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ON THE ROAD TO INSURRECTION



By **NIKOLAI LENIN**

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PREFACE TO ENGLISH EDITION

[We are indebted to the Editor of the LABOUR MONTHLY for permission to reprint the first portion of this book which appeared in the issues of that periodical.]

This book includes nearly everything written by Lenin between the Kornilov rising, in the late summer of 1917, and the revolution of November (October, old Russian calendar), except *The State and Revolution*,¹ the series of articles entitled *For the Revision of the Party Programme*, and a few other brief articles. All his writings dealing with the question of the insurrection are contained in *On the Road to Insurrection*, but one section, *Will the Bolsheviki Maintain Power?*, having already been published separately in English,² is omitted from the present translation.

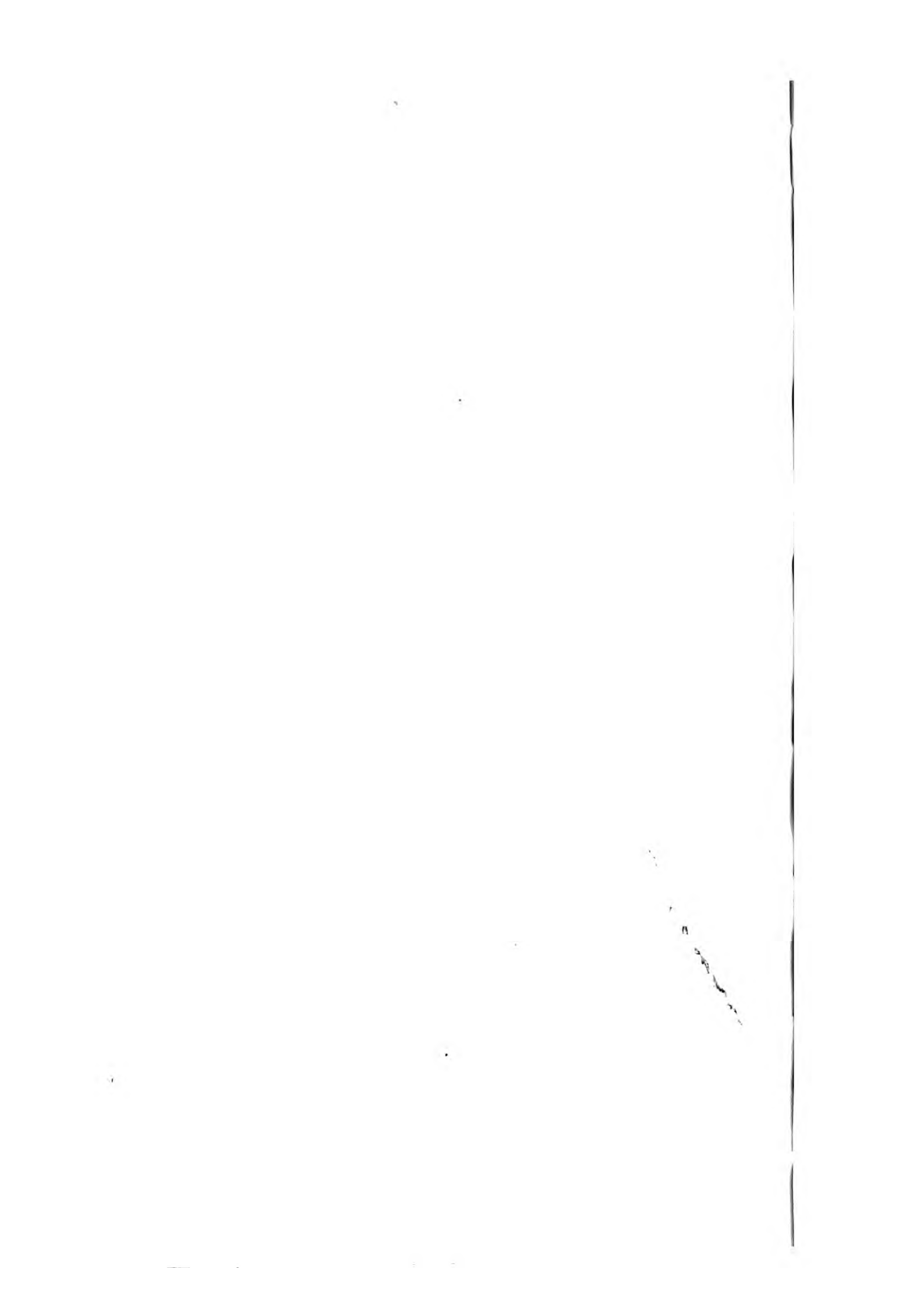
Comrade Lenin wrote everything that is inserted in this collection after the "July days" when he was forced to flee from Kerensky's spies. First of all hidden in the suburbs of Petrograd, he lived for a time in a log cabin with a workman named Emelianov, then in a hut of branches in the depths of a forest; later, disguised as a locomotive fireman, he passed into Finland, where he found shelter at the home of a Finnish comrade, Rokis, formerly a workman in Petrograd. It was not until the end of September that Lenin succeeded in again re-entering Petrograd, where he stayed with a Bolshevik workman. And it was only on the eve of the insurrection that he could re-appear at Smolny.

These, then, were the circumstances in which Lenin never tired of explaining the coming armed clash of social forces, of exposing the Mensheviks' and Social-Revolutionaries' cowardly treachery, of pitilessly castigating any hesitation in the ranks of the Bolsheviki themselves, and of proving the inevitable necessity of the seizure of power. He himself was reduced to clandestine action and deprived of all immediate contact with the Party and the working masses, but that did not prevent him from appreciating, better than anyone else, the exact action called for by the political situation from day to day, and so making without any deviation towards the insurrection which concluded in the brilliant victory that autumn.

The problems that the Russian working class met with and, under the guidance of Lenin, solved during those months, are akin to the problems that the working class in every other country has also to prepare to face. Therein—and not in any mere academic interest such as history can never have for a class in bondage or struggling for power—lies the historical significance to the workers of all Lenin's writings, and this applies in a very special way to *On the Road to Insurrection*, for there exists no other complete or comparable work of day-to-day studies of the practical strategical problems of an immediately imminent proletarian revolution; and without such understanding as is here found of the actual struggle for power no Marxism or Socialism is genuine.

¹ English translation published by the Communist Party of Great Britain, and obtainable from the Communist Bookshop, 16 King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2. Second Edition, 1926. Price 1s. 6d.

² The Labour Publishing Company, 1921. Price 1s. 6d. Obtainable from the Communist Bookshop.



ON THE ROAD TO INSURRECTION

Letter to the Central Committee of the Russian
Social-Democratic Labour (Bolshevik) Party

END OF AUGUST, 1917.¹

MAYBE these lines will arrive too late, for events are developing at a really giddy speed. However, I am taking the risk of writing them, for I consider it to be a duty.

The Kornilov rising² is (at such a moment and in such a form) a formidable and, one might say, a really unbelievable dramatic stroke.

Like every sudden and complete change in the political outlook it demands a revision of our tactics. And, as in every revision, we must be more than careful not to fail our principles.

To admit the point of view of those who advocate national defence or even (like certain Bolsheviks) would go *to the extent of coalition* with the Social-Revolutionaries, in support of the provisional Government, would be, I am deeply convinced, to fall into the grossest error and at the same time to prove an absolute lack of principle. We will not become partisans of national defence *until after* the seizure of power by the proletariat, *until after* the offer of peace, until after the secret treaties have been cancelled and relations with the banks broken. Neither the capture of Riga,³ nor the capture of Petrograd will make us partisans of national defence. Until the moment of the seizure of power by the proletariat, we are for the proletarian revolution, we are against the war, we are against the "defencists."

Even now, we must not support the revolution of Kerensky. It would be a failure of principle. How then, it will be said, must Kornilov not be fought?—Certainly, yes. But between

¹ Old Russian calendar throughout.

² Terminated, September 1, 1917, by the arrest of the principal participants at G.H.Q.

³ By the Germans, on August 21. The entire bourgeoisie drew therefrom arguments as to the need for a strong government, for the re-establishment of discipline in the army, &c., &c.

fighting Kornilov and supporting Kerensky there is a difference ; there is a limit to all things, and that limit is passed by a few Bolsheviks when they fall for conciliation, and let themselves be *carried away* by the torrents of events.

We wage and shall continue to wage war on Kornilov, but we do not support Kerensky ; we unveil his febleness. There there is a difference. That difference is subtle enough, but most essential, and it must not be forgotten.

In what, then, does our change of tactics following on the Kornilov rising consist ?

In this : that we modify the form of our struggle against Kerensky. Without diminishing, the least bit in the world, our hostility, without withdrawing a single one of the words we have pronounced against him, without renouncing our intention to beat him, we declare that consideration must be given to the circumstances of the moment, that we will not concern ourselves at the present with overthrowing Kerensky, that we will now conduct the struggle against him in another way by emphasising to the people (and it is the people who are engaged in fighting Kornilov) the *weakness* and *vacillations* of Kerensky. That we were already doing previously. But now it is this which comes to *the forefront of our plan of campaign*, and therein lies the change.

Another change: at this moment we place equally *in the forefront of our plan of campaign* the reinforcing of our agitation for what might be called "partial demands" : Arrest Miliukoff, we say to Kerensky ; arm the Petrograd workers ; bring the troops from Cronstadt, from Vyborg and from Helsingfors to Petrograd ; dissolve the Duma¹ ; arrest Rodzianko ; legalise the handing over of the big estates to the peasants ; establish working-class control of cereals and manufactured products, &c. And it is not only to Kerensky that we should put these claims ; it is not so much to Kerensky as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been *carried away* by the struggle against Kornilov. They must be carried further, they must be encouraged to demand the arrest of the generals and officers who side with Kornilov ; we must insist that they immediately claim the land for the peasants, and we must suggest to them the necessity of arresting Rodzianko

¹ This demand was satisfied on October 6, but the others not until the October revolution.

and Miliukoff, of dissolving the Imperial Duma, of closing down the *Rietch* and other bourgeois newspapers and bringing them before the courts. It is particularly the Left Social-Revolutionaries who must be pushed in this direction.

It would be erroneous to believe that we are turning away from our principle objective : the conquest of power by the proletariat. We have, on the contrary, got considerably nearer to it, but *indirectly*, by a flanking movement. And *we must at the very same moment* agitate against Kerensky—but let the agitation be *indirect* rather than direct—by insisting on an active war against Kornilov. Only the active development of that war can lead us to power, but of that we must *speak* as little as possible in our agitation (we keep it well in mind that even to-morrow events may compel us to take power, and that then we will not let it go). In my opinion, these points should be communicated in a letter (a private one) to our agitators, to our propagandists' training groups and schools, and to the members of the Party in general. As to the phrases about the defence of the country, about the single revolutionary battle line of revolutionary democracy, about support of the Provisional Government, &c., they must be mercilessly combated because they are nothing but *phrases*. Now is the time for *action* : these phrases, gentlemen of the Social-Revolutionary and the Menshevik parties, have already been too much depreciated by your use of them. Now is the time for action, we must wage the war against Kornilov as revolutionaries, carrying the masses with us, awakening them, inflaming them (and Kerensky *is afraid* of the masses, he is afraid of the people). It is precisely in the war against the Germans that action is now necessary : it is necessary *immediately and unreservedly to propose peace to them on definite terms*. If that is done, there will either be an early peace or else a revolutionary war² ; if not all the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries will remain the lackeys of imperialism.

¹ Not then in existence as a separate Party, but as a tendency inside the Social-Revolutionary Party.

² The Bolsheviks always opposed peace at any price. Lenin's thesis was exactly upheld by Kerensky's last Minister for War, Verkhovsky, whose resignation was demanded by the Allies.

Concerning Compromise

SEPTEMBER 3, 1917.

THE word compromise indicates in politics the renunciation, by virtue of an agreement with another party, of certain of one's claims. The idea that the crowd has of the Bolsheviks, and the idea promoted by the gutter press, is that the Bolsheviks consent never and with no one to any compromise.

This idea flatters us, as well as a part of the revolutionary proletariat, for it proves that even our enemies are compelled to recognise our fidelity to the fundamental principles of Socialism and of the revolution. But, truth to say, this idea does not correspond to reality. Engels was right when in his criticism of the *Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists* (1873) he mocked the latter's declaration: "No compromise!" That is but a phrase, said he, for it often happens that circumstances impose a compromise on a party in battle, and it is stupid to condemn oneself never "to accept payment of a debt by instalments." But the duty of a truly revolutionary party is not to proclaim an impossible renunciation of every sort of compromise, but to know throughout all compromises, in so far as such are inevitable, how to remain faithful to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary goal; to its duty of preparing for the revolution and of educating the mass whom it must lead to victory.

For instance, the fact of participating in the Third and Fourth Dumas was a compromise, a temporary abdication of revolutionary claims.¹ But it was a compromise that had to be, for at that time the correlation of forces provisionally excluded the possibility of carrying on a mass struggle. To prepare for that struggle one had to know how to work inside that farmyard that was the Duma. History has shown that the Bolsheviks well understood the issue in this case.

We are at present concerned not with a compromise forced upon us, but with a voluntary compromise.

Our party, like every other party, aspires to political power. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have confirmed with extraordinary exactitude in the most forceful and startling manner, the justice and inevitability of that contention, precisely in the interests of the revolution.

¹ Formerly opposed by a fraction of the Bolsheviks.

For without the dictatorship of the proletariat the people will be unable to obtain either a democratic peace, or the return of the land to the peasants, or complete liberty (that is to say, an entirely democratic republic). The march of events during these six months of revolution, the struggle of classes and of parties, the development of the crises of April 20-21,¹ of June 9-10,² of June 18-19³ and July 3-5,⁴ and of August 27-31,⁵ have shown and proved it.

We are now faced with such a sudden, such a surprising upheaval of the Russian revolution, that we are in a position as a Party to propose a voluntary compromise, not to the bourgeoisie, our direct and principal enemy, but to those adversaries who are nearer to us, to the petit bourgeois democratic parties in office, to the S.-R.'s and to the Mensheviks.

It is only by way of exception, it is only in virtue of a special situation which apparently will last a very short time, that we can propose a compromise to those parties, and that we ought, it seems to me, to do so.

What is a compromise to us is the return to our demand of before July: All power to the Soviets! Formation of a Government of Social Revolutionaries and of Mensheviks responsible before the Soviets.

Now, and only now, during a few days, or perhaps one or two weeks, could such a Government be created and peacefully consolidated. It very much looks as if it could assure the peaceful

¹ A crisis caused by a note in which Miliukoff, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, promised to the Allies to continue the war until guarantees (Constantinople, &c.) were obtained. It led to the retirement of Miliukoff, and the formation of the first Coalition Government of May 6.

² A demonstration, arranged for the tenth of June by the Central Bureau of Factory Committees and the Bolshevik Party, to protest against "industrial anarchy and lock-outs by the employers," had to be cancelled on the 10th, on account of the opposition of the Congress of Soviets then assembled.

³ On the 18th, the demonstration prepared by the opportunists changes into a triumph for the Bolshevik slogans: All Power to the Soviets! Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers! Down with the political offensive! On the 19th a bourgeois counter-demonstration took place.

⁴ A crisis caused by the resignation of the bourgeois ministers, leading to a spontaneous demonstration of the workers and soldiers that came under the direction of the Bolshevik Party, but was crushed by the Government which thenceforward gave itself over to reaction.

⁵ A stroke by Kornilov's Commander-in-Chief to get, with or without Kerensky, the military dictatorship.

progression of the revolution and would contribute to the progression of the world movement towards peace, towards the victory of Socialism. It is only for the sake of this peaceful development of the revolution, it is only in order to profit from this precious possibility, such as is extremely rare in history, that the Bolsheviks, partisans of the world revolution and of revolutionary methods, could and should, in my opinion, agree to such a compromise. The substance of this compromise would be that without pretensions to participation in the Government (a participation impossible for an internationalist without the effective realisation of the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants) the Bolsheviks would renounce their demands for the immediate handing over of all power to the proletariat and the poor peasants, and their employment of revolutionary methods to achieve the triumph of the demand. On the other hand, the compromise would involve two conditions which require nothing new of the S.-R.'s and the Mensheviks, namely, absolute liberty of agitation and the calling of the Constituent Assembly at the fixed date, or even within a shorter period.

The Mensheviks and the S.-R.'s in their capacity as the Government bloc would consent (supposing the compromise to be accepted) to form a Government entirely and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, to whom would be handed over all the machinery of power.

Therein would lie the "new condition." The Bolsheviks, it seems to me, should impose no other condition, for they could count on the fact that the entire liberty of agitation and the immediate realisation of a new democratisation in the composition of the Soviets (which would be re-elected) and in their functioning would by themselves assure the peaceful progression of the revolution, the *peaceful cessation* of the conflict of parties within the Soviets.

Perhaps this is no longer possible? Perhaps. But even if there remains one chance in a hundred that chance makes an attempt worth while.

What would the two contracting parties, the Bolsheviks on one hand, and the Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik bloc on the other, gain by this "compromise"? If they gain nothing thereby the compromise is evidently impossible and accordingly

useless to talk about. Whatever difficulty its realisation may now present (after July and August, two months equivalent to a score of years of peaceable torpor), it seems to me that it is not yet quite impossible, and what makes me think this is the decision taken by the S.-R.'s and the Mensheviks not to participate in the Government with the Cadets.¹

The Bolsheviks will gain from this compromise in that they will secure the ability freely to propagate their point of view and the possibility of exercising their influence in the Soviets, thanks to the effective realisation of integral democracy. Nominally everyone already grants this freedom to the Bolsheviks. In fact, it is *impossible* under a bourgeois Government or under a Government in which the bourgeoisie joins, to wit, under any Government other than that of the Soviets. Under the Government of the Soviets this freedom would be *possible* (we do not say absolutely assured, but possible). Therefore, it is in order to try and realise this possibility that it would be convenient, at such a painful time, to make a compromise with the present majority in the Soviets. We have nothing to fear under a regime of genuine democracy for life is on our side, and even the tendencies that are developing within the womb of the parties of our adversaries, the S.-R.'s and the Mensheviks, will in time confirm the justice of our position.

The Mensheviks and the S.R.'s would gain by this compromise in the sense that they would obtain at one stroke the complete possibility of realising the programme of *their* bloc, by resting on the immense majority of the people and in assuring themselves of the ability to use "peacefully" their majority in the Soviets.

In this bloc, necessarily heterogenous both as a coalition and because the petty bourgeois democracy is *always* less homogeneous than the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, two voices would, apparently, make themselves heard.

One would say: "Our path is neither with the Bolsheviks nor with the revolutionary proletariat. The latter's demands will be extravagant, and it will, by means of demagogue orations, drag the poor peasants in its wake. It will demand peace and a rupture with the Allies. And that is impossible. We are nearer to the

¹ In fact, on August 31 the Petrograd Soviet had voted by 279 to 115 with 51 abstentions against the participation of the Cadets (Liberals) in the Government: "The sole issue is the constitution of a Government formed of representatives of the proletariat and the peasant class."

bourgeoisie, with whom we have had a mild *quarrel*—a quarrel is not a rupture—over the Kornilov incident. We have quarrelled—well, we can make it up. Moreover, the Bolsheviks ‘concede’ us absolutely nothing, for all the insurrections that they’ll try will be totally crushed as was the Commune of 1871.”

The other voice will say: “To base one’s arguments on the Commune is to reason superficially and even sillily. For, first of all, the Bolsheviks have learned a little from the experience of their precursors of 1871: they will not fail to put their hand on the State Bank, nor will they hesitate to march on Versailles; and the Commune, had it done that, might have won through. Furthermore, the Commune could not immediately offer the people what the Bolsheviks can if they take power, that is to say: land to the peasants, the immediate proposal of peace, effective control of production, an honourable peace with the Ukrainians, the Finns, &c. The Bolsheviks, in common parlance, have ten times as many trumps in their hand as had the Commune. The Commune implies a painful period of civil war, a prolonged stoppage to civilisation’s peaceful development; it will facilitate the machinations of all sorts of MacMahons and Kornilovs, a grave danger to our bourgeois society. Is it reasonable to run the risk of the Commune?”

“But the Commune is inevitable in Russia, if our bloc does not take power, if the situation remains as it has done from May 6 to August 31. The spirit of every workman, of every revolutionary soldier will without fail turn towards the Commune, he will believe in it, he will attempt to achieve it. The people, he will say to himself, is perishing; war, famine, ruin are decimating its ranks more and more seriously as each day goes by. Only the Commune can save us. Let us sacrifice ourselves, let us all die if need be, but long live the Commune! These are the thoughts which will fatally come into the minds of all the workers, and the Commune to-day will not be so easy to defeat as in 1871. The Russian Commune will have throughout the whole world allies a hundred times more mighty than the Commune of Paris. Is it sensible to take the chance of the Commune? Moreover one could not say that the Bolsheviks are granting us nothing by their compromise. In all advanced countries intelligent ministers highly appreciate every accord, small as it may be, with the people during war. And, as these ministers are business men, genuine ministers, their

example is not to be disdained. Again, the Bolsheviki are rapidly becoming stronger, in spite of the repressions to which they are subjected and the feebleness of their Press. . . . Is it in these conditions reasonable to run the risk of the Commune ?

“ We have our majority assured, the most impoverished sections of the peasant class will not stir for a long time yet ; we have a good period of tranquillity before us ; after that we shall see.

“ It is improbable that in an essentially agricultural country the majority will follow the extreme elements. Therefore, in a truly democratic republic, insurrection against the recognised majority is an impossibility.”

So will speak the second voice.

Perhaps, among the partisans of Martov or of Spiridonova¹ there will be a third voice saying: “ Comrades, I am genuinely indignant that, reasoning about the Commune and the possibilities of its realisation, you both of you range yourselves without hesitation on the side of its foes. In one form or another you are both on the side of those who crushed the Commune. I am not going to agitate for the Commune, I cannot promise in advance to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do ; nevertheless I must say that *if, in spite of* my efforts the Commune survives, I shall rather help its defenders than its foes. . . .”

The divergences in the bosom of the “ bloc ” are considerable and inevitable, for the democratic petty bourgeoisie includes a mass of *nuances*, from the bourgeois who would become a minister to the flea-bitten bourgeois almost disposed to adopt the platform of the proletariat. And what, at one moment or another, will be the outcome of this clash of contrary views ? No one can tell.

* * * * *

The above lines were written on Friday last, September 1, but as a result of unforeseen circumstances (history will tell that under Kerensky not all the Bolsheviki were free to choose their domicile where best it suited them), they did not reach the editorial offices on the same day. So, after reading Saturday's and Sunday's papers, I said to myself: I think it is already too late to propose a compromise. The few days during which the peaceful

¹ Martov, Internationalist Social-Democrat, occupied with his group a place apart ; so did the Left Social-Revolutionaries, such as Marie Spiridonova.

development of events was still possible have already passed. Yes, everything points to this. By one way or another, Kerensky will leave the Social - Revolutionary Party and consolidate his position with the help of the bourgeois *without* the S.-R.'s, thanks to their inaction¹ . . . Yes, everything clearly shows that the days during which the possibility of setting forth on the path of peaceful development became by chance available have gone by beyond recall. There remains nothing to do but to send these notes to the editorial department accompanied by a request that they may be entitled " Belated Reflections "; even belated reflections are not, at times, without their uses.

¹ On September 1, Kerensky actually formed his "Directory" with Tereschchenko, and laid an interdict on the internationalist newspaper *Novaya Zizn*; the Central Executive Committee convoked a packed " Democratic Conference " as a counter to the Congress of Soviets arranged for the end of September. The Social-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic ministers, Zarondny, Avxentiev and Skobelev resigned.

One of the Fundamental Questions of Revolution

SEPTEMBER 14, 1917.

THE most important question of all revolution is undoubtedly that of political power. In the hands of which class does power lie? There is the whole question on which depends the destiny of the country. And when the principal governing party of Russia complains in its organ (*cf. Dielo Naroda*, No. 147) that the discussions about power overlook the question of the Constituent Assembly and that of the food supply, one can justly answer: Gentlemen of the Social-Revolutionary Party, speak for yourselves only. It is the hesitations, the irresolution of your party which have most contributed to the prolongation of "ministerialism" and to the endless postponement of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and have allowed the capitalists to scrap the measures elaborated and adopted for effectively enforcing the cereals' monopoly¹ and revictualling the country.

The question of power cannot be evaded or relegated to the background, for it is the fundamental question which determines the whole development of the revolution in both its foreign and its domestic politics. Our revolution has lost half a year in hesitations over the organisation of power; that is an incontestable fact, and this fact has its origin in the political oscillations of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. Now, the policy of these parties has been itself determined, in the last analysis, by the character of the petit-bourgeoisie, by its economic instability in the struggle between Capital and Labour.

The whole question at present is to know whether the democratic petit-bourgeoisie has learnt anything during six months so extraordinarily rich in events. If it has learnt nothing, the revolution is lost, and only the victorious insurrection of the proletariat will be able to save it. If it has learnt anything, it will have to set about creating immediately a firm and stable power. During a popular revolution it is only a power which relies openly and without reserve on the *majority* of the population that can be a stable power, that is to say, capable of appealing to the life of the masses, the majority

¹ Decree of March 25.

of the workers and peasants. At the present moment, political power in Russia still rests in the hands of the bourgeoisie, who are obliged to make merely partial concessions (to withdraw them the next day), to scatter promises (which are never kept), and to find ways of masking their domination (to deceive the people by the appearance of "a loyal coalition," &c.). In words, we have a popular, democratic, revolutionary Government; in reality, we are in the presence of a Government anti-popular, anti-democratic, counter-revolutionary, bourgeois. There lies the fundamental contradiction existing hitherto, which has caused this instability, these oscillations of power, and which has provoked this succession of ministries to which Messieurs the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have lent themselves with a zeal so disastrous (to the people).

Either the dissolution of the Soviets and their inglorious death, or all power to the Soviets; that is what I said before the All-Russia Congress of Soviets at the beginning of the month of June, 1917, and the history of the months of July and August have fully confirmed the truth of those words. Only Soviet power can be stable and actually depend on the majority of the people, whatever may say the flunkies of the bourgeoisie, Potresov,¹ Plekhanov and others, whose explanations of an "enlargement of the basis of power" result in effect in a transmission of power to an infinitesimal minority of the population, to the bourgeoisie, to the exploiters.

Soviet power alone can be stable; it alone cannot be overthrown even in the most tortured hours of the most stormy revolution, it only will be able to assure a wide and steady development of the revolution, with the peaceful concurrence of all parties inside the Soviets. But if it does not exist, there will be hesitations, irresolution, instability, innumerable crises, comedies of ministerial resignations and new shufflings of portfolios, explosions to the right and to the left.

But frequently, if not invariably, the slogan "Power to the Soviets" is understood in a completely false fashion. In effect it is taken to mean a ministry recruited by the parties forming the majority of the Soviets, and it is this profoundly erroneous opinion that we wish to examine in detail.

¹ One of the founders of Social Democracy, leader of the Menshevik liquidators, partisan-like Plekhanov, of simple bourgeois democracy.

“ A ministry recruited from the parties forming the majority of the Soviets,” that is to say, a change in the personal composition of the Cabinet, that is to say, the integral conservation of all the former machinery of State power, machinery essentially bureaucratic, essentially undemocratic, incapable of realising a single serious reform, even those that figure in the programmes of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks,

The slogan “ Power to the Soviets ” signifies a radical transformation of all the former machinery of State, of this apparatus of officialdom which fetters all democratic initiative; it implies the suppression of this machinery and its substitution by a new popular, truly democratic machinery, that is to say, by the machinery of the Soviets, which represent the organised and armed majority of the people—workers, soldiers and peasants. “ Power to the Soviets,” it is this that gives free scope to the initiative of the majority of the people, not only in the election of deputies, but in the administration of the State, in the realisation of reforms and social transformation.

