The Proletarian Revolution in Russia

By Louis C. Fraina

I.

The Russian Revolution is an incomparably mightier event than any previous revolution; larger in scope and deeper in ultimate meaning than the French Revolution. It is not, as yet, the Social Revolution; but it marks the *start* of the revolution of the proletariat against Capitalism. Internally, the Russian Revolution pursues a class policy in accord with the interests and requirements of the revolutionary proletariat; internationally, in the attitude toward war and peace, it pursues, in the words of Leon Trotzky, "its independent class policy," a policy in accord with the requirements of the international proletariat. In 1914, the Social-Democratic Workers' Party, the Bolsheviki, demanded "the transformation of the imperialistic war into a civil war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and for Socialism." The imperialistic war in Russia has been transformed into a civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; it may yet become the Social Revolution of the international proletariat; if not immediately, surely ultimately.

The prevailing historic situation, acting through the pressure of events and the existence of a class conscious proletariat, has made of the Russian Revolution a proletarian revolution, to the horror and indignation of the pseudo-Marxists who dogmatically insist that Russia is ripe *only* for a bourgeois revolution. But life itself answers dogma.

The insistence upon Russia being ripe only for the bourgeois revolution ignores a number of factors that completely alter the problem, creating a new historic situation which alone is the determining consideration.

The central factor is the existence of Imperialism, which not only makes a national democratic revolution of the bourgeoisie in itself incompatible with the requirements of modern Capitalism, but which equally makes Europe *as a whole* ripe for the immediate revolutionary struggle for Socialism. Imperialism determines Capitalism in a reactionary policy; but, simultane-

ously, it creates the conditions under which the proletariat may express its revolutionary action for the overthrow of Capitalism.

The bourgeois democratic revolution is not an indispensable necessity at all stages of the development of Capitalism; it occurs at particular stages and under certain conditions, and may be dispensed with, as was the case in Germany. Imperialism negates democracy, projecting a new autocracy necessary to maintain the proletariat in subjection, expressing the requirements of concentrated industry, and indispensable in the armed struggles produced by imperialistic competition. Without a class conscious proletariat in Russia, there would in all probability have been no revolution; the situation, after the abortive revolution of 1905, was shaping itself as in Germany, where the imperialistic bourgeoisie compromises with and accepts autocracy as an instrument for promoting its brutal class interests. The requirements of Imperialism are incompatible with bourgeois democracy, with the paltry democracy of the bourgeoisie in its earlier "liberal" era. What other meaning is there in the international reactionary trend *away* from democracy and *toward* autocracy?

Imperialism, moreover, means, generally, Capitalism at the climax of its development, Capitalism ripe for the introduction of Socialism. The Western European countries are ripe for the Socialist community: they have that material basis in the maturity of the industrial development of Capitalism which is indispensable for the establishment of Socialism. Russia, geographically and economically, is an integral part of Europe; this being the case, the introduction of Socialism in Europe generally would necessarily, under the historic conditions, mean the Socialist community in Russia. This is precisely what the Bolsheviki meant by "a civil war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and for Socialism." Not in Russia alone, but throughout Europe, the revolutionary proletariat is called to action, Russian revolutionary Socialism using its power and strategic position to arouse that international class struggle which would transform itself into the Social Revolution. Two forces are necessary to establish Socialism—the material, Capitalism in

the fullness of its development of the forces of production; the dynamic, a revolutionary, class conscious proletariat. The material force exists in West Europe, but not in Russia; the dynamic exists in Russia, but, as yet, not in West Europe. Now consider Europe as one great social arena, as it is in fact. The revolutionary energy of the Russian proletariat, uniting with the impulse of a war that is developing intense revolutionary currents, may conceivably arouse the European proletariat for the Social Revolution. The Social Revolution of the proletariat is an international revolution; and it is precisely the international aspirations of the Russian Revolution, in its Bolshevist phase, that is a proof of its proletarian character.

The proletarian revolution in Russia marks a complete break with the traditions and the ideology of the past. To compare it with previous revolutions is to miss the significance of its fundamental character. There are no historic standards by which to measure the proletarian revolution in Russia; it is making its own history, creating the standards by which alone it and subsequent proletarian revolutions may be measured. The circumstance is pivotal in interpreting the course of events in Russia and the meaning of this first general revolution of the proletariat.

In the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* Marx declares that bourgeois revolutions hark to the past for inspiration; the old figures and ideology appear as means to intoxicate people with their revolutionary task. At one moment, the French Revolution is cloaked in the forms of the Roman Republic; at another moment, in the forms of Roman Empire. Cromwell and the English people drew from the Old Testament the figures and the ideology for their bourgeois revolution. But, says Marx, "the Social Revolution [of the proletariat] cannot draw its poetry from the past, it can draw that only from the future. It cannot start upon its work before it has stricken off all superstition concerning the past. Former revolutions required historic reminiscences in order to intoxicate themselves with their own issues. The revolution [of the proletariat] must let the dead bury their dead in order to reach its issue. With the

former, the phrase surpasses the substance; with this one, the substance surpasses the phrase."

It is only in appearance, accordingly, that the Russian Revolution and its stages are comparable with previous revolutions. In one stage alone is this comparison actual, and that is the first stage, when, the proletariat having made the revolution, the bourgeoisie seized power for its own class purposes,—as in previous revolutions. But this stage was the initial one: the subsequent stages are stages of a proletarian revolution, creating its own modes of action and its own standards. The Russian Revolution marks the entry of a new character upon the stage of history—*the revolutionary proletariat in action;* it means a new revolution, *the Proletarian Revolution;* it establishes a new reality, the imminence of the Social Revolution, *the transformation of the aspiration for the Social Revolution into a fact of immediate, palpitant importance to all the world.*

Nor can the proletarian revolution in Russia be compared with the Paris Commune. The Parisian proletariat had neither the numbers, the class consciousness, the organized revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat; nor did it break completely with the superstitions and ideology of the past. Industrial development in France at that period had not produced a mass of unskilled workers, mere appendages of the machine, that typical proletariat which constitutes the revolutionary class in Capitalism, and which is the bone and sinew of the revolutionary movement in Russia. In spite of Russia being still largely a peasant community, its industry is substantial; and, moreover, is large scale, concentrated industry, producing a large mass of typical and potentially revolutionary proletarians. The Parisian proletariat, again, did not act in conjunction with the rest of France; nor did it operate in a generally revolutionary situation such as prevails in Europe to-day. The conditions of Imperialism develop a revolutionary epoch: and Russia may act as the signal for the *general* proletarian revolution.

The moderate Socialist who considers Socialism a process of gradually transforming Capitalism, of "growing into" Socialism,

will not favorably consider the proletarian revolution in Russia, or will consider it simply in the light of the success or failure of its aspirations on peace. But if the European proletariat does not respond to the revolutionary call to action, then the proletarian revolution in Russia becomes a phase in the development of the general revolution; the struggle will break out anew to-morrow. The Social Revolution may have to become a series of revolutionary struggles, alternately weakening Capitalism and strengthening the proletariat, ending finally in the overthrow of Capitalism. The Social Revolution is a process, not an ultimate act alone: but it is a *revolutionary* process. The value of the revolutionary struggle against Capitalism lies in the development of the consciousness and action of the proletariat; in the intensity of its antagonism to capital; in the moral and physical reserves it acquires for action in the days to come. In this sense, the Russian Revolution means the *start* of the Social Revolution, the emergence of the international proletariat into a new revolutionary era. "The bourgeoisie," says Heinrich Laufenberg, "born in the Revolution, maintaining itself in a struggle against the Revolution, can only be overcome by the Revolution." The overthrow of Capitalism is accomplished, not through the development of institutions but through the development of proletarian consciousness, action and class power.

II.

The entry of Russia into the war in August, 1914, decreed by the government of the Czar, was the signal for a great outburst of patriotic enthusiasm among the bourgeoisie, which allied itself with the Czarism all along the line. Instead of using the war in the struggle against the autocratic regime, the bourgeoisie used it to promote Imperialistic interests. The Russian bourgeoisie was no longer revolutionary: it had become imperialistic; and this circumstance was a determining issue in the course of the revolution.

The Revolution of 1905 supplemented the earlier abolition of serfdom in creating the partial conditions for the development of capitalistic industry. The bourgeoisie acquired new powers and

influence, and a new ideology. Industry developed in great proportions, absorbed from without and reproducing all the features of large scale, concentrated industry. The industrial technology, not being developed slowly from within but acquired full-grown from without, did not reproduce normally all stages of the historical development of Capitalism. One consequence of this was that a large industrial middle class never developed in Russia, that class of industrial petty bourgeois which historically is the carrier of democracy and revolution. The Russian bourgeoisie was the bourgeoisie of Big Capital, of trusts and financial capital, in short, of modern Imperialism. You had these two extremes: on the one hand, backward, undeveloped peasant production; and on the other, the typical concentrated industry of imperialistic Capitalism.

