaced by a still juicier term.

The swiftest of all to disintegrate was the peasant infantry. As a general rule, the artillery with its high percentage of industrial workers, is distinguished by an incomparably greater hospitality to revolutionary ideas: this was clearly evident in 1905. If in 1917, on the contrary, the artillery showed more conservatism than the infantry, the cause lies in the fact that through the infantry divisions, as through a sieve, there passed ever new and less and less trained human masses. The artillery, moreover, suffering infinitely fewer losses, retained its original *cadres*. The same thing was observed in other specialised troops. But in the long run the artillery yielded too. During the retreat from Galicia a secret order

was issued by the commander-in-chief: flog the soldiers for desertion and other crimes. The soldier Pireiko relates: “They began to flog soldiers for the most trivial offences; for example, for a few hours’ absence without leave. And sometimes they flogged them in order to rouse their fighting spirit.” As early as September 17, 1915, Kuropatkin wrote, citing Guchkov: “The lower orders began the war with enthusiasm; but now they are weary, and with the continual retreats have lost faith in a victory.” At about the same time the Minister of the Interior spoke of the presence in Moscow of 30 000 convalescent soldiers: “That’s a wild crowd of libertines knowing no discipline, rough-housing, getting into fights with the police (not long ago a policeman was killed by the soldiers), rescuing arrested men, etc. Undoubtedly, in case of disorders this entire horde will take the side of the mob.” The same soldier, Pireiko, writes: “Everyone, to the last man, was interested in nothing but peace...Who should win and what kind of peace it would be, that was of small interest to the army. It wanted peace at any cost, for it was weary of war.”

An observant woman, Feodorchenko, serving as sister of mercy, listened to the conversations of the soldiers, almost to their thoughts, and cleverly wrote them down on scattered slips of paper. The little book thus produced *The People at War*, permits us to look in that laboratory where bombs, barbed-wire entanglements, suffocating gases, and the baseness of those in power, had been fashioning for long months the consciousness of several million Russian peasants, and where along with human bones age-old prejudices were cracking. In many of the self-made aphorisms of the soldiers appear already the slogans of the coming civil war.

General Ruszky complained in December 1916 that Riga was the misfortune of the northern front. This is a “nest of propaganda, and so is Dvinsk.” General Brussilov confirmed this: From the Riga district troops arrive demoralised; soldiers refuse to attack. They lifted one company commander on the points of their bayonets. It was necessary to shoot several men, etc., etc. “The ground for the final disintegration of the army was prepared long before the revolution,” concedes Rodzianko, who was in close association with the officers and visited the front.

The revolutionary elements, scattered at first, were drowned in the army almost without a trace, but with the growth of the general discontent they rose to the surface. The sending of striking workers to the front as a punishment increased the ranks of the agitators and the retreat gave them a favourable audience. “The army in the rear and especially at the front,” reports a secret service agent, “is full of elements of which some are capable of becoming active forces of insurrection, and others may merely refuse to engage in punitive activities.” The Gendarme Administration of the Petrograd province declares in October 1916, on the basis of a report made by a representative of the Land Union, that “the mood in the army is alarming, the relation between officers and soldiers is extremely tense, even

bloody encounters are taking place. Deserters are to be met everywhere by the thousands. Everyone who comes near the army must carry away a complete and convincing impression of the utter moral disintegration of the troops." Out of caution the report adds that although much in these communications seems hardly probable, nevertheless it must be believed, since many physicians returning from the active army have made reports to the same effect. The mood of the rear corresponded to that of the front. At a conference of the Kadet party in October 1916, a majority of the delegates remarked upon the apathy and lack of faith in the victorious outcome of the war "in all layers of the population, but especially in the villages and among the city poor." On October 30, 1916, the director of the Police Department wrote, in a summary of his report, of "the weariness of war to be observed everywhere, and the longing for a swift peace, regardless of the conditions upon which it is concluded." In a few months all these gentlemen – deputies, police, generals, and land representatives, physicians and former gendarmes – will nevertheless assert that the revolution killed patriotism in the army, and that the Bolsheviks snatched a sure victory out of their hands.

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The place of coryphes, in the chorus of military patriotism, undoubtedly belonged to the Constitutional Democrats (Kadets). Having already in 1905 broken its dubious ties with the revolution, liberalism at the beginning of the counter-revolutionary period had raised the banner of imperialism. One thing flowed from another: once it proved impossible to purge the country of the feudal rubbish in order to assure to the bourgeoisie a dominant position, it remained to form a union with the monarchy and the nobility in order to assure to capital the best position in the world market. If it is true that the world catastrophe was prepared in various quarters, so that it arrived to a certain degree unexpectedly even to its most responsible organisers, it is equally indubitable that Russian liberalism, as the inspirer of the foreign policy of the monarchy, did not occupy the last place in its preparation. The war of 1914 was quite rightly greeted by the leaders of the Russian bourgeoisie as their war. In a solemn session of the State Duma on July 26, 1914, the president of the Kadet faction announced: "We will make no conditions or demands. We will simply throw in the scales our firm determination to conquer the enemy." In Russia, too, national unity became the official doctrine. During a patriotic manifestation in Moscow the master of ceremonies, Count Benkendorff, cried to the diplomats: "Look! There is your revolution which they were prophesying in Berlin!" "A similar thought," explained the French minister Palologue, "was evidently in the minds of all." People considered it their duty to nourish and propagate illusions in a situation which, it would seem, absolutely forbade illusions.

They did not wait long for sobering lessons. Very soon after the beginning of the war one of the more expansive Kadets, a lawyer and landlord, Rodichev, exclaimed at a session

of the Central Committee of his party: “Do you really think we can conquer with those fools?” Events proved that it was not possible to conquer with fools. Liberalism, having more than half lost faith in the victory, tried to employ the momentum of the war in order to carry out a purgation of the camarilla and compel the monarchy to a compromise. The chief implement towards this end was to accuse the court party of Germanophilism and of preparing a separate peace.

In the spring of 1915, while the weaponless soldiers were retreating along the whole front, it was decided in governmental circles, not without pressure from the Allies, to recruit the initiative of private industry for work in behalf of the army. The Special Conference called for this end included, along with bureaucrats, the more influential industrialists, The Land and City unions which had arisen at the beginning of the war, and the Military-Industrial Committees created in the spring of 1915, became the points of support of the bourgeoisie in the struggle for victory and for power. The State Duma, backed by these organisations, was induced to intercede more confidently between the bourgeoisie and the monarchy.

These broad political perspectives did not, however distract attention from the important problems of the day. Out of the Special Conference as out of a central reservoir tens of hundreds of millions, mounting up to billions, flowed down through distributing canals, abundantly irrigating the industries and incidentally nourishing numberless appetites. In the State Duma and in the press a few of the war profits for 1914 and 1915 were published. The Moscow textile company of the Riabushinskys showed a net profit of 75 per cent; the Tver Company, 111 per cent; the copper-works of Kolchugin netted over 12 million on a basic capital of 10 million. In this sector patriotic virtue was rewarded generously, and moreover immediately.

Speculation of all kinds and gambling on the market went to the point of paroxysm. Enormous fortunes arose out of the bloody foam. The lack of bread and fuel in the capital did not prevent the court jeweller Faberget from boasting that he had never before done such a flourishing business. Lady-in-waiting Vyrubova says that in no other season were such gowns to be seen as in the winter of 1915-16, and never were so many diamonds purchased. The night clubs were brim full of heroes of the rear, legal deserters, and simply respectable people too old for the front but sufficiently young for the joy of life. The grand dukes were not among the last to enjoy this feast in times of plague. Nobody had any fear of spending too much. A continual shower of gold fell from above. “Society” held out its hands and pockets, aristocratic ladies spread their skirts high, everybody splashed about in the bloody mud – bankers, heads of the commissariat, industrialists, ballerinas of the tzar and the grand dukes, orthodox prelates, ladies-in-waiting, liberal deputies, generals of the front and rear, radical lawyers, illustrious mandarins of both sexes, innumerable nephews,

and more particularly nieces. All came running to grab and gobble, in fear lest the blessed rain should stop. And all rejected with indignation the shameful idea of a premature peace.

Common gains, external defeats, and internal dangers, drew together the parties of the ruling classes. The Duma, divided on the eve of the war, achieved in 1915 its patriotic oppositional majority which received the name of "Progressive Bloc." The official aim of this bloc was of course declared to be a "satisfaction of the needs created by the war." On the left the social-democrats and Trudoviks did not enter the bloc; on the right the notorious Black Hundred groups. All the other factions of the Duma – the Kadets, the Progressives, three groups of Octobrists, the Centre and a part of the Nationalists, entered the bloc or adhered to it – as also the national groups: Poles, Lithuanians, Mussulmans, Jews, etc. In order not to frighten the tzar with the formula of a responsible ministry, the bloc demanded "a united government composed of men enjoying the confidence of the country." The Minister of the Interior, Prince Sherbatov, at that time characterised the bloc as a temporary "union called forth by the danger of social revolution." It required no great penetration to realise this. Miliukov, the leader of the Kadets, and thus also of the oppositional bloc, said at a conference of his party: "We are treading a volcano...The tension has reached its extreme limit...A carelessly dropped match will be enough to start a terrible conflagration...Whatever the government – whether good or bad – a strong government is needed now more than ever before."

The hope that the tzar, under the burden of defeat, would grant concessions, was so great that in the liberal press there appeared in August the slate of a proposed "Cabinet of confidence" with the president of the Duma, Rodzianko, as premier (according to another version, the president of the Land Union, Prince Lvov, was indicated for that office), Guchkov as Minister of the Interior, Miliukov, Foreign Minister, etc. A majority of these men who here nominated themselves for a union with the tzar against the revolution, turned up a year later as members of the "Revolutionary Government." History has permitted herself such antics more than once. This time the joke was at least a brief one.

A majority of the ministers of Goremykin's cabinet were no less frightened than the Kadets by the course things were taking, and therefore inclined towards an agreement with the Progressive Bloc. "A government which has not behind it the confidence of the supreme ruler, nor the army, nor the cities, nor the zemstvos, nor the nobles, nor the merchants, nor the workers, not only cannot function, but cannot even exist – the thing is obviously absurd." In these words, Prince Sherbatov in August 1915 appraised the government in which he himself was Minister of the Interior. "If you only arrange the scene properly and offer a loophole," said the Foreign Minister Sazonov, "the Kadets will be the first to propose a compromise. Miliukov is the greatest possible bourgeois and fears a social revolution above everything. Besides, a majority of the Kadets are trembling for their own

capital." Miliukov on his side considered that the Progressive Bloc "would have to give in somewhat." Both sides were ready to bargain, and everything seemed thoroughly oiled. But on August 29 the Premier, Goremykin, a bureaucrat weighed down with years and honours, an old cynic playing politics between two games of *grand-patience* and defending himself against all complaints by remarking that the war is "not my business," journeyed out to the tzar at headquarters and returned with the information that all and everybody should remain in their places, except the rambunctious Duma, which was to be dissolved on the 3rd of September. The reading of the tzar's order dissolving the Duma was heard without a single word of protest: the deputies gave a "hurrah" for the tzar, and dispersed.

How did the tzar's government, supported according to its own confession by nobody at all, survive for over a year and a half after that? A temporary success of the Russian troops undoubtedly exerted its influence and this was reinforced by the good golden rain. The successes at the front soon ceased, to be sure, but the profits at the rear continued. However, the chief cause of the successful propping up of the monarchy for twelve months before its fall, was to be found in a sharp division in the popular discontent. The chief of the Moscow Secret Service Department reported a rightward tendency of the bourgeoisie under the influence of "a fear of possible revolutionary excesses after the war." During the war, we note, a revolution was still considered impossible. The industrialists were alarmed, over and above that, by "a coquetting of certain leaders of the Military Industrial Committee with the proletariat." The general conclusion of this colonel of gendarmes, Martynov – in whom a professional reading of Marxist literature had left some traces – announced as the cause of a certain improvement in the political situation "the steadily growing differentiation of social classes concealing a sharp contradiction in their interests, a contradiction felt especially keenly in the times we are living through."

The dissolution of the Duma in September 1915 was a direct challenge to the bourgeosie, not to the workers. But while the liberals were dispersing with cries of "Hurrah!" – to be sure, not very enthusiastic cries – the workers of Petrograd and Moscow responded with strikes of protest. That cooled off the liberals still more. They feared worst of all the intrusion of an uninvited third party in their family discussion with the monarchy. But what further step was to be taken? Accompanied by a slight growl from the left wing, liberalism cast its vote for a well-tried recipe: to stand exclusively on legal grounds, and render the bureaucracy "as it were, unnecessary" in the course of a mere fulfilment of their patriotic functions. The ministerial slate at any rate would have to be laid aside for a time.

The situation in those days was getting worse automatically. In May 1916 the Duma was again convoked, but nobody knew exactly what for. The Duma, in any case, had no intention of summoning a revolution, and aside from that there was nothing for it to say. "At that session" – Rodzianko remembers – "the proceedings were languid; the deputies

attended irregularly...The continual struggle seemed fruitless, the government would listen to nothing, irregularities were increasing, and the country was headed for ruin." In the bourgeoisie's fear of revolution and its impotence without revolution, the monarchy found, during the year 1916, a simulacrum of social support.

By autumn the situation was still worse. The hopelessness of the war had become evident to all. The indignation of the popular masses threatened any moment to flow over the brim. While attacking the court party as before for Germanophilism, the liberals now deemed it necessary to feel out the chances of peace themselves, preparing their own future. Only in this way can you explain the negotiations of one of the leaders of the Progressive Bloc, the deputy Protopopov, with the German diplomat, Warburg, in Stockholm in the autumn of 1916. The Duma delegation, making friendly visits to the French and English, could easily convince itself in Paris and London that the dear Allies intended in the course of the war to squeeze all the live juice out of Russia, in order after the victory to make this backward country their chief field of economic exploitation. A defeated Russia in tow to a victorious Entente would have meant a colonial Russia. The Russian possessing classes had no other course but to try to free themselves from the too close embrace of the Entente, and find an independent road to peace, making use of the antagonism of the two more powerful camps. The meeting of the Duma deputy with the German diplomat, as a first step on this road, was both a threat in the direction of the Allies with a view to gaining concessions, and a feeling out of the actual possibilities of rapprochement with Germany. Protopopov was acting in agreement not only with the tzarist diplomats – the meeting occurred in the presence of the Russian ambassador in Sweden – but also with the whole delegation of the State Duma. Incidentally the liberals by means of this reconnoitre were pursuing a not unimportant domestic goal. "Rely on us" – they were hinting to the tzar – "and we will make you a separate peace better and more reliable than Strmer can." According to Protopopov's scheme – that is, the scheme of his backers – the Russian government was to inform the Allies "several months in advance" that she would be compelled to end the war, and that if the Allies refused to institute peace negotiations, Russia would have to conclude a separate peace with Germany. In his confession written after the revolution, Protopopov speaks as of something which goes without saying of the fact that "all reasonable people in Russia, among them probably all the leaders of the party of 'the People's Freedom' (Kadets), were convinced that Russia was unable to continue the war."

The tzar, to whom Protopopov upon his return reported his journey and negotiations, treated the idea of a separate peace with complete sympathy. He merely did not see the necessity of drawing the liberals into the business. The fact that Protopopov himself was included incidentally in the staff of the court camarilla, having broken with the Progressive bloc, is explained by the personal character of this fop, who had fallen in love, according to his own words, with the tzar and the tzarina – and at the same time, we may add, with

an expected portfolio as Minister of the Interior. But this episode of Protopopov's treason to liberalism does not alter the general content of the liberal foreign policy – a mixture of greed, cowardice and treachery.

The Duma again assembled on November 1. The tension in the country had become unbearable. Decisive steps were expected of the Duma. It was necessary to do something, or at the very least say something. The Progressive Bloc found itself compelled to resort to parliamentary exposures. Counting over from the tribune the chief steps taken by the government, Miliukov asked after each one: "Was this stupidity or treason?" High notes were sounded also by other deputies. The government was almost without defenders. It answered in the usual way: the speeches of the Duma orators were forbidden publication. The speeches therefore circulated by the million. There was not a government department, not only in the rear but at the front, where the forbidden speeches were not transcribed - frequently with additions corresponding to the temperament of the transcriber. The reverberation of the debate of November 1 was such that terror seized the very authors of the arraignment.

A group of extreme rightists, sturdy bureaucrats inspired by Durnovo, who had put down the revolution of 1905, took that moment to present to the tzar a proposed programme. The eye of these experienced officials, trained in a serious police school, saw not badly and pretty far, and if their prescription was no good, it is only because no medicine existed for the sickness of the old rgime. The authors of the programme speak against any concessions whatever to the bourgeois opposition, not because the liberals want to go too far, as think the vulgar Black Hundreds – upon whom these official reactionaries look with some scorn – no, the trouble is that the liberals are "so weak, so disunited and, to speak frankly, so mediocre, that their triumph would be as brief as it would be unstable." The weakness of the principal opposition party, the "Constitutional Democrats" (Kadets), is indicated, they point out, by its very name. It is called democratic, when it is in essence bourgeois. Although to a considerable degree a party of liberal landlords, it has signed a programme of compulsory land redemption. "Without these trumps from a deck not their own" – write these secret counsellors, using the images to which they are accustomed – "the Kadets are nothing more than a numerous association of liberal lawyers, professors and officials of various departments – nothing more." A revolutionist, they point out, is a different thing. They accompany their recognition of the significance of the revolutionary parties with a grinding of teeth: "The danger and strength of these parties lies in the fact that they have an idea, they have money (!), they have a crowd ready and well organised." The revolutionary parties "can count on the sympathy of an overwhelming majority of the peasantry, which will follow the proletariat the very moment the revolutionary leaders point a finger to other people's land." What would a responsible ministry yield in these circumstances? "A complete and final destruction of the right parties, a gradual swallowing

of the intermediate parties – the Centre, the Liberal-Conservatives, the Octobrists and the Progressives of the Kadet party – which at the beginning would a decisive importance. But the same fate would menace the Kadets...and afterwards would come the revolutionary mob, the Commune, destruction of the dynasty, pogroms of the possessing classes, and finally the peasant-brigand." It is impossible to deny that the police anger here rises to a certain kind of historic vision.

The positive part of their programme was not new, but consistent: a government of ruthless partisans of the autocracy; abolition of the Duma; martial law in both capitals; preparation of forces for putting down a rebellion. This programme did in its essentials become the basis of the government policy of the last pre-revolutionary months. But its success presupposed a power which Durnovo had had in this hands in the winter of 1905, but which by the autumn of 1917 no longer existed. The monarchy tried, therefore, to strangle the country stealthily and in sections. Ministers were shifted upon the principle of "our people" – meaning those unconditionally devoted to the tzar and tzarina. But these "our people" – especially the renegade Protopopov - were insignificant and pitiful. The Duma was not abolished, but again dissolved. The declaration of martial law in Petrograd was saved for a moment when the revolution had already triumphed. And the military forces prepared for putting down the rebellion were themselves seized by rebellion. All this became evident after two or three months.

Liberalism in those days was making its last efforts to save the situation. All the organisations of the enfranchised bourgeoisie supported the November speeches of the Duma opposition with a series of new declarations. The most impudent of these was the resolution of the Union of Cities on December 9: "Irresponsible criminals, fanatics, are preparing for Russia's defeat, shame and slavery." The State Duma was urged "not to disperse until the formation of a responsible government is attained." Even the State Council, organ of the bureaucracy and of the vast properties, expressed itself in favour of calling to power people who enjoyed the confidence of the country. A similar intercession was made by a session of the united nobility: even the moss-covered stones cried out. But nothing was changed. The monarchy would not let the last shreds of power slip out of its hands.

The last session of the last Duma was convoked, after waverings and delays, on February 14, 1917. Only two weeks remained before the coming of revolution. Demonstrations were expected. In the Kadet organ *Rech*, alongside an announcement by the chief of the Petrograd Military District, General Khabalov, forbidding demonstrations, was printed a letter from Miliukov warning the workers against "dangerous and bad counsel" issuing from "dark sources." In spite of strikes, the opening of the Duma was sufficiently peaceful. Pretending that the question of power no longer interested it, the Duma occupied itself with a critical, but still strictly business question: food supplies. The mood was languid, as

Rodzianko subsequently remembered: “We felt the impotence of the Duma, weariness of a futile struggle.” Miliukov kept repeating that the Progressive Bloc “will act with words and with words only.” Such was the Duma that entered the whirlpool of the February revolution.

CHAPTER 3

THE PROLETARIAT AND THE PEASANTRY

The Russian proletariat learned its first steps in the political circumstances created by a despotic state. Strikes forbidden by law, underground circles, illegal proclamations, street demonstrations, encounters with the police and with troops – such was the school created by the combination of a swiftly developing capitalism with an absolutism slowly surrendering its positions. The concentration of the workers in colossal enterprises, the intense character of governmental persecution, and finally the impulsiveness of a young and fresh proletariat, brought it about that the political strike, so rare in western Europe, became in Russia the fundamental method of struggle. The figures of strikes from the beginning of the present century are a most impressive index of the political history of Russia. With every desire not to burden our text with figures, we cannot refrain from introducing a table of political strikes in Russia for the period 1903 to 1917. The figures, reduced to their simplest expression, relate only to enterprises undergoing factory inspection. The railroads, mining industries, mechanical and small enterprises in general, to say nothing of agriculture, for various reasons do not enter into the count. But the changes in the strike curve in the different periods emerge no less clearly for this.

We have before us a curve – the only one of its kind – of the political temperature of a nation carrying in its womb a great revolution. In a backward country with a small proletariat – for in all the enterprises undergoing factory inspections there were only about 1.5 million workers in 1905, about 2 million in 1917 – the strike movement attains such dimensions as it never knew before anywhere in the world. With the weakness of the petty bourgeois democracy, the scatteredness and political blindness of the peasant movement, the revolutionary strike of the workers becomes the battering ram which the awakening nation directs against the walls of absolutism. Participants in political strikes in 1905 num-

bering 1,843,000 – workers participating in several strikes are here, of course, counted twice – that number alone would permit us to put our finger on the revolutionary year in our table, if we knew nothing else about the Russian political calendar.

Year	Number in thousands of participants in political strikes
1903	87*
1904	25*
1905	1,843
1906	651
1907	540
1908	93
1909	8
1910	4
1911	8
1912	550
1913	502
1914 (first half)	1,059
1915	156
1916	310
1917 (January-February)	575

* The figures for 1903 and 1904 refer to all strikes, the economic undoubtedly predominating

For 1904, the first year of the Russo-Japanese war, the factory inspection indicates in all only 25,000 strikers. In 1905, political and economic strikes together involved 2,863,000 mean – 115 times more than in the previous year. This remarkable fact by itself would suggest the thought that a proletariat, impelled by the course of events to improvise such unheard-of revolutionary activities, must at whatever cost produce from its depths an organisation corresponding to the dimensions of the struggle and the colossal tasks. This organisation was the soviets – brought into being by the first revolution, and made the instrument of the general strike and the struggle for power.

Beaten in the December uprising of 1905, the proletariat during the next two years makes heroic efforts to defend a part of the conquered positions. These years, as our strike figures show, still belong directly to the revolution, but they are the years of ebb. The four following years (1908-11) emerge in our mirror of strike statistics as the years of victorious counter-revolution. An industrial crisis coincident with this still further exhausts the proletariat, already bled white. The depth of the fall is symmetrical with the height of the rise. National convulsions find their reflection in these simple figures.

The industrial boom beginning in 1910 lifted the workers to their feet, and gave a new impulse to their energy. The figures for 1912-14 almost repeat those for 1905-07, but in the opposite order: not from above downwards, but from below up. On a new and higher historical basis – there are more workers now, and they have more experience – a new revolutionary offensive begins. The first half-year of 1914 clearly approaches in the number of political strikes the culminating point of the year of the first revolution. But war breaks out and sharply interrupts this process. The first war months are marked by political inertness in the working class, but already in the spring of 1915 the numbness begins to pass. A new cycle of political strikes opens, a cycle which in February 1917 will culminate in the insurrection of soldiers and workers.

The sharp ebbs and flows of the mass struggle had left the Russian proletariat after a few years almost unrecognisable. Factories which two or three years ago would strike unanimously over some single arbitrary police action, today have completely lost their revolutionary colour, and accept the most monstrous crimes of the authorities without resistance. Great defeats discourage people for a long time. The consciously revolutionary elements lose their power over the masses. Prejudices and superstitions not yet burnt out come back to life. Grey immigrants from the village during these times dilute the workers' ranks. Sceptics ironically shake their heads. So its was in the years 1907-11. But molecular processes in the masses are healing the psychological wounds of defeat. A new turn of events, or an underlying economic impulse, opens a new political cycle. The revolutionary elements again find their audience. The struggle reopens on a higher level.

In order to understand the two chief tendencies in the Russian working class, it is important to have in mind that Menshevism finally took shape in the years of ebb and reaction. It relied chiefly upon a thin layer of workers who had broken with the revolution. Whereas Bolshevism, cruelly shattered in the period of the reaction, began to rise swiftly on the crest of a new revolutionary tide in the years before the war. "The most energetic and audacious element, ready for tireless struggle, for resistance and continual organisation, is that element, those organisations, and those people who are concentrated around Lenin." In these words the Police Department estimated the work of the Bolsheviks during the years preceding the war.

In July 1914, while the diplomats were driving the last nail into the cross designed for the crucifixion of Europe, Petrograd was boiling like a revolutionary cauldron. The President of the French Republic, Poincaré, had to lay his wreath on the tomb of Alexander III amid the last echoes of a street fight and the first murmurs of a patriotic demonstration.

Would the mass offensive of 1912-14 have led directly to an overthrow of tzarism if the war had not broken out? It is hardly possible to answer that question with certainty. The process would inexorably have led to a revolution, but through what stages would the

revolution in those circumstances have had to go? Would it not have experienced another defeat? How much time would have been needed by the workers in order to arouse the peasantry and win the army? In all these directions only guesses are possible. The war, at any rate, gave the process at first a backward movement, but only to accelerate it more powerfully in the next period and guarantee its overwhelming victory.

At the first sound of the drum the revolutionary movement died down. The more active layers of the workers were mobilised. The revolutionary elements were thrown from the factories to the front. Severe penalties were imposed for striking. The workers' press was swept away. Trade unions were strangled. Hundreds of thousands of women, boys, peasants, poured into the workshops. The war – combined with the wreck of the International – greatly disoriented the workers politically, and made it possible for the factory administration, then just lifting its head, to speak patriotically in the name of the factories, carrying with it a considerable part of the workers, and compelling the more bold and resolute to keep still and wait. The revolutionary ideas were barely kept glowing in small and hushed circles. In the factories in those days nobody dared to call himself "Bolshevik" for fear not only of arrest, but of a beating from the backward workers.

The Bolshevik faction in the Duma, weak in its personnel, had not risen at the outbreak of the war to the height of its task. Along with the Menshevik deputies, it introduced a declaration in which it promised "to defend the cultural weal of the people against all attacks wheresoever originating." The Duma underlined with applause this yielding of a position. Not one of the Russian organisations or groups of the party took the openly defeatist position which Lenin came out for abroad. The percentage of patriots among the Bolsheviks, however, was insignificant. In contrast to the Narodniks[1] and Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks began in 1914 to develop among the masses a printed and oral agitation against the war. The Duma deputies soon recovered their poise and renewed their revolutionary work – about which the authorities were very closely informed, thanks to a highly developed system of provocation. It is sufficient to remark that out of seven members of the Petersburg committee of the party, three, on the eve of the war, were in the employ of the Secret Service. Thus tzarism played blind man's buff with the revolution. In November the Bolshevik deputies were arrested. There began a general smash-up of the party throughout the country. In February 1915 the case of the Duma faction was called in the courts. The deputies conducted themselves cautiously. Kamenev, theoretical instigator of the factions, stood apart from the defeatist position of Lenin; so did Petrovsky, the present president of the Central Committee in the Ukraine. The Police Department remarked with satisfaction that the severe sentences dealt out to the deputies did not evoke any movement of protest among the workers.

It seemed as though the war had produced a new working class. To a considerable

extent this was the fact: in Petrograd the personnel of the workers had been renewed almost forty per cent. The revolutionary succession had been abruptly broken. All that existed before the war, including the Duma faction of the Bolsheviks, had suddenly retired to the background and almost disappeared in oblivion. But under cover of this quietness and patriotism - and to some extent even monarchism – the moods of a new explosion were gradually accumulating in the masses.

In August 1915 the tzarist ministers were telling each other that the workers "are eveywhere hunting out treason, betrayal and sabotage in behalf of the Germans, and are enthusiastic in the search for those guilty of our unsuccesses at the front." It is true that in that period the awakening mass-criticism – in part sincerely and in part for the sake of defensive coloration - often adopted the standpoint of "defence of the fatherland." But that idea was only a point of departure. The discontent of the workers was digging a deeper and deeper course, silencing the masters, the Black Hundred workers, the servants of the administration, permitting the worker-Bolsheviks to raise their heads.

From criticism the masses pass over to action. Their indignation finds expression first of all in food disturbances, sometimes rising to the height of local riots. Women, old men and boys, in the market or on the open square, feel bolder and more independent than the workers on military duty in the factories. In Moscow in May the movement turns into a pogrom of Germans, although the participants in this are chiefly the scum of the town armed under police protection. Nevertheless, the very possibility of such a pogrom in industrial Moscow proves that the workers are not yet sufficiently awakened to impose their slogans and their discipline upon the disturbed small-town people. These food disorders, spreading over the whole country, broke the war hypnosis and laid the road to strikes.

The inflow of raw labour power to the factories and the greedy scramble for war-profits, brought everywhere a lowering of the conditions of labour, and gave rise to the crudest methods of exploitation. The rise in the cost of living automatically lowered wages. economic strikes were the inevitable mass reflection – stormy in proportion as they had been delayed. The strikes were accompanied by meetings, adoption of political resolutions, scrimmages with the police, not infrequently by shots and casualties.

The struggle arose chiefly in the central textile district. On June 5 the police fire a volley at the weavers in Kostroma: 4 killed, 9 wounded. On August 10 the troops fire on the Ivanovo-Voznesensk workers: 16 killed, 30 wounded. In the movement of the textile workers some soldiers of a local battalion are involved. Protest strikes in various parts of the country give answer to the shootings at Ivanovo-Voznesensk. Parallel to this goes the economic struggle. The textile workers often march in the front rank.

In comparison with the first half of 1914 this movement, as regards strength of pressure and clarity of slogans, represents a big step backward. This is not surprising, since raw

masses are to a large extent being drawn into the struggle, and there has been a complete disintegration of the guiding layer of the workers. Nevertheless even in these first strikes of the war the approach of great battles can be heard. The Minister of Justice, Khvostov, said on the 16th of August: "If there are at present no armed demonstrations of the workers, it is only because they have as yet no organisation." Goremykin expressed himself more concisely: "The trouble among the workers' leaders is that they have no organisation, since it was broken up by the arrest of the five members of the Duma." The Minister of the Interior added: "We must not amnesty the members of the Duma (Bolsheviks) - they are the organising centre of the movement in its most dangerous form." These people at least made no mistake as to who was the real enemy.

While the ministry, even at the moment of its greatest dismay and readiness for liberal concessions, deemed it necessary as before to pound the workers' revolution on the head – i.e. on the Bolsheviks – the big bourgeoisie was trying to fix up a co-operation with the Mensheviks. Frightened by the scope of the strike movement, the liberal industrialists made an attempt to impose patriotic discipline upon the workers by including their elected representatives in the staff of the Military Industrial Committees. The Minister of the Interior complained that it was very difficult to oppose this scheme, fathered by Guchkov. "The whole enterprise," he said, "is being carried out under a patriotic flag, and in the interests of the defence." We must remark, however, that even the police avoided arresting the social-patriots, seeing in them a side partner in the struggle against strikes and revolutionary "excesses." It was indeed upon their too great confidence in the strength of patriotic socialism, that the Secret Service based their conviction that no insurrection would occur while the war lasted.

In the elections to the Military-Industrial Committees the defencists, headed by an energetic metal worker, Gvozdev – we shall meet him later as Minister of Labour in the Coalition Government of the revolution – turned out to be a minority. They enjoyed the support, however, not only of the liberal bourgeoisie, but of the bureaucracy, in getting the better of those who, led by the Bolsheviks, wished to boycott the committees. They succeeded in imposing a representation in these organs of industrial patriotism upon the Petersburg proletariat. The position of the Mensheviks was clearly expressed in a speech one of their representatives later made to the industrialists in the Committee: "You ought to demand that the existing bureaucratic power retire from the scene, yielding its place to you as the inheritors of the present social structure." This young political friendship was growing by leaps and bounds. After the revolution it will bring forth its ripe fruit.

The war produced a dreadful desolation in the underground movement. After the arrest of the Duma faction the Bolsheviks had no centralised party organisation at all. The local committees had an episodic existence, and often had no connections with the workers dis-

tricts. Only scattered groups, circles and solitary individuals did anything. However, the reviving strike movement gave them some spirit and some strength in the factories. They gradually began to find each other and build up the district connections. The underground work revived. In the Police Department they wrote later: "Ever since the beginning of the war, the Leninists, who have behind them in Russia an overwhelming majority of the underground social-democratic organisations, have in their larger centres (such as Petrograd, Moscow, Kharkov, Kiev, Tula, Kostroma, Vladimir Province, Samara) been issuing in considerable numbers revolutionary appeals with a demand to stop the war, overthrow the existing government, and found a republic. And this work has had its palpable result in workers' strikes and disorders."

The traditional anniversary of the march of the workers to the Winter Palace, which had passed almost unnoticed the year before, produces a widespread strike on January 9, 1916. The strike movement doubles during this year. Encounters with the police accompany every big and prolonged strike. In contact with the troops, the workers conduct themselves with demonstrative friendliness, and the Secret Police more than once notice this alarming fact.

The war industries swelled out, devouring all resources around them and undermining their own foundation. The peacetime branches of production began to die away. In spite of all plannings, nothing came of the regulation of industry. The bureaucracy, incapable of taking this business in hand against the opposition of the powerful Military-Industrial Committees, at the same time refused to turn over the regulating rôle to the bourgeoisie. The chaos increased. Skilled workers were replaced by unskilled. The coal mines, shops and factories of Poland were soon lost. In the course of the first year of the war a fifth part of the industrial strength of the country was cut off. As much as 50 per cent of production went to supply the needs of the army and the war – including about 75 per cent of the textile production of the country. The overloaded transport proved incapable of supplying factories with the necessary quantity of fuel and raw material. The war not only swallowed up the whole current national income, but seriously began to cut into the basic capital of the country.

The industrialists grew less and less willing to grant anything to the workers, and the government, as usual, answered every strike with severe repressions. All this pushed the minds of the workers from the particular to the general, from economics to politics: "We must all strike at once." Thus arose the idea of the general strike. The process of radicalisation of the masses is most convincingly reflected in the strike statistics. In 1915, two and a half times fewer workers participated in political strikes than in economic strikes. In 1916, twice as few. In the first few months of 1917, political strikes involved six times as many workers as economic. The rôle of Petrograd is portrayed in one figure: 72 per cent of the

political strikers during the years of the war fall to her lot!

Many of the old beliefs are burned up in the fires of this struggle. The Secret Service reports, "with pain," that if they should react according to the dictates of the law to "every instance of insolence and open insult to His Majesty, the number of trials under Article 103 would reach an unheard-of figure." Nevertheless the consciousness of the masses is far behind their action. The terrible pressure of the war and the national ruin is accelerating the process of struggle to such a degree that broad masses of the workers, right up to the very revolution, have not freed themselves from many opinions and prejudices brought with them from the village or from the petty bourgeois family circle in the town. This fact will set its stamp on the first stage of the February revolution.

By the end of 1916 prices are rising by leaps and bounds. To the inflation and the breakdown of transport, there is added an actual lack of goods. The demands of the population have been cut down by this time to one-half. The curve of the workers' movement rises sharply. In October the struggle enters its decisive phase, uniting all forms of discontent in one. Petrograd draws back for the February leap. A wave of meetings runs through the factories. The topics: food supplies, high cost of living, war, government. Bolshevik leaflets are distributed; political strikes begin; improvised demonstrations occur at factory gates; cases of fraternisation between certain factories and the soldiers are observed; a stormy protest-strike flares up over the trial of the revolutionary sailors of the Baltic Fleet. The French ambassador calls Premier Stürmer's attention to the fact, become known to him, that some soldiers have shot at the police. Stürmer quiets the ambassador: "The repressions will be ruthless." In November a good-sized group of workers on military duty are removed from the Petrograd factories and sent to the front. The year ends in storm and thunder.

Comparing the situation with that in 1905, the director of the Police Department, Vassiliev, reaches a very uncomforting conclusion: "The mood of the opposition has gone very far – far beyond anything to be seen in the broad masses during the above-mentioned period of disturbance." Vassiliev rests no hope in the garrison; even the police officers are not entirely reliable. The Intelligence Department reports a revival of the slogan of the general strike, the danger of a resurrection of the terror. Soldiers and officers arriving from the front say of the present situation: "What is there to wait for? – Why don't you take and bump off such-and-such a scoundrel? If we were here, we wouldn't waste much time thinking," etc. Shliapnikov, a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, himself a former metal worker, describes how nervous the workers were in those days: "Sometimes a whistle would be enough, or any kind of noise – the workers would take it for a signal to stop the factory." This detail is equally remarkable both as a political symptom and as a psychological fact: the revolution is there in the nerves before it comes out on the street.

The provinces are passing through the same stages, only more slowly. The growth in massiveness of the movement and in fighting spirit shifts the centre of gravity from the textile to the metal-workers, from economic strikes to political, from the provinces to Petrograd. The first two months of 1917 show 575,000 political strikers, the lion's share of them in the capital. In spite of new raids carried out by the police on the eve of January 9, 150,000 workers went on strike in the capital on that anniversary of blood. The mood was tense. The metal-workers were in the lead. The workers all felt that no retreat was possible. In every factory an active nucleus was forming, oftenest around the Bolsheviks. Strikes and meetings went on continuously throughout the first two weeks of February. On the 8th, at the Putilov factory, the police received "a hail of slag and old iron." On the 14th, the day the Duma opened, about 90,000 were on strike in Petrograd. Several plants also stopped work in Moscow. On the 16th, the authorities decided to introduce bread cards in Petrograd. This novelty rasped the nerves. On the 19th, a mass of people gathered around the food shops, especially women, all demanding bread. A day later bakeries were sacked in several parts of the city. These were the heat lightnings of the revolution, coming in a few days.

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The Russian proletariat found its revolutionary audacity not only in itself. Its very position as minority of the nation suggests that it could not have given its struggle a sufficient scope – certainly not enough to take its place at the head of the state - if it had not found a mighty support in the thick of the people. Such a support was guaranteed to it by the agrarian problem.

The belated half-liberation of the peasants in 1861 had found agricultural industry almost on the same level as two hundred years before. The preservation of the old area of communal land - somewhat filched from during the reform – together with the archaic methods of land culture, automatically sharpened a crisis caused by the rural excess population, which was at the same time a crisis in the three-fold system. The peasantry felt still more caught in a trap because the process was not taking place in the seventeenth but in the nineteenth century – that is, in the conditions of an advanced money economy which made demands upon the wooden plough that could only be met by a tractor. Here too we see a drawing together of separate stages of the historic process, and as a result an extreme sharpening of contradictions. The learned agronomes and economists had been preaching that the old area with rational cultivation would be amply sufficient – that is to say, they proposed to the peasant to make a jump to a higher level of technique and culture without disturbing the landlord, the bailiff, or the tzar. But no economic régime, least of all an agricultural régime, the most tardy of all, has ever disappeared before exhausting all its possibilities. Before feeling compelled to pass over to a more intensive economic culture,

the peasant had to make a last attempt to broaden his three fields. This could obviously be achieved only at the expense of non-peasant lands. Choking in the narrowness of his land area, under the smarting whip of the treasury and the market, the muzhik was inexorably forced to attempt to get rid of the landlord once for all.

On the eve of the first revolution the whole stretch of arable land within the limits of European Russia was estimated at 280 million dessiatins.[2] The communal allotments constituted about 140 million. The crown lands, above 5 million. Church and monastery lands, about 2.5 million. Of the privately owned land, 70 million dessiatins belonged to the 30,000 great landlords, each of whom owned above 500 dessiatins. This 70 million was about what would have belonged to 10 million peasant families. The land statistics constitute the finished programme of a peasant war.

The landlords were not settled with in the first revolution. Not all the peasants rose. The movement in the country did not coincide with that in the cities. The peasant army wavered, and finally supplied sufficient forces for putting down the workers. As soon as the Semenovsky Guard regiment had settled with the Moscow insurrection, the monarchy abandoned all thought of cutting down the landed estates, as also its own autocratic rights.

However, the defeated revolution did not pass without leaving traces in the village. the government abolished the old land redemption payments and opened the way to a broader colonisation of Siberia. The frightened landlords not only made considerable concessions in the matter of rentals, but also began a large-scale selling of their landed estates. These fruits of the revolution were enjoyed by the better-off peasants, who were able to rent and buy the landlords' land.

However, the broadest gates were opened for the emerging of capitalist farmers from the peasant class by the law of November 9, 1906, the chief reform introduced by the victorious counter-revolution. Giving the right even to a small minority of the peasants of the commune, against the will of the majority, to cut out from the communal land a section to be owned independently, the law of November 9 constituted an explosive capitalist shell directed against the commune. The president of the Council of Ministers, Stolypin, described the essence of this governmental policy towards the peasants as "banking on the strong ones." This meant: encourage the upper circles of the peasantry to get hold of the communal land by buying up these "liberated" sections, and convert these new capitalist farmers into a support for the existing régime. It was easier to propose such a task, however, than to achieve it. In this attempt to substitute the kulak problem for the peasant problem, the counter-revolution was destined to break its neck.

By January 1, 1916, 2.5 million home-owners had made good their personal possession of 17 million dessiatins. Two more million home-owners were demanding the allotment to them of 14 million dessiatins. This looked like a colossal success for the reform. But the

majority of the homesteads were completely incapable of sustaining life, and represented only material for natural selection. At that time when the more backward landlords and small peasants were selling on a large scale – the former their estates, the latter their bits of land – there emerged in the capacity of principal purchaser a new peasant bourgeoisie. Agriculture entered upon a state of indubitable capitalist boom. The export of agricultural products from Russia rose between 1908 and 1912 from 1 billion roubles to 1.5 billion. This meant that broad masses of the peasantry had been proletarianised, and the upper circles of the villages were throwing on the market more and more grain.

To replace the compulsory communal ties of the peasantry, there developed very swiftly a voluntary co-operation, which succeeded in penetrating quite deeply into the peasant masses in the course of a few years, and immediately became a subject of liberal and democratic idealisation. Real power in the co-operatives belonged, however, only to the rich peasants, whose interests in the last analysis they served. The Narodnik intelligentsia, by concentrating its chief forces in peasant co-operation, finally succeeded in shifting its love for the people on to good solid bourgeois rails. In this way was prepared, partially at least, the political bloc of the "anti-capitalist" party of the Social Revolutionaries with the Kadets, the capitalist party *par excellence*.

Liberalism, although preserving the appearance of opposition to the agrarian policy of the reaction, nevertheless looked with great hopes upon this capitalist destruction of the communes. "In the country a very powerful petty bourgeoisie is arising," wrote the liberal Prince Troubetskoy, "in its whole make and essence alien alike to the ideals of the united nobility and to the socialist dreams."

But this admirable medal had its other side. There was arising from the destroyed communes not only a "very powerful bourgeoisie," but also its antithesis. The number of peasants selling tracts of land they could not live on had risen by the beginning of the war to a million, which means no less than five million souls added to the proletarian population. A sufficiently explosive material was also supplied by the millions of peasant-paupers to whom nothing remained but to hang on to their hungry allotments. In consequence those contradictions kept reproducing themselves among the peasants which had so early undermined the development of bourgeois society as a whole in Russia. The new rural bourgeoisie which was to create a support for the old and more powerful proprietors, turned out to be as hostilely opposed to the fundamental masses of the peasantry as the old proprietors had been to the people as a whole. Before it could become a support to the existing order, this peasant bourgeoisie had need of some order of its own wherewith to cling to its conquered positions. In these circumstances it is no wonder that the agrarian problem continued a sharp one in all the State Dumas. Everyone felt that the last word had not yet been spoken. The peasant deputy Petrichenko once declared from the tribune of the Duma:

"No matter how long you debate you won't create a new planet – that means that you will have to give us the land." This peasant was neither a Bolshevik, nor a Social Revolutionary. On the contrary, he was a Right deputy, a monarchist.

The agrarian movement, having, like the strike movement of the workers, died down toward the end of 1907, partially revives in 1908, and grows stronger during the following years. The struggle, to be sure, is transferred to a considerable degree within the commune: that is just what the reaction had figured on politically. There are not infrequent armed conflicts among peasants during the division of the communal land. But the struggle against the landlord also does not disappear. The peasants are more frequently setting fire to the landlord's manors, harvest, haystacks, seizing on the way also those individual tracts which had been cut off against the will of the communal peasants.

The war found the peasantry in this condition. The government carried away from the country about 10 million workers and about 2 million horses. The weak homesteads grew still weaker. The number of peasants who could not sow their fields increased. But in the second year of the war the middle peasants also began to go under. Peasant hostility toward the war sharpened from month to month. In October 1916, the Petrograd Gendarme Administration reported that in the villages they had already ceased to believe in the success of the war – the report being based on the words of insurance agents, teachers, traders, etc. "All are waiting and impatiently demanding: When will this cursed war finally end?" And this is not all: "Political questions are being talked about everywhere and resolutions adopted directed against the landlords and merchants. Nuclei of various organisations are being formed....As yet there is no uniting centre, but there is no reason to suppose that the peasants will unite by way of the co-operatives which are daily growing throughout all Russia." There is some exaggeration here. In some things the gendarme has run ahead a little, but the fundamentals are indubitably correct.

The possessing classes could not foresee that the village was going to present its bill. But they drove away these black thoughts, hoping to wriggle out of it somehow. On this theme the inquisitive French ambassador Paléologue had a chat during the war days with the former Minister of Agriculture Krivoshein, the former Premier Kokovtsev, the great landlord Count Bobrinsky, the President of the State Duma Rodzianko, the great industrialist Putilov, and other distinguished people. Here is what was unveiled before him in this conversation: In order to carry into action a radical land reform it would require the work of a standing army of 300,000 surveyors for no less than fifteen years; but during this time the number of homesteads would increase to 30 million, and consequently all these preliminary calculations by the time they were made would prove invalid. To introduce a land reform thus seemed in the eyes of these landlords, officials and bankers something like squaring the circle. It is hardly necessary to say that a like mathematical scrupulousness

was completely alien to the peasants. He thought that first of all the thing to do was to smoke out the landlord, and then see.

If the village nevertheless remained comparatively peaceful during the war, that was because its active forces were at the front. The soldiers did not forget about the land – whenever at least they were not thinking about death – and in the trenches the muzhik's thoughts about the future were saturated with the smell of powder. But all the same the peasantry, even after learning to handle firearms, could never of its own force have achieved the agrarian democratic revolution – that is, its own revolution. It had to have leadership. For the first time in world history the peasant was destined to find a leader in the person of the worker. In that lies the fundamental, and you may say the whole difference between the Russian revolution and all those preceding it.

In England serfdom had disappeared in actual fact by the end of the fourteenth century – that is, two centuries before it arose in Russia, and four and a half centuries before it was abolished. The expropriation of the landed property of the peasants dragged along in England through one Reformation and two revolutions to the nineteenth century. The capitalist development, not forced from the outside, thus had sufficient time to liquidate the independent peasant long before the proletariat awoke to political life.

In France the struggle with royal absolutism, the aristocracy, and the princes of the church, compelled the bourgeoisie in various of its layers, and in several instalments, to achieve a radical agrarian revolution at the beginning of the eighteenth century. For long after that an independent peasantry constituted the support of the bourgeois order, and in 1871 it helped the bourgeoisie put down the Paris Commune.

In Germany the bourgeoisie proved incapable of a revolutionary solution of the agrarian problem, and in 1848 betrayed the peasants to the landlords, just as Luther some three centuries before in the peasant wars had betrayed them to the princes. On the other hand, the German proletariat was still too weak in the middle of the nineteenth century to take the leadership of the peasantry. As a result the capitalist development of Germany got sufficient time, although not so long a period as in England, to subordinate agriculture, as it emerged from the uncompleted bourgeois revolution, to its own interests.

The peasant reform of 1861 was carried out in Russia by an aristocratic and bureaucratic monarchy under pressure of the demands of a bourgeois society, but with the bourgeoisie completely powerless politically. The character of this peasant emancipation was such that the forced capitalistic transformation of the country inevitably converted the agrarian problem into a problem of revolution. The Russian bourgeois dreamed of an agrarian evolution on the French plan, or the Danish, or the American – anything you want, only not the Russian. He neglected, however, to supply himself in good season with a French history or an American social structure. The democratic intelligentsia, notwithstanding its revolutionary

past, took its stand in the decisive hour with the liberal bourgeoisie and the landlord, and not with the revolutionary village. In these circumstances only the working class could stand at the head of the peasant revolution.

The law of combined development of backward countries – in the sense of a peculiar mixture of backward elements with the most modern factors – here rises before us in its most finished form, and offers a key to the fundamental riddle of the Russian revolution. If the agrarian problem, as a heritage from the barbarism of the old Russian history, had been solved by the bourgeoisie, if it could have been solved by them, the Russian proletariat could not possibly have come to power in 1917. In order to realise the Soviet state, there was required a drawing together and mutual penetration of two factors belonging to completely different historic species: a peasant war – that is, a movement characteristic of the dawn of bourgeois development – and a proletarian insurrection, the movement signalising its decline. That is the essence of 1917.

1. *Narodnik* is a general name for those non-Marxians who had originally hoped to accomplish the regeneration of Russia by "going to the people (*narod*)," and out of whom developed the Social Revolutionary party. The Mensheviks were the right, or so-called "moderate," wing of the Marxian or Social Democratic party, whom Lenin abandoned in 1903. [Trans.]

2. A dessiatin is 2.702 English acres. [Trans.]

CHAPTER 4

THE TZAR AND THE TZARINA

This book will concern itself least of all with those unrelated psychological researches which are now so often substituted for social and historical analysis. Foremost in our field of vision will stand the great, moving forces of history, which are super-personal in character. Monarchy is one of them. But all these forces operate through people. And monarchy is by its very principle bound up with the personal. This in itself justifies an interest in the personality of that monarch whom the process of social development brought face to face with a revolution. Moreover, we hope to show in what follows, partially at least, just where in a personality the strictly personal ends – often much sooner than we think – and how frequently the "distinguishing traits" of a person are merely individual scratches made by a higher law of development.

Nicholas II inherited from his ancestors not only a giant empire, but also a revolution. And they did not bequeath him one quality which would have made him capable of governing an empire or even a province or a county. To that historic flood which was rolling its billows each one closer to the gates of his palace, the last Romanov opposed only a dumb indifference. It seemed as though between his consciousness and his epoch there stood some transparent but absolutely impenetrable medium.

People surrounding the tzar often recalled after the revolution that in the most tragic moments of his reigns – at the time of the surrender of Port Arthur and the sinking of the fleet at Tsu-shima, and ten years later at the time of the retreat of the Russian troops from Galicia, and then two years later during the days preceding his abdication when all those around him were depressed, alarmed, shaken – Nicholas alone preserved his tranquillity. He would inquire as usual how many versts he had covered in his journeys about Russia, would recall episodes of hunting expeditions in the past, anecdotes of official meetings, would interest himself generally in the little rubbish of the day's doings, while thunders

roared over him and lightnings flashed. “What is this?” asked one of his attendant generals, “a gigantic, almost unbelievable self-restraint, the product of breeding, of a belief in the divine predetermination of events? Or is it inadequate consciousness?” The answer is more than half included in the question. The so-called “breeding” of the tzar, his ability to control himself in the most extraordinary circumstances, cannot be explained by a mere external training; its essence was an inner indifference, a poverty of spiritual forces, a weakness of the impulses of the will. That mask of indifference which was called breeding in certain circles, was a natural part of Nicholas at birth.

The tzar’s diary is the best of all testimony. From day to day and from year to year drags along upon its pages the depressing record of spiritual emptiness. “Walked long and killed two crows. Drank tea by daylight.” Promenades on foot, rides in a boat. And then again crows, and again tea. All on the borderline of physiology. Recollections of church ceremonies are jotted down in the same tome as a drinking party.

In the days preceding the opening of the State Duma, when the whole country was shaking with convulsions, Nicholas wrote: “April 14. Took a walk in a thin shirt and took up paddling again. Had tea in a balcony. Stana dined and took a ride with us. Read.” Not a word as to the subject of his reading. Some sentimental English romance? Or a report from the Police Department? “April 15: Accepted Witte’s resignation. Marie and Dmitri to dinner. Drove them home to the palace.”

On the day of the decision to dissolve the Duma, when the court as well as the liberal circles were going through a paroxysm of fright, the tzar wrote in his diary: “July 7. Friday. Very busy morning. Half hour late to breakfast with the officers....A storm came up and it was very muggy. We walked together. Received Goremykin. Signed a decree dissolving the Duma! Dined with Olga and Petia. Read all evening.” An exclamation point after the coming dissolution of the Duma is the highest expression of his emotions. The deputies of the dispersed Duma summoned the people to refuse to pay taxes. A series of military uprisings followed: in Sveaborg, Kronstadt, on ships, in army units. The revolutionary terror against high officials was renewed on an unheard-of scale. The tzar writes: “July 9. Sunday. It has happened! The Duma was closed today. At breakfast after Mass long faces were noticeable among many....The weather was fine. On our walk we met Uncle Misha who came over yesterday from Gatchina. Was quietly busy until dinner and all evening. Went padding in a canoe.” It was in a canoe he went paddling – that is told. But with what he was busy all evening is not indicated. So it was always.

And further in those same fatal days: “July 14. Got dressed and rode a bicycle to the bathing beach and bathed enjoyably in the sea.” “July 15. Bathed twice. It was very hot. Only us two at dinner. A storm passed over.” “July 19. Bathed in the morning. Received at the farm. Uncle Vladimir and Chagin lunched with us.” An insurrection and explosions of

dynamite are barely touched upon with a single phrase, “Pretty doings!” – astonishing in its imperturbable indifference, which never rose to conscious cynicism.

“At 9:30 in the morning we rode out to the Caspian regiment...walked for a long time. The weather was wonderful. Bathed in the sea. After tea received Lvov and Guchkov.” Not a word of the fact that this unexpected reception of the two liberals was brought about by the attempt of Stolypin to include opposition leaders in his ministry. Prince Lvov, the future head of the Provisional Government, said of that reception at the time: “I expected to see the sovereign stricken with grief, but instead of that there came out to meet me a jolly sprightly fellow in a raspberry-coloured shirt.” The tzar’s outlook was not broader than that of a minor police official – with this difference, that the latter would have a better knowledge of reality and be less burdened with superstitions. The sole paper which Nicholas read for years, and from which he derived his ideas, was a weekly published on state revenue by Prince Meshchersky, a vile, bribed journalist of the reactionary bureaucratic clique, despised even in his own circle. The tzar kept his outlook unchanged through two wars and two revolutions. Between his consciousness and events stood always that impenetrable medium – indifference. Nicholas was called, not without foundation, a fatalist. It is only necessary to add that his fatalism was the exact opposite of an active belief in his “star.” Nicholas indeed considered himself unlucky. His fatalism was only a form of passive self-defence against historic evolution, and went hand in hand with an arbitrariness, trivial in psychological motivation, but monstrous in its consequences.

“I wish it and therefore it must be – ” writes Count Witte. “That motto appeared in all the activities of this weak ruler, who only through weakness did all the things which characterised his reign – a wholesale shedding of more or less innocent blood, for the most part without aim.”

Nicholas is sometimes compared with his half-crazy great-great-grandfather Paul, who was strangled by a camarilla acting in agreement with his own son, Alexander “the Blessed.” These two Romanovs were actually alike in their distrust of everybody due to a distrust of themselves, their touchiness as of omnipotent nobodies, their feeling of abnegation, their consciousness, as you might say, of being crowned pariahs. But Paul was incomparably more colourful; there was an element of fancy in his rantings, however irresponsible. In his descendant everything was dim; there was not one sharp trait.

Nicholas was not only unstable, but treacherous. Flatterers called him a charmer, bewitcher, because of his gentle way with the courtiers. But the tzar reserved his special caresses for just those officials whom he had decided to dismiss. Charmed beyond measure at a reception, the minister would go home and find a letter requesting his resignation. That was a kind of revenge on the tzar’s part for his own nonentity.

Nicholas recoiled in hostility before everything gifted and significant. He felt at ease

only among completely mediocre and brainless people, saintly fakers, holy men, to whom he did not have to look up. He had his *amour propre* – indeed it was rather keen. But it was not active, not possessed of a grain of initiative, enviously defensive. He selected his ministers on a principle of continual deterioration. Men of brain and character he summoned only in extreme situations when there was no other way out, just as w call in a surgeon to save our lives. It was so with Witte, and afterwards with Stolypin. The tzar treated both with ill-concealed hostility. As soon as the crisis had passed, he hastened to part with these counsellors who were too tall for him. This selection operated so systematically that the president of the last Duma, Rodzianko, on the 7th of January 1917, with the revolution already knocking at the doors, ventured to say to the tzar: "Your Majesty, there is not one reliable or honest man left around you; all the best men have been removed or have retired. There remain only those of ill repute."

All the efforts of the liberal bourgeoisie to find a common language with the court came to nothing. The tireless and noisy Rodzianko tried to shake up the tzar with his reports, but in vain. The latter gave no answer either to argument or to impudence, but quietly made ready to dissolve the Duma. Grand Duke Dmitri, a former favourite of the tzar, and future accomplice in the murder of Rasputin, complained to his colleague, Prince Yussupov, that the tzar at headquarters was becoming every day more indifferent to everything around him. In Dmitri's opinion the tzar was being fed some kind of dope which had a benumbing action upon his spiritual faculties. "Rumours went round," writes the liberal historian Miliukov, "that this condition of mental and moral apathy was sustained in the tzar by an increased use of alcohol." This was all fancy or exaggeration. The tzar had no need of narcotics: the fatal "dope" was in his blood. Its symptoms merely seemed especially striking on the background of those great events of war and domestic crisis which led up to the revolution. Rasputin, who was a psychologist, said briefly of the tzar that he "lacked insides."

This dim, equable and "well-bred" man was cruel – not with the active cruelty of Ivan the Terrible or of Peter, in the pursuit of historic aims – What had Nicholas the Second in common with them? – but with the cowardly cruelty of the late born, frightened at his own doom. At the very dawn of his reign Nicholas praised the Phanagoritsy regiment as "fine fellows" for shooting down workers. He always "read with satisfaction" how they flogged with whips the bob-haired girl-students, or cracked the heads of defenceless people during Jewish pogroms. This crowned black sheep gravitated with all his soul to the very dregs of society, the Black Hundred hooligans. He not only paid them generously from the state treasury, but loved to chat with them about their exploits, and would pardon them when they accidentally got mixed up in the murder of an opposition deputy. Witte, who stood at the head of the government during the putting down of the first revolution, has written in his memoirs: "When news of the useless cruel antics of the chiefs of those detachments reached the sovereign, they met with his approval, or in any case his defence." In answer

to the demand of the governor-general of the Baltic States that he stop a certain lieutenant-captain, Richter, who was "executing on his own authority and without trial non-resistant persons," the tzar wrote on the report: "Ah, what a fine fellow!" Such encouragements are innumerable. This "charmer," without will, without aim, without imagination, was more awful than all the tyrants of ancient and modern history.

The tzar was mightily under the influence of the tzarina, an influence which increased with the years and the difficulties. Together they constituted a kind of unit – and that combination shows already to what an extent the personal, under pressure of circumstances, is supplemented by the group. But first we must speak of the tzarina herself.

Maurice Palologue, the French ambassador at Petrograd during the war, a refined psychologist for French academicians and janitresses, offers a meticulously licked portrait of the last tzarina: "Moral restlessness, a chronic sadness, infinite longing, intermittent ups and downs of strength, anguishing thoughts of the invisible other world, superstitions – are not all these traits, so clearly apparent in the personality of the empress, the characteristic traits of the Russian people?" Strange as it may seem, there is in this saccharine lie just a grain of truth. The Russian satirist Saltykov, with some justification, called the ministers and governors from among the Baltic barons "Germans with a Russian soul." It is indubitable that aliens, in no way connected with the people, developed the most pure culture of the "genuine Russian" administrator.

But why did the people repay with such open hatred a tzarina who, in the words of Palologue, had so completely assimilated their soul? The answer is simple. In order to justify her new situation, this German woman adopted with a kind of cold fury all the traditions and nuances of Russian mediaevalism, the most meagre and crude of all mediaevalisms, in that very period when the people were making mighty efforts to free themselves from it. This Hessian princess was literally possessed by the demon of autocracy. Having risen from her rural corner to the heights of Byzantine despotism, she would not for anything take a step down. In the orthodox religion she found a mysticism and a magic adapted to her new lot. She believed the more inflexibly in her vocation, the more naked became the foulness of the old rgime. With a strong character and a gift for dry and hard exaltations, the tzarina supplemented the weak-willed tzar, ruling over him.

On March 17, 1916, a year before the revolution, when the tortured country was already writhing in the grip of defeat and ruin, the tzarina wrote to her husband at military headquarters: "You must not give indulgences, a responsible ministry, etc....or anything that *they* want. This must be your war and your peace, and the honour yours and our fatherland's, and not by any means the Duma's. They have not the right to say a single word in these matters." This was at any rate a thoroughgoing programme. And it was in just this way that she always had the whip hand over the continually vacillating tzar.

After Nicholas' departure to the army in the capacity of fictitious commander-in-chief, the tzarina began openly to take charge of internal affairs. The ministers came to her with reports as to a regent. She entered into a conspiracy with a small camarilla against the Duma, against the ministers, against the staff-generals, against the whole world – to some extent indeed against the tzar. On December 6, 1916, the tzarina wrote to the tzar: "...Once you have said that you want to keep Protopopov, how does he (Premier Trepov) go against you? Bring down your first on the table. Don't yield. Be the boss. Obey your firm little wife and our Friend. Believe in us." Again three days late: "You know you are right. Carry your head high. Command Trepov to work with him....Strike your fist on the table." Those phrases sound as though they were made up, but they are taken from authentic letters. Besides, you cannot make up things like that.

On December 13 the tzarina suggest to the tzar: "Anything but this responsible ministry about which everybody has gone crazy. Everything is getting quiet and better, but people want to feel your hand. How long they have been saying to me, for whole years, the same thing: 'Russia loves to feel the whip.' That is *their* nature!" This orthodox Hessian, with a Windsor upbringing and a Byzantine crown on her head, not only "incarnates" the Russian soul, but also organically despises it. *Their* nature demands the whip – writes the Russian tzarina to the Russian tzar about the Russian people, just two months and a half before the monarchy tips over into the abyss.

In contrast to her force of character, the intellectual force of the tzarina is not higher, but rather lower than her husband's. Even more than he, she craves the society of simpletons. The close and long-lasting friendship of the tzar and tzarina with their lady-in-waiting Vyrubova gives a measure of the spiritual stature of this autocratic pair. Vyrubova has described herself as a fool, and this is not modesty. Witte, to whom one cannot deny an accurate eye, characterised her as "a most commonplace, stupid, Petersburg young lady, homely as a bubble in the biscuit dough." In the society of this person, with whom elderly officials, ambassadors and financiers obsequiously flirted, and who had just enough brains not to forget about her own pockets, the tzar and tzarina would pass many hours, consulting her about affairs, corresponding with her and about her. She was more influential than the State Duma, and even that the ministry.

But Vyrubova herself was only an instrument of "The Friend," whose authority superseded all three. "...This is my *private* opinion," writes the tzarina to the tzar, "I will find out what our Friend thinks." The opinion of the "Friend" is not private, it decides. "...I am firm," insists the tzarina a few weeks later, "but listen to me, *i.e. this means* our Friend, and trust in everything....I suffer for you as for a gentle soft-hearted child – who needs guidance, but listens to bad counsellors, while a man sent by God is telling him what he should do."

The Friend sent by God was Gregory Rasputin.

....The prayers and the help of our Friend – then all will be well.“

”If we did not have Him, all would have been over long ago. I am absolutely convinced of that.“

Throughout the whole reign of Nicholas and Alexandra soothsayers and hysterics were imported for the court not only from all over Russia, but from other countries. Special official purveyors arose, who would gather around the momentary oracle, forming a powerful Upper Chamber attached to the monarch. There was no lack of bigoted old women with the title of countess, nor of functionaries weary of doing nothing, nor of financiers who had entire ministries in their hire. With a jealous eye on the unchartered competition of mesmerists and sorcerers, the high priesthood of the Orthodox Church would hasten to pry their way into the holy of holies of the intrigue. Witte called this ruling circle, against which he himself twice stubbed his toe, ”the leprous court camarilla.“

The more isolated the dynasty became, and the more unsheltered the autocrat felt, the more he needed some help from the other world. Certain savages, in order to bring good weather, wave in the air a shingle on a string. The tzar and tzarina used shingles for the greatest variety of purposes. In the tzar’s train there was a whole chapel full of large and small images, and all sorts of fetiches, which were brought to bear, first against the Japanese, then against the German artillery.

The level of the court circle really had not changed much from generation to generation. Under Alexander II, called the ”Liberator,“ the grand dukes had sincerely believed in house spirits and witches. Under Alexander III it was no better, only quieter. The ”leprous camarilla“ had existed always, changed only its personnel and its method. Nicholas II did not create, but inherited from his ancestors, this court atmosphere of savage mediaevalism. But the country during these same decades had been changing, its problems growing more complex, its culture rising to a higher level. The court circle was thus left far behind.

Although the monarchy did under compulsion make concessions to the new forces, nevertheless inwardly it completely failed to become modernised. On the contrary it withdrew into itself. Its spirit of mediaevalism thickened under the pressure of hostility and fear, until it acquired the character of a disgusting nightmare overhanging the country.

Towards November 1905 – that is, at the most critical moment of the first revolution – the tzar writes in his diary: ”We got acquainted with a man of God, Gregory, from the Tobolsk province.“ That was Rasputin – a Siberian peasant with a bald scar on his head, the result of a beating for horse-stealing. Put forward at an appropriate moment, this ”Man of God“ soon found official helpers – or rather they found him – and thus was formed a new ruling class which got a firm hold of the tzarina, and through her of the tzar.

From the winter of 1913-14 it was openly said in Petersburg society that all high appointments, posts and contracts depended upon the Rasputin clique. The ”Elder“ himself gradually turned into a state institution. He was carefully guarded, and no less carefully sought after by the competing ministers. Spies of the Police Department kept a diary of his life by hours, and did not fail to report how on a visit to his home village of Pokrovsky he got into a drunken and bloody fight with his own father on the street. On the same day that this happened – September 9, 1915 – Rasputin sent two friendly telegrams, one to Tzarskoe Selo, to the tzarina, the other to headquarters to the tzar. In epic language the police spies registered from day to day the revels of the Friend. ”He returned today 5 o’clock in the morning completely drunk.“ ”On the night of the 25-26th the actress V. spent the night with Rasputin.“ ”He arrived with Princess D. (the wife of a gentleman of the bedchamber of the Tzar’s court) at the Hotel Astoria.“...And right beside this: ”Came home from Tzarskoe Selo about 11 o’clock in the evening.“ ”Rasputin came home with Princess Sh- very drunk and together they went out immediately.“ In the morning or evening of the following day a trip to Tzarskoe Selo. To a sympathetic question from the spy as to why the Elder was thoughtful, the answer came: ”Can’t decide whether to convoke the Duma or not.“ And then again: ”He came home at 5 in the morning pretty drunk.“ Thus for months and years the melody was played on three keys: ”Pretty drunk,“ ”Very drunk,“ and ”Completely drunk.“ These communications of state importance were brought together and countersigned by the general of gendarmes, Gorbachev.

The bloom of Raputin’s influence lasted six years, the last years of the monarchy. ”His life in Petrograd,“ says Prince Yussupov, who participated to some extent in that life, and afterward killed Rasputin, ”became a continual revel, the drunken debauch of a galley slave who had come into an unexpected fortune.“ ”I had at my disposition,“ wrote the president of the Duma, Rodzianko, ”a whole mass of letters from mothers whose daughters had been dishonoured by this insolent rake.“ Nevertheless the Petrograd metropolitan, Pitirim, owed his position to Rasputin, as also the almost illiterate Archbishop Varnava. The Procuror of the Holy Synod, Sabler, was long sustained by Rasputin; and Premier Kokovtsev was removed at his wish, having refused to receive the ”Elder.“ Rasputin appointed Strmer President of the Council of Ministers, Protopopov Minister of the Interior, the new Procuror of the Synod, Raev, and many others. The ambassador of the French republic, Palologue, sought an interview with Rasputin, embraced him and cried, *”Voil, un vritable illumin¡‘* hoping in this way to win the heart of the tzarina to the cause of France. The Jew Simanovich, financial agent of the ”Elder,“ himself under the eye of the Secret Police as a night club gambler and usurer – introduced into the Ministry of Justice through Rasputin the completely dishonest creature Dobrovolsky.

”Keep by you the little list,“ writes the tzarina to the tzar, in regard to new appointments. ”Our friend has asked that you talk all this over with Protopopov.“ Two days later:

”Our friend says that Strmer may remain a few days longer as President of the Council of Ministers.“ And again: ”Protopopov venerates our friend and will be blessed.“

On one of those days when the police spies were counting up the number of bottles and women, the tzarina grieved in a letter to the tzar: ”They accuse Rasputin of kissing women, etc. Read the apostles; they kissed everybody as a form of greeting.“ This reference to the apostles would hardly convince the police spies. In another letter the tzarina goes still farther. ”During vespers I thought so much about our friend,“ she writes, ”how the Scribes and Pharisees are persecuting Christ pretending that they are so perfect...yes, in truth no man is a prophet in his own country.“

The comparison of Rasputin and Christ was customary in that circle, and by no means accidental. The alarm of the royal couple before the menacing forces of history was too sharp to be satisfied with an impersonal God and the futile shadow of a Biblical Christ. They needed a second coming of ”the Son of Man.“ In Rasputin the rejected and agonising monarchy found a Christ in its own image.

”If there had been no Rasputin,“ said Senator Tagantsev, a man of the old rgime, ”it would have been necessary to invent one.“ There is a good deal more in these words than their author imagined. If by the word *hooliganism* we understand the extreme expression of those anti-social parasite elements at the bottom of society, we may define Rasputinism as a crowned hooliganism at its very top.

CHAPTER 5

THE IDEA OF A PALACE REVOLUTION

Why did not the ruling classes, who were trying to save themselves from a revolution, attempt to get rid of the tzar and his circle? They wanted to, but they did not dare. They lacked both resolution and belief in their cause. The idea of a palace revolution was in the air up to the very moment when it was swallowed up in a state revolution. We must pause upon this in order to get a clearer idea of the inter-relations, just before the explosion, of the monarchy, the upper circles of the nobility, the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

The possessing classes were completely monarchist, by virtue of interests, habits and cowardice. But they wanted a monarchy without Rasputin. The monarchy answered them: Take me as I am. In response to demands for a decent ministry, the tzarina sent to the tzar at headquarters an apple from the hands of Rasputin, urging that he eat it in order to strengthen his will. "Remember," she adjured, "that even Monsieur Philippe (a French charlatan-hypnotist) said that you must not grant a constitution, as that would mean ruin to you and Russia..." "Be Peter the Great, Ivan the Terrible, Emperor Paul - crush them all under your feet!"

What a disgusting mixture of fright, superstition and malicious alienation from the country! To be sure, it might seem that on the summits the tzar's family could not be quite alone. Rasputin indeed was always surrounded with a galaxy of grand ladies, and in general shamanism flourishes in an aristocracy. But this mysticism of fear does not unite people, it divides them. Each saves himself in his own way. Many aristocratic houses have their competing saints. Even on the summits of Petrograd society the tzar's family was surrounded as though plague-stricken, with a quarantine of distrust and hostility. Lady-in-waiting Vyrubova remembers: "I was aware and felt deeply in all those around us a malice toward those whom I revered, and I felt that this malice would assume terrible dimensions."

Against the purple background of the war, with the roar of underground tremors clearly

audible, the privileged did not for one moment renounce the joys of life; on the contrary, they devoured them greedily. Yet more and more often a skeleton would appear at their banquets and shake the little bones of his fingers. It began to seem to them that all their misery lay in the disgusting character of "Alix," in the treacherous weakness of the tzar, in that greedy fool Vyrubova, and in the Siberian Christ with a scar on his skull. Waves of unendurable foreboding swept over the ruling class, contracting it with spasms from the periphery to the centre, and more and more isolating the hated upper circle at Tzarskoe Selo. Vyrubova has pretty clearly expressed the feelings of the upper circle at that time in her, generally speaking, very lying reminiscences: "...For the hundredth time I asked myself what has happened to Petrograd society. Are they all spiritually sick, or have they contracted some epidemic which rages in war time? It is hard to understand, but the fact is, all were in an abnormally excited condition." To the number of those out of their heads belonged the whole copious family of the Romanovs, the whole greedy, insolent and universally hated pack of grand dukes and grand duchesses. Frightened to death, they were trying to wriggle out of the ring narrowing around them. They kowtowed to the critical aristocracy, gossiped about the royal pair, and egged on both each other and all those around them. The august uncles addressed the tzar with letters of advice in which between the lines of respect was to be heard a snarl and a grinding of teeth.

Protopopov, some time after the October revolution, colourfully if not very learnedly characterised the mood of the upper circles: "Even the very highest classes became *frondeurs* before the revolution: in the grand salons and clubs the policy of the government received harsh and unfriendly criticism. The relations which had been formed in the tzar's family were analysed and talked over. Little anecdotes were passed around about the head of the state. Verses were composed. Many grand dukes openly attended these meetings, and their presence gave a special authority in the eyes of the public to tales that were caricatures and to malicious exaggerations. A sense of the danger of this sport did not awaken till the last moment."

These rumours about the court camarilla were especially sharpened by the accusation of Germanophilism and even of direct connections with the enemy. The noisy and not very deep Rodzianko definitely stated: "The connection and the analogy of aspirations is so logically obvious that I at least have no doubt of the co-operation of the German Staff and the Rasputin circle: nobody can doubt it." The bare reference to a "logical" obviousness greatly weakens the categorical tone of this testimony. No evidence of a connection between the Rasputinists and the German Staff was discovered after the revolution. It was otherwise with the so-called "Germanophilism." This was not a question, of course, of the national sympathies and antipathies of the German tzarina, Premier Strmer, Countess Kleinmichel, Minister of the Court Count Frederiks, and other gentlemen with German names. The cynical memoirs of the old *intriguante* Kleinmichel demonstrate with remark-

able clearness how a supernational character distinguished the aristocratic summits of all the countries of Europe, bound together as they were by ties of birth, inheritance, scorn for all those beneath them, and last but not least, cosmopolitan adultery in ancient castles, at fashionable watering places, and in the courts of Europe. Considerably more real were the organic antipathies of the court household to the obsequious lawyers of the French Republic, and the sympathy of the reactionaries – whether bearing Teuton or Slavic family names – for the genuine Russian soul of the Berlin rgime which had so often impressed them with its waxed mustachios, its sergeant-major manner and self-confident stupidity.

But that was not the decisive factor. The danger arose from the very logic of the situation, for the court could not help seeking salvation in a separate peace, and this the more insistently the more dangerous the situation became. Liberalism in the person of its leaders was trying, as we shall see, to reserve for itself the chance of making a separate peace in connection with the prospect of its own coming to power. But for just this reason it carried on a furious chauvinist agitation, deceiving the people and terrorising the court. The camarilla did not dare show its real face prematurely in so ticklish a matter, and was even compelled to counterfeit the general patriotic tone, at the same time feeling out the ground for a separate peace.

General Kurlov, a former chief of police belonging to the Rasputin camarilla, denies, of course, in his reminiscences any German connection or sympathies on the part of his protector, but immediately adds: “We cannot blame Strmer for his opinion that the war with Germany was the greatest possible misfortune for Russia and that it had no serious political justification.” It is hardly possible to forget that while holding this interesting opinion Strmer was the head of the government of a country waging war against Germany. The tzarist Minister of the Interior, Protopopov, just before he entered the government, had been conducting negotiations in Stockholm with the German diplomat Warburg and had reported them to the tzar. Rasputin himself, according to the same Kurlov, “considered the war with Germany a colossal misfortune for Russia.” And finally the empress wrote to the tzar on April 5, 1916: “...They dare not say that He has anything in common with the Germans. He is good and magnanimous toward all, like Christ. No matter to what religion a man may belong: that is the way a good Christian ought to be.” To be sure, this good Christian who was almost always intoxicated might quite possibly have been made up to, not only by sharpers, usurers and aristocratic princesses, but by actual spies of the enemy. “Connections” of this kind are not inconceivable. But the oppositional patriots posed the matter more directly and broadly: they directly accused the tzarina of treason. In his memoirs, written considerably later, General Denikin testifies: “In the army there was loud talk, unconstrained both in time and place, as to the insistent demands of the empress for a separate peace, her treachery in the matter of Field-Marshal Kitchener, of whose journey she was supposed to have told the Germans, etc....This circumstance played

a colossal role in determining the mood of the army in its attitude to the dynasty and the revolution." The same Denikin relates how after the revolution General Alexeiev, to a direct question about the treason of the empress, answered, "vaguely and reluctantly," that in going over the papers they had found in the possession of the tzarina a chart with a detailed designation of troops on the whole front, and that upon him, Alexeiev, this had produced a depressing effect. "Not another word," significantly adds Denikin. "He changed the subject." Whether the tzarina had the mysterious chart or not, the luckless generals were obviously not unwilling to shoulder off upon her the responsibility for their own defeat. The accusation of treason against the court undoubtedly crept through the army chiefly from above downward – starting with that incapable staff.

But if the tzarina herself, to whom the tzar submitted in everything, was betrayed to Wilhelm the military secrets and even the heads of the Allied chieftains, what remained but to make an end of the royal pair? And since the head of the army and of the anti-German party was the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich, was he not as a matter of duty chosen for the role of supreme patron of a palace revolution? That was the reason why the tzar, upon the insistence of Rasputin and the tzarina, removed the grand duke and took the chief command into his own hands. But the tzarina was afraid even of a meeting between the nephew and the uncle in turning over the command. "Sweetheart, try to be cautious," she writes to the tzar at headquarters, "and don't let Nikolasha catch you in any kind of promises or anything else – remember that Gregory saved you from him and from his bad people...remember in the name of Russia what they wanted you to do, oust you (this is not gossip – Orloff had all the papers ready), and put me in a monastery."

The tzar's brother Michael said to Rodzianko: "The whole family knows how harmful Alexandra Feodorovna is. Nothing but traitors surround her and my brother. All honest people have left. But what's to be done in such a situation?" That is it exactly: what is to be done?

The Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna insisted in the presence of her sons that Rodzianko should take the initiative in "removing the tzarina." Rodzianko suggested that they consider the conversation as not having taken place, as otherwise in loyalty to hi oath he should be obliged to report to the tzar that the grand duchess had suggested to the President of the Duma that he destroy the tzarina. Thus the ready-witted Lord Chamberlain reduced the question of murdering the tzarina to a pleasantry of the drawing room.

At times the ministry itself came into sharp opposition to the tzar. As early as 1915, a year and a half before the revolution, at the sittings of the government, talk went on openly which even now seems unbelievable. The War Minister Polivanov: "Only a policy of conciliation toward society can save the situation. The present shaky dykes will not avert a catastrophe." The Minister of Marine Grigorovich: "It's no secret that the army does not

trust us and is awaiting a change." The Minister of Foreign Affairs Sazonov: "The popularity of the tzar and his authority in the eyes of the popular mass is considerably shaken." The Minister of the Interior Prince Sherbatov: "All of us together are unfit for governing Russia in the situation that is forming...We must have either a dictatorship or a conciliatory policy" (Session of August 21, 1915). Neither of these measures could now be of help; neither was now attainable. The tzar could not make up his mind to a dictatorship; he rejected a conciliatory policy, and did not accept the resignation of the ministers who considered themselves unfit. The high official who kept the record makes a short commentary upon these ministerial speeches: evidently we shall have to hang from a lamp-post.

With such feelings prevailing it is no wonder that even in bureaucratic circles they talked of the necessity of a palace uprising as the sole means of preventing the advancing revolution. "If I had shut my eyes," remembers one of the participants of these conversations, "I might have thought that I was in the company of desperate revolutionists."

A colonel of gendarmes making a special investigation of the army in the south of Russia painted a dark picture in his report: Thanks to propaganda chiefly relating to the Germanophilism of the empress and the tzar, the army is prepared for the idea of a palace revolution. "Conversations to this effect are openly carried on in officers' meetings and have not met the necessary opposition on the part of the high command." Protopopov on his part testifies that "a considerable number of people in the high commanding staff sympathised with the idea of a coup d'tat: certain individuals were in touch with and under the influence of the chief leaders of the so-called Progressive Bloc."

The subsequently notorious Admiral Kolchak testified before the Soviet Investigation Commission after his troops were routed by the Red Army that he had connections with many oppositional members of the Duma whose speeches he welcomed, since "his attitude to the powers existing before the revolution was adverse." As to the plan for a palace revolution, however, Kolchak was not informed.

After the murder of Rasputin and the subsequent banishment of grand dukes, high society talked still louder of the necessity of a palace revolution. Prince Yussupov tells how when the Grand Duke Dmitry was arrested at the palace the officers of several regiments came up and proposed plans for decisive action, "to which he, of course, could not agree."

The Allied diplomats – in any case, the British ambassador – were considered accessories to the plot. The latter, doubtless upon the initiative of the Russian liberals, made an attempt in January 1917 to influence Nicholas, having secured the preliminary sanction of his government. Nicholas attentively and politely listened to the ambassador, thanked him, and – spoke of other matters. Protopopov reported to Nicholas the relations between Buchanan and the chief leaders of the Progressive Bloc, and suggested that the British Ambassador be placed under observation. Nicholas did not seem to approve of the proposal,

finding the watching of an ambassador "inconsistent with international tradition." Meanwhile Kurlov has no hesitation in stating that "the Intelligence Service remarks daily the relations between the leader of the Kadet Party Miliukov and the British Ambassador." International traditions, then, had not stood in the way at all. But their transgression helped little: even so, a palace conspiracy was never discovered.

Did it in reality exist? There is nothing to prove this. It was a little too broad, that "conspiracy." It included too many and too various circles to *be* a conspiracy. It merely hung in the air as a mood of the upper circles of Petrograd society, as a confused idea of salvation, or a slogan of despair. But it did not thicken down to the point of becoming a practical plan.

The upper nobility in the eighteenth century had more than once introduced practical corrections into the succession by imprisoning or strangling inconvenient emperors: this operation was carried out for the last time on Paul in 1801. It is impossible to say, therefore, that a palace revolution would have transgressed the traditions of the Russian monarchy. On the contrary, it had been a steady element in those traditions. But the aristocracy had long ceased to feel strong at heart. It surrendered the honour of strangling the tzar and tzarina to the bourgeoisie. But the leaders of the latter showed little more resolution.

Since the revolution references have been made more than once to the liberal capitalists Guchkov and Tereshchenko, and to General Krymov who was close to them, as the nucleus of the conspirators. Guchkov and Tereshchenko themselves have confirmed this, but indefinitely. The former volunteer in the army of the Boers against England, the duellist Guchkov, a liberal with spurs, must have seemed to "social opinion" in a general way the most suitable figure for a conspiracy. Surely not the wordy Professor Miliukov! Guchkov undoubtedly recurred more than once in his thoughts to the short and sharp blow in which one regiment of the guard would replace and forestall the revolution. Witte in his memoirs had already told on Guchkov, whom he hated, as an admirer of the Young Turk methods of disposing of an inconvenient sultan. But Guchkov, having never succeeded in his youth in displaying his young Turkish audacity, had had time to grow much older. And more important, this henchman of Stolypin could not help but see the difference between Russian conditions and the old Turkish conditions, could not fail to ask himself: Will not the palace revolution, instead of a means for preventing a real revolution, turn out to be the last jar that looses the avalanche? May not the cure prove more ruinous than the disease?

In the literature devoted to the February revolution the preparation of a palace revolution is spoken of as a firmly established fact. Miliukov puts it thus: "Its realisation was already on the way in February." Denikin transfers its realisation to March. Both mention a "plan" to stop the tzar's train in transit, demand an abdication, and in case of refusal, which was considered inevitable, carry out a "physical removal" of the tzar. Miliukov adds that, fore-

seeing a possible revolution, the heads of the Progressive Bloc, who did not participate in the plot, and were not "accurately" informed of its preparation, talked over in narrow circle how best to make use of the coup d'tat in case of success. Certain Marxian investigations of recent years also take on faith the story of the practical preparation of a coup d'tat. By that example we may learn how easily and firmly legends win a place in historical science.

As chief evidence of the plot they not infrequently advance a certain colourful tale of Rodzianko, which testifies to the very fact that there was no plot. In January 1917 General Krymov arrived from the front and complained before members of the Duma that things could not continue longer as they were: "If you decide upon this extreme measure (replacement of the tzar) we will support you." *If* you decide! The Octobrist Shidlovsky angrily exclaimed: "There is no need to pity or spare him when he is ruining Russia." In the noisy argument these real or imaginary words of Brussilov are also reported: "If it is necessary to choose between the tzar and Russia, I side with Russia." *If* it is necessary! The young millionaire Tereshchenko spoke as an inflexible tzaricide. The Kadet Shingarev spoke: "The General is right, an overturn is necessary...*but who will resolve upon it?*" That is just the question: who will resolve upon it? Such is the essence of the testimony of Rodzianko, who himself spoke against an overturn. In the course of the few following weeks the plan apparently did not move forward an inch. They conversed about stopping the tzar's train, but it is quite unknown who was to carry out that operation.

Russian liberalism, when it was younger, had supported the revolutionary terrorists with money and sympathy in the hope that they would drive the monarchy into its arms with their bombs. None of those respected gentlemen was accustomed to risk his own head. But all the same the chief role was played not by personal but by class fear: Things are bad now – they reasoned – but they might get worse. In any case, if Guchkov, Tereshchenko and Krymov had seriously moved toward a coup d'tat – that is, practically prepared it, mobilising the necessary forces and means – that would have been established definitely and accurately after the revolution. For the participants, especially the active young men of whom not a few would have been needed, would have had no reason to keep mum about the "almost" accomplished deed. After February this would only have assured them a career. However, there were no revelations. It is quite obvious that the affair never went any farther with Krymov and Guchkov than patriotic sighs over wine and cigars. The light-minded *frondeurs* of the aristocracy, like the heavyweight oppositionists of the plutocracy, could not find the heart to amend by action the course of an unpropitious providence.

In May 1917 one of the most eloquent and empty liberals, Maklakov, will cry out at a private conference of that Duma which the revolution will sweep away along with the monarchy: "If posterity curses this revolution they will curse us for having been unable to prevent it in time with a revolution from above!" Still later, when he is already in exile,

Kerensky, following Maklakov will lament: "Yes, enfranchised Russia was too slow with its timely coup d'tat from above (of which they talked so much, and for which they prepared [?] so much) – she was too slow to forestall the spontaneous explosion of the state."

These two exclamations complete the picture of how, even after the revolution had unleashed its unconquerable forces, educated nincompoops continued to think that it could have been forestalled by a "timely" change of dynastic figure-heads. * The determination was lacking for a "big" palace revolution. But out of it there arose a plan for a small one. The liberal conspirators did not dare to remove the chief actor of the monarchy, but the grand dukes decided to remove its prompter. In the murder of Rasputin they saw the last means of saving the dynasty.

Prince Yussupov, who was married to a Romanov, drew into the affair the Grand Duke Dmitry Pavlovich and the monarchist deputy Purishkevich. They also tried to involve the liberal Maklakov, obviously to give the murder an "all-national" character. The celebrated lawyer wisely declined, supplying the conspirators however with poison – a rather stylistic distinction! The conspirators judged, not without foundation, that a Romanov automobile would facilitate the removal of the body after the murder. The grand ducal coat-of-arms had found its use at last. The rest was carried out in the manner of a moving picture scenario designed for people of bad taste. On the night of the 16-17th of December, Rasputin, coaxed in to a little party, was murdered in Yussopov's maisonette.

The ruling classes, with the exception of a narrow camarilla and the mystic worshippers, greeted the murder of Rasputin as an act of salvation. The grand duke, placed under house arrest, his hands, according to the tzar's expression, stained with the blood of a muzhik, – although a Christ, still a muzhik! – was visited with sympathy by all the members of the imperial household then in Petersburg. The tzarina's own sister, widow of the Grand Duke Sergei, telegraphed that she was praying for the murderers and calling down blessings on their patriotic act. The newspapers, until they were forbidden to mention Rasputin, printed ecstatic articles. In the theatres people tried to demonstrate in honour of the murderers. Passers-by congratulated one another in the streets. "In private houses, in officers' meetings, in restaurants," relates Prince Yussupov, "they drank to our health; the workers in the factories cried *Hurrah* for us." We may well concede that the workers did not grieve when they learned of the murder of Rasputin, but their cries of Hurrah! had nothing in common with the hope for a rebirth of the dynasty. The Rasputin camarilla dropped out of sight and waited. They buried Rasputin in secrecy from the whole world – the tzar, the tzarina, the tzar's daughters and Vyrubova. Around the body of the Holy Friend, the former horse thief murdered by grand dukes, the tzar's family must have seemed outcast even to themselves. However, even after he was buried Rasputin did not find peace. Later on, when Nicholas and Alexandra Romanov were under house arrest, the soldiers of Tzarskoe Selo dug up the

grave and opened the coffin. At the head of the murdered man lay an icon with the signatures: Alexandra, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, Ania. The Provisional Government for some reason sent an emissary to bring the body to Petrograd. A crowd resisted, and the emissary was compelled to burn the body on the spot.

After the murder of its "Friend" the monarchy survived in all ten weeks. But this short space of time was still its own. Rasputin was no longer, but his shadow continued to rule. Contrary to all the expectations of the conspirators, the royal pair began after the murder to promote with special determination the most scorned members of the Rasputin clique. In revenge for Rasputin, a notorious scoundrel was named Minister of Justice. A number of grand dukes were banished from the capital. It was rumoured that Protopopov took up spiritualism, calling up the ghost of Rasputin. The noose of hopelessness was drawing tighter.

The murder of Rasputin played a colossal role, but a very different one from that upon which its perpetrators and inspirers had counted. It did not weaken the crisis, but sharpened it. People talked of the murder everywhere: in the palaces, in the staffs, at the factories, and in the peasant's huts. The inference drew itself: even the grand dukes have no other recourse against the leprous camarilla except poison and the revolver. The poet Blok wrote of the murder of Rasputin: "The bullet which killed him reached the very heart of the ruling dynasty." * Robespierre once reminded the Legislative Assembly that the opposition of the nobility, by weakening the monarchy, had roused the bourgeoisie, and after them the popular masses. Robespierre gave warning at the same time that in the rest of Europe the revolution could not develop so swiftly as in France, for the privileged classes of other countries, taught by the experience of the French nobility, would not take the revolutionary initiative. In giving this admirable analysis, Robespierre was mistaken only in his assumption that with its oppositional recklessness the French nobility had given a lesson once for all to other countries. Russia proved again, both in 1905 and yet more in 1917, that a revolution directed against an autocratic and half-feudal rgime, and consequently against a nobility, meets in its first step an unsystematic and inconsistent but nevertheless very real co-operation not only from the rank and file nobility, but also from its most privileged upper circles, including here even members of the dynasty. This remarkable historic phenomenon may seem to contradict the class theory of society, but in reality it contradicts only its vulgar interpretation.

A revolution breaks out when all the antagonisms of a society have reached their highest tensions. But this makes the situation unbearable even for the classes of the old society – that is, those who are doomed to break up. Although I do not want to give a biological analogy more weight than it deserves, it is worth remarking that the natural act of birth becomes at a certain moment equally unavoidable both for the maternal organism and for

the offspring. The opposition put up by the privileged classes expresses the incompatibility of their traditional social position with the demands of the further existence of society. Everything seems to slip out of the hands of the ruling bureaucracy. The aristocracy finding itself in the focus of a general hostility lays the blame upon the bureaucracy, the latter blames the aristocracy, and then together, or separately, they direct their discontent against the monarchical summit of their power.

Prince Sherbatov, summoned into the ministry for a time from his service in the hereditary institutions of the nobility, said: “Both Samarin and I are former heads of the nobility in our provinces. Up till now nobody has ever considered us as Lefts and we do not consider ourselves so. But we can neither of us understand a situation in a state where the monarch and his government find themselves in radical disagreement with all reasonable (we are not talking here of revolutionary intrigue) society – with the nobility, the merchants, the cities, the zemstvos, and even the army. If those above do not want to listen to our opinion, it is our duty to withdraw.”

The nobility sees the cause of all its misfortunes in the fact that the monarchy is blind or has lost its reason. The privileged caste cannot believe that no policy whatever is possible which would reconcile the old society with the new. In other words, the nobility cannot accept its own doom and converts its death-weariness into opposition against the most sacred power of the old rgime, that is, the monarchy. The sharpness and irresponsibility of the aristocratic opposition is explained by history’s having made spoiled children of the upper circles of the nobility, and by the unbearableness to them of their own fears in face of revolution. The unsystematic and inconsistent character of the noble discontent is explained by the fact that it is the opposition of a class which has no future. But as a lamp before it goes out flares up with a bright although smoky light, so the nobility before disappearing gives out an oppositional flash, which performs a mighty service for its mortal enemy. Such is the dialectic of this process, which is not only consistent with the class theory of society, but can only by this theory be explained.

