THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE U.S.S.R.



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THE HISTORY
OF THE CIVIL WAR
IN THE U. S. S. R.

FROM NOW ON, A NEW ERA IN THE HISTORY OF RUSSIA BEGINS, AND THIS REVOLUTION, THE THIRD RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, SHOULD, IN THE END, LEAD TO THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM

LENIN

October 25 (November 7), 1917

1917–1922

THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE U.S.S.R.



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THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE U.S.S.R.

2

VOLUME TWO

THE GREAT PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

(OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1917)

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THE GREAT PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION



V. I. LENIN



V. I. LENIN



Chapter One

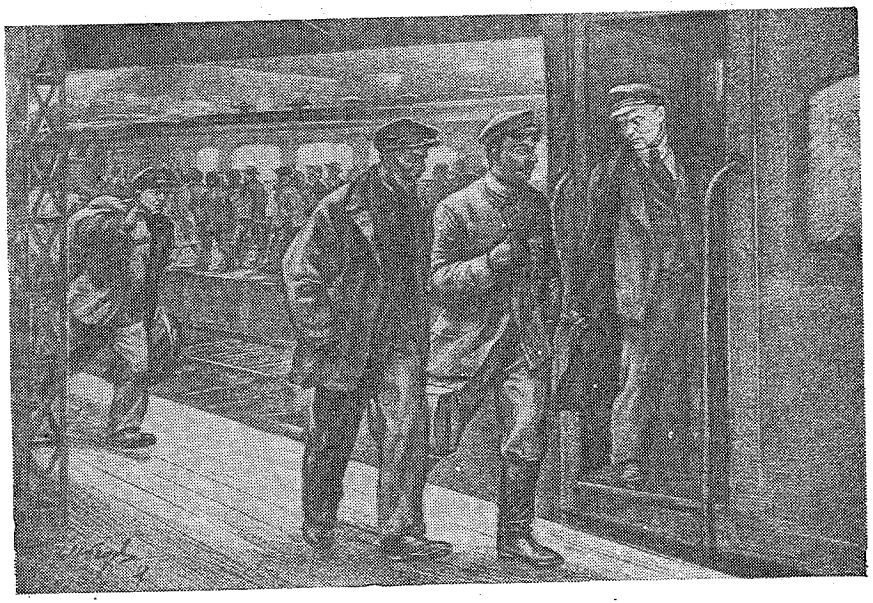
THE CRISIS HAS MATURED

I

LENIN'S CALL FOR INSURRECTION

IT WAS late in the autumn of 1917. At the front, in the cold and muddy trenches, millions of soldiers cursed the Provisional Government and gloomily asked themselves whether they would have to spend a fourth winter under these conditions. At night, in the countryside, the sky was aglow with the glare of conflagrations. The sinister sound of the tocsin was heard. The toiling peasants, having lost all hope of receiving land from the bourgeois Provisional Government, were burning the mansions of the nobility, seizing their lands and sharing their farm property. In the towns, wave after wave of strikes followed in a constantly rising tide. The new revolution was approaching—the revolution which Lenin had foretold, anticipated and prepared for.

After the demonstration in July 1917 was fired upon, Lenin, closely shadowed by counter-revolutionaries, was forced to go into hiding. During the first few days he took refuge in the modest apartment of the veteran



"Before the third bell, Vladimir Ilyich came out on to the platform of the last car. . . ."

From a drawing by I. Lebedev

Bolshevik, S. Y. Alliluyev, at No. 17a 10th Rozhdestvenskaya Street, Petrograd. Here, on the fifth floor, the leader of the Bolshevik Party occupied a small room, containing only one window. The Provisional Government offered a reward for Lenin's apprehension; and since spies shadowed all the prominent members of the Bolshevik Party who maintained contact with Lenin, there was a danger that they might discover his whereabouts. Consequently, on July 11,* Lenin removed to a village near Sestroretsk. He was accompanied to the railway station in Petrograd by Comrades Stalin and Alliluyev.

"Before the third bell," relates Comrade Alliluyev, "Vladimir Ilyich came out on to the platform of the last car. The train moved out, and Comrade Stalin and I stood on the platform watching our beloved leader slowly vanishing into the distance."[1]**

Lenin took up residence at a place near Razliv Station where there was a cottage with barn attached. The barn contained a hayloft access to which was had by means of a steep ladder. A table and chairs were hauled into the loft, and here Lenin took up his abode. But even this place was not safe.

* All dates in this volume are Old Style, unless otherwise stated.—*Ed.*

** For list of references, see Appendices.—*Ed.*

Residents of the nearby village, government officials and army officers, were constantly prowling round the place, angrily discussing Lenin's alleged flight to Germany. So Lenin decided to find a safer hiding place in the surrounding forest. Beyond the station, on the bank of a small lake, there was a secluded glade. The local inhabitants or holiday makers rarely passed this way. A few haymakers lived close by and disguised as one of these and provided with an identity card made out to "Constantine Petrovich Ivanov," Lenin removed to this place. Friends hollowed out a hayrick, converting it into a kind of shack, and this served as Lenin's dwelling. Here he received newspapers and mail. Screened by a bush, and sitting at a fire over which a kettle was suspended, Lenin wrote his articles, which were duly dispatched to Petrograd. Sometimes, in the evening, the splash of oars was heard as representatives of the Central Committee of the Party rowed across the lake to visit Lenin.

One evening Sergo Orjonikidze arrived. He had been commissioned by Comrade Stalin to visit Lenin to receive instructions. Rowing across the lake, Sergo walked through the thick brush and came out on to the glade. A short, thickset man appeared from behind a haystack and greeted him. Orjonikidze would have passed on, but the stranger tapped him on the shoulder and said:

"Comrade Sergo, don't you recognise me?"

Clean-shaven as he then was, Lenin indeed, was unrecognisable.[2]

Sergo spent several hours with Lenin, telling him about the work of the Central Committee.

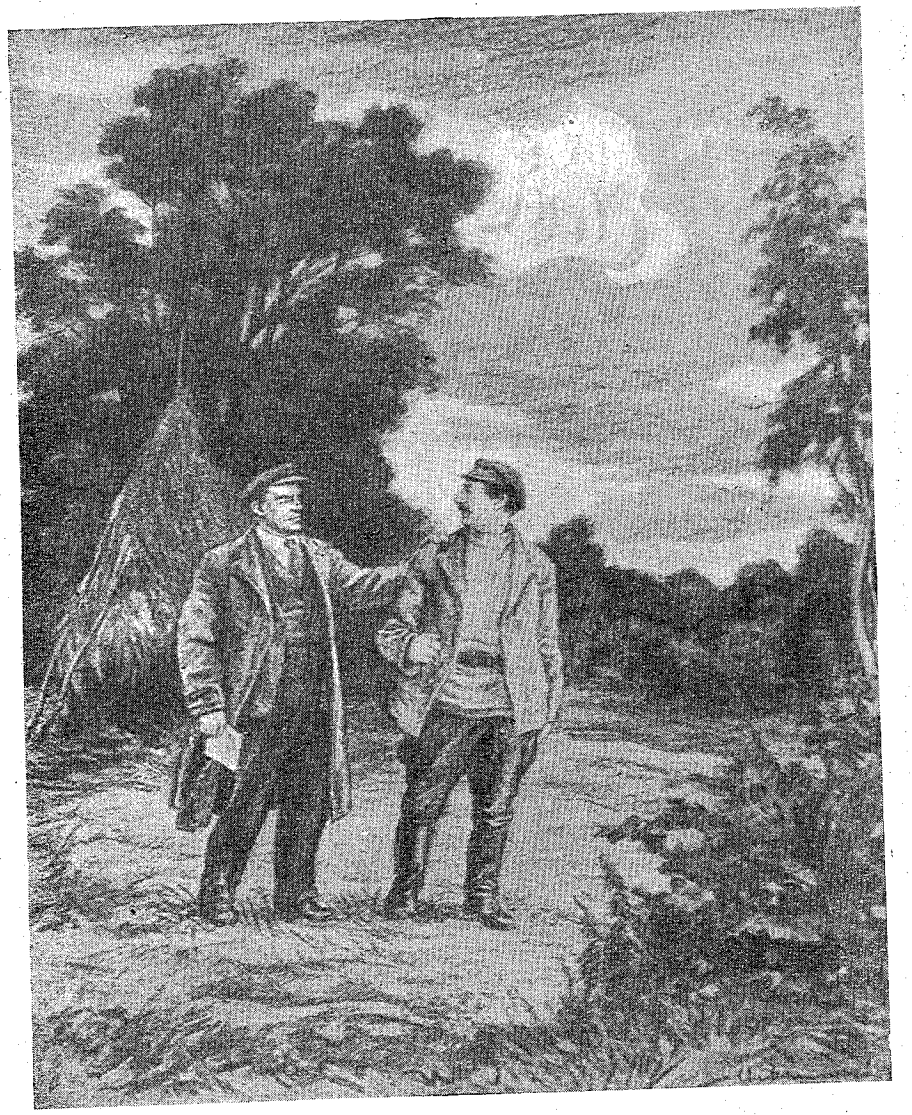
Through Orjonikidze, Vladimir Ilyich sent the Central Committee a series of instructions indicating how they should pursue their operations further.

From this hiding place Lenin steadily guided the proceedings of the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party.

But even in this forest Lenin was not allowed to remain in peace. Government agents scoured the adjacent working-class district. One night Lenin was awakened by the sound of shots in his vicinity, and rifle fire echoed through the woods. "They are on my track," thought Lenin to himself, and leaving the shack, he moved deeper into the forest. But it was a false alarm. It transpired that cadets had surrounded the Sestroretsk Works and had demanded that the workers should surrender their weapons.

At the end of July, the Central Committee of the Party decided that Lenin must be transferred to Finland. The organisation of this was entrusted to Comrade Orjonikidze, who for this purpose enlisted the services of Party members well experienced in underground work.

The plans for the removal were then drawn up. Owing to the close vigilance of the police it was no easy matter to cross the Finnish border. In was first proposed that Lenin should cross the border on foot, but a party sent out to reconnoitre discovered that passports were subjected to a strict scrutiny all along the line, so this plan had to be abandoned. It was then decided to get Lenin across the border on the engine of a local train with the



"Comrade Sergo, don't you recognise me?"

From a drawing by A. Malinorsky

assistance of Hugo Jalava, an engine-driver employed on the Finnish Railway. This suggestion, submitted to Lenin, met with his approval.

The plan of operation was as follows. Lenin with two companions were to go to Razliv Station, whence they were to proceed by train to Udelnaya, near Petrograd. There, Lenin, disguised as a fireman, was to be put on the engine of a train bound for Finland. At the last moment, however, it was decided to shorten the train journey by walking 12 kilometres to Levashovo Station. The way led through a forest and the party proceeded in single file along a narrow, barely discernible path.



Sergo Orjonikidze

Dusk set in and in the gathering darkness the party lost their way and eventually found themselves in the zone of a forest fire. Breathing was difficult owing to the acrid fumes of the burning peat. Wandering about for a long time in danger of stepping into the burning peat at almost every step, they came to a stream and, taking off their boots, waded across, knee deep in water. At last, out of the darkness, came the distant whistle of a locomotive. They pushed on and reached the station about one o'clock in the morning. A single lantern dimly lit up the platform which was thronged with armed students and cadets. Lenin hid in a roadside ditch while his companions went ahead to reconnoitre. One of them was stopped by a patrol who demanded his papers and escorted him to the station office. The raw and inexperienced guards hastened after the man thus detained, leaving the platform deserted. Just then the train came in and Lenin quickly entered the last car. He was immediately followed by his companion, Eino Rahja, a Finnish Bolshevik. The other man was released after his papers were examined.

Late at night Lenin and his companion arrived at Udelnaya Station. At no great distance the sky reflected the lights of Petrograd. They spent the night at the house of a Finnish acquaintance and next day went to the station as had been previously arranged. The train for Finland came in with driver Jalava on the footplate. Jalava took the train to a crossing some distance from the station. There Lenin mounted the engine and taking up a shovel began to work as a fireman.

At Byelo-Ostrov, the border station, the train was met by militiamen of the Provisional Government who, passing from car to car, carefully exam-



„In the gathering darkness the party lost their way and eventually found themselves in the zone of a forest fire"

From a drawing by I. Lebedev

ined passports and scrutinised the passengers. The government's sleuths were already approaching the engine and in another moment would have seized Lenin, but the engine-driver kept his head. He jumped down, quickly uncoupled the engine, and then drove off to take on water. Time passed, the second gong had already sounded, but the engine did not return. The impatient guard ran down the platform blowing his whistle. Only after the third gong did the engine come puffing into the station. Jalava hastily coupled the engine to the train and pulled out towards the Finnish border. Kerensky's sleuths were foiled.

For some little time Lenin lived in the small Finnish village of Jalkala, 12 kilometres from Terijoki. Here, however, he had difficulty in maintaining contact with the Party Centres and it was necessary to seek a refuge for him in town. In Helsingfors a reliable hiding place was found at the house of the chief of the Workers' Militia who acted as deputy Chief Constable, and later was himself appointed Chief Constable. Nobody suspected that this important government official would harbour the leader of the Bolsheviks.

Lenin met his host in the street and together they walked to the house. On reaching the front door Lenin looked up and down the street before entering to make sure they were not being followed. Lenin's first reguest

was for newspapers. He arranged to have all the Petrograd papers delivered to him daily and for the regular dispatch of his correspondence to Petrograd. As soon as he was established in his new quarters he pounced upon the fresh newspapers he found there, quickly perused them and sat down to write. The tired host fell asleep, but the scratching of the pen and the rustle of newspapers were heard for a long time in the silence of the room. On the table in front of Lenin lay a notebook bearing the title *The State and Revolution*. This was the book which he was then engaged in writing, and which became one of the most important documents of Bolshevism.

With great difficulty Lenin was at last provided with the necessary facilities for pursuing his work. Reliable communication was established with the Central Committee of the Party and the regular delivery of newspapers was arranged.

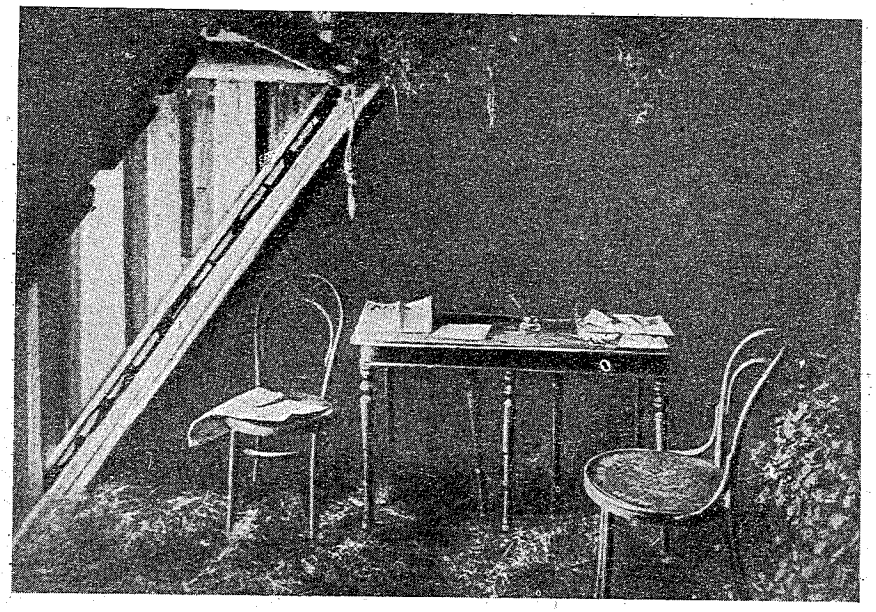
Amidst the trying conditions of an underground existence, and constantly hounded by spies, Lenin carefully watched the unfolding events and noted every step taken by the enemy. He at once perceived

Facsimile of the identity card made out to Constantine Petrovich Ivanov used by Lenin after July days of 1917



the change in the tactics of the bourgeoisie. The counter-revolution had suffered a setback in August 1917, but it had not been defeated. General Kornilov's attempt to restore the monarchy had failed and Kornilov and his accomplices were under arrest, but they had not relinquished the idea of rebellion against the people. On the contrary, after their failure, the Kornilovites hastened to rectify their error. In August they had moved a cavalry corps against revolutionary Petrograd, but now they were mustering a much larger force. Their "prison regime" did not in the least hinder them in their counter-revolutionary activities. Kornilov and the other mutinous generals were "imprisoned" in the premises of the Girls' High School in Bykhov and were guarded by the very same Tekinsky Regiment of the "Savage Division" which had served as Kornilov's bodyguard at General Headquarters. Under this regime and "vigilant" guard, the counter-revolutionary Generals Kornilov, Lukomsky, Markov, Denikin, Romanovsky and the others associated with him in the recent mutiny, could quite undisturbed hatch their schemes for another mutiny.

Dispatch riders hastened one after another from Bykhov to General Headquarters—then in Moghilev—carrying the necessary information. In Bykhov, Kornilov was visited by representatives of the bourgeoisie and banking circles who promised financial assistance. On the pretext of preparing for his trial, Kornilov was allowed to summon any commander from any part of the front he desired. When these arrived they were informed of his plans for another mutiny and instructed to recruit the necessary forces. After a short period he had succeeded in mustering ten times more forces than had been at his disposal in August. He had nearly a quarter of a million men ready to hurl against the people. As was already stated in Volume One of the *History of the Civil War*, Kornilov's forces included 40 special "shock battalions," each consisting of 1,100 well armed men who had been carefully picked by their officers. These battalions were quartered at points extremely convenient for the counter-revolution, mainly on the Northern and Western Fronts. They could easily be moved forward so as to cut off the fronts from the capitals in the event of a Bolshevik insurrection there. Kornilov could also rely on the cadet schools and the officers' training schools which could muster about 50,000 armed men loyal to the bourgeois Provisional Government. At convenient places in Finland, in the Bryansk Area, and in the Donets Basin, cavalry and Cossack divisions were held in readiness to come to the aid of the Provisional Government. An important place in Kornilov's plan was allotted to the Czechoslovak Corps which was quartered in Right Bank Ukraine, *i.e.*, the area on the western bank of the Dnieper. Under cover of this corps troops could be called from the South-Western and Rumanian Fronts, and the corps itself could be used against the Bolsheviks. In Byelorussia, a Polish Corps was in the course of formation under the command of General Dowbor-Musnicki, which could isolate Byelorussia from the capitals.



The loft of the barn near Razliv where V. I. Lenin lived and worked in hiding

Naturally, at that time Lenin was not, nor could he be, aware of all these details of the plot, which came to light many years later, after the revolution had triumphed. But Lenin's genius lay precisely in the fact that he divined the enemy's plans and was convinced that the counter-revolutionaries were secretly and hurriedly hatching a second Kornilov plot. He realised that the bourgeoisie was preparing for civil war against the workers and peasants.

Civil war is the *highest* form of the class struggle, in the course of which all antagonisms are strained to the utmost and assume the form of an armed struggle. Civil war is the *most acute* form of the class struggle, in the course of which society splits up into two hostile camps and the question of power is settled by force of arms.

Studying the proletarian insurrection in Paris in June 1848, Marx gave the following characterisation of civil war:

> "The June revolution for the first time split the whole of society into two hostile camps—East and West Paris. The unity of the February Revolution no longer exists. . . . The February fighters are now warring against each other — something that has never happened before; the former indifference has vanished, and every man capable of bearing arms is fighting on one or the other side of the barricades."[3]

Continuing and further elaborating Marx's doctrine, Lenin wrote the following about the nature of civil war:

"... experience ... teaches us that civil war is the sharpest form of the class struggle, when a series of clashes and battles of an economic and political nature, repeating themselves, accumulating, expanding and becoming more intense, reach the stage when they become transformed into the armed struggle of one class against another."[4]

It was this acute stage that the Russian revolution reached in September-October 1917. Society split up into two sharply antagonistic camps. One contained the bourgeoisie, the landlords and the kulak upper stratum of the rural population and of the Cossacks, and was led by the Constitutional Democratic Party in alliance with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. This was the camp of the counter-revolution, which was feverishly preparing for civil war against the proletariat. The other camp contained the working class and the poorer strata of the peasant population, and was led by the Bolshevik Party. The bulk of the middle peasants was more and more definitely drifting towards them.

Vast changes, heralding the approach of the revolution, had taken place among the people. Primarily, the methods of struggle employed by the various classes of society had undergone a fundamental change. Lenin had repeatedly called for a *historical* re-examination of the question of the forms of struggle. At different periods and under different political, national, social, etc. conditions, different forms of struggle come to the forefront and become the main forms of struggle in the given period or conditions. After the Kornilov mutiny new elements appeared in the working-class movement. The industrial workers not only downed tools, not only organised economic and political strikes, but with increasing frequency drove the factory owners from their factories and took over the management themselves. This indicated that the working-class movement was being brought face to face with the question of capturing power.

Fundamental changes had also taken place in the peasant movement. The Kornilov events had proved to the masses of the peasants that the landlords were "flocking home" and were regaining possession of the land. After the Kornilov mutiny, attacks on manor houses were resumed with renewed vigour. The peasants set fire to the houses of the aristocracy, smoked out their occupants and divided the farm implements among themselves. This became the chief form of the peasants' struggle, which was also faced with the question of capturing power. The peasant movement was growing into a peasant insurrection.

New forms of struggle developed also in the army. The soldiers refused to obey their officers. In many regiments the soldiers removed the officers they detested and elected in their places new men who were more akin to them in spirit, very often from the ranks of the soldiers themselves. In September, the sailors on some of the ships of the Baltic Fleet threw their officers overboard. The soldiers' struggle was growing into insurrection. In the armed forces too the movement was faced with the question of capturing power.

And lastly, a notable change took place among the working people of the oppressed nations. Over the heads of their bourgeois nationalist organisations the people of these nations began more and more frequently to establish contact with the Bolshevik organisations. They began to realise that they could not obtain their freedom from the bourgeois organisations, but only from a victorious people.

Thus, the forms of struggle of all strata of the working population underwent a change. All the movements came face to face with the question of armed insurrection.

The camp of the revolution enjoyed overwhelming numerical superiority. But, as experience had proved more than once, the bourgeoisie, commanding an organised military force, a corps of officers and a network of Whiteguard organisations, was in a position to defeat the camp of the revolution. And for this purpose the Russian bourgeoisie again mustered its forces. Counter-revolution could be averted only by an armed insurrection of the workers and soldiers.

Between September 12 and 14 Lenin wrote *two* letters of instruction to the Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee and the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party in which he stated:

"Having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in both capitals, the Bolsheviks can and must take political power into their own hands."[5]

With exceptional lucidity he explained why insurrection had appeared on the order of the day precisely at that moment.

"To be successful," he wrote, "insurrection must be based not on a conspiracy, not on a party, but on the advanced class. This is the first point. Insurrection must be based on the revolutionary upsurge of the people. This is the second point. Insurrection must be based on that *turning point* in the history of the maturing revolution when the activity of the vanguard of the people is at its height, and when there is most *vacillation* in the ranks of the enemies and in the *ranks of the weak, half-hearted, irresolute friends* of the revolution."[6]

These three conditions now existed.

The working class was whole-heartedly behind the Bolshevik Party. This was proved by the failure of General Kornilov's adventure, when the workers as a whole rose in response to the call of the Bolsheviks. It was confirmed by the Soviets in both capitals when they adopted Bolshevik resolutions. It was proved also by the returns in the elections to the Soviets in the industrial centres, where the leadership of the Soviets passed into the hands of the proletarian party.

"We have behind us the majority of the *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people which is capable of leading the masses," wrote Lenin.[7]

Large strata of the peasantry were freeing themselves from the influence of the landlords and the bourgeoisie. Politically, this found expression in the disintegration of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries gained in strength. The Mensheviks, searching for a new prop, clutched at the Zemstvo-ists and rural co-operators who represented the kulak groups of the rural population. The soldiers were shedding the last remnants of confidence in the compromisers.

This was proved by the growing influence of the Bolshevik Party in the armed forces. The long-suffering and starving people now realised that they could obtain peace, land and bread only from the proletariat.

". . . we have behind us the *majority* of the people," wrote Lenin.[8]

In the camp of the immediate allies of the bourgeoisie—among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—uncertainty and confusion prevailed; all sorts of "Left" trends arose among the Mensheviks, as well as among the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

There was vacillation also in the camp of the counter-revolution. Although the Constitutional Democrats had closely welded all the bourgeois elements in a single *bloc*, they, nevertheless, had failed to remove the antagonisms that existed between the respective groups. The Black Hundreds were trying to drag the country back to the old regime, while the Left Constitutional Democrats still clung to the idea of a compromise with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks.

German imperialism was the first to attempt to profit by these vacillations. Early in September 1917, the German government made secret peace overtures to France, offering concessions to France and Great Britain in the West on the understanding that Germany received her share in the East. The German diplomats hoped to make capital out of the spectre of revolution, for in the autumn of 1917 unrest broke out in the French army and the French soldiers demanded peace. The movement spread to entire army corps, and even penetrated the British forces. By raising the bogey of revolution Germany hoped to obtain peace in the West in order to have her hands free in the East to put an end to Russia.

The negotiations, however, became protracted and eventually the German manoeuvre failed. The German diplomats, never scrupulous in their methods, quickly changed front and offered to open negotiations for a separate peace with the bourgeois Provisional Government of Russia. The Provisional Government were not averse to such negotiations; they would then be free to hurl themselves with all their might upon the Bolsheviks. When, however, the news about this imperialist plot appeared in the Bolshevik newspapers, the entire bourgeois and compromising press raised an outcry against what they termed "Bolshevik slander." The Constitutional Democratic newspapers inveighed against "the Bolsheviks' special sources of information," hinting that the information had come from the Germans.

Meanwhile, rumours about these backstairs negotiations appeared in the foreign press, and Entente circles began to talk about the Provisional Government's attempt to conclude a separate peace with Germany. The Ministers of the Provisional Government, recalling that a similar attempt had once before hastened the fall of a government, and that the position of Nicholas II became very embarrassing when the news of his attempt to conclude a separate peace with Germany got abroad, made haste to cover up their tracks.

Tereshchenko, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who only the day before had denied the "rumours" about the proposed deal, was obliged to state in the press that Germany had indeed offered to conclude peace. And after the civil war, D. R. Francis, the United States Ambassador in Russia, wrote the following:

"Tereshchenko, former Minister of Finance and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Provisional Government came to Archangel and dined with me twice. . . .

"He furthermore assured me that about August 1, 1917, he received advantageous peace proposals from Germany; this he showed to no one in the Ministry except Kerensky."[9]

The Russian bourgeoisie took part in this sordid conspiracy. In order to crush the revolution the propertied classes of Russia were prepared to barter part of their country.

The vacillation in the camp of the counter-revolution shackled the initiative of the bourgeoisie. In the camp of the revolution, however, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, forces were growing, and readiness for the struggle increased. During the Kornilov mutiny the Bolsheviks had demonstrated to the entire nation that they were capable of leading the struggle against the counter-revolution and were resolute in championing the interests of the working people.

One of Lenin's letters to the Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee and the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party contained the following statement:

"We have before us all the objective prerequisites for a successful insurrection. We have the advantage of a situation in which *only* our victory in an insurrection will put an end to the most painful thing on earth, the vacillations that have sickened the people; a situation in which *only our* victory in an insurrection will *put an end* to the game of a separate peace against the revolution by openly offering a more complete, more just, more immediate peace *favourable for* the revolution."[10]

Lenin summoned the Party to insurrection, but did not yet suggest a definite date for it. In his opinion, that question could be decided only by those who had direct contact with the workers and soldiers, with the masses. That *the crisis had matured had to be made clear to the Party*. Preparation for armed insurrection had to become the pivot of all the Party's activities.

This, however, demanded a corresponding change in the Bolsheviks' tactics.

First of all it was necessary to break off all connection with the so-called Democratic Conference which was to meet on September 14. Alarmed by the dimensions of the popular movement against the Kornilov mutiny, the Provisional Government made efforts to fortify its position by enlarging the base upon which it rested. With this end in view a conference was convened in Petrograd which, in order to deceive the people, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks called a "Democratic Conference." To this Conference were invited representatives of City Dumas, the Zemstvos, the co-operative societies, and the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, army organisations, trade unions and factory committees. The City Dumas and the Zemstvos were given a far larger representation than the organisations of the workers, soldiers and peasants. The Provisional Government believed that with the representation manipulated in this way, the Democratic Conference would vote support for a bourgeois government. The compromisers thus hoped to avert a revolution and divert the country from the path of Soviet revolution to the path of bourgeois-constitutional evolution. But popular discontent with the government ran so high that even this gerrymandered conference, while voting in favour of a coalition government, opposed the inclusion of the Constitutional Democrats.

The Bolshevik Party took part in the Democratic Conference, not for the purpose of carrying on constructive work in it, as Trotsky slanderously averred, but in order to expose this manoeuvre of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. In its resolution of September 24 on the functions of the Bolshevik group in the Preliminary Parliament—or Pre-parliament, as this Democratic Conference was also called—the Central Committee of the Party, stated:

> "... participation in the Pre-parliament must bear merely an auxiliary character and be entirely subordinated to the task of the mass struggle."[11]

When the tide of revolution was rising, however, and when preparations for armed insurrection were under way, even such auxiliary activities in the Democratic Conference would have been a mistake. The continued presence of the Bolsheviks at this Conference might have given the masses the impression that through the Conference peace, land and workers' control of industry could be achieved. To remain in it would have meant creating the illusion that a peaceful development of the revolution was possible, and this would have meant diverting the masses from the revolutionary path. Lenin therefore urged that the Bolshevik group should consolidate itself, cast out the waverers and leave the Conference after making a short declaration.

> "Having made this declaration," he wrote, "having called for *decisions* and not talk; for *action*, not the writing of resolutions, we must *move* our entire group *into the factories and barracks*; its place is there; the pulse of life beats there; the source of saving the revolution is there; the driving forces of the Democratic Conference are there."[12]

Lenin particularly emphasised that the concentration of the entire Bolshevik group in the factories and in the army barracks would facilitate the correct choice of the time at which to start the insurrection.

From *participation* in the Democratic Conference to *boycotting* the Conference—such was the change in the Party's tactics demanded by the course that was set for insurrection.

In fact, Lenin headed his second letter to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party "Marxism and Insurrection." In this letter he summed up all that Marx and Engels had said about the tactics of insurrection, which the opportunists in all countries had concealed from the people for many years. The doctrine of insurrection propounded by Marx and Engels was based on the experience of the revolutions in Europe in 1848 and of the heroic Paris Commune. The great founders of Marxism studied every manifestation of revolution, learning from it and drawing fresh deductions. Lenin generalised what Marx and Engels had said on this subject and moulded their views into a harmonious system of guiding rules and propositions. In his letters and articles Lenin tirelessly stressed the point that insurrection must be regarded as an art. He insisted that having once decided on insurrection, that course must be pursued to the very end. He urged that to ensure the success of the plan it was necessary to muster the decisive forces at the decisive point and maintain superiority in morale over the enemy in the course of the insurrection. To achieve this, it was necessary, daily and hourly, to consolidate success after success, for defence meant death to armed insurrection.

Lastly, he demanded that the Bolshevik Party should treat very seriously the *technical* preparations for insurrection.

> "And in order to treat insurrection in a Marxist way, *i.e.*, as an art," he wrote, "we must, at the same time, without losing a single moment, organise a staff to direct the insurrectionary forces; distribute these forces; move the loyal regiments to the most important points; surround the Alexandrinsky Theatre [where the Democratic Conference held its sessions—*Ed.*]; occupy the Fortress of Peter and Paul; arrest the General Staff and the government; move against the cadets and the Savage Division such detachments as will die rather than allow the enemy to reach the heart of the city; we must mobilise the armed workers, call upon them to fight the last desperate battle, occupy at once the Telegraph Offices and Telephone Exchanges, instal *our* staff of the insurrection in the Central Telephone Exchange and connect it by wire with all the factories, regiments, centres of armed fighting, etc."[13]

This was not yet a plan of insurrection. As Lenin himself wrote, all these remarks were meant to illustrate how insurrection should be treated

as an art. But if we compare the actual course of subsequent events with these illustrations, we shall realise how profoundly Lenin had thought out the matter of organising an insurrection, and how thoroughly he had studied the conditions for achieving victory. Lenin not only revealed and generalised Marx's utterances but also further developed his doctrine and brilliantly applied it to the concrete conditions of our revolution.

He concluded his bold appeal to the Party by expressing firm conviction that victory would be achieved.

"Take power at once in Moscow and in Petrograd (it does not matter which begins; perhaps even Moscow may begin); we shall win *absolutely* and *unquestionably*," he wrote. [14]

2

THE COURSE IS SET FOR INSURRECTION

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party discussed Lenin's letters on September 15. At this meeting, Kamenev, who was subsequently tried and executed as an enemy of the people, sharply opposed Lenin. He argued that Lenin was isolated from events, and demanded that Lenin's letters should be burned as the "ravings of a lunatic." The fighting call of the leader of the Party frightened those who had been opposing the Party and Lenin for a long time past.

The Central Committee strongly rebuffed this coward and traitor. Stalin moved that the letters be discussed and circulated among the larger Party organisations.

Kamenev thereupon moved a resolution in which he tried to put Lenin in opposition to the Central Committee. The resolution read as follows:

"The Central Committee, having discussed Lenin's letters, rejects the practical proposal contained in them, calls upon all organisations to follow only the directions of the Central Committee and re-affirms its opinion that no street demonstrations of any kind are permissible in the present situation." [15]

Kamenev thus tried to create the impression that Lenin did not express the opinion of the Central Committee.

This despicable manoeuvre failed, however. The Central Committee rejected Kamenev's proposal.

Lenin's letters were circulated among the larger organisations of the Bolshevik Party.

From the moment these letters were received, the Central Committee conducted its operations in the spirit of Lenin's directions.

"Already at the end of September," wrote Stalin on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Great Proletarian Revolution, "the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party decided to mobilise all the Party's forces for the purpose of organising a successful insurrection." [16]

A number of members of the Central Committee were appointed to inspect the forces of the Red Guard and its equipment, to ascertain the whereabouts of arms depots, and to register the military units and the temper of the men. The military organisation of the Bolshevik Party became more active. It established closer connections with the armed forces, formed Bolshevik groups among them, and conducted extensive propaganda and agitation among the soldiers and sailors.

All the preparations for the insurrection were carried on with the utmost secrecy. These matters were not discussed at ordinary meetings where resolutions were adopted and minutes taken. The conditions under which the Party was then operating, and the very nature of the task of preparing for insurrection, determined the specific character of these activities. Acting on Lenin's advice, the members of the Central Committee established connections with Party workers in the localities and gave instructions to the most tried and tested of them. Sometimes highly important decisions were taken and organisational measures decided upon without any formal meeting and transmitted orally through trusted agents. Written instructions and reports were avoided as much as possible.

The Bolsheviks had their secret headquarters in the premises of the Sergiev Brotherhood in Furstadtskaya Street. These premises, ostensibly the offices of the Priboy Publishers, were situated next door to the church and, consequently, were jestingly referred to as "under the crosses." Here, every day, representatives of local Bolshevik organisations came from all parts of Russia for assistance and advice. These premises also served as the base of operations of J. M. Sverdlov, in whose hands all the organisational contacts with the Central Committee of the Party were concentrated.

In this momentous period of the Party's history, Stalin, as always, was by Lenin's side organising victory. At the Sixth Congress of the Party Stalin had acted as the political leader of the Congress and Lenin's right hand, whom he had entrusted with the task of carrying out the political line. On the Central Committee and on the editorial board of the central organ of the Party, *Rabochy Put*—the title adopted by *Pravda* owing to the persecution of the government—Stalin conducted organisational as well as propaganda work in pursuing and explaining the Leninist line of the Bolshevik Party. Under the conditions then prevailing, the role played by the central organ of the Party was an immense one, and the Party organisations obtained their main political bearings from the articles written by Lenin and Stalin.

The Central Committee had firmly and confidently set its course for insurrection, and this was immediately reflected in the columns of *Rabochy Put*.

Already on September 17, that is, two days after the first discussion of Lenin's letter, Stalin, the editor of the central organ of the Bolshevik Party, in an article in *Rabochy Put*, wrote as follows:

"The revolution is marching on. Fired at in the July days and 'buried' at the Moscow Council, it is raising its head again, breaking down the old obstacles, creating a new power. The first line of trenches of the counter-revolution has been captured. After Kornilov, Kaledin is now retreating. In the flames of the struggle the moribund Soviets are reviving. They are once again taking the helm and leading the revolutionary masses.

"'All power to the Soviets!'—such is the slogan of the new movement. . . .

"The straight question which life raises demands a clear and definite answer.

"For the Soviets or against them?"[17]

This was not a direct call for insurrection, that was impossible in a legally published newspaper. But the article as a whole breathed the Leninist spirit and called for a decisive struggle. Skilfully steering clear of the censorship, Stalin set a brilliant example of how to conduct popular agitation for an armed insurrection in the legal press.

" . . . in Russia the decisive growth of a new power is taking place, a genuine power of the people, a genuinely revolutionary p wer which is waging a desperate struggle for existence," wrote Stalin in the next issue of *Rabochy Put*. "On the one hand there are the Soviets, standing at the head of the revolution, at the head of the fight against the counter-revolution, which is not yet crushed, which has only retreated, wisely hiding behind the back of the government. On the other hand there is the Kerensky government, which is shielding the counter-revolutionaries, is coming to an understanding with the Kornilovites (the Constitutional Democrats!), has declared war upon the Soviets and is trying to crush them so as not to be crushed itself.

"Who will conquer in this struggle? That is the whole issue now. . . .

"That is why the main thing now is not to draw up general formulas for 'saving' the revolution, but to render direct assistance to the Soviets in their struggle against the Kerensky government."[18]

Stalin splendidly carried out the view expressed by Lenin in his first letter on armed insurrection, namely:

"We must think of *how* to agitate for this without expressing it openly in the press."[19]

Stalin's articles do not even mention the word "insurrection." Nevertheless, every line of them contains a plain, convincing and open argument in favour of seizing power.

Adherence to Lenin's line in the central organ of the Party again evoked opposition on the part of Kamenev. At the meeting of the Central Committee, held on September 20, Kamenev denounced what he regarded as the excessively sharp tone adopted by *Rabochy Put* and took exception to certain expressions used in the articles published in that paper. The Central Committee adopted a special resolution on this question which stated:

". . . postponing a detailed discussion of the tone adopted by the central organ, the Central Committee affirms that its general trend wholly coincides with the Central Committee's line."[20]

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party fully approved of the line pursued by the central organ which, in Stalin's editorials, calmly and firmly carried out Lenin's instructions. This was stressed by Lenin himself who wrote:

"We shall not at present dwell on the facts which testify to the rise of a new revolution, since, judging by the articles of our central organ, *Rabochy Put*, the Party has already made its views clear on this point. The rise of a new revolution appears to be commonly recognised by the Party."[21]

By "new revolution" Lenin meant armed insurrection. He used this term in order to get around the censor.

Lenin gave this appraisal of the situation as early as September 22, after the publication of Stalin's articles in the central organ of the Party. For Lenin and the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, the slogan of armed insurrection was a slogan of action, and it was this idea that Stalin steadily and persistently stressed in the Party's newspaper.

But the slogan of action demanded definite tactical measures. On September 21 the Central Committee of the Party discussed the tactical measures which followed from the fact that the course had been set for insurrection. One of these was the question of withdrawing from the Democratic Conference.

The Democratic Conference was on its last legs. It had dwindled down to meetings of the Presidium, at which the Menshevik Tsereteli, one of the Ministers of the Provisional Government, tried to persuade the delegates to support a coalition government. It had already been decided to substitute for the Democratic Conference a Council of the Russian Republic, consisting of members of the Democratic Conference.

Even before this new body had come into existence the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks hastened to describe it as a Preliminary, or Pre-parliament, hoping in this way to enhance its prestige and to create the impression among the people that Russia had already taken the path of bourgeois parliamentarism. In his articles Stalin described the Pre-parliament as a "Kornilovist abortion," and the workers, jeering at the compromisers, dubbed it the "pre-bathhouse." *

* In Russian the Pre-parliament was called "Predparlament." The workers referred to it sarcastically as "predbannik," *i. e.*, the anteroom used for undressing in a bathhouse.—*Trans.*

Thus, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had to define its attitude towards this new Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik body. It decided to withdraw the Bolshevik representatives from the Presidium of the Democratic Conference (although not from the Conference itself), and to take no part in the proposed Pre-parliament. Owing to the fact that this motion was adopted by the narrow margin of nine votes against eight, the Central Committee resolved to leave the final decision to the Bolshevik group in the Conference.

That same day, September 21, a meeting of the Bolshevik group in the Democratic Conference was held at which Kamenev, Rykov and Ryazanov demanded that the group should remain in the Pre-parliament. The parliament must not be boycotted, they said; withdrawing from it was tantamount to insurrection. Trotsky, too, took up a definitely anti-Leninist position. He proposed that a decision on the question be postponed until the Congress of Soviets met; meanwhile, the group was not to enter the Pre-parliament.

Subsequently, Trotsky mendaciously claimed that this position coincided with Lenin's boycott tactics.

Stalin adopted a clear and definite policy. To enter the Pre-parliament, he argued, would mean misleading the masses and creating the impression that a *bloc* with the compromisers was possible; it would mean strengthening the position of the very enemy whom we were preparing to overthrow. He proposed that the Pre-parliament should be boycotted and that all forces be concentrated on the struggle outside.

The opponents of the boycott, however, succeeded in winning over the Party's "parliamentary" representatives, who had lost their political intuition. The members of the Democratic Conference were chosen not by the vote of the general electorate, but by public organisations, and the Bolshevik representatives were elected by Soviets, City Dumas, co-operative societies, etc. The atmosphere of compromise and the continuous pressure exercised by frightened petty-bourgeois had affected a number of the Bolsheviks. By a vote of 77 against 50 the Bolshevik group decided in favour of entering the Pre-parliament which was called into existence for the purpose of deceiving the masses.

The moment news of this decision reached Lenin he wrote a letter dealing with "the mistakes of our Party." Hitherto Lenin had called upon the Bolshevik Party to leave the Conference and to concentrate on the factories and army barracks, but never before had he spoken of the Party's mistakes. Now, however, he sharply attacked those who insisted on participating in this fictitious "parliament."

"Not all is well at the 'parliamentary' head of our Party," he wrote. "More attention must be paid to it; the workers must watch it more vigilantly. The jurisdiction of parliamentary groups must be more strictly defined.

"The mistake our Party has made is obvious. It is not dangerous for the fighting Party of the advanced class to make mistakes. It is dan-



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gerous, however, to persist in error, to refuse out of false pride to admit and correct mistakes."[22]

The Central Committee returned to the question of the Democratic Conference on September 23, when the conduct of the "parliamentary" group was subjected to severe criticism. The Democratic Conference had adopted a resolution calling upon the government to conclude peace. It was obvious that the treacherous Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who had been talking about peace for so many months, had on this occasion merely signed another scrap of paper. The Bolsheviks at the Conference should have exposed this hypocritical step; but instead of doing so, they, headed by Kamenev and Ryazanov, voted for the resolution. The leaders of the group were dragging it along the path of parliamentarism.

The Central Committee condemned this conduct. To emphasise how impermissible it was even in minor things to create "parliamentary" illusions about the possibility of unity with the compromisers, the Central Committee stated in its resolution:

> "Having heard the report that in reading the declaration [of the group in the Democratic Conference] Ryazanov had referred to Tsereteli as 'Comrade,' the Central Committee instructs the comrades to refrain in their public utterances from applying this term to people, whose designation as such may offend the revolutionary sentiments of the workers."[23]

Furthermore, the Central Committee decided to convene on the next day a joint conference of the Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee and the Bolshevik group in the Democratic Conference.

The conference was held as arranged and a resolution was adopted calling for:

> ". . . the exertion of all efforts to mobilise the wide masses of the people organised by the Soviets . . . which are now militant class organisations, the transfer of power to which is becoming the slogan of the day."[24]

Thus, the incorrect line adopted by the Bolshevik group in the Democratic Conference was rectified.

The opponents of insurrection, however, instead of fighting for the immediate seizure of power, clung to the idea of remaining in the Pre-parliament. This trend had to be exposed and defeated.

On September 24 the Central Committee called upon the Party to demand the immediate convocation of a Congress of Soviets to counter-balance the Pre-parliament, and in those localities where revolutionary temper was more pronounced to convene Regional and Area Congresses of Soviets without waiting for official sanction.

In a leading article in *Rabochy Put*, Stalin wrote:

> "It is the duty of the proletariat as the leader of the Russian revolution to tear the mask from this government and to expose its real counter-revolutionary face to the masses. . . . It is the duty of the proletariat to close its ranks and to prepare tirelessly for the impending battles.

"The workers and soldiers in the capital have already taken the first step by passing a vote of no confidence in the Kerensky-Konovalov government. . . .

"It is now for the provinces to say their word."[25]

On September 23, the day before the Central Committee of the Party adopted this resolution, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks on the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, yielding to the pressure of the masses, had at last resolved to convene the Second Congress of Soviets, fixing the opening for October 20. Beginning with September 27, *Rabochy Put* daily printed the following appeal: "Comrades, workers, soldiers and peasants! Get ready for the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on October 20! Immediately convene Regional Congresses of Soviets!"

At its meeting on September 29, the Central Committee of the Party resolved to convene, on October 5, a Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, that is, of Finland, Petrograd and the adjacent towns, where Bolshevik sentiment predominated. The object of the Congress was to accelerate the agitational and organisational preparations for armed insurrection.

3

THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY'S DIRECTIONS

By the beginning of October 1917 the situation had again undergone a change. The revolution had taken another step forward and had brought the country to the eve of insurrection.

In Finland power was practically in the hands of the Soviets. Yielding to the pressure of the revolutionary sailors, soldiers and workers, the Regional Committee of Soviets, on which the Defencists were still strong, was compelled to convene a Regional Congress of Soviets.

This Congress, known as the Third Regional Congress, opened in Helsingfors on September 9. It became evident at the very outset that the majority of the delegates favoured a revolutionary policy. The first two Congresses of Soviets in Finland had been dominated by Defencists; at this Congress, however, the latter were scarcely represented. The hall was filled with sailors, soldiers and workers whose very demeanour expressed boldness, determination and readiness to fight. At the very outset a stable majority was formed consisting of Bolsheviks and of "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries who had broken away from their party. These "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries consistently voted for the Bolshevik resolutions, except that on the question of power when they moved their own resolution. But on this question too the Bolshevik resolution was adopted by 74 votes against 16. The newly elected Regional Committee of Soviets consisted of 37 Bolsheviks, 26 "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and two Menshevik Internationalists.

After the Congress the local Soviets in Finland rapidly became Bolshevised. In the larger towns, such as Vyborg and Helsingfors, the Bolsheviks predominated in the Soviets. At the same time the Soviets in other towns in the vicinity of Petrograd where strong garrisons were quartered became more active. They too passed resolutions calling for the convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets. The Soviets in Kronstadt, Yuryev and Reval adopted the fighting slogan: "All power to the Soviets!"

Thus, the Bolsheviks won the support of the immediate rear of Petrograd.

The Northern Front, like Finland, was ready to support the Bolshevik Party. The Petrograd workers insisted on the transfer of power to the Soviets. In Moscow where the election of the District Dumas had taken place shortly before, the Bolsheviks had polled more than half the votes. These elections were probably the surest indication of the profound change that had taken place in the temper of the masses. For Moscow was more petty bourgeois than Petrograd; the Moscow workers were more closely linked with the rural districts and were more susceptible to rural influences than the Petrograd proletariat. Consequently, the elections in which the Bolsheviks polled 14,000 soldiers' votes out of a total of 17,000 were not only an indication of the readiness of the proletariat to fight, but also of the sharp change that had taken place in the temper of the rural population.

In the capitals, in the industrial centres around Moscow and Petrograd and among the troops at the front nearest to these centres, the Party of Lenin was backed by the majority of the electorate. From the Urals and the Donets Basin, from the Volga Region and the Ukraine also came glad tidings of complete readiness for the new, proletarian revolution.

The international situation had also undergone a change. Isolated cases of mutiny grew into incipient military insurrection. In Germany, where a draconic military regime prevailed, the crews of five large warships mutinied in September 1917. The crew of the cruiser *Westfalen* threw their captain overboard and abandoned the ship. The crew of the cruiser *Nürnberg* arrested the officers and put off for Norway with the intention of deserting, but some destroyers loyal to the government surrounded the rebel cruiser and compelled her to return to Germany, threatening to sink her if she refused to obey. The movement spread so rapidly that it was no longer possible to hush it up. The German government admitted in the Reichstag that mutiny was rife in the German navy.

The events in Germany were undoubtedly an indication of the change of temper among the revolutionary masses in Europe. They were a symptom of the fact that the whole world stood on the *threshold of revolution*.

"The crisis has matured," wrote Lenin on September 29. "The whole future of the Russian revolution is at stake. The honour of the Bolshevik

Party is at stake. The whole future of the international workers' revolution for Socialism is at stake.

"The crisis has matured. . . ."[26]

Lenin decided that the crucial moment had arrived. The slogan of action—prepare for an armed insurrection—had become an instruction—act at once!

To cling to the Pre-parliament in such a situation was tantamount to betraying the revolution. Not daring to oppose the idea of insurrection openly, its opponents proposed that action be delayed until the Congress of Soviets met. But to postpone a decision on the question of power until the Congress of Soviets met meant betraying to the enemy the date set for the insurrection. This would have enabled the enemy to muster his forces and crush the centres and organisations of the insurrection. It meant, practically, inviting failure and surrendering the initiative to the enemy.

The idea of postponing the insurrection until the opening of the Congress of Soviets was advocated by Trotsky. On September 20, addressing the Petrograd Soviet, he said that the question of power would be decided by the Congress of Soviets. Previous to that Trotsky had been in favour of abolishing the "Council of Five," as the Kerensky government was called, and of the Democratic Conference setting up a Provisional Committee.

To place any hopes in the ability of a conference manipulated by traitors to set up some kind of an "interim" government until the meeting of the Congress of Soviets meant falling into the compromisers' trap and misleading the people at the decisive moment.

Next day, at a meeting of the Bolshevik group in the Democratic Conference, Trotsky again suggested that the question of power be deferred until the meeting of the Congress of Soviets.

Trotsky did not dare oppose armed insurrection openly, but actually, like Kamenev, he did all he could to prevent it. Like all the Mensheviks, he dreaded insurrection and imagined that it was possible to decide the question of power in a peaceful way. He argued that the refusal to allow the garrison to be withdrawn from the capital showed that the victory of the revolution was already three-quarters won. In effect, however, his stand was that the bourgeoisie should be kept in power. More than that; postponement of the insurrection until the meeting of the Congress of Soviets meant revealing all the plans to the enemy, disrupting the revolutionary ranks and cooling the ardour of the masses who were straining to go into battle.

Lenin denounced the would-be saboteurs of the insurrection in no uncertain terms. With the vigour of a revolutionary fighter certain of victory he denounced any postponement as treachery and attacked the recalcitrants with the determination of a leader who realised that the crucial moment had arrived. In a postscript to his article "The Crisis Has Matured," written especially for the Central Committee, Petrograd Committee and Moscow Committee of the Party, he again and again, underscored certain passages, as for example:

"To wait for the Congress of Soviets is downright idiocy, for this means losing *weeks*; and weeks, even days, now decide *everything*. It means timidly *renouncing* the seizure of power, for on November 1-2 it will be impossible to do so (both politically and technically, for the Cossacks will be mobilised for the day of insurrection foolishly 'appointed' beforehand).

"To 'wait' for the Congress of Soviets is idiocy, for *nothing will come, nothing can come of the Congress.*"[27]

Again and again Lenin persistently and emphatically repeated his arguments in favour of an immediate insurrection: We have a majority in the country. The Soviets in both capitals are ours. The ranks of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are in a state of utter disintegration. We must advance slogans that will ensure us the complete support of the working people, *viz.*, "Down with the government that is delaying peace!" "Down with the government that is suppressing the peasants' revolt against the landlords!"

"The Bolsheviks are now *assured* of victory in the insurrection," he urged. ". . . We can (if we do not 'wait' for the Congress of Soviets) strike *suddenly*, and from three centres, from Petrograd, Moscow and the Baltic Fleet. . . . We have *thousands* of armed workers and soldiers in Petrograd who can *at once* seize the Winter Palace and the General Staff Headquarters, the Telephone Exchange, and all the larger printing plants, from which nobody will be able to dislodge us; and we shall be able to carry on agitation *in the army* on such a scale that *nobody* will be able to combat this government of peace, land for the peasants, and so forth."[28]

On receiving this letter the Central Committee, on October 3, decided to summon Lenin to Petrograd so as to be able to maintain constant and close contact with him.

Lenin himself was displeased with having to remain so far away from the struggle that was flaring up in the capital. Letters from Petrograd reached him after considerable delay, and newspapers arrived a day late. The leader of the proletarian revolution wanted to be closer to the maelstrom of revolutionary events. He expressed the wish to remove to Vyborg. He again disguised himself, even putting on a grey wig, and on September 17 left Helsingfors. In Vyborg Lenin stayed with a Finnish Social-Democrat named Laatukka, the editor of the local Social-Democratic newspaper, who lived on the outskirts of the town. Here he continued tirelessly to write, instruct and spur on his comrades.

On October 5, the Central Committee of the Party decided, with only one dissenting vote, *i.e.*, Kamenev's, that the Bolshevik group should withdraw from the Pre-parliament at its very first session.

At the same meeting, the Central Committee decided to postpone the Northern Congress of Soviets to October 10 and to convene it not in Finland, as had been previously decided, but in Petrograd, and that the Petrograd Soviet should take part in the proceedings of this Congress. It also decided to invite representatives from the Moscow Soviet. In this way the

Central Committee emphasised the importance it attached to the Northern Congress of Soviets as a sort of general review of the forces before going into action. Its decisions were to serve as a model for all the other Regional Congresses of Soviets; and it was to be a means of mobilising the masses in preparation for the insurrection.

In order to convert the decisions of the Northern Congress of Soviets into definite instructions Stalin proposed that a conference of the Central Committee of the Party together with prominent Petrograd and Moscow Party workers be convened on October 10, the day the Northern Congress was to be opened. Stalin's proposal was adopted and at the same time it was decided to refrain from convening a Party Congress as this would divert attention from the work of preparing for the insurrection. All forces had to be concentrated on one question, namely, the insurrection.

On October 7, the Pre-parliament was opened in the Mariinsky Palace. Representatives of the government, important government officials and representatives of the various public organisations in the capitals were present at the official opening. The Constitutional Democrats occupied the benches on the right and in the centre. These corpulent Moscow merchants, Petrograd industrial magnates and provincial landlords, kulaks and property owners had gathered to decide the "fate of the revolution." Among them the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were bowing and scraping, and all looked askance to the left, at the benches occupied by the Bolsheviks.

The session was opened by Kerensky, who in his speech—which was sympathetically applauded on the right and in the centre—bitterly complained that he was not being obeyed, and that the Bolsheviks had gained control in the army.

Kerensky was followed by the aged and senile Socialist-Revolutionary "grandmother" Breshko-Breshkovskaya, who wistfully recalled the tranquil days of the beginning of the revolution and tearfully compared them with the present turbulent times. The Right Socialist-Revolutionary Avksentyev, who had been elected President of the Council of the Russian Republic, delivered a fervid oration, which was followed by the dull and monotonous routine of electing secretaries and under-secretaries. Meanwhile the "leaders" of the Pre-parliament conferred with each other on how to prevent the Bolsheviks from speaking. The Bolsheviks persistently demanded the floor in order to read their declaration and at last Avksentyev called upon their spokesman. The Bolshevik declaration roused the bourgeois and compromiser deputies to fury. Beside themselves with rage when they heard the Kerensky government described as a "government for betraying the people" they raised a terrific uproar in order to drown the voice of the Bolshevik speaker.

"Get down!" shouted the infuriated Constitutional Democrats.

"Shut up, you Kishkins-Burishkins!" came the retort from the Bolshevik benches.

Their faces distorted with rage, co-operative society officials, Constitutional Democrats from the City Dumas enraged by their exposure, and compromiser members of the Executive Committees of Soviets who dared not stand for re-election, jumped from their benches and rushed towards the tribune with threatening gestures. Amidst the storm of abuse and insult raised by the Constitutional Democrats and Defencists, the Bolsheviks, after reading their declaration, retired from the hall.

"A safe journey!"—shouted someone in a voice in which irony was mixed with anger.

"We shall meet again!"—retorted the Bolsheviks prophetically.

The Central Committee succeeded in smashing the resistance of the saboteurs. The Party broke off connection with the Pre-parliament where the Kornilovites, screened by the compromisers, were making their preparations to attack the revolution. The working class, and working people generally, realised that all illusions about the possibility of peaceful evolution had to be abandoned. Self-sacrificing struggle alone could decide the outcome of the revolution.

> "The first Kornilov plot was thwarted," wrote Stalin after the Bolsheviks had withdrawn from the Pre-parliament, "but the counter-revolution was not crushed; it merely retreated, hid behind the back of the Kerensky government and entrenched itself in its new positions. . . .
>
> "Let the workers and soldiers know, let the peasants and sailors know that it is now a fight for *peace* and *bread*, for *land* and *liberty*, against the capitalists and landlords, against the profiteers and marauders, against betrayers and traitors, against all who do not want to put an end once and for all to the Kornilovites who are now organising.
>
> "The Kornilovites are mustering—prepare to resist!"[29]

On receiving the Central Committee's summons to Petrograd, Lenin decided to travel by train to Raivola Station on the Finnish border and from there to ride on the footplate of Jalava's engine, as he had done on the first occasion, to Udelnaya Station.

At 2:25 p.m. on October 7, Lenin, again in disguise, boarded the train. It was arranged that he and his companion, Rahja, should not go into the car but remain on the outside platform and, that Rahja should speak to Lenin in Finnish and that Lenin would reply now and again in the monosyllables "jo" or "ei" which meant "yes" or "no."

The railway car was crowded. As arranged, Rahja spoke to Lenin in Finnish, but Lenin's replies were quite out of place. Where he should have said "yes" he shook his head in the negative, and where he should have said "no" he uttered a curt "yes."

The journey to Raivola passed without mishap, however. Leaving the train, Lenin and his companion walked down the line to the place where Jalava was fueling his engine, about a kilometre and a half from the station. Lenin hid behind a bush while his companion climbed to the footplate. Jalava whispered in alarm that two suspicious individuals were watching the engine and suggested that Lenin and Rahja should walk back to the station and that he should pick them up on the way. Lenin retraced his

steps along the tracks. Only one minute remained before the departure of the train, but Jalava's engine had not yet arrived. At last it came puffing up at full speed. Drawing level with Lenin, Jalava sharply applied the brakes and the engine slowed down. Lenin climbed on to the footplate and the engine slowly glided towards the waiting train. Another moment, and they were off.

Lenin reached the suburban station of Udelnaya at night and walked to the Vyborg District of Petrograd. The first thing he requested on his arrival was an interview with Stalin. In the course of this interview, which took place on October 8 and lasted several hours, Stalin informed Lenin of how the preparations for the insurrection were progressing. Lenin eagerly questioned Stalin in detail about the temper prevailing among the armed forces and in the factories.

It was found impossible to convene the Party Conference which had been arranged for October 10, and a meeting of the Central Committee took place instead. Twelve persons were present at the meeting. Lenin too was present, this being his first attendance at a meeting of the Central Committee since the July days. When he arrived he was unrecognisable. He was clean-shaven and wore a grey wig which now and again he smoothed with both his hands. The assembled comrades congratulated him on his safe arrival and expressed their admiration at the skill with which he had succeeded in evading the vigilance of Kerensky's sleuths.

As soon as the first raptures over the reunion were over, Lenin, who had already been informed of events by Stalin, suggested that the meeting proceed to discuss the main question.

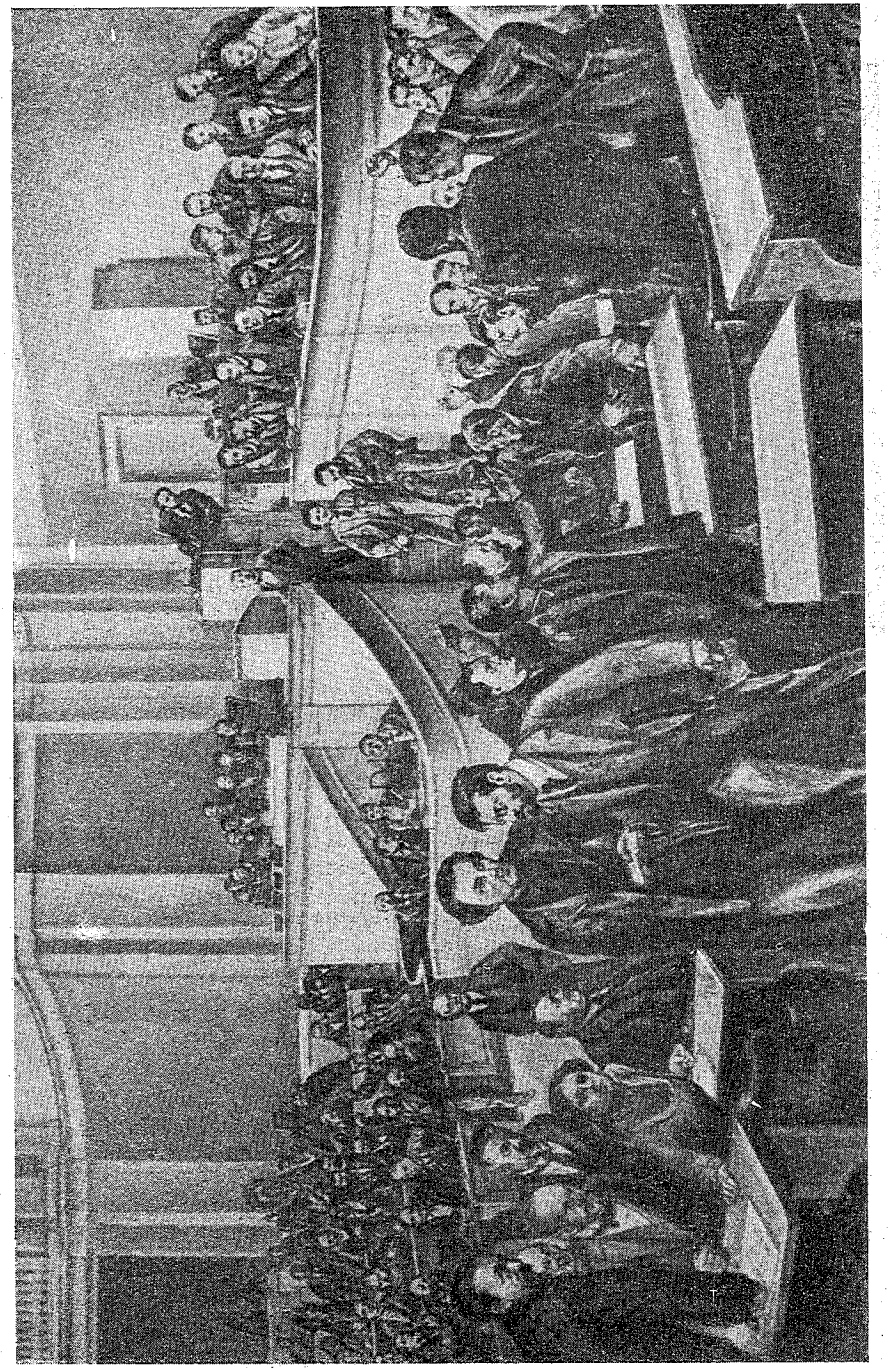
Not having attended a meeting of the Central Committee for three months Lenin was keenly interested in the reports on latest developments. Comrade Sverdlov reported on the situation on the Northern and Western Fronts. There, the general temper was Bolshevik, he said. The Minsk garrison was on our side, but there was something in the wind there; mysterious negotiations were proceeding between General Headquarters and Front Headquarters. Cossacks were being concentrated around Minsk and anti-Bolshevik agitation was being conducted. Evidently, preparations were afoot to surround and disarm the revolutionary troops.

When Sverdlov finished speaking Lenin rose and reviewed the situation.

He again emphasised the importance of making thorough technical preparations for the insurrection and expressed the view that what had been done hitherto was inadequate. The political situation had matured; the people were expecting action, they were tired of resolutions and words. The agrarian movement was also developing in the direction of revolution. The international situation was such that the Bolsheviks must take the initiative. Summing up, Lenin said:

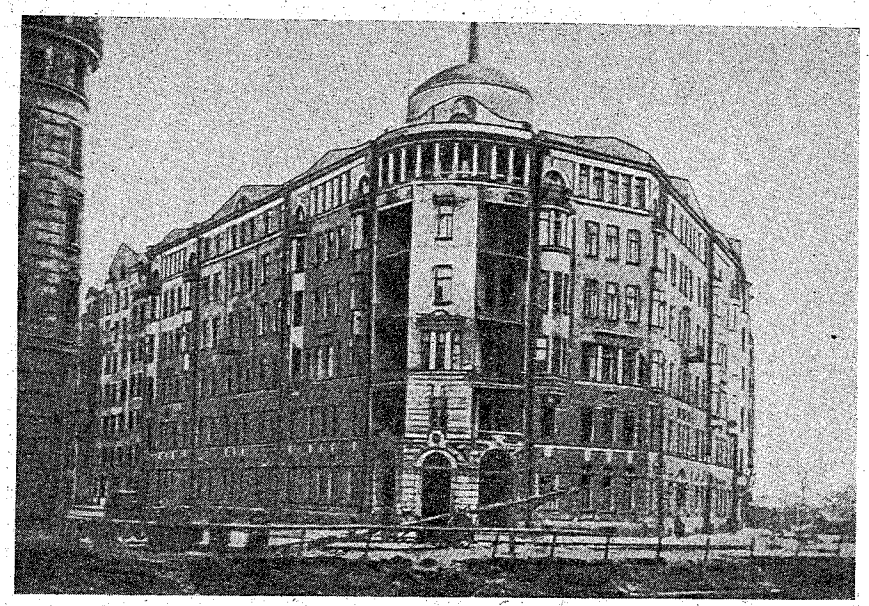
"Politically, the situation has fully matured for the transfer of power. . . . .

"We must discuss the technical side. Everything depends on that."[30]



From a drawing by I. Lebedev

The Bolsheviks retire from the session of the Pre-parliament



The house on the embankment of the river Karpovka in Petrograd where the meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party of October 1917 was held

In this review Lenin twice emphasised that the political situation had matured and that the point at issue was the choice of the moment for the insurrection. He definitely proposed that advantage should be taken of the Northern Congress of Soviets and of the readiness of the Bolshevik-minded garrison in Minsk for the purpose "of commencing decisive operations."[31]

He was convinced that immediate action was necessary as further delay "meant death." He proposed that advantage should be taken of any occasion that arose to begin—in Petrograd, Moscow, Minsk or Helsingfors, it did not matter where. But irrespective of the circumstances, no matter what the occasion for the insurrection might be, or where it started, *the decisive battle would have to be fought in Petrograd, the political centre of the country, the hearth of the revolution.*

Thus, Lenin had already in mind the question of the *date* of the insurrection; both for him and the Central Committee the question of the insurrection as such was a settled matter.

Lenin formulated his views in a brief resolution in which the Party directions were set forth with exceptional lucidity and precision. The resolution read as follows:

"The Central Committee affirms that both the international situation as it affects the Russian revolution (the mutiny in the German navy, which

was an extreme manifestation of the growth of the world Socialist revolution all over Europe, and the threat of the imperialist world with the object of stifling the revolution in Russia) and the military situation (the undoubted determination of the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky and Co. to surrender Petrograd to the Germans), as well as the fact that the proletarian party has secured a majority in the Soviets—all this, taken in conjunction with the peasant revolts and the swing of public confidence towards our Party (the elections in Moscow), and, finally, the obvious preparations being made for a second Kornilov affair (withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, dispatch of Cossacks to Petrograd, encirclement of Minsk by Cossacks, etc.)—all this places armed insurrection on the order of the day.

"Affirming, therefore, that armed insurrection is inevitable and that it has fully matured, the Central Committee instructs all Party organisations to be guided accordingly and to discuss and decide all practical questions from this standpoint (the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, action in Moscow and Minsk, etc.)."[32]

Lenin's resolution was carried by ten votes against two. On Dzerzhinsky's motion it was decided "to set up for the purpose of political guidance for the immediate future a Political Bureau to consist of members of the Central Committee."[33]

Only two members of the Central Committee opposed Lenin at this meeting. They were Kamenev and Zinoviev who raised a number of objections to what Lenin had said. The international situation, they argued, was unfavourable for us; the working class would not render active support and the Germans could easily come to an arrangement with their enemies and hurl themselves against the revolution; we did not have a majority in the country; only the workers and a section of the soldiers were on our side, the rest were doubtful. It would be better, they urged, to take up a *defensive* position; the bourgeoisie would not dare to call off the Constituent Assembly, and there we would have one-third of the seats; the petty-bourgeoisie were inclining towards the Bolsheviks; in conjunction with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries we could form a *bloc* which would predominate in the Constituent Assembly and pursue our policy.

Kamenev and Zinoviev simply ignored all that the Russian working class had suffered in the struggle against tsarism and the bourgeoisie.

In ceaseless battle against the opportunists Lenin had perseveringly taught that it was not enough to recognise the class struggle. Even the bourgeoisie did not deny the class struggle. But only those who recognised the class struggle carried to the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat were genuine Marxists. Bolshevism had grown and become strong and steeled precisely in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

On the very eve of the stern and decisive event that was to mark the culminating point of an entire historical stage of the struggle waged by the Bolshevik Party, Kamenev and Zinoviev took up the treacherous position of the Mensheviks and of Kautsky, *i.e.*, of peaceful evolution towards Socialism through Parliament, in this case through the Constituent Assembly. Virtually, Zinoviev and Kamenev were strenuously defending capitalism.

Like all traitors, they could see only the mighty array of the enemy's forces.

The enemy, they argued, had at his command well-trained forces, artillery, Cossacks, shock troops and the army. . . . As for ourselves . . . "there is no fighting spirit even in the factories or in the barracks."[34] Verily, the coward is afraid of his own shadow!

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party administered a stern rebuff to these defenders of capitalism. Nobody supported these capitulators. Lenin's resolution became an instruction for the entire Bolshevik Party.

This meeting of the Central Committee ended late at night. Outside it was cold and raw. Here and there a street lamp gleamed fitfully through the mist. Comrade Dzerzhinsky removed his cape and put it over Lenin's shoulders. Lenin wanted to protest, but Dzerzhinsky insisted.

"No excuses, now! Please put this cape on, otherwise I shall not let you out," he said.[35]

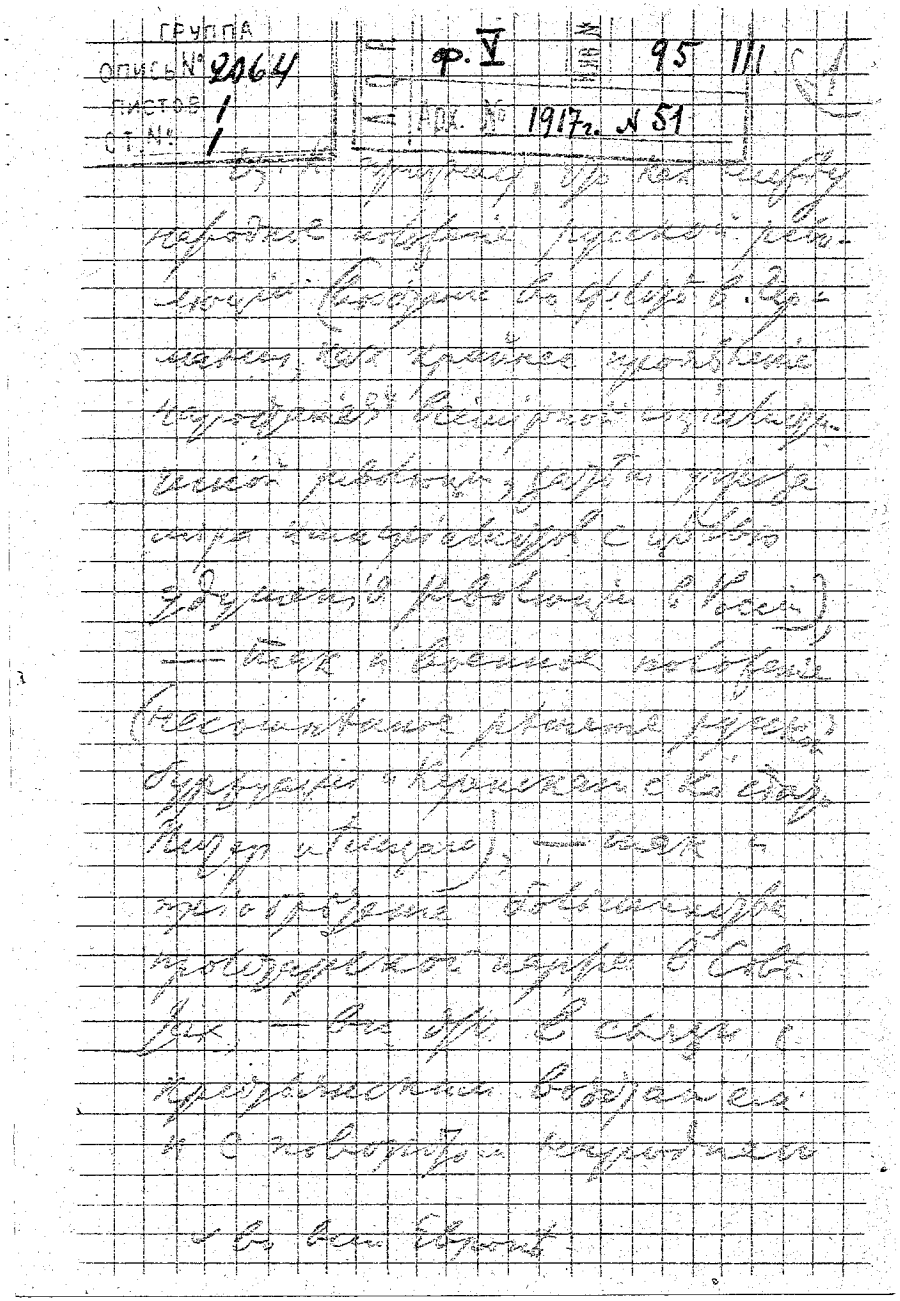
Lenin lived at a considerable distance from the place of the meeting and seeing that it was so late he decided to spend the night with a worker who occupied a tiny room in Pevcheskaya Street, nearby, the site now occupied by the huge Electropribor Plant.

The worker offered Lenin his bed, but Lenin categorically refused and lay down on the floor, using a couple of books for a pillow.

4

THE CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF THE NORTHERN REGION

On October 10, while the meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party was proceeding, delegates began to assemble in the Smolny for the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region. Sverdlov had informed the organisers and leaders of the Congress that it would be necessary to postpone the opening until October 11. Consequently, on the evening of the 10th, only a preliminary conference of the delegates was held, at which a Credentials Committee was elected and the agenda endorsed.



Facsimile of resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party on October 10, 1917 on armed insurrection drafted by V. I. Lenin

2/ Эвакуація к нашей партіи (Вибо-
ра в Москве), наконец явное
подготовленіе второй кор-
ниловщины (вывод войск
из Питера, подвоз к Питеру
казаков, окруженіе Минска
казаками и пр.), — все
это ставит на очередь дня
вооруженное восстаніе.

Признавая так. обр.,
что вооруж. восстаніе неизбеж-
но и вполне назрело, и к
предлагает всем организа-
циям партіи руководиться
этим и с этой точки зрѣ-
нія обсуждать и разрѣшать
всѣ практическіе вопросы
(съѣзды Совѣтов, Совѣт. Штаба, вы-
вода войск из Питера, вы-
ступленія москвичей и
ленинцев и т. д.).

Delegates had arrived from Petrograd, Moscow, Novgorod, Staraya Russa, Borovichi, Reval, Yuryev, Archangel, Volmar, Kronstadt, Gatchina, Tsarskoye Selo, Chudovo, Sestroretsk, Schlüsselburg, Vyborg, Helsingfors, Narva, Abo and Kotka. No representatives were present from Petrozavodsk, Tikhvin, Pavlovsk, Venden and Pskov.

In all there were 94 delegates, of whom 51 were Bolsheviks, 24 "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, four Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionaries, one Internationalist-Menshevik, ten Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and four Defencist-Mensheviks.

Lenin attached exceptional importance to this Congress. On October 8 he addressed a special letter to "the Bolshevik comrades participating in the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region," in which he stated that the Congress must be prepared to seize power and launch the insurrection.

> "We must not wait for the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which the Central Executive Committee may postpone till November," he wrote; "we must not tarry and allow Kerensky meanwhile to bring up still more Kornilov troops."[36]

No further delay could be permitted. The moment for active operations had arrived. . . .

Again and again Lenin reiterated the arguments in favour of insurrection. It was no longer a matter of passing new resolutions.

> "It is now a question," he wrote, "of an insurrection which can and must be decided by Petrograd, Moscow, Helsingfors, Kronstadt, Vyborg and Reval. Near *Petrograd* and in Petrograd—this is where this insurrection can and must be decided upon and carried out as thoroughly as possible, with as much preparation as possible, as quickly as possible and as energetically as possible."[37]

Lenin then briefly drafted the plan of insurrection. He proposed that the regiments from the nearest garrisons be brought to Petrograd, that the fleet be summoned from Kronstadt, Helsingfors and Reval, that the Kornilov units be crushed, that both capitals rise and overthrow the Kerensky government, set up their own government, immediately offer peace to the belligerent countries and transfer the land to the peasants.

The leader of the revolution also indicated the slogan of insurrection.

> "Kerensky," he wrote, "has again brought the Kornilov troops to Petrograd in order to prevent power from passing to the Soviets, to prevent the immediate offer of peace by this power, to prevent the immediate transfer of the land to the peasantry, to deliver Petrograd to the Germans while he himself runs off to Moscow! This is the slogan of the insurrection which we must circulate as widely as possible, and which will meet with tremendous success."[38]

Lenin's letter was discussed at a meeting of the Bolshevik group at the Congress. The group met in the morning on October 11, after the decisive session of the Central Committee of the Party, in the large room No. 18, in the Smolny, where the Bolsheviks usually held their meetings.

On behalf of the Central Committee a report was made on the measures which had been adopted. Avoiding the word "insurrection," the speaker stated that the time for general talk about transferring power to the Soviets had passed and that the time had arrived to decide definitely what occasion was to be seized upon to carry this out. Probably the Congress would have to be the organisation to launch the insurrection.

The leaders of the Congress had learned from Comrade Sverdlov the nature of the decision reached by the Central Committee. Many of the Bolshevik delegates to the Congress had also heard about it. This report thus brought them face to face with the question of insurrection. Everybody sensed that the decisive moment had arrived, and every delegate involuntarily looked round at the slightest rustle, as if expecting the door to open and the call to battle ring out.

That same evening the Congress was opened.

The voices of the speakers participating in the discussion vibrated with fervour and emotion. Speaking of the danger which threatened Petrograd the representative of the Petrograd Soviet stated that the Provisional Government intended to withdraw two-thirds of the Petrograd garrison. "The fate of Petrograd is in the balance!"—he exclaimed.[39]

A sailor from the Baltic Fleet followed. He said: "To withdraw the garrison from Petrograd means betraying the revolution."

Addressing the delegates, he added:

"The Baltic Fleet says to you: remain here and defend the interests of the revolution. Remain here and guard the revolution!"

The last words of this call were drowned by thunderous applause. The Congress sent a message of greeting to the Baltic Fleet.

The Moscow representative declared that in the moment of danger the Moscow garrison and proletariat would not remain mere idle spectators.

"In Finland, the Soviets have already become organs of revolutionary power," reported the representative of the Finnish Regional Committee. "The Regional Committee," he added, "controlled the work of the government officials. Not a single order issued by the Provisional Government is carried out in Finland unless it is countersigned by the Commissar of the Regional Committee."[40]

One after another delegates from the various districts addressed the Congress. The representatives of the Soviets in the Petrograd Gubernia and of the Soviets of Helsingfors and Kronstadt greeted the Congress; one and all unanimously urged the necessity of convening the Second Congress of Soviets at the earliest date.

Suddenly, a jarring note was struck in this militant atmosphere when the Menshevik Mukhanov rose on a point of order to make a declaration to the effect that for a number of reasons the Menshevik group felt obliged to withdraw from the Congress.

The effect produced on the delegates by this statement was the opposite of what its sponsors had desired. It was met with derision and the Congress calmly decided to postpone discussion on it until the next session, whereupon the hapless Menshevik orator left the rostrum in utter confusion. His place was taken by a representative of the Vyborg garrison, a Bolshevik named Golovov, who reported to the Congress:

> "In Vyborg, power is now in the hands of the Soviet. The Soviet has captured the Telegraph Office and has dismissed the Army Corps Commander and the commandant of the fortress."[41]

According to the report of the delegate Ryabchinsky, the same militant spirit prevailed in Reval.

The compromisers, however, persisted in their efforts. On behalf of the Novgorod delegation the Menshevik Abramovich requested leave to speak on a matter of urgency. His delegation, he said, had received a telegram from the Executive Committee of the army organisations of the Northern Front ordering them to withdraw from the Congress.

The delegates, however, did not wish to withdraw. Krylov, the delegate from Borovichi, a town in the Novgorod Gubernia, mounted the rostrum and sharply rebuking Abramovich stated that he refused to submit to the order of the compromising Executive Committee and assured the Congress that

> "the Borovichi garrison will back the demands of the Northern Congress with armed force."[42]

And again to the platform, one after another, came an endless procession of soldiers, sailors and workers, many of them delegates direct from the front who had come to the Congress secretly, overcoming the numerous obstacles that the Army Command had placed in their way. At the Congress there were representatives of the "trench dwellers" of the Western, South-Western and Rumanian Fronts. All hastened to add their voices to the demands of the soldiers and sailors of the Northern Region:

"All power to the Soviets!"

A representative of the Volhynia Regiment spoke on behalf of the Petrograd garrison.

> "The regiment will not leave Petrograd as long as the present government remains in power," he said. "If we have to leave, we'll take the Provisional Government with us," he added amidst a roar of laughter and applause.[43]

The demand of the soldiers and workers was fully supported by the representatives of the peasant organisations at the Congress. The represen-

tative of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Peasants' Deputies called for the immediate transfer of power to the Soviets. The demand of the Petrograd peasants was backed by the peasant delegate from the Kherson Gubernia, who described the hard lives of the Kherson peasants and stated that the latter had no confidence in the Provisional Government and were determined not to deliver a single ounce of grain until the Soviets took power.[44]

With this the first session of the Congress was brought to a close. This session had revealed the revolutionary fighting spirit of the fleet, the garrisons and the factories in the Northern Region, and the fact that they were entirely on the side of the Bolsheviks. Even the counter-revolutionaries and the compromisers were reluctantly compelled to admit this. Bourgeois newspapers like *Dyen* and *Utro Rossii*, in their reports of the first day's proceedings of the Congress, were obliged to concede that the Bolsheviks were the victors.[45]

The militant spirit of the Congress frightened the compromisers. Next morning all their newspapers published a decision passed by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet to the effect that the Congress was "unauthorised." Until this moment, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Central Executive Committee had raised no objection to the convocation of the Congress, but as soon as its Bolshevik composition and genuinely revolutionary temper became evident the compromisers raised a howl of protest. The Central Executive Committee stated that it could regard the Congress only as a private conference on the ground that it had been convened by the Helsingfors Soviet "which had no authority to do so," that a representative of the Moscow Soviet was present, whereas several Soviets in the Northern Region were not represented, and lastly, that the Central Executive Committee had not been aware that the Congress was being convened.

Next morning, on October 12, the compromisers arrived at the Congress with radiant faces. They rubbed their hands with glee and gathered in the lobbies whispering to each other and triumphantly waving the morning newspapers which contained the decision of the Central Executive Committee stating that the Congress was unauthorised. When the session was opened the Mensheviks asked for the floor. Bogdanov, the first speaker, declared that the Mensheviks associated themselves with the decision of the Central Executive Committee and refused to take any further part in the proceedings of the Congress. They would remain at the Congress merely "for the purpose of obtaining information."

This statement by the Menshevik group met with no sympathy from the delegates. Here and there impatient voices were heard demanding: "Let's get down to business!"

Even the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries dared not openly support the Mensheviks.

On the motion of the Bolshevik group the Congress passed a resolution

denouncing the treacherous conduct of the Central Executive Committee, after which it proceeded to discuss the political situation.

The resolute proposal of the Bolsheviks that power be immediately transferred to the Soviets frightened the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries.

> "The Bolsheviks want the question of power to be decided in the streets, and refuse to have the question settled in a parliamentary way," timidly complained Kolegayev.[46]

This leader of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, was opposed by a rank-and-file member of his party, a Kronstadt sailor named Shishkov, who expressed the opinion that the Bolsheviks and the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries should fight jointly to capture power. The representative of the 33rd Army Corps read to the Congress the instructions he had received from the soldiers of this Corps stating that they were expecting the immediate conclusion of peace, the confiscation of private land, the ruthless taxation of big capital and large incomes, and the confiscation of war profits.[47]

The Congress passed the following resolution:

> "The coalition government has disorganised, bled and tortured the country. The so-called Democratic Conference has ended in a miserable fiasco. The fatal and treacherous policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie is indignantly rejected by the workers, soldiers and politically conscious peasants. . . . The hour has arrived when only the most resolute and unanimous action on the part of all the Soviets can save the country and the revolution and settle the question of the central authority. The Congress calls upon all the Soviets in the region to commence active operations."[48]

In a comprehensive report on the military and political situation a Bolshevik representative informed the sailor, soldier and worker delegates of Lenin's plans and of the decision adopted by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party regarding armed insurrection. He did not employ the term "insurrection," but in words suitable for the conditions under which the Congress was being held he stated that the Provisional Government must be removed and that the Soviets must take power.

A representative of the Petrograd Bolsheviks informed the Congress that a Military Revolutionary Committee was being formed in Petrograd, which would be in control of all the armed forces. In response to this, the representative of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary group stated that his group supported the proposal to form Soldiers' Military Revolutionary Committees.

The Congress issued an appeal to the garrisons in the Northern Region to take all measures to put themselves in proper fighting trim. It also called upon the local Soviets to follow the example of the Petrograd Soviet and form Military Revolutionary Committees for the purpose of organising the military defence of the revolution.

The Congress paid special attention to the land question and issued a call to the peasants urging them to support the struggle for power. In this call the Congress said:

"The peasants should know that their sons in the trenches, in the barracks and on the warships, and the workers in the factories and mills are on their side, and that the days of decisive battles are drawing near, when the revolutionary workers, soldiers and sailors will rise in the struggle for land, for freedom and for a just peace. They will establish the workers' and peasants' government of Soviets of Peasants', Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."[49]

On the motion of the Bolsheviks a decision was adopted to form a Northern Regional Committee for the purpose of ensuring the convocation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and to serve as the centre of the activities of all the Soviets in the region. The Committee consisted of 17 members of whom 11 were Bolsheviks and six "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Before the Congress drew to a close numerous delegations appeared in the hall. The rostrum suddenly seemed to have been enclosed in a ring of bayonets. These were representatives of the Lettish Rifle Regiments, who had come to greet the Congress.

"From the very first day of the revolution," said their spokesman "the Letts issued the slogan: 'All power to the Soviets!' and today, when revolutionary Petrograd is preparing to put this slogan into effect, the Lettish Rifles, 40,000 strong, are ready to render full support."[50]

The Lettish speaker was followed by the representative from the Obukhov Works.

"Our plant wholeheartedly supports the Bolsheviks," he assured the Congress.[51]

The declarations of all the delegations expressed but one thought, *viz.*, indomitable determination to fight to the bitter end. The Letts, the sailors and the Petrograd workers all called for insurrection, and the hundreds of men who filled the Assembly Hall of the Smolny responded to these appeals with loud applause and cheers and the singing of the *Internationale*.

The compromising Central Executive Committee of Soviets tried to discredit the Congress and proclaimed that the decisions it had adopted were disruptive.

The compromisers realised that the Congress's direct call to the Regimental Committees, to the soldiers, sailors, workers and peasants, to take the election of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets into their own hands was a veiled blow at the Central Executive Committee. This they feared most of all.

While the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region was in session an editorial article entitled "The Crisis in the Soviet Organisation" appeared

in *Izvestia*, the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik Central Executive Committee. This article contained the following passage:

"The Soviets were a splendid organisation for fighting the old regime, but they are totally incapable of undertaking the task of establishing a new regime; they lack experts, they lack the skill and ability to conduct affairs, and lastly, they lack the organisation."[52]

Terrified by the successes achieved by the Bolsheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks tried to persuade the masses that as political organisations the Soviets were absolutely incapable of governing the country. In the above-mentioned article we read further:

"We built the Soviets of Deputies as temporary hutments in which the entire democracy could find shelter. Now, in place of these hutments, we are building the permanent edifice of the new system, and naturally, people are gradually deserting the hutments for the more convenient premises as they are built storey by storey."[53]

The compromisers rushed about in consternation, wailing in apprehension of the impending revolutionary storm. In fear and panic they blurted out the class content of their compromising policy, which was to use the Soviets as a means of holding back the masses from revolution until the bourgeoisie had taken the reins of government more firmly in their hands and had become masters of the situation in the country.

The faithfulness of these flunkeys of the bourgeoisie was at once appreciated in their master's drawing room. *Russkaya Volya*, one of the leading organs of the counter-revolution, made the following sympathetic comment on the aforementioned *Izvestia* article:

"Only very recently . . . one could speak . . . about the Soviets only in the most respectful terms. Criticism of the Soviet organisations was regarded as an open manifestation of counter-revolution. At last, the day has come when not the 'counter-revolutionary' and not the 'bourgeois' press, but the organ of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets openly speaks about the demise of the Soviets."[54]

The compromising "Socialists" and the diehard counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie found a common tongue. What the terrified flunkeys blurted out in a fit of panic was fully in accord with the plans of their counter-revolutionary masters. In organising a new offensive against the workers and peasants, the bourgeoisie demanded first of all the dissolution of the Soviets.

The counter-revolutionaries fully appreciated the enormous importance of the decision adopted by the Congress which had just drawn to a close. In its issue of the day after the Congress closed, the Moscow newspaper *Utro Rossii* wrote as follows:

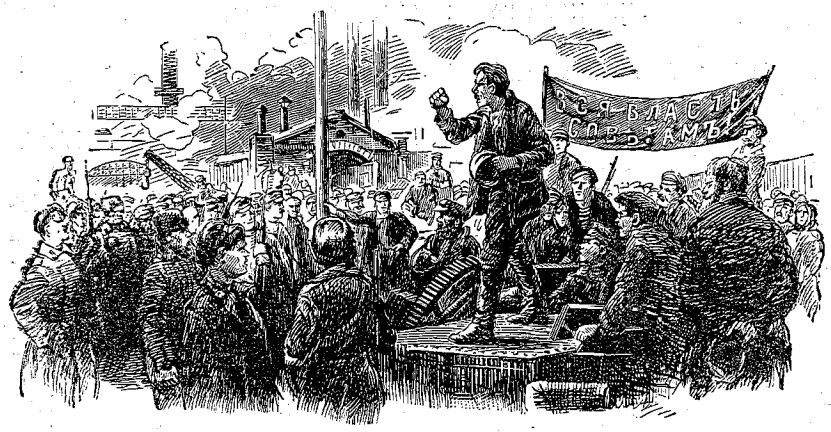
"The Left Bolshevik temper of the Regional Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies which closed yesterday gives rise to the most alarming apprehensions."[55]

And *Dyen* stated that "the provinces are responding, and in a most unambiguous manner" to the slogans issued by the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region.[56]

The Congress exercised a vast mobilising influence not only in the Northern Region but far beyond its borders. Immediately after the Congress the delegates returned to their respective localities and everywhere reported on its decisions and mobilised the forces of the revolution.

Following on the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, Congresses of Soviets were held in a number of other regions and districts. And the keynote of all of them was: prepare for the struggle to transfer power to the Soviets.





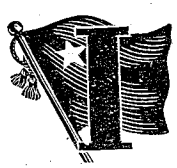
Chapter Two

THE ORGANISATION OF THE ASSAULT



1

WINNING THE MAJORITY IN THE COUNTRY



IN HIS ARTICLES and letters written on the eve of October, Lenin always emphasised that the *political fate of the people*, the fate of the entire country, would be decided primarily by the victory of the revolution in Petrograd and in Moscow. The armed insurrection in Petrograd and in Moscow would to a large degree determine the outcome of the struggle throughout the country.

But while indicating the centres from which the *main drive* was to bes launched, where the success of the revolution would, in the main, be decided, and where it was primarily necessary to concentrate the main striking force and secure decisive superiority over the enemy, the Bolshevik Party, headed by Lenin and Stalin, never assumed that the rest of the country would automatically follow Petrograd and Moscow as soon as the Soviet power had been established in the capitals. Mobilisation of forces proceeded all over the country, and the very conclusion which Lenin had drawn, namely, that the insurrection had matured, was based entirely on an analysis

of the relation of class forces not only at the centre, but throughout the country.

"We have a majority in the *country*. . . ." wrote Lenin in his historic article "The Crisis Has Matured."[1]

After the Kornilov plot it became obvious that the Bolsheviks were winning the majority in the country. The decision regarding armed insurrection adopted by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party marked the opening of a new period—the third—in the history of the preparations for the Great October Socialist Revolution.

Stalin characterised the first period (March-April, 1917) as the period in which the Party adopted the new orientation.

The second period (May-August, 1917) was the period of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses.

The third period (September-October, 1917) was the period of the organisation of the assault.

"We must regard as the characteristic feature of this period," wrote Stalin, "the rapid maturing of the crisis, the utter confusion prevailing in ruling circles, the isolation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and the wholesale desertion of the vacillating elements to the side of the Bolsheviks."[2]

After their victory in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets the Bolsheviks won majorities in the Soviets in nearly all the important industrial centres of the country, such as Ekaterinburg, Minsk, Rostov, Saratov, Kiev, Kharkov, Taganrog, Samara, Tsaritsyn and Vladimir, not to speak of Lugansk and Ivanovo-Voznesensk, where the Soviets had turned Bolshevik soon after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution. The elections of members of the Constituent Assembly in the large industrial centres and districts which took place after October, but which reflected the relation of forces that had existed just prior to the October Socialist Revolution, indicated how much the influence of the Bolsheviks had grown in the country.

In Ivanovo-Voznesensk the Bolsheviks polled 17,166 votes (64 per cent), the Mensheviks 679 votes (2.6 per cent) and the Socialist-Revolutionaries 3,389 votes (12.7 per cent). In Kineshma the Bolsheviks polled 3,567 votes, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 858 and the Mensheviks 815. In the Vladimir Uyezd, Vladimir Gubernia, where there were a number of large textile mills, the Bolsheviks polled 71 per cent of the total vote (over 36,000 voted for the Bolsheviks and only 745 for the Mensheviks; the Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 11,600 votes). In the Shuya Uyezd, in the same gubernia, the Bolsheviks polled 63.5 per cent of the total vote, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 22 per cent and the Mensheviks two per cent. In Ekaterinburg the Bolshevik ticket polled 11,827 votes, the Socialist-Revolutionary ticket 4,293 votes and the Menshevik ticket 567 votes.

The figures for the Asha-Balashovsky Works, in the Urals, are interesting.

Here the Bolsheviks polled 1,829 votes, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 134, and all the other parties together 20 votes. In the Minyar Volost, Ufa Gubernia (the Minyar Works), the Bolsheviks polled 2,232 votes, whereas the Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 116 votes, and all the other parties together 28 votes. In Minsk the Bolsheviks polled 63 per cent of the total vote, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 19 per cent and the Mensheviks 1.8 per cent.

These figures strikingly demonstrated the utter bankruptcy of the Mensheviks, who had lost all influence over the masses, primarily in the important proletarian centres. The victory the Bolsheviks had achieved in the Soviets in the larger cities had to be consolidated all over the country. It was with this object in view that the Bolsheviks demanded the convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets. The struggle for the early convocation of the Second Congress and for ensuring Bolshevik leadership of this Congress actually became a most important means of organising the assault in the various localities.

At the beginning of October the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party circulated to its local organisations a letter signed by J. M. Sverdlov, informing them of the convocation of a special Party Congress on October 17, and of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on October 20. The Central Committee of the Party urged that as far as possible the same delegates should be elected for the Party Congress and for the Congress of Soviets. It also instructed the local organisations to arrange for new elections to the Soviets and for Area and Regional Congresses of Soviets. At these Congresses they were to endeavour to secure the adoption of resolutions demanding the immediate convocation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and these resolutions were to be telegraphed to Petrograd. On September 30, *Rabochy Put* published a leading article signed by the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) entitled "On the Eve of the Congress of Soviets." The article called for a struggle against the compromisers who were trying to prevent the Congress from being called. Addressing the Bolshevik Party members in the localities, the Central Committee said:

"Be on your guard, comrades! Rely only on yourselves. Do not waste a single hour. Prepare for the Congress of Soviets. Convene Regional Congresses, and see to it that opponents of the compromisers are elected as delegates to the Congress. Do not yield an inch of the ground won by the Soviets in the localities!"

In conclusion, the Central Committee uttered a warning against taking premature action, and, in effect, called upon the local workers to wait for the signal from the centre:

"We shall not go into battle when it suits our enemies. No isolated actions!"[3]

The campaign in favour of convening Regional Congresses of Soviets assumed particularly wide dimensions after the Congress of Soviets of the

Northern Region. Regional Congresses were held in the following important centres:

Region	*Date*	*Place*
1. Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region	October 11	Petrograd
2. Ekaterinburg Area Congress of Soviets	October 13	Ekaterinburg
3. Congress of Soviets of Vladimir Gubernia	October 16	Vladimir
4. Regional Congress of Soviets of the Volga Region	October 16	Saratov
5. Regional Congress of Soviets in Minsk	October 16	Minsk
6. First All-Siberian Congress of Soviets	October 16	Irkutsk
7. Congress of Soviets of the Tver Gubernia	October 17	Tver
8. Regional Conference of Soviets of the South Western Territory	October 17	Kiev
9. Congress of Soviets of the Ryazan Gubernia	October 18	Ryazan

In addition, the following Congresses had been held somewhat earlier than the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region:

Region	*Date*	*Place*
1. Regional Congress of Soviets of the Urals	August 17	Ekaterinburg
2. Congress of Soviets of Central Siberia	September 5	Krasnoyarsk
3. Second Territorial Congress of Soviets of Turkestan	September 29	Tashkent
4. Regional Congress of Soviets of the Donets and Krivoi Rog Basins	October 6	Kharkov
5. Congress of Soviets of Eastern Siberia	October 10	Irkutsk

At the Congresses enumerated above representatives were present from the Soviets of Petrograd, Moscow, Finland, Estonia, the Volga Region, the Urals, Siberia, the Far East, the Ukraine, and Central Asia, *i.e.*, from the Soviets of almost the entire country. At the Regional Congress of Soviets of the Volga Region delegates were present from Saratov, Samara, Simbirsk, Syzran, Astrakhan, Tsaritsyn and other cities. The First All-Siberian Congress of Soviets was attended by representatives from 69 Soviets in Siberia and the Far East (Vladivostok, Tumen, Harbin [in Special Area of Chinese-Eastern Railway], the Yakutsk Region, Khabarovsk, etc.). In all, 184 delegates were present, of whom 65 were Bolsheviks and 35 "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries.

At the Regional Conference of Soviets of the South-Western Territory, held in Kiev, 34 Soviets were represented. As has been already stated, at the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region delegates were present from the Petrograd Soviet and the Soviets in the Petrograd Gubernia, from the Moscow and Archangel Soviets, and from several Soviets in Finland, Estonia, and Latvia.

As a rule, the keynote of these Congresses of Soviets was the capture of power by the Soviets, and they passed Bolshevik resolutions. The temper prevailing in the localities may be judged from the character of the resolution adopted by the Congress of Soviets of the Vladimir Gubernia where, in addition to the Vladimir Soviet, the Soviets of Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Shuya, Kovrov, Gorokhovets, and other industrial centres in the Vladimir Gubernia were represented. The resolution read as follows:

> "The Congress proclaims the Provisional Government and all the parties which support it a government and parties of betrayers of the revolution and traitors to the people. Henceforth the Congress regards all the Soviets in the Vladimir Gubernia and their gubernia centre (the Gubernia Executive Committee) as being in a state of open and implacable war against the Provisional Government."[4]

The pre-October Regional and Gubernia Congresses of Soviets were an extremely important factor in the preparations for the assault. They not only adopted resolutions urging the necessity of transferring power to the Soviets, but undertook definite obligations as regards supporting Petrograd and Moscow when the decisive battle commenced.

Simultaneously, in accordance with the instructions of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, preparations were made in the localities for the special Party Congress that was to meet on October 17. That Congress did not take place, but in nearly all localities Party Conferences and Congresses were held, all of which discussed one and the same question: "the current situation," *i.e.*, armed insurrection.

On October 1, the Area Conference of Bolsheviks in the Petrograd Gubernia was opened. The Moscow City Conference of Bolsheviks met on October 10. At the end of September a Gubernia Conference of the Bolshevik Party was convened in Nizhni-Novgorod (September 30—October 2). On October 6 a Gubernia Party Congress was held in Samara, and on October 5 the Second Regional Conference of Party Organisations in Byelorussia and on the Western Front was held. In the same period (October 2-7) the First Regional Congress of Caucasian Bolshevik Organisations was held in Tiflis. In the beginning and middle of October, Gubernia Party Conferences were held in Voronezh, Novgorod, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Yaroslavl, Vyatka, Perm, Ufa, Ekaterinburg, Tomsk, and other cities.

In the main industrial centres of the country the Bolshevik Party organisations had been from the very outset independent organisations, or else had broken off all connection with the Mensheviks during the first few months after the February Revolution. In some towns, however, where

there were compromising and opportunist elements, it was not possible to form sufficiently strong Bolshevik groups. Here, joint Bolshevik and Menshevik Party organisations were formed, which in some places existed up to August, September, and October 1917. But during the autumn months, on the eve of the October battles, the rupture with the Mensheviks came to a head everywhere. During September and October *Pravda* published every day in its "Party Life" columns "Letters to the Central Committee" from local organisations reporting the formation of independent Bolshevik Party branches which accepted the instructions of the Central Committee, and their complete rupture with the Mensheviks. In August 1917 independent Bolshevik branches were formed in Pskov and Vyatka, and in September in Taganrog, Simferopol, Orsha, Vladivostok, Orenburg, Berdyansk, Elisavetgrad, Novonikolayevsk and Tomsk. In October branches were formed in Omsk and in Irkutsk. Later on it was found that the struggle to transfer power to the Soviets and the capture of power by the Soviets were more difficult and complicated precisely in those places where the rupture with the Mensheviks and the formation of independent Bolshevik organisations had been unduly delayed despite the explicit instructions of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

By October 1917 considerable Bolshevik forces had developed in the localities; the Party had increased its membership enormously. As Comrade Sverdlov reported at the meeting of the Central Committee held on October 16, the Bolshevik Party at that time had no less than 400,000 members.

This army of 400,000 Bolsheviks was very well distributed over the country. The Party's main forces were naturally concentrated in the two capitals. In October the Party membership in Petrograd was around 50,000. In Moscow it exceeded 20,000, and with the membership in the whole region, 70,000. The Urals Party organisation had a membership of over 30,000.

At the Second North-Western Conference of Bolsheviks held in Minsk in October, 28,590 Party members were represented. Including the membership on the Western Front, the total amounted to 49,000.

The Party Conference of the South-Western Territory held in Kiev in July was attended by delegates from eight organisations with an aggregate membership of 7,297. Of these, the Kiev Party organisation had about 4,000 and the Odessa organisation 2,200.

The Regional Congress of Caucasian Bolshevik organisations held in Tiflis in October represented a membership of 8,636, of which Baku accounted for 2,200. There was a strong Bolshevik organisation in Ivanovo-Voznesensk with 6,000 members and large organisations in other gubernias, as for example: Saratov—3,500 members, Samara—4,000, Nizhni-Novgorod—3,000, Tsaritsyn—about 1,000, Kazan—650, and Voronezh—600.

Under the direction of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party preparations for capturing power proceeded all over the country. Notwithstanding the enormous difficulties and persecution by the Provisional Government and its organs, communication between the Central Committee and the local organisations was splendidly maintained during the pre-October days.

The delegates at the Sixth Congress of the Party went among the masses and urged the necessity for armed insurrection, and jointly with the local Party organisations, they made the practical preparations and created the necessary conditions for success.

The delegates at the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party returned to the working-class centres, to the front and to the rural districts. Sixty-four of them carried on work in Petrograd, 55 in Moscow, 33 went to the Donets Basin, Kharkov and Odessa, 13 to Baku and 12 to the Urals.

A number of delegates were sent to other large cities such as Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Tula, Nizhni-Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Ufa, Omsk and Vladivostok. The Bolshevik delegates carried the decision of the Party Congress to the workers, peasants and soldiers. They prepared the working people for the new revolution, formed Red Guard units and roused the masses for the assault on capitalism, for the organisation of the armed insurrection.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party attached its members to the various regions and was regularly kept informed by them of the progress of operations in the localities. Every telegram from the provinces reporting readiness to support an insurrection at the centre was an important means of gauging the temper of the country. J. M. Sverdlov insisted on constant and systematic information from the localities, and he himself maintained the closest communication even with the most remote districts.

"Petrograd is not the whole of Russia!"—howled the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries hysterically, vainly trying to prove in their press that when the decisive clash occurred the vast provinces would, like an avalanche, overwhelm the insurrection in the Bolshevik "islands" of Petrograd and Moscow. But the Bolshevik General Staff, which was preparing for the insurrection, knew perfectly well that Petrograd and Moscow were not "islands" in a sea of hostile "provinces" but militant centres, the vanguard, at whose signal unit after unit, town after town, district after district, in fact, the whole country, would march into battle.

There was not a single large region in the country which had not received special instructions from the Central Committee of the Party. The Urals, the Donets Basin, Byelorussia and North Caucasus knew beforehand the place they were to occupy, the functions they were to perform and the part they were to play in the impending insurrection. Representatives of the Central Committee of the Party visited the localities to convey the final decisions and to inspect the preparations that had been made to capture power. The Red Guard units, which were formed on the eve of October in nearly all the important centres of the country, grew, procured arms and assumed definite shape. The entire country waited intensely for the signal to go into action, and everybody knew that this signal would come from Petrograd and Moscow.

2

THE PETROGRAD BOLSHEVIKS PREPARE FOR THE ASSAULT

Foremost among the Party organisations in the preparations for the assault was the Petrograd Committee. The leading workers of the Petrograd organisations were familiar with Lenin's letters on the insurrection. Lenin had already addressed himself to the Petrograd Committee on more than one occasion. The Committee of the Vyborg District, where Lenin went to live at the beginning of October, had these letters duplicated. The workers read them in groups and copied them by hand. Intense work was carried on in rallying the rank and file of the Party membership around Lenin's call for preparation for insurrection.

On October 5, the Petrograd Committee discussed Lenin's letter to the Bolsheviks in the two capitals. M. M. Lashevich, who subsequently became a prominent Trotskyite, opposed the idea of insurrection. He advanced the same arguments as those advanced by Kamenev and Zinoviev: our forces were inadequate; Petrograd and Finland were not the whole of Russia; the peasants would not follow us, and even if they did and were willing to deliver grain, we would not be able to transport it to the towns; economically, industrially and as regards food supplies, the country was heading for the abyss; power was coming into our hands, but we must not precipitate events.

In other words, the waverers stood for a policy of drift. Instead of *organising* the insurrection, they advocated *waiting* to see how things would develop; instead of rapidly and perseveringly *mobilising* all forces, they advocated *drifting* with the stream; instead of leading the revolution, they advocated *trailing* in its wake.

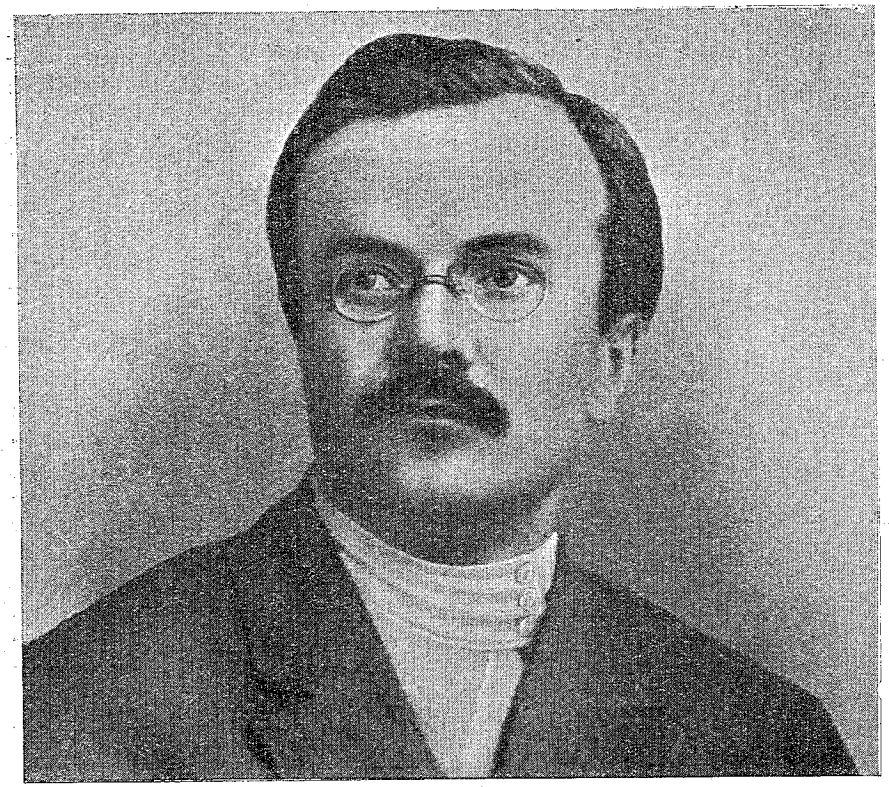
Lashevich supported Trotsky's proposal to postpone the insurrection until the opening of the Congress of Soviets, but he frankly advanced the arguments which Trotsky had endeavoured to conceal. These arguments clearly revealed how identical the position of Zinoviev and Kamenev was with that of Trotsky. One merged with the other. When dislodged from one platform its authors took shelter on the other.

The Petrograd Committee sternly rebuffed the opponents of insurrection.

> "The situation at present," said M. I. Kalinin, "is that we are heading for the seizure of power. We shall not capture power by peaceful means. It is hard for us to say whether we shall be able to commence operations tomorrow. But we must not miss the present opportunity to wage the struggle. The question of seizing power stands squarely before us. Our only problem is to decide on the strategical moment for the assault."[5]

The general temper of the Petrograd Committee was expressed by Comrade Molotov in the following precise and lucid terms:

> "Our task at the present time is not to restrain the masses, but to choose the most opportune moment for capturing power. Lenin's theses state that we must not allow ourselves to be fascinated by dates, but must choose the opportune moment for capturing power; that we should not wait until the masses break into anarchy. It is impossible to determine the moment with precision. Perhaps the moment will come when the Provisional Government removes to Moscow. But we must be prepared for action at any moment."[6]



V. M. Molotov

The Petrograd Committee resolved to convene a City Conference of the Bolsheviks in the capital. This Conference, the third that year, was in session from October 7 to 11. About 50,000 Party members were represented: over 7,000 in the Narva District, slightly under 7,000 in the Vyborg District, 3,000 in the Petersburg District, etc., etc. The general situation was so tense that the Conference was held in semi-secrecy, no visitors being allowed to attend. The Conference revealed that only a few individuals in the Petrograd organisations were opposed to insurrection. The Petrograd Bolsheviks marched in step with the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

Lenin addressed a letter to the delegates at the Conference setting forth his arguments in favour of insurrection. The leader's call met with an enthusiastic response. On October 10 the Conference adopted a resolution which fully supported Lenin's line. The resolution stated:

> "The moment has arrived for the last decisive struggle which will determine the fate not only of the Russian, but of the world revolution. In view of this, the Conference declares that only if the Kerensky government, together with the spurious Council of the Republic, is superceded by a Workers' and Peasants' Revolutionary Government will it be possible: a) to transfer the land to the peasants . . . b) immediately propose a just peace. . . ."[7]

This resolution was adopted on the very same evening that the Central Committee endorsed the call for insurrection.

The Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party resolutely set to work to prepare for the insurrection. Members of the Committee visited the districts, inspected the Red Guard and procured arms. In the Vyborg District, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov (Skryabin), was active. An old Bolshevik, who had served several terms in exile, Comrade Molotov worked on the editorial board of *Zvezda* and *Pravda*, the first legal Bolshevik newspapers. During the war he was in exile in Eastern Siberia, but in 1916 he escaped to Petrograd, where he was co-opted as a member of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party. During the February Revolution he led the Petrograd Bolsheviks. It was on his initiative that the representatives of the workers and soldiers were merged in a single Soviet.

At the period of which we are writing, Comrade Molotov was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

When the Party set its course for armed insurrection Molotov was elected a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee and placed in charge of the Education Department. While directing agitational work among the garrison, he continued his work on the District as well as on the Petrograd Committee. He familiarised the active Bolsheviks in Petrograd with the contents of Lenin's letters and worked to secure the defeat of the opponents of insurrection.

Andrei Andreyevich Andreyev was active among the metal-workers of Petrograd, who were entirely under the influence of the Bolsheviks and rendered enormous assistance in organising the Red Guards.

On October 15 the Petrograd Committee of the Party discussed the Party's call for immediate insurrection. There were 35 comrades present at this meeting, representing all the districts of the city, the Central Council of Trade Unions, the City Duma and the national sections of the Party organisation in the capital. The question under discussion was not whether action should be taken—that was already settled—but the practical problems connected with the insurrection. After hearing a statement on the resolution which had been adopted by the Central Committee, the meeting heard the reports of delegates from the various districts.



A. A. Andreyev

The representatives of the Vyborg District confidently stated: "The masses will support us." The representatives from the Vasilyevsky Island District stated that military training was in full swing at all the factories and mills in that district.