To make this difference still more clear and more perceptible we will recall a fact avowed a short time ago, by the newspaper of the leading party, the *Dielo Naroda*, organ of the Social Revolutionaries. “ Even in the ministries in which Socialists have had a share,” writes this paper during the famous coalition with the Cadets, when the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries held ministerial portfolios, “ even in these ministries, all the administrative machinery remained absolutely unaltered, and this machinery curbed all their work.”

This indeed is comprehensible. The whole history of parliamentary bourgeois countries shows that the changes of ministry have only very little importance, for all effective work, all the administration, is in the hands of a gigantic army of bureaucrats. Now, this army is impregnated to the marrow with a spirit essentially anti-democratic, it is attached by thousands and thousands of ties to the big property-holders and to the bourgeoisie, on whom it depends in every sphere. This army swims in a bourgeois atmosphere from which it is absolutely impossible for it to escape. Bound by immobile, mummified forms it is unable to modify in anything its habits of thought, feeling and action. It is based on the hierarchical principle, on certain privileges reserved to the

functions of State; by the intervention of banks, the upper-grade bureaucrats become subservient to finance-capital, of which they are, to a certain degree, the agents, whose interests they defend and whose influence they propagate.

To believe that by means of this State machinery such social transformation as the suppression without compensation of the big property-holders in the cereal monopoly, &c., can be brought about is utterly to delude oneself, and is at the same time to fool the people. A republican bourgeoisie could use this machinery to create a republic of the type of "a monarchy without a monarch," like the Third French Republic, but it is absolutely incapable of achieving radical reform; I do not say of abolishing, but simply of limiting in a more or less effective way the rights of capital and the "sacred rights" of individual property. It is for this reason that, in all the coalition ministries in which "Socialists" participated, the latter, even if they were of good faith, were only a vain ornament or a screen for the bourgeois Government, a buffer against popular indignation, an instrument for duping the masses. That had been the rôle of Louis Blanc in 1848; that had been, since then, the rôle of innumerable coalition ministries in England and France; that had been the rôle of Tchernov and of Tseretelli in 1917¹ and so it will remain as long as the bourgeois regime lasts and the old bourgeois State apparatus based on bureaucracy exists in its integrity.

Now, one of the fundamental merits of the Soviets, of the workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies, is that they represent a type of State machinery infinitely superior and incomparably more democratic. The Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks undertook the impossible in their endeavour to transform the Soviets (particularly that of Petrograd, as also the All-Russian Soviet, that is, the Central Executive Committee) into vague talking shops, occupied solely, under cover of "control," in voting impotent resolutions on what they desire, the realisation of which the Government, with the most exquisite urbanity, postpones to the Greek Kalends.² But it only needed the escapade of Kornilov, that fresh breeze, forerunner of a good storm, temporarily to purify

¹ Tchernov, Social Revolutionary leader, Minister of Agriculture; Tseretelli, Social Democrat, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in the Coalition Cabinet of May 6.

² This is the opinion not only of Lenin, but also of the anti-Bolshevik Social Democrat Soukhanov given in his *Memoirs of the Revolution*.

from all its miasmas the atmosphere of the Soviets and to restore the initiative of the revolutionary masses which is revealed in all its grandeur, in all its power, in all its invincibility.¹

May this historical example be a lesson for all men of little faith. Shame on those who say, "We have no machinery to replace the old machinery, which tends inevitably to the defence of the bourgeoisie." This machinery does exist. This machinery is the Soviets. Do not mistrust the initiative of the masses, have confidence in the revolutionary organisations and you will see the workers and peasants bring to bear in *every* sphere of public life the force, the majesty, the invincibility of which they gave proof in their union, in their enthusiasm against Kornilov.²

The Social Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders have not had confidence in the masses, they have doubted their initiative, they have trembled before their revolutionary energy instead of supporting it without reserve; that has been their great crime. It is there that one must seek the principal cause of their indecision, of their hesitation, of their perpetual—and perpetually vain—attempts to pour new wine into the old bottles of the former bureaucratic machine.

Take the history of the democratisation of the army in the Russian revolution of 1917, the history of the Minister Tchernov,³ the history of the "reign" of Paltchinsky, the history of the resignation of Piecheckovon,⁴ and you will see in each a striking confirmation of what I have just said. The lack of confidence towards the organisations elected by the soldiers, the incomplete realisation of the principle of election of officers by the soldiers, have had the result of leaving the Kornilovs, Kaledins and counter-revolutionary officers at the head of the army. That is a fact, and, short of deliberately shutting one's eyes, it is impossible not to see that, after the insurrection of Kornilov, the Kerensky Government allowed the former situation to continue and, in fact, restored "Kornilovism." The nomination of Alexéiev, the "peace" with

¹ The victory over Kornilov was less the work of the Government than of the Soviets and of the initiative of the workers themselves. Miliukov recognised this in his *History of the Second Revolution*, Vol. II.

² See the development of these ideas on the rôle of the Soviets in *Can the Bolsheviks Maintain power?* and in *The State and Revolution*.

³ He refused to let the peasants take the land of the big proprietors.

⁴ Minister of Supply, he retired on August 26 because Kerensky, at the demand of the big proprietors, wished to double the State purchase price of corn.

Klembovsky, Gagavine, Bagration and other "Kornilovians," the indulgence to Kornilov and Kaledin themselves, all goes to show as clear as day that Kerensky in fact restored "Kornilovism."

There is no middle course, experience has demonstrated that. Either all power to the Soviets and the complete democratisation of the army—or reaction.

Take the history of the Minister Tchernov. Was it not shown that every attempt, however frivolous, to satisfy the needs of the peasants in a real fashion, that every act of confidence towards them and their mass organisations was accepted with the utmost enthusiasm by the entire peasant class? And Tchernov was forced for nearly four months "to bargain with the Left," with the Cadets and officials, who by their shufflings and perpetual adjournments compelled him at the end of the deal to give in his resignation having been able to achieve nothing. During those four months the landlords and capitalists gained their end; they saved, for the moment, the big landed properties, retarded the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and even launched a campaign of repression against the agrarian committees.

There is no middle term. All power to the Soviets at the centre and in the provinces, all land to the peasants, *immediately*, according to the decision of the Constituent Assembly, otherwise the landed nobility and the capitalists will crab everything, restore their power, exasperate the peasants so far that they will unloose the most furious *jacquerie*.

In the same way the capitalists (with the help of Paltchinsky) have made hay of all serious control over production, and the merchants have obstructed the operation of the cereal monopoly and the regulated democratic rationing of bread and food products undertaken by Piecheckonov.

It is not the time now, in Russia, to invent "new" reforms, to evolve plans for a general transformation the capitalists, the Potressovs, the Plekhanovs, who clamour against "the installation of socialism," against "the dictatorship of the proletariat," would cunningly have you believe. In reality, the insupportable burdens and scourges of the war, the formidable dangers of disorganisation and of famine have already shown where the situation is leading; they have already indicated—what am I saying!—they have already forced an urgent realisation of such indispensable reforms and readjust-

ments as are the cereal monopoly, the control of production and rationing, the restriction of the issue of paper money, a regular exchange of corn for merchandise, &c.

These measures everybody recognises¹ are an absolute necessity, and they have begun to be applied in many places. But the realisation of these policies is trammelled by the resistance of the big proprietors and of the capitalists, resistance exercised through the agency of the Kerensky Government (a government at bottom bourgeois and bonapartist), through the agency of the administrative apparatus of the former Government by means of the direct or indirect pressure of Russian and Allied finance-capital.

Deploring the resignation of Piecheckonov and the failure of the taxation and of the cereal monopoly, I. Prilejaïev wrote quite recently in the *Dielo Naroda* (No. 147): "The absence of courage and the spirit of decision, which has marked all our governments, has been due to their composition. . . . The democratic revolution ought not to hesitate, it ought itself to exhibit initiative and to interfere systematically in the economic chaos. . . . If ever the necessity of a positive and absolute power made itself felt, it is now."

That is the truth. Here are words of gold. Only, there is one thing that has not struck the author: it is that the firm line, the courage and the spirit of decision are not questions of persons, they depend on the class that is capable of showing these qualities. Now this class is uniquely the proletariat. A courageous, resolute authority which takes a firm line, what is it but the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the poorer ranks of the peasant class? Without doubt I. Prilejaïev yearns after that dictatorship.

What will this dictatorship actually signify? The definite wiping out of "Kornilovians" and the democratisation of the army. The day following its installation it will be welcomed with enthusiasm by 99 per cent. of the army. In that it gives the land to the peasants and full power to the local committees of peasants, will not the dictatorship be supported without reserve by the latter? What Piecheckonov only promises ("the capitalist resistance is destroyed" said he in his famous speech in the Soviet Congress), the dictatorship will actually realise, and to do that it

¹ Even the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries; they were a party to the programme adopted by the majority of the State Conference on August 14.

will not demolish the democratic organisations which are beginning to be set up for the revictualling, control, &c.; on the contrary, it will support them and develop them in suppressing all that hampers their operation.

Only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants is capable of conquering the resistance of the capitalists, of showing in the exercise of power the maximum of courage and decision, of obtaining the enthusiastic, complete and heroic support of the great mass of the army and also of the naval population.

Power to the Soviets, that is the only means of assuring gradual, peaceful evolution, unscathed by events; of carrying through this evolution side by side with the development of consciousness; of the power of decision and of experience in the majority of the masses of the population. Power to the Soviets, that is the entire transmission of the country and of economic control to the workers and peasants, to which none dare offer resistance and which learns rapidly, by practice, how to distribute to the best advantage the land, products and corn.

On The Freedom of the Press

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 18, 1917.

THE capitalists (and in their train, either through stupidity or crass ignorance, numerous Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks) define "freedom of the Press" as the suppression of the censor and the power for every party to publish newspapers as they please.

In reality that is not freedom of the Press, but freedom for the rich, for the bourgeoisie, to deceive the oppressed and exploited masses of the people.

There is no doubt about this. Take, for example, the newspapers of Petrograd or Moscow. You will see at the first glance that from their circulation the *Ryetch*, the *Birjovka*,¹ the *Novoye Vremya*,² the *Russkoye Slovo*,³ and so on and so forth (for their name is legion) have an undoubted preponderance. On what is this preponderance based? One could not say that it was based on the will of the majority, for the elections show that in the two capitals the majority (and the vast majority) is on the side of the democracy, that is the Social-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. These three parties comprise from three-quarters to four-fifths of the total poll⁴ while the number of copies of their newspapers equals only a quarter or even a fifth of those belonging to the whole bourgeois Press (which, as we know now and see now, defended Kornilov both directly and indirectly). This is because the publication of a newspaper is a capitalist enterprise in which the rich invest millions and millions of roubles. "Freedom of the Press" in bourgeois society means the power given to the rich of systematic, unceasing, daily, million-sale perversion and deception of the poor, of the exploited and the oppressed masses.

This is the simple self-evident truth of which everybody is well aware, but of which hardly anybody dares whisper a word.

The question before us is : Is struggle against such an appalling state of affairs possible and, if so, how can it be carried out ?

¹ *The Stock Exchange Gazette*, journal of information without any precise political tendencies, but supported by finance.

² *New Times*, a thoroughly monarchist paper, nationalist, anti-Semitic, though it hides these tendencies at the moment.

³ *The Voice of Russia*, the Moscow paper with a very wide provincial circulation.

⁴ In the municipal elections of Petrograd on August 20, the Socialist parties altogether obtained 154 seats, against the Cadets' 142.

There exists a very simple method and a perfectly legitimate one which I indicated a long time ago in the *Pravda*, one which it is particularly opportune to remember on this memorable September 12.¹ The workers ought never to lose sight of this means because it is almost certain that they will be compelled to make use of it when they have the power.

This method is the State monopoly of newspaper advertisement.

Glance at the *Russkoye Slovo*, the *Novoye Vremya*, the *Ryetch*, &c., and you will see a large number of advertisements bringing in enormous returns, which represent the clearest source of profit of the capitalist publishers of these papers. This is how they enrich themselves while they poison the people. This applies to every bourgeois newspaper in the whole world.

In Europe there are newspapers of which copies are printed equal to a third of the inhabitants of the town where they appear (for example 12,000 for a population of 40,000); and which, though they are distributed free to every house, nevertheless give an excellent income to their publishers. These newspapers live on advertisements paid for by individuals, and free house-to-house delivery is the best way to assure the success of this form of publicity.

Why is it that a democracy, calling itself revolutionary, cannot carry through a measure like newspaper advertisement monopoly (for the profit of the State)? Why can it not forbid the printing of advertisements except in papers published by the Soviets in the provinces, or by the Central Soviet in Petrograd for all Russia? Why must the revolutionary democracy tolerate the fact that only the rich, the partisans of Kornilov, who scatter lies and calumny against the Soviets, should make themselves still richer by private advertisement?

This measure would be indisputably a just one. It would give enormous advantage to those who print the advertisements as well as to all the people, particularly to the most oppressed and the most ignorant portions of the peasant class, who would then be able to receive for a very small price, or even gratis, the Soviet newspapers with special supplements for the countryside.²

¹ The day of the summoning of the Democratic Conference.

² One of the first decrees of the Soviet Government of November 8, 1917, proclaims the insertion of advertisements to be the monopoly of the State carried out in the *Izvestia* of the Soviets.

Why not carry through this measure? Solely because the right of private ownership and inheritance is a holy thing to these capitalist gentlemen.

Strange that at the time of our second revolution men who recognise the sanctity of this right dare still to call themselves revolutionary democrats of the twentieth century!

All that is nonsense. This monopoly would restore and extend the freedom of the Press, the possibility of printing freely all the opinions *of all* the citizens. What do we see now? At present it is only wealthy men or the large political parties that prevent this monopoly. Whereas if big Soviet newspapers were published all advertisements could appear solely in them and it would be possible to guarantee expression of opinion for a much larger number of citizens, for example, for every group which had collected a certain number of signatures. Freedom of the Press, thanks to this transformation, would become much more democratic and incomparably more complete.

But where are the printing works or the paper coming from?

We shall see! That has nothing to do with the "Freedom of the Press." It concerns the holy proprietorship of exploiters over the printing establishments and the stocks of paper which they have procured.

For what reason should we workers and peasants recognise this sacrosanct right? In what way is this "right" to publish false information better than the "right" to own serfs?

Why is it that during the war commandeering of all kinds—houses, apartments and vehicles as well as horses, cereals and metals—was allowed everywhere, while the commandeering of printing works and paper is not allowed?

No, you can deceive the workers for a time by representing these measures as unjust or hard to accomplish, but in the long run truth will triumph.

The Bogy of Civil War

SEPTEMBER 16, 1917.

THE refusal of the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries to join with the Cadets—although the democracy could perfectly well form a government and rule Russia without them, and even against them—alarmed the bourgeoisie into preparing schemes to frighten the democracy.

“Spread terror to the utmost!” Such is the watchword of the whole bourgeois Press. “Terrify as much as you can! Lie, slander—above all things terrify!”

The *Stock Exchange Gazette* attempts to stir up panic by means of forged information about Bolshevik plots. The rumour is spread that Alexiev has resigned and that the Germans have broken through the Russian lines in the direction of Petrograd—as if it had not been proved that it was just the “Kornilovian” generals (with whom Alexiev is undoubtedly connected) who have no hesitation in throwing open the front to the Germans in Galicia, before Riga¹ and before Petrograd, and stirring up in the army violent hatred against G.H.Q. To incite the danger of civil war you are forced to use intimidation of the democracy in the most consistent and convincing way. In fact, the stirring up of the civil war bogy is the most widespread method of intimidation. Observe how this idea, very prevalent in petty bourgeois centres, is described by the Rostov-on-the-Don local committee of the party of Freedom for the People.² To quote from their resolution of September 1 (cf. *Ryetch* No. 210):—

“. . . Considering that civil war would abolish all the victories of the revolution and drown in rivers of blood our young and as yet unestablished freedom, the committee considers it necessary for the good of the revolutionary victories to protest strongly against the tendency to extend the revolution, a tendency which is dictated by the impracticable Socialist utopians.”

We see here the clearest, the most distinct, detailed and most thought-out expression of the fundamental thought that appears continually in the publications of the *Ryetch*, in the articles by

¹ It is probable that the fall of Riga was due to the incapacity or to the connivance of the military staff. The troops fought bravely as the bourgeois journalist Naudeau admits.

² Name taken by the Cadet party after the March revolution (French translator's note).

Plekhanov, by Potressov, in Menshevik newspapers, &c. In passing it would do us no harm to stop and consider a little this idea.

Let us try to examine the question of civil war as concretely as possible, basing ourselves on the experience of the six months of our revolution.

This experience, which corresponds absolutely with that of all European revolutions since the end of the eighteenth century, shows us that civil war is the most acute form of class struggle. After a series of conflicts and economic and political battles, increasingly numerous and violent, it becomes transformed inevitably into an armed struggle of two classes, one against the other.

What one sees most frequently, one might say invariably, in all countries, however little advanced, is civil war between the classes (that is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat). This antagonism has been created and is accentuated by the whole economic development of capitalism, and can be seen by the whole history of society all over the world. Thus, during the six months of our revolution we had on April 20 and 21, and on July 3 and 4, vigorous spontaneous outbursts which almost amounted to the beginning of civil war. Kornilov's insurrection is a military plot, supported by the large landed proprietors and capitalists, and directed by the Cadets. This conspiracy has effectively brought about the beginning of civil war, started this time by the bourgeoisie.

Such are the facts. Such is the history of our revolution. Now, it is chiefly from this history that we must extract guidance ; it is to its development and social significance that we must give special thought. Let us try to compare the beginnings of proletarian and bourgeois civil wars in Russia from the following points of view: (1) The spontaneity of the movement ; (2) Its aims ; (3) The class consciousness of the masses who take part ; (4) The strength of the movement ; (5) Its tenacity. We believe that if all the parties who now talk at random about "civil war" should formulate the question thus, and try to study the outbreak of civil war from the basis of the facts, the Russian revolution would gain vast knowledge of itself.

Let us take first the spontaneity. Concerning July 3 and 4 we

have the verdict of such witnesses as the Menshevik *Rabotchaia Gazette* and the Social Revolutionary *Dielo Naroda* of the spontaneous character of the movement. I have quoted these reports in an article in the *Proletarskoie Dielo*, which afterwards appeared in a special pamphlet entitled *An Answer to the Slanderers*. But for perfectly obvious reasons the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, who defend themselves for having shared in persecutions carried on against the Bolsheviks, continue to deny the spontaneity of the outbreak of July 3 and 4.

Let us leave aside for the moment disputable points and stick to the indisputable. The spontaneity of the movement of April 20 and 21 is not disputed by anyone. It is to this spontaneous movement that the Bolshevik Party allied itself and proclaimed the slogan "All power to the Soviets." And independent of the Bolshevik Party, the late Linde¹ was also whole-heartedly attached to the movement and brought 30,000 soldiers on the scene to arrest the Provisional Government. (It may be mentioned in passing that this incident of the troops' intervention has not been adequately brought to light.) The more one thinks about this, the more one connects April 20 with the historical course of events; that is, when one regards it as a link in the chain between February 28 and August 29, the clearer it appears that the Bolsheviks erred then through *insufficient* revolutionarism, although the philistines continue to accuse them of the reverse.

Hence one cannot question the spontaneity of a movement which nearly brings the proletariat to civil war. Meanwhile Kornilov's insurrection presents no shadow of the resemblance of spontaneity. All we have there is a conspiracy of generals who hope to drag after them a section of the troops by means of deception and the prestige of authority.

Beyond a doubt the spontaneity of a movement reveals its grip on the masses and its fundamental soundness. Thus the summing up of events from the point of view of spontaneity demonstrates the firm basis of the proletarian revolution and the lack of this basis in the bourgeois counter-revolution.

Let us pass now to the aims. The movement of April 20-21

¹ A soldier who led the Finnish regiment, 180, and the Moscow regiment to surround the Town Hall where the Government were besieged.

came very near to the Bolsheviks' policy, while on July 3 and 4 the movement sprang up under the immediate influence of that policy which was its real guide. Dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants, immediate peace proposals, confiscation of the land of the large owners—these are the principal *aims* of proletarian civil war which the Bolshevik Party declared openly and as definitely as possible in its Press and in spoken propaganda.

Concerning the aims of Kornilov and his supporters we all know, and no democrat will deny, that they consist of the dictatorship of the landlords and of the bourgeoisie, the suppression of the Soviets and the restoration of the monarchy. The Cadets, the principal Kornilovian party (it would be quite a good thing, by the way, to begin now to call them simply the "Kornilovian Party"), who own a Press and other methods of agitation superior to the Bolsheviks, have never dared, nor dare yet, to speak openly to the people of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or of the dissolution of the Soviets—the aims of Kornilov's supporters.

Events show that the proletarian civil war can fearlessly display its final objects before the people, for they are certain to attract the workers, while it is only by dissimulation that the bourgeois civil war can drag after it a portion of the masses. Hence the extreme importance of the degree of consciousness in the masses. . . .

The only relevant information that one has on this question is in connection with the party and the elections. There seem to be no other facts which enable us to judge precisely the mass consciousness. It is obvious, and no one would dream of denying it after six months of revolution, that the proletarian revolutionary movement is led by the Bolshevik Party and the bourgeois counter-revolutionary movement is led by the Cadets. Three comparisons based on fact allow us to throw some light on the question of the development of mass consciousness.

In the first place, the elections ; the central Duma elections of August, compared with the district municipal elections of May, show a considerable decrease of Cadet votes and an enormous increase of the number of votes secured by the Bolsheviks.¹ The Cadet Press admits that where the masses of workers and soldiers are collected the strength of Bolshevism is usually demonstrated.

¹ On May 27-29 the Cadets had 185 seats out of 801. On August 20, 42 out of 200. The Bolsheviks exceeded from 22 per cent. to 33 per cent. of the votes.

Secondly, the facts concerning the parties ; with no statistics of the strength of the parties, attendance at meetings, &c., we can only measure the participation of the masses therein by the results of the money collections in support of each. From all accounts the Bolshevik workers have shown extraordinary heroism and collected comparatively considerable sums for the *Pravda*, for suppressed or suspended newspapers, &c. We have always published the accounts of our collections.¹ This is not the case with the Cadets. It is obviously the wealth of the rich that supports their party. There is no trace among them of any active aid from the masses.

Finally, in comparing the movements of April 20-21 and of July 3-4 on the one hand, and the escapade of Kornilov on the other, it is demonstrated that in civil war the Bolsheviks always openly reveal their enemy to the masses: the bourgeoisie, the big landed proprietors and the capitalists. The troops behind Kornilov, on the contrary, were *deceived* in the literal sense of the word, and this deception was laid bare after the first encounter of the "barbarian division" and other Kornilovian battalions with the Petersburgians.²

Let us consider now the facts concerning the *strength* of the workers and the bourgeoisie in civil war. The strength of the Bolsheviks rests in the numbers of the proletarians, in their consciousness ; it also depends on the sympathy of the "lower orders" (that is to say, the workers and poor peasants) and of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks towards Bolshevik slogans. It is these slogans which on April 20 and 21, June 18, and July 3 and 4 in Petrograd won over the majority of the effective revolutionary masses. Here we have an indisputable fact.

Further, the comparison of the data provided by the mass movements with those concerning the elections entirely confirms, in connection with Russia, that observation which is frequently made in the West: the strength of the revolutionary proletariat from the point of view of its influence *on the masses* and on their

¹ In May and June the subscription for the printing of the *Pravda* came to about 200,000 roubles. The same in Moscow for the *Social Democrat*.

² Kornilov made his troops believe that there was a Bolshevik revolt in Petrograd. As soon as they were disabused by the Soviet propagandists sent from Petrograd to meet them, they refused to fight. The enterprise was thus settled without a single shot. General Krasnov, who was in command of the cavalry corps that marched on Petrograd, recounts these events in his memoirs.

enthusiasm for the contest is immeasurably *greater* in the struggle *outside* than inside Parliament. This is a very important observation on the question of civil war.

It is easily understood why the conditions of the struggle in Parliament and the elections prevent the oppressed classes from utilising all the strength that they can effectively muster in civil war.

The power of the Cadets and Kornilovians is the power of *wealth*. Anglo-French capital and imperialism are on the side of the Cadets and Kornilovians, as has been demonstrated both in the Press and by a series of political interventions. It is notorious that the whole of the right wing at the Moscow Conference (August 12-14) was resolutely on the side of Kornilov and Kaledin.¹ It is further notorious that the bourgeois and French Press "assisted" Kornilov. And there are certain signs to indicate that the latter was supported by the banks.

All the power of wealth was ranged on behalf of Kornilov, and none the less what a speedy and lamentable downfall was his! Beyond money there are only two social forces that the Kornilovians can depend upon: the "barbarian division"² and the Cossacks. The strength of the former relies upon ignorance and deception, and this power is all the more appalling because the bourgeoisie hold most of the Press. The proletariat, after having conquered in the civil war, will obviously destroy this source of power once for all.

As regards the Cossacks, we are dealing with a portion of the population that is composed of small, medium and big landed proprietors (the average extent of the Cossack estate is about 50 hectares) who have preserved the economic and moral characteristics of the Middle Ages. The Cossacks might provide the social and economic foundation of a Russian *Vendée*.³ But what have the relevant *facts* shown in the Kornilov-Kaledin movement? Although supported by Goutchkov, Miliukov, Riabouchinsky and their

¹ These two generals made unveiled protestations in their speeches at the Conference against the Soviets and soldiers' committees, &c., and were frequently applauded by the whole right wing.

² A division of Caucasian cavalry, made up of mountaineers, naturally warlike and blindly devoted to their officers—as long as they had not deceived them.

³ This happened more or less in February, 1920, when the representatives of all the Cossacks (from the Don, Kuban, Orenbourg, Amur, &c.) declared themselves on the side of the Soviets.

associates, Kaledin himself, the "well-beloved leader," *could not* let loose a movement of the masses ! And nevertheless he went much more directly towards civil war than the Bolsheviks ! Out to "stir up the Don," which purpose he did not conceal, he failed to rouse any mass disturbance in "his" region, in this Cossack area, utterly isolated from the Russian democracy ! Very much the reverse: revolutionary explosions broke out among the proletarians in the very centre of the anti-Bolshevik Russian democratic stronghold.

We have no relevant information concerning the attitude of the various economic grades and groups of the Cossacks towards the democracy and the Kornilovian regime. We can only gather from certain indications that the majority of poor and middle-class Cossacks incline rather towards the democracy, and that only the officers and the most wealthy are entirely Kornilovian.

At all events, it is historically manifested after the experience of August 26 to 31 that the Cossack movement in support of the bourgeois counter-revolution is extremely weak.