The inner conditions of Russian Capitalism required the intensive development and exploitation of the home market. But this would necessarily mean two things: the end of low wages and a revolutionary struggle against the Czarism. The bourgeoisie rejected this policy, mortally afraid of the consequences it might have in arousing the strength and revolutionary class consciousness of the proletariat. The home market was allowed to remain largely undeveloped; and the bourgeoisie embarked upon a policy of export trade, exploiting Asia Minor, Persia and the Far East, and making loans and investments in "dying empires"—in short, Imperialism. This was a policy which had no revolutionary consequences, and that promised, immediately, larger profits than the intensive development of the home market. But it also meant the end of the bourgeoisie as a liberal and revolutionary force, it meant immediately and ultimately a compromise with the Czarism.

The revolution of 1905 marked the turning point of this development. During this revolution, betrayed and maligned by the "liberal" forces, the bourgeoisie beheld the spectre of a proletarian revolution, of a revolution that might not persist within the limits of bourgeois interests, and that might turn against the bourgeoisie,—as has actually been the case. The danger was too palpable: why take risks, particularly when the policy of Imperialism offered an apparently easy way out? But such are the contradictions of Capitalism, that the bourgeoisie inevitably digs its own grave no matter which way it may turn. The new policy had momentous consequences. It made the bourgeoisie reactionary; moreover, it assisted in clarifying the class consciousness of the proletariat by constituting it *the* revolutionary force. Prior to the revolution of 1905, the political prisoners were dominantly bourgeois intellectuals; after, they were dominantly proletarians.

The significance of Russian Imperialism in the course of the revolution should not be confused because of the fact that Imperialism generally means the maturity of the industrial development of Capitalism. Events are not interpreted simply by formulas. Japan is imperialistic in its policy, and yet it is not a fully-developed industrial country. The prevailing historical situation and modifying factors are of the first importance. The development of concentrated industry in Russia produced a mass of surplus commodities and of surplus capital, which had to be disposed of; to be sure, this could have been done internally, but that would have required the development of the home market, with revolutionary consequences; the Russian bourgeoisie, accordingly, chose the policy of export trade and Imperialism. The social consequences were identical with those in other countries: the liberals and intellectuals generally became lackeys of Imperialism; democracy and liberal ideas were accepted within the limits of the new autocracy necessary to promote the interests of the imperialistic bourgeoisie. All social groups, on the whole and essentially, except the proletariat, became reactionary and counter-revolutionary.

The imperialistic bourgeoisie, accordingly, enthusiastically accepted the war against Germany and Austria, and for the Dardanelles, Constantinople, Asia Minor, and the promotion of its imperialistic interests generally as against the Imperialism of Germany. But their hopes of a profitable victory lagged, as the corrupt and inefficient beaureaucracy of the Czar bungled the management of the war. Defeat, instead of victory, stared the imperialists in the face. The bourgeoisie tried through extra-parliamentary means to avert the collapse. This was not sufficient. There was no decline in the patriotic enthusiasm of the bour-

geoisie, but their representatives in the Duma began to criticize the policy of the government,—a criticism, mark you, strictly within the limits of legality, parliament and the existing system. Not only was the criticism not at all revolutionary, it was distinctly counter-revolutionary. The bourgeoisie, represented by the Cadets and the Octobrists, did not want a revolution, nor did they want an overthrow of the Czarism; their policy insisted upon an aggressive war against Germany, upon bourgeois representation in the government, upon an international policy in accord with the Imperialism of Britain and France. With the support of British-French capital and the governments of the Entente, the bourgeoisie plotted to compel the abdication of the Czar and to put in his place the Grand Duke Nicholas, after repeated, futile attempts to make the Czar recognize the prevailing situation and accept the guidance of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois policy was not revolution: it was intrigue, a palace revolt.

III.

While the war was not producing victory for the imperialistic bourgeoisie of Russia, it was producing an increasing and agonizing mass of misery among the workers and peasants. Just prior to the declaration of war, the proletariat was entering upon a new revolutionary phase, consisting of aggressive mass action and general strikes. During the war itself, the workers refused to yield up their independence and action; strike after strike was declared in war industries, bitterly suppressed equally by the Czarism and the bourgeoisie. These strikes, supplemented by the general Socialist opposition to the war, and particularly by the aggressive agitation for a civil war carried on by the Bolshevist groups[1], developed intense revolutionary actions and consciousness. Each strike, each mass action, was beaten down, but the totality of results was the weakening of the Czarism and the strengthening of the proletariat, which turned to its own activity in revolutionary mass action. Then came that sweeping unity of general means into one mighty, revolutionary mass action of the workers of Petrograd which overthrew the government. The bonds of authority were broken. The soldiers and peasants acted in harmony with the Petrograd workers, and the revolution was on.

[1]There was a vital, a fundamental difference in the oppositional attitude of the Bolsheviki, on the one hand, and the Mensheviki and Social Revolutionists—a difference in policy that persisted into the revolution and determined the antagonisms between the two groups. "The opposition of the bourgeois classes to czarism—upon an imperialistic foundation, however, had, even before the revolution, provided the necessary basis for a *rapprochement* between the opportunist Socialists and the propertied classes. In the Duma, Kerensky and Tscheidse built up their policy as an annex to the progressive *bloc*, and the Gvozdyevs and Bogdanovs merged with the Gutchkovs on the War Industry committees. But the existence of czarism made an open advocacy of the government-patriotism standpoint very difficult. The revolution cleared away all the obstacles of this nature. Capitulating to the capitalist parties was now called "a democratic unity," and the discipline of the bourgeois state suddenly became "revolutionary discipline," and finally, participation in a capitalist war was looked upon as a defense of the revolution from external defeat."—Leon Trotzky, "The Farce of Dual Authority,' in the Petrograd *Vperiod* of June 15, 1917.

The fact must be emphasized that it was the workers of Petrograd that made the revolution; it was their action that acted as a signal for the general uprising of the soldiers and peasants. The bourgeoisie did not participate in the making of the revolution; its contribution was the passive one of not opposing the workers and soldiers. The bourgeoisie was between the devil and the deep sea: its efforts to compromise with the Czarism had failed miserably, and it feared the revolution. It was forced to allow events to take their course. While the workers of Petrograd were fighting in the streets, making the revolution at the cost of their lives, the Cadets and the bourgeoisie generally acted as spectators; and when the fighting was over, they accepted the accomplished fact of revolution and tried to control it in their own class interests. The Czar abdicated in favor of one of the Grand Dukes; this was acceptable to the bourgeois representatives, but the revolution had gotten beyond their control, and they realized the wisdom of abandoning the plan for a "constitutional" monarchy, and temporarily, at least, becoming republicans.

This first stage of the revolution is identical with and yet dissimilar to the earlier, bourgeois revolutions. It is identical in this, that the bourgeoisie does not make the revolution but steps in and tries to control its course and policy; it is dissimilar, in that the

antagonism of the proletariat to the bourgeois policy is not disorganized, inchoate, unaware of means and purposes: but organized and disciplined, the instincts of the masses unerringly pointing the way to future action, in spite of immediate hesitations, compromises and defeats. The significant fact was the immediate formation of *two* governments: the government of the bourgeoisie, the imperialistic Provisional Government of Milyukov-Gutschkov; and the government of the revolutionary masses, the Council of Soldiers and Workers. Immediate antagonisms developed between these two governments, antagonisms that acted as an educator of the masses and as a means of converting the general revolution into a revolution definitely of the proletariat and proletarian peasantry.

It was a fortunate coincidence of events that the revolution occurred in the midst of an imperialistic war, in which world power was at stake. Under these circumstances, the bourgeoisie could not conceal or compromise its class interests: *the imperialistic war had to be continued;* the masses wanted peace, and it was through the issue of peace, which could not be avoided or compromised, that class antagonisms developed acutely and aroused the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. In the normal times of peace, it would have been much more difficult to drive on the bourgeoisie to the fatal conclusion of its class policy, it would have been much more difficult to deliver the masses from the deceptions and ideology of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the war developed the potentiality of the European Social Revolution, without which the proletarian revolution in Russia might never develop or become smothered in its own isolation. **The issue of** peace assisted mightily in accomplishing the work of clarification; and while at first peace concealed the sharper class antagonisms, the course of events proved to the masses that *peace itself was a class issue:* the imperialistic bourgeoisie and its democratic sycophants wanted war, the proletarian and peasant masses wanted peace. "Peace, land and liberty" was the slogan of the Revolution; the Milyukov-Gutschkov government promised land and liberty—in the future; while it prepared to wage a new and more aggressive war. This government accepted the Czar's obligations

with the Allies; it differed from the old regime only in this, that instead of the Czarism waging the war, the bourgeoisie was to wage a war in the interests of Imperialism. But the masses acted again, and the government of Gutschkov-Milyukov was overthrown, because of its imperialistic peace policy. The Council of Workers and Soldiers acted as the centre of the great demonstrations which brought the downfall of the first Provisional Government.