M. I. Kalinin reported on the contacts that were being established with the armed forces:

> "The Army Committees," he said, "are not in our hands . . . but delegations come from the army independently of the army organisations and put forward demands which indicate that a militant spirit prevails among them."[8]

The representatives of the Obukhov District stated:

> ". . . formerly, the Obukhov Works was a stronghold of the Defencists. Now, however, sentiment has changed in our favour. The meetings . . . are attended by five to seven thousand men. . . . Two thousand men have joined the Red Guards. We have 500 rifles, a machine gun and an armoured car. . . . Our workers will undoubtedly come out in response to the call of the Petrograd Soviet."[9]

Eino Rahja stated very emphatically on behalf of the Finns: "The feeling among the Finns is: the sooner the better."[10]

The Lettish representatives reported that their organisation had 1,200 members. The workers had been enlisted in the Red Guard in their respective factories.

All the districts were seething with activity. The masses were impatiently waiting for the Party's call:

"To arms!"

Summing up the reports Kalinin stated:

"I am convinced that the people will display their constructive ability in the very near future."

The general feeling was such that even those who only recently had been wavering now voted with the entire organisation in favour of insurrection.

The Petrograd Committee resolved immediately to call together all the active Party workers and to acquaint them with the slogans for their daily militant agitation. On organisational questions it was resolved:

1. to set up a small sub-committee;

2. to arrange for members to be on constant duty at the centre and in the localities;

3. to organise a military information centre at the Headquarters of every District Committee;

4. that all the districts establish closer connections with the factory committees and the Secretariat of the Central Committee;

5. to improve communications with the railwaymen, postal workers and all mass working-class organisations;

6. to intensify agitation and accelerate the mass training of the workers in the use of arms;

7. to improve communications between the district Party organisations and the army units.

In conformity with the decisions of the Petrograd Committee, its Executive Sub-Committee elected an Insurrection Committee of three and instructed it to inspect the army barracks and military schools and take stock of the available arms and munitions.

This was followed by the formation of a General Committee of Insurrection consisting of members of the Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee and the military organisation of the Bolshevik Party.

The District Committees of the Petrograd Party organisation soon buzzed with intense activity.

The Petrograd Committee had called for the "intensification of agitation," and, in response, the calls to the workers in the factories became louder and more insistent. At the leading factories meetings were held every day. At the Pipe Works, where M. I. Kalinin was a member of the factory committee, 20,000 workers had only recently followed the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Now Bolshevik speakers were frequent visitors at the plant. Feeling among the workers soon underwent a change. They listened to the Bolshevik speakers with close attention, and every now and again they would ask: "When are the Bolsheviks going to take action?"

The Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party had called for "closer contact with the masses of the soldiers," and accordingly, the District Party Committees conducted energetic work among the army units. The Socialist-Revolutionaries had strongly entrenched themselves in one of the companies of the Izmailovsky Regiment and the men continued to pass defencist resolutions. The District Committee sent some of its workers to the company. In the evenings factory workers began to gather near the barracks and explain to the soldiers the meaning of the events that were rapidly maturing. At first the soldiers would not give the Party's speakers a hearing, but soon their plain and convincing arguments proved effective, and

a week or two later the soldiers themselves expressed surprise that they had allowed the compromisers to lead them by the nose so long.

The Bolsheviks' strongholds were the big plants in the Vyborg, Narva and other working-class districts of Petrograd. The Vyborg District had a special Agitators' Bureau which sent speakers to the factories at their request. Non-party workers came to the Bureau in quest of literature, and every now and again Red Guardsmen arrived with requests for instructors to be sent to their units. From here groups of men went off for rifle practice. The offices of the District Committee, which shared premises with the Staff of the Red Guard in No. 13, Lesnoi Prospect, were always crowded with people.

The three rooms which the Committee occupied became inadequate and so it removed to the premises of what was formerly the "Quiet Valley" Tavern at No. 33, Sampsonievsky Prospect, where it occupied two floors. On the ground floor tea-rooms were arranged for Red Guardsmen. The premises, consisting of two large halls, one on each floor, and of several small rooms, had the advantage of being in the very centre of the district.

At the factories, the members of the District Committee arranged for military training for the workers, and for guards to be on constant duty. Increased efforts were made to procure arms and military equipment.

The workers concealed arms in the most unlikely places. On Okhta Island, for instance, arms were kept in premises which bore the sign "Co-operative Store." In this store there was only one case of macaroni. All the other cases were filled with rifles and cartridges.

The Vyborg District Committee was in constant communication with the Petrograd Committee and with the members of the Central Committee. Representatives of the District Committee were regularly on duty at the Smolny.

The premises of the Vyborg District Committee were open day and night. The members of the Committee, of the District Soviet and of the Staff of the Red Guard, often worked whole nights at a stretch. They received information about the temper of the workers in the factories, heard reports from speakers as to how their meetings had gone off, counted up their fighting forces and checked up on the progress made in recruiting men for the Red Guard.

The Vyborg District became a Bolshevik fortress. It was not by mere chance that the Central Committee put Lenin in the care of the Vyborg Red Guards.

> "An outstanding role in the October insurrection was played by the Baltic sailors and the Red Guards of the Vyborg District. In view of the extraordinary daring of these men, the role of the Petrograd garrison was reduced mainly to that of giving moral and partly military support to the front rank fighters," such was Stalin's estimation of the sailors and Red Guardsmen of the Vyborg District.[11]

Nor did preparations lag in the other districts of Petrograd. The Rozh-

destvensky District Committee met every three days and at every meeting the first items on the agenda were: reports about the temper prevailing among the factory workers; whom to send, and where, to change the situation in favour of the Bolsheviks. Every day hurried conferences of two or three of the leading members of the Committee were held to arrange for current agitation. Representatives from the big plants were constantly on duty at the Committee's Headquarters ready to inform all the factories as soon as action became necessary.

The question of armed insurrection as such was not discussed at the meetings of the Committee; the line of the Bolshevik Party was clear to every member without exception. The only question discussed was how to obtain arms, and whom to arm.

An N.C.O. who sympathised with the Bolsheviks acted as instructor in this district and conducted rifle practice every day. Red Guards also came to the District Committee for instructions.

During the last days before the insurrection, regular conferences with the non-party representatives of the factories were held at which the delegates were instructed how to answer the "tricky" questions put by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. These conferences helped the District Committee to establish connections with wide sections of the workers.

Tension in the district was so high that workers hastened to the Committee even at night to enquire whether the insurrection had commenced.

The District Committees worked with exceptional revolutionary enthusiasm. Everywhere it was felt that the decisive battle was approaching. In all the working-class districts of Petrograd, Revolutionary Military Staffs were formed, which served as the district centres of the insurrection. Workers' combat groups were formed, armed and trained with feverish intensity.

Soon after the Military Revolutionary Committee was formed in the Vyborg District a similar committee was formed in the Narva-Peterhof District. Its formation was welcomed with enthusiasm by the workers in the district. At the Putilov Works—the largest in the district—the workers in every shop passed resolutions declaring that they would render the Committee full and unreserved support.

The District Military Revolutionary Committee had its headquarters in No. 21, Novosivkovskaya Street, next door to the offices of the District Committee of the Bolshevik Party. It was in constant communication with the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, and issued orders to the local staffs of the Red Guard. On it devolved the task of guarding the district, and all the Red Guard units were subordinate to it. It operated under the direct guidance of the Narva District Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

Several days before the October Revolution a Revolutionary Staff was formed in the Petrograd District. This Staff also worked in close contact with and under the direct guidance of the District Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

The Staff had its headquarters in the premises of the District Soviet and was in command of all the Red Guard units in the district. It inspected the fighting fitness of the units, supplied them with arms, organised the protection of the bridges and kept the local hotbeds of counter-revolution—such as the Vladimirsky and Pavlovsky Military Schools—under constant surveillance.

In the Moskovskaya Zastava District, the Staff of the District Military Revolutionary Committee was endorsed at a joint conference of the District Committee of the Party and representatives of the factories and mills in the district. At this time the overwhelming majority of the workers employed in the largest plants in the district, such as Rechkin's Works, the Skorokhod Shoe Factory, and others, already unreservedly followed the Bolsheviks. In October the Bolshevik group at the Skorokhod Factory numbered about 500. The District Committee energetically proceeded to form combat groups. Similar activities were conducted by the Revolutionary Staffs in the other districts of the capital.

In all the factories and mills in Petrograd military training of Red Guards was conducted under the supervision of the factory committees, factory groups, and district staffs of the Red Guard. At the Obukhov Works, the Red Guard consisted of 400 men under arms, although the total number of men on the rolls was about 2,000. The men were divided into ten units, each headed by Bolsheviks who conducted regular military training.

In October there were in the Moskovskaya Zastava District 2,000 Red Guards out of a total of 13,000 workers in the district.

At the Putilov Works there were about 1,500 Red Guards. Military training was conducted on definite days, after working hours, under the direction of Bolshevik N.C.O.'s and privates. Hundreds and thousands of splendid organisers and agitators sprang up from the ranks of the workers and soldiers. The factory committee set up a military committee of three, which enlisted men for the Red Guard. In this, the committee found large numbers of voluntary helpers in the various shops of the plant.

In the Vasilyevsky Island District, one of the best organised fighting units was the Red Guard at the Pipe Works. Non-party workers as well as members of the Bolshevik Party willingly undertook military training. On the outbreak of the revolution, the works had at its command a complete battalion, numbering nearly 2,000 men.

One of the outstanding figures in the Vasilyevsky Island District was Vera Slutskaya, a brilliant propagandist and a devoted member of the Bolshevik Party. The Party had assigned her to this district, where she came early every morning and spent the whole day with the workers in the factories. Often she stayed in the district the whole night. She was very popular among the working women in the district who called her "Iron Vera." One woman worker, in her reminiscences of Vera, related:

"In the morning I would come into the common room and hear somebody say: 'Our Iron Vera had no sleep again last night. She sat

at the table and dozed for a couple of hours, and then rushed off to some factory or other.'"[12]

On the eve of the October Revolution the factories and mills in the Vasilyevsky Island District, like those in the other districts of the capital, bristled with Red Guard bayonets.

In those days the factories resembled armed camps more than industrial enterprises. They teamed with armed men, and the constant rattling of rifle bolts was heard. The Red Guards stood at their machines with cartridge belts strapped across their shoulders. In the factory yards metal sheets were attached to the sides of motor trucks, converting them into improvised armoured cars on which machine guns were mounted.

"We are not scared by the struggle which will break out soon. . . . We are firmly convinced that we shall win.

"Long live the power of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!"—declared the workers of the Stary Parviainen Works in their resolution.[13]

Similar resolutions were adopted by the workers in the other districts of Petrograd. Everywhere there prevailed an atmosphere of high revolutionary enthusiasm combined with well organised activity and confidence in victory.

The workers prepared for action.

The military preparations of the Petrograd Committee revealed that in the impending decisive battles the proletariat of the capital would have a staunch and experienced leader.

3

THE MOSCOW BOLSHEVIKS PREPARE FOR INSURRECTION

Conditions in Moscow were somewhat different from those in Petrograd, where the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party directly guided the struggle. The Petrograd proletariat consisted mainly of metal-workers and workers engaged in other branches of heavy industry employed in large plants. They were called "hereditary proletarians" to emphasise the fac that they had long ago lost contact with the rural districts. The bulk of the workers in Moscow, however, were textile mill hands who still had close contacts with the rural districts. It took a longer time for them to free themselves from petty-bourgeois influences. The few large plants in Moscow were islands in a sea of small and medium enterprises.

The Petrograd proletariat had suffered less from military mobilisation than the Moscow proletariat. The government had refrained as far as possible from calling up skilled workers. In Moscow, however, large numbers of factory workers had been conscripted and their places had been taken by new arrivals from the rural districts. For a time this greatly diminished the revolutionary fighting efficiency of the Moscow workers. The military organisation of the Moscow Bolsheviks was much less efficient than that of Petrograd.

The main thing, however, was that Moscow lacked the Party leadership that was ensured in Petrograd by the presence of Lenin and Stalin.

A serious obstacle to the mobilisation of the masses in Moscow was the fact that, unlike Petrograd and all the other large centres, the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies existed separately. The compromisers did all in their power to hinder the merging of the two bodies in the effort to preserve their influence at least in the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, for the Bolsheviks had entrenched themselves in the Soviet of Workers' Deputies quite early.

Another reason why the struggle assumed a sharper form in Petrograd was that the latter was the seat of the government, and the city was regarded as being within the war zone. Hence, government persecution was more severe in Petrograd than in Moscow. Events like the firing on the July demonstration, the repeated suppression of Bolshevik newspapers and the arrest of Bolshevik leaders were unknown in Moscow. During the July days the Moscow authorities had limited themselves to preventing Bolsheviks from entering army barracks, and temporarily prohibiting open air meetings.

Nevertheless, the counter-revolutionary forces closely watched the development of events in Moscow. Russia's second capital—tranquil, mercantile Moscow—was a striking contrast to the premier capital—turbulent, revolutionary Petrograd. The Provisional Government intended to take refuge in Moscow. Moscow was the place of assembly of the "public men," under which "innocent" title were concealed the most prominent leaders of the counter-revolution, virtually its General Staff. Moscow was much nearer to the Don Region, from which the Cossacks could easily be drawn. In short, the counter-revolutionaries regarded Moscow as their haven of refuge and it was here that they proposed to concentrate large forces. In fact, they had planned to convert Moscow into their centre at the time the Council of State met.

Shortly before the Council was convened the news got abroad that the 7th Siberian Cossack Regiment was moving towards Moscow. The Bolshevik press immediately raised the alarm. In the factories and mills the workers passed resolutions protesting against the transfer of the Cossacks. Nol public statement was made as to who had given orders for the Cossacks to be transferred, and those who knew kept quiet about it. The Bolsheviks openly accused the Provisional Government of being responsible for the Cossacks' movements, but Kerensky remained silent, while Headquarters of the Moscow Military Area published denial after denial.

True, the Cossacks did not take part in the Kornilov mutiny. It was suppressed before the Moscow counter-revolutionaries could come to its aid. But the Cossacks remained in Moscow and in its environs.

Now that fresh preparations were being made for an offensive against the revolution, General Headquarters decided to dispatch a Cavalry Division to Moscow.

This division was to replace the 7th Cossack Regiment and orders were issued for the latter's recall from Moscow. But the Moscow counter-revolutionaries were of the opinion that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush, and when Colonel Ryabtsev, Commander-in-Chief of the Moscow Military Area, sent an urgent request that the Cossacks be allowed to remain, General Headquarters countermanded its previous order and the Cossacks remained. Being of the opinion that this force was inadequate, General Headquarters ordered the 4th Siberian Cossack Regiment to move to Kaluga.

The official "public-democratic" organ around which the fighting forces of the Moscow counter-revolution rallied was the City Duma, which had been elected in June. The post of Mayor of Moscow and head of the Moscow City Duma was held by the Right Socialist-Revolutionary V. V. Rudnyev, a medical man by profession, and one of the leaders of the Moscow Socialist-Revolutionary organisation. He was also Chairman of the Chief Committee of the All-Russian Union of Cities. Extremely ambitious, Rudnyev aspired to the post of Cabinet Minister, and, perhaps, even of head of the government, should the plan to organise a new Provisional Government in Moscow succeed.

But it was not Rudnyev who commanded the fighting effectives of the counter-revolution. They were under the command of the Staff of the Moscow Military Area, whose chief was Colonel of the General Staff, K. I. Ryabtsev, an incompetent officer, and a typical General Staff administrator of the tsarist regime, who was carried on the crest of the revolutionary wave to a leading post for which he was obviously unfit. Versed only in military affairs and having no political outlook, he took his orders from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which, he thought, was the party in power. Officially, he was not a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and many people regarded him as a Populist Socialist.

Ryabtsev could rely only upon a small number of the many thousands of men who constituted the Moscow garrison. His main props were the two military schools and six officers' training schools. This Cadet Corps consisted of the sons of the aristocracy and army officers. The senior classes could be used as a fighting force.

In Moscow there were about 15,000 officers, either on leave, in the hospitals, or belonging to reserve units. All had been registered by the Staff, but they had not been organised into a single unit. Moreover, nobody could say how many of them were prepared to defend the Provisional Government.

It was intended to win over the university students to the side of the counter-revolution, as the majority of them supported the Provisional Government.

In addition, the bourgeoisie in Moscow organised their "house guards," consisting of students and office employees, and hired army officers on leave from the front to instruct them. This "guard" was not a regular force, but could be usefully employed in street fighting against the insurgents.

Cossack units were quartered in and around Moscow.

At most, Ryabtsev could rely on 20,000 men. Of these, only the cadets and army officers had received proper military training. These, too, were well armed. It was anticipated that, in the event of the government being successful, all the officers in Moscow would probably support it; but it was still doubtful whether all of them would take part in actual fighting against the revolution.

Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks were obviously gaining control of the garrison, and so this had to be reduced at all costs.

On October 15, Ryabtsev, on the pretext of carrying out the plan for reducing the army initiated by the Minister of War, secretly ordered the disbandment of 16 reserve regiments, including a number of Moscow units. It was planned to complete the disbandment of the regiments by November 10. By this measure the counter-revolution hoped at one stroke to deprive the Bolsheviks of a large section of their armed forces.

On October 21, Ryabtsev issued an order to send all craftsmen in the army, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, bootmakers, joiners, tailors, etc., to the front. Before the war a large number of these had been factory workers and now supported the Bolsheviks.

The Staff of the Moscow Military Area hastened to bring more reliable troops to Moscow and to dispatch the revolutionary-minded soldiers to the front. Evidently the counter-revolutionaries had got wind of Lenin's letter in which he recommended that, if necessary, the insurrection could be started in Moscow.

Lenin attached exceptional importance to the outcome of the struggle in Moscow as well as in Petrograd. Already in his first letter on insurrection, written between September 12 and 14, he had said:

"... it does not matter which begins; perhaps even Moscow may begin...."[14]

This was not a definite instruction. In this letter the leader of the revolution merely emphasised that the insurrection had matured to such an extent that the slightest spark might cause an explosion. In Moscow there were no central government organs and no immediate outbreak was expected. Closely watching for the slightest change in the alignment of forces, however, Lenin, on September 29, again formulated the reason why the insurrection might be started in Moscow. He wrote:

"... We are technically in a position to seize power in Moscow (which might even be the one to start, so as to take the enemy by surprise)."[15]

At the very beginning of October he wrote for the third time:

"It is not essential to 'start' with Petrograd. If Moscow 'starts' bloodlessly it will undoubtedly be supported 1) by the sympathies of the army at the front; 2) by the peasants everywhere; 3) by the fleet and the troops in Finland *which are moving on Petrograd.*"[16]

The Moscow Bolsheviks were closely connected with Petrograd and immediately learned of the decisions adopted by the Central Committee. On September 19, the Moscow Bolshevik newspaper, *Sotsial Demokrat*, appeared with an article by Stalin entitled "All Power to the Soviets," in which he discussed the new course which the Bolsheviks had taken towards armed insurrection.

Lenin's letter was recieved in Moscow in the latter half of September and was discussed by the leaders of the organisation. It transpired that Rykov, who was subsequently shot for treason, was opposed to insurrection. He conceived the transfer of power to the Soviets as a peculiar stage in the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

But Rykov found no support in the Moscow Bolshevik organisation.

One of the meetings at which Lenin's letter was discussed was held in the house of V. A. Obukh. Twelve to 15 members of the Regional Committee of the Bolshevik Party were present at this meeting during which a long discussion took place, not about the question of insurrection as such—there was no disagreement about that—but about whether it should be started in Moscow. Some argued that Moscow could not take the initiative as the Moscow workers were inadequately armed, the Bolsheviks had no strong contacts with the garrison, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies was still controlled by the compromisers, and the garrison itself had been left without arms. In effect, this meant abandoning the idea of insurrection. Others argued that in view of the laxity of the Moscow military authorities, a small but militant force could ensure the success of the insurrection. The majority decided that it was necessary to prepare for insurrection, but that it would hardly be possible to begin in Moscow.

Operations in Moscow were hindered by the wavering and opportunist vacillations of certain leaders of the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Party.

Some of the leaders of the Moscow Committee—such as Pyatnitsky, who was subsequently exposed as an enemy of the people—were opposed to preparing the masses for the seizure of power.

All these circumstances, although they hindered the work of the Moscow Bolsheviks, could not check the mobilisation of forces. The bulk of the Moscow Bolsheviks followed the lead of Lenin and Stalin and solidly backed the Central Committee of the Party. The Bolshevik traditions of the armed insurrection in December 1905 inspired the Moscow workers to prepare for the struggle. That explains why numerous units of the Red Guard were formed in Moscow long before the insurrection.

The swing of the masses in Moscow towards Bolshevism found expression in the vote taken at the meetings of the Moscow Soviets held on September 5. For the first time, the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies and the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, which existed separately, voted in favour of a Bolshevik program containing the following demands:

"1. The immediate arming of the workers and the formation of a Red Guard.

"2. The cessation of all repressive measures against the working class and its organisations. The immediate abolition of the death penalty at the front and the restoration of complete freedom for all democratic organisations to conduct agitation in the army. The purging of the army of counter-revolutionary officers.

"3. Commissars and other officials to be elected by local organisations.

"4. Practical application of the right of the nations inhabiting Russia to self-determination, and primarily, the satisfaction of the demands of Finland and the Ukraine.

"5. The dissolution of the Council of State and of the State Duma. The immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

"6. The abolition of all class privileges (of the nobility and others) and complete equality of citizens.

"This platform can be carried out only if there is a complete rupture with the policy of compromise and if the masses of the people wage a determined struggle for power."[17]

The adoption of this resolution compelled the compromising majority on the Executive Committees and Presidiums of both Soviets to resign.

The election of new Executives took place on September 19. The election of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of *Workers'* Deputies resulted in the return of 32 Bolsheviks, 16 Mensheviks, nine Socialist-Revolutionaries and three Unionists, *i.e.* Mensheviks (who advocated unity with the Bolsheviks).

The election of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of *Soldiers'* Deputies, however, resulted in the return of 26 Socialist-Revolutionaries, 16 Bolsheviks, nine Mensheviks and nine non-party.

Only one-third of the Moscow garrison consisted of troops of the line. The remainder consisted of men employed in military workshops, depots, arsenals and other army service units. The troops of the line were not a permanent force. After a few weeks' training the men were dispatched to the front and replaced by new men. The permanent forces, officers and men, were retained to train the new arrivals. Many members of the permanent forces belonged to Moscow—sons of the bourgeoisie, office employees and government officials—who, as was said of them, had "found cushy jobs at the base."

In order to maintain their influence, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks prohibited the recall of deputies from the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, but in spite of this, quite a number of army units did recall those of their deputies in whom they had lost confidence. Moreover, the Bolsheviks took advantage of every opportunity to secure the election of new Company and Regimental Committees.

A number of outstanding Bolsheviks conducted energetic work among the garrison. Among these were M.F. Shkiryatov, who was elected a member of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies and of the Executive Committee of the Soviet; E. Yaroslavsky, leader of the military organisation of the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party; O. Varentsova, and many others. Considerable activity was conducted by the military organisation. It issued the demand that men worn out at the front should be replaced by those who had "dug themselves in at the base." This demand was directed not only against shirkers but also against the defencist Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, for the latter relied mainly on the permanent section of the Moscow garrison. In addition, the military organisation (the Military Bureau) conducted considerable activity during the election of the Soldiers' Committees. E. Yaroslavsky received special instructions from J. M. Sverdlov, in Petrograd, to exert every effort to secure the election of new Soldiers' Committees. The purpose of this was to rectify the mistake that had been committed in Moscow, where the Soviets of Workers' Deputies and Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies existed separately. On the eve of the October Revolution, all the regiments and companies, except the 1st Reserve Artillery Brigade, had elected new committees.

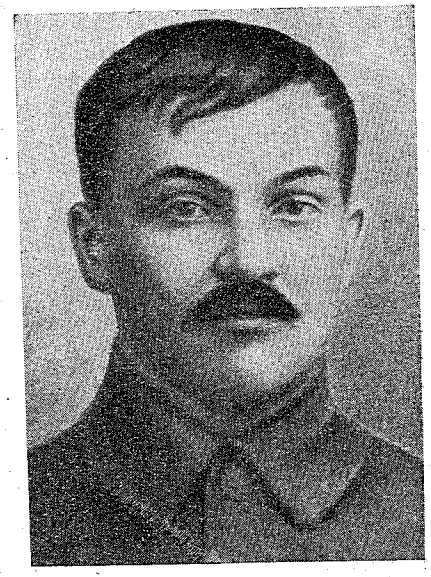
The elections to the District Dumas, which were held on September 24, revealed how great had been the swing of the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses in Moscow towards the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks polled nearly 50 per cent of the total vote, the Constitutional Democrats 20 per cent, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 15 per cent, and the Mensheviks slightly over four per cent.

Ninety per cent of the soldiers voted for the Bolsheviks. Several units voted almost unanimously for them.

This remarkable success showed that in Moscow the proletarian revolution had passed from the stage of mobilisation of forces to the stage of organisation of the assault.

Activities in the districts of Moscow daily grew in intensity and dimensions. Debates between Bolsheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks attracted huge audiences. In many cases, after such a debate, the workers in a given factory recalled their deputies from the Soviet and elected new men. Day by day the newspapers reported Bolshevik successes. In the election of the factory committee at the Prokhorov Textile Mills, the Bolsheviks topped the poll. Of the 11 new deputies elected to the Presnya District Soviet, eight were Bolsheviks.

At the Headquarters of the District Committees of the Party, military training was conducted, but the work of the leaders of the Moscow organisation in the way of technical preparations for the insurrection was inadequate owing to the shortage of arms, to procure which every effort was made. Agents were sent to Tula to purchase revolvers. Attempts were made to persuade the soldiers to provide arms. Hidden stocks of arms were discovered and requisitioned. In the Zamoskvorechye District, about 100 rifles, well cleaned and oiled, had been carefully hidden in a wall of the factory committee office at the Michelson Works. This was known to several officials of the District Committee. The rifles were unearthed and distributed among reliable people.



M. F. Shkiryatov

In the evening of October 10 a City Conference of the Moscow Bolsheviks was held in the Main Hall of the Polytechnical Museum. The agenda was as follows:

1. The current situation:
   a) the new Kornilov movement and the provocative activities at the front;
   b) the economic crisis;
   c) the nation-wide struggle against cold and hunger.
2. The Constituent Assembly election campaign.

Three days before this Conference Lenin had addressed a letter to the Petrograd Conference, which had been fixed for October 7, but was postponed to October 10.

In this letter Lenin called for the mobilisation of all forces for a last desperate and decisive struggle against the Kerensky government.

He enclosed a resolution which he recommended the Conference should adopt.

This letter and resolution were dispatched to Moscow and were read at the City Conference which adopted Lenin's resolution in its entirety.

Thus, on the same day, October 10, Lenin's resolution on armed insurrection was not only endorsed by the Central Committee of the Party, but also supported by the City Conferences of the Bolshevik Party in both Petrograd and Moscow. The fact that the Moscow Bolsheviks expressed their support of the leader of the Party on the same day as this was done by the Petrograd Bolsheviks was a tribute to the organising abilities of the Bolshevik Party.

On October 14, after a meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party at which representatives from Moscow were present, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Party met and adopted without discussion the Central Committee's directions concerning the insurrection and drafted a number of measures to carry them out.

The Regional Bureau also decided to set up a Party Military Centre for the purpose of guiding the insurrection. This centre consisted of two

members of the Regional Bureau, two members of the Moscow Committee and one member of the Moscow Area Committee.

A day or two later a conference of the active Party members from all the districts of Moscow was held. An animated discussion took place during which stock was taken of the available forces, and measures were proposed for intensifying Party activities. Some of those present complained about the shortage of arms and about the inadequate contacts with the garrison, but on the whole, the meeting almost unanimously supported the decision to prepare for the armed struggle to transfer power to the Soviets. The decisive moment was approaching.

The revolutionary crisis in Moscow and the Moscow Region advanced with giant strides. The tannery workers had been on strike for ten weeks. The metal-workers and textile-workers were threatening strike action. The Municipal employees remained at work only because the Soviet had intervened in their dispute with the City Duma. The conditions of the workers were becoming more and more intolerable. The employers, on various pretexts, were closing their factories. Actually, they were conducting a tacit lockout. The capitalists were deliberately fomenting a crisis. They provoked strikes and accused the workers of hindering production. Acting to the detriment of the general public, they blamed the workers. It became impossible to restrain the masses. The trade unions complained to the Soviet and demanded that resolute measures be taken against the lockout enforced by the employers.

On October 18 a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies was held, to which representatives of the trade unions were invited. One after another these trade union representatives mounted the rostrum and described the awful conditions under which the workers were living.

Temper in the hall steadily rose. The compromisers realised that the Executive Committee supported the trade unions and so the Socalist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks demanded an adjournment to enable the various party groups to draw up definite proposals.

During the adjournment the compromisers called to their aid the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks still predominated.

The meeting was resumed as a joint meeting of the two Executives.

The Bolsheviks demanded that the Soviets should intervene in the workers' economic struggle and issue a decree ordering the cessation of the lockout and the satisfaction of all the strikers' demands. If the capitalists refuse to yield they should be arrested. This might give rise to a conflict between the local and central authorities, but if that occurred, the Soviet, relying on the mass movement, should seize power.

The Bolsheviks' proposal came like a bombshell. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were furious, for they realised that the Bolsheviks were raising the question of power.

In opposition to the clear-cut and radical platform proposed by the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries proposed . . . that another petition be sent to the Provisional Government, an appeal to issue a decree ordering the satisfaction of the workers' demands.

The debate came to a close. A vote by roll call was demanded. Amidst intense silence the tellers announced the result: the Menshevik resolution was adopted by 46 votes against 33, with one abstaining. The compromisers were jubilant, but their triumph was short-lived.

Next day, October 19, a joint general meeting of the two Soviets was held. In spite of all the efforts of the compromisers to prevent it, the Bolshevik resolution was adopted by 332 votes against 207, with 13 abstaining. The announcement of the result was greeted by a storm of applause.

The applause had barely died down when the Menshevik, B. Kibrik, mounted the rostrum, and amidst derision and jeers stated:

> "The measures proposed by the Bolsheviks for the purpose of settling the dispute in the main branches of industry mark the utter bankruptcy of Bolshevism.
>
> "The Soviet's decree ordering the satisfaction of the workers' demands and threatening to arrest the capitalists, that is to say, the attempt to abolish the class struggle by means of a decree of the Soviet, virtually means the seizure of power in the most unwise manner and the virtual isolation of the working class." [18]

And then he let loose another flood of threats and predictions of all sorts of horrors: The capitalists would withdraw their money from the banks. Trade between Moscow and the rest of the country would be dislocated. The workers would be doomed to starvation because not only money, but food too would disappear. This would be a lockout, but one caused by the Bolsheviks themselves.

In short, in their obsequious devotion to the bourgeoisie the Mensheviks suggested to the capitalists the measures they could take to combat the revolution.

In conclusion this garrulous agent of the bourgeoisie demanded that all the deputies who had voted for the Bolsheviks should stand for re-election, and that the Executive Committees of the trade unions which had voted for the measures proposed by the Bolsheviks should be dissolved and new committees elected.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Cherepanov stated that the Bolshevik resolution virtually called for the unorganised seizure of power and, therefore, his party refused to accept any responsibility for the serious consequences that would ensue.

The zealous flunkeys of the bourgeoisie were given a severe trouncing by the Bolshevik Avanesov:

> "If," he said, "the Right thrusts the responsibility upon us Bolsheviks, we declare that we shall not shirk this responsibility and are ready to shoulder it; but this responsibility also rests upon the Moscow Soviets

of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. . . . We call upon all the people to support us in our struggle, and we shall rely only on the people, on the masses of the soldiers who by their votes have shown that they are marching with us, and also on the workers who are marching, and will continue to march, only with us."[19]

"Will you submit to the decision of the Soviet?"—Avanesov asked the compromisers point-blank.

In reply, the Menshevik Kibrik muttered something to the effect that they would submit to the Soviet's decision, but would refuse to take the leadership in carrying out the measures proposed. In conclusion he very distinctly and unambiguously added:

"We shall stand together to the very end, but we shall exert all our efforts to neutralise the fatal consequences of the resolution which has been adopted here today."[20]

"Neutralise the consequences"—such was the compromisers' policy on the eve of the Great Proletarian Revolution.

The temper of the meeting can be judged from the following incident. One of the Socialist-Revolutionaries stated in the course of his speech that the Moscow Bolsheviks were putting into effect Lenin's slogans. Immediately somebody in the hall shouted: "Long live Lenin!" and this was echoed by a thunder of applause and cries of greeting in honour of Lenin. The meeting ended with the singing of the *Internationale*.

The bourgeoisie regarded the decision adopted by the two Soviets as an indication of their intention to seize power. In fact, *Russkoye Slovo* furnished its report of the meeting with the heading: "Moscow Soviets' Decision to Seize Power."[21] On the same day, V.V. Rudnyev, the Mayor of Moscow, stated:

"I regard the decision adopted by the Moscow Soviets as part of a general plan which they have decided to put into effect. They will start by seizing the factories and then seize the banks, and so on."[22]

Rumours spread throughout the city that the Bolsheviks were to take action in the very near future.

The counter-revolution made energetic preparations for the struggle and tried to take the initiative. Ryabtsev, Chief of the Moscow Military Area, sent telegram after telegram to General Headquarters and to the General Staff of the South-Western Front demanding troops.

General Headquarters assured Ryabtsev that the lst Brigade of the 3rd Horse Guards' Division with a battery of horse artillery were being dispatched to the Moscow Military Area.

This information served to calm somewhat the Headquarters of the Moscow Military Area. On October 24 Ryabtsev issued the following Order of the Day to the units of the Moscow garrison:

"Among the public and, it is to be regretted, in certain sections of the press, rumours are being circulated to the effect that someone, somewhere, is threatening the area, and Moscow in particular, with some danger or other. There is no truth in this. . . . As chief of the armed forces of the area and the guardian of the true interests of the people, whom alone the troops are serving, I declare that no pogroms or anarchy will be permitted. In Moscow, in particular, such actions will be ruthlessly suppressed by troops who are loyal to the revolution and to the people. Adequate forces for this are available."[23]



V. A. Avanesov

The events of the very next few days proved how mistaken Ryabtsev had been in this estimation of his strength.

On October 22 the delegates at the Regional Conference of Bolshevik military organisations reported that the garrison was extremely hostile to the government. Feeling among the men was running high. It was found necessary to close the Conference next day, before it had concluded its business, owing to the alarming news received from Petrograd. Moscow was preparing for insurrection, and the delegates had to hasten back to their various districts.

The Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party recommended that extensive fraternisation between workers and soldiers should be arranged in the districts. On October 23 the Presnya Soviet of Workers' Deputies, on the proposal of the Bolsheviks, organised a demonstration of workers from all the factories in the district. Carrying banners and streamers bearing the inscription "All Power to the Soviets!" the workers marched to the Khodinka Camp, on the outskirts of the city, where a joint meeting was held with the men of the lst Reserve Artillery Brigade. After the meeting, the workers and soldiers lined up and, headed by a band and singing revolutionary songs, marched to the Vagankovsky Cemetery where, at the grave of the Bolshevik Nikolai Bauman whom the Black Hundreds had killed in 1905, they pledged themselves to fight to the very end.

On October 24 a joint meeting of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies endorsed the Regulations of the Red Guard, which had been organised by the Soviet and existed side by side with the Red Guards organised by the Bolshevik Party. For six weeks the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had prevented these Regulations from being adopted. The Bolsheviks stated that the main function of the Red Guard was to protect the

gains of the revolution and to combat counter-revolution. Another function was to prevent hooligan riots in the towns.

The Mensheviks again uttered their "warnings."

The Socialist-Revolutionaries on the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies declared that they could not even participate in the discussion of the Red Guard Regulations. That was the function of the workers' deputies, they said. They placed responsibility for all the undesirable consequences that would ensue from the organisation of the Red Guard upon the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. This was sheer demagogy designed to set the soldiers against the workers.

By a vote of 374 against eight, with 27 abstaining, the joint meeting of Soviets adopted the Regulations.

The next item on the agenda of this joint meeting was a report on the execution of the order adopted by the Soviets on October 19. The Bolsheviks proposed that the following decree be passed in pursuance of this order:

Decree No. 1

"1. Factory managements are to employ and discharge workers with the consent of the factory committees. In the event of the latter disagreeing the case shall be submitted to the District Soviet of Workers' Deputies whose decision shall be binding on both sides. Neither the employment nor discharge can be valid until the matter has been finally decided.

"2. The employment and discharge of office employees shall be effected with the consent of the office employees' committees.

"*Note 1.* In those enterprises where no separate office workers' committees exist, the employment and discharge of office employees shall be effected with the consent of the general factory committees.

"*Note 2.* A workers' factory committee has the right to challenge the decision of an office committee, and in such event the matter shall be decided by a conciliation committee set up by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

"3. The aforementioned orders are binding on all the enterprises in the city of Moscow. The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will take the sternest measures, including arrest, against persons guilty of infringing them."[24]

This decree was adopted by an overwhelming majority. By adopting it the Soviets took the first step in putting into effect the Bolsheviks' slogan of control of industry. The Moscow Soviets were developing into organs of state authority. The Moscow Bolsheviks were on the threshold of decisive action.

"War has been declared," wrote the organ of the Moscow Committee of the Party. "In Kaluga the Soviets are being suppressed, their members arrested and, according to rumour, some of them have been shot. The Cossacks who were sent there from the Western Front by order of the Provisional Government have been given a free hand.

"The situation is clear: the government has proclaimed civil war and at Kaluga has already achieved its first success. What we foretold has come to pass. This time it is not Kornilov, but Kerensky himself who, at the head of the capitalist scoundrels, is openly marching against the people whom he has been deceiving with flamboyant speeches for the past seven months.... Kerensky and his agents are our avowed enemies; there can be no negotiations with them. We do not talk with enemies—we fight and beat them.... Immediate resistance must be offered! The time for talk has passed...."[25]

* * *

For the Moscow Bolsheviks and the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party the question of preparing for the insurrection was a much wider one than that of directing the struggle in Moscow proper. At that time the Regional Party organisation covered the city of Moscow as well as the Moscow, Vladimir, Tver, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Nizhni-Novgorod, Voronezh, Tula, Orel, Smolensk, Ryazan, Kaluga and Tambov Gubernias.

The Moscow Regional Bureau maintained constant communication with the Party organisations in the region. On September 27 and 28 a meeting of the Regional Bureau was held at which the local Party organisations were widely represented. At the meeting reports were delivered summing up the work that had been carried out in the preceding months. From these reports it was evident that the influence of the Bolsheviks in the localities had grown enormously and that the Bolshevik organisations were assuming the leadership of the working people.

Throughout the region the Party had a membership of about 70,000, half of which was concentrated in Moscow and the Moscow Gubernia. On September 27, while the meeting of the Regional Bureau was in progress, an urgent enquiry was received from the Vladimir Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies as to whether it should obey Kerensky's order to remove the garrison from the town. The debate was adjourned. Everybody felt that decisive events were imminent and that it was not only Vladimir that was involved. The Provisional Government had launched a campaign against the revolutionary-minded garrisons. On this question the meeting adopted the following resolution:

"Striving to preserve all the revolutionary forces for the forthcoming enforcement of the slogan 'All power to the Soviets!' the Regional Bureau instructs the local organisation resolutely to resist the plan, which is being systematically carried out, to weaken the revolutionary centres by withdrawing the revolutionary units of the army."[26]

A telegram was sent to the Vladimir comrades instructing them to keep the garrison in the town.

On September 28 the Regional Committee of the Party discussed a resolution on the current situation. Some of the speakers linked the struggle for transferring power to the Soviets with the question of proclaiming a Soviet Republic. This meant postponing the struggle for power until the meeting of the Congress of Soviets. The majority of the members of the Committee, however, firmly opposed this motion. "It is wrong to link the struggle for the transfer of power to the Soviets with the convocation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets," said the delegates. "The actual struggle for Soviet power may flare up before the Congress meets, and we have no grounds for postponing this struggle until the Congress meets."[27]

The resolution that was adopted on this question was in keeping with the spirit of Lenin's letter and read as follows:

"Under the present conditions, the political struggle is shifting from the various representative bodies to the streets. The most important task of the day is to fight for power, and under present conditions this fight must inevitably begin as a struggle in the localities around the food, housing and economic crisis."[28]

The meeting called for the formation of fighting centres in the large industrial towns and the establishment of close communications between them. As soon as the meeting drew to a close the delegates hastened back to their respective localities to put the adopted decision into effect.

After the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had reached its decision on insurrection the Moscow Regional Bureau instructed all local Party organisations to time their action with the beginning of the insurrection at the centre. In the event of disputes arising with the local authorities they were not to yield, but at the same time they were not to allow the dispute to develop into an armed collision, which would be permissible only in the event of, and for the purpose of, furthering a general insurrection. The Regional Bureau recommended that in those places where power was practically in the hands of the Soviets, the latter should be proclaimed the sole authority in the given town or district.

It was decided to dispatch the members of the Bureau to tour the region in order to warn the comrades of the imminence of the insurrection, to obtain information about the military units on whose assistance Moscow could rely, and everywhere to set up in advance fighting centres for the purpose of directing the insurrection.

At the meeting of the Regional Bureau held on October 14 telegrams were coded for each district to be dispatched immediately the insurrection was launched at the centre as signals for action in the respective localities.

The Bolsheviks in the Moscow Region made thorough preparations for the decisive battle. The most favourable conditions for the rapid seizure of power prevailed mainly in industrial gubernias like Vladimir, Yaroslavl and Tver, where the Bolsheviks had gained control of the Soviets before the October Revolution.

At that time Ivanovo-Voznesensk was an uyezd town in the Vladimir Gubernia. The peculiar feature of the course taken by the October Revolution in this large textile district, situated at no great distance from Moscow, was that literally only a few days before the October battles a strike involving large numbers of textile workers broke out in the Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Kineshma Area and spread to all the textile towns in the Vladimir and Kostroma Gubernias.

At 3 a.m. on October 21, the Central Strike Committee of the Ivanovo-Kineshma Textile Workers' Union sent the following telegram to all its districts:

"Start strike on 21st at 10 a.m. Urgently inform factory strike committees. Strike to commence with meetings at the factories, after which the workers are to disperse to their homes. On Monday 23rd all workers are to attend factory meetings at 10 a.m. Acknowledge receipt of this telegram at once and inform us of beginning and progress of strike."[29]

Precisely at 10 a.m. on the same day, work in the textile mills in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kineshma, Shuya, Rodniki, Sereda, Kovrov, Kokhma, Teikov and Vichuga came to a standstill. The strike affected 114 mills, employing some 300,000 workers. It began with a demand for an increase in the minimum wage, but the political and revolutionary character of the strike was evident from the fact that in the Ivanovo-Kineshma District the workers were in complete control of the mills.

Concerning the strike in the Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Kineshma Area the bourgeois newspaper *Utro Rossii* wrote the following:

"In many of the mills the workers stopped work, locked the premises and took the keys away. Everywhere armed pickets were posted and prevented any of the managerial staff from entering the factory premises. Goods manufactured to the order of the Quartermaster-General, or consigned to the Ministry of Food, are not allowed to be taken out of the mills. In view of the arming of the workers the technical staff is terrorised and will be forced to leave the mills."[30]

Not a single yard of cloth, not a thing, could be removed from the mills without the sanction of the factory strike committee. Neither the mill-owner nor members of the management could enter a factory without the committee's sanction. The workers became the actual masters of the mills and guarded them with arms in hand.

The workers of Shuya joined the strike and on the proposal of M.V. Frunze, the Chairman of the Shuya Soviet, adopted the following resolution:

"The present state power, represented by the Provisional Government and its local agents, is incapable of coping with the impending catastrophe. . . . The transfer of power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies at the centre and in the localities can alone enable the people to cope with the impending crisis."[31]

On October 23 a mass demonstration of workers, in which the local garrison participated, took place in Shuya. The meeting was addressed by M.V. Frunze, and on the conclusion of his speech a resolution was passed calling upon the All-Russian Congress of Soviets to take power and promising full support.

Active preparations for the seizure of power were made by the Bolsheviks in the city of Tver and in the Tver Gubernia, where there were about 50,000 factory workers. The elections to the Tver Soviet in August had resulted in the Bolsheviks obtaining an absolute majority. At the beginning of September, the Tver Soviet of Workers' Deputies, at a meeting held jointly with the factory committees and the trade unions, had passed a resolution urging the necessity of transferring power to the Soviets. The Tver organisation of the Bolshevik Party considered that their chief task was to render armed assistance to Moscow. They were determined at all costs to prevent the cadets and Cossacks from leaving Tver for Moscow and, if necessary, to send armed units of workers and soldiers to the aid of the Moscow insurgents. In fact, during the October days, they sent armoured cars from Kimri and the sappers who were stationed in Staritsa.

The Yaroslavl Gubernia was also in the forefront of the struggle for the transfer of power to the Soviets. The number of factory workers in this gubernia was over 40,000, and in 1916 the Karzinkin Textile Mills, in the city of Yaroslavl, alone employed no less than 20,000 workers. At the end of September 1917, the Yaroslavl City Soviet came under the control of the Bolsheviks and adopted Bolshevik resolutions on all fundamental questions.

During the war Voronezh had become an important industrial centre, and in 1917 the factory workers in the city numbered 10,000, half of whom were employed in the metal trades. In October 1917 the countryside in the Voronezh Gubernia was ablaze with peasant revolts. At the end of September a Gubernia Conference of Bolsheviks held in Voronezh Gubernia elected a Gubernia Party Committee. On the eve of the October Revolution the Voronezh Soviet was still controlled by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the latter exercised considerable influence upon the peasanty in the rural districts. The Soviet, however, no longer expressed the temper of the people in Voronezh, who followed the lead of the Bolsheviks.

A similar situation existed in Smolensk on the eve of the October Revolution. Here, too, the Soviet, controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did not express the feeling of the masses. In the fighting that broke out after the victory of the revolution in Petrograd, the workers and soldiers of Voronezh and Smolensk quickly routed their enemies.

The greatest tension prevailed in Kaluga, where the counter-revolution took the offensive before the October battles in Petrograd and succeeded in achieving a temporary victory.

The relation of forces in Kaluga on the eve of the October Revolution was typical of that in most of the small provincial towns. The Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies was under the influence of the Bolsheviks, but the Soviet of Workers' Deputies was under the control of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. This is to be explained largely by the fact that most of the industrial enterprises in Kaluga were of the small handicraft type. On October 17 and 18, units of Cossacks and Dragoons and a "Death's Head Shock Battalion" arrived in Kaluga from the Western Front and on the 18th, an order was issued, signed by the chief of the garrison, proclaiming martial law in the town. Next morning, October 19, Galin, the Gubernia Commissar of the Provisional Government, presented an ultimatum to the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies calling upon them immediately to disarm, to disband the Soldiers' Section and to dispatch the Kaluga garrison to the front.

In the evening of the 19th, when the Soviet met to discuss Galin's ultimatum, the premises were surrounded by Cossacks and Dragoons and machine guns and armoured cars were planted in the vicinity. Galin allowed five minutes for the surrender of the members of the Soviet and of all the arms in the Soviets' possession, but without waiting for even this short period to expire he ordered the troops to open fire. Suddenly machine guns began to rattle, and the crash of broken glass was heard. The Cossacks stormed the building, wrecked everything in it, arrested the Bolshevik members of the Executive Committee of the Soviet and dragged them off to prison. The most revolutionary section of the Kaluga garrison was sent to the front. This raid on the Kaluga Soviet was carried out on the direct orders of the Provisional Government. The government dared not take a step like this in any of the large industrial centres and therefore decided to make "an example" of Kaluga in order to terrorise the country on the eve of the decisive battles. The counter-revolutionaries in Kaluga were jubilant. On October 21 the Kaluga City Duma welcomed the break up of the Soviet and expressed its gratitude to those who were responsible for it.

But the most prolonged and complicated struggle to transfer power to the Soviets in the Moscow Region was waged in Tula and Tambov. The causes of this delay and difficulty in establishing the Soviet power were different in the two cities. Tula was, for those times, a large industrial centre, and in 1917 had over 50,000 factory workers, nearly two-thirds of whom were metal-workers and railwaymen. At the time of the Sixth Party Congress, the Tula Bolshevik organisation numbered 1,000 members.

But right up to the October Revolution, the Tula Soviet was controlled by the compromisers. The Mensheviks exercised stronger influence in Tula than in the other industrial centres of the country. This was due to the type of workers employed during the imperialist war in Tula, where large numbers of shopkeepers, kulaks, sons of bourgeois elements found jobs in the small arms factories in order to evade military service. The

management of the government factories in Tula were very careful in choosing their employees. But the chief difficulty in the struggle for the transfer of power to the Soviets in Tula was that here the Mensheviks were assisted by traitors from the Kamenev-Zinoviev camp who at that time belonged to the Bolshevik group in the Soviet. The course of the struggle in Tula glaringly demonstrated the true significance of the treacherous position adopted by Kamenev and Zinoviev during the October days. It was the alliance between the advocates of a "homogeneous Socialist government" and the Mensheviks who had not yet entirely lost their influence that caused the struggle in Tula to drag on right up to December 1917. Despite the fact that the Tula Soviet was controlled by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, even here the bulk of the workers were eventually won over by the Bolsheviks.

In Tambov the very prolonged and fierce struggle to transfer power to the Soviet was due to entirely different causes. In the city of Tambov the industrial proletariat was not numerous. Tambov itself, and the Tambov Gubernia as a whole, were strongholds of Socialist-Revolutionary influence. One of the most important tasks of the Bolsheviks in this region was to destroy this influence, and this took time.

Notwithstanding the difference in the conditions that prevailed at this time in the various midland gubernias which in 1917 constituted the Moscow Region, there was one feature in the development of events that was common to them all. Irrespective of whether the Soviets were controlled by the Bolsheviks or still controlled by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (as was the case in Voronezh, Smolensk, Tula and other cities), or whether power was achieved by peaceful means or by armed force, in all these towns and industrial districts (with the exception of Tula, Tambov, and one or two other towns, perhaps) the relation of forces was such that, as a rule, victory was achieved fairly quickly and easily, and the Soviet power was established already at the end of October or the beginning of November 1917.

It was precisely in these proletarian industrial districts and midland gubernias, where the best forces of the working class were concentrated, that the armed forces were won over *en masse* and the compromising parties were isolated. As Stalin wrote later:

> "Inner Russia, with its industrial, cultural and political centres—Moscow and Petrograd—with its nationally homogeneous population, mainly Russian, became the base of the revolution."[32]

This was true not only of the gubernias which constituted the Moscow Region, but also of the Volga Region and the Urals, where the situation on the eve of the October days was approximately the same as in the Moscow Region.

4

THE VOLGA REGION

The Socialist-Revolutionaries always regarded the Volga Region—particularly the middle and lower Volga—as their own special "domain." It was to this region, that, as far back as the 'seventies of the last century, the rebels went "among the people," attracted by the historical traditions of the great peasant revolts led by Stepan Razin and Emelyan Pugachev. The Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to bask in the halo of these great rebels.

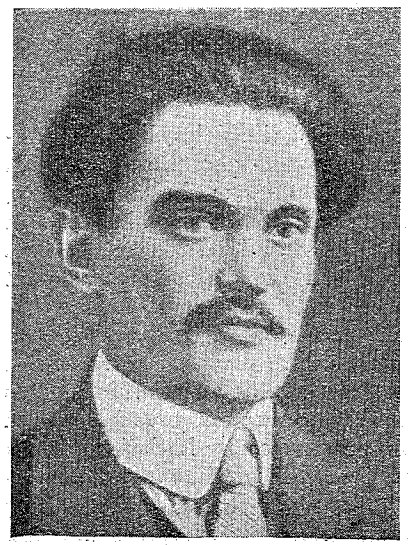
During the 1905 Revolution the peasant movement raged more fiercely in the Volga Region than in any other part of the country. It was here, amidst the glare of the burning estates of the nobility and the ominous sound of the tocsin, that Stolypin, then Governor of Saratov, introduced his system of combating the peasant revolt. Promoted by Nicholas II from Provincial Governor to Cabinet Minister, Stolypin tried to save the tottering empire by his agrarian policy.

Historical traditions were not the main factor, of course. Traditions grow out of and are fostered by a definite economic soil. In 1861, during the emancipation of the serfs, the landlords robbed the Volga peasants of 25 per cent of their land, and in the Saratov and Samara Gubernias of as much as 40 per cent. The peasants were driven "into the sands," or were obliged to settle on wretchedly small plots. In the Saratov Gubernia one-third of the peasants, nearly 35 per cent, were known as *darstvenniki*,* as at the time of the emancipation they were freed gratis, *i.e.*, without having to pay compensation, but they received only one-quarter of an allotment. This explains the turbulent character of the agrarian movement in the Volga Region.

During the war the Volga Region was converted into a huge army base. Big garrisons were quartered in the towns—60,000 troops in Samara, 30,000 in Saratov, while Kazan was the centre of one of the largest military areas, which included all the garrisons in the region. On January 1, 1917, the total number of troops concentrated in the Kazan Military Area reached 800,000, of whom officers alone numbered 20,000. On the eve of the October Revolution the garrison of the city of Kazan numbered nearly 60,000 men.

Hypocritically flaunting the slogan "Land for the Peasants!" but actually defending the landlords, the Socialist-Revolutionaries made capital out of the yearning of the soldiers and backward workers for land. This enabled them in the early days of the February Revolution to entrench themselves in the rural districts, in the garrisons, and even in certain large factories. Whole regiments expressed their support for the Socialist-

* From the Russian word "darom," *i.e.* "gratis."—*Trans.*



V. V. Kuibyshev

Revolutionaries who in the Volga Region during the election of the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, succeeded in polling 70 per cent of the vote. The task that confronted the Volga Bolsheviks was to win the region away from the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The speedy realisation of this aim was facilitated by the fact that in 1917 there were considerable numbers of industrial workers in the large towns of the Volga Region, such as Samara, Nizhni-Novgorod, Tsaritsyn and Saratov, with whose aid the Bolsheviks succeeded in destroying the influence of the Socialist Revolutionaries in the rural districts and among the soldiers in the army barracks.

In 1917, the Samara Pipe Works employed 23,000 workers, and the Sormovo Works, in Nizhni-Novgorod, 25,000. A similar number was employed in the factories in the Kanavino District of Nizhni-Novgorod. Of the 200,000 population of Tsaritsyn, 35,000 were industrial workers, of whom some 7,000 were metalworkers employed mainly in the two largest enterprises in the town—the French Works and the Ordnance Works. Kazan was a large industrial centre for those times, with 20,000 workers, half of whom were metalworkers. Even in Saratov, then a typical Volga trading town, there were from 12,000 to 15,000 workers out of a total population of 250,000.

During the war the munitions industry developed very rapidly in the cities along the Volga, and large numbers of workers came to the factories from the rural districts, bringing with them their hatred of landlordism, but also their rural backwardness and prejudices. Large numbers of the petty bourgeoisie in the towns flocked to the factories in order to evade military service.

All this created favourable soil for the activities of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. At the Pipe Works, in Samara, for example, where the Bolsheviks had their strongest organisation, numbering over 2,000 members, the Mensheviks had only 300 members, but the Socialist-Revolutionaries had about 12,000. At the Sormovo Works, in Nizhni-Novgorod, out of a total of 25,000 workers, the Socialist-Revolutionaries had a membership of 10,000. The influence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries was least marked in Tsaritsyn.



N. M. Shvernik

As the days and months of the revolution passed by, however, the Bolshevik organisations in the Volga Region grew and became more strongly entrenched.

The Bolsheviks had their largest organisation in Samara. At the time of the Sixth Party Congress they already had 4,000 members in that city. The growth of the Samara Bolshevik organisation was due largely to the work of Valeryan Vladimirovich Kuibyshev, who came here in 1916, after his escape from exile. Under the name of Adamchik he obtained a job as a lathe hand at the Pipe Works where he operated a machine next to that of N. M. Shvernik.

In September 1916, Kuibyshev was arrested and exiled to Siberia for five years. While on the way to his place of exile news came through of the outbreak of the February Revolution, and Kuibyshev hastened back to Samara, which he reached on March 17, 1917. He was given an official welcome by the working people of the city, the workers from all the factories coming out with banners to meet him. On March 21, only a few days after his arrival, Kuibyshev was elected Chairman of the Workers' Section of the Samara Soviet, in spite of the fact that at that time the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks predominated in the Soviet.

Kuibyshev set to work to strengthen the local Bolshevik organisation. He organised a big meeting at the Triumph Cinema at which he strongly denounced those who tried to obliterate the distinction between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. A City Committee and District Committees of the Party were set up which firmly pursued the line of no amalgamation with the Mensheviks. It was on this principle that the Bolshevik organisations in the city of Samara and the Samara Region were built up.

The Samara Bolsheviks started their campaign to win over the masses in the factory committees and trade unions. Here they concentrated their best forces. In May, Shvernik became Chairman of the Metal Workers' Union, the Bolshevik Galaktionov became Vice-Chairman, and Kuibyshev a member of the Executive. On August 29, the workers at the Pipe Works elected a new factory committee consisting almost entirely of Bolsheviks. The Executive Board of the factory committee consisted of 18 Bolsheviks and two Socialist-Revolutionaries. Unit after unit—



L. M. Kaganovich

metal-workers, builders, food-workers and railwaymen—unanimously cast its vote for the Bolshevik Party.

The same process, although somewhat slower, went on in the army barracks where the 102nd, 133rd and 143rd Infantry Regiments, a Reserve Regiment of the Sappers, the 4th and 5th Batteries of the Reserve Artillery Brigade and other units were stationed. A Bolshevik military organisation was set up in Samara and a Bolshevik newspaper, *Soldatskaya Pravda* was published for the benefit of the soldiers. The influence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries was overcome fairly quickly.

In the course of August and September the Bolsheviks gained complete control of the Soviet. On August 21 the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopted by 97 votes against 72 a Bolshevik resolution urging the necessity of combating the counter-revolution. In this way the Bolsheviks, step by step, gained the majority in the Soviet.

In Saratov a strong Bolshevik group was formed during the period of the imperialist war. The group consisted of Olminsky—who, jointly with Lenin, had edited the Bolshevik central organ in the period of the first revolution—Mitskevich, and others. They published a legal Bolshevik organ called *Nasha Gazeta*.

As soon as the Bolshevik Party became legalised in March 1917, the Saratov Bolsheviks formed their own independent organisation, and on the 23rd of that month they issued the first number of the Bolshevik newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat*. Among those participating in the work of the Saratov Party organisation was Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich. A representative of the *Pravda* generation of Bolsheviks and in 1917 having already had seven years' experience of active Party work, arrests and exile, he came to Saratov in May 1917 as a private in the 7th Company of the 42nd Infantry Regiment. A brilliant orator, he had the gift of speaking to the people in a language they could understand. Vital and energetic, Kaganovich appeared at meetings at the crucial moment when it seemed that some Socialist-Revolutionary or Menshevik "spellbinder" had succeeded in swaying the audience. Crushing the compromisers with his biting sarcasm and silencing interrupters with his witty repartee, Kaganovich succeeded with his

ardour and eloquence in winning the audience to his side. The soldiers and workers listened to him with rapt attention.



Y. Z. Yerman

The effects of the Bolsheviks' activities were seen first of all in the rapid Bolshevisation of the Saratov Soviet. Thus, the second Soviet (June-August) consisted of 90 Bolsheviks, 210 Mensheviks and 310 Socialist-Revolutionaries. After the election of the third Soviet at the end of August the situation underwent a radical change; the relative strength of the parties was as follows: Bolsheviks 320, Mensheviks 76, Socialist-Revolutionaries 103. The Bolsheviks thus had an absolute majority.

In Tsaritsyn there was no definite Bolshevik organisation before the war, although a few individual Bolsheviks worked secretly in different factories. In 1914 Klement Efremovich Voroshilov was employed at the Ordnance Works. A veteran Bolshevik, who had gone through the stern school of revolution, he succeeded in evading the vigilance of the secret police. In Tsaritsyn he formed a workers' co-operative society and a workers' choir, and under cover of these "innocuous" bodies he conducted Bolshevik agitation and propaganda. The Bolsheviks whom Voroshilov trained took an active part in the revolutionary struggle.

The bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917 opened the sluice gates which had held back the revolutionary energy of the Tsaritsyn proletariat, and the revolutionary activities of the workers of Tsaritsyn burst forth like a spring flood. Mass meetings were held in the Skorbyashchenskaya Square where the workers listened to the Bolsheviks for hours, the meetings often lasting far into the night. Here, in this tense atmosphere, the minds of the workers matured with exceptional rapidity. To the square came the soldiers from the garrison, and in this close communion the influence of the proletariat spread over these peasants in soldiers' uniform.

It seemed for all the world as if the meetings on the Volga called to the meetings held in the Baltic. In Kronstadt, thousands of sailors gathered in the open air in Yakornaya Square. The bourgeoisie soon perceived this close connection, and in their newspapers references to Red Kronstadt were more and more often coupled with references to Red Tsaritsyn.

In the beginning of April 1917, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik

Party sent Yakov Yerman to conduct Party work in Tsaritsyn. In the early days of the revolution, the Trotskyite S. Minin also appeared in Tsaritsyn, and as a result of his influence the united Social-Democratic organisation, consisting of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, existed right up to May 1917. How artificial this temporary unity was may be judged from the fact that on May 9, when the split took place, of 380 members only 30 followed the Mensheviks.

At first the Soviet remained under the control of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, but in the factories, in the army barracks and in the public squares where mass meetings were continually in progress, the Bolsheviks obviously predominated.

The Provisional Government in Petrograd and the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet continued to receive alarming information about the "anarchy" prevailing in Tsaritsyn, about the imminence of Tsaritsyn "seceding" from the rest of Russia, and about the "Bolshevik republic" which had been set up in Tsaritsyn.

The correspondents of the bourgeois newspapers sent lurid accounts of the "mob rule" prevailing in the town. "The city is in the hands of mobs of soldiers incited by the Bolsheviks," reported one of them.[33]

The enemies of the revolution wrote about Tsaritsyn with venom and hatred, but the workers all over the country spoke about it with pride.

Becoming bolder after the July days, the counter-revolution began to tackle Red Tsaritsyn. On July 26, by order of the Provisional Government and with the complicity of the Saratov and Tsaritsyn Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, a punitive expedition arrived from Saratov under the command of Colonel Korvin-Krukovsky. The unit consisted of 500 cadets and 500 Orenburg Cossacks equipped with fourteen machine guns and two three-inch field guns. Martial law was proclamed and all meetings were prohibited. The Bolshevik newspaper *Borba* was suppressed. The 141st and 155th Regiments, the most revolutionary units of the Tsaritsyn garrison, were hastily sent out of the city, one to Saratov and the other to the front. The elections to the City Duma, in which the Bolsheviks had won 39 of 102 of the seats, were annulled and new elections were appointed for the end of August.

The new elections were held on August 27, while Korvin-Krukovsky's punitive unit was still in the city. The elections proved that its presence had not intimidated the workers. The Bolsheviks secured 45 of the 102 seats, the Mensheviks 11 and the Socialist-Revolutionaries 15. The Bolshevik Yerman was elected Chairman of the City Duma.

In the speed with which it mobilised the masses Tsaritsyn outpaced not only the capital of the gubernia, Saratov, but also the other important centres of the Volga Region, such as Samara and Nizhni-Novgorod. This was due primarily to the fact that in Tsaritsyn the enemy who had to be isolated—the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—was much weaker than in the other Volga cities.

In Nizhni-Novgorod the struggle for power was more difficult and fierce than in any other Volga city.

In Sormovo and in Nizhni-Novgorod united Bolshevik and Menshevik organisations existed right up to the end of May. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had to send a special instruction to the Sormovo and Nizhni-Novgorod Bolsheviks ordering them to break away completely from the Mensheviks and to form their own independent organisation. This opportunist dread of breaking with the compromisers was the main reason why the process of winning the masses from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks was much slower in Nizhni-Novgorod than in the other Volga centres.

An important factor in bringing about this change was the strike at the Sormovo Works, which broke out on June 20 and ended in victory on July 8. In the course of this strike the workers, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, took the first steps in organising workers' control of industry. On June 27 the Sormovo Committee of the Bolshevik Party adopted a resolution calling for the confiscation of the works.

The Sormovo Works was engaged on war contracts, and the fact that it had been brought to a standstill alarmed the capitalists. The government sent a commission of enquiry to the plant, but the workers displayed such firmness that at a general meeting of the Sormovo organisations the commission was obliged to promise that all the workers' demands would be conceded. Only after this was the strike called off.

The workers learned a great deal from this strike, and it helped them shed the illusions about the possibility of compromise under which many of them had laboured.

In the middle of August the workers, at mass meetings held at nearly all the factories in Nizhni-Novgorod, passed resolutions against the Moscow Conference. The columns of the Bolshevik newspaper *International* were filled with these resolutions.

The Nizhni-Novgorod Soviet was controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, but even in this stronghold of the compromisers the Bolshevik vote steadily increased. At a meeting of the Soviet held on September 10, at which the functions of the Democratic Conference were discussed, 62 votes were cast for the Bolshevik resolution and 69 against.

At this time the peasant movement in the Nizhni-Novgorod Gubernia assumed enormous dimensions.

Cases of the seizure of landlords' estates and the division of their land became more frequent. Throughout 1917 there were no less than 384 cases of peasant agrarian disturbances in the Nizhni-Novgorod Gubernia.

On the eve of the October Revolution there was a strong mass peasant movement also in the Kazan Gubernia. In a report of the Chief Adminis-

tration of the Militia on the Kazan Gubernia dated October 18 we read the following:

"In nearly all the uyezds in the gubernia there are numerous cases of wholesale felling of private woods . . . the forcible sale of livestock and farm implements, the confiscation of grain, hay and fodder and the expulsion of the administration."[34]

The Tatar workers and peasants and the other Volga nationalities in the Kazan Gubernia, such as the Chuvash and Mari, rose up to fight for their national liberation. The intricate interweaving of nationalities, the fierce struggle against the nationalist counter-revolution, and the presence of considerable Whiteguard forces, all served to intensify the struggle in Kazan.

Nevertheless, the Bolshevik organisation in the city steadily extended its influence over the masses. On the eve of the October Revolution the Bolsheviks won a majority in the Kazan Soviet.

Thus, the Bolshevik organisation in the Volga Region steadily advanced towards the conquest of power. By September, the Samara, Saratov and Tsaritsyn Soviets were entirely under the control of the Bolsheviks. Only in Nizhni-Novgorod was the Soviet still controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, but, as these compromisers themselves were forced to admit, the Soviet no longer expressed the sentiments of the masses.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party devoted considerable attention to the Volga Region in drawing up its plans for the insurrection. It sent to Saratov one of its representatives who, on October 8, at a general meeting of the Party members in the city, reported on the course the Central Committee had taken towards an insurrection. On October 11, the Saratov Committee of the Party held a joint meeting with representatives of the uyezd towns, such as Tsaritsyn, Volsk, Petrovsk and Rtishchevo, at which it was decided to mobilise all forces for the purpose of touring the whole gubernia. On October 15, a Regional Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was opened in Saratov at which the Bolsheviks predominated. The report on the political situation was made by Comrade Yerman, who was in Saratov at that time. In the course of his report he clearly and concisely conveyed to the Congress the political line of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

By a majority of 128 votes against 12 the Congress adopted the Bolshevik resolution, whereupon the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries demonstratively withdrew from the Congress.

The "chief reason for our withdrawal," they stated, "is the rejection by the majority at this Congress of the resolution which called for abstention from street demonstrations."[35]

Thus, from the Central Committee to Saratov, from Saratov to the various uyezd towns throughout the region, right up to Tsaritsyn, came the clear and definite instruction to prepare for the armed struggle for power.

On October 6, a Gubernia Congress of the Bolshevik Party was opened in Samara. This Congress elected a Gubernia Committee with Kuibyshev as Chairman.

On October 22, a few days before the October insurrection, a joint meeting was held of the Bureau of the Gubernia and City Committees of the Party with representatives from the districts. At this meeting the question of making practical preparations for the insurrection came sharply to the front.

Kuibyshev demanded that "actual operations be started."

The meeting adopted the following resolution:

"That resolute measures be undertaken, such as suppressing the newspaper *Volzhsky Dyen*, arresting provocateurs, floating a compulsory loan, abolishing queues, etc., etc. The resistance of the bourgeoisie to these measures will stimulate the energy of the masses and then, having the majority behind us, and with the launching of similar operations in the majority of other cities throughout Russia, to proclaim the dictatorship of the Soviets."[36]

Intense preparations for the insurrection were also made in Nizhni-Novgorod.

Soon after the Central Committee had made its historic decision on armed insurrection a meeting of the Nizhni-Novgorod Gubernia Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) was held at which the following decision was adopted:

"Be ready to do everything at the proper moment to ensure a successful insurrection."[37]

In September, and particularly in October, the Bolshevik organisations in the Volga Region energetically armed the workers.

The first to start was Samara. Already at the beginning of May, a Workers' Militia was formed to cope with "drunken riots," *i.e.*, the raiding of wine shops, and so forth.

On September 29, the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, after hearing a report by Kuibyshev, endorsed the main points of the Workers' Red Guard Regulations.

In September, the formation of Red Guard units began in Saratov. On September 2, the Executive Committee of the Saratov Soviet decided to form combat groups, and in October, the Soviet appealed to the Moscow Soviet for assistance in the way of arms for the Red Guard. In October, the Railwaymen's Red Guard alone numbered 700 men. On October 22, a City Conference of the Red Guard was held at which the Regulations were adopted.

On October 15, a joint meeting of representatives of the Red Guard of Kanavino, Sormovo and Myza was held at which the question of procuring arms for the Red Guard was discussed. Sormovo needed 285 rifles and Kanavino and Myza 200 each. A week later, the Gubernia Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) set up a Gubernia Headquarters Staff for the Red Guard.

In Tsaritsyn, the arming of the workers began long before the October Revolution, and in the period of the Kornilov mutiny it was conducted on a mass scale. The pioneers in this matter were the workers employed in the two leading plants—the Ordnance Works and the French Works. The *Volgo-Donskoi Krai*, a bourgeois newspaper published in Tsaritsyn, reported the following:

"On the night of August 30, a group of members of the R.S.D.L.P. (B.) took several waggon loads of rifles and cartridges from the stores of one of the companies of the 93rd Regiment for the purpose of arming the workers. That same night the rifles were served out to the workers in the French Works and at the saw mills."[38]

This incident raised quite a furore.

On August 30 the punitive detachment commanded by Korvin-Krukovsky was recalled from Tsaritsyn, but before leaving the city the Colonel issued his last "threatening" order demanding the immediate surrender of the arms captured by the workers. Nobody, of course, paid any attention to this order. Very soon the workers needed these weapons to fight the Kornilovites.

The arming of the Tsaritsyn workers proceeded at a rapid pace throughout September and October. At that time the Tsaritsyn Red Guard numbered about 750 men.

The Central Committee's directions to prepare for an insurrection were effectively carried out by the Bolshevik organisations in the Volga Region.

To the Second Congress of Soviets Samara sent three Bolshevik delegates, Tsaritsyn two Bolshevik delegates, Saratov two Bolsheviks and one Menshevik, and Nizhni-Novgorod five Bolsheviks and several Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The overwhelming majority of the delegates from the Volga Region carried to the Second Congress of Soviets the instruction: "All power to the Soviets!"

5

IN THE DON REGION

Many leading counter-revolutionaries, especially among the military, were convinced that the victory of the revolution in Central Russia was inevitable. They therefore recommended that a *place d'armes* should be chosen beforehand, where their forces could be concentrated in order to continue the struggle. Their choice fell upon south-east Russia. While continuing the struggle in the centre, the Provisional Government took measures to transform the Don Region and North Caucasus into strongholds of the counter-revolution. The troops commanded by the Ataman of

the Don, General Kaledin, who had been accused of complicity with Kornilov and had been acquitted by the Government Commission of Enquiry, resolutely set to work to clear the region of revolutionary elements. On the pretext of a shortage of fodder at the front, Cossack regiments were transferred to this region, while the reserve battalions that were under Bolshevik influence were withdrawn. The army officers who had been expelled from their units by the rank and file fled to the Don and North Caucasus. Here, in October 1917, was formed the South-Eastern League, which was to embrace the Kuban, Don, Terek and Astrakhan Cossacks, the highlanders of the North Caucasus and the peoples of the Don Steppes and the Astrakhan Gubernia. This League was to serve as one of the bulwarks in the struggle against the proletarian revolution.

The Bolshevik organisations in the Don Region, and primarily the Rostov organisation, waged a determined struggle against the counter-revolution in order to win over the masses.

In this struggle the Bolsheviks relied on the workers and the Rostov garrison. In August there were about 300 Bolsheviks in this city. The Bolshevik Party Committee had its headquarters in a pavilion in the public park which it shared with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The workers and soldiers who came to this place for literature, or to invite speakers to their meetings often came to the "wrong door" and found themselves in the Bolsheviks' room. The compromisers speedily realised what dangerous neighbours they had and made haste to find other premises. The Bolsheviks thus remained in sole possession. Work proceeded briskly. In the park and in the adjacent streets, meetings were held almost uninterruptedly, and crowds of people heatedly discussed the speeches delivered by the Bolsheviks. Copies of *Pravda* were distributed as well as of the local Bolshevik newspaper *Nashe Znamya*, which had a circulation of over 15,000. Mainly, however, activities were conducted in the trade unions, among the metal-workers and railwaymen.

Considerable harm was caused the Bolshevik organisations in Rostov by a group of Right-wingers, headed by Syrtsov, and by a group of Trotskyites, headed by Vasilchenko. Both these anti-Party groups fiercely opposed Lenin's line. Virtually, they were masked allies of the counter-revolutionary Cossack Force government of the Don. They proposed that the Bolsheviks should unite with the Mensheviks and support the Cossack government, opposed Lenin's April Theses and the decision of the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party which had turned the Party's course towards armed insurrection. The Rostov Bolsheviks resolutely combated the treacherous policy of the Right-wingers and the Trotskyites. The latter were expelled from the Rostov-Nakhichevan Committee, but they continued their anti-Party activities. Denouncing the compromisers and their henchmen in the camp of the Right wing and Trotskyite traitors, the Bolshevik organisation successfully built up its political army on the eve of October.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party closely followed the activities of the Bolsheviks in the Don Region. Sverdlov called for frequent reports and gave them valuable advice. Party workers were sent to Rostov, and the Moscow organisation was instructed to maintain communication with the city. During the Sixth Congress of the Party the delegates from the Don Region visited Sverdlov and Stalin, to whom they reported on the work of their organisations and from whom they received a number of instructions. The Rostov Bolsheviks were informed about the course which had been taken towards armed insurrection.

Bolshevik activities greatly increased after the Kornilov mutiny. Red Guard units began to be formed in the towns and on September 6, a Central Red Guard Headquarters were set up in Rostov. The counter-revolutionaty character of the conduct of the militarists caused even the Cossack regiments to waver. Kaledin failed to move his units to assist Kornilov. The bulk of the rank-and-file Cossacks refused to obey their generals. As Lenin wrote at the time:

"Whatever the case may be, the extreme weakness of a mass Cossack movement in favour of a bourgeois counter-revolution appears historically proven after the experience of August 26-31" [*i.e.*, September 8-13 New Style, the period of the Kornilov mutiny—*Ed.*].[39]

Revolutionary sentiments spread among the Cossacks. The agitation conducted by the Bolsheviks among them was centred around concrete issues, and such as the Cossacks could easily understand. They made splendid capital out of the election, on Kaledin's recommendation, of Rodzyanko, a big landlord and ex-Chairman of the State Duma, to the Cossack caste, which was accompanied by a grant of land. "A new Cossack has occupied your land while you are writhing in the clutches of want," the Bolsheviks said to the poorer classes of the Cossacks, thus tearing them away from the influence of the wealthy Cossacks.

In Belaya Kalitva, E. A. Shchadenko conducted propaganda work in the 39th Cossack Regiment. He organised fraternisation between the workers and the Cossacks. Under his leadership, the miners from the neighbouring collieries—Vassilevsky, Bogurayevsky and Svinoretsky—marched to the Cossacks' camp, carrying posters and banners, and singing revolutionary songs. The Cossacks gave the workers a hearty welcome, and this fraternisation completely won them over. In spite of Kaledin's orders to the contrary, the Cossacks elected their deputy to the Soviet. This facilitated Bolshevik propaganda work in the regiment.

It was particularly difficult to conduct propaganda work in the Cossack *stanitsas*, or villages. The Bolsheviks induced the Rostov Soviet to establish a Settlers' Department, and with a mandate from this department the Bolsheviks found it easier to carry on their work in the *stanitsas*. Extensive propaganda work was also conducted among the "settler peasants," as the non-Cossack peasants who had migrated to this region from other

parts of Russia were called. *Nashe Znamya* had regular subscribers in the rural districts and often published letters from peasants.

Bolshevik groups were formed in a number of Cossack *stanitsas*. In Morozovskaya there was a railway depot, a small iron foundry and three or four flour mills. The local Bolsheviks had their propaganda headquarters in the railway depot and peasants from the neighbouring villages and *stanitsas* often visited the place.

In their agitational work the Bolsheviks skilfully made use of individual grievances. For example, a local stationmaster wanted to discharge a disabled soldier who was employed as a watchman. The Bolsheviks called a meeting of the railwaymen and got them to pass a resolution containing two points: 1. That the disabled soldier was not to be discharged; 2. That Lenin's article on workers' control of industry be published as a practical guide in the railwaymen's struggle against the administration. In the Morozovskaya Soviet of Peasants' Deputies the Bolsheviks formed a group consisting of farm labourers and poor peasants. This group, in its turn, organised a squad of 26 persons, of whom nine were women, to help the poorer peasants in the district. This squad procured a threshing machine and other farm implements and helped the poorer peasants in their farming. This was a practical demonstration of how the Bolsheviks proposed to solve the agrarian problem.

The Bolsheviks were particularly successful in the city of Rostov.

On September 11, at a meeting of factory committees in this town, the Bolshevik resolution on the question of state power received 49 votes and that of the Mensheviks 58 votes. A month previously the Bolsheviks were barely able to scrape together five or six votes. This shows how rapidly the compromisers were being isolated.

To consolidate their successes the Bolsheviks proposed at the next meeting of the factory committees held on September 26 that the existing Soviet and factory committees be dissolved and that new elections be held. The workers approved of this proposal. At the same meeting it was decided to form a Red Guard.

Preparations were made for the new elections to the Soviet. To weaken the influence of the Bolsheviks, Ataman Kaledin ordered the reserve companies to be dispatched to the front. The Rostov-Nakhichevan Committee of the Bolshevik Party passed a resolution to detain these companies in the town, and sent agitators to the regiments. These agitators succeeded in addressing even the Cossack regiments. The soldiers heartily supported the Bolsheviks; the compromisers, however, could not obtain a hearing.

On September 29, the men of the 225th Reserve Regiment refused to detail companies to be dispatched to the front. General Chernoyarov and General Bogayevsky, the Ataman's second in command, arrived and tried to persuade the soldiers to obey the order, but the soldiers drove the counter-revolutionary generals from the meeting. The chief of the garrison then issued a secret order to deprive the Guard Company of the

regiment of its rifles, but the men got wind of this and placed a reinforced guard near the rifle stacks.

The entire Rostov garrison supported the men of the 225th Regiment. The Bolsheviks called for a demonstration against the war for October 1.

The bourgeois press howled:

> "If you demonstrate in the streets you will be dispersed with bayonets. . . . The Provisional Government and Kaledin will not stand any nonsense," said the compromisers, trying to intimidate the men.[40]

Late at night, on the eve of the demonstration, the chief of the garrison issued orders by telephone to serve out arms to the troops that were loyal to the government, as a demonstration of "Bolshevik gangs" was anticipated. The officer on duty in the 225th Regiment was asleep when the telephone message arrived and it was taken down by a private whose sympathies lay with the Bolsheviks and who happened to be in the room at the time. The regimental clerk ordered this private to convey the order to the company commanders, but instead of doing that, he hastened to the committee rooms of the Bolshevik Party, but found nobody there. He then warned the Company Committees and the soldiers. The Training Company and the 12th Company, which the chief of the garrison had intended to use against the demonstration, decided to come out with the Bolsheviks.

On October 1 a huge demonstration took place in the city, in which the entire garrison participated. The workers marched from the factories in a seemingly endless column, carrying posters bearing Bolshevik slogans.

On October 7 the elections to the Soviets took place. The Bolsheviks had made thorough preparations for these elections and had conducted numerous meetings at the factories. Bolshevik agitators had also visited all the regiments of the garrison. In many of the factories there were still a number of compromisers who tried to prevent the Bolshevik speakers from addressing the meetings, but no sooner were these attempts challenged than it was found that the workers had entirely deserted their recent leaders. This was the case at the tramway depot, which was a Menshevik stronghold. One day several Bolshevik speakers arrived at the depot to address a meeting that had been arranged there but received a very cool reception from the depot committee. The chairman drily informed them that no meeting would be held as the representatives of the other parties were absent. The Bolsheviks were about to leave when they were detained by several workers who led them into the depot. Suddenly the local Menshevik leaders appeared on the scene and were very much surprised to find the Bolsheviks in the place. It turned out that this trick had been arranged beforehand between the Mensheviks and the depot committee, but it was foiled by the workers.

The meeting was opened and a Menshevik elected chairman, but when the discussion started it soon became evident that a wide gulf separated

the leaders from the masses. The Mensheviks accused the workers of being responsible for "disorder and destruction." The audience loudly protested. Feeling began to run high.

The plain words of the Bolshevik speakers telling how the war could be brought to an end and the people could obtain bread at once, won the sympathy of the workers, who listened to the Bolsheviks' message with the closest attention. There was not a single interruption. Towards the end of the meeting the Mensheviks quietly disappeared. The Bolshevik speakers were greeted with loud cheers. Similar scenes were witnessed in other factories.

The new elections resulted in the Bolsheviks obtaining the largest number of votes, but it was not yet clear how the non-party delegates would act. At the first meeting of the new Soviet the question of choosing a delegate for the All-Russian Congress of Soviets came up. Acting on instructions received from Petrograd, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks made feverish efforts to get their representative elected. It was a stormy meeting and at times it seemed that the Soviet would split into two halves, as the Mensheviks still appeared to exercise considerable influence.

At last the debate drew to a close and the election of a delegate to the Congress was proceeded with. The Bolsheviks received 20 or 30 votes more than the Mensheviks and a Bolshevik delegate was sent to the Congress. This vote proved to be decisive. From that day the Rostov Soviet became a Bolshevik Soviet.

Thus, strongholds of the proletarian revolution were formed in the Don Region.

6

IN THE URALS

The Bolsheviks in the Urals had long had firm contacts with the Central Committee of the Party. The first organisations of the Party of the proletariat sprang up among the metal-workers and miners of the Urals long before the 1917 Revolution. The inspirer and organiser of the Urals Bolsheviks was J. M. Sverdlov. The iron and steel workers in the Urals were very familiar with "Andrei" and "Mikhailych," the Party pseudonyms by which Sverdlov was known. He had started work in the Urals in 1906. Short, slim and frail in appearance, he was a tireless worker. The young Bolshevik organiser was rarely to be found at home. He was constantly visiting the factories, speaking at mass meetings or at secret meetings of workers. Fearless and resolute himself, knowing no doubts or hesitation in fulfilling the Party's decisions, he trained the Urals Bolsheviks in the

same spirit. In March 1917 he returned to the Urals from exile and then went to Petrograd to attend the All-Russian April Conference of the Party, where he was elected a member of the Central Committee. Remaining in Petrograd, he continued to maintain close contact with the Urals Bolshevik organisations, frequently sent Party workers there and wrote letters containing instructions and advice.

The Central Committee imposed special tasks on the Urals Bolsheviks, such as to take the initiative in the insurrection should the Bolshevik organisations in Petrograd and Moscow be suppressed, and to ensure the delivery of food supplies to the central districts of the country from Siberia and the Urals. In particular, the Ufa Party organisation was instructed to prepare several trainloads of grain to be dispatched to Petrograd and Moscow on the day after the successful proletarian revolution.

The directions of the Central Committee found the Urals Bolsheviks fully prepared. They sent 22 delegates to the Sixth Congress of the Party, and the decisions of that Congress still further stimulated the fighting spirit of the Urals Party organisations.

In pursuance of the decisions of the Sixth Congress, the Urals Regional Committee issued new instructions to its organisations, including the instruction to put a stop to all tendencies towards unity with the Mensheviks.

On August 5, 1917, a split occurred in the Nizhnaya-Lyalya organisation, and on August 11 a separate Bolshevik organisation was formed in Vyatka. In the same month, independent Bolshevik organisations were also formed in Nizhnaya Salda and in one of the oldest Menshevik strongholds, Nizhnaya Tura. In Chelyabinsk, too, the Bolsheviks completely broke away from the Mensheviks, and finally, a split occurred in Ufa, where the last big united organisation in the Urals had remained.

One of the main tasks confronting the Urals Bolsheviks was to win over the Soviets. Some of the Soviets in the Urals were Bolshevik from the very outset. This was the case at the Nevyansk Works, the Simsk Works, and other plants. The elections held in June 1917 greatly strengthened Bolshevik influence in the Soviets. In the Verkhni Ufalei Soviet, the Bolsheviks won 95 seats out of a total of 103. In the Minyar Soviet they won all the seats. At a District Congress of Soviets held in Alapayevsk the Bolsheviks held 20 seats out of 34. Even in Troitsk, a petty-bourgeois town in the steppes of the Orenburg Gubernia, surrounded by Cossack *stanitsas*, the elections resulted in the Bolsheviks obtaining predominance in the Soviet.

In August, even in Nizhni Tagil—that Menshevik citadel—the workers began to talk about the necessity of dissolving the Soviet and holding new elections.

"The deputies have held their seats too long," the workers said about the Mensheviks. "It's time to infuse fresh blood into the Soviet."

The Soviet was dissolved and when the new elections took place early in August the Bolsheviks achieved important gains. The former Executive Committee of the Soviet had consisted entirely of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries; after the elections it contained five Bolsheviks and one non-party deputy. A Bolshevik was elected chief of the Nizhni-Tagil Militia.



J. M. Sverdlov

The Bolsheviks were extremely active among the garrison. On August 1 the exemptions from military service granted to former political exiles expired. The Bolshevik Committees instructed all Party members who had been granted exemption to present themselves to the Chief Recruiting Officer in order to join the forces. The latter tried to dissuade the Bolsheviks from their intention to join the army and explained to those who were members of the Soviet that they were exempted automatically. The Bolsheviks refused this offer, however, joined the army, formed military organisations and developed propaganda work in the regiments.

Bolshevik influence also grew in the rural districts. At first agitation among the peasants was conducted in the districts adjacent to the industrial plants. The peasants who came to town listened to Bolshevik speakers who explained to them the Party program and opened their eyes to the demagogy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and bourgeois-nationalists.

Striking testimony of the successes of the Urals Bolsheviks was provided by the Second Regional Congress of Soviets in the Urals held August 17 to 21, 1917, at which 140 delegates, representing over half a million organised workers and soldiers were present. Of these, 77 were Bolsheviks and only 23 were Mensheviks. A section of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries voted with the Bolsheviks.

The Congress adopted Bolshevik resolutions on all questions. Of the 11 members of the new Urals Regional Executive Committee that was elected, seven were Bolsheviks. On the previous Executive Committee there had been only one Bolshevik, three Socialist-Revolutionaries and two Mensheviks.

The Congress decided to call a political strike on September 1 to protest against the offensive which had been launched by the counter-revolu-

tionaries. It issued a call to the workers, soldiers and peasants of the Urals which read in part:

"Proletarians of the Urals!

"Our strike will serve as a stern warning to the counter-revolution!...

"Our strike will be the first round in the general engagement between the proletariat and capital!"[41]

This call was issued as a special supplement to the regional Bolshevik newspaper *Uralskaya Pravda* and was printed in 25,000 copies which were distributed in the factories, steel plants, villages and homesteads. The delegates attending the Regional Congress secured bundles of freshly printed copies of this issue and hurried back to their districts, where they visited the factories and military barracks and delivered reports on the Congress.

The only attempts to frustrate the strike were made at the few factories where the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries still predominated. The compromising Soviet in Zlatoust, by a majority vote rejected the resolution of the Regional Congress of Soviets and declared that there was no need to call a political strike. In Perm, the capital of the gubernia, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries also opposed the strike. They were in the majority in the Perm City Soviet as well as in the Area Soviet known as the "Ural Soviet."

The Urals workers, however, rebuffed these political blacklegs. The Motovilikha Soviet, the largest in the Perm Area, adopted a resolution by the combined votes of the Bolsheviks and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries stating that "this Soviet will not submit to the Ural Soviet and will proceed with the strike." A delegate meeting of the Perm Metal Workers' Union also voted in favour of strike action.

Where the Soviets wavered the workers themselves carried out the resolution of the Regional Congress.

The strike of September 1 coincided with the Kornilov mutiny. News of Kornilov's ultimatum was received in Ekaterinburg on August 28. Next day, on the initiative of the Bolsheviks, a conference was held of representatives of Regional, Area and City Soviets and trade union organisations, and of the committees of the Bolshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. This conference adopted a declaration calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets and for a relentless struggle against the Kornilovites. Except for that dealing with the agrarian question, all the points of this declaration were adopted in the form drafted by the Bolsheviks. The conference also set up a special body called the "Executive Committee of Urals Revolutionary Democracy" to combat the counter-revolution. In this connection the Bolsheviks made the reservation that while fighting against Kornilov they would continue to struggle against the Provisional Government.

This committee failed to serve its purpose. The Bolsheviks, therefore, concentrated their efforts on the industrial enterprises and the Soviets. On the proposal of the Bolsheviks, the Executive Committee of the Ekaterinburg Soviet sent special Commissars to the railway, the Telegraph Office and Post Office, and appointed Commissars to supervise the activities of the chief of the garrison and of the Commissar of the Provisional Government so that not a single order or document might be issued without the knowledge of the Soviet. All telephone conversations were put under control.

In view of the Kornilov mutiny the strike of September 1 assumed exceptional political importance. It was to demonstrate the readiness of the Urals workers to resist every attempt at counter-revolution.

The organisation of the demonstration was undertaken by the Regional Executive Committee of Soviets, headed by the Bolsheviks. An additional slogan was added to those which had been already adopted, namely: "Active struggle against the armed counter-revolution."[42]

On the morning of September 1, work at scores of plants in the Urals ceased, and the workers came out into the streets in groups.

At the Ust-Katav Works, where work ceased at 7 a. m., a mass meeting was held at which about 2,000 workers were present and a Bolshevik resolution was adopted unanimously.

The strike also proceeded in an organised manner in the city of Ekaterinburg, the centre of working-class Urals. The correspondent of the *Uralsky Rabochy* described the events of the day as follows:

"The city seemed dead. All the factories and workshops were at a standstill. The shops were closed. Many of the government and public offices (the municipal offices, the State Bank, the Treasury Office) were also closed. Quiet reigned in the streets."[43]

Order in the town was maintained by units of the Red Guard.

Soldiers and peasants took an active part in the demonstrations. In Belebei the men of the local garrison formed the main contingent of the September 1 demonstration and marched in formation through the town carrying flags and singing songs. In the Alapayevsk District, peasants from the surrounding countryside were present at a huge mass meeting held there.

At the most moderate estimate over 100,000 workers of the Urals took part in the strike.

The period of resistance to the Kornilov mutiny and the September strike served as a review of the fighting forces of the Bolshevik organisations. Thousands of armed workers came out into the streets of the factory settlements. New units of the Red Guard were formed at the different plants. In the beginning of August a meeting was held at the Lysva Works, one of the largest enterprises in the Urals, at which 2,000 workers declared in a resolution:

". . . we are ready to defend the liberties we have won with our last drop of blood and demand that all the workers be armed."[44]

These words expressed the sentiments of all the workers in the Urals. Most of the resolutions passed by the workers at this time ended with the words: "We demand the immediate organisation of a Red Guard!"

The Urals workers had had considerable experience in organising combat groups dating from 1905. After the February bourgeois-democratic

revolution, workers' combat groups were formed in many of the industrial enterprises. These first units consisted of Bolsheviks who had been working underground, and of non-party workers, mainly those who had taken part in the 1905 Revolution.

Sometimes it was found possible to procure arms in an organised manner. In the first days of the revolution, the workers disarmed the police, the gendarmes and the forest guards. Sometimes arms were confiscated from the managerial staffs of the steel plants. Not only rifles, but machine guns and even three-inch field guns were obtained in this way. Each man procured for himself whatever kind of weapon he could find. Not only firearms but also side arms were obtained, and very often the workers on the night shifts forged for themselves daggers and knives.

In July a Red Guard was formed in Chelyabinsk. Armed workers' units were formed in all the big industrial plants in the city, primarily on the railways, and at the Stoll Works.[45]

The Red Guard units guarded the industrial plants, railway stations and public buildings, and maintained public order; and in the districts where there were many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks they acted as body-guards for the Bolshevik speakers.

The Red Guard consisted of tried, tested and devoted revolutionary proletarians, most of them members of the Bolshevik Party. Recruits were enrolled with the greatest care and the character of every volunteer was carefully verified by the workers themselves.

A Red Guard unit usually consisted of 20 or 30 men, that is, a small percentage of the workers of a given factory, but the majority of the workers took part in forming these units. At the Motovilikha Works, near Perm, for example, the workers in each shop elected one out of every 25 of their number, the most tried and reliable of them. Considering that the Red Guardsman could not perform his military duties properly if he remained at his job, his workmates released him from the latter duty. The 24 men who elected him deducted a part of their wages and paid him a sum equal to his average earnings.

After the Kornilov mutiny and the unanimous strike of September 1, the Bolsheviks achieved further successes in the struggle against the compromisers. On September 20, the Executive Committee of the Ust-Katav organisation of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party announced to its members the voluntary dissolution of the organisation. Having lost all influence among the workers the Socialist-Revolutionaries "committed suicide." The newspaper *Vperyod* published a comment on this incident in the form of an obituary signed "Local S.R." in which the author briefly sketched the history of the Socialist-Revolutionary organisation and ended with the following observation which he suggested as an epitaph for the deceased organisation's tombstone:

> "Such is the result of the unprincipled tactics of the Socialist-Revolutionaries."[46]

The Zlatoust organisation of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party also dwindled to nothing as the result of the growing influence of the Bolsheviks. In the summer of 1917 this organisation had a membership of about 3,000; of these only a mere handful was left. In September the Socialist-Revolutionaries in this town could muster at their general meetings no more than 150 to 200 members.

The extent to which Bolshevik agitation had spread among the masses may be judged from the case of the Byeloretsk Works. This was the biggest and politically the most backward plant in the South Urals; 30,000 workers lived in these backwoods, surrounded by lofty mountains, remote from the railway and from the large centres. But the plant itself was the centre of the Byeloretsk Kamarov Area, and 11 other factories came within the radius of its influence. All the workers in this plant owned plots of land and their own houses. They had only the very faintest idea about political parties and the class struggle. Their cultural level was extremely low and they hardly ever read the newspapers. In August 1917, the tsar's portrait could still be seen in many of their houses. This morass of political indifference and stagnation served as excellent soil for the growth of Socialist-Revolutionary weeds.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries were in full control of the Soviet, which had nothing in common with the revolution. After the July days it passed a resolution expressing complete confidence in the Provisional Government and called for the ruthless suppression of the Bolsheviks in general, and for the arrest of all the local Bolsheviks in particular. These resolutions were adopted at a meeting held on July 9 and 10, and were advanced by the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Such were the grim conditions under which that veteran Bolshevik P.V. Tochissky was obliged to work at the Byeloretsk Plant. Tochissky had started his revolutionary career as far back as the 'eighties of the last century, and had been an active participant in the 1905 Revolution in Moscow. He arrived at the Byeloretsk Works from exile in 1916 and formed a nucleus of the Bolshevik organisation. Owing to the machinations of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the threats of the works' management, however, the group fell to pieces. A brave, staunch and convinced Bolshevik, Comrade Tochissky fought on, regardless of threats and persecution. He was howled down at meetings, dragged from the platform and threatened with assassination, but undaunted he continued to explain the Bolshevik slogans to the workers. By dint of persevering effort, step by step, the Bolsheviks won new positions. They gained control of the Metal Workers' Union, where they formed a Council of Workers' Control. By the beginning of October there were 51 Bolsheviks in Byeloretsk. The Socialist-Revolutionaries still had about 2,000 members on their register, but signs of decay were already visible in their organisation. More and more frequently workers belonging to the Socialist-Revolutionary Party came out in opposition to their own committee. The Bolsheviks gained the leadership of the workers,



A. A. Zhdanov

At the Verkhne-Isetsky Works, in Ekaterinburg, the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary organisation changed their name to Maximalists in an attempt to maintain their influence over the workers. But the workers in the Socialist-Revolutionary Party saw through the trick.

> ". . . they have led us by the nose long enough," they said. "They have been fooling us for seven months, and it's got to such a pitch that they are ashamed to come before the workers. So now they are calling themselves Maximalists. . . ."[47]

Apart from Ekaterinburg, the only uyezd centre in the Perm Gubernia where the Bolsheviks had a strong organisation was Shadrinsk. This organisation first sprang up in the 139th Reserve Infantry Regiment to which A. A. Zhdanov, then a sub-lieutenant, belonged. As a result of his efforts a small group of Bolshevik soldiers was formed in the middle of 1917.

On August 30 the inaugural meeting of the Bolshevik organisation in the regiment was held at which the Committee of the Shadrinsk Bolshevik organisation was formed, with Zhdanov as Chairman.

From that time onwards the Bolsheviks in the 139th Regiment conducted regular activities among the workers and soldiers. Comrade Zhdanov often visited the Butakov Brothers Textile Mills and soon a number of weavers joined the Bolshevik organisation. Railwaymen were also enrolled. Bolshevik influence gradually spread to the rural districts and Bolshevik committees appeared in a number of volosts in the Shadrinsk Uyezd.

There was a fairly strong Socialist-Revolutionary organisation in Shadrinsk, and even though the local Bolshevik organisation suffered from a shortage of capable propagandists and agitators, under Comrade Zhdanov's leadership, it quickly succeeded in eliminating the influence of the local Socialist-Revolutionaries among the masses. Soon the Socialist-Revolutionaries ceased to play any role not only in the Workers' and Soldiers' Sections of the Soviet, but also in the Peasants' Section.

In October the Bolshevik organisation in Shadrinsk had a membership of over 100.

The Bolshevik Party's success in this region was due in no small measure to the assistance it received from the youth. As early as April 1917, a "Youth Organisation" was formed under the supervision of the Ekaterinburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). At first this organisation consisted mainly of college students, but the Bolsheviks soon changed this. In August a general city meeting of working-class youth was held in Ekaterinburg at which it was decided to form the Third International Socialist Young Workers' League. The inaugural meeting of this League was held on August 31, at which the rules were adopted and a committee elected. In September, groups of the League began to be formed at the factories.

On July 27 the first general meeting of the Socialist Youth League was held at the Minyar Works; on August 10 a Youth League was formed in Chelyabinsk, and in the middle of August a branch was formed in Perm. The League inculcated Bolshevik ideas among the working-class youth. Young workers sold Bolshevik newspapers, distributed leaflets and acted as messengers. This was modest and unostentatious work, perhaps, but extremely important. The Bolshevik Committees had scarcely any means of communication; they had no local newspapers in which to make their announcements, there were no such things as telephones, and events were moving very rapidly; sometimes it was necessary to meet twice a day. Here the young workers proved very useful in hastening from one plant to another delivering notices of these meetings.

In the factories and surrounding villages the League formed groups of agitators who conducted educational work among the young workers and peasants and collected funds for the Party. By October the League had a membership of 500 in Ekaterinburg, 118 at the Minyar Works, 350 at the Nevyansk Works, 120 at the Verkhnaya Tura Works. In the Socialist League of Working-Class Youth the Bolsheviks had an organised and active auxiliary.

At the beginning of October the Vyatka Gubernia Conference, the Ufa Gubernia Conference and the Perm Area Conference of the Bolshevik Party were held, and on October 10 the Ekaterinburg Gubernia Conference was opened. These conferences revealed that the Ural organisation, which at that time already had an aggregate membership of over 30,000, was ready to carry out the directions of the Central Committee.

The keynote of the Area Congresses of Soviets that were held at this time was that the Congresses were "a review before the battle."

The Urals delegates who were elected for the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets left for Petrograd knowing that they would have to take part in the armed insurrection in the streets of the capital.

7

IN SIBERIA

The Russian counter-revolutionary capitalists and landlords intended to muster their forces in Siberia, where the foreign imperialists could come to their aid. Siberia was one of the main sources of food supply for Central Russia. It was natural, therefore, that in their plans the Central Committee of the Party should attach great importance to Siberia.

It was no easy matter to conduct activities here. After the February Revolution the best forces of the Bolsheviks, who had been exiled to Siberia by the tsarist government, were recalled to Petrograd and other centres. Only local forces were available, and these had to be reinforced and rallied around the line of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

On March 20, 1917, J. M. Sverdlov stopped at Krasnoyarsk on his way back to European Russia from Yeniseisk, whither he had been exiled. Here he met the local Bolsheviks and outlined a plan for uniting all the Bolshevik forces in the district, and later on throughout Siberia. This plan was adopted and it was decided to set up a District Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) to direct Bolshevik work in the district.

In the beginning of April a conference was held of the Bolshevik groups in Krasnoyarsk, Achinsk, Kansk and Yeniseisk. This conference instructed the Krasnoyarsk District Bureau to establish communication with all the Bolsheviks in Siberia. The conference sent greetings to the Central Committee of the Party and informed it of its organising activities. On April 13 a reply was received, signed by E. D. Stassova, stating:

"We welcome your new undertaking and endorse the formation of a Bureau. . . ."

In May the Krasnoyarsk Bolsheviks withdrew from the united Social-Democratic organisation. In July the Internationalist Social-Democrats followed suit and joined the Bolsheviks.

The Krasnoyarsk Bolsheviks exercised considerable influence among the local proletariat. The *Sibirskaya Pravda*, the only Bolshevik organ in the whole territory, was published in this town, and the *Krasnoyarsky Rabochy*, the organ of the Soviet, was under Bolshevik influence. The Bolsheviks had 180 members in the Soviet; the Mensheviks had two or three and the Socialist-Revolutionaries about 40.

In August the Central Siberian Regional Conference of the Bolshevik Party, representing about 5,000 members, was held in Krasnoyarsk. The Conference sent greetings to the Sixth Congress of the Party.

A Central Siberian Regional Bureau was set up to direct all Party activity in Siberia. This Bureau received an urgent instruction from the Central Committee to see to it that the Bolsheviks in Tomsk, Barnaul, Novonikolayevsk and Omsk withdrew from the united Social-Democratic organisations.

After the Regional Party Conference the Krasnoyarsk Bolsheviks toured Siberia, speaking at workers' and Party meetings and forming new Party organisations.

One of the most active of the Krasnoyarsk Bolsheviks to leave for the working-class districts in Western Siberia was Y.E. Bograd.

Tomsk was one of the first united Social-Democratic organisations in Western Siberia to split. On September 1, as soon as the details of the Kornilov mutiny became known, a general meeting of the Tomsk Social-Democratic organisation was held at which a resolution was passed calling for the immediate transfer of power to the Soviets.

Next day a joint meeting of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Central Bureau of Trade Unions demanded the transfer of power to revolutionary democracy represented by the Soviets.

In the large garrison of Tomsk meetings of soldiers were held which were addressed by Bolsheviks and their sympathisers. At nearly all the meetings the soldiers passed resolutions containing the demand for "the transfer of all power to the Central Congress of Soldiers', Workers' and Peasants' Deputies."

At a meeting of the Social-Democratic organisation held on September 6 a report was delivered on the Regional Conference which had been held in Krasnoyarsk. After a heated debate a resolution was passed by 58 votes against nine with nine abstentions, stating that:

> ". . . this meeting associates itself with the decision of the Conference [Central Siberian—*Ed.*] to join the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) and declares that the decisions of Party Congresses and leading bodies are binding on the members of the organisation who remain in it after the adoption of the present resolution."[48]

On September 9 a Gubernia Conference of the Bolshevik Party was held in Tomsk.

The delegates from the Sudzhenka and Anzherka mines, from Kemerovo, and those from Taiga Station, reported that Bolshevik influence had greatly increased among the masses and that the workers unreservedly adopted the slogan "All power to the Soviets!"

The Conference sent the following telegram to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and to the central Party organ:

> "On behalf of 2,500 workers organised in the Party, the Tomsk Gubernia Conference has resolved to recognise the Central Committee as its Party Centre and its directions as binding. We are confident of the speedy return to the victorious proletariat of its honest and devoted leaders—Comrade Lenin and the others."[49]

Several days after this Gubernia Conference a split took place in the Novonikolayevsk Party organisation. By a vote of 85 against 22 the meeting decided to associate itself with the platform of the Bolsheviks.

The break with the Unionists raised Bolshevik prestige in the Tomsk Gubernia. This was strikingly demonstrated at the Gubernia Congress of

Soviets of Peasants' Deputies which opened in the city of Tomsk in the middle of September and was attended by about 200 delegates. The Congress was dominated by the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, but during the course of the proceedings, however, the leadership passed into the hands of the Internationalist Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks.

The report on the current situation was made by the Internationalist Socialist-Revolutionary, Lisiyenko, who was followed by N. N. Yakovlev, a Bolshevik, and one of the outstanding fighters for the dictatorship of the proletariat in Siberia.

N. N. Yakovlev joined the Bolshevik Party in 1905, while still a student at the Moscow University. His revolutionary work was frequently interrupted by arrests, imprisonment, exile in the Arctic Region, and exile abroad. He escaped from Siberia several times. While abroad he spent a year working in a brass foundry where he learned the trade of a foundryman.

In 1916 he was called up for military service. On the outbreak of the revolution he was elected to the Presidium of the Tomsk Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies. In 1918 he was shot by Kolchak forces.

Yakovlev's speech at the Congress of Peasants' Deputies in Tomsk had a powerful effect, and when he finished speaking he was greeted with loud and prolonged applause.

The resolutions proposed by the Bolsheviks and Internationalist Socialist-Revolutionaries differed on one point, namely, the agrarian question. The Socialist-Revolutionary resolution was adopted, but the Bolshevik resolution received as many as 60 votes.

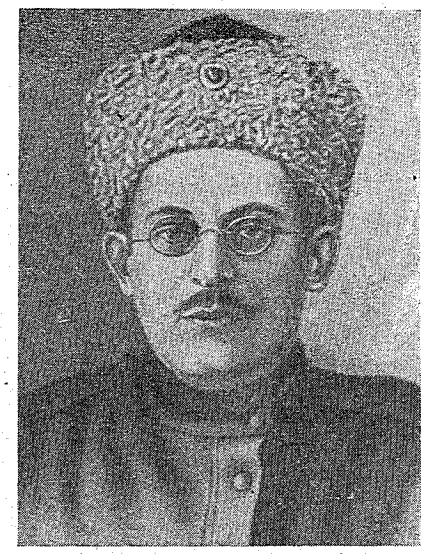
The Tomsk Bolsheviks gained further successes at the joint meeting of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies. Here, too, Yakovlev spoke on the current situation. The meeting decided to unite the two Soviets and form a Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. In their resolution, the Soviets insisted "on the immediate convocation of a Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies for the purpose of electing a new Central Executive Committee and of drawing up revolutionary tactics. . . ."[50]

At a meeting held on October 7 a Presidium of the united Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was formed of which N. N. Yakovlev was elected chairman. At the same meeting two Bolsheviks were elected as delegates to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

The elections to the Tomsk City Duma, which were held on October 1, revealed to what extent Bolshevik influence had increased. The Bolsheviks won the largest number of seats, namely 34; the Socialist-Revolutionaries won 24 seats and the Mensheviks only six.

In Omsk the united organisation held together longer than in any other part of Siberia. The Omsk Bolsheviks carried on work mainly among the railwaymen, metal-workers and the soldiers of the garrison. One of the most outstanding Bolshevik agitators in Omsk, the 19-year-old Z. Lobkov,

exercised enormous influence among the workers and soldiers; his influence was also felt in the work of the Omsk Soviet. His young and ardent life was cut short in May 1919, when he was arrested in Chelyabinsk as a member of the underground Bolshevik organisation and tortured to death by the Kolchak secret police.



N. N. Yakovlev

On September 16 the Omsk Soviet passed a resolution demanding the immediate convocation of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. At the same meeting a decision to form a workers' Red Guard was adopted.

The Bolsheviks had raised the question of arming the workers as far back as May at a general meeting of the Social-Democratic organisation. But the Mensheviks had opposed this and had described the proposal to arm the workers as "an echo of the Leninist-Blanquist trends."[51] Despite this opposition, however, the Bolsheviks began to organise combat groups.

Units of workers and peasants began to be formed and were trained by soldiers returned from the front. One of the organisers of such groups was Lobkov.

On October 12 a general meeting of the Omsk united Social-Democratic organisation was held at which 366 members were present. An Internationalist Menshevik presided. The question under discussion was the election of the Constituent Assembly, but this was linked up with the question as to which party centre the Omsk organisation was to submit to—the Bolshevik or the Menshevik.

The Bolsheviks proposed that the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party should be acknowledged as the leading centre. This proposal received 256 votes. A split followed.

The chairman of the meeting resigned and left the hall, followed by the Internationalist Mensheviks. The new chairman of this now exclusively Bolshevik meeting was Lobkov. The meeting decided to put up an independent Bolshevik ticket in the Constituent Assembly elections.

Almost at the same time the Bolsheviks in Irkutsk—the centre of Eastern Siberia—withdrew from the united organisation, membership of which hampered their efforts to extend their influence to the large local garrison. The Soviet of Workers' Deputies and Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies

existed separately. Lacking proletarian guidance, the soldiers drifted along in their own way.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party sent a representative to Irkutsk with the special mission of helping the Irkutsk Bolsheviks to set up their own organisation and of uniting the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets.

As was the case in Omsk, the split in the Social-Democratic organisation came about in connection with the nomination of candidates for the Constituent Assembly. On the insistence of N. A. Gavrilov the Bolsheviks decided to put up their own ticket.

Nikolai Andreyevich Gavrilov came from a peasant family and was a school teacher by profession. In 1906 he was arrested while trying to smuggle revolutionary literature into his district. From then on his career was marked by imprisonment, penal servitude and exile in the Irkutsk Gubernia.

After the revolution he joined the Irkutsk united organisation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In 1919 he was beaten to death by counter-revolutionaries.

At a meeting of the Gubernia Committee of the Social-Democratic organisation held in Irkutsk on October 4, Comrade Gavrilov demanded that a larger number of Bolsheviks be included in the list of candidates for the Constituent Assembly on the grounds that the Bolsheviks exercised greater influence in the city.

The Gubernia Committee refused to comply with this demand and denounced the statements by Gavrilov and other Bolsheviks as "disruptive" and unauthorised.

This dispute led to a split in the Irkutsk Social-Democratic organisation, from which the Bolsheviks withdrew.

Just at this time a group of Bolsheviks arrived from Krasnoyarsk.

On October 19 the first issue of the Bolshevik journal *Rabochaya Sibir* was published.

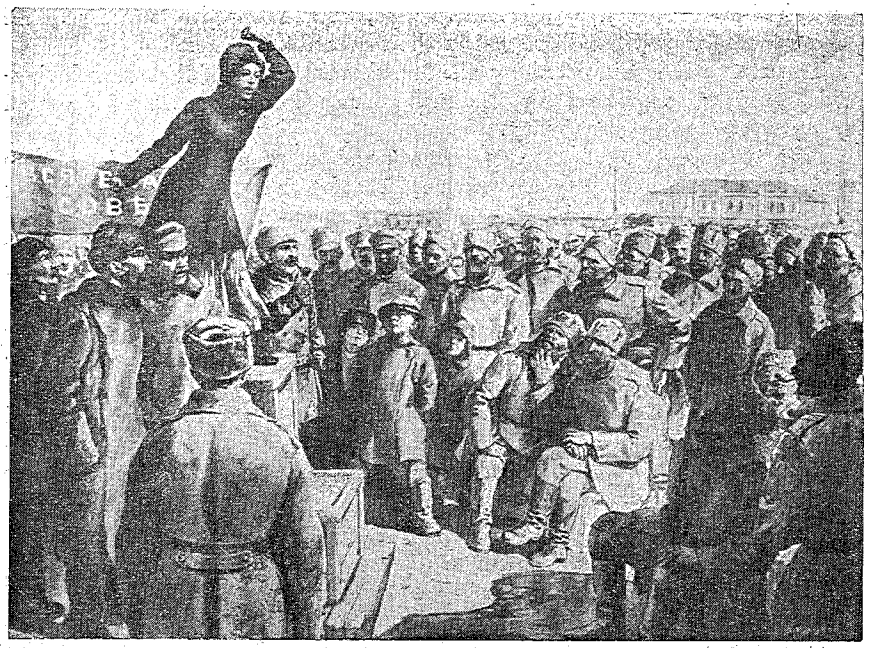
The Irkutsk City Committee of the Bolshevik Party, in conjunction with the comrades who had arrived from Krasnoyarsk, drew up plans for forming a military organisation and for securing new elections to the Soviets.

During these days a general meeting of the Bolsheviks in the city was held in the premises of the Railway School at which about 1,000 workers and soldiers were present.

The hall was filled to overflowing. Members of the Irkutsk Committee of the Party and delegates to the Congress of Soviets spoke on the current situation, after which the meeting adopted a resolution defining the Bolsheviks' aims and tasks in the struggle to win over the masses of Irkutsk and the adjacent districts.

On October 15 over 3,000 soldiers gathered in the Tikhvin Square at a mass meeting called by the Irkutsk Bolsheviks.

The meeting was addressed by the Bolshevik delegates to the All-Siberian Congress. They were supported by the Maximalist Ada Lebedeva. It was strange to hear this little woman with a perky face and boyish way of speaking, delivering vigorous and passionate speeches explaining in plain terms the slogans issued by Lenin.



Ada Lebedeva speaking at a soldiers' meeting in 1917

From a drawing by A. Kulikov

Born in Irkutsk, the daughter of a Polish exile and a native Siberian woman, she imbibed a hatred for tsarism in her childhood. She joined the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, but in May 1917 broke away from the main body and formed an independent "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary group in Krasnoyarsk. With her at the head of this group were N. Mazurin and Sergei Lazo, who shortly after joined the Bolsheviks.

Lebedeva attended the Congress of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Petrograd where she astonished the aged Narodnik, Breshko-Breshkovskaya, by her bold attacks on the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. Subsequently, she, together with Sergei Lazo, joined the Bolsheviks.

In 1918 she was captured by Whiteguard Cossacks near Krasnoyarsk and hacked to death.