CHAPTER 6

THE DEATH AGONY OF THE MONARCHY

The dynasty fell by shaking, like rotten fruit, before the revolution even had time to approach its first problems. Our portrayal of the old ruling class would remain incomplete if we did not try to show how the monarchy met the hour of its fall.

The czar was at headquarters at Moghilev, having gone there not because he was needed, but in flight from the Petrograd disorders. The court chronicler, General Dubensky, with the czar at headquarters, noted in his diary: “A quiet life begins here. Everything will remain as before. Nothing will come of his (the czar’s) presence. Only accidental external causes will change anything . . .” On February 24, the czarina wrote Nicholas at headquarters, in English as always: ”I hope that Duma man Kedrinsky (she means Kerensky) will be hung for his horrible speeches-it is necessary (war time law) and it will be an example. All are thirsting and beseeching that you show your firmness.“ On February 25, a telegram came from the Minister of War that strikes were occurring in the capital, disorders beginning among the workers, but measures had been taken and there was nothing serious. In a word: ”It isn’t the first time, and won’t be the last¡‘

The czarina, who had always taught the czar not to yield, here too tried to remain firm. On the 26th, with an obvious desire to hold up the shaky courage of Nicholas, she telegraphs him: ”It is calm in the city.“ But in her evening telegram she has to confess: ”Things are not going at all well in the city.“ In a letter she says: ”You must say to the workers that they must not declare strikes, if they do, they will be sent to the front as a punishment. There is no need at all of shooting. Only order is needed, and not to let them cross the bridges.“ Yes, only a little thing is needed, *only* order! But the chief thing is not to admit the workers into the city-let them choke in the raging impotence of their suburbs.

On the morning of the 27th, General Ivanov moves from the front with the Battalion of St. George, entrusted with dictatorial powers-which he is to make public, however, only

upon occupying Tsarskoe Selo. ”It would be hard to imagine a more unsuitable person.“ General Denikin will recall later, himself having taken a turn at military dictatorship, ” a flabby old man, meagrely grasping the political situation, possessing neither strength, nor energy, nor will, nor austerity.“ The choice fell upon Ivanov through memories of the first revolution. Eleven years before that he had subdued Kronstadt. But those years had left their traces; the subduers had grown flabby, the subdued, strong. The northern and western fronts were ordered to get ready troops for the march on Petrograd; evidently everybody thought there was plenty of time ahead. Ivanov himself assumed that the affair would be ended soon and successfully; he even remembered to send out an adjutant to buy provisions in Moghilev for his friends in Petrograd.

On the morning of February 27, Rodzianko sent the czar a new telegram, which ended with the words: ”The last hour has come when the fate of the fatherland and the dynasty is being decided.“ The czar said to his Minister of the Court, Frederiks: ”Again that fat-bellied Rodzianko has written me a lot of nonsense, which I won’t even bother to answer.“ But no. It was not nonsense. He will have to answer.

About noon of the 27th, headquarters received a report from Khabalov of the mutiny of the Pavlovsky, Volynsky, Litovsky and Preobrazhensky regiments, and the necessity of sending reliable troops from the front. An hour later from the War Ministry came a most reassuring telegram: ”The disorders which began this morning in certain military units are being firmly and energetically put down by companies and battalions loyal to their duty . . . I am firmly convinced of an early restoration of tranquillity.“ However, a little after seven in the evening, the same minister, Belyaev, is reporting that ”We are not succeeding in putting down the military rebellion with the few detachments that remain loyal to their duty,“ and requesting a speedy dispatch of really reliable troops-and that too in sufficient numbers ”for simultaneous activity in different parts of the city.“

The Council of Ministers deemed this a suitable day to remove from their midst the presumed cause of all misfortunes-the half-crazy Minister of the Interior Protopopov. At the same time General Khabalov issued an edict-prepared in secrecy from the government-declaring Petrograd, on His Majesty’s orders, under martial law. So here too was an attempt to mix hot with cold-hardly intentional, however, and anyway of no use. They did not even succeed in pasting up the declaration of martial law through the city: the burgomaster, Balka, could find neither paste nor brushes. Nothing would stick together for those functionaries any longer; they already belonged to the kingdom of shades.

The principal shade of the last czarist ministry was the seventy-year old Prince Golytsin, who had formerly conducted some sort of eleemosynary institutions of the czarina, and had been advanced by her to the post of head of the government in a period of war and revolution. When friends asked this ”good-natured Russian squire, this old weakling “-

as the liberal Baron Nolde described him-why he accepted such a troublesome position, Golytsin answered: ”So as to have one more pleasant recollection.“ This aim, at any rate, he did not achieve. How the last czarist government felt in those hours is attested by Rodzianko in the following tale: With the first news of the movement of a crowd toward the Mariinsky Palace, where the Ministry was in session, all the lights in the building were immediately put out. (The government wanted only one thing-that the revolution should not notice it.) The rumour, however, proved false; the attack did not take place; and when the lights were turned on, one of the members of the czarist government was found ”to his own surprise“ under the table. What kind of recollections he was accumulating there has not been established.

But Rodzianko’s own feelings apparently were not at their highest point. After a long but vain hunt for the government by telephone, the President of the Duma tries again to ring up Prince Golytsin. The latter answers him: ”I beg you not to come to me with anything further, I have resigned.“ Hearing this news, Rodzianko, according to his loyal secretary, sank heavily in an armchair and covered his face with both hands.

My ”God, how horrible! . . . Without a government... Anarchy . . . Blood . . .“ and softly wept. At the expiring of the senile ghost of the czarist power Rodzianko felt unhappy, desolate, orphaned. How far he was at that moment from the thought that to-morrow he would have to ” head“ a revolution!

The telephone answer of Golytsin is explained by the fact that on the evening of the 27th the Council of Ministers had definitely acknowledged itself incapable of handling the situation, and proposed to the czar to place at the head of the government a man enjoying general confidence. The czar answered Golytsin: ”In regard to changes in the personal staff in the present circumstances, I consider that inadmissible. Nicholas.“ Just what circumstances was he waiting for? At the same time the czar demanded that they adopt ”the most decisive measures“ for putting down the rebellion. That was easier said than done.

On the next day, the 28th, even the untamable czarina at last loses heart. ”Concessions are necessary,“ she telegraphs Nicholas. ”The strikes continue; many troops have gone over to the side of the revolution. Alex.“

It required an insurrection of the whole guard, the entire garrison, to compel this Hessian zealot of autocracy to agree that concessions are necessary.” Now the czar also begins to suspect that the “ fat-bellied Rodzianko” had not telegraphed non-sense. Nicholas decides to join his family. It is possible that he is a little gently pushed from behind by the generals of the staff, too, who are not feeling quite comfortable.

The czar’s train travelled at first without mishap. Local chiefs and governors came out as usual to meet him. Far from the revolutionary whirlpool, in his accustomed royal car,

surrounded by the usual suite, the czar apparently again lost a sense of the close coming crisis. At three o'clock on the 28th, when the events had already settled his fate, he sent a telegram to the czarina from Vyazma: "Wonderful weather. Hope you are well and calm. Many troops sent from the front. With tender love. Niki." Instead of the concessions, upon which even he czarina is insisting, the tenderly loving czar is sending troops from the front. But in spite of that "wonderful weather," in just a few hours the czar will stand face to face with the revolutionary storm. His train went as far as the Visher station. The railroad workers would not let it go farther: "The bridge is damaged." Most likely this pretext was invented by the courtiers themselves in order to soften the situation. Nicholas tried to make his way, or they tried to get him through, by way of Bologoe on the Nikolaevsk railroad; but here too the workers would not let the train pass. This was far more palpable than all the Petrograd telegrams. The czar had broken away from headquarters, and could not make his way to the capital. With its simple railroad "pawns" the revolution had cried "check" to the king!

The court historian Dubensky, who accompanied the czar in his train, writes in his diary: " Everybody realises that this midnight turn at Visher is a historical night . . . To me it is perfectly clear that the question of a constitution is settled; it will surely be introduced . . . Everybody is saying that it is only necessary to strike a bargain with them, with the members of the Provisional Government." Facing a lowered semaphore, behind which mortal danger is thickening, Count Frederiks, Prince Dolgoruky, Count Leuchtenberg, all of them, all those high lords, are now for a constitution. They no longer think of struggling. It is only necessary to strike a bargain, that is, try to fool them again as in 1905.

While the train was wandering and finding no road, the czarina was sending the czar telegram after telegram, appealing to him to return as soon as possible. But her telegrams came back to her from the office with the inscription in blue pencil: "Whereabouts of the addressee unknown." The telegraph clerks were unable to locate the Russian czar.

The regiments marched with music and banners to the Tauride Palace. A company of the Guards marched under the command of Cyril Vladimirovich, who had quite suddenly, according to Countess Kleinmichel, developed a revolutionary streak. The sentries disappeared. The intimates were abandoning the palace. "Everybody was saving himself who could," relates Vyrubova. Bands of revolutionary soldiers wandered about the palace and with eager curiosity looked over everything. Before they had decided up above what should be done, the lower ranks were converting the palace of the czar into a museum.

The czar-his location unknown-turns back to Pskov, to the headquarters of the northern front, commanded by the old General Ruszky. In the czar's suite one suggestion follows another. The czar procrastinates. He is still reckoning in days and weeks, while the revolution is keeping its count in minutes.

The poet Blok characterised the czar during the last months of the monarchy as follows: “Stubborn, but without will; nervous, but insensitive to everything; distrustful of people, taut and cautious in speech, he was no longer master of himself. He had ceased to understand the situation, and did not take one clearly conscious step, but gave himself over completely into the hands of those whom he himself had placed in power.” And how much these traits of tautness and lack of will, cautiousness and distrust, were to increase during the last days of February and first days of March!

Nicholas finally decided to send-and nevertheless evidently did not send-a telegram to the hated Rodzianko stating that for the salvation of the fatherland he appointed him to form a new ministry, reserving, however, the ministries of foreign affairs, war and marine for himself. The czar still hoped to bargain with “them” : the “many troops,” after all, were on their way to Petrograd.

General Ivanov actually arrived without hindrance at Tsarskoe Selo: evidently the railroad workers did not care to come in conflict with the Battalion of St. George. The general confessed later that he had three or four times found it necessary on the march to use fatherly influence with the lower ranks, who were impudent to him: he made them get down on their knees. Immediately upon the arrival of the “dictator” in Tsarskoe Selo, the local authorities informed him that an encounter between the Battalion of St. George and the troops would mean danger to the czar’s family. They were simply afraid for themselves, and advised the dictator to go back without detraining.

General Ivanov telegraphed to the other “dictator,” Khabalov, in Petrograd ten questions, to which he received succinct answers: We will quote them in full, for they deserve it:

Ivanov's questions':	**Khabalov's replies:**
1. How many troops are in the order and how many are misbehaving?	1. I have at my disposal in the Admiralty building four corn companies of the Guard, five squadrons of cavalry and Cossacks, and two batteries the rest of the troops have gone over to the revolutionists, or by agreement with them are remaining neutral. Soldiers are wandering through the towns singly or in bands disarming officers.
2. Which railroad stations are guarded?	2. All the stations are in the hands of the revolutionists and strictly guarded by them.
3. In what parts of the city is order preserved?	3. The whole city is in the hands of the revolutionists. The telephone is not working, there is no communication between different parts of the city.
4. What authorities are governing the different parts of the city?	4. I cannot answer this question?
5. Are all the ministries functioning properly?	5. The ministers have been arrested by the revolutionists.
6. What police forces are at your disposal at the present moment?	6. None whatever.
7. What technical and supply institutions of the War Department are now in your control?	7. I have none.
8. What quantity of provisions at is at your disposal?	8. There are no provisions my disposal. In the city on February 5 there were 5,600,000 pounds of flour in store.
9. Have many weapons, artillery and military stores fallen . into the hands of the mutineers?	9. All the artillery establishments are in the hands of the revolutionists.
10. What military forces and the staffs are in your control?	10. The chief of the Staff of District is in my personal control. With the other district administrations I have no connections.

Having received this unequivocal illumination as to the situation, General Ivanov "agreed" to turn back his echelon without detraining to the station "Dno." [1] . "Thus," concludes one of the chief personages of the staff, General Lukomsky, "nothing came of the expedition of General Ivanov with dictatorial powers but a public disgrace."

That disgrace, incidentally, was a very quiet one, sinking unnoticed in the billowing

events. The dictator, we may suppose, delivered the provisions to his friends in Petrograd, and had a long chat with the czarina. She referred to her self-sacrificing work in the hospitals, and complained of the ingratitude of the army and the people.

During this time news was arriving at Pskov by way of Moghilev, blacker and blacker. His Majesty's own bodyguard, in which every soldier was known by name and coddled by the royal family, turned up at the State Duma asking permission to arrest those officers who had refused to take part in the insurrection. Vice-Admiral Kurovsky reported that he found it impossible to take any measures to put down the insurrection at Kronstadt, since he could not vouch for the loyalty of a single detachment. Admiral Nepenin telegraphed that the Baltic Fleet had recognised the Provisional Committee of the State Duma. The Moscow commander-in-chief, Mrozovsky, telegraphed: "A majority of the troops have gone over with artillery to the revolutionists. The whole town is therefore in their hands. The burgomaster and his aide have left the city hall." *Have left* means that they fled.

All this was communicated to the czar on the evening of March 1. Deep into the night they coaxed and argued about a responsible ministry. Finally, at two o'clock in the morning the czar gave his consent, and those around him drew a sigh of relief. Since they took it for granted that this would settle the problem of the revolution, an order was issued at the same time that the troops which had been sent to Petrograd to put down the insurrection should return to the front. Ruszky hurried at dawn to convey the good news to Rodzianko. But the czar's clock was way behind. Rodzianko in the Tauride Palace, already buried under a pile of democrats, socialists, soldiers, workers' deputies, replied to Ruszky: "Your proposal is not enough; it is now a question of the dynasty itself. . . . Everywhere the troops are taking the side of the Duma, and the people are demanding an abdication in favour of the Heir with Mikhail Alexandrovich as regent." Of course. the troops never thought of demanding either the Heir or Mikhail Alexandrovich. Rodzianko merely attributed to the troops and the people that slogan upon which the Duma was still hoping to stop the revolution. But in either case the czar's concession had come too late: "The anarchy has reached such proportions that I (Rodzianko) was this night compelled to appoint a Provisional Government. Unfortunately, the edict has come too late. . . ." These majestic words bear witness that the President of the Duma had succeeded in drying the tears shed over Golytsin. The czar read the conversation between Rodzianko and Ruszky, and hesitated, read it over again, and decided to wait. But now the military chiefs had begun to sound the alarm: the matter concerned them too a little !

General Alexeiev carried out during the hours of that night a sort of plebiscite among the commanders-in-chief at the fronts. It is a good thing present-day revolutions are accomplished with the help of the telegraph, so that the very first impulses and reactions of those in power are preserved to history on the tape. The conversations of the czarist field-

marshals on the night of March 1-2 are an incomparable human document. Should the czar abdicate or not? The commander-in-chief of the western front, General Evert, consented to give his opinion only after Generals Ruszky and Brussilov had expressed themselves. The commander-in-chief of the Roumanian front, General Sakharov, demanded that before he express himself the conclusions of all the other commanders-in-chief should be communicated to him. After long delays this valiant chieftain announced that his warm love for the monarch would not permit his soul to reconcile itself with an acceptance of the "base suggestion"; nevertheless, "with sobs" he advised the czar to abdicate in order to avoid still viler pretensions." Adjutant-General Evert quite reasonably explained the necessity for capitulation: "I am taking all measures to prevent information as to the present situation in the capital from penetrating the army, in order to protect it against indubitable disturbances. No means exist for putting down the revolution in the capitals." Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolajevich on the Caucasian front beseeched the czar on bended knee to adopt the "supermeasure" and renounce the throne. A similar prayer came from Generals Alexeiev and Brussilov and Admiral Nepenin. Ruszky spoke orally to the same effect. The generals respectfully presented seven revolver barrels to the temple of the adored monarch. Fearing to let slip the moment for reconciliation with the new power, and no less fearing their own troops, these military chieftains, accustomed as they were to surrendering positions, gave the czar and the High Commander-in-Chief a quite unanimous counsel: Retire without fighting. This was no longer distant Petrograd against which, as it seemed, one might send troops ; this was the front from which the troops had to be borrowed.

Having listened to this suggestively circumstanced report, the czar decided to abdicate the throne which he no longer possessed. A telegram to Rodzianko suitable to the occasion was drawn up: "There is no sacrifice that I would not make in the name of the real welfare and salvation of my native mother Russia. Thus I am ready to abdicate the throne in favour of my son, and in order that he may remain with me until he is of age, under the regency of my brother, Mikhail Alexandrovich. Nicholas." This telegram too, however, was not despatched, for news came from the capital of the departure for Pskov of the deputies Guchkov and Shulgin. This offered a new pretext to postpone the decision. The czar ordered the telegram returned to him. He obviously dreaded to sell too cheap, and still hoped for comforting news-or more accurately, hoped for a miracle. Nicholas received the two deputies at twelve o'clock midnight March 2-8. The miracle did not come, and it was impossible to evade longer. The czar unexpectedly announced that he could not part with his son-what vague hopes were then wandering in his head?-and signed an abdication in favour of his brother. At the same time edicts to the Senate were signed, naming Prince Lvov President of the Council of Ministers, and Nikolai Nikolaievich Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The family suspicions of the czarina seemed to have been justified: the hated "Nikolasha" came back to power along with the conspirators. Guchkov appar-

ently seriously believed that the revolution would accept the Most August War Chief. The latter also accepted his appointment in good faith. He even tried for a few days to give some kind of orders and make appeals for the fulfilment of patriotic duty. However the revolution painlessly removed him.

In order to preserve the appearance of a free act, the abdication was dated three o'clock in the afternoon, on the pretence that the original decision of the czar to abdicate had taken place at that hour. But as a matter of fact that afternoon's "decision," which gave the sceptre to his son and not to his brother, had been taken back in anticipation of a more favourable turn of the wheel. Of that, however, nobody spoke out loud. The czar made a last effort to save his face before the hated deputies, who upon their part permitted this falsification of a historic act-this deceiving of the people. The monarchy retired from the scene preserving its usual style; and its successors also remained true to themselves. They probably even regarded their connivance as the magnanimity of a conqueror to the conquered.

Departing a little from the phlegmatic style of his diary, Nicholas writes on March 2: "This morning Ruszky came and read me a long conversation over the wire with Rodzianko. According to his words the situation in Petrograd is such that a ministry of the members of the State Duma will be powerless to do anything, for it is being opposed by the social-democratic party in the person of a workers' committee. My abdication is necessary. Ruszky transmitted this conversation to Alexeiev at headquarters and to all the commanders-in-chief. Answers arrived at 12.30. To save Russia and keep the army at the front, I decided upon this step. I agreed, and they sent from headquarters the text of an abdication. In the evening came Guchkov and Shulgin from Petrograd, with whom I talked it over and gave them the document amended and signed. At 1 o'clock in the morning I left Pskov with heavy feelings; around me treason, cowardice, deceit."

The bitterness of Nicholas was, we must confess, not without foundation. It was only as short a time ago as February 28, that General Alexeiev had telegraphed to all the commanders-in-chief at the front : " Upon us all lies a sacred duty before the sovereign and the fatherland to preserve loyalty to oath and duty in the troops of the active army." Two days later Alexeiev appealed to these same commanders-in-chief to violate their "loyalty to oath and duty." In all the commanding staff there was not found one man to take action in behalf of his czar. They all hastened to transfer to the ship of the revolution, firmly expecting to find comfortable cabins there. Generals and admirals one and all removed the czarist braid and put on the red ribbon. There was news subsequently of one single righteous soul, some commander of a corps, who died of heart failure taking the new oath. But it is not established that his heart failed through injured monarchist feelings, and not through other causes. The civil officials naturally were not obliged to show more courage than the military-each one was saving himself as he could.

But the clock of the monarchy decidedly did not coincide with the revolutionary clocks. At dawn of March 8, Ruszky was again summoned to the direct wire from the capital: Rodzianko and Prince Lvov were demanding that he hold up the czar's abdication, which had again proved too late. The installation of Alexei, -said the new authorities evasively-might perhaps be accepted-by whom?-but the installation of Mikhail was absolutely unacceptable. Ruszky with some venom expressed his regret that the deputies of the Duma who had arrived the night before had not been sufficiently informed as to the aims and purposes of their journey. But here too the deputies had their justification. "Unexpectedly to us all there broke out such a soldiers' rebellion as I never saw the like of," explained the Lord Chamberlain to Ruszky, as though he had done nothing all his life but watch soldiers' rebellions. " To proclaim Mikhail emperor would pour oil on the fire and there would begin a ruthless extermination of everything that can be exterminated." How it whirls and shakes and bends and contorts them all!

The generals silently swallowed this new "vile pretension" of the revolution. Alexeiev alone slightly relieved his spirit in a telegraphic bulletin to the commanders-in-chief: "The left parties and the workers' deputies are exercising a powerful pressure upon the President of the Duma, and there is no frankness or sincerity in the communications of Rodzianko." The only thing lacking to the generals in those hours was sincerity

But at this point the czar again changed his mind. Arriving in Moghilev from Pskov, he handed to his former chief-of-staff, Alexeiev, for transmission to Petrograd, a sheet of paper with his consent to the handing over of the sceptre to his son. Evidently he found this combination in the long run more promising. Alexeiev, according to Denikin's story, went away with the telegram and . . . did not send it. He thought that those two manifestos which had already been published to the army and the country were enough. The discord arose from the fact that not only the czar and his counsellors, but also the Duma liberals, were thinking more slowly than the revolution.

Before his final departure from Moghilev on March 8, the czar, already under formal arrest, wrote an appeal to the troops ending with these words: "Whoever thinks now of peace, whoever desires it, that man is a traitor to the fatherland, its betrayer." This was in the nature of a prompted attempt to snatch out of the hands of liberalism the accusation of Germanophilism. The attempt had no result : they did not even dare publish the appeal.

Thus ended a reign which had been a continuous chain of ill luck, failure, misfortune, and evil-doing, from the Khodynka catastrophe during the coronation, through the shooting of strikers and revolting peasants, the Ruse-Japanese war, the frightful putting-down of the revolution of 1905, the innumerable executions, punitive expeditions and national pogroms and ending with the insane and contemptible participation of Russia in the insane and contemptible world war.

Upon arriving at Tsarskoe Selo, where he and his family were confined in the palace, the czar, according to Vyrubova, softly said: ”There is no justice among men.“ But those very words irrefutably testify that historic justice, though it comes late, does exist.

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The similarity of the Romanov couple to the French royal pair of the epoch of the Great Revolution is very obvious. It has already been remarked in literature, but only in passing and without drawing inferences. Nevertheless it is not at all accidental, as appears at the first glance, but offers valuable material for an inference.

Although separated from each other by five quarter centuries, the czar and the king were at certain moments like two actors playing the same role. A passive, patient, but vindictive treachery was the distinctive trait of both-with this difference, that in Louis it was disguised with a dubious kindliness, in Nicholas with affability. They both make the impression of people who are overburdened by their job, but at the same time unwilling to give up even a part of those rights of which they are unable to make any use. The diaries of both, similar in style or lack of style, reveal the same depressing spiritual emptiness.

The Austrian woman and the Hessian German form also a striking symmetry. Both queens stand above their kings, not only in physical but also in moral growth. Marie Antoinette was less pious than Alexandra Feodorovna, and unlike the latter was passionately fond of pleasures. But both alike scorned the people, could not endure the thought of concessions, alike mistrusted the courage of their husbands, looking down upon them – Antoinette with a shade of contempt, Alexandra with pity.

When the authors of memoirs, approaching the Petersburg court of their day, assure us that Nicholas II, had he been a private individual, would have left a good memory behind him, they merely reproduce the long-ago stereotyped remarks about Louis XVI, not enriching in the least our knowledge either of history or of human nature.

We have already seen how Prince Lvov became indignant when, at the height of the tragic events of the first revolution, instead of a depressed czar, he found before him a *”jolly, sprightly little man* in a raspberry-coloured shirt.“ Without knowing it, the prince merely repeated the comment of Governor Morris writing in Washington in 1790 about Louis:

”What will you have from a creature who, situated as he is, eats and drinks and sleeps well, and laughs and is as merry a grig as lives ?

When Alexandra Feodorovna, three months before the fall of the monarchy, prophesies: “All is coming out for the best, the dreams of our Friend mean so much! ”she merely repeats Marie Antoinette, who one month before the overthrow of the royal power wrote :

“ I feel a liveliness of spirit, and something tells me that we shall soon be happy and safe.” They both see rainbow dreams as they drown.

Certain elements of similarity of course are accidental, and have the interest only of historic anecdotes. Infinitely more important are those traits of character which have been grafted, or more directly imposed, on a person by the mighty force of conditions, and which throw a sharp light on the interrelation of personality and the objective factors of history.

“He did not know how to wish: that was his chief trait of character,” says a reactionary French historian of Louis. Those words might have been written of Nicholas: neither of them knew how to wish, but both knew how to not wish. But what really could be “wished” by the last representatives of a hopelessly lost historic cause? “ Usually he listened, smiled, and rarely decided upon anything. His first word was usually *No*.” Of whom is that written? Again of Capet. But if this is so, the manners of Nicholas were an absolute plagiarism. They both go toward the abyss “with the crown pushed down over their eyes.” But would it after all be easier to go to an abyss, which you cannot escape anyway, with your eyes open? What difference would it have made, as a matter of fact, if they had pushed the crown way back on their heads?

Some professional psychologist ought to draw up an anthology of the parallel expressions of Nicholas and Louis, Alexandra and Antoinette, and their courtiers. There would be no lack of material, and the result would be a highly instructive historic testimony in favour of the materialist psychology. Similar (of course, far from identical) irritations in similar conditions call out similar reflexes; the more powerful the irritation, the sooner it overcomes personal peculiarities. To a tickle, people react differently, but to a red-hot iron, alike. As a steam-hammer converts a sphere and a cube alike into sheet metal, so under the blow of too great and inexorable events resistances are smashed and the boundaries of“ individuality” lost.

Louis and Nicholas were the last-born of a dynasty that had lived tumultuously. The well-known equability of them both, their tranquillity and “gaiety ” in difficult moments, were the well-bred expression of a meagreness of inner powers, a weakness of the nervous discharge, poverty of spiritual resources. Moral, castrates, they were absolutely deprived of imagination and creative force. They had just enough ’brains to feel their own triviality, and they cherished an envious hostility toward everything gifted and significant. It fell to them both to rule a country in conditions of deep inner crisis and popular revolutionary awakening. Both of them fought off the intrusion of new ideas, and the tide of hostile forces. Indecisiveness, hypocrisy, and lying were in both cases the expression, not so much of’ personal weakness, as of the complete impossibility of holding fast, to their hereditary positions.

And how was it with their wives? Alexandra, even more than Antoinette, was lifted

to the very heights of the dreams of a princess, especially such a rural one as this Hessian, by her marriage with the unlimited despot of a powerful country. Both of them were filled to the brim with the consciousness of their high mission: Antoinette more frivolously, Alexandra in a spirit of Protestant bigotry translated into the Slavonic language of the Russian Church. An unlucky reign and a growing discontent of the people ruthlessly destroyed the fantastic world which these two enterprising but nevertheless chickenlike heads had built for themselves. Hence the growing bitterness, the gnawing hostility to an alien people that would not bow before them; the hatred toward ministers who wanted to give even a little consideration to that hostile world, to the country; hence their alienation even from their own court, and their continued irritation against a husband who had not fulfilled the expectations aroused by him as a bridegroom.

Historians and biographers of the psychological tendency not infrequently seek and find something purely personal and accidental where great historical forces are refracted through a personality. This is the same fault of vision as that of the courtiers who considered the last Russian czar born "unlucky." He himself believed that he was born under an unlucky star. In reality his ill-luck flowed from the contradictions between those old aims which he inherited from his ancestors and the new historic conditions in which he was placed. When the ancients said that Jupiter first makes mad those who whom he wishes to destroy, they summed up in superstitious form a profound historic observation. In the saying of Goethe about reason becoming nonsense-" *Vernunft wird Unsinn* "-this same thought is expressed about the impersonal Jupiter of the historical dialectic, which withdraws "reason " from historic institutions that have outlived themselves and condemns their defenders to failure. The scripts for the roles of Romanov and Capet were prescribed by the general development of the historic drama; only the nuances of interpretation fell to the lot of the actors. The ill-luck of Nicholas, as of Louis, had its roots not in his personal horoscope, but in the historical horoscope of the bureaucratic-caste monarchy. They were both, chiefly and above all, the last-born offspring of absolutism. Their moral insignificance, deriving from their dynastic epigonism, gave the latter an especially malignant character.

You might object: if Alexander III had drunk less he might have lived a good deal longer, the revolution would have run into a very different make of czar, and no parallel with Louis XVI would have been possible. Such an objection, however, does not refute in the least what has been said above. We do not at all pretend to deny the significance of the personal in the mechanics of the historic process, nor the significance in the personal of the accidental. We only demand that a historic personality, with all its peculiarities, should not be taken as a bare list of psychological traits, but as a living reality grown out of definite social conditions and reacting upon them. As a rose does not lose its fragrance because the natural scientist points out upon what ingredients of soil and atmosphere it is nourished, so an exposure of the social roots of a personality does not remove from it either its aroma or

its foul smell.

The consideration advanced above about a possible long life of Alexander III is capable of illuming this very problem from another side. Let us assume that this Alexander III had not become mixed up in 1904 in a war with Japan. This would have delayed the first revolution. For how long? It is possible that the“ revolution of 1905 ”-that is, the first test of strength the first breach in the system of absolutism-would have been a mere introduction to the second, republican, and the third, proletarian revolution. Upon this question more or less interesting guesses are possible, but it is indubitable in any case that the revolution did not result from the character of Nicholas II, and that Alexander III would not have solved its problem. It is enough to remember that nowhere and never was the transition from the feudal to the bourgeois rgime made without violent disturbances. We saw this only yesterday in China; to-day we observe it again in India. The most we can say is that this or that policy of the monarchy, this or that personality o; the monarch, might have hastened or postponed the revolution and placed a certain imprint on its external course.

With what angry and impotent stubbornness charisma tried to defend itself in those last months, weeks and days, when it game was hopelessly lost! If Nicholas himself lacked the will the lack was made up by the czarina. Rasputin was an instrument of the action of a clique which rabidly fought for self-preservation. Even on this narrow scale the personality of the czar merges in a group which represents the coagulum of the past and its last convulsion. The“ policy ”of the upper circles a Tsarskoe Selo, face to face with the revolution, were but the reflexes of a poisoned and weak beast of prey. If you chase wolf over the steppe in an automobile, the beast gives out a last and lies down impotent. But attempt to put a collar on him and he will try to tear you to pieces, or at least wound you And indeed what else can he do in the circumstances?

The liberals imagined there was something else he might do. Instead of coming to an agreement with the enfranchised bourgeoisie in good season, and thus preventing the revolution such is liberalism’s act of accusation against the last czar-Nicholas stubbornly shrank from concessions, and even in the last days when already under the knife of destiny, when every minute was to be counted, still kept on procrastinating, bargaining with fate, and letting slip the last possibilities. This all sounds convincing. But how unfortunate that liberalism, knowing so accurately how to save the monarchy, did not know how to save itself!

It would be absurd to maintain that czarism never and in no circumstances made concessions. It made them when they were demanded by the necessity of self-preservation. After the Crimean defeat, Alexander II carried out the semi-liberation of the peasants and a series of liberal reforms in the sphere of land administration, courts, press, educational institutions, etc. The czar himself expressed the guiding thought of this reformation: to

free the peasants from *above* lest they free themselves from *below.* Under the drive of the first revolution Nicholas II granted a semi-constitution. Stolypin scrapped the peasant communes in order to broaden the arena of the capitalist forces. For czarism, however, all these reforms had a meaning only in so far as the partial concession preserved the whole-that is, the foundations of a caste society and the monarchy itself. When the consequences of the reform began to splash over those boundaries the monarchy inevitably beat a retreat. Alexander II in the second half of his reign stole back the reforms of the first half. Alexander III went still farther on the road of counter-reform. Nicholas II in October 1905 retreated before the revolution, and then afterward dissolved the Dumas created by it, and as soon as the revolution grew weak, made his coup d'etat. Throughout three-quarters of a century-if we begin with the reform of Alexander II-there developed a struggle of historic forces, now underground, now in the open, far transcending the personal qualities of the separate cars, and accomplishing the overthrow of the monarchy. Only within the historic framework of this process can you find a place for individual cars, their characters, their "biographies."

Even the most despotic of autocrats is but little similar to a "free" individuality

laying its arbitrary imprint upon events. He is always the crowned agent of the privileged classes which are forming society in their own image. When these classes have not yet fulfilled their mission, then the monarchy is strong and self-confident. Then it has in its hands a reliable apparatus power and an unlimited choice of executives-because the more gifted people have not yet gone over into the hostile camp. Then the monarch, either personally, or through the mediation of a powerful favourite, may become the agent of a great and progressive historic task. It is quite otherwise when the sun of the old society is finally declining to the west. The privileged classes are now changed from organisers of the national life into a parasitic growth; having lost their guiding function, they lose the consciousness of their mission and all confidence in their powers. Their dissatisfaction with themselves becomes a dissatisfaction with the monarchy; the dynasty becomes isolated the circle of people loyal to the death narrows down; their level sinks lower; meanwhile the dangers grow; new force are pushing up; the monarchy loses its capacity for any kin of creative initiative; it defends itself, it strikes back, it retreats; its activities acquire the automatism of mere reflexes. The semi Ascitic despotism of the Romanies did not escape this fate.

If you take the czarism in its agony, in a vertical section, so to speak, Nicholas is the axis of a clique which has its roots the hopelessly condemned past. In a horizontal section of the historic monarchy, Nicholas is the last link in a dynastic chain. His nearest ancestors, who also in their day were merged in family, caste and bureaucratic collectivity-only a broader one-tried out various measures and methods of government order to protect the old social

rgime against the fate advancing upon it. But nevertheless they passed it on to Nicholas a chaotic empire already carrying the matured revolution in its womb. If he had any choice left, it was only between different roads to ruin.

Liberalism was dreaming of a monarchy on the British plan. But was parliamentarism born on the Themes by a peaceful evolution? Was it the fruit of the "free" foresight of a single monarch? No, it was deposited as the result of a struggle that lasted for ages, and in which one of the kings left his head at the crossroads.

The historic-psychological contrast mentioned above between the Romanovs and the Capets can, by the way, be aptly extended to the British royal pair of the epoch of the first revolution. Charles I revealed fundamentally the same combination of traits with which memoirists and historians have endowed Louis XVI and Nicholas II. "Charles, therefore, remained passive," writes Montague, "yielded where he could not resist, betrayed how unwillingly he did so, and reaped no popularity, no confidence." " He was not a stupid man," says another historian of Charles Stuart, "but he lacked firmness of character. . . . His evil fate was his wife, Henrietta, a Frenchwoman, sister of Louis XIII**,** saturated even more than Charles with the idea of absolutism." We will not detail the characteristics of this third-chronologically first-royal pair to be crushed by a national revolution. We will merely observe that in England the hatred was concentrated above all on the queen, as a Frenchwoman and a papist, whom they accused of plotting with Rome, secret connections with the Irish rebels, and intrigues at the French court.

But England had, at any rate, ages at her disposal. She was the pioneer of bourgeois civilisation; she was not under the yoke of other nations, but on the contrary held them more and more under her yoke. She exploited the whole world. This softened the inner contradictions, accumulated conservatism, promoted an abundance and stability of fatty deposits in the form of a parasitic caste, in the form of a squirearchy, a monarchy, House of Lords, and the state church. Thanks to this exclusive historic privilege of development possessed by bourgeois England, conservatism combined with elasticity passed over from her institutions into her moral fibre. Various continental Philistines, like the Russian professor Miliukov, or the Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer, have not to this day ceased going into ecstasies over this fact. But exactly at the present moment, when England, hard pressed throughout the world, is squandering the last resources of her former privileged position, her conservatism is losing its elasticity, and even in the person of the Labourites is turning into stark reactionism. In the face of the Indian revolution the "socialist" MacDonald will find no other methods but those with which Nicholas II opposed the Russian revolution. Only a blind man could fail to see that Great Britain is headed for gigantic revolutionary earthquake shocks, in which the last fragments of her conservatism, her world domination, her present state machine, will go down without a trace. MacDonnell is preparing these

shocks no less successfully than did Nicholas II in time, and no less blindly. So here too, as we see, is no poor illustration of the problem of the role of the "free" personality in history.

But how could Russia with her belated development, coming along at the tail end of the European nations, with her meagre economic foundation underfoot, how could she develop an "elastic conservatism" of social forms-and develop it for the special benefit of professorial liberalism and its leftward shadow, reformist socialism? Russia was too far behind. And when world imperialism once took her in its grip, she had to pass through her political history in. too brief a course. If Nicholas had gone to meet liberalism and replaced one with Miliukov, the development of events would have differed a little in form, not in substance. Indeed it was just in this way that Louis behaved in the second stage of the revolution, summoning Gironde to power: this did not save Louis himself from guillotine, nor after him the Gironde. The accumulating social contradictions were bound to break through to the surface, breaking through to carry out their work of purgation. Before the pressure of the popular masses, who had at last brought into the open arena their misfortunes, their pains, indentions, passions, hopes, illusions and aims, the high-up combination the monarchy with liberalism had only an episodic significance. They could exert, to be sure, an influence on the order of events maybe upon the number of actions, but not at all upon development of the drama nor its momentous climax.

CHAPTER 7

FIVE DAYS (FEBRUARY 23-27, 1917)

The 23rd of February was International Woman's Day. The social-democratic circles had intended to mark this day in a general manner: by meetings, speeches, leaflets. It had not occurred to anyone that it might become the first day of the revolution. Not a single organisation called for strikes on that day. What is more, even a Bolshevik organisation, and a most militant one-the Vyborg borough committee, all workers - was opposing strikes. The temper of the masses, according to Kayurov, one of the leaders in the workers' district, was very tense; any strike would threaten to turn into an open fight. But since the 0committee thought, the time unripe for militant action-the party not strong enough and the workers having too few contacts with the soldiers-they decided not to call for strikes but to prepare for revolutionary action at some indefinite time in the future. Such was the course followed by the committee on the eve of the 23rd of February, and everyone seemed to accept it. On the following morning, however, in spite of all directives, the women textile workers in several factories went on strike, and sent delegates to the metal workers with an appeal for support. "With reluctance," writes Kayurov, "the Bolsheviks agreed to this, and they were followed by the workers Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. But once there is a mass strike, one must call everybody into the streets and take the lead." Such was Kayurov's decision, and the Vyborg committee had to agree to it. "The idea of going into the streets had long been ripening among the workers; only at that moment nobody imagined where it would lead." Let us keep in mind this testimony of a participant, important for understanding the mechanics of the events.

It was taken for granted that in case of a demonstration the soldiers would be brought out into the streets against the workers. What would that lead to? This was wartime; the authorities were in no mood for joking. On the other hand, "reserve" soldier in wartime is nothing like an old soldier o the regular army. Is he really so formidable? In revolutionary circles they had discussed this much, but rather abstractly. For no one, positively no one-

we can assert this categorically upon the basis of all the data-then thought that February 23 was to mark the beginning of a decisive drive against absolutism The talk was of a demonstration which had indefinite, but in any case limited, perspectives.

Thus the fact is that the February revolution was begun from below, overcoming the resistance of its own revolutionary organisations, the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed and downtrodden part of the proletariat -the women textile workers, among them no doubt many soldiers' wives. The overgrown breadlines had provided the last stimulus. About 90,000 workers, men and women, were on strike that day. The fighting mood expressed itself in demonstrations, meetings, encounters with the police. The movement began in the Vyborg district with its large industrial establishments; thence it crossed over to the Petersburg side. There were no strikes or demonstrations elsewhere, according to the testimony of the secret police. On that day detachments of troops were called in to assist the police-evidently not many of them -but there were no encounters with them. A mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to the municipal duma demanding bread. It was like demanding milk from a he-goat. Red banners appeared in different parts of the city, and inscriptions on them showed that the workers wanted bread, but neither autocracy nor war. Woman's Day passed successfully, with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed in itself, no one had guessed even by nightfall.

On the following day the movement not only fails to diminish, but doubles. About one-half of the industrial workers of Petrograd are on strike on the 24th of February. The workers come to the factories in the morning; instead of going to work they hold meetings; then begin processions toward the centre. New districts and new groups of the population are drawn into the movement. The slogan "Bread!" is crowded out or obscured by louder slogans: "Down with autocracy!" "Down with the war!" Continuous demonstrations on the Nevsky -first compact masses of workmen singing revolutionary songs, later a motley crowd of city folk interspersed with the blue caps of students. "The promenading crowd was sympathetically disposed toward us, and soldiers in some of the war-hospitals greeted us by waving whatever was at hand." How many clearly realised what was being ushered in by this sympathetic waving from sick soldiers to demonstrating workers? But the Cossacks constantly, though without ferocity, kept charging the crowd. Their horses were covered with foam. The mass of demonstrators would part to let them through, and close up again. There was no fear in the crowd. "The Cossacks promise not to shoot," passed from mouth to mouth. Apparently some of the workers had talks with individual Cossacks. Later, however, cursing. half-drunken dragoons appeared on the scene. They plunged into the crowd, began to strike at heads with their lances. The demonstrators summoned all their strength and stood fast. They won't shoot." And in fact they didn't.

A liberal senator was looking at the dead street-cars-or was that on the following day

and his memory failed him?-some of them with broken windows, some tipped over on the tracks, and was recalling the July days of 1914 on the eve of the war. ”It seemed that the old attempt was being renewed.“ The senator’s eyes did not deceive him; the continuity is clear. History was picking up the ends of the revolutionary threads broken by the war, and tying them in a knot.

Throughout the entire day, crowds of people poured from one part of the city to another. They were persistently dispelled by the police, stopped and crowded back by cavalry detachments and occasionally by infantry. Along with shouts of ”Down with the police¡‘ was heard oftener and oftener a ”Hurrah¡‘ addressed to the Cossacks. That was significant. Toward the police the crowd showed ferocious hatred. They routed the mounted police with whistles, stones, and pieces of ice. In a totally different way the workers approached the soldiers. Around the barracks, sentinels, patrols and lines of soldiers stood groups of working men and women exchanging friendly words with the army men. This was a new stage, due to the growth of the strike and the personal meeting of the worker with the army. Such a stage is inevitable in every revolution. But it always seems new, and does in fact occur differently every time: those who have read and written about it do not recognise the thing when they see it.

In the State Duma that day they were telling how an enormous mass of people had flooded Znamensky Square and all Nevsky Prospect, and the adjoining streets and that a totally unprecedented phenomenon was observed: the Cossacks and the regiments with bands were being greeted by revolutionary and not patriotic crowds with shouts of ”Hurrah¡‘ To the question, ”What does it all mean? the first person accosted in the crowd answered the deputy: A policeman struck a woman with a knout; the Cossacks stepped in and drove away the police.“ Whether it happened in this way or another, will never be verified. But the crowd believed that it was so, that this was possible. The belief had not fallen out of the sky; it arose from previous experience, and was therefore to become an earnest of victory.

The workers at the Erikson, one of the foremost mills in the Vyborg district, after a morning meeting came out on the Sampsonievsky Prospect, a whole mass, 2,500 of them, and in a narrow place ran into the Cossacks. Cutting their way with the breasts of their horses, the officers first charged through the crowd. Behind them, filling the whole width of the Prospect galloped the Cossacks. Decisive moment! But the horsemen, cautiously, in a long ribbon, rode through the corridor just made by the officers. ”Some of them smiled,“ Kayurov recalls, ”and one of them gave the workers a good wink“ This wink was not without meaning. The workers were emboldened with a friendly, not hostile, kind of assurance, and slightly infected the Cossacks with it. The one who winked found imitators. In spite of renewed eff6rts from the officers, the Cossacks, without openly breaking discipline, failed

to force the crowd to disperse, but flowed through it in streams. This was repeated three or four times and brought the two sides even closer together. Individual Cossacks began to reply to the workers' questions and even to enter into momentary conversations with them. Of discipline there remained but a thin transparent shell that threatened to break through any second. The officers hastened to separate their patrol from the workers, and, abandoning the idea of dispersing them, lined the Cossacks out across the street as a barrier to prevent the demonstrators from getting to the centre. But even this did not help: standing stock-still in perfect discipline, the Cossacks did not hinder the workers from "diving" under their horses. The revolution does not choose its paths: it made its first steps toward victory under the belly of a Cossack's horse. A remarkable incident! And remarkable the eye of its narrator-an eye which took an impression of every bend in the process. No wonder, for the narrator was a leader; he was at the head of over two thousand men. The eye of a commander watching for enemy whips and bullets looks sharp.

It seems that the break in the army first appeared among the Cossacks, those age-old subduers and punishers. This does not mean, however, that the Cossacks were more revolutionary than others. On the contrary, these solid property owners, riding their own horses, highly valuing their Cossack peculiarities, scorning the plain peasants, mistrustful of the workers, had many elements of conservatism. But just for this reason the changes caused by the war were more sharply noticeable in them. Besides, they were always being pulled around, sent everywhere, driven against the people, kept in suspense-and they were the first to be put to the test. They were sick of it, and wanted to go home. Therefore they winked: "Do it, boys, if you know how-we won't bother you¡' All these things, however, were merely very significant symptoms. The army was still the army, it was bound with discipline, and the threads were in the hands of the monarchy. The worker mass was unarmed. The leaders had not yet thought of the decisive crisis.

On the calendar of the Council of Ministers that day there stood, among other questions, the question of disorders in the capital. Strikes? Demonstrations? This isn't the first time. Everything is provided for. Directions have been issued. Return to the order of business. And what were the directions? In spite of the fact that on the 23rd and 24th twenty-eight policemen were beaten up persuasive exactness about the number!-the military commander of the district, General Khabalov, almost a dictator, Did not resort to shooting. Not from kind-heartedness: everything was provided for and marked down in advance, even the time for the shooting.

The revolution caught them unawares only with regard to the exact moment. Generally speaking, both sides, the revolutionary and the governmental, were carefully preparing for it, had been preparing for years, had always been preparing. As for the Bolsheviks, all their activity since 1905 was nothing but preparation for a second revolution. And the

activities of the government, an enormous share of them, were preparations to .put down the new revolution. In the fall of 1916 this part of the government's work had assumed an aspect of particularly careful planning. A commission under Khabalov's chairmanship had completed by the middle of January 1917 a very exact plan for crushing a new insurrection. The city was divided into six police districts, which in turn were subdivided into rayons. The commander of the reserve guard units, General Chebykin, was placed at the head of all the armed forces. Regiments were assigned to different rayons. In each of the six police districts, the police, the gendarmes and the troops were united under the command of special staff officers. The Cossack cavalry was at the disposal of Chebykin himself for larger-scale operations. The order of action was planned as follows: first the police act alone, then the Cossacks appear on the scene with whips, and only in case of real necessity the troops go into action with rifles and machine-guns. It was this very plan, developed out of the experience of 1905, that was put into operation in the February days. The difficulty lay not in lack of foresight, nor defects of the plan itself, but in the human material. Here the whole thing threatened to hang fire.

Formally the plan was based on the entire garrison, which comprised one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers, but in reality only some ten thousand came into the count. Besides the policemen, numbering three and a half thousand, a firm hope was placed in the military training schools. This is explained by the make up of the Petrograd garrison which at that time, consisted almost exclusively of reserve units, primarily of the fourteen reserve battalions attached to the regiments of the Guard which were then at the front. In addition to that, the garrison comprised one reserve infantry regiment, a reserve bicycle battalion, a reserve armoured car division, small units of sappers and artillerymen and two regiments of Don Cossacks. That was a great many-it was too many. The swollen reserve units were made up of a human mass which had either escaped training almost entirely, or succeeded in getting free of it. But for that matter, substantially the same thing was true of the entire army.

Khabalov meticulously adhered to the plan he had worked out. On the first day, the 23rd, the police operated alone. On the 24th, for the most part the cavalry was led into the streets, but only to work with whip and lance. The use of infantry and firearms was to depend on the further development of events. But events came thick and fast.

On the 25th, the strike spread wider. According to the government's figures, 240,000 workers participated that day. The most backward layers are following up the vanguard. Already a good number of small establishments are on strike. The streetcars are at a stand. Business concerns are closed. In the course of the day students of the higher schools join the strike. By noon tens of thousands of people pour to the Kazan cathedral and the surrounding streets. Attempts are made to organise street meetings; a series of armed encounters with

the police occurs. Orators address the crowds around the Alexander III monument. The mounted police open fire. A speaker falls wounded. Shots from the crowd kill a police inspector, wound the chief of police and several other policemen. Bottles, petards and hand grenades are thrown at the gendarmes. The war has taught this art. The soldiers show indifference, at times hostility, to the police. It spreads excitedly through the crowd that when the police opened fire by the Alexander 111 monument, the Cossacks let go a volley at the horse ”Pharaohs“ (such was the nickname of the police) and the latter had to gallop off. This apparently was not a legend circulated for self-encouragement, since the incident, although in different versions, is confirmed from several sources.

A worker-Bolshevik, Kayurov, one of the authentic leaders in those days, relates how at one place, within sight of a detachment of Cossacks, the demonstrators scattered under the whips of the mounted police, and how he, Kayurov, and several workers with him, instead of following the fugitives, took off their caps and approached the Cossacks with the words: ”Brothers-Cossacks, help the workers in a struggle for their peaceable demands; you see how the Pharaohs treat us, hungry workers. Help us! “This consciously humble manner, those caps in their hands-what an accurate psychological calculation! Inimitable gesture! The whole history of street fights and revolutionary victories swarms with such improvisations. But they are drowned without a trace in the abyss of great events-the shell remains to the historian, the generalisation. ”The Cossacks glanced at each other in some special way, “Kayurov later, near the station gate, the crowd were tossing in their arms a Cossack continues, ”and we were hardly out of the way before they rushed into the fight.“ And a few minutes who before their eyes had slaughtered a police inspector with his sabre.

Soon the police disappear altogether-that is, begin to act secretly. Then the soldiers appear-bayonets lowered. Anxiously the workers ask them: ”Comrades, you haven’t come to help the police¿‘ A rude ”Move along¡‘ for answer. Another attempt ends the same way. The soldiers are sullen. A worm is gnawing them, and they cannot stand it when a question hits the very centre of the pain.

Meanwhile disarmament of the Pharaohs becomes a universal slogan. The police are fierce, implacable, hated and hating foes. To win them over is out of the question. Beat them up and kill them. It is different with the soldiers: the crowd makes every effort to avoid hostile encounters with them; on the contrary, seeks ways to dispose them in its favour, convince, attract, fraternise, merge them in itself. In spite of the auspicious rumours about the Cossacks, perhaps slightly exaggerated, the crowd’s attitude toward the mounted men remains cautious. A horseman sits high above the crowd; his soul is separated from the soul of the demonstrator by the four legs of his beast. A figure at which one must gaze from below always seems more significant, more threatening. The infantry are beside one on the pavement-closer, more accessible. The masses try to get near them, look into

their eyes, surround them with their hot breath. A great ro1e is played by women workers in relationship between workers and soldiers. They go up to the cordons more boldly than men, take hold of the rifles, beseech, almost command: ”Put down your bayonets-join us.“ The soldiers are excited, ashamed, exchange anxious glances, waver; someone makes up his mind first, and the bayonets rise guiltily above the shoulders of the advancing crowd. The barrier is opened, a joyous and grateful ”Hurrah¡‘ shakes the air. The soldiers are surrounded. Everywhere arguments, reproaches, appeals the revolution makes another forward step.

Nicholas from headquarters sent Khabalov a telegraphic command to put an end to the disorders ”tomorrow.“ The czar’s will fell in with the next step in Khabalov’s ”plan,“ and the telegram served merely as an extra stimulus. To-morrow the troops will say their say. Isn’t it too late? You can’t tell yet. The question is posed, but far from answered. The indulgence of the Cossacks, the wavering of certain infantry lines-these are but much-promising episodes repeated by the thousand voiced echo of the sensitive street. Enough to inspire the revolutionary crowd, but too little for victory. Especially since there are episodes of an opposite kind. In the afternoon a detachment of dragoons, supposedly in response to revolver shots from the crowd, first opened fire on the demonstrators near Gostinny Dvor. According to Khabalov’s report to headquarters three were killed and ten wounded. A serious warning! At the same time Khabalov issued a threat that all workers registered in the draft would be sent to the front if they did not go to work before the 28th. The general issued a three-day ultimatum-that is, he gave the revolution more time than it needed to overthrow Khabalov and the monarchy into the bargain. But that will become known only after the victory. On the evening of the 25th nobody guessed what the next day had in its womb.

Let us try to get a clearer idea of the inner logic of the movement. On February 23, under the flag of ”Woman’s Day,“ began the long-ripe and long-withheld uprising of the Petrograd working masses. The first step of the insurrection was the strike. In the course of three days it broadened and became practically general. This alone gave assurance to the masses and carried them forward. Becoming more and more aggressive, the strike merged with the demonstrations, which were bringing the revolutionary mass face to face with the troops. This raised the problem as a whole to the higher level where things are solved by force of arms. The first days brought a number of individual successes, but these were more symptomatic than substantial.

A revolutionary uprising that spreads over a number of days can develop victoriously only in case it ascends step by step, and scores one success after another. A pause in its growth is dangerous; a prolonged marking of time, fatal. But even successes by themselves are not enough; the masses must know about them in time, and have time to understand

their value. It is possible to let slip a victory at the very moment when it is within arm's reach. This has happened in history.

The first three days were days of uninterrupted increase in the extent and acuteness of the strife. But for this very reason the movement had arrived at a level where mere symptomatic successes were not enough. The entire active mass of the people had come out on the streets. It was settling accounts with the police successfully and easily. In the last two days the troops had been drawn into the events-on the second day, cavalry, on the third, the infantry too. They barred the way, pushed and crowded back the masses, sometimes connived with them, but almost never resorted to firearms. Those in command were slow to change their plan, partly because they under-estimated what was happening-the faulty vision of the reaction supplemented that of the leaders of the revolution-partly because they lacked confidence in the troops. But exactly on the third day, the force of the developing struggle, as well as the czar's command, made it necessary for the government to send the troops into action in dead earnest. The workers understood this, especially their advance ranks; the dragoons had already done some shooting the day before. Both sides now faced the issue unequivocally.

On the night of the 26th about a hundred people were arrested in different parts of the city-people belonging to various revolutionary organisations, and among them five members of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks. This also meant that the government were taking the offensive. What will happen today? In what mood will the workers wake up after yesterday's shooting? And most important: what will the troops say? The sun of February 26 came up in a fog of uncertainty and acute anxiety.

In view of the arrest of the Petrograd Committee, the guidance of the entire work in the city fell into the hands of the Vyborg rayon. Maybe this was just as well. The upper leadership in the party was hopelessly slow. Only on the morning of the 25th, the, Bureau of the Bolshevik Central Committee a last decided to issue a hand bill calling for an all-Russian General strike. At the moment of issue, if indeed it ever did issue, the general strike in Petrograd was facing an armed uprising. The leaders were watching the movement from above; they hesitated, they lagged-in other words, they did not lead. They dragged after the movement.

The nearer one comes to the factories, the greater the decisiveness. Today however, the 26th, there is anxiety even in the rayons. Hungry, tired, chilled, with a mighty historic responsibility upon their shoulders, the Vyborg leaders gather outside the city limits, amid vegetable gardens, to exchange impressions of the day and plan the course . . . of what? Of a new demonstration? But where will an unarmed demonstration lead, now the government has decided to go the limit? This question bores into their minds. "One thing seems evident: the insurrection is dissolving." Here we recognise the voice of Kayurov, already familiar to

us, and at first it seems hardly his voice. The barometer falls so low before the storm.

In the hours when hesitation seized even those revolutionises closest to the mass, the movement itself had gone much farther than its participants realised. Even the day before, towards evening of the 25th, the Vyborg side was wholly in the hands of the insurrection. The police stations were wrecked, individual officers had been killed, and the majority had fled. The city headquarters had completely lost contact with the greater part of the capital. On the morning of the 26th it became evident that not only the Vyborg side, but also Peski almost up to Liteiny Prospect, was in control of the insurrection. At least so the police reports defined the situation. And it was true in a sense, although the revolutionists could hardly realise it: the police in so many cases abandoned their lairs before there was any threat from the workers. But even aside from that, ridding the factory districts of the police could not have decisive significance in the eyes of the workers: the troops had not yet said their final word. The uprising is ”dissolving,“ thought the boldest of the bold. Meanwhile it was only beginning to develop.

The 26th of February fell on a Sunday; the factories were closed, and this prevented measuring the strength of the mass pressure in terms of the extent of the strike. Moreover the workers could not assemble in the factories, as they had done on the preceding days, and that hindered the demonstrations. In the morning the Nevsky was quiet. In those hours the czarina telegraphed the czar: ”The city is calm.“

But this calmness does not last long. The workers gradually concentrate, and move from all suburbs to the centre. They are stopped at the bridges. They flock across the ice: it is only February and the Neva is one solid bridge of ice. The firing at their crowds on the ice is not enough to stop them. They find the city transformed. Posses, cordons, horse-patrols everywhere. The approaches to the Nevsky are especially well guarded. Every now and then shots ring out from ambush. The number of killed and wounded grows. Ambulances dart here and there. You cannot always tell who is shooting and where the shots come from. One thing is certain: after their cruel lesson, the police have decided not to expose themselves again. They shoot from windows, through balcony doors, from behind columns, from attics. Hypotheses are formed, which easily become legends. They say that in order to intimidate the demonstrators, many soldiers are disguised in police uniforms. They say that Protopopov has placed numerous machine-gun nests in the garrets of houses. A commission created after the revolution did not discover such nests, but this does not mean that there were none. However, the police on this day occupy a subordinate place. The troops come decisively into action. They are given strict orders to shoot, and the soldiers, mostly training squads-that is, non-commissioned officers' regimental schools-do shoot. According to the official figures, on this day about forty are killed and as many wounded, not counting those led or carried away by the crowd. The struggle arrives at a

decisive stage. Will the mass ebb before the lead and flow back to its suburbs? No, it does not ebb. It is bound to have its own.

Bureaucratic, bourgeois, liberal Petersburg was in a fright. On that day Rodzianko, the President of the State Duma, demanded that reliable troops be sent from the front; later he ”reconsidered “ and recommended to the War Minister Belyaev that the crowds be dispersed, not with lead, but with cold water out of a fire-hose. Belyaev, having consulted General Khabalov, answered that a dowse of water would produce precisely the opposite effect ”because it excites.“ Thus in the liberal and bureaucratic upper circles they discussed the relative advantages of hot and cold douches for the people in revolt. Police reports for that day testify that the fire-hose was inadequate: ” In the course of the disorders it was observed as a general phenomenon, that the rioting mobs showed extreme defiance towards the military patrols, at whom, when asked to disperse, they threw stones and lumps of ice dug up from the street. When preliminary shots were fired into the air, the crowd not only did not disperse but answered these volleys with laughter. Only when loaded cartridges were fired into the very midst of the crowd, was it found possible to disperse the mob, the participants, in which, however, would most of them hide in the yards of nearby houses, and as soon as, the shooting stopped come out again into the street.“ This police report shows that the temperature of the masses had risen very high. To be sure, it is hardly probable that the crowd would have begun of itself to bombard the troops-even the training squads-with stones and ice: that would too much contradict the psychology of the insurrectionary masses, and the wise strategy they had shown with regard to the army. For the sake of supplementary justification for mass murders, the colours in the report are not exactly what they were, and are not laid on the way they were, in actual fact. But the essentials are reported truly and with remarkable vividness: the masses will no longer retreat, they resist with optimistic brilliance, they stay on the street even after murderous volleys, they cling, not to their lives, but to the pavement, to stones, to pieces of ice. The crowd is not only bitter, but audacious. This is because, in spite of the shooting, it keeps its faith in the army. It counts on victory and intends to have it at any cost.

The pressure of the workers upon the army is increasing countering the pressure from the side of the authorities. The Petrograd garrison comes into the focus of events. The expectant period, which has lasted almost three days, during which it was possible for the main mass of the garrison to keep up friendly neutrality toward the insurrection, has come to an end. ”Shoot the enemy¡‘ the monarchy commands. ”Don’t shoot your brothers and sisters¡‘ cry the workers. And not only that: ”Come with us¡‘ Thus in the streets and squares, by the bridges, at the barrack-gates, is waged a ceaseless struggle now dramatic, now unnoticeable-but always a desperate struggle, for the heart of the soldier. In this struggle, in these sharp contacts between working men and women and the soldiers, under the steady crackling of rifles and machine-guns, the fate of the government, of the war, of the

country, is being decided.

The shooting of demonstrators increased the uncertainty among the leaders. The very scale of the movement began to seem dangerous. Even at the meeting of the Vyborg committee the evening of the 26th-that is, twelve hours before the victory-arose discussions as to whether it was not time to end the strike. This may seem astonishing. But remember, it is far easier to recognise victory the day after, than the day before. Besides, moods change frequently under the impact of events and the news of them. Discouragement quickly gives way to a flow of enthusiasm. Kayurovs and Chugurins have plenty of personal courage, but at moments a feeling of responsibility for the masses clutches them. Among the rank-and-file workers there were fewer oscillations. Reports about their moods were made to the authorities by a well informed agent in the Bolshevik organisation, Shurkanov. ”Since the army units have not opposed the crowd, wrote this provocateur,“ and in individual cases have even taken measures paralysing the initiative of the police officers, the masses have got a sense of impunity, and now, after two days of unobstructed walking the streets, when the revolutionary circles have advanced the slogans ”Down with war“ and ”Down with the autocracy¡‘ the people have become convinced that the revolution has begun, that success is with the masses, that the authorities are powerless to suppress the movement because the troops are with it, that a decisive victory is near, since the troops will soon openly join the side of the revolutionary forces, that the movement begun will not subside, but will ceaselessly grow to a complete victory and a state revolution.” A characterisation remarkable for compactness and clarity! The report is a most valuable historic document. This did not, of course, prevent the victorious workers from executing its author.

These provocateurs, whose number was enormous, especially in Petrograd, feared, more than anyone else did, the victory of the revolution. They followed a policy of their own: in the Bolshevik conferences Shurkanov defended the most extreme actions; in his reports to the secret police he suggested the necessity of a decisive resort to firearms. It is possible that with this aim, Shurkanov tried even to exaggerate the aggressive confidence of the workers. But in the main he was right events would soon confirm his judgement.

The leaders in both camps guessed and vacillated, for not one of them could estimate a priori the relation of forces. External indications ceased absolutely to serve as a measure. Indeed one of the chief features of a revolutionary crisis consists in this sharp contradiction between the present consciousness and the old forms of social relationship. A new relation of forces was mysteriously implanting itself in the consciousness of the workers and soldiers. It was precisely the government’s offensive, called forth by the previous offensive of the revolutionary masses, which transformed the new relation of forces from a potential to an active state. The worker looked thirstily and commandingly into the eyes of the soldier, and the soldier anxiously and diffidently looked away. This meant that, in a way, the sol-

dier could no longer answer for himself. The worker approached the soldier more boldly. The soldier sullenly, but without hostility-guiltily rather-refused to answer. Or sometimes now more and more often-he answered with pretended severity in order to conceal how anxiously his heart was beating in his breast. Thus the change was accomplished. The soldier was, clearly shaking off his soldiery. In doing so he could not immediately recognise himself. The authorities said that the revolution intoxicated the soldier. To the soldier it seemed, on the contrary, that he was sobering up from the opium of the barracks. Thus the decisive day was prepared-the 27th of February.

However, on the eve of that day an incident occurred which in spite of its episodic nature paints with a new colour all the events of the 26th. Towards evening the fourth company of the Pavlovsky regiment of the Imperial Guard mutinied. In the written report of a police inspector the cause of the mutiny is categorically stated: “Indignation against the training squad of the same regiment which, while on duty in the Nevsky, fired on the crowd.” Who informed the fourth company of this? A record has been accidentally preserved. About two o’clock in the afternoon, a handful of workers ran up to the barracks of the Pavlovsky regiment. Interrupting each other, they told about a shooting on the Nevsky. “Tell your comrades that the Pavlovtsi, too, are shooting at us-we saw soldiers in your uniform on the Nevsky.” That was a burning reproach, a flaming appeal. “All looked distressed and pale.”

The seed fell not upon the rock. By six o’clock the fourth company had left the barracks without permission under the command of a non-commissioned officer-Who was he? His name is drowned forever among hundreds and thousands of equally heroic names- and marched to the Nevsky to recall its training squad. This was not a mere soldiers’ mutiny over wormy meat; it was an act of high revolutionary initiative. On their way down, the company had an encounter with a detachment of mounted police. The soldiers opened fire. One policeman and one horse were killed; another policeman and another horse were wounded. The further path of the mutineers in the hurricane of the streets is unknown. The company returned to the barracks and aroused the entire regiment. But their arms had been hidden. According to some sources, they nevertheless got hold of thirty rifles. They were soon surrounded by the Preobrazhentsi. Nineteen Pavlovtsi were arrested and imprisoned in the fortress; the rest surrendered. According to other information, the officers on that evening found twenty-one soldiers with rifles missing. A dangerous leak! These twenty-one soldiers would be seeking allies and defenders all night long. Only the victory of the revolution could save them. The workers would surely learn from them what had happened. This was not a bad omen for to-morrow’s battles.

Nabokov, one of the most prominent liberal leaders, whose truthful memoirs seem at times to be the very diary of his party and of his class, was returning home from a visit at one o’clock in the morning along the dark and watchful streets. He was “perturbed and

filled with dark forebodings." It is possible that at one of the crossings he met a fugitive Pavlovetz. Both hurried past: they had nothing to say to each other. In the workers' quarters and the barracks some kept watch or conferred, others slept the half-sleep of the bivouac, or dreamed feverishly about to-morrow. Here the fugitive Pavlovetz found shelter.

How scant are the records of the mass fighting in the February days-scant even in comparison with the slim records of the October fights. In October the party directed the insurrection from day to day; in its articles, proclamations, and reports, at least the external continuity of the struggle is recorded. Not so in February. The masses had almost no leadership from above. The newspapers were silenced by the strike. Without a look back, the masses made their own history. To reconstruct a living picture of the things that happened in the streets, is almost unthinkable. It would be well if we could recreate at least the general continuity and inner order of events.

The government, which had not yet lost hold of the machinery of power, observed the events on the whole even less ably than the left parties, which, as we know, were far from brilliant in this direction. After the "successful" shootings of the 26th, the ministers took heart for an instant. At dawn of the 27th Protopopov reassuringly reported that, according to information received, "part of the workers intend to return to work." But the workers' never thought of going back to the shops. Yesterday's shootings and failures had not discouraged the masses. How explain this? Apparently the losses were out-balanced by certain gains. Pouring through the streets, colliding with the enemy, pulling at the arms of soldiers, crawling under horses' bellies, attacking, scattering, leaving their corpses on the crossings, grabbing a few firearms, spreading the news, catching at rumours, the insurrectionary mass becomes a collective entity with numberless eyes, ears and antennae. At night, returning home from the arena of struggle to the workers' quarter, it goes over the impressions of the day, and sifting away what is petty and accidental, casts its own thoughtful balance. On the night of the 27th, this balance was practically identical with the report made to the authorities by the provocateur, Shurkanov.

In the morning the workers streamed again to the factories, and in open meetings resolved to continue the struggle. Especially resolute, as always, were the Vyborgtsi. But in other districts too these morning meetings were enthusiastic. To continue the struggle! But what would that mean to day? The general strike had issued in revolutionary demonstrations by immense crowds, and the demonstrations had led to a collision with the troops. To continue the struggle to day would mean to summon an armed insurrection. But nobody had formulated this summons. It had grown irresistibly out of the events, but it was never placed on the order of the day by a revolutionary party.

The art of revolutionary leadership in its most critical moments consists nine-tenths in knowing how to sense the mood of the masses-just as Kayurov detected the movement of

the Cossacks eyebrow, though on a larger scale. An unexcelled ability to detect the mood of the masses was Lenin's great power. But Lenin was not in Petrograd. The legal and semi-legal "socialistic" staffs, Kerensky, Cheidze, Skobelev, and all those who circled around them, pronounced warnings and opposed the movement. But even the central Bolshevik staff, composed of Shliapnikov, Zalutsky and Molotov was amazing in its helplessness and lack of initiative. In fact, the districts and barracks were left to themselves. The first proclamation to the army was released only on the 26th by one of the Social Democratic organisations close to the Bolsheviks. This proclamation, rather hesitant in character-not even containing an appeal to come over to the people-was distributed throughout all the city districts on the morning of the 27th. "However," testifies Yurenev, the leader of this organisation, "the tempo of the revolutionary events was such that our slogans were already lagging behind it. By the time the leaflets had penetrated into the thick of the troops, the latter had already come over." As the Bolshevik centre – Shliapnikov, at the demand of Chugurin one of the best worker-leaders of the February days, finally wrote an appeal to the soldiers on the morning of the 27th. Was it even published? At best it might have come in at the finish. It could not possibly have influenced the events of February 27. We must lay it down as a general rule for those days that the higher the leaders, the further they lagged behind.

But the insurrection, not yet so named by anyone, took its own place on the order of the day. All the thoughts of the workers were concentrated on the army. "Don't you think we can get them started?" To day haphazard agitation would no longer do. The Vyborg section staged a meeting near the bar racks of the Moscow regiment. The enterprise proved a failure. Is it difficult for some officer or sergeant major to work the handle of a machine gun? The workers were scattered by cruel fire. A similar attempt was made at the barracks of Reserve regiment. And there too: officers with machine gun interfered between the workers and soldiers. The leaders of the workers fumed, looked for firearms, demanded them from the party. And the answer was: "The soldiers have the firearms, go get them." That they knew themselves. But how to get them? Isn't everything going to collapse all at once to day? Thus came on the critical point of the struggle. Either the machine gun will wipe out the insurrection, or the insurrection will capture the machine gun.

In his recollections, Shliapnikov, the chief figure in the Petrograd centre of the Bolsheviks, tells how he refused the demands of the workers for firearms – or even revolvers – sending them to the barracks to get them. He wished in this way to avoid bloody clashes between workers and soldiers, staking everything on agitation-that is, on the conquest of the soldiers by work and example. We know of no other testimony which confirms or refutes this statement of a prominent leader of those days-a statement which testifies to side-stepping rather than foresight. It would be simpler to confess that the leaders had no firearms.

There is no doubt that the fate of every revolution at a certain point is decided by a break in the disposition of the disposition of the army. Against a numerous, disciplined, well-armed and ably led military force, unarmed or almost unarmed masses of the people cannot possibly gain a victory. But no deep national crisis can fail to affect the army to some extent. Thus along with the conditions of a truly popular revolution there develops a possibility-not, of course, a guarantee-of its victory. However, the going over of the army to the insurrection does not happen of itself, nor as a result of mere agitation. The army is heterogeneous, and its antagonistic elements are held together by the terror of discipline. On the very eve of the decisive hour, the revolutionary soldiers do not know how much power they have, or what influence they can exert. The working masses, of course, are also heterogeneous. But they have immeasurably more opportunity for testing their ranks in the process of preparation for the decisive encounter. Strikes, meetings, demonstrations, are not only acts in the struggle, but also measures of its force. The whole mass does not participate in the strike. Not all the strikers are ready to fight. In the sharpest moments the most daring appear in the streets. The hesitant, the tired, the conservative, sit at home. Here a revolutionary selection takes place of itself; people are sifted through the sieve of events. It is otherwise with the army. The revolutionary soldiers-sympathetic, wavering or antagonistic-are all tied together by a compulsory discipline whose threads are held, up to the last moment, in the officer's fist. The soldiers are told off daily into first and second files, but how are they to be divided into rebellious and obedient?

The psychological moment when the soldiers go over to the revolution is prepared by a long molecular process, which, like other processes of nature, has its point of climax. But how determine this point? A military unit may be wholly prepared to join the people, but may not receive the needed stimulus. The revolutionary leadership does not yet believe in the possibility of having the army on its side, and lets slip the victory. After this ripened but unrealised mutiny, a reaction may seize the army. The soldiers lose the hope which flared in their breasts; they bend their necks again to the yoke of discipline, and in a new encounter with the workers, especially at a distance, will stand opposed to the insurrection. In this process there are many elements imponderable or difficult to weigh, many crosscurrents, collective suggestions and autosuggestions. But out of this complicated web of material and psychic forces one conclusion emerges with irrefutable clarity: the more the soldiers in their mass are convinced that the rebels are really rebelling-that this is not a demonstration after which they will have to go back to the barracks and report, that this is a struggle to the death, that the people may win if they join them, and that this winning will not only guarantee impunity, but alleviate the lot of all-the more they realise this, the more willing they are to turn aside their bayonets, or go over with them to the people. In other words, the revolutionises can create a break in the soldiers' mood only if they themselves are actually ready to seize the victory at any price whatever, even the price of blood. And the highest

determination never can, or will, remain unarmed.

The critical hour of contact between the pushing crowd and the soldiers who bar their way has its critical minute. That is when the grey barrier has not yet given way, still holds together shoulder to shoulder, but already wavers, and the officer, gathering his last strength of will, gives the command: "Fire!" The cry of the crowd, the yell of terror and threat, drowns the command, but not wholly. The rifles waver. The crowd pushes. Then the officer points the barrel of his revolver at the most suspicious soldier. From the decisive minute now stands out the decisive second. The death of the boldest soldier, to whom the others have involuntarily looked for guidance, a shot into the crowd by a corporal from the dead man's rifle, and the barrier closes, the guns go off of themselves, scattering the crowd into the alleys and backyards. But how many times since 1905 it has happened otherwise! At the critical moment, when the officer is ready to pull the trigger, a shot from the crowd-which has its Kayurovs and Chugurins-forestalls him. This decides not only the fate of the street skirmish, but perhaps the whole day, or the whole insurrection.

The task which Shliapnikov set himself of protecting the workers from hostile clashes with the troops by not giving firearms to the insurrectionists, could not in any case be carried out. Before it came to these clashes with the troops, innumerable clashes had occurred with the police. The street fighting began with the disarming of the hated Pharaohs, their revolvers passing into the hands of the rebels. The revolver by itself is a weak, almost toy-like weapon against the muskets, rifles, machine guns and cannon of the enemy. But are these weapons genuinely in the hands of the enemy? To settle this question the workers demanded arms. It was a psychological question. But even in an insurrection psychic processes are inseparable from material ones. The way to the soldier's rifle leads through the revolver taken from the Pharaoh.

The feelings of the soldiers in those hours were less active than those of the workers, but not less deep. Let us recall again that the garrison consisted mainly of reserve battalions many thousands strong, destined to fill up the ranks of those at the front. These men, most of them fathers of families, had the prospect of going to the trenches when the war was lost and the country ruined. They did not want war, they wanted to go home to their farms. They knew well enough what was going on at court, and had not the slightest feeling of attachment to the monarchy. They did not want to fight with the Germans, and still less with the Petrograd workers. They hated the ruling class of the capital, who had been having a good time during the war. Among them were workers with a revolutionary past, who knew how to give a generalised expression to all these moods.

To bring the soldiers from a deep but as yet hidden revolutionary discontent to overt mutinous action-or, at least, first to a mutinous refusal to act-that was the task. On the third day of the struggle the soldiers totally ceased to be able to maintain a benevolent

neutrality toward the insurrection. Only accidental fragments of what happened in those hours along the line of contact between workers and soldiers have come down to us. We heard how yesterday the workers complained passionately to the Pavlovsky regiment about the behaviour of its training squad. Such scenes, conversations, reproaches, appeals, were occurring in every corner of the city. The soldiers had no more time for hesitation. They were compelled to shoot yesterday, and they would be again to day. The workers will not surrender or retreat; under fire they are still holding their own. And with them their women-wives, mothers, sisters, sweethearts. Yes, and this is the very hour they had so often whispered about: “If only we could all get together ...” And the moment of supreme agony, in the unbearable fear of the coming day, the choking hatred of those who are imposing upon them the executioner’s rle, there ring out in the barrack room the first voices of open indignation, and in those voices-to be for ever nameless-the whole army with relief and rapture recognises itself. Thus dawned upon the earth the day of destruction of the Romanov monarchy.

At a morning conference in the home of the indefatigable Kayurov, where over forty shop and factory representatives had assembled, a majority spoke for continuing the movement. A majority, but not all. Too bad we cannot establish what majority, but in those hours there was no time for records. Anyway, the decision was belated. The meeting was interrupted by the intoxicating news of the soldiers’ insurrection and the opening of the gaols. Shurkanov kissed all those present. A kiss of Judas, but not, fortunately, to be followed by a crucifixion.

One after another, from early morning, the Reserve Guard battalions mutinied before they were led out of the barracks, continuing what the 4th Company of the Pavlovsky regiment had begun the day before. In the documents, records, memoirs, this grandiose event of human history has left but a pale, dim imprint. The oppressed masses, even when they rise to the very heights of creative action, tell little of themselves and write less. And the overpowering rapture of the victory later erases memory’s work. Let us take up what records there are.

The soldiers of the Volynsky regiment were the first to revolt. As early as seven o’clock in the morning a battalion commander disturbed Khabalov with a telephone call and this threatening news: the training squad-that is, the unit especially relied on to put down the insurrection-had refused to march out, its commander was killed, or had shot himself in front of the troops. The latter version, by the way, was soon rejected. Having burned their bridges behind them, the Volintzi hastened to broaden the base of the insurrection. In that lay their only salvation. They rushed into the neighbouring barracks of the Litovsky and Preobrazhensky regiments “calling out” the soldiers, as strikers go from factory to factory calling out the workers. Some time after, Khabalov received a report that the Volynsky

regiment had not only refused to surrender their rifles when ordered by the general, but together with the Litovsky and Preobrazhensky regiments-and what is even more alarming, “having joined the workers”-had wrecked the barracks of the political police. This meant that yesterday’s experiment of the Pavlovtsi had not been in vain: the insurrection had found leaders, and at the same time a plan of action.

In the early hours of the 27th, the workers thought the solution of the problem of the insurrection infinitely more distant than it really was. It would be truer to say that they saw the problem as almost entirely ahead of them, when it was really, nine-tenths behind. The revolutionary pressure of the workers on the barracks fell in with the existing revolutionary movement of the soldiers to the streets. During the day these two mighty currents united to wash out clean and carry away the walls, the roof, and later the whole groundwork of the old structure.

Chugurin was among the first to appear at the Bolshevik headquarters, a rifle in his hands, a cartridge belt over his shoulder,“ all spattered up, but beaming and triumphant.” Why shouldn’t he beam? Soldiers with rifles in their hands are coming over to us! In some places the workers had succeeded in uniting with the soldiers, penetrating the barracks and receiving rifles and cartridges. The Vyborgtsi together with the most daring of the soldiers, outlined a plan of action: seize the police stations where the armed police have entrenched themselves; disarm all policemen; free the workers held in the police stations, and the political prisoners in the gaols; rout the government troops in the city proper; unite with the still inactive troops and with the workers of other districts.

The Moscow regiment joined the uprising not without inner struggle. Amazing that there was so little struggle among the regiments. The monarchist command impotently fell away from the soldier mass, and either hid in the cracks or hastened to change its colours. “At two o’clock,” remembers Korolev, a worker from the “Arsenal” factory, “when the Moscow regiment marched out, we armed ourselves.... We took a revolver and rifle apiece, picked out a group of soldiers who came up some of them asked us to take command and tell them what to do, and set out for Tikhvinskaia street to shoot up the police station.” The workers, it seems, did not have a moment’s trouble telling the soldiers “what to do.”

One after another came the joyful reports of victories. Our own armoured cars have appeared! With red flags flying, they are spreading terror through the districts to all who have not yet submitted. Now it will no longer be necessary to crawl under the belly of a Cossack’s horse. The revolution is standing up to its full height.

Toward noon Petrograd again became the field of military action; rifles and machine guns rang out everywhere. It was not easy to tell who was shooting or where. One thing was clear: the past and the future were exchanging shots. There was much casual firing; young boys were shooting off revolvers unexpectedly acquired. The arsenal was wrecked.

“They say that several tens of thousands of Brownings alone were carried off” From the burning buildings of the District Court and the police stations pillars of smoke rolled to the sky. At some points clashes and skirmishes thickened into real battles. On Sampsonievsky boulevard the workers came up to a barrack occupied by the bicycle men, some of whom crowded into the gate.“ Why don’t you get on the move, comrades?” The soldiers smiled “not a good smile,” one of the participants testifies and remained silent, while the officers rudely commanded the workers to move on. The bicyclists, along with the cavalry, proved to be the most conservative part of, the army in the February, as in the October revolution. A crowd of workers and revolutionary soldiers soon gathered round the fence. “We must pull out the suspicious battalion!” Someone reported that the armoured cars had been sent for; perhaps there was no other way of getting these bicyclists, who had set up the machine guns. But it is hard for a crowd to wait; it is anxiously impatient, and quite right in its impatience. Shots rang out from both sides. But the board fence stood in the way, dividing the soldiers from the revolution. The attackers decided to break down the fence. They broke down part of it and set fire to the rest. About twenty barracks came into view. The bicyclists were concentrated in two or three of them. The empty barracks were set fire to at once. Six years later Kayurov would recall: “The flaming barracks and the wreckage of the fence around them, the fire of machine guns and rifles, the excited faces of the besiegers, a truck load of armed revolutionises dashing up, and finally an armoured car arriving with its gleaming gun mouths, made a memorable and magnificent picture.” This was the old czarist, feudal, priestly, police Russia burning down, barracks and fences and all, expiring in fire and smoke, spewing out its soul with the cough of machine-gun shots. No wonder Kayurov, and tens, hundreds, thousands of Kayurovs, rejoiced! The arriving armoured car fired several shells at the barracks where the bicyclists and officers were barricaded. The commander was killed. The officers, tearing off their epaulets and other insignia, fled through the vegetable gardens adjoining the barracks; the rest gave them selves up. This was probably the biggest encounter of the day.

The military revolt had meanwhile become epidemic. Only those did not mutiny that day who did not get around to it. Toward evening the Semenovsky regiment joined in, a regiment notorious for its brutal putting down of the Moscow uprising of 1905. Eleven years had not passed in vain. Together with the chasseurs, the Semenovtsi late at night “called out” the lzmailovtsi, whom the command were holding locked up in their barracks. This regiment, which on December 3, 1905 had surrounded and arrested the first Petrograd soviet, was even now considered one of the most backward.

The czarist garrison of the capital, numbering 150,000 soldiers, was dwindling, melting, disappearing. By night it no longer existed.

After the morning’s news of the revolt of the regiments, Khabalov still tried to offer

resistance, sending against the revolution a composite regiment of about a thousand men with the most drastic orders. But the fate of that regiment has become quite a mystery. "Something impossible begins to happen on that day," the incomparable Khabalov relates after the revolution, " . . . the regiment starts, starts under a brave, a resolute officer (meaning Colonel Kutyepov), but ... there are no results." Companies sent after that regiment also vanished, leaving no trace. The general began to draw up reserves on Palace Square, "but there were no cartridges and nowhere to get them." This is taken from Khabalov's authentic testimony before the Commission of Inquiry of the Provisional Government. What became of the punitive regiments? It is not hard to guess that as soon as they marched out they were drowned in the insurrection. Workers, women, youths, rebel soldiers, swarmed around Khabalov's troops on all sides, either considering the regiment their own or striving to make it so, and did not let them move any way but with the multitude. To fight with this thick swarming, inexhaustible, all-penetrating mass, which now feared nothing, was as easy as to fence in dough.

Together with reports of more and more military revolts, came demands for reliable troops to put down the rebels, to defend the telephone building, the Litovsky Castle, the Mariinsky Palace, and other even more sacred places. Khabalov demanded by telephone that loyal troops be sent from Kronstadt, but the commandant replied that he himself feared for the fortress. Khabalov did not yet know that the insurrection had spread to the neighbouring Garrisons. The general attempted, or pretended to attempt, to convert the Winter Palace into a redoubt, but the plan was immediately abandoned as unrealisable, and the last handful of "loyal" troops was transferred to the Admiralty. Here at last the dictator occupied himself with a most important and urgent business he printed for publication the last two governmental decrees on the retirement of Protopopov "owing to illness," and on the state of siege in Petrograd. With the latter he really had to hurry, for several hours later Khabalov's army lifted the "siege" and departed from the Admiralty for their homes. It was due only to ignorance that the revolution had not already on the evening of the 27th arrested this formidably empowered but not at all formidable general. This was done without any complications the next day.

Can it be that that was the whole resistance put up by the redoubtable Russian Empire in the face of mortal danger? Yet that was about all-in spite of its great experience in crushing the people and its meticulously elaborated plans. When the came to themselves later, the monarchists explained the case of the February victory of the people by the peculiar character of the Petrograd garrison. But the whole further course of the revolution refutes this explanation. True, at the beginning of the fatal year, the camarilla had already suggested to the czar the advisability of renovating the garrison. The czar had easily allowed himself to be persuaded that the cavalry of the Guard, considered especially loyal, "had been under fire long enough" and had earned a rest in its Petrograd barracks. However, after respectful

representations from the front, the czar agreed that four regiments of the cavalry Guard should be replaced by three crews of the naval Guard. According to Protopopov's version, this replacement was made by the command without the czar's consent, and with treacherous design: " . . . The sailors are recruited from among the workers and constitute the most revolutionary element of' the forces." But this is sheer nonsense. The highest officers of the Guard, and particularly the cavalry, were simply cutting out too good a career for themselves at the front to want to come back. Besides that, they must have thought with some dread of the punitive functions to be allotted to them. In these they would be at the head of troops totally different after their experience at the front from what they used to be on the parade grounds of the capital. As events at the front soon proved, the horse Guard at this time no longer differed from the rest of the cavalry, and the naval Guard, which was transferred to the capital, did not play an active part in the February revolution. The whole truth is that the fabric of the rgime had completely decayed; there was not a live thread left.

During the 27th of February the crowd liberated without bloodshed from the many gaols of the capital, all political prisoners-among them the patriotic group of the Military and Industrial Committee, which had been arrested on the 26th of January, and the members of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks, seized by Khabalov forty hours earlier. A political division occurred immediately outside the prison gates. The Menshevik-patriots set out for the Duma, where functions and places were to be assigned; the Bolsheviks marched to the districts, to the workers and soldiers, to finish with them the conquest of the capital. The enemy must have no time to breathe. A revolution, more than any other enterprise, has to be carried through to the end.

It is impossible to say who thought of leading the mutinous troops to the Tauride Palace. This political line of march was dictated by the whole situation. Naturally all the elements of radicalism not bound up with the masses gravitated toward the Tauride Palace as the centre of oppositional information. Quite probably these elements, having experienced on the 27th a sudden injection of vital force, became the guides of the mutinous soldiers. This was an honourable ro1e and now hardly a dangerous one. In view of its location, Potemkin's palace was well fitted to be the centre of the revolution. The Tauride‘ is separated by just one street from the whole military community, containing the barracks of the Guard and a series of military institutions. It is true that for many years this part of the city was considered both by the government and the revolutionises to be the military stronghold of the monarchy. And so it was. But now everything had changed. The soldiers' rebellion had begun in the Guard sector. The mutinous troops had only to cross the street in order to reach the park of the Tauride Palace, which in turn was only one block from the Neva River. And beyond the Neva lies the Vyborg district, the very cauldron of the revolution. The workers need only cross Alexander's Bridge, or if that is up, walk over the ice of the river, to reach the Guards' barracks or the Tauride Palace. Thus the heterogeneous, and

in its origins contradictory, north east triangle of Petrograd-the Guards, Potemkin's palace, and the giant factories-closely interlocked-became the field of action of the revolution.

In the Tauride Palace various centres are already created, or at least sketched out-among them the field staff of the insurrection. It has no very serious character. The revolutionary officers-that is, those officers who had somehow or other, even though by mistake, got connected with the revolution in the past, but who have safely slept through the insurrection-hasten after the victory to call attention to themselves, or upon summons from others arrive "to serve the revolution." They survey the situation with profound thought and pessimistically shake their heads. These tumultuous crowds of soldiers, often unarmed, are totally unfit for battle. No artillery, no machine guns, no communications, no commanders. One strong regiment is all the enemy needs! To be sure, just now the revolutionary crowds prevent any planned manoeuvres in the streets. But the workers will go home for the night, the residents will quiet down, the town will be emptied. If Khabalov were to strike with a strong regiment at the barracks, he might become master of the situation. This idea, by the way, will meet us in different versions throughout all the stages of the revolution. "Give me a strong regiment," gallant colonels will more than once exclaim to their friends, "and in two seconds I will clean up all this mess!" And some of them, as we shall see, will make the attempt. But they will all have to repeat Khabalov's words: "The regiment starts, starts' under a brave officer, but ... there are no results."

Yes, and how could there be results? The most reliable of all possible forces had been the police and the gendarmes, and the training squads of certain regiments. But these proved as pitiful before the assault of the real masses as the Battalion of St. George and the officers' training schools were to prove eight months later in October. Where could the monarchy get that salvation regiment, ready and able to enter a prolonged and desperate duel with a city of two million? The revolution seems defenceless to these verbally so enterprising colonels, because it is still terrifically chaotic. Everywhere aimless movements, conflicting currents, whirlpools of people, individuals astounded as though suddenly gone deaf, unfastened trench coats, gesticulating students, soldiers without rifles, rifles without soldiers, boys firing into the air, a thousand-voiced tumult, hurricanes of wild rumour, false alarms, false rejoicing. Enough, you would think, to lift a sword over all that chaos, and it would scatter apart and leave never a trace. But that is a crude error of vision. It is only seeming chaos. Beneath it is proceeding an irresistible crystallisation of the masses around new axes. These innumerable crowds have not yet clearly defined what they want, but they are saturated with an acid hatred of what they do not want. Behind them is an irreparable historic avalanche. There is no way back. Even if there were someone to scatter them, they would be gathering again in an hour, and the second flood would be more furious and bloodier than the first. After the February days the atmosphere of Petrograd becomes so red hot that every

hostile military detachment arriving in that mighty forge, or even coming near to it, scorched by its breath, is transformed, loses confidence, becomes paralysed, and throws itself upon the mercy of the victor without a struggle. To-morrow General Ivanov, sent from the front by the czar with a battalion of the. Knights of St. George, will find this out. In five months the same fate will befall General Kornilov, and in eight months it will happen to Kerensky.

On the streets in the preceding days the Cossacks had seemed the most open to persuasion; it was because they were the most abused. But when it came to the actual insurrection, the cavalry once more justified its conservative reputation and lagged behind the infantry. On the 27th, it was still preserving the appearance of watchful neutrality. Though Khabalov no longer relied upon it, the revolution still feared it.

The fortress of Peter and Paul, which stands on an island in the Neva opposite the Winter Palace and the palaces of the grand dukes, remained a puzzle. Behind its walls the garrison of the fortress was, or seemed to be, a little world completely shielded from outside influences. The fortress had no permanent artillery except for that antiquated cannon which daily announced the noon, hour to Petrograd. But to day field guns are set up on the walls and aimed at the bridge. What are they getting ready for? The Tauride staff has worried all night what to do about the fortress, and in the fortress they were worrying what will the revolution do with us? By morning the puzzle is solved: “On condition that officers remain inviolable,” the fortress will surrender to the Tauride Palace. Having analysed the situation-not so difficult a thing to do-the officers of the fort hastened to forestall the inevitable march of events.

Towards evening of the 27th, a stream of soldiers, workers, students and miscellaneous people flows toward the Tauride, Palace. Here they hope to find those who know everything – to get information and instructions. From all sides ammunition is being carried by armfuls into the palace, and deposited in a room that has been converted into an arsenal. At nightfall, the revolutionary staff settles down to work. It sends out detachments to guard the railway stations, and despatches reconnoitring squads wherever danger lurks. The soldiers carry out eagerly and without a murmur, although very unsystematically, the orders of the new authorities. But they always demand a written order. The initiative in this probably came from the fragments of the military staff which had remained with the troops, or from the military clerks. But they were right; it is necessary to bring order immediately into the chaos. The staff, as well as the new born Soviet, had as yet no seals. The revolution has still to fit itself out with the implements of bureaucratic management. In time this will be done-alas, too well.

The revolution begins a search for enemies. Arrests are made all over the city-“arbitrarily,” as the liberals will say reproachfully later. But the whole revolution is arbitrary. Streams

of people are brought into the Tauride under arrest such people as the Chairman of the State Council, ministers, policemen, secret service men, the "pro-German" countess, whole broods of gendarme officers. Several statesmen, such as Protopopov, will come of their own volition to be arrested: it is safer so. "The walls of the chamber which had resounded to hymns in praise of absolutism, now heard but sobbing and sighs," the countess will subsequently relate. "An arrested general sank down exhausted on a near-by chair. Several members of the Duma kindly offered me a cup of tea. Shaken to the depths of his soul, the general was saying excitedly: Countess, we are witnessing the death of a great country."

Meanwhile, the great country, which had no intention of dying, marched by these people of the past, stamping its boots, clanging the butts of its rifles, rending the air with its shouts, and stepping all over their feet. A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners.

The Tauride became the temporary field headquarters, governmental centre, arsenal, and prison-fortress of the revolution, which had not yet wiped the blood and sweat from its face. Into this whirlpool some enterprising enemies also made their way. A disguised captain of gendarmes was accidentally discovered taking down notes in a corner-not for history, but for the court-martials. The soldiers and workers wanted to end him right there. But people from the "staff" interfered, and easily led the gendarme out of the crowd. The revolution was then still good-natured, trustful and kind-hearted. It will become ruthless only after a long series of treasons, deceits and bloody trials.