There remains one final question, namely, the *tenacity* of the movement. In connection with the Bolshevik proletarian revolutionary movement, it has been proved that its adversaries carried on the ideological struggle with a great advantage of Press organs and methods of agitation. But they did not limit themselves there ; they brought into action a furious campaign of calumnies at the same time as *methods of repression*, arrests by the hundred, pillage of our printing presses, suppression of our principal organ and of our other newspapers.¹ Events have demonstrated the result. There was a formidable strengthening of Bolshevism at the August elections in Petrograd, there was a pronounced growth of the international and left wing tendencies in the very heart of the Socialist Revolutionary² and Menshevik parties and an approach nearer to Bolshevism. Thus the tenacity of the proletarian revolutionary movement in republican Russia is shown to be very great. The united efforts of the Cadets, Social Revolutionaries and

¹ After the July days, amongst others, Trotsky, Kamenev, Lunasharsky, Kollontai, Raskolnikov, &c., were arrested. *Pravda* was shut down on July 5, afterwards the *Pravda des Tranchees* of Riga, the Bolshevik paper of Cronstadt, &c. The campaign of calumny, launched by Bourtsev, financed by the Allies, consisted in representing the Bolsheviks as German agents.

² In the S.R. organisation of Petrograd, for example, the Left had the majority from that time.

Mensheviks did not succeed in weakening it. On the contrary, the coalition of the Kornilovians with the "democracy" only *strengthened* Bolshevism.¹ Moreover, all these methods of combat were exhausted because no other method of opposing the proletarian revolutionary movement except the struggle of ideas and repression can exist.

We have as yet no details about the tenacity of the Cadet-Kornilovian movement. The Cadets have never experienced persecution. Goutchkov himself has been released; Maklakdeov and Miliukov have not even been arrested. The *Ryetch* has never been suppressed. The Cadets, in fact, have been spared. The Kerensky Government pays *little attention* to them and the Kornilovians. Granted that the Anglo-French and Russian Riabouchinskys still fling millions into the *Edinstvo*² and the *Dien*³ for a new electoral campaign, will that increase their votes now after the Kornilov insurrection? It is very unlikely. To judge from their conferences, meetings, &c., it is almost certain that the number of their partisans will rest approximately the same.

As a result of our comparison we are driven to the conclusion that the beginning of the civil war initiated by the proletariat demonstrated the strength, consciousness, basis, growth and organisation of the movement. And the beginning of the bourgeois civil war, on the other hand, revealed that it had no strength, no mass consciousness, no foundation, no chance of victory.

We have had practical experience for many months of the union of the Cadets with the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks, that is to say, against the revolutionary proletariat; and this alliance of the temporarily silenced Kornilovians with the democracy in reality provoked not the weakening but the reinforcement of the Bolsheviks, the crash of the coalition, the strengthening of the left opposition even among the Mensheviks.

A Bolshevik alliance with the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks against the Cadets, against the bourgeoisie, *has not yet been tried*. Or to be exact, it has only been experienced for five days—from August 26 to 31—and at one point against Kornilov's

¹ Particularly in the army.

² Plekhanov's organ.

³ Liberal-Socialist organ, started in Petrograd towards the end of 1916, and subsidised by high finance.

revolt. And this alliance made it possible to conquer the counter-revolutionary forces with supreme ease, unexampled in any other revolution. It inflicted such a defeat on the counter-revolutionaries, the bourgeoisie, the landed proprietors, the capitalists, the Allied imperialists and the Cadets, that the civil war (which was initiated by the bourgeoisie) was held up from the start, crushed at birth, annihilated without a shot being fired. In spite of this historical fact the whole bourgeois Press with its auxiliaries (the Plekhanovs, Potressovs, Brechko-Brechkovskaias, &c.) continues to declare that a union of the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries would threaten Russia with the horrors of civil war !

It would be laughable if it were not so sad. It is pitiful that anything so obviously absurd, so appalling, and which evinces such a contempt for the facts, such a misreading of the whole history of our revolution should still be believed. It only goes to prove how widely spread are the bourgeois lies (inevitable since the bourgeoisie monopolise the Press) which smother the most indisputable and tangible lessons of the revolution.

If the revolution teaches anything, incontestably and definitely proved by facts, it is that only the alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, only the immediate handing over of all power to the Soviets, can prevent civil war. The bourgeoisie could not even dream of launching this alliance into civil war against the Soviets of elected workers, soldiers and peasants, for this war would not even get so far as one battle. After Kornilov's adventure the bourgeoisie would not even find a "barbarian division."

The peaceful development of a revolution such as this is on the whole an extremely unusual and difficult process. For revolution is the culminating point in the antagonism of the classes. But in a fundamentally agrarian country where the alliance of the proletariat and the peasants can give peace to the masses exhausted by an unjust and criminal war, and *all the land* to the peasants—given such an exceptional moment historically, the peaceful growth of the revolution would be both possible and probable if all power were given over to the Soviets. The struggle of the parties for power could develop peacefully in the heart of the Soviets on condition that the latter cease to distort democratic principles, as, for example, granting the soldiers one representative

per 200 and the workers one per 1,000. In a democratic republic these departures from principles would not be tolerated.

Against the Soviets who would give the land to the peasants without compensation, and who would propose a just peace to all the peoples, no alliance of the Anglo-French and Russian bourgeoisie, or of the Kornilovs, the Buchanans, the Riabouchinskys and the Miliukovs with the Plekhanovs and the Potressovs could do anything. For such an alliance would be doomed to impotence.

Certainly the bourgeoisie would oppose giving up the land to the peasants without indemnity, similar rearrangements in other spheres, a just peace and the rupture with imperialism. But to carry this resistance as far as civil war there would need to be a *mass* capable of *warring* against the Soviets and conquering them. Now, the bourgeoisie does not possess these masses and can therefore take no action. Moreover, the Soviets will speedily and resolutely seize power ; the "barbarian divisions" and Cossacks will be disintegrated ; and fast enough the masses will divide themselves into a meagre minority of conscious Kornilovians and an immense majority of workers and peasants, partisans in the democratic and *Socialist* democracy (for it will then have to do with Socialism).

The bourgeois resistance, after the Soviets have seized power, will result in *every* capitalist being watched, inspected and controlled by *tens* and *hundreds* of workers and peasants whose interests it will be to prohibit the deception of the people by the capitalists. The forms and machinery of this registration and control have been invented and simplified by capitalism itself, by its very creations—the banks, large factories, trusts, railways, post office, consumers' associations and syndicates. It will be enough to break all resistance without bloodshed for the Soviets to punish by means of confiscation or a short-term imprisonment the capitalists who refuse to give an account of themselves or who continue to trick the people. For it is precisely by means of the banks, which will be nationalised, the associations of employers and civil servants, the post office, the consumers' societies and the syndicates that the control and registration will become universal, all-powerful and invincible.

The Soviets, the workers and poor peasants of Russia, are not

¹ A regulation which has been allowed since the formation of the Petrograd Soviet ; one deputy for each company or thousand workers. The Social-Democrats and even the Mensheviks have tried scores of times, but always in vain, to do away with this anomaly.

alone in their march towards Socialism. If we were alone we would not reach the goal of our task, even peacefully, for it is properly speaking international. But we have a powerful reserve in the army of the most advanced workers of other countries. Russia's break-away from imperialism and the imperialistic war will accelerate everywhere the ripening of the Socialist—the workers'—revolution.

One talks of the "rivers of blood" that civil war would provoke. This phrase, which we have already cited in the resolution of the Cadet-Kornilovians, is repeated on all sides by the bourgeoisie and opportunists of every shade. After Kornilov's insurrection it does and can only excite laughter among all class-conscious workers.

But during the time of actual war the question of bloodshed must be regarded from this perspective: the approximate evaluation of the forces, the calculation of the consequences. It must be taken seriously, not just as an empty phrase, as a simple hypocrisy of the Cadets who did their best to allow Kornilov to flood Russia with blood in order to restore the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the power to the big landed proprietors and the monarchy. "Rivers of blood" they say to us. Let us also examine that side of the question.

Let us admit that the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks continue in their eternal falterings, that they do not give over the power to the Soviets, do not overthrow Kerensky; that they re-establish, in a scarcely different form, the old compromise with the bourgeoisie (discarding, for example, the Cadets for the Kornilovians "without party"), that they do not substitute the existing machinery of power for the Soviet machinery, that they make no peace proposals, that they do not break with imperialism or confiscate the estates of the big proprietors. Let us face all this as the result of the present shilly-shallying of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries.

The experience of our revolution shows with blinding evidence that such a state of affairs would bring the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to an even feebler condition. They would become more and more separated from the masses, whose indignation and fury would retaliate and whose sympathies for the revolutionary party the Bolsheviks would considerably increase. The proletariat in the capital would be nearer related than at present to the Commune, to the workers' insurrection, the conquest of power, and to civil war in its most definite and decisive form.

After the experience of the occasion of April 20 and 21 and July 3 and 4 this consequence should be regarded historically as inevitable. "Rivers of blood" cry the Cadets! But "rivers of blood" would grant victory to the proletariat and poor peasants. This victory would have ninety-nine chances out of a hundred to substitute *peace* for the imperialist war, that is to save the lives of *hundreds of thousands* of men who shed their blood at this moment to settle the question of the division of profits and territorial conquests (annexations) among the capitalists. If the movement of April 20 and 21 had ended in the transference of power to the Soviets and had given the victory in them to the Bolsheviks allied to the poor peasants, that seizure of power, even suppose that it had let flow "rivers of blood," would at least have saved the lives of the *half-million* soldiers which the disastrous offensive of June 18 certainly cost us.

All the conscious workers and soldiers, when they seriously approach the question of civil war, about which there is so much noise at present, will make this reckoning. And surely the workers and soldiers who have gained a certain amount of experience and acquired the habit of thought will not be frightened by the shouts of the men, parties and groups who argue about "rivers of blood," while they themselves prepare again to sacrifice the lives of *millions* of Russian soldiers for Constantinople, Lvov, Varsovie—for the victory over Germany. All the *rivers of blood* caused by civil war would not bear the remotest comparison with the *seas of blood* which the Russian imperialists have shed since June 18 (in spite of the considerable opportunity that they had to avoid these hecatombs by transferring the power to the Soviets).

Be a little more discreet in your reasoning about the "rivers of blood" of civil war, my gentlemen — Miliukov, Potressov, Plekhanov and others, for during the war the soldiers have already seen seas of blood.

Now in 1917, in the fourth year of a frightful and criminal war that has exhausted all the peoples, the international situation of the Russian revolution is such that proposals for a just peace through the Russian proletariat, victorious in civil war, would have ninety-nine chances out of a hundred to end in an armistice and peace—*without it being necessary to shed any more seas of blood.*

In fact, the alliance of the rival Anglo-French and German

imperialisms *against* a Russian Socialist proletarian republic *cannot be realised*, whereas the alliance of English, Japanese and American imperialism is almost impossible, and in any case in no way formidable considering the geographic situation of Russia. Besides, the existence of the revolutionary and Socialist proletarian masses in the bosom of *all* the European States is a fact ; there is no doubt about the growth and inevitability of the world-wide Socialist revolution. Surely it is not through delegations and conferences at Stockholm with the foreign Plekhanovs or Tseretellis that one can seriously assist the development of this world-wide revolution, but only by the progression of the Russian revolution.

The bourgeoisie talks of the inevitable defeat of the Commune, that is of the proletariat, if they seize power.

These are lying assertions, dictated by class interest.

Once power is captured, the Russian proletariat has *every* chance to retain it and to lead Russia right on to the triumph of the revolution in the West.

For, in the first place, we have learnt a lot since the Commune, and we shall not repeat its fatal mistakes. We shall not leave the State Bank in the hands of the bourgeoisie, we shall not limit ourselves to a defence against our *Versillais* (the Kornilovians), but we shall take the offensive and crush them.

In the second place, the victorious proletariat will give Russia peace. After all the horrors of that methodical extermination of the peoples which has lasted already more than three years, no force will be in a condition to overthrow the government of *peace*, the government of honest, sincere, just peace.

In the third place, the victorious proletariat will immediately present the land to the peasants without indemnity. And, tired and exasperated by the way our Government has flirted with the large landowners, especially the coalition Government, Kerensky's Government, the vast majority of the peasant class will support the victorious proletariat whole-heartedly and heroically in every way.

You speak incessantly of the "heroic effort" of the people, my Menshevik and Social Revolutionary gentlemen. I have recently seen for the *n*th time this phrase in the editorial of your *Izvestia of the Central Executive Committee*. For you it is nothing but a catch-phrase. But the workers and peasants read it and think about it, and all their thinking, fortified by the experience of

Kornilov's adventure, by the "experiences" of the Minister Piecheckonov, the Minister Tchernov and so forth—all their thinking, I say, leads them inevitably to this conclusion: this "heroic effort" is nothing else but the confidence of the poor peasants in the workers in the towns, whom they regard as their allies and faithful leaders. This heroic effort is nothing else but the victory of the Russian proletariat over the bourgeoisie in the civil war, for that victory alone will put an end to the agonising hesitations, it alone will resolve the situation and it alone will give peace.

If the union of the town workers with the poor peasants can be realised by the immediate transference of power to the Soviets, so much the better! The Bolsheviks will do everything to assure that opportunity for a *peaceful* development of the revolution. If not, the Constituent Assembly itself will not bring salvation because the Social Revolutionaries can carry on in its bosom their policy of compromise with the Cadets and with Brechko-Brechkoskaia and Kerensky, who are no better.

If the Kornilov experience has not enlightened the democracy, if it continue to carry on its policy of oscillation and conciliation, we shall say: Nothing is more fatal to the proletarian revolution than these oscillations. Do not seek, gentlemen, to frighten us with the spectre of civil war—it is inevitable unless you decide to break with the Kornilovians and the "Coalition" immediately and definitely. And that war which will terminate in victory over the exploiters, and which will give the land to the peasants and peace to the peoples, will throw open the way for a victorious Socialist proletarian revolution to the whole world.

The Aims of the Revolution

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 26 & 27, 1917.¹

RUSSIA is a country dominated by the petty bourgeoisie. The vast majority of the population belong to this class. It is inevitable that it fluctuates between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It is only by this class joining the proletariat that the victory of the revolution, that is to say peace, freedom, the re-division of the land among the workers, can be peacefully brought about with ease and speed, and without hardship.

The whole course of our revolution reveals the hesitations of the petty bourgeois class. Let us have no illusion about the Social Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, but hold fast to our proletarian track. The poverty of the poor peasants, the horrors of the war and famine clearly reveal to the masses the rightness of our policy, and the necessity of supporting the proletarian revolution.

The progress of the revolution mercilessly destroys the "pacifist" petty bourgeois trust in any "coalition" with the bourgeoisie, or in any agreement with them, and in the possibility of waiting "quietly" for the "next" convocation of the Constituent Assembly, &c. Kornilov's insurrection was the last important and cruel lesson which completed the thousands and thousands of daily lessons given to the workers and peasants by the capitalists and the landed gentry, and to the soldiers by their officers.

Discontent, indignation, exasperation continued to grow in the army, and among the peasants and workers. The "coalition" of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie, a coalition which makes ceaseless promises only to break them, irritates the masses, opens their eyes and urges them to insurrection.

Among the Social Revolutionaries of the Left (Spiridonova and others), as among the Mensheviks (Martov and his group), opposition is increasing. It has already reached 40 per cent. of the Council and the Congress of these parties. And below, in the proletarian and peasant class, particularly among the poor peasants, the majority of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are Left Wing.

¹The text shows that this article was written before the end of the Democratic Conference, therefore before September 22.

The Kornilov regime instructs the masses. It has already taught them a great deal.

It is impossible to say if the Soviets will now be able to remove their Social Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders and thus insure the peaceful development of the revolution ; or whether they will continue to mark time and thus render the insurrection of the proletariat inevitable.

We must do our best to insure an eleventh hour peaceful development to the revolution ; and for this we must expound our programme, bring its popular character to light and prove that it corresponds entirely with the interests and demands of the vast majority of the population.

The following lines are an attempt to explain this programme.

Let us forge ahead with it ; draw nearer to the masses. Let us go not only to the employés, the workers and peasants who are on our side, but to those who follow the Social Revolutionaries ; to the Non-party people, and to the elements as yet unconscious. Let us endeavour to teach them to judge for themselves, to draw up their own resolution and send their own delegates to the Conference, to the Soviets and to the Government. Thus our labours will not be in vain whatever may be the result of the Conference. It will be useful both for the Conference, for the Constituent Assembly elections and also for all political action in general.

Experience proves for us the validity of the programme and tactics of the Bolsheviks. The time between April 20 and the Kornilov insurrection is very brief, but how full of incident.

The experience of the *masses* and the *oppressed* classes has given them, during this short lapse of time, an immense amount of instruction. Meanwhile the leaders of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks are completely detached from the masses whose interests they have not supported. It is the point of our practical programme that it will clearly show to the masses the measures by which we will secure their participation in its discussion.

1.—*The Fatal Consequences of the Policy of Compromise with Capitalism*

To have the power in the hands of the representatives of the bourgeoisie, however small the number, to leave it to the avowed Kornilovians like the generals Alexeiev, Klembovsky, Bragation,

Gargarire and others, or to the men who have, like Kerensky, proved their complete impotence in the hands of the bourgeoisie and their tendency towards Bonapartist methods, is to throw open the gates to disaster of every kind. On the one hand you invite famine and economic collapse, which the capitalists intentionally aggravate and accelerate, and on the other military collapse ; for the army detests the G.H.Q. and only under force participates in the imperialist war.

Moreover, if they maintain power the Kornilovian officers *will certainly open the lines to the Germans* ; they will do this *intentionally* as they did in Galicia and at Riga. Nothing short of the creation of a new government, formed on a basis that will be explained later, will be able to prevent the imminent economic and military disaster. After all that has occurred since April 20 it will be not only a mistake on the part of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, but a direct betrayal of the people and the revolution, to continue an alliance with the bourgeoisie under any form whatever.

2.—*Power to the Soviets*

The whole undivided power of the State should be given over to the representatives of the Soviets of deputies, workers, soldiers and peasants on the basis of a pre-determined programme. This power should be entirely responsible to the Soviets.¹ This action should be immediately followed by the re-election of the Soviets so that the experiences acquired by the people during the last and particularly instructive weeks of the revolution may be turned to account, and so that various appalling injustices can be suppressed, such as the ill-proportioned electoral districts, electoral inequality, &c., which still persist in certain places.

In the provinces where democratically elected institutions do not yet exist, as in the army, all power should be transferred exclusively to the local Soviets and to the commissars elected by them, or to other institutions, but only to the elective ones.

Everywhere it should be carried out with the complete support of the State, by the winning of the workers, of the revolutionary troops, that is to say the troops who have proved in action their will to crush the Kornilovians.

¹ Decree of October 26, 1917.

3.—*Peace for the People*

The Soviet Government must *immediately* formulate proposals to *all* the belligerent countries (that is simultaneously to their governments and to the masses of workers and peasants) to negotiate general peace on the spot on democratic terms, and to conclude an armistice at once, even if it is for only three months.¹

The principal condition of a democratic peace is the renunciation of claims to annexation. This must not be wrongly understood in the sense that all the powers should recover what they have lost, but according to the only true meaning, which is that *every* nationality without exception, in Europe and in the colonies, should obtain freedom and the opportunity to decide themselves if they will form a *distinct* State or enter as a constituent member of some other State.

The Soviet government in proposing peace conditions should immediately proceed itself to their realisation. That is to say, to publish and to break the peace treaties concluded by the Tsar, which bind us at present and which promise the spoils of Turkey, Austria, &c., to the Russian capitalists.

Further, we must do immediate justice to the claims of the Ukrainians and Finlanders, and to assure them, as well as all other nationalities in Russia, complete liberty including that of secession.

This ought, in the same way, to be our attitude towards *the whole* of Armenia, which we should agree to evacuate as well as the Turkish territories occupied by us, &c.

These peace conditions will not have the good fortune to please the capitalists, but they will receive such a warm welcome from the people, they will evoke such an explosion of enthusiasm in the whole world, such indignation against the interminable war of plunder waged by the bourgeoisie, that very probably we shall obtain at one stroke both an armistice and the opportunity to broach peace negotiations. For the workers' revolt against the war grows everywhere with undiminished vigour, and it is not by mere talk about peace (by means of which all the imperialist governments, including our Kerensky government, have deceived the workers and peasants for so long), it is only by a break with the capitalists and resolute peace proposals that can help on this revolt.

¹ It was precisely in this form that the Decree on Peace of the Second Congress of the Soviets, of October 26, was issued.

If the most unlikely thing were to happen, that is, if any of the belligerent States refuse even an armistice, then the war would be shown to have been one that was forced upon us—a just war, a war of defence. The proletariat and workers will realise this, and the mere knowledge of the justice of our cause will render Russia infinitely more powerful, even from the military point of view. Moreover, this war will bring about on our side a union with the oppressed classes in all countries, the oppressed peoples all over the world.

It is particularly necessary to warn the people against an assertion of the capitalists which has led astray from time to time the timid elements and the petty bourgeoisie ; it is affirmed that in the eventuality of our breaking our alliance with them the English and other capitalists could deal a serious blow to the Russian revolution. This assertion is utterly false, because the “ financial support of the allies,” in that it enriches the bankers, “ supports ” the workers and peasants in exactly the same way as the gallows support its victim. Russia has enough corn, coal, oil, iron, and it will suffice to rid the people of the big proprietors and of the plundering capitalists to be able to assure the fair re-division of these products. As for the event of a military action being let lose against the Russian people by her present allies, it is manifestly absurd to suppose that the French and Italians could join forces with the Germans, and launch them against Russia, since it is she who has proposed a just peace. Then even if England, America and Japan declare war on Russia (which would be very difficult for them owing to the unpopularity of such a war as well as the divergence of interest which divides them on the question of the distribution of Asia, and particularly the plundering of China) they could only cause Russia the hundredth part of the affliction and distress caused by the war with Germany, Austria and Turkey.

4.—*The Land for the Workers*

The Soviet Government must immediately proclaim the confiscation without compensation of private property in connection with the estates of the big landed proprietors. They must be transferred to agrarian committees. These will be responsible for the administration of this land, pending the decision of the Constituent Assembly.

In the same way the arrangements concerning the lease of cattle of the big landed proprietors must be handed over to the administration of these rural committees, so that they can be placed at once at the free disposal of the poor peasants.¹

These measures are urgently necessary. The vast majority of peasants have already demanded them for a long time, in the resolutions of their congresses and in the hundreds of their instructions to local delegates (it arose, amongst other things, from the examination of the 242 instructions published in the *Isvestia of the Soviets of Peasant Representatives*).² None of those delays of payment from which the peasant class suffered so much during the "coalition" ministry can be allowed any more. Every government who puts off the realisation of these measures will be recognised as being against the people, and would deserve to be overthrown and crushed by the revolt of workers and peasants. And, on the contrary, every government that brings about these measures will be considered really popular.

5.—*The Struggle Against Famine and Disorganisation*

The Soviet government must immediately institute workers' control over production and consumption. Without this control, as has been shown by the course of events since May 6, all promises and attempts in connection with reform are powerless, and from one day to the next famine and disaster threaten to overwhelm the country.³

It is essential to proceed immediately to the nationalisation of the banks,⁴ insurance companies and the most important branches of industry (oil, coal, metal, sugar, &c.).⁵ In the same way commercial secrets must be suppressed and a vigorous inspection instituted on the part of the workers and peasants over the tiny minority of capitalists who, enriching themselves by means of

¹ This was practically the literal terms of the Decree on the Land of October 26, 1917.

² "Instructions" added precisely to the Decree on the Land, under the title of unobligatory regulations.

³ The *Regulations on Workers' Control* was published on November 16, 1917.

⁴ The Decree on the Nationalisation of the Banks, December 17.

⁵ The sugar industry was nationalised on May 3, 1918; oil on June 30. In June also the principal mining and metal, textile, &c., concerns were nationalised *en bloc*. In all these branches nationalisation was prepared for by the existence of large trusts and syndicates of the owners.

supplies made to the State, arrange so as to keep no accounts, and avoid all taxation of their profits and property.

These measures, which will not deprive the peasants of the least portion of their goods nor take away the means of the Cossacks and small artisans, are absolutely necessary for the equal division of the burden of the war and extremely urgent in the struggle against famine. It is only by curbing the appetite of the capitalists and by preventing them from intentionally hindering production¹ that one can obtain the best return for labour, and that general obligation to work, the normal exchange of corn for industrial products, and the return to the Treasury coffers of the thousands of paper money hidden by the rich.

Without these measures the confiscation without compensation of big estates is impossible, for most of these properties are mortgaged to the banks and the interests of the landed proprietors are linked up with those of the capitalists.

The last resolution of the economic section of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of workers' and soldiers' representatives (cf. *Rabotchaia Gazeta*, No. 152²) recognises not only the uselessness of the Government's measures (such as the doubling of the tax on corn, destined to enrich the big landed proprietors and the Kulaks) as well as the "*complete inaction*" of the central organs created by the government to regularise economic life," but also the "*violation of the laws*" by this Government. This confession from the parties in power, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, proves once again how criminal is the policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie.

6.—*The Struggle Against the Counter-Revolution of the Big Landed Proprietors and Capitalists*

The insurrection of Kornilov and Kaledin was supported by the whole landlord class and the capitalists led by the Cadet Party ("Party of Popular Freedom"). This has been definitely proved already by the facts published in the *Izvestia* of the Central Executive Committee. But nothing of any importance has been, or can be, done towards a complete suppression of this counter-

¹ On August 1, 1917, 568 concerns, employing 105,000 workers, were closed by their owners (206 of these in July alone) for various pretexts, lack of fuel, excessive demands of the workers, &c.

² Menshevik journal.

revolution or an effective inquiry without the transfer of power to the Soviets. A commission that had not power at its disposal could neither carry through a complete inquiry nor arrest the guilty.

The Soviet Government alone could and should do it. It alone could save Russia from the inevitable repetition of the Kornilovian attacks by arresting the Kornilovian generals and the leaders of the bourgeois counter-revolution (Goutchkov, Miliukov, Riabouchinsky, Maklakov and their associates), by dissolving the counter-revolutionary societies (Duma of the Empire, League of Officers, &c.), by submitting their members to the inspection of the local Soviets and by disbanding the counter-revolutionary units. It alone could create a commission capable of making a full public inquiry into the Kornilovian and other affairs, even those stirred up by the bourgeoisie. It is moreover to such a commission that the Bolshevik party from its side will ask the workers to submit completely and to lend their co-operation. The Soviet Government is the only one that could struggle successfully against such an appalling injustice as the seizure, by means of the millions stolen from the people, of the big printing presses and the majority of the newspapers perpetrated by the capitalists. The counter-revolutionary bourgeois papers (*Rietch*, *Royskoye Slovo*, &c.) must be closed down, their presses confiscated; advertisements must be declared a State monopoly and reserved for a governmental paper, published by the Soviets to offer truth to the peasants. This is the only way to snatch from the hands of the bourgeoisie the powerful weapon of the Press which they use to lie, slander and deceive the people, lead the peasants astray and to prepare the counter-revolution.

7.—*The Peaceful Development of the Revolution*

The Russian democracy, the Soviets, the Social Revolutionary and Menshevik parties have before them now an opportunity which is extremely rare in the history of revolution. They can assure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly on the date fixed without further adjournment; they can preserve the country from military and economic disaster; they can safeguard the peaceful development of events.

If the Soviets seize power now in order to carry out the programme expounded above, they can be certain not only of the

support of the working class and the great majority of peasants, but also of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the army and of the majority of the people ; without which enthusiasm victory over famine and war is impossible.

There could be no longer any question of resistance to the Soviets, but for their hesitations. No class will dare provoke insurrection against them, and, enlightened by the Kornilov experience, the big proprietors and capitalists will peacefully surrender power before the Soviet ultimatum. In order to overcome the capitalists' resistance to the Soviet programme it will suffice to institute a vigilant supervision by the peasants and workers over the exploiters, and to inflict such punishments as total confiscation of their possessions and short time imprisonment upon the recalcitrants.