The Council constituted itself as the active representative of the revolutionary masses. But it consisted, as yet, of the old revolutionary opposition: it did not express the new revolutionary activity and requirements. The Council dared not assume power, it dared not act aggressively. The split between the masses and their intellectual representatives widens; and this process becomes vital in the revolutionary course of events. The Council realized the immense task it had to perform, but shrank before the immensity of the revolutionary requirements.

The Council appeals to the proletariat to overthrow their imperialistic governments, and allows the imperialistic bourgeoisie to assume power; it calls for the proletarian revolution in Europe and acquiesces in the formation of a new coalition government; moreover, it allows its leaders, Tscheidse, Skobeleff, Tseretelli, Tchernov, to participate in this government *together* with representatives of the bourgeoisie. The Council hesitates; and out of hesitancy comes compromise. It imagines that the course of the Revolution may be determined by interminable discussions among the intellectuals: it acts only under pressure of the revolutionary masses. It talks revolution, while the government acts reaction. It takes refuge in proclamations, in discussion, in appeals to a pseudo-theory, in everything save the revolutionary action of the masses directed aggressively to a solution of the pressing problems of the day. They who had always preached Socialism now shelve Socialism as a problem of the future. Where revolutions do not act immediately, particularly the proletarian revolution, reaction appears and controls the situation; and the formerly revolutionary representatives of the masses accept and strengthen this reaction. Once revolutionary ardor cools, the force of bourgeois institu-

tions and control of industry weights the balance in favor of the ruling class. Revolutions march from action to action: action, more action, again action, supplemented by an audacity that shrinks at nothing,—these are the tactics of the proletarian revolution. The revolution seizes power and uses the power aggressively and uncompromisingly; it allows nothing to stand in its way save its own lack of strength. But the Council hesitates and compromises until the day comes when the accomplished fact of reaction stares it in the face. The Council hampers and tries to control the instincts and action of the masses, instead of *directing* them in a way that leaves the initiative to the masses—developing that *action* of the masses out of which class power arises. Acquiring prestige through its criticism of the government, the Council lacks the revolutionary policy and consciousness of assuming full governmental power when the criticism is converted into the necessity of action. Instead of action—phrases; instead of Revolution—a paltering with the revolutionary task.

On May 2 the Council of Workers and Soldiers might have constituted itself the government in place of the overthrown Milyukov-Gutschkov regime. Its failure to act accordingly marked the decline of its power and influence *as then constituted*: the task of the Council now became that of revolutionizing itself, of discarding its old policy and personnel. And this revolutionary process could develop only out of the masses, not out of the Council's intellectual representatives: these representatives had to be thrust aside, brutally and contemptuously.

IV.

The Council of Soldiers and Workers, in its dominant expression and activity, gradually became the representative of a vague democracy. "The unity of all democratic elements!"—this was the slogan of the new coalition government. But democracy under the conditions of Imperialism is an instrument of reaction, useful and necessary in misleading the masses. The government, in alliance with the Council, tried to revive the war spirit of the people by speaking of a "democratic war," of a war "to defend the revolution." But under the conditions every action toward

war was counter-revolutionary, as the war was waged in alliance with French-British Imperialism, strengthening the bourgeoisie of Russia and its imperialistic interests. A war to defend the revolution could be waged only after the bourgeoisie and the social-patriotic "democratic" elements were excluded from the government; only a revolutionary war, waged by a revolutionary government for revolutionary purposes could constitute a war "to defend the Revolution." The moderate Socialists in control of the Council, whose Socialism expressed nothing more than a liberal democracy, developed under the pressure of the situation into a conservative and counter-revolutionary force. The Council was united with the government in its essentially reactionary policy. The influence of the leaders of the Council with the masses was used to mislead the masses and to support the bourgeois policy of the government. The only way out was to break the coalition—and this the Council, at this moderate stage, dared not attempt.

But the revolutionary aspirations of the masses developed increasingly, and the Council was rent in a violent struggle between the revolutionary forces represented by the Bolsheviki (Lenine, Zinovieff, Kameneff, and Trotzky who, although not a Bolshevik, adopted their program) and the moderate forces, represented by the Social-Revolutionists and the Mensheviki (Tscheidse, Skobeleff, Tseretelli, Tchernov).

The Social-Revolutionists represented the peasantry, not the mass of agricultural workers, but largely the middle class peasantry, under the domination of the bourgeois ideology. They represented that conservative middle class which in previous revolutions had always acted against and betrayed the proletariat. The interests of this class of peasants moved within the orbit of the bourgeois regime of property, and its representatives acted accordingly.

The Mensheviki represented the dominant Socialism, that moderate Socialism which directed the International straight to disaster; and which, moreover, had become, in the words of Trotzky, the greatest obstacle to the revolutionary development

of the proletariat. The Mensheviki represented those social elements which everywhere have dominated organized Socialism—the intellectuals, liberal democrats, small traders and the lower bourgeoisie, and above all, skilled labor, which everywhere is a reactionary force in the councils of Socialism. The ideology of this group was a bourgeois ideology; it mistrusted the masses and their action, it tried to limit the revolution within the circle of legality and parliamentary action. It used the masses only when it considered action necessary, which was only when its own petty purposes were in jeopardy: the masses were a tool to be used or discarded at will; any independent action of the masses was discouraged, and suppressed if necessary.

The Bolsheviki, on the contrary, constituted the party of the industrial proletariat; in the words of Nikolai Lenine, the "class conscious workers, day laborers, and the poorer classes of the peasantry, who are classed with them (semi-proletariat)." It was the proletariat of unskilled labor which constituted the strength of the Bolsheviki, that unskilled proletariat which is *the* revolutionary class in modern society. Skilled labor in Russia, as in other countries, was conservative; unskilled labor actually or potentially revolutionary. One of the most interesting chapters of the proletarian revolution in Russia will consist of precisely this struggle between skilled and unskilled: it is a fact of the utmost importance in the action and reconstruction of Socialism. The Bolsheviki were in active and continual contact with the masses, developing that general mass action and power out of which revolutions arise and develop uncompromisingly.

The Bolsheviki constituted an actual revolutionary movement, not a group of intellectuals and mongers of dogmas. They worked out a program, a practical program of action meeting the revolutionary requirements of the situation in Russia. Revolutions do not rally round dogmas, but programs. The sense of reality of the revolutionist is expressed in this, that he translates his revolutionary aspirations into a revolutionary program in accord with the historic conditions, and which can rally and unite the masses for action and the conquest of power. Revolutions make their own laws, their own programs. Revolutions are the great educator and developer of class consciousness and action. It is the great merit of the Bolsheviki that they were revolutionists *in action,* using the prevailing situation to educate the masses and develop their consciousness and revolutionary struggles.

The great problem of the Revolution was the problem of *state power.* It was a crucial problem, and it split the Council of Workers and Soldiers. The moderate majority wanted a coalition government with the bourgeoisie; the Bolshevist minority adopted as their slogan, "All power to the Councils!" In view of the moderate domination of the Council, it may be asked why should the Bolsheviki wish to turn all power over to an organization in which they were a minority? In a way, this disposes of the slurs and slanders hurled at the Bolsheviki, of the charge that their's was a "rule or ruin" policy. Anton Pannekoek has answered the question: "This, however, was perfectly logical. A body representing exclusively peasants and workers would be compelled to take such economic measures required for those classes independent of theories, and do what we wish it to do—if only it is separated completely from a coalition with the bourgeoisie in the interests of the latter." In this, again, the Bolsheviki trusted the masses, placed their faith in that action of the proletariat which in a crisis is instinctively revolutionary. The class struggle and class action, separate and distinct from all other social groups, is the inescapable condition of revolutionary Socialist policy.

The revolutionary solution of the problem of state power, of the exclusion of the bourgeoisie and propertied interests generally from the government, was indispensable for the solution of the other problems of the Revolution: of the division of the land, of the organization of industry, of peace, of converting the revolution in Russia into a proletarian revolution as a preliminary to the Social Revolution in Europe.

