Leon Trotsky

The History of the Russian Revolution

VOLUME TWO

The Attempted Counter-Revolution

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Introduction to Volumes Two and Three

Russia was so late in accomplishing her bourgeois revolution that she found herself compelled to turn it into a proletarian revolution. Or in other words: Russia was so far behind the other countries that she was compelled, at least in certain spheres, to out-strip them. That seems inconsistent, but history is full of such paradoxes. Capitalist England was so far in advance of other countries, that she had to trail behind them. Pedants think that the dialectic is an idle play of the mind. In reality it only reproduces the process of evolution, which lives and moves by way of contradictions.

The first volume of this work should have explained why that historically belated democratic régime which replaced tzarism proved wholly non-viable. The present volumes are devoted to the coming to power of the Bolsheviks. Here too the fundamental thing is the narrative. In the facts themselves the reader ought to find sufficient support for the inferences.

By this the author does not mean to say that he has avoided sociological generalizations. History would have no value if it taught us nothing. The mighty design of the Russian revolution, the consecutiveness of its stages, the inexorable pressure of the masses, the finishedness of political groupings, the succinctness of slogans, all this wonderfully promotes the understanding of revolution in general, and therewith of human society. For we may consider it proven by the whole course of history that

society, torn as it is by inner contradictions, conclusively reveals in a revolution not only its anatomy, but also its “soul.”

In a more immediate manner the present work should promote an understanding of the character of the Soviet Union. The timeliness of our theme lies not only in that the October revolution took place before the eyes of a generation still living – although that of course has no small significance – but in the fact that the régime which issued from the revolution still lives and develops, and is confronting humanity with ever new riddles. Throughout the whole world the question of the soviet country is never lost sight of for a moment. However, it is impossible to understand any existent thing without a preliminary examination of its origin. For large-scale political appraisals an historic perspective is essential.

The eight months of the revolution, February to October 1917, have required three volumes. The critics, as a general rule, have not accused us of prolixity. The scale of the work is explained rather by our approach to the material. You can present a photograph of a hand on one page, but it requires a volume to present the results of a microscopic investigation of its tissues. The author has no illusion as to the fullness or finishedness of his investigation. But nevertheless in many cases he was obliged to employ methods closer to the microscope than the camera.

At times, when it seemed to us that we were abusing the patience of the reader, we generously crossed out the testimony of some witness, the confession of a participant or some secondary episode, but we afterwards not

infrequently restored much that had been crossed out. In this struggle for details we were guided by a desire to reveal as concretely as possible the very process of the revolution. In particular it was impossible not to try to make the most of the opportunity to paint history from the life.

Thousands and thousands of books are thrown on the market every year presenting some new variant of the personal romance, some tale of the vacillations of the melancholic or the career of the ambitious. The heroine of Proust requires several finely-wrought pages in order to feel that she does not feel anything. It would seem that one might, at least with equal justice, demand attention to a series of collective historic dramas which lifted hundreds of millions of human beings out of non-existence, transforming the character of nations and intruding forever into the life of all mankind.

The accuracy of our references and quotations in the first volume no one has so far called in question: that would indeed be difficult. Our opponents confine themselves for the most part to reflections upon the topic of how personal prejudice may reveal itself in an artificial and one-sided selection of facts and texts. These observations, although irrefutable in themselves, say nothing about the given work, and still less about its scientific methods. Moreover we take the liberty to insist firmly that the coefficient of subjectivism is defined, limited, and tested not so much by the temperament of the historian, as by the nature of his method.

The purely psychological school, which looks upon the tissue of events as an interweaving of the free activities of

separate individuals or their groupings, offers, even with the best intentions on the part of the investigator, a colossal scope to caprice. The materialist method disciplines the historian, compelling him to take his departure from the weighty facts of the social structure. For us the fundamental forces of the historic process are classes; political parties rest upon them; ideas and slogans emerge as the small change of objective interests. The whole course of the investigation proceeds from the objective to the subjective, from the social to the individual, from the fundamental to the incidental. This sets a rigid limit to the personal whims of the author.

When a mining engineer finds magnetic ore in an uninvestigated region by drilling, it is always possible to assume that this was a happy accident: the construction of a mine is hardly to be recommended. But when the same engineer, on the basis, let us say, of the deviation of a magnetic needle, comes to the conclusion that a vein of ore lies concealed in the earth, and subsequently actually strikes ore at various different points in the region, then the most caviling skeptic will not venture to talk about accidents. What convinces is the system which unites the general with the particular.

The proof of scientific objectivism is not to be sought in the eyes of the historian or the tones of his voice, but in the inner logic of the narrative itself. If episodes, testimonies, figures, quotations, fall in with the general pointing of the needle of his social analysis, then the reader has a most weighty guarantee of the scientific solidity of his conclusions. To be more concrete: the present author has been true to objectivism in the degree that his book actually reveals the inevitability of the October revolution

and the causes of its victory.

The reader already knows that in a revolution we look first of all for the direct interference of the masses in the destinies of society. We seek to uncover behind the events changes in the collective consciousness. We reject wholesale references to the spontaneity" of the movement, references which in most cases explain nothing and teach nobody. Revolutions take place according to certain laws. This does not mean that the masses in action are aware of the laws of revolution, but it does mean that the changes in mass consciousness are not accidental, but are subject to an objective necessity which is capable of theoretic explanation, and thus makes both prophecy and leadership possible.

Certain official soviet historians, surprising as it may seem, have attempted to criticize our conception as idealistic. Professor Pokrovsky, for example, has insisted that we underestimate the objective factors of the revolution. 'Between February and October there occurred a colossal economic collapse." "During this time the peasantry ... rose against the Provisional Government." It is in these "objective shifts," says Pokrovsky, and not in fickle psychic processes, that one should see the motive force of the revolution. Thanks to a praiseworthy incisiveness of formulation, Pokrovsky exposes to perfection the worthlessness of that vulgarly economic interpretation of history which is frequently given out for Marxism.

The radical turns which take place in the course of a revolution are as a matter-of-fact evoked, not by those episodic economic disturbances which arise during the events themselves, but by fundamental changes which

have accumulated in the very foundations of society throughout the whole preceding epoch. The fact that on the eve of the overthrow of the monarchy, as also between February and October, the economic collapse was steadily deepening, nourishing and whipping up the discontent of the masses-that fact is indubitable and has never lacked our attention. But it would be the crudest mistake to assume that the second revolution was accomplished eight months after the first owing to the fact that the bread ration was lowered during that period from one-and-a-half to three-quarters of a pound. In the years immediately following the October revolution the food situation of the masses continued steadily to grow worse. Nevertheless the hopes of the counter-revolutionary politicians for a new overturn were defeated every time. This circumstance can seem puzzling only to one who looks upon the insurrection of the masses as "spontaneous" – that is, as a herd – mutiny artificially made use of by leaders. In reality the mere existence of privations is not enough to cause an insurrection; if it were, the masses would be always in revolt. It is necessary that the bankruptcy of the social régime, being conclusively revealed, should make these privations intolerable, and that new conditions and new ideas should open the prospect of a revolutionary way out. Then in the cause of the great aims conceived by them, those same masses will prove capable of enduring doubled and tripled privations.

The reference to the revolt of the peasantry as a second "objective factor" shows a still more obvious misunderstanding. For the proletariat the peasant war was of course an objective circumstance – insofar as the

activity of one class does in general become an external stimulus to the consciousness of another. But the direct cause of the peasant revolt itself lay in changes in the consciousness of the villages; a discovery of the character of these changes makes the content of one chapter of this book. Let us not forget that revolutions are accomplished through people, although they be nameless. Materialism does not ignore the feeling, thinking and acting man, but explains him. What else is the task of the historian? [1]

Certain critics from the democratic camp, inclined to operate with the help of indirect evidence, have looked upon the “ironic” attitude of the author to the compromise leaders as the expression of an undue subjectivism vitiating the scientific character of his exposition. We venture to regard this criterion as unconvincing. Spinoza’s principle, “not to weep or laugh, but to understand” gives warning against inappropriate laughter and untimely tears. It does not deprive a man, even though he be a historian, of the right to his share of tears and laughter when justified by a correct understanding of the material itself. That purely individualistic irony which spreads out like a smoke of indifference over the whole effort and intention of mankind, is the worst form of snobbery. It rings false alike in artistic creations and works of history. But there is an irony deep laid in the very relations of life. It is the duty of the historian as of the artist to bring it to the surface.

A failure of correspondence between subjective and objective is, generally speaking, the fountain-source of the comic, as also the tragic, in both life and art. The sphere of politics less than any other is exempted from the action of this law. People and parties are heroic or comic not in themselves but in their relation to circumstances. When

the French revolution entered its decisive stage the most eminent of Girondists became pitiful and ludicrous beside the rank-and-file Jacobin. Jean-Marie Rolland, a respected figure as factory inspector of Lyons, looks like a living caricature against the background of 1792. The Jacobins, on the contrary, measure up to the events. They may evoke hostility, hatred, horror – but not irony.

The heroine of Dickens who tried to hold back the tide with a broom is an acknowledged comic image because of the fatal lack of correspondence between means and end. If we assert that this person symbolizes the policies of the compromise parties in the revolution, it may seem an extravagant exaggeration. And yet Tseretelli, the actual inspirer of the dual-power régime, confessed to Nabokov, one of the liberal leaders, after the October revolution: “Everything we did at that time was a vain effort to hold back a destructive elemental flood with a handful of insignificant chips.” Those words sound like spiteful satire, but they are the truest words spoken by the Compromisers about themselves. To renounce irony in depicting “revolutionists” who tried to hold back a revolution with chips, would be to plunder reality and betray objectivism for the benefit of pedants.

Peter Struve, a monarchist from among the former Marxists, wrote as an émigré: “Only Bolshevism was logical about revolution and true to its essence, and therefore in the revolution it conquered.” Miliukov, the leader of liberalism, made approximately the same statement: “They knew where they were going, and they went in the direction which they had chosen once for all, toward a goal which came nearer and nearer with every new, unsuccessful experiment of compromisism.” And finally,

one of the white émigrés not so well known, trying in his own way to understand the revolution, has expressed himself thus: “Only iron people could take this road ... only people who were revolutionists by their very ‘profession’ and had no fear of calling into life the all-devouring spirit of riot and revolt.” You may say of the Bolsheviks with still more justice what was said above about the Jacobins. They were adequate to the epoch and its tasks; curses in plenty resounded in their direction, but irony would not stick to them-it had nothing to catch hold of.

In the introduction to the first volume it was explained why the author deemed it suitable to speak of himself as a participant of the events in the third person, and not the first. This literary form, preserved also in the second and third volumes, does not in itself of course offer a defense against subjectivism, but at least it does not make subjectivism necessary. Indeed it reminds one of the obligation to avoid it.

On many occasions we hesitated long whether to quote this or that remark of a contemporary, characterizing the role of the author in the flow of events. It would have been easy to renounce any such quotation, were nothing greater involved than the rules of correct tone in polite society. The author of this book was president of the Petrograd Soviet after the Bolsheviks won a majority there, and he was afterwards president of the Military Revolutionary Committee which organized the October uprising. These facts he neither wishes nor is able to erase from history. The faction now ruling in the Soviet Union has of late years dedicated many articles, and no few books, to the author of this work, setting themselves the task of proving that his activity was steadily directed against the

interests of the revolution. The question why the Bolshevik party placed so stubborn an “enemy” during the most critical years in the most responsible posts remains unanswered. To pass these retrospective quarrels in complete silence would be to renounce to some extent the task of establishing the actual course of events. And to what end? A pretense of disinterestedness is needful only to him whose aim is slyly to convey to his readers conclusions which do not flow from the facts. We prefer to call things by their whole name as it is found in the dictionary.

We will not conceal the fact that for us the question here is not only about the past. Just as the enemy in attacking a man’s prestige are striking at his program, so his own struggle for a definite program obliges a man to restore his actual position in the events. As for those who are incapable of seeing anything but personal vanity in a man’s struggle for great causes and for his place under the banner, we may be sorry for them but we will not undertake to convince them. In any case we have taken measures to see to it that “personal” questions should not occupy a greater place in this book than that to which they can justly lay claim.

Certain of the friends of the Soviet Union – a phrase which often means friends of the present Soviet powers and that only so long as they remain powers – have reproached the author for his critical attitude to the Bolshevik party or its individual leaders. Nobody, however, has made the attempt to refute or correct the picture given of the condition of the party during the events. For the information of these “friends” who consider themselves called to defend against us the role of the Bolsheviks in

the October revolution, we give warning that our book teaches not how to love a victorious revolution after the event in the person of the bureaucracy it has brought forward, but only how a revolution is prepared, how it develops, and how it conquers. A party is not for us a machine whose sinlessness is to be defended by state measures of repression, but a complicated organism which like all living things develops in contradictions. The uncovering of these contradictions – among them the waverings and mistakes of the general staff – does not in our view weaken in the slightest degree the significance of that gigantic historic task which the Bolshevik party was the first in history to take upon its shoulders.

L. TROTSKY
Prinkipo
May 13, 1932.

P.S. The critics have already paid their tribute to Max Eastman's translation. He has brought to his work not only a creative gift of style, but also the carefulness of a friend. I subscribe with warm gratitude to the unanimous voice of the critics.

L.T.

Note

1. News of the death of M.N. Pokrovsky, with whom we have had to do battle more than once in the course of these two volumes, arrived after our work was finished. Having come over to Marxism from the liberal camp when already a finished scholar, Pokrovsky enriched the most

recent historic literature with precious works and beginnings. But nonetheless he never fully mastered the method of dialectic materialism. It is a matter of simple justice to add that Pokrovsky was a man not only of high gifts and exceptional erudition, but also of deep loyalty to the cause which he served.

Chapter 24: The July Days: Preparation and Beginning

In 1915, the war cost Russia 10 billion rubles; in 1916, 19 billion; during the first half of 1917, 10½ billion; by the beginning of 1918, the national debt would have amounted to 60 billion – would have almost equaled, that is, the entire wealth of the country, estimated at 70 billion. The Central Executive Committee was preparing an appeal for a war loan, under the sugary name of “Liberty Loan,” while the government was arriving at the not very complicated conclusion that without an immense new foreign loan, it not only could not pay for its foreign orders, but could not even handle its domestic obligations. The liability side of the trade balance was continually on the rise. The Entente was evidently getting ready to leave the ruble wholly to its fate. On the very day when the appeal for a Liberty Loan filled the first page of the Soviet **Izvestia**, the government **Vyestnik** announced a sharp drop in the value of the ruble. The printing presses could no longer keep up with the tempo of inflation. For the old respectable bank notes, about which there still clung a glamour of their former buying power, they were getting ready to substitute those red bottle-labels which came to be known as “kerenkies.” Both the bourgeois and the worker, each in his own way, embodied in that name a slight note of disgust.

In words the government had adopted a program of state regulation of industry, and had even established towards

the end of June some lumbering institutions for this purpose. But the word and deed of the February régime, like the spirit and flesh of the pious Christian, were in a continual state of conflict. These appropriately hand-picked regulative institutions were more concerned to protect the capitalist from the caprices of a shaky and tottering state power, than to curb the interests of private persons. The administrative and technical personnel of industry was becoming stratified; the upper layers, frightened by the leveling tendencies of the workers, were going over decisively to the side of the capitalist. The workers had acquired an attitude of disgust toward the war orders by which the disintegrating factories had been guaranteed for a year or two in advance. But the capitalists also were losing their taste for a production which promised more trouble than profits. The deliberate closing-down of the factories from above was now becoming systematic. Metal production was cut down 40 per cent; the textile industry, 20 per cent. The supply of all the necessities of life was inadequate. Prices were rising at a pace with inflation and the decline of industry. The workers were aspiring towards a control of that administrative – commercial mechanism which in concealment from them decides their destinies. The Minister of Labor, Skobelev, was preaching to the workers in wordy manifestos the inadvisability of their interference in the administration of the factories. On June 24, **Izvestia** told about a new proposal for the closing of a series of plants. Similar news was arriving from the provinces. Railroad transport was stricken even more heavily than industry. Half of the locomotives were in need of capital repairs; the greater part of the rolling stock was at the front; fuel was lacking. The Ministry of Communications

was in a continual state of struggle with the railroad workers and clerks. The supply of foodstuffs was steadily on the decrease. In Petrograd, the flour reserve was adequate for ten or fifteen days; in other centers, for little longer. With the semi-paralysis of rolling stock and the impending threat of a railroad strike, this meant a continual danger of famine. The future contained no glimmer of hope. This was not what the workers had expected from the revolution.

Things were still worse, if that is possible, in the sphere of politics. Indecisiveness is the worst possible condition in the life of governments, nations, classes – as also of individuals. A revolution is the most ruthless of all methods of solving historic problems. To introduce evasiveness into a revolution is the most destructive policy imaginable. The party of revolution dare not waver – no more than a surgeon dare who has plunged a knife into a sick body. However, that double régime – or régime of duplicity – which issued from the February overturn was indecisiveness organized. Everything was going against the government. Its qualified friends were becoming opponents; its opponents, enemies; its enemies were taking arms. The counterrevolution was mobilizing quite in the open-inspired by the central committee of the Kadet party, the political staff of all those who had something to lose. The Head Committee of the League of Officers at General Headquarters in Moghiliev, representing about a hundred thousand discontented commanders, and the Council of the Union of Cossack troops in Petrograd, were the two military levers of the counter-revolution. The State Duma, in spite of the decision of the June congress of the soviets, had resolved to continue its “private conferences.”

Its Provisional Committee supplied a legal covering for the counter-revolutionary work, which was broadly financed by the banks and by the embassies of the Entente. The Compromisers were threatened with dangers both right and left. Glancing uneasily in these two directions, the government secretly resolved to make a disbursement for the organization of a public intelligence service – that is, a secret political police. At about this same time, in the middle of June, the government designated September 17 as the date for elections to the Constituent Assembly. The liberal press, in spite of the participation of Kadets in the ministry, waged a stubborn campaign against this officially designated date – in which nobody believed and which nobody seriously defended. The very image of the Constituent Assembly, so bright in the first days of March, had dissolved and grown dim. Everything was going against the government, even its own thin-blooded good intentions. Only on the 30th of June did it muster the courage to dismiss those aristocratic guardians over the villages, the zemsky nachalniks [1], whose very name had been hateful to the whole country ever since the day of their establishment by Alexander III. And this enforced and belated partial reform only stamped the Provisional Government with a brand of contemptible cowardice. The nobility were by this time recovering from their fright. The landed proprietors were uniting and bringing pressure to bear. Toward the end of June, the Provisional Committee of the Duma addressed to the government a demand that decisive measures be taken to protect the landlords from peasants incited by the “criminal element.” On the first of July there met in Moscow an All-Russian Congress of Landed Proprietors, containing an overwhelming majority of nobles. The government wriggled and tried to hypnotize

with words, now the muzhiks, now the landlords.

Worst of all, however, was the situation at the front. The offensive against the enemy, which had also become Kerensky's decisive play in a domestic struggle, was dying in convulsions. The soldiers did not want to fight. The diplomats of Prince Lvov were afraid to look the diplomats of the Entente in the eyes. They needed a loan to the point of desperation. In order to make a show of firmness, the condemned and impotent government waged an offensive against Finland, carrying it through, as it did all of its very dirtiest work, by the hands of the socialists. At the same time a conflict had arisen with the Ukraine and was moving towards an open break.

Those days were far away when Albert Thomas sang hymns to the luminous revolution and to Kerensky. At the beginning of July the French ambassador, Paléologue, who smelled too strongly of the aromas of the Rasputin salons, was replaced by the "radical" Noulens. The journalist, Claude Anet, gave the new ambassador an introductory lecture on Petrograd. Opposite the French embassy – he told him – across the Neva, spreads the Vyborg district. "This is a district of big factories which belongs wholly to the Bolsheviks. Lenin and Trotsky reign there as masters." In that same district are located the barracks of the Machine Gun regiment, numbering about 10,000 men and over 1,000 machine guns. Neither the Social Revolutionaries nor the Mensheviks have access to the barracks of that regiment. The remaining regiments are either Bolshevik or neutral. "If Lenin and Trotsky want to take Petrograd, what will stop them?" Noulens listened with astonishment. "How can the government tolerate such a situation?" "But what can it do?" answered the

journalist. “You must understand that the government has no power but a moral one, and even that seems to me very weak ...”

Finding no channel, the aroused energy of the masses spent itself in self-dependent activities, guerrilla manifestations, sporadic seizures. The workers, soldiers and peasants were trying to solve in a partial way those problems which the power created by them had refused to solve. More than anything else, indecisiveness in their leaders exhausts the nerves of the masses. Fruitless waiting impels them to more and more insistent knockings at that door which will not open to them, or to actual outbreaks of despair. Already in the days of the congress of soviets, when the provincials could hardly withhold the hands of their leaders stretched out against Petrograd, the workers and soldiers had plenty of opportunity to find out what was the feeling and attitude toward them of the soviet leaders. Tseretelli, following Kerensky, had become not only an alien, but a hated figure to the majority of the Petrograd workers and soldiers. On the fringes of the revolution there was a growing influence of the anarchists, whose chief role so far had been played in the self-constituted revolutionary committee in the summer home of Durnovo. But even the more disciplined layers of the workers – even broad circles of the party – were beginning to lose patience or at least listen to those who had lost it. The manifestation of June 18 had revealed to everybody that the government was without support. “Why don’t they get busy up there?” the soldiers and workers would ask, having in mind not only the compromise leaders but also the governing bodies of the Bolsheviks.

Under inflation prices the struggle for wages was exciting

the workers and getting on their nerves. During June this question became especially sharp in the giant Putilov factory, where 36,000 men worked. On June 21 a strike of skilled workers broke out in certain parts of the factory. The fruitlessness of these scattered outbreaks was only too clear to the party. On the next day a meeting of representatives of the principal workers' organizations, led by the Bolsheviks, and of 70 factories, announced that "the cause of the Putilov workers is the cause of the whole Petrograd proletariat," but appealed to the Putilov men to "restrain their legitimate indignation." The strike was postponed. But the following 12 days brought no change. The factory masses were seething, seeking an outlet. Every plant had its conflict, and all these conflicts tended upward toward the government. A report of the trade union of the Locomotive Brigade to the Minister of Communications reads: "For the last time we announce: patience has its limit; we simply cannot live in such conditions ..." That was a complaint not only against want and hunger, but against duplicity, characterlessness, false dealing. The report protests with especial rage against the "endless exhorting of us to the duties of a citizen and to self-restraint in starvation."

The March transfer of power by the Executive Committee to the Provisional Government had been made on the condition that the revolutionary troops should not be removed from the capital. But those days were far in the past. The garrison had moved to the left, the ruling soviet circles to the right. The struggle with the garrison had never disappeared from the order of the day. Although no whole units were transferred from the capital, nevertheless the more revolutionary – under the pretext of strategic

necessities – were systematically weakened by a pumping-out of replacement companies. Rumors from the front of the disbandment of more and more units for disobedience, for refusal to carry out military orders, were continually arriving at the capital. Two Siberian divisions – and were not the Siberian sharpshooters long considered the finest? – had to be disbanded by military force. In a case of mass disobedience in the Fifth Army only – that nearest the capital – 87 officers and 12,725 soldiers were arraigned. The Petrograd garrison – accumulator of discontent from the front, the village, the workers' districts, and the barracks – was in a continual ferment. Bearded men in their forties were demanding with hysterical insistence that they be sent home for work in the fields. The regiments distributed through the Vyborg district – the 1st Machine Gun, the 1st Grenadier, the Moscow, the 180th Infantry, and others – were continually washed by the hot springs of the proletarian suburb. Thousands of workers were passing the barracks, among them no small number of the tireless agitators of Bolshevism. Under those dirty and dilapidated walls impromptu meetings were being held almost continuously. On the 22nd of June, before the patriotic manifestations called out by the offensive had died out, an automobile of the Executive Committee incautiously drove through the Sampsonevsky Prospect, carrying the placard: "Forward for Kerensky!" The Moscow regiment stopped the agitators, tore up the placard, and turned over the patriotic automobile to the Machine Gun regiment.

In general the soldiers were more impatient than the workers – both because they were directly threatened with a transfer to the front, and because it was much harder for

them to understand considerations of political strategy. Moreover, each one had his rifle; and ever since February the soldier had been inclined to overestimate the independent power of a rifle. An old worker-Bolshevik, Lizdin, told later how the soldiers of the 180th Reserve regiment said to him: “What are they doing there, fast asleep in Kshesinskaia’s Palace? Come on, let’s kick out Kerensky!” At meetings of the regiments, resolutions would be adopted continually, proclaiming the necessity of taking final action against the government. Delegations from individual factories would come to a regiment with the query: Will the soldiers go into the streets? The machine-gunners sent representatives to the other units of the garrison with an appeal to rise against the prolongation of the war. The more impatient of these delegates added: The Pavlov and Moscow regiments and forty thousand Putilov men are coming out “tomorrow.” Official admonitions from the Executive Committee had no effect. The danger was growing every minute that Petrograd, lacking the support of the front and the provinces, would be broken down bit by bit. On the 21st of June, Lenin appealed in Pravda to the Petrograd workers and soldiers to wait until events should bring over the heavy reserves to the side of Petrograd. “We understand your bitterness, we understand the excitement of the Petersburg workers, but we say to them: Comrades, an immediate attack would be inexpedient.” On the next day a private conference of leading Bolsheviks – standing, apparently, “to the left” of Lenin – came to the conclusion that in spite of the mood of the soldier and worker masses, they must not give battle: “Better wait until the ruling parties have disgraced themselves completely with their offensive, and then the game is ours.” Thus reports the

district organizer, Latsis, one of the most impatient in those days. The Central Committee was oftener and oftener compelled to send agitators to the troops and the factories to restrain them from untimely action. With an embarrassed shake of the head, the Vyborg Bolsheviks would complain to their friends: “We have to play the part of the fire hose.” Appeals to come into the street did not cease, however, for a single day. Some of them were obviously provocative in character. The Military Organization of the Bolsheviks felt compelled to address the soldiers and workers with an appeal: “Do not trust any summons to go into the street in the name of the Military Organization. The Military Organization is not summoning you to action.” And then, even more insistently: “Demand of any agitator or orator who summons you to come out in the name of the Military Organization credentials signed by the president and secretary.”

On the famous Yakorny Square in Kronstadt, where the anarchists were more and more confidently lifting their voices, one ultimatum was drawn up after another. On the 23rd of June, delegates from Yakorny Square, acting over the head of the Kronstadt soviet, demanded from the Ministry of Justice the liberation of a group of Petrograd anarchists, threatening, in case their demand was not granted, that the sailors would march on the prison. Upon the following day, representatives from Oranienbaum informed the Ministry of Justice that their garrison was as much disturbed about the arrests in the summer home of Durnovo as Kronstadt, and that they were “already cleaning the machine guns.” The bourgeois press caught these threats on the wing, and shook them under the very noses of their compromisist allies. On June 26, delegates

from the Grenadier Guard regiment came from the front to their reserve battalion with the announcement: “The regiment is against the Provisional Government and demands the transfer of power to the soviets, it declines the offensive begun by Kerensky, and expresses an apprehension lest the Executive Committee has gone over along with the minister-socialists to the side of the Bourjui.” The organ of the Executive Committee published a reproachful account of this visit.

Not only Kronstadt was boiling like a kettle, but also the whole Baltic fleet with its principal base in Helsingfors. The head boss of the Bolsheviks in the fleet was undoubtedly Antonov-Ovseenko, who years ago as a young officer had taken part in the Sebastopol insurrection of 1905. A Menshevik during the reaction years, an emigrant-internationalist during the war, a colleague of Trotsky on **Nashe Slovo**, in Paris, he joined the Bolsheviks after his return from abroad. Politically shaky, but personally courageous – impulsive and disorderly, but capable of initiative and improvisation – Antonov-Ovseenko, although still little known in those days, was to play by no means the smallest role in the future events of the revolution. “We in the Helsingfors committee of the Party,” he relates in his memoirs, “understood the necessity of restraint and serious preparation. We had directions to that effect, moreover, from the Central Committee. But we saw the utter inevitability of an explosion, and were looking with alarm towards Petersburg.” And in Petersburg the elements of an explosion were piling up day by day. The 2nd Machine Gun regiment, which was less advanced than the first, adopted a resolution demanding the transfer of power to the Soviet. The 3rd Infantry regiment refused to

send out fourteen replacement companies. Meetings in the barracks were acquiring a more and more stormy character. A meeting of the Grenadier regiment on July 1st was signalized by the arrest of the president of the committee, and by the obstructive heckling of the Menshevik orators: Down with the offensive! Down with Kerensky! At the focus of the garrison stood the machine gun men. It was they who opened the sluices for the July flood.

We have already met with the name of the 1st Machine Gun regiment in the events of the first month of the revolution. Arriving shortly after the overturn, having marched from Oranienbaum to Petrograd upon its own initiative “for the defense of the revolution,” this regiment immediately ran into the opposition of the Executive Committee, which adopted a resolution: to send the regiment back with thanks to Oranienbaum. The machine-gunners flatly refused to leave the capital: “Counter-revolutionists might attack the Soviet and restore the old régime.” The Executive Committee surrendered, and several thousand machine-gunners remained in Petrograd along with their machine guns. They took up their quarters in the House of the People, and wondered what their further destiny was to be. They had among them, however, a good many Petrograd workers, and therefore by no accident the Bolshevik Committee took upon itself the care of these machine-gunners. Through its intercession they were assured provisions from Peter and Paul fortress. A friendship began. It soon became indestructible. On the 21st of June, the machine-gunners introduced at a mass meeting a resolution: “In the future detachments shall be sent to the front only when the war

has a revolutionary character." On the 2nd of July, the regiment called a farewell meeting in the House of the People for the "last" replacement company to depart for the front. The speakers were Lunacharsky and Trotsky. The authorities tried subsequently to attribute unusual significance to this accidental fact. Responses were made in the name of the regiment by the soldier, Zhilin, and the old Bolshevik non-commissioned officer, Lashevich. The mood was exalted. They denounced Kerensky and swore fealty to the revolution – but nobody made any practical proposal for the immediate future. However, during those last days the city persisted in expecting something to happen. The "July Days" were casting their shadow before them. "Everywhere," Sukhanov remembers, "in all corners, in the Soviet, in the Mariinsky Palace, in people's apartments, on the public squares and boulevards, in the barracks, in the factories, they were talking about some sort of manifestation to be expected, if not today, tomorrow ... Nobody knew exactly who was going to manifest what, or where, but the city felt itself to be upon the verge of some sort of explosion." And the explosion did actually come. The stimulus was given from above – from the ruling circles.

On the same day when Trotsky and Lunacharsky were speaking to the machine gun men about the bankruptcy of the coalition, four Kadet ministers exploded the coalition by withdrawing from the government. They chose as pretext an agreement which their compromisist colleagues had concluded with the Ukraine, an agreement unacceptable to their imperial ambitions. The real cause of this demonstrative break lay in the fact that the Compromisers had been dilatory about bridling the

masses. The moment chosen was suggested by the collapse of the offensive – not yet officially acknowledged, but no longer a matter of doubt to the well-informed. These Liberals considered it expedient to leave their left allies face to face with defeat, and with the Bolsheviks. The rumor of the resignation of the Kadets immediately spread through the capital, and generalized all the existing conflicts politically in one slogan – or rather, one cry to heaven: “Let us have an end of this coalition rigmarôle!” The soldiers and workers considered that all other questions – that of wages, of the price of bread, and of whether it is necessary to die at the front for nobody knows what – depended upon the question who was to rule the country in the future, the bourgeoisie or their own Soviet. In these expectations there was a certain element of illusion – in so far, at least, as the masses hoped with a change of power to achieve an immediate solution of all sore problems. But in the last analysis they were right: the question of power determined the direction of the revolution as a whole, and that means that it decided the fate of everyone in particular. To imagine that the Kadets may not have foreseen the effect of this act of open sabotage of the Soviet would be decidedly to underestimate Miliukov. The leader of liberalism was obviously trying to drag the Compromisers into a difficult situation from which they could make a way out only with bayonets. In those days Miliukov firmly believed that the situation could be saved with a bold bloodletting.

On the morning of July 3, several thousand machine-gunners, after breaking up a meeting of the company and regimental committees of their regiment, elected a chairman of their own and demanded immediate

consideration of the question of an armed manifestation. The meeting was a storm from the first moment. The problem of the front intercrossed with the crisis in the government. The chairman of the meeting, a Bolshevik, Golovin, tried to apply the brakes, proposing that they have a preliminary talk with other units and with the Military Organization. But every suggestion of delay set the soldiers on edge. There appeared at this meeting the anarchist, Bleichman, a small but colorful figure on the background of 1917, with a very modest equipment of ideas but a certain feeling for the masses – sincere in his limited and ever inflammable intelligence – his shirt open at the breast and curly hair flying out on all sides. Bleichman was greeted at such meetings with a certain amount of semi-ironical sympathy. The workers, it is true, treated him somewhat coolly, a little impatiently – specially the metalworkers. But the soldiers smiled delightedly at his speeches, nudging each other with their elbows and egging the orator on with pithy comments. They plainly liked his eccentric looks, his unreasoning decisiveness, and his Jewish-American accent sharp as vinegar. By the end of June, Bleichman was swimming in all these impromptu meetings like a fish in a river. His opinion he had always with him: It is necessary to come out with arms in our hands. Organization? “The street will organize us.” The task? “To overthrow the Provisional Government just as it overthrew the tzar although no party was then demanding it.” These speeches perfectly met the feelings of the machine-gunners at that moment – and not theirs alone. Many of the Bolsheviks did not conceal their satisfaction when the lower ranks pressed forward against their official admonition. The progressive workers remembered that in February their leaders had been ready

to beat a retreat just on the eve of the victory; that in March the eight hour day had been won by action from below; that in April Miliukov had been thrown out by regiments who went into the street on their own initiative. A recollection of these facts augmented the tense and impatient mood of the masses.

The Military Organization of the Bolsheviks, being promptly informed that a meeting of the machine-gunners was at the boiling point, sent over one agitator after another. Soon came Nevsky himself, the leader of the Military Organization, a man respected by the soldiers. They seemed to listen to him. But the mood of that endless meeting changed with its ingredients. “It was an immense surprise to us,” relates Podvoisky, another leader of the Military Organization, “when at seven o’clock in the evening a horseman galloped up to inform us that ... the machine-gunners had again resolved to come out.” In place of the old regimental committee they had elected a provisional revolutionary committee consisting of two men from each company under the presidency of ensign Semashko. Specially appointed delegates were already making the rounds of the shops and regiments with an appeal for support. The machine-gunners had not forgotten, either, to send their men to Kronstadt. In this way, one step below the official organizations, and partly under their protection, new temporary relations were established between the more restive regiments and the factories. The masses had no intention of breaking with the Soviet; on the contrary, they wanted the Soviet to seize the power. Still less did the masses intend to break with the Bolshevik party. But they did feel that the party was irresolute. They wanted to get their shoulder under it –

shake a fist at the Executive Committee, give the Bolsheviks a little shove. Thus impromptu systems of representation were created, new knots were tied, new centers of activity formed – not permanently, but for the given situation. Changes in circumstance and mood were taking place so fast and sharply, that even such extremely flexible organizations as the soviets inevitably lagged behind, and the masses were compelled at every new turn to create auxiliary organs for the demands of the moment. In the course of these improvisations accidental and not always reliable elements would often spring into prominence. The anarchists poured oil on the fire. But so did some of the new and impatient Bolsheviks. Provocateurs also undoubtedly mixed in – perhaps also German agents, but surest of all the agents of the 100 per cent Russian secret police. How can one analyze the complicated web of a mass movement into its separate threads? The general character of the event emerges at least with complete clarity. Petrograd was feeling its strength, was straining at the leash, not glancing round at either the provinces or the front, and even the Bolshevik party was no longer able to hold it back. Only experience could teach them.

In calling the factories and regiments into the street, the delegates of the machine-gunners did not forget to add that the manifestation was to be armed. Yes, and how could it be otherwise? You wouldn’t present yourself unarmed to the blows of an enemy? Moreover – and this perhaps was the chief thing – we must show our force, and a soldier without weapons is not a force. Upon this point all the regiments and all the factories were of one mind: if we do go out, we must go with plenty of lead. The machine-

gunners lost no time: having started a big job, they intended to push it through as fast as possible. The report of a Court of Inquiry subsequently characterized the activities of ensign Semashko, one of the principal leaders of the regiment in these words: “He demanded automobiles from the factories, armed them with machine guns, sent them to the Tauride Palace and other points, designating the route, personally led out his regiment from the barracks into the town, rode out to the reserve battalion of the Moscow regiment to persuade it to come out, in which he was successful, promised the soldiers of the Machine Gun regiment support from the regiments of the Military Organization, kept in continual touch with this organization, quartered in the house of Kshesinskaia, and with the leader of the Bolsheviks, Lenin, dispatched sentries for the protection of the Military Organization ...” The reference to Lenin here is inserted only to fill out the picture. Lenin was not in Petrograd either on that day or the days preceding. Since the 29th of June he had been ill in a bungalow in Finland. But for the rest, the compressed language of the military court official conveys not at all badly the feverish preparations of the machine-gunners. In the yard of the barracks a no less feverish work was going on. They were giving out rifles to the soldiers who did not possess them, giving bombs to some, installing three machine guns with operators on each motor truck supplied by the factories. The regiment was to go into the street in full military array.

And just about the same thing was going on in the factories. Delegates would arrive from the machine-gunners, or from a neighboring factory, and summon the workers into the street. It would seem as though they had

been waiting for the delegates. Work would stop instantly. A worker of the Renaud Factory tells this story: “After dinner a number of machine gun men came running with the request that we give them some motor trucks. In spite of the protest of our group (the Bolsheviks), we had to give up the cars ... They promptly loaded the trucks with ’Maxims’ (machine guns) and drove down the Nevsky. At this point we could no longer restrain our workers ... They all, just as they were, in overalls, rushed straight outdoors from the benches ...” The protests of the factory Bolsheviks were not always, we may assume, very insistent. The longest struggle took place at the Putilov Factory. At about two in the afternoon a rumour went round that a delegation had come from the machine gun unit, and was calling a meeting. About ten thousand men assembled. To shouts of encouragement, the machine-gunners told how they had received an order to go to the front on the 4th of July, but they had decided “to go not to the German front, against the German proletariat, but against their own capitalist ministers.” Feeling ran high. “Come on, let’s get moving!” cried the workers. The secretary of the factory committee, a Bolshevik, objected, suggesting that they ask instructions from the party. Protests from all sides: “Down with it! Again you want to postpone things. We can’t live that way any longer. Towards six o’clock came representatives from the Executive Committee, but they succeeded still less with the workers. The meeting continued, the everlasting nervous obstinate meeting of innumerable masses seeking a way out and unwilling to be told that there is none. It was proposed that they send a delegation to the Executive Committee-still another delay, but, as before, the meeting did not disperse. About this time a group of workers and

soldiers brought news that the Vyborg Side was already on its way to the Tauride Palace. To hold them back longer was impossible. They decided to go. A Putilov worker, Efimov, ran to the district committee of the party to ask: “What shall we do?” The answer he got was: “We will not join the manifestation, but we can’t leave the workers to their fate. We must go along with them.” At that moment appeared a member of the committee, Chudin, with the word that the workers were going out in all the districts, and that it was up to the party men to “maintain order.” In this way the Bolsheviks were caught up by the movement and dragged into it, looking around the while for some justification for an action which flatly contravened the official decision of the party.

By seven o’clock the industrial life of the capital was at a complete standstill. Factory after factory came out, lined up and armed its detachment of the Red Guard. “Amid an innumerable mass of workers,” relates the Vyborg Worker, Metelev, “hundreds of young Red Guards were working away loading their rifles. Others were piling cartridges into the cartridge-chambers, tightening up their belts, tying on their knapsacks or cartridge boxes, adjusting their bayonets. And the workers without arms were helping the Red Guards get ready ...” Sampsonevsky Prospect, the chief artery of the Vyborg Side, was packed full of people. To the right and left of it stood solid columns of workers. In the middle of the Prospect marched the Machine Gun regiment, the spinal column of the procession. At the head of each company went an automobile truck with its Maxims. After the Machine Gun regiment came the workers. Covering the manifestation as a rear guard, came detachments of the Moscow regiment. Over every

detachment streamed a banner: “All Power to the Soviets!” The funeral procession in March and the First of May demonstration were probably more numerous, but the July procession was incomparably more eager, more threatening, and – more homogeneous in its composition. “Under the red banners marched only workers and soldiers,” writes one of the participants. “The cockades of the officials, the shiny buttons of students, the hats of ‘lady sympathizers’ were not to be seen. All that belonged to four months ago, to February. In today’s movement there was none of that. Today only the common slaves of capital were marching.” As before, automobiles flew through the streets in all directions full of armed workers and soldiers – delegates, agitators, reconnoiters, telephone men, and detachments for calling out workers and regiments. They all held their bayonets advanced. The bristling motor trucks completed a picture of the February days, electrifying some, terrorizing others. The Kadet Nabokov writes: “The same insane, dumb, beastlike faces which we all remember from the February days” – that is, the days of that very revolution which the liberals had officially pronounced glorious and bloodless. By nine o’clock seven regiments were already moving toward the Tauride Palace. They were joined on the way by columns from the factories and by new military detachments. The movement of the Machine Gun regiment developed a colossal power of contagion. The “July days” had begun.

Meetings were held on the march. Shots rang out. According to a worker, Korotkov, “they dragged out of a cellar on the Liteiny a machine gun and an officer whom they killed on the spot.” All conceivable rumours ran ahead of the demonstration. Fears rayed out from it on all

sides like beams of light. What imaginable thing was not reported over the telephones from the frightened central districts? It was said that about eight o'clock in the evening an armed automobile dashed up to the Warsaw station seeking Kerensky who had left that very day for the front, intending to arrest him, but that the train had gone and the arrest did not occur. That episode was subsequently repeated more than once as proving a conspiracy. Just who was in the automobile and who discovered its mysterious intentions, has nevertheless remained unknown. On that evening automobiles with armed men were careering in all directions – doubtless, therefore, in the vicinity of the Warsaw station. Strong words were to be heard about Kerensky in many places. This evidently served as a basis for the myth – if it was not indeed simply manufactured out of whole cloth.

Izvestia sketched the following outline of the events of July 3rd: "At five o'clock in the afternoon there came out, armed, the First Machine Gun, a part of the Moscow, a part of the Grenadier, and a part of the Pavlovsky regiments. They were joined by crowds of workers ... By eight o'clock in the evening, separate parts of regiments began to pour towards the Palace of Kshesinskaia, armed to the teeth and with red banners and placards demanding the transfer of power to the soviets. Speeches were made from the balcony ... At ten-thirty a meeting was held on the square in front of the Tauride Palace ... The troops elected a deputation to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee which presented in their name the following demands: Removal of the ten bourgeois ministers, all power to the soviets, cessation of the offensive, confiscation of the printing plants of the bourgeois press, the land to be state

property, state control of production.” Aside from certain prunings – “parts of regiments” instead of regiments, “crowds of workers” instead of entire factories – you may say that the official report of Tseretelli and Dan does not distort the general picture of what happened. In particular it correctly notes the two focal points of the demonstration: the private residence of Kshesinskaia and the Tauride Palace. Both spiritually and physically the movement revolved around those two antagonistic centers: It came to the house of Kshesinskaia for instructions, leadership, inspirational speeches; to the Tauride Palace it came to present demands and even to threaten a little with its power.

At three o’clock in the afternoon, two delegates from the machine-gunners came to an all-city conference of the Bolsheviks, sitting that day in the house of Kshesinskaia, with the information that their regiment had decided to come out. Nobody had expected this, and nobody wanted it. Tomsky declared: “The regiments which have come out have acted in an uncomradely manner, not having invited the Central Committee of our party to consider the question of a manifestation. The Central Committee proposes to the conference: in the first place, to issue an appeal in order to hold back the masses; in the second, to prepare an address to the Executive Committee urging them to take the power in their hands. It is impossible to talk of a manifestation at this moment unless we want a new revolution.” Tomsky, an old worker-Bolshevik who had certified his loyalty to the party with years at hard labor – famous subsequently as leader of the trade unions – was in general more inclined by character to restrain the masses from action than summon them to it. But on this

occasion he was merely carrying out the thought of Lenin: “It is impossible to talk of a manifestation at this moment unless we want a new revolution.” Even the attempt at a peaceful demonstration on June 10th had been denounced by the Compromisers as a conspiracy. An overwhelming majority of the conference was at one with Tomsky. We must at all costs postpone the final conflict. The offensive at the front is holding the whole country at high tension. Its failure is inevitable – as also the determination of the government to throw all the responsibility for the defeat upon the Bolsheviks. We must give the Compromisers time to ruin themselves completely. Volodarsky answered the machine-gunners in the name of the conference to the effect that the regiment must submit to the decisions of the party. The machine-gunners departed with a protest. At four o’clock the Central Committee confirmed the decision of the conference. Its members dispersed to the districts and factories to restrain the masses from going out. Appeals to the same effect were sent to **Pravda** to be printed on the front page the following morning. Stalin was appointed to bring the decision to the attention of the joint session of the Executive Committees. There remains, therefore, no doubt whatever as to the intention of the Bolsheviks. Their Central Committee addressed an appeal to the workers and soldiers: “Unknown persons … are summoning you into the streets under arms,” and that proves that the summons does not come from any one of the soviet parties … Thus the central committees – both of the party and the Soviet – proposed, but the masses disposed.

At eight o’clock in the evening, the Machine Gun regiment, and soon after it the Moscow regiment, came up to the

palace of Kshesinskaia. Popular Bolsheviks – Nevsky, Lashevich, Podvoisky – speaking from the balcony, tried to send the regiments home. They were answered from below: *Doloi! Doloi!* Such cries the Bolshevik balcony had never yet heard from the soldiers; it was an alarming sign. Behind the regiments the factories began to march up: “All Power to the Soviets!” “Down with the ten minister capitalists!” Those had been the banners of June 18th, but now they were hedged with bayonets. The demonstration had become a mighty fact. What was to be done? Could the Bolsheviks possibly stand aside? The members of the Petrograd committee, together with the delegates to the conference and representatives from the regiments and factories, passed a resolution: to reconsider the question, to end all fruitless attempts to restrain the masses and guide the developing movement in such a way that the governmental crisis may be decided in the interests of the people; with this goal, to appeal to the soldiers and workers to go peacefully to the Tauride Palace, elect delegates, and through them present their demands to the Executive Committee. The members of the Central Committee who were present sanctioned this change of tactics. This new decision, announced from the balcony, was met with welcoming shouts and with singing of the *Marseillaise*. The movement had been legalized by the party. The machine-gunners could heave a sigh of relief. A part of the regiment immediately went to the Peter and Paul fortress to influence its garrison, and in case of necessity protect from its blows the Palace of Kshesinskaia, which was separated from the fortress only by the narrow Kronverksky canal.

The principal ranks of the demonstration moved out into

the Nevsky, the artery of the bourgeoisie, bureaucracy and officers, as though into a foreign country. From the sidewalks, windows, balconies, thousands of eyes looked out with no good wishes. regiment pressed upon factory, factory upon regiment. Fresh masses arrived continually. All the banners, in gold letters on red, cried out with one voice: “All Power to the Soviets!” The procession brimmed the Nevsky and poured like a river at the flood to the Tauride Palace. The placards “Down with the war!” provoke the bitterest hostility from the officers – among them many war-invalids. Waving their arms and straining their voices, students, college girls, officials, endeavor to persuade the soldiers that German agents behind them are aiming to let Wilhelm’s troops into Petrograd to strangle freedom. To these orators their own conclusions seem irrefutable. “They are deceived by spies,” say the officials, pointing at the workers, and the workers’ answer is a surly growl. “Led astray by fanatics!” say the more indulgent. “Ignorant elements,” others agree. But the workers have their own way of measuring things. They did not learn from German spies those ideas which have brought them into the streets today. The demonstrators impolitely push aside their importunate tutors, and move forward. This drives the patriots of the Nevsky out of their heads. Shock groups, led for the most part by war-cripples and Cavaliers of St. George, fall upon individual sections of the demonstration, trying to snatch away the banners. Clashes occur here and there. The atmosphere grows hot. Shots ring out. One, and then another. From a window? From the Anichkin Palace? The pavement answers with a volley in the air, aimed nowhere. In a short time the whole street is in confusion. At about midnight – relates a worker from the “Vulcan” Factory – as the Grenadier regiment was passing

through the Nevsky in the vicinity of the Public Library, somebody opened fire on them from somewhere, and the shooting continued several minutes. A panic followed. The workers began to scatter into the side streets. The soldiers lay down under fire – they had learned that in the war school. That midnight scene on the Nevsky, with Grenadier Guards lying down on the pavement, was a fantastic spectacle. Neither Pushkin nor Gogol, singers of the Nevsky, ever imagined it thus. Moreover, there was reality in this fantasia: dead and wounded men stayed there on the pavement.

THE TAURIDE was living a life of its own in those days. In view of the resignation of the Kadets, both Executive Committees, the worker-soldier's and the peasant's, had met in joint session to consider a discourse of Tseretelli on how to pour out the coalition bath without the baby. The secret of this operation would undoubtedly have been discovered in the long run, if the restless suburbs had not intervened. A telephone communication about the manifestation under preparation by the Machine Gun regiment produced frowns of anger and vexation on the faces of the leaders. Can it be that the soldiers and workers will not wait until our newspapers bring them salvation in the form of a resolution? Oblique glances were cast in the direction of the Bolsheviks. But for them too, this time, the demonstration was a surprise. Kamenev, and other representatives of the party who happened to be present, even agreed at the end of the day's session to go to the factories and barracks and attempt to restrain the masses from going out. This gesture was afterward

interpreted by the Compromisers as a military trick. The Executive Committee as usual hastily adopted a proclamation declaring any manifestation an act of treachery to the revolution. But even so, how were they going to deal with the governmental crisis? A way out was found: they would leave the mutilated cabinet as it was, postponing the whole question until the provincial members of the Executive Committee could be summoned. To drag things out, to gain time for your own vacillations – is not that the most ingenious of all p0litical policies?

Only in their struggle against the masses did the Compromisers consider it unwise to lose time. The official apparatus was immediately set in motion to prepare arms against the “insurrection” – for so they named the demonstration from the very beginning. The leaders searched everywhere for armed forces to defend the government and the Executive Committee. Over the signature of Cheidze and other members of the præsidium , demands were sent to various military institutions to send to the Tauride Palace armored cars, three-inch guns and shells. At the same time almost every regiment received orders to send armed detachments for the defense of the palace. But they did not stop there. Their bureau telegraphed an order that same day to the front – to the Fifth Army, stationed nearest the capital – to “send to Petrograd a cavalry division, a brigade of infantry, and armored cars.” The Menshevik, Voitinsky, to whom was allotted the task of protecting the Executive Committee, let the whole thing out later in his retrospective survey: “The entire day of July 3rd was spent in getting together troops to fortify the Tauride Palace … Our problem was to

bring in at least a few companies … At one time we had absolutely no forces. Six men stood at the doors of the Tauride Palace without power to hold back the crowd …” And again: “On the first day of the demonstration we had at our disposal only a hundred men – we had no other forces. We sent out commissars to all the regiments with a request to give us soldiers to form a patrol . But each regiment looked to the next to see what it was going to do. We were compelled at whatever cost to put a stop to this outrage, and we summoned troops from the front.” It would be difficult, even with malice aforethought, to devise a more vicious satire upon the Compromisers. Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators were demanding the transfer of power to the soviets. Cheidze, standing at the head of the soviet system and thus the logical candidate for premier, was hunting for armed forces to employ against the demonstrators. This colossal movement in favor of power to the democracy, was denounced by the democratic leaders as an attack upon the democracy by an armed gang.

In the Tauride Palace at that same time the workers’ section of the Soviet was meeting after a long intermission. In the course of the last two months this section had so far changed its composition, as a result of by-elections in the factories, that the Executive Committee had well-grounded fears of a predominance of Bolsheviks. The artificially delayed meeting of the section – finally called a few days before by the Compromisers themselves – accidentally coincided with the armed demonstration. In this the newspapers saw the hand of the Bolsheviks. Zinoviev in a speech to the section convincingly developed the thought that the Compromisers, being allies of the

bourgeoisie, were unable and unwilling to struggle against the counter-revolution, since that word meant to them only individual manifestations of Black Hundred hooliganism; it did not mean what it was – a political union of the possessing classes for the purpose of strangling the soviets as centers of the resistance of the toiling masses. His speech hit the mark. The Mensheviks, finding themselves for the first time in a minority on soviet soil, proposed that no decision should be arrived at, and that they should disperse to the districts to preserve order. But it was already too late! The news that armed workers and machine-gunners were approaching the Tauride Palace produced a mighty excitement in the hall. Kamenev ascended the tribune: “We did not summon the manifestation,” he said. “The popular masses themselves came into the street ... But once the masses have come out, our place is among them... Our present task is to give the movement an organized character.” Kamenev concluded with a proposal that they elect a commission of twenty-five men for the leadership of the movement. Trotsky seconded the motion. Cheidze feared a Bolshevik commission, and vainly insisted that the question be turned over to the Executive Committee. The debate became fiercer. Convinced finally that all together they constituted only a third of the assembly, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries left the hall. This was becoming a favorite tactic with the democrats; they began to boycott the soviets from the moment they lost the majority there. A resolution summoning the Executive Committee to take the power was adopted in the absence of the opposition by 276 votes. Elections were immediately held for the fifteen members of the commission. Ten places were left for the minority – and these ten would remain unoccupied.

This fact of the election of a Bolshevik commission signified both to friends and enemies that the workers' section of the Petrograd soviet would henceforth become a Bolshevik base. A vast step forward! In April the influence of the Bolsheviks had extended to approximately a third of the Petrograd workers; in the Soviet of those days they occupied a wholly insignificant sector. Now, at the beginning of July, the Bolsheviks were sending to the workers' section about two-thirds of its members. That meant that among the masses their influence had become decisive.

Through the streets leading to the Tauride Palace there is flowing a steady column of working men and women and soldiers, with banners, songs and bands playing. The light artillery comes along, its commander reporting amid rapture that all the batteries of his division are at one with the workers. The thoroughfares and square near the Tauride are filled with people. All are trying to crowd in around the tribune at the chief entrance to the palace. Cheidze comes out to the demonstrators with the gloomy look of a man who has been unnecessarily torn from his work. The popular soviet president is met with an unfriendly silence. In a tired and hoarse voice Cheidze repeats those commonplaces which have long puckered his mouth. Voitinsky, who comes out to help him, is no better received. "Trotsky, however " – according to the account of Miliukov – "having announced that the moment was now come when the power should go over to the soviets, was met with loud applause." This sentence of Miliukov's is purposely ambiguous. None of the Bolsheviks declared that "the moment was come." A machinist from the small Duflon factory on the Petrograd side said later

about that meeting under the wall of the Tauride Palace: “I remember the speech of Trotsky, who said that it was not yet time to seize the power in our hands.” The machinist reports the essence of the speech more correctly than the professor of history. From the lips of the Bolshevik orators the demonstrators learned of the victory just won in the Workers’ Section, and that fact gave them almost as palpable a satisfaction as would an entrance upon the epoch of soviet power.

The joint session of the Executive Committees met again a little before midnight. (Just then the grenadiers were lying down on the Nevsky.) On a motion from Dan, it was resolved that only those could remain at the meeting who should bind themselves in advance to defend and carry out its decisions. This was a new note! From a workers’ and soldiers’ parliament, which was what the Mensheviks had declared the Soviet to be, they were trying to convert it into an administrative organ of the compromise majority. After they have become a minority – and this is only two months away – the Compromisers will passionately defend the principle of democracy in the soviet. Today, however – as indeed at all decisive moments in social life – democracy is held in reserve. A number of Mezhrayontsi [1] left the hall with a protest. The Bolsheviks were not there; they were in the Palace of Kshesinskaia getting ready for tomorrow. During the further course of the meeting the Mezhrayontsi and the Bolsheviks appeared in the hall with the announcement that no one could take from them the mandate given them by their electors. The majority greeted this announcement with silence, and Dan’s resolution was quietly dropped into oblivion. The session dragged out like a death agony. In tired voices the

Compromisers kept on assuring each other that they were right. Tseretelli, in his character of Postmaster General, entered a complaint against his employees: “I just now learned of the strike of the postal and telegraph workers ... As to their political demands, their slogans are the same: “All Power to the Soviets!”

Delegates from the demonstrators, now surrounding the Tauride Palace on all sides, demanded admission to the meeting. They were admitted with alarm and hostility. The delegates, however, sincerely believed that this time the Compromisers could not help coming to meet them. Had not today’s issues of the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary papers, wrought up over the resignation of the Kadets, themselves exposed the intrigues and sabotage of their bourgeois allies? Moreover the workers’ section had come out in favor of a soviet government. What else was there to wait for? But their fervent appeals, in which hope still mingled with indignation, dropped impotent and inappropriate into the stagnant atmosphere of that parliament of compromise. The leaders had but one thought: how quickest to get rid of their uninvited guests. To suggest that they withdraw to the gallery, to drive them back into the street to the demonstrators, would be indiscreet. In the gallery machine gun men were listening with amazement to the evolving debate, which had only one goal – to gain time. The Compromisers were waiting for reliable regiments. “A revolutionary people is in the streets,” cried Dan, “but that people is engaged in a counter-revolutionary work.” Dan was supported by Abramovich, one of the leaders of the Jewish Bund, a conservative pedant whose every instinct had been outraged by the revolution. “We are witnesses to a

conspiracy," he asserts, in defiance of the obvious, and he proposes to the Bolsheviks that they openly announce that "this is their work." Tseretelli deepens the discussion: "To go out into the streets with the demand, 'All Power to the Soviets' – is that to support the soviets? If the soviets so desired, the power could pass to them. There is no obstacle anywhere to the will of the soviets ... Such a manifestation is not along the road of revolution, but of counter-revolution." These considerations the workers' delegates could not possibly understand. It seemed to them that the high-up leaders were a little bit out of their heads. The meeting at last resolved once more, by all votes except 11, that an armed manifestation would be a stab in the back at the revolutionary army, etc., etc. The meeting adjourned at five o'clock in the morning.

The masses were gradually gathered back into their districts. Armed automobiles traveled all night, uniting regiments, factories and district centers. As in the last days of February, the masses spent the night casting the balance of the day's struggle. But now they did this with the aid of a complicated system of organizations-factory, party and regimental-which conferred continually. In the districts it was considered self-evident that the movement could not stop half way. The Executive Committee had postponed the decision about the power. The masses regarded that as wavering. The conclusion was clear: we must bring more pressure to bear. A night session of Bolsheviks and Mezhrayontsi [2], meeting in the Tauride Palace simultaneously with the Executive Committees, also cast the balance of the day and tried to foretell what the morrow would bring. Reports from the districts testified that today's demonstration had merely set the masses in

motion, presenting to their minds nakedly for the first time the question of power. Tomorrow the factories and regiments would go after the answer, and no force in the world could hold them in the suburbs. The debate was not about whether to summon the masses to a seizure of power – as enemies later asserted – but about whether to try to call off the demonstration the next morning or to stand at the head of it.

Late in the night, or rather at about three o'clock in the morning, the Putilov factory approached the Tauride Palace – a mass of eighty thousand workers, many with wives and children. The procession had started at eleven o'clock in the evening, and other belated factories had joined it on the road. In spite of the late hour, there was such a mass of people at the Narva Gate as to suggest that nobody stayed home that night in the whole district. The women had exclaimed: "Everybody must go – we will watch the houses." At a signal from the belfry of the Church of the Savior shots had rattled out as though from a machine gun. From below a volley was fired at the belfry. "Near Gostiny Dvor a company of junkers and students fell upon the demonstrators and tried to tear away their placards. The workers resisted. The crowd piled up. Somebody fired a shot. The writer of these lines got his head broken, his sides and chest badly mashed by tramping feet." These are the words of the worker Efimov, already known to us. Passing across the whole town, silent now, the Putilov men finally arrived at the Tauride Palace. Thanks to the insistent efforts of Riazanov, closely associated at that time with the trade unions, a delegation was admitted to the Executive Committee. The throng of workers, hungry and dead-tired, scattered about on the street and in the

garden, a majority immediately stretching themselves out, thinking to wait there for an answer. The entire Putilov factory lying there on the ground at three o'clock in the morning around the Tauride Palace, where the democratic leaders were waiting for the arrival of troops from the front – that is one of the most startling pictures offered by the revolution on this summit of the pass between February and October. Twelve years before no small numbers of these same workers had participated in the January procession to the Winter Palace with ikons and religious standards. Ages had passed since that Sunday afternoon; other ages will pass during the next four months.

The sombre image of these Putilov workers lying down in the courtyard hung over the conference of Bolshevik leaders and organizers as they debated about the next day's plans. Tomorrow the Putilovtsi will refuse to work – yes, and what work would they be good for after the night's vigil? Zinoviev was summoned to the telephone. Raskolnikov had rung up from Kronstadt to say that tomorrow early in the morning the garrison of the fortress would start for Petrograd and nobody and nothing could stop it. The young midshipman was holding on in suspense at the other end of the wire: Would the central committee order him to break with the soviets, and ruin himself in their eyes? To the picture of the Putilov factory as a gypsy camp was thus joined the no less suggestive picture of the sailors' island getting ready in those sleepless hours of the night to support workers' and soldiers' Petrograd. No, the situation was too clear. There was no more room for wavering. Trotsky inquired for the last time: Can we, nevertheless, try to make it an unarmed demonstration? No, there can be no question of that. One squad of Junkers

can scatter tens of thousands of unarmed workers like a flock of sheep. The soldiers and the workers, too, will regard that proposal as a trap. The answer was categorical and convincing. All unanimously decided to summon the masses in the name of the party to prolong the demonstration on the next day. Zinoviev hastened to relieve the mind of Raskolnikov, languishing at the other end of the telephone. An address to the workers and soldiers was immediately drawn up: Into the streets! The afternoon's summons from the Central Committee to stop the demonstration, was torn from the presses-but too late to replace it with a new text. A white page in **Pravda** the next morning will be deadly evidence against the Bolsheviks: Evidently getting frightened at the last moment, they withdrew the appeal for an insurrection; or maybe, just the opposite – maybe they renounced an earlier appeal for a peaceful demonstration in order to go in for insurrection. Meanwhile the real decision of the Bolsheviks was issued on a separate leaflet. It summoned the workers and soldiers "by way of a peaceful and organized demonstration to bring their will to the attention of the Executive Committees now in session." No, that was not a summons to insurrection.

Notes

1. Appointed officials having both administrative and judicial power over the local peasant population.

2. Members of the "Inter-district" organization to which the author at that time belonged. – *Trans.*

Chapter 25: The July Days: Culmination and Rout

From that moment the direct leadership of the movement passed conclusively into the hands of the Petrograd committee of the party, whose chief force as an agitator was Volodarsky. The task of mobilizing the garrison was assigned to the Military Organization. The direction of this organization ever since March had been in the hands of two old Bolsheviks to whom the organization was to owe much in its further development. Podvoisky was a sharply outlined and unique figure in the ranks of Bolshevism, with traits of the Russian revolutionary of the old type – from the theological seminaries – a man of great although undisciplined energy, with a creative imagination which, it must be confessed, often went to the length of fantasy. The word “Podvoiskyism” subsequently acquired on the lips of Lenin a friendly-ironical and admonitory flavor. But the weaker sides of this ebullient nature were to show themselves chiefly after the conquest of power, when an abundance of opportunities and means gave too many stimuli to the extravagant energy of Podvoisky and his passion for decorative undertakings. In the conditions of the revolutionary struggle for power, his optimistic decisiveness of character, his self-abnegation, his tirelessness, made him an irreplaceable leader of the awakening soldiers. Nevsky, a university instructor in the past, of more prosaic mould than Podvoisky, but no less devoted to the party, in no sense an organizer, and only by

an unlucky accident made soviet Minister of Communications a year later, attached the soldiers to him by his simplicity, sociability, and attentive kindness. Around these leaders stood a group of close assistants, soldiers and young officers, some of whom in the future were to play no small role On the night of July 4th the Military Organization suddenly came forward to the center of the stage. Under Podvoisky, who easily mastered the functions of command, an impromptu general staff was formed. Brief appeals and instructions were issued to all the troops of the garrison. In order to protect the demonstration from attack, armored cars were to be placed at the bridges leading from the suburbs to the capital and at the central crossings of the chief streets. The machine-gunners had already, during that night, established their own sentries at the Peter and Paul fortress. The garrisons of Oranienbaum, Peterhoff, Krasnoe Selo and other points near the capital, were informed of tomorrow’s demonstration by telephone and special messenger. The general political leadership, of course, remained in the hands of the Central Committee of the party.

The machine-gunners returned to their barracks at dawn, tired and, in spite of the July weather, shivering. A night rain had soaked the Putilov men also to the skin. The demonstrators did not assemble until eleven o’clock in the morning. The military sections got there still later. Today the 1st Machine Gun regiment was on the street to the last man. But it will no longer play the role of initiator as it did yesterday. The factories have moved into the front rank. Moreover, those plants have been drawn into the movement which yesterday stood aside. Where the

leaders wavered or resisted, younger workers had compelled the member-on-duty of the factory committee to blow the whistle as a signal to stop work. In the Baltic factory, where Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries dominated, about four out of five thousand workers came out. In the Skorokhod shoe factory, long considered a stronghold of the Social Revolutionaries, the mood had so sharply changed that an old deputy from that factory, a Social Revolutionary, did not dare show his face for several days. All the factories struck and held meetings. They elected leaders for the demonstration and delegates to present their demands to the Executive Committee. Again hundreds of thousands moved in radii toward the Tauride Palace, and again tens of thousands turned aside on their way there to the Palace of Kshesinskaia. Today's movement was more impressive and organized than yesterday's: the guiding hand of the party was evident. But the feeling too was hotter today. The soldiers and workers were out for a solution of the crisis. The government was in despair, for on this second day of the demonstration its impotence was even more obvious than on the first. The Executive Committee was waiting for loyal troops, and getting reports from all sides that hostile troops were moving on the capital. From Kronstadt, from New Peterhoff, from Krasnoe Selo, from the Krasnaia Gorka fort, from all the nearby centers, by land and sea, soldiers and sailors were marching in with music, with weapons, and, worst of all, with Bolshevik standards. A number of regiments were bringing their officers with them, just as in the February days, pretending to be acting under their command.

"The sitting of the government was not over," relates

Miliukov, “when news came from the staff that there was shooting on the Nevsky. It was decided to transfer the sitting to staff-headquarters. Here were Prince Lvov, Tseretelli, Minister of Justice Pereverzev, and two assistants from the Ministry of War. There was one moment when the situation of the government seemed hopeless. The Preobrazhentsi, the Semenovtsi, and the Izmailovtsi [1], who had not joined the Bolsheviks, announced to the government that they would remain ‘neutral.’ On Palace Square, for the defense of headquarters, there were to be found only war-invalids and a few hundred Cossacks.” General Polovtsev published on the morning of July 4th an announcement that he was going to cleanse Petrograd of armed hordes. The inhabitants were strictly advised to lock their doors and not go into the streets except in case of absolute necessity. This threatening order fell flat. The commander of all the troops of the district was able to bring out against the demonstrators only petty detachments of Cossacks and junkers. In the course of the day they caused some meaningless shootings and some bloody clashes. An ensign of the First Don regiment guarding the Winter Palace reported subsequently to a commission of inquiry: “We were ordered to disarm small groups of people who passed by, no matter who they were, and also armed automobiles. To carry out this order, we would run out of the palace on foot from time to time and disarm people ...” The ingenuous tale of the Cossack ensign correctly portrays the correlation of forces, and gives a picture of the struggle. The “mutinous” troops came out of the barracks in companies and battalions, taking possession of the streets and squares. The government troops acted from ambush, or made raids in small

detachments – that is, they functioned exactly as insurrectionary bands are supposed to. This exchange of rôles is explained by the fact that almost the whole armed force of the government was hostile to it – or at the best, neutral. The government was living by the authorization of the Executive Committee; the power of the Executive Committee derived in turn from the hopes of the masses that it might at last come to its senses and take the power.

The demonstration attained its highest point with the appearance on the Petrograd arena of the Kronstadt sailors. Delegates from the machine-gunners had been working the day before in the garrison of the naval fortress. A meeting had assembled in Yakorny Square, unexpectedly to the local organization, on the initiative of some anarchists from Petrograd. The Orators had appealed to the sailors to come to the help of Petrograd. Roshal, a medical student, one of the young heroes of Kronstadt and a favorite on Yakorny Square, had tried to make a speech counseling moderation. Thousands of voices cut him off. Roshal, accustomed to a different welcome, had been compelled to leave the tribune. Not until night did it become known that in Petrograd the Bolsheviks were calling the masses into the streets. That settled the matter. The Left Social Revolutionaries – and in Kronstadt there could be no right ones – announced that they intended to take part in the demonstration. These people belonged to the same party with Kerensky, who at that very moment was at the front collecting troops to put down the demonstration. The mood at that night’s session of the Kronstadt organization was such that even the timid commissar of the Provisional Government, Parchevsky, voted for the march on Petrograd. A plan was drawn up;

transports were mobilized. For the necessities of this political siege, two and a half tons of arms and ammunition were given out from the stores. Crowded on tugs and passenger steamers, about 10,000 armed sailors, soldiers and workers came into the narrows of the Neva at twelve o’clock noon. Disembarking on both sides of the river, they formed a procession with bands playing and with rifles slung over their shoulders. Behind the detachments of sailors and soldiers came columns of workers from the Petrograd and Vassilievsky Island districts, interspersed with companies of the Red Guard flanked by armored cars and with innumerable standards and banners rising above them.

The Palace of Kshesinskaia was but two steps away. A little lank man, black as tar, Sverdlov – one of the basic organizers of the party elected to the Central Committee in the April conference – was standing on the balcony and in a businesslike manner, as always, shouting down instructions in his powerful bass voice: “Head of the procession, advance – close up ranks – rear ranks come closer.” The demonstrators were greeted from the balcony by Lunacharsky, a man always easily infected by the moods of those around him, imposing in appearance and voice, eloquent in a declamatory way – none too reliable, but often irreplaceable. He was stormily applauded from below. But most of all the demonstrators wanted to hear Lenin himself. He had been summoned that morning, by the way, from his temporary Finland refuge. And the sailors so insisted on having their will, that in spite of ill health Lenin could not beg off. An irresistible wave of ecstasy, a genuine Kronstadt wave, greeted the leader’s appearance on the balcony. Impatiently – and as always

with some embarrassment – awaiting the end of the greeting, Lenin began speaking before the voices died down. His speech, which the hostile press for weeks after growled over and tore to pieces in every possible manner, consisted of a few simple phrases: a greeting to the demonstrators; an expression of confidence that the slogan, “All Power to the Soviets,” would conquer in the end, an appeal for firmness and self-restraint. With renewed shouts the procession marched away to the music of the band.

Between this holiday introduction and the next stage of the proceedings, when blood began to flow, a curious episode intruded. The leaders of the Kronstadt Left Social Revolutionaries noticed only after they arrived on Mars Field a colossal standard of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks which had appeared at the head of the procession after the stop at the Palace of Kshesinskaia. Burning with party rivalry, they demanded its removal. The Bolsheviks refused. The Social Revolutionaries then announced that they would withdraw entirely. However, none of the sailors or soldiers followed the leaders. The whole policy of the Left Social Revolutionaries consisted of such capricious waverings, now comic and now tragic.

At the corner of the Nevsky and Liteiny, the rear guard of the demonstration was suddenly fired on, and several people were wounded. A more cruel fire occurred on the corner of the Liteiny and Panteleimonov Street. The leader of the Kronstadt men, Raskolnikov, tells how “like a sharp pain to the demonstrators was their uncertainty where the enemy was, from what side he was shooting.” The soldiers seized their rifles. Disorderly firing began in all directions. Several were killed and wounded. Only with great difficulty

was order restored in the ranks. The procession again moved forward with music, but not a trace was left of its holiday spirit. “There seemed to be a hidden enemy everywhere; Rifles no longer rested peacefully on the left shoulder, but were held ready for action.”

There were no few bloody encounters on that day in different parts of the town. A certain number of them were doubtless due to misunderstanding, confusion, stray shots, panic. Such tragic accidents are one of the inevitable overhead expenses of a revolution – itself one of the overhead expenses of historic progress. But an element of bloody provocation was also indubitable in the July events. It was manifest in those very days, and was subsequently confirmed. Says Podvoisky: “When the demonstrating soldiers began to pass through the Nevsky and the surrounding sections, inhabited for the most part by the bourgeoisie, ominous indications of a clash began to appear: strange shots were fired, nobody knew whence or by whom ... The columns were seized at first with confusion, and then the least steady and self-restrained began to open an irregular fire.” In the official **Izvestia**, the Menshevik, Kantorovich, described the firing upon one of the workers’ columns in the following words: “A crowd of sixty thousand workers from many factories was marching along Sadovaia Street. As they were passing by a church, a bell tolled in the steeple and as though at a signal both rifle and machine gun fire was opened from the roofs of the houses. When the crowd of workers dashed to the other side of the street, shots came also from the roofs opposite.” In those attics and roofs, where in February Protopopov’s “Pharaohs” had posted themselves with machine guns, members of the officers’ organizations

were now at work. They were attempting – and not without success – by firing on the demonstrators to spread panic and produce clashes between the different military units participating. When the houses from which shots came were searched, machine gun nests were found, and sometimes also the gunners.

The chief instigators of the bloodshed, however, were the government troops – powerless to put down the movement, but adequate for purposes of provocation. At about eight o'clock in the evening, when the demonstration was in full swing, two Cossack squadrons with flying artillery rode up as a guard for the Tauride Palace. On the way they stubbornly refused to enter into conversation with the demonstrators – in itself a bad sign. These Cossacks seized armored automobiles wherever they could and disarmed individual small groups. Cossack weapons on streets occupied by workers and soldiers seemed an intolerable challenge. Everything pointed to a clash. Near the Liteiny Bridge the Cossacks drew near to a compact mass of the enemy, who had here, on the road to the Tauride, succeeded in throwing up some sort of barrier. There was a moment of ominous silence broken by shots from neighboring houses. Then the fight began. "The Cossacks used up cartridges by the box," writes the worker, Metelev. "The workers and soldiers, scattering to shelter, or simply lying down on the sidewalk under fire, replied in the same fashion." The soldiers' fire compelled the Cossacks to retreat. Having fought their way through to the quay along the Neva, they fired three volleys from cannon – the cannon shots are also remarked upon by **Izvestia** – but under the long-range rifle fire they retired in the direction of the Tauride Palace. Running into another

workers' column the Cossacks received a decisive blow. Abandoning their cannon, horses, rifles, they sought shelter in the entrances of bourgeois houses, or dispersed altogether.

That encounter on Liteiny, an actual small battle, was the biggest military episode of the July days, and stories about it are to be found in the recollections of many demonstrators. Bursin, a worker of the Ericcson factory which came out with the machinegunners, tells how upon meeting them "the Cossacks immediately opened fire with their rifles." "Many workers were left lying dead, and it was here that I was struck by a bullet, which passed through one leg and stopped in the other ... As a memento of the July days I have my crutch and my useless leg." In the encounter on the Liteiny seven Cossacks were killed, and nineteen wounded or knocked out by shell explosions. Among the demonstrators six were killed, and about twenty wounded. Here and there lay the dead bodies of horses.

We have an interesting testimony from the opposing camp. That same ensign, Averin, who in the morning had made guerrilla attacks on the regular troops of the mutineers, writes as follows: "At eight o'clock in the evening we received an order from General Polovtsev to go out in two companies with two field-guns to the Tauride Palace ... We got as far as the Liteiny Bridge, upon which I saw armed workers, soldiers and sailors ... With my advance detachment I approached them and asked them to surrender their weapons, but my request was not granted, and the whole gang turned and ran across the bridge to the Vyborg side. I had not yet started after them, when a small-sized soldier without shoulder straps turned

round and fired at me, but missed. That shot served as a signal, and an irregular rifle fire was opened on us from all sides. The crowd sent up a shout: ‘The Cossacks are shooting us.’ And that was the fact: the Cossacks slid from their horses and began to shoot. They even attempted to open fire with cannon, but the soldiers let go such a hurricane of rifle fire that the Cossacks were compelled to retreat and scatter through the town.” It is not at all impossible that some soldier shot at the ensign; a Cossack officer could better expect a bullet than a greeting from that July crowd. But it is easier to believe the abundant testimony to the fact that the first shots came not from the streets, but from ambush. A rank-and-file Cossack from the same squadron as the ensign has testified with conviction that the Cossacks were shot at from the direction of the District Court, and afterward from other houses in Samursky Alley and on the Liteiny. In the official organ of the Soviet, it was related that the Cossacks, before arriving at the Liteiny Bridge, were fired on with machine guns from a stone house. The worker, Metelev, asserts that when the soldiers searched that house they found in the apartment of a general who lived there a store of fire-arms, including two machine guns with cartridges. There is nothing unlikely in that. By hook or crook quantities of all kinds of weapons had been accumulated in the hands of the commanding staff during the war period. And the temptation to sprinkle that “rabble” with a hail of lead from above must have been great. To be sure, shots did fall among the Cossacks, but there was a conviction among the July crowds that counter-revolutionists were consciously shooting at the government troops in order to incite them to ruthless action. Officers who only yesterday possessed unlimited powers, recognize no limits to trickery

and cruelty when the civil war comes. Petrograd was swarming with secret and semi-secret officer organizations enjoying lofty protection and generous support. In a confidential report made by the Menshevik, Lieber, almost a month before the July Days, it was asserted that the officer-conspirators were in touch with Buchanan. Yes, and how could the diplomats of the Entente help trying to promote the speedy establishment of a strong power in Russia?