If the Soviets seized power they could still—and it is probably the last chance—assure the peaceful development of the revolution, the peaceful election by the people of their representatives, the peaceful competition of parties in the bosom of the Soviets, the experiments of the different party programmes, and the peaceful transference of power from one party to another.

If this opportunity is not taken, civil war in its most acute form between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is inevitable. The whole course of the revolution from April 20 down to Kornilov demonstrates this. The impending collapse of the country will accelerate the approach of this war. As far as one can judge from the facts accessible to human intelligence, this war will result in the complete victory of the working classes. It will be supported in the carrying out of the programme explained above by the poor ranks of the peasant class, but it may be extremely bitter and bloody, and cost the lives of tens of thousands of big proprietors and capitalists as well as of the officers who side with them. The proletariat will shrink from no sacrifice that will assure the safety of the revolution, a safety which can only be secured by the carrying out of the above programme. But it will sustain the Soviets by every means in its power if they grasp this last chance to secure the peaceful development of the revolution.

The Bolsheviks Must Seize Power

LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, TO THE PETROGRAD COMMITTEE AND TO THE MOSCOW COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY OF RUSSIA (BOLSHEVIK)

(Written during the Democratic Conference)

THE Bolsheviks, who have obtained the majority of worker and soldier deputies in the Soviets of the two capitals,¹ can and must seize power. They can do it because the active majority of the revolutionary elements of the two capitals is sufficient to rally the masses, to vanquish and crush hostile resistance to conquer power and to hold it. For, by the immediate proposal of a democratic peace, the immediate gift of the land to the peasants and the restoration of the democratic institutions and the liberty that Kerensky mutilated, the Bolsheviks will found a government which no man on earth could overthrow.

The majority of the people is for us. The course of events since May 6 up to August 31 and September 12 has proved it: the majority won in the Soviets of the two capitals is the *result* of the people's evolution *towards bolshevism*. This is equally proved by the vacillations of the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and the strengthening of internationalists in the bosom of the two parties.

The Democratic Conference does not represent the majority of the people, but merely the acme of petty bourgeois class conciliation. The votes of this conference must not affect us, they prove nothing. Compare the elections of the Petrograd or Moscow municipal councils and the Soviet elections; compare the Moscow elections and the strike of August 12² and you will realise the true facts concerning the majority of the revolutionary elements that lead the masses.

The Democratic Conference deceives the peasant class by giving them neither peace nor the land.

A Bolshevik government alone will satisfy the peasants.

Why must the Bolsheviks seize power exactly *now*?

¹ On August 31 the Petrograd Soviet and on September 6 that of Moscow adopted for the first time the general Bolshevik political resolution.

² The general strike was started in Moscow by the trade unions and Bolsheviks, against the majority of the Soviet, against the re-union of the Democratic Conference, a screen for reaction.

Because the next surrender of Petrograd will considerably lessen our chances.¹

Now, with an army led by Kerensky and his associates, it is absolutely impossible for us to avoid this surrender.

Nor can one "wait for" the Constituent Assembly, for, by means of the Petrograd surrender, Kerensky and his acolytes will always be in a position to postpone its summons. Our party alone, once in power, could assure the convocation of the Constituent, and then we will accuse the other parties of having delayed it and we will prove our assertion.

It is only through rapid action that one must and can bring about the conclusion of a separate peace between the English and German imperialists.²

The people are tired of the Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary hesitations. Only our triumph in the capital cities will attract the peasants to our side.

It is not a case of "the day" nor of "the moment" of insurrection in the narrow sense of the word. The exact date can only be fixed by the agreement of those who are in contact with the workers and soldiers, with the *masses*.

The point is this : our party has now at the Democratic Conference its *own* congress, and this congress must, whether it wishes to or not, decide the *fate of the revolution*. It is necessary to make clear to the party its task for issuing marching orders for the *armed insurrection* at Petrograd and at Moscow (and in the neighbourhood), the conquest of power and the overthrow of the government. Our party must consider how to accomplish this aim without open proclamation of it in the Press.

Remember, ponder deeply on the words of Marx on insurrection : " Insurrection is an art . . . "

It would be childish on the part of the Bolsheviki to wait for a "formal" majority. Kerensky and his associates, they will not wait but prepare the surrender of Petrograd. It is precisely the pitiable hesitations of the Democratic Conference which should arouse, and will thoroughly arouse the workers of Petrograd and

¹ At that time an offensive of the Germans on Riga and afterwards Petrograd was feared.

² The French military circles equally examined the possibility of a peace at the expense of Russia.

Moscow. History will not forgive us if we do not seize power now.

There is no machinery? There is one; the Soviet and the democratic organisations. *Precisely* now, on the *eve* of the separate peace between the English and Germans, the international situation is in our favour. At this moment to propose peace to the people is to conquer.

Seize power now simultaneously at Moscow and at Petrograd (little matter which begins; perhaps Moscow can do so), we are *certain* of victory.

Marxism and Insurrection

LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC
LABOUR PARTY OF RUSSIA (BOLSHEVIK)

(Written during the Democratic Conference)

ONE of the worst ways of distorting Marxism, and one of those most frequently used to that effect by the leading "Socialist" parties is to represent by methods of opportunist logic preparation for insurrection, and the consideration of insurrection as an art¹ as "Blanquism" pure and simple.

The high priest of opportunism, Bernstein, has already acquired a shameful notoriety by accusing Marx of Blanquism, and no extant opportunist who shrieks "Blanquism!" refreshes or enriches his meagre ideas in any way.

Accuse the Marxists of Blanquism because they consider insurrection an art! Can truth be more disgustingly distorted since in calling insurrection an "art" Marx explains himself in the most precise and categorical manner on this question, he declares that one must *win* an initial victory and then go from success to success without interrupting for an instant the offensive against the enemy, by profiting from his disorder.

In order to be entirely victorious, insurrection must not depend on a conspiracy, or on a party but on a revolutionary class. That is the first point. Insurrection must depend on the revolutionary pressure of all the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must break out at the apogee of the rising revolution, that is at the moment when the activity of the vanguard of the people is greatest, when fluctuations among the enemy and *among the weak and indecisive friends of the revolution are strongest*. That is the third point. It is in bringing these three conditions to the consideration of the question of insurrection that Marxism differs from Blanquism.

But from the moment that these conditions arise, it would be a betrayal of Marxism and the revolution to refuse to consider insurrection as an art. In order to show that the present moment is exactly the one when, by the whole course of events, the party is obliged to recognise that insurrection is the order of the day,

¹ Lenin alludes throughout this letter to a passage in "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany" which is dealt with in detail in the preface to his pamphlet "Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?"

it will be best to employ the comparative method, to set side by side the days of July 3 and 4, and the days of September.

Of July 3 and 4 we may justifiably reason thus : it would be preferable to seize power, for if we refuse to do so that will not prevent our enemies from accusing us of sedition and treating us as rebels. But from this consideration one could not logically argue an obligation to seize power, for the objective conditions of the triumph of insurrection were lacking.

(1) We had not then on our side the class that is the advance guard of the revolution.

We had not then a majority among the workers and soldiers of the capitals. Now we have one in the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow. This majority has been created by the events of July and August, by the repression of the Bolsheviki and by the experience of the Kornilov revolt.

(2) Revolutionary enthusiasm had not yet taken possession of the great mass of the people, now after Kornilov that is an accomplished fact. Events in the provinces, the seizing of power by the Soviets in a number of places prove it incontestably.

(3) There were not then those wide-spread political *fluctuations* among our enemies and among the irresolute petty bourgeoisie; now we are confronted by colossal fluctuations : our chief enemy, allied and world imperialism—for the “ Allies ” are at the head of world imperialism—fluctuates at this moment between war for final victory and a separate peace against Russia. Our petty bourgeois democrats, who have obviously lost the majority among the people, have fluctuated tremendously in holding aloof from the bloc—in other words the coalition with the Cadets.

(4) That is why on July 3 and 4, insurrection would have been a mistake ; neither physically nor politically should we have been able to retain power.

We should not have had the physical force for although Petrograd was from time to time in our hands, our workers and soldiers would not have been willing to fight and die for the possession of the town ; they were not then in their present state of exasperation, they were not boiling over with such a furious hatred against the Kerenskys, the Tseretellis and the Tchernovs ; they were not then tempered by persecutions directed against the Bol-

sheviks with the help of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks.

Politically we should not have been able to retain power on July 3 and 4, for *before the Kornilov adventure*, the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd.

Now the situation is completely changed. We have on our side the majority of the working *class*, of the advance guard of the revolution, of the advance guard of the people, who alone can carry the masses with them.

We have on our side the *majority* of the people, for the resignation of Tchernov is only the clearest and plainest indication among a host of others that the Social Revolutionary bloc (or even the Social Revolutionaries left to themselves) will not give the land to the peasants. But it is here that the root cause of the essentially popular character of the revolution lies.

We have on our side the advantage of the position of our party which among the disordered fluctuations of imperialism and of the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary bloc, alone holds firmly to the path that it has traced out for itself.

We have *certain victory* on our side for the people are almost reduced to despair, and we alone have pointed out to them the real issue by demonstrating the importance of our attitude in the "Kornilov days"; further we proposed a compromise with the members of the bloc, who refused our offer, but who none the less unceasingly continue to be torn asunder by their perpetual hesitations.

It would be a grave error to believe that our proposal of a compromise is not *yet* rejected, that the "Democratic Conference" may *still* accept it. This compromise has been put forward by one party *qua* party to other parties; it could not be put forward in any other way. These parties have rejected it. The Democratic Conference is only a conference and nothing more. It must not be forgotten that it does not represent the *majority* of the revolutionary people, the poorest section of the peasantry, exasperated by the policy of the present government. It is a conference of the minority of the people. This is an obvious truth that must not be lost sight of. We should be making a tremendous mistake, we should be sinking into most hopeless parliamentary imbecility if we behaved towards the Democratic Conference as we should towards parliament, for

even if it proclaimed itself a parliament, and the sovereign parliament of the revolution, it could determine nothing for the supreme decision *does not depend on it*, but on the working class districts of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions of success are present. We have on our side the exceptional advantages of a situation where our victory in the insurrection is the only thing which can put an end to the faltering inaction which maddens the people and which is a real torture to them ; again our victory in the insurrection is the only thing which will make the contrivance of a separate peace against the revolution break down, by means of an open proposal for peace which shall be more complete, more just, and *in favour* of the revolution.

Finally our party alone after gaining victory in the insurrection, will be able to save Petrograd. For if our offer of peace is rejected, and if we fail even to procure an armistice we shall become desperate "defensists," we shall put ourselves at the head of the military parties, we shall become the *most military party* of all, we shall conduct the war in a really revolutionary manner. We shall carry off all the bread and the boots of the capitalists. We shall leave them nothing but crumbs, we shall give them nothing but clogs. All the bread and boots will be needed for the front.

And then we shall be within reach of defending Petrograd victoriously. Russia has still immense material and moral resources for a truly revolutionary war. Further there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. And, to obtain an armistice now is to vanquish the *whole world*.

Firmly convinced that the insurrection of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow is absolutely necessary to save the revolution and to defend Russia from the greed of the imperialists of the two Ententes who are ready to conclude a separate peace in order to divide her land, we must first of all, at the Conference adapt our tactics to the conditions of the rising insurrection and then prove that we accept not in words alone the dictum of Marx on the necessity of considering insurrection as an art.

We must, at the Conference, immediately proceed to the strengthening of the Bolshevik fraction, and for this, we must not seek quantity nor fear to leave the falterers in the camp of the

falterers ; they will be more useful to the cause of the revolution there, than in the camp of the resolute and devoted fighters.

We must compose a short declaration, in which we strongly and sharply emphasize the inopportuneness of long discussions and all discussions in the abstract, the necessity for immediate action for the salvation of the revolution, the absolute necessity of a complete rupture with the bourgeoisie, the dismissal of all the members of the present government, a complete break with the Anglo-French imperialists who are preparing to partition Russia by means of a separate peace, and finally the necessity for the immediate handing over of all the power to the *revolutionary democracy led by the revolutionary proletariat*.¹

In our declaration we must formulate, in a manner as brief as it is vigorous, this conclusion which will remain on our prospective programme ; peace to the peoples ; land to the peasants, confiscation of the scandalous profits of the capitalists, strong measures to curb these latter and to prevent them from continuing to disorganise production.

The briefer and more trenchant the declaration the better. It remains to emphasize again two important points, namely : The people are tortured, reduced to despair by the faltering and indecision of the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks ; we must break definitively with these parties, because they have betrayed the revolution. Secondly, by proposing immediate peace without annexation, by breaking with the allied imperialists and with all the imperialists in general, we shall obtain at once either an armistice or the adoption of the defensive point of view by the revolutionary proletariat, under whose direction the revolutionary democracy will carry on a truly just and revolutionary war.

After having read this declaration, after having demanded a *decision* instead of idle words, *action* instead of written resolutions, we must delegate our fraction to the factories and barracks : its place is there, there lies the nerve centre, the salvation of the revolution, the power behind the Democratic Conference.

There, in ardent and impassioned speeches we must develop and expound our programme and thus formulate the question : either complete acceptance of this programme, or insurrection.

¹ On September 22 Riazanov, in the name of the Bolshevik fraction, made a declaration in this sense at the Conference.

There is no middle course. To wait is impossible. The revolution is in danger.

The question put thus, the whole of our fraction concentrated in the factories and barracks, *we shall be able to judge the moment when insurrection should be begun.*

And to treat the insurrection in the Marxist manner, in other words as an art, we must at the same time, without loss of a minute, organise a general staff for the insurrectionary *cadres*, distribute our forces, concentrate the trustworthy regiments on the most important points, invest the Alexandra Theatre, occupy the Peter and Paul Fortress, arrest the Grand General Staff and the Government, march against the officer-cadets and the "barbarian division."¹ Our *cadres* must be ready to sacrifice themselves to the last man rather than allow the enemy to penetrate into the centres of the town ; we must mobilise the armed workers, summon them to the greatest fight of all, occupy simultaneously the central telegraph office and telephone exchange, instal *our* insurrectionary staff at the central telephone exchange, get telephone connections with all the factories, all the regiments, all the points at which the attacking army displays itself, &c.

All this indeed is only approximate, but I have limited myself to proving that at the present moment, one cannot be faithful to Marxism, to the revolution, *without treating insurrection as an art.*

¹ A division of Kornilov's Cossacks.

The Approaching Catastrophe and How to Avert it¹

(PUBLISHED AT THE END OF OCTOBER, 1917).

I.—*The Approaching Famine*

RUSSIA is menaced by an inevitable catastrophe. The disorganisation of railway transport is unbelievable and grows worse and worse. The train service is ceasing to function. Raw materials and coal for the factories are no longer being transported. Corn will soon cease to arrive. The capitalists sabotage production without abatement, in the hope that the catastrophe that they provoke will involve the burial of the republic, the failure of the democracy of the Soviets and of all the proletarian and peasant organisations in general, and will facilitate the return of the monarchy and the restoration of the omnipotence of the bourgeoisie and the large landed proprietors.

The menace of an unprecedented catastrophe, the threat of famine weighs upon Russia.² For a long time already this alarming situation has been a matter of comment throughout the Press. In an incredible number of resolutions adopted both by the different Parties and by the Soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies it is recognised that the catastrophe is inevitable, that it is imminent, that it is necessary to fight desperately against it, that the people must make "heroic efforts" to avert disaster, &c.

Everyone is speaking of it. Everyone recognises the danger. Everyone is passing resolutions.

And yet nothing is done, absolutely nothing.

Half a year of revolution has gone by. We are now within an ace of catastrophe. The stoppage is beginning to tell. How does it come about that in a country well supplied with cereals and raw materials and lacking manufactured goods, finished products and skilled workers, there arises especially at such a critical moment, a gigantic stoppage? Do we need further facts to demonstrate that, during six months of revolution, our democratic republic with its plethora of Trade Unions, organisations and institutions of all sorts

¹ The pamphlet was written in the first part of September, 1917.

² One knows that even the revolution of February had as its immediate cause, food supply difficulties.

proudly styling themselves "revolutionary democratic" has taken no serious steps to meet disaster and famine? We are rushing to destruction; the war goes on and the disorganisation to which it gives rise in every branch of the national life spreads with ever-increasing rapidity.

And yet, only a little care and reflection are needed to convince us that means exist of combating disaster and famine; that these means are clear, simple, completely attainable and quite within the power of the people, and that if these means are not adopted it is only because their adoption would affect the huge profits of a handful of large landed proprietors and capitalists.

One would be hard put to it to find a single speech, a single newspaper article of no matter what complexion or a resolution of a single gathering or institution of any kind which does not clearly realise the fundamental and essential measure needed to avert disaster and famine. This measure is central inspection, registration, State regulation, reasonable redistribution of labour and the products of labour, the suppression of all waste, economy of the strength and labour of the people. To control, to inspect, to register—these are the ways to fight disaster and famine. No one denies this and everybody recognises it. And it is precisely what *is not being done* for fear of encroaching upon the unlimited power of the large landed proprietors and the capitalists, and upon their unlimited, unheard of and scandalous profits, profits resulting from the high cost of living and military supplies (who does not work directly or indirectly for the war?) profits of which everyone is aware, which everyone can calculate, and which everyone deplures.

And the State is doing absolutely nothing, however half-hearted, to institute control, inspection and registration.

2.—*The Complete Inaction of the Government*

Everywhere there is a systematic and ceaseless sabotage of all control, and of every attempt at the organisation of control by the State. One must be either an extraordinary simpleton or a hypocrite not to understand, or to pretend not to know, the origin of this sabotage and the forces by which it is maintained; for this sabotage by the bankers and capitalists, this

obstruction of all control, inspection and registration, is adapted to the forms of the democratic republic, to the existence of "revolutionary democratic" institutions. The capitalist gentlemen have learnt perfectly this oft-repeated lesson which the partisans of scientific Socialism verbally acknowledge, but which the Mensheviks and S.R.'s have been eager to forget since their friends were installed in the ministerial and secretarial armchairs—this truth, that the economic essence of capitalist exploitation is quite unaffected by the substitution of democratic republican forms for monarchical forms; and that to protect capitalist profits with as much success in a democratic republic as under the autocratic regime, it is only necessary to modify the methods of struggle.

The latest method, the present republican democratic method of sabotaging all control, registration and inspection, is for the capitalists (this goes without saying), and the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, to recognise verbally, without protest, the "principle" and the necessity for control, but to demand its "gradual" application. It is with these seemingly plausible pretexts that the capitalists veil their real activity, which is to make control miscarry, to transform it into a fiction by the creation of a mass of complicated and bureaucratic machinery, dependent upon them, doing nothing and incapable of doing anything.

To make it clear that these are not just airy assertions, we will base our case on the evidence of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s; that is, of the people who have had the majority in the Soviets during the first half-year of the Revolution, who have participated in the "coalition government," and are therefore politically responsible before the workers and peasants for the benevolent neutrality they have observed towards the capitalists, who were occupied in making abortive every attempt at control.

The official organ of the most important of the "plenipotentiary" (don't smile!) organs of the "revolutionary" democracy, the *Isvestia* of the C.E.C. (that is, of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Worker, Soldier and Peasant delegates), published in No. 164, on September 7, a decree of a special institution for dealing with questions of control, an institution created by the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, and entirely in their hands. In this decree, this institution, which is the "Economic Section" of the C.E.C., officially acknowledges *the*

complete inaction of those central organs for the "regulation of economic life" that have been formed around the Government.

Can one imagine a more eloquent testimony to the bankruptcy of the Menshevist and S.R. policy than this, signed as it is by the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s themselves ?

Even under Tsarism the necessity of regulating economic life had been recognised and some institutions had been created for this purpose.¹ But they could not put a stop to the disorganisation, which never ceased to grow and finally reached monstrous proportions. Also from the beginning of the Revolution it was recognised that the first task of a republican revolutionary government was to take decisive measures to put an end to the disorganisation. When the "coalition" Government was formed, with the participation of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, it gave, in its solemn declaration to the whole Russian people on May 6, its formal promise to establish the control and regulation of economic life by the State. The Tseretellis and Tchernovs as well as all the leading Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries swore then with great oaths that they would not only answer for the Government but that the "plenipotentiary organs of the revolutionary democracy," which were in their hands, would effectively supervise the Government and control it.

Four months have rolled by since May 6 : four long months in the course of which Russia has sacrificed hundreds of thousands of soldiers for an absurd imperialist "offensive" ; four months during which disorganisation has not ceased to grow, so that the catastrophe is now imminent ; four months which the hot season allowed us to use for river-transport, for agriculture, mines, &c. ; and after these four months, the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s are compelled to admit officially "the complete inaction" of the institutions for control that were formed around the Government!

And now these same Mensheviks and S.R.'s, with the most serious air, like true statesmen, are going to tell us (we write on the eve of the opening of the Democratic Conference, September 12) that the way to remedy the situation is to replace the coalition with

¹ During the war from 1915 on, there appeared "Special Committees" ; for Defence, controlling metallurgical industries ; for Food Supplies, Transport and Fuel, regulating the corresponding branches. Further, there were functioning central and local bureaux for sugar, leather and flour ; and these can be considered substantially as the forerunners of the Soviet organs of 1918-1921.

the Cadets by the coalition with the big-wigs of commerce and industry, with Riabouchinsky,¹ Boublikov,² Terestchenko³ and Co.

Truly one may demand an explanation of this extraordinary blindness of the Mensheviks and S.R.'s. Must they be considered as inexperienced babes in politics, who do not know what they are doing and are genuinely self-deluded? Or rather is this peculiar political blindness due to their possession of such a wealth of posts as Ministers and Secretaries, governors and commissars and so on . . . ?

3.—*The Measures of Control are known and can be easily carried out*

But, it will be asked, are not the measures of control things exceedingly complicated, difficult, untried and even quite unthought-of? Is not this the reason for the delays of the Government—that the statesmen of the Cadet party, of the commercial and industrial classes, the S.R. and Menshevist parties, have indeed been labouring for six months to discover, investigate and study these measures, but that the problem appears to be a terribly difficult one and not to be so settled so quickly?

Alas! this is how the poor ignorant resigned peasants are put on the wrong scent, as well as the public that does not penetrate to the essence of things and can be made to believe anything. In reality, Tsarism, the *ancien régime* itself, which created the "Committees for the War-Industries,"⁴ knew the fundamental measure, the chief means and essential method of control: the organisation of the population by trades, by branches of industry, &c. But Tsarism was afraid of such organisation and, therefore, restricted it as much as possible, and artificially hindered the application of this known, easy, perfectly practicable method of control.

Crushed by the cost and the scourge of the war, more or less the prey to disorganisation and famine, each of the belligerent

¹ The big industrialist of Moscow who uttered the famous phrase about "strangling the Revolution with the bony hand of famine."

² A railway "expert" and Duma deputy, notorious for having imitated the Lamourette kiss of pretended reconciliation by embracing Tseretelli at the Moscow State Conference in August.

³ A big sugar factor of Kieff, before becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs in the coalition Government.

⁴ Organisations of industrialists formed during the war to regulate the distribution of orders from the State amongst the various enterprises; they were approved by the Duma on August 27, 1915. Their president was Goutchkov, Minister for War after the February Revolution.

States has long since decided upon, experimented with and applied *a whole series* of measures of control which almost all involve the organisation of the population, the creation or encouragement of organisations of various kinds with the participation and supervision of the representatives of the Government. All these measures of control are of public notoriety, they have given rise to a flood of speeches and writings, and the laws on control published by the most advanced belligerent States have been translated into Russian or described in detail in our Press.

If our Government really wished practically and seriously to enforce control—if its institutions were not condemned to “complete inaction” for fear of displeasing the capitalists—the State has nothing more to do than borrow wholesale from the considerable number of measures of control already worked out and tried. The only obstacle in the way—an obstacle that the Cadets, the S.R.’s and the Mensheviks conceal from the eyes of the people—is that this control would expose the unbridled profiteering of the capitalists and would dry it up at the source.

To throw more light on this important question (which is nothing more nor less than the question of the programme of *every* revolutionary government that wants to save Russia from the war and from the famine) we are going to enumerate these chief measures of control and examine them separately.

We shall then see that for State control to be realised in the twinkling of an eye, a government—if it is to be called “revolutionary-democratic” otherwise than in derision—has only to decree, in the very first week of its existence, the application of the essential measures of control, to establish effective sanctions against the capitalists who attempt evasion, and to invite the population itself to supervise them and see to it that they are compelled to carry out the provisions of the law.

Here are the chief of these measures :—

(1) The merging of all banks into one, controlled by the State—the nationalisation of the banks, in other words.

(2) The nationalisation of the trusts; that is to say, of those very important capitalist groupings that exercise a monopoly (sugar, petroleum, coal, metals, &c.).¹

(3) The suppression of business secrecy.

¹ Thus in 1912, the capitalist trust Prodameta sold 75 to 95 per cent. of the iron rails, axles, &c., that were sold in Russia; the trust Prodvagon executed 97 per cent. of the orders distributed in Russia; the same for coal.

(4) The obligation for all industrialists, merchants and employers to group themselves into trusts.

(5) Encouragement or enforcement of the organisation of the population in consumers' societies, under the control of the State.

Let us now see what would be the result of each of these measures, given that they are carried out in a really revolutionary and democratic way.

4.—*The Nationalisation of the Banks*

Everyone knows that the banks are the chief nerve centres of the whole present economic system, under the capitalist regime. To talk about the "regulation of economic life" and to leave out the nationalisation of the banks is either to display the crassest ignorance or to deceive the credulous public with big words and marvellous promises which one has absolutely no intention of keeping.

It is absurd to control and regulate the supply and distribution of cereals or of all products generally, without controlling and regulating the operations of the banks. It is to go hunting for a few doubtful kopeks while neglecting the millions of roubles close at hand. The banks at the present time are so closely connected with commerce (in cereals as in every product) and industry that without taking possession of the banks it is impossible for anything serious, "revolutionary," "democratic," to be done at all.

But is not this seizure of the banks by the State perhaps an extremely difficult and complicated operation? This is what the capitalists and their defenders try in their own interest to make the public believe, so as to frighten it.

In reality the nationalisation of the banks would not take a farthing from anyone, and it presents no technical or moral difficulties whatever; it is prevented only for base motives of personal interest, by a handful of plutocrats gorged with lucre. If the nationalisation of the banks is so often confounded with the confiscation of private property, the fault is with the bourgeois Press whose interest it is that the public should be deceived.

The ownership of the capital with which the banks operate and which is concentrated in these institutions is certified by printed or written slips called shares, bonds, Bills of Exchange, receipts, etc. . . . Not one of these slips is suppressed or altered by the

nationalisation of the banks, by the merging, that is, of all the banks into a single State Bank. Whosoever has fifteen roubles in the Savings Bank retains his fifteen roubles after the nationalisation of the banks ; and whosoever has fifteen millions keeps his fifteen millions also, in the form of shares, bonds, Bills of Exchange, warrants, notes, &c.

What then is the use of nationalising the banks ?

To make control possible. In fact real control of private banks and their operations (even if business secrecy is abolished) is impracticable, for it is absolutely impossible to verify the mechanism of the extremely complex, subtle and artificial procedure employed in the preparation of balance-sheets, in the founding of fictitious enterprises and branch banks and in the use of men of straw, &c.... Only the merging of all banks in one—in no way modifying property relationships by this step and taking away from no one, we repeat, the tiniest portion of his property—makes effective control *possible*—on condition, of course, that all the other measures indicated above are put into force.