Of this problem of state power, Lenine spoke as follows shortly before his departure from Switzerland for Russia:

"As to the *revolutionary organization* and its task, the conquest of the power of the state and militarism: From the praxis of the

French Commune of 1871, Marx shows that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made machinery of the state as built by the bourgeoisie, and use this machinery for its own purposes. The proletariat must break down this machinery. And this has been either concealed or denied by the opportunists. But that is the most valuable lesson of the Paris Commune and of the Revolution in Russia of 1905. The difference between us and the Anarchists is, that we admit the state is a necessity in the development of our Revolution. The difference with the opportunists and the Kautsky disciples is, that we claim we do not need the bourgeois state machinery as completed in the 'democratic' bourgeois republics but the *direct power of armed and organized workers.*"

The program of the Bolsheviki in its essential features was as follows:

1. The Council of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants constitutes the actual revolutionary government; the dictatorship of the proletariat.

2. Immediate confiscation of landed estates without compensation; the peasants must at once seize the land and organize in Councils of Peasants' Delegates.

3. Measures for the control of production and distribution by this revolutionary government. The nationalization of monopolistic organizations of Capitalism, manufacturing syndicates and the banks. Repudiation of national debts.

4. The workers shall immediately take possession of factories and operate them in conjunction with the technical staffs. Co-operation between the industrial proletariat and the proletarian peasantry.

5. The Council of Soldiers and Workers declares that as a revolutionary government it does not recognize any treaty of Czarism or the bourgeoisie; it publishes immediately these treaties of exploitation.

6. It proposes at once and publicly a truce to all participants in

the war; peace negotiations should not be carried on by and with bourgeois governments, but with the proletariat in each of the warring countries.

7. Peace terms to be liberation of all oppressed peoples and of all colonies; a revolutionary peace dictated by the proletariat.

8. A declaration of distrust in all bourgeois governments; appeal to the working class to overthrow those governments.

The international character of the Bolshevist program was emphasized by Lenine in these words: "Historic conditions have made the Russians, *perhaps for a short period,* the leaders of the revolutionary world proletariat, but Socialism cannot now prevail in Russia. . . . The main result will have to be the creation of more favorable conditions for further revolutionary development, and to influence the more highly developed European countries into action. . . . When in November, 1914, the Russian party demanded, 'transformation of the imperialistic war into a civil war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and for Socialism,' this demand was considered ridiculous by social patriots, as well as by those who constitute the 'center.' . . . The changing of the imperialistic war into a civil war has already started. Good luck to the proletarian revolution in Europe!" Lenine has, moreover, insisted all along that the Bolsheviki, acting in accord with the class conscious proletariat, would be willing to wage a revolutionary war if necessary for the accomplishment of their program.

This was the policy and action that the Bolsheviki urged upon the Council, and which was rejected by the Mensheviki and moderates generally.

The moderates argued that the proletariat was not strong enough of itself to direct the revolution; that Russia with its mass of peasantry and primitive industrial development was not yet ripe for Socialism, and, accordingly, the bourgeoisie was necessary in the revolution. The Bolsheviki argued against this that the proletarian revolution was a process which might consist of a series of revolutionary struggles; that the decisive factor was

the *power* of the proletariat, and that it was necessary to stir the European proletariat into action. Moreover, the Bolsheviki organized a campaign to split the peasantry, to align the proletarian peasantry with the revolutionary workers. This peasantry was itself divided. It consisted of owners of land, petty proprietors, and an agricultural bourgeoisie created by the agrarian reform program of Stolypin which dissolved the old peasant community—a group obviously realizing its interests in a bourgeois agrarian policy along the lines of capitalist accumulation; but, on the other hand, there was a mass of men expropriated from the soil, agricultural workers and hired laborers, those whom Lenine calls "semi-proletarians." The Bolsheviki tried to secure the support of the mass of the peasantry in this way: The peasants wanted the land, they wanted the abolition of hired labor. Capital, through the banks, had great financial interests in the lands that were to be expropriated without compensation; in case of a partial division on the basis of capitalist property, the financial interests of capital would inevitably secure control of the land, and all the evils of private ownership would prevail: the peasants could not get the land unless through immediate seizure, the abolition of private ownership and the nationalization of the lands and of private banks. This procedure, however, emphasized the Bolsheviki, means a struggle against capital and the bourgeoisie, a general revolutionary struggle that the peasantry can engage in only with the co-operation of the industrial proletariat. This was a program that split the reactionary *bloc* of the peasantry, and that gradually but surely aligned the mass of agricultural workers with the industrial workers.[2]

[2] A short reflection on these demands [of the peasants, for the expropriation of the lands without compensation, and the abolition of private ownership and of hired labor] will show the absolute impossibility of securing the aid of the capitalists in their realization—in fact, the impossibility of avoiding a break with the capitalists, a determined and merciless struggle with the capitalist class, in short, a complete overthrow of their rule. In fact, the confiscation of all private ownership in land means the confiscation of hundreds of millions of bank capital, with which these lands, for the most part, are mortgaged. Is such a measure conceivable unless the revolutionary plan, by the aid of revolutionary methods, shall break down the opposition of the capitalists? Besides, we are here touching the most centralized form of capital, which is bank capital, and which is bound by a million threads with all the important centers of the capitalist system of this great nation, which can be defeated only by the equally well-organized power of the proletariat of the cities. . . . Only the revolutionary proletariat can actually carry out the plan of the impoverished peasants—Nikolai Lenine, "Workers and Peasants," in *The New International,* February, 1918.

The program of the Bolsheviki implied a gigantic task of agitation, organization, and action,—a task before which the Mensheviki and Social-Revolutionists shrank into conservatism. But the Bolsheviki buckled down to the task in earnest and uncompromisingly: unite the proletariat and the proletarian peasantry by means of this practical program of co-operation, and a revolutionary government was feasible, excluding any representation for the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviki initiated an intensive propaganda in the Councils in an effort to convert the delegates. But that was not all: they did not depend simply upon the delegates, *but upon the action of the masses,* which more and more adopted revolutionary purposes and tactics in spite of their conservative representation in the Councils. As early as June the Bolshevist program was being put into practice by the peasants, who seized the lands and managed them through the control of local Peasants' Councils. In city after city, the Council of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants declared itself the local governmental authority, repudiated the Provisional Government, and recognized the Council in Petrograd as the only national authority.

The course of events now assumed the form of a struggle in the Council between the right and the left, between the Mensheviki and the Bolsheviki. But the Council was still dominated by the moderates: it was allied all along the line with the Provisional Government, which more and more proved its utter incapacity to solve the pressing problems of the Revolution, being converted into an instrument of the reaction. The Council, represented through its leaders in the bourgeois government, was compelled to assume responsibility for the acts of the government.

The government of Kerensky was in an untenable position: a coalition government was an impossibility in operation. Either it honestly tried to represent both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the revolution and the reaction, in which case it might

talk but could not act, because of the antagonism of class interests; or else, under the pressure of events, it might act, but in the interest of one or the other group. It was no accident of history that the head of this government was Kerensky, an orator, a master of words. Only words, only fine phrases and glittering slogans, could be the expression of an actual two-class government in a revolutionary situation. And where the government of Kerensky acted, it fatedly acted against the revolution. Where revolutions do not act, they are submerged in a welter of words. If the revolutionary class shrinks before the task of assuming power and reorganizing society, the ruling class inevitably acts in the interest of reaction. Every day that passed in the making of phrases and without action was a defeat for the Revolution. The policy of phrases makes for reaction. The slogans of the Revolution may be used and assimilated by the time-serving politicians of the bourgeoisie and moderate Socialists: its *action,* never.

Under the coalition government, industry was demoralized, the bourgeoisie using its ownership of industry to starve the proletariat and paralyze the Revolution by locking out the workers and sabotaging industrial production. Agriculture was demoralized, because the government dared not carry out the revolutionary task of expropriating and distributing the lands, as this task antagonized the interests of the bourgeoisie represented in the government. These bourgeois representatives sabotaged any revolutionary measures of the government, when pressure compelled the government to act, which was rarely. The task of internal reorganization could be undertaken either by a strictly bourgeois government, which would have meant a reorganization dominantly in the interest of the bourgeoisie; or by a strictly revolutionary Socialist government, which would have meant a reorganization in the interest of the proletariat and proletarian peasantry. Where the government paltered on the land question, the Bolsheviki told the peasants, "Seize the lands immediately, and organize agriculture through your Councils." Where the capitalists used industry to strike at the Revolution, the Bolsheviki told the workers, "Seize the work-shops, and organize and manage production through your own efforts and the technical staffs."[2]

The Provisional Government wanted the problems of the Revolution settled by the Constituent Assembly, and kept postponing the convening of the Assembly. The Council, dominated by the moderates, acquiesced in this paltering policy designed to cut the ground from under the Revolution. The Bolsheviki insisted upon action—the immediate revolutionary action of the masses.