The first night of the triumphant revolution was full of alarms. The improvised commissars of the railway terminals and other points, most of them chosen haphazard from the intelligentsia through personal connection, upstarts and chance acquaintances of the revolution-non-commissioned officers, especially of worker origin, would have been more useful-got nervous, saw danger on all sides, nagged the soldiers and ceaselessly telephoned to the Tauride asking for reinforcements. But in the Tauride too they were nervous. They were telephoning. They were sending out reinforcements which for the most part did not arrive. "Those who receive orders," said a member of the Tauride night staff, "do not execute them; those who act, act without orders."

The workers' districts act without orders. The Revolutionary chiefs who have led out their factories, seized the police stations, "called out" the soldiers and wrecked the strongholds of the counter-revolution, do not hurry to the Tauride Palace, to the staffs, to the administrative centres. On the contrary, they jerk their heads in that direction with irony and distrust: "Those brave boys are getting in early to divide the game they didn't kill-before it's even killed." Worker-Bolsheviks, as well as the best workers of the other Left parties, spend their days on the streets, their nights in the district headquarters, keep-

ing in touch with the barracks and preparing to-morrow's work. On the first night of victory they continue, and they enlarge, the same work they have been at for the whole five days and nights. They are the young bones of the revolution, still soft, as all revolutions are in the first days.

On the 27th, Nabokov, already known to us as a member of the Kadet centre, and at that time working-a legalised deserter-at General Headquarters, went to his office as usual and stayed until three o'clock, knowing nothing of the events. Toward evening shots were heard on the Morskaia. Nabokov listened to them from his apartment. Armoured cars dashed along, individual soldiers and sailors ran past, sidling along the wall. The respected liberal observed them from the side windows of his vestibule. "The telephone continued to function, and my friends, I remember, kept me in touch with what was going on during the day. At the usual time we went to bed." This man will soon become one of the inspirators of the revolutionary (!) Provisional Government, occupying the position of General Administrator. To-morrow an unknown old man will approach him on the street-a bookkeeper, perhaps, or a teacher-bow low and remove his hat, and say to him: "Thank you for all that you have done for the people." Nabokov, with modest pride, will relate the incident himself.

Nevsky Prospect, the main avenue of the city. [Trans.]

Vyborgtsi means the men of the Vyborg district – the workers – just as Pavlovtsi means men of the Pavlovsky regiment. In the singular, Pavlovets. [Trans.]

CHAPTER 8

WHO LED THE FEBRUARY INSURRECTION?

Lawyers and journalists belonging to the classes damaged by the revolution wasted a good deal of ink subsequently trying to prove that what happened in February was essentially a petticoat rebellion, backed up afterwards by a soldiers' mutiny and given out for a revolution. Louis XVI in his day also tried to think that the capture of the Bastille was a rebellion, but they respectfully explained to him that it was a revolution. Those who lose by a revolution are rarely inclined to call it by its real name. For that name, in spite of the efforts of spiteful reactionaries, is surrounded in the historic memory of mankind with a halo of liberation from all shackles and all prejudices. The privileged classes of every age, as also their lackeys, have always tried to declare the revolution which overthrew them, in contrast to past revolutions, a mutiny, a riot, a revolt of the rabble. Classes which have outlived themselves are not distinguished by originality.

Soon after the 27th of February attempts were also made to liken the revolution to the military coup d'etat of the Young Turks, of which, as we know, they had been dreaming not a little in the upper circles of the Russian bourgeoisie. This comparison was so hopeless, however, that it was seriously opposed even in one of the bourgeois papers. Tugan-Baranovsky, an economist who had studied Marx in his youth, a Russian variety of Sombart, wrote on March 10 in the Birzhevoe Vedomosti: "The Turkish revolution consisted in a victorious uprising of the army, prepared and carried out by the leaders of the army; the soldiers were merely obedient executives of the plans of their officers. But the regiments of the Guard which on February 27 overthrew the Russian throne, came without their officers. Not the army but the workers began the insurrection; not the generals but the soldiers came to the State Duma. The soldiers supported the workers not because they were obediently fulfilling the commands of their officers, but because . . . they felt themselves

blood brothers of the workers as a class composed of toilers like themselves. The peasants and the workers-those are the two social classes which made the Russian revolution."

These words require neither correction, nor supplement. The further development of the revolution sufficiently confirmed a reinforced their meaning. In Petrograd the last day of February was the first day after the victory: a day of raptures, embraces joyful tears, voluble outpourings; but at the same time a day of final blows at the enemy. Shots were still crackling in the streets. It was said that Protopopov's Pharos, not informed of the people's victory, were still shooting from the roofs. From below they were firing into attics, false windows a belfries where the armed phantoms of czarism might still lurking. About four o'clock they occupied the Admiralty where the last remnants of what was formerly the state power had taken refuge. Revolutionary organisations and improvised groups were making arrests throughout the town. The Schlusselburg hard-labour prison was taken without a shot. More and more regiments were joining the revolution, both in the capital and in the environs.

The overturn in Moscow was only an echo of the insurrection in Petrograd. The same moods among the workers and soldiers, but less clearly expressed. A slightly more leftward tendency among the bourgeoisie. A still greater weakness among revolutionary organisations than in Petrograd. When events began on the Nerve, the Moscow radical intelligentsia called a conference on the question what to do, and came to no conclusion. Only on the 27th of February strikes began in shops and factories of Moscow, and then demonstrations. The officers told the soldiers in the barracks that a rabble was riot in the streets and they must be put down. "But by this time" relates the soldier Shishilin, "the soldiers understood word rabble in the opposite sense." Towards two o'clock there arrived at the building of the city duma many soldiers of various regiments inquiring how to join the revolution. On the next day the strikes increased. Crowds flowed toward the duma with flags. A soldier of an automobile company, Mural, old Bolshevik, an agriculturist, a good-natured and courageous giant, brought to the duma the first complete and disciplined military detachment, which occupied the wireless station and other points. Eight months later Muralov, will be in command of the troops of the Moscow military district.

The prisons were opened. The same Muralov was driving an automobile truck filled with freed political prisoners: a police officer with his hand at his vizor asked the revolutionist whether it was advisable to let out the Jews also. Dzerzhinsky, just liberated from a hard labour prison and without changing his prison dress, spoke in the duma building where a soviet of deputies was already formed. The artillerist Dorofeev relates how on March 1 workers from the Siou candy factory came with banners to the barracks of an artillery brigade to fraternise with the soldiers, and how many could not contain their joy, and wept. There were cases of sniping in the town, but in general neither armed encounters

nor casualties: Petrograd answered for Moscow.

In a series of provincial cities the movement began only on March 1, after the revolution was already achieved even in Moscow. In Tver the workers went from their work to the barracks in a procession and having mixed with the soldiers marched through the streets of the city. At that time they were still singing the “ Marseillaise,” not the “ International.” In Nizhni-Novgorod thousands of workers gathered round the city duma building, which in a majority of the cities played the role of the Tauride Palace. After a speech from the mayor the workers marched off with red banners to free the politicals from the jails. By evening, eighteen out of the twenty-one military divisions of the garrison had voluntarily came over to the revolution. In Samara and Saratov meetings were held, soviets of workers’ deputies organised. In Kharkov the chief of police, having gone to the railroad station and got news of the revolution, stood up in his carriage before an excited crowd and, lifting his hat, shouted at the top of his lungs: “ Long live the revolution. Hurrah! ”The news came to Ekaterinoslav from Kharkov. At the head of the demonstration strode the assistant chief of police, carrying in his hand a long sabre as in the grand parades on saints’ days. When it became finally clear that the monarchy could not rise, they began cautiously to remove the czar’s portraits from the government institutions and hide them in the attics. Anecdotes about this, both authentic and imaginary, were much passed around in liberal circles, where they had not yet lost a taste for the jocular tone when speaking of the revolution. The workers, and the soldier barracks as well, took the events in a very different way. As to a series of other provincial cities (Pskov, Orel, Rybinsk, Penza, Kazan, Czaritsyn, and others), the Chronicle remarks under date of March 2: “News came of the uprising and the population joined the revolution.” This description, notwithstanding its summary character, tells with fundamental truth what happened.

News of the revolution trickled into the villages from the near-by cities, partly through the authorities, but chiefly through the markets, the workers, the soldiers on furlough. The villages accepted the revolution more slowly and less enthusiastically than the cities, but felt it no less deeply. For them it was bound up with the question of war and land.

It would be no exaggeration to say that Petrograd achieved the February revolution. The rest of the country adhered to it. There was no struggle anywhere except in Petrograd. There were not to be found anywhere in the country any groups of the population, any parties, institutions, or military units which were ready to put up a fight for the old rgime. This shows how ill-founded was the belated talk of the reactionaries to the effect that if there had been cavalry of the Guard in the Petersburg garrison, or if Ivanov had brought a reliable brigade from the front, the fate of the monarchy would have been different. Neither at the front nor at the rear was there a brigade or regiment to be found which was prepared to do battle for Nicholas II.

The revolution was carried out upon the initiative and by the strength of one city, constituting approximately about 1/75 of the population of the country. You may say, if you will, that this most gigantic democratic act was achieved in a most undemocratic manner. The whole country was placed before a fait accompli. The fact that a Constituent Assembly was in prospect does not alter the matter, for the dates and methods of convoking this national representation were determined by institutions which issued from the victorious insurrection of Petrograd. This casts a sharp light on the question of the function of democratic forms in general, and in a revolutionary epoch in particular. Revolutions have always struck such blows at the judicial fetishism of the popular will, and the blows have been more ruthless the deeper, bolder and more democratic the revolutions.

It is often said, especially in regard to the great French revolution, that the extreme centralisation of a monarchy subsequently permits the revolutionary capital to think and act for the whole country. That explanation is superficial. If revolutions reveal a centralising tendency, this is not in imitation of overthrown monarchies, but in consequence of irresistible demands of the new society, which cannot reconcile itself to particularism. If the capital plays as dominating a role in a revolution as though it concentrated in itself the will of the nation, that is simply because the capital expresses most clearly and thoroughly the fundamental tendencies of the new society. The provinces accept the steps taken by the capital as their own intentions already materialised. In the initiatory role of the centres there is no violation of democracy, but rather its dynamic realisation. However, the rhythm of this dynamic has never in great revolutions coincided with the rhythm of formal representative democracy. The provinces adhere to the activity of the centre, but belatedly. With the swift development of events characteristic of a revolution this produces sharp crises in revolutionary parliamentarism, which cannot be resolved by the methods of democracy. In all genuine revolutions the national representation has invariably come into conflict with the dynamic force of the revolution, whose principal seat has been the capital. It was so in the seventeenth century in England, in the eighteenth in France, in the twentieth in Russia. The role of the capital is determined not by the tradition of a bureaucratic centralism, but by the situation of the leading revolutionary class, whose vanguard is naturally concentrated in the chief city; this is equally true for the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

When the February victory was fully confirmed, they began to count up the victims. In Petrograd they counted 1,443 killed and wounded, 869 of them soldiers, and 60 of these officers. By comparison with the victims of any battle in the Great Slaughter these figures are suggestively tiny. The liberal press declared the February revolution bloodless. In the days of general salubrity and mutual amnesty of the patriotic parties, nobody took the trouble to establish the truth. Albert Thomas, a friend of everything victorious, even a victorious insurrection wrote at that time about the “sunniest, most holiday-like, most bloodless Russian revolution.” To be sure, he was hopeful that this revolution would remain

at the disposal of the French Bourse. But after all Thomas did not invent this habit. On the 27th of June 1789, Mirabeau exclaimed: “How fortunate that this great revolution will succeed without evil-doing an without tears! . . . History has too long been telling us only of the actions of beasts of prey. . . . We may well hope that we are beginning the history of human beings.” When all the three estates were united in the National Assembly the ancestors of Albert Thomas wrote: “The revolution is ended. It has not cost a drop of blood.” We must acknowledge, however, that at that period blood had really not yet flowed. Not so in the February days. Nevertheless the legend of a bloodless revolution stubbornly persisted, answering the need of the liberal bourgeois to make things look as though the power had come to him of its own accord.

Although the February revolution was far from bloodless still one cannot but be amazed at the insignificant number of victims, not only at the moment of revolution but still more in the first period after it. This revolution, we must remember was a paying-back for oppression, persecution, taunts, vile blows, suffered by the masses of the Russian people throughout the ages! The sailors and soldiers did in some places, to be sure take summary revenge upon the most contemptible torturer in the person of their officers, but the number of these acts settlement was at first insignificant in comparison with the number of the old bloody insults. The masses shook off their good-naturedness only a good while later, when they were convinced that the ruling classes wanted to drag everything back and appropriate to themselves a revolution not achieved by them, just as they had always appropriated the good things of life not produced by themselves.

Tugan-Baranovsky is right when he says that the February revolution was accomplished by workers and peasants-the latter in the person of the soldiers. But there still remains the great question : Who led the revolution? Who raised the workers to their feet? Who brought the soldiers into the streets? After the victory these questions became a subject of party conflict. They were solved most simply by the universal formula: Nobody led the revolution, it happened of itself. The theory of “ spontaneousness” fell in most opportunely with the minds not only of all those gentlemen who had yesterday been peacefully governing, judging, convicting, defending, trading, or commanding, and to-day were hastening to make up to the revolution, but also of many professional politicians and former revolutionists, who having slept through the revolution wished to think that in this they were not different from all the rest.

In his curious History of the Russian Disorders, General Denikin, former commander of the White Army, says of the 27th of February: “On that decisive day there were no leaders, there were only the elements. In their threatening current there were then visible neither aims, nor plans, nor slogans.” The learned historian Miliukov delves no deeper than this general with a passion for letters. Before the revolution the liberal leader had declared every

thought of revolution a suggestion of the German Staff. But the situation was more complicated after a revolution which had brought the liberals to power. Miliukov's task was now not to dishonour the revolution with a Hohenzollern origin, but on the contrary to withhold the honour of its initiation from revolutionists. Liberalism therefore has whole-heartedly fathered the theory of a spontaneous and impersonal revolution. Miliukov sympathetically cites the semi-liberal, semi-socialist Stankevich, a university instructor who became Political Commissar at the headquarters of the Supreme Command: "The masses moved of themselves, obeying some unaccountable inner summons . . ." writes Stankevich of the February days. "With what slogans did the soldiers come out? Who led them when they conquered Petrograd, when they burned the District Court? Not a political idea, not a revolutionary slogan, not a conspiracy, and not a revolt, but a spontaneous movement suddenly consuming the entire old power to the last remnant." Spontaneousness here acquires almost mystic character.

This same Stankevich offers a piece of testimony in the highest degree valuable: "At the end of January, I happened in a very intimate circle to meet with Kerensky. . . . To the possibility of a popular uprising they all took a definitely negative position, fearing lest a popular mass movement once aroused might get into an extreme leftward channel and this would create vast difficulties in the conduct of the war." The views of Kerensky's circle in nowise essentially differed from those of the Kadets. The initiative certainly did not come from there. "The revolution fell like thunder out of the sky," says the president of the Social Revolutionary Party, Zenzinov. "Let us be frank : it arrived joyfully unexpected for us too, revolutionists who had worked for it through long years and waited for it always."

It was not much better with the Mensheviks. One of the journalists of the bourgeois emigration tells about his meeting in a tramcar on February 21 with Skobelev, a future minister of the revolutionary government: "This Social Democrat, one of the leaders of the movement, told me that the disorders had the character of plundering which it was necessary to put down. This did not prevent Skobelev from asserting a month later that he and his friends had made the revolution." The colours here are probably laid on a little thick, but fundamentally the position of the legal Social Democrats, the Mensheviks, is conveyed accurately enough.

Finally, one of the most recent leaders of the left wing of the Social Revolutionaries, Mstislavsky, who subsequently went over to the Bolsheviks, says of the February uprising: "The revolution caught us, the party people of those days, like the foolish virgins of the Bible, napping." It does not matter how much they resembled the virgins, but it is true they were all fast asleep.

How was it with the Bolsheviks? This we have in part already seen. The principal leaders of the underground Bolshevik organisation were at that time three men: the former

workers Shliapnikov and Zalutsky, and the former student Molotov. Shliapnikov, having lived for some time abroad and in close association with Lenin, was in a political sense the most mature and active of these three who constituted the Bureau of the Central Committee. However, Shliapnikov's own memoirs best of all confirm the fact that the events were too much for the trio. Up to the very last hour these leaders thought that it was a question of a revolutionary manifestation, one among many, and not at all of an armed insurrection. Our friend Kayurov, one of the leaders of the Vyborg section, asserts categorically: "Absolutely no guiding initiative from the party centres was felt . . . the Petrograd Committee had been arrested and the representative of the Central Committee, Comrade Shliapnikov, was unable to give any directives for the coming day."

The weakness of the underground organisations was a direct result of police raids, which had given exceptional results amid the patriotic moods at the beginning of the war. Every organisation, the revolutionary included, has a tendency to fall behind its social basis. The underground organisation of the Bolsheviks at the beginning of 1917 had not yet recovered from its oppressed and scattered condition, whereas in the masses the patriotic hysteria had been abruptly replaced by revolutionary indignation.

In order to get a clear conception of the situation in the sphere of revolutionary leadership it is necessary to remember that the most authoritative revolutionists, the leaders of the left parties, were abroad, and, some of them, in prison and exile. The more dangerous a party was to the old rgime, the more cruelly beheaded it appeared at the moment of revolution. The Narodniks had a Duma faction headed by the non-party radical Kerensky. The official leader of the Social-Revolutionaries, Chernov, was abroad. The Mensheviks had a party faction in the Duma headed by Cheidze and Skobelev; Martov was abroad; Dan and Tseretelli, in exile. A considerable number of socialistic intellectuals with a revolutionary past were grouped around these left factions-Narodnik and Menshevik. This constituted a kind of political staff, but one which was capable of coming to the front only after the victory. The Bolsheviks had no Duma faction: their five worker-deputies, in whom the czarist government had seen the organising centre of the revolution, had been arrested during the first few months of the war. Lenin was abroad, Zinoviev with him; Kamenev was in exile; in exile also, the then little known practical leaders : Sverdlov, Rykov, Stalin. The Polish social-democrat, Dzerzhinsky, who did not yet belong to the Bolsheviks, was at hard labour. The leaders accidentally present, for the very reason that they had been accustomed to act under unconditionally authoritative supervisors, did not consider themselves and were not considered by others capable of playing a guiding role in revolutionary events.

But if the Bolshevik Party could not guarantee the insurrection an authoritative leadership, there is no use talking of other organisations. This fact has strengthened the current conviction as to the spontaneous character of the February revolution. Nevertheless the

conviction is deeply mistaken, or at least meaningless.

The struggle in the capital lasted not an hour, or two hours, but five days. The leaders tried to hold it back; the masses answered with increased pressure and marched forward. They had against them the old state, behind whose traditional facade a mighty power was still assumed to exist, the liberal bourgeoisie with the State Duma, the Land and City Unions, the military-industrial organisations, academies, universities, a highly developed press, and finally the two strong socialist parties who put up a patriotic resistance to the assault from below. In the party of the Bolsheviks the insurrection had its nearest organisation, but a headless organisation with a scattered staff and with weak illegal nuclei. And nevertheless the revolution, which nobody in those days was expecting, unfolded, and just when it seemed from above as though the movement was already dying down, with an abrupt revival, a mighty convulsion, it seized the victory.

Whence came this unexampled force of aggression and self-restraint? It is not enough to refer to bitter feelings. Bitterness alone is little. The Petersburg workers, no matter how diluted during the war years with human raw material, had in their past a great revolutionary experience. In their aggression and self-restraint, in the absence of leadership and in the face of opposition from above, was revealed a vitally well-founded, although not always expressed, estimate of forces and a strategic calculation of their own.

On the eve of the war the revolutionary layers of the workers had been following the Bolsheviks, and leading the masses after them. With the beginning of the war the situation had sharply changed: conservative groups lifted their heads, dragging after them a considerable part of the class. The revolutionary elements found themselves isolated, and quieted down. In the course of the war the situation began to change, at first slowly, but after the defeats faster and more radically. An active discontent seized the whole working class. To be sure, it was to an extent patriotically coloured, but it had nothing common with the calculating and cowardly patriotism of the possessing classes, who were postponing all domestic questions until after the victory. The war itself, its victims, its horror, its shame brought not only the old, but also the new layers of workers into conflict with the czarist rgime. It did this with a new incisiveness and led them to the conclusion: we can no longer endure it. The conclusion was universal; it welded the masses together and gave them a mighty dynamic force.

The army had swollen, drawing into itself millions of workers and peasants. Every individual has his own people among the troops: a son, a husband, a brother, a relative. The army was no longer insulated, as before the war, from the people. One met with soldiers now far oftener; saw them off to the front, lived with them when they came home on leave, chatted with them on the streets and in the tramways about the front, visited them in the hospitals. The workers' districts, the barracks, the front, and to an extent the villages

too, became communicating vessels. The workers would know what the soldiers were thinking and feeling. They had innumerable conversations about the war, about the people who were getting rich out of the war, about the generals, government, czar and czarina. The soldier would say about the war: To hell with it! And the worker would answer about the government: To hell with it! The soldier would say: Why then do you sit still here in the centre? The worker would answer: We can't do anything with bare hands; we stubbed our toe against the army in 1905. The soldier would reflect: What if we should all start at once! The worker: That's it, all at once! Conversations of this kind before the war were conspirative and carried on by twos; now they were going on everywhere, on every occasion, and almost openly, at least in the workers' districts.

The czar's intelligence service every once in a while took its soundings very successfully. Two weeks before the revolution a spy, who signed himself with the name Krestianinov, reported a conversation in a tramcar traversing the workers' suburb. The soldier was telling how in his regiment eight men were under hard labour because last autumn they refused to shoot at the workers of the Nobel factory, but shot at the police instead. The conversation went on quite openly, since in the workers' districts the police and the spies preferred to remain unnoticed. " ' We'll get even with them,' the soldier concluded." The report reads further: "A skilled worker answered him: 'For that it is necessary to organise so that all will be like one.' The soldier answered: 'Don't you worry, we've been organised a long time.. .. They've drunk enough blood. Men are suffering in the trenches and here they are fattening their bellies ! '... No special disturbance occurred. February 10, 1917. Krestianinov." Incomparable spy's epic. "No special disturbance occurred." They will occur, and that soon : this tramway conversation signalises their inexorable approach.

The spontaneousness of the insurrection Mstislavsky illustrates with a curious example: When the " Union of Officers of February 27," formed just after the revolution, tried to determine with a questionnaire who first led out the Volynsky regiment, they received seven answers naming seven initiators of this decisive action. It is very likely, we may add, that a part of the initiative really did belong to several soldiers, nor is it impossible that the chief initiator fell in the street fighting, carrying his name with him into oblivion. But that does not diminish the historic importance of his nameless initiative. Still more important is another side of the matter which will carry us beyond the walls of the barrack room. The insurrection of the battalions of the Guard, flaring up a complete surprise to the liberal and legal socialist circles, was no surprise at all to the workers. Without the insurrection of the workers the Volynsky regiment, would not have gone into the street. That street encounter of the workers with the Cossacks, which a lawyer observed from his window and which he communicated by telephone to the deputy, was to them both an episode in an impersonal process: a factory locust stumbled against a locust from the barracks. But it did not seem that way to the Cossack who bad dared wink to the worker, nor to the worker

who instantly decided that the Cossack had ”winked in a friendly manner.“ The molecular interpenetration of the army with the people was going on continuously. The workers watched the temperature of the army and instantly sensed its approach to the critical mark. Exactly this was what gave such inconquerable force to the assault of the masses, confident of victory.

Here we must introduce the pointed remark of a liberal official trying to summarise his February observations : ”It is customary to say that the movement began spontaneously, the soldiers themselves went into the street. I cannot at all agree with this. After all, what does the word ’ spontaneously ’mean? ... Spontaneous conception is still more out of place in sociology than in natural science. Owing to the fact that none of the revolutionary leaders with a name was able to hang his label on the movement, it becomes not impersonal but merely nameless.“ This formulation of the question, incomparably more serious than Miliukov’s references to German agents and Russian spontaneousness, belongs to a former Procuror who met the revolution in the position of a czarist senator. It is quite possible that his experience in the courts permitted Zavadsky to realise that a revolutionary insurrection cannot arise either at the command of foreign agents, or in the manner of an impersonal process of nature.

The same author relates two incidents which permitted him to look as through a keyhole into the laboratory of the revolutionary process. On Friday, February 24, when nobody in the upper circles as yet expected a revolution in the near future, a tramcar in which a senator was riding turned off quite unexpectedly, with such a jar that the windows rattled and one was broken, from the Liteiny into a side street, and there stopped. The conductor told everybody to get off: ”The car isn’t going any farther.“ The passengers objected, scolded, but got off. ”I can still see the face of that unanswering conductor: angrily resolute, a sort of wolf look.“ The movement of the tramways stopped everywhere as far as the eye could see. That resolute conductor, in whom the liberal official could already catch a glimpse of the ”wolf look,“ must have been dominated by a high sense of duty in order all by himself to stop a car containing officials on the streets of imperial Petersburg in time of war. It was just such conductors who stopped the car of the monarchy and with practically the same words - this car does not go any farther ! - and who ushered out the bureaucracy, making no distinction in the rush of business between a general of gendarmes and a liberal senator. The conductor on the Liteiny boulevard was a conscious factor of history. It had been necessary to educate him in advance.

During the burning of the District Court a liberal jurist from the circle of that same, senator started to express in the street his regret that a roomful of judicial decisions and notarial archives was perishing. An elderly man of sombre aspect dressed as a worker angrily objected : ” We will be able to divide the houses and the lands ourselves, and

without your archives.“ Probably the episode is rounded out in a literary manner. But there were plenty of elderly workers like that in the crowd, capable of making the necessary retort. They themselves had nothing to do with burning the District Court: why burn it? But at least you could not frighten them with ”excesses“ of this kind. They were arming the masses with the necessary ideas not only against the czarist police, but against liberal jurists who feared most of all lest there should burn up in the fire of the revolution the notarial deeds of property. Those nameless, austere statesmen of the factory and street did not fall out of the sky : they had to be educated.

In registering the events of the last days of February the Secret Service also remarked that the movement was ”spontaneous,“ that is, had no planned leadership from above; but they immediately added: ”with the generally propagandised condition of the proletariat.“ This appraisal hits the bull’s-eye: the professionals of the struggle with the revolution, before entering the cells vacated by the revolutionists, took a much closer view of what was happening than the leaders of liberalism.

The mystic doctrine of spontaneousness explains nothing. In order correctly to appraise the situation and determine the moment for a blow at the enemy, it was necessary that the masses or their guiding layers should make their examination of historical events and have their criteria for estimating them. In other words, it was necessary that there should be not masses in the abstract, but masses of Petrograd workers and Russian workers in general, who had passed through the revolution of 1905, through the Moscow insurrection of December 1905, shattered against the Semenovsky Regiment of the Guard. It was necessary that throughout this mass should be scattered workers who had thought over the experience of 1905, criticised the constitutional illusions of the liberals and Mensheviks, assimilated the perspectives of the revolution, meditated hundreds of times about the question of the army, watched attentively what was going on in its midst-workers capable of making revolutionary inferences from what they observed and communicating them to others. And finally, it was necessary that there should be in the troops of the garrison itself progressive soldiers, seized, or at least touched, in the past by revolutionary propaganda.

In every factory, in each guild, in each company, in each tavern, in the military hospital, at the transfer stations, even in the depopulated villages, the molecular work of revolutionary thought was in progress. Everywhere were to be ” What’s the news“? and from whom one awaited the needed words. These leaders had often been left to themselves, had nourished themselves upon fragments of revolutionary generalisations arriving in their bands by various routes, had studied out by themselves between the lines of the liberal papers what they needed. Their class instinct was refined by a political criterion, and though they did not think all their ideas through to the end, nevertheless their thought ceaselessly and stubbornly worked its way in a single direction. Elements of experience, criticism, initiative,

self-sacrifice, seeped down through the mass and created, invisibly to a superficial glance but no less decisively, an inner mechanics of the revolutionary movement as a conscious process. To the smug politicians of liberalism and tamed socialism everything that happens among masses is customarily represented as an instinctive process, no matter whether they are dealing with an anthill or a beehive. In reality the thought which was drilling through the thick of the working class was far bolder, more penetrating, more conscious, than those little ideas by which the educated classes live. Moreover, this thought was more scientific : not only because it was to a considerable 'degree fertilised with the methods of Marxism, but still more because it was ever nourishing itself on the living experience of the masses which were soon to take their place on the revolutionary arena. Thoughts are scientific if they correspond to an objective process and make it possible to influence that process and guide it. Were these qualities possessed in the slightest degree by the ideas of those government circles who were inspired by the Apocalypse and believed in the dreams of Rasputin? Or maybe the ideas of the liberals were scientifically grounded, who hoped that a backward Russia, having joined the scrimmage of the capitalist giants, might win at one and the same time victory and parliamentarism? Or maybe the intellectual life of those circles of the intelligentsia was scientific, who slavishly adapted themselves to this liberalism, senile since childhood, protecting their imaginary independence the while with long-dead metaphors? In truth here was a kingdom of spiritual inertness, spectres, superstition and fictions, a kingdom, if you will, of "spontaneousness." But have we not in that case a right to turn this liberal philosophy of the February revolution exactly upside down? Yes, we have a right to say: At the same time that the official society, all that many-storied superstructure of ruling classes, layers, groups, parties and cliques, lived from day to day by inertia and automatism, nourishing themselves with the relics of worn-out ideas, deaf to the inexorable demands of evolution, flattering themselves with phantoms and foreseeing nothing-at the same time, in the working masses there was (taking place an independent and deep process of growth, not only of hatred for the rulers, but of critical understanding of their impotence, an accumulation of experience and creative consciousness which the revolutionary insurrection and its victory only completed.

To the question, Who led the February revolution? we can then answer definitely enough: Conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin. But we must here immediately add: This leadership proved sufficient to guarantee the victory of the insurrection, but it was not adequate to transfer immediately into the hands of the proletarian vanguard the leadership of the revolution.

CHAPTER 9

THE PARADOX OF THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

The insurrection triumphed. But to whom did it hand over the power snatched from the monarchy? We come here to the central problem of the February revolution: Why and how did the power turn up in the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie?

In Duma circles and in bourgeois "society" no significance was attributed to the agitation beginning the 23rd of February. The liberal deputies and patriotic journalists were assembling in drawing rooms as before, talking over the questions of Trieste and Fiume, and again confirming Russia's need of the Dardanelles. When the decree dissolving the Duma was already signed, a Duma commission was still hastily considering the question of turning over the food problem to the city administration. Less than twelve hours before the insurrection of the battalions of the Guard, the Society for Slavic Reciprocity was peacefully listening to its annual report. "Only when I had returned home on foot from that meeting," remembers one of the deputies, "I was struck by some sort of awesome silence and emptiness in the usually lively streets." That awesome emptiness was forming around the old ruling classes and already oppressing the hearts of their future inheritors.

By the 26th the seriousness of the movement had become clear both to the government and to the liberals. On that day negotiations about a compromise were going on between the czars ministers and members of the Duma, negotiations from which even subsequently the liberals never lifted the curtain. Protopopov states in his testimony that the leaders of the Duma bloc demanded as formerly the naming of new ministers from among people enjoying social confidence: "This measure perhaps will pacify the people." But the 26th created, as we know, a certain stoppage in the development of the revolution, and for a brief moment the government felt firmer. When Rodzianko called on Golytsin to persuade

him to resign, the Premier pointed in answer to a portfolio on his desk in which lay the completed edict dissolving the Duma, with the signature of Nicholas but without a date. Golytsin put in the date. How could the government decide upon such a step at the moment of growing pressure from the revolution? Upon this question the ruling bureaucrats long ago arrived at a firm conviction. " Whether we have a bloc or not, it is all the same to the workers' movement. We can handle that movement by other means, and up till now the Ministry of the Interior has managed to deal with it." Thus Goremykin had spoken in August 1915. On the other hand, the bureaucracy believed that the Duma, in case of its dissolution, would not venture upon any bold step. Again in August 1915, in discussing the question of dissolving a discontented Duma, the Minister of the Interior, Prince Sherbatov, had said: "The Duma will hardly venture upon direct disobedience. The vast majority are after all cowards and are trembling for their hides." The prince expressed himself none too nicely, but in the long run correctly. In its struggle with the liberal opposition, then, the bureaucracy felt plenty of firm ground under its feet.

On the morning of the 27th, the Deputies, alarmed at the mounting events, assembled at a regular session. The majority learned only here that the Duma had been dissolved. The news seemed the more surprising as on the very day before they had been carrying on peace negotiations with the ministers. "And nevertheless," writes Rodzianko with pride, "the Duma submitted to the law, still hoping to find a way out of the tangled situation, and passed no resolution that it would not disperse, or that it would illegally continue its sessions." The deputies gathered at a private conference in which they made confessions of impotence to each other. The moderate liberal Shidlovsky subsequently remembered, not without a malicious pleasure, a proposal made by an extreme left Kadet, Nekrasov, a future colleague of Kerensky, " to establish a military dictatorship handing over the whole power to a popular general." At that time a practical attempt at salvation was undertaken by the leaders of the Progressive Bloc, not present at this private conference of the Duma. Having summoned the Grand Duke Mikhail to Petrograd, they proposed to him to take upon himself the dictatorship, to "impel" the personal staff of the government to resign, and to demand of the czar by direct wire that he "grant" a responsible ministry. In those hours, when the uprising of the first Guard regiments was beginning, the liberal bourgeoisie were making a last effort to put down the insurrection with the help of a dynastic dictator, and at the same time at the expense of the revolution to enter into an agreement with the monarchy. "The hesitation of the grand duke," complains Rodzianko, "contributed to the letting slip of the favourable moment."

How easily a radical intelligentsia believes whatever it wants to, is testified by a non-party socialist, Sukhanov, who begins in this period to play a certain political ro1e in the Tauride Palace. "They told me the fundamental political news of those morning hours of that unforgettable day," he relates in his extensive memoirs: "The decree dissolving the

State Duma had been promulgated, and the Duma had answered with a refusal to disperse, electing a Provisional Committee." This is written by a man who hardly ever left the Tauride Palace, and was there continually buttonholing his deputy friends. Miliukov in his history of the revolution, following Rodzianko, categorically declares: "There was adopted after a series of hot speeches a resolution not to leave Petrograd, but no resolution that the State Duma should as an institution not disperse as the legend runs" "Not to disperse" would have meant to take upon themselves, however belatedly, a certain initiative. "Not to leave Petrograd" meant to wash their hands of the matter and wait to see which way the course of events would turn. The credulousness of Sukhanov has, by the way, mitigating circumstances. The rumour that the Duma had adopted a revolutionary resolution not to submit to the czars decree was slipped in hurriedly by the Duma journalists in their information bulletin, the only paper published at that time owing to the general strike. Since the insurrection triumphed during that day the deputies were in no hurry to correct this mistake, being quite willing to sustain the illusions of their "left" friends. They did not in fact undertake to establish the facts of the matter until they were out of the country. The episode seems secondary, but it is full of meaning. The revolutionary ro1e of the Duma on the 27th of February was a complete myth, born of the political credulity of the radical intelligentsia delighted and frightened by the revolution, distrusting the ability of the masses to carry the business through, and eager to lean as quickly as possible toward the enfranchised bourgeoisie.

In the memoirs of the deputies belonging to the Duma majority, there is preserved by good luck a story of how the Duma did meet the revolution. According to the account of Prince Mansyrev, one of the right Kadets, among the deputies who assembled in great numbers on the morning of the 27th there were no members of the prsidium , no leaders of parties, nor heads of the Progressive Bloc: they already knew of the dissolution and the insurrection and had preferred as long as possible to refrain from showing their heads. Moreover, at just that time they were, it seems, negotiating with Mikhail about the dictatorship. "A general consternation and bewilderment prevailed in the Duma," says Mansyrev. "Even lively conversations ceased, and in their place were heard sighs and brief ejaculations like It's come or indeed frank expressions of fear for life." Thus speaks a very moderate deputy who sighed the loudest of all. At two o'clock in the afternoon, when the leaders had found themselves obliged to appear in the Duma, the secretary of the prsidium brought in the joyful but ill-founded news: "The disorders will soon be put down, because measures have been taken." It is possible that by "measures" was meant the negotiations for a dictatorship, but the Duma was downcast and awaited a decisive word from the leader of the Progressive Bloc. "We cannot adopt any decision at the present moment," Miliukov announced, "because the extent of the disorders is unknown to us; likewise it is unknown upon which side a majority of the local troops, workers and social organisations will take

their stand. It is necessary to gather accurate information about this, and then will be time enough to judge the situation. At present it is too soon." At two o'clock in the afternoon of February 27 it is still for liberalism "too soon"! "Gather information" means wash your own hands and await the outcome of the struggle. But Miliukov had not ended his speech-which, by the way, he began with a view to ending in nothing-when Kerensky came running into the hall in high excitement: An enormous crowd of people and soldiers is coming to the Tauride Palace, he announces, and intends to demand of the Duma that it seize the power in its hands! The radical deputy knows accurately just what the enormous crowd of people is going to demand. In reality it is Kerensky himself who first demands that the power shall be seized by a Duma which is still hoping in its soul that the insurrection may yet be put down. Kerensky's announcement is met with "general bewilderment and dismayed looks." He has however not finished speaking when a frightened Duma attendant, rushing in, interrupts him: the advanced detachment of the soldiers has already reached the Palace, a detachment of sentries stopped them at the entrance, the chief of the sentries, it seems, was heavily wounded. A minute later it transpires that the soldiers have entered the Palace. It will be declared later in speeches and articles that the soldiers came to greet the Duma and swear loyalty to it, but right now everything is in mortal panic. The water is up to their necks. The leaders whisper together. We must get a breathing space. Rodzianko hastily introduces a proposal, suggested to him by somebody, that they form a Provisional Committee. Affirmative cries. But they all want to get out there as quickly as possible. No time for voting. The president, no less frightened than the others, proposes that they turn over the formation of the committee to the council of elders. Again affirmative cries from the few still remaining in the hall. The majority have already vanished. Such was the first reaction of the Duma, dissolved by the czar, to the victory of the insurrection.

At that time the revolution was creating in the same building only in a less showy part of it, another institution. The revolutionary leaders did not have to invent it; the experience of *the Soviets* of 1905 was forever chiselled into the consciousness of the workers. At every lift of the movement, even in, wartime, the idea of soviets was almost automatically reborn. And although the appraisal of the ro1e of the soviets was different among Bolsheviks and Mensheviks-the Social Revolutionaries had in general no stable appraisals-the form of organisation itself stood clear of all debate. The Mensheviks liberated from prison, members of the Military-Industrial Committee, meeting in the Tauride Palace with leaders of the Trade Union and Co-operative movements, likewise of the right' wing, and with the Menshevik deputies of the Duma, Cheidze and Skobelev, straightway formed a "Provisional Executive committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies," which in the course of the day was filled out principally with former revolutionises who had lost connection with the masses but still preserved their "names." This Executive Committee , including also Bolsheviks in its staff summoned the workers to elect deputies at once. The first session

was appointed for the same evening in the Tauride Palace. It actually met at nine o'clock and ratified the staff of the Executive Committee, supplementing it with official representatives from all the socialist parties. But not here lay the significance of this first meeting of representatives of the victorious proletariat of the capital. Delegates from the mutinied regiments made speeches of greeting at this meeting. Among their number were completely grey soldiers, shell-shocked as it were by the insurrection, and still hardly in control of their tongues. But they were just the ones who found the words which no orator could find. That was one of the most moving scenes of the revolution, now first feeling its power, feeling the unnumbered masses it has aroused, the colossal tasks, the pride in success, the joyful failing of the heart at the thought of the morrow which is to be still more beautiful than to-day. The revolution still has no ritual, the streets are in smoke, the masses have not yet learned the new songs. The meeting flows on without order, without shores, like a river at flood. The Soviet chokes in its own enthusiasm. The revolution is mighty but still naive, with a child's naiveness.

At the first session it was decided to unite the garrison with the workers in a general Soviet of Workers' arid Soldiers' Deputies. Who first proposed this resolution? It probably arose from various, or rather from all sides, as an echo of that fraternisation of workers and soldiers which had this day decided the fate of the revolution. From the moment of its formation the Soviet in the person of its Executive Committee, begins to function as a sovereign It elects a temporary food commission and places it in charge of the mutineers and of the garrison in general. It organises parallel with itself a Provisional revolutionary staff-everything was called provisional in those days-of which we have already spoken above. In order to remove financial resources from the hands of the officials of the old power, the Soviet decides to occupy the State Bank, the Treasury, the Mint and the Printing Office with a revolutionary guard. The tasks and functions of the Soviet grow unceasingly under pressure from the masses. The revolution finds here its indubitable centre. The workers, the soldiers, and soon also the peasants, will from now on turn only to the Soviet. In their eyes the Soviet becomes the focus of all hopes and all authority, an incarnation of the revolution itself. But representatives of the possessing classes will also seek in the Soviet, with whatever grindings of teeth, protection and counsel in the resolving of conflicts.

However, even in those very first days of victory, when the new power of the revolution was forming itself with fabulous speed and inconquerable strength, those socialists who stood at the head of the Soviet were already looking around with alarm to see if they could find a real "boss." They took it for granted that power ought to pass to the bourgeoisie. Here the chief political knot of the new rgime is tied: one of its threads leads into the chamber of the Executive Committee of workers and soldiers, the other into the central headquarters of the bourgeois parties.

The Council of Elders at three oclock in the afternoon, when the victory was already fully assured in the capital, elected a "Provisional Committee of Members of the Duma" made up from the parties of the Progressive Bloc with the addition of Cheidze and Kerensky. Cheidze declined, Kerensky wiggle-waggled. The designation prudently indicated that it was not a question of an official committee of the State Duma, but a private committee of a conference of members of the Duma. The leaders of the Progressive Bloc thought to the very end of but one thing: how to avoid responsibility and not tie their own hands. The task of the committee was defined with meticulous equivocation: "The restoration of order and conducting of negotiations with institutions and persons." Not a word as to the kind of order which those gentlemen intended to restore, nor with what institutions they intended to negotiate. They were not yet openly reaching out their hands toward the bear's hide: what if he is not killed but only badly wounded? Only at eleven o'clock in the evening of the 27th, when, as Miliukov acknowledged, "the whole scope of the revolutionary movement had become clear, did the Provisional Committee decide upon a further step, and take in its hands the power which had fallen from the hands of the government." Imperceptibly the new institution had changed from a committee of the members of the Duma to a committee of the Duma itself. There is no better means of preserving the state juridical succession than forgery. But Miliukov remains silent about the chief thing: the leaders of the Executive Committee of the Soviet, created during that day, had already appeared before the Provisional-Committee and insistently demanded that it take the power into its hands. This friendly push had its effect. Miliukov subsequently explained the decision of the Duma Committee by saying that the government was supposed to be sending loyal troops against the insurrectionists, "and on the streets of the capital it threatened to come to actual battle." In reality the government was already without troops, the revolution was wholly in the past Rodzianko subsequently wrote that in case they had declined the power, "the Duma would have been arrested and killed off to the last man by the mutinied troops, and the power would gave gone immediately to the Bolsheviks." That is, of course, an inept exaggeration, wholly in the character of the respected lord Chamberlain; but it unmistakably reflects the feelings of the Duma, which regarded the transfer of power to itself as an act of political rape.

With such feelings the decision was not easily arrived at. Rodzianko especially stormed and vacillated, putting a question to the others "What will this be? Is it a rebellion or not a rebellion?" The monarchist deputy Shulgin answered him, according to his own report: "There is no rebellion in this at all; take the power as a loyal subject ... If the ministers have run away somebody has got to take their place . . . There may be two results: Everything quiets down-the sovereign names a new government, we turn over the power to him. Or it doesn't quiet down. In that case if we don't take the power, others will take it, those who have already elected some sort of scoundrels in the factories. . ." We need not take

offence at the low-class abuse directed by the reactionary gentleman toward the workers: the revolution had just firmly stepped on the tails of all these gentlemen. The moral is clear: if the monarchy win we are with it; if the revolution wins, we will try to plunder it.

The conference lasted long. The democratic leaders were anxiously waiting for a decision. Finally, Miliukov came out of the office of Rodzianko. He wore a solemn expression. Approaching the Soviet delegation Miliukov announced: "The decision is reached, we will take the power . . ." "I did not inquire whom he meant by *we*," relates Sukhanov with rapture, "I asked nothing further, but I felt with all my being, as they say, a new situation. I felt that the ship of the revolution, tossed in the squall of those hours by the complete caprice of the elements, had put up a sail, acquired stability and regularity in its movements amid the terrible storm and the rocking." What a high-flying formula for a prosaic recognition of the slavish dependence of the petty bourgeois democracy upon capitalistic liberalism! And what a deadly mistake in political perspective. The handing over of power to The handing over of power to the liberals not only will not give stability to the ship of state, but, on the contrary, will become from that moment a source of headlessness of the revolution, enormous chaos, embitterment of the masses, collapse of the front, and in the future extreme bitterness of the civil war.

If you look only backward to past ages, the transfer of power to the bourgeoisie seems sufficiently regular: in all past revolutions who fought on the barricades were workers, apprentices, in part students, and the soldiers came over to their aside. But afterwards the solid bourgeoisie, having cautiously watched the barricades through their windows, gathered up the power. But the February revolution of 1917 was distinguished from former revolutions by the incomparably higher social character and political level of the revolutionary class, by the hostile distrust of the insurrectionists toward the liberal bourgeoisie, and the consequent formation at the very moment of victory of a new organ of revolutionary power, Soviet, based upon the armed strength of the masses. In these circumstances the transfer of power to a politically isolated and unarmed bourgeoisie demands explanation.

First of all we must examine more closely the correlation of forces which resulted from the revolution. Was not the Soviet democracy compelled by the objective situation to renounce the power in favour of the big bourgeoisie? The bourgeoisie itself did not think so. We have already seen that it not only did not expect power from the revolution, but on the contrary foresaw in it a mortal danger to its whole social situation. "The moderate parties not only did not desire a revolution," writes Rodzianko, "but were simply afraid, of it. In particular the Party of the People's Freedom, "the Kadets" as a party standing at the left wing of the moderate group, and therefore having more than the rest a point of contact with the revolutionary parties of the country, was more worried by the advancing catastrophe than all the rest." The experience of 1905 had too significantly hinted to the liberals that

a victory of the workers and peasants might prove no less dangerous to the bourgeoisie than to the monarchy. It would seem that the course of the February insurrection had only confirmed this foresight. However formless in many respects may have been the political ideas of the revolutionary masses in those days, the dividing line between the toilers and the bourgeoisie was at any rate implacably drawn.

Instructor Stankevich who was close to liberal circles-a friend, not an enemy of the Progressive Bloc-characterises in the following way the mood of those circles on the second day after the overturn which they had not succeeded in preventing: “Officially they celebrated, eulogised the revolution, cried ”Hurrah¡‘ to the fighters for freedom, decorated themselves with red ribbons and marched under red banners.... But in their souls, their conversations *tte--tte*, they were horrified, they shuddered, they felt themselves captives in the hands of hostile elements travelling an unknown road. Unforgettable is the figure Rodzianko, that portly lord and imposing personage, when, preserving a majestic dignity but with an expression of deep suffering despair frozen on his pale face, he made his way through a crowd of dishevelled soldiers in the corridor of the Tauride Palace. Officially it was recorded: The soldiers have come to support the Duma in its struggle with the government. But actually the Duma had been abolished from the very first day. And the same expression was on the faces of the members of the Provisional Committee of the Duma and those circles which surrounded it. They say that the representatives of the Progressive Bloc in their own homes wept with impotent despair.”

This living testimony is more precious than any sociological research into the correlation of forces. According to his own tale, Rodzianko trembled with impotent indignation when he saw unknown soldiers, “at whose orders is not recorded” arresting the officials of the old rgime and bringing them to the Duma. The Lord Chamberlain turned out to be something in the nature of a jailer in relation to people, with whom he had, to be sure, his differences, but who never the less remained people of his own circle. Shocked by his “arbitrary” action Rodzianko invited the arrested Minister Sheglovitov into his office, but the soldiers brusquely refused to turn over to him the hated official. “When I tried to show my authority”, relates Rodzianko, “the soldiers surrounded their captive and with the most challenging and insolent expression pointed to their rifles, after which more ado they led Sheglovitov away I know not where.” Would it be possible to confirm more absolutely Sankevich’s assertion that the regiments supposedly coming to support the Duma, in reality abolished it?

The power was from the very first moment in the hands of the soviet-upon that question the Duma members less than anybody else could cherish that illusion. The Octobrist deputy Shidlovsky, one of the leaders of the Progressive Bloc, relates how, “The Soviet seized all the Post and Telegraph bureaux, the wireless, all the Petrograd railroad stations,

all the printing establishments, so that without its permission it was impossible to send a telegram, to leave Petrograd, or to print an appeal." In this unequivocal characterisation of the correlation of forces, it is necessary to introduce one slight correction: the "seizure" of the Soviet of the telegraph, railroad stations, printing establishments, etc., meant merely that the workers and clerks in those enterprises refused to submit to anybody but the Soviet.

The plaint of Shidlovsky is admirably illustrated by an incident which occurred at the very height of the negotiations about the power between the leaders of the Soviet and the Duma. Their joint session was interrupted my an urgent communication from Pskov, where after his railroad wanderings the czar had now come to a stand, stating that they wanted Rodzianko on the direct wire. The all-powerful President of the Duma declared that he would not go to the telegraph office. Look here, you've got the power and the sovereignty," he continued excitedly. "you can, of course, arrest me maybe you are going to arrest us all, how do we know¿' This happened on the 1st of March, less than twenty-hours after the power was "taken over" by the Provisional Committee with Rodzianko at its head.

How did it happen then that in such a situation the liberals turned out to be in power? How and by whom were they authorised to form a government as the result of a revolutionary which they had dreaded, which they had resisted, which they tried to put down, which was accomplished by masses completely hostile to them, and accomplished with such audacity and decisiveness that the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers arising from the insurrection became the natural, and by all unequivocally recognised, master of the situation?

Let us listen now to the other side, to those who surrendered the power. "The people did not gravitate toward the State Duma," writes Sukhanov of the February days, "they were not interested in it, and never thought of making it either politically or technically the centre of the movement." This acknowledgement is the more remarkable in that its author will soon devote all his force to getting the power handed over to a committee of the Sate Duma. "Miliukov perfectly understood," says Sukhanov further, speaking of the negotiations of March, "that the Executive Committee was in a perfect position either to give the power to the bourgeois government, or not to give it." Could it be more categorically expressed? Could a political situation be clearer? And nevertheless Sukhanov, in direct contradiction to the situation and to himself, immediately adds: "The power destined to replace czarism must be only a bourgeois power ... we must steer our course by this principle. Otherwise the uprising will not succeed and the revolution will collapse." The revolution will collapse without Rodzianko!

The problem of the living relations of social forces is here replaced by an a priori scheme and a conventional terminology: and this is the very essence of the doctrinairism of the intelligentsia. But we shall see later that this doctrinairism was by no means Platonic: it fulfilled a very real political function, although with blindfolded eyes.

We have quoted Sukhanov for a reason. In that first period the inspirer of the Executive Committee was not its president, Cheidze, an honest and limited provincial, but this very Sukhanov, a man, generally speaking, totally unsuited for revolutionary leadership. Semi-Narodnik, semi-Marxist, a conscientious observer rather than a statesman, a journalist rather than a revolutionist, a rationaliser rather than a journalist-he was capable of standing by a revolutionary conception only up to the time when it was necessary to carry it into action. A passive internationalist during the war, he decided on the very first day of the revolution that it was necessary just as quickly as possible to toss the power and the war over to the bourgeoisie. As a theorist-that is, at least in his feelings of the need that things should be reasoned out, if not in his ability to fulfil it-he stood above all the then members of the Executive Committee. But his chief strength lay in his ability to translate into a language of doctrinairism the organic traits of all that many-coloured and yet nevertheless homogeneous brotherhood: distrust of their own powers, fear of the masses, and a heartily respectful attitude toward the bourgeoisie. Lenin described Sukhanov as one of the best representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, and that is the most flattering thing that can be said of him.

Only in this connection it must not be forgotten that the question is here of a new capitalist type of petty bourgeoisie, of industrial, commercial and bank clerks, the functionaries of capital on one side, and the workers' bureaucracy on the other -that is of that new *middle caste,* in whose name the well known German social democrat Edward Bernstein undertook at the end of the last century a revision of the revolutionary conceptions of Marx. In order to answer the question how a revolution of workers and peasants came to surrender the power to the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to introduce into the political chain an intermediate link: the petty bourgeoisie democrats and socialists of the Sukhanov type, journalists and politicians of the new middle caste, who had taught the masses that the bourgeoisie is an enemy, but themselves feared more than any thing else to release the masses from the contradiction between the character of the revolution and the character of the power that issued from it, is explained by the contradictory character of this new petty bourgeois partition wall between the revolutionary masses and the capitalist bourgeoisie. In the course of further events the political ro1e of this petty bourgeois democracy of the new type will fully open before us. For the time being we will limit ourselves to a few words.

A minority of the revolutionary class actually participates in the insurrection, but the strength of that minority lies in the support, or at least sympathy, of the majority. The active and militant minority inevitably puts forward under fire from the enemy its more revolutionary and self-sacrificing element. It is thus natural that in the February fights the worker-Bolshevik occupied the leading place. But the situation changes the moment the victory is won and its political fortification begins. The elections to the organs and institutions of the victorious revolution attract and challenge infinitely broader masses than those

who battled with arms in their hands. This is true not only of general democratic institutions like the city dumas and zemstvos, or later on, the Constituent Assembly, but also of class institutions, like the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. An overwhelming majority of the workers, Menshevik, Social Revolutionary and non-party, supported the Bolsheviks at the moment of direct grapple with czarism. But only a small minority of the workers understood that the Bolsheviks were different from other socialist parties. At the same time, however, all the workers drew a sharp line between themselves and the bourgeoisie. This fact determined the political situation after the victory. The workers elected socialists, that is, those who were not only against the monarchy, but against the bourgeoisie. In doing this they made almost no distinction between the three socialist parties. And since the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries comprised infinitely larger ranks of the intelligentsia-who came pouring in from all sides-and thus got into their hands immediately an immense staff of agitators, the elections, even in shops and factories, gave them an enormous majority. An impulse in the same direction, but an incomparably stronger one, came from the awakening army. On the fifth day of the insurrection the Petrograd garrison followed the workers. After the victory it found itself summoned to hold elections for the Soviet. The soldiers trustfully elected those who had been for the revolution against monarchist officers, and who knew how to say this out loud: these were volunteers, clerks, assistant surgeons, young war-time officers from the intelligentsia, petty military officials-that is, the lowest layers of that new middle *caste.* All of them almost to the last man inscribed themselves, beginning in March, in the party of the Social Revolutionaries, which with its intellectual formlessness perfectly expressed their intermediate social situation and their limited political outlook. The representation of the garrison thus turned out to be incomparably more moderate and bourgeois than the soldier masses. But the latter were not conscious of this difference: it would reveal itself to them only during the experience of the coming months. The workers, on their part, were trying to cling as closely as possible to the soldiers, in order to strengthen their blood-bought union and more permanently arm the revolution. And since the spokesmen of the army were predominantly half-baked Social Revolutionaries, this fact could not help raising the authority of that party along with its ally, the Mensheviks, in the eyes of the workers themselves. Thus resulted the predominance in the soviets of the two Compromise parties. It is sufficient to remark that even in the soviet of the Vyborg district the leading ro1e in those first times belonged to the worker-Mensheviks. Bolshevism in that period was still only simmering in the depths of the revolution. Thus the official Bolsheviks, even in the Petrograd Soviet, represented an insignificant minority, who had moreover none too clearly defined its tasks.

Thus arose the paradox of the February revolution. The power was in the hands of the democratic socialists. It had not been seized by them accidentally by way of a Blanquist coup; no, it was openly delivered to them by the victorious masses of the people. Those

masses not only did not trust or support the bourgeoisie, but they did not even distinguish them from the nobility and the bureaucracy. They put their weapons at the disposal only of the soviets. Meanwhile the socialists, having so easily arrived at the head of the soviets, were worrying about only one question: Will the bourgeoisie, politically isolated, hated by the masses and hostile through and through to the revolution, consent to accept the power from our hands? Its consent must be won at any cost. And since obviously a bourgeoisie cannot renounce its bourgeois programme, we, the ”socialists,“ will have to renounce ours: we will have to keep still about the monarchy, the war, the land, if only the bourgeoisie will accept the gift of power. In carrying out this operation, the CQ ”socialists,“ as though to ridicule themselves, continued to designate the bourgeoisie no otherwise than as their class enemy. In the ceremonial forms of their worship was thus introduced an act of arrant blasphemy. A class struggle carried to its conclusion is a struggle for state power. The fundamental character of a revolution lies in its carrying the class struggle to its conclusion. A revolution is a direct struggle for power. Nevertheless, our ”socialists“ are not worried about getting the power away from the class enemy who does not possess it, and could not with his own forces seize it, but, just the opposite, with forcing this power upon him at any cost. Is not this indeed a paradox? It seems all the more striking, because the experience of the German revolution of 1918 did not then exist, and humanity had not yet witnessed a colossal and still more successful operation of this same type carried out by the ”new middle caste“ led by the German social democracy.

How did the Compromisers explain their conduct? One explanation had a doctrinaire character: Since the revolution is bourgeois, the socialists must not compromise themselves with the power-let the bourgeoisie answer for itself. This sounded very implacable. In reality, however, the petty bourgeoisie disguised with this false implacability its obsequiousness before the power of wealth, education, enfranchised citizenship. The right of the big bourgeoisie to power, the petty bourgeois acknowledged as a right of primogeniture, independent of the correlation of forces. Fundamentally we had here the same almost instinctive movement which has compelled the small merchant or teacher to step aside respectfully in the stations or theatres to let a Rothschild pass. Doctrinaire arguments served as a compensation for the consciousness of a personal insignificance. In only two months, when it became evident that the bourgeoisie was totally unable with its own force to keep the power thus delivered to it, the Compromisers had no difficulty in tossing away their ”socialistic“ prejudices and entering a coalition ministry-not in order to crowd out the bourgeoisie but, on the contrary, in order to save it-not against its will but, on the contrary, at its invitation, which sounded almost like a command. Indeed, the bourgeoisie threatened the democrats, if they refused, to let the power drop on their heads.

The second argument for refusing the power, although no more serious in essence, had a more practical appearance. Our friend Sukhanov made the most of the ”scatteredness“ of

democratic Russia: ”The democrats had at that time no stable or influential organisations, party, professional or municipal.“ That sounds almost like a joke! Not a word about the soviets of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies from this socialist who is acting in the name of the soviets. As a matter of fact, thanks to the tradition of 1905, the soviets sprang up as though from under the earth, and immediately became incomparably more powerful than all the other organisations which later tried to compete with them (the municipalities, the co-operatives, and in part the trade unions). As for the peasantry, a class by its very nature scattered, thanks to the war and revolution it was exactly at that moment organised as never before. The war had assembled the peasants into an army, and the revolution had given the army a political character! No fewer than eight million peasants were united in companies and squadrons, which had immediately created their revolutionary representation and could through it at any moment be brought to their feet by a telephone call. Is this at all similar to ”scatteredness“?

You may say to be sure, that at the moment of deciding the question of power, the democracy did not know what would be the attitude of the army at the front. We will not raise the question whether there was the slightest basis for fearing or hoping that the soldiers at the front, worn out with the war, would want to support the imperialist bourgeoisie. It is sufficient to remark that this question was fully decided during the next two or three days, which the Compromisers passed in the backstage preparation of a bourgeois government. ”The revolution was successfully achieved by the 3rd of March,“ concedes Sukhanov. In spite of the adherence of the whole army to the soviets, the leaders of the latter continued with all their strength to push away the power: they feared it the more, the more completely it became concentrated in their hands.

But why? How could those democrats, ”socialists,“ directly supported by such human masses as no democracy in history ever had behind it-masses, moreover, with a considerable experience, disciplined and armed, and organised in soviets-how could that all-powerful and apparently inconquerable democracy fear the power? This apparently intricate enigma is explained by the fact that the democracy did not trust its own support, feared those very masses, did not believe in the stability of their confidence in itself, and worst of all dreaded what they called ”anarchy,“ that is, that having seized the power, they might along with the power prove a mere plaything of the so called unbridled elements. In other words, the democracy felt that it was not called to be the leader of the people at the moment of its revolutionary uprising, but the left wing of a bourgeois order, its feeler stretched out toward the masses. It called itself, and even deemed itself ”socialistic,“ in order to disguise not only from the masses, but from itself too, its actual role: without this self-inebriation it could rot have fulfilled this ro1e. This is the solution of the fundamental paradox of the February revolution.

On the evening of March 1, representatives of the Executive Committee, Cheidze, Steklov, Sukhanov and others, appeared at a meeting of the Duma Committee, in order to discuss the conditions upon which the soviets would support the new government. The programme of the democrats flatly ignored the question of war, republic, land, eight-hour day, and confined itself to one single demand: to give the left parties freedom of agitation. An example of disinterestedness for all peoples and ages! Socialists, having all the power in their hands, and upon whom alone it depended whether freedom of agitation should be given to others or not, handed over the power to their "class enemy" upon the condition that the latter should promise them . . . freedom of agitation! Rodzianko was afraid to go to the telegraph' office and said to Cheidze and Sukhanov: "You have the power, you can arrest us all." Cheidze and Sukhanov answered him: "Take the power, but don't arrest us for propaganda." When you study the negotiations of the Compromisers with the liberals, and in general all the incidents of the interrelation of the left and right wings at the Tauride Palace in those days, it seems as though upon that gigantic stage upon which the historic drama of a people is developing, a group of provincial actors, availing themselves of a vacant corner and were playing out a cheap quick-change vaudeville act.

The leaders of the bourgeoisie, we must do them justice, never expected anything of the kind. They would surely have less dreaded the revolution if they had counted upon this kind s from its leaders. To be sure, they would have miscalculated even in that case, but at least together with the latter. Fearing, nevertheless, that the bourgeoisie might not agree to take the power on the proposed conditions, Sukhanov delivered athreatening ultimatum: "Either we or nobody can control the elements ... there is but one way out-agree to our terms." In other words: accept the programme, which is your programme; for this we promise to subdue for you the masses who gave us the power. Poor subduers of the elements!

Miliukov was astonished. "He did not try to conceal," remembers Sukhanov, "his satisfaction and his agreeable astonishment." When the Soviet delegates, to make it sound more important, added that their conditions were "final," Miliukov even became expansive and patted them on the head with the remark: "Yes, I was listening and I was thinking how far forward our workers' movement has progressed since the days of 1905 . . ."In the same tone of the good-natured crocodile the Hohenzollern diplomat at Brest-Litovsk conversed with the delegates of the Ukranian Rada, complimenting them upon their statesman-like maturity just before swallowing them up. If the Soviet democracy was not swallowed up by the bourgeoisie, it was not Miliukov's fault, and no thanks to Sukhanov. The bourgeoisie received the power behind the backs of the people. It had no support in the toiling classes. But along with the power it received a simulacrum of support second-hand. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, lifted aloft by the masses, delivered as if from themselves a testimonial of confidence to the bourgeoisie. If you look at this operation of formal democracy in cross-section you have a picture of a twofold election, in which

the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries play the technical role of a middle link, that is, Kadet electors. If you take the question politically, it must be conceded that the Compromisers betrayed the confidence of the masses by calling to power those against whom they themselves were elected. And finally from a deeper, more social point of view, the question presents itself thus: the petty bourgeois parties, having in everyday circumstances shown an extraordinary pretentiousness and satisfaction with themselves, as soon as they were raised by a revolution to the heights of power, were frightened by their own inadequacy and hastened to surrender the helm to representatives of capital. In this act of prostration is immediately revealed the terrible shakiness of the new middle caste and its humiliating dependence upon the big bourgeoisie. Realising or only feeling that the power in their hands would not last long anyway, that they would soon have to surrender it either to the right or the left, the democrats decided that it was better to give it to-day to the solid liberals than to-morrow to the extreme representatives of the proletariat. But in this view also, the role of the Compromisers, in spite of its social conditioning, does not cease to be a treachery to the masses.

In giving their confidence to the socialists the workers and soldiers found themselves, quite unexpectedly, expropriated politically. They were bewildered, alarmed, but did not immediately find a way out. Their own betrayers deafened them from above with arguments to which they had no ready answer, but which conflicted with all their feelings and intentions. The revolutionary tendencies of the masses, even at the moment of the February revolution, did not at all coincide with the Compromise tendencies of the petty bourgeois parties. The proletariat and the peasantry voted for the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries not as compromisers, but as opponents of the czar, the capitalists and the landowners. But in voting for them they created a partition-wall between themselves and their own aims. They could not now move forward at all without bumping into this wall erected by themselves, and knocking it over. Such was the striking *quid pro quo* comprised in the class relations as they were uncovered by the February revolution.

To this fundamental paradox a supplementary one was immediately added. The liberals agreed to take the power from the hands of the socialists only on condition that the monarchy should agree to take it from their hands. During the time when Guchkov, with the monarchist Shulgin, already known to us, was travelling out to Pskov to save the dynasty, the problem of a constitutional monarchy was at the centre of negotiation between the two committees in the Tauride Palace. Miliukov was trying to convince the democrats who had come to him with the power in the palms of their hands, that the Romanovs could now no longer be dangerous, that Nicholas, to be sure, would have to be removed, but that the czarevich Alexei, with Mikhail as regent, could fully guarantee the welfare of the country: ”The one is a sick child, the other an utterly stupid man.“ We will add also a characterisation which the liberal monarchist Shidlovsky gave of the candidate for czar: ”Mikhail Alexan-

drovich has tried every way possible to avoid interfering in any affairs of state, devoting himself wholeheartedly to horse-racing.“ A striking recommendation, especially if it were repeated before the masses. After the flight of Louis XVI to Varennes, Danton proclaimed in the Jacobin Club that once a man is weak-minded he can no longer be king. The Russian liberals thought on the contrary that the weak-mindedness of a monarch would serve as the best possible decoration for a constitutional rgime. However, this was a random argument calculated to impress the mentality of the ”left“ simpletons a little too crude, however, even for them. It was suggested to broad circles of the liberal Philistines that Mikhail was an ”Anglomaniac“-without making clear whether in the matter of horseracing or parliamentarism. But the main argument was that they needed a ”customary symbol of power.“ Otherwise the people would imagine that anarchy had come.

The democrats listened, were politely surprised and tried to persuade them ... to declare a republic? No. Only not to decide the question in advance. The third point of the Executive Committee’s conditions read: ”The Provisional Government shall not undertake any steps which would define in advance the future form of government.“ Miliukov, made of the question of the monarchy an ultimatum. The democrats were in despair. But here the masses came to their help. At the meetings in the Tauride Palace absolutely nobody, not only among the workers, but among the soldiers, wanted a czar, and there was no means of imposing one upon them. Nevertheless, Miliukov tried to swim against the current, and to save the throne and dynasty over the heads of his left allies. In his history of the revolution he himself cautiously remarks that towards the end of the 2nd of March the excitement produced by his announcement of the Regency of Mikhail ”had considerably increased.“ Rodzianko far more colourfully paints the effect upon the masses produced by this monarchist manoeuvre of the liberals. The moment he arrived from Pskov with the czar’s abdication in favour of Mikhail, Guchkov, upon the demand of the workers, went from the station to the railroad shops to tell what had happened, and having read the act of abdication he concluded: ”Long live the Emperor Mikhail¡‘ The result was unexpected. The orator was, according to Rodzianko, immediately arrested by the workers, and even apparently threatened with execution. ”He was liberated with great difficulty, with the help of a sentry company of the nearest regiment.“ Rodzianko, as always, exaggerates a little, but the essence of the matter is correctly stated. The country had so radically vomited up the monarch that it could not ever crawl down the people’s throat again. The revolutionary masses did not permit even the thought of a new czar.

Facing such a situation the members of the Provisional Committee sidled away from Mikhail one after another-not decisively, but ”until the Constituent Assembly“ and then we shall see. Only Miliukov and Guchkov stood out for monarchy to the end, continuing to make it a condition of their entering the cabinet. What to do? The democrats thought that without Miliukov it was impossible to create a bourgeois government, and without a

bourgeois government to save the revolution, Bickerings and persuasions went on without end. At a morning conference on March 3, a conviction of the necessity of ”persuading the grand duke to abdicate“-they considered him czar then, after all!-seemed to gain the upper hand completely in the Provisional Committee. The left Kadet Nekrasov even drew up a text of the abdication. But since Miliukov stubbornly refused to yield, a decision was finally reached after further passionate quarrels: ”Both sides shall present before the grand duke their opinions and without further argument leave the decision to the grand duke himself.“ Thus an ”utterly stupid man,“ to whom his older brother overthrown by the insurrection had tried, in conflict even with the dynastic statute, to slip the throne, unexpectedly became the super-umpire on the question of the state structure of the revolutionary country. However improbable it may seem, a betting competition had arisen over the fate of the state. In order to induce the duke to tear himself away from the stables for the throne, Miliukov assured him that there was an excellent possibility of collecting outside of Petrograd a military force to defend his rights. In other words, having barely received the power from the hands of the socialists, Miliukov advanced a plan for a monarchist coup detat. At the end of the speeches for and against, of which there were not a few, the grand duke requested time for reflection. Inviting Rodzianko into another room Mikhail flatly asked him: Would the new authorities guarantee him only the crown, or also his head? The incomparable Lord Chamberlain answered that he could only promise the monarch in case of need to die with him. This did not at all satisfy the candidate. Coming out to the deputies after an embrace with Rodzianko, Mikhail Romanov ”pretty firmly“ declared that he would decline the lofty but risky position offered to him. Here Kerensky, who personified in these negotiations the conscience of the ‘democracy, ecstatically jumped up from his chair with the words: ”Your Highness, you are a noble man¡‘-and swore that from that time on he would proclaim this everywhere. ”Kerensky’s grandiloquence,“ comments Miliukov dryly, ”harmonised badly with the prose of the decision just taken.“ It is impossible to disagree. The text of this interlude truly left no place for pathos. To our comparison with a vaudeville played in the corner of an ancient amphitheatre, it is necessary to add that the stage was divided by screens into two halves: in one the revolutionises were begging the liberals to save the revolution, in the other the liberals were begging the monarchy to save liberalism.

The representatives of the Executive Committee were sincerely perplexed as to why such a cultured and far-sighted man as Miliukov should be obstinate about some old monarchy, and even be ready to renounce the power if he could not get a Romanov thrown in. Miliukov’s monarchism, however, was neither doctrinaire, nor romantic; on the contrary, it was a result of the naked calculation of the frightened property-owners. In its nakedness indeed lay its hopeless weakness. Miliukov the, historian, might, it is true, cite the example of the leader of the French revolutionary bourgeoisie, Mirabeau, who also in his day strove to reconcile the revolution with the king. There too at the bottom it was the fear

of the property-owners for their property: the more prudent policy was to disguise it with the monarchy, just as the monarchy had disguised itself with the church. But in 1789 the tradition of kingly power in France had still a universal popular recognition, to say nothing of the fact that all surrounding Europe was monarchist. In clinging to the king the French bourgeoisie was still on common ground with the people-at least in the sense that it was using against the people their own prejudices. The situation was wholly different in Russia in 1917. Aside from the shipwreck of the monarchist rgime in various other countries of the world, the Russian monarchy itself had been irremediably damaged already in 1905. After the 9th of January, Father Gapon had cursed the czar and his ”serpent offspring.“ The Soviet of Workers' Deputies of 1905 had stood openly for a republic. The monarchist feelings of the peasantry, upon which the monarchy itself had long counted, and with references to which the bourgeoisie camouflaged its own monarchism, simply did not exist. The militant counter-revolution which arose later, beginning with Kornilov, although hypocritically, nevertheless all the more demonstratively, disavowed the czarist power-so little was left of the monarchist roots in the people. But that same revolution of 1905, which mortally wounded the monarchy, had undermined forever the unstable republican tendencies of the ”advanced“ bourgeoisie. In contradicting each other, these two processes supplemented each other. Feeling in the first hours of the February revolution that it was drowning, the bourgeoisie grabbed at a straw. It needed the monarchy, not because that was a faith common to it and the people; on the contrary, the bourgeoisie had nothing left to set against the faith of the people but a crowned phantom. The ”educated“ classes of Russia entered the arena of the revolution not as the announcers of a rational state, but as defenders of medieval institutions. Having no support either in the people or in themselves, they sought it above themselves. Archimedes undertook to move the earth if they would give him a point of support. Miliukov was looking for a point of support in order to prevent the overthrow of the landlord's earth. [1] He felt in this operation much nearer to the calloused Russian generals and the hierarchs of the orthodox church, than to these tame democrats who were worried about nothing but the approval of the liberals. Not being in a position to break the revolution, Miliukov firmly decided to outwit it. He was ready to swallow a great deal: civil liberty for soldiers, democratic municipalities, Constituent Assembly, but on one condition: that they should give him an Archimedian point of support in the form of monarchy. He intended gradually and step by step to make the monarchy the axis of a group of generals, a patched-up bureaucracy, princes of the church, property-owners, all those who were dissatisfied with the revolution, and starting with a ”symbol,“ to create gradually a real monarchist bridle for the masses as soon as the latter should get tired of the revolution. If only he could gain time. Another leader of the Kadet Party, Nabokov, explained later what a capital advantage would have been gained if Mikhail had consented to take the throne: ”The fatal question of convoking a Constituent Assembly- in war time

would have been removed.“ We must bear those words in mind. The conflict about the date of the Constituent Assembly occupied a great place between February and October, during which time the Kadets categorically denied their intention to delay the summoning of the people’s representatives, while insistently and stubbornly carrying out a policy of postponement in fact. Alas, they had only themselves to rely on in this effort: the monarchist camouflage they never got. After the desertion of Mikhail, Miliukov had not even a straw to grab.

1. In Russian, the words *earth* and *land* are the same. [Trans.]

CHAPTER 10

THE NEW POWER

The beleted Russian bourgeoisie, separated from the people bound up much more closely with foreign finance capital than with its own toiling masses, hostile to the revolution which had triumphed, could not in its own name find a single justification for its pretence to power. And yet some justification was necessary, for the revolution was subjecting to a ruthless examination not only inherited rights but new claims. Least of all capable of presenting convincing arguments to the masses was the President of the Provisional Committee, Rodzianko, who arrived at the head of the revolutionary nation during the first days of the uprising.

A page in the court of Alexander II, an officer of the Cavalier Guard, head of the nobles of his province, Lord Chamberlain under Nicholas II, a monarchist through and through, a rich landlord and agrarian administrator, a member of the Octobrist Party, a deputy in the State Duma, Rodzianko was finally elected its president. This happened after the resignation of Guchkov, who was hated by the court as a "Young Turk." The Duma hoped that through the mediation of the Lord Chamberlain it would find easier access to the heart of the monarch. Rodzianko did what he could: sincerely enough assured the czar of his loyalty to the dynasty, begged the honour of being presented to the Heir Apparent, and introduced him self to the latter as "the biggest and fattest man in Russia." In spite of all his Byzantine clowning, the Lord Chamberlain did not win over the czar to the constitution, and the czarina briefly referred to Rodzianko in her letters as a scoundrel. During the war the President of the Duma undoubtedly gave the czar not a few unpleasant moments, cornering him when making personal reports and filling his ears with prolix exhortations, patriotic criticisms and gloomy forebodings. Rasputin considered Rodzianko a personal enemy. Kurlov, who was close to the court gang, speaks of Rodzianko's "insolence combined with obvious limitations." Witte spoke in better terms, although condescendingly, of the President of the Duma: "Not a stupid man, rather sensible; but still Rodzianko's chief talent lies not

in his mind but his voice-he has an excellent bass." At first Rodzianko tried to put down the revolution with the help of the fire-hose; he wept when he found out that the government of Count Golytsin had abandoned its post; declined with terror the power which the socialists offered him; afterwards decided to take it, but only in order as a loyal subject to restore the lost property as soon as possible to the monarch. It wasn't Rodzianko's fault if that opportunity never arrived. However the revolution-with the help of the socialists -did offer the Lord Chamberlain a grand opportunity to exercise his thunderous bass before the revolting troops. As early as the 27th of February this retired Captain of the Guard said to a cavalier regiment which had come to the Tauride Palace: "Christian warriors, hearken to my counsel. I am an old man; I will not deceive you obey your officers-they will not teach you evil, and will act in full agreement with the State Duma. Long live holy Russia!" Such a revolution as that would have been agreeable to all the Guard officers, but the soldiers couldn't help wondering what was the use making such a revolution. Rodzianko feared the soldiers; feared the workers, considered Cheidze and other left deputies German agents, and while he stood at the head of the revolution kept looking around every few minutes to see whether the Soviet was going to arrest him.

The figure of Rodzianko was a little funny, but by no means accidental. This Lord Chamberlain with an excellent bass personified the union of the two ruling classes of Russia, the landlords and the bourgeoisie, with the progressive priesthood adhering to them. Rodzianko himself was very pious and expert in hymn singing-and the liberal bourgeoisie, whatever its attitude towards Greek orthodoxy, considered a union with the church just as necessary to law and order as a union with the monarchy. The venerable monarchist, having received the power from the hands of conspirators, rebels and tyrannicides, wore a haunted expression in those days. And the other members of the Provisional committee felt but little better. Some of them never appeared at the Tauride Palace at all, considering that the situation had not yet sufficiently defined itself. The wisest of them sneaked on tiptoe round the blaze of the revolution, choking from the smoke, and saying to themselves: let it burn down to the coals, then we'll try to cook up something. Although it agreed to accept the power, the Committee did not immediately decide to form a ministry. "Awaiting the proper moment for the formation of a government "-as Miliukov expresses it-the Committee confined itself to the naming of commissars from the membership of the Duma to the principal governmental departments. That left them a chance to retreat.

To the Ministry of the Interior they delegated the deputy Karaulov, insignificant but rather less cowardly than the others, and he issued on March 1 an order for the arrest of all police officials, public, secret and political. This ferocious revolutionary gesture was purely platonic in character, for the police were already being arrested and the jails were their only refuge from massacre. It was some time later that the reaction began to regard this demonstrative act of Karaulov as the beginning of all their troubles.

As commander of Petrograd, they appointed Colonel Engelhardt, an officer of the Cavalier Guard, owner of a racing stud and vast landed properties. Instead of arresting the "dictator" Ivanov, sent from the front to pacify the capital, Engelhardt put at his disposition a reactionary officer in the capacity of chief of staff. It was all a matter between friends.

To the Ministry of Justice they delegated a bright light of the Moscow liberal bar, the eloquent and empty Maklakov, who began by giving the reactionary bureaucrats to understand that he did not want to accept the ministry as a favour from the revolution, and "glancing around at a messenger boy who had just come in," said in French: "*Le danger est* a' *gauche.*" The workers and soldiers did not have to understand French in order to recognise in all these gentlemen their mortal enemies.

Rodzianko's reverberations at the head of the Committee did not last very long. His candidacy for president of the revolution faded away of itself. The mediator between the monarchy and the property owners was too obviously useless as a mediator between the property owners and the revolution.

But he did not disappear from the scene. He stubbornly attempted to revive the Duma as a counter-weight to the Soviet, and invariably appears in the centre of all attempts to solidify the capitalist-landlord counter-revolution. We shall hear of him again.

On the 1st March the Provisional Committee undertook the formation of a ministry, appointing to it those men whom the Duma had been recommending to the czar since 1915 as enjoying the confidence of the country. They were big landlords and industrialists, opposition deputies in the Duma, leaders of the Progressive Bloc. The fact is that, with one single exception, the revolution accomplished by workers and soldiers found no reflection whatever in the staff of the revolutionary government. The exception was Kerensky. The distance from Rodzianko to Kerensky appeared officially to represent the whole gamut of the February revolution.

Kerensky entered the government somewhat in the character of a plenipotentiary ambassador. His connection with the revolution, however, was that of a provincial lawyer who had defended political cases. Kerensky was not a revolutionist; he merely hung around the revolution. Arriving in the fourth Duma thanks to his legal position, Kerensky became the president of a grey and characterless faction, the Trudoviks, anaemic fruit of a crossbreeding between liberalism and Narodnikism. He had no theoretical preparation, no political schooling, no ability to think, no political will. The place of these qualities was occupied by a nimble susceptibility, an inflammable temperament, and that kind of eloquence which operates neither upon mind nor will, but upon the nerves. His speeches in the Duma, couched in a spirit of declamatory radicalism which had no lack of occasions, gave Kerensky, if not popularity, at least a certain notoriety. During the war Kerensky, a patriot, had looked with the liberals upon the very idea of revolution as ruinous. He acknowledged the revolution

only after it had come and catching him up by his pseudo-popularity lifted him aloft. The revolution naturally identified itself for him with the new power. The Executive Committee decided, however, that was a bourgeois revolution and the power should belong to the bourgeoisie. This formula seemed false to Kerensky, if only because it slammed the doors of the ministry in his face. Kerensky was quite rightly convinced that his socialism would not trouble the bourgeois revolution, nor would the bourgeois revolution do any damage to his socialism. The Provisional Committee of the Duma decided to try to draw this radical deputy away from the Soviet, and achieved it with no difficulty by offering him the portfolio of Justice, which had already been refused by Maklakov. Kerensky buttonholed his friends in the *couloirs*, and asked: Shall I take it or not? His friends had no doubt whatever that he would take it. Sukhanov, who was very friendly towards Kerensky at that period, attributes to him in his subsequent memoirs, "a confidence in some mission of his own . . . and an enormous vexation with those who had not yet found out about that mission. In the long run his friends, and Sukhanov among them, advised Kerensky to take the portfolio: We will be safer this way-we will have our own man to tell us what is going on among those foxy liberals. But while pushing Kerensky *sub rosa* toward that sin to which he himself aspired with all his heart, the leaders of the Executive Committee refused him their official sanction. As Sukhanov reminded Kerensky, the Executive Committee had already expressed itself against its members entering the government, and to raise the question again in the Soviet would be "not without danger," for the Soviet might simply answer: "The power ought to belong to the soviet democracy. Those are the very words of Sukhanov himself, an unbelievable mixture of naivet and cynicism. The inspirer of this whole governmental mystification thus openly acknowledges that, as easily as the 2nd of March, the Petrograd Soviet was in a mood for the *formal* seizure of that power which had belonged to it *in fact* since the evening of February 27-that only behind the backs of the workers and soldiers, without their knowledge, and against their actual will, had the socialist leaders been able to expropriate this power for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. In Sukhanov's account this deal between the democrats and the liberals acquires all the necessary juridical marks of a crime against the revolution, a veritable secret conspiracy against the sovereignty and rights of the people. Discussing Kerensky's impatience, the leaders of the Executive Committee whispered that it would be embarrassing for the socialists to take back from the members of the Duma a small piece of the power when they had only just handed the whole thing over to them. Better let Kerensky do it on his own responsibility. Truly those gentlemen had an infallible instinct for finding in every situation the most false and tangled-up solution possible. But Kerensky did not want to enter the government in the business suit of a radical deputy; he wanted to wear the cloak of a plenipotentiary of the triumphant revolution. In order to avoid obstacles, he did not appeal for sanction either to that party of which he professed himself a member, nor to the Executive Committee of which he was one of

the vice-presidents. Without warning the leaders, he appeared at a plenary session of the Soviet-chaotic meetings in those days-requested the floor for a special announcement, and in a speech which some describe as incoherent, others as hysterical in which, to be sure, there is no contradiction demanded the personal confidence of the deputies, and spoke of his general readiness to die for the revolution, and his more immediate readiness to take the portfolio of Minister of Justice. He had only to mention the necessity of complete political amnesty and a prosecution of the czar's officials, in order to win tumultuous applause from that inexperienced and leaderless assembly. "This farce," Shliapnikov remembers, "produced in many a deep indignation and disgust for Kerensky." But nobody opposed him. Having turned over the power to the bourgeoisie, the socialists, as we have heard, wanted to avoid raising that question before the masses. There was no vote. Kerensky decided to interpret the applause as a vote of confidence. In a way he was right. The Soviet was undoubtedly in favour of socialists entering the ministry, seeing in that a step toward the liquidation of the bourgeois government with which it had not for a moment reconciled itself. At any rate, Kerensky, flouting the official doctrine of the sovereignty, accepted on March 2 the post of Minister of Justice. "He was highly pleased with his appointment," the Octobrist Shidlovsky relates, "and I distinctly remember him in the chambers of the Provisional Committee, lying in an armchair, telling us heatedly upon what an unattainably high pedestal he was going to place justice in Russia." He demonstrated this some months later in his prosecution of the Bolsheviks.

The Menshevik Cheidze, upon whom the liberals-guided by a too simple calculation and an international tradition-wanted in a hard moment to unload the Ministry of Labour, categorically refused, and remained President of the Soviet. Although less brilliant than Kerensky, Cheidze was made of more serious material.

The axis of the Provisional Government, although not formally its head, was Miliukov, the indubitable leader of the Kadet Party. "Miliukov was incomparably above his colleagues in the cabinet," wrote the Kadet Nabokov, after he had broken with Milinkov, "as an intellectual force, as a man of enormous, almost inexhaustible knowledge and wide intelligence." Sukhanov, while blaming Miliukov personally for the wreck of Russian liberalism, nevertheless wrote: "Miliukov was then the central figure, the soul and brain of all the bourgeois political circles. . . . Without him there would have been no bourgeois policy in the first period of the revolution." In spite of their slightly exalted tone, these reports truly indicate the superiority of Miliukov to the other political men of the Russian bourgeoisie. His strength lay, and his weakness too, in this: he expressed more fully and elegantly than others in the language of politics the fate of the Russian bourgeoisie-the fact that it caught historically in a blind alley. The Mensheviks wept because Miliukov ruined liberalism, but it would be truer to say that liberalism ruined Miliukov.

In spite of his Neo-Slavism warmed over for imperialistic purposes, Miliukov always remained a bourgeois "Westerner." The goal of his party was always the triumph in Russia of European civilisation. But the farther he went, the more he feared those revolutionary paths upon which the Western peoples were travelling. His "Westernism" therefore reduced itself to an impotent envy of the West.

The English and French bourgeoisie created a new society in their own image. The Germans came later, and they were compelled to live for a long time on the pale gruel of philosophy. The Germans invented the phrase "speculative world," which does not exist in English or French. While these nations were creating a new world the Germans were thinking one up. But the German bourgeoisie, although poor in political activity, created the classical philosophy, and that is no small achievement. Russia came much later. To be sure, she translated the German phrase "speculative world" into Russian, and that with several variations, but this only the more clearly exposed both her political impotence and her deadly philosophical poverty. She imported ideas as well as machines, establishing high tariffs for the latter, and for the former a quarantine of fear. To these characteristics of his class Miliukov was called to give a political expression.

A former Moscow professor of history, author of significant scholarly works, founder of the Kadet Party-a union of the liberal landlords and the left intelligentsia-Miliukov was completely free from that insufferable, half-aristocratic and half-intellectual political dilettantism which is proper to the majority of Russian liberal men of politics. Miliukov took his profession very seriously and that alone distinguished him.

Before 1905, the Russian liberals were customarily embarrassed about being liberal. A tinge of Narodnikism, and later of Marxism, long served them as a defensive colouration. This rather shallow, shamefaced capitulation to socialism on the part of wide bourgeois circles, among them a number of young industrialists, expressed the lack of self-confidence of a class which appeared soon enough to concentrate millions in its hands, but too late to stand at the head of the nation. The bearded fathers, wealthy peasants and shopkeepers, had piled up their money, thinking nothing of their social role. Their sons graduated from the university in the period of pre-revolutionary intellectual ferment, and when they tried to find their place in society, they were in no hurry to adopt the banner of liberalism, already worn out in advanced countries, patched and half faded. For a period of time they gave a part of their souls, and even a part of their incomes, to the revolutionists. This is especially true of the representatives of the liberal professions. A very considerable number of them passed through a stage of socialistic sympathy in their youth. Professor Miliukov never had these measles. He was organically bourgeois and not ashamed of it.

It is true that at the time of the first revolution, Miliukoy did not wholly renounce the idea of utilising the revolutionary masses-with the help of tame and well-trained socialist

parties. Witte relates that when he was forming his constitutional cabinet in October 1905, and appealed to the Kadets to "cut off their revolutionary tail," the answer was that they could no more get along without the armed forces of the revolution than Witte could without the army. In the essence of the matter, this was a bluff even then: in order to raise their own price, the Kadets tried to frighten Witte with the masses whom they themselves feared. It was precisely the experience of 1905 which convinced Miliukov that, no matter how strong the liberal sympathies of the socialist groups of the intelligentsia might be, the genuine forces of the revolution, the masses, would never give up their weapons to the bourgeoisie, and would be the more dangerous the better armed they were. When he declared openly that the red flag is a red rag, Miliukov ended to everybody's relief a romance which in reality nobody had seriously begun. The isolation of the so-called intelligentsia from the people has been one of the traditional themes of Russian journalism-and by "intelligentsia" the liberals, in contrast with the socialists, mean all the "educated," that is, possessing, classes. Ever since that isolation proved such a calamity to the liberals in the first revolution, the ideologues of the "educated" masses have lived in a kind of perpetual expectation of the judgment day. One of the liberal writers, a philosopher not restrained by the exigencies of politics, has expressed this fear of the masses with an ecstatic force which reminds us of the epileptic reactionism of Dostoyevsky: "Whatever we stand for, we must not dream of uniting with the people-we must fear them more than all the persecutions of the government, and we must give thanks to the government which alone protects us with its prisons and bayonets from the ferocity of the people." With such political feelings, could the liberals possibly dream of leading a revolutionary nation? Miliukov's whole policy is marked with a stamp of hopelessness. At the moment of national crisis his party thinks about dodging the blow, not dealing it.

As a writer, Miliukov is heavy, prolix and wearisome. He has the same quality as an orator. Decorativeness is unnatural to him. That might have been an advantage, if the niggardly policies of Miliukov had not so obviously needed a disguise or if they had had, at least, an objective disguise in the shape of a great tradition. There was not even a little tradition. The official policy in France-quintessence of bourgeois perfidy and egotism-has two mighty allies: tradition and rhetoric. Each promoting the other, they surround with a defensive covering any bourgeois politician, even such a prosaic clerk of the big proprietors as Poincare. It is not Miliukov's fault if he had no glorious ancestors, and if he was compelled to conduct a policy of bourgeois egotism on the borders of Europe and Asia.

"Along with a sympathy for Kerensky," we read in the memoirs of the Social Revolutionary, Sokolov, "one felt from the beginning an immense and unconcealed, and yet rather strange, antipathy for Miliukov. I did not understand, and do not now, why that respectable social reformer was so unpopular." If the Philistines had understood the cause

of their admiration for Kerensky and their distaste for Miliukov, they would have ceased to be Philistines. The everyday bourgeois did not like Miliukov, because Miliukov too prosaically and soberly, without adornment, expressed the political essence of the Russian bourgeoisie. Beholding himself in the Miliukov mirror, the bourgeois saw that he was grey, self-interested and cowardly; and, as so often happens, he took offence at the mirror.

On his side, observing the displeased grimaces of the liberal bourgeois, Miliukov quietly and confidently remarked: "The everyday man is a fool." He pronounced these words without irritation, almost caressingly, as though to say: He does not understand me to day, but never mind, he will understand later. Miliukov was deeply confident that the bourgeoisie would not betray him, that it would obey the logic of the situation and follow, for it had no other way to go. And in reality, after the February revolution, all the bourgeois parties, even those to, the right, followed the Kadet leader, abusing and even cursing him.

It was very different with the democratic politicians of a socialist colouring, men of the type of Sukhanov. This was no ordinary Philistine, but on the contrary a professional man-of-politics, sufficiently expert in his small trade. He could never look intelligent, because one saw too plainly the continual contrast between what he wanted, and what he arrived at. But he intellectualised and blundered and bored. In order to lead him after you, it was necessary to deceive him by acknowledging his genuine independence, even accusing him of being self-willed, excessively given to command. That flattered him and reconciled him to the role of helper. It was in conversation with just these socialistic highbrows that Miliukov tossed out that phrase: "The everyday man is a fool." This was delicate flattery: "Only you and I are intelligent." As a matter of fact, at that very moment Miliukov was hooking a ring in the noses of his democratic friends. By that ring they were subsequently led out of the way.

His personal unpopularity prevented Miliukov from standing at the head of the government. He took the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had been his speciality in the Duma.

The War Minister of the revolution was the big Moscow industrialist, Guchkov, already known to us-in his youth a liberal with an adventurous temperament, but afterwards, in the period of the defeat of the first revolution, the trusted man of the big bourgeoisie under Stolypin. The dissolution of the two first Dumas, dominated by the Kadets, led to the governmental overturn of the 3rd of June 1907, which changed the election law to the benefit of the party of Guchkov. It became the leader of the two subsequent Dumas and continued so right up to the day of the revolution. In Kiev in 1911, at the unveiling of a monument to Stolypin who was killed by a terrorist, Guchkov, in placing a wreath, bowed silently down to the ground: a gesture in the name of his class. In the Duma, Guchkov dedicated himself chiefly to the question of "military might," and in preparing for war walked

hand-in-hand with Miliukov. In the position of President of the Central Military Industrial Committee, Guchkov united the industrialists under the banner of a patriotic opposition-not however preventing the leaders of the Progressive Bloc, including Rodzianko, from getting a rake-off on military contracts. For revolutionary recommendation there was attached to Guchkov's name that semi-legend about the plot of a palace revolution. A former chief of police asserted, moreover, that Guchkov "had permitted himself in private conversations about the monarch to employ an epithet insulting in the highest degree" That was very likely true, but in that Guchkov was no exception. The pious czarina hated Guchkov, lavished crude abuse upon him in her letters, and expressed the hope that he would hang "on a high tree." But the czarina had many others in view for this same high position. Somehow, at any rate, this man who bowed to the earth in honour of the hangman of the first revolution became the War Minister of the second.