In all excesses the Liberals and Compromisers would see the hand of “Anarcho-Bolsheviks” and German agents. The workers and soldiers, on the other hand, confidently laid the responsibility for the July clashes and victims upon patriotic provocateurs. Which side was right? The judgment of the masses is of course not infallible. But it is a crude mistake to imagine that the mass is blind and credulous. Where it is touched to the quick, it gathers facts and conjectures with a thousand eyes and ears, tests rumors by its own experience, selects some and rejects others. Where versions touching a mass movement are contradictory, those appropriated by the mass itself are nearest to the truth. It is for this reason that international sycophants of the type of Hippolyte Taine, who in studying great popular movements ignore the voices of the street, and spend their time carefully collecting and sifting the empty gossip produced in drawing-rooms by moods of isolation and fear, are so useless to science.

The demonstrators again besieged the Tauride Palace and demanded their answer. At the moment the Kronstadt men arrived, some group or other brought Chernov out to them. Sensing the mood of the crowd, the word-loving minister pronounced upon this one occasion a very brief speech.

Sliding over the crisis in the problem of power, he referred scornfully to the Kadets who had withdrawn from the government. “Good riddance!” he cried. Shouts interrupted him: “Then why didn’t you say so before?” Miliukov even relates how “a husky worker, shaking his fist in the face of the minister, shouted furiously: ‘Take the power, you son-of-a-bitch, when they give it to you.’ Even though nothing more than an anecdote, this expresses with crude accuracy the essence of the July situation. Chernov’s answers have no interest; in any case, they did not win him the hearts of the Kronstadters ... In just two or three minutes someone ran into the hall where the Executive Committee was sitting, and yelled that the sailors had arrested Chernov and were going to end him. With indescribable excitement the Executive Committee delegated several of its prominent members, exclusively internationalists and Bolsheviks, to rescue the minister. Chernov testified subsequently before a government commission that as he was descending from the tribune he noticed in the entrance behind the columns a hostile movement of several people. “They surrounded me and would not let me through to the door ... A suspicious-looking person in command of the sailors who were holding me back, kept pointing to an automobile standing near ... At that moment Trotsky, emerging from the Tauride Palace, came up and mounting on the front of the automobile in which I found myself, made a short speech.” Proposing that Chernov be released, Trotsky asked all those opposed to raise their hands. “Not one hand was raised. The group which had conducted me to the automobile then stepped aside with a disgruntled look. Trotsky, as I remember, said: ‘Citizen Chernov, nobody is hindering you from going back.’ ... The general picture of

this whole episode leaves no doubt in my mind that there was here a planned attempt of dark elements, acting over the heads of the general mass of the workers and soldiers, to call me out and arrest me."

A week before his own arrest Trotsky stated at a joint session of the Executive Committees, "These facts are going into history and we will try to establish them as they were ... I saw that a bunch of thugs was standing around the entrance. I said to Lunacharsky and Riazanov that those were *okhranniki* [2] and they were trying to break into the Tauride Palace (Lunacharsky from his seat: 'That's correct.') ... I would know them, I said, in a crowd of ten thousand." In his testimony of July 24th, Trotsky, already in solitary confinement in Kresty Prison, wrote: "I was first minded to ride out of the crowd in the automobile along with Chernov and those who wanted to arrest him, in order to avoid conflict and panic in the crowd. But Midshipman Raskolnikov, running up in extreme excitement, called to me: 'That is impossible ... If you ride away with Chernov, they will say tomorrow that the Kronstadters arrested him. Chernov must be freed immediately.' As soon as the trumpeter had summoned the crowd to silence, and given me a chance to make a short speech, which ended with the question: 'Those here in favor of violence, raise their hands,' Chernov found it possible to go back immediately into the palace without hindrance." The testimony of these two witnesses, who were at the same time the chief participants in the adventure, exhausts the factual side of it. But that did not in the least hinder the press hostile to the Bolsheviks from presenting the Chernov incident, together with the "attempt" at an arrest of Kerensky, as the most convincing of proofs that an armed insurrection

had been organized by the Bolsheviks. There was no lack of allusion also, especially in oral agitation, to the fact that Trotsky had directed the arrest of Chernov. That version even arrived at the Tauride Palace. Chernov himself, who described the circumstances of his half-hour arrest with sufficient accuracy in a secret document addressed to a Commission of Inquiry, nevertheless refrained from making any public statement, in order not to hinder his party from creating indignation against the Bolsheviks. Moreover Chernov was a member of the government which put Trotsky in prison. The Compromisers, to be sure, might have remarked that a gang of dark conspirators would never have ventured upon so insolent a plot as to arrest a minister in the middle of a crowd in broad daylight, had they not hoped that the hostility of the mass to the “victim” would be a sufficient protection. Such indeed to a certain degree it was. Nobody around the automobile made of his own accord the slightest attempt to liberate Chernov. If to supplement this, somebody had somewhere arrested Kerensky, of course neither the workers nor soldiers would have grieved about that either. In this sense the moral sympathy of the masses for actual and imaginary attempts against the socialist ministers did exist and give support to the accusations against the Kronstadters. But the Compromisers were hindered from drawing this candid conclusion by their worry about the relics of their democratic prestige. While fencing themselves off with hostility from the demonstrators, they continued nevertheless to be heads of the system of workers’, soldiers’ and peasants’ soviets in the besieged Tauride Palace.

At eight o’clock in the evening, General Polovtsev revived

the hopes of the Executive Committee by telephone: two Cossack squadrons with flying artillery are on the way to the Tauride Palace. At last! But this time, too, their expectations were disappointed. Telephone calls in all directions only deepened their panic: the Cossacks had disappeared as though by evaporation, and their horses, saddles and flying artillery with them. Miliukov writes that towards evening there appeared “the first results of the governmental appeal to the troops.” Thus, he adds, the 176th regiment was said to be hastening to the Tauride Palace. This remark, which sounds so accurate, is curiously characteristic of those quid *pro quo*’s which inevitably arise in the first period of a civil war when the two camps are still only beginning to divide. A regiment did actually arrive at the Tauride Palace in campaign array: knapsacks and folded coats on their backs, canteens and kettles at their belts. The soldiers had got wet through on the way and were tired; they had come from Krasnoe Selo. It was, too, the 176th regiment. But they had no intention whatever of rescuing the government. Affiliated with the Mezhrayontsi, this regiment had come out under the leadership of two soldier Bolsheviks, Levinson and Medvediev, to win the power for the soviets. It was immediately reported to the leaders of the Executive Committee, sitting so-to-speak on pins and needles, that a regiment in campaign array had arrived from a distance with its officers, and was settling down to a well-earned rest beneath the windows of the palace. Dan, dressed in the uniform of a military physician, went to the commander with the request that he supply sentries for the defense of the palace. The sentries were soon actually supplied. Dan, we may imagine, communicated this fact with satisfaction to the præsidium, and from that source it

arrived in the newspapers. Sukhanov in his **Notes** makes fun of the submissiveness with which a Bolshevik regiment fulfilled the directions of a Menshevik leader – a further proof, he thinks, of the "absurdity" of the July demonstration. In reality the matter was both simpler and more complex. Having received the request for sentries, the commander of the regiment turned to an assistant commandant on duty in the palace, the young lieutenant, Prigorovsky. By good or bad luck Prigorovsky was a Bolshevik, a member of the Mezhrayontsy organization, and he immediately turned for advice to Trotsky, who was occupying a point of observation with a small group of Bolsheviks in one of the side rooms of the palace. It goes without saying that Prigorovsky was advised to post the sentries immediately: far better to have friends than enemies at the entrances and exits of the palace! Thus it happened that the 76th regiment, having come out for a demonstration against the government, defended the government against demonstrators. If it had really been a question of insurrection, Lieutenant Prigorovsky with four soldiers at his back could easily have arrested the whole Executive Committee. But nobody thought of arresting anybody. The soldiers of the Bolshevik regiment conscientiously fulfilled their duty as sentries.

After the Cossack squadrons, who were the sole obstacle on the road to the Tauride Palace, had been swept away, it seemed to many demonstrators that victory was assured. In reality the chief obstacle was sitting in the very palace itself. At the joint session of the Executive Committees, which had begun at six o'clock in the evening, there were present 90 representatives from 54 shops and factories. The five orators, who were given the floor by agreement,

began by protesting against the denunciation of the demonstrators as counter-revolutionists in the manifestos of the Executive Committee. “You see what is written on our standards,” said one. “Such are the decisions adopted by the workers ... We demand the resignation of the ten minister-capitalists. We have confidence in the Soviet, but not in those in whom the Soviet has confidence ... We demand that the land be seized immediately, that control of industry be established immediately. We demand a struggle against the famine which threatens us ...” Another added: “This is not a meeting, but a fully organized manifestation. We demand the transfer of the land to the peasants. We demand an annulment of the orders directed against the revolutionary army ... At this time when the Kadets have refused to work with you, we ask you with whom further you want to dicker. We demand that the power pass to the soviets.” The propaganda slogans of the manifestation of June 18th had now become an armed ultimatum of the masses. But the Compromisers were still bound with too heavy chains to the chariot of the possessing classes. Power to the soviets? But that means first of all a bold policy of peace, a break with the Allies, a break with our own bourgeoisie, complete isolation, and in the course of a few weeks, ruin. No! A responsible democracy will not enter on the path of adventurism! “The present circumstances,” said Tseretelli, “make it impossible in the Petrograd atmosphere to carry out any new decisions whatever.” It remains, therefore, “to recognize the government with the staff it has left ... to call an extraordinary session of the soviets in two weeks ... in a place where it may be able to work without interference, best of all in Moscow.”

But the course of the meeting was continually interrupted. The Putilovtsi were knocking at the door of the palace: they came up only towards evening, tired, irritated, in extreme excitement. “Tseretelli – we want Tseretelli!” This mass, thirty thousand strong, sends its representatives into the palace, somebody shouting after them that if Tseretelli won’t come out of his own accord they must bring him out. It is a long way from threat to action, but nevertheless the thing is taking a rough turn, and the Bolsheviks hasten to interfere. Zinoviev subsequently reported: “Our comrades proposed that I should go out to the Putilov men ... a sea of heads such as I never saw before. Tens of thousands of men were solidly packed together. The cries of ‘Tseretelli’ continued ... I began: ‘In place of Tseretelli, it is I who have come out to you.’ Laughter. That changed the mood. I was able to make quite a long speech ... And in conclusion I appealed to that audience to disperse peacefully at once, keeping perfect order, and under no circumstances permitting anyone to provoke them to any aggressive action. The assembled workers applauded stormily, formed in ranks, and began to disperse.” This episode offers the best possible illustration of the keen discontent of the masses, their lack of any plan of attack, and the actual role of the Bolshevik party in the July events.

During the moments when Zinoviev was exchanging views with the Putilovtsi outdoors, a large group of their delegates, some of them with rifles, burst stormily into the hall where the Executive Committees were in session. The members of the Committees jumped up from their seats. “Some of them did not reveal a sufficient courage and self-restraint,” says Sukhanov, who has left a vivid description

of this dramatic moment. One of the workers, “a classic *sansculotte* in cap and short blue blouse without belt, with a rifle in his hand,” jumped up on the speaker’s tribune, trembling with excitement and wrath: “ ’Comrades! How long are we workers going to stand for this treachery? You are making bargains with the bourgeoisie and the landlords ... Here we are, thirty thousand Putilovtsi ... We are going to have our will!’ Cheidze, before whose nose the rifle was dancing, showed great presence of mind. Calmly leaning down from his elevation, he thrust into the quivering hand of the worker a printed manifesto: ‘Here, comrade, take this, please, and I ask you to read it. It says here what the Putilov comrades should do ...’” In the manifesto it said nothing at all except that the demonstrators ought to go home, as otherwise they would be traitors to the revolution. And what else, indeed, was there left for the Mensheviks to say?

In the agitation under the walls of the Tauride Palace – as everywhere in the agitational whirlwind of that period – a great place was occupied by Zinoviev, an orator of extraordinary power. His high tenor voice would surprise you at first, but afterward win you with its unique music. Zinoviev was a born agitator. He knew how to infect himself with the mood of the masses, excite himself with their emotions, and find for their thoughts and feelings a somewhat prolix, perhaps, but very gripping expression. Enemies used to call Zinoviev the greatest demagogue among the Bolsheviks. This was their usual way of paying tribute to his strongest trait – his ability to penetrate the heart of the *demos* and play upon its strings. It is impossible to deny, however, that being merely an agitator, and neither a theoretician nor a revolutionary

strategist, Zinoviev, when he was not restrained by an external discipline, easily slid down the path of demagoguery – speaking not in the philistine, but in the scientific sense of that word. That is, he showed an inclination to sacrifice enduring interests to the success of the moment. Zinoviev's agitatorial quick scent made him an extraordinarily valuable counselor whenever it was a question of estimating political conjunctures – but nothing deeper than that. At meetings of the party he was able to conquer, convince, bewitch, whenever he came with a prepared political idea, tested in mass meetings and, so-to-speak, saturated with the hopes and hates of the workers and soldiers. On the other hand, Zinoviev was able in a hostile meeting – even in the Executive Committee of those days – to give to the most extreme and explosive thoughts an enveloping and insinuating form, making his way into the minds of those who had met him with a preconceived distrust. In order to achieve these invaluable results, he had to have something more than a consciousness that he was right; he had to have a tranquilizing certainty that he was to be relieved of the political responsibility by a reliable and strong hand. Lenin gave him this certainty. Armed with a prepared strategic formula containing the very essence of a question, Zinoviev would adroitly and astutely supplement it with fresh exclamations, protests, demands, just now caught up by him on the street, in the factory or the barrack. In those moments he was an ideal mechanism of transmission between Lenin and the masses – sometimes between the masses and Lenin. Zinoviev always followed his teacher except in a very few cases. But the hour of disagreement was just that hour when the fate of the party, of the class, of the country, was to be decided. The agitator of the

revolution lacked revolutionary character. When it was a question of conquering minds and hearts Zinoviev remained a tireless fighter, but he suddenly lost his fighting confidence when he came face to face with the necessity of action. Here he drew back from the masses – from Lenin too – responded only to voices of indecision, caught up every doubt, saw nothing but obstacles. And then his insinuating, almost feminine voice, losing its conviction, would expose his inner weakness. Under the walls of the Tauride Palace in the July days, Zinoviev was extraordinarily active, ingenious and strong. He raised the excitement of the masses to its highest note – not in order to summon them to decisive action, but, on the contrary, in order to restrain them. This corresponded to the moment and to the policy of the party. Zinoviev was wholly in his element.

The battle on the Liteiny produced a sharp break in the development of the demonstration. Nobody was now watching the procession from window or balcony. The more well-to-do part of the public, besieging the railroad stations, were leaving town. The struggle in the streets turned into a scattered skirmishing without definite aim. During the night there were hand-to-hand fights between demonstrators and patriots, unsystematic disarmings, transfers of rifles from one hand to another. Groups of soldiers from the dispersed regiments functioned helter-skelter. “Shady elements and provocateurs, attaching themselves to the soldiers, incited them to anarchistic activities,” adds Podvoisky. On a hunt for those who had shot from the roofs, groups of sailors and soldiers carried out searches in the cellars. Here and there, under the pretext of a search, plunderings would occur. On the other

side deeds of a pogrom character were perpetrated. Merchants furiously attacked the workers in those parts of the town where they felt strong, and ruthlessly beat them up. Says Afanassiev, a worker from the New Lessner factory: “With cries of ‘Beat the Yids and Bolsheviks! Drown them!’ the crowd attacked us and gave it to us good.” One of the victims died in the hospital. Afanassiev himself was dragged by sailors, bruised and bloody, from the Ekaterininsky Canal.

Skirmishes, victims, fruitlessness of the struggle, and indefiniteness of practical aim – that describes the movement. The Central Committee of the Bolsheviks passed a resolution: to call on the workers and soldiers to end the demonstration. This time that appeal, which was immediately brought to the attention of the Executive Committee, met hardly any opposition at all in the lower ranks. The masses ebbed back into the suburbs, and they cherished no intention of renewing the struggle on the following day. They felt that the problem of “Power to the Soviets” was considerably more complicated than had appeared.

The siege of the Tauride Palace was conclusively raised. The nearby streets stood empty. But the vigil of the Executive Committees continued, with intermissions, with long-drawn-out speeches, meaningless and fruitless. Only afterwards did it become clear that the Compromisers were waiting for something. In neighboring rooms the delegates of the factories and regiments were still languishing. “It was already long after midnight,” relates Metelev, “and we were still waiting for a ‘decision’. Irritated with weariness and hunger, we were wandering through the Alexandrovsky hall ... At four o’clock in the

morning On the 5th of July our waiting came to an end ... Through the open doors of the chief entrance to the palace burst in a noisy crowd of officers and soldiers.” The whole building was filled with the brassy sounds of the Marseillaise. The trampling of feet and the thunder of the band at that hour before the dawn, caused an extraordinary excitement in the session hall. The deputies leapt from their seats. A new danger? But Dan was in the tribune. ”Comrades,” he shouted, “don’t get excited. There is no danger. Those are regiments loyal to the revolution that have arrived.” Yes, the reliable troops had arrived at last. They occupied the corridors, viciously fell upon the few workers still remaining in the palace, grabbed the weapons of those having them, arrested them and led them away. Lieutenant Kuchin, a well-known Menshevik, ascended the tribune in field uniform. The chairman, Dan, received him with open arms to the triumphal notes of the band. Choking with delight, and scorching the Lefts with their triumphant glances, the Compromisers seized each other by the hand, opened their mouths wide, and poured out their enthusiasm in the notes of the Marseillaise. “A classic picture of the beginning of a counter-revolution,” angrily muttered Martov, who knew how to see and understand many things. The political meaning of this scene – recorded by Sukhanov – will become still more clear if you remember that Martov belonged to the same party with Dan for whom it represented the highest triumph of the revolution.

Only now, as they observed the joy of the majority bubbling like a fountain, did the Left Wing of the Soviet begin to understand in a downright way how isolated was this highest organ of the official democracy when the

genuine democracy came into the streets. For thirty-six hours these people had been alternately disappearing behind the scenes, running to a telephone booth to get in touch with headquarters or with Kerensky at the front, to demand troops, to appeal, to urge, to beseech, to dispatch agitators and ever more agitators, and again to come back and wait. The danger was past, but the fear retained its momentum. The tramping steps of the “loyal” at five o’clock in the morning therefore sounded to their ears like a symphony of liberation. At last from the tribune came frank speeches about the lucky putting down of an armed revolt, and about the necessity of settling with the Bolsheviks this time for good. That detachment which entered the Tauride Palace had not come from the front, however, as many in the heat of the moment thought. It had been hand-picked from the Petrograd garrison – chiefly from the three most backward guard battalions, the Preobrazhensky, the Semenovsky and the Izmailovsky. On the 3rd of June these regiments had declared themselves neutral, and vain efforts had been made to capture them with the authority of the government and the Executive Committee. The soldiers sat gloomily in their barracks waiting. Only in the afternoon of July 4th did the authorities at last discover an effective means of influencing them. They showed the Preobrazhentsi documents demonstrating as plain as 2 + 2 = 4 that Lenin was a German spy. That moved them. The news flew round the regiments. Officers, members of the regimental committee, agitators of the Executive Committee, were active everywhere. The mood of the neutral battalions changed. By dawn, when there was no longer any need of them, it became possible to assemble them and lead them through the deserted streets to the empty Tauride Palace.

The Marseillaise was played that night by the band of the Izmailovsky regiment – the same reactionary regiment to which on December 3, 1905 had been entrusted the task of arresting the first Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies, in session with Trotsky in the chair. The blind director of the historic drama achieves striking theatrical effects at every step without striving after them; he simply gives a loose rein to the logic of events.

WHEN the streets had been cleansed of the masses, the young government of the revolution stretched out its gouty limbs. Workers' representatives were arrested, weapons were seized, one district of the town was cut off from another. At about six o'clock in the morning an automobile stopped in front of the editorial office of **Pravda**. [3] It was loaded with junkers and soldiers with a machine gun which was immediately set up at the window. After the departure of these uninvited guests the office was a picture of destruction: desk drawers smashed open, the floor heaped with torn-up manuscripts, the telephones ripped loose. The sentries and employees of the office had been beaten up and arrested. A still more violent attack was made on the printing plant for whose purchase the workers had been collecting money during the last three months. The rotary presses were destroyed, monotypes ruined, Linotype machines smashed to pieces. The Bolsheviks were wrong, it seems, when they accused the Kerensky government of lacking energy!

"Generally speaking, the streets had now become normal," writes Sukhanov. "There were almost no crowds or street

meetings; almost all the stores were Open.” In the morning the summons of the Bolsheviks to stop the demonstration – the last product of the destroyed printing plant – was distributed. Cossacks and junkers were arresting sailors, soldiers and workers on the streets, and sending them to jail or to the guardhouses. In the stores and on the sidewalks the talk was of German money. They arrested everybody who made a peep in defense of the Bolsheviks. “It was no longer possible to declare Lenin an honest man – they would take you to the police station.” Sukhanov as always appears as an attentive observer of what is happening on the streets of the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the burghers. But things looked different in the workers’ districts. The factories and shops were still closed. The mood was vigilant. Rumors went round that troops had arrived from the front. The streets of the Vyborg section were filled with groups discussing what to do in case of attack. “The Red Guards and the factory youth in general,” says Metelev, “were getting ready to penetrate the Peter and Paul fortress and support the detachment besieged there, concealing hand grenades in their pockets, in their shoes, under their coats. They crossed the river in row-boats and partly by the bridges.” The typesetter, Smirnov, from the Kolomensky district, remembers: “I saw a tugboat with naval cadets coming down the Neva from Duderhoff and Oranienbaum. Toward two o’clock the situation cleared up in the bad sense ... I saw how the sailors one by one were returning to Kronstadt along the back streets ... The story was being spread that all Bolsheviks were German spies. A vile hue and cry was raised ...” The historian, Miliukov, sums it all up with satisfaction: “The mood and personnel of the public on the streets had completely changed. By evening

Petrograd was entirely tranquil.”

So long as the troops from the front had not arrived, Petrograd headquarters, with the political co-operation of the Compromisers, continued to disguise its intentions. In the afternoon some members of the Executive Committee, with Lieber at their head, came to the Palace of Kshesinskaia for a conference with the Bolshevik leaders. That visit alone testified to a very peaceable feeling. According to the agreement then arrived at, the Bolsheviks were to induce the sailors to return to Kronstadt, to withdraw the machine gun company from Peter and Paul fortress, and to remove the patrols and armored cars from their positions. The government, on its part, promised not to permit any pogroms or repressions against the Bolsheviks, and to liberate all arrested persons except those who had engaged in criminal activities.

But the agreement did not last long. As the rumors spread about German money and the approach of troops from the front, more and more detachments and small groups were discovered in the garrison mindful of their loyalty to the government and to Kerensky. They sent delegates to the Tauride Palace or to the district staff. Finally echelons from the front actually began to arrive. The mood in compromise spheres grew fiercer and fiercer from hour to hour. The troops from the front had arrived all ready to snatch the capital with bloody hands from the agents of the Kaiser. Now that it was clear the troops were not needed, it became necessary to justify sending for them. To avoid falling under suspicion themselves, the Compromisers tried with all their might to show the commanders that Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries belong to the same camp with them, and that Bolsheviks

are a common enemy. When Kamenev tried to remind the members of the præsidium of the Executive Committee about the agreement arrived at a few hours before, Lieber answered in the tone of an iron-hearted statesman: “The correlation of forces has now changed.” Lieber had learned from the popular speeches of Lassalle that cannon is an important part of a constitution. A delegation of Kronstadters headed by Raskolnikov was several times summoned before the military commission of the Executive Committee, where the demands, increasing from hour to hour, at last resolved themselves into an ultimatum from Lieber: that they should agree at once to the disarming of the Kronstadt men. “Departing from the session of the military commission,” related Raskolnikov, “we renewed our conferences with Trotsky and Kamenev. Lyev Davidovich (Trotsky) advised us immediately and secretly to send the Kronstadters home. A decision was adopted to send comrades around the barracks to warn the Kronstadters that they were going to be forcibly disarmed.” A majority of the Kronstadters got away in time. Only a few detachments remained in the house of Kshesinskaia and the Peter and Paul fortress.

With the knowledge and consent of the minister-socialists, Prince Lvov had already on July 4 given General Polovtsev a written order to “arrest the Bolsheviks occupying the house of Kshesinskaia, clear out the house, and occupy it with troops.” At this time, after the destruction of the editorial office and printing plant, the question of the fate of the central headquarters of the Bolsheviks became a very vital one. It was necessary to put the residence in a state of defense. The Military Organization appointed Raskolnikov commander of the building. He took his duties

in a broad way – in a Kronstadt way – sent requisitions for cannon and even ordered a small warship to enter the mouth of the Neva. Raskolnikov subsequently explained this step in the following manner: “These military preparations were of course made on my part not merely with a view to self-defense, since there was a smell in the air not only of powder but of pogroms ... I also thought – and not, I believe, without foundation – that one good warship in the mouth of the Neva would be enough to considerably shake the resolution of the Provisional Government.” All this is rather indefinite and none too serious. We may rather assume that at five o’clock in the afternoon of July 5th the leaders of the Military Organization, including Raskolnikov, had not yet estimated the extent of the changes in the situation, and hence at that moment, when the armed demonstration was compelled to beat a hasty retreat in order not to turn into an armed insurrection imposed by the enemy, some of the military leaders made certain accidental and not well thought-out steps forward. The young Kronstadt leaders did in this first action overreach themselves. But can you make a revolution without the help of people who overreach themselves? Indeed, does not a certain percentage of light-mindedness enter as a constituent part into all great human deeds? This time it came to nothing more than instructions, and these moreover were soon annulled by Raskolnikov himself. During this time more and more alarming news was pouring into the place. One man had seen in the windows of a house on the opposite shore of the Neva machine guns aimed at the Palace of Kshesinskaia; another had observed a column of armored automobiles traveling in the same direction; a third brought news of the approach of a detachment of

Cossacks. Two members of the Military Organization were sent to the commander of the district to negotiate. Polovtsev assured the emissaries that the raid on Pravda had been made without his knowledge, and that no repressions were in preparation against the Military Organization. In reality he was only awaiting sufficient reinforcements from the front.

During this time, while Kronstadt was retreating, the Baltic Fleet as a whole was still only getting ready to advance. The principal part of the fleet was in the Finland waters, with a total of about 70,000 sailors. An army corps was also located in Finland, and ten thousand Russian workers were in the port factories of Helsingfors. That was a good-sized fist of the revolution. The pressure of the sailors and soldiers was so irresistible that even the Helsingfors committee of the Social Revolutionaries had come out against the Coalition, and in consequence all the soviet bodies of the fleet and army in Finland had unanimously demanded that the Executive Committee take the power. In support of their demand the Baltic men were ready at any moment to move into the mouth of the Neva. They were restrained, however, by the fear of weakening the naval line of defense, and making it easy for the German fleet to attack Kronstadt and Petrograd.

But here something completely unexpected occurred. The Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet – the so-called Centrobalt – called on the 4th of July an extraordinary session of the ship committees at which the president, Dybenko, read two secret orders just received by the fleet commander and signed by the assistant minister of the navy Dudarev. The first obliged the Admiral Verderevsky to send four destroyers to Petrograd to prevent by force the

landing of sailors from the side of Kronstadt; the second demanded of the commander of the fleet that he should not on any pretext permit the departure of ships from Helsingfors to Kronstadt, not hesitating to sink disobedient ships with submarines. Finding himself between two fires, and worried most of all about his own head, the admiral anticipated events by turning over the telegram to the Centrobalt with the announcement that he would not carry out the orders even if countersigned by the Centrobalt. The reading of the telegram startled the sailors. To be sure, they had been ready on any pretext to abuse Kerensky and the Compromisers in no kind-hearted terms. But up to now this had been in their eyes an intra-soviet struggle. A majority in the Executive Committee belonged to the same parties as the majority in the Regional Committee of Finland which had just come out for a soviet government. It seemed clear enough that neither Mensheviks nor Social Revolutionaries could possibly approve the sinking of ships which had come out for the power of the Executive Committee. How could an old naval officer like Dudarev get mixed up in a family quarrel of the soviets, turning it into a naval battle? Only yesterday the big battleships had been officially regarded as the bulwark of the revolution – and this in contrast to the backward destroyers and submarines, which had hardly been touched by revolutionary propaganda. Could it be that the government now seriously intended to sink the battleships with the help of the submarines?

These facts simply could not find their way into the stubborn skulls of the sailors. That order which justifiably seemed to them to belong to the realm of nightmare was nevertheless a legitimate July harvest of the March sowing.

Already in April the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries had begun to appeal to the provinces against Petrograd, to the soldiers against the workers, to the cavalry against the machine-gunners. They had given the troops representative privileges in the soviets above the factories; they had favored the small and scattered enterprises as against the giants of the metal industry. Themselves representing the past, they had sought support in backwardness of all kinds. With the ground slipping under their feet, they were now inciting the rear guard against the advance guard. Politics has its own logic, especially in times of revolution. Pressed from all sides, the Compromisers had found themselves obliged to direct Admiral Verderevsky to sink the more advanced battleships. Unfortunately for the Compromisers, the backward ones upon whom they were relying were more and more striving to catch up to those in advance. The submarine command was no less indignant at Dudarev's orders than the commanders of the battleships.

The men at the head of Centrobalt were not at all of the Hamlet type. They lost no time in passing a resolution, together with the members of the ship committees, to send immediately to Petrograd the squadron destroyer Orpheus, designated for the sinking of the Kronstadters, in the first place to get information as to what was happening there, and in the second "to arrest the Assistant-Minister of the Navy, Dudarev." However unexpected this decision may seem, it nevertheless clearly reveals to what an extent the Baltic sailors were still inclined to regard the Compromisers as a private opponent in contrast to any old Dudarev whom they considered a public enemy. The Orpheus entered the mouth of the Neva twenty-four hours

after the ten thousand armed Kronstadters had moored their vessels there. But “the correlation of forces had changed.” For a whole day the crew was not permitted to disembark. Only in the evening a delegation consisting of sixty-seven sailors from the Centrobalt and the ship’s crews was admitted to the joint session of the Executive Committees, then engaged in casting up the first balance of the July Days. The victors were luxuriating in their new victory. The spokesman, Voitinsky, was complacently describing the hours of weakness and humiliation, in order the more sharply to depict the triumph which followed. “The first unit which came to our help,” he said, “was the armored cars. We firmly intended in case of violence from the side of the armed gang to open fire ... Seeing the extent of the danger threatening the revolution we issued an order to certain units (on the front) to entrain and come to the capital ...” A majority of that high assembly were breathing out hatred for the Bolsheviks, and especially for the sailors. It was in this atmosphere that the Baltic delegates arrived armed with an order for the arrest of Dudarev. With a wild yelp, a pounding of fists on tables, and a stamping of feet, the victors greeted the reading of the resolution of the Baltic fleet. Arrest Dudarev? Why, this gallant captain of the first rank was only fulfilling his sacred duty to the revolution, which they, the sailors, the rebels, the counter-revolutionists, were stabbing in the back! In a special resolution the joint session solemnly declared its solidarity with Dudarev. The sailors looked at the orators and at each other with startled eyes. Only at this moment did they begin to understand what had been taking place before their eyes. The next day the whole delegation was arrested, and completed its political education in jail! Immediately after that, the president of

the Centrobalt, the non-commissioned naval officer Dybenko, who had followed them up, was arrested, and after him also Admiral Verderevsky who had been summoned to the capital to explain matters.

On the morning of the 6th the workers went back to work. Only the troops summoned from the front were now demonstrating in the streets. Agents of the Intelligence Service were examining passports and making arrests right and left. A young worker, Voinov, who was distributing the ***Pravda*** *Leaflet*, published in place of the destroyed Bolshevik paper, was killed in the streets by a gang – perhaps composed of these same intelligence men. The Black Hundred elements were acquiring a taste for the putting down of revolts. Plundering, violence, and in some places shooting continued in different parts of the city. In the course of the day echelon after echelon arrived from the front – the Cavalier Division, the Don Cossack regiment, the Uhlan division, the Izborsky, the Malorossisky, the Dragoon regiment, and others. “The Cossack divisions, arriving in great numbers,” writes Gorky’s paper, “were in a very aggressive mood.” Machine-gunfire was opened on the newly arrived Izborsky regiment in two parts of the city. In both cases the machine guns were found in an attic; those guilty were not discovered. In other places, too, the arriving troops were shot at. The deliberate madness of this shooting deeply disturbed the workers. It was clear that experienced provocateurs were greeting the soldiers with lead with a view to anti-Bolshevik inoculation. The workers were eager to explain this to the arriving soldiers, but they were denied access to them. For the first time since the February days the junker or the officer stood between the

worker and soldier.

The Compromisers joyfully welcomed the arriving regiments. At a meeting of representatives of the troops, in the presence of a great number of officers and junkers, our friend Voitinsky unctuously explained: “Now along Milliony Street troops and armored cars are traveling towards Palace Square to place themselves at the disposal of General Polovtsev, and this is our real strength upon which we rely.” To act as a political covering, four socialist assistants were appointed to the commander of the district: Avksentiev and Gotz from the Executive Committee, Skobelev and Chernov from the Provisional Government. But that did not save the commander. Kerensky subsequently boasted to the White Guards that on returning from the front in the July Days, he had discharged General Polovtsev for “irresolution.”

Now at last it was possible to solve the so long postponed problem: to clean up that wasp’s nest of Bolsheviks in the house of Kshesinskaia. In social life in general, and particularly in a time of revolution, secondary facts which act upon the imagination sometimes acquire through their symbolic meaning an enormous significance. Thus a disproportionately large place in the struggle against the Bolsheviks was occupied by the question of the “seizure” by Lenin of the Palace of Kshesinskaia, a court ballerina famous not so much for her art as for her relations with the male representatives of the Romanov dynasty. Her private palace was the fruit of these relations – the foundation of which was laid down, it seems, by Nicholas II when still heir to the throne. Before the war, people gossiped with a tinge of envious respectfulness about this den of luxury, spurs, and diamonds located opposite the

Winter Palace. But in wartime they more frequently remarked: “Stolen goods.” The soldiers expressed themselves even more accurately. Arriving at a critical age, the ballerina took up a career in patriotism. The outspoken Rodzianko has this to say on that subject: “The high commander-in-chief (the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich) remarked that he was aware of the participation and influence in artillery matters of the ballerina, Kshesinskaia, through whom various firms had received orders.” It is no wonder if after the revolution the abandoned Palace of Kshesinskaia failed to awaken benevolent feelings among the people. In those times when the revolution was making an insatiable demand for quarters, the government never dared lay its hands on a single private residence. To requisition the peasants’ horses for the war – that is one thing; to requisition vacant palaces for the revolution – that is quite another. But the masses of the people saw it otherwise.

On a search for suitable quarters, a reserve armored-car division had run into the residence of Kshesinskaia in the first days of March, and occupied it: the ballerina had an excellent garage. The division gladly turned over the upper story of the building to the Petrograd committee of the Bolsheviks. The friendship of the Bolsheviks with this armored-car division supplemented their friendship with the machine-gunners. The occupation of the palace, which occurred a few weeks before the arrival of Lenin, passed almost unnoticed at first. The indignation against the usurpers grew with the growth of the influence of the Bolsheviks. The wild stories in the newspapers about how Lenin was occupying the boudoir of the ballerina, and how all the decorations of the palace had been shattered to

pieces and torn up, were mere lies. Lenin lived in the modest apartment of his sister. The ballerina's furnishings were put away by the commandant of the building and kept under seal. Sukhanov, who visited the palace at the time of Lenin's arrival, has left an interesting description of the quarters. 'The chambers of the famous ballerina had a rather strange and inappropriate look; the exquisite ceilings and walls did not harmonize at all with the unpretentious furnishings, the primitive tables, chairs, and benches set casually about according to the demands of business. In general there was very little furniture. Kshesinskaia's movable property had been put away somewhere ..." Discreetly avoiding the question of the armored-car division, the press represented Lenin as guilty of an armed seizure of the house from the hands of a defenseless devotee of art. This theme was developed in leading editorials and *feuilletons*. Tattered workers and soldiers among those velvets and silks and beautiful rugs! All the drawing-rooms of the capital shuddered with moral indignation. As once the Girondists held the Jacobins responsible for the September murders, the disappearance of mattresses in the barracks, and the campaign for an agrarian law, so now the Kadets and democrats accused the Bolsheviks of undermining the pillars of human morality and hawking and spitting on the polished floors of the Palace of Kshesinskaia. The dynastic ballerina became a symbol of culture trampled under the hoofs of barbarism. This apotheosis gave wings to the lady herself, and she complained to the court. The court decided that the Bolsheviks should be removed from the premises. But that was not quite so easy to do. "The armored cars on duty in the courtyard looked sufficiently imposing," remembers Zalezhsky, then a member of the Petrograd committee.

Moreover the Machine Gun regiment, and other units too, were ready in case of need to back up the armored cars. On May 25, the bureau of the Executive Committee, upon a complaint from the ballerina's lawyer, recognized that "the interests of the revolution demand submission to the decisions of the court." Beyond this platonic aphorism, however, the Compromisers did not venture – [?] to the extreme distress of the ballerina, who was not by nature inclined to Platonism.

The Central Committee, the Petrograd committee, and the Military Organization, continued to work in the palace side by side. "A continuous mass of people crowded into the house of Kshesinskaia," says Raskolnikov. "Some would come on business to this or that secretariat, others to the literature department, others to the editorial offices of the soldiers' Pravda, others to some meeting or other. Meetings took place very often, sometimes continually – either in the spacious wide hall below, or in the room upstairs with a long table which had evidently been the dining-room of the ballerina." From the palace balcony, above which waved the impressive banner of the Central Committee, orators carried on a continuous mass meeting, not only by day but by night. Often out of the darkness some military detachment would approach the building, or some crowd of workers with a demand for an orator. Accidental groups of citizens would also stop before the balcony, their curiosity aroused by some uproar in the newspapers. During the critical days hostile manifestations would draw near to the building for a time, demanding the arrest of Lenin and the driving out of the Bolsheviks. Under the streams of people flowing past the palace one felt the seething depths of the revolution. The house of

Kshesinskaia reached its apogee in the July days. “The chief headquarters of the movement,” says Miliukov, “was not the Tauride Palace, but Lenin’s citadel, the house of Kshesinskaia with its classic balcony.” The putting down of the demonstration led fatally to the break-up of this staff headquarters of the Bolsheviks.

At three o’clock in the morning there advanced against the house of Kshesinskaia and the Peter and Paul fortress – separated from each other by a strip of water- – he reserve battalion of the Petrograd regiment, a machine gun detachment, a company of Semenovtsi, a company of Preobrazhentsi, the training squad of the Volynsky regiment, two cannon, and a detachment of eight armored cars. At seven o’clock in the morning an assistant of the commander of the district, the Social Revolutionary Kuzmin, demanded that the house be vacated. Not wishing to surrender their weapons, the Kronstadters, of whom there remained only a hundred and twenty in the palace, dashed across to the Peter and Paul fortress. When the government troops occupied the house, they found nobody there but a few employees. There then remained the problem of the Peter and Paul fortress. Young Red Guards, as we remember, had gone over from the Vyborg district in order in case of need to help the sailors. “On the fortress walls,” one of them relates, “stood a number of cannon, evidently set up by the sailors in case anything should happen ... It began to look like bloody doings.” But diplomatic negotiations settled the problem peacefully. At the direction of the Central Committee, Stalin proposed to the compromise leaders to adopt joint measures for the bloodless termination of the action of the Kronstadt men. In company with the Menshevik, Bogdanov, he had no

difficulty in persuading the sailors to accept Lieber's ultimatum of the day before. When the government armored cars approached the fortress, a deputation came out of its gates announcing that the garrison would submit to the Executive Committee. The weapons given up by the sailors and soldiers were carried away in trucks. The disarmed sailors were sent to the barges for return to Kronstadt. The surrender of the fortress may be considered the concluding episode of the July movement. A bicycle brigade from the front occupied the house of Kshesinskaia and the Peter and Paul fortress. This brigade in its turn, will go over on the eve of the October revolution, to the Bolsheviks.

Notes

1. Members of the regiments named Preobrazhensky, etc. – *Trans.*

2. Agents of the tsarist secret police.

3. Official organ of the Bolshevik party.

Chapter 26: Could the Bolsheviks Have Seized the Power in July?

The demonstration forbidden by the government and the Executive Committee had been a colossal one. On the second day not less than five hundred thousand people participated. Sukhanov, who cannot find words strong enough for the “blood and filth” of the July Days, nevertheless writes: “Political results aside, it was impossible not to look with admiration upon that amazing movement of the popular masses. Even while deeming it fatal, one could not but feel a rapture in its gigantic spontaneous scope.” According to the reckonings of the Commission of Inquiry, 29 men were killed and 114 wounded – about an equal number on each side.

That the movement had begun from below, irrespective of the Bolsheviks – to a certain extent against their will – was at first recognized even by the Compromisers. But on the night of July 3, and yet more on the following day, official opinion began to change. The movement was declared an insurrection, the Bolsheviks its organizers. “Under the slogan, ‘All Power to the Soviets’,” writes Stankevich, a man close to Kerensky, “there occurred an organized insurrection of the Bolsheviks against the majority of the soviets, consisting at that time of the defensist parties.” This charge of organizing an insurrection was something more than a method of political struggle. During the month of June those people had well convinced themselves of the strong influence of the Bolsheviks on the masses, and they

now simply refused to believe that a movement of workers and soldiers could have surged up over the heads of the Bolsheviks. Trotsky tried to explain the situation at a session of the Executive Committee: “They accuse us of creating the mood of the masses; that is wrong, we only tried to formulate it.” In books published by their enemies after the October revolution, particularly in Sukhanov, you will find it asserted that the Bolsheviks covered up their actual aim only in consequence of the defeat of the July insurrection, hiding behind the spontaneous movement of the masses. But could one possibly conceal, like a buried treasure, the plans of an armed insurrection which drew into its whirlpool hundreds of thousands of people? Were not the Bolsheviks compelled in October to summon the masses quite openly to insurrection, and to make preparations for it before the eyes of all? If no one discovered such a plan in July, it is only because there was none. The entry of the machine-gunners and Kronstadters into the Peter and Paul fortress with the consent of its permanent garrison – upon which “seizure” the Compromisers especially insist – was not at all an act of armed insurrection. That building situated on an island – a prison rather than a military post – might perhaps serve as a refuge for men in retreat, but it offers nothing whatever to attacking forces. In making their way to the Tauride Palace the demonstrators passed calmly by the most important government buildings – to occupy which the Putilov detachment of the Red Guard would have been an adequate force. They took possession of the Peter and Paul fortress exactly as they took possession of the streets, the sentry posts, the public squares. An additional motive was its nearness to the Palace of Kshesinskaia to whose aid it could have come in case of need.

The Bolsheviks made every effort to reduce the July movement to a demonstration. But did it not, nevertheless, by the very logic of things transcend these limits? This political question is harder to answer than the criminal indictment. Appraising the July Days immediately after they occurred, Lenin wrote: “An anti-government demonstration – that would be the most formally accurate description of the events. But the point is that this was no ordinary demonstration. It was something considerably more than a demonstration and less than a revolution.” When the masses once get hold of some idea, they want to realize it. Although trusting the Bolshevik party, the workers, and still more the soldiers, had not yet acquired a conviction that they ought to come out only upon the summons of the party and under its leadership. The experiences of February and April had taught them rather the opposite. When Lenin said in May that the workers and peasants were a hundred times more revolutionary than the party, he undoubtedly generalized this February and April experience. But the masses had also generalized the experience in their own way. They were saying to themselves: “Even the Bolsheviks are dawdling and holding us back.” The demonstrators were entirely ready in the July Days to liquidate the official government if that should seem necessary in the course of business. In case of resistance from the bourgeoisie they were ready to employ arms. To that extent there was an element of armed insurrection. If, in spite of this, it was not carried through even to the middle – to say nothing of the end – that is because the Compromisers confused the whole picture.

In the first volume of this work we described in detail the

paradox of the February régime. The petty bourgeois democrats, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries received the power from the hands of the revolutionary people. They had not set themselves the task of winning it. They had not conquered the power. They were put in possession of it against their will. Against the will of the masses, they tried to hand over this power to the imperialist bourgeoisie. The people did not trust the Liberals, but they trusted the Compromisers. The Compromisers, however, did not trust themselves. And in this they were in a way right. Even in turning over the whole power to the bourgeoisie, the democrats had continued to be somebody. But once they had seized the power in their own hands, they would have become nothing at all. From the democrats the power would almost automatically have slid into the hands of the Bolsheviks. This was inevitable, for it was involved in the organic insignificance of the Russian democracy.

The July demonstrators wanted to turn over the power to the soviets, but for this the soviets had to agree to take it. Even iii the capital, however, where a majority of the workers and the active elements of the garrison were already for the Bolsheviks, a majority in the Soviet – owing to that law of inertia which applies to every representative system – still belonged to those petty bourgeois parties who regarded an attempt against the power of the bourgeoisie as an attempt against themselves. The workers and soldiers felt clearly enough the contrast between their moods and the policy of the Soviet – that is, between their today and their yesterday. In coming out for a government of the soviets, they by no means gave their confidence to the compromisist majority in those soviets.

But they did not know how to settle with this majority. To overthrow it by violence would have meant to dissolve the soviets instead of giving them the power. Before they could find the path to a change of the personal composition of the soviets, the workers and soldiers tried to subject the soviets to their will by the method of direct action.

In a proclamation of the two Executive Committees on the subject of the July Days, the Compromisers indignantly appealed to the workers and soldiers against the demonstrators, who, they alleged, had “attempted by force of arms to impose their will upon your elected representatives.” As though the demonstrators and the electors were not merely two names for the same workers and soldiers! As though electors have not a right to impose their will upon those they have elected! And as though this will consisted of anything else but the demand that they should fulfill their duty – namely, get possession of the power in the interests of the people! The masses concentrated around the Tauride Palace were shouting into the ears of the Executive Committee the very same phrase which that nameless worker had thrust up at Chernov with his horny fist: “Take the power when they give it to you!” In answer the Compromisers sent for the Cossacks. These gentlemen of the democracy preferred a civil war against the people to a bloodless transfer of power into their own hands. It was the White Guards who fired the first shots, but the political atmosphere of the civil war was created by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries.

Running into this armed resistance from the very institution to which they wished to turn over the power, the workers and soldiers lost a clear sense of their goal.

From their mighty mass movement the political axis had been torn out. The July campaign was thus reduced to a demonstration partially carried out with the instruments of armed insurrection. Or, it would be equally true to say: It was a semi – insurrection, directed toward goals which did not permit other methods than those proper to a demonstration.

Although declining the power, the Compromisers had not wholly given it over to the Liberals. This was both because they feared them – the petty bourgeois always fears the big bourgeois – and because they feared for them. A pure Kadet ministry would have been immediately overthrown by the masses. Moreover, as Miliukov rightly points out, “In struggling against independent armed actions, the Executive Committee of the Soviet was fortifying its own right, proclaimed in the tumultuous days of the 20th and 21st of April, to deploy at its own discretion the armed forces of the Petrograd garrison.” The Compromisers were continuing to steal the power from under their own pillows. In order to offer armed resistance to those who had written on their banners “All Power to the Soviets,” the Soviet was obliged actually to concentrate the power in its hands.

The Executive Committee went even farther in the July Days: it formally proclaimed its sovereignty. “If the revolutionary democracy deemed necessary a transfer of all power into the hands of the soviets,” says their resolution of July 4, “the decision of that question could belong only to a plenary session of the Executive Committees.” While declaring the demonstration in favor of the soviet power a counter-revolutionary insurrection, the Executive Committee thus at the same time constituted itself the supreme power, and decided the fate

of the government.

When at dawn on the 5th of July the “loyal troops” entered the Tauride Palace, their commander reported that his detachment submitted to the Executive Committee wholly and without reserve. Not a word about the government! But the rebels also wanted to submit to the Executive Committee in the character of a sovereign power. In surrendering the Peter and Paul fortress, the garrison considered it sufficient to announce their submission to the Executive Committee. Nobody demanded a submission to the official authority. The troops summoned from the front also placed themselves wholly at the disposal of the Executive Committee. Why, in that case, was there any shedding of blood?

If this conflict had taken place toward the end of the Middle Ages, both sides in slaughtering each other would have cited the same text from the Bible. Formalist historians would afterwards have come to the conclusion that they were fighting about the correct interpretation of texts. The craftsmen and illiterate peasants of the Middle Ages had a strange passion, as is well known, for allowing themselves to be killed in the cause of philological subtleties in the Revelations of Saint John, just as the Russian Separatists submitted to extermination in order to decide the question whether one should cross himself with two fingers or three. In reality there lies hidden under such symbolic formulae – in the Middle Ages no less than now – a conflict of life interests which we must learn to uncover. The very same verse of the Evangelist meant serfdom for some, freedom for others.

But there is a far more fresh and modern analogy. In the

June days of 1848 in France, the same shout went up on both sides of the barricades: “Long live the Republic!” To the petty bourgeois idealist, therefore, the June fight has seemed a misunderstanding caused by the inattention of one side, the hotheadedness of the other. In reality the bourgeoisie wanted a republic for themselves, the workers a republic for everybody. Political slogans serve oftener to disguise interests than to call them by name.

In spite of the paradoxical character of the February régime – scribbled all over to boot with Marxian and Narodnik hieroglyphics by the Compromisers – the actual interrelation of classes is easy enough to see. It is only necessary to keep in view the twofold nature of the compromise parties. The educated petty bourgeois oriented himself upon the workers and peasants, but hobnobbed with the titled landlords and owners of sugar factories. While forming a part of the soviet system, through which the demands of the lower classes found their way up to the official state, the Executive Committee served at the same time as a political screen for the bourgeoisie. The possessing classes “submitted” to the Executive Committee so long as it pushed the power over to their side. The masses submitted to the Executive Committee, in so far as they hoped it might become an instrument of the rule of workers and peasants. Contradictory class tendencies were intersecting in the Tauride Palace and they both covered themselves with the name of the Executive Committee – the one through unconscious trustfulness, the other with cold-blooded calculation. The struggle was about nothing more or less than the question who was to rule the country, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat?

But if the Compromisers did not want to take the power, and the bourgeoisie did not have the strength to take it, maybe the Bolsheviks could have seized the helm in July? In the course of those two critical days the power in Petrograd completely dropped from the hands of the governmental institutions. The Executive Committee then felt for the first time its own complete impotence. In such circumstances it would have been easy enough for the Bolsheviks to seize the power. They could have seized the power, too, at certain individual points in the provinces. That being the case, was the Bolshevik party right in refraining from an insurrection? Might they not, fortifying themselves in the capital and in certain industrial districts, have subsequently extended their rule to the whole country? That is an important question. Nothing gave more help to the triumph of imperialism and reaction in Europe at the end of the war than those few months of Kerenskyism, exhausting revolutionary Russia and immeasurably damaging her moral authority in the eyes of the warring armies and of the toiling masses of Europe who had been hopefully awaiting some new word from the revolution. To shorten the birth pains of the proletarian revolution by four months would have been an immense gain. The Bolsheviks would have received the country in a less exhausted condition; the authority of the revolution in Europe would have been less undermined. This would not only have given the soviets an immense predominance in conducting the negotiations with Germany, but would have exerted a mighty influence on the fortunes of war and peace in Europe. The prospect was only too enticing!

But nevertheless the leadership of the party was completely right in not taking the road of armed

insurrection. It is not enough to seize the power – you have to hold it. When in October the Bolsheviks did decide that their hour had struck, the most difficult days came after the seizure of power. It requires the highest tension of the forces of the working class to sustain the innumerable attacks of an enemy. In July even the Petrograd workers did not yet possess that preparedness for infinite struggle. Although able to seize the power, they nevertheless offered it to the Executive Committee. The proletariat of the capital, although inclining toward the Bolsheviks in its overwhelming majority, had still not broken the February umbilical cord attaching it to the Compromisers. Many still cherished the illusion that everything could be obtained by words and demonstrations – that by frightening the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries you could get them to carry out a common policy with the Bolsheviks. Even the advanced sections of the class had no clear idea by which roads it was possible to arrive at the power. Lenin wrote soon after: “The real mistake of our party on the 3rd and 4th of July, as events now reveal, was only this … that the party still considered possible a peaceful development of the political transformation by way of a change of policy on the part of the soviets. In reality the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries had already tangled and bound themselves up by compromisism with the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie had become so counterrevolutionary, that there was no longer any use talking about a peaceful development.”

If the proletariat was not politically homogeneous and not sufficiently resolute, still less so was the peasant army. By its conduct on the 3rd and 4th of July the garrison made it wholly possible for the Bolsheviks to seize the power, but

nevertheless there were neutral units which by the evening of the 4th were decisively inclining to the side of the patriotic party. By July 5, the neutral regiments had taken their stand with the Executive Committee, and the regiments tending towards Bolshevism were striving to assume a color of neutrality. It was this, far more than the belated arrival of troops from the front, that gave a free hand to the authorities. If the Bolsheviks in the heat of the moment had seized the power on the evening of July 4th, the Petrograd garrison would not itself have held it, and would have hindered the workers from defending it against the inevitable blow from without.

The situation looked still less favorable in the active army. The struggle for peace and land had made the army extremely hospitable, especially since the June offensive, to the slogans of the Bolsheviks, but the so-called “spontaneous” Bolshevism of the soldier was not in the least identified in his consciousness with a definite party, with its Central Committee, or its leaders. The soldiers’ letters of those times clearly depict this condition of the army. “Remember, Messers Ministers, and all you chief leaders,” writes the crooked hand of a soldier from the front, “we don’t understand very well about parties, only that the future and the past are not far off. The Tzar sent you to Siberia and sat you in jail, and we will sit you on our bayonets.” In these lines an extreme bitterness against those higher up who are deceiving the soldiers, is united with a recognition of the soldiers’ own helplessness. “We don’t understand very well about parties.” The army mutinied continually against the war and the officers, making use of slogans from the Bolshevik dictionary. But it was far from ready to raise an insurrection in order to give

the power to the Bolshevik party. For the subduing of Petrograd the government picked out reliable detachments from the troops nearest the capital without encountering active resistance from other detachments, and it transported the echelons without resistance from the railroad workers. The discontented, rebellious, easily excitable army was still formless politically. It still contained too few compact Bolshevik nuclei capable of giving a single direction to the thought and activity of the crumbly soldier mass.

On the other hand the Compromisers, in order to turn the front against Petrograd and the peasant rear, made successful use of that poisoned weapon which in March the reaction had so carefully tried to bring to bear against the Soviet. The Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks said to the soldiers on the front: The Petrograd garrison, under the influence of the Bolsheviks, is refusing to send replacements; the workers do not want to work for the necessities of the front; if the peasant listens to the Bolsheviks and seizes the land now, nothing will be left for the men at the front. The soldiers needed some supplementary experience before they would understand for whom the government was saving the land, whether for the peasants at the front or the landlords.

Between Petrograd and the active army stood the provinces. Their reaction to the July events serves in itself as a very important a posteriori criterion for deciding the question whether the Bolsheviks were right in refraining from a direct struggle for power in July. Even in Moscow the pulse of the revolution was incomparably weaker than in Petrograd. In the session of the Moscow committee of the Bolsheviks stormy debates arose. Individuals

belonging to the extreme left wing of the party – such, for example, as Bubnov – proposed that they occupy the Post Office, the telegraph and telephone stations, the editorial offices of Russkoe Slov – that is, that they take the road of insurrection. The committee, very moderate in its general spirit, decisively rejected these proposals, considering that the Moscow masses were not in the least ready for such action. It was nevertheless decided to hold a demonstration in spite of the veto of the Soviet. A considerable crowd of workers marched to Skobelevsky Square with the same slogans as in Petrograd, but with far from the same enthusiasm. The garrison reacted by no means unanimously; individual units joined the procession, but only one of them came fully armed. The artillery soldier, Davidovsky, who subsequently took a serious part in the October struggles, testifies in his memoirs that Moscow was not prepared for the July Days, and that the leaders of the demonstration were left with a bad taste in their mouths by its failures.

In Ivanovo-Voznesensk, the textile capital where the soviet was already under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, news came of the events in Petrograd, accompanied by a rumor that the Provisional Government had fallen. At a night session of the Executive Committee it was resolved, as a preliminary measure, to establish control over the telephone and telegraph. Work was stopped in the factories on July 6. Forty thousand took part in the demonstration, many of them armed. When it was learned that the Petrograd demonstration had not led to victory, the Ivanovo-Voznesensk soviet hastily beat a retreat.

In Riga, under influence of the news from Petrograd, a clash occurred on the night of July 6 between Lettish

sharpshooters inclined towards Bolshevism and the "Battalion of Death," the patriotic battalion being compelled to retire. The Riga soviet adopted on that same night a resolution in favor of a government of the soviets. Two days later a similar resolution was adopted in Ekaterinburg, the capital of the Urals. The fact that this slogan of Soviet Power, which had been advanced in the early months only in the name of the party, became henceforward the program of individual local soviets indubitably meant a gigantic step forward. But from resolutions in favor of a Soviet Power to insurrection under the banner of the Bolsheviks, there was still a considerable road to travel.

In certain parts of the country the Petrograd events served as a stimulus to set off acute conflicts of a private character. In Nizhni-Novgorod, where some soldiers on furlough had long been resisting their entrainment for the front, junkers sent from Moscow to enforce orders aroused the indignation of two local regiments by their violence. Shooting followed, and men were killed and wounded. The junkers surrendered and were disarmed. The authorities disappeared. A punitive expedition set out from Moscow with three kinds of troops. At its head was the commander of the Moscow district, the impulsive Colonel Verkhovsky – a future War Minister of Kerensky – and the president of the Moscow soviet, the old Menshevik Khinchuk, a man of no military temper, the future head of the cooperatives, and afterward soviet ambassador in Berlin. However, they found nobody to subdue, as a committee elected by the mutinous soldiers had fully restored order by the time they arrived.

In Kiev, during approximately the same hours of the same

night, and on the same ground – refusal to go to the front – soldiers of the regiment named after the Hetman Polubotko mutinied to the number of five thousand, seized a store of weapons, occupied the fortress and the district headquarters, and arrested the commander and the head of the militia. The panic in the city lasted several hours, until by the combined efforts of the military authorities, a committee of social organizations, and the institutions of the central Ukrainian Rada, the arrested were liberated and the greater part of the mutinous troops disarmed.

In far away Krasnoyarsk the Bolsheviks, thanks to the mood of the garrison, felt so strong that, in spite of the wave of reaction already gathering in the country, they held a demonstration on July 9, in which eight to ten thousand people took part, a majority of them soldiers. A detachment of 400 soldiers with artillery was moved against Krasnoyarsk from Irkutsk, led by the district military commander, the Social Revolutionary, Krakovetsky. During the two days of conferences and negotiations necessitated by the two-power régime, the punitive detachment became so demoralized by the soldiers' agitation that the commissar hastened to send them back to Irkutsk. But Krasnoyarsk was upon the whole an exception.

In a majority of the provinces and county seats, the situation was incomparably less favorable. In Samara, for instance, the local Bolshevik organization, upon receiving news of the fights in the capital, "awaited the signal for action, although there was almost nobody they could count on." One of the local members of the party says: "The workers had begun to sympathize with the Bolsheviks" but it was impossible to hope that they would

go into a fight; it was still less possible to count on the soldiers. As for the Bolshevik organizations: “They were altogether weak; we were a mere handful. In the soviet of workers deputies there were a few Bolsheviks, but in the soldiers’ soviet there was, it seems, not a single one; and moreover the soviet consisted almost exclusively of officers.” The principal cause of this weak and unfavorable reaction of the country lay in the fact that the provinces, having received the February revolution from the hands of Petrograd without a struggle, were far slower than the capital in digesting new facts and ideas. An additional period was necessary before the vanguard could draw up to its own position the heavy reserves.

Thus the state of the popular consciousness – decisive factor in a revolutionary policy – made impossible the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in July. At the same time the offensive on the front impelled the party to oppose the demonstration. The collapse of the offensive was absolutely inevitable. As a fact it had already begun, but the country did not yet know it. The danger was that if the party were incautious, the government might lay the blame upon the Bolsheviks for the consequences of its own madness. The offensive must be given time to exhaust itself. The Bolsheviks had no doubt that the break in the mood of the masses would be very abrupt when it came. Then it would be clear what should be undertaken. Their reckoning was absolutely right. Events, however, have their own logic which takes no account of political reckonings, and this time events came down cruelly on the heads of the Bolsheviks.

The failure of the offensive became catastrophic on the 6th of July, when the Germans broke through the Russian

troops on a front twelve *versts* [1] long and to a depth of ten *versts*. The breach became known in the capital on July 7, at the very height of the punitive and repressive activities. Many months later, when passions ought to have quieted down a little, or at least become a little more sensible, Stankevich – not one of the most vicious enemies of Bolshevism – was nevertheless still writing about the "mysterious sequence of events" to be observed in the breach at Tarnopol following just after the July Days in Petrograd. Those people did not see, or did not want to see, the real sequence of events – the fact that a hopeless offensive begun under the whip of the Entente could not but lead to military catastrophe and, simultaneously therewith, to an outbreak of indignation in the masses deceived in their hopes of the revolution. But what difference does it make what the real concatenation of events was? The temptation to link up the Petrograd manifestation with the misfortune at the front was too strong. The patriotic press not only did not conceal the reverses, but exaggerated them with all its might, not hesitating even to reveal military secrets – printing the names of divisions and regiments and indicating their position. "Beginning on July 8," Miliukov confesses, "the newspapers began purposely to print outspoken telegrams from the front which struck Russian society like a clap of thunder." And that was their purpose – to shock, to frighten, to deafen, in order the more easily to link up the Bolsheviks with the Germans.

Provocation undoubtedly played a certain role in the events at the front as well as on the streets of Petrograd. After the February revolution the government had thrown over into the active army a large number of former

gendarmes and policemen. None of them of course wanted to fight. They were more afraid of the Russian soldiers than of the Germans. In order to get their past forgotten, they would simulate the most extreme moods of the army, incite the soldiers against the officers, come out loudest of all against discipline, and often openly give themselves out for Bolsheviks. Bound naturally together as accomplices, they created a kind of special Brotherhood of Cowardice and Villainy. Through them would penetrate and quickly spread through the army the most fantastic rumors, in which ultra-revolutionism was combined with Black Hundredism. In critical hours these creatures would give the first signals for panic. The press more than once referred to this demoralizing work of the police and gendarmes. No less frequent references of this kind are to be found in the secret documents of the army itself. But the high command remained silent, preferring to identify the Black Hundred provocateurs with the Bolsheviks. And now, after the collapse of the offensive, this method was legalized, and the Menshevik papers endeavored not to fall behind the dirtiest sheets of the chauvinists. With shouts about “Anarcho-Bolsheviks” and German agents, and about former gendarmes, they succeeded for a time in drowning out the question of the general condition of the army and of the policy of peace. “Our deep breach on the Lenin front,” Prince Lvov openly boasted, “has incomparably more importance for Russia in my firm opinion than the breach made by the Germans on the southwestern front ...” The respected head of the government was like Rodzianko, the Lord Chamberlain, in that he did not know when to keep still.

If it had been possible to restrain the masses from

demonstrating on July 3-4, the demonstration would inevitably have broken out as a result of the Tarnopol breach. However, a delay even of a few days would have brought important changes in the political situation. The movement would have assumed at once a broader scope, taking in not only the provinces but also, to a considerable degree, the front. The government would have been exposed politically, and would have found it incomparably more difficult to lay the blame upon “traitors” in the rear. The situation of the Bolshevik party would have been more advantageous in every respect. However, even in that case the thing could not have been carried to the point of an immediate conquest of power. Only this much, indeed, can be confidently affirmed: If the July movement had broken out a week later, the reaction would not have come off so victorious. It was just that “mysterious sequence” of the date of the demonstration and the date of the breach which counted heavily against the Bolsheviks. The wave of indignation and despair rolling back from the front fell in with the wave of shattered hopes radiating from Petrograd. The lesson received by the masses in the capital was too severe for anyone to think of an immediate renewal of the struggle. Moreover the bitter feelings caused by the meaningless defeat sought expression, and the patriots succeeded to a certain extent in directing it against the Bolsheviks.

In April, June, and July, the principal actors were the same: the Liberals, the Compromisers and the Bolsheviks. At all these stages the masses were trying to crowd the bourgeoisie out of the government. But the difference in the political consequences of mass interference in the several cases was enormous. It was the bourgeoisie who

suffered in consequence of the “April days.” The annexation policy was condemned – in words at least; the Kadet party was humiliated; the portfolio of foreign affairs was taken from it. In June the movement came to nothing. A gesture was made against the Bolsheviks, but the blow was not struck. In July the Bolshevik party was accused of treason, shattered, deprived of food and drink. Whereas in April Miliukov had been forced out of the government, in July Lenin was forced underground.

What was the cause of this sharp change occurring in a period of ten weeks? It is quite obvious that in the ruling circles a serious shift had occurred to the side of the liberal bourgeoisie. However, in that same period – April to July – the mood of the masses had sharply shifted to the side of the Bolsheviks. These two opposing processes developed in close dependence one upon the other. The more the workers and soldiers closed up around the Bolsheviks, the more resolutely were the Compromisers compelled to support the bourgeoisie. In April the leaders of the Executive Committee, worrying about their own influence, could still come one step to meet the masses and throw Miliukov overboard – supplying him, to be sure, with a reliable life-belt. In July the Compromisers joined the bourgeoisie and the officers in raiding the Bolsheviks. The change in the correlation of forces was thus caused this time, too, by a shift of the least stable of political forces, the petty bourgeois democracy – its abrupt movement to the side of the bourgeois counter-revolution.

But if this is so, were the Bolsheviks right in joining the demonstration and assuming responsibility for it? On July 3, Tomsky expounded the thought of Lenin: “It is impossible to talk of a manifestation at this moment

unless we want a new revolution.” In that case how could the party a few hours later stand at the head of an armed demonstration without summoning the masses to a new revolution? Doctrinaires will see inconsistency here – or still worse, political light-mindedness. Sukhanov, for instance, sees the matter in this way, and incorporates in his **Notes** no few ironical references to the vacillation of the Bolshevik leadership. The masses take part in events, however, not at the bidding of doctrinaires, but at whatever time this flows inevitably from their own political development. The Bolshevik leadership understood that only a new revolution could change the political situation, but the workers and soldiers did not yet understand this. The Bolshevik leadership saw clearly that the heavy reserves – the front and the provinces – needed time to make their own inferences from the adventure of the offensive. But the advanced ranks were rushing into the street under the influence of that same adventure. They combined a most radical understanding of the task with illusions as to its methods. The warnings of the Bolsheviks were ineffective. The Petrograd workers and soldiers had to test the situation with their own experience. And their armed demonstration was such a test. But the test might, against the will of the masses, have turned into a general battle and by the same token into a decisive defeat. In such a situation the party dared not stand aside. To wash one’s hands in the water of strategical morals would have meant simply to betray the workers and soldiers to their enemies. The party of the masses was compelled to stand on the same ground on which the masses stood, in order, while not in the least sharing their illusions, to help them make the necessary inferences with the least possible loss. Trotsky answered in the press the innumerable critics of

those days: “We do not consider it necessary to justify ourselves before anybody for not having stood aside waiting while General Polovtsev ‘conversed’ with the demonstrators. In any case our participation could not possibly have increased the number of victims, nor converted a chaotic armed manifestation into a political insurrection.”

A prototype of the July Days is to be found in all the old revolutions – with various, but generally speaking unfavorable, and frequently catastrophic, results. This stage is involved in the inner mechanics of a bourgeois revolution, inasmuch as that class which sacrifices most for the success of the revolution and hopes the most from it, receives the least of all. The natural law of the process is perfectly clear. The possessing class which is brought to power by the revolution is inclined to think that with this the revolution has accomplished its mission, and is therefore most of all concerned to demonstrate its reliability to the forces of reaction. This “revolutionary” bourgeoisie provokes the indignation of the popular masses by those same measures with which it strives to win the good will of the classes it has overthrown. The disappointment of the masses follows very quickly; it follows even before their vanguard has cooled off after the revolutionary struggle. The people imagine that with a new blow they can carry through, or correct, that which they did not accomplish decisively enough before. Hence the impulse to a new revolution, a revolution without preparation, without program, without estimation of the reserves, without calculation of consequences. On the other hand those bourgeois layers which have arrived at the power are in a way only waiting for a stormy outbreak

from below, in order to make the attempt decisively to settle accounts with the people. Such is the social and psychological basis of that supplementary semi-revolution, which has more than once in history become the starting-point of a victorious counter-revolution.

On July 17, 1791, on the Champs de Mars, Lafayette fired on a peaceful demonstration of republicans attempting to bring a petition to the National Assembly which was engaged in screening the treachery of the monarchical power, just as the Russian Compromisers one hundred and twenty-six years later were screening the treachery of the Liberals. The royalist bourgeoisie hoped with a timely bath of blood to settle accounts with the party of the revolution forever. The republican leaders, still not feeling strong enough for victory, declined the battle and that was entirely reasonable. They even hastened to separate themselves from the petitioners – and that was, to say the least, unworthy and a mistaken policy. The régime of the bourgeois terror compelled the Jacobins to quiet down for several months. Robespierre took shelter with the carpenter Duplay. Desmoulins went into hiding. Danton spent several weeks in England. But the royalist provocation nevertheless failed: the settlement on the Champ de Mars did not prevent the republican movement from going on to victory. The great French revolution thus had its “July Days” – both in the political and the calendar sense of the word.

Fifty-seven years later in France, the “July Days” came in June and were incomparably more colossal and tragic. The so-called “June Days” of 1848 grew irresistibly out of the February overturn. The French bourgeoisie had proclaimed in the hour of its victory “the right to labor” – just as in

1789 it announced a great many admirable things, just as in 1914 it swore that it was now waging its last war. Out of that vainglorious “right to labor” arose those pitiful national sweatshops where a hundred thousand workers, after winning the power for their bosses, got a wage of twenty-three *sous* a day. Only a few weeks later the republican bourgeoisie, generous of phrase but stingy of money, could find no words insulting enough for these “spongers living on a national starvation dole. In the abundance of those February promises and the cold-bloodedness of the pre-June provocations, the national traits of the French bourgeoisie find admirable expression. But even without provocation, the Parisian worker with the February weapons still in his hands could not help reacting to the contrast between gorgeous program and miserable reality – that intolerable contrast every day gnawing at his stomach and his conscience. With what cool and barely concealed calculation did Cavaignac before the eyes of the whole dominant society, permit an insurrection to develop in order the better to drown it in blood! No less than 12,000 workers were slaughtered by the republican bourgeoisie, no less than 20,000 were imprisoned, in order to divest the remainder of their faith in that “right to labor” which the bourgeoisie had proclaimed. Without plan, without program, without leadership, the movement of the June days of 1848 was like a mighty and unrestrainable reflex action of the proletariat. Deprived of their most elementary necessities and insulted in their highest hopes, the insurrectionary workers were not only put down but slandered. The left democrat, Flaucon, a follower of Ledru-Rollin, a predecessor of Tseretelli, assured the National Assembly that the insurrectionists had been bribed by monarchists and foreign governments. The Compromisers

of 1848 did not even have to have a war atmosphere in order to discover English and Russian gold in the pockets of the rebels. It was in this way that the democrats laid down the road to Bonapartism.

The gigantic outbreak of the Commune bore the same relation to the September overturn of 1870, as the June Days to the February revolution of 1848. That March uprising of the Parisian proletariat was least of all a matter of strategic calculation. It resulted from a tragic combination of circumstances, supplemented by one of those acts of provocation in which the French bourgeoisie is so inventive when fear puts the spurs to its spiteful will. Against the plans of the ruling clique, which wished above all to disarm the people, the workers wanted to defend that Paris which they had first tried to make their own. The National Guard had given them an armed organization – one very close to the soviet type – and it had given them political leadership in the person of its Central Committee. In consequence of unfavorable objective conditions and political mistakes, Paris became opposed to France, misunderstood, not supported, in part actually betrayed by the provinces – and fell into the hands of the enraged men of Versailles with Bismarck and Moltke behind their backs. The depraved and beaten officers of Napoleon III proved indispensable hangmen in the service of the gentle Marianne, whom the Prussians in heavy boots had just freed from the embraces of a false Bonaparte. In the Paris Commune the reflex protest of the proletariat against the deceitfulness of a bourgeois revolution first rose to the height of proletarian revolution – but rose only to fall immediately.

Spartacus Week in January 1919 in Berlin belonged to the

same type of intermediate, semi-revolution as the July Days in Petrograd. Owing to the prevailing position of the proletariat in the German nation, especially in its industry, the November revolution automatically transferred the state sovereignty to the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet. But the proletariat was politically identical with the Social Democracy, which in turn identified itself with the bourgeois régime. The independent party occupied in the German revolution the place which in Russia belonged to the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The thing lacking was a Bolshevik party.

Every day after the 9th of November gave the German workers a vivid feeling as though of something slipping from their hands, being withdrawn, sliding through their fingers. The desire to keep what they had won, to fortify themselves, to put up a resistance, was growing from day to day. And this defensive tendency lay at the bottom of the January fights of 1919. Spartacus Week began, not in the manner of a strategy calculated by the party, but in the manner of a pressure from the indignant lower ranks. It developed around a question of third-rate importance, that of retaining the office of chief-of-police, although it was in its tendencies the beginning of a new revolution. Both organizations participating in the leadership, the Spartacus League and the Left Independents, were taken unawares; they went farther than they intended and at the same time did not go through to the end. The Spartacus men were still too weak for independent leadership. The Left Independents balked at those methods which could alone have brought them to the goal, vacillated, and played with the insurrection, combining it with diplomatic negotiations.

In number of victims the January defeat falls far below the colossal figures of the “June Days” in France. However, the political importance of a defeat is not measured only by the statistics of killed and executed. It is enough that the young communist party was physically beheaded, and the Independent Party demonstrated that by the very essence of its methods it was incapable of leading the proletariat to victory. From a larger point of view the “July Days” repeated themselves in Germany in several different editions: the January week of 1919, the March days of 1921, the October retreat of 1923. The whole subsequent history of Germany derives from those events. The unachieved revolution was switched over into Fascism.

At the present moment, while these lines are being written – early in May 1931 – the bloodless, peaceful, glorious (the list of these adjectives is always the same) revolution in Spain, is preparing before our eyes its “June Days” – if you go by the French calendar – its “July Days” by the Russian. The Provisional Government in Madrid, bathing in phrases – a good part of them apparently translated from the Russian language – is promising broad measures against unemployment and land-hunger, but dares not touch a single one of the old social sores. The coalition socialists are helping the republicans sabotage the tasks of the revolution. Is it hard to foresee the feverish growth of indignation among workers and peasants? The incompatible movements of the mass revolution on the one hand, and the policy of the new ruling classes on the other – that is the source of an irreconcilable conflict, which as it develops will either bury the first, the April, revolution, or lead to a second.

ALTHOUGH the underlying mass of Russian Bolsheviks felt in July, 1917, that beyond certain limits it was still impossible to go, still there was no complete homogeneity of mood. Many workers and soldiers were at times inclined to estimate the developing movement as a decisive action. Metelev, in his memoirs written five years later, expresses himself about the meaning of the events in the following words: “In that insurrection our chief mistake was that we proposed to the compromisist Executive Committee to seize the power ... We ought not to have proposed, but to have seized the power ourselves. Our second mistake may be considered to be this, that we spent almost two days marching in the streets, instead of immediately occupying all the institutions, palaces, banks, railroad stations, telegraph offices, arresting the whole Provisional Government,” etc., etc. As applied to an insurrection those words would be unanswerable, but to convert the July movement into an insurrection would have meant almost certainly to bury the revolution.