It is only by means of the nationalisation of the banks that the State will be able to find out whence come the millions and the milliards, where they go to and which way they pass. And only the control of the banks, on which the whole of capitalist circulation is pivoted, will allow us to realise, in fact and not in words merely, the control of the whole of economic life, of the production and distribution of the most important products, and so to organise “ the regularisation of economic life ” which otherwise will remain a mere ministerial phrase, only useful to dupe the people. Only the control of banking operations, conditioned as it is by their being concentrated in a single State Bank, will enable us, by using it to prevent any concealment of income and with the help of easily applied supplementary measures, to make effective the collection of the income-tax which at the present time, thanks to the possibility of concealing income, is no more than a fiction.

It would be enough to decree the nationalisation of the banks ; the directors and officials themselves would be responsible for carrying it out. The State needs no special machinery, no special preparatory measures : nationalisation can be realised by decree, “ at one stroke.” The economic possibility of this measure has been created just by capitalism, which has put property into the form of

Bills of Exchange, shares, bonds, &c. . . . It only remains to *unify the book-keeping* ; and if a revolutionary democratic State were to command the immediate convocation of assemblies (in every town) and congresses (in every province and for the whole country) of directors and officials for the purpose of immediately merging all the banks into one State Bank, this reform could be accomplished in a few weeks. It goes without saying that the directors and higher officials would offer resistance and would attempt to deceive the State and cause delay, for these gentlemen would see themselves being deprived of their sinecures and would lose the opportunity for all sorts of specially profitable shady operations ; for this reason, and only this, they would sabotage the measure.

But the fusion of the banks does not present the slightest technical difficulty ; and a power which was revolutionary in more than words (that is to say, which would not be afraid to break away from inertia and routine) and democratic not in phrases only (which would act, that is, in the interests of the majority of the people and not of a handful of plutocrats)—such a power could realise this measure in the twinkling of an eye if it decreed that directors, administrators and big shareholders who tried to protract the business and to conceal documents and abstracts of accounts should be imprisoned and their property confiscated.

Nationalisation would have immense advantages, not so much for the workers (who rarely do business at a bank) as for the mass of peasants and small industrialists. It would mean a colossal saving in labour ; and supposing that the State kept the same number of officials as there were before, it would result in a much larger number of people making use of the services of the banks, which could increase their branches, extend their operations, and make them more accessible to the mass of the public. Small proprietors and the peasants would have a better chance of obtaining credit. As for the State, it would be able, first, to have *knowledge* of all the big financial operations and to obtain an exact record of them ; and then to *regulate* economic life ; and finally in the big operations it undertakes itself the State would save millions and milliards by not having to pay fabulous “ commissions ” to the capitalists. It is because of this, and this alone, that all the capitalists, all the bourgeois economists, all the bourgeoisie and its valets, Plekhanov, Potressov and Co., are ready to fight furiously

against nationalisation of the banks, to invent thousands of pretexts and bad arguments against this urgent and all-important measure ; although *even* from the point of view of " national defence," that is from the military point of view, it would bring immense advantages and would increase the " military strength " of Russia.

But, it will be objected, why do such advanced States as Germany and the U.S.A. regulate their economic life quite well without ever dreaming of nationalising the banks ?

Because these States, whether they be monarchical or republican are not merely capitalist, but also imperialist. As such, they carry through the necessary transformations in the reactionary bureaucratic way, and what we have in mind here is the revolutionary democratic way.

This " slight difference " is of primary importance. The words " democratic revolutionary " have almost become conventional expressions amongst us (particularly amongst the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks), just like the expression " Thank God ! " that is used very often by people who are not so ignorant as to believe in a God ; or like the phrase " honourable citizen " that is sometimes used in addressing contributors to *Den* and *Edinstvo*, although almost everyone knows that these periodicals were founded and are maintained by capitalists in the interests of capitalism and that it is far from being honourable for Socialists to contribute to these organs.

So it is we use the words " revolutionary democratic " as a conventional expression, a *cliche* ; but if we *reflect* upon their meaning we see that to be democratic is to take into consideration the interests of the majority of the people and not of the minority, and that to be revolutionary is to crush pitilessly all that is harmful, all that has had its day.

No more in America than in Germany does the government and the ruling class lay claim, I am sure, to the title " revolutionary democratic," which our Mensheviks and S.R.'s have given themselves (and have prostituted).

In Germany there exist only four big private banks of national importance ; in America only two. It is easier, more convenient and profitable for the lords of these banks to organise amongst themselves, secretly, in the reactionary and not the revolutionary manner,

bureaucratically and not democratically by bribing State officials (the general rule in America and Germany), by keeping up the private character of the banks for the single purpose of maintaining the secrecy of their operations, so as to take millions upon millions of "surplus-value" from the State and guarantee the possibility of shady financial combinations.

America as well as Germany "regularises" its economic life in such a way as to make life a *military prison* for the workers (in part for the peasants), and a paradise for the bankers and capitalists. Their "regularisation" consists in leading the workers to hard labour and to . . . famine, and in guaranteeing to the capitalists (secretly, reactionarily and bureaucratically) profits even more gigantic than they made before the war.

Such a kind of "regularisation" is also perfectly possible in republican-imperialist Russia: moreover it is practised here at this very moment, not only by the Miliukovs and the Chingarevs, but by Kerensky himself, with the help of Terestchenko, Nekrassov, Bernatsky, Prokopovitch¹ and Co., who defend, by their reactionary bureaucratic and bourgeois conduct, the "inviolability" of the banks and their sacred right to make the most monstrous profits. Let us speak the plain *truth*: in republican Russia there are people who want to "regularise" economic life by reactionary and bureaucratic methods, but who are prevented sometimes by the "Soviets" which have not succeeded in wiping out the first Kornilov but will spare no effort to smash another Kornilov.

That is the truth. And this simple and bitter truth is more useful for the education of the people than the lies with which it is deceived about "our great revolutionary democracy."

The nationalisation of the banks would facilitate considerably the nationalisation of insurance; that is to say, the merging of all insurance companies into a single one which would centralise their operations and would be controlled by the State. Here again, if the democratic-revolutionary State were to decree the fusion and order the directors, officials and big shareholders to proceed without delay, on their own personal responsibility, to carry it out, the congresses of officials would accomplish it at once and without the

¹ Chingarev—Minister of Finance in the first coalition ministry, after Terestchenko: Bernatsky—Minister of Finance, and Prokopovitch—Minister for Food Supplies, in Kerensky's last ministry.

slightest difficulty. Hundreds of millions are invested in insurance by the capitalists and all the work is done by the employees. The fusion would lead to the lowering of the premium for insurance and would give a host of advantages and benefits to all the insured, whose number could be considerably increased without increasing the outlay of forces and resources at all. There is absolutely nothing—except the inertia, routine and cupidity of a handful of people occupying comfortable sinecures—to prevent the realisation of this reform, which would increase, moreover, the country's "capacity for defence" by economising the labour of the population and by opening out the widest possibilities for effective and not merely verbal "regularisation" of economic life.

5.—*Nationalisation of the Trusts*

Capitalism is distinguished from economic systems which have preceded it by the alliance and close interdependence which it has established between its different branches, and without which, it may be said in passing, no progress would be technically possible. Thanks in large part to the domination of the banks over production, contemporary capitalism has carried to its highest point this interdependence of the different branches of the economic system.

The banks and the most important branches of industry and commerce are in indissoluble alliance. The result of this is that on the one hand nationalisation of the banks implies necessarily the monopolisation by the State, and so nationalisation of the syndicates (rings and trusts), both commercial and industrial (sugar, coal, iron, petroleum trusts, &c.): on the other hand that the regularisation of economic life has for a *sine qua non* condition the simultaneous nationalisation of the banks and trusts.

Let us take for example the sugar trust. Formed under Tsarist rule, it developed into a gigantic capitalist union of magnificently equipped mills and factories; a union which, needless to say, was thoroughly impregnated with a reactionary and bureaucratic spirit, which secured scandalous profits on its capital and reduced workers and employees to a veritable slavery. The government then controlled and regulated production in favour of the capitalist magnates.

In this branch, all that remains to be done is to transform the reactionary bureaucratic organisation into a democratic revolutionary

organisation by simple decrees requiring the convocation of congresses of employee, engineers directors, and shareholders, the establishment of uniform book-keeping, the registration of workers' associations, &c. There is the simplest thing in the world, and yet it is not done! In our democratic republic, the organisation of the sugar industry remains bureaucratic and reactionary ; it is the same exploitation of work, the same routine and the same stagnation, the same enriching of the Brobinskys¹ and Terechtchenkos as under Tsarism. Invite the democracy and not the bureaucracy, the workers and the employees and not the " sugar kings," to display their initiative, that is what could and ought to be done in a few days, at a single stroke, if the S.R.'s and Mensheviks did not cloud the public conscience by plans of " coalition " precisely with these sugar kings, a coalition which renders inevitable the complete inaction of the government in the organisation of economic life.²

Take the case of the oil industry. It is already nationalised on a vast scale (to a certain degree), by the development of capitalism. Two oil-kings, commanding millions and hundreds of millions, have only to tear off their dividend coupons to receive fabulous profits from their enterprise which is already technically and socially organised, and efficiently run, by hundreds and thousands of clerks and engineers, &c. . . . The nationalisation of the oil industry can be accomplished at one stroke: and it is obligatory upon a revolutionary democratic state, particularly when that State is passing through a frightful crisis and ought, at whatever cost, to economise the labour of the people and increase the output of fuel. Bureaucratic control, obviously, will yield no result in this case ; it will change absolutely nothing: for the oil-kings will manipulate the Teretchenkos, the Kerenskys, the Avxentiev and the Skobelevs, as easily as they did the Tsarist ministers—making use for this purpose of delays, false statements, and direct or indirect corruption of the bourgeois Press (that is, the " public opinion " for which the Kerenskys and Avxentiev have such high esteem), as well as of the officials, whom Kerensky and Avxentiev have left at their posts in the old but still intact State apparatus.

¹ A landowner and sugar manufacturer of the province of Kiev.

² These lines were already written when I read in the newspapers that the Kerensky government had instituted a sugar monopoly, and had instituted it, naturally, in a bureaucratic and reactionary fashion, without a workers' congress, without publicity, and without any check on capitalist avidity.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

If anything serious is to be done, we must pass—and pass in a revolutionary manner—from bureaucracy to democracy: that is, we must declare war on the “kings” and shareholders of the oil industry; they must be punished with confiscation of goods and with imprisonment if they try to delay nationalisation, make false statements of their income or of the accounts of their enterprises, if they sabotage production or refuse to take measures for increasing output. It is necessary to appeal directly to the initiative of the workers and clerks, to summon congresses of them at once, and offer them a definite percentage of the profits on condition that they exercise complete control and increase the output. If revolutionary democratic measures of this kind had been carried out from April, 1917, Russia, which is one of the world’s richest oil-producing areas, could have taken advantage of river transport during the summer, to ensure a sufficient supply of fuel.

The bourgeois Government and the coalition Government (of the S.R.’s, the Mensheviks and the Cadets) have done absolutely nothing. They have carried out only a few purely bureaucratic reforms. They have not dared to take a single really revolutionary measure. Everything is as it was—there are the oil-kings still, the same rule-of-thumb methods in production, the same enmity towards the workers and the clerks; and in consequence there is the same disorganisation, the same plundering of labour, as there was under Tsarism. Nothing has been altered except the headings on the newspaper of these “republican” chancelleries.

In the coal industry—no less technically and morally “ready” for nationalisation, and no less impudently controlled by the coal kings—we meet with the *fact* of direct sabotage, destruction or suspension of production. Even the Menshevik organ, the *Rabotchaia Gazeta*, has had to recognise these facts: yet absolutely nothing has been done—apart from setting up reactionary bureaucratic commissions where the brigands who control the coal trust have as many representatives as the workers.

No revolutionary democratic measure has been taken; there has not been the slightest attempt to establish the one real control—*control from below*, by the association of workers and clerks, wielding Terror against the industrial magnates who are holding up production and are leading the country to ruin. All the present rulers are in favour of coalition: if not with the Cadets, at least with commer-

cial and industrial circles. Coalition demands that the power of the capitalist be left untouched ; that they be left unpunished ; that they be allowed to restrict production and to blame the workers for it, to increase the disorganisation and so pave the way for a new Kornilovist insurrection.

6.—*The Suppression of Business Secrecy*

Without the abolition of business secrecy, control of production and distribution is either a meaningless phrase which the Cadets use to dupe the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks, and the latter to dupe the working classes; or it is something that can only be carried out by reactionary and bureaucratic means. Although this is evident to any unprejudiced man, although the *Pravda* has insistently demanded the suppression of business secrecy (and has itself been suppressed, largely because of this, by the Kerensky Government that is always eager to please the capitalists) our republican government has not thought—no more than have the “organs of the revolutionary democracy”—of this *primary means* of control.

Here in fact is the key to all control. Here is the most sensitive spot of the Capital that plunders the people and sabotages production. Precisely for that reason the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks are afraid to touch it.

The usual argument of the capitalist, repeated thoughtlessly by the petite bourgeoisie, is that capitalist economy absolutely forbids the abolition of business secrecy, because private property in the means of production and the capitalist's individual relation to the market demand that business ledgers be “inviolable” and, consequently, that banking operations be kept secret.

Persons who use these and similar arguments have let themselves be deceived and in turn they deceive the people: for they refuse to see two cardinal and notorious facts in the economic life of to-day. The first is the existence of big capitalism ; that is, the organisation *sui generis* of banks and trusts and huge factories, &c. . . . The second is the war.

It is just big capitalism of to-day that deprives business secrecy of the right to exist ; that makes business secrecy nothing but hypocrisy—a means of concealing the financial combinations and the monstrous profits of big capital. Big-capitalist economy is, by

its very nature, a collective economy: it works for millions of men ; by its operations it binds together directly or indirectly hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of families.

It's a far cry from this economy to that of the small artisan or middle peasant, who usually keep no accounts and are therefore not affected by the suppression of business secrecy.

Moreover, the operations of big capitalism are known to hundreds of people and even more. In actual fact the law which protects business secrecy serves, not the needs of production or exchange, but speculation and the most brutal form of profit-making, the direct swindling that, as is well known, is particularly widespread in joint stock companies but is cleverly concealed by such manipulation of reports and balance-sheets as dupes the public.

If business secrecy is indispensable in petty economy, for the small peasants and artisans among whom production is not collective but scattered and separate: in the big capitalist economy the preservation of business secrecy means the maintenance of the privileges and profits of a handful of people *against the interests* of the whole people. This has already been partially recognised by the law for the publication of the balance-sheets of joint-stock companies: but the control which is in existence in Russia as in all the advanced countries, is just that reactionary bureaucratic control which does not open the eyes of the people and does not *allow* the *whole truth* to be known concerning the operations of the joint stock companies.

To act in a revolutionary and democratic manner it is necessary at once to decree a new law abolishing business secrecy, exacting complete statements from the big firms, and conferring on every group of citizens that reaches a certain size (*e.g.*, 1,000 or 10,000 electors) the right to examine *all* the documents and books of any enterprise whatever. A simple decree is enough to realise such a measure easily and completely: *only*, it would give free play to popular initiation of control by the black-coat unions, the trade unions, and all the political parties ; it would make control effective and democratic.

As we have said, the second fact that is forgotten is the war. The great majority of commercial and industrial undertakings work no longer for the free market but for the *State*, for the war. I have already written in *Pravda* that people who bring against us, in this

connection, the objection that it is impossible to establish Socialism are shameless liars : what we have to do, I repeat, is not establish Socialism in a day, but *expose the theft of public money*.

The capitalist economy which works "for the war" and is directly or indirectly connected with the war supplies on which the capitalists make hundreds of millions of profit, is protected by the Cadets, just as it is also by the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s who oppose the suppression of business secrecy ; who are therefore no more nor less than the *accomplices* of those who steal the public money.

The war now costs Russia fifty millions a day, and most of this is for military supplies. Of these fifty millions, five millions at least and probably ten and more represent the "legitimate profits" of the capitalists and of the officials with whom the former are more or less directly connected. The big firms and the important banks which finance the transactions in war supplies pocket enormous sums—speculating on the suffering of war, profiting by the death of hundreds of thousands and millions of men, in order to plunder the Treasury.

These scandalous profits on munitions, these "securities" faked by the banks, the names of those who are enriching themselves out of the rise in the cost of living—these are publicly notorious. In "Society" everyone talks about it with a smile on the lips. The bourgeois Press itself, whose principle it is to ignore unpleasant facts and evade "delicate" questions, nevertheless provides us with a certain amount of precise information. Everyone knows these things: yet nothing is done, all is tolerated, and a government which is able only to indulge in fine phrases about "control" and "regulations" still finds support.

If the revolutionary democrats really were revolutionaries and democrats, they would at once have published a law to suppress business secrecy ; compel the merchants and war-contractors to hand over their accounts ; forbid them to abandon their class of occupation without authority ; punish them with confiscation of goods for concealing their profits and deceiving the people ; organise the inspection *from below*, democratically, by the whole people itself, by the associations of clerks, workers, consumers, &c. . .

Our S.R.'s and Mensheviks are quite rightly dubbed "frightened democrats" ; for in reality they only repeat what all the

frightened petty bourgeois say : that the capitalist will " run away " if " too vigorous " measures are taken, that without them " we " cannot manage things, that the Anglo-French millionaires who " sustain " us will be " offended," &c. . . . One would believe, listening to these fellows, that the Bolsheviks propose something which has never yet been seen in history, which has never been tried—a pure Utopia: although in France, 150 years ago, men who were really " revolutionary democrats," who were really convinced of the just, defensive character of the war which they were waging, and whose power truly rested on the popular masses, were able to set up a *revolutionary* control over the rich and get results which compelled the admiration of the whole world.

Now, during the 150 years which have rolled away since then, the development of capitalism by the creation of banks and trusts and railroads has simplified and facilitated, to an indefinite extent, the means of real democratic control on the part of the workers and peasants, over the exploiters and the capitalists.

At bottom, the question of control is really the question: Who is it that exercises control: that is to say, what class controls and what class is controlled? Amongst us in republican Russia, it is the big landowners and the capitalists who have continued so far, with the connivance of the " competent organs " of the so-called revolutionary democracy, to play the part of the controllers.

The inevitable outcome is the capitalist venality which provokes general indignation amongst the people, as much as the disorganisation which the capitalists have artificially created.

It is necessary revolutionarily, unequivocally and fearlessly to break with the past and build up the structure of the future ; to put into effect the control of the workers and peasants over the big landowners and the capitalists. It is of *this* that our S.R.'s and Mensheviks are most afraid.

8.—*Compulsory Grouping into Trusts*

In Germany the compulsory grouping into associations—of the industrialists, for instance—has long since been effected. There is nothing new in it. The S.R.'s and the Mensheviks are to be blamed for the complete stagnation which, in this matter as in others, prevails in republican Russia where we see these not too honourable parties in close embrace with the Cadets or the

Boublikovs, or, for that matter, with the Teretchenkos and the Kerenskys.

The compulsory grouping into associations will on the one hand accelerate capitalist development which leads everywhere and always to the organisation of the class struggle, to the increase in the number, the variety and the importance of the Trusts. On the other hand, it is the indispensable preliminary condition for even the least serious control, and for all economy of national effort.

The German law, for example, compels the master tanners in a locality, or in a whole state, to join an association in the management of which a representative of the government participates, so as to control it. Of itself this law does not affect the property regime at all; it does not take a centime from anybody and does not determine in what spirit, reactionary and bureaucratic or revolutionary and democratic, control will be carried out. Such laws can and ought to be promulgated in Russia without a moment's delay; social circumstances can be left to determine, according to the needs of the situation, the forms of rapid application and the methods of controlling their application, etc. . . . The government needs no special machinery, no preliminary investigation, no preparatory work for the promulgation of these laws. All it requires is the firm decision to break with the private interests of a few capitalists who are not "accustomed" to such interference in their affairs and who do not want to lose the monstrous profits which are guaranteed to them by the absence of all control and by the running of their businesses on the old lines.

There is no need for any machinery, for any system of statistics (like that which Tchernov wishes to substitute for the revolutionary initiative of the worker and peasant masses) in order to promulgate this law; for the application of it ought to be entrusted to *existing* social forces, to the industrialists themselves, under compulsory control of the "lower classes"—of the oppressed and exploited classes who have always been, as history shows, infinitely superior to the exploiters in heroism, spirit of sacrifice and fraternal discipline.

If we had a really democratic and revolutionary government, it would decree that the manufacturers and industrialists in every branch, employing, let us say, at least two workers each, are obliged to group themselves immediately into districts and provincial associations. The responsibility for the complete execution of the law

will fall in the first place on the manufacturers, the directors of the undertakings, the members of the boards of management, the big shareholders (for these are the real captains of modern industry, the real masters), and these would be considered deserters and punished as such if they refused to co-operate in putting the law into immediate operation: and they would be collectively responsible up to the full extent of the value of their property. The responsibility would fall finally on the general body of clerks who would also be obliged to form a single association, and on the workers, all organised in their trade union. The object of compulsory organisation would be to establish a complete, rigorous and detailed system of book-keeping, and above all to *centralise* the operations of buying raw materials and selling manufactured products, as well as to *economise* resources and the energies of the people. This economy would, thanks to the merging of isolated enterprises into one Trust, attain gigantic proportions, as political economy teaches us, and as the example of all trusts, syndicates and cartels proves.

Besides, we must repeat, this grouping into a trust in no way changes the system of property. That fact should be specially emphasised, for the bourgeois Press does not cease to "frighten" the small and middle employers by representing that Socialists in general, and the Bolsheviki in particular, want to "expropriate" them: that is a lie; for the Socialist, even in case of a *completely Socialist* revolution, does not want to expropriate the poor peasants, they cannot and will not expropriate them.

We are speaking *solely* of the indispensable and urgent measures that have already been realised in the West and which even the least consistent democratic government must apply if it is going to avert the approaching catastrophe.

The organisation into associations of the small employers would meet with considerable difficulties of a technical and cultural nature. But it is just these enterprises that could be excluded from the operation of the law (as we pointed out in the example given above) without being a serious obstacle, in spite of that, to the operation of the law; for although they may be excessively numerous they are responsible for only a very tiny fraction of the general mass of production; besides they are often dependent, directly or indirectly, on the big enterprises.

Only the latter are of decisive importance, and so far as they

are concerned, the technical and intellectual conditions for their grouping already exists. Nothing is wanting except a firm and resolute revolutionary initiative, ruthless against the exploiters.

The poorer a country is in technicians and intellectuals, the more necessary and urgent it is to decree the compulsory fusion and to begin to apply it to the big enterprises; for it is just this fusion that will economise intellectual forces, by enabling them to be utilised to the full and rationally distributed. If it was possible for the Russian peasants to create all sorts of organisations in their villages after 1905, in spite of the innumerable obstacles created by the Tsarist regime: surely the fusion of the enterprises of big and middle industry and commerce can be brought about in a few months or even sooner, if it is commanded and compelled by a truly revolutionary and democratic government supported by the participation and interest of the "lower classes" of the democracy—that is, of the black-coats and the workers, to whom it would entrust the exercise of control.

8.—*Regulation of Food Supplies.*

The war obliged all the belligerent States and a certain number of neutral States to have recourse to the regulation of food supplies. The bread ticket made its appearance, became customary, and other kinds of tickets followed in its train. Russia also was forced to adopt it.

Better than any other example, this system allows us to compare bureaucratic and reactionary methods, which tend to limit economic and social transformations to a minimum, with revolutionary and democratic methods, which deserve this name only if their direct object is to break violently with the old circumscribed system, and to hasten as much as possible the movement of progress.

The bread ticket, which is the chief specimen of the regulation of food supplies (consumption) in contemporary capitalist states, has as its object (an object rarely attained) to share out the existing quantity of bread in such a way as to allow some to all. The maximum of consumption is far from being established for all products. It is only so for the chief—that is all. No attempt is made to go any farther. The proceeding is to gather statistics, by bureaucratic methods, of the existing stocks of bread; to divide the figures so obtained by the number of inhabitants; to fix a standard of con-

sumption ; to make it compulsory ; and there to stop. Objects of luxury are not touched, for they are so dear that they are inaccessible to " the people."

That is why in all the belligerent countries, without exception, even in Germany, where the regulation of consumption is, without doubt, most careful, most vigorous and the least slipshod, you can see the rich continually avoiding the " rations." Of that everyone is aware, and of that everyone speaks with a smile on the lips: in the Socialist Press and also everywhere in the bourgeois Press, notes on the " menu " of the rich are to be seen, in spite of the rigour of the censor. In such and such a health resort, they receive white bread in quantity (these resorts are frequented by those who have the means, on the pretext of illness): they consume, instead of the simple products of the people, the most rare, the most " recherché " and the dearest of commodities.

A reactionary Capitalist State, which dreads the sapping of the foundations of Capitalism, the foundations of salaried slavery, the foundations of the economic domination of the rich, which fears the development of initiative on the part of the artisans and the workers in general; which is afraid of their covetousness flaring up and of their demands increasing, only needs to introduce the bread ticket. It loses sight not for one instant of its reactionary aims: to fortify capitalism, not to let it be undermined ; to limit as much as possible the " regulation of economic life " in general, and of consumption in particular, only to take absolutely indispensable measures to make sure of the subsistence of the people, and to keep well on guard against really regulating consumption by exercising a control over the rich, by imposing on the rich, placed as they are, in the most comfortable circumstances, privileged and overfed in times of peace, greater burdens in time of war.

In every country, we repeat, even in Germany, and most clearly in Russia, there exist a whole lot of methods of avoiding the law: the people tighten up their belts, and the rich strut in the health resorts, supplementing the meagre pittance, called " national allowance," by every kind of means, and do not in any way allow themselves to be controlled.

In Russia, which has just effected its revolution against Tsarism in the name of liberty and equality ; in Russia, which has just in one blow become a democratic republic, what comes immediately

under one's notice, what particularly excites the discontent, irritation, indignation and fury of the masses, is the ease with which the rich evade the discipline of the bread-rationing. Nothing is more easy than for them to avoid the law. Secretly, and at particularly high prices, especially when one has "connections" (and only the rich have "connections"), one can find everything and in great quantity. The people suffer from hunger. The regulation of the food supply is confined within the strictest limits—limits most bureaucratically reactionary. The government is not in the least occupied with establishing this regulation on a truly democratic and revolutionary basis.

Everyone lines up in a queue before the shops, except the rich, who send their servants to line up for them, and often engage a special servant for this one purpose. After that, we talk of democracy!

A truly revolutionary and democratic policy, in the face of the unheard-of plight of the nation, would not limit itself to instituting bread-rationing cards in its struggle against the approaching catastrophe: it would, to begin with, decree the compulsory grouping of all the population into "social units of consumption," for without that it is impossible to obtain any control over consumption: in the second place, obligation to work for the rich, who should be compelled to give their services free in such societies, as secretaries or in some other employment: in the third place, the equal distribution of commodities amongst the people, so as to divide in an equitable manner the burdens of the war: in the fourth place, an organisation of control by means of which the control of consumption by the rich should be carried out by the poor.

A real democracy in this sphere of activity, a real revolution in the organisation of control by the least fortunate classes, would powerfully encourage the application of all the intellectual forces and the development of the revolutionary energies of the people.