The test of action, of power, was inescapable. The revolutionary impatience of the masses increased in the measure that the Provisional Government evaded the necessity of action and adopted an international policy that allied new Russia with the Imperialism of Great Britain, France and Italy. The Kerensky government did not simply palter on the issue of peace: it actually repudiated peace, and secretly conspired with the governments of the Allies to continue an imperialistic war. Not only were the secret agreements of the Czarism not published and repudiated[2], but the Provisional Government itself used secret diplomacy in making arrangements of its own to continue the war with the Allies. Words promised peace, but acts constituted war. The policy of trying to influence the governments of the Allies to revise and re-state their war aims was not only a futile and bourgeois policy, but it was insincere in that secretly the Provisional Government plotted war. The Mensheviki and Social-Revolutionists accepted this policy: they contributed to the delusion of a war for democracy,—a war "to defend the Revolution": but *which* revolution? In the first flush of the Revolution, the moderates in the Council appealed to the proletariat to break with their imperialistic governments; but gradually this revolu-

[2] In the matter of publishing the secret treaty agreements, as in other matters, the Kerensky government took its cue from the Allies. In a secret telegram to the Russian Charge d'Affairs in Paris, dated September 24, 1917, Tereschenko, Kerensky's Foreign Minister, said: " . . . a publication of a treaty which is generally known would be completely misunderstood by public opinion and would only give rise to demands for the publication of the agreements which had been concluded during the war. The publication of these, and especially of the Rumanian and Italian treaties, is regarded by our allies as undesirable. In any case we have no intention of putting difficulties in the way of France or of placing Ribot in a still more painful position . . . no obstacles will be placed in the way of publishing all agreements before or during the war, in the event of the other Allies who are parties to them consenting."

tionary policy was abandoned, and the Council co-operated with the infamous gathering of the social-patriots at Stockholm, against the protests of the Bolsheviki, who insisted on co-operation only with revolutionary Socialism. It required only this to emphasize the non-revolutionary character of the Council as dominated by the moderates, that they joined hands with Schiedemann and the social-patriots of all countries.[4] Moderate Socialism acted as the *comis voyageur* of bourgeois diplomacy.

This was the policy of reaction dominating the Council of Workmen and Soldiers, which had become identified with the government and its willing tool. When on June 23 the masses of Petrograd, aware of the counter-revolutionary trend of events, decided upon a formidable demonstration, the moderates in the Council declared violently against the proposed action. In the Council itself, Tseretelli accused the Bolsheviki of intentions to overthrow the government by *armed force*. Tseretelli had become counter-revolutionary, had constituted himself the guardian of the authority of a government that betrayed the hopes of the masses and that secretly plotted war with other imperialistic governments. *Overthrow the government by armed force!* Is this not a method of revolution? What an accusation, what a terrible indictment, coming from a man who cloaked himself in the garb of the revolutionist, who had himself applauded the use of that armed force which overthrew the Czarism! The accusation of Tseretelli is an historic one—it is an expression of the complete moral and revolutionary bankruptcy of the moderates in the Council.

The proposed demonstration was abandoned. This apparent victory heartened the government. It yielded to the pressure of

[4] One of the secret documents published by the Bolshevist government shows the true character of this Stockholm Conference. It is a telegram dated August 18, 1917, from the Russian Ambassador in Stockholm to the Provisional Government, reporting a conversation with Branting, who declared that he was willing to drop the Conference if Kerensky considered it untimely, and that Branting would use his influence with the Dutch-Scandinavian committee to this end. The telegram concludes by asking secrecy and not compromising Branting, as otherwise a valuable source of information would be lost. A Socialist Conference the willing tool of diplomacy! No wonder the Mensheviki fraternized with Scheidemann and Branting at Stockholm!

the Allies for an offensive, and this offensive was organized and decided upon secretly. It was kept a secret from the Russian people, at a time when the Allied capitals knew about it. On July 1 the offensive was launched, was temporarily victorious, and it was then that the Russian people were informed. But the counter-attacks came, and the offensive, as was natural, was smothered in its own impotence. Under the circumstances, the offensive was sheer murder of the Russian soldiers, who were unprepared. But the Council, in spite of an increased opposition vote, approved of the government and its offensive. Although the government was bent on war, it knew that an offensive was as yet impossible; it launched the premature offensive as a diplomatic trick, under pressure of the Allies and in order to secure their financial assistance. The Bolshevist organ *Pravda* openly asserted this character of the offensive.[5] And, to be sure, the Provisional Government under the circumstances was dependent upon the Allies, not alone because of its bourgeois war policy, but because it needed money to carry out the policy. The money could have been secured by expropriating the wealthy, and by taxing industry heavily; but the government was not of a character to adopt this policy. And so the Russian soldiers were sacrificed,—in the interest of imperialism and the counter-revolution.

In spite of its failure, the July offensive had important results. It strengthened the reaction; it aligned the moderates in the Council more firmly with the government: Council and government became more thoroughly one and reactionary. The sinister forces of the imperialistic bourgeoisie indulged openly in counter-revolutionary activity. The Cadets, emboldened, challenged the Revolution on the autonomy granted the Ukraine, and resigned from the government.

But, simultaneously, the masses were aroused, determined upon

[5] "On June 27 a meeting was held in the Russian headquarters, attended by Brussilov and other Russian generals, Minister Terestchenko, the American Senator Root, the British Ambassador Buchanan and the American General Scott. The decision for an offensive was only taken under strong pressure of President Wilson, who had fixed the as ultimate date July 1, threatening to cut off financial negotiations in case of refusal."—Quoted in *The New International* of October, 1917.

action to defend the Revolution. A demonstration was organized for July 17 in Petrograd. All parties, including the Bolsheviki, tried to prevent the demonstration, the Bolsheviki because they knew counter-revolutionary gangs had been organized to provoke a clash, which under the conditions they considered premature. But the determination of the masses was inflexible, and in spite of all opposition an armed demonstration was decided upon. The moderates abandoned the revolutionary masses to their fate, but the Bolsheviki, realizing the futility of prevention, resolved to abide by the decision to demonstrate. "It would have been possible," said Trotzky, "to deprive the masses of any political guidance, to decapitate them politically, as it were, and to leave them, by refusing to direct them, to their fate. But we, being the Workers' Party, neither could nor would follow Pilate's tactics: we decided to join in with the masses and to stick to them, in order to introduce into their elemental turmoil the greatest measure of organization attainable under the circumstances, and thus to reduce to a minimum the number of probable victims." The peaceful demonstration was converted into an uprising by the armed interference and provocation of counter-revolutionary forces, and after two days of savage fighting the uprising was crushed; and a counter-revolutionary reign of terror ensued. The Mensheviki and Social-Revolutionists actively co-operated with the government in disarming and imprisoning the Bolsheviki, establishing "revolutionary order," and crushing the left wing of the Revolution. This uprising, however, in spite of its defeat, went far toward preserving the Revolution: its temporary defeat assured ultimate victory, and it paved the way for the overthrow of the moderates in the Council, which occurred completely a few months later.[6]

[6] We are at present passing through days of trial. The steadfastness of the masses, their self-control, the fidelity of their "friends," all these things are being put to the acid-test. We also are being subjected to this test, and we shall emerge from it more strengthened, more united, than from any previous trial. Life is with us and fighting for us. . . . We need revolutionary power. The Tseretelli-Kerensky policy is directly intended to disarm and weaken the left wing of the Revolution. If, with the aid of these methods, they succeed in establishing "order," they will be the first—after us, of course—to fall as victims of this "order." But they will not succeed. The contradiction is too profound, the problems are too enormous, to be disposed of by mere police measures. After the days of trial will come the days of progress and victory.—Leon Trotzky, "The July Uprising," in the Petrograd *Vperiod* of July 25, 1917.