The anarchists in summoning the masses to battle referred to the fact that “the February revolution also took place without the leadership of a party.” But the February revolution had its prepared tasks laid down by the struggle of whole generations, and above the February revolution stood an oppositional liberal society and a patriotic democracy ready to receive the power. The July movement, on the contrary, would have had to lay down a wholly new historic road-bed. The whole of bourgeois society, the soviet democracy included, were implacably hostile to it. This basic difference between the conditions of a bourgeois and a workers’ revolution, the anarchists did not see, or did not understand.

Had the Bolshevik party, stubbornly clinging to a doctrinaire appraisal of the July movement as “untimely,” turned its back on the masses, the semi-insurrection would inevitably have fallen under the scattered and uncoordinated leadership of anarchists, of adventurers, of accidental expressers of the indignation of the masses, and would have expired in bloody and bootless convulsions. On the other hand, if the party, after taking its place at the head of the machine-gunners and Putilov men, had renounced its own appraisal of the situation as a whole, and glided down the road to a decisive fight, the insurrection would indubitably have taken a bold scope. The workers and soldiers under the leadership of the Bolsheviks would have conquered the power – but only to prepare the subsequent shipwreck of the revolution. The question of power on a national scale would not have been decided, as it was in February, by a victory in Petrograd. The provinces would not have caught up to the capital. The front would not have understood or accepted the revolution. The railroads and the telegraphs would have served the Compromisers against the Bolsheviks. Kerensky and headquarters would have created a government for the front and the provinces. Petrograd would have been blockaded. Disintegration would have begun within its walls. The government would have been able to send considerable masses of soldiers against Petrograd. The insurrection would have ended, in those circumstances, with the tragedy of a Petrograd Commune.

At the July forking of historic roads, the interference of the Bolshevik party eliminated both fatally dangerous variants – both that in the likeness of the June Days of 1848, and that of the Paris Commune of 1871. Thanks to the party’s

taking its place boldly at the head of the movement, it was able to stop the masses at the moment when the demonstration began to turn into an armed test of strength. The blow struck at the masses and the party in July was very considerable, but it was not a decisive blow. The victims were counted by tens and not by tens of thousands. The working class issued from the trial, not headless and not bled to death. It fully preserved its fighting cadres, and these cadres had learned much.

During the February overturn all the many preceding years work of the Bolsheviks came to fruition, and progressive workers educated by the party found their place in the struggle, but there was still no direct leadership from the party. In the April events the slogans of the party manifested their dynamic force, but the movement itself developed independently. In June the enormous influence of the party revealed itself, but the masses were still functioning within the limits of a demonstration officially summoned by the enemy. Only in July did the Bolshevik Party, feeling the pressure of the masses, come out into the street against all the other parties, and not only with its slogans, but with its organized leadership, determine the fundamental character of the movement. The value of a close-knit vanguard was first fully manifested in the July Days, when the party – at great cost – defended the proletariat from defeat, and safeguarded its own future revolution.

“As a technical trial,” wrote Miliukov, speaking of the significance of the July Days to the Bolsheviks, “the experience was for them undoubtedly of extraordinary value. It showed them with what elements they had to deal, how to organize these elements, and finally what

resistance could be put up by the government, the Soviet and the military units … It was evident that when the time came for repeating the experiment, they would carry it out more systematically and consciously.” Those words correctly evaluate the significance of the July experiment for the further development of the policy of the Bolsheviks. But before making use of these July lessons, the party had to go through some heavy weeks, during which it seemed to the shortsighted enemy that the power of Bolshevism was conclusively broken.

Note

1. A *verst* is very nearly $^{2}/_{3}$ of a mile.

Chapter 27: The Month of the Great Slander

During that night of July 4, when the two hundred members of both Executive Committees, the worker-soldiers' and the peasants', were sitting around between fruitless sessions, a mysterious rumor arrived among them. Material had been discovered connecting Lenin with the German general staff; tomorrow the newspapers would publish the documents. The gloomy augurs of the præsidium, crossing the hall on their way to one of those endless conferences behind the scenes, responded unwillingly and evasively even to questions from their nearest friends. The Tauride Palace, already almost abandoned by the outside public, was bewildered. "Lenin in the service of the German staff?" Amazement, alarm, malicious pleasure, drew the delegates together in excited groups. "It goes without saying," says Sukhanov, who was very hostile to the Bolsheviks in the July Days, "that not one person really connected with the revolution doubted for an instant that these rumors were all nonsense." But those with a revolutionary past constituted an insignificant minority among the members of the Executive Committee. March revolutionists, accidental elements caught up by the first wave, predominated even in the ruling soviet institutions. Among those provincials – town-clerks, shopkeepers, heads of villages – deputies were to be found with a definitely Black Hundred odor. These people immediately began to feel at home: Just what was to be

expected! They had known it all along!

Alarmed by this unforeseen and too abrupt turn of events, the leaders sparred for time. Cheidze and Tseretelli suggested to the newspapers by telephone that they refrain from printing the sensational exposure as “unverified.” The editors did not dare ignore this “request” from the Tauride Palace – except one of them. The small yellow sheet published by one of the sons of Suvorin, the powerful publisher of **Novoe Vremya**, served up to its readers the next morning an official-sounding document about Lenin’s receiving directions and money from the German government. The censorship was thus broken, and within a day the whole press was full of this sensation. Thus began the most incredible episode of a year rich in events: The leaders of a revolutionary party, whose lives for decades had been passed in a struggle against rulers, both crowned and uncrowned, found themselves portrayed before the country and the whole world as hired agents of the Hohenzollern. On a scale hitherto unheard of, this slander was sown in the thick of the popular masses, a vast majority of whom had heard of the Bolshevik leaders for the first time only after the February revolution. Mud-slinging here became a political factor of primary importance. This makes necessary an attentive examination of its mechanism.

The primary source of this sensational document was the testimony of a certain Ermolenko. The image of this hero is sufficiently delineated by the official records: In the period from the Japanese War to 1913, he was an agent of the Intelligence Service; in 1913, for reasons not established, he was discharged from service with the title of ensign from the ranks; in 1914 he was called to service in the

army, gallantly permitted himself to be captured, and became a police spy among the war prisoners. The régime of a concentration camp was not to this spy's taste, however, and "at the insistence of his friends," so he testifies, he took service with the Germans – needless to say, with patriotic aims. Here a new chapter opened in his life. On April 25 this ensign from the ranks was "thrown over the Russian front" by the German military authorities for the purpose of dynamiting bridges, reporting military secrets, struggling for the independence of the Ukraine, and agitating for a separate peace. The German officers, Captains Shiditsky and Liebers, in contracting with Ermolenko for these services, informed him in passing, without any practical necessity and evidently merely in order to keep up his spirits, that besides the ensign himself, Lenin would be working in Russia in the same direction. That was the foundation of the whole affair.

Who – or what – suggested to Ermolenko his testimony about Lenin? Not the German officers, in any case. A simple juxtaposition of dates and facts will introduce us into the intellectual workshop of the ensign. On April 4 Lenin issued his famous theses, constituting a declaration of war against the February régime. On April 20-21 occurred the armed demonstration against a continuance of the war. The attack upon Lenin at that time became a veritable hurricane. On the 25th Ermolenko was "thrown over" the front, and during the first half of May was getting in contact with the Intelligence Service at headquarters. Ambiguous newspaper articles demonstrating that the policy of Lenin was advantageous to the Kaiser gave birth to the idea that Lenin was a German agent. Officers and commissars at the front, struggling with the irrepressible

“Bolshevism” of the soldiers, were still less ceremonious in their forms of expression when the talk was about Lenin. Ermolenko promptly plunged into these waters. Whether he himself thought up the dragged-in remark about Lenin, whether it was suggested to him by some outside person, or whether it was cooperatively manufactured by Ermolenko and the officials of the Intelligence Service, has no great significance. The demand for slanders against the Bolsheviks had reached such intensity that a supply could not fail to turn up. The chief of the headquarters staff, General Denikin, future generalissimo of the White Guards in the civil war – himself not very much higher in his outlook than the agents of the tzarist secret service – attributed, or pretended to attribute, great importance to the testimony of Ermolenko, and turned it over to the War Minister on May 16 with an appropriate letter. Kerensky, we may assume, exchanged opinions with Tseretelli or Cheidze, who could hardly have failed to put a curb on his righteous indignation. That evidently explains why the thing went no further. Kerensky wrote later that, although Ermolenko had testified to a connection of Lenin with the German staff, he did so “not with sufficient credibility.” The report of Ermolenko-Denikin thus remained for a month and a half under a bushel. The Intelligence Service dismissed Ermolenko as superfluous, and the ensign wandered off to the Far East to drink away the money he had received from two sources.

The events of the July Days, however, revealing the danger of Bolshevism in its full stature, called to mind the exposures of Ermolenko. He was hastily summoned from Blagoveshchensk, but owing to a sheer lack of imagination he could not, in spite of all cluckings and jerkings of the

reins, add one word to his original testimony. By that time, however, the Department of Justice and the Intelligence Service were working under full steam. Inquiries about possible criminal connections of the Bolsheviks were addressed to politicians, generals, gendarmes, merchants, innumerable people of any and every profession. The respectable tzarist secret police conducted themselves in this investigation with considerably more discretion than the brand-new representatives of democratic justice. “Such evidence,” wrote a former chief of the Petrograd secret police, the venerable general Globachev, “as that Lenin worked in Russia to her injury and on German money, was not, at least during my period of service, in the possession of the secret police.” Another secret police officer, Yakubov, chief of the intelligence department of the Petrograd military district, testified: “I know nothing of a connection between Lenin and his followers and the German general staff, but I also know nothing of the resources upon which Lenin worked.” Thus from the institutions of the tzarist spy system, which had kept watch of Bolshevism from its very inception, nothing useful could be squeezed out.

However, when people seek long, especially if they are armed with power, they find something in the end. A certain Z. Burstein, a merchant by official calling, opened the eyes of the Provisional Government to a “German espionage organization in Stockholm, headed by Parvus,” – a well-known German social democrat of Russian origin. According to the testimony of Burstein, Lenin was in contact with this organization through the Polish revolutionists, Ganetsky and Kozlovsky. Kerensky wrote later: “Some extraordinarily serious data – unfortunately

not of a legal, but merely of a secret police character – were to receive absolutely unquestionable confirmation with the arrival in Russia of Ganetsky, who had been arrested on the border, and were to be converted into authentic juridical material against the Bolshevik staff." Kerensky knew in advance into what this material would be converted!

The testimony of the merchant, Burstein, concerned the trade operations of Ganetsky and Kozlovsky between Petrograd and Stockholm. This wartime commerce, which evidently had recourse at times to a code correspondence, had no relation to politics. The Bolshevik party had no relation to this commerce. Lenin and Trotsky had publicly denounced Parvus, who combined good commerce with bad politics, and in printed words had appealed to the Russian revolutionists to break off all relations with him. But who was there in the whirlpool of events who had time to look into all this? An espionage organization in Stockholm – that sounded plain enough. And so the light unsuccessfully ignited by the hand of ensign Ermolenko, flared up from another direction. To be sure, here too they ran into a difficulty. The head of the Intelligence Service of the general staff, Prince Turkestanov, to the query of an investigator into the especially important affair of Alexandrov, had answered, "Z. Burstein is a person not deserving the slightest confidence. Burstein is an unscrupulous type of business man, who will not stop at any kind of undertaking." But could Burstein's bad reputation stand in the way of an attempt to besmirch the reputation of Lenin? No, Kerensky did not hesitate to recognize the testimony of Burstein as "extraordinarily serious." Henceforth the investigation was off on the

Stockholm scent. The exposures of a spy who had been in the service of two general staffs, and an unscrupulous business man, “not deserving the slightest confidence,” lay at the foundation of that utterly fantastic accusation against a revolutionary party which a nation of 160 million were about to raise to the supreme power.

But how did it happen that the materials of a preliminary investigation appeared in print, and moreover just at the moment when the shattered offensive of Kerensky was becoming a catastrophe, and the July demonstration in Petrograd was revealing the irresistible growth of the Bolsheviks? One of the initiators of this business, the attorney general, Bessarabov, later frankly described in the press how, when it became clear that the Provisional Government in Petrograd was wholly without reliable armed forces, it was decided in the district headquarters to try to create a psychological change in the regiments by means of some strong medicine. “The substance of the documents was communicated to representatives of the Preobrazhensky regiment nearest to headquarters; those present observed what an overwhelming impression the communication made. From that moment it was clear what a powerful weapon was in the hands of the government.” After this successful experimental test, these conspirators from the Department of Justice, the Intelligence Service and the General Staff hastened to make known their discoveries to the Minister of Justice. Pereverzev answered that no official communication could be issued, but that by the members of the Provisional Government who were present “no obstacle would be put in the way of a private initiative.” The names of the juridical and staff officials were rightly judged inapposite to the best interests of the

business: in order to get the sensational slander into circulation a “political figure” was needed. By the method of private initiative the conspirators had no difficulty in finding exactly the personage they needed. A former revolutionist, a member of the second Duma, a shrieking orator and a passionate lover of intrigue, Alexinsky had once stood on the extreme left flank of the Bolsheviks. Lenin had been a hopeless opportunist in his eyes. In the years of reaction Alexinsky had created a special ultra-left group, which he had continued to lead from abroad until the war, at the beginning of which he took an ultra-patriotic position and straightway made a specialty of accusing all and everybody of being in the service of the Kaiser. Along this line he developed an extensive espionage business in Paris in company with Russian and French patriots of the same type. The Paris Association of Foreign Journalists – that is, the correspondents of Allied and neutral countries, a very patriotic and by no means austere body – found it necessary in a special resolution to declare Alexinsky “a dishonest slanderer” and expel him from its midst. Arriving in Petrograd with this attestation after the February revolution, Alexinsky made an attempt, in the character of a former Left, to get into the Executive Committee. In spite of all their tolerance, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries by a resolution of April 11 shut the door in his face, suggesting that he make an attempt to re-establish his honor. That was easy to propose! Having decided that he was better fitted to besmirch others than rehabilitate himself, Alexinsky got into connection with the Intelligence Service, and laid hold of a national field of operation for his instinct for intrigue. By the second half of July he had already begun to include Mensheviks, too, in the widening circle of his slanders. A leader of the latter

party, Dan, abandoning the policy of watchful waiting, printed in the official soviet **Izvestia** (July 22) a letter of protest: “It is time to put an end to the doings of a man officially denounced as a dishonest slanderer.” Is it not clear that Themis, inspired by Ermolenko and Burstein, could find no better intermediary between herself and public opinion than Alexinsky? It was his signature which adorned the documents of the exposure.

Behind the scenes the minister-socialists protested against the handing over of these documents to the press, as also did two of the bourgeois ministers, Nekrasov and Tereshchenko. On the day of their publication, July 5, Pereverzev, with whom the government had already been willing to part, found himself obliged to resign. The Mensheviks passed the hint that this was their victory. Kerensky subsequently asserted that the minister had been removed for being too hasty with the exposure, thus hindering the course of the investigation. In any case, Pereverzev, with his departure, if not with his presence in the government, gave satisfaction to everybody.

On that same day Zinoviev appeared at a sitting of the bureau of the Executive Committee, and in the name of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks demanded that immediate measures be taken to exonerate Lenin and to prevent possible consequences of the slander. The bureau could not refuse to appoint a commission of inquiry. Sukhanov writes: “The commission itself understood that what needed investigation was not the question of Lenin’s selling out Russia, but only of the sources of the slander.” But the commission ran into the jealous competition of the Institutions of Justice and the Intelligence Service, which had every reason not to desire outside interference in their

trade. To be sure, the soviet bodies had not up to that time had any difficulty in getting the better of the governmental bodies when they found it necessary. But the July Days had produced a serious shift of power to the right, and moreover the soviet commission was in no hurry to fulfill a task obviously in conflict with the political interests of those who had entrusted it. The more serious of the compromise leaders – that is, properly speaking, only the Mensheviks – were concerned to establish a formal disconnection with the slander, but nothing more. In all cases where it was impossible to avoid making some direct answer, they would in a few words clear themselves of guilt. But they did not extend a finger to ward off the poisoned sword poised over the head of the Bolsheviks. A popular image of their policy was once provided by the Roman pro-consul, Pilate. Yes, and could they behave otherwise without betraying themselves? It was only the slander against Lenin that in the July Days turned away a part of the garrison from the Bolsheviks. If the Compromisers had made a fight against the slander, it is easy to imagine that the battalion of the Izmailovstsi would have stopped singing the *Marseillaise* in honor of the Executive Committee and gone back to their barracks, if not to the Palace of Kshesinskaia.

In line with the general policy of the Mensheviks, the Minister of the Interior, Tseretelli, who took the responsibility for the arrest of Bolsheviks soon to follow, did indeed, under pressure from the Bolshevik faction, announce at a meeting of the Executive Committee that he personally did not suspect the Bolshevik leaders of espionage, but that he did accuse them of conspiracy and armed insurrection. On July 13, Lieber, in introducing a

resolution which in essence outlawed the Bolshevik party, deemed it necessary to remark: “I myself consider that the accusations directed against Lenin and Zinoviev have no foundation.” Such declarations were met by all in gloomy silence: to the Bolsheviks they seemed dishonorably evasive, to the patriots, superfluous or unprofitable.

Speaking on the 17th at a joint session of the two Executive Committees, Trotsky said: “An intolerable atmosphere has been created, in which you as well as we are choking. They are throwing dirty accusations at Lenin and Zinoviev. (***Voice:*** *’That is true.’ Uproar. Trotsky continues.*) There are in this hall, it appears, people who sympathize with these accusations. There are people here who have only sneaked into the revolution. (*Uproar. The president’s bell long tries to restore order.*) ... Lenin has fought thirty years for the revolution. I have fought twenty years against the oppression of the people. And we cannot but cherish a hatred for German militarism ... A suspicion against us in that direction could be expressed only by those who do not know what a revolutionist is. I have been sentenced by a German court to eight months’ imprisonment for my struggle against German militarism ... This everybody knows. Let nobody in this hall say that we are hirelings of Germany, for that is not the voice of convinced revolutionists but the voice of scoundrels. (*Applause*)” Thus the episode was reported in the anti-Bolshevik publications of the day. The Bolshevik publications were already closed. It is necessary to explain, however, that the applause came from a small left sector. A part of the deputies bellowed with hatred. The majority were silent. No one, however, even of the direct agents of Kerensky, ascended the tribune to support the

official version of the accusation, or even indirectly to defend it.

In Moscow, where the struggle between Bolsheviks and Compromisers had in general assumed a milder character – only to become so much the more cruel in October – a joint session of the two soviets, the workers' and soldiers', passed a resolution on July 10th to "publish and paste up a manifesto in which it shall be declared that the accusation of espionage against the Bolshevik faction is a slander and a plot of the counter-revolution." The Petrograd soviet, more directly dependent upon governmental combinations, took no steps whatever, awaiting the conclusions of a Commission of Inquiry which had not even met.

On July 5, Lenin, in a conversation with Trotsky, raised the question: "Aren't they getting ready to shoot us all?" Only such an intention could explain the official stamp placed upon that monstrous slander. Lenin considered the enemy capable of carrying through to the end the scheme they had thought up, and decided not to fall into their hands. On the evening of the 6th, Kerensky arrived from the front all stuffed full of the suggestions of the generals, and demanded decisive measures against the Bolsheviks. At about two o'clock at night the government resolved to bring to trial all the leaders of the "armed insurrection," and to disband the regiments which had taken part in the mutiny. The military detachment sent to the apartment of Lenin for purposes of search and arrest had to content itself with search, for the occupant had already left home. Lenin still remained in Petrograd, but hid in a worker's apartment, demanding that the soviet Inquiry Commission hear him and Zinoviev in conditions precluding the danger

of attack from the counter-revolution. In a declaration sent to the Commission, Lenin and Zinoviev wrote: “This morning (Friday, July 7) it was communicated to Kamenev from the Duma that the commission was to go at 12 o’clock to an apartment agreed upon. We are writing these lines at 6:30 in the evening of July 7, and we remark that up to now the Commission has not appeared or given the slightest sign of its existence … The responsibility for the delay of the inquiry does not rest upon us.” The disinclination of the soviet commission to begin the promised investigation finally convinced Lenin that the Compromisers were washing their hands of the case, and leaving it to the mercies of the White Guards. The officers and junkers, who had by that time broken up the party printing plant, were now beating up and arresting in the streets everyone who protested against the charge of espionage against the Bolsheviks. Lenin therefore finally decided to go into hiding – not from the investigation, but from possible attempts upon his life.

On the 15th, Lenin and Zinoviev explained in the Kronstadt Bolshevik paper, which the authorities had not dared to shut down, why they did not consider it possible to hand themselves over to the authorities: “From a letter of the former Minister of Justice, Pereverzev, printed on Sunday in the newspaper **Novoe Vremya**, it has become perfectly clear that the ’case’ of the spy activities of Lenin and others was a perfectly deliberate frame-up by the party of counter-revolution. Pereverzev quite openly acknowledges that he put in circulation unverified accusations in order to arouse the rage (his *verbatim* expression) of the soldiers against our party. This is the confession of yesterday’s Minister of Justice! … There is no guarantee of justice in

Russia at this moment. To turn oneself over to the authorities would mean to put oneself in the hands of the Miliukovs, Alexinskies, Pereverzevs, in the hands of infuriated counter-revolutionists for whom the whole accusation against us is a mere episode in a civil war." In order to explain at this day the meaning of the phrase "episode in a civil war," it is sufficient to remember the fate of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Lenin knew how to see ahead.

While agitators of the hostile camp were telling a thousand stories – Lenin is on a destroyer, Lenin has fled to Germany in a submarine, etc. – the majority of the Executive Committee hastily condemned Lenin for avoiding an investigation. Ignoring the political essence of the accusation, and the pogrom situation in which, and for the sake of which, it was launched, the Compromisers came out as champions of pure justice. This was the least inexpedient position of all those remaining open to them. A resolution of the Executive Committee on July 13 not only declared the conduct of Lenin and Zinoviev "absolutely impermissible," but also demanded of the Bolshevik faction "an immediate, categorical and clear condemnation" of its leaders. The faction unanimously rejected the demands of the Executive Committee. However in the Bolshevik ranks – at least in the upper circles – there were waverings on the subject of Lenin's avoiding an investigation. And among even the most extreme Left Compromisers Lenin's disappearance caused downright indignation – an indignation not always hypocritical, either, as we see in the example of Sukhanov. The slanderous character of the material supplied by the secret police had not been subject to the slightest doubt in

his mind, as we know, from the beginning. “The nonsensical accusation went up like smoke,” he wrote. “It had no confirmation, and people simply stopped believing it.” But it remained a mystery for Sukhanov how Lenin could decide to avoid an inquiry. “That was something wholly special, unexampled, incomprehensible. Any other mortal would have demanded a court and an investigation, no matter how unfavorable the circumstances.” Yes, any other mortal. But no other mortal could have become an object of such raging hatred to the ruling classes. Lenin was not any other mortal, and did not for one moment forget the responsibility which rested on him. He knew how to draw all the inferences from a situation, and he knew how in the name of those tasks to which he had consecrated his life, to ignore the oscillations of “public opinion.” Quixotism was just as foreign to him as posing.

In company with Zinoviev Lenin passed a number of weeks in the environs of Petrograd in a forest near Sestroretsk. They had to spend the nights and find shelter from rain in a haystack. Disguised as a fireman Lenin then crossed the Finland border on a locomotive, and concealed himself in the apartment of a Helsingfors police chief, a former Petrograd worker. Afterward he moved nearer the Russian border, to Vyborg. From the end of September he lived secretly in Petrograd. And on the day of the insurrection he appeared, after an almost four months’ absence, in the open arena.

July became a month of shameless, unbridled and triumphant slander. By August the slander had already begun to exhaust itself. Just a month after the attack was let loose, Tseretelli, ever true to himself, deemed it necessary to repeat at a session of the Executive

Committee: “On the day after the arrests I gave an oral answer to the questions of the Bolsheviks, and I said: ‘The leaders of the Bolsheviks, under indictment for inciting to insurrection on July 3-5, I do not suspect of connection with the German staff.’” To say less than that would have been impossible; to say more would have been inexpedient. The press of the compromise parties went no farther than these words of Tseretelli, and since this press was at the same time bitterly denouncing the Bolsheviks as auxiliaries of German militarism, the voice of the compromisist papers merged politically with the outcry of all the rest of the press, which was speaking of the Bolsheviks not as “Auxiliaries” of Ludendorff but as his hired agents. The highest notes in this chorus were sung by the Kadets. **Russkie Vedomosti**, the paper of the liberal Moscow professors, printed a communication to the effect that in a search in the editorial offices of **Pravda** a German letter had been found in which a Baron from Gaparanda “welcomes the activities of the Bolsheviks and foresees what legitimate rejoicing this will cause in Berlin.” The German Baron on the Finland border well knew what letters were needed by the Russian patriots. The press of cultivated society, defending itself against Bolshevik barbarism, was filled with such communications.

Did the professors and lawyers believe their own words? To admit this, at least in regard to the leaders in the capital, would be to think far too little of their political intelligence. Even if not considerations of principle, or of psychological possibility, mere business considerations alone ought to have revealed to them the vacuity of these accusations – and first of all financial considerations. The German government could obviously have helped the Bolsheviks,

not with ideas, but with money. But money was just what the Bolsheviks did not have. The center of the party abroad during the war was struggling with cruel need; a hundred francs was a big sum; the central organ was appearing once a month, or once in two months, and Lenin was carefully counting the lines in order not to exceed his budget. The expenses of the Petrograd organization during the war years amounted to a few thousand rubles, which went mostly to the printing of illegal leaflets. In two and a half years only 300,000 copies of these leaflets were distributed in Petrograd. After the revolution the inflow of members and of means increased, of course, remarkably. The workers were wonderfully ready to tax themselves for the Soviet and for the soviet parties. “Contributions, all kinds of dues, collections and deductions in behalf of the Soviet,” reported the lawyer Bramson, a Trudovik, at the first congress of the soviets, “began on the very first day after our revolution broke out ... You could see the extraordinarily touching spectacle of an uninterrupted pilgrimage to us in the Tauride Palace from early morning to late at night bringing these contributions.” As time went on, the workers were still more ready to make these deductions in behalf of the Bolsheviks. However, in spite of the swift growth of the party and of money receipts, **Pravda** was, in physical proportions, the smallest of all the party papers. Soon after his arrival in Russia Lenin wrote to Radek in Stockholm: “Write articles for **Pravda** about foreign politics – extremely short and in the spirit of **Pravda** (there is very, very little space – we are trying hard to enlarge it).” In spite of the Spartan régime of economy instituted by Lenin, the party was always in need. The disbursement of two or three thousand war – time rubles in behalf of some local organization would

mean always a serious problem for the Central Committee. In order to send papers to the front, it became necessary again and again to take up special collections among the workers. And even so, the Bolshevik papers arrived in the trenches in incomparably fewer number than the papers of the Compromisers and Liberals. Complaints about this were continual. “We are living only on the rumor of your papers, wrote the soldiers. In April a city conference of the party appealed to the workers of Petrograd to collect in three days the 75,000 rubles lacking for the purchase of a printing plant. The sum was more than covered, and the party finally acquired its own printing press – the same one which the junkers shattered to the ground in July. The influence of the Bolshevik slogans spread like a fire in the steppes, but the material instruments of their propaganda remained exceedingly scant. The personal lives of the Bolsheviks gave still less occasion for slander. What then remained? Nothing, in the last analysis, but Lenin’s trip through Germany. But that very fact, advanced oftenest of all before inexperienced audiences as proof of Lenin’s friendship with the German government, in reality proved the opposite. An agent would have traveled through the hostile territory concealed and without the slightest danger. Only a revolutionist confident of himself to the last degree would have dared openly to transgress the laws of patriotism in wartime.

The Ministry of Justice, however, did not hesitate to carry out its unpleasant task. It had not for nothing inherited employees trained during the final period of the autocracy, when the murder of liberal deputies by Black Hundred agents known by name to the whole country would remain systematically undiscovered, while a Jewish salesman in

Kiev would be accused of using the blood of a Christian boy. Over the signature of the investigator in the exceptionally important affair of Alexandrov, and that of the Attorney General, Karinsky, a decree was published on the 21st of July, indicting on a charge of state treason Lenin, Zinoviev, Kollontai and a number of other people, among them the German social democrat Helfand-Parvus. The same articles of the Criminal Code, 51, 100 and 108, were afterwards invoked in indicting Trotsky and Lunacharsky, arrested by military detachments on the 23rd of July. According to the text of the decree, the leaders of the Bolsheviks “being Russian citizens, did, according to a preliminary agreement between themselves and other parties, with the aim of aiding other states engaged in hostile activities within the borders of Russia, enter into an agreement with the agents of the said governments to co-operate in the disorganization of the Russian army and rear for the purpose of weakening the fighting power of the army. For which purpose, with monies received by them from these states, they did organize a propaganda among the population and troops, summoning them to an immediate refusal of military activity against the enemy, and they did also with the same ends in view, during the period from the 3rd to the 5th of July, 1917, organize in Petrograd an armed insurrection.” Although every educated person in those days, at least in the capital, knew in what circumstances Trotsky had come from New York through Christiania and Stockholm to Petrograd, the Court of Inquiry charged him also with having traveled through Germany. The Department of Justice evidently desired to leave no doubt as to the solidity of the materials which had been placed at its disposition by the Intelligence Service.

The latter institution has nowhere been a propagator of good morals. But in Russia the Intelligence Service was the very sewer of the Rasputin régime. The scum of the military officers, the police, the gendarmerie, together with discharged agents of the secret police, formed the cadres of that foul, stupid and all-powerful institution. Colonels, captains and ensigns who were useless for military deeds took under their supervision all branches of the social and governmental life, establishing throughout the country a system of spy feudalism. “The situation became absolutely catastrophic,” complains a former director of police, Kurlov, “when the notorious Intelligence Service began to take part in the affairs of civil administration.” Kurlov himself has no little dirty business to his credit – among other things an indirect participation in the murder of the Prime Minister, Stolypin. Nevertheless the activities of the Intelligence Service made even his experienced imagination shudder. During the time when “the struggle with enemy espionage ... was being carried on very weakly,” he writes, notoriously framed-up cases would frequently come down upon the heads of completely innocent people with the aim of naked blackmail. Kurlov ran into one such case: “To my horror,” he says, “[I] heard the pseudonym of a secret agent known to me in my former service with the police department as having been expelled for blackmail.” One of the provincial heads of the Intelligence Service, a certain Ustinov, a notary before the war, describes the morals of this service in his memoirs in practically the same terms as those used by Kurlov: “In search of something to do, the agents themselves would manufacture material.”

It is still more instructive to verify the intellectual level of

the institution by the example of this very accuser. “Russia went to ruin,” writes Ustinov, speaking of the February revolution, “the victim of a revolution created by German agents on German money.” The attitude of the patriotic notary to the Bolsheviks needs no further explanation. “The reports of the Intelligence Service as to the former activities of Lenin, as to his connection with the German staff, as to his receipt of German gold, are convincing enough to hang him immediately.” Kerensky did not do this, it would seem, only because he was himself a traitor. “Especially astonishing, and even downright exasperating, was the leadership of a good-for-nothing lawyer among the Yids, Sashka Kerensky.” Ustinov testifies that Kerensky “was well-known as a provocateur who betrayed his comrades.” The French general, Anselm, as was found out later, abandoned Odessa in March, 1919, not under pressure from the Bolsheviks, but because he received an immense bribe. From the Bolsheviks? No. “The Bolsheviks had nothing to do with it,” said Ustinov. “Here the Free Masons were at work.” Such was that world.

Soon after the February revolution this institution, consisting of sharpers, falsificators and blackmailers, was put in charge of a patriotic Social Revolutionary, Mironov, who had arrived from abroad and whom an assistant minister, Demianov, a “people’s socialist,” characterized in the following words: “Mironov creates a good impression externally ... But I shall not be surprised if I learn that this is not a wholly normal person. It is quite possible to believe he is not: a normal person would hardly have agreed to stand at the head of an institution which ought to have been simply disbanded and its walls washed with sublimate.” As a result of that administrative mix-up

caused by the revolution, the Intelligence Service came under the supervision of the Minister of Justice, Pereverzev, a man of incredible light-mindedness and complete indifference to the means he employed. The same Demianov says in his memoirs that his minister “enjoyed almost no prestige at all in the Soviet.” Under the protection of Mironov and Pereverzev, the Intelligence men, frightened at first by the revolution, soon came to themselves and accommodated their old activities to the new political situation. In June even the left wing of the governmental press began to publish information about blackmail and other crimes committed by the highest ranks of the Intelligence Service, even including two chiefs of the institution, Shukin and Broy, first assistants of the miserable Mironov. A week before the July crisis the Executive Committee, under pressure from the Bolsheviks, had addressed a demand to the government for an immediate inspection of the Intelligence Service with the participation of soviet representatives. The intelligence men thus had their own departmental reasons – or rather reasons of livelihood – for striking at the Bolsheviks as quickly and as hard as possible. Prince Lvov had signed a timely law giving the Intelligence Service the right to hold an arrestee under lock and key for three months.

The character of the accusation, and of the accusers, inevitably gives rise to the question, how could people of normal mould believe, or even pretend to believe, in this notorious lie which was inept from beginning to end. The success of the Intelligence Service would in truth have been unthinkable, except for the general atmosphere created by war, defeat, ruin, revolution, and the embitterment of the social struggle. Since the autumn of

1914 nothing had gone well with the ruling classes of Russia. The ground was crumbling under their feet. Everything was falling from their hands. Misfortunes were coming down on them from all directions. How could they help seeking a scapegoat? The former Attorney General, Zavadsky, remembers that “entirely healthy people were inclined in the alarming years of the war to suspect treachery where it apparently, and even indubitably, was not to be found. The majority of the cases of this kind prosecuted while I was attorney general, were fanciful.” These cases were initiated, not only by spiteful agents, but by ordinary philistines who had lost their heads. But often, too, the war psychosis united with the pre-revolutionary political fever to produce even more freakish fruits. The Liberals, in common with the unsuccessful generals, sought everywhere and in everybody for the hand of the Germans. The court camarilla had been considered Germanified. The whole clique of Rasputin had been believed, or at least declared by the Liberals, to be under instructions from Potsdam. The tzarina had been widely and openly accused of espionage. She had been held responsible even in court circles for the sinking by Germans of the vessel in which General Kitchener was coming to Russia. The Rights, it goes without saying, were not slow to pay back the debt. Zavadsky relates how the Assistant Minister of the Interior, Beletsky, attempted early in 1916 to bring a charge against the national-liberal industrialist, Guchkov, accusing him of “activities bordering upon state treason in wartime.” In exposing the performances of Beletsky, Kurlov, also a former Assistant Minister of the Interior, in his turn put the question to Miliukov: “For what honorable work in behalf of the fatherland did he (Miliukov) receive two hundred thousand

rubles of ‘Finland’ money, transferred to him by mail in the name of the janitor of his house?” The quotation marks around “Finland” are supposed to show that it was really a question of German money. But nevertheless Miliukov had a well-earned reputation for Germanophobia! In governmental circles it was generally considered as proven that all the opposition parties were operating with German money. In August 1915, when disturbances were expected in connection with the dissolution of the Duma, the naval minister, Grigorovich, considered to be almost a Liberal, said at a session of the government: “The Germans are conducting a reinforced propaganda and showering the anti-government organizations with money.” The Octobrists and Kadets, although indignant at these insinuations, nevertheless never thought of fending them off in a leftward direction. On the subject of a semi-patriotic speech of the Menshevik, Cheidze, at the beginning of the war, the president of the Duma, Rodzianko, wrote: “Subsequent events proved the closeness of Cheidze to German circles.” You will wait in vain for the slightest shadow of such proof!

In his **History of the Second Russian Revolution**, Miliukov says: “The role of the ‘dark sources’ in the revolution of February 27 is wholly unclear, but judging by all that followed it is difficult to deny it.” Peter Struve, a former Marxist and now a reactionary Slavophile of German origin, expresses himself more decisively: “When the Russian revolution, planned and created by Germany, succeeded, Russia had to all intents and purposes withdrawn from the war.” Like Miliukov, Struve is here speaking not of the October, but of the February Revolution. On the subject of the famous *Order No.1*, the

Magna Carta of soldiers' liberties drawn up by the delegates of the Petrograd garrison, Rodzianko wrote: "I have not the slightest doubt of the German origin of *Order No.1*:" The chief of one of the divisions, General Barkovsky, told Rodzianko that "*Order No.1* was supplied to his troops in enormous quantities from the German trenches." When he became war minister, Guchkov, whom they had tried to indict for state treason under the tzar, hastened to switch this accusation to the left. The April orders of Guchkov to the army read: "Persons who hate Russia, and are undoubtedly in the service of our enemies, have penetrated into the active army with the persistence characteristic of our enemies, and evidently in fulfillment of their demands are preaching the necessity of ending the war as soon as possible." On the subject of the April manifestation, which was directed against an imperialist policy, Miliukov writes: "The task of removing both ministers (Miliukov and Guchkov) was directly imposed by Germany," and the workers got 15 rubles a day from the Bolsheviks for taking part in the demonstration. With this key of German gold the liberal historian unlocks all those enigmas against which he bumped his head as a politician.

The patriotic socialists who baited the Bolsheviks as involuntary allies, if not agents, of the German ruling circles, were themselves under the same accusation from the right. We have seen what Rodzianko said about Cheidze. He did not even spare Kerensky himself. "It was he, undoubtedly, who through secret sympathy for the Bolsheviks, but perhaps also because of other considerations, impelled the Provisional Government" to admit the Bolsheviks into Russia. "Other considerations" can mean nothing but a partiality for German gold. In his

curious memoirs, which have been translated into foreign languages, the General of Gendarmes, Spiridovich, remarking upon the abundance of Jews in the ruling circles of the Social Revolutionaries, adds: “Among them Russian names also glimmered, such as the future Rural Minister, the German spy, Victor Chernov.” And it was by no means only this gendarme who suspected the leader of the Social Revolutionary party. After the July pogrom of the Bolsheviks, the Kadets lost no time in raising a hue and cry against the Minister of Agriculture, Chernov, a man suspected of connections with Berlin; and the unhappy patriot had to resign temporarily in order to exonerate himself. Speaking in the autumn of 1917 on the instructions given by the patriotic Executive Committee to the Menshevik, Skobelev, for his participation in an international socialist conference, Miliukov, in the tribune of the Pre-parliament, demonstrated by means of a meticulous syntactical analysis of its text, the obvious “German origin” of the document. The style of the instructions, as indeed of all the compromisist literature, was as a fact bad. The belated democracy, without ideas, without will, glancing round affrightedly on all sides, piled up qualification after qualification in its writings, until they sounded like a bad translation from a foreign language – just as the democracy itself was, indeed, the shadow of a foreign past. Ludendorff, however, is not in the least to blame for that.

The journey of Lenin through Germany offered inexhaustible possibilities for chauvinist demagoguery But as though to demonstrate beyond a doubt the purely instrumental role of patriotism in their policies, the bourgeois press, after having at first met Lenin with a

hypocritical good-will, started their licentious attack upon his “Germanophilism” only after his social program had become clear. “Land, bread, and peace” – those slogans he could only have brought from Germany. At that time there were still no revelations of Ermolenko.

After Trotsky and several other emigrants, returning from America, had been arrested by the military authorities of King George in the latitude of Halifax, the British ambassador in Petrograd gave to the press an official communication in a quite inimitable Anglo-Russian language: “Those Russian citizens on the steamer *Christianiafiord* were detained in Halifax because it was communicated to the British government that they had connections with a plan subsidized by the German government to overthrow the Russian Provisional Government ...” Buchanan’s communication was dated April 14: at that time neither Burstein nor Ermolenko had appeared upon the horizon. Miliukov, in his capacity of Minister of Foreign Affairs, found himself obliged, however, to request the British government through the Russian ambassador, Nabokov, to liberate Trotsky and permit him to come to Russia. “Knowing of Trotsky’s activities in America,” writes Nabokov, “the British government was perplexed: ‘Is this ill-will or blindness?’ The Englishmen shrugged their shoulders, understood the danger, gave us warning.” Lloyd George however was compelled to yield. In answer to a question put by Trotsky to the British Ambassador in the Petrograd press, Buchanan took back in some embarrassment his first explanation, and this time announced: “My government detained the group of emigrants in Halifax only for the purpose of, and until, the establishment of their identity by the Russian

government ... That is the whole story of the detaining of the Russian emigrants." Buchanan was not only a gentleman, but also a diplomat.

At a conference of members of the State Duma early in June, Miliukov, having been pushed out of the government by the April demonstration, demanded the arrest of Lenin and Trotsky, unequivocally hinting at their connections with Germany. On the following day at the congress of the soviets, Trotsky declared: "Until Miliukov confirms or withdraws this accusation, he wears the brand of a dishonest slanderer." Miliukov answered in the newspaper **Rech** that he was "in truth dissatisfied that Messrs. Lenin and Trotsky are at liberty," but that he had motivated the demand for their arrest "not on the ground that they are agents of Germany, but that they have sufficiently violated the criminal code." Miliukov was a diplomat without being a gentleman. The necessity of arresting Lenin and Trotsky had been perfectly clear to him before the revelations of Ermolenko; the juridical dressings of the arrest were a mere question of technique. The leader of the Liberals had been playing with the sharp blade of this accusation long before it was set in motion in a "juridical" form.

The role of the myth of German gold becomes most obvious of all in a colorful episode described by the general administrator of the Provisional Government, the Kadet Nabokov (not to be confused with the Russian ambassador in London mentioned above). In one of the sittings of the government, Miliukov, speaking on some other question, remarked: "It is no secret to anybody that German money played its role among the factors promoting the revolution ..." That was quite in the character of Miliukov, although the formula was obviously

softened. “Kerensky,” according to Nabokov’s report, “went into a rage. He seized his portfolio and slamming it down on the table, cried out: ‘Since Miliukov has dared in my presence to slander the sacred cause of the great Russian Revolution, I do not wish to remain here another minute.’” That is wholly in the character of Kerensky although his gestures were perhaps a little exaggerated. A Russian proverb advises us not to spit in the well from which we may have to drink. When he was offended by the October Revolution, Kerensky could think of nothing better to use against it than this myth of German gold. That which in Miliukov’s mouth had been a “slander against a sacred cause” became for Kerensky in the mouth of Burstein the sacred cause of slandering the Bolsheviks.

The unbroken chain of suspicions of Germanophilism and espionage, extending from the tzarina, Rasputin and the court circles, through the ministry, the staffs, the Duma, the liberal newspapers, to Kerensky and a number of the Soviet leaders, strikes one most of all by its monotony. The political enemy seem to have firmly resolved not to overwork their imaginations: they simply switched the same old accusations about from one point to another, the movement being predominantly from right to left. The July slander against the Bolsheviks least of all fell down out of a clear sky. It was the natural fruit of panic and hate, the last link in a shameful chain, the transfer of a stereotyped slanderous formula to its new and final object, permitting a reconciliation of the accusers and the accused of yesterday. All the insults of the ruling group, all their fears, all their bitterness, were now directed against that party which stood at the extreme left and incarnated most completely the unconquerable force of the revolution. Was

it in actual fact possible for the possessing classes to surrender their place to the Bolsheviks without having made a last desperate effort to trample them in the blood and filth? That tangle of slander, well snarled up from long usage, was inevitably fated to come down on the heads of the Bolsheviks. The revelations of the retired ensign from the Intelligence Service were only a materialization of the ravings of possessing classes who found themselves in a blind alley. For that reason the slander acquired such frightful force.

The idea of German agentry was not in itself, to be sure, mere raving. The German espionage in Russia was incomparably better organized than the Russian in Germany. It is sufficient to recall the fact that the War Minister, Sukhomlinov, was arrested even under the old régime as the trusted man of Berlin. It is also indubitable that German agents inserted themselves not only into the court and Black Hundred circles, but also among the Lefts. The Austrian and German governments had flirted from the first days of the war with separatist tendencies, beginning among the Ukrainian and Caucasian emigrants. It is interesting that Ermolenko, recruited in April 1917, was sent over to struggle for the secession of the Ukraine. As early as 1914, both Lenin and Trotsky in Switzerland had demanded in print a break with those revolutionists who were getting caught on the hook of Austro-German militarism. Early in 1917 Trotsky repeated this printed warning to the left German social democrats, the followers of Liebknecht, with whom agents of the British embassy were trying to establish connections. But in flirting with separatists in order to weaken Russia and frighten the tzar, the German government was far from the thought of

overthrowing tzarism. The best evidence of this is a proclamation scattered in the Russian trenches after the February revolution, and read on March 11 at a session of the Petrograd soviet. “At the beginning the English joined hands with your tzar; now they have turned against him because he would not agree to their self-interested demands. They have overthrown your tzar, given to you by God. Why has this happened? Because he understood and divulged the faults and crafty schemes of the English.” Both the form and contents of this document give internal guarantee of its genuineness. Just as you cannot imitate a Prussian lieutenant, so you cannot imitate his historic philosophy. Hoffmann, a Prussian lieutenant with a general’s rank, imagined that the Russian revolution was thought up and its foundations laid in England. In that, however, there is less absurdity than in the theory of Miliukov and Struve, for Potsdam continued to the end to hope for a separate peace with Tzarskoe Selo, while in London they feared more than anything else a separate peace between them. Only when the impossibility of restoring the tzar became wholly obvious, did the German staff transfer its hopes to the disintegrating power of the revolutionary process. Even in the matter of Lenin’s trip through Germany, the initiative came not from German circles but from Lenin himself – in its very first form, indeed, from the Menshevik, Martov. The German staff only consented to it, and that probably not without hesitation. Ludendorff said to himself: Perhaps relief will come from that side.

During the July events the Bolsheviks themselves sought for an alien and criminal hand in certain unexpected excesses that were obviously provoked with malice

aforethought. Trotsky wrote in those days: “What role has been played in this by counter-revolutionary provocation and German agents? It is difficult at present to pronounce definitely upon this question. We must await the results of an authentic investigation ... But even now it is possible to say with certainty that the results of such an investigation will throw a clear light upon the work of Black Hundred gangs, and upon the underground role played by gold, German, English or 100 per cent Russian, or indeed all three of them. But no judicial investigation will change the political meaning of the events. The worker and soldier masses of Petrograd were not, and could not have been, bought. They are not in the service of Wilhelm, or Buchanan, or Miliukov. The movement was prepared by the war, by oncoming hunger, by the reaction lifting its head, by the headlessness of the government, by the adventurist offensive, by the political distrust and revolutionary alarm of the workers and soldiers ...” All the material in the archives, the documents and memoirs, which have become public since the war and the two revolutions, prove beyond a doubt that the partiality of German agents for the revolutionary processes in Russia did not for one moment rise out of the military-police sphere into the sphere of big politics. Is there, by the way, any need of insisting upon this, after the revolution in Germany itself? How pitiful and impotent did these supposedly all-powerful Hohenzollern agents turn out to be in the autumn of 1918 in the face of the German workers and soldiers! “The calculation of our enemy in sending Lenin to Russia was absolutely right,” says Miliukov. Ludendorff himself quite otherwise estimates the results of the undertaking: “I could not suppose” so he justifies himself, speaking of the Russian revolution, “that it would

become the tomb of our own might.” This merely means that of the two strategists, Ludendorff who permitted Lenin to go, and Lenin who accepted his permission, Lenin saw farther and better.

“The enemy propaganda and Bolshevism” complains Ludendorff in his memoirs, “were seeking one and the same goal within the boundaries of the German state. England gave opium to China, our enemies gave us revolution …” Ludendorff attributes to the Entente the same thing of which Miliukov and Kerensky were accusing Germany. Thus cruelly does the insulted reason of history avenge itself! But Ludendorff did not stop there. In February 1931, he informed the world that behind the back of the Bolsheviks stood international and especially Jewish finance capital, united in the struggle against tzarist Russia and imperialist Germany. “Trotsky arrived in Petrograd from America through Sweden, provided with great supplies of the money of international capitalists. Other moneys were supplied to the Bolsheviks by the Jew, Solmsen, from Germany.” (Ludendorff’s **Volkswarte**, February 15, 1931). However the testimonies of Ludendorff and Ermolenko may disagree, they coincide in one point: a part of the money did actually come from Germany – not from Ludendorff, it is true, but from his mortal enemy, Solmsen. Only this testimony was lacking to provide an aesthetic finish to the whole question.

But not Ludendorff, nor yet Miliukov, nor Kerensky, invented this device, although they first made a broad use of it. “Solmsen” has many predecessors in history, both as Jew and as German agent. Count Fersen, a Swedish ambassador in France during the great revolution, a passionate partisan of the monarchical power of the king,

and more especially of the queen, more than once sent to his government in Stockholm such communications as the following: “The Jew, Efraim, an emissary of Herr Herzberg in Berlin, (the Prussian Minister of Foreign Affairs) is supplying them (the Jacobins) with money; not long ago he received another 600,000 livres.” The moderate newspaper, **Les Revolutions de Paris** made the supposition that during the republican revolution “emissaries of the European diplomats, such as for instance the Jew Efraim, an agent of the Prussian king, made their way into the volatile and fickle crowd. . . .” The same Fersen reported: “The Jacobins would have perished, but for the help of the rabble bribed by them.” If the Bolsheviks paid daily wages to the participants in that demonstration, they only followed the example of the Jacobins, and moreover the money for bribing the “rabble” came in both cases from a source in Berlin. This similarity in the action of revolutionists in the twentieth and eighteenth centuries would be striking, were it not outweighed by a more striking similarity in the slanders peddled by their enemies. But we need not limit ourselves to the Jacobins. The history of all revolutions and civil wars invariably testifies that a threatened or an overthrown ruling class. is disposed to find the cause of its misfortunes, not in itself, but in foreign agents and emissaries. Not only Miliukov in his character as a learned historian, but even Kerensky in his character as a superficial reader of history, must be aware of this. However, in their character as politicians they were victims of their own counterrevolutionary functions.

Under these theories about the revolutionary role of foreign agents, as under all typical mass-

misunderstandings, there lies an indirect historical foundation. Consciously or unconsciously, every nation at the critical period of its existence makes especially broad and bold borrowings from the treasury of other peoples. Not infrequently, moreover, a leading role in the progressive movement is played by people living on the border or emigrants returning to the homeland. The new ideas and institutions thus appear to the conservative strata first of all as alien, as foreign inventions. The village against the city, the backwoods against the capital, the petty bourgeois against the worker – they all defend themselves under the guise of a national force resisting foreign influence. Miliukov portrayed the Bolshevik movement as “German” for the same reason in the last analysis that the Russian *muzhik* has for a hundred years regarded as a German any man dressed up in city clothes. The difference is that the muzhik was making an honest mistake.

In 1918 – that is, after the October Revolution – a press bureau of the American government triumphantly published a collection of documents connecting the Bolsheviks with the Germans. This crude forgery, which would not stand up under a breath of criticism, was believed in by many educated and perspicacious people, until it was discovered that the originals of the documents supposed to have been drawn up in different countries were all written on the same machine. The forgers did not stand on ceremony with their customers: they were obviously confident that the political demand for exposures of the Bolsheviks would outweigh the voice of criticism. And they made no mistake, for they were well paid for the documents. However, the American

government, separated by an ocean from the scene of the struggle, was only secondarily interested in this matter. But why after all is political slander as such so poor and monotonous? Because the social mind is economical and conservative. It does not expend more efforts than are necessary for its goal. It prefers to borrow the old, when not compelled to create the new. But even when so compelled, it combines with it elements of the old. Each successive religion has created no new mythology, but has merely re-personified the superstitions of the past. In the same manner philosophical systems are created, and doctrines of law and morals. Separate individuals, even those possessed of genius, develop in the same inharmonious way as the society which nourishes them. A bold imagination lives in the same skull with a slavish adherence to trite images. Audacious flights reconcile themselves with crude prejudices. Shakespeare nourished his creative genius upon subjects handed down from the deep ages. Pascal used the theory of probability to demonstrate the existence of God. Newton discovered the law of gravitation and believed in the Apocalypse. After Marconi had established a wireless station in the residence of the pope, the vicar of Christ distributed his mystic blessing by radio. In ordinary times these contradictions do not rise above a condition of drowsiness, but in times of catastrophe they acquire explosive force. When it comes to a threat against their material interests, the educated classes set in motion all the prejudices and confusion which humanity is dragging in its wagon-train behind it. Can we too much blame the lords of old Russia, if they built the mythology of their fall out of indiscriminate borrowings from those classes which were overthrown before them? To be sure, the circumstance that Kerensky

resurrects the tale of Ermolenko in his memoirs many years after the event, is, to say the least, superfluous.

The slander of those years of war and revolution was striking, we remarked, in its monotony. However, it does contain a variation. From the piling up of quantity we get a new quality. The struggle of the other parties among themselves was almost like a family spat in comparison with their common baiting of the Bolsheviks. In conflict with one another they were, so to speak, only getting in training for a further conflict, a decisive one. Even in employing against each other the sharpened accusation of German connections, they never carried the thing through to the limit. July presents a different picture. In the assault upon the Bolsheviks all the ruling forces, the government, the courts, the Intelligence Service, the staffs, the officialdom, the municipalities, the parties of the soviet majority, their press, their orators, constituted one colossal unit. The very disagreements among them, like the different tone qualities of the instruments in an orchestra, only strengthened the general effect. An inept invention of two contemptible creatures was elevated to the height of a factor in history. The slanders poured down like Niagara. If you take into consideration the setting – the war and the revolution – and the character of the accused – revolutionary leaders of millions who were conducting their party to the sovereign power – you can say without exaggeration that July 1917 was the month of the most gigantic slander in world history.

Chapter 28: The Counter-Revolution Lifts Its Head

During the first two months, when the power belonged formally to the government of Guchkov and Miliukov, it was as a fact wholly in the hands of the Soviet. During the following two months the Soviet grew weaker. A part of its influence upon the masses went over to the Bolsheviks; a part of its power the minister-socialists took with them into their portfolios in the Coalition Government. From the outset of preparations for the offensive there began an automatic increase of the influence of the commanding staff, the organs of finance capital and the Kadet party. Before shedding the blood of the soldiers, the Executive Committee carried out a substantial transfusion of its own blood into the arteries of the bourgeoisie. Behind the scenes the threads of all this were held in the hands of the embassies and governments of the Entente.

At an inter-allied conference in London the western friends “forgot” to invite the Russian ambassador. Only after he had reminded them of his existence, did they send him an invitation – it was about ten minutes before the opening of the session – and moreover there was no place for him at the table, and he had to crowd in between the Frenchmen. This mockery of the ambassador of the Provisional Government and the demonstrative exit of the Kadets from the government – both events happening on the 2nd of July – had the same purpose: to bring the Compromisers to their knees. The armed demonstration, bursting out just

after this, had an especially exasperating effect upon the soviet leaders, because having been struck this double blow, they were at the time directing all their attention in exactly the other direction. Once it had become necessary to take up a bloody task in alliance with the Entente, it would be hard after all to find better intermediaries than the Kadets. Chaikovsky, one of the oldest revolutionists, who had become metamorphosed after long years abroad into a moderate British Liberal, moralized as follows: “Money is necessary for war, and the Allies will not give money to socialists.” The Compromisers were embarrassed by this argument, but fully understood the force of it.

The correlation of forces had obviously changed to the disadvantage of the people, but nobody was able to say how much: The appetites of the bourgeoisie, at least, had grown considerably more than their opportunities. In this uncertainty lay the source of the conflict, for the strength of class forces is tested in action, and all the events of a revolution reduce themselves to these repeated trials of force. However great may have been the shift of power from left to right, in any case it very little affected the Provisional Government which remained a vacant space. The people who in those critical July Days were interested in the ministry of Prince Lvov could be counted on the fingers of one hand. General Krymov, the same one who once had a conversation with Guchkov about overthrowing Nicholas II – we will soon meet this general for the last time – sent the prince a telegram concluding with the urgent demand: “It is time to pass from words to deeds.” The advice sounded funny, and merely further emphasised the impotence of the government.

“At the beginning of July,” subsequently wrote the Liberal, Nabokov, “there was one short moment when the authority of the government seemed again to lift its head; that was after the putting down of the first Bolshevik uprising. But the Provisional Government was unable to make use of this opportunity, and let slip the favorable conditions of the moment. It was never repeated.” Other representatives of the right camp have expressed themselves to the same effect. In reality, in the July Days as in all other critical moments, the constituent parts of the coalition were pursuing different goals. The Compromisers would have been perfectly ready to permit a final wiping out of the Bolsheviks, had it not been obvious that after settling with the Bolsheviks, the officers, Cossacks, Cavaliers of St. George and shock battalions would have cleaned up the Compromisers themselves. The Kadets wanted to carry through, and sweep away not only the Bolsheviks but the soviets also. However, it was no accident that at all acute moments the Kadets found themselves outside the government. In the last analysis what pushed them out was the pressure of the masses, irresistible in spite of the buffer provided by the Compromisers. Even if they had succeeded in seizing the power, the Liberals could not have held it. Subsequent events conclusively proved this. The idea of a lost opportunity in July is a retrospective illusion. At any rate, the July victory did not strengthen the government, but on the contrary opened a prolonged period of crisis which was formally resolved only on the 24th of July, and was in essence an introduction to the four months’ death agony of the February régime.

The Compromisers were torn between the necessity of

reviving their half-friendship with the bourgeoisie, and the need of softening the hostility of the masses. Tacking became for them a form of existence. Their zigzags became a feverish tossing to and fro, but the fundamental line kept swinging sharply to the right. On the 7th of July, a whole series of repressive measures was decreed by the government. But at the same session, and so to speak by stealth, taking advantage of the absence of the “old man” – that is, the Kadets – the minister-socialists proposed to the government that it undertake to carry out the program of the June congress of the soviets. This, however, straightway led to a further disintegration of the government. The great landlord and former president of the land union, Prince Lvov, accused the government of “undermining” with its agrarian policy “the popular sense of right.” The landlords were worried not only lest they be deprived of their hereditary possessions, but lest the Compromisers “attempt to place the Constituent Assembly before the fact of a decision already arrived at.” All the pillars of the monarchist reaction now became flaming partisans of pure democracy! The government decided that Kerensky should occupy the position of Minister-President, retaining also the portfolios of war and navy. To Tseretelli as the new Minister of the Interior fell the task of responding in the Executive Committee to questions about the arrest of the Bolsheviks. A protesting question was raised by Martov, and Tseretelli unceremoniously answered his old party comrade that he would rather deal with Lenin than Martov: with the former he knew what to do, but with the latter his hands were tied ... “I take upon myself the responsibility for these arrests”: the minister threw this challenge into the tensely attentive hall.

In dealing blows to the left, the Compromisers would justify themselves by citing a danger to the right. “Russia is threatened with a military dictatorship,” declared Dan at the session of July 9th. “We are obliged to snatch the bayonet from the hand of the military dictator. And this we can do only by declaring the Provisional Government a Committee of Public Safety. We must give it unlimited powers, so that it may root out to the bottom anarchy on the left and counter-revolution on the right. As though in the hands of a government fighting against workers and soldiers and peasants there could be any other bayonet but the bayonet of counter-revolution! By 253 votes with 47 abstaining, the joint session adopted the following resolutions: “1. The country and the revolution are in danger. 2. The Provisional Government is a government of the Salvation of the Revolution. 3. It is endowed with unlimited powers.” The resolution resounded as loud as an empty barrel. The Bolsheviks present at the session abstained from the voting, which testifies to an indubitable disconcertedness among the heads of the party at that time.

Mass movements, even when shattered, never fail to leave their traces. The place of the titled nobleman at the head of the government was now occupied by a radical lawyer. The Ministry of the Interior was occupied by a former hard-labor convict. The plebeian transformation of the government was at hand. Kerensky, Tseretelli, Chernov, Skobelev, leaders of the Executive Committee, now determined the physiognomy of the government. Was not this a realization of the slogan of the June Days, “Down with the ten minister-capitalists”? No, this was only an exposure of its inadequacy. The minister-democrats took

the power only in order to bring back the minister-capitalists. *La Coalition est morte, vive la coalition!*

The comedy is now put on – the solemnly shameful comedy of the disarming of the machine-gunners on Palace Square. A series of regiments are disbanded, the soldiers are sent in small detachments to fill up the ranks at the front. Forty-year-old men are brought to submission, and herded into the trenches. They are all agitators against the régime of Kerenskyism. There are tens of thousands of them, and in the autumn they will accomplish a great work in the trenches. At the same time the workers are disarmed, although with less success. Under pressure from the generals – we shall see in a minute what forms it took – the death penalty is reintroduced at the front. But on the same day, the 12th of July, a decree is published limiting the sales of land. That belated half-measure, adopted under the axe of the *muzhik*, provokes mockery from the left and a grinding of teeth on the right. While forbidding all processions in the streets – a threat to the left – Tseretelli warns of the prevalence of unlegalized arrests – an attempt to pull up the reins on the Right. In removing the commander-in-chief of the forces of the Petrograd district, Kerensky explains to the Left that this is because he broke up the workers' organizations, to the Right that it is because he was not decisive enough.

The Cossacks became the veritable heroes of bourgeois Petrograd. "There were occasions," relates the Cossack officer, Grekov, "when upon the entrance into a public place, a restaurant for example, of someone in a Cossack uniform, all would stand up and greet the newcomer with applause." The theaters, the moving-picture houses, the

public gardens, instituted a series of benefit evenings for the wounded Cossacks and the families of the slain. The bureau of the Executive Committee found itself compelled to elect a commission, with Cheidze at the head, to participate in the organization of a public funeral for the "warriors fallen while fulfilling their revolutionary duty in the days of July 3-5." The Compromisers had to drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs. The ceremonial began with a liturgy in the Isaakievsky Cathedral. The pall-bearers were Rodzianko, Miliukov, Prince Lvov, Kerensky and they marched in procession to the burial-place in the Alexandr-Nevsky Monastery. On the line of march the militia were not to be seen; order was preserved by the Cossacks. The day of the funeral was the day of their complete dominion of Petrograd. The workers and soldiers slain by the Cossacks, own brothers of the February martyrs, were buried secretly, as were the martyrs of January 9th under tzarism.

The Kronstadt Executive Committee was ordered by the government, under threat of a blockade of the island, to put Raskolnikov, Roshal and ensign Remnev at the disposal of the Court of Inquiry. At Helsingfors, Left Social-Revolutionaries were for the first time arrested along with Bolsheviks. The retired Prince Lvov complained in the newspapers that "the soviets are beneath the level of state morals and have not yet cleansed themselves of Leninists – those agents of the Germans ..." It became a matter of honor with the Compromisers to demonstrate their state morals. On July 13th the Executive Committees in joint session adopted a resolution introduced by Dan: "Any person indicted by the courts is deprived of membership in the Executive Committees until sentence is

pronounced.” This placed the Bolsheviks in fact beyond the law. Kerensky shut down the whole Bolshevik press. In the provinces the land committees were arrested. **Izvestia** sobbed impotently: “Only a few days ago we witnessed a debauch of anarchy on the streets of Petrograd. Today on the same streets there is an unrestrained flow of counter-revolutionary Black Hundred speeches.”

After the disbandment of the more revolutionary regiments and the disarming of the workers, the resultant of the composition of forces moved still farther to the right. A considerable part of the real power was now clearly in the hands of the military chiefs, the industrial and banking and Kadet groups. The rest of it remained as before in the hands of the soviets. The dual power was still there, but now no longer the legalized, contractual or coalitional dual power of the preceding two months, but the explosive dual power of a clique – of two cliques, the bourgeois-military and the compromisist, who feared, but at the same time needed each other. What remained to be done? To resurrect the Coalition. “After the insurrection of July 3-5,” says Miliukov quite justly, “the idea of a Coalition not only did not disappear, but acquired for the time being more force and importance than it had possessed before.”

The Provisional Committee of the state Duma unexpectedly came to life at this time and adopted a drastic resolution against the Government of Salvation. That was the last straw. All the ministers handed their portfolios to Kerensky, thereby making him the focus of the national sovereignty. In the further development of the February revolution, as also in the personal fate of Kerensky, that moment acquired an important significance. In the chaos of groupings, resignations and appointments,

something in the nature of an immovable point had been designated around which everything else revolved. The resignation of the ministers served only as an introduction to negotiations with the Kadets and industrialists. The Kadets laid down their conditions: responsibility of the members of the government “exclusively to their own conscience”; complete unity with the Allies; restoration of discipline in the army; no social reforms until the Constituent Assembly. A point not written down was the demand that the elections to the Constituent Assembly be postponed. This was called a “non-party and national program.” A similar program was advanced by the representatives of trade and industry, whom the Compromisers had tried vainly to set against the Kadets. The Executive Committee again confirmed its resolution endowing the Government of Salvation with “unlimited powers.” That meant agreeing to the government’s independence of the soviets. On the same day Tseretelli as Minister of the Interior sent out instructions for the taking of “swift and decisive measures putting an end to all illegal activities in the matter of land relations.” The Minister of Food Supply, Peshekhonov, likewise demanded an end of all “violent and criminal manifestations against the landlords.” The Government of the Salvation of the Revolution recommended itself above all as a government of the salvation of the landlord’s property. But not that alone. An industrial magnate, the engineer Palchinsky, in his three-fold calling as director of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, plenipotentiary administrator of fuel and metal, and head of the Commission on Defence, was conducting an energetic campaign for syndicated capital. The Menshevik economist, Cherevanin, complained in the economic department of the Soviet that the noble

undertakings of the democracy were going to smash against the sabotage of Palchinsky. The Minister of Agriculture, Chernov, to whose shoulders the Kadets had shifted the accusation of German connections, felt obliged “for purposes of rehabilitation” to resign. On July 18, the government, in which socialists predominated, issued a decree dissolving the unsubmissive Finnish Seim [1] with its socialist majority. In a solemn note to the Allies on the third anniversary of the World War, the government not only repeated the ritual oath of loyalty, but also reported the happy putting down of an insurrection caused by agents of the enemy. A priceless documentary record of boot licking! At the same time a fierce law was promulgated against transgressions of discipline on the railroads. After the government had thus demonstrated its statesmanly maturity, Kerensky finally made up his mind to answer the ultimatum of the Kadet party. His answer was to the effect that the demands presented by it “could not serve as an obstacle to its participation in the Provisional Government.” This veiled capitulation was, however, not enough for the Liberals. They had to bring the Compromisers to their knees. The central committee of the Kadet party declared that the governmental declaration issued after the break-up of the coalition on July 8 – a collection of democratic commonplaces – was unacceptable to them, and broke off the negotiations.

It was a concentrated attack. The Kadets were acting in close union, not only with the industrialists and Allied diplomats, but also with the army generals. The head committee of the League of Officers at headquarters functioned under the de facto leadership of the Kadet party. Through the high commanding staff the Kadets

brought pressure against the Compromisers on their most sensitive side. On July 8th the commander-in-chief of the southwestern front, General Kornilov, gave orders to open fire upon retreating soldiers with machine-guns and artillery. Supported by the commissar of the front, Savinkov – former head of a terrorist organization of Social Revolutionaries – Kornilov had before this demanded the introduction of the death penalty at the front, threatening otherwise to resign the command. A secret telegram had immediately appeared in the press. Kornilov was trying to get publicity for himself. The supreme commander-in-chief, Brussilov, more cautious and evasive, wrote to Kerensky in pedagogical tone: “The lessons of the great French Revolution, partially forgotten by us, nevertheless forcibly call themselves to mind …” These lessons lay in the fact that the French revolutionists, after vainly trying to reorganize the army “upon humane principles” afterward adopted the death penalty and “their triumphal banners filled half the world.” This was all that the general had learned from the book of revolution. On July 12, the government restored the death penalty “in war time for certain major crimes committed by men on military duty.” However, the commander-in-chief of the northern front, General Klembovsky, wrote three days later: “Experience has shown that those military units in which there have been many replacements have become utterly incapable of fighting. An army cannot be healthy if the source of its replacements is rotten. This rotten source of replacements was the Russian people.

On the 16th of July, Kerensky called a conference of the older military chiefs at headquarters with the participation of Tereshchenko and Savinkov. Kornilov was absent. The

recoil on his front was in full swing, and came to a stand only several days later when the Germans themselves called a halt on the old state frontier. The names of the conferees, Brussilov, Alexeiev, Ruszky, Klembovsky, Denikin, Romanovsky, sounded like the last echo of an epoch that was disappearing in the abyss. For four months these high generals had been regarding themselves as half-dead. They now came to life and, considering the minister-president an incarnation of the revolution which had so vexed them, spitefully pinched and slapped him with impunity.

According to headquarters' figures, the army on the southwestern front had lost between June 18 and July 6, 56,000 men. An insignificant sacrifice measured by the scale of the war! But two revolutions, the February and the October, cost a great deal less. What had the Liberals and Compromisers got out of the offensive besides death, destruction and disaster? The social earthquakes of 1917 changed the aspect of one-sixth of the earth's surface and opened new possibilities before humanity. The cruelties and horrors of revolution – which we have no desire either to soften or deny – do not fall from the sky. They are inseparable from the whole process of historic development.

Brussilov made a report on the results of the offensive begun a month before: "Complete failure." Its cause lay in the fact that "the officers, from the company commander to the commander-in-chief, have no power." How and why they lost it, he did not say. As for future operations: "We cannot get ready for them before spring." While insisting like the rest upon repressive measures, Klembovsky expressed a doubt whether they could be real. "The death

penalty? But is it possible to put to death whole divisions? Court-martials? But in that case half of the army would be in Siberia The chief of the general staff reported: “Five regiments of the Petrograd garrison disbanded; the instigators court-martialled ... In all about 90,000 men will be transferred from Petrograd.” This news was received with satisfaction. It did not occur to anybody to ponder the consequences of an evacuation of the Petrograd garrison.

As to the committees, said Alexeiev, “they must be abolished ... Military history extending over thousands of years has created its laws. We tried to violate these laws, and we have had a fiasco.” This man confused the laws of history with the rules of the drill-master. “People followed the old banners as sacred things and went to their deaths,” boasted Ruszky. “But to what have the red banners brought us? To the surrender of armies in whole corps.” The decrepit general had forgotten that he himself in August 1915 reported to the Council of Ministers: “The contemporary demands of military technique are beyond our powers; in any case we cannot keep up with the Germans.” Klembovsky insisted with spiteful pleasure that the army had not really been ruined by Bolsheviks, but by “other persons” who had introduced a good-for-nothing military code, “persons who do not understand the life and conditions of existence of an army.” This was a direct slap at Kerensky. Denikin came down on the ministers more decisively: “You have trampled them in the mud, our glorious war banners, and you will lift them again if you have a conscience ...” And Kerensky? Suspected of lacking a conscience, he humbly thanked the military boor for his “frankly and justly expressed opinion.” And as for the declaration of rights of the soldier: “If I had been minister

when it was drawn up, the declaration would not have been issued. Who first put down the Siberian sharp-shooters? Who first shed blood to bring the disobedient into line? My appointee! My commissar!" the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tereshchenko, ingratiated himself with this consoling observation: "Our offensive even though unsuccessful has increased the confidence in us of the Allies." The confidence of the Allies! Was it not for this that the earth rotated upon its axis?

"At the present time the officers are the sole bulwark of freedom and the revolution," declaimed Klembovsky. "The officer is not a bourgeois," explained Brussilov, "he is the most real proletarian." General Ruszky added: "Generals also are proletarian." To abolish the committees, restore power to the old chiefs, drive politics – and that means revolution – out of the army: such was the program of these proletarians with a general's rank. And Kerensky did not object to the program itself; he was only troubled about the date. "As for the proposed measures," he said, "I think that even General Denikin would not insist upon their immediate introduction ..." Those generals were mere drab mediocrities, but they could hardly have failed to say to themselves: "That's the kind of language to use with these fellows!"

As a result of the conference there was a change in the high command. The compliant and flexible Brussilov who had replaced the cautious bureaucrat Alexeiev, the latter having opposed the offensive, was now removed, and General Kornilov named in his place. The change was variously motivated: to the Kadets they promised that Kornilov would establish iron discipline; they assured the Compromisers that Kornilov was a friend of the

committees and commissars; Savinkov himself vouched for his republican sentiments. In answer to his high appointment the general sent a new ultimatum to the government: He, Kornilov, would accept the appointment only on the following conditions: “Responsibility only to his own conscience and the people; no interference in the appointment of the high-commanding staff; restoration of the death penalty at the rear.” The first point created difficulties. Kerensky had started the business of “answering to his own conscience and the people,” and this particular business does not tolerate competitors. Kornilov’s telegram was published in the most widely circulated liberal papers. The cautious politicians of the reaction puckered their noses. Kornilov’s ultimatum was merely the ultimatum of the Kadet party translated into the forthright language of a Cossack general. But Kornilov’s calculations were right: The exorbitant demands and impudent tone of his ultimatum delighted all the enemies of the revolution, and above all the regular officers. Kerensky took fright and wanted to remove Kornilov forthwith, but found no support in his government. In the end, upon the advice of his backers, Kornilov agreed to concede in an oral statement that by responsibility to the people he meant responsibility to the Provisional Government. For the rest, the ultimatum was accepted with some slight qualifications. Kornilov became commander-in-chief. At the same time the military engineer, Filonenko, was appointed as his commissar, and the former commissar of the southwestern front, Savinkov, was made general administrator of the War Ministry. The one was an accidental figure, a parvenu, the other a man with a big revolutionary past – both of them pure adventurers, ready for anything. Filonenko at least was

ready for anything, and Savinkov was ready for much. Their close connection with Kornilov, promoters of the swift career of the general, played its role as we shall see in the further development of events.

The Compromisers were surrendering all along the line. Tseretelli asserted: “The Coalition is a union of salvation.” In spite of the formal split, negotiations were in full swing behind the scenes. In order to hasten the solution, Kerensky, in obvious agreement with the Kadets, resorted to a purely histrionic measure – a measure, that is to say, wholly in the spirit of his general policy, but at the same time useful to his goal. He resigned and left town, abandoning the Compromisers to their own desperation. Miliukov says on this theme: “By his demonstrative departure he proved to his enemies, rivals and adherents that, however they might look upon his personal qualities, he was indispensable at the present moment simply because of the political position he occupied between the two warring camps.” He won the game by giving it away. The Compromisers threw themselves upon “Comrade Kerensky” with suppressed curses and public prayers. Both sides, the Kadets and the socialists, easily persuaded the headless ministry to abolish itself, empowering Kerensky to form the government anew and at his sole personal discretion.

In order to drive out of their wits the already frightened members of the Executive Committees, the latest news was handed to ’them of the deteriorating situation at the front. The Germans were driving the Russian troops, the Liberals were driving Kerensky, Kerensky was driving the Compromisers. The Menshevik and Social Revolutionary factions were in session all night on July 24. Wearied out

with their own helplessness, the Executive Committees, by a majority of 147 votes against 46, with 42 abstaining – unprecedented opposition! – finally ratified the turning over of unconditional and unlimited powers to Kerensky. At the Kadet Congress, sitting simultaneously, voices were raised for the overthrow of Kerensky, but Miliukov curbed this impatience, suggesting that they limit themselves for the present to bringing pressure to bear. This does not mean that Miliukov had any illusions about Kerensky, but he saw in him a point of application for the power of the possessing classes. Once having freed the government from the soviets, it would be no labor to free it from Kerensky.

In those days the gods of the Coalition remained athirst. The decree demanding the arrest of Lenin had preceded the formation of the transitional government of July 7. Now some firm act was needed to signalize the resurrection of the Coalition. Already on the 13th of July there had appeared in Maxim Gorky's paper – the Bolshevik press no longer existing – an open letter from Trotsky to the Provisional Government which read: "You can have no logical foundation for excepting me from the implications of the decree under which Lenin, Zinoviev and Kamenev are liable to arrest. So far as concerns the political side of the question, you can have no reason to doubt that I am as implacable an enemy of the general policy of the Provisional Government as the above-named comrades." On the night when the new ministry was created, Trotsky and Lunacharsky were arrested in Petrograd, and ensign Krylenko, the future Bolshevik commander-in-chief, on the front.