Now, however, the ministers of Russia, republican and democratic-revolutionary, just like their brothers in the other imperialist countries, keep on uttering mere phrases about the "universal obligation to work," or "the application of all energies," but the people see and feel and testify to the hypocrisy beneath these words. The result is that there is no progress, and disorganisation is growing at an incredible speed, the catastrophe is approaching, for our

government cannot institute a military prison for the workers, in the manner of Kornilov, Hindenburg and the imperialists in general: the traditions, the memories, the times, the habits and the institutions of the revolution are still too fresh in the minds of the people. But it is no longer possible to take serious measures in the democratic-revolutionary path, for it is impregnated to the very marrow with the bourgeois spirit, and it is bound by its coalition with the bourgeoisie on whom it is dependent with a whole mass of agreements and whose privileges it dare not touch.

9.—*The Government's Destruction of the Work of Democratic Organisations*

We have examined the different methods and means by which a struggle is made against the catastrophe of famine. We have seen everywhere the flagrant contradiction which appears between democracy and the government by the S.R. and Menshevik *bloc*, which supports it. To prove that this contradiction does not exist only in our imagination and that the demonstration that it is incapable of solution lies in the fact that the conflicts which are its results have a material significance, it is enough to recall two typical "schedules," two characteristic lessons of our half-year of revolution:

The History of the "Reign" of Polchinsky¹ is the first lesson.

The second is the History of the "Reign" and the fall of Piecheckonov.

Fundamentally, the measures against the catastrophe and the famine, which we have described above, are intended to encourage by every means (even to the point of constraint) the grouping together of the people, and above all of the oppressed classes, the workers and the peasants, and particularly the poor peasants. And it is in this way that the people have agreed, spontaneously, to struggle against the burdens and the unheard-of scourges of the war. Tsarism thwarted by every means in its power the spontaneous association of the people. After its fall a multitude of democratic organisations arose and developed rapidly throughout Russia. The struggle against the catastrophe was carried on by democratic organisations, created spontaneously by the people, by all sorts of

¹Engineer and Man of Affairs, attached to the Ministry of Commerce, under Kerensky, he favoured the "sabotage" of the industrials.

committees whose business was revictualling and the provision of the necessaries of life, fuel, &c.

What is more remarkable is that, during the six months of revolution, our government, which calls itself both republican and revolutionary, our government, which the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s support, has, under the name of "plenipotentiary organs of the revolutionary democracy," *fought with great bitterness against democratic organisations and has just succeeded in triumphing over them.*

Polchinsky has acquired a wretched notoriety in this struggle. He has acted behind the back of the government, without openly interfering (just like the "Cadets," who put the name of Tseretelli in front "for the people" and themselves silently carried out all affairs of importance). Polchinsky has effected the miscarriage of all the serious measures of the democratic organisations, created spontaneously by the people, for no serious measures could fail to do injury to the monstrous profits and to the aggrandisement of the sharks of commerce and of industry. Now, Polchinsky was and still is the defender and the faithful servant of these sharks. He has succeeded in annulling quite simply the decisions of these democratic organisations (a fact published in the newspapers)!

All the "reign" of Polchinsky, which has lasted several months (precisely those during which Tseretelli, Skobelev and Tchernov were ministers), is nothing but an abominable scandal, a complete denial of the will of the people, of the decisions of democracy, done to please the capitalists, to satisfy their base cupidity. The newspapers, naturally enough, have only published a very small part of the exploits of Polchinsky, and it is only when it has acquired power, and when it denounces Polchinsky and his fellows in the tribunals, that a truly democratic government will be able to make a complete inquiry into all the means employed by Polchinsky to hinder the struggle against the famine.

We shall be told that Polchinsky was an exception and that, besides, he is now deprived of power. The unfortunate part of it is that Polchinsky is not an exception, but he is the rule and his dismissal has not made things any better. His place has been filled by others of his own kind, who have left untouched the influence of the capitalists and have continued the policy of their predecessor in favour of them—a decision which tends neither more nor less than to destroy the efficacy of any struggle whatever against the

famine, for Kerensky and his acolytes are only a bulwark for the defence of capitalist interests.

The clearest proof of this is shown by the dismissal of Piecheckonov, Minister of Food. Piecheckonov, we know, is one of the most moderate of democrats. But, in the organisation for feeding the people, he wished to work conscientiously in strict combination with the democratic organisations. And nevertheless, it is a fact most highly significant, that this ultra-moderate "populist," this member of the socialist popular party, ready to make every compromise with the bourgeoisie, has had to give up his post. For, to please the capitalists, the Kerensky government has doubled the retail price of cereals.

This is how, in the edition of September 2 of the *Svobodnaia Zizn*, M. Smith gives approval of this step :—

"Some days before the taxes were increased, the following scene took place at a meeting of the All-Russia Food Committee. The representative of the Right, Rokhovitch, a bitter defender of the rights of private trading and an intractable enemy of the monopoly of cereals and of State interference in the economic life of the people, declared with a triumphant smile that, in accordance with his recommendations, the taxes on corn were immediately to be raised.

"The representative of the Soviet of the workers and soldiers declared then that, as far as he knew, there could be no question of such a measure as long as the revolution lasted ; and that in any case the government had no power without consulting the competent organs of democracy, the Economic Council and the All-Russia Food Committee. The representative of the Soviet of peasant deputies associated himself with this declaration.

"But, alas ! the facts gave them a flat contradiction : it was the representative of the sections of qualified electors and not those of the democracy who turned out to be right. He was perfectly informed about the attack which was being launched against the rights of democracy when our representatives indignantly repelled the very idea of it."

And so the workers' and the peasants' representatives clearly declare their opinion in the name of the immense majority of the people and the Kerensky government does exactly opposite to what they demand, obviously to please the capitalists.

Rokhovitch, the representative of the capitalists, has shown himself, so we see, better informed than the representatives of democracy. It is worthy of notice that it is always the bourgeois newspapers, the *Reitch* and the *Birjovka*, which have the best information on what is being done by the Kerensky government.

What remains to be said? The position is clear: the capitalists have entrance into the government and in fact exercise the power. Kerensky is only their hack, whom they order about when and how they please. The interests of the tens of millions of workers and of peasants are sacrificed to a handful of the rich.

How do our S.R.'s and Mensheviks justify this abominable violation of the people's rights? Perhaps they have addressed an appeal to the workers and the peasants declaring before all Russia that after such a scandal the place for Kerensky and his colleagues is no longer in the government, but in prison?

Not on your life! the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks, in the person of their "economic section," have merely limited themselves to adopting the threatening resolution mentioned above. They declared there that the rise in the price of cereals effected by the Kerensky government is a "fatal measure striking the most deadly blow at the measures for feeding the people as well as to economic life," and that the putting into force of this fatal measure is a direct violation of the law.

Such are the results of this policy of conciliation and compromise.

The government has violated the law to please the rich, the great landed proprietors and the capitalists, by taking a measure which ruins control, disorganises the machinery of feeding the people and wholly prevents the recovery of our financial stability: and the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks continue to extol their agreement with the commercial and the industrial classes, to hold conferences with Terechtchenko, to treat Kerensky gently, and they are content merely with writing a resolution of protest which the government coolly tosses into the waste-paper basket.

It can easily be made as clear as daylight that the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks have betrayed the people and the revolution, and that it is the Bolsheviks who are really the leaders of the masses, even of the S.R. and Menshevist masses. Only the acquisition of power by the proletariat, directed by the Bolshevik party, will make it possible

to put an end to the scandalous state of affairs created by Kerensky and his consorts and to restore the work of democratic food organisations which Kerensky and his government have thwarted. Only the Bolsheviks interfere as true defenders of the national organisation for the distribution of food ; only they truly represent the workers and the peasants in the face of the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks, whose policy, vacillating, irresolute and treacherous, has led the country to such a pass as that of the rise in the price of cereals.

10.—*The Financial Crash and the Means of Preventing It*

There is another aspect of this question of the increase in the retail price of cereals. This increase brings in its train fresh issues of paper money, and consequently a new epidemic of high prices and an aggravation of the financial chaos, leading us straight to bankruptcy. Everyone knows that inflation is the worst form of forced loan, that it especially aggravates the condition of the workers, of the poorer classes of the population, and that it is the principal obstacle in the way of financial recovery.

And the Kerensky government, supported by the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks, has recourse to this measure.

To make a serious attempt to combat financial disorder and to meet the inevitable crash, there is no other method than to break with the capitalist interests and to organise a really democratic control—*i.e.*, by the workers—a control over the capitalists by the workers and the peasants, and this method we have advocated all along.

The unlimited issue of paper money encourages speculation, permits the capitalists to make millions profit and creates immense difficulties for the development, so necessary, of production ; for the high cost of materials, of machines, and of every kind of product is making formidable leaps and bounds from day to day. How can the situation be remedied when the rich conceal the wealth they have acquired by speculation ?

A progressive tax can be put on incomes with very high taxes on the more important incomes. Our government has already decided on this measure, in imitation of imperialist governments. But the tax has remained and still remains a dead letter, for the value of money depreciates day by day, and in addition the falsification

of income returns is all the greater as incomes arise from speculation and business secrets are kept more carefully.

To make the tax effective we must have a real control, not only a control on paper. This control is impossible if it remains bureaucratic, for bureaucracy itself is linked with the bourgeoisie by thousands of ties. This is why, in the Imperialist states of Western Europe, whether monarchies or republics, the stabilisation of finance is only secured at the price of "compulsory labour," which imposes a barrack-room discipline upon the workers. Reactionary bureaucratic control is the only method known to the imperialist governments, not excepting the "democratic" republics of France and America, for placing the burdens of the war upon the proletariat and the labouring classes.

The fundamental contradiction of our government consists in the fact that in order not to clash with the bourgeoisie, in order not to break the "coalition," it is obliged to instal a reactionary bureaucratic control, to call it "revolutionary-democratic," and thus, at each step, to deceive and irritate and exasperate the masses who have just over-thrown Tsarism.

Now revolutionary-democratic measures, *i.e.*, the grouping into associations of the oppressed classes, of the workers and peasant masses, are exactly what is required to exercise the most effective control over the rich and to wage an efficacious struggle against the concealment of incomes.

It is necessary, in order to combat fiduciary inflation, to encourage the use of cheques. It is a step which in no way affects the poor, for they live from day to day and only establish their budget for their week ; at the end of which they have given back to the capitalists the few pence which they have earned in working for them. But as far as the rich are concerned, the exclusive use of cheques would be of immense importance. It would allow the state—especially if accompanied by the nationalisation of banking and the suppression of business secrecy—to exercise a *real* control over the incomes of the capitalists, to *really* "democratise" the financial system and at the same time to regulate it.

The unfortunate thing about the present situation is that there is a fear of assailing the privileges of the bourgeoisie and of breaking the "coalition." For, without truly revolutionary measures, without some degree of coercion, the capitalists will not

submit to any control, they will not reveal their balance-sheets, they will not present their stocks of paper money to be registered by the democratic state.

By nationalising the banks, by making the use of cheques compulsory for the rich, by suppressing secret balance-sheets, by punishing with the confiscation of all their goods all who make false returns of income—by these means a close alliance of the workers and peasants would be able, with the greatest ease, to institute an effective and universal control of the rich ; and this control would take back from those who are holding it in their safes the paper money issued by the treasury—to which it would then return.

To do this, we need a revolutionary and democratic dictatorship, directed by the revolutionary proletariat—in other words, democracy must become *effectively* revolutionary.

But there's the rub. This is not what is desired by our S.R.'s and our mensheviks, who cover themselves with the *flag* of "revolutionary democracy," meanwhile upholding the reactionary and bureaucratic policy of the bourgeoisie, who, as usual, are now acting on the motto: "*After us the deluge!*"

In general, we do not even notice how far our thinking is encrusted with anti-democratic habits and the prejudice of the "inviolability" of bourgeois private property. When an engineering firm or a banker publishes data on the income and wages of a worker, on the productivity of his work—this is considered to be something perfectly legal and just. Nobody dreams of considering it as an assault on the "private life" of the worker and as an "act of spying" or of gathering illegal information on the part of the employer. Bourgeois society considers work and the payment of wages to be like an open book in which every bourgeois has the right to look at any time, which he can use as a basis to reveal the "luxury" of the workers, their "laziness," &c. . . .

But what about reversing control? If associations of officials, employees and servants were invited by the democratic State to verify the income and expenditure of the capitalists, to publish the figures concerning them, to help the government to combat the making of false income returns?

What a clamour of indignation would arise from the breasts of the bourgeoisie, who would howl about "spying" and "illegal

information" ! When the masters exercise control over their servants and the capitalists over "their" workers, that is all in the natural order of things. The private life of the workers and of the exploited classes is not considered as "inviolable." The capitalist class has the right to demand that each worker should render an account ; they have always a right to reveal to the public the income and expenditure of the workers. But the bourgeoisie will never allow the oppressed to control the oppressor, to investigate *his* income and expenditure ; to reveal his state of luxury—even during the war when this very state of luxury is provoking famine in the country and the death of soldiers at the front. The bourgeoisie will not allow this kind of control, for it is "spying" and "illegal information."

The question always comes back to the same point—the domination of the bourgeoisie is incompatible with truly revolutionary democracy. In the twentieth century, in a capitalist country, it is impossible for us to be revolutionary democrats *if we are afraid* to go forward to Socialism.

11.—*Is it Possible to make a Forward Step if we are afraid to Advance to Socialism ?*

The preceding argument may easily arouse in the mind of the reader impregnated with the current opportunist ideas of the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks the objection that most of the measures we have just described are not democratic, but socialist.

This objection, which is current (in one form or another) in the bourgeois, Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik Press, is a reactionary excuse of backward capitalism, a defence on the model of Struvé. We are not yet ripe, they say, for Socialism. Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution—that's why we must bow down and give way to the bourgeoisie (although the great French bourgeois revolutionaries, 125 years ago, made sure of the greatness of *their* revolution by the use of the Terror against all oppressors, of any kind whatever ; landed seigneurs as well as capitalists).

The pseudo-Marxists (including the S.R.'s) who have become the servants of the bourgeoisie and who argue in this way do not understand the nature of imperialist monopoly, the nature of the

State or of revolutionary democracy. For, if they understood it, they would be compelled to admit that a movement forward must be a step towards Socialism.

Everyone talks about imperialism. But imperialism is only monopolistic capitalism.

That capitalism has become monopolistic in Russia also is sufficiently shown by the existence of metal, sugar, coal and other combines. The sugar combine, moreover, gives us a typical example of the transformation of monopolist capitalism into State monopoly.

Now, what is the State? It is the organisation of the ruling class: for example, in Germany of the junkers and capitalists. Thus what the German Plekhanovs (Scheidemann, Leutsch and others) call "War Socialism" is really wartime state monopoly or, to put it more clearly and more simply, a military prison for the workers, a military defence for the capitalists.

Try to substitute for this capitalist State of the junkers (that is, the great landed proprietors) the State of the revolutionary democracy (that is, the State which destroys all privileges and which does not hesitate to attain by revolutionary means a true democracy) and you will see that, in the true state of revolutionary democracy, capitalist State monopoly marks inevitably a step towards Socialism.

For a great capitalist undertaking which has happened to secure a monopoly works for the whole population. If it become a State monopoly, as a result the State directs it (the State, that is, the armed organisation of the people and in the first place of the workers and peasants, on condition that revolutionary democracy has been achieved). But in whose interest does the State direct it?

Either in the interests of the great landowners and capitalists, in which case there is not a State of revolutionary democracy, but a State of reactionary bureaucracy, an imperialist republic, or else in the interests of the revolutionary democracy, in which case *it is* a step towards Socialism.

For Socialism is simply the next step after capitalist State monopoly. In other words, Socialism is the Monopolist State in the service of the people and thus ceasing to be a capitalist monopoly.

The trend of evolution is such that, from monopolies (the number, function and importance of which have been greatly increased by the war) it is impossible to advance without approaching Socialism. Therefore it is necessary to choose between:—

Either being truly a revolutionary democrat and therefore not fearing to take another step towards Socialism ;

Or else dreading the approach of Socialism ; condemning it, by suggesting—as the Piecheckonovs, the Dans and the Tchernovs suggest—that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution ; and thus fatally slipping towards Kerensky, Miliukov and Kornilov (that is, the reactionary and bureaucratic repression of the “ revolutionary democratic ” aspirations of the workers and peasants).

There is no other alternative.

In this lies the fundamental contradiction of our revolution.

It is impossible usually—and above all in war-time—to stand still. We must go forward or back. In twentieth-century Russia, which has secured a republic and democratic rule by a revolution, it is *impossible* to go forward without approaching Socialism, without making one or more *steps* towards Socialism. (And these steps are conditioned by the level of our technique and of our culture ; thus it is impossible in Russia to introduce machinery on a large scale into agriculture, although it is indispensable in sugar production.)

Those who fear to go forward must go back—this is what the Kerenskys do, applauded by the Miliukovs and the Plekhanovs and with the ignorant support of the Tseretellis and the Tchernovs.

The logic of history is such that the war has extraordinarily accelerated the transformation of monopoly capitalism into State capitalism and has, *through this very fact*, brought humanity considerably nearer to Socialism.

The imperialist war is on the eve of the social revolution. And that not only because, by its horror, the war leads to proletarian insurrection—for no insurrection will create Socialism if the economic conditions do not permit the establishment of it—but because monopolist State capitalism is the *material* preparation for Socialism, the vestibule to Socialism, the step of the historical ladder which is separated from the step called Socialism *by no intervening step*.

Our S.R.'s and our Mensheviks approach the question of Socialism as doctrinaires, from the point of view of a doctrine which they have learnt by heart, but ill understood.

They picture Socialism as a thing of the distant future, dim and unknown.

Now Socialism is oozing through all the pores of contemporary capitalism ; Socialism rises directly and *practically* from each great step in advance within capitalism.

What is general compulsory labour ?

It is a step in advance on the basis of actual monopolist capitalism; a step towards the regularisation of the whole of economic life in a general scheme ; a step towards the preservation of national work, insanely wasted by capitalism.

In Germany the junkers (the great landowners) and the capitalists established general compulsory labour and then this obligation became inevitably a military prison for the workers.

But take the same institution and consider the application it would have in a state of revolutionary democracy. The general obligation to work, established, regulated and directed by the Soviets of workers', peasants', and soldiers' deputies, is not Socialism yet, but it is *already no longer capitalism*. It is an immense step towards Socialism; a step after which—under a rule of true democracy—it would be impossible, without using unprecedented violence against the masses, to force a retreat to capitalism.

12.—*The Struggle against Disorganisation and War*

The question of the measures to take against the approaching catastrophe leads us to the discussion of another extremely important question: that of the relations between home and foreign policy or, in other words, between the imperialist war of conquest and the revolutionary, proletarian war, between the criminal war of plunder and the just democratic war.

All the measures that we have described would considerably strengthen, as we have already shown, the capacity for defence or, in other words, the military power of the country. On the other hand, it is impossible really to carry them out without changing the war of conquest into a just war, without making of the war carried on by the capitalists in their own interests a war carried on by the proletariat in the interests of all workers and of all exploited peoples.

The nationalisation of banks and trusts, accompanied by the suppression of business secrecy and by the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, would not only lead to tremendous economy of the labour, strength and reserve of the population, but also to a great improvement in the conditions of the working *masses*,

that is, of the majority of the population. In modern war, as is well known, economic organisation has a decisive importance. Russia has enough corn, coal, oil and iron ; in this respect our situation is better than the other belligerent countries. Now, if the struggle against disorganisation was carried on by the methods shown above—by interesting the masses in the struggle, by improving their conditions, by nationalising the banks and combines—the government would actually utilise the revolution and the achievement of democratic rule and would carry the whole country to a level of economic organisation considerably higher than it possesses now.

If, instead of the “ coalition ” with the bourgeoisie, who hinder control and sabotage production, the S.R.’s and the Mensheviks had carried out the transference of power to the Soviets and had put forth all their strength, not to share in the ministry and to occupying at the side of the Cadets the posts of ministers, vice-ministers, &c., but to lead the workers and peasants in their control of the capitalists, Russia to-day would be in the midst of a great economic change, where the land would belong to the peasants and the bank would be nationalised, that is to say, it would be considerably *in advance* of all the other capitalist States.

The capacity for defence and the military strength of a country where the banks are nationalised is greater than that of a country where the banks remain in individual hands. The military power of an agricultural country where the land is in the hands of peasants’ committees is greater than that of a country where great landowners rule.

The heroic patriotism and the prodigies of courage of the French in 1792-93 are constantly quoted. But the material historico-economic conditions which made these prodigies possible are forgotten. A ruthless revolutionary struggle against feudalism, the general adoption of better means of production, the free possession of the soil, combined with energy, efficiency and self-denial truly democratic and revolutionary—these were the material and economic conditions which saved France by *transforming*, by *giving new life* to its economic foundations.

The example of France proves one thing and one thing only: to make Russia capable of defence, to arouse “ prodigies ” of heroism in the masses, it is necessary to sweep away with “ Jacobin ” ruthlessness everything that has served its purpose and to put new

economic life into Russia. Now, it is impossible to do this in the twentieth century merely by the overthrow of Tsardom; France, 125 years ago, did not stop with the overthrow of royalty. It is also impossible to do it simply by the revolutionary destruction of great landed estates (even which we have not done, because the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks have betrayed the peasants) and by the transference of land to the peasants. For we live in the twentieth century and control of the land *without control of the banks* is powerless to restore the country.

The regeneration of production in France, at the end of the eighteenth century, was linked up with moral and political regeneration, with the dictatorship of the revolutionary democracy and of the revolutionary proletariat (from which democracy was not yet separated and with which it was almost identical), and with a ruthless struggle against every kind of reaction. The whole nation, and especially the *oppressed classes*, were uplifted by great revolutionary enthusiasm; everyone looked on the war as a just war, as a war of defence—which *really* it was. Revolutionary France was defending herself against the reactionary Europe of the kings. It was not in 1792-93, but later, after the triumph of reaction, that the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of Napoleon changed the war of defence into a war of conquest.

And in Russia? In Russia, we are continuing to wage an imperialist war in the interests of the capitalists, in alliance with the imperialists and bound by secret treaties that the Tsar concluded with the English and other capitalists and that promise to the Russian capitalists the plunder of other countries, Constantinople, Galicia, Armenia, &c. . . .

This war will be for Russia a reactionary and unjust war, a war of conquest, until our country proposes a just peace and breaks with imperialism. The social character of war and its historic significance are not determined by the position of the enemies' troops (as the S.R.'s and Mensheviks think, thus descending to the intellectual level of the most ignorant moujik) but by the *policy* which conducts the war. (For "War is the continuation of policy.") They depend on the *class* which makes war and on the end for which it is made.

It is ridiculous to lead the masses to a war of plunder based on secret treaties and then to expect their enthusiasm. The advanced

class of revolutionary Russia, the proletariat, is seeing more and more clearly the criminal character of the war, despite the efforts of the bourgeoisie and their lacqueys to hoodwink them. The proletariat of the *two capitals* has become definitely international.

How could there be any question of enthusiasm ?

Home policy is indissolubly knit up with foreign policy. It is impossible for the country to defend itself without the heroism of the people bringing about—doggedly and firmly—great economic changes. And it is impossible to arouse the heroism of the masses without breaking with imperialism ; without proposing to all peoples a democratic peace ; without transforming the criminal war of plunder and conquest into a just war of revolutionary defence.

The break with the capitalists in home and foreign policy can alone save our revolution and our country from the octopus of imperialism.

13.—*Revolutionary Democracy and the Revolutionary Proletariat*

To be truly revolutionary, democracy must go hand-in-hand with the proletariat and support it as the only class revolutionary through and through.

Such is the conclusion to which we are led by our examination of the remedies to use against the terrible catastrophe which is threatening us.

The war has brought on such a crisis ; tried so severely the moral and material force of the people ; struck such violent blows at the social structure that the human race must choose between perishing or entrusting its lot to the most revolutionary class which alone can carry it rapidly and thoroughly to more developed means of production.

Through special historical causes—the backward state of the country, the particularly crushing burdens of war, the decay of Tsardom, the persistence of the traditions of 1905—the Russian Revolution has preceded that of other countries. As a result, Russia has been carried in a few months to the level of the most advanced countries.

But that is not enough. The war is pitiless, ruthlessly it presents the alternative: to perish or else to overtake, and even to surpass the most advanced countries, even on economic grounds.

It is possible, for we have on our side the experience of many countries. We have moral support from the growing opposition to the war throughout Europe, from the atmosphere of the workers' revolution which is approaching all over the world. We have on our side, an extremely rare thing during an imperialist war, the liberty of revolutionary democracy, which urges us and drags us on.

We must perish or go forward. Thus does history present the alternative.

The attitude of the proletariat towards the peasants at this moment confirms our old Bolshevik policy: to free the peasants from bourgeois influence. In that alone is there safety for the revolution.

Now, the peasants compose the greatest part of the petit-bourgeois class.

Our S.R.'s and our Mensheviks have taken up a reactionary position by keeping the peasants under bourgeois influence, by making them enter into an alliance with the bourgeoisie and by preventing them from uniting with the proletariat.

The experience of revolution rapidly teaches the masses. The reactionary policy of the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks is bankrupt: they have been beaten in the soviets of the two capitals. The opposition of the "Left" increases steadily within the two democratic, petit-bourgeois parties. On September 10, 1917, the S.R. Conference at Petrograd gave a two-thirds majority to the *left* wing, which wants union with the proletariat and repels the coalition with the bourgeoisie.

The S.R.'s and the Mensheviks are repeating their favourite contrast: the bourgeoisie and democracy. But this contrast is as idiotic as to compare yards and pounds.

It is possible to have a democratic bourgeoisie; it is possible to have a bourgeois democracy; he who denies it has not the slightest knowledge of history or political economy.

The S.R.'s and Mensheviks want to hide the existence of the *petite bourgeoisie* between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The *petite bourgeoisie*, because of its social position, wavers everlastingly between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The S.R.'s and the Mensheviks seek to bring the *petite bourgeoisie* into alliance with the bourgeoisie. This is the real cause of all their "coalitions," of all their participation in the ministries, of the

whole policy of Kerensky, the typical semi-Cadet. But for six months of our revolution, this policy has completely failed.

The Cadets are happy: the revolution, they think, has become bankrupt, it cannot conquer in war or over disorganisation.

It is a lie. Those who have become bankrupt are *the Cadets and the S.R.'s with the Mensheviks*, for it is this coalition which for six months has ruled Russia, has increased the economic crisis and has made the military situation worse.

As the failure of the alliance of the bourgeoisie with the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks becomes more complete, so will the people learn quickly and will see ever more clearly the true solution of the situation: the alliance of the poor peasants with the proletariat.

The Crisis Approaches

OCTOBER 7, 1917.

I

THERE can be no doubt that the end of the month of September marked the beginning of a new period in the history of the Russian Revolution ; and, very probably, of the world revolution.

The world working-class revolution was first begun with engagements by isolated combatants representing with unequalled courage all the honest elements of official " Socialism "—a socialism rotten to the core, which is in reality nothing but social Chauvinism. Leibknecht in Germany, Adler in Austria, MacLean in England: such are the best known of these isolated heroes who assumed the heavy task of precursors of the revolution.

The second stage was an unrest in the masses which showed itself by splits in the official parties, by illegal publications, and by public demonstrations. The protest against the war became stronger and stronger, the number of victims of government persecution grew bigger and bigger ; and in countries like Germany, France, Italy and England, which were noted for their respect of legality and the liberty of their regime, the prisons were filled with tens and hundreds of internationalists, opponents of the war, and advocates of the working-class revolution.