The Minister of Agriculture was the Kadet Shingarev, a provincial doctor who had subsequently become a deputy in the Duma. His close associates in the party considered him an honest mediocrity or, as Nabokov expressed it, "a Russian provincial intellectual, designed on a small-town or county, rather than a national, scale." The indefinite radicalism of his early years had long washed away, and the chief anxiety of Shingarev was to demonstrate his statesmanlike maturity to the possessing classes. Although the old Kadet program spoke of the "confiscation with just indemnity of the landed estates," none of the property owners took this program seriously especially now in the years of the war inflation. And Shingarev made it his chief task to delay the decision of the agrarian problem, deluding the peasants with the mirage of a Constituent Assembly which the Kadets did not want to summon. On the land question and the question of war, the February revolution was destined to break its neck. Shingarev helped all he could.

The portfolio of Finance was given to a young man named Tereshchenko. "Where did they get him?" everybody was inquiring with bewilderment in the Tauride Palace. The well-informed explained that this was an owner of sugar factories, estates, forests, and other innumerable properties, worth some eighty million roubles in gold, president of the Military-Industrial Committee of Kiev, possessed of a good French pronunciation, and on top of it all a connoisseur of the ballet. And they added-more importantly-that as the favourite of Guchkov, Tereshehenko had almost taken part in the great conspiracy which was to have overthrown Nicholas II. The revolution which prevented that conspiracy was of great help to Tereshchenko.

In the course of those five February days when the revolutionary fight was being waged in the cold streets of the capital, there flitted before us several times like a shadow the figure of a liberal of noble family, the son of a former czarist minister, Nabokov-almost symbolic in his self-satisfied correctness and dry egotism. Nabokov passed the decisive days of the

insurrection within the four walls of the chancellery, or his home, "in dull and anxious expectancy." He now became General Administrator of the Provisional Government, actually a minister without portfolio. In his Berlin exile where he was finally killed by the stray bullet of a White Guard, he left memoirs of the Provisional Government which are not without interest. Let us place that to his credit.

But we have forgotten to mention the Prime Minister-whom, by the way, in the most serious moments of his brief term everybody forgot. On March 2, in recommending the new government to a meeting at the Tauride Palace, Miliukov described Prince Lvov as "the incarnation of the Russian social consciousness so persecuted by the czarist rgime." Later, in his history of the revolution, Miliukov prudently remarks that at the head of the government was placed Prince Lvov, "personally little known to the majority of the Provisional Committee." The historian here tries to relieve the politician of responsibility for this choice. As a matter of fact, the prince had long been a member of the Kadet Party, belonging to its right wing. After the dissolution of the first Duma, at that famous meeting of the deputies at Vyborg which addressed the population with the ritual of offended liberalism: "Refuse to pay the taxes!" Prince Lvov attended but did not sign the appeal. Nabokov relates that immediately upon his arrival at Vyborg the prince fell sick, and his sickness was "attributed to the emotional condition in which he found himself." The prince was evidently not built for revolutionary excitement. This moderate prince, owing to a political indifference that looked like broadmindedness, tolerated in the organisations which he administered a large number of left intellectuals, former revolutionists, socialistic patriots, and draft-dodgers. They worked just as well as the bureaucrats, did not graft, and moreover created for the prince a simulacrum of popularity. A prince, a rich man, and a liberal that was very impressive to the average bourgeois. For that reason Prince Lvov was marked for the premiership even under the czar. To sum it all up in a word, the head of the government of the February revolution was an illustrious but notoriously empty spot. Rodzianko would at least have been more colourful.

The legendary history of the Russian state begins with a tale in the *Chronicle* to the effect that delegates of the Slavic tribes went to the Scandinavian princes with the request: "Come and rule and be princes over us." The pitiable representatives of the social democracy transformed this historic legend into a fact-not in the ninth but in the twentieth century, and with this difference, that they did not address themselves to princes over the sea, but to their own home princes. Thus as a result of a victorious insurrection of workers and soldiers, there appeared at the helm of government a handful of the very richest landlords and industrialists, remarkable for less than nothing, political dilettantes without a program and at the head of them a prince with a strong dislike for excitement.

The composition of the new government was greeted with satisfaction in the Allied em-

bassies, in the bourgeois and bureaucratic salons, and in the broader circles of the middle, and part of the petty, bourgeoisie. Prince Lvov, Octobrist Guchkov, Kadet Miliukov - those names sounded reassuring. The name of Kerensky perhaps caused some eyebrows to rise among the Allies, but they were not badly frightened. The more far-seeing understood: after all, there is a revolution in the country; with such a steady wheel-horse as Miliukov, a mettlesome team-mate can only be helpful. Thus the French ambassador Palologue, a great lover of Russian metaphors, must have expressed it.

Among the workers and soldiers the composition of the government created an immediate feeling of hostility, or at the best a dumb bewilderment. The name of Miliukov or Guchkov did not evoke one voice of greeting in either factory or barrack. There exists no little testimony to this. Officer Mstislavisky reports the sullen alarm of his soldiers at the news that the power had passed from czar to prince: Is that worth shedding blood for? Stankevich, one of Kerensky's intimate circle, made the rounds of his sapper battalion, company by company, recommending the new government, which he himself considered best possible and of which he spoke with great enthusiasm. "But I felt a coolness in the audience." Only when the officer mentioned Kerensky did the soldiers "kindle with sincere satisfaction." By that time the bourgeois social opinion of the capital had already converted Kerensky into the central hero of the revolution. The soldiers even more than the workers desired to see in Kerensky a counterpoise to the bourgeois government, and only wondered why he was there alone. Kerensky was not a counterpoise, however, but a finishing touch, a screen, a decoration. He was defending the same interests as Miliukov, but with magnesium flashlights.

What was the real constitution of the country after the inauguration of the new power?

The monarchist reaction was hiding in the cracks. With the very first ebb of the wave, property owners of all kinds and tendencies gathered around the banner of the Kadet Party, which had suddenly become the only non-socialist party-and at the same time the extreme right party-ill the open arena.

The masses went over in droves to the socialists, whom they identified with the Soviet. Not only the workers and soldiers of the enormous garrisons in the rear, but all the many-coloured small people of the towns-mechanics, street peddlers, petty officials, cab-drivers, janitors, servants of all kinds-feeling alien to the Provisional Government and its bureaux, were seeking a closer and more accessible authority. In continually increasing numbers, peasant delegates were appearing at the Tauride Palace. The masses poured into the Soviet as though into the triumphal gates of the revolution. All that remained outside the boundaries of the Soviet seemed to fall away from the revolution, seemed somehow to belong to a different world. And so it was in reality. Beyond the boundaries of the Soviet remained the world of the property owner, in which all colours mingled now in one greyish-pink

defensive tint.

Not all the toiling masses chose the Soviet; not all awakened at once; not every layer of the oppressed dared instantly believe that the revolution concerned them. In the consciousness of many only an undiscriminating hope was stirring. But all the active elements of the masses poured into the Soviet, and activity prevails in times of revolution. Moreover, since mass activity was growing from day to day, the basis of the Soviet was continually broadening. It was the sole genuine basis of the revolution.

In the Tauride Palace there were two halves: the Duma and the Soviet. The Executive Committee was at first crowded into some narrow secretarial chambers, through which flowed an uninterrupted human flood. The deputies of the Duma tried to feel like proprietors in their sumptuous chambers. But the barriers were soon swept away by the overflow of the revolution. In spite of all the indecisiveness of its leaders, the Soviet spread out irresistibly, and the Duma was crowded away into the back yard. The new correlation of forces broke its path everywhere.

Deputies in the Tauride Palace, officers in their regiments, commanders in the staffs, directors and managers in factories, on the railroads, in the telegraph offices, landlords or managers of estates-all felt themselves during those first days of the revolution to be under the suspicious and tireless scrutiny of the masses. In the eyes of those masses the Soviet was an expression of their distrust of all who had oppressed them. Typesetters would jealously follow the text of the articles which they had set up, railroad workers would anxiously and vigilantly watch over the military trains, telegraphers would become absorbed in re-reading the texts of telegrams, soldiers would glance around suspiciously every time their officer made a move, workers would dismiss from the factory an overseer belonging to the Black Hundreds and take in under observation a liberal manager. The Duma from the first hours of the revolution, and the Provisional Government from its first days, became reservoirs into which flowed a continuous stream of complaints and objections from the upper layers of society, their protests against “excesses,” their woeful comments and dark forebodings.

“Without the bourgeoisie we cannot manage the state apparatus,” reasoned the socialistic petty bourgeois, timidly looking up at the official buildings where the skeleton of the old government looked out with empty eyes. The problem was solved by setting some sort of a liberal head on the institution which the revolution had beheaded. The new ministers entered into the czarist bureaux, took possession of the apparatus of typewriters, telephones, couriers, stenographers and clerks, and found out from day to day that the machine was running empty.

Kerensky subsequently related how the Provisional Government “took the power in its hands on the third day of all Russian anarchy, when throughout the whole extent of the Russian land there existed not only no governmental power, but literally not one policeman.”

The soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies standing at the head of millions of people, counted for nothing; that of course was merely one element of the anarchy. The orphaned condition of the country is summed up for Kerensky in the disappearance of policemen. In that confession of faith of the most leftward of the ministers, you have the key to the whole policy of the government.

The place of the governors of provinces was occupied, on the order of Prince Lvov, by the presidents of the provincial zemstvos, who differed but little from their predecessors. Often enough they were feudal landlords who regarded even the governors as Jacobins. At the head of the counties stood the presidents of the county zemstvos. Under the new name of "commissars" the population recognised their old enemies. "New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large," as Milton once said of the cowardly Presbyterian reformation. The provincial and district commissars took possession of the typewriters, correspondence, and clerks of the governors and chiefs of police, only to find out that they had inherited no real power. Real life both in the provinces and in the counties concentrated around the Soviet. A two-power system thus reigned from top to bottom. But in the provinces the Soviet leaders, those same Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, were a little simpler and by no means everywhere renounced that power which the whole situation was imposing upon them. As a result of this, the activity of the provincial commissars consisted mainly of submitting complaints as to the complete impossibility of fulfilling the duties of their office. Two days after the formation of the liberal ministry the bourgeoisie were feeling that they had not acquired the power, but lost it. In spite of all the fantastic caprices of the Rasputin clique before the revolution, its real power had been limited. The influence of the bourgeoisie upon the government had been enormous. The very participation of Russia in the war was more the work of the bourgeoisie than the monarchy. But the main thing was that the czarist government had guaranteed to the property owners their factories, land, banks, houses, newspapers; it was consequently upon the most vital questions *their* government. The February revolution changed the situation in two contrary directions it solemnly handed over to the bourgeoisie the external attributes of power, but at the same time it took from them that share in the actual rulership which they had enjoyed before the revolution. The former employees of the zemstvos where Prince Lvov was the boss, and of the Military-Industrial Committee where Guchkov was in command, became to-day, under the name of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, lords of the situation in the country and on the front, in the city and in the village. They appointed Lvov and Guchkov to the ministry, and laid down the conditions of their work as though they were hiring stewards.

On the other hand, the Executive Committee, having created a bourgeois government, could not make up its mind like the Bible God to call the creation good. On the contrary, it made great haste to increase the distance between itself and the work of its hands, and announced that it intended to support the new power only in so far as it should truly serve the

democratic revolution. The Provisional Government very well knew that it could not survive an hour without the support of the official democracy. But this support was promised only as a reward for good behaviour-that is, for fulfilling tasks alien to it, and which the democracy itself had just declined to fulfil. The government never knew within what limits it might dare to reveal its semi-contraband sovereignty. The leaders of the Executive Committee could not always advise it, because it was hard for them to guess just where some dissatisfaction would break out in their own midst, expressing the dissatisfaction of the masses. The bourgeoisie pretended that the socialists were deceiving them. The socialists in their turn were afraid that the liberals, with their premature demands, would stir up the masses and complicate a situation difficult enough as it was. *"In sofar as "*-that equivocal formula laid its imprint on the whole pre-October period. It became the juridical formulation of the inner lie contained in the hybrid rgime of the February revolution.

To bring pressure upon the government, the Executive Committee elected a special commission which it politely but ludicrously named "Contact Commission." The organisation of the revolutionary power was thus upon the principle of mutual persuasion. The mystic writer Merezhkovsky could find a precedent for such a rgime only in the Old Testament: the kings of Israel had their prophets. But the prophets of the Bible, like the prophets of the last Romanov, used at least to receive suggestions directly from heaven, and the kings did not dare to contradict. In that way a single sovereignty was assured. It was quite different with the prophets of the Soviet: they prophesied only under the stimulus of their own limited intelligence. The liberal ministers moreover believed that nothing good could come out of the Soviet. Cheidze, Skobelev, Sukhanov and others would run to the government and garrulously try to persuade it to make some concession; the ministers would object; the delegates would return to the Executive Committee, try to influence it with the authority of the government; again get into contact with the ministers; and so begin over again from the beginning. This complicated mill-wheel never did any grinding.

In the Contact Commission everybody complained. Guchkov especially wept over the disorders in the army caused by the connivances of the Soviet. At times the War Minister of the revolution "in the literal sense of the word . . . poured out tears, or at least earnestly wiped his eyes with his handkerchief." He was quite right in thinking that to dry the tears of the anointed is one of the functions of a prophet.

On the ninth of March General Alexeiev, the Chief of Staff, telegraphed the War Minister: "The German yoke is near if only we indulge the Soviet." Guchkov answered him tearfully: ' The government, alas, has no real power: the troops, the railroads, the post and telegraph are in the hands of the Soviet. The simple fact is that the Provisional Government exists only so long as the Soviet permits it."

Week followed week, but the situation did not improve in the least. Early in April when

the Provisional Government sent deputies of the Duma to the front, it directed them, gritting its teeth, not to reveal any disagreements with the delegates of the Soviet. Throughout the whole journey the liberal deputies felt as though they were under convoy, but they also knew that without this, notwithstanding their lofty credentials, they not only could not approach the soldiers, but they could not even find seats in the trains. That prosaic detail in the memoirs of Prince Mansyrev excellently supplements Guchkov's correspondence with the staff as to the essence of the February constitution. One of the reactionary wits pretty well characterised the situation thus: "The old government is in prison, I and the new one under house arrest."

But did the Provisional Government have no other support but this equivocal one of the Soviet leaders? What had become of the possessing classes? The question is a fundamental one. United by their past with the monarchy, the possessing classes had hastened to group themselves around a new axis after the revolution. On the 2nd of March, the Council of Trade and Industry, representing the united capital of the whole country, saluted the act of the State Duma, and declared itself "wholly at the disposition" of its Committee.

The zemstvos and the town dumas adopted the same course. On March 10, even the Council of the United Nobility, the mainstay of the throne, summoned all the people of Russia a language of eloquent cowardice "to unite around the Provisional Government as now the sole lawful power in Russia. Almost at the same time the institutions and organs of the possessing classes began to denounce the dual power, and to lay the blame for the disorders upon the Soviet-at first cautiously but then bolder and bolder. The employers were soon followed by the clerks, the united liberal professions, the government employees. From the army came telegrams, addresses and resolutions of the same character-manufactured in the staff. The liberal press opened a campaign "for a single sovereignty," which in the coming months acquired the character of a hurricane of fire around the heads of the Soviet. All these things together looked exceedingly impressive. The enormous number of institutions, well-known names, resolutions, articles, the decisiveness of tone-it had an indubitable effect upon the suggestible heads of the Committee. And yet there was no serious force behind this threatening parade of the propertied classes. How about the force of property? said the petty bourgeois socialists, answering the Bolsheviks. Property is a relation among people. It represents an enormous power so long as it is universally recognised and supported by that system of compulsion called Law and the State. But the very essence of the present situation was that the old state had suddenly collapsed, and the entire old system of rights had been called in question by the masses. In the factories the workers were more and more regarding themselves as the proprietors, and the bosses as uninvited guests. Still less assured were the feelings of the landlords in the provinces, face to face with those surly vengeful muzhiks, and far from that governmental power in whose existence they did for a time, owing to their distance from the capital, believe. The property-holders, deprived

of the possibility of using their property, or protecting it, ceased to be real property holders and became badly frightened Philistines who could not give any support to the government for the simple reason that they needed support themselves. They soon began to curse the government for its weakness, but they were only cursing their own fate

In those days the joint activity of the Executive Committee and the ministry seemed to have for its goal to demonstrate that the art of government in time of revolution consists in a garrulous waste of time. With the liberals this was a consciously adopted plan. It was their firm conviction that all measures demanded postponement except one: the oath of loyalty to the Entente.

Miliukov acquainted his colleagues with the secret treaties. Kerensky let them in one ear and out the other. Apparently only the Procuror of the Holy Synod, a certain Lvov, rich in surprises, a namesake of the Premier but not a prince, went into a storm of indignation and even called the treaties "brigandage and swindle "-which undoubtedly provoked a condescending smile from Miliukov ("The everyday man is a fool") and a quiet proposal to return to the order of business. The official Declaration of the government promised to summon a Constituent Assembly at the earliest possible date-which date, however, was intentionally not stated. Nothing was said about the form of government: they still hoped to return to the lost paradise of monarchy. But the real meat of the Declaration' lay in its promise to carry the war through to victory, and "unswervingly carry out the agreements made with our Allies." So far as concerned the most threatening problems of the people's existence, the revolution had apparently been achieved only in order to make the announcement: everything remains as before. Since the democrats attributed an almost mystic importance to recognition by the Entente-a small trader amounts to nothing until the bank recognises his credit-the Executive Committee swallowed in silence the imperialist declaration of March 6.

"Not one official organ of the democracy," grieves Sukhanov a year later, "publicly reacted to the Declaration of the Provisional Government, which disgraced our revolution at its very birth in the eyes of democratic Europe."

At last, on the 8th of March, there issued from the ministerial laboratory a Decree of Amnesty. By that time the doors of the prisons had been opened by the people throughout the whole country, political exiles were returning in a solid stream with meetings, hurrahs, military speeches, flowers. The decree sounded like a belated echo from the government buildings. On the twelfth they announced the abolition of the death penalty. Four months later it was restored in the army. Kerensky promised to elevate justice to unheard-of heights. In a moment of heat he actually did carry out a resolution of the Executive Committee introducing representatives of the workers and soldiers as members of the courts of justice. That was the sole measure in which could be felt the heartbeat of the revolution, and it raised

the hair on the heads of the eunuchs of justice. But the matter stopped right there. Lawyer Demianov, an important officer in the ministry under Kerensky, and also a "socialist," decided to adopt the principle of leaving all former officials at their posts. To quote his own words: "The policies of a revolutionary government ought never to offend anybody unnecessarily." That was, at bottom, the guiding principle of the whole Provisional Government, which feared most of all to offend anybody from the circles of the possessing classes, or even the czarist bureaucracy. Not only the judges, but even the prosecutors of the czarist rgime remained at their posts. To be sure, the masses might be offended. But that was the Soviet's business; the masses did not enter into the field of vision of the government.

The sole thing in the nature of a fresh stream was brought in by the above-mentioned temperamental Procuror, Lvov, who gave an official report on the "idiots and scoundrels" sitting in the Holy Synod. The ministers listened to his juicy characterisations with some alarm, but the synod continued a state institution, and Greek Orthodoxy the state religion. Even the membership of the Synod remained unchanged. A revolution ought not to quarrel with anybody!

The members of the State Council-faithful servants of two or three emperors continued to sit, or at least to draw their salaries. And this fact soon acquired a symbolic significance. Factories and barracks noisily protested. The Executive Committee worried about it. The government spent two sessions debating the question of the fate and salaries of the members of the State Council, and could not arrive at a decision. Why disturb these respectable people, among whom, by the way, we have many good friends?

The Rasputin ministers were still in prison, but the Provisional Government hastened to vote them a pension. This sounded like mockery, or a voice from another world. But the government did not want to offend its predecessors even though they were locked up in jail.

The senators continued to drowse in their embroidered jackets, and when a left senator, Sokolov, newly appointed by Kerensky, dared to appear in a black frock coat, they quietly removed him from the hall. These czarist legislators were not afraid to offend the February revolution, once convinced that its government had no teeth.

Karl Marx saw the cause of the failure of the March revolution in Germany in the fact that it "reformed only the very highest political circles, leaving untouched all the layers beneath them-the old bureaucracy, the old army, the old judges, born and brought up and grown old in the service of absolutism." Socialists of the type of Kerensky were seeking salvation exactly where Marx saw the cause of failure. And the Menshevik Marxists were with Kerensky, not Marx.

The sole sphere in which the government showed initiative and revolutionary tempo, was that of legislation on stock holdings. Hence the degree of reform was issued on the

17th of March. National and religious limitations were annulled only three days later. There were quite a few people on the staff of the government, you see, who had suffered under the old rgime, if at all, only from a lack of business in stocks.

The workers were impatiently demanding an eight-hour day. The government pretended to deaf in both ears. Besides it is war time, and all ought to sacrifice themselves for the good of the Fatherland. Moreover that is the soviet's business: let them pacify the workers.

Still more threatening was the land question. Here it was really necessary to do something. Spurred on by the prophets, the Minister of Agriculture, Shingarev, ordered the formation of local land committees-prudently refraining, however, from defining their tasks and functions. The peasants had an idea that these committees ought to give them the land. The landlords thought the committees ought to protect their property. From the very start the muzhik's noose, more ruthless than all others, was tightening round the neck of the February rgime.

Agreeably to the official doctrine, all those problems which had caused the revolution were postponed to the Constituent Assembly. How could you expect these irreproachable democrats to anticipate the national will, when they had not even succeeded in seating Mikhail Romanov astride of it? The preparation of a national representation was approached in those days with such bureaucratic heaviness and deliberate procrastination that the Constituent Assembly itself became a mirage. Only on the 25th of March, almost a month after the insurrection-a month of revolution !-the government decided to call a lumbering Special Conference for the purpose of working out an election law. But the conference never opened. Miliukov in his *History of the Revolution* –which is false from beginning to end – confusedly states that as a result of various difficulties "the work of the Special Conference was not begun under the first government." The difficulties were inherent in the constitution of the conference and in its function. The whole idea was to postpone the Constituent Assembly until better times: until victory, until peace or until the Calends of Kornilov.

The Russian bourgeoisie, which appeared in the world too late, mortally hated the revolution. But its hatred had no strength. It had to bide its time and manoeuvre. Being unable to overthrow and strangle the revolution, the bourgeoisie counted on starving it out.

CHAPTER 11

DUAL POWER

What constitutes the essence of a dual power? [1] We must pause upon this question, for an illumination of it has never appeared in historic literature. And yet this dual power is a distinct condition of social crisis, by no means peculiar to the Russian revolution of 1917although there most clearly marked out.

Antagonistic classes exist in society everywhere, and a class, deprived of power inevitably strives to some extent to swerve the governmental course in its favour. This does not as yet mean, however, that two or more powers are ruling in society. The character of political structure is directly determined by the relation of the oppressed classes to the ruling class. A single, government, the necessary condition of stability in any rgime, is preserved so long as the ruling class succeeds in putting over its economic and political forms upon the whole of society the only forms possible.

The simultaneous dominion of the German Junkers and the bourgeoisie-whether in the Hohenzollern form or the republic-is not a double government, no matter how sharp at times may be the conflict between the two participating powers. They have a common social basis, therefore their clash does not threaten to split the state apparatus. The two-power rgime arises only out of irreconcilable class conflicts-is possible, therefore, only in a revolutionary epoch, and constitutes one of its fundamental elements.

The political mechanism of revolution consists of the transfer of power from one class to another. The forcible overturn is usually accomplished in a brief time. But no historic class lifts itself from a subject position to a position of rulership suddenly in one night, even though a night of revolution. It must already on the eve of the revolution have assumed a very independent attitude towards the official ruling class; moreover, it must have focused upon itself the hopes of intermediate classes and layers, dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs, but not capable of playing an independent ro1e. The historic preparation of

a revolution brings about, in the pre-revolutionary period, a situation in which the class which is called to realise the new social system, although not yet master of the country, has actually concentrated in its hands a. significant share of the state power, while the official apparatus of the government is still in. the hands of the old lords. That is the initial dual power in every revolution.

But that is not its only form. If the new class, placed in power by a revolution which it did not want, is in essence an already old, historically belated, class; if it was already worn out before it was officially crowned; if on coming to power it encounters an antagonist already sufficiently mature and reaching out its hand toward the helm of state; then instead of one unstable two-power equilibrium, the political revolution produces another, still less stable. To overcome the "anarchy" of this twofold sovereignty becomes at every new step the task of the revolution-or the counter-revolution.

This double sovereignty does not presuppose-generally speaking, indeed, it excludes-the possibility of a division of the power into two equal halves, or indeed any formal equilibrium of forces whatever. It is not a constitutional, but a revolutionary fact. It implies that a destruction of the social equilibrium has already split the state superstructure. It arises where the hostile classes are already each relying upon essentially incompatible governmental organisations-the one outlived, the other in process of formation-which jostle against each other at every step in the sphere of government. The amount of power which falls to each of these struggling classes in such a situation is determined by the correlation of forces in the course of the struggle.

By its very nature such a state of affairs cannot be stable. Society needs a concentration of power, and in the person of the ruling class-or, in the situation we are discussing, the two half-ruling classes-irresistibly strives to get it. The splitting of sovereignty foretells nothing less than civil war. But before the competing classes and parties will go to that extreme-especially in case they dread the interference of third force-they may feel compelled for quite long time to endure, and even to sanction, a two-power system. This system will nevertheless inevitably explode. Civil war gives to this double sovereignty its most visible, because territorial, expression. Each of the powers, having created its own fortified drill ground, fights for possession of the rest of the territory, which often has to endure the double sovereignty in the form of successive invasions by the two fighting powers, until one of them decisively installs itself.

The English revolution of the seventeenth century, exactly because it was a great revolution shattering the nation to the bottom, affords a clear example of this Alternating dual power, with sharp transitions in the form of civil war.

At first the royal power, resting upon the privileged classes or the upper circles of these classes-the aristocrats and bishops, -is opposed by the bourgeoisie and the circles of the

squirearchy that are close to it. The government of the bourgeoisie is the Presbyterian Parliament supported by the City of London. The protracted conflict between these two regimes is finally settled in open civil war. The two governmental centres-London and Oxford-create their own armies. Here the dual power takes territorial form, although, as always in civil war, the boundaries are very shifting. Parliament conquers. The king is captured and awaits his fate.

It would seem that the conditions are now created for the single rule of the Presbyterian bourgeoisie. But before the royal power could be broken, the parliamentary army has converted itself into an independent political force. It has concentrated in its ranks the Independents, the pious and resolute petty bourgeoisie, the craftsmen and farmers. This army powerfully interferes in the social life, not merely as an armed force, but as a Praetorian Guard, and as the political representative of a new class opposing the prosperous and rich bourgeoisie. Correspondingly the army creates a new state organ rising above the military command: a council of soldiers' and officers' deputies ("agitators"). A new period of double sovereignty has thus arrived: that of the Presbyterian Parliament and the Independents' army. This leads to open conflicts. The bourgeoisie proves Powerless to oppose with its own army the "model army" of Cromwell-that is, the armed plebeians. The conflict ends with a purgation of the Presbyterian Parliament by the sword of the Independents. There remains but the rump of a parliament; the dictatorship of Cromwell is established. The lower ranks of the army, under the leadership of the Levellers the extreme left wing of the revolution-try to oppose to the rule of the upper military levels, the patricians of the army, their own veritably plebeian rgime. But this new two-power system does not succeed in developing: the Levellers, the lowest depths of the petty bourgeoisie, have not yet, nor can have, their own historic path. Cromwell soon settles accounts with his enemies. A new political equilibrium, and still by no means a stable one, is established for a period of years.

In the great French revolution, the Constituent Assembly, the backbone of which was the upper levels of the Third Estate, concentrated the power in its hands-without however fully annulling the prerogatives of the king. The period of the Constituent Assembly is a clearly-marked period of dual power, which ends with the flight of the king to Varennes, and is formally liquidated with the founding of the Republic.

The first French constitution (1791), based upon the fiction of a complete independence of the legislative and executive powers, in reality concealed from the people, or tried to conceal, a double sovereignty: that of the bourgeoisie, firmly entrenched in the National Assembly after the capture by the people of the Bastille, and that of the old monarchy still relying upon the upper circles of the priesthood, the clergy, the bureaucracy, and the military, to say nothing of their hopes of foreign intervention. In this self-contradictory rgime lay the germs of its inevitable destruction. A way out could be found only in the abolition

of bourgeois representation by the powers of European reaction, or in the guillotine for the king and the monarchy. Paris and Coblenz must measure their forces.

But before it comes to war and the guillotine, the Paris Commune enters the scene-supported by the lowest city layers of the Third Estate-and with increasing boldness contests the power with the official representatives of the national bourgeoisie. A new double sovereignty is thus inaugurated, the first manifestation of which we observe as early as 1790, when the big and medium bourgeoisie is still firmly seated in the administration and in the municipalities. How striking is the picture-and how vilely it has been slandered!-of the efforts of the plebeian levels to raise themselves up out of the social cellars and catacombs, and stand forth in that forbidden arena where people in wigs and silk breeches are settling the fate of the nation. It seemed as though the very foundation of society, tramped underfoot by the cultured bourgeoisie, was stirring and coming to life. Human heads lifted themselves above the solid mass, horny hands stretched aloft, hoarse but courageous voices shouted! The districts of Paris, bastards of the revolution, began to live a life of their own. They were recognised-it was impossible not to recognise them!-and transformed into sections. But they kept continually breaking the boundaries of legality and receiving a current of fresh blood from below, opening their ranks in spite of the law to those with no rights, the destitute Sansculottes. At the same time the rural municipalities were becoming a screen for a peasant uprising against that bourgeois legality which was defending the feudal property system. Thus from under the second nation arises a third.

The Parisian sections at first stood opposed to the Commune, which was still dominated by the respectable bourgeoisie. In the bold outbreak of August 10, 1792, the sections gained control of the Commune. From then on the revolutionary Commune opposed the Legislative Assembly, and subsequently the Convention, which failed to keep up with the problems and progress of the revolution-registering its events, but not performing them-because it did not possess the energy, audacity and unanimity of that new class which had raised itself up from the depths of the Parisian districts and found support in the most backward villages. As the sections gained control of the Commune, so the Commune, by way of a new insurrection, gained control of the Convention. Each of the stages was characterised by a sharply marked double sovereignty, each wing of which was trying to establish a single and strong government-the right by a defensive struggle, the left by an offensive. Thus, characteristically-for both revolutions and counter-revolutions-the demand for a dictatorship results from the intolerable contradictions of the double sovereignty. The transition from one of its forms to the other is accomplished through civil war. The great stages of revolution-that is, the passing of power to new classes or layers-do not at all coincide in this process with the succession of representative institutions, which march along after the dynamic of the revolution like a belated shadow. In the long run, to be sure, the revolutionary dictatorship of the Sansculottes unites with the dictatorship of the

Convention. But with what Convention? A Convention purged of the Girondists, who yesterday ruled it with the hand of the Terror-a Convention abridged and adapted to the dominion of new social forces. Thus by the steps of the dual power the French revolution rises in the course of four years to its culmination. After the 9th Thermidor it begins-again by the steps of the dual power-to descend. And again civil war precedes every downward step, just as before it had accompanied every rise. In this way the new society seeks a new equilibrium of forces.

The Russian bourgeoisie, fighting with and co-operating with the Rasputin bureaucracy, had enormously strengthened its political position during the war. Exploiting the defeat of czarism, it had concentrated in its hands, by means of the Country and Town unions and the Military-Industrial Committees, a great power. It had at its independent disposition enormous state resources, and was in the essence of the matter a parallel government. During the war the czar's ministers complained that Prince Lvov was furnishing supplies to the army, feeding it, medicating it, even establishing barber shops for the soldiers. "We must either put an end to this, or give the whole power into his hands," said Minister Krivoshein in 1915. He never imagined that a year and a half later Lvov would receive "the whole power"-only not from the czar, but from the hands of Kerensky, Cheidze and Sukhanov. But on the second day after he received it, there began a new double sovereignty: alongside of yesterday's liberal half-government-to-day formally legalised-there arose an unofficial, but so much the more actual government of the toiling masses in the form of the soviets. From that moment the Russian revolution began to grow up into an event of world-historic significance.

What, then, is the peculiarity of this dual power as it appeared in the February revolution? In the events of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the dual power was in each case a natural stage in a struggle imposed upon its participants by a temporary correlation of forces, and each side strove to replace the dual power with its own single power. In the revolution of 1917, we see the official democracy consciously and intentionally creating a two-power system, dodging with all its might the transfer of power into its own hands. The double sovereignty is created, or so it seems at a glance, not as a result of a struggle of classes for power, but as the result of a voluntary "yielding" of power by one class to another. In so far as the Russian "democracy" sought for an escape from the two-power rgime, it could find one only in its own removal from power. It is just this that we have called the paradox of the February, revolution.

A certain analogy can be found in 1848, in the conduct of the German bourgeoisie with relation to the monarchy. But the analogy is not complete. The German bourgeoisie did try earnestly to divide the power with the monarchy on the basis of an agreement. But the bourgeoisie neither had the full power in its hands, nor by any means gave it over wholly

to the monarchy. “The Prussian bourgeoisie nominally possessed the power, it did not for a moment doubt that the forces of the old government would place themselves unreservedly at its disposition and convert themselves into loyal adherents of its own omnipotence” (Marx and Engels).

The Russian democracy of 1917, having captured the power from the very moment of insurrection tried not only to divide it with the bourgeoisie, but to give the state over to the bourgeoisie absolutely. This means, if you please, that in the first quarter of the twentieth century the official Russian democracy had succeeded in decaying politically completely than the German liberal bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century. And that is entirely according to the laws of history, for it is merely the reverse aspect of upgrowth in those same decades of the proletariat, which now occupied the place of the craftsmen of Cromwell and the Sansculottes of Robespierre.

If you look deeper, the twofold rule of the Provisional Government and the Executive Committee had the character of a mere reflection. Only the proletariat could advance a claim to the new power. Relying distrustfully upon the workers and soldiers, the Compromisers were compelled to continue the double bookkeeping-of the kings and the prophets. The twofold government of the liberals and the democrats only reflected the still concealed double sovereignty of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. When the Bolsheviks displace the Compromisers at the head of the Soviet-and this will happen within a few months-then that concealed double sovereignty will come to the surface, and this will be the eve of the October revolution. Until that moment the revolution will live in a world of political reflections. Refracted through the rationalisations the socialist intelligentsia, the double sovereignty, from being a stage in the class struggle, became a regulative principle. It was just for this reason that it occupied the centre of all theoretical discussions. Everything has its uses: the mirror-like character of the February double government has enabled us better to understand those epochs in history when the same thing appears as a full-blooded episode in a struggle between two regimes. The feeble and reflected light of the moon makes possible important conclusions about the sunlight.

In the immeasurably greater maturity of the Russian proletariat in comparison with the town masses of the older revolutions, lies the basic peculiarity of the Russian revolution. This led first to the paradox of a half-spectral double government, and afterwards prevented the real one from being resolved in favour of the bourgeoisie. For the question stood thus: Either the bourgeoisie will actually dominate the old state apparatus, altering it a little for its purposes, in which case the soviets will come to nothing; or the soviets will form the foundation of a new state, liquidating not only the old governmental apparatus but also the dominion of those classes which it served. The Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries were steering toward the first solution, the Bolsheviks toward the second. The oppressed

classes, who, as Marat observed, did not possess in the past the knowledge, or skill, or leadership to carry through what they had begun, were armed in the Russian revolution of the twentieth century with all three. The Bolsheviks were victorious.

A year after their victory the same situation was repeated in Germany, with a different correlation of forces. The social democracy was steering for the establishment of a democratic government of the bourgeoisie and the liquidation of the soviets. Luxemburg and Liebknecht steered toward the dictatorship of the soviets. The Social Democrats won. Hilferding and Kautsky in Germany, Max Adler in Austria, proposed that they should "combine" democracy with the soviet system, including the workers' soviets in the constitution. That would have meant making, potential or open civil war a constituent part of the state rgime. It would be impossible to imagine a more curious Utopia. Its sole justification on German soil is perhaps an old tradition : the Wiirttemberg democrats of '48 wanted a republic with a duke at the head.

Does this Phenomenon of the dual power – heretofore not sufficiently appreciated – contradict the Marxian theory of the ‚state, which regards government as an executive committee of the ruling class? This is just the same as asking: Does the fluctuation of prices under the influence of supply and demand contradict the labour theory of value? Does the self-sacrifice of a female protecting her offspring refute the theory of a struggle for existence ? No, in these phenomena we have a more complicated combination of the same laws. If the state is an organisation of class rule, and a revolution is the overthrow of the ruling class, then the transfer of power from the one class to the other must necessarily create self-contradictory state conditions, and first of all in the form of the dual power. The relation of class forces is not a mathematical quantity permitting a priori computations. When the old rgime is thrown out of equilibrium, a new correlation of forces can be established only as the result of a trial by battle. That is revolution.

It may seem as though this theoretical inquiry has led us away from the events of 1917. In reality it leads right into the heart of them. It was precisely around this problem of twofold power that the dramatic struggle of parties and classes turned. Only from a theoretical height is it possible to observe it fully and correctly understand it.

[1] Dual power is the phrase settled upon in communist literature as an English rendering of dvoevlastie. The term is untranslatable both because of its form twin-powerdom-and because the stem, vlast, means sovereignty as well as power. Vlast is also used as an equivalent of government, and in the plural corresponds to our phrase the authorities. In view of this, I have employed some other terms besides dual power: double sovereignty, two-power rgime, etc. [Trans.]

CHAPTER 12

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The organisation created on February 27 in the Tauride Palace, and called "Executive Committee of The Soviet of Workers' Deputies," had little in common with its name. The Soviet of Deputies of 1905, the originator of the system, rose out of a general strike. It directly represented the masses in struggle. The leaders of the strike became the deputies of the Soviet; the selection of its membership was carried out under fire; its Executive Committee was elected by the Soviet for the further prosecution of the struggle. It was this Executive Committee which placed on the order of the day the armed insurrection.

The February revolution, thanks to the revolt of the troops, was victorious before the workers had created a soviet. The Executive Committee was self-constituted, in advance of the Soviet and independently of the factories and regiments after the victory of the revolution.

We have here the classic initiative of the radicals-standing aside from the revolutionary struggle, but getting ready to harvest its fruit. The real leaders of the workers had not yet left the streets. They were disarming some, arming others, making sure of the victory. The more far-sighted among them were alarmed by the news that in the Tauride Palace some kind of a soviet of workers' deputies had come into being. Just as in the autumn of 1916 the liberal bourgeoisie, in expectation of a palace revolution which somebody was supposed to put through, had got ready a reserve government to impose upon the new czar in case it succeeded, so the radical intelligentsia got ready its reserve sub-government at the moment of the February victory. Inasmuch as they had been, at least in the past, adherents of the workers' movement and inclined to cover themselves with its tradition, they now named their offspring Executive Committee of the Soviet. That was one of those half-intentional falsifications with which all history is filled, especially the history of popular revolutions. In a revolutionary turn of events involving a break in the succession, those "educated"

classes who have now to learn to wield the power, gladly seize hold of any names and symbols connected with the heroic memories of the masses. And words not infrequently conceal the essence of things-especially when this is demanded by the interests of influential groups. The immense authority of the Executive Committee from the very day of its birth rested upon its seeming continuance of the Soviet of 1905. This Committee, ratified by the first chaotic meeting of the Soviet, thereafter exerted a decisive influence both upon the member-ship of the Soviet and upon its policy. This influence was the more conservative, in that the natural selection of revolutionary representatives which is guaranteed by the red-hot atmosphere of a struggle no longer existed. The insurrection was already in the past. All were drunk with victory, were planning how to get comfortable on the new basis, were relaxing their souls, partly also their heads. It required months of new conflicts and struggles in new circumstances, with the consequent reshuffling of personnel, in order that the soviets, from being organs for consecrating the victory, should become organs of struggle and preparation for a new insurrection. We emphasise this aspect of matter because it has until now been left completely in the shade.

However, not only the conditions in which the Executive Committee and the Soviet arose determined their moderate and compromising character. Deeper and more enduring causes were operating in the same direction.

There were over 150,000 soldiers in Petrograd. There were at least four times as many working men and women of all categories. Nevertheless for every two worker-delegates in the Soviet, there were five soldiers. The rules of representation were extremely elastic, and they were always stretched to the advantage of the soldiers. Whereas the workers elected only one delegate for every thousand, the most petty military unit would frequently send two. The grey army cloth became the general ground tone of the Soviet.

But by no means all even of the civilians were selected by workers. No small number of people got into the Soviet by individual invitation, through pull, or simply thanks to their own penetrative ability. Radical lawyers, physicians, students, journalists, representing various problematical groups-or most often representing their own ambition. This obviously distorted character of the Soviet was even welcomed by the leaders, who were not a bit sorry to dilute the too concentrated essence of factory and barrack with the lukewarm water of cultivated Philistia. Many of these accidental crashers-in, seekers of adventure, self-appointed Messiahs, and professional bunk shooters, for a long time crowded out with their authoritative elbows the silent workers and irresolute soldiers.

And if this was so in Petrograd, it is not hard to imagine how it looked in the provinces, where the victory came wholly without struggle. The whole country was swarming with soldiers. The garrisons at Kiev, Helsingfors, Tiflis, were as numerous as that in Petrograd; in Saratov, Samara, Tambov, Omsk, there were 70,000 to 80,000 soldiers; in Yaroslavl,

Ekaterinoslav, Ekaterinburg 60,000; in a whole series of other cities, 50,000, 40,000 and 80,000. The soviet representation was differently organised in different localities, but everywhere it put the troops in a privileged position. Politically this was caused by the workers themselves, who wanted to go as far as possible to meet the soldiers. The soviet leaders were equally eager to go to meet the officers. Besides the considerable number of lieutenants and ensigns at first elected by the soldiers themselves, a special representation was often given, particularly in the provinces, to the commanding staff. As a result the military had in many soviets an absolutely overwhelming majority. The soldier masses, who had not yet had time to acquire a political physiognomy, nevertheless determined through their representatives the physiognomy of the soviets.

In every representative system there is a certain lack of correspondence. It was especially great on the second day of the revolution. The deputies of the politically helpless soldiers often turned out in those early days to be people completely alien to the soldiers and to the revolution-all sorts of intellectuals and semi-intellectuals who had been hiding in the rear barracks and consequently came out as extreme patriots. Thus was created a divergence between the mood of the barracks and the mood of the soviet. Officer Stankevich, whom the soldiers of his battalion had received back sullenly and distrustfully after the revolution, made a successful speech in the soldiers' section on the delicate question of discipline. Why, he asked, is the mood of the Soviet gentler and more agreeable than that of the battalions? This naive perplexity testifies once more how hard it is for the real feelings of the lower ranks to find a path to the top.

Nevertheless, as early as March 8, meetings of soldiers and workers began to demand that the Soviet depose forthwith the Provisional Government of the liberal bourgeoisie, and take the power in its own hands. Here again the initiative belonged to the Vyborg district. And could there be, indeed, a demand more intelligible and nearer to the hearts of the masses? But this agitation was soon broken off, not only because the Defensists sharply opposed it; worse than that, the majority leadership had already in the first half of March bowed down in real fact to the two-power rgime. And anyway, aside from the Bolsheviks, there was no one to bring up squarely the question of power. The Vyborg leaders had to back down. The Petrograd workers, however, did not for one moment give their confidence to the new government, nor consider it their own. They did listen keenly, though, to the soldiers and try not to oppose them too sharply. The soldiers, on the other hand, just learning the first syllables of political life, although as shrewd peasants they would not trust any master who happened along, nevertheless intently listened to their representatives, who in turn lent a respectful ear to the authoritative leaders of the Executive Committee; and these latter did nothing but listen with alarm to the pulse of the liberal bourgeoisie. Upon this system of universal listening from the bottom toward the top everything rested-for the time being. However, the mood from below had to break out on the surface. The question of

power, artificially sidetracked, kept pushing up anew, although in disguised form. “The soldiers don’t know whom to listen to,” complained the districts and the provinces, expressing in this way to the Executive Committee their dissatisfaction with the divided sovereignty. Delegations from the Baltic and Black Sea fleets announced on the 16th of March that they were ready to recognise the Provisional Government in so far as it went hand in hand with the Executive Committee; in other words, they did not intend to recognise it at all. As time goes on, this note sounds louder and louder. “The army and the population should submit only to the directions of the Soviet,” resolves the 172nd Reserve Regiment, sad then immediately formulates the contrary theorem: “Those directions of the Provisional Government which conflict with the decision of the Soviet are not to be obeyed.” With a mixed feeling of satisfaction and anxiety the Executive Committee sanctioned this situation; with grinding teeth the government endured it. There was nothing else for either of them to do.

Already early in March, soviets were coming into being in all the principal towns and industrial centres. From these spread in the next few weeks throughout the country. They began to arrive in the villages only in April and May; at first it was practically the army alone which spoke in the name of the peasants.

The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet actually acquired a state significance. The other soviets guided them-selves by the capital, one after the other adopting resolutions of conditional support to the Provisional Government. Although in the first months the relations between the Petrograd and provincial soviets worked themselves out smoothly, and without conflict or serious disagreement, nevertheless the necessity of a state organisation was obvious in the whole situation. A month after the overthrow of the autocracy a first conference of soviets was summoned-incomplete and one-sided in its membership. Although, out of 185 organisations represented, two-thirds were provincial soviets, these were for the most part soldiers’ soviets. Together with the representatives of the front organisations, these military delegates-for the most part officers-were in an overwhelming majority. Speeches resounded about war to complete victory, and outcries resounded against the Bolsheviks, notwithstanding their more than moderate behaviour. The conference filled out the Petrograd Executive Committee with sixteen conservative provincials, thus legitimising its state character.

That strengthened the right wing still more. From now on they frightened the malcontents by alluding to the provinces. The resolution on regulating the membership of the Petrograd Soviet-adopted March 14-was hardly carried out at all. It is not the local soviet that decides, but the All-Russian Executive Committee. The official leaders thus occupied an almost unassailable position. The most important decisions were made by the Executive Committee, or rather by its ruling nucleus, after a preliminary agreement with the nucleus of the government. The Soviet remained on one side. They treated it like a meeting:

"Not there, not in general meetings, is the policy wrought out; all these 'plenary sessions' had decidedly no practical importance" (Sukhanov). These complacent rulers of destiny thought that in entrusting the leadership to them the soviets had essentially completed their task. The future will soon show them that this is not so. The masses are long-suffering, but they are not clay out of which you can fashion anything you want to. Moreover, in a revolutionary epoch they learn fast. In that lies the power of a revolution.

In order better to understand the further development of events, it is necessary to pause upon the character of the two parties which from the very beginning formed a close political bloc, dominating in the soviets, in the democratic municipalities, in the congresses of the so-called revolutionary democracy, and even carrying their steadily dwindling majority to the Constituent Assembly, which became the last reflection of their former power, like the glow on a hilltop illumined by a sun already set.

If the Russian bourgeoisie appeared in the world too late to be democratic, the Russian democracy for the same reason wanted to consider itself socialistic. The democratic ideology had been hopelessly played out in the course of the nineteenth century. A radical intelligentsia standing on the edge of the twentieth, if it wanted to find a path to the masses, had need of a socialist colouring. This is the general historic cause which gave rise to those two intermediate parties: Menshevik and Social Revolutionary. Each of them, however, had its own genealogy and its own ideology.

The views of the Mensheviks were built up on a Marxian basis. In consequence of that same historical belatedness of Russia, Marxism had there become at first not so much a criticism of capitalist society as an argument for the inevitability of the bourgeois development of the country. History cleverly made use of the emasculated theory of proletarian revolution, in order with its help to Europeanise, in the bourgeois sense, wide circles of the mouldy "Narodnik" intelligentsia. In this process a very important role fell to the Mensheviks. Constituting the left wing of the bourgeois intelligentsia, they put the bourgeoisie in touch with the more moderate upper layers of the workers, those with a tendency towards legal activity around Duma and in the trade unions.

The Social Revolutionaries, on the contrary, struggled theoretically against Marxism-although sometimes surrendering to it. They considered themselves a party which realised the union of the intelligentsia, the workers and the peasants-under the leadership, it goes without saying, of the Critical Reason. In the economic sphere their ideas were an indigestible mess of various historical accumulations, reflecting the contradictory life-conditions of the peasantry in a country rapidly becoming capitalistic. The coming revolution presented itself to the Social Revolutionaries as neither bourgeois nor socialistic, but "democratic ": they substituted a political formula for a social content. They thus laid out for themselves a course halfway between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and con-

sequently a position of arbiter between them. After February it might seem as though the Social Revolutionaries did actually approach this position.

From the time of the first revolution they had had their roots in the peasantry. In the first months of 1917, the whole rural intelligentsia adopted for its own the traditional formula of the Narodniks: "Land and Freedom." In contrast to the Mensheviks who remained always a party of the cities, the Social Revolutionaries had found, it seemed, an amazingly powerful support in the country. More than that, they dominated even in the cities: in the soviets through the soldiers' sections, and in the first democratic municipalities where they had an absolute majority of the votes. The power of this party seemed unlimited. In reality it was a political aberration. A party for whom everybody votes except that minority who know what they are voting for, is no more a party, than the tongue in which babies of all countries babble is a national language. The Social Revolutionary Party came forward as a solemn designation for everything in the February revolution that was immature, unformulated and confused. Everybody who had not inherited from the pre-revolutionary past sufficient reasons to vote for the Kadets or the Bolsheviks, voted for the Social Revolutionaries. But the Kadets stood inside a closed circle of property owners; and the Bolsheviks were still few, misunderstood, and even terrifying. To vote for the Social Revolutionaries meant to vote for the revolution in general, and involved no further obligation. In the city it meant the desire of the soldiers to associate themselves with a party that stood for the peasants, the desire of the backward part of the workers to stand close to the soldiers, the desire of the small townspeople not to break away from the soldiers and the peasants. In those days the Social Revolutionary membership-card was a temporary ticket of admission to the institutions of the revolution, and this ticket remained valid until it was replaced by another card of a more serious character. It has been truly said of this great party, which took in all and everybody, that it was only a grandiose zero.

From the time of the first revolution, the Mensheviks had inferred the necessity of a union with the liberals from the bourgeois character of the revolution. And they valued this union higher than cooperation with the peasantry, whom they considered an unsafe ally. The Bolsheviks, on the contrary, had founded their view of the revolution on a union of the proletariat with the peasantry against the liberal bourgeoisie. As an actual fact we see in the February revolution an opposite grouping-the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries come out a close union, completed by their common bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks, on the official political field, are completely isolated.

This apparently inexplicable fact is in reality wholly in accord with the laws of things. The Social Revolutionaries were not by any means a peasant party, notwithstanding the wholesale sympathy for their slogans in the villages. The central nucleus of the party-what actually defined its policies and created ministers and bureaucrats from its midst-was

far more closely associated with the liberal and radical circles of the cities than with the masses of the peasants in revolt. This ruling nucleus-monstrously swelled by the careerist flood of Social Revolutionaries of the March vintage-was frightened to death by the spread of the peasant movement under Social Revolutionary slogans. These freshly baked "Narodniks" wished the peasants all good things, of course, but did not want the red cock to crow. And the horror of the Social Revolutionaries before the peasant revolt was paralleled by the horror of the Mensheviks before the assault of the proletariat. In its entirety this democratic fright was a reflection of the very real danger to the possessing classes caused by a movement of the oppressed, a danger which united them in a single camp, the bourgeois-landlord reaction. The bloc of the Social Revolutionaries with the government of landlord Lvov signalised their break with the agrarian revolution, just as the bloc of the Mensheviks with industrialists and bankers of the type of Guchkov, Tereshchenko and Konovalov, meant their break with the proletarian movement. In these circumstances the union of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries meant not a cooperation of proletariat with peasants, but a coalition of those parties which had broken with the proletariat and the peasants respectively, for the sake of a bloc with the possessing classes.

From what has been said it is clear that the socialism of the two democratic parties was a fiction. But this is far from saying that their democratism was real. It is a bloodless sort of democratism that requires a socialistic disguise. The Russian proletariat had waged its struggle for democracy in irreconcilable antagonism to the liberal bourgeoisie. The democratic parties therefore, in entering a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie, had inevitably to enter into conflict with the proletariat. Such were the social roots of the cruel struggle to come between Compromisers and Bolsheviks.

If you reduce the above outlined processes to their naked class mechanism-of which of course the participants, and even the leaders, of the two compromise parties were not thoroughly conscious-you get approximately the following distribution of historic functions: The liberal bourgeoisie was already unable to win over the masses. Therefore it feared a revolution. But a revolution was necessary for the bourgeois development. From the enfranchised bourgeoisie two groups split off, consisting of sons and younger brothers. One of these groups went to the workers, the other to the peasants. They tried to attach these workers and peasants to themselves, sincerely and hotly demonstrating that they were socialists and hostile to the bourgeoisie. In this way they actually gained a considerable influence over the people. But very soon the effect of their ideas outstripped the original intention. The bourgeoisie sensed a mortal danger and sounded the alarm. Both the groups which had split off from it, the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, eagerly responded to the summons from the head of the family. Hastily patching up the old disagreements they all stood shoulder to shoulder, abandoned the masses, and rushed to the rescue of bourgeois society.

The Social Revolutionaries made a feeble and flabby impression even in comparison with the Mensheviks. To the Bolsheviks at all important moments they seemed merely third-rate Kadets. To the Kadets they seemed third-rate Bolsheviks. (The second-rate position was occupied, in both cases, by the Mensheviks.) Their unstable support and the formlessness of their ideology were reflected in their personnel: on all the Social Revolutionary leaders lay the imprint of unfinishedness, superficiality and sentimental unreliability. We may say without any exaggeration that the rank-and-file Bolshevik revealed more political acumen, more understanding of the relations between classes, than the most celebrated Social Revolutionary leaders.

Having no stable criteria, the Social Revolutionaries showed a tendency toward moral imperatives. It is hardly necessary to add that these moral pretensions did not in the least hinder them from employing in big politics those petty knaveries so characteristic of intermediate parties lacking a stable support, a clear doctrine, and a genuine moral axis.

In the Menshevik-Social Revolutionary bloc the dominant place belonged to the Mensheviks, in spite of the weight of numbers on the side of the Social Revolutionaries. In this distribution of forces was expressed in a way the hegemony of the town over the country, the predominance of the city over the rural petty bourgeoisie, and finally the intellectual superiority of a “Marxist ” intelligentsia over an intelligentsia which stood by the simon-pure Russian sociology, and prided itself on the meagreness of the old Russian history.

In the first weeks after the revolution not one of the left parties, as we know, had its actual headquarters in the capital. The generally recognised leaders of the socialist parties were abroad. The secondary leaders were on their way to the centre from the Far East. This created a mood of prudence and watchful waiting among the temporary leaders, which drew them closer together. Not one of the guiding groups in those weeks thought anything through to the end. The struggle of parties in the Soviet was extremely peaceable in character. It was a question, almost, of mere nuances within one and the same “revolutionary democracy.” It is true that with the arrival of Tseretelli from exile (March 19) the Soviet leadership took a rather sharp turn toward the right-toward direct responsibility for the government and the war. But the Bolsheviks also toward the middle of March, under the influence of Kamenev and Stalin who had arrived from exile, swung sharply to the right, so that the distance between the Soviet majority and its left opposition had become by the beginning of April even less than it was at the beginning of March. The real differentiation began a little later. It is possible to set the exact date: April 4, the day after the arrival of Lenin in Petrograd.

The Menshevik Party had a number of distinguished figures at the head of its different tendencies, but not one revolutionary leader. Its extreme right wing, led by the old teachers of the Russian social democracy-Plekhanov, Zassulich, Deutsch-had taken a patriotic posi-

tion even under the autocracy. On the very eve of the February revolution, Plekhanov, who had so pitifully outlived himself, wrote in an American newspaper that strikes and other forms of working-class struggle in Russia would now be a crime. The broader circles of old Mensheviks-among their number such figures as Martov, Dan, Tseretelli-had inscribed themselves in the camp of Zimmerwald and refused to accept responsibility for the war. But this internationalism of the left Mensheviks, as also of the left Social Revolutionaries, concealed in the majority of cases a mere democratic oppositionism. The February revolution reconciled a majority of those Zimmerwaldists[1] to the war, which from now on they discovered to be a struggle in defence of the revolution. The most decisive in this matter was Tseretelli, who carried Dan and the others along with him. Martov, whom the war had found in France, and who arrived from abroad only on May 9, could not help seeing that his former party associates had after the February revolution arrived at the same position occupied by Guesde, Sembat and others at the beginning of 1914, when they took upon themselves the defence of a bourgeois republic against German absolutism. Standing at the head of the left wing of the Mensheviks, which did not rise to any serious role in the revolution, Martov remained in opposition to the policy of Tseretelli and Dan-at the same time opposing a rapprochement between the left Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. Tseretelli spoke in the name of official Menshevism and had an indubitable majority-pre-revolutionary patriots having found it easy to unite with these patriots of the February vintage. Plekhanov, however, had his own group, completely chauvinist and standing outside the party and outside the Soviet. Martov's faction, which did not quit the party, had no paper of its own and no policy of its own. As always at times of great historic action, Martov floundered hopelessly and swung in the air. In 1917, as in 1905, the revolution hardly noticed this unusually able man.

The president of the Menshevik faction of the Duma, Cheidze, became almost automatically the president of the Petrograd Soviet, and afterwards of its Executive Committee. He tried to consecrate to the duties of his office all the resources of his conscientiousness, concealing his perpetual lack of confidence in himself under an ingenuous jocularity. He carried the ineradicable imprint of his province. Mountainous Georgia, the land of sun, vineyards, peasants and petty princes, with a small percentage of workers, produced a very wide stratum of left intellectuals, flexible, temperamental, but the vast majority of them not rising above the petty bourgeois outlook. Georgia sent Mensheviks as deputies to all four Dumas, and in all four factions her deputies played the role of leaders. Georgia became the Gironde of the Russian revolution. But whereas the Girondists of the eighteenth century were accused of federalism, the Girondists of Georgia, although at first defending a single and indivisible Russia, ended in separatism.

The most distinguished figure produced by the Georgian Gironde was undoubtedly the former deputy of the second Duma, Tseretelli, who immediately on his arrival from exile

took the leadership, not only of the Mensheviks, but of the whole Soviet majority. Not a theoretician and not even a journalist, but a distinguished orator, Tseretelli remained a radical of the southern French type. In conditions of ordinary parliamentary routine he would have been a fish in water. But he was born into a revolutionary epoch, and had poisoned himself in youth with a dose of Marxism. At any rate, of all the Mensheviks, Tseretelli revealed in the events of the revolution the widest horizon and the desire to pursue a consistent policy. For this reason he, more than any other, helped on with the destruction of the February rgime. Cheidze wholly submitted to Tseretelli, although at moments be was frightened by that doctrinaire straightforwardness which caused the revolutionary hard-labour convict of yesterday to unite with the conservative representatives of the bourgeoisie.

The Menshevik Skobelev, indebted for his new popularity to his position as deputy in the last Duma, conveyed-and not only on account of his youthful appearance-the impression of a student playing the role of statesman on a home-made stage. Skobelev specialised in putting down “excesses,” quieting local conflicts, and in general caulking up the cracks of the two-power rgime-until he was included, in the unlucky role of Minister of Labour, in the Coalition government of May.

A most influential figure among the Mensheviks was Dan, an old party worker, always considered the second figure after Martov. If Menshevism in general was nourished upon the flesh, blood, tradition, and spirit of the German social democracy of the period of decline, Dan actually seemed to be a member of the German party administration-an Ebert on a smaller scale. Ebert, the German Dan, successfully carried out in Germany a year later that policy which Dan, the Russian Ebert, had failed to carry out in Russia. The cause of the difference however was not in the men, but in the conditions.

If the first violin in the orchestra of the Soviet majority was Tseretelli, the piercing clarinet was played by Lieber-with all his lungpower and blood in his eyes. This was a Menshevik from the Jewish workers’ union (The Bund), with a long revolutionary past, very sincere, very temperamental, very eloquent, very limited, and passionately desirous of showing himself an inflexible patriot and iron statesman. Lieber was literally beside himself with hatred of Bolsheviks.

We may close the phalanx of Menshevik leaders with the former ultra-left Bolshevik, Voitinsky, a prominent participant in the first revolution, who had served at hard labour, and who broke with his party in March on grounds of patriotism. After joining the Mensheviks, Voitinsky became, as was to be expected, a professional Bolshevik-eater. He lacked only Liebear’s temperament in order to equal him in baiting his former party comrades.

The general staff of the Narodniks was equally heterogeneous, but far less significant and bright. The so-called Popular Socialists, the extreme right flank, were led by the old emigrant Chaikovsky, who equalled Plekhanov in military chauvinism but lacked his tal-

ent and his past. Alongside him stood the old woman Breshko-Breshkovskaia, whom the Social Revolutionaries called the "grandmother of the Russian Revolution," but who zealously forced herself as godmother on the Russian counter-revolution. The superannuated anarchist Kropotkin, who had had a weakness ever since youth for the Narodniks made use of the war to disavow everything he had been teaching for almost half a century. This denouncer of the state supported the Entente, and if he denounced the dual power in Russia, it was not in the name of anarchy, but in the name of a single power of the bourgeoisie. However, these old people played mostly a decorative although-although later on in the war against the Bolsheviks Chaikovsky headed one of the White governments financed by Churchill. The first place among the Social Revolutionaries-far in advance of the others, though not in the party but above it-was occupied by Kerensky, a man without any party past whatever. We shall meet often again this providential figure, whose strength in the two-power period lay in his combining the weaknesses of liberalism with the weaknesses of the democracy. His formal entrance into the Social Revolutionary Party did not destroy Kerenskys scornful attitude toward parties in general: he considered himself the directly chosen one of the nation. But after all, the Social Revolutionary Party had ceased by that time to be a party, and become a grandiose and indeed national zero. In Kerensky this party found an adequate leader.

The future Minister of Agriculture, and afterwards President of the Constituent Assembly, Chernov, was indubitably the most representative figure of the old Social Revolutionary Party, and by no accident was considered its inspirator, theoretician and leader. A well-read rather than educated man, with a considerable but unintegrated learning, Chernov always had at his disposition a boundless assortment of appropriate quotations, which for a long time caught the imagination of the Russian youth without teaching them much. There was only one single question which this many-worded leader could answer: Whom was he leading and whither? The eclectic formulas of Chernov, ornamented with moralisms and verses, united for a time a most variegated public who at all critical moments pulled in different directions. No wonder Chernov complacently contrasted his methods of forming a party with Lenin's "sectarianism."

Chernov arrived from abroad five days after Lenin: England after some hesitation had passed him. To the numerous greetings of the Soviet, the leader of its biggest party answered with its longest speech-a speech about which Sukhanov, himself a half Social Revolutionary, comments as follows: "Not only I, but many other Social Revolutionary party patriots wrinkled our brows and shook our heads, because he chanted so unpleasantly and minced and rolled his eyes-yes, and talked endlessly and without aim or purpose." All the further activity of Chernov in the revolution developed in tune with this first speech. After some attempts to oppose Kerensky and Tseretelli from the left, finding himself pressed on all sides, Chernov surrendered without a struggle, purged himself of his emigrant Zimmer-

waldism, took a seat in the Contact Commission, and later also in the coalition government. Everything he did was inappropriate. He decided therefore to evade all issues. Abstaining from the vote became for him a form of political life. His authority melted away from April to October, faster even than the ranks of his party. With all the differences between Chernov and Kerensky, who hated each other, they were both completely rooted in the pre-revolutionary past-in the old flabby Russian society, in that thin-blooded and pretentious intelligentsia, burning with a desire to teach the masses of the people, to be their guardian and benefactor, but completely incapable of listening to them, understanding them, and learning from them. And without learning from the masses there can be no revolutionary statesmanship.

Avksentiev, who was raised by his party to the highest revolutionary posts-president of the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Deputies, Minister of the Interior, President of the Pre-Parliament-was the complete caricature of a statesman. A charming teacher of language in a ladies' seminary in Orel-that is really all you can say about him, although, to be sure1 his political activity turned out far more pernicious than his personality. A large although was played-although mostly behind the scenes-in the Social Revolutionary faction, and in the ruling nucleus of the Soviet, by Gotz. A terrorist of well-known revolutionary family, Gotz was less pretentious and more business-like than his closest political friends. But in his character as a so-called "practical," he limited himself to kitchen matters, leaving the big questions to others. It is necessary to add that he was neither orator nor writer, and that his chief resource was his personal authority bought with years of imprisonment at hard labour.

We have named essentially all who can be named among the ruling circle of the Narodniks. Below them are completely accidental figures like Filipovsky, whose arrival at the very height of the February Olympus nobody ever could explain: the deciding factor would seem to have been his naval officer's uniform. Alongside the official leaders of the two ruling parties in the Executive Committee, there were quite a few "wild ones," solitaries, participants of the past movement at its various stages, people who had withdrawn from the struggle long before the uprising, and now, after a hasty return under the banner of the victorious revolution, were in no hurry to adopt the yoke of any party. On all fundamental questions the "wild ones" followed the line of the Soviet majority. For the first few days they played even a leading although, but in proportion as the official leaders began to arrive from exile and from abroad, these non-party men retired to a secondary place. Politics began to take form, and party allegiance entered into its rights.

Enemies of the Executive Committee in the reactionary camp made a great point of the "preponderance" in it of non-Russians: Jews, Georgians, Letts, Poles, and so forth. Although by comparison with the whole membership of the Executive Committee the non-

Russian elements were not very numerous, it is nevertheless true that they occupied a very prominent place in the prsidium , in the various committees, among the orators, etc. Since the intelligentsia of the oppressed nationalities-concentrated as they were for the most part in cities-had flowed copiously into the revolutionary ranks, it is not surprising that among the old generation of revolutionaries the number of non-Russians was especially large. Their experience, although not always of a high quality, made them irreplaceable when it came to inaugurating new social forms. The attempt, however, to explain the policy of the soviets and the course of the whole revolution by an alleged "predominance" of non-Russians is pure nonsense. Nationalism in this case again reveals its scorn for the real nation-that is, the people-representing them in the period of their great national awakening as a mere block of wood in alien and accidental hands. But why and how did the non-Russians acquire such miracle-working power over the native millions? As a matter of fact, at a moment of deep historic change, the bulk of a nation always presses into its service those elements which were yesterday most oppressed, and therefore are most ready to give expression to the new tasks. It is not that aliens lead the revolution, but that the revolution makes use of the aliens. It has been so even in great reforms introduced from above. The policy of Peter 1did not cease to be national when, swinging out of the old tracks, it impressed into its service non-Russians and foreigners. The master of some German suburb, or some Dutch skipper, would express far better at that period the demands of the nation development of Russia, than Russian priests dragged in long ago by the Greeks, or Moscow Boyars, who also complained of foreign predominance, although themselves descended from those alien tribes who created the Russian state. In any case the non-Russian intelligentsia of 1917 were distributed amongst the same parties as the one hundred per cent. Russians, suffered from the same vices, made the same mistakes-and moreover the non-Russians among the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries displayed a most particular zeal for the defence and unity of Russia.

Such was the Executive Committee, the highest organ of the democracy. Two parties which had lost their illusions but preserved their prejudices, with a staff of leaders who were incapable of passing from word to deed, arrived at the head of revolution called to break the fetters of a century and lay the foundations of a new society. The whole activity of the Compromisers became one long chain of painful contradictions exhausting the masses and leading to the convulsions of civil war.

The workers, soldiers and peasants took events seriously. They thought that the soviets which they had created ought to undertake immediately to remove those evils which had caused the revolution. They all ran to the Soviet. Everybody brought his pains there. And who was without pains? They demanded decisions, hoped for help, awaited justice, insisted upon indemnification. Solicitors, complainers, petitioners, exposers, all came assuming that at last they had replaced a hostile power with their own. The people believe

in the Soviet, the people are armed, therefore the Soviet is the sovereign power. That was the way they understood it. And were they not indeed right? An uninterrupted flood of soldiers, workers, soldiers' wives, small traders, clerks, mothers, fathers, kept opening and shutting the doors, sought, questioned, wept, demanded, compelled action-sometimes even indicating what action-and converted the Soviet in very truth into a revolutionary government. "That was not all in the interest, or at least did not at all enter into the plans, of the Soviet itself," complains our friend Sukhanov, who of course struggled with all his might against this process. But with what success did he struggle? Alas, he is soon compelled to acknowledge that "the Soviet apparatus began involuntarily, automatically, against the will of the Soviet, to crowd out the official governmental machine, which was grinding more and more without grain." What did the doctrinaires of capitulation do the mechanics of this empty grinding? "It became necessary to reconcile ones self and take up the separate functions of administration," Sukhanov sadly confesses, "at the same time preserving the fiction that the Mariinsky Palace was performing them." That is what those people were busy with in a shattered country caught in the flames of war and revolution-protecting with masquerade measures the prestige of a government which the people had organically ejected. The revolution may die, but long live the fiction! And all the while the power which they had driven out of the door, kept crawling back through the window, catching them every time unawares and making them look cheap or ludicrous.

On the night of the 28th of February, the Executive Committee closed up the monarchist press and established a licensing system for newspapers. Protesters heard, those shouting the loudest who had been accustomed to stop the mouths of others. After a few days the Committee had to take up again the problem of a free press: to permit or not to permit the publication of reactionary papers? Disagreements arose. Doctrinaires of the type of Sukhanov stood for absolute freedom of the press. Cheidze at first disagreed: how can we leave weapons at the uncontrolled disposition of our mortal enemies? It occurred to nobody, by the way, to turn over the whole question to the decision of the government. Anyway, that would have been useless; the typographical workers took orders only from the Soviet. On March 5 the Executive Committee confirmed this fact as follows: "The right press is closed and the issue of new papers will depend upon the decision of the Soviet." But as early as the 10th, under pressure from bourgeois circles, that resolution was annulled. "They took only three days to come to their senses," exults Sukhanov. Ill-founded exultation! The press does not stand above society the conditions of its existence during a revolution reflect the progress of the revolution itself. When the latter assumes, or may assume, the character of a civil war, not one of the warring camps will permit the existence of a hostile press within the sphere of its influence-no more than it will let escape from its control the arsenals, the railroads, the printing establishments. In a revolutionary struggle the press is only one kind of weapon. The right to speech is certainly not higher

than the right to life. A revolution takes the latter too into its hands. We may lay this down as a law: Revolutionary governments are the more liberal, the more tolerant, the more " magnanimous" to the reaction, the shallower their programme, the more they are bound up with the past, the more conservative their although. And the converse: the more gigantic their tasks and the greater the number of vested rights and interests they are to destroy, the more concentrated will the revolutionary power, the more naked its dictatorship. Whether this is a good thing or bad, it is by these roads that humanity has thus far moved forward. The Soviet was right when it wanted to retain control of the press. Why did it so easily give this up? Because in general it was refusing to make a serious fight. It remained silent about peace, about the land, even about a republic. Having turned over the power to the conservative bourgeoisie, it had neither a reason for fearing the right press, nor a possibility of struggling against it. The government, on the other hand, began after a few months, with the support of the Soviet, to suppress ruthlessly the left press. The Bolshevik papers were shut down one after another.

On March 7 in Moscow, Kerensky declaimed: "Nicholas II is in my hands. I will never be the Marat of the Russian revolution. Nicholas II is to go under my personal supervision to England. . . ." Ladies threw flowers; students applauded. But the depths bestirred themselves. Not one serious revolution yet-not one that had something to lose-has let the deposed monarch escape over the border. From the workers and soldiers came continuous demands: arrest the Romanovs. The Executive Committee sensed the tact that there could be no joking here. It was decided that the Soviet must take into its own hands the question of the Romanovs: the government was thus openly proclaimed undeserving of confidence. The Executive Committee gave an order to all railroads not to let Romanov through. That was why the czar's train got lost in the tracks. One of the members of the Executive Committee, the worker Gvosdev, a right Menshevik, was commissioned to arrest Nicholas. Kerensky was disavowed-and along with him the government. But instead of resigning it submitted in silence. On March 9 Cheidze reported to the Executive Committee that the government had "renounced" the thought of sending Nicholas to England. The czar's family was put under arrest in the Winter Palace.

Thus the Executive Committee stole the power from under its own pillow. But from the front the demand became more and more insistent: transfer the former czar to the Peter and Paul fortress.

Revolutions have always involved a reshuffling of property, not only by legislative means, but also by mass seizure. No agrarian revolution in history has ever proceeded otherwise: legal reforms always trail behind the red cock. In the towns, forcible seizures have played a smaller although: bourgeois revolutions have not had the task of uprooting bourgeois property relations. But there has never been any revolution, it seems, in which the

masses have not appropriated for social purposes the buildings which formerly belonged to the enemies of the people. Immediately after the February revolution the parties came out from underground, trade unions arose, continuous meetings were held, there were soviets in every district; for all these things quarters were needed. Organisations seized the uninhabited summer homes of the czarist ministers, or the vacant palaces of the czar's ballerinas. The victims complained, or else the government interfered on its own initiative. But since the expropriators really possessed the sovereign power-the official power being a ghost-it became necessary for the Prosecuting Attorney to appeal in the long run to that same Executive Committee to restore the ravished rights of a certain ballerina, whose none too complicated functions had been so highly paid for by the members of the dynasty out of the people's wealth. The Contact Commission of course was brought into operation; the ministers held sittings; the Bureau of the Executive Committee conferred; delegations were sent to the expropriators–and the affair dragged on for months.

Sukhanov relates that as a "Left "he had nothing against the most radical legislative invasions of the rights of property, but on the other hand he was a "bitter opponent of all forcible seizures." With ruses like this the unhappy Lefts" have always covered up their bankruptcy. A genuinely revolutionary government might unquestionably have reduced these chaotic seizures to a minimum by a timely decree on the requisition of quarters. But the left Compromisers had turned over the power to the fanatics of property, in order afterwards carefully to preach to the masses-under an open sky-a respect for revolutionary legality. The climate of Petrograd is not favourable to Platonism.

The bread-lines had given the last stimulus to the revolution. They also proved the first threat to the new rgime. At the very first session of the Soviet a food commission had been created. The government bothered little about feeding the capital. It would not have been averse to holding it down with hunger. The task lay on the Soviet. It had at its disposition economists and statisticians with some practical experience, people who had served formerly in the economic and administrative organs of the bourgeoisie. They were in most cases Mensheviks of the right wing, like Grohman and Cherevanin, or former Bolsheviks like Bazarov and Avilov, who had moved far to the right. But they had hardly approached the problem of feeding the capital, when they found themselves compelled by the whole situation to apply extremely radical measures to control speculation and organise a market. In a series of sessions of the Soviet a whole system of measures of "military socialism" was adopted, including the declaring of all grain stores public property, the establishment of a definite price for bread, to accord with similar prices for industrial products, state control of industry, a regulated exchange of goods with the peasants. The leaders of the Executive Committee looked at each other in alarm; not knowing what else to propose, however, they supported these radical resolutions. The members of the Contact Commission afterward communicated them, in some embarrassment, to the government. The government

promised to examine them. But Prince Lvov, and Guchkov, and Konovalov had not the least desire. to control, requisition, or otherwise cut down on themselves and their friends. All the economic measures of the Soviet went to pieces against the passive resistance of the state apparatus-except in so far as they were carried out independently by local soviets. The sole practical measure carried through by the Petrograd Soviet in the matter of food supply was the limitation of the consumer to a strict ration: a pound and a half of bread for people engaged in physical labour, a pound for the rest. To be sure, this limitation introduced almost no change into the natural food budget of the population of the capital: you can live on a pound, or a pound and a half. The misery of daily under-nourishment was still ahead. For a period of years-not months, but years-the revolution will have to take in its belt tighter and on a shrinking stomach. It will weather the ordeal. At present what troubles it is not hunger but doubt, indefiniteness, uncertainty of to-morrow. Economic difficulties that have been multiplied by thirty-two months of war, are knocking at the doors and windows of the new rgime. The breakdown of transport, the lack of various kinds of raw materials, the exhaustion of a considerable part of the equipment, alarming inflation, dislocation of trade, all these things demand bold and immediate measures. But while approaching these problems economically, the Compromisers made the solution of them impossible politically. Every economic problem they encountered turned into a condemnation of the dual power; every decision they had to sign burned their fingers unbearably.

The eight-hour working day was the great test of strength and mutual relations. The insurrection had conquered, but the general strike continued. The workers seriously assumed that a change in the rgime ought to introduce changes into their lives. This caused instant alarm to the new rulers, both liberal and socialist. The patriotic parties and newspapers adopted the cry: ”Soldiers to the barracks, workers to the shops¡‘ ”Does that mean that everything is going to remain the same? “asks the worker. ”For the time being,“ answer the Mensheviks, embarrassed. But the workers understand: If there isn’t a change right now, there never will be.

The bourgeoisie left the task of settling things with the workers to the socialists. Referring to the fact that the victory already won ”has sufficiently guaranteed the position of the working class in its revolutionary struggle“-to be sure, have not the liberal landlords come into power?-the Executive Committee designated March 5 as the date for resuming work in the Petrograd district. Workers to the shops! Such is the iron-clad egotism of the educated classes, liberals and socialists alike. Those people believed that millions of workers and soldiers lifted to the heights of insurrection by the inconquerable pressure of discontent and hope, would after their victory tamely submit to the old conditions of life. From reading historical works, they had got the impression that it happened this way in previous revolutions. But no, even in the past it has never been so. If the workers have been driven back into their former stalls, it has been only in a roundabout way, after a whole

series of defeats and deceptions. Marat was keenly aware of this cruel social perversion of political revolutions. For that reason he is so well slandered by the official historians. ”A revolution is accomplished and sustained only by the lowest classes of society,“ he wrote a month before the revolution of August 10, 1792, ”by all the disinherited, whom the shameless rich treat as *canaille*, and whom the Romans with their usual cynicism once named proletarians.“ And what will the revolution give to the disinherited? ”Winning a certain success at the beginning, the movement is finally conquered; it always lacks knowledge, skill, means, weapons, leaders and a definite plan of action; it remains defenceless in the face of conspirators possessed of experience, adroitness and craft.“ Is it any wonder that Kerensky did not want to be the Marat of the Russian revolution?

One of the former captains of Russian industry, V. Auerbach, relates with indignation how ”the revolution was understood by the lower orders as something in the nature of an Easter carnival: servants, for example, disappeared for whole days, promenaded in red ribbons, took rides in automobiles, came home in the morning only long enough to wash up and again went out for fun.“ It is remarkable that in trying to demonstrate the demoralising effect of a revolution, this accuser describes the conduct of a servant in exactly those terms which-with the exception, to be sure, of the red ribbon-most perfectly reproduce the daily life of the bourgeois lady-patrician. Yes, a revolution is interpreted by the oppressed as a holiday-or the eve of a holiday-and the first impulse of the drudge aroused by it is to loosen the yoke of the day-by-day humiliating, anguishing, ineluctable slavery. The working-class as a whole could not, and did not intend to, comfort themselves with mere red ribbons as a symbol of victory-a victory won for others. There was agitation in the factories of Petrograd. A considerable number of shops openly refused to submit to the resolution of the Soviet. The workers were of course ready to return to the shops, for that was necessary-but upon what terms? They demanded the eight-hour day. The Mensheviks answered by alluding to 1905 when the workers tried to introduce the eight-hour day by forcible methods and were defeated. ”A struggle on two fronts-against the reaction and against the capitalist-is too much for the proletariat.“ That was the central idea of the Mensheviks. They recognised in a general way the inevitability of a break in the future with the bourgeoisie. But this purely theoretical recognition did not bind them to anything. They considered that it was wrong to force the break. And since the bourgeoisie is driven into alliance with the reaction not by heated phrases from orators and journalists, but by the independent activity of the toiling classes, the Mensheviks tried with all their power to oppose this activity-to oppose the economic struggle of the workers and peasants. ”For the working class,“ they taught, ”social questions are not now of the first importance. Its present task is to achieve political freedom.“ But just what this speculative freedom consisted of, the workers could not understand. They wanted in the first place a little freedom for their muscles and nerves. And so they brought pressure on their bosses. By the irony of fate it was exactly on the 10th

of March, when the Mensheviks were explaining that the eight-hour day is not a current issue that the Manufacturers' Association-which had already been obliged to enter into official relations with the Soviet announced its readiness to introduce the eight-hour day and permit the organisation of factory and shop committees. The industrialists were more far-seeing than the democratic strategists of the Soviet. And no wonder: these employers came face to face with the workers, and the workers in no less than half of the Petrograd plants among them a majority of the biggest ones were already leaving the shops in a body after eight hours of work. They themselves took what the soviet and the government refused them. When the liberal press unctuously compared this gesture of the Russian industrialists of March 10, 1917 with that of the French nobility of August 4, 1789, they were far nearer the historic truth than they themselves imagined : like the feudalists of the end of the eighteenth century, the Russian capitalists acted under the club of necessity, hoping by this temporary concession to make sure of getting back in the future what they had lost. One of the Kadet publicists, breaking through the official lie, frankly acknowledged this: "Unfortunately for the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks had already by means of terror compelled the Manufacturers' Association to agree to an immediate introduction of the eight-hour day." In what this terror consisted we already know. Worker-Bolsheviks indubitably occupied the front ranks in the movement, and here as in the decisive days of February an overwhelming majority of the workers followed them.

The Soviet, led by Mensheviks, recorded with mixed feelings this gigantic victory gained essentially against its opposition. The disgraced leaders were compelled, however, to make a still further step forward; they had to propose to the Provisional Government the promulgation in advance of the Constituent Assembly of an eight-hour law for all Russia. The government, however, in agreement with the manufacturers, resisted. Hoping for better days, they refused to fulfil this demand-presented to them, to be sure, without any particular insistence.

In the Moscow region the same struggle arose, but it lasted longer. Here too the soviet in spite of the resistance of the workers demanded a return to work. In one of the biggest factories a resolution against calling off the strike received 7,000 votes against 0. Other factories reacted in much the same way. On the 10th of March the soviet again proclaimed the duty of returning immediately to the shops. Although work began after that in a majority of shops, there developed almost everywhere a struggle for the shortening of the working day. The workers corrected their leaders by direct action. After a long resistance the Moscow Soviet was obliged on the 21st of March to introduce the eight-hour day by its own act. The industrialists immediately submitted. In the provinces the same struggle was carried over into April. Almost everywhere the soviets at first refrained and resisted, and afterwards under pressure from the workers entered into negotiations with the manufacturers. And where the latter did not accede, the soviets were obliged independently to decree the

eight-hour day. What a breach in the system!

The government stood aside on purpose. In those days, a furious campaign was opening under liberal leadership against the workers. In order to subdue them it was decided to turn the soldiers against them. To shorten the working day means, you see, to weaken the front. How can anybody think only of himself in war time? Are they counting the hours in the trenches?When the possessing classes make a start on the road of demagogism, they stop at nothing. The agitation assumed a frenzied character, and was soon carried into the trenches. The soldier Pireiko in his reminiscences of the front confesses that this agitation-carried on chiefly by half-baked socialists among the officers-was not without success. ”But the great weakness of the official staff in their effort to turn the soldiers against the workers lay in the fact that they were officers. It was too fresh in the mind of every soldier what his officer had been to him in the past.“ This baiting of the workers was most bitter, however, in the capital. The industrialists along with the Kadet staff found unlimited means and opportunities for agitation in the garrison. ”Towards the end of March,“ says Sukhanov, ”you could see at all street crossings, in the tram-*ways*, and in every public place, workers and soldiers locked together in a furious verbal battle.“ Even physical fights occurred. The workers understood the manoeuvre and skilfully warded it off. For this it was only necessary to tell the truth-to cite the figures of war profits, to show the soldiers the factories and shops with the roar of machines, the hell fires of the furnaces, their perpetual front where victims are innumerable. On the initiative of the workers there began regular visits by the troops of the garrison to the factories, and especially to those working on munitions. The soldiers looked and listened. The workers demonstrated and explained. These visits would end in triumphant fraternisation. The socialist papers printed innumerable resolutions of the military units as to their indestructible solidarity with the workers. By the middle of April the very topic of the conflict had disappeared from the newspapers. The bourgeois press was silent. Thus after their economic victory, the workers won a political and moral victory.

The events connected with this struggle for the eight-hour day had an immense significance for the whole future development of the revolution. The workers had gained a few free hours a week for reading, for meetings, and also for practice with the rifle, which became a regular routine from the moment of the creation of the workers' militia. Moreover, after this clear lesson, the workers began to watch the Soviet leadership more closely. The authority of the Mensheviks suffered a serious drop. The Bolsheviks grew stronger in the factories, and partly too in the barracks. The soldier became more attentive, thoughtful, cautious: he understood that somebody was stalking him. The treacherous design of the demagogues turned against its own inspirers. Instead of alienation and hostility, they got a closer welding together of workers and soldiers.

The government, in spite of the idyll of ”Contact,“ hated the Soviet, hated its leaders

and their guardianship. It revealed this upon the very first occasion. Since the Soviet was fulfilling purely governmental functions, and this moreover at the request of the government itself whenever it became necessary to subdue the masses, the Executive Committee requested the payment of a small subsidy for expenses. The government refused, and in spite of the repeated insistence of the Soviet, stood pat: it could not pay out the resources of the state to a ”private organisation.“ The Soviet swallowed it. The budget of the Soviet lay on the workers who never tired of taking collections for the needs of the revolution. In those days both sides, the liberals and the socialists, kept up the decorum of a complete mutual friendliness. At the All-Russian Conference of Soviets the existence of the duel power was declared a fiction Kerensky assured the delegates from the army that between the government and the soviets there was a complete unity of problems and aims. The dual power was no less zealously denied by Tseretelli, Dan and other Soviet pillars. With the help of these lies, they tried to reinforce a rgime which was founded on lies.

However, the rgime tottered from the very first weeks. The leaders were tireless in the matter of organisational combinations. They tried to bring to bear all sorts of accidental representative bodies against the masses-the soldiers against the workers, the new dumas, zemstvos and cooperatives against the soviets, the provinces against the capital, and finally the officers against the people.

The soviet form does not contain any mystic power. It is by no means free from the faults of every representative system-unavoidable so long as that system is unavoidable. But its strength lies in that it reduces all these faults to a minimum.

We may confidently assert-and the events will soon prove it-that any other representative system, atomising the masses, would have expressed their actual will in the revolution incomparably less effectively, and with far greater delay. Of all the forms of revolutionary representation, the soviet is the most flexible, immediate and transparent. But still it is only a form. It cannot give than the masses are capable of putting into it at a given moment. Beyond that, it can only assist the masses in understanding the mistakes they have made and correcting them. In this function of the soviets lay one of the most important guarantees of the development of the revolution.

What was the political plan of the Executive Committee? You could hardly say that any one of the leaders had a plan thoroughly thought out. Sukhanov subsequently asserted that, according to his plan, the power was turned over to the bourgeoisie only for a short time, in order that the democracy, having strengthened itself, might the more surely take it back. However, this construction-naive enough in any case-was obviously retrospective. At least it was never formulated by anybody at the time. Under the leadership of Tseretelli, the vacillations of the Executive Committee, if they were not put an end to, were at least organised into a system. Tseretelli openly announced that without a firm bourgeois power

the revolution would inevitably fail. The democracy must limit itself to bringing pressure on the liberal bourgeoisie, beware of pushing it. over by some incautious step into the camp of the reaction, and conversely, support it in so far as it backs up the conquests of the revolution. In the long run that half-minded rgime would have ended in a bourgeois republic with the socialists as a parliamentary opposition.

The main difficulty for the leaders was not so much to find a general plan, as a current programme of action. The Compromisers had promised the masses to get from the bourgeoisie by way of ”pressure“ a democratic policy, foreign and domestic. It is indubitable that under pressure from the popular mass, ruling classes have more than once in history made concessions. But ”pressure“ means, in the last analysis, a threat to crowd the ruling class out of the power and occupy its place. Just this weapon however was not in the hands of the democracy. They had themselves voluntarily given over the power to the bourgeoisie. At moments of conflict the democracy did not threaten to seize the power, but on the contrary the bourgeoisie frightened them with the idea of giving it back. Thus the chief lever in the mechanics of pressure was in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This explains how, in spite of its complete impotence, the government succeeded in resisting every somewhat serious undertaking of the Soviet leaders.

By the middle of April, even the Executive Committee had proved too broad an organ for the political mysteries of the ruling nucleus, who had turned their faces completely toward the liberals. A ”bureau“ was therefore appointed, consisting exclusively of right defensists. From now on big politics was carried on in its own small circle. Everything seemed nicely and permanently settled. Tseretelli dominated in the Soviet without limit. Kerensky was riding higher and higher. But exactly at that moment appeared clearly the first alarming signs from below-from the masses. ”It is amazing,“ writes Stankevich, who was close to the circle of Kerensky, ”that at the very this committee was formed, when responsibility for the work was assumed by a bureau selected only from defensist parties, exactly at this moment they let slip from their hands the leadership of the masses-the masses moved away from them.“ Not at all amazing, but quite in accord with the laws of things.

CHAPTER 13

THE ARMY AND THE WAR

In the months preceding the revolution discipline in the army was already badly shaken. You can pick up plenty of officers' complaints from those days: soldiers disrespectful to the command; their treatment of horses, of military property, even of weapons, indescribably bad; disorders in the military trains. It was not equally serious everywhere. But everywhere it was going in the same direction-toward ruin.

To this was now added the shock of revolution. The uprising of the Petrograd garrison took place not only without officers, but against them. In the critical hours the command simply hid its head. Deputy-Octobrist Shidlovsky conversed on the 27th of February with the officers of the Preobrazhensky regiment obviously in order to feel out their attitude to the Duma-but found among these aristocrat-cavaliers a total ignorance of what was happening, perhaps a half-hypocritical ignorance, for they were all frightened monarchists.

"What was my surprise," says Shidlovsky, "when the very next morning I saw the whole Preobrazhensky regiment marching down the street in military formation led by a band, their order perfect and without a single officer! "To be sure, a few companies arrived at the Tauride with their officers-more accurately, they brought their officers with them. But the officers felt that in this triumphal march they occupied the position of captives. Countess Kleinmichel, observing these scenes while under arrest, says plainly The officers looked like sheep led to the slaughter."

The February uprising did not create the split between soldiers and officers but merely brought it to the surface. In the minds of the soldiers the insurrection against the monarchy was primarily an insurrection against the commanding staff. "From the morning of the 28th of February," says the Kadet Nabokov, then wearing an officer's uniform, "it was dangerous to go out, because they had begun to rip off the officers' epaulets." That is how the first day of the new rgime looked in the garrison.

The first care of the Executive Committee was to reconcile soldiers with officers. That meant nothing but to Subordinate the troops to their former command. The return of the officers to their regiments was supposed, according to Sukhanov, to protect the army against ”universal anarchy or the dictators of the dark and disintegrated rank-and-file.“ These revolutionists, just like the liberals, were afraid of the soldiers, not of the officers. The workers on the other hand, along with the ”dark“ rank-and-file, saw every possible danger exactly in the ranks of those brilliant officers. The reconciliation therefore proved temporary.

Stankevich describes in these words the mental attitude of the soldiers to the officers who returned to them after the uprising: ”The soldiers, breaking discipline and leaving their barracks, not only without officers, but in many cases against their officers and even after killing them at their posts, had achieved, it turned out, a great deed of liberation. If it was a great deed, and if the officers themselves now affirm this, then why didn’t they lead the soldiers into the streets? That would have been easier and less dangerous. Now, after the victory, they associate themselves with this deed. But how sincerely and for how long¿‘ These words are the more instructive that the author himself was one of those ”left“ officers to whom it did not occur to lead his soldiers into the streets.

On the morning of the 28th, on Sampsonievsky Prospect, the commander of an engineers’ division was explaining to his soldiers that ”the government which everybody hated is overthrown,“ a new one is formed with Prince Lvov at the head therefore it is necessary to obey officers as before. ”And now I ask all to return to their places in the barracks.“ A few soldiers cried : ”Glad to try“. The majority merely looked bewildered: ”Is that all¿‘

The scene was observed accidentally by Kayurov. It jarred him. ”Permit me a word, Mr. Commander.....“ And without waiting for permission, Kayurov put this question: ”Has the workers’ blood been flowing in the streets of Petrograd for three days merely to exchange one landlord for another¿‘ Here Kayurov took the bull by the horns. His question summarised the whole struggle of the coming months. The antagonism between the soldier and the officer was a refraction of the hostility between peasant and landlord.

The officers in the provinces, having evidently got their instructions in good season, explained the events all in the same way: ”His Majesty has exceeded his strength in his efforts for the good of the country, and has been compelled to hand over the burden of government to his brother.“ The reply was plain on the faces of the soldiers, complains an officer in a far corner of the Crimea: ”Nicholas or Mikhail-it’s all the same to us.“ When, however, this same officer -was compelled next morning to communicate the news of the revolutionary victory, the soldiers, he tells us, were transformed. Their questions, gestures, glances, testified to the ”prolonged and resolute work which somebody had been doing on those dark and cloudy brains, totally unaccustomed to think.“ What a gulf between the officer, whos brain accommodates itself without effort to the latest telegram from

Petrograd, and those soldiers who are, however stiffly, nevertheless honestly, defining their attitude to the events, independently weighing them in their calloused palms!