The soldiers' meeting in Tikhvin Square was also addressed by representatives of the Irkutsk Bolshevik military organisation.

Amidst loud applause the soldiers of the Irkutsk garrison adopted

a resolution, proposed by the Bolsheviks, demanding the transfer of all power to the Soviets and promising their armed assistance.

The resolution submitted by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries expressing support for the Provisional Government was defeated by an overwhelming majority.

After this meeting numerous other meetings of workers and soldiers were held all over the city at which Bolsheviks who were popular among the masses spoke.

At all these meetings resolutions were adopted demanding the transfer of power to the Soviets and expressing no confidence in the Kerensky government.

The local compromisers' newspapers started a campaign against the "strolling players from Krasnoyarsk," but this proved ineffective; the masses of the workers and soldiers continued to swing to the left.

On October 10 the Congress of Soviets of Eastern Siberia was opened in Irkutsk. It was dominated by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Of the 115 delegates present only 32 were Bolsheviks and 15 were "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Bolshevik organisation in Krasnoyarsk, Kansk, and other towns in Eastern Siberia decided to take part in the Congress in order to use it as a centre in which to prepare for the All-Siberian Congress of Soviets and as a platform from which to expose the compromisers.

Extreme tension prevailed from the moment the Congress opened. A clash was inevitable. It came during the debate on the work of the Area Bureau of Soviets.

The Bolsheviks who declared that the Bureau had not served as an organ of revolutionary power but had followed in the wake of the Provisional Government moved a resolution demanding stern condemnation of the Bureau's harmful political line. The compromising majority at the Congress, however, passed a resolution expressing confidence in the Bureau.

The debate on the current situation was even more heated. Valentine Yakovlev, the delegate of the Krasnoyarsk Soviet, spoke on behalf of the Bolshevik group, and in a magnificent speech shattered the arguments advanced by the Right Socialist-Revolutionary Timofeyev that the Soviets could not take over power as they lacked the educated people necessary to run the administration.

Yakovlev charged the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries with being in alliance with the bourgeoisie and showed what this alliance was leading to. "Behind Kornilov stands Savinkov," he declared, and concluded his speech by hurling the accusation at the Socialist-Revolutionaries: "You are betraying the revolution!"

The resolution on the current situation was adopted in the absence of the Bolsheviks and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries who had withdrawn from the Congress as a protest against the insulting behaviour of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The First Congress of Soviets of Siberia was to open a few days after the East Siberian Congress of Soviets, and delegates had been arriving for it since October 12.

Before the Congress opened a conference of the Bolshevik delegates was held at which preliminary reports were heard and draft resolutions on all the questions on the agenda of the Congress were adopted. The delegates decided in favour of organising a Central Executive Committee of Soviets for Siberia and nominated candidates for this body.

When the First All-Siberian Congress of Soviets was opened at 7 p.m. on October 16 in the Hall of the Military Topographical Corps, representatives from 69 Soviets in Siberia were present. They came from Vladivostok, Tumen, Harbin, Khabarovsk, Taiga, the Yakutsk Region and other places. In all there were 184 delegates, of whom 65 were Bolsheviks and 35 "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. Thus, 100 delegates supported a Soviet platform.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had been aware long before the Congress assembled that the majority of Soviets in Siberia had expressed themselves in favour of the Soviets taking power and anticipated that the Bolshevik Party would come out on top at the Congress.

Consequently, the compromisers hastened to muster reinforcements and sent telegrams to Kirensk, Bodaibo and Yakutsk begging that credentials for the Congress be given to "their men."

The Socialist-Revolutionaries had made up their minds to obstruct the Congress proceedings and jumped at the first opportunity that offered to do so when a Bolshevik was nominated as chairman of the Congress.

An acrimonious debate ensued. At last the question was put to the vote and by 86 votes against 32, with nine abstaining, a Bolshevik was elected chairman of the First Congress of Soviets in Siberia.

Then commenced the debate on the first item of the agenda, *viz.*, the current situation, the tactics of the Soviets, and the defence of the revolution and the country.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries declared that they wanted to postpone the settlement of all questions until the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. The Mensheviks, as usual, wriggled and pleaded for unity among all the forces of revolutionary democracy. The Bolsheviks and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries insisted on the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

An eloquent speech was delivered by Sergei Lazo, one of the heroes of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Far East. During the Civil War Lazo headed the guerilla fighters in the Taiga and displayed wonderful courage, resourcefulness and devotion to the revolution. He met with a horrible death, however. In April 1920 he was captured by the Japanese who burned him alive in the furnace of a railway engine.

The speech delivered by Lazo at the Congress was remarkable for its ardour and conviction. "Only when power is transferred to the Soviets," the said, "shall we be able to direct the unorganised masses into a single

channel. We do not oppose the Soviet power to the Constituent Assembly, but we cannot be certain of having a Constituent Assembly unless power is transferred to the Soviets."[52]

After debating this question for two days the Congress proceeded to take a vote on the resolution that was to determine the political and tactical line of the Soviets in Siberia. The Bolsheviks, supported by the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, submitted a resolution which contained the following passage:

> "All compromise with the bourgeoisie must be emphatically rejected and the All-Russian Congress of Soviets must take power into its own hands. In the struggle to take over power, the All-Russian Congress can rely on the effective support of the Soviets in Siberia."[53]

By 93 votes against 68 this resolution was adopted as a basis, subject to ammendment.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries made another attempt to obstruct the proceedings. They protested against the wording of one part of the resolution which referred to the forthcoming All-Russian Congress as a Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The word "Peasants'" they said, should be deleted as the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, led by Avksentyev, had decided not to take part in the proceedings of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

Their motion to this effect was defeated, however, and the resolution was adopted without amendment. When the result of the voting was announced commotion arose in the hall. The so-called "peasant representatives," most of whom could easily be recognised as local inhabitants, rose from their seats.

"We are leaving the hall," declared one of these "peasants," "because we do not wish to violate the decision of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies."

Thereupon, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries raised the question as to whether, under these circumstances, the Congress could claim to represent the peasants as well as the workers and soldiers. This question was answered in the affirmative by the Credentials Committee which stated that the Congress was fully justified in calling itself a Congress of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, as representatives were present from Soviets of Peasants' Deputies as well as from united Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries persisted in their obstruction, however. They made the demagogic statement that the representation at the Congress had been manipulated, that the industrial workers were over-represented, and that most of the peasant deputies at the Congress were soldiers of the local garrison. The Congress rejected this objection. Thereupon the Socialist-Revolutionaries noisily got up from their seats, threw their delegate cards on the presidium table and left the hall. The Congress continued without them.

A number of delegates urged that the proceedings be accelerated so as to enable the delegates to return to their districts as speedily as possible in order to continue the struggle to transfer power to the Soviets.

On October 23 the Congress elected the First Central Executive Committee of Soviets in Siberia known as the Centrosibir.

The Congress elected 14 delegates to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of whom six were Bolsheviks, one "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary and one Internationalist Social-Democrat.

The representatives of six out of the seven larger towns of Siberia voted in favour of transferring power to the Soviets. Only the seventh, the Omsk Soviet, stood for "transferring power to the democracy."

In Siberia the period of organising the assault was more protracted than in the other regions of the country owing to the strong influence of the compromisers and the failure of the Bolsheviks immediately to break away from the Unionists.

But even here the Bolsheviks, directed by the Central Committee of the Party, rectified their mistakes, defeated the compromisers and by the eve of the October insurrection had organised a mighty column of reserves for the Great Proletarian Revolution.

8

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE STRUGGLE TO TRANSFER POWER TO THE SOVIETS IN THE NATIONAL AND BORDER REGIONS

> "The revolution, which started in the centre," wrote Stalin, "could not long be confined to this narrow territory. Once having triumphed in the centre, it was bound to spread to the border regions. And, indeed, from the very first days of the seizure of power, the revolutionary wave spread from the North all over Russia, sweeping over one border region after another."[54]

But a number of serious obstacles and enormous difficulties stood in the path of establishing the Soviet regime in the non-Russian, so-called national and border regions. The counter-revolution had concentrated all its forces in the Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Crimea, Transcaucasia, Turkestan and the Far East, to combat the Soviet regime even before the October Revolution had definitely triumphed at the centre. This explains why the struggle for the victory of the proletarian revolution assumed a more fierce protracted character in the national and border regions than in the other parts of the country. The specific features and difficulties of the work of preparing for and developing the proletarian revolu-

tion in the national and border regions may be reduced to four main points.

First, the onward march of the proletarian revolution was here checked by, as Stalin said, the dam of regional and "national governments," which were bourgeois in character and imperialistic in their nature.

One of the most important centres of counter-revolution was the Ukrainian Central Rada.

The Central Rada had tried to pose as the saviour of the dying Russian bourgeoisie even before the October Revolution. The growing front of the Socialist revolution was encountered by a *bloc* of the bourgeoisie of all the nationalities inhabiting Russia.

Striving by their united efforts to prevent the triumph of the proletarian revolution in Russia, the nationalist counter-revolution set out to dismember the country, to set the various nationalities against one another in order to break up the united front of the working people of all nationalities, to divide the forces of the revolution and thereby strengthen the forces of the counter-revolution.

In addition to the Ukrainian Rada, "national governments," sometimes fictitious and sometimes real, appeared in Transcaucasia (the "Transcaucasian Commissariat" and the "Transcaucasian Diet"), in the Crimea (the "Kurultai"), in Central Asia (the "Khokand Autonomy" and "Allash-Orda"), in Byelorussia (the "Byelorussian Rada"), in the North Caucasus (the "Central Committee of the Union of Mountain People"), and also in Bashkiria and the Tatar Region.

The second obstacle to the victory of the revolution in the national and border regions was the Cossack counter-revolution, which tried to hurl against the revolution the entire mass of the 11 Cossack Forces (Don, Kuban, Terek, Astrakhan, Urals, Orenburg, Siberian, Amur, Transbaikal, Ussuri and Semirechensk) which were stationed in the border regions and served as instruments for the enslavement and oppression of the peoples of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia, Central Asia, Siberia and the Far East.

While the Central Rada in the Ukraine played first fiddle among the "national governments," the leading role in organising the forces of the all-Russian counter-revolution was played by the upper ranks of the Don Cossack Force, the largest of the Cossack formations, which was strategically situated nearest to the revolutionary centres of the country.

The third specific feature of the struggle to establish the Soviet regime in the national regions was that here, and particularly in the southern and eastern border regions of the Soviet Republic, the pressure of the foreign imperialists was felt far more than in the central parts of the country.

The border regions of Russia had long been the objects of special attention of foreign governments.

Right from the beginning the "Khokand Autonomy" and the "Allash-Orda" in Central Asia, the "Transcaucasian Commissariat" in Tiflis, the "Central Committee of the Union of Mountain People" in the North Caucasus and the Whiteguard governments in Siberia and the Far East received the support of the foreign imperialists.

In the course of the struggle for the establishment of the Soviet regime the imperialist governments exercised no less pressure in other parts of the country besides the Far East—in the North, in Archangel and Murmansk. The foreign ships in Archangel harbour served as a reliable support for the local Whiteguard organisations. It was no accident that in these districts the struggle to transfer power to the Soviets dragged on until the summer of 1918.

Lastly, still another difficulty in the path of the struggle for the Soviet regime in the national regions was the fact that the tsarist government had deliberately kept the border regions of Russia in a state which Lenin described as "semi-savagery, and even actual savagery." In these regions industry was scarcely developed, and in a number of districts there were no industrial enterprises whatever. Among many of the nationalities there was no native industrial proletariat; the few proletarians that were to be found in the national regions were mainly Russians. This state of affairs inevitably affected the work of the Bolshevik organisations. In most of the towns of Central Asia, the Far East and Siberia independent Bolshevik organisations were formed either on the very eve of the October Revolution or, as was the case in a number of places, several weeks and even months after the October Revolution had triumphed in the capitals. In these regions illusions about the possibility of reaching a compromise were more tenacious and lasted longer than elsewhere. The long "co-habitation" of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the united Social-Democratic organisations did not help to dispel these illusions. While Menshevik influence was destroyed in the main centres of the country before the October Revolution, in these regions, the Menshevik poison had so corroded the minds of the backward groups of the working class that it was not easy to eliminate it. It was in these border regions that the supporters of the treacherous line advocated by Kamenev and Zinoviev found favourable soil for their disruptive tactics. "Coalition combinations" were made in these regions on a more open and wider scale and met with less resistance than in other parts of the country. In Chita, Transbaikal, for example, the so-called "Peoples' Soviet," a coalition government headed by the Mensheviks, was in power for over a month; the Soviet regime was established there only in the beginning of February 1918.

Such were the specific features and difficulties that impeded the development and victory of the proletarian revolution in the border and national regions of Russia. It goes without saying that these factors operated differently in the different national regions, which varied in their level of development of productive forces, availability of proletarian forces, and rapidity of Bolshevisation of the masses.

In the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic provinces, proletarian Baku, and an important centre like Tashkent, the working-class forces were very

considerable and the Bolshevik organisations had large masses of working people behind them. Here the difficulties and obstacles were overcome and swept away much faster than in the other national regions, and the process of preparing for the proletarian revolution bore features that were a peculiar mixture of those typical of the main industrial centres and of the national regions of the country.

This was particularly marked during the preparations for the revolution in the Ukraine and in Byelorussia.

9

THE UKRAINE

Before the revolution the Ukraine was the chief coal and metallurgical base of Russian industry, and Ukrainian agriculture provided millions of tons of wheat for the home and foreign market. Furthermore, the food processing industry was highly developed in the Ukraine.

During the imperialist war the Ukraine served as the supply base for the Russian armies on the South-Western and Rumanian Fronts, which were the main theatres of military operations in 1916 and 1917.

The Bolshevik Party was confronted with the all important task of preparing for the armed insurrection in the Ukraine, the success of which would facilitate the first steps taken by the proletarian dictatorship at the centre. This explains why the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party devoted so much attention to the Ukraine.

The Central Committee sent to the Donets Basin, in the Ukraine, K. E. Voroshilov, who had led the revolutionary struggle there in 1905.

The central Bolshevik newspapers assisted the Ukrainian Bolshevik press. The Kharkov newspaper *Proletary* was in constant communication with the Moscow *Sotsial-Demokrat* and regularly received instruction and copy from M.S. Olminsky, the editor of that paper.

The suppression of the Kornilov mutiny marked the turning point in the development of the revolution in the Ukraine.

The workers of Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav and Kiev and the miners of the Donets Basin demanded arms.

In connection with the Kornilov mutiny, the Kharkov Committee of the Bolshevik Party issued a manifesto to the workers calling upon them to arm.

"It is necessary immediately to arm the workers," said the Committee in its manifesto. "No revolution has succeeded with the aid of words alone.

"The proletariat will take, and has already taken, the lead in defending the revolution. It is necessary immediately to arm the proletariat with the stocks of arms available in the city. Time does not wait. Long live the workers' Red Guard."[55]

Delegates were sent to Tula to procure arms.

The Bolsheviks were not daunted by the enormous difficulties that stood in the way of the mass arming of the workers. They took advantage of every opportunity that arose for doing so.

The combat groups armed themselves even with swords, and the workers forged their own bayonets for their rifles. Those who had firearms of any kind were regarded as lucky. The Red Guards had to take turns at firing practice, as there was only one rifle for every two men.



K. E. Voroshilov

A big part in directing this work was played by K. E. Voroshilov.

At the time the February bourgeois-democratic revolution broke out Voroshilov was in Petrograd as a delegate from the Donets Basin. The Donets miners sent repeated requests to the Central Committee urging that Voroshilov be allowed to return. In view of the enormous importance of the Donets Basin for the revolution the Central Committee consented and Voroshilov returned to Lugansk. There, utilising his old connections, he built up a stronghold of Bolshevism long before the Kornilov mutiny. After the July events he organised a meeting of solidarity with the Petrograd proletariat. On a sweltering July day, columns of workers marched from all parts of the town to the Preobrazhensky Square, carrying banners bearing the inscriptions: "Down with the counter-revolution!" "Long live the power of the workers, peasants and soldiers!"

On the way to the square the demonstrators encountered a troop of Cossacks led by Colonel Katayev, the chief of the Lugansk garrison. Silently allowing the demonstration to pass, the Cossacks followed up in its rear. The meeting was opened in the square. As soon as a Bolshevik speaker stepped on to the platform the Cossacks, at a sign from Colonel Katayev, raised a frightful din. From the ranks of the Mensheviks, who kept close to the Cossacks for protection, voices were heard shouting:

"We've had enough of Bolshevik demagogy!"

The Bolshevik speaker was followed by the Uyezd Commissar of the Provisional Government, the Menshevik, Nesterov. A demagogue and slanderer, he managed, right up to June 1917, simultaneously to occupy the posts of Commissar of the Provisional Government, Chairman of the Committee of Public Safety and Chairman of the Soviet. Shortly before this demonstration, however, Nesterov had been expelled from the Soviet as a result of the campaign conducted by Voroshilov. Now, under the protection of the Cossacks, he tried to win the workers to his side. The workers, however, denied him a hearing. "Down with the traitor!"—they shouted, and amidst the howls and jeers of the demonstrators, this Menshevik was dragged from the platform.

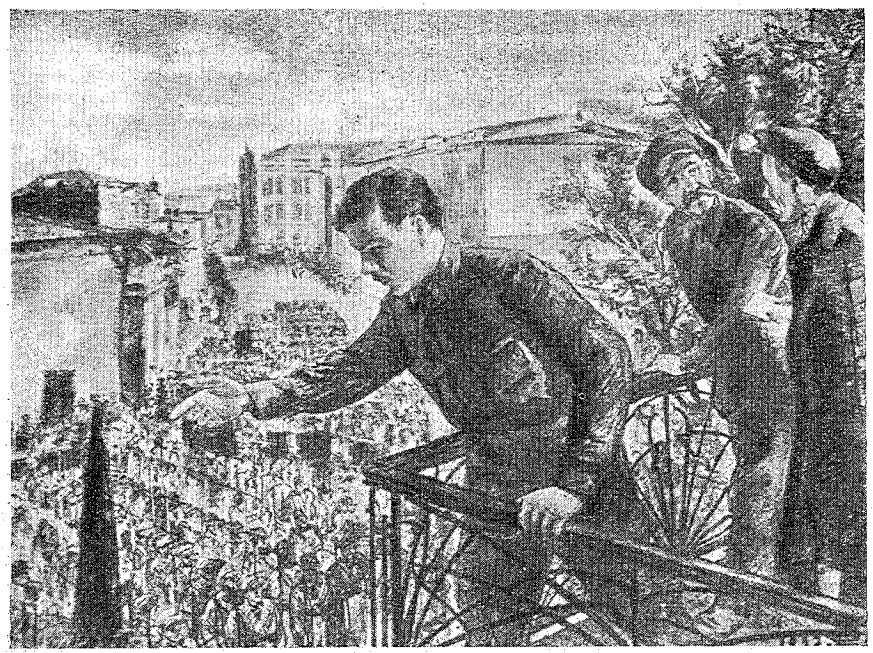
At last Voroshilov appeared on the platform. In his speech he fiercely denounced the Provisional Government and exposed the treacherous conduct of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks during the July days. Again vicious cries were heard from the small crowd of Mensheviks. The Cossacks took up these cries and the din increased, drowning Voroshilov's voice. Voroshilov then slowly descended from the platform and calmly directed his steps towards the crowd of Mensheviks and the Cossacks. He was followed by armed workers. Colonel Katayev's command rang out: "Ready!"

The Cossacks drew their sabres, but they hesitated to attack Voroshilov. At this moment the ranks of the workers opened and a detachment of Bolshevik soldiers appeared with their rifles at the ready. Shouting "Long live the Soviets!" the soldiers resolutely advanced against the Cossacks. The latter turned their horses and galloped off, followed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The meeting was then resumed. Towards evening the workers and soldiers unanimously adopted a Bolshevik resolution demanding the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

In those days only vague rumours about the Kornilov mutiny had reached Lugansk. Voroshilov was tireless in his activities. On August 27 he addressed a soldiers' meeting, and in the evening of the same day he organised a mass meeting of workers and soldiers. On August 28 he addressed a meeting of workers at the Hartman Works, at which he summed up the events of the past six months of the revolution.

> "These events have shown," he said, "that the Bolshevik Party is the only true party of the revolutionary proletariat and has correctly estimated the state of affairs in the country and the forces operating in our revolution."[56]

When the first definite information about the Kornilov mutiny was received Voroshilov set up a Revolutionary Committee. That same night, on the orders of the Committee, the officers of the local garrison and the former high officials of the tsarist government were arrested. The Committee sent its Commissars to all the public offices for the purpose of ensuring the normal conduct of business and of stopping attempts at sabotage.



"The soldiers in serried ranks marched past the building responding to Voroshilov's greeting with loud 'Hurrahs!'"

From a drawing by P. Malkov

On August 30 meetings were held in all the units of the Lugansk garrison. The soldiers expressed their complete support of the Bolsheviks and their readiness to fight Kornilov. That day the units elected new commanders from among the rank and file. One of these newly elected commanders came to the People's Palace, where the Bolshevik Party had its committee rooms, and informed Voroshilov that his men were lined up outside and desired to demonstrate their devotion to the revolution. The members of the committee went out on the balcony and the soldiers in serried ranks marched past the building responding to Voroshilov's greetings with loud "Hurrahs!"

The fact that the garrison had been won over naturally had a profound effect upon the further development of the revolution in Lugansk. The workers armed themselves in order to repel the anticipated attack of the Don counter-revolution. As Voroshilov wrote in his reminiscences:

> "Our proximity to the Don Region and the old hostility that had remained from the first revolution between Red Lugansk and the very black Don Region gave rise to a host of very absurd as well as to some

grave rumours, assumptions and anticipations. Not a day passed but what, *according to rumour*, a Cossack Hundred, regiment, or even division, was marching against Lugansk. Actually, nothing of the kind happened, but it compelled our Red Guards to spend many long and trying hours on guard duty. Since then I have seen a great deal, but my conscience compels me to say that I have rarely seen such conscientious, self-sacrificing and unselfish service to the revolution at the fighting post as was performed by the Lugansk proletarians.

"In pouring rain, impassable mud and freezing cold, in the darkness of the night, groups of Red Guards, after a hard day's work at the factory, would march into the steppe, far beyond the city, and loyally guard all the approaches to the city until morning. And this went on not for one day, or two, but for whole months."[57]

Voroshilov formed a Defence Committee headed by his closest associate, A. Y. Parkhomenko, the leader of the Lugansk workers' combat groups. Scouts and agitators were sent out to the adjacent Cossack *stanitsas*. The Lugansk Soviet succeeded in establishing contact with the *stanitsas* Mityakinskaya and Luganskaya, where the Cossacks were favourably inclined towards the Bolsheviks.

In September the Cossacks decided to send a delegation to the Lugansk Soviet to discuss the question of conducting joint operations against the counter-revolution. When the train arrived in Lugansk, the delegates emerged from their car and lined up on the platform. The workers had not been warned of the arrival of the delegation, and being hostile towards Cossacks in general, they surrounded the visitors and demanded that they should remove their epaulets, which to them were the symbols of the tsarist regime. The delegates pleaded with the workers not to insist on this as they had to wear these epaulets in order to be able to influence the rest of the Cossacks. The misunderstanding was cleared up and a friendly conversation ensued between the Lugansk workers and the delegates from the Cossack *stanitsas*.

Soon permanent contacts were established between Lugansk and the surrounding *stanitsas*. The local counter-revolutionary forces gradually began to concentrate in Novocherkassk.

The situation in the city on the eve of the October battles is most vividly described in a report sent from Lugansk to the Central Committee of the Party at the end of September which stated:

"All the organisations in the city are in our hands. The Mayor of the City, the members of the Municipality, the Chairman of the City Duma, the Soviet of Deputies, the trade unions and the newspapers are all ours."[58]

Thus the Bolsheviks in Lugansk prepared to seize power. The city was practically under the control of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, of which Voroshilov was the head. The representative of the Provisional Government was merely the nominal authority. The Lugansk workers were

only waiting for the signal from the centre to expel even this nominal representative of the Provisional Government.



Artyom (F. A. Sergeyve)

All over the Ukraine the workers armed themselves and prepared for decisive operations. Even the compromising Soviets were compelled by mass pressure to pass Bolshevik resolutions. On August 25 the Odessa Soviet still passed a Menshevik resolution calling for the prohibition of all demonstrations; but five days later, it passed a resolution calling for the arming of the Red Guards and the payment of the Red Guardsmen by the factory owners. The Red Guards took over the function of maintaining order in the city.

Similar progress was made in the Kiev Soviet. On August 30 the Kiev Soviet passed a resolution to search for and requisition arms for the purpose of equipping the combat groups. At the same meeting a resolution was passed to disarm the Polish fighting squads formed in Kiev by the Polish counter-revolutionary organisations.

When the Provisional Government tried to disarm the workers after the suppression of the Kornilov mutiny, it met with mass resistance which had been organised by the Bolsheviks. P. P. Dobroselsky, the Kharkov Gubernia Commissar of the Provisional Government, acting on Kerensky's orders, wanted to dissolve the Revolutionary Committees which had been set up at the time of the Kornilov mutiny, but he failed. At a meeting of the Kharkov Soviet, Kerensky's Commissar was opposed by N. Rudnyev, the commander of a company of the 30th Regiment, and one of the leaders of the Kharkov military organisation of the Party and of the Red Guard. Rudnyev succeeded in transforming the 30th Regiment into a Bolshevik stronghold. The soldiers of this regiment said: "We are all Bolsheviks." Nikolai Rudnyev died like a hero fighting the Whiteguard Cossacks near Tsaritsyn in 1918.

One of the most active in exposing the compromisers was Artyom (F. A. Sergeyev). He was well known among the workers in the Donets Basin as an eloquent speaker and leader of the Bolshevik organisations in the turbulent days of 1905. After the defeat of the first revolution Artyom was arrested and imprisoned, and then sent into exile. In 1910 he escaped

from exile and travelling through China and Japan went to Australia, where he became prominent in the revolutionary working-class movement. He returned to Russia in May 1917 and at once became the recognised leader of the proletariat in the Donets Basin.

Artyom devoted himself particularly to the work of agitation and propaganda among the masses. On his initiative the Kharkov Soviet organised instruction courses for speakers who, after finishing the course, were sent to work among the soldiers and peasants. The leading members of the Bolshevik Party, men at the head of large organisations, personally conducted propaganda, setting examples of how the workers and soldiers should be won over to the side of the revolution.

At the end of August 1917 Artyom, accompanied by a group of comrades, came to the 6th Artillery Depot, which was part of the Kharkov garrison, where a meeting of the soldiers was to be held. The officers, however, refused to permit Artyom to enter the depot, but this did not daunt him. He posted himself in the street outside the barrack yard and began to read aloud a popular Bolshevik pamphlet, making a running comment on what he read. A large crowd gathered. Attracted by Artyom's speech, the soldiers in the barrack yard pushed their officers aside and coming out into the street listened to Artyom with close interest and then took an enthusiastic part in the meeting which ended in the adoption of a Bolshevik resolution.

The Bolshevik organisation among the Kharkov railwaymen, which was headed by Artyom, made a practice of sending out groups of their members to hold impromptu open air meetings. Carrying a banner and a portable platform, a group would stop at a busy street corner and hold a short meeting, and when that had finished they would go on to the next street corner.

At a meeting of the Kharkov Soviet held on September 12, the slogans of the political demonstration that had been fixed for September 14 were discussed. Artyom called upon the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik majority of the Soviet to support the slogans "All power to the Soviets!" and "All the land to the working peasants, at once and without compensation." The Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary, Odoyevsky, opposed this and proposed instead that the Soviets' first slogan should be "All power to revolutionary democracy." As for the second, he proposed that it should be dropped altogether on the ground that "the land must be transferred to the peasants in an organised manner, and this could not be done at once." [59]

The slogan proposed by the Bolsheviks for the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants without compensation was rejected by the Socialist-Revolutionaries who predominated in the Soviet.

The Bolsheviks would not admit defeat, however. Artyom stood up and addressing the Presidium angrily said:



"Artyom posted himself in the street outside the barrack yard and began to read aloud a popular Bolshevik pamphlet, making a running comment on what he read"

From a drawing by D. Shmarinov

> "I request that it be recorded in the minutes that for three hours the Soviet discussed the question as to whom the land should belong—the landlords or the peasants—and at last decided that it should belong to . . . the landlords." [60]

This stinging statement was greeted with loud applause. That day the Bolsheviks polled nearly half the votes in the Soviet. The influence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks began to wane.

The demonstration which was held in Kharkov two days later was conducted under Bolshevik slogans, and the meeting that followed was addressed only by Bolshevik speakers. This demonstration showed that the influence of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Soviet among the masses had been greatly shaken.

By their persevering and self-sacrificing efforts among the proletarian masses of the Ukrainian towns, the Bolsheviks won over the majority of the working class.

The capitalists retaliated by shutting down factories.

In an article written at the beginning of September, Voroshilov, the Bolshevik leader in the Donets Basin, wrote as follows:

> "In Kharkov the Locomotive Works have been brought to a standstill. In St. Petersburg works and factories, large and small, are being closed nearly every day. In the Donets Basin 77 pits have already been closed, and a number of others are about to be closed. The situation is no better in the Moscow central industrial district, in the Urals, in Siberia, etc. In short, all over the Russian Republic we see the same thing—the manufacturers and factory owners have passed from sabotage, from the surreptitious Italian strike to an open offensive—a lockout."[61]

Voroshilov then went on to expose the pseudo patriotism of the bourgeoisie who were shouting about loving one's country and at the same time undermining the country's power of defence by their policy of sabotage in industry.

> "You are not afraid of the invasion of the German hordes, as your henchmen loudly proclaim," he wrote, "you are mortally afraid of your own workers, who are the true defenders of their country, but who want to defend it not in the interests of the capitalists who are torturing and plundering the nation, but in the interests of all the toilers and of all mankind. . . ."[62]

In simple language the Bolsheviks explained to the workers that the only way out of the blind alley into which the bourgeoisie was driving the country was to transfer power to the new class.

In the Donets Basin the miners maintained close contact with the peasants of the surrounding villages. The miners used to hold their celebrations in these villages and often arranged their wedding festivities there. They informed the peasants of the political events that were taking place and explained their significance.

After the February Revolution the Bolsheviks took advantage of these traditional ties to strengthen their influence in the rural districts. Under their direction Village Soviets were formed in the Donets Basin. As a result the peasants in villages like Shcherbinovka, Nelenovtsi, Zaliznoye and others, opposed the local Socialist-Revolutionaries. The influence of the Lugansk Uyezd Bureau of the Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies extended far beyond the Lugansk District. This Bureau was presided over by Voroshilov. It organised "excursions"—on foot, owing to lack of funds—of worker delegates of the Lugansk Soviet to the surrounding villages where they acted as arbitrators in disputes over the renting and parcelling out of land and explained to the peasants the Bolshevik program on the land and peace questions.

All over the Ukraine the peasant movement developed under Bolshevik leadership. The Ukrainian countryside was distinguished for its extensive development of capitalist relations and for its large class of agricultural labourers. With the aid of the kulaks the Ukrainian nationalists

tried to set up their own organisations in the rural districts, and the various educational and co-operative organisations there served as channels of Ukrainian nationalist influence. The Ukrainian Bolsheviks, as well as the Bolsheviks at the centre, counteracted these tactics by organising the poorer sections of the peasants and the agricultural labourers, and by striving to win over the middle peasants.

On the instructions of the Central Committee of the Party the Bolsheviks in the local Soviets set up sections or departments to protect the interests of the agricultural labourers. The Ekaterinoslav Soviet, for example, set up an Agricultural Labourer's Bureau, which maintained contact with all the uyezds and fairly successfully organised the agricultural labourers.

The growth of Bolshevik influence in the rural districts and the close proximity of the villages to the working-class centres gave rise to new forms of the peasant movement. In the autumn of 1917 strikes of agricultural labourers and of poor peasants who worked for the landlords and the kulaks broke out all over the Ukraine. These were undoubtedly stimulated by the growing strike movement in the industrial centres of the country. Even the demand for workers' control of industry, which was a specifically working-class demand, became popular in the rural districts of the Ukraine. In the Uman District, for example, the Rural Soviet appointed a special commissioner to inspect the progress of the threshing on the Talnov estate. This measure was called forth by the tactics of the landlords in this region who were deliberately spoiling grain and refusing to ship produce to the industrial districts in the effort to strangle the revolution by "the gaunt hand of famine" as had been advised by the millionaire Ryabushinsky.

The representatives of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, and their mercenary newspaper hacks, raised a howl about the alleged disorder and anarchy in the rural districts, but in their secret dispatches the representatives of the Provisional Government were obliged to admit that by their propaganda the Bolsheviks were establishing revolutionary order and organisation. Thus, the Uyezd Commissar of the Provisional Government in Berdichev in a report to the authorities in Kiev dated October 16, stated:

> "On one of the estates belonging to Tereshchenko, the peasants, according to the statement of the steward, carted off about 10,000 poods of straw which had been set aside for the army, under absolutely exceptional circumstances, namely: the peasants committed this act quite deliberately, conscious of their rights, on the grounds that everything now belonged to the people. First they seized the straw, then the farm implements, the land . . . *i.e.*, they carried out their intentions systematically, without the usual disorders and conflicts. "This phenomenon," wrote the Uyezd Commissar in conclusion, "is undoubtedly the result of Bolshevik propaganda carried into the rural districts almost exclusively by soldiers."

The poorer sections of the peasantry began to understand the general political aims of the revolution. In their resolution the peasants not only demanded the settlement of the questions of land tenure and rents, the abolition of landlordism and the cessation of the war, but also the dissolution of the State Duma and the Council of State, and the prosecution of Kornilov and his accomplices. In a resolution adopted at the end of September, the Kherson Gubernia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies demanded the immediate convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets, the right of self-determination for the different nationalities in Russia, and workers' control of production and distribution. The peasant insurrection in the Ukraine proceeded under Bolshevik slogans, but the special conditions prevailing in the Ukraine and the existence of powerful nationalist organisations limited its scope and force. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks incited the Ukrainian peasants against the workers, and against the representatives of Russian democracy generally.

At a meeting of the Lubny Soviet, the Ukrainian nationalist, Sukhenko, claiming to act in conformity with the instructions of the Central Rada, strongly objected to the dispatch of grain to Moscow and Petrograd. The nationalists operated hand in hand with Ryabushinsky in trying to starve the revolution. The Russian counter-revolutionaries, in their turn, made extensive use of the Ukrainian nationalist organisations. At a congress of instructors of village co-operative societies in the Poltava Gubernia, the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary, Bagri, was compelled to admit that Black Hundreds belonged to the Socialist-Revolutionary organisation and that one of them was the former head of the City Duma. This Black Hundred agent was actually re-elected to this post with the aid of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The peasant insurrection in the Ukraine was supported by the movement in the army.

In the beginning of October Lieutenant-Colonel Bogayevsky of the Headquarters Staff of the Commander of the South-Western Front drew up a memorandum on the revolutionary movement in the army in which he vividly described how much the officers feared the rank and file. The soldiers are everywhere and always dangerous, he wrote; everywhere and always they cause disorder. Whenever they are quartered at a particular place for any length of time they take the lead of the peasant movement. When on the march they wreck the landlords' mansions. When they are transported by rail they enter into communication with the revolutionary railwaymen.

All attempts to suppress the insurrection in the army by armed force failed. As was stated in this memorandum:

> ". . . every attempt on the part of the officers to restore order is met with forcible resistance, accompanied by the charge that the officers want to restore the old regime and are serving the interests of the bourgeoisie and landlords."[63]

The author of the memorandum recommended two methods of combating the revolution: 1. surgical, "*i.e.*, punitive," and 2. sanitary, "*i. e.*, preventative," but he at once added the following melancholy observation:

> "Under present conditions, however, as is evident from reports received, the surgical measures are often nullified by the temporary bluntness of the government's surgical instruments."[64]

The counter-revolutionaries were still deluding themselves with the hope that the "instruments" were only temporarily blunted. While fighting to arm the workers, the Ukrainian Bolsheviks made vigorous preparations for the Second Congress of Soviets.

On October 6, the Regional Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Donets and Krivoy Rog Basins was opened in Kharkov. The Congress was attended by 146 delegates, of whom 49 were Bolsheviks, 44 Mensheviks, 42 Socialist-Revolutionaries and two Anarchists.

When the agenda was discussed the representative of the Bolshevik group proposed that the report on the conditions of the proletariat in the Donets Basin be heard before the report of the Regional Committee.

The Bolsheviks' denunciation of the activities of the compromisers on the Regional Committee before the report of the Committee was heard caused consternation in the Presidium. True, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had a majority at the Congress, but the Congress was obviously packed. All the members of the Regional Committee and of the District Committees, the overwhelming majority of whom were Mensheviks, were present with the right to speak and vote. But even then the compromisers were not sure of their position.

When the report of the Regional Committee was discussed the Bolsheviks subjected it to a withering criticism.

In an eloquent speech Artyom revealed the true role the Mensheviks were playing on the Regional Committee.

> "I criticise the Regional Committee not for its inactivity, but for its activities against the working class," he said. "The Committee merely served as an office of the Ministry of Labour. It sent its representatives to various bodies in order to arrange a compromise. The Committee hindered the workers' efforts to organise. This was the case in Debaltsevo and in other districts of the Donets Basin."
>
> "The Regional Committee was not a workers' organisation, but a lash for the workers,"[65] declared Artyom amidst the loud approval of the majority of the Congress.

Even the rank-and-file delegates of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik groups listened to the Bolsheviks' speeches with unconcealed sympathy.

The Congress ended with a formal victory for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, but the victors left the hall in a depressed mood. They had failed to carry out a single instruction issued by the compro-

mising All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets and by their respective parties. Nor did they succeed in inducing the Congress to drop the demand for the convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets. They also failed to secure support for the new Provisional Government that was formed after the Democratic Conference.

On October 17 a Regional Conference of Soviets of the South-Western Territory was held in Kiev at which 34 Soviets were represented. Notwithstanding the strong opposition of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks a Bolshevik resolution was adopted demanding the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

On the eve of the October Revolution the nationalist counter-revolutionaries in the Ukraine endeavoured to reach an agreement with the Provisional Government. As if in retaliation to the preparations for the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the Central Rada made arrangements for holding the Third All-Ukrainian Army Congress in Kiev on October 20. This was a congress of representatives of Ukrainian army formations. A congress of representatives of Cossacks at the front was to be held in Kiev on the same day. The counter-revolutionaries intended these two congresses to serve as political centres of the fight against the Bolsheviks as well as military centres, for the 2,000 armed soldiers and Cossacks who would be assembled could serve as the nucleus of a counter-revolutionary force.

The All-Ukrainian Army Congress was attended by 940 delegates, most of them soldiers from the front. About 800 of these belonged to Ukrainian nationalist parties. But even this did not inspire the Central Rada with confidence that it would obtain the support of the soldiers at the front, for the temper of the rank-and-file delegates was obviously revolutionary. They would not hear a word about reaching an agreement with the Provisional Government.

In the middle of October the Soviets in the Ukraine elected their delegates to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. The elections were the occasion of a fierce struggle between the Bolsheviks on the one hand and the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks on the other.

Meanwhile, the compromising All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets did all in its power to put off the convocation of the Congress.

The Central Executive Committee's telegram instructing the Soviets to elect delegates to the Second Congress was received in Kiev only on October 19. The Kiev Soviet elected its delegates that very day. Of the 13 delegates representing the various Kiev organisations (the City, Area and Regional Soviets) seven were Bolsheviks, three Ukrainian Social-Democrats and three Internationalist Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Odessa Soviet elected its delegates to the Congress at a meeting held on October 10. While the meeting was in progress a collision occurred in the streets between the Haidamaks and the Red Guards, in which the former tried to disarm the latter. The terrified Socialist-Revolutionaries

and Mensheviks proposed that the Chevaliers of St. George be called out to guard the city and that the Cossacks be sent for. Towards the end of the meeting, however, it was learned that the Red Guards had dispersed the Haidamaks and that order had been restored. The Soviet passed a resolution urging the necessity of further arming the workers. The election of delegates to the Second Congress was postponed to the following day.

On October 11, at a joint meeting of the Odessa Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and Sailors' Deputies, the discussion on the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was resumed. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks changed their tactics again, the second time in 24 hours. Convinced that they would be unable to sabotage the Congress, they now formed a united front in support of the demand for the formation of a "homogeneous Socialist government." In this united front of petty-bourgeois parties, both the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks united around the Internationalist Socialist-Revolutionaries whose "radicalism" was to serve as a screen for the compromising tactics of the entire *bloc*. This "Left" manoeuvre failed, however. The resolution proposed by the Bolsheviks polled 306 votes, while that of the Internationalist Socialist-Revolutionaries, which called for the formation of a "homogeneous revolutionary democratic government," polled 169 votes. No other resolution was submitted.

The Odessa Soviet delegated to the Congress five Bolsheviks, two Socialist-Revolutionaries and one Internationalist Menshevik.

Of the 83 delegates chosen by the Soviets of the Ukraine for the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets 40 belonged to the Bolshevik Party. A considerable number of the delegates belonged to Ukrainian petty-bourgeois parties, but their constituents gave them a definite mandate to defend the power of the Soviets.

Of the 40 Ukrainian Soviets represented at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets only five had supported the slogan "All power to democracy!" which the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik agents of the bourgeoisie flaunted at that time. These Soviets had long ago lost contact with the masses and had not stood for election since the beginning of the February Revolution. Such was the case with the Regional Committee of Soviets of the Donets and Krivoy Rog Basins. It had nothing in common with the Soviets in the districts, which had unanimously instructed their delegates to the Second Congress to fight for the transfer of power to the Soviets.

The Ukrainian masses marched forward to meet the proletarian revolution under the banner of the Bolsheviks.

10

IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

In the North Caucasus the Bolsheviks were obliged to fight under extremely difficult conditions. The very intricate national situation, the antagonisms among the Cossacks, the strife between the higher caste of the Cossacks and the Mountain People, and between the Cossacks as a whole and the peasant settlers from other parts of the country, the national strife among the Mountain People, and the numerical weakness of the proletariet in the region—all this necessitated the employment of exceptionally cautious tactics. An example of thoughtful, Bolshevik handling of problems was set in the Terek Region in 1917 by Sergei Mironovich Kirov.

Kirov had been away in Petrograd on a mission on behalf of the Vladikavkaz Bolshevik organisation and the Vladikavkaz Soviet. He returned on September 2 and immediately plunged into revolutionary work. Every day, and sometimes several times a day, he addressed meetings of workers and soldiers. A brilliant speaker, and well read, he had a gift for illustrating his arguments with vivid metaphors and examples. His inspired speeches, breathing profound faith in the victory of the revolution, literally fired his audiences. In preparing the proletariat and the working people in the North Caucasus in general for armed insurrection Kirov attached enormous importance to propaganda activities among the poorer sections of the Mountain People, among whom he was already extremely popular.

The counter-revolutionaries among the Cossacks and Mountain People did their utmost to foment national strife. Rumours were deliberately spread in the Cossack *stanitsas* to the effect that the Bolsheviks were inciting the Mountain People to set fire to and destroy the *stanitsas*. On the other hand, the mullahs and kulaks among the Mountain People spread the rumour that the *shaitans* (devils), the Bolsheviks, were urging the Cossacks to wreck their mosques and seize their wives and children. The poorer sections of the Mountain People and the Cossacks, however, knew Kirov as a courageous Bolshevik who had already on one occasion averted what had seemed an inevitable sanguinary collision. On July 6, the soldiers in Vladikavkaz, incited by the counter-revolutionaries, brutally assaulted the unarmed Mountain People who had come to market. The flames of national war threatened to engulf the city, the Cossack *stanitsas* and the *auls*, or mountain villages. Foreseeing the frightful bloodshed that would result in the extermination of the best revolutionary forces and the strengthening of the counter-revolutionary forces among the Cossacks and the Mountain People, Kirov went off alone to the Ingush village of Bazorkino, where preparations were in progress for an armed attack on Vladikavkaz and succeeded in revealing to the Ingush people the provocative designs of the counter-revolutionaries among the Cossacks and

Mountain People. His courage and daring made such a profound impression upon them that they abandoned their intention of attacking the city. Through Kirov, the best representatives of the Ingush people, such as Sultan Kostayev and Yusup Albagachiev, made contact with the Vladikavkaz Soviet of Workers' Deputies.



S. M. Kirov

Kirov also established connections with the poorer sections of the Ossetian people through the Ossetian revolutionary party known as "Kermen," which was formed in the summer of 1917. This party took its name from the legendary Ossetian hero, Kermen, a slave, who had fought for his rights and had been treacherously killed by his oppressors. True, this organisation lacked a definite program and clung to a number of nationalist prejudices and fallacies, but it exercised considerable influence among the poorer sections of the Ossetian peasants. In May 1918 the best elements of the "Kermenists" joined the Bolshevik Party and formed an Ossetian Area Bolshevik organisation.

By the autumn of 1917 the Vladikavkaz Party organisation had undergone considerable change. Under Kirov's leadership, the Bolsheviks had won over the proletarian nucleus in the united Social-Democratic organisation, and from the very first days of the revolution had acted as an independent group. They were backed by the workers in the railway workshops and the Alagir Works.

The split in the Social-Democratic organisation occurred at the end of October 1917. At a general Party meeting held in Vladikavkaz, of the 500 members present, only eight supported the Menshevik platform. In face of this overwhelming defeat the Mensheviks withdrew from the meeting.

Thus, on the eve of the Great Proletarian Revolution the Vladikavkaz Bolsheviks were united in a strong and solid Party organisation. This was an extremely important factor in securing the victory of the Soviet regime in the North Caucasus. Already at the end of September the Bolsheviks had gained control of the Vladikavkaz Soviet.

On October 5 the Vladikavkaz Soviet elected Kirov as one of its delegates to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. He was also elected as a delegate to this Congress by the Nalchik Soviet. On October 21, after

Kirov had left for Petrograd, the Vladikavkaz Soviet re-elected him in his absence a member of the new Executive Committee that was chosen that night.

Preparing to combat the maturing revolution, the Provisional Government proclaimed martial law in the Grozny, Vedeno and Khasav-Yurt Areas of the Terek Region, and on October 16 martial law was extended to the entire Terek Region. Although the state of martial law facilitated the execution of the measures taken by the government to combat the maturing revolution, all its efforts were in vain. The influence of the Bolsheviks continued to grow in Vladikavkaz as well as in the mountain villages. The Soviet followed the lead of the Bolsheviks, and the Vladikavkaz garrison, too, was on their side.

The Bolsheviks also conducted extensive activities in the other large centre of the Terek Region, namely, Grozny, which is famous for its oil wells and oil refineries. Here, already during the imperialist war, there was a small group of Bolsheviks working underground. After the tsarist regime was overthrown the Bolshevik organisation came into the open and began to grow rapidly. At the time of the April Conference it already had a membership of 800, and when the decisions reached by this Conference became known among the oil-workers, the influx of members increased still further. The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. There were only a few Bolsheviks in the Soviet at first, but Bolshevik influence was particularly strong in the working-class districts. In Grozny the bourgeoisie had powerful organisations which were backed by the bourgeois engineers and technical personnel in the oilfields.

Around Grozny were numerous Cossack *stanitsas* and Chechen villages, the inhabitants of which were at daggers drawn. In the summer of 1917 there were even open collisions between Cossacks and Chechens. There was a fairly large garrison in the town consisting of the 111th Reserve Regiment, the 21st Regiment, and the 252nd Samara Detachment. The Bolsheviks conducted extensive activities among the troops of the garrison and their influence among the men spread rapidly.

A "Security Detachment" was organised among the workers and was practically a unit of the Red Guard. The Grozny Bolsheviks were in contact with Petrograd and Moscow, and often visited Vladikavkaz.

From the very first days of the February Revolution the Grozny proletariat had waged an intense struggle against the owners of the oilfields and the refineries. With the aid of revolutionary soldiers the workers captured 700 rifles and 100 revolvers belonging to the Terek Oil Owners Council.

The growing influence of the Bolsheviks in Grozny caused anxiety not only to the local organs of the Provisional Government, but to the Provisional Government itself. Grozny was of too great importance to the bourgeoisie for them to surrender it to the workers without a fight.



S. M. Kirov addressing a meeting in the Ingush village of Bazorkino

After the July days the combined counter-revolutionary forces among the Cossack and Mountain People took the offensive. In the beginning of August the 21st Regiment, which was under strong Bolshevik influence, was disarmed and disbanded by order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Front. The disarming of this regiment served as a signal to the counter-revolutionary Cossack higher caste—which had raised its head after the July days in Petrograd—to intensify disorderly activities. On August 17 a gang of Cossack officers attacked the premises of the Grozny Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and dispersed the Soviet.

In August an Ingush-Cossack Congress was held, presided over by Pshemakho Kotsev, a Kabardinian horse breeder, and one of the leaders of the "Central Committee of the Union of Mountain People." This Congress was to have been a symbol of "peace" between the Ingush people and the Cossacks. Karaulov, the Ataman of the Terek Cossacks, stated in his speech at the Congress that all the trouble in the region was due to anarchy, and anarchy was due to the activities of all sorts of committees. A strong and united government was needed, he said, and only a government of the Terek Cossack Forces could serve the purpose.

After the suppression of the Kornilov mutiny, the situation in the town changed again. On September 8 a report on the Kornilov mutiny was made

at a meeting of the Grozny Soviet by the Bolshevik, Ivan Malygin, one of the 26 Baku Commissars who were treacherously shot by the intervention forces in 1918. Malygin was a member of the Presidium of the Grozny Soviet. At the beginning of 1917, and during the first months of the revolution, he was a private in the 113th Reserve Infantry Regiment which was quartered in Pyatigorsk. Together with G. Andzhievsky, another private in this regiment, he became Party organiser in Pyatigorsk and helped to organise the Pyatigorsk Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The summer of 1917 found him in Grozny where he was one of the leaders of the local Bolsheviks. In August he travelled to Petrograd to attend the All-Russian Conference of representatives of Regional Soviets and on his return to Grozny he reported on the revolutionary temper prevailing in the country and on the suppression of the Kornilov mutiny.

Malygin's vivid report and the resolution he moved were greeted with outbursts of applause at the meeting of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Malygin was followed by Nikolai Anisimov, another Bolshevik, who had also just returned from Petrograd, where he had been the Grozny delegate at the Sixth Congress of the Party and had reported on the growth of the Grozny Bolshevik organisation. Although still a student, Anisimov was the actual leader of the Grozny Bolsheviks. He was a splendid organiser and was highly respected by the Grozny workers.

His speech at the meeting of the Grozny Soviet on September 8 was also well received. This was too much for the Mensheviks, and the Chairman of the Soviet, the Menshevik Bogdanov, requested the "guests"—workers and soldiers—not to applaud, threatening to have them ejected if they did. This statement caused an outburst of indignation. The Bolshevik delegates in the Soviet protested and together with the workers and soldiers demonstratively left the hall with the result that the meeting had to be adjourned. After the recess, the Bolsheviks and their sympathisers returned. Two resolutions were put to the vote: a Menshevik resolution submitted by the Presidium, and a Bolshevik resolution moved by Malygin. The Bolshevik resolution polled 207 votes, but the Menshevik resolution was adopted by a majority of 44.

The Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders of the Grozny Soviet steadily turned the workers against themselves. Meetings of workers in the oilfields and in the refineries openly expressed lack of confidence in the Executive Committee of the Soviet. Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary speakers were refused a hearing. At the end of September the Executive Committee of the Soviet was obliged to resign. The grounds for this were given by the Menshevik Bogdanov, the Chairman of the Soviet, at a meeting held on September 29, when he said that "the members of the Executive Committee cannot address a single workers' meeting . . . the workers have no confidence whatsoever in us."[66]

This frank confession of the leader of the Mensheviks and Chairman of the Soviet was greeted with rounds of applause by the Bolshevik workers, and by an outburst of fury on the part of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik *bloc*. In view of the critical position in which the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders found themselves, they called for several Socialist-Revolutionary members of the Regional Executive Committee to come to their assistance. The latter failed to impress the assembly, however, and the Bolsheviks demanded the election of a new Soviet and the annulment of the agreement with the bourgeoisie. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks moved a resolution protesting against the charge of "disloyal conduct" levelled against the Executive Committee. Nevertheless, under pressure of the workers, they were compelled to accept an amendment calling for new elections at the earliest date. This time the resolution moved by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries was adopted by a majority of only six votes.[67] This marked the end of Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik rule in Grozny.

The strongest Bolshevik organisation in the Kuban was that in Ekaterinodar. On the eve of the February Revolution more than one-third of all the industrial enterprises and about one-half of all the workers in the Kuban were concentrated in that city. At the end of April, the Ekaterinodar Bolshevik organisation had a membership of about 200. A Bolshevik newspaper, *Prikubanskaya Pravda*, was published and soon became popular among the working-class population. The Bolsheviks were extremely active in the City Duma. The preparations for the City Duma elections had proceeded under great difficulties. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had formed a strong *bloc*, and supported by a section of the local intelligentsia and by the petty-bourgeoisie, had conducted a bitter struggle against the Bolsheviks. Nevertheless the Party succeeded in winning 20 seats out of a total of 101. This provided the Bolsheviks with a public platform from which to address the working people of the city and obtain publicity for the Bolshevik slogans.

On several occasions deputations came from the suburbs to present demands to the City Duma and appealed directly to the Bolsheviks for support. As a result of the insistence of the Bolsheviks in the City Duma a number of practical measures were adopted which improved the workers' conditions. For example, the poorer section of the workers could receive allotments of six hectares of land outside the city rent free; workers were exempted from paying the house and water rates; homes were opened for orphan children; poor people in the city were exempted from paying arrears of rates for 1916, which had to be paid by the bourgeoisie.

In August the Soviet of Workers' Deputies came completely under the control of the Bolsheviks. In the newly elected Executive Committee they had two-thirds of the seats, while the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had only one seat each.

After capturing the Soviet, the Bolsheviks set out to obtain the effective support of the troops. Besides the Cossacks, there were quartered in the

city, the Samur Regiment, and also an Artillery Battalion which had been withdrawn from the Caucasian Front on the grounds that it was "revolutionary." Both units became armed supports for the proletariat.

Pursuing their plan to isolate the south-eastern part of the country, the counter-revolutionaries formed a Kuban Territory Government, of which Bardizh, the Commissar of the Provisional Government, Colonel Filimonov, the Ataman of the Kuban Cossack Forces, and D. Sverchkov were members. To protect themselves from the revolutionary soldiers, the two first mentioned called for a regiment of the "Savage Division" to reinforce the Cossack units. The Artillery Battalion, which supported the Bolsheviks, was disarmed. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries decided to render the Kuban counter-revolutionaries effective assistance and with the aid of the Tiflis Commissar of the Provisional Government called out the 39th Division, which took up a position on the railway line at the approaches to Ekaterinodar and occupied the Kavkazskaya, Tikhoretskaya, Armavir and other stations. The Bolsheviks, however, carried on work among the units of this division.

The disarming of the Artillery Battalion gave the counter-revolutionaries a superiority of forces. The Executive Committee of the Soviets, therefore, decided to set up a Military Revolutionary Committee, but this Committee contained representatives of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries who were filled with anxiety by the way events were developing. Naturally, a Military Revolutionary Committee of such a composition could not become the organiser and leader of the struggle against the counter-revolutionary Cossacks, the more so since the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries practically boycotted this Committee.

Aware of the growing danger, the Bolsheviks decided to set up a secret Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee to function simultaneously with the legal Military Revolutionary Committee of the Soviets.

The Ekaterinodar Soviet elected a Bolshevik as its delegate to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets and voted in favour of the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" The Armavir Soviet did likewise and this slogan was also supported by the Armavir Area Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

On the Black Sea coast, the Bolsheviks gained control of the Soviet in the important towns of Tuapse and Novorossiisk both of which elected Bolshevik delegates to the Second All-Russian Congress.

Thus, the counter-revolution failed to transform the North Caucasus into their *place d'armes*. By dint of self-sacrificing effort, the Bolsheviks succeeded in creating a number of revolutionary strongholds in the region. The enemy's rear was threatened, the forces of the counter-revolution were weakened, and the possibility of an immediate attack on the revolution was removed.

II

IN BYELORUSSIA

In 1917 Byelorussia was in the war zone. The country was intersected from end to end with the trenches and barbed wire entanglements of the three armies of the Western Front. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers garrisoned the cities. Moghilev was the headquarters of the Supreme Command, where the generals were hastily mustering forces to crush the revolution. Through the large railway junctions, such as Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk and Orsha, troop trains passed from the front, carrying troops to be used against revolutionary Petrograd. All this gave exceptional importance to the struggle for the victory of the revolution in Byelorussia. It was essential to wrest this extremely important *place d'armes* from the counter-revolution.

The first Bolshevik organisation in the region was formed in Gomel, where a Bolshevik Committee was set up as early as April 1917. This Committee preserved the name of Polessye Committee, by which the local Bolshevik organisation had been known before the revolution.

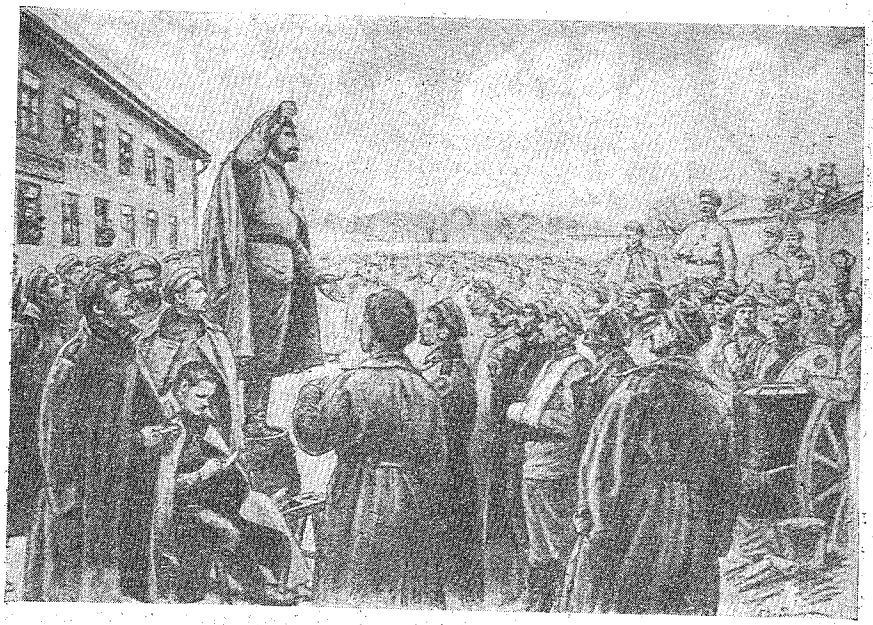
The activities of the Polessye Committee extended far beyond Gomel to all parts of the Moghilev Gubernia, as well as to Moghilev itself, the gubernia capital. The Committee's activities were greatly stimulated by the arrival in Gomel, in August 1917, of L. M. Kaganovich, who was elected Chairman of the Polessye Committee.

Kaganovich made contact with the industrial workers, sent instructors, organisers and propagandists to the districts, saw to all details of Party work, visited the study circles, and supervised the activities of the Party workers.

He personally took charge of Party work in the most difficult districts. One of these was Moghilev, the headquarters of the Supreme Command. There was as yet no independent Bolshevik organisation in Moghilev; the Bolsheviks belonged to the united Social-Democratic organisation. The city was inundated with counter-revolutionary officers and this hindered the work of revolutionary propaganda. Kaganovich managed to establish connection even with a battalion of the Chevaliers of St. George who guarded General Staff Headquarters, and formed a Bolshevik organisation among them.

In Minsk the Bolsheviks withdrew from the united Social-Democratic organisation in June.

The proximity of the front to a large degree determined the nature of the work of the Minsk Committee of the Bolshevik Party. It organised special courses to train propagandists for work among the soldiers. Propaganda work in the army was conducted by tried and experienced Bolshevik revolutionaries. Frequent visits to the front were made by Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze, who had taken part in the 1905 Revolution, during



L. M. Kaganovich addressing a soldiers' meeting in Gomel
From a drawing by B. Vladimirsky

which he had been active in organising combat groups. He had been twice sentenced to death for the part he had taken in the fight against the tsarist autocracy. During the war he was employed in Minsk as a clerk in the office of the Union of Zemstvos and Cities under the assumed name of "Mikhailov." Here he formed an underground Bolshevik organisation and after the overthrow of the autocracy he became one of the principal leaders of the revolutionary movement in Byelorussia and on the Western Front, where he was extremely popular among the soldiers.

In July 1917 the Provisional Government arrested hundreds of revolutionary-minded soldiers at the front and had them brought to Minsk. The Minsk prison was overcrowded, and all the guardrooms, several army barracks, and even the Girls' High School in the city were filled with soldiers under arrest.

The conditions of the prison were very bad and the men were kept on a starvation diet. The Minsk Committee of the Bolshevik Party formed a Political Red Cross Society for the relief of the arrested soldiers. Assistance was also rendered by the Petrograd workers, who sent the prisoners money and food parcels.

The Minsk Committee assigned to a group of comrades the task of conducting work among the soldier prisoners. In the dimly lit crowded cells, these Bolshevik propagandists would explain to the men the aims of the war, how it affected the peasants, and in whose interests it was being waged. The soldiers eagerly listened to the Bolsheviks, bombarded them with questions and asked for literature.

Soon a number of the imprisoned soldiers began to sympathise with the Bolsheviks, and a Bolshevik Party organisation was formed in the prison.

All the arrested soldiers were formed into a regiment which elected all its officers, from the regimental commander down to the corporals.

The detention prison was guarded by the 37th Regiment, in which Bolshevik influence was very strong. The guards permitted the prisoners to roam freely about the town, and the Minsk Committee of the Bolshevik Party utilised many of them as propagandists at the front. They formed groups of five or ten men, each headed by a Bolshevik, and supplied them with literature. Having been in the firing line themselves, these men knew how to approach the men in the trenches. Evading the patrols who were guarding the roads to the front, they reached the trenches and outposts where they distributed Bolshevik literature and supplemented the rousing calls of the Party with their own plain and simple talks to the men.



M. V. Frunze

An important role in the work of the Minsk Party organisation was played by the Bolshevik newspaper *Zvezda (The Star)* which began publication at the end of July.

The initiative in publishing this paper was taken by A. F. Myasnikov, one of the outstanding leaders of the Bolshevik Party in Byelorussia. Owing to lack of funds with which to start the paper the Minsk Committee organised a lottery and a collection, but this did not bring in enough. Comrade Myasnikov himself later on related the following:

> "We had no funds, so we scraped together our last copecks and sent a comrade to the Central Committee in Petrograd with a petition for a loan of a small sum of money with which to launch our literary undertaking. Although very hopeful, we nevertheless doubted whether the Central Committee would heed the request of our young and little known organisation. But our envoy returned with 2,000 rubles. We were



A. F. Myasnikov

overjoyed. With this money we could publish six issues of our daily newspaper."[68]

The first issue of the Minsk *Zvezda* appeared on July 27, and nearly every subsequent issue contained editorials by Myasnikov—writing under different *noms de plume*, such as "A. Martuni," "Alyosha," and "Bolshevik" — calling upon the workers and soldiers to prepare for the struggle.

A. F. Myasnikov was an old Bolshevik who had joined the revolutionary movement as far back as 1904. He conducted his early activities in Transcaucasia—in Nakhichevan, and later, in Baku. On the outbreak of the war he was called up for military service as a sub-lieutenant in a regiment of reserves, which was quartered in Dorogobuzh, in the Smolensk Gubernia. Calm, strong-willed and unassuming, Myasnikov was a capable organiser and soon made contact with the Bolsheviks in his regiment, organised the distribution of literature, etc.

Myasnikov was in command of a company for the training of N.C.O.'s. He formed a Bolshevik group in the company and while making no secret of his hostility towards reactionary officers, and generally keeping aloof from all the officers, he was ever on the lookout for individual revolutionaries. He used to invite men from his company to his quarters and in his cautious, skilful way, gradually turned them against the autocracy. Even when the company moved closer to regimental headquarters, Myasnikov painstakingly continued his revolutionary work. On the eve of the revolution the Bolshevik Party had 13 members in the regiment.

The newspaper edited by Myasnikov became very popular among the soldiers on the Western Front and among the workers and peasants in the region. In a message of greeting to the newspaper sent by the men in prison in the Kalanchevsky Guardroom, in Minsk, we read the following:

"Difficult is your path, dear *Star*, for you are a lone star in the dark firmament of reaction.... May your light dispel this gloom.... May your brilliance never fade in these sombre days."[69]

The soldiers under detention contributed their last copecks to the newspaper, and even donated the money they received from the Petrograd workers.



Российская Социалъ-Демократическая Рабочая Партія.

"Пролетаріи всѣхъ странъ, соединяйтесь!"

ЗВѢЗДА

Органъ Минскаго Комитета Р. С.-Д. Р. П.

№ 11. ЕЖЕДНЕВНАЯ ГАЗЕТА. 13 Августа 1917 г.

Товарищи рабочіе, солдаты и всѣ трудящіеся! Вчера въ Москвѣ началось государственное совѣщаніе контръ-революціонной буржуазіи и плетущихся за ними меньшевиковъ и эсъ-эр. Протестуйте противъ этого совѣщанія въ резолюціяхъ, этимъ вы покажете, что голосъ совѣщанія не есть голосъ страны и попытка обмануть этимъ совѣщаніемъ революціонныхъ рабочихъ и крестьянъ не удастся.

Facsimile of the heading of *Zvezda*, the organ of the Bolshevik organisation in Minsk

These donations were used to establish an "iron fund" for the newspaper, the circulation of which rose from 3,000 copies in July to 6,000 in August. The High Command of the Western Front regarded this Bolshevik newspaper as a menace. On August 22, the Commissar of this front stated in a dispatch to Petrograd.

"The Social-Democratic Party in the Minsk Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies has started publishing the newspaper *Zvezda* which is pursuing a definitely Leninist line. I have taken measures to prevent it from reaching the front."[70]

When Kerensky ordered the suppression of the *Zvezda*, the directors of the newspaper, aided by a group of young workers who were active in the Party Committee, procured a motor truck and quickly cleared out the printshop where it was printed. The type which had been set up for the next number was taken to another place so that when the authorities arrived to confiscate the copy for the newspaper they found nothing there.

The Minsk organisation, under the direction of Frunze, conducted considerable activity among the peasants.

As chief of the local militia, Mikhail Frunze spent a great deal of his time visiting the villages, where he held meetings of the peasants, had heart-to-heart talks with them, and conducted revolutionary propaganda. Among the poorer section of the rural population he found many who sympathised with Bolshevism. These he helped to organise and supplied them with literature.

The confidence which the peasants reposed in the Bolshevik Party was strikingly manifested at the Second Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies in the Minsk Gubernia which was opened in Minsk on July 30. Among the delegates there were many elderly peasants who had never been in the city before. The Congress was opened by Frunze, and it at once became evident how popular he was among them. As *Zvezda* reported at the time:

"The delegates paid tribute to the enormous services our Comrade Mikhailov has rendered in organising the peasants in the Minsk Gubernia. The first to organise them, he was their leader and ideological guide, and enjoyed their complete confidence. When it was moved that Comrade Mikhailov be elected chairman without discussion, the motion was greeted with unanimous applause."[71]

The representative of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, protested, and said that "it would be more fitting for a Peasant Congress to have a chairman who stood under the banner of 'Zemlya i Volya,' *i.e.* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

This proposal evoked loud protests from the delegates. Voices were heard shouting: "Don't elect those who refuse to give the peasants land!" The Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to intimidate the peasants by saying: "Mikhailov is a Bolshevik." But to this the peasants retorted: "Yes, and he's our man!"[72]

The Socialist-Revolutionary leaders exerted strenuous efforts to dissuade the peasants from electing Frunze as chairman of the Congress. They adjourned the session, held private conferences, returned and again appealed to the delegates, but the latter were adamant. Frunze was elected chairman by an overwhelming majority. In their joy, the peasant delegates surged round the Bolshevik Frunze, tossed him in the air and then carried him shoulder-high to the platform.

Almost simultaneously with the Minsk Bolsheviks, the Bolsheviks and the Internationalists in Vitebsk withdrew from the united Social-Democratic organisation. This question was discussed at a meeting held on June 20 at which 56 Bolsheviks, 28 United Internationalists and 11 Internationalist Mensheviks were present.

The comrades who took part in the discussion said that "the local Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. has gone too far to the right," and suggested that an independent organisation of Bolsheviks and Internationalist Social-Democrats be formed.[73]

At this meeting a Provisional Committee was elected which met on July 4 jointly with the Committee of the Lettish Social-Democratic Party. It was agreed that a common City Committee of the Bolshevik Party should be formed.

The Bolsheviks in Byelorussia were able to put their organisation and solidarity to the test during the Kornilov mutiny. In Minsk a Revolutionary Committee of the Western Front was formed. Frunze was appointed

Chief of Staff of the revolutionary troops who were ready to defend the revolution.

The Minsk garrison was ready for action and was only waiting for the word of command.

The Bolsheviks in the Vitebsk Soviet formed a Military Revolutionary Bureau and representatives of the Soviet were assigned to the railway stations, the Post Office and the Staff Headquarters Telegraph Office.

In Orsha, fighting detachments were formed and were ready to go into action against Kornilov.

In Moghilev, the centre of the Kornilov conspiracy, the Soviet ceased to exist for a time. At a secret meeting of Bolsheviks held to discuss the situation, it was decided to issue a manifesto to the people in order to let the workers and soldiers and also the counter-revolutionary generals know that a revolutionary party was in existence in the city. This manifesto was secretly printed in one of the local printing plants.

Several of the workers who printed the manifesto were arrested.

In Gomel an "Emergency Committee of Five" was formed on the initiative of the Bolsheviks. The Polessye Committee sent Bolshevik Commissars to the most important points in the city, such as the post and telegraph offices. It arrested Zavoiko, General Kornilov's "ideological adviser" and sent a number of comrades to Minsk, Rechitsa and Orsha for liaison purposes.

The fight against the Kornilov mutiny served to raise the prestige of the Bolshevik organisation in Gomel very considerably. The effect of this was immediately seen in the change that took place in the relation of forces in the Gomel Soviet, where the compromisers had predominated up to that time.

The Chairman of the Gomel Soviet was a Menshevik named Sevruk. He called himself a Bolshevik, but as early as March 1917 he spoke as a Menshevik-Defencist at the All-Russian Conference of Soviets. For this he was expelled from the Bolshevik Party, a fact which he concealed on his return to Gomel from Petrograd.

The Soviet of which Sevruk was Chairman persecuted the Bolsheviks in Gomel.

On September 1, a regular meeting of the Gomel Soviet was held at which the current situation in general, and the Democratic Conference in particular, were discussed. Thanks to the influence of the Bolsheviks, the Soviet rejected a resolution proposed by the compromising presidium in favour of uniting all the "virile forces of the country." Another meeting of the Soviet was held on September 9 at which the question of the Democratic Conference was again discussed. The debate was opened by Sevruk.

At the end of his speech he moved the same resolution that had been rejected at the previous meeting. The Bolsheviks again secured its rejec-

tion. Having been defeated twice, Sevruk was obliged to resign the chairmanship of the Soviet.

On the election of a new presidium a Bolshevik was chosen as vice-chairman.

After the Kornilov mutiny new Bolshevik organisations arose in Rogachev, Klintsy and Dvinsk. In September, a Bolshevik organisation was definitely formed in Orsha.

An important part in the activities of the Party organisation in Orsha was played by the veteran Bolshevik, P. N. Lepeshinsky, a former high school teacher, who was extremely popular in the city. He was the Chairman of the City Duma and took an active part in the work of the Bolshevik Committee. He addressed numerous meetings and held heated debates with the Menshevik leaders who visited Orsha. In September the well-known Menshevik Lieber came to Orsha to deliver a lecture. The Bolsheviks prepared for the meeting and mobilised all their sympathisers. Lepeshinsky took part in the debate and his speech was greeted with enthusiastic applause. At the end of the debate a resolution was passed demanding the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

The revival of the organisation which had been suppressed on July 3-5 was reported to the Vitebsk Committee by the Bolsheviks of Polotsk. In October the Polotsk organisation already had a membership of about 75.

Party work was conducted on a wide scale in the armies on the Western Front. On September 9 the Bolsheviks in the 3rd Siberian Army Corps reported to the Central Committee as follows:

> "We are going ahead forming new and strengthening and expanding existing Party groups.... At present we have in the corps 14 groups with an aggregate membership of about 1,000."[74]

In the hectic days of preparation for the assault, scores and hundreds of new fighters for the revolution joined the Bolshevik organisations. Every day workers and soldiers came to the Party offices to enrol in the ranks of the militant Leninist Party. In August, in Vitebsk alone, 212 new members joined the Party. In September the figure rose to 353 and in October to 735.

In September the Party in Byelorussia had a total of over 9,000 members and sympathisers.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party devoted considerable attention to Byelorussia. It sent organisers there and gave the Party organisations detailed instructions concerning their activities. Sverdlov often summoned the leaders of the Byelorussian Bolsheviks to Petrograd and kept them closely informed of the Central Committee's plans and directions. He also gave practical advice to the local organisations in Byelorussia. On one occasion he wrote to the Bolsheviks in Orsha as follows:

> "At the present time, no honest Internationalist can remain in a *bloc* with the Defencists, who by their compromising policy are betraying the revolution. . . ."[75]

The Central Committee attached special importance to the Party work in the army. In this letter Sverdlov wrote:

> "In building up the military organisation you must bear in mind that it must be closely connected with the workers' organisations. Owing to its class character, the personnel of the military organisation is not very susceptible to the ideas of proletarian Socialism. Close contact with the workers is therefore extremely important."[76]

The best way to secure this close contact between the workers and the soldiers was to have one organisation for the region and the front.

The formation of this regional organisation was undertaken by the Minsk Committee of the Bolshevik Party. It issued notices to the Bolsheviks of Vitebsk, Polotsk, Moghilev, Gomel, Bobruisk, Slutsk, Borisov, and other towns calling a Regional Conference for September 1. It was also arranged to call a conference of Bolsheviks at the front.

Owing to the Kornilov mutiny, however, it was impossible to withdraw large Bolshevik forces from the districts with the result that only 46 delegates with the right of voice and vote and six only with the right to speak arrived in Minsk on September 1. It was therefore decided to postpone the Conference and instead to hold a council to hear reports from the districts and a review of the current situation, to discuss the rules of the Party military organisation, and to fix another date for the Regional Conference.

The deliberations of the council drew to a close on September 3 after the election of a Regional Bureau. The Regional Conference was fixed for September 15 to be held in Minsk.

How closely the Central Committee watched the process of building up this regional Party organisation may be judged from the letter Sverdlov addressed to the Bolsheviks in the 3rd Army Corps in the course of which he wrote:

> "It is a very good thing that the regional organisation has become a fact. Although always important, it is particularly important at the present time, the more so that the groups belonging to it are scattered in different places."[77]

The Regional Conference of the Bolsheviks of Byelorussia took place on the appointed date and was attended by 88 delegates—61 from the army and 27 from the region.

The first item on the agenda was: the persecution of the Bolsheviks.

The resolution that was adopted on this question demanded free speech, freedom of the press and assembly, the creation of conditions that would ensure a really free political contest, the cessation of the persecution of the Bolsheviks, the dropping of all cases of legal prosecution of a political character, the immediate liberation of all those under arrest, and amnesty for all those who had been convicted.

The Conference expressed the opinion that these measures could be achieved only if power were taken out of the hands of the imperialist

bourgeoisie and transferred to the proletariat and the poor sections of the peasantry.

The delegates reported on the enormous growth of Bolshevik influence among the masses. Nearly everywhere the garrisons had become Bolshevik. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were isolated. Combat groups were being formed in the regiments at the front for the purpose of fighting the counter-revolution.

A report on the current situation was made by Comrade Myasnikov, and in the resolution which the Conference adopted on his report it emphasised that:

> ". . . The only organised centres in the revolutionary country are the Soviets, and they have become such to an increasing degree. . . . The Soviets are becoming stronger, the proletariat and the soldiers, the majority of whom are already conscious of their own interests and the interests of the revolution, are strengthening the Soviets. In many places the Soviets are taking power. . . ."[78]

Every line of this resolution, and every deduction drawn by the Conference, reduced itself to the one slogan: "All power to the Soviets!"

On the report on the Constituent Assembly, the Conference adopted a resolution calling for the organisation of short training courses for speakers and instructors in all parts of the region and at the front where Party organisations existed, the calling of conferences in the Vitebsk and Moghilev electoral areas to nominate candidates for the Constituent Assembly, and the nomination of candidates in the Minsk electoral area.

The Conference endorsed as the official organ of the Regional Committee the newspaper *Molot* which had started publication on September 15 in place of *Zvezda* after the latter had been suppressed by the government.

Like its predecessor *Molot* played an important organisational role in Byelorussia and on the Western Front. Officers sent telegram after telegram to Headquarters complaining about the newspaper. At last, on October 3, General Vyrubov, Chief of Staff of the Supreme High Command, sent the following message to General Baluyev, Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front.

> "I sent a request to have the newspaper *Molot* suppressed. As long as that paper circulates at the front no measures to restore order will prove effective. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief has ordered *Molot* to be suppressed and the printing plant to be requisitioned. A telegram to this effect has been sent to you today."[79]

On October 6 *Molot* was suppressed and the printing plant at which it was printed was sealed. The military authorities had decided to raid the printing plant and place a guard over it, but the soldiers refused to perform police duty. The Minsk Soviet undertook to take care of the premises and after posting a military guard demanded that the seals be removed.


РОССІЙСКАЯ СОЦІАЛЪ-ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКАЯ РАБОЧАЯ ПАРТІЯ.

Цѣна отдѣльнаго № 12 коп. „Пролетаріи всѣхъ странъ, соединяйтесь!"

БУРЕВѢСТНИКЪ

ОРГАНЪ СѢВЕРО-ЗАПАДНАГО ОБЛАСТНОГО БЮРО Р. С.-Д. Р. П.

УСЛОВІЯ ПОДПИСКИ:

Цѣна отдѣльнаго № 12 коп.

Адресъ редакціи: Минскъ, Петроградская, 6, тел. № 1009.

№ 10. Четвергъ. ЕЖЕДНЕВНАЯ ГАЗЕТА. 19 октября 1917 года.

Товарищи! собирайте въ фондъ типографіи.

Facsimile of the heading of *Burevestnik*, the organ of the Bolshevik organisation in Minsk published in place of *Molot* which had been suppressed by the Provisional Government

This demand was supported by the entire garrison, which had expressed great indignation at the order suppressing the Bolshevik newspaper. The 289th Infantry Regiment even threatened to resort to arms.

The chief of the garrison was terrified at this and yielded to the garrison's demand. Two days later, on October 8, a new Bolshevik newspaper, the *Burevestnik* was published in place of the *Molot*.

The voice of the *Burevestnik* was heard right up to the victory of the proletarian revolution. In its columns the workers and peasants, and the soldiers on the Western Front, were able to read Lenin's articles. Issue No.3, of October 11, contained Lenin's article "The Crisis Has Matured," No. 8, of October 17, contained his article "The Nationalisation of the Banks," and Nos. 13—16, his "A Letter to Comrades."

Lenin's articles in the *Burevestnik* and his pamphlet *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* which the Minsk Committee reprinted, became the Bolshevik program of action in Byelorussia.

The practical results of the First Regional Conference in Byelorussia were seen in the organisation of the election campaign when the Soviets came up for re-election.

The first Soviet in Byelorussia to dissolve and appoint new elections was the Minsk Soviet, which had been under Bolshevik influence from its inception.

The Party in Minsk took advantage of the election campaign to explain the political situation in the country to the masses. Within a short period, the Minsk Committee arranged as many as 40 lectures on the current situation. The election returns showed that the people had full confidence in

the Bolsheviks. In the newly elected Minsk Soviet the Bolsheviks had 184 seats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 60, the Mensheviks 21.

The new Soviet exercised enormous influence. Throughout October it devoted its efforts to training its armed forces and collecting and taking stock of arms. The influence and prestige of the Bolshevik groups grew also in those Soviets which did not stand for election again, or in which the Bolsheviks did not succeed in obtaining a majority in the elections.

The Vitebsk Committee of the Party also paid close attention to work in the Soviet. In the latter half of September the Vitebsk Bolsheviks began to make active preparations for the Gubernia Congress of Soviets.

Fearing that the Bolsheviks would obtain a majority at the Gubernia Congress, the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders of the Soviet succeeded by manipulating the elections in securing the return of 300 peasant deputies and of only 40 representatives of the workers and soldiers. The Congress was opened on October 4. There were only 26 Bolsheviks present, but they had the backing of scores of other delegates. This was seen during the voting on the resolution on the current situation, when nearly one-fifth of the delegates voted against the resolution moved by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and for the resolution moved by the Bolsheviks.

Although the Bolsheviks did not yet have a majority in the Soviet, the Vitebsk Committee of the Bolshevik Party, in the middle of October, began to make active preparation for the seizure of power by the Soviets. At a meeting of the Committee held on October 20, comrades from the army units were co-opted, thus linking the Committee more closely with the masses of the armed forces. At the same meeting a military organisation was formed.

In Gomel the Bolsheviks' struggle for influence was complicated still further by the fact that the Jewish workers in the city were imbued with nationalist ideas. There was a strong organisation of the Bund (the Jewish Social-Democratic League) in the city headed by hardened politicians who exercised considerable influence among the petty bourgeoisie. Lieber, Weinstein—the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Bund who had his headquarters in Minsk—and other leaders of the Bund often visited the city. This put the utmost strain upon the Bolshevik forces.

But already in September it was evident at the meetings that were addressed by the visiting Menshevik and Bundist leaders that the Bolsheviks had gained predominance.

On October 5 the Second Regional Conference of Bolshevik organisations in Byelorussia and on the Western Front was opened in Minsk. The brief minutes of this Conference that have been preserved tell us very little about the great work carried on by the Bolshevik organisations in the short period between the First and the Second Conferences. The most eloquent testimony of this are the figures showing the growth of the Party membership. During the 20 days that passed between the two conferences, the Party organisation in Byelorussia increased almost sixfold. At the Second Conference 28,591 members and 27,856 sympathisers were represented. At the time of the First Conference the army organisation on the Western Front had a total of 6,500 members and sympathisers, whereas at the time of the Second Conference the figure had risen to 49,000. At the time of the First Conference the civilian organisations had 2,642 members and sympathisers. Twenty days later the figure stood at 7,453.

The Conference, which was opened by Comrade Myasnikov, who was elected chairman, sent greetings to Lenin.

On the question of the Soviet and Army Committee elections, the Conference instructed the different organisations:

> "To exert all efforts to ensure in the districts the convocation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies on the appointed date—October 20."[80]

It also instructed them to see to it that the newly elected army committees should send to the Congress of Soviets representatives who will "express the will and defend the interests of the working people."[81]

The Byelorussian organisations quite rightly regarded the struggle for the early convocation of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets as one of their fundamental tasks.

In accordance with the decision of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party of September 24 concerning the holding of Regional Congresses of Soviets, for the purpose of preparing for the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, a Regional Conference of Soviets was held in Minsk on October 16.

The overwhelming majority of the delegates at this conference were Bolsheviks. In its resolution the conference associated itself with the manifesto issued by the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region calling for the convocation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and insisted that this Congress should be convened not later than October 20.

On October 22 the Minsk Soviet celebrated the 12th anniversary of the formation of the St. Petersburg Soviet. Comrade Myasnikov delivered an address on the historical significance of the St. Petersburg Soviet of 1905 and urged the necessity of seizing power by force of arms. The Soviet supported this idea in the resolution adopted after Myasnikov's speech.

The working people of Byelorussia sent to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets 46 delegates, of whom 20 were Bolsheviks and six "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. Nearly all the delegates received instructions to support the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

The delegates of the Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk, Gorodoksk, Nesvizh, Slutsk, Rechitsa and Orsha City Soviets, and the Soviets of the Tenth Army, the Guards Corps, the 35th Army Corps and the 37th Infantry Regiment conveyed to the Congress of Soviets the demand of their people for "All power to the Soviets." The delegates of only three Soviets, *i.e.*, the Vi-

tebsk Gubernia Soviet, the Moghilev City Soviet and the Orsha District Soviet, which were still under the influence of the compromisers, came to the Congress with the demand for "All power to democracy."

On the eve of October, the Bolsheviks had torn Byelorussia from the enemy's grasp and had converted it into a stronghold of the revolution.

12

THE BALTIC PROVINCES

The situation in the Baltic Provinces on the eve of the October Socialist Revolution differed greatly from that in the other national regions. Here a number of factors served to swing the masses towards Bolshevism very rapidly and facilitated the maturing of the revolutionary crisis. Nevertheless, certain difficulties were encountered which left their impress upon the course of the revolution up to and after October. These difficulties arose from the specific features of the development of the region under the tsarist regime.

Unlike the national regions in the eastern part of the Russian Empire. the Baltic provinces, *i.e.*, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania—which under the tsarist regime constituted the gubernias of Courland, Lifland, Estland, Kovno, Vilna and parts of other gubernias—were considerably industrialised and capitalist relations were highly developed there.

On the eve of the first World War, the Baltic provinces, primarily Latvia and Estonia, were two of the largest industrial regions of the country. In Latvia, in 1913, there were over 110,000 industrial workers out of a total population of about 2,000,000; in Estonia there were 70,000 industrial workers out of a total population of 1,000,000. But in Lithuania, the largest of the Baltic provinces, capitalist industry was scarcely developed at all, and the province bore the typical features of a backward agrarian country.

Riga was the principal industrial centre of Latvia, and Reval (Tallin) and Narva were the principal industrial centres of Estonia.

Outstanding among the large factories in Riga were industrial giants like the Provodnik Rubber Works with 12,000 employees, the Baltic Railway Car Works with 4,000 and the Phoenix Railway Car Works which employed 6,000 workers. The Baltic Shipyards in Reval employed 5,000 workers, and the Krengholm Textile Mills in Narva, one of the largest textile mills in pre-revolutionary Russia, employed 14,000 workers. The total number of industrial workers in Riga in 1914 was 90,000 and in Reval, 40,000. The foremost industry in Latvia was the metal industry, which employed over 25,000 workers.

In Estonia the textile industry, employing 19,000 workers, and the metal industry, employing 11,500 workers, predominated.

But beyond the working-class quarters of the large industrial centres of Estonia and Latvia stretched the backward Baltic countryside. In the towns there were modern, capitalist industrial enterprises, large plants equipped with the most up-to-date machinery and employing thousands of workers. Around them were the Lettish and Estonian rural districts, where the modern German feudal barons, the descendants of the Knights of the Teutonic Order or "cur knights" as Karl Marx called them, who invaded the Baltic countries 700 years ago, held undivided sway.

These German barons, enjoying exceptional privileges, kept the masses of the people of Latvia and Estonia in a state of utter slavery and ruthlessly exploited and oppressed them. They owned the great bulk of the land in the shape of vast estates, some of them of an area of tens of thousands of hectares. In Latvia there were 35 estates of over 10,000 hectares each. Baron Dundag owned over 66,000 hectares of land, Baron Popen owned over 46,000 hectares. The family of Baron von Wolf owned 36 estates of a total area of 165,227 hectares.

Barons Osten-Sacken, von Fredericks, von Rosen, von Rennenkampf and Meller-Zakomelsky were notorious as brutal butchers and tyrants who suppressed the freedom of the masses. It was they who drowned in blood the revolt of the workers and peasants in the Baltic provinces in 1905. Occupying high posts in the tsarist administration and in the army, and utilising their connections with the tsar's court, the German barons, during the first World War, extensively engaged in espionage on behalf of Germany. The hearts of the working people of the Baltic countries burned with hatred for their age-long oppressors, the German barons.

To this inhuman feudal exploitation of the peasants was added the yoke of modern capitalist relations. From the beginning of the 20th century the process of differentiation among the rural population of Estonia and Latvia made great headway. The peasants had to bear on their backs not only the "black barons," as they called the German landlords, but also the "grey barons," *i.e.*, the native capitalist farmers. The bulk of the peasantry in Estonia and Latvia were landless labourers and small holders. At the end of the 19th century no less than 66 per cent of the rural population of Latvia had no land.

If to this double yoke of capitalist and feudal exploitation we add the national oppression of the tsarist autocracy and the German barons, the exceptional acuteness of the class antagonisms in the rural districts of the Baltic provinces on the eve of 1917 will be clear.

The rapid growth of the revolutionary movement in the western border regions of Russia, and the successes achieved, in particular, by the Lettish Social-Democratic Party, which almost throughout its history maintained unbroken ties with the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, were, as Lenin had explained, due to the higher develop-

ment of capitalism in these regions, to the clearer, sharper and more definite class antagonisms prevailing there, to the cruel national oppression, the high concentration of the population in the towns and the higher cultural standard of the urban population.

In 1905 the workers and peasants of the Baltic provinces were in the vanguard of the struggle against tsarism and landlordism. The revolt of almost the entire industrial proletariat and of the great bulk of the agricultural labourers in Latvia in 1905 was suppressed with frightful brutality. The young workers and peasants who experienced the horrors of the pacification and reaction became imbued with burning hatred for their oppressors, the tsarist autocracy and the German landlords, and they nursed this hatred right up to the October days of 1917.

The second specific feature of the development of the revolution in the Baltic provinces was that during the first World War they were the arena of intense military operations. In the autumn of 1915 Vilna fell, and with this Lithuania and Courland passed entirely into German hands. In August 1917 Kornilov and Kerensky treacherously surrendered Riga to the Germans. Thus, with the exception of Estonia and the northern part of Latvia, the Baltic provinces on the eve of the October Revolution were occupied by the forces of Kaiser Germany. The German conquerors despoiled the country and carried off all its treasures to Germany, inflicting untold suffering upon the Lettish and Lithuanian people. In Latvia, over one-fourth of the volosts were converted into a wilderness; over 200,000 buildings were destroyed, and 600,000 inhabitants were rendered homeless. A number of the large industrial enterprises in Latvia were evacuated to the interior of Russia, and from Riga 300,000 of the total pre-war population of 500,000 left the city. All this served still further to fan the hatred of the Baltic people for the German tyrants. The Lettish and Estonian peasants regarded the German invaders as the kinsmen of the hated oppressors whom they had been fighting for centuries.

The hardships of the war, which were far more severe in the war zone than in other parts of the country, naturally accelerated the process of revolutionisation in the Baltic provinces, particularly after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution.

And lastly, the third specific feature of the development of the revolution in the Baltic provinces was that, owing to the military operations conducted in Latvia, all three armies of the Northern Front, the Twelfth, the First and the Fifth, were, in the main, concentrated here. The most important of these was the Twelfth Army, which was stationed in the immediate vicinity of Petrograd. The preparations for the October battles in the unoccupied parts of Latvia and in Estonia were bound up with the course and development of the October Revolution on the Northern Front.

The attitude of the soldiers on the Northern Front was to a large degree determined by the course of the struggle in the capital. Of immense importance was the fact that the Lettish Rifle Regiments formed part of the

Twelfth Army. These regiments had been formed in the summer of 1915 on the initiative of the Lettish bourgeoisie with the consent of the tsarist government. At the time of the February Revolution the Lettish Rifles, which in the main consisted of proletarians and semi-proletarians, constituted eight regiments, united in two brigades with a total strength ranging from 30,000 to 35,000 men and 1,000 officers. Thanks to the persevering work conducted among them by the Bolsheviks, the Lettish Rifle Regiments disappointed the hopes the Lettish bourgeoisie and the tsarist government had placed in them, and on the eve of the October Socialist Revolution constituted a mighty revolutionary armed force with the aid of which the Soviets in Latvia captured power.

A Bolshevik Party organisation was formed in the Lettish Rifle Regiment as early as March 1917, but at that time it had a membership of only 70. In June the membership had increased to 1,500, and in August to 3,000. An important factor in the work conducted among the soldiers of the Twelfth Army was the newspaper *Okopnaya Pravda*, which was published by the Bolshevik military organisation.

In May 1917 the United Soviet of the Lettish Rifle Regiments adopted a Bolshevik resolution, and from that time onwards the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Lettish Rifle Regiments served as a stronghold of Bolshevism in Riga.

Very rapid progress was made by the Bolshevik Party organisation in Reval, to which many of the sailors in the Reval Base of the Baltic Fleet belonged. In June it had a membership of 2,123, which by August had increased to 3,182.

After the Kornilov mutiny Bolshevik resolutions were adopted at meetings of nearly all the units of the Twelfth Army.

Meanwhile, the class struggle in the rural districts between the poor peasants and the kulaks, or capitalist farmers, increased in intensity. In August, during harvesting, a strike of agricultural labourers broke out in Latvia, led by the Soviet of Landless Peasants' Deputies which had been formed already in April 1917.

Between August 13 and 15, a Conference of Landless Peasants was held in Reval, under Bolshevik leadership, at which 40,000 labourers, landless peasants and small holders were represented.

The extent to which the influence of revolutionary Social-Democracy was growing among the poorest sections of the rural population is shown by the returns of the Uyezd Rural Soviet elections held in September, in which the Social-Democrats polled 71 per cent of the total vote in the Valk Uyezd, 76 per cent in the Volmar Uyezd, and 74 per cent in the Venden Uyezd.

In that month, also, most of the other Soviets in Latvia and Estonia swung round to the Bolsheviks. The Narva Soviet was controlled by the Bolsheviks from the very moment of its inception. In August the Bolsheviks won the Riga Soviet. The Venden and Volmar Soviets were also Bolshevik.

Another index of the growing influence of the Bolshevik Party were the City Duma elections which were held in August 1917. In Riga the Bolsheviks won 49 seats out of a total of 120, and in Volmar 18 out of 28. In Reval the Bolsheviks polled one-third of the total vote in the centre of the city and 50 per cent in the suburbs. In Narva they polled 74 per cent of the total vote. Here, in 1917, Victor Kingisepp, one of the most prominent leaders of the Estonian proletariat and member of the Bolshevik Party since 1906, was active.

The City Duma election campaign coincided with the beginning of the German advance on Riga. On August 21 the Provisional Government surrendered Riga to the Germans. The Lettish Rifles had defended it with the utmost heroism, and the Russian units too had fought bravely. Even the Executive Committee of Soldiers' Deputies of the Twelfth Army, which was controlled by Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, was obliged to pay tribute to the splendid spirit and revolutionary ardour of the masses of the soldiers in that difficult situation. After occupying the city the Germans proclaimed martial law and began to apply organised terror against the civil population, particularly against the Bolsheviks.

With the loss of Riga and the further advance of the German troops, the area of legal activity for the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party of Latvia was limited to three uyezds in the Lifland Gubernia, *viz.*, Valk, Venden and Volmar.

On October 16, 1917, a Special Conference of the Social-Democratic Party of Latvia was held in Valk to discuss the current situation. After the discussion the Conference passed a resolution in which it whole-heartedly associated itself with Lenin's historic resolution on armed insurrection which was adopted by the Central Committee of the Party on October 10. The resolution of the Conference stated:

> "This Conference is of the opinion that the moment of final and decisive struggle has arrived when the fate, not only of the Russian, but of the world revolution, will be decided. . . . In preparing for the forthcoming battles, the proletariat of Latvia sets itself the object of maintaining the closest unity with the revolutionary workers of Petrograd and Moscow and of supporting the struggle of the Russian proletariat . . . for the conquest of political power with all its strength and resources."[82]

At the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region in Petrograd the representative of the Lettish Rifles eloquently expressed the readiness of the army to support the insurrection when he said that the Lettish Regiments, numbering 40,000 men, were ready to render full support to Petrograd which was about to put into effect the slogan "All power to the Soviets!"

Immediately after the Congress preparations began to be made for armed insurrection. On the night of October 18, in accordance with the decision of the Party Conference, a secret Military Revolutionary Committee was

formed in Venden, which established close communication between the Bolshevik organisations in the Twelfth Army. The Military Revolutionary Committee was instructed to occupy, as soon as the insurrection broke out in Petrograd, all the strategic points on the road to Petrograd and to neutralise the counter-revolutionary activities of the Staff of the Twelfth Army and of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Executive Committee of the Soviet of Lettish Rifle Regiments.

On October 20 a Congress of delegates of the Lettish Rifles was held at which a resolution proposed by the representative of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party calling for immediate preparations for an armed struggle to transfer power to the Soviets and to protect the All-Russian Congress of Soviets was carried unanimously without discussion.

The Congress also endorsed the formation of the Military Revolutionary Committee by the Lettish Party Conference.

On October 22, at a joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Estonia and of the Reval Soviet, a Military Revolutionary Committee of 40 was elected, which established control over the strategical and important points in the city and fortress zone.

The workers and peasants of Latvia and Estonia, headed by the Bolshevik Party, were thus ready for the decisive October battles.

13

TRANSCAUCASIA

The pioneers in the struggle for the victory of the proletarian revolution in Transcaucasia were the proletariat of Baku. Baku was, as Stalin said, the industrial oasis of the region. Here were concentrated the largest oilfields and refineries, and the decisive forces of the proletariat who had a splendid militant revolutionary past.

Before the revolution the total number of industrial workers in Transcaucasia was about 100,000, of whom over 36,000, 38 per cent, were employed in the Baku oilfields. In Tiflis, which was the commercial and administrative centre of the Caucasian Dominion, there were hardly any large industrial enterprises except for the main railway workshops. In Erivan, which before the revolution had a population of barely 30,000, there was no industrial proletariat at all. In Kutais there were only several hundred industrial workers in all. All this served to make Baku the centre of the revolutionary movement in Transcaucasia.

The Bolshevik organisation in Baku was formed, grew and matured under the direct leadership of Stalin. As L. P. Beria wrote:

"The glorious Bolshevik traditions implanted by Comrade Stalin, the closest colleague of our great Lenin, put the Baku proletariat in the front ranks of those fighting for the victory of the revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the victory of Socialism."[83]

In 1917 the Bolshevik organisation in Baku was headed by outstanding Party leaders like Stepan Georgievich Shaumyan and Alyosha Djaparidze. Stepan Shaumyan was a veteran Bolshevik who had attended the Fourth and Fifth Congresses of the Party. From 1907 to 1911 he carried on revolutionary work in Baku under the immediate guidance of Stalin. He was extremely popular with the Baku workers and exercised enormous influence among them. For many years he kept up a correspondence with Lenin, mainly on the national question. At the time of the February Revolution he was in Saratov, where he had been exiled by the tsarist government after spending ten months in prison. Immediately on receiving news of the February Revolution he left for his native city, Baku. On the way he learned that the Baku workers had elected him the first Chairman of the Baku Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

Alyosha Djaparidze joined the Social-Democratic Party in 1898. Throughout his life he, like Shaumyan, set a splendid example of how a professional revolutionary should live and fight for his cause. His lively and ardent temperament seemed to supplement that of his more reserved and thoughtful friend, Stepan Shaumyan.

Djaparidze's revolutionary career was marked by a series of arrests and sentences to exile. In 1915 the tsarist government exiled him to Siberia but soon he escaped and, on the instructions of the Party, conducted revolutionary activities among the soldiers in the Caucasian Army.

After the February Revolution he was recalled to Baku from Trapezund, where he had been engaged in revolutionary activities.

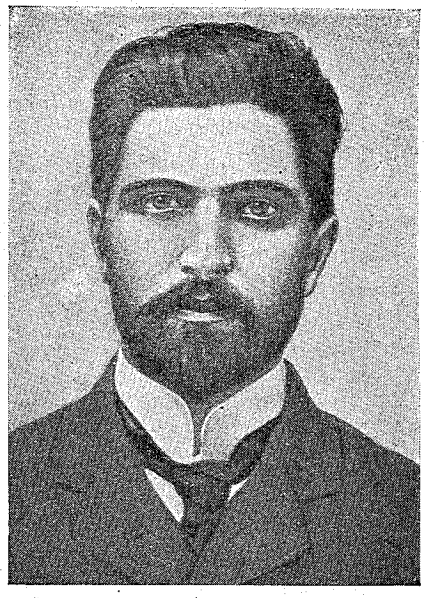
After the All-Russian April Conference of the Bolshevik Party the Transcaucasian Bolsheviks, on the direct instructions of Lenin and Stalin, broke with the Menshevik organisation and formed independent Bolshevik organisations in Baku, Tiflis, Batum and other Transcaucasian cities. On March 11, the first issue of the Bolshevik newspaper *Kavkazsky Rabochy* appeared in Tiflis. On April 22 the Bolsheviks in Baku published the first issue of their newspaper the *Bakinsky Rabochy*, the same title as that borne by the newspaper which Stalin had edited in the period of 1906-08.

Firm Bolshevik leadership and this newspaper were powerful assets in the struggle the Baku Bolsheviks waged to transform the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a Socialist revolution.

Nevertheless, grave difficulties were encountered in the process of winning the masses for Bolshevism and of capturing power.

Comrade Stalin later pointed to two specific features of the movement in Transcaucasia, which left their impress on the course of the proletarian revolution.

"Of all the border regions of the Russian Federation," he wrote, "Transcaucasia, I think, is the most characteristic corner as regards number and variety of nationalities. Georgians and Russians, Armenians and Azerbaijanians, Tatars, Turks and Lezghians, Ingushes and Ossetes, Chechens and Abkhasians, Greeks and Kumyks—such is the far from complete picture of the motley national make up of the seven million population of Transcaucasia."[84]



S. G. Shaumyan

This intricate maze of national antagonisms gave rise, as, Comrade Stalin said, to a very "convenient" situation "for covering up the class struggle with national flags and tinsel."[85]

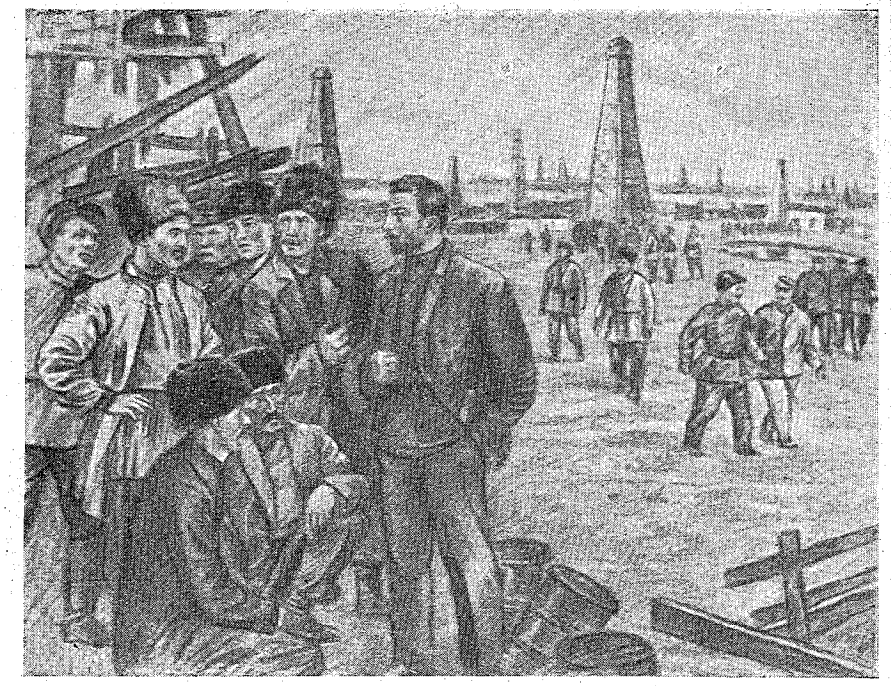
Another characteristic feature of Transcaucasia was its economic backwardness. As Stalin wrote:

"If we leave out Baku, that industrial oasis of the region, which is run mainly by foreign capital, Transcaucasia is an agrarian country with commercial life more or less developed on its borders, on the seacoast, and with still strong survivals of purely feudal society in the interior."[86]

The Baku proletariat, among whom there were many Russian workers, had but slight contact with the rural districts of Azerbaijan, and this inevitably affected the course of the proletarian revolution in Transcaucasia.

In March 1917, the Provisional Government set up an administrative body known as the Special Transcaucasian Committee to replace the Viceroy of the Caucasus and Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Front, N. N. Romanov. This Committee was glaringly counter-revolutionary in character and so, to pacify the masses, the government was obliged to add the Menshevik Chkhenkeli to the Committee. All the regional directing bodies in Transcaucasia, such as the Regional Centre of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Soviet of the Caucasian Army, were controlled by the Georgian Mensheviks, who had entered into a *bloc* with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the bourgeois-nationalist organisations.

Even the Baku Soviet of Workers' Deputies, of which the Bolshevik Stepan Shaumyan had been elected the first chairman, was dominated by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.



Comrade Djaparidze in the oilfields of Baku during the strike in September 1917
From a drawing by T. Zvonareva

Taking advantage of the merging of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies with the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, which in Baku took place in May 1917, the compromisers succeeded in electing their nominee, the Socialist-Revolutionary Saakyan, as Chairman of the Joint Soviet, in place of Shaumyan.

The Georgian Mensheviks, in alliance with the bourgeois-nationalist organisations, the Dashnaktsutyun (the Armenian bourgeois-landlord party) and the Mussavat (the Azerbaijan bourgeois-landlord party), did their utmost to divert the attention of the masses from the class struggle by fomenting national antagonisms and national strife.

The Dashnaks and Mussavatists welcomed the Provisional Government and supported it with might and main. These bourgeois-nationalist organisations, particularly during the first few months after the February Revolution, succeeded by means of demagogic slogans in winning over large masses of the working people of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, mainly in the rural districts.

The Transcaucasian Bolsheviks had to wage a long and persevering struggle to win the masses.



A. Djaparidze

Among the Mohammedan section of the working people an important part was played by the Gummet (Energy) organisation, which was headed by the veteran Bolshevik, Meshadi Azizbekov. The Gummet was affiliated to the Baku Bolshevik organisation and published its own newspaper in the Azerbaijan language. The Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party greeted the Gummet as the first Social-Democratic organisation among the Mohammedans. A number of nationalists, masking their true political opinions, managed to worm their way into the organisation, however, and did everything to prevent the masses of the various nationalities from rallying around the Bolshevik Party. Moreover the organisation had only slight influence in the rural districts. Yet, despite these drawbacks, and the mistakes it committed, it succeeded in carrying on extensive Bolshevik activities in 1917, which produced important results.

At the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party the Baku Bolsheviks were represented by Alyosha Djaparidze. In Petrograd he met Stalin and Sergo Orjonikidze, from whom he received the necessary instructions concerning the further objects of Bolshevik work in Transcaucasia. The Sixth Congress elected Stepan Shaumyan a member of the Central Committee and Alyosha Djaparidze an alternate member.

Guided by the decisions of the Sixth Congress, the Bolsheviks in Transcaucasia intensified their efforts with the object of swinging the Soviets to their side and of capturing power.

After the July days, and especially after the Kornilov mutiny, the situation in Transcaucasia, particularly in Baku, underwent a radical change.

On August 30, 1917, the Baku Soviet, at a meeting at which, besides the members of the Soviet, about a thousand representatives of workers and soldiers were present, for the first time adopted a Bolshevik resolution.

A demand, strongly backed by the masses, was made for the election of a new Soviet. The old Soviet was dissolved and the campaign for the election of the new Soviet was started in September. The Bolsheviks gradually gained influence also in the trade unions. In May 1917 they had already gained the leadership in the Oil Workers' Union, the largest and leading

trade union in Baku. Of the five members of the Presidium, three were Bolsheviks, and the Bolshevik, I. Fioletov, was chairman of the Executive.

In the autumn of 1917 the peasant movement in Transcaucasia flared up with renewed intensity, but it was suppressed by armed force by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Amidst this growing revolutionary crisis a general strike broke out in Baku. The oil-workers presented an ultimatum to the employers demanding the conclusion of a collective agreement on terms which they had drawn up. The employers rejected this ultimatum, whereupon, on September 27, the workers declared a general strike. The entire proletariat of Baku downed tools and industrial life in the city came to a standstill. The strike was led by the Bolsheviks with Djaparidze as chairman of the strike committee. Lasting six days—from September 27 to October 2—the strike ended in a complete victory for the workers. The Provisional Government intervened and sent the Minister of Labour to Baku to arrange a compromise, but all his efforts failed. The oil magnates were compelled to yield. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party congratulated "the revolutionary proletariat of Baku who has defeated organised capital in open battle."[87]

The strike gave a tremendous impetus to the growth of Bolshevik influence in Baku. Preparations were commenced for the decisive battles. On September 15 Shaumyan was summoned to Petrograd, where he attended the meeting of the Central Committee of the Party at which Lenin's letters on armed insurrection were discussed.

On returning to Transcaucasia, Shaumyan directed the proceedings of the First Congress of Bolshevik organisations in the Caucasus, which was held in Tiflis from October 2 to 7. The decisions adopted at this Congress were based on the Central Committee's directions on armed insurrection. It also passed a resolution on the national and agrarian questions. These decisions were supported by all the Party organisations except the Tiflis group, which held the mistaken opportunist view that it was possible to capture power "peacefully" and reach an agreement with the Mensheviks. The treacherous line pursued by this group, however, had serious consequences and served to protract the struggle for the transfer of power to the Soviets in all the decisive centres of Transcaucasia except Baku.

In the middle of October the Bolsheviks gained control of the Baku Soviet. At the meeting held on October 13 the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Executive Committee resigned and a Provisional Executive Committee headed by Shaumyan was elected. On October 15 a joint meeting of the Soviet with representatives of the workers and soldiers was held at which delegates to the Second All-Russian Congress were elected and a resolution was passed urging the necessity of depriving the enemy of power and of transferring it to the people represented by the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Thus, surmounting all the difficulties in their way, the Bolsheviks of Baku firmly and confidently marched toward the seizure of power.

14

CENTRAL ASIA

The February bourgeois-democratic revolution brought no change in the conditions of the nationalities in Central Asia—the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Tajiks and Turkmenians.

In April 1917 the Provisional Government sent to Turkestan the so-called Turkestan Committee, headed by the Constitutional Democrat, Shchepkin, an ex-member of the State Duma. This Committee was to act as the supreme authority in the region.

After the coalition Provisional Government was formed, the composition of the Turkestan Committee was slightly changed, and the Mensheviks instead of the Constitutional Democrats predominated in it; but its policy remained the same.

In its counter-revolutionary dealings the Turkestan Committee relied not only on the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, former tsarist officials and Whiteguards, but also on the bourgeois-nationalist organisations, Shuro-Islamia and Uleme, which came into existence in March 1917.

Shuro-Islamia was the party of the Uzbek nationalist bourgeoisie, while Uleme was the party of the Mohammedan clergy, the semi-feudal landlords and the nationalist big bourgeoisie. These two organisations repeatedly expressed their loyalty to the Provisional Government.

The Turkestan Committee failed to solve any of the fundamental problems raised by the revolution. National oppression continued as before, merely assuming, as Stalin pointed out, a new, more insidious and, therefore, more dangerous form.

Nor was the agrarian problem solved; and the conditions of the industrial workers remained the same as they had been before the revolution. In September 1917 a working day of 12 hours prevailed in Turkestan, whereas in all other parts of the country the eight-hour day had already been won.

The difficulties in Turkestan were aggravated by the fact that almost to the end of 1917 no independent Bolshevik organisation existed there. The various groups of Bolsheviks in Tashkent, Samarkand, Perovsk, New Bukhara, and other towns, belonged to the united Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Second Regional Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. which was held in Tashkent on June 21 to 27, was dominated by the Mensheviks and passed a resolution expressing confidence in the Provisional Government.

Not having a newspaper of their own, the Tashkent Bolsheviks were obliged to have their articles published in *Rabocheye Dyelo,* the organ of the R.S.D.L.P., which was controlled entirely by the Mensheviks, and very often the Mensheviks, on one pretext or another, refused to publish these articles.

Through the medium of the Orenburg Bolsheviks, Comrade Sverdlov conveyed to the Bolsheviks in Turkestan the categorical instruction to

break off their "unlawful cohabitation" with the compromisers, but for a long time this instruction remained a dead letter.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Bolsheviks among the masses grew rapidly. A strong Party group was formed in Khokand, headed by E. P. Babushkin, who had been a Bolshevik since 1903 and was the Chairman of the Khokand Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Extensive activities within the united Social-Democratic organisation were conducted by the Bolsheviks in Samarkand.

On the eve of the October Revolution there was a Bolshevik group in New Bukhara, led by Poltoratsky, who in 1918, met his death at the hands of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Bolsheviks in Tashkent were led by A. Pershin, a worker employed in the Central Asia Railway Workshops, and N. Shumilov, a fitter in the same plant who, in 1918, became Chairman of the Tashkent Soviet.

In their activities the Bolsheviks in Turkestan relied on the organisation known as the Ittifaki, *i.e.*, Leagues of Mohammedan Working People.

In March 1917 the first Mohammedan labour organisation was formed in Skobelev (now Ferghana). Later, similar organisations were formed in Tashkent, Samarkand, Khokand, Margelan, Katta-Kurgan, Khojent, and other towns. In most cases, these leagues were formed by workers and poor peasants who, in 1916 had been mobilised by the tsarist government for work behind the lines. On returning to Turkestan they formed themselves into an inaugural group of demobilised workers and issued a call for the formation of Labour Leagues. In this call they declared that their object was "to form a family of workers consisting of poor peasants and working people, of Tatars and Sarts, which would reinforce the working class in its struggle against capital and help to create a new society based on truly democratic principles."[88]

Many of those demobilised workers and dehkans (peasants) had obtained a thorough revolutionary schooling in Russia and were connected with the Bolshevik Party and the Russian workers.

At first the Ittifaki were strongly influenced by the Mensheviks, but they gradually drifted away from them and drew nearer to the Bolsheviks. During the elections of the local government bodies and of the Constituent Assembly they put up joint tickets with the Bolsheviks and helped the latter to combat the compromisers in the Soviets. The struggle between the Mohammedan Labour Leagues and the Shuro-Islamia and Uleme—the bourgeois-nationalist organisations—daily became more intense. This was the most convincing proof that the "theory" advanced by the bourgeois nationalists that there was no class struggle in Turkestan and that all Mohammedans were equal was fallacious, and it revealed the hollowness of the slogan: "Mohammedans Unite!"

After the Kornilov mutiny was suppressed the revolutionary struggle of the working people of Turkestan entered a new phase. In September 1917 strikes frequently broke out among the cotton-workers, oil-press workers and soap makers who demanded higher wages and an eight-hour day. Strikes

occurred in Tashkent, Samarkand, Namangan, Andijan, Katta-Kurgan and New Bukhara.

In the rural districts the agrarian movement developed into a struggle for land and irrigation water.