The new government, having got born into the world after

a three-day crisis, had the appearance of a runt. It consisted of second and third-rate figures selected on the basis of a choice between evils. The Vice-President turned out to be the engineer Nekrasov, a left Kadet who on February 27 had proposed that they put down the revolution by turning over the power to one of the tzarist generals. A writer without party and without personality, Prokopovich, a man who had been dwelling on the borderland between Kadets and Mensheviks, became Minister of Trade and Industry. A former attorney general, afterward a radical lawyer, Zarudny, son of a “liberal” minister of Alexander II, was called to the Ministry of Justice. The president of the Executive Committee of the peasant soviet, Avksentiev, received the portfolio of the Interior. The Menshevik, Skobelev, remained Minister of Labor, and the People’s Socialist, Peshekhonov, became Minister of Provisions. The Liberals supplied equally secondary figures, men who played a leading role neither before nor after their appointment. Chernov somewhat unexpectedly returned to his post as Minister of Agriculture. In the four days between his resignation and this new appointment he had had time to rehabilitate himself. Miliukov in his **History** dispassionately remarks that the nature of the relation between Chernov and the German authorities “remained unexplained.” “It is possible,” he adds, “that the testimony of the Russian Intelligence Service and the suspicions of Kerensky, Tereshchenko and others went a little too far in this matter.” The reappointment of Chernov to the post of Minister of Agriculture was nothing more than a tribute paid to the prestige of the ruling party of the Social Revolutionaries – in which, by the way, Chernov was steadily losing influence. Finally, Tseretelli had the

foresight to remain outside the ministry. In May he had thought that he would be useful to the revolution in the staff of the government; now he intended to be useful to the government in the staff of the Soviet. From this time on Tseretelli actually fulfilled the duties of a commissar of the bourgeoisie in the system of the soviets. “If the interests of the country should be transgressed by the Coalition,” he said at a session of the Petrograd soviet, “our duty would be to withdraw our comrades from the government.” It was no longer a question then – as Dan had not long ago vouchsafed – of crowding out the Liberals after using them up; it was a question of retiring in good season upon finding out that you had been used up. Tseretelli was preparing a complete surrender of power to the bourgeoisie.

In the first Coalition, formed on May 6, the socialists had been in the minority, but they were in fact masters of the situation. In the ministry of July 24, the socialists were in a majority, but they were mere shadows of the Liberals. “With a slight nominal predominance of socialists,” writes Miliukov, “the actual predominance in the cabinet unquestionably belonged to the convinced partisans of bourgeois democracy.” It would be more accurate to say bourgeois property. In the matter of democracy the thing was much less definite. In the same spirit, although with an unexpected motivation, Minister Peshekhonov compared the July with the May Coalition: At that time, he said, the bourgeoisie needed support from the left; now when counter-revolution threatens it needs support from the right. “The more forces we attract from the right, the fewer will remain of those who wish to make an attack upon the government.” This suggests a superb rule for

political strategy: In order to raise the siege of a fortress, the best method is to open the gates from the inside. That was the formula of the new Coalition.

The reaction was on the offensive, the democracy in retreat. Classes and groups which had retired in fright during the first days of the revolution began to lift their heads. Interest which yesterday had lain concealed, today came into the open. Merchants and speculators demanded the extermination of the Bolsheviks and – freedom of trade. They raised their voice against all restrictions upon trade whatsoever, even those which had been introduced under tzarism. The food commissions which had tried to struggle with speculation were declared to blame for the lack of the necessities of life. From the commissions, hatred was transferred to the soviets. The Menshevik economist Grohman has reported that the campaign of the merchants “became especially strong after the events of July 3-4.” The soviets were held responsible for the defeat, the high cost of living and nocturnal burglaries.

Alarmed by monarchist intrigues and fearing some answering explosion from the left, the government on August 7 sent Nicholas Romanov and his family to Tobolsk. On the following day the new Bolshevik paper, **Worker and Soldier**, was suppressed. News was arriving from all sides of the mass arrests of the soldier committees. The Bolsheviks were able to assemble their congress at the end of July only semi-legally. Army congresses were forbidden. Congresses were now held by all who had been sitting at home: landlords, merchants, industrialists, Cossack chiefs, the clergy, the Cavaliers of St. George. Their voices sounded alike, distinguished only in the degree of boldness. The indubitable, although not always

open, conductor of the symphony was the Kadet party.

At a Congress of Trade and Industry which early in August assembled about three hundred representatives of the most important industrial and stock-exchange organizations, the opening speech was made by the textile king, Riabushinsky, and he did not hide his light under a bushel. “The Provisional Government,” he said, “possesses only the shadow of power ... Actually a gang of political charlatans are in control ... (The government is concentrating on taxes, imposing them primarily and cruelly upon the merchant and industrial class ...) Is it expedient to give to the spendthrifts? Would it not be better in the name of the salvation of the fatherland to appoint a guardian over the spendthrifts?” And then a concluding threat: “The bony hand of hunger and national destitution will seize by the throat the friends of the people!” That phrase about the bony hand of hunger, generalizing the policy of lock-outs, entered from that time forth into the political dictionary of the revolution. It cost the capitalists dear.

There was held in Petrograd a congress of commissars of the provinces. These agents of the Provisional Government, who were supposed to stand like a wall around it, virtually united against it, and under the leadership of their Kadet nucleus took in hand the unhappy Minister of the Interior, Avksentiev. “You can’t sit down between two chairs: a government ought to govern and not be a puppet.” The Compromisers defended themselves and protested half-heartedly, fearing lest Bolsheviks overhear their quarrel with their ally. Avksentiev walked out of the congress as though he had got burnt.

The Social Revolutionary and Menshevik press gradually began to adopt the language of injury and complaint. Unexpected revelations began to appear on its pages. On August 6, the Social Revolutionary paper Dyelo Naroda, published a letter from a group of left junkers, mailed by them while on the road to the front. They were “surprised by the role being played by the junkers … (Systematic striking of people in the face, participation in punitive expeditions characterized by executions without trial or investigation at a mere order from the battalion commander. (… Embittered soldiers have begun to snipe isolated junkers from hiding-places …)” [?] Thus looked the business of restoring health to the army.

The reaction was on the offensive, the government in retreat. On August 7, the most popular Black Hundred agents, partisans of the Rasputin circles and of Jewish pogroms, were liberated from prison. The Bolsheviks remained in the Kresty Prison, where a hunger strike of arrested soldiers and sailors was impending. The workers’ section of the Petrograd soviet sent greetings on that day to Trotsky, Lunacharsky, Kollontai and other prisoners.

The industrialists, the commissars of the provinces, the Cossack congress in Novocherkassk, the patriotic press, the generals, the liberals, everybody, thought it would be impossible to hold the elections for the Constituent Assembly in September – best of all to postpone them to the end of the war. To this, however, the government would not agree. A compromise was found. The convocation of the Constituent Assembly was deferred to the 28th of November. The Kadets accepted this postponement, although not without grumblings. They were firmly counting on certain decisive events happening

during the three remaining months, which would shift the whole question of the Constituent Assembly to a different level. These hopes were being more and more openly connected with the name of Kornilov.

The reclame surrounding the figure of this new “chief” henceforth occupied the center of the bourgeois policy. A biography of the “First People’s Commander-in-chief” was distributed in enormous quantities with the active co-operation of headquarters. When Savinkov, speaking as general administrator of the War Ministry, would say to the journalists, “We assume, etc.” – his “we” did not mean Savinkov and Kerensky, but Savinkov and Kornilov. The noise surrounding the name of Kornilov put Kerensky on his guard. Rumors were spreading more and more persistently about a conspiracy centering in the League of Officers at headquarters. Personal meetings between the heads of the government and the chiefs of the army in the first days of August only fanned the fires of their mutual antipathy. “Does that lightweight elocutionist think he can give orders to me?” Kornilov doubtless said to himself. “Does that dull and ignorant Cossack expect to save Russia?” Kerensky could not but think. And they were both right in their way. Kornilov’s program, which included the militarisation of the factories and railroads, the extension of the death penalty to the rear, and the subordination of the Petrograd military district and therewith the garrison of the capital to headquarters, became known in those days to the compromisist circles. Behind this official program another program – unexpressed but no less actual – could easily be guessed at. The left press sounded the alarm. The Executive Committee advanced a new candidate for commander-in-chief in the person of General Cheremissov.

There was open talk of the impending retirement of Kornilov. The reaction became alarmed.

On the 6th of August, the council of the Union of Twelve Cossack Armies – the Don, the Kuban, the Tver, etc. – passed a resolution, not without help from Savinkov, to bring it “loudly and forcibly” to the attention of the government and the people that they would not be responsible for the behavior of Cossack troops at the front or rear in case of the removal of the “hero-chief,” General Kornilov. A conference of the League of Cavaliers of St. George even more forcibly threatened the government. If Kornilov was removed the League would immediately issue a war-cry to all the Knights of St. George, summoning them to united action with the Cossacks.” Not one of the generals protested against this active insubordination, and the press of the existing order printed with delight this resolution which contained the threat of civil war. The head committee of the League of Officers of the Army and Fleet sent out telegrams in which it placed all its hopes in “our dear leader, General Kornilov,” and summoned “all honest people” to express their confidence in him. A conference of “Public Men” of the right camp, sitting in Moscow during those days, sent Kornilov a telegram in which it joined its voice with those of the officers, the Georgian Cavaliers and the Cossacks: “All thinking Russia looks with hope and confidence to you.” It would be impossible to speak more clearly. The conference was attended by industrialists and bankers like Riabushinsky and Tretiakov, generals Alexeiev and Brussilov, representatives of the clergy, professors, and leaders of the Kadet party with Miliukov at their head. In the character of a smoke screen, representatives were present from a semi-fictitious “peasant union,” designed to

give the Kadets some support among the peasant leaders. In the president's chair loomed the monumental figure of Rodzianko, offering public thanks to the delegation of a Cossack regiment for putting down the Bolsheviks. The candidacy of Kornilov for the role of savior of the country was thus openly advanced by the most authoritative representatives of the possessing and educated classes of Russia.

After these preparations the high commander-in-chief appeared for a second time at the War Ministry for negotiations as to his program for the salvation of the country. "Upon his arrival in Petrograd," says his chief of staff, General Lukomsky, describing this visit of Kornilov, "he went to the Winter Palace escorted by Tekintsi [2] with two machine guns. These machine guns were taken from the automobile after General Kornilov entered the Winter Palace, and the Tekintsi stood guard at the palace gate in order in case of need to come to the aid of the commander-in-chief." It was assumed that the commander-in-chief might require military aid against the Minister-President. The machine guns of the Tekintsi were machine guns of the bourgeoisie aimed at the Compromisers who kept getting under their feet. Such was the position of this government of salvation so independent of the soviets!

Shortly after Kornilov's visit a member of the Provisional Government, Kokoshkin, announced to Kerensky that the Kadets would resign "if Kornilov's program is not accepted today." Although without the machine guns, the Kadets were now talking to the government in the same ultimative language as Kornilov. And that was a help. The Provisional Government hastened to examine the report of

the supreme commander, and to recognize in principle the possibility of adopting the measures proposed by him, “including the restoration of the death penalty at the rear.”

In this mobilization of the forces of reaction there was naturally included the All-Russian Council of Churches, which had for its official aim to complete the emancipation of the orthodox church from bureaucratic activities, but whose real aim was to protect it from the revolution. With the overthrow of the monarchy the church had been deprived of its official head. Its relation to the state, which had been its defence and protector from time immemorial, was now left hanging in the air. To be sure, the Holy Synod, in an epistle of March 9, had hastened to extend its blessing to the accomplished revolution and summon the people to “place their trust in the Provisional Government.” However, the future contained a menace. The government had kept silent on the church question as on all others. The clergy were completely at a loss. Occasionally from some far-off region – from the city of Verny on the borders of China – a telegram would come from a local cleric assuring Prince Lvov that his policy fully corresponded to the Testament of the Evangelists. Although thus tuning in on the revolution, the church had not dared to interfere in events. This was plainest of all at the front, where the influence of the clergy had evaporated along with the discipline of fear. Denikin acknowledges this: “Whereas the officers’ corps did for a long time fight for its military authority and power to command, the voice of the pastors was silent from the first days of the revolution and their every participation in the life of the soldiers came to an end.” The congresses of the clergy at headquarters and in the staffs of the army went

by without leaving a trace.

The Council of Churches, although primarily a caste affair of the clergy itself, and especially of its upper tiers, nevertheless did not remain confined within the limits of the church bureaucracy. Liberal society tried with might and main to get hold of it. The Kadet party, having found no political roots among the people, fancied that a reformed church might serve as a transmitting mechanism between it and the masses. In the preparations for the meeting of the Council, an active role was played side by side with princes of the church, and even ahead of them, by temporal politicians of various tints, such as Prince Troubetskoy, Count Olsufiev, Rodzianko, Samarin, and by liberal professors and writers. The Kadet party tried in vain to create around the Council an atmosphere of church reform, stepping softly the while, lest some incautious motion might shake down the whole rotting structure. Not a word was said about the separation of church and state, either among the clergy or among the temporal reformers. The princes of the church were naturally inclined to weaken the control of the state over their inner affairs, but at the same time they desired that in the future the state should not only guarantee their privileged situation, their lands and income, but also continue to carry the lion’s share of their expenses. In their turn the liberal bourgeoisie were willing to guarantee to the orthodox church a continuance of its dominant position, but on the condition that it learn to serve the interests of the ruling class among the masses in the new style.

But just here the chief difficulties began. Denikin himself remarks with sorrow that the Russian revolution “did not create one single popular religious movement worth

remarking upon. It would be truer to say that in proportion as new layers of the people were drawn into the revolution, they almost automatically turned their backs on the church, even where they had formerly been attached to it. In the country individual priests may still have had some personal influence, dependent upon their behavior in regard to the land question; in the cities it occurred to nobody, either among the workers or the petty bourgeoisie, to turn to the clergy for the solution of any problem raised by the revolution. The preparations for the Council of Churches were met with complete indifference by the people. The interests and passions of the masses were finding their expression in socialist slogans, not in theological texts. Belated Russia enacted her history in an abridged edition: she found herself obliged to step over, not only the epoch of the reformation, but that of bourgeois parliamentarism as well.

Although planned for in the months of the flood-tide of the revolution, the Church Council took place during the weeks of its ebb. This still further thickened its reactionary coloring. The constitution of the Council, the circle of problems it touched upon, even the ceremony of its opening – all testified to radical changes in the attitude of the different classes toward the church. At the divine services in the Uspensky Cathedral, side by side with Rodzianko and the Kadets, sat Kerensky and Avksentiev. The burgomaster of Moscow, the Social Revolutionary Rudner, said in his speech of greeting: “So long as the Russian people shall live, the Christian faith will burn in its soul.” Only yesterday those people had considered themselves the direct descendants of the prophet of the Russian Enlightenment, Chernishevsky.

The Council distributed printed appeals in all directions, prayed for a strong government, denounced the Bolsheviks, and adjured the workers in concert with the Minister of Labor, Skobelev: “Laborers, do your work, sparing no efforts, and subject your own needs to the welfare of the fatherland.” But the Council gave its more special attention to the land question. The metropolitans and bishops were no less frightened and embittered than the landlords by the scope of the peasant movement; fear for the church and monastery lands had seized hold of their souls more firmly than the question of the democratization of the parish. With threats of the wrath of God and excommunication from the church, the epistles of the Council demanded “an immediate restoration to the churches, monasteries, parishes, and private proprietors, of the land, forests and harvests of which they have been robbed.” Here it is appropriate to recall the voice crying in the wilderness! The Council dragged along from week to week, and arrived at the high point of its labors – the re-establishment of patriarchy [3] abolished by Peter two hundred years before – only after the October revolution.

At the end of July the government decided to call a State Conference of all classes and social institutions of the country to meet in Moscow August 13. Membership in the conference was to be determined by the government itself. In direct contradiction to the results of all democratic elections which had taken place in the country without a single exception, the government took care to make sure in advance that the conference should contain an equal number of representatives from the possessing classes and the people. Only by means of this artificial equilibrium could the government of the salvation of the revolution

still hope to save itself. This national congress did not possess any definite rights. To quote Miliukov: “The conference ... received at the most a merely advisory voice.” The possessing classes wished to give the people an example of self-abnegation, in order afterward the more surely to seize the power as a whole. Officially the goal of the conference was “a rapprochement between the state power and all the organized forces of the country.” The press talked about the necessity of solidarity, reconciliation, encouragement and of raising everybody’s spirits. In other words, they did not wish to say, and others were incapable of saying, for just what purpose the conference had been called. Here again, giving things their true names became the task of the Bolsheviks.

Notes

1. Parliament
2. Caucasian native cavalry
3. Before Peter the Great the heads of the church had called themselves patriarchs and had their own court, their own administration – were in effect a second order of tzars. He abolished this title and reduced the church to a department in his own administration. – *Trans.*

Chapter 29: Kerensky and Kornilov

(Elements of Bonapartism in the Russian Revolution)

A GOOD deal has been written to the effect that subsequent misfortunes, including the advent of the Bolsheviks, might have been avoided if instead of Kerensky a man of clear head and strong character had stood at the helm of the government. It is indubitable that Kerensky possessed neither of these attributes. But the question is, why did certain well defined social classes find themselves obliged to lift up just this man, Kerensky, upon their shoulders?

As though to freshen our historic memory, events in Spain are now again showing us how a revolution, washing away the customary political boundary lines, surrounds everybody and everything during its first days with a rosy mist. At this stage even its enemies try to tint themselves with its color. This mimicry expresses a semi-instinctive desire of the conservative classes to accommodate themselves to the changes impending, so as to suffer from them as little as possible. This solidarity of the nation, founded upon loose phrases, makes of compromisism an indispensable political function. Petty bourgeois idealists, overlooking class distinctions, thinking in stereotyped phrases, not knowing what they want, and wishing well to everybody, are at this stage the sole conceivable leaders of the majority. If Kerensky had possessed clear thoughts

and a strong will, he would have been completely unfit for his historic role This is not a retrospective estimate. The Bolsheviks so judged the matter in the heat of the events. “An attorney for the defense in political cases, a Social Revolutionary who became leader of the Trudoviks, a radical without any socialist schooling whatever, Kerensky has expressed more completely than anyone else the first epoch of the revolution, its ‘national’ formlessness, the idealism of its hopes and expectations”: thus wrote the author of these lines while locked up in Kerensky’s prison after the July Days. “Kerensky made speeches about land and freedom, about law and order, about peace among nations, about the defense of the fatherland, the heroism of Liebknecht, about how the Russian revolution ought to astonish the world with its magnanimity – waving the while a little red silk handkerchief. The everyday man who was just beginning to wake up politically listened to these speeches with rapture: it seemed to him that he himself was speaking from the tribune. The army greeted Kerensky as their savior from Guchkov. The peasants heard about him as a Trudovik, as a *muzhik*’s deputy. The Liberals were won over by the extreme moderateness of idea under his formless radicalism of phrase.

But the period of universal and indiscriminate embraces does not last long. The class struggle dies down at the beginning of a revolution only to come to life afterward in the form of civil war. In the fairy-like rise of compromisism is contained the seed of its inevitable fall. The official French journalist, Claude Anet, explained Kerensky’s swift loss of popularity by a lack of tact which impelled the socialist politician to actions “little harmonizing” with his role “He frequents the imperial *loges*, he lives in the

Winter Palace or at Tsarskoe Selo, he sleeps in the bed of Russian emperors. A little too much vanity and vanity a little too noticeable-that is shocking in a country which is the simplest in the world." Tact implies, in the small as well as the great, an understanding of the situation and of one's place in it. Of this understanding Kerensky had not a trace. Lifted up by the trustful masses, he was completely alien to them, did not understand, and was not the least interested in, the question of how the revolution looked to them and what inferences they were drawing from it. The masses expected bold action from him, but he demanded from the masses that they should not interfere with his magnanimity and eloquence. Once when Kerensky was paying a theatrical visit to the arrested family of the tzar, the soldiers on duty around the palace said to their commandant: "We sleep on boards, we have bad food, but Nicholashka even after he is arrested has meat to throw in the pail." Those were not "magnanimous" words, but they expressed what the soldiers were feeling.

Breaking free of their age-old chains, the people were transgressing at every step those boundaries which educated leaders wanted to lay down for them, Towards the end of April Kerensky voiced a lament upon this subject: "Can it be that the Russian Free State is a state of slaves in revolt? … I regret that I did not die two months ago. I should have died with the great dream," etc. etc. With this bad rhetoric he hoped to exert an influence on the workers, soldiers, sailors, and peasants. Admiral Kolchak related subsequently before a soviet tribunal how in May the radical War Minister made the rounds of the Black Sea Fleet in order to reconcile the sailors with their officers. It seemed to the orator after each speech that the

goal had been attained: “There, you see, admiral, everything is fixed …” But nothing at all was fixed. The disintegration of the fleet was only beginning.

As time went on Kerensky’s affectations, insolence, and braggadocio more and more keenly offended the masses, During his journey around the front he once cried out irascibly to his adjutant in the railroad car – perhaps on purpose to be heard by a general: “Kick all those damned committees to hell!” Arriving on a visit to the Baltic fleet, Kerensky ordered the Sailors’ Central Committee to appear before him on the admiral’s warship. The Centrobalt, being a soviet body, was not under the war ministry and considered the order offensive. The president of the committee, the sailor Dybenko, answered: “If Kerensky wants to talk to the Centrobalt, let him come to us.” Wasn’t that an intolerable act of impudence! On the vessels where Kerensky did enter into conversation with the sailors, it went no better – especially on the warship *Republic* whose mood was Bolshevik. Here they questioned the minister on the following points: Why had he voted for war in the State Duma? Why had he put his signature to the imperialist note of Miliukov on the 21st of April? Why had he given the tzarist senators a pension of six thousand rubles a year? Kerensky refused to answer these “crafty” questions put to him by “foes.” The crew dryly declared the minister’s explanations ’unsatisfactory.” In a silence like the tomb Kerensky withdrew from the ship. “Slaves in revolt!” muttered the radical lawyer, grinding his teeth. But the sailors were experiencing an emotion of pride: “Yes, we were slaves and we have revolted!”

Kerensky’s high-handed treatment of democratic social opinion called out at every step semi-conflicts with the

soviet leaders, who were traveling the same road but with more of a disposition to look round at the masses. Already on the 8th of March, the Executive Committee, frightened by protests from below, had warned Kerensky of the impossibility of liberating arrested policemen. A few days later the Compromisers found themselves obliged to protest against the plan of the Minister of Justice to export the tzar's family to England. Again in two or three weeks, the Executive Committee raised the general question of a "regulation of their relations" with Kerensky, but those relations never were and never could be regulated. The same difficulties arose about his party relations, At a Social Revolutionary congress early in June, Kerensky was voted down in the elections to the party central committee, receiving 135 votes out of 270. And how the leaders did squirm in their effort to explain, both to right and left, that "many did not vote for Comrade Kerensky because he is already overloaded with work." The fact is that, while the staff and departmental Social Revolutionaries adored Kerensky as the source of all good things, the old Social Revolutionaries bound up with the masses regarded him without confidence and without respect. But neither the Executive Committee nor the Social Revolutionary party could get along without Kerensky: He was necessary to them as the connecting link of the coalition.

In the Soviet bloc the leading role belonged to the Mensheviks. They invented the decisions – that is, the methods by which to avoid doing anything. But in the state apparatus the Narodniks clearly outbalanced the Mensheviks – a fact which was most obviously expressed in the dominating position of Kerensky. Half Kadet and half Social Revolutionary, Kerensky was not a representative of

the soviets in the government, like Tseretelli or Chernov, but a living tie between the bourgeoisie and the democracy. Tseretelli and Chernov formed one side of the Coalition. Kerensky was a personal incarnation of the Coalition itself. Tseretelli complained of the predominance in Kerensky of ’personal motives,” not understanding that these were inseparable from his political function. Tseretelli himself as Minister of the Interior issued a circular to the effect that the commissars of the provinces ought to rely upon all the “living forces” of their locality – that is, upon the bourgeoisie and upon the soviets – and carry out the policies of the Provisional Government without surrendering to “party influences.” That ideal commissar, rising above all hostile classes and parties in order to find his whole duty in himself and in a circular – that is Kerensky on a provincial or a county scale. As a crown to this system there was needed one independent all-Russian commissar in the Winter Palace. Without Kerensky compromisism would have been like a church steeple without a cross.

The history of Kerensky’s rise is full of lessons. He became Minister of Justice thanks to the February revolution which he feared. The April demonstration of “slaves in revolt” made him Minister of War and Marine. The July struggle, caused by “German agents,” put him at the head of the government. At the beginning of September a movement of the masses will make this head of the government supreme commander-in-chief as well. The dialectic of the compromise régime, and its malicious irony, lie in the fact that the masses had to lift Kerensky to the very highest height before they could topple him over.

While contemptuously drawing away his skirts from the

people who had given him power, Kerensky the more thirstily grabbed after any sign of encouragement from educated society. In the very first days of the revolution the leader of the Moscow Kadets, Doctor Kishkin, said, upon returning from Petrograd: “if it were not for Kerensky, we should not have what we have. His name will be written in golden letters on the tablets of history.” The praise of these Liberals became one of the most important political criteria for Kerensky, but he could not, and did not wish to, lay his popularity in a simple way at the feet of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, he more and more acquired a taste for seeing all classes at his own feet. “The thought of setting off and balancing against each other the government of the bourgeoisie and the democracy,” testifies Miliukov, “was not foreign to Kerensky from the very beginning of the revolution.” This course was the natural outcome of his whole life’s journey, which had run between the functions of a liberal lawyer and the underground circles. While respectfully assuring Buchanan that “the Soviet will die a natural death,” Kerensky was frightening his bourgeois colleagues at every step with the wrath of the Soviet. And on those frequent occasions when the leaders of the Executive Committee disagreed with Kerensky, he dismayed them by mentioning the most horrible of catastrophes, the resignation of the Liberals.

When Kerensky reiterated that he did not wish to be the Marat of the Russian revolution, that meant that he would refuse to take severe measures against the reaction, but not so against “anarchy.” Generally speaking, by the way, that is the moral of the opponents of violence in politics: they renounce violence when it comes to introducing changes in what already exists, but in defense of the

existing order they will not stop at the most ruthless acts.

In the period of preparation for the offensive, Kerensky became the especially beloved figure of the possessing classes. Tereshchenko kept telling each and everybody how highly our Allies esteem “the labors of Kerensky.” The Kadet paper, Rech, while severe with the Compromisers, continually emphasized its favorable attitude to the War Minister. Rodzianko himself recognized that “this young man ... is reborn each day with redoubled strength for creative labor and the welfare of the fatherland.” With such remarks the Liberals were, of course, deliberately flattering Kerensky, but also they could not help seeing that in the essence he was working for them. “Imagine how it would have been,” remarked Lenin, “if Guchkov had attempted to issue orders for an offensive, to disband regiments, to arrest soldiers, to forbid congresses, to shout ‘thou’ at the soldiers, to call the soldiers ‘cowards’ etc. But Kerensky could permit himself this ‘luxury’ – only, it is true, until he had squandered that incredibly quick-melting confidence which the people had placed to his credit ...”

The offensive, while elevating Kerensky’s reputation in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, completely undermined his popularity with the people. The collapse of the offensive was in essence a collapse of Kerensky in both camps. But the striking thing is that exactly this two-sided loss of standing rendered him henceforth “irreplaceable.” As to the role of Kerensky in creating the second Coalition, Miliukov expresses himself thus: “the only possible man.” Not, alas: “the only man needed,” This leading liberal politician, be it remarked, never took Kerensky any too seriously, and broad circles of the bourgeoisie were more and more inclined to lay the blame on him for all the blows

of fate. “The impatience of patriotically inclined groups” impelled them, according to Miliukov, to search for a strong man. At one time Admiral Kolchak was suggested for this role Moreover, this installing of a strong man at the helm was “thought of in different terms from those of negotiation and compromise.” That we may easily believe. “Hopes of democracy, of the will of the people, of the Constituent Assembly,” writes Stankevich of the Kadet party, were already thrown overboard. The municipal elections throughout all Russia had given an overwhelming majority to the socialists … and there were beginning to be convulsive reachings out for a power which should not persuade but only command.” More accurately speaking, a power which should take the revolution by the throat.

IN the biography of Kornilov, and in his personal attributes, it is easy to distinguish the traits which justified his candidacy for the post of national savior. General Martynov, who had been Kornilov’s superior in peace time, and in wartime had shared his captivity in an Austrian fortress, characterizes Kornilov as follows: “Distinguished by a sustained love of work and great self-confidence, he was in his intellectual faculties an ordinary and mediocre man, not possessed of any broad outlook.” Martynov places to the credit of Kornilov two traits: personal bravery and disinterestedness. In those circles where most people were thieving and worrying about their own skin, these qualities were striking. Of strategic ability – above all the ability to estimate a situation as a whole, both in its material and moral element – Kornilov hadn’t a trace. “Moreover he lacked organizing ability,” says Martynov,

“and with his violent temper and lack of equilibrium was little fitted for planned activity.” Brussilov, who observed the entire military activity of his subordinate during the World War, spoke of him with supreme contempt: “The chief of a bold guerrilla band and nothing more ...” The official legend created around the Kornilov division was dictated by the demand of patriotic social opinion for some bright spot on the dark back ground of events. ’The forty-eighth division,” writes Martynov, “was destroyed thanks to the abominable administration ... of Kornilov himself, who ... did not know how to organize a retreat, and worst of all kept continually changing his mind and losing time ... At the last moment Kornilov abandoned to their fate the division he had led into a trap, and tried himself to escape capture. However, after four days and nights of wandering the unlucky general surrendered to the Austrians, and he only escaped some time later. “Upon his return to Russia Kornilov, in conversing with various newspaper correspondents, touched up the story of his escape with bright colors supplied by his own imagination.” We need not pause upon the prosaic corrections which well-informed witnesses have introduced into his legend. It is evident that from that moment on Kornilov began to acquire a taste for newspaper *reclame*.

Before the revolution Kornilov had been a monarchist of the Black Hundred tint. In captivity when reading the papers, he would frequently remark that “he would gladly hang all those Guchkovs and Miliukovs.” But political ideas occupied him, as is usual with people of his mould, only insofar as they directly affected his own person. After the February revolution Kornilov found it easy to declare himself a republican. “He was very little acquainted,”

according to the report of Martynov, “with the interlacing interests of the different strata of Russian society, knew nothing either of party groups or of individual political leaders.” Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, and Bolsheviks constituted for him one hostile mass which hindered the officers from commanding, the landlord from enjoying his estate, the merchant from trading, and the factory owner from producing goods.

Already on the 2nd of March, the committee of the State Duma laid hold upon General Kornilov, and over the signature of Rodzianko demanded of headquarters that this “valiant hero known to all Russia” be appointed commander-in-chief of the troops of the Petrograd district. The tzar, who had already ceased to be a tzar, wrote on Rodzianko’s telegram: “Carry out.” Thus the revolutionary capital acquired its first red general. In a report of the Executive Committee dated March 10, this phrase is applied to Kornilov: “A general of the old stripe who wants to put an end to the revolution.” In those early days, however, the general tried to put his best foot forward, and even carried out without grumbling the ritual of arresting the tzarina. That was placed to his credit. In the memoirs of Colonel Kobylinsky, however – the commander of Tzarskoe Selo appointed by him – it becomes known that Kornilov was here playing a double game. After his presentation to the tzarina, Kobylinsky guardedly relates: “Kornilov said to me: ‘Colonel, leave us alone. Go and stand outside the door.’ I went out. After about five minutes Kornilov called me. I entered. The Empress extended her hand. It is clear that Kornilov had recommended the colonel as a friend. Later on we shall hear of the embraces exchanged between the tzar and his

“jailer” Kobylinsky. As an administrator Kornilov in his new position proved unspeakably bad. “His closest associates in Petrograd,” writes Stankevich, “continually complained of his incapacity to do the work or to direct it.” Kornilov lingered In the capital, however, only a short time. In the April days he attempted, not without a hint from Miliukov, to inaugurate the first blood-letting of the revolution, but ran into the opposition of the Executive Committee, resigned, was given command of an army, and afterward of the southwestern front. Without waiting for the legal introduction of the death penalty, Kornilov here gave orders to shoot deserters and set up their corpses on the road with an inscription, threatened the peasants with severe penalties for violating the proprietary rights of landlords, created shock battalions, and on every appropriate occasion shook his fist at Petrograd. This immediately surrounded his name with a halo in the eyes of the officers and the possessing classes. But many of Kerensky’s commissars, too, would say to themselves: there is no hope left but in Kornilov. In a few weeks this gallant general with a mournful experience as commander of a division, became the supreme commander-in-chief of those disintegrating armies of millions which the Entente was trying to make wage a war to complete victory.

It made Kornilov’s head swim. His narrow horizon and political ignorance rendered him an easy prey for seekers of adventure. While willfully defending his personal prerogative, this man “with a lion’s heart and the brain of a sheep,” as Kornilov was described by General Alexeiev, and after him by Verkhovsky, submitted very easily to personal influences, if only they fell in with the voice of his ambition. Miliukov, who was friendly to Kornilov, remarks

in him a “childish trust in people who knew how to flatter him.” The closest inspirer of the supreme commander was a certain Zavoiko, who followed the modest calling of orderly – an obscure figure from among the former landlords, an oil speculator, an adventurer, who especially impressed Kornilov with his pen. Zavoiko did indeed have the brisk style of the swindler who will stop at nothing. This orderly became Kornilov’s press agent, author of the *People’s Biography*, drawer-up of reports, ultimatums, and all those documents for which there was needed – in the words of the general – “a strong artistic style.” To Zavoiko was added another seeker of adventure, Alladin, a former deputy of the first Duma, who had spent some years abroad, who never removed an English pipe from his mouth, and therefore considered himself a specialist upon international affairs. These two men stood at Kornilov’s right hand, keeping him in touch with the centers of the counter-revolution. His left flank was covered by Savinkov and Filonenko, who employed every means to hold up the general’s exaggerated opinion of himself, and at the same time keep him from taking any premature step which might make him impossible in the eyes of the democracy. “To him came the honest and the dishonest, the sincere and the intriguing, political leaders, and military leaders, and adventurers,” writes the unctuous General Denikin, “and all with one voice cried: Save us!” It would be difficult to determine the exact proportion of the honest and the dishonest. At any rate Kornilov seriously considered himself called to “save,” and thus became a direct rival of Kerensky.

THE rivals quite sincerely hated each other. “Kerensky,” according to Martynov, “assumed a high-and-mighty tone in his relations with the older generals. A humble hard worker like Alexeiev, or the diplomatically-inclined Brussilov, could permit this treatment. But such tactics would not go down with the self-complacent and touchy Kornilov, who ... for his part looked down upon the lawyer, Kerensky.” The weaker of the two was prepared to yield, and did make serious advances. At least Kornilov told Denikin towards the end of July that a proposal had come to him from governmental circles to enter the ministry. “No sir! Those gentlemen are too bound up with the soviets ... I said to them: give me the power and then I will make a decisive fight.”

The ground was quaking under Kerensky’s feet like a peat bog. He sought a way out, as always, in the sphere of verbal improvisations: call meetings, announce, proclaim! His personal success on the 21st of July, when he had risen above the hostile camps of the democracy and the bourgeoisie in the character of the irreplaceable, suggested to Kerensky the idea of a state conference in Moscow, That which had taken place in a closed chamber of the Winter Palace would now be brought out in the open. Let the country see with its own eyes that everything will go to pieces if Kerensky does not take in his hands the reins and the whip.

According to the official list, the State Conference was to include “representatives of political, social, democratic, national, commercial, industrial, and co-operative organizations, leaders of the institutions of the democracy, the higher representatives of the army, scientific institutions, universities, and members of the four State

Dumas.” About 1500 conferees were indicated, but more than 2500 assembled – the number having been enlarged wholly in the interests of the right wing. The Moscow Journal of the Social Revolutionaries wrote reproachfully about its own government: “As against 150 representatives of labor, there are 120 representatives of trade and industry; against 100 peasant deputies, 100 representatives of the landlords have been invited; against 100 representatives of the Soviet, there will be 300 members of the State Duma ...” This official paper of Kerensky’s party expressed a doubt as to whether such a conference would be able to give the government “that support which it seeks.”

The Compromisers went to the Conference gritting their teeth: We must make an honest effort, they were saying to each other, to come to an agreement. But how about the Bolsheviks? We must at whatever cost prevent them from interfering in this dialogue between the democracy and the possessing classes. By a special resolution of the Executive Committee, party factions were deprived of the right to take the floor without the consent of the præsidium. The Bolsheviks decided to make a declaration in the name of the party and walk out of the conference. The præsidium, watchful of their every movement, demanded that they abandon this criminal plan. Then the Bolsheviks unhesitatingly handed back their cards of admission. They were preparing another and more significant answer: Proletarian Moscow was to speak its word.

Almost from the first days of the revolution the partisans of law and order had on all possible occasions contrasted the peaceful “country” against tumultuous Petrograd. The

convocation of the Constituent Assembly in Moscow had been one of the slogans of the bourgeoisie. The National-Liberal “Marxist,” Potressov, had sent curses to Petrograd for imagining itself to be “a new Paris.” As though the Girondists had not threatened the old Paris with thunder and lightning – had not proposed that it reduce its role to 1/83 of what it was! A provincial Menshevik said in June at the congress of soviets: “Some sort of place like Novocherkassk far better reflects the conditions of life in Russia than Petrograd.” In the essence of the matter the Compromisers like the bourgeoisie were seeking support, not in the actual moods of “the country,” but in consoling illusions which they themselves created. Now, when it came time to feel the actual political pulse of Moscow, a cruel disappointment awaited the initiators of the conference,

Those counter-revolutionary conferences which had followed each other in Moscow from the first days of August, beginning with a congress of landlords and ending with the Church Council, had not only mobilized the possessing circles, but had also brought the workers and soldiers to their feet. The threats of Riabushinsky, the appeals of Rodzianko, the fraternization of Kadets with Cossack generals – all this had taken place before the eyes of the lower ranks in Moscow. All this had been interpreted by Bolshevik agitators hot on the trail of the news-stories. But the danger of a counter-revolution had now taken a palpable, even a personal form. A wave of indignation ran through the shops and factories. “If the soviets are powerless,” wrote the Moscow Bolshevik paper, “the workers must unite round their own living organizations.” In the first rank of these organizations were named the

trade-unions, a majority of them already under Bolshevik leadership. The mood of the factories was so hostile to the State Conference that the idea of a general strike, suggested from below, was adopted almost without opposition at a meeting of representatives of all the Moscow nuclei of the Bolshevik organization. The trade-unions had taken the initiative. The Moscow soviet by a majority of 364 against 304 voted against the strike. But since at the caucus of their factions the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary workers had voted for the strike, and were now merely submitting to party discipline, this decision of a soviet elected long ago, adopted moreover against the will of its actual majority, was far from stopping the Moscow workers. A meeting of the officers of 41 trade unions passed a resolution to call a one-day strike of protest. The district soviets, a majority of them, came out on the side of the party and the trade-unions. The factories here advanced a demand for re-elections to the Moscow soviet, which was not only lagging behind the masses, but coming into sharp conflict with them. In the Zamoskvoretsky district soviet, which met jointly with the factory committees, a demand for the recall of those deputies who had “gone against the will of the working-class” received 175 votes against 4, with 19 abstaining!

The night before the strike was, nevertheless, a bad night for the Moscow Bolsheviks. The country was indeed following in the steps of Petrograd, but lagging behind, The July demonstration had been unsuccessful in Moscow: a majority, not only of the garrison, but also of the workers had feared to go into the streets against the voice of the Soviet. How would it be this time? Morning brought the answer. The counter-efforts of the Compromisers did not

prevent the strike from becoming a powerful demonstration of hostility to the Coalition and the government. Two days before, the newspaper of the Moscow industrialists had confidently declared: “Let the Petrograd government come soon to Moscow. Let them listen to the voice of the holy places, the bells and sacred towers of the Kremlin …” Today the voice of the sacred places was drowned – by an ominous stillness.

A member of the Moscow committee of the Bolsheviks, Piatnitsky, subsequently wrote: “The strike came off magnificently. There were no lights, no tramcars; the factories and shops were closed and the railroad yards and stations; even the waiters in the restaurants had gone on strike.” Miliukov adds a sharp light to this picture: “The delegates coming to the Conference could not ride on the tramways, nor lunch in the restaurants.” This permitted them, as the liberal historian acknowledges, the better to estimate the strength of the Bolsheviks, who had not been admitted to the Conference. The **Izvestia** of the Moscow soviet adequately described the significance of this manifestation of August 12th. “In spite of the resolutions of the soviets … the masses followed the Bolsheviks,” 400,000 workers went on strike in Moscow and the suburbs upon the summons of a party which for five weeks had been under continual blows, and whose leaders were still in hiding or in prison. The new Petrograd organ of the party, **The Proletarian**, managed before it was shut down to put a question to the Compromisers: “From Petrograd you went to Moscow – where will you go from there?”

Even the masters of the situation must have put this question to themselves. In Kiev, Kostroma, Tzaritzyn, similar one-day strikes of protest occurred, general or

partial. The agitation covered the whole country. Everywhere, in the remotest corners, the Bolsheviks gave warning that the State Conference bore the “clearly marked imprint of a counter-revolutionary conspiracy.” By the end of August the meaning of this formula was disclosed before the eyes of the whole people.

The delegates to the Conference, as well as bourgeois Moscow, expected a coming-out of the masses with arms, expected clashes, battles, “August days.” But for the workers to go into the street, would have meant for them to offer themselves to the blows of the Cavaliers of St. George, the officer detachments, junkers, individual cavalry units, burning with the desire to take revenge for the strike. To summon the garrison to the street would have introduced a split, and tightened the task of the counterrevolution which stood ready with its hand on the trigger. The party did not summon them to the street, and the workers themselves, guided by a correct strategic sense, avoided any open encounter. The one-day strike perfectly corresponded to the situation. It could not be hid under a bushel, as was the declaration of the Bolsheviks at the Conference. When the city was plunged in darkness, all Russia saw the hand of the Bolsheviks at the switch-board. No, Petrograd was not isolated. “In Moscow, upon whose patriarchal humbleness so many had set their hopes, the workers’ districts suddenly showed their teeth.” Thus Sukhanov describes the significance of that day. In the absence of the Bolsheviks, but under the sign of the unfleshed teeth of the proletarian revolution, the Coalition conferees had to take their seats.

Moscow wits were saying that Kerensky had come there “to be crowned.” But the next day Kornilov arrived from

headquarters with the same purpose, and was met by innumerable delegates – among them those from the Church Council. The Tekintsi leapt from the approaching train in their bright red long coats, with their naked curved swords, and drew up in two files on the platform. Ecstatic ladies sprinkled the hero with flowers as he reviewed this bodyguard and the deputations. The Kadet, Rodichev, concluded his speech of greeting with the cry: “Save Russia, and a grateful people will reward you!” Patriotic sobbings were heard. Morozova, a millionaire merchant’s wife, went down on her knees. Officers carried Kornilov out to the people on their shoulders. While the commander-in-chief was reviewing the Cavaliers of St. George, the cadets, the officers’ schools, and the Cossack squadron drawn up on the square before the station, Kerensky, in his character as rival and Minister of War, was reviewing a parade of the troops of the Moscow garrison. From the station Kornilov took his way – in the steps of the tzar – to the Ivarsky shrine, where a service was held in the presence of his escort of Mussulmen Tekintsi in their gigantic fur hats. “This circumstance,” writes the Cossack officer Grekov, “disposed believing Moscow still more favorably to Kornilov.” The counter-revolution was meanwhile trying to capture the street. Kornilov’s biography, together with his portrait, was generously scattered from automobiles, The walls were covered with posters summoning the people to the aid of the hero. Like a sovereign, Kornilov received in his private car statesmen, industrialists, financiers. Representatives of the banks made reports to him about the financial condition of the country. The Octobrist Shidlovsky significantly writes: “The only one of all the members of the Duma to visit Kornilov in his train was Miliukov, who had a conversation with him,

the matter of which is unknown to me.” We shall hear later from Miliukov as much about this conversation as he himself thinks it necessary to relate.

During this time the preparations for a military insurrection were In full swing. Several days before the conference Kornilov had given orders, under pretext of going to the help of Riga, to prepare four cavalry divisions for a movement on Petrograd. The Orenburg Cossack regiment had been sent by headquarters to Moscow “to preserve order,” but at Kerensky’s command it had been held up on the way. In his subsequent testimony before an Inquiry Commission on the Kornilov affair, Kerensky said: “We were informed that during the Moscow conference a dictatorship would be declared.” Thus in those triumphant days of national unity, the War Minister and the commander-in-chief were engaged in strategic counter-maneuvers. So far as possible, however, decorum was observed. The relations between the two camps oscillated between officially friendly assurances and civil war.

In Petrograd, notwithstanding the self-restraint of the masses – the July experience having left its lesson – rumors kept coming down from above, from the staffs and editorial offices, furiously insisting upon an impending insurrection of the Bolsheviks, The Petrograd organizations of the party warned the masses in an open manifesto against possible provocative appeals upon the part of the enemy. The Moscow soviet meanwhile took its own measures. A secret revolutionary committee was formed, consisting of six people, two from each of the soviet parties, including the Bolsheviks. A secret order was issued forbidding the formation of cordons of Cavaliers of St. George, officers, and junkers, along the line of march of

Kornilov. The Bolsheviks, who had been forbidden entry into the barracks since the July Days, were now freely admitted: without them it was impossible to win over the soldiers. While in the open arena the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were negotiating with the bourgeoisie for the creation of a strong power against the masses led by the Bolsheviks, behind the scenes these same Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in co-operation with the Bolsheviks, whom they would not admit to the conference, were preparing the masses for a struggle against the conspiracy of the bourgeoisie. Although yesterday they had opposed the protest strike, today they were summoning the workers and soldiers to prepare for a struggle. The contemptuous indignation of the masses did not prevent them from responding to the summons with a fighting eagerness which frightened the Compromisers more than it pleased them. This arrant duplicity, almost amounting to an open treachery in two directions, would have been incomprehensible if the Compromisers had still been consciously carrying out their policy; as a matter of fact they were merely suffering its consequences.

Big events were clearly in the air, But apparently nobody had settled upon the days of the Conference for an overturn. At any rate no confirmation of the rumors to which Kerensky subsequently referred has been found either in documents, or in the compromisist literature, or in the memoirs of the Right Wing. It was still merely a matter of getting ready. According to Miliukov – and his testimony coincides with the further development of events – Kornilov himself had already before the Conference chosen the date for his action: August 27. This

date of course was known to but few. The half-informed, however, as always in such circumstances, kept advancing the day of the great event, and rumors forerunning it poured in upon the authorities from all sides. It seemed from moment to moment as though the blow would fall.

Indeed, the very mood of excitement among the bourgeois and officer circles in Moscow might have led, if not to an attempted overturn, at least to counter-revolutionary manifestations designed as a test of power. Still more probable would have been an attempt to create out of the members of the Conference some sort of center for the salvation of the fatherland in competition with the soviets. The right press had spoken openly of this. But things did not even go that far: the masses prevented it, Even if perhaps some had cherished the thought of hastening the decisive hour, the strike compelled them to pause and say to themselves: We cannot catch the revolution unawares; the workers and soldiers are on their guard; we must postpone action. Even that universal popular procession to the Ivarsky shrine which had been planned by the priests and Liberals in agreement with Kornilov, was called off.

As soon as it became clear that there was no immediate danger, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks hastened to pretend that nothing special had happened. They even refused to continue admitting Bolsheviks into the barracks, although the barracks insistently continued to demand Bolshevik orators. “The Moor has done his duty,” Tseretelli and Dan and Khinchuk, president of the Moscow soviet, must have said to each other with a foxy smile. But the Bolsheviks had not the slightest intention of falling into the position of the Moor. They were stilt only intending to carry their work through to the end.

EVERY class society has need of unity in the governmental will. The dual power is in its essence a régime of social crisis signifying an utter dividedness of the nation. It contains within itself potential or actual civil war. Nobody any longer wanted the dual power. On the contrary, all were searching for a strong, single-minded, “iron” government. The July government of Kerensky had been endowed with unlimited powers. The design had been by common consent to establish above the democracy and the bourgeoisie, who were paralyzing each other, a “real” sovereign power. This idea of a master of destiny rising above all classes, is nothing but Bonapartism. If you stick two forks into a cork symmetrically, it will, under very great oscillations from side to side, keep its balance even on a pin point: that is the mechanical model of the Bonapartist superarbiter. The degree of solidity of such a power, setting aside international conditions, is determined by the stability of equilibrium of the two antagonistic classes within the country. In the middle of May at a session of the Petersburg soviet, Trotsky had defined Kerensky as “the mathematical center of Russian Bonapartism.” The immateriality of this description shows that it was not a question of personality but of function. At the beginning of July, as you will remember, all the ministers, acting upon instructions from their parties, had resigned in order to permit Kerensky to form a government. On the 21st of July this experiment was repeated in a more demonstrative form. The two hostile camps invoked Kerensky, each seeing in him a part of itself, and both swearing fealty to him. Trotsky wrote while in prison: “Led by politicians who are afraid of their own

shadow, the Soviet did not dare take the power. The Kadet party, representing all the propertied cliques, could not yet seize the power. It remained to find a great conciliator, a mediator, a court of arbitration."

In a manifesto to the people issued by Kerensky in his own name, he declared: "I, as head of the government ... consider that I have no right to hesitate if the changes (in the structure of the government) increase my responsibility in the matters of supreme administration." That is the unadulterated phraseology of Bonapartism. But nevertheless, although supported from both right and left, it never got beyond phraseology. What is the reason for this?

In order that the Little Corsican might lift himself above a young bourgeois nation, it was necessary that the revolution should already have accomplished its fundamental task – the transfer of land to the peasants – and that a victorious army should have been created on the new social foundation. In the 18th century a revolution had no farther to go: it could only from that point recoil and go backward. In this recoil, however, its fundamental conquests were in danger. They must be defended at any cost. The deepening but still very immature antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat kept the nation, shaken as it was to its foundations, in a state of extreme tension. A national "judge" was in those conditions indispensable. Napoleon guaranteed to the big bourgeois the possibility to get rich, to the peasants their pieces of land, to the sons of peasants and the hobos a chance for looting in the wars. The judge held a sword in his hand and himself also fulfilled the duties of bailiff. The Bonapartism of the first Bonaparte was solidly founded.

The revolution of 1848 did not give the peasants the land, and could not do so. That was not a great revolution, replacing one social régime with another, but a political re-shuffle within the framework of the same social régime. Napoleon III did not have under him a victorious army. The two chief elements of classical Bonapartism were thus lacking. But there were other favorable conditions, and no less real, The proletariat, which had been maturing for half a century, showed its threatening force in June, but was incapable of seizing the power. The bourgeoisie feared the proletariat and its own bloody victory over them. The peasant proprietors feared the June insurrection, and wanted the state to protect them from those who wished to divide the land. And finally a powerful industrial boom, extending with slight moments of lull over two decades, had opened before the bourgeoisie unheard of sources of wealth. These conditions proved sufficient for an epigone Bonapartism.

In the policies of Bismarck, who also stood “above classes,” there were, as has been often pointed out, indubitable Bonapartist elements, although disguised by legitimacy The stability of the Bismarck régime was guaranteed by the fact that, having arisen after an impotent revolution, it offered a solution, or a half-solution, of such a mighty national problem as the unification of Germany. It brought victory in three wars, indemnities, and a mighty up-growth of capitalism. That was enough to last several decades.

The misfortune of the Russian candidates for Bonaparte lay not at all in their dissimilarity to the first Napoleon, or even to Bismarck. History knows how to make use of substitutes, But they were confronted by a great revolution

which had not yet solved its problems or exhausted its force The bourgeoisie was trying to compel the peasant, still without land, to fight for the estates of the landlords. The war had given nothing but defeats. There was not the shadow of an industrial boom; on the contrary the breakdown of industry was producing ever new devastations. If the proletariat had retreated, it was only to close up its ranks. The peasantry were only drawing back for their last assault upon the lords. The oppressed nationalities were assuming the offensive against a Russifying despotism. in search of peace, the army was coming closer and closer to the workers and their party. The lower ranks were uniting, the upper weakening. There was no equilibrium. The revolution was still full-blooded. No wonder Bonapartism proved anemic

Marx and Engels compared the role of a Bonapartist régime in the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, with the role of the old absolute monarchy in the struggle between the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie. Traits of similarity are indubitable, but they stop just where the social content of the power begins to appear. The role of court of arbitration between the elements of the old and the new society was possible at a certain period owing to the fact that the two exploiting régimes both needed defense against the exploited. But between feudal lords and peasant serfs no “impartial” mediation was possible. While reconciling the interests of the landlords to those of a youthful capitalism, the tzarist autocracy functioned in relation to the peasants, not as a mediator, but as an authorized representative of the exploiting classes.

Similarly Bonapartism was not a court of arbitration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It was in

reality the most concentrated dominion of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. Having climbed up with his boots on the neck of the people, whatever Bonaparte happened to come along could not fail to adopt a policy of protection of property, rent and profits. The peculiarities of a régime do not go beyond its means of defense. The watchman does not now stand at the gate, but sits on the roof of the house, yet his function is the same. The independence of Bonapartism is to an enormous degree external, decorative, a matter of show. Its appropriate symbol was the mantle of the emperor.

While skilfully exploiting the fear of the bourgeoisie before the workers, Bismarck remained in all his political and social reforms the unchanging plenipotentiary of the possessing classes, whom he never betrayed. Nevertheless, the growing pressure of the proletariat indubitably permitted him to rise above the Junkerdom, and the capitalists in the quality of a weighty bureaucratic arbiter: that was his essential function.

The soviet régime permits a very considerable independence of the government in relation to proletariat and peasantry, and consequently a “mediation” between them insofar as their interests, although giving rise to debates and conflicts, remain fundamentally reconcilable. But it would not be easy to find an “impartial” court of arbitration between the soviet state and a bourgeois state, at least so far as concerns the fundamental interests of each. On the international arena the Soviet Union is prevented from adhering to the League of Nations by those same social causes which within the national borders make impossible anything but a pretended “impartiality” of any government In the struggle between

bourgeoisie and proletariat.

While lacking the force of Bonapartism, Kerenskyism had all its vices. It lifted itself above the nation only to demoralize the nation with its own impotence. Whereas in words the leaders of the bourgeoisie and the democracy promised to “obey” Kerensky, in reality Kerensky, the omnipotent arbiter, obeyed Miliukov – and more especially Buchanan. Kerensky waged the imperialist war, protected the landlord’s property from attack, and postponed social reforms to happier days. If his government was weak, this was for the same reason that the bourgeoisie in general could not get its people into power. However, with all the insignificance of the “government of salvation” its conservatively capitalistic character grew manifestly with the growth of its “independence.”

Their understanding that the régime of Kerensky was the inevitable form of bourgeois rulership for the given period, did not prevent the bourgeois politicians from being extremely dissatisfied with Kerensky, nor from preparing to get rid of him as quickly as possible. There was no disagreement among the possessing classes that the national arbiter put forward by the petty bourgeois democracy must be opposed by a figure from their own ranks. But why Kornilov, exactly? Because the candidate for Bonaparte must correspond to the character of the Russian bourgeoisie. He must be backward, isolated from the people, ungifted, and on the decline. In an army which had seen almost nothing but humiliating defeats, it was not easy to find a popular general. Kornilov was arrived at by a process of elimination of other candidates still less suitable.

Thus the Compromisers and Liberals could neither seriously unite in a coalition, nor agree upon a single candidate for savior. They were prevented from doing so by the uncompleted tasks of the revolution. The Liberals did not trust the democrats, the democrats did not trust the Liberals. Kerensky, it is true, opened his arms wide to the bourgeoisie, but Kornilov made it clearly understood that at the first opportunity he would twist the neck of the democracy. The clash between Kornilov and Kerensky, inevitably resulting from the preceding development, was a translation of the contradictions of the dual power into the explosive language of personal ambition.

Just as in the midst of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison there was formed, toward the beginning of July, an impatient wing dissatisfied with the too cautious policy of the Bolsheviks, so among the possessing classes there accumulated, towards the beginning of August, an impatience of the watchful – waiting policy of the Kadet leaders. This mood expressed itself, for example, at the Kadet congress, where demands were voiced for the overthrow of Kerensky. A still keener political impatience was to be seen outside the framework of the Kadet party – in the military staffs where they lived in continual dread of the soldiers, in the banks where they were drowning in the waters of inflation, in the manors of the landlords where the roofs were burning over the heads of the nobility. “Long live Kornilov!” became a slogan of hope, of despair, and of thirst for revenge.

While agreeing throughout to the program of Kornilov, Kerensky quarreled about the date: “We cannot do everything at once.” While recognizing the necessity of getting rid of Kerensky, Miliukov answered his impatient

followers: “It is still, I suggest, a little too soon.” Just as out of the eagerness of the Petrograd masses arose the semi-insurrection of July, so out of the impatience of the property owners arose the Kornilov insurrection of August. And just as the Bolsheviks found themselves obliged to take the side of an armed insurrection, in order if possible to guarantee its success, and in any case to prevent its extermination, so the Kadets found themselves obliged, for like purposes, to take part in the Kornilov insurrection. Within these limits, there is an astonishing symmetry in the two situations. But inside this symmetrical framework there is a complete contrast of goals, methods and results. It will develop fully in the course of the coming events.

Chapter 30: The State Conference in Moscow

IF a symbol is a concentrated image, then a revolution is the master-builder of symbols, for it presents all phenomena and all relations in concentrated form. The trouble is that the symbolism of a revolution is too grandiose; it fits in badly with the creative work of individuals. For this reason artistic reproductions of the greatest mass dramas of humanity are so poor.

The Moscow State Conference ended in the failure assured in advance. It created nothing and decided nothing. However, it has left to the historian an invaluable impression of the revolution – although a negative impression, one in which light appears as shadow, weakness parades as strength, greed as disinterestedness, treachery as the highest valor. The mightiest party of the revolution, which in only ten weeks was to arrive at the power, was left outside the walls of the Conference as a magnitude not worth noticing. At the same time the “party of evolutionary socialism,” unknown to anybody, was taken seriously. Kerensky stepped forth as the incarnation of force and will. The Coalition, wholly exhausted in the past, was spoken of as a means of future salvation. Kornilov, hated by the soldier millions, was greeted as the beloved leader of the army and the people. Monarchists and Black Hundred men registered their love for the Constituent Assembly. All those who were about to retire from the political arena behaved as though they had

agreed for one last time to play their best rôles on the stage of a theater. They were all eager to shout with all their might: Here is what we wanted to be! Here is what we would have been, if they had not prevented us! What prevented them was the workers, the soldiers, the peasants, the oppressed nationalities. Tens of millions of “slaves in revolt” prevented them from demonstrating their loyalty to the revolution. In Moscow where they had gone for shelter a strike followed on their heels. Harried by “dark elements,” by “ignorance,” by “demagoguery,” these two and a half thousand people, having crowded into a theater, tacitly agreed together not to violate the histrionic illusion. Not a word was spoken about the strike. They tried never to mention the Bolsheviks by name. Plekhanov recalled “the unhappy memory of Lenin” just in passing, and as though he were talking of an enemy completely routed. The impression thus bore the character of a negative to the last detail: in this kingdom of half-buried shades, giving themselves out for “the living forces of the nation,” the authentic people’s leader could not possibly figure otherwise than as a political cadaver.

“The brilliant auditorium,” writes Sukhanov, “was quite sharply divided into two halves: to the right sat the bourgeoisie, to the left the democracy. In the orchestra and loges to the right many uniforms of generals were to be seen, and to the left ensigns and soldiers. Opposite the stage in the former imperial loge were seated the higher diplomatic representatives of the Allied and friendly powers … Our group, the extreme Left, occupied a small corner of the orchestra.” The extreme Left, in the absence of the Bolsheviks, were the followers of Martov.

Towards four o’clock Kerensky appeared on the stage

accompanied by two young officers, a soldier and a sailor, symbolizing the power of the revolutionary government. They stood stock still as though rooted in the ground behind the back of the Minister-President. In order not to irritate the Right Wing with the word republic – so it was agreed in advance – Kerensky greeted “the representatives of the Russian land” in the name of the government of the “Russian state.” “The general tone of the speech,” writes our liberal historian, “instead of being one of dignity and confidence, was, as a result of the influence of recent days ... one of badly concealed fright, which the orator seemed to be trying to suppress within himself by adopting the high notes of a threat.” Without directly naming the Bolsheviks, Kerensky began with a fist-shake in their direction. Any new attempts against the government “will be put down with blood and iron.” Both wings of the conference joined in a stormy applause. Then a supplementary threat in the direction of Kornilov, who had not yet arrived: “Whatever ultimatums no matter who may present to me, I will know how to subdue him to the will of the supreme power, and to me, its supreme head.” Although this evoked ecstatic applause, the applause came only from the left half of the Conference. Kerensky kept coming back again and again to himself as the “supreme head”: he had need of that thought. “To you here who have come from the front, to you say I, your War Minister and supreme leader there is no will and no power in the army higher than the will and power of the Provisional Government.” The democrats were in rapture at these blank cartridges. They believed that in this way they could avoid the resort to lead.

“All the best forces of the people and the army,” affirms

the head of the government, “associated the triumph of the Russian revolution with the triumph of our arms on the front, but our hopes have been trampled in the mud and our faith spat upon. Such is his lyrical summing up of the June offensive. He himself, Kerensky, intends in any case to wage the war to complete victory. Speaking of the danger of a peace at the expense of Russia’s interests – that course having been suggested in the peace proposals of the Pope on August 4 – Kerensky pays a tribute of praise to the noble loyalty of our Allies. To which he adds: “And I, in the name of the mighty Russian people, say only one thing: We have expected nothing else and we can expect nothing else.” An ovation addressed to the loges of the Allied diplomats brings all to their feet except a few internationalists and those solitary Bolsheviks who have come as delegates from the trade unions. From the officers’ loge somebody shouts: “Martov, get up!” Martov, to his honor be it said, had the force not to offer homage to the disinterestedness of the Entente.

To the oppressed nationalities of Russia striving to rebuild their destiny, Kerensky offers a Sunday school lesson interwoven with threats. “When languishing and dying in the chains of the tzarist autocracy” – thus he boasts of chains that others have worn – “we poured out our blood in the name of the welfare of all the peoples.” Out of a feeling of gratitude, he suggests to the oppressed nationalities, they ought now to endure a régime which deprives them of rights.

Where lies the way out? “Do you not feel it in you, this mighty flame? … Do you not feel within you the strength and the will to discipline, self-sacrifice and labor? … Do you not offer here a spectacle of the united strength of the

nation?” These words were pronounced on the day of the Moscow strike, and during the hours of the mysterious movements of Kornilov’s cavalry. “We will destroy our souls, but we will save the state.” That was all the government of the revolution had to offer the people.

“Many provincials,” writes Miliukov, “saw Kerensky in this hall for the first time, and they went out half disappointed and half indignant. Before them had stood a young man with a tortured pale face, and a pose like an actor speaking his lines. This man seemed to be trying to frighten somebody and create upon all an impression of power and force of will in the old style. In reality he evoked only a feeling of pity.”

The speeches of the other members of the government exposed not so much a personal bankruptcy, as the bankruptcy of the compromise system. The grand idea which the Minister of the Interior, Avksentiev, submitted to the judgement of the country, was the institution of “traveling commissars.” The Minister of Industry advised the capitalists to content themselves with a modest profit. The Minister of Finance promised to lower the direct tax upon the possessing classes by increasing indirect taxation. The Right Wing was incautious enough to greet these words with a stormy applause, in which Tseretelli afterward, with some embarrassment, pointed out a lack of eagerness for self-sacrifice. The Minister of Agriculture, Chernov, had been told to keep still entirely, in order not to irritate the Allies on the right with the specter of land expropriation. In the interests of national unity it had been decided to pretend that the agrarian question did not exist. The Compromisers had no objection. The authentic voice of the muzhik never once sounded from the tribune.

Nevertheless in those very weeks of August the agrarian movement was billowing throughout the whole country, getting ready to break loose in autumn in the form of an unconquerable peasant war.

After a day's intermission – a day passed in reconnoitering and mobilizing of forces on both sides – the session of the 14th opened in an atmosphere of extreme tension. When Kornilov appeared in his *loge*, the right half of the Conference gave him a stormy ovation, the left remained seated almost as a body. Cries of "get up!" from the officers' loges were followed with coarse abuse. When the government appeared, the left section gave Kerensky a prolonged ovation, in which, as Miliukov testifies, "the right just as demonstratively refused to participate, remaining in their seats." In those hostile clashing waves of applause were heard the close approaching battles of the civil war. Meanwhile upon the stage representatives of both halves of the divided hall continued to sit with the title of government; and the president, who had secretly taken military measures against the commander-in-chief, did not for a moment forget to incarnate in his figure "the unity of the Russian people." In pursuance of this role, Kerensky announced: "I propose to all that in the person of the supreme commander-in-chief who is present here, we should all greet our army, courageously dying for freedom and the fatherland." On the subject of that army he had said at the first session: "Our hopes have been trampled in the mud, and our faith spat upon." But never mind! A saving phrase had been found. The hall rose and stormily applauded Kornilov and Kerensky. The unity of the nation was once more preserved!

The ruling classes, whom historic necessity had seized by

the throat, resorted to the method of historic masquerade. It evidently seemed to them that if they could once more stand before the people in all their transformations, this would make them more significant and stronger. In the character of experts on the national conscience, they brought out on the stage all the representatives of all the four state Dumas. Their mutual disagreements, once so sharp, had disappeared. All the parties of the bourgeoisie now united without difficulty upon the “extra-party and extra-class program” of those public men who a few days back had sent a telegram of greeting to Kornilov. In the name of the first Duma – of the year 1906! – the Kadet Nabokov renounced “the very intimation of the possibility of a separate peace.” This did not prevent the liberal politician from subsequently relating in his memoirs how he, and with him many of the leading Kadets, saw in a separate peace the only way to salvation. In the same way representatives of the other tzarist Dumas demanded of the revolution first of all a tribute of blood.

“General! you have the floor!” The session has now arrived at its critical moment. What will the high commander-in-chief have to say, after Kerensky has insistently but vainly urged him to limit himself to a mere outline of the military situation? Miliukov writes as an eye-witness: “The short, stumpy but strong figure of a man with Kalmuck features, appeared up the stage, darting sharp piercing glances from his small black eyes in which there was a vicious glint. The hall rocked with applause. All leapt to their feet with the exception of ... the soldiers.” Shouts of indignation mingled with abuse were addressed from the right to the delegates who did not stand: “You roughnecks, get up!” From the delegates not standing the answer

comes back: “Serfs!” The uproar turns into a storm. Kerensky demands that they all quietly listen to the “first soldier of the Provisional Government.” In the sharp, fragmentary, imperious tone appropriate to a general who intends to save the country, Kornilov read a manuscript written for him by the adventurer Zavoiko at the dictation of the adventurer Filonenko. But the program proffered in the manuscript was considerably more moderate than the design to which it formed an introduction. Kornilov did not hesitate to paint the condition of the army and the situation at the front in the blackest colors, and with an obvious intent to cause fright. The central point in his speech was a military prognosis: “The enemy is already knocking at the gates of Riga, and if the instability of our army does not make it possible to restrain him on the shores of the Gulf of Riga, then the road to Petrograd is open.” Here Kornilov hauls off and deals a blow to the government: “By a whole series of legislative measures introduced after the revolution by people strange to the spirit and understanding of an army, the army has been converted into a crazy mob trembling only for its own life.” The inference is obvious: There is no hope for Riga, and the commander-in-chief openly and challengingly says so before the whole world, as though inviting the Germans to seize the defenseless city. And Petrograd? Kornilov’s thought was this: If I am empowered to carry out my program, Petrograd may still be saved, but hurry up! The Moscow Bolshevik paper wrote: “What is this, a warning or a threat? The Tarnopol defeat made Kornilov commander-in-chief, the surrender of Riga might make him dictator.” That suggestion accorded far more accurately with the designs of the conspirators than could have been guessed by the most suspicious Bolshevik.

The Church Council, having participated in the gorgeous welcome of Kornilov, now sent to the support of the commander-in-chief one of its most reactionary members, the Archbishop Platon. “You have just seen the deadly picture of our army,” says this representative of the living forces, “and I have come here in order from this platform to say to Russia: Do not be troubled, dear one. Have no fear, my own one ... If a miracle is necessary for the salvation of Russia, then in answer to the prayers of his church, God will accomplish this miracle ...” For the protection of the church lands, however, the orthodox prelates preferred some good Cossack troops. The point of the speech was not there, though. The Archbishop complained that in the speeches of the members of the government, he “had not once heard even by a slip of the tongue the word God.” Just as Kornilov had accused the revolutionary government of demoralizing the army, so Platon accused “those who now stand at the head of our God-loving people” of criminal unbelief. These churchmen who had been squirming in the dust at the feet of Rasputin were now bold enough publicly to confess the revolutionary government.

A declaration of the 12th Cossack Army was read by General Kaledin, whose name was persistently mentioned during this period among the strongest of those in the military party. “Kaledin,” to quote one of his eulogists, “not desiring and not knowing how to please the mob, broke with General Brussilov on this ground, and as not adaptable to the spirit of the times was retired from the command.” Returning to the Don at the beginning of May, the Cossack general had soon been elected *ataman* of the Don army, and so to him as chief of the oldest and

strongest of the Cossack armies was allotted the task of presenting the program of the privileged Cossack upper circles. Rejecting the accusation of counter-revolutionism, his declaration ungraciously reminded the minister-socialists how at the moment of danger they had come to the Cossacks for help against the Bolsheviks. The gloomy general unexpectedly won the hearts of the democrats by pronouncing in a thunderous voice the word which Kerensky had not dared to speak out loud: Republic. The majority of the hall, and with special zeal the minister Chernov, applauded this Cossack general, who was quite seriously demanding of the republic that which the autocracy was no longer able to give. Napoleon predicted that Europe would become either Cossack or republican. Kaledin agreed to see Russia republican on condition that she should not cease to be Cossack. Having read the words: “There should be no place for defeatists in the government,” the ungrateful general roughly and impudently turned in the direction of the unlucky Chernov. The report of the liberal press remarks: “All eyes were fixed upon Chernov, whose head was bowed low over the table.” Being untrained by any political position, Kaledin developed to the full the military program of the reaction: abolish the committees, restore power to the commanders, equalize the front and the rear, reconsider the rights of the soldiers – that is, reduce them to nothing. (*Applause from the Right was here mingled with protests and even whistling from the Left.*) The Constituent Assembly “in the interest of tranquil and deliberative labors” should be convoked in Moscow. This speech, prepared in advance of the Conference, was read by Kaledin the next day after a general strike which made his phrase about “tranquil” labors in Moscow sound like a joke.

The speech of the Cossack republican finally raised the temperature of the hall to the boiling point, and prompted Kerensky to show his authority: “It is unbecoming for anybody in the present assembly to address demands to the government.” But in that case why had he summoned the conference? Purishkevich, a popular member of the Black Hundreds, shouted from his seat: “We are in the position of supers to the government!” Two months before, this organizer of pogroms had not dared show his face.

The official declaration of the democracy, an endless document which tried to answer all questions and answered none, was read by the president of the Executive Committee, Cheidze, who received a warm greeting from the Left. Their cries of “Long live the leader of the Russian revolution!” must have embarrassed this modest Caucasian, who was the last man in the world to imagine himself a leader. In a tone of self-justification the democracy announced that it “had not striven after the power, and had not desired a monopoly for itself.” It was prepared to support any power capable of preserving the interests of the country and the revolution. But you must not abolish the soviets: they alone have saved the country from anarchy. You must not destroy the soldiers’ committees: only they can guarantee the continuation of the war. The privileged classes must in some things act in the interests of the whole people. However, the interests of the landlords must be protected from forcible seizures. The solution of nationality questions must be postponed to the Constituent Assembly. It is necessary, on the other hand, to carry out the more urgent reforms. Of an active policy of peace, the declaration said not a word. In general the document seemed to have been especially designed to

provoke the indignation of the masses without giving satisfaction to the bourgeoisie.

In an evasive and colorless speech, the representative of the peasants' Executive Committee reminded his auditors of the slogan "Land and Freedom," under which "our best fighters have died." An account in a Moscow paper records an episode omitted from the official stenographic report: "The whole hall rises and gives a stormy ovation to the prisoners of Schlusselburg who are seated in a *loge*." Astonishing grimace of the revolution! "The whole hall" does honor to those few of the former political hard-labor convicts whom the monarchy of Alexeiev, Kornilov, Kaledin, Archbishop Platon, Rodzianko, Guchkov, and in essence also Miliukov, had not succeeded in strangling to death in its prisons. These hangmen, or colleagues of hangmen, wanted to decorate themselves with the martyr's aureole of their own victims!

Fifteen years before that, the leaders of the right half of this hall were celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the capture of Schlusselburg fortress by Peter the First. **Iskra**, the journal of the revolutionary wing of the social democracy, wrote during those days: "What indignation awakens in the breast at the thought of this patriotic celebration on that accursed island which has been the place of execution of Minakov, Myshkin, Rogachev, Stromberg, Ulianov, Generalov, Ossipanov, Chevyrev; Andryushkin; within sight of those stone cages in which Klimenko strangled himself with a rope, Grachevsky soaked himself with kerosene and set fire to his body, Sophia Ginsburg stabbed herself with a pair of scissors; under the walls within which Shchedrin, Yuvachev, Konashevich, Pokhitonov, Ignatius Ivanov, Aronchik and

Tikhonovich sank into the black night of madness, and scores of others died of exhaustion, scurvy and tuberculosis. Abandon yourself, then, to your patriotic bacchanal for today you are still the lords in Schlusselburg!" The motto of **Iskra** was a sentence from the letter of a Dekabrist hard-labor convict to Pushkin: "The spark will kindle a flame." The flame had been kindled. It had reduced to ashes the monarchy and its Schlusselburg hard-labor prison, and now today in the hall of this State Conference yesterday's jail-keepers were offering an ovation to the victims torn from their clutches by the revolution. But most paradoxical of all was the fact that the jailers and their prisoners had actually united together in a feeling of common hatred for the Bolsheviks – for Lenin, the former chief-editor of **Iskra**, for Trotsky, the author of the above-quoted lines, for the rebelling workers and the unsubmissive soldiers who now filled the prisons of the republic.

The National-Liberal, Guchkov, president of the third Duma, who in his day had refused to admit the left deputies into the Committees of Defense, and for this was named by the Compromisers first War Minister of the revolution, made the most interesting speech-a speech, however, in which irony struggled vainly with despair: "But why then ..." he said, alluding to the words of Kerensky, "why have the representatives of the government come to us with 'mortal alarm' and 'in mortal terror' with a sort of morbid, I would even say, hysterical, cry of despair? And why does this alarm, this terror and this cry, why do they find in our souls a kindred piercing pain as of the anguish of those about to die?" In the name of those who had lorded, commanded, and pardoned, and punished, the

great Moscow merchant publicly confesses to a feeling as of “the anguish of those about to die.” “This government,” he said, “is the shadow of a power.” Guchkov was right. But he himself, too, the former partner of Stolypin, was but a shadow of himself.

On the very day of the opening of the conference, there appeared in Gorky’s paper an account of how Rodzianko had got rich by supplying worthless wood for rifle-stocks. This untimely revelation – due to Karakhan, the future soviet diplomat, then still unknown to anybody – did not prevent the Lord Chamberlain from speaking at the conference with dignity in defense of the patriotic program of the manufacturers of military supplies. All misfortunes, he said, flowed from the fact that the Provisional Government did not go hand in hand with the state Duma, “the sole, legal and absolutely all-national popular representative assembly in Russia.” That seemed a little too much. There was laughter on the left. There were shouts: “The third of June!” There had been a time when that date, the third of June, 1907, the day of the trampling underfoot of the constitution they had granted, burned like the brand of a galley-slave on the brow of the monarchy and the party supporting it. Now it was only a pale memory. But Rodzianko himself, too, with his thundering bass, ponderous and portentous, seemed as he stood on the tribune rather a living monument of the past than a political figure.

As against attacks from within, the government brought forward some encouragements received a long time ago from without. Kerensky read a telegram of greeting from the American president, Wilson, promising “every material and moral support to the government of Russia for success

in the common cause uniting both peoples and in which they are pursuing no selfish aims.” The renewed applause addressed to the diplomatic loge could not drown the alarm caused in the right half of the assembly by this telegram from Washington. Praise for their disinterestedness had too often meant to the Russian imperialists the prescription of a starvation diet.

In the name of the compromisist democracy, Tseretelli, its acknowledged leader, defended the soviets and the army committees, as one defends for honor’s sake a lost cause. “We cannot yet remove these scaffoldings, when the temple of free revolutionary Russia is not yet completely built.” After the revolution “the popular masses had trusted nobody in the essence of the matter, but themselves”; only the efforts of the compromisist soviets had made it possible for the possessing classes to stay on top at all, even though at first deprived of their comforts. Tseretelli placed it to the special credit of the soviets that they “had handed over all state functions to the Coalition Government.” Did this sacrifice, he asked, have to be “wrested from the democracy by force?” The orator was like the commander of a fortress who boasts publicly that he has surrendered the position entrusted to him without a struggle ... And in the July days – “Who then came forward in defense of the country against anarchy?” A voice resounded on the right: “The Cossacks and junkers.” Those short words cut like the blow of a whip through the flow of democratic commonplaces. The bourgeois wing of the conference perfectly understood the rescuing services done them by the Compromisers; but gratitude is not a political feeling. The bourgeoisie had promptly drawn their conclusion from the services rendered them by the

democracy. It was this: The chapter of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks is at an end, the Cossack and junker chapter is next in order.