The high command, although formally recognising the revolution, decided not to let it through to the front. The chief of staff ordered the commander-in-chief of all the fronts, in case revolutionary delegations arrived in his territory delegations which General Alexeiev called ”gangs“ for short-to arrest them immediately and turn them over to court-martial. The next day the same general, in the name of ”His Highness,“ the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich, demanded of the government ”an end of all that is now happening in the rear of the army“-in other words, an end of the revolution.

The command delayed informing the active army about the revolution as long as possible, not so much through loyalty to the monarchy as through fear of the revolution. On several fronts they established a veritable quarantine: stopped all letters from Petrograd, and held up newcomers. In that way the old rgime stole a few extra days from eternity. The news of the revolution rolled up to the line of battle not before the 5th or 6th of March-and in what form? About the same as above: ”The grand duke is appointed commander-in-chief; the czar has abdicated in the name of the Fatherland; everything else as usual.“ In many trenches, perhaps even in the majority, the news of the revolution came from the Germans before it got there from Petrograd. Could there have been any doubt among the soldiers that the whole command was in a conspiracy to conceal the truth? And could those same soldiers trust those same officers to the extent of two cents, when a couple of days later they pinned on a red ribbon?

The chief of staff of the Black Sea fleet tells us, that the news of the events in Petrograd at first made no marked impression on the soldiers. But when the first socialist papers arrived from the capital, ”in the wink of an eye the mood changed, meetings began, criminal agitators crawled out of their cracks.“ The admiral simply did not understand what was happening before his eyes. The newspapers did not create this change of mood. They merely scattered the doubt of the soldiers as to the depth of the revolution, and permitted them to reveal their true feelings without fear of reprisals from the staff. The political physiognomy of the Black Sea staff, his own among them, is characterised by the same author in a single phrase: ”The majority of the officers of the fleet thought that without the czar the Fatherland would perish.“ The democrats also thought that the Fatherland would perish-unless they brought back bright lights of this kind to the ”dark“ sailors!

The commanding staff of the army and fleet soon divided into two groups. One group tried to stay in their places, tuning in on the revolution, registering as Social Revolutionaries. Later a part of them even tried to crawl into the Bolshevik camp. The other group strutted a while and tried to oppose the new order, but soon broke out in some sharp conflict and were swept away by the soldier flood. Such groupings are so natural that they

have been repeated in all revolutions. The irreconcilable officers of the French monarchy, those who in the words of one of them ”fought as long as they could,“ suffered less over the disobedience of the soldiers than over the knuckling under of their noble colleagues. In the long run the majority of the old command were pushed out or suppressed, and only a small part re-educated and assimilated. In a more dramatic form the officers shared the fate of those classes from which they were recruited.

An army is always a copy of the society it serves-with this difference, that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying both their positive and negative features to an extreme. It is no accident that the war did not create one single distinguished military name in Russia. The high command was sufficiently characterised by one of its own members: ”Much adventurism, much ignorance, much egotism, intrigue, careerism, greed, mediocrity and lack of foresight“ writes General Zalessky-”and very little knowledge, talent or desire to risk life, or even comfort and health.“ Nikolai Nikolaievich, the first commander-in-chief, was distinguished only by his high stature and august rudeness. General Alexeiev, a grey mediocrity, the oldest military clerk of the army, won out through mere perseverance. Kornilov was a bold young commander whom even his admirers regarded as a bit simple; Kerensky’s War Minister, Verkhovsky, later described him as the lion heart with the brain of a sheep. Brussilov and Admiral Kolchak a little excelled the others in culture, if you will, but in nothing else. Denikin was not without character, but for t e rest, a perfectly ordinary army general who had read five or six books. And after these came the Yudeniches, the Dragomirovs the Lukomskies, speaking French or not speaking it, drinking moderately or drinking hard, but amounting to absolutely nothing.

To be sure, not only feudal, but also bourgeois and democratic Russia had its representatives in the officers’ corps. The into the ranks of the army tens of thousands of petty bourgeois youths in the capacity of officers, military engineers. These circles, standing almost solid for war to complete victory, felt the necessity of some broad measures of reform, but submitted in the long run to the reactionary command. Under the czar they submitted through fear, and after the revolution through conviction-just as the democracy in the rear submitted to the bourgeoisie. The conciliatory wing of the officers shared subsequently the unhappy fate of the conciliatory parties-with this difference, that at the front the situation developed a thousand times more sharply. In the Executive Committee you could hold on for a long time with ambiguities; in the face of the soldiers it was not so easy.

The ill-will and friction between the democratic and aristocratic officers, incapable of reviving the army, only introduced a further element of decomposition. The physiognomy of the army was determined by the old Russia, and this physiognomy was completely feudal. The officers still considered the best soldier to be a humble and unthinking peasant lad, in whom no consciousness of human personality had yet awakened. Such was the

”national“ tradition of the Russian army-the Suvorov tradition-resting upon primitive agriculture, serfdom and the village commune. In the eighteenth century Suvorov was still creating miracles out of this material. Leo Tolstoy, with a baronial love, idealised in his Platon-Karatayev the old type of Russian soldier, unmurmuringly submitting to nature, tyranny and death (War and Peace). The French revolution, initiating the magnificent triumph of individualism in all spheres of human activity, put an end to the military art of Suvorov. Throughout the nineteenth century, and the twentieth too-throughout the whole period between the French and Russian revolutions-the czar's army was continually defeated because it was a feudal army. Having been formed on that ”national“ basis, the commanding staff was distinguished by a scorn for the personality of the soldier, a spirit of passive Mandarinism, an ignorance of its own trade, a complete absence of heroic principles, and an exceptional disposition toward petty larceny. The authority of the officers rested upon the exterior signs of superiority, the ritual of caste, the system of suppression, and even a special caste language-contemptible idiom of slavery which the soldier was supposed to converse with his officer. Accepting the revolution in words and swearing fealty to the Provisional Government, the czar's marshals simply shouldered off their own sins on the fallen dynasty. They graciously consented to allow Nicholas II to be declared scapegoat for the whole past. But farther than that, not a step! How could they understand that the moral essence of the revolution lay in the spiritualisation of that human mass upon whose inertness all their good fortune had rested? Denikin, appointed to command the front, announced at Minsk: ”I accept the revolution wholly and irrevocably. But to revolutionise the army and bring demagogism into it, I consider ruinous to the country.“ A classic formula of the dull-wittedness of major-generals! As for the rank-and-file generals, to quote Zalessky, they made but one demand: ”Only keep your hands off us-that is all we care about¡‘ However, the revolution could not keep its hands off them. Belonging to the privileged classes, they stood to win nothing, but they could lose much. They were threatened with the loss not only of officer privileges, but also of landed property. Covering themselves with loyalty to the Provisional Government, the reactionary officers waged so much the more bitter a campaign against the soviets. And when they were convinced that the revolution was penetrating irresistibly into the soldier mass, and even into their home estates, they regarded this as a monstrous treachery on the part of Kerensky, Miliukov, even Rodzianko–to say nothing of the Bolsheviks.

The life conditions of the fleet even more than the army nourished the live seeds of civil war. The life of the sailors in their steel bunkers, locked up there by force for a period of years, was not much different even in the matter of food, from that of galley slaves. Right beside them the officers, mostly from privileged circles and having voluntarily chosen naval service as their calling, were identifying the Fatherland with the czar, the czar with themselves, and regarding the sailor as the least valuable part of the battleship. Two alien

and tight-shut worlds thus live in close contact, and never out of each other's sight. The ships of the fleet have their base in the industrial seaport towns with their great population of workers needed for building and repairing. Moreover, on the ships themselves, in the engineering and machine corps, there is no small number of qualified workers. Those are the conditions which convert the fleet into a revolutionary mine. In the revolutions and military uprisings of all countries the sailors have been the most explosive material; they have almost always at the first opportunity drastically settled accounts with their officers. The Russian sailors were no exception.

In Kronstadt the revolution was accompanied by an outbreak of bloody vengeance against the officers, who attempted, as though in horror at their own past, to conceal the revolution from the sailors. One of the first victims to fall was Admiral Viren, who enjoyed a well-earned hatred. A number of the commanding staff were arrested by the sailors. Those who remained free were deprived of arms.

In Helsingfors and Sveaborg, Admiral Nepenin did not admit the news of the insurrection in Petrograd until the night of March 4, threatening the soldiers and sailors meanwhile with acts of repression. So much the more ferocious was the insurrection of these soldiers and sailors. It lasted all night and all day. Many officers were arrested. The most hateful were shoved under the ice. "Judging by Skobelev's account of the conduct of the officers of the fleet and the Helsingfors authorities," writes Sukhanov, who is by no means indulgent to the "dark rank-and file," "it is a wonder these excesses were so few."

But in the land forces too there were bloody encounters, several waves of them. At first this was an act of vengeance for the past, for the contemptible striking of soldier. The was no lack of memories that burned like ulcers. In 1915 disciplinary punishment by flogging had been officially introduced into the czar's army. The officers flogged soldiers upon their own authority-soldiers who were often the fathers of families. But it was not always a question of the past. At the All-Russian Conference of Soviets, a delegate speaking for the army stated that as early as the 15th or 17th of March an order had been issued introducing corporal punishment in the active army. A deputy of the Duma, returning from the front, reported that the Cossacks said to him, in the absence of officers: "Here, you say, is the order. [Evidently the famous Order Number 1, of which we will speak further.] We got it yesterday, and yet to-day an officer soaked me on the jaw." The Bolsheviks went out to try to restrain the soldiers from excesses as often as the Conciliators. But bloody acts of retribution were as inevitable as the recoil of a gun. The liberals had no other ground for calling the February revolution bloodless except that it gave them the power.

Some of the officers managed to stir up bitter conflicts about the red ribbons, which were in the eyes of the soldiers a symbol of the break with the past. The commander of the Sumsky regiment got killed in this way. Another commander, having ordered newly

arrived reinforcements to remove their ribbons, was arrested by the soldiers, and locked up in the guard house. A number of encounters also resulted from the czar's portraits, not yet removed from the official quarters. Was this out of loyalty to the monarchy? In a majority of cases it was mere lack of confidence in the revolution, an act of personal insurance. But the soldiers were not wrong in seeing the ghost of the old rgime lurking behind those portraits.

It was not thought-out measures from above, but spasmodic movements from below, which established the new rgime in the army. The disciplinary power of the officers was neither annulled nor limited. It merely fell away of itself during the first weeks of March. "It was clear," said the chief of the Black Sea staff, "that if an officer attempted to impose disciplinary punishment upon a soldier, the power did not exist to get it executed." In that you have one of the sure signs of a genuinely popular revolution.

With the falling away of their disciplinary power, the practical bankruptcy of the staff of officers was laid bare. Stankevich, who possessed both a gift of observation and an interest in military affairs, gives a withering account in this respect of the commanding staff. The drilling still went on according to the old rules, he tells us, totally out of relation to the demands of the war. "Such exercises were merely a test of the patience and obedience of the soldiers." The officers, of course, tried to lay the blame for this, their own bankruptcy, upon the revolution.

Although they were quick with cruel reprisals, the soldiers were also inclined to child-like trustfulness and self-forgetful acts of gratitude. For a short time the deputy Filomenko, a priest and a liberal, seemed to the soldiers at the front a standard-bearer of the idea of freedom, a shepherd of the revolution. The old churchly ideas united in funny ways with the new faith. The soldiers carried this priest on their hands, raised him above their heads, carefully seated him in his sleigh. And he afterward, choking with rapture, reported to the Duma: "We could not finish our farewells. They kissed our hands and feet." This deputy thought that the Duma had an immense authority in the army. What had authority in the army was the revolution. And it was the revolution that threw this blinding reflection on various accidental figures.

The symbolic cleansing carried out by Guchkov in the upper circles of the army-the removal of a few score of generals-gave no satisfaction to the soldiers, and at the same time created a state of uncertainty among the high officers. Each one was afraid that he would lose his place. The majority swam with the current, spoke softly and clenched their fists in their pockets. It was still worse with the middle and lower officers, who came face to face with the soldiers. Here there was no governmental cleansing at all. Seeking a legal method, the soldiers of one artillery battery wrote to the Executive Committee and the State Duma about their commander: "Brothers, we humbly request you to remove our

domestic enemy, Vanchekhaza.“ Receiving no answer to such petitions, the soldiers would employ what means they had: disobedience, crowding out, even arrest. Only after that the command would wake up, remove the arrested or assaulted officer, sometimes trying to punish the soldiers, but oftener leaving them unpunished in order to avoid complicating things. This created an intolerable situation for the officers, and yet gave no clear definition to the situation of the soldiers.

Even many fighting officers, those who seriously cared about the fate of the army, insisted upon the necessity of a general clean-up of the commanding staff. Without that, they said, it is useless to think of reviving the fighting ability of the troops. The soldiers presented to the deputies of the Duma no less convincing arguments. Formerly, they said, when they had a grievance, they had to complain to the officers, who ordinarily paid no attention to their complaint. And what were they to do now? The officers were the same-the fate of their complaints would be the same. ”It was very difficult to answer that question,“ a deputy confesses. But nevertheless that question contained the whole fate of the army and fore-ordained its future.

It would be a mistake to represent the state of affairs in the army as homogeneous throughout the country in all kinds of troops and all regiments. The variation. was very considerable. While the sailors of the Baltic fleet responded to the first news of the revolution by killing officers, right beside them in the garrison at Helsingfors the officers were occupying a leading position in the soldiers’ soviet by the beginning of April, and here an imposing general was speaking at celebrations in the name of the Social Revolutionaries. There were many such contrasts between hate and trustfulness. But nevertheless the army was like a system of communicating vessels, and the political mood of the soldiers and sailors gravitated to wards a single level.

Discipline was maintained somehow while the soldiers were counting on a quick and decisive change. ”But when the soldiers saw,“ to quote a delegate from the front, ”that everything remained as before-the same oppression, slavery, ignorance, the same insults-an agitation began.“ Nature, who was not thoughtful enough to arm the majority of men with rhinoceros skin, also endowed the soldier with a nervous system. Revolutions serve to remind us from time to time of this carelessness on the part of nature.

In the rear as well as at the front, accidental pretexts easily led to conflicts. The soldiers were given the right to attend theatres, meetings, concerts, etc., ”equally with all citizens.“ Many soldiers interpreted this as a right to attend theatres free. The ministry explained that ”freedom“ was to be understood in a speculative sense. But a people in insurrection has never shown any inclination towards Platonism or Kantianism.

The worn-out tissue of discipline broke through in various ways at different times, in different garrisons, and in different regiments. A commander would often think that

everything had gone well in his regiment until certain newspapers appeared, or until the arrival of some outside agitator. It was all really the work of deep inexorable forces.

The liberal deputy Yanushkevich came back from the front with a generalisation-that the disorganisation is worst of all in the ”green“ troops composed of muzhiks. ”In the more revolutionary regiments the soldiers are getting along very well with the officers.“ As a matter of fact discipline rested for the most part on two foundations: the privileged cavalry made up of well-off peasants, and the artillery or technical branch in general with a high percentage of workers and intellectuals. The land-owning Cossacks held out longest of all, dreading an Agrarian revolution in which the majority of them would lose, and not gain. More than once after the revolution individual Cossack divisions carried out punitive operations, but in general these differences were merely in the date and tempo of disintegration.

The blind struggle had its ebbs and flows. The officers would try to adapt themselves; the soldiers would again begin to bide their time. But during this temporary relief, during these days and weeks of truce, the social hatred which was decomposing the army of the old rgime would become more and more intense. Oftener and oftener it would flash out in a kind of heat lightning. In Moscow, in one of the amphitheatres, a meeting of invalids was called, soldiers and officers together. An orator-cripple began to cast aspersions on the officers. A noise of protest arose, a stamping of shoes, canes, crutches. ”And how long ago were you, Mr. Officer, insulting the soldiers with lashes and fists¿‘ These wounded, shell-shocked, mutilated people stood like two walls, one facing the other. Crippled soldiers against crippled officers, the majority against the minority, crutches against crutches. That nightmare scene in the amphitheatre foreshadowed the ferocity of the coming civil war.

Above all these fluctuations and contradictions in the army and in the country, one eternal question was hanging, summed up in the short word, war. From the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the Black Sea to the Caspian and beyond into the depths of Persia, on an immeasurable front, stood sixty-eight corps of infantry and nine of cavalry. What should happen to them further? What was to be done with the war?

In the matter of military supplies the army had been considerably strengthened before the revolution. Domestic production for its needs had increased, and likewise the importation of War material through Murmansk and Archangel-especially artillery from the Allies. Rifles, cannon, cartridges, were on hand in incomparably greater quantities than during the first years of the war. New infantry divisions were in process of organisation. The engineering corps had been enlarged. On this ground a number of the unhappy military chieftains attempted later to prove that Russia had stood on the eve of victory, and that only the revolution had prevented it. Twelve years before, Kuropatkin and Linevich had asserted with as good a foundation that Witte prevented them from cleaning up the Japanese. In reality

Russia was farther from victory in 1917 than at any other time. Along with the increase in ammunition there appeared in the army toward the end of 1916 an extreme lack of food supplies. Typhus and scurvy took more victims than the fighting. The breakdown of transport alone cancelled all strategy involving large-scale regroupings of the military mass. Moreover an extreme lack of horses often condemned the artillery to inaction. But the chief trouble was not even here; it was the moral condition of the army that was hopeless. You might describe it by saying that the army as an army no longer existed. Defeats, retreats, and the rottenness of the ruling group had utterly undermined the troops. You could no more correct that with administrative measures, than you could change the nervous system of the country. The soldier now looked at a heap of cartridges with the same disgust that he would at a pile of wormy meat; the whole thing seemed to him unnecessary and good for nothing; a deceit and a thievery. And his officer could say nothing convincing to him, couldn't even make up his mind to crack him on the jaw. The officer himself felt deceived by the higher command, and moreover not infrequently ashamed before the soldiers for his own superiors. The army was incurably sick. It was still capable of speaking its word in the revolution, but so far as making war was concerned, it did not exist. Nobody believed in the success of the war, the officers as little as the soldiers. Nobody wanted to fight any more, neither the army nor the people.

To be sure, in the high chancelleries, where a special kind of life is lived, they were still chattering, through mere inertia, about great operations, about the spring offensive, the capture of the Dardanelles. In the Crimea they even got ready a big army for this latter purpose. It stood in the bulletins that the best element, of the army had been designated for the siege. They sent the regiments of the guard from Petrograd. However, according to the account of an officer who began drilling them on the 25th of February-two days before the revolution-these reinforcements turned out to be indescribably bad. Not the slightest desire to fight was to be seen in those imperturbable blue, hazel and grey eyes. "All their thoughts and their aspirations were for one thing only-peace."

There is no lack of such testimony. The revolution merely brought to the surface what already existed. The slogan "Down with the war¡' became for that reason one of the chief slogans of the February days. It came from demonstrations of women, from the workers of the Vyborg quarter, from the regiments of the Guard. Early in March when deputies from the Duma made a tour of the front, the soldiers, especially the older ones, would continually ask them:" What are they saying about the land¿' The deputies answered evasively that the land question would be decided by the Constituent Assembly. But here would sound out a voice betraying the hidden thought of everybody: "Well, as for the land, if I'm not here, you know, I won't need it." Such was the original soldier programme of revolution: first peace, and then the land.

Toward the end of March at the All-Russian Conference of Soviets, where there was a good deal of patriotic bragging, one of the delegates representing the soldiers in the trenches reported very sincerely how the front received the news of the revolution: ”All the soldiers said, “Thank God! Maybe now we will have peace!” The trenches instructed the delegate to tell the conference “We are ready to lay down our lives for freedom, but just the same, Comrades, we want an end of the war.” That was the living voice of reality-especially the latter half of it. We will wait a while if we have to, but you up there at the top, hurry along with the peace.

The czar’s troops in France in a completely unnatural atmosphere-being moved by the same feelings, passed through the same stages of disintegration. “When we heard that the czar had abdicated,” an illiterate middle-aged peasant soldier explained to his officer, “we all thought it meant that the war was over.... The czar sent us to war, and what is the use of freedom if I have got to rot in the trenches again?” That was the genuine soldier philosophy of the revolution-not brought in from the outside. No agitator could think up those simple and convincing words.

The liberals and the half-liberal socialists tried afterwards to represent the revolution as a patriotic uprising. On the 2nd of March, Miliukov explained to the French journalists: “The Russian revolution was made in order to remove the obstacles on Russia’s road to victory.” Here hypocrisy goes hand-in-hand with self-deceit-the hypocrisy somewhat the larger of the two. The candid reactionaries saw things clearer. Von Struve, a German Pan-Slavist, a Lutheran Greek Orthodox, and a Marxian monarchist, better defined the actual sources of the revolution, although in the language of reactionary hatred. “In so far as the popular, and especially the soldier, masses took part in the revolution, it was not a patriotic explosion, but a riotous self-demobilisation, and was directed straight against a prolongation of the War. That is, it was made in order to stop the War.”

Along with a true thought, those words contain also a slander. The riotous demobilisation was growing as a matter of fact right out of the war. The revolution did not create, but on the contrary checked it. Deserting, extraordinarily frequent on the eve of the revolution, was very infrequent in the first weeks after. The army was waiting. In the hope that the revolution would give peace, the soldier did not refuse to put a shoulder under the front: Otherwise, he thought, the new government won’t be able to conclude a peace.

“The soldiers are definitely expressing the opinion,” reports the chief of the Grenadier Division on the 23rd of March, “that we can only defend ourselves and not attack.” Military reports and political speeches repeat this thought in various forms. Ensign Krylenko, an old revolutionist and a future commander-in-chief under the Bolsheviks, testified that for the soldier the war question was settled in those days with this formula: “Support the front, but don’t join the offensive.” In a more solemn but wholly sincere language, that meant:

defend freedom.

"We mustn't stick our bayonets in the ground!" Under the influence of obscure and contradictory moods the soldiers those days frequently refused even to listen to the Bolsheviks. They thought perhaps, impressed by certain unskilful speeches that the Bolsheviks were not concerned with the defence of revolution and might prevent the government from concluding peace. The social patriotic papers and agitators more and more cultivated this idea among the soldiers. But even though sometimes preventing the Bolsheviks from speaking, the soldiers from the very first days decisively rejected the idea of an offensive. To the politicians of the capital this seemed some kind of a misunderstanding which could be removed with appropriate pressure. The agitation for war reached extraordinary heights. The bourgeois press in millions of issues portrayed the problems of the revolution in the light of "War to complete victory." The Compromisers hummed the same tune-at first under their breath, then more boldly. The influence of the Bolsheviks, very weak in the army at the moment of the revolution, became even weaker when thousands of workers who had been banished to the front for striking left its ranks. The desire for peace thus found no open and clear expression exactly where it was most intense. This situation made it possible for the commanders and commissars, who were looking round for comforting illusions, to deceive themselves about the actual state of affairs. In the articles and speeches of those times it is frequently asserted that the soldiers declined the offensive because they did not correctly understand the formula "without annexations or indemnities." The Compromisers spared no effort to explain that defensive warfare permits taking the offensive, and sometimes even requires it. As though that scholastic question were at issue! An offensive meant re-opening the war. A waiting support of the front meant armistice. The soldiers' theory and practice of defensive warfare was a form of silent, and later indeed of quite open, agreement with the Germans: "Don't touch us and we won't touch you." More than that the army had nothing to give to the war.

The soldiers were still less open to warlike persuasions because, under the form of preparation for an offensive, reactionary officers were obviously trying to get the reins in their hands. In the soldiers' conversation appeared the phrase: "Bayonet for the Germans, butt for the inside enemy." The bayonet, however, had here a defensive significance. The soldiers in the trenches never thought of the Dardanelles. The desire for peace was a mighty underground current which must soon break out on the surface.

Although he did not deny that negative signs were "to be observed" in the army, Miliukov tried for a long time after the revolution to assert that the army was capable of fulfilling the tasks laid out for it by the Entente. "The Bolshevik propaganda," he writes in his character of historian, "by no means immediately reached the front. For the first month or moth and-a-half after the revolution the army remained healthy." He approaches the whole

question at the level of propaganda, as though that exhausts the historic process. Under the form of a belated struggle against Bolsheviks, to whom he attributes veritably mystic powers, Miliukov carries on his struggle against facts. We have already seen how the army looked in reality. Let us see how the commanders themselves appraised its fighting capacity in the first weeks, and even days, after the revolution.

On March 6 the commander-in-chief of the northern front, General Ruszky, informs the Executive Committee that a complete insubordination of the soldiers is beginning, popular personalities must be sent to the front in order to introduce some sort of tranquillity into the army.

The chief of the staff of the Black Sea fleet says in his memoirs: “From the first days of the revolution it was clear to me that it was impossible to wage war, and that the war was lost.” Kolchak, according to him, was of the same opinion, and if he remained at his post as commander at the front, it was merely to defend the staff officers against violence.

Count Ignatiev, who occupied a high command in the Imperial Guard, wrote to Nabokov in March: “You must clearly understand that the war is finished, that we can’t and won’t fight any longer. Intelligent people ought to be thinking up a way to liquidate the war painlessly, otherwise there will be a catastrophe....” Guchkov told Nabokov at the same time that he was receiving such letters by the thousand. Certain superficially more hopeful reports, rare enough in any case, were mostly contradicted by their own supplementary explanations. “The desire of the troops for victory remains,” says the commander of the 2nd Army, Danilov. “In some regiments it is even stronger.” But just here he adds: “Discipline has fallen off. . . . It would be well to postpone offensive action until the situation quiets down (say one to three months).” And then an unexpected supplement: “Only 50 per cent. of the reinforcements are arriving. If they continue to melt away in the future, and are equally undisciplined, we cannot count on the success of the offensive.”

“Our Division is fully capable of defensive action,” reports the valiant commander of the 51st Infantry Division, and immediately adds: “It is necessary to rescue the army from the influence of the Soldiers’ and Workers’ Deputies.” That, however, was not so easy to do.

The chief of the 182nd Division reports to the commander of the corps: “With every day misunderstandings are increasing, essentially about trifles, but ominous in their character. The soldiers are increasingly nervous, and the officers still more so.”

This is so far only scattered testimony, although there is much of it. But on the 18th of March there was held at staff head-quarters a conference of high officers on the condition of the army. The conclusion of the central organs of command was unanimous: “It will be impossible to send troops to the front in sufficient numbers to replace the losses, for there is

unrest among all the reserves. The army is sick. It will probably take two or three months to adjust the relations between officers and soldiers." The generals did not understand that the disease could only progress. For the present they observed a decline of spirits among the officers, agitation among the troops, and a considerable tendency to desert. "The fighting capacity of the army is lowered, and it is difficult at present to rely on the possibility of an advance." Conclusion: "It is now impossible to carry into execution the active operations indicated for the spring."

In the weeks following, the situation continues to get worse a and similar testimony is endlessly multiplied. Late in March the commander of the 5th Army, General Dragomirov, wrote to General Ruszky: "The fighting spirit has declined. Not only is there no desire among the soldiers to take the offensive, but even a simple stubbornness on the defensive has decreased to a degree threatening the success of the war.... Politics, which has spread through all the layers of the army, has made the whole military mass desire only one thing-to end the war and go home."

General Lukomsky, one of the pillars of the reactionary staff, dissatisfied with the new order, took over the command of a corps and found, as he tells us, that discipline remained only in he artillery and engineering division in which there were many officers and soldiers of the regular army. "As for the three infantry divisions, they were all on the road to complete disintegration."

Deserting, which had decreased after the revolution under the influence of hope, increased again under the influence of disappointment. In one week, from the 1st to the 7th of April, according to the report of General Alexeiev, approximately 8,000 soldiers deserted from the northern and western fronts. "I read with the utmost astonishment," he wrote to Guchkov, "the irresponsible reports as to the 'excellent' temper of the army, What is the use? It will not deceive the Germans, and for us it is a fatal self-deception."

So far, it is well to note, there is hardly a reference to the Bolsheviks. The majority of officers had hardly learned that strange name. When they raised the question of the causes of the army's disintegration, it was newspapers, agitators, soviets, "politics" in general-in a word, the February revolution.

You still could find individual officer-optimists who hoped that everything would turn out all right. There were still more who intentionally shut their eyes to the facts, in order not to cause unpleasantness to the new government. On the other hand a considerable number, especially of the highest officers, consciously exaggerated the signs of disintegration in order to get from the government some decisive action, which they themselves, however, were not quite ready to call by name. But the fundamental picture is indubitable. Finding the army sick, the revolution clothed the inexorable process of its decline in political forms which became more cruelly definite from week to week. The revolution carried to its

logical end not only the passionate thirst for peace, but also the hostility of the soldier mass to the commanding staff and to the ruling classes in general.

In the middle of April, Alexeiev made a personal report to the government on the mood of the army, in which he evidently ,did not hesitate to lay on colours. “I well remember,” writes ,Nabokov, “what a feeling of awe and hopelessness seized me.” We may assume that, Miliukov was present during that report, which must have occurred in the first six weeks after the revolution. More likely indeed it was he who had summoned Alexeiev with the desire of frightening his colleagues, and through their, mediation, his friends the socialists.

Guchkov actually had a conversation after that with the representatives of the Executive Committee. “A ruinous fraternisation has begun,” he complained. “Cases of direct insubordination are reported. Orders are talked over in army organisations and at general meetings before being carried out. In such and such regiments they wouldn’t even hear of active operations. When people are hoping that peace will come tomorrow”-Guchkov added, wisely enough-“ you can’t expect them to give up their lives to-day.” From this the War Minister drew the conclusion: “We must stop talking out loud about peace.” But since the revolution was just what had taught people to say out loud what they were formerly thinking in silence, this meant stop the revolution.

The soldier, of course, from the very first day of the war, did not want either to die or to fight. But he did not want this just the way an artillery horse does not want to drag a heavy gun through the mud. Like the horse, he never thought that he might get rid of the load they had hitched to him. There was no connection between his will and the events of the war. The revolution showed him that connection. For millions of soldiers the revolution meant the right to a personal life, and first of all the right to life in general, the right to protect their lives from bullets and shells, and by the same token their faces from the officers’ fists. In this sense it was said above, that the fundamental psychological process taking place in the army was the awakening of personality. In this volcanic eruption of individualism, which often took anarchistic forms the educated classes saw only treachery to the nation. But as a matter of fact in the stormy speeches of the soldiers, in their intemperate protests, even in their bloody excesses, a nation was merely beginning to form itself out of impersonal prehistoric raw material. This flood of mass individualism. so hateful to the bourgeoisie, was due to the very character of the February revolution, to the fact that it was a bourgeois revolution.

But that was not its only content, either. For besides the peasant and his soldier son, the worker took part in this revolution. The worker had long ago felt himself a personality, and into the war not only with hatred of it, but also with the thought of struggling against it. The revolution meant only the naked fact of conquering, but also the partial triumph of his ideas. The overthrow of the monarchy was for him only a first step, and he did not pause

on it but hastened toward other goals. The whole question for him was, how much farther would the soldier and peasant go with him? What good is the land to me if I won't be there? asked the soldier. What good is freedom to me, he repeated after the worker before the closed doors of the theatre, if the keys to freedom are in the hand of the master? Thus across the immeasurable chaos of the February revolution, the steely gleams of October were already visible.

CHAPTER 14

THE RULING GROUP AND THE WAR

What did the Provisional Government and the Executive Committee intend to do with this war and this army?

First of all it is necessary to understand the policy of the liberal bourgeoisie, since they played the leading role. In external appearance the war policy of liberalism remained aggressive, patriotic, annexationist, irreconcilable. In reality it was self-contradictory, treacherous, and rapidly becoming defeatist.

"Even if there had been no revolution," wrote Rodzianko later, "the war would have been lost just the same, and in all probability a separate peace signed." Rodzianko's views were not distinguished by independence, and for that reason ably typify the average opinions of liberally conservative circles. The mutiny of the battalions of the Guard foretold to the possessing classes not victory abroad but defeat at home. The liberals were the less able to deceive themselves about this, because they had foreseen, and to the best of their ability struggled against, this danger. The unexpected revolutionary optimism of Miliukov-declaring the revolution a step towards victory was in reality the last resort of desperation. The question of war and peace had almost ceased for the liberals to be an independent question. They felt that they would not be able to use the revolution for the purposes of war, and so much the more imperative became their other task: to use the war' against the revolution.

Problems concerning the international situation of Russia after the war, debts and new loans, the capital market and the sales market, of course still confronted the leaders of the Russian bourgeoisie; but these questions did not directly determine their policy. The concern of the moment was not to secure advantageous international conditions for bourgeois Russia, but to save the bourgeois rgime itself, even at the price of Russia's further enfeeblement. "First we must recover," said this heavily wounded class. "After that we will put

things in order." But to recover meant to put down the revolution.

To keep up the war hypnosis and the mood of chauvinism was the only possible way the bourgeoisie could maintain their hold upon the masses-especially upon the army-against the so-called "deepeners" of the revolution. The problem was to sell to the people an old war which had been inherited from czarism, with all its former aims and allies, as a new war in defence of the conquests and hopes of the revolution. That would be something of an achievement. But how achieve it? The liberals firmly expected to direct against the revolution that whole organisation of patriotic social opinion which they had been using yesterday against the Rasputin clique. Since they had failed to save the monarchy, the highest court of appeal against the people, so much the more must they hold fast to the Allies. In time of war at any rate, the Entente was a far more powerful court of appeal than their own monarchy could

A prolongation of war would justify them in preserving the old military bureaucratic apparatus, postponing the Constituent Assembly, subordinating the revolutionary country to the front-that is, to the commanding staff acting in unison with the liberal bourgeoisie. All domestic questions, especially the agrarian, and all social legislation, were to be postponed until the end of the war-which in turn was to be postponed until a victory in which the liberals did not believe. A war to exhaust the enemy was thus converted into a war to exhaust the revolution. This was not perhaps a completed plan, thought-up in advance and talked over in official meetings. But that was unnecessary plan flowed inevitably from the whole preceding policy of liberalism and the situation created by the revolution.

Compelled to choose the path of war, Miliukov could not of course refuse in advance to participate in the division of the booty. The Allied hopes of victory remained very real, and indeed with the entrance of America into the war had grown immensely stronger. To be sure, the Entente was one thing and Russia another. The leaders of the Russian bourgeoisie had learned during the war that, in view of the economic and military weakness of Russia, a victory of the Entente over the Central Empires would also mean a victory over Russia. For whatever might happen, Russia could only come out of the war broken and weakened. But the liberal imperialists quite consciously decided to close their eyes to this prospect. There was really nothing else for them to do. Guchkov frankly stated to his circle that only a miracle could save Russia, and that his programme as War Minister was to hope for a miracle. For domestic purposes Miliukov needed the myth of victory. It does not matter how much he himself believed in it. At any rate, he stubbornly asserted that Constantinople must be ours. In this he acted with his usual cynicism. On the 20th of March this Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs tried to persuade the Allied ambassadors to betray Serbia in order by this means to purchase the treason of Bulgaria to the Central Empires. The French ambassador wrinkled his nose. Miliukov, however, insisted upon

the “necessity of abandoning sentimental considerations in this matter ”-abandoning at the same time that Neo-Slavism which he had been preaching ever since the defeat of the first revolution. Engels was right when he wrote to Bernstein as early as 1882: “What does all this Russian Pan-Slavic charlatanism amount to? The seizure of Constantinople and nothing more.”

The charge of being Germanophile, even of being bribed by the Germans-directed yesterday against a court camarilla-was now directed with venom against the revolution. Bolder, louder, more insolent day by day, this note resounded in the speeches and articles of the Kadet Party. Before capturing the Turkish waters, liberalism was going to dirty the springs and poison the wells of the revolution.

By no means all the liberal leaders took an irreconcilable position, at least immediately after the revolution, on the question of war. Many were still in the pre-revolutionary mood, contemplating the prospect of a separate peace. Certain leading Kadets told about this afterwards with complete frankness. Nabokov, according to his own confession, was already talking with members of the government about a separate peace on the 7th of March. Several members of the Kadet centre tried collectively to demonstrate to their leaders the impossibility of continuing the war. “Miliukov with his usual cold precision explained,” says Baron Nolde, “that the aims of the war must be achieved.” General Alexeiev, at that time drawing near to the Kadet Party, joined his voice with Miliukov’s, asserting that “the army could be revived.” That staff organiser of calamities apparently felt called to revive it.

A good many of the liberals and democrats, a little more naive, misunderstood Miliukov of course, and thought him a very knight of loyalty to the Allies, the Don Quixote of the Entente. What nonsense! After the Bolsheviks seized the power, Miliukov did not hesitate one second to hurry down to Kiev, then occupied by the Germans, and offer his services to the Hohenzollern government-which, to be sure, was in no hurry to accept them. Miliukov’s immediate goal in this was to secure for the purpose of his struggle with the Bolsheviks that same German gold with whose spectre he had earlier tried to befoul the revolution. Miliukov’s appeal to Germany in 1918 seemed to many liberals just as incomprehensible as his programme of shattering Germany in the first months of 1917. But these were merely two sides of the same medal. In preparing to betray the Allies-as formerly he tried to betray Serbia-Miliukov did not betray himself nor his class. He was pursuing the same policy, and it was not his fault if it didn’t look nice. In feeling out under czarism the path to a separate peace in order to avoid revolution; in demanding war to complete victory in order to stop the February revolution when it came; in seeking an alliance with the Hohenzollerns in order to overthrow the October revolution-in all this Miliukov remained true to the interests of the possessing classes. If he did not succeed in helping them, but

only butted his head each time into a new wall, that is merely because his patrons were in a blind alley. What Miliukov especially needed in the first days after the uprising was an enemy attack, a good German crack over the skull for the revolution. Unfortunately for him, March and April were inauspicious from a climatic point of view for large operations on the Russian front. And more important, the Germans, whose own situation was getting more and more difficult, decided after some hesitation to leave the Russian revolution to its own inner course. General Lisingen. alone showed some private initiative at the Stokhod, the 20th and 21st of March. His success simultaneously frightened the German, and delighted the Russian governments. The staff, with the same shamelessness with which under the czar it had exaggerated every trivial success, now exaggerated this defeat on the Stokhod. And the liberal press took up the cry. They described examples of weakness, panic, and loss in the Russian troops with the same gusto with which they had formerly described war-prisoners and trophies. The bourgeoisie and the general staff had quite plainly gone over to the defeatist position. But Lisingen was stopped by his superior officers, and the front again stood stock-still in spring mud and expectation.

The device of using the war against the revolution had a chance of success only if the intermediate parties, whom the popular masses followed, agreed to play the part of transmitting mechanism for this liberal policy. Liberalism was not in a position to unite the idea of war with the idea of revolution; only yesterday it had been preaching that a revolution would be ruinous to the war. This task must be turned over to the democrats. But of course the "secret" must not be revealed to them. They must not be initiated into the scheme, but taken with a hook. The best way to take them was through their prejudices, their vanity, their high opinion of their own states-manlike intelligence, their fear of anarchy, their superstitious bowing down to the bourgeoisie.

In the first days the socialists-for brevity we will use this name for both Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries-did not know what to do with the war. Cheidze heaved a sigh: "We have been talking against war all the time-how can I now advocate continuing the war?" On March 10 the Executive Committee voted to send a greeting to Franz Mehring. With this little gesture, the left wing tried to quiet its not very active socialist conscience. Upon the war itself the Soviet continued to say nothing. The leaders were afraid they might stir up a conflict with the Provisional Government on this subject, and darken those honeymoon weeks of "contact." They were no less afraid of a split in their own ranks. They had both defenders of the Fatherland and Zimmerwaldists among them. Each of these groups over-estimated their differences. Wide circles of the revolutionary intelligentsia had undergone a deep bourgeois metamorphosis during the war. Patriotism, open or disguised, had united the intelligentsia with the ruling classes, drawing them away from the masses. The banner of Zimmerwald with which the left wing had covered themselves did not bind them to anything much, and it did permit them to keep hidden their patriotic solidarity with

the Rasputin clique. But now the Romanov rgime was overthrown. Russia had become a democratic country. Her freedom, dancing in all colours, stood out sharply on the background of well-policed Europe with her military dictatorships. “Must we not defend our revolution against the Hohenzollern?” exclaimed both the old and the new patriots at the head of the Executive Committee. Zimmerwaldists of the type of Sukhanov and Steklov diffidently pointed out that the war remained imperialist, that the liberals were insisting that the revolution guarantee the annexations agreed on under the czar. “How can I now advocate continuing the war?” says the worried Cheidze. But since these Zimmerwaldists were themselves the initiators of the transfer of power to the liberals, their objection to the liberal policy merely hung in the air. After some weeks of wavering and obstruction the first part of Miliukov’s plan was, with the help of Tseretelli, decided in a satisfactory manner: these half-hearted democrats calling themselves socialists were hitched up in the war harness, and under the whip of the liberals tried with all their tiny strength to guarantee victory-the victory of the Entente over Russia and of America over Europe!

The chief function of the Compromisers was to short circuit the revolutionary energy of the masses into patriotic wires. They tried on the one hand to revive the fighting capacity of the army-that was difficult. They tried on the other hand to induce the governments of the Entente to renounce their prospective robberies-that was ludicrous. In both efforts they passed from illusion to disappointment, from error to humiliation. Let us note the first signposts on this road.

In the brief hours of his grandeur, Rodzianko succeeded in publishing an order for the immediate return of the soldiers to their barracks, and their subordination to the officers. The indignation this caused in the garrison compelled the Soviet to dedicate one of its first sessions to the question of the future of the soldier. In the heated atmosphere of those hours, in the chaos of those sessions like mass meetings, and at the direct dictation of the soldiers whom the absent leaders could not restrain, there was born the famous “Order No.1”-the single worthy document of the February revolution, a charter of the freedom of the revolutionary army. Its bold paragraphs, giving the soldiers an organisational mode of entry to the new high-way, declare: that elective committees shall be formed in all military regiments; soldiers’ deputies shall be elected to the Soviet; in all political acts the soldiers shall submit to the Soviet and its committees; weapons shall be in the control of the regimental and battalion committees, and shall “in no case be given up to the officer” ; on duty, the severest military discipline-off duty, complete citizens’ rights; saluting off duty and titling of officers, are abolished; uncivil treatment of soldiers is forbidden, and particularly addressing them as thou. . . . Such were the inferences drawn by the Petrograd soldiers from their participation in the revolution. Could they have been other? Nobody dared to oppose them. During the preparation of this “order” the leaders of the Soviet were distracted by more lofty business-they were conducting negotiations with the liberals.

That gave them an alibi later when they had to justify themselves before the bourgeoisie and the commanding staff. Simultaneously with "Order No.1," the Executive Committee-having hastily pulled itself together-sent to the printer, by way of antidote, an appeal to the soldiers, which, under the pretext of condemning lynch law for officers, demanded the soldiers' subordination to the old commanding staff. The typesetters simply refused to set up this document. Its democratic authors were beside themselves with indignation: where are we headed for? It would be a mistake to imagine, however, that the typesetters were longing for bloody reprisals upon officers. The demand for subordination to the czarist commanding staff on the second day after the revolution, seemed to them to be merely opening he door to the counter-revolution. Of course the type-setters exceeded their rights. But they did not feel themselves to be only typesetters. It was a question, in their opinion, of the life of the revolution.

In those first days, when both the soldiers and the workers were intensely excited about the future of the officers who had returned to their troops, the Mezhrayontsi, a Social Democratic organisation close to the Bolsheviks, formulated this sore question with revolutionary audacity. "In order that the aristocrats and officers shall not deceive you," said their appeal to the soldiers, "choose your own platoon, company and regiment commanders, accept only those officers whom you know to be friends of the people." And what happened? This proclamation, which adequately met the situation, was immediately confiscated by the Executive Committee, and Cheidze in his speech called it an act of provocateurs. The democrats, you see, were not in the least embarrassed about limiting the freedom of the press when it came to dealing blows to the left. Fortunately their own freedom was sufficiently limited, for the workers and soldiers, although supporting the Executive Committee as their highest organ, at all important moments corrected the policy of the leadership by direct interference. Before two days passed, the Executive Committee was trying by means of "Order No.2" to annul the first order, limiting its application to the Petrograd military district. In vain. "Order No.1" was indestructible it had not invented anything, but merely affirmed and strengthened what had already come to pass both in the rear and at the front, and was demanding recognition. Even liberal deputies, when face to face with the soldiers, defended themselves against questions and reproaches by referring to "Order No.1." But in the sphere of Big Politics, that audacious order became the chief argument of the bourgeoisie against the Soviet. From that time on, the beaten generals discovered in "Order No.1 "the chief obstacle which had prevented them from crushing the German armies. Its origin was even traced to Germany! The Compromisers never ceased to apologise for what they had done, and bewildered the soldiers by trying to take away with their right hand what their left hand had let slip.

Meanwhile in the Soviet the majority of rank-and-file deputies were already demanding the election of officers. The democrats got excited. Finding no better argument, Sukhanov

tried to frighten the deputies with the idea that the bourgeoisie, to whom they had turned over the power, would not go this far. The democrats frankly hid behind Guchkov's back. In their scheme, the liberals occupied the same place which the monarchy was to have occupied in the scheme of the liberals. "As I was returning from the tribune to my place," Sukhanov relates, "I ran into a soldier who blocked my path, and shaking his fist in my face, angrily shouted something about 'gentlemen who have never been in a soldier's skin.'" After this "excess" our democrat, completely losing his equilibrium, ran to find Kerensky, and only with the latter's help was "the question somehow smoothed over." These people did nothing all the time but smooth questions over.

For two weeks they succeeded in pretending that they had not noticed the war. At last, however, a further postponement became impossible. On the 14th of March, the Executive Committee introduced into the Soviet the project of a manifesto written by Sukhanov and addressed to "the people of the whole world." The liberal press soon named this document-which united the right and left Compromisers-" Order No.1 in the sphere of foreign policy." But this flattering appraisal was just as false as the document to which it referred. "Order No. 1" had been the honest answer of the lower ranks themselves to the questions raised before the army by the revolution. The manifesto of March 14 was the treacherous answer of the upper ranks to the questions honestly presented to them by soldiers and workers.

The manifesto of course expressed a desire for peace, and moreover a democratic peace without annexations or indemnities. But long before the February revolution, the Western imperialists had learned to make use of that same phraseology. It was exactly in the name of a durable, honourable, "democratic" peace, that Wilson was getting ready just at that moment to go into the war. The pious Mr. Asquith had given to Parliament a learned classification of annexations, from which it could be unmistakably inferred that all those annexations were to be condemned as immoral which conflicted with the interests of Great Britain. As for French diplomacy, its very essence consisted in giving the most liberating possible aspect to the greediness of the shopkeeper and moneylender. The Soviet document, to which one cannot deny a rather simple sincerity of motive, dropped with fatal perfection into the well-worn rut of official French hypocrisy. The manifesto promised "firmly to defend our own freedom" against foreign militarism. The French social patriots had been occupied with just that business ever since August 1914. "The hour has come for the people to take into their own hands the decision about war and peace," declares this manifesto, whose authors, in the name of the Russian people, had just turned over the decision of that question to the big bourgeoisie. The workers of Germany and Austria-Hungary were summoned by the manifesto, "to refuse to serve as an instrument of conquest and spoliation in the hands of kings, landlords and bankers¡' Those words are the quintessence of a lie-for the leaders of the Soviet had no intention of breaking off their own alliance with the kings of Great Britain and Belgium, with the Emperor of Japan, with the landlords and bankers of

their own and all the countries of the Entente. While turning over the leadership of foreign policy to Miliukov, who had been scheming not long before to convert East Prussia into a Russian province, the leaders of the Soviet summoned the German and Austro-Hungarian workers to follow the lead of the Russian revolution. Their theatrical condemnation of slaughter altered nothing: the Pope himself was doing that. With the help of magniloquent phrases directed against the shadows of bankers, landlords and kings, these Compromisers were converting the February revolution into an instrument in the hands of real kings, landlords and bankers. In his telegram of salutation to the Provisional Government, Lloyd George had appraised the revolution as a proof that ”the present war is in its foundations a struggle for popular government and freedom.“ The manifesto of March 14 associated itself with Lloyd George ”in its foundations,“ and gave invaluable aid to the war propaganda in America. Miliukov’s paper was a thousand times right when it declared that ”the manifesto, although it began with so typical a note of pacifism, developed an ideology essentially common to us and to all our allies.“ If the Russian liberals nevertheless at times fiercely attacked the manifesto, and the French censorship would not let it through, that was merely due to a fear of the interpretation which would be given it by revolutionary but still trustful masses. Although written by Zimmerwaldists, the manifesto signalised the victory of the patriotic wing. The local soviets understood the signal. They pronounced the slogan ”war against war“ unpermissible. Even in the Urals and in Kostroma, where the Bolsheviks were strong, the patriotic manifesto received unanimous approval. No wonder, when in the Petrograd Soviet itself the Bolsheviks offered no resistance to this false document.

After a few weeks it became necessary to make partial payments on bills of exchange. The Provisional Government issued a war loan, of course called ”liberty loan.“ Tseretelli explained that since the government ”as a whole and in general“ was fulfilling its obligations, the democracy ought to support the loan. In the Executive Committee the opposition captured more than a third of the votes. But at the plenum of the Soviet (April 22) only 112 votes were cast against the loan out of almost 2,000. From this the conclusion is sometimes drawn that the Executive Committee was further to the left than the Soviet. But that is not true. The Soviet was merely more honest than the Executive Committee: if the war is in defence of the revolution, then you must give money for the war, you must support the loan. The Executive Committee was not more revolutionary, but more evasive. It lived on ambiguities and reservations. It supported the government set up by itself only ”as a whole and in general,“ and took the responsibility for the war ”in so far as.“ These petty trickeries are alien to the masses. Soldiers cannot fight ” in so far as,“ nor die ”as a whole and in general.“

In order to reinforce the victory of statesmanly thinking over wild talk, General Alexeiev who had been intending on March 5 to shoot all ”gangs“ of propagandists was on April 1 officially placed at the head of the armed forces. From then on everything was in

order. The inspirer of the czarist foreign policy, Miliukov, was Minister of Foreign Affairs; the leader of the army under the czar, Alexeiev, had become commander-in-chief of the revolution. The succession was fully re-established.

At the same time, however, the Soviet leaders felt compelled by the logic of the situation to unravel the loops of the net they were weaving. The official democracy mortally feared those officers whom they tolerated and supported. They could not help opposing to them their own authority, trying to find support for it among the rank-and-file soldiers and make it as independent of the officers as possible. At the session of March 6, the Executive Committee considered it advisable to install its own commissars in all regiments and in all military institutions. Thus was created a three way bond between the soldier and the Soviet; the regiments sent their representatives to the Soviet; the Executive Committee sent its commissars to the regiments; and finally at the head of each regiment stood an elective committee, constituting a sort of lower nucleus of the Soviet.

One of the principal duties of the commissars was to keep watch over the political reliability of the staff and commanding officers. ”The democratic rgime outdid in this respect the autocratic,“ says Denikin with indignation. And he boasts how cleverly his staff intercepted and handed over to him the cipher correspondence of the commissars with Petrograd. To watch over monarchists and feudal lords what could be more outrageous! To steal the correspondence of commissars with the government is, of course, a different matter. But however things stood in the field of morals, the internal situation in the ruling apparatus of the army at that time is perfectly clear: each side was afraid of the other and watching the other with hostility; they were united only by their common fear of the soldier. Even the generals and admirals, whatever further hopes and plans they may have had, saw clearly that without a democratic smoke-screen things would go badly with them. The resolutions on committees in the fleet were drawn up by Kolchak. He counted on strangling the committees in the future. But since it was impossible for the present to take a single step without them, Kolchak interceded with the staff to get them confirmed. Similarly General Markov, one of the future White chieftains, sent to the ministry early in April a plan for the institution of commissars to keep watch over the loyalty of the commanding staff. Thus the ”age-old laws of the army“-that is, the traditions of military bureaucratism-went to pieces like straws under the pressure of the revolution.

The soldiers approached the committees from the opposite angle, and united around them against the commanding staff. And although the committees did defend officers against the soldiers, this was only within certain limits. The situation of an officer who came into conflict with the committee became unbearable. Thus was created the unwritten right of the soldiers to remove the commanders. On the western front by the month of July, according to Denikin, sixty of the old officers ranking from commander of a corps to

commander of a regiment, had gone. Similar removals had occurred within the regiments.

At that time a meticulous secretarial work was going on in the War Ministry, in the Executive Committee, in the Contact Sessions, aiming to create ”reasonable“ relations in the army, raise the authority of the officers, and reduce the army committees to a secondary and mainly economic role. But while the high-up leaders were thus cleaning away the shadow of the revolution with the shadow of a broom, the committees were actually developing into a powerful system ascending toward the Petrograd Executive Committee and strengthening its organisational control over the army. The Executive Committee used this control, however, chiefly in order, through the commissars and committees, to drag the army once more into the war. More and more the soldiers found themselves pondering the question: how does it come about that committees elected by us so often say, not what we think, but what our officers want of us?

The trenches arc more and more frequently sending deputies to the capital to find out how things stand. From the beginning of April this movement of the soldiers from the front becomes continual. Every day mass conversations are going on in the Tauride. Arriving soldiers are stirring their heavy brains, trying to find their way among the mysteries of the politics of an Executive Committee which cannot give a clear answer to any single question. The army is ponderously moving over to a Soviet position-but only in order the more clearly to convince itself of the bankruptcy of the Soviet leadership.

The liberals, not daring to oppose the Soviet openly, nevertheless tried to carry on a struggle for the control of the army. Chauvinism, of course, must serve as their political bond with the soldiers. The Kadet minister Shingarev, in one of the conferences with the trench delegates, defended the order of Guchkov against ”unnecessary indulgence“ towards war-prisoners, and spoke of ”German ferocity.“ His remarks did not meet with the slightest sympathy. The conference decisively expressed itself in favour of relieving the conditions of the prisoners of war. These were the same men whom the liberals had so casually accused of excesses and ferocities. But the grey men from the front had their own criterion. They considered it permissible to take vengeance on an officer for insulting soldiers, but it seemed contemptible to them to avenge on a captive German soldier the real or imagined ferocity of Ludendorff. The Eternal Standards of Morality remained, alas, quite foreign to those rough and lousy muzhiks.

Out of the attempt of the bourgeoisie to get control of the army there arose a contest-which, however, never came to any thing-between the liberals and the Compromisers. It was at a congress of delegates from the western front on the 7th-10th of April. This first congress of one of the fronts was to be a decisive political test of the army, and both sides sent to Minsk their best forces. From the Soviet: Tseretelli, Cheidze, Skobelev, Gvozdev. From the bourgeoisie: Rodzianko himself, the Kadet, Demosthenaes Rodichev, and others.

An intense feeling reigned in the crowded hall of the Minsk theatre, and spread in ripples throughout the town. The reports of the delegates painted a picture of the real state of affairs. Fraternisation was going an along the whole front; the soldiers were taking the initiative more and more boldly; the commanding staff could not even think of repressive measures. What could the liberals say here? Faced by this passionate audience, they at once gave up the idea of opposing their own resolutions to those of the Soviet. They confined themselves to a patriotic note in their speeches; of greeting, and soon erased themselves entirely. The battle was won by the democrats without a struggle. Their task was not to lead the masses against the bourgeoisie, but to hold them back, The slogan of peace equivocally woven in with war for the defence of the revolution, in the spirit of the manifesto of March 14-ruled the congress. The Soviet resolution on the war was adopted by 610 votes against 8, with 46 abstaining. The last hope of the liberals, that of opposing the front to the rear, the army to the Soviet, went up in smoke. But the democratic leaders returned from the congress more frightened than inspired by their victory. They had seen the ghosts raised by the revolution and they felt unable to cope with them.

CHAPTER 15

THE BOLSHEVIKS AND LENIN

On the 3rd of April Lenin arrived in Petrograd from abroad. Only from that moment does the Bolshevik Party begin to speak out loud, and, what is more important, with its own voice.

For Bolshevism the first months of the revolution had been a period of bewilderment and vacillation. In the "manifesto" of the Bolshevik Central Committee, drawn up just after the victory of the insurrection, we read that the workers of the shops and factories, and likewise the mutinied troops, must immediately elect their representatives to the Provisional Revolutionary Government." The manifesto was printed in the official organ of the Soviet without comment or objection, as though the question were a purely academic one. But the leading Bolsheviks themselves also regarded their slogans as purely demonstrative. They behaved not like representatives of a proletarian party preparing an independent struggle for power, but like the left wing of a democracy, which, having announced its principles, intended for an indefinite time to play the part of loyal opposition.

Sukhanov asserts that at the sitting of the Executive Committee on March 1 the central question at issue was merely as to the conditions of the handing over of power. Against the thing itself-the formation of a bourgeois government-not one voice was raised, notwithstanding that out of 39 members of the Executive Committee, 11 were Bolsheviks or their adherents, and moreover three members of the Bolshevik centre, Zalutsky, Shliapnikov and Molotov, were present at the sitting.

In the Soviet on the next day, according to the report of Shliapnikov himself, out of 400 deputies present, only 19 voted against the transfer of power to the bourgeoisie-and this although there were already 40 in the Bolshevik faction. The voting itself passed off in a purely formal parliamentary manner, without any clear counter-proposition from the Bolsheviks, without conflict, and without any agitation whatever in the Bolshevik press.

On the 4th of March the Bureau of the Bolshevik Central Committee adopted a resolution on the counter-revolutionary character of the Provisional Government, and the necessity of steering a course towards the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. The Petrograd committee, rightly regarding this resolution as academic-since it gave no directives for to-day's action-approached the problem from the opposite angle. "Taking cognisance of the resolution on the Provisional Government adopted by the Soviet," it announces that "it will not oppose the power of the Provisional Government in so far as," etc.... In essence this was the position of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries-only moved back to the second line trenches. This openly opportunist resolution of the Petrograd Committee contradicted only in a formal way the resolution of the Central Committee, whose academic character had meant nothing politically but putting up with an accomplished fact.

This readiness to submit silently, or with reservations, to the government of the bourgeoisie did not have by any means the entire sympathy of the party. The Bolshevik workers met the Provisional Government from the first as a hostile rampart unexpectedly grown up in their path. The Vyborg Committee held meetings of thousands of workers and soldiers, which almost unanimously adopted resolutions on the necessity for a seizure of power by the soviets. An active participant in this agitation, Dingelstedt, testifies: "There was, not one meeting, not one workers' meeting, which would have voted down such a resolution from us if there had only been somebody to present it." The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were afraid in those first days to appear openly before audiences of workers and soldiers with their formulation of the question of power. A resolution of the Vyborg workers, in view of its popularity, was printed and pasted up as a placard. But the Petrograd Committee put an absolute ban upon this resolution, and the Vyborg workers were compelled to submit.

On the question of the social content of the revolution and prospects of its development, the position of the Bolshevik Party

A revolutionary conception without a revolutionary will is like a watch with a broken spring. Kamenev was always behind the time-or rather beneath the tasks-of the revolution. But the absence of a broad political conception condemns the most wilful revolutionise to indecisiveness in the presence of vast and complicated events. Stalin, the empiric, was open to alien influences not on the side of will but on the side of intellect. Thus it was that this publicist without decision, and this organise without intellectual horizon, carried Bolshevism in March 1917 to the very boundaries of Menshevism. Stalin proved even less

capable than Kamenev of developing an independent position in the Executive Committee, which he entered as a representative of the party. There is to be found in its reports and its press not one proposal, announcement, or protest, in which Stalin expressed the Bolshevik point of view in opposition to the fawning of the ”democracy“ at the feet of liberalism. Sukhanov says in his *Notes of the Revolution: ”*Among the 1 Bolsheviks, besides Kamenev, there appeared in the Executive Committee in those days Stalin. . . . During the time of his modest activity in the Executive Committee he gave me the impression-and not only me-of a grey spot which would sometimes give out a dim and inconsequential light. There is really nothing more to be said about him.“ Although Sukhanov obviously under-estimates Stalin as a whole, he nevertheless correctly describes his political characterlessness in the Executive Committee of the Compromisers.

On the 14th of March the manifesto ”to the people of the whole world,“ interpreting the victory of the February revolution in the interests of the Entente, and signifying the triumph of a new republican social patriotism of the French stamp, was adopted by the Soviet unanimously. That meant a considerable success for Kamenev and Stalin, but one evidently attained without much struggle. Pravda spoke of it as a ” conscious compromise between different tendencies represented in the Soviet.“ It is necessary to add that this compromise involved a direct break with the tendency of Lenin, which was not represented in the Soviet at all.

Kamenev, a member of the emigrant editorial staff of the central organ, Stalin, a member of the Central Committee, and Muranov, a deputy in the Duma who had also returned from Siberia, removed the old editors of *Pravda,* who had occupied a too ”left “ position, and on the 15th of March, relying on their somewhat problematical rights, took the paper into their own hands. In the programme announcement of the new editorship, it was declared that the Bolsheviks would decisively support the Provisional Government ”in so far as it struggles against reaction or counter-revolution.“ The new editors expressed themselves no less categorically upon the question of war: While he German army obeys its emperor, the Russian soldier must stand firmly at his post answering bullet with bullet and shell with shell.” “Our slogan is not the meaningless ’down with war.’ Our slogan is pressure upon the Provisional Government with the aim of compelling it . . . to make an attempt to induce all the warring countries to open immediate negotiations . . . and until then every man remains at his fighting post! ” Both the idea and its formulation are those of the defensists. This programme of pressure upon an imperialist government with the aim of “inducing” it to adopt a peace-loving form of activity, was the programme of Kautsky in Germany, Jean Longuet in France, MacDonald in England. It was anything but the programme of Lenin, who was calling for the overthrow of imperialist rule. Defending itself against the patriotic press, Pravda went even farther “All ’defeatism,’ ” it said, “ or rather what an undiscriminating press protected by the czar’s, censorship has branded with

that name, died at the moment when the first revolutionary regiment appeared on the streets of Petrograd." This was a direct abandonment of Lenin. "Defeatism" was not invented by a hostile press under the protection of a censorship, it was proclaimed by Lenin in the formula: "The defeat of Russia is the lesser evil." The appearance of the first revolutionary regiment, and even the overthrow of the monarchy, did not alter the imperialist character of the war. "The day of the first issue of the transformed Pravda," says Shliapnikov, was a day of rejoicing for the defensists. The whole Tauride Palace, from the business men in the committee of the State Duma to the very heart of the revolutionary democracy, the Executive Committee, was brimful of one piece of news: the Victory of the moderate and reasonable Bolsheviks over the extremists. In the Executive Committee itself they met us with venomous smiles. . . . When that number of *Pravda* was received in the factories it produced a complete bewilderment among the members of the party and its sympathisers, and a sarcastic satisfaction among its enemies.... The indignation in the party locals was enormous, and when the proletarians found out that Pravda had been seized by three former editors arriving from Siberia they demanded their expulsion from the party." Pravda was soon compelled to print a sharp protest from the Vyborg district: " If the paper does not want to lose the confidence of the workers, it must and will bring the light of revolutionary consciousness, no matter how painful it may be, to the bourgeois owls." These protests from below compelled the editors to become more cautious in their expressions, but did not change their policy. Even the first article of Lenin which got there from abroad passed by the minds of the editors. They were steering a rightward course all along the line. " In our agitation," writes Dingelstedt, a representative of the left wing, " we had to take up the principle of the dual power . . . and demonstrate the inevitability of this roundabout road to that same worker and soldier mass which during two weeks of intensive political life had been educated in a wholly different understanding of its tasks."

The policy of the party throughout the whole country naturally followed that of *Pravda*. In many soviets resolutions about fundamental problems were now adopted unanimously: the Bolsheviks simply bowed down to the Soviet majority. At a conference of the soviets of the Moscow region the Bolsheviks joined in the resolution of the social patriots on the war. And finally at the All-Russian Conference of the representatives of 82 soviets at the end of March and the beginning of April, the Bolsheviks voted for the official resolution on the question of power, which was defended by Dan. This extraordinary political rapprochement with the Mensheviks caused a widespread tendency towards unification. In the provinces the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks entered into united organisations. The Kamenev-Stalin faction was steadily converting itself into a left flank of the so-called revolutionary democracy, and was taking part in the mechanics of parliamentary "pressure" in the *couloirs* upon the bourgeoisie, supplementing this with a similar, pressure upon the democracy.

The part of the Central Committee which lived abroad and the Central Organ, *The Social Democrat*, had been the spiritual centre of the party. Lenin, with Zinoviev as assistant, had conducted the whole work of leadership. The most responsible secretarial duties were fulfilled by Lenin's Wife, Krupskaia. In the practical work this small centre relied upon the support of a few score of Bolshevik emigrants. During the war their isolation from Russia became the more unbearable as the military police of the Entente drew its circle tighter and tighter. The revolutionary explosion they had so long and tensely awaited caught them unawares. England categorically refused to the emigrant internationalists, of whom she had kept a careful list, visa to Russia. Lenin was raging in his Zurich cage, seeking a way out. Among a hundred plans that were talked over, one was to travel on the passport of a deaf-and-dumb Scandinavian. at the same time Lenin did not miss any chance to make his voice heard from Switzerland. On March 6 he telegraphed through Stockholm to Petrograd: "Our tactic; absolute lack of confidence; no support to the new government; suspect Kerensky especially; arming of proletariat the sole guarantee; immediate elections to the Petrograd Duma; no rapprochement with other parties." In this directive, only the suggestion about elections to the Duma instead of the Soviet, had an episodic character and soon dropped out of sight. The other points, expressed with telegraphic incisiveness, fully indicate the general direction of the policy to be pursued. At the same time Lenin begins to send to *Pravda his Letters from Afar* which, although based upon fragments of foreign information constitute a finished analysis of the revolutionary situation. The news in the papers soon enabled him to conclude that the Provisional government, with the direct assistance not only of Kerensky but of Cheidze, was not unsuccessfully deceiving the workers, out the imperialist war for a war of defence. On the March, through friends in Stockholm, he wrote a letter Red with alarm. "Our party would disgrace itself for ever, kill itself politically, if it took part in such deceit.... I would choose an immediate split with no matter whom in our party rather than surrender to social patriotism. . . . After this apparently impersonal threat-having definite people in mind however-Lenin adjures: "Kamenev must understand that a world historic responsibility rests upon him." Kamenev is named here because it is a question of political principle. If Lenin had had a practical militant problem in mind, he would have been more likely to mention Stalin. But in just those hours Lenin was striving to communicate the tensity of his will to Petrograd across smoking Europe, Kamenev with the co-operation of Stalin was turning sharply toward social patriotism.

Various schemes-disguises, false whiskers, foreign or false passports-were cast aside one after the other as impossible. And meanwhile the idea of travelling through Germany became more and more concrete. This plan frightened the majority emigrants-and not only those who were patriotic, either. Martov and the other Mensheviks could not make up their m to adopt the bold action of Lenin, and continued to knock in vain on the doors of the Entente. Later on even many of Bolsheviks repented of their journey through Germany, in

view of the difficulties caused by the “sealed train” in the sphere of agitation. From the beginning Lenin never shut his eyes to those future difficulties. Krupskaia wrote not long before the departure from Zurich: “Of course the patriots will raise an outcry in Russia, but for that we must be prepared. ” The question stood as follows: either stay in Switzerland or travel through Germany. There was no other choice. Could Lenin have hesitated for a moment? Just one month Martov Axelrod and the others had to follow in his steps.

In the organisation of this unusual trip through hostile territory in war time, the fundamental traits of Lenin as statesman expressed themselves-boldness of conception a meticulous carefulness in its fulfilment. Inside that great revolutionist there dwelt a pedantic notary-one who knew his function, however, and drew up his paper at the moment when it might help in the overthrow of all such notarial acts for ever. The conditions of the journey through German were worked out with extraordinary care in this unique international treaty between the editorial staff of a revolutionary paper and the empire of the Hohenzollerns. Lenin demanded complete extraterritoriality during the transit: no supervision of the personnel of the passengers, their passports or baggage. No single person should have the right to enter the train throughout the journey. (Hence the legend of the “scaled” train.) On their part, the emigrant group agreed to insist upon the release from Russia of a corresponding number of German and Austro-Hungarian civil prisoners.

At the same time a joint declaration was drawn up with several foreign revolutionises. “The Russian internationalists who are now going to Russia in order to serve there the cause of the revolution, will help us arouse the proletariat of other countries, especially of Germany and Austria, against their governments. So speaks the protocol signed by Loriot and Gilbeaux from France, Paul Levy from Germany, Platten from Switzerland, by Swedish left deputies and others. On those conditions and with those precautions, thirty Russian emigrants left Switzerland at the end of March. A rather explosive trainload even among the loads of those war days!

In his farewell letter to the Swiss workers Lenin reminded them of the declaration of the central organ of the Bolsheviks in the autumn of 1915: If the revolution brings to power in Russia a republican government which wants to continue the imperialist war, the Bolsheviks will be against the defence of the republican Fatherland. Such a situation has now arisen. ”Our slogan is no support to the government of Guchkov-Miliukov.“ With those words Lenin now entered the territory of the revolution.

However, the members of the Provisional Government did not see any ground for alarm. Nabokov writes: ”At one of the March sessions of the Provisional Government, during a recess, in a long conversation about the increasing propaganda of the Bolsheviks, Kerensky exclaimed with his usual hysterical giggle*:* ’Just you wait, Lenin himself is coming, then the real thing will begin! ’ “ Kerensky was right. The real thing would begin only then.

However the ministers, according to Nabokov, were not greatly disturbed: ”The very fact of his having appealed to Germany will so undermine the authority of Lenin that we need not fear him.“ As was to be expected, the ministers were exceedingly perspicacious.

Friendly disciples went to meet Lenin in Finland. ”We had hardly got into the car and sat down,“ writes Raskolnikov, a young naval officer and a Bolshevik,” when Vladimir Llych flung at Kamenev: ’What’s this you’re writing in *Pravda?* We saw several numbers and gave it to you good and proper. ’ “ Such was their meeting after a separation of several years. But even so it was a friendly meeting.

The Petrograd Committee, with the co-operation of the military organisation, mobilised several thousand workers and soldiers for a triumphal welcome to Lenin. A friendly armoured car division detailed all their cars to meet him, The committee decided to go to the station with the armoured cars. The revolution had already created a partiality for that type of monster, so useful to have on your side in the streets of a city.

The description of the official meeting which took place in the so-called ”Czar’s Room“ of the Finland station, constitutes a very lively page in the many-volumed and rather faded memoirs of Sukhanov. ”Lenin walked, or rather ran, into the ’Czar’s Room’ in a round hat, his face chilled, and a luxurious bouquet in his arms. Hurrying to the middle of the room, he stopped still in front of Cheidze as though he had run into a completely, unexpected obstacle. And here Cheidze, not abandoning his previous melancholy look, pronounced the following speech of greeting, carefully, preserving not only the spirit and voice of a moral instructor: ’ Comrade Lenin, in the name of the Petrograd Soviet and the whole revolution. We welcome you to Russia ... *but* we consider the that the chief task of the revolutionary democracy at present is to defend our revolution against every kind of attack both from within and from without ... We hope that you will join us in striving towards this goal.’ Cheidze ceased. I was dismayed with the unexpectedness of it. But Lenin, it seemed, knew well how to deal with all that. He stood there looking as though what was happening did not concern him in the least, glanced from one side to the other, looked over the surrounding public, and even examined the ceiling to the ’Czar’s Room’ while rearranging his bouquet (which harmonised rather badly with his whole figure), and finally, having turned completely away from the delegates of the Executive Committee, ’answered’ thus: ’Dear comrades, soldiers, sailors and workers, I am happy to greet in you the victorious Russian revolution, to greet you as the advance guard of the international proletarian army, . . . The hour is not far when, at the summons of our comrade Karl Liebknecht, the people will turn their weapons against their capitalist exploiters. . . . The Russian revolution achieved by you has opened a new, epoch, Long live the world wide socialist revolution!’ “

Sukhanov is right-the bouquet harmonised badly with the figure of Lenin, and doubtless hindered and embarrassed him with its inappropriateness to the austere background of

events. In general, as it happens, Lenin did not like flowers in a bouquet. But doubtless he was far more embarrassed by that official and hypocritical Sunday school greeting in the parade room of a station. Cheidze was better than his speech of greeting. He was a little timid of Lenin. But they undoubtedly had told him that it was necessary to pull up on the ”sectarian“ from the very beginning. To supplement Cheidze’s speech, which had demonstrated the pitiable level of the leadership, a young naval commander’ speaking in the name of the sailors, was brilliant enough to express the hope that Lenin might become a member of the Provisional Government. Thus the February revolution, garrulous and flabby and still rather stupid, greeted the man who had arrived with a resolute determination to set it straight both in thought and in will. Those first impressions, multiplying tenfold the alarm which he had brought with him, produced a feeling of protest in Lenin which it was difficult to restrain. How much more satisfactory to roll up his sleeves! Appealing from Cheidze to the sailors and workers, from the defence of the Fatherland to international revolution, from the Provisional Government to Liebknecht, Lenin merely gave a short rehearsal there at the station of his whole future policy.

And nevertheless that clumsy revolution instantly and heartily took its leader into its bosom. The soldiers demanded that Lenin climb up on one of the armoured cars, and he had to obey. The oncoming night made the procession especially impressive. The lights on the other armoured cars being dimmed, the night was stabbed by the sharp beam from the projector of the machine on which Lenin rode. It sliced out from the darkness of the street sections of excited workers, soldiers, sailors-the same ones who had achieved the great revolution and then let the power slip through their fingers. The band ceased playing every so often, in order to let Lenin repeat or vary his speech before new listeners. ”That triumphal march was brilliant,“ says Sukhanov, ” and even somewhat symbolic.“

In the palace of Kshesinskaia, Bolshevik headquarters in the satin nest of a court ballerina-that combination must have amused Lenin’s always lively irony-greetings began again. This was too much. Lenin endured the flood of eulogistic speeches like an impatient pedestrian waiting in a doorway for the rain to stop. He felt the sincere joyfulness at his arrival, but was bothered by its verboseness. The very tone of the official greetings seemed to him imitative, affected-in a word borrowed from the petty bourgeois democracy, declamatory, sentimental and false. He saw that the revolution, before having even defined its problems and tasks, had already created its tiresome etiquette. He smiled a good-natured reproach, looked at his watch, and from time to time doubtless gave an unrestrained yawn. The echo of the last greeting had not died away, when this unusual guest let loose upon that audience a cataract of passionate thought which at times sounded almost like a lashing. At that period the stenographic art was not yet open to Bolshevism. Nobody made notes. All were too absorbed in what was happening. The speeches have not been preserved. There remain only general impressions in the memoirs of the listeners. And these have been edited by the

lapse of time; rapture has been added to them, and fright washed away. The fundamental impression made by Lenin's speech even among those nearest to him was one of fright. All the accepted formulas, which with innumerable repetition had acquired in the course of a month a seemingly unshakeable permanence, were exploded one after another before the eyes of that audience. The short Leninist reply at the station, tossed out over the head of the startled Cheidze, was here developed into a two hour speech addressed directly to the Petrograd cadres of Bolshevism.

The non-party socialist, Sukhanov, was accidentally present this meeting as a guest-admitted by the good-natured Kamenev, although Lenin was intolerant of such indulgences. Thanks to this we have a description made by an outsider half-hostile and half-ecstatic-of the first meeting of Lenin with the Petersburg Bolsheviks.

I will never forget that thunderlike speech, startling and amazing not only to me, a heretic accidentally dropped in, but also to the faithful, all of them. I assert that nobody there had expected anything of the kind. It seemed as if all the elements and the spirit of universal destruction had risen from their lairs, knowing neither barriers nor doubts nor personal difficulties nor personal considerations, to hover through the banquet chambers of Kshesinskaia above the heads of the bewitched disciples."

Personal considerations and difficulties-to Sukhanov that meant for the most part the editorial waverings of the *Novy Zhizn* circle having tea with Maxim Gorky Lenin's considerations went deeper. Not the elements were hovering in that banquet hall, but human thoughts-and they were not embarrassed by the elements, but were trying to understand in order to control them. But never mind-the impression is clearly conveyed.

"On the journey here with my comrades," said Lenin, according to Sukhanov's report-" I was expecting they would take us directly from the station to Peter and Paul. We are far from that, it seems. But let us not give up the hope that it will happen, that we shall not escape it."

For the others at that time the development of the revolution was identical, with a strengthening of the democracy; for Lenin the nearest prospect led straight to the Peter and Paul prison-fortress. It seemed a sinister joke. But Lenin was not joking, nor was the revolution joking.

"He swept aside legislative agrarian reform," complains Sukhanov, "along with all the rest of the policies of the Soviet. He spoke for an organised seizure of the land by the peasants, not anticipating ... any governmental power at all."

"We don't need any parliamentary republic. We don't need any bourgeois democracy. We don't need any government except the Soviet of workers', soldiers', and farmhands' deputies! ' "

At the same time Lenin sharply separated himself from Soviet majority, tossing them over into the camp of the enemy. That alone was enough in those days to make his listeners dizzy! “

”Only the Zimmerwald Left stands guard over the proletarian interests and the world revolution“ - thus Sukhanov reports, with indignation, the thoughts of Lenin, ”The rest are the same old opportunist speaking pretty words but in reality betraying the cause of socialism and the work masses.“

Raskolnikov supplements Sukhanov: ”He decisively assailed the tactics pursued before his arrival by the ruling party groups and by individual comrades. The most responsible workers were here. But for them too the words of Ilych were a veritable revelation. They laid down a Rubicon between the tactics of yesterday and to-day,“ That Rubicon, as we shall see was not bid down at once.

There was no discussion of the speech. All were too much astounded, and each wanted a chance to collect his thoughts. I came out on the street,” concludes Sukhanov, “feeling as though on that night I had been fogged over the head with a flail. Only one thing was clear: There was no place for me, a non-part man beside Lenin!”

Indeed not!

The next day Lenin presented to the party a short written exposition of his views, which under the name of *Theses of April 4* has become one of the most important documents of the revolution. The theses expressed simple thoughts in simple words comprehensible to all: The republic which has issued from the February revolution is not our republic, and the war which it is now raging is not our war, The task of the Bolsheviks is to overthrow the imperialist government. But this government rests upon the support of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who in turn are supported by the trustfulness of the masses of the people. We are in the minority. In these circumstances there can be no talk of violence from our side. We must teach the masses not to trust the Compromisers and defensists. “We must patiently explain.” The success of this policy, dictated by the whole existing situation, is assured, and it will bring us to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and so beyond the boundaries of the bourgeois rgime. We will break absolutely with capital, publish its secret treaties, and summon the workers of the whole world to cast loose from the bourgeoisie and put an end to the war. We are beginning the international revolution. Only its success will confirm our success, and guarantee a transition to the socialist rgime.

These theses of Lenin were published in his own name and his only, The central institutions of the party met them with a hostility softened only by bewilderment. Nobody-not one organisation, group or individual-affixed his signature to them. Even Zinoviev, arriving with Lenin from abroad, where for ten years his ideas had been forming under the imme-

diate and, daily influence of Lenin, silently stepped aside, Nor was this side-stepping a surprise to the teacher, who knew his closest disciple all too well.

Where Kamenev was a propagandist populariser, Zinoviev was an agitator, and indeed, to quote an expression of Lenin, "nothing but an agitator." He has not, in the first place, a sufficient sense of responsibility to be a leader. But not only that. Lacking inner discipline, his mind is completely incapable of theoretical work, and his thought dissolve into formless intuitions of the agitator. Thanks to an exceptionally quick scent, he can catch out of the air whatever formulas are necessary to him-those which will exercise the most the most effective influence on the masses. Both as journalist and orator he remains an agitator, with only this difference-that in his articles you usually see his weaker side, and in oral speech his stronger. Although far more bold and unbridled in agitation than any other Bolshevik, Zinoviev is even less capable than Kamenev of revolutionary initiative. He is, like all demagogues, indecisive. Passing from the arena of factional debate to that of direct mass fighting, Zinoviev almost involuntarily separated from his teacher.

There have been plenty of attempts of late years to prove that the April party crisis was a passing and almost accidental confusion. They all go to pieces at first contact with the facts.

What we already know of the activity of the party in March reveals the deepest possible contradiction between Lenin and the Petersburg leadership. This contradiction reached its highest intensity exactly at the moment of Lenin's arrival. Simultaneously with the All-Russian Conference of representatives, of 82 soviets, where Kamenev and Stalin voted for the resolution on sovereignty introduced by the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, there took place in Petrograd a party conference of Bolsheviks assembled from all over Russia. This conference, at the very end of which Lenin arrived, has an exceptional interest for anyone wishing to characterize the mood and opinions of the party and all its upper layers as they issued from the war. A reading of the reports, to this day unpublished, frequently produces a feeling of amazement: is it possible that a party represented by these delegates will after seven months seize the power with an iron hand? A month had already passed since the uprising-a long period for a revolution, as also for a war. Nevertheless opinions were not defined in the party on the most basic questions of the revolution. Extreme patriots such as Voitinsky, Eliava, and others, participated in the conference alongside of those who considered themselves internationalists. The percentage of outspoken patriots, incomparably less than among the Mensheviks, was nevertheless considerable. The conference as a whole did not decide the question whether to break with its own patriots or unite with the patriots of Menshevism. In an interval between sessions of the Bolshevik conference there was held a united session of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks-delegates to the Soviet conference-to consider the war question. The most furious Menshevik-patriot,

Lieber, announced at this session: "We must do away with the old division between Bolshevik and Menshevik, and speak only of our attitude toward the war." The Bolshevik, Voitinsky, hastened to proclaim his readiness to put his signature to every word of Lieber. All of them together, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, patriots and internationalists, were seeking a common formula for their attitude to the war. The views of the Bolshevik conference undoubtedly found their most adequate expression in the report of Stalin on relations with the Provisional Government. It is necessary to introduce here the central thought of this speech, which, like the reports as a whole, is not yet published." The power has been decided between two organs of which neither one possesses full power. There is debate and struggle between them, and there ought to be. The roles have been divided. The Soviet has in fact taken the initiative in the revolutionary transformation; the Soviet is the revolutionary leader of the insurrectionary people; an organ controlling the Provisional Government. And the Provisional Government has in fact taken the role of fortifier of the conquests of the revolutionary people. The Soviet mobilizes the forces, and controls. The Provisional Government, balking and confused, takes the role of fortifier of those conquests of the people, which they have already seized as a fact. This situation has disadvantageous, but also advantageous sides. It is not to our advantage at present to force events, hastening the process of repelling the bourgeois layers, who will in the future inevitably withdraw from us."

Transcending class distinctions, the speaker portrays the relation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as a mere division of labour. The workers and soldiers achieve the revolution, Guchkov and Miliukov "fortify" it. We recognize here the traditional conception of the Mensheviks, incorrectly modelled after the events of 1789. This superintendent's approach to the historical process is exactly characteristic of the leaders of Menshevism, this handing out of instructions to various classes and then patronisingly criticising their fulfillment. The idea that it is disadvantageous to hasten the withdrawal of the bourgeoisie from the revolution, has always been the guiding principle of the whole policy of the Mensheviks. Inaction this means blunting and weakening the movement of the masses in order not to frighten away the liberal allies. And finally, Stalin's conclusion as to the Provisional Government is wholly in accord with the equivocal formula of the Compromisers: "In so far as the Provisional Government fortifies the steps of the revolution, in so far we must support it, but in so far as it is counter-revolutionary, support to the Provisional Government is not permissible."

Stalin's report was made on March 29. On the next day the official spokesman of the Soviet conference, the non-party social democrat Steklov, defending the same conditional support to the Provisional Government, in the ardor of his eloquence painted such a picture of the activity of the "fortifiers" of the revolution-opposition to social reforms, leaning towards monarchy, protection of counter-revolutionary forces, appetite for annexation-that

the Bolshevik conference recoiled in alarm from this formula of support. The right Bolshevik Nogin declared: “The speech of Steklov has introduced one new thought: it is clear that we ought not now to talk about support, but about resistance.” Skrypnik also arrived at the conclusion that since the speech of Steklov “many things have changed, there can be no more talk of supporting the government. There is a conspiracy of the Provisional Government against the people and the revolution.” Stalin, who a day before had been painting an idealistic picture of the “division of labour” between the government and the Soviet, felt obliged to eliminate this point about supporting the government. The short and superficial discussion turned about the question whether to support the Provisional Government“ in so far as,” or only to support the revolutionary activities of the Provisional Government. The delegate from Saratov, Vassiliev, not untruthfully declared: “We all have the same attitude to the Provisional Government.” Krestinsky formulated the situation even more clearly: “As to practical action there is no disagreement between Stalin and Voitinsky.” Notwithstanding the fact that Voitinsky went over to the Mensheviks immediately after the conference, Krestinsky was not very wrong. Although he eliminated the open mention of support, Stalin did not eliminate support. The only one who attempted to formulate the question in principle was Krassikov, one of those old Bolsheviks who had withdrawn from the party for a series of years, but now, weighed down with life’s experience, was trying to return to its ranks.

Krassikov did not hesitate to seize the bull by the horns. Is this then a dictatorship of the proletariat you are about to inaugurate? he asked ironically. But the conference passed over his irony, and along with it passed over this question as one not deserving attention. The resolution of the conference summoned the revolutionary democracy to urge the Provisional Government toward “a most energetic struggle for the complete liquidation of the old rgime”-that is, gave the proletarian party the role of governess of the bourgeoisie.

The next day they considered the proposal of Tseretelli for a union of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Stalin was wholly in favour of the proposal: “We must do it. It is necessary to define our proposal for a basis of union; union is possible on the basis of Zimmerwald-Kienthal.” Molotov, who had been removed from the editorship of Pravda by Kamenev and Stalin because of the too radical line of the paper, spoke in opposition: Tseretelli wants to unite heterogeneous elements, he himself calls himself Zimmerwaldist; a union on that basis is wrong. But Stalin stuck to his guns: “ There is no use running ahead and trying to forestall disagreements. There is no party life without disagreements. We will live down petty disagreements within the party.” The whole struggle which Lenin had been carrying on during the war years against social patriotism and its pacifist disguise, was thus casually swept aside. In September 1916 Lenin had written through Shliapnikov to Petrograd with special insistence: “Conciliationism and consolidation is the worst thing for the workers’ party in Russia, not only idiotism but ruin to the party.... We can rely only on those who

halve understood the whole deceit involved in the idea of unity and whole necessity of a split with that brotherhood (Cheidze Co.) in Russia." This warning was not understood. Disagreements with Tseretelli, the leader of the ruling Soviet bloc, seemed to Stalin petty disagreements, which could be "lived down" within a common party. This furnishes the best criterion for an appraisal of the views held by Stalin at that time.

On April 4 Lenin appeared at the party conference. His speech, developing his "theses," passed over the work of the conference like the wet sponge of a teacher erasing what had been written on the blackboard by a confused pupil.

"Why didn't you seize the power? " asked Lenin. At the Soviet conference not long before that, Steklov had confusedly explained the reasons for abstaining from the power: revolution is bourgeois-it is the first stage-the war, etc." That's nonsense," Lenin said. "The reason is that the proletariat was not sufficiently conscious and not sufficiently organised. That we have to acknowledge. The material force was in the hands of the proletariat, but the bourgeoisie was conscious and ready. That is the monstrous fact. But it is necessary to acknowledge it frankly, and say to the people straight out that we did not seize the power because we were unorganised and not conscious."

From the plane of pseudo-objectivism, behind which the political capitulators were hiding, Lenin shifted the whole question to the subjective plane. The proletariat did not seize the power in February because the Bolshevik Party was not equal to its objective task, and could not prevent the Compromises from expropriating the popular masses politically for the; benefit of the bourgeoisie.

The day before that, lawyer Krassikov had said challengingly: "If we think that the time has now come to realize the dictatorship of the proletariat, then we ought to pose the question that way. We unquestionably have the physical force for a seizure of power." The chairman at that time deprived Krassikov of the floor on the ground that practical problems were under discussion, and the question of dictatorship was out of order. But Lenin thought that, as the sole practical question, the question of preparing the dictatorship of the proletariat was exactly in order. "The peculiarity of the present moment in Russia," he said in his theses, "consists in the transition from the first stage of the revolution, which gave the power to the bourgeoisie on account of the inadequate consciousness and organization of the proletariat, to its second stage which must give the power to the proletariat and the poor layers of the peasantry." The conference, following the lead of *Pravda,* had limited the task of the revolution to a democratic transformation to be realized through the Constituent Assembly. As against this, Lenin declared that "life and the revolution will push the Constituent Assembly into the background. A dictatorship of the proletariat exists, but nobody knows what to do with it."

The delegates exchanged glances. They whispered to each other that Ilych had stayed

too long abroad, had not had time, to look around and familiarize himself with things. But the speech of Stalin on the ingenious division of labour between the government and the Soviet sank out of sight once and for ever. Stalin himself remained silent. From now on he will have to be silent for a long time. Kamenev alone will man the defences.

Lenin had already given warning in letters from Geneva that he was ready to break with anybody who made concessions on the question of war, chauvinism and compromise with the bourgeoisie. Now, face to face with the leading circles of the party he opens an attack all along the line. But at the beginning he does not name a single Bolshevik by name. If he has need of a living model of equivocation and half-wayness, he points his finger at the non-party men, or at Steklov or Cheidze. That was the customary method of Lenin: not to nail anybody down to his position too soon, to give the prudent a chance to withdraw from the battle in good season and thus weaken at once the future ranks of his open enemies. Kamenev and Stalin had thought that in participating in the war after February, the soldiers and workers were defending the revolution. Lenin thinks that, as before, the soldier and the worker take part in the war as the conscripted slaves of capital. “Even our Bolsheviks,” he says, narrowing the circle around his antagonists, “show confidence in the government. Only the fumes of the revolution can explain that. That is the death of socialism.... If that’s your position, our ways part. I prefer to remain in the minority.” That was not a mere oratorical threat; it was a clear path thought through to the end.

Although naming neither Kamenev nor Stalin, Lenin was obliged to name the paper: “*Pravda* demands of the government that it renounce annexation. To demand from the government of the capitalists that it renounce annexation is nonsense, flagrant mockery.” Restrained indignation here breaks out with a high note. But the orator immediately takes himself in hand: he wants to say no less than is necessary, but also no more. Incidentally and in passing, Lenin gives incomparable rules for revolutionary statesmanship: “When the masses announce that they do not want conquests, I believe them. When Guchkov and Lvov say they do not want conquests, they are deceivers! When a worker says that he wants the defense of the country, what speaks in him is the instinct of the oppressed.” This criterion, to call it by its right name, seems simple as life itself. But the difficulty is to call it by its right name in time.

On the question of the appeal of the Soviet “to the people of the whole world ”-which caused the liberal paper *Rech* at one time to declare that the theme of pacifism is developing among us into an ideology common to the Allies-Lenin expressed himself more clearly and succinctly: “What is peculiar to Russia is the gigantically swift transition from wild violence to the most delicate deceit.”

“This appeal,” wrote Stalin concerning the manifesto, “if it reaches the broad masses (of the West), will undoubtedly recall hundreds and thousands of workers to the forgotten

slogan ’Proletarians of all Countries Unite! ’ ”

“The appeal of the Soviet,” objects Lenin, “-there isn’t a word in it imbued with class consciousness. There is nothing to it but phrases.” This document, the pride of the home-grown Zimmerwaldists, is in Lenin’s eyes merely one of the weapons of the most delicate deceit.“

Up to Lenin’s arrival *Pravda* had never even mentioned the Zimmerwald left. Speaking of the International, it never indicated which International. Lenin called this ”the Kautskyanism of *Pravda.*“ ”In Zimmerwald and Kienthal,“ he declared at a party conference, ” the Centrists predominated. . . . We declare that we created a left and broke with the centre. . . . The left Zimmerwald tendency exists in all the countries of the world. The masses ought to realize that socialism has split throughout the world .....

Three days before that Stalin had announced at that same conference his readiness to live down differences with Tseretelli on the basis of Zimmerwald-Kienthal-that is, on the basis of Kautskyanism. “I hear that in Russia there is a trend toward consolidation,” said Lenin. “Consolidation with the defensists -that is betrayal of socialism. I think it would be better to stand alone like Liebknecht-one against a hundred and ten.” The accusation of betrayal of socialism-for the present still without naming names-is not here merely a strong word; it fully expresses the attitude of Lenin toward those Bolsheviks who were extending a finger to the social patriots. In opposition to Stalin who thought it was possible to unite with the Mensheviks, Lenin thought it was unpermissible to share with them any longer the name of Social Democrat. “Personally and speaking for myself alone,” he said, “I propose that we change the name of the party, that we call it the Communist Party.” “ Personally and speaking for myself alone ”-that means that nobody, not one of the members of the conference, agreed to that symbolic gesture of ultimate break with the Second International.

“You are afraid to go back on your old memories?” says the orator to the embarrassed, bewildered and partly indignant delegates. But the time has come “to change our linen; we’ve got to take off the dirty shirt and put on clean.” And he again insists: “Don’t hang on to an old word which is rotten through and through. Have the will to build a new party . . . and all the oppressed will come to you.”

Before the enormity of the task not yet begun, and the intellectual confusion in his own ranks, a sharp thought of the precious time foolishly wasted in meetings, greetings, ritual resolutions, wrests a cry from the orator: “Have done with greetings and resolutions! It’s time to get down to business. We must proceed to practical sober work!” An hour later Lenin was compelled to repeat his speech at the previously designated joint session of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, where it sounded to a majority of the listeners like something between mockery and delirium. The more condescending shrugged their shrugged their shoulders: -This man evidently fell down from the moon; hardly off the steps of the Finland

station after a ten-year absence he starts preaching the seizure of power by the proletariat. The less good-natured among the patriots made references to the sealed train. Stankevich testifies that Lenin's speech greatly delighted his enemies: "A man who talks that kind of stupidity is not dangerous. It's a good thing he has come. Now he is in plain sight. . . . Now he will refute himself."