The revolutionary movement grew also in the army, particularly in the Tashkent garrison.

The most striking symptom of the growth of the revolutionary crisis, however, was what are known as the "September events" in Tashkent.

After the suppression of the Kornilov mutiny the Bolsheviks intensified their work under the slogan of "All power to the Soviets!"

The Regional Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Tashkent Soviet were controlled by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. At a conference of regional democratic organisations held in Tashkent on September 11, 1917, a Bolshevik motion that the conference should proclaim itself a Revolutionary Committee and take over power was defeated. The Bolsheviks moved the same resolution at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Tashkent Soviet at which a large number of workers and soldiers were present.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Tashkent Soviet, both Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, forthwith resigned and left the meeting as a protest against the Bolsheviks' action. After their departure the Executive Committee of the Soviet, for the first time, adopted a Bolshevik resolution demanding the formation of a Revolutionary Committee and the holding of a demonstration of the working people of the city under the slogan: "All power to the Soviets!"

On hearing of this mass demonstration, called by the Bolsheviks, the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government immediately banned all meetings for a period of three days from September 12 to 15; but no orders could curb the mass movement. On September 12 the working people of Tashkent spontaneously poured into the streets. A meeting was held in the Alexander Park, where the crowd was continuously augmented by contingents of workers and soldiers who came marching from the factories and army barracks. The speeches delivered by the Bolsheviks were enthusiastically applauded, and many rank-and-file workers and soldiers too delivered rousing speeches. The meeting adopted a resolution, moved by the Bolsheviks, demanding that power should be transferred to the Tashkent Soviet and that a Provisional Revolutionary Committee should be formed. This Committee was forthwith elected. It consisted of 14 members, of whom five were Bolsheviks, five Socialist-Revolutionaries, two Mensheviks and two Anarchists.

Thus, notwithstanding the adoption of the resolution demanding that power be transferred to the Soviets, the Bolsheviks were in a minority on the Revolutionary Committee. In an article appraising the September events in Tashkent, Stalin stated that it was found possible to form a united revolutionary front in that city on the basis of the demand to transfer power to the Soviets. But he stressed the point that the subsequent course

of events would be determined by the party that would head and direct this temporary united revolutionary front—the Bolsheviks or the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Tashkent Bolsheviks did not succeed in gaining the leadership of the Revolutionary Committee and in exposing the vacillations and half-heartedness of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. This determined the subsequent course of events.

Nevertheless, the "September events" in Tashkent proved beyond doubt that the masses had swung round to the Bolsheviks. One of the most important national regions of the country was on the threshold of armed insurrection. But these events did not, of course, signify that power had actually been transferred to the Soviets.

The election of the Revolutionary Committee caused the counter-revolutionaries in Tashkent considerable anxiety. At 5 p.m. on September 12, at a special joint conference of the Turkestan Committee and representatives of the Regional Soviet with General Cherkess, the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, a decision was taken immediately to arrest the Revolutionary Committee. General Cherkess ordered the cadets and a company of ensigns to surround "Liberty Hall" where the Revolutionary Committee and the Tashkent Soviet were simultaneously in session. The Tashkent Soviet had just elected a new Executive Committee, the majority of which consisted of "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. The members of the Revolutionary Committee were arrested and taken to prison. When the workers and soldiers who were present at the meeting of the Soviet heard of this they demanded an explanation and the immediate release of the members of the Committee.

General Cherkess appeared at the meeting, where his speech so incensed the audience that he was pelted with every kind of missile that came to hand and was compelled to flee from the hall. He spent the night hiding in a ditch. Next day he was arrested.

The men of the lst and 2nd Siberian Reserve Regiments, on learning of the arrest of the members of the Revolutionary Committee, took to arms and threatened to wreck the prison and release the prisoners. The compromisers were so terrified that they yielded and released the Revolutionary Committee, which forthwith resumed work.

The leaders of the compromising Regional Soviet fled in panic to Skobelev in the hope of receiving assistance for an offensive against revolutionary Tashkent.

The Turkestan Committee appealed to the Provisional Government for assistance and began to make its own preparations to suppress the insurrection.

The Revolutionary Committee and the new Executive Committee of the Soviet took a series of measures to strengthen their power, but they took no resolute action to disarm and suppress the counter-revolutionary forces.

On September 16 the situation in the city changed. A telegram was received from Kerensky qualifying the conduct of the Tashkent Soviet as criminal and demanding its submission to the local representatives of the

Provisional Government within 24 hours, openly threatening that if it failed to do so "the usurpers of power will be punished with all the severity of the law."

Kerensky also stated in this telegram that a punitive expedition was being sent. This information, together with Kerensky's peremptory "order," encouraged the counter-revolutionaries, who until then had been lying low, but preparing to strike. The Whiteguards began to arm the "loyal" units. In anticipation of the arrival of the punitive expedition, the Turkestan Committee opened negotiations with the Executive Committee of the Tashkent Soviet. To gain time, the Chairman of the Turkestan Committee, the Menshevik Nalivkin, on September 18, signed an agreement with the Executive Committee of the Soviet guaranteeing "immunity to individuals and units who had participated in the recent events" and providing for the recall of the punitive expedition that was being sent to Tashkent.

The Turkestan Committee failed to carry out this agreement, however. The punitive expedition was not recalled, and as a protest against this the workers of Tashkent, on September 20, at 4 p.m. declared a general strike. All the factories in the city, the railway, the tram service and the electric power station came to a standstill. The city was plunged in darkness. In retaliation, the Turkestan Committee proclaimed martial law in the city.

The strike proved ineffective. The punitive expedition which arrived in Tashkent on September 24, headed by General Korovichenko, was welcomed with great pomp by the counter-revolutionaries; the workers in nearly all the factories in the city remained on strike.

On September 26, General Korovichenko, acting as the Commissar General of the Provisional Government, issued an order to court-martial the members of the Revolutionary Committee who had been elected on September 12, set up a committee to investigate the actions of the Revolutionary Committee and the Tashkent Soviet, and banned all meetings and assemblies. Cossacks surrounded "Liberty Hall," searched the premises and confiscated the funds, books and papers of the Tashkent Soviet and Executive Committee.

Korovichenko promised to withdraw the martial law order if the general strike was called off. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were in favour of calling off the strike and intimated this to the Strike Committee on September 27. The strike was called off that day, but instead of ending, the struggle waged by the proletariat and dehkans became more intense.

In Tashkent and other towns in Turkestan the railwaymen organised armed combat groups which served as the nucleus of the Red Guard. A wave of strikes again swept Tashkent, Khokand and other towns—this time joined by the printers of Samarkand—for a 50 per cent increase in wages. A similar demand was advanced by the employees of the Zemlya i Volya, Pechatnik and Ideal printing plants.

The Tashkent employers refused to yield to the demands of the workers, and in this they were supported by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. A general meeting of the printers retaliated by passing a resolution expressing no confidence in the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders.

How strained the relations between the Bolsheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries had become was revealed at the Second Extraordinary Regional Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Turkestan, convened on the initiative of the Bolsheviks on September 29. The agenda contained the items: the Tashkent events, the election of the Regional Soviet, and the preparations for the election of the Constituent Assembly.

Considerable tension prevailed at the time of the Congress. The punitive expedition was still in Tashkent. Chaikin, the Right Socialist-Revolutionary leader, did his utmost to prevent the Congress from meeting. At the Congress itself he behaved in the most provocative manner and openly entered into a *bloc* with the Uleme organisation. Nevertheless, he was obliged to admit that "the Tashkent representatives, headed by the members of the late Revolutionary Committee had won the support of a section of the delegates from other towns."[89]

At the Congress there was a small but compact group of Bolsheviks. The bulk of delegates remembered the instructions they had received from their constituents and would not allow themselves to be misled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The delegates from Kushka, for example, had been instructed by a general meeting of the garrison and workers of that town to insist on the following points:

> "1)'All power to the Soviets!' 2) Not a single soldier to be granted leave until the end of the war; if leave is granted however, the men must take their arms with them; 3) in view of the food crisis, to requisition all church treasures for the purpose of procuring food."[90]

The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, headed by Chaikin, demanded in their resolution condemnation of the action of the late Revolutionary Committee during the September events, adding that the members of this Committee should not be allowed to vote on this resolution. When the Congress rejected this demand they demonstratively left the meeting.

The Bolshevik Poltoratsky, speaking on behalf of the New Bukhara Soviet, condemned the attitude of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries towards the members of the late Revolutionary Committee and of the Executive Committee, and their demand for a committee of investigation, "The assassins of the revolution cannot be its judges," he said.

Other Bolshevik speakers fiercely attacked the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and denounced their treachery. A section of the delegates listened to the Bolsheviks' arguments with the closest attention and expressed their approval.

During October the tension in the city reached a high pitch. The workers in all the factories and the units of the garrison passed resolutions protesting against the conduct of the punitive expedition and demanded that power be transferred to the Soviets.

On October 18 the Tashkent Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies called a conference of representatives of the Regimental Committees and trade unions in the city to discuss the political situation and to draw up

instructions for the delegate to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. In a resolution protesting against the actions of General Korovichenko, the conference demanded from the Turkestan Committee: 1) The abolition of capital punishment and the release of the arrested members of the Tashkent Soviet; 2) the transfer of all the land to Land Committees; 3) public control of industry; 4) the conclusion of an armistice on all fronts; 5) the convocation of the Constituent Assembly on a definite date.

The delegates who spoke demanded that the Soviets should take power.

A lively debate ensued on the instructions to be given to the delegate to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. The Bolsheviks urged that the instructions should demand the transfer of power to the Soviets, for unless this were done the Constituent Assembly would not be convened. Moreover, the local Soviets would have to retain power even after the Constituent Assembly had been convened. The Bolshevik resolution on this question was carried by 89 votes against four, with six abstentions.

Thus, the Tashkent Soviet was won by the Bolsheviks.

In these circumstances, a resolute armed struggle to transfer power to the Soviets became inevitable. The Provisional Government, having concentrated considerable forces in Tashkent, hoped to be able to drown the insurrection of the working people of Tashkent in blood and thus "demonstrate its strength" to the workers all over Russia. But the "Tashkent venture" proved to be as unfortunate for the counter-revolutionaries as were all their other attempts to crush the revolutionary action of the masses.

The Executive Committee of the Tashkent Soviet appealed for assistance to the Second Congress of Soviets, which was then assembling. The workers energetically armed themselves and the Red Guards grew in numbers.

* * *

Thus, the work of organising for the assault proceeded all over the country. In this period the Bolsheviks' activities assumed exceptional intensity and dimensions. Summing up the work performed by the Bolshevik Party in 1917, Stalin wrote as follows:

> "In order to understand the tactics the Bolsheviks pursued during the period of preparation for October we must get a clear idea of at least some of the particularly important features of those tactics. . . .
>
> "What are these features?
>
> ". . . the undivided leadership of *one* party, the Communist Party, as the principal factor in the preparation for October—such is the characteristic feature of the October Revolution, such is the first peculiar feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October.
>
> ". . . isolation of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Parties as the main line in directing the preparations for October—such was the second peculiar feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks.
>
> ". . . the policy of transforming the Soviets into organs of state power, as the most important condition for isolating the compromising parties

and for the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat—such is the third peculiar feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October.

". . . ability to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party slogans on the basis of their own experience, by leading them up to the revolutionary positions, as the most important condition for winning the millions of working people to the side of the Party—such is the fourth peculiar feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October."[91]

All four features of the Bolsheviks' tactics in the period of preparation for the October Revolution were observed in every part of the vast country. Everywhere the Bolshevik Party *organised* the victory, surmounted difficulties, swept away obstacles, led millions of working people, and exercised undivided leadership of the historic struggle for the establishment of the Soviet regime.

The organising hand of the Bolshevik Party is also clearly visible in the manner the forces were distributed in the decisive regions of the country on the eve of October and during the October days. At the headquarters of the revolution, in Petrograd, was the great leader of the Party, V. I. Lenin and his closest associate, J. V. Stalin, who was at the head of the Party Centre which directed the armed insurrection. Working in Petrograd were the most outstanding leaders of the Bolshevik Party: J. M. Sverdlov, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, M. I. Kalinin, V. M. Molotov, G. K. Orjonikidze, A. A. Andreyev and others. In Moscow, working under the direction of the Central Committee of the Party, the preparations for the historic battles were directed by those tried Bolsheviks, I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, E. Yaroslavsky and M. F. Shkiryatov; in the Volga Region, by V. V. Kuibyshev, N. M. Shvernik and others; in the Ivanovo-Voznesensk District, by M. V. Frunze; in the North Caucasus, by S. M. Kirov; in the Urals, by A. A. Zhdanov; in the Ukraine, by K. E. Voroshilov, F. A. Sergeyev (Artyom) and G. I. Petrovsky; in Byelorussia, by A. F. Myasnikov and L. M. Kaganovich; in Transcaucasia, by S. Shaumyan and A. Djaparidze.

The Bolshevik Party was a compact, highly politically conscious and disciplined organisation, which confidently led the proletariat and the rest of the working people. It was the real vanguard of the only consistently revolutionary class, a vanguard of which the entire membership took part in the Party's struggle, in the movement, and in the daily life of the masses. As Stalin wrote:

"A virile and powerful Party, standing at the head of the revolutionary masses who were storming and overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie—such was the state of our Party in that period."[92]



Chapter Three

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE ARMED INSURRECTION IN PETROGRAD

1

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY AS THE ORGANISER OF THE INSURRECTION

IMMEDIATELY after the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region Lenin summoned the leaders of the Bolshevik military organisation—N. I. Podvoisky and others—and asked to be informed to what degree the soldiers and sailors were prepared for the insurrection. The leaders of the military organisation reported that the sailors could be relied upon absolutely; the fleet would go into action immediately the Bolsheviks gave the order. Such was the temper of the sailors at Helsingfors and the other naval bases in the Baltic.

Podvoisky, reporting on the sentiments prevailing among the troops of the Petrograd garrison, stated that the soldiers were openly in sympathy with the insurrection.

Some of the officials of the Bolshevik military organisation, the "voyenki," or "military committee-ites," as they were called, displayed exces-

sive caution and hindered the preparations for the insurrection. They urged that the armed insurrection should be postponed for a while in order to gain time to prepare the army and the provinces and to dispatch Commissars to the front, to Moscow, Kiev, Saratov, Ekaterinoslav and Nizhni-Novgorod.

Lenin, however, resolutely rejected all arguments in favour of putting off the insurrection and strongly stressed the point that postponement would enable the enemy to organise for the defeat of all the revolutionary forces. He demanded that preparations be accelerated in order to forestall the counter-revolutionaries, and he personally took up the work of organising the insurrection. He summoned Stalin and Sverdlov to his secret residence, questioned them concerning the preparedness of the Party organisations and gave necessary instructions. He also summoned Podvoisky and other members of the Military Revolutionary Committee and enquired about the technical side of the insurrection, their contacts with the troops, the temper prevailing among them, the composition of the Red Guards and the feeling in the working-class districts. He imbued his assistants with courage and energy, and under his direct, virile and militant leadership the work of preparing for the armed insurrection made rapid progress.

In Petrograd, district military organisations had been set up already at the end of September. These organisations enrolled instructors for the Red Guards, procured arms and conducted propaganda in the regiments. They also made a list of all the military schools in the city and conducted propaganda work among the machine-gunners, armourers and other lower rank categories attached to the cadet units. In the Petrograd District they reconnoitred the approaches to the Fortress of Peter and Paul and to the arsenal, where large quantities of arms were stored. In the fortress they found from 10 to 15 politically conscious soldiers who were ready to co-operate with the Bolsheviks. The Arsenal Workers' and Soldiers' Committee was dominated by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, but a considerable amount of propaganda work was conducted among the soldiers and workers at the arsenal with the assistance of the Bolsheviks in the fortress. The compromisers were eventually isolated and the Bolsheviks began secretly to supply the Red Guards and the revolutionary regiments of the garrison with arms obtained from the arsenal.

The task of directing the practical work in preparing for the insurrection devolved upon the legally functioning Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. This Committee had been formed at the time when the Kornilovites had attempted to withdraw the revolutionary troops from Petrograd and thereby disarm the capital. The Headquarters Staff of the Petrograd Military Area had issued an order to re-group a section of the Petrograd garrison and to dispatch it to the front on the plea of urgent military necessity.

On October 9, the day on which this order was issued, the Mensheviks on the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, secured the adoption



From a painting by V. Svaroga

The Party Centre — Leader of the Insurrection of October 1917

of a resolution calling for the organisation of a committee to facilitate the withdrawal of the garrison from the capital.

The full meeting of the Petrograd Soviet held that same evening, however, rejected this Menshevik resolution, and on a motion of the Bolsheviks decided to form a Military Revolutionary Committee for the defence of Petrograd and to counteract the attempt of Staff Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area to withdraw the troops from the capital.

This was an open challenge by the Bolsheviks to the counter-revolutionaries.

On October 12 the regulations governing the functions of the Military Revolutionary Committee were adopted at a closed session of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. These functions were defined as follows: to determine the minimum of forces necessary for the defence of the capital and, therefore, to be retained; to maintain communication with the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet and the garrison in Finland; to keep an exact record of the strength of the Petrograd garrison; to take measures to prevent rioting in the capital, to arm the workers and maintain revolutionary discipline.

After the Central Committee had adopted its decision on armed insurrection it set up in all the districts of the capital secret staffs to make preparations for the insurrection. These staffs consisted of the leader of the military organisation in each district, the chief of the Red Guard, and the Chairman of the District Soviet if he was a Bolshevik. Working under the direction of the Military Revolutionary Committee, these district staffs energetically set to work to inspect the Red Guard in their respective districts; they took note of the buildings and strongholds which were to be captured during the insurrection, and enrolled commanders for the revolutionary detachments from among non-commissioned officers and junior officers of the army.

To improve contact with the provinces and to afford the local Party organisations practical assistance the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party dispatched its members to the various regions to convey to the local organisations the Party's instructions and to inform them of the general plan for the insurrection. They also collected information concerning the military and technical preparedness of the local organisations for the insurrection so that the centre might know on which organisations it could rely, and to what degree, when the insurrection commenced.

On the instructions of the Central Committee a report on the state of preparedness for the insurrection was made at a meeting of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

On October 14, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party instructed all the organisations within its province to go ahead with practical preparations for the insurrection, to organise fighting detachments of the Red Guard, to establish contacts with the soldiers in the various garrisons, and to set up committees to direct operations.

The Central Committee sent a representative to Saratov to acquaint the Bolshevik organisation there with the preparations for the insurrection. At a small gathering of leading Party members this representative reported on the plans of the Central Committee, enquired about the temper of the masses and instructed the organisation to accelerate the military and technical preparations.

The representative of the Central Committee who attended a Special Congress of Latvian Bolsheviks held in the city of Valk, conveyed instructions to the Latvian comrades to hold up troops that might be recalled from the front by the Provisional Government, and also to prepare for the dispatch of detachments to Petrograd whenever the Military Revolutionary Committee called for such. The Latvian Bolsheviks formed a secret Military Revolutionary Committee and decided to prepare two Lettish regiments to be sent to the aid of Petrograd. The other regiments were to take up positions to prevent any military unit recalled from the front by the Provisional Government from passing through to Petrograd. All the regiments pledged themselves to support the Soviets' struggle for power.

On the urgent representations of the Central Committee, a Military Revolutionary Committee was also formed in the Twelfth Army. This Committee established communications with Petrograd and from there received definite instructions how to act when the insurrection started.

The Central Committee took advantage of the All-Russian Congress of the Union of Cities which was held in Moscow to establish contacts with the Bolshevik representatives from the provinces. At a meeting of the Bolshevik group attending the Congress the Central Committee's representatives conveyed the Party's instructions. After hearing these reports the meeting discussed the practical measures that could be taken to assist the centre in the event of power being captured in Moscow and Petrograd. The meeting also laid down the definite functions that were to be carried out by the different organisations. Tula was to supply arms. Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kolomna and other districts adjacent to Moscow were to render direct assistance by sending armed detachments.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party anticipated that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who predominated in the food committees would attempt, after the victory of the insurrection, to dislocate the food supply in order to crush the revolution by starvation. Consequently, measures were taken to prevent this long before the insurrection. The Bolsheviks in Ufa, for example, were instructed to prepare trainloads of grain for dispatch to the capital immediately after the insurrection.

The Ufa Bolsheviks immediately set to work to carry out these instructions. The local Gubernia Food Committee, of which A. D. Tsurupa, a Bolshevik, was the head, made arrangements to come to the speedy assistance of Petrograd. Messengers were sent to the various industrial enterprises in the Urals to warn the organisations there of the impending events.

In addition to the urgent task of supplying Petrograd with Siberian grain the Urals Bolsheviks also prepared to render the revolution armed assistance.

Lenin had drawn up the plan of insurrection in the capitals, but, great strategist that he was, he allowed for the possibility of the insurrection failing in Petrograd and Moscow. In that event, the Urals were to take up the struggle for power. As the *Uralsky Rabochy*, the organ of the Urals Regional Committee of the Bolshevik Party, wrote at the time:

> "The entire revolutionary army in the province must put itself in a state of complete fighting preparedness so as to be able, if necessary, to go to the aid of the revolutionary Petrograd vanguard, or perhaps, in the event of the defeat of the Petrograd workers, to take the field against the advancing counter-revolution here."[1]

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party gave close attention to the matter of capturing the approaches to the capital. It sent its representatives to all the railway junctions in the region with the warning that the Provisional Government would attempt to seize these junctions in order to ensure the movement of troops.

On the instructions of the Central Committee, representatives of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee visited Luga, Dno, Pskov and other towns to investigate the preparedness of the local organisations for action and to instruct them to prevent troops from the front from being moved against revolutionary Petrograd.

A secret code was drawn up to be used in informing the Party organisations of the date fixed for the insurrection. The local organisations were informed that the Central Committee would advise them in good time of the favourable moment to start operations and indicate the most expedient method of procedure.

The remarkable discipline, precise organisation and speedy mutual assistance that were achieved were due to the warning uttered by the Central Committee to the local organisations not to act on their own accord, but to subordinate their operations to the general instructions.

It was this co-ordination of all operations with action at the centre that explains why many towns came out against the Provisional Government either on the very day that victory was achieved in Petrograd, or the day after. *Such organisation and co-ordination, precision and mutual assistance had never been achieved in any previous insurrection or revolution. This organisation and discipline were secured by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin.*

There was not a single question affecting the insurrection which the Central Committee did not discuss beforehand. The general plan, communications, security of the rear and the slogans were all carefully prepared.

Special attention was paid to the organisation of the fighting forces of the insurrection, namely, the Red Guard.

The resolution on the insurrection that was adopted called for thorough military, technical and organisational preparation.

"History," wrote Lenin, "has now made the *military* question the fundamental *political* question." [2]

In some quarters the importance and significance of the military aspect of the insurrection were underrated. This was undoubtedly the effect of the influence of Menshevik, Social-Democratic opportunism, one of the characteristic features of which was, and still is, dread of arming the workers and of real revolution. This was one of the most pronounced characteristics of the traitor Trotsky.

Neglecting the military-technical preparations for the insurrection, however, meant courting certain defeat. Lenin did his utmost to impress upon the members of the Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee and the Moscow Committee the importance of this aspect of the preparations and addressed himself directly to individual organisations and comrades on the question.

All this time the compromising Soviets in the important centres had been hindering the organisation of the fighting forces of the revolution. The Red Guard units that existed had been formed semi-legally in the factories by the lower Soviet bodies and local committees of the Bolshevik Party. As a result of the pressure brought to bear by the Bolsheviks, however, the Soviets began to take over the work of organising the armed forces. On October 16 the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet declared:

"1) The organisation of a workers' guard, whose direct function is to combat the counter-revolution and to protect the gains of the revolution, is an urgent task of the moment, and 2) . . . all the work of organising the workers' guard and of giving it political direction will be taken over by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."[3]

The example of the Petrograd Soviet was followed by the Soviets in other cities. Special organisers were appointed to form Red Guard units and funds and arms were allocated for the purpose. The detachments of the proletarian army grew rapidly everywhere.

Following the example of Petrograd, the Soviets in the provinces and at the front formed Military Revolutionary Committees to direct operations during the insurrection. The Party organisations sent their best forces to these committees and strengthened the Executive Committees of the Soviets.

Eventually all the preparations for the insurrection were completed. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had drawn up its general plan of operations. A Military Revolutionary Committee had been formed to act as the General Staff of the insurrection. The Red Guard—the main fighting force—had been mobilised. The provinces had been warned. A secret code had been drawn up. Reliable communications had been established. The duties of the different Party organisations had been assigned. The state of all the fighting forces had been ascertained. The capture of



M. I. Kalinin

the railway junctions had been provided for. Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had been isolated from the masses. Bolshevik slogans had long become the slogans of the proletariat and of all working people. The Bolshevik Party, led by the Central Committee, was ready for the decisive battle for power.

Lenin had not set a definite date for the insurrection. It might start any day, but certainly before the opening of the Congress of Soviets, which the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Central Executive Committee had fixed for October 20.

In order to verify the progress made in the preparations for the insurrection and to warn a larger circle of Party workers of its imminence, Lenin proposed that a joint meeting of the members of the Central Committee of the Party and representatives of the Petrograd Committee of the Party,

the military organisation, the Petrograd Council of Trade Unions, the factory committees, the railwaymen and the Petrograd Area Committee be held on October 16. About thirty comrades in all were expected to be present. The meeting was to be a secret one and it was difficult to find suitable premises. M. I. Kalinin solved the problem. At that time he was the Chairman of the City Administration of the Lesnoi Sub-District of the Vyborg District of Petrograd, and in that capacity he placed at the disposal of the Central Committee a room in the District Duma, which then occupied a villa in Bolotnaya Street.

At about 7 p.m. Lenin arrived. Before entering the room he removed his wig and put it into his pocket. He sat down on a stool and, taking from his pocket a sheaf of papers covered with notes, began to speak. He read the resolution which had been adopted by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party on October 10 and reported that only two members had voted against it. In brief and concise terms he appraised the general situation, and quoting the returns of the municipal elections in Petrograd and Moscow, he showed that the masses had followed the lead of the Bolsheviks even before the Kornilov mutiny.

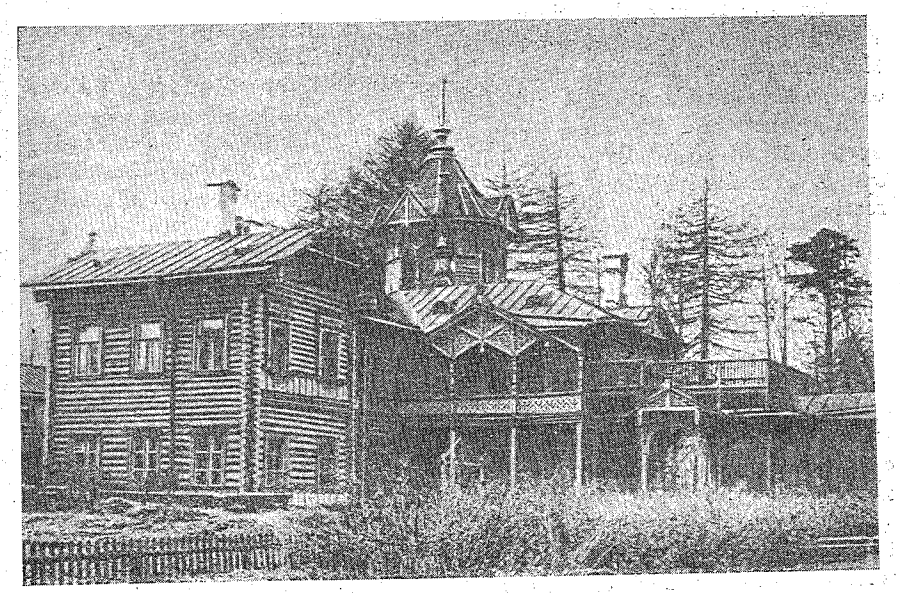
> "The Kornilov mutiny," he said, "brought the masses still closer to us," and analysing the relation of forces at the Democratic Conference, he added: "The situation is clear: either a Kornilov dictatorship or the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry."[4]

Tense silence reigned in the room while Lenin was speaking. Now and again he raised his voice, as if trying to hammer his arguments into the minds of his auditors. Now and again he rose from his seat and with his thumbs thrust in the armholes of his waistcoat, paced up and down the room, continuing to speak. When replying to the opponents of insurrection his eyes darkened, his voice became harder and in terms of withering scorn he exposed the hollowness of their arguments.

After reviewing the situation within the country, Lenin proceeded to appraise the international situation. It would be more difficult to start a revolution in Western Europe than in Russia, he said; but the mutiny which had started in the German navy showed what great progress the revolutionary movement was making even in a country like Germany. If we started the insurrection at once we would have the whole of proletarian Europe on our side. Concluding his report he said:

> ". . . the bourgeoisie wishes to surrender Petrograd. We can avert this only by taking Petrograd into our hands. The conclusion from all this is clear, namely, that the armed uprising of which the Central Committee resolution speaks is on the order of the day. . . . The political analysis of the class struggle, both in Russia and in Europe, proves the necessity of a most decisive and most active policy; this can mean only armed insurrection."[5]

Everybody in the room had been listening to Lenin's speech with bated breath, and for several minutes after he had finished nobody uttered a word.



The premises of the City Administration of the Lesnoi Sub-District where the secret meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party of October 16, 1917 was held

Then the clear calm voice of Sverdlov was heard proposing that the reports from the districts should now be taken. Sverdlov himself spoke first on behalf of the Secretariat of the Central Committee. He pointed to the colossal growth of the Bolshevik Party, which now had no less than 400,000 members. The Party's influence, he said, had grown enormously in the army, in the navy and in the Soviets. He concluded his report with a statement regarding the mobilisation of the counter-revolutionary forces.

Sverdlov was followed by comrades who spoke on behalf of the Petrograd Committee of the Party and of the military organisation, and then reports were heard from the trade unions and the factory committees. Special emphasis was laid on the temper prevailing among the railwaymen and post and telegraph workers. The reporters stated that the junior staff of the Post Office accepted the lead of the Bolsheviks. The postmen, for example, were ready to seize the General Post Office at the decisive moment. The railwaymen reported that the bulk of the transport workers were incensed against the bourgeois government. All these reports served to confirm Lenin's conclusion that the masses were ripe for insurrection. Sverdlov rounded off these reports by stating:

> "In connection with the Central Committee's resolution, steps have been taken to ascertain the possibility of insurrection in Moscow."[6]

The reports were then thrown open for discussion, during the course of which several speakers quoted cases of inadequate technical preparations for the insurrection, but on the main issue nobody opposed Lenin except Kamenev and Zinoviev.

Kamenev and Zinoviev again uttered their "warnings." Not daring openly to advocate the preservation of capitalism, Zinoviev began his speech with the insidious question as to whether the success of the insurrection was ensured.

"The issue must be decided on the very first day, and in Petrograd," he continued, "for otherwise demoralisation will set in. It is no use depending on reinforcements from Finland and Kronstadt. In Petrograd, however, our forces are inadequate. Moreover, our enemies are in command of a vast organisational staff."[7]

The rustle of the trees in the garden could be heard, rain was beating against the windows, and Zinoviev's shrill voice seemed to harmonise with these depressing sounds. Monotonously and obstinately he harped continuously on one and the same argument: the enemy is strong, we must not act rashly.

Bored to death by this speech, the people in the room stopped listening to him and gathered at the other end of the table where Lenin and Stalin were seated. Soon his part of the room was deserted and he found himself alone with Kamenev.

For reasons of secrecy Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov had not in their reports related all that had been done during the preceding week. Kamenev took advantage of this, and throwing off all restraint, made a slanderous attack upon the Party leadership.

"A week has passed since this resolution was adopted," he said, "and that is exactly why it shows how an insurrection should not be made. During this week nothing has been done, and this has only served to make things worse. The results of this week show that there are now no grounds for insurrection."[8]

Two days later Lenin wrote the following concerning Kamenev's outburst:

"I could *not* refute that because I could not *tell what had really been done.*"[9]

Virtually advocating the preservation of bourgeois democracy Kamenev openly took up a Menshevik position. He treated the question of insurrection in the same way as a schoolteacher treats a writing exercise; he wanted everything to be straight on the line, and nicely rounded, that all the weapons needed should be immediately available, that all the enemy's plans should be known beforehand, and that victory should be absolutely guaranteed. Like the Mensheviks, he slanderously accused Lenin of being a Blanquist and a conspirator.

"Speaking from the social aspect," he droned, "the crisis has matured; but there is nothing to prove that we must go into battle before the 20th. It is not a matter of 'now or never'. . . . We are not strong enough to start an insurrection with any certainty of victory. . . . We have here a conflict of two tactics: the tactics of conspiracy and the tactics of confidence in the driving forces of the Russian revolution."[10]

When he finished speaking Stalin rose calmly and confidently and analysed the arguments advanced by Zinoviev and Kamenev. In a sharp rebuff to the capitulators he said:

"It's all very well to say postpone the attack, but we must understand what is meant by attack; raising the price of bread, sending Cossacks to the Don Region, and so forth, are also attacks. How long are we to wait if there is no military attack? Objectively, what Kamenev and Zinoviev propose would give the counter-revolution the opportunity to organise. We shall keep on retreating and in the end lose the entire revolution. Why should we not ensure for ourselves the possibility of choosing the day and the conditions and deprive the counter-revolution of the opportunity to organise?"[11]

Stalin's stern and devastating arguments exposed the craven designs of these poltroons. Every word he uttered cut like a whip-lash. Kamenev nervously plucked at his beard and shrivelled up. Zinoviev fidgeted in his corner of the room and tried to interrupt Stalin's scathing speech.

Stalin then went on to deal with the international situation and showed that international relations were extremely favourable. In conclusion he stated:

"There are two policies: one is heading towards the victory of the revolution and looks to Europe; the other has no faith in the revolution and counts on being only an opposition. The Petrograd Soviet has already taken the path of insurrection by refusing to sanction the withdrawal of the troops. The navy has already risen, in so far as it has gone against Kerensky."[12]

One after another the members of the Central Committee rose to speak in opposition to Zinoviev and Kamenev. They did not try to convince these two panic-stricken capitulators. They were not arguing with them. Their object was to dispel likely doubts in the minds of rank-and-file workers, to reply to questions that might be put at meetings. The entire Bolshevik Party had to be prepared for battle. In the impending decisive battle there must be no waverers—such was the gist of their arguments.

Comrade Sverdlov amplified the idea expressed by Lenin that the insurrection had emerged from the political sphere and had entered the technical sphere. Being connected with all the important districts of the country, and having privately interviewed most of the responsible workers before the meeting, he had the situation at his finger tips. He gave the meeting a detailed report on the feverish preparations which the counter-revolutionaries were secretly making. He showed that the counter-revolutionary generals were hastening to forestall the revolution, and ridiculed Kamenev's

claim that practically nothing had been done to carry out the Central Committee's resolution of October 10.

"The relation of forces is in our favour," he said. "There is no need to rescind the resolution, but to amend it to the effect that the technical preparations must be proceeded with more energetically."[13]

Sverdlov was followed by Dzerzhinsky who, in a voice trembling with emotion, ardently supported Lenin's resolution and explained why the Bolsheviks were calling for insurrection precisely at that moment. He fiercely denounced Kamenev for accusing Lenin of pursuing conspiratorial tactics.

Thoroughly familiar with the classical ideas of Marxism, he exposed the Menshevik character of the arguments advanced by Zinoviev and Kamenev. It seemed as if he were stripping bare these capitulators, leaving them naked and exposed as cowards and poltroons who had accidently found their way into the ranks of revolutionaries.

"The essence of the creed of the conspirator is precisely that all the technical preparations for insurrection should be absolutely complete beforehand," he explained ironically. "When the insurrection starts we shall have the technical forces. The same holds good as regards food."[14]

The discussion was wound up by Lenin who, punctuating his remarks with biting sarcasm at the expense of Zinoviev and Kamenev, taught those two the elementary truths about the revolution.

"If you say that it is an insurrection 'of the peoples,' then it is wrong for you to talk about conspiracies," he said. "If, politically, the insurrection is inevitable, we must treat insurrection as an art. Politically it has already matured." [15]

Rising from his seat as if to indicate that there was nothing more to be said, he moved that the Central Committee's resolution be endorsed and that energetic preparations be made for the insurrection, leaving it to the Central Committee to fix the date.

This unanimous rebuff of the Central Committee compelled Kamenev and Zinoviev to change their tactics right there at the meeting. Kamenev pretended to be a simpleton; spreading out his arms, he said in mock bewilderment:

"First you said that the insurrection must take place before the 20th, but now you talk about setting the course towards revolution."[16]

But at once these two champions of capitalism exposed their hand. Zinoviev begged and prayed that the insurrection should not be started for at least another five days. Kamenev pleaded for postponement of three days. In this way both made it clear that they understood that the issue was not the general course towards insurrection, but an insurrection within the next few days.

Lenin answered Zinoviev for the third time. In curt, trenchant terms he explained the difference between the new, proletarian revolution and

the February bourgeois-democratic revolution, and then moved the following resolution:

"This meeting heartily greets and fully supports the resolution of the Central Committee. It calls upon all the organisations and all the workers and soldiers to make energetic preparations for armed insurrection and to render every support to the organ which the Central Committee is setting up for this purpose, and expresses its full confidence that the Central Committee and its Soviet will in due time indicate the favourable moment and the most expedient methods for taking the offensive." [17]



F.E. Dzerzhinsky

The vote was about to be taken on this resolution when Zinoviev rose again and in his shrill, exasperating voice proposed the following motion:

"While not postponing reconnoitring preparatory steps, such actions must be regarded as impermissible until the Bolshevik group at the Congress of Soviets has been consulted." [18]

Convinced that no amount of wriggling would be of any avail Zinoviev, right at the end of the meeting, took up Trotsky's position. While not openly opposing Lenin, Trotsky had been secretly trying to sabotage the insurrection and insisting upon its postponement until the meeting of the Congress of Soviets. Now Zinoviev tried to shield himself from the blows of the Bolshevik Party by taking cover behind Trotsky's Menshevik position.

Several days later Lenin, commenting on Zinoviev's last quibble, wrote the following:

". . . Zinoviev, with an innocent air, moved a resolution—which was rejected by the meeting—proposing 'to take no action before the Bolsheviks who are to arrive for the Congress of Soviets on the 20th are consulted.'

"Just think of it: after the *centre* has decided on the question of a strike, they propose to a meeting of the rank and file that it be postponed and submitted (by October 20, when the Congress convenes—and that Congress was later postponed . . . the Zinovievs trust the Liebers and Dans), that it be submitted to a body which is not recognised

by the Party rules, which has *no* power over the Central Committee, and which does *not* know Petrograd." [19]

Neither subterfuges nor quibbles were of any avail. The meeting adopted Lenin's resolution by 19 votes against 2, with 4 abstentions.

Kamenev and Zinoviev made one more attempt to hold up the Central Committee's decision by submitting a statement demanding the immediate calling by telegraph of a full meeting of the Central Committee.

The meeting decided to attach the statement to the minutes without discussion. Exposed and isolated, Kamenev submitted a statement to the effect that the line taken by the Central Committee would lead the Party and the proletariat to defeat, and that he was resigning from the Central Committee.

Thus, this liar and coward deserted his post on the eve of the decisive battle.

With this the meeting ended. The members of the Central Committee went into another room where they decided to set up a Party Centre, consisting of Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky and Uritsky with Stalin at the head, for the purpose of directing operations during the insurrection. This centre was to be incorporated in the Military Revolutionary Committee in order to guide the insurrection.

The meeting ended just before dawn. The members dispersed as they had come, one at a time. Lenin left last. A gusty wind was blowing and Lenin's hat and wig were swept off his head. He picked them up and put them on again, without noticing that they had been soiled. The great leader was engrossed in thought about the fate of the revolution.

Thrusting his hands deep down into the pockets of his overcoat Lenin stepped out briskly, turning over in his mind the last problems of the armed insurrection.

2

TREACHERY

Defeated in the Central Committee, Kamenev and Zinoviev resolved to commit a crime that was unprecedented in the Party's history. On October 17, several hours after the meeting of the Central Committee had ended, they sent a statement to the Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* announcing their disagreement with the Central Committee.

> "In view of the fact that the question of action is being more and more strongly mooted," wrote Kamenev, "Comrade Zinoviev and I have sent a letter to the largest organisations of our Party in Petrograd, Moscow and Finland, emphatically opposing the idea that our Party should take the initiative in any armed action in the immediate future . . . . Not only Comrade Zinoviev and I, but a number of comrades engaged in practical work are of the opinion that to take the initiative in an armed insurrection at the present time, with the present relation of social forces, independently, and a few days before the assembly of the Congress of Soviets, would be impermissible and fatal for the proletariat and the revolution." [20]

Sukhanov, the editor of the Menshevik newspaper, immediately informed his party colleagues about this letter. Hitherto, the question of insurrection had been discussed in absolute secrecy. Nobody outside the Bolshevik Party was aware of the steps that were being taken. Suddenly, on the eve of the insurrection, Kamenev and Zinoviev betrayed the Central Committee's secret decision.

That same day, literally only an hour or two after Sukhanov had informed his friends about this letter, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets was hastily called together and it was decided to postpone the Congress of Soviets until October 25 and to take measures to ensure that the petty-bourgeois parties represented at it had a majority. Only three days previously the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had declared that the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region was unauthorised and had hushed up its telegram calling upon the army to sweep away all obstacles and send delegates to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. But now, making a complete about-face, they referred to the appeal of the Congress of the Northern Region, and in their turn also called upon the army to make every effort to be represented at the Congress. Telegrams were sent to all the army Soviets which had not stood for re-election and were therefore still controlled by the compromisers, urging them, as these petty-bourgeois leaders stated:

> "To give the policy of the Congress stability and direction in conformity with the interests of the entire revolutionary democracy and the revolution." [21]

The calculations of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were simple in the extreme. They were aware that Trotsky had demanded that the insurrection should be postponed until the Congress of Soviets had assembled. They had now learned that Zinoviev and Kamenev were opposed to armed insurrection. The compromisers calculated that by postponing the Congress of Soviets they would give the opponents of revolutionary tactics in the Bolshevik Party time to intensify their struggle against Lenin and Stalin. Moreover, they wanted to take advantage of the postponement to secure for themselves a majority at the Congress. The postponement also gave the Provisional Government more time to prepare to crush the insurrection.

On the morning of October 18, the letter of Kamenev and Zinoviev appeared in the press. The enemy learned that an insurrection was being prepared. Colonel Polkovnikov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd

Military Area, immediately issued the following "extremely urgent" order to the garrison:

"1) Every military unit, in conformity with special orders and within the precincts of the district in which it is stationed, must render every assistance to the organs of the city administration—the Commissars and militia—in protecting government and public buildings;

"2) jointly with the district commandant and the representative of the City Militia, must organise patrols and take measures to detain criminal elements and deserters;

"3) all persons who appear in the barracks and call for armed action and rioting are to be arrested and placed in the custody of the deputy commandant of the city;

"4) prevent street demonstrations, meetings and processions;

"5) put a stop to armed demonstrations and rioting forthwith with all the armed forces available."[22]

Later in the day, armoured cars and automobiles mounted with machine guns were posted in the Palace Square, in front of the Winter Palace.

In the evening, the Provisional Government met in secret session. Verkhovsky, the Minister for War, and Nikitin, the Minister for the Interior, reported on the measures which had been taken to combat the insurrection. After the meeting of the Cabinet, a Council of War was held in Kerensky's private room. Those present were Colonel Polkovnikov, Commander-in-Chief of the Military Area, Kozmin, his second-in-command, General Bagratuni, Chief of Staff of the Area, and the brigade commanders.

Polkovnikov and Bagratuni reported on the steps they had taken to avert an insurrection, or to crush it if in the event of its breaking out. The capital had been divided into districts and "maintenance of order" in each district had been entrusted to the commanders of the army units. Reinforced patrols were on duty throughout the city. Strong forces had been posted in the suburbs to prevent crowds from gathering and all over Petrograd reserves of mounted troops had been posted under cover, ready to take action at a moment's notice.

"Concrete measures have already been drawn up and approved, and will be put into operation tomorrow," said Polkovnikov.[23]

The discussion of these measures lasted until 6 o'clock in the morning of the 19th. A little later the cadets were called, the patrols were reinforced, and Cossacks posted in different parts of the city.

The Mensheviks made no secret of the government's measures. On October 19, their central organ, *Robochaya Gazeta*, informed its readers:

"A series of measures have already been taken to avert dangerous excesses. Yesterday revolvers were served out to all militiamen. Six hundred picked soldiers, highly conscious politically and loyal to the Provisional Government, have been incorporated in the militia."[24]

But these petty bourgeois, scared out of their wits, thought that this was not enough. The article in which the above information was given ended with the following anxious observation:

"Nevertheless, it must be said that the protection of the capital from dark forces is not so well organised as it should be, for a sufficiently reliable executive organ is lacking."[25]

Nikitin, the Minister for the Interior and the Menshevik representative in the government, tried to calm the fears of his nervous colleagues. In an interview published in the same newspaper he assured them that "the most resolute and energetic measures" had been taken against the anticipated Bolshevik action.[26]

Forewarned, the enemy was able to prepare and to take the initiative. In the light of this, the action of the counter-revolutionaries in Kaluga on October 19 becomes intelligible.

The entire bourgeois press raised a hue and cry. On October 19 the Menshevik *Rabochaya Gazeta* published an article under the heading, "Zinoviev Against Lenin," in which, gloating over the dissension in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party, the Mensheviks let loose a flood of slander and vilification against the Bolsheviks. They falsely asserted that the Bolsheviks were inciting against the government deserters from the army and navy and that they were enrolling criminal elements in their ranks. These worthy Menshevik windbags already pretended to see mysterious "shady characters" prowling the streets of Petrograd.

"There is an atmosphere of approaching storm," the Mensheviks shrieked hysterically. "The action of the unorganised masses may take place independently of the will of those elements who by their propaganda have cultivated the soil for it."[27]

Dyen even published the alleged "plan" of the Bolshevik insurrection, according to which the insurrection was to have started on the night of October 17. One "army" was to have marched from the Okhta, through the Vyvorg District, across the Liteiny Bridge and capture the Taurida Palace. Another, marching from the Narvskaya Zastava, was to have captured the Winter Palace and other government buildings. A third was to have marched from Staraya and Novaya Derevnya and capture the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

"In the evening it was learned," added the "well-informed" correspondent of this newspaper, "that the Bolsheviks have decided to postpone this action. This was due to the communication made yesterday at a secret meeting of one of the committees of the Council of the Republic by Colonel Polkovnikov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military Area, concerning the steps he had taken to suppress likely disorders."[28]

Abusing and vilifying the Bolshevik Party, the entire pack of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois scribes shrieked to the government: "Act!"

Nor did the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks in the army remain idle. The Committee of the Twelfth Army, which consisted of compromisers and only the day before had in the name of the "front" threatened to prevent the Congress of Soviets from being held, was now hastily, also in the name of this "front," mobilising its forces for the Congress. These quondam opponents of the Congress sent the following telegram to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets and to the Bureau of the Military Department:

"Request you to display utmost energy in organising delegates to the Congress arriving from the front. Outcome of Congress will depend on the rapid and extensive organisation of these delegates. Our delegation will arrive on October 23 in full force. Request you to issue no credentials unless certificates of Army Committee are presented."[29]

On October 22, the soldiers' section of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets, which hitherto had been opposed to the holding of the Congress, adopted on a motion of urgency a resolution in favour of peace and of transferring the land to the peasants. But following on these pompous phrases the compromisers repeated their old, threadbare arguments.

"We must not shrink even from transferring power to democracy," they said in their resolution, but scared by their own boldness they immediately added, "but not to the Soviet."[30]

In this resolution the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks insidiously suggested to the Provisional Government that it should cut the ground from under the feet of the Bolsheviks by adopting their slogans of "peace" and "land." These old hands at the game of politics advised the government to resort to this manoeuvre in order to prevent the Soviets from taking power and really satisfying the demands of the people.

The despicable conduct of Kamenev and Zinoviev found some echo in the ranks of the revolutionary fighters, but on the whole it failed to shake them. In view of the treacherous betrayal of the plan to organise an insurrection the Petrograd Soviet was obliged to publish a denial, declaring that it had no such intention. There was some danger that this would mislead the masses whom the Bolsheviks were calling upon to revolt. Indeed, at a special meeting of Regimental Committees held on October 21, one of the speakers expressed bewilderment "concerning the disagreements which are so obvious when one compares the statement made by the Petrograd Soviet in its appeal to the Cossacks, in which it denies the possibility of an insurrection, with Lenin's articles in *Rabochy Put*, in which he openly calls for insurrection."[31]

On the morning of October 18 Lenin was not yet aware of the treachery perpetrated by Zinoviev and Kamenev, but he was in possession of the letter they had sent to the Petrograd, Moscow and other Party Committees after the Central Committee had adopted its decision on October 10. In this letter, which Zinoviev and Kamenev had given the heading of "On the Current Situation," they repeated all their arguments against the armed insurrection. Replying to this letter Lenin declared:

"The arguments which these comrades have advanced are so weak, they are evidence of such astounding confusion, cowardice and renunciation of all the fundamental ideas of Bolshevism and revolutionary proletarian internationalism, that it is difficult to find an explanation for such shameful vacillation. The fact nevertheless remains, and since the revolutionary party has no right to tolerate vacillation on such a serious question, and since the conduct of this precious pair who have scattered their principles to the winds may cause some confusion, it is necessary to analyse their arguments, expose their vacillation and to show how shameful it is."[32]

Lenin had barely finished wording this reply when he received the latest issue of *Novaya Zhizn*, in which Zinoviev and Kamenev had betrayed the secret of the insurrection. These traitors had treacherously stabbed the revolution in the back. The enemy had been forewarned. He was aware that the armed insurrection might break out any day and had no doubt taken urgent measures. The success of the operation on which the fate of the revolution depended, which had cost so much labour and energy, on which all the hopes and aspirations of millions of proletarians and the poorer peasants were based, was jeopardised.

As if physically feeling this treacherous blow, Lenin, the leader and organiser attacked these traitors with all the passion he was capable of. Addressing a letter to the members of the Bolshevik Party, he branded the two men as blacklegs and contemptible defenders of the capitalist system.

"Dealing with the burning problem of the highest importance," he wrote, "on the eve of the critical day of October 20, two, 'outstanding Bolsheviks' oppose an unpublished decision of the Party Centre in the *non*-party press, and above all, in a paper which in this matter goes *hand in hand with the bourgeoisie against the workers' Party*!

"Obviously, this is a thousand times meaner and a *million times more harmful* than, say all Plekhanov's writings in the non-party press in 1906-1907, which the Party so strongly condemned! At that time, however, it was only a question of elections; now it is a question of insurrection for the purpose of seizing power!

"And with such a question before us, *after* the centre had made a decision, to dispute this *unpublished* decision before the Rodzyankos and Kerenskys in a non-party paper—can one imagine a more treacherous and more blacklegging act?"[33]

Lashing out at these traitors, Lenin declared that he would insist on their expulsion from the Party. In his opinion their treachery had caused the Party enormous harm and had undoubtedly had the effect of postponing the insurrection.

"As for the question as to how matters now stand with the insurrection," he wrote, "I cannot, so near to October 20, judge from afar how

much damage has been done to the cause by this blackleg publication in the non-party press. Very great *practical* damage has undoubtedly been caused. To remedy matters it is first of all necessary to re-establish the unity of the Bolshevik front by expelling the strike-breakers."[34]

But even at that moment—one of the most dramatic in the revolution—Lenin had no doubt whatever that victory would be achieved. His confidence in the strength and solidarity of the Bolshevik Party was supreme. He was aware of the incalculable sources of energy that were latent among the proletariat. He knew what the common people were capable of when led by a tried proletarian Party. He concluded his stinging letter with the words:

"Hard times. A difficult task. A grave betrayal. But for all that, the task will be fulfilled, the workers will rally, the peasants revolt and the extreme impatience of the soldiers at the front will do their work. Let us close our ranks more firmly—the proletariat must win!"[35]

Lenin followed this letter up with another, addressed exclusively to the Central Committee in which he called for the immediate removal of the traitors from the Central Committee and their expulsion from the Party.

"The statement made by Kamenev and Zinoviev in the non-party press," he wrote, "was despicable also for the reason that the Party could not publicly refute their *infamous slander*.... We cannot tell the capitalists the truth, namely, that we *have decided* on a strike and have decided *to conceal from them* the *moment we have chosen* for it.

"We cannot refute the slanderous statements uttered by Zinoviev and Kamenev *without doing the cause still more harm*. This is exactly what makes the conduct of these two men so absolutely mean and treacherous. They have betrayed to the capitalists the plans of the strikers. Since we are keeping silent in the press, everybody can guess *how* things stand."[36]

In this letter Lenin again analysed the crime committed by Zinoviev and Kamenev and revealed the depths of depravity to which they had sunk.

The Central Committee discussed Lenin's letters on October 20. It removed Kamenev from the Committee and prohibited both him and Zinoviev from making any statement on behalf of the Bolsheviks, thus, practically depriving them of the right to be members of the Party.

The treachery of Zinoviev and Kamenev, however, failed to arrest the onward march of the revolution. The Bolsheviks mustered and organised vast forces. The masses of the people were mobilised. The counter-revolution was surrounded by a raging sea of revolutionary workers and soldiers. But owing to this treachery, the insurrection had to be postponed. To commence operations at such a moment meant falling into the enemy's trap.

But postponing the insurrection did not mean calling it off. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party was guided by what Lenin had written in his last letter:

"Even though the strike-breakers who have betrayed the matter to Rodzyanko and Kerensky have caused it to be put off for a long time, the question of armed insurrection has not been withdrawn from the order of the day . . . not been withdrawn by the Party."[37]

Having rid itself of both capitulators, the Central Committee, under Lenin's guidance, persistently and perseveringly continued to organise the insurrection.

3

THE EVE OF THE DECISIVE BATTLE

The first thing to be done was to secure additional forces, for the enemy was concentrating fresh troops in the capital. The Red Guard had to be increased. A considerable section of the garrison had to be prepared for action, for it would have been unsafe to rely only on a few regiments. Lastly, it was necessary to revise the plan of the armed insurrection, for it was very probable that some of its details had become known to the enemy.

The job of carrying out the decisions of the Central Committee was entrusted to the Military Revolutionary Committee, the moving spirit of which was the Party Centre headed by Stalin which had been elected by the Central Committee.

Under the direction of this centre, the Military Revolutionary Committee became the General Staff of the armed insurrection. It quickly concentrated in its hands the contacts with all the units of the garrison and guided the operations of the Red Guard, which was the main fighting force of the insurrection.

The prestige of the Military Revolutionary Committee among the troops increased day by day and its instructions soon acquired the force of military orders. On October 18, the day on which the treacherous letter of Zinoviev and Kamenev was published, a meeting of representatives of Regimental and Company Committees of the Petrograd garrison was held in the Smolny Institute. A large number of representatives were assembled from most of the military units in and around the city. The first speaker, the representative of the Ismailovsky Regiment, said that the men of his regiment were hostile to the Provisional Government and reposed confidence only in the Soviet. They were ready to go into action as soon as the order was given.

The representative of the Chasseur Guards Regiment said that his men would come out in an organised manner on the order of the Petrograd Soviet and would demand the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government.

The representative of the Moscow Regiment declared that his regiment had confidence only in the Petrograd Soviet and was waiting for the order to take armed action.

The representatives of the Pavlovsky Regiment and the Volhynia and Grenadier Reserve Regiments stated that their regiments would support the Petrograd Soviet by every means in their power, including organised action.

The delegate of the Kexholm Regiment read a resolution of no confidence in the Provisional Government.

The representative of the Semyonovsky Regiment described a meeting in his regiment at which the Menshevik Skobelev and the Socialist-Revolutionary Gotz had been refused a hearing. The men, he said, demanded that power should be transferred to the Soviets.

The representatives of the Guards Reserve Crews and the 2nd Baltic Reserve Crews assured the meeting that the sailors were only waiting for the order of the Petrograd Soviet to go into action.

Even the delegates of the cadet schools, such as the 2nd Oranienbaum Officers' Training School and the 1st Petrograd Infantry School, dared not express confidence in the Provisional Government. The cadets stated that they would come out only on the order of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

A resolution pledging unreserved support to the Military Revolutionary Committee was carried by an overwhelming majority. The Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary members of the Central Executive Committee were refused a hearing, and the only thing that they could do was ignominiously to leave the meeting, declaring it to be "unauthorised."

The meeting also decided on measures to ensure permanent communication between the Military Revolutionary Committee and the units of the garrison. It was decided to have men constantly on duty at the regimental telephones, that each unit should send two liaison officers to the Smolny, and that the Military Revolutionary Committee should issue daily reports to the regiments.

Next day the compromising Central Executive Committee of Soviets called a conference of representatives of the garrison to counteract the Bolshevik meeting.

At this conference the Menshevik F. Dan who spoke on the current situation and on the forthcoming Congress of Soviets, was given a frigid reception. It was obvious from the interruptions and jeers of the soldiers that a storm was brewing.

Dan grew more and more excited as he spoke, and at last, adopting a threatening tone, he said:

"If the Petrograd garrison responds to the call for action in the streets of Petrograd for the purpose of transferring power to the Soviets then, undoubtedly, there will be a repetition of the events of July 3 to 5."[38]

This threat precipitated the storm. The soldiers had not forgotten the part the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had played in breaking up the July demonstration and one after another the representatives from the different regiments rose and demanded the transfer of power to the Soviets. A number of speakers passionately appealed for an immediate armistice and the transfer of the land to the peasants.

The conference took particular exception to Dan's statement to the effect that the convocation of the Congress of Soviets was premature. The soldiers fiercely attacked him on this point and bluntly accused the Mensheviks of wanting to sabotage the Congress.

The attempt of the compromisers to discredit the meeting of representatives of the garrison held the previous day failed completely. More than that, the conference resolved that since this particular gathering of the representatives had been convened by the Central Executive Committee without the knowledge and consent of the military organisation of the Petrograd Soviet, it had no authority to adopt any decisions. The garrison solidly backed the Military Revolutionary Committee.

In addition to members of the Petrograd Soviet and delegates of the garrison, the Military Revolutionary Committee consisted of representatives of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet, the Finland Regional Committee of Soviets, municipal bodies, factory committees and trade unions, Party and military organisations, and similar bodies.

At the first full meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee held on October 20, a report was made on the Committee's main functions. After this it was decided to establish contact with the army units in the districts and suburbs, and also to take measures to protect Petrograd from likely disorders, as the churches had arranged for a religious procession of the Cossacks for October 22. Speakers were sent to all the districts. It was resolved to issue a manifesto to the Cossacks explaining to them the political significance of the manoeuvres of the counter-revolutionaries.

From various parts of the city the Committee began to receive information testifying to the vigilance of the masses and their readiness to defend the revolution. The workers at one printing plant reported that their firm had received an order to print a manifesto issued by a Black Hundred organisation. The Committee, in conjunction with the Printers' Union, immediately instructed the workers at this plant to refrain from fulfilling any orders without their sanction.

The workers and office employees at the Kronwerk Arsenal, in the Fortress of Peter and Paul, reported that the government was removing arms from the arsenal to supply the cadet units in Petrograd and its environs, and that it was intended to dispatch 10,000 rifles to Novocherkassk in the Don Region. Upon receipt of this information the Military Revo-

lutionary Committee immediately appointed a Commissar over the arsenal and instructed him to stop the issue of arms to the cadets and to hold up the 10,000 rifles intended for Novocherkassk. When the commandant of the arsenal prevented the Commissar from discharging his duties the latter appealed to the workers and soldiers. Several impromptu meetings were held at which the workers and soldiers insisted that the Commissar be allowed to perform his duties and, secure in their loyalty and support, the Commissar seated himself in the commandant's office and gave orders that no arms were to be issued without his sanction. The Military Revolutionary Committee sent its representatives to all other arms depots in the city.

On the night of October 20, the Military Revolutionary Committee appointed Commissars to all the units of the Petrograd garrison. These Commissars strengthened the influence of the Military Revolutionary Committee among the troops and improved the links between Headquarters and the masses, thus enabling it to exercise direct control of the military operations.

From the very outset, the Commissars, as the representatives of the nascent new government, encountered the resistance of nearly all the army officers, but they gained the upper hand, thanks to the whole-hearted support they received from the overwhelming majority of the soldiers, and to the tremendous work that had been carried on among the units of the Petrograd garrison by the military organisation of the Bolshevik Party.

On October 21, the Military Revolutionary Committee called a meeting of representatives of the Petrograd garrison, who once again expressed their complete confidence in the Military Revolutionary Committee and demanded that the All-Russian Congress of Soviets should take power and ensure the people peace, land and bread. In its resolution the meeting stated:

> "The Petrograd garrison gives its solemn pledge to the All-Russian Congress that in the struggle for these demands it will place at their command all its forces to the very last man.... We are at our posts, ready for battle."[39]

That same day the Military Revolutionary Committee set up a Bureau, consisting of three Bolsheviks and two "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Bureau appointed three comrades as Commissars at the Staff Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area and instructed them to take over control of the garrison.

That night the newly appointed Commissars presented themselves to Colonel Polkovnikov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Military Area, and informed him that henceforth all the orders had to be submitted to them for their sanction. Polkovnikov categorically refused to acquiesce to this.

On the morning of October 22, a special meeting of the representatives of all the regiments in the garrison was held in the Smolny at which a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee reported on the negotiations with Polkovnikov. The meeting adopted a resolution which contained a full account of the negotiations and noted the refusal of Headquarters of the Military Area to recognise the Military Revolutionary Committee. It declared that no orders issued to the garrison would be carried out unless countersigned by the Military Revolutionary Committee and denounced Staff Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area, which had isolated itself from the garrison of the capital, as a tool of the counter-revolutionary forces. The resolution ended with the call:

> "Soldiers of Petrograd!
>
> "1. The duty of maintaining revolutionary order in the face of counter-revolutionary attempts to disturb the peace rests upon you, under the leadership of the Military Revolutionary Committee.
>
> "2. No orders issued to the garrison shall be valid unless countersigned by the Military Revolutionary Committee.
>
> "3. All the orders issued today—the Day of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—remain in full force.
>
> "4. It is the duty of every soldier of the garrison to be vigilant, staunch and absolutely disciplined.
>
> "5. The revolution is in danger.
>
> "Long live the revolutionary garrison!"[40]

While this meeting was in progress at the Smolny, Headquarters Staff of the Petrograd Military Area attempted to address the garrison over the head of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Polkovnikov summoned to Headquarters the representatives of the Regimental and Brigade Committees, and also representatives of the Central Executive Committee and of the Petrograd Soviet. The representatives of the Regimental Committees failed to appear, they were attending the meeting in the Smolny.

Polkovnikov then requested the garrison meeting in the Smolny to send representatives to his conference. The garrison meeting responded by sending a delegation to Headquarters with the instruction to inform the Staff that henceforth all the orders issued had to be countersigned by the Military Revolutionary Committee. The spokesman of the delegation delivered this message, and adding that this was all he had been authorised to say, he forthwith returned with the rest of the delegation to the Smolny.

Staff Headquarters were able to convince themselves of the power wielded by the Military Revolutionary Committee that very day. Not a single arms depot would issue arms to the Staff. All the orders issued by the Staff were returned, as they had not been countersigned by the Committee.

All day on October 22, signs of the approaching climax were visibly accumulating.

For the purpose of mobilising the workers, the Bolshevik Party had proclaimed October 22 as "Petrograd Soviet Day." The counter-revolutionaries had arranged for a religious procession of the Cossacks on the



Российская Соціалъ-Демократическая Рабочая Партія. Цѣна 20 коп.

РАБОЧІЙ ПУТЬ.

Пролетаріи всѣхъ странъ, соединяйтесь!

Центральный органъ Р. С.-Д. Р. П.

№ 43. Воскресенье ЕЖЕДНЕВНАЯ ГАЗЕТА. 4-го Ноября (22-го октября ст. ст.) 1917 г.

Сегодня день Петроградскаго Совѣта.

Товарищи рабочіе и солдаты! Устраивайте сборы и отчисленія! Зовите массы подъ знамя Петроградскаго Совѣта!—Всѣ на митинги!

Сегодня въ день Петроградскаго Совѣта. День Петроградскаго Совѣта. Сегодня въ номерѣ.

Facsimile of the heading of *Rabochy Put*, central organ of the Bolshevik Party

same day. Government agents went among the Cossack regiments whispering to the men that the Bolsheviks had deliberately chosen October 22 for their "Soviet Day" in order to outrage the religious sentiments of the faithful. Shady characters tried to incite the Cossacks against the soldiers of the garrison. Counter-revolutionary sermons were preached in the churches.

The Provisional Government was anxious to pit its strength against the forces of the revolution, but at the very last moment the government's Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik accomplices showed the white feather and advised the government to call off the religious procession.

Already on October 21 the Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military Area had ordered the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces to abandon the religious procession on the grounds that it might serve as the occasion for an armed insurrection. To this, A. N. Grekov, the Cossack Hetman replied that the Cossacks would not abandon the procession, and added that the procession had been arranged by the regiments and the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces had no power to cancel their decision.

The Cossack leaders were obviously intent on provoking a conflict, but the issue was decided by the rank-and-file Cossacks. At a garrison meeting of Regimental Committees held on the evening of October 21, the representative of the 4th Cossack Regiment stated that his regiment would not take part in the procession despite the efforts of the regimental chaplain to persuade the men to do so. Amidst loud applause the delegate of the 14th Don Cossack Regiment stated that he "had much pleasure in extending the hand of friendship" to the representative of the 4th Cossack Regiment.[41]



From a painting by B. Yohanson

A Meeting of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee

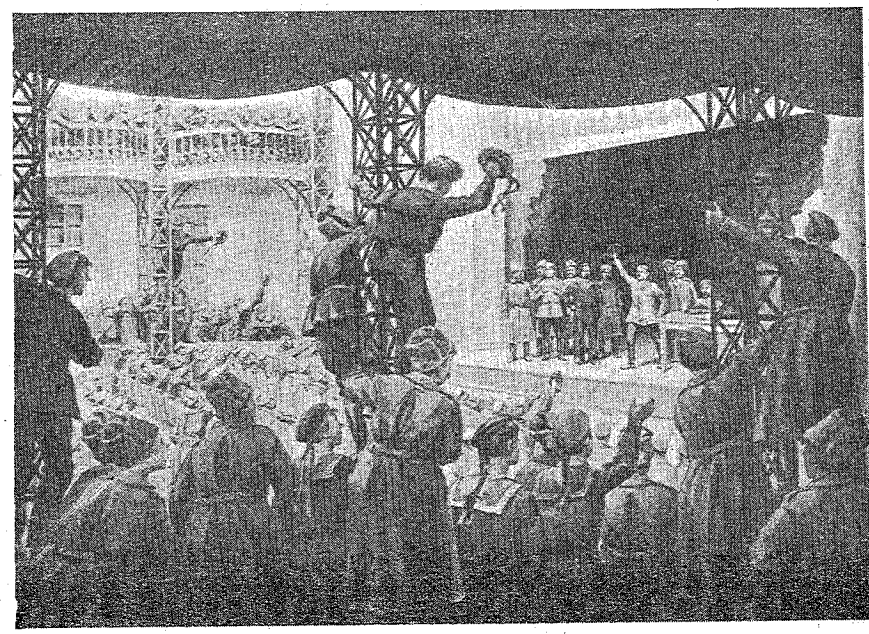
The plot failed. The Cossack regiments refused to take part in the religious procession.

October 22 turned out to be a review of the forces of the Petrograd proletariat, in which the latter demonstrated its readiness to fight under the Bolshevik flag.

Numerous meetings were held in the units of the garrison and in the factories. The results exceeded the most sanguine expectations. Several thousand men attended the meeting in the People's Palace. So crowded was the hall that soldiers and sailors found precarious seats up among the girders, while thousands thronged the grounds outside.

Greetings were conveyed to revolutionary Petrograd "from the banks of the Volga" by a representative of the Tsaritsyn Soviet. A Baltic Fleet delegate who declared that the sailors would die rather than allow the policy of compromise to continue was greeted with a storm of applause. So whole-hearted was the enthusiasm of the thousands of workers and soldiers assembled at this meeting that the least call would have been sufficient to cause this mass of humanity to rush bare-handed to the barricades and to face death. In response to the invitation of the Bolshevik speakers, all those present solemnly pledged themselves with arms upraised to rush

"Several thousand men attended the meeting in the People's Palace"
From a drawing by I. Vladimirov





V. Volodarsky

into the fray against the government of the bourgeoisie at the word of command of the Petrograd Soviet. Similar scenes were witnessed all over Petrograd. Meetings were held in every factory and every barracks attended by vast numbers of soldiers, working men and working women.

That day the Party sent all its available propagandists to the districts. Requests for speakers came from all sides. When a speaker had finished addressing one meeting he was sent to another, and in this way each Bolshevik speaker addressed numerous meetings in the course of that day. At many of the meetings the tall, slender figure of V. Volodarsky, one of the best Bolshevik propagandists in Petrograd, was seen on the platform. A brilliant orator, Volodarsky was extremely popular among worker and soldier audiences. Wherever a severe tussle with the compromisers was expected, Volodarsky was invited to speak. The districts would telephone the Party Headquarters and say: "Send us Volodarsky; it's going to be a big meeting."[42]

Many of the Bolshevik delegates who were arriving in Petrograd for the Second Congress of Soviets also volunteered to address meetings of workers and soldiers.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were being dislodged from their positions. At a meeting in the Polytechnical Institute, in the Vyborg District, the speech delivered by the Menshevik leader Martov began and ended with the one word "Comrades!" The audience refused to listen to him. His voice was drowned by cries of: "Get down! Shut up! Clear out, Kornilovite!"

At the Putilov Works October 22 was a day of remarkable enthusiasm. Workers who were present at that meeting relate that "we decided to take power in our own hands." The Menshevik Sukhanov, in his *Memoirs of the Revolution*, complained that after several attempts to speak he was obliged to abandon the effort because the workers would listen to none save the Bolshevik speakers.[43]

On the night of October 22 the Military Revolutionary Committee sent telephone messages to the regiments of the garrison informing them of the decision to appoint Commissars for all the units, and instructing

them to carry out only such orders emanating from Staff Headquarters as were countersigned by the Military Revolutionary Committee.

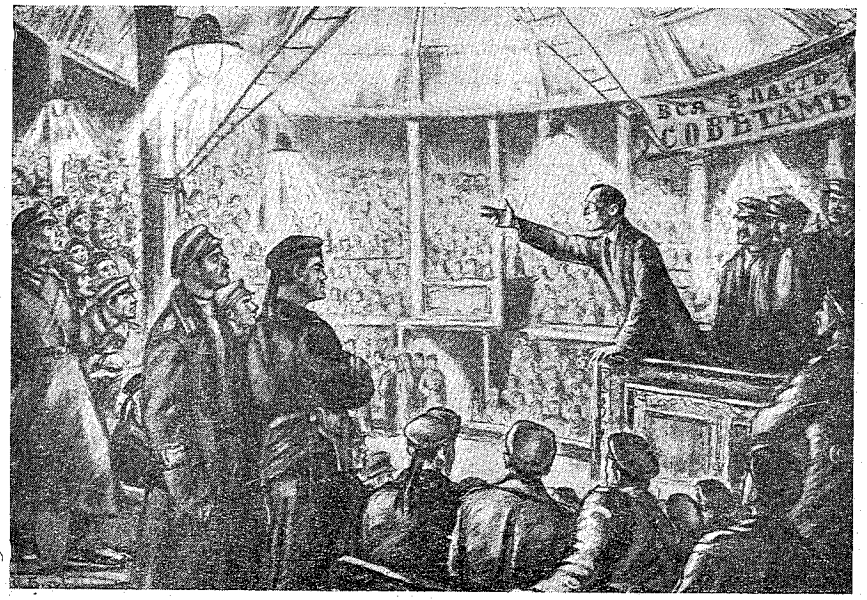
Late that night, A. I. Konovalov, the Deputy Prime Minister, accidentally learned of these telephone messages and hastened to the Winter Palace to inform Kerensky, who knew nothing about them. Konovalov expressed surprise that Staff Headquarters of the Military Area had not informed the government.

The appointment of the Regimental Commissars and the demand of the Military Revolutionary Committee that all the orders of Staff Headquarters of the Area should be sent to it for endorsement were regarded by the government as the beginning of the actual seizure of power by the Soviets.

For several days past the Provisional Government had been living in a state of growing alarm. The energy spent in concentrating forces appeared to have been fruitless. It seemed as though the revolution was forestalling the government's measures. Kerensky formed battalions of shock troops, but the Bolsheviks formed a far larger number of battalions of the Red Guard. The counter-revolutionary generals sent Cossacks to the rear, but the Bolsheviks at the front won over division after division. The Provisional Government intended to utilise several thousand

V. Volodarsky speaking at a meeting in the Circus Moderne

From a drawing by S. Boym



Polish Legionaries and Czechoslovaks, but the revolution won to its side vast masses of the working people of the oppressed nationalities.

The Provisional Government strained its efforts to the utmost to muster armed detachments, but it seemed to make no progress. The members of the government rushed hither and thither like animals in a cage. Kerensky spent all his time travelling. From the revolution that was maturing in the capital he fled to the front; but even there the sinister news reached him of the impending armed insurrection. The newspapers were full of rumours, insinuations and predictions, culled from "trustworthy sources." Day after day this stream of rumour electrified the atmosphere, kept the country in a state of nervous tension and whipped up the temper of the masses. On October 15, *Rech*, the organ of the Constitutional Democrats, reported:

> "At 1 o'clock this morning, the City Militia Administration received from various Commissariats information about the movements of armed Red Guards."[44]

On October 18 it reported:

> "The Bolsheviks are feverishly, perseveringly and persistently preparing for a massacre. They are collecting arms, planning operations, and occupying strong points."[45]

On October 19 it reported:

> "The industrial workers are hurriedly arming for the forthcoming action of the Bolsheviks. On October 17 and 18 arms—rifles and revolvers—were issued to the workers in the main Bolshevik stronghold—the Vyborg District. On October 18, arms were issued to the workers in the Bolshaya and Malaya Okhta, and at the Putilov Works."[46]

On October 20 it reported:

> "We have reached the 20th of October, the date which not only St. Petersburg, but the whole of Russia associates with fresh anxieties and forebodings. To give the Bolsheviks their due it must be said that they are doing everything to keep the state of alarm at the necessary level so as to intensify these forebodings and to bring the state of tension to the pitch when the guns begin to shoot of their own accord."[47]

The first question the members of the Provisional Government asked themselves every morning was: "Will the Bolsheviks take action today?" The Ministers made guesses at the date on which the insurrection would break out. They pricked up their ears at every rumour that decisive action had already commenced. Konovalov, the Deputy Prime Minister, stated to a newspaper correspondent:

> "On October 16 the Provisional Government had no exact information as to the day on which the Bolsheviks would take action. On the previous evening the Provisional Government had received information that the Bolsheviks had decided to take action not on the 20th, as everybody believed, but on the 19th. Evidently, the Bolsheviks themselves had not yet definitely decided that question," he concluded in an effort to console himself.[48]

The situation was made more complicated for the Provisional Government by the fact that the Bolsheviks were preparing for an assault under the guise of defence. Camouflaging the offensive in the guise of defence was the specific feature of the Bolsheviks' tactics during those days. The prevention of the withdrawal of the troops from the capital marked the beginning of the revolution, but that step had been taken on the plea of protecting Petrograd from the Germans and the counter-revolution. The Military Revolutionary Committee had been set up as the Battle Headquarters of the revolution, but this was done on the plea of strengthening the defence of the city. The appointment of Commissars over the regiments signified the mobilisation of the revolutionary forces, but this was done on the plea of defending the Petrograd Soviet from an onslaught by the reaction. As Stalin wrote:

> "The revolution, as it were, masked its offensive operations in the cloak of defence in order the more easily to bring within its orbit the irresolute and vacillating elements."[49]

By means of this skilful manoeuvre, the Bolsheviks deprived the Provisional Government of a pretext for accusing them of unleashing civil war, and also hindered the Provisional Government in mobilising the vacillating elements.

The state of constant tension in which the Bolsheviks kept the government caused confusion and friction in its ranks. On October 14 all three Deputy Ministers of Justice handed in their resignations and accused Malyantovich, the Minister of Justice, of conniving with the Bolsheviks because he had released several Bolsheviks on bail.

Kerensky summoned Malyantovich and told him in sharp terms that he had acted wrongly.

Soon after this, the question of Verkhovsky, the Minister for War, came up. The government had already had several minor conflicts with him. The first arose in connection with the formation of the Demobilisation Committee. Verkhovsky was of the opinion that this committee should be under his jurisdiction, but the government had placed it under the jurisdiction of another Minister, namely, Tretyakov. The second dispute arose over the question of demobilising men of the older age groups. The Minister for War had emphatically opposed this measure on the plea that this would weaken the forces at the front. Obviously scared by the growth of revolutionary temper in the army, the Minister ceased to attend the meetings of the Cabinet, vaguely hinting at his disagreement with it. In reply to the request to send a substitute, Verkhovsky practically handed in his resignation. To prevent this matter from becoming public the government granted him leave of absence.

The Provisional Government was in a continuous state of crisis.

Marked vacillation was also observed in the Pre-parliament. On October 18 that assembly discussed the question of national defence. The Constitutional Democrats, the Cossacks, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Co-operators moved a joint resolution which was carried on a show of hands by 141 votes against 132. This happened at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Ten minutes later the Mensheviks demanded a division. This time the resolution was defeated by 139 votes against 135. After that, five other motions were put to the vote: two moved by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and three by various groups of Mensheviks. They were all defeated.

When the adjournment was announced all the party groups were given an opportunity to confer in order to come to an understanding, but no agreement could be reached. In the end, on the question of defence—the most vital question affecting the country—the Pre-parliament did not adopt any resolution.

In this atmosphere of nervous tension and utter consternation the decision of the Military Revolutionary Committee to appoint Commissars caused utter dismay.

On October 22 Kerensky very excitedly telephoned General Bagratuni, Chief of Staff of the Petrograd Military Area, and in very sharp terms ordered him to refuse to recognise the Commissars under any circumstances. He ordered that "an ultimatum be presented calling for the rescindment of the telephone message by the body on whose instructions it had been issued,"[50] in other words, that the Military Revolutionary Committee should rescind its own order.

All night long the government sat in conference, now with Staff Headquarters of the Military Area and now with the Minister for War. Several Ministers were summoned to the Winter Palace. The members of the Council of the Russian Republic arrived. Lights appeared in the windows of the Mariinsky Palace, where the Councillors assembled. There they appraised the telephone message of the Military Revolutionary Committee as the beginning of the struggle for power. The Provisional Government fully concurred with Kerensky and Konovalov that it was necessary to take decisive measures against the Military Revolutionary Committee.

In the morning of October 23 the Military Revolutionary Committee publicly announced that it had appointed Commissars to all the units of the garrison. In its statement it said:

> "As representatives of the Soviet, the Commissars enjoy complete immunity. Resistance to the Commissars is tantamount to resistance to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."[51]

Early in the morning of October 23, Kerensky resumed his conversations with the Ministers and with the officers of Staff Headquarters. As the Military Revolutionary Committee had shown no intention of rescinding its telephone message, it was decided to offer a compromise by giving the Petrograd Soviet increased representation at Staff Headquarters. This



A Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee addressing a regiment of the Petrograd garrison

From a drawing by D. Shmarinov

offer was communicated to the Smolny, but the Military Revolutionary Committee made no reply. Meanwhile, the Commissars appointed by the Committee appeared in the regiments of the garrison in ever increasing numbers.

Later in the day a secret session of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet was held, not in the Smolny, where the Central Executive Committee usually held its meetings, but in the Mariinsky Palace. The meeting passed a resolution condemning the Military Revolutionary Committee and calling upon the government to take determined measures, even to the extent of arresting the heads of the Committee.

While Kerensky was rushing to and fro between the Winter Palace and the Mariinsky Palace, the Military Revolutionary Committee continued to send its Commissars to the regiments. During the first day it appointed about 100 Commissars, and within the next few days about 600 more.

the organisation on a uniform basis, tightened up discipline and strictly defined the rights and duties of the General Staff, the Bureau, and the district staffs. According to the new regulations, each district was to have one permanent representative at General Headquarters. The Vyborg and the Porkhovo Districts were allowed two representatives.

The conference ended on October 23. The smell of powder was in the air. A conference of the General Staff of the Red Guard and representatives of the districts was hastily convened at which a Staff Bureau was elected. The General Staff gave orders to keep the Red Guard under arms, to have Red Guards permanently on duty at the factories, and to reinforce the patrols and scouting parties.

Next to the Red Guard, the most important fighting force of the revolution was the Baltic Fleet. The sailors had long been bitterly hostile to the government. As early as September 19, the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet had adopted a resolution stating that it "would no longer carry out the orders of the Provisional Government or recognise its authority."[52]

The majority of the naval officers kept away from the meetings of the sailors on the plea that they were "non-party" and "non-political." The sailors, however, wholly and entirely supported the Bolsheviks.

In the evening of October 23, the Military Revolutionary Committee called together the Regimental Committees of the garrison. The meeting was also attended by many delegates from the front who had arrived for the Second Congress of Soviets. The meeting lasted over six hours, during which the representatives of the regiments reported on the temper prevailing among their men. These reports were listened to with the closest attention, and every now and again were interrupted by loud applause. The representatives of the Petrograd Guards Regiment and of the Moscow Reserve Guards Regiment declared that the time had arrived to transfer power to the Soviets. The delegate from the Ismailovsky Regiment expressed the sentiments of his regiment in the words: "All power to the Soviets!"

Amidst loud applause the representative of the 1st Rifle Division who had arrived from the Rumanian Front stated:

"The Provisional Government has done nothing to carry out the will of the working people and therefore all power in the country must be transferred to the Soviets."[53]

He was followed by the representative of the Guards Rifle Division, which was at the front. He described the horrors of cold and hunger experienced by the men in the trenches.

Reports were also made by the representatives of the Grenadier Regiment, units of the Gatchina garrison, the 2nd Machine-Gun Regiment, and the Semyonovsky Regiment. One after another, the delegates declared that the soldiers of these units placed themselves entirely at the disposal of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.



From a drawing by N. Kochergin

For the power of the Soviets

Simultaneously, a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet was held at which a report was heard on the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

By an overwhelming majority the Petrograd Soviet passed a resolution approving of the Committee's activities. The resolution stated:

"The Petrograd Soviet declares that thanks to the energetic activities of the Military Revolutionary Committee, firm contacts have been established between the Petrograd Soviet and the revolutionary garrison, and it expresses the conviction that only further activities in the same direction will enable the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which is about to open, to conduct its proceedings freely and without hindrance. The Petrograd Soviet instructs its Revolutionary Committee immediately to take measures to guard the safety of the citizens of Petrograd and, by determined measures, thwart attempts at rioting, looting, etc."[54]

The Petrograd Soviet instructed its members to place themselves at the disposal of the Military Revolutionary Committee for the purpose of participating in its work.

When the meeting came to an end, late at night on October 23, the Party Centre called the Military Revolutionary Committee together, appraised the forces, and allocated the definite duties each unit was to perform when operations commenced. Every regiment left two representatives for liaison purposes.

The Military Revolutionary Committee had mustered against the counter-revolutionary offensive the politically conscious might of the Red Guard, the regiments of the garrison and the ships of the Baltic Fleet. The fighting forces of the revolution were only waiting for the word of command of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

Meanwhile, the Provisional Government was growing more and more alarmed. The Ministers communicated to each other rumours of an increasingly gloomy nature. Somebody in the Mariinsky Palace telephoned to the Winter Palace reporting the sentiments of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik groups in the Pre-parliament. Delegates who had attended the conferences of the garrison and the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet returned from the Smolny and reported that the garrison was preparing for action, and that the insurrection could be expected within the next few hours.

Kerensky summoned General Manikovsky, recently appointed Acting-Minister for War, and General Cheremisov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front, to discuss measures "to avert a fresh attempt on the part of the Petrograd Soviet to violate discipline and disrupt the normal life of the garrison."[55]

Both generals agreed that the Soviet's influence on the garrison was "extremely pernicious."

At 5 p. m. on October 23, Kerensky called a secret meeting of the officers of Staff Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area at which General Bagratuni, the Chief of Staff, delivered a comprehensive report on the measures taken to counteract the operations of the Bolsheviks.



Red Guards *From a drawing by V. Khvostenko*

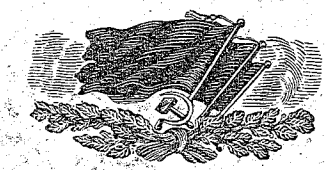
Information had got abroad of Trotsky's proposal that the insurrection should be postponed until the assembly of the Congress of Soviets, *i.e.*, until October 25, and it was assumed that, since Trotsky had mentioned that date, the Bolsheviks must have planned something for it. Acting on this treacherous warning the military men decided to get busy a day or two before the Bolsheviks. At the meeting of military men called by Kerensky it was proposed and agreed that action be taken on October 24.

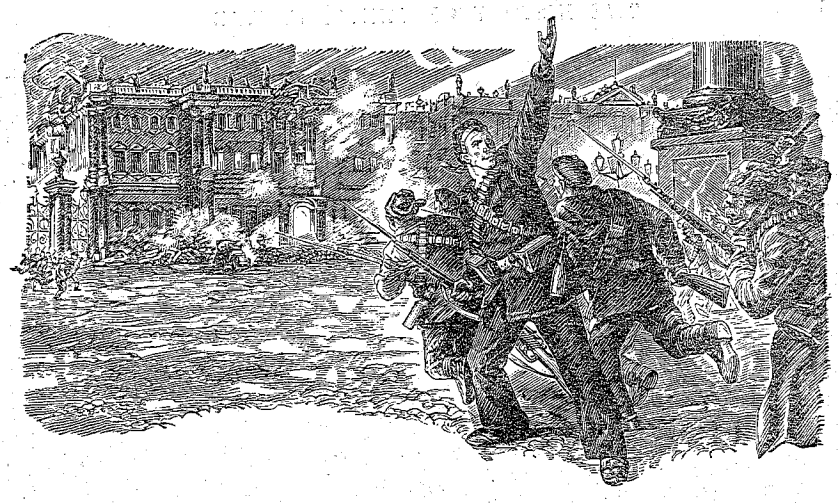
At night, on October 23, the Provisional Government assembled to discuss a single item of business, *viz.*, measures to combat the insurrection planned by the Bolsheviks. Kerensky in an excited tone quoted a number of facts proving that an insurrection was afoot, and in very emphatic terms demanded that action should immediately be taken against the Bolsheviks. Delay, he said, would undoubtedly be taken by the Bolsheviks as a sign of the government's weakness. He then unfolded before the Ministers the plan of operations against the insurrection and in conclusion stated that he had already issued preliminary orders, namely the arrest of the heads of the Military Revolutionary Committee, primarily those who incited insubordination to the lawful authorities.

The government approved of Kerensky's measures. Some of the Ministers recommended that efforts should be made to secure the support of the Pre-parliament, whose sanction would strengthen the government's hand in carrying out its measures to suppress the Bolsheviks.

This proposal was adopted and the government instructed Kerensky to address the Pre-parliament. Late that night, as soon as the Ministers dispersed, Kerensky informed Staff Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area that the plan of operations against the Bolsheviks had been approved.

The decisive moment had arrived. The opposing forces were lined up, facing each other and ready for action.





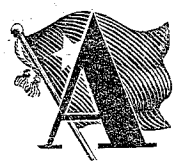
Chapter Four

THE INSURRECTION IN PETROGRAD



1

THE BEGINNING OF THE INSURRECTION



AT DAWN on October 24 (November 6) 1917, the Commissar of Militia of the 3rd Rozhdestvensky District, accompanied by a detachment of cadets from the 2nd Oranienbaum Officers' Training School, appeared at the plant where the central organ of the Bolshevik Party was printed and presented an order, signed by the chief of the Petrograd Military Area, to close the plant and to suppress the newspapers *Rabochy Put* and *Soldat*. The workers emphatically refused to stop printing the newspapers and the night editor, declaring that he recognised only such orders as were signed by the Military Revolutionary Committee, refused to accept the order. The cadets were posted as guards at the doors of the premises.

Later, when the Petrograd workers were hurrying to the factories, the news of the seizure of the printing plant rapidly spread through the district and an angry crowd gathered outside the plant and surrounded



НАЧАЛЬНИКЪ ШТАБА
ПЕТРОГРАДСКАГО ВОЕННАГО ОКРУГА
на театръ военныхъ дѣйствій.

Отдѣленіе общее.

24 Октября 1917 г.

№ 674/к

ПЕТРОГРАДЪ.

УДОСТОВѢРЕНІЕ.

Дано сіе Подполковнику ГЕРМАНОВИЧУ въ томъ, что на него возложено исполненіе распоряженія Временнаго Правительства о закрытіи газеты „Рабочій Путь".

На основаніи коего предлагается всѣмъ гражданскимъ и военнымъ властямъ оказывать ему полное содѣйствіе.

Что подписью съ приложеніемъ казенной печати удостовѣряется.

Генеральнаго Штаба
Генералъ-Маіоръ

Старшій Адъютантъ
Генеральнаго Штаба
Капитанъ

Комиссаръ
Центр. Исп. Ком. Всерос. С. Р. и С. Д.

Facsimile of the warrant to close down the Bolshevik newspaper *Rabochy Put*

the cadets. Mingling with the crowd were members of the Red Guard from the adjacent factories. One of them telephoned to the Rozhdestvensky District Committee of the Party and reported that the cadets were wrecking the plant. Meshcheryakov, the District Party Organiser informed the members of the District Committee. Stalin, the editor of the newspaper, was also informed by telephone.

An excited voice reported:

"Cadets are wrecking *Pravda*."

"How many?"

"A small detachment headed by an officer."

"Very well. I will send some armoured cars."

Stalin ordered two armoured cars from a unit which was entirely on the side of the Bolsheviks to proceed to the printing plant.

In the Smolny a meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee had just come to a close. Round the room in which the meeting was held were gathered a number of dispatch riders from each army regiment and Red Guard Headquarters. Orders were issued in a low voice.



Going to Storm the Winter Palace *From a painting by V. Svaroga*

Now and again, representatives of arriving detachments entered the room, took up places near the dispatch riders and on receiving orders, departed again. The telephone kept on ringing, but worn out by sleepless nights, most of the men continued dozing.

The news of the seizure of the *Pravda* printing plant roused everybody: "It has begun!"

Excited dispatch riders surrounded a Red Guardsman who rushed breathless into the room. Immediately a private of the Lithuanian Regiment was sent to muster the company on duty. The dispatch riders quickly mounted their motorcycles and dashed off to the regiment.

Meanwhile, the cadets had smashed the stereotypes, sealed the *Rabochy Put* printing plant and seized about 8,000 copies of the morning issue.

The Provisional Government knew what it was doing. This issue of *Rabochy Put* contained Stalin's call, in the course of which he stated:

> "In February the soldiers and workers overthrew the tsar. But, having vanquished the tsar, they did not want to take power into their own hands. Led by bad shepherds, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, the workers and soldiers voluntarily relinquished power to the placemen of the landlords and capitalists—the Milyukovs and Lvovs, the Guchkovs and Konovalovs. . . .
>
> "This error must be rectified at once. The time has come when further delay will be fatal for the whole cause of the revolution.
>
> "The present government of landlords and capitalists must be replaced by a new government of workers and peasants. . . .
>
> "What was not done in February must be done now.
>
> "In this way, and only in this way, can peace, bread, land and liberty be won."[1]

The Provisional Government, pursuing a carefully prepared plan, began with the wrecking of the *Rabochy Put* offices. Its intention was to wrest this powerful weapon out of the Bolsheviks' hands.

At about 10 a. m. Kerensky called a conference of his Ministers at the Winter Palace and after informing them that he had taken the initiative, outlined the main points of the speech he intended to deliver at the meeting of the Pre-parliament. The Ministers approved of the speech and Kerensky left for the Mariinsky Palace, where the Pre-parliament held its sessions.

The session of the Pre-parliament opened at 12:30 p.m. The deputies listened with obvious boredom to a statement by the Minister for the Interior, the Menshevik Nikitin, about the food disorders. When Kerensky suddenly appeared in the ministerial box the deputies noticed that he was extremely excited. The Chamber livened up and as soon as Nikitin finished speaking, Kerensky quickly mounted the rostrum. Delivering a tirade against the Bolsheviks he accused them of organising insurrection.

> "To prove that this is not a wild statement, and to prevent anybody from accusing the Provisional Government of making unfounded or

malicious charges against any party," he said, "I deem it my duty to read to you the most definite passages from a number of manifestos written by that wanted but fugitive state criminal Ulyanov-Lenin, and published in *Rabochy Put*."[2]

He then quoted passages from Lenin's "Letter to Comrades" written in denunciation of Zinoviev's and Kamenev's treachery. The Chamber was in an uproar. Shouts of indignation against the Bolsheviks interrupted Kerensky's speech. After relating in detail how the Military Revolutionary Committee had appointed Commissars for the regiments and how the attempts of the General Staff to annul these appointments had failed, Kerensky concluded with the following words:

"Thus, I must define before the Provisional Council the complete, obvious and definite state of a section of the population of St. Petersburg as a state of insurrection."[3]

From the benches of the Constitutional Democrats (Cadets) the cry was heard:

"It has come at last!"

Suddenly A. I. Konovalov, the Deputy Prime Minister, advanced to the rostrum and handed Kerensky a note. There was a brief pause. Hastily reading the note Kerensky stated amidst tense silence:

"I have been handed a copy of a document which is now being sent to all the regiments: 'The Petrograd Soviet is in danger. I order your regiment to be fully prepared for action and await further orders. All procrastination or failure to obey this order will be regarded as treason to the revolution. Podvoisky, Acting Chairman.'"[4]

Pandemonium broke loose in the Chamber. Kerensky demanded that the Pre-parliament should grant him extraordinary powers to suppress the insurrection in the most resolute manner. At 2 p.m. Kerensky, amidst loud cheers, left the meeting and hastened to the Winter Palace. The Pre-parliament adjourned to enable the groups to meet and discuss the situation.

While Kerensky was delivering his hysterical, excited and tedious speech, the following events took place in the city.

Immediately after the cadets raided the offices of *Rabochy Put*, Stalin warned the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party of Kerensky's attempt to take the initiative.

The Central Committee at once met, heard an account of what had taken place, and without wasting time on long speeches or discussion, resolved: that the members of the Central Committee remain at the Smolny; to communicate with the Petrograd Committee and arrange that its members should take turns of duty at the Smolny and at the Petrograd Committee.

The following resolution was adopted concerning *Rabochy Put:*

"To send a guard to the printing plant forthwith, and to take measures to ensure the timely appearance of the next issue."[5]

Sverdlov was appointed to watch all the moves of the Provisional Government. Dzerzhinsky was appointed to watch the post and telegraphs.

It was also decided to organise a reserve staff in the Fortress of Peter and Paul, and all the members of the Central Committee were provided with passes to the fortress. Sverdlov was instructed to maintain permanent contact with this staff.

It was agreed that the Moscow Bolsheviks be immediately informed of all that was taking place in Petrograd.

A decision was taken to break off relations with the compromising Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, which was sabotaging the convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets, and to open negotiations with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries for joint action.

Sverdlov immediately communicated the decisions of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party to the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Acting on these decisions, the Military Revolutionary Committee forthwith issued the following orders:

"1. To open the printing plant of the revolutionary newspapers; 2. To instruct the editorial staffs and compositors to continue issuing these newspapers; 3. To impose the honourable duty of protecting the printing plant from the attacks of counter-revolutionaries on the valiant men of the Lithuanian Regiment and of the 6th Reserve Sapper Battalion."[6]

By 11 a.m., the orders of the Revolutionary Committee were executed. The publication of the Bolshevik newspapers was resumed.

At the same time, all the military Commissars and Regimental Committees received by telephone the following "Instruction No. 1:

"The Petrograd Soviet is in imminent danger. Last night the counter-revolutionary conspirators tried to call the cadets and shock battalions into Petrograd from the surrounding districts. The newspapers *Soldat* and *Rabochy Put* have been suppressed. You are hereby ordered to prepare your regiment for action. Await further orders.

"All procrastination and hesitation will be regarded as treason to the revolution.

"Send two representatives to a delegate meeting to be held in the Smolny."[7]

Dispatch riders carrying the same instruction were sent to the regiments. The men of the Lithuanian Regiment and the Sappers were called to the Smolny. The Commissar and Garrison Committee of the Fortress of Peter and Paul were ordered to prepare for action and to place the most reliable guard at the gates. Instructions were given that except for military units and persons supplied with passes issued by the Military Revolutionary Committee, nobody was to be allowed to leave or enter the fortress.

The Headquarter Staff of the Red Guard was ordered immediately to dispatch to the Smolny a unit of 1,500 to 2,000 workers; to mobilise all transport facilities; to occupy all the key positions in the districts;

to organise the protection of the factories and works, and to detail forces for seizing the government offices.

The insurrection had begun.

The proletarian districts of the capital were ready for action. In the works and factories, feverish activity began as soon as the first news came through that operations had commenced. The Putilov Works Committee sent Red Guard Hundreds to the Smolny, and gave the signal for the reserves to muster. The Schlüsselburg Works formed a unit of 200 men. The Staff of the Red Guard in the Vyborg District informed all the works in the district that operations had commenced and ordered the works committees to requisition all motor vehicles.

The Red Guards at the Russian Renault Works went to the barracks of the Preobrazhensky Regiment to induce it to come over. A meeting was already in progress when the delegates arrived. When Chudnovsky, the Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee, called upon the men to side with the workers, the soldiers expressed their readiness to join the insurrection.

In the Nevskaya Zastava District the Red Guards held all the approaches to the city and patrols were stationed all the way from the village of Smolenskoye to the Shunting Yard of the Nikolayevsky Railway.

Small units from the smaller factories assembled outside the premises of the Petrograd District Soviet, and after midday about 2,000 Red Guards were mustered there waiting for orders.

On the Vasilyevsky Island three blasts from the siren of the Pipe Works signalled for the Red Guards to muster. From all parts of the island, and particularly from the port and the Baltic Works, streams of men poured towards the Staff Headquarters—the office of the commandant of the District Fighting Units.

Motor trucks filled with Red Guards and soldiers arrived at the Smolny. Patrols were marching in different directions, hurrying to take up their posts. Two companies of Lithuanians arrived. Part of them were disposed in front of the building and part in the building itself. Units of the Red Guard were posted at all the exits. In the guardroom, on the ground floor, were a number of machine guns which could be mounted on the roof.

A detachment of the 6th Sapper Battalion arrived to protect the Petrograd Soviet.

From all the ten districts of the capital, fresh Red Guard Hundreds arrived in a continuous stream. Many of them lacked rifles and particularly ammunition. The Military Revolutionary Committee hastily sent its representatives to the nearest army units ordering them to send spare rifles and ammunition.

Similar orders were sent not only to the Rifle Regiments, but also to the commandos of technical battalions; but they too were already hastily arming for the insurrection.

The committee of the Reserve Electricians Battalion wrote the following reply to the order of the Military Revolutionary Committee:

"In view of the lack of spare arms, only 70 weapons being available for a commando of 190 men, we consider that we have not enough for ourselves."[8]

The battalion was forming its own fighting unit.

Stalin, Sverdlov and Dzerzhinsky, the members of the Party Centre, were constantly in attendance at the Military Revolutionary Committee. It was they who planned the details of the insurrection. They selected the units that were to occupy the Telephone Exchange and Telegraph Office. The Military Revolutionary Committee detailed units to protect the Neva bridges so as to maintain contact with all the districts and with the centre.

The plan for the armed insurrection was drawn up in complete conformity with Lenin's instructions. Lenin had outlined the principles of the plan in his letters to the Central Committee and Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party of September and October. These principles were to create a vast superiority of forces in order "to surround and cut off Petrograd; to capture the city by a combined attack by the fleet, the workers and the troops."[9] The plan provided for a surprise attack on the enemy and the seizure of the most important points in the capital: the Telephone Exchange, the Telegraph Office, the railway stations, the bridges, and the government offices. One of the main points of the plan was to surround and capture the Winter Palace and to arrest the Provisional Government.

The Finnish and the 180th Regiments, in conjunction with Red Guards, were detailed to protect all the crossings from the Vasilyevsky Island District. The workers of the Petrograd District together with a Grenadier Regiment and the Chemical Battalion, were instructed to liquidate all likely counter-revolutionary operations—having in mind the cadets of the Pavlovsky and Vladimirsky Military Schools. Those units were also instructed to occupy all the crossings and important points. The Red Guards of the Vyborg District and the men of the Moscow Regiment were ordered to occupy the Liteiny, Grenadier and Sampsonievsky Bridges. The Moscow and Grenadier Regiments also put up a strong cordon (of about 3,000 bayonets) facing Byelo-Ostrov, thus cutting the highway along which the Provisional Government intended to bring up counter-revolutionary forces from Finland.

The protection of the approaches to Petrograd along the Warsaw and Baltic Railways, and also along the Peterhof Highway, devolved upon a mixed unit of Red Guards from the Moskovskaya Zastava and Narvskaya Zastava Districts and of the Izmailovsky and Petrograd Regiments. Units of the Volhynia Regiment, the Ist Reserve Lithuanian Regiment, and the 6th Sapper Battalion were ordered to occupy the immediate approaches to the Smolny. Thus a second line surrounding the Winter Palace was formed.



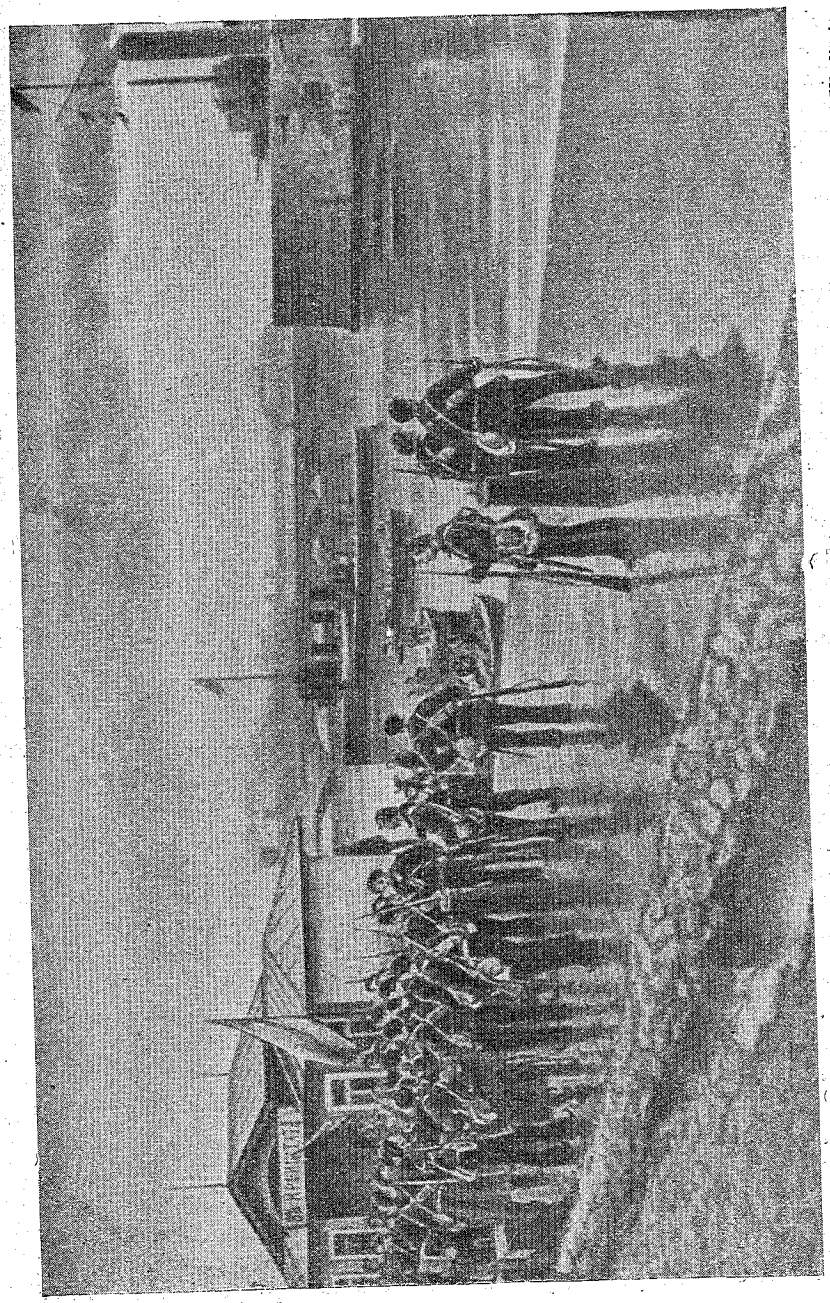
Red Guards outside the Smolny Institute

The warships and sailors of the Baltic Fleet were called in to assist the Petrograd Red Guards and revolutionary army units.

Two representatives of the Kronstadt Executive Committee, who had arrived in Petrograd that day, had been retained for the purpose of maintaining contact with Kronstadt. As soon as they received their orders they hastened back to Kronstadt to prepare the ships and detachments for dispatch to Petrograd on the morning of October 25 (November 7).

The ships of the Baltic Fleet were instructed to steam up the Neva and to train their heavy guns on the main roads leading to Petrograd. On the way they were to clear Oranienbaum, Peterhof and Strelna of cadet groups and to capture the Baltic Railway. They were also to bring 5,000 Kronstadt sailors who were to be landed in Petrograd. Several ships took up their stations in the Neva and trained their guns on the Winter Palace. Thus, Lenin's instruction to make a sudden and swift attack on Petrograd, "which must unfailingly be carried out from within and from without, from the working-class quarters, from Reval and from Kronstadt"[10]... were embodied in the plan of insurrection. A detailed memorandum on the plan of operations was sent to Lenin.

Considerable bustle and excitement reigned round the Smolny where new detachments of Red Guards and units of the garrison were continually



From a painting by I. Vladimirov

A naval landing from the Cruiser *Aurora*

arriving. The manifesto of the Military Revolutionary Committee was distributed among the soldiers and the Red Guards.

In the afternoon of October 24 (November 6) the Military Revolutionary Committee issued the following order through the radio station of the cruiser *Aurora*:

"1. The troops which are guarding the approaches to Petrograd must be fully prepared for action.

"2. The guards at the railway stations must be reinforced.

"3. Not a single military unit whose attitude towards present events is unclear must be allowed to enter Petrograd. Send out several score of speakers to meet every unit marching towards Petrograd to explain to them that they are to be used against the people.

"Kornilov's troops must be detained by force if they do not submit to persuasion. Act sternly, but cautiously; resort to force where necessary.

"Immediately report all troop movements to the Military Revolutionary Committee in the Smolny Institute in Petrograd, and also send there representatives of the local Soviets and Regimental Committees for purposes of liaison. The Soviets must be in permanent session."[11]

This was the first case in history of the radio being used by the proletariat in revolt.

The radio linked up the Military Revolutionary Committee with the entire country and helped to achieve a greater degree of unity in the resistance the soldiers and railwaymen were making to the Provisional Government's efforts to transfer troops from the front to Petrograd. In Vyborg, the 5th Kuban Cossack Division was held up. In Reval, the unreliable regiments of the 3rd Cavalry Corps were neutralised. In Tsarskoye Selo, a battalion of shock troops was held up. In Peterhof the students of the 1st Peterhof Military School were held up and disarmed.

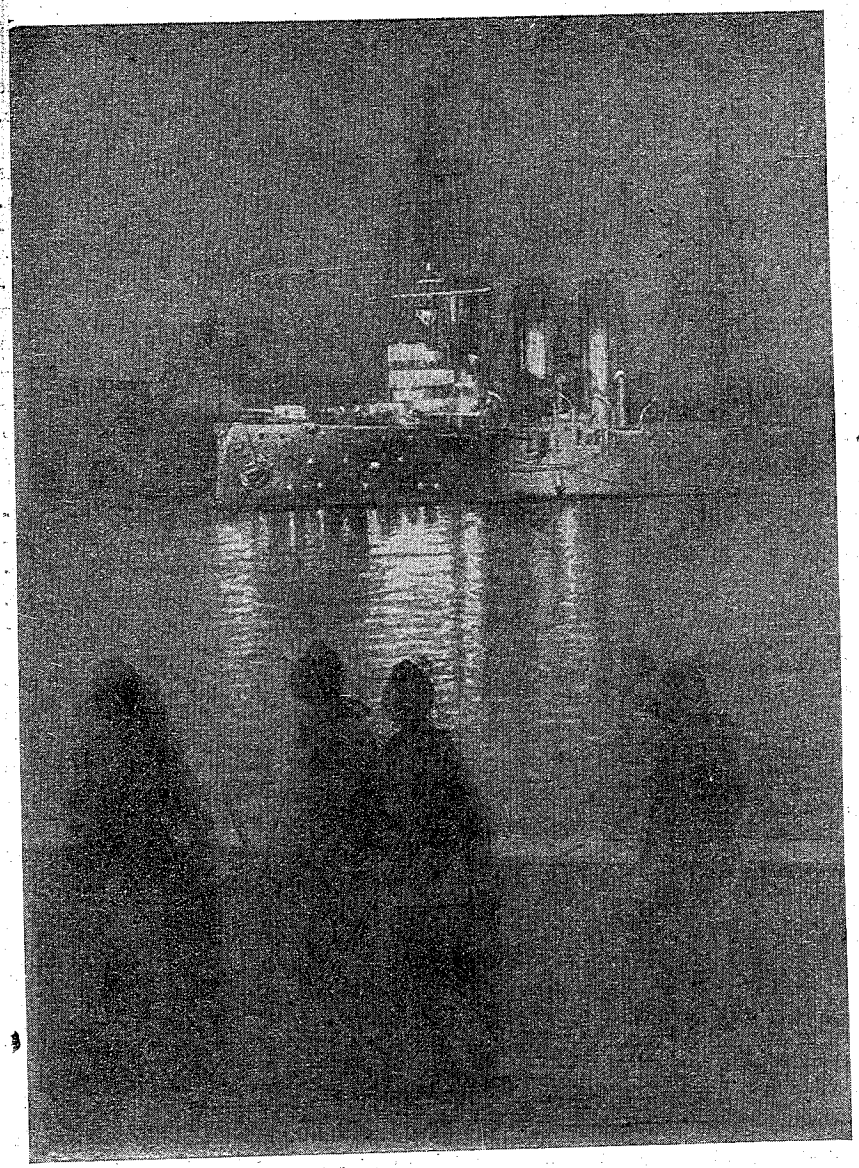
At many factories, meetings were held at midday on October 24 at which the workers declared their complete readiness to come out against the Provisional Government. At the Putilov Works, the workers of the 2nd Department resolved:

"1. Implicitly to obey the Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet;

"2. To demand of the All-Russian Soviet of Deputies that power be taken over by the Soviet;

"3. We demand that all workers be armed."[12]

At the Army Medical Supplies Factory in the Petrograd District the workers decided to come out in defence of the revolution forthwith, and that all should join the Red Guard. This resolution was carried out, and in the course of two days nearly all the 500 workers employed in this factory



The Cruiser *Aurora* *From an Engraving by M. Dobrov*

joined the Red Guard and took part in the fighting against the troops of the Provisional Government.

At 4 p.m., the men of the cycle unit on guard duty at the Winter Palace left their posts and declared that they would no longer defend the palace. They were immediately replaced by cadets.

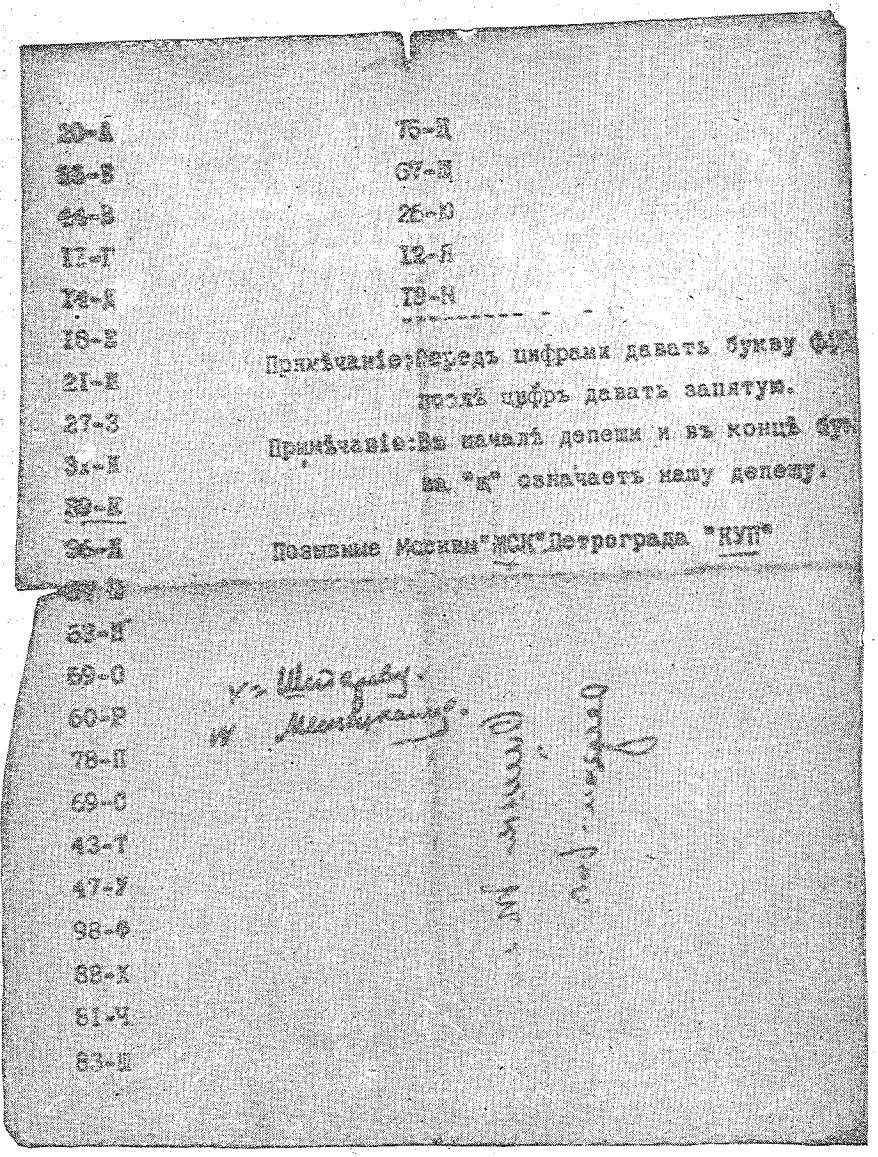
That day the forces in the Fortress of Peter and Paul, where there was a vast arsenal, definitely went over to the side of the insurrection. At 5 p.m. the Cyclist Battalion—the last unit in the fortress that still vacillated—declared in favour of the Soviets taking over all power. Thus, the last wavering unit in the fortress garrison went over to the Military Revolutionary Committee. This was of immense importance.