Tseretelli approached the problem of power with special caution. During the recent months elections had been held to the city dumas, in part also to the zemstvos, on a basis of universal franchise – and what had happened? The representatives of these democratic, self-governing bodies had turned up at the State Conference in the left group, side by side with the soviets, under the leadership of those same parties, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. If the Kadets intend to insist upon their demand: to abolish all dependence of the government upon the democracy, then what will be the use of the Constituent Assembly? Tseretelli only just suggested the contours of this argument, for carried to its conclusion it would have condemned the policy of coalition with the Kadets as standing in contradiction even with formal democracy. They are accusing the revolution of overdoing its speeches about peace, he said, but do not the possessing classes understand that the slogan of peace is now the sole means by which the war can be continued? The bourgeoisie understood this all right. They merely wished to take this means of continuing the war, along with the power, into their own hands. Tseretelli concluded with a hymn of praise to the Coalition. In that divided assembly which saw no way out of its problems, his compromisist commonplaces awakened for the last time a ray of hope. But Tseretelli, too, was already in essence a phantom of himself.

The democracy was answered in the name of the right half of the hall by Miliukov, the hopelessly sober representative

of those classes for whom history had made a sober policy impossible. In his “History” the leader of liberalism has expressly set forth his own speech at the State Conference. “Miliukov made ... a brief factual survey of the mistakes of the ‘revolutionary democracy’ and summarized them: ... Capitulation on the question of ‘democratization of the army,’ involving the retirement of Guchkov; capitulation on the question of a ‘Zimmerwaldist’ foreign policy, involving the retirement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Miliukov); capitulation before the utopian demands of the working class, involving the retirement of Konovalov (Minister of Commerce and Industry); capitulation before the extreme demands of the national minorities, involving the retirement of the rest of the Kadets. The fifth capitulation – before the tendency of the masses to direct action in the agrarian problem ... had caused the retirement of the first president of the Provisional Government, Prince Lvov.” That was no bad history of the case. When it came to suggesting a cure, however, Miliukov’s wisdom did not go beyond police measures: We must strangle the Bolsheviks. “Confronted by obvious facts,” he reproached the Compromisers, “these more moderate groups have been compelled to admit that there are criminals and traitors among the Bolsheviks. But they have not yet acknowledged that the very fundamental idea uniting these partisans of anarcho-syndicalist militant action is criminal (*applause*).”

The extremely submissive Chernov still seemed to be the link uniting the Coalition with the revolution. Almost all the orators of the Right Wing, Kaledin, the Kadet Maklakov, the Kadet Astrov, aimed a blow at Chernov, who had been ordered in advance to keep still, and whom no one

undertook to defend. Miliukov for his part called to mind the fact that the Minister of Agriculture “had himself been at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, and had there introduced the most extreme resolutions.” That was a blow straight to the jaw. Before becoming a minister – the minister of an imperialist war – Chernov had actually placed his signature under certain documents of the Zimmerwald Left – that is, of the faction of Lenin.

Miliukov did not conceal from the Conference the fact that from the very beginning he had been opposed to the Coalition, considering that it would be “not stronger but weaker than the government which issued from the revolution” – that is, the government of Guchkov and Miliukov. And now he “greatly fears that the present staff of executives … cannot guarantee the safety of persons and property.” But however that may be, he, Miliukov, promises to support the government, “voluntarily and without any argument.” The treachery of this magnanimous promise will become adequately clear in two weeks. At the moment his speech did not evoke any enthusiasm nor occasion any stormy protest. The orator was both greeted and dismissed with a rather dry applause.

The second speech of Tseretelli reduced itself to promises, asseverations, clamor: Don’t you understand that it is all for you – soviets, committees, democratic programs, slogans of pacifism – all this is a protection for you? “Who is more capable of setting in motion the troops of the Russian revolutionary state, the war-minister Guchkov, or the war-minister Kerensky?” Tseretelli was here repeating the words of Lenin almost verbatim, although the leader of compromise regarded as a service what the leader of

revolution had branded as treachery. The orator even apologized for his excessive mildness in relation to the Bolsheviks: “I tell you that the revolution was inexperienced in the struggle with anarchy on the left (*stormy applause from the right*).” But after it had “received its first lessons” the revolution corrected its mistake: “An exceptional law has already been passed.” During those very hours Moscow was in the secret control of a committee of six – two Mensheviks, two Social Revolutionaries, two Bolsheviks – defending it against a seizure of power by those to whom the Compromisers were giving this promise to shatter the Bolsheviks.

The high point of the last day was the speech of General Alexeiev, in whose authority the mediocrity of the old military chancelleries stood incarnate. To the wild enthusiasm of the Right, this former chief-of-staff of Nicholas II and organizer of defeats for the Russian army, talked about those destructive characters “in whose pockets is to be heard the melodious clink of German marks.” For the restoration of the army, discipline is necessary; for discipline, the authority of the commanders is necessary; and for this again, discipline is necessary. “Call discipline ‘iron,’ call it ‘conscious,’ call it ‘genuine’ ... at bottom these three kinds of discipline are one and the same.” For Alexeiev all history was comprised in the domestic service regulations. “Is it so difficult, gentlemen, to sacrifice some imaginary advantage – the existence of these organizations (*laughter on the left*) for a certain period of time? (*uproar and shouts on the left*).” The general urged them to give the disarmed revolution into his keeping, not forever – oh, God save us, no – but only “for a certain period of time!” Upon the conclusion of the

war he promised to return the goods undamaged. But Alexeiev concluded with an aphorism that was not bad: “We need measures and not half-measures.” These words were a blow at the declaration of Cheidze, the Provisional Government, the Coalition, the whole February régime. Measures and not half-measures! To that the Bolsheviks heartily subscribed.

General Alexeiev’s speech was immediately offset by the delegates of the Petrograd and Moscow left officers, who spoke in support of “our supreme chief, the Minister of War.” After him Lieutenant Kuchin, an old Menshevik, spokesman of the “representatives of the front at the State Conference” spoke in the name of the soldier millions, who, however, would scarcely have recognized themselves in the mirror of compromisism. “We have all read the interview of General Lukomsky, printed in all the papers, where he says that if the Allies do not help us, Riga will be surrendered ...” Why did the high commanding staff which has heretofore always concealed its failures and defeats, consider it necessary to lay on these black colors? Cries of “For shame!” from the left were aimed at Kornilov, who had expressed the same thought at the conference the day before. Kuchin here touched the possessing classes on their sorest point. The upper circles of the bourgeoisie, the commanding staff, the whole right half of the hall, were saturated with defeatist tendencies in all three spheres, economic, political and military. The motto of these respectable and cool-blooded patriots had become: the worse it gets the better! But the compromisist orator hastened to abandon a theme which would have mined the ground under his own feet. “Whether we shall save the army or not, we do not know,” said Kuchin. “But if we fail,

the commanding staff will not save it either …” “It will!” cried a voice from the officers’ seats. Kuchin: “No, it won’t!” A burst of applause from the left. Thus the commanders and the committees, upon whose pretended solidarity the whole program of the restoration of the army was based, shouted their hostility across the hall – and thus likewise the two halves of the Conference, which was supposed to constitute the foundation of “an honest coalition.” These clashes were merely a weak, smothered, parliamentarian echo of those contradictions which were convulsing the country. Obeying their Bonapartist stage directions, the orators from left and right followed each other alternately, balancing each other off as well as possible. If the hierarchs of the orthodox Church Council supported Kornilov, then the evangelical Christian parsons sided with the Provisional Government. The delegates of the zemstvos and the city dumas made speeches in pairs – one from the majority adhering to the declaration of Cheidze, the other from the minority supporting the declaration of the State Duma.

The representatives of the oppressed nationalities one after another assured the government of their patriotism, but beseeched it to deceive them no longer: In the localities we have the same officials, the same laws, the same oppression. “You must not delay – no people is able to live upon mere promises.” Revolutionary Russia must show that she is “mother and not stepmother of all her peoples.” These timid reproaches and humble adjurations found hardly a sympathetic response even from the left side of the hall. The spirit of an imperialist war is least of all compatible with an honest policy upon the question of nationalities.

“Up to the present time the nationalities from beyond the Caucasus have not made a single separative move,” announced the Menshevik, Chenkeli, in the name of the Georgians, “and they will not make one in the future.” This promise, which was roundly applauded, was soon to prove false: from the moment of the October revolution Chenkeli became one of the leaders of separatism. There was no contradiction here, however: the patriotism of democrats does not extend beyond the framework of the bourgeois régime.

Meanwhile certain more tragic specters of the past are taking their place upon the stage; the war cripples are going to lift their voices. They too are not unanimous. The handless, the legless, the blind, have also their aristocracy and their plebes In the name of the “immense and mighty League of the Cavaliers of St. George, in the name of its 128 departments in all parts of Russia,” a crippled officer, outraged in his patriotic feelings, supports Kornilov (*applause from the right*). The All-Russian League of Crippled Warriors adheres through the voice of its delegate to the declaration of Cheidze (*applause from the left*).

The Executive Committee of the recently organized union of railroad workers – destined under the abbreviated name of Vikzhel to play an important role – joins its voice to the declaration of the Compromisers. The president of the Vikzhel, a moderate democrat and an extreme patriot, paints a vivid picture of counter-revolutionary intrigue among the railroad lines: malicious attacks upon the workers, mass discharges, arbitrary violations of the eight-hour day, arrests and indictments. Underground forces, he says, directed from hidden but influential centers, are clearly trying to provoke the hungry railroad workers to a

fight. The enemy remains undiscovered. “The Intelligence Service is dreaming, and the prosecuting attorney’s inspectors are fast asleep.” And this most moderate of the moderates concludes his speech with a threat: “If the Hydra of counter-revolution lifts its head, we will go out and we will choke him with our own hands.”

Here one of the railroad magnates immediately takes the floor with counter accusations: “The clear spring of the revolution has been poisoned.” Why? “Because the idealistic aims of the revolution have been replaced by material aims (applause from the right).” In a similar spirit the Kadet landlord, Rodichev, denounces the workers for having appropriated from France “the shameful slogan: get rich!” The Bolsheviks will soon give extraordinary success to the formula of Rodichev, although not quite of the kind which the orator hoped for. Professor Ozerov, a man of pure science and a delegate from the agricultural banks, exclaims: “The soldier in the trenches ought to be thinking of war, not of dividing the land.” This is not surprising: a confiscation of privately owned land would mean a confiscation of bank capital. On the first of January, 1915, the debts of the private land owners amounted to more than 3¼ billion rubles.

On the right spokesmen took the floor from the high staffs, from the industrial league, from chambers of commerce and banks, from the society of horse breeders, and other organizations comprising hundreds of eminent people. On the left spokesmen appeared for the soviets, the army committees, the trade unions, the democratic municipalities, and the cooperatives behind which in the distant background stood nameless millions and tens of millions. In normal times the advantage would have been

with the short arm of the lever. “It is impossible to deny,” preached Tseretelli, “especially at such a moment, the great relative weight and significance of those who are strong through the possession of property.” But the whole point was that this weight was becoming more and more impossible to weigh. Just as weight is not an inner attribute of individual objects, but an inter-relation between them, so social weight is not a natural property of people, but only that class attribute which other classes are compelled to recognize in them. The revolution, however, had come right up to the point where it was refusing to recognize this most fundamental “attribute” of the ruling classes. It was for this reason that the position of the eminent minority on the short arm of the lever was becoming so uncomfortable. The Compromisers were trying with might and main to preserve the equilibrium, but they also were already without power: the masses were too irresistibly pressing down on the long arm. How cautious were the great agrarians, bankers, industrialists about coming out in the defense of their interests! Did they indeed defend them at all? Almost not at all. They spoke for the rights of idealism, the interests of culture, the prerogatives of a future Constituent Assembly. The leader of the heavy industries, Von Ditmar, even concluded his speech with a hymn in honor of “liberty, equality, fraternity.” Where were the metallic baritones of profits, the hoarse bass of land rents – where were they hiding? Only the over-sweet tenor melodies of disinterestedness filled the hall. But listen for a moment: how much spleen and vinegar under all this syrup! How unexpectedly these lyric roulades break into a spiteful falsetto! The president of the All-Russian Chamber of Agriculture, Kapatsinsky, standing with all his heart for the

coming agrarian reform, does not forget to thank “our pure Tseretelli” for his circular in defense of law against anarchy. But the land committees? They will straightway turn over the power to the muzhik! To this “dark, semi-illiterate man, crazy with joy that they have at last given him the land, it is proposed to turn over the inauguration of justice in the country!” If in their struggle with this dark muzhik, the landlords happen to be defending property, it is not for their own sakes – Oh no! – but only in order afterwards to lay it upon the altar of freedom.

The social symbolism would now seem to have been completed. But here Kerensky is blessed with a happy inspiration. He proposes that they give the floor to one more group – “a group out of Russian history – namely Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Kropotkin and Plekhanov.” Russian Narodnikism, Russian anarchism, and Russian social democratism take the floor in the person of the older generation – anarchism and Marxism in the person of their most eminent founders.

Kropotkin asked only to join his voice “to those voices which are summoning the whole Russian people to break once for all with Zimmerwaldism.” The apostle of non-government promptly gave his adherence to the right wing of the Conference. A defeat threatens us, he cried, not only with the loss of vast territories and the payment of indemnities: “You must know, comrades, that there is something worse than all this – that is the psychology of a defeated nation.” This ancient internationalist prefers to see the psychology of a defeated nation on the other side of the border. While recalling how a conquered France had humbled herself before the Russian tzars, he did not foresee how a conquering France would humble herself

before American bankers. He exclaimed: “Are we going to live through the same thing? Not by any means!” He was applauded by the entire hall. And then what rainbow prospects, he said, are opened by the war: “All are beginning to understand that we must build a new life on new socialist principles ... Lloyd George is making speeches imbued with the socialist spirit ... In England, in France and in Italy, there is forming a new comprehension of life, imbued with socialism-unfortunately state socialism.” If Lloyd George and Poincaré have not yet “unfortunately” renounced the state principle, at least Kropotkin has come over to it frankly enough. “I think,” he said, “that we will not be depriving the Constituent Assembly of any of its rights – I fully recognize that to it belongs the sovereign decision upon such questions – if we, the Council of the Russian land, loudly express our desire that Russia should be declared a republic.” Kropotkin insisted upon a confederative republic: “We need a federation such as they have in the United States.” That is what Bakunin’s federation of free communes had come down to! “Let us promise each other at last,” adjured Kropotkin in conclusion, “that we will no longer be divided into the left and right halves of this theater. We all have one fatherland, and for her we ought all to stand together, or to lie down together if need be, both Lefts and Rights.” Landlords, industrialists, generals, Cavaliers of St. George, all those who did not recognize Zimmerwald, extended to the apostle of anarchism a well-earned ovation.

The principles of liberalism can have a real existence only in conjunction with a police system. Anarchism is an attempt to cleanse liberalism of the police. But just as pure oxygen is impossible to breathe, so liberalism without the

police – principle means the death of society. Being a shadow-caricature of liberalism, anarchism as a whole has shared its fate. Having killed liberalism, the development of class contradictions has also killed anarchism. Like every sect which founds its teaching not upon the actual development of human society, but upon the reduction to absurdity of one of its features, anarchism explodes like a soap bubble at that moment when the social contradictions arrive at the point of war or revolution. Anarchism as represented by Kropotkin was about the most spectral of all the specters at the State Conference.

In Spain, the classic country of Bakuninism, the anarcho-syndicalist and so-called “specific,” or pure anarchists, in abstaining from politics, are really repeating the policy of the Russian Mensheviks. These bombastic deniers of the state respectfully bow down to force the moment it changes its skin. Having warned the proletariat against the temptations of power, they self-sacrificingly support the power of the “left” bourgeoisie. Cursing the gangrene of parliamentarism, they secretly hand their followers the election ballot of the vulgar republican. No matter how the Spanish revolution develops, it will at least put an end to anarchism once for all.

Plekhanov, who was greeted by the whole conference with stormy applause – the lefts were honoring their old leader, the rights their new ally – represented that early Russian Marxism whose outlook had in the course of the decades become fixed within the boundaries of political freedom. For the Bolsheviks the revolution had only begun, for Plekhanov it was already finished. Advising the industrialists to “seek a rapprochement with the working class,” Plekhanov suggested to the democrats: “It is

absolutely necessary for you to come to an agreement with the representatives of the commercial and industrial class." As a horrible example Plekhanov introduced the "unhappy memory of Lenin," who had fallen to such a level that he was summoning the proletariat to "an immediate seizure of political power." It was just for this warning against a struggle for power that the Conference had need of Plekhanov, who had abandoned the last item of the armor of a revolutionist upon the threshold of the revolution.

On the evening of the day that the delegates from "Russian history" spoke, Kerensky gave the floor to a representative of the Chamber of Agriculture and the Union of Horse Breeders, also a Kropotkin, another member of the old princely family which had, if you believe their genealogical tree, a better right than the Romanovs to the Russian throne. "I'm not a Socialist," said this feudal aristocrat, "though I have a respect for genuine socialism. But when I see seizures, robberies and violence I am obliged to say ... the government ought to compel people who are attaching themselves to socialism to withdraw from the task of reconstructing the country." This second Kropotkin, obviously aiming his shot at Chernov, had no objection to such socialists as Lloyd George or Poincare'. Along with his family-opposite, the anarchist, this monarchist Kropotkin condemned Zimmerwald, the class struggle and the land seizures – alas, he had been in the habit of calling them "anarchy" – and also demanded union and victory. Unfortunately the records do not state whether the two Kropotkins applauded each other.

In this conference, corroded with hatred, they talked so much about unity that unity simply had to materialize at

least for one second in the inevitable symbolic handshake. The Menshevik paper tells of this incident in rapturous words: “During the speech of Bublikov an incident occurred which made a deep impression upon all the members of the Conference ... ‘Yesterday,’ said Bublikov, ‘a noble leader of the revolution, Tseretelli, extended his hand to the business world, and I want him to know that that hand is not left hanging in the air ...’“ When Bublikov stopped speaking Tseretelli came up and shook hands with him. Stormy ovations.

How many ovations! A little too many. A week before the scene just described, this same Bublikov, a big railroad magnate, attending a congress of industrialists, had bellowed against the soviet leaders: “Away with the dishonest, the ignorant, all those who have driven us toward destruction!” and his words were still echoing in the atmosphere of Moscow. The old Marxist, Riazanov, who attended the conference as a trade union delegate, very appropriately recalled the kiss of the prelate of Lyon, Lamourette – “That kiss which was exchanged by two parts of the National Assembly – not the workers and the bourgeoisie, but two parts of the bourgeoisie – and you know that the struggle never burst out more furiously than just after that kiss.” Miliukov acknowledges with unaccustomed frankness that this union was, upon the side of the industrialists, “not sincere, but practically necessary for a class which would have too much to lose. The celebrated handshake of Bublikov was just such a reconciliation, with mental reservations.”

Did the majority of the members of the conference believe in the force of handshakes and political kisses? Did they believe in themselves? Their feelings were contradictory,

like their plans. To be sure, in certain individual speeches, especially from the provinces, there was still to be heard the crackle of the first raptures, hopes, illusions. But in a conference where the left half was disappointed and demoralized, and the right enraged, these echoes of the March days sounded like the correspondence of a betrothed couple made public in their divorce trial. Having already departed into the kingdom of shades, these politicians were saving with spectral measures a spectral régime. A deathly cold breath of hopelessness hung over this assembly of “living forces,” this final parade of the doomed.

Towards the very end of the conference an incident occurred revealing the deep split even in that group which was considered the model of unity and loyalty to the state, the Cossacks. Nagaiev, a young Cossack officer in the soviet delegation, declared that the working Cossacks were not with Kaledin. The Cossacks at the front, he said, do not trust the Cossack leaders. That was true, and touched the conference upon its sorest point. The newspaper accounts here report the stormiest of all the scenes at the conference. The Left ecstatically applauded Nagaiev and shouts were heard: “Hurrah for the revolutionary Cossacks!” Indignant protests from the Right: “You will answer for this!” A voice from the officers’ benches: “German marks!” In spite of the inevitability of these words as the last argument of patriotism, they produced an effect like an exploding bomb. The hall was filled with a perfectly hellish noise. The soviet delegates jumped from their seats, threatening the officers’ benches with their fists. There were cries of “Provocateurs!” The president’s bell clanged continually. “Another moment and

it seemed as though a fight would begin.”

After all that had taken place Kerensky declared in his concluding speech: “I believe and I even know ... that we have achieved a better understanding of each other, that we have achieved a greater respect for each other .” Never before had the duplicity of the February régime risen to such disgusting and futile heights of falsity. Himself unable to sustain this tone, the orator suddenly burst out in the midst of his concluding phrases into a wail of threat and despair. As Miliukov describes it: “With a broken voice which fell from a hysterical shriek to a tragic whisper, Kerensky threatened an imaginary enemy, intently searching for him throughout the hall with inflamed eyes ...” Miliukov really knew better than anybody else that this enemy was not imaginary. “Today citizens of the Russian land, I will no longer dream ... May my heart become a stone ...” Thus Kerensky raged: “Let all those flowers and dreams of humanity dry up. (*A woman’s voice from the gallery: ‘You cannot do that. Your heart will not permit you.’*) I throw far away the key of my heart, beloved people. I will think only of the state.”

The hall was stupefied, and this time both halves of it. The social symbol of the State Conference wound up with an insufferable monologue from a melodrama. That woman’s voice raised in defense of the flowers of the heart sounded like a cry for help, like an SOS from the peaceful, sunny, bloodless February revolution. The curtain came down at last upon the State Conference.

Chapter 31: Kerensky's Plot

THE Moscow Conference damaged the position of the government by revealing, as Miliukov correctly states, "that the country was divided into two camps between which there could be no essential reconciliation or agreement." The Conference raised the spirits of the bourgeoisie and sharpened their impatience. In the other hand it gave a new impulse to the movement of the masses. The Moscow strike opened a period of accelerated regrouping to leftward of the workers and soldiers. Henceforth the Bolsheviks grew unconquerably. Among the masses, only the Left Social Revolutionaries, and to some extent the Left Mensheviks, held their own. The Petrograd organization of the Mensheviks signalized its political shift leftward by excluding Tseretelli from the list of candidates for the city duma. On the 16th of August, a Petrograd conference of the Social Revolutionaries demanded, by 22 votes against 1, the dissolution of the League of Officers at headquarters, and other decisive measures against the counter-revolution. On August 18, the Petrograd Soviet, over the objection of its president, Cheidze, placed upon the order of the day the question of abolishing the death penalty. Before the voting, Tseretelli put this challenging question: "If as a consequence of your resolution, the death penalty is not abolished, then will you bring the crowd into the street and demand the overthrow of the government?" "Yes," shouted the Bolsheviks in answer. "Yes, we will call out the crowd, and we will try our best to overthrow the government." "You have lifted your heads

high these days," said Tseretelli. The Bolsheviks had lifted their heads together with the masses. The Compromisers had lowered their heads as the heads of the masses were lifted. The demand for an abolition of the death penalty was adopted by all votes – about 900 – against 4. Those four were Tseretelli, Cheidze, Dan, Lieber! Four days later, at a joint session of Mensheviks and groups surrounding them, where upon fundamental questions a resolution of Tseretelli was adopted in opposition to that of Martov, the demand for an immediate abolition of the death penalty was passed without debate. Tseretelli, no longer able to resist the pressure, remained silent.

This thickening political atmosphere was pierced by events at the front. On the 19th of August, the Germans broke through the Russian line near Ikskul. On the 21st, they occupied Riga. This fulfillment of Kornilov's prediction became, as though by previous agreement, the signal for a political attack of the bourgeoisie. The press multiplied tenfold its campaign against "workers who wilt not work" and "soldiers who will not fight." The revolution had to answer for everything: it had surrendered Riga; it was getting ready to surrender Petrograd. The slandering of the army – just as furious as two and a half months ago had now not a shadow of justification. In June the soldiers had actually refused to take the offensive: they had not wanted to stir up the front, to break the passivity of the Germans, to renew the fight. But before Riga the initiative was taken by the enemy, and the soldiers behaved quite differently. It was, moreover, the most thoroughly propagandized part of the 12th army which proved least subject to panic.

The commander of the army, General Parsky, boasted, and not without foundation, that the retreat was accomplished

“in model formation,” and could not even be compared to the retreats from Galicia and East Prussia. Commissar Voitinsky reported: “Our troops have carried out the tasks allotted to them in the region of the breach honorably and irreproachably, but they are not in a condition long to sustain the attack of the enemy, and are retreating slowly, a step at a time, suffering enormous losses. I consider it necessary to mention the extraordinary valor of the Lettish sharpshooters, the remnant of whom, in spite of complete exhaustion, has been sent again into the battle Still more enthusiastic was the report of the president of the army committee, the Menshevik Kuchin: “The spirit of the soldiers was astonishing. According to the testimony of members of the committee and officers, their staunchness was something never before seen.” Another representative of the same army reported a few days later at a session of the bureau of the Executive Committee: “In the center of the point of attack was a Lettish brigade consisting almost exclusively of Bolsheviks ... Receiving orders to advance, the brigade went forward with red banners and bands playing and fought with extraordinary courage.” Stankevich wrote later to the same effect, although more restrainedly: “Even in the army headquarters which contained people notoriously ready to lay the blame upon the soldiers, they could not tell me one single concrete instance of non-fulfillment, not only of fighting orders, but of any orders whatever.” The landing force of marines engaged in the Moonsund operation, as appears in the official documents, also showed noticeable fortitude. A part was played in determining the mood of the soldiers, especially the Lettish sharpshooters and Baltic sailors, by the fact that it was a question this time of the direct defense of two centers of the revolution, Riga and

Petrograd. The more advanced troops had already got hold of the Bolshevik idea that “to stick your bayonets in the ground does not settle the question of the war,” that the struggle for peace was inseparable from the struggle for power, for a new revolution.

Even if certain individual commissars, frightened by the attack of the generals, exaggerated the staunchness of the army, the fact remains that the soldiers and sailors obeyed orders and died. They could not do more. But nevertheless in the essence of the matter there was no defense. Incredible as it may seem, the twelfth army was caught wholly unprepared. Everything was lacking: men, arms, military supplies, gas masks. The communications were unspeakably bad. Attacks were delayed because Japanese cartridges had been supplied for Russian rifles. Yet this was no incidental sector of the front. The significance of the loss of Riga had been no secret to the high command. How then explain the extraordinarily miserable condition of the defense forces and supplies of the twelfth army? “The Bolsheviks,” writes Stankevich, “had already begun to spread rumors that the city was surrendered to the Germans on purpose, because the officers wanted to get rid of that nest and nursery of Bolshevism. These rumors could not but win belief in the army, which knew that essentially there had been no defense or resistance.” The fact is that as early as December 1916, Generals Ruzsky and Brussilov had complained that Riga was “the misfortune of the Northern front,” that it was “a nest of propaganda,” which could only be dealt with by the method of executions. To send the Riga workers and soldiers to the training school of a German military occupation, must have been the secret

dream of many generals of the northern front. Nobody imagined of course that the commander-in-chief had given an order for the surrender of Riga. But all the commanders had read the speech of Kornilov and the interview of his chief-of-staff, Lukomsky. This made an order entirety unnecessary. The commander-in-chief of the northern front, General Klembovsky, belonged to the inside clique of conspirators, and was consequently awaiting the surrender of Riga as a signal for the beginning of the movement to save the country. Moreover, even in normal conditions these Russian generals had a preference for surrender and retreat. On this occasion, when they were relieved of responsibility in advance by headquarters, and their political interests impelled them along the road of defeatism, they did not even make the attempt at a defense. Whether this or that general added some damaging action to the passive sabotage of the defense, is a secondary question and In its essence hard to solve. It would be naive to imagine, however, that the generals restrained themselves from lending what help they could to destiny in those cases where their traitorous activities would remain unpunished.

The American journalist, John Reed, who knew how to see and hear, and who has left an immortal book of chronicler’s notes of the days of the October Revolution, testifies without hesitation that a considerable part of the possessing classes of Russia preferred a German victory to the triumph of the revolution, and did not hesitate to say so openly. “One evening I spent at the house of a Moscow merchant,” says Reed, among other examples. “During tea we asked eleven people at the table whether they preferred ‘Wilhelm or the Bolsheviks.’ The vote was ten to

one for Wilhelm.” The same American writer conversed with officers on the northern front, who “frankly preferred a military defeat to working with the soldiers’ committees.”

To sustain the political accusation made by the Bolsheviks – and not only by them – it is wholly sufficient that the surrender o£ Riga entered into the plans of the conspirators and occupied a definite place in the calendar of their conspiracy. This was quite clearly evident between the lines of the Moscow speech of Kornilov. Subsequent events illumined that aspect of the matter completely. But we have also a piece of direct testimony, to which, in the given instance, the personality of the witness imparts an irreproachable authority. Miliukov in his **History** says: “In Moscow, Kornilov indicated in his speech that moment beyond which he did not wish to postpone decisive steps for the ‘salvation of the country from ruin and the army from collapse.’ That moment was the fall of Riga predicted by him. This event in his opinion would evoke ... a flood of patriotic excitement ... As Kornilov told me personally at a meeting in Moscow on the 13th of August, he did not wish to let pass this opportunity. And the moment of open conflict with the government of Kerensky was completely determined in his mind even to the point of settling in advance upon the date, August 27.” Could one possibly speak more clearly? In order to carry out the march on Petrograd, Kornilov had need of the surrender of Riga several days before the date settled upon. To strengthen the Riga position, to take serious measures of defense, would have meant to destroy the plan of another campaign immeasurably more important for Kornilov. If Paris is worth a mass, then Riga is a small price to pay for

power.

During the week which passed between the surrender of Riga and the insurrection of Kornilov, headquarters became the central reservoir of slander against the army. The communications from the Russian staff printed in the Russian press found immediate echo in the press of the Entente. The Russian patriotic papers in their turn enthusiastically reprinted the taunts and abuse addressed to the Russian army by The Times, Le Temps and Le Matin. The soldiers' front quivered with resentment, indignation and disgust. The commissars and committees, even the compromisist and patriotic ones, felt injured to the quick. Protests poured in from all sides. Especially sharp was the letter of the executive committee of the Rumanian front, the Odessa military district, and the Black Sea fleet – the so-called Rumcherod – which demanded that the Executive Committee "establish before all Russia the valor and devoted bravery of the soldiers who are dying by the thousands every day in cruel battles for the defense of revolutionary Russia ..." Under the influence of these protests from below, the compromisist leaders abandoned their passivity. "It seems as if there exists no filth which the bourgeois papers will not fling at the revolutionary army," wrote Izvestia of its allies in a political bloc. But nothing had any effect. This slandering of the army was a necessary part of the conspiracy which had its center in headquarters.

Immediately after the abandonment of Riga, Kornilov gave order by telegram to shoot a few soldiers on the road before the eyes of others as an example. Commissar Voitinsky and General Parsky reported that in their opinion the conduct of the soldiers did not at all justify such

measures. Kornilov, beside himself, declared at a meeting of committee representatives at headquarters that he would court-martial Voitinsky and Parsky for giving untrue reports of the situation in the army – which meant, as Stankevich explains, “for not laying the blame on the soldiers.” To complete the picture, it is necessary to add that on the same day Kornilov ordered the army staffs to supply a list of Bolshevik officers to the head committee of the League of Officers – that is, to the counter-revolutionary organization headed by the Kadet Novosiltsev which was the chief center of the plot. Such was this supreme commander-in-chief, ’the first soldier of the revolution!”

Having made up its mind to lift a tiny corner of the curtain, **Izvestia** wrote: “Some mysterious clique extraordinarily close to the high commanding circles is doing a monstrous work of provocation …” Under the phrase “mysterious clique” they were alluding to Kornilov and his staff. The heat lightnings of the advancing civil war began to cast a new illumination not only upon today’s, but upon yesterday’s doings. Under the head of self-defense, the Compromisers began to uncover suspicious activities of the commanding staff during the June offensive. There appeared in the press more and more details of the malicious slandering by the staffs of divisions and regiments. “Russia has the right to demand,” wrote **Izvestia**, “that the whole truth be laid bare to her about our July retreat.” Those words were eagerly read by soldiers, sailors, workers – especially by those who, under the pretense that they had been guilty of the catastrophe at the front, were still keeping the prisons full. Two days later **Izvestia** felt compelled to declare more openly that:

“Headquarters with its communiqués is playing a definite political game against the Provisional Government and the revolutionary democracy.” The government is portrayed in these lines as an innocent victim of the designs of headquarters, but it would seem as though the government had every opportunity to pull up on the generals. If it did not do so, that was because it did not want to.

In the above-mentioned protest against treacherous baitings of the soldiers, Rumcherod spoke with especial indignation of the fact that “the communiqués from headquarters ... while emphasizing the gallantry of the officers seem deliberately to belittle the devotion of the soldiers to the defense of the revolution.” The protest of Rumcherod appeared in the press of August 22, and the next day a special order of Kerensky was published devoted to the laudation of the officers, who “from the first days of the revolution have had to endure a diminution of their rights,” and undeserved insults on the part of soldier masses “concealing their cowardice under idealistic slogans.” At a time when his closest assistants, Stankevich, Voitinsky and others, were protesting against the taunting of soldiers, Kerensky demonstratively associated himself with this business, crowning it with a provocative order from the War Minister and Head of the Government. Kerensky subsequently acknowledged that as early as the end of July he had in his hands “accurate information” as to an officers’ plot grouped around headquarters. ’The head committee of the League of Officers,” to quote Kerensky, “appointed active conspirators from its midst, and its members were agents of the conspiracy in various localities. They gave to the

legal actions of the League the necessary tone." That is perfectly correct. We need only add that "the necessary tone" was a tone of slander against the army, the committees, and the revolution – that is, the very tone of Kerensky's order of August 23.

How shall we explain this riddle? That Kerensky had no consistent and thought-out policy is absolutely indubitable. But he must needs have been altogether out of his senses, in order with knowledge of an officer's plot to put his head under the knife of the plotters and at the same time to help them disguise themselves. The explanation of the conduct of Kerensky, incomprehensible at first glance, is in reality very simple: he was himself at that time a party to the plot against the baffled régime of the February revolution.

When the time came for revelations, Kerensky himself testified that from the Cossack circles, from officers, and from bourgeois politicians, proposals of a personal dictatorship had come to him more than once. "But they fell upon unfertile soil ..." The position of Kerensky was at any rate, then, such that the leaders of counter-revolution were able without risk to exchange opinions with him about a coup d'etat. "The first conversations on the subject of a dictatorship, taking the form of a slight feeling out of the ground," began – according to Denikin – at the beginning of June, that is, during the preparations for the offensive. Kerensky not infrequently participated in these conversations, and in such cases it was assumed as a matter of course, especially by Kerensky himself, that he would occupy the center of the dictatorship. Sukhanov rightly says of Kerensky: "He was a Kornilovist – only on the condition that he himself should stand at the head of

the Kornilovists.” During the collapse of the offensive, Kerensky promised Kornilov and the other generals far more than he could fulfill “During his journeys on the front,” relates General Lukomsky, “Kerensky would often pump up his courage and discuss with his companions the question of creating a firm power, of forming a directory, or of turning over the power to a dictator.” In conformity with his character, Kerensky would introduce into these conversations an element of formlessness, a slovenly, dilettante element. The generals, on the other hand, would incline towards military precision.

These casual participations of Kerensky in the conversations of the generals gave a certain legalization to the idea of a military dictatorship, a thing which, out of cautiousness before the not yet strangled revolution, they most often called by the name of “directory.” What role historic recollections about the government of France after the Thermidor played here, it would be difficult to say. But aside from questions of mere verbal disguise, the directory presented in the first place this indubitable advantage, that it permitted a subordination of personal ambitions. In a directory, places ought to be found not only for Kerensky and Kornilov, but also for Savinkov, even for Filonenko – in general, for people of “iron will.” as the candidates themselves expressed it. Each of them cherished in his own mind the thought of passing over afterward from the collective to the single dictatorship.

For a conspiratorial bargain with headquarters Kerensky therefore did not have to make any abrupt change: it was sufficient to develop and continue what he had already begun. He assumed, moreover, that he could give to the conspiracy of the generals a suitable direction, bringing it

down not only on the heads of the Bolsheviks, but also, within certain limits, upon his allies and tiresome guardians, the Compromisers. Kerensky maneuvered in such a way that, without exposing the conspirators completely, he could adequately frighten them and involve them in his own design. In this he went to the very limit beyond which the head of a government would become an illegal conspirator. “Kerensky needed an energetic pressure upon him from the right, from the capitalist cliques, the Allied embassies, and especially from headquarters,” wrote Trotsky early in September, “in order to enable him to get his own hands absolutely free. Kerensky wanted to use the revolt of the generals in order to reinforce his own dictatorship.”

The State Conference was the critical moment. Carrying home from Moscow, along with the illusion of unlimited opportunities, a humiliating sense of his personal failure, Kerensky finally decided to cast away all hesitations and show himself to them in his full stature. But whom did he mean by “them”? Everybody – but above all the Bolsheviks, who had placed the mine of a general strike under his gorgeous national tableau. In doing this he would also settle matters once for all with the Rights, with all those Guchkovs and Miliukovs who would not take him seriously, who made fun of his gestures and considered his power the shadow of a power. And finally he would give a good reprimand to “them,” the compromisist tutors, the hateful Tseretelli who kept correcting and instructing him, Kerensky, the chosen of the nation, even at the State Conference. Kerensky firmly and finally decided to show the whole world that he was by no means a “hysteric,” a “juggler,” a “ballerina,” as the Guard and Cossack officers

were more and more openly calling him, but a man of iron who had closed tight the doors of his heart and thrown the key in the ocean in spite of the prayers of the beautiful unknown in the loge at the theater.

Stankevich remarked in Kerensky in those days, “a desire to speak some new word answering the universal alarm and consternation of the country. Kerensky … decided to introduce disciplinary punishments into the army; probably he was also ready to propose other decisive measures to the government.” Stankevich knew only that part of his chief’s intentions which the latter deemed it timely to communicate to him. In reality the designs of Kerensky at that time already went considerably further. He had decided at one blow to cut the ground under the feet of Kornilov by carrying out the latter’s program, and thus binding the bourgeoisie to himself. Guchkov had been unable to move the troops to an offensive; he, Kerensky, had done it. Kornilov would not be able to carry out the program of Kornilov; he, Kerensky, could. The Moscow strike had reminded him, it is true, that there would be obstacles on this road, but the July Days had shown that it was possible to overcome them. Now again it was only necessary to carry the job through to the end, not permitting the friends on the left to get hold of your coat-tails, First of all it was necessary to change completely the Petrograd garrison: the revolutionary regiments must be replaced by “healthy” detachments, who would not be always glancing round at the soviets. There would be no chance to talk of this plan with the Executive Committee. And why indeed should that be necessary? The government had been recognized as independent and crowned under that banner in Moscow. To be sure, the

Compromisers understood independence only in a formal sense, as a means of pacifying the Liberals. But he, Kerensky, would convert the formal into the material. Not for nothing had he declared in Moscow that he was neither with the Rights nor the Lefts, and that therein lay his strength. Now he would prove this in action!

After the conference Kerensky's line and the line of the Executive Committee had continued to diverge: the Compromisers were afraid of the masses, Kerensky of the possessing classes. The popular masses were demanding the abolition of the death penalty at the front; Kornilov, the Kadets, the embassies of the Entente, were demanding its introduction at the rear.

On August 19, Kornilov telegraphed the Minister-President: "I insistently assert the necessity of subordinating to me the Petrograd district." Headquarters was openly stretching its hand toward the capital. On August 24, the Executive Committee summoned the courage to demand vocally that the government put an end to "counter-revolutionary methods," and undertake "without delay and with all energy" the realization of the democratic transformation. This was a new language. Kerensky was compelled to choose between accommodating himself to a democratic platform, which with all its meagerness might lead to a split with the Liberals and generals, and the program of Kornilov which would inexorably lead to a conflict with the soviets. Kerensky decided to extend his hand to Kornilov, to the Kadets, to the Entente. He wanted to avoid an open conflict on the right at any cost.

It is true that on August 21, the grand dukes Mikhail Alexandrovich and Pavel Alexandrovich were put under

house arrest, and a few other persons at the same time placed under observation. But there was nothing serious in all that, and Kerensky was compelled to liberate the arrestees immediately. “It seems,” he said in subsequent testimony on the Kornilov affair, “that we had been consciously led off on a false scent.” To this it is only necessary to add – “with our own co-operation.” It was perfectly clear that for serious conspirators – that is, for the whole right wing of the Moscow Conference – it was not at all a question of restoring monarchy, but of establishing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the people. It was in this sense that Kornilov and all his colleagues rejected, not without indignation, the charge of his, monarchist-designs. To be sure, there were former officials, *aides-de-camp*, ladies-in-waiting, Black Hundred courtiers, witch-doctors, monks, ballerinas, whispering here and there in the back yards. That was a thing of no consequence whatever. The victory of the bourgeoisie could come only in the form of a military dictatorship. The question of monarchy could rise only at some future stage, and then too on the basis of a bourgeois counter-revolution, not of Rasputin’s ladies-in-waiting.

For the given period the real thing was the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the people under the banner of Kornilov. Seeking an alliance with this camp, Kerensky was all the more willing to screen himself from the suspicions of the Left with a fictitious arrest of grand dukes. The trick was so obvious that the Moscow Bolshevik paper wrote at the time: “To arrest a pair of brainless puppets from the Romanov family and leave at liberty … the military clique of the army commanders with Kornilov at the head – that is to deceive the people ...” The Bolsheviks were hated for

this, too, that they saw everything, and talked out loud about it. Kerensky's inspiration and guide in those critical days had come to be Savinkov – a mighty seeker of adventures, a revolutionist of the sporting type, one who had acquired a scorn for the masses in the school of the individual terror, a man of talent and will – qualities which had not, however, prevented him from becoming for a number of years an instrument in the hands of the famous provocateur, Azef – a sceptic and a cynic, who believed, not without foundation, that he had a right to look down upon Kerensky, and while holding his right hand to his visor respectfully to lead him by the nose with his left. Savinkov imposed himself upon Kerensky as a man of action, and upon Kornilov as a genuine revolutionist with a historic name. Miliukov has a curious story of the first meeting between the commissar and the general, as told by Savinkov. "General," said Savinkov, "I know that if conditions arise in which you ought to shoot me, you will shoot me." After a prolonged pause he added: "But if conditions arise in which I have to shoot you, I will do that too.," Savinkov was fond of literature, knew Corneille and Hugo, and was inclined to the lofty genre. Kornilov intended to get rid of the revolution without regard to the formulae of pseudo-classicism and romanticism, but the general, too, was not a stranger to the charm of a "strong artistic style." The words of the former terrorist must have tickled pleasantly the heroic principle buried in the breast of the former member of the Black Hundreds.

In one of the later newspaper articles, obviously inspired and perhaps also written by Savinkov, his own plans were quite lucidly explained: "While still a commissar ..." says the article, "Savinkov came to the conclusion that the

Provisional Government was incapable of getting the country out of its difficult situation, Here other forces must be brought into play. However, all the work in that direction could be done only under the banner of the Provisional Government, and in particular of Kerensky. It would have to be a revolutionary dictatorship established by an iron hand. That iron hand Savinkov saw in General Kornilov." Kerensky as a "revolutionary" screen, Kornilov as an iron hand. As to the role of the third party, the article has nothing to say, but there is no doubt that Savinkov, in reconciling the commander-in-chief with the prime minister, had some thought of crowding them both out. At one time this unspoken thought came so close to the surface that Kerensky, just on the eve of the Conference and against the protest of Kornilov, compelled Savinkov to resign. however, like everything else that happened in that sphere, the resignation was not conclusive. "On the 17th of August it was announced," testified Filonenko, "that Savinkov and I would keep our posts, and that the Minister-President had accepted in principle the program expounded in the report presented by General Kornilov, Savinkov and me." Savinkov, to whom Kerensky on August 17, "gave orders to draft a law for measures to be adopted in the rear," created to this end a commission under the presidency of General Apushkin. Although seriously fearing Savinkov, Kerensky definitely decided to use him for his own great plan, and not only kept his place for him in the war ministry but gave him one in the ministry of the navy to boot. That meant, according to Miliukov, that for the government "the time had come to take some definite measures even at the risk of bringing the Bolsheviks into the street." Savinkov on this subject "frankly stated that with two regiments it would be easy to put down a

Bolshevik revolt and break up the Bolshevik organizations.”

Both Kerensky and Savinkov perfectly understood, especially after the Moscow Conference, that the compromisist soviets would in no case accept the program of Kornilov. The Petrograd soviet, having only yesterday demanded the abolition of the death penalty at the front, would rise with redoubled strength against the extension of the death penalty to the rear. The danger, therefore, was that the movement against the coup d’etat planned by Kerensky might be led, not by the Bolsheviks, but by the soviets. However, we must not stop for that of course: it is a question of saving the country!

“On the 22nd of August,” writes Kerensky, “Savinkov went to headquarters at my direction in order, among other things (!) to demand of General Kornilov that he place a cavalry corps at the disposal of the government.” Savinkov himself, when it came his turn to justify himself before public opinion, described his mission in the following terms; “To get from General Kornilov a cavalry corps for the actual inauguration of martial law in Petrograd and for the defense of the Provisional Government against any attempt whatever, in particular (!) an attempt of the Bolsheviks who ... according to information received from a foreign intelligence service, were again preparing an attack in connection with a German siege and an insurrection in Finland The fantastic information of the Intelligence Service was used simply to cover the fact that the government itself, in the words of Miliukov, was assuming the “risk of bringing the Bolsheviks into the street.” That is, it was ready to provoke an insurrection. And since the publication of the decree establishing a

military dictatorship was designated for the last days of August, Savinkov accommodated to that date the anticipated insurrection.

On the 25th of August, the Bolshevik organ Proletarian was suppressed without any external motive. The Worker, which came out in its place, declared that its predecessor had been “closed the day after it had summoned the workers and soldiers, in connection with the breach on the Riga front, to self-restraint and tranquility Whose hand is taking such care that the workers shall not know that the party is warning them against provocation?” That question was directly to the point. The fate of the Bolshevik press was in the hands of Savinkov. The suppression of the paper gave him two advantages: it irritated the masses and it prevented the party from protecting them against a provocation which came this time from governmental high places.

According to the minutes of headquarters – perhaps a little polished up, but in general fully corresponding to the situation and the persons involved – Savinkov informed Kornilov: “Your demands, Lavr Georgievich, will be satisfied in a few days. But the government fears that in connection with this, serious complications may arise in Petrograd … The publication of your demands will be a signal for a coming-out of the Bolsheviks. It is not known what attitude the soviets will take to the new law. The latter may also oppose the government. Hence I request you to give an order that the third cavalry corps be sent to Petrograd toward the end of August and placed at the disposition of the Provisional Government. In case the members of the soviets as well as the Bolsheviks come out, we shall have to take action against them.” Kerensky’s emissary added

that the action would have to be very decisive and ruthless-to which Kornilov answered that he ’understands no other kind of action.” Afterward, when it became necessary to justify himself, Savinkov added, “... if at the moment of the insurrection of the Bolsheviks, the soviets should be Bolshevik”. But that is too crude a trick. The decree announcing the *coup d'etat* of Kerensky was to come out in three or four days. It was thus not a question of some future soviets, but of those in existence at the end of August. In order that there should be no misunderstanding, and the Bolsheviks should not come out “before the proper moment” the following sequence of actions was agreed upon: First concentrate a cavalry corps in Petrograd, then declare the capital under martial law, and only after that publish the new laws which were to provoke a Bolshevik insurrection. In the minutes of headquarters this plan is written down in black and white. “In order that the Provisional Government shall know exactly when to declare the Petrograd military district under martial law and when to publish the new law, it is necessary that General Kornilov shall keep him (Savinkov) accurately informed by telegraph of the time when the corps wilt approach Petrograd.”

The conspiring generals understood, says Stankevich, “that Savinkov and Kerensky ... wanted to carry out some sort of *coup d'etat* with the help of the staff. Only this was needed. They hastily agreed about all demands and conditions. Stankevich, who was loyal to Kerensky, makes the reservation that at headquarters, they mistakenly associated” Kerensky with Savinkov. But how could these two be dissociated, once Savinkov had arrived with precisely formulated instructions from Kerensky? Kerensky

himself writes: “On the 25th of August, Savinkov returns from headquarters and reports to me that the troops to be at the disposition of the Provisional Government will be sent according to instructions.” The evening of the 26th was designated for the adoption by the government of the law on measures for the rear, which was to be the prologue for decisive action by the cavalry corps. Everything was ready – it remained only to press the button.

The events, the documents, the testimony of the participants, and finally the confession of Kerensky himself, unanimously bear witness that the Minister-President, without the knowledge of a part of his own government, behind the back of the soviets which had given him the power, in secrecy from the party of which he considered himself a member, had entered into agreement with the highest generals of the army for a radical change in the state régime with the help of armed forces. In the language of the criminal law this kind of activity has a perfectly definite name – at least in those cases where the undertaking does not come off victorious. The contradiction between the “democratic” character of Kerensky’s policy and his plan of saving the government with the help of the sword, can seem insoluble only to a superficial view. In reality the cavalry plan flowed inevitably from the compromisist policy. In explaining the law of this process it is possible to abstract to a considerable extent, not only from the personality of Kerensky, but even from the peculiarities of the national milieu. It is a question of the objective logic of compromisism in the conditions of revolution.

Friedrich Ebert, the people’s plenipotentiary of Germany, a

compromisist and a democrat, not only acted under the guidance of the Hohenzollern generals behind the back of his own party, but also at the beginning of December 1918 became a direct participant in a military plot having as its goal the arrest of the highest soviet body, and the declaration of Ebert himself as President of the Republic. It is no accident that Kerensky subsequently declared Ebert the ideal statesman.

When all their schemes – those of Kerensky, Savinkov, Kornilov – had gone to smash, Kerensky, to whom fell the none too easy work of obliterating the tracks, testified as follows: “After the Moscow Conference it was clear to me that the next attempt against the government would be from the right and not the left.” It is not to be doubted that Kerensky feared headquarters, and feared that sympathy with which the bourgeoisie surrounded the military conspirators; but the point is that Kerensky thought it necessary to struggle against headquarters, not with a cavalry corps, but by carrying out in his own name the program of Kornilov. The double-faced accomplice of the Prime Minister was not merely fulfilling an ordinary mission – for that a telegram in code from the Winter Palace to Moghiliev would have been enough. No, he went as an intermediary to reconcile Kornilov with Kerensky, to bring their plans, that is, into agreement, and thus guarantee that the *coup d'etat* should proceed so far as possible legally. It was as though Kerensky said through Savinkov: “Go ahead, but within the limits of my scheme. You will thus avoid risk and get almost everything you want.” Savinkov on his own part added the hint: “Do not go prematurely beyond the limits of Kerensky’s plan.” Such was that peculiar equation with three unknown quantities.

Only in this way is it possible to understand Kerensky's appealing to headquarters through Savinkov for a cavalry corps. The conspirators were addressed by a highly placed conspirator, preserving his legality, and himself aspiring to stand at the head of the conspiracy.

Among the directions given to Savinkov, only one seemed a measure actually directed against the conspirators on the right: it concerned the head committee of the League of Officers, whose dissolution had been demanded by a Petrograd conference of Kerensky's party. But here a remarkable thing is the very formulation of the order: "... in so far as possible to dissolve the League of Officers." Still more remarkable is the fact that Savinkov not only did not find any such possibility at all, but did not seek it. The question was simply buried as untimely. The very order had been given merely to have something on paper for justification before the Lefts. The words "so far as possible" meant that the order was not to be carried out. As though to emphasize the decorative character of this order, it was placed first on the list.

Attempting at least to weaken a little the deadly meaning of the fact that, in expectation of a blow from the right, he had removed the revolutionary regiments from the capital, and simultaneously appealed to Kornilov for "reliable" troops, Kerensky later referred to the three sacramental conditions with which he had surrounded the summoning of the cavalry corps. Thus his agreement to subordinate to Kornilov the Petrograd military district Kerensky had conditioned upon the separation of the capital and its immediate suburbs from the district, so that the government would not be wholly in the hands of headquarters. For as Kerensky expressed himself among

his own friends: “We here would be eaten up.” This condition merely shows that in his dream of subordinating the generals to his own designs, Kerensky had no weapon in his hands but impotent chicanery. Kerensky’s desire not to be eaten alive can be credited without demonstration. The two other conditions amounted to nothing more: Kornilov was not to include in the expeditionary corps the so-called “Savage Division” consisting of Caucasian mountaineers, and was not to put General Krymov in command of the corps. So far as concerned defending the interests of the democracy, that really meant swallowing the camel and choking on the gnat. But so far as concerned disguising a blow at the revolution, Kerensky’s conditions were incomparably more purposeful. To send against the Petrograd workers Caucasian mountaineers who did not speak Russian would have been too imprudent; even the tzar in his day never made up his mind to that! The inconvenience of appointing General Krymov, about whom the Executive Committee possessed some rather definite information, Savinkov convincingly explained at headquarters on the ground of their common interest: “It would be undesirable,” he said, “in case of disturbances in Petrograd that these disturbances should be put down by General Krymov. Public opinion might perhaps connect with his name motives by which he is not guided ...” Finally, the very fact that the head of the government, in summoning a military detachment to the capital, anticipated events with that strange request: not to send the Savage Division and not to appoint Krymov, convicts Kerensky as clearly as he could be convicted of possessing advance knowledge, not only of the general scheme of the conspiracy, but also of the constituent units of the punitive expedition, and the candidates for its more

important executive positions.

Moreover, no matter how things had stood in these secondary points, it was perfectly obvious that a cavalry corps of Kornilov could not be of any use in defending “the democracy.” On the contrary, Kerensky could not possibly doubt that of all the units in the army this corps would be the most reliable weapon against the revolution. To be sure it might have been well to have a detachment in Petrograd personally loyal to Kerensky, who was elevating himself above the Rights and Lefts. However, as the whole further course of events demonstrates, no such troops existed in nature. For the struggle against the revolution there was nobody but Kornilov men, and to them Kerensky had recourse.

These military preparations only supplemented the political ones. The general course of the Provisional Government during the not quite two weeks separating the Moscow Conference from the insurrection of Kornilov, would have been enough in itself essentially to prove that Kerensky was getting ready, not for a struggle against the Right, but for a united front with the Right against the people. Ignoring the protests of the Executive Committee against this counter-revolutionary policy, the government on August 26 took a bold step to meet the landlords with its unexpected decree doubling the price of grain. The hatefulness of this measure – which was introduced, moreover, upon the spoken demand of Rodzianko, – put the government almost in the position of consciously provoking the hungry masses. Kerensky was clearly trying to win over the extreme right flank of the Moscow Conference with an immense bribe. “I am yours!” he hastened to cry to the landlords on the eve of a cavalry

assault upon what was left of the February revolution.

Kerensky’s testimony before the commission of inquiry named by himself, was disgraceful. Although appearing in the character of a witness, the head of the government really felt himself to be the chief of the accused, and moreover, one caught red-handed. The experienced judiciary officials, who excellently well understood the mechanics of the events, pretended to take seriously the explanations of the head of the government, but all other mortals – among them the members of Kerensky’s own party – quite frankly asked themselves how one and the same cavalry corps might be useful both for accomplishing a coup d’etat and for preventing it. It was just a little too reckless on the part of the “Social Revolutionary” to bring into the capital a force which had been composed for the purpose of strangling it. The Trojans, to be sure, did once bring a hostile detachment into the walls of their city, but they were at least ignorant of what was inside the belly of the wooden horse. And even so an ancient historian disputes the story of the poet: in the opinion of Pausanius, you can believe Homer only if you consider the Trojans to have been “stupid men not possessed of a glimmer of reason.” What would the old man have said of the testimony of Kerensky?

Chapter 32: Kornilov's Insurrection

As early as the beginning of August, Kornilov had ordered the transfer of the Savage Division and the Third Cavalry Corps from the southwestern front to the sector of the railroad triangle, Nevel-Novosokolniki-Velikie Luki, the most advantageous base for an attack on Petrograd-this under the guise of reserves for the defense of Riga. At the same time the commander-in-chief had concentrated one Cossack division in the region between Vyborg and Byeloostrov. This fist thrust into the very face of the capital – from Byeloostrov to Petrograd is only thirty kilometers! – was given out as a preparation of reserves for possible operations in Finland. Thus even before the Moscow Conference four cavalry divisions had been moved into position for the attack on Petrograd, and these were the divisions considered most useful against Bolsheviks. Of the Caucasian division it was customary in Kornilov's circle to remark: "Those mountaineers don't care whom they slaughter." The strategic plan was simple. The three divisions coming from the south were to be transported by railroad to Tzarskoe Selo, Gatchina, and Krasnoe Selo, in order from those points "*upon receiving* information of disorders beginning in Petrograd, *and not later than* the morning of September 1" to advance on foot for the occupation of the southern part of the capital on the left bank of the Neva. The division quartered in Finland was at the same time to occupy the northern part of the capital.

Through the mediation of the League of Officers Kornilov

had got in touch with Petrograd patriotic societies who had at their disposal, according to their own words, 2,000 men excellently armed but requiring experienced officers to lead them. Kornilov promised to supply commanders from the front under the pretext of leave-of-absence. In order to keep watch of the mood of the Petrograd workers and soldiers and the activity of revolutionists, a secret intelligence service was formed, at the head of which stood a colonel of the Savage Division, Heiman. The affair was conducted within the framework of military regulations. The conspiracy made use of the headquarters' apparatus.

The Moscow Conference merely fortified Kornilov in his plans. Miliukov, to be sure, according to his own story, recommended a delay on the ground that Kerensky still enjoyed a certain popularity in the provinces. But this kind of advice could have no influence upon the impatient general. The question after all was not about Kerensky, but about the soviets. Moreover, Miliukov was not a man of action, but a civilian, and still worse a professor. Bankers, industrialists, Cossack generals were urging him on. The metropolitans had given him their blessing. Orderly Zavoiko offered to guarantee his success. Telegrams of greeting were coming from all sides. The Allied embassies took an active part in the mobilization of the counter-revolutionary forces. Sir Buchanan held in his hands many of the threads of the plot. The military attache's of the Allies at headquarters assured him of their most cordial sympathies. "The British attache in particular" testifies Denikin, "did this in a touching form." Behind the embassies stood their governments. In a telegram of August 23, a commissar of the Provisional Government

abroad, Svatikov, reported from Paris that in a farewell reception the Foreign Minister Ribot had “inquired with extraordinary eagerness who among those around Kerensky was a man of force and energy. And President Poincare had “asked many questions … about Kornilov,” All this was known at headquarters. Kornilov saw no reason to postpone and wait. On or about the 20th, two cavalry divisions were advanced further in the direction of Petrograd. On the day Riga fell, four officers from each regiment of the army were summoned to headquarters, about 4000 in all, “for the study of English bomb-throwing.” To the most reliable of these officers it was immediately explained that the matter in view was to put down “Bolshevik Petrograd” once for all. On the same day an order was given from headquarters to supply two of the cavalry divisions with several boxes of hand grenades: they would be the most useful in street fighting. “It was agreed,” writes the chief-of-staff, Lukomsky, “that everything should be ready by the 26th of August.”

As the troops of Kornilov approached Petrograd an inside organization “was to come out in Petrograd, occupy Smolny Institute and try to arrest the Bolshevik chiefs.” To be sure in Smolny Institute the Bolshevik chiefs appeared only at meetings, whereas continually present there was the Executive Committee which had appointed the ministers, and continued to number Kerensky among its vice-presidents. But in a great cause it is not possible or necessary to observe the fine points of things. Kornilov at least did not bother about them. “It is time,” he said to Lukomsky, “to hang the German agents and spies, Lenin first of all, and disperse the Soviet of Workers’ and Peasants’ Deputies – yes, and disperse it so it will never

get together again.

Kornilov firmly intended to give the command of the operations to Krymov, who in his own circles enjoyed the reputation of a bold and resolute general. “Krymov was at that time happy and full of the joy of life,” says Denikin, “and looked with confidence into the future.” At headquarters they looked with confidence upon Krymov. “I am convinced,” said Kornilov, “that he will not hesitate, if need arises, to hang the whole membership of the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.” The choice of this general, so happy and full of the joy of life, was consequently most appropriate.

At the height of these labors, which drew attention from the German front, Savinkov arrived at headquarters in order to dot the i’s of an old agreement, and introduce some secondary changes into it. Savinkov named the same date for the blow against the common enemy as that which Kornilov had long ago designated for his action against Kerensky: the semi-anniversary of the revolution. In spite of the fact that the conspiracy had split into two halves, both sides were trying to operate with the common elements of the plan – Kornilov for the purpose of camouflage, Kerensky in order to support his own illusions. The proposal of Savinkov played perfectly into the hands of headquarters: the government had presented its head, and Savinkov was ready to slip the noose. The generals at headquarters rubbed their hands:

“He’s biting!” they exclaimed like happy fishermen. Kornilov was quite ready to make the proposed concessions, which cost him nothing. What difference will the non-subordination of the Petrograd garrison to

headquarters make, once the Kornilov troops have entered the capital? Having agreed to the other two conditions, Kornilov immediately violated them: the Savage Division was placed in the vanguard and Krymov at the head of the whole operation. Kornilov did not consider it necessary to choke on the gnats.

The Bolsheviks debated the fundamental problems of their policy openly: a mass party cannot do otherwise. The government and headquarters could not but know that the Bolsheviks were restraining the masses, and not summoning them to action. But as the wish is father to the thought, so political needs become the basis for a prognosis. All the ruling classes were talking about an impending insurrection because they were in desperate need of one. The date of the insurrection would approach or recede a few days from time to time. In the War Ministry – that is, in the office of Savinkov – according to the press, the impending insurrection was regarded “very seriously.” **Rech** stated that the Bolshevik faction of the Petrograd soviet was assuming the responsibility for the attack. Miliukov was to such an extent involved in this matter of the pretended insurrection of the Bolsheviks in his character of politician, that he has considered it a matter of honor to support the tale in his character of historian. “In subsequently published documents of the Intelligence Service,” he writes, “new assignments of German money for Trotsky’s enterprise relate to exactly this period.” The learned historian, together with the Russian Intelligence Service, forgets that Trotsky – whom the German staff for the convenience of the Russian patriots was kind enough to mention by name – was “exactly at this period,” from the 23rd of July to the 4th of September, locked up in

prison. The fact that the earth's axis is merely an imaginary line does not of course prevent the earth from rotating on its axis. In like manner the Kornilov operations rotated round an imaginary insurrection of the Bolsheviks as round its own axis. That was amply sufficient for the period of preparation. But for the *denouement* something a little more substantial was needed.

One of the leading military conspirators, the officer Vinberg, revealing in his interesting notes what was going on behind the scenes in this business, wholly confirms the assertion of the Bolsheviks that a vast work of military provocation was in progress. Even Miliukov is obliged, under the whip of facts and documents, to admit that "the suspicions of the extreme left circles were correct: agitation in the factories was undoubtedly one of the tasks which the officers' organizations were supposed to fulfill" But even this did not help: "The Bolsheviks," complains the same historian, decided "not to be put upon," and the masses did not intend to go out without the Bolsheviks. However, even this obstacle had been taken into consideration in the plan, and paralyzed as it were in advance. The "republican center," as the leading body of the conspirators in Petrograd was called, decided simply to replace the Bolsheviks. The business of imitating a revolutionary insurrection was assigned to the Cossack colonel, Dutov. In January 1918, Dutov, to a question from his political friends: "What was to have happened on the 28th of August, 1917?" answered as follows (the quotation is verbatim): "Between the 28th of August and the 2nd of September I was to take action in the form of a Bolshevik insurrection." Everything had been foreseen. This plan had not been labored over by the officers of the general staff

for nothing.

Kerensky, on his side, after the return of Savinkov from Moghiliev, was inclined to think that all misunderstandings had been removed, and that headquarters was entirely drawn into his plan. “There were times,” writes Stankevich, “when all those active not only believed they were all acting in the same direction, but that they had a like conception of the very methods of action.” Those happy moments did not last long. An accident occurred, which like all historic accidents opened the sluice-gates of necessity. To Kerensky came the Octobrist, Lvov, a member of the first Provisional Government – that same Lvov who as the expansive Procuror of the Holy Synod had reported that this institution was filled with “idiots and scoundrels.” Fate had allotted to Lvov the task of discovering that under the appearance of a single plan there were in reality two plans, one of which was directed in a hostile manner against the other.

In his character as an unemployed but word-loving politician, Lvov had taken part in endless conversations about the transformation of the government and the salvation of the country – now at headquarters, now in the Winter Palace. This time he appeared with a proposal that he be permitted to mediate in the transformation of the cabinet along national lines, incidentally frightening Kerensky in a friendly manner with the thunders and lightnings of a discontented headquarters. The disturbed Minister-President decided to make use of Lvov in order to test the loyalty of the staff – and at the same time, apparently, that of his accomplice, Savinkov. Kerensky expressed his sympathy for the plan of a dictatorship – in which he was not hypocritical – and encouraged Lvov to

undertake further mediations – in which there was military trickery.

When Lvov again arrived at headquarters, weighed down now with the credentials of Kerensky, the generals looked upon his mission as a proof that the government was ripe for capitulation. Only yesterday Kerensky through Savinkov had promised to carry out the program of Kornilov if defended by a corps of Cossacks; today Kerensky was already proposing to the staff a co-operative transformation of the government. “It is time to put a knee in his stomach,” the generals justly decided. Kornilov accordingly explained to Lvov that since the forthcoming insurrection of the Bolsheviks has as its aim “the overthrow of the Provisional Government, peace with Germany, and the surrender to her by the Bolsheviks of the Baltic fleet,” there remains no other way out but “the immediate transfer of power by the Provisional Government into the hands of the supreme commander-in-chief.” To this Kornilov added: “... no matter who he may be” – but he had no idea of surrendering his place to anybody. His position had been fortified in advance by the oath of the Cavaliers of St. George, the League of Officers and the Council of the Cossack army. In order to make sure of the “safety” of Kerensky and Savinkov from the hands of the Bolsheviks, Kornilov urgently requested them to come to headquarters and place themselves under his personal protection. The orderly, Zavoiko, gave Lvov an unequivocal hint as to just what this protection would consist of.

Returning to Moscow, Lvov fervently urged Kerensky, as a “friend,” to agree to the proposal of Kornilov “in order to save the lives of the members of the Provisional Government, and above all his own life.” Kerensky could

not but understand at last that his political playing with the idea of dictatorship was taking a serious turn, and might end most unfortunately for him. Having decided to act, he first of all summoned Kornilov to the wire in order to verify the facts: Had Lvov correctly conveyed his message? Kerensky put his questions, not only in his own name, but in the name of Lvov, although the latter was not present during the conversation. “Such an action,” remarks Martynov, “appropriate for a detective, was of course improper for the head of a government.” Kerensky spoke of his arrival at headquarters the next day as a thing already decided upon. This whole dialogue on the direct wire seems incredible. The democratic head of the government and the “republican” general converse about yielding the power the one to the other, as though they were discussing a berth in a sleeping car!

Miliukov is entirely right when he sees in the demand of Kornilov that the power be transferred to him, merely “a continuation of all those conversations openly begun long ago about a dictatorship, a re-organization of the government, etc.” But Miliukov goes too far when he tries upon this basis to present the thing as though there had been in essence no conspiracy at headquarters. It is indubitable that Kornilov could not have presented his demand through Lvov, if he had not formerly been in a conspiracy with Kerensky. But this does not alter the fact that with one conspiracy – the common one – Kornilov was covering up another – his own private one. At the same time that Kerensky and Savinkov were intending to clean up the Bolsheviks, and in part the soviets, Kornilov was intending also to clean up the Provisional Government. It was just this that Kerensky did not want.

For several hours on the evening of the 26th headquarters was actually in a position to believe that the government was going to capitulate without a struggle. But that does not mean that there was no conspiracy; it merely means that the conspiracy seemed about to succeed. A victorious conspiracy always finds ways of legalizing itself “I saw General Kornilov after this conversation,” says Troubetskoy, a diplomat who represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at headquarters. “A sigh of relief lifted his breast, and to my question, ‘This means that the government is coming to meet you all along the line?’ he answered: ‘Yes.’“ Kornilov was mistaken. It was at that very moment that the government, in the person of Kerensky, had stopped coming to meet him.

Then headquarters has its own plans? Then it is not a question of dictatorship in general, but of a Kornilov dictatorship? To him, to Kerensky, they are offering as if in mockery the post of Minister of Justice? Kornilov had actually been so imprudent as to make this suggestion through Lvov. Confusing himself with the revolution, Kerensky shouted out to the Minister of Finance, Nekrasov: “I won’t hand over the revolution to them!” And the disinterested friend, Lvov, was immediately arrested and spent a sleepless night in the Winter Palace with two sentries at his feet, listening through the wall with a grinding of his teeth to “the triumphant Kerensky in the next room, the room of Alexander III, happy at the successful progress of his affairs and endlessly singing a *roulade* from an opera.” During those hours Kerensky experienced an extraordinary afflux of energy.

Petrograd in those days was living in a two-fold state of alarm. The political tension, purposely exaggerated by the

press, contained the material of an explosion. The fall of Riga had brought the front nearer. The question of evacuating the capital, raised by the events of the war long before the fall of the monarchy, now came up with new force. Well-to-do people were leaving town. The flight of the bourgeoisie was caused far more by fear of a new insurrection than by the advance of the enemy. On August 26th the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks repeated its warning: “A provocative agitation is being carried on by unknown persons supposedly in the name of our party.” The leading organs of the Petrograd soviet, the trade unions, and the shop and factory committees, announced on the same day that not one workers’ organization, and not one political party, was calling for any kind of demonstration. Nevertheless rumors of an overthrow of the government to occur on the following day did not cease for one minute. “In government circles,” stated the press, “they are talking of a unanimously adopted decision that all attempted manifestations shall be put down.” And measures had been taken to call out the manifestation before putting it down.

In the morning papers of the 27th there was not only no news of the insurrectionary intentions of headquarters, but, on the contrary, an interview with Savinkov declared that “General Kornilov enjoys the absolute confidence of the Provisional Government.” On the whole the semi-anniversary began in unusual tranquility The workers and soldiers avoided anything which might look like a demonstration; the bourgeoisie, fearing disorders, stayed at home; the streets stood empty; the tomb of the February martyrs on Mars Field seemed abandoned.

On the morning of that long-expected day which was to

bring the salvation of the country, the supreme commander-in-chief received a telegraphic command from the Minister-President: to turn over his duties to the chief-of-staff, and come immediately to Petrograd. This was a totally unexpected turn of affairs. The general understood – to quote his own words – that “here a double game was being played.” He might have said with more truth that his own double game had been discovered. Kornilov decided not to surrender. Savinkov’s urgings over the direct wire made no difference. “Finding myself compelled to act openly” – with this manifesto the commander-in-chief appealed to the people – ”I, General Kornilov, declare that the Provisional Government, under pressure from the Bolshevik majority of the soviets, is acting in full accord with the plans of the German general staff, and simultaneously with the impending descent of hostile forces upon the Riga coastline is murdering the army and unsettling the country from within.” Not wishing to surrender the power to the enemy, he, Kornilov “prefers to die upon the field of honor and battle.” Of the author of this manifesto Miliukov subsequently wrote, with a tinge of admiration: “resolute, scornful of juridical refinements, and accustomed to go directly toward the goal which he has once decided is right.” A commander-in-chief who withdraws troops from the enemy front in order to overthrow his own government certainly cannot be accused of a partiality for “juridical refinements.”

Kerensky removed Kornilov upon his sole personal authority. The Provisional Government had by that time ceased to exist. On the evening of the 26th the ministers had resigned – an act which, by a happy conjuncture of events, corresponded to the desires of all sides. Several

days before the break between headquarters and the government, General Lukomsky had already suggested to Lvov through Alladin, that “it would not be a bad idea to warn the Kadets that they should withdraw from the government before the 27th of August, so as to place the government in a difficult situation and themselves avoid any unpleasantness.” The Kadets did not fail to take cognizance of this suggestion. On the other side, Kerensky himself announced to the government that he considered it possible to struggle with the revolt of Kornilov “only on condition that the whole power be conferred upon him personally.” The rest of the ministers, it seemed, were only waiting for some such happy occasion to take their turn at resigning. Thus the Coalition received one more test. “The ministers from the Kadet Party,” writes Miliukov, “announced that they would resign for the given moment, without prejudicing the question of their future participation in the Provisional Government.” True to their traditions, the Kadets wanted to stay on the sidelines until the struggle was over, so that their decision might be guided by its outcome. They had no doubt that the Compromisers would keep their seats inviolable for them. Having thus relieved themselves of responsibility, the Kadets, along with all the other retired ministers, took part thereafter in a series of conferences of the government, conferences of a “private character.” The two camps who were preparing for a civil war grouped themselves, in a “private” manner, around the head of the government, who was endowed with all possible authorizations but no real power.

Upon a telegram from Kerensky received at headquarters reading, “Hold up all echelons moving towards Petrograd

and its districts, and return them to their last stopping-point," Kornilov wrote: "Do not carry out this order. Move the troops towards Petrograd." The military insurrection was thus firmly set in motion. This must be understood literally: three cavalry divisions, in railroad echelons, were advancing on the capital.

Kerensky's order to the soldiers of Petrograd read: "General Kornilov, having announced his patriotism and loyalty to the people ... has withdrawn regiments from the front ... and sent them against Petrograd." Kerensky wisely omitted to remark that the regiments were withdrawn from the front, not only with his knowledge, but at his direct command, in order to clean up that same garrison before whom he was now disclosing the treachery of Kornilov. The rebellious commander of course was not slow with his answer. "The traitors are not among us," his telegram reads, "but there in Petrograd, where for German money, with the criminal connivance of the government, they have been selling Russia." Thus the slander set in motion against the Bolsheviks found ever new roads.

That exalted nocturnal mood in which the President of the Council of Retired Ministers was singing arias from the opera, very quickly passed. The struggle with Kornilov, whatever turn it took, threatened dire consequences. "On the first night of the revolt of headquarters," writes Kerensky, "in the soldier and worker circles of Petrograd a persistent rumor went round associating Savinkov with the movement of General Kornilov." The rumor named Kerensky in the next breath after Savinkov, and the rumor was not wrong. Extremely dangerous revelations were to be feared in the future.

“Late at night on the 26th of August,” relates Kerensky, “the general administrator of the War Ministry entered my office in a great state of excitement. ‘Mr. Minister,’ Savinkov addressed me, standing at attention, ‘I ask you to arrest me immediately as an accomplice of General Kornilov. If, however, you trust me, I ask you to give me the opportunity to demonstrate to the people in action that I have nothing in common with the revoltees ...” “In answer to this announcement,” continued Kerensky, “I immediately appointed Savinkov temporary governor-general of Petersburg, endowing him with ample authority for the defense of Petersburg from the troops of General Kornilov.” Not content with that, at the request of Savinkov, Kerensky appointed Filonenko his assistant. The business of revolting and the business of putting down the revolt were thus concentrated within the narrow circle of the “directory.”

This so hasty naming of Savinkov governor-general was dictated to Kerensky by his struggle for political self-preservation. If Kerensky had betrayed Savinkov to the soviets, Savinkov would have immediately betrayed Kerensky. On the other hand, having received from Kerensky – not without blackmail – the possibility of legalizing himself by an overt participation in the actions against Kornilov, Savinkov was bound to do his best to exonerate Kerensky. The “governor-general” was needed not so much for the struggle against counter-revolution, as for covering up the tracks of the conspiracy. The friendly labors of the accomplices in this direction began immediately.

“At four o’clock on the morning of August 28th,” testifies Savinkov, “I returned to the Winter Palace, summoned by

Kerensky, and there found General Alexeiev and Tereshchenko. We all four agreed that the ultimatum of Lvov had been nothing more than a misunderstanding." The role of mediator in this early-morning conference belonged to the new governor-general. Miliukov was directing it all from behind the scenes. During the course of the day he will come out openly upon the stage. Alexeiev, although he had called Kornilov a sheep's brain, belonged to the same camp with him. The conspirators and their seconds made a last attempt to declare the whole business a "misunderstanding" – that is, to join hands in deceiving public opinion, in order to save what they could of the common plan. The Savage Division, General Krymov, the Cossack echelons, the refusal of Kornilov to retire, the march on the capital – all these things were the mere details of a "misunderstanding"! Frightened by the ominous tangle of circumstances, Kerensky was no longer shouting: "I will not hand over the revolution to them!" Immediately after the conference with Alexeiev he went to the journalists' room in the Winter Palace and demanded that they withdraw from the papers his manifesto declaring Kornilov a traitor. When in answer the journalists had made it clear that this was a physical impossibility, Kerensky exclaimed: "That's too bad." This miserable episode, described in the newspapers of the following day, illumines with marvelous clarity the figure of the now hopelessly entangled super-arbiter of the nation. Kerensky had so perfectly embodied in himself both the democracy and the bourgeoisie, that he had now turned out to be at the same time the supreme incarnation of governmental power and a criminal conspirator against it.