Nevertheless, with all its boldness of revolutionary grasp, its inflexible determination to break even with his former long time colleagues and comrades-in-arms, if they proved unable to march with the revolution, the speech of Lenin-every part balanced against the rest-was filled with deep realism and an infallible feeling for the masses. Exactly for this reason, it seemed to the democrats a fantastic skimming of the surface.

The Bolsheviks are a tiny minority in the Soviet, and Lenin dreams of seizing the power; isn't that pure adventurism? There was not a shadow of adventurism in Lenin's statement of the problem. He did not for a moment close his eyes to the existence of "honest" defensist moods in the broad masses. He did not intend either to lose himself in the masses or to act behind their backs. "We are not charlatans" -he throws this in the eyes of future objections and accusations-"we must base ourselves only upon the consciousness of the masses. Even if it is necessary to remain in a minority-so be it. It is a good thing to give up for a time the position of leadership; we must not be afraid to remain in the minority." Do not fear to remain in a minority-even a minority of one, like Liebknecht's one against a hundred and ten-such was the leitmotif of his speech.

"The real government is the Soviet of workers' deputies.... In the Soviet our party is the minority.... What can we do? All we can do is to explain patiently, insistently, systematically the error of their tactics. So long as we are in the minority, we will carry on the work of criticism, in order to free the masses from deceit. We do not want the masses to believe us just on our say so; we are not charlatans. We want the masses to be freed by experience from their mistakes." Don't be afraid to remain in the minority! Not for ever, but for a time. The hour of Bolshevism will strike." Our line will prove right.... All the oppressed will come to us, because the war will bring them to us. They have no other way out."

"At the joint conference," relates Sukhanov, "Lenin was the living incarnation of a split. . . . I remember Bogdanov (a prominent Menshevik) sitting two steps away from the orator's tribune. 'Why, that is raving,' he interrupted Lenin, 'that is the raving of a lunatic.... You ought to be ashamed to applaud such spouting,' he cried, turning to the audience, white in the face with rage and scorn. 'You disgrace yourselves, Marxists!' "

A former member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, Goldenberg, at that time a non-party man, appraised Lenin's theses in these withering words: "For many years the place of Bakunin has remained vacant in the Russian revolution, now it is occupied by Lenin."

"His programme at that time was met not so much with indignation," relates the Social Revolutionary Zenzinov, "as with ridicule. It seemed to everybody so absurd and fantastic."

On the evening of the same day in the *couloirs* of the Contact Commission, two socialists were talking with Miliukov, and the conversation touched on Lenin. Skobelev estimated him as a man completely played out, standing apart from the movement." Sukhanov was of the same mind, and added that "Lenin is to such a degree unacceptable to everybody that he is no longer dangerous even to my companion Miliukov here."

The distribution of roles in this conversation, however, was exactly according to Lenin's formula: the socialists were protecting the peace of mind of the liberal from the trouble which Bolshevism might cause him.

Rumors even arrived in the ears of the British ambassador that Lenin had been, declared a bad Marxist. "Among the newly arrived anarchists," wrote Buchanan, "was Lenin, who came through in a sealed train from Germany. He made his first public appearance at a meeting of the Social Democratic Party and was badly received."

The most condescending of all toward Lenin in those days was no other than Kerensky, who in a circle of members of the Provisional Government unexpectedly stated that he must go to see Lenin, and explained in answer to their bewildered questions: "Well, he is living in a completely isolated atmosphere, he knows nothing, sees everything through the glasses of his fanaticism. There is no one around him who might help him orient himself a little in what is going on." Thus testifies Nabokov. But Kerensky never found the time to orient Lenin in what was going on.

The April theses of Lenin not only evoked the bewildered indignation of his opponents and enemies. They repelled a number of old Bolsheviks into the Menshevik camp-or into that intermediate group which found shelter around Gorky's paper. This leakage had no serious political significance. Infinitely more important was the impression which Lenin's position made on the whole leading group of the party. "In the first days after his arrival," writes Sukhanov, "his complete isolation among all his conscious party comrades cannot be doubted in the least." " Even his party comrades, the Bolsheviks," confirms the Social Revolutionary Zenzinov, "at that time turned away in embarrassment from him." The authors of these comments were meeting the leading Bolsheviks every day in the Executive Committee, and had first-hand evidence of what they said.

But there is no lack of similar testimony from among the ranks of the Bolsheviks. "When the theses of Lenin appeared," wrote Tsikhon, softening the colours as much as possible, as do a majority of the old Bolsheviks when they stumble on the February revolution, "there was felt in our party a certain wavering. Many of the comrades argued that Lenin showed a syndicalist deviation, that he was out of touch with Russia, that he was not taking

into consideration the given moment," etc. One of the prominent Bolshevik leaders in the provinces, Lebedev, writes: "On Lenin's arrival in Russia, his agitation, at first not wholly intelligible to us Bolsheviks, but regarded as Utopian and explainable by his long removal from Russian life, was gradually absorbed by us, and entered, as you might say, into our flesh and blood."

Zalezhski, a member of the Petrograd Committee and one of the organizers of the welcome to Lenin, expresses it more frankly "Lenin's theses produced the impression of an exploding bomb." Zalezhski fully confirms the complete isolation of Lenin after that so warm and impressive welcome. "On that day (April 4) Comrade Lenin could not find open sympathisers even in our own ranks."

Still more important, however, is the evidence of *Pravda.* "On April 8, after the publication of the theses-when time enough had passed to make explanations and reach a mutual understanding-the editors of *Pravda* wrote: " As for the general scheme of Comrade Lenin, it seems to us unacceptable in that it starts from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is ended, and counts upon an immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution." The central organ of the party thus openly announced before the working class and its enemies a split with the generally recognised leader of the party upon the central question of the revolution for which the Bolshevik ranks had been getting ready during a long period of years. That alone is sufficient to show the depth of the April crisis in the party, due to the clash of two irreconcilable lines of thought and action. Until it surmounted this crisis the revolution could not go forward.

CHAPTER 16

REARMING THE PARTY

HOW EXPLAIN Lenin's extraordinary isolation at the beginning of April? How in general could such a situation arise, and how was the rearming of the Bolshevik staff accomplished?

From the year 1905 the Bolshevik Party had waged a struggle against the autocracy under the slogan "Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry." This slogan as well as its theoretical background, derives from Lenin. In opposition to the Mensheviks, whose theoretician, Plekhanov, stubbornly opposed the "mistaken idea of the possibility of accomplishing a bourgeois revolution without the bourgeoisie," Lenin considered that the Russian bourgeoisie was already incapable of leading its own revolution. Only the proletariat and peasantry in close union could carry through a democratic revolution against the monarchy and the landlords. The victory of this union, according to Lenin, should inaugurate a democratic dictatorship, which was not only not identical with the dictatorship of the proletariat, but was in sharp contrast to it, for its problem was not the creation of a socialist society, nor even the creation of forms of transition to such a society, but merely a ruthless cleansing of the Augean stables of medievalism. The goal of the revolutionary struggle was fully described in three militant slogans : Democratic Republic, Confiscation of the Landed Estates, Eight-Hour Working Day-colloquially called the three whales of Bolshevism, by analogy with those whales upon which according to an old popular fable the earth reposes.

The question of the possibility of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry hinged upon the question of the ability of the peasantry to accomplish their own revolution-that is, to put forward a new government capable of liquidating the monarchy and the landed nobility. To be sure, the slogan of democratic dictatorship assumed also a participation in the revolutionary government of workers' representatives. But this participation was limited in advance by the role attributed to the proletariat as ally on the

left in solving the problems of the peasant revolution. The popular and even officially recognised idea of the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution could not, consequently, mean anything more than that the workers' party would help the peasantry with a political weapon from its arsenal, suggest to them the best means and methods for liquidating the feudal society, and show them how to apply these means and methods. In any case, to speak of the leading role of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution did not at all signify that the proletariat would use the peasant uprising in order with its support to place upon the order of the day its own historic task-that is, the direct transition to a socialist society. The hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution was sharply distinguished from the dictatorship of the proletariat, and polemically contrasted against it. The Bolshevik Party had been educated in these ideas ever since the spring of 1905.

The actual course of the February revolution disrupted this accustomed schema of Bolshevism. It is true that the revolution was accomplished by a union of the workers and peasants. The fact that the peasants functioned chiefly in the guise of soldier's did not alter this. The behavior of the peasant army of czarism would have had decisive import even if the revolution had developed in peace times. So much the more natural if in war time these millions of armed men at first completely concealed the peasantry. After the victory of the insurrection the workers and soldiers were bosses of the situation. In that sense it would seem possible to say that a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants had been established. But as a matter of fact, the February overturn led to a bourgeois government, in which the power of the possessing classes was limited by the not yet fully realised sovereignty of the workers' and soldiers' soviets. All the cards were mixed. Instead of a revolutionary dictatorship - i.e. the most concentrated power-there was established the flabby rgime of the dual power, in which the feeble energy of the ruling classes was wasted in overcoming inner conflicts. Nobody had foreseen this rgime. And indeed one cannot demand from a prognosis that it indicate not only the fundamental tendencies of development, but also accidental conjunctions. "Who ever made a great revolution knowing beforehand how to carry it through to the end?" asked Lenin later. "Where could you get such knowledge? It is not to be found in books. There are no such books. Our decisions could only be born out of the experience of the masses."

But human thought is Conservative, and the thought of to stand by the old formula and regarded the February revolution, notwithstanding its obvious establishment of two incompatible regimes, merely as the first stage of a bourgeois revolution. At the end of March Rykov sent to Pravda from Siberia, in the name of the Social Democrats, a telegram of greeting to the victory of the "national revolution," whose problem was "the winning of political liberty." All the leading Bolsheviks-not one exception is known to us-considered that the democratic dictatorship still lay in the future. After this Provisional Government of the bourgeoisie "exhausts itself," then a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants

will be established as the forerunner of the bourgeois parliamentary rgime. This was a completely erroneous perspective. The rgime which issued from the February revolution not only was not preparing a democratic dictatorship, but was a living and exhaustive proof of the fact that such a dictatorship was impossible. That the compromising democracy did not accidentally, through the light-mindedness of Kerensky and the limited intelligence of Cheidze, hand over the power to the liberals, is demonstrated by the fact that throughout the eight months following, it struggled with all its force to preserve the bourgeois government. It repressed the workers, peasants and soldiers, and on the 25th of October it fell fighting at its post as ally and defender of the bourgeoisie. Moreover it was clear enough from the beginning, when the democracy, with gigantic tasks before it and the unlimited support of the masses, voluntarily renounced the power, that this was not due to political principles or prejudices, but to the hopelessness of the situation of the petty bourgeoisie in the capitalist society-especially in a period of war and revolution, when the fundamental life problems of countries, peoples and classes are under decision. In handing Miliukov the sceptre, the petty bourgeoisie said? No, I am not equal to these tasks.“

The peasantry, lifting on its shoulders the conciliatory democracy, contains in itself in a rudimentary form all the classes of bourgeois society. Along with the petty bourgeoisie of the cities-which in Russia, however, never played a serious role-it constitutes that protoplasm out of which new classes have been differentiated in the past, and continue to be differentiated in the present. The peasantry always has two faces, one turned towards the proletariat the other to the bourgeoisie. But the intermediary, compromising position of ”peasant“ parties like the Social Revolutionaries, can be maintained only in conditions of comparative political stagnation; in a revolutionary epoch the moment inevitably comes when the petty bourgeoisie is compelled to choose. The Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks made their choice from the first moment. They destroyed the ”democratic dictatorship“ in embryo, in order to prevent it from becoming a bridge to the dictatorship of the proletariat. But they thus opened a road to the latter-only a different road, not through them, but against them.

The further development of the revolution must obviously proceed from new facts, not old schemas. Through their representatives the masses were drawn, partly against their will, partly without their consciousness, into the mechanics of the two power rgime. They now had to pass through this in order to learn by experience that it could not give them either peace or land. To recoil from the two-power rgime henceforward meant for the masses to break with the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. But it is quite evident that a political turning of the workers and soldiers toward the Bolsheviks, having knocked over the whole two-power construction, could now no longer mean anything but the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat resting upon a union of the workers and peasants. In case the popular mass had been defeated, only a military dictatorship of capital could have

risen on the ruins of the Bolshevik Party. ”The democratic dictatorship“ was impossible in either case. In looking toward it, the Bolsheviks had actually to turn their faces toward a phantom of the past. It was in this position that Lenin found them when he arrived with his inflexible determination to bring the party out on a new road.

Lenin himself, to be sure, did not replace the formula of democratic dictatorship by any other formula, even conditional or hypothetical, until the very beginning of the February revolution. Was he correct in this? We think not. What happened in the party after the revolution revealed all too alarmingly the belatedness of that re-arming-which moreover in the given situation no one but Lenin himself could have carried through. He had prepared himself for that. He had heated his steel white hot and re-tempered it in the fires of the war. In his eyes the general prospect of the historic process had changed; the shock of the war had sharply advanced the possible date of a socialist revolution in the West. While remaining for Lenin still democratic, the Russian revolution was to give the stimulus to a socialist revolution in Europe, which should then drag belated Russia into its whirlpool. Such was Lenin’s general conception when he left Zurich. The letter to the Swiss workers which we have already quoted says: ”Russia is a peasant country, one of the most backward of European countries. Here socialism cannot immediately conquer, but the peasant character of the country, with enormous tracts of land remaining intact in the hands of the nobility, can, on the basis of the experience of 1905, give enormous scope to a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, and make our revolution a prologue to the worldwide socialist revolution, a step leading to it.“ In this sense Lenin now first wrote that the Russian proletariat will begin the socialist revolution.

Such was the connecting link between the old position of Bolshevism, which limited the revolution to democratic aims, and. the new position which Lenin first presented to the party in his theses of April 4. This new prospect of an immediate transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat seemed completely unexpected, contradictory to tradition, and indeed simply would not fit into the mind. Here it is necessary to remember that up to the outbreak of the February revolution and for a time after Trotskyism did not mean the idea that it was impossible to build a socialist society within the national boundaries of Russia (which ”possibility“ was never expressed by anybody up to 1924 and hardly came into anybody’s head). Trotskyism meant the idea that the Russian proletariat might win the power in advance of the Western proletariat, and that in that case it could not confine itself within the limits of a democratic dictatorship but would be compelled to undertake the initial socialist measures. It is not surprising, then, that the April theses of Lenin were condemned as Trotskyist.

The counter-arguments of the old Bolsheviks developed along several lines. The principal quarrel was about the question whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution was fin-

ished. Inasmuch as the agrarian revolution was not yet complete, the opponents of Lenin justly asserted that the democratic revolution as a whole was not finished, and hence, they concluded, there is no place for a dictatorship of the proletariat, even though the social conditions of Russia render it possible in general at a more or less proximate date. It was in this way that the editors of Pravda posed the question in the passage we have already cited. Later on, in the April conference, Kamenev repeated this: ”Lenin is wrong when he says that the bourgeois democratic revolution is finished. . . . The classical relics of feudalism, the landed estates, are not yet liquidated.... The state is not transformed into a democratic society. . . . It is early to say that the bourgeois democracy has exhausted all its possibilities.“

”The democratic dictatorship is our foundation stone“ -this was Tomsky’s argument- ”We ought to organise the power of the proletariat and the peasants, and we ought to distinguish this from the Commune, since that means the power of the proletariat alone.

“Rykov seconded him: ”Gigantic revolutionary tasks stand before us, but the fulfillment of these tasks does not carry us beyond the framework of the bourgeois rgime.“

Lenin saw, of course, as clearly as his opponents that the democratic revolution was not finished, that, on the contrary without really beginning it had already begun to drop into the past. But from this very fact it resulted that only the rulers of a new class could carry it through to the end, and that this could be achieved no otherwise but by drawing the masses out from under the influence of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries-that is to say, from the indirect influence of the liberal bourgeoisie. The connection of those parties with the workers, and especially with the soldiers, was based on the idea of defence- ”defence of the country “ or ”defence of the revolution.“ Lenin, therefore, demanded an irreconcilable opposition to all shades of social patriotism. Separate the party from the backward masses, in order afterwards to free those masses from their backwardness. ”We must abandon the old Bolshevism,“ he kept repeating. ”We must make a sharp division between the, line of the petty bourgeoisie and the wage worker.“

At a superficial glance it might seem that the age-old enemies had exchanged weapons. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries now represented a majority of the workers and soldiers, and seemed to have realised that political union of the proletariat and peasantry which Bolshevism had always been advocating against the Mensheviks. Lenin was demanding that the proletarian vanguard break away from this union. In reality, however, both sides remained true to themselves. The Mensheviks, as always, saw their mission in supporting the liberal bourgeoisie. Their union with the Social Revolutionaries was only a means of broadening and strengthening this support. On the contrary, the break of the proletarian vanguard with the petty bourgeois bloc meant the preparation of a union of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party-that is, the dictatorship

of the proletariat.

Another argument against Lenin was derived from the backwardness of Russia. A government of the working class inevitably means a transition to socialism, but economically and culturally Russia is not ripe for this. We must carry through the democratic revolution. Only a socialist revolution in the West can justify a dictatorship of the proletariat here. This was Rykov's argument at the April conference. That the cultural-economic condition of Russia in itself was inadequate for the construction of a socialist society was mere a-b-c to Lenin. But societies are not so rational in building that the dates for proletarian dictatorships arrive exactly at that moment when the economic and cultural conditions are ripe for socialism. If humanity evolved as systematically as that, there would be no need for dictatorship, nor indeed for revolutions in general. Living historic societies are inharmonious through and through, and the more so the more delayed their development. The fact. that in a backward country like Russia the bourgeoisie had decayed before the complete victory of the bourgeois rgime, and that there was nobody but the proletariat to replace it in the position of national leadership, was an expression of this in harmony. The economic backwardness of Russia does not relieve the working class of the obligation to fulfil its allotted task, but merely surrounds this task with extraordinary difficulties. To Rykov, who kept repeating that socialism must come from countries with a more developed industry, Lenin gave a simple but sufficient answer: "You can't say who will begin and who finish."

In 1921, when the party-still far from bureaucratic ossification-was appraising its past as freely as it prepared its future, one of the older Bolsheviks, Olminsky, who had played a leading part in the party press in all stages of its development, raised the question: How explain the fact that the February revolution found the party on the opportunist path, and what permitted it thereafter to turn so sharply to the path of October ? The author correctly found the source of the party's going astray in March in the fact that it held on too long to the "democratic dictatorship." "The coming revolution must be only a bourgeois revolution. . . . That was," says Olminsky, "an obligatory premise for every member of the party, the official opinion of the party, its continual and unchanging slogan right up to the February revolution of 1917, and even some time after." In illustration Olminsky might have referred to the fact that Pravda, even before Stalin and Kamenev-that is under the "left " editorship, which included Olminsky himself declared on March 7, as though mentioning something that goes without saying: "Of course there is no question among us of the downfall of the rule of capital, but only of the downfall of the rule of autocracy and feudalism." From this too short aim resulted the March captivity of the party to the bourgeois democracy." Whence then the October revolution ¿' asks the same author. "How did it happen that the party, from its leaders to its rank-and-file members, so suddenly renounced everything that it had regarded as fixed truth for almost two decades¿'

Sukhanov, speaking as an enemy, raises the question differently. ”How did Lenin manage to outwit and conquer his Bolsheviks¿‘ It is true that Lenin’s victory within the party was not only complete, but was won in a very short time. The party enemies indulged on this theme in a good deal of irony as to the personal rgime in the Bolshevik Party. Sukhanov himself answers the question he had raised wholly in the heroic spirit: ”Lenin, the genius, was a historic authority -that is one side of it. The other is that there was nobody and nothing in the party besides Lenin. A few great generals without Lenin amounted to as little as a few gigantic planets without the sun (I here omit Trotsky who was not then within the ranks of the Order).“ These curious lines attempt to explain the influence of Lenin by his influentialness, as the capacity of opium to produce sleep is explained by its soporific powers. Such an explanation does not, of course, get us forward very far. Lenin’s actual influence in the party was indubitably very great, but it was by no means unlimited. It was still subject to appeal even later, after October, when his authority had grown extraordinarily because the party had measured his power with the yardstick of world events. So much the more insufficient are these mere personal references to his authority in April 1917, when the whole ruling group of the party had already taken up a position contradictory to that of Lenin.

Olminsky comes much nearer to answering the question when he argues that, in spite of its formula of bourgeois democratic revolution, the party had in its whole policy toward the bourgeoisie and the democracy, been for a long time actually preparing to lead the proletariat in a direct struggle for power. ”We (or at least many of us)“ -says Olminsky- ”were unconsciously steering a course toward proletarian revolution, although thinking we were steering a course toward a bourgeois democratic revolution. In other words we were preparing the October revolution while thinking we were preparing the February.“ An extremely valuable generalization, and at the same time the testimony of an irreproachable witness!

In the theoretical education of the revolutionary party there had been an element of contradiction, which had found its expression in the equivocal formula ”democratic dictatorship“ of the proletariat and peasantry. Speaking on the report of Lenin to the conference, a woman delegate expressed the thought of Olminsky still more simply: ”The prognosis made by the Bolsheviks proved wrong, but their tactics were right. “

In his April theses which seemed so paradoxical, Lenin was relying against the old formula upon the living tradition of the party-its irreconcilable attitude to the ruling classes and its hostility to all half-way measures-whereas the ”old Bolsheviks“ were opposing a still fresh although already outdated memory to the concrete development of the class struggle. But Lenin had a too strong support prepared by the whole historic struggle of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks. Here it is suitable to remember that the official Social Democratic programme was still at that time common to the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, that

the practical tasks of the democratic revolution looked the same on paper to both parties. But they were by no means so in action. The worker-Bolsheviks immediately after the revolution took the initiative in the struggle for the eight hour day; the Mensheviks declared this demand untimely. The Bolsheviks took the lead in arresting the czarist officials; the Mensheviks opposed ”excesses.“ The Bolsheviks energetically undertook the creation of a workers’ militia; the Mensheviks delayed the arming of the workers, not wishing to quarrel with the bourgeoisie. Although not yet overstepping the bounds of bourgeois democracy, the Bolsheviks acted, or strove to act however confused by their leadership-like uncompromising revolutionists. The Mensheviks sacrificed their democratic programme at every step in the interests of a coalition with the liberals. In the complete absence of democratic allies, Kamenev and Stalin inevitably hung in the air.

This April conflict between Lenin and the general staff of the party was not the only one of its kind. Throughout the whole history of Bolshevism, with the exception of some episodes which in essence only confirm the rule, all the leaders of the party at all the most important moments stood to the right of Lenin. This was not an accident. Lenin became the unqualified leader of the most revolutionary party in the world’s history, because his thought and will were really equal to the demands of the gigantic revolutionary possibilities of the country and the epoch. Others fell short by an inch or two, and often more.

Almost the whole ruling circle of the Bolshevik Party for months and even years before the revolution had been outside the active work. Many had carried away into jails and exile the oppressive recollections of the first months of the war, and had lived through the wreck of the International in solitude or in small groups. Although in the ranks of the party they had manifested a sufficient receptivity to those thoughts of revolution which had attracted them to Bolshevism, in isolation they were not strong enough to resist the pressure of the surrounding milieu and make an independent Marxist appraisal of events. The enormous shift of opinion in the masses during the two and a half years of war had remained almost outside their field of vision. Nevertheless the revolution had not only dragged them out of their isolation, but immediately placed them, thanks to their prestige, in a commanding position in the party. They were often much closer in mood to the ”Zimmerwald“ intelligentsia than to the revolutionary workers in the factories.

The ”Old Bolsheviks“-who pretentiously emphasised this appellation in April 1917-were condemned to defeat because they were defending exactly that element of the party tradition which had not passed the historic test. ”I belong to the old Bolshevik Leninists,“ said Kalinin, for instance, at the Petrograd conference of April 14, ”and I consider that the old Leninism has not by any means proved good-for-nothing in the present peculiar moment, and I am astonished at the declaration of Comrade Lenin that the old Bolsheviks have become an obstacle at the present moment.“ Lenin had to listen to many such offended

voices in those days. However, in breaking with the traditional formula of the party, Lenin did not in the least cease to be a ”Leninist.“ He threw off the worn-out shell of Bolshevism in order to summon its nucleus to a new life.

Against the old Bolsheviks Lenin found support in another layer of the party already tempered, but more fresh and more closely united with the masses. In the February revolution, as we know, the worker-Bolsheviks played the decisive role. They thought it self-evident that that class which had won the victory should seize the power. These same workers protested stormily against the course of Kamenev and Stalin, and the Vyborg district even threatened the ”leaders“ with expulsion from the party. The same thing was to be observed in the provinces. Almost everywhere there were left Bolsheviks accused of maximalism, even of anarchism. These worker-revolutionists only lacked the theoretical resources to defend their position. But they were ready to respond to the first clear call. It was on this stratum of workers, decisively risen to their feet during the upward years of 1912-14, that Lenin was now banking. Already at the beginning of the war, when the government dealt the party a heavy blow by arresting the Bolshevik faction of the Duma, Lenin, speaking of the further revolutionary work, had demanded the education by the party of ”thousands of class conscious workers, from among whom in spite of all difficulties a new staff of leaders will arise.“

Although separated from these workers by two war fronts, and almost without communication, Lenin had never lost touch with them. ”Let the war, jails, Siberia, hard labour, shatter them twice, ten times, you cannot destroy that stratum. It is alive. It is imbued with revolutionism and anti-chauvinism.“

In his mind Lenin had been living through the events along ,with these worker-Bolsheviks, making with them the necessary inferences-only broader and more boldly than they. In his struggle with the indecisiveness of the staff and the broad officer layer of the party, Lenin confidently relied on its under-officer layer which better reflected the rank-and-file worker-Bolshevik.

The temporary strength of the social-patriots, and the hidden weakness of the opportunist wing of the Bolsheviks, lay in the fact that the former were basing themselves on the temporary prejudices and illusions of the masses, and the latter were conforming themselves to these temporary prejudices and illusions. The chief strength of Lenin lay in his understanding the inner logic of the movement, and guiding his policy by it. He did not impose his plan on the masses; he helped the masses to recognize their own plan. When Lenin reduced all the problems of the revolution to one-”patiently explain“- that meant it was necessary to bring the consciousness of the masses into correspondence with that situation into which the historic process had driven them. The worker or the soldier, disappointed with the policy of the Compromisers, had to be brought over to the position of

Lenin and not left lingering in the intermediate stage of Kamenev and Stalin.

Once the Leninist formulas were issued, they shed a new light for the Bolsheviks upon the experience of the past months and of every new day. In the broad party mass a quick differentiation took place-leftward and leftward,- toward the theses of Lenin. District after district adhered to them," says Zalezhsky, and by the time of the all-Russian party conference on April 24, the Petersburg organization as a whole was in favour of the theses".

The struggle for the re-arming of the Bolshevik ranks, begun on the evening of April 3, was essentially finished by the end of the month. The party conference, which met in Petrograd April 24-29, cast the balance of March, a month of opportunist vacillations, and of April, a month of sharp crisis. By that time the party had grown greatly, both quantitatively and in a political sense. The 149 delegates represented 79,000 party members, of whom 15,000 lived in Petrograd. For a party that had been illegal yesterday, and was to-day anti-patriotic, that was an impressive number, and Lenin several times called attention to it with satisfaction. The political physiognomy of the conference was immediately defined by the election of a prsidium of five members. It did not include either Kamenev or Stalin, the chief culprits March misfortune.

Although for the party as a whole the debated questions were already firmly decided, many of the leaders, still clinging to the past, continued at this conference in opposition, or semi-opposition, to Lenin. Stalin remained silent and waited. Dzerzhinsky, in the name of "many," who "did not agree in principle with the theses of the spokesman," demanded that a dissenting report be heard from "the comrades who have along with us experienced the revolution in a practical way." This was an evident thrust at the emigrant character of the Leninist theses. Kamenev did actually make a dissenting report in defence of the bourgeois democratic dictatorship. Rykov, Tomsky, Kalinin, tried to stand more or less by their March positions. Kalinin continued to advocate a coalition with the Mensheviks in the interests of the struggle with liberalism. The prominent Moscow party worker, Smidovich, hotly complained in his speech that "every time we speak they raise against us a certain bogey in the form of the theses of Comrade Lenin." Earlier, when the Moscow members were voting for the resolutions of the Mensheviks, life had been a good deal more peaceful.

As a pupil of Rosa Luxemburg, Dzerzhinsky spoke against the right of nations to self-determination, accusing Lenin of protecting a separatist tendencies which weakened the Russian proletariat. To Lenin's answering accusation of giving support to Great-Russian chauvinism, Dzerzhinsky answered: "I can reproach him (Lenin) with standing at the point of view of the Polish, Ukrainian and other chauvinists." This dialogue is not without a political piquancy: the Great-Russian Lenin accuses the Pole, Dzerzhinsky, of Great-Russian chauvinism directed the Poles, and is accused by the latter of Polish chauvinism. Politically Lenin was in the right in this quarrel. His policy on nationalities entered as a most

important constituent element into the October revolution.

The opposition was obviously on the wane. It did not muster more than seven votes on the questions under debate. There was, however, one curious and sharp exception, touching the international relations of the party. At the very end of the conference, in the evening session of April 29, Zinoviev introduced in the name of his commission a resolution To take part in the international conference of Zimmerwaldists designated for May 18 (at Stockholm). "The report says: " Adopted by all votes against one." That one was Lenin. He demanded a break with Zimmerwald, where the majority had been decisively with the German Independents and neutral pacifists of the type of the Swiss, Grimm. But for the Russian circles of the party, Zimmerwald had during the war become almost identified with Bolshevism. The delegates were not yet ready to give up the name of Social Democrat or break with Zimmerwald, which remained moreover in their eyes a bond with the masses of the Second International.

Lenin tried at least to limit participation in the coming conference to an attendance for informational purposes. Zinoviev spoke against him. Lenin's proposal was rejected. He then voted against the resolution as a whole. Nobody supported him. That was the last splash of the "March" tendency a clinging to yesterday's position, a fear of "isolation." The Stockholm Conference, however, was never held-a result of those same inner diseases of Zimmerwald, which had led Lenin, to break with it. His unanimously rejected policy of boycott was thus realised in fact.

The abruptness of the turn in the policy of the party was obvious to all. Schmidt, a worker-Bolshevik, afterward People's Commissar of Labour, said at the April conference: "Lenin gave a different direction to the character of the work." According to Raskolnikov-writing, to be sure, several years later-Lenin in April 1917 "carried out an October revolution in the consciousness of the party leaders.... The tactic of our party is not a single straight line, but makes after the arrival of Lenin a sharp jump to the left." The old Bolshevik, Ludmila Stahl, more directly and also more accurately appraised the change. "All the comrades before the arrival of Lenin were wandering in the dark," she said, at the city conference on the 14th of April. "We know only the formulas of 1905. Seeing the independent creative work of the people, we could not teach them. ... Our comrades could only limit themselves to getting ready for the Constituent Assembly by parliamentary means, and took no account of the possibility of going farther. In accepting the slogans of Lenin we are now doing what life itself suggests to us. We need not fear the Commune, and say that we already have a workers' government; the Commune of Paris was not only a workers', but also a petty bourgeois government." It is possible to agree with Sukhanov that the re-arming of the army "was the chief and fundamental victory of Lenin completed by the first days of May." Sukhanov, it is true thought that Lenin in this operation substituted an

anarchist for a Marxist weapon.

It remains to ask-and this is no unimportant question, although easier to ask than answer : How would the revolution gave developed Lenin if Lenin had not reached Russia in April 1917? If our exposition demonstrates and proves anything at all, we hope it proves that Lenin was not a demiurge of the revolutionary process, that he merely entered into a chain of objective historic forces. But he was a great link in that chain. The dictatorship of the proletariat was to be inferred from the whole situation, but it had still to be established. It could not be established without a party. The party could fulfil its mission only after understanding it. For that Lenin was needed. Until his arrival, not one of the Bolshevik leaders dared to make a diagnosis of the revolution. The leadership of Kamenev and Stalin was tossed by the course of events to the right, to the Social Patriots: between Lenin and Menshevism the revolution left no place for intermediate positions. Inner struggle in the Bolshevik Party was absolutely unavoidable. Lenin's arrival merely hastened the process. His personal influence shortened the crisis. Is it possible, however, to say confidently that the party without him would have found its road? We would by no means make bold to say that. The factor of time is decisive here, and it is difficult in retrospect to tell time historically. Dialectic materialism at any rate has nothing in common with fatalism. Without Lenin the crisis, which the opportunist leadership was inevitably bound to produce, would have assumed an extraordinarily sharp and protracted character. The conditions of war and revolution, however, would not allow the party a long period for fulfilling its mission. Thus it is by no means excluded that a disoriented and split, party might have let slip the revolutionary opportunity for years. The role of personality arises before us here on a truly gigantic scale. It is necessary only to understand that role correctly, taking personality as a link in the historic chain.

The "sudden" arrival of Lenin from abroad after a long absence, the furious cry raised by the press around his name, his clash with all the leaders of his own party and his quick victory over them-in a word, the external envelope of circumstance-make easy in this case a mechanical contrasting of the person, the hero, the genius, against the objective conditions, the mass, the party. In reality, such a contrast is completely one-sided. Lenin was not an accidental element in the historic development, but a product of the whole past of Russian history. He was embedded in it with deepest roots. Along with the vanguard of the workers, he had lived through their struggle in the course of the preceding quarter century. The "accident" was not his interference in the events, but rather that little straw with which Lloyd George tried to block his path. Lenin did not oppose the party from outside, but was himself its most complete expression. In educating it he had educated himself in it. His divergence from the ruling circles of the Bolsheviks meant the struggle of the future of the party against its past. If Lenin had not been artificially separated from the party by the conditions of emigration and war, the external mechanics of the crisis would not have been

so dramatic, and would not have overshadowed to such a degree the inner continuity of the party's development. From the extraordinary significance which Lenin's arrival received, it should only be, inferred that leaders are not accidentally created, that they are gradually chosen out and trained up in the course of decades, that they cannot be capriciously replaced, that their mechanical exclusion from the struggle gives the party a living wound, and in many cases may paralyse it for a long period.

CHAPTER 17

THE “APRIL DAYS”

ON THE 23rd of March the United States entered the war. On that day Petrograd was burying the victims of the February be revolution. The funeral procession-in its mood a procession it triumphant with the joy of life-was a mighty concluding chord in the symphony of the five days. Everybody went to the funeral: both those who had fought side by side with the victims, and those who had held them back from battle, very likely also those who killed them-and above all, those who had stood aside from the fighting. Along with workers, soldiers, he and the small city people here were students, ministers, ambassadors, the solid bourgeois, journalists, orators, leaders be of all the parties. The red coffins carried on the shoulders of workers and soldiers streamed in from the workers’ districts to Mars Field. When the coffins were lowered into the grave there sounded from Peter and Paul fortress the first funeral salute, startling the innumerable masses of the people. That cannon had a new sound: our cannon, our salute. The Vyborg section carried fifty-one red coffins. That was only a part of the victims it was proud of. In the procession of the Vyborg workers, the most compact of all, numerous Bolshevik banners were to be seen, but they floated peacefully beside other banners. On Mars Field itself there stood only the members of the government, of the Soviet, and the State Duma -already dead but stubbornly evading its own funeral. All day long no less than 800,000 people filed past the grave with bands and banners. And although, according to preliminary reckonings by the highest military authorities, a human mass of that size could not possibly pass a given point without the most appalling chaos and fatal whirlpools, nevertheless the demonstration was carried out in complete order-a thing to be observed generally in revolutionary processions, dominated as they are by a satisfying consciousness of a great deed achieved, combined with a hope that everything will grow better and better in the future. It was only this feeling that kept order, for organisation was still weak, inexperienced and unconfident of itself. The very fact of the funeral was, it would seem, a sufficient refutation of the myth of a bloodless

revolution. But nevertheless the mood prevailing at the funeral recreated, to some extent the atmosphere of those first days when the legend was born.

Twenty-five days later-during which time the soviets had gained much experience and self-confidence-occurred the May 1 celebration. (May I according to the Western calendar April 18 old style.) All the cities of Russia were drowned in meetings and demonstrations. Not only the industrial enterprises, but the state, city and rural public institutions were closed. In Moghilev, the headquarters of the General Staff, the Cavaliers of St. George marched at the head of the procession. The members of the staff-unremoved czarist generals marched under May 1 banners. The holiday of proletarian antimilitarism blended with revolution-tinted manifestations of patriotism. The different strata of the population contributed their own quality to the holiday, but all flowed together into a whole, very loosely held together and partly false, but on the whole majestic. In both capitals and in the industrial centres the workers dominated the celebration, and amid them the strong nuclei of Bolshevism stood out distinctly with banners, placards, speeches and shouts. Across the immense facade of the Mariinsky Palace, the refuge of the Provisional Government, was stretched a bold red streamer with the words: “Long Live the Third International!” The authorities, not yet rid of their administrative shyness, could not make up their mind to remove this disagreeable and alarming streamer. Everybody, it seemed, was celebrating. So far as it could, the army at the front celebrated. News came of meetings, speeches, banners and revolutionary songs in the trenches, and there were responses from the German side.

The war had not yet come to an end; on the contrary it had only widened its circle. A whole continent had recently-on the very day of the funeral of the martyrs-joined the war and given it a new scope. Yet meanwhile throughout Russia, side by side with soldiers, war-prisoners were taking part in the processions under the same banners, sometimes singing the same song in different languages. In this immeasurable rejoicing, obliterating like a spring flood the delineations of classes, parties and ideas, that common demonstration of Russian soldiers with Austro-German war-prisoners was a vivid hope-giving fact which made it possible to believe that the revolution, in spite of all, did carry within itself the foundation of a better world.

Like the March funeral, the 1st of May celebration passed off without clashes or casualties as an “all-national festival.” However, an attentive car might have caught already among the ranks of the workers and soldiers impatient an even threatening notes. It was becoming harder and harder to live. Prices had risen alarmingly; the workers were demanding a minimum wage; the bosses were resisting; the number of conflicts in the factories was continually growing; the food situation was getting worse; bread rations were being cut down; cereal cards had been introduced; dissatisfaction in the garrison had grown. The district staff, making ready to bridle the soldiers, was removing the more revolutionary

units from Petrograd. At a general assembly of the garrison on April 17 the soldiers, sensing these hostile designs, had raised the question of putting a stop to the removal of troops. That demand will continue to arise in the future, taking a more and more decisive form with very new crisis of the revolution. But the root of all evils was the war, of which no end was to be seen. When will the revolution bring peace? What are Kerensky and Tseretelli waiting for? The masses were listening more and more attentively to the Bolsheviks, glancing at them obliquely, waitingly, some with half-hostility, others already with trust. Underneath the triumphal discipline of the demonstration the mood was tense. There was ferment in the masses.

However, nobody-not even the authors of the streamer on the Mariinsky Palace-imagined that the very next two or three days would ruthlessly tear off the envelope of national unity from the revolution. The menacing event whose inevitability many foresaw, but which no one expected so soon, was suddenly upon them. The stimulus was given by the foreign policy of the Provisional Government, i.e., the problem of war. No other than Miliukov touched the match to the fuse.

The history of that match and fuse is as follows : On the day of America’s entry into the war, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government, greatly encouraged, developed his programme before the journalists: seizure of Constantinople, seizure of Armenia, division of Austria and Turkey, seizure of Northern Persia, and over and above all this, the right of nations to self -determination. “ In all his speeches ”-thus the historian Miliukov explains Miliukov the minister-“ he decisively emphasised the pacifist aims of the war of liberation, but always presented them in close union with the national problems and interests of Russia.” This interview disquieted the listeners, “When will the foreign policy of the Provisional Government cleanse itself of hypocrisy? ” stormed the Menshevik paper. Why does not the Provisional Government demand from the Allied governments an open and decisive renunciation of annexations¿‘ What these people considered hypocrisy, was the frank language of the predatory. In a pacifist disguise of such appetites they were quite ready to see a liberation from all hypocrisy. Frightened by the stirring of the democracy, Kerensky hastened to announce through the press bureau: ”Miliukov’s programme is merely his personal opinion.“ That the author of this personal opinion happened to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs was, if you please, a mere accident.

Tseretelli, who had a talent for solving every question with a commonplace, began to insist on the necessity of a governmental announcement that for Russia the war was exclusively one of defence. The resistance of Miliukov and to some extent of Guchkov was broken, and on March 27 the government gave birth to a declaration to the effect that ”the goal of free Russia is not domination over other peoples, nor depriving them of their national heritage, nor violent seizure of alien territory,“ but ”nevertheless complete obser-

vance of the obligations undertaken to our Allies.“ Thus the kings and the prophets of the two-power system proclaimed their intention to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven in union with patricides and adulterers, Those gentlemen, besides everything else that they lacked, lacked a sense of humour. That declaration of March 27 was welcomed not only by the entire Compromisers’ press, but even by the *Pravda* of Kamenev and Stalin, which said in its leading editorial four days before Lenin’s arrival: ”The Provisional Government has clearly and definitely announced before the whole people that the aim of Russia is not the domination of other nations,“ etc., etc. The English press immediately and with satisfaction interpreted Russia’s renunciation of annexations as her renunciation of Constantinople, by no means intending of course to extend this formula of renunciation to herself. The Russian ambassador in London sounded the alarm, and demanded an explanation from Moscow to the effect that ”the principle of peace without annexations is to be applied by Russia not unconditionally, but in so far as. it does not oppose our vital interests.“ But that, of course, was exactly the formula of Miliukov: ”We promise not to rob anybody whom we don’t need to.“ Paris, in contrast to London, not only supported Miliukov but urged him on, suggesting through Paléologue the necessity of a more vigorous policy toward the Soviet.

The French Premier, Ribot, out of patience with the terrible red tape at Petrograd, asked London and Rome Whether they did not consider it necessary to demand of the Provisional Government that they put an end to all equivocation. ”London answered that it would be wise “to give the French and English socialists, who had been sent to Russia, time to influence their colleagues.”

The sending of allied socialists into Russia had been undertaken on the initiative of the Russian Staff-that is, the old czarist generals. “We counted upon him,” wrote Ribot of Albert Thomas, “to give a certain firmness to the decisions of the Provisional Government.” Miliukov complained, however, that Thomas associated too closely with the leaders of the Soviet. Ribot answered that Thomas “is sincerely striving” to support the point of view of Miliukov, but nevertheless promised to urge his ambassador to a more active support.

The declaration of March 27, although totally empty, disquieted the Allies, who saw in it a concession to the Soviet. From London came threats of a loss of faith “in the military Power of Russia.” Paléologue complained of “the timidity and indefiniteness” of the declaration. But that was just what Miliukov needed. In the hope of help from the Allies, Miliukov had embarked on a big game, far exceeding his resources. His fundamental idea was to use the war against the revolution, and the first task upon this road was to demoralise the democracy. But the Compromisers had begun just in the first days of April to reveal an increasing nervousness and fussiness upon questions of foreign policy, for upon these questions the lower classes were unceasingly pressing them. The government needed a loan. But the masses, with all their defensism, were ready to defend a peace loan but not a

war loan. It was necessary to give them at least a peep at the prospect of peace.

Developing his policy of salvation by commonplaces, Tseretelli proposed that they demand from the Provisional Government that it despatch a note to the Allies similar to the domestic declaration of March 27. In return for this, the Executive Committee would undertake to carry through the Soviet a vote for the “Liberty Loan.” Miliukov agreed to the exchange-the note for the loan-but decided to make a double use of the bargain. Under the guise of interpreting the declaration, his note disavowed it. It urged that the peace-loving phrases of the government should not give anyone “the slightest reason to think that the revolution which had occurred entailed a weakening of the role of Russia in the common struggle of the Allies. Quite the contrary-the universal desire to carry the world war through to a decisive victory had only been strengthened.” The note further expressed confidence that the victors “will find a means to attain those *guarantees and sanctions*, which are necessary for the prevention of new bloody conflicts in the future.” That word about “guarantees and sanctions,” introduced at the insistence of Thomas, meant nothing less in the thieves’ jargon of diplomacy, especially French, than annexations and indemnities. On the day of the May 1 celebration Miliukov telegraphed his note, composed at the dictation of Allied diplomats, to the governments of the Entente. And only after this was it sent to the Executive Committee, and simultaneously to the newspapers. The government had ignored the Contact Commission, and the leaders of the Executive Committee found themselves in the position of everyday citizens. Even had the Compromisers found in the note nothing they had not heard from Miliukov before, they could not help seeing in this a premeditated hostile act. The note disarmed them before the masses, and demanded from them a direct choice between Bolshevism and imperialism.

Was not in that direction, and suggests indeed that his design went even farther. Already in March Miliukov had been trying with all his might to resurrect that ill-fated plan for the seizure of the Dardanelles by a Russian raid, and had carried on many conversations with General Alexeiev, urging him to carry out the operation-which would in Miliukov’s calculations place the democracy with its protest against annexations before an accomplished fact. Miliukov’s note of April 18 was a similar raid upon the ill-defended coastlines of the democracy, The two acts-military and political-supplemented each other, and in case of success would have justified each other. Generally speaking, one does not condemn a victor. But Miliukov was not destined to be a victor. Two to three hundred thousand troops were needed for the raid, and the plan fell through because of a mere detail: the refusal of the soldiers. They agreed to defend the revolution, but not to take the offensive, Miliukov’s attempt upon the Dardanelles came to nothing, and that broke down all his further plans. But it must be confessed that they were not badly worked out-provided he won.

On April 17 there took place in Petrograd the patriotic nightmare demonstration of the

war invalids. An enormous number of wounded from the hospitals of the capital, legless, armless, bandaged, advanced upon the Tauride Palace. Those who could not walk were carried in automobile trucks. The banners read: “War to the end.” That was a demonstration of despair from the human stumps of the imperialist war, wishing that the revolution should not acknowledge that their sacrifice had been in vain. But the Kadet Party stood behind the demonstration, or rather Miliukov stood behind it, getting ready his great blow for the following day.

At a special night session of the 19th, the Executive Committee discussed the note sent the day before to the Allied governments. “After the first reading.” relates Stankevich, “it was unanimously and without debate acknowledged by all that this was not at all what the Committee had expected.” But responsibility for the note had been assumed by the government as a whole, including Kerensky. Consequently, it was necessary first of all to save the government. Tseretelli began to “decode” the note, which had never been coded, and to discover in it more and more merits. Skobelev profoundly reasoned that in general it is impossible to demand “acomplete coincidence of the aims of the democracy with that of the government.” The wise men harried themselves until dawn, but found no solution. They dispersed in the morning only to meet again after a few hours. Apparently they were counting upon time to heal all wounds.

In the morning the note appeared in all the papers. *Rech* commented upon it in a spirit of carefully prepared provocation. The Socialist Press expressed itself with great excitement. The Menshevik *Rabochaia Gazeta,* not yet having succeeded like Tseretelli and Skobelev in freeing itself from the vapours of the night’s indignation, wrote that the Provisional Government had published “a document which is a mockery of the democracy,” and demanded from the Soviet decisive measures “to prevent its disastrous- consequences.” The growing pressure of the Bolsheviks was very clearly felt in those phrases.

The Executive Committee resumed its sitting, but only in order once more to convince itself of its incapacity to arrive at a solution. It resolved to summon a special plenary session of the Soviet “for purposes of information ”-in reality for the purpose of feeling out the amount of dissatisfaction in the lower ranks, and to gain time for its own vacillations. In the meantime all kinds of contact sessions were suggested with the aim of bringing the whole agitation to nothing.

But amid all this ritual diddling of the double sovereignty, athird power unexpectedly intervened. The masses came out with arms in their hands. Among the bayonets of the soldiers glimmered the letters on a streamer: “Down with Miliukov!” On other streamers Guchkov figured in the same way. In these indignant processions it was hard to recognise the demonstrators of May 1.

Historians call this movement “spontaneous” in the conditional sense that no party took

the initiative in it. The immediate summons to the streets was given by a certain Linde, who therewith inscribed his name in the history of the revolution. “Scholar, mathematician, philosopher,” Linde was a non-party man-for the revolution with all his heart and earnestly desirous that it should fulfil its promise. Miliukov’s note and the comments of *Rech* had aroused him. “Taking counsel with no one,” says his biographer, “he acted at once, went straight to the Finland regiment, assembled its committee and proposed that they march immediately as a whole regiment to the Mariinsky Palace . . . Linde’s proposal was accepted, and at three o’clock in the afternoon a significant demonstration of the Finlanders was marching through the streets of Petrograd with challenging placards.” After the Finland regiment came the soldiers of the 180th Reserve, the Moscow regiment, the Pavlovsky, the Keksgolmsky, the sailors of the 2nd Baltic fleet. The commotion and whole factories came out into the streets after the soldiers.

“The majority of the soldiers did not know why they had come,” affirms Miliukov, as though he had asked them. “Besides the troops, boy workers took part in the demonstration, loudly (!) proclaiming that they were paid ten to fifteen roubles for doing it.” The source of this money is also clear: “The idea of removing the two ministers (Miliukov and Guehkov) was directly inspired from Germany.” Miliukov offered this profound explanation not in the heat of the April struggle, but three years after the October events had abundantly demonstrated to him that nobody had to pay a high wage for then people’s hatred of Miliukov.

The unexpected sharpness of the April demonstration is explained by the directness of the mass reaction to deceit from above. “Until the government achieves peace, it is necessary to be on our guard.” That was spoken without enthusiasm, but with conviction. It had been assumed that, up above, everything was being done to bring peace. The Bolsheviks, to be sure, were asserting that the government wanted the war prolonged for the sake of robberies. But could that be possible? How about Kerensky? We have known the Soviet leaders since February. They were the first to come to us in the barracks. They are for peace. Moreover, Lenin came straight from Berlin, whereas Tseretelli was at hard labour. We must be patient. . . . Meanwhile the progressive factories and regiments were more and more firmly adopting the Bolshevik slogans of a peace policy: publication of the secret treaties; break with the plans of conquest of the Entente; open proposal of immediate peace to all warring countries. The note of April 18 fell among these complex and wavering moods. How can this be? They are not for peace up there after all, but for the old war aims? All our patience and waiting for nothing? Down with . . . but down with whom? Can the Bolsheviks be right? Hardly. But what about this note? It means that somebody is selling our hides, all right, to the czar’s allies. From a simple comparison of the press of the Kadets and the Compromisers, it could be red that Miliukov, betraying the general confidence, was intending to carry on a policy of conquest in company with Lloyd George

and Ribot. And yet Kerensky had declared that the attempt upon Constantinople was “the personal opinion of L-Miliukov.” . . . That was how this movement flared up.

But it was not homogeneous. Certain hot-headed elements among the revolutionists greatly overestimated the volume and political maturity of the movement, because it had broken out so sharply and suddenly. The Bolsheviks developed an energetic campaign among the troops and in the factories. They supplemented the demand to “remove Miliukov,” which was, so to speak, a programme-minimum of the movement, with placards against the Provisional Government as a whole. But different elements understood this differently: some as slogans of propaganda, others as the task of the day. The slogan carried into the streets by the armed soldiers and sailors: “Down with the Provisional Government! ”inevitably introduced into the demonstration a strain of armed insurrection. Considerable groups of workers and soldiers were quite ready to shake down’ the Provisional Government right then and there. They made an attempt to enter the Mariinsky Palace, occupy its exits, and arrest the ministers. Skobelev was delegated to rescue the ministers, and he fulfilled his mission the more successfully in that the Mariinsky Palace happened to be unoccupied.

In consequence of Guchkov’s illness, the government had met that day in his private apartment. But it was not the accident which saved the ministers from arrest; they were not seriously threatened. That army of 25,000 to 30,000 soldiers, which had come into the streets for a struggle with the prolongers of the war, was plenty enough to do away with a far solider government than that headed by Prince Lvov, but the demonstrators had not set themselves this goal. All they really intended was to show their fist at the window, so that these high gentlemen should cease sharpening their teeth for Constantinople and get busy as they should about the question of peace. In this way the soldiers hoped to help Kerensky and Tseretelli against Miliukov.

General Kornilov attended that sitting of the government, reported the armed demonstrations which were taking place, and declared that as the commander of the troops of the Petrograd military district he had at his disposition sufficient forces, to put down the disturbance with a mailed fist: he merely, awaited the command. Kolchak, who happened accidentally to, be present, related afterwards, at the trial which preceded his execution, that Prince Lvov and Kerensky spoke against the, attempt to put down the demonstration with military force. Miliukov did not express himself directly, but summed up the situation by saying that the honourable ministers might of course reason as they wished, but their decision would not prevent their removal to prison. There is no doubt whatever that Kornilov was acting in agreement with the Kadet centre.

The Compromise leaders had no difficulty in persuading the soldier demonstrators to withdraw from the square before the Mariinsky Palace, and even go back to their bar-

racks. The commotion which had overflowed the city, however, did not recede to its banks. Crowds gathered, meetings assembled, they wrangled at street corners, the crowds in the tramways divided into partisans and opponents of Miliukov. On the Nevsky and adjoining streets, bourgeois orators waged an agitation against Lenin-sent from Germany to overthrow the great patriot Miliukov. In the suburbs and workers’ districts the Bolsheviks tried to extend the indignation aroused against the note and its author to the government as a whole.

At seven in the evening the plenum of the Soviet assembled. The leaders did not know what to say to that audience, quivering with tense passion. Cheidze explained to them at great length that after the session there was to be a meeting with the Provisional Government. Chernov tried to scare them with the approach of civil war. Feodorov, the metal worker, a member of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks, replied that the evil war was already here, that what the soviets ought to do was to rely upon it and seize the power in their hand so “Those were new and at that time terrible words,” writes Sukhanov. “They hit the very centre of the prevailing mood and received a response such as the Bolsheviks had never met in the Soviet before, and did not meet for along time after.”

The pivot of the conference, however, was an unexpected speech by Kerensky’s favourite, the liberal socialist, Stankevich: “Comrades,” he asked, “why should we take any ’action’ at all? Against whom marshal our forces ? The sole power that exists is you and the masses which stand behind you.... Look there! It is now five minutes to seven.” -(Stankevich pointed his finger to the clock on the wall, and the whole assembly turned in that direction)- “Resolve that the Provisional Government does not exist, that it has resigned. We will communicate this by telephone, and in five minutes it will surrender its authority. Why all this talk about violence, demonstrations, civil war?” Loud applause. Elated shouts. The orator wanted to frighten the soviets with an extreme inference from the existing situation, but frightened himself with the effect of his own speech. That unexpected truth about the power of the Soviet lifted the assembly above the wretched pottering of its leaders, whose main occupation was to prevent the Soviet from arriving at any decision. “Who will take the place of the government?” An orator replied to the applause. “We? But our hands tremble. . . .” That was an incomparable characterisation of the compromises-high and mighty leaders with trembling hands.

Prime Minister Lvov, as though to supplement Stankevich from the other side, made the next day the following announcement: “Up till now the Provisional Government has received unwavering support from the ruling organ of the Soviet. For the last two weeks . . . the government has been under suspicion. In these circumstances . . . it is best for the Provisional Government to withdraw.” We see again what was the real constitution of the February revolution!

The meeting of the Executive Committee with the Provisional Government took place in the Mariinsky Palace. Prince Lvov in an introductory speech regretted the campaign undertaken by the socialist circles against the government, and half offendedly, half threateningly, spoke of resignation. The ministers described in turn the difficulties which they had assisted with all their might to accumulate. Miliukov, turning his back to all this “contact” oratory, spoke from the balcony to a Kadet demonstration.“ Seeing those placards with the inscription ’Down with Miliukov!’ . . . I did not fear for Miliukov, I feared for Russia.” Thus the historian Miliukov reports the modest words which the minister Miliukov pronounced before the crowds assembled in the square. Tseretelli demanded from the government a new note. Chernov found a brilliant solution, proposing that Miliukov go over to the Ministry of Public Education. Constantinople as a topic in geography would at any rate be less dangerous than as a topic in diplomacy. Miliukov, however, categorically refused both to return to science, and to write a new note. The leaders of the Soviet did not need much persuasion, and agreed to an “explanation” of the old note. It remained to find a few phrases whose falsity should be sufficiently oiled over with democraticness, and the situation might be considered saved-and with it Miliukov’s portfolio.

But the restless third power would not be quiet. The 21st of April brought a new wave of commotion, more powerful than yesterday’s. To-day the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks had called for the demonstration. In spite of the counter-agitation of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, immense masses of workers advanced to the centre from the Vyborg side, and later too from other districts. The Executive Committee sent to meet the demonstrators their most authoritative pacifiers with Cheidze at the head. But the workers firmly intended to speak their word-and they had a word to speak. A well-known liberal journalist described in *Rech* this demonstration of workers on the Nevsky : “About a hundred armed men- marched in front; after them solid phalanxes of unarmed men and women, a thousand strong. Living chains on both sides. Songs. Their faces amazed me. All those thousands had but one face, the stunned ecstatic face of the early Christian monks. Implacable, pitiless, ready for murder, inquisition and death.” The liberal journalist had looked the workers, revolution in the eye and felt for a second its intense determination. How little those phalanxes resembled Miliukov’s boy-workers “ hired by Ludendorff at fifteen roubles a day!

Today as yesterday the demonstrators did not come out to overthrow the government, although a majority of them, we may guess, had already seriously thought about this problem, and a part were ready even to-day to carry the demonstration far beyond the bounds of the majority mood. Cheidze asked the demonstration to turn round and go back to its districts. But the leaders sternly answered that the workers themselves knew what to do. This was a new note-and Cheidze would have to get used to it in the course of the next few weeks.

While the Compromisers were persuading and hushing up, the Kadets were challenging and inflaming. In spite of the fact that Kornilov had not yesterday been authorised to employ firearms, he not only had not abandoned the plan, but on the contrary was all this day from early morning getting ready to oppose the demonstrators with cavalry and artillery. Firmly counting on the boldness of the generals, the Kadets had issued a special handbill summoning their partisans to the streets, clearly intending to carry matters to the point of a decisive conflict. Although failing of his raid on the Dardanelles coastline, Miliukov continued his general offensive, with Kornilov in the capacity of advance guard and the Entente as heavy reserves. The note despatched behind the back of the Soviet, and the editorial in *Rech*, were to serve the liberal Chancellor of the February revolution in the role of the Ems despatch. ”All who stand for Russia and her freedom must unite round the Provisional Government and support it.“ Thus read the appeal of the Kadet Central Committee, inviting all good citizens into the street for the struggle against the advocates of immediate peace.

The Nevsky, the chief artery of the bourgeoisie, was converted into a solid Kadet meeting. A considerable demonstration headed by the members of the Kadet Central Committee marched to the Mariinsky Palace. Everywhere could be seen brand-new placards, fresh from the sign-painters : ”Full Confidence to the Provisional Government¡‘ ”Long Live Miliukov¡‘ The ministers looked like guests of honour. They had their own ”people“, and this the more noticeably since emissaries of the Soviet were doing their utmost to help them, dispersing revolutionary meetings, steering workers’ and soldiers’ demonstrations toward the suburbs, and restraining the barracks and factories from going out. Under the flag of defence of the governments the first open and broad mobilisation of counter-revolutionary forces took place. In the centre of the town appeared trucks with armed officers, cadets and students. The Cavaliers of St. George were sent out. The gilded youth organised a mock trial on the Nevsky, establishing on the spot the existence both of Leninists and of ”German spies.“ There were skirmishes and casualties. The first bloody encounter began, according to reports, with an attempt of officers to snatch from the workers a banner with a slogan against the Provisional Government. The encounters became more and more fierce; shots were interchanged, and towards afternoon they became almost continuous. Nobody knew exactly who was shooting or why, but there were already victims of this disorderly shooting, partly malicious, partly the result of panic. The temperature was reaching red heat.

No, that day was not in the least like a manifestation of national unity. Two worlds stood face to face. The patriotic columns called into the streets against the workers and soldiers by the Kadet Party consisted exclusively of the bourgeois layers of the population-officers’ officials, intelligentsia. Two human floods-one for Constantinople, one for Peace-had issued from different parts of the town. Different in social composition, not a bit similar in

external appearance, and with hostile inscriptions on their placards, as they clashed together they brought into play fists, clubs, and even firearms.

The unexpected news reached the Executive Committee that Kornilov was moving cannon into the Palace Square. Was this independent initiative on the part of the commander? The character and further career of Kornilov testify that somebody was always leading that brave general by the nose-a function fulfilled on this occasion by the Kadet leaders. It was only because they counted on the interference of Kornilov, and in order to make this interference necessary, that they had summoned their masses into the street. One of the younger historians has correctly remarked that Kornilov’s attempt to draw away the military schools to Palace Square coincided, not with the moment of real or pretended necessity to defend the Mariinsky Palace from a hostile crowd, but with the moment of highest pitch of the Kadet manifestation.

The Miliukov-Kornilov plan went to pieces, however, and very ignominiously. However naive the leaders of the Executive Committee may have been, they could not fail to understand that their own heads were in question. Even before the first news of bloody encounters on the Nevsky, the Executive Committee had sent to all the military units of Petersburg and its environs telegraphic, instructions not to leave the barracks without orders from the Soviet-not one detachment to the streets of the capital. Now, when the intentions of Kornilov became evident, the Executive Committee, contradicting all its solemn declarations, put both hands to the helm, not only demanding of the commander that he immediately send back the troops, but also commissioning Skobelev and Filipovsky to send back those which had come out in the name of the Soviet. ”Except upon a summons from the Executive Committee in these alarming days, do not come out on the streets with arms in your hands. *To the Executive Committee alone belongs the right to* command you.“ Thereafter every order for the despatch of troops had, besides the customary formalities, to be issued on an official paper of the Soviet and countersigned by no less than two persons authorised for this purpose. It seemed that the Soviet had unequivocally interpreted Kornilov’s act as an attempt on the part of the counter-revolution to create a civil war. But, although by its order it reduced to nothing the commandership of the district, the Executive Committee never thought of removing Kornilov himself. How could one think of violating the prerogatives of the government? ”Their hands trembled.“ The young régime was wrapped up in fictions like a patient in pillows and compresses. From the point of view of the correlation of forces, most instructive is the fact that not only the Military units, but also the officers’ schools, even before receiving the order of Cheidze, refused to go out without the sanction of the Soviet. These unpleasantnesses, not foreseen by the Kadets, dropping upon them one after another, were inevitable consequences of the fact that the Russian bourgeoisie up to the time of the national revolution had been an anti-national class. That could be concealed for a short time by the dual power, but could not be corrected.

The April crisis apparently was coming to nothing. The Executive Committee had succeeded in holding back the masses on the threshold of the dual power. On its side, the grateful government explained that by ”guarantees“ and ”sanctions“ was to be understood world courts, limitation of armaments and all admirable things. The Executive Committee hastily seized upon these terminological concessions, and by a majority of 34 against 19 voted the matter adjusted. In order to quiet their alarmed ranks, the majority also adopted the following resolution : Our control of the activities of the Provisional Government must be strengthened; without previously informing the Executive Committee no important political steps must be taken; the diplomatic personnel must be radically changed. The double sovereignty which had existed in fact was thus translated into the juridical language of a constitution. But this changed nothing in the nature of things. The left wing could not even secure from the compromising majority the resignation of Miliukov. Everything must remain as before. Over the Provisional Government hung the far more effective control of the Entente, which the Executive Committee did not dare to touch.

On the evening of the 21st the Petrograd Soviet cast up its balance. Tseretelli reported on the fresh victory of the wise leadership, which had put an end to all false interpretations of the note of March 27. Kamenev, in the name of the Bolsheviks, proposed the formation of a purely soviet government. Kollantai, apopular revolutionist who had come over during the war from the Mensheviks to the Bolsheviks, proposed a referendum throughout all the districts of Petrograd and its environs on the desirability of this provisional government or another. But these proposals hardly entered into the consciousness of the Soviet: the question, it seemed, was adjusted. The solacing resolution of the Executive Committee was adopted by an enormous majority against 18. To be sure, a majority of the Bolshevik deputies were then still in their factories, on the streets, or attending demonstrations. But nevertheless it remains indubitable that in the central mass of the Soviet there was not any move to the side of the Bolsheviks.

The Soviet directed all to refrain for two days from any street demonstrations. This resolution was adopted unanimously. Nobody had a shadow of doubt that all would submit to the decision. And as a fact the workers, the soldiers, the bourgeois youth, the Vyborg side, the Nevsky Prospect-no one at all dared to disobey the order of the Soviet. Tranquillity was attained without any forcible measures whatever. The Soviet had only to feel itself master of the situation and it would have been so in fact.

Into the editorial offices of the left papers in those days poured many scores of factory and regimental resolutions demanding the immediate resignation of Miliukov, and sometimes of the whole Provisional Government. And not only Petrograd surged up. In Moscow too the workers abandoned the shops, and the soldiers issued from the barracks, filling the streets with stormy protests. Telegrams poured in to the Executive Committee from scores

of local soviets, opposing the policy of Miliukov and promising full support to the Soviet. The same voices came from the front. But all was to remain as before.

”During April 21,“ asserted Miliukov later, ”a mood favourable to the government again took possession of the streets.“ He evidently had in mind those streets which he had an opportunity to view from the balcony after the majority of the workers and soldiers had gone home. As an actual fact, the government had been completely shown up. There was no serious force behind it. We have just heard this from the lips of Stankevich and Prince Lvov himself. What did Kornilov’s assurance that he had sufficient forces to put down the rebels mean ? Nothing whatever except the extreme light-mindedness of the respected general. This light-mindedness will reach its highest bloom in August, when the conspirator Kornilov will deploy against Petrograd a non-existent army. The trouble was that Kornilov was still trying to judge the troops by the commanding staff. The officers, a majority of them, were indubitably with him-that is, they were ready, under the pretext of defending the Provisional Government, to smash the ribs of the Soviet. The soldiers stood for the Soviet, being very much farther to the left than the Soviet itself. But inasmuch as the Soviet stood for the Provisional Government, it happened that Kornilov was able to bring out in its defence Soviet soldiers commanded by reactionary officers. Thanks to the two-power régime, they were all playing hide and seek with one another. However, the leaders of the Soviet had hardly issued the command to the troops not to leave their barracks, when Kornilov found himself hanging in the air along with the whole Provisional Government.

And yet the government did not fall. The masses who had made the attack were totally unready to carry it through, to the end. The Compromise leaders were thus still able to try to turn back the February régime to its original position. Having forgotten, or desiring to make others forget, that the Executive Committee had been openly compelled in opposition to the ”legally constituted“ authorities to lay its hands on the army, the *Izvestia* of the Soviet complained on April 22: ”The Soviet did not aspire to seize the power in its own hands, but nevertheless upon many banners carried by the partisans of the Soviet there were inscriptions demanding the overthrow of the government and the transfer of all power to the Soviet.“ ... Is it not indeed exasperating that the workers and soldiers had tried to tempt the Compromisers with power-that is, had seriously imagined these gentlemen capable of making a revolutionary use of it?

No, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did not want the power. As we saw, the Bolshevik resolution demanding the transfer of power to the soviets, mustered in the Petrograd Soviet an insignificant umber of votes. In Moscow the vote of ”no confidence“ in the Provisional Government, introduced by the Bolsheviks on April 22, mustered only 74 votes out of many hundreds. To be sure the Helsingfors Soviet, notwithstanding its domination by Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, adopted on that same day an extraordinarily bold

resolution for those times, offering the Petrograd Soviet its armed assistance in removing the ”imperialist Provisional Government.“ But that resolution, adopted under direct pressure from the sailors, was an exception. By an overwhelming majority, the Soviet deputies, representing those masses who had been but yesterday so near to an armed insurrection against the Provisional Government, stood pat on the two-power system. What does this signify ?

This crying contradiction between the decisiveness of the mass offensive and the half-heartedness of its political reflection was not accidental. In a revolutionary epoch the oppressed masses turn more easily and quickly to direct action, than they learn to give their desires and demands a formal expression through their own representatives. The more abstract the system of representation, the more it lags behind the rhythm of those events which determine the activity of the masses. A Soviet representation, the least abstract of all, has immeasurable advantages in revolutionary conditions: it is sufficient to remember that the democratic Dumas, elected according to their own regulations of April 17, hampered by nothing and by nobody, proved absolutely powerless to compete with the soviets. But with all the advantages of their organic connection with the factories and regiments-that is, with the active masses-the soviets are nevertheless representative organs, and ,are therefore not free from the qualifications and distortions of parliamentarism. The contradiction inherent in representation, even of the soviet form, lies in the fact that it is on the one necessary to the action of the masses, but on the other easily becomes a conservative obstacle to it. The practical way out of this contradiction is to renew the representation continually. But this operation, nowhere very simple, must in a revolution be the result of direct action and therefore lag behind such action. At any rate, on the day after the April semi-insurrection, or more accurately, quarter-insurrection the semi-insurrection will occur in July-the same deputies were sitting in the Soviet as on the day before. Arriving once more in their accustomed seats they voted for the motions of their accustomed leaders.

But this by no means signifies that the April storm had passed without effect on the Soviet, on the entire February system, and still more on the masses themselves. That giant interference of the workers and soldiers in political events, although not yet carried through to the end, altered the political scene, gave impulse to the general movement of the revolution, accelerated inevitable regroupings, and forced the parlour and backstage politicians to forget their plans of yesterday and adapt their action to new sets of circumstances.

When the Compromisers had liquidated this flare-up of civil war, and thought that everything was coming back to its old position, the government crisis was only just beginning. The liberals did not want to rule any longer without a direct participation of socialists in the government. The socialists on their part, forced by the logic of the two-power system to agree to this condition, demanded an unequivocal repudiation of the Dardanelles pro-

gramme, and this inevitably led to the downfall of Miliukov. On May 2, Miliukov found himself compelled to leave the ranks of the government. The slogan of the demonstration of April 20 was thus realised in the space of twelve days, and against the will of the Soviet leaders.

But delays and procrastinations succeeded only in accentuating more strongly the impotence of the rulers Miliukov, attempting with the aid of his general to make a sharp break in the correlation of forces, had popped out of the government with a noise like a cork. The smashing general found himself obliged to resign. The ministers did not look a bit like guests of honour any more. The government implored the Soviet to agree to a coalition. All this because the masses were pressing on the long end of the lever.

This does not mean, however, that the Compromising parties were coming nearer to the workers and soldiers. On the contrary, the April events by suggesting what unexpected surprises lay hidden in the masses, impelled the democratic leaders still further toward the right, toward a closer union with the bourgeoisie. From that time on the patriotic course definitely predominates. The majority of the Executive Committee becomes more united. Formless radicals like Sukhanov, Steklov, etc., who had but recently inspired the policies of the Soviet, and had made attempts to save something at least of the traditions of socialism, are pushed aside. Tseretelli takes a firm, conservative and patriotic position, an accommodation of Miliukov’s policies to the representative organ of the labouring masses.

The conduct of the Bolshevik Party during the April days was not uniform. Events had caught the party unprepared. The internal crisis was just being wound up, and busy preparations were going on for the party conference. Impressed by the keen excitement in the workers’ districts some Bolsheviks expressed themselves in favour of overthrowing the Provisional Government. The Petrograd Committee, which on March 5 had been still passing resolutions of qualified confidence in the Provisional Government, wavered. It was decided to hold a demonstration on the 21st, though its purpose was still insufficiently defined. A part of the Petrograd Committee were bringing the workers and soldiers into the streets with the intention not very clear, to be sure–of attempting, so to speak incidentally, to overthrow the Provisional Government. Individual left elements standing outside the party acted in the same direction. There was apparently also an anarchist element-not numerous but bustling. The military quarters were approached by individual persons demanding armoured cars or general reinforcements, now for the arrest of the Provisional Government, now for street fighting with the enemy. An armoured car division close to the Bolsheviks declared, however, that they would give no machines to anyone except by order of the Executive Committee.

The Kadets did their best to place the blame for the bloody encounters on the Bolsheviks. But a special committee of the Soviet established beyond a doubt that the shooting had

started, not in the streets, but from doorways and windows. The newspapers published an announcement from the Public Prosecutor: ”The shooting was done by the scum of the population for the purpose of arousing disorders and disturbances-always useful to the criminal elements.“

The hostility of the ruling Soviet parties to the Bolsheviks had not yet reached that intensity which two months later, in July, completely eclipsed both reason and conscience. The Department of Justice, although it had kept its old staff, was standing at attention before the revolution, and in April had not yet permitted itself to apply to the extreme left the methods of the czar’s secret service. Along this line too Miliukov’s attack was repelled without difficulty.

The party Central Committee pulled up on the left wing Bolsheviks, and declared on April 21 that they considered the Soviet’s veto of demonstrations perfectly in order, and to be submitted to unconditionally. ”The motto ’Down with the Government’ is incorrect at present,“ stated the resolution of the Central Committee,” because without a solid (that is, conscious and organised) majority of the people on the side of the proletariat, such a motto is either an empty phrase, or leads to attempts of an adventurous character.“ This resolution declared the task of the moment to be criticism, propaganda, and winning of the majority in the soviets, as the groundwork for capturing the power. In this their opponents saw either the retreat of frightened leaders, or a sly manoeuvre. We already know the fundamental position of Lenin on the question of power; he was now teaching the party to apply the ”April theses“ on the basis of actual experience.

Three weeks before this, Kamenev had declared happy ” to vote with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries for a joint resolution on the Provisional Government, and Stalin had been developing his theory of a division of labour between Kadets and Bolsheviks. How far those days and those theories were gone into the past! Only after the lesson of the April days, Stalin at last came out against the theory of benevolent “control” over the Provisional Government, cautiously retreating from his own previous position. But this manoeuvre passed unnoticed.

In what consisted the element of adventurism in the policy of certain parts of the party? asked Lenin at a conference which, opened right after the menacing days. It consisted in the attempt to employ violence where there was not yet, or no longer any place for revolutionary violence. “You can overthrow one who is known to the people as a tyrant; but there are no tyrants now; the cannon and rifles are in the hands of the soldiers , not the capitalists. The capitalists axe not prevailing with violence but deceit, and you can’t talk now about violence-its mere nonsense.... We gave the slogan of peaceful demonstration. We wanted only to make a peaceful reconnoitre of the enemy’s strength, not to give battle. But the Petrograd Committee aimed **a** wee bit too far to the left.... Along with the correct

slogan, ’Long Live the Soviets! ’they gave a wrong one, ’ Down with the Provisional Government’ A moment of action is no time to aim ’a wee bit too far to the left.’ We look upon that as the greatest crime, disorganisation.”

What lies underneath the dramatic events of a revolution? Shifts in the correlation of class forces? What causes these shifts? For the most part oscillations of the intermediary classes, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the army. There is a gigantic amplitude of oscillation between Kadet imperialism and Bolshevism. These oscillations go simultaneously in two opposite directions. The political representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, their chiefs, the compromising leaders, gravitate farther and farther to the right, toward the bourgeoisie. The Oppressed masses, on the other hand, will each time take a sharper and more daring swing to the left. In protesting against the adventurism shown by the leaders of the Petrograd organisation, Lenin made this exception: if the intermediate masses had swung toward our side seriously, deeply, steadily, we would not shave hesitated one minute to oust the government from the Mariinsky Palace. But this has not yet happened. The April crisis, bursting into the street, was “not the first and not the last swing of the petty bourgeois and semi-proletarian masses.” Our task is still for the time being to “patiently explain”-to prepare the next swing of the masses to our side, a deeper and more conscious one.

As for the proletariat, its movement to the side of the Bolsheviks assumed during April a clearly expressed character. Workers came to the party committees asking how to transfer their names from the Menshevik Party to the Bolshevik. At the factories they began insistently to question the deputies about foreign policy, the war, the two-power system, the food question; and as a result of these examinations Menshevik and Social Revolutionary delegates were more and more frequently replaced by Bolsheviks. The sharp turn began in the district soviets, as these were closer to the factories. In the soviets of the Vyborg side, Vassiliev Island, Narva district, the Bolsheviks seemed suddenly and unexpectedly to find themselves toward the end of April in a majority. This was a fact of the greatest significance, but the Executive Committee leaders, busy with high politics, looked with disdain upon the fussing of the Bolsheviks in the workers’ districts. However, the districts began to press on the centre more and more perceptibly. In the factories, without orders from the Petrograd Committee, an energetic and successful campaign was carried on for the re-election of representatives to the municipal soviet of workers’ deputies. Sukhanov estimates that at the beginning of May the Bolsheviks had behind them a third of the Petrograd proletariat. Not less, certainly-and the most active third besides. The March formlessness had disappeared ; political lines were sharpening; the “fantastic” theses of Lenin were talking flesh in the Petrograd workers districts.

Every step forward of the revolution was evoked or compelled by direct intervention of

the masses-in most cases utterly unexpected by the Soviet parties. After the February uprising, when the workers and soldiers overthrew the monarchy without anyone’s permission, the leaders of the Executive Committee considered the role of the masses fulfilled. But they were fatally wrong. The masses had no intention of getting off the stage. Already in the beginning of March, during the campaign for the eight-hour day, the workers wrested this concession from capital in spite of the efforts of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries to hold them back. The Soviet was forced to record a victory obtained without it and against it. The April demonstration was a second correction of the same kind. Every mass action, regardless of its immediate aim, is a warning addressed to the leadership. This warning is at first mild in character, but becomes more and more resolute. By July it had become a threat. In October we have the final act.

In all critical moments the masses intervene “spontaneously”-in other words, obeying only their own from political experience, and their as yet officially unrecognised leaders. Assimilating this or that premise from the talk of agitators, the masses on their own volition translate its conclusions alto the language of action. The Bolsheviks, as a party, were not yet leading the campaign for the eight-hour day. The Bolsheviks did not summon the masses to the April demonstration. The Bolsheviks will not call the armed masses into the street at the beginning of July. Only in October will the party finally, fall in step and march out at the head of the masses, not for a demonstration but for a revolution.

CHAPTER 18

THE FIRST COALITION

All official theories, declarations and advertisements to the contrary notwithstanding, the power belonged to the Provisional government on paper only. The revolution, paying no attention to the resistance of the so-called democracy, was striding along, lifting up new masses of the people, strengthening the workers. The Soviets, and to a limited extent even arming the local commissars of the government and the "social committees" created under them, in which representatives of bourgeois organisations usually predominated, were quite naturally and without effort crowded out by the soviets. In certain cases, when these agents of the central power tried to resist, sharp conflicts arose. The commissars accused the local soviets of refusing to recognise the central government. The bourgeois press began to cry out that Cronstadt, Schlusselburg or Czaritsyn had seceded from Russia and become independent republics. The local soviets protested against this nonsense. The ministers got excited. The governmental socialists hastened to these places, persuading, threatening, justifying themselves before the bourgeoisie. But all this did not change the correlation of forces. The fatefulness of the processes undermining the two power system could be seen in the fact that these processes were developing, although at different tempos, all over the country. From organs for controlling the government the soviets were becoming organs of administration. They would not accommodate themselves to any theory of the division of powers, but kept interfering in the administration of the army, in economic conflicts, questions of food and transport, even in the courts of justice. The soviets under pressure from the workers decreed the eight-hour day, removed reactionary executives, ousted the more intolerable commissars of the Provisional Government, conducted searches and arrests, suppressed hostile newspapers. Under the influence of continually increasing food difficulties and a goods famine, the provincial soviets undertook to fix prices, forbid export from the provinces and requisition provisions. Nevertheless at the head of the soviets everywhere stood the Social Revolutionaries and Menshevik who rejected with indignation

the Bolshevik slogan, “Power to the Soviets!”

Especially instructive in this connection is the activity of the soviet in Tiflis, the very heart of the Menshevik Gironde which gave the February revolution such leaders as Tseretelli and Cheidze, and sheltered them afterwards when they had hopelessly squandered themselves in Petrograd. The Tiflis Soviet, led by Jordania-afterwards head of independent Georgia-found itself compelled at every step to trample on the principles of the Menshevik Party in control of it, and act as sovereign power. This soviet confiscated a private printing establishment for its own uses, made arrests, took charge of investigations and trials for political offences, established a bread ration, and fixed the prices of food and the necessaries of life That contrast between official doctrine and real life, manifest from the very first day, only continued to grow throughout March and April.

In Petrograd a certain decorum at least was observed-although not always, as we have seen. The April days, however had unequivocally lifted the curtain on the impotence of the (Provisional Government, showing that it had no serious support whatever in the capital. In the last ten days of April the government was flickering and going out. “Kerensky stated with, anguish that the government was already non-existent, that it did not work but merely discussed its condition” (Stankevich). You might say in general about this government, that up to the days of October in hard moments it was always undergoing a crisis, and in the intervals between crises it was merely existing. Continually “discussing its condition,” it found no time for business.

From the crisis created by the April rehearsal of future events, three outcomes were theoretically possible. The power might have gone over wholly to the bourgeoisie; that could have been achieved only through civil war; Miliukov made the attempt, but failed. The power should have gone over wholly to the soviets; this could have been accomplished without any civil war whatever, merely by raising of hands-merely by wishing it. But the Compromisers did not want to wish it, and the masses still preserved their faith in the Compromisers, although it was badly cracked. Thus both of the fundamental clays out-the bourgeois and the proletarian-were closed. There remained a third possibility, the confused, weak-hearted, cowardly half-road of compromise. The name of that road was Coalition.

At the end of the April days the socialists had no thought of a coalition. In general those people never foresaw anything. By the resolution of April 21 the Executive Committee had officially converted the double sovereignty from a fact into a constitutional principle. But here again the owl of wisdom made her flight too late: this juridical consecration of the March form of double sovereignty-the kings and the prophets-was carried out just at the moment when this form had already been exploded by the action of the masses. The socialists tried to close their eyes to this. Miliukov relates that when the question of a coalition was raised from the government side, Tseretelli said: “What good will it do you

if we enter your cabinet? We will be compelled, in case you are stubborn, to withdraw from the ministry with a loud bang." Tseretelli was trying to frighten the liberals with his future "bang." As always in the fundamentals of their policies, the Mensheviks were appealing to the interests of the bourgeoisie themselves. But the water was up to their necks. Kerensky frightened the Executive Committee: "The government is at present in an impossibly difficult situation: the rumours of its resignation are no political by-play." At the same time there was pressure from the bourgeois circles. The Moscow city duma passed a resolution in favour of coalition. On April 26, when the ground was sufficiently prepared, the Provisional Government announced in a special appeal the necessity of bringing in to the governmental work "those active creative forces of the country which have not yet participated in it." The question was thus presented point-blank.

The feeling against coalition was nevertheless pretty strong. At the end of April the following soviets declared themselves against the participation of socialists in the government: Moscow, Tiflis, Odessa, Ekaterinburg, Nizhni-Novgorod, Tver, and others. Their motives were very clearly expressed by one of the Menshevik leaders in Moscow: If the socialists enter the government, there will be nobody to lead the movement of the masses " in a definite channel." But it was difficult to convey this idea to the workers and soldiers against whom it was, directed. The masses, in so far as they were not yet for the Bolsheviks, stood solid for the entrance of socialists into the government. If it is a good thing to have Kerensky as a minister, then so much the better six Kerenskys. The masses did not know that this was called coalition with the bourgeoisie, and that the bourgeoisie wanted to use these socialists as a cover for their activities against the people. A coalition looked different from the barracks and from the Mariinsky Palace. The masses wanted to use the socialists to crowd out the bourgeoisie from the government. Thus two forces tending in opposite directions united for a moment in one.

In Petrograd a series of military units, among them an armoured car division friendly to the Bolsheviks, declared in favour of coalition government. The provinces voted for the coalition by an overwhelming majority. The coalition tendency prevailed among the Social Revolutionaries; they only feared to go into the government without the Mensheviks. And finally, the army was in favour of coalition. One of its delegates later -at the June congress of the soviets expressed not at all badly the attitude of the front toward the question of power: " We thought that the groan which arose from the army when it learned that the socialists would not enter the ministry to work with people whom they did not trust, while the whole army was compelled to go on dying with people whom it did not trust, must have been heard in Petrograd."

The war was the deciding factor in this question, as in others. 'The socialists had at first intended to sit out the war, as also the sovereignty, and wait. But the war would not wait.

The Allies would not wait. The front did not want to wait any longer. Right in the middle of the governmental crisis came delegates from the front and put up to their leaders in the Executive Committee the question: Are we going to fight or not? Which meant: Do you assume the responsibility for the, war or not ? There was no dodging that question. The Entente was posing the same question in the language of a half-threat.

The April offensive on the west European front cost the Allies heavily and gave no results. A wavering was felt in the French army under the influence of the Russian revolution and of the failure of its own offensive from which so much had been hoped. The army, in the words of Marshal Petain, " was bending in our hands." To stop this threatening process the French Government had need of a Russian offensive-and until that at least a firm promise of one. Aside from the material relief to be gained, it was necessary as quickly as possible to snatch the halo of peace from the Russian revolution, poison the hope in the hearts of the French soldiers, compromise the revolution by associating it with the crimes of the Entente, trample the banner of the Russian workers' and soldiers' insurrection in the blood and mud of the imperialist slaughter.

In order to attain this high aim, all possible levers were brought into play. Among these levers not the last place was occupied by the patriotic socialists of the Entente. The most experienced of them were sent into revolutionary Russia. They arrived armed to the teeth with obsequious consciences and boneless talk. "The foreign social-patriots," writes Sukhanov, "were received with open arms in the Mariinsky Palace, Branting, Cachin, O'Grady, De Brouckere, and others felt at home there and formed a united front with our ministers against the Soviet." It must be conceded that even the Compromisers' Soviet was often ill at case with those gentlemen.

The Allied socialists made the rounds of the fronts. "General Alexeiev," wrote Vandervelde, "did everything in his power in order that our efforts should be applied to the same end as were those undertaken a little earlier by delegations of sailors from the Black Sea, by Kerensky, Albert Thomas-that is to complete what he called the moral preparation of the offensive." The President of the Second International and the former chief of staff of Nicholas the Second thus found a common language in their struggle for the glorious ideals of democracy. Renaudel, one of the leaders of French socialism, was able to cry out with relief: "Now we can talk without blushing of the war of justice." It was three years before humanity learned that those people had something to blush about.

On the 1st of May the Executive Committee, having passed through all the stages of vacillation known to nature, decided by a majority of 41 votes against 18, with 3 abstaining, to enter into a coalition government. Only the Bolsheviks and a small group of Menshevik-Internationalists voted against it.

It is not without interest that the victim of this closer rapprochement was the recognised

leader of the bourgeoisie, Miliukov. “I did not go out, they put me out,” said Miliukov later, Guchkov had withdrawn already on April 30, refusing to sign the “Declaration of the Rights of the Soldier.” How dark it was in those days in the hearts of the liberals is evident from the fact that the Central Committee of the Kadet Party decided, in order to save the Coalition, not to insist upon Miliukov’s remaining in the government. “The party betrayed its leader,” writes the right Kadet, Isgoyev. The party, however, had no great choice. The same Isgoyev remarks quite correctly At the end of April the Kadet Party was smashed to pieces; morally it had received a blow from which it would never recover.“

But on the question of Miliukov the Entente was to have the last word. England was entirely willing that the Dardanelles patriot should be replaced by a more temperate ”democrat.“ Henderson, who was in Petrograd with authorisation to replace Buchanan as ambassador in case of need, learning of the state of affairs, deemed this change unnecessary. As a fact, Buchanan was exactly in the right place, for he was a resolute opponent of annexations in so far as they did not coincide with the appetites of Great Britain. ”If Russia has no need of Constantinople,“ he whispered tenderly to Tereshchenko, ”the sooner she announces this, the better.“ France at first supported Miliukov, but here Thomas played his role, coming out. after Buchanan and the Soviet leaders against Miliukov. Thus that politician, hated by the masses, was abandoned by the Allies, by the democrats, and lastly by his own party.

Miliukov really did not deserve such cruel punishment-at least not from these hands. But the Coalition demanded a purification sacrifice. They pictured Miliukov to the masses as that evil spirit who had been darkening the universal triumphant recession towards democratic peace. In cutting off Miliukov, the Coalition purified itself at one stroke from the sins of imperialism. The staff of the Coalition Government, and its programme, were approved by the Petrograd Soviet on May 5. The Bolsheviks mustered 100 votes against it. ”The meeting warmly greeted the orator-ministers,“ Miliukov ironically tells of this meeting. ”It greeted with the same stormy applause, however, ’the old leader of the first revolution’ Trotsky, who had arrived the day before from America, and who sharply condemned the entrance of socialists into the ministry, asserting that the ’double sovereignty’ is not destroyed, but ’merely transferred into the ministry,’ and that the real single power which will ’save’ Russia will arrive only when ’the next step is taken, the transfer of power into the hands of the workers’ and soldiers’ deputies’; then will begin ’a new epoch, an epoch of blood and iron, but not in a struggle of nation against nation, but of the suffering and oppressed class against the ruling classes.’“ Such is Miliukov’s rendering. In his conclusion Trotsky formulated three rules for the policy of the masses ”three revolutionary articles of faith: do not trust the bourgeoisie; control the leaders; rely only on your own force.“ Speaking of this speech, Sukhanov remarks: ” He evidently did not expect any sympathy for his words.“ And in truth the orator left the hall amid far less applause than had greeted

his entrance. Sukhanov, very sensitive to what is going on in the *couloirs* of the intelligentsia, adds: ”Although Trotsky did not belong to the Bolshevik Party, rumours were already going around to the effect that he was worse than Lenin.“

The socialists appropriated six portfolios out of fifteen. They wanted to be in the minority. Even after deciding openly to enter the government, they continued to play this game of give-away. Prince Lvov remained Premier; Kerensky became Minister of War and Marine; Chernov, Minister of Agriculture. Miliukov’s place as Minister of Foreign Affairs was taken by Tereshchenko, a connoisseur of the ballet who had become the confidential man at one and the same time of Kerensky and Buchanan. They all three agreed in thinking that Russia could get along exceptionally well without Constantinople. At the head of the Department of Justice stood an insignificant lawyer,

Pereverzev, who subsequently acquired a passing glory in connection with the July incident of the Bolsheviks. Tseretelli limited himself to the portfolio of Posts and Telegraphs in order to keep his time for the Executive Committee. Skobeleyv, becoming Minister of Labour, promised in the heat of the excitement to cut down the profits of the capitalists one hundred per cent. That phrase soon acquired wings. For the sake of symmetry the Ministry of Trade and Industry was given to a great Moscow industrialist, Konovalov. He brought along with him certain notables from the Moscow Stock Exchange who received important government posts. After two weeks, by the way, Konovalov resigned as a protest against the ”anarchy“ in public economy. Skobelev, even before two weeks, had renounced his attack on profits, and was busying himself with the struggle against anarchy-quarrelling strikes, summoning the workers to self-restraint. The Declaration of the new government consisted, as is to be expected of all coalitions, of commonplaces. It referred to an active foreign policy in the cause of peace, a solution of the food question, and a getting ready to solve the land question. All this was mere talk. The single serious point-at least from the standpoint of intention-was the one about the preparation of the army ”for defensive and offensive activity to prevent the possible defeat of Russia and her Allies.“ In this was essentially summed up the whole meaning of the Coalition, which was created as the last play of the Entente in Russia.

”The Coalition Government in Russia,“ wrote Buchanan, is for us the last, and almost the only, hope for salvation of the military situation on that front.” Thus behind the platforms, speeches, compromises and votes of the liberal and democratic leaders of the February revolution, stood an imperialist stage director in the person of the Entente. Being obliged hastily to enter the government in the name of the interests of the Entente front, which was hostile to the revolution, the socialists took upon themselves about a third of the power and the Whole war.

The new Minister of Foreign Affairs had to delay publishing for two weeks the answers

of the Allied governments to the declaration of March 27, in order to work out certain stylistic changes which would disguise their polemic against the Declaration of the Coalition Cabinet. That “active foreign policy in the cause of peace ” expressed itself thereafter in Tereshchenko’s zealously editing the texts of the diplomatic telegrams drawn up for him by old-rgime clerks. Crossing out “claims he would write ”the demands of justice“; in place of ”safeguarding the interests“ he would write ”for the good of the peoples.“ Miliukov, with a slight grinding of teeth, said of his successor: ”The Allied diplomats knew that the ’democratic’ terminology of his despatches was a reluctant concession to the demands of the moment, and treated it with indulgence.“

Thomas and the newly arrived Vandervelde did not sit with folded arms. They zealously interpreted the ”good of the peoples“ in correspondence with the needs of the Entente, and manipulated with a fair success the simpletons of the Executive Committee. ”Skobelev and Chernov,“ reported Vandervelde , ”are energetically protesting against all thoughts of premature peace.“ No wonder Ribot, relying on such assistants, felt able to announce to the French Parliament on May 9, that he intended to make a satisfactory reply to Tereshchenko ”without giving up anything.“

No, the real masters of the situation were not intending to give up anything that was lying around loose. It was just in those days that Italy announced the independence of Albania, and immediately placed her under Italy’s protectorate. That was not a bad object lesson. The Provisional Government had an idea of protesting-not so much in the name of democracy, as because of the destruction of ”equilibrium in the Balkans.“ But impotence compelled it for the time to bite its tongue.

The only new thing in the foreign policy of the Coalition was its hasty rapprochement with America. This young friendship offered three not unimportant advantages: the United States was not so compromised with military depravities as France and England; the transatlantic republic opened before Russia broad prospects in the matter of loans and military supplies; finally, the diplomacy of Wilson-a mixture of knavery with democratic piety-fell in admirably with the stylistic needs of the Provisional Government. In sending the Root mission to Russia, Wilson addressed the Provisional Government with one of his parish letters in which he declared: ”No people must be forced under sovereignty under which it does not wish to live.“ The aims of the war were defined by the American President not too definitely, but beguilingly: ”..to secure the future peace of the world and the future welfare and happiness of its.“ What could be better? Tereshehenko people and Tseretelli needed only that: fresh credits and the commonplaces of pacifism. With the help of the first, and under cover of the second, they could make ready for the offensive which the Shylock on the Seine was demanding with a furious shaking of all his promissory notes.