The Fortress of Peter and Paul was an important strategical point in Petrograd. It is situated at the junction of what were two of the most militant districts of the city, *viz.*, the Vyborg and Petrograd Districts. Moreover, the fortress was impregnable and had its guns trained on the Troitsky Bridge, the Neva and the Winter Palace, the seat of the Provisional Government.

By order of the Military Revolutionary Committee the fortress was prepared for action. Machine guns were mounted on its walls to cover the Troitsky Bridge and Kseshinska mansion on the corner of Kameno-Ostrovsky Prospect and Bolshaya Dvoryanskaya Street, which was occupied by shock troops. Patrols were sent out in all directions. The guards were reinforced. A detachment occupied the dome of the People's Palace. The commandant of the fortress and his adjutant were arrested. The stores of the Kronwerk Ammunition Depot were immediately utilised to arm the Red Guard. The arsenal in the fortress, which contained about 100,000 rifles, became the chief base for arming the workers' detachments. Representatives of the district staffs arrived and took these arms away in trucks. Workers came straight from their factories, and rifles were handed out to them on presentation of their time-checks. On receiving their arms the detachments went off to carry out military operations in line with the plan of insurrection.

At 5 p.m., Commissars of the Revolutionary Military Committee with a detachment of Red Guards occupied the Central Telegraph Office.

The District Party Committees of the Vasilyevsky Island, Narvskaya Zastava and the lst City Districts called meetings of their members in the respective districts for 6 p.m. In the 2nd City District (Kolomna) a meeting was held of all the factory committees. At the Izhora Works a joint meeting was held of the Executive Committee of the Soviet, the factory committee and of the Bolshevik organisation in the town of Kolpino. At the Petrograd Trades Council a meeting took place of the Bolshevik trade union officials. At all these meetings there was only one question on the agenda, *viz.*, participation in the insurrection. The meetings were brief and business-like and the resolution adopted at all of them was practically the same: each in his particular field of work was immediately to take part in the fight to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie; to disperse and take up their posts



Facsimile of the secret code of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet

on the staffs of the Red Guard, in the fighting units, in the committees, and in the factories.

The Izhora Works forthwith sent a delegation to the Smolny for the purpose of liaison. In the Kolomna District guards were posted in the area of the Fontanka, Krukov Canal and the river Moika. Pickets were posted on the road right up to the General Post Office. On the orders of the Peterhof District Soviet, the Putilov workers, jointly with the Red Guard of the Moskovskaya Zastava, established observation posts along the Obvodny Canal. The barracks of the 1st and 4th Don Cossack Regiments and of the Nikolayevsky Cavalry School were surrounded by patrols in order to isolate these wavering units.

The workers of the Metal Works brought out two guns which they had repaired and mounted them on the bank of the Neva.

The Red Guards of the Ordnance Works came out with machine guns.

The Bolshevik District Committee of the Petrograd Side attached all its members to the various fighting units in the district. The Narva District Metal Workers' Union sent its entire office staff to work in the Smolny.

The revolutionary forces continued to grow every minute. Hundreds of workers assembled in their factories, in the offices of the factory committees and at Red Guard Headquarters waiting for arms to be issued. As soon as the rifles arrived, the workers snatched them up and hastened to the Smolny.

At 8 p.m., the Military Revolutionary Committee dispatched to Helsingfors the following prearranged telegram.

"Central Balt. Send regulations."

This meant: "Dispatch ships and men immediately."

As every hour passed the effects of the insurrection became more obvious and palpable.

Of the ten swing bridges, which connected the working-class districts with the centre of the city, nine were in the hands of the revolutionaries. In most cases, the bridgeheads were captured on both sides simultaneously. At a prearranged hour, detachments arrived from the Smolny, simultaneously with Red Guards sent by the district staffs. Generally, the cadets, hard pressed on both sides, retired without offering serious resistance.

Patrols of Red Guards were posted all over the city, and these gradually closed in to form the first ring around the Winter Palace.

2

AT COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY HEADQUARTERS

After receiving the Pre-parliament's consent to the suppression of the Bolsheviks, Kerensky hastened to the Winter Palace to issue orders. He urgently called for reinforcements from the front and telegraphed along all lines making enquiries about delayed troop trains. The garrison at Tsarskoye Selo was ordered to detail units for dispatch to Petrograd. He enquired of the commandant of the Disabled Men's Rifle Regiment when this regiment would arrive and whether it would not be possible to send at least a part of it.

At midday, Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area began to receive reports to the effect that units of Red Guards were being concentrated round the Smolny and that they were being served with arms. The Commander-in-Chief of the Military Area immediately sent the following order to all units:

"1. I order all units and commandos to remain in barracks until further orders from Area Headquarters. I prohibit all independent action. Persons acting contrary to this order and engaging in armed street demonstrations will be court-martialled.

"2. In the event of any unauthorised armed demonstrations, or of an individual unit or group of soldiers going into the streets contrary to the orders issued by Area Headquarters, I order the officers to remain in barracks. All officers who act contrary to the orders of their superiors will be court-martialled.

"3. I categorically prohibit the execution by the troops of any 'orders' emanating from other organisations.

Polkovnikov,
Colonel, General Staff
Commander-in-Chief of the Area."[13]

Not trusting the men of the garrison, Polkovnikov addressed himself to the officers; but at Headquarters they were well aware how little the officers had control of their units. Polkovnikov knew that the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee had either isolated the officers, or else removed them entirely.

In a second order Polkovnikov demanded that the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee be removed from the regiments, that a list of their names be drawn up and sent to Headquarters, and that all cases of illegal action be investigated with the view to proceedings being taken against the culprits.

Malevsky, the Military Commissar of the Petrograd Military Area, who had been appointed by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, in his turn, called upon the regiments of the garrison to submit to Military Area Headquarters. On learn-

ing that forces were being concentrated around the Smolny, this Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik Commissar issued another hysterical order to all the Regimental Committees. It read as follows:

"Confirming previous order: in the name of the salvation of the country and the revolution, in order to avoid bloodshed and starvation in Petrograd and at the front, which will be the inevitable result of civil war, I categorically demand that the units in Petrograd and its environs should obey only the orders of the Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area." [14]

The threat of starvation and civil war—this was the argument with which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had tried to intimidate the workers and soldiers before.

But this threat proved ineffective now, so the organisers of counter-revolution resorted to the means they had already tried during the July days of 1917. Captain A. Kozmin, second in command of the troops of the Petrograd Military Area and official representative of the Socialist-Revolutionaries at Headquarters, issued the following order to the troops of the garrison:

"To all the military units of the Petrograd garrison.

"1. The refusal of the regiments of the Petrograd garrison to obey the orders issued by Area Headquarters is condemned by democracy represented by its executive bodies—the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies.

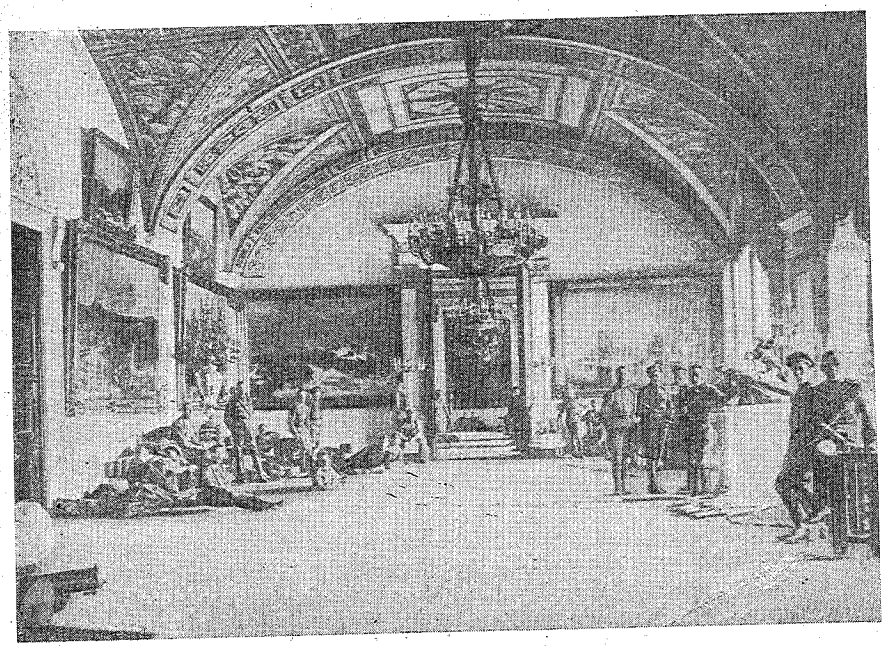
"2. The decision to obey only the orders of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will lead to anarchy and to the doom of our country and the revolution. This compels the Central Executive Committee, the Commissar, and the Staff of the Petrograd Military Area to appeal to the troops at the front.

"3. Officers and men must realise that responsibility for all the severe consequences of the arrival in Petrograd of fresh troops and of the ensuing conflicts will rest on those who are compelling the authorities and the supreme organ of revolutionary democracy to resort to this measure.

October 24, 1917."[15]

Actually, they had already appealed to the troops at the front several days before, but had done this secretly. Now the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks openly approved of the plan for a counter-revolution by giving their consent to the withdrawal of troops from the front.

To isolate the General Staff of the insurrection, which had its headquarters in the centre of the city, from the working-class districts, which were prepared to put up a heroic fight for the power of the Soviets, Polkovnikov gave orders to swing open the Nikolayevsky, Troitsky and Liteiny Bridges. This order did not apply to the Palace Bridge, at which he intended to place a guard.



Cadets in the Winter Palace before it was captured

The tram depots were ordered to stop running cars to the districts on the other side of the river at 7 p.m.

This order was issued after 2 p.m. on October 24 (November 6); it was received at Militia Headquarters at 2:40 p.m. [16] The cadets and shock troops hastened to the bridges, but they were too late; the revolutionary units dispatched by the Military Revolutionary Committee had already occupied them in the morning. In the other districts, where the Military Revolutionary Committee had not managed to send detachments, measures had been taken independently by the local regiments or Red Guards. Guided by their experience of the July days, the workers had anticipated that the first thing the government would do would be to try to cut off the working-class districts from the centre. Comrade Yeremeyev, whom the Military Revolutionary Committee had sent to prevent the bridges from being swung open, found a commando of the Sapper Battalion at the Liteiny Bridge. The other end of the bridge was occupied by Red Guards and a detachment of the Moscow Regiment. At the Troitsky Bridge, one end was guarded by a unit of the Pavlovsky Regiment and the other by a unit of Red Guards who had dispersed the cadets.

The Grenadier and Sampsonievsky Bridges, which connected the Petrograd District with the Vyborg District, were swung to by revolutionary pa-

trols from the Russian Renault Works and the Parviainen Works. The Red Guards of the Benz Works went out to capture the bridge on an armoured car which they had themselves repaired. The huge levers used for swinging the bridges were taken from the watchmen's cabin and piled in the office of the Commissar of the Grenadier Guards Regiment.

At the Nikolayevsky Bridge, the cadets found a small detachment of Red Guards. The cadets communicated with their Headquarters, called out a detachment of shock troops and pressed back the Red Guards. This, their only success, was short-lived. The remainder of the Neva bridges were in the hands of the revolutionaries.

The vigilance of the Red Guards and of the soldiers of the garrison thwarted the plans of Military Area Headquarters. The Smolny maintained unbroken contact with the districts.

Simultaneously with the order to swing open the bridges, Polkovnikov issued an order to reinforce the militia posts in the city. Detachments of cadets and shock troops appeared in the streets and a reinforced guard was posted at the arch of the General Staff buildings which led to the Palace Square and the Winter Palace.

The tension in the city increased. The junior staffs of the government offices and banks ceased work. On the Nevsky Prospect, and in the streets adjacent to the centre of the city, many shops closed and put up their shutters.

Government patrols on the Nevsky Prospect began to hold up automobiles and question their passengers.

For the first time since the July days, Cossack detachments began to patrol the main streets, such as the Nevsky Prospect and Morskaya Street. The City Militia were also mounted. The last units which had remained loyal to the Provisional Government were drawn to the Winter Palace whither the Women's Battalion and artillerymen from the Mikhailovsky Artillery School with light guns also arrived.

The cadets who had occupied the Central Telephone Exchange disconnected the telephones of the Smolny.

At about 6 in the evening of October 24, Petrograd Military Area Headquarters learned that *Rabochy Put*, the central organ of the Bolshevik Party, continued to be issued and distributed among the soldiers. This news caused extreme irritation at Headquarters where only an hour earlier it had been reported that the Chief of Militia had ordered all the confiscated copies of *Rabochy Put* to be burnt. Infuriated by the news that the paper was coming out for all that, Polkovnikov dispatched another detachment of cadets, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel G.V. Hermanovich, to suppress the newspaper and to arrest the editor, Stalin. General Bagratuni, the Chief of Staff of the Military Area, recommended that an armoured car and 30 cyclists should accompany the detachment. The cadets left in four motor trucks. Hermanovich took with him one cyclist and 13 cadets.

When they arrived at the *Rabochy Put* printing plant the cadets found it guarded by Red Guards and soldiers. The Lieutenant-Colonel rode

to the Free-Reason Workers' Club, on the Finland Prospect, and summoning the club manager, ordered him to give up the editor of *Rabochy Put* who, according to the Lieutenant-Colonel's information, was on the club's premises. The arrival of the cadets was reported to the District Soviet. A member of the Soviet arrived and requested the Lieutenant-Colonel to show him his warrant authorising him to enter the club premises and to arrest the editor of *Rabochy Put*. The Lieutenant-Colonel refused to present any such document. Meanwhile, a number of Red Guards arrived and together with some workers who were present in the club, surrounded and disarmed the cadets. The Lieutenant-Colonel was taken to Headquarters of the Red Guard and from there, with the cadets, escorted to the Fortress of Peter and Paul.[17]

At 6:30 p.m., a Militia Inspector and seven militiamen arrived at the printing plant where the newspaper *Rabochy i Soldat* was printed and presented an order prohibiting the publication of the newspaper and of three manifestos of the Military Revolutionary Committee which were in the press. The militiamen began to break up the stereotypes, but succeeded in breaking only one. The workers and two sailors who appeared, drove these representatives of the Provisional Government off the premises and seized the truck in which they had piled the confiscated copies of the paper. Some of the militiamen joined forces with the workers and the inspector quickly made himself scarce. Soon after, the Military Revolutionary Committee sent two platoons from the Preobrazhensky Regiment to guard the printing plant.

Thus, the second attempt of the General Staff of the Petrograd Military Area to suppress the Bolshevik newspapers failed. This was soon followed by a third attempt which was equally unsuccessful.

At 9 p.m., a Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee, at the head of a detachment of sailors, occupied the offices of the Petrograd Telegraph Agency. The director of the agency declared that he would not obey the orders of anybody except the Provisional Government; but the Commissar calmly pushed him aside, sat down at his desk, and demanded that he be shown all communications. Among a heap of telegrams that was brought to him the Commissar found a resolution passed by the Pre-parliament which had only just been sent from the Mariinsky Palace.

For four dreary hours after Kerensky's speech and departure, the various groups in the Pre-parliament had been in constant session. Every minute the deputies telephoned to the Winter Palace and the Smolny; they ran from group to group to learn what decisions had been arrived at. The Socialist-Revolutionaries had already rejected five resolutions. Gradually it became known that several resolutions had been submitted to the Presidium of the Pre-Parliament: one by the Co-operators and Constitutional Democrats, another by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The Cossack group had expressed its intention to submit a third. It looked as if the majority of the Pre-parliament was inclined in favour of the first resolution, but at this juncture information arrived of the movements of

the revolutionary detachments and this served to swing opinion in favour of the second resolution.

Kerensky was kept informed by telephone of the course of the debates in the different groups. Round about 3 in the afternoon, fearing that the members of his party would be unable to secure the adoption of the resolution he desired, he telephoned Senator S. V. Ivanov requesting him to invite all the senators who were members of the Council of the Republic to attend the meeting.

The dreary debates in the groups drew to a close only at 6 p.m., when A.V. Peshekhonov, who acted as chairman, opened the session. Peshekhonov stated that he had before him two motions. The first, which had been submitted on behalf of the Mensheviks, Menshevik-Internationalists and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, read as follows:

> "The revolutionary actions which have been in preparation during the past few days with the object of seizing power, threaten to give rise to civil war, create favourable conditions for a pogrom movement and the mobilisation of the Black Hundred counter-revolutionary forces, and will inevitably result in wrecking the chances of convening the Constituent Assembly, in another military disaster and in the doom of the revolution, accompanied by economic paralysis and the complete collapse of the country. Apart from the objective conditions of the war and the dislocation of industry, the ground for the success of the aforementioned agitation was created by the delay in introducing urgent measures. It is therefore primarily necessary immediately to issue a decree to transfer the land to the jurisdiction of Land Committees, and to make a definite pronouncement on foreign policy calling upon the Allies to state their peace terms and to open negotiations for peace. To combat the active manifestations of anarchy and the pogrom movement it is necessary immediately to adopt measures to liquidate these, and with this object it is necessary to set up in Petrograd a Committee of Public Safety, which shall consist of representatives of the City Council and of the organs of revolutionary democracy, and shall operate in contact with the Provisional Government."[18]

The second motion submitted by the Co-operators and Constitutional Democrats, read as follows:

> "Having heard the Prime Minister's statement, the Provisional Council of the Russian Republic declares that it will render the government every assistance in combating treason to the country and the cause of the revolution and those who in face of the enemy and on the eve of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly resort to the organisation of open revolt in the capital. The Provisional Council demands that the most resolute measures be taken to suppress mutiny and moves that the House pass to the order of the day."[19]

The Cossack deputies supported the motion of the Constitutional Democrats and Co-operators. It was also backed by P.B. Struve, on behalf of the representatives of the Moscow "Conference of Public Men" and by several Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. On being put to the vote, the first motion received 123 votes, 102 votes were cast against it and 26 deputies abstained from voting. Among the latter were the Populist Socialists and a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, including N. V. Tchaikovsky.

With this resolution, carried by such a narrow majority, Avksentyev, the Speaker of the Pre-parliament, Dan, the Menshevik leader, and Gotz, the Socialist-Revolutionary leader, hastened to the Winter Palace where Kerensky and the government were making their final arrangements for combating Bolshevism. Kerensky was summoned from the Cabinet meeting and a long conversation ensued between him and the excited party leaders. Avksentyev officially informed Kerensky of the resolution passed by the Pre-parliament. The latter was shocked. He said it was a challenge to the Provisional Government, and in a tone of extreme irritation he offered to resign and ask the Pre-parliament to form a new government.

Amazed at Kerensky's attitude, Avksentyev tried to calm him, and explained that the resolution did not mean an expression of no confidence in the Provisional Government.

"On the contrary," he said, "the leaders of all the groups which voted for this resolution emphasised that they adhered to their former position and expressed complete readiness to support the government. By including the question of land and peace in the motion, the groups merely wanted to deprive the Bolsheviks of the trump card they were playing in their fight against the Provisional Government by arguing that the latter was indifferent to the vital interests of the people."

"In that case," asked Kerensky irritably, "why doesn't the motion contain the usual parliamentary expression of confidence in the government?"

"This is due to faulty drafting resulting from the haste with which it was drawn up; it is not a deliberate omission," Avksentyev assured him.[20]

Similar statements were made by Gotz on behalf of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and by Dan on behalf of the Mensheviks. Writing about this interview with Kerensky, Dan stated:

> "We came to the Provisional Government with a very definite and concrete proposal that it should immediately adopt vital decisions on the question of the war, the land and the Constituent Assembly, and to inform the population of the decisions by telegrams and posters. We insisted that this should be done without fail that very night, so that in the morning every soldier and every worker might learn of the Provisional Government's decision. . . . The adoption and execution of our proposals by the government will cause a change of mood among the masses and give grounds for hoping that the influence of Bolshevik propaganda will rapidly wane."[21]

Thus, the whole business was a piece of downright deception. The idea was to attempt to win the masses away from the revolution by promising to adopt resolute measures.

V. B. Stankevich, a member of the "Lieber-Dan bloc" and Commissar of the Supreme Command, openly admitted in his reminiscences that the object of this "revolutionary" resolution was once again to hoodwink the masses, who had already been hoodwinked many times before. After relating that Kerensky threatened to resign if the resolution was not amended, Stankevich went on to say:

> "Kerensky's decision astounded them [the compromisers—*Ed.*] for they regarded the resolution as being purely theoretical and fortuitous, and did not anticipate that it would lead to the taking of any practical steps."[22]

The members of the Pre-parliament left the Winter Palace at about 11 p. m. After their departure Kerensky informed the members of the Provisional Government of his conversation with them. The latter considered that resignation was entirely out of the question; that the most resolute measures had to be taken to suppress revolt.

Palchinsky relates that at the meeting a heated "theoretical dispute" arose on the question as to who was imperilling the revolution. In the midst of this dispute news was received that the offices of the Petrograd Telegraph Agency and the Central Telegraph Office had been seized. Rogovsky, a government Commissar, arrived and reported the seizure of the Nikolayevsky Bridge and the advance of the Red Guards towards the Palace Bridge. The revolutionaries were steadily pressing forward to the palace. The government ordered armoured cars and cadets to be rushed to the Petrograd Telegraph Agency, the Central Telegraph Office, and the Baltic Railway Station.

Round about midnight, Kerensky, Palchinsky and several army officers hastened to Petrograd Military Area Headquarters and there found Polkovnikov, the Commander-in-Chief—who during the past few days had been behaving in a very arrogant manner—in a state of utter consternation. His orders were being countermanded by the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee. One after another the regiments were going over to the side of the revolution. The Red Guard, which hitherto had not been taken seriously, had under his very nose, suddenly grown into a formidable force.

Polkovnikov looked to the Winter Palace in anticipation of instructions from Kerensky, but Palchinsky made it plain to him that nothing was to be expected from that quarter. Subsequently, Palchinsky summed up his impression of the situation in the Winter Palace with the one word: "Madhouse."[23]

The mood prevailing at Military Area Headquarters caused Kerensky abruptly to change his plans. An offensive was entirely out of the question. Commenting on the situation at a later date he wrote:

> "It was necessary immediately to take over the command, but not in order to conduct offensive operations against the revolutionaries—it was too late for that now—but to defend the government itself until the arrival of fresh troops from the front and the reorganisation of the government forces in the capital itself."[24]

The Winter Palace again communicated with General Dukhonin, Chief of the General Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, complaining that the units from the front which had been promised Kerensky for the 24th had not yet arrived and requesting that their dispatch be expedited. General Headquarters made soothing promises to speed up the dispatch of these troops.

Late at night the cadets from the military schools and Officers' Training Schools, who up to now had remained in their barracks, were summoned to the Winter Palace. Kerensky ordered all the Cossack troops to be called out to the Palace Square.

Many of the military schools, however, failed to obey the order. The Pavlovsky Military School, for example, reported that it could not turn out as it was afraid of the Grenadier Regiment. Kerensky decided to call out the military organisations of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, but it transpired that no such organisations existed.

At midnight, Polkovnikov, in a state of utter panic, reported to General Headquarters and to the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front, as follows:

> "I hereby report that the situation in Petrograd is menacing. There are no street demonstrations or disorders, but the seizure of government offices and railway stations and arrests are proceeding methodically. Orders are no longer being obeyed. The cadets are surrendering their posts without resistance. Despite repeated orders, the Cossacks have so far remained in their barracks. Appreciating to the full my responsibility to the country, I hereby report that the Provisional Government is in danger of losing all power, and there is no guarantee that attempts will not be made to seize the Provisional Government." [25]

At the very moment when, in accordance with Polkovnikov's "brilliant" plan, the Smolny was to have been captured by a "victorious assault," this same Polkovnikov admitted that the Winter Palace itself was in imminent danger of being captured by the revolutionaries.

The meeting of the Provisional Government ended at 2 a.m. on October 25 (November 7).

Before the meeting ended the government rang up the Petrograd City Council where a special meeting was in progress. G.I. Schreider, the Mayor of Petrograd, who had just arrived from the meeting of the Pre-parliament, reported on the Bolsheviks' actions. He stated that a Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee had appeared at the Special Department for Food Affairs—as the Municipal Food Department was called. Commissars had also appeared in other Municipal Departments. To frighten the members of the City Council, Schreider added on his own account that domiciliary searches would be made in all houses next morning.

An angry debate began in the Council. The Socialist-Revolutionaries, particularly, raved and stormed. One of them, J. T. Dedusenko, shouted, amidst the approval of the whole Chamber, that if the Commissars appeared in any of the Municipal Departments they must be ejected. V. D. Nabokov, a Constitutional Democrat, welcomed Dedusenko's speech. P. N. Milyukov, the leader of the Constitutional Democrats, also supported the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

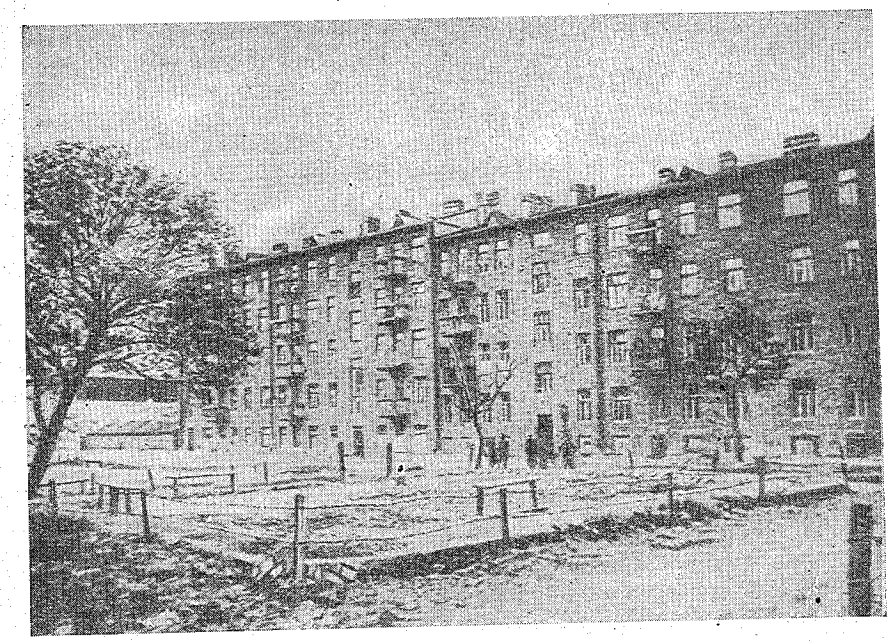
All the speakers strongly emphasised that the City Council had been elected on the basis of universal, direct, equal and secret suffrage, and was the "sole legal representative" of authority. [26] The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks decided to make the City Council the centre around which all the forces opposed to the revolution were to be rallied. In a resolution adopted by a majority of 53 votes against 16, the people of Petrograd were called upon to rally around the City Council. It was decided to adopt the recommendation made in the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik resolution of the Pre-parliament to set up an executive body in the shape of a "Committee of Public Safety," to consist of 20 representatives of the City Duma, 21 representatives of public organisations, 17 representatives of the District Dumas, and one representative each of Military Area Headquarters and the Procurator's Office. Just previous to that, a similar resolution to form a "Committee of Public Safety" had been adopted at a meeting of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

3

AT THE STAFF HEADQUARTERS OF THE REVOLUTION

The preparations for the insurrection were directed by Lenin with unflagging energy. At that time Lenin was hiding in the apartment of M. Fofanova, in the Lesnoi District. For reasons of safety the apartment was visited only by Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, and his sister, Maria Ilyinichna. Meetings between Lenin and Stalin, and conferences with the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, were arranged in other premises. On the instructions of the Central Committee, the Vyborg District Committee of the Party posted Red Guards in plain clothes to keep watch over the house where Lenin lived.

At this apartment Lenin received newspapers, correspondence and messages. The door was opened only in response to a prearranged signal. One evening, Nadezhda Konstantinovna arrived and found a young man at the door. It was Fofanova's nephew, a university student. Nobody was in the flat except Lenin. He had heard the ring at the door and thinking it was



House No. 92/1 on the corner of Sampsonievsky Prospect and Serdobolskaya Street in Petrograd where in Flat No. 42 Lenin lived in hiding after his return from Finland up to October 25 (November 7) 1917

the prearranged signal he went to open the door. On hearing a strange voice, however, he had returned to his room. The student continued to ring. At this moment Nadezhda Konstantinovna arrived.

"I think somebody has got into the flat," he said in alarm.

"What do you mean?" asked Nadezhda Konstantinovna.

"Well, I rang the bell and heard a man's voice answer me. I rang again and again, but nobody opened the door." [27]

The uninvited guest was induced to depart.

Lenin rarely left his hiding place, but one night, rather late, he went out for a walk. He was stopped by a patrol, but finding nothing suspicious about him, they let him go. Lenin walked past the house, fearing to betray his place of hiding.

He returned after a time, but found that the patrol was still where he had left it. As he could not pass into the yard of the house without being observed, he decided to return home another way. He walked to Lanskaya Station and crossed the railway track, but losing his way in the darkness he wandered about all night and arrived home only at daybreak.

Every morning Lenin read a pile of newspapers and immediately after

that he wrote articles and comments for *Pravda*, and messages to the Central Committee.

On the morning of October 24 Lenin, as usual, rapidly perused the newspapers. All signs showed that the climax was approaching. A message was brought informing him of the raid on the *Pravda* offices and of the measures that had been taken by the Central Committee. Office work in the city finished early that day in view of the prevailing alarm, and the landlady of the apartment, on returning home, informed Lenin that the government was raising the bridges and that she had with great difficulty secured a passage across the river on a boat.

Upon receipt of this news Lenin quickly wrote a message to the Central Committee asking for permission to remove to the Smolny.

"Take this message for the Central Committee and return at once," he said to Fofanova. [28]

The landlady took the message to the Vyborg District Committee of the Bolshevik Party, from where it was telephoned to the Central Committee. The reply came that it was still too early for Lenin to leave his refuge.

While Fofanova was away Lenin nervously paced up and down his room, forgetting that he was not supposed to walk about when there was nobody at home lest the people in the flat below should hear his footsteps. On reading the message brought by Fofanova, he at once wrote the following letter:

"Comrades,

I am writing these lines on the evening of the 24th. The situation is critical in the extreme. It is as clear as clear can be that to delay the insurrection now will be absolutely fatal.

"With all the power of conviction at my command I exhort my comrades to realise that everything now hangs by a thread; that we are confronted by problems which cannot be solved by conferences or congresses, even Congresses of Soviets, but exclusively by the people, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed masses.

"The bourgeois onslaught of the Kornilovites and the removal of Verkhovsky show that we cannot afford to wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, first disarming the cadets (defeating them, if they resist).

"We must not wait! We may lose everything!

"The value of seizing power immediately will be that we shall defend the *people* (not the congress, but the people, the army and the peasants in the first place) from the Kornilovite government, which has driven out Verkhovsky and has hatched a second Kornilov plot.

"Who must take power?

"That is not important at present. Let the Military Revolutionary Committee take it, or 'some other body' which will declare that it will relinquish power only to the true representatives of the interests of the people, the interests of the army (an immediate proposal of peace), the interests of the peasants (the land to be taken immediately and private property abolished), the interests of the starving. . . .

"The government is tottering. It must be given the *final push* at all costs.

"Delay will be fatal." [29]

At the very moment that Lenin was writing this letter, Stalin sent a messenger to Lenin's secret apartment with a letter from the Central Committee inviting him to come to the Smolny.

Fofanova, who had carried Lenin's letter to the Smolny, returned to the apartment at 9:30 and already found the dispatch rider, Eino Rahja, sitting in Lenin's room.

For the sake of secrecy and to avoid having an unnecessary witness in the place, Lenin wrote a third message of no particular import and sent Fofanova off with it to the Smolny.

"We shall wait for you until 11 o'clock. If you don't return by that time, I shall consider myself at liberty to do as I please," were his parting words to her. [30]

The streetcars had already stopped running and so Fofanova had to walk. The journey there and back took her about two hours. The whole day had been so tense that Lenin forgot to take the usual precautions. It had been arranged that whenever Fofanova left the flat, the lamp was to be left burning, but screened so as not to be seen from the street. When Fofanova returned, however, she found the place in darkness. She groped for a match and lit the lamp. The place was empty. The table was laid for a meal, but there was no sign of Lenin's overcoat or goloshes. On one of the plates, however, she found the following note:

"I have gone where you did not want me to go. Au revoir, Ilyich." [31]

The leader of the revolution had hastened to the place where the heart of the insurrection was throbbing—the Smolny.

Changing his clothes, pulling a cap over his head, and concealing his face with a large handkerchief, Lenin, accompanied by the messenger, left the house. The streets were deserted. A lone streetcar was hastening to the depot. Lenin jumped into the car and asked the conductress where it was going.

"You're a funny chap. Where do you come from? Don't you know what's going on in town?" she asked in astonishment.

"No, I don't," answered Lenin.

"What sort of a working man are you if you don't know there's going to be a revolution? We're going to kick the bosses out!" the conductress retorted. [32]

Lenin chuckled and eagerly began to tell her how a revolution is made. His companion was on tenterhooks. The car was crowded. Lenin might be recognised and betrayed. Just then the car entered the depot. Lenin and his companion got out and walked. In Shpalernaya Street two mounted cadets overtook them and demanded to see their passes. Rahja entered into

an altercation with them, thus giving Lenin the opportunity to walk on ahead. Evidently, the cadets decided that these were two working men who had been on the spree and let them go.

Arrived at the Smolny after midnight they found that it was no easy matter to get in without a pass. They shouldered their way among a group of men who were arguing with the guard. The crowd kept pressing forward and the guards, unable to withstand the pressure, stepped aside.

"Our side always wins," said Lenin gleefully, pushing his way with the crowd into the Smolny.

Mounting the stairs, he entered a room, sat down by the window, and sent his companion to inform Stalin of his arrival. At this moment a group of Mensheviks entered. Among them Lenin recognised Dan. The group sat down at the table and Dan, puffing and blowing, turned to the man next to him and asked:

"Would you like to have a bite? I have a roll and some sausage."

As he untied the package Dan glanced at Lenin and then stared at him intently. Evidently he recognised him, for he hastily gathered up the food and hurried out of the room. Lenin laughed heartily. A little later, Stalin, accompanied by a group of comrades, entered.

Lenin was quickly informed of the course of events and Stalin reported to him the latest decisions of the Central Committee. From that moment Lenin permanently took up his quarters in the Smolny: at this crucial turn in the course of history, the leader of the revolution took his place at the helm.

The Smolny, formerly an institute for the education of "ladies of noble birth" and now the headquarters of the General Staff of the proletarian revolution, was entirely in the hands of the Bolsheviks. For over 150 years this building had served as a school for the inculcation of "obedience to God and loyalty to the monarch." By command of the Empress Elizabeth, the famous architect Bartolomeo Rastrelli—who had arrived in Russia with his father, the sculptor, in 1716—drew up plans for the erection of a convent. This was to have been one of the most magnificent buildings in the world. Rastrelli intended to erect a belfry in the convent 120 metres high. The building was to cost a colossal sum of money. Thousands of serfs were mobilised for the work. The most skilled masons, carpenters and joiners were assembled from all parts of the country. Special brick yards were built to provide the bricks, and numerous villages were ordered to provide the workers for them. Regiments of soldiers were sent to the quarries to hew stone for the building, and cast-iron tiles were ordered at the Siberian and Tula Iron Works.

But the Empress failed to carry out her capricious plans owing to lack of funds. After her death, only a few rubles were left in the Treasury, but her wardrobe was found to contain over 6,000 dresses. Rastrelli was unable to finish the building as he was engaged to build the Winter Palace. In 1764, in the unfinished building of the Smolny convent the "Society for the Education of Young Ladies of Noble Birth" was founded. This was the first state



"In Shpalernaya Street two mounted cadets overtook them. ..."
From a drawing by E. Mashkevich

educational establishment to be instituted in Russia for the daughters of the nobility.

In 1808, a Widows' Home was built next to the convent under the direction of the well-known architect, Quarenghi. This vast, three-storey building, 200 metres long, with fine columns, lofty vaulted corridors, large, bright rooms, and a splendid columned hall for balls and concerts, was taken over by the Young Ladies' Institute. The widows were transferred to the convent building, which was at last completed.

The Smolny Institute existed right up to 1917. It was not until August 1917 that the Institute was closed, the inmates distributed among other educational establishments, and the building taken over by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets and the Petrograd Soviet. From that day onwards the building became the central rallying point of the workers of Petrograd and the soldiers of the garrison. During the Kornilov mutiny the Smolny served as the headquarters for the defence of the capital.

The Bolshevik group occupied room No. 18. Here the representatives of the factories and revolutionary regiments came for advice and guidance. During the October days the Smolny became the centre of the insurrection.

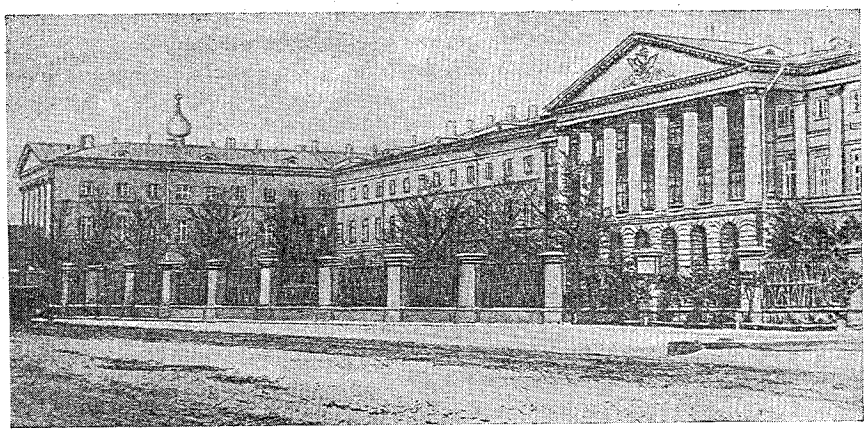
The Military Revolutionary Committee occupied three rooms on the third floor which had previously been occupied by schoolmistresses of the Institute.

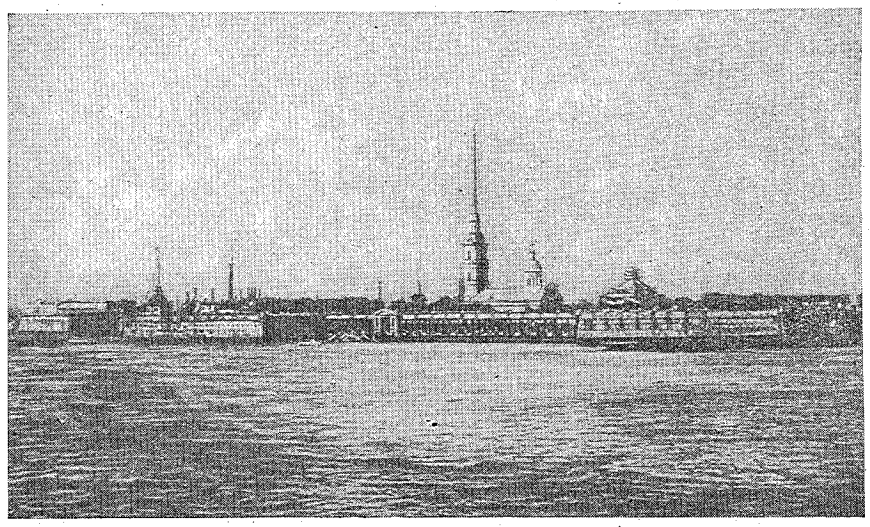
Before the Military Revolutionary Committee took over the rooms they had been occupied by the Military Commission of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Central Executive Committee of Soviets. At that time solemn silence reigned in these rooms. On the tightly closed doors there were neatly written notices indicating the hours of reception. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks spent most of their time at all sorts of co-ordinating committees drawing up, in conjunction with representatives of the Provisional Government, measures for combating the Bolsheviks.

Now, however, the recently silent vaulted corridors of the Smolny echoed with loud voices, the tramp of thousands of feet and the rattle of arms. The rooms of the Military Revolutionary Committee were crowded and noisy. The doors kept swinging to and fro as soldiers arrived to report on the temper prevailing in their regiments and Red Guards came and went with urgent messages.

The Smolny was converted into an armed camp. Patrols were stationed at the gates. Groups of excited workers, Red Guards and soldiers filled the square outside the building. Saddled horses were tethered to the railings, waiting for their riders to gallop off at a moment's notice. Numerous automobiles and motorcycles were parked outside the building. In the wide courtyard, where the ground was churned up by wheels and thousands of feet, campfires were burning. At the magnificent entrance, at which only recently gilded coaches had drawn up, heavy motor trucks drove up laden with arms. The vaulted corridors echoed with the clatter of machine guns, rifles and cases of cartridges as they were dragged along the floor. And

The Smolny Institute





The Fortress of Peter and Paul

the brilliantly illuminated columned hall was filled with workers and soldiers. These were the new masters of the country, the delegates who had arrived for the Congress of Soviets.

Here, too, in the Smolny, Lenin endorsed the final arrangements for the capture of the Winter Palace—the last stronghold of the Provisional Government.

It was decided to surround the Winter Palace on the line formed by the Zimnaya Kanava, the river Moika up to the Mariinsky Square, and then on to the Neva, gradually drawing in towards the exits of the streets which led to the Palace Square. The best units of the Red Guard, the warship crews and the most revolutionary of the Guards Regiments, *viz.*, the Kexholm, Petrograd, Ismailovsky, Pavlovsky, and Chasseur Regiments, were detailed for this operation, which was planned to be completed by noon on the 25th.

The General Staff of the insurrection had its headquarters in the Fortress of Peter and Paul, where the actual operations for the capture of the Winter Palace were directed.

With Lenin's arrival at the Smolny the Military Revolutionary Committee greatly extended its activities. Jointly with his colleagues, Stalin and Sverdlov, Lenin greatly stimulated the revolutionary initiative and independent activities of the masses. He summoned representatives of the Red Guards, the district and factory organisations and the military units and gave them precise and detailed instructions. He sent representatives of the dis-

tricts to the members of the Military Revolutionary Committee, urging them to take immediate measures to facilitate the creation of an overwhelming superiority of forces on the most vital sectors.

All the threads of the insurrection were concentrated in the hands of that brilliant strategist of the proletarian revolution, V. I. Lenin, and of his closest disciples, Stalin and Sverdlov.

On the eve of October 25 (November 7) scores of workers and soldiers—commanders of Red Guard Hundreds and liaison officers—visited Lenin in the Smolny. The representatives of the Putilov Works Committee and of the Narvskaya Zastava Soviet received direct from Lenin most minute instructions as to how to organise the swift and complete capture of power in their districts.

Shortly after Lenin's arrival a group of motor-cyclists left the entrance of the Smolny and sped to the districts and suburbs of Petrograd—they were the harbingers of the insurrection.

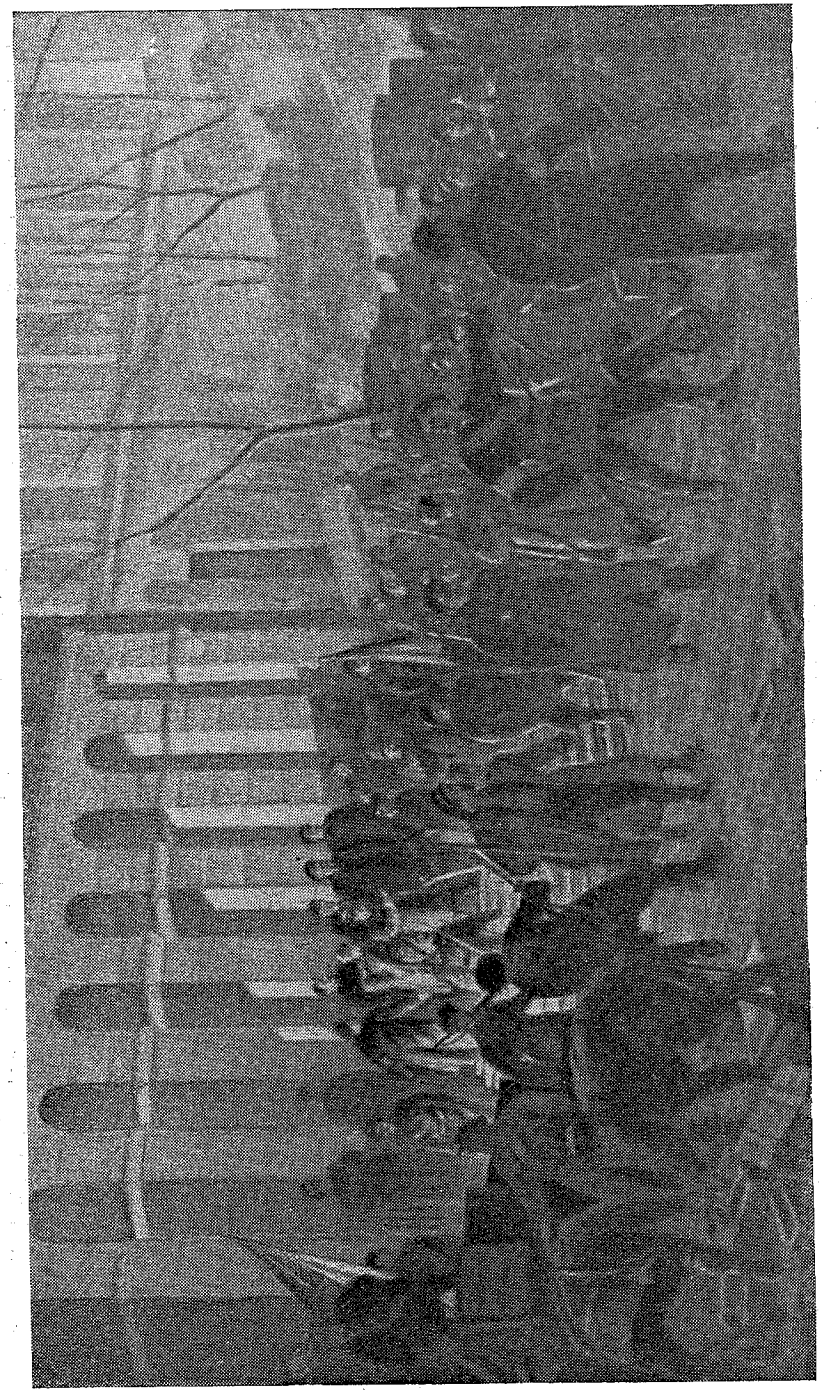
Long after midnight, one of these motor-cyclists stopped outside the premises of the Obukhov District Committee of the Bolshevik Party. Here, for three days and nights the District Military Revolutionary Committee had been in continuous session. The messenger handed the commander of the Red Guard a dispatch. It contained the order to commence operations and detailed instructions.

The moment for which the Bolsheviks of the Obukhov Works had been preparing for so long had arrived. Everybody flocked into the street. The streets and avenues were soon thronged with workers streaming towards the works, near which motor trucks were lined up. The pay office of the works was crowded with workers waiting for arms to be served out. The men registered their names as they arrived, formed into units, received rifles, hand grenades and revolvers, got into the trucks and rode off to the city.

The suburbs, *i.e.*, the working-class quarters, rose; the workers hastened to the rallying points where arms were served out.

In the Moskovskaya Zastava District, a district meeting was held in the club rooms of the Skorokhod Shoe Factory on the evening of the 24th, at which a resolution was adopted in favour of immediate armed action. The meeting ended at 2 o'clock next morning and a section of the Red Guards went straight off to place themselves at the disposal of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

At a shed near the weighbridge, opposite the canteen, cartridges were issued. Men emerged from the shed carrying rifles and with machine-gun cartridge belts round their waists and lined up in the yard for roll call. Detachment after detachment passed through the factory gates and marching at a rapid pace disappeared into the night. Similar detachments left the gates of the Rechkin and Siemens-Schuckert Works. The proletariat of the Moskovskaya Zastava District were on the march to fulfil their duty in the October Revolution.



From a painting by V. Kuznetsov

The Staff Headquarters of the Revolution. The Smolny during the October days 1917

Outside the Putilov Theatre, which only two days before had been the scene of a huge meeting, Red Guard Hundreds were silently lined up. It was all done quietly, quickly, and efficiently. The Red Guard detachments left the works for the District Soviet, and thence to the Smolny. After midnight they marched off to seize the government offices and the railway stations.

Patrols were in the streets throughout the night. The suburbs were deserted. Silence reigned in the Narvskaya Square, broken now and again by the sound of the rapid footsteps of small groups of armed workers hastening along Novosivkovskaya Street to the headquarters of the Soviet.

At the District Party Committees, Military Revolutionary Committees, Red Guard Headquarters and District Soviets the last preparations were hastily being made. In accordance with a prearranged plan, all the members of the Peterhof District Soviet, each accompanied by a small detachment of armed workers of the Red Guard reserve, were detailed to organise feeding centres, the distribution of arms, and the formation of patrols and guard posts. Members of the Putilov Works Committee were sent to assist them, to obtain medical supplies, bandages and automobiles, and to act as liaison officers.

In the Narvskaya Zastava District, the night shifts at the factories remained at work, but each man had his rifle beside him. As soon as the signal was given by the sirens of the Putilov Works, the machines were stopped and the workers, grasping their rifles, hastened to the prearranged place of assembly.

In the Vyborg District, the District Soviet had established control over the Post and Telegraph Offices as early as the evening of the 24th, and had installed a staff of clerks at the Telegraph Office to take copies of all telegrams. By night time, all transport facilities in the district had been requisitioned. All the motor trucks and passenger cars belonging to the factories in the district had been mobilised and were at the disposal of the Soviet.

The district headquarters of the Red Guard were crowded with workers. Here were assembled the Red Guards from all the factories in the district without exception. There was not enough room at headquarters to hold all the arrivals, and the neighbouring premises of the District Soviet had to be requisitioned. The Metal Works sent a detachment and stated that another had been left at the works, but would be sent at the first telephone call.

A detachment of the Vyborg Red Guards, headed by a Commissar appointed by the District Soviet, occupied the Telegraph Office of the Finland Railway Station. Another occupied the Post Office in Lesnaya Street. The Commissar at the Telegraph Office, a Finnish worker, with an air of great authority, held up telegrams in Danish, Swedish, Finnish and Russian. This display of "linguistic ability" at once won the respect of the girl telegraph operators, and they brought him all telegrams for his perusal.

Shortly after midnight the Red Guards of the Rozhdestvensky District posted pickets in their section. On the way to the Taurida Palace they encountered a Cossack patrol. Shots were exchanged and the Cossacks were scattered. By 1 a.m. the Taurida Palace was occupied.

The representatives of the Izhora Works returned to Kolpino from the Smolny, and that very night armoured cars with machine guns left the works for Petrograd. Two armoured cars were retained for the purpose of patrolling the streets of Kolpino itself. That night a Revolutionary Committee was formed which took over control of the town.

The seizure of the vital points of the city of Petrograd proceeded swiftly and methodically. At 1:25 a.m. a unit consisting of Red Guards from the Vyborg District and the Baltic Shipyards, soldiers of the Kexholm Regiment, and a detachment of sailors occupied the General Post Office, which had already been kept under observation by worker pickets from the Kolomna District. At 2 a.m. two strong mixed detachments captured the Nikolayevsky and Baltic Railway Stations. An attempt at resistance was made at the Telegraph Office at the Nikolayevsky Station, but the railwaymen Red Guards, joining the mixed detachment, cleared the office of counter-revolutionaries and arrested the ringleaders. All the telegraph and telephone exchanges were occupied. A Red Guard telegraph operator was put in charge of the telegraph office. The railway depot and the workshops near the American Bridge were captured and guards posted over them.

Meanwhile other revolutionary detachments captured the Electric Power Station and other important establishments in the city. The workers posted guards at the Central Power Station of the Streetcar Service. The station did not cease to function for a moment, and the streetcar employees were able without interruption to perform their duty of maintaining connections and transporting Red Guards to different parts of the city.

Here and there the counter-revolutionaries tried to check the impetuous advance of the Red Guards. At night the Staff of the Petrograd Military Area made attempts with the aid of cadets to recapture the Petrograd Telegraph Agency and the Central Telegraph Office, which the revolutionaries had occupied that evening. Skirmishes with cadets occurred at some of the bridges. These attempts, however, were thwarted by the revolutionary soldiers and Red Guards.

About 3 a.m. the Pavlovsky Regiment threw a cordon across Millionnaya Street, near the Winter Palace, and held up a car containing cadets from the Winter Palace who were going to seek assistance from the Committee of the Order of the Chevaliers of St. George.

In the same street a patrol of Red Guards and soldiers held up a car in which were Kartashev, the Minister for Public Worship, and A. Galperin, the Director of the Chancellery of the Provisional Government, who were returning home after an all night meeting of the Cabinet. They were arrested and taken to the Smolny.

The Supreme Commissar, Stankevich, was also arrested and taken to a Regimental Committee but was soon released.

The Military Revolutionary Committee sent the following order to the cruiser *Aurora*:

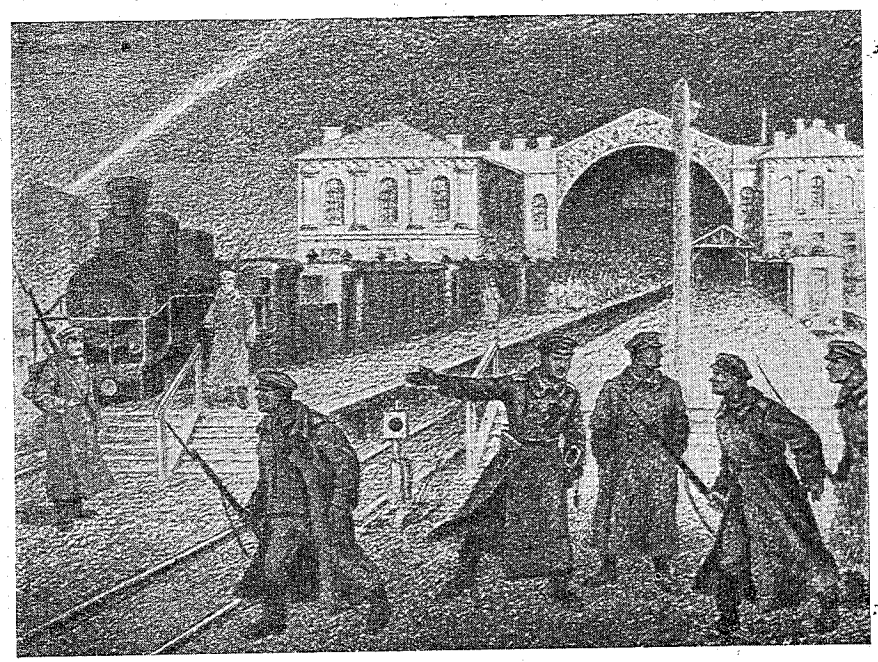
"To the Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on the cruiser *Aurora*: The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies hereby orders you to restore traffic across the Nikolayevsky Bridge with all the means at your command."[33]

The *Aurora* had been undergoing repairs in the Franco-Russian Shipyard and had intended to go out on a trial run on October 22 (November 4). The Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet (the Centrobalt), however, had ordered the sailors to remain in Petrograd as the *Aurora's* guns might be needed in Petrograd any day.

On the night of the 23rd, the Provisional Government, in preparing to strike its blow at the revolution, ordered the *Aurora* to put to sea. The sailors however, applied to the Military Revolutionary Committee for instructions. The latter sent the following order:

"Don't put to sea. Sending Commissar with full instructions."[34]

Troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee capture the Baltic Station
From a drawing by T. Travin





Troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee occupy the General Post office
From a drawing by B. Vladimirsky

On receiving the order of the Military Revolutionary Committee to occupy the Nikolayevsky Bridge, the Commissar gave the order to get up steam and weigh anchor. While these preparations were being made the Commissar got in touch with the 2nd Baltic Reserve Crew and ordered it to occupy the bridge and restore traffic under cover of the *Aurora's* guns. When the cruiser was ready to put off the commander refused to navigate her. "I am afraid I shall run her aground," he said, in an attempt to avoid taking part in the fight. The Commissar ordered soundings of the fairway of the Neva to be taken, and it was found that the vessel could pass without difficulty. All the officers were forthwith arrested and the order given to weigh anchor. At the very last moment the commander consented to direct the operation. At 3:30 a.m., the *Aurora* dropped anchor at the bridge. The crew dispersed the cadets who were guarding it and swung the bridge to.

At daybreak the Red Guard of the Kolomna District, in conjunction with the sailors of the *Aurora* and a company of Marine Guards captured the Hotel Astoria, which had served as a hotel for army officers, and occupied the place after clearing out the officers. A detachment of workers from the Ericson Works captured the Riding School and the Military Technical School in Karavannaya Street.

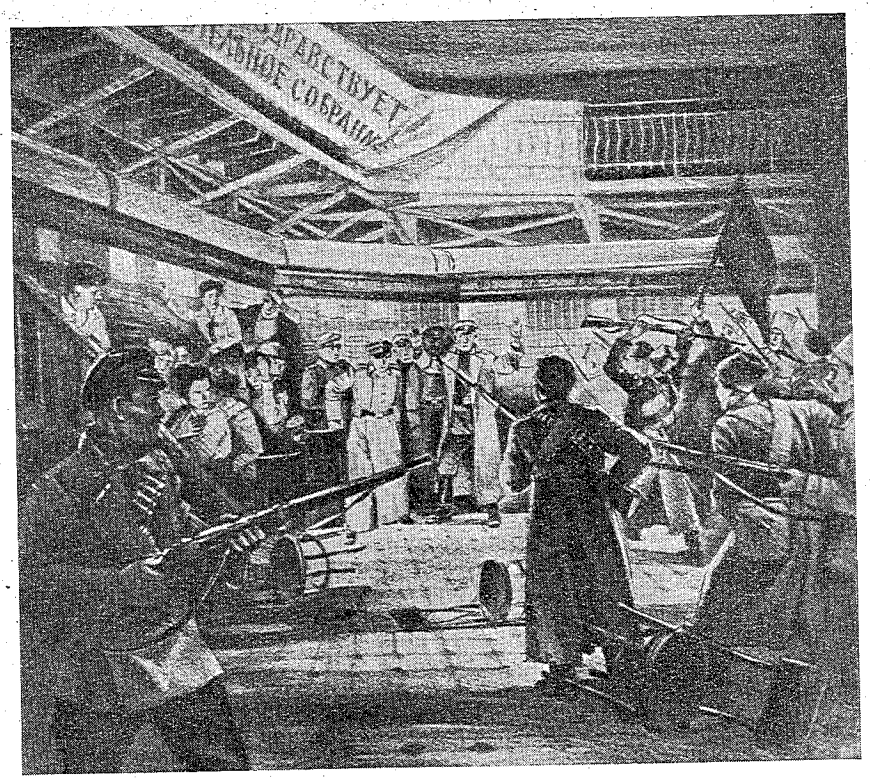
At 6 a.m. on October 25 (November 7) a detachment of 40 men of the Marine Guards in conjunction with men from the Kexholm Regiment,

penetrated the State Bank by way of the guardroom and occupied it without encountering any resistance. In the guardroom there were men of the Semyonovsky Regiment who stated that they were on the side of the Military Revolutionary Committee and would feel disgraced if they were removed from the guard. They were allowed to remain together with the Marine Guards Detachment.

The order to occupy the Central Telephone Exchange was given at about 4 a.m. The Putilov Works Committee and the Vyborg District Red Guard Headquarters received instructions to send detachments to Morskaya Street at a given hour. The Kexholm Regiment received similar orders. A detachment of Red Guards from the Pipe Works was instructed "to deliver at the Telephone Exchange from the food base at the Narvskaya Zastava, provisions for 300 telephone girls."

M. Prigorovsky, Commissar of the Kexholm Regiment with two companies of soldiers marched to the Telephone Exchange. At about 7 a.m. the Red

Troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee capture the Central Telephone Exchange
From a drawing by N. Pavlov



Guards from the Pipe Works arrived with 300 loaves of bread, 300 tins of meat, and a quantity of sugar and tea.

The gates of the Telephone Exchange were found to be ajar and guarded by a cadet sentry. The Red Guards and soldiers rushed the gates and entered the courtyard without firing a shot. An armoured car in the yard was captured—the machine gunners in it were asleep.

Cadets came running from all the doors into the narrow courtyard. Rifle bolts clicked. Taking advantage of the darkness, the commander of the revolutionary detachment commanded in a loud voice: "Unload!" The cadets, not knowing who had given the command, unloaded their rifles. whereupon the Red Guards and the Kexholm men quickly surrounded and disarmed them.

Ivan Gaza, a worker at the Putilov Works, who was on duty on the premises of the Peterhof District Soviet, wanted to telephone to the Smolny to report that he had carried out the order to issue provisions for the telephone operators. He rang up just at the moment when the Red Guards were capturing the Telephone Exchange. For a long time he could not get connected, but at last he heard a gruff male voice in the receiver:

"I can't connect you. The telephone girl has fainted."

As soon as the Telephone Exchange was captured the telephones of the Winter Palace and the Petrograd MilitaryArea Headquarters were disconnected. This greatly hindered the government and Military Area Headquarters in maintaining communications with their troops and governing bodies. They were compelled to use dispatch riders in automobiles, but even this means of communication was soon interrupted by patrols of Red Guards and revolutionary troops.

By tbe morning the sailors and Red Guards had captured the last remaining section of the Palace Bridge abutting on the Winter Palace. That morning Kerensky, in a state of alarm, entered in his diary: "The Palace Bridge (under the windows of my rooms) has been occupied by Bolshevik sailor pickets."[35]

At 8 a.m. the revolutionary troops and workers from the Moskovskaya Zastava gained complete control of the Warsaw Railway Station.

Thus, step by step, the detachments of Red Guards, sailors and soldiers, captured the vital centres and the most important tactical points in the capital. Every step of progress was reported to the Smolny. Every 10 or 15 minutes the Military Revolutionary Committee received news of the successful achievement of their objectives by the revolutionary forces.

4

THE FLIGHT OF KERENSKY

The Provisional Government exerted its last efforts to muster a force for its defence.

At 2:20 a.m. on October 24 (November 6), General Levitsky, Kerensky's Adjutant, telephoned General Headquarters and conveyed two urgent telegrams from Kerensky as Supreme Commander-in-Chief, to General Dukhonin, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front, categorically demanding that the orders they contained be obeyed forthwith. The first telegram read as follows:

> "I order you, on the receipt of this, to dispatch by rail to Petrograd, Nikolayevsky Station, all the regiments of the 5th Caucasian Cossack Division with all their artillery, the 23rd Don Cossack Regiment, and all the other Cossack units in Finland under the general command of the chief of the 5th Caucasian Cossack Division, where they are to place themselves at the disposal of Colonel Polkovnikov, the chief of the Petrograd Military Area. Inform me by coded telegram of units' departure. In the event of it being impossible to dispatch by rail, send units in echelons in marching order."[36]

In the second telegram, Kerensky ordered the regiments of the lst Don Cossack Division, which were distributed along the Northern Front, to be collected and dispatched to Petrograd. He took the precaution to add that the regiments be dispatched by road if the railwaymen prevented them from obtaining transport. It was mainly the Cossacks that Kerensky relied upon to defend the Winter Palace.

On receiving Kerensky's telegram, Dukhonin immediately called up General S. G. Lukirsky, Chief of Staff of the Northern Front.

The General reported that two regiments of the lst Don Cossack Division had just reached Reval, and that two others had in the morning of October 24 left for the First Army to disarm an infantry division which had refused to obey orders.

Dukhonin ordered the General to dispatch any Cossack unit that was available, as the situation brooked no delay. To confirm this he added that he had just received the following telegram from Kerensky's Adjutant-General:

> "Actually, at the present moment, the Petrograd garrison, with the exception of a few units, is on the side of the Bolsheviks, or else neutral. Evidently, the Winter Palace is surrounded, and events are taking a grave turn. Inform Cheremisov of this. Probably, it will soon be impossible for me to communicate with you, Levitsky."[37]

Northern Front Headquarters answered that all the necessary orders had been issued. The first to arrive in Petrograd would be companies of



The Women's Shock Battalion guarding the Winter Palace

the Cycle Battalion, which were already at Batetskaya Station, waiting to entrain.

Towards morning Dukhonin called up Levitsky at the Winter Palace. "I am very glad to be able to talk to you," he said,[38] and then reported all the measures General Headquarters and the Staff of the Northern Front had taken. The 44th Infantry Division with two batteries, the 5th Caucasian Cossack Division with its artillery, and the 43rd Don Cossack Regiment were being sent to Petrograd. Furthermore, the 13th and 15th Don Regiments with their artillery were being dispatched from the Northern Front, and the regiments of the lst Don Cossack Division, which had been sent to the First Army, had been ordered to change their route and go to Petrograd. The 3rd and 6th Cycle Battalions were already proceeding along the railway, and Dukhonin suggested that "trustworthy persons" should be sent out to meet them. He also suggested to the Staff of the Northern Front that the units they sent should be accompanied by elected representatives of the Army Committees. It was the mission of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to incite the troops against the revolution.

In conclusion, Dukhonin requested Levitsky to give a brief description of the situation which could be communicated to all the fronts.

Levitsky gave him a detailed account of the latest events. Sailors had arrived from Kronstadt. The bridges which had been swung open had now been swung to by the revolutionary detachments. The whole city was covered with a network of guard posts. The Central Telephone Exchange was in the hands of the Bolsheviks. The Winter Palace was surrounded.

> "On the whole," said General Levitsky in conclusion, urgently requesting that troops be dispatched from the front, "the impression one gets is that the Provisional Government is, as it were, in the capital of a hostile state, which has completed the mobilisation of its forces, but has not yet commenced active operations."[39]

At about 4 a. m. on October 25, Kerensky arrived at Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area, but the news he heard there was anything but consoling. The key positions were in the hands of the enemy; reinforcements could not be obtained anywhere; the units which had promised to assist had gone over to the side of the revolutionaries.

He called a conference at Military Area Headquarters, at which it was decided to call out the 1st, 4th and 14th Don Cossack Regiments which were stationed in Petrograd. The following telephone message was sent out to these regiments.

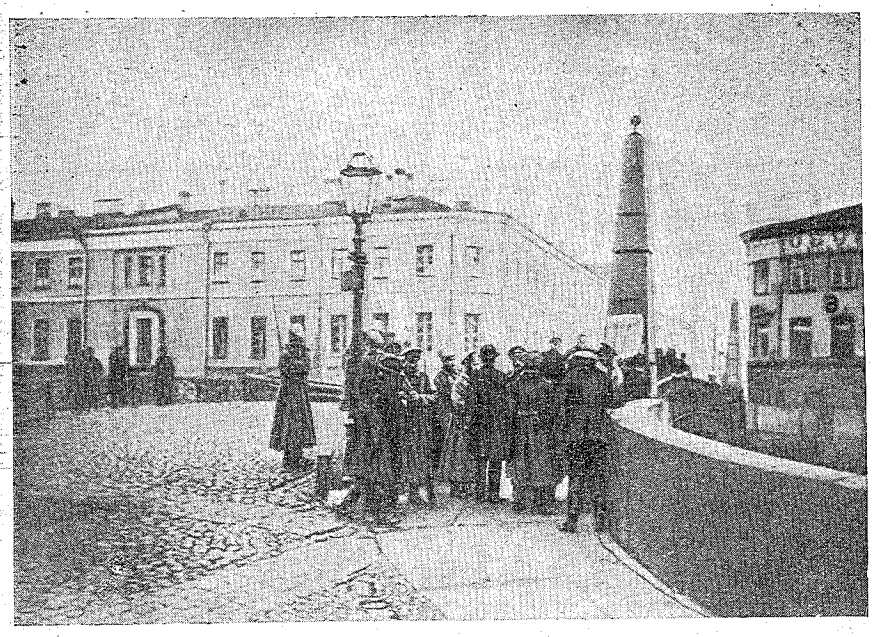
> "In the name of the freedom, honour and glory of our country, and the salvation of dying Russia, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief orders the 1st, 4th and 14th Cossack Regiments to come to the assistance of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets of revolutionary democracy and of the Provisional Government."[40]

This message was signed by Major-General Bagratuni and countersigned by Malevsky, the Commissar of the Central Executive Committee.

The Cossacks were aware that their barracks were completely surrounded by Red Guard patrols and that thousands of workers from the Moscow, Narva and Peterhof Districts would come pouring into the streets at any moment in order to prevent them from taking action. They enquired of Headquarters whether the infantry would act with them. If not, they would not move, they said.

Early in the morning, Kerensky left the Petrograd Military Area Headquarters and returned to the Winter Palace.

Here there was a shortage of provisions. In concentrating in the palace a large force numbering about 1,600, the government had not dreamed that it would be cut off from the outside world in the course of a single day and had made no arrangements to take in a sufficient stock of provisions. On the night of the 24th, the food crisis in the palace was already so acute that cadets had to be sent out on a foraging expedition. A motor truck containing cadets in quest of provisions was held up by Red Guards at the Nikolayevsky Railway Station and taken to the Smolny.



A patrol of the Military Revolutionary Committee examining pedestrians' papers in a street in Petrograd during the October days

Meanwhile, the forces on which the Provisional Government depended continued to dwindle. Subsequently, Kerensky wrote:

> "The cadets, who were in excellent spirits at first, began to lose heart. Later, unrest broke out among the Armoured Car Detachment. Every minute of fruitless waiting for reinforcements caused the 'fighting efficiency' of both units to deteriorate."[41]

After a meeting held in the Mikhailovsky Riding School, the majority of the men of the Armoured Car Detachment went over to the side of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Later, at 11 a. m. on October 25, the entire detachment appeared at the Smolny and placed itself at the disposal of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

The Winter Palace had only one armoured car left, the *Akhtyrets*, the crew of which stated that it intended to defend the palace as "a monument of artistic value."[42]

Another meeting of the government was called. Cabinet Ministers, army officers and couriers hurried to and fro between the Winter Palace and the Military Area Headquarters. From all sides rumours came pouring in, each more alarming than the other. The situation became extremely tense.

At the meeting of the Cabinet Kerensky stated that he was leaving the palace, for, he said, he had "decided . . . personally to meet the approaching . . . troops."[43] At 11 a.m. on October 25, he left Petrograd. Subsequently, Kerensky stated that he left the Winter Palace in his own car, but the news of his departure, as he put it, "reached the Allied Embassies . . . how, I do not know. . . ."[44] As a matter of fact, Kerensky fled under cover of the flag of a foreign Embassy.

Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Petrograd, stated in his memoirs the following:

> "About ten in the morning [on October 25—*Ed.*] Kerensky sent out an officer to try to get him another motor. The officer found Whitehouse, one of the secretaries of the United States Embassy, and persuaded him to lend Kerensky his car with the American flag. They drove back together to the Winter Palace. After telling Whitehouse that he proposed driving to Luga to join the troops which had been summoned from the front, he begged him to ask the Allied Ambassadors not to recognise the Bolshevik government, as he hoped to return on the 12th [October 30, Old Style—*Ed.*] with sufficient troops to re-establish the situation."[45]

Sir George Buchanan's version of Kerensky's flight is fully supported by the statements made by the officers who accompanied Kerensky. For example, B. I. Knirsch, Adjutant of the chief of the Automobile Unit of the Petrograd Military Area, related that at 10 a. m. he was called to Staff Headquarters where Colonel Polkovnikov instructed him to procure two cars for Kerensky, who intended to go out to meet the approaching troops. He advised him to apply to one of the Embassies. Knirsch obtained a car from an American and together with the Military Attaché of the United States Embassy he returned to Staff Headquarters. When the car flying a foreign flag came out on the square the Red Guards allowed it to pass.

It was not by "accident" that Kerensky found a foreign car; and the car did not keep "at a respectable distance." The foreign flag enabled the head of the Provisional Government of Russia to flee from revolutionary Petrograd.

The revolution swept on with irresistible force. Every attempt on the part of the Provisional Government to resist the triumphant progress of the insurrection was immediately thwarted. The Cabinet Ministers could do nothing else but lock themselves in the Winter Palace and wait fruitlessly for the arrival of troops from the front.

5

OCTOBER 25 (NOVEMBER 7)—THE FIRST DAY OF THE VICTORIOUS SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

On the morning of October 25 (November 7), the proletariat was in command of all the decisive and tactically important points of the capital. Only the Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area and the Winter Palace were left in the hands of the government. The insurrection was successful. At 10 a.m., the Military Revolutionary Committee issued the following manifesto to the citizens of Russia:

> "The Provisional Government has been overthrown. State power has been transferred to the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—the Military Revolutionary Committee—which is at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison.
>
> "The success of the cause for which the people have been fighting—the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landlordism, the institution of workers' control of industry and the formation of a Soviet Government—is ensured.
>
> "Long live the workers', soldiers' and peasants' revolution!"[46]

The manifesto was signed by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

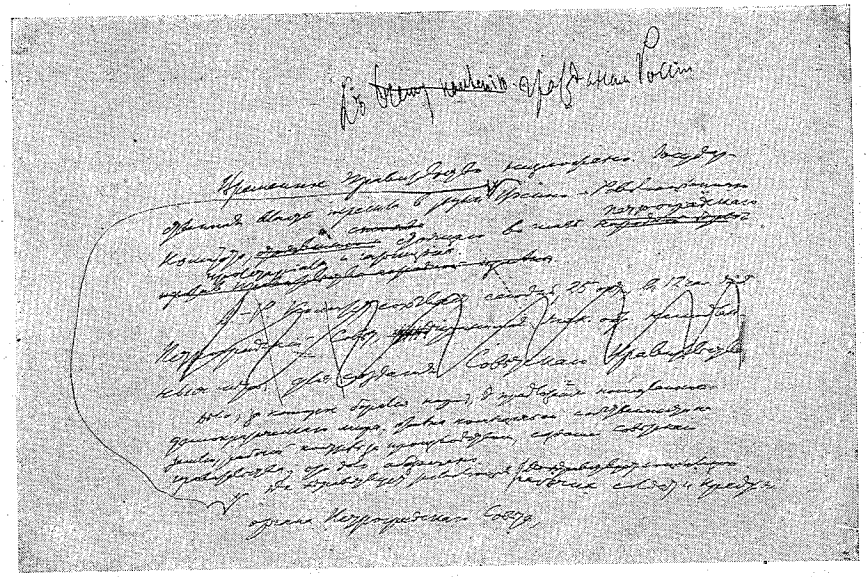
That very morning the manifesto was telegraphed to all the industrial centres. It exercised enormous revolutionary influence upon the working class throughout the country and facilitated the rapid transfer of power to the local Soviets. Wherever the news of the victory in Petrograd penetrated, the masses of the proletariat rose up for the struggle.

The forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee steadily grew. At the Smolny reinforcements arrived from the working-class suburbs. All the districts sent detachments. Transport facilities were obtained and stocks of arms and provisions were laid in. Arms were quickly obtained from the arsenal in the Fortress of Peter and Paul and conveyed to the different factories.

Meanwhile, work at the factories continued and the tram service was maintained without interruption. Just before the insurrection the Petrograd wood-workers went on strike. On the day of the insurrection, however, the strike committee called upon all the strikers to resume work forthwith. The resolution adopted by the committee stated:

> "During these days, every worker must be at his post and prove his loyalty to the new government."[47]

A strike was also in progress at the sawmills in the Narva District, but members of the strike committee came to the Committee of the Bolshevik Party and stated that they were calling off the strike, that they desired to join in the insurrection, and placed themselves at the service of the Military Revolutionary Committee. They were forthwith instructed to organise a detachment and send it to the Smolny.



Facsimile of rough draft of the Manifesto "To the Citizens of Russia" written by Lenin

The telephones in the offices of the factory committees rang continuously; the district staffs of the Red Guard were calling out the detachments. The Red Guards captured the last remaining government offices in the city and its environs.

The Red Guard detachments of the Rosenkranz Works and Metal Works disarmed the cadets of the Mikhailovsky Artillery School. In the Narva District, the Red Guards occupied No. 2 Gorokhovaya Street, the offices of the Chief of Police of Petrograd. The revolutionary troops captured the trunk telegraph line connecting Petrograd with Moscow, Kiev, and Reval. In the Vyborg District the workers occupied the Kresty Prison and released the Bolsheviks who had been arrested and confined there by the Provisional Government in July. A detachment from the Sestroretsk Small Arms Factory received the order to disarm the cadets at the Military Engineers' School.

The revolutionary troops occupied the Central Firearms Depot. From here cases of revolvers were taken and distributed to the factories. The Putilov Shipyard received a thousand, and a large quantity was also received by the Franco-Russian Works. Fresh detachments of Red Guards were dispatched to the Smolny.

The streets in the working-class districts were thronged. Here and there groups gathered and animatedly exchanged impressions of the events of

the last few hours. Motor trucks filled with armed soldiers and workers dashed through the streets scattering copies of the manifesto of the Military Revolutionary Committee. The streets near the centre of the city were quieter. The Nevsky Prospect was deserted. The patrols would not allow anyone to pass beyond the Kazan Cathedral. Here the tension of an unfinished battle was felt.

Lenin demanded that the last places of refuge of the Provisional Government—the Winter Palace and the Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area—should be occupied as speedily as possible. Representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee went to the factories to rally the workers and to organise fresh detachments of the Red Guard.

The Petrograd garrison detailed its strongest units to capture the Winter Palace. At 11 a.m. on October 25, anti-aircraft guns were brought to the Smolny. The Armoured Car Detachment which had come over to the side of the Military Revolutionary Committee also arrived at the Smolny and was immediately dispatched to the palace.

The 6th Rear Automobile Repair Company sent a representative to the Smolny to announce its adherence to the insurrection. The company was ordered to facilitate the transfer of Red Guards and troops to the Winter Palace, and to transport arms to the working-class districts. The company's garage immediately sent trucks, which they had refused to send to Military

Red Guards examining passes at the entrance to the Smolny





A Red Guard picket in Petrograd during the October days 1917

Area Headquarters on the pretext that they were out of repair. At noon, the ring around the Winter Palace and Military Area Headquarters began to close in. The line ran from the river Moika, through the Field of Mars to the Mariinsky Square, with its flanks resting on the Neva. Fresh detachments of Red Guards and revolutionary soldiers continuously arrived at different points of this line. By morning, seven companies of the Kexholm Regiment had occupied the approaches on the left flank of the cordon and had joined the Red Guard units of the 2nd City (Kolomna) District, *viz.*, of the Franco-Russian Works. The Pavlovsky Regiment took up a position on the right, along Millionnaya Street, and placed outposts in the adjacent streets. In the afternoon 11 trucks, mounted with anti-aircraft guns arrived at the Headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee from the Putilov Works. These machines, together with the cars of the Armoured Car Division, were distributed along the whole cordon. Two anti-aircraft guns and two armoured cars were placed at the disposal of the Pavlovsky Regiment.

At noon, the troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee surrounded the Mariinsky Palace. A meeting of the Pre-parliament had been called for that day and many of the deputies had gathered there. As soon as the speaker, N. D. Avksentyev, arrived he was surrounded by the excited deputies and bombarded with anxious questions. What interested everybody most of all was the whereabouts of Kerensky. Avksentyev assured them all that Kerensky had gone to the front for a brief visit and would return shortly to Petrograd.

Suddenly, the news was received that the palace was surrounded by Red Guards and a company of the Lithuanian Regiment. Later, companies of the Kexholm Regiment and of the Marine Guards, supported by an armoured car, arrived. The deputies were ordered to leave the premises. Avksentyev hastily called a meeting of representatives of the different political groups, at which it was decided to express an emphatic protest against the resort to force. After the meeting Avksentyev managed to run into the Chamber where about 100 deputies were gathered. By a majority vote the deputies resolved to "yield to force" and disperse. As soon as the deputies left, the palace was occupied by the revolutionary detachments.

The soldiers demanded the arrest of the Constitutional Democrats, but the commander, who examined the deputies' papers, replied: "We shall always have time to arrest those who warrant arrest."[48]

Detachments of sailors hastened to the assistance of the Petrograd proletariat. On the evening of October 24, a special meeting of the Kronstadt Executive Committee of the Soviets was held. After hearing the report of the delegates of the Military Revolutionary Committee on the situation in the capital, the meeting decided forthwith to send a mixed unit of sailors of the Baltic Fleet to Petrograd. A number of measures were decided on to ensure the Soviet complete control in Kronstadt. At 1 a.m. the general meeting of the Soviet approved the proposal of the Executive Committee. Early in the morning of October 25, a huge mass meeting was held in Yakornaya Square. Above the heads of the vast crowd waved flags and streamers bearing the inscriptions: "Long Live the Power of the Soviets!" "Down with the Provisional Government!" In passionate speeches the Kronstadt sailors expressed their readiness to take part in the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie.

By 8 a.m., the embarkation of seven detachments was completed. The first to sail for Petrograd was the minelayer *Amur* on which the Revolutionary Staff had its headquarters. The seventh detachment, which brought up the rear, had a special commission, *viz.*, in co-operation with the garrison of Strelna and Peterhof, immediately to occupy the line of the Baltic Railway and the Baltic Railway Station, to disarm the cadets and the students at the Marine Guard School, to establish communication with Luga and Pskov, and to land a force at Oranienbaum under cover of the 12-inch guns of the battleship *Zarya Svobody*, one of the vessels that had left Kronstadt.

At 2 p.m., a flotilla of Kronstadt ships with a detachment of sailors appeared at the estuary of the Neva. The detachment consisted of the men of the Naval Engineers' School, the Naval Torpedo Gunners' School, the Motor Engineers' School, a half-company of Kronstadt Marine Guards, and the crews of the warships *Slava, Narodovolets, Aziya, Pulkovo* and *Okean*, and the destroyer *Pryamislav*. It also included a detachment of workers from the Kronstadt shipyards.

The active Baltic Fleet sent five fighting ships, headed by the cruiser *Oleg*.

As had been arranged, the battleship *Zarya Svobody* stopped at Ligov where, under cover of her 12-inch guns, the seventh detachment of sailors landed at the Lifeboat Station and began to disarm the cadets of the Oranienbaum and Peterhof Military Schools. At 8 p.m. the sailors arrived in Petrograd, having occupied the whole line of the Baltic Railway.

The Helsingfors Detachment, which arrived in Petrograd by railway, consisted of 1,500 sailors. Among them were men from the Coastal Mine Defence Company, sailors from the warships anchored at Helsingfors, commandos of Sveaborg Marine Guards and commandos from the Helsingfors hospital.

The Petrograd sailors occupied the Naval Port with its radio station, and the new Admiralty, where the leading Naval Staff officers were arrested.

After Kerensky's departure Konovalov presided at the meetings of the Cabinet in the Winter Palace. The Cabinet decided to remain in the Winter Palace and to defend it until the arrival of the troops from the front. An appeal to the country was drawn up on those lines. It was deemed necessary to dismiss Colonel Polkovnikov.

Stankevich, the Supreme Commissar of General Headquarters, communicated with General Dukhonin by direct wire, enquiring whether the troops that had been requested were coming. The latter answered that the troops had been dispatched and would soon reach Petrograd.

"Have you really not yet received news of their approach?" asked Dukhonin. "I have been informed that you have sent somebody out to meet them. . . . What is the Constantinovsky Military School and the Nikolayevsky Cavalry School doing? Probably there are others. . . . I think you ought to be able to find sufficient forces. All you have to do is to organise this business properly; meanwhile the troops from the front will arrive. . . ."

"I think," answered Stankevich, "that the commanders of the approaching echelons should be advised that if the Staff of the Petrograd Military Headquarters are unable to give them instructions on their arrival they should leave a guard at the railway station and immediately proceed to Area Headquarters and to the Winter Palace, in spite of any obstacles they may encounter in the streets."

Dukhonin ended the conversation by saying:

"I think it is essential to send trustworthy persons from Petrograd to meet the approaching troops two or three stations before Petrograd. . . . Moreover, I have asked Shtasev (abbreviation of Staff of the Northern Front—*Ed.*) to send representatives of Army or Front Committees with the troop trains."[49]

General Bagratuni, Chief of Staff of the Military Area, summoned to the meeting of the Cabinet, reported that there were too few troops to defend the government. They could rely only on those forces which were concentrated at the Winter Palace. The Cabinet decided to appoint a special commissioner for the defence of the Provisional Government. The Menshevik Nikitin nominated Palchinsky for this post, but the majority, including the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Ministers, voted for the Constitutional Democrat Kishkin, who at the Congress of the Constitutional Democratic Party held in Moscow in the autumn of 1917, had promised to "infuse spirit" into the government. Subsequently, Nikitin explained Kishkin's appointment as follows:

"Evidently he was appointed because, being a Cadet, it would have been easier for him, morally, to undertake the responsibility of issuing order for bloody reprisals than it would have been for the Socialist Ministers." [50]

This once again exposes the mean and despicable souls of these petty-bourgeois politicians. Preparing for bloody reprisals against the working class the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks put the arrangement of this in reliable hands. In the event of failure, they would be able to wash their hands of the affair and throw the blame on the Constitutional Democrats.

P. Palchinsky and P. Ruthenberg were appointed Kishkin's assistants. This newly hatched military dictator, jointly with Palchinsky and the Chief of Staff of the Petrograd Military Area, immediately began to take defensive measures. Kishkin dismissed Colonel Polkovnikov and set to work himself to organise the defence of the Winter Palace until the arrival of the troops from the front; but not even a plan of the palace was available. The fighting spirit of the officers and cadets dwindled. In his memoirs Palchinsky noted "consternation and apathy among the officers, and dismay among the cadets."[51]

To rouse the spirit of the cadets they decided to make a sortie. Stankevich took a company of cadets from the Engineer Officers' Training School to recapture the Mariinsky Palace, but when they got there they found it guarded by armoured cars. Stankevich, however preferred to have a try at the Telephone Exchange in Morskaya Street. Breaking up into two half-companies, the cadets thought they would be able to surprise the guard at the Exchange. "Those yokels will see that we are in earnest and they will at once climb down,"[52] said Stankevich, sending one half-company by a round-about route, and himself leading the other to the building by the direct route.

But the "yokels" caught sight of the cadets and sounded the alarm. A machine gun was turned on the approaching cadets and the entire half-company at once scattered. Soon firing ceased. The telephone girls flocked into the street and informed the cadets that the Exchange was full of soldiers who controlled all telephone conversations.

The cadets were preparing to return to the attack, but at this juncture a secretary of the French Embassy arrived and warned them that their rear was threatened. Red Guards armed with machine guns had taken up a position at the corner of Gorokhovaya Street and the Moika. Stankevich requested the secretary to inform the other half-company and the Winter Palace, and hastened to withdraw. The other half-company was surrounded by Red Guards on the Nevsky Prospect and disarmed.

The sortie failed. This was the only attempt of the forces of the Provisional Government to engage in active operations. After this fiasco, the government locked itself in the palace and took to the defensive, in expectation of the arrival of reinforcements from the front.

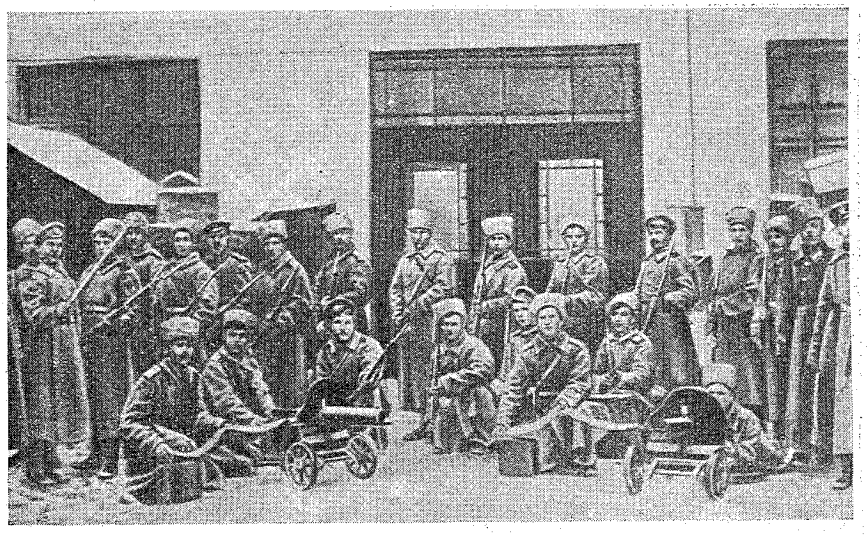
At about 2 p.m. on October 25 (November 7) Nikitin, the Minister for the Interior, rang up the City Council from the Winter Palace. Taking advantage of the inexperience of the Revolutionary Military Committee's controller, the Telephone Exchange operator stealthily put Nikitin through. He informed the Council of the occupation of the Telephone Exchange and requested that representatives of the Council be sent there. He also demanded assistance, primarily provisions.

At the City Council the second meeting of the "Committee of Public Safety" was opened at 3 p.m. The first meeting had been held in the morning, and it had been decided to organise local "Committees of Public Safety" in all the districts, to be headed by the Chairmen of the District Municipal Councils. The question had also been raised of organising house committees, ostensibly for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of the inhabitants.

At the second meeting of the "Committee of Public Safety" it was decided to organise what was called a Civil Guard, consisting of property-owners, government officials and office clerks. It was also proposed that a supplementary "bourgeois guard" be formed. Lieutenant U. P. Mazurenko, who commanded the Provisional Government's punitive detachments in the July days, was appointed chief of the Civil Guard.

At this meeting Schreider, the Mayor of Petrograd, reported that he had received a request for aid from the Minister for the Interior, Nikitin. The "Committee of Public Safety" immediately dispatched a truckload of provisions, but this was intercepted by the revolutionary patrols. Two members of the City Council—A. D. Korotnyev, a Constitutional Democrat, and Zakharov, a Socialist-Revolutionary, were sent to the Telephone Exchange. At 3 p.m. the City Council's cars appeared in Morskaya Street but the drivers, fearing that they would be fired at, categorically refused to go any further. The Councillors were obliged to get out and walk. On reaching the Telephone Exchange these envoys of the "Committee of Public Safety" tried to calm the employees, and on behalf of the Council thanked them for their zealous and devoted service.

The intervention of the members of the "Committee of Public Safety" was cut short by the representative of the Military Revolutionary Committee who ordered the delegates to leave the premises forthwith. They complied, muttering that they regarded the action of the Military Revolutionary Committee as illegal, and that they were yielding only to force.



Troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee guarding the Telephone Exchange

After his conversation with the City Council, Nikitin called up Moscow and asked to speak with Rudnyev, the Mayor. The latter informed him that insurrection had broken out in Moscow, but the City Council was issuing an emphatic protest against the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

Nikitin informed Rudnyev that the Provisional Government had decided to defend itself until the arrival of troops from the front, and requested him to maintain close communication with the Winter Palace and keep it regularly informed about the situation in Moscow. He added that the government had granted Rudnyev the same power to appeal to all the governmental institutions throughout the country as that enjoyed by the military authorities.

The Smolny, the headquarters of the proletarian revolution, was humming with activity. Every participant in the struggle devotedly performed his duty. Everybody was imbued with unshakeable confidence in victory. Detachments of Red Guards continued to arrive. Machine guns clattered in the long corridors. The rooms were filled with excited workers and soldiers. Exceptional animation prevailed outside the rooms of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Men passed in and out, coming for instructions or leaving hurriedly on various commissions. In the room at the extreme end



A Red Guard

From a drawing by N. Kochergin

of the corridor, which was guarded by Red Guards, the Military Revolutionary Committee was in session. They were hearing reports and issuing instructions. The following manifesto was sent out to the entire country:

> "In Petrograd power is in the hands of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The soldiers and workers who unanimously rose in revolt achieved victory without bloodshed. The Kerensky government has been deposed.
>
> "The Committee calls upon the front and the rear not to yield to provocation and to support the Petrograd Soviet and the new revolutionary government, which will immediately offer to conclude a just peace, transfer the land to the peasants and convene the Constituent Assembly. Local government must pass into the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."[53]

Telegrams were sent to the front calling upon the soldiers to prevent the dispatch of unreliable units; officers who failed openly and unreservedly to associate themselves with the revolution were to be immediately arrested as enemies.

In the room of the Military Revolutionary Committee were members of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin and Stalin took a most active and decisive part in all the details of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee. The most important documents, beginning with the manifesto announcing the overthrow of the Provisional Government, were written by Lenin. All appointments were made with his approval. He endorsed the most important of the orders issued by other leaders. Here Lenin drafted the resolution for the special meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

This meeting opened at 2:35 p.m. on October 25 (November 7).

Amidst loud and prolonged applause the Military Revolutionary Committee announced the victory of the revolution. When Lenin—the organiser and inspirer of victory—entered the hall to make his first public appearance since the July days, the delegates jumped to their feet and gave the leader of the revolution a rousing ovation. When Lenin was called upon to speak the delegates rose again, and cheer after cheer rang through the hall. With a clatter of arms a unit of Red Guards entered the hall. They brought with them the smell of powder and the excitement of battle.



A Red Guard

From a drawing by N. Kochergin

In greeting Lenin they acclaimed their victory, the victory of the revolution.

Overjoyed at meeting their leader once again the delegates could not calm down for a long time. At last Lenin could make himself heard, and he delivered the first report on the first victorious proletarian revolution in the world.

"Comrades," he said, "the workers' and peasants' revolution, which the Bolsheviks always urged was necessary, is an accomplished fact.

"What is the significance of this workers' and peasants' revolution? Its significance is, first of all, that we shall have a Soviet Government, our own organ of power, in which the bourgeoisie will have no share whatever. The oppressed masses will themselves create a power. The old state apparatus will be shattered to its foundations and a new administrative apparatus set up in the shape of the Soviet organisations.

"From now on, a new era in the history of Russia begins, and this revolution, the third Russian revolution, should, in the end, lead to the victory of Socialism."[54]

That is how the great leader of the proletariat characterised the significance of this historic victory. His speech was the program of action of the entire October Revolution.

The meeting decided not to open a debate on Lenin's report. It immediately adopted the following resolution, which had been drawn up by Lenin:

"The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies hails the victorious revolution of the proletariat and garrison of Petrograd. The Soviet particularly emphasises the solidarity, organisation, discipline and complete unanimity displayed by the masses in this remarkably bloodless and remarkably successful insurrection.

"The Soviet expresses its unshakeable conviction that the workers' and peasants' government which will be created by the revolution as a Soviet Government, and which will ensure the urban proletariat the support of the whole mass of the poor peasantry, will firmly proceed towards Socialism, the only means of saving the country from the untold miseries and horrors of war. . . .

"The Soviet is convinced that the proletariat of the West-European countries will help us to achieve a complete and lasting victory for the cause of Socialism."[55]

6

THE SIEGE OF THE WINTER PALACE

The ring around the Winter Palace was drawing ever tighter:

At 5 p.m. on October 25, the Red Guards, fighting their way through, approached the palace.

Situated on the Neva embankment the Winter Palace is a huge, three-storey building, nearly two hundred metres long, 160 metres wide and 22 metres high. Together with the adjacent Hermitage and the Hermitage Theatre, it occupies an area of nearly nine hectares. The palace is fronted by a large square, flanked on both sides by the huge buildings of the General Staff and the Admiralty. In the middle of the square the Alexander Column reared its lonely head.

The forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee held all the streets leading into the Palace Square. On the right, near the Guards Headquarters and the Pevchesky Bridge, units of the Red Guard and of the Ismailovsky Regiment were concentrated. The Pavlovsky Regiment and small groups of men of the Preobrazhensky Regiment advanced along Millionnaya Street, which led to the Guards Headquarters, to the Zimnaya Kanava—the narrow canal which flows into the Neva between the palace and the Hermitage. The Reval Shock Battalion of sailors took up positions along the Neva, on the Peter the Great Embankment, and in the vicinity of the Troitsky Bridge.

Opposite the Winter Palace, behind the General Staff building in Morskaya Street, and in the streets adjacent to it and near the Politseisky Bridge, a strong force was concentrated, consisting of units of the Red Guard from the Vyborg and Petrograd Districts. Here, too, were stationed the Armoured Car Detachment, the anti-aircraft guns, and a half-battery of field artillery. Further along the Neva, near the Kazan Cathedral, heavy guns were placed ready for action. These guns had been transferred from the front by the Provisional Government, but on their arrival in the capital the crews went over to the side of the Petrograd Soviet.

In the Alexandrovsky Park, near the General Staff buildings, were stationed units of the Red Guard, sailors from the Kronstadt Naval Torpedo School, men from the Second Baltic and Guard Marines, men of the Kexholm Regiment, and some armoured cars.

On the left, near the Admiralty, were sailors from the Naval Engineers' School, from the training ship *Okean*, and other units from Kronstadt. Moreover, the left flank and the centre were supported by reserves of the Chasseur and Volhynia Regiments.

On the opposite bank of the Neva were concentrated workers' units from the factories in the Vasilyevsky Island District. Vasilyevsky Island was connected with the centre by the Palace Bridge, the approaches to which were controlled by Red Guards.

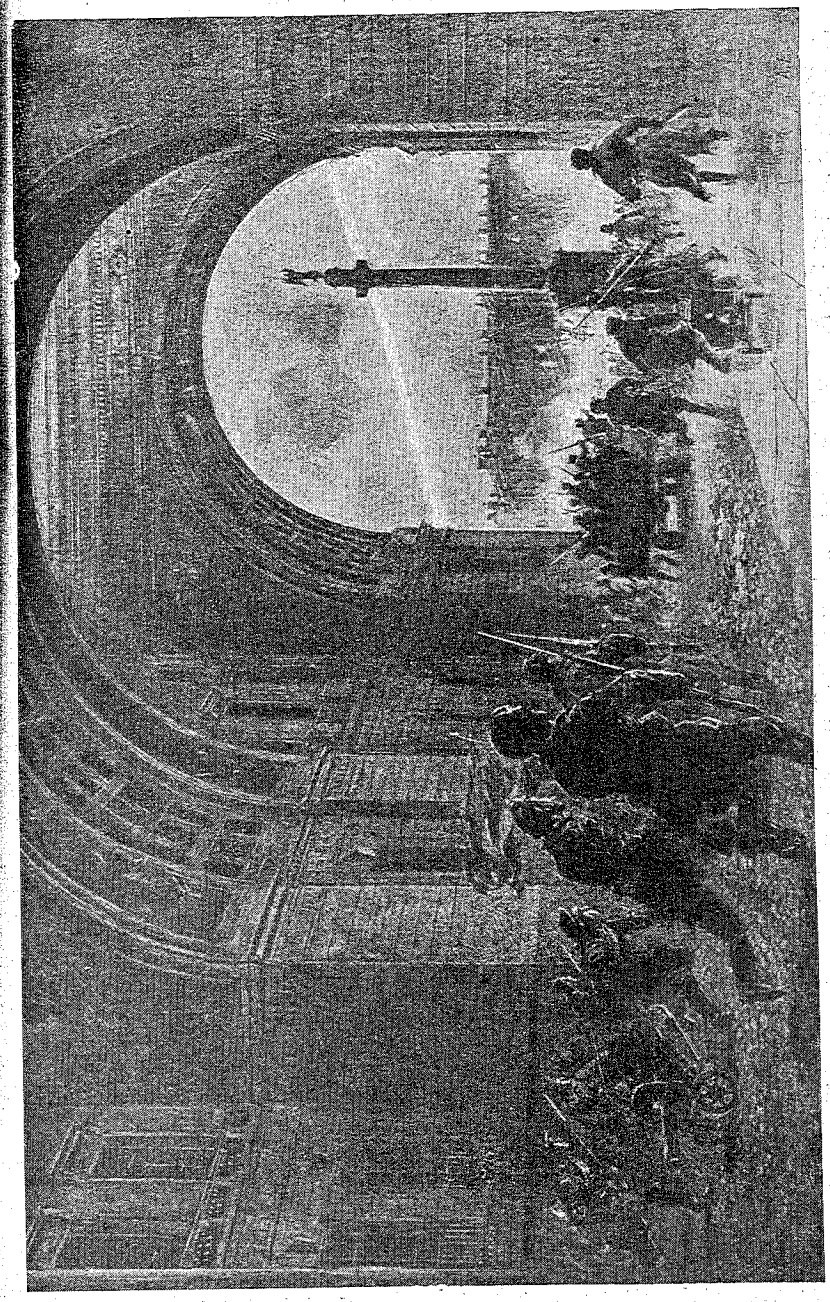


Presentation of the ultimatum of the Military Revolutionary Committee to the Provisional Government

From a drawing by D. Shmarinov

On the other side of the river, opposite the Winter Palace, the slender spire of the Fortress of Peter and Paul loomed high in the gathering twilight. The fortress, too, was preparing to take an active part in the battle.

The Fortress of Peter and Paul was the first structure to be erected in this area and is the most ancient in Petrograd. It was built by Peter the Great on the small Jenisaari Island (Hare Island), on the Neva, and was completed in 1703. Over 60,000 serfs and soldiers perished in the course of building this first stronghold of the autocracy on the banks of the Neva. Subsequently, the fortress was converted into a state prison. In the cathedral within the fortress, a mausoleum for the tsars of Russia was built, and near the pompous tombs of tyrants, in the damp, stone cellars of the fortress ravelins, the finest representatives of the Russian people—the



Red Guards and sailors storming the Winter Palace

From a drawing by A. Yermolayev

revolutionaries—were confined in living graves. Now the fortress trained the muzzles of its guns upon the Winter Palace—the last stronghold of the tsarist regime.

The Military Revolutionary Committee drew up its final plan of operations. It was resolved to send an ultimatum to the Provisional Government, calling for surrender not later than 6:20 p.m. If it refused the fortress was to fire a gun. The cruiser *Aurora* was to fire two blank shots from one of its 6-inch guns, which were to serve as the signal for storming the Winter Palace.

Volunteers were called for to convey the ultimatum to the Winter Palace. This was undertaken by V. Frolov, of the 1st Cycle Battalion.

The ultimatum was hastily typed. In it, the Military Revolutionary Committee called upon the Provisional Government to surrender the Winter Palace and the Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area, failing which these buildings would be bombarded. The Fortress of Peter and Paul and the cruiser *Aurora* were ready to open fire.

Accompanied by another cyclist named A. Galanin, Frolov set out for the Winter Palace. Near the Hermitage they were stopped by the Red Guard cordon, but after explaining their mission they were allowed to pass. Carrying a white flag they advanced towards the enemy positions. Three cadets, with rifles at the ready, came out to meet them. The emissaries requested to be taken to Headquarters to present the ultimatum.

One of the cadets said threateningly: "I'll give you ultimatum!" Nevertheless, Frolov was taken to Headquarters. There he found N. M. Kishkin, member of the Provisional Government and the Minister responsible for restoring order in Petrograd, together with his two deputies P. Palchinsky and P. Ruthenberg. General Bagratuni and Lieutenant-Colonel N. N. Poradelov were also present. "Twenty minutes for reflection," said Frolov, handing over the ultimatum. Kishkin, accompanied by his assistants and General Bagratuni, went to the Winter Palace, promising to reply by telephone.

The members of the government were informed of the receipt of the ultimatum.

The Provisional Government was assembled in the Malachite Hall, the enormous windows of which looked out on the Neva. The Ministers perused the terse, stern terms of the ultimatum, and then gazed across the river. From a corner window they could see the grim outlines of the *Aurora* anchored off the bridge. On the other side of the river they saw mysterious lights shining from the Fortress of Peter and Paul. Surrender or wait for assistance? The government decided to consult General Headquarters before replying to the ultimatum.

The Central Telegraph Office had long been in the hands of the revolutionaries and it was believed that the connections of the Winter Palace had been cut; but this was not the case. One line had remained undiscovered, probably that of the Ministry of Railways, or the War Ministry. Availing

themselves of this wire the Provisional Government maintained direct communication with General Headquarters till the very last minute. The Menshevik Nikitin went to speak with General Headquarters from whom he received precise information as to which regiments had been sent to the aid of the Winter Palace.



P. P. Podvoisky

The Provisional Government thereupon decided not to enter into negotiations with the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Twenty minutes elapsed. The emissaries demanded the answer which had been promised. Poradelov requested them to wait another ten minutes, promising to obtain a reply from the Winter Palace. He telephoned, but received no answer. While Poradelov was telephoning the Ministers, the messengers left the palace and called a patrol of the Pavlovsky Regiment and a detachment of Red Guards. This mixed detachment entered the Military Area Headquarters, disarmed the cadets, and arrested Poradelov and a group of staff officers and dispatched them to the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

The capture of Military Area Headquarters closed the ring around the Winter Palace. The forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee took up their positions for an immediate assault upon the palace.

In the meantime, while waiting for the return of the messengers, the Fortress of Peter and Paul made preparations to open fire on the palace. The fortress artillerymen, however, refused to man the guns. The shells were unsuitable, they said in excuse; there was no grease, the guns were only fit for firing salutes.

The representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee immediately reported this to Sverdlov by telephone, adding that the fortress artillerymen were obviously unreliable. Sverdlov immediately ordered a detachment of naval gunners from the Naval Gunnery Practice Grounds to go to the fortress.

Night was falling. While the guns were being got ready the rumour was spread in the fortress that the Provisional Government had accepted the ultimatum. Arrangements were made to receive the arrested Ministers.

From the direction of the Winter Palace, however, the sound of machine-gun fire was heard. Podvoisky and Yeremeyev, members of the Military

Revolutionary Committee, hastened to the palace in a car. Near the Zimnaya Kanava they were stopped by Red Guards and in answer to their queries they explained who they were and where they were going, stating that information had been received of the surrender of the palace. At this, one of the Red Guards said scornfully:

"Who surrendered? There was pretty hot firing from that quarter just now. It's dangerous to go there."

It turned out that only Military Area Headquarters had been captured. The Winter Palace was still resisting.

Nikitin, the Minister for the Interior, rang up Khizhnyakov the Vice-Minister, informed him about the ultimatum and requested him to intimate to all public organisations that the government demanded their full support. He assured Khizhnyakov that if small units were dispatched in the rear of the forces surrounding the Winter Palace the besiegers would disperse. Khizhnyakov went to the City Council and made enquiries of all the parties represented in it. The Constitutional Democrats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks promised to support the government.

Nikitin again telephoned Rudnyev, the Mayor of Moscow, and informed him of the government's decision to defend itself.

"Quite right," replied Rudnyev, adding that Moscow had followed Petrograd's example and had decided to establish a "Committee of Public Safety."

"That is not enough," said Nikitin, interrupting him. "The question of power must be put point-blank. If you share the point of view of the Provisional Government you must appeal to the whole of Russia."

Rudnyev promised to carry out the government's instructions forthwith. [56]

At General Headquarters forces were being feverishly mustered. The telegram of the Military Revolutionary Committee announcing the insurrection was kept back from the army. Only the Commanders-in-Chief of the different fronts were informed of it, and they passed this information on to their Army Committees. At 6 p.m. on October 25, General Headquarters received telegraphic reports from the Army Committees on the reaction to events in Petrograd.

The Executive Committee of the Rumanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet and the Odessa Military Area (the *Rumcherod*) stated that it had sufficient forces at its disposal to liquidate the insurrection.

The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the South-Western Front declared that seizure of power by force of arms was impermissible, and promised to send a resolution of the entire Committee to that effect.

Members of the Executive Committee of the Western Front firmly expressed the opinion that the Committee would support General Headquarters, adding however, that the feeling of the Second Army had not yet been ascertained.

The Executive Committee of the Northern Front reported that apparently the Twelfth Army condemned the Bolsheviks, but added that the Bolsheviks might find support in the Fifth Army. Similar reports were received from the units in the rear of the Northern Front.

Thus, the nearer the units were to the revolutionary capital, the more hesitant were the replies from the Army Committees. The Rumanian Front unreservedly expressed readiness to suppress the insurrection. The Northern Front relied only on one of its armies. This was not surprising. While the Front Committee was communicating with General Headquarters, the Fifth Army called up the Military Revolutionary Committee in Petrograd and asked: "Do you need any military assistance and provisions?" [57] The Committee answered that assistance was not needed at the moment, but requested the army to prepare for action.

About 7 p.m., immediately after the capture of Military Area Headquarters, General Headquarters communicated with the Winter Palace. Lieutenant Danilevich, Kerensky's adjutant, conveyed to Headquarters the following telegram on behalf of Konovalov, Kerensky's deputy:

> "The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has proclaimed the overthrow of the government and has demanded the surrender of power, threatening that if this was not complied with the Fortress of Peter and Paul and the cruiser *Aurora* would bombard the Winter Palace. The government can surrender power only to the Constituent Assembly. It has decided not to surrender, and to place itself under the protection of the people and the army. Expedite the dispatch of troops." [58]

General Headquarters replied that Cycle Battalions should arrive in Petrograd that day, October 25. The 9th and 10th Don Regiments with artillery, and two regiments of the 5th Caucasian Division would arrive in the morning of the 26th; the 23rd Don Regiment would arrive in the evening of the 26th; the remaining regiments of the Caucasian Division would arrive in the morning of the 28th, and a brigade of the 44th Division with two batteries would arrive in the afternoon of the 30th. Headquarters expressed the assurance that the Winter Palace would succeed in organising its defence and hold out until the arrival of the troops from the front.

The government decided to continue its resistance. The cadets of the Oranienbaum and Peterhof Military Schools were assembled in the White Hall of the Winter Palace, where Palchinsky addressed them. The cadets listened in gloomy silence. Palchinsky loudly called upon them to perform their duty. "We shall perform it," came the response, [59] but it was none too hearty, and far from unanimous.

A cadet of the Petrograd Engineer Corps Training School, who with his fellow cadets had been called to the Winter Palace in the afternoon of October 25, related the following:

> "The object of our presence in the palace was not clear to us. We were excited and wanted to talk to the other cadets (the Mikhailovs, Northern Front, and others), but we were not permitted to do so. At last, an hour or two later, we were told that everything would be explained, and we were ordered to line up in the courtyard. It was already quite

dark. We lined up. Somebody came along who introduced himself as Governor-General Palchinsky and delivered a long harangue. His speech was jerky and disjointed. He said that we must defend the Provisional Government, perform our duty, and so forth." [60]

To rouse the spirits of the cadets Palchinsky told a deliberate lie. He said:

"Kerensky and the troops are already in Luga, only about 40 versts from Petrograd."

The cadets remained silent. Suddenly, the silence was broken by one of them, who said in a dour, ironical voice:

"You would have done well to have consulted a railway guide before telling us how many versts it really is from Luga to Petrograd."

Actually Luga is about 140 versts, or kilometres, from Petrograd.

Murmurs of discontent were heard on all sides. The speaker was bombarded with questions and commotion became rife. Palchinsky barely managed to get away.

The garrison of the Winter Palace began to waver. Malyantovich, the Minister for Justice, who was kicking his heels in the palace with the other members of the Provisional Government, subsequently related the following:

"We were informed that the cadets wished to see the members of the Provisional Government. This request was couched in very insistent terms. . . . The very fact that such a request should be made showed that the cadets were wavering. . . . We went out to speak to them. We found a hundred or more cadets assembled in the lobby.

"What military orders could we give them? None," concluded Malyantovich gloomily. [61]

The members of the government confined themselves to making pitiful appeals to the cadets, which merely served the latter as topics for discussion. They were extricated from this embarrassing position by the hasty arrival of the "dictator" Kishkin with the information that the Military Revolutionary Committee had presented an ultimatum demanding surrender within twenty minutes. Malyantovich goes on to relate the following:

"Palchinsky came in and reported that the Cossacks wished to speak with the Provisional Government. Two officers, one of them of high rank, had arrived with this request.

They were invited to enter.

"A Cossack officer, a colonel, I think, entered, accompanied by another officer.

"They inquired what the Provisional Government's intentions were.

"Kishkin and Konovalov answered. We stood around. Now and then one or another of us put in a word.

"We told them what we had already told the cadets.

"The colonel listened attentively, now raising and now dropping his head. He put several questions. At the end of the conversation he raised his head. He had been listening out of politeness. He did not utter a word. He heaved a sigh, and both officers left—it seemed to me with a puzzled look in their eyes . . . or, perhaps, with their minds made up.

"A little later Palchinsky returned with the news that the Cossacks had left the palace, saying that they did not know what they had to do there." [62]

The demoralisation of the Provisional Government spread to its defenders. After the departure of the 300 Cossacks, who left the palace in spite of the government's exhortations to them to remain, other units followed suit. At 6 p. m. the majority of the cadets of the Mikhailovsky Artillery School left, taking with them four of the six guns that were in the palace. They were held up by the revolutionary forces on the Nevsky Prospect. At 8 p.m., Chudnovsky, a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee, was invited by a delegate of the Oranienbaum School to open negotiations for the surrender of the cadets, who had no desire to fight on the side of the Provisional Government. The cadets guaranteed Chudnovsky safe conduct and kept their word, but Palchinsky had him arrested. When the cadets heard of this they at once protested and Chudnovsky was promptly released. The majority of the cadets of the Oranienbaum School and those of several other schools left the palace with him.

In the palace there remained 310 cadets of the 2nd Peterhof Officers' Training School, 352 cadets of the 2nd Oranienbaum Officers' Training School with nine machine guns, a company of the 1st Petrograd Women's Battalion, 130 strong, a company of cadets from the Engineers' School, the cadets of the Officers' Training School of the Northern Front, one armoured car, the *Akhtyrets*, two machine guns and two field guns. In addition, there were 50 or 60 nondescript military men in the courtyard. This force, numbering in all about 850 men, was well armed. The armoured car was stationed at the main gate. Outside the palace, barricades of logs collected there for firewood had been built in order to hinder the approach of the attackers. Machine guns and field guns were mounted behind the barricades covering the Palace Square and the adjacent streets.

Artillery, evidently from Pavlovsk, were moving to the assistance of the Winter Palace. The batteries advanced without forward patrols, evidently not expecting an attack in the city. In Morskaya Street, the Red Guards lay in ambush for them at the entrances to the courtyards of the houses lining the street. When the artillery drew level with them the Red Guards suddenly attacked and disarmed them. The attack was so swift that no resistance was offered. The guns were captured and immediately trained on the Winter Palace.