Now we have reached the third stage, which may be called the eve of the revolution. The arrests in mass of the Socialist leaders in Free Italy, and more especially the beginning of *military insurrections* in Germany—such are the unmistakable signs of the great turning point ; the signs which show that we are on the *eve* of the *world revolution*.

It is beyond a doubt that there had previously been isolated cases of mutiny amongst the troops in Germany ; but they had been so insignificant, so few in number that it was possible to stifle them and to suppress the news of them—the surest means of preventing contagion. But now, finally, an insurrectionary movement has broken out in the navy, a movement that it has not been possible to stifle or suppress, in spite of the strong measures carefully elaborated and rigorously applied by the German military-barrack regime.

Doubt is no longer permissible. We are on the eve of the world proletarian revolution. And as we, the Russian Bolsheviks, amongst all the proletarian internationalists of all countries, alone enjoy an immense liberty ; as we have at our disposal a legal party with twenty journals ; as we have on our side the Soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies of the big towns, and the majority of the popular masses in a revolutionary period, we shall see this motto justly applied to us: "*Much to you has been given ; much from you will be required.*"

II.

Russia has undoubtedly arrived at a turning point in the revolution.

In this essentially rural country, under a revolutionary republican government counting on the support of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, which even yesterday had a preponderance in the petit-bourgeois democracy—in this country a *peasant insurrection is developing*.

The fact seems incredible, but all the same it exists. It does not astonish us ; for we Bolsheviks have always said that the government of " coalition " with the bourgeoisie is the government of the betrayal of democracy and the revolution ; the government of *imperialist carnage*, the government protecting the capitalists and the great landed proprietors against the wrath of the people.

In republican Russia, thanks to the work of deceit of the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks, there still exists in the time of revolution, a government of capitalists and great landowners, alongside the soviets. Such is the bitter and menacing truth. Why be astonished if in Russia, where the people are succumbing beneath the burdens and scourges of the imperialists war, a peasant insurrection has broken out and is extending more and more ?

What is there astonishing in the fact that the opponents of the Bolsheviks and the leaders of the *official* Socialist-Revolutionary party which has constantly supported the " coalition," which, until the last few days or the last few weeks had the majority of the people on its side ; which is continuing to censure and molest the " new " S.R.'s who have arrived at the conviction that the policy of coalition is a betrayal of the peasants' interests—what is there astonishing, I

say, in the fact that these leaders of the official S.R. party should write in the editorial of their official organ, the *Dielo Naroda* (September 29) the following words:—

“ . . . Scarcely anything has been done up to the present to put an end to the oppressive rule which still dominates the countryside in the very centre of Russia. . . . The law on the regulation of agrarian conditions, which has been laid down by the provisional government for a long time, and which had even passed through the purgatory of the judicial conference ; this law is now pigeon-holed in the depths of some office or other. . . . Are we not right in stating that our republican government is still by no means free from the habits of the Tsarist administration, and that the brutal methods of Stolypine are still making themselves strongly felt in the proceedings of the revolutionary ministers ” ?

This is what the official S.R.'s are writing ! The supporters of the coalition are *obliged* to recognise that after seven months of revolution in an agrarian country, “ scarcely anything has been done to put an end to the oppressive rule ” of the peasants by the big landed proprietors. And these same S.R.'s are *obliged* to apply the term *Stolypinist* to their colleague Kerensky and all his group of ministers.

Is it possible to imagine, coming from our opponents, a more eloquent testimony that the coalition is bankrupt ; that the S.R.'s who tolerate Kerensky have become a party which is *anti-popular*, *anti-peasant* and *counter-revolutionary* ; and, above all, that the whole revolution has reached a turning point ?

A peasant rebellion, in an agrarian country, against the government of the socialist-revolutionary Kerensky, of the Mensheviks Nikitine and Gvozdiev, and of other ministers representing the interests of capital and of the landed seigneurs ! A repression of this rebellion by a republican government by means of *military measures* !

In the face of such facts can any partisan of the proletariat deny that the crisis is about to burst forth, that the revolution is at a decisive turning point, that the victory of the government over the peasant rebellion now would sound the knell of the revolution, and would signify the definite victory of the Korniloff regime ?

III.

If, in an agrarian country, after seven months of the democratic republic, a peasant rebellion has broken out, this proves irrefutably that the revolution has gone bankrupt throughout the country ; that the crisis through which it is passing has reached a climax, and that the time is near when the counter-revolution will make its supreme effort.

So much is clear. In the presence of a fact like the peasant rebellion, all other political symptoms, even if they contradicted the imminence of a crisis, would have no value.

But, on the contrary, they all indicate, without exception, that the crisis is going to burst out.

After the agrarian question, that of most importance for Russia, particularly for the petit-bourgeois masses, is the national question. At the Democratic Conference which was bamboozled by M. Tseretelli and his disciples, the "national" faction occupied a position second only in importance to that of the trade unions, and far in advance of that of the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies in the proportion of votes given against the coalition (40 to 55).¹

The Kerensky government, the government of the repression of the peasant rebellion, withdraws the revolutionary troops from Finland so as to strengthen the reactionary Finnish bourgeoisie. In Ukraine, the conflicts of the Ukrainians, and especially of the Ukrainian troops, with the government, are becoming more and more frequent.

Let us next consider the army, which, in time of war, plays an exceptional part in the whole life of the State. We have seen the complete *breakaway* of the Finnish troops and the Baltic Fleet from the government. We have seen the declaration of the non-Bolshevik officer, Dubassov, who says, in the name of all those at the front—and in a more revolutionary fashion than any Bolshevik, that the soldiers will not fight in the war any longer. We see government reports declaring that "nervousness" exists amongst the soldiers and that it is impossible to answer for "order" (that is to say, for the aid of the troops in repressing the peasant rebellion). Finally, we see the results of the elections at Moscow, where, out of 17,000 soldiers, 14,000 gave their vote to the Bolsheviks.²

¹ In the Trade Unions the proportion was 9 to 10 against the coalition.

² September 30.

The result of these elections in the municipalities of Moscow is one of the most striking symptoms of the profound change which is taking place in the state of mind of the people. It is notorious that Moscow is more petit-bourgeois than Petrograd. As compared with that of Petrograd the Moscow proletariat has many more ties with the country-side and is much nearer to rural ideology. This is an indisputable fact and one which has often been confirmed.

And now at Moscow the number of votes cast for the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks falls from 70 per cent. in July to 18 per cent. in September. The petite bourgeoisie has turned away from the coalition ; and the people also: so much cannot be doubted. The Cadets have increased their poll from 17 per cent. to 30 per cent., but they remain a minority—a minority condemned to impotence, although the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks of the Right have undoubtedly rallied to them.

The *Rouskia Viedomosti* declare that the *total* number of votes polled by the Cadets has fallen from 67,000 to 62,000. Only the Bolsheviks have had an increase (from 34,000 to 82,000) in the total number of their votes. They have obtained 47 per cent. of the total votes.¹

Together with the Left-wing S.R.'s, we now have an undoubted majority in the soviets, in the army, *and in the country*.

It is worth while noting yet one more fact which is very symptomatic, and which has at the same time some tangible consequences: The organisations of railwaymen and postal workers which have a tremendous economic political and military importance are in sharp conflict with the government,² to such an extent that the Menshevik apologists themselves are dissatisfied with their "minister" Nikitine, and that the S.R.'s are treating Kerensky and his disciples as "Stolypinists." Is it not obvious that if such a support of the government by the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks is to have any result, they can only be negative ones ?

IV.

Yes, the leaders of the Central Executive Committee are beating an ordered retreat for the bourgeoisie and the big landowners. It cannot be doubted that if the Bolsheviks allow themselves to be

¹ And even 52 per cent. according to more exact estimates made later.

² From September 23 to 26, a Railway Strike, the Government refusing to apply the scale of wages demanded by the All-Russian Railway Congress.

caught in the snare of constitutional illusions, of "faith" in the calling of the Constituent Assembly, of waiting for the Congress of Soviets, &c., . . . they will be nothing but miserable traitors to the cause of the working-class.

For internationalism does not consist in phrases, in declarations of solidarity or in resolutions, but in *action*.

For to allow the peasant rebellion to be crushed by a government that the *Dielo Naroda* itself compares to that of Stolypine, is to *lose* the whole revolution, for ever and beyond recall. The growing anarchy and indifference to the masses is complained of. How can the masses not be indifferent to the elections when the peasant class is *reduced to rebellion*, and when the "Revolutionary Democracy" patiently puts up with the repression of this rebellion by armed force?

To allow the peasant revolt to be crushed at such a time is to allow the elections for the Constituent Assembly to be falsified still more shamefully than the "Democratic Conference" and the "Pre-Parliament" were falsified.

The crisis is approaching its climax. The whole future of the Russian Revolution is at stake. The whole future of the international socialist working class revolution is at stake.

The crisis approaches . . .

Letter to the Petrograd Committee and to the Moscow Committee of the Social Democratic Labour Party of Russia (Bolshevik)

(Beginning of October, 1917.)

Dear Comrades,—

Events show us our duty so clearly that waiting becomes a *crime*.

The agrarian movement is developing, and the government is repressing it more and more savagely. The sympathy of the troops towards us is increasing (at Moscow, we have 99 per cent of the soldiers' votes for us ; the Finnish troops and the fleet are against the government ; and Doubassov's declaration shows that the army will have no more of the war).

In Germany, especially since the execution of the sailors, the beginning of the revolution is doubtless at hand. The elections at Moscow have given 47 per cent. of the votes to the Bolsheviks ; it is a great victory. With the Left Social Revolutionaries *we have obviously a majority in the country*.

The railwaymen and postal workers are in conflict with the government. As for the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, due to meet on October 20, the *Dan Liber* is already speaking of its meeting " *about the 20th,*" &c. . . .

In these conditions, *to wait* is a crime.

The Bolsheviks have no right to wait for the Congress of Soviets. They must take power immediately. In so doing they will save the world revolution (for it is to be feared, especially after the executions in Germany, that the capitalists of all countries will compose their differences *and unite against us*). They will also save the Russian revolution (for if we delay perhaps the rising wave of real anarchy will be *too strong for us*) ; and they will save the lives of hundreds of thousands of men at the front.

To wait is a crime. To wait for the Congress of Soviets is to show signs of a standing on ceremony which is childish as well as dishonourable. It is to betray the revolution.

If *insurrection* is necessary to seize power, it must be begun immediately. It is very possible that precisely at this moment a seizure of power could take place without insurrection ; it would be sufficient, perhaps, for the Moscow soviet to proclaim itself (with

the Petrograd soviet) as the government. At Moscow victory is assured *and there is no one to oppose us*. At Petrograd *we can wait*. The government is in a position where it is impossible to do anything. It is in a blind alley. It will yield.

By seizing power—by taking the banks, the factories and the (newspaper) *Rouskoie Slovo*, the Moscow soviet obtains at one blow a base and a colossal force for its agitation throughout all Russia to which it puts the question thus:—We propose immediate peace *from to-morrow even*, if Kerensky yields (and if he does not yield we shall overthrow him); the land to the peasants; and immediate concessions to the railwaymen and postal workers, &c.

It is not compulsory to “begin” at Petrograd. If Moscow “begins” without bloodshed, it will certainly be supported (i) by the sympathy of the army at the front; (ii) by the peasants, everywhere; (iii) by the fleet and the troops from Finland *which are marching on Petrograd*.

Even if Kerensky has one or two cavalry corps at Petrograd he must give in. The Petrograd soviet can wait, meanwhile carrying on the agitation for the soviet government of Moscow. Let our slogan be: Power to the soviets, the land to the peasants, peace to the nations, bread for the hungry.

Victory is assured, and there are nine chances in ten that we shall obtain it without bloodshed.

To wait is a crime against the Revolution.

Greetings.

N. LENIN.

On the Slogan : " All Power to the Soviets "

(Beginning of October, 1917.)

I.

ALL the work done by the Bolsheviks during a half-year of the revolution, and all their criticism of the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s who supported the policy of " conciliation " and transformed the soviets into talk-shops, demand from the Bolshevik Party the conscientious, sustained and strictly Marxian application of this slogan. It is regrettable to find that, at the head of the party, there are signs of hesitation, a kind of " fear " of the struggle for power, a tendency to replace this struggle by resolutions, protests and congresses.

II.

All the experience of the revolutions of 1905 to 1917, as well as all the decisions and political declarations of the Bolshevik party for many years, demonstrate and affirm that the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies are only to be considered in reality as organs of insurrection, as agents of revolutionary power. That is the real function of the soviets. Otherwise they are nothing but a vain plaything, and a fatal cause of apathy, indifference and the deception of the masses, who are disgusted (and justly so) by the continual repetition of resolutions and protests.

III.

At this moment, especially when the peasants' revolt, although repressed by Kerensky with the use of selected troops, is rapidly spreading all over the country ; and when military measures applied in the country areas create a risk that the elections for the Constituent Assembly will be completely falsified ; now that in Germany an insurrection has broken out in the fleet—the failure of the Bolsheviks to transform the soviets into organs of insurrection would be a betrayal of the peasants and of the international socialist revolution.

IV.

The seizure of power by the soviets depends on the success of the insurrection. For this reason the best forces of the party must be directed to the factories and military barracks to explain there

to the masses what their tasks are, to estimate their state of mind and to choose exactly the moment for the overthrow of the Kerensky government.

To associate this task of taking power absolutely with the Congress of Soviets, to subordinate it to this Congress, is *to play at insurrection* by fixing its date in advance, by making it an easy matter for the government to prepare its troops, by giving the masses the illusion that a "resolution" by Congress can solve a question that can only be solved by the force of the insurgent working class.

V.

We must fight against the illusions of constitutionalism and the hopes founded on the Congress of Soviets; we must renounce the frame of mind of waiting at all costs for this Congress; we must concentrate all our forces on explaining to the masses that an insurrection is inevitable; and we must prepare the insurrection itself. If the Bolsheviks, with the soviets of the two capitals on their side, were to renounce this task and were to wait resignedly for the calling of the Constituent Assembly (that is to say, the *falsified* constituent assembly) by the Kerensky government, then they would reduce to an empty phrase their propaganda for the slogan: "Power to the soviets." And politically, they would cover themselves with shame as the party of the revolutionary working class.

VI.

This is particularly true now that the elections at Moscow have given 49½ per cent. of the votes to the Bolsheviks; and that these latter, with the support of the Left S.R.'s (a support which has been a reality for some time now), have an undisputed majority in the country.

Advice from One Absent

(Written on October 8, 1917.)

I WRITE these lines on October 8, without any great hope that they will have reached comrades at Petrograd by the 9th. It is possible that they will arrive too late for the Congress of Soviets of the North, which is fixed for October 10. All the same I shall try to give my advice as a man removed from the main current of events, counting on the fact that the probable action of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and neighbourhood, which is soon to take place, has not yet occurred.

All power must pass to the soviets—this is clear. It must similarly be indisputable for all Bolsheviki that the revolutionary proletarian power (or the Bolshevik power, which is now absolutely the same thing) is assured of the most ardent sympathy and the unreserved support of the whole of the workers and exploited masses throughout the world, particularly in the belligerent countries, and above all amongst the Russian peasant class. These truths are too well known and have been demonstrated for too long to make it worth while to dwell on them.

On the other hand, it is necessary to dwell on a fact that more than one comrade probably does not take completely into account—viz., that the seizure of power by the soviets now of necessity implies armed insurrection. This, it seems, should have been evident; but all have not yet grasped it thoroughly. To renounce armed insurrection now would mean giving up the chief watchword of Bolshevism (“All Power to the Soviets”), and also all revolutionary working-class internationalism.

But armed insurrection is a special form of political struggle. It is subject to special rules which must be deeply reflected upon. Karl Marx expressed this thought with particular clearness when he said that “armed insurrection, like warfare, is an art.”

The principal rules of this art, as laid down by Marx, are as follows:—

(1) *Never* play with insurrection; and, when it is once begun, understand clearly that it must be carried through *to the end*.

(2) Collect, at the decisive place and time, forces which are greatly superior to those of the enemy; otherwise the latter, better prepared and better organised, will annihilate the insurgents.

(3) Once the insurrection has begun, it is necessary to act with the utmost vigour, and to wage at all costs, the *offensive*. "The defensive is death to the insurrection."

(4) Make sure of taking the enemy by surprise, and take advantage of the moment when his troops are scattered.

(5) Win successes *each day*, even small ones (one might say "each hour" in the case of a small town), and at all costs keep the "*moral superiority*."

Marx has summarised the lessons of all revolutions or armed insurrections in the words of the greatest master of revolutionary tactics known to history, Danton: "*Be daring, be still more daring; be daring always!*"

Applied to Russia in October, 1917, these precepts mean:—

(1) A simultaneous offensive, as sudden and as rapid as possible, upon Petrograd, from within and without, from the working-class suburbs and from Finland, Reval and Cronstadt; an offensive of *the whole* of the Fleet; a concentration of forces which will *considerably outnumber* our "bourgeois guard" (Cadet-officers), our "chouans" (Cossack units), &c. . . .

(2) Combination of our three chief forces: (the navy, the workers, and the military units) to occupy in the first place and hold *at all costs*—(a) the telephones; (b) the telegraphs; (c) the railway stations; (d) the bridges.

(3) Selection of the most resolute of our "storm troops"—of the working youth and the sailors; and formation of small detachments to occupy all the most important points and to *take part in* all decisive operations, *e.g.*, to encircle Petersburg and to cut it off from other towns; to take possession of it by a combined attack of the navy, the workers, and the troops—a task which requires *art* and *triple daring*.

(4) Formation of detachments composed of the best workers, who, armed with rifles and bombs, will march upon and surround the "centres" of the enemy (Cadet-officers' schools, telegraph and telephone offices, &c.). The watchword of these will be:—

"*Perish to the last man rather than let the enemy pass.*"

Let us hope that, if insurrection is decided upon, its leaders will know how to apply the great precepts of Danton and of Marx.

The triumph of the Russian Revolution, as well as of the world revolution, depends on two or three days' struggle.

Letter to the Comrades

OCTOBER 16-17, 1917.

COMRADES,—

The period we are now passing through is so critical, events succeed one another with such incredible rapidity, that the writer whose fate it is to be placed somewhat out of the full current of history, runs a constant risk of being behind the times or of appearing to be badly informed, especially if his writings are not published immediately. Nevertheless, I find myself compelled to address this letter to the Bolsheviks (though perhaps it will not be printed); for the hesitations, against which I consider it my duty to set myself with the utmost energy, are a crying scandal, and may have the most disastrous effect on the party, on the progress of the international proletariat and on the revolution. It is possible that I am too late: in any case, I intend to mention the information at my disposal and the times of its receipt.

It was only on the morning of Monday, October 16, that I was able to see a comrade who had been present the evening before, at Petrograd, at a most important Bolshevik meeting and who gave me detailed information about the debates. The question discussed was that of the insurrection, which was also the subject of comment of the whole press on Sunday. The assembly included representatives of all the principal branches of Bolshevik activity in the capital. And only a negligible minority—two comrades to be exact—was against the insurrection. The reasons put forward by these comrades are so weak, show such disorder, such timidity, such a forgetting of the fundamental principals of Bolshevism and of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, that one asks oneself how such shameful hesitations can be explained. Nevertheless, the fact exists, and since a revolutionary party should have no tolerance of hesitation on so serious a matter, and this pair of comrades against our principles might cause some disturbance in our midst, it is necessary to examine their arguments, reveal the nature of their hesitations and show how infamous they are. That is what I am going to try to do in the following lines.

“ We have not a majority amongst the people, and consequently the insurrection cannot be successful.”

Those who are capable of speaking thus, either consciously trifle with truth or are incurable formalists who, being fully determined to take no account of the actual situation, in the highest degree a revolutionary one, desire stubbornly to have a guarantee that in the whole country the Bolshevik party has exactly half the votes plus one. Never throughout history has a revolutionary party had such a guarantee, and it is absolutely impossible that it should have. To bring forward objections of this kind is to jeer at your audience and to conceal your flight from reality.

The revolution affords incontrovertible evidence that the majority of the people, after the events of July, began to rally to the Bolsheviks. This was shown even before the Kornilov insurrection, by the elections at Petrograd on August 20, when the percentage of votes obtained by the Bolsheviks in the town itself (excluding the suburbs) rose from 20 per cent. to 33 per cent., and later, in September, by the municipal elections in the Moscow municipal districts, where the total percentage of the votes for the Bolsheviks increased from 11 per cent. to 49½ per cent. (a Moscow comrade whom I saw recently told me that the exact figure was 51 per cent.). It was also shown by the elections for the soviets. It was shown again by the fact that, in spite of their central council being entirely devoted to Avxentiev, the peasant soviets declared themselves by a majority to be *against* the coalition.¹ Now to be against the coalition, is *in reality* to follow the Bolsheviks. Further, communications which reach us from the front bear clearer and clearer witness that in spite of the slanders and attacks directed against the Bolsheviks by the Socialist Revolutionary or Menshevik leaders, officers, deputies, &c., the mass of the troops is coming over more and more strongly to their side.

Finally, what shows more clearly than any words, that the people are rallying to the Bolsheviks, is the peasant insurrection which is the most important fact to-day. For, whatever lies are told by the bourgeois press and its pathetic attendants, the perpetual procrastinators of the *Novaia Zizn* and others who shout "pogrom" and "anarchy," the insurrection is a fact. The movement of peasants in the province of Tambov has been an insurrection both in the physical and political sense of the word, an insurrection which has had splendid political results, the first of which has been the agree-

¹ Not at the democratic conference, but later, for instance, the soviet of peasant deputies at Petrograd on October 2.

ment to hand the land over to the peasants. Terrified by the insurrection, the whole Socialist Revolutionary clique, up to and including the *Dielo Naroda*, now proclaims the necessity of giving the land to the peasants. Here, attested by facts, is the justification and the success of Bolshevism. The insurrection was necessary to teach conduct to the Bonapartistes and their lackeys of the *Pre-parliament*.

The result is a fact. Now whatever happens, a fact is a solid thing. And this factual argument in favour of the insurrection is stronger than all the bad reasons with which our pessimist politicians conceal their inquietude and their fear.

If the agrarian insurrection was not an event of national political importance, the socialist revolutionary minions of the *Pre-parliament* would not proclaim that it was necessary to give the land to the peasants.

The *Rabotchi Pont* has already drawn attention to another excellent political and revolutionary result of the peasant insurrection. This is the arrival of barley at the railway stations in the province of Tambov. Here again, my fanatical friends, is an argument which shows you that insurrection is the only way to save the country from famine and disaster. While the Social-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, who are betraying the country, are grumbling, threatening, writing resolutions and promising to feed the starving by calling together the Constituent Assembly, the people themselves set to work and settled the food question in the *Bolshevik* way, by insurrection against the great landowners, the capitalists and the monopolists.

And the magnificent results of this solution (the only real one) of the food question have been admitted by the *bourgeois* press itself, by the *Roushaia Volia*, among others, which published a communique stating that the stations in the Tambov province are literally blocked by cereals—*since the rising of the peasants*.

To doubt that the majority of the people are now with the Bolsheviks and following them towards the future, is to hesitate disgracefully and to reject in fact *all* the principles of proletarian revolutionism ; it is to abjure Bolshevism.

“ We are not strong enough to take control, but neither are the bourgeoisie strong enough to overrun the Constituent Assembly.”

The first part of this reasoning is only a paraphrase of the previous argument, which argument gains nothing in force or persuasive powers because of the expression of confusion and fear of the bourgeoisie, by pessimism about the workers and optimism about the bourgeoisie. If Cadets and Cossacks affirm that they will fight to the end against the Bolsheviks, no one dreams of doubting their word for a moment ; but if, in hundreds of meetings, workmen and soldiers express absolute confidence in the Bolsheviks and repeat that they are ready to fight to secure power for the soviets, people think it their duty to point out that voting and fighting are quite different things.

It is obvious that by reasoning thus, the insurrection is condemned beforehand. But it is difficult to see how this one-sided pessimism differs from open adoption of the bourgeois platform.

Consider the facts. Recall the countless declarations of the Bolsheviks, completely "forgotten" by these pessimists of ours. We are not weary of repeating that the soviets of workmen's and peasants' representatives are a force, are the vanguard of the revolution and that they *can* seize power. Thousands of times we have reproached the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries for their incessant output of sonorous phrases about "the plenipotentiary organs of democracy"; and for their fear of the soviets seizing power.

What did the Kornilov insurrection show ? That the soviets are indeed a force.

And yet, after this impressive demonstration, we shall repudiate Bolshevism, deny our own principles, and say that we are not strong enough (though the soviets of both capitals and the majority of the provincial soviets are Bolshevik) ! Are not such procrastinations shameful ? In a word, our pessimists, without daring to say so, do nothing less than reject the resolution: "All Power to the Soviets !"

How can it be proved that the bourgeoisie is not strong enough to overturn the Constituent Assembly ?

If the bourgeoisie is *not strong enough* to break up the soviets, it is sufficiently strong to overturn the Constituent Assembly, for there is no one to prevent it. To believe the promises of Kerensky, and his friends, to believe the resolutions of the *Pre-parliament*

lackeys ; is this an attitude worthy of a member of the proletarian party, of a revolutionary ?

The bourgeoisie is not only strong enough to overturn the Constituent Assembly if the present government continues, but it can bring about the same result *indirectly* by handing over Petrograd to the Germans, by opening the front, by an increase of lock-outs and by interfering with the arrivals of grain. It has already done all these things to some extent. Hence it is strong enough to do them *completely*, if the workers and the soldiers do not overturn it.

“ The soviets must be a pistol held to the head of the government, to force it to call together the Constituent Assembly and to disclaim the attempts at Kornilov.”

This is what one of our two deplorable pessimists dared to say !

And he had to say it, for to disclaim the insurrection is to disclaim the resolution: “ All Power to the Soviets ! ”

Certainly, resolutions are not sacred. But why did *no one* raise the question of modifying the resolution: “ All Power to the Soviets ” (as I myself did after the events of July) ? Why be afraid openly to ask that it be revised considering that since September the party has been examining the question of the insurrection, which henceforth is alone capable of giving complete power to the soviets ?

To this, our deplorable pessimists can give absolutely no answer. To renounce the insurrection is to renounce the giving of power to the soviets: As far as realising the hopes and dreams of the people is concerned, it is throwing ourselves on the magnanimity of the bourgeoisie, who “ promised ” to call together the Constituent Assembly.

Is it really so difficult to understand that, if power comes into the hands of the soviets, the Constituent Assembly and its success are safe ? The Bolsheviki have repeated this until it has become monotonous, and no one has ever tried to contest their statement. This “ combined form ” is agreed on by everyone ; but now to extol, under the name of “ combined form,” the abandonment of the handing of power to the soviets ; to extol this abandonment secretly without daring openly to repudiate our resolution ; what can be said of this ? Is there a parliamentary expression to describe such an attitude ?

An *unloaded* pistol ! This was the answer rightly made to our

pessimist. If this is right, it is ranging oneself at once with the Libers and the Dans, who have thousands of times proclaimed that the soviets were a pistol, and thousands of times have deceived the people ; for, *under their control*, the soviets were absolutely nothing at all.

But if we want a bullet in the pistol, this is equivalent to preparing the technique of the insurrection, for the bullet must be found and the pistol loaded: besides, one bullet will not be enough.

We must either frankly adopt the Liber-Dan platform and frankly renounce the resolution: "All Power to the Soviets," or we must adopt straight-out insurrection. There is no middle course.

" . . . The bourgeoisie, in spite of Rodzianko's desire, cannot deliver Petrograd to the Germans, for it is not the bourgeois, but our heroic sailors who do the fighting. . . ."