On the 11th of May, Kerensky went to the front to open his agitation in favour of an

offensive. ”A wave of enthusiasm is growing and spreading in the army,“ reported the new War Minister to the Provisional Government, choking with the enthusiasm of his own speeches. On May 14, Kerensky issued a command to the army: ”You will go where your leaders conduct you,“ and in order to adorn this well-known and not very attractive prospect for the soldier, he added: ”You will carry on the points of your bayonets-peace.“ On May 22, the cautious General Alexeiev, a man of no parts in any case, was removed, and replaced in the position of commander-in-chief by the more flexible and enterprising Brussilov. The democrats with all their power were preparing the offensive-the grand catastrophe, that is, of the February revolution.

The Soviet was the organ of the workers and soldiers-and soldiers here means peasants. The Provisional Government was the organ of the bourgeoisie. The Contact Commission was the organ of compromise. The Coalition simplified this mechanism by converting the Provisional Government itself into a contact commission. But the double sovereignty was not in the least done away with. Whether Tseretelli was a member of the Contact Commission or Minister of Posts-that did not decide anything. There were in the country two incompatible state organisations: the hierarchy of old and new officials appointed from above crowned by the Provisional Government, and the system of elective soviets reaching down to the most remote companies at the front. These two state systems rested upon different classes which as yet were only getting ready to settle their historic accounts. In entering the Coalition, the Compromisers counted on a peaceful and gradual dissolution of the power of the soviet system. They imagined that the power of the soviets, concentrated in their persons, would now flow over into the official government. Kerensky categorically assured Buchanan, that ”the soviets will die a natural death . .“ This hope soon became the official doctrine of the Compromise leaders. According to their thought, the centre of gravity ought to be transferred to the new organs of self-government. The place of the Central Committee should be occupied by the Constituent Assembly. The Coalition Government was in this way to become a bridge to the bourgeois parliamentary republic.

The trouble was that the revolution did not want to, and could not, travel along this road. The fate of the new city dumas had given unequivocal warning in this sense. These dumas had been elected upon the widest possible franchise basis. The soldiers voted equally with the civil population, women equally with men. Four parties took part in the struggle. *Novoye Vremya,* the old official sheet of the czarist government, one of the most dishonest newspapers in the world and that is saying something-summoned the Rights, the nationalists, the Octobrists, to vote for the Kadets. But when the political impotence of the possessing classes became fully evident, the majority of the bourgeois papers adopted the slogan: ”Vote for anybody you please, only not the Bolsheviks¡‘ In all the dumas and zemstvos the Kadets were right wing, the Bolsheviks a growing left minority. The majority, immense as usual, belonged to the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

It would seem as if these new dumas, which differed from the soviets by a broader representation, ought to have enjoyed great authority. Moreover as socio-juridical institutions, the dumas had the immense advantage of official government support. The militia, the food supplies, the municipal transport, popular education, all were officially in the hands of the duma. The soviet as a private ”institution“ had neither budget nor rights. And nevertheless the power remained with the soviets. The dumas turned out to be in the essence of the matter municipal commissions of the soviets. This rivalry of the soviet system with formal democracy was the more striking in its outcome, in that it took place under the leadership of those same parties, Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who, ruling in the dumas and the soviets alike, were profoundly convinced that the soviets ought to give way to the dumas, and themselves did their best to promote the process. The explanation of this remarkable phenomenon-about which there was, very little speculation in the whirlpool of the actual events is simple: municipal governments, like any other institutions of democracy, can function only on the basis of firmly established social relations-that is, a definite property system. The essence of revolution, however, is that it calls in question this, the very basis of all bases. And its question can be answered only by an open revolutionary test of the correlation of forces. The soviets, in spite of the quality of their leadership, were the fighting organisations of the oppressed classes who had consciously or half-consciously united to transform the bases of the social structure. The municipal governments gave equal representation to all classes of the population, reduced to the abstraction of citizenship, and behaved in the revolutionary situation very much like a diplomatic conference expressing itself in qualified and hypocritical language while the hostile camps represented by it are feverishly preparing for battle. In the everyday of the revolution the municipal governments dragged out a half-fictitious existence. But at critical moments, when the interference of the masses was defining the further direction of events, these governments simply exploded in the air, their constituent elements appearing on different sides of a barricade. It was sufficient to contrast the parallel roles of the soviets and the municipal governments from May to October, in order to foresee the fate of the Constituent Assembly.

The Coalition Government was in no hurry to summon that constituent Assembly. The liberals being, notwithstanding the democratic arithmetic, a majority in the government, were in no haste to become in the Constituent Assembly a feeble right wing such as they were in the new dumas. The special conference on the convocation of a Constituent Assembly began work only at the end of May-three months after the revolution. The liberal jurists divided every hair into sixteen parts, shook up in their alembics all the different kinds of democratic sediment, bickered endlessly about the elective rights of the army, whether or not it would be necessary to give votes to the deserters, numbering millions, and to the members of the czar’s family, numbering tens. As to the date of the assembly, as little was said as possible. To raise this question was considered in the conference a breach of

etiquette such as only Bolsheviks would commit.

Weeks passed, but in spite of the hopes and prophecies of the Compromisers the soviets did not die out. At times, lulled and confused by their leaders, they did fall into semi-prostration, but the first signal of danger would bring them to their feet, and reveal to the eyes of all that they were the real masters of the situation. While attempting to sabotage the soviets, Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were obliged in every important incident to recognise their priority. This was expressed among other things by the fact that the best forces of both parties were concentrated in the soviets. To the municipal governments and the zemstvos they appointed people of the second rank, technicians and administrators. The same thing was to be observed among the Bolsheviks. The Kadets alone, not having access to the soviets, concentrated their best forces in those institutions of self-government. But that hopeless bourgeois minority was not able to convert them into a real support.

Thus nobody considered the municipal governments their own institutions. The sharpening antagonism between worker and boss, soldier and officer, peasant and landlord, could not be openly brought up for discussion in the municipal bodies or zemstvos as was done in their own circles by the soviets on the one side, and by ”private“ meetings of the State Duma and all kinds of conferences of the ”enfranchised“ politicians on the other. One can talk over petty details with an enemy, but not matters of life and death.

If you accept the Marxian formula according to which a government is a committee of the ruling class, then you must admit that the genuine ”committees“ of the classes struggling for power were to be found outside the Coalition Government. As regards the soviets, represented in the government as a minority, that was perfectly obvious. But it was no less true of the bourgeois majority. The liberals were totally unable to discuss in a serious and businesslike way in the presence of socialists the questions of most moment to the bourgeoisie. The crowding out of Miliukov, the acknowledged and indubitable leader of the bourgeoisie, around whom a staff of property owners had united, had a symbolic character, completely revealing the fact that the government was in every sense of the word eccentric. Life revolved around two axes, one of which was to the left and one to the right of the Mariinsky Palace.

Not daring to say what they thought in the staff of the government, the ministers lived in an atmosphere of conventions created by themselves. The double sovereignty concealed by a coalition became a school of two-mindedness, two-heartedness and every possible kind of duplicity. The Coalition Government in the course of the next six months lived through a whole series of crises, reconstructions and reshufflings, but its fundamental features, impotence and hypocrisy, survived to the day of its death.

CHAPTER 19

THE OFFENSIVE

In the army as in the country there was a continual political regrouping of forces, the lower ranks moving to the left, the upper to the right. Just as the Executive Committee was becoming an instrument of the Entente for taming the revolution, the soldiers' committees, having arisen to represent the soldiers against the commanding staff, were being converted into assistants of the commanding staff against the soldiers.

The membership of these committees was variegated. There were not a few patriots who sincerely identified the war with the revolution, courageously joined an offensive imposed from above, and laid down their heads in an alien cause. Beside them stood the heroes of the phrase, regimental and divisional Kerenskys. Finally, there were not a few petty cheats and chair-warmers who got into the committees to keep out of the trenches, always on a hunt for privileges. Every mass movement, especially in its first stages, inevitably raises up on its crest all these human varieties. But the compromise period was especially rich in such loud talkers and chameleons. People form programmes but programmes also form people. The school of "contact" politics becomes in a revolution a school trickery and intrigue.

The two-power regime made it impossible to create a military force. The Kadets were hated by the mass of the people, and were compelled in the army to re-title themselves Social Revolutionaries. The democracy could not resurrect the army for the same reason that it could not take over the power. The one was inseparable from the other. As a curiosity, which nevertheless very clearly illumines the situation, Sukhanov remarks that the Provisional Government did not organise a single parade for the soldiers in Petrograd. The liberals and generals did not want the soviets to participate in their parade, at perfectly well understood that without the soviets a parade as impossible. The higher officers were clinging closer, and closer to the Kadets, biding the time when more reactionary parties might lift

their heads. The petty bourgeois intelligentsia could give the army a considerable number of lower officers, as they had done under czarism, but they could not create, a commanding corps in their own image, for they had no image of their own. As the whole further course of the revolution showed, it was only possible either to take the commanding corps as it was from the nobility and the bourgeoisie, as the Whites did, or bring forward and train up a new one on the basis of proletarian recruiting, as did the Bolsheviks. The petty bourgeois democracy could do neither one thing nor the other. All they could do was to persuade, plead and deceive every body and when nothing came of it, turn over the power in despair to the reactionary officers, and let them teach the people the correct revolutionary ideas.

One after the other the ulcers of the old society broke out and destroyed the organism of the army. The problem of nationality in all its forms-and Russia is rich in nationality-went deeper and deeper into the soldier mass, which was made up less than half of Great Russians. National antagonisms intercrossed and interwove in all directions with class antagonisms. The policy of the government in the sphere of nationalities, as in all others, was vacillating, confused, and therefore seemed double treacherous. Certain generals flirted with national formations such as the "Mussulman Corps with French discipline" on the Rumanian front. These new national units did as a rule prove the most sturdy of the old army, for they were formed under a new idea and a new banner. This national cement however did not last long. Class struggles soon broke it. But the very process of these national formations, threatening to affect half the army, reduced it to a fluid condition, decomposing the old units before it succeeded in welding the new. Thus misfortune came from all sides.

Miliukov writes in his history that the army was ruined by "conflict between 'revolutionary' ideas and normal military discipline, between 'democratisation of the army' and the 'preservation of its fighting power' "-in which statement, by "normal" discipline is to be understood that which existed under czarism. A historian ought to know, it would seem, that every great revolution brings ruin to the old army, a result of the clash, not of abstract disciplinary principles, but of living classes. A revolution not only permits strict discipline in an army, but creates it. However, this discipline cannot be established by representatives of the class which the revolution has overthrown.

"Surely, the fact is evident," wrote one wise German to another on September 26, 1851, "that a disorganised army and a complete breakdown of discipline has been the condition as well as the result of every victorious revolution." The whole history of humanity proves this simple and indubitable law. But along with the liberals, the Russian socialists-with the experience of 1905 behind them-did not understand this, although they called the two Germans, one of whom was Frederick Engels and the other Karl Marx, their teachers. The Mensheviks seriously believed that army after making a revolution would continue the war under the old command. And those people called the Bolsheviks Utopian!

General Brussilov at a conference at headquarters in the beginning of May succinctly characterised the condition of the commanding staff: 15 to 20 per cent had adapted themselves to the new order through conviction; a part of the officers were beginning to flirt with the soldiers and incite them against the commanding staff; but the majority, about 75 per cent, could not adapt themselves, were offended, were hiding in their shells, and did not know what to do. The overwhelming mass of the officers were, in addition, good-for-nothing from a purely military point of view.

At a conference with the generals, Kerensky and Skobelev zealously apologised for the revolution, which, alas, "was continuing" and must be taken into consideration. To this the Black Hundred general Gurko answered the ministers moralisingly: "You say the revolution is continuing. Listen to us. Stop the revolution, and let us, the military, do our duty to the end." Kerensky went to meet the generals with all his heart-until one of them, the valorous Kornilov, almost strangled him in his embraces.

Compromisism in a time of revolution is a policy of feverish scurrying back and forth between classes. Kerensky was the incarnation of scurrying back and forth. Placed at the head of an army, an institution unthinkable without a clear and concise regime, Kerensky became the immediate instrument of its disintegration. Denikin publishes a curious list of changes of personnel in the high commanding staff-changes which missed the mark, although nobody really knew, and least of all Kerensky, where the mark was. Alexeiev dismissed the commander-in-chief at the front, Ruszky, and the army commander Radko-Dmitriev, for weakness and indulgence to the committees, Brussilov removed for the same reason the panic-stricken. Yudenaich. Kerensky dismissed Alexeiev himself and the commanders-in-chief at the front, Gurko and Dragomirov, for resisting democratisation of the army. On the same grounds Brussilov removed General Kaledin, and was himself subsequently relieved for excessive indulgence to the committees, Kornilov left the command of the Petrograd district through inability to get along with the democracy. This did not prevent his appointment to the front, and subsequently to the supreme, command. Denikin was removed from the post of chief of staff under Alexeiev for his obviously feudal administration, but was soon after named commander-in-chief of the western front. This game of leap-frog, showing that the people at the top did not know what they wanted, gradually extending downward to the companies, hastened the breakdown of the army.

While demanding that soldiers obey the officers, the commissars themselves did not trust them. At the very height of the offensive, at a meeting of the soviet at headquarters in Moghilev, one of the members of the soviet declared in the presence of Kerensky and Brussilov: "Eighty-eight per cent of the officers of the staff are giving rise by their activities to a danger of counter-revolutionary manifestations." This was no secret to the soldiers. They had had plenty of time to get acquainted with their officers before the revolution.

Throughout May the reports of the commanding staff from top to bottom consist of variations on one single theme: “The attitude to the offensive is in general adverse, and especially in the infantry.” Sometimes they add: “A little better in the cavalry and hearty enough in the artillery.”

At the end of May when the troops were already marshalled for the offensive, the commissar with the 7th Army telegraphed to Kerensky: “In the 12th Division, the 48th Regiment has gone out in full force. The 45th and 46th Regiments, with only half of the front-line companies. The 47th refuses to go out. Of the regiments of the 13th Division, the 50th came out almost in full force. The 51st promises to come out to-morrow, the 49th did not come out as ordered, and the 52nd refused to come out and arrested all its officers.” The same picture was to be observed almost everywhere. To the report of the commissar, the government answered: “Disband the 45th, 46th, 47th and 52nd regiments, court-martial those who incited the officers and soldiers to disobedience.” That sounded terrible, but did not frighten anybody. The soldiers who did not want to fight were not afraid either of disbandment or of court-martial. In deploying the soldiers it was often necessary to send one detachment against another. The instrument of repression would most often be the Cossacks, as under the czar. But they were now led by socialists: it was a question, you see, of defending the revolution.

On June 4, less than two weeks before the beginning of the offensive, the chief of the headquarters staff reported : “ The northern front is still in a ferment, fraternisation continues, the infantry is opposed to the offensive. . . . On the western front the situation is indefinite. . . .On the south-western a certain improvement of mood is noticeable. . . . On the Rumanian no special improvement is observable, the infantry does not want to advance.”

On June 11, 1917, the commander of the 61st Regiment writes: “The officers and I have nothing left to do but save ourselves, because there has arrived from Petrograd a soldier of the 5th Company, a Leninist.... Many of the best soldiers and officers have already fled.” The appearance in the regiment of one Leninist was enough to start the officers running away. It is clear that the arriving soldier played the part of the crystal in a saturate solution. However, we must not think that the talk here is necessarily of a Bolshevik. In those days the commanding staff called every soldier a Leninist who raised his voice more boldly than others against the offensive. Many of those “Leninists” still sincerely believed that Lenin had been sent by Wilhelm. The commander of the 61st Regiment tried to frighten his soldiers with punishment at the hands of the government. One of the soldiers answered: “We overthrew the former government, we’ll kick out Kerensky.” That was new talk. They were nourished on Bolshevik agitation, but went far beyond it.

From the Black Sea fleet, which was under the leadership of Social Revolutionaries

and was considered by contrast to the Kronstadt sailors a bulwark of patriotism, a special delegation of 800 men was sent out through the country at the end of April with a brisk student, Batkin, dressed up as a sailor, at the head. There was a good deal of the masquerade in that delegation but there was also a more sincere impulse. The delegation was selling to the country the idea of war to victory. But with every week the listeners became more hostile. And just as these Black Sea sailors were beginning to lower the tone of their pro-war sermons, a Baltic delegation arrived in Sebastopol to preach peace. The Northerners had more success in the south than the Southerners in the north. Under the influence of the Kronstadt sailors, the Sebastopol sailors undertook on June 8 to disarm the commanding staff and arrest their worst-hated officers.

At a meeting of the soviet Congress on June 9, Trotsky asked how it could happen that "in that model Black Sea fleet which had sent patriotic deputations throughout the country, in that nest of organised patriotism, an explosion of this nature could occur at such a critical moment? What does this prove?" He received no answer.

The headless and brainless condition of the army tortured everybody-soldiers, commanders and committee-men. To their all the need of some way out became unbearable. To the chiefs it seemed that the offensive would overcome this reign of bedlam and bring definiteness. And to a certain extent this was true. While Tseretelli and Chernov expressed themselves in Petrograd in favour of the offensive with all the careful modulations of the democratic rhetoric, the committee-men at the front had to wage a campaign hand-in-hand with the officers against the new regime in the army-a regime incompatible with War, but without which the revolution was unthinkable. The results of the change were soon v h every day that passed, the members of the committee were noticeably moving to the right," recounts one of the naval officers, "but at the same time there was an obvious decline in their authority among the soldiers and sailors." It happens, however, that soldiers and sailors are just what is needed for a war.

Brussilov, with Kerensky's approval, undertook the formation of shock battalions of volunteers, thus frankly acknowledging the incapacity of the army to fight. All sorts of elements immediately attached themselves to this enterprise-for the most part adventurers like Captain Muraviev, who subsequently, after the October revolution, swung round to the left Social Revolutionaries, and then after a stormy and in its way brilliant career, betrayed the Soviet power, and died of a bullet shot, either from a Bolshevik or from his own hand. It is needless to say that the counter-revolutionary officers greedily seized upon the shock battalion idea as a legal way of mustering their own forces. The idea got almost no response, however, in the soldier mass. Some women in search of adventure created a women's battalion of "Black Death Hussars." One of these battalions became Kerensky's last armed force in the defence of the Winter Palace in October. But all this gave very little help to the

cause of crushing German militarism-as the task was described.

The offensive promised by the staff to the Allies for early spring had been postponed from week to week. But now the Entente firmly refused to accept any further postponements. In pressing for an immediate offensive the Allies did not mince methods. Along with the pathetic adjurations of Vandervelde, they employed the threat to stop sending military supplies. The Italian consul-general in Moscow announced to the press-not the Italian, but the Russian press-that in case of a separate peace on the part of Russia, the Allies would give Japan a free hand in Siberia. The liberal papers-not the Rome, but the Moscow papers-printed these insolent threats with patriotic rapture, making them apply not to a separate peace, but to a delayed offensive. In other respects the Allies did not stand upon ceremony: for instance, they sent artillery that was known to he damaged. Thirty-five per cent of the weapons received from abroad did not survive two weeks of moderate shooting. England was shutting down on credits; but then America, the new benefactor, without the knowledge of England, offered the Provisional Government on the security of the new offensive a credit of $75,000,000. Although supporting the demands of the Allies by waging a frantic agitation for the offensive, the Russian bourgeoisie withheld its own confidence from the offensive by refusing to subscribe the Liberty loan. The overthrown monarchy utilised this incident to remind the public of its existence. In a declaration in the name of the Provisional Government, Romanov expressed a desire to subscribe to the loan, but added: ”The extent of the subscription will depend on the question whether the treasury supplies money to support the members of the czar’s family.“ All this was read by the army, which knew very well that the majority of the Provisional Government, as also a majority of the upper officers, were still hoping for a restoration. Justice demands the observation that in the Allied camp not all agreed with Vandervelde, Thomas and Cachin in pushing the Russian army over the precipice. There were warning voices. ”The Russian army is nothing but facade,“ said General Petain, ”it will fall to pieces if it makes move.“ The American mission, for another example, expressed the view. But other considerations prevailed. It was necessary to take the heart out of the revolution. ”The German fraternisation,“ explained Painleve later, ”had caused such ravages that to leave the Russian army inactive would o risk its rapid disintegration.“ The political preparation for the offensive was at first carried on by Kerensky and Tseretelli, in secrecy even from their closest colleagues. In the days when these half-consecrated leaders were still continuing to spout about the defence of the revolution, Tseretelli was more and more firmly insisting on the necessity that the army make ready for active service. The longest to resist-that is, the coyest-was Chernov. At a meeting of the Provisional Government on May 17, the ”rural minister,“ as he called himself, was asked with heat whether it was true that he had expressed himself at a certain meeting on the subject of the offensive without the necessary sympathy. It transpired that Chernov answered as follows: ”The offensive does not concern me, a man of polities; that

is a question for the strategists at the front.“ Those people were playing hide-and-seek with the war, as with the revolution. But only for the time being.

The preparation for the offensive was accompanied, of course, by a redoubled struggle against the Bolsheviks. They were being accused now of oftener and oftener of working for a separate peace. The possibility that a separate peace would be the only way out, was evident in the whole situation-the weakness and exhaustion of Russia in comparison with the other warring countries. But nobody had yet measured the strength of the new factor, revolution. The Bolsheviks believed that the prospect of a separate peace could be avoided only in case the force and authority of revolution were boldly and conclusively set against the war. For this was needed first of all a break with our own bourgeoisie. On June 9, Lenin announced at the congress of the soviets: ”When they say that we are striving for a separate peace, that is not true. We say: No separate peace, not with any capitalists, and least of all with the Russian capitalists. But the Provisional Government has made a separate peace with the Russian capitalists. Down with that separate peace! “ ”Applause,“ remarks the report. That was the applause of a small minority at the congress, and for that reason especially fervent.

In the Executive Committee some still lacked decision, others wanted to hide behind the more authoritative institutions. At the last moment it was resolved to bring to Kerensky’s attention the undesirability of giving the order for the offensive before the question had been decided upon by the soviet congress. A declaration introduced at the very first session of the congress by the Bolshevik faction had stated: ”An offensive can only, utterly disorganise the army, bringing one part into antagonism with the other, and the Congress should either immediately oppose this counter-revolutionary onslaught, or else frankly assume the whole responsibility for this policy.“

The decision of the soviet congress in favour of the, offensive was merely a democratic formality. Everything was already prepared. The artillery had for a long time been aimed at the enemys positions. On June 16, in an order to the army and the fleet, Kerensky, referring to the commander-in-chief as ”our leader fanned by the wings of victory,“ demonstrated the necessity of ”an immediate and decisive blow,“ and concluded with the words I command you-forward! ”In an article written on the eve of the offensive, commenting on the declaration of the Bolshevik faction at the soviet congress. Trotsky wrote: “The policy of the government completely undermines the possibility of successful military action ... The material premises for an offensive are extremely unfavorable. The organisation of supplies for the army reflects the general economic collapse, against which a government constituted like the present one cannot undertake a single radical measure. The spiritual premises of the offensive are still more unfavorable. The government ... has exposed before the army ... its incapacity to determine Russia’s policy independently of the will of the imperialist

Allies. No result is possible but the progressive breakdown of the army.... The mass desertions ... are ceasing in the present conditions to be the result of depraved individual wills, and are becoming an expression of the complete incapacity of the government to weld the revolutionary army with inward unity of purpose. . .” Pointing out further that the government could not make up its mind“ to an immediate annulment of landlordship-that is, to the sole measure which would convince the most backward peasant that this revolution is his revolution,” the article concluded: “In such material and spiritual conditions an offensive must inevitably have the character of an adventure.”

The commanding staff was almost unanimous in thinking that the offensive, hopeless from a military point of view, was dictated by political considerations. Denikin after making the rounds of his front reported to Brussilov: “I haven’t the slightest belief in the success of the offensive.” A supplementary element of hopelessness was introduced by the good-for-nothingness of the commanding staff itself. Stankevich, an officer and a patriot, testifies that the technical dispositions of things made victory impossible regardless of the morale of the troops: “The offensive was organised in a manner beneath criticism.” A delegation of officers came to the leaders of the Kadet Party with the president of the officers’ union, the Kadet Novosiltsev, at its head, and warned them that the offensive was doomed to failure, and would mean only the extermination of the best units. The higher powers waved away these warnings with general phrases: “A last spark of hope remains,” said the chief of the headquarters staff, the reactionary general Lukomsky, “that perhaps a beginning of successful battles will change the psychology of the masses, and the officers will be able to seize the reins that have been torn from their hands.” That was their main purpose to get hold of those reins.

The chief blow was to be delivered, according to a plan worked out long before, by the forces of the south-western front in the direction of Lvov; the work of the northern and western fronts was to help this operation. The advance was to have begun simultaneously on all fronts. It was soon evident that this plan was far beyond the powers of the command. They decided to start off one front after the other, beginning with those of secondary importance. But that too proved impossible. “Then the supreme command,” says Denikin, “decided to give up all idea of planned strategy, and had to allow the fronts to begin operations whenever they were ready.” All was left to the will of Providence. Only the icons of the czarina were lacking. They tried to replace them with the icons of democracy. Kerensky travelled everywhere, appealing and pronouncing benedictions. The offensive began: June 16 on the south western front, July 7 on the western, 9th on the Rumanian. The advance of the last three fronts was in reality fictitious, coinciding with the beginning of the collapse of the principal one, the south-western.

Kerensky reported to the Provisional Government: “To-day is the great triumph of the

revolution. On June 18th the Russian revolutionary army with colossal enthusiasm assumed the offensive." "The long expected advance has arrived," wrote the Kadet organ Rech, "which has at one stroke restored the Russian revolution to its best days." On the 19th the old man Plekhanov acclaimed to a patriotic manifestation: "Citizens, if I ask you what day this is, you will say 'Monday.' But that is a mistake. To-day is the resurrection day.' Resurrection of our country and of the whole world. Russia, having thrown off the yoke of czarism, has decided to throw off the yokes of the enemy." Tseretelli said on the same day at the soviet congress: "A new page is opening in the history of the great Russian revolution. The success of our revolutionary army ought to be welcomed not only by the Russian democracy, but . . . by all those who are really striving to fight against imperialism." The patriotic democracy had opened all its taps. The newspapers meanwhile carried joyful news: "The Paris Bourse greets the Russian offensive with a rise in all Russian securities." Those socialists were trying to estimate the stability of the revolution by the stock-ticker. But history teaches that bourses feel better the worse it goes with revolutions.

The workers and the garrison of the capital were not for one minute infected by this wave of artificially warmed-over patriotism. Its sole arena was the Nevsky Prospect. "We went out on the Nevsky," relates the soldier Chinenov in his memoirs, "and tried to agitate against the offensive. Some of the bourgeois took after us with their umbrellas... We grabbed them and dragged them into the barracks... and told them that to-morrow they would be sent to the front." That was a preliminary symptom of the advancing explosion of civil war. The July days were drawing near.

On the 21st of June a machine gun regiment in Petrograd resolved in general meeting: "In the future we will send forces to the front only when the war shall have a revolutionary character." In answer to the threat of disbandment, the regiment answered that it would not hesitate to disband "the Provisional Government and the other organisations which support it." Here again a threatening note far in advance of the Bolshevik agitation. The *Chronicle* of the Revolution remarks under date of June 23: "Detachments of the 2nd Army have occupied the first and second line trenches of the enemy. . . ." And right beside this: "At the Baranovsky factory (6,000 men) there were re-elections to the Petrograd Soviet. In place of three Social Revolutionaries, three Bolsheviks were elected."

By the end of the month the physiognomy of the Petrograd Soviet had already considerably changed. It is true that on June 20 the Soviet adopted a resolution of greeting to the advancing army. But with what majority ?-472 votes against 271, with 39 abstaining. That is a totally new correlation of forces, something we have not seen before. The Bolsheviks, together with the left groups of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, constitute already two-fifths of the Soviet. This means that in the factories and barracks the opponents of the offensive are already an indubitable majority.

The Vyborg district soviet adopted a resolution on June 24 every word of which strikes like a heavy hammer: "We . . . protest against the adventure of the Provisional Government, which is conducting an offensive for the old robber treaties ... and we lay the whole responsibility for this policy on the Provisional Government and the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary parties supporting it." Having been pushed out after the February insurrection into the back-yard, the Vyborg district was now confidently advancing to the leading position. The Bolsheviks already completely dominated the Vyborg Soviet.

Everything now on the fate of the offensive-that is that is upon the trench soldiers. What changes had the offensive made in the consciousness of those who were supposed to carry it through? They had been irrepressibly longing for peace. But the rulers had succeeded to a certain degree-at least among a part of the soldiers and for a short time-in converting this very longing into a readiness to advance.

After the revolution the soldiers had expected from the new power a swift conclusion of peace, and had been ready until then to defend the front. The peace did not come. The soldiers resorted to attempts at fraternisation with the Germans and Austrians, partly under the influence of Bolshevik agitation, but chiefly seeking their own road to peace. But a drive had been opened against fraternisation from all sides. And moreover it was discovered that the German soldiers were still far from casting off obedience to their officers. Fraternisation, not having led to peace, dwindled rapidly.

There was on the front at that time a *de facto* armistice. The Germans availed themselves of it for a wholesale transfer of troops to the western front. The Russian soldiers noticed how the enemy trenches were emptied, machine guns removed, cannon carted away. Upon this rested the plan of the "moral preparation for the offensive." It was systematically suggested to the soldiers that the enemy was completely weakened, that he had no force left, that America was pressing upon him from the west, and that we had only to give a small push on our side, and the enemy front would crumple and we would have peace. The authorities did not believe this for a single minute, but they calculated that once having put its hand to the war machine, the army would not be able to let go.

Having failed of their goal, both through the diplomacy of the Provisional Government and through fraternisation, a part of the soldiers undoubtedly inclined to this third scheme: to give that push which would make the war crumble into dust. One of the front delegates to the congress reported exactly in this way the mood of the soldiers: "At present we have before us a thinned out German front; there are at present no cannon; and if we advance and overthrow the enemy then we will be close to the wished-for peace."

The enemy at first actually did seem extremely weak, and retired without accepting the battle, which incidentally the attackers were not able to give. But instead of crumbling. the enemy regrouped and concentrated his forces. Penetrating a few score kilometers inland,

the Russian soldiers discovered a picture sufficiently familiar to them in the experience of the preceding years: the enemy was waiting for them in new and reinforced positions. Here it became evident that although the soldiers had agreed to give a push in the direction of peace, they were not in the least desirous of war. Having been dragged into it by a combination of force, moral pressure, and most of all deceit, they so much the more indignantly turned back.

"After an artillery fire unprecedented on the Russian side in its intensity and power," says the Russian historian of the World War, General Zayonchkovsky, "the troops occupied the enemy positions almost without loss and did not wish to go any farther. There began a steady desertion and withdrawal of whole units from their positions." A Ukrainian leader, Doroshenko, former commissar of the Provisional Government in Galicia, tells how after the seizure of the cities Calich and Kalush: "In Kalush there immediately occurred a frightful pogrom of the local population-but only of Ukrainians and Jews, they did not touch Poles. Some experienced hand guided the pogrom, pointing out with special care the local Ukrainian cultural and educational institutions." The pogrom was participated in by "the better class of troops, the least depraved by the revolution"-those carefully picked for the offensive. But what still more clearly shows its face in this affair is the leadership of the offensive-the old czarist commanders, experienced organisers of pogroms.

On July 9 the committees and commissars of the 11th Army telegraphed the government: "A German attack begun on July 6 against the 11th Army front is developing into an overwhelming catastrophe. . . In the morale of the troops, only recently induced to move by the heroic efforts of a minority, a sharp and ruinous break has occurred. The aggressive flare-up is rapidly exhausting itself. The majority of the troops are now in a state of increasing disintegration. There is nothing left of authority or obedience. Persuasions and arguments have lost their force. They are answered with threats and sometimes with death."

The commander-in-chief of the south-western front, with the agreement of the commissars and committees, gave an order to shoot those running away. On June 12 the commander-in-chief of the western front, Denikin, returned to his headquarters, as he says, "with despair in my heart, and with a clear consciousness of the complete collapse of the last flickering hope for ... a miracle."

The soldiers did not want to fight. The rear troops, to whom the weakened units turned for replacements after occupying the enemy trenches, answered: "What did you advance for anyway? Who told you to? Its time to end the war, not attack. " The commander of the 1st Siberian Corps, considered one of the best commanders, reported how at nightfall the soldiers began to abandon the unattacked first line in crowds and whole companies. "I understood that we, the officers, were powerless to alter the elemental psychology of

the soldier masses, and I sobbed bitterly and long." One of the companies refused even to toss a leaflet to the enemy announcing the capture of Galich, until a soldier could be found who could translate the German text into Russian. In that it expressed the utter lack of confidence of the soldier mass in its ruling staff, both the old one and the new February one. A century of taunts and violence had burst to the surface like a volcano. The soldiers felt themselves again deceived. The offensive had not led to peace but war. The soldiers did not want war. And they were right. Patriots hiding in the rear were branding the soldiers as slackers and baiting them. But the soldiers were right. They were guided by a true national instinct, refracted ,through the consciousness of men oppressed, deceived, tortured, raised up by a revolutionary hope and again thrown back into the bloody mash. The soldiers were right. A prolongation of the war could give the Russian people nothing but new victims, humiliation, disasters-nothing but an increase of domestic land foreign slavery.

The patriotic press of 1917-not only the Kadet but also the socialist press-was tireless in contrasting the Russian soldiers, cowards and deserters, with the heroic battalions of the great French revolution. This testifies not only to a failure to understand the dialectic of a revolutionary process, but also to a crude ignorance of history.

The remarkable warriors of the French revolution and empire frequently began their careers as breakers of discipline, disorganisers-Miliukov would say, as Bolsheviks. The future Marshal Davout spent many months of 1789-90 as Lieutenant d'Avout destroying the "normal" discipline in the garrison of Hesdin, driving out the commanding staff. Throughout France up to the middle of 1790 a complete disintegration of the whole army was taking place. The soldiers of the Vincennes regiment compelled their officers to eat with them. The fleet drove out their officers. Twenty regiments did various deeds of violence upon their officers. At Nancy three regiments locked their highest officers in prison. Beginning with 1790 the leaders of the French revolution never tire of repeating on the subject of soldier excesses: "The executive power is, guilty, because it has not removed officers hostile to the revolution." It is remarkable that both Mirabeau and Robespierre spoke in favour of dismissing the entire old corps of officers. The former was trying the more quickly to establish a firm discipline, the latter wanted to disarm the counter-revolution. But both understood that the old army could not survive.

To be sure, the Russian revolution, in contrast with the French, took place in a time of war. But you cannot infer from this an exception to the historic law noted by Engels. On the contrary, conditions of prolonged and unsuccessful war could only hasten and sharpen the process of revolutionary disintegration of the army. That miserable and criminal offensive of the democrats did the rest. The soldiers were now saying, to the last man Enough of bloodshed! What good are land and freedom if we are not here? "When enlightened pacifists try to abolish war by rationalistic arguments they are merely ridiculous, but when

the armed masses themselves bring weapons of reason into action against a war, that means that the war is about over.

CHAPTER 20

THE PEASANTRY

The subsoil of the revolution was the agrarian problem. In the antique land system, born directly out of serfdom, in the traditional power of the landlord, the close ties between landlord, local administration and caste zemstvo, lay the roots of the most barbarous features of Russian life which had their crown in the Rasputin monarchy. The muzhik, age-old support of orientalism, proved also its first victim.

In the first weeks after the February revolution, the village remained almost inert. Those of the most active age were at the front. The elderly generation left at home too well remembered how revolutions end in punitive expeditions. The village was silent, and therefore the city was silent about the village. But the spectre of a peasant war hung over the nests of the landlords from the first March days. Out of the most aristocratic-that is backward and reactionary-provinces a cry for help was heard almost before the real danger appeared. The liberals sensitively reflected the fright of the landlords. The Compromisers reflected the mood of the liberals. “It would be dangerous,” rationalises the left radical, Sukhanov, just after the revolution, “ to force the agrarian problem in the next few weeks; and moreover there is not the slightest need of it.” As we know, Sukhanov likewise thought it would be dangerous to force the question of peace, or of the eight-hour day. To hide from difficulties is simpler. Moreover, the landlords were afraid a shake-up of land relations would reflect itself harmfully upon the spring sowing and the provisioning of the cities. The Executive Committee sent telegrams to the localities recommending that they should not “become absorbed in the agrarian question to the neglect of food supplies to the cities.”

In many regions the landlords, frightened by the revolution, abstained from the spring sowing. With a heavy food crisis throughout the country, those empty fields themselves seemed to cry for a new owner. The peasantry stirred dimly. Hoping little from the new power, the landlords hastened to dispose of their properties. The kulaks began zealously

to buy up these estates, figuring that as peasants they would escape forcible expropriation. Many of these land sales were notoriously fictitious. It was assumed that private holdings below a certain norm would be spared; in view of this, the landlords artificially divided their property into small allotments, creating dummy owners. Not infrequently the lands were transferred to foreigners citizens of the allied or neutral countries. Kulak speculation and landlord trickery threatened to leave nothing of the public land by the time the Constituent Assembly was convoked.

The villages saw these manoeuvres. Hence their demand: stop all land sales by decree. Peasant delegates kept pouring into the cities to the new authorities seeking land and justice. It happened to the ministers more than once, after their exalted debates and ovations, to run into the grey figures of peasant deputies at the doorway. Sukhanov tells how one of these delegates with tears in his eyes beseeched the citizen minister to promulgate a law protecting the land from being sold off. He was impatiently interrupted by Kerensky excited and pale: "I said it would be done, and that means it will be . . . and you needn't look at me with those suspicious eyes." Sukhanov, who was present at this scene, adds: "I report this verbatim. And Kerensky was right: the muzhik did look with suspicious eyes at the eminent people's minister and leader." In this short dialogue between a peasant who is still asking but no longer trusting, and the radical minister gesturing away the peasant's distrust, is contained the inevitability of the February regimes collapse.

The act creating land committees as organs of preparation for agrarian reform was published by the first Minister of Agriculture, the Kadet Shingarev. The main land committee, presided over by the liberal bureaucratic professor, Postnikov, consisted chiefly of Narodniks who feared more than anything else to appear less moderate than their president. Local land committees were established in the, provinces, counties and rural districts. Whereas the Soviets, which took hold rather slowly in the villages, were considered private organisations, these committees had a governmental character. But the more indefinite their functions were according to the act, the harder slit was for them to resist the pressure of the peasants. The lower a committee stood in the general hierarchy-the nearer, that is, to the land-the sooner it became an instrument of the peasant movement.

Toward the end of March there began to flow into the capital the first alarming tidings of the peasants' entrance upon the scene. The Novgorod commissar telegraphed of disorders caused by a certain corporal Panasiuk, of "unwarranted arrests of landlords," etc. In Tambov province a crowd of peasants, with certain furloughed soldiers at their head, had sacked a landlords estate. The first communications were doubtless exaggerated. The landlords certainly magnified these conflicts in their complaints, running ahead of the actual events. But one thing is beyond doubt; namely, that the leading role in the peasant movement was played by the soldier, who brought home from the front and from the city barracks a spirit

of initiative.

One of the district land committees of Kharkov province decided, on April 5, to conduct a search for weapons among the landowners. That already smacks of the coming civil war. A disturbance arising in Skopinsky county, Riazan province, is explained by the commissar as due to a decree of the executive committee of a neighbouring county establishing compulsory rental to the peasants of the landlords' lands. "The agitation of students in favour of tranquillity until the Constituent Assembly, has had no success." Thus we learn that the students, "who had summoned the peasants in the first revolution to a campaign of terror, such being the tactic of the Social Revolutionaries at that time, were now, in 1917, preaching lawfulness and tranquillity-to be sure, without success.

The commissar of Simbirsk province draws the picture of a more developed peasant movement: The district and village committees-of which something will be said later-are arresting the landlords, banishing them from the province, calling out the workers from the landlords' fields, seizing the land, establishing arbitrary rentals. "The delegates sent by the Executive Committee are taking their stand on the side of the peasants." At the same time there begins a movement of the communal peasants against the individual landowners-against strong peasants, that is, who had detached themselves and taken up individual holdings on the basis of Stolypin's law of November 9, 1906. "The situation in the provinces menaces the sowing of the fields." As early as April, the Simbirsk province commissar can see no way out but immediately to declare the land national property, the terms on which it is to be used to be defined later by the Constituent Assembly.

From Kashir county, just outside Moscow, come complaints that the executive committee is inciting the population to the seizure without indemnity of the church, monastery and landlords' estates. In Kursk province the peasants are removing the war-prisoners from work on the estates, and even locking them up in the local jail. After the peasant congresses, the peasants in the Penza province, inclining to a literal interpretation of the Social Revolutionary resolution on land and freedom, begin to violate a recently concluded contract with the landlords. At the same time they make an assault on the new organs of power. "Upon the organisation of the district and county executive committees in March, the intelligentsia composed the majority of their staffs, but afterwards"-reports the commissar of Penza-"voices began to be heard against the intelligentsia, and by the middle of April the staff of the committees everywhere was exclusively composed of peasants whose tendency on the land question was clearly lawless." A group of landlords of the neighbouring Kazan province complains to the Provisional Government of the impossibility of carrying on their business, because the peasants are calling off their workers, stealing seed, in many localities carrying off the movables of the estate, not permitting the landlord to cut wood in his own forest, threatening him with violence and death. "There are no courts; everybody does as he

wishes; sensible people are terrorised.“ The Kazan landlords already know who is guilty of this anarchy: ”The instructions of the Provisional Government are unknown in the village, but Bolshevik leaflets are widely distributed.“ However, there was no lack of instructions from the Provisional Government. In a telegram of March 20, Prince Lvov proposed to the commissars to create district committees as organs of the local power, recommending that they should draw into the work of these committees ”the local landowners and all the intellectual forces of the village.“ It was proposed to organise the whole state structure in the manner of a system of chambers of conciliation. The commissars, however, were soon weeping about the crowding out of the ”intellectual forces.“ The muzhik obviously did not trust his county and district Kerenskys.

On April 3, Prince Lvov’s substitute, Prince Yurussov-the Ministry of the Interior was adorned, we see, with lofty titles recommends that no arbitrary acts shall be permitted, and especially ”the freedom of every proprietor to dispose of his own land“-sweetest of all freedoms-shall be defended. Ten days later Prince Lvov himself considers it necessary to do something, and recommends to the commissars ”to put a stop to every manifestation of violence and robbery with the whole power of the law.“ Again two days later, Prince Yurussov instructs the provincial commissars ”to take measures for the protection of the stud farms from lawless acts, explaining to the peasants ... and so forth.“ On April 18, Prince Yurussov is troubled because the war-prisoners working for the landlords are beginning to present immoderate demands, and instructs the commissars to penalise these insolent fellows on the basis of the authority formerly enjoyed by the czar’s governors. Circulars, instructions, telegraphic directions pour down from above in a continual shower. On May 12 Prince Lvov enumerates in a new telegram the unlawful activities which are unceasing throughout the country arbitrary arrests, searches; removals from office, from management of estates, from administration of factories and shops; wrecking of properties; pillage, insubordination, hooliganism; acts of violence against official personages; imposition of taxes upon the population inciting one part of the population against another, etc., etc. All such forms of activity must be recognised as clearly unlawful and in certain cases even anarchistic. . . .” The characterisation is not very clear, but the conclusion is: “That the most decisive measures must be taken.” The provincial commissars resolutely issued orders to the counties, the counties brought pressure to bear on the district committees, and all of them together revealed their impotence in the face of the muzhiks.

Almost everywhere the nearest military detachments had a hand in the business. Oftenest indeed they took the initiative. The movement assumed widely different forms, according to local conditions and the sharpness of the struggle. In Siberia, where there were no landlords, the peasants took possession of the church and monastery lands. In other parts of the country, too, the clergy had a hard time. In the pious province of Smolensk, under the influence of soldiers arriving from the fronts, the priests and the monks were arrested. Lo-

cal organisations were often compelled to go farther than they wanted to, merely to prevent the peasants from taking incomparably more radical steps. Early in May a county executive committee of Samara province appointed a social trustee over the property of Count Orlov-Davidov, thus protecting it from the peasants. Since the decree promised by Kerensky forbidding the sale of lands never did appear, the peasants began to stop these sales in their own way, preventing surveys of the land. Confiscation of the landlords' weapons, even their hunting weapons, was spreading wider and wider. The peasants of Minsk province, complains the commissar, "take the resolutions of a peasant congress for law." Yes, and how could they take them otherwise? Those congresses were the sole real power in the localities. Thus is revealed the vast dissonance between the Social Revolutionary intelligentsia drowning in words, and the peasantry demanding action.

Towards the end of May the far steppes of Asia billowed up. The Kirghiz, from whom the czardom used to take away their best lands for the benefit of its servants, arose now against the landlords, suggesting that they hand over at once the stolen goods. "This view is gaining ground in the steppes," reported the Akmolinsk commissar. At the opposite end of the country, in Lifland province, a county executive committee sent a commission to investigate the sacking of the property of Baron Stahl von Holstein. The commission declared the disorders insignificant and the presence of the baron in the county undesirable for the public tranquillity, and proposed: To forward him along with the baroness to Petrograd and place them at the disposal of the Provisional Government. Thus arose one of the innumerable conflicts between the local and the central powers, between the Social Revolutionaries down below and the Social Revolutionaries on top.

A report of May 27 from Pavlograd county in Ekaterinoslav province paints an almost idyllic picture of law and order: The members of the land committee are explaining to the population all misunderstandings and thus "preventing any kind of excess." Alas, this idyll will last but a few weeks. The head of one of the Kostroma monasteries bitterly complained at the end of May against a requisition by the peasants of a third of his horned cattle. The reverend monk should have been more meek: he will soon bid farewell to the other two-thirds.

In Kursk province there began a persecution of the individual settlers who had refused to return to the commune. In the hour of its great land revolution, its "Black Division," the peasantry wanted to act as a single whole. Inner distinctions might prove an obstacle; the commune must stand forth as one man. The fight for the landlord's land was therefore accompanied by acts of violence against the separate farmer-the land individualist.

On the last day of May, a soldier, Samoilov, was arrested in Perm province for inciting to non-payment of land taxes. Soldier Samoilov will soon be arresting others. During a religious procession in one of the villages in Kharkov province, a peasant Grichenko

chopped down with an axe before the eyes of the entire Village the revered icon of St. Nicholas. Thus all kinds of protests arise and express themselves in action. An anonymous naval officer and landlord, in his *Notes of a White Guard,* gives an interesting picture of the evolution of the village in the first months of the revolution. To all offices "almost everywhere they elected at first men from the bourgeois layers. Everybody was striving for but one thing-to maintain order." The peasants, to be sure, made demands for the land, but during the first two or three months without violence. You could hear everywhere such phrases as "We do not want to rob, we want to get it by agreement," etc. In these reassuring, affirmations the ear of the lieutenant caught a note of "concealed threat." And in truth, although the peasantry in the first period did not resort to violence, still in relation to the so-called Intellectual forces "they immediately began to reveal their disrespect." This half-waiting attitude continued, according to the White Guard, until May or June, "after which a sharp change was to be observed-a tendency appeared to quarrel with the provisional regulations, to put things through to suit themselves." In other words, the peasants gave the February revolution approximately three months grace on the promissory notes of the Social Revolutionaries, after which they began to collect their own way.

A soldier, Chinenov, who had joined the Bolsheviks, made two trips from Moscow after the revolution to his home in Orel. In May the Social Revolutionaries were dominant in the district. The muzhiks in many localities were still paying rent to the landlords. Chinenov organised a Bolshevik nucleus of soldiers, peasant farmhands and poor peasants. The nucleus advocated the cessation of rent payments and a distribution of land among the landless. They immediately registered the landlords' meadow lands, divided them among the villages, and mowed them. "The Social Revolutionaries sitting in the district committees cried out against the illegality of our act, but did not renounce their own share of the hay." As the village representatives would give up their offices through fear of responsibility, the peasants would select new ones who were more resolute. The latter were by no means always Bolsheviks. By direct pressure the peasants were producing a split in the Social Revolutionary Party, dividing the revolutionary elements from the functionaries and careerists. Having mowed the manorial hay, the muzhiks turned to the fallow land and began to divide it for the fall sowing. The Bolshevik nucleus decided to look over the manorial granaries and send the reserves of grain to the hungering capital. The resolution of the nucleus was carried out because it coincided with the mood of the peasants. Chinenov brought with him to his homeland some Bolshevik literature, a thing nobody had ever heard of until he arrived. "The local intelligentsia and the Social Revolutionaries," he said, "spread a rumour that I was bringing with me a great deal of German gold and that I would bribe the peasants." The same process developed on a small as on a large scale. The districts had their Miliukovs, their Kerenskys, and . . . their Lenins.

In Smolensk province the influence of the, Social Revolutionaries began to grow after

the Provincial Congress of peasant deputies, which declared itself, as was to be expected, for a transfer of land to the people. The peasants swallowed this decision whole, but in distinction from their leaders they swallowed it in earnest. Thenceforward the number of Social Revolutionaries in the villages increased continuously. "Anyone who had been in the Social Revolutionary faction at any congress," relates one of the local party workers, "considered himself either a Social Revolutionary, or something very much like it." In the county seat there were two regiments, also under the influence of the Social Revolutionaries. The district land committee began to plow the landlord's land and mow his meadows. The provincial commissar, a Social Revolutionary, Efimov, issued threatening orders. The village was bewildered. Why, didn't this same commissar tell us that the peasants themselves are now the government and that only he who works the land can benefit by it? But as a matter of fact at the direction of this Social Revolutionary commissar, Efimov, 16 district land committees out of 17, in Yelnin county alone, were brought to trial in the coming months for seizing the landlords' land. Thus, in its own way, the romance between the Narodnik intelligentsia and the people drew to its denouement. In the whole county there were not more than three or four Bolsheviks. Their influence grew quickly, however, crowding out or splitting the Social Revolutionaries.

An All-Russian Peasant Congress was convoked in Petrograd at the beginning of May. The representation was largely upper crust, and in many cases accidental. If the workers' and soldiers' congresses continually lagged behind the course of events and the political evolution of the masses, it is needless to say how far the representation of a scattered peasantry lagged behind the actual mood of the Russian villages. As delegates there appeared, on the one hand, Narodnik intellectuals of the extreme right, associated with the peasantry chiefly through commercial co-operatives or the reminiscences of childhood. The genuine 44 "people," on the other hand, were represented by the better off upper strata of the villages, kulaks, shopkeepers, peasant co-operators. The Social Revolutionaries dominated this congress absolutely, and moreover in the person of their extreme right wing. At times, however, even they paused in fright before the reeking mixture of land greed and political "blackhundred-ism" which exuded from some of the deputies. In regard to the land lord problem an extremely radical position was formulated this congress: "Conversion of all land into national property for equal working use, without any indemnity." To be sure, the kulak understood equality only in the sense of his equality with the landlord, not at all in the sense of his equality with the hired hands. However, this little misunderstanding between the fictitious socialism of the Narodniks and the agrarian democratism of the muzhiks would come out in the open only in the future.

The Minister of Agriculture, Chernov, burning with a desire to present an Easter egg to the Peasant Congress, vainly busied himself with the project of a decree forbidding land sales. The Minister of Justice, Pereverzev, also counting himself something of a Social

Revolutionary, issued instructions during the very days of the congress that in the various localities no obstacles should be put in the way of land sales. On this subject the peasant deputies raised a noise. But the matter did not move forward a step. The Provisional Government of Prince Lvov would not agree to lay a hand on the landlords' estates. The socialists did not want to lay a hand on the Provisional Government. And least of all was the staff of the congress capable of finding a way out of the contradiction between its appetite for land and its reactionism.

On the 20th of May, Lenin spoke at the Peasant Congress. It seemed, says Sukhanov, as though Lenin had landed in a pit of crocodiles. "However, the little muzhiks listened attentively and very likely not without sympathy, although they did not dare show it." The same thing was repeated in the soldiers' section, which was extremely hostile to the Bolsheviks. In the style of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, Sukhanov tries to give Lenin's tactics on the land question an anarchist tint. This is not so far from the attitude of Prince Lvov, who was always inclined to regard infringements of landlord rights as anarchist activities. According to this logic, the revolution as a whole is equivalent to anarchy. In reality Lenin's way of posing the question was far deeper than it seemed to his critics. The instruments of the agrarian revolution, and primarily of the seizure of the landed estates, were to be the soviets of peasants' deputies with the land committees subject to them. In Lenin's eyes these soviets were the organs of a future state power, and that too a most concentrated power-namely, the revolutionary dictatorship. This is certainly far from anarchism, from the theory and practice of non-government. Lenin said on April 28 "We favour an immediate transfer of the land to the peasants, with the highest degree of organisation possible. We are absolutely against anarchist seizures." Why, then, are we unwilling to await the Constituent Assembly? For this reason: "The important thing for us is revolutionary initiative; the laws should be the result of it. If you wait until the law is written, and do not yourselves develop revolutionary energy, you will get neither law nor land." Are not these simple words the voice of all revolutions?

After a month's sitting, the Peasant Congress elected as a permanent institution an executive committee composed of two hundred sturdy village petty bourgeois and Narodniks of the professorial or trader type, adorning them at the summit with the decorative figures of Breshkovskaia, Chaikovsky, Vera Figner and Kerensky. As president they elected the Social Revolutionary, Avksentiev, a man made for provincial banquets, but not for a peasant war.

Henceforward the more important questions were taken up at joint sessions of the two executive committees, that of the worker-soldiers and that of the peasants. This combination entailed a great strengthening of the right wing which blended directly with the Kadets. In all cases where it was necessary to bring pressure against the workers, come down on

the heads of the Bolsheviks, or threaten the independent Kronstadt republic with whips and scorpions, the two hundred hands, or rather the two hundred fists, of the peasant executive committee would be lifted like a wall. Those people were fully in accord with Miliukov, that it was necessary to "make an end" of the Bolsheviks. But in regard to the landed estates, they had the views not of liberals, but of muzhiks, and this brought them into opposition with the bourgeoisie and the Provincial Government. The Peasant Congress had not had time to disperse, when complaints began to arrive that its resolutions were being taken seriously in the localities and that peasants were going about the business of appropriating the land and equipment of the landlords. It was simply impossible to hammer into those stubborn peasant skulls the difference between words and deeds.

The Social Revolutionaries, frightened, sounded the retreat. At the beginning of June, at their Moscow congress, they solemnly condemned all arbitrary seizures of land: we must wait for the Constituent Assembly. But their resolution proved impotent, not only to stop, but even to weaken the agrarian movement. The matter was further greatly complicated by the fact that in the Social Revolutionary party itself there was no small number of elements actually ready to go the limit with the muzhiks against the landlords. These left Social Revolutionaries, not yet having made up their minds to break with the party, helped the muzhiks get around the law, or at least interpret it in their own fashion.

In Kazan province, where the peasant movement assumed especially stormy proportions, the left wing of the Social Revolutionaries defined itself sooner than in other places. At their head stood Kalegaev, subsequently Commissar of Agriculture in the Soviet Government during the bloc between the Bolsheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. From the middle of May there began in Kazan province a systematic transfer of land to the district committees. This measure was adopted most boldly of all in Spassk county, where a Bolshevik stood at the head of the peasant organisations. The provincial authorities complained to the centre about the agrarian agitation carried on by Bolsheviks coming from Kronstadt, and added that the pious nun Tamara was arrested for "making objections."

From the province of Yorenezh the commissar reported on June 2: "Incidents of lawbreaking and illegal activity in the province are growing more numerous every day, especially in the agrarian matter." In Penza province also, the seizures of land were becoming more insistent. One of the district land committees in Kaluga province deprived the monastery of half of its meadow lands, and upon the complaint of the abbot the county committee resolved: that the meadows should be taken as a whole. It is not often that the higher institution proves more radical than the lower. In Penza province an abbess, Maria, weeps over the seizure of the nunnery's land The local authorities are powerless."

In Viatka province the peasants closed up the property of the Skoropadskys, the family of the future Ukrainian hetman, and "until the decision of the question of landed property"

resolved that nobody should touch the forests, and that the income from the property should be paid into the public treasury. In a series of other localities the land committees not only lowered the rent five or six times, but directed that it should not be paid to the landlords, but placed at the disposal of the committees until the question should be settled by the Constituent Assembly. This was not a lawyer's but a muzhik's way-that is, a serious way-of postponing the question about land reforms until the Constituent Assembly. In Saratov province the peasants who only yesterday forbade the landlords to cut down the forests have to-day begun to fell the trees themselves. Oftener and oftener the peasants are seizing the church and monastery lands, especially where there are few landlords. In Lifland, the Lettish farm workers, along with soldiers of the Lettish Battalion, undertake an organised seizure of the baronial lands.

The lumber kings from Vitebsk province cry loudly that the measures adopted by the land committees are destroying the lumber industry and preventing them from supplying the needs of the front. Those no less. disinterested patriots, the landlords of the Poltava province, grieve over the fact that agrarian disorders are making it impossible; for them to supply provisions for the army. Finally a congress of horse breeders in Moscow gives warning that peasant seizures are threatening with gigantic misfortunes the studs of the Fatherland. In those days the Procuror of the Holy Synod, the same one who called the members of that sacred institution "idiots and scoundrels," complains to the government that in Kazan province the peasants are taking away from the monks not only lands and cattle, but also the flour necessary for the holy bread. In Petrograd province, two steps from the capital, the peasants drive the lessee out of a property and begin to run it themselves. The wide-awake Prince Yurussov again telegraphs on June 2 to the four winds: "In spite of a series of demands from me . . . etc., etc. . . . I again ask you to take the most decisive measures." The prince only forgets to say what measures.

In those times, when a gigantic job of tearing up the deepest roots of medievalist and serfdom was under way throughout the whole country, the Minister of Agriculture, Chernov, was gathering in his chancelleries materials for the. Constituent Assembly. He intended to introduce the reform no otherwise than on the basis of the most accurate agricultural data and statistics of all possible kinds, and therefore kept urging the peasants with the sweetest of voices to wait until his exercises were finished. This did not, however, prevent the landlords from kicking out the "Rural Minister" long before he had completed his sacramental tables.

On the basis of the archives of the Provisional Government young investigators have concluded that in March the agrarian movement had arisen with more or less strength in only 84 counties. In April, it had seized 174 counties; in May, 236; in June, 280; in July, 325. These figures, however, do not give complete picture of the actual growth of the

movement, because in each county the struggle assumed from month to month more and more stubborn and broad mass character.

In that first period, from March to July the peasants in their overwhelming majority are still refraining from direct acts of violence against the landlords, and from open seizures of the land. Yakovlev, the leader of the above-mentioned investigations, now People's Commissar of Agriculture of the Soviet Union, explains the comparatively peaceful tactics of the peasants by their trustfulness toward the bourgeoisie. This explanation must be declared invalid. To say nothing of the continual suspiciousness of the muzhik toward the city the authorities and cultivated society a government headed by Prince Lvov could not possibly dispose the peasants to trustfulness. If the peasants during this first period hardly ever resort to measures of open violence, and are still trying to give their activities the form of legal or semi-legal pressure, this is explained by their very distrustfulness of the government, combined with an insufficient trust in their own powers. The peasants are only pacing the take-off, feeling out the ground, measuring the resistance of the enemy-bringing pressure upon the landlords from all directions. "We do not want to rob," they recite, "we want to do everything nicely." They are not appropriating the meadow, but only cutting the hay. They are only compelling the landlords to rent them the land, but are themselves establishing the price. Or with a similar compulsion they are "buying" the land-but at a price designated by themselves. All these legal coverings, none too convincing to the landlord or the liberal jurists, are dictated in reality by a concealed but deep distrust of the government. "You won't get it by being good," says the muzhik to himself, "and force is dangerous-let's try foxiness." He would prefer, of course, to expropriate the landlord with his own consent.

"Throughout all these months," insists Yakovlev, "there prevails a wholly unique method of 'Peaceful' struggle with the landlord, a thing never before seen in history, a result of the peasants' trust in the bourgeoisie and the government of the bourgeoisie." These methods here declared to have been never before seen in history, are in reality the typical and inevitable methods historically obligatory throughout the entire planet in the initial stages of a peasant war. The attempt to disguise its first rebel steps with legality, both sacred and secular, has from time immemorial characterised the struggle of every revolutionary class, before it has gathered sufficient strength and confidence to break the umbilical cord which bound it to the old society. This is more completely true of the peasantry than of any other class, for even in its best periods the peasantry advances in semi-darkness, looking upon its city friends with distrustful eyes. It has good reasons for this. The friends of an agrarian movement in its first steps are the agents of the liberal and radical bourgeoisie. And while promoting a part of the peasant demands, these friends are, nevertheless alarmed for the fate of bourgeois property rights, and therefore try their best to lead the peasant uprising on to the rails of bourgeois legality.

Long before the revolution, other factors operate in the same direction. From the milieu of the nobility itself there arise preachers of conciliation. Leo Tolstoy looked deeper into the soul of the muzhik than anybody else. His philosophy of non-resistance to evil by violence was a generalisation of the first stages of the muzhik revolution. Tolstoy dreamed of a day when it would all come to pass ”without robbery, by mutual consent.“ He built up a religious foundation under this tactic in the form of a purified Christianity. Mahatma Gandhi is now fulfilling the same mission in India, only in a more practical form. If we go backward from the present day we shall have no difficulty in finding, similar ”never before seen in history“ phenomena in all sorts of religious, national, philosophical and political disguises, beginning with Biblical times and still earlier.

The peculiarity of the peasant uprising of 1917 lay only in the fact that the agents of bourgeois legality were people who called themselves socialists, and also revolutionists. But it was not they who determined the character of the peasant movement and its rhythm. The peasants followed the Social Revolutionaries only in so far as they could secure from them adequate formulas for a settlement with the landlord. At the same time the Social Revolutionaries served them in the capacity of a juridical disguise: this was, after all, the party of Kerensky, Minister of Justice and afterwards War Minister, and of Chernov, Minister of Agriculture. The delay in the promulgation of the necessary decrees would be explained by the district and county Social Revolutionaries as due to the resistance of the landlords and liberals. They would assure the peasants that ”our people“ in the government are doing their very best. To this of course the muzhik had no answer. But not suffering in the least from that precious ”trustfulness,“ he deemed it necessary to help ”our people“ from below, and he did this so thoroughly that ”our people“ up above soon began to feel their very joints cracking.

The weakness of the Bolsheviks in relation to the peasant was temporary, and due to the fact that the Bolsheviks did not share the peasant illusions. The village could come to Bolshevism only through experience and disappointment. The strength the Bolsheviks lay in the fact that on the agrarian question, as on others, they were free of the divergence between word and deed.

General sociological considerations could not yield an a priori decision as to whether the peasantry as a whole were capable of rising against the landlords or not. The strengthening of capitalist tendencies in agriculture during the period between the two revolutions, the dividing off of a layer of wealthy farmers from the primitive commune, the extraordinary growth of rural co-operation administered by well-off and rich peasants-all this made it impossible to say with certainty which of two tendencies would weigh the most in the revolution: the agrarian caste antagonism between the peasantry and the nobility, or the class antagonism within the peasantry itself.

Lenin upon his arrival took a very cautious position upon this question. ”The agrarian movement,“ he said on April 14, ”is only a prophecy, not a fact.... We must be prepared for a union of the peasantry with the bourgeoisie.“ That was not a thought accidentally tossed off. On the contrary, Lenin insistently repeated it in many connections. At a party conference on April 24, he said attacking the ”old Bolsheviks“ who had accused him of underestimating the peasantry: ”It is not permissible for a proletarian party to rest its hopes at this time on a community of interest with the peasantry. We are struggling to bring the peasantry over to our side, but they now stand to a certain degree consciously-on the, side of the capitalists.“ This demonstrates among other things how far Lenin was from that theory of an eternal harmony of interest between proletariat and peasantry subsequently attributed to him by the epigones. While admitting the possibility that the peasantry, as a caste, might act as a revolutionary factor, Lenin nevertheless was getting ready in April for a less favourable variant; namely, a stable bloc of the landlords, bourgeoisie and broad layers of the peasantry. ”To try to attract the peasant now,“ he said, ”means to throw ourselves on the mercy of Miliukov.“ Hence the conclusion: ”Transfer the centre of gravity to the soviets of farm-hand deputies.“

But the more favourable variant was realised. The agrarian movement from being a prophesy became a fact, revealing for a brief moment, but with extraordinary force, the superiority of the caste ties of the peasantry over the capitalistic antagonisms. The soviets of farm-hand deputies attained significance only in a few localities, chiefly the Baltic provinces. The land committees, on the contrary, became the instruments of the whole peasantry, who with their heavy-handed pressure converted them from chambers of conciliation into weapons of agrarian revolution.

This fact that the peasantry as a whole found it possible once more-for the last time in their history-to act as a revolutionary factor, testifies at once to the weakness of capitalist relations in the country and to their strength. The bourgeois economy had not yet by any means sucked up the land relations of medieval serfdom. At the same time the capitalist development had gone so far that it had made the old forms of landed property equally unbearable for all layers of the village. The interweaving of landlord and peasant property-quite often conscious arranged in such a way as to convert the landlord’s rights in a trap for the whole commune-the frightful striped owners of the village land, and finally the very recent antagonism between the land commune and the individualist owners-all this together created an unbearable tangle of land relationships from which it was impossible to escape by way of halfhearted legislative measures. Moreover, the peasants felt it more deeply than any agrarian theoreticians could. The experience of life handed down through a series of generations led them all to the same conclusion: we must bury both hereditary and acquired rights in the land, erase all boundary marks, and hand over the land, purged of historic deposits, to those who work it. This was the meaning of the muzhik’s aphorism:

the land is no man's, the land is God's. And in this same spirit the peasantry interpreted the Social Revolutionary programme: socialisation of the land. All Narodnik theories to the contrary notwithstanding, there was not in this one grain of socialism. The most audacious of agrarian revolutions has never yet by itself overstepped the bounds of the bourgeois regime. That socialisation which was to guarantee to each toiler his "right to the land," was with the preservation of unrestricted market relations, an utter Utopia. Menshevism criticised this Utopia from the liberal-bourgeois point of view. Bolshevism, on the other hand, exposed the progressive democratic tendency which was finding in these theories of the Social Revolutionaries a Utopian expression. This exposure of the genuine historic meaning of the Russian agrarian movement was one of the greatest services of Lenin.

Miliukov wrote that for him, "as a sociologist and investigator of Russian historic evolution"-that is, a man surveying the course of events from a height-"Lenin and Trotsky are leading a movement far nearer to Pugatchev and Razin, to Bolotnikov-to the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries of our history-than to the last word in European anarcho-syndicalism." That dole of truth which is contained in this assertion of the liberal sociologist-leaving aside his reference to "anarcho-syndicalism" which was dragged in here for some unknown reason-militates not against the Bolsheviks, but rather against the Russian bourgeoisie, their belatedness and political insignificance. The Bolsheviks are not to blame that those colossal peasant movements of past ages did not lead to a democratisation of social relations in Russia-without cities to lead them it was unattainable!-nor are the Bolsheviks to blame that the so-called liberation of the peasants in 1861 was carried out in such a way as to involve stealing of the communal land, enslavement of the peasant to the state, and complete preservation of the caste system. One thing is true: the Bolsheviks were obliged to carry through in the first quarter of the twentieth century that which was not carried through-or not even undertaken at all-in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Before taking up their own great task, they had to clear the ground of the historic rubbish of the old ruling classes and the old ages. We may add that the Bolsheviks at least fulfilled this preliminary task most conscientiously. This Miliukov will now hardly venture to deny.

CHAPTER 21

SHIFTS IN THE MASSES

In the fourth month of its existence the February regime was already choking from its own contradictions. June had begun with the all-Russian congress of the soviets, whose task was to create a political cover for the advance on the front. The beginning of the advance coincided in Petrograd with a gigantic demonstration of workers and soldiers organised by the Compromisers against the Bolsheviks, but which turned out to be a Bolshevik demonstration against the Compromisers. The growing indignation of the masses led after two weeks to another demonstration, which broke out without any summons from above, led to bloody encounters, and has gone into history under the name of "the July days." Taking place exactly halfway between the February and the October revolutions, the July semi-insurrection closes the former and constitutes a kind of dress rehearsal for the latter. We shall end this volume on the threshold of the July days, but before passing over to those events whose arena in June was Petrograd, it is necessary to have a glance at certain processes which were taking place in the masses.

To a certain liberal who had affirmed at the beginning of May that the more the government moves to the left, the more the country moves to the right-meaning by "country," of course, "the possessing classes"-Lenin replied: "the country of workers and poorer and poorest peasants, I assure you, citizen, is a thousand times farther to the left than the Chernovs and Tseretellis, and a hundred times farther than we. Live a little and you will see." Lenin estimated that the workers and peasants were "a hundred times" farther to the left than the Bolsheviks. This may seem a little unfounded: the workers and soldiers were still supporting the Compromisers, and the majority of them were on their guard against the Bolsheviks. But Lenin was delving deeper. The social interests of the masses, their hatred and their hope, were still only seeking a mode of expression. The policy of the Compromisers had been for then a first stage. The masses were immeasurably to the left of the Chernovs and Tseretellis, but were themselves still unconscious of their radicalism. Lenin

was right in asserting that the masses were to the left of the Bolsheviks, for the party in its immense majority had not yet realised the mightiness of the revolutionary passions that were simmering in the depths of the awakening people. The indignation of the masses was nourished by the dragging-out of the war, the economic ruin and the malicious inactivity of the government.

The measureless European-Asiatic plain had become a country only thanks to railroads. The war struck them most heavily of all. Transport was steadily breaking down; the number of disabled locomotives on certain roads had reached 50 per cent. At headquarters learned engineers read reports to the effect that no later than in six months the railroad transport would be in a state of complete paralysis. In these calculations there was a certain amount of conscious spreading of panic. But the breakdown of transport had really reached threatening dimensions. It had created tie-ups on the roads, intensified the disturbance of commodity exchange, and augmented the high cost of living.

The food situation in the cities was becoming worse and worse. The agrarian movement had established its centre in 43 provinces. The flow of grain to the army and the towns was dangerously dwindling. In the more fertile regions, to be sure, there were still tens and hundreds of millions of poods of surplus grain, but the purchasing operations at a fixed price gave extremely unsatisfactory results: and moreover it was difficult to deliver the ready grain to the centres owing to the breakdown of transport. From the autumn of 1916 on, an average of about one half of the expected provision trains arrived at the front. Petrograd, Moscow and other industrial centres received no more than 10 per cent of what they needed. They had almost no reserves. The standard of living of the city masses oscillated between under-nourishment and hunger. The arrival of the Coalition Government was signalised with a democratic order forbidding the baking of white bread. It will be several years after that before the “French roll” will again. appear in the capital. There was not enough butter. In June the consumption of sugar was cut down by definite rationing for the whole country.

The mechanism of the market, broken by the war, had not been replaced by that state regulation to which the advanced capitalist governments had been compelled to resort, and which alone permitted Germany to hold on through four years of war.

Threatening symptoms of economic collapse appeared at every step. The fall in productivity in the factories was caused, aside from the breakdown of transport, by the wearing out of equipment, the lack of raw materials and supplies, the flux of personnel, bad financing the universal uncertainty.

The principal plants were still working for the war. Orders had been distributed for two or three years ahead. Meantime the workers were unwilling to believe that the war would continue. The newspapers were publishing appalling figures of war profits. The cost of living was rising. The workers were awaiting a change. The technical and administrative

personnel of the factories were uniting in unions and advancing their demands. In this sphere the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries dominated. The regime of the factories was disintegrating. All joints were weakening. The prospects of the war and of the national economy were becoming misty, and property rights unreliable. Profits were falling off, dangers growing, the bosses losing their taste for production under the conditions created by the revolution. The bourgeoisie as a whole was entering upon a policy of economic defeatism. Temporary losses and deficits due to economic paralysis were in their eyes the overhead expenses of a struggle with the revolution which threatened the foundations of "culture." At the same time the virtuous press was accusing the workers from day to day of maliciously sabotaging industry, stealing raw materials, unnecessarily burning up fuel in order to produce stoppages. The falsity of these accusations exceeded all bounds, and since this was the press of a party which actually stood at the head of the Coalition power, the indignation of the workers naturally transferred itself to the Provisional Government.

The industrialists had not forgotten the experience of 1905 when a correctly organised lockout actively supported by the government had not only broken up the struggle of the workers for an eight-hour day, but also had rendered the monarchy an invaluable service in the matter of wiping out the revolution. The question of a lockout was now again brought up for discussion at a Council of the Congresses of industry and Trade-thus innocently they named the fighting organ of trustified and syndicated capital. One of the leaders of industry, the engineer explained later in his memoirs why the idea of a lockout was rejected: "This would have looked like a blow at the rear of the army . . . The consequences -of such a step, *in the absence of governmental support,* looked to the majority very dark." The whole misfortune lay in the absence of a "real" government. The Provisional Government was paralysed by the Soviet; the reasonable leaders of the Soviet were paralysed by the masses; the workers in the factories were armed; moreover, almost every factory had in the neighbourhood a friendly regiment or battalion. In these circumstances these gentlemen industrialists considered a lockout "odious in its national aspect." But they did not by any means renounce the idea of an offensive, but merely adapted it to existing circumstances, giving it not a simultaneous, but a creeping character. According to the diplomatic expression of Auerbach, the industrialists "finally came to the conclusion that an object lesson would be given by life itself, in the form of an inevitable gradual closing of the factories, so to speak, one at a time-a thing which soon did actually occur." In other words, renouncing a demonstrative lockout as involving "an enormous responsibility," this Council of the United Industries recommended to its members to close up the enterprises one at a time, seeking out a respectable pretext.

This plan of a creeping lockout was carried out with remarkable system. Leaders of Capital like the Kadet Kutler, a former Minister in the cabinet of Witte, read significant reports about the breakdown of industry, laying the blame, not on the three years of war, but

on the three months of revolution. “In the course of two or three weeks,” prophesied the impatient newspaper *Rech*, “the shops and factories will begin to shut down one after another,” A threat was here dressed up in the form of a prophecy. Engineers, professors, journalists started a campaign in both the general and the specialised press, in which a bridling of the workers was presented as the fundamental condition of salvation. The minister-industrialist Konovalov had declared on the 17 of May, just before his demonstrative withdrawal from government: “If there does not soon come a sobering up of cloudy heads ... we will witness a stoppage of tens and hundreds of plants.”

In the middle of June a Congress of Trade and Industry demands of the Provisional Government “a radical break with the system of developing the revolution.” We have already heard this demand made by the generals: “Stop the Revolution.” But the industrialists make it more concise: “The source of all evil is not only the Bolsheviks, but also the socialist parties. Only a firm iron hand can save Russia.”

Having prepared the political setting, the industrialists passed from words to deeds. In the course of March and April, 129 small plants involving 9,000 workers were shut down; in May, 108 with a like number of workers; in June, 125 plants with 38,000 workers were shut down; in July, 206 plants threw out on the streets 48,000 workers. The lockout developed in a geometric progression. But that was only a beginning. Textile Moscow got into motion after Petrograd, and the provinces after Moscow. The manufacturers would refer to an absence of fuel, raw materials, accessories, credits. The factory committees would interfere in the matter and in many cases indubitably establish the fact of a malicious dislocation of industry with the goal of bringing pressure on the workers, or holding up the government for subsidies. Especially impudent were the foreign capitalists acting through the mediation of their embassies. In several cases the sabotage was so obvious that as a result of the exposures of the shop committees the industrialists found themselves compelled to re-open the factories, thus laying bare one contradiction after another. The revolution soon arrived at the chief of them all: that between the social character of industry and the private ownership of its tools and equipment. In the interests of victory over the workers, the entrepreneur closes the factory as though it were a question of a mere snuff box, and not an enterprise necessary to the life of the whole nation.

The banks, having successfully boycotted the Liberty Loan, took a militant attitude against fiscal encroachments on big capital. In a letter addressed to the Ministry of Finance the bankers “prophesied” a flow of capital abroad and a transfer of papers to the safes in case of radical financial reforms. In other words the banker-patriots threatened a financial lockout to complete the industrial one. The government hastened to accede: after all, the organisers of this sabotage were respected people who had been compelled as the result of the war and the revolution to risk their capital, and not any old Kronstadt sailors who risked

nothing but their heads.

The Executive Committee could not fail to understand that the responsibility for the economic fate of the country, especially since the open association of the socialists in the government, would lie in the eyes of the masses upon the ruling Soviet majority. The economic department of the Executive Committee had worked out a broad programme of state regulation of the economic life. Under pressure of the threatening situation, the proposals of very moderate economists had proved much more radical than their authors. "For many branches of industry," read this programme, "the time is ripe for a state trade monopoly (bread, meat, salt. leather); for others, the conditions are ripe for the formation of regulating state trusts (coal, oil, metals, sugar, paper); and finally, for almost all branches of industry contemporary conditions demand a regulative participation of the state in the distribution of raw materials and finished products, and also in the fixation of prices.... Simultaneously with this it is necessary to place under control ... all credit institutions."

On May 16, the Executive Committee with its bewildered political leadership adopted the proposals of the economists almost without debate, and backed them up with a unique warning addressed to the government: It should take upon itself "the task of a planned organisation of the national industry and labour," calling to memory that in consequence of the non fulfilment of this task "the old regime fell and it had been necessary to reorganise the Provisional Government." In order to pump up their courage the Compromisers were scaring themselves.

"The programme is excellent," wrote Lenin, "both the control and the governmentalising of the trusts, also the struggle with speculation, and liability for labour. . . . It is necessary to recognise this programme of 'frightful' Bolshevism, for no other programme and no other way out of the actually threatening terrible collapse can be found." However, the whole question was: Who was to carry out this excellent programme? Would it be the Coalition? The answer was given immediately. The day after the adoption by the Executive Committee of the economic programme, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Konovalov, resigned and slammed the door behind him. He was temporarily replaced by the engineer Palchinsky, a no less loyal but more energetic representative of big capital. The minister-socialists did not even dare seriously propose the programme of the Executive Committee to their liberal colleagues. Chernov, you remember, was vainly trying to get the government to adopt a veto on land sales. In answer to its growing difficulties, the government, on its side, brought forward a programme of unloading Petrograd, that is, transferring shops and factories into the depths of the country. This programme was motivated both by military considerations-the danger that the Germans might seize the capital-and by economic: Petrograd was too far from the sources of fuel and raw materials. This unloading would have meant the liquidation of the Petrograd industries for a series of months and years. The political aim

was to scatter throughout the whole country the vanguard of the working class. Parallel with this the military power brought forward one pretext after another for deporting from Petrograd the revolutionary military units.

Palchinsky tried with all his might to convince the workers' section of the Soviet of the advantages of an unloading. To accomplish this task against the will of the workers was impossible. But the workers would not agree. The unloading scheme got forward as little as the regulation of industry the break down was going deeper. Prices were rising. The silent lockout was broadening, and the therewith unemployment. The government was marking time. Miliukov wrote later: "The ministry was simply swimming with the current, and the current was running in the Bolshevik channel." Yes, the current was running in the Bolshevik channel.

The proletariat was the chief motive force of revolution. At the same time the revolution was giving shape to the proletariat. And the proletariat was badly in need of this.

We have observed the decisive role of the Petrograd workers in the February days. The most militant positions were occupied by the Bolsheviks. Immediately after the overturn, however, the Bolsheviks retired into the background. The Compromise parties advanced to the front of the political stage. They turned over the power to the liberal bourgeoisie. Patriotism was the countersign of this bloc. Its assault was so strong that at least one half of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party capitulated to it. With Lenin's arrival the course of the party changed abruptly, and thereafter its influence grew swiftly. In the armed April demonstration the front ranks of the workers and soldiers were already trying to break the chain of the Compromisers. But after a first effort they fell back. The Compromisers remained at the helm.

Later on, after the October revolution, a good deal was written to the effect that the Bolsheviks owed their victory to the peasant army, tired of the war. That is a very superficial explanation. The opposite statement would be nearer to the truth: If the Compromisers got a dominant position in the February revolution, it is thanks most of all to the unusual place occupied in the life of the country by a peasant army. If the revolution had developed in peace time, the leading role of the proletariat would have had from the beginning a far more sharply expressed character. Without the war the revolutionary victory would have come later, and if you do not count the victims of the war, would have been paid for at a higher price. But it would not have left a place for an inundation of compromising patriotic moods. At any rate, the Russian Marxists who had prophesied long before these events a conquest of proletariat in the course of the bourgeois revolution did not take for their starting point the temporary moods army, but the class structure of the Russian society. That prophecy was wholly confirmed. But the fundamental correlation of classes was refracted through the war and temporarily shifted by the pressure of the army-that is, by an organisation of declassed

and armed peasants. It was just this artificial social formation which so extraordinarily strengthened the hold of the petty bourgeois compromise policy, and made possible an eight-months' period of experiments, weakening to the country and the revolution.

However, the question as to the roots of compromisism is not exhausted by reference to the peasant army. In the proletariat itself, in its make-up, its political level, we must seek supplementary causes for the temporary entrenchment of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The war brought vast changes in the constitution and mood of the working class. If the preceding years had been a time of revolutionary afflux, the war sharply broke off that process. The mobilisation was thought out and conducted not only from a military, but still more from a police viewpoint. The government made haste to clean out from the industrial districts the more active and restless groups of workers. We may consider it established that the mobilisation of the first months of war tore away from the industries as many as 40 per cent of the workers, chiefly the skilled workers. Their absence, having a very damaging effect on the course of production, called out hot protests from the industrialists in proportion to their high profits from the war industries. A further destruction of the workers' cadres was thus stopped. The workers indispensable to the industries remained in the capacity of men on military duty. The breaches effected by the mobilisation were made up by immigrants from the villages, small-town people, badly qualified workers, women, boys. The percentage of women in industry rose from 32 to 40 per cent.

The process of renewal and dilution of the proletariat reached its extreme dimensions in the capital. For the years of the war, 1914-17, the number of workers in large enterprises, those hiring more than 500, almost doubled in the Petrograd province. In consequence of the liquidation of plants and factories in Poland, and especially in the Baltic states, and still more in consequence of the general growth of the war industries, there were concentrated in Petrograd by 1917 about 400,000 workers in plants and factories. Out of these, 335,000 were in the one hundred and forty giant plants. The more militant elements of the Petrograd proletariat played no small part at the front in giving form to the revolutionary moods of the army. But those yesterday's immigrants from the villages who replaced them, often well-to-do peasants and shopkeepers hiding from the front, women and boys, were far more submissive than the ranking workers. To this we must add that the qualified workers who found themselves in the position of men on military duty-and of these there were hundreds of thousands-observed an extraordinary caution through fear of being, thrown over to the front. Such was the social basis of the patriotic mood, which had prevailed with a part of the workers even under the czar. But there was no stability in this patriotism. The merciless military and police repression, the redoubled exploitation, defeats at the front, and industrial breakdown, pushed the workers into the struggle. Strikes. during the war were predominantly economic in character, however, and distinguished by far more moderation than before the war. The weakening of the class was increased by the weakening of its

party. After the arrest and exile of the Bolshevik Duma deputies, there was carried out with the help of a previously prepared hierarchy of provocateurs a general smash-up of the Bolshevik organisations, from which the party did not recover until the February revolution. During 1915 and 1916 the diluted working class had to go through an elementary school of struggle before the partial economic strikes and demonstrations of hungry women could in February 1917 fuse in a general strike, and draw the army into an insurrection.

The Petrograd proletariat thus entered the February revolution not only in a heterogeneous condition, not yet having amalgamated its constituent parts, but with a lowered political level even of its advanced layers. In the provinces it was still worse. It was this revival of political illiteracy and semi-illiteracy in the proletariat, caused by the war, which created the second condition necessary for the temporary dominance of the Compromise parties.

A revolution teaches and teaches fast. In that lies its strength. Every week brings something new to the masses. Every two months creates an epoch. At the end of February, the insurrection. At the end of April, a demonstration of the armed workers and soldiers in Petrograd. At the beginning of July, a new assault, far broader in scope and under more resolute slogans. At the end of August, Kornilov's attempt at an overthrow beaten off by the masses. At the end of October, conquest of power by the Bolsheviks. Under these events, so striking in their rhythm, molecular processes were taking place, welding the heterogeneous parts of the working class into one political whole. In this again the chief role was played by the strike.

Frightened by the lightning of revolution striking in the midst of their bacchanalia of war profits, the industrialists made concessions in the first weeks to the workers. The Petrograd factory owners even agreed, with qualifications and exceptions, to the eight-hour day. But that did not quiet things, since the standard of living continually sank. In May the Executive Committee was obliged to concede that with the increasing cost of living the situation of the workers "borders for many categories upon chronic starvation." The mood in the worker districts was becoming more and more nervous and tense. What depressed them most of all was the absence of prospects. The masses are capable of enduring the heaviest deprivations when they understand what for, but the new regime was more and more revealing itself to them as a mere camouflage of the old relations against which they had revolted in February. This they would not endure.

The strikes were especially stormy among the more backward and exploited groups of workers. Laundry workers, dyers, coopers, trade and industrial clerks, structural workers, bronze workers, unskilled workers, shoemakers, paper-box makers, sausage makers, furniture workers, were striking, layer after layer, throughout the month of June. The metal-workers were beginning, on the contrary, to play a restraining role. To the advanced

workers it was becoming more and more clear that individual economic strikes in the conditions of war, breakdown and inflation could not bring a serious improvement, that there must be some change in the very foundations. The lockout not only made the workers favourable to the demand for the control of industry, but even pushed them toward the thought of the necessity of taking the factories into the hands of the state. This inference seemed the more natural in that the majority of private factories were working for the wax, and that alongside them were state enterprises of the same type. Already in the summer of 1917 delegations began to arrive in the capital from the far ends of Russia, delegations of workers and clerks, with a plea that the factories should be taken over by the treasury, since the shareholders had stopped financing them. But the government would not hear of this; consequently it was necessary to change the government. The Compromisers opposed this. The workers began to shift their front against the Compromisers. The Putilov factory with its 40,000 workers was a stronghold of the Social Revolutionaries during the first months of the revolution. But its garrison did not long defend it against Bolsheviks. At the head of the Bolshevik attack most often was to be seen Volodarsky, a tailor in the past. A Jew who had spent some years in America and spoke English well, Volodarsky was a magnificent mass orator, logical, ingenious and bold. His American intonation gave a unique expressiveness to his resonant voice, ringing out concisely at meetings of many thousands. “From the moment of his arrival in the Narva district,” says the worker Minichev, “the ground in the Putilov factory began to slip under the feet of the Social Revolutionary gentlemen, and in the course of something like two months the Putilov workers had gone over to the Bolsheviks.”

The growth of strikes, and of the class struggle in general, almost automatically raised the influence of the Bolsheviks. In all cases where it was a question of life-interests the workers became convinced that the Bolsheviks had no ulterior motives, that they were concealing nothing, and that you could rely on them. In the hours of conflict all the workers tended toward the Bolsheviks, the non-party workers, the Social Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks. This is explained by the fact that the factory and shop committees, waging a struggle for the life of their factories against the sabotage of the administration and the proprietors, went over to the Bolsheviks much sooner than the Soviet. At a conference of the factory and shop committees of Petrograd and its environs at the beginning of June, the Bolshevik resolution won 885 out of 421 votes. This fact went by utterly unnoticed in the big newspapers. Nevertheless it meant that in the fundamental questions of economic life the Petrograd proletariat, not yet having broken with the Compromisers, had nevertheless as a fact gone over to the Bolsheviks.

At the June conference of trade unions it became known that in Petrograd there were over 50 unions with no less than 250,000 members. The metal workers’ union numbered about 190,000 workers; its membership had doubled in the course of the one month of

May. The influence of the Bolsheviks in the union had grown still more swiftly. All the by-elections to the soviets showed a victory for the Bolsheviks. By the 1st of June in the Moscow Soviet there were already 206 Bolsheviks against 176 Mensheviks and 110 Social Revolutionaries. The same shifts occurred in the provinces, only more slowly. The membership of the party was growing steadily. At the end of April the Petrograd organisation had 15,000 members. By the end of June, over 82,000.

The workers' section of the Petrograd Soviet had at that time already a Bolshevik majority. But at a joint session of both sections the soldier delegates overweighed the Bolsheviks. Pravda as more and more insistently demanding general elections: The 500,000 Petrograd workers have four times fewer delegates in the Soviet than the 150,000 soldiers of the Petrograd garrison."

At the June congress of the Soviets Lenin demanded serious measures of struggle against lockouts, plunderings and organised disruption of economic life on the part of the industrialists and bankers. "Publish the profits of the capitalist gentlemen, arrest fifty or a hundred of the biggest millionaires. It will be enough to hold them for a few weeks, even on such privileged terms as Nicholas Romanov is held, with the simple aim of compelling them to reveal the threads, the tricky manipulations, the filth, and selfishness, which even under the new government are costing our country millions." To the Soviet leaders Lenin's proposal seemed monstrous. "You imagine that you can alter the laws of economic life by acts of violence against individual capitalists¿' The circumstance that these industrialists were dictating the laws by way of a conspiracy against the nation was considered a part of the due order of things. Kerensky, who came down on Lenin with thunderous indignation, did not hesitate a month later to arrest many thousands of workers who differed with the industrialists in their understanding of the "laws of economic life".

The bond between economics and politics was being revealed. The state, accustomed to appear in the quality of a mystic principle, was operating now oftener and oftener in its most primitive form, that is, in the form of detachments of armed men. The workers in various parts of the country were subjecting the bosses who refused to make concessions or even negotiate, now to enforced appearance before the soviet, now to house arrest. It is no wonder that the workers' militia became an object of special hatred to the possessing classes.

The initial decision of the Executive Committee to arm ten per cent of the workers had not been carried out. But the workers succeeded in arming partially just the same, and moreover the more active elements got into the ranks of the militia. The leadership of the workers' militia was concentrated in the hands of the factory committees, and the leadership of the factory committees was coming over more and more into the hands of the Bolsheviks. A worker of the Moscow factory, Postavshchik, relates: "On the 1st of

June as soon as the new Factory Committee was elected with a Bolshevik majority . . . a detachment of eighty men was formed, which in the absence of weapons drilled with sticks, under the leadership of an old soldier, Comrade Levakov."

The press accused the militia of acts of violence, requisitions, and illegal arrests. It is indubitable that the militia did employ violence: it was created exactly for that. Its crime consisted, however, in resorting to violence in dealing with representatives of that class which was not accustomed to be the object of violence and did not want to get accustomed to it.

In the Putilov factory, which played the leading role in the struggle for higher wages, a conference assembled on the 23rd of June, in which participated representatives of the Central Council of Factory and Shop Committees, the Central Bureau of the Trade Unions and 73 plants. Under the influence of the Bolsheviks the conference recognised that the strike of a factory under the given conditions might entail an "unorganised political struggle of the Petrograd workers," and therefore proposed to the Putilov workers to "restrain their legitimate indignation and prepare their forces for a general attack.

On the eve of that important conference the Bolshevik faction had warned the Executive Committee: "A mass of 40,000 may any day strike and come into the street. It would already have done so if our party had not restrained it. And moreover there is no guarantee that in the future we can restrain it. But a coming out of the Putilov men-there can be no doubt of it-will inevitably bring after it an action of the majority of the workers and soldiers."

The leaders of the Executive Committee judged these warnings to be demagogy, or else simply let them go in one ear and out the other, preserving their tranquillity. They themselves had almost ceased to visit the factories and barracks, since they had succeeded in making themselves odious in the eyes of the soldiers and workers. Only the Bolsheviks enjoyed sufficient authority to make it possible for them to restrain the workers, and soldiers from scattered action. But the impatience of the masses was already sometimes directed even against the Bolsheviks.

Anarchists appeared in the factories and in the fleet. As always in the face of great events and great masses, they exposed their organic bankruptcy. They found it the more easy to reject the state power in that they completely failed to understand the significance of the soviets as organs of a new state. Moreover, stunned by the revolution, they most often simply kept mum on the subject of the state. They revealed their bankruptcy for the most part by encouraging petty flare-ups. The economic blind alley and the growing embitterment of the Petrograd workers gave certain points of support to the anarchists. Incapable of seriously appraising the correlation of forces on a national scale, ready to regard every little impulse from below, as the last stroke of salvation, they sometimes accused the Bolsheviks

of irresolution and even of compromisism. But beyond grumbling they usually did not go. The response of the masses to the action of the anarchists sometimes served the Bolsheviks as a gauge of the steam pressure of the revolution.

The sailors who had met Lenin at the Finland station declared two weeks later, under patriotic pressure from all sides: "If we had known... by what ways he came to us, instead of rapturous cries of hurrah! we would have made heard our indignant shouts: 'Down with you! Back to the country you came through."' The soldiers' soviets in the Crimea threatened one after another to prevent with armed fists Lenin's entry into that patriotic peninsula, where he had no idea of going. The Volynsky regiment, the coryphee of February 27, in the heat of the moment even resolved to arrest Lenin, so that the Executive Committee found itself obliged to take its own measures against such an event. Moods of this kind had not finally dissipated up to the June offensive, and they flared up sharply again after the July days. At the same time in the most far-away garrisons and the most remote parts of the front the soldiers were speaking more and more boldly in the language of Bolshevism, often enough never guessing it. The Bolsheviks in the regiments were only single individuals, but the Bolshevik slogans were penetrating deeper. They seemed to be coming up spontaneously in a the country. Liberal observers saw nothing in this but ignorance and chaos. *Rech* wrote: "Our Fatherland is veritably turning into a sort of madhouse, where those possessed are in action and command, and people who have not yet lost their reason stand aside in fright and cling along the walls." In exactly these words the "moderates" have poured out their souls in all revolutions. The Compromisers' press comforted itself that the soldiers in spite of all misunderstanding did not want to have anything to do with the Bolsheviks. Meanwhile the unconscious Bolshevism of the mass, reflecting the logic of evolution, was constituting the inconquerable power of the Lenin party.