The Red Guards made a dash for the palace and about fifty of them, supported by sailors, forced their way into the building through the Hermitage entrance. The unusual surroundings, the plush and gold decorations, amazed the men. For a moment they were overawed. Then they began cau-

tiously to mount the staircase. A Red Guard opened the door of one of the halls. In a huge mirror he saw the reflection of a painting depicting a cavalry parade. "Cavalry!" he exclaimed, and dodged to one side. Taking advantage of the confusion that ensued, the cadets disarmed a number of the invaders. The rest rushed down the stairs. The palace servants and the soldiers in the hospital situated below, helped them to escape from the labyrinth of rooms and corridors of the palace. Palchinsky commented to himself bitterly: "All the doors are open. The servants are helping. Slaves! The men too!"[63]

7

CAPTURE OF THE WINTER PALACE

The refusal of the Provisional Government to accept the ultimatum of the Military Revolutionary Committee necessitated decisive military operations against the Winter Palace. The time limit had long expired. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party heard a report on the progress of the fighting at the palace. Lenin sent a dispatch to Podvoisky and Chudnovsky ordering them to expedite the capture of the Winter Palace.

Meanwhile, messages were sent to the district headquarters of the Red Guards calling for additional detachments. A call to arms was sounded in the factories. Additional Red Guards were enrolled. Group after group, the workers of the Vyborg District made their way to the Vulcan Works. There, in the courtyard, separated from the embankment by a high iron railing, were stacks of cases of brand new rifles; they had just been brought from the Sestroretsk Small Arms Factory.

The courtyard was flooded with electric light. Workers were busy opening the cases. A number of motor trucks stood waiting. Detachments of Red Guards arrived in the courtyard in a continuous stream. Above the noise of the axes, the crack of wooden cases being opened and the whirr of automobile engines, words of command were heard. Work proceeded methodically and unceasingly; and detachment after detachment of armed Petrograd workers went off, singing lustily, to storm the Winter Palace.

Red Guard units streamed towards the palace from all sides: from the Okhta, the Moscow District, Vasilyevsky Island, and from the Narva and Nevsky Districts. The Putilov Works sent several detachments; on the way, these were joined by workers from Siemens-Schuckert and the Skorokhod Factory, and together they took up stations alongside the Alexandrovsky Park. The Red Guards of the Sestroretsk Small Arms Factory sent out a second detachment of 600 men who, carrying a huge streamer inscribed

with the proud word "Revolution," landed in Novaya Derevnya and marched on foot to the palace.

The Petrograd District mustered a second large mixed detachment consisting of Red Guards from small factories, such as Duflont, Langenzippen, the tramway repair works, the aeroplane factory, Shchetinin's, the cable factory, and others. P. A. Skorokhodov, the energetic Chairman of the District Soviet, formed a unit. The Red Guards were provided with an armoured car. To expedite the dispatch of forces, many units, including a women's first-aid unit, were put on motor trucks. The forces from the Petrograd District were sent to the palace embankment and there took part in the general assault.

A detachment was formed of men in the Convalescents' Battalion in the Naval Hospital. Sailors went to the barracks of the 2nd Reserve Crew, obtained rifles, armed themselves and issued rifles to the lower ranks of the hospital staff.

Scores of small Red Guard units, after capturing various government institutions, also made their way to the Winter Palace. The workers were in high spirits, exhilarated by success. They took their places in the ring around the palace, where, in the front ranks of the besiegers, workers' overcoats mingled with the black blouses of the sailors. The men were impatient, eager to go into battle and smash the resistance of the numerically small but firmly entrenched defenders of the bourgeois Provisional Government.

At 9 p. m. the Fortress of Peter and Paul gave the prearranged signal. The *Aurora* followed suit. After this a field gun was hauled under the arch of the General Headquarters building and a shell was fired. It hit the cornice of the palace. The report of the gun was echoed by an outburst of rifle and machine-gun fire on both sides.

An attempt on the part of some units of the Red Guard and sailors to advance into the square was countered by the fire of the cadets.

The vast square was like a desert. It provided no cover whatever. This hindered the advance on the palace, which was surrounded by barricades.

After it had received the ultimatum, the government left the Malachite Hall, from the windows of which they could see the sinister lights of the *Aurora*, and went to the inner apartments. Here they could not see the cruiser, and the cannonade was not so audible.

The Ministers paced up and down the Field Marshal Hall, engaged in anxious conversation. Suddenly, from above, a shout was heard: "Look out!" All scattered in different directions. A sailor holding a hand grenade was bending over the railing of the gallery. A few seconds later there was an explosion. Palchinsky and a group of cadets rushed to the gallery, seized the sailor and triumphantly dragged him down. Only one cadet had been injured by the explosion but the appearance of the sailor on the upper floor of the palace accelerated the demoralisation of the cadets of the 2nd Oranienbaum School. They refused to stay in the palace any longer, and

it was only the frequent exchange of firing in the street that prevented them from leaving.

At 10 p.m. a company of the Petrograd Women's Shock Battalion, no longer able to stand the fire of the besiegers, surrendered. As they left the palace they were accompanied by a large section of the cadets of the Northern Front Officers' Training School and by groups from other schools. Firing on both sides temporarily subsided.

At 10:5 p.m. the Provisional Government drafted and dispatched a telegram addressed "To All! To All! To All!" in which it announced that it placed itself under the protection of the army and the people.

General Headquarters communicated to the Winter Palace a dispatch from the Commander-in-Chief, Dukhonin, stating that the Cossack units would arrive in Petrograd on October 26, and reporting what other assistance could be rendered.

At about 11 p.m. firing was resumed. Owing to the Provisional Government's obduracy, the Military Revolutionary Committee was obliged to order the Fortress of Peter and Paul to bombard the Winter Palace.

Meanwhile, the sailors from the Naval Gunnery Practice Grounds who had been sent by order of Sverdlov, had arrived at the fortress. They examined the guns and found them quite fit for action. Receiving the command, they opened fire, discharging in all 35 shells. Of these, only two struck the palace, one bursting in a room next to the one occupied by the members of the Provisional Government. Although the shelling did little material damage, its effect upon the morale of the besieged was enormous. Between the *Aurora* and the fortress—where the staff directing the siege of the Winter Palace had its headquarters—communication was maintained by means of flashlights. The *Aurora* was signalled: "Open rapid fire with blank shells." The *Aurora* supported the fortress with her heavy guns. True, she fired blank shells but, accompanying as it did the fire of the fortress guns, the effect was terrifying.

Simultaneously with the artillery salvos, the rifle and machine-gun fire on both sides increased in intensity. The forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee attacked from the side of the Palace Square. This attack, however, was repulsed, and only a small group of about 50 daring Red Guards succeeded in breaking through the barricades to the main gates of the palace, where they were surrounded by cadets and disarmed.

The siege had been going on for about six hours. Many of the Red Guards and soldiers had been near the palace since the early morning without a break. Field kitchens began to arrive and supplied the soldiers and workers with food. Red Guard tramwaymen sent a message to their depot through the conductors and drivers to the effect that as the assault on the palace was being delayed, it would be necessary to send provisions.

On receiving the message, members of the depot committee obtained provisions and loaded them on a streetcar. Soon, in the dark autumn night,

a lone, brightly-lit streetcar was tearing at full speed through the silent streets of Petrograd carrying food for the Red Guards. A little later several more cars, filled with Red Guards, arrived near the Palace Square.

The part played by the working women in those eventful days of the proletarian insurrection, although unostentatious, was truly heroic. All the large detachments of the Red Guards had women first-aid units, and in many cases women fought in the ranks. There were also several separate first-aid units composed of women. At a small clothing factory in Vasilyevsky Island, 50 women were employed. All of them joined the first-aid unit. On October 25, breaking up into small groups, they joined the Red Guard Hundreds and remained on duty outside the Winter Palace all night, rendering first aid to the wounded.

Rifle and machine-gun fire at the palace continued unabated. This, and the roar of artillery, caused a shiver to run down the spines of the open and tacit supporters of the counter-revolution. At any moment the Provisional Government would be compelled ignominiously to leave the stage. Nikitin, the Minister for the Interior, communicated with the City Council for the last time. Madame Kuskova, a member of the Constitutional Democratic group in the Council, informed him that a large deputation representing all the groups in the Council was going to the Winter Palace. Powerless to render any assistance to the Provisional Government, the leaders of the petty-bourgeois parties, in conjunction with the Constitutional Democrats, resolved to organise a procession to the palace. When news of the presentation of the ultimatum to the Provisional Government reached the City Council the Mayor proposed that a deputation be sent to the *Aurora* to endeavour to avert the bombardment. It was also decided to send similar deputations to the Winter Palace and to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Included in the deputations were the Mayor, G. I. Schreider, the Chairman of the Council, A. A. Isayev, Countess Panina, Korotnyev, and others. The deputation to the *Aurora* was the first to return. This was about 11 p.m. The meeting of the Council was at once resumed. The deputation reported that they had not been allowed to board the cruiser. This information roused a storm of protest. Bykhovsky, a Socialist-Revolutionary, sprang to the rostrum.

> "The Council cannot remain indifferent at a time when the worthy champions of the people remain alone in the Winter Palace, ready to die," he declaimed. [64]

He concluded his hysterical outburst with the suggestion that the entire Council should march to the Winter Palace in order to die together with the elect of the people.

At this juncture, S. N. Prokopovich, a member of the Provisional Government, appeared at the meeting. In a tearful voice he complained that he had been prevented from going to the Winter Palace to share the fate of the Provisional Government. With outstretched arms he implored the Councillors to do something.

"At a time like this," he said, "when our chosen representatives are dying, let us forget our party squabbles . . . and let us all go to defend them or die!" [65]

The meeting then adjourned to enable the groups to discuss the question as to whether they should die together with the Provisional Government. When the meeting was resumed, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks stated that they had decided to die. The Constitutional Democrats and the other groups stated that they were ready to die with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. The Mayor of Pyatigorsk, who happened to be at this meeting, expressed the desire to join in the procession. A member of the Saratov City Council, who also happened to be at the meeting, associated himself with the Mayor of Pyatigorsk.

The proposal to go to the Winter Palace was put to a vote by roll call. A hush fell upon the assembly. As each Councillor's name was called he rose and answered in a solemn voice: "Yes, I will go and die together with the Provisional Government." Sixty-two Councillors responded in this way. Fourteen stated that they preferred to join the deputation to the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Three Menshevik-Internationalists abstained from "dying."

The Councillors descended the stairs to go into the street. At this juncture the deputation which had gone to the Winter Palace appeared. Everybody returned to the Council Chamber and the meeting was again resumed. The deputation reported that they had failed to reach the Winter Palace. With great difficulty they had made their way through gloomy cellars from Millionnaya Street to the Palace Square and then, displaying a white flag, they moved towards the palace. But here they were fired at from the palace. The spokesman for the deputation stated apologetically that evidently, owing to the darkness, the defenders of the Winter Palace had not noticed the white flag. One of the Councillors opined that the deputation was evidently fired at because the defenders were afraid of opening the gates to the Bolsheviks.

Countess Panina then mounted the rostrum and said excitedly:

"If the Councillors cannot get to the Winter Palace they can stand in front of the guns that are bombarding the palace and categorically declare that only over their dead bodies will the Bolsheviks be able to shoot the Provisional Government!" [66]

This exhortation raised the spirits of the Councillors and they again went into the street. A cold, drizzling rain was falling. The streets seemed deserted. Not a shot was heard. The Councillors halted irresolutely. Suddenly a "messenger" appeared.

"Wait!" he said. "The Soviet of Peasants' Deputies in a body is on the way here to hold a joint meeting with the Council."

Again everybody returned to the Chamber to wait for the arrival of the Soviet. The Councillors, whose spirits had been whipped up by hysteria, became despondent again. Just then it was reported that S. Maslov, the

Minister for Agriculture, who was in the Winter Palace, had managed in some way to send a message. In this message, which he himself called "posthumous," Maslov stated that "if he is destined to die, he will die with curses on his lips against democracy which had sent him to the Provisional Government, which had insisted on his going, and was now leaving him defenceless." [67]

This message had a galvanizing effect. Again the Councillors began to talk about going immediately to die for the Provisional Government. Finally, late at night, they started out for the Winter Palace. The procession was headed by Mayor Schreider and by Prokopovich, who carried a lantern in one hand and an umbrella in the other. But the members of the City Council were not destined to die just yet.

The procession managed to reach the Ekatereninsky Canal. Here their road was barred by a detachment of sailors. "The Committee has given orders to allow no one to go to the Winter Palace," they said.

Schreider and Prokopovich entered into an altercation with the sailors. Angry voices were raised in the procession. One of the sailors raised his finger and said to them sternly:

"Now go home and leave us in peace!"

The Councillors hesitated, grumbled, and then quietly returned to the City Hall. A somewhat peremptory order had been sufficient to compel these political corpses to retire.

Meanwhile, the situation at General Headquarters had undergone a sharp change. Some time between 10 p. m. and 1 a. m., General Dukhonin called up the Northern Front. General Lukirsky, Chief of Staff, replied. He reported to Dukhonin that at 10 p.m., General Cheremisov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front, had countermanded all the orders for the dispatch of troops. General Dukhonin ordered General Cheremisov to be called. Asked to explain his action Cheremisov stated that he had information that the old government was no longer in power in Petrograd, and that the Constitutional Democrat Kishkin had been appointed Governor-General. Kishkin's appointment had caused a change in the attitude of the army organisations of the front that was unfavourable for the Provisional Government.

Dukhonin expressed surprise and urged the necessity of supporting the government and performing one's duty to one's country, but Cheremisov interrupted him and said:

"For the time being treat what I have said as confidential; but mark my word, there is no longer a Provisional Government in Petrograd." [68]

Dukhonin communicated with the Western Front. It transpired that Cheremisov had already communicated with General Baluyev, the Commander-in-Chief of this front, who, like Dukhonin, had pleaded for unity, and had appealed to honour and duty. Cheremisov, however, had remained adamant.

General Headquarters again communicated with the Northern Front. Baluyev, in his turn, tried to communicate with Dukhonin, but the latter was busy communicating with the Winter Palace.

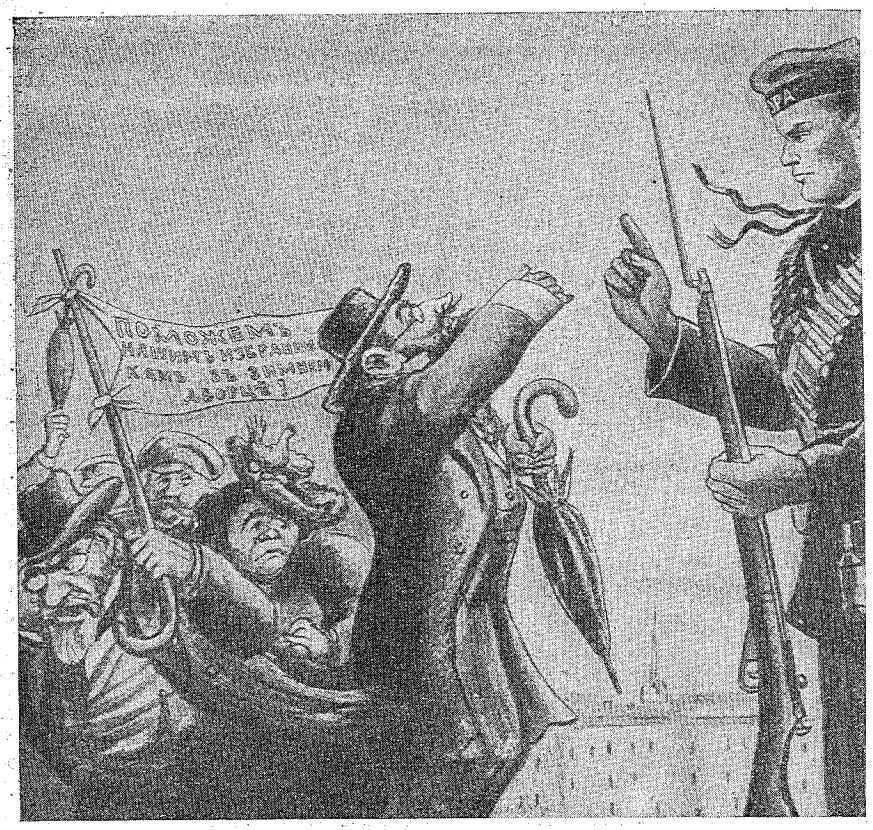
While the generals were in communication with each other, the news of the revolution in Petrograd spread like wildfire among the troops. The regiments refused to go into action in defence of the Provisional Government. The Cycle Battalion halted at a place 70 kilometres from the capital. The Military Revolutionary Committee sent Sergo Orjonikidze to meet them. Orjonikidze had just returned from Transcaucasia, whither the Central Committee had sent him after the Sixth Congress of the Party. On reaching the battalion, Orjonikidze arranged a meeting, and in a passionate speech told the men about the insurrection in Petrograd and revealed to them that they had been duped. The soldiers loudly applauded the speaker and placed themselves under the command of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

In the Army Committee of the Northern Front a split occurred over the question. The majority were obviously not on the side of the Provisional Government. Just at the moment when Cheremisov was in communication with General Headquarters, the committee was drawing up a resolution. The Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front was no longer master of the situation. His orders had no force whatever. In view of the temper of the rank and file, he was compelled to refrain from dispatching any troops.

In Petrograd nobody came to the aid of the Provisional Government. Even the Cossacks deserted it.

The conduct of the Cossacks most strikingly illustrates the rapidity with which the revolution demoralised the fighting forces of the counter-revolution. On October 25, the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces was in session the whole day with the Regimental Committees of the 1st, 4th and 14th Don Cossack Regiments, which were quartered in Petrograd. The representatives of these regiments stated that the Cossacks were unwilling to defend the Provisional Government, and in any case, they refused to go into action unless they were supported by infantry. The Cossack chiefs, including the newly-hatched Cossack, the Socialist-Revolutionary B. Savinkov, who had been co-opted on the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces, spent hours and hours trying to persuade the Cossacks to support Kerensky. Savinkov and Filatov, a member of the Council, promised the Cossacks that their main demands would be conceded if they supported the government. They flattered and cajoled the Cossacks, promising that their privileges would be preserved, and trying to incite them against the Bolsheviks by stating that they, the Cossacks, would be the first to suffer at their hands, that they would confiscate their land, and so forth.

Although worn out by these lengthy exhortations, the representatives of the Regimental Committees refused to take a ballot on the proposal



"Now go home and leave us in peace!" *Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio*

made by the leaders of the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces and requested that the meeting be adjourned to give them an opportunity of discussing the question in their Regimental Committees. When the meeting was resumed, two regiments (the 1st and 14th) promised to obey orders; but even in these regiments several of the Hundreds insisted that the infantry must be brought out first. The 4th Don Cossack Regiment categorically refused to go into action. The Council of the Union of Cossack Forces passed a resolution in favour of supporting the Provisional Government and stated that the regiments were prepared to go into action against the insurgents.

It transpired, however, that in adopting this resolution the Council had "reckoned without its host." In the evening, despite the decision

of their Regimental Committees, all three regiments stated: 1) that they refused to obey the orders of the Provisional Government; 2) that they would take no action against the Petrograd Soviet, and 3) that they were prepared to guard the city, as they had done under the previous government.

Heavy firing continued at the Winter Palace without interruption. Irritated by the stubborn resistance of the cadets who were entrenched behind the log barricades, the Red Guards and sailors made repeated attempts to force their way into the building. Regardless of danger, they advanced slowly, in small groups, until they reached the barricades.

The easiest way of getting into the building was through the Saltykov entrance, on the Admiralty side, where there was a military hospital. The wounded soldiers helped the sailors and Red Guards to gain entrance. At the same time, groups of besiegers penetrated into the palace through the entrances on the Hermitage side, which had been left entirely unguarded.

Once inside the attacking forces quickly mounted the stairs and occupied all floors of the palace. Taking advantage of the consternation in the ranks of the defenders, individual Red Guards—"red agitators," as the Supreme Commissar Stankevich subsequently called them in his memoirs—mingled with the cadets and demoralised the ranks of the government's forces. The cadets however managed to disarm some of the Red Guards.

The assault on the palace was launched mainly from the flanks—from the side of Millionnaya Street and the Alexandrovsky Park. At the head of other units of the Petrograd garrison were the Pavlovsky and Kexholm Regiments and the 2nd Baltic Marine Guards. With them, in the front ranks, was the Kronstadt mixed Naval Unit. And in the vanguard, setting an example to the others, were the Red Guards.

The searchlights from the warships pierced the prevailing gloom and threw a flood of light on the palace, the walls of which gleamed scarlet, as if they had been painted with blood. From the windows of the brightly-lit rooms beams of light reached into the Palace Square. Gradually, the cadets extinguished the lights in the rooms. The rattle of rifle and machine-gun fire and the boom of guns mingled in one continuous roar.

At about 1 a.m. the fire from the barricades began to subside.

The besiegers drew closer to the palace and concentrated round the Alexander Column. Pressure from the flanks increased. The Red Guards began to gather at the wood piles, using them as a breastwork against the cadets. An order was passed down the line: "Cease fire! Wait for a single rifle shot, which will be the signal for the assault!"

Meanwhile, Red Guards who had succeeded in gaining entrance earlier were fighting inside the palace. Occasional rifle shots and the rattle of a machine gun were still heard; but the enemy was no longer able to withstand the pressure of the forces surrounding him.



The Winter Palace. Petrograd

Soon a rifle shot rang out—the signal for the "assault," and a human torrent surged through the palace gates and porches into the building.

The guns of the Fortress of Peter and Paul ceased fire. Triumphant cheers drowned the rattle of rifles and machine guns, and leaping over the barricades the Red Guards, sailors and soldiers swept forward and filled the palace.

By 2 a.m. the Winter Palace, the last stronghold of the bourgeois Provisional Government had fallen.

Cheering, the tramp of thousands of feet, and the clatter of rifle butts disturbed the tranquillity of the royal apartments. For 150 years, this vast and magnificent edifice had dominated the city like an impregnable fortress, a symbol of the unshakeable power of the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. But now the Petrograd workers, soldiers and sailors were complete masters of this building, which formerly had been closed to them.

The Winter Palace was completed in 1762, in the reign of Peter III. The cost of building it was met out of "tavern profits," *i.e.*, the revenues obtained from the taverns, which were the tsar's monopoly. The palace was built by the famous 18th century architect, Rastrelli, who had designed the Smolny. In his memorandum to the Senate conveying the Empress Elizabeth's request for funds with which to build the palace, Rastrelli stated:

"The stone edifice of the Winter Palace is being built solely for the glory of Russia."[69]

The massive columns of the Imperial Palace proudly reared their heads in the great Palace Square. The gilded coaches of the courtiers rolled up to its porches, while the ragged workmen of the city, furtively passing beneath its glittering windows, were bawled at by the guards, ordering the "common herd" to keep at a respectful distance.

In the winter of 1837 the palace was gutted by fire, but it was restored by order of Nicholas I with even greater pomp and splendour. Scaffolding was immediately erected around the ruins of the burned-out palace and 6,000 craftsmen were rounded up from all parts of Russia to rebuild it. Work went on day and night, amidst the biting frost of winter. Inside, in the halls, the temperature was as high as 30° Centigrade, to such an extent were the stoves heated to dry the walls more quickly. The wall painters were obliged to wear special caps with ice to cool their heads, for it was impossible to work in the heat otherwise. Scores of workers died as a result of the unbearable conditions of labour, but the palace was rebuilt in little over a year.

The new palace was an imposing building. Within, a series of vast and magnificent halls, decorated with dazzling splendour and luxuriously furnished, led to the royal apartments.

The keynote of its architectural design was the triumph of the autocracy. Nicholas I issued an ukase prohibiting the erection in St. Petersburg of any building higher than 22 metres, *i.e.*, higher than the Winter Palace. Several years earlier, in 1834, the tsar had erected in the Palace Square the Alexander Column, a granite pillar, 25 metres high, surmounted by the figure of an angel with a cross, trampling upon the serpent of revolution. Looking at it from the pavement the angel appeared to be standing in front of the windows of the tsar's palace like a sentry presenting arms.

The base of this granite palace stronghold was washed by the tears of grief and anger of the people. More than once the tide of popular wrath surged beneath the windows of the royal apartments; and it was in this Palace Square that the revolutionary soldiers were lined up in December 1825. In one of the halls of the palace, Nicholas himself interrogated the insurgent officers, late at night, with the blinds tightly drawn. It was to the Winter Palace that the workers of St. Petersburg came with icons and portraits of the tsar to petition the "little father" on that memorable frosty day of January 9, 1905. The Winter Palace greeted them with a hail of bullets; its granite and marble walls were bespattered with the blood of the workers, their wives and children.

After the July days in 1917, the Provisional Government, celebrating its victory over the Bolsheviks, removed to the Winter Palace. The "Socialist" Minister, Kerensky, took up his abode in the apartments of Alexander III. The only change witnessed in the royal apartments and halls of the Winter Palace was the change of inmates. It was only on the night of October 25 (November 7), 1917, that this ancient stronghold of landlord

and capitalist rule finally fell. The new rulers of the country—the workers and soldiers—mounted the 117 marble steps of the grand staircase. One after another, all the 1,786 doors were flung open before them, and the heavy tread of the Red Guards re-echoed in each of its 1,050 chambers and halls.

The Red Guards, sailors and soldiers swept into the palace like a torrent and disarmed the cadets who were benumbed with fear.

"Provocateurs! Kornilovites! Murderers of the people!" were the epithets hurled at them on all sides. Nevertheless, not one of them suffered harm.

In a large ante-chamber, guarding the hall in which the Provisional Government had taken refuge, a number of cadets stood stiffly with their rifles at the ready. This was the last group of defenders of the Provisional Government. Their weapons were torn out of their hands.

Palchinsky burst into the hall to meet the invaders, shouting that an agreement had been reached and that a deputation representing the City Council and the Soviet were on their way to the palace. He was placed under arrest. The hall in which the Provisional Government was hiding was immediately occupied by the revolutionary forces. The Ministers, who were found standing, pale and confused, were likewise placed under arrest. "Why bother with them? They have sucked our blood long enough!" shouted a hefty sailor, stamping his rifle on the floor.[70] The other men calmed the sailor. The Military Revolutionary Committee is in command, they explained. There must be no unauthorised action.

Amidst solemn silence a list of the arrested Ministers was drawn up, after which they were led out. Every Minister was called by name and then ordered to proceed with an armed soldier behind him. In this way a living chain was formed, which moved along the half-lit corridors to the exit. Crowds of Red Guards, sailors and soldiers filled the dark, damp square.

"Where's Kerensky?"—they asked.

On learning that the Prime Minister had fled, they poured curses on his head, and declared their determination to catch him.

The "creatures that once were men," were led under escort to the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

With the fall of the Winter Palace, the power of the Provisional Government was utterly liquidated. The great proletarian revolution had triumphed in the capital.

8

THE OCTOBER INSURRECTION—A CLASSICAL EXAMPLE OF A VICTORIOUS PROLETARIAN INSURRECTION

The October insurrection serves as a classical example of the tactics of armed insurrection as elaborated by the founders of scientific Socialism, Marx and Engels, and by their great successor and continuator, Lenin. The October insurrection incorporated the entire experience of the struggle of the world proletariat and was the culmination of the revolutionary path traversed by the Bolshevik Party. The heroic struggle of the Petrograd proletariat once again proved that armed insurrection is a *special* form of the political struggle and is subject to *special* laws. It was this tenet of Marxism that was, perhaps, most distorted by the Second International. International Menshevism accused all those who tried to put Marxist revolutionary ideas into practice of being Anarchists; and those who demanded that the special laws of insurrection should be studied, they accused of being Blanquists. Blanqui, the well-known French revolutionary, conceived revolution as a *coup d'état*, prepared and carried out by a small group of secret conspirators. He argued that a small compact group could, by sudden action, achieve initial successes, which in their turn, would rouse the masses. In this way a revolution could be accomplished.

Marxism, however, has nothing in common with this "conspirator" theory and practice of revolution.

The October proletarian revolution was a brilliant example of the practical application of the Marxian theory of armed insurrection. What were the most important political and tactical lessons taught by the armed insurrection in Petrograd in October 1917?

1. That victory never comes "of its own accord"; it is achieved only by stern, stubborn and organised struggle. However demoralised the enemy forces may be, and however much wavering there may be in his ranks, the enemy must be defeated; the enemy class must be crushed.

This, however, calls for extremely careful preparation.

The Bolshevik Party took advantage of every opportunity to mobilise its forces and to establish the closest possible contact with the provinces. The Central Committee sent its representatives to all conferences, congresses and meetings to inform the Bolshevik delegates about the situation and to arrange with them the distribution of forces. The Bolshevik delegates at the Northern Congress of Soviets were commissioned, on their return, to convey the Party's instructions to their respective districts. At the Congress of Cities held in Moscow the Bolshevik delegates arranged among themselves the part each region was to play in the forthcoming insurrection. Members of the Central Committee, or its representatives,

were sent to the various districts. On the other hand, Party officials from the industrial centres visited the Central Committee. The closest contact was maintained between the centre and the localities. Representatives of the Central Committee, correspondence, the press and the telegraph, were all utilised for the purpose of keeping the leading Party members informed of the maturing events, so that the Party might be fully prepared for action.

An important element of the preparations for the insurrection was the isolation of the compromising parties. In the capital and in the industrial centres this isolation was revealed by the way the Bolsheviks gained control of the Soviets. At Lenin's suggestion, speakers were sent to the rural districts to explain the Bolsheviks' policy to the peasants. Soldiers on furlough were put through a short course of training and supplied with Bolshevik literature before proceeding to their homes.

The isolation of the compromising parties facilitated the task of creating a *united front* of revolutionary proletarians and other working people. The October Socialist Revolution was a *people's* revolution in the sense that Marx understood this term. The Bolsheviks succeeded in winning the masses away from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Many of the rank-and-file members of the compromising parties deserted their leaders and followed the Bolsheviks. The overwhelming majority of the working people supported the proletariat, headed by the Bolshevik Party. As Lenin wrote:

> "We have the support of the majority of the *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it. We have the support of the *majority* of the people. And that is the chief reason for the popular character of the revolution."[71]

During the October Socialist Revolution the Bolshevik Party displayed exceptional skill in winning over the army. The revolution wrested the army out of the hands of the counter-revolution. The bourgeoisie had the support only of detachments of Whiteguards formed on class lines, such as the cadets, shock troops and officers' units.

Great attention was paid to the task of demoralising the enemy's ranks. Bolshevik propagandists permeated the forces of the Provisional Government. The majority of the soldiers serving as auxiliaries in the Officers' Training Schools were under Bolshevik influence. Bolshevik propagandists were discovered and arrested in the Winter Palace itself, even during the siege.

At Lenin's suggestion, a Revolutionary Staff was formed under Stalin's direct leadership, which drew up the plan of operations and distributed the forces. Special units were told off to seize the most important centres. Great care was taken to collect all the information possible concerning the composition and distribution of the troops outside of and in Petrograd,

and to provide the Red Guards and the revolutionary regiments with proper training for the insurrection. Lenin wrote:

"If we do not do this, we may find ourselves in a ridiculous position: in possession of beautiful resolutions and Soviets, but *without power*!!"[72]

"*Insurrection, like war, is an art.*" The Bolshevik Party took this postulate of Marx and Engels as the basis of its activities. The Party was guided in all its preparatory work by Lenin's exhortation:

"Never *play* with insurrection, but once you have embarked on it, firmly realise that you must *see it through to the end.*"[73]

2. Of exceptional importance in organising the insurrection was *its timing*. Lenin developed and amplified what Marx had said about what constitutes a revolutionary situation. He defined the conditions which make for such a situation, and pointed to the symptoms which indicated the transition to revolution. The prevalence of a general crisis which sweeps the masses into the struggle, the inability of the ruling classes to govern in the old way, increasing friction in the government camp and the refusal of the masses to tolerate oppression and exploitation any longer—such are the main characteristic features of a revolutionary situation, without which an insurrection can only end in a *putsch*. Lenin not only developed and amplified Marx's ideas about what constitutes a revolutionary situation, but proved that only the *existence* of a conscious, disciplined and ideologically united *party* can ensure the transformation of a revolutionary situation into a revolution. Lenin drew a clear distinction between revolution and armed insurrection, which the Mensheviks and Trotskyites had confused. Replying to the Menshevik traitors who opposed the idea of deliberately preparing for and carrying out an armed insurrection on an appointed date on the plea that a popular revolution cannot be made to order, that the ground for revolution is prepared by the change in social relations, Lenin wrote:

"A people's revolution cannot be made to order; that is true. . . . But if the situation is ripe for a popular insurrection, in view of the fact that the revolution in social relations *has already taken place*, and if we have prepared for it, we can order an insurrection."[74]

The October Socialist Revolution strikingly demonstrated the skill of the Bolshevik Party in timing the insurrection. That braggart and traitor Trotsky, supported by the traitors Zinoviev and Kamenev, suggested that the insurrection should be postponed until the convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets, thus treacherously proposing to give the enemy time to muster forces with which to crush the revolution.

Master of revolutionary tactics that he was, Lenin saw through the designs of the bourgeoisie and its government, and from a number of signs divined that they were feverishly mobilising their forces. He therefore insisted on the insurrection being launched before the Congress of Soviets opened and he had his way. The course of the struggle proved how brilliant was his leadership of the revolution. Had the Bolshevik Party not



Red Guards guarding Lenin's office in the Smolny

launched the insurrection on October 24 (November 6) the whole course of the revolution would have been entirely different. The enemy would have been able to take the initiative.

3. For insurrection to be successful a great superiority of forces must be concentrated at the decisive points. The class which is leaving the stage is always better armed and has a larger number of military experts at its command than the incoming ruling class. During the long years it was in power the old ruling class trained numerous experienced commanders. It is also superior in technical equipment, and in many cases better organised and better prepared. This was the case in October, and consequently the revolutionaries had to make good this deficiency by the greatest self-

sacrifice and devotion. They had to counter the enemy's superior technique and military organisation with superior numbers. Lenin repeatedly insisted that it was necessary to muster

". . . a *gigantic superiority* of forces over the 15,000 or 20,000 (perhaps more) of our 'bourgeois guard' (the cadets), our 'Vendée forces' (a section of the Cossacks), etc."[75]

Concerning this rule Lenin wrote as follows:

"You must concentrate *a great superiority of forces* at the decisive point, at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of being better prepared and organised, will destroy the insurgents."[76]

4. To be successful the insurrection must be swift and aggressive.

From beginning to end the October armed insurrection served to confirm this rule of Lenin's. It was the very embodiment of the tactics of an impetuous offensive against the enemy.

In the first place, the revolutionary working class captured and entrenched themselves at those points and in the buildings which were of extreme practical importance for developing subsequent operations. In this respect the following order of Lenin's was carried out with remarkable precision:

". . . to occupy without fail and to hold *at no matter what sacrifice*: a) the Telephone Exchange; b) the Telegraph Office; c) the railway stations; d) above all, the bridges."[77]

In the course of the insurrection these instructions were carried out to the letter by the Military Revolutionary Committee.

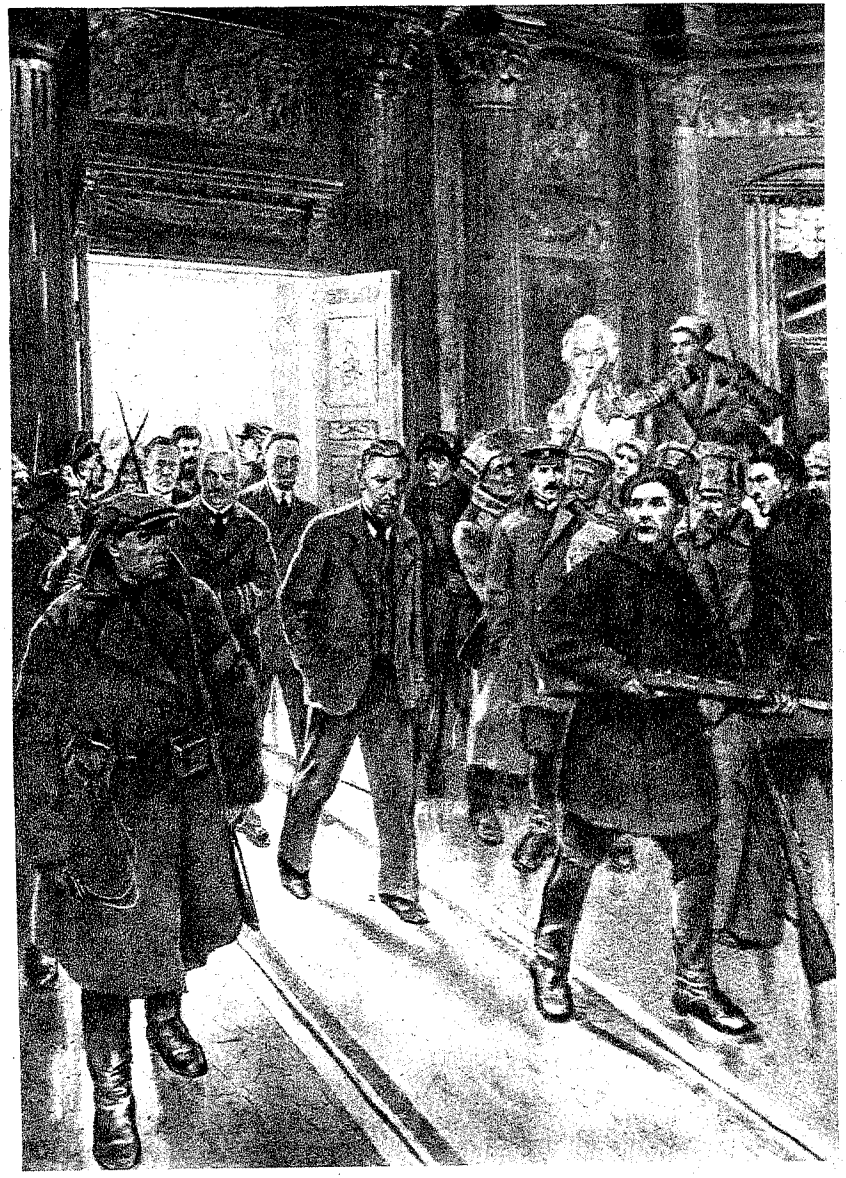
What did the revolutionaries gain by this? They gained possession of the means of communication, primarily the Central Telephone Exchange. This enabled them to isolate the Provisional Government from its armed forces. The capture of the railways enabled them to intercept troops sent from the front to the assistance of the Provisional Government. And it goes without saying that in a city where a wide river separates the centre from the working-class districts, the capture of the bridges was of enormous importance.

After the tactically important points and buildings in the city were captured, the other government offices were gradually occupied. Every hour brought the revolutionaries news of the occupation of other points in the capital, and the Provisional Government news of its growing isolation.

Lenin's main rule governing the tactics of armed insurrection was:

"Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and take *the offensive* without fail. 'Defence means death to armed insurrection.'"[78]

5. For an insurrection to be successful, the enemy must be taken by surprise. For many days before the insurrection the press was full of rumours about insurrection and the government was terror-stricken by the news coming in from all sides. At meetings of the Cabinet, at the front, where Kerensky had fled in quest of aid, and in the offices of the compromisers—



Arrest of the Provisional Government

From a painting by P. Shukhmin

everywhere the government was haunted by rumours of a plot. They expected the insurrection to break out any day. The first dread thought that came to their minds as they awoke in the morning was: "It has begun!" The compromisers anxiously rushed from place to place, making enquiries, trying to ascertain when the inevitable would happen at last. Meanwhile, the Bolshevik Party calmly waited for the opportune moment to strike the enemy a sudden blow.

> "You must try to take the enemy by surprise," urged Lenin, "and seize the moment when his forces are scattered."[79]

6. To be successful an insurrection must achieve continuous success, even of the most insignificant degree.

The news continuously received by the Provisional Government about the capture of building after building by the forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee created increasing dismay in the ranks of the defenders of the Winter Palace and among the members of the Provisional Government. Bad news reached Kerensky every minute. A delegation of cadets reported to him the presentation of the Military Revolutionary Committee's ultimatum demanding that the government should leave the Winter Palace. The members of the government were informed of the arrival of the Kronstadt sailors. Staff officers of Area Military Headquarters reported in consternation the refusal of the regiments to support the Provisional Government. Kerensky, unable to stand the strain, "went to meet the forces arriving from the front."

All these reports were immediately conveyed to the revolutionaries. Their knowledge of the growing demoralisation in the enemy camp and the news of victory in different parts of the city stimulated their fighting spirit and encouraged them to go ahead with the struggle. Every new success caused the ranks of the enemy to dwindle and the ranks of the revolutionary forces to grow. Every step forward increased the panic in the enemy's camp and imbued the revolutionaries with greater confidence in their own strength. Every new point captured served to convince the government's defenders of the hopelessness of their cause and roused in the proletariat greater confidence in victory.

In these operations the revolutionaries systematically followed Lenin's exhortation:

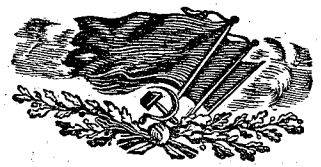
> "You must strive for *daily* successes, even if small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain *'moral ascendancy.'*"[80]

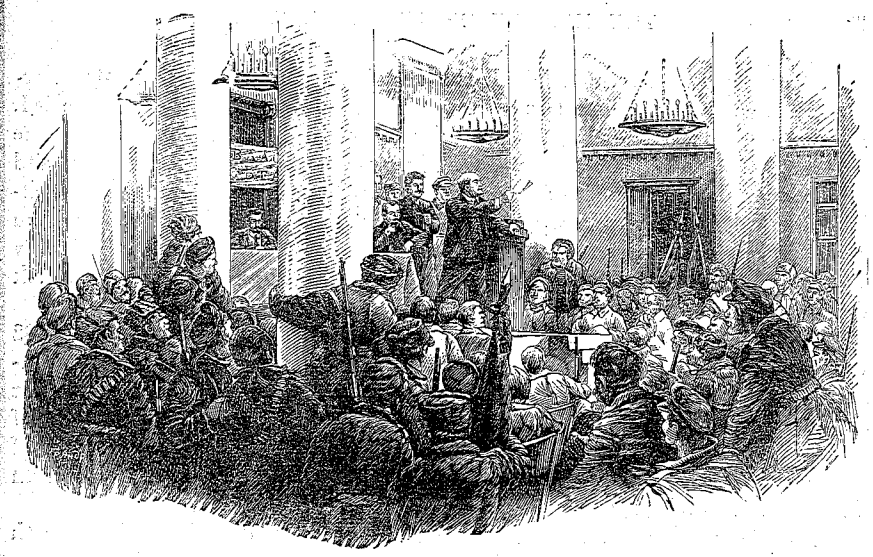
The October victory revealed what a force the masses of the people become when they are led by a tried, militant proletarian party. The compromisers and the bourgeoisie tried to scare the proletariat with the bogey of the "rivers of blood" that would flow if civil war broke out. The successful insurrection, however, saved hundreds of thousands of soldiers from being killed in the imperialist war, millions of peasants from the feu-

dal oppression of the landlords, and millions of proletarians from the horrors of unemployment, starvation and exploitation.

No insurrection in history was carried out with such organisation, co-ordination and careful preparation as the October Socialist Revolution was carried out. This careful preparation, organisation and discipline, and the "audacity, audacity, and more audacity," as Danton put it, was ensured by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin. Every question concerning the insurrection was discussed beforehand by the Central Committee. The general plan, communications, codes, protection of the rear, slogans, etc. were all fully and precisely formulated by the Central Committee. This explains why in this greatest of revolutions, in this remarkable insurrection, in this collision of titanic forces numbering hundreds of thousands, there were so few casualties. Only a few score were killed during the fighting at the Winter Palace.

The great heroes of the Paris Commune defended themselves in Paris instead of launching an impetuous assault upon the enemy. During the revolutions of 1849 and 1871 in Western Europe, and in 1905 in Russia, a vast number of fighters lost their lives without achieving success because they had failed to follow the advice of Marx and Engels to regard insurrection as an art. The October Socialist Revolution, prepared for, organised and carried through by the Party of Lenin and Stalin, rectified the mistakes of the fighters of the Paris Commune, took into account the experience of all previous insurrections, and is recorded in the annals of the world revolutionary proletarian movement as a brilliant, practical guide to action.





Chapter Five

THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

1

THE OPENING OF THE CONGRESS

ON THE NIGHT of October 25, the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, having overthrown the bourgeois government, transferred power to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. The delegates to this Congress had begun to arrive in Petrograd on October 17 and 18, as it had been originally intended to open the Congress on the 20th. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Central Executive Committee accommodated the delegates in different parts of the city with the definite aim of preventing them from uniting. This ruse failed, however. The hostels at which the delegates were quartered were very quickly transformed into animated political clubs. The delegates also visited the factories and regiments and in the

tense atmosphere of the capital, the illusions which some of them harboured about the possibilities of effecting a compromise, were dispelled. In the evening, the delegates would gather in their hostels and share their impressions of the busy day. Everywhere, lively discussions and debates went on, and most of the delegates, although not officially associated with the Bolshevik Party, whole-heartedly expressed their opposition to the Provisional Government. Even non-party delegates were carried away by the fighting spirit that prevailed in the capital and among the Bolshevik delegates.

By October 22, 175 delegates had arrived in Petrograd. Of these, 102 were Bolshevik, or shared the Bolshevik point of view.[1] Every day, representatives of the Central Committee of the Party visited the hostels, called out the Bolshevik delegates and sent them to the working-class districts of Petrograd to address meetings in the factories and the regiments. One of the most eloquent of these speakers was S. M. Kirov, the delegate from North Caucasus, who addressed several meetings a day.

At these meetings the Bolshevik propagandists described the growth of the revolutionary movement in their respective districts. Y.Z. Yerman, for instance, reported on the growth of the revolution in Tsaritsyn. Delegates from the industrial regions read the instructions they had received, in which tens of thousands of proletarians demanded the transfer of power to the Soviets. The Bolshevik soldier delegates related how eagerly the men in the army clutched at every piece of information about the maturing revolution. Kerensky's name, they said, was always pronounced with derision and imprecations. Thus, the people attending these enthusiastic meetings obtained a picture of what was going on in the Urals, the Donets Basin, the Volga Region, the Ukraine and at the front—in fact, throughout the country, and from what the Bolshevik delegates related in their speeches the Petrograd workers became convinced that they were not alone, that they could rely on the support of the working class of the country and the entire poor section of the peasants.

Of the 318 provincial Soviets which were represented at the Second Congress, only 59 had expressed themselves in favour of the "power for democracy," slogan and 18 had passed indefinite resolutions, partly in favour of "power for democracy" and partly of "power for the Soviets." Delegates from 241 Soviets arrived for the Congress with Bolshevik mandates; 241 Soviets had unreservedly demanded: "All power to the Soviets!"

Such was the temper prevailing in the provinces.

As the opening day drew nearer the delegates assembled more often in the Smolny.

Delegates from the trenches, from the factories and rural districts came with grim and anxious faces. The dimly lit corridors of the Smolny, darkened still more by clouds of tobacco smoke, were thronged with workers in overalls, soldiers in grey and sailors in black greatcoats, and peasants in their homespun clothes.

Delegates from working-class districts and army regiments came to attest their loyalty to the revolution and to the Congress of Soviets which was about to open.

On October 25 from early morning until late at night meetings of the various party groups were held in the different rooms of the Smolny. The largest group at the Congress was the Bolshevik group, constituting a clear majority of the delegates, *i.e.*, 390 out of a total of 650 who had arrived at the opening. Several score other delegates arrived after the Congress had opened.

The Bolshevik group had its office in a large room on the first floor of the Smolny. This room, furnished with only a table and several chairs, was filled with Bolshevik delegates who kept arriving in a constant stream. Many of them squatted near the walls on the floor.

Spirits ran high, but everybody was calm and confident. Many of the Bolshevik delegates had spent the last few nights before the Congress in this room in the Smolny. Spreading newspapers, overcoats or greatcoats on the floor, they dozed for two or three hours, and at the break of day were ready once again to carry out the tasks entrusted to them by the Party. Many of them were armed with revolvers, rifles and sabres, and had hand grenades dangling from their belts.

The composition of the Second Congress of Soviets was a striking demonstration of how far the Bolshevik Party, during the seven months of the Provisional Government, had succeeded in convincing the people that without a proletarian revolution the question of land and peace could not be settled.

The Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had been the strongest parties at the First Congress of Soviets, came to the Second Congress as miserable bankrupts. Only a very short period had been necessary to expose these false friends of the people to the workers and peasants as traitors and deserters.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, together with the Centrist Socialist-Revolutionaries, constituted a group of 60. The other members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party followed the "Lefts." Later on in the course of the Congress, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, after winning over a section of the Right and Centrist Socialist-Revolutionary delegates from the provinces, constituted a group of 179, the second largest at the Congress. At the opening of the Congress the Mensheviks of different trends, including the Bund, numbered about 80.

The leaders of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries wandered through the corridors of the Smolny, pale, bewildered and depressed. They were generals without armies. At their group meetings their delegates had split up into innumerable coteries. They had decided not to take part in the Congress, but the temper of the masses was so revolutionary that the rank and file had openly opposed the decision of their leaders.

At the meeting of the Menshevik group the debate went on for hours, but their leaders failed to secure unity. An adjournment was made in order to hold a meeting of the Central Committee of the Menshevik Party. When the

group meeting was resumed at 6 p.m., Dan informed the delegates that the Central Committee of the Menshevik Party had decided to repudiate responsibility for the revolution which had been made and, therefore, the Menshevik Party could not stand behind Bolshevik barricades. The Central Committee recommended that the group should take no part in the proceedings of the Congress and decided to open negotiations with the Provisional Government with a view to forming a new government.

The Socialist-Revolutionary group had also discussed the question of whether to take part in the Congress proceedings or not. The Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party had recommended that the group should keep away, but by a majority vote the group decided not to leave the Congress.

In order to keep control over the delegates from the front the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks formed what they called a Front Group. Taking advantage of the absence from the front of the Bolshevik delegates, who had left to attend a meeting of the Bolshevik group, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks succeeded by a vote of sixteen to nine, with six abstentions, in persuading this so-called Front Group to adopt a resolution declaring against participation in the Congress.

These group meetings lasted until late at night.

With the consent of all the groups it had been arranged to open the Congress at 8 p.m.; but at 10 p.m. the Menshevik group was still in session. The Bolsheviks sent two representatives to the Mensheviks to inquire when they could be expected in the hall. The Mensheviks replied that they would be engaged at least another hour.[2]

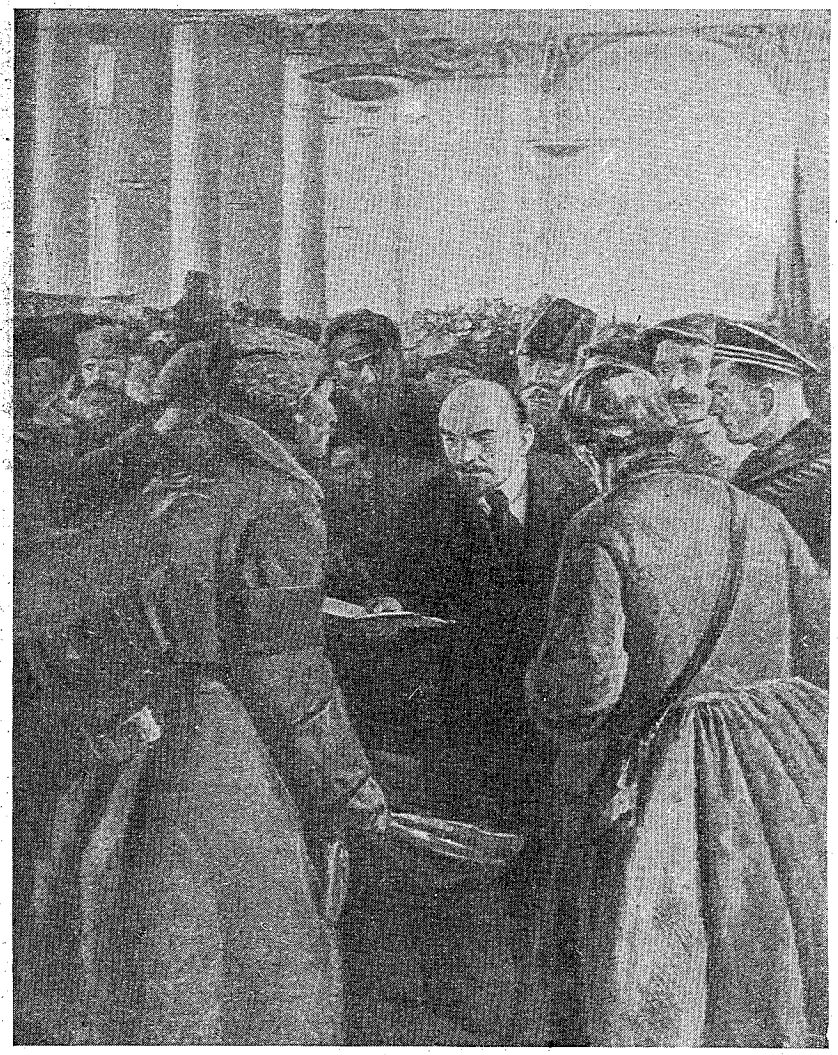
At last, at about 11 p.m., a group of members of the outgoing Central Executive Committee of Soviets—Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—took their seats on the platform.

In spite of the lateness of the hour, the Smolny was as animated as ever. The hall in which the Congress was held was crowded and ablaze with light. Delegates stood on the bases of the pillars and sat on window-sills. The gangways and the doorways were packed when at 10:40 p.m. a stout figure in military tunic with a Red Cross on his sleeve mounted the platform. This was the Menshevik Dan, who, on behalf of the outgoing Central Executive Committee, declared the Congress open.

It seemed, however, that the only reason why the Mensheviks and their inseparable companions, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, had appeared at the Congress was to display their counter-revolutionary faces. Right from the very outset they brazenly supported the counter-revolution, the hotbed of which—the Winter Palace—the Petrograd workers and soldiers were at that moment taking by storm.

In opening the Congress Dan said:

"I am a member of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, but at this moment our party comrades are under fire in the Winter Palace, selflessly performing their duty as Ministers."[3]



Lenin among the delegates at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets

From a painting by S. Gerasimov

The Ministers, with whom Dan thus expressed his solidarity, were at that moment summoning troops from the front for the purpose of suppressing the Petrograd proletariat. They had already sent Kerensky to the front for the purpose of bringing Cossack units to Petrograd. They had appointed the Constitutional Democrat Kishkin "dictator," and had vested him with extraordinary powers to "restore order" in Petrograd.

"Without any speech making," said Dan, "I declare the session of the Congress open and propose that we proceed to elect a Presidium."[4]

The Bolsheviks moved that the Presidium be elected on the basis of proportional representation, but the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries declined to nominate their representative. The International Mensheviks also declared that they would "abstain" from taking part in the election of the Presidium of the Congress "until certain questions are cleared up."[5]

They moved that "the question of how to avert inevitable civil war be taken as the first item for discussion."[6]

The gaunt and irate figure of Martov, the Menshevik leader, appeared on the platform. In a hoarse voice he began by hurling abusive epithets at the Bolsheviks, described the victorious uprising of the proletariat as a "conspiracy," and called upon the revolutionary workers and soldiers to come to their senses before it was too late. Martov actually suggested that the delegates should go out into the streets of Petrograd to persuade the insurgent workers and soldiers to disperse to their homes.

On behalf of the Internationalist Mensheviks Martov recommended that the Congress should

> "elect a delegation to negotiate with other Socialist parties and organisations with a view to securing the cessation of the conflict."

He claimed that the only way to avert civil war was to set up "a united democratic government."[7]

The representatives of "the other Socialist parties and organisations" with whom Martov suggested that an agreement should be reached concerning the formation of a "united democratic government" were present at the Congress, and if the Mensheviks had sincerely wished to act in accordance with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the working people, they would have taken part in the proceedings of the Congress and have submitted to its decisions. But Martov's proposal had something entirely different in view. The "cessation of the conflict which had commenced" that the Mensheviks demanded meant raising the siege of the Winter Palace, freedom of action for the beleaguered Ministers headed by the "dictator" Kishkin, and giving the Provisional Government time to obtain reinforcements from the front and to mobilise the counter-revolutionary forces in Petrograd itself. Martov's proposal was tantamount to direct support for the counter-revolution.



Martov doing the balancing trick between revolution and counter-revolution
Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio

He was supported by the other vacillating groups at the Congress—the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Front Group. The Bolshevik group declared that it

> "had no objection whatever to Martov's proposal. On the contrary it was interested in having all the groups express their views on current events and submit their proposals for a way out of the situation."[8]

In this sense, *viz.*, that the various groups at the Congress should express their attitude toward the events of the day, Martov's proposal was adopted unanimously.

The resolution as adopted could not possibly satisfy the Mensheviks. The Congress had side-tracked the main point of their proposal—"cessation of the conflict which had commenced." One after another, representatives of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks demanded the floor for the purpose of making declarations on a "motion of urgency." Spluttering with impotent rage they continued to howl about the "plot" and the "adventurism" of the Bolsheviks. From the platform of the Congress they openly declared civil war against the Soviet Government. The Menshevik Y. A.

Kharash, speaking as the representative of the Committee of the Twelfth Army, said:

"The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries deem it necessary to dissociate themselves from all that is taking place here, and to rally the social forces for the purpose of resisting attempts to seize power with all their might."[9]

He was followed by G.D. Kuchin, a Menshevik army officer, who claimed to speak "on behalf of the Front Group."

"From now on the provinces will be the arena of the struggle, and that is where the forces must be mobilised," said this Menshevik emissary.

"In whose name are you speaking?" came the retort from some delegates in the hall. "When were you elected? What do the soldiers say?"[10]

Kuchin mentioned the Committees of the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Seventh and other Armies. Assuming a threatening tone, he tried to intimidate the Congress by stating that the 20 armies at the front would come to Petrograd where they would not leave a stone upon stone. He painted a lurid picture of the front being opened and of Russia hurtling to her doom. In proof of his statements he read the resolutions passed by the Army Committees which were full of similar threats.

Tense silence followed. A chill seemed to have seized the delegates. The units at the front did indeed represent a formidable fighting force. Supposing all that this officer had said was true?

But suddenly the spell was broken by a loud and confident voice. A soldier from the front, in a mud-stained greatcoat, pressed his way to the platform.

"These men," he said, "are expressing the opinion of the cliques in the Army and Front Committees. The army has long demanded new elections of these committees. . . . The men in the trenches are waiting impatiently for the transfer of power to the Soviets."[11]

And amid a storm of enthusiastic applause the soldier waved a batch of resolutions passed by the men at the front.

The next speaker was the representative of the Lettish Rifles. He said:

"You have heard the statements of two representatives of Army Committees. These statements would have been of some value if those who made them really represented the army. . . . They do not represent the soldiers. . . . Let them get out! The army is not with them!"[12]

Kharash and Kuchin were typical representatives of the Army Committees which had held office without re-election since practically the first days of the February Revolution. The mass of rank-and-file soldiers rightly regarded them as agents of the General Staff, which had undergone hardly any change since the fall of the autocracy. From the moment the Congress opened a struggle began between the representatives of the higher army, peasants' and railwaymen's organisations who spoke from the platform, and the rank-and-file worker, soldier and peasant delegates who filled the benches and gangways of this vast hall. These rank-and-file delegates scoffed at the statements made by the committee men who addressed the Congress as if it were an enemy camp. The cries of indignation that came from all parts of the hall in reply to the threats of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were but a faint echo of the anger which the policy of these social-compromisers had roused throughout the country. Kuchin and the other committee men represented a stage of the revolution that had long passed away.

"Traitors! . . . You are speaking on behalf of the General Staff and not of the army!"—were the cries hurled at Kuchin from the delegates' benches.

In reply to his call to "all politically conscious soldiers" to leave the hall hundreds of soldiers retorted:

"Kornilovites!"

The abusive language used by Kharash and Kuchin in their speeches was repeated in the declarations read by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, which breathed impotent rage at the Socialist revolution, and abounded in counter-revolutionary abuse of the Bolsheviks.

In their declaration the Mensheviks referred to the Great Socialist Revolution as a "gamble" and a "conspiracy," which would "plunge the country into internecine strife" and would "lead to the triumph of the counter-revolution." The only way out of the situation, the Mensheviks maintained, was "to negotiate with the Provisional Government with a view to the reorganisation of the government."[13]

The Socialist-Revolutionaries associated themselves with the Mensheviks. Their declaration, read by Hendelmann, was in complete accord with that of the Mensheviks and described the October insurrection as "a crime against the country and the revolution."[14]

Both the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries stated in their declarations that they would leave the Congress.

Abramovich, the representative of the Bund, stated that his group had also resolved to leave the Congress. Continuing, he said that the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies and the members of the City Duma had all decided to die by the side of the government and, therefore, were all going to the Winter Palace to face the fire. He invited all the Congress delegates to join them.

"We're not going that way!" came the reply from the delegates' benches.

The Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bundists thereupon withdrew from the Congress, to which they had come for the sole purpose of issuing from its platform a call to the counter-revolutionary forces.

To reach the exit from the platform, the leaders of the compromisers had to walk down the length of the hall, and as they made their way through the dense crowd of delegates they were greeted on all sides with jeers and cries of:

"Deserters! Traitors! A good riddance!"

The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders failed to carry even their own supporters with them. The rank-and-file members of the compromising parties continued to swing to the left. The Menshevik group had registered 80 members and the Right Socialist-Revolutionary group 60. It might have been expected that 140 delegates would have left the Congress with the leaders. But some of the Socialist-Revolutionary delegates joined the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary group, which in the course of one night had grown from 7 to 21. Some of the Mensheviks went over to the United Internationalists who remained at the Congress. The United Internationalists group increased from 14 to 35. Many of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and non-party delegates joined the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, whose group increased to 179, whereas on the eve of the opening of the Congress the Socialist-Revolutionary delegates of all shades had numbered 193. Thus, only 70 delegates left the Congress. As the Congress proceeded the compromisers were still further isolated. Not a few rank-and-file members of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik groups deserted their leaders.[15]

A little later the Internationalist Mensheviks left the Congress. In spite of the fact that the conduct of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had clearly shown that they were hostile to the revolution, the Internationalist Mensheviks continued strongly to insist that it was necessary to reach an agreement with them for the purpose of forming a united democratic government.

Soon after the departure of the compromisers the dull booming of distant guns was heard in the hall. The delegates turned to the windows, beyond which, in the dark October night, the last act of the great insurrection—the assault on the Winter Palace—was drawing to a close.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks re-appeared in the hall and, their faces distorted by panic and rage, ran to and fro among the delegates, shouting that the Bolsheviks were bombarding the Winter Palace. Abramovich again mounted the platform and, wringing his hands hysterically, appealed to the Congress to come to the aid of the members of the Provisional Government, among whom there were representatives delegated by the Menshevik Party.

Abramovich was followed by Martov.

"The information just conveyed to you still more imperatively demands that we should take decisive measures," he began, but was interrupted by voices from the hall:

"What information? Why are you trying to scare us? You ought to be ashamed of yourself. These are only rumours."

"We hear not only rumours here. If you come nearer to the windows you will hear the sound of guns."[16]

Terrified by the gunfire, Martov accused the Bolsheviks of having hatched a military plot and of causing bloodshed. In conclusion, his face twitching nervously, he read a declaration calling for the formation of a committee

to secure a peaceful solution of the crisis and for the suspension of the Congress until this committee had completed its labours.

No sooner had the shrill voice of the Menshevik leader died down than the Socialist-Revolutionary representative of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies appeared on the platform and gave vent to the same "exhortations." He appealed to the delegates not to take part "in this Congress," but to go to the Winter Palace where

> "three members of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, including Breshko-Breshkovskaya, now were. We shall go there at once to die side by side with those whom we have sent to carry out our will."[17]

A handful of members of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies left the hall and accompanied the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to the Winter Palace. As they went out a sailor from the *Aurora* mounted the platform and in a bantering tone shouted:

"Don't be afraid! We're using blank shells." This representative of the *Aurora* repeated this assurance to the delegates and added that the sailors would take all measures to ensure that the Congress of Soviets would be able "to continue its proceedings in peace."[18]

This statement was greeted with a loud outburst of applause. As the handful of Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, members of the bourgeois City Duma, and members of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies were pushing their way to the exit, another group pushed their way into the hall. The chairman announced: "The Bolshevik members of the Duma have arrived to conquer or die side by side with the All-Russian Congress of Soviets."[19] Down the gangway came the Bolshevik members of the Petrograd City Duma, accompanied by the ringing cheers of the delegates.

At 3:10 a.m., on October 26, the session of the Congress was resumed after a brief adjournment. The capture of the Winter Palace was announced. The last stronghold of the counter-revolution had fallen. The members of the Provisional Government, headed by the "dictator" Kishkin, had been arrested by the Red Guards and soldiers. The Provisional Government, which during its brief existence had deservedly earned the hatred of the masses of the people, was no more.

One after another messengers arrived with news of fresh victories achieved by the Great Proletarian Revolution and the passing of new units of the army to the side of the revolutionary people.

The Commissar of the garrison of Tsarskoye Selo reported:

> "The garrison of Tsarskoye Selo is guarding the approaches to Petrograd. . . . When we heard that the Cycle Battalion was coming we prepared to offer resistance, but our alarm was uncalled for; it turned out that there were no enemies of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets among our comrades the cyclists. When we sent our Commis-

sars to them we found that they, too, were in favour of a Soviet Government. . . . I declare that the garrison of Tsarskoye Selo stands for the All-Russian Congress and for the revolution, which we shall defend to the very last."[20]

He was followed by the representative of the 3rd Cycle Battalion, which Sergo Orjonikidze had visited. The Congress greeted this soldier with loud cheers. He said:

"Until recently we were stationed on the South-Western Front. The other day we received telegraphic orders to move to the North. The telegram stated that we were going to protect Petrograd, but it did not say from whom. We seemed to be blindfolded, and we did not know where we were going. But we had a vague idea of what was in the wind. All the way we kept asking ourselves: Where? What for?

"At Peredolskaya Station we held a meeting with the 5th Cycle Battalion in order to clear up the situation. At this meeting we found that not a single man among us cyclists was willing to fight our brothers and spill their blood. . . . We decided not to obey the orders of the Provisional Government. We said that in that government there were people who were unwilling to protect our interests, but were sending us against our own brothers. I tell you definitely, we shall not put into power a government which is headed by capitalists and landlords."[21]

When the speaker had finished it was reported that a telegram had been received stating that a Military Revolutionary Committee had been formed on the Northern Front "which will prevent the movement of troops against Petrograd."[22]

The Congress sent greetings to the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Northern Front.

The Congress then adopted a manifesto "To the Workers, Soldiers and Peasants," drawn up by Lenin, which stated:

"The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, at which the vast majority of the Soviets are represented, has begun. A number of delegates from the Peasants' Soviets are also present. The mandate of the compromising Central Executive Committee has terminated.

"Backed by the will of the overwhelming majority of workers, soldiers and peasants, backed by the victorious insurrection of the workers and the garrison in Petrograd, the Congress takes power into its own hands.

"The Provisional Government has been overthrown and most of its members have been arrested. . . .

"The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must ensure genuine revolutionary order."[23]

This brief manifesto, written in Lenin's terse and concise style, ushered in a new era in the life of many millions of people. From that moment, the

rule of the landlords and the capitalists in Russia was abolished forever, and the great mass of the working people were enlisted for the task of governing the country. Lenin's manifesto concluded with the following revolutionary appeal on behalf of the Congress of Soviets to the soldiers, industrial workers and other working people calling upon them to be staunch and vigilant:

"Soldiers, actively resist Kerensky, the Kornilovite! Be on your guard!

"Railwaymen, hold up all troop trains dispatched by Kerensky against Petrograd!

"Soldiers, workers and employees, the fate of the revolution and the fate of the democratic peace lies in your hands!

"Long live the revolution!"[24]

This was the first time in history that the transfer of power from one class to another was decreed in such plain and brief terms.

The reading of this manifesto was frequently interrupted by loud applause from the delegates. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had remained at the Congress, supported the manifesto. At 5 a.m. it was adopted by the Congress with only two dissentients, with 12 abstaining.

Although it was already morning and the delegates were tired, all were as cheerful as could be; their eyes sparkled with youthful fire, and their hearts were filled with joy and hope. The first faint streaks of day glimmered in the October sky, heralding the dawn of a new era for the whole of mankind.

2

THE DECREES OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The majority of the Bolshevik delegates remained in the Smolny until the early hours of October 26 and spent all that day in a feverish round of activity. The manifesto of the Second Congress of Soviets was transmitted all over the country and to all the armies by telegraph and telephone. The Military Revolutionary Committee was in almost continuous session. Its decisions were reached in consultation with Lenin, many of them being drafted by the leader of the revolution personally. Lenin urged that the normal life of the city which had been interrupted by the insurrection should be resumed as quickly as possible. In the morning, the Military Revolutionary Committee issued an order that all commercial establishments be opened on the 27th. It also took under its control all the vacant business premises and dwellings in the city.

Attention was concentrated mainly on securing the final defeat of the counter-revolution. The Military Revolutionary Committee ordered all trains carrying troops to Petrograd to be stopped. This order concluded with the following statement:

"In issuing the present order, the Military Revolutionary Committee trusts that the All-Russian Union of Railwaymen will give it its whole-hearted support and calls upon all railway employees and workers who are loyal to the cause of the revolution to be vigilant."[25]

A separate appeal was issued to all railwaymen informing them that the revolutionary government of Soviets was taking upon itself the duty of improving their material conditions.

Coming as it did after the recent conflict between the railwaymen and the Provisional Government, this appeal had tremendous effect. It drove a wedge between the rank-and-file railwaymen and the reactionary leaders of the Railwaymen's Union and prevented the latter from turning the men against the revolution.

Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov devoted a great deal of attention to the organisation of the food supply and to the procuring of grain for Petrograd and the front.

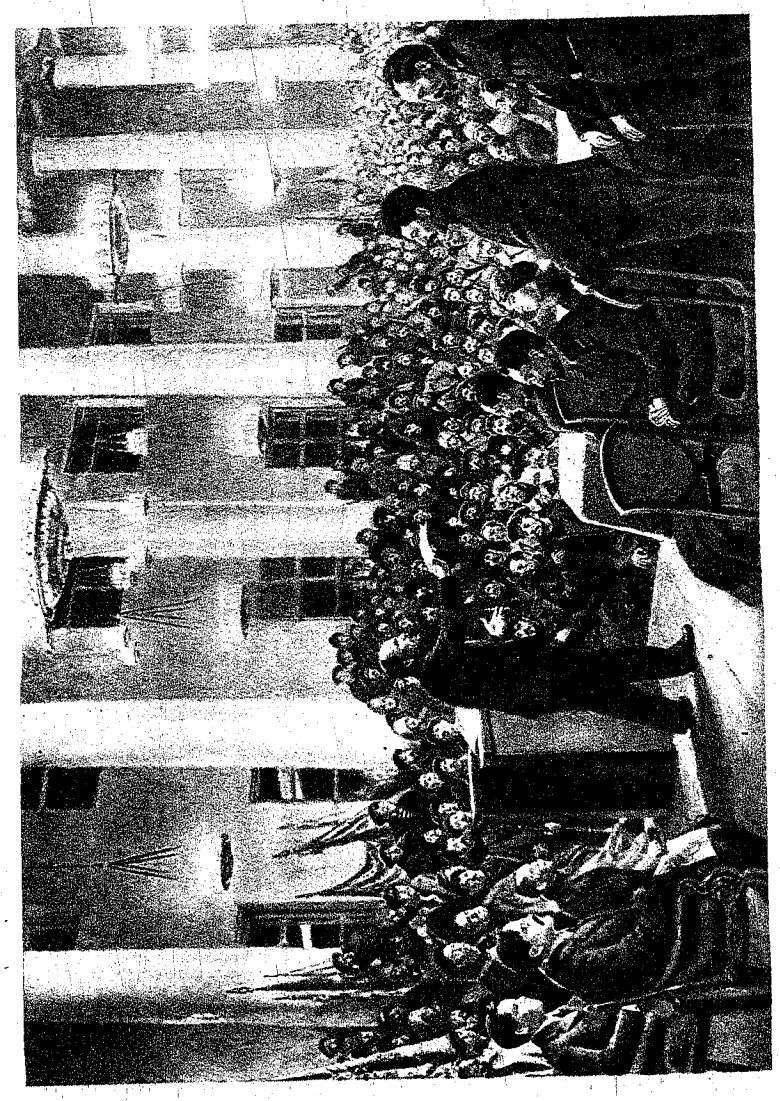
In the evening, after a strenuous day, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party met to discuss the composition of the new, Soviet Government. It was decided to call the new government the Council of People's Commissars.

At the second and last session of the Congress of Soviets which opened at 9 p.m. on October 26, decisions of enormous historical importance were adopted. The first of these was to abolish capital punishment at the front, which had been restored by Kerensky, and immediately to release all revolutionary soldiers and officers who were under arrest. The next decision was to release the members of the Land Committees who had been arrested by order of the Kerensky government, and to transfer all local government to the local Soviets. This decision read as follows:

"Henceforth, all power is vested in the Soviets. The government Commissars are dismissed. The chairmen of the Soviets must communicate directly with the revolutionary government."[26]

The Congress issued a special order to all the army organisations to take measures to secure the immediate arrest of Kerensky and to have him sent to Petrograd.

After passing these decisions the Congress proceeded to discuss its declarations on the fundamental issues, *viz.*, peace and land. The reports on these two questions were made by Lenin. Up to this moment the Congress had not seen him; he had been in the Smolny, entirely absorbed in the work of organising the insurrection. Now he appeared on the platform of the Congress not only as the leader and teacher, as the masses had known him until then, but also as the organiser of the victory which the proletariat had achieved over the united forces of the counter-revolution.



V. I. Lenin speaking at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets
From a painting by B. Vladimirsky

The chairman had scarcely mentioned the name which had become world famous when an outburst of applause made the very rafters ring. The whole Congress rose to its feet. A storm of applause and enthusiastic cries of welcome greeted the leader of the greatest revolution the world had seen.

Hundreds of eyes were turned with admiration and love towards the platform where stood a man of short stature, with high, open forehead and keen, piercing eyes.

Lenin waited until the storm of greeting died down, but it was only after his repeated requests that the delegates at last became silent.

In his speech, which by its entire content seemed to emphasise that "there has been quite enough talk, it is time to get down to real work," Lenin drew a borderline between two eras.

> "The question of peace," he said, "is a burning and urgent question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject and all of you, no doubt, have discussed it at great length. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you elect should publish."[27]

This declaration—the Decree on Peace—was adopted by the Congress in the form of "An Appeal to the Peoples and Governments of the Belligerent Countries," and began as follows:

> "The Workers' and Peasants' Government created by the revolution of October 24-25 and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent nations and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace."[28]

It went on to explain that:

> "By a just, democratic peace . . . the government means an immediate peace without annexations (*i.e.* without the seizure of foreign lands, or the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities."[29]

It proposed that peace should be concluded forthwith, and expressed readiness to take the most resolute measures without the least delay,

> "pending the final ratification of the terms of this peace by authoritative assemblies of the peoples' representatives of all countries and all nations."[30]

It went on to state that the Soviet Government did not

> "regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other terms of peace, but only insists that they be advanced by any of the belligerent nations as speedily as possible, and that peace proposals should be formulated in the clearest terms without the least ambiguity or mystery."[31]

At the same time, the Soviet Government proclaimed the abolition of secret diplomacy and expressed its firm determination to conduct all negotiations quite openly in sight of the whole people. It promised to proceed

immediately to publish in full the secret treaties, which it forthwith proclaimed null and void.

It called for the immediate conclusion of a three months' armistice and wound up with the following appeal to the proletariat of the three foremost capitalist countries in Europe—Great Britain, France and Germany.

> "The workers of these countries will understand the duty that now rests with them of rescuing mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences . . . and will help us to achieve the success of the cause of peace, and at the same time of the cause of the emancipation of the toiling and exploited masses from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation."[32]

The Decree on Peace adopted by the Second Congress of Soviets was of great international importance.

Russia's economic development and the interests of her various nationalities demanded that she should withdraw from the unjust war. During the imperialist war Russia had steadily been reduced to the position of a semi-colony of foreign capital. Under the bourgeois Provisional Government this state of colonial dependence increased. By means of loans, the British and French imperialists were paving the way for the complete enslavement of the country. Russia was to compensate for the losses incurred by foreign imperialism, and German imperialism had designs of obtaining concessions in the West at Russia's expense. But the Russian bourgeoisie was incapable of saving the country from this fate. Owing to its selfish class interests, and enmeshed as it was in a net of debt, the Russian bourgeoisie was to an increasing degree serving merely as the agent of foreign imperialism. Nor could the country be saved by the petty bourgeoisie, the upper strata of which whole-heartedly supported the big capitalists.

Moreover, almost the entire peasantry longed for peace, not for the sake of Socialism, and not exclusively for a "democratic" peace without annexations and indemnities, but peace primarily in order to be able to proceed to take over the landlords' land.

The only class that could solve the problems of the national development of the country was the proletariat.

The Bolshevik Party had drawn up its peace platform long before it won power. As early as 1915, Lenin had said that upon winning power the Bolsheviks would offer a democratic peace to *all* the belligerent countries on terms that would ensure the liberation of the dependent and oppressed nations. If the governments of the day in Germany and the other belligerent countries rejected these terms, the Bolsheviks would carry out all the measures enumerated in the Party program. They would reorganise the country's economy and prepare for and wage a revolutionary war in defence of Socialist society.

It was the working class led by the Bolsheviks which liberated the country from its state of semi-colonial dependence, extricated it from the unjust war, and paved the way for waging a just war.

The Russian proletariat began to express the national interests of the country. It became the embodiment of the hopes of the democratic sections of the population. But the proletariat solved the national-democratic problems of the country, not by means of a peaceful compromise with the government, but by the only means that were possible, revolutionary means, *viz.*, by transforming the imperialist war into civil war. The Russian proletariat brought about a Socialist revolution and, in the process, it completed the unfinished work of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

The Decree on Peace enunciated the principles of the foreign policy of the Soviet State. Distinctly and without ambiguity the decree proclaimed that the Soviet Government utterly renounced all aims of conquest. The decree delivered a shattering blow to the imperialist aims of the war and revealed its predatory nature to the world. In his speech on the peace question at the Congress of Soviets, Lenin said:

> "No government will say exactly what it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly, in full view of the whole people."[33]

The peace program of the proletarian state was clear and definite from beginning to end. It was a state document addressed both to the governments and to the peoples of the belligerent nations. Lenin particularly emphasised this when he said:

> "We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and a people's government dare not do that; but we have every right to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the people, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in the questions of war and peace."[34]

Further, pointing out that the Soviet Government did not intend to submit its terms in the form of an ultimatum, Lenin said:

> "We will, of course, insist upon our program of a peace without annexations and indemnities in its entirety. We shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies the opportunity to say that their terms are different and that therefore it is useless to enter into negotiations with us. No, we shall not provide them with such an advantageous position and must not advance our terms in the form of an ultimatum."[35]

In the ensuing debate Comrade Yeremeyev said in objection to this particular point: "They may take it as a sign of weakness and think that we are afraid."[36]

Lenin made the following emphatic rejoinder to Yeremeyev's objection:

> "An ultimatum may prove fatal to our whole cause. We cannot allow some slight disagreement with our demands to serve the imperialist governments as a pretext for saying that it is impossible to enter into peace negotiations because we are too uncompromising."[37]

But Lenin's most effective reply to the argument that the terms should be presented in the form of an ultimatum was his statement that a peasant "from some remote province" would have every reason for saying:

"Comrades, why did you preclude the possibility of all sorts of peace terms being proposed? I would have discussed them, I would have examined them, and then would have instructed my representatives in the Constituent Assembly how to act."[38]

Every word spoken by Lenin fell like refreshing rain upon sun-baked earth. The hundreds of delegates who filled the Smolny drank in every syllable. The plain and simple terms of Lenin's speech and of the "Appeal" found an immediate response in the suffering hearts of millions of people of the various nations, for they expressed their most cherished hopes and aspirations.

The representatives of the oppressed nations unanimously supported the Bolshevik Decree on Peace.

The tall, well-built figure of Felix Dzerzhinsky appeared on the platform, his stern, ascetic face lit up with the joy of victory.

"We know," he said, speaking on behalf of the working people of Poland, "that the only force that can liberate the world is the proletariat which is fighting for Socialism. . . .

"Those in whose name this declaration has been submitted are marching in the ranks of the proletariat and of the poor peasants, and all those who have left this hall at this tragic moment are not the friends but the enemies of the revolution and the proletariat. You will hear no response to this appeal from them; but it will find an echo in the hearts of the proletariat of all countries. With allies like that we shall achieve peace.

"We do not demand separation from revolutionary Russia. With her we shall always find common ground. We shall have a single fraternal family of nations, without strife and without discord."[39]

Silence reigned in the hall. The delegates listened intently to the impassioned speech of this Polish revolutionary and became imbued with his confidence in victory. As Dzerzhinsky spoke it seemed as if the walls were being pushed outward and the hall expanding, giving the delegates a vision of the age-long fetters of tsarist Russia—the prison of nations—falling away.

One after another, fighters for the liberation of the oppressed nations came to the platform. On behalf of the Lettish proletariat and poor peasants the veteran revolutionary, Stuchka, supported the Decree on Peace. On behalf of the Lithuanian working people Comrade Kapsukas Mickiewicz said:

"There is no doubt that the Appeal will find an echo in the hearts not only of all the nations inhabiting Russia, but also of those in other countries. The voice of the revolutionary proletariat, the army and the peasantry will be borne over the bayonets into Germany and other countries and will help to achieve universal liberation."[40]

At dawn on the day after the revolution the radio broadcast to the world the grand, wise words of the Soviet Decree on Peace, snapping the iron fetters of the imperialist war. People wept with joy on hearing them, and eyes, long dimmed by despair, shone again with reborn hope.

The Congress of Soviets adopted this historic decree with unrestrained enthusiasm. The proceedings were interrupted. The delegates jumped from their seats and mingled with the members of the Presidium. They flung their caps into the air, faces were flushed with excitement, and eyes glowed with joy.

The strains of the "Internationale"—the hymn of the proletarian struggle—merged with cries of greeting and thunderous cheers in honour of the great leader of the revolution.

One of the delegates mounted the platform and amidst cries of approval proposed that the Congress should greet Lenin as "the author of the Appeal and staunch champion and leader of the victorious workers' and peasants' revolution."[41]

At this all the delegates rose to their feet and gave Lenin an ovation.

The cheering broke out anew when Lenin again rose to speak on the land question, the second item on the agenda.

"I shall read you the points of a decree your Soviet Government must promulgate," said Lenin, and in the silent hall the thrilling words of the "Decree on Land" were heard.

"1. Landlord property is abolished forthwith without compensation.

"2. The landed estates, as also all appanage, monasterial and church lands, with all their livestock, implements, farm buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed at the disposal of the Volost Land Committees and the Uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly."[42]

The decree went on to state that "all damage to confiscated property, which henceforth belongs to the whole people, is proclaimed a felony punishable by the revolutionary courts."[43]

The Uyezd Soviets were enjoined to take all necessary measures to guarantee the observance of strict order during the confiscation of the landed estates and to protect in a revolutionary way all agricultural enterprises that were transferred to the people.

Everywhere, the work of carrying through the great land reform was to be guided by the 242 local Peasant Instructions which had been published in *Izvestia of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies* "pending a final decision by the Constituent Assembly."[44]

The last point of the decree contained the proviso that "the land of ordinary peasants and ordinary Cossacks shall not be confiscated."[45]

The decrees on the land and peace, occupied the foremost place in the series of important decisions adopted by the Soviet Government.

The vast majority of the peasants had long been waiting for the expropriation of the landlords. This measure, which the bourgeois-democratic

revolution proved incapable of carrying out, was secured by the decree on the land. In his speech Lenin explained the main purpose of this decree as follows:

"The object is definitely to assure the peasants that there are no longer any landlords in the countryside, that they themselves must decide all questions, and that they themselves must arrange their own lives."[46]

The Decree on Land proved to the peasants that the Soviet Government was finally and irrevocably abolishing landlordism and its oppression and exploitation in the rural districts. At the same time it was a guarantee that the land would really be placed at the peasants' disposal.

In connection with point 4 of the decree on the land, which stated that the work of carrying through the great land reforms should be guided by what were known as the "Peasant Instructions," the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks levelled a series of charges against the Bolsheviks. The facts of the case are that on the basis of the 242 Instructions, which had been given to the peasant delegates to the First All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies, the Socialist-Revolutionaries had drawn up "Model Instructions," which summed up all the peasants' demands. These Model Instructions were published in *Izvestia of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies* on August 19, 1917. They proclaimed all the land the property of the people, to be "transferred to those who tilled it."[47] They advocated "equal land tenure" and prohibited the employment of hired labour in agriculture. This Socialist-Revolutionary land program ran counter to the Bolshevik program for the nationalisation of the land. The Bolsheviks were also opposed to equal land tenure, to the prohibition of hired labour, and to other points in the "Instructions."

But on one point—and that the decisive one—the "Instructions" had this in common with point 17 of the Bolshevik program—which had been formulated at the April Conference—that both demanded the confiscation of all landlord, appanage and monasterial land, and its transfer to the local Soviet bodies, *viz.*, the Soviet and Volost Committees. This was the fundamental and most important revolutionary measure for which the peasants were waiting. The important thing was to confiscate the land from the landlords and declare that the peasants had the right to cultivate it; to proclaim the abolition of landlord tyranny. Insofar as the majority of the peasants had in an organised manner expressed the wish to arrange the use of the confiscated land in the way indicated in the "Instructions," the first document on the land issued after the October Socialist Revolution had to ratify this right.

It must be observed that this situation did not come as a surprise to Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. Long before the October Revolution, on the eve of the Fourth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin wrote a pamphlet entitled *A Revision of the Agrarian Program* in which he stated:

"To remove all idea that the workers' party wants to thrust any project of reform upon the peasants against their will and without regard for the independent peasant movement, we have appended to the draft program *variant* A, which, instead of the direct demand for nationalisation, contains the statement that the Party will support the revolutionary peasants in their desire to abolish the private ownership of land."[48]

It is well known that Lenin had always advocated this position when the agrarian program had been discussed. He had emphasised that this program "would under no circumstances cause strife between the peasantry and the proletariat as the fighters for democracy."[49]

Lenin, therefore, had every ground for stating at the Second Congress of Soviets that the accusation that the Bolsheviks had borrowed another party's program was frivolous. On this point Lenin said:

"Voices are being raised here to the effect that the decree itself and the 'Instructions' were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. What of it? Does it matter who drew them up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the rank and file of the people, even though we may disagree with it. From the experience of applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realise where the truth lies. And even if the peasants continue to follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, even if they give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still say—what of it? Experience is the best teacher, and it will show who is right. Let the peasants solve this problem from one end while we solve it from the other."[50]

The very fact that the Bolsheviks—while not concealing their disagreement with certain points of the "Instructions"—accepted the latter as the basis of the agrarian platform of the October Revolution testifies to the wisdom, foresight and realism of Lenin's policy on this question. The Party foresaw that in putting the law into operation the peasants would adopt the Bolshevik solution of the problem "from the other end," that they themselves would drop the petty-bourgeois, Socialist-Revolutionary "equal tenure" slogans and proceed to organise agriculture on new lines. They knew that experience would teach the peasants that equal land tenure would not liberate the poorer peasants from bondage to the kulaks. The abolition of the yoke of landlordism would be immediately followed by a struggle between the poor classes of the rural districts and the kulaks over the question of distributing the land, of cultivating it, the distribution of farm implements, and so forth.

The program outlined in the "Instructions," had virtually ceased to be the program of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, for the latter had staunchly supported the Provisional Government in its efforts to prevent the peasants from confiscating the land from the landlords, *i.e.*, from carrying out their own, *i.e.*, the Socialist-Revolutionaries' "Instructions." In these circumstances, the Decree on Land was a special method of *isolating* the Socialist-Revolutionaries from the peasants. At one stroke the Soviet Govern-

ment liberated vast masses from the influence of the compromisers. The first act of the Soviet Government—which was confronted with the task of winning the masses away from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties *"by satisfying their most urgent economic needs in a revolutionary way"* (Lenin)[51]—was to satisfy precisely this demand of the peasants.

The "Peasants' Instructions" were published by the Socialist-Revolutionaries on August 19. Two months later—on October 18—these very same Socialist-Revolutionaries—members of Kerensky's government—published a Ministerial Land Bill which directly ran counter to the "Instructions." The "Peasants' Instructions" were shelved for over two months, and it was the proletarian revolution which brought them to light again. On Lenin's proposal, the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets transformed them into an immutable law in the shape of the Decree on Land, thereby proving to the peasants that the Party of Lenin and Stalin did more for the working people in one day than the Socialist-Revolutionaries had done in the course of seven months of the revolution.

The Decree on Land was ratified with only one dissentient and eight abstentions. The feeling of the Congress was vividly expressed by a peasant delegate from the Tver Gubernia who stated that he had brought from his constituents "profound respects and greetings to the present assembly" and also "greetings and thanks to Comrade Lenin as the staunchest champion of the poor peasants."[52]

This speech was greeted with an outburst of thunderous applause.

The peasants had been fighting for land for hundreds of years. Many generations of peasants of all the nationalities inhabiting Russia had ploughed up millions of acres of virgin soil, had by dint of arduous toil cleared dense forests and had reclaimed wastelands and marshes. But the land thus won by the labour of generations had been seized by the feudal landowners, and the peasants themselves were reduced to serfdom. By means of economic pressure the capitalists, landlords and kulaks drove the peasants, "into the desert." Time and again the peasants rose in revolt against the predatory landlords, but in those days there was no proletariat—the only consistently and thoroughly revolutionary class—to take the lead of the peasant movement. The age-long, vague and impotent yearnings of the peasants were realised only after the October Socialist Revolution. The land was confiscated, taken from the landlords without compensation, by the now victorious oppressed classes led by the proletariat.

The Decree on Land abolished landlordism in Russia, but the landlords' land was mortgaged over and over again to the banks. The blow at landlordism was therefore a blow at the capitalist system as a whole. The abolition of the private ownership of land menaced the private ownership of all other means of production. Moreover, the abolition of the private ownership of land broke down the peasants' age-long proprietary prejudices. The way was cleared for new, Socialist forms of agriculture to replace the old, feudal forms, which had kept the bulk of the peasantry in a state

ДЕКРЕТЪ О ЗЕМЛѢ

Съѣзда Совѣтовъ Рабоч. и Солдат. Депутатовъ.

(Принятъ на засѣданіе 26-го октября въ 2 часа ночи).

1) Помѣщичья собственность на землю отмѣняется немедленно безъ всякаго выкупа.

2) Помѣщичьи имѣнія, равно какъ всѣ земли удѣльныя, монастырскія, церковныя со всѣмъ ихъ живымъ и мертвымъ-инвентаремъ, усадебными постройками и всѣми принадлежностями переходятъ в распоряженіе волостныхъ земельныхъ Комитетовъ и уѣздныхъ Совѣтовъ Крестьянскихъ Депутатовъ впредь до Учредительнаго Собранія.

3) Какая бы то ни была порча конфискуемаго имущества, принадлежащаго отнынѣ всѣму народу, объявляется тяжкимъ преступленіемъ, караемымъ революціоннымъ судомъ. Уѣздные Совѣты Крестьянскихъ Депутатовъ принимаютъ всѣ необходимыя мѣры для соблюденія строжайшаго порядка при конфискаціи помѣщичьихъ имѣній, для опредѣленія того, до какого размѣра участки и какіе именно подлежатъ конфискаціи для составленія точной описи всего конфискуемаго имущества и для строжайшей революціонной охраны всего переходящаго къ народу хозяйства на землѣ со всѣми постройками, орудіями, скотом, запасами продуктовъ и проч.

4) Для руководства по осуществленію великихъ земельныхъ преобразованій впредь до окончательнаго ихъ рѣшенія Учредительнымъ Собраніемъ долженъ повсюду служить слѣдующій крестьянскій наказъ, составленный на основаніи 242 мѣстных крестьянскихъ наказовъ редакціей «Извѣстія Всероссійскаго Совѣта Крестьянскихъ Депутатовъ» и опубликованный в номерѣ 88 этихъ «Извѣстій» (Петроградъ, номеръ 88, 19 августа 1917 г.).

О землѢ.

Вопросъ о землѣ можетъ быть разрѣшенъ только всенароднымъ Учредительнымъ Собраніемъ.

Самое справедливое разрѣшеніе земельнаго вопроса должно быть таково:

1) Право частной собственности на землю отмѣняется навсегда; земля не можетъ быть ни продаваема, ни покупаема, ни сдаваема в аренду либо въ залогъ, ни какимъ либо другимъ способомъ отчуждаема. Вся земля: государственная, удѣльная, кабинетская, монастырская, церковная, поссесіонная, майоратная, частновладѣльческая, общественная и крестьянская и т. д. отчуждается безвозмездно, обращается во всенародное достояніе и переходитъ в пользованіе всѣхъ трудящихся на ней.

За пострадавшими от имущественнаго переворота признается лишь право на общественную поддержку на время, необходимое для приспособленія къ новымъ условіямъ существованія.

2) Всѣ нѣдра земли: руда, нефть, уголь, соль и т. д., а также лѣса и воды, имеющіе общегосударственное значеніе переходятъ въ исключительное пользованіе государства. Всѣ мелкіе реки, озера, лѣса и проч. переходятъ въ пользованіе общинъ, при условіи завѣдыванія ими мѣстными органами самоуправленія

3) Земельные участки с высоко-культурными хозяйствами: сады, плантации, разсадники, питомники, оранжереи и т. под. не подлежатъ раздѣлу, а превращаются въ показательные и передаются въ исключительное пользованіе государства или общинъ, въ зависимости отъ размѣра и значенія ихъ.

Усадебная городская и сельская земля съ домашними садами и огородами остается въ пользованіи настоящихъ владѣльцевъ, причемъ размѣръ самихъ участковъ и высота налога за пользованіе ими опредѣляется законодательнымъ порядкомъ.

4) Конскіе заводы, казенные и частные племенные скотоводства и птицеводства и проч. конфискуется, обращаются во всенародное достояніе и переходятъ либо въ исключительное пользованіе государства, либо общины, въ зависимости отъ величины и значенія ихъ.

Вопросы о выкупѣ подлежатъ разсмотрѣнію Учредительнаго Собранія.

5) Весь хозяйственный инвентарь конфискованныхъ земель, живой и мертвый переходитъ въ исключительное пользованіе государства или общины въ зависимости отъ величины и значенія ихъ, безъ выкупа.

Конфискація инвентаря не касается маломельныхъ Крестьянъ.

6) Право пользованія землею получаютъ всѣ граждане (безъ различія пола) Россійскаго Государства, желающіе обрабатывать ее своимъ трудомъ, при помощи своей семьи, или въ товариществѣ, и только до той поры, пока они въ силахъ ее обрабатывать. Наемный трудъ не допускается.

При случайномъ безсиліи какого-либо члена сѣльскаго общества въ продолженіи 2 лѣтъ, сельское общество обязуется до возстановленія его трудоспособности на этотъ срокъ прійти ему на помощь, путемъ общественной обработки земли.

Земледѣльцы, вслѣдствіе старости и инвалидности, утратившіе навсегда возможность лично обрабатывать землю, теряютъ право на пользованіе ею, взамѣнъ того получаютъ отъ государства пенсіонное обезпеченіе.

7) Землепользованіе должно быть уравнительнымъ, т. е. земля распредѣляется между трудящимися, смотря по мѣстнымъ условіямъ — по трудовой или потребительной нормѣ.

Формы пользованія землею должны быть совершенно свободны: подворная, хуторская, общинная, артельная, какъ рѣшено будетъ въ отдѣльныхъ селеніяхъ и поселкахъ.

8) Вся земля, по ея отчужденіи, поступаетъ въ общенародный земельный фондъ. Распредѣленіемъ ея между трудящимися завѣдуютъ мѣстные и центральныя самоуправленія, начиная отъ демократически организованныхъ безсословныхъ сельскихъ и городскихъ общинъ и кончая центральными областными учрежденіями.

Земельный фондъ подвергается періодическимъ передѣламъ въ зависимости отъ роста населенія и поднятія производительности и культуры сельскаго хозяйства.

При измѣненіи границъ надѣловъ, первоначальное ядро надѣла должно остаться неприкосновеннымъ.

Земля выбывающихъ членовъ поступаетъ обратно въ земельный фондъ, причемъ преимущественное право на полученіе участковъ выбывшихъ членовъ получаютъ ближайшіе родственники ихъ и лица по указанію выбывшихъ.

Вложенная въ землю стоимость удобренія и меліораціи (коренныя улучшенія), поскольку они не использованы при сдачѣ надѣла обратно въ земельный фондъ, должны быть оплачены.

Если въ отдѣльныхъ мѣстностяхъ наличный земельный фондъ окажется недостаточнымъ для удовлетворенія всего мѣстнаго населенія, то избытокъ населенія подлежитъ переселенію.

Организацію переселенія, равно какъ и расходы по переселенію и снабженію инвентаремъ и проч., должно взять на себя государство.

Переселеніе производится въ слѣдующемъ порядкѣ: желающіе безземельные крестьяне, затѣмъ порочные члены общинъ, дезертиры и проч., и, наконецъ, по жребію либо по соглашенію.

Все содержащееся въ этомъ наказѣ, какъ выраженіе безусловной воли огромнаго большинства сознательныхъ крестьянъ всей Россіи, объявляется временнымъ закономъ, который впредь до Учредительнаго Собранія проводится в жизнь по возможности немедленно, а въ извѣстныхъ своихъ частяхъ съ той необходимой постепенностью, которая должна опредѣляться уѣздными совѣтами крестьянскихъ депутатовъ.

Земля рядовыхъ крестьянъ и рядовыхъ казаковъ не конфискуется.

Предсѣдатель Совѣта Народныхъ Комиссаровъ

26-го октября 1917 г.

Владиміръ Ульяновъ-Ленинъ.

The Decree on Land (facsimile)

of starvation on tiny plots of land. This was the Socialist aspect of the Decree on the Land.

The Land Decree, together with the Decree on Peace, consummated the bourgeois-democratic revolution and completed the tasks which that revolution had failed to carry out; but it did this "in passing, in its stride." Referring at a later date to the achievements of the Great Proletarian Revolution, Lenin wrote:

> ". . . in order to enable the peoples of Russia to retain the gains of the bourgeois-democratic revolution we had to advance further, and did so. We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, in our stride, as a 'by-product' of our main and real, *proletarian* revolutionary, Socialist work."[53]

The last item on the agenda of the Congress was the question of the form of government. On this point the Congress passed a decree on the formation of a workers' and peasants' government to be known as the Council of People's Commissars. The decree on this question read as follows:

> "The All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies resolves:
>
> "For the purpose of administering the country, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, a Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government, shall be formed to be known as the Council of People's Commissars.
>
> "Authority to control the work of the People's Commissars and the right to appoint and dismiss them shall be vested in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies and in its Central Executive Committee."[54]

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was appointed Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin was appointed People's Commissar for National Affairs.

The first Soviet Government consisted entirely of Bolsheviks. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries rejected the Bolsheviks' offer to share power with them. At the Congress their representatives said that their

> "entry into the Bolshevik Ministry would create a gulf between them and the detachments of the revolutionary army which had left the Congress—a gulf which would prevent the possibility of mediation between the Bolsheviks and these groups."[55]

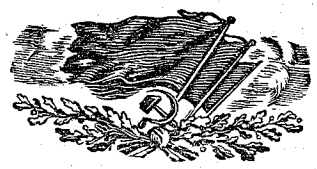
Representing the ideology of the wealthy upper stratum of the rural population on the one hand and the peasants' thirst for land on the other, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries oscillated between the Bolsheviks and the petty-bourgeois parties. Ideologically gravitating towards the latter, they nevertheless realised that only the Bolsheviks could give the peasants land. This explains their oscillation between the Bolsheviks and the petty-bourgeois parties. They were temporary fellow-travellers of the proletarian revolution, likely to desert and betray it at a critical moment.

In conclusion, the Congress elected a Central Executive Committee of 101 members, of whom 62 were Bolsheviks, 29 "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, six United Internationalist Social-Democrats, three Ukrainian Socialists, and one Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionary.

At 5:15 a.m. on October 27, the Second Congress of Soviets drew to a close amidst loud cries of "Long live the Revolution!" "Long live Socialism!"[56] and the strains of the "Internationale."

Thus came into being the Soviet Government—the first Workers' and Peasants' Government in history.

Day was already breaking when the delegates left the Smolny. Taking with them bundles of newspapers and leaflets fresh from the press, and loaded with Bolshevik literature, they hastened to the railway stations, eager to return to their respective districts in order to carry the news of the victory of the proletarian revolution to all parts of the country.





Chapter Six

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE ANTI-SOVIET MUTINY



1

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY INSURRECTION AGAINST THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

AT ABOUT noon on October 25, Kerensky left the Winter Palace and dashed off in an automobile to Gatchina. There he found, however, that none of the troops which had been summoned from the front had arrived. The local garrison had already been warned of the flight of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The soldiers gathered in groups, noisily argued among themselves, held meetings, and might have arrested Kerensky at any moment. Barely managing to refuel his car, he rushed on further in quest of the troops he had summoned, but nowhere could he find them, and the garrisons of the towns he passed through had already gone over to the Military Revolutionary Committee. Through the drizzling autumn rain and the mud, the ex-dictator's car sped further and further into the gathering dusk.

Late in the evening, at about 9 o'clock, Kerensky, weary and depressed, reached Pskov, the headquarters of the Northern Front. Here he learned

that the Commander-in-Chief, General Cheremisov, had countermanded the order to send troops to Petrograd. Earlier in the day the Menshevik Voitinsky, the Commissar of the Northern Front, had called a conference of representatives of the Commander-in-Chief of the front, the Front Committee and of the Executive Committee of the Pskov Soviet, at which he had proposed that reliable troops should be sent to the aid of the Provisional Government in Petrograd. The conference, however, had strongly criticised Voitinsky's proposal and had passed a vote of no confidence in him. In the evening, when the conference was resumed Voitinsky was absent. His deputy, Savitsky, reported with some embarrassment that information had been received from Petrograd that the Constitutional Democrat Kishkin had been appointed dictator and that this had roused indignation among the soldiers. At all events, the Commissariat of the front had decided to refrain from sending troops to Petrograd. All the organisations represented at the conference unanimously opposed the dispatch of troops to assist the Provisional Government. At the same time the conference decided to form a North-Western Military Revolutionary Committee and to instruct it to take all measures to prevent the dispatch of troops to Petrograd.

Later on Voitinsky appeared and reported that communications had been received from all the three armies at the front. The First Army was opposed to dispatching troops; the Fifth Army was in favour of dispatching troops, not against the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, however, but, if anything, to assist it. Only the Twelfth Army was alleged to be in favour of sending troops. Thus, of the three armies, only one, and that only Voitinsky could vouch for, had expressed itself in favour of assisting the Provisional Government.

Declaring that he evidently did not express the sentiments of the soldiers Voitinsky offered to resign, adding that in conjunction with General Cheremisov, he had cancelled the movement of all troop trains to Petrograd.

On learning these details, Kerensky hesitated to appeal to General Cheremisov, the Commander-in-Chief of the front. Nor had he any confidence in the Pskov garrison. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief, therefore, addressed himself to Quartermaster-General Baranovsky, formerly *Chef de Cabinet* of the Ministry of War. The news he received there was alarming. Kerensky was informed that a Military Revolutionary Committee was already operating in Pskov, that the Telegraph Office had been placed under control, and that Staff Headquarters had received orders from Petrograd to arrest him.

Soon after, however, Kerensky summoned General Cheremisov, who confirmed the information Kerensky had received and added that he had no reliable troops at his command to send to Petrograd. General Cheremisov concluded by saying that he could not guarantee Kerensky's safety in Pskov.

When Kerensky enquired whether Cheremisov had rescinded the order to dispatch all the troops that had been indicated, including the 3rd Cavalry Corps commanded by Krasnov, the General replied in the affirmative.

"Have you seen General Krasnov? Does he agree with you?" asked Kerensky irritably, interrupting the General.

"General Krasnov is coming from Ostrov to see me, and I expect him to arrive any minute," answered Cheremisov.

"In that case, General, send him to me as soon as he arrives," said Kerensky.

"I will,"[1] the General answered, and then left to attend a meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee whither he had been summoned.

Cheremisov returned to Kerensky's apartment at one o'clock in the morning, only to inform him that he was unable to render the government any assistance. He advised Kerensky to leave General Headquarters as he was in imminent danger of arrest in Pskov.

In utter despair Kerensky decided to make his way to Ostrov, the headquarters of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, and from there march with the Cossacks against Red Petrograd. But just before daybreak on October 26, General Krasnov, the Corps Commander, accompanied by his Chief of Staff, suddenly turned up at Kerensky's quarters. . . .

Krasnov had not credited the order countermanding the dispatch of his Corps and had come to Pskov to verify matters. At that moment General Cheremisov, the Commander-in-Chief of the front, was in conference with the representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee whither Krasnov went to see him. Fearing that he would rouse the suspicion of the members of the Committee with whom he was conferring, Cheremisov reluctantly left the room to speak to Krasnov. In a brief conversation he advised him to return to Ostrov. Krasnov demanded an order in writing. Cheremisov, very displeased, again urged Krasnov to return to Ostrov and then returned to the conference room.

After waiting at General Headquarters for a little while the perplexed Krasnov went to see Voitinsky, whose acquaintance he had made during the Kornilov plot. He was obliged to wait a long time before he could see him, however, for the Commissar was away, at the same conference at which Cheremisov was engaged. When Voitinsky arrived he informed Krasnov in strict confidence that Kerensky was in Pskov and requested Krasnov to go and see him immediately.

Taking great precautions, Krasnov, just before dawn, arrived at the secret quarters of the fugitive Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Kerensky was overjoyed at seeing Krasnov and at once decided to accompany him to the Headquarters of the 3rd Cavalry Corps.

The 3rd Cavalry Cossack Corps had not been disbanded after the Kornilov plot. On the contrary, at the beginning of September Kerensky had ordered it to be concentrated in the district of Pavlovsk-Gatchina-Peterhof "in view of the likelihood of a German landing in Finland," as was stated in the confidential order.[2] The very disposition of the corps showed that it was not intended to be used to combat a German landing, but to fight the

Bolsheviks. Later on Krasnov gave the following reason why the Corps had been transferred:

"I briefly and quite frankly explained the situation to the officers and Cossacks. I did not conceal from them that the reason for going to Petrograd was not so much the danger of a German landing as the frightful, insidious activities of the Bolsheviks who were out to seize power."[3]

The Corps was carefully shielded from all revolutionary influence. Krasnov had proposed that all the unreliable units should be weeded out and replaced by fresh Cossack regiments. Cavalry, however, were needed at the front to suppress mutiny among the soldiers. Moreover, the Petrograd Soviet was closely watching the suspicious concentration of Cossacks near the capital. The Corps was transferred to Ostrov, where it arrived on September 28. During the month it was stationed there, its strength waned, as several Cossack Hundreds were sent to different towns. Two Hundreds of the 10th Don Regiment with two guns were in Toropets; three Hundreds of the Ussuriisky Regiment with two guns were in Ostashkov, and five squadrons with two guns were in Vitebsk.

Round about October 20 the 51st Infantry Division, which was on the Northern Front, refused to relieve the 184th Division. The soldiers of the latter division thereupon decided to leave the trenches. All the efforts of the Army and Corps Committees to persuade them to remain were without avail. The Commander-in-Chief and the Commissar of the Northern Front issued an order to "disband the 51st Division, even if it is necessary to resort to armed force for the purpose."[4] The task of carrying out the order was entrusted to General Krasnov's 3rd Cavalry Corps which on October 23, was ordered by Krasnov to join the First Army in the area where the 51st Division was disposed.

On October 24, Krasnov telegraphed to the Headquarters of the various fronts and to the Staff of the First Army informing them that his troops had begun to entrain, and that the twenty troop trains would arrive at their destination within three days. He requested that the units quartered in Ostashkov, Toropets and Vitebsk be returned forthwith.[5]

But at dawn on October 25, before the troop trains had started out, Cavalry Corps Headquarters received the following telegram, signed by Kerensky and the Acting Chairman of the Union of Cossack Forces, A. Grekov:

"I order you on the receipt of this to dispatch by rail to Petrograd, Nikolayevsky Station, all the regiments of the 1st Don Cossack Division, with all their artillery, now on the Northern Front under the general command of the chief of the 1st Don Cossack Division, to be placed at the disposal of Colonel Polkovnikov, Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military Area. Wire me by code time of departure. If it is found impossible to dispatch by rail, dispatch units in echelons, in marching order."[6]

After Kerensky's telegram came the following manifesto, signed by the Menshevik Voitinsky, Commissar of the Northern Front:

"Convey the following to the men of the Don and Maritime Regiments:

"'The Provisional Government, with the full consent of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, is drawing to Petrograd troops who are loyal to the revolution and to their duty to the country. The Petrograd regiments who have stubbornly refused to go to the front on the pretext of defending freedom in the rear have proved incapable of protecting Petrograd from disorder and anarchy. The convocation of the Constituent Assembly is menaced. Among the troops who are being called in this grave hour to save Russia, a leading place is occupied by the Cossack regiments.

"Let the deserters who have entrenched themselves in the rear fume against the Cossacks; the Cossacks will perform their duty to their country to the very last."[7]

This petty-bourgeois politician, scared to death by the Great Proletarian Revolution, began to talk in the language of the tsarist generals.

At 11 a.m. on October 25, Krasnov, with manifest pleasure, gave orders to publish the appeal of the Menshevik Voitinsky.

At 7 p.m., Krasnov issued another order to the Corps. The grounds which Voitinsky had advanced for sending the Cossacks against revolutionary Petrograd had seemed inadequate to him, so he advanced his own. In his order this future henchman of Kaiser Wilhelm (in 1918 Krasnov was the head of the counter-revolutionary government set up in the Don Region) declared that the revolution had been the work of "a handful of irresponsible persons who have been bribed by Emperor Wilhelm." He rescinded his order of October 23 and sent only one division to the First Army. To all the other units he issued the following order in pursuance of that sent by Kerensky:

"A. The unit commanded by Colonel Popov of the General Staff:

"The 9th Don Cossack Regiment—5 Hundreds, 4 machine guns.
" 10th " " " —5 " 4 " "
" 13th " " " —5 " 4 " "
" 15th " " " —5 " 4 " "

"The 1st Don Artillery Battalion—10 guns.
"The 1st Amur Cossack Battalion—4 guns.
"Total: 20 Hundreds, 16 machine guns, 14 guns.

"Immediately to entrain at Ostrov, Reval, Pallifer and Toropets, travel *via* Narva and Pskov to Alexandrovskaya and there wait for the concentration of the entire division in the region of Pulkovo-Tsarskoye Selo. If these points cannot be reached by rail, fight your way through to them in entire regiments from the rail-head."[8]

In the same order General Krasnov announced that the 44th Infantry Division, the Cycle Battalions, the 5th Caucasian Cossack Division, the 23rd

and 43rd Don Cossack Regiments and a number of other units had been called to Petrograd. Such was the situation in the Cavalry Corps on the night of October 25, when Northern Front Headquarters was compelled to rescind the order for the dispatch of troops to Petrograd.

As soon as Kerensky set eyes on General Krasnov he fired a series of questions at him:

"General, where is your Corps? Is it on the way? Is it already near here? I expected to meet it near Luga."[9]

Krasnov replied that the Corps was ready to march against the Bolsheviks, but it required infantry support. It was dangerous, he said, to move cavalry alone, and in small units at that. Kerensky ordered Baranovsky to muster all the Hundreds of the Corps which were scattered along the front and attach to the Corps the 37th Infantry Division, the 1st Cavalry Division and the entire 17th Army Corps. He asked Krasnov whether these forces would be adequate. The latter replied:

"Yes, if we muster all the forces, and if the infantry accompanies us, Petrograd will be occupied and freed from the Bolsheviks."[10]

Baranovsky conveyed Kerensky's order to General Headquarters. Kerensky and Krasnov rushed off to Ostrov.

General Headquarters maintained communication with Petrograd even after the surrender of the Winter Palace. After 1 a.m. on October 25, it got in touch on the direct wire with Sub-Lieutenant Scherr, the representative of the Political Administration of the Ministry of War. The latter reported the capture of the Winter Palace, after which the following dialogue ensued:

"Where are the members of the Provisional Government now?"

"They were arrested in the Winter Palace an hour ago. I have no knowledge of their present whereabouts. Minister Prokopovich was arrested earlier in the day, but later was released. . . ."

"Who is the Supreme Commander-in-Chief now?"

"Alexander Fedorovich Kerensky."

"Where is he?"

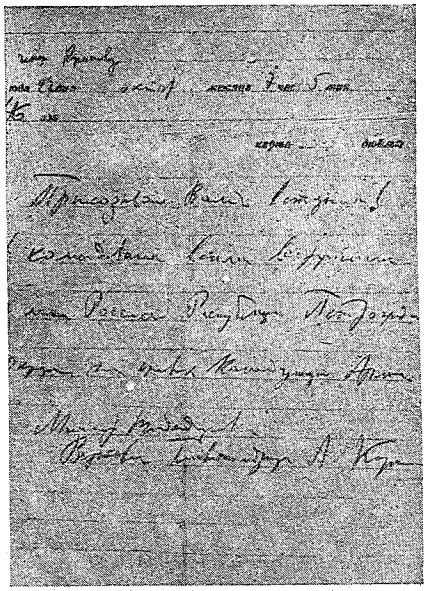
"Vyrubov has just informed me that he is in Pskov. We know that he went out to meet the troops which were coming from the front. . . ."

"How has the Ministry of War reacted to the overthrow of the Provisional Government, the suppression of the Council of the Republic and the capture of power by the Bolsheviks?"

"By chance, the premises of the Ministry for War are not yet occupied by the mutinous troops and evidently this line is the only one in Petrograd that is not yet in their hands. The only people here are the officers of the Political Administration who have decided to refuse to do any work in the event of power being captured here, in the Administration. The premises of the Chief Administration of the General Staff and the Chief Headquarters were already occupied by the rebels in the daytime."[11]

General Headquarters had barely finished speaking with Petrograd when they were called up by the Western Front. General Baluyev reported that he had received several orders from the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee and asked for instructions. General Headquarters enquired whether military forces were available on the Western Front which were ready to support the Provisional Government.