The uprising crushed, the Bolsheviki disarmed and imprisoned, the counter-revolutionary forces became active. The Kerensky government decided to hold a Conference in Moscow, out of which could be snatched a mandate for its acts. This conference was completely counter-revolutionary. The Bolsheviki, naturally, were excluded from participation.[7] The delegates were hand-picked, consisting of 400 delegates representing the three Dumas, conservative and reactionary; delegates from industry, science and Zemstvos, and a small minority of Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary representatives of the Councils. Milyukov was active at this Conference, as was General Korniloff, who demanded complete discipline in the army and the re-introduction of the death penalty. The army was again to become an instrument against the Revolution. The Cadets challenged the Councils either to assume full control of the government or else cease their "advisory" function. From the bourgeois as well as from the proletarian standpoint, the coalition government had become an impossibility. But the Mensheviki cravenly avoided the challenge. Tschiedse answered hesitantly: neither a government of the Councils *nor* a dictatorship. Again the moderates avoided action, and again they betrayed the Revolution. The seizure of power was the only way out.

But the masses insisted upon action. The Moscow Conference was a failure from the government's point of view. In his final address to the Conference, Kerensky said: "The Russian Government does not regret having called this Conference, for although it has not secured practical results, it has given an opportunity to all Russian citizens to say openly what they have on

[7] In an article in *Pravda*, Zinovieff points out that the Cadets were at first suspicious of the Moscow Conference, considering it a part of Kerensky's Bonapartist policy, the policy of a dictatorship merging both forces in himself. And this was precisely the purpose of the Conference, although the Cadets finally participated.

their minds. And that is essential for the state." These words epitomize the utter failure, immediately, of the Moscow Conference. But reaction had scored.

And then Kerensky returned to Petrograd, and secretly plotted drastic action against the Revolution. The masses of Petrograd were again restive; the Bolsheviki were dominant, and Kerensky secretly agreed that Korniloff should march on Petrograd, the centre of the proletarian revolution, and crush and disarm the workers completely. The agreement was made, and Korniloff started his march upon Petrograd. But the Council, learning of the agreement, intervened, and the weakling Kerensky, broke his agreement with Korniloff, issuing an order for his arrest. Korniloff refused to submit, and continued his march upon Petrograd, determined to overthrow simultaneously Kerensky and the Council. The Provisional Government was alarmed, and issued an order to the Soldiers' Committees in the army, which it had previously ordered to disband, to arrest all officers in sympathy with Korniloff; the work done, a decree was again issued ordering the committees to disband! Moreover, Kerensky released from prison the workers and Bolsheviki imprisoned after the July uprising, who marched out to fight Korniloff and defeated him. Korniloff was beaten, Kerensky and the moderates in the Councils completely discredited. The aftermath was swift and certain. The Bolsheviki everywhere became ascendant. Kerensky tried a last futile move, and convened a Democratic Congress in Petrograd, which was to constitute a Preliminary Parliament prior to the convening of the Constituent Assembly. Trotzky was elected president of the Petrograd Council of Soldiers and Workers. Tschiedse, Skobeleff and Tsrettelli resigned from the Council. Trotzky appeared before the Democratic Congress and issued a declaration of civil war in the event the government opposed lodging all power in the Councils. The period of compromise was definitely at an end.

But the moderates, who still dominated the Central Committee of the Councils of All Russia, attempted a last maneuvre. They adopted a series of peace terms, specifying concretely the meaning of "no indemnities and no annexations," and which included

a demand for the neutralization of the Panama Canal. The Central Committee, which still placed more emphasis on diplomacy than on revolutionary action, delegated Skobeleff to present these terms as its delegate to the Conference of the Allies at Paris. But the Provisional Government secretly advised the Allies against Skobeleff,[8] and Jules Cambon, of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, declared that "the Allied governments will absolutely refuse to consent to M. Skobeleff's taking part in the deliberations." The rebuff destroyed the influence of the moderates completely. It became clear to the Revolution that the Allies conspired in the interests of Imperialism; that not through diplomatic means, and certainly not through direct and indirect imperialistic conferences at Paris or Stockholm, could a revolutionary peace be assured. The class struggle, nationally and internationally, the struggle against all imperialistic governments and for the Social Revolution, alone is the straight and sure way to a proletarian peace. The use of diplomacy hampers the development of revolutionary action. The allies of revolutionary Russia are not the governments of the Entente, but the proletariat of all nations, united in the uncompromising struggle against Imperialism and for a revolutionary peace. The Bolshevist uprising of November 6, which annihilated the Kerensky government, and organized a *revolutionary proletarian* government of the Councils, with Lenine as Premier and Trotzky as Commissary of Foreign Affairs, was the affirmation of a fact made amply mandatory by the logic of events and of revolutionary Socialism.

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[8] On October 29, Terreschenko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Kerensky government, sent a secret telegram (published by the Bolshevist government) to the Russian Ambassador in London, reading in part as follows: "With regard to your conversation with Balfour, I deem it important to confirm that in our opinion the forthcoming Allied Conference shall have for its problem an appraisal of the present situation and establishment of full solidarity of the views of the Allies with regard to the same. At the same time the Conference should determine the means of further conduct of the war and mutual assistance which the Allies must show to each other. With regard to the participation at the Conference of a person [Skobeleff] having the confidence of our democracy, it is important to bear in mind that this person will be one of the personnel of the Russian government delegation, in whose name only its head will speak officially." This is ample proof that the Provisional Government conspired with imperialistic governments to continue the war and intrigued against the revolutionary democracy.

The rapidity of events should not obscure their developmental character. As a revolutionary process, the proletarian revolution in Russia has developed through all the necessary historical stages. The overthrow of Czarism resulted in the establishment of the imperialistic bourgeois republic of the Milyukov-Gutchkov government. But the frankly imperialistic character of this government was incompatible with the stage on which it operated. Imperialism was undermined by the oncoming proletarian revolution, and Imperialism had to camouflage itself in the colors of radical democracy to promote its purposes and preserve Capitalism. This camouflage assumed the form of the "radical" Kerensky-Menshevist government—the final stage of the bourgeois republic. This is a significant development. That period comes in capitalism when, shaken by the oncoming proletarian revolution, it adopts as a last bulwark of defense the "radical democracy" of the moderate labor and Socialist movement, which is dominantly the movement of skilled labor and the *petite bourgeoisie*. This phenomena assumes the form of "laborism" in Australia, where the "labor" government became the centre of Imperialism and of bourgeois reaction against the oncoming revolution. It seems, apparently, that a similar development may occur in England, where the Labor Party, through its slogan of a "democratic peace," promotes the war, and which, by now allowing all "democratic" social groups within its organization, is rapidly becoming the dominant party to which Lloyd-George may yet relinquish power. The bourgeois *intelligentsia* of England is not only largely complacent about these developments, but actually approves of a potential "labor" government. Democracy serves to promote Imperialism, and democracy may serve to prevent, temporarily, the proletarian revolution. The "radical" bourgeois republic of the Menshevist-Kerensky government was precisely of this character—the final stage of the republic of Capitalism. Pluming itself as revolutionary, it acted against the proletarian revolution; it put pacifism in the service of Imperialism; it incorporated within itself the "radical democracy" of moderate Socialism to mislead the masses and provide Capitalism with a new lease of life. But this final stage of capitalism multiplies the inherent contradictions of Capitalism, and is temporary. The "Socialism" of a bourgeois government is in the nature of things mere camouflage, and being such it acts as a developer of class consciousness and revolutionary Socialism. The moderates of the Council represented in the government had to acquiesce in a bourgeois policy. The proletarian revolution, passing through a series of defeats which alternately weakened Capitalism and strengthened the Revolution, finally annihilated the Menshevist-bourgeois republic. The proletarian revolution in Russia was not an arbitrary seizure of power, as was the Paris commune; it was the consequence of an historical development characteristic of the proletarian revolution as a process.

V.

There are Socialists, for and against the Bolsheviki, who for motives of their own separate the Bolshevist policy into two phases, the internal and the international, agreeing with one and disagreeing with the other, in accordance with the peculiar considerations dominant in their purposes. This constitutes an absurdity,—it is either a negation of Socialist policy or a result of unclear thinking. The policy of the Bolsheviki, internally and internationally, is equally determined by the requirements of the class struggle and of revolutionary Socialism; of the internal requirements of Russia and of the struggle for peace; of the necessity of the Social Revolution in Europe as the climax of the proletarian revolution in Russia.

A central feature of Bolshevist policy in practice is its emphasis on the *mass action* of the proletariat as the dynamic means of promoting the revolution. The revolution cannot operate within the orbit of legality: legality becomes the expression of the accomplished facts of the revolution, not the mechanics of the revolution. Legality is the ideology of the bourgeois; action the ideology of the proletariat. The first requirement is action that will produce accomplished facts,—revolutionary action, and the seizure of revolutionary power. It is a process of action.* Otherwise, the revolution withers and compromises.