By the morning of the 28th, the split between the

government and the commander-in-chief had become an accomplished fact before the eyes of the whole country. The stock exchange immediately took a hand in the matter. Whereas it had reacted to the Moscow speech of Kornilov threatening the surrender of Riga with a fall in the value of Russian stocks, it reacted to the news of an open insurrection of the general with a rise of all values. With this annihilating appraisal of the February régime, the stock exchange gave unerring expression to the moods and hopes of the possessing classes who had no doubt of Kornilov's victory.

The chief-of-staff, Lukomsky, whom Kerensky the day before had ordered to take upon himself the temporary command, answered: "I do not consider it possible to take the command from General Kornilov, for that will be followed by an explosion in the army which will ruin Russia." With the exception of the commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, who after some delay declared his loyalty to the Provisional Government, the rest of the commanders in various tones of voice supported the demands of Kornilov. Inspired by the Kadets, the head committee of the League of Officers sent out a telegram to all the staffs of the army and fleet: "The Provisional Government, which has already more than once demonstrated to us its political incapacity, has now dishonored its name with acts of provocation and can no longer remain at the head of Russia ..." That same Lukomsky was the respected president of the League of Officers. At headquarters they said to General Krasnov, appointed to command the Third Cavalry Corps: "Nobody will defend Kerensky. This is only a promenade. Everything is ready."

A fair idea of the optimistic calculations of the leaders and

backers of the plot is conveyed by the code telegram of the aforementioned Prince Troubetskoy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “Soberly estimating the situation,” he writes, “it must be acknowledged that the whole commanding staff, an overwhelming majority of the officers, and the best of the rank-and-file elements of the army, are for Kornilov. On his side at the rear stand all the Cossacks, a majority of the military schools, and also the best fighting units. To these physical forces it is necessary to add the moral sympathy of all the non-socialist layers of the population, and in the lower orders ... an indifference which will submit to the least blow of the whip. There is no doubt that an enormous number of the March socialists will come quickly over to the side” of Kornilov in case of his victory. Troubetskoy here expressed not only the hopes of headquarters, but also the attitude of the Allied missions. In the Kornilov detachments advancing to the conquest of Petrograd, there were English armored cars with English operatives – and these we may assume constituted the most reliable units. The head of the English military mission in Russia, General Knox, reproached the American Colonel Robbins, for not supporting Kornilov: “I am not interested in the government of Kerensky,” said the British General, “it is too weak. What is wanted is a strong dictatorship. What is wanted is the Cossacks. This people needs the whip! A dictatorship – that is just what it needs.” All these voices from different quarters arrived at the Winter Palace, and had an alarming effect upon its inhabitants. The success of Kornilov seemed inevitable. Minister Nekrassov informed his friends that the game was completely up, and it remained only to die an honorable death. “Several eminent members of the Soviet,” affirms Miliukov, “foreseeing their fate in case of Kornilov’s victory,

had already made haste to supply themselves with foreign passports."

From hour to hour came the messages, one more threatening than the other, of the approach of Kornilov's troops. The bourgeois press seized them hungrily, expanded them, piled them up, creating an atmosphere of panic. At 12:30 noon on August 28th: "The troops sent by General Kornilov have concentrated themselves in the vicinity of Luga." At 2:30 in the afternoon; "Nine new trains containing the troops of Kornilov have passed through the station Oredezh. In the forward train is a railroad engineering battalion." At 3:00 p.m.: "The Luga garrison has surrendered to the troops of General Kornilov and turned over all its weapons. The station and all the government buildings of Luga are occupied by the troops of Kornilov." At 6:00 in the evening: "Two echelons of Kornilov's army have broken through from Narva and are within half a verst of Gatchina. Two more echelons are on the road to Gatchina." At two o'clock in the morning of the 29th: "A battle has begun at the Antropshino Station (33 kilometers from Petrograd) between government troops and the troops of Kornilov. Killed and wounded on both sides." By nightfall comes the news that Kaledin has threatened to cut off Petrograd and Moscow from the grain-growing south of Russia. "Headquarters," "commanders-in-chief at the front," "British mission," "officers," "echelons," "railroad battalions," "cossacks," "Kaledin" – all these words sounded in the Malachite Hall of the Winter Palace like the trumpets of the Last Judgement.

Kerensky himself acknowledges this in a somewhat softened form: "August 28th was the day of the greatest

wavering," he writes, "the greatest doubt as to the strength of the enemy, Kornilov, the greatest nervousness among the democracy." It is not difficult to imagine what lies behind those words. The head of the government was torn by speculations, not only as to which of the two camps was stronger, but as to which was personally the less dangerous to him. "We are neither with you on the right, nor with you on the left" – those words had seemed effective on the stage of the Moscow theater. Translated into the language of a civil war on the point of explosion, they meant that the Kerensky group might appear superfluous both to right and left. "We were all as though numb with despair," writes Stankevich, "seeing this drama unfold to the destruction of everything. The degree of our numbness may be judged by the fact that even after the split between headquarters and the government was before the eyes of the whole people, attempts were made to find some sort of reconciliation...

"A thought of mediation ... was in these circumstances spontaneously born," says Miliukov, who himself preferred to function in the capacity of mediator. On the evening of the 28th he appeared at the Winter Palace "to advise Kerensky to renounce the strictly formal viewpoint of the violation of law." The liberal leader, who understood that it is necessary to distinguish the kernel of a nut from the shell, was at that moment a most suitable person for the task of loyal intermediary. On the 13th of August, Miliukov had learned directly from Kornilov that he had set the 27th as the date for the revolt. On the following day, the 14th, Miliukov had demanded in his speech at the Conference that "the immediate adoption of the measures designated by the supreme commander-in-chief should not serve as a

pretext for suspicions, verbal threats, or even removals from office." Up to the 27th Kornilov was to remain above suspicion! At the same time Miliukov promised Kerensky his support – "voluntarily and without any argument." That would have been a good time to remember the hangman's noose which also, as they say, "supports without argument." Kerensky upon his side acknowledges that Miliukov, appearing with his proposal of mediation, "chose a very comfortable moment to demonstrate to me that the real power was on the side of Kornilov." The conversation ended so successfully that in conclusion Miliukov called the attention of his political friends to General Alexeiev as a successor to Kerensky against whom Kornilov would offer no objection. Alexeiev magnanimously gave his consent.

And after Miliukov came a greater than he. Late in the evening the British Ambassador Buchanan handed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs a declaration in which the representatives of the Allied Powers unanimously offered their good services "in the interests of humanity and the desire to avoid irrevocable misfortune." This official mediation between the government and the general in revolt was nothing less than support and insurance to the revolt. In reply, Tereshchenko expressed, in the name of the Provisional Government, "extreme astonishment" at the revolt of Kornilov, a greater part of whose program had been adopted by the government. In a state of loneliness and prostration, Kerensky could think of nothing better to do than to call one more of those everlasting conferences with his retired ministers. In the midst of this wholly disinterested business of killing time, some especially alarming news arrived as to the approach of the enemy's echelons. Nekrasov voiced an apprehension that "in a few

hours Kornilov's troops will probably be in Petrograd." The former ministers began to guess "how in those circumstances the governmental power would have to be formed." The thought of a directory again swam to the surface. The idea of including General Alexeiev in the staff of the "directory" found sympathy both right and left. The Kadet Kokoshkin thought that Alexeiev ought to be placed at the head of the government. According to some accounts, the proposal to tender the power to some other was made by Kerensky himself, with a direct reference to his conversation with Miliukov. Nobody objected. The candidacy of Alexeiev reconciled them all. Miliukov's plan seemed very, very near to realization. But just here – as is proper at the moment of highest tension – resounds a dramatic knock on the door. In the next room a deputation is waiting from the "Committee of Struggle against the Counter-Revolution." It was a most timely arrival. One of the most dangerous nests of counter-revolution was this pitiful, cowardly and treacherous conference of Kornilovists, intermediaries, and capitulators in the hall of the Winter Palace.

This new soviet body – The Committee of Struggle against Counter-Revolution – had been created at a joint session of both Executive Committees, the worker-soldiers' and the peasants'. It was created on the evening of the 27th, and consisted of specially delegated representatives of the three soviet parties from both executive committees, from the trade union center, and from the Petrograd soviet. This creation *ad hoc* of a fighting committee was in essence a recognition of the fact that the governing soviet bodies were themselves conscious of their decrepit condition, and their need of a transfusion of fresh blood for the purposes

of revolutionary action.

Finding themselves compelled to seek the support of the masses against the rebellious general, the Compromisers hastened to push their left shoulder forward. They immediately forgot all their speeches about how all questions of principle should be postponed to the Constituent Assembly. The Mensheviks announced that they would press the government for an immediate declaration of a democratic republic, a dissolution of the State Duma, and the introduction of agrarian reform. It was for this reason that the word “republic” first appeared in the announcement of the government about the treason of the commander-in-chief.

On the question of power, the Executive Committees considered it necessary for the time being to leave the government in its former shape – replacing the retired Kadets with democratic elements – and for a final solution of the problem to summon in the near future a congress of all those organizations which had united in Moscow on the platform of Cheidze. After midnight negotiations it became known, however, that Kerensky resolutely rejected the idea of a democratic control of the government. Feeling that the ground was slipping under him both to left and right, he was holding out with all his might for the idea of a “directory,” in which there was still room for his not yet dead dreams of a strong power. After renewed fruitless and wearisome debates in Smolny, it was decided to appeal again to the irreplaceable and one and only Kerensky, with the request that he agree to the preliminary project of the Executive Committees. At seven-thirty in the morning Tseretelli returned with the information that Kerensky would make no concession, that he demanded

“unconditional” support, but that he agreed to employ “all the powers of the state” in the struggle against the counter-revolution. Wearied out with their night’s vigil, the Executive Committees surrendered at last to that idea of a “directory” which was as empty as a knot-hole.

Kerensky’s solemn promise to throw “all the powers of the state” into the struggle with Kornilov did not, as we already know, prevent him from carrying on those negotiations with Miliukov, Alexeiev, and the retired ministers, about a peaceful surrender to headquarters – negotiations which were interrupted by a midnight knock on the door. Several days later the Menshevik, Bogdanov, one of the members of the Committee of Defense, made a report to the Petrograd soviet in cautious but unequivocal words about the treachery of Kerensky. “When the Provisional Government was wavering, and it was not clear how the Kornilov adventure would end, intermediaries appeared, such as Miliukov and General Alexeiev ...” But the committee of defense interfered and “with all energy” demanded an open struggle. “Under our influence,” continued Bogdanov, “the government stopped all negotiations and refused to entertain any proposition from Kornilov ...”

After the head of the government, yesterday’s conspirator against the left camp, had become today its political captive, the Kadet ministers who had resigned on the 26th only in a preliminary and hesitating fashion, announced that they would conclusively withdraw from the government, since they did not wish to share the responsibility for Kerensky’s action in putting down so patriotic, so loyal, and so nation-saving a rebellion. The retired ministers, the counselors, the friends – one after

another they all left the Winter Palace. It was, according to Kerensky himself, “a mass abandonment of a place known to be condemned to destruction.” There was one night, August 28-9, when Kerensky was actually walking about almost in “complete solitude” in the Winter Palace. The opera *bravuras* were no longer running in his head. “A responsibility lay upon me in those anguishingly long days and nights that was really super-human.” This was in the main a responsibility for the fate of Kerensky himself: everything else had already been accomplished over his head and without any attention being paid to him.

Chapter 33: The Bourgeoisie Measures Strength with the Democracy

ON the 28th of August, while fright was shaking the Winter Palace like a fever, the commander of the Savage Division, Prince Bagration, informed Kornilov by telegraph that “the natives would fulfill their duty to the fatherland and at the command of their supreme hero … would shed the last drop of their blood.” Only a few hours later the division came to a halt; and on the 31st of August a special deputation, with the same Bagration at the head, assured Kerensky that the division would submit absolutely to the Provisional Government. All this happened not only without a battle, but without the firing of a single shot. To say nothing of its last, the division did not shed even its first drop of blood. The soldiers of Kornilov never even made the attempt to employ weapons to force their way to Petrograd. The officers did not dare give them the command. The government troops were nowhere obliged to resort to force in stopping the onslaught of the Kornilov army. The conspiracy disintegrated, crumbled, evaporated in the air.

In order to understand this, it is only necessary to look closely at the powers which had come in conflict. First of all we must notice – and this will not be an unexpected discovery – that the staff of the conspiracy was the same old tzarist staff, composed of clerical people without brains, incapable of thinking out in advance two or three

moves in the vast game they had undertaken. Notwithstanding the fact that Kornilov had set the day of the insurrection several weeks in advance, nothing whatever had been foreseen or properly reckoned upon. The purely military preparation of the uprising was carried out in an inept, slovenly and light-headed manner. Complicated changes in the organization and commanding staff were undertaken on the eve of the action-just on the run. The Savage Division, which was to deal the first blow at the revolution, consisted all told of 1,350 fighters, and they were short 600 rifles, 1,000 lances and 500 sabers. Five days before the beginning of active fighting, Kornilov gave an order for the transformation of the division into a corps. This measure, which any schoolbook would condemn, was obviously considered necessary in order to attract the officers with higher pay. “A telegram stating that the lacking weapons would be supplied at Pskov,” writes Martynov, “was received by Bagration only on August 31st after the complete collapse of the whole enterprise.” The sending of instructors from the front to Petrograd was also taken up at headquarters only at the very last moment. The officers accepting the commission were liberally supplied with money and private cars, but the patriotic heroes were in no great hurry, it seems, to save the fatherland. Two days later railroad communications between headquarters and the capital were cut off, and the majority of the heroes had not yet arrived at the place of their proposed deeds.

The capital, however, had its own organization of Kornilovists numbering about 2,000. The conspirators here were divided into groups according to the special tasks allotted to them; seizure of armored automobiles; arrest

and murder of the more eminent members of the Soviet; arrest of the Provisional Government; capture of the more important public institutions. Vinberg, the president of the League of Military Duty, known to us above, says: “By the time Krymov’s troops arrived, the principal forces of the revolution were supposed to have already been broken, annihilated, or rendered harmless, so that Krymov’s task would be merely to restore order in the town.” At Moghiliev, to be sure, they considered this program exaggerated, and relied upon Krymov for most of the work, but headquarters did also expect very serious help from the detachments of the Republican Center. As it turned out, however, the Petrograd conspirators never showed themselves for an instant, never lifted a voice, never moved a finger; it was quite as though they did not exist in the world. Vinberg explains this mystery rather simply. It seems that the superintendent of the Intelligence Service, Colonel Heiman, spent the decisive hours in a roadhouse somewhere outside of town, while Colonel Sidorin, whose duty it was, under the immediate command of Kornilov, to co-ordinate the activities of all the patriotic societies of the capital, and Colonel Ducemetiere, the head of the military department, “had disappeared without a trace and could not be found anywhere.” The Cossack colonel Dutov, who was supposed to take action “in the guise of” Bolsheviks, subsequently complained: “I ran ... and called people to come into the streets, but nobody followed me.” The sums of money set aside for organization were, according to Vinberg, appropriated by the principal participants and squandered on dinner parties. Colonel Sidorin, according to Denikin’s assertion, “fled to Finland, taking with him the last remnants of the treasury of the organization, something around a hundred

or a hundred and fifty thousand rubles.” Lvov, whom we last saw under arrest in the Winter Palace, subsequently told about one of the secret contributors who was to deliver to some officers a considerable sum of money, but upon arriving at the designated place found the conspirators in such a state of inebriation that he could not deliver the goods. Vinberg himself thinks that if it had not been for these truly vexatious “accidents,” the plan might have been crowned with complete success. But the question remains: Why was a patriotic enterprise entered into and surrounded, for the most part, by drunkards, spendthrifts and traitors? Is it not because every historic task mobilizes the cadres that are adequate to it?

As regards personnel the conspiracy was in a bad case, beginning from the very top. “General Kornilov,” according to the right Kadet, Izgoyev, “was the most popular general ... among the peaceful population, but not among the soldiers, at least not among those in the rear whom I had an opportunity to observe.” By peaceful population, Izgoyev means the people of the Nevsky Prospect. To the popular masses, both front and rear, Kornilov was alien, hostile, hateful.

The general appointed to command the Third Cavalry Corps, Krasnov, a monarchist who soon after tried to become a vassal of Wilhelm II, expressed his surprise that “Kornilov conceived such a great undertaking, but himself remained at Moghiliev in a palace surrounded by Turkomen and shock troops, as though he did not believe in his own success.” To a question from the French journalist, Claude Anet, why Kornilov himself did not go to Petrograd at the decisive moment, the chief of the conspiracy answered: “I was sick. I had a serious attack of malaria, and was not in

possession of my usual energy.”

There were too many of these unfortunate accidents: it is always so when a thing is condemned to failure in advance. The moods of the conspirators oscillated between drunken toploftiness, when the ocean only came up to their knees, and complete prostration before the first real obstacle. The difficulty was not Kornilov’s malaria, but a far deeper, more fatal, and incurable disease paralyzing the will of the possessing classes.

The Kadets have seriously denied any counter-revolutionary intentions upon the part of Kornilov, understanding by that the restoration of the Romanov monarchy. As though that were the matter in question! The “republicanism” of Kornilov did not in the least prevent the monarchist Lukomsky from going hand in hand with him, nor did it prevent the president of the Union of Russian People, the Black Hundreds, Rimsky-Korsakov, from telegraphing Kornilov on the day of the uprising: “I heartily pray God to help you save Russia. I put myself absolutely at your disposal.” The Black Hundred partisans of tzarism would not stop for a cheap little thing like a republican flag. They understood that Kornilov’s program was to be found in himself, in his past, in the Cossack stripes on his trousers, in his connections and sources of financial support, and above all in his unlimited readiness to cut the throat of the revolution.

Designating himself in his manifestos as “the son of a peasant” Kornilov based the plan of his uprising wholly upon the Cossacks and the mountaineers. There was not a single infantry detachment among the troops deployed against Petrograd. The general had no access to the

muzhik and did not even try to discover any. There was at headquarters, to be sure, an agrarian reformer, some sort of “professor,” who was ready to promise every soldier a fantastic number of dessiatins of land, but the manifesto prepared upon this theme was not even issued. The generals were restrained from agrarian demagoguism by a well-justified dread of frightening and repelling the landlords.

A Moghiliev peasant, Tadeush, who closely observed the environs of the staff in those days, testifies that among the soldiers and in the villages nobody believed in the manifestos of the general. “He wants the power,” they said, “and not a word about the land and not a word about ending the war.” Upon life-and-death questions, the masses had somehow or other learned to find their way during the six months of revolution. Kornilov was offering the people war and a defense of the privileges of generals and the property of landlords. He could give them nothing more, and they expected nothing else from him. In his inability to rely upon the peasant infantry – evident in advance to the conspirators themselves – to say nothing of relying upon the workers, is expressed the socially outcast position of Kornilov’s clique.

The picture of political forces traced by the headquarters’ diplomat, Prince Trubetskoy, was correct in many things, but mistaken in one. Of that indifference of the people which made them ready “to submit to the least blow of the whip,” there was not a trace. On the contrary, the masses were as if only awaiting a blow of the whip in order to show what sources of energy and self-sacrifice were to be found in their depths. This mistake in estimating the mood of the masses brought all their other calculations to the

dust.

The conspiracy was conducted by those circles who were not accustomed to know how to do anything without the lower ranks, without labor forces, without cannon-fodder, without orderlies, servants, clerks, chauffeurs, messengers, cooks, laundresses, switchmen, telegraphers, stablemen, cab drivers. But all these little human bolts and links, unnoticeable, innumerable, necessary, were for the Soviet and against Kornilov. The revolution was omnipresent. It penetrated everywhere, coiling itself around the conspiracy. It had everywhere its eye, its ear, its hand.

The ideal of military education is that the soldier should act when unseen by the officer exactly as before his eyes. But the Russian soldiers and sailors of 1917, without carrying out official orders even before the eyes of the commanders, would eagerly catch on the fly the commands of the revolution, or still oftener fulfill them on their own initiative before they arrived. The innumerable servants of the revolution, its agents, its intelligence men, its fighters, had no need either of spurs or of supervision.

Formally the liquidation of the conspiracy was in the hands of the government, and the Executive Committee co-operated. In reality the struggle was carried on within totally different channels. While Kerensky, bending under the weight of a “more than human responsibility,” was measuring the floors of the Winter Palace in solitude, the Committee of Defense, also called the Military Revolutionary Committee, was taking action on a vast scale. Early in the morning instructions were sent by telegram to the railroad workers, and postal and telegraph

clerks, and soldiers. “All movements of troops” – so Dan reported on the same day – “are to be carried out at the direction of the Provisional Government when countersigned by the committee of People’s Defense.” Qualifications aside, this meant: The Committee of Defense deploys the troops under the firm name of Provisional Government. At the same time steps were taken for the destruction of Kornilovist nests in Petrograd itself. Searches and arrests were carried out in the military schools and officers’ organizations. The hand of the Committee was felt everywhere. There was little or no interest in the governor-general.

The lower soviet organizations in their turn did not await any summons from above. The principal effort was concentrated in the workers’ districts. During the hours of greatest vacillation in the government, and of wearisome negotiations between the Executive Committee and Kerensky, the district soviets were drawing more closely together and passing resolutions: to declare the inter-district conferences continuous; to place their representatives in the staff organized by the Executive Committee; to form a workers’ militia; to establish the control of the district soviets over the government commissars; to organize flying brigades for the detention of counter-revolutionary agitators. In the total, these resolutions meant an appropriation not only of very considerable governmental functions, but also of the functions of the Petrograd Soviet. The logic of the situation compelled the soviet institutions to draw in their skirts and make room for the lower ranks. The entrance of the Petrograd districts into the arena of the struggle instantly changed both its scope and its direction. Again the

inexhaustible vitality of the soviet form of organization was revealed. Although paralyzed above by the leadership of the Compromisers, the soviets were reborn again from below at the critical moment under pressure from the masses.

To the Bolshevik leaders of the districts, Kornilov's uprising had not been in the least unexpected. They had foreseen and forewarned, and they were the first to appear at their posts. At the joint session of the Executive Committees, on August 27, Sokolnikov announced that the Bolshevik party had taken all measures available to it in order to inform the people of the danger and prepare for defense; the Bolsheviks announced their readiness to co-ordinate their military work with the organs of the Executive Committee. At a night session of the Military Organization of the Bolsheviks, participated in by delegates of numerous military detachments, it was decided to demand the arrest of all conspirators, to arm the workers, to supply them with soldier instructors, to guarantee the defense of the capital from below, and at the same time to prepare for the creation of a revolutionary government of workers and soldiers. The Military Organization held meetings throughout the garrison; the soldiers were urged to remain under arms in order to come out at the first alarm.

"Notwithstanding the fact that they were in a minority," writes Sukhanov, "it was quite clear that in the Military Revolutionary Committee the leadership belonged to the Bolsheviks." He explains this as follows: "If the committee wanted to act seriously, it was compelled to act in a revolutionary manner," and for revolutionary action "only the Bolsheviks had genuine resources," for the masses were with them. Intensity in the struggle has everywhere

and always brought forth the more active and bolder elements. This automatic selection inevitably elevated the Bolsheviks, strengthened their influence, concentrated the initiative in their hands, giving them de facto leadership even in those organizations where they were in a minority. The nearer you came to the district, to the factory, to the barrack, the more complete and indubitable was the leadership of the Bolsheviks. All the nuclei of the party were on their toes. The big factories organized a system of guard duty by Bolsheviks. In the district committees of the party representatives of small plants were put on duty. A tie was formed from below, from the shop, leading through the districts, to the Central Committee of the party.

Under direct pressure from the Bolsheviks and the organizations led by them, the Committee of Defense recognized the desirability of arming individual groups of workers for the defense of the workers' quarters, the shops and factories. It was only this sanction that the masses lacked. In the districts, according to the workers' press, there immediately appeared "whole queues of people eager to join the ranks of the Red Guard." Drilling began in marksmanship and the handling of weapons. Experienced soldiers were brought in as teachers. By the 29th, Guards had been formed in almost all the districts. The Red Guard announced its readiness to put in the field a force of 40,000 rifles. The unarmed workers formed companies for trench-digging, sheet-metal fortification, barbed-wire fencing. The new governor-general Palchinsky who replaced Savinkov, – Kerensky could not keep his accomplice longer than three days – was compelled to recognize in a special announcement that when the need arose for the work of sappers in the defense of the capital

“thousands of workers ... by their irreplaceable, personal labor achieved in the course of a few hours a colossal task which without their help would have required several days.” This did not prevent Palchinsky, following the example of Savinkov, from suppressing the Bolshevik paper, the sole paper which the workers considered their own.

The giant Putilov factory became the center of resistance in the Peterhoff district. Here fighting companies were hastily formed; the work of the factory continued day and night; there was a sorting out of new cannon for the formation of proletarian artillery divisions. The worker, Minichev, says: “In those days we worked sixteen hours a day ... We got together about 100 cannon.

The newly formed Vikzhel received a prompt baptism of war. The railroad workers had a special reason to dread the victory of Kornilov, who had incorporated in his program the inauguration of martial law on the railroads. And here, too, the lower ranks far outdistanced their leaders. The railroad workers tore up and barricaded the tracks in order to hold back Kornilov’s army. War experiences came in handy. Measures were also taken to isolate the center of the conspiracy, Moghiliev, preventing movements both towards and away from headquarters. The postal and telegraph clerks began to hold up and send to the Committee telegrams and orders from headquarters, or copies of them. The generals had been accustomed during the years of war to think of transport and communications as technical questions. They found out now that these were political questions.

The trade unions, least of all inclined toward political

neutrality, did not await any special invitation before occupying military positions. The railroad workers' union armed its members, and sent them along the lines for inspection, and for tearing up railroads, guarding bridges, etc. The workers in their enthusiasm and resolution pushed ahead of the more bureaucratic and moderate Vikzhel. The metal workers' union put its innumerable office workers at the disposal of the Committee of Defense, and also a large sum of money for expenses. The chauffeurs' union put in charge of the committee its technical and transportation facilities. The printers' union arranged in a few hours for the issue of Monday's papers, so as to keep the population in touch with events, and at the same time availed themselves of the most effective of all possible means of controlling the press. The rebel general had stamped his foot, and legions rose up from the ground-but they were the legions of the enemy.

All around Petrograd, in the neighboring garrisons, in the great railroad stations, in the fleet, work was going on night and day. They were inspecting their own ranks, arming the workers, sending out detachments as patrols along the tracks, establishing communications with neighboring points, and with Smolny. The task of the Committee of Defense was not so much to keep watch over and summon the workers, as merely to register and direct them. Its plans were always anticipated. The defense against the rebellion of the generals turned into a popular round-up of the conspirators.

In Helsingfors a general congress of all the soviet organizations created a revolutionary committee which sent its commissars to the offices of the governor-general, the commandant, the Intelligence Service, and other

important institutions.

Thenceforth no order was valid without its signature. The telegraphs and telephones were taken under control. The official representatives of a Cossack regiment quartered in Helsingfors, chiefly officers, tried to declare themselves neutral: they were secret Kornilovists. On the second day, a rank-and-file cossack appeared before the Committee with the announcement that the whole regiment was against Kornilov. Cossack representatives were for the first time introduced into the soviet. In this case as in others a sharp conflict of classes was pushing the officers to the right and the rank-and-file to the left.

The Kronstadt soviet, which had completely recovered from the July wounds, sent a telegraphic declaration: “The Kronstadt garrison is ready as one man at the first word from the Executive Committee to come to the defense of the revolution.” The Kronstadters did not know in those days to what extent the defense of the revolution meant the defense of themselves against annihilation: at that time they could still only guess this.

Soon after the July Days it had been decided by the Provisional Government to vacate the Kronstadt fortress as a nest of Bolshevism. This measure, adopted in agreement with Kornilov, was officially explained as due to “strategic motives.” Sensing some dirty work, the sailors had resisted. “The legend of treachery at headquarters” – wrote Kerensky after he himself had accused Kornilov of treachery – “was so deeply rooted in Kronstadt that every attempt to remove the artillery evoked actual ferocity from the crowd there.” The task of devising a way to liquidate Kronstadt was laid by the government upon Kornilov.

Kornilov devised a way: immediately after the conquest of the city Krymov was to dispatch a brigade with artillery to Oranienbaum and, under threat of bombardment from the shores, demand that the Kronstadt garrison disarm the fortress and transfer themselves to the mainland, where the sailors were to undergo mass executions. But while Krymov was entering upon his task of saving the government, the government found itself obliged to ask the Kronstadters to save it from Krymov.

The Executive Committee sent telephonegrams to Kronstadt and Vyborg asking for the dispatch of considerable detachments of troops to Petrograd. On the morning of the 29th, the troops began to arrive. These were chiefly Bolshevik units. In order that the summons of the Executive Committee should become operative, it had to be confirmed by the central committee of the Bolsheviks. A little earlier, at midday of the 28th, upon an order from Kerensky which sounded very much like a humble request, sailors from the cruiser *Aurora* had undertaken the defense of the Winter Palace. A part of the same crew were still imprisoned in Kresty for participation in the July demonstration. During their hours off duty the sailors came to the prison for a visit with the imprisoned Kronstadters, and with Trotsky, Raskolnikov and others. “Isn’t it time to arrest the government?” asked the visitors. “No, not yet,” was the answer. “Use Kerensky as a gun-rest to shoot Kornilov. Afterward we will settle with Kerensky.” In June and July these sailors had not been inclined to pay much attention to revolutionary strategy, but they had learned much in a short two months. They raised this question of the arrest of the government rather to test themselves and clear their own consciences. They

themselves were beginning to grasp the inexorable consecutiveness of events. In the first half of July, beaten, condemned, slandered; at the end of August, the trusted defenders of the Winter Palace against Kornilovists; at the end of October, they will be shooting at the Winter Palace with the guns of the *Aurora*.

But although the sailors were willing to postpone for a certain time a general settlement with the February régime, they did not want to endure for one unnecessary day the Kornilovist officers hanging over their heads. The commanding staff which had been imposed upon them by the government since the July Days was almost solidly on the side of the conspirators. The Kronstadt soviet immediately removed the government commander of the fortress and installed their own. The Compromisers had now ceased to shout about the secession of the Kronstadt republic. However the thing did not everywhere stop at mere removals from office: it came to bloody encounters in several places.

“It began in Vyborg,” says Sukhanov, “with the beating to death of generals and officers by a sailor-soldier crowd infuriated and panic-stricken.” No, these crowds were not infuriated, and it would not be possible to speak in this instance of panic. On the morning of the 29th, Centroflot sent a telegram to the commandant at Vyborg, General Oranovsky, for communication to the garrison, informing them of the mutiny at headquarters. The commandant held up the telegram for a whole day, and to questions about what was happening, answered that he had received no information. In the course of a search instituted by the sailors the telegram was found. Thus caught in the act, the general declared himself a partisan of Kornilov. The sailors

shot the commandant and along with him two other officers who had declared themselves of the same party. From the officers of the Baltic fleet the sailors required a signed declaration of loyalty to the revolution, and when four officers of the ship-of-the-line *Petropavlovsk* refused to sign, declaring themselves Kornilovists, they were by resolution of the crew immediately shot.

A mortal danger was hanging over the soldiers and sailors; a bloody purgation not only of Petrograd and Kronstadt, but of all the garrisons of the country, was impending. From the conduct of their suddenly emboldened officers, – from their tones, their side glances – the soldiers and sailors could plainly foresee their own fate in case of a victory of headquarters. In those localities where the atmosphere was especially hot, they hastened to cut off the road of the enemy, forestalling the purgation intended by the officers with their own sailors' and soldiers' purgation. Civil war, as is well known, has its laws, and they have never been considered identical with the laws of humane conduct.

Cheidze immediately sent a telegram to Vyborg and Helsingfors condemning lynch law as "a mortal blow against the revolution." Kerensky on his part telegraphed to Helsingfors: "I demand an immediate end of disgusting acts of violence." If you seek the political responsibility for these individual cases of lynch law – not forgetting that revolution as a whole is a taking of the law into one's own hands – in the given case the responsibility rests wholly on the government and the Compromisers, who at a moment of danger would run for help to the revolutionary masses, in order afterward to turn them over again to the counterrevolutionary officers.

As during the State Conference in Moscow, when he was expecting an uprising from moment to moment, so now after the break with headquarters, Kerensky turned to the Bolsheviks with a request “to influence the soldiers to come to the defense of the revolution.” In summoning the Bolshevik sailors to the defense of the Winter Palace, however, Kerensky did not set free their comrades, the July prisoners. Sukhanov writes on this theme: “The situation with Alexeiev whispering to Kerensky and Trotsky in prison was absolutely intolerable.” It is not hard to imagine the excitement which prevailed in the crowded prisons. “We were boiling with indignation,” relates midshipman Raskolnikov, “against the Provisional Government which in such days of alarm ... continued to let revolutionists like Trotsky rot in Kresty ... ‘What cowards, what cowards they are,’ said Trotsky as some of us were circling around together on our walk. ‘They ought immediately to declare Kornilov an outlaw, so that any soldier devoted to the revolution might feel that he had a right to put an end to him.’”

The entrance of Kornilov’s troops into Petrograd would have meant first of all the extermination of the arrested Bolsheviks. In his order to General Bagration, who was to enter the capital with the vanguard, Krymov did not forget this special command: “Place a guard in prisons and houses of detention, in no case let out the people now under restraint.” This was a concerted program, inspired by Miliukov ever since the April days: “In no case let them out.” There was not a single meeting in Petrograd in those days which did not pass resolutions demanding the release of the July prisoners. Delegation after delegation came to the Executive Committee, which in turn sent its leaders for

negotiations to the Winter Palace. In vain! The stubbornness of Kerensky on this question is the more remarkable since during the first day and a half or two days he considered the position of the government hopeless, and was therefore condemning himself to the role of the old-time jail keeper – holding the Bolsheviks so that the generals could hang them.

It is no wonder that the masses led by the Bolsheviks in fighting against Kornilov did not place a moment of trust in Kerensky. For them it was not a case of defending the government, but of defending the revolution. So much the more resolute and devoted was their struggle. The resistance to the rebels grew out of the very road beds, out of the stones, out of the air. The railroad workers of the Luga station, where Krymov arrived, stubbornly refused to move the troop trains, alluding to a lack of locomotives. The Cossack echelons also found themselves immediately surrounded by armed soldiers from the Luga garrison, 20,000 strong. There was no military encounter, but there was something far more dangerous: contact, social exchange, inter-penetration. The Luga soviet had had time to print the government announcement retiring Kornilov, and this document was now widely distributed among the echelons. The officers tried to persuade the Cossacks not to believe the agitators, but this very necessity of persuasion was a bad sign.

On receiving Kornilov’s order to advance, Krymov demanded under threat of bayonets that the locomotives be ready in half an hour. The threat seemed effective: the locomotives, although with some delays, were supplied; but even so, it was impossible to move, since the road out was damaged and so crowded with cars that it would take

a good twenty-four hours to clear it. To get free of demoralizing propaganda, Krymov on the evening of the 28th, removed his troops several *versts* from Luga. But the agitators immediately turned up in the villages. These were soldiers, workers, railroad men – there was no refuge from them. They went everywhere. The Cossacks began even to hold meetings. Thus stormed with propaganda and cursing his impotence, Krymov waited in vain for Bagration. The railroad workers were holding up the echelon of the Savage Division, which also in the coming hours was to undergo a most alarming moral attack.

No matter how spineless and even cowardly the compromisist democracy was in itself, those mass forces upon which it again partly relied in its struggle against Kornilov, opened before it inexhaustible resources for action. The Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did not see it as their task to conquer the forces of Kornilov in open struggle, but to bring the forces over to their own side. That was right. Against “compromisism” along that line, it goes without saying, the Bolsheviks had no objection. On the contrary that was their own fundamental method. The Bolsheviks only demanded that behind the agitators and parliamentaries armed workers and soldiers should stand ready. For this moral mode of action upon the Kornilov regiments, an unlimited choice of ways and means was suddenly discovered. Thus a Mussulman delegation was sent to meet the Savage Division on the staff of which were included native potentates who had immediately made themselves known, beginning with the grandson of the famous Shamil who heroically defended the Caucasus against tzarism. The mountaineers would not permit their officers to arrest the delegation: that was

a violation of the ancient customs of hospitality. Negotiations were opened and soon became the beginning of the end. The Kornilov commanders, in order to explain the whole campaign, had kept referring to a rebellion of German agents supposed to have begun in Petrograd. The delegates, arriving directly from the capital, not only disproved the fact of a rebellion, but also demonstrated with documents in their hands that Krymov was a rebel and was leading his troops against the government. What could the officers of Kornilov reply to that?

On the staff car of the Savage Division the soldiers stuck up a red flag with the inscription: “Land and freedom.” The staff commander ordered them to take down the flags – “merely to avoid confusing it with a railroad signal,” as the lieutenant-colonel politely explained. The staff soldiers were not satisfied with this cowardly explanation, and arrested the lieutenant-colonel. Were they not mistaken at headquarters when they said that the Caucasian mountaineers did not care whom they slaughtered?

The next morning a colonel arrived at Krymov’s headquarters from Kornilov with an order to concentrate his corps, advance swiftly on Petrograd, and “unexpectedly” occupy it. At headquarters they were obviously still trying to shut their eyes to the facts. Krymov replied that the different units of the corps were scattered on various railroads and in some places were detraining; that he had at his disposition only eight Cossack squadrons; that the railroads were damaged, overloaded, barricaded, and that it was possible to move farther only on foot; and that finally there could be no talk of an unexpected occupation of Petrograd, now that the workers and soldiers had been placed under arms in the capital

and its environs. The affair was still further complicated by the fact that the possibility was hopelessly past of carrying out the operation “unexpectedly” even to the troops of Krymov himself. Sensing something unpropitious, they had demanded explanations. It had become necessary to inform them of the conflict between Kornilov and Kerensky – that is, to place soldiers’ meetings officially on the order of the day.

An order issued by Krymov at just that moment read: “This evening I received from the headquarters of the commander-in-chief and from Petrograd information that rebellions have begun in Petrograd ...” This deceit was designed to justify an already quite open campaign against the government. An order of Kornilov himself on the 29th of August, had read: “The intelligence service from Holland reports: (a) In a few days a simultaneous attack upon the whole front is to begin, with the aim of routing and putting to flight our disintegrating army; (b) An insurrection is under preparation in Finland; (c) Explosions are to be expected of bridges on the Dnieper and the Volga; (d) An insurrection of Bolsheviks is being organized in Petrograd.” This was that same “information” to which Savinkov had already referred on the 23rd. Holland is mentioned here merely to distract attention. According to all evidence the document was fabricated in the French war mission or with its participation.

Kerensky on the same day telegraphed Krymov: “There is complete tranquility in Petrograd. No demonstrations are expected. Your corps is not needed.” The demonstrations were to have been evoked by the military edicts of Kerensky himself. Since it had been necessary to postpone this governmental act of provocation, Kerensky was

entirely justified in concluding that “no demonstrations are expected.”

Seeing no way out, Krymov made an awkward attempt to advance upon Petrograd with his eight Cossack squadrons. This was little but a gesture to clear his own conscience, and nothing of course came of it. Meeting a force on patrol duty a few *versts* from Luga, Krymov turned back without even trying to give battle. On the theme of this single and completely fictitious “operation,” Krasnov, the commander of the Third Cavalry Corps, wrote later: “We should have struck Petrograd with a force of eighty-six cavalry and Cossack squadrons, and we struck with one brigade and eight weak squadrons, half of them without officers. Instead of striking with our fist, we struck with our little finger. It pained the finger, and those we struck at were insensible of the blow.” In the essence of the matter there was no blow even from a finger. Nobody felt any pain at all.

The railroad workers in those days did their duty. In a mysterious way echelons would find themselves moving on the wrong roads. regiments would arrive in the wrong division, artillery would be sent up a blind alley, staffs would get out of communication with their units. All the big stations had their own soviets, their railroad workers’ and their military committees. The telegraphers kept them informed of all events, all movements, all changes. The telegraphers also held up the orders of Kornilov. Information unfavorable to the Kornilovists was immediately multiplied, distributed, pasted up, passed from mouth to mouth. The machinists, the switchmen, the oilers, became agitators. It was in this atmosphere that the Kornilov echelons advanced – or what was worse, stood

still. The commanding staff, soon sensing the hopelessness of the situation, obviously did not hasten to move forward, and with their passivity promoted the work of the counter-conspirators of the transport system. Parts of the army of Krymov were in this way scattered about in the stations, sidings, and branch lines, of eight different railroads. If you follow on the map the fate of the Kornilov echelons, you get the impression that the conspirators were playing at blind man's buff on the railroad lines.

"Almost everywhere," says General Krasnov, writing his observations made on the night of August 30, "we saw one and the same picture. On the tracks or in the cars, or in the saddles of their black or bay horses, who would turn from time to time to gaze at them, dragoons would be sitting or standing, and in the midst of them some lively personality in a soldier's long coat." The name of this "lively personality" soon became legion. From the direction of Petrograd innumerable delegations continued to arrive from regiments sent out to oppose the Kornilovists. Before fighting they wanted to talk things over. The revolutionary troops were confidently hopeful that the thing could be settled without fighting. This hope was confirmed: the Cossacks readily came to meet them. The communication squad of the corps would seize locomotives, and send the delegates along all railroad lines. The situation would be explained to every echelon. Meetings were continuous and at them all the cry was being raised: "They have deceived us!"

"Not only the chiefs of divisions," says Krasnov, "but even the commanders of regiments did not know exactly where their squadrons and companies were. The absence of food and forage naturally irritated everybody still more. The

men ... seeing all this meaningless confusion which had been created around them, began to arrest their chiefs and officers." A delegation from the Soviet which had organized its own headquarters reported: "Fraternization is going on rapidly ... We are fully confident that the conflict may be considered liquidated. Delegations are coming from all sides ..." Committees took the place of the officers in directing the units. A soviet of deputies of the corps was very soon created, and from its staff a delegation of forty men was appointed to go to the Provisional Government. The Cossacks began to announce out loud that they were only waiting an order from Petrograd to arrest Krymov and the other officers.

Stankevich paints a picture of what he found on the road when he set out on the 30th with Voitinsky in the direction of Pskov. In Petrograd, he says, they had thought Tzarskoe was occupied by Kornilovists; there was nobody there at all. "In Gatchina, nobody ... On the road to Luga, nobody. In Luga, peace and quiet ... We arrived at the village where the staff of the corps was supposed to be located ... empty ... We learned that early in the morning the Cossacks had left their positions and gone away in the direction opposite to Petrograd." The insurrection had rolled back, crumbled to pieces, been sucked up by the earth.

But in the Winter Palace they were still dreading the enemy. Kerensky made an attempt to enter into conversation with the commanding staff of the rebels. That course seemed to him more hopeful than the "anarchist" initiative of the lower ranks. He sent delegates to Krymov, and "in the name of the salvation of Russia," invited him to come to Petrograd, guaranteeing him safety on his word of honor. Pressed upon all sides, and having completely lost

his head, the general hastened, of course, to accept the invitation. On his heels came a deputation from the Cossacks.

The fronts did not support headquarters. Only the Southwestern made a somewhat serious attempt. Denikin's staff had adopted preparatory measures in good season. The unreliable guards at the staff were replaced by Cossacks. The printing presses were seized on the night of the 27th. The staff tried to play the role of self-confident master of the situation, and even forbade the committee of the front to use the telegraph. But the illusion did not last more than a few hours. Delegates from various units began to come to the committee with offers of support. Armored cars appeared, machine guns, field artillery. The committee immediately asserted its control of the activity of the staff, leaving it the initiative only in operations against the enemy. By three o clock on the 28th the power on the Southwestern front was wholly in the hands of the committee. "Never again," wept Denikin, "did the future of the country seem so dark, our impotence so grievous and humiliating."

On the other fronts the thing passed off less dramatically: the commander-in-chief had only to look around in order to sense a torrent of friendly feeling going out to the commissars of the Provisional Government. By the morning of the 29th, telegrams had arrived at the Winter Palace with expressions of loyalty from General Sherbachev, on the Rumanian front, Valuyev on the Western, and Przevalsky on the Caucasian. On the Northern front, where the commander-in-chief was an open Kornilovist, Klembovsky, Stankevich named a certain Savitsky as his deputy. "Savitsky, little known to anybody

until then, and appointed by telegram at the moment of the conflict," writes Stankevich himself, "could appeal with confidence to any bunch of soldiers-infantry, Cossacks, orderlies and even junkers – with any order whatever, even if it were a question of arresting the commander-in-chief, and the order would be promptly carried out." Kiembovsky was replaced, without further difficulties, by General Bonch-Bruevich, who through the mediation of his brother, a well-known Bolshevik, became afterward one of the first to enter the service of the Bolshevik government.

Things went a little better with the southern pillar of the military party, the ataman of the Don Cossacks, Kaledin. They were saying in Petrograd that Kaledin was mobilizing the Cossack army and that echelons from the front were marching to join him on the Don. Meanwhile the ataman, according to one of his biographers, "was riding from village to village, far from the railroad ... peacefully conversing with villagers." Kaledin actually did conduct himself more cautiously than was imagined in revolutionary circles. He chose the moment of open revolt, the date of which had been made known to him in advance, for making a "peaceful" round of the villages, in order that during the critical days he might be beyond control by telegraph or otherwise, and at the same time might be feeling out the mood of the Cossacks. On the 27th he telegraphed his deputy, Bogayevsky: "It is necessary to support Kornilov with all means and forces." However, his conversations with the villagers were demonstrating at just that moment that properly speaking there were no means or forces: those Cossack wheat-growers would not think of rising in defense of Kornilov. When the collapse of the uprising became evident, the so-

called “troop ring” [1] of the Don decided to refrain from expressing its opinion “until the real correlation of forces has become clear.” Thanks to these maneuvers, the chiefs of the Don Cossacks succeeded in making a timely jump to the sidelines.

In Petrograd, in Moscow, on the Don, at the front, along the course followed by the echelons, here, there and everywhere, Kornilov had had his sympathizers, partisans, friends. Their number seemed enormous to judge by telegrams, speeches of greeting, newspaper articles. But strange to say, now when the hour had come to reveal themselves, they had disappeared. In many cases the cause did not lie in personal cowardice. There were plenty of brave men among the Kornilov officers. But their bravery could find no point of application. From the moment the masses got into motion the solitary individual had no access to events. Not only the weighty industrialists, bankers, professors, engineers, but also students and even fighting officers, found themselves pushed away, thrown aside, elbowed out. They watched the events developing before them as though from a balcony. Along with General Denikin they had nothing left to do but curse their humiliating and appalling impotence.

On the 30th of August, the Executive Committee sent to all soviets the joyous news that “there is complete demoralization in the troops of Kornilov.” They forgot for the moment that Kornilov had chosen for his undertaking the most patriotic units, those with the best fighting morale, those most protected from the influence of the Bolsheviks. The process of demoralization consisted in the fact that the soldiers had decisively ceased to trust their officers, discovering them to be enemies. The struggle for

the revolution against Kornilov meant a deepening of the demoralization of the army. That is exactly the thing of which they were accusing the Bolsheviks.

The generals had finally got an opportunity to verify the force of resistance possessed by that revolution which had seemed to them so crumbly and helpless, so accidentally victorious over the old régime. Ever since the February days, on every possible occasion, the gallant formula of soldier – braggadocio had been repeated: “Give me one strong detachment and I will show them.” The experience of General Khabalov and General Ivanov at the end of February had taught nothing to these warriors of loud mouth. The same song was frequently sung too by civilian strategists. The Octobrist Shidlovsky asserted that if in February there had appeared in the capital “a military detachment, not especially large but united by discipline and fighting spirit, the February revolution would have been put down in a few days.” The notorious railway magnate, Bublikov, wrote: “One disciplined division from the front would have been enough to crush the insurrection to the bottom.” Several officers who participated in the events assured Denikin that “one firm battalion under a commander who knew what he wanted, could have changed the whole situation from top to bottom.” During the days of Guchkov’s war ministry, General Krymov came to him from the front and offered to “clean up Petrograd with one division – of course not without bloodshed.” The thing was not put through merely because “Guchkov did not consent.” And finally Savinkov, preparing in the interests of a future directory his own particular “August 27th,” asserted that two regiments would be amply sufficient to make dust and ashes of the

Bolsheviks. Now fate had offered to all these gentlemen, in the person of the “happy” general “full of the joy of life,” an ample opportunity to verify the truth of their heroic calculations. Without having struck a single blow, with bowed head, shamed and humiliated, Krymov arrived at the Winter Palace. Kerensky did not let pass the opportunity to play out a melodramatic scene with him-a scene in which his chief effects were guaranteed their success in advance. Returning from the prime-minister to the war office, Krymov ended his life with a revolver shot. Thus turned out his attempt to put down the revolution “not without bloodshed.”

In the Winter Palace they breathed more freely, having concluded that a matter so pregnant with difficulties was ending favorably. And they decided to return as soon as possible to the order of the day – that is to a continuation of the business which had been interrupted. Kerensky appointed himself commander-in-chief. From the standpoint of preserving his political ties with the old generals, he could hardly have found a more suitable figure. As chief of the headquarters staff he selected Alexeiev, who two days ago had barely missed landing in the position of Prime Minister. After hesitating and conferring with his friends, the general, not without a contemptuous grimace, accepted the appointment – with the aim, as he explained to his own people, of liquidating the conflict in a peaceful manner. The former chief-of-staff of the supreme commander-in-chief, Nicholas Romanov, thus arrived at the same position under Kerensky. That was something to wonder at! “Only Alexeiev, thanks to his closeness to headquarters and his enormous influence in high military circles” – so Kerensky subsequently tried to

explain his wonderful appointment – “could successfully carry out the task of peacefully transferring the command from the hands of Kornilov to new hands.” Exactly the opposite was true. The appointment of Alexeiev – that is, one of their own men could only inspire the conspirators to further resistance, had there remained the slightest possibility of it. In reality Alexeiev was brought forward by Kerensky after the failure of the insurrection for the same reason that Savinkov had been summoned at the beginning of it: it was necessary at any cost to keep open a bridge to the right. The new commander-in-chief considered a restoration of friendship with the generals now especially needful. After the disturbance it will be necessary to inaugurate a firm order, and accordingly a doubly strong power is needed.

At headquarters nothing was now left of that optimism which had reigned two days before. The conspirators were looking for a way to retreat. A telegram sent to Kerensky stated that Kornilov in view of the “strategic situation” was disposed to surrender the command peacefully, provided he was assured that “a strong government will be formed.” This large ultimatum the capitulator followed up with a small one: lie, Kornilov, considered it “upon the whole impermissible to arrest the generals and other persons most indispensable to the army.” The delighted Kerensky immediately took a step to meet his enemy, announcing by radio that the orders of General Kornilov in the sphere of military operations were obligatory upon all. Kornilov himself wrote to Krymov on the same day: “An episode has occurred – the only one of its kind in the history of the world: a commander-in-chief accused of treason and betrayal of the fatherland, and arraigned for this crime

before the courts, has received an order to continue commanding the armies ...” This new manifestation of the good-for-nothingness of Kerensky immediately raised the hopes of the conspirators, who still dreaded to sell themselves too cheap. In spite of the telegram sent a few hours earlier about the impermissibility of inner conflict “at this terrible moment,” Kornilov, half-way restored to his rights, sent two men to Kaledin with a request “to bring pressure to bear” and at the same time suggested to Krymov: “If circumstances permit, act independently in the spirit of my instructions to you.” The spirit of those instructions was: Overthrow the government and hang the members of the Soviet.

General Alexeiev, the new chief-of-staff, departed for the seizure of headquarters. At the Winter Palace they still took this operation seriously. In reality Kornilov had had at his immediate disposition: a battalion of St. George, the “Kornilovist” infantry regiment, and a Tekinsky cavalry regiment. The St. George battalion had gone over to the government at the very beginning, the Kornilovist and Tekinsky regiments were still counted loyal, but part of them had split off. Headquarters had no artillery at all. In these circumstances there could be no talk of resistance. Alexeiev began his mission by paying ceremonial visits to Kornilov and Lukomsky – visits during which we can only imagine both sides unanimously squandering the soldierly vocabulary on the subject of Kerensky, the new commander-in-chief. It was clear to Kornilov, as also to Alexeiev, that the salvation of the country must in any case be postponed for a certain period of time.

But while at headquarters peace without victors or vanquished was being so happily concluded, the

atmosphere in Petrograd was getting extraordinarily hot, and in the Winter Palace they were impatiently awaiting some reassuring news from Moghiliev which might be offered to the people. They kept nudging Alexeiev with inquiries. Colonel Baranovsky, one of Kerensky's trusted men, complained over the direct wire: "The soviets are raging, the atmosphere can be discharged only by a demonstration of power, and the arrest of Kornilov and others. This did not at all correspond to the intentions of Alexeiev. "I remark with deep regret," answers the general, "that my fear lest at present we have fallen completely into the tenacious paws of the Soviet has become an indubitable fact." By the familiar pronoun we is implied the group of Kerensky, in which Alexeiev, in order to soften the sting, conditionally includes himself. Colonel Baranovsky replies in the same tone: "God grant that we shall get out of the tenacious paws of the Soviet into which we have fallen." Hardly had the masses saved Kerensky from the paws of Kornilov, when the leader of the democracy hastened to get into agreement with Alexeiev against the masses: "We shall get out of the tenacious paws of the Soviet." Alexeiev was nevertheless compelled to submit to necessity, and carry out the ritual of arresting the principal conspirators. Kornilov offered no objection to sitting quietly under house arrest four days after he had announced to the people: "I prefer death to my removal from the post of commander-in-chief." The Extraordinary Commission of Inquiry, when it arrived at Moghiliev, also arrested the Vice-Minister of Communications, several officers of the general staff, the unarrived diplomat Alladin, and also the whole personnel of the head committee of the League of Officers.

During the first hours after the victory the Compromisers gesticulated ferociously. Even Avksentiev gave out flashes of lightning. For three whole days the rebels had left the front without any command! “Death to the traitors!” cried the members of the Executive Committee. Avksentiev welcomed these voices: Yes, the death penalty was introduced at the demand of Kornilov and his followers – “so much the more decisively will it be applied to them.” Stormy and prolonged applause.

The Moscow Church Council which had two weeks ago bowed its head before Kornilov as the restorer of the death penalty, now beseeched the government by telegraph “in the name of God and the Christ-like love of the neighbor to preserve the life of the erring general.” Other levers also were brought into operation. But the government had no idea at all of making a bloody settlement. When a delegation from the Savage Division came to Kerensky in the Winter Palace, and one of the soldiers in answer to some general phrases of the new commander, said that “the traitor commanders ought to be ruthlessly punished,” Kerensky interrupted him with the words: “Your business now is to obey your commander and we ourselves will do all that is necessary. Apparently this man thought that the masses ought to appear on the scene when he stamped with his left foot, and disappear again when he stamped with his right.

“We ourselves will do all that is necessary.” But all that they did seemed to the masses unnecessary, if not indeed suspicious and disastrous. The masses were not wrong. The upper circles were most of all occupied with restoring that very situation out of which the Kornilov campaign had arisen. “After the first few questions put by the members

of the Inquiry Commission," relates Lukomsky, "it became clear that they were all in the highest degree friendly toward us." They were in essence accomplices and accessories. The military prosecutor Shablovsky gave the accused a consultation on the question how to evade justice. The organizations of the front sent protests. "The generals and their accomplices are not being held as criminals before the state and the people ... The rebels have complete freedom of communication with the outside world." Lukomsky confirms this: "The staff of the commander-in-chief kept us informed about all matters of interest to us." The indignant soldiers more than once felt an impulse to try the generals in their own courts, and the arrestees were saved from summary execution only by a counterrevolutionary Polish division sent to Bykhov where they were detained.

On the 12th of September, General Alexeiev wrote to Miliukov from headquarters a letter which reflected the legitimate indignation of the conspirators at the conduct of the big bourgeoisie, which had first pushed them on, but after the defeat left them to their fate. "You are to a certain degree aware" – wrote the general, not without poison in his pen-"that certain circles of our society not only knew about it all, not only sympathized intellectually, but even to the extent that they were able helped Kornilov ..." In the name of the League of Officers Alexeiev demanded of Vyshnegradsky, Putilov and other big capitalists, who had turned their backs to the vanquished, that they should collect 300,000 rubles for the benefit of "the hungry families of those with whom they had been united by common ideas and preparations ... The letter ended in an open threat: "If the honest press does not

immediately begin an energetic explanation of the situation ... General Kornilov will be compelled to make a broad exposure before the court of all the preparatory activities, all conversations with persons and circles, the parts they played, etc." As to the practical results of this tearful ultimatum, Denikin reports: "Only towards the end of October did they bring to Kornilov from Moscow about 40,000 rubles." Miliukov during this period was in a general way absent from the political arena. According to the official Kadet version he had "gone to the Crimea for a rest." After all these violent agitations the liberal leader was, to be sure, in need of rest.

The comedy of the Inquiry Commission dragged along until the Bolshevik insurrection, after which Kornilov and his accomplices were not only set free, but supplied by Kerensky's headquarters with all necessary documents. These escaped generals laid the foundation of the civil war. In the name of the sacred aims which had united Kornilov with the liberal Miliukov and the Black Hundredist, Rimsky-Korsakov, hundreds of thousands of people were buried, the south and east of Russia were pillaged and laid waste, the industry of the country was almost completely destroyed, and the Red Terror imposed upon the revolution. Kornilov, after successfully emerging from Kerensky's courts of justice, soon fell on the civil war front from a Bolshevik shell. Kaledin's fate was not very different. The "troop ring" of the Don demanded, not only a revocation of the order for Kaledin's arrest, but also his restoration to the position of *ataman*. And here too Kerensky did not miss the opportunity to go back on himself. Skobelev was sent to Novocherkassk to apologize to the troop ring. The democratic minister was subjected

to refined mockeries conducted by Kaledin himself. The triumph of the Cossack general was not, however, long-lasting. Pressed from all sides by the Bolshevik revolution breaking out on the Don, Kaledin in a few months ended his own life. The banner of Kornilov then passed into the hands of General Denikin and Admiral Kolchak, with whose names the principal period of the civil war is associated. But all that has to do with 1918 and the years that followed.

Note

1. The Cossacks’ name for their elective assembly.

Chapter 34: The Masses Under Attack

THE immediate causes of the events of a revolution are changes in the state-of-mind of the conflicting classes. The material relations of society merely define the channel within which these processes take place. Changes in the collective consciousness have naturally a semi-concealed character. Only when they have attained a certain degree of intensity do the new moods and ideas break to the surface in the form of mass activities which establish a new, although again very unstable, social equilibrium. The development of a revolution lays bare at each new stage the problem of power, but only to disguise it again immediately afterward – until the hour of a new exposure. A counter-revolution has the same dynamic, except that the picture is reeled off in the opposite direction.

What goes on in the governmental and soviet upper circles is by no means without effect upon the course of events. But it is impossible to understand the real significance of a political party or find your way among the maneuvers of the leaders, without searching out the deep molecular processes in the mind of the mass. In July the workers and soldiers were defeated, but in October with an unconquerable onslaught they seized the power. What happened in their heads during those four months? How did they live through the blows rained upon them from above? With what ideas and feelings did they meet the open attempt at a seizure of power by the bourgeoisie?

Here the reader will find it necessary to go back to the July defeat. It is often necessary to step back a few paces in order to make a good leap. And before us is the October leap.

In the official soviet histories the opinion has become established, and been converted into a kind of rubber-stamp, that the July attack upon the party – the combination of repression and slander – went by almost without leaving a trace upon the workers' organizations. That is utterly untrue. The decline in the ranks of the party and the ebbing away of workers and soldiers did not, to be sure, last very long – not longer than a few weeks. The revival began so quickly – and what is more important, so boisterously – that it more than half wiped out the memory of the days of persecution and decline. Victories always throw a new light upon the defeats which led up to them. But in proportion as the minutes of local party organizations begin to be published, the picture emerges more and more sharply of a July decline of the revolution – a thing which was felt in those days the more painfully in proportion as the preceding upward swing had been uninterrupted.

Every defeat, resulting as it does from a definite correlation of forces, changes that correlation in its turn to the disadvantage of the vanquished, for the victor gains in self-confidence and the vanquished loses faith in himself. Moreover this or that estimate of one's own forces constitutes an extremely important element in the objective correlation of forces. A direct defeat was experienced by the workers and soldiers of Petrograd, who in their urge forward had come up against the confusedness and contradictions in their own aims, on the

one hand, and on the other, the backwardness of the provinces and the front. It was in the capital, therefore, that the consequences of the defeat revealed themselves first and most sharply. The assertion is also untrue, however – although as frequently to be found in the official literature – that for the provinces the July defeat passed almost unnoticed. This is both theoretically improbable, and refuted by the testimony of facts and documents. Whenever great questions arose, the whole country involuntarily and always looked toward Petrograd. The defeat of the workers and soldiers of the capital was therefore bound to produce an enormous impression, and especially upon the more advanced layers of the provinces. Fright, disappointment, apathy, flowed down differently in different parts of the country, but they were to be observed everywhere.

The lowered pressure of the revolution expressed itself first of all in an extraordinary weakening of the resistance of the masses to the enemy. While the troops brought into Petrograd were carrying out official punitive activities in the way of disarming soldiers and workers, semi-volunteer gangs under their protection were attacking with impunity the workers' organizations. After the raid on the editorial rooms of Pravda and the printing plant of the Bolsheviks, the headquarters of the metal workers' union was raided. The next blow fell upon the district soviets. Even the Compromisers were not spared. On the 10th, one of the institutions of the party led by the Minister of the Interior, Tseretelli, was attacked. It required no small amount of self-abnegation on the part of Dan to write on the subject of the arriving soldiers: "Instead of the ruin of the revolution, we are now witnessing its new triumph." This

triumph went so far that – in the words of the Menshevik, Prushitsky – passers-by on the streets, if they happened to look like workers or be suspected of Bolshevism, were in danger at any moment of cruel beatings. Could there be a more unmistakable symptom of a sharp change in the whole situation?

A member of the Petrograd committee of the Bolsheviks, Latsis – subsequently a well-known member of the "Cheka" – wrote in his diary: "July 9. All our printing plants in the city are destroyed. Nobody dares print our papers and leaflets. We are compelled to set up an underground press. The Vyborg district has become an asylum for all. Here have come both the Petrograd committee and the persecuted members of the Central Committee. In the watchman's room of the Renaud factory there is a conference of the committee with Lenin. The question is raised of a general strike. A division occurs in the committee. I stand for calling the strike. Lenin, after explaining the situation, moves that we abandon it ... July 12. The counter-revolution is victorious. The soviets are without power. The junkers, running wild, have begun to raid the Mensheviks too. In some sections of the party there is a loss of confidence. The influx of members has stopped ... But there is not as yet a flight from our ranks." After the July Days "there was a strong Social Revolutionary influence in the Petersburg factories," writes the worker, Sisko. The isolation of the Bolsheviks automatically increased the weight and self-confidence of the Compromisers. On July 16, a delegate from Vassillievsky Ostrov reported at a Bolshevik city conference that the mood in his district was "in general" hearty, with the exception of a few factories. "In the Baltic

factories the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are crowding us out." Here the thing went very far: the factory committee decreed that the Bolsheviks attend the funeral of the slain Cossacks, and this they did ... The official loss of membership of the party was, to be sure, insignificant. In the whole district, out of four thousand members not more than a hundred openly withdrew. But a far greater number in those first days quietly stood apart. "The July Days," a worker, Minichev, subsequently remembered, "showed us that in our ranks too there were people who, fearing for their own skin, 'chewed up' their party cards, and denied all connection with the party." "But there were not many of them he adds reassuringly. "The July events," writes Shliapnikov, "and the whole accompanying campaign of violence and slander against our organization interrupted that growth of our influence which by the beginning of July had reached enormous proportions ... The very party became semi-illegal, and had to wage a defensive struggle, relying in the main upon the trade unions and the shop and factory committees."

The charge that the Bolsheviks were in the service of Germany could not but create an impression even upon the Petrograd workers-at least upon a considerable number of them. Those who had been wavering, drew off. Those who were about to join, wavered. Even of those who had already joined, a considerable number withdrew. Together with the Bolsheviks a large part had been played in the July demonstrations by workers belonging to the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. After the blow they were the first to jump back under the banners of their own parties. It now seemed to them that in violating party discipline they had really made a mistake. Broad layers of

non-party workers, traveling companions of the party, also stepped away from it under the influence of that officially proclaimed and juridically embellished slander.

In this changed political atmosphere the repressive blows produced a redoubled effect. Olga Ravich, one of the old and active workers of the party, a member of the Petrograd committee, subsequently stated in a report: “The July Days brought such a break-up of the organization that for the first three weeks afterward there could be no talk of any kind of activities.” Ravich here has in view, for the most part, public activities of the party. For a long time it was impossible to arrange for the issue of the party paper; there were no printing plants which would agree to serve the Bolsheviks. The resistance here did not always come from the owners, either. In one printing plant the workers threatened to stop work if Bolshevik papers were printed, and the proprietor tore up a contract already concluded. For a certain period of time Petrograd was supplied by the Kronstadt paper.

The extreme Left Wing upon the open arena during those weeks was the group called “Menshevik-Internationalists.” The workers eagerly listened to the speeches of Martov, whose fighting instinct woke up in this period of retreat when it was not necessary to lay out new roads for the revolution, but only to fight for what remained of its conquests. Martov’s courage was the courage of pessimism. He said at a session of the Executive Committee: “It seems as though they had put a full stop to the revolution. If it has got so that ... there is no place in the Russian revolution for the voice of the peasantry and the workers, then let us make our exit honorably. Let us accept this challenge not with silent renunciation, but with

honest fighting.” This proposal to make their exit with honest fighting, Martov made to those party comrades of his, such as Dan and Tseretelli, who regarded the victory of the generals and Cossacks over the workers and soldiers as a victory of the revolution over anarchy. On a background of unrestrained Bolshevik-baiting and continuous belly-crawling by the Compromisers before Cossack trouser-stripes, the conduct of Martov raised him high during those weeks in the eyes of the workers.

The July crisis struck an especially damaging blow at the Petrograd garrison. The soldiers were far behind the workers politically. The soldiers’ section of the Soviet remained a bulwark of compromisism after the workers had gone over to the Bolsheviks. This is not in the least contradicted by the fact that the soldiers showed a remarkable readiness to get out their guns. In demonstrations they would play a far more aggressive role than the workers, but under blows they would retreat much farther. The wave of hostility against Bolshevism swept up very high in the Petrograd garrison. “After the defeat,” says the former soldier, Mitrevich, “I did not show up in my regiment, as I might have been killed there before the squall passed.” It was exactly in those more revolutionary regiments which had marched in the front rank in the July Days, and therefore received the most furious blows, that the influence of the party fell lowest. It fell so low that even three months later it was impossible to revive the organization. It was as though these units had been morally disintegrated by too strong a shock. The Military Organization was compelled to draw in very decidedly. “After the July defeat,” writes a former soldier, Minichev, “not only in the upper circles of our party, but

also in some of the district committees, the comrades were none too friendly toward the Military Organization." In Kronstadt the party lost about 250 members. The mood of the garrison of this Bolshevik fortress declined vastly. The reaction also spread to Helsingfors. Avksentiev, Bunakov, and the lawyer, Sokolov, went up there to bring the Bolshevik ships to repentance. They achieved certain results. By arresting the leading Bolsheviks, by playing up the official slander, by threats, they succeeded in getting a declaration of loyalty even from the Bolshevik battleship, *Petropavlovsk*. Their demand for the surrender of the "instigators" was rejected, however, by all the ships.

It was not greatly different in Moscow. "The attacks of the bourgeois press," remembers Piatnitsky, "produced a panic even in certain members of the Moscow committee." The organization weakened numerically after the July Days. "I will never forget," writes the Moscow worker, Ratekhin, "one mortally hard moment. A plenary session was assembling (of the Zamoskvoretsky district soviet) ... I saw there were none too many of our comrade Bolsheviks ... Steklov, one of the energetic comrades, came right up close to me and, barely enunciating the words, asked: 'Is it true they brought Lenin and Zinoviev in a sealed train? Is it true they are working on German money ...?' My heart sank with pain when I heard those questions. Another comrade came up – Konstantinov: 'Where is Lenin? He has beat it, they say ... What will happen now?' And so it went." This living picture introduces us correctly to the experience of the advanced workers of that time. "The appearance of the documents published by Alexinsky," writes the Moscow artillerist, Davidovsky, "produced a terrible confusion in the brigade.

Even our battery, the most Bolshevik, wavered under the blow of this cowardly lie ... It seemed as though we had lost all faith."

"After the July Days," writes V. Yakovleva, at that time a member of the Central Committee and a leader of the work in the extensive Moscow region, "all the reports from the localities described with one voice not only a sharp decline in the mood of the masses, but even a definite hostility to our party. In a good number of cases our speakers were beaten up. The membership fell off rapidly, and several organizations, especially in the southern provinces, even ceased to exist entirely." By the middle of August no noticeable change for the better had taken place. Work was going on among the masses to sustain the influence of the party, but no growth of the organization was observable. In Riazan and Tambov provinces, no new bonds were established, no new Bolshevik nuclei arose. In general, these were the domains of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

Evreinov, who directed the work in proletarian Kineshma, remembers what a difficult situation arose after the July events, when at a grand conference of all social organizations the question was put of expelling the Bolsheviks from the soviets. The efflux from the party in some cases reached such a scale that only after a new registration of members could the organization begin to live a proper life. In Tula, thanks to a preliminary serious selection of workers, the organization did not experience a loss of members, but its solidarity with the masses weakened. In Nizhni-Novgorod, after the punitive campaign under the leadership of Colonel Verkhovsky and the Menshevik Khinchuk, a sharp decline set in: at the

elections to the city duma the party carried only four deputies. In Kaluga the Bolshevik faction took under consideration the possibility of its being expelled from the soviets. At certain points in the Moscow region the Bolsheviks were obliged to withdraw not only from the soviets, but also from the trade unions.

In Saratov, where the Bolsheviks had kept up very peaceful relations with the Compromisers, and even at the end of June were intending to nominate common candidates with them for the city duma, the soldiers were to such a point incited against the Bolsheviks after the July storm that they would break into campaign meetings, tear the Bolshevik bulletins from people's hands, and beat up their agitators. "It became difficult," writes Lebedev, "to speak at election meetings. They would often yell at us: 'German spies! Provocateurs!'" Among the Saratov Bolsheviks the faint-hearted were numerous: "Many announced their resignation, others went into hiding."

In Kiev, which had long been famous as a Black Hundred center, the baiting of Bolsheviks took on an especially unbridled character, soon even including Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The decline of the revolutionary movement was here felt especially. At the elections to the local duma the Bolsheviks received only 6 per cent of the votes. At a city conference the speakers complained that apathy and inactivity were to be felt everywhere. The party paper was compelled to abandon daily for weekly publication.

The disbandment and transfer of the more revolutionary regiments must in itself not only have lowered the political level of the garrisons, but also grievously affected the local

workers, who had felt firmer when friendly troops were standing behind their backs. Thus the removal from Tver of the 57th regiment abruptly changed the political situation both among the soldiers and the workers. Even among the trade unions the influence of the Bolsheviks became negligible. This was still more evident in Tiflis, where the Mensheviks, working hand in hand with the staff, replaced the Bolshevik units with wholly colorless regiments.

At certain points, owing to the constitution of the garrison, the level of the local workers, and other causes accidentally intervening, the political reaction took a paradoxical form. In Yaroslavl, for example, the Bolsheviks were almost completely crowded out of the workers' soviet in July, but kept their predominant influence in the soviet of soldiers' deputies. In certain individual localities, moreover, the July events did seem to pass without effect, not stopping the growth of the party. So far as we can judge, this occurred in those cases where an arrival upon the revolutionary arena of new backward strata coincided with the general retreat. Thus in certain textile districts a considerable influx of women workers into the organization was to be observed in July. But these cases do not alter the general fact of the decline.

The indubitable and even exaggerated acuteness of this reaction to a partial defeat, was in some sense a payment made by the workers, and yet more the soldiers, for their too smooth, too rapid, too uninterrupted flow to the Bolsheviks during the preceding months. This sharp turn in the mood of the masses produced an automatic, and moreover an unerring, selection within the cadres of the party. Those who did not tremble in those days could be

relied on absolutely in what was to come. They constituted a nucleus in the shops, in the factories, in the districts. On the eve of October in making appointments and allotting tasks, the organizers would glance round many a time calling to mind who bore himself how in the July Days.

On the front, where all relations are more naked, the July reaction was especially fierce. The staff made use of the events chiefly in order to create special units of “Duty to the Free Fatherland.” Each regiment would organize its own shock companies. “I often saw these shock companies,” Denikin relates, “and they were always tense and gloomy. The attitude of the rest of the regiment to them was aloof or even hostile.” The soldiers rightly saw in these “Divisions of Duty” the nuclei of a Praetorian guard. “The reaction went fast,” relates the Social Revolutionary, Degtyarev, who subsequently joined the Bolsheviks. He is speaking of the backward Rumanian front: “Many soldiers were arrested as deserters. The officers lifted their chins and began to ignore the army committees. In some places the officers tried to restore the salute.” The commissars carried out a purgation of the army. “Almost every division,” writes Stankevich, “had its Bolshevik with his name better known in the army than that of the chief of the division ... We gradually removed one celebrity after another.” The unsubmissive units were disarmed simultaneously throughout the entire front. In this operation the commanders and commissars relied upon the Cossacks and upon those special companies so hateful to the soldiers.

On the day Riga fell, a conference of the commissars of the Northern front with representatives of the army organizations, declared necessary a more systematic

application of severe measures of repression. Some soldiers were shot for fraternizing with the Germans. Many of the commissars, pumping up their nerve with hazy recollections of the French revolution, tried to show the iron fist. They did not understand that the Jacobin commissars were relying upon the lower ranks; they were not sparing the aristocrats and the bourgeoisie; only the authority of a plebeian ruthlessness nerved them to the introduction of severe discipline in the army. These commissars of Kerensky had no popular support under them, no moral halo about their heads. In the eyes of the soldiers they were agents of the bourgeoisie, cattle-drivers of the Entente, and nothing more. They could frighten the army for a time – this indeed to a certain extent they actually did-but they were powerless to resurrect it.

It was reported in the bureau of the Executive Committee in Petrograd at the beginning of August that a favorable change had occurred in the mood of the army, that drilling activities were getting under way. But on the other hand, an increasing tyranny was observable, increasing acts of despotism and oppression. The question of the officers was becoming especially critical. “They were completely isolated, and formed a closed organization of their own.” Other testimony bears out the fact that externally a greater order was being established at the front – the soldiers had ceased to rebel about petty and accidental things – but their dissatisfaction with the situation as a whole was only the more intense. In the cautious and diplomatic speech of the Menshevik, Kuchin, at the State Conference, an alarmed warning could be heard underneath the note of reassurance. “There is an indubitable tranquility,” he said, “but there is also

something else. There is a feeling of something like disappointment, and of this feeling also we are extremely afraid ...” The temporary victory over the Bolsheviks had been first of all a victory over the new hopes of the soldiers, over their faith in a better future. The masses had become more cautious, they had acquired a certain amount of discipline. But the gulf between the rulers and the soldiers had deepened. What and whom will it swallow up tomorrow?

The July reaction established a kind of decisive water-shed between the February and October revolutions. The workers, the garrisons at the rear, the front – in part even, as will appear later, the peasantry – recoiled and jumped back as though from a blow in the solar plexus. The blow was in reality psychological rather than physical, but it was no less real for that. During the first four months all the mass processes had moved in one direction – to the left. Bolshevism had grown, strengthened, and become bold. But now the movement had run into a stone wall. In reality it had only become clear that further progress along the road of the February revolution was impossible. Many thought that the revolution in general had exhausted itself. The February revolution had indeed exhausted itself to the bottom. This inner crisis in the mass consciousness, combining with the slanders and measures of repression, caused confusion and retreat – in some cases panic. The enemy grew bolder. In the masses themselves all the backward and dubious elements rose to the surface, those impatient of disturbances and deprivations. These receding waves in the flood of the revolution developed an overwhelming force. It seemed as though they were obeying the fundamental laws of social hydrodynamics.

You cannot conquer such a wave head on – it is necessary to give way to it, not let it swamp you. Hold out until the wave of reaction has exhausted itself, preparing in the meantime points of support for a new advance.