"I cannot answer for a single unit," replied Baluyev. "The majority of the units will certainly not support it. Even the units that are with me may be used only for the purpose of putting a stop to rioting and disorder: they are scarcely fit to be used as a support for the Provisional Government."[12]



Facsimile of the page from Kerensky's field notebook containing the order appointing General Krasnov commander "of all the armed forces of the Russian Republic and of the Petrograd Area"

General Headquarters called up the Rumanian Front and made the same enquiry about the loyalty of the troops. From there the reply came that the Executive Committee of the Rumanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet and the Odessa Military Area had decided to organise a division of picked troops, the men of which were to be recommended by the Army Committees and sent to Petrograd under the slogan: Defend the Constituent Assembly! General Headquarters interrupted the reporter impatiently and stated that they were not discussing the Constituent Assembly—that would be promised by the new government too—but whether the Rumanian Front could allocate forces for the purpose of rescuing the former government. Upon this Tiesenhausen, the Commissar of the Rumanian Front, took up the conversation.

"I am profoundly convinced," he said, "that it is scarcely possible to move troops from the front even for the purpose of protecting the members of the government. . . . The entire front, however, would rise in defence of the Constituent Assembly and to counteract attempts to prevent it from being convened. . . . The idea of defending the Constituent Assembly is extremely popular. The composition of the former government is not particularly popular among the troops and, as such, interests the soldiers very little."[13]

Thus, in the very first days of the civil war, the counter-revolutionaries realised that an open attack on behalf of the old regime was doomed to utter failure. Such an attack might be camouflaged with some "democratic"

slogan in which the masses still had faith. Thus the Constituent Assembly was used as the slogan for mobilising the counter-revolutionary forces. General Headquarters did not realise this at once, but the petty-bourgeois traitors did so very quickly, and advanced the very slogan which they had rejected only a few days previously as a Bolshevik slogan.

General Dieterichs, at General Headquarters, called up the Staff of the South-Western Front and conveyed the same information and made the same enquiries as in the case of the other fronts. The Staff kept Dieterichs on the wire for two hours. Evidently it was collecting information. At last, to the blunt question as to whether any reliable troops were available, the Staff replied:

"Since the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front has countermanded the order to send troops, why send troops from here?"[14]

The only information General Headquarters gleaned after a long conversation was that the Cossack Committee of the South-Western Front had received instructions from the Cossack Congress, then proceeding at the front, to reinforce the guard at Staff Headquarters and to have men on constant duty at the telegraph instruments.

On the morning of October 26, General Headquarters circulated to these fronts the following telegram, which Kerensky had addressed to the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front:

"I order you on the receipt of this to continue to transfer the 3rd Cavalry Corps to Petrograd. October 26, 5:30."[15]

This was all General Headquarters succeeded in doing during the whole night.

That same morning, October 26, Voitinsky, the Commissar of the Northern Front, appeared at the meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee in Pskov, but in an entirely different mood. He reported that Kerensky had issued orders to move troops from the front, and that the necessary instructions had already been issued. In reply to the blunt question as to whether he recognised the authority of the North-Western Military Revolutionary Committee, he said:

"I shall obey only the Central Executive Committee, which is calling for troops."[16]

Soon after, this Menshevik joined the forces of Krasnov and Kerensky.

While Kerensky was rushing from place to place in an effort to get at least some units moved from the front, his supporters in Petrograd were mustering their forces to strike at the revolution from the rear.

On the night of October 25, the members of the hapless procession to the Winter Palace returned to the City Duma and immediately opened a meeting of the "Committee of Public Safety." The ex-"Socialist" Minister, Skobelev, suggested that the "Committee" should be developed into a more powerful organisation and should assume a militant character. His idea was that the new organisation should unite all the democratic forces in the country and wage a determined struggle against the Bolsheviks. This



"The Committee for the Salvation" *Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio*

suggestion was adopted. The new organisation was given the high-sounding title of "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution." Very soon, the Petrograd workers gave it the much more appropriate title of "Committee for the Salvation of the Counter-Revolution."

This was the first fighting organisation of the counter-revolutionary forces to take action against the October Revolution. It consisted of the City Duma, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik groups at the Second Congress of Soviets which had demonstratively left the Congress, members of the Pre-parliament, representatives of the Central Committees of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, Plekhanov's "Unity" group, and representatives of other anti-Soviet groups. It also included representatives of organisations such as the Bank Clerks' Union,

the Disabled Soldiers' League, the League of Chevaliers of St. George, and others, which the Provisional Government had formed especially for the purpose of combating the working class. The Committee elected a Bureau and instructed it to draw up a plan of action.

The members of the "Committee" spent the whole of October 26 in establishing connections with organisations which were willing to take action against the Soviet Government. Among those who attended the meetings of the "Committee" as a representative of the Union of Cossack Forces was A. Grekov, who, in conjunction with Kerensky, had called for the 3rd Cavalry Corps.

The "Committee for the Salvation" sent a group of officers to the nearest towns to inform them of what was going on. The certificate of the officer who was sent to Luga and Reval was signed by A. Gotz, a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.[17]

Almost from its inception the "Committee for the Salvation" established connections with the anti-Soviet military training units in Petrograd, which had not yet been disarmed, and also with the Mikhailovsky and Constantinovsky Artillery Schools, and the Pavlovsky, Vladimirsky, Engineering, Nikolayevsky and several other military schools.

In the morning of October 27, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Railwaymen's Union appeared before the "Committee for the Salvation" and stated that they did not recognise the Bolshevik government and would not carry out any of its orders. The Railwaymen's Union, they said, would obey only a "democratic government," of which they regarded the "Committee for the Salvation" as the nucleus. They added that the Railwaymen's Union would take over the entire administration of the railways.

The Railwaymen's Executive was invited to appoint three permanent representatives to the Committee.

At 2 p.m., that day, in the premises of the City Duma, a meeting was held of the first Central Executive Committee of Soviets, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, members of the Council of the Republic, members of the City Duma, the Central Committees of the compromising parties, and other organisations. The Menshevik, M. I. Skobelev addressed the meeting on behalf of the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution." After reporting on the formation of the "Committee" he went on to say:

> "The task of the day is not only to render irresponsible demagogues harmless, but to combat the counter-revolution. Thanks to the affiliation of the Railwaymen's Union to the Committee, not a single telegram of the new government has been allowed to pass."[18]

This was a downright falsehood; the Soviet Government's telegrams were being sent over the wires to all parts of the country, but this counter-revolutionary assembly loudly applauded the Menshevik's statement; it imagined that he was talking about a force which, in fact, it did not possess.

> "But this is not enough," continued the Menshevik, encouraged by the applause. "In the struggle which lies ahead of us, we shall have to rely on physical force. We must restore the alliance between the railwaymen and our brothers in uniform. This will guarantee the salvation of the revolution."[19]

A resolution was moved to form "Committees for the Salvation, etc." all over the country.

Weinstein, the representative of the Mensheviks, delivered a speech in which he called for calmness and fortitude. On behalf of the Central Committee of the Menshevik Party he said:

> "We must concentrate around the Committee for the Salvation the public opinion of the entire country and later, after we have ascertained whether our forces are adequate, pass from the defensive to the offensive."[20]

The "Committee" set up a military organisation of its own members to direct armed action. At the same time, through its delegates, it got in touch with Kerensky, thus ensuring complete co-ordination with the counter-revolutionary forces which were moving towards Petrograd.

The counter-revolutionary *coup* was to be headed by Colonel Polkovnikov, the former chief of the Petrograd Military Area. A staff was set up to direct military operations.

Not satisfied with mustering armed forces to crush the victorious revolution under the flag of the "Committee for the Salvation," the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks devised another form of fighting the Soviet Government, *viz.*, sabotage. The Committee called upon the government officials and office staffs to declare a boycott and refuse to obey the Bolshevik authorities.

The "Committee" also worked in complete unison with the out-and-out Black Hundreds.

On the evening of October 26, Captain A. P. Anikeyev of the Don Cossack Forces, the new Chairman of the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces, assumed his new post at the offices of the Council. The outgoing Chairman, A. I. Dutov, had been elected an Ataman by the Orenburg Cossack Military Area and had left to take up his post. Anikeyev was accompanied by A. P. Mikheyev, the Vice-Chairman of the Council. Both reported that they had just come from a secret meeting which had been convened by General Alexeyev, the ex-Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, and one of the most prominent of the tsarist generals. The meeting was still in progress, they stated, and Anikeyev requested the Council to send representatives to it at once. When the representatives of the Council arrived at the address which had been given them, they found there, in addition to General Alexeyev, B. Savinkov, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and a cadet. General Alexeyev stated that according to his information General Krasnov's 3rd Cavalry Corps was being moved against Petrograd, and that he and Savinkov had intended to go out to meet it. General Alexeyev was

advised by those present not to go as he might be recognised and arrested. Less known people should be sent, they said. They appointed a representative of the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces and the cadet. General Alexeyev handed them the railway tickets that he had purchased earlier in the day for himself and Savinkov. The Council of the Union of Cossack Forces provided them with forged documents, and both went off to meet Krasnov's Cossacks.[21]

The "Committee for the Salvation" made contact with the monarchist organisation headed by V. Purishkevich. This notorious chief of the Black Hundreds had formed this organisation earlier in the month, before power had passed to the Soviets. As one of its prominent members stated, its object was

> "to set up a strong government for the purpose of bringing the war to a victorious conclusion and of subsequently restoring the monarchy in Russia without fail."[22]

The organisation recruited its members from among the army officers and cadets. These were organised in secret groups of five, and no group had any knowledge of the other groups.

Purishkevich himself informed one of those whom he had enlisted that he had at his command about 2,000 devoted men in Petrograd, about 7,000 at the front, and a large number in Moscow and other towns.[23] The organisation was to operate in secret, and for the time being there was to be no talk about restoring the monarchy. Purishkevich proposed that these forces should be united with the groups which were striving for a dictatorship, such as the monarchists, the Constitutional Democrats and Savinkov's organisation. Purishkevich's accomplice stated:

> "Purishkevich insisted particularly on establishing close connection with Savinkov and his political friends and supporters on the grounds that the monarchists were too weak to achieve success by themselves, and that without the Right 'Socialist-Revolutionaries' and Savinkov's followers they were doomed to defeat."[24]

The Great Proletarian Revolution upset Purishkevich's plans. His organisation fell to pieces. Some of those who had been enlisted dispersed to different towns.

Purishkevich wanted immediate armed action in Petrograd itself. He strongly insisted that as the Soviet Government had not yet consolidated itself and Kerensky and the Socialist-Revolutionaries had not yet entirely surrendered power, this was the most favourable moment for taking action with the object of seizing power and restoring the monarchy. He told his fellow conspirators that he had been promised the assistance of Colonel Polkovnikov and the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution."

Thus came into being the united anti-Soviet front created mainly by the efforts of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and comprising all the counter-revolutionary elements, from out-and-out Black Hundreds to the



The "United Front" from Martov and Chernov to Milyukov-Rodzyanko and Purishkevich

Cartoon by A. Kanevsky

"Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" led by representatives of alleged revolutionary democracy.

In their struggle against the Soviet Government, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries also sought the aid of the imperialists of the Entente. Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Russia, relates the following in his *Memoirs of a Diplomat*:

> "Avksentyev, the President of the Provisional Council, who came to see me today, assured me that, though the Bolsheviks had succeeded in overthrowing the government owing to the latter's criminal want of foresight, they would not hold out many days. At last night's meeting of the Congress of All-Russian Soviets they had found themselves completely

isolated, as all the other Socialist groups had denounced their methods and had refused to take any further part in the proceedings. The Council of Peasants had also pronounced against them. The Municipal Council, he went on to say, was forming a 'Committee of Public Safety' composed of representatives of the Provisional Council, the Central Committee of the Soviet, the Peasants' Council and the Committee of Delegates from the front; while the troops, which were expected from Pskov, would probably arrive in a couple of days.

"I told him that I did not share his confidence."[25]

It is difficult to believe that Avksentyev visited the British Ambassador solely for the purpose of "exchanging news."

2

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY MARCH ON PETROGRAD

The information which Kerensky received from the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" about the insurrection that was being prepared in Petrograd revived his hopes for a speedy return to power.

He urged Krasnov to accelerate the opening of hostilities. Near Ostrov they met some Hundreds of the 9th Don Regiment en route to their quarters. Krasnov stopped them and ordered them to return to their train and continue their advance on Petrograd.

The news of Kerensky's arrival in Ostrov spread through the town like wildfire. Crowds consisting mainly of soldiers from the local units began to gather outside his quarters. At first, these men in drab greatcoats stood around quietly, but soon they began to show marked signs of hostility. A commotion arose and voices were heard calling for Kerensky's arrest. Cossacks had to be called out to protect the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Kerensky summoned the Regimental and Divisional Committees of the Cavalry Corps and delivered an impassioned oration, but even in this assembly there were signs of hostility.

"Kornilovite!"—hissed several Cossacks in Kerensky's face.

At this point the meeting broke up and, guarded by a platoon of Cossacks, Kerensky drove to the railway station and boarded a train. Krasnov gave the command for the train to pull out, but the engine remained motionless. Threats proved useless. Meanwhile, groups of excited soldiers began to gather outside Kerensky's car. Krasnov then ordered the commander of his escort—who had once been an assistant engine-driver—and two Cossacks to mount the footplate. At last, about 3 in the afternoon of October 26, the train moved off. The march on Soviet Petrograd commenced.

The route lay through Pskov, where the station was crowded with armed soldiers. The train dashed through this dangerous spot without stopping. It travelled at top speed to Dno, and then on to Gatchina which was reached at daybreak on October 27.

Soon after, Krasnov received a dispatch to the effect that a mixed company of soldiers and sailors from Petrograd had arrived at the Baltic Railway Station. He sent a force of Cossacks with artillery against them. Surrounded by the Cossacks and with the muzzles of the guns trained on them, the soldiers and sailors had to surrender.

The Cossacks also succeeded in seizing the Warsaw Railway Station without a fight and in capturing prisoners and 14 machine guns.

While this was taking place, Kerensky, protected by a reliable escort and accompanied by his aides-de-camp drove off to Gatchina.

This quiet, country town was suddenly transformed into a bustling armed camp. Words of command were constantly ringing out, and the place was ablaze with the red striped Cossack uniforms.

Kerensky issued the following circular telegram:

"The town of Gatchina has been captured by troops loyal to the government and occupied without bloodshed.

"Companies of Kronstadt Marines, the Semyonovsky and Ismailovsky Regiments and detachments of sailors obediently surrendered their arms and joined the government forces.

"I order all troop trains appointed to take the road to proceed with the greatest dispatch.

"The Military Revolutionary Committee has ordered its troops to withdraw."[26]

This sudden leap from despair, when he had occasion to fear his own generals, to transient success, turned the head of the unbalanced Supreme Commander-in-Chief. He had visions of "entire companies" surrendering their arms, although by their sudden raid the Cossacks had managed to capture only one company. Allowing his imagination to run away with him, he could see soldiers and sailors voluntarily surrendering and gleefully joining him, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. But alas, the occupation of Gatchina did not mean that its garrison had submitted to Krasnov. In spite of all their efforts, Kerensky and Krasnov failed to induce a single unit in the town to commence active operations against the Petrograd proletariat. The most they achieved was that the ensigns of the Gatchina School agreed to perform guard duty in the town and its environs. In addition, the officers of the Gatchina Aviation School placed two aeroplanes at the disposal of the troops. That very day the aeroplanes took off and flying over Petrograd and its suburbs dropped Kerensky's manifesto and Krasnov's orders.

Meanwhile, the reinforcements from the front failed to appear.

On the morning of October 26, General Headquarters again got in touch with the Northern Front to make enquiries. The Chief of Staff of the Northern Front reported that it had not been possible to transmit Kerensky's last or-

ders about the movement of troops as the officers of the Pskov Military Revolutionary Committee on duty at the telegraph instrument had not permitted anybody to go near. Only the 3rd Cavalry Corps was on the way to Petrograd. Dukhonin requested that the following telegram be handed to Kerensky when the latter passed through Pskov:

"I believe it is necessary to move to Petrograd not only the 3rd Corps, but also the other units which have been assigned. Of course, it will be necessary to proceed in marching order, as the Railwaymen's Union has issued an order not to transport troops to Petrograd."[27]

General Headquarters had intended to form a mixed unit to send to Petrograd under the command of General Wrangel, but they were unable to find reliable troops.

In the afternoon of October 26, Headquarters again called up the Political Administration of the War Ministry in Petrograd. Count Tolstoi, the Deputy Chief, reported on the measures taken by the "Committee for the Salvation," but emphasised that no forces were available in Petrograd.

General Headquarters then called up the Northern Front and learned that Kerensky had already passed through Pskov with the first troop train.

General Headquarters called up the Western Front, but the information obtained from there was far from consoling. General Baluyev reported that in Minsk power was in the hands of the Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies. The Front Committee, he said, was opposed to the Soviet, but he could not answer for the garrison.

"The guard of the 37th Regiment has just been here," added General Baluyev, "and declared myself and the entire staff under arrest and requested that we should work under their revolutionary staff. On the whole, the situation is bad, and I do not know how I shall extricate myself from it. Nor can the Commissars do anything."[28]

Thus, General Headquarters failed to send Kerensky reinforcements on the 26th. The soldiers categorically refused to obey orders, and the railwaymen held up the troop trains that were ready to depart.

All the hoardings in the town were covered with the orders of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee and the decrees on peace and land issued by the Soviet Government.

The ancient, gloomy palace in Gatchina, where the half-wit Paul I had resided and had delighted in his ceremonies of changing guard, was suddenly transformed. It began to hum with activity and the atmosphere of front line Staff Headquarters pervaded it. Kerensky and his adjutants took up their quarters in the rooms on the third floor. The other wing of the building was taken by the Chancellery and First Secretary of the Provisional Government. Messengers from the commandant of the town mounted the stairs to Kerensky's apartments carrying dispatches, and officers with jingling spurs descended in a continuous stream to go off on various commissions.

Military men arrived from Petrograd with dispatches and information. Voitinsky too arrived and was immediately attached to Krasnov's unit. He

telegraphed to the office of the Commissar of the Northern Front in Pskov stating that during the present critical events he would remain constantly with this detachment.[29]

Two representatives of the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces arrived and reported on the situation in Petrograd and on the work of the Council and of General Alexeyev. They also reported that the lst, 4th and 14th Cossack Regiments quartered in Petrograd would meet the 3rd Cavalry Corps as soon as it approached the capital. One of the representatives of the Council was ordered to remain in Gatchina, while the second returned to Petrograd to report that the Cavalry Corps was approaching the city and that the Cossacks must be ready to take action against the Bolsheviks at the proper moment.

Kerensky sent the following order to the troops of the Petrograd Military Area:

"I hereby announce that I—the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Russian Republic—have this day arrived at the head of the troops from the front who are loyal to our country. I order all the units in the Petrograd Military Area which, owing to ignorance or error, have joined the gang of traitors to our country and betrayers of the revolution, to resume forthwith ... the performance of their duties."[30]

Again and again Kerensky sent peremptory telegrams to General Headquarters and to the Staff of the Northern Front demanding that the dispatch of troops be accelerated. The Generals promised, made reassuring replies, but there was no sign of the promised troop trains. Instead of troops Kerensky received a telegram from the Staff of the Caucasian Front in which the Commander-in-Chief, General Przhevalsky, and the Commissar of the Front, Donskoy, expressed indignation at the insurrection in Petrograd and solemnly promised to support the Provisional Government.

But the Caucasian Front was thousands of miles away, so what were these promises worth? Kerensky sent a dry reply thanking them, but unable to forego the opportunity of posing once again like Khlestakov in Gogol's *Inspector-General*, this Supreme Commander-in-Chief who had failed to receive a single troop train from the front concluded his message as follows:

"Glad to assure you that the entire army on active service is imbued with the same buoyant spirit."[31]

Kerensky rushed about like a cornered rat. He wrote letters to individual commanders and officers of his acquaintance. On his instructions Captain A. Kozmin, the second in command of the Petrograd Military Area, who had fled with him from Petrograd, wrote letter after letter to various individuals appealing for assistance. Through Schreider, the Mayor of Petrograd, he wrote to Colonel Krakovetsky, a Socialist-Revolutionary in Petrograd. From an officer whom the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" had sent to Luga he had learned that this Krakovetsky was

taking part in the preparations for the counter-revolutionary insurrection, so he wrote to him as follows:

"I would ask you, my dear Colonel, to communicate with me in order to settle questions connected with ridding Petrograd and its environs of the Bolsheviks.... Send your reply with my courier, or better still, send your delegate to me for liaison, and I will arrange with him our future joint action."[32]

Kozmin sent a similar request to Count Rebinder, the Commander of the Reserve Guards Horse Artillery Brigade. In a letter to the Commander of the Disabled Soldiers' Rifle Regiment informing him of Kerensky's arrival in Gatchina, he begged for "all the assistance in your power for our common cause."[33] Kozmin's begging letters failed to reach their destinations, however; his couriers were intercepted by the representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee. The Military Revolutionary Committee also gained possession of Kozmin's letter to the Political Department of the Ministry for War requesting information about Kerensky's family and asking that one of the officials of the department be sent to Gatchina.[34]

The men in Kerensky's entourage gave him the addresses of regiments and units commanded by men of their acquaintance. One of the officers informed him that a friend of his was in command of the 5th Armoured Car Detachment. Kerensky telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front ordering him to direct that detachment immediately to Gatchina-Tsarskoye Selo. Not trusting the Staff of the Northern Front, Kerensky ordered his aide-de-camp, Senior Lieutenant Kovanko, to dispatch the following telegram directly to the 5th Armoured Car Detachment:

"The Supreme Commander-in-Chief orders you to facilitate the speedy preparation and dispatch of the 5th Detachment, to be placed at the disposal of General Krasnov, Commander-in-Chief of the Army operating near Petrograd."[35]

Giving up hope of the arrival of the troop trains from the front, Kerensky eagerly clutched at rumours about the existence of guerilla detachments and volunteer battalions who were said to be ready to come to his aid. Late that night he sent the following telegram to General Dukhonin at General Headquarters, and to the commandant of the town of Orsha:

"I order you to take immediate measures to give free passage through Orsha of all volunteer battalions proceeding in the direction of Gatchina-Tsarskoye Selo to place themselves under my command."[36]

By midnight it was found that the only town to respond to all these appeals and requests for aid was Luga where the Chairman of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was the Socialist-Revolutionary, Voronovich. Voronovich had been visited by representatives of the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution," and by the Commissar of the Central Executive Committee of the Petrograd Military Area, Malevsky. The Luga Socialist-Revolutionaries promised that a part of the

First Siege Artillery Regiment consisting of 800 men would be sent to Gatchina.[37]

Throughout October 27, only two and a half Hundreds of Cossacks joined the forces of Kerensky and Krasnov. A Cossack patrol, which had been sent out in the direction of Pulkovo, captured a stranded armoured car and brought it to Gatchina, where it was repaired and handed over to the detachment.

The occupation of Gatchina by the Cossacks was reported that very day to the Military Revolutionary Committee in Petrograd; and throughout the day the Commissars of the Gatchina garrison and individual soldiers and workers sent reports about the Cossacks' activities.

At first the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee concentrated its attention on Krasnoye Selo, the direction from which the Cossacks' advance against Petrograd was expected. A mixed detachment of revolutionary forces consisting of four armoured cars, a battalion of the Kronstadt Marines with four machine guns, a battalion of the Helsingfors Regiment with four machine guns, and a battery of six guns from the Vyborg Regiment were ordered to Krasnoye Selo.

Events showed, however, that the Cossacks intended to launch their main drive against Petrograd not through Krasnoye Selo, but *via* Tsarskoye Selo and Pulkovo. The Pavlovsky Reserve Regiment was therefore sent to Tsarskoye Selo, while the sailors' detachments together with detachments of the workers' Red Guard were concentrated along the route to Pulkovo. Later on artillery and the Petrograd and the Ismailovsky Reserve Regiments were sent there.

At the same time, the Military Revolutionary Committee took measures to protect the southern and south-eastern suburbs of Petrograd. This fortified zone was later known as the "Petrograd defence line," or the "Gulf-Neva position," the latter name more correctly describing the line it occupied. This defence line was divided into sectors and occupied by units of the Red Guard, the Lithuanian Reserve Regiment, and other units of the Petrograd garrison. During October 27 and 28 trenches were hastily dug here, and barbed-wire entanglements put up.

In view of the appearance over Petrograd of a Whiteguard aeroplane which dropped Kerensky's leaflets—the second aeroplane made a forced landing near Ligovo and was captured—the Military Revolutionary Committee gave orders to prepare for action the aircraft at the commandant's aerodrome in Petrograd.

The Military Revolutionary Committee carried out all these measures under the direct guidance of Lenin.

On October 27 Lenin and Stalin appeared at Staff Headquarters and requested a report on the plan of operations. Podvoisky enquired whether this visit signified distrust, but Lenin sharply and firmly answered:

"Not distrust. The workers' and peasants' government simply wants to know how its military authorities are functioning."[38]

Lenin was not satisfied with the report, and after carefully studying the

map he pointed to quite a number of omissions and careless mistakes in the military preparations. It was evident that this newly formed staff had not yet mastered its functions.

Lenin requested that another desk be brought into Podvoisky's room, sat down and began to examine every detail of the plan. He summoned representatives of the factories, collected information about the number of guns available, and gave orders to have armour plate attached to railway cars to form an armoured train.

It was Lenin's idea to summon the ships of the Baltic Fleet to assist in the defence of Petrograd. On October 27 he called up the representative of the Finnish Regional Committee of the army and fleet, informed him that Kerensky had captured Gatchina and demanded the immediate dispatch of reinforcements. Helsingfors enquired:

"Anything else?"

Lenin answered:

"Instead of the question 'anything else?' I expected you to say that you were ready to put off and fight."

The head of the Military. Department of the Regional Committee then came to the telegraph instrument and the following conversation ensued:

"How many bayonets do you need?"—asked the Chairman:

Lenin replied:

"We need the largest possible number of bayonets, but they must be in the hands of men who are loyal and ready and determined to fight. How many men like that have you?"

"As many as five thousand. We can send them out at once, men who will fight."

"In how many hours can you guarantee that they will be in Petrograd if sent off with the utmost dispatch?"

"Twenty-four hours from now at the utmost."

"By land?"

"By rail."

"Can you provide food for them?"

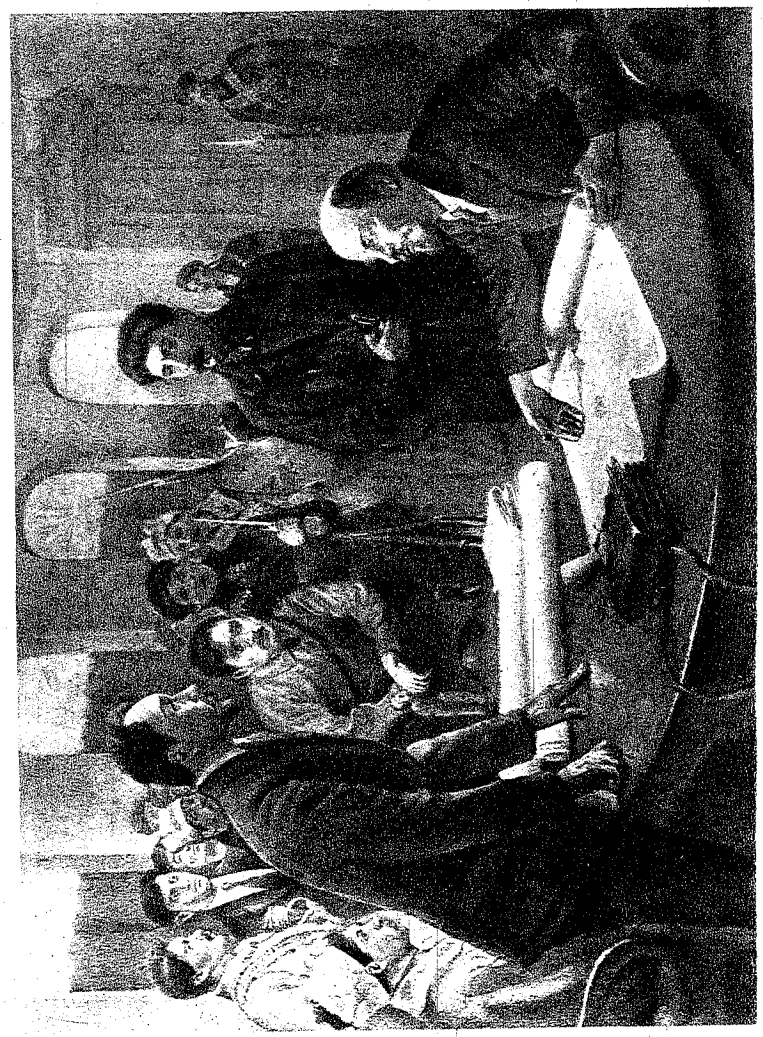
"Yes. We have plenty of provisions. We also have 35 machine guns. We can send these with the gun crews without affecting the situation here. We also have a few field guns."

"On behalf of the government of the republic I urgently request you to proceed to dispatch these forces immediately. Please inform me also whether you are aware that a new government has been formed and what the attitude of your Soviets is towards it?"

"So far we know about the government only from the newspapers. The transfer of power to the Soviets is welcomed here with enthusiasm."

"And so, the land forces will start off immediately and you will ensure the supply of food?"

"Yes. We shall start sending them off immediately and supply provisions."[39]



V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin at Headquarters of the Defence of Petrograd
From a painting by B. Vladimirsky

Lenin then called up the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet and demanded the dispatch of several warships ready for action to assist the Petrograd proletariat.

Lenin not only called for reinforcements, but at once drew up a brilliant plan whereby the fleet would assist the land operations. On the arrival of the warships they were utilised in the following manner.

The cruiser *Oleg* and the battleship *Respublika* were anchored in the Morskoy Canal, where in case of necessity they were to open fire on Tsarskoye Selo and the roads leading from there to Petrograd. The torpedo boats *Zabiyaka, Pobeditel* and *Metki* were sent up the Neva to a point near the village of Ribatskoye, where they trained their four-inch guns on the north-eastern outskirts of Tsarskoye Selo and on the approaches from it to the Nikolayevsky railway line.

The officers of the torpedo-boats refused to carry out this order, whereupon the sailors themselves undertook to take the ships to their stations.

Stalin supervised the carrying out of Lenin's orders. He received delegations from the factories and summoned and carefully instructed the district Party organisers. He performed prodigious work in preparing the garrison to resist the forces of Krasnov and Kerensky. Scores of Commissars as well as rank-and-file soldiers came to him to report on the temper of the men. Invariably he ended the conversation with each of them with the question—his pencil poised, ready to take down the answer —"How many effectives can you provide?"

The defence of Petrograd was entrusted to Lieutenant-Colonel Muravyev, an officer who began his military career in the 1st Neva Infantry Regiment and later served as an instructor at the Kazan Military School. A man with no definite political convictions, he was extremely ambitious, which drove him from one extreme to the other. At the beginning of the revolution he formed bourgeois shock units, the main function of which was to combat the revolution. During the Kornilov mutiny he swung over to the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. During the October armed insurrection he accepted the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military Area although the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries had forbidden their members to hold responsible posts under the Soviet Government. Subsequently, he betrayed the Soviet Government.

Muravyev's Commissar was Comrade Yeremeyev, a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee. He was an old Bolshevik who had been one of the editors of the Bolshevik newspapers *Zvezda* and *Pravda* in the period of reaction and revolutionary revival in 1908 to 1914. During the Great Proletarian Revolution he commanded some of the detachments which captured the Winter Palace. Muravyev's Chief of Staff was Colonel Walden.

The arrival of Lenin and Stalin at Headquarters had immediate effect upon the entire work. The nervous bustle and inefficiency characteristic of a new body gave way to order and organisation. Every man knew his place

and the particular function he was to perform. Scores of men, looking calm and resolute, left the Headquarters carrying the orders of Lenin and Stalin to different parts of the city.

Stalin proposed that first of all stock be taken of all the available arms. The Commissars of the regiments, of the arsenal and of the munition factories sent in reports of the number of rifles and machine guns in their possession. Representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee drove to the arms depots in trucks, loaded them with rifles and ammunition, and immediately sent them off to the front near Pulkovo. The Military Revolutionary Committee took over all the available automobiles and motor trucks. The garrison was put in a state of preparedness. Where there were no Commissars they were appointed. In some units the soldiers were advised to elect their own Commissars. For example, the Military Revolutionary Committee sent the following order to the Guards Reserve Artillery Battalion:

> "We hereby instruct the battalion to elect a Commissar if one has not been appointed, to prepare the detachment for action, and to carry out the orders of Area Headquarters."[40]

All the officers who had been previously employed at the Headquarters of the Petrograd Military Area, at the Ministry for War and the Admiralty were ordered immediately to resume their duties. Those failing to do so were threatened with prosecution before a revolutionary tribunal.

Propagandists were sent to the towns and villages along the railways to spread among the working people the news about the revolution in the capital.

The new government appealed directly to the working people, and its vigorous exhortations stimulated the initiative and activity of the masses. The Red Guards, on their own initiative, searched for stocks of arms, and on finding any, immediately informed the Military Revolutionary Committee. For example, the Red Guards at the railway station in Tsarskoye Selo, seeing an armoured train loaded with war supplies, surrounded it, prevented it from going to Kerensky's assistance, and then reported the matter to the Military Revolutionary Committee. The latter sent a detachment of 50 men to guard the train.

At about 5 p.m., the Commissar of the Armoured Car Detachment reported that "the Armoured Car Division intends to send to Luga four armoured cars for very suspicious purposes,"[41] and he himself immediately got an armoured car ready to prevent this.

In some parts of the capital drunken riots broke out. The counter-revolutionaries were secretly selling spirits and also inciting groups of ignorant soldiers to raid the wine stores. The Military Revolutionary Committee sent out patrols which, with the assistance of the Commissars of the nearest units, searched suspicious premises, confiscated the liquor found there and arrested those who were guilty of selling spirits or inciting the soldiers to raid wine stores.

During the very first days of the insurrection the Military Revolutionary Committee suppressed a number of bourgeois newspapers. On October 25, Red Guards occupied the offices of *Russkaya Volya*, a newspaper which had been founded by the tsarist Minister, Protopopov; *Birzheviye Vedomosti*, an extremely reactionary newspaper; *Obshcheye Dyelo*, the newspaper published by Burtsev, and others. Taking advantage of the inadequate guard that had been placed at the offices of these newspapers, agents of the counter-revolution broke into the printing plants, carried away the type and in some cases managed to print leaflets. The newspapers which were not suppressed conducted a fierce counter-revolutionary campaign against the new government and published the orders of Kerensky and the bulletins of the "Committee for the Salvation."

The Military Revolutionary Committee suppressed the reactionary newspaper *Novoye Vremya* and took over its premises for the purpose of publishing the Bolshevik Party newspaper *Pravda*. *Rech*, the organ of the Constitutional Democrats and *Dyen*, a pro-Constitutional Democratic paper, were also suppressed and their premises used for the publication of *Soldatskaya Pravda* and *Derevenskaya Bednota*. The reinforced guard placed over the premises of the suppressed newspapers was instructed to maintain close contact with the Shop Stewards Committees in order to keep close watch over the printing machines and type, and to prevent any material from being printed without the knowledge of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

From all quarters the Military Revolutionary Committee received information about every step taken by the troops of Krasnov and Kerensky. Reports were received from Commissars of the units which were retreating from Gatchina. Workers who had managed to filter through the lines of the enemy patrols came to the Committee to report their observations. Telegraph operators, too, sent in reports of the movements of enemy troops.

Krasnov continued to advance, meanwhile collecting all the information he could about the situation in Petrograd. He personally interrogated the officers, cadets and university students who came from Petrograd to join his forces. He telephoned his wife who lived in Tsarskoye Selo. He communicated with the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces in Petrograd and received information from them.

Late at night, on October 27, he convened a conference of Cossack Committees at which he made a report on the situation and proposed that an attack be launched on Tsarskoye Selo at daybreak, when it would be difficult for the enemy to determine the size of the advancing forces. The committees approved of Krasnov's plan. At 2 a.m. on October 28, Krasnov's Cossack Regiments left Gatchina for Tsarskoye Selo, sending out only small patrols in the direction of Krasnoye Selo.

The Cossacks approached Tsarskoye Selo at daybreak on October 28. On the southern outskirts of the town they were encountered by a battalion of infantry drawn up in fairly close order. An exchange of fire commenced,

which soon developed into a hot battle. The Cossack Hundreds were supported by artillery and soon shrapnel began to burst over the heads of the Soviet troops. In danger of being outflanked, part of the infantry retreated towards the park.

In the vicinity of the army barracks and the Orlovsky Gate leading to the park, there was a crowd of soldiers of the Tsarskoye Selo garrison armed with rifles. When members of the Cossack Committee approached the soldiers and urged them to surrender, the officers of the garrison agreed and many of them tried to persuade the soldiers to follow their example.

Meanwhile, members of the local Military Revolutionary Committee and of the local Bolshevik Party organisation went from one excited group of soldiers to another to counteract the officers' exhortations and read to the men the decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets on land and peace. The crowd split into two: part of the men surrendered their arms to the Cossacks; the majority, however, led by the Bolsheviks, began to move round the outskirts of the park in order to threaten the Cossacks' left flank.

Savinkov, in a semi-military uniform, rode among the soldiers and tried to persuade them to surrender. Stankevich who had motored from Petrograd, also tried to address the men, but his attempt almost ended in disaster for him. The soldiers wanted to arrest him, but he managed to retire, "although hastily, nevertheless, with some show of dignity," as he himself subsequently confessed.[42]

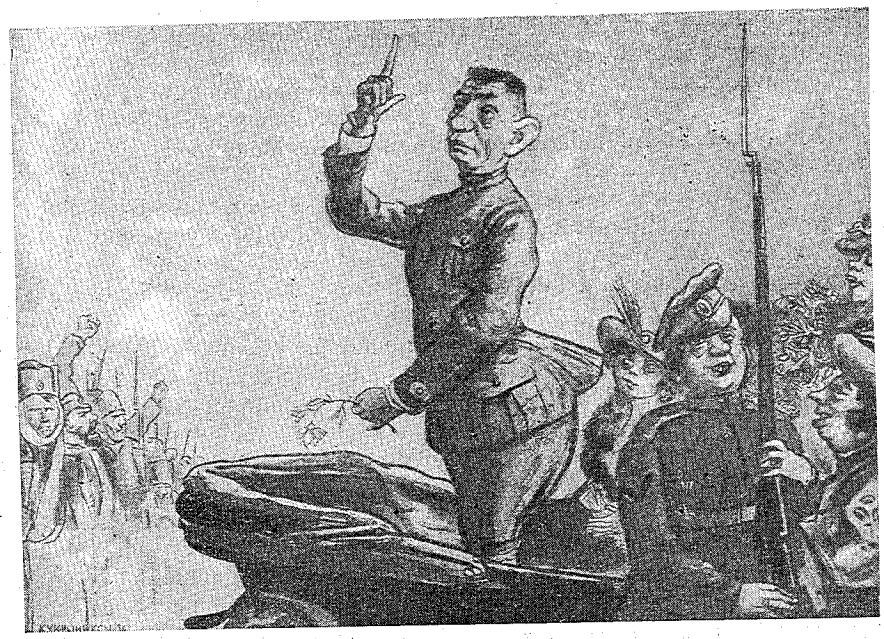
The temper of the majority of the garrison affected the Cossacks. Stankevich, in the same memoirs related that not far from Tsarskoye Selo he met a detachment of Cossacks whose "appearance and morale" made a "cheerless" impression upon him. This was confirmed by the Cossack officers who requested Stankevich "to talk to the Cossacks and inform them" that "not everybody in Petrograd had gone over to the Bolsheviks yet," and to convince them that they "were not marching against the entire people." Stankevich himself admitted that the Cossacks listened to his speech in gloomy silence.[43]

On the road from Gatchina several automobiles appeared containing, as Krasnov subsequently related, "Kerensky and his adjutants, and several smartly dressed, gushing ladies."[44]

Kerensky had remained in the palace at Gatchina, where a state of siege had been proclaimed. Krasnov had dissolved the local Soviet of Workers' Deputies and had ordered the arrest of the Bolsheviks. At 11 a.m. on October 28, Captain B. I. Svistunov, who had been appointed chief of the Gatchina garrison and commandant of the town, reported to Kerensky as follows:

> "The Bolshevik members of the Soviet have been arrested. It will be necessary to disarm the 2nd Reserve Artillery Battalion, which has 300 rifles."[45]

While waiting for reports from the front Kerensky kept calling up General Headquarters and the different garrisons in the vicinity. The information he obtained was far from reassuring, but he learned definitely that aid was coming from Luga. He ordered the following information to be communicated to Krasnov's unit:



"Kerensky and his adjutants, and several smartly dressed, gushing ladies" arrive in Tsarskoye Selo

Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio

> "1) At daybreak [of October 29—*Ed.*] the 4th Siege Regiment will arrive with four guns.
>
> "2) The arrival of cavalry from Tosno is anticipated. . . .
>
> "3) Another battery of light artillery will arrive from Luga.
>
> "4) The 3rd Finland Division and the 17th Don Regiment are on the way, and will arrive near Petrograd on the evening of the 29th.
>
> "5) In Moscow the Bolsheviks surrendered this afternoon."[46]

But all this was a matter of the future—"anticipated," "will arrive," but there was nothing tangible at present; nor was there any news from Krasnov at the front. At 3:40 p.m. Kerensky sent the following personal message to General Krasnov:

> "I consider that the occupation of Tsarskoye Selo must be completed at the earliest possible date."[47]

To this he received no reply. Irritated by Krasnov's silence, Kerensky called for an automobile and drove to Tsarskoye Selo. As General Krasnov

subsequently related, on his arrival, Kerensky asked him in an abrupt and angry tone:

"What's the matter, General? Why have you sent me no report? I have been kept in Gatchina in complete ignorance."[48]

Krasnov informed Kerensky of the situation. Continuing his description of this interview Krasnov goes on to say:

"Kerensky was in a high state of nervous excitement. His eyes were burning. The ladies in the automobile, whose gay appearance suggested that they were out on a picnic, were entirely out of place here, where guns had only just been firing. I requested Kerensky to return to Gatchina.

"Kerensky replied with a frown: 'That's your opinion, General, but not mine. I will ride up to them [the soldiers] and plead with them.'"[49]

Krasnov ordered a Hundred of Yenisei Cossacks to mount and escort Kerensky.

Kerensky drove right into the crowd, and standing on the seat of his car, delivered a hysterical speech to the soldiers. He shouted so loudly that his voice broke; the raw, piercing wind carried the sound of his utterances away. The soldiers listened to him with sullen anger and distrust. Meanwhile, the Cossacks forced their way among the wavering soldiers and tried to take their rifles from them. Some of them gave up their arms, but the rest, gripping their rifles firmly, rushed to the park gates where the members of the Military Revolutionary Committee were gathered. The soldiers lined up and formed detachments which quickly marched out of the park, deployed in open order and began to surround the Cossacks. A shot rang out, a second and a third, and then steady firing was resumed on both sides. Kerensky beat a hasty retreat. General Krasnov ordered his batteries to open fire. Shrapnel began to shriek and burst over the heads of the attacking soldiers.

The artillery decided the issue. With shrapnel dropping on them like hail, the soldiers scattered. The road was thus opened, and at dusk the Cossack units entered the town.

The first thing the Cossacks did on entering Tsarskoye Selo was to occupy the railway station, the Telephone Exchange and the Radio Telegraph Office. At night, they occupied the royal palaces.

Tsarskoye Selo, situated only a matter of 12 miles from Petrograd, was occupied by the counter-revolutionary troops. The farce staged by Kerensky near Petrograd threatened to develop into a tragedy for the revolution, for the Tsarskoye Selo garrison consisting of 20,000 men, could be forced to march against Petrograd. Krasnov calculated that the boom of the guns near Tsarskoye Selo would influence the Petrograd garrison and induce the waverers to join the counter-revolutionary forces.

Kerensky, who in an instant jumped from despair to elation, imagined that the capture of Tsarskoye Selo was already the herald of victory. In the afternoon of October 28 he was nervously pacing the halls of the Gatchina Palace in utter despair at the absence of news, but at 11 o'clock that night, on arriving at Tsarskoye Selo, he sent the following boastful telegram to General Headquarters:

"I deem it necessary to inform you that Bolshevism is disintegrating; it is isolated and no longer exists as an organised force even in Petrograd."[50]

Kerensky wrote his letters and telegrams in a field notebook of the Staff of the 3rd Cavalry Corps. This notebook accidentally fell into the hands of the revolutionary troops. In it were found copies of documents which had been dispatched, and also originals of undispatched telegrams. The rough draft of the telegram quoted above contained the following lines:

"Tsarskoye has been occupied by government troops. In Petrograd even the *Aurora* declares that its action was due to a misunderstanding. In my opinion there can be only one policy, *viz.*, a state and not a Bolshevik policy."[51]

The above lines were not included in the final draft of the telegram. Evidently the last shred of decency had prevented this rival of Khlestakov from including the lie about the *Aurora*. But Kerensky's spirits continued to soar. At 11:10 p.m. he sent the following order to all the Gubernia Commissars and Gubernia Food Supply Committees:

"I order you to exert all your efforts to the utmost to send food trains to the front and, also energetically, to resume the dispatch of grain to Petrograd, undisturbed by the situation which has arisen, against which the government is taking determined measures."[52]

Kerensky was so confident that Petrograd would be captured that he even ordered grain to be sent there. He hoped to be able to enter the city bringing bread with him, and thus entirely cut the ground from under the feet of the Bolsheviks.

At 11:25 p.m. he sent a telegram addressed to all the Cabinet Ministers and chiefs of departments in as yet uncaptured Petrograd, ordering them to refuse to carry out the orders of the People's Commissars, not to enter into any negotiations with them, and not to allow them to enter the government offices.[53] He ended that day by sending the following message to General Krasnov:

"I think that, the movement of the troop trains permitting, the position in Tsarskoye Selo should be consolidated by the morning, so that preparations may be started for the liquidation of St. Petersburg. Greetings. *A. Kerensky*."[54]

Calmer, and inspired by the rosiest of hopes, Kerensky retired for the night. In the distance the sky reflected the lights of Petrograd, and it seemed to him that after his ignominious flight, he was already back in the capital as Prime Minister of the Provisional Government and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Forces.

3

THE CADETS' REVOLT AGAINST THE SOVIETS IN PETROGRAD

Meanwhile, in Petrograd, energetic efforts were being made in the army barracks and in the working-class districts to mobilise the revolutionary forces. The news of the occupation of Gatchina and Tsarskoye Selo by the Cossacks had the very opposite effect of what Kerensky and Krasnov had expected.

The Military Revolutionary Committee issued the following order to the District Soviets and factory committees:

"Kerensky's Kornilov gangs are threatening the approaches to the capital. All the necessary orders have been issued for the ruthless suppression of this counter-revolutionary attack upon the people and its gains.

"The army and the Red Guard of the revolution need the immediate assistance of the workers.

"We order the District Soviets and factory committees:

"1. To detail the largest possible number of workers to dig trenches and erect barricades and barbed-wire entanglements.

"2. Where it is necessary to stop work at the factories and mills for this purpose—to do so immediately.

"3. To collect all the available stocks of barbed and ordinary wire, as well as all tools necessary for digging trenches and erecting barricades.

"4. Every man to carry with him all the arms available.

"5. To maintain the strictest discipline and be ready to support the army and the revolution by every means."[55]

Grey, ragged clouds hung low over Petrograd, which though alarmed, was ready for battle. The shrieking of factory sirens was heard as if the different districts were calling to one another: The enemy is at the gates! Rise in defence of the revolution!

The enthusiasm among the workers was unbounded. Red Guards seized their rifles and went straight from their factories to their district headquarters where detachments were hastily formed and dispatched to Pulkovo. Many of the Red Guards were clad only in short jackets which were soon soaked with rain, but this did not dampen their ardour.

Many workers held arms in their hands for the first time and these were hurriedly put through a course of rifle practice. All night on October 28, revolutionary troops entrained for the front.

In a special manifesto the Military Revolutionary Committee warned all the citizens of Petrograd of the approach of Kerensky's troops, but assured them that Kerensky, like General Kornilov, was leading to the capital only a few trainloads of misguided Cossacks and urged them not to allow themselves to be deceived by his false promises. The manifesto further stated:

"In obedience to the orders of the aristocratic landlords, the capitalists and profiteers, Kerensky is marching against you in order to restore the land to the landlords and to resume the destructive and detestable war."[56]

The Military Revolutionary Committee also called upon the citizens of Petrograd to place no trust in the false declarations of the impotent bourgeois plotters.

In a later statement, the Military Revolutionary Committee informed the people about the treacherous role that was being played by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who were actually on the side of the counter-revolution, vilifying the Soviet Government and preparing for civil war against the proletariat.

"We pillory these traitors," said the Committee in its statement. "We hold them up to the derision of all the workers, soldiers, sailors and peasants on whom they want to fasten the former chains. They will never be able to remove from their foreheads the brand of the people's wrath and contempt.

"Shame and disgrace upon these traitors to the people!"[57]

Bundles of manifestos, leaflets and Soviet newspapers were sent to the railway stations where every departing train had special compartments loaded with revolutionary literature for the front. Propagandists supplied with leaflets and newspapers were sent to the nearby towns and villages.

It was decided to strengthen the defences of the Fortress of Peter and Paul in case the Cossacks should break through to Petrograd. The crew of the *Aurora* was called to reinforce the garrison of the fortress and the cruiser herself was instructed to cover the approaches to it. Fifty seamen from the *Aurora* were assigned to guard the Smolny.

The Commissar of the Naval Gunnery Practice Grounds was instructed to send all the gun crews to the fortress, and field guns were ordered from the Ust-Izhora Camps and Gunnery Practice Grounds.

The Military Revolutionary Committee instructed the works committee of the Izhora Ordnance Works in Kolpino to send all available armoured cars.

All the infantry regiments in Petrograd and its environs were ordered to select and send to the Smolny eight men from each of their hand-grenade units capable of training others to handle grenades; the committee of the grenade artificers was ordered to send 20 men.

The Staff of the Red Guard was ordered to dispatch 20,000 men to the Moskovskaya Zastava by 7 a.m. on October 29 to dig trenches.

The following telegram was sent to the Commissar of Fort Ino:

"The situation in Helsingfors is well in hand. Immediately send from the fort to Petrograd 3,000 armed men with artillery to be placed at the command of the Military Revolutionary Committee."[58]

Messengers of the Military Revolutionary Committee brought arms from the regiments stationed in Finland. Gusev, a member of the Regional Committee of the army, navy and workers of Finland, obtained from the 2nd Infantry Reserve Regiment over a thousand rifles and a large quantity of ammunition.

The Military Revolutionary Committee called upon the garrisons of the districts adjacent to Petrograd to resist the forces of Kerensky and Krasnov. The following order was issued:

"To the Commander of the Guards Reserve Cavalry Regiment, to the Novgorod Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, to the Selishchensky garrison, the garrison of the village of Medved, and others. No. 1565. October 28, 1917.

"The Military Revolutionary Committee of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies orders all the above-mentioned forces, immediately on the receipt of this order, to form battalions to be dispatched to Petrograd and to occupy Dno Station and other points, as circumstances may demand.

"All battalions must be supplied with a sufficient quantity of provisions and arms and ammunition."[59]

This order met with response from numerous quarters, and soon reports were received from many towns of the measures which had been taken. Thus, the Commander of the 428th Lodeinopolsky Regiment reported that a column of 500 men with machine-gun and trench-mortar detachments would arrive in Petrograd on the morning of October 29.[60] Incidentally, this communication was intercepted and delivered to the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" which claimed that this battalion was loyal to the deposed government.

The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the towns along the route of the troops marching from the front were ordered by the Military Revolutionary Committee: 1. To take over power in the town and in the uyezd; 2. Not to obey any orders issued by Kerensky or his supporters; 3. Immediately to establish strict control over all public institutions.... 4. To prevent the transfer ... of troops marching against revolutionary Petrograd.[61]

Work at the Headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee went on without interruption. A constant stream of workers and Red Guards came to receive instructions and departed again.

All the work was conducted under the immediate direction of Lenin and Stalin, who were almost continuously to be found in one of the committee rooms. They issued the orders calling for troops and sent members of

the Central Committee to verify the execution of orders. A frequent visitor to this room was Dzerzhinsky, upon whom devolved the function of combating the sabotage organised by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Dzerzhinsky received all the reports about the counter-revolutionary actions of the Army and Fleet Committees. To the Naval Revolutionary Committee, he sent the following order concerning the Central Executive Committee of the Navy which was controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks:

"The Military Revolutionary Committee hereby orders the Revolutionary Naval Committee immediately to send to Kronstadt the members of the former Central Executive Committee of the Navy who decline to assist in the work of consolidating and saving the Russian revolution, there to be detained until the political situation in the country becomes clear."[62]

An enormous amount of work was accomplished by Sverdlov. Possessing a remarkable memory, he remembered the countless numbers of people he had met in the course of his Party work and was always asked for his opinion of people whom it was intended to entrust with some responsible task. He carefully inquired whether all the Bolsheviks who had been imprisoned by the Provisional Government had been released. Above the noise that filled the ante-room of the Military Revolutionary Committee his stentorian voice was constantly heard giving instructions.

Lenin's tireless activities knew no bounds. He seemed to be everywhere. He personally visited the factories and front line positions to verify the readiness of the Petrograd proletariat for battle. His cheerful smile and calm voice imbued everybody with unshakeable confidence in the justice of his cause. He weighed the temper of the masses and tested their fighting spirit.

The proletariat of Petrograd hastily mobilised its forces to resist Kerensky's troops.

Meanwhile, the enemies of the Soviet Government feverishly prepared for armed action within the capital, which was to synchronise with General Krasnov's advance. Representatives of the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" visited the army barracks and tried to rouse the soldiers against the Soviet Government, but not a single army unit did they succeed in persuading to defend Kerensky. They visited the Cossacks, but they too were very indefinite. The Cossack officers promised to bring their men out if at least one infantry unit supported them. A definite understanding was reached with several military schools, but even then it was only with the commanding personnel.

The energy spent in the effort to organise the mutiny was enormous, but the effective forces mustered as a result of this effort were ridiculously meagre.

Among the papers belonging to "General Staff Colonel Polkovnikov, Commander of the Troops of the Committee for the Salvation," as he signed

himself in his orders, the following note was found written on the reverse side of a poster:

"Mobilised

a. Nikolayevsky Engineers—200 bayonets (liaison Y. Weinstein) 2 companies.
b. Disabled Battalion—130 men, bayonets (Cossacks) Sub-Lieutenant Shatilov (liaison).
c. Vladimirsky School—150 men (2,000 rifles, 12 machine guns cartridges).
d. Pavlovsky School—300 men (no rifles).
e. Constantinovsky Artillery (?).
f. Mikhailovsky Artillery (?).
g. Nikolayevsky Cavalry (?).
h. Engineering Cadet School (50 men)+rifles without cartridges.

Armoured cars
Artillery
Passenger Automobiles
Motor Trucks
Food Supply
Water
Communication
Supply Corps
Ambulance Corps."[63]

In all, a matter of 830 men, dispersed over the city, many of them without rifles. To raise a mutiny with such forces was an obvious gamble. Their only hope lay in taking the enemy by surprise, in making a sudden attack upon the Soviet troops in the rear when the forces of Krasnov and Kerensky would make a frontal attack on Petrograd and thus cause confusion in the ranks of the defenders of the proletarian revolution.

On the evening of October 28 Stankevich returned to Petrograd from his visit to Kerensky. In the offices of the "Committee for the Salvation" he found considerable animation and heard a lot of talk about connections having been established with all the units of the garrison. The "Committee" considered that it was in command of a "very considerable armed force."[64]

The work of organising this anti-Soviet mutiny was directed by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. During the trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries in 1922, Rakitin-Braun, the Secretary of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, stated the following:

"I, Krakovetsky, and Bruderer called a meeting of the Military Commission at which it was decided to commence action as soon as Kerensky's troops approached Petrograd. Accordingly, we established closer connections with the Socialist-Revolutionary groups in all the cadet units. We were in touch with the Constantinovsky Artillery School, the Mikhailovsky Artillery School, the Pavlovsky and Vladimirsky Infantry Schools and the Nikolayevsky Engineering School. We established connection, though somewhat weak, with the Nikolayevsky Cavalry School. On November 8, 9, and 10 New Style [October 26, 27 and 28 Old Style—*Ed.*] representatives of these schools were on duty at our headquarters. On November 10, I had a meeting with Gotz, who informed me that the 'Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution' had appointed Colonel Polkovnikov as the leader of the insurrection."[65]

Late at night on October 28, a secret meeting of the "Committee for the Salvation" was held at which the final plan for the armed insurrection was drawn up. This plan provided for the capture, first of all, of the Central Telephone Exchange and the Mikhailovsky Riding School, where the armoured cars were parked. The insurrection was to be started by the Nikolayevsky Engineering School, while the Pavlovsky and Vladimirsky Schools were with their combined forces to capture the Fortress of Peter and Paul. It was anticipated that the shock troops quartered in the Kshesinska mansion would join the rebels and help to capture the Smolny. The insurrection was timed to coincide with the approach of Krasnov's forces, which according to Stankevich's report were expected next day but one, *i.e.*, on October 30.

Unforeseen circumstances, however, hastened the failure of the Socialist-Revolutionary adventure. On the night of October 29, a patrol from the Fortress of Peter and Paul detained two suspicious persons as they emerged from the Kshesinska mansion and were about to enter a waiting automobile. The suspects were taken to the commandant of the fortress for investigation. On the way the Red Guards who were escorting them saw one of them stealthily take something from his pocket and try to get rid of it. This was reported to the commandant. The man in question proved to be Bruderer, a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. He was found to be in possession of documents showing that the "Committee for the Salvation" had appointed special Commissars for the cadet schools. Another document found in his possession, written on the official notepaper of the "Committee for the Salvation," was signed by Polkovnikov and Gotz, and addressed to all the military schools, Disabled Soldiers' units and units of the Chevaliers of St. George calling upon them "to prepare for action and await further orders."[66]

The commandant of the fortress sent these documents to the Military Revolutionary Committee which, in its turn, informed the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party of the impending danger. The Party Committee warned all the District Soviets, the army units and the factories. The documents found on these suspects made it clear which cadet schools and army units were preparing to take part in the mutiny.

Meanwhile, the other side was also active. News of the discovery of their conspiracy reached the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution." The latter decided to begin the mutiny at once. Polkovnikov with a group of members of the "Committee" dashed off to the

Nikolayevsky Engineering School, which occupied what was known as the Engineers' Castle, and advised the cadets to sleep in their clothes and to keep their rifles beside their beds. At 2 a.m. on October 29, Polkovnikov issued the following order to the troops of the Petrograd garrison:

"By order of the 'All-Russian Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution' I take up the command of the forces of salvation. I hereby order:

"1. That no orders of the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee be obeyed.

"2. That the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committees in all units of the garrison be arrested and dispatched to points to be specified later.

"3. That every unit immediately send a representative to the Nikolayevsky Engineering School (Engineers' Castle).

"4. All persons who fail to obey this order will be regarded as enemies of the country and traitors to the cause of the revolution."[67]

This order was dispatched to the various military schools and shortly after cadet patrols appeared in the streets and began to disarm the Red Guards. Here and there firing broke out. At 4 a.m. the cadets of the Engineering School were lined up and served with ball cartridges. A colonel, whose name has not been ascertained, addressed them on behalf of the "Committee for the Salvation" and informed them that Kerensky's troops would arrive at 11 a.m. Meanwhile, the cadets were to maintain order in the city and for that purpose it was necessary for them to capture the Mikhailovsky Riding School and the Telephone Exchange.

Seventy cadets were detailed to capture the Riding School. Before their departure a staff captain, who said he was a member of the "Committee for the Salvation," delivered another exhortation to the cadets explaining their task to them, and then led them into the courtyard. Here they were joined by five officers.

For several days already intense anti-Soviet activity had been conducted in the Armoured Car Unit, which was quartered in the Mikhailovsky Riding School. A number of the officers who supported the "Committee for the Salvation," had succeeded in winning over some of the men, mainly drivers. At about 3 a.m. the Military Revolutionary Committee called for an armoured car to be sent to the Ismailovsky Regiment. The armoured car named "Fighter for the Right" was chosen, and a driver of the machine-gun squad who supported the "Committee for the Salvation" volunteered to drive it. As soon as the driver brought the car into the square, which at that hour was deserted, he stopped, and three men, a driver and two officers came up and got into the car. Instead of driving to the Ismailovsky Regiment, the driver headed for the Engineers' Castle. On their arrival the officers and the driver informed the cadets that the Riding School was almost unguarded and could be captured without a fight.[68]

At about 5 a.m. while it was still dark, a detachment of cadets marched briskly to the Riding School. The guard consisted of only three men and being greatly outnumbered, they surrendered. The cadets rushed inside and disarmed another 15 men. They examined the armoured cars and found only five of them fit for action. Among these was the *Akhtyrets*, which had taken part in the defence of the Winter Palace. The armoured cars were sent to the Engineers' Castle.

A detachment of cadets reinforced with officers and escorted by the *Akhtyrets* was sent to the Telephone Exchange.[69] Between 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning the unit, knowing the password, occupied the Exchange without a shot and immediately disconnected all the telephones of the Smolny.

At 8:30 a.m. the leaders of the mutiny issued the following order by telegraph:

"On October 29 the troops of the 'Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution' liberated all the cadet schools and Cossack barracks; the Mikhailovsky Riding School has been occupied; the armoured cars and artillery trucks have been captured; the Telephone Exchange has been occupied and forces are being concentrated for the purpose of capturing the Fortress of Peter and Paul and the Smolny Institute—the last refuges of the Bolsheviks, which are now isolated thanks to the measures taken. We urge you to remain absolutely calm and to render the Commissars and officers every assistance in carrying out the combat orders of the commander of the 'Army for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution,' Colonel Polkovnikov and of his second in command, Lieutenant-Colonel Krakovetsky, and to arrest all the Commissars of the so-called Military Revolutionary Committee. We order all military units which have recovered from the intoxication of the Bolshevik adventure and desire to serve the cause of the revolution and freedom to concentrate in the Nikolayevsky Engineering School. Delay will be regarded as treachery to the revolution, involving the adoption of the most resolute measures. Signed:

Avksentyev,
Chairman of the Council of the Republic

Gotz,
Chairman of the Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution

Sinani,
Commissar of the All-Russian Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution attached to the Commander of the Army of Salvation

Braun,
Member of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party."[70]



Bombardment of the Vladimirsky Military School

From a drawing by I. Vladimirov

The "Committee for the Salvation" issued a manifesto addressed to the soldiers, workers and the citizens of Petrograd calling upon them to refuse to dig trenches, to return to their barracks, not to obey the Bolsheviks but to rally around the "Committee." It stated also that Kerensky's troops were accompanied by V. M. Chernov, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

The followers of the "Committee for the Salvation" tried to foment mutiny in different parts of the city. At 9 a.m. the "Committee" received a message from the Union of the Chevaliers of St. George requesting that an armoured car be sent to escort a detachment to the Engineers' Castle. "We have arms and grenades," the commander of the detachment reported.[71] Lieutenant-Colonel Solodovnikov, the commandant of the city, reported that he had occupied the Hotel Astoria and had arrested all the Commissars who were living there.

"I am mobilising the entire male population. I will issue arms and call upon the people to fight the Red Guards. I am awaiting further orders," added the commandant.[72]

Armoured cars appeared in the main streets of the city and opened sporadic fire upon the Red Guards.

More serious events occurred at the Vladimirsky Military School. The cadets of this school had already been disarmed on October 26. Their

rifles had been distributed among the soldiers serving in the school who had been appointed to guard the premises. The cadets had been given permission to go home on leave, but advantage of this had been taken only by those who lived in the city or near it.

On the eve of the mutiny representatives of the "Committee for the Salvation" had visited the school and had informed the officers and some of the cadets of the preparations being made for a mutiny. Early in the morning of October 29, when the cadets were still asleep, Colonel Kuropatkin appeared at the school with a group of soldiers from the 3rd Detachment of the Disabled Soldiers' Battalion. The cadets were roused, and together with the newly arrived soldiers they disarmed the guard. The machine-gun detachment, which had been employed to train the cadets, opened fire; it was the only unit in the school to do so. The machine-gunners were surrounded. Some of them surrendered, but others continued to fire. This prevented the cadets from proceeding to the Pavlovsky Military School. Suddenly, firing was heard in the street, followed by the tinkle of glass from the shattered school windows. Red Guards and sailors sent by the Military Revolutionary Committee had surrounded the school and had opened fire on it.[73]

Thanks to the timely measures which had been taken, the cadet mutiny was nipped in the bud. Forewarned, the workers, sailors and soldiers who

Storming of the Vladimirsky Military School

From a drawing by I. Vladimirov



had remained in the city to maintain order rushed to the different centres of the mutiny. The cadet schools and Cossack units were immediately surrounded and isolated from each other. As Krakovetsky, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Polkovnikov's second in command, subsequently related:

"Our Headquarters were a small island in a raging sea. We were simply overwhelmed by the armed masses."[74]

The Vladimirsky School was closely surrounded by Red Guards, reinforced by the men of the Grenadier Reserve Regiment, the Flame-Thrower and Chemical Battalion, and the gunners of the Colt Machine-Gun Battalion in the fortress. Somewhat later, sailors from the Motor Mechanics School arrived. These had not been warned of the impending mutiny; they were roused by rifle and machine-gun fire near their school. The sailors dressed quickly, and snatching up their weapons, hastened in the direction of the shooting.

The attempt of the cadets to advance from the school and occupy the adjacent buildings was thwarted by the fire of the besiegers.

At first the siege of the school was insufficiently organised. Attracted by the firing, Red Guards came up in groups, or individually, and immediately joined in the action. Soon the armoured car *Yaroslav* and two guns arrived from the Fortress of Peter and Paul. Before opening fire on the school they called upon the cadets to surrender, but the latter refused. Several shells were then discharged which pierced the walls and exploded inside the building, causing panic among the cadets whose fire became very ragged.

After a few more shells were sent over the firing from the school ceased. A number of the cadets had been killed and wounded and others wanted to put out a Red Cross flag to indicate that they needed medical assistance. But no such flag could be found, so they hung out a piece of white sheeting instead. Taking this as a sign of surrender, the Red Guards and sailors advanced towards the school, but the cadets fired at them. About fifteen men fell. Enraged by the treacherous conduct of the cadets the revolutionary troops opened a hurricane fire. Some of the cadets stopped shooting. Noticing this, Colonel Kuropatkin shouted to them that Kerensky's troops were already in the city and that the Cossacks were nearby. By this time, however, some Red Guards had forced their way into the building through the private apartment of the chief of the school. In the ensuing fighting the Colonel was killed.

The cadets then hoisted the white flag, but fearing treachery, the revolutionary troops continued to fire.

At about 4 p.m. the Vladimirsky Military School surrendered. Before surrendering, the chief of the school and his deputy removed their epaulets and tried to make their way through the lines of the besiegers, but they were detected and caught. The cadets were disarmed and their wounded taken to hospital. The rifles, cases of cartridges and machine guns were taken to the Smolny.

Somewhat earlier, the Pavlovsky Military School had surrendered. An attempt on the part of the shock troops in the Kshesinska mansion to make a sortie was observed in time and rendered abortive. Under threat of machine-gun fire from the walls of the fortress, the shock troops were called upon to surrender. This they did without offering any resistance.

The cadets' staff remained in the Engineers' Castle, having at its command 230 cadets, five armoured cars and about 50 shock troop volunteers. Here complete panic reigned. Everybody gave orders just as he thought fit.

Requests for aid were received, but none could be sent. A cadet from the Telephone Exchange came hurrying in to report that the Exchange was surrounded by Red units and was likely to be captured at any moment. To this Polkovnikov replied:

"The castle must be abandoned and all must disperse as best they can."[75]

After that Polkovnikov vanished, without leaving any orders as to whether the men should surrender or retreat. The people who had been issuing orders in the name of the "Committee for the Salvation" also vanished. The cadets were abandoned to their fate by the people who had dragged them into this miserable adventure. As a result of the onslaught of the Red Guards, sailors and soldiers who were surrounding the Engineers' Castle, and under threat of the guns mounted in the Field of Mars, the staff surrendered without a fight, not daring to go to the aid of the Vladimirsky Military School. The whole affair was restricted to a brief exchange of shots.

The cadet patrols in the streets of the city were gradually disarmed. The armoured cars which they had captured were retaken. One of these cars had been cruising round the Central Telegraph Office keeping the adjacent districts under fire. A group of sailors lay in ambush for it behind a pile of logs in St Isaacs' Square and as the car came up they succeeded in bursting its tyres and bringing it to a standstill. When the sailors rushed to attack it, two of them were killed, but the rest captured the armoured car and its crew.

The Central Telephone Exchange was surrounded at 11 a.m. After prolonged firing on both sides the cadets fell back from the gates and took cover in positions in the courtyard. They held out until 5:30 p.m. when they surrendered to the Red Guards.

Fearing that the cadet prisoners of war would be roughly treated by the soldiers and Red Guards who were enraged by their treachery, the Military Revolutionary Committee sent three representatives to the Telephone Exchange. On their arrival, however, they found that the cadets had already been transferred to the headquarters of the 2nd Baltic Marines.

The counter-revolutionary revolt in Petrograd was thus crushed. It had been exclusively a revolt of the cadets—the bourgeois guard which had protected the Provisional Government in the Winter Palace.

4

PROLETARIAN PETROGRAD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE WHITEGUARDS

The only defenders of the Provisional Government were the cadets. The Soviet Government was defended by the entire working-class population of the red capital. During those days the Petrograd workers displayed supreme heroism, unprecedented enthusiasm and selfless devotion to the cause of the proletarian revolution. Their courage and self-sacrifice compensated for the defects in organisation, which were inevitable in the first days of the new regime.

The workers of the different factories and mills vied with each other in heroism. Some, in response to the call of the Military Revolutionary Committee, took up arms and went to the front. Others worked on fortifications at the approaches to Petrograd. The district staffs of the Red Guard formed armed workers' detachments and dispatched them to Pulkovo. In the factories the production of war material went on day and night. The workers repaired armoured cars, assembled guns and fitted up armoured trains. This is illustrated by the following statement subsequently made by the Commissar of the Putilov Works:

"During Kerensky's counter-revolutionary adventure, I, at the request of the Military Revolutionary Committee, dispatched to Krasnoye Selo and Gatchina, and also to the positions at Pulkovo-Alexandrovka:

"2 armoured cars;

"4 motor trucks mounted with four anti-aircraft guns;

"4 trucks loaded with shells;

"2 Red Cross vans which we ourselves had equipped with stretchers, medical supplies, etc.;

"2 field kitchens, which we had also fitted up.

"We dispatched together with gunners, gun crews and escort:

"4 forty-two bore guns, and 19 three-inch guns.

"I myself went to the forward positions with a workers' unit 200 strong and remained there five days and nights. Very often mechanics were sent to the positions to repair guns. Over 500 Putilov workers and 50 carpenters were sent to the trenches with all the tools they needed.

"The Putilov Works supplied the men taking part in operations with fuel, gas-driven automobiles, etc. We carried wounded in passenger cars from Krasnoye Selo and Gatchina until the arrival of the Red Cross unit.

"All damaged motor trucks were immediately repaired in our automobile shop, which was kept running day and night, and returned to the Headquarters of the Revolutionary Committee the moment repairs were completed."[76]



From a drawing by N. Kochergin

Petrograd workers digging trenches to resist the troops of Kerensky and Krasnov

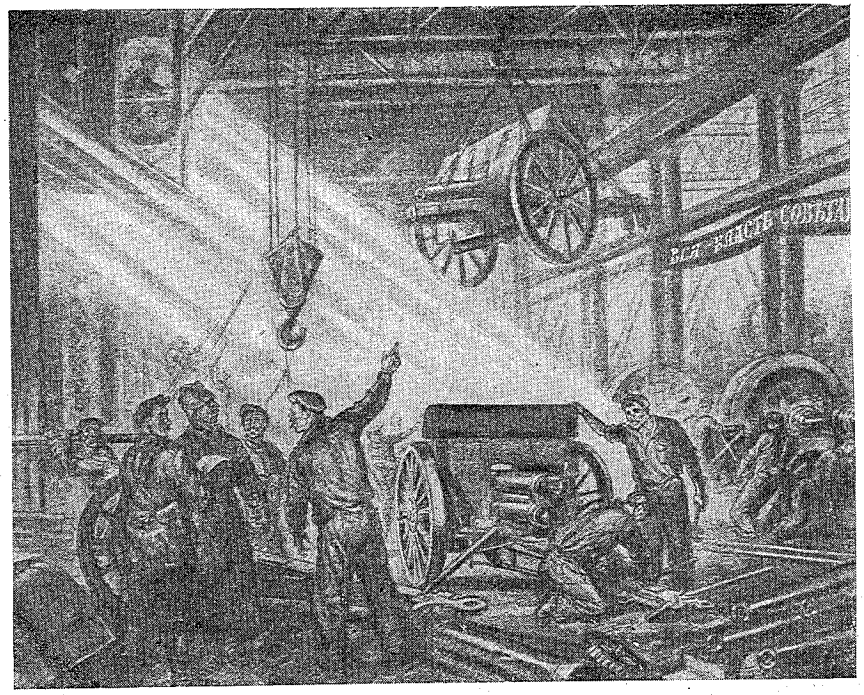
The Putilov unit of the Red Guard consisted of thousands of picked revolutionary fighters. In the October days alone the Putilov workers received over 2,000 rifles, of which 1,212 were issued to the works proper, and 804 to the Putilov shipyard. About half of the youths employed in the Putilov Works joined the Red Guard. A large number of the men served in the technical forces, some as drivers, others in the artillery. Twenty-two truck drivers of the Putilov Works were placed at the disposal of the Military Revolutionary Committee and sent to the Krasnoye Selo-Tsarskoye line. Later, the Chief of Staff of the Gatchina unit issued a certificate couched in terse, military terms stating that they had "conscientiously performed their duties and are now returning to the Putilov Works."[77]

A tense atmosphere prevailed in the working-class districts of Petrograd in those days. The workers flocked to the district headquarters to enrol in the Red Guard. Many brought reports about suspicious houses where army officers gathered. The workers of the Franco-Russian Works demanded that drinking dens like the "Columbia," "Mayak" and "Svoboda," where the declassed elements were supplied with free liquor by the counter-revolutionaries, should be closed.

One after another columns of armed worker volunteers marched down the Bolshoi Sampsonievsky Prospect, in the Vyborg District, carrying red banners and streamers on which fighting slogans had been hastily inscribed. The columns reached the premises of the District Soviet and District Staff Headquarters, which only recently had housed the "Quiet Valley" tavern. The rooms were noisy and crowded. Here the newly elected officers received their credentials. Men without arms were supplied with rifles and those who were badly clothed received equipment. Military instructors formed detachment after detachment which, amidst the strains of the martial music played by the band of the Moscow Regiment, marched off to Tsarskoye Selo Station, to be dispatched forthwith to Pulkovo. The workers of the Pipe Works, Siemens-Halske and Possel's came straight from their work to the commandant requesting that they be given arms and sent to the firing line. During the day, 3,000 rifles were issued, and still workers came pouring in. There were not enough rifles to go round, so the workers took picks and shovels and went off to dig trenches.

The road to Pulkovo was lined with an endless column of revolutionary detachments marching in the pouring rain. They were overtaken by motor trucks filled with armed workers. Old men, and even youths, hastened to the front. The trains to Gatchina were packed, and still men struggled to get in. Red Guards and sailors clung to the roofs and steps of the railway cars. There was a perfect rush to the place from where the dull booming of guns was heard.

At the front, thousands of men and women toiled in the wet and mud, digging trenches and erecting barbed-wire entanglements. Ahead of them, Red Guards, lying in hastily dug shallow pits, peered vigilantly in the direction of the enemy. From the rear, reinforcements arrived at a brisk and confident pace.



At the Putilov Works during the October days

From a drawing by V. Shcheglov

The District Committees called upon the working women in the factories and mills to volunteer as nurses, and everywhere small first-aid units were formed.

In the course of one night over two hundred women at Siemens-Halske enrolled, procured the necessary medical supplies themselves, and at once went off to the front.

The working women of Petrograd not only rendered first aid to the wounded, but participated in the great struggle in many other ways. At the Army Medical Supplies Factory the women procured provisions, cooked them in the kitchens of the factory dining rooms and took the food to the front which was not far away. The men, hungry and cold, eagerly surrounded the motor trucks on which the food had been brought, and from them the women distributed loaves of bread, boiled meat and hot potatoes which had been kept warm by the sheepskin coats in which the containers had been wrapped.

During those October days the young workers fought with the enthusiasm characteristic of youth in the very front ranks of their class. Lenin, who had estimated the fighting forces of the revolution with his characteristic foresight, had allocated to the youth an important place in his plans for the insurrection. In a letter he wrote to his comrades in Petrograd entitled "Advice from an Outsider" he recommended as a means of executing the plan that they should

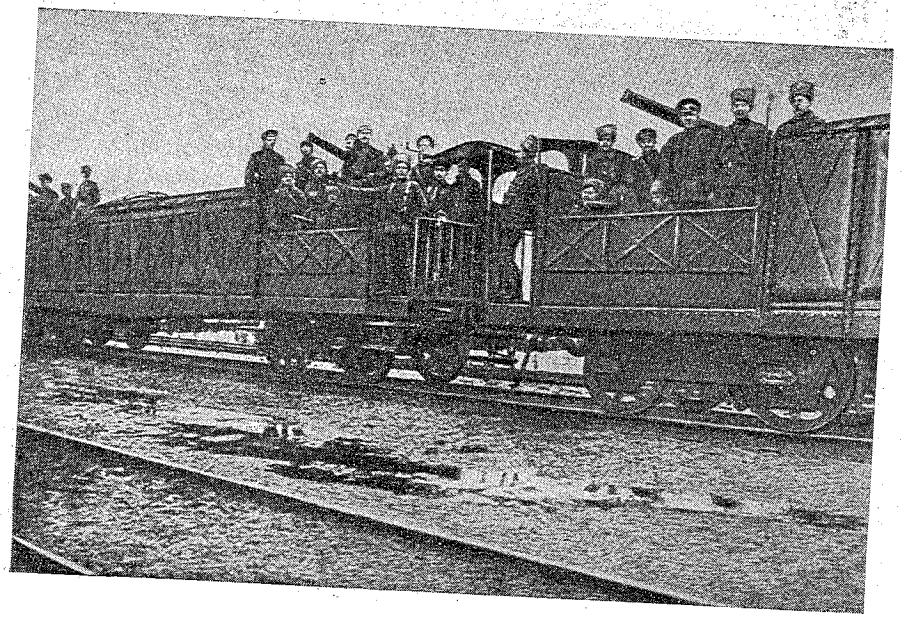
"pick the *most resolute* elements (our 'shock troops' and *young workers*, and also the best sailors)."[78]

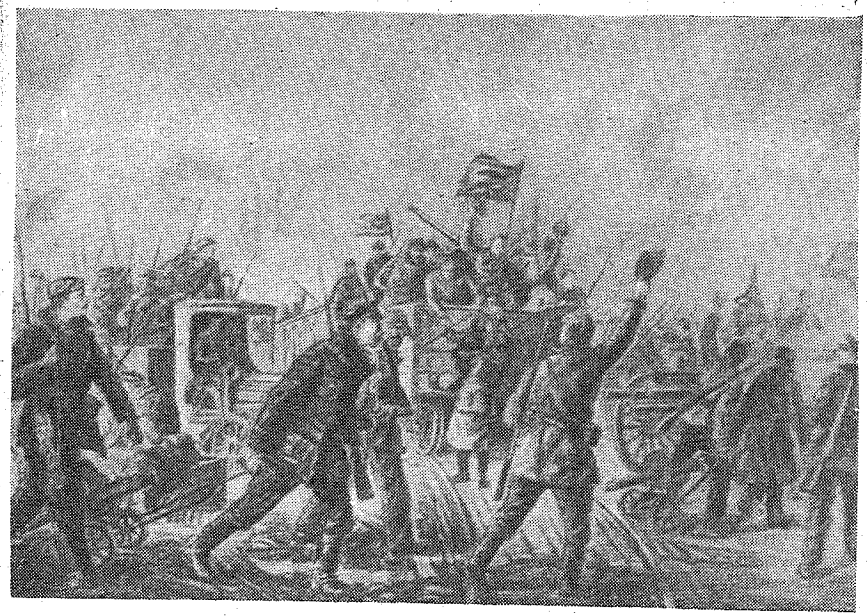
The young workers justified the expectations of the great leader of the working class. The young proletarians constituted from 30 to 40 per cent of the Red Guard. In a number of factories the Red Guard consisted mainly of young workers.

These young men took a most active part in the struggle against the forces of Krasnov and Kerensky.

An enquiry instituted in the summer of 1932 among 2,274 former Petrograd Red Guards who had taken part in the October insurrection showed that about 900 of them, *i.e.*, nearly 40 per cent, were under 23 years of age at the time. Such was the part played by the working-class youth in the October battles.

Armoured train built by the workers of the Putilov Works





Departure for the front of the armoured train built at the Putilov Works

From a drawing by A. Yermolayev

This was realised also by the enemies of the Soviet Government who distorted the true significance of these great events. On October 29, the Menshevik newspaper *Yedinstvo* published an article entitled "A Biblical Crime," in which the author asserted that Red Guard units consisting of mere children, boys of 15 or 16, had been sent to fight Kerensky's troops:

"They marched along the streets in a crowd of several hundred, or perhaps a thousand, in the direction of the City Gates."[79]

In the bitter struggle for a brighter future the Petrograd proletariat, young and old, was united. Fathers, mothers and children—members of the indivisible proletarian family—marched in serried ranks to fight for their Soviet Government.

October 29 was a critical day for the Military Revolutionary Committee. Directed by Lenin and Stalin, this young and not yet consolidated organ of the new government, was suddenly put to a severe test.

Already at daybreak it was learned that a mutiny had suddenly broken out in the city and that the cadet schools had risen in revolt against the Soviet Government. At 5 a.m., when the lights in the rooms of the Military Revolutionary Committee were still burning, the telephone rang sharply.

The weary attendant picked up the receiver and heard a distant voice speaking excitedly. It was the member on duty of the Regimental Committee of the Officers' Electrical Engineering School. He said:

"About sixty cadets, evidently from the Nikolayevsky School, have appeared in Inzhenernaya Street. They are armed. As they go along they stop soldiers and urge them to join them. They are probably making for the Mikhailovsky Riding School."[80]

At 8 a.m. all doubts were dispelled. The following message was received:

"The Mikhailovsky Riding School has been occupied by cadets. The machine-gunners of the Lithuanian Regiment are on their way there."[81]

Then came more bad news:

"The cadets have advanced from the Mikhailovsky Riding School with armoured cars and have occupied the Central Telephone Exchange. There is not a single officer in the Riding School. The machines were left there."[82]

"Vladimirsky School. At night those who were asleep were captured and the mixed company stationed on Bolshoi Prospect was disarmed. Firing is going on in the vicinity of Bolshaya Grebetskaya Street."[83]

"In Shpalernaya Street cadets of the Engineering School are selling newspapers and pamphlets."[84]

Armed forces were hurled against the rebels. The stormy night at last drew to a close and the grey, cheerless dawn peered through the rain-streaked windows, boding still greater evil than the preceding night. The rooms of the Military Revolutionary Committee were crowded and noisy with the stamping of rifle butts and the clicking of typewriters typing out orders, instructions, certificates and the minutes of special conferences. The voices of the men in leather coats and crumpled soldiers' greatcoats—members of the Committee—were cracked and hoarse. Their eyes, hollow with lack of sleep, were ablaze. The rooms and corridors echoed with the tramping of crowds of armed workers, young and old, carrying rifles, their wan faces black with the grime of the factories; there were crowds of soldiers with cartridge belts strapped across their shoulders, and sailors with weather-beaten faces and hand grenades stuck in their belts.

Some demanded provisions or ammunition for their men. Others had come to report about the temper prevailing in their units, while others again had come for instructions, advice or assistance.

Outside, the rumble of automobile engines was heard. Motor-cyclists, their machines rattling like machine guns, dashed up to the entrance of the Smolny and quickly dismounting, hastened inside with dispatches.

These dispatches, of a most contradictory nature, came pouring in from all sides. At 3:20 p.m. a message arrived from the Putilov Works stating that rifle and gun fire was heard and anxiously enquiring whether measures were being taken.[85]

The following dispatch was received from the 1st Don Cossack Regiment:

"A delegation from Kerensky's troops has arrived and is urging the regiment to join them. The regiment is beginning to waver."[86]

Hordikainen, a resident of Tsarskoye Selo who had come all the way on foot, related:

"The town is occupied by Kerensky's troops, most of whom are concentrated near the railway station. In all, Kerensky has about 5,000 men in the district. The soldiers are requisitioning from the peasants their cattle and all the provisions they can lay their hands on, merely giving them receipts in return. During the firing some local inhabitants suffered, and two or three children were killed. One shell burst in the garrison hospital. Some of the members of the Soviet, about eight of them, and some of the troops have remained in the town," how many Hordikainen could not say.[87]

The telephone kept on ringing almost incessantly.

The commandant of the Soviet of the 1st City District reported that "at noon an armoured car opened fire on the premises of the Soviet."[88]

Commissar Medvedev reported:

"The Ismailovsky Regiment is moving into position. Cyclists should be dispatched to Alexandrov Station."[89]

A senior militiaman reported:

"A mass meeting is to be held on the Obvodny Canal. Exactly where it is to take place, and at what hour, has not been ascertained. Scouts should be sent out—I think the meeting will be a counter-revolutionary one."[90]

Fighting had broken out in Petrograd and Kerensky was approaching with Cossacks. Night fell, and again the electric lights were put on. Far away the dull boom of artillery and the vicious rattle of machine guns were heard. The vast city was enveloped in a cold, damp mist, and nobody knew for certain what was going on beyond it. How was the fighting progressing? Who would gain the upper hand? People hung on to telephone receivers, with puckered brows, their faces gloomy and tense with anxiety. The cadets were still holding the Telephone Exchange. The Commissar of the guard of the State Bank reported that when he telephoned, the telephone girl replied that "a cadet was standing behind her" with a bayonet pointed at her "and therefore she could not connect him."[91]

At last more cheerful news arrived, and the faces of the people who had been anxiously waiting lit up with joy.

9 p.m.

A report was received that the Commissars of the Tsarskoye Selo Railway Station who had been arrested by the cadets were now free.

10 p.m.

A message from the Petersburg District.

"The windows of many of the houses adjacent to the Pavlovsky School have been smashed as a result of the shelling of the school. Excitement is rife among the inhabitants. A riotous mood is growing and urgent

measures must be taken. The District Committee proposes that glaziers be called to put in the windows, taking the glass from the extra winter frames. Moreover, it is necessary to place guards near the shops where the windows have also been smashed, otherwise there will be a riot."[92]

10:55 p.m.

A telephone message from the Phoenix Works:

"The cadets of the Mikhailovsky Artillery School have surrendered. The arms are being taken away by the Staff of the Red Guard and the Moscow Regiment. One motor truck has already been loaded. The school is being searched."[93]

10:55 p.m.

The following telephone message was received from the Revolutionary Staff at the Moskovskaya Zastava:

"We need ambulances, as many as possible. Many wounded. Cheers are heard in the direction of the Petrograd Chaussée. We also need artillery, for according to as yet unconfirmed information, Kerensky has an armoured train at his command."[94]

This was the voice of the front. While suppressing the treacherous revolt of the cadets and taking care to maintain order in the city, the Military Revolutionary Committee could not for an instant forget that the enemy was at the approaches to Red Petrograd and that in the gloom of the misty night fierce fighting was proceeding and blood was flowing. At the meetings of the Committee, terse and resolute decisions were quickly arrived at:

Kerensky's delegation which is agitating among the 1st Cossack Division is to be arrested.

Visitors to the Fortress of Peter and Paul, where the arrested Cabinet Ministers are confined, are not to be allowed today.

A Food Department must be set up.

Two delegates must be sent to the front to obtain information.

The Staff must more closely scrutinise the barges sailing on the Neva and on the canals.

A railway strike was anticipated. A representative of the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union (Vikzhel) demanded a permit for a delegation to be sent to Kerensky with the object of preventing an attack by his troops on Petrograd.

Resolved: Without going into the object of the delegation's journey, to issue a permit.

A delegate arrived from the Semyonovsky Regiment and reported that the men were indignant. They wanted to go into action, but had received no orders to that effect. They did not know what to do.

Resolved: A garrison meeting is already in progress. The delegate should go there and take part in formulating the decisions on the questions he is concerned with.

Messengers arrived from the front one after another, fatigued, drenched to the skin, and covered with mud. They reported that the



A meeting of the workers at the Petrograd railway workshops in the period of the fight against the troops of Kerensky and Krasnov *From a drawing by I. Vladimirov*

men were hungry and exhausted. Colonel Walden, the commander of a detachment, sent the following message:

"Please issue immediately an order to supply bread and provisions for 1,500 men of the Tsarskoye Selo defence unit in the village of Pulkovo. The provisions must arrive not later than 12 noon, otherwise the unit will no longer be fit for action. Two motor trucks are being sent to bring the provisions. Everything depends upon their timely arrival."[95]

The order for provisions was issued at once. The Military Revolutionary Committee sent the following urgent instruction to the Bakers' Union:

"Send immediately a group of bakers to the Smolny Institute, so that the troops arriving to assist revolutionary Petrograd may not go without bread."[96]

The Deputy Commissar of Supplies for the workers' guard and the troops at the approaches to Petrograd received the following order:

"Immediately obtain from Area Stores provisions necessary to feed the workers' guard and the troops fighting at the approaches to Petrograd in a quantity sufficient for 8,000 men for one day: tinned meat, bread or

biscuits, butter, cereals, sugar and tea. Give a receipt for the provisions received. In the event of refusal, delay, equivocation, or any other excuse on the part of the Area Quartermaster . . . you are hereby instructed to call for a military unit, arrest the recalcitrants, take the necessary provisions from the stores and draw up a report on the case. Act vigorously and promptly. Report date and time of fulfilment of this order."[97]

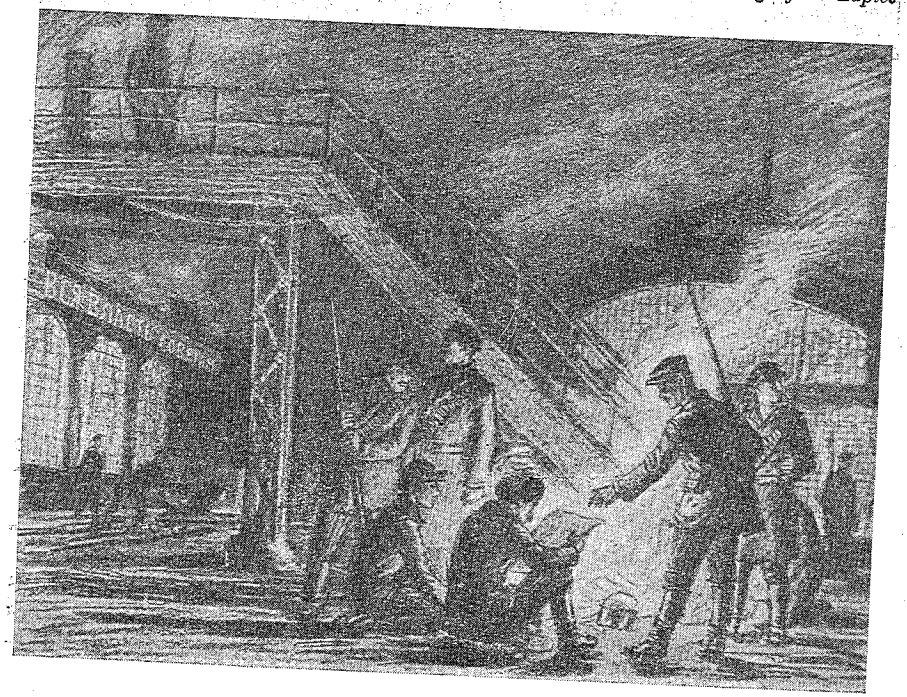
Meanwhile, fresh forces, arms and other war material were dispatched to the front in increasing quantities. An order was sent to the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet in Helsingfors to prepare a torpedo boat for action and to await further orders.

Muravyev, the Commander of the Petrograd Military Area, ordered that "all the war planes be prepared for action. Four aeroplanes must be at the aerodrome at dawn and await further orders. The remainder to be held ready in reserve. . . ."[98]

Searchlights were dispatched to the front. Telephone operators were also sent. Workers were hastily enrolled in detachments for digging trenches. The Fortress of Peter and Paul sent four armoured cars. All the hand grenades were collected from the Winter Palace. Separate detachments and regiments were dispatched to the front by rail. Reinforcements arrived from

Workers guarding their factory during the October days in Petrograd

From a drawing by A. Lapiev



Kronstadt: sailors and Red Guards. Everything for the front! The people of the capital read the following reassuring proclamation of the commander in charge of the defence of Petrograd:

"I order all the staffs, administrations and public offices to carry on as usual. I assure the citizens of the capital that they need have no anxiety about the maintenance of order. Ruthless measures will be taken to restore order if it is disturbed by the enemies of the revolution."[99]

Having risen to meet the enemy, working-class Petrograd, bristling with bayonets, prepared for the decisive battle. It was imbued with only one overwhelming desire: to defeat and crush the enemy at all costs.

In the evening of October 29, a conference of representatives of the Petrograd garrison was held under the auspices of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Forty representatives of military units were present. The agenda was as follows: 1. Information; 2. The formation of a staff; 3. The arming of the units; 4. The maintenance of order in the city.

At this conference Lenin spoke three times and, as always, was clear, calm and confident. Speaking amidst tense silence, he infused his auditors with fresh strength and courage.

". . . The political situation has now reduced itself to a military one," he said. "A victory for Kerensky is unthinkable. If that were to happen there would be neither peace, nor land, nor freedom. I am confident that the Petrograd soldiers and workers who have just accomplished a victorious insurrection will succeed in crushing the Kornilovites. . . . The political task, and the military task, is to organise a staff, to concentrate the material forces, and to supply the soldiers with all they need. This must be done without the loss of a single hour, or a single minute, so that everything may proceed as victoriously as it has done up to now."[100]

Thus, inseverably linked with the masses of the working people, carefully heeding their wishes and firmly leading them, Lenin consolidated the victory of the Great Proletarian Revolution.

5

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE KERENSKY-KRASNOV MUTINY

Kerensky woke up on the morning of October 29 in excellent spirits. He had not yet learned of the failure of the cadets' revolt. It seemed to him that fortune was at last beginning to smile on him, and his hopes of victory did not seem as remote as they had been two or three days before.

He visited the armoured train which had been called from the front and told the officers that the German fleet had occupied the Aland Islands and

was heading for Petrograd. In the capital, he said, a riotous mob led by German officers had occupied the railway and was preventing the troops from entering Petrograd. He therefore ordered the armoured train:

"To clear the line. . . occupy the Nikolayevsky Railway Station to enable the troops to reach Petrograd. It must act with determination."[101]

Later in the morning he transferred his headquarters to Tsarskoye Selo, which had been occupied by the Cossacks the previous evening. In the palace at Tsarskoye Selo he resumed his feverish mustering of forces. He sent officers to Luga to accelerate the dispatch of troop trains, and also telegraphed to the commandant of that town ordering him immediately to dispatch a detachment of guerillas to assist the Cossacks.

General Krasnov's Cossacks continued the occupation of Tsarskoye Selo. But the reinforcements from the front failed to arrive. Kerensky called for three regiments of the Finland Division from the South-Western Front. The troop trains arrived at Dno, but on hearing about the events in Petrograd the men sent representatives to the city to inform the Military Revolutionary Committee that they would not go into action against the Soviet Government.

Two troop trains arrived in Osipovichi on the Libau-Romni line. The men elected a committee and resolved that under no circumstances would they march against Petrograd.

The garrison in Bologoye, from where Kerensky was expecting assistance, set up a Military Revolutionary Committee which began to organise the dispatch of troops and provisions to revolutionary Petrograd.

Only three Hundreds of the Amur Regiment arrived to assist Krasnov and Kerensky, but even these declared that "they would take no part in the fratricidal war."[102] They actually refused to perform guard duty in the town and took up their quarters in the adjacent villages. An armoured train mounted with heavy guns, and a Hundred of Orenburg Cossacks, armed only with sabres, also arrived.

The Cossacks began to waver; there was a growing suspicion among them that Kerensky was simply fooling them. More and more often the officers heard what to them was the sinister remark: "We shall march with anybody in the world, but not with Kerensky."[103]

At first Krasnov was saved, as he himself later admitted, by the Commissars Stankevich and Voitinsky, who succeeded in persuading the Cossacks that it was necessary to advance against Petrograd. The Cossacks calmed down somewhat. In the evening, however, representatives of the Cossack Committee again presented themselves to Krasnov and stated that the Cossacks refused to proceed without infantry. Again Krasnov was obliged to plead with them and, as he subsequently stated in his reminiscences, had to "bring all his influence to bear."

At last he succeeded once again in convincing the Cossacks that it was necessary for them to march against Petrograd. Nevertheless, it was obvious that a decisive assault was already out of the question.



A detachment of sailors on the way to fight the Whiteguards

Meanwhile, the temper of the units of the Tsarskoye Selo garrison became more definite. After their skirmish with the Cossacks at the Orlovsky Gate they returned to barracks and categorically refused to give up their arms.

Realising that the prospect of receiving reinforcements from the front was practically nil, Krasnov made another effort to induce the troops in Tsarskoye Selo to join his forces. With this aim in view, he, on October 29, summoned the officers of all the units of the Tsarskoye Selo garrison. The officers, who were hostile to the Bolsheviks, undertook to persuade their men to join the Cossacks; but they were unable to redeem their promise. At the soldiers' meetings held to discuss this question the men categorically refused to support the Whiteguard mutiny. All that the officers succeeded in obtaining was a far from definite promise of neutrality.

Upon hearing that the machine-gun company of the 14th Don Regiment was in Tsarskoye Selo, Krasnov summoned its officers and its committee, but here, too, disappointment awaited him. To his astonishment, they all proved to be under Bolshevik influence and categorically refused to render the Cossacks any assistance.

The significance of the events that were unfolding was confirmed by the analysis of the political situation made by Lenin on the same evening at a conference of regimental representatives of the Petrograd garrison.

"I need not dwell at length on the political situation," he said. "The political question now verges on the military question. It is all too clear

that Kerensky has enlisted the Kornilovites; he has nobody else to depend on. . . . At the front nobody supports Kerensky. . . . The masses of the soldiers and peasants will not follow the lead of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. I have no doubt that at any meeting of workers and soldiers, nine-tenths will vote for us.

"Kerensky's attempt is as miserable an adventure as Kornilov's was."[104]

The popular character of the Great Proletarian Revolution was displayed in all its magnitude and indomitable strength.

In the evening of October 29 Kerensky learned of the failure of the cadet revolt. This sad news was conveyed to him by those leaders without followers, generals without armies—Stankevich, Gotz, and others—who presented themselves to him in the palace chambers. Gotz had intended to flee to Gatchina together with a group of Socialist-Revolutionaries on the night of October 27, but had been arrested and taken to the Smolny. Later, he was released, and taking advantage of this, slipped away and took part in the revolt. The fugitives from Petrograd were panic-stricken. They wrangled among themselves, blamed each other for the failure, and intrigued against one another. Savinkov for example hastened to General Krasnov, who had put up in the servants' quarters of Grand Duchess Maria's palace, and suggested to the General that he should depose Kerensky and place himself at the head of the troops.

"Everybody will be with you and behind you," he said.[105]

The rest of the night was spent in endless negotiations. Fantastic plans for the movement of entire army corps were drawn up. All hopes now were placed on assistance from the front. They believed that aid would be forthcoming if the Cossacks were moved nearer to the capital. Stankevich, Gotz and Voitinsky displayed the greatest zeal in attempting to persuade the troops to march against Petrograd. They travelled to different sectors of the front in search of units loyal to the Provisional Government. They pleaded with the troops in Tsarskoye Selo and in its immediate environs not to take action against Kerensky and Krasnov, and did all in their power to rouse the "fighting spirit" of the Cossacks. But all the efforts of these political corpses were in vain; nobody heeded them.

Suddenly, a new ray of hope flashed on the horizon. On October 29, at about 10 p.m., when the utter defeat of the cadet revolt had become obvious, a delegation of the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union reached the palace in Tsarskoye Selo.

This Executive Committee had been elected at the Inaugural All-Russian Congress of the Railwaymen's Union in the latter half of July 1917. Its composition fully exposed the real nature of its alleged "above-party" stand. Of its 41 members, 14 were Socialist-Revolutionaries, six Mensheviks, three Popular Socialists and 11 non-party, most of whom, as Wompe, a leading official of the union admitted, "were actually Constitutional Democrats." A body of such a composition, while claiming to lead the railwaymen, naturally became a centre of "legal" anti-Soviet plotting in the days immediately following the proletarian revolution.

This Executive had its headquarters in Moscow. As soon as the news of the revolution was received, the Executive resolved to take upon itself the role of "saviour of democracy" and of "mediator" between the contending sides. On October 26, the Railwaymen's Executive transferred its headquarters to Petrograd and on the same day it circulated a telegram in which it expressed doubt about the "validity of the Congress of Soviets now convened" and pointed to the "absence of a government whose authority is recognised all over the country."[106] The statement clearly revealed the Executive's attitude towards recent events. It had never denounced the Provisional Government. Regarding the latter as being sufficiently authoritative for the whole country, it was constantly on the doorstep of the Ministry of Railways in the role of conciliator between the railwaymen on strike for the redress of their grievances and the Ministers.

But the leaders of the Railwaymen's Executive had it brought home to them in the very first days after the October Revolution that they would not succeed in turning the masses of the railwaymen against the Bolsheviks. During the October days a member of the Auditing Committee of the Railwaymen's Executive made the following entry in his diary:

"Most of our railway clerks and senior officials belong to Right Constitutional Democratic trends; the workshops are almost entirely under Bolshevik influence."[107]

This situation compelled the Railwaymen's Executive to launch their campaign to save bourgeois democracy under the flag of "neutrality" in the Civil War. Had the circumstances been different, the Railwaymen's Executive would have openly advocated the overthrow of the Soviets.

On October 29, when the Krasnov-Kerensky offensive near Gatchina was at its height, the Railwaymen's Executive adopted a resolution on the question of state power and sent out the following telegram addressed: "To All, To All, To All!"

"The country is without a government. . . . The Council of Peoples' Commissars established in Petrograd, based, as it is, only on one party, cannot receive the recognition and support of the entire country. A new government must be formed."[108]

This new government, in the opinion of the Executive, should be formed with the co-operation of all the Socialist parties, from the Bolsheviks to the Popular Socialists, inclusively. The telegram went on to say:

"The Railwaymen's Union declares that it will endeavour to carry through this decision by all the means in its power, even to the extent of stopping all railway traffic. Traffic will cease at midnight, between October 29 and 30, unless hostilities in Petrograd and Moscow cease by that time."[109]

On the same day the Railwaymen's Executive sent its delegation to Kerensky and informed him that railway traffic would cease at midnight

if its terms were not accepted. Kerensky and his accomplices jumped at this proposal, which was a trump in their hands with which to play for time. Kerensky summoned the representatives of the parties affiliated to the "Committee for the Salvation" and the Socialist Cabinet Ministers to discuss the proposal and requested the Railwaymen's Union to provide facilities for them to get to Tsarskoye Selo. The delegates consented and promised to report this to their Executives. Kerensky then demanded that a train be placed at his disposal to go to Moghilev to confer with the army organisations. Having vainly tried to reach General Headquarters and the generals for the past few days, he now tried to do so with the aid of the Railwaymen's Executive. The delegates granted his request, thus proving that the "neutrality" of the Railwaymen's Executive was merely a screen for its active assistance to the counter-revolution. After their interview with Kerensky the delegates returned to Petrograd.

In Petrograd, in the meantime, intense preparations to repel Krasnov's forces were continued. After liquidating the cadet revolt, the Military Revolutionary Committee took energetic measures to defend the Red capital and to inflict a crushing blow upon the enemy.

A plan of operations was there and then drawn up. The Pulkovo Heights, which were to serve as the centre of the line, were occupied by the Red Guard, of which the Vyborg District detachments formed the main core. The right flank, in the vicinity of the village of Noviye Suzy was occupied by sailors from Helsingfors and Kronstadt. The left flank, in the district of Bolshoye and Podgornoye Pulkovo, was occupied by the Ismailovsky and Petrograd Regiments. Here four armoured cars were posted. The total strength of the revolutionary forces was about 10,000. There was a severe shortage of artillery; the Soviet troops had only two field guns. This was felt very acutely next day, when the fighting commenced, for General Krasnov had a far larger number of guns at his disposal.

The Soviet units spent the night digging in. The Staff took up its quarters in a cottage on the outskirts of Podgornoye Pulkovo and issued its final orders, distributed the provisions and sent the various units of armed workers who continued to arrive to their appointed positions. The offensive of the Soviet troops was fixed for the morning of October 30.

To accelerate the offensive against Krasnov's troops Stalin commissioned Sergo Orjonikidze to go to the front at the head of a group of Bolsheviks. On October 29, the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered the Commissar of the Baltic Railway Station to place a special locomotive at Orjonikidze's disposal and on this Orjonikidze travelled to the front. On his arrival he inspected the positions and talked with the Red Guards. His calm confidence that victory would be achieved greatly cheered the men. He carefully studied the plan for the offensive and sent a report of it to Lenin and Stalin. Stalin considered it necessary to have trenches dug and barricades erected in Pulkovo itself, in case the Cossacks succeeded in breaking through.



Sergo Orjonikidze in the trenches near Pulkovo
From a drawing by V. Shcheglov

Representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee, including D. Z. Manuilsky, visited the lines at Pulkovo and reported that:

"The spirit of the men is splendid: firm, determined and staunch. In the workers' guard a shortage of officers is felt. The soldiers are resolute. The sailors too. . . . The men were informed that the cadets have been crushed and this had a profound effect."[110]

At night the representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee visited the Staff Headquarters. In a room, humming with conversation and filled with tobacco smoke, they found many officers and soldiers. Maps were spread out on the table. The plan of the offensive was being discussed. It was decided to strengthen the flanking movement on the Krasnoye Selo side. The soldiers, particularly the scouts, suggested alterations to the plan as it was being discussed. The Red Guards, many of whom had taken part in the capture of the Winter Palace, demanded that the offensive should be accelerated. Their fighting spirit was very high and they were eager to push forward. Their ardour infected the soldiers and the sailors.

The representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee learned that there was an acute shortage of artillery and reported this to the Committee.

On receiving the report of their representatives the Military Revolutionary Committee decided to send two comrades to strengthen the Staff at the front, and also to send additional artillery and motor vehicles. A group of comrades was dispatched to procure the automobiles and after a few hours of energetic effort they requisitioned several score, which were hurriedly dispatched to Pulkovo. At the same time 50 horses were requisitioned to haul the guns.

Meanwhile Lenin and Stalin had been unremitting in their efforts to reinforce the front. On the morning of October 30 they summoned all the district organisers of the Bolshevik Party. About ten or twelve men gathered and Lenin informed them about the situation at Pulkovo. Lenin and Stalin urged the necessity of rousing the masses, as it might be necessary to fight in the city. They recommended that arms be procured and detachments formed. Lenin, personally wrote on a half-sheet of notepaper a mandate authorising the bearer to take from the Putilov Works all that was needed for the front.

Early in the morning of October 30 a student, who had managed to make his way from Petrograd, presented himself to Krasnov and delivered a message from the Council of the Union of Cossack Forces. The panic-stricken leaders of the cadet revolt wrote that "the situation in Petrograd is awful. . . ." The Red Guards are "smashing the cadets." "The infantry regiments are wavering and are standing idle. . . ." "The Cossacks are waiting" until the infantry units move. All their hopes now rested on Krasnov's Corps. "The Council of the Union demands your immediate advance on Petrograd."[111]

General Krasnov ordered the Cossacks to advance. He sent one Cossack Hundred to Krasnoye Selo against the right flank of the Red forces. A half-Hundred was sent to probe the left flank of the Red forces in the vicinity

of Bolshoye Kuzmino. A squadron was sent to reconnoitre in the direction of Slovyanka and Kolpino. The artillery, covered by Cossacks, was deployed in the vicinity of the village of Redkoye Kuzmino. Here, somewhat to the rear, Krasnov's main forces were concentrated. Krasnov personally watched the course of the battle from an observation post on the outskirts of Redkoye Kuzmino.

The Red forces did not wait for the Whiteguards to attack. On the morning of October 30, in accordance with the operational plan, the Red Guards launched their attack. Headed by their commanders, they charged down the hillside.

The Cossacks had a superiority in artillery which, handled by experienced gunners commanded by officers, inflicted heavy losses on the Red troops. Many of the workers were under artillery fire for the first time in their lives. In the midst of the fighting the commanders taught these young soldiers how to take cover. The Red Guards hugged the ground and the shrapnel burst over their heads. The enemy artillery put up a barrage behind which the Cossacks prepared to advance.

But the Red Guards did not flinch. Cheers were heard, rising in volume and again the Red Guards rose and charged.

The Cossacks, seasoned soldiers and tempered in battle though they were, failed to withstand the impetuous onslaught of the Red Guards. The long dense lines of men in civilian overcoats poured down the slopes of the Pulkovo Heights. It seemed as though masses in incalculable numbers, the entire nation, was rushing to overwhelm the handful of mutineers. The Cossacks hesitated and began to waver, and this increased as the Red Guards advanced.

On the right flank where the Kolpino detachment was operating, a Cossack charge broke against the staunchness of the Red Guards. The latter had two armoured cars, but the shells from Krasnov's artillery pitted the road with deep craters. One of the armoured cars came to a standstill and the Cossacks, under the impression that it had been crippled by shell fire, drew their sabres and charged. The Red Guards allowed them to come close up and then opened a withering rifle and machine-gun fire. The Cossacks were mown down. Their commander and most of the men were killed. The casualties of the Kolpino Detachment amounted to one wounded and one missing.[112]

Towards noon three batteries of artillery arrived from Petrograd. The offensive of the Red forces was now supported by gunfire of increasing intensity. The shells dropped not only in the Cossacks' forward positions, but also in their rear lines. Their guns were gradually silenced and they began to fall back, pursued by the Red Guards. Outflanking the Cossacks, the Red units captured Bolshoye Kuzmino. The Petrograd and Ismailovsky Reserve Regiments, advancing in open order, came out on the railway line and approached Tsarskoye Selo.

Kerensky was in the palace at Gatchina. All the swagger and arrogance which he had displayed the day before had now vanished. Again he rushed

hither and thither from telegraph instrument to telephone. He no longer trusted the people around him. General Krasnov had appointed a chief of the guard of Gatchina and had requested Kerensky to sanction the appointment. Kerensky did so, but fifteen minutes later he appointed his own "super-chief."[113]

The bad tidings he received from Petrograd drove him to despair. Just as he had done during the siege of the Winter Palace, he again decided to flee or, as he put it, "to leave immediately to meet the approaching troop trains." Early in the morning of October 30 he sent Krasnov a note informing him of his impending departure. He also drew up a document resigning his powers as Prime Minister in favour of N. D. Avksentyev, one copy of which he handed to Gotz and another to Stankevich. But later in the day, when all the preparations for the flight had been completed, Savinkov, accompanied by representatives of the Council of Cossack Forces, approached him on behalf of Krasnov and stated that his departure would demoralise the troops, and that he ought to wait until the battle was over.

Kerensky remained, but continued to send out telegrams calling for the dispatch of troops from the front. At 4:30 p.m. he sent the following telegram to General Dukhonin:

> "Please order the dispatch of shock units and cavalry if any difficulties arise in dispatching infantry. Exert all efforts to accelerate the movement of the troops."[114]

At the time he dispatched this telegram Kerensky was already aware that the infantry units which General Headquarters had been promising all this time had refused to come to his aid. The original draft of the above telegram, which was preserved in Kerensky's notebook, contained the following lines which he had crossed out for fear that they might become public:

> "Information has been received of incipient unrest among the infantry of the 17th Army Corps which had been dispatched to Petrograd."[115]

At the beginning of October, General Headquarters had ordered the transfer of the 17th Army Corps from the Rumanian to the Northern Front and placed in the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's reserves in the region of Vitebsk-Polotsk-Orsha. Probably this Army Corps was already being got ready to be used against the Bolsheviks, for General Headquarters more than once emphasised that:

> "In view of the gravity of the situation, reliable troops are needed on the Northern Front, troops that are more concerned about the defence of the country than with politics."[116]

For two weeks troop trains carrying units of this Army Corps had been arriving at their destination when suddenly an order was received to move the regiments with artillery to Tsarskoye Selo. The Army Corps Commander hastened to entrain brigades of infantry and three batteries of artillery. Telegram after telegram was received from General Headquarters. An order arrived to occupy the railway station at Dno. In reply to the perplexed commander's question as to what he should do: occupy Dno or go to the capital?—General Headquarters stated: entrain for Petrograd.[117] The units arrived at the railway station, but they found no railway cars. Reports came in from regimental commanders to the effect that the railwaymen were not allowing the soldiers to entrain, or else were providing trains without locomotives. Then more alarming news was received—the Bolsheviks had captured the railway stations and towns on the line of route. The Corps Commander telegraphed to a Divisional Commander as follows:

> "The Bolsheviks have captured the Telegraph Office in Vitebsk. I order you to place one of the regimental commanders in command of the guard at Gorodok Station to prevent it from being captured by the Bolsheviks. Act resolutely."[118]

But a message arrived from Gorodok stating that Bolshevik meetings were being held there. The soldiers refused to entrain. They had seized the railway engines and were demanding to be sent back to their former stations.

The commanders failed to induce a single regiment to go to the aid of Krasnov and Kerensky. Nor did the armoured cars upon which Krasnov had placed such hopes turn up. The Armoured Car Unit commanded by Captain Artifexov refused to entrain at Rezhitsa. The Captain ordered the unit to proceed by road, but on the way the soldiers mutinied and the Captain himself was obliged to seek safety in flight.[119]

The 5th Armoured Car Detachment, which Kerensky had personally called up, also failed to appear. When the second unit of this detachment was ordered in Kerensky's name to proceed to Petrograd it decided to send a delegate to the capital to enquire why it was being called there. Nevertheless, the Commander succeeded in inducing four armoured cars and 14 motor trucks and passenger cars to go to Kerensky's aid by road. But even this detachment did not get beyond Staraya Russa; the soldiers refused to go any further.[120]

At 5 p.m., on October 30, Kerensky called for the 17th Cavalry Division which, according to his information, was "definitely opposed to the Bolsheviks." In the same telegram he called for the dispatch of troops from Moscow "if the news that complete calm now prevailed in Moscow is correct."[121] This news proved to be incorrect, however. At that time, the counter-revolutionaries in Moscow were themselves appealing to General Headquarters for assistance.