This argument, too, is charged with that "optimism" about the *bourgeoisie* which is shown only too clearly at every moment by those who have only pessimism for the strength and revolutionary capacity of the proletariat.

It is the heroic sailors who do the fighting, but this did not prevent *two* admirals from *running away* before the capture of Essex Island.

This is a fact ! Facts are facts. They prove that admirals, just as much as Kornilov, are capable of being traitors. The general staff has not changed, the corps of officers is Kornilovian: this, too, is an irrefutable fact.

If the Kornilovians (directed by Kerensky who is a Kornilovian himself) *want* to give up Petrograd, they have two, even three ways of doing so.

First of all, they could, through treason among the highest officers, open the Northern sector of the land front.

Secondly, they could arrange with the German and the English imperialists for the freedom of action of the whole German Fleet, which is *stronger* than ours, and which will be directed against us. Besides the "vanished" admirals have been able to give our plans to the Germans.

Thirdly, by a lock-out and by interfering with the arrival of barley, they could reduce our troops to despair and to *complete* helplessness.

None of these possibilities should be left out of account. Facts have proved that the bourgeois cossack party in Russia has already knocked at three doors and tried to open them.

What then? Why then, it is our duty not to wait till the bourgeoisie will throttle the revolution.

We must not despise Rodzianko's intentions, for experience has tested him. Rodzianko is a man of action. It is incontestable that capital is on his side. Now capital is an enormous force so long as the proletariat has not possession of power. For *decades* Rodzianko has shown unbounded devotion to the political ends of capital.

To hesitate, then, on the question of insurrection, to hesitate to recognise that insurrection is the only way of saving the revolution, is to hand oneself entirely to the bourgeoisie, to sink into that cowardly state of confidence which characterises revolutionary socialism, Menshevism and the apathy of the "moujik," and against which the Bolsheviks have directed their most violent attacks.

Either let us fold our arms and, uttering professions of "faith" in the Constituent Assembly, wait till Rodzianko and his henchman betray Petrograd and the whole revolution—or let us decide on insurrection. There is no middle course.

But even the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, if that is all, does not alter the situation; for no constitution, no vote by an assembly, even the most sovereign body, would be able to conquer famine and Wilhelm. The convocation of the Constituent Assembly and its efficacy depend on the seizure of power by the soviets: this is an ancient Bolshevik truism, which events are confirming more and more ruthlessly and irrevocably.

" . . . We are getting stronger every day, we can form a powerful opposition in the Constituent Assembly; why risk everything on one throw? . . . "

This is the logic of a Philistine, who has read that the Constituent Assembly was to be called together, and who trusts implicitly in the ability of legal and constitutional methods to resolve the situation.

Unfortunately, the question of famine can no longer be solved, nor can that of the surrender of Petrograd, by *waiting* for the Constituent Assembly. This is what is forgotten by the simpletons,

those who have lost their heads and those who have given way to their fears.

Hunger does not wait. The peasant insurrection did not wait. War does not wait. The vanished admirals did not wait.

Or perhaps because we, the Bolsheviks, proclaim our faith in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, hunger will kindly consent to wait? Would the vanished admirals agree to wait? Would the Maklakovs and Rodziankos agree to give up the lock-out, stop interfering with grain arrivals, and cease their secret negotiations with English and German imperialists?

This, in fact, is what seems to stand out from the point of view of the champions of "constitutional illusions" and of Parliamentary feeble-mindedness. These people do not wish to see and cannot see anything of real life: for them the only realities are *the paper* announcing the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and the elections.

And these sightless ones are still astonished that a starving people, a soldiery betrayed by their generals and their admirals, can be indifferent to the elections! O wise men!

" . . . If the Kornilovians begin again, we will show them what we are made of. But as for beginning ourselves; what's the good of running the risk of failure? . . ."

This is in the highest degree convincing and revolutionary. History does not repeat itself, but if we *turn our back* on it, and, considering the first Kornilov insurrection, say to ourselves: "Aha! if only the Kornilovians begin again": What wonderful revolutionary strategy this is! Exactly like "go where you are pushed!"

Perhaps, we say, the Kornilovians will once more choose a bad time to begin. Isn't this a powerful "argument"? What a serious foundation for proletarian tactics?

Just suppose that the Kornilovians may have learnt something? Suppose that they *wait* for famine riots, the breaking of the front, the surrender of Petrograd, and only *begin* at that time? What then?

It is suggested that we base the tactics of the proletarian party on the chance of the eventual repetition by the Kornilovians of their old mistakes!

Let us forget what the Bolsheviks have shown hundreds of

times, what has been proved by six months of revolution ; let us forget that there is not and cannot be any other solution than the dictatorship of the Kornilovians or of the proletariat ; let us forget this, deny it all, and wait. Wait for what ? Wait for a miracle ; wait for the development of events, which happened so uncontrollably and stormily from April 20 to August 29, to take place suddenly (owing to the prolongation of war and increase of famine) at the peaceful, calm, legal sitting of the Constituent Assembly and the carrying out of its legal decisions.

Here we have real " Marxist " tactics ! Wait, ye starving, Kerensky has promised to call the Constituent Assembly together !

" . . . There is nothing in the international situation, considered as a whole, which obliges us to take immediate action ; rather we would damage the cause of the socialist revolution in the West, if we get ourselves shot. . . ."

This argument is really wonderful : Schiedemann and Renaudel themselves would not be able more cleverly to exploit the sympathy of the workers who wish for the success of the international socialist revolution.

Just consider : under the most difficult conditions, with only Liebknecht (and he still in prison), with no papers, no freedom of meeting, no soviets, in spite of the unchangeable hostility of *all* classes of the population, even including the better-off peasants, to the idea of internationalism, in spite of the superior organisation of the upper, middle and lower class imperialist bourgeoisie, the Germans, that is the international revolutionary Germans, workers disguised as sailors, have been able to organise an insurrection in the Fleet.

And we, who have dozens of papers, freedom of meeting, a majority in the soviets ; we, international proletarians, who, compared to our comrades all over the world, are in an exceptionally favourable position, we would refuse to support, by our own insurrection, the German revolutionaries. We would reason like the Schiedemanns and the Renaudels, would say : " It is better not to attempt a rising, for if we get shot, the world will lose reasonable, model internationalists, incomparable in fact ! "

Let us show our wisdom. Pass a motion of sympathy for the German insurgents and keep down insurrection in Russia. This

will be reasonable, well-thought-out internationalism. And how rapidly will internationalism flourish in the world if this wise counsel triumphs everywhere ?

The war has worn out and tortured the workers of every country. In Italy, in Germany and in Austria, revolutionary explosions are becoming more and more frequent.

We alone, with our soviets of workers and soldiers' deputies, *let us alone wait!* . . . Let us betray the interests of the German internationalists as we are betraying the Russian peasants who, by their rebellion against the great landowners, are calling upon us to arise, too, against the Kerensky government.

Let the clouds of the imperialist conspiracy of plutocrats of all countries roll up to overwhelm the Russian revolution ; we shall quietly wait till capital has crushed us with its billions. Instead of making an attack upon the conspirators and breaking their ranks with the victory of the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies, let us wait for the Constituent Assembly which, if it is called conscientiously by Kerensky and Rodzianko, will triumph by means of the permission to vote of all the international plotters. Why should we doubt the good faith of Kerensky and Rodzianko ?

“ . . . But we have 'everybody' against us ! We are isolated. The Central Executive Committee, the Menshevik-internationalists, and also the *Novaia Zizn* have issued and will issue proclamations against us ! ”

A splendid argument indeed ! It is precisely by this isolation that we have won the sympathies of the people. It is by it that we have won the soviets, without which the insurrection could not have been either sure or speedy. Now, let us profit by the fact that we have won the soviets, *by also passing, ourselves, into the ranks of hesitation*. What a magnificent fate for Bolshevism !

The whole policy of the Liber-Dans and the Tchernovs, as well as that of the S.R.'s and left-wing Mensheviks has been composed of *nothing but hesitations*. The masses are moving *towards the Left*. These two facts: the movement of about 40 per cent. of the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s into the Left camp, and the peasant rebellion, are in an obvious and undubitable connection.

But it is precisely the nature of this connection which reveals the abysmal apathy of those who are now bewailing the fact that

the Central Executive Committee, rotten as it is to the core, or the Left wing S.R.'s and other perpetual hesitators have pronounced themselves against us. If we are to have a *real* political comparison we must view these hesitations of the petit-bourgeois leaders—Martinov, Kamkov,¹ Soukhanov,² and others, in relation to the peasant rebellion.

On whose side are we? With the handful of irresolute leaders at Petrograd who have only *indirectly* expressed the evolution of the masses towards the Left, and who, at each move Leftwards went shamefully lamenting and wavering and apologising to the Liber-Dans, Avxentiev and consorts—*or are we with the masses who have themselves moved to the Left?*

It is in this way, and only in this way, that the question must be faced.

As the Martovs, Kamkovs and Soukhanovs have betrayed the peasant rebellion, it is proposed that we, revolutionary internationalists, should follow their example. That is, in short, the essence of the policy of those who are advising us to imitate the left-wing S.R.'s and the Menshevik-internationalists.

We have always said that the best way to help hesitators is to stop hesitating ourselves. These brave petit-bourgeois Left-wingers hesitated to pronounce for the coalition! We brought them in behind us in the end because we did not hesitate ourselves. And events justified our action.

By their hesitating doubts and fears these gentlemen were losing the revolution. We alone saved it. And now shall we become feeble when hunger is knocking at the gates of that Petrograd which Rodzianko and company are preparing to surrender?

“ . . . But we have not even a solid contact with the railwaymen and post-office workers. Their official representatives are the Planson.³ Now, is it possible to win without the railways and the post on our side? ”

Always the same refrain! The Liber-Dans one moment, and

¹ Leader of the Left S.R.'s.

² Internationalist Social Democrat, of the *Novaia Zizn*.

³ Populist and defensist. The Central executive committee of the railwaymen comprised 18 S.R.'s, 6 Mensheviks, 4 Social Democrats, 1 Cadet, &c., and only 2 Bolsheviks out of 40 members. But it had to remain neutral in the events of October because of the attitude of the rank and file of railwaymen.

the Planson the next: But have the *masses* displayed the slightest confidence in these people? Have we not kept on pointing out that these leaders are betraying the *masses*? Have not the masses detached themselves from these chiefs and come over to us, in the Moscow elections as well as in the soviet elections? Or is it by any chance that the rank and file of railwaymen and post-office workers are not suffering from the famine? Are they not on strike against the Kerensky government? And, before February 28 did we have a contact with these Trade Unions? This was the question which a comrade asked the "pessimist." The latter replied alleging that it was impossible to compare the two revolutions. But this answer only reinforces the position of the questioner. For the Bolsheviks have spoken thousands of times (and not so that it should be forgotten just before the decisive moment) of the long preparation of the *proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie*. The main feature of the political and economic life of post-office and railway Trades Unions has been precisely the separation of the proletarian elements of the rank and file away from the petit-bourgeois and the bourgeois upper strata. The important fact is not that we should get "contact" in advance with these two Trade Unions; it is that only the victory of the proletarian and peasant revolution can give satisfaction to the rank and file of the railwaymen and post-office workers.

" . . . At Petrograd we have two or three days' bread supply. Can we give bread to the insurgents? "

This is one of the innumerable remarks of the sceptics (who may always "doubt," for they cannot be refuted in any other way than by experience). It is one of those remarks by which blame is laid on the innocent.

As a matter of fact it is Rodzianko and company, as a matter of fact it is the bourgeoisie, who are preparing the famine and speculating upon the stifling of the revolution by famine. There is not and there cannot be another means of escaping the famine than by the insurrection of the peasants against the great landowners in the country, and the victory of the workers over the capitalists in the towns and cities.

Otherwise, it is *impossible* to take the cereals from the rich, to transport them despite the sabotage of the rich, to break the resistance of the corrupt officials and of the profiteers, and to establish

a rigorous control. This much is proved by the history of the organisations and of the food policy of the "Democratic" regime, which never wearied of complaining about the sabotage of the capitalists ; to which it only opposed tears and supplications.

There is no force in the world, save that of the victorious proletarian revolution, which is capable of passing to *revolutionary action*, instead of being restricted to weeping and prayers. And the more the proletarian revolution is postponed, the more prolonged are the hesitations of those who are in perplexity and disarray—the more this revolution will exact great sacrifices ; the more difficult will it be to organise the marketing and distribution of bread.

Slackening down in the revolution means death—this is the answer to those who, in face of growing disorganisation and the increasing famine, have the mournful courage to *dissuade* the workers from rising in revolt: (that is to say, *to advise them to wait and to put their trust once more in the bourgeoisie*).

" . . . The situation on the front no longer involves danger. Even if the soldiers conclude an armistice on their own initiative there will be no great harm done. . . ."

But the soldiers will not conclude an armistice. To conclude an armistice State power is necessary, and it is impossible to obtain this without insurrection. The soldiers will *run away*—that is all. This much is indicated by all reports coming from the front. It is impossible to wait without running the risk of helping Rodzianko to come to an understanding with Kaiser Wilhelm and without contributing to the complete disorganisation of the army. For if the soldiers are reduced to despair (and they are not far from it) they will run away in a body and abandon everything.

" . . . But if we seize power and do not obtain either an armistice or democratic peace, perhaps the soldiers will not consent to a revolutionary war. What could we do then ? "

This is an argument that recalls the proverb: that an idiot can ask ten times more questions than can be answered by the concerted wisdom of ten wise men.

We have never denied the difficulties which proletarian *power* will be up against during the imperialist war. Nevertheless we have *given our sanction* to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor

peasants. Can we possibly renounce our principles now that the moment of action has arrived ?

We have always said that the dictatorship of the proletariat in any one country creates immense changes in the international situation, in its economy, in the situation and state of mind of the army—shall we then “forget” all this now and allow ourselves to be frightened by the difficulties of the revolution ?

“ . . . The masses, according to general opinion, have no ardent desire to fight. Amongst the signs which justify pessimism we must also place the growing circulation of the ultra-reactionary Press. . . . ”

All things appear naturally yellow to those who are afraid of the bourgeoisie. In the first place they substitute for the Marxian criterion an intellectual-impressionist criterion. They replace the political estimation of the development of the class struggle and of the general march of events on an international scale, with subjective impressions on the state of mind of the masses ; but *they forget that the firm line of the Party, its unshakable decision, is also a factor* in forming this state of mind ; especially at the decisive moment of the revolution. It is sometimes very convenient for responsible leaders to forget that, by their vacillation and their propensity to burn what they worshipped yesterday, they are themselves creating hesitations in certain sections of the masses.

In the second place—and this is most important at the present moment—people without character forget to add, when mentioning the state of mind of the masses, that, “according to general opinion,” this state of mind is concentrated and anxious.

That, “according to general opinion,” the workers would rise as one man on the appeal and for the defence of the soviets.

That, “according to general opinion,” the state of mind of the masses is only confined to despair and that the growth of anarchy is nothing but the result of this state of mind.

That, “according to general opinion,” there exists amongst the class-conscious workers a marked aversion to going out into the streets only for demonstrations, for a partial struggle—because the feeling is in the air that a general battle is approaching and not a

partial struggle ; because the futility of strikes, demonstrations and isolated pressure has been understood and recognised by all.

And so on.

If we approach the study of the state of mind of the masses from the point of view of the whole development of the class struggle and the political struggle, as well as of the whole course of events during these six months of revolution, we shall clearly see how people terrified by the bourgeoisie have false perspectives. The present point of view is not that of April 20-21, of June 9, of July 3, for then there existed a *spontaneous effervescence* that we, as a Party, did not take advantage of (April 20) ; or that we restrained and transformed into a peaceful demonstration (June 9 and July 3). For we knew quite well at that time, that the soviets were not yet on our side ; that the peasants *still* believed in the Liber-Dan-Tchernov method and not in the Bolshevik method (insurrection) ; that, moreover, we could not have had the majority of the people with us ; and that, consequently, insurrection would have been premature.

At that time the idea of the final decisive battle had not seized the mind of the majority of thinking workers ; not a single party committee even considered the question. As for the partly-conscious masses, they had not yet been thrown back on their own resources, they had not yet the courage of despair. They were seized with a spontaneous *effervescence*, with the simple hope that an "intervention," or even simply a demonstration, would suffice to "influence" the Kerenskys and the bourgeoisie.

Now, for an insurrection something entirely different is required. What is necessary is, on the one hand, the deliberate, firm, and unshakable decision of men who have decided to fight to the very end ; and, on the other hand, the silent despair of the masses *who feel* that henceforth half-measures will not bring salvation, that it is impossible to "influence" the government, that the starving will "sweep all away, will break down everything, even anarchically," if the Bolsheviks do not know how to lead them in the decisive struggle.

Now, it is precisely to this concentrated state of mind of thinking men, and to this almost desperate hatred of the masses against

the capitalists and factory-owners who are closing down their factories—it is to this state of mind that the development of the revolution has led the workers and peasants.

This fact also explains the “ success ” of the blackguards of the ultra-reactionary press who are serving up to the people a counterfeit of Bolshevism. The monarchists are rejoicing as they see the approach of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; but it has always been thus in all revolutions—this is absolutely inevitable. And if we allow ourselves to be frightened by this fact, we must give up, not only the hope of insurrection, but also the proletarian revolution itself. For, in capitalist society, this revolution cannot develop without calling forth the wicked joy of the monarchist clique who hope to have good fishing in troubled waters.

Intelligent workers know perfectly well that the monarchists are working hand in glove with the bourgeoisie, and that the decisive victory of the proletariat (which the petit-bourgeois do not believe in; which the capitalists fear; which some avowed revolutionaries wish for, in the hope that the Bolsheviks will not be able to keep power)—this victory, they know, will definitely annihilate the monarchists. And they know that the Bolsheviks will maintain power and will be able to use it for the greatest good of war-weary and war-shattered humanity.

In fact, is there a man in possession of his mental faculties who can doubt that the Rodziankos and the Souvarines¹ are acting in connivance, sharing rôles with one another?

Have not the facts proved that Rodzianko is leading Kerensky by the nose and that the “ National Printing Press of the Russian Republic ” (don't smile!) is printing, at the expense of the Princess, ultra-reactionary speeches made by monarchists in the Imperial Duma? Has not his fact been revealed even by the flunkeys of *Dielo Naroda*? Has not the journal of the great Tsarist landowners, the *Novoie Vremia* itself supported at all elections the candidature of the Cadets?

Did we not read yesterday that industrial commercial capital (non-party, of course!) has subsidised the Cadets to the extent of a mere 300,000 roubles?

Considered from the class point of view and not from the sentimental point of view, the whole of the ultra-reactionary press

¹ Monarchist, editor of the *Novoie Vremia*.

is only a *branch* of the firm of " Riabouchinsky, Miliukov & Co. " Capital buys up the Miliukovs, &c., on the one hand, and on the other the ultra-reactionaries.

There is no other method than by the victory of the working class to put an end to the scandalous poisoning of the public mind by the reactionary press.

And why should we be astonished if the war-weary and war-shattered people are eagerly absorbing reactionary poison ? Is it possible that, in capitalist society on the verge of bankruptcy, despair should not be spread abroad amongst the oppressed masses ? And cannot the despair of the masses, amongst whom unthinking elements are numerous, find a form of expression in the steady consumption of all kinds of poison ?

The position of those who, in speaking of the state of mind of the masses, invest these latter with their own weakness is untenable. The masses are divided into conscious elements awaiting their time and unthinking elements ready to fall into despair ; but the masses of the oppressed and starving are not hesitant and weak.

" . . . Moreover, a Marxist party should not reduce the question of insurrection to the level of a military plot. . . "

Marxism is an extremely profound and complex doctrine. Consequently it is not astonishing to meet constantly, amongst those who are breaking away from Marxism, with quotations from Marx which seem to confirm their arguments—especially if these quotations are made in bad faith.

A military plot is pure Blanquism, *if* it is not organised by the party of a determined class ; *if* the organisers of it have not justly estimated the correct moment in general and the international situation in particular ; *if* they have not on their side the sympathy (proved by deeds) of the majority of the people ; *if* the course of the revolution has not destroyed the illusions and the hopes of the petty bourgeoisie in the possibility and the efficacy of the method of conciliation ; *if* the organisers of the " plot " have not conquered the majority of the organs of revolutionary struggle recognised as " plenipotentiary " organs, or occupying, like the soviets, an important place in the life of the nation ; *if* in the army (when the thing happens in war-time) there is not a determined hostility against a government prolonging an unjust war against the will of

the people ; *if* the slogans of insurrection (such as " All Power to the Soviets," " The Land to the Peasants," " Immediate Democratic Peace to all Belligerent Nations," " Annulment of Secret Treaties and Secret Diplomacy," &c.)—if these slogans have not acquired the widest diffusion and the greatest popularity ; *if* the advanced workers are not convinced of the desperate situation of the masses and assured of the support of the country workers (a support proved by an important peasant movement or by a widespread insurrection against the landlords and the government which is defending them) ; finally, *if* the economic situation seriously allows hope in a favourable solution of the crisis by peaceful methods and the parliamentary way. . . .

I think that is enough, is it not ?

In my pamphlet "*Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power ?*" (which I hope will appear any time now) I have made a quotation from Marx which has a real connection with the question of insurrection, and fixing the rules of insurrection considered as an " art."

I am willing to bet that if the croakers who are now shouting against the military plot were invited to explain the difference between the " art " of armed insurrection and a military plot to be condemned from every point of view, they would only be able to repeat what has been said above, or else they would disgrace themselves and call down upon themselves the general scorn of the workers. Just try it and see, " Marxists of failure " !

Do sing us a little song *against* the " military plot " !

POSTSCRIPT

The preceding lines were already written when I received, on Tuesday evening at eight o'clock, the Petersburg Sunday papers, amongst which was the *Novaia Zizn*, in which I read Bazarov's article. M. Bazarov states that " in the town a manuscript sheet is being circulated in which two noted Bolsheviks pronounce themselves against armed action."

If this be true, I beg the comrades whom this letter cannot reach before Wednesday to *have it printed* as quickly as possible.

It was not intended for publication ; it was only a discussion with the party members with whom I am in correspondence. But if the heroes of the *Novaia Zizn* (who voted for the Bolsheviks on the day before yesterday, and for the mensheviks yesterday, and

who have almost succeeded in bringing the two together in the famous Unity Congress)—if these heroes, who do not belong to our party, and whom we have chided time after time for their contemptible weakness, if such individuals receive a manuscript from the members of our party who are agitating against the insurrection—we cannot possibly remain silent. We must ourselves agitate for the revolt. Let the anonymous writers be definitely revealed and punished, if only by the mockery of all conscious workers, for their shameful hesitations. I have at my disposal only an hour before sending this letter to Petrograd, and that is why I shall indicate in a few words only one of the “arguments” of the mournful heroes of *Novaia Zizn*. M. Bazarov is trying to reply to the argument of comrade Riazanov who has said, quite truly, that “the insurrection is being prepared by those who are creating despair and indifference amongst the masses.”

The mournful hero of a sad cause replies:—

“Have despair and indifference ever conquered?”

O contemptible idiots of the *Novaia Zizn*! Do they know of any cases in the history of insurrection when the oppressed masses have won in a fight to the death without being reduced to despair by long sufferings and acute crises of every kind?

When have the masses not been disgusted and made indifferent by the servility of pre-parliaments, by tramping about on the Square of the Revolution, and the manœuvres of the Liber-Dans reducing the soviets, organs of *power*, to the rôle of talk-shops?

Or is it indeed a fact that the imbeciles of the *Novaia Zizn* have by any chance discovered indifference amongst the masses on the question of the Daily Bread, on the continuance of the war, and the return of the land to the peasants?

FINIS

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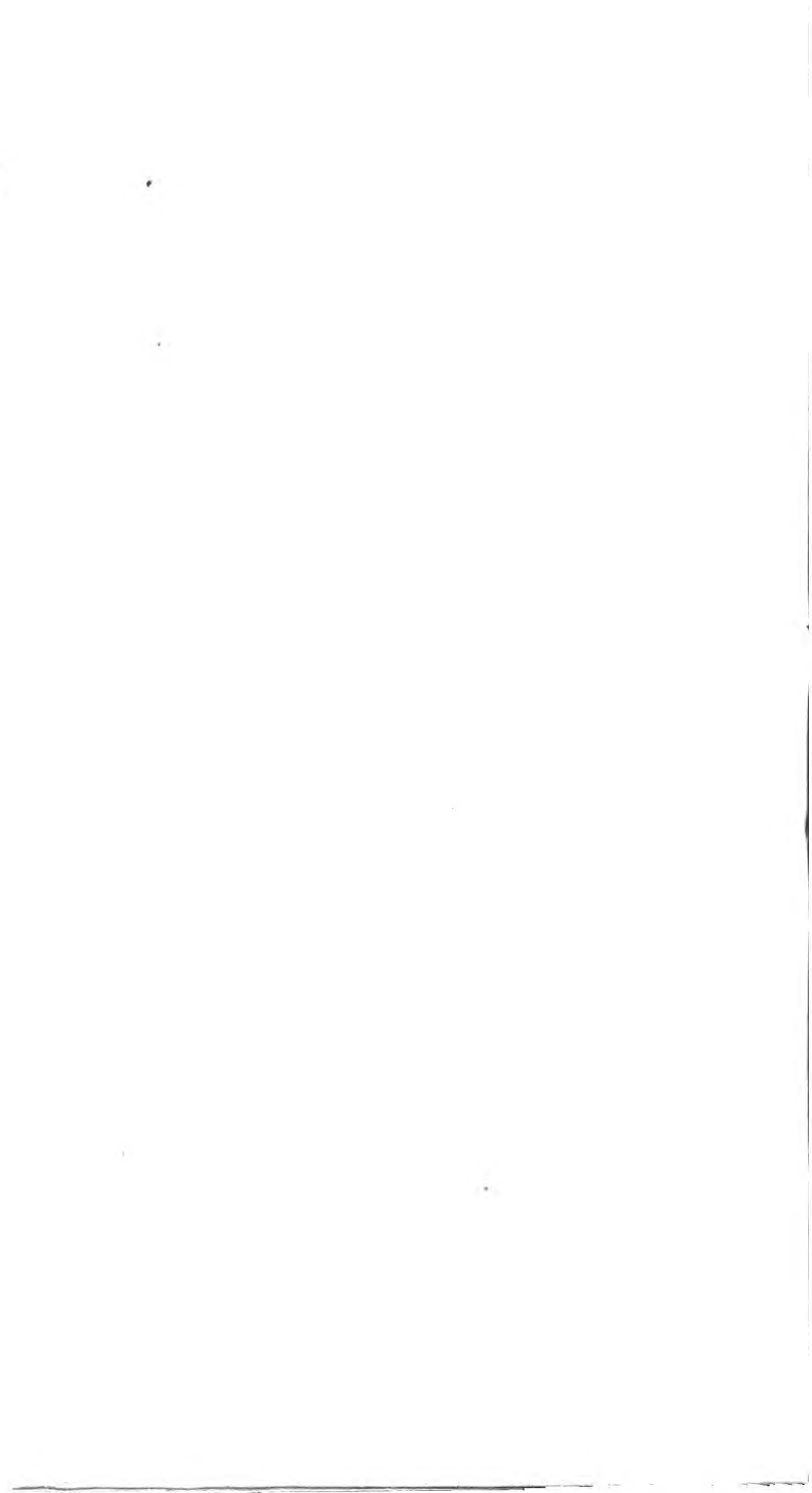
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