Observing certain individual regiments which on July 3rd had marched under Bolshevik banners and a week later were calling down awful punishments upon the agents of the Kaiser, educated sceptics might have exulted, it would seem, in a complete victory: Such are your masses, such is their stability and comprehension! But that is a cheap scepticism. If the masses really did change their feelings and thoughts under the influence of accidental circumstances, then that mighty obedience to natural law which characterizes the development of great revolutions would be inexplicable. The deeper the popular millions are caught up by a revolution, and the more regular therefore is its development, the more confidently can you predict the sequence of its further stages. Only in doing this you must remember that the political development of the masses proceeds not in a direct line, but in a complicated curve. And is not this, after all, the essential movement of every material process? Objective conditions were powerfully impelling the workers, soldiers and peasants toward the banners of the Bolsheviks, but the masses were entering upon this path in a state of struggle with their own past, with their yesterday’s beliefs, and partly also with their beliefs of today. At a difficult turn, at a moment of failure and disappointment, the old prejudices not yet burnt out would flare up, and the enemy would naturally seize upon these as upon an anchor of salvation. Everything about the Bolsheviks which was unclear, unusual, puzzling – the novelty of their thoughts, their

audacity, their contempt for all old and new authorities – all this now suddenly acquired one simple explanation, convincing in its very absurdity: They are German spies! In advancing this accusation against the Bolsheviks, the enemy were really staking their game upon the enslaved past of the people, upon the relics among them of darkness, barbarism, superstition. And it was no fatuous game to play. That gigantic patriotic lie remained throughout July and August a political factor of primary importance, playing its accompaniment to all the questions of the day. The ripples of slander spread out over the whole country, carried by the Kadet press, swallowing up the provinces, the frontiers, penetrating even into the remotest backwoods. At the end of July the Ivanovo-Voznesensk organization of the Bolsheviks was still demanding a more energetic campaign against slander. The question of the relative weight of slander in a political struggle in civilized society still awaits its sociologist.

And yet the reaction among the workers and soldiers, although nervous and impetuous, was neither deep nor lasting. The more advanced factories in Petrograd began to recover in the very next days after the raids. They protested against arrests and slanders, they came knocking on the doors of the Executive Committee; they restored their lines of communication. At the Sestroretsk arms factory, which had been stormed and disarmed, the workers soon had the helm again in their hands: a general meeting on July 20 resolved that the workers must be paid for the days of the demonstration, and that the pay should be used entirely in supplying literature to the front. The open agitational work of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd began

again, according to the testimony of Olga Ravich, between the 20th and 30th of July. At meetings comprising no more than 200 or 300 people, three men began to appear in different parts of the city: Slutsky, later killed by the Whites in the Crimea, Volodarsky, killed by the Social Revolutionaries in Petrograd, and Yefdokimov, a Petrograd metal worker, one of the ablest orators of the revolution. In August the educational work of the party acquired a broader scope. According to the notes of Raskolnikov, Trotsky, when arrested on the 23rd of July, gave those in prison the following picture of the situation in the city: “The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries are continuing their insane baiting of the Bolsheviks. The arrests of our comrades continue, but there is no gloom in party circles. On the contrary, everybody is looking to the future with hope, calculating that the repressions will only strengthen the popularity of the party ... In the workers’ districts no loss of spirit is to be observed.” And it is true that a meeting of the workers of 27 plants in the Peterhoff district passed soon after that a resolution of protest against the irresponsible government and its counter-revolutionary policy. The proletarian districts were fast coming to life.

During those very days when up on top, in the Winter Palace or the Tauride, they were creating new Coalitions, tearing them up, and then pasting them together again – in those same days, and even hours, of the 21st and 22nd of July, a gigantic event was taking place in Petrograd, an event hardly noticed in the official sphere, but which signified the formation of another, more solid coalition – a coalition of the Petrograd workers with the soldiers of the active army. Delegates from the front had begun to arrive in the capital with protests from their regiments against

the strangling of the revolution at the front. For some days these delegates had been knocking in vain at the doors of the Executive Committee. The Committee did not admit them. It turned them away and recoiled from them. Meanwhile new delegates had been arriving, and following the same course. All these repulsed soldiers would run into each other in the corridors and reception rooms, would complain, abuse the Committee, and then seek some common way out. In this they would be helped by the Bolsheviks. The delegates would decide to exchange thoughts with the workers of the capital, with the soldiers and sailors. And these would meet them with open arms, give them shelter and feed them. At a conference which nobody summoned from above but which grew up spontaneously from below, representatives were present from 29 regiments at the front, from 90 Petrograd factories, from the Kronstadt sailors, and from the surrounding garrisons. At the focus of the conference stood the trench delegates – among them a number of young officers. The Petersburg workers listened to the men from the front eagerly, trying not to let fall a word of their own. The latter told how the offensive and its consequences had devoured the revolution. Those gray soldiers – not in any sense agitators – painted in unstudied words the workaday life of the front. The details were disturbing – they demonstrated so nakedly how everything was crawling back to the old, hateful, pre-revolutionary régime. The contrast between the hopes of yesterday and today’s reality struck home to every man there and brought them all to one mood. Although Social Revolutionaries obviously predominated among the men from the front, a drastic Bolshevik resolution was passed almost unanimously: only three men abstained from the

voting. That resolution will not remain a dead letter. The dispersing delegates will tell the truth about how the compromise leaders repulsed them, and how the workers received them. And the trenches will believe their delegates. These men would not deceive them.

In the Petrograd garrison itself the beginning of a break was evident toward the end of the month – especially evident after those meetings participated in by delegates from the front. Of course the more heavily stricken regiments could not so soon recover from their apathy. But on the other hand in those units which had preserved longest the patriotic attitude, submitting to discipline throughout the first months of the revolution, the influence of the party was noticeably growing. The Military Organization, which had suffered especially from the persecution, began to get on its feet. As always after a defeat, they looked unfavorably in party circles on the leaders of the military work, laying up against them both actual and imaginary mistakes and deviations. The Central Committee drew the Military Organization closer under its wing, established a more direct control over it through Sverdlov and Dzerzhinsky, and the work got under way again, more slowly than before but more reliably.

By the end of July the position of the Bolsheviks in the Petrograd factories was already restored. The workers were united under the same banners, but they were now different workers, more mature – that is, more cautious but at the same time more resolute. “We have a colossal, an unlimited influence in the factories,” reported Volodarsky to a congress of the Bolsheviks on July 27. “The party work is carried out chiefly by the workers themselves ... The organization has grown from below, and we have every

reason to believe therefore that it will not disintegrate." The Union of Youth had at that time 50,000 members, and was coming continually more and more under the influence of the Bolsheviks. On August 7 the workers' section of the Soviet adopted a resolution demanding the abolition of the death penalty. In sign of protest against the State Conference, the Putilov workers set aside a day's wages for the workers' press. At a conference of factory and shop committees, a resolution was passed unanimously declaring the Moscow Conference "an attempt to organize the counter-revolutionary forces."

Kronstadt was healing its wounds. On July 20, a meeting in Yakorny Square demanded the transfer of power to the soviets, the sending of the Cossacks to the front together with the gendarmes and police, the abolition of the death penalty, the admission of Kronstadt delegates to Tsarskoe Selo to make sure that Nicholas II was adequately guarded, the disbandment of the battalions of death, the confiscation of the bourgeois newspapers, etc. At about the same time the new admiral, Tyrkov, on taking command of the fortress had ordered the red flags lowered on military vessels and the Andreievsky flag raised; the officers and a part of the soldiers had put on chevrons. The Kronstadters protested against this. A government commission to investigate the events of July 3-5 was compelled to return from Kronstadt without results: it was met with hisses, protests and even threats.

A shift was occurring throughout the whole fleet. "At the end of July and the beginning of August," writes one of the Finland leaders, Zalezhsky, "it was clearly felt that the outside reaction had not only not broken the revolutionary strength of Helsingfors, but on the contrary there was to

be observed here a sharp shift to the left and a broad growth of sympathy for the Bolsheviks." The sailors had been to a considerable degree the instigators of the July movement, acting over the head of, and to an extent against the will of the party, which they suspected of moderation and almost of compromisism. The experience of the armed demonstration had shown them that the question of power is not so easily solved. Semi-anarchistic moods had now given place to a confidence in the party. Upon this theme the report of a Helsingfors delegate at the end of July is very interesting: "On the small vessels the influence of the Social Revolutionaries prevails, but on the big battleships, cruisers and destroyers, all the sailors are either Bolsheviks or Bolshevik sympathizers. This was (even before) the attitude of the sailors on the Petropavlovsk and the Republic, but since July 3-5 there have come over to us the Gangut, the Sebastopol, the Rurik, the Andrei Pervozvanny, the Diana, the Gromoboi, and the India. Thus we have in our hands a colossal fighting force ... The events of July 3-5 taught the sailors many things, showing them that a mere state of mind is not sufficient for the attainment of a goal."

Although lagging behind Petrograd, Moscow was traveling the same road. "The fumes began gradually to clear up," relates the artillerist Davidovsy. "The soldier masses began to come to themselves, and we again took the offensive all along the line. That lie which stopped for a time the leftward movement of the masses afterward only reinforced their rush to us." Under blows the friendship between factory and barrack had grown closer. A Moscow worker, Strelkov, tells about the close relation gradually established between the Michaelson factory and a

neighboring regiment. The workers' and soldiers' committees often decided at joint sessions the practical life-questions of both factory and regiment. The workers arranged cultural and educational evenings for the soldiers, bought them the Bolshevik papers, and gave them help in all kinds of ways. "If somebody was disciplined," says Strelkov, "they would come immediately to us to complain. During the street meetings, if a Michaelson man was insulted anywhere, it was enough for one soldier to hear of it, and they would come running in whole groups to protect him. And there were many insults in those days; they baited us with talk of German gold, treason and the whole vile compromisist lie."

The Moscow conference of factory and shop committees at the end of July opened on a moderate note, but swung strongly to the left during the week of its labors, and towards the end adopted a resolution quite obviously tinged with Bolshevism. In those same days a Moscow delegate, Podbelsky, reported to a party conference: "Six district soviets out of ten are in our hands ...Under the present organized slanderous attacks only the worker mass which firmly supports Bolshevism is saving us." At the beginning of August, in elections at the Moscow factories Bolsheviks were already getting elected in place of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The growth of the party's influence became boisterously evident in the general strike on the eve of the Conference. The official Moscow **Izvestia** wrote: "It is time to understand at last that the Bolsheviks are not an irresponsible group, but one of the divisions of the organized revolutionary democracy, and that broad masses stand behind them, not always disciplined perhaps, but nevertheless devotedly loyal to

the revolution.”

The July weakening of the position of the proletariat gave courage to the industrialists. A conference of thirteen of the most important business organizations, including the banks, formed a Committee for the Defense of Industry, which took upon itself the leadership of the lockouts and of the whole political offensive against the revolution. The workers put up a resistance. A wave of big strikes and other conflicts swept over the whole country. While the more experienced ranks of the proletariat moved cautiously, the new and fresh layers went the more resolutely into the fight. The metal workers were waiting and getting ready, but the textile workers and the workers of the rubber, leather and paper industries were rushing into the arena. The most backward and submissive strata of the laboring population were beginning to rise. Kiev was disturbed by a riotous strike of the night-watchmen and janitors. Making the rounds of the houses, the strikers put out lights, removed keys from elevators, opened street doors, etc., etc. Every conflict, no matter upon what theme it arose, showed a tendency to spread to the whole given branch of industry and become a struggle about principles. With the support of labor throughout the whole country, the leather-workers of Moscow started in August a long and stubborn fight for the right of the factory committees to employ and discharge men. In many instances, especially in the provinces, the strikes were very dramatic, going even to the point of arrests by the strikers of the managers and executives. The government preached self-restraint to the workers, formed a coalition with the capitalists, sent the Cossacks to the Don basin, and doubled the prices of bread and of military supplies. While

raising the indignation of the workers to white heat, this policy did not satisfy the capitalists. “The commissars of labor in the localities,” complains Auerbach, one of the captains of heavy industry, “had not yet seen the light which had come to Skobelev ... In the ministry itself ... they did not trust their own provincial agents ... They would summon representatives of the workers to Petrograd and in the Marble Palace scold them and try to persuade and reconcile them with the industrialists and engineers.” But all this came to nothing: “The laboring masses were by this time steadily falling under the influence of the more resolute leaders and those unashamed in their demagoguism.”

Economic defeatism became the chief weapon of the industrialists against the dual power in the factories. At a conference of factory and shop committees during the first half of August, the sabotage policy of the industrialists aiming at a disorganization and stoppage of production was exposed in detail. Aside from financial machinations, there was a general resort to the concealment of raw materials, the closing of tool and repair shops, etc. An illuminating testimony as to the sabotage of the capitalists is given by John Reed, who had access as an American correspondent to the most heterogeneous circles, having credentials from the diplomatic agents of the Entente, and who listened to frank confessions from the Russian bourgeois politicians. “The secretary of the Petrograd branch of the Kadet Party,” writes Reed, “told me that the breakdown of the country’s economic life was part of a campaign to discredit the revolution. An Allied diplomat, whose name I promised not to mention, confirmed this from his own knowledge. I know of certain coal mines near

Kharkov which were fired and flooded by the owners, of textile factories at Moscow whose engineers put the machinery out of order when they left, of railroad officials caught by the workers in the act of crippling the locomotives.” Such was the cruel economic reality. It corresponded not to the compromisist illusions, not to the politics of the Coalition, but to the preparation of the Kornilov uprising.

At the front the sacred union got along about as badly as at the rear. Arrests of individual Bolsheviks, complains Stankevich, did not settle the question. “Criminality was in the air; its contours were not sharply defined because the whole mass was infected with it.” If the soldiers had become more restrained, it was only because they had learned to a certain extent to discipline their hatred; when the dams broke their feelings were only the more clearly revealed. One of the companies of the Dubensky regiment, when ordered to disband for refusing to recognize a newly appointed company commander, induced several other companies and finally the whole regiment to mutiny, and when the regiment commander made an attempt to restore order by force of arms, they killed him with the butts of their rifles. That happened on July 31. If it did not go so far as that in other regiments, the commanding staffs nevertheless felt inwardly that it might do so at any moment.

In the middle of August, General Sherbachev reported to headquarters: “The mood of the infantry, with the exception of the battalions of death, is very unstable. Sometimes in the course of a few days the attitude of certain infantry units will swing sharply to its diametric opposite.” Many of the commissars were beginning to

understand that the July methods would solve nothing. On August 22, the commissar Yamandt reported: “The practice of military revolutionary court-martial on the western front is causing a dreadful disaccord between the commanding staff and the mass of the population, discrediting the very idea of these courts …” The Kornilov program of salvation had already, before the revolt of headquarters, been sufficiently tried out, and had led into the same blind alley.

What the possessing classes feared most of all was the specter of a disintegration of the Cossacks. Here the last bulwark threatened to give way. In February the Cossack regiments in Petrograd had surrendered the monarchy without resistance. In their own country, to be sure, in Novocherkassk, the Cossack authorities had tried to conceal the telegram about the revolution, and had carried out with the usual solemnity the March 1st mass in memory of Alexander II. But in the long run the Cossacks were willing to get along without the tzar, and had even managed to dig up republican traditions in their own past. But farther than this they would not go. From the beginning the Cossacks refused to send their deputies to the Petrograd soviet in order not to put themselves on a level with the workers and soldiers; and they formed a soviet of the Cossack armies which brought together all the twelve Cossackdoms in the person of their rear commanders. The bourgeoisie tried, and not without success, to base upon the Cossacks their plans against the workers and peasants.

The political role of these Cossacks was determined by their special situation in the state. The Cossacks had from long ago been a unique privileged caste of a lower order.

The Cossacks paid no taxes and enjoyed a considerably larger land allotment than the peasant. In the three neighboring territories, Don, Kuban and Tver, the Cossack population of 3 million owned 23 million dessiatins of land, while the 4.3 million peasants in the same territories owned only 6 million dessiatins. The Cossacks owned on the average, that is, five times as much per capita as the peasants. Among the Cossacks themselves the land was divided, to be sure, very unequally. They had here their landlords and Kulaks, even more powerful than in the North; they had also their poor. Every Cossack was obliged to present himself at the demand of the state on his own horse and with his own equipment. The rich Cossacks more than covered this expense with their freedom from taxes; but the lower ranks were bowed down under the burden of this liability to service. These fundamental data sufficiently explain the self-contradictory position of the Cossackdom as a whole. In its lower strata it came in close contact with the peasantry; in its upper, with the landlords. At the same time the upper and lower strata were united by a consciousness of their special situation, their position as a chosen people, and were accustomed to look down not only upon the worker but also upon the peasant. This was what made the middle Cossack so useful for putting down revolts.

During the years of the war, when the younger generations were at the front, the old men, carrying conservative traditions and closely bound up with their officers, became the bosses. Under the pretext of a resurrection of Cossack democracy, the Cossack landlords during the first months of the revolution summoned the so – called “troop rings” which elected atamans – presidents

of a kind – and under them “troop governments.” The official commissars and soviets of the non-Cossack population had no power in the Cossack territories, for the Cossacks were stronger, richer and better armed. The Social Revolutionaries tried to form common soviets of peasant and Cossack deputies, but the Cossacks would not consent, since they feared, rightly enough, that an agrarian revolution would take away a part of their land. It was no empty phrase that Chernov let fall as Minister of Agriculture: “It will be necessary for the Cossacks to make a little room on their lands.” Still more important was the fact that the local peasants and infantry soldiers were themselves oftener and oftener addressing such remarks as this to the Cossacks: “We will get at your land, you have bossed things long enough.” That was the aspect of affairs at the rear, in the Cossack villages – partly also in the Petrograd garrison, the political focus. And that explains the conduct of the Cossack regiments in the July demonstration.

On the front the situation was essentially different. In the summer of 1917 there were 162 regiments in the active Cossack army, and 171 separate squadrons. Torn away from their village connections, the Cossacks at the front shared the experiences of the war with the whole army, and they passed through, although somewhat belatedly, the same evolution as the infantry – lost faith in the victory, became embittered at the insane confusion, grumbled against the command, got to longing for peace and for home. As many as 45 regiments and 65 squadrons were gradually drawn away for police duty at the front and in the rear! The Cossacks had again been turned into gendarmes. The soldiers, workers and peasants grumbled

against them, reminding them of their hangman's work in 1905. Many of the Cossacks, who had begun to enjoy a pride in their conduct in February, began to feel a gnawing at the heart. The Cossack began to curse his whip, and would often refuse to include a whip in his equipment. There were not many deserters, though, among the Don and Kuban Cossacks; they were afraid of their old men in the village. In general the Cossack units remained considerably longer in control of the officers than the infantry.

From the Don and the Kuban news came to the front that the Cossack chiefs, along with the old men, had set up their own government without asking the Cossacks at the front. This awakened sleeping social antagonisms: "We will show them when we get home," the men at the front would say. The Cossack general, Krasnov, one of the leaders of the counter-revolution on the Don, has vividly described how the strong Cossack units at the front were gradually torn asunder: "Meetings began to be held and they would pass the wildest resolutions ... The Cossacks stopped cleaning and feeding their horses regularly. There was no thought of any kind of serious occupation. The Cossacks decorated themselves with crimson bands, decked themselves out with red ribbon, and would not hear of any kind of respect for their officers." Before finally arriving at this condition, however, the Cossack had long hesitated, scratching his head and wondering which way to turn. At a critical moment, therefore, it was not easy to guess how this or that Cossack unit would behave.

On August 8 the troop ring on the Don formed a bloc with the Kadets for the elections to the Constituent Assembly. News of this immediately reached the army. "Among the

Cossacks," writes the Cossack officer Yanov, "this bloc was greeted very adversely. The Kadet Party had no roots in the army." As a matter-of-fact the army hated the Kadets, identifying them with everything that was strangling the popular masses. "The old folks have sold you out to the Kadets," the soldiers would tease them. "We will show them!" the Cossacks would reply. On the Southwestern front the Cossack units passed a special resolution declaring the Kadets "the sworn enemies and enslavers of the working people," and demanded the expulsion from their troop ring of all those who dared to enter an agreement with the Kadets.

Kornilov, himself a Cossack, counted strongly on the help of the Cossacks, especially those of the Don, and filled out with Cossack units the division designated for his *coup d'etat* But the Cossacks never stirred in behalf of this "son of a peasant." The villagers were ready to defend their land in their own territory ferociously enough, but they had no desire to get mixed up in somebody else's quarrel. The Third Cavalry Corps also failed to justify the hopes placed in it. Although unfriendly to fraternization with the Germans, on the Petrograd front the Cossacks willingly came to meet the soldiers and sailors. It was this fraternization which broke up Kornilov's plan without bloodshed. In this way the last prop of the Old Russia, the Cossacks, weakened and crumbled away.

During this same time and far beyond the border of Russia, on French territory, an experiment in the "resurrection" of the Russian armies was carried out on a laboratory scale – beyond the reach of the Bolsheviks and therefore the more convincing. During the summer and autumn dispatches appeared in the Russian press, but remained almost

unnoticed in the whirlwind of events, telling of armed revolts among the Russian troops in France. As early as January 1917 – that is, before the revolution – the soldiers of the two Russian brigades in France, to quote the officer Lissovsky, “were firmly convinced that they had all been sold to the French in exchange for ammunition.” The soldiers were not so badly mistaken, either. For their Allied masters they had not the “slightest sympathy,” and in their own officers not the slightest confidence. The news of the revolution found these exported brigades politically prepared, so to speak, yet nevertheless, it took them unawares. An explanation of the revolution was not to be expected from the officers – the officers were the more at a loss, the higher they were – but democratic patriots from among the emigrants appeared in the camps. “It was observed more than once,” writes Lissovsky, “that certain of the diplomats and officers of the guard regiments ... would obligingly draw up chairs for the former emigrants.” Elective institutions were formed among the regiments, and at the head of the committee would soon arrive a Lettish soldier. Here, too, then, they had their “foreign elements.” The first regiment, formed in Moscow and consisting almost wholly of workers, clerks and salesmen – proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in general – had first stepped on French soil a year before, and during the winter had fought well on the fields of Champagne. But “the disease of demoralization struck this same regiment first.” The second regiment, which had in its ranks a large percentage of peasants, remained longer tranquil. The second brigade, which consisted almost exclusively of Siberian peasants, seemed wholly reliable. Very soon after the February revolution the first brigade broke discipline. It did not want to fight either for Alsace or for Lorraine; it did

not want to die for beautiful France. It wanted to try living in the New Russia. The brigade was withdrawn to the rear, and quartered in the center of France, in Camp La Courtine. “Amid quiet bourgeois villages,” relates Lissovsky, “about ten thousand mutinous Russian soldiers, armed, having no officers, and absolutely refusing to submit to anybody, lived in this vast camp an entirely unique and special kind of life.” Here Kornilov had an extraordinary opportunity to apply his methods for restoring the army, with the co-operation of his warm sympathizers, Poincare and Ribot. The commander-in-chief telegraphed a command that the soldiers be brought “into submission,” and sent to Salonika. But the rebels would not surrender. On the 1st of September heavy artillery was brought up, and placards posted within the camp quoting the threatening telegram of Kornilov. But just here a new complication thrust itself into the course of events. News appeared in the French papers that Kornilov himself had been declared a traitor and a counter-revolutionist. The mutinous soldiers firmly decided that there was no reason why they should die in Salonika – especially at the command of a traitor-general. These workers and peasants who had been sold for ammunition decided to stand up for themselves. They refused to hold conversations with anybody whatever from the outside. From then on not one single soldier ever left the camp.

The second Russian brigade was brought into action against the first. The artillery occupied positions on the nearby mountain slopes, the infantry, employing all the rules of engineering science, dug trenches and approaches to La Courtine. The surroundings were strongly occupied by Alpine sharpshooters, to make sure that no single

Frenchman should enter the theater of war of the two Russian brigades. Thus the military authorities of France set the stage on their territory for a Russian civil war, prudently surrounding it with a hedge of bayonets. This was merely a rehearsal. Later on the French ruling classes organized a civil war on the territory of Russia herself, surrounding it with the barbed ring of the blockade.

“A regular methodical bombardment of the camp began.” Several hundred soldiers came out of the camp, agreeing to surrender. They were received, and the artillery fire immediately began again. This lasted for four days and four nights. The La Courtine men surrendered in detachments. On the 6th of September, there remained about two hundred men who had decided not to give themselves up alive. At their head stood a Ukrainian, Globa, a Baptist, a fanatic: in Russia they would have called him a Bolshevik. Under cover of artillery, machine gun and rifle fire, combining in one general roar, the place was actually stormed. In the end the rebels were subdued. The number of victims is unknown. Law and order was in any case re-established. But in just a few weeks the second brigade which had bombarded the first was seized with the same disease.

The Russian soldiers had carried this dreadful infection with them across the sea in their canvas knapsacks, in the linings of their coats, in the secret places of their hearts. This dramatic episode at La Courtine is significant; it was a kind of consciously arranged ideal experiment, almost as though under a bell-glass, for testing out those inner processes in the Russian army, the foundation for which had been laid by the whole past history of the country.

Chapter 35: The Rising Tide

THE strong weapon of slander proved a two-edged one. If the Bolsheviks are German spies, why does the news come chiefly from sources most hateful to the people? Why is it the Kadet press, which has always attributed to the workers and soldiers the lowest possible motives, that is loudest and clearest of all in accusing the Bolsheviks? Why does that reactionary overseer or engineer who has been crouching in a corner since the insurrection, now suddenly jump out and begin to curse the Bolsheviks? Why have the most reactionary officers begun to swagger in their regiments? And why in accusing “Lenin & Co.” do they shake their fists in the very faces of the soldiers, as though they were the traitors?

Every factory had its Bolsheviks. “Do I look like a German spy, boys, eh?” a fitter would ask, or a cabinet-maker, whose whole life history was known to the workers. At times even the Compromisers, in their struggle against the assault of the counter-revolution, would go farther than they planned and unintentionally smooth the path for the Bolsheviks. The soldier Pireiko tells how at a soldiers’ meeting an army physician Markovich, a follower of Plekhanov, refuted the accusation of espionage against Lenin, in order the more effectively to attack his political views as inconsistent and ruinous. In vain! “If Lenin is intelligent and not a spy, not a traitor, and wants to make peace, then we are for him,” said the soldiers after the meeting.

After the temporary halt in its growth Bolshevism again began confidently spreading its wings. “The compensation is coming fast,” wrote Trotsky in the middle of August. “Driven, persecuted, slandered, our party has never grown so swiftly as in recent days. And this process will not be long in running from the capital into the provinces, from the cities into the villages and the army ... All the toiling masses of the country will have learned, when new trials come, to unite their fate with the fate of our party.”

As before, Petrograd took the lead. It seemed as though an almighty broom was busy in the factories, sweeping the influence of the Compromisers out of every last nook and cranny. “The last fortresses of defensism are falling ...” said the Bolshevik paper. “Was it so long ago that the defensist gentlemen were the sole bosses in the giant Obukhovsky factory? ... Now they don’t dare show their faces in that factory.” About 550,000 votes were cast in the elections for the Petrograd city duma on August 20, considerably less than in the July elections for the district dumas. After losing upwards of 375,000, the Social Revolutionaries still got over 200,000 votes, or 37 per cent of the whole number. The Kadets got a fifth of the whole number. “A pitiful 23,000 votes,” writes Sukhanov, “were cast for our Menshevik ballot.” Unexpectedly to everybody, the Bolsheviks got almost 200,000 votes or about one third of the whole number.

At a regional conference of trade unions which took place in the Urals in the middle of August, uniting 150,000 workers, resolutions of a Bolshevik character were carried upon all questions. In Kiev at a conference of the factory and shop committees on the 20th of August, the Bolshevik resolution was carried by a majority of 161 votes against

35, with 13 abstaining. At the democratic elections for the city duma of Ivonovo-Voznesensk which coincided exactly with the Kornilov revolt, the Bolsheviks got 58 seats out of 102, the Social Revolutionaries 24, the Mensheviks 4. In Kronstadt a Bolshevik, Brekman, was elected president of the soviet, and a Bolshevik, Pokrovsky, burgomaster. It was far from being so obvious everywhere, and in some places there was a decline. But during August Bolshevism was growing almost throughout the whole breadth of the land.

The revolt of Kornilov gave a powerful impetus to the radicalization of the masses. Slutsky has recalled upon this theme a word of Marx: a revolution needs from time to time the whip of the counter-revolution. The danger had awakened not only energy, but penetration. The collective thought was working at a higher tension. There was no lack of data from which to draw conclusions. A Coalition had been declared necessary for the defense of the revolution, and meanwhile the ally in the Coalition had turned up on the side of the counter-revolution. The Moscow Conference had been declared a review of the national unity. Only the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks had given warning: “The Conference ... will inevitably turn into the instrument of a counter-revolutionary conspiracy.” Events had verified this. And now Kerensky was declaring: “The Moscow Conference ... this was a prologue to the 27th of August ... Here was carried out an estimate of forces ... Here the future dictator, Kornilov, was first introduced to Russia ...” As though Kerensky had not been the initiator, organizer and president of this conference, and as though it were not he who had introduced Kornilov as “the first soldier” of the revolution. As though it had not been the Provisional

Government which armed Kornilov with the death penalty against the soldier, and as though the warnings of the Bolsheviks had not been denounced as demagoguism.

The Petrograd garrison remembered, moreover, that two days before the uprising of Kornilov, the Bolsheviks had voiced the suspicion at a meeting of the soldiers' section that the progressive regiments were being removed from the capital with counter-revolutionary aims. To this the representatives of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries had replied with a threatening demand: Do not venture upon a discussion of the military orders of General Kornilov. A resolution had been introduced and carried in that spirit. "The Bolsheviks, it seems, were not talking through their hats!" That is what the non-party worker and soldier must be saying to himself now.

If the conspiring generals were guilty, according to the belated accusation of the Compromisers themselves, not only of surrendering Riga but also of the July breach, then why bait the Bolsheviks and execute the soldiers? If military provocateurs attempted to bring the workers and soldiers into the streets on the 27th of August, did they not play their role also in the bloody encounters of July 4? Moreover, what is the position of Kerensky in all this history? Against whom did he summon the Third Cavalry Corps? Why did he name Savinkov Governor – general, and Filonenko his assistant? And who is this Filonenko, this candidate for the directory? An unexpected answer came from the armored-car division: Filonenko, who had served with them as a lieutenant, had inflicted the worst kinds of taunts and humiliations upon the soldiers. Where did this shady performer, Zavoiko, come from? What, in general, does this selection of swindlers for the highest positions

signify?

The facts were simple, remembered by many, accessible to all, irrefutable and deadly. The echelons of the Savage Division, the torn-up rails, the mutual accusations between the Winter Palace and headquarters, the testimonies of Savinkov and Kerensky – all spoke for themselves. What an irrefutable indictment of the Compromisers and their régime! The meaning of the baiting of Bolsheviks had become utterly clear: it had been an indispensable element in the preparation for a *coup d'etat* The workers and soldiers, as they began to see all this, were seized with a sharp feeling of shame. Lenin is in hiding, then, merely because they have vilely slandered him. The others are in jail, then, to please the Kadets, the generals, the bankers, the diplomats of the Entente. The Bolsheviks, then, are not office-seekers, and they are hated up above exactly because they do not want to join that stock company which they call a Coalition! This was the understanding arrived at by the hard workers, by the simple people, by the oppressed. And out of these moods, together with a feeling of guilt before the Bolsheviks, grew an unconquerable loyalty to the party and confidence in its leaders.

The old soldiers, the standing elements of the army, the artillery men, the staff of non-commissioned officers, resisted up to the very last days, with all their power. They did not want to set a cross against all their fighting labors, their sacrifices, their deeds of heroism: can it be that all that was squandered for nothing? But when the last prop was knocked out from under them, they turned sharply – left about face! – to the Bolsheviks. Now they had utterly come over to the revolution, their non commissioned

officer chevrons, their soldier wills tempered in battle, their bulging jaw muscles, and all. They had got fooled on the war, but this time they would carry the thing through to the end.

In the reports of local authorities, both military and civil, Bolshevism had become in these days a synonym for every kind of mass activity, every decisive demand, every resistance against exploitation, every forward motion – in a word, it had become another name for revolution. Does that mean that all these things are Bolshevism? the strikers would ask themselves – and the protesting sailors, and the dissatisfied soldiers' wives, and the muzhiks in revolt. The masses were, so to speak, compelled from above to identify their intimate thoughts and demands with the slogans of Bolshevism. Thus the revolution turned to its own uses a weapon directed against it. In history not only does the reasonable become nonsensical, but also, when the course of evolution requires it, the nonsensical becomes reasonable.

The change in the political atmosphere revealed itself very clearly in the joint session of the Executive Committees of August 30, when delegates from Kronstadt demanded that they receive seats in that high body. Could it be possible that, where these unbridled Kronstadters had been subjected only to condemnations and excommunications, their representatives were now to take seats? But how refuse them? Only yesterday the Kronstadt sailors and soldiers had come to the defense of Petrograd. Sailors from the Aurora were even now guarding the Winter Palace. After whispering among themselves, the leaders offered the Kronstadters four seats with a voice but not a vote. The concession was accepted dryly, without

expressions of gratitude.

“After the attempt of Kornilov,” relates Chinenov, a soldier of the Moscow garrison, “all the troops acquired a Bolshevik color … All were struck by the way in which the statement (of the Bolsheviks) came true … that General Kornilov would soon be at the gates of Petrograd.” Mitrevich, a soldier of the armored-car division, recalls the heroic legends which passed from mouth to mouth after the victory over the rebellious generals: “They were nothing but stories of bravery and of great deeds, and of how – well, if there is such bravery, we can fight the whole world. Here the Bolsheviks came into their own.

Antonov-Ovseenko, liberated from prison on the day of the Kornilov campaign, went immediately to Helsingfors. “An immense change had occurred in the masses,” he says. At the regional congress of the Finland soviets the Right Social Revolutionaries were in a tiny minority; the Bolsheviks, in coalition with the Left Social Revolutionaries, had taken the lead. As president of the regional committee of the soviet they elected Smilga, who in spite of his extreme youth was a member of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks – a man with a strong urge leftward, and who had already in the April Days revealed an inclination to shake down the Provisional Government. As president of the Helsingfors soviet, which rested upon the garrison and the Russian workers, they elected Scheineman, a Bolshevik, the future director of the Soviet State Bank – a man of cautious and bureaucratic mould, but who at that time was marching abreast with the other leaders. The Provisional Government had forbidden the Finlanders to convoke the Seim, dissolved by it. The regional committee suggested that the Seim assemble, and volunteered to

defend it. The committee refused to fulfil the orders of the Provisional Government withdrawing various military units from Finland. Essentially the Bolsheviks had here already established a dictatorship of the soviets in Finland.

At the beginning of September a Bolshevik paper wrote: “From a whole series of Russian cities, the news comes that the organizations of our party have grown immensely in the recent period, but still more significant is the growth of our influence in the broadest democratic masses of the workers and soldiers.” “Even in those plants where at first they had refused to listen to us,” writes the Bolshevik, Averin, from Ekaterinoslav, “the workers were on our side in the Kornilov days.” “When the rumor came that Kaledin was mobilizing the Cossacks against Tzaritzyn and Saratov,” writes Antonov, one of the leaders of the Saratov Bolsheviks, “when this rumor was confirmed and reinforced by the insurrection of General Kornilov, the masses got over their former prejudices in a few days.”

The Bolshevik paper in Kiev stated on the 19th of September: “In the election for the soviets twelve comrades were elected from the arsenal-all Bolsheviks. All the Menshevik candidates were defeated. The same thing is happening in a whole series of other plants.” Similar dispatches are to be found from now on every day in the pages of the workers’ press. The hostile press tried in vain to minimize or hush up the growth of Bolshevism. The masses, leaping forward, seemed to be trying to make up for the time lost in their former waverings, hesitations, and temporary retreats. There was a universal, obstinate and unrestrainable flood tide.

A member of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks,

Barbara Yakovleva, from whom we learned in July and August about the extreme weakening of the Bolsheviks in the whole Moscow region, now testifies to an abrupt change. “During the second half of September,” she reports to the conference, “the workers of the regional bureau made the rounds of the region … Their impressions were absolutely identical: everywhere, in all the provinces, the process was under way of general Bolshevization of the masses, and everyone observed likewise that the villages were demanding Bolsheviks In those localities where after the July Days the organizations of the party had disintegrated they were now reborn and were growing rapidly. In the districts into which Bolsheviks had not been admitted, party nuclei were now spontaneously arising. Even in the backward provinces of Tambovsk and Riazan – in those bulwarks of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, which formerly in making their rounds the Bolsheviks had passed by through sheer hopelessness – a veritable revolution was now occurring: the influence of the Bolsheviks was growing by leaps and bounds, and the compromisist organizations were dissolving.

The reports of the delegates to the Bolshevik conference of the Moscow region, a month after the Kornilov uprising and a month before the insurrection of the Bolsheviks, are filled with confidence and enthusiasm. In Nizhni-Novgorod, after a two months’ decline, the party is again living a full life. Social Revolutionary workers are coming over to the Bolsheviks by the hundreds. In Tver a broad party work has developed only since the Kornilov days. The Compromisers are going to pieces; nobody listens to them; they are being chased out. In Vladimir province the Bolsheviks have grown so strong that at a provincial

congress of the soviets only five Mensheviks are to be found and only three Social Revolutionaries. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk, the Russian Manchester, the whole work in the soviets, the duma, and the zemstvo has been turned over to the Bolsheviks as the semi-sovereign masters.

The organizations of the party are growing, but its force of attraction is growing incomparably faster. The lack of correspondence between the technical resources of the Bolsheviks and their relative political weight finds its expression in the small number of members of the party compared to the colossal growth of its influence. Events are sweeping the masses so powerfully and swiftly into their whirlpool, that the workers and soldiers have no time to organize themselves in a party. They have no time even to understand the necessity of any special party organization. They drink up the Bolshevik slogans just as naturally as they breathe the air. That the party is a complicated laboratory in which these slogans have been worked out on the basis of collective experience, is still not clear to their minds. There are over twenty million people represented in the soviets. The party, which had on the very eve of the October revolution only 240,000 members, was more and more confidently leading these millions, through the medium of the trade unions, the factory and shop committees, and the soviets.

Throughout this vast country, shaken to its depths and with an inexhaustible variety of local conditions and political levels of development, some sort of elections were going on every day – to the dumas, the zemstvos, the soviets, the factory and shop committees, the trade unions, the army or land committees. And throughout all these elections there appears like a red thread one

unchanging fact: the growth of the Bolsheviks. The elections to the district dumas of Moscow astonished the country especially with the sharp change they indicated in the mood of the masses. The “great” party of the Social Revolutionaries retained at the end of September only 54,000 of the 375,000 votes it had counted in June. The Mensheviks had fallen from 76,000 to 16,000. The Kadets kept 101,000, having lost only 8,000. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, had risen from 75,000 to 198,000. Whereas in June the Social Revolutionaries had 58 per cent of the votes, in September the Bolsheviks had approximately 52 per cent. The garrison voted 90 per cent for the Bolsheviks; in some detachments over 95 per cent. In the shops of the heavy artillery, the Bolsheviks got 2,286 out of 2,347 votes. A considerable lowering of the number of voters was due to the fact that many small town people, who in the vapor of their first illusions had joined the Compromisers, fell back soon after into political non-existence. The Mensheviks were melting away completely; the Social Revolutionaries received half as many votes as the Kadets; the Kadets received half as many as the Bolsheviks. Those September votes for the Bolsheviks were won in a bitter struggle with all the other parties. They were strong votes. They were to be relied on. The wiping out of intermediate groups, the significant stability of the bourgeois camp, the gigantic growth of the most hated and persecuted proletarian party – these were unmistakable symptoms of a revolutionary crisis. “Yes, the Bolsheviks worked zealously and unceasingly,” writes Sukhanov, who himself belonged to the shattered party of the Mensheviks. “They were among the masses, in the factories, every day and all the time … They became the party of the masses because they were always there,

guiding both in great things and small the whole life of the factories and barracks. The masses lived and breathed together with the Bolsheviks. They were wholly in the hands of the party of Lenin and Trotsky.”

On the front the political picture was more variegated. There were regiments and divisions which had never yet heard or seen a Bolshevik. Many of them were sincerely astounded when they were themselves accused of Bolshevism. On the other hand, divisions were to be found which took their own anarchistic moods, mingled with a dash of Black Hundredism, for pure Bolshevism. The mood of the front was levelling out in one direction, but in that colossal political flood which took the trenches for its channels there occurred many whirlpools and backwashes, and there was no little turbidity.

In September the Bolsheviks broke through the cordon and got access to the front, from which they had been cut off in dead earnest for the last two months. Even now the official veto was not removed. The compromisist committees did everything to keep the Bolsheviks out of their units; but all efforts were vain. The soldiers had heard so much about their own “Bolshevism” that they were all, without exception, dying to see and hear a live Bolshevik. The formal obstacles, delays, and complications thought up by the committee men were wiped away by the insistence of the soldiers as soon as the news came that a Bolshevik had arrived. The old revolutionist, Efgenia Bosh, who did a great work in the Ukraine, has left brilliant memoirs of her bold excursions into the primitive soldier jungle. The frightened warnings of her friends, both sincere and insincere, were everywhere refuted. In those divisions which had been described as bitterly hostile to

the Bolsheviks, the orator, approaching her theme very cautiously, would soon find out that the listeners were with her. “There was no coughing, or hawking, or nose-blowing – those first indications of boredom in a soldier audience; the silence and order were complete.” The meetings would end in stormy ovations in honor of that bold agitator. In general, the whole journey of Efgenia Bosh along the front was a kind of triumphal procession. Less heroic, less effective, but essentially the same, was the experience of agitators of less distinguished caliber.

New ideas, or ideas convincing in a new way, new slogans, new generalizations, were bursting into the stagnant life of the trenches. The millions of soldier brains were grinding over the events, casting the balance of their political experience. “Dear comrade-workers and soldiers,” writes a soldier at the front to the editor of the party paper, “do not give free rein to that bad letter K which has sold the whole world into bloody slaughter. That includes the first murderer, Kolka (Nicholas II), Kerensky, Kornilov, Kaledin, the Kadets, all of them on one letter K. The Kossacks are also dangerous for us ... Sidor Nikolaiev.” Do not look for superstition here: this is merely a method of political mnemonics.

The insurrection, starting at headquarters, could not but shock every fiber of the soldiers’ being. That external discipline, the effort to restore which had cost so many victims, was again going to pieces on all sides. The military commissar of the western front, Zhdanov, reported: “The general mood is nervous, suspicious of officers, waiting; refusal to obey orders is explained on the ground that they are Kornilov orders, and should not be obeyed.” Stankevich, who replaced Filonenko in the

position of head commissar, writes to the same effect: “The soldier masses ... felt themselves surrounded on all sides by treason ... Anyone who tried to dissuade them from this seemed also a traitor.”

For the ranking officers the collapse of Kornilov’s adventure meant the collapse of their last hope. Even before that, the self-confidence of the commanding staff had been none too brilliant. We observed during the last days of August the military conspirators in Petrograd, drunk, boastful and weak-willed. The officers now felt utterly despised and rejected. “That hatred, that baiting,” writes one of them, “that complete inactivity, and eternal expecting of arrest and shameful death, drove the officers into the roadhouses, the private dining rooms, the hotels ... In this drunken vapor the officers were drowned.” In contrast to this, the soldiers and sailors were more sober than ever before. They were caught up by a new hope.

“The Bolsheviks,” according to Stankevich, “lifted up their heads, and felt themselves to be complete masters in the army. The lower committees began to turn into Bolshevik nuclei. Every election in the army showed an amazing Bolshevik growth. And moreover it is impossible to ignore the fact that the best and most tightly disciplined army, not only on the Northern front but perhaps on the whole Russian front, the Fifth Army, was the first to elect a Bolshevik army committee.”

The fleet was still more clearly, concisely and colorfully going Bolshevik. On September 8, the Baltic sailors raised the battle-flags on all ships as an expression of their readiness to fight for the transfer of power to the

proletariat and peasantry. The fleet demanded an immediate armistice on all fronts, the transfer of land to the peasant committees, and the establishment of workers' control of production. Three days later the central committee of the Black Sea Fleet, less advanced and more moderate, supported the Baltic sailors, adopting the slogan of Power to the Soviets. The same slogan was adopted in the middle of September by 23 Siberian and Lettish infantry regiments of the Twelfth Army. Other divisions followed steadily. The demand for Power to the Soviets never again disappeared from the order of the day in the army or the fleet.

"The sailors' meetings," says Stankevich, "nine-tenths of them, consisted of Bolsheviks only." The new head commissar happened to be defending the Provisional Government before the sailors at Reval. He felt the futility of the attempt from the very first words. At the mere word "government" the audience drew together with hostility: "A wave of indignation, hatred and distrust instantly seized the whole crowd. It was clear, strong, passionate, irresistible, and poured out in one unanimous shout: *"Down with it!"* We cannot withhold a word of praise to this story-teller who does not forget to see beauty in the attack of a crowd mortally hostile to him.

The question of peace, driven underground for these two months, now emerges with tenfold strength. At a meeting of the Petersburg Soviet, the officer Dubassov, arriving from the front, declares: "Whatever you may say here, the soldiers will not fight any more." Voices reply: "Even the Bolsheviks don't say that!" But the officer, not a Bolshevik, comes back: "I tell you what I know, and what the soldiers directed me to tell you." Another man from the front, a

gloomy soldier in a long coat soaked with the filth and stink of the trenches, declared to the Petrograd Soviet in those same September days that the soldiers needed peace, any kind of peace, even “some sort of an indecent peace. Those harsh soldier words gave the soviet a fright. That is how far things had gone then! The soldiers at the front were not little children. They excellently understood that with the present war map,” the peace could only be an oppressor’s peace. And for this understanding of his, the trench delegate purposely chose the crudest words possible, expressing the whole force of his disgust for a Hohenzollern peace. But with this very nakedness of his mind the soldier compelled his hearers to understand that there was no other road, that the war had unwound the spirit of the army, that an immediate peace was necessary no matter what it cost. The bourgeois press seized the words of the trench orator with malicious joy, attributing them to the Bolsheviks. That phrase about an indecent peace was henceforward continually to the fore as an extreme expression of the savagery and depravity of the people!

AS a general rule the Compromisers were not at all inclined, like the political dilettant Stankevich, to admire the beauties of that rising tide which threatened to wash them off the revolutionary arena. They learned from day to day with amazement and horror that they no longer possessed any power of resistance. As a matter of fact, under the confidence of the masses in the Compromisers there had lain concealed from the first hours of the revolution a misunderstanding – historically inevitable but

not long-lasting. Only a few months had been required to clear it up. The Compromisers had been compelled to talk with the workers and soldiers in a wholly different language from that which they employed in the Executive Committee, and still more in the Winter Palace. The responsible leaders of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, were more and more afraid as weeks passed, to come out into the open square. Agitators of the second and third rank would go out, and they would accommodate themselves to the social radicalism of the people with the help of equivocal phrases. Or else they would become sincerely infected with the mood of the factories, mines and barracks, would begin to speak their language, and soon break away from their own parties.

The sailor Khovrin tells in his memoirs how the seamen who considered themselves Social Revolutionaries would in reality defend the Bolshevik platform. This was to be observed everywhere. The people knew what they wanted, but they did not know how to call it by name. That “misunderstanding” which belonged to the inner essence of the February revolution had a universal popular mass character – especially in the villages, where it lasted longer than in the cities. Only experience could introduce order into this chaos. Events, little and great, were tirelessly shaking up the mass parties, bringing their membership into correspondence with their policy and not their signboards.

An excellent example of this quid *pro quo* between the Compromisers and the masses, is to be seen in an oath taken at the beginning of July by 2,000 Donetz miners, kneeling with uncovered heads in the presence of a crowd of 5,000 people and with its participation. “We swear by

our children, by God, by the heaven and earth, and by all things that we hold sacred in the world, that we will never relinquish the freedom bought with blood on the 28th of February, 1917; believing in the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, we swear we will never listen to the Leninists, for they, the Bolshevik-Leninists, are leading Russia to ruin with their agitation, whereas the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks united in a single union, say: The land to the people, land without indemnities; the capitalist structure must fall after the war and in place of capitalism there must be a socialist structure ... We give our oath to march forward under the lead of these parties, not stopping even at death." This oath of the miners directed against the Bolsheviks in reality led straight to the Bolshevik revolution. The February shell and the October kernel appear in this naive and fervent picture so clearly as in a way to exhaust the whole problem of the Permanent Revolution.

By September the Donetz miners, without betraying either themselves or their oath, had already turned their backs on the Compromisers. The most backward ranks of the Ural miners had done the same thing. A member of the Executive Committee, the Social Revolutionary Ozhegov, a representative of the Urals, paid a visit early in August to his Izhevsky factory. "I was dreadfully shocked," he writes in his sorrowful report, "by the sharp changes which had taken place in my absence. That organization of the Social Revolutionary Party which, both for its numbers (8,000 members), and its activities, was known throughout the whole Ural region ... had been disintegrated and reduced to 500 people, thanks to irresponsible agitators."

The report of Ozhegov did not bring any unexpected news

to the Executive Committee: the same picture was to be seen in Petrograd. If after the July raids the Social Revolutionaries temporarily leapt to the front in the factories, and even in some places increased their influence, their subsequent decline was only the more headlong. “To be sure, Kerensky’s government conquered at the time,” wrote the Social Revolutionary V. Zenzinov later, “the Bolshevik demonstrators were scattered, and the chiefs of the Bolsheviks arrested, but that was a Pyrrhic victory.” That is quite true: like King Pyrrhus the Compromisers won a victory at the price of their army. “Whereas earlier, before July 3-5,” writes the Petrograd worker, Skorinko, “the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries had been able in some places to appear before the workers without the risk of being whistled down, at present they had no such guarantee. In general they had no guarantees left.

The Social Revolutionary Party had not only lost its influence, but had also changed its social constituency. The revolutionary workers had already either gone over to the Bolsheviks or, in taking flight, were going through an inner crisis. On the other hand, the sons of shopkeepers, kulaks and petty officials who had been hiding in the factories during the war, had had time to find out that the perfect place for them was the Social Revolutionary party. In September, however, even they were afraid to call themselves Social Revolutionaries any longer – at least in Petrograd. The workers, the soldiers, and in some provinces already even the peasants, had abandoned that party. There remained in it only the conservative, bureaucratic and philistine strata.

When the masses, awakened by the revolution, gave their

confidence to the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, both these parties were tireless in praising the lofty intelligence of the people. When those same masses, having passed through the school of events, began to turn sharply toward the Bolsheviks, the Compromisers laid the blame for their own collapse upon the ignorance of the people. But the masses would not agree that they had become more ignorant. On the contrary it seemed to them that they now understood what they had not understood before.

The Social Revolutionary party, as it withered and weakened, also began to split along a social seam, in this process throwing its members over into hostile camps. In the fields and villages there remained those Social Revolutionaries who, side by side with the Bolsheviks and usually under their leadership, had defended themselves against the blows dealt out by Social Revolutionaries in the government. The sharpening struggle between the two wings brought to life an intermediate group. Under the leadership of Chernov, this group tried to preserve a unity between the persecutors and the persecuted, became tangled up, arrived in hopeless and often ludicrous contradictions, and still further compromised the party. In order to make it possible for them to appear at mass meetings, the Social Revolutionary orators were compelled insistently to recommend themselves as “Lefts,” as internationalists, having nothing in common with the clique of “March Social Revolutionaries.” After the July Days the Left Social Revolutionaries came out in open opposition – still not breaking formally with the party, but belatedly catching up the arguments and slogans of the Bolsheviks. On the 21st of September, Trotsky, not without

a hidden pedagogical intention, declared at a session of the Petrograd Soviet that it was becoming “easier and easier for the Bolsheviks to come to an understanding with the Left Social Revolutionaries.” In the end these people split off in the form of an independent party, to inscribe in the book of revolution one of its most fantastic pages. This was the last flare-up of self-sufficient intellectual radicalism, and a few months after October there remained nothing of it but a small heap of ashes.

There was a deep differentiation also among the Mensheviks. Their Petrograd organization came into sharp conflict with their central committee. Their central nucleus, led by Tseretelli, having no peasant reserve such as the Social Revolutionaries possessed, melted even more rapidly than they did. Intermediate social democratic groups, who adhered to neither of the two principal camps, were still trying to unite the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks: they were still nourishing the illusions of March, when even Stalin had thought desirable a union with Tseretelli, and had believed that “we will live down petty disagreements within the party.” In the latter part of August there occurred a fusion of the Mensheviks with these advocates of union. At their joint session the right wing had a decided preponderance, and the resolution of Tseretelli favoring war and a coalition with the bourgeoisie got 117 votes against 79. Tseretelli’s victory in the party hastened the defeat of the party in the working class. The Petrograd organization of worker-Mensheviks, extremely few in number, followed Martov, pushing him along, irritated by his indecisiveness and getting ready to go over to the Bolsheviks. In the middle of September the organization of the Vassilie Island district joined the

Bolshevik party almost as a unit. That hastened the agitation in other districts and in the provinces. The leaders of the different trends of Menshevism furiously accused each other in joint sessions of destroying the party. Gorky's paper, belonging to the left flank of the Mensheviks, stated at the end of September that the Petrograd organization of the party, which had a little while ago numbered about 10,000 members, "had practically ceased to exist ... The last all-city conference was unable to meet for lack of a quorum."

Plekhanov was attacking the Mensheviks from the right. "Tseretelli and his friends," he said, "without themselves knowing or desiring it, have been preparing the road for Lenin." The political condition of Tseretelli himself in the days of the September tide, is clearly depicted in the memoirs of the Kadet, Nabokov: "The most characteristic quality of his mood at that time was fright at the rising tide of Bolshevism. I remember how he spoke to me in a heart to heart conversation about the possibility of a seizure of power by the Bolsheviks. 'Of course,' he said, 'they will not hold out more than two or three weeks, but only think what destruction that will mean. This we must avoid at any cost.' In his voice was a note of genuine, panic-stricken alarm Tseretelli was experiencing before October those same moods which had been familiar to Nabokov in the February days.

THE soviets were the arena in which the Bolsheviks functioned side by side with the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, although in continual conflict with them. The

change in the relative power of the soviet parties did not, to be sure, immediately, but only with unavoidable laggings and artificial postponements, find its expression in the make-up of the soviets and their social functioning.

Many of the provincial soviets had already, before the July Days, become organs of power. It was so in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Lugansk, Tzaritzyn, Kherson, Tomsk, Vladivostok – if not formally, at least in fact, and if not continually at least sporadically. The Krasnoyarsk Soviet quite independently introduced a system of cards for the purchase of objects of personal consumption. The compromisist soviet in Saratov was compelled to interfere in economic conflicts, to arrest manufacturers, confiscate the tramway belonging to Belgians, introduce workers' control, and organize production in the abandoned factories. In the Urals, where ever since 1905 the Bolsheviks had enjoyed a predominant political influence, the soviets frequently instituted courts of justice for the trial of citizens, created their own militia in several factories, paying for its equipment out of the factory cash-box, organized a workers' inspection which assembled raw materials and fuel for the factories, superintended the sale of manufactured goods and established a wage scale. In certain districts of the Urals the soviets took the land from the landlords and put it under social cultivation. At the Simsk metal works, the soviets organized a regional factory administration which took charge of the whole administration, the cash-box, the bookkeeping, and the sales department. By this act the nationalization of the Simsk metal district was roughly accomplished. "As early as July," writes V. Eltsin, from whom we borrow these data, "not only was everything in the Ural factories in the hands

of the Bolsheviks, but the Bolsheviks were already giving object lessons in the solution of political, economic and agrarian problems." These lessons were primitive – they were not reduced to a system, not illumined by a theory – but in many respects they anticipated the future roads to be travelled.

The July Days hit the soviets far harder than the party or the trade unions, for the struggle then was primarily for the life and death of the soviets. The party and the trade unions would retain their significance both in a "peaceful" period and during the difficult times of reaction. Their tasks and methods would change, but not their basic functions. The soviets, however, could survive only on the basis of a revolutionary situation, and would disappear along with it. Uniting the majority of the working class, they brought it face to face with a problem which rises above the needs of all private persons, groups and guilds, above the wage problem, the problem of reforms and improvements in general – the problem, that is, of a conquest of power. But the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" seemed shattered along with the July demonstration of the workers and soldiers. That defeat which weakened the Bolsheviks in the soviets, weakened the soviets in the state incomparably more. "The government of salvation" meant the resurrection of an independent bureaucracy. The renunciation of power by the soviets meant their humiliation before the commissars, their enfeeblement, their fading away.

The decline in the significance of the Executive Committee found a vivid external expression: the government suggested to the Compromisers that they evacuate the Tauride Palace on the ground that it required repairs in

preparation for the Constituent Assembly. During the first half of July the building of Smolny, where formerly the daughters of the nobility had been educated, was set apart for the soviets. The bourgeois press now wrote about the giving over to the soviets of the house of the “white doves,” in the same tone in which they had formerly talked of the seizure of the Palace of Kshesinskaia by the Bolsheviks. Various revolutionary organizations, among them the trade unions which were occupying requisitioned buildings, were subjected to attack at the same time on the ground of the housing problem. It was no other but a question of crowding the workers’ revolution out of the too extensive quarters seized by it within bourgeois society. The Kadet press knew no limit to its indignation – somewhat belated to be sure, – over the vandalism of the people, their trampling upon the rights of private and state property. But toward the end of July an unexpected fact was laid bare through the medium of the typographical workers. The parties grouped around the notorious Committee of the State Duma had long ago, it appeared, appropriated to their needs the opulent state printing plant, its despatching facilities and its franking privileges. The agitational brochures of the Kadet party were not only being printed free, but freely distributed by the ton, and moreover with preferential rights, throughout the whole country. The Executive Committee, placed under the necessity of examining this charge, was obliged to confirm it. The Kadet party, to be sure, only found a new theme for indignation: Could you, indeed, for a moment place in the same category the seizure of government buildings for destructive purposes, and the use of the properties of the state for the defense of its greatest treasures? In a word, if we gentlemen have somewhat light-fingeredly robbed the

state, it is only in its own interest. But this argument did not seem convincing to all. The building trades stubbornly believed that they had more right to a building for their union than the Kadets had to the government printing office. This disagreement was not accidental: it was leading straight to the second revolution. The Kadets were compelled, in any case, to bite their tongues a little.

One of the instructors sent out during the second half of August by the Executive Committee, having made the rounds of the soviets in the south of Russia, where the Bolsheviks were considerably weaker than in the north, made this report of his disturbing observations: “The political moods are noticeably changing … In the upper circles of the masses a revolutionary mood is growing, as a result of the shift in the policy of the Provisional Government … In the masses a weariness and indifference to the revolution is to be felt. There is a noticeable coolness toward the soviets … The functions of the soviets are decreasing little by little.” That the masses were getting tired of the vacillations of their democratic intermediaries is beyond a doubt, but it was not to the revolution, but to the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, that they were growing cold. This situation was especially unbearable in those localities where the power was, in spite of all programs, actually concentrated in the hands of the compromisist soviets. Utterly entangled in the capitulation of the Executive Committee before the bureaucracy, the leaders no longer dared make any use of their power, and merely compromised the soviets in the eyes of the masses. A considerable part of the ordinary everyday work, moreover, had passed over from the soviets to the democratic municipalities – a still

greater part to the trade unions and factory and shop committees. Less and less clear became the answer to the question: Will the soviets survive? And what will their future be?

During the first months of their existence, the soviets, far outstripping all other organizations, had taken upon themselves the task of creating trade unions, factory committees, clubs, and played a leading part in their work. But once they got on their own feet, these workers' organizations came more and more under the leadership of the Bolsheviks. "The factory and shop committees," wrote Trotsky in August, "are not created out of temporary meetings. The masses elect to these committees those who at home in the everyday life of the factory have demonstrated their firmness, their business-like character, and their devotion to the interests of the workers. And these same factory committees ... in their overwhelming majority consist of Bolsheviks." There could no longer be any talk of a guardianship over the factory committees and trade unions exercised by the compromisist soviets. On the contrary, there was a bitter struggle between them. In those problems which touched the masses to the quick, the soviets were proving less and less capable of standing up against the trade unions and factory committees. Thus, for instance, the Moscow unions carried out a general strike in opposition to the decision of the soviets. In a less clear form similar conflicts were taking place everywhere, and it was not the soviets which usually came off victorious.

Driven up a blind alley by their own policy, the Compromisers found themselves obliged to "think up" incidental occupations for the soviets, to switch them over

into the cultural field – in the essence of the matter, to entertain them. In vain. The soviets were created to conduct a struggle for power; for other tasks, other more appropriate organizations existed. “The entire work of our soviet, running in the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary channel,” writes the Saratov Bolshevik, Antonov, “lost all meaning ... At a meeting of the Executive Committee we would yawn from boredom till it became indecent. The Social Revolutionary-Menshevik talking-mill was empty and trivial.”

The sickly soviets were becoming less and less able to serve as a support to their Petrograd center. The correspondence between Smolny and the localities was going into a decline: there was nothing to write about, nothing to propose; no prospects remained, and no tasks. This isolation from the masses took the very palpable form of a financial crisis. The compromisist soviets in the provinces were themselves without means, and therefore could not offer support to their staff in Smolny; and the left soviets demonstratively refused financial support to an Executive Committee which had dishonored itself by participating in the work of the counterrevolution.

This process of fading out of the soviets was crossed, however, by processes of another and partly opposite character. Far-off frontiers, backward counties, and inaccessible corners were waking up and creating their own soviets, and these would manifest a revolutionary freshness until they fell under the demoralizing influence of the center, or under the repressions of the government. The total number of soviets was growing rapidly. At the end of August, the secretariat of the Executive Committee counted as many as 600 soviets, behind which stood 23

million electors. The official soviet system had been raised up over a human ocean which was billowing powerfully and driving its waves leftward.

The political revival of the soviets, which coincided with their Bolshevization, began from the bottom. In Petrograd the first voice to be lifted was that of the district locals. On July 21, a delegation from an inter-district conference of the soviets presented to the Executive Committee a list of demands: dissolve the State Duma, confirm the inviolability of the army organizations by a decree of the government, restore the left press, stop the disarming of workers, put an end to mass arrests, bridle the right press, bring to an end the disbandment of regiments and the death penalty at the front. A lowering of the political demands here, in comparison with the July demonstration, is quite obvious; but this was only a first step toward convalescence. In cutting down the slogans, the districts were trying to broaden their base. The leaders of the Executive Committee diplomatically welcomed the "sensitiveness" of the district soviets, but confined their response to the assertion that all misfortunes had resulted from the July insurrection. The two sides parted politely but coolly.

Upon this program of the district soviets a significant campaign was opened. Izvestia printed from day to day resolutions of soviets, trade unions, factories, battleships, army units, demanding the dissolution of the State Duma, an end of repressions against the Bolsheviks and indulgences to the counter-revolution. Upon this general background, certain more radical voices were heard. On the 22nd of July the soviet of Moscow Province, considerably in advance of the soviet of Moscow itself,

passed a resolution in favor of the transfer of power to the soviets. On July 26 the Ivanovo-Voznesensk soviet “branded with contempt” the method of struggle employed against the party of the Bolsheviks, and sent a greeting to Lenin, “the glorious leader of the revolutionary proletariat.” Elections held at the end of July and during the first half of August at many points in the country brought about as a general rule a strengthening of the Bolshevik factions in the soviets. In Kronstadt, raided and made notorious throughout Russia, the new soviet contained 100 Bolsheviks, 75 Left Social Revolutionaries, 12 Menshevik-Internationalists, 7 anarchists, and over 90 non-party men of whom not one dared openly acknowledge his sympathy for the Compromisers. At a regional congress of the soviets of the Urals, opening on August 18, there were 86 Bolsheviks, 40 Social Revolutionaries, 23 Mensheviks. Tzaritzyn became an object of special hatred to the bourgeois press, for here not only had the soviet become Bolshevik, but the leader of the local Bolsheviks, Minin, was elected burgomaster. Kerensky sent a punitive expedition against Tzaritzyn, a city which was a red rag to the Don Cossack ataman Kaledin – without any serious pretext and with the sole aim of destroying a revolutionary nest. In Petrograd, Moscow, and all the industrial districts, more and more hands were being raised every day for the Bolshevik proposals.

The events at the end of August subjected the soviets to a test. Under the shadow of danger an inner regrouping took place very swiftly; it took place everywhere, and with comparatively little debate. In the provinces as in Petrograd, the Bolsheviks-step-children of the official soviet system-were advanced to the front rank. But also in

the staff of the Compromise party, the “March” socialists, the politicians of ministerial and official waiting-rooms, were temporarily crowded back by more militant elements tempered in the underground movement. For this new grouping of forces a new organizational form was needed. The leadership of the revolutionary defense was nowhere concentrated in the hands of the executive committees. They were of little use in the form in which Kornilov’s insurrection found them for fighting action. Everywhere there were formed special committees of defense, revolutionary committees, staffs. They relied upon the soviets, made reports to them, but represented a new selection of elements, a new method of action corresponding to the revolutionary nature of the task.

The Moscow soviet created – as in the days of the State Conference – a fighting group of six, which alone should have the right to deploy armed forces and make arrests. The regional congress of Kiev, which met at the end of August, advised its local soviets not to hesitate to replace unreliable representatives of the power, both military and civil, and take measures for the immediate arrest of counter-revolutionists and the arming of the workers. In Vyatka the soviet committee assumed extraordinary rights, including the disposition of the armed forces. In Tzaritzyn the whole power went over to the soviet staff. In Nizhni-Novgorod the revolutionary committee established its sentries at the post and telegraph offices. The Krasnoyarsk soviet concentrated both the civil and military power in its hands.

With various qualifications – at times substantial – this same picture was reproduced almost everywhere. And it was by no means a mere imitation of Petrograd. The mass

constitution of the soviets gave the character of a general law to their inner evolution, making them all react in like manner to any great event. While the two parts of the coalition were divided by a civil war front, the soviets had actually gathered around themselves all the living forces of the nation. Running into this wall the offensive of the generals had crumbled into dust. A more instructive lesson could not possibly be demanded. “In spite of all efforts of the authorities to crowd out the soviets and deprive them of power,” says the declaration of the Bolsheviks on this theme, “the soviets manifested during the putting down of the Kornilov revolt the irrepressible … might and initiative of the popular mass … After this new experience, which nothing will ever drive out of the consciousness of the workers, soldiers and peasants, the cry raised at the very beginning of the revolution by our party – ’All Power to the Soviets!’ – has become the voice of the whole revolutionary country.”

The city dumas, which had made an effort to compete with the soviets, died down in the days of danger and vanished. The Petrograd duma humbly sent its delegation to the Soviet “for an explanation of the general situation and the establishment of contact.” It would seem as though the soviets, elected by a part of the city’s population, should have had less power and influence than the dumas, elected by the whole population. But the dialectic of the revolutionary process has demonstrated that in certain historic conditions the part is incomparably greater than the whole. As in the government, so in the duma, the Compromisers formed a bloc with the Kadets against the Bolsheviks, and that bloc paralyzed the duma as it had the government. The soviet, on the other hand, proved the

natural form of defensive cooperation between the Compromisers and the Bolsheviks against the attack of the bourgeoisie.

After the Kornilov days a new chapter opened for the soviets. Although the Compromisers still retained a considerable number of bad spots, especially in the garrison, the Petrograd soviet showed such a sharp careen in the direction of the Bolsheviks as to astonish both camps-both Right and Left. On the night of September 1, while still under the presidency of Cheidze, the Soviet voted for a government of workers and peasants. The rank-and-file members of the compromisist factions almost solidly supported the resolution of the Bolsheviks. The rival proposal of Tseretelli got only about 15 votes. The compromisist præsidium could not believe their eyes. The Right demanded a roll call, and this dragged on until three o'clock in the morning. To avoid openly voting against their parties, many of the delegates went home. But even so, and in spite of all methods of pressure, the resolution of the Bolsheviks received in the final vote 279 votes against 115. That was a big fact. That was the beginning of the end. The præsidium, stunned, announced that they would resign.

On September 2nd at a joint session of the Russian soviet institutions of Finland, a resolution was adopted by 700 votes against 13, with 36 abstaining, favoring a government of soviets. On the 5th, the Moscow soviet followed in the steps of the Petrograd. By 355 votes against 254, it not only expressed its want of confidence in the Provisional Government, declaring it a weapon of counter-revolution, but also condemned the coalition policy of the Executive Committee. The præsidium,

headed by Khinchuk, announced they would resign. A congress of the soviets of central Siberia, meeting at Krasnoyarsk on September 5, followed the Bolshevik leadership throughout. On the 8th, the Bolshevik resolution was adopted in the Kiev soviet of workers' deputies by a majority of 130 against 66 – although there were only 95 deputies in the official Bolshevik faction. At the Finland congress of the soviets which met on the 10th, 150,000 sailors, soldiers and Russian workers were represented by 69 Bolsheviks, 48 Left Social Revolutionaries, and a few non-party men. The soviet of peasants' deputies of Petrograd Province elected the Bolshevik, Sergeiev, as delegate to the Democratic Conference. Here again it was revealed that in those cases where the party is able through the mediation of workers or soldiers to get into immediate contact with the villages, the peasantry eagerly flock to its banner.

The dominance of the Bolshevik party in the Petrograd Soviet was dramatically certified at the historic session of September 9. All the factions had diligently rounded up their members: "It is a question of the fate of the soviets." About 1,000 workers' and soldiers' deputies assembled. Had the vote of September 1st been a mere episode caused by the accidental constitution of the session, or did it mean a complete change in the policy of the Soviet? Thus the question was posed. Fearing lest they could not assemble a majority against the præsidium, of which all the compromise leaders were members – Cheidze, Tseretelli, Chernov, Gotz, Dan, Skobelev – the Bolshevik faction made a motion that the præsidium be elected on a proportional basis. This proposal, which would obscure to a certain degree the sharpness of the conflict about

principles, and was on this account roundly condemned by Lenin, had this tactical advantage, that it made sure of the support of the wavering elements. But Tseretelli rejected the compromise. The præsidium wants to know, he said, whether the Soviet has actually changed its direction: “We cannot carry out the tactics of the Bolsheviks.” The resolution introduced by the Right declared that the vote of September 1st did not correspond to the political line of the Soviet, and that the Soviet had confidence, as before, in its præsidium There was nothing left for the Bolsheviks to do but accept the challenge, and that they did with great willingness. Trotsky, appearing for the first time after his liberation from prison and warmly welcomed by a considerable part of the assembly – both sides were inwardly measuring the applause: is it a majority or not? – demanded an explanation before the vote: Is Kerensky, as before, a member of the præsidium? The præsidium, after hesitating a moment, answered in the affirmative – thus, although already weighed down with sins, tying another millstone around its neck. “We had firmly believed,” said Trotsky, “... that Kerensky would not be allowed to sit in the præsidium We were mistaken. The ghost of Kerensky now sits between Dan and Cheidze ... When they propose to you to sanction the political line of the præsidium, do not forget that you will be sanctioning the policies of Kerensky.” The meeting proceeded in the utmost imaginable tension. Order was preserved by the desire of each and every person there not to permit an explosion. They all wanted to count as soon as possible the numbers of their friends and enemies. All understood that they were deciding the question of power – of the war – of the fate of the revolution. It was decided to vote by the method of withdrawing from the room. Those should go out who

accepted the resignation of the præsidium: it is easier for a minority to go out than a majority. In every corner of the hall an impassioned although whispered agitation now began. The old præsidium or the new? The Coalition or the Soviet Power? A large crowd of people seemed to be drifting towards the door – too large, in the opinion of the præsidium The Bolshevik leaders, on their part, estimated that they would lack about 100 votes of the majority. “And that will be doing excellently well,” they comforted themselves in advance. But the workers and soldiers kept on drifting and drifting toward the door. There was a hushed rumble of voices – brief explosions of loud argument. From one side a voice shouted out: “Kornilovists!” From the other: “July heroes!” The procedure lasted about an hour. The arms of an unseen scale were oscillating. The præsidium, hardly able to contain its excitement, remained throughout the whole hour upon the platform. At last the result was counted and weighed: For the præsidium and the Coalition, 414 votes; against, 519; abstaining, 67! The new majority applauded like a storm, ecstatically, furiously. It had a right to. The victory had been well paid for. A good part of the road lay behind.

Still bewildered by the blow, with long faces, the overthrown leaders withdraw from the platform. Tseretelli cannot refrain from one last dreadful prophecy. “We withdraw from this tribune,” he cries, turning halfway round as he moves, “in the consciousness that for half a year we have held worthily and held high the banner of the revolution. This banner has now passed into your hands. We can only express the wish that you may be able to hold it in the same way for half as long!” Tseretelli was

cruelly mistaken about his dates as about everything.

The Petrograd Soviet, the parent of all the other soviets, henceforth stood under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, who had been only yesterday “an insignificant little bunch of demagogues.” Trotsky, from the tribune, reminded the præsidium that the charge against the Bolsheviks of being in the service of the German staff had not been withdrawn. “Let the Miliukovs and Guchkovs tell the story of their lives day by day. They dare not do it. But we are ready any day to give an account of our activities. We have nothing to hide from the Russian people …” The Petrograd soviet in a special resolution “branded with contempt the authors, distributors and promoters of the slander.”

The Bolsheviks now entered upon their inheritance. It proved at once colossal and extraordinarily slender. The Executive Committee had in good season taken away from the Petrograd Soviet the two newspapers established by it, all the administrative offices, all funds and all technical equipment, including the typewriters and inkwells. The innumerable automobiles which had been at the disposal of the Soviet since the February days had every last one of them been transferred into the keeping of the compromisist Olympus. The new leaders had nothing – no treasury, no newspapers, no secretarial apparatus, no means of locomotion, no pen and no pencil. Nothing but the blank walls and – the burning confidence of the workers and soldiers. That, however, proved sufficient.

After this fundamental break in the policy of the Soviet, the ranks of the Compromisers began to melt even more rapidly. On the 11th of September, when Dan defended the Coalition before the Petrograd Soviet and Trotsky spoke for

a soviet government, the Coalition was rejected by all votes against 10, with 7 abstaining! On the same day the Moscow soviet by a unanimous vote condemned the repressions against the Bolsheviks. The Compromisers soon found themselves pushed away into a narrow sector on the right, such as that which the Bolsheviks had occupied on the left at the beginning of the revolution. But with what a difference! The Bolsheviks had always been stronger among the masses than in the soviets. The Compromisers, on the contrary, still had a larger place in the soviets than among the masses. The Bolsheviks in their period of weakness had a future. The Compromisers had nothing left but a past – and one of which they had no reason to be proud.

Together with its change of course the Petrograd Soviet changed its external aspect. The compromise leaders completely disappeared from the horizon, digging themselves in in the Executive Committee. In the Soviet they were displaced by stars of the second and third magnitude. With the disappearance of Tseretelli, Chernov, Avksteniev, Skobelev, the friends and admirers of these democratic ministers also ceased to appear – the radical-minded officers and ladies, the semi-socialistic writers, the people of culture and celebrity. The Soviet became more homogeneous – grayer, darker, more serious.

Chapter 36: The Bolsheviks and the Soviets

UPON a close examination, the means and implements of the Bolshevik agitation seem not only completely out of proportion to the political influence of Bolshevism, but simply amazing in their insignificance. Up to the July days the party had 41 publications counting weeklies and monthlies, with a total circulation, counting everything, of 320,000. After the July raids the circulation dwindled by half. At the end of August the central organ of the Party was printing 50,000 copies. In the days when the party was winning over the Petrograd and Moscow soviets, the cash in the treasury of the Central Committee amounted to only 30,000 paper rubles.

The intelligentsia hardly came into the Bolshevik party at all. A broad layer of so-called “old Bolsheviks,” from among the students who had associated themselves with the revolution of 1905, had since turned into extraordinarily successful engineers, physicians, government officials, and they now unceremoniously showed the party the hostile aspect of their backs. Even in Petrograd there was felt at every step a lack of journalists, speakers, agitators; and the provinces were wholly deprived of what few they had had. “There are no leaders; there are no politically literate people who can explain to the masses what the Bolsheviks want!” – this cry came from hundreds of remote corners, and especially from the front. In the villages there were almost no Bolshevik nuclei

at all. Postal communications were in complete disorder. The local organizations, left to their own devices, would occasionally reproach the Central Committee – and not without foundation – that it was concerning itself only with Petrograd.

How was it that with this weak apparatus and this negligible circulation of the party press, the ideas and slogans of Bolshevism were able to take possession of the people? The explanation is very simple: those slogans which correspond to the keen demands of a class and an epoch create thousands of channels for themselves. A red-hot revolutionary medium is a high conductor of ideas. The Bolshevik papers were read aloud, were read all to pieces. The most important articles were learned by heart, recited, copied, and wherever possible reprinted. “Our staff printing plant,” says the soldier, Pereiko, “performed a great service for the revolution. How many individual articles from Pravda were reprinted by us, and how many small brochures, very close and comprehensible to the soldiers! And all these were swiftly distributed along the front with the help of air mails, bicycles and motorcycles ...” At the same time the bourgeois press, although’ supplied to the front free of cost in millions of copies, hardly found a reader. The heavy bales remained unopened. This boycott of the “patriotic” press at times assumed a demonstrative form. Representatives of the 18th Siberian division passed a resolution asking the bourgeois parties to stop sending literature, inasmuch as it was “fruitlessly used to boil the hot water for tea.” The Bolshevik press was very differently employed. Hence the coefficient of its useful – or if you prefer, harmful – effectiveness was incomparably higher.