The soldier Pireiko relates how at the elections at the front to the congress of soviets, after a three-day debate, only Social Revolutionaries were elected. But right after that, notwithstanding the protest of the leaders, the soldiers adopted a resolution in favour of taking the land from the landlords, without waiting for the Constituent Assembly. "In general on questions which the soldiers understood, they were inclined farther to the left than the most extreme of extreme Bolsheviks." That is-what Lenin had in mind when he said that the masses "are a hundred times to the left of us."

A clerk in a motor-cycle shop somewhere in the Tauride province tells how not infrequently after reading the bourgeois, papers, the soldiers would abuse some sort of unknown creatures called Bolsheviks, and then immediately take up the discussion of the necessity of stopping the war, seizing the land from the landlords, etc. These were those same patriots who swore not to let Lenin into the Crimea. The soldiers in the gigantic rear garrisons were chafing. A vast accumulation of idle people impatiently awaiting a change in their

fate created a nervous condition which expressed itself in a continuous readiness to bring their discontent out into the street, in wholesale tramway rides and an epidemical chewing of sunflower seeds. The soldier with his trench-coat thrown over his shoulders, with a seedshell on his lip, became the most hated image to the bourgeois press. This man whom in war time they had crudely flattered, naming him no less than hero-which did not prevent their flogging this hero at the front-he whom after the February revolution they had lifted aloft as a liberator, became suddenly a thug, a traitor, a gunman, a German agent. Really, there was no vileness that the patriotic press would not attribute to the Russian soldiers and sailors.

All the Executive Committee did was to justify itself, struggle with anarchy, abate excesses, distribute frightened questionnaires and moral instructions. The president of the soviet in Czaritsyn-that city was considered a nest of anarcho-Bolshevism-to a questionnaire from the centre as to the state of affairs, answered with a clean-cut phrase: “The more the garrison goes to the left, the more the everyday man goes to the right.” You can extend this formula from Czaritsyn to the whole country. The soldier is moving to the left, the bourgeois to the right.

Every soldier who expressed a little more boldly than the rest what they were all feeling, was so persistently shouted at from above as a Bolshevik that he was obliged in the long run to believe it. From peace and land the soldiers’ thoughts began to pass over to the question of power. Responsiveness to the scattered slogans of Bolshevism changed into a conscious sympathy for the Bolshevik Party. In the Volynsky regiment, which in April had intended to arrest Lenin, the mood shifted in the course of two months in favour of the Bolsheviks. The same in the Egersky and Litovsky regiments. The Lettish sharpshooters had been brought into being by the autocracy in order to use for the ends of war the hatred of parcelled-out peasants and farm-hands against the Baltic barons. These regiments fought magnificently. But that spirit of class hatred on which the monarchy thought to rely, found a road of its own. The Lettish sharpshooters were among the first to break with the monarchy, and afterwards with the Compromisers. As early as May 17, the representatives of eight Lettish regiments almost unanimously adhered to the Bolshevik slogan: “All Power to the Soviets.” In the further course of the revolution they will play a mighty role.

An unknown soldier writes from the front: “To-day, June 13, we had a little meeting at headquarters, and they talked of Lenin and Kerensky. The soldiers for the most part were for Lenin, but the officers said that Lenin was very ’bourgui.”’ After the collapse of the offensive Kerensky’s name became utterly hateful to the army.

On June 21 the military students in Peterhof marched through the streets with banners and placards : “Down with the Spies,” “Long Live Kerensky and Brussilov.” It was Brussilov, of’ course, that the military students themselves stood for. Soldiers of the 4th Bat-

talion attacked the military students and roughhoused them, scattering the demonstration. The placard in honour of Kerensky was what provoked the most hatred.

The June demonstration greatly accelerated the political evolution of the army. The popularity of the Bolsheviks, the only party which had raised its voice in advance against the offensive, began to grow with extraordinary speed. It is true that the Bolshevik papers only with great difficulty found access to the army. Their circulation was extremely small in comparison with the liberal press and the patriotic press in general. "There is not even one of your papers to be seen anywhere," writes to Moscow a clumsy soldier's hand, "and we only make use of the rumour of your papers. They sprinkle us here with free bourgeois papers, carrying them along the front in whole bales." But it was just these patriotic papers which gave the Bolsheviks an incomparable popularity. Every case of protest from the oppressed, of land seizure, of accounts squared with the hated officers, these papers attributed to Bolsheviks. The soldiers concluded that the Bolsheviks are a righteous folk.

The commissar of the 12th Army reports to Kerensky at the beginning of July as to the mood of the soldiers: "Everything is in the long run blamed on the bourgeois ministers and the Soviet, which has sold out to the bourgeoisie. But in general in the immense mass is an opaque darkness; I am unhappy to report that even the newspapers axe but little read lately complete distrust of the printed word: 'They write pretty,' They are good at the tall talk."' In the first months the reports of the patriotic commissars were ordinarily a hymn to the revolutionary army, its consciousness, its discipline. Then, after four months of uninterrupted disappointments, when the army had lost confidence in the government orators and journalists, these same commissars discovered in it nothing but opaque darkness.

The more the garrison moves to the left, the more the everyday man moves to the right. Stimulated by the offensive, counter-revolutionary unions sprang up in Petrograd like mushrooms after rain. They gave themselves names, one more resonant than the other: Union of the Honour of the Fatherland, Union of Military Duty, Battalion of Freedom, Organisation of the Spirit, etc. These admirable signboards concealed the ambitions and attempts of the nobility, the officers, the officialdom, the bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie. Some of these organisations, such as the Military League, the Union of the Cavaliers of St. George, or the Volunteers' Division, were the finished nuclei of a military plot. Coming forward as flaming patriots, these knights of "honour" and "the spirit" not only found easy access to the Allied Missions, but even at times received governmental subsidies, a thing which had in its day been refused to the Soviet as a "private organisation." One of the offshoots of the family of the newspaper magnate Suvorin undertook the publication in those days of a *Little Newspaper,* which as an organ of "independent socialism" advocated an iron dictatorship, advancing Admiral Kolchak as its candidate. The more solid press, without as yet quite dotting its i's, tried in every way to create a popularity for Kolchak. The further

career of the admiral testifies that already in the summer of 1917 there was a broad plan connected with his name, and that there were influential circles behind Suvorin's back.

In obedience to a simple tactical calculation, the reaction, aside from certain individual explosions, pretended that it was directing its blows only against Leninists. The word "Bolshevik" became a synonym for satanic origin. Just as before the revolution the czarist commanders had put the responsibility for all misfortunes, including their own stupidity, upon German spies and more particularly upon "Yids," so now, after the collapse of the June offensive, the blame for failure and defeat was unceasingly laid upon Bolsheviks. In this matter democrats such as Kerensky and Tseretelli were almost in nowise distinguished, not only from liberals like Miliukov, but from outspoken feudalists like General Denikin.

As always happens when contradictions are intensified to the limit but the moment of explosion has not yet come, the grouping of political forces revealed itself more frankly and clearly not on fundamental questions, but on accidental side issues. One of the lightening rods for the diversion of political passions in those days was Kronstadt. That old fortress which was to have been a loyal sentry at the sea gates of the imperial capital, had in the past more than once lifted the banner of revolt. In spite of ruthless vengeances, the flame of rebellion never went out in Kronstadt. It flared up threateningly after the revolution. The name of this naval fortress soon became on the pages of the patriotic press a synonym of the worst aspect of the revolution, a synonym of Bolshevism. In reality, the Kronstadt Soviet was not yet Bolshevik. It contained in May 107 Bolsheviks, 112 Social Revolutionaries, 30 Mensheviks, and 97 non-party men. But these were Kronstadt Social Revolutionaries and Kronstadt non-party men, living under high pressure: a majority of them on important questions followed the Bolsheviks.

In the political sphere the Kronstadt sailors were not inclined either toward manoeuvring or toward diplomacy. They had their own rule: no sooner said than done. It is no wonder that in relation to a phantom government they tended toward an extremely simplified method of action. On May 13 the soviet resolved: "The sole power in Kronstadt is the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies." The removal of the government commissar, the Kadet Pepelyaev, who occupied the position of fifth wheel in a wagon, passed off in the fortress totally unnoticed. Model order was maintained. Card playing in the city was forbidden. All brothels were closed, and their inmates deported. Under threat of "confiscation of property and banishment to the front," the soviet forbade drunkenness in the streets. The threat was more than once carried into action.

Tempered in the terrible regime of the czarist fleet and the naval fortress, accustomed to stern work, to sacrifices, but also to fury, these sailors, now when the curtain of the new life was beginning to rise before them, a life in which they felt themselves to be the coming masters, tightened all their sinews in order to prove themselves worthy of the revolution.

They thirstily threw themselves upon both friends and enemies in Petrograd and almost dragged them by force to Kronstadt, in order to show them what revolutionary seamen are in action. Such moral tension could not of course last for ever, but it lasted a long time. The Kronstadt sailors became a kind of fighting crusaders of the revolution. But what revolution? Not that, in any case incarnated in the minister Tseretelli and his commissar Pepelyaev. Kronstadt stood there as a herald of the advancing second revolution. For that reason it was hated by all those for whom the first revolution had been more than enough.

The peaceful and unnoticed removal of Pepelyaev was portrayed in the press of the existing order almost as an armed insurrection against the unity of the state. The government complained to the Soviet. The Soviet immediately appointed a delegation to exert influence. The machine of the double sovereignty came into action with a creak. On May 24 the Kronstadt Soviet, with Tseretelli and Skobelev present, agreed, upon the insistence of the Bolsheviks, to acknowledge that in prolonging its struggle for the power of the soviets, it was practically obliged to submit to the power of the Provisional Government until the power of the soviets was established throughout the land. However, the next day, under pressure from the sailors, indignant at this submissiveness, the Soviet announced that the ministers had received only an "explanation" of the point of view of Kronstadt which remained unchanged. This was clearly a tactical mistake, but one behind which nothing was concealed except revolutionary ambition.

It was decided up above to make use of this lucky chance to give the Kronstadters a lesson, making them pay at the same time for their previous sins. The prosecutor, of course, was Tseretelli. With heartbreaking references to his prison days Tseretelli thundered especially against the Kronstadters for holding eighty officers behind the fortress bars. All the virtuous press backed him up. However, even the Compromisist, that is, the ministerial, papers had to acknowledge that it was a question of "direct embezzlement" and of "men who carried fist rule to a point of horror." " The sailor witnesses"-according to *Izvestia,* the official paper of Tseretelli himself "testify to the putting down (by the arrested officers) of the insurrection of 1906, to mass shootings, to barges filled with the corpses of men executed and drowned in the sea, and to other horrors.... They tell of these things quite simply as of everyday events."

The Kronstadters stubbornly refused to give up the arrestees to the government, to whom the hangmen and the peculators of noble birth were incomparably nearer than were those tortured sailors of 1906 and other years. It was no accident that the Minister of Justice, Pereverzev, whom Sukhanov mildly describes as "one of the most suspicious figures in the Coalition Government," systematically liberated from the Peter and Paul fortress the vilest agents of the czarist political police. The democratic upstarts were above all striving to compel the reactionary bureaucracy to acknowledge their nobleness.

To Tseretelli's indictment the Kronstadters answered in their appeal: "The officers, gendarmes and police arrested by us in the days of the revolution have themselves declared to representatives of the government that they have nothing to complain of in the treatment they have received from the prison management. It is true that the prison buildings of Kronstadt are horrible, but those are the same prisons which were built by czarism for us. We haven't any others. And if we keep the enemies of the people in those prisons it is not out of vengeance, but from considerations of revolutionary self-preservation."

On the 27th of May the Petrograd Soviet tried the Kronstadters. Appearing in their defence, Trotsky warned Tseretelli that in case of danger "when a counter-revolutionary general tries to throw a noose around the neck of the revolution, the Kadets will soap the rope, and the Kronstadt sailors will come to fight and die with us." This warning came true three months later with unexpected literalness: when General Kornilov raised his revolt and led troops against the capital, Kerensky, Tseretelli and Skobelev summoned the Kronstadt sailors to defend the Winter Palace. But what of that? In June the democratic gentlemen were defending law and order against anarchy, and no arguments or prophecies had weight with them. By a majority of 580 votes against 162, with 74 abstaining, Tseretelli carried through the Petrograd Soviet a resolution denouncing the "apostasy" of "anarchist" Kronstadt from the revolutionary democracy. No sooner had the impatiently awaited news reached the Mariinsky Palace that this bull of excommunication had been adopted than the government immediately cut off telephone communication for private people between the capital and the fortress in order to prevent the Bolshevik centre from influencing the Kronstadters, ordered all the training ships to leave the Kronstadt waters, and demanded of its soviet "unconditional submission." The congress of peasant deputies sitting at that time threatened to "refuse foodstuffs to Kronstadt." The reaction standing behind the back of the Compromisers sought a decisive and, to the extent possible, a bloody settlement.

"The reckless step of the Kronstadt Soviet," writes one of the young historians, Yugov, "might have brought undesirable consequences. It was necessary to find a suitable way to get out of the situation created. With this aim Trotsky went to Kronstadt, where he addressed the soviet and wrote a declaration which was adopted by the soviet and afterwards carried unanimously-by Trotsky at a meeting on Yakorny Square." Preserving their position in principle, the Kronstadters yielded upon the practical issue.

The peaceful settlement of the conflict left the bourgeois press completely beside themselves: There is anarchy in the fortress; the Kronstadters are printing their own money-fantastic specimens of it were reproduced in the papers-they are plundering state property, the women are nationalised, robberies and drunken orgies are in progress. The sailors, so proud of their austere order, doubled their horny fists on reading these papers which in millions of copies were distributing slanders against them throughout all Russia.

Having got the Kronstadt officers in their hands the judicial institutions of Pereverzev freed them one after another. It would be very instructive to find out how many of them subsequently participated in the civil war, and how many sailors, soldiers, workers and peasants were shot and hung by them. Unfortunately, we are not here in a position to carry out this instructive census.

The authority of the government was saved. But the sailors soon got satisfaction for the indignities suffered. From all corners of the country there began to arrive resolutions of greeting to Red Kronstadt: from individual left soviets, from factories, regiments, mass-meetings. The first machine-gun regiment demonstrated in solid ranks on the streets of Petrograd its respect for the Kronstadters "for their firm attitude of non-confidence in the Provisional Government."

Kronstadt was getting ready, however, to take a more significant revenge. The baiting of the bourgeois press had-made it a factor of all-national importance. "Fortifying itself in Kronstadt," writes Miliukov, "Bolshevism with the help of suitably trained agitators threw out widely over Russia a net of propaganda. Kronstadt emissaries were sent also to the front, where they undermined discipline, and to the rear, into the villages, where they incited to the sacking of estates. The Kronstadt Soviet gave these emissaries special mandates: 'N. N. has been sent to his province to be present with the right of a deciding vote in the county, district and village committees, and also to speak at meetings and call meetings at his own discretion where ever he wants to,' with 'the right to bear arms, with unhindered and free transportation on all railroads and steamships.' And therewith 'the inviolability of the person of the said agitator is guaranteed by the Soviet of the City of Kronstadt.' "

In exposing the undermining work of the Baltic sailors Miliukov only forgets to explain how and why, notwithstanding the presence of learned authorities, institutions and newspapers, solitary sailors armed with this strange mandate of the Kronstadt Soviet travelled all over the country without hindrance, found food and lodging everywhere, were admitted to all popular meetings, everywhere attentively listened to, and left the imprint of a sailor's hand on the events of history. The historian in the service of liberal politics does not ask himself this simple question. But the Kronstadt miracle was thinkable only because the sailors far more deeply expressed the demands of historic evolution than the very intelligent professors. The semi-literate mandate was, to speak in the language of Hegel real because it was reasonable, whereas the subjectively most intelligent plans were spectral because the reason of history was not even camping in them for the night.

The soviets lagged behind the shop committees. The shop committees lagged behind the masses. The soldiers lagged behind the workers. Still more the provinces lagged behind the capital. Such is the inevitable dynamic of a revolutionary process, which creates thousands

of contradictions only in order accidentally and in passing, as though in play, to resolve them and immediately create new ones. The party also lagged behind the revolutionary dynamic-an organisation which has the least right to lag, especially in a time of revolution. In such workers' centres as Ekaterinburg, Perm, Tula, Nizhni-Novgorod, Sormovo, Kolomna, Yuzovka, the Bolsheviks separated from the Mensheviks only at the end of May. In Odessa, Nikolaev, Elisavetgrad, Poltava and other points in the Ukraine, the Bolsheviks did not have independent organisations even in the middle of June. In Baku, Zlatioust, Bezhetsk, Kostroma, the Bolsheviks divided from the Mensheviks only towards the end of June. These facts cannot but seem surprising when you take into consideration that within four months the Bolsheviks are going to seize the power. How far the party during the war had fallen behind the molecular process in the masses, and how far the March leadership of Kamenev and Stalin lagged behind the gigantic historic tasks! The most revolutionary party which human history until this time had ever known was nevertheless caught unawares by the events of history. It reconstructed itself in the fires, and straightened out its ranks under the onslaught, of events. The masses at the turning point were "a hundred times" to the left of the extreme left party. The growth of the Bolshevik influence, which took place with the force of a natural historical process, reveals its own contradiction upon a closer examination, its zigzags, its ebbs and flows. The masses are not homogeneous, and more over they learn to handle the fire of revolution only by burning their hands and jumping away. The Bolsheviks could only accelerate the process of education of the masses. They patiently explained. And history this time did not take advantage of their patience.

While the Bolsheviks were resolutely winning the shops, factories and regiments, the elections to the democratic dumas gave an enormous and apparently growing advantage to the Compromisers. This was one of the sharpest and most enigmatical contradictions of the revolution. To be sure, the duma of the Vyborg district, which was purely proletarian, prided itself upon its Bolshevik majority. But that was an exception. In the city elections of Moscow in June, the Social Revolutionaries got more than 60 per cent of the votes. They themselves were astonished at this figure, for they could not but feel that their influence was swiftly dwindling. In the effort to understand the mutual relation between the real development of the revolution and its reflection in the mirrors of democracy the Moscow elections have an extraordinary interest. The vast layers of workers and soldiers were already hastily shaking off their Compromisist illusions. Meanwhile, the broadest layers of the small town people were also beginning to stir. For these scattered masses the democratic elections offered almost the first, and in any case one of the very rare opportunities to show themselves politically. While the worker, yesterday's Menshevik or Social Revolutionary, gave his vote to the Bolshevik Party and drew the soldier along with him, the cabman, the deliveryman, the janitor, the market woman, the shopkeeper, his assistant, the teacher, in performing so heroic a deed as giving their vote to the Social Revolutionaries, for the first

time emerged from political non-existence. The petty bourgeois layers belatedly voted for Kerensky because he personified in their eyes the February revolution, which had only to-day seeped down to them. With its 60 per cent Social Revolutionary majority the Moscow Duma glowed with the last flare of a dying luminary. It was so also with all the other organs of democratic self-administration. Having barely arrived, they were already stricken with the impotence of belatedness. That meant that the course of the revolution depended upon the workers and soldiers, and not upon that human dust which had been kicked up and was dancing in the whirlwind of the revolution.

Such is the deep and at the same time simple dialectic of the revolutionary awakening of the oppressed classes. The most dangerous of the aberrations of the revolution arises when the mechanical accountant of democracy balances in one column yesterday, to-day and to-morrow, and thereby impels the formal democrats to look for the head of the revolution where in reality is to be found its very heavy tail. Lenin taught his party to distinguish head from tail.

CHAPTER 22

THE SOVIET CONGRESS AND THE JUNE DEMONSTRATION

The first congress of the soviets, which sanctioned the offensive for Kerensky, assembled in Petrograd on June 3 in the building of the Cadet Corps. There were 820 delegates with a vote and 268 with a voice. They represented 305 local soviets, 53 district and regional organisations at the front, the rear institutions of the army, and a few peasant organisations. The right to a vote was accorded to Soviets containing not less than 25,000 men. Soviets containing from 10,000 to 25,000 had a voice. On the basis of this ruleby the way, none too strictly observedwe may assume that over 20,000,000 people stood behind the soviets. Out of 777 delegates giving information as to their party allegiance, 285 were Social Revolutionaries, 248 Mensheviks, 105 Bolsheviks; a few belonged to less important groups. The left wingthe Bolsheviks, and the Internationalists adhering to themconstituted less than a fifth of the delegates. The congress consisted for the most part of people who had registered as socialists in March but got tired of the revolution by June. Petrograd must have seemed to them a town gone mad.

The Congress began by ratifying the banishment of Grimm, an unhappy Swiss socialist who had been trying to save the Russian revolution and the German social democracy by means of back-stage negotiations with the Hohenzollern diplomats. The demand of the left wing that they take up immediately the question of the coming offensive was rejected by an overwhelming majority. The Bolsheviks looked like a tiny group. But on that very day and perhaps hour, a conference of the factory and shop committees of Petrograd adopted, also with an overwhelming majority, a resolution that only a government of soviets could save the country.

The Compromisers, no matter how near-sighted they were, could not help seeing what

was happening around them every day. In the session of June 4 the Bolshevik-hater, Lieber, evidently under the influence of the provincials, denounced the good-for-nothing commissars of the government to whom the power had not been surrendered in the provinces. "A whole series of functions of the governmental organs have as a result gone over into the hands of the soviets, even when the soviets did not want them." Those people had to complain to somebody even against themselves.

One of the delegates, a school teacher, complained to the congress that after four months of revolution there had not been the slightest change in the sphere of education. All of the old teachers, inspectors, directors, overseers of districts, many of them former members of the Black Hundreds, all of the old school programmes, reactionary textbooks, even the old assis tant ministers, remained peacefully at their posts. Only the czar's portraits had been removed to the attics, and these might any day be stuck back in their places.

The congress could not make up its mind to lift a hand against the State Duma, or against the State Council. Its timid ity before the reaction was covered up by the Menshevik orator Bogdanov with the remark that the Duma and the Soviet are "dead and non-existent organisations anyway." Martov, with his polemical wit, answered: "Bogdanov proposes that we should declare the Duma dead but not make any attempt upon its life."

The congress, in spite of its solid government majority, proceeded in an atmosphere of alarm and uncertainty. Patriotism had grown rather damp and gave out only lazy flashes. It was obvious that the masses were dissatisfied, and the Bolsheviks were immeasurably stronger throughout the country, and especially in the capital, than at the congress. Reduced to its elements, the quarrel between the Bolsheviks and the Compromisers invariably revolved around the question: With whom shall the democrats side, the imperialists or the workers? The shadow of the Entente stood over the congress. The question of the offensive was predetermined; the democrats had nothing to do but accede.

"At this critical moment," preached Tseretelli, "not one social force ought to be thrown out of the scales, so long as it may be useful to the cause of the people." Such was the justification for a coalition with the bourgeoisie. Seeing that the proletariat, the army, and the peasantry were upsetting their plans at every step, the democrats had to open a war against the people under guise of a war against the Bolsheviks. Thus Tseretelli had declared the Kronstadt sailors apostates in order not to throw out of his scales the Kadet Pepelyaev. The coalition was ratified by a majority of 543 votes against 126, with 52 abstaining.

The work of this enormous and flabby assembly in the Cadet Corps was distinguished by grandeur in the matter of declarations, and conservative stinginess in practical tasks. This laid on all its decisions a stamp of hopelessness and hypocrisy. The congress recognised the right of all Russian nationalities to self. determination, but gave the key to this problematic right not to the oppressed nations themselves, but to a future Constituent Assembly, in

which the Compromisers hoped to be in a majority and capitulate before the imperialists, exactly as they had done in the government.

The congress refused to pass a decree on the eight-hour day. Tseretelli explained this side-stepping by the difficulty of reconciling the interests of the different layers of the population. As though any single great need in history was ever accomplished by "reconciling interests," and not by the victory of progressive interests over reactionary!

Grohman, a Soviet economist, introduced toward the end of the congress his inevitable resolution: as to. the oncoming economic catastrophe and the necessity of governmental regulation. The congress adopted this ritual resolution, but only so that everything might remain as before.

"Having deported Grimm," wrote Trotsky, on the 7th of June, "the congress returned to the order of the day. But capitalistic profits remain as before inviolable for Skobelev and his colleagues. The food crisis is getting sharper every hour. In the diplomatic sphere the government is taking blow after blow. And finally this so hysterically proclaimed offensive is obviously getting ready to come down on the nation, a monstrous adven hire.

"We should be willing to watch peacefully the sanctified activities of the ministersLvov–TereshchenkoTseretellifor a number of months. We need time for our own preparations. But the underground mole digs too fast. With the help of the 'socialist' ministers the problem of power may rise before the members of this congress a great deal sooner than any of us imagine"

Trying to shield themselves from the masses with a higher authority, the leaders dragged the congress into all current conflicts, pitilessly compromising it in the eyes of the Petrograd workers and soldiers. The most resounding episode of this kind was the incident about the summer home of Durnovo, an old czarist bureaucrat who had made himself famous as Minister of the Interior by putting down the revolution of *1905*. The vacant home of this hated, and moreover dirty-handed, bureaucrat was seized by workers' organisations on the Vyborg sidechiefly because of the enormous gardens which became a favourite playground for children. The bourgeois press represented the place as a lair of pogromists and hold-up menthe Kronstadt of the Vyborg district. No one took the trouble to find out what the facts were. The government, carefully avoiding all important questions, undertook with fresh passion to rescue this house. They demanded sanction for the heroic undertaking from the Executive Committee, and Tseretelli of course did not refuse. The Procuror gave an order to evict the group of anarchists from the place in twenty-four hours. Learning about the military activities in preparation, the workers sounded the alarm. The anarchists on their side threatened armed resistance. Twenty-eight factories proclaimed a protest strike. The Executive Committee issued a proclamation accusing the Vyborg workers of aiding the counter-revolution. After all these preliminaries a representative of justice and the militia

penetrated into the lions' den. They found complete order reigning; the house was occupied by a number of workers' educational organisations. They were compelled to withdraw in shame. This history had, however, a further development.

On the 9th of June a bomb was exploded at the congress: in the morning's edition of *Pravda* appeared an appeal for a demonstration on the following day. Cheidze, who knew how to get scared, and was therefore inclined to scare others, announced in a voice from the tomb: ”If measures are not taken by the congress, to-morrow will be fatal.“ The delegates lifted their heads in alarm.

The idea of a show-down between the Petrograd workers and soldiers and the congress was suggested by the whole situation. The masses were urging on the Bolsheviks. The garrison especially was seethingfearing that in connection with the offensive they would be distributed among the regiments and scattered along the front. To this was united a bitter satisfaction with the ”Declaration of the Rights of the Soldier,“ which had been a big backward step in comparison with ”Order No. I,“ and with the régime actually established in the army. The initiative for the demonstration came from the military organisation of the Bolsheviks. Its leaders asserted, and quite rightly as events showed, that if the party did not take the leadership upon itself, the soldiers themselves would go into the streets. That sharp turn in the mood of the masses, however, could not be easily apprehended, and hence there was a certain vacillation in the ranks of the Bolsheviks themselves. Volodarsky was not sure that the workers would come out on the street. There was fear, too, as to the possible character of the demonstration. Representatives of the military organisation declared that the soldiers, fearing attacks and reprisals, would not go out without weapons. ”What will come out of the demonstration¿‘ asked the prudent Tomsky, and demanded supplementary deliberations. Stalin thought that ”the fermentation among the soldiers is a fact; among the workers there is no such definite mood,“ but nevertheless judged it necessary to show resistance to the government. Kalinin, always more inclined to avoid than welcome a battle, spoke emphatically against the demonstration, referring to the absence of any clear motive, especially among the workers: ”The demonstration will be purely artificial.“ On June 8, at a conference with the representatives of the workers' sections, after a series of preliminary Votes, 131 hands against 6 were finally raised for the demonstration, with 22 abstaining.

The work of preparation was carried on up to the last moment secretly, in order not to permit the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to start a counter-agitation. That legitimate measure of caution was afterwards interpreted as evidence of a military conspiracy. The Central Council of Factory and Shop Committees joined in the decision to organise the demonstration. ”Upon the insistence of Trotsky and against the objection of Lunacharsky,“ writes Yugov, ”the Committee of the Mezhrayontzi decided to join the demonstration.“ Preparations were carried on with boiling energy.

The manifestation was to raise the banner of ”Power to the Soviets.“ The fighting slogan ran: ”Down with the Ten Minister-Capitalists“ That was the simplest possible expression for a break-up of the coalition with the bourgeoisie. The pro cession was to march to the Cadet Corps where the congress was sitting. This was to emphasise that the question was not of overthrowing the government, but of bringing pressure on the Soviet leaders.

To be sure, other ideas were expressed at the preliminary conferences of the Bolsheviks. For instance, Smilga, then a young member of the Central Committee, proposed that they should not ”hesitate to seize the Post Office, telegraph, and arsenal, if events developed to the point of a clash.“ Another participant in the conference, a member of the Petrograd Committee, Latsis, comments in his diary upon the rejection of Smilga’s proposal: ”I cannot reconcile myself ... I arrange with comrades Semashko and Rakhia to be fully armed in case of necessity and seize the railroad terminals, arsenals, banks, post and telegraph offices, with the help of a machine-gun regiment.“ Semashko was the officer of a machine-gun regiment. Rakhia, a worker, one of the militant Bolsheviks.

The existence of such moods is easily understandable. The whole course of the party was toward a seizure of power, and the question was merely of appraising the present situation. An obvious break in favour of the Bolsheviks was taking place in Petrograd, but in the provinces the same process was going slower. Moreover the front needed the lesson of an advance before it could shake off its distrust of the Bolsheviks. Lenin therefore stood firm on his April position: ”Patiently explain.“

Sukhanov in his *Notes* describes the plan of the demonstration of June 10, as a direct device of Lenin for seizing the power ”if the situation proves favourable.“ As a matter of fact, only individual Bolsheviks tried to put the matter this way, aiming according to the ironic expression of Lenin, ”just a wee bit too far to the left.“ Strangely enough, Sukhanov does not even try to compare his arbitrary guesses with the political line of Lenin expressed in innumerable speeches and articles.[see Appendix 3 for more information on this]

The Bureau of the Executive Committee immediately presented the Bolsheviks with a demand to call off the demonstration. On what grounds? Only the state power, obviously, could formally forbid a demonstration; but the state power did not dare think of it. How could the Soviet, itself a ”private organisation,“ led by a bloc composed of two political parties, pre vent a third party from demonstrating? The Bolshevik Central Committee refused to accede to the demand, but decided to emphasise more sharply the peaceful character of the demonstration. On the 9th of June, a Bolshevik proclamation was pasted up in the workers’ districts. ”We are free citizens, we have the right to protest, and we ought to use this right before it is too late. The right to a peaceful demonstration is ours.“

The Compromisers carried the question before the congress. It was at that moment that Cheidze pronounced his words about the fatal outcome, and that it would be necessary for

the congress to sit all night. A member of the præsidium, Gegechkori, also one of the sons of the Gironde, concluded his speech with a rude cry in the direction of the Bolsheviks: ”Take your dirty hands off a glorious cause¡‘ They did not give the Bolsheviks time, though it was demanded, to take up the question in a meeting of their faction. The congress passed a resolution for bidding all demonstrations for three days. Besides being an act of violence with relation to the Bolsheviks, this was an act of usurpation with relation to the government. The soviets continued to steal the power from under their own pillow.

Miliukov was speaking at this time at a Cossack conference, and called the Bolsheviks ”the chief enemies of the Russian revolution.“ Its chief friend, he allowed them to infer, was Miliukov himself, who just before February had agreed to accept defeat from the Germans rather than revolution from the Russian people. To a question from the Cossacks as to the attitude towards Leninists, Miliukov answered: ”It’s time to make an end of these people.“ The leader of the bourgeoisie was in too great a hurry. However, he really could not afford to waste time.

Meanwhile meetings were being held in factories and regiments, adopting resolutions to go into the streets the next day with the slogan ”All Power to the Soviets.“ Under the noise of the soviet and Cossack congresses, the fact passed unnoticed that 37 Bolsheviks were elected to the duma of the Vyborg district, only 22 from the Social Revolutionary-Menshevik bloc, and 4 Kadets.

Confronted with the categorical resolution of the congress and moreover with a mysterious reference to a threatening blow from the rightthe Bolsheviks decided to reconsider the question. They wanted a peaceful demonstration, not an insurrection, and they could not have any motive for converting a for bidden demonstration into a half-insurrection. On its side the presidium of the congress decided to take measures. Several hundred delegates were grouped in tens and sent out to the workers’ districts and the barracks to prevent the demonstration. They were to meet in the morning at the Tauride Palace and compare notes. The executive committee of the peasant deputies joined in this expedition, appointing 70 from its membership.

Thus, in however unexpected a manner, the Bolsheviks achieved their goal. The delegates of the congress found them selves obliged to get acquainted with the workers and soldiers of the capital. If the mountain was not allowed to come to the prophet, the prophet at least went to the mountain. The meeting proved instructive in the highest degree. In the Izvestia of the Moscow Soviet, a Menshevik correspondent paints the following picture: ”All night long, without a wink of sleep, a majority of the congress, more than 500 members, dividing themselves into tens, travelled through the factories and shops and military units of Petrograd, urging everybody to stay away from the demonstration. . . . The congress had no authority in a good many of the factories and shops, and also in several

regiments of the garrison. . . . The members were frequently met in a far from friendly manner, sometimes hostilely, and quite often they were sent away with insults.“ This official Soviet organ does not exaggerate in the least. On the contrary, it gives a very much softened picture of this nocturnal meeting of two different worlds.

The Petrograd masses at least left no doubt among the dele gates as to who was able henceforth to summon a demonstration, or to call it off. The workers of the Putilov factory agreed to paste up the declaration of the congress against the demonstration only after they learned from *Pravda* that it did not contradict the resolution of the Bolsheviks. The first machine gun regimentwhich played the leading role in the garrison, as did the Putilov factory among the workersafter hearing the speeches of Cheidze and Avksentiev representing the two executive committees, adopted the following resolution: ”In agreement with the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks and their military organisation, the regiment postpones its action.“

This brigade of pacifiers arrived at the Tauride Palace after their sleepless night in a condition of complete demoralisation. They had assumed that the authority of the congress was in violable, but had run into a stone wall of distrust and hostility. ”The masses are thick with Bolsheviks.“ ”The attitude to the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries is hostile.“ ”They trust only *Pravda.“* ”In some places they shouted: ’We are not your comrades.’“ One after another the delegates reported how, although they had called off the battle, they were defeated.

The masses submitted to the decision of the Bolsheviks, but not without protest and indignation. In certain factories they adopted resolutions of censure of the Central Committee. The more fiery members of the patty in the sections tore up their membership cards. That was a serious warning.

The Compromisers had motivated their three-day veto of demonstrations by references to a monarchist plot, which hoped to avail itself of the action of the Bolsheviks; they mentioned the participation in it of a part of the Cossack congress and the approach to Petrograd of counter-revolutionary troops.

It is not surprising if after calling off the demonstration the Bolsheviks demanded an explanation as to this conspiracy. In place of an answer the leaders of the congress accused the Bolsheviks themselves of a conspiracy. They found this happy way out of the situation.

It must be acknowledged that on the night of June 10 the Compromisers did discover a conspiracy, and one which shook them badlya conspiracy of the masses with the Bolsheviks against the Compromisers. However, the submission of the Bolsheviks to the resolution of the congress encouraged them and permitted their panic to turn into madness. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries decided to show aniron energy. On the 10th of

June the Menshevik paper wrote: ”It is time to brand the Leninists as traitors and betrayers of the revolution.“ A representative of the Executive Committee appeared at the Cossack congress and requested them to support the Soviet against the Bolsheviks. He was answered by the chairman, the ataman of the Urals, Dutov: ”We, Cossacks, will never go against the Soviet.“ Against the Bolsheviks the reactionaries were ready to go hand in hand even with the Soviet—in order the better to strangle it later on.

On June 11 there assembles a formidable court of justice: the Executive Committee, members of the presidium of the congress, leaders of the actionsin all about a hundred men. Tseretelli as usual appears in the role of prosecutor. Choking with rage, he demands deadly measures, and scornfully waves away Dan, who is always ready to bait the Bolsheviks, but still not quite ready to destroy them. ”What the Bolsheviks are now doing is not ideological propaganda, but a conspiracy.

The Bolsheviks must excuse us. Now we are going to adopt different methods of struggle. .. . *We have got to disarm the Bolsheviks.* We cannot leave in their hands those two great technical instruments which they have possessed up to now. We cannot leave machine guns and rifles in their hands. We will not tolerate conspiracies.“ That was a new note. What did it mean exactly to disarm the Bolsheviks? Sukhanov writes on this subject: ”The Bolsheviks really did not have any special stores of weapons. All the weapons were actually in the hands of soldiers and workers, the immense mass of whom were following the Bolsheviks. Disarming the Bolsheviks could mean only disarming the proletariat. More than that, it meant disarming the troops.“

In other words, that classic moment of the revolution had arrived when the bourgeois democracy, upon the demand of the reaction, undertakes to disarm the workers who had guaranteed the revolutionary victory. These democratic gentlemen, among whom were well-read people, had invariably given their sympathy to the disarmed, not to the disarmersso long as it was a question of reading old books. But when this question presented itself in reality, they did not recognise it. The mere fact that Tseretelli, a revolutionist, a man who had spent years at hard labour, a Zimmerwaldist of yesterday, was undertaking to disarm the workers, had some difficulty in making its way into people’s heads. The hall was stunned into silence. The provincial delegates nevertheless felt that someone was pushing them into an abyss. One of the officers went into hysterics.

No less pale than Tseretelli, Kamenev rose in his seat and cried out with a dignity the strength of which was felt by the audience: ”Mr. Minister, if you are not merely talking into the wind, you have no right to confine yourself to speech. Arrest me, and try me for conspiracy against the revolution.“ The Bolsheviks left the hall with a protest, refusing to participate in this mockery of their own party. The tenseness in the hall became almost unbearable. Lieber hastened to the aid of Tseretelli. Restrained rage was replaced by

hysterical fury. Lieber called for ruthless measures. ”If you want to win the masses who follow the Bolsheviks, then break with Bolshevism.“ But he was heard without sympathy, even with a half-hostility.

Impressionable as always, Lunacharsky immediately tried to find a common ground with the majority: Although the Bolsheviks had assured him that they had in mind only a peaceful demonstration, nevertheless his own experience had convinced him that ”it was a mistake to organise a demonstration“; however, we must not sharpen the conflicts. Without pacifying his enemies, Lunacharsky irritated his friends.

”We are not fighting with the left tendency,“ said Dan jesuiticallyhe was the most experienced, but also most futile of the leaders of the swamp. ”We are fighting with the counter revolution. It is not our fault if behind your shoulders stand the agents of Germany.“ The reference to Germans was merely a substitute for an argument. Of course these gentlemen could not point to any agents of Germany.

Tseretelli wanted to deal a blow; Dan merely wanted to show his fist. In its helplessness the Executive Committee sided with Dan. The resolution offered to the congress next day had the character of an exceptional law against Bolsheviks, but without immediate practical inferences.

”You can have no doubt after the visit of your delegates to the factories and regiments,“ said a declaration addressed to the congress in writing by the Bolsheviks, ”that if the demonstration did not take place, it was not because of your veto, but because our party called it off.... The fiction of a military conspiracy was created by the members of the Provisional Government in order to carry out the disarming of the proletariat of Petrograd and the disbanding of the Petrograd garrison.. . . Even if the state power went over wholly into the hands of the Sovietwhich we advocateand the Soviet tried to put fetters upon our agitation, that would not make us passively submit; we should go to meet imprisonment and other punishments in the name of the idea of international socialism which separates us from you.“

The Soviet majority and the Soviet minority confronted each other breast to breast three days as though for a decisive battle. But both sides stepped back at the last moment. The Bolsheviks gave up the demonstration. The Compromisers abandoned the idea of disarming the workers.

Tseretelli remained in the minority among his own people. But nevertheless from his point of view he was right. The policy of union with the bourgeoisie had arrived at a point where it became necessary to paralyse the masses who were not reconciled to the coalition. To carry the Compromise policy through to a successful endthat is, to the establishment of a parliamentary rule of the bourgeoisiedemanded the disarming of the workers and soldiers.

But Tseretelli was not only right. He was besides that powerless. Neither the soldiers nor the workers would have voluntarily given up their arms. It would have been necessary to employ force against them. But Tseretelli was already without forces. He could procure them, if at all, only from the hands of the reaction. But they, In case of a successful crushing of the Bolsheviks, would have immediately taken up the job of crushing the Compromise soviets, and would not have failed to remind Tseretelli that he was a former hard-labour convict and nothing more. However, the further course of events will show that even the reaction did not have forces enough for this.

Politically Tseretelli grounded his argument for fighting the Bolsheviks upon the assertion that they were separating the proletariat from the peasantry. Martov answered him: Tseretelli does not get his guiding ideas ”from the depth of the peasantry. A group of right Kadets, a group of capitalists, a group of landlords, a group of imperialists, the bourgeoisie of the West“these are the ones who are demanding the disarmament of the workers and soldiers. Martov was right: the possessing classes have more than once in history hidden their pretensions behind the backs of a peasantry.

From the moment of publication of Lenin’s April theses, a reference to the danger of isolating the proletariat from the peasants became the principal argument of all those who wanted to drag the revolution backward. It was no accident that Lenin compared Tseretelli to the ”old Bolsheviks.“

In one of his works of the year 1917, Trotsky wrote on this theme: ”The isolation of our party from the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, even its extreme isolation, even by way of solitary confinement, would still in no case mean the isolation of the proletariat from the oppressed peasantry and the oppressed city masses. On the contrary, a sharp demarcation of the policy of the revolutionary proletariat from the treacherous apostasy of the present leaders of the Soviet, can alone bring a saving political differentiation into the peasant millions, draw away the poor peasants from the traitorous leadership of the aggressive Social Revolutionary type of muzhik and convert the socialist proletariat into genuine leaders of the national plebeian revolution.“

But Tseretelli’s totally false argument remained alive. On the eve of the October revolution it reappeared with redoubled force as the argument of many ”old Bolsheviks“ against the uprising. Several years later when the intellectual reaction against October began, Tseretelli’s formula became the chief theoretical weapon of the school of the epigones.

*** * * :** At the same session of the congress which condemned the Bolsheviks in their absence, a representative of the Mensheviks unexpectedly moved to appoint for the following Sunday, the 18th of June, a manifestation of workers and soldiers in Petro grad and other important cities, in order to demonstrate to the enemy the unity and strength of the

democracy. The motion was carried, although not without bewilderment. Something over a month later Miliukov fairly well explained this un expected turn on the part of the Compromisers: ”In delivering Kadet speeches at the congress of the soviets, in disorganising the armed demonstration of June 10 . . . the minister. socialists felt that they had gone too far in our direction, that the ground was slipping under their feet. They got frightened and backed away abruptly toward the Bolsheviks.“ The decision to hold a demonstration on June 18 was, of course not a step in the direction of the Bolsheviks, but an attempt to turn toward the masses as against the Bolsheviks. Their nocturnal experience with the workers and soldiers bad caused a certain amount of trepidation among the heads of the soviets. Thus, for instance, in direct opposition to what had been in mind at the beginning of the congress, they hastily produced in the name of the government a resolution calling for the abolition of the State Duma and the summoning of a Constituent Assembly for the 30th of September. The slogans of the demonstration were chosen with this same idea of not causing any irritation to the masses: ”Universal Peace,“ ”Immediate Con vocation of a Constituent Assembly,“ ”Democratic Republic.“ Not a word either about the offensive or the coalition. Lenin asked in *Pravda: ”*And what has become of ’Complete Confidence to the Provisional Government,’ gentlemen? . . Why does your tongue stick in your throat¿‘ This irony was accurately to the point: the Compromisers did not dare demand of the masses confidence in that government of which they themselves were members.

The Soviet delegates, having a second time made the rounds of the workers’ districts and the barracks, gave wholly encouraging reports on the eve of the demonstration to the Executive Committee. Tseretelli, to whom these communications restored his equilibrium and inclination towards complacent sermonising, addressed some remarks to the Bolsheviks:

”Now we shall have an open and honest review of the revolutionary forces. . . . Now we shall see whom the majority is following, you or us.“ The Bolsheviks had accepted the challenge even before it was so incautiously formulated. ”We shall join the demonstration on the 18th,“ wrote *Pravda, ”*in order to struggle for those aims for which we had intended to demonstrate on the 10th.“

The line of marchevidently in memory of the funeral procession of three months before, which had been, at least superficially, a gigantic manifestation of the unity of the democracyagain led to Mars Field and the grave of the February martyrs. But aside from the line of march nothing whatever was reminiscent of those earlier days. About 400,000 people paraded, considerably less than at the funeral: absent from the Soviet demonstration were not only the bourgeoisie with whom the soviets were in coalition, but also the radical intelligentsia, which had occupied so prominent a place in the former parades of the democracy. Few but the factories and barracks marched.

The delegates of the congress, assembled on Mars Field, read and counted the placards.

The first Bolshevik slogans were met half-laughinglyTseretelli had so confidently thrown down his challenge the day before. But these same slogans were repeated again and again. ”Down with the Ten Minister- Capitalists¡‘ ”Down with the Offensive“ ”All Power to the Soviets¡‘ The ironical smiles froze, and then gradually disappeared. Bolshevik banners floated everywhere. The delegates stopped counting the uncomfortable totals. The triumph of the Bolsheviks was too obvious. ”Here and there,“ writes Sukhanov, ”the chain of Bolshevik banners and columns would be broken by specifically Social Revolutionary or official Soviet slogans. But these were drowned in the mass. Soviet officialdom was recounting the next day ’how fiercely here and there the crowd tore up banners bearing the slogan “Confidence to the Provisional Government.”’“ There is obvious exaggeration in this. Only three small groups carried placards in honour of the Provisional Government: the circle of Plekhanov, a Cossack detachment, and a handful of Jewish intellectuals who belonged to the Bund. This threefold combination, which gave the impression with its variegated membership of a political curio, seemed to have set itself the task of publicly exhibiting the impotence of the régime. Under the hostile cries of the crowd the Plekhanovites and the Bund lowered their placards. The Cossacks were stubborn, and their banners were literally torn from them by the demonstrators, and destroyed. ”The stream which had been flowing quietly along until then,“ writes *Izve4̃ia*, ”turned into a veritable river at the flood, just at the point of overflowing its banks.“ That was the Vyborg section, all under the banners of the Bolsheviks. ”Down with the Ten Minister-Capitalists“ One of the factories carried a placard:

”The right to Life is Higher than the rights of Private Property.“ This slogan had not been suggested by the party.

Dismayed provincials were looking everywhere for their leaders. The latter lowered their eyes or simply went into hiding. The Bolsheviks went after the provincials. Does this look like a gang of conspirators? The delegates agreed that it did not. ”In Petrograd you are the power,“ they conceded in a totally different tone from that in which they had spoken at the official sessions, ”but not in the provinces, not at the front. Petrograd Cannot go against the whole country.“ That’s all right, answered the Bolsheviks, your turn will soon comethe same slogans will be raised.

”During this demonstration,“ wrote the old man Plekhanov, ”I stood on Mars Field beside Cheidze: I saw in his face that he was not deceiving himself in the least about the significance of the astonishing number of placards demanding the over throw of the capitalist ministers. It was emphasised as though intentionally by the veritably imperious commands with which some of the Leninists addressed him as they passed by like people celebrating a holiday.“ The Bolsheviks certainly had ground for a holiday feeling. ”Judging by the placards and slogans of the demonstrators,“ wrote Gorky’s paper, ”the Sun day demonstration

revealed the complete triumph of Bolshevism among the Petersburg proletariat.“ It was a great victory, and moreover it was won on the arena and with the weapons chosen by the enemy. While sanctioning the offensive, recognising the coalition, and condemning the Bolsheviks, the soviet congress had called the masses on its own initiative into the streets. They came with the announcement: We don’t want either offensive or coalition; we are for Bolshevism. Such was the political meaning &f the demonstration. No wonder the papers of the Mensheviks, who had initiated the demonstration, asked themselves mournfully the next day: Who suggested that unhappy idea?

Of course not all the workers and soldiers in the capital took part in the demonstration, and not all the demonstrators were Bolsheviks. But by this time not one of them wanted a coalition. Those workers who still remained hostile to Bolshevism did not know what to oppose to it. Their hostility was thus converted into a watchful neutrality. Under the Bolshevik slogans marched no small number of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries who had not yet broken with their party, but had already lost faith in its slogans.

The demonstration of June18 made an enormous impression on its own participants. The masses saw that the Bolsheviks had become a power, and the vacillating were drawn to them. In Moscow, Kiev, Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, and many other provincial towns the demonstrations revealed an immense growth of the influence of the Bolsheviks. Everywhere the same slogans were advanced, and they struck at the very heart of the February regime. It was impossible not to draw conclusions. It seemed as though the Compromisers had nowhere to go. But the offensive helped them at the very last moment. On the 19th of June, there was a patriotic demonstration on the Nevsky under the leadership of Kadets, and with a portrait of Keren sky. In the words of Miliukov, ”It was so different from what happened on the same street the day before that there mingled with the feeling of triumph an involuntary feeling of uneasiness.“ Legitimate feeling! But the Compromisers gave a sigh of relief. Their thoughts immediately soared above both demonstrations in the form of a democratic synthesis. Those people were fated to drain the cup of illusion and humiliation to the dregs.

In the April days two simultaneous demonstrations, one revolutionary and the other patriotic, had gone to meet each other, and their clash resulted in casualties. The hostile demonstrations of the 18th and 19th of June followed one after the other. There was no direct clash then. But a clash was not to be avoided. It had only been postponed for two weeks.

The anarchists, not knowing how else to show their independence, availed themselves of the demonstration of June 18 for an attack on the Vyborg prisons. The prisoners, a majority of them criminal, were liberated without a fight and without casualtiesand not from one prison, but from several simultaneously. It seems obvious that the attack had not caught the

administration unawaresthat the administration had gladly gone half-way to meet actual and pretended anarchists. That whole enigmatical episode had nothing whatever to do with the demonstration. But the patriotic press linked them together. The Bolsheviks proposed to the congress of soviets a strict investigation of the manner in which 460 criminals had been let loose from various prisons. However, the Compromisers could not permit themselves this luxury: they were afraid they would run into men higher up in the administration and their own allies in a political bloc. Moreover, they had no desire to defend their own demonstration against malicious slanders.

The Minister of Justice, Pereverzevwho had disgraced himself a few days before in connection with the summer house of Durnovodecided to have vengeance, and under the pre text of a search for escaped convicts made a new raid on the place. The anarchists resisted; one of them was killed, and the house wrecked. The workers of the Vyborg side, considering the house their own, sounded the alarm. Several factories quit work; the alarm spread to other sections and even to the bar racks.

The last days of June pass in a continual commotion. A machine gun regiment prepares for an immediate attack on the Provisional Government. Workers from the striking factories make the rounds of the regiments calling them into the streets. Bearded peasants in soldiers' coats, many of them grey-haired, pass in processions of protest along the pavements: these middle-aged peasants are demanding that they be discharged for work in the fields. The Bolsheviks are carrying on an agitation against going into the streets: The demonstration of the 18th has said all that can be said: in order to produce a change, demonstrating is not enough; and yet the hour of revolution has not yet struck. On the 22nd of June, the Bolshevik press appeals to the garrison: ”Do not trust any summons to action in the Street delivered in the name of the Military Organisation.“ Delegates are arriving from the front with complaints of violence and punishments. Threats to reorganise the unsubmissive regiments Dour oil on the fire. ”In many regiments the soldiers are sleeping with weapons in their hands,“ says a declaration of the Bolsheviks to the Executive Committee. Patriotic demonstrations, often armed, lead to street fights. These are small discharges of the accumulated electricity. Neither side directly intends to attack: the reaction is too weak, the revolution is not yet fully confident of its power. But the streets of the town seem paved with explosive material. A battle hovers in the air. The Bolshevik press explains and restrains. The patriotic press gives away its fright with an un bridled baiting of Bolsheviks. On the 25th, Lenin writes: ”This universal wild cry of spite and rage against the Bolsheviks is the common complaint of Kadets, Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks against their own flabbiness. They are in a majority. They are the government. They are all together in a bloc. And they see that nothing comes of it. What can they do but rage against the Bolsheviks¿‘

CHAPTER 23

CONCLUSION

In the first pages of this work we tried to show how deeply the October revolution was rooted in the social relations of Russia. Our analysis, far from having been accommodated ex *post Thdo* to the achieved events, was on the contrary made by us long before the revolutionindeed before its prologue of 1905.

In the further pages we tried to see how the social forces of Russia revealed themselves in the events of the revolution. We recorded the activity of the political parties in their interrelations with the classes. The sympathies and antipathies of the author may be set aside. A historic exposition has a right to demand that its objectivity be recognised if, resting upon accurately established facts, it reproduces their inner connection on the basis of the real development of social relations. The inner casual order of the process thus coming to life becomes itself the best proof of the objectivity of the exposition.

The events of the February revolution passing before the reader have confirmed our theoretical prognosis for the time being by one half at leastthrough a method of successive elimination. Before the proletariat came to power all the other variants of the political development were subjected to the test of life and thrown aside as worthless.

The government of the liberal bourgeoisie with Kerensky as a democratic hostage, proved a total failure. The “April days’ were the first candid warning addressed by the October to the February revolution. The bourgeois Provisional Government was replaced after this by a Coalition whose fruitless ness was revealed on every day of its existence, In the June demonstration summoned by the Executive Committee on its own initiative, although perhaps not quite voluntarily, the February revolution tried to measure strength with the October and suffered a cruel defeat. The defeat was the more fatal in that it occurred in the Petrograd arena, and at the hands of those same workers and soldiers who had achieved the February revolution and turned it over to the rest of the country. The June

demonstration proved that the workers and soldiers of Petrograd were on their way to a new revolution whose alms were inscribed on their banners. Unmistakable signs testified that all the rest of the country, although with an inevitable delay, would catch up with Petrograd. Thus by the end of its fourth month the February revolution had already exhausted itself politically. The Compromisers had lost the confidence of the soldiers and workers. A conflict between the leading soviet parties and the soviet masses now became in evitable. After the manifestation of June 18, which was a peaceful test of the correlation of forces of the two revolutions, the contradiction between them must inevitably take an open and violent form.

Thus arose the ”July days.“ Two weeks after the demonstration which had been organised from above, the same workers and soldiers went out into the street on their own initiative and demanded of the Central Executive Committee that it seize the power. The Compromisers flatly refused. The July days led to street encounters and casualties, and ended with the dispersion of the Bolsheviks who were declared responsible for the bankruptcy of the February regime. That resolution which Tseretelli had introduced on June II and which was then voted downto declare the Bolsheviks beyond the law and disarm themwas carried out in full at the beginning of July. The Bolshevik papers were shut down; the Bolshevik military units were dissolved. The workers were disarmed. The leaders of the party were declared hirelings of the German Staff. One of them went into hiding, the others were locked up in jail.

But just this ”victory“ of the Compromisers over the Bolsheviks completely revealed the impotence of the democracy. Against the workers and soldiers the democrats were compelled to employ notoriously counter-revolutionary units, hostile not only to the Bolsheviks, but also to the Soviet: the Executive Committee already had no troops of its own.

The liberals drew from this the correct conclusion, which Miliukov formulated in the form of an alternative: Kornilov or Lenin? The revolution actually left no more room for the empire of the golden mean. The counter-revolution was saying to itself: now or never. The supreme commander-in-chief, Kornilov, raised a rebellion against the revolution under the guise of a campaign against the Bolsheviks. Just as all forms of the legal opposition before the revolution had adopted the camouflage of patriotismthat is, the necessities of the struggle against the Germansso now all forms of legal counter-revolution adopted as camouflage the necessities of the struggle against the Bolsheviks. Kornilov had the support of the possess mu classes and their party, the Kadets. This did not hinder, but rather promoted, the result that the troops deployed against Petrograd by Kornilov were defeated without a fight, capitulated without an encounter, went up in vapour like a drop falling on a hot stove-lid. Thus the attempt at a revolution *from the right* was made, and moreover by a man standing at the head of the army. The correlation of forces between the possessing

classes and the people was tested in action. In the choice between Kornilov and Lenin, Kornilov fell like a rotten fruit, although Lenin was still at that time compelled to re main in deep hiding.

What variant after that still remained unused, untried, untested? The variant of Bolshevism. Actually after the Kerni by attempt and its inglorious collapse, the masses stormily and decisively swung over to the Bolsheviks. The October revolution advanced with a physical necessity. In distinction from the February revolution, which has been called bloodless al though it cost Petrograd a considerable number of victims, the October revolution was actually achieved in the capital without bloodshed. Have we not the right to ask: What further demonstration could be given of the deep natural inevitability of the October revolution? Is it not clear that this revolution can seem the fruit of adventurism and demagogy only to those whom it damaged at the most sensitive point, the pocketbook? The bloody struggle breaks out only after the conquest of power by the Bolshevik soviets when the overthrown classes, with material support from the governments of the Entente, make desperate efforts to get back what they have lost. Then come the years of civil war. The Red Army is created, the hungry country is put under the régime of military communism and converted into a Spartan war camp. The October revolution step by step lays down its road, beats back all enemies, passes over the solution of its industrial problems, heals the heaviest wounds of the imperialist and civil war, and achieves gigantic successes in the sphere of the development of industry. There arise before it, however, new difficulties flowing from its isolated position with mighty capitalistic lands surrounding it. That belatedness of development which had brought the Russian proletariat to power, has imposed upon that power tasks which in their essence cannot be fully achieved within the framework of an isolated state. The fate of that state is thus wholly bound up with the further course of world history.

This first volume, dedicated to the February revolution, shows how and why that revolution was bound to come to nothing, The second volume will show how the October revolution triumphed.

APPENDIX I

(To the Chapter *Peculiarities of Russia's Development***) :** The question of the peculiarities of Russia's historic development. and, bound up therewith, the question of its future destinies, lay at the bottom of all the debates and groupings of the Russian intelligentsia throughout almost the whole of the nineteenth century. Slavophilism and westernism resolved this question in opposite ways but with similar dogmatism. They were replaced by the theories of the Narodniks and Marxism. Before the Narodnik theory conclusively faded out under the influence of bourgeois liberalism, it long and stubbornly defended the idea of a completely unique course of development for Russia, a detour around capitalism. In this sense the Narodniks continued the Slavophile tradition, purging it how ever of monarchist-churchly-Pan-Slavic elements, and giving it a revolutionary-democratic character.

In the essence of the matter the Slavophile conception, with all its reactionary fantasticness, and also Narodnikism, with all its democratic illusions, were by no means mere speculations, but rested upon indubitable and moreover deep peculiarities of Russia's development, understood one-sidedly however and incorrectly evaluated. In its struggle with Narodnikism, Russian Marxism, demonstrating the identity of the laws of development for all countries, not infrequently fell into a dogmatic mechanisation discovering a tendency to pour out the baby with the bath. This tendency is revealed especially sharply in many of the works of the well-known Professor Pokrovsky.

In 1922 Pokrovsky came down upon the historic conception of the author which lies at the basis of the theory of Permanent Revolution, We consider it useful, at least for readers interesting them selves not only in the dramatic course of events but also in revolutionary doctrine, to adduce here the more essential excerpts from our answers to Professor Pokrovsky published in two issues of the central organ of the Bolshevik Party, *Pravda,* July land 2,1922:

*Concerning the Peculiarities of Russia's Historic Development***:** Pokrovsky has published an article dedicated to my book: *1905,* which demonstratesnegatively, alas !what a complex matter it is to *apply* methods of historic materialism to living human history, and what

a rubber-stamp affair is often made out of history even by such deeply erudite people as Pokrovsky. The book which Pokrovsky criticises was directly called out by a desire to establish historically and justify theoretically the slogan of the conquest of power by the proletariat, as against the slogan of a bourgeois democratic republic, and also that of a democratic government of the proletariat and the peasantry. . . . This line of thought produced a very great theoretic indignation on the part of no small number of Marxists, indeed an overwhelming majority of them. Those who expressed this indignation were not only Mensheviks, but also Kamenev and Rozhkov (a Bolshevik-historian). Their point of view in broad outlines was as follows: The political rule of the bourgeoisie must precede the political rule of the proletariat; the bourgeois democratic republic must be a prolonged historic schooling for the proletariat; the attempt to jump over this stage is adventurism; if the working class in the West has not yet conquered the power, how can the Russian proletariat set itself this task? etc., etc. From the point of view of this pseudo-Marxism, which confines itself to historical mechanisms, formal analogies, converting historic epochs into a logical succession of inflexible social categories (feudalism, capitalism, socialism, autocracy, bourgeois republic, dictatorship of the proletariat)from this point of view the slogan of the conquest of power by the working class in Russia must have seemed a monstrous departure from Marxism. However, a serious empirical evaluation of the social forces as they stood in 190305 powerfully suggested the entire viability of a struggle for a conquest of power by the working class. Is this a peculiarity, or is it not? Does it assume profound peculiarities in the whole historical development or does it not? How does it come that such a task arose before the proletariat of Russia-i-that is, the most backward (with Pokrovsky's permission) country of Europe?

And in what consists the backwardness of Russia? Merely in the fact that Russia is belatedly repeating the history of the western European countries? But in that case would it be possible to talk of a conquest of power by the Russian proletariat? This conquest, how ever (We permit ourselves to remember), was actually made. Where lies the essence of all this? In that the indubitable and irrefutable belatedness of Russia's development under influence and pressure of the higher culture from the West, results not in a simple repetition of the Western European historic process, but in the creation of profound *peculiarities* demanding independent study.

This deep uniqueness in our political situation, which led to the victorious October revolution before the beginning of the revolution in Europe, had its roots in the peculiar correlation of forces among the different classes and the state power. When Pokrovsky and Rozhkov quarrelled with the Narodniks or liberals, demonstrating that the organisation and policy of czarism was determined by the economic development and the interests of the possessing classes, they were fundamentally right. But when Pokrovsky tries to repeat this against me, he simply hits the wrong mark.

The result of our belated historic development, in the conditions of the imperialist encirclement, was that our bourgeoisie did not have time to push out czarism before the proletariat had become an independent revolutionary force.

But for Pokrovsky the very question which constitutes for us the central theme of the investigation, does not exist.

Pokrovsky writes: 'To portray the Moscow Russ of the sixteenth century on a background of general European relations of that time is an extremely alluring enterprise. There is no better way to refute the prejudices prevailing until now even in Marxist circles about the primitiveness' of those economic foundations upon which the Russian autocracy arose," And further: "To present this autocracy in its real historic connections, as one of the aspects of commercial-capitalist Europe . . . that is an undertaking not only of extraordinary interest to the historian, but also of extraordinary educational importance for the reading public: there is no more radical way of putting an end to the legend of peculiarities' of the Russian historic process." Pokrovsky as we see, flatly denies the primitiveness and backwardness of our economic development, and therewith relegates the peculiarities of the Russian historic process to the sphere of legend. And the whole trouble is that Pokrovsky is completely hypnotised by the comparatively broad development of trade noticed by him and also by Rozhkov in sixteenth century Russia. It is hard to understand how Pokrovsky could make such a mistake. You might indeed imagine that trade is the basis of economic life and its infallible measuring rod. The German economist Karl Bucher twenty years ago tried to find in trade (the path between the producer and the consumer) a criterion of the whole economic development. Strive, of course, hastened to transport this "discovery" into the Russian economic science." At that time the theory of Bucher met a perfectly natural opposition from the Marxists. We find the criteria of economic development in productionin technique and the social organisation of labourand the path followed by the product from the producer to the consumer we regard as a secondary phenomenon, whose roots are to be found in that same production.

The large scope, at least in a spatial sense, of Russian trade in the sixteenth centuryhowever paradoxical from the standpoint of the Bucher-Struve criterionis explained exactly by the extraordinary primitiveness of Russian economy. The West European city was a craft-guild and trade-league city; our cities were above all administrative, military, consequently consuming, and not producing, centres. The craft-guild culture of the West formed itself on a relatively high level of economic development when all the fundamental processes of the manufacturing industries had been distinguished from agriculture, and had been converted into independent crafts, had created their own organisations, their own focusesthe citiesand at first a limited (belonging to local districts), but nevertheless stable, market. At the basis of the medieval European city therefore lay a comparatively high differentiation

of industry, giving rise to regular interrelations between the city centre and its agricultural periphery. Our economic backwardness, on the other hand, found its expression in the fact that craft, not yet separated from agriculture, preserved the form of home industry. Here we were nearer to India than to Europe, just as our medieval cities were nearer to the Asiatic than the European type, and as our autocracy, standing between the European absolutism and the Asiatic despotism, in many features approached the latter.

With the boundlessness of our spaces and the sparseness of the population (also a sufficiently objective sign, it would seem, of backwardness) the exchange of products presupposed a mediating r6le of trade-capital on the broadest scale. This scale was possible exactly because the West stood at a far higher level of development, had its own innumerable demands, sent out its merchants and its goods, and therewith stimulated our trade turnover with its extremely primitive, and in a certain measure barbarian, economic basis. Not to see this immense peculiarity of our historic development means not to see our whole history.

My Siberian boss (I spent two months entering poods and arshines in his ledger), Jacob Andreievich Chernykhthis was not in the sixteenth century, but at the very beginning of the twentiethenjoyed an almost unlimited rulership within the limits of Kirensky county, thanks to his trade operations. Jacob Andreievich bought up furs from the Tunghuz had bought in the parish contributions in kind from the priests of more remote districts, imported calico from the lrbitsk and Nizhni-Novgorod market, and above all supplied vodka. (In the Irkutsk province at that epoch the monopoly had not yet been introduced.) Jacob Andreievich was illiterate, but a millionaire (according to the value of the decimal in those days, not now). His “dictatorship,” as the representative of trade capital, was indubitable. He even always talked of ’my little Tuoghuzi.“ The city of Kirensk, like Verkholensk and Nizhni-llimsk, was a residence of sheriffs and magistrates, kulaks in hierarchical dependence one upon another, all kinds of officials, and a few wretched artisans. An organised handicraft as the basis of city economic life I did not find there, neither guilds, nor guild holidays, nor trade leagues, although Jacob Andreievich counted himself a member of the ”second League.“ Really this live bit of Siberian reality carries us far deeper into an understanding of the historic peculiarities of Russia’s development than what Pokrovsky says on this subject. That is a fact. The trade operations of Jacob Andreievich extended from the midstream of the Lena and its eastern tributaries to Nizhni-Novgorod and even Moscow. Few trades of Continental Europe can mark off such distances on their maps. However, this trade dictatorthis ’king of clubs,” in the language of the Siberian farmers was the most finished and convincing incarnation of our industrial backwardness, barbarism, primitiveness, sparseness of . population, scatteredness of peasant towns and villages, impassable country roads, creating around the counties, districts and villages in the spring and autumn floods a two-months’ swampy blockade, of our universal illiteracy, etc., etc. And Chernykh had risen to

his commercial importance on the basis of the Siberian (mid-Lensky) barbarism, because-the West-“Rassea,” “Moskva”-was exerting pressure, and was taking Siberia in tow, creating a combination of nomad economic primitiveness with alarm clocks from Warsaw.

The guild craft was the basis of the medieval city culture, which radiated also into the village. Medieval science, scholasticism, religious reformation, grew out of a craft-guild soil. We did not have these things. Of course the embryo symptoms, the signs, can be found, but in the West these things were not signs but powerful cultural economic formations with a craft-guild basis. Upon this basis stood the medieval European city, and upon this it grew and entered into the conflict with the church and the feudal lords, and brought into play against the lords the hand of the monarchy. That same city created the technical premises for standing armies in the shape of firearms.

Where were our craft-guild cities even in a remote degree similar to the western cities? Where was their struggle with the feudal lords? And was the foundation for the development of the Russian autocracy laid by a struggle of the industrial-commercial city with the feudal lord? By the very nature of our cities we had no such struggle, just as we had no Reformation. Is this a peculiarity or is not it?

Our handicraft remained at the stage of home industrythat is, did not split off from peasant agriculture. Our Reformation remained at the stage of the peasant sect, because it found no leader ship from the cities. Primitiveness and backwardness here cry to the heavens. . . .

Czarism arose as an independent state organisation (again only relatively independent within the limits of the struggle of living historic forces on an economic foundation), not thanks to a struggle of powerful feudal cities with powerful lords, but in spite of the complete industrial feebleness of our cities and thanks to the feeble ness of our feudal lords.

Poland in her social structure stood between Russia and the West, just as Russia stood between Asia and Europe. The Polish cities knew already much more of guild craft than ours did, but they did not succeed in rising high enough to help the kingly power break the barons. The state power remained in the immediate hands of the nobility. The result: complete impotence of the state and its disintegration.

What has been said of czarism relates also to capital and the proletariat. I cannot understand why Pokrovsky directs his rage only against my first chapter dealing with czarism. Russian capitalism did not develop from handicraft through manufacture to the factory, because European capital, at first in the trade form and afterwards in the finance and industrial form, poured down on us during that period when Russian handicraft had not in the mass divided itself from agriculture. Hence the appearance among us of the most modern capitalist industry in an environment of economic primitive. ness: the Belgian or American

factory, and round about it settlements, villages of wood and straw, burning up every year, etc. The most primitive beginnings and the latest European endings. Hence the mighty role of West European capital in Russian industry; hence the political weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie; hence the ease with which we settled accounts with the Russian bourgeoisie; hence our further difficulties when the European bourgeoisie interfered.

And our proletariat? Did it pass through the school of the medieval apprentice brotherhoods? Has it the ancient tradition of the guilds? Nothing of the kind. It was thrown into the factory cauldron snatched directly from the plough. Hence the absence of conservative tradition, absence of caste in the proletariat itself, revolutionary freshness: hencealong with other causesOctober, the first workers' government in the world. But hence also illiteracy, backwardness, absence of organisational habits, absence of system in labour, of cultural and technical education. All these minuses in our cultural economic structure we are feeling at every step.

The Russian state encountered the military organisation of Western nations standing on a higher political and cultural level. Thus Russian capital in its first step ran into the far more developed and powerful capital of the West and fell under its leadership. Thus the Russian working class in its first steps also found ready weapons worked out by the experience of the West European proletariat; the Marxian theory, the trade union, the political party. Whoever ex plains the character and policy of the autocracy merely by the interests of the Russian possessing classes forgets that besides the more backward, poorer and more ignorant exploiters in Russia, there were the richer and more powerful exploiters in Europe. The possessing classes of Russia had to encounter the possessing classes of Europe, hostile or semi-hostile. This encounter was mediated through a state organisation. Such an organisation was the autocracy. The whole structure and history of the autocracy would have been different if it had not been for the European cities, European gunpowder (for we did not invent it), if it had not been for the European stock markets.

In the last epoch of its existence the autocracy was not only an organ of the possessing classes of Russia, but also of the organisation of European stock markets for the exploitation of Russia. This double role again gave it a very considerable independence. A sharp expression of this is the fact that the French Bourse made a loan for the support of the autocracy in 1905 against the will of the party of the Russian bourgeoisie.

Czarism was shattered in the imperialist war. And why? Because it had under it a too low-grade productive foundation *('primitive ness").* In military-technical matters czarism tried to fall in line with more perfected models. It was every way assisted in this by the more rich and cultured Allies. Thanks to this fact czarism had at its disposal the most finished weapons of war, but it had not, and could not have, the capacity to reproduce these weapons and transport then (and the human masses also) on railroads and waterways with

sufficient speed. In other words, czarism was defending the interests of the ruling classes of Russia in the international struggle, while relying upon a more primitive economic basis than her enemies and allies.

Czarism exploited this basis during the war mercilesslydevoured, that is to say, a far greater percentage of the national wealth and the national income than her mighty enemies and allies. This fact finds its confirmation on the one hand in the system of war debts, on the other in the complete ruin of Russia. . . .

All these circumstances, which immediately pre-determined the October revolution, the victory of the proletariat and its future difficulties, remain totally unexplained by the commonplaces of Pokrovsky.

APPENDIX II

(To the Chapter *Re-arming the Party***) :** In a New York daily paper, *Novy Mit*, published for the Russian workers in America, the author of this book attempted an analysis and a prognosis of the development of the revolution on the basis of the scant information supplied by the American press. "The inner history of the developing events," wrote the author on March 6, 1917 (old style), "is known to us only in fragments and hints which have crept into the official despatches." The series of articles devoted to the revolution begins on February 27 and breaks off on March 14 with the departure of the author from New York. We reproduce below a series of excerpts from these articles in chronological order, which will give an idea of the views of the revolution with which the author arrived in Russia on May 4.

FEBRUARY 27:

"The disorganised, compromised, disintegrated government at the top, the army shaken to the depths, the discontent, uncertainty and fear among the ruling classes, deep bitterness in the popular masses, the numerically developed proletariat tempered in the fire of eventsall this gives us the right to say that we are witnessing the beginning of the second Russian revolution. Let us hope that many of us will be participants in it."

March 3:

"The Rodziankos and Miliukovs have begun talking too soon about law and order; not to-morrow will tranquillity descend on billowing Russia. Stratum after stratum now, the country will ariseall the oppressed, destitute, robbed by czarism and the ruling classes-throughout the whole measureless space of the whole Russian prison of the people. The Petrograd events are only beginning. At the head of the popular masses the Russian revolutionary proletariat will fulfil its historic task: it will drive out the monarchical and aristocratic reaction from all its refuges, and stretch out its hand to the proletariat of Germany and all Europe. For it is necessary to liquidate not only czarism, but also the war."

"Now the second wave of the revolution wilt roll over the heads of the Rodziankos and Miliukovs, busy with their attempts to restore order and come to terms with monarchy.

From its own depths the revolution will produce its government, a revolutionary organ of the people marching to victory. Both the chief battles and the chief sacrifices are in the future, and only after them will come complete and genuine victory."

MARCH 4:

"The long restrained discontent of the masses has broken to the surface so late, on the 32nd month of the war, not because there stood before the masses a police bulwark, very much shaken during the war, but because all the liberal institutions and organs including their social-patriotic hangers-on, have exercised an enormous political pressure upon the less conscious layers of the workers, suggesting to them the necessity of 'patriotic' discipline and order."

"Now only (after the victory of the insurrection) came the turn of the Duma. The czar tried at the last moment to disperse it. And it would have submissively dispersed 'following the precedent of former years,' if it had been able to. But the capitals were already in the control of the revolutionary people, that same people who, against the will of the liberal bourgeoisie, come out into the street to fight. The army was with the people. And if the bourgeoisie had not made an attempt to organise their power, a revolutionary government would have issued from the midst of the Insurrectionary worker masses. That Duma of June 3 would never have ventured to snatch the power from the hands of czarism, but it could not help making use of the created interregnum: the monarchy had temporarily disappeared from the face of the earth and a revolutionary power was not yet created."

MARCH 6:

"An open conflict between the forces of revolution at whose head stands the city proletariat, and the anti-revolutionary liberal bourgeoisie temporarily in power, is absolutely inevitable. You can, of course,and the liberal bourgeois and mountain socialist of the philistine type are heartily busy about itpile up many pitiful words on the subject of the immense advantages of national unity over class split. But nobody has yet succeeded with such incantations in removing social contradictions and stopping the natural development of a revolutionary struggle."

"Already at this moment, immediately, the revolutionary proletariat ought to oppose its revolutionary institutions, the soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies, to the executive institutions of the Provisional Government. In this struggle the proletariat, uniting around itself the rising popular masses, ought to make its direct goal the conquest of power. Only a revolutionary workers' government will have the will and ability, even during the preparation for a Constituent Assembly, to carry out a radical democratic clean-up throughout the country, reconstruct the army from top to bottom, convert it into a revolutionary militia and demonstrate in action to the lower ranks of the peas. ants that their

salvation lies only in supporting a revolutionary workers' régime."

MARCH '7:

"While the clique of Nicholas II held the power, dynastic and reactionary aristocratic interests had the last word in foreign policy. For just this reason in Berlin and Vienna they were continually hoping for a separate peace with Russia. But now the interests of naked imperialism are inscribed on the governmental banners. 'The czar's government is no more,' the Guchkovs and Miliukovs are telling the people, 'Now you must pour out your blood for the all-national interests.' But by national interests the Russian imperialists mean the getting back of Poland, the con quest of Galicia, Constantinople, Armenia, Persia. In other words, Russia now takes her place in the joint ranks of imperialism with other European states, and first of all with her allies, England and France."

"The proletariat of Russia cannot possibly reconcile the transition from a dynastic aristocratic imperialism to a purely bourgeois regime with this butchery. The international struggle against the world butchery and imperialism is now our task more than ever before."

"The imperialist boast of Miliukovto crush Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkeynow plays perfectly into the hands of the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, Miliukov will now play the role of a garden scarecrow in their hands. Before the new imperialistic-liberal government undertakes reforms in the army, it will help the Hohenzollern raise the patriotic spirit and restore the 'national unity' of the German people, now cracking in all its seams. If the German proletariat should get the right to think that the whole Russian people, and among them the chief force of the revolutionthe Russian proletariatstands behind its new bourgeois government, that would be a terrible blow to our colleagues, the revolutionary socialists of Germany."

'It is the straight duty of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia to show that behind the evil imperialist will of the liberal bourgeoisie there is no strength, for it has no support in the worker masses. The Russian revolution ought to reveal its authentic face before the whole worldthat is, its irreconcilable hostility not only to the dynastic aristocratic reaction, but to liberal imperialism."

MARCH 8:

'Under the banner Salvation of the Country' the liberal bourgeois is trying to keep the revolutionary leadership of the people in his hands, and with this aim is dragging after him on a tow-line not only the Trudovik Kerensky, but evidently also Cheidze, representative of the opportunist elements of the social democracy.

'The agrarian question will drive a deep wedge into the present aristocratic bourgeois

social-patriotic bloc. Kerensky will have to choose between the 'liberal,' the 3rd of June [Members of the Duma which issued from the state overturn of June 3, 1907.] men, who want to steal the whole revolution for capitalist goals, and the revolutionary proletariat, which will unfold to its full width the programme of agrarian revolutionthat is, confiscation in behalf of the people of the czarist, landlord, appanage, monastery and church lands. What personal choice Kerensky makes will make no difference. . . . It is another matter with the peasant masses, the rural lower ranks. To bring them over to the side of the proletariat is the most urgent unpostponable task."

It would be a crime to try to accomplish this task (the bringing over the peasantry) by adapting our policy to the national-patriotic limitedness of the village: the Russian worker would commit suicide if he paid for his union with the peasant at the price of a breaking of his ties with the European proletariat. But there is no political need for this; we have a more powerful weapon In our hands: whereas the present Provisional Government and the ministry of Lvov, Guchkov, Miliukov, Kerensky,[By Provisional Government the American press meant Provisional Committee of the Duma.] are compelledin the name of a preservation of their unityto side-step the agrarian question, we can and must present it in its full stature before the peasant masses of Russia.

"'Since agrarian reform is impossible, we are for the imperialist war,' said the Russian bourgeoisie after the experience of1905-07.

'Torn your back to the imperialist war, opposing to it the agrarian revolution!' we will say to the peasant masses, referring to the experience of 191417.

"This same question, the land question, will play an immense role in uniting the proletarian cadres of the army with its peasant depths. The land of the landlords, and not Constantinople.' the soldier proletarian will say to the soldier peasant, explaining to him whom and what the imperialist war is serving. And upon the success of our agitation and struggle against the warabove all among the workers, and in the second place among the peasant and soldier masseswill depend the answer to the question how soon the liberal imperialist government can be replaced by a revolutionary workers' government resting directly upon the proletariat, and the rural lower ranks adhering to it."

"The Rodziankos, Guchkovs, Miliukovs will bend all their efforts to get a Constituent Assembly in their image. The strongest trump in their hand will be the slogan of the common national war against an external enemy. They will now talk, of course, about the necessity of defending the 'conquests of the revolution' against destruction by the Hohenzollerns. And the social patriots will join the song."

'If we had something to defend' we will say. The first thing is to insure the revolution against the domestic enemy. We must, without waiting for the Constituent Assembly,

sweep out the monarchic and feudal rubbish to the last corner. We must teach the Russian peasant not to trust the promises of Rodzianko and the patriotic lies of Miliukov. We must unite the peasant mil lions against the liberal imperialists under the banner of agrarian revolution and the republic. Only a revolutionary government relying on the proletariat, which will remove the Guchkovs and Miliukovs from power, can carry out this work to the full. This workers' government will bring into play all the instruments of state power in order to raise to their feet, educate, and unite the most backward and dark depths of the toiling masses of the city and village."

'"And if the German proletariat does not rise? What shall we do then?"'

'That is, you assume that the Russian revolution can go by without affecting Germanyeven in case our revolution puts a workers' government in power? But surely that is utterly improbable."

'Yes, but suppose it happens?'

"If the improbable should happen, if the conservative social- patriotic organisation should prevent the German working class from rising against its ruling classes in the coming epoch, then of course the Russian working class would defend its revolution with arms in its hands. The revolutionary workers' government would wage war against the Hohenzollerns, summoning the brother proletariat of Germany to rise against the common enemy. In exactly the same way the German proletariat, if in the coming epoch it came to power, would not only have the 'right,' but would be obliged, to wage war against Guchkov and Miliukov in order to help the Russian worker settle accounts with his imperialist enemy. In both these situations the war conducted by a proletarian government would be only an armed revolution. It would be a question not of the 'defence of the government,' but of the defence of the revolution, and its transplantation into other countries."

It is hardly necessary to demonstrate that in the above extended excerpts from popular articles to be read by workers, the same view of the development of the revolution is expounded as that which found its expression in Lenin's *Theses of April 4.*

* * *

In connection with the crisis which the Bolshevik Party went through in the first two months of the February revolution, it is not superfluous to adduce here a quotation from an article written by the author of this book in 1909 for the Polish journal of Rosa Luxemburg:

"If the Mensheviks, starting from the abstraction 'Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution,' arrive at the idea of adapting the whole tactic of the proletariat to the conduct of

the liberal bourgeoisie, even to the point of a conquest by it of the state power, then the Bolsheviks, starting from an equally bare abstraction 'a democratic and not a socialist dictatorship,' will arrive at the idea of a bourgeois democratic self-limitation of the proletariat in whose hands the governmental power will be found. To be sure, the difference between them on this question is very considerable:

while the anti-revolutionary sides of Menshevism are expressed in their full strength even now, the anti-revolutionary traits of Bolshevism threaten a great danger only in the case of a revolutionary victory."

After 1923 those words were widely used by the epigones in their struggle against "Trotskyism." As a matter of fact they giveeight years before the eventa perfectly accurate characterisation of the conduct of the present epigones in the case of a revolutionary victory.

The party issued from the April crisis with honour, having settled accounts with the "anti-revolutionary traits" of its right flank. For this reason the author in 1922 supplemented the passage quoted above with the following remark:

"This, as is well known, did not happen, because under the leadership of Lenin. Bolshevism carried out (not without inner struggle) its intellectual re-armament upon this all-important question in the spring of 1917that is, before the conquest of power."

Lenin, in April 1917, in his struggle with the opportunist tendencies of the dominant layer of the Bolsheviks, wrote:

"The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *in general* are completely confirmed, but *concretely* things have shaped themselves *other wise* than anybody (no matter who) could have expectedmore originally, uniquely, variously. To ignore, to forget this fact would mean to be like those 'old Bolsheviks' who have more than once already played a pitiful role in the history of our party, meaninglessly repeating a formula *learned by rote* instead of *studying* the unique living reality. Whoever talks *now* only of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' is lagging behind Life. He has by that very fact gone *over* actually to the bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle. Him we must put away in the archives of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary curiosities (you might call them the archives of the 'old Bolsheviks')."

APPENDIX 3

(To the Chapter *The Soviet Congress and the June Demonstration* **):** To Professor A. Kaun, The University of California.

You ask me how correctly Sukhanov describes my meeting in May 1917 with the editors of *Novy Zhizn*, a newspaper nominally directed by Maxim Gorky. In order that what follows may be under stood, I must say a few words as to the general character of the seven-volume *Notes of the Revolution* by Sukhanov. With all the faults of that work (wordiness, impressionism, political short-sightedness) which make the reading of it at times unbearable, it is impossible not to recognise the conscientiousness of the author which renders his *Notes* a valuable source for the historian. Jurists know, however, that the conscientiousness of a witness by no means guarantees the reliability of his testimony. It is necessary to take into consideration his level of development, his vision, hearing, memory, his mood at the moment of the event, etc. Sukhanov is an impressionist of the intellectual type, and like the majority of such people lacks the ability to understand the political psychology of men of a different mould. Notwithstanding the fact that he himself in 1917 stood in the left wing of the Compromise camp, and so in close neighbourhood to the Bolsheviks, he was and remained, with his Hamlet temperament, the very opposite of a Bolshevik. There lives always in him a feeling of hostile revolution from integrated people, people who know firmly what they want and where they are going. All of this brings it about that Sukhanov in his *Notes* quite conscientiously piles up mistake after mistake so soon as he tries to understand the springs of action of the Bolsheviks, or reveal their motivation behind the scenes. At times it seems as though he consciously confuses simple and clear questions. In reality he is organically incapable, at least in politics, of finding the shortest distance between two points.

Sukhanov wastes no little strength in the effort to contrast my line with Lenin's. Being very sensitive to the moods of the *couloir* and the gossip of intellectual circlesin which, by the way, lies one of the merits of the *Notes*, which contain much material for characterising the psychology of the liberal, radical, and socialistic upper circlesSukhanov naturally nourished a hope that disagreements would arise between Lenin and Trotskythe more so that

this must lighten somewhat the unenviable fate of *Novy Zhizn,* standing between the Social Patriots and the Bolsheviks. In his *Notes* Sukhanov is still living in the atmosphere of those unrealised hopes under the form of political recollections and *ex post facto* guesses.

Peculiarities of personality, temperament, style, he tries to interpret as a political line.

In connection with the abandoned Bolshevik manifestation of June 10, and more especially the armed demonstration of the July days, Sukhanov tries throughout many pages to demonstrate that Lenin was directly striving in those days for a seizure of power by way of conspiracy and insurrection, while Trotsky by contrast was striving for the real power of the soviets in the person of the, then dominant parties, that is, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. There is not a shadow of foundation for all this.

At the first congress of the soviets on June 4, Tseretelli during his speech remarked in passing: "In Russia at the present moment there is not one political party which would say, Give us the power in our hands." At that moment a voice was heard from the benches:

"There is!" Lenin did not like to interrupt orators, and did not like to be interrupted. Only serious considerations could have impelled him to abandon on that occasion his customary restraint. According to Tseretelli's logic, when the nation gets into a tangle of enormous difficulty, the first thing to do is to try to slip the power to others. In this lay the cleverness of the Russian Compromisers who after the February uprising slipped the power to the liberals. To a not very attractive fear of responsibility, Tseretelli was giving the colour of political disinterestedness and extraordinary farsightedness. To a revolutionist who believes in the mission of his party such cowardly swanking is absolutely intolerable. A revolutionary party which is capable in difficult conditions of turning away from the power, deserves only contempt.

In a speech at that same session Lenin explained his reply from the benches: "The Citizen Minister of Posts and Telegraph (Tseretelli) said that there is no political party in Russia which would express its readiness to take upon itself the whole power. I answer there is. No party can decline to do that, and our party does not decline. It is ready at any minute to take the whole power. (Applause and laughter,) You may laugh all you want to, but if the Citizen Minister puts this question to us he will get the proper answer." It would seem as though Lenin's thought is transparent through and through.

At the same congress of the soviets, speaking after the Minister of Agriculture, Peshekhonov, I expressed myself as follows: "I do not belong to the same party with him (Peshekhonov) but if they told me that a ministry was to be formed out of twelve Peshekhonovs, I should say that this was an immense step forward."

I do not think that at that time, amid those events, my words about a ministry of Peshekhonovs could be understood as an anti thesis to Lenin's readiness to take power:

Sukhanov appears as an *ex post facto* theoretician of this pretended antithesis. Interpreting the Bolshevik preparation of the demonstration of June 10 in favour of the power of the soviets as a preparation for the seizure of power, Sukhanov writes: "Lenin two or three days before the manifestation' publicly stated that he was ready to take the power in his hands. But Trotsky said at the same time that he would like to see twelve Peshekhonovs is power. That is the difference. But nevertheless I assume that Trotsky was drawn into the affair of June 10. . . . Lenin was not then inclined to enter a decisive engagement without the dubious 'Mezhdurayonets." For Trotsky was to him a kind of monumental partner in a monumental game, and in his own party after Lenin himself there was nothingfor a long, long, long distance."

This whole passage is full of contradictions. According to Sukhanov, Lenin would seem to have been really intending what Tseretelli accused him of: "An immediate seizure of power by the proletarian minority." A proof of such Blanquism Sukhanov sees, if you can believe it. in those words of Lenin about the readiness of the Bolsheviks to take the power in spite of all difficulties. But if Lenin had really intended on June 10 to seize the power by way of a conspiracy, he would hardly have forewarned his enemies of this at a plenary session of the soviets on June 4. It should hardly be necessary to recall that from the first day of his arrival in Petrograd, Lenin had been telling the party that the Bolsheviks could assume the task of overthrowing the Provisional Government only after winning a majority in the soviets. In the April days Lenin decisively opposed those Bolsheviks who advanced the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" as the task of the day. Lenin's reply of June 4 had only one meaning: We, the Bolsheviks, are ready to take the power even to-day if the workers and soldiers give us their confidence: in this we are distinguished from the Compromisers who, possessing the confidence of the workers and soldiers, dare not take the power.

Sukhanov contrasts Trotsky with Lenin as a realist with a Blanquist. "Without accepting Lenin, one could fully agree to Trotsky's presentation of the question." At the same time Sukhanov announces that: "Trotsky was drawn into the affair of June l0"that is, to the conspiracy for the seizure of power. Having discovered two lines where there were not two, .Sukhanov cannot deny himself the plea sure of afterward uniting these two lines in one in order to be able to convict me of adventurism. This is a unique and somewhat platonic revenge for the disappointed hope of the left intelligentsia for a split between Lenin and Trotsky.

On the placards which had been prepared by the Bolsheviks for the cancelled demonstration of June 10, and which were afterward carried by the demonstrators of June 18, a central place was occupied by the slogan "Down with the Ten Minister-Capitalists" Sukhanov, in the quality of šthete, admires the simple expressiveness of this slogan, but in his quality

of statesman he reveals an incomprehension of its meaning. In the government besides the “ten Minister-Capitalists” there were also six Minister-Compromisers. The Bolshevik placards had nothing to say of them. On the contrary, according to the sense of the slogan, the Minister-Capitalists were to be replaced by Minister-Socialists, representatives of the Soviet majority. It was exactly this sense of the Bolshevik placards that I expressed before the Soviet Congress: Break your bloc with the liberals, remove the bourgeois ministers and replace them with your Peshekhonovs. In proposing to the Soviet majority to take the power, the Bolsheviks did not, of course, bind themselves in the least as to their attitude to these Peshekhonovs; on the contrary, they made no secret of the fact that within the frame of the Soviet democracy they would wage an implacable strugglefor a majority in the soviets and for the power.

But all this is after all mere A-B-C. Only the above-mentioned traits of Sukhanovnot so much as a person but as a typecan explain how this participant and observer of events could get so hopelessly mixed up upon so serious and at the same time so simple a question.

In the light of this analysis of a political episode it is easy to understand the false light which Sukhanov throws upon my meeting which interests you with the editors of *Navy Zhizn.* The moral of my encounter with the circle of Maxim Gorky is expressed by Stakhanov in the concluding phrase which he puts in my mouth:

“Now I see that nothing remains for me but to found a paper together with Lenin.” The inference is that only my inability to reach an agreement with Gorky and Sukhanovthat is, with people whom I never regarded as either men of politics or revolutionists compelled me to find my way to Lenin. It is only necessary to formulate this idea in order to demonstrate its absurdity.

Incidentally, how characteristic of Sukhanov is the phrase, “found a paper together with Lenin”as though the tasks of a revolutionary policy reduced themselves to the founding of a newspaper. For anybody with a minimum of creative imagination, it ought to be clear that I could not so think or so define my tasks.

In order to explain my visit to the newspaper circle of Gorky, it is necessary to remember that I arrived in Petrograd at the beginning of May. something over two months after the revolution, a month after the arrival of Lenin. During this time many things had adjusted and defined themselves. I had to have a direct, and so to say empirical orientation, not only in the fundamental forces of the revolution, in the moods of the workers and soldiers, but also in all the groupings and political shades of “educated” society. The visit to the editors of *Navy Zhizn* was for me a small political reconnoitre executed with a view to finding out the forces of attraction and repulsion possessed by this “left” group, the chances of splitting off certain elements, etc. A short conversation convinced me of the complete hopelessness of this circle of literary wiseacres, for whom revolution reduced itself to the problem of

the leading editorial. And, besides that, since they were accusing the Bolsheviks of self-isolation, laying the blame for this upon Lenin and his April Theses, I undoubtedly must have told them that with all their speeches they had only once more demonstrated to me that Lenin was completely right in isolating the party from them, or rather isolating them from the party. This conclusion, which I had to emphasise with special energy for the sake of its effect upon Riazanov and Lunacharsky, who participated in the conversation, and who were opposed to a union with Lenin, evidently supplied the occasion for Sukhanov's version.

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It goes without saying that you are completely right in assuming that I would in no case have agreed in the autumn of 1917 to speak about a Gorky jubilee from the tribune of the Petrograd Soviet. Sukhanov did well that time at least in renouncing one of his fantastic ideas: to indict me on the eve of the October insurrection to take part in a celebration of Gorky, who stood on the other side of the barricades.