* In a report concerning a unification meeting of Socialist groups, published in 1906, Lenine argued against the confiscation of lands as a demand in the party platform. Lenine favored the *seizure* of the lands

This was why the Bolsheviki did not wait for the Constituent Assembly to convene before pressing their demands. The fact of complete revolution had first to be accomplished; and they overthrew the government of Kerensky through the action of the masses.[10] The use of force is not a finality but a process of revolutionary development, of intensifying class antagonisms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not permanent, but temporary: it is a means, a necessary means of pushing on the Revolution to the point where dictatorship ceases because its function has ceased. Not force alone is used against the counter-revolutionary Cossacks: the non-propertied Cossacks are aroused in a class struggle against the propertied Cossacks through organization of a Cossack Soldiers' and Workers' Council; not force alone is used against the bourgeois Ukrainian Rada, but the development of class antagonisms through organization of an Ukrainian Council of Soldiers and Workers. Revolutions are not stationary: they develop and develop through class antagonisms. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January by the government of the Councils was a *developmental* expression of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. The Revolution, declared the Bolshevist decree of dissolution, created the Workers' and Soldiers' Council—the only organization able to direct the

by the peasants; later the constituent assembly would ratify the seizure and "confiscate" the lands. Confiscation is a juridical process, and must be preceded by the *action* of seizure. Plechanov argued against the nationalization of the land, saying this was going back to the Russia of the 17th century. Lenine answered, that nationalization of land under an industrial regime was different from nationalization under an Asiatic form of production. During the Revolution of 1917, the problem of seizure had an immediate importance—the resumption of agricultural production to prevent starvation.

[10] Immediately upon its assumption of power, the government issued the following decrees among others: All factories belong to the workers; confiscation of all lands in favor of the peasants, without compensation, all large properties, church and state domains together with all buildings, tools, livestock, etc., being put at the disposal of local councils; confiscation of coal fields, oil and salt mines, forests and canals, partly in the hands of the central government, partly to be organized by local authorities. Undertaken by a bourgeois government, these measures constitute State Capitalism; undertaken by a revolutionary government, as measures of a dictatorship of the proletariat, they are steps toward Socialism *in the process of the Social Revolution.*

struggle of the exploited classes for *complete* political and economic liberation; this Council constituted a revolutionary government through the November Revolution, after perceiving the illusion of an understanding with the bourgeoisie and its deceptive parliamentary organization; the Constituent Assembly, being elected from the old election lists, necessarily became the authority of the bourgeois republic, setting itself against the Revolution of November and the authority of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils; the old bourgeois parliamentarism has had its day and is incompatible with the tasks before Socialism, hence it was necessary and unavoidable that the Constituent Assembly, necessarily counter-revolutionary, should be dissolved. The use of *armed* and *arbitrary* force is a dynamic process in the dictatorship of the proletariat: it completely annihilates the institutions and ideology of the old parliamentay regime in the midst of its task of creating the institutions and ideology of the regime of communist Socialism.

All democracy is relative, is *class* democracy. As an historical category, democracy is the instrument of a class: bourgeois democracy is the form of expression of the tyranny of Capitalism. The democracy of Socialism annihilates the democracy of Capitalism—relative democracy is superseded by the actuality of the full and free democracy of Communist Socialism. The proletarian revolution does not allow the "ethical concepts" of bourgeois democracy to interfere in the course of events: it ruthlessly sweeps aside bourgeois democracy in the process of establishing proletarian democracy. Capitalism hypocritically insists upon a government *of all the classes;* Socialism frankly institutes the government of *one class—the proletariat*—which means the ultimate end of "government" as hitherto constituted. The Constituent Assembly was an expression of government of the classes; it was, accordingly, necessarily and essentially a reaction against the proletarian revolution.

Moreover, the Constituent Assembly was a phase of the parliamentary regime of the bourgeois republic.[11] The parliamentary

[11] It is said: if the Bolsheviki are against a Constituent Assembly, why did they press its convening, as one of their immediate demands prior to the November Revolution? A measure may correspond to an earlier

system is not an expression of democracy, but of the ruling class requirements of Capitalism. Parliamentarism, presumably representing all classes, actually represents and promotes the requirements of the ruling class alone. The division of functions in the parliamentary system into legislative and executive has for its direct purpose the indirect smothering of the opposition—the legislature talks, and represents "democracy," while the executive acts autocratically. The proletarian revolution annihilates the parliamentary system and its division of functions, legislative and executive being democratically united in one body—as in the Russian Councils of Workers and Peasants. Socialism—and this has been either denied or concealed by the moderate Socialist—abolishes the parliamentary system, substituting a system of the "administration of things," a proletarian "state" functioning through the organized producers.

In the *Communist Manifesto,* Marx and Engels projected a determining phase of the proletarian revolution: "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie; to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state—that is, of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible. Of course, in the beginning this cannot be effected except by means of *despotic* inroads on the rights of property and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production." And in his "Criticism of the Gotha Program" Marx says: "Between the capitalist and the communist systems of society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. This corresponds to a political

stage of the revolution, and not to a later. Proposed measures are dynamic, not static. The November Revolution having organized a revolutionary proletarian government, the Constituent Assembly corresponded to an older set of facts, and was no longer necessary; it had to be dispersed.

transition period, *whose state can be nothing else than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.*" The theory of Marx is the practice of the proletarian revolution in Russia. The dictatorship of the proletariat ruthlessly annihilates the rights and ideology of the old regime, particularly when these are expressed in the activity of a counter-revolutionary moderate Socialism.

It was not a single issue, but the unity of all issues, internal and international, that produced the ascendancy of the Bolsheviki. The issue of peace was a dominating one, because it expressed in an acute form the antagonisms between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Peace, as well as the fundamental internal problems, constituted a class issue, soluble only through uncompromising class action.

The Bolshevist attitude on peace is fundamental and revolutionary. The slogan of a "democratic peace" is a mockery, if the peace is to be concluded by bourgeois governments; a peace concluded in this way, on no matter what terms, even on the terms of no annexations, no indemnities, and disarmament, is not a democratic peace, is in fact an imperialistic peace fundamentally, if it is not accompanied by the overthrow of Imperialism. A world at peace may still be dominated by Imperialism. A democratic peace means simply a peace on the basis largely of the *status quo ante,* an imperialistic status. Moreover, there are nations, such as Great Britain and the United States, whose imperialistic interests are served by a "democratic peace." Great Britain's Imperialism is on the defensive, and its interests would be amply promoted by a democratic peace on the basis of the *status quo ante,* as this would constitute a defeat of German Imperialism. The United States is even more interested in this sort of peace, as American Imperialism is playing the old game of balance of power: neither an aggrandized Germany *nor* an aggrandized Britain, neither a crushed Britain *nor* a crushed Germany. Either eventuality would prove disadvantageous to American Imperialism, hence its slogan of a democratic peace. Socialism, accordingly, aims at a revolutionary peace, *a peace concluded by the proletariat* through its international overthrow

of Imperialism, or through the acquisition of revolutionary reserves for action in the days to come.

A peace of this character means the revolutionary waging of the international class struggle, means the unity of proletarian action against *all* imperialistic governments. The Bolsheviki, accordingly, adopted a policy of appealing to the belligerent proletariat, particularly to the proletariat of Germany. The proposal for an armistice on all belligerent fronts was a means of developing proletarian action, by placing the question of peace before the people, getting the soldiers out of the trenches and encouraging fraternizing. Once an armistic is concluded, and German Imperialism were to hold out for an imperialistic peace, the German soldiers would scarcely return meekly to the trenches, but would turn their guns upon their own ruling class. It is claimed by moderate Socialists and by Socialists whose Marxism and revolutionary spirit have equally atrophied, that the Bolsheviki discarded their policy of discussing peace with the proletariat of Germany by discussing it with German diplomats. Do they imagine for a moment that it is the simplest thing in the world to reach the German workers? Do they imagine that the Bolsheviki expect to make peace with those diplomats, that they are not using the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk as a means of reaching the German workers with the message of revolution? Revolutions are not made in a day; and the resources of the Bolsheviki are equal to using *every* opportunity of reaching the proletariat with their call to revolutionary action. Inflexible in purposes, the Revolution may still, within the limits of these purposes, adopt a flexible policy of action.