The usual explanation of the success of Bolshevism reduced itself to a remark upon “the simplicity of its slogans,” which fell in with the desires of the masses. In this there is a certain element of truth. The wholeness of the Bolshevik policy was due to the fact that, in contrast to the “democratic parties,” the Bolsheviks were free from unexpressed or semi-expressed gospels reducing themselves in the last analysis to a defense of private property. However, that distinction alone does not exhaust the matter. While on the right the “democracy” was competing with the Bolsheviks, on the left too there were the anarchists, the Maximalists, the Left Social Revolutionaries, trying to crowd them out. But these groups too – none of them ever emerged from its impotent state. What distinguished Bolshevism was that it subordinated the subjective goal, the defense of the interests of the popular masses, to the laws of revolution as an objectively conditioned process. The scientific discovery of these laws, and first of all those which govern the movement of popular masses, constituted the basis of the Bolshevik strategy. The toilers are guided their struggle not only by their demands, not only by their needs, but by their life experiences. Bolshevism had absolutely no taint of any aristocratic scorn for the independent experience of the masses. On the contrary, the Bolsheviks took this for their point of departure and built upon it. That was one of their great points of superiority.

Revolutions are always verbose, and the Bolsheviks did not escape from this law. But whereas the agitation of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries was scattered, self-contradictory and oftenest of all evasive, the agitation of

the Bolsheviks was distinguished by its concentrated and well thought-out character. The Compromisers talked themselves out of difficulties; the Bolsheviks went to meet them. A continual analysis of the objective situation, a testing of slogans upon facts, a serious attitude to the enemy even when he was none too serious, gave special strength and power of conviction to the Bolshevik agitation.

The party press did not exaggerate success, did not distort the correlation of forces, did not try to win by shouting. The school of Lenin was a school of revolutionary realism. The data supplied by the Bolshevik press of 1917 are proving, in the light of historic criticism and the documents of the epoch, incomparably more correct than the data supplied by all the other newspapers. This correctness was a result of the revolutionary strength of the Bolsheviks, but at the same time it reinforced their strength. The renunciation of this tradition has subsequently become one of the most malignant features of epigonism.

“We are not charlatans,” said Lenin immediately after his arrival. “We must base ourselves only upon the consciousness of the masses. Even if it is necessary to remain in a minority, be it so ... We must not be afraid to be a minority ... We will carry on the work of criticism in order to free the masses from deceit. Our line will prove right. All the oppressed will come to us. They have no other way out.” Here we have the Bolshevik policy, comprehensible from beginning to end as the direct opposite of demagoguism and adventurism.

Lenin is in hiding. He is intently watching the papers, reading as always between the lines, or catching in

personal conversations – not very frequent – the echo of ideas not thought out, intentions not expressed. The masses are on the ebb. Martov, while defending the Bolsheviks from slander, is at the same time indulging in mournful irony at the expense of a party which has been so “crafty” as to defeat itself. Lenin guesses – and direct rumors of this will soon reach him – that even some of the Bolsheviks, too, are not free from a note of repentance, that the impressionable Lunacharsky is not alone. Lenin writes about the whimpering of the petty bourgeois, and about the “renegadism” of those Bolsheviks who show a disposition to respond to this whimpering. The Bolsheviks in the districts and in the provinces catch up with approval these austere words. They are again and more solidly convinced: “The old man is not losing his head. His will is firm. He will not surrender to any accidental mood.

A member of the central committee of the Bolsheviks – perhaps Sverdlov – writes to a province: “We are temporarily without newspapers ... The organization is not broken up ... The congress is not postponed.” Lenin, so far as his enforced isolation permits, attentively follows the preparation for the party congress, and designates its fundamental problem: to plan the further offensive. The congress was described in advance as a joint congress, since it was to bring about the inclusion in the Bolshevik party of certain autonomous revolutionary groups. Chief among these was the Petrograd inter-district organization to which belonged Trotsky, Joffe, Uritsky, Riazanov, Lunacharsky, Pokrovsky, Manuilsky, Karakhan, Urenev, and several other revolutionists known in the past, or still only coming to be known.

On July 2, on the very eve of the demonstration, a

conference had been held of the Mezhrayontsi [1] representing about 4,000 workers. “The majority,” writes Sukhanov, who was present in the gallery, “were workers and soldiers unknown to me ... A feverish work had been carried on and its success was palpable to us all. There was only one difficulty: What is the difference between you and the Bolsheviks, and why are you not with them?” In order to hasten that fusion which certain individual leaders of the organization were trying to postpone, Trotsky published in Pravda the following statement: “There are in my opinion at the present time no differences either in principle or tactics between the inter-district and the Bolshevik organizations. Accordingly there are no motives which justify the separate existence of these organizations.”

The joint congress opened on July 26 – in essence the 6th congress of the Bolshevik party – and it conducted its meetings semi-legally, concealing itself alternately in two different workers’ districts. There were 175 delegates, 157 with a vote, representing 112 organizations, comprising 176,750 members. In Petrograd there were 41,000 members: 36,000 in the Bolshevik organization, 4,000 Mezhrayontsi, and about 1,000 in the Military Organization. In the central industrial regions, of which Moscow is the focus, the party had 42,000 members; in the Urals 25,000; in the Donetz Basin about 15,000. In the Caucasus, big Bolshevik organizations were to be found in Baku, Grozny, and Tiflis. The first two were almost wholly composed of workers; in Tiflis the soldiers predominated.

The personnel of the congress embodied the pre-revolutionary past of the party. Out of 171 delegates who filled out a questionnaire, 110 had spent 245 years in

prison, 10 delegates had spent 41 years at hard labor, 24 had spent 73 years in penal settlements, 55 delegates had been in exile 127 years; 27 had been abroad for 89 years; 150 had been arrested 549 times.

“At that congress,” as Piatnitsky, one of the present secretaries of the Communist International, later remembered, “neither Lenin, nor Trotsky, nor Zinoviev, nor Kamenev was present … Although the question of the party program was withdrawn from the agenda, nevertheless the congress went off well and in a businesslike way without the leaders of the party …” At the basis of the work lay the theses of Lenin. Bukharin and Stalin made the principal reports. The report of Stalin is a good measure of the distance travelled by the speaker himself, along with all the cadres of the party, in the four months since Lenin’s arrival. With theoretical diffidence, but political decisiveness, Stalin tries to name over those features which define “the deep character of a socialist workers’ revolution.” The unanimity of this conference in comparison with the April one is noticeable at once.

On the subject of elections to the Central Committee, the report of the congress reads: “The names of the four members of the Central Committee receiving the most votes are read aloud: Lenin – 133 votes out of 134. Zinoviev 132, Kamenev 131, and Trotsky 131. Besides these four, the following members were elected to the Central Committee: Nogin, Kollantai, Stalin, Sverdlov, Rykov, Bukharin, Artem, Joffe, Uritsky, Miliutin, Lomov.” The membership of this Central Committee should be well noted. Under its leadership the October Revolution is to be achieved.

Martov greeted the congress with a letter in which he again expressed his deep indignation against the campaign of slander, but on fundamental problems remained standing upon the threshold of action. “We must not substitute for the conquest of power by a majority of the revolutionary democracy, the conquest of power in a struggle with that majority and against it …” By “a majority of the revolutionary democracy” Martov meant, as before, the official soviet representation which had no longer any ground under its feet. “Martov is bound up with the social patriots, not only by an empty factional tradition,” wrote Trotsky at that time, “but by a profoundly opportunistic attitude to the social revolution as to a far-off goal which cannot determine our approach to the problems of today. That of itself separates him from us.”

Only a small number of Left Mensheviks, headed by Larin, decisively came over to the Bolsheviks during this period. Urenev, future soviet diplomat, making the report to the conference on the subject of fusion with these Internationalists, came to the conclusion that it was necessary to fuse with “a minority of the minority of the Mensheviks …” A copious flow of former Mensheviks into the party began only after the October revolution. Adhering not to the proletarian insurrection, but to the power which issued from it, the Mensheviks here revealed the fundamental quality of opportunism – submission to the existing powers. Lenin, always extremely sensitive to the question of the ingredients of the party, soon came forward with the demand that 99 per cent of the Mensheviks who had joined after the October revolution be expelled. He was far from attaining that goal. Subsequently the doors were opened wide to Mensheviks

and Social Revolutionaries, and former Compromisers have become one of the bulwarks of the Stalinist party régime. But all that has to do with later times.

Sverdlov, the practical organizer of the congress, reported: “Trotsky had already before the congress joined the editorial staff of our paper, but his imprisonment prevented his actual participation.” It was only at this July congress that Trotsky formally joined the Bolshevik party. The balance was here struck to years of disagreement and factional struggle. Trotsky came to Lenin as to a teacher whose power and significance he understood later than many others, but perhaps more fully than they. Raskolnikov, who was in close contact with Trotsky from the time of his arrival from Canada, and afterward passed several weeks side by side with him in prison, has written in his memoirs: “Trotsky’s attitude to Vladimir Ilych (Lenin) was one of enormous esteem. He placed him higher than any contemporary he had met with, either in Russia or abroad. In the tone in which Trotsky spoke of Lenin you felt the devotion of a disciple. In those times Lenin had behind him thirty years’ service to the proletariat, and Trotsky twenty. The echoes of their disagreements during the pre-war period were completely gone. No difference existed between the tactical line of Lenin and Trotsky. Their rapprochement, already noticeable during the war, was completely and unquestionably determined, from the moment of the return of Lyev Davidovich (Trotsky) to Russia. After his very first speeches all of us old Leninists felt that he was ours.” To this we may add that the mere number of votes cast for Trotsky in electing him to the Central Committee proves that even at the very moment of his entrance into the party, nobody in Bolshevik circles

looked upon him as an outsider.

Invisibly present at the congress, Lenin introduced into its work a spirit of responsibility and audacity. The founder and teacher of this party could not endure slovenliness, either in theory or in practical politics. He knew that an incorrect economic formula, like an inattentive political observation, takes cruel vengeance in the hour of action. In defending his fastidiously attentive attitude to every party text, even the secondary ones, Lenin said more than once: “This is not a trivial detail. We must have accuracy. Our agitators will learn this and not go astray …” “We have a good party,” he would add, having in view just this serious, meticulous attitude of the rank-and-file agitator upon the question what to say and how to say it.

The audacity of the Bolshevik slogans more than once produced a fantastic impression. Lenin’s April theses were greeted in this way. In reality the fantastic thing in a revolutionary epoch is near-sightedness. Realism at such times is unthinkable without a policy of long aim. It is not enough to say that anything fantastic was wholly alien to Bolshevism. The fact is that the party of Lenin was the sole party of political realism in the revolution.

In June and early July the worker Bolsheviks complained more than once that they were often compelled to play the role of fire hose in relation to the masses – and this, too, not always successfully. July brought, along with its defeat, a lesson dearly paid for. The masses became far more attentive to the warnings of the party, more understanding of its tactical calculations. The July congress of the party ratified those warnings. “The proletariat must not yield to the provocations of the bourgeoisie, who at the present

time would be only too glad to incite us to a premature battle.” The whole of August, and especially the latter half, was marked by continual warnings from the party to the workers and soldiers: Do not go into the street. The Bolshevik leaders themselves often joked about the similarity of their warnings to the political *leitmotif* of the German social democracy, which has invariably restrained the masses from every serious struggle by referring to the danger of provocateurs and the necessity of accumulating strength. In reality the similarity was imaginary. The Bolsheviks well understood that strength is accumulated in struggle and not in passive evasion of it. The study of reality was for Lenin only a theoretical reconnoitre in the interests of action. In appraising a situation he always conceived his party in its very center as an active force. He viewed with especial hostility – or more accurately, disgust – that Austro-Marxism of Otto Bauer, Hilferding and others for whom theoretical analysis consists merely of the learned commentaries of passivity. Prudence is a brake and not a motive force. Nobody ever made a journey on brakes, and nobody every created anything out of prudence. But the Bolsheviks knew well, just the same, that a struggle demands a calculation of forces – that one must be prudent to win the right to be bold.

The resolution of the 6th Congress, in giving its warning against premature conflicts, at the same time pointed out that the battle must be joined at that moment “when the all-national crisis and the deep movement of the masses have created a favorable condition for the coming over of the city and country poor to the side of the workers.” At the tempo of the revolution, this was a question not of decades, nor of years, but of a few months.

In placing upon the order of the day the task of explaining to the masses the necessity of getting ready for an armed insurrection, the congress decided at the same time to withdraw the central slogan of the preceding period: transfer of power to the soviets. The one thing was bound up with the other. Lenin had opened the way to this change of slogan with his articles, letters and personal conversations.

The transfer of power to the soviets meant, in its immediate sense, a transfer of power to the Compromisers. That might have been accomplished peacefully, by way of a simple dismissal of the bourgeois government, which had survived only on the good will of the Compromisers and the relics of the confidence in them of the masses. The dictatorship of the workers and soldiers had been a fact ever since the 27th of February. But the workers and soldiers were not to the point necessary aware of that fact. They had confided the power to the Compromisers, who in their turn had passed it over to the bourgeoisie. The calculations of the Bolsheviks on a peaceful development of the revolution rested, not on the hope that the bourgeoisie would voluntarily turn over the power to the workers and soldiers, but that the workers and soldiers would in good season prevent the Compromisers from surrendering the power to the bourgeoisie.

The concentration of the power in the soviets under a régime of soviet democracy, would have opened before the Bolsheviks a complete opportunity to become a majority in the soviet, and consequently to create a government on the basis of their program. For this end an armed insurrection would have been unnecessary. The

interchange of power between parties could have been accomplished peacefully. All the efforts of the party from April to July had been directed towards making possible a peaceful development of the revolution through the soviet. “Patiently explain” – that had been the key to the Bolshevik policy.

The July Days had radically changed the situation. From the soviets the power had gone over into the hands of a military clique in close contact with the Kadets and the embassies, a clique which only tolerated Kerensky temporarily in the character of a democratic trademark. If the Executive Committee should now have decided to introduce a resolution transferring the power into its own hands, the result would have been wholly different from three days before. A Cossack regiment with men from the military schools would probably have entered the Tauride Palace and attempted to arrest the “usurpers.” The slogan “Power to the Soviets” from now on meant armed insurrection against the government and those military cliques which stood behind it. But to raise an insurrection in the cause of “Power to the Soviets” when the soviets did not want the power, was obvious nonsense.

On the other hand, it had become doubtful from this point on – some even considered it improbable – whether the Bolsheviks could win a majority in those powerless soviets by means of peaceful elections. Having associated themselves with the July raids upon workers and peasants, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries would of course continue to furnish a screen for acts of violence against the Bolsheviks. Remaining compromisist, the soviets would turn into a spineless opposition under a counterrevolutionary government, and then soon come to

an end altogether.

Under these circumstances there could no longer be any talk of a peaceful transfer of power to the proletariat. For the Bolshevik party this meant: We must prepare for an armed insurrection. Under what slogan? Under the candid slogan of the conquest of power by the proletariat and the peasant poor. We must present the revolutionary task in its naked form. We must liberate the class essence of the thing from its equivocal soviet form. This was not a renunciation of the soviets as such. After winning the power, the proletariat would have to organize the state upon the soviet type. But those would be other soviets, fulfilling a historic work directly opposite to the defensive function of the compromisist soviets.

“The slogan of the transfer of power to the soviets,” wrote Lenin, under the first volleys of slander and attack, “would now sound like Quixotism or like a joke. That slogan, taken objectively, would be a deceiving of the people – a suggesting to them of the illusion that it would be now enough for the soviets to desire to take the power or pass a resolution to that effect, in order to receive the power. As though there were in the Soviet a party which had not disgraced itself by helping the hangman! As though we could make what has been as though it had not been.”

Renounce the demand for a transfer of power to the soviets? At the first blush this idea shocked the party – or rather it shocked the agitatorial cadres, who for the preceding three months had so much lived with this popular slogan, that they had almost come to identify it with the whole content of the revolution. A discussion began in the party circles. Many eminent party workers,

such as Manuilsky, Urenev and others, argued that withdrawing the slogan “Power to the Soviets” would create a danger of isolating the proletariat from the peasantry. This argument substituted institutions for classes. The fetishism of organizational forms – strange as it may seem at a first glance – is an especially common disease among revolutionary circles. “Insofar as we remain within the membership of these soviets,” wrote Trotsky, “... we will try to bring it about that the soviets, reflecting the past days of the revolution, may be able to raise themselves to the height of the future task. But no matter how important is the question of the role and fate of the soviets, it is for us wholly subordinate to the question of the struggle of the proletariat and the semi-proletarian masses of the city, the army and the country, for political power, for a revolutionary dictatorship.”

The question, what mass organizations were to serve the party for leadership in the insurrection, did not permit an *a priori*, much less a categorical, answer. The instruments of the insurrection might have been the factory committees and trade unions, already under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, and at the same time in individual cases certain soviets that had broken free from the yoke of the Compromisers. Lenin, for example, said to Ordzhonikidze: “We must swing over the center of gravity to the factory and shop committees. The factory and shop committees must become the organs of insurrection.”

After the masses had come into conflict with the soviets in July, finding them at first passive opponents and then active enemies, this change of slogan found in their consciousness a prepared soil. Just here lay the everlasting preoccupation of Lenin: to express with the utmost

simplicity that which on the one hand flowed from the objective conditions, and on the other formulated the subjective experience of the masses. It is not to Tseretelli's soviets that we must now offer the power – so the advanced workers and soldiers felt. We must now take it in our own hands.

The Moscow strike demonstration against the State Conference not only came about against the will of the soviets, but did not put forward the demand for a soviet power. The masses had succeeded in learning the lesson offered by events and interpreted by Lenin. At the same time the Moscow Bolsheviks did not for a moment hesitate to occupy fighting positions as soon as a danger arose that the counter-revolution would attempt to strangle the compromisist soviets. The Bolshevik policy always united revolutionary implacableness with the greatest flexibility, and in just this combination lay the whole secret of its power.

Events in the theater of the war soon subjected the policy of the party, so far as concerns its internationalism, to a very severe test. After the fall of Riga the question of the fate of Petrograd touched the workers and soldiers to the quick. At a meeting of the factory and shop committees in Smolny, the Menshevik Mazurenko, an officer who had recently taken the lead in disarming the Petrograd workers, made a speech about the danger threatening Petrograd, and raised practical questions concerning defense. "What are you trying to say to us," cried one of the Bolshevik orators. "Our leaders are in prison and you ask us to take up questions connected with the defense of the capital?" As industrial workers, as citizens of a bourgeois republic, the proletarians of the Vyborg district

had no intention of sabotaging the defense of the revolutionary capital, but as Bolsheviks, as members of the party, they did not for a minute intend to share with the ruling groups the responsibility before the Russian people and the people of other countries for the war. Fearing that defensive moods would turn into a defensist policy, Lenin wrote: “We will become defensists only after the transfer of power to the proletariat ... Neither the capture of Riga nor the capture of Petersburg will make us defensists. Up to that moment we are for the proletarian revolution. We are against the war. We are not defensists.” “The fall of Riga,” wrote Trotsky from prison, “is a cruel blow. The fall of Petersburg would be a misfortune. But the fall of the international policy of the Russian proletariat would be ruinous.”

Was this the doctrinairism of fanatics? During the very days while Bolshevik sharpshooters and sailors were dying under the walls of Riga, the government was withdrawing troops for the purpose of raiding the Bolsheviks, and the supreme commander-in-chief was making ready to wage war on the government. For this policy, whether at the front or rear, whether for defense or offense, the Bolsheviks could not and would not bear a shadow of responsibility. Had they behaved otherwise, they would not have been Bolsheviks.

Kerensky and Kornilov were two variants of one and the same danger. But those two variants, the one chronic and the other acute, came into conflict with each other towards the end of August. It was necessary to ward off the acute danger first, in order afterwards to settle with the chronic one. The Bolsheviks not only entered the committee of defense, although condemned there to the

position of a small minority, but they announced that in the struggle with Kornilov they were prepared to form a “military-technical union even with the directory. On this theme Sukhanov writes: “The Bolsheviks revealed extraordinary tact and political wisdom. ... To be sure, in entering a compromise not proper to their natures, they were pursuing certain aims of their own not foreseen by their allies. But so much the greater was their wisdom in this matter.” There was nothing whatever “not proper” to the nature of Bolshevism in this policy: on the contrary, nothing could correspond better to the whole character of the party. The Bolsheviks were revolutionists of the deed and not the gesture, of the essence and not the form. Their policy was determined by the real grouping of forces, and not by sympathies and antipathies. When taunted by the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, Lenin wrote: “It would be the profoundest mistake to imagine that the revolutionary proletariat is capable, so to speak, out of ’vengeance’ upon the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks for the support they have given to anti-Bolshevik raids, to shootings at the front, and the disarming of workers, of refusing to ’support’ them against the counterrevolution.”

Support them technically, but not politically. Lenin gave a decisive warning against political support in one of his letters to the Central Committee: “We ought not even now to support the government of Kerensky. That would be unprincipled. You ask: But mustn’t we fight Kornilov? Of course, yes. But that is not the same thing. There is a limit here. Some of the Bolsheviks are crossing it, slipping into ‘compromisism,’ getting carried away by the flood of events.”

Lenin knew how to catch the finest shadings of a political mood from afar. On the 29th of August at a session of the Kiev city duma, one of the local Bolshevik leaders, G. Piatakov, declared: “In this dangerous moment we must forget all the old accounts ... and unite with all revolutionary parties which stand for a decisive struggle against counter-revolution. I summon you to unity, etc.” This was that false political tone against which Lenin gave his warning. “To forget the old accounts” would have meant to open new credits for the candidates in bankruptcy. “We will fight, we are fighting against Kornilov,” wrote Lenin, “but we are not supporting Kerensky, but exposing his weakness. This is a different thing ... We must struggle ruthlessly against phrases ... about supporting the Provisional Government, etc., etc., precisely as mere phrases.” The workers had no illusions about the nature of their bloc with the Winter Palace. “In fighting Kornilov the proletariat will fight not for the dictatorship of Kerensky, but for all the conquests of the revolution.” Thus spoke factory after factory – in Petrograd, in Moscow, in the provinces. Without making the slightest political concession to the Compromisers, without confusing either organizations or banners, the Bolsheviks were ready as always to harmonize their action with that of opponent and enemy, if this made it possible to deal a blow at another enemy more dangerous at the given moment.

In the struggle against Kornilov, the Bolsheviks were pursuing their own “special aims.” Sukhanov hints that they had already at that time set themselves the task of converting the committee of defense into an instrument of proletarian revolution. It is indubitable that the

revolutionary committees of the Kornilov days became to a certain extent the prototype of those organs which subsequently led the proletarian insurrection. But Sukhanov nevertheless attributes too much foresight to the Bolsheviks, when he thinks they saw this organizational factor in advance. The “special aims” of the Bolsheviks were to shatter the counter-revolution, tear away the Compromisers from the Kadets if possible, unite the largest masses possible under their own leadership, arm as many revolutionary workers as they could. Of these aims the Bolsheviks made no secret. The persecuted party saved the government which had repressed and slandered it, but it saved the government from military destruction only in order the more surely to destroy it politically.

The last days of August brought another abrupt shift in the correlation of forces, but this time from right to left. The masses once called into the fight had no difficulty in re-establishing the soviets in the position which they had occupied before the July crisis. Henceforth the fate of the soviets was in their own hands. The power could be seized by them without a struggle. For this the Compromisers had only to ratify the situation which had already been created in reality. The whole question was, did they want to do this? The Compromisers now declared with heat that a coalition with the Kadets was no longer thinkable. If that was so, then it had been unthinkable at any time. The renunciation of a coalition, however, could mean nothing but the transfer of power to the Compromisers.

Lenin immediately seized the essence of the new situation, and made the necessary inferences from it. On the 3rd of September he wrote an admirable article, *On Compromises*. The role of the soviets has again changed,

he declared: At the beginning of July they were organs of struggle against the proletariat. At the end of August they have become organs of struggle against the bourgeoisie. The soviets have again got the troops in their control. History again half-opens the possibility for a peaceful development of the revolution. That is an extraordinarily rare and precious possibility. We must make an attempt to achieve it. In passing Lenin made fun of those phrase makers who reject all compromises whatever: the problem is “throughout all compromises insofar as they are inevitable” to carry out your own aims and fulfil your own tasks. “The compromise upon our part,” he said, “will be a return to our pre-July demand: All power to the soviets, a government of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks responsible to the soviets. Now and now only, perhaps only in the course of a few days, or one or two weeks, such a government might be created and fortified in a wholly peaceful manner.” That short date was meant to characterize the acuteness of the whole situation: the Compromisers had only days in which to make their choice between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The Compromisers recoiled hastily from Lenin’s proposal as from a wily trap. In reality there was not the slightest hint of wiliness in Lenin’s proposal. Confident that his party was destined to stand at the head of the people, Lenin made a frank attempt to soften the struggle, weakening the resistance of the enemy against the inevitable.

Lenin’s bold changes of policy, always resulting from changes in the situation itself, and invariably preserving the unity of his strategic design, constitute an invaluable textbook of revolutionary strategy. This proposal of compromise was significant first of all as an object lesson

to the Bolshevik party itself. It demonstrated that in spite of their experience with Kornilov, there was no longer a possibility of the Compromisers' turning down the road of revolution. The Bolshevik party now conclusively felt itself to be the sole party of revolution.

The Compromisers refused to play the part of a transmitting mechanism carrying the power from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, as they had in March carried the power from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. By virtue of this fact, the slogan "Power to the Soviets" was again suspended. However, not for long: In the next few days the Bolsheviks got a majority in the Petrograd Soviet, and afterward in a number of others. The phrase "Power to the soviets" was not, therefore, again removed from the order of the day, but received a new meaning: All power to the Bolshevik soviets. In this form the slogan had decisively ceased to be a slogan of peaceful development. The party was launched on the road of armed insurrection through the soviets and in the name of the soviets.

In order to understand the further course of events, it is necessary to raise the question: In what manner did the compromisist soviets regain at the beginning of September the power which they had squandered in July? Throughout the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik party there runs the assertion that, as a result of the July events, the dual power has been liquidated and replaced by a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The most recent soviet historians have copied this idea from book to book, without even trying to revalue it in the light of the events which followed. Moreover it has never occurred to them to ask: If in July the power went over wholly into the hands of a military clique, why was this same military

clique compelled in August to resort to an insurrection? Those who have power do not choose the risky path of conspiracy, only those who want to get it.

The formula of the Sixth Congress was, to say the least, inaccurate. Once we designate as a dual power that régime in which an essentially fictitious power lies in the hands of the official government and the real power in the hands of the Soviet, then there is no reason to assert that the dual power is liquidated from the moment when a part of the real power passes over from the Soviet to the bourgeoisie. From the point of view of the military problems of the moment it was permissible, and indeed necessary, to overestimate the concentration of power in the hands of the counter-revolution. Politics is not a mathematical science. Practically, it would have been incomparably more dangerous to minimize the significance of the change, than to magnify it. But a historical analysis has no need of those exaggerations proper to agitation.

Simplifying the thought of Lenin, Stalin said at the congress: “The situation is clear. Nobody talks now of the dual power. If the soviets formerly represented a real power, they are now merely instruments of the union of the masses, possessing no power.” Some of the delegates replied to the effect that the reaction had triumphed in July, but that the counter-revolution was not victorious. Stalin answered with a surprising aphorism: “During a revolution there is no reaction.” As a matter of fact a revolution triumphs only through a series of intermittent reactions. It always makes a step back for every two steps forward. Reaction is to counter-revolution as reform is to revolution. We may call victories of the reaction those changes in the régime which bring it in the direction of the

demands of the counter-revolutionary class, without, however, altering the possessor of power; but a victory of the counter-revolution is unthinkable without the transfer of power to a different class. This decisive transfer of power did not occur in July.

“If the July insurrection was a semi-insurrection, then to a certain degree the victory of the counter-revolution was a semi-victory.” Thus wrote Bukharin a few months ago – correctly enough, but without drawing the necessary inferences from his words. A semi-victory could not give the power to the bourgeoisie. The dual power was reconstructed, transformed, but it did not disappear. In the factories it was impossible as before to do anything against the will of the workers; the peasants retained enough power to prevent the landlord from enjoying his property rights; the commanders felt no confidence before the soldiers. But what is the power if it is not the material possibility to dispose of property rights and the military force? On August 13 Trotsky wrote in regard to the shifts which had occurred: “It was not merely that alongside the government stood the soviets, fulfilling a whole series of governmental functions … The essence of the thing was that behind the soviets and behind the government stood two different régimes relying upon different classes … The régime of the capitalist republic imposed from above, and the régime of the workers’ democracy taking form below, paralyzed each other.”

It is absolutely indubitable that the Executive Committee had lost the lion’s share of its importance. But it would be a mistake to imagine that the bourgeoisie had received all that the compromise leaders had lost. These leaders had lost not only to the right, but also to the left – not only to

the benefit of the military cliques, but also to the benefit of the factory and regimental committees. The power was decentralized, scattered – in part concealed underground together with that weapon which the worker hid away after the July defeat. The dual power had ceased to be “peaceful,” contractual, regulated. It had become more concealed, more decentralized, more antithetic and explosive. At the end of August this concealed dual power again became active. We shall see what significance this fact acquired in October.

Note

1. The above-mentioned inter-district organization – *Trans.*

Chapter 37: The Last Coalition

TRUE to its tradition, not to survive a single serious shock, the Provisional Government went to pieces, as we remember, on the night of August 26. The Kadets withdrew in order to make it easier for Kornilov. The socialists withdrew in order to make it easier for Kerensky. Thus began a new governmental crisis. First of all arose the problem of Kerensky himself. The head of the government had turned out to be an accomplice in the conspiracy. The indignation against him was so great that at the mention of his name the compromise leaders would occasionally even resort to the vocabulary of the Bolsheviks. Chernov, who had recently jumped out of the ministerial train while traveling at full speed, wrote in the central organ of his party about “this general mix-up in which you can’t make out where Kornilov ends and where Filonenko and Savinkov begin, where Savinkov ends and where begins the Provisional Government as such.” The hint was sufficiently clear. “The Provisional Government as such” – that was of course Kerensky, who belonged to the same party as Chernov.

But having relieved their feelings with strong words, the Compromisers decided that they could not get along without Kerensky. Although they would not let Kerensky grant an amnesty to Kornilov, they themselves promptly granted one to Kerensky. By way of compensation he agreed to make concessions on the question of the form of the Russian government. Only yesterday it had been

maintained that a Constituent Assembly alone could decide this question. Now the juridical difficulty suddenly disappeared. In the declaration of the government, the removal of Kornilov was explained by the necessity of "saving the fatherland, freedom and the republican régime." This purely verbal, and moreover belated, donation to the Left did not, of course, in the least strengthen the authority of the government – especially since Kornilov too had declared himself a republican.

On August 30 Kerensky was compelled to discharge Savinkov, who a few days later would even be expelled from the all-embracing party of the Social Revolutionaries. But a political equivalent of Savinkov was immediately appointed to the post of Governor-General – Palchinsky, who began by closing the Bolshevik paper. The Executive Committee protested. Izvestia called this act a "crude provocation." Palchinsky had to be removed in three more days. How little Kerensky intended to change the course of his policy at large, is demonstrated by the fact that as early as the 31st he had formed a new government with the participation of Kadets. Even the Social Revolutionaries would not go that far: they threatened to recall their representatives. It was Tseretelli who found a new recipe for the power: "Preserve the idea of the Coalition, but remove all those elements which hang like a millstone upon the government." "The idea of Coalition has been strengthened," sang Skobelev in chorus, "but there can be no place in the government for that party which was connected with the conspiracy of Kornilov." Kerensky would not agree to this limitation, and in his way he was right.

A Coalition with the bourgeoisie which excluded the ruling

bourgeois party was obviously absurd. This was pointed out at a joint session of the Executive Committees by Kamenev, who in his characteristic tone of admonition drew the conclusions from the recent events. “You want to start us off on the still more dangerous road of Coalition with irresponsible groups. But you have forgotten about that coalition sealed and ratified by the ominous events of these past days – the coalition between the revolutionary proletariat, the peasantry, and the revolutionary army.” The Bolshevik orator recalled the words spoken by Trotsky on May 26, in defending the Kronstadt sailors against the accusation of Tseretelli: “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 recollection hit the mark. To the bombast about a “united democracy” and about an “honest coalition,” Kamenev answered: “The unity of the democracy depends upon whether or not you enter into coalition with the Vyborg district ... Any other coalition is dishonest.” The speech of Kamenev made an indubitable impression, registered by Sukhanov in these words: “Kamenev spoke very intelligently and tactfully.” But it did not go beyond making an impression. The courses of the two sides were predetermined.

From the beginning the break between the Compromisers and the Kadets had been merely a matter of show. The liberal Kornilovists themselves understood that it behooved them to stay in the shadow for a few days. Behind the scenes it was therefore decided – in obvious agreement with the Kadets – to create a government standing to such a degree above all the real forces of the

nation, that its temporary character could be a matter of doubt to nobody. Besides Kerensky, the directory of five members included the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tereshchenko, who had already become irreplaceable thanks to his connections with the diplomats of the Entente; the commander of the Moscow military district, Verkhovsky, who was hastily promoted for this purpose from colonel to general; Admiral Verderevsky, who was for this purpose hastily let out of prison; and finally, the dubious Menshevik, Nikitin, whom his own party soon after acknowledged to be sufficiently ripe for expulsion from its ranks.

Having conquered Kornilov with the hands of others, Kerensky had only one concern, it would seem, and that was to carry out Kornilov's program. Kornilov had wished to unite the power of the commander-in-chief with the power at the head of the government. Kerensky accomplished this. Kornilov had intended to screen a personal dictatorship behind a directory of five members. Kerensky carried out this plan. Chernov, whose resignation had been demanded by the bourgeoisie, Kerensky put out of the Winter Palace. General Alexeiev, the hero of the Kadet party and its candidate for Minister-President, he named chief of the headquarters staff – that is, *de facto* head of the army. In his order to the army and fleet, Kerensky demanded a cessation of political struggle among the troops – that is, a restoration of the original situation. Lenin from his hiding-place described this situation in the upper circles with the extreme simplicity characteristic of him: "Kerensky is a Kornilovist who has accidentally quarrelled with Kornilov, and continues in intimate union with the other Kornilovists." There was only

one drawback: the victory over the counter-revolution had been far more sweeping than was demanded by the personal plans of Kerensky.

The directory hastened to let out of prison the former War Minister, Guchkov, who was considered one of the instigators of the conspiracy. In general, the Department of Justice did not raise a hand against the Kadet instigators. In these circumstances it became more and more difficult to keep the Bolsheviks under lock and key. The government found a way out: without withdrawing the indictment, it would release the Bolsheviks on bail. The Petrograd soviet and trade unions took upon themselves "the honor of furnishing bail for the esteemed leader of the revolutionary proletariat," and on the 4th of September Trotsky was set free under the modest – indeed essentially fictitious – bail of 3,000 rubles. In his **History of the Russian Disturbance** General Denikin writes with unction: "On the 1st of September General Kornilov was arrested, and on the 4th of September Bronstein-Trotsky was set free by the same Provisional Government. Those two dates ought to remain in the memory of Russia." The liberation of Bolsheviks under bond continued during the next few days. Those liberated from prison wasted no time. The masses were waiting and calling. The party needed men.

On the day of Trotsky's liberation, Kerensky issued an order in which, recognizing that the Military Committee had given very substantial help to the governmental power," he commanded this committee to cease from any further activity. Even **Izvestia** conceded that the author of this order revealed a rather feeble understanding of the situation. An inter-district conference of the soviets in

Petrograd adopted a resolution: “Not to dissolve the revolutionary organizations of struggle with the counter-revolution.” The pressure from below was so strong that the compromisist Military Revolutionary Committee decided not to accede to the order of Kerensky, and summoned its local branches “in view of the continued alarming situation to work with their former energy and restraint.” Kerensky took this in silence. There was nothing else for him to do.

The omnipotent head of the Directory was compelled to observe at every step that the situation had altered, that the opposition had grown, and that it was necessary to make some change at least in words. On September 7, Verkhovsky announced in the press that the program for the revival of the army prepared before the Kornilov rebellion must be set aside for the time being, since “in the present psychological condition of the army it would only bring about its further demoralization.” In token of the beginning of a new era, the War Minister appeared before the Executive Committee. Let them have no fear, he announced, General Alexeiev is going, and along with him everybody who had any connection whatever with the Kornilov insurrection. Healthy principles must be inoculated into the army, he went on, “not with whips and machine guns, but by way of the suggestion of right, justice and firm discipline.” That sounded quite like the spring days of the revolution. But it was September outdoors, and the autumn was coming. Alexeiev was actually removed after a few days, and his place taken by General Dukhonin. The superiority of this general lay in the fact that nobody knew him.

In return for these concessions the Minister of War and

Marine demanded immediate help from the Executive Committee: the officers are standing under the sword of Damocles; it is worst of all in the Baltic Fleet; you must pacify the sailors. After long debate it was decided, as usual, to send a delegation to the fleet. The Compromisers insisted, moreover, that the delegation should include Bolsheviks, and above all Trotsky: only upon this condition, they said, could the delegation be sure of success. Trotsky announced: “We decisively reject the form of co-operation with the government which Tseretelli defends ... The government is conducting a policy false to the bottom, against the interests of the people, and uncontrolled by them. But when this policy runs into a bag’s end or produces a catastrophe, then they want to impose upon the revolutionary organizations the hard labor of smoothing out the inevitable consequences ... One of the tasks of this delegation, as you formulate it, is to hunt out in the staff of the garrison the “dark forces” – that is, provocateurs and spies ... Have you forgotten then that I myself am indicted under Article 108? ... In the struggle against lynch-law we will travel our own road ... Not hand in hand with the Attorney General and the Intelligence Service, but as a revolutionary party which is persuading, organizing, and educating.”

The convocation of a “Democratic Conference” had been decided upon in the days of the Kornilov insurrection. Its functions were: to reveal the strength of the democracy, to instill respect for it among its enemies, both right and left, and finally – by no means the least of its tasks – to bridle the too eager Kerensky. The Compromisers seriously intended to subject the government to some sort of improvised representative institution until the convocation

of the Constituent Assembly. The bourgeoisie took a hostile attitude in advance, looking upon this Conference as an attempt to fortify the position which the democracy had regained through the victory over Kornilov. “This device of Tseretelli,” writes Miliukov in his history, “was in essence a complete capitulation before the plans of Lenin and Trotsky.” Exactly the contrary: Tseretelli’s device was aimed to paralyze the struggle of the Bolsheviks for a soviet government. The Democratic Conference was set over against the Congress of the Soviets. The Compromisers were creating a new base for themselves, trying to strangle the soviets by an artificial combination of all kinds of organizations. The democrats apportioned the votes at their own discretion, guiding themselves by one thought only: to guarantee themselves an indubitable majority. The higher-up organizations were vastly better represented than the lower. The organs of self-government, among them the undemocratic zemstvos, enormously outbalanced the soviets. The Cooperators [1] appeared in the role of masters of destiny.

Having up to this time occupied no place in politics, the Cooperators were first pushed forward into the political arena during the days of that Moscow conference, and from then on they began to appear no otherwise than as the representatives of their 20 million members – or, to put it more simply, of some half the population of Russia. The cooperatives sent their roots down into the village through its upper strata, through those who approved of a “just” expropriation of the nobility on condition that their own landed property, often very considerable, should receive not only defense but augmentation. The leaders of the cooperatives were recruited from the liberal-Narodnik

and partly the liberal-Marxist intelligentsia, which formed a natural bridge between the Kadets and the Compromisers. To the Bolsheviks the Cooperators took the same attitude of hatred which the Kulak takes to an unsubmissive hired man. The Compromisers eagerly seized upon the Cooperators, after the latter had thrown off the mask of neutrality, in order to strengthen themselves against the Bolsheviks. Lenin mercilessly denounced these chefs of the democratic kitchen. “Ten convinced soldiers or workers from a backward factory are worth a thousand times more than a hundred of these hand-picked … delegates.” Trotsky argued in the Petrograd Soviet that the officials of the cooperatives as little expressed the political will of the peasants as a physician the political will of his patients, or a Post Office clerk the views of those who send and receive letters. “The Cooperators have to be good organizers, merchants, bookkeepers, but for the defense of their class rights the peasants, like the workers, trust the soviets.” This did not prevent the Cooperators from receiving 150 seats and, along with the unreformed zemstvos and all sorts of other organizations dragged in by the hair, completely dislocating the representation of the masses.

The Petrograd Soviet included Lenin and Zinoviev in the list of its delegates to the Conference. The government issued an order for the arrest of both delegates at the entrance to the theater building, but not in the actual hall of the Conference. Such was, evidently, the agreement arrived at between the Compromisers and Kerensky. But the matter went no farther than a political demonstration on the part of the Soviet: neither Lenin nor Zinoviev intended to appear at the Conference. Lenin considered

that the Bolsheviks had no business there at all.

The Democratic Conference opened on the 14th of September, exactly a month after the State Conference, in the auditorium of the Alexandrinsky Theatre. The credentials of 1,775 representatives were accepted; about 1,200 were present at the opening. The Bolsheviks of course were in the minority, but in spite of all the tricks of the elective method, they constituted a very considerable group, which upon certain questions gathered around itself more than a third of the whole assembly.

Would it be suitable for a strong government to appear before a mere “private” conference of this sort? That question became a matter of enormous indecision in the Winter Palace, and of reflected excitements in the Alexandrinsky. In the long run the head of the government decided to show himself to the democracy. “He was met with applause,” says Shliapnikov, describing the arrival of Kerensky, “and went over to the præsidium to shake hands with those sitting at the table. We (the Bolsheviks) were sitting not far from each other, and when it came our turn, we glanced at each other and agreed not to extend our hands. A theatrical gesture across the table – I drew back from the hand offered me, and Kerensky with his hand extended, not meeting ours, passed along the table!” The head of the government got a like greeting on the opposite wing from the Kornilovists – and besides the Bolsheviks and the Kornilovists there were now no real forces left.

Being compelled by the whole situation to offer an explanation on the subject of his role in the conspiracy, Kerensky once again relied too much upon improvisation.

“I knew what they wanted,” he let fall. “Before they went to Kornilov they came to me and suggested that I take the same course.” Cries on the left: “Who came? Who suggested?” Frightened by the echo of his own words, Kerensky closed up. But the political background of the plot had already been revealed to the most naive The Ukrainian Compromiser Porsh reported to the *rada* [2] in Kiev upon his return: “Kerensky did not succeed in proving his non-participation in the Kornilov uprising.” But the head of the government dealt himself another no less heavy blow in his speech, when in answer to those phrases that everybody was sick of – “In the moment of danger all will come forward and give an account of themselves,” etc., somebody shouted: “And the death penalty?” The orator, losing his equilibrium, cried out, to the complete surprise of everybody probably including himself: “Wait a little. When one single death penalty has been signed by me, the supreme commander-in-chief, then I will permit you to curse me.” A soldier came right up to the edge of the platform and shouted at close quarters. “You are the calamity of the country!” So that is what it had come to! He, Kerensky, had been ready to forget the high place which he occupied, and talk things over with the conference as a man. “But not all here understand a man.” Therefore he would speak in the language of authority: “Anyone who dares ...” Alas, that had been heard before in Moscow, and Kornilov nevertheless had dared.

“If the death penalty was necessary,” asked Trotsky in his speech, “then how does he, Kerensky, dare say that he will not make use of it? And if he considers it possible to give his promise to the democracy not to apply the death penalty, then ... its restoration becomes an act of light-

mindedness transcending the limits of criminality.” The whole assembly agreed to that – some silently, some with an uproar. “With that confession Kerensky seriously discredited both himself and the Provisional Government,” says his colleague and admirer, the Assistant Minister of Justice, Demianov.

Not one of the ministers was able to report anything that the government had done besides solving the problem of how to exist. Economic measures? Not one could be named. Peace policy? “I do not know,” said the former Minister of Justice, Zarudny – more frank than the others – “whether the Provisional Government has done anything in this regard. I have not seen it.” Zarudny complained perplexedly that “the whole power has arrived in the hands of a man” at whose nod ministers come and go. Tseretelli incautiously took up this theme: “Let the democracy upbraid itself, if on the heights its representative has got a little dizzy.” But it was Tseretelli who most fully incarnated all those traits of the democracy which had given rise to Bonapartist tendencies in the government. “Why does Kerensky occupy the place which he occupies today?” retorted Trotsky. “A place was opened for Kerensky by the weakness and irresolution of the democracy ... I have not heard a single speaker here who would take upon himself the unenviable honor of defending the directory or its president …” After an outbreak of protests the speaker continued: “I am sorry to say that the point of view which now finds such a stormy expression in the hall has not found any deliberated expression from this tribune. Not one speaker has come out here and said to us: ‘Why are you arguing about the past of the Coalition? Why are you worrying about the

future? We have Kerensky and that is enough ...’” But the Bolshevik presentation of the question almost automatically united Tseretelli with Zarudny, and united them both with Kerensky. Of this Miliukov has pointedly written: Zarudny could complain of the arbitrary power of Kerensky; Tseretelli could throw out a hint that the government was getting dizzy – “those were mere words”. But when Trotsky stated that nobody in the conference would undertake the open defense of Kerensky “the assembly immediately felt that this was spoken by a common enemy.”

The power was spoken of by these people who embodied it no otherwise than as a burden and a misfortune. A struggle for power? Minister Peshekhonov instructed the delegates: “The power has now become a thing from which everybody is trying to protect himself.” Was this true? Kornilov had not tried to protect himself. But that quite fresh lesson was already half forgotten. Tseretelli stormed at the Bolsheviks because they did not take the power themselves, but were pushing the soviets toward the power. Others took up the thought of Tseretelli. Yes, the Bolsheviks ought to take the power! – murmured the præsidium, as they sat around the table. Avksentiev turned to Shliapnikov who sat near him: “Take the power, the masses will follow you. Answering his neighbor in the same tone, Shliapnikov suggested that they first lay the power on the table of the præsidium These semi-ironical challenges to the Bolsheviks, issued both through speeches in the tribune and conversations in the couloir, were partly taunts and partly reconnoiters. What are these people going to do next, now that they have come to the head of the Petrograd, the Moscow, and many of the

provincial soviets? Can it be that they will really dare seize the power? This could hardly be believed. Ten days before the challenging speech of Tseretelli, Rech had declared that the best way to get rid of Bolshevism for many years would be to turn the country over to its leaders. “But those sorry heroes of the day are themselves far from desirous of seizing the whole power … Practically their position cannot be taken seriously from any standpoint.” This proud conclusion was, to say the least, a little hasty.

An immense advantage of the Bolsheviks – and one up to this time, it seems to me, not adequately appreciated – was the fact that they excellently understood their enemies, that they completely saw through them. They were aided in this by the materialistic method, the Leninist school of clarity and simplicity, and the keen vigilance proper to people who have decided to carry a struggle through to the end. On the other hand, the Liberals and Compromisers invented Bolsheviks to suit themselves and the demands of the moment. It could not have been otherwise. Those parties for whom evolution has left no future never prove capable of looking reality in the face – just as a hopeless invalid dares not look in the face of his disease.

However, although they did not believe in the insurrection of the Bolsheviks, the Compromisers feared it. This was best of all expressed by Kerensky. “Make no mistake,” he cried out suddenly in the midst of his speech. “Do not think that when the Bolsheviks bait me, the forces of the democracy are not there to support me. Do not think that I am hanging in the air. Remember that if you start something, the railroads will stop. There will be no transmission of dispatches …” A part of the hall

applauded, a part kept an embarrassed silence. The Bolshevik section laughed outright. It is a poor dictatorship which is compelled to argue that it is not hanging in the air!

To these ironical challenges, accusations of cowardice, and clumsy threats, the Bolsheviks made answer in their Declaration: “In struggling for the power in order to realize its program, our party has never desired and does not desire to seize the power against the organized will of the majority of the toiling masses of the country. – That meant: We will take the power as the party of the soviet majority. Those words about “the organized will of the toiling masses” referred to the coming Congress of Soviets. “Only such decisions and proposals of the present Conference ... can find their way to realization” said the Declaration, “as are recognized by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

During the reading of the Bolshevik Declaration by Trotsky, its mention of the necessity of immediately arming the workers evoked persistent cries from the benches of the majority: “What for? What for?” Here was that same note of alarm and provocation. What for? “In order to create a real bulwark against the counter-revolution,” answered the orator. But not only for that: “I say to you in the name of our party and the proletarian masses adhering to it that the armed workers ... will defend the country of the revolution against the armies of imperialism with a heroism such as Russian history has never known ...” Tseretelli characterized this promise, which sharply divided the hall, as an empty phrase. The history of the Red Army subsequently refuted him.

Those hot moments when the compromise chiefs had

renounced their coalition with the Kadets were now far behind: without the Kadets a coalition had proved impossible. Surely you wouldn't ask us to take the power ourselves! "We might have seized the power on the 27th of February," meditated Skobelev, "but ... we employed all our influence in helping the bourgeois elements recover from their confusion ... and come into the power." Why then had these gentlemen prevented the Kornilovists, as they recovered from their confusion, from taking the power? A purely bourgeois government, explained Tseretelli, is still impossible: that would cause a civil war. It was necessary to break Kornilov in order that with his adventure he should not prevent the bourgeoisie from coming to power through a series of stages. "Now when the revolutionary democracy has proven victorious, the moment is especially favorable for a coalition."

The political philosophy of the cooperatives was expressed by their leader, Berkenheim: "Whether we want it or not, the bourgeoisie is the class to whom the power will belong." The old revolutionary Narodnik, Minor, beseeched the conference to adopt a unanimous decision in favor of coalition. Otherwise "there is no use deceiving ourselves. Otherwise we will slaughter ..." "Whom?" cried the Left benches. "We will slaughter each other," concluded Minor in an ominous silence. But in reality what made a governmental bloc necessary according to the views of the Kadets, was the struggle against the "anarchist hooliganism" of the Bolsheviks. "That really constitutes the essence of the idea of the coalition," as Miliukov quite frankly explained. While Minor was hoping that a coalition would make it possible for the Compromisers and the Bolsheviks not to slaughter each other, Miliukov, on the

contrary, was firmly calculating that the coalition would make it possible for the joint forces of the Compromisers and the Kadets to slaughter the Bolsheviks.

During the debate about a coalition, Riazanov read an editorial from Rech of August 29 which Miliukov had withdrawn at the last moment, leaving a blank space in the paper: “Yes, we do not fear to state that General Kornilov was pursuing those same objects which we consider necessary for the salvation of the fatherland.” The reading made a sensation. “They will save it all right!” somebody shouted on the left. But the Kadets found their defenders: After all, the editorial had not been printed! Moreover, not all the Kadets had stood for Kornilov, and we must learn to distinguish the sinners from the saints.

“They say that we must not accuse the whole Kadet Party of participation in the Kornilov insurrection,” Trotsky answered. “Znamensky has said to us Bolsheviks here and not for the first time: ‘You protested when we held your whole party responsible for the movement of July 3-5; do not repeat the same mistake; do not hold all the Kadets responsible for the insurrection of Kornilov.’ But in my opinion there is a slight inaccuracy in this comparison. When they accused the Bolsheviks of calling out the movement of July 3-5, it was not a question of inviting them into the ministry, but of inviting them into the jails. Zarudny (the Minister of Justice) will not, I trust, deny this difference. We say now too: If you want to drag the Kadets to prison for the Kornilov movement, don’t do this wholesale, but inspect each individual Kadet from all sides (*Laughter; voice: ‘Bravo!’*). When it is a question of introducing the Kadet Party into the ministry, then the decisive thing is not the circumstance that this or that

Kadet was in contact with Kornilov behind the scenes – not that Maklakov stood at the telegraph apparatus while Savinkov conducted his negotiations with Kornilov – not that Rodichev went to the Don and conducted political negotiations with Kaledin – not that is the essence of the thing; the essence of it is that the whole bourgeois press either openly welcomed Kornilov or cautiously kept mum awaiting his victory ... That is why I tell you that you have no partners for a coalition!" The next day a representative from Helsingfors and Sveaborg, the sailor Shishkin, spoke more briefly and suggestively on the same theme: "A Coalition Ministry will have neither confidence nor support among the sailors of the Baltic Fleet and the garrison of Finland ... Against the creation of a Coalition Ministry the sailors have raised their battle flag!" Arguments from reason had been ineffective. The sailor Shishkin advanced the argument of the naval guns. He was heartily supported by other sailors doing sentry duty at the entrance to the hall. Bukharin subsequently related how "the sailors posted by Kerensky to defend the Democratic Conference against us, the Bolsheviks, turned to Trotsky and asked him, shaking their bayonets: 'How soon can we get to work with these things?'" That was merely a repetition of the question asked by the sailors of the *Aurora* at the interview in Kresty prison. But now the moment was drawing near.

If we disregard fine shades, it is easy to distinguish three groupings in the Democratic Conference: an extensive but very unstable center which does not dare seize the power, agrees to a coalition, but does not want the Kadets; a weak Right Wing which stands unconditionally for Kerensky and a coalition with the bourgeoisie; a Left Wing, twice as

strong, which stands for a government of the soviets or a socialist government. At a caucus of the soviet delegates to the Democratic Conference, Trotsky spoke for the transfer of power to the soviets, Martov for a homogeneous socialist ministry. The first formula got 86 votes, the second 97. Formally only about one-half of the workers' and soldiers' soviets were at that moment in control of the Bolsheviks; the other half were wavering between the Bolsheviks and the Compromisers. But the Bolsheviks spoke in the name of the powerful soviets of the more industrial and cultural centers of the country. In the soviets they were immeasurably stronger than at the Conference, and in the proletariat and army immeasurably stronger than in the soviets. The backward soviets were, moreover, rapidly drawing up to the advanced ones.

At the Democratic Conference 766 deputies against 688 voted for a coalition, with 38 abstaining. The two camps were almost equal! An amendment excluding the Kadets from the coalition got a majority: 595 against 493, with 72 abstaining. But the removal of the Kadets made a coalition entirely purposeless. For that reason the resolution as a whole was voted down by a majority of 813 – that is, a bloc of the extreme wings, the resolute partisans and implacable enemies of the coalition, against the center, which had melted to 133 votes, with 80 abstaining. That was the most united of all the votes, but it was just as meaningless as the idea of a coalition without the Kadets which it rejected.

"Upon the basic question ..." as Miliukov just observes, "the Conference thus remained without an opinion and without a formula."

What remained for the leaders to do? To trample on the will of “the democracy which had rejected their own will. A præsidium was assembled consisting of representatives of separate parties and groups to re-decide a question which had already been decided by a plenary session. The result: 50 votes for a coalition, 60 against. Now it would seem that the thing was clear? The question whether the government should be responsible to the Democratic Conference as a permanent body, was unanimously decided in the affirmative by this same enlarged præsidium 56 hands against 48 with 10 abstaining were raised in favor of filling out the body with representatives of the bourgeoisie. Kerensky then appeared and announced that he would refuse to participate in a homogeneous government. After that the only thing left to do was to send the unhappy Conference home, and replace it with institutions in which the partisans of unconditional coalition would be in the majority. To attain this desired consummation it was only necessary to understand the rules of arithmetic. In the name of the præsidium Tseretelli introduced a resolution in the Conference to the effect that this representative body had been summoned “to co-operate in the creation of a government,” and that the government would have to “sanction this body.” The dream of putting a bridle on Kerensky was thus filed in the archives. Having been filled out with the necessary proportion of bourgeois representatives, the future Council of the Republic, or Pre-Parliament, would have as its task the sanctioning of a coalition government with the Kadets. The resolution of Tseretelli meant the exact opposite of what the conference wanted, and what the præsidium had just now resolved upon, but the general breakdown, decay and

demoralization were so great that the assembly adopted the slightly disguised capitulation presented to it by 829 votes against 106, with 69 abstaining. “And so for the moment you have conquered, Messrs. Compromisers and Kadets,” wrote the Bolshevik paper. “Play your game. Make your new experiment. It will be your last – we will vouch for that.”

“The Democratic Conference,” says Stankevich, “astonished even its own initiators with its extraordinary looseness of thought.” In the compromise parties – “complete confusion”; on the Right, in the bourgeois circles – “a noise of muttering, slanders conveyed in a whisper, a slow corroding of the last remnants of governmental authority ...; and only on the Left, a consolidation of moods and forces.” This was spoken by an opponent. This is the testimony of an enemy who will again be shooting at the Bolsheviks in October. This Petrograd parade of the democracy proved to be for the Compromisers what the Moscow parade of national unity had been for Kerensky – a public confession of bankruptcy, a review of political prostration. Whereas the State Conference gave an impetus to the insurrection of Kornilov, the Democratic Conference finally cleared the road for the Bolshevik insurrection.

Before dispersing, the Conference appointed from its members a permanent body composed of 15 per cent of the membership of each of its groups – in all, about 350 delegates. The institutions of the possessing classes were to receive in addition to this 120 seats. The government in its own name added 20 seats for the Cossacks. All these together were to constitute a Council of the Republic, or Pre-Parliament, which was to represent the nation until the

Constituent Assembly.

What attitude to adopt toward the Council of the Republic immediately became for the Bolsheviks an acute tactical problem. Should they enter it or not? The boycott of parliamentary institutions on the part of anarchists and semi-anarchists is dictated by a desire not to submit their weakness to a test on the part of the masses, thus preserving their right to an inactive *hauteur* which makes no difference to anybody. A revolutionary party can turn its back to a parliament only if it has set itself the immediate task of overthrowing the existing régime. During the years between the two revolutions, Lenin had gone with great profundity into this problem of revolutionary parliamentarism.

Even a parliament based on the most limited franchise may become, and has more than once in history become, an expression of the actual correlation of classes. Such were, for example, the State Dumas after the defeated revolution of 1905-7. To boycott such parliaments is to boycott the actual correlation of forces, instead of trying to change it to the advantage of the revolution. But the Pre-Parliament of Tseretelli and Kerensky did not correspond in the slightest degree to the correlation of forces. It was created by the impotence and trickery of the upper circles – by their mystic faith in institutions, their fetishism of forms, their hope of subjecting to this fetishism an incomparably more powerful enemy and therewith disciplining him.

In order to compel the revolution, hunching its shoulders and bending its back, to pass submissively under the yoke of the Pre-Parliament, it was first necessary to shatter the

revolution, or in any case to inflict upon it a serious defeat. In reality, however, it was only three weeks ago that the vanguard of the bourgeoisie had suffered a defeat. The revolution had experienced an influx of forces. It had taken for its goal not a bourgeois republic, but a republic of workers and peasants. It had no reason for crawling under the yoke of the Pre-Parliament when it was steadily broadening its power in the soviets.

On the 20th of September, the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks called a party conference consisting of the Bolshevik delegates to the Democratic Conference, the members of the Central Committee itself, and of the Petrograd committee. As spokesman for the Central Committee, Trotsky proposed the slogan of boycotting the Pre-Parliament. The proposal was met with decisive resistance by some (Kamenev, Rykov, Riazanov) and with sympathy by others (Sverdlov, Joffé, Stalin). The Central Committee, having divided in two on the debated question, had found itself compelled, in conflict with the constitution and traditions of the party, to submit the question to the decision of the conference. Two spokesmen, Trotsky and Rykov, took the floor as champions of the opposing views. It might seem, and for the majority it did seem, that this hot debate was purely tactical in character. In reality the quarrel revived the April disagreements and initiated the disagreements of October. The question was whether the party should accommodate its tasks to the development of a bourgeois republic, or should really set itself the goal of conquering the power. By a majority of 77 votes against 50, this party conference rejected the slogan of boycott. On September 22nd, Riazanov had the satisfaction of announcing at the

Democratic Conference in the name of the party that the Bolsheviks would send their representatives to the Pre-Parliament, in order “in this new fortress of compromisism to expose all attempts at a new coalition with the bourgeoisie.” That sounded very radical, but it really meant substituting a policy of oppositional exposure for a policy of revolutionary action.

Lenin’s April theses had been appropriated by the whole party; but upon every big question that arose, the March attitudes would swim out from under them. And these attitudes were very strong in the upper layers of the party, which in many parts of the country had only just now divided from the Mensheviks. Lenin was able to take his part in this argument only after the event. On the 23rd of September he wrote: “We must boycott the Pre-Parliament. We must go out into the soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasants’ deputies, go out into the trade unions, go out in general to the masses. We must summon them to the struggle. We must give them a correct and clear slogan: To drive out the Bonapartist gang of Kerensky with its fake Pre-Parliament ... The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries even after the Kornilov events refused to accept our offer of compromise ... Ruthless struggle against them! Ruthless expulsion of them from all revolutionary organizations! ... Trotsky was for the boycott. Bravo, Comrade Trotsky! Boycottism was defeated in the faction of the Bolsheviks who attended the Democratic Conference. Long live the boycott!”

The deeper down this question went into the party, the more decisively did the correlation of forces change in favor of the boycott. Almost all the local organizations formed into majorities and minorities. In the Kiev

committee, for example, the advocates of boycott, Efgenia Bosh at their head, were a weak minority. But only a few days later at a general city conference, a resolution in favor of boycotting the Pre-Parliament was adopted by an overwhelming majority. “There is no use wasting time,” the resolution declared, “in chattering and spreading illusions.” Thus the party promptly corrected its leaders.

During this time Kerensky, having abandoned all languid pretenses at democracy, was trying with all his might to show the Kadets that he had a firm hand. On September 18 he issued an unexpected order dissolving the central committee of the fleet. The sailors answered: “The order dissolving the Centroflot, being unlawful, is to be considered inoperative, and its immediate annulment is demanded.” The Executive Committee intervened, and supplied Kerensky with a formal pretext for annulling his decision after three days. In Tashkent the soviet, which had a Social Revolutionary majority, seized the power and removed the old officials. Kerensky sent the general designated to put down Tashkent a telegram: “No negotiations whatever with the rebels ... The most decisive measures are necessary.” The troops occupied the city, and arrested the representatives of the soviet power. A general strike occurred immediately with forty trade unions participating. For a week no papers were published, and the garrison was in a ferment. Thus in pursuit of a phantom law and order, the government was sowing bureaucratic anarchy.

On the day the Conference adopted its decision against a coalition with the Kadets, the central committee of the Kadet party had proposed to Konovalov and Kishkin that they accept Kerensky’s offer of a place in the ministry. The

move, it is said, was directed by Buchanan. That, however, you need not take too literally. If Buchanan was not himself the director, his shadow was: a government acceptable to the Allies had to be born. The Moscow industrialists and brokers had got their backs up. They had raised their price, and presented an ultimatum. The Democratic Conference passed off in voting, imagining that its votes had a real significance. In reality the question had been decided in the Winter Palace at a joint session of the fragments of the government with the representatives of the coalition parties. The Kadets had sent here their most frank Kornilovists. All joined in persuading each other of the necessity of unity. Tseretelli, that inexhaustible layer-down of commonplaces, discovered that the chief obstacle to an agreement “has consisted up to this point in mutual distrust ... This distrust ought to be removed.” The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tereshchenko, figured up and reported that out of the 197 days’ existence of the revolutionary government, 56 days had been occupied in crises. How the remaining days had been occupied he did not state.

Even before the Democratic Conference in direct conflict with its own intentions had swallowed Tseretelli’s resolution, the correspondents of the English and American papers had cabled home that a Coalition with the Kadets was assured, and had confidently given the names of the new ministers. On its part, the Moscow Council of Public Men, with our old friend Rodzianko in the chair, sent congratulations to its member Tretiakov who had been invited to enter the government. On the 9th of August these same gentlemen had sent Kornilov a telegram: “In this threatening hour of severe trial all thinking Russia looks to you with hope and faith.”

Kerensky graciously consented to the existence of the Pre-Parliament on condition that “it be recognized that the organization of the power and the appointment of the staff of the government belong to the Provisional Government only.” This humiliating condition was dictated by the Kadets. The bourgeoisie could not, of course, fail to understand that the membership of a Constituent Assembly would be far less favorable to it than the membership of the Pre-Parliament. “The elections for the Constituent Assembly” – to quote Miliukov – “can only give the most accidental and perhaps pernicious results.” If in spite of this, the Kadet party – which had not long ago tried to subject the government to the tzarist Duma- absolutely refused legislative rights to the Pre-Parliament, this could only mean that it had not given up hope of quashing the Constituent Assembly.

“Either Kornilov or Lenin”: thus Miliukov defined the alternative. Lenin on his part wrote: “Either a Soviet government or Kornilovism. There is no middle course.” To this extent Miliukov and Lenin coincided in their appraisal of the situation – and not accidentally. In contrast to the heroes of the compromise phrase, these two were serious representatives of the basic classes of society. According to Miliukov the Moscow State Conference had already made it clearly obvious that “the country is dividing into two camps, between which there can be no essential conciliation or agreement.” But where there can be no agreement between two social camps, the issue is decided by civil war.

However, neither the Kadets nor the Bolsheviks withdrew the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. It was needful to the Kadets as the last court of appeal against immediate

social reform, against the soviets, against the revolution. That shadow which democracy cast before it in the form of the Constituent Assembly, was employed by the bourgeoisie in opposition to the living democracy. The bourgeoisie could openly reject the Constituent Assembly only after they had crushed the Bolsheviks. They were far from that. At the given stage the Kadets were trying to assure the government's independence of those organizations bound up with the masses, in order afterward the more surely and completely to subject the government to themselves.

But the Bolsheviks also, although finding no way out on the road of formal democracy, had not yet renounced the idea of the Constituent Assembly. Moreover, they could not do this without abandoning revolutionary realism. Whether the future course of events would create the conditions for a complete victory of the proletariat, could not with absolute certainty be foreseen. Exactly as the Bolsheviks defended the compromisist soviets and the democratic municipalities against Kornilov, so they were ready to defend the Constituent Assembly against the attempts of the bourgeoisie.

The thirty day crisis ended at last in the creation of a new government. The chief role, after Kerensky, was to be played by the very rich Moscow industrialist, Konovalov, who at the beginning of the revolution had financed Gorky's paper, had thereafter become a member of the first coalition government, had resigned in protest after the first congress of the soviets, entered the Kadet party when it was ripe for the Kornilov events, and now returned into the government in the capacity of Vice-President and Minister of Commerce and Industry. Along with Konovalov,

ministerial posts were occupied by Tretiakov, the president of the Moscow stock exchange committee, and Smirnov, president of the Moscow Military Industrial Committee. The sugar manufacturer from Kiev, Tereshchenko, remained Minister of Foreign Affairs. The other ministers – among them the Socialists – had no traits of identification, but were wholly prepared to sing in tune. The Entente could be the more satisfied with the government in that the old diplomatic official, Nabokov, remained ambassador in London; the Kadet Maklakov, an ally of Kornilov and Savinkov, went as an ambassador to Paris; and to Berne, the “progressive” Efremov. The struggle for a democratic peace was thus placed in reliable hands. The Declaration of the new government was a spiteful parody of the Moscow Declaration of the democracy. The meaning of the Coalition lay, however, not in its program of transformations, but in its attempt to carry through the business of the July days: to behead the revolution by shattering the Bolsheviks. But here Rabochy Put, one of the reincarnations of Pravda, impudently reminded the partners: “You have forgotten that the Bolsheviks are now the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.” This reminder touched a sore point. As Miliukov recognizes: “The fatal question presented itself: Is it not now too late to declare war on the Bolsheviks?”

And indeed it actually was too late. On the day the new government was formed, with six bourgeois and ten semi-socialist ministers, the Petrograd Soviet completed the formation of a new Executive Committee, consisting of thirteen Bolsheviks, six Social Revolutionaries and three Mensheviks. The Soviet greeted the governmental coalition with a resolution introduced by its new president,

Trotsky. “The new government … will go into the history of the revolution as the civil war government ... The news of the formation of the government will be met by the whole revolutionary democracy with one answer: Resign! Relying upon this unanimous voice of the authentic democracy, the All-Russian Congress of Soviets will create a genuinely revolutionary government.” The enemy tried to see in this resolution a mere ritual vote of non-confidence. In reality it was a program of revolution. Exactly a month was required for its realization.

The curve of industry continued sharply downward. The government, the Central Executive Committee, and soon the newly created Pre-Parliament, registered the facts and symptoms of decline as arguments against anarchy, the Bolsheviks, and the revolution. But they had not themselves the ghost of an industrial plan. A body constituted by the government for the regulation of industry did not take one single serious step. The capitalists were shutting down the factories; the movement of the railroads was decreasing through lack of coal; electric power stations were dying down in the cities; the press was wailing about a catastrophe; prices were rising; the workers were striking, layer after layer, in spite of the warnings of parties, soviets, and trade unions. Only those layers of the working class did not enter the strike conflict, which were already consciously moving towards a revolution. The most peaceful city of all, perhaps, was Petrograd.

The government, with its inattention to the masses, its light-minded indifference to their needs, its impudent phrasemongering in answer to protests and cries of despair, was raising up everybody against it. It seemed as

though the government were deliberately seeking a conflict. The railroad workers and clerks almost since the February revolution had been demanding a raise. Commission had followed commission, nobody had made an answer, and this was getting on the nerves of the railroad workers. The Compromisers had pacified them; the Vikzhel had held them back. But on the 24th of September the explosion came. Only then did the government wake up to the situation. Some sort of concessions were made to the railroad workers, and on September 27th the strike, which had already seized a large section of the railroads, was called off.

August and September were months of swift deterioration in the food situation. Already in the Kornilov days the bread ration had been cut down in Moscow and Petrograd to half a pound a day. In Moscow county they began to give out no more than two pounds a week. The Volga, the South, the Front, and the immediate rear – all parts of the country were experiencing a sharp food crisis. In the textile district near Moscow a number of factories had already begun to starve in the literal sense of the word. The working-men and women of the Smirnov factory – whose owner was in those very days invited as State Auditor into the new coalition ministry – held a demonstration in the neighboring town of Orekhov-Zuyev with placards reading: “We are starving”, “Our children are starving”, “Whoever is not for us is against us.” The workers of Orekhov and the soldiers of the local military hospital divided their scanty rations with the demonstrators. That was another coalition rising against the Coalition Government.

The newspapers were every day recording new centers of

conflict and rebellion. Workers, soldiers and the town petty bourgeoisie were protesting. Soldiers' wives were demanding increased subventions, living quarters, wood for the winter. Black Hundred agitation was trying to find fuel in the hunger of the masses. The Moscow Kadet paper **Russkie Vedornosti**, which in the old times united Liberalism with Narodnikism, now looked with hatred and disgust upon the authentic
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– the people. "A broad wave of disorders has swept through all Russia," wrote the liberal professors. "The spontaneousness and meaninglessness of these pogroms ... more than anything else, makes it difficult to struggle with them ..." Resort to measures of repression, to the aid of armed forces? But it is exactly the armed forces, in the shape of soldiers from the local garrison, that play the chief part in these pogroms. The crowd comes into the streets and begins to feel itself master of the situation.

The Saratov district attorney reported to the Minister of Justice Maliantovich, who in the epoch of the first revolution had counted himself a Bolshevik: "The chief evil against which we have no power to fight is the soldiers. Lynch-law, arbitrary arrests and searches, requisitions of every kind – all these things are carried out in the majority of cases either exclusively by the soldiers, or with their immediate participation." In Saratov itself, in the county seats, in the villages, there is "a complete absence on all

sides of assistance to the Department of Justice.” The district attorney’s offices have no time even to register the crimes which a whole people are committing.

The Bolsheviks had no illusions about the difficulties which would fall upon them along with the power. “In advancing the slogan ‘All power to the soviets,’” said the new president of the Petrograd Soviet, “we know that it will not heal all sores in a minute. We need a power created in the image of the executive of the trade unions, which will give the strikers all that it can, which will conceal nothing, and when it cannot give, will openly acknowledge the fact.”

One of the first sittings of the government was devoted to the problem of “anarchy” in the localities, especially in the villages. Once more it was declared necessary “not to stop at the most decisive measures.” In passing, the government discovered that the cause of the failure of the struggle against disorders lay in the “inadequate popularity” of the government commissars among the masses of the peasant population. In order to help out, it was decided to organize immediately in all provinces affected by disorders “special committees of the Provisional Government.” Henceforth the peasantry were expected to meet punitive detachments with shouts of welcome.

Inexorable historic forces were dragging the rulers down. Nobody seriously believed in the success of the new government. Kerensky’s isolation was beyond mending. The ruling classes could not forget his betrayal of Kornilov. “Those who were ready to fight against the Bolsheviks,” writes the Cossack officer Kakliugin, “did not want to do it in the name of, or in defense of, the power of the

Provisional Government.” Although hanging on to the power, Kerensky himself feared to make any use of it. The growing force of the opposition paralyzed his will to the last fibre. He evaded any decisions whatever, and avoided the Winter Palace where the situation compelled him to act. Almost immediately after the formation of the new government he slipped the presidency to Konovalov, and himself went to headquarters where there was the least possible need of him. He came back to Petrograd only to open the Pre-Parliament. Although urged to remain by his ministers, he nevertheless returned to the front on the 14th. Kerensky was running away from a fate which followed at his heels.

Konovalov, the closest colleague of Kerensky and his Vice-President, got into a state of despair, according to Nabokov, over Kerensky’s instability and the complete impossibility of relying upon his word. But the mood of the other members of the cabinet differed little from that of their chief. The ministers kept looking round and listening in alarm, waiting, jotting down little notes of evasion, occupying themselves with trifles. The Minister of Justice, Maliantovich, was dreadfully troubled, according to Nabokov, over the fact that the senators would not admit into their body the new colleague Sokolov, who wore a black business suit. “What do you think must be done?” asked Maliantovich with alarm. According to the ritual established by Kerensky, and carefully observed, the ministers addressed each other, not by the first and middle name as simple mortals do, but by the title of their position – “Mr. Minister of this or that” – as the representatives of a strong power are supposed to. The memoirs of the members sound like a satire. Kerensky

himself subsequently wrote about his own war minister: “That was the most unfortunate of all my appointments. Verkhovsky introduced something indescribably comic into his activities.” But the misfortune was that a tint of the involuntary comic lay over the whole activity of the Provisional Government. These people did not know what to do or where to turn. They did not govern, they played at government as little boys play soldier, though far more amusingly.

Speaking as an eye-witness, Miliukov has depicted in very definite strokes the condition of the head of the government at this period: “Having lost the ground under his feet, the further he went the more Kerensky revealed all the signs of that pathological condition of spirit which may be called in medical language ‘psychic neurasthenia.’ It had long been known to a close circle of his friends that from periods of extreme failure of energy in the morning, Kerensky would pass over in the latter half of the day into a condition of extreme excitement under the influence of the drugs he was taking.” Miliukov explains the special influence of the Kadet minister, Kishkin, a psychiatrist by profession, on the ground of his skillful handling of the patient. These testimonies we leave entirely upon the responsibility of the liberal historian, who had, to be sure, every possibility of knowing the truth, but was far from choosing truth as his supreme criterion.

The testimony of a man as near to Kerensky as Stankevich confirms, if not the psychiatric, at least the psychological, characterization given by Miliukov. “Kerensky gave me the impression,” writes Stankevich, “of a kind of emptiness in the whole situation, and a strange unprecedented tranquility He had around him his invariable ’little *aides*-

de-camp,’ but there was no longer the continual crowd surrounding him, neither delegations nor lime-lights … There appeared strange periods of a kind of leisure, and I got the rare opportunity to converse with him for whole hours, during which he would manifest a strange unhurriedness.”

Every new transformation of the government was accomplished in the name of a strong power, and each new ministry would open on a major key, only to fall in a very few days into nervous prostration. It would then only wait for an external impetus in order to fall apart. The impetus would be given each time by a movement of the masses. The transformations of the government, if you penetrate below the deceiving exterior, moved in every case in a direction opposite to that of the mass movement. The passage from one government to another would be accompanied by a crisis becoming every time more long drawn out and morbid in its character. Each new crisis squandered a part of the governmental power, enfeebled the revolution, demoralized the ruling groups. The Executive Committee of the first two months could do anything – even summon the bourgeoisie to a nominal power. In the next two months the Provisional Government together with the Executive Committee could still do much – even start an offensive on the front. The third government, together with the enfeebled Executive Committee, was able to begin the destruction of the Bolsheviks, but powerless to carry it through. The fourth government, arising after the longest crisis of all, was incapable of doing anything. Hardly born, it began to die and sat waiting with wide open eyes for the undertaker.

Footnotes

1. Official personnel of the cooperatives.

2. Parliament.