The Bolshevist rejection of the German terms of peace is an illustration of their resourceful policy. Their preparations for waging a revolutionary war against Germany, if necessary, are as much a part of their international revolutionary policy as the proposal for a general armistice. Should the Bolsheviki wage a revolutionary war against Germany it would be *their own war* waged for *their own purposes;* it would cease the moment the workers of Germany acted; and it is conceivable that the revolutionary poletariat of Russia and Germany might wage together a

war against world Imperialism. This was not the war Kerensky waged, nor is it a war desired by the Allies. Peace is a means to an end: *the Social Revolution* in Europe. The international policy of revolutionary Russia is to arouse this proletarian response. Every move, every expression of this policy is calculated to promote this response. Without this response there cannot be an actual democratic peace, nor can there be a *permanent* revolutionary Russia.

A revolutionary peace is the indispensable condition for the proletarian revolution in Russia. The moderates in the Councils sensed this vital fact, in a vague way; but their policy, in accord with the moderates among all the belligerents, directly hampered the revolutionary action of the proletariat. How couid one expect the proletariat of Germany to revolt against its government, when revolutionary Russia was directed by a bourgeois-Menshevist government that secretly plotted war and conspired against the Revolution? In Germany, where bourgeoisie and autocracy are one, a revolution would from the start have to be a proletarian revolution. How could the workers of Germany unite with the proletarian revolution in Russia, seeing that the bourgeoisie was represented in the government, and the revolutionary government pursued essentially a bourgeois policy? It was a psychological and political contradiction. The Menshevist-bourgeois republic could not inspire international proletarian action. This was the crucial problem of revolutionary Russia: either the Social Revolution in Europe, or the collapse of revolutionary hopes in Russia.[12]

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[12] This problem was a central one in Bolshevik policy since the Revolution of 1905. In the unification report previously mentioned, Lenine declared that the Russian Revolution has enough power to conquer, but not enough power of itself to maintain its gains and the fruits of its victory. External assistance is necessary from the Socialist proletariat of the West, whom Lenine designated as "revolutionary reserves." In this connection, Lenine placed great faith in the "guarantees" of the German proletariat. The epochal significance of the Bolsheviki policy is that in practically every essential it was formulated during the revolutionary period of 1905, was consistently adhered to in spite of discouragement and the sneers of the right and the centre, and is one reason why its application to Russia to-day is a brilliant performance in applied tactics. In this, as in all other matters, the Bolsheviki are characteristic of revolutionary Socialism, pioneering the Social Revolution.

As the tactics of the proletarian revolution in Russia are synthesized into the general mass action of the proletariat, so its internal and international policy are synthesized into the aspiration and the struggle for the Social Revolution of the international proletariat. The war was precipitated by Imperialism—it must be converted into a struggle against Imperialism; the war was directed against the proletariat—the proletariat must transform it into the Social Revolution.

VI.

The proletarian revolution in Russia marks a recovery from the great collapse of Socialism in 1914, and during the war; but at the same time it emphasizes that collapse. The moderate Socialism that directed the International to disaster and betrayed the proletariat, is again betraying the proletariat through its failure to respond to the revolutionary call to action of the proletariat in Russia. The "moderate" Socialism of Germany, through its infamous Schiedemann, persists in its intrigues to promote the interests of Social-Imperialism, and holds the proletariat in leash. The parliamentary Socialist group in the French Chamber of Deputies issues a long appeal to the workers of Russia, ignoring completely their call to revolutionary action, and imploring them not to make a separate peace—after the Bolsheviki have repeatedly and emphatically declared that they desire a *general* and *revolutionary* peace! The American Socialist Party is silent on the appeal of the Russian proletariat and on the proposal for an armistice; its National Executive Committee meets during the latter part of December, and says *not a word* about solidarity with the Russian revolutionary proletariat and the proposal for an armistice. The American party is allied through its representatives and its policy with bourgeois pacifism as organized in the People's Council, which declares that President Wilson has adopted *its* peace program and which has done mighty effective work to enlist the peace sentiment for the government, and thereby virtually destroyed the peace movement. You say Socialism cannot act as yet? But it could at the least affirm its revolutionary solidarity with the proletariat of Russia. Revolutionary propoganda is itself a process of revolution. The representatives of moderate Socialism are either actively against the Bolsheviki, calling them "anarchists" as did recently the editor of the Stockholm *Social-Demokraten,* and as did the New York *Call* some seven months ago, or they confess an "ignorance" of the situation which not only borders on intellectual bankruptcy, but which in many cases is a contemptible subterfuge to palliate inaction. If during three years of war there was any doubt about moderate Socialism being the greatest obstacle to the revolutionary development of the proletariat, the proletarian revolution in Russia destroys every single doubt. For the Russian Revolution, after having overcome the moderates in its own councils, must now overcome moderate Socialism throughout the world.

And by "moderate Socialism" is meant, not simply the Socialism of the right which acquiesced in war, but equally the Socialism of the centre, which either opposed the war from the start or adopted an oppositional attitude after preliminary acquiescence. It was not simply the Socialism of the right, of Plechanov and his group "Yedinstvo," but equally the Socialism of the centre, of Tscheidse and Tseretelli, that the revolution in Russia had to overcome. This moderate Socialism in the other belligerent nations refuses to act in solidarity with the revolutionary proletariat of Russia. The collapse of the centre is particularly emphasized—that type of Socialism which is neither fish, flesh, nor yet fowl; the representative of an atrophied Marxism, which is neither revolutionary nor of Marx; in the action of which the phrase surpasses the substance; and which, precisely because it labels itself Marxist and uses revolutionary phrases in its criticism of the right, is peculiarly dangerous. Plechanov was not much of a problem to the revolutionary proletariat of Russia; he was ignominously cast aside; but it required much more time and energy to cast aside Tseretelli and Tscheidse. When the proletariat of Germany acts, it will unceremoniously cast aside the Scheidemanns and the Cunows; but it may be directed into the swamps of compromise by the Kaustkys. The proletarian revolution must discard the miserable masters of the phrase and the poltroons in action, as it did in Russia.

The proletarian revolution in Russia, the climax of the war,

marks the entry of the international proletariat into a new revolutionary epoch. In this epoch the Social Revolution is no longer an aspiration, but a dynamic process of immediate revolutionary struggles.

This is an historic fact of the utmost importance. It means the preparation of the proletariat for the revolutionary struggle; it means the necessity of clear-cut action in the activity of Socialism —it means, in short, *the revolutionary reconstruction of Socialist policy and tactics,* in accord with the ineluctable necessity of the new epoch.

There are two vital stages in the development of Socialism—the stage of its theory, and the stage of its practice.

The Communist Manifesto, roughly, marked the first stage. The Manifesto, supplemented by the general theoretical activity of Marx, provided the proletariat with a theory of its historic mission, and developed the understanding of the conditions necessary for its emancipation. This was an epochal and revolutionary fact. The proletariat, a despised and lowly class, was conceived as a class socially the only necessary class, destined to overthrow Capitalism and realize the dream of the ages—social, economic and individual freedom. Itself an oppressed class, the proletariat, through the expression of its class interests, was to annihilate all oppression. The proletariat, through the theory of Socialism, was intellectually made equal to its historic mission—socially, economically and intellectually, the proletariat was a revolutionary class upon which history imposed a revolutionary mission. The actual practice of the movement, however, was conservative, a conservatism determined by the conditions under which it operated: Socialism was only intellectually an essentially revolutionary thing—in ultimate purpose, but not as yet in immediate practice. The genius of Marx, to be sure, projected a general conception of revolutionary practice; but this part of his ideas played only a secondary role in a movement dominated by conservative policy.

The proletarian revolution in Russia, as determined by the practice and program of the Bolsheviki, marks the second vital

stage in the development of Socialism—the stage of its *revolutionary practice.* The epoch of Marx developed the theory of Socialism, the epoch of Lenine is developing its practice: and this is precisely the great fact in Russia—the fact of *Socialism and the revolutionary proletariat in action.* The left wing of the Socialism of yesterday becomes through the compulsion of events *the* Socialism of revolutionary action in the days to come. As Marx is the source of Socialist theory, so the proletarian revolution in Russia is the source of Socialist practice. Its uncompromising spirit, its sense of reality, its emphasis on the general mass action of the revolutionary proletariat, its realization of the deceptive character of the parliamentary regime and the necessity of annihilating that regime, its use of all means compatible with its purposes in the revolutionary struggle—all this and more marks the proletarian revolution in Russia as peculiarly characteristic of the Social Revolution of the proletariat..

The "Socialist" of the right and the centre maintains that even should the Bolsheviki succeed they will fail; the revolutionary Socialist maintains that even should the Bolsheviki fail they will succeed, as it will prove a temporary failure: the proletarian revolution in Russia prepares the international proletariat for the final revolutionary struggle that will annihilate the rapacious regime of Capitalism.