At 5:45 p.m. Kerensky ordered the chief of the Gatchina Aviation School to mount machine guns on two aeroplanes and immediately place them at the disposal of General Krasnov. But at that moment the latter sent bad news from Pulkovo: the Bolsheviks had defeated the Cossacks and Krasnov's troops might retreat to Gatchina at any moment. It was necessary to take measures to defend the town. At 7:45 p.m. Kerensky ordered the chief of the Aviation School to transfer all his available machine guns to Gatchina to protect the town.

Not one of the numerous units which had been summoned from the front even reported its whereabouts.

Kerensky's panic may be judged from the following telegram which he sent to the commander of the Polish Rifle Division at 8 o'clock that night:

"I order you urgently to entrain your division and proceed with it to Gatchina."[122]

For this at least ten trains were required, and to load ten trains with troops and equipment must take time. Kerensky, however, needed assistance at once; the Cossacks at Pulkovo were obviously fighting a losing battle.

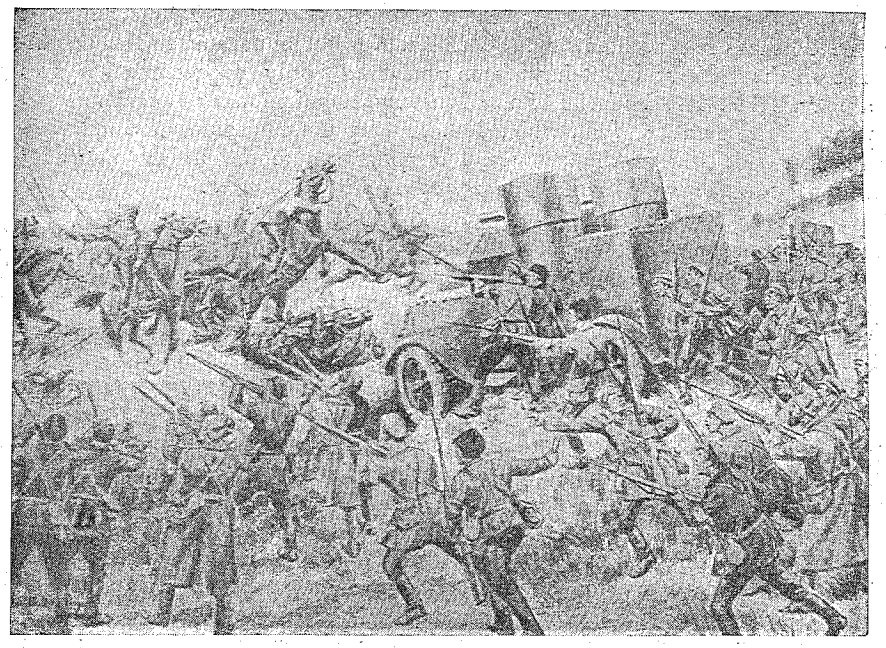
The offensive launched by the Red units influenced the garrison at Tsarskoye Selo, but certainly not in Krasnov's favour. Meetings were again held in the barracks and the resolutions adopted at all of them were couched in identical terms. The soldiers called upon Krasnov to cease hostilities, threatening to attack the Cossacks in the rear if he failed to do so.

Krasnov learned of the temper prevailing among the garrison of Tsarskoye Selo from the bourgeois youth of that town who were employed as spies.

In the end, the Krasnoye Selo garrison supported the offensive of the Red Guard. On October 29, Cossack patrols came into collision with units of the 171st and 176th Reserve Regiments, which were quartered in Krasnoye Selo. Here the Pavlovsky and Chasseur Reserve Regiments, and detachments of sailors arrived by order of the Military Revolutionary Committee. After a heavy exchange of fire, the Cossacks retreated. The Krasnoye Selo garrison, covered on the Gatchina side by the Pavlovsky Regiment,

A detachment of sailors near Pulkovo





The battle of Pulkovo *From a drawing by I. Vladimirov*

launched an attack in the Tsarskoye Selo direction and reached the Gatchina-Tsarskoye Highway. The machine-gunners of the 2nd Regiment, and the artillery sent from Petrograd, joined the attacking units.

On the night of October 29, the Krasnoye Selo detachment captured a trainload of artillery and 400 men. As the soldiers could not unload the guns from the train they removed the locks, in spite of the fire from a White-guard armoured train which had come up. The prisoners were sent to Krasnoye Selo.

Next day, while the Red Guards launched their offensive at Pulkovo, the Krasnoye Selo detachment resumed its operations against the Cossacks' flank and rear. True, they did not make much headway but their mere presence in the Vitgolovo-Maliye Kobozi area and active operations in the direction of Tsarskoye Selo constituted a threat to Krasnov's main forces.

At 7 p.m. that day the Commissar of the 176th Infantry Reserve Regiment sent the following dispatch to the Military Revolutionary Committee:

"All rumours about the defeat of the Krasnoye Selo detachment are false. We are conducting a vigorous offensive against Tsarskoye Selo and Alexandrovka. The sailors are fighting like heroes and the soldiers are not a whit behind them. The 176th and 171st Infantry Reserve Regiments are living up to their revolutionary reputation."[123]

Continuing their offensive, the Red troops occupied Tsarskoye Selo. The Cossacks retreated towards Gatchina. No precise data as to the casualties on the Pulkovo Front have been preserved, only approximate figures are available. The bulletin of the Military Revolutionary Committee estimated the number of killed at 200. Among these was Vera Slutskaya, an active member of the Petrograd organisation of the Bolshevik Party who went to the front in the capacity of a political worker.

On the evening of October 30, Krasnov and his Staff arrived in Gatchina. All night long conferences were held in the palace at which the officers discussed their plan of further operations. Representatives of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party kept on arriving to see Kerensky. One of these was Victor Chernov. On learning of the arrival of their leader, a delegation of Socialist-Revolutionaries from Luga came to seek advice and to enquire whether their line of policy was correct. On the previous evening they had decided to maintain neutrality and to allow troop trains of both sides to pass, *i.e.*, those going to the assistance of the Kerensky government and those called out by the Bolsheviks. Chernov approved of this resolution, but Stankevich said that it was a stab in the back of the government. To this Chernov replied:

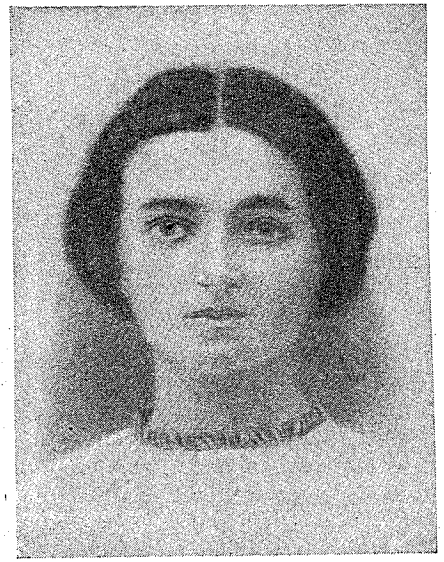
> "From the practical point of view, one thing is important, and that is to allow the government's troop trains to pass; for evidently no troop trains are going to the Bolsheviks."[124]

Kerensky received disastrous news from General Headquarters: The Fifth Army had decided to send assistance to the Bolsheviks; armed collisions had broken out in the Twelfth Army. The retreat to Gatchina completely demoralised the Cossacks. They even refused to guard the bridges at the river Izhora. "It's no use," they said, according to Krasnov's own testimony, "we Cossacks cannot stand alone against the whole of Russia. If all Russia is with them, what can we do?"[125]

On October 31 a council of war was held at which it was decided to enter into negotiations with the Bolsheviks in order to gain time until reinforcements arrived. Two proposals were submitted, one in the name of Krasnov addressed to the commander of the Red Forces on the Gatchina Front, and the other under Kerensky's signature addressed to Petrograd. Both proposals were couched in obviously unacceptable terms. Kerensky demanded that the Bolsheviks should cease hostilities and submit to a new democratic government. This government was to be formed by agreement with the "existing" Provisional Government and representatives of all political parties and of the "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution." That this offer of "peace" negotiations was a ruse on the part of Kerensky and Co. with the object of gaining time was confirmed by Krasnov himself. As he subsequently confessed:

> "Stankevich was to go to Petrograd to seek an agreement or assistance; Savinkov went to fetch the Poles, and Voitinsky went to General Headquarters to ask for shock battalions."[126]

Stankevich carried Kerensky's proposals to Petrograd. Taking advantage of the fact that the best units and the most progressive soldiers had been sent to the front at Pulkovo, the "Committee for the Salvation" sent its agents to all the regiments of the garrison with the object of influencing the more politically backward soldiers who had remained in the capital. These agents told the soldiers that Kerensky stood for peace, whereas the Bolsheviks were fomenting civil war. The officers tried to persuade the soldiers to call upon the Bolsheviks to put a stop to the bloodshed. The counter-revolutionaries endeavoured to make political capital out of the soldiers' passionate desire for peace.



Vera Slutskaya

Some of the regiments elected delegates and sent them to the Smolny. During the course of the day delegates arrived from the Chevaliers of St. George, the 3rd Rifle Division and other units. In the evening of October 31, delegates arrived representing the Lithuanian, Semyonovsky, Petrograd, Kexholm, the Grenadier, Ismailovsky, Moscow and the Preobrazhensky Regiments. Among them were soldiers from the front. The chairman of the deputation, a private of the Preobrazhensky Regiment, read an instruction which the delegates had received—obviously dictated by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—to the effect that the Military Revolutionary Committee and the garrison of Petrograd should appoint representatives consisting of members of all Socialist parties, including the Popular Socialists, for the purpose of negotiating with Kerensky.

The deputation was received by Stalin. He described to the men the situation at the front and explained that the proposal they had made meant assisting Kerensky, whose only object was to gain time. Finally, Stalin urged that it was impossible to negotiate with Kerensky.[127]

Stalin's words convinced many of the delegates. The representatives of the Lithuanian Regiment stated that they had never had any disagreement with the Military Revolutionary Committee, but they had no information about the character of the negotiations.

Stalin spoke again and explained Kerensky's manoeuvre.

> "Kerensky has submitted an ultimatum demanding the surrender of arms," he added.[128]

Stalin's arguments finally convinced the delegates, who realised that they had nearly fallen victim to a fraud. They decided to send a deputation to Kerensky's troops to put the following five questions to them:

1. Do the Cossacks and Kerensky's soldiers recognise the Central Executive Committee as the source of power responsible to the Congress?
2. Do the Cossacks and the soldiers recognise the decisions of the Second Congress of Soviets?
3. Do they recognise the decrees on peace and land?
4. Do they recognise the possibility of an immediate cessation of hostilities and of their return to their former stations?
5. Do they agree to arrest Kerensky, Krasnov and Savinkov?[129]

In addition, it was decided that the deputation should not negotiate with Kerensky and the commanders, but exclusively with the rank-and-file Cossacks and soldiers. Thus, Kerensky's last manoeuvre failed.

That very day, October 31, the French General Niessel arrived in Gatchina from General Headquarters. He had a long interview with Kerensky, after which he invited Krasnov to confer with him. At this conference Krasnov said:

> "If it were possible to provide at least one battalion of foreign troops, we could, with the aid of this battalion, compel the garrisons of Tsarskoye Selo and Petrograd to obey the government."[130]

The counter-revolutionaries could see no way out of their predicament except foreign intervention.

At 6 p.m. on October 31 Kerensky set all the wires buzzing with a telegram to the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union stating that the proposal for an armistice had been accepted and that his representative had left for Petrograd.

At 8:45 p.m. that same evening he sent the following telegram to the "Committee for the Salvation" and to the Railwaymen's Executive:

> "Conforming to the proposal of the 'Committee for the Salvation' and of all the democratic organisations affiliated to it, I have ceased operations against the insurgent troops and have commissioned Stankevich, Representative-Commissar of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, to open negotiations. Take measures to prevent useless bloodshed."[131]

Kerensky tried to avoid negotiating with the victorious Bolsheviks, but while the endless conferences and mutual recrimination dragged on, representatives of the Red Guard, the Petrograd regiments and the sailors appeared in Gatchina and began to negotiate with the rank and file. The workers began to reach an understanding with the Cossacks. They urged them to stop fighting and to arrest Kerensky, promising that after that they would be allowed to return to their homes on the Don. The Cossacks readily agreed to this and went off to place a guard over Kerensky's quarters. The latter, however, had been warned.

At 10:15 a.m. on November 1 Kerensky sent another very urgent telegram to the Railwaymen's Executive stating that he had accepted the proposal for an armistice and was waiting for a reply.[132] But the Red Guards



From a painting by I. Lebedev

Stalin receiving a deputation from the Petrograd garrison in October (November), 1917

and sailors were already on the first floor of the palace. At 1 p.m. Kerensky wired to General Dukhonin:

"In view of my departure for Petrograd, I order you to assume the duties of Supreme Commander-in-Chief."[133]

This was the last telegram, boastful and false as ever, that this Prime Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Provisional Government dispatched. Instead of going to Petrograd, as he had stated in the telegram, he, at about 3 p.m. on November 1, escaped from the ancient palace by a secret corridor, abandoning the demoralised counter-revolutionary forces near Petrograd to their fate. The revolutionary troops occupied Gatchina and arrested the Staff of the 3rd Cavalry Corps together with General Krasnov.

Late that night, Baranovsky, Quartermaster-General of the Northern Front, called up General Dukhonin at General Headquarters and informed him of the failure of Krasnov's operations and of Kerensky's flight. He enquired what was to be done with the troop trains of the 3rd Finland Division and the units of the 17th Army Corps, as Gatchina had been occupied by the revolutionary troops. To direct these trains to Gatchina meant surrendering them one by one to the Bolsheviks, he said. He also wanted to know what to do with the 182nd Division which the Socialist-Revolutionary Mazurenko had intended to bring to Kerensky's aid.

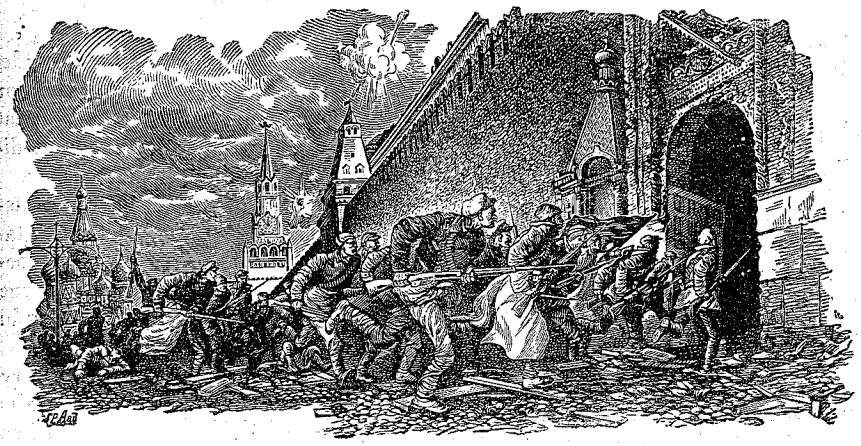
Dukhonin replied that he was temporarily acting as Supreme Commander-in-Chief. All the troops which had been sent to Krasnov's aid were to be concentrated in the region of Luga-Plusna-Peredolskaya. The units of the 3rd Cavalry Corps were to be isolated from the troops of the Petrograd garrison, but not to be sent back to Ostrov. They were to be dispatched to the region of Chudovo.

General Headquarters still hoped to be able to make use of these troops and concentrated them at places not far from Petrograd.

"It is easier to bring up supplies, and the presence of cavalry in this area will have a more salutary effect in the region of the Nikolayevsky Railway,"[134] said Dukhonin, explaining his choice of the area in which to quarter these troops. But even General Headquarters admitted that the Kerensky-Krasnov expedition had ended in failure.

Backed by the overwhelming majority of the workers and the toiling peasants, the young Soviet Government crushed the revolt of the remnants of the old regime. The first anti-Soviet mutiny was crushed. The dictatorship of the proletariat achieved its first important victory.





Chapter Seven

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION IN MOSCOW

I

THE BEGINNING OF THE INSURRECTION

ON OCTOBER 24, telephone communication between Moscow and Petrograd was cut off the whole day and nobody knew what was going on in the capital. It was not until the morning of October 25 that Nogin, the Chairman of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies, who was then in Petrograd, telephoned the Moscow Soviet. There, a joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies had been fixed for 10 a.m. but the deputies had not yet arrived. Only the Bolsheviks had arrived for a meeting of their group. When Nogin's telephone message was received, A.S. Vedernikov, the chief of the Red Guard of the Soviet, happened to be in the room and he communicated the message to the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party, which then had its headquarters in the Hotel Dresden, in Skobelev Square opposite the Moscow Soviet.

The Moscow Committee was not yet aware of what had taken place in Petrograd. At the time Nogin's telephone message arrived the Committee

was in session, discussing the question of forming a fighting centre under the auspices of the Moscow Soviet. The question had arisen in connection with the suppression of the Soviet in Kaluga. Everybody recognised that urgent measures were necessary, but nobody as yet talked about an immediate insurrection. It was decided:

"Forthwith to instruct the [Bolshevik] group in the Soviet immediately to form a fighting centre on the basis of proportional representation, the body to consist of three Bolsheviks, one Menshevik, one Socialist-Revolutionary, one representative of the Red Guard, and one representative of the Staff of the Military Area. Proportionate strength: four Bolsheviks, three others.

"The work of the military organisation is to continue. The military bureau is instructed to launch a political campaign in all the units with the view to inducing them to declare that they will obey no orders without the sanction of the Soviet."[1]

The candidates for this *Soviet* fighting centre were nominated there and then.

The Moscow Committee then discussed the question of forming a *Party* fighting centre. It was unanimously decided without discussion forthwith to form a single Party fighting centre consisting of two comrades from the Regional Bureau, two from the Moscow Committee and one from the Area Committee of the Bolshevik Party. In addition, it was proposed to include one representative of the trade unions and one of the military organisation. This Party Centre was invested with full powers.

The election of the members of this centre was barely concluded when news was received of the insurrection in Petrograd. The Soviet fighting centre had not yet been formed; the joint meeting of the Soviets had been deferred until 3 p.m., but the situation called for immediate action. The Party Centre, remaining in the Hotel Dresden, therefore issued an order to seize the General Post Office and the Central Telegraph Office, to post a guard in the Polytechnical Museum, in the Lecture Hall of which the meeting of the Soviets was to be held, and to suppress the bourgeois newspapers. All the District Committees of the Bolshevik Party were instructed to set up district fighting centres and to occupy the militia stations. The Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party was instructed to send a messenger to Alexandrov with a request for hand grenades. It sent instructions to Orel and Bryansk to form defence bases in case the counter-revolutionaries launched an attack in Moscow. The Regional Bureau, in its turn, sent an organiser of the Smolensk Citizen's League* to the city of Smolensk, and also informed Tula of what was going on in Moscow.

The task of seizing the General Post Office and Central Telegraph Office was entrusted to A. S. Vedernikov, who decided to call out units of the 56th

* Formed by soldiers from Smolensk who were serving in the Moscow Region... *Trans.*

Regiment for this purpose. The regimental staff and two battalions of this regiment were quartered in the Pokrovsky Barracks. The 1st Battalion and the 8th Company were quartered in the Kremlin, and companies of the 2nd Battalion were quartered in the Zamoskvorechye District.

Accompanied by O. M. Berzin, a Sub-Lieutenant of the 8th Company, Vedernikov hurried to the Pokrovsky Barracks where he found a meeting of the Regimental Committee in progress. The proceedings were interrupted and Vedernikov informed the Committee of the overthrow of the Provisional Government in Petrograd and requested that two companies of the regiment be detailed for the purpose of capturing the Post and Telegraph Offices. The Chairman of the Committee, a Socialist-Revolutionary, after a considerable amount of wriggling, submitted the question for discussion. The officers on the Committee demanded that everybody should keep calm and await orders from Military Area Headquarters. Some of the privates—Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—demanded that the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies should be warned. It was evident that the Regimental Committee was deliberately procrastinating. Suddenly a Bolshevik private jumped up and shouted:

"Boys, don't let these fellows lead us by the nose!... We must act. There's been quite enough talk. Come on, let's line up the companies!"

The soldiers jumped from their seats. Somebody shouted:

"You line up your 11th Company and I will call out mine!"

The members of the soldiers' section of the Regimental Committee rushed to their respective companies to call out their men. About fifteen minutes later two companies—the 11th and the 13th—were lined up in the barrack square. They quickly numbered and marched through the gates. Here they encountered the Regimental Commander, but the men ignored him.

The company arrived at the Central Telegraph Office and General Post Office, occupied all the entrances and posted a guard, but did not interrupt the work of the employees. They committed a blunder, however, which led to serious consequences later. Next door to the General Post Office and Central Telegraph Office was the Inter-City Telephone Exchange. The soldiers occupied this building and with that considered their task finished. They should, however, have occupied the Central City Telephone Exchange in Milyutinsky Street too. This they failed to do.

The soldiers had barely managed to occupy their different posts when a company of cadets from the Alexeyevsky Military School arrived from the direction of the Red Gate and turned towards the entrances at the General Post Office. The guard at the gates barred their way and held their rifles at the ready. In reply to the enquiry made by the astonished officer the men stated that the premises were guarded by the 56th Regiment. The officer telephoned to Military Area Headquarters and reported what had happened. As it transpired later, Area Headquarters was already aware of the revolution in Petrograd and was in its turn taking urgent measures. Its first object was to occupy the Central Telegraph Office, but in this it

was foiled by the arrival of the revolutionary soldiers before the cadets. Colonel Ryabtsev, the Commander-in-Chief of the Moscow Military Area, was obliged to recall his cadets. The revolutionary patrols remained on guard.

After 1 p.m., while the soldiers were hastening to the Central Telegraph Office, a conference of representatives of all the party groups, including the Bolshevik group, was held in the premises of the Moscow Soviet. Colonel Ryabtsev was also present. Rudnyev, the Mayor of Moscow, a Socialist-Revolutionary, greatly excited, reported on the situation in Petrograd. After this a resolution was adopted which was to be submitted in the name of the Bureau representing all groups, to the joint meeting of the two Moscow Soviets which had been postponed until 3 p. m. This resolution read:

"For the purpose of restoring revolutionary order in Moscow and of guarding against all counter-revolutionary attempts, a provisional democratic body is to be set up consisting of representatives of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, the City Council, the Zemstvo Council, the All-Russian Railwaymen's Union and the Union of Post and Telegraph Workers."[2]

Smidovich and Ignatov, the Bolshevik representatives on the Executive Committee, raised no objections to the formation of such a body. The only point of difference was the proportion of representation. Rudnyev insisted that the City Duma should have a majority of representatives, while Smidovich and Ignatov insisted that the Soviets should have the majority.

This resolution, however, ran counter to the proposal of the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party that the Soviets should form a fighting centre. By agreeing to Rudnyev's proposal, the Bolshevik representatives at this conference took the line of negotiating with the compromisers.

The joint session of the two Soviets was not opened until 6 p.m. The Main Hall of the Polytechnical Museum where the meeting took place was crowded with deputies. Everybody had heard about the insurrection in Petrograd, but the reports were contradictory. Some said that the Provisional Government had been overthrown; others said that troops had been called from the front. The deputies gathered in groups, excitedly discussing the alarming news. At last Smidovich, the chairman, mounted the platform and opening the meeting said:

"Comrades. The course of the great revolutionary events which we have witnessed during the past eight months has brought us to the most revolutionary and, perhaps, the most tragic phase."[3]

These words electrified the audience. All eyes were riveted on the speaker. Everybody was on tenterhooks, waiting to hear the answer to the vital question as to whether the insurrection had been successful. Continuing, Smidovich said:

"The information at our disposal does not enable us to say with certainty whether it will reach successful consummation. . . . Today we shall discuss the question of forming a new governmental centre in Moscow, a revolutionary governmental centre. . . ."[4]

In spite of the decision adopted by the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party, of which he was already aware, he pleaded for a unanimous decision on this question and referred to the draft resolution which had been adopted at the conference of representatives of all the party groups in the Soviets in favour of forming a coalition organ of government in Moscow.

When the chairman had finished his opening remarks telegrams announcing the insurrection in Petrograd were read amidst tense silence. The telegrams were very brief, but they left no doubt about the fact that the insurrection had been successful. Following this, the Menshevik Isuv reported on the decision which had been arrived at by the conference of representatives of all the party groups on the question of forming a coalition organ of government. This decision was obviously at variance with the nature of the events in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks called for an adjournment.

At a meeting of the Bolshevik group the draft of this "compromise" resolution was severely criticised. The Bolshevik representatives of the Executive Committee of the Soviet were told that the resolution they had voted for not only ran counter to the line of the Bolshevik Party and to the decision of the Moscow Committee, but was likely to render a bad service to the insurgent workers in Petrograd.

This "compromise" resolution was rejected by an overwhelming majority and the following decision was adopted:

"The Moscow Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies shall at today's general meeting elect a revolutionary committee of seven.

"This revolutionary committee shall have power to co-opt representatives of other revolutionary democratic organisations and groups, subject to the sanction of the general meeting of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The elected revolutionary committee shall begin to function forthwith with the object of rendering all possible assistance to the Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."[5]

The meeting of the Soviet was resumed. The delegates filed into the hall.

The Bolshevik group called upon the Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to be with the workers and soldiers of Petrograd in this critical moment. Whoever failed to perform this duty would be a traitor, they said.

"Demagogy!" shouted the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.

"Don't burn your boats!" shouted the Menshevik Isuv. "Don't break up the democratic front on the eve of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly! . . ."[6]

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks loudly protested against the proposal to set up a Military Revolutionary Committee. They tried to scare the workers with the bogey of isolation and threatened that the counter-revolutionary organisations would come into power. As against the proposal to form a Military Revolutionary Committee they proposed that

a "democratic body" be set up on the lines of the resolution adopted by the conference of party groups.

When the various groups had made their declarations the Soviet decided to put the matter to a vote without further discussion. A proposal was made to take the Bolshevik resolution first, but the Mensheviks insisted that theirs should be taken first. A commotion arose in the hall. Several delegates protested against the efforts of the Mensheviks to drag out the meeting. A number of delegates demanded the floor to make proposals. The Socialist-Revolutionaries consulted with each other in whispers. Suddenly their spokesman got up and announced that they would take no part in the voting. It was noticeable from the platform that the Socialist-Revolutionary group in the hall had greatly dwindled; individually and in groups, they were stealthily leaving the meeting.

Observing this flight, the Bolsheviks demanded a roll call. At this pandemonium broke loose. The Socialist-Revolutionaries remaining in the hall shouted that they would withdraw from the meeting entirely.

At last the voting was proceeded with.

By a vote of 394 against 106, with 23 abstentions, the meeting adopted the Bolshevik resolution. The "compromise" resolution polled only 113 votes. The Socialist-Revolutionaries refrained from voting.

After the count the Mensheviks made the following declaration:

> "It is our duty and obligation to guard to the end the working class and the Moscow garrison from the reckless, dangerous path, which you [the Bolsheviks—*Ed.*] are taking. For that reason we shall join this body, but we shall do so not for the object which you are pursuing, but for the purpose of continuing the work of exposure which we have been performing in the Soviet in order to mitigate all the fatal consequences that will fall on the heads of the proletariat and the soldiers of Moscow."[7]

Two lines of policy—the Bolshevik and the compromising line—were in conflict at this meeting of the Soviets on October 25: the first was that of taking action to support the Petrograd proletariat and garrison; the second was that of betraying the proletarian revolution on the plea of waiting for further developments in Petrograd.

A Military Revolutionary Committee was elected consisting of four Bolsheviks and three Mensheviks. The Socialist-Revolutionaries refused to sit on this Committee.

Unlike the Military Revolutionary Committee in Petrograd, the Moscow body contained Mensheviks, who were actually the spies of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, together with devoted revolutionaries like Usiyevich, it contained defeatists like Muralov, who was subsequently shot for high treason. A committee of such a composition could not but have a harmful effect upon the leadership of the insurrection.

The newly elected Military Revolutionary Committee immediately left the Polytechnical Museum for the Moscow Soviet and started work.

Here, too, on the night of October 25, the Party fighting centre took up its headquarters.



G. A. Usiyevich

It soon became known where the Socialist-Revolutionaries had gone to on leaving the meeting of the Soviet. At about 9 p.m., three hours after that meeting had started, a special meeting of the City Duma was held, at which, unlike the meeting of the Soviet, anxiety and nervous anticipation prevailed. The Constitutional Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks predominated. The solemnity which the Constitutional Democratic professors tried to introduce in the meeting faded away. The deputies fidgeted nervously, exchanged news, flitted from one party group to another, and crowded around the various party leaders as they entered the hall.

Rudnyev, the Mayor of the City, addressed the meeting. He had just been in communication with the Winter Palace by telephone, and Nikitin, the Menshevik Minister for the Interior, had managed to inform him that the Bolsheviks had called upon the Provisional Government to surrender. The government had instructed him, Rudnyev, to organise resistance in Moscow.

In a melancholy, tragic voice he said:

> "The issue at stake is whether the government is to be overthrown and power seized by a certain party—the Bolsheviks. We are witnessing the last hours of the Provisional Government. The government is in its death throes."[8]

Rudnyev then reported on the events in Petrograd. The Central Telegraph Office had been captured by the Bolsheviks. The railway stations were in the hands of the insurgents. The Pre-parliament had been dispersed by a detachment of sailors and soldiers. Preponderence of strength was on the side of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, but the Provisional Government was still holding on.

> "Fifteen minutes ago," continued Rudnyev, "Nikitin, the Minister for the Interior, reported the following: Half an hour ago, two soldiers from the Military Revolutionary Committee had come to him with a statement that the Provisional Government was regarded as deposed. If the Provisional Government agreed to regard itself as deposed its

safety would be guaranteed. Nikitin had replied that the government was of the opinion that it had no right to retire."[9]

These remarks were greeted with loud applause on all sides, except from the Bolsheviks and Unionists. The panic-stricken deputies saw a ray of hope, but it vanished in an instant. Rudnyev proceeded to deal with the situation in Moscow. The Central Telegraph Office had been occupied by the 56th Regiment. A number of other acts of seizure were being committed. All this was being done in the name of the Soviet, but actually it was being directed by the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

"The Moscow City Duma," he said in conclusion, "may not possess physical force, but it is the sole and supreme authority in the city and cannot sanction what is now taking place in Petrograd. Moreover, a concrete duty devolves upon it—to ensure the safety of the population of Moscow, to whom it is responsible."[10]

Rudnyev proposed that the City Duma should set up a united body to be known as the "Committee of Public Safety" for the purpose, as he explained, of protecting the population. He delivered the last part of his speech amidst intense silence, which continued long after he finished speaking. Nobody asked for the floor. At last, the Constitutional Democrat Shchepkin, who subsequently became the leader of one of the biggest plots against the Soviet Government, got up and proposed that the Duma should first of all hear "... those who are responsible for the terrible events that are happening in the country, those who occupy the left benches."[11]

The veteran Bolshevik I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov replied in a clear, calm voice, that reverberated throughout the hall:

"When the Moscow State Conference was held the trade unions decided to react to it by holding a demonstration. At that time the Mayor challenged the right of the workers to demonstrate and described it as an anarchistic demonstration by the minority. Six weeks have passed and the anarchistic minority now proves to be the majority. This has been definitely proved by the District Duma elections. In whose name does the Mayor speak? In the name of those who were elected on June 25, but not in the name of the present majority. Now you are the minority."[12]

The public gallery and the Bolshevik members in the hall greeted this statement with an outburst of applause. The Constitutional Democrats fumed with rage. The Socialist-Revolutionaries glanced at each other in silence.

"The Duma," continued Stepanov, sharply raising his voice, "no longer represents the population. In the name of the future of our country we speak boldly and emphatically. Power is being seized not by an insignificant minority, but by the representatives of the majority in the country. This is proved by the facts. The Telegraph Office, the Smolny Institute, the railway stations, the State Bank and a number of other institutions have been occupied, and this was resisted only by a few score of people. This proves that the people are not with the Provisional Government. It is a Provisional Government not by the will of the people, but by the grace of Rodzyanko. Pass your resolution. We shall not take part in the voting on it. But bear in mind the responsibility that you are taking upon yourselves."[13]



I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov

Skvortsov-Stepanov's speech caused dismay in the ranks of the social-compromisers and evoked feeble protests. The representatives of the Socialist-Revolutionaries stated that "the entire peasantry is opposed to insurrection," that "the Bolsheviks have not a majority in the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies," that "the Soviets of Workers' Deputies are not the entire proletariat. . . ."

Astrov, the spokesman of the Constitutional Democrats, the second largest group in the City Duma, called for unconditional support for the Provisional Government. Himself a monarchist who, with Milyukov, had pleaded for the preservation of the autocratic rule of the Romanovs, he now compared the capture of power by the Soviets to . . . a reversion to the monarchy.

The Mensheviks, in long and rambling speeches, accused the Soviet of Workers' Deputies of having taken a wrong and false step. They promised support for a body consisting of representatives of all the democratic organisations, but if this body took measures of repression against the workers they would withdraw from it.

The Mensheviks were in a state of utter panic and confusion. Some of them said that they would oppose the Provisional Government if it resorted to the death penalty. Others echoed the Constitutional Democrats in calling for whole-hearted support for the Provisional Government, even if that meant resigning from the Menshevik group.

These dull and dreary speeches went on endlessly, each group trying to throw the blame on the other. Amidst the din of this mutual recrimination the Bolsheviks withdrew from the meeting and hastened to the districts where urgent work awaited them.

The departure of the Bolsheviks convinced the remaining members that they were simply wasting time. The debate was closed. At about midnight

a long resolution was adopted calling upon all and sundry to rally around the City Duma and to resist the Bolsheviks.

On Rudnyev's motion the Duma formed a "Committee of Public Safety" consisting of representatives of the Duma, the Moscow Uyezd Zemstvo Council, the Executive Committees of the Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies and Peasants' Deputies in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were in the majority, the Staff of the Moscow Military Area, the Union of Post and Telegraph Employees and the Railwaymen's Union.

The Mensheviks elected their representatives to the "Committee of Public Safety" as well as to the Military Revolutionary Committee.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries refused to serve on the Military Revolutionary Committee, but they unreservedly supported the "Committee of Public Safety." This explains the riddle of their refusing to take part in the voting and their withdrawal from the meeting of the Soviets. They had hurried off to the counter-revolutionary Duma.

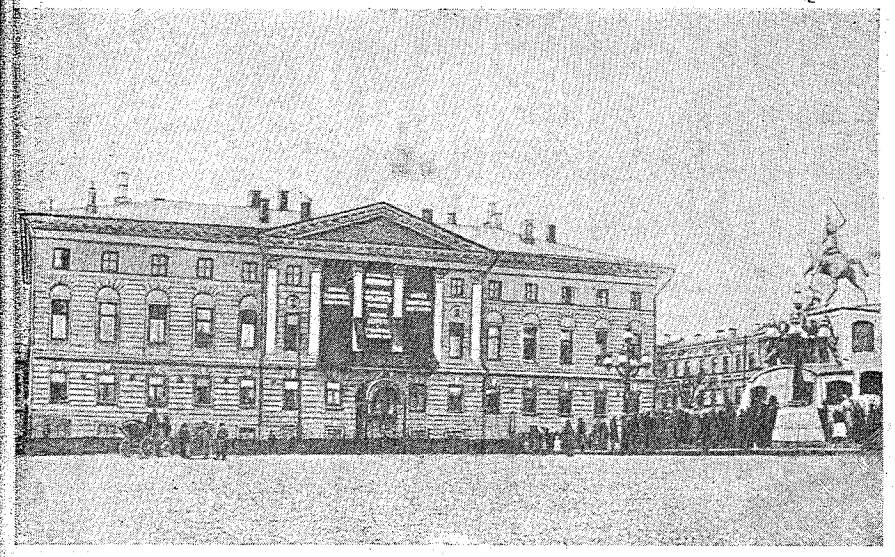
Immediately after it was formed, the "Committee of Public Safety" issued an appeal to the City Dumas all over Russia to support the Provisional Government and to organise local Duma Committees.

The Chief Committee of the Union of Cities, of which Rudnyev was the chairman, telegraphed to all urban and rural local government bodies urging them immediately to elect delegates who were to hold themselves in readiness to assemble, as soon as the signal was given, for the purpose of organising and supporting the Constituent Assembly. The object of this appeal was to offset the Second Congress of Soviets by a congress of urban and rural local government bodies.

The "Committee of Public Safety" set to work at once. On Colonel Ryabtsev's instructions the cadets occupied the Duma premises and also the Riding School opposite the Troitsky Gate of the Kremlin. They wanted to enter the Kremlin, but the soldiers on guard barred their way.

At midnight on October 25, while the leading body of the counter-revolution was being formed in the City Duma, a meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee was held. The Mensheviks resorted to obstruction by making long and meaningless speeches. Ryabtsev's cadets were already marching through the streets and it was necessary to take urgent and energetic action, but this was the moment the Mensheviks chose to move that the first item of business should be the question of co-opting representatives of other organisations to the Military Revolutionary Committee. This proposal was rejected. The Committee sent a guard composed of men of the 56th Infantry Regiment to the State Bank in Neglinnaya Street. The occupation of the railway stations was entrusted to the Railwaymen's Military Revolutionary Committees. The following telephone message was sent to all the districts:

> "Meet, elect a district revolutionary centre, decide what to occupy in your district (offices, public buildings, etc.), immediately arm (occupy arms depots), establish contacts with the revolutionary centre of the Soviet and the Party."[14]



The Moscow Soviet—the Headquarters of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee

A company of the Cycle Battalion was called out to guard the Moscow Soviet. In accordance with the instructions of the Party Centre, the Military Revolutionary Committee sent soldiers to close down the bourgeois newspapers *Russkoye Slovo, Utro Rossii, Russkiye Vedomosti* and *Ranneye Utro*. By 4 a.m. the printing offices of these newspapers were sealed.

An order was issued to the garrison informing it of the insurrection in Petrograd and calling for support for it. The Military Revolutionary Committee declared:

> "1. The entire Moscow garrison must immediately prepare for action. Every military unit must be ready to come out at the first word of command of the Military Revolutionary Committee.
>
> "2. No order or instruction issued by any body other than the Military Revolutionary Committee is to be obeyed unless counter-signed by the Committee."[15]

Obviously this was not enough. The army units should have been called to the Soviet and instructed to occupy the Kremlin and other government buildings. Comrade Yaroslavsky proposed that the Riding School should be occupied at once so as to safeguard the approaches to the Kremlin, but this proposal was not accepted.

A special commission was set up to organise and direct the work in the districts. This commission requested all the District Soviets to appoint persons to act as the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee in the various districts.

These Commissars were instructed not to wait for orders, but immediately, on their own authority, to appoint Commissars over all the army units and also Commissars of the militia and post offices, and with the aid of the Red Guard to organise the protection of the districts.

The Military Revolutionary Committee was in constant session. Telephone messages were received from all the districts in the city asking for instructions and enquiring whether military units were needed, and where they were to be sent. The answers to these enquiries were indefinite, however. It was evident that the Military Revolutionary Committee had no plan of action for the insurrection, and was not displaying the necessary determination.

The question that excited the workers most was that of obtaining arms. Ryabtsev had taken the precaution to deprive the soldiers of their rifles. All night long delegates from the regiments and from the Red Guard came to the Soviet in quest of arms. The districts sent their Commissars with strict instructions not to return without arms.

There was a large quantity of arms in the Kremlin arsenal. The Military Revolutionary Committee appointed E. Yaroslavsky Commissar of the Kremlin. O. Berzin was recalled from the Post Office and appointed Commissar of the arsenal to supervise the issue of arms. The Commissars were instructed to go to the Kremlin and were warned that in the morning the districts would be sending their messengers for arms.

In the Kremlin were quartered a battalion and one company (five companies in all) of the 56th Regiment, which was pro-Bolshevik, and a detachment for the arsenal. The Kremlin was also the headquarters of Colonel Ryabtsev, the Commander-in-Chief, and of the Staff of the Ukrainian units, and of a large number of officers who had their quarters there. They had two armoured cars at their command.

Measures had to be taken against the hostile forces in the Kremlin, but the Military Revolutionary Committee did not settle this question. True, jointly with the Party Centre, it passed a resolution urging the necessity of increasing the Kremlin garrison and recommending for this purpose the 193rd Infantry Reserve Regiment which was quartered in Khamovniki and upon whose loyalty to the Soviet it had every reason to rely.

On the night of October 25, E. Yaroslavsky, the Commissar of the Kremlin, went to Khamovniki to convey the order of the Military Revolutionary Committee. The members of the Regimental Committee on duty quietly mustered a company and by 5 a.m. it arrived in the Kremlin.

Berzin appeared at the arsenal and the guard escorted him to the apartment of Major-General Kaigorodov, the chief of the arsenal. The stores were opened and the company from the 193rd Regiment was armed.

Early in the morning of October 26, the District Party Centres and Military Revolutionary Committees took care first of all to send Red Guards to the Kremlin with official requests for arms, but only three motor trucks managed to reach the arsenal. The rest were held up by cadets who, the night before, had occupied the Riding School opposite the Troitsky Gate entrance to the Kremlin. It transpired that Ryabtsev had learned that a company from the 193rd Infantry Reserve Regiment had been brought in and had ordered the cadets to surround the Kremlin. The three trucks that did get through were captured as they left the Kremlin loaded with arms.



E. M. Yaroslavsky

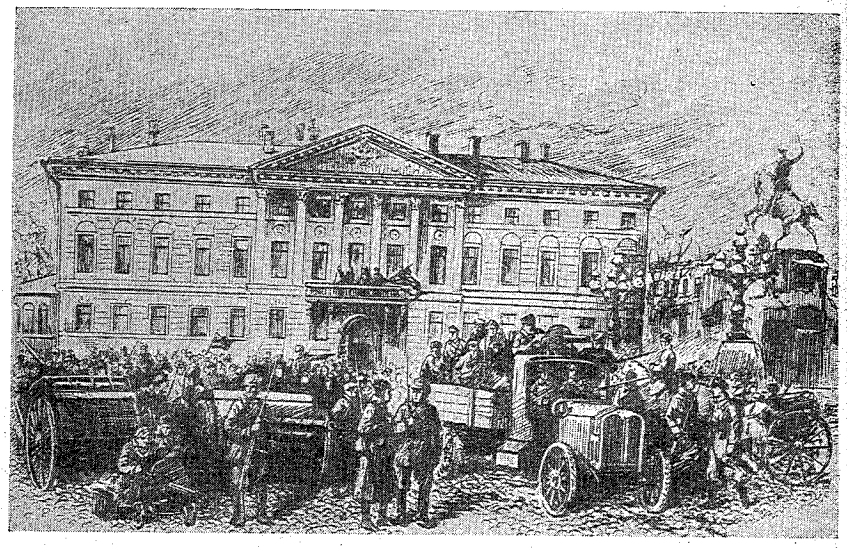
The troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee were thus left unarmed. The districts did not receive a single rifle from the arsenal.

In the districts the workers were waiting in tense expectation for the order to start the insurrection. On the night of October 25, a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Zamoskvorechye District Soviet was held at which a Military Revolutionary Committee of five was elected. This Committee appointed a Commissar to act as the representative of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee.

On the morning of October 26 the Zamoskvorechye Military Revolutionary Committee occupied the district militia station and removed the government Commissars. Red Guards were called to the Headquarters of the Committee and ordered to occupy the electric power station of the "1886 Company." This protected the Zamoskvorechye District from the side of the Moscow River Bridge. Moreover, it enabled the Committee to deprive the districts occupied by the Whites of electric light.

The Headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee was strongly guarded against a likely attack by the Whites. It was anticipated that the students of the Commercial Institute would try to seize the premises. Men were constantly on duty also at the District Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

In the evening of October 25, a joint meeting of the Khamovniki District Soviet and the active Party workers in the factories in the district was held in the Students' Dining Rooms at No. 6 Devichyi Field. Enthusiasm ran high. Delegates reported that the masses were ready for action. Late that



Red Guards outside the Moscow Soviet *From a drawing by A. Yermolayev*

night a Military Revolutionary Committee was elected. The first thing it did was to take stock of the arms available. It found fifteen old rifles in the premises of the District Committee of the Bolshevik Party, about a dozen others in different factories, and several revolvers. These were all the weapons available to arm a hundred Red Guards! There were in reserve a few hand grenades which had been clandestinely manufactured by the workers of the Kauchuk Rubber Factory. An appeal was then made to the 193rd Regiment, but it was found that Ryabtsev had taken away nearly all their rifles. About a dozen rifles and a couple of hundred cartridges were obtained from the "disciplinary" company. By order of the Military Revolutionary Committee guards were posted at the factories. A first-aid centre was set up in the Students' Dining Rooms.

On the morning of October 26, the Sushchevsko-Maryinsky Soviet summoned a score or so of Red Guards from the Ordnance Works. All the morning men came to the Soviet from the factories to hear the latest news. In the afternoon a special meeting of the Soviet was held at which a Military Revolutionary Committee was elected.

In the Presnya District a Revolutionary Committee was formed on October 25. In the Railway District, too, a Revolutionary Committee was formed that day, and at night one was formed in the Sokolniki District. In the other districts of Moscow they were formed either on the 25th or the 26th.

In the districts the workers began to confiscate arms from counter-

revolutionaries, and in many cases Red Guards, carrying rifles without cartridges, disarmed officers and cadets.

But not until the militia stations were occupied were the districts able to proceed with the confiscation of arms on a large scale, not only in the streets of Moscow, but also in the apartments of officers and the bourgeoisie. The occupation of the militia stations all over the city took place on October 26 almost without resistance. The whole affair reduced itself to dismissing the old Commissars and appointing new ones. Only the Headquarters of the City Militia remained uncaptured. Subsequently, these premises served the cadets as one of their most important strongholds in their attack on the Moscow Soviet.

On October 26 the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party issued a manifesto to the workers and soldiers calling upon them to start the offensive. At 4 p.m., however, the District Military Revolutionary Committees received a telephone message from the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee ordering them to refrain from offensive operations. Everybody wondered what had happened.

2

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE WHITES

What happened was this. In spite of all the care Colonel Ryabtsev had devoted to the mustering of his forces, he was foiled at every step by the measures taken by the Moscow Bolsheviks. The Telegraph Office had been captured by the revolutionary troops. The Kremlin was occupied by Bolshevik units. On October 25, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies—which was controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries—sent out an urgent telephone message to the troops instructing them to refrain from any action until ordered to do so by the Soviet, but the units of the garrison came out in response to the call of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

On October 26 Ryabtsev issued the following order to the garrisons in the Moscow Military Area:

> "Not to start civil war. To stand firm and safeguard public security. All units and all garrisons are to take all measures to protect national treasures."[16]

Nevertheless, the units and the garrisons elected Military Revolutionary Committees. From the towns in the Moscow Region the Staff received disquieting news. General Headquarters promised reinforcements, but these would not arrive before October 30. A representative was sent to General Headquarters to accelerate the dispatch of troops. Ryabtsev had no artillery whatever.

The only thing to do was to play for time, to postpone the battle for as long as possible. Circumstances favoured Ryabtsev. On the morning of October 26, on learning that the cadets were holding up the motor trucks that had been sent to the Kremlin for arms, the Military Revolutionary Committee telephoned to Ryabtsev and protested against this. Ryabtsev feigning astonishment, suggested that delegates be sent to him for negotiations. Nogin, the Chairman of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies, who had just returned from Petrograd, went to see Ryabtsev. He was accompanied by Muralov, a representative of the Military Revolutionary Committee and a prominent Trotskyite who was opposed to the insurrection and hoped it would be averted by negotiations with the Whites.

Ryabtsev told them that he had no desire to oppose the will of the democracy and went on to explain that

"by the will of the democracy he meant the decisions passed by the Social-Democrats, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Trudovik Party."[17]

This was a hint at the resolution adopted by the conference of representatives of all party groups in the Soviet on October 25.

As a result of the negotiations, according to Nogin's report

"... they arrived at the conclusion that all the operations undertaken by both sides must be cancelled. The cadets would be withdrawn and the Military Revolutionary Committee would recall its units [*i.e.*, the company of the 193rd Regiment—***Ed.***] from the Kremlin. The Military Revolutionary Committee was to send its representatives to General Headquarters.

"On the question of arming the workers, Ryabtsev requested that a representative of the Military Revolutionary Committee should be sent to him to arrange for the quantity of arms to be issued."[18]

Thus, by pretending to yield, Ryabtsev gained time. Actually, he had no intention of yielding. At 2 p.m. on October 26, a meeting of the "Committee of Public Safety" was held in the premises of the City Duma. It was a special meeting, and even the Gubernia Commissar and his deputy, representatives of the Provisional Government, were not permitted to attend. Both of them nervously paced up and down the corridor past the door of the room where the meeting was held. The Provisional Government was so utterly discredited in the eyes of all that the "Committee of Public Safety" feared to compromise itself by appearing to have any connection with it.

Ryabtsev reported on his negotiations with the Military Revolutionary Committee. He emphasised that the Moscow garrison was demoralised, and he did not appear to be confident of achieving decisive victory.

Rudnyev proposed that only one question should be decided, and that without discussion, *viz.*, whether to start a struggle against the Military Revolutionary Committee, or not. Ryabtsev was again asked whether he had any hopes of victory. After some hesitation he answered in the affirmative, adding that he counted on the assistance of General Headquarters. All those present unanimously voted in favour of opening hostilities. Ryabtsev again declared that he would perform his duty. "It would be a hard struggle," he said, "but he had hopes of achieving victory."[19]



V. P. Nogin

Thus, at about 5 p.m. on October 26, Ryabtsev received the sanction of the "Committee of Public Safety" to commence hostilities. The moment for action was left entirely to his discretion. He then left the meeting.

The appetite, however, comes with eating. Convinced that the representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee were irresolute, Ryabtsev, who had the sanction of the "Committee of Public Safety" to open hostilities, submitted fresh demands to the insurgents. He demanded not only that the company of the 193rd Regiment be withdrawn from the Kremlin, but also that the cadets should replace the 56th Regiment which was guarding the Kremlin.

To all appeals to allow the 56th Regiment to continue to guard the Kremlin Ryabtsev replied that he would insist on his demand, but would inform the Moscow Soviet of his final decision by telephone.

In the evening of October 26 Muralov again visited the Kremlin and after another conversation with Ryabtsev he agreed to the withdrawal of the company of the 193rd Regiment from the Kremlin on the condition that the cadets were withdrawn too.

On hearing of Ryabtsev's demand for their withdrawal, the men of the 56th Regiment were furious and wanted to lynch him. Many demanded his arrest.

The delegates of the Military Revolutionary Committee left the Kremlin.

E. Yaroslavsky was recalled from the Kremlin and instructed by the Military Revolutionary Committee to develop the activities of the Military Bureau among the units of the garrison so as to prevent the enemy from winning them over, and to prepare the entire garrison for action.

On the evening of the 26th a special joint meeting was held of the Moscow Area Committees and the Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party to discuss the sharp disagreement that had arisen between the members of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the Party Centre concerning the negotiations

with Ryabtsev. The meeting passed a resolution categorically ordering the cessation of all negotiations and instructing the fighting centres to commence decisive operations. That same evening the negotiations ceased.

At 7 p.m. on October 26, a joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the Soviet of Workers' and Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies was held at which Nogin reported on the events in Petrograd. The gist of his information was that in Petrograd a Military Revolutionary Committee "consisting of all party groups" had been formed. This information might have created the impression that the position Nogin had taken in the negotiations with Ryabtsev were in line with the course of events in Petrograd. The fact was, however, that at the time of the October insurrection, the representatives of the compromising parties withdrew from the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee.

The whole tone of Nogin's speech was that of conciliation. As soon as he finished speaking the very people whom he had called upon to co-operate in the struggle against the counter-revolution rose one after another to denounce the revolution. The Socialist-Revolutionaries read the manifesto passed by the former Central Executive Committee of Soviets which had declared that the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was unauthorised. They also read the telegram sent out by the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies threatening the Bolsheviks with the prospect of troops being called from the front.

At that moment delegates from the regiments of the garrison appeared in the hall. On the previous day the Party Centre had instructed the Military Bureau to organise a new Provisional Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, as the old Soviet had sent its representatives to the counter-revolutionary "Committee of Public Safety." On the evening of October 26, the Military Bureau called a garrison meeting of Company Committees. Shortly before that, these Company Committees, in conformity with the special instructions sent by Sverdlov to E. Yaroslavsky, had been newly elected, and were now nearly all under Bolshevik influence. By a vote of 212 against one, with 23 abstentions, the garrison meeting passed the following resolution:

> "The Company Committees recognise the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies as the sole authority. The Company Committees will obey only the orders of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and demand that the Soviets merge, and that the election of a Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies should take place at the earliest date."[20]

The Company Committees also decided to send a deputation to the Military Revolutionary Committee and to Colonel Ryabtsev. From the latter the deputation was to demand the withdrawal of the cadets from the vicinity of the Kremlin and the release of the besieged soldiers of the 56th Regiment. In the event of refusal

> "the Revolutionary Committee must take the most resolute measures to free the arsenal and the 56th Regiment. The workers and soldiers must be armed forthwith."[21]

Thus, the garrison was entirely on the side of the Bolsheviks, but the latter failed to take advantage of this. The fact that the opportunist-minded members of the Party who were wavering on the question of insurrection were not removed was in itself a blunder.

The deputation elected by the garrison meeting of Company Committees appeared at the joint meeting of Executive Committees at which Nogin made his report. Soldiers took the floor, demanded the transfer of power to the Soviets and protested against the conduct of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies.

Nogin had a talk with the soldiers and informed them that an agreement had practically been reached with Ryabtsev. After this interview the deputation went straight from the Soviet to interview Ryabtsev. It was already night. On reaching the Riding School the deputation was held up for a long time and subjected to insults and threats. One of the senior officers ordered the Cossacks to compel the delegates to run the gauntlet and to whip them with their *nagaikas*, but the Cossacks refused to obey and allowed the deputation to proceed. On meeting Colonel Ryabtsev they informed him of the decision adopted by the garrison meeting and returned to the Soviet.

The events of October 26 appeared to be in Ryabtsev's favour—he had succeeded in postponing the hour of decisive battle, but the counter-revolution received no assistance for all that. On the contrary, the Moscow garrison proved to be on the side of the Bolsheviks. Thanks to the efforts of the local organisation of the Bolshevik Party, the workers and soldiers of Moscow swung over in favour of insurrection and of transferring power to the Soviets.

3

THE WHITES' ULTIMATUM

On the morning of October 27, the controversy within the Bolshevik leading bodies in Moscow was resumed. Those officials who disagreed with the decision of the joint meeting of the Moscow Committee, the Moscow Regional Bureau and Moscow Area Committee of the Bolshevik Party to cease negotiations demanded that the question be re-opened. A joint meeting of the available members of the Party Centre and of the Bolshevik Section of the Military Revolutionary Committee was held. At this meeting two points of view were in conflict. Some demanded the cessation of negotiations with Ryabtsev and the launching of a decisive offensive. Others insisted on a peaceful agreement in order to gain time to organise the forces.

The Party Fighting Centre, although invested with dictatorial powers, failed to exercise these powers and allowed a discussion to go on at a moment when the utmost determination was needed. Some members of the Party Centre actually hoped to avert insurrection by means of negotiations. By a majority vote—nine against five—it was decided to resume negotiations with Ryabtsev. The motives which guided the majority in voting in this way were that the insurgents lacked arms and it was necessary to gain time. As Usiyevich, the Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee, reported subsequently (on November 7) at a meeting of the Executive Committee of Soviets:

> "At the critical moment, when the Military Revolutionary Committee had already been organised, it found itself without any real forces. When, at midnight, [on October 25—*Ed.*] the Committee went to the meeting of the Soviets in the Governor-General's residence, the only real armed force it had at its disposal was a small detachment of cyclists. Obviously, the first thing we had to do was to exert all efforts to prevent the Soviets and the Military Revolutionary Committee from being taken unawares. We knew that the cadets were massing and were only waiting for the order to march against the Soviets. We, however, had still to muster our forces. We knew that although the overwhelming majority of the Moscow garrison was behind us and that the vast majority of the workers supported us, that majority was practically unarmed. Three-fourths of the Moscow garrison had no arms. The Red Guard was in an embryonic state. Therefore, the first measures taken by the Military Revolutionary Committee were directed towards arming the soldiers and the workers."[22]

In the districts, the negotiations with the cadets caused bewilderment and in many cases roused indignation. All over the city detachments of the Red Guard were being hastily formed and stocks of provisions laid in. In the factories the workers were preparing for insurrection. The premises of the District Soviets teemed with activity. Suddenly the news arrived that negotiations had commenced!

When this news reached the Zamoskvorechye District Committee of the Bolshevik Party nobody would believe it. A meeting was at once held at which workers reported that a mutiny was being hatched in the city and that in all the military barracks the officers were conducting counter-revolutionary agitation. Cadets were being dispatched to the centre of the city in companies, and arms were being issued to the university students.

The meeting passed a resolution protesting against the negotiations and sent delegates to the Military Revolutionary Committee to insist on more resolute action.

At the same time a delegation was sent to the regiments quartered in the district to ascertain what temper prevailed among them. The soldiers welcomed the delegates with enthusiasm—the delegate that went to the 55th Regiment was carried shoulder high from company to company. All

pledged themselves to support the insurrection. A similar welcome was accorded the delegates by the 196th Commando.

The same thing occurred in other districts. The officers abandoned their regiments and went to join Ryabtsev. From all parts of the city detachments of soldiers, without officers, marched to the Moscow Soviet.

"Where to?" asked the bystanders in alarm.

"To the Soviet!" answered the soldiers.

The premises of the Moscow Soviet were packed. Soldiers thronged the rooms, the corridors and the courtyards, and fresh groups kept on arriving in the square outside the building.

In their newspaper *Vperyod* the Mensheviks wrote that the guards of the Moscow Soviet were drunk. Next day they were forced to withdraw this statement and tendered an apology.[23]

Taking advantage of the crowds of soldiers which filled the square outside the Soviet, the compromisers held impromptu meetings, tried to persuade the soldiers to disperse, and carried on counter-revolutionary agitation. The Military Revolutionary Committee was obliged to prohibit these meetings.

Under pressure of the districts, the Military Revolutionary Committee, in its turn, made every effort to take advantage of the period of the negotiations to muster its forces. Things began to hum. In the morning the Committee held a meeting at which a number of urgent measures were decided upon. Members of the Committee were constantly on duty receiving reports. In the next room the Staff of the Military Revolutionary Committee was working, and here Commissars from the districts came to report on what had been done and to receive instructions. Brief conferences were held to deal with problems as they arose. The Military Revolutionary Committee made contact with the various army units. Political organisers, or "wardens," as they were called at the meetings of the Committee, were attached to the regiments and a series of instructions were drawn up for the district military Commissars who were placed in control of the district militia and the Red Guard.

Considerable attention was devoted to the matter of organising the food supply, so as not to leave the population without bread. Food Commissars were appointed by each of the District Soviets. To combat drunkenness, the Military Revolutionary Committee decided to confiscate all stocks of liquor. Patrols were ordered to visit all the night cafés and if liquor was discovered on sale, to arrest the owners.

The Staff of the Military Revolutionary Committee formed an Intelligence Department, whose scouts, both soldiers and Red Guards, penetrated the City Duma and the district where the cadets were concentrated and collected necessary information. Numerous voluntary scouts brought information about the movement of troops and the state of morale in the enemy camp. The Military Revolutionary Committee organised a transport service and requisitioned numerous motor vehicles for the purpose. The workers of the AMO Plant provided 50 motor cars. The 2nd and 22nd Motor-

Transport Companies placed themselves at the disposal of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks spread false rumours, and their newspapers published false information to the effect that the insurrection in Petrograd had been suppressed.

As communication with Petrograd had been cut off it was decided to establish connections with the capital through the medium of the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union. The latter replied that being "neutral" it could not allow another body to use its telephone line for conversations with Petrograd, but it was willing to call up anyone who was needed and make the necessary inquiry. However, when asked about the military situation in the capital the reply came that "neutrality" forebade the answering of such questions. All that could be ascertained was the composition of the Council of People's Commissars.

After several vain attempts to get round the "neutrality" of the Railwaymen's Executive—a "neutrality," which, by the by, did not prevent its representative from sitting on the "Committee of Public Safety" for two days—it was decided forcibly to occupy the office of the Executive where the telephone was installed. Furthermore, it was discovered that the Executive's telegraph wire to Petrograd was connected through the Northern Railway Exchange. The Chief Railwaymen's Committee on this line contained a majority of Bolsheviks and soon the Military Revolutionary Committee was able to talk with Petrograd. Both telephone and telegraph communication was thus restored.

By intercepting the telegrams of the Railwaymen's Executive the Bolsheviks learned that there was a stock of rifles at the Caucasus and Mercury Wharf in Yaroslavl. The Railwaymen's Military Revolutionary Committee informed the Party Centre of this and the latter immediately sent a representative to Yaroslavl.

The Military Revolutionary Committee endorsed the following general plan of military operations of the revolutionary forces:

"1. All the military operations are to be directed towards one centre.

"2. The function of the districts is systematically to move their military forces towards the centre. Separate operations may be conducted, provided they do not run counter to the general plan.

"3. It must be borne in mind that the rear of the districts is not entirely safe, and it may become necessary for the revolutionary army to conduct operations outside of Moscow.

"4. Act with determination and vigour."[24]

On the insistence of the tacit opponents of insurrection and of the wavverers, the following two points were added to the plan:

"5. To ensure the minimum of bloodshed.

"6. To ensure the safety of the population."[25]

In the course of the day the Military Revolutionary Committee achieved one more success. All the committees of the 1st Reserve Artillery Brigade

were dissolved and new bodies elected. At a joint meeting of the Brigade, Battery and Commando Committees it was decided to acknowledge only the Military Revolutionary Committee. At the same meeting the artillerymen elected a Military Revolutionary Committee which practically controlled the brigade.

The artillerymen of the Moscow garrison rallied around the Bolsheviks.

The Menshevik members of the Military Revolutionary Committee, aware of Ryabtsev's preparations for action, submitted the following terms of co-operation, threatening to resign in the event of rejection.

1. That all documents be signed by all the seven members of the Military Revolutionary Committee. If any document is signed by only one or two members, the Mensheviks have the right to appeal to the population through the medium of the newspapers and leaflets;

2. That the Soviet of Workers' Deputies send a representative to the "Committee of Public Safety" of the City Duma;

3. That all agreements reached in the negotiations with the Staff of the Military Area be adhered to.

The Mensheviks tried to dislocate the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee and compel it to yield. The conduct of these lackeys of the bourgeoisie was fully in accord with the interests of the counter-revolutionary "Committee of Public Safety."

When their proposals were rejected, the Mensheviks resigned from the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Meanwhile, the counter-revolutionary "Committee of Public Safety" was by no means idle. Ryabtsev summoned the commanders of the army units. He wanted to call an army unit from the environs of Moscow or from somewhere further in the Moscow Region. The commanders duly arrived but in reply to his question: "Where are your men?" they waved their hands in hopelessness and disgust:

"Over there. At the Soviet," they said.

Ryabtsev made a hurried tour of the military training schools and cadet schools. The cadets were actively preparing. For two days they had been riding around the city in motor trucks armed to the teeth. In Arbat Street cadets issued rifles to Whiteguard students and all sorts of volunteers and sent them to the Alexandrovsky Military School.

Ryabtsev had appealed to the university students to appear at this school already on October 26. When they appeared the cadets urged them to enrol in the Whiteguard detachments. On October 27 a general meeting of students of the Moscow University was held in the Divinity Lecture Hall at which reports were heard from the Lazarev and Commercial Institutes. Without discussion, and even without a formal vote, a resolution was passed pledging armed support for the Staff of the Military Area, the City Duma and the Provisional Government.

On the morning of the 27th, the Council of Officers' Deputies organised a meeting of army officers who supported the Provisional Government, and

at this meeting a detailed plan was drawn up for crushing the Soviets and disarming the revolutionary units. This was secretly reported to the Staff of the Military Revolutionary Committee by two officers of the Lecture Courses organised in the summer of 1917 by the Cultural and Educational Department of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies. The Whites placed their main hopes, however, on General Headquarters, with which they communicated several times. On the morning of October 27, they received the following telegram from the front:

"In the name of the armies at the front we demand the immediate cessation of Bolshevik violence, the abandonment of attempts to seize power by armed force, and absolute obedience to the Provisional Government, which is functioning in complete accord with the authorised organs of democracy, and which alone can lead the country to the Constituent Assembly—the ruling power in Russia. The army on active service will back this demand with force.

Dukhonin
Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief

Vyrubov
Deputy Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief

Lieutenant-Colonel Kovalevsky
Acting Supreme Commissar at General Headquarters

Perekrestov
Chairman of the Army Committee."[26]

But except for this threat and the support rendered the compromising Army Committee by Dukhonin's prestige, the telegram contained no promise of effective assistance.

Later on, General Baluyev, the Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front, sent Rudnyev the following urgent telegram:

"Cavalry are moving to Moscow to assist you against the Bolsheviks. Am applying to General Headquarters for permission to send artillery."[27]

That same day Baluyev informed Dukhonin that the situation in Moscow was serious. He had no hope, he said, of being able to combat the Bolshevik insurrection with the forces at his command, and urgently requested that additional troops be sent, particularly artillery.

Dukhonin realised that the situation was becoming critical. He changed the route of the units which were moving to Tula, Bryansk and Orel, reinforced them with artillery and directed the whole force to Moscow.

Finally, on October 27, he sent the following telegram to Ryabtsev with a copy for Rudnyev:

"For the purpose of crushing the Bolshevik movement, General Headquarters are placing at your command a brigade of Guards with artillery from the South-Western Front. It will begin to arrive in Moscow on October 30. Also sending artillery with covering troops from the Western Front. You should send delegates to meet the units before they reach Moscow. The most resolute action must be taken by the combined forces to secure the complete suppression of the rebels who have risen in revolt in the heart of Russia.

Dukhonin
Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief."[28]

Ryabtsev realised that no time was to be lost. The Bolsheviks were steadily increasing their forces. If no obstacles arose—which he did not anticipate then—the artillery from the Western Front would arrive not later than October 28. Moreover, the Staff of the Military Area hoped that the negotiations and the demoralising activities of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks would shake the morale of the revolutionary troops.

Ryabtsev suddenly adopted a stiffer tone. Only the day before he had agreed to consider the question of arming the workers and on the strength of this had secured the withdrawal of the Bolshevik company of the 193rd

The Alexandrovsky Military School—the Whiteguard Headquarters



Reserve Regiment from the Kremlin. After that he had categorically demanded the withdrawal from the Kremlin of the 56th Reserve Infantry Regiment which was also under Bolshevik influence. That day, October 27, the negotiations had centred entirely around the question of replacing the soldiers with cadets. Now, at 7 p.m. on October 27, Ryabtsev broke off negotiations with the representative of the Military Revolutionary Committee and presented an ultimatum demanding the surrender of the Kremlin, the dissolution of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the prosecution of its members. The ultimatum was to be complied with within 15 minutes.

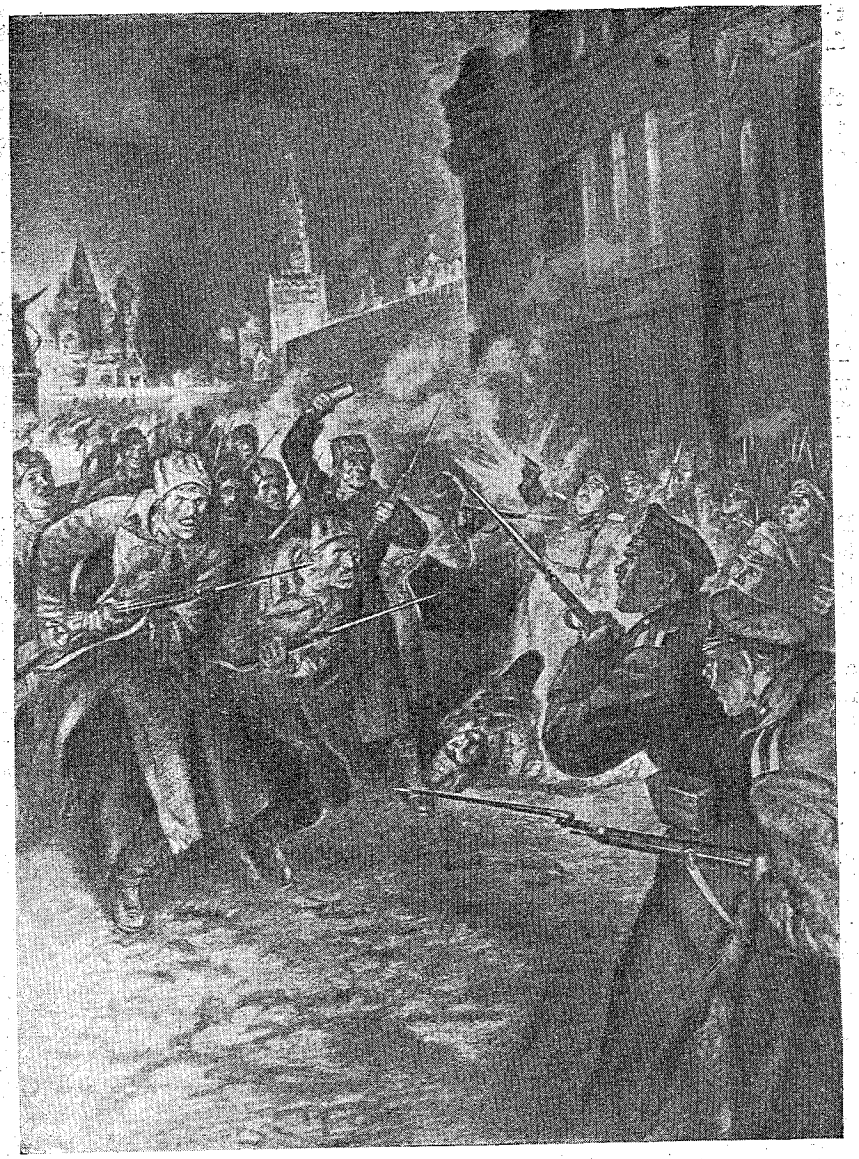
The ultimatum acted like a cold douche on the Military Revolutionary Committee. All hopes of a peaceful settlement of the conflict vanished like smoke. The Committee now realised that Ryabtsev had been deliberately dragging out the negotiations in order to gain time. The ultimatum was rejected. All the measures planned for the event of an armed struggle began to be put into effect. An order was issued to the District Commissars in Moscow fully to prepare for action and immediately to send detachments to the Moscow Soviet. Telephone messages were sent out to the army units calling upon them to obey no orders except those issued by the Military Revolutionary Committee. To protect the Moscow Soviet, the Military Revolutionary Committee summoned a detachment of "Dvinsks" from the Zamoskvorechye District.

The "Dvinsks" were soldiers from the Western Front, mostly of the Fifth Army, who had been arrested for conducting Bolshevik propaganda and imprisoned in the city of Dvinsk—hence their name. Later on they were transferred to Moscow and kept in the Butyrsky Prison. Among them were many members of Company and Regimental Committees. They were kept in prison for a long time without trial, and even without definite charges being brought against them. Two hundred of them went on hunger strike and demanded an immediate investigation of their cases. The army law authorities were greatly embarrassed by this and stated in excuse that the documents in the cases had gone astray. The Bolsheviks started a campaign for their release and in this were unanimously supported by the Moscow garrison.

Delegations of soldiers came to the Moscow Soviet and to the Military Bureau with resolutions which not only demanded the release of the "Dvinsks," but accused the Soviet of dilatoriness and irresolution. "There has been enough talk, it is time to take action," said the soldiers, expressing their readiness to go into battle.

On the demand of the Moscow organisation of the Bolshevik Party and on the insistence of the Bolshevik group in the Moscow Soviet an order was issued for the release of the "Dvinsks" on September 22, but on that day only 593 out of a total of 860 were discharged, the rest were released only during the October insurrection.

The "Dvinsks" were eager to go into battle. They proved to be splendid agitators and organisers. The Moscow Party Committee entrusted them with



The "Dvinsks" dash through the Red Square

From a drawing by V. Shcheglov

the task of conducting meetings not only in the army, but also in the factories.

At 10 p.m. on October 27, a detachment of the "Dvinsks" marched through the Red Square on the way to the Moscow Soviet in response to the call of the Military-Revolutionary Committee. In the square they were stopped by cadets.

"Where are you going?"—a Colonel demanded.

"To guard the Moscow Soviet," the men answered.

"We are guarding the centre," the Colonel then said, and ordered the "Dvinsks" to give up their arms.

The soldiers protested whereupon the Colonel, drawing his revolver and levelling it at Sapunov, the Commander of the "Dvinsks," shot him dead. The second in command shouted to his men: "Open order!" The engagement was short and sharp. There were dead and wounded on both sides. But the "Dvinsks" fought their way through to the Moscow Soviet, carrying their wounded with them.

Open hostilities had commenced.

At the time Ryabtsev's ultimatum was received a meeting of the District Dumas was in progress in the Sukharev People's Palace and there several hundred active Bolsheviks were assembled. The Military Revolutionary Committee hastened to inform them about the ultimatum. This was a meeting of all the 17 District Dumas in Moscow, 11 of which were under Bolshevik control. The Bolsheviks were resolved to secure the election of a new centre consisting of the District Dumas as an offset to the counter-revolutionary Moscow City Duma. In all about 400 members were assembled. As soon as the meeting was opened at 6:30 p.m. Prince D.I. Shakhovskoi, a Constitutional Democrat, got up and declared that "measures had not been taken to inform all the members and therefore, in his opinion, the meeting was a packed one."[29]

This caused commotion in the hall and Shakhovskoi was obliged to withdraw his statement. The chairman of the meeting, constantly interrupted by cries of protest from the Constitutional Democrats and the compromisers, explained why the meeting had been called and read the following concrete proposals:

"1. To express complete confidence in the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee as the sole local organ of government.

"2. Immediately to organise a Joint Council of District Dumas to consist of two members from each District Duma and one from each administration.

"3. The Council is to elect from its own number an Executive Revolutionary Bureau of seven members.

"4. To instruct the Bureau immediately to draft measures concerning food distribution and supply, city finances, and the maintenance of revolutionary order in Moscow and its environs.

"5. These draft measures, after endorsement by the Joint Council, are to be submitted to the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee and enforced at once."[30]



E. N. Sapunov

A motion to vote on these proposals without debate provoked another storm. One of the members demanded the floor; others loudly protested. In the midst of this turmoil, M. F. Vladimirsky, a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee, appeared on the platform, and on a motion of urgency, made the following statement:

"Ryabtsev, the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, has presented an ultimatum to the Military Revolutionary Committee demanding that it should dissolve within 15 minutes. The Committee has refused to yield to this demand and the square is already being shelled by counter-revolutionary units. The Committee proposes that all talking be stopped and that all the internationalist Social-Democrats (Bolsheviks) should at once go to the districts and be prepared for all emergencies."[31]

The Constitutional Democrats and the compromisers—the minority of the meeting—noisily left the hall. Those who remained voted in favour of the resolution and then left hurriedly for their respective districts.

On the night of October 27, a joint meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the Party Centre decided to call upon the Moscow proletariat to declare a general strike and to muster all its forces to crush the White-guards.

The side streets off the Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street leading to the premises of the Moscow Soviet were already occupied by the cadets. In view of the danger of the building being captured by the Whites it was decided to break up into two centres, one to remain in the Soviet and the other to have its headquarters in one of the districts. Between 4 and 6 o'clock in the morning, on October 28, most of the members of the Party Centre left the Moscow Soviet and transferred to premises in the City District. In this district a "reserve staff" was formed in case the Military Revolutionary Committee was broken up.

It was necessary to inform the regiments and to summon the loyal units to the Soviet. The members of the Military Revolutionary Committee dispersed to the districts where the workers and soldiers were eagerly waiting for the signal to go into action.

When the news of Ryabtsev's ultimatum reached the Soviet, the Mensheviks, who only that morning had resigned from the Military Revolutionary Committee, once again appeared on the scene. These political stock-jobbers again offered their services as mediators in the negotiations with the "Committee of Public Safety."

The compromisers were ejected from the building.

The only people to remain were those who were prepared to fight and die for the Soviet regime.

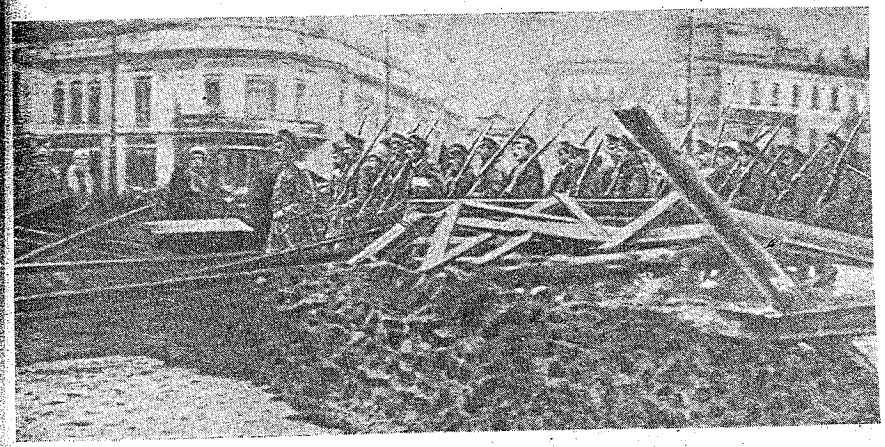
4

THE SURRENDER OF THE KREMLIN

Ryabtsev made careful preparations for his offensive. Martial law was proclaimed in the city and throughout the Moscow Military Area. All the garrisons in the area were ordered to prepare for action and to dispatch troops to Moscow as soon as they were called for. Ryabtsev telephoned all the regimental commanders of the Moscow garrison ordering them immediately to form detachments and to send them to the Alexandrovsky Military School to be placed at the command of Colonel Kravchuk, his second in command. Detachments of university students and officers were also called to the Alexandrovsky Military School. A detachment of cadets commanded by artillery officers who had deserted the day before, was sent to the Khodinka camp with instructions to attack the 1st Artillery Brigade and to capture the guns or, failing that, to put them out of action.

Late at night on October 27 the cadets succeeded in disarming the brigade's outposts and in forcing their way into the barrack yard of the 2nd Artillery Detachment. Some of the cadets began to remove the locks from the guns, while others rushed to the stables to seize the horses. Here one sentry was killed and another severely wounded. The soldiers then opened fire on the cadets. At the sound of the firing, the artillerymen in all the barracks rushed out with their rifles, dressing as they ran. The cadets retreated, keeping their pursuers off with rifle fire. They succeeded in hauling away two guns without shells and in damaging several more. The raid incensed the artillerymen who demanded that they should be sent to the city to fight the cadets. By order of the Military Revolutionary Committee the brigade immediately proceeded to erect barricades. By the morning of the 28th hastily built fortifications rose around the brigade's headquarters, and later the 5th Battery started out for the Moscow Soviet.

While the cadets were trying to seize the artillery, other White units began to deploy round the Kremlin with the object of occupying as wide a



Whiteguards in the Arbat Square during the October days

radius as possible. Their advanced detachments appeared near the Moscow Soviet. They succeeded in occupying the whole of the Arbat. Their patrols roamed from the Krimsky Bridge to the Smolensk Market. They captured the large army food depot on the corner of Ostozhenka, which supplied provisions for the entire garrison.

Ryabtsev sent a detachment to capture the Borodinsky Bridge near the Bryansk Railway Station in the Dorogomilovo District. The night before, the Committee for Requisitioning Arms set up by the Dorogomilovo Revolutionary Committee had arrested and disarmed three army officers, but had allowed them to go free on their pledging their word of honour that they would not fight against the revolution. About an hour and a half later the Whites appeared outside the Headquarters of the Revolutionary Committee. The guard barely managed to warn the members of the Revolutionary Committee, but it was too late to offer resistance. The Committee members extinguished the lights and made their escape in the dark. Three of them were captured, however. They were taken to the Soviet where an officer approached them and enquired mockingly:

"Do you recognise me?"

This was one of the officers who had given his word of honour not to fight against the revolution. It transpired that the disarmed officers had gone direct to the 5th Cadet School where a half-company was being formed for the purpose of capturing the bridge, and it was they who had led the cadets to the Headquarters of the Revolutionary Committee.

The Borodinsky Bridge was also captured by the Whites. This was an extremely important gain for them, as reinforcements from the Western Front were expected to arrive at the Bryansk Railway Station, to which the bridge led.

The "Committee of Public Safety" approved of all the measures taken by Ryabtsev. Rudnyev called upon all the Regimental and Company Committees to obey only the orders of the Staff of the Moscow Military Area. With the proclamation of martial law in Moscow he issued a manifesto to the population in which he put the blame for everything on the Bolsheviks. It was they, he said, who had refused to withdraw the soldiers from the Kremlin; they had "looted" army stores and had seized rifles, machine guns and ammunition, and the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee had thwarted all attempts to reach an agreement.

All this was a downright falsehood. Rudnyev had already called for active operations the previous day, long before the rupture of the negotiations. For the purpose of distributing manifestos of this type the "Committee of Public Safety" had set up an Information Bureau consisting of three men: Rudnyev, Sub-Lieutenant V. V. Scherr, a Menshevik, and L. K. Ramzin, the ex-Vice-Minister for War who had arrived from Petrograd after the fall of the Winter Palace, and was now a member of the Moscow City Duma. This Bureau published the *Bulletin of the Moscow Committee of Public Safety*, of which four numbers were issued. It circulated false information and fantastic communiqués which were reprinted in full in the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press.

To his own surprise Rudnyev, an utter mediocrity, found himself in the very centre of the whirlpool of events. The Provisional Government had fallen and had entrusted him with the task of continuing the struggle.

Prokopovich, the ex-Minister for Food, discharged from custody, arrived in Moscow. The ex-Vice-Ministers who had not been arrested also appeared. All the Ministries were represented in Moscow except the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Thrown out of office by the revolution, these Ministers spent hours conferring in Rudnyev's office.

Rudnyev imagined that he was the saviour of the country. He cherished the idea of re-establishing the government in Moscow, and carried away by ambition, he had visions of himself at the head of the government of all the Russias. At 11:45 p.m. on October 27, he informed General Headquarters that:

> "two days of effort to avert civil war only resulted in strengthening the position of the Bolsheviks and diminishing our chances. Today the Committee of Public Safety decided: relying on armed force, to attempt to crush the Bolsheviks. An ultimatum was presented to them at 7 p.m."[32]

Demanding prompt assistance, for the struggle would not be an easy one, Rudnyev continued:

> "Apart from the task of fighting the Bolsheviks, Moscow is faced with the necessity of organising a Provisional Government. The Committee [of Public Safety—*Ed.*] proposes immediately to set up a technical staff for the purpose of providing the front and the country with provisions and supplies, and to ensure the democracy in the very near future the opportunity of expressing its will regarding the character of the future government by convening a congress of public organisations, the democratic administration and the Soviets."[33]

This would-be Napoleon realised that everything depended upon whether the Bolsheviks in Moscow would be suppressed or not. All the counter-revolutionary forces were concentrated with the aim of seizing the Kremlin, which would give them control of the arsenal, secure their rear, and leave them free to develop the offensive.

The cordon of cadets which had been placed around the Kremlin on the night of the 26th was opened only for a few moments in the morning of October 27 to allow the company of the 193rd Regiment to leave. From then on the siege was unbroken. Ryabtsev violated the terms agreed to during the negotiations. Within the Kremlin were located the officers' hospital, the Moscow Assize Court, and several other government offices. The officers of the battalion of the 56th Regiment, many of whom supported the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, had remained, and they kept urging the soldiers to surrender. Moreover, there were two armoured cars in the Kremlin commanded by officers who declared themselves to be neutral. All this served to weaken the Kremlin garrison. Towards evening on October 27 fresh groups of cadets arrived and the ring around the Kremlin closed in. Already before the rupture of negotiations with Ryabtsev, the



"The would-be Napoleon . . . imagined that he was the saviour of the country"

Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio

Military Revolutionary Committee had received the following telephone message from Berzin, the commandant of the Kremlin:

"The cadets of the Alexandrovsky School and of the Cadet School are determined to seize the Kremlin at all costs. They are arming, and officers are teaching students to shoot. They want the colonel to leave the Kremlin. Place the regiment at the gates, at all events at. . . ."[34]

At this point the telephone message broke off. The Intelligence Department of the Military Revolutionary Committee reported the following:

"Kuleshov, the member on duty from the Bakers' Union, informed us of the following: at a meeting of cadets held in the Alexandrovsky Military School it was resolved to occupy the Kremlin tonight and arrest the Revolutionary Committee. Operations are to be commenced immediately."[35]

The Military Revolutionary Committee had intended to send reinforcements to the Kremlin and even contemplated sending artillery, but it was too late. Ryabtsev presented his ultimatum.

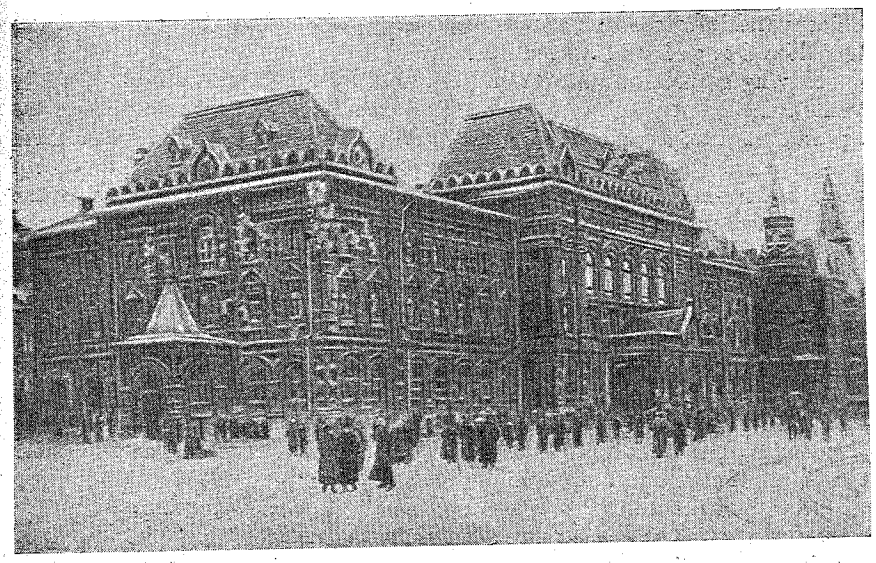
At about 6 a.m. on October 28, a soldier from the Armoured Car Detachment came hurrying to Sub-Lieutenant Berzin, who remained at the head of the revolutionary garrison in the Kremlin, and informed him that he was urgently wanted on the telephone. Berzin was surprised to hear this as his communications had been cut for some time and believed that the telephone of the Armoured Car Detachment was also out of order. He hastened to the detachment and on the way observed the two armoured cars, on each of which a gun and a machine gun were mounted. The engines were running. As soon as he entered the room the officer in command of the detachment handed him the telephone receiver and said:

"The Commander-in-Chief wishes to speak to you."

Ryabtsev told Berzin over the telephone that the insurgents, including the Artillery Brigade, had been disarmed.

"I demand the immediate surrender of the Kremlin," he continued. "The entire city is in my hands. All the members of the Military Revolutionary Committee have been arrested. I give you twenty-five minutes in which to surrender. If you fail to comply I will open artillery fire."

The whole situation—the lull in the city and the absence of communication with the centre owing to the telephone wires to the Soviet having been cut—led Berzin, as he afterwards stated, to believe that what Ryabstev had said was true. This irresolute Sub-Lieutenant, who had only recently joined the Bolshevik Party and had had no revolutionary experience, was taken in by Ryabtsev's bluff and yielded to his demands without the slightest resistance. Even if the city had really been in Ryabtsev's hands, the surrender of a fortress which had a garrison in good fighting condition and an adequate supply of arms was downright treachery and a stab in the back of the revolutionary troops. The treacherous voluntary surrender of the Kremlin immeasurably worsened the position of the revolutionary forces.



The Moscow City Duma—the stronghold of the "Committee of Public Safety"

After obtaining Berzin's agreement to surrender the Kremlin, Ryabtsev demanded that the Troitsky and Borovitsky Gates be opened and that five hostages be placed at each, that all guards be removed, that all arms be surrendered, and that the 56th Regiment should be lined up at the Alexander II monument. He repeated the threat to bombard the Kremlin if these demands were not complied with.

At the meetings of the Company Committees the soldiers protested against the acceptance of the ultimatum.

"We shall not surrender the Kremlin," they said. "We have got to die just the same. Far better to die fighting."

Nevertheless, Berzin succeeded in persuading the soldiers to lay down their arms. He went to the Troitsky Gate and told the soldiers on guard there that the Kremlin was to be surrendered. One of the men rushed at him with his rifle raised and shouted:

"Traitor!"

He swung his rifle to bring the butt down on the Sub-Lieutenant's head, but checked himself, threw the rifle away, clutched his head with both his hands and stood aside. The other members of the guard followed him with drooping heads.

As soon as Berzin opened the Borovitsky Gate the officers outside rushed at him, tore off his epaulets, snatched his weapons from him and assaulted him. Only after he appealed to a general who was among the crowd of

officers and informed him that not all the guards had yet been removed was he allowed to go back into the Kremlin.

Having gained entrance to the Kremlin by fraud, the Whites brutally vented their spite on the soldiers. They lined up the unarmed men in the square, ostensibly for roll call, and without warning opened fire upon them with machine guns. This happened simultaneously in two places. The men of the 56th Regiment were shot down at the Alexander II monument, and the soldiers of the arsenal in the courtyard of the arsenal. The story of the surrender of the Kremlin to the cadets was told by a soldier of the 56th Regiment.

"About 7 o'clock in the morning, on October 28," he said, "a man came running into the barracks of the 56th Regiment in the Kremlin shouting that the Troitsky Gate had been opened. The soldiers jumped from their bunks and saw cadets and officers running into the square from all sides, hauling up machine guns and training them on the barracks.

"An armoured car appeared and also trained its machine guns on the soldiers. The soldiers lost their heads and began to shout, accusing the officers of treachery. Resistance was useless."[36]

A few moments later cadets rushed into the barracks shouting:

"Out into the yard, every one of you, without arms!"

When all the five companies had mustered in the square the cadets, yelling and swearing, lined them up in companies facing the Chudov Monastery.

At the same time machine guns were hurriedly put in position, one near the Tsar Cannon, another near the wall of the Chudov Monastery, a third at the entrance to the barracks, and a fourth near the wall of the arsenal.

Then, surrounding the soldiers, the cadets began to search them thoroughly, turning out their pockets, and searching the leggings of their boots. The cadets treated the soldiers mercilessly, some beating them with rifle butts and some punching them in the face with their fists.

The soldiers realised that they had been brought out into the square unarmed to be killed by the infuriated Whiteguards.

After thoroughly searching the men, these gangs of Whites stepped aside. A command rang out: "Fire!"

The machine guns began to splutter. Shouts were heard:

"Murder! Save yourselves!"

Somebody shouted:

"Lie down!"

The soldiers to a man dropped to the ground, but this did not save them. The firing went on while they were on the ground. Some of them tried to seek safety in the barracks. They stumbled over their prostrate comrades, many of whom were dead and others wounded, but a machine gun fired point-blank at the barrack door.

The firing continued for about fifteen minutes.

"Lying on the ground," the above-mentioned soldier related, "I heard my wounded comrades shrieking with pain and saw them writhing in the agony of death.

"The clock on the Spassky Tower loudly tolled out the hour of nine. The firing ceased.

"'Get up, you swine! What are you lying there for!' I heard somebody shouting.

"I raised my head and realised that I was alive and not even wounded. I took off my cap, looked at it, and thought to myself: 'Not touched,' and put it on again. A frightful scene spread out before me. Men in the throes of death, the groans and the hoarse cries of the wounded who were crawling on the ground. . . ."[37]

A soldier from the Kremlin arsenal has supplemented these reminiscences with the following:

"The cadets lined up the arsenal men in the courtyard, called the roll and then led us out into the square between the arsenal and the barracks of the 56th Regiment.

"An officer—the commander—came up. Without greeting the arsenal men he received the report of the senior cadet and proceeded further to the Tsar Cannon.

"We stood there for about an hour after that.

"Another officer came up. A command: 'Shun!'

"The cadets hauled two machine guns from the arsenal and placing them to the right and left, trained them on us.

"No command was given.

"Suddenly a shot rang out, and immediately, as if by a signal, the machine guns started going.

"Dead and wounded began to fall, followed by those who had remained unhurt.

"The machine guns stopped. A voice rang out: 'Get up!'

"The arsenal men got up and wanted to run into the barracks, but two cadets at the gates threw hand grenades at them. Panic broke out, there was an awful stampede in which many were trampled underfoot.

"The men found the barrack rooms in a state of utter disorder. The bed clothes had been slashed with bayonets. The men's chests were broken open and all their belongings scattered over the floor. The food buckets were filled with filth."[38]

Here is further evidence of this savage massacre of unarmed soldiers. It is the dry report Major-General Kaigorodov sent to headquarters on November 8, 1917:

"At 8 a.m. on October 28, the Troitsky Gate was opened by Sub-Lieutenant Berzin and the cadets were allowed to enter the Kremlin. Sub-Lieutenant Berzin was assaulted and arrested. The cadets immediately occupied the Kremlin, placed two machine guns and an armoured car at the Troitsky Gate, and began to drive out the men of the storehouse and of the 56th Infantry Reserve Regiment from their barracks, goading them with rifle butts and threats. The soldiers from the storehouse, numbering 500, were lined up without arms in front of the arsenal gates,

Several cadets numbered the men. At that moment shots were heard, from which quarter was not clear, whereupon the cadets opened fire with machine guns and the guns at the Troitsky Gate. The unarmed soldiers of the storehouse dropped as if they had been mown down. Cries and groans were heard. Everybody rushed to the arsenal gates, but only a narrow wicket was open, in front of which there was a mound of dead bodies and of men, wounded, trampled upon and unhurt, all struggling to get through the wicket. About five minutes later the firing ceased. The wounded who remained groaned; mutilated corpses lay around."[39]

As the soldiers were driven from the barracks to the yard of the Law Courts the cadets compelled them to hold their arms above their heads. The victors feared the vanquished, even though they were unarmed. These brutes refused to feed the hungry soldiers.

The Kremlin fell.

The counter-revolutionaries, exulting in their triumph, issued a communiqué addressed: "To All! To All! To All!"

"The Kremlin has been captured. The main centre of resistance has been broken. But street fighting is still proceeding in Moscow. In order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, on the one hand, and not to hinder military operations on the other, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the state of martial law prohibiting all assemblies or appearance in the streets without a permit from the house committees."[40]

In his elation, Ryabtsev had not even taken the trouble to go over the order to see that it was drafted properly, and the compromisers published it in their newspapers just as it had been issued with the mistakes left in it. But even so, the people of Moscow were well aware of the danger of appearing in the streets unarmed. News of the fate of the soldiers in the Kremlin spread throughout the city.

The "Committee of Public Safety," proclaiming that the "revolt in Moscow has been suppressed," nevertheless confirmed that the streets

"will be patrolled by armoured cars and foot patrols, which, in the event of armed resistance, or shooting, will open fire."[41]

Why do they need armoured cars if the revolt is suppressed? Who will resist if the insurrection has been crushed? Such were the questions asked by the bewildered readers of these boastful proclamations.

The victory was reported to General Headquarters.

"The ground has slipped from under the feet of the rebels, and the revolt has assumed an unorganised character," reported Lieutenant Rovny, Ryabtsev's deputy. "Attempts are being made to gather near the premises of the Soviet of Deputies in the Governor-General's house. An ultimatum has also been presented to the rebels in occupation of that building."[42]

General Dieterichs, the Quartermaster-General, an old and experienced hand at suppressing insurrections, deemed it necessary to read the novice at this game quite a lecture over the telegraph wire.

"Permit me," he said, "to advise you to place less reliance on ultimatums in matters of street fighting, for this gives the rebels time to recuperate and build new strongholds. Street revolts must be suppressed by rapid and ruthless measures, without dispersing your forces over the whole city. The material you have in the shape of the cadets is exceptionally good, only you must take care not to weary them by dragging out the affair by means of ultimatums. Obviously, these scoundrels must be annihilated, no agreements can be concluded with them.

"Dieterichs."[43]

In reply to this exhortation the following message was sent from Moscow:

"Up to the very last moment the Commander-in-Chief, in complete accord with the Committee of Public Safety, strove to avoid sanguinary civil war and to avert events by means of a peaceful solution. When this proved impossible, the most determined measures were taken to suppress the revolt and to punish the rebels in the most ruthless manner."[44]

To facilitate this ruthless punishment General Headquarters reported that a battery of the Siberian Cossack Artillery Battalion with covering troops, and a detachment of the Caucasian Cavalry Division were being sent from the Western Front, and that the guns would probably arrive in the evening of October 28.[45]

The events of the day may be summed up as follows: by careful preparation and resolute action the counter-revolutionaries achieved considerable success.

During the first days of the struggle the leaders of the insurrection in Moscow committed a number of mistakes which prolonged the struggle.

The following are the chief mistakes that were committed.

1. The Party Fighting Centre was elected on October 25, *i.e.*, before the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party had learned of the transfer of power to the Soviets in Petrograd. The Party Centre set to work at once and arranged for the capture of the Telegraph Office, Telephone Exchange and General Post Office. But it failed to take adequate measures to organise the best of the workers in detachments and arm them properly for the purpose of attacking and surrounding the enemy centres, as Lenin had recommended.

The arms needed for the Red Guard and the soldiers of the garrison were available in the Kremlin arsenal, and the ammunition was available at the Simonovsky ammunition and powder depot.

The leaders of the insurrection did not at first pay sufficient attention to the Simonovsky depot. The Kremlin was occupied only on the morning of October 26, and no measures were taken to ensure communication with the Kremlin and the arsenal.

Meanwhile, on the night before, the cadets had occupied the Riding School opposite the Troitsky Gate of the Kremlin, and in the morning of the 26th they prevented the return of the motor trucks which had been sent from the districts to obtain arms.

The comrades in charge of the occupation of the Post and Telegraph Offices failed to display sufficient vigilance. It turned out that the staffs of these offices continued to support the counter-revolutionaries. They dispatched telegrams to the City Duma and to Military Area Headquarters, placed the telegraph instruments at their disposal, and systematically facilitated telephone communication for the enemy.

2. The Military Revolutionary Committee failed to arrest Ryabtsev and the officers of his staff and to disarm the cadets and officers. It did not make the fullest use of all the opportunities to prepare the revolutionary units in the Kremlin for action. It did not appoint its own crews for the armoured cars. It did not call out and arm the soldiers of the garrison and the units of the Red Guard to rout the cadets in occupation of the Riding School. In short, it failed to do all that was necessary to transform the Kremlin into a stronghold of the insurrection.

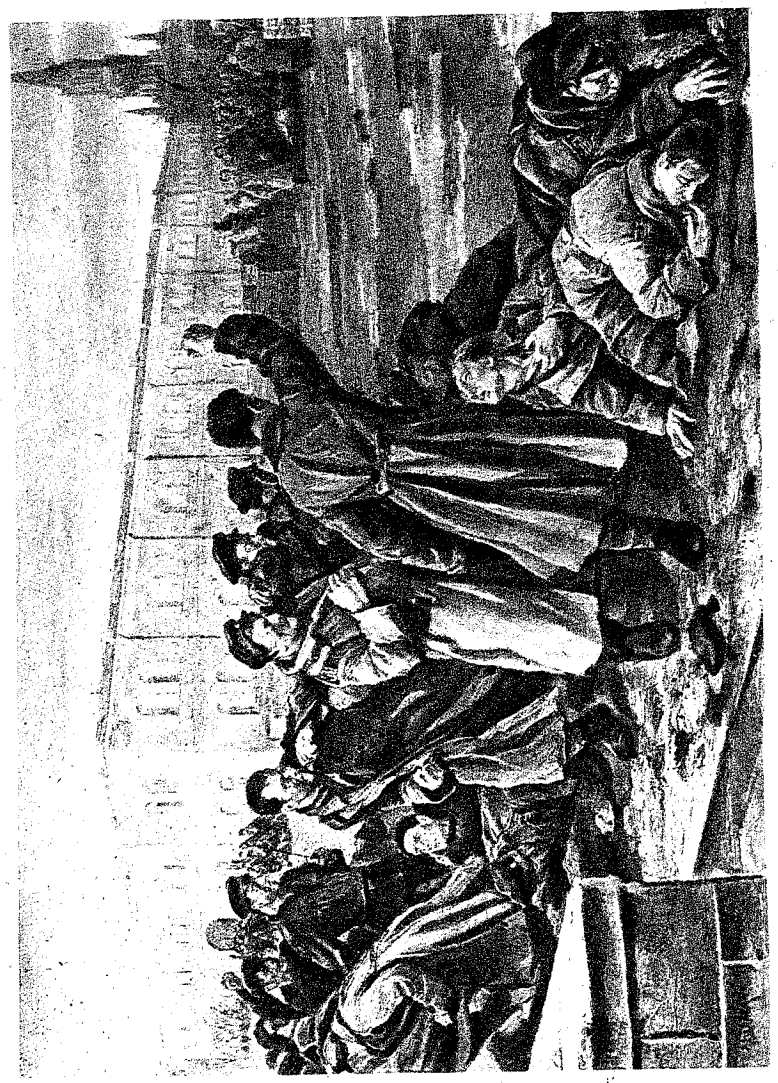
The plenipotentiaries of the Military Revolutionary Committee who for two days—October 26 and 27—negotiated with Rudnyev and Ryabtsev, accepted the latter's word. Ryabtsev promised to withdraw the cadets on the condition that the Military Revolutionary Committee withdrew the company of the 193rd Regiment from the Kremlin. The company was withdrawn, but Ryabtsev at once closed the cordon around the Kremlin gates. This blunder was followed by one still more grave: commandant Berzin surrendered the Kremlin. The Whiteguards gained possession of arms—rifles, machine guns and two armoured cars.

The Whiteguards responded to this pacifism by resorting to the blackest treachery: they not only proceeded to disarm the soldiers, but shot them down in cold blood.

3. The bourgeois newspapers were suppressed on the night of October 25, but the newspapers of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and other compromisers were allowed to continue publication. These newspapers conducted a campaign of vilification and abuse of the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary workers and soldiers. They spread false rumours about the defeat of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd and the victory of Kerensky.

4. The joint meeting of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies and Soldiers' Deputies elected three Mensheviks to the Military Revolutionary Committee. This, too, was a grave blunder. Although these men had been elected, there were sufficient grounds for removing them from the Committee as they were a hindrance to the struggle. The program of treachery and hypocrisy proclaimed by the Mensheviks during the October days predetermined the role played by their representatives on the Military Revolutionary Committee. They went on the Committee as the direct agents of the counter-revolutionaries in order to sabotage its work.

The double-dealing policy pursued by the Mensheviks explains to some extent the irresoluteness displayed by the leaders during the first days of the insurrection in Moscow.



From a painting by I. Lebedev

Shooting the men of the 56th Regiment in the Kremlin

5. The Military Revolutionary Committee naturally took up its headquarters in the premises of the Moscow Soviet. But the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik members of the Executive Committees and the Presidiums of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies were allowed every opportunity to prowl about the premises and spy out what was going on. They reported all they saw and heard to the "Committee of Public Safety." Nor was this all. When the Military Revolutionary Committee, or its staff, called troops to the Soviet, the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary members of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies urged the soldiers not to take part in the "fratricidal war." All these spies of the bourgeoisie left the premises of the Soviet only on October 27, as soon as Ryabtsev presented his ultimatum. At that time, also, the two Mensheviks resigned from the Military Revolutionary Committee.

6. On the morning of October 26, the Military Revolutionary Committee presented to Ryabtsev a demand that arms be allowed to pass from the Kremlin and that the motor trucks which had been held up by the cadets be returned. In reply Ryabtsev suggested that negotiations be opened concerning the arming of the workers. Instead of backing up their demand by military operations in the districts, the Military Revolutionary Committee entered into negotiations, which were broken off, not by the Military Revolutionary Committee, but by the Whiteguards, as soon as the latter had achieved their object. These negotiations not only served to strengthen the enemy's position, but, by creating the illusion that power could be transferred to the Soviets without an armed struggle, it had a demoralising effect upon activities in the districts. Ryabtsev failed to adhere to the agreement to withdraw the cadets from the Riding School. On the evening of October 27, the cadets attacked the "Dvinsks," and following this, Ryabtsev presented an insolent ultimatum demanding the dissolution of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and by means of a downright fraud captured the Kremlin and brutally massacred the garrison.

The cadets took advantage of the negotiations that were conducted on October 26 and 27 in the following manner: a) they threw a close cordon around the premises of the Moscow Soviet; b) they carried out a raid on the Cycle Company in Petrovsky Park where they captured machine guns, raided the Simonovsky ammunition and powder depots and carried away the ammunition, and also attacked the 1st Artillery Reserve Brigade and captured two three-inch guns, true, without shells; c) they gained time to call up reinforcements.

From the very outset of the cadet revolt the Staff of the Moscow counter-revolutionaries widely resorted to the spreading of false rumours. More than once they reported the suppression of the armed insurrection in Petrograd, the arrival of troops from the front, and the crushing of the revolt of the Moscow workers. Through the medium of the Moscow Post and Telegraph Offices, which the cadets had captured, Rudnyev flooded the towns in the Moscow Region with false and provocative information to the effect that the

Soviet authority in Moscow had been suppressed and that a new Provisional Government had been set up there, and called upon all local City Dumas and rural local government bodies to refuse to obey the Soviet Government and to organise a struggle against it. The Whiteguards were particularly zealous in spreading the legend about the suppression of the Bolshevik insurrection after they had captured the Kremlin. A despicable role in disseminating this false information was played by the "neutral" All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union and by the Post and Telegraph Employees' Union.

Worming their way into the fighting centres of the insurrection, the enemies of the Socialist revolution—who were subsequently exposed as enemies of the people—sabotaged the counsel of Lenin and Stalin that offensive operations must be started at the very outset of the struggle. Moreover, they cooled the fighting ardour of the workers and soldiers and deliberately hindered the opening of military operations in the districts in the hope of averting an insurrection by negotiation with the Whiteguards.

These are the main reasons why the Whiteguard revolt in Moscow was not crushed at the very outset, although all the conditions were favourable for this.

5

THE REVOLUTIONARY TROOPS PASS TO THE OFFENSIVE

The massacre of unarmed soldiers in the Kremlin stirred the people to the highest pitch of indignation.

The Military Revolutionary Committee, the Central Bureau of Trade Unions, the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party and the Moscow organisation of the Polish and Lithuanian Social-Democrats issued a manifesto to the workers in the course of which they said:

> "This is no time for work! On the 28th let us leave the factories to a man and at the first call of the Military Revolutionary Committee do everything that it orders."[46]
>
> "Show our enemies that the overwhelming majority of the population of Moscow is against them."[47]

The proletariat unanimously responded to this call. All the Moscow factories came to a standstill. The workers on night shift went straight from their machines to their factory committees.

"Give us arms!"—demanded the workers.

The day shifts went to their Military Revolutionary Committees without going to their shops. Crowds of workers besieged the premises of the District Soviets.

"To arms!"—was the cry of the masses.

Red Guards lined up in squads of ten and hastened to the local Military Revolutionary Committees where arms were issued to them. Everybody rallied for the fight: men and women, Bolsheviks and non-party. On learning of the commencement of hostilities, a Bolshevik worker employed at the Ordnance Works telephoned the works' committee and said:

"Take all the Bolsheviks off work and send them to the Revolutionary Committee to await orders."

The Bolshevik group at these works, numbering about 300, lined up and marched to points indicated to them. The departure of these Bolshevik Red Guards caused alarm among the two thousand workers of the night shift who requested that a meeting be called. This was done and a brief report of the situation was made. Without wasting any time in debate, the workers hastened to the barricades. The women workers at once joined first-aid groups. Enthusiasm ran so high that even Menshevik workers, forgetting about their "neutrality," joined the Red Guard.

Late at night workers from a factory outside Moscow arrived at the Headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the City District. The grim look on their faces, the flaming torches they held and the rifles which some of them carried, attracted universal attention.

"Who are you? Where are you from? And why have you come?"—were the questions fired at them by workers and soldiers.

"We heard that things were hot here and so we came to lend a hand," they answered.[48]

The majority of them were non-party.

"Let's get on with the job!"—they begged of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

The treacherous attack of the cadets incensed others besides the workers. A representative of the Zamoskvorechye District Committee of the Bolshevik Party was on Kaluga Square recruiting volunteers. Suddenly, out of the darkness a military unit emerged, armed with rifles, and led by two officers.

"Whiteguards!" was the thought that flashed through his mind.

One of the officers commanded: "Order arms!" and approaching the representative, saluted and enquired:

"Who represents the Chief of Staff here? We're from the 196th Reserve Unit. We've come to place ourselves at your command."

The two officers proved to be Captain Shutsky and Lieutenant Bogoslovsky. Incensed by the savage atrocity perpetrated in the Kremlin, they went over to the side of the revolutionary people.

Staff Captain L. I. Lozovsky, an Internationalist Menshevik, presented himself at the Headquarters of the Sokolniki District Military Revolutionary Committee together with his two sons.

> ". . . I am not a Bolshevik," he said, "but since the working class have come out on the barricades arms in hand, I cannot stand aloof."[49]

Lozovsky and one of his sons died like heroes in the civil war. Many intellectuals threw in their lot with the cause of the working class

that day. Engineers presented themselves at the Headquarters of the District Military Revolutionary Committee offering their services.

Indignation also spread among the soldiers of the garrison. That day, October 28, a garrison meeting of Company Committees elected a Provisional Committee of Soldiers' Deputies of ten men. The meeting also proclaimed the former Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies traitors to the cause of the revolution. The "Committee of Ten" forthwith issued an appeal to the rank-and-file soldiers calling upon them

> "to render the Military Revolutionary Committee every support and obey only its orders. Orders emanating from Military Area Headquarters, or from the 'Committee of Public Safety,' are to be disregarded."[50]

The "Committee of Ten" issued an order to muster army units for the protection of the Moscow Soviet, which occupied the premises of the former Governor-General of Moscow opposite Skobelev (now Soviet) Square. On the site where the new wing of the Moscow Soviet now stands there was a courtyard with stables and other outbuildings, and also two wings facing Chernishevsky Street.

On the evening of October 28, Skobelev Square was already under fire from all sides. The cadets were attacking from Okhotny Ryad, and from the side streets between Nikitskaya and Tverskaya Streets.

The Military Revolutionary Committee together with its Staff drew up a plan for piercing the Whiteguard ring and for launching an offensive.

The enemy occupied the central part of the city. This enabled him to manoeuvre freely and to transfer reserves to the weak sectors of his line. The telephone wires were also controlled by the cadets and this ensured the enemy regular communication. On the morning of October 28 the Whites captured the Telegraph Office, and this enabled them to communicate with General Headquarters and call for assistance. The enemy had an undoubted superiority in arms. The arsenal in the Kremlin and a large stock of rifles and machine guns had fallen into the hands of the cadets. The army food depot which they had captured supplied them with provisions.

After carefully studying the situation, the Military Revolutionary Committee resolved:

> "To establish close connections with the districts and secure a base in one of them. To wage offensive operations in the centre, and guerilla warfare in the districts."[51]

The battle of Moscow split up into a number of separate engagements in the different districts of the city. From all quarters came demands for arms and ammunition.

The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Kazan Railway ordered a search of all the railway cars on the lines. Red Guard Markin, a railway car inspector, discovered a number of cars loaded with rifles and immediately informed the Military Revolutionary Committee. The cars were opened and about 40,000 rifles were found. An engine was hitched to the cars and the



Red Guards of the Gustav Liszt Works

train hauled to the railway workshops. A report was immediately sent to the City and Sokolniki Districts which at once sent motor trucks to take the rifles away. The supply of arms for the other districts was organised by the Party Centre. During that night and the following morning the rifles were brought to the city and distributed among the districts. The Simonovsky powder magazines were captured by the Red Guards of the Simonovsky Sub-District, and here ammunition was distributed. From that moment the arming of the workers and soldiers and their organisation in detachments was vigorously proceeded with.

First of all it was necessary to make the immediate rear secure. House No. 26, on the Tverskoi Boulevard, was the headquarters of the City Militia. This building abutted on both Bolshoi and Maly Gnezdnikovsky Streets, quite close to the premises of the Moscow Soviet, where the Military Revolutionary Committee had its headquarters.

This house was held by a force of about 200 well armed Whites. Furthermore, a detachment of mounted militia arrived, and during October 27 and 28 considerable numbers of militiamen from the stations which had been captured by the Bolsheviks trickled in singly and in groups. Ryabtsev, realising the necessity of retaining possession of this building in order to threaten

the rear of the Red troops, sent an additional detachment of cadets with two machine guns. To these were added two detachments of university students commanded by a lieutenant.

In the courtyard of the same building the Militiamen's Union had its offices. The union was on the side of the Military Revolutionary Committee and rendered it important service with its telephone. The Whites soon learned of this, raided the offices and arrested the union officials. On the captured telephone they intercepted some of the orders issued by the Military Revolutionary Committee.

To capture this building a special detachment was formed, consisting of the "Dvinsks," a Cycle Unit, men of the 55th and 85th Regiments and Red Guards from the Michelson and other plants. The detachment, with one piece of artillery, took up its position on Strastnaya Square. From there it launched an attack along the Tverskoi Boulevard and the two Gnezdnikovsky Streets.

The approaches from Nikitsky Street through Chernishevsky and Bryusovsky Streets were held by cadet pickets. These were forced back and the attack was driven home by Red Guards and men of the 56th and 192nd Reserve Infantry Regiments.

The men of the 193rd Infantry Reserve Regiment which had guarded the Moscow Soviet the previous day were relieved by two companies of the 55th Infantry Reserve Regiment. Armed units of the Red Guard and soldiers from different regiments sent by the Party Centre from the districts arrived at the Moscow Soviet. Barricades were erected and trenches dug and the attack was developed from here in all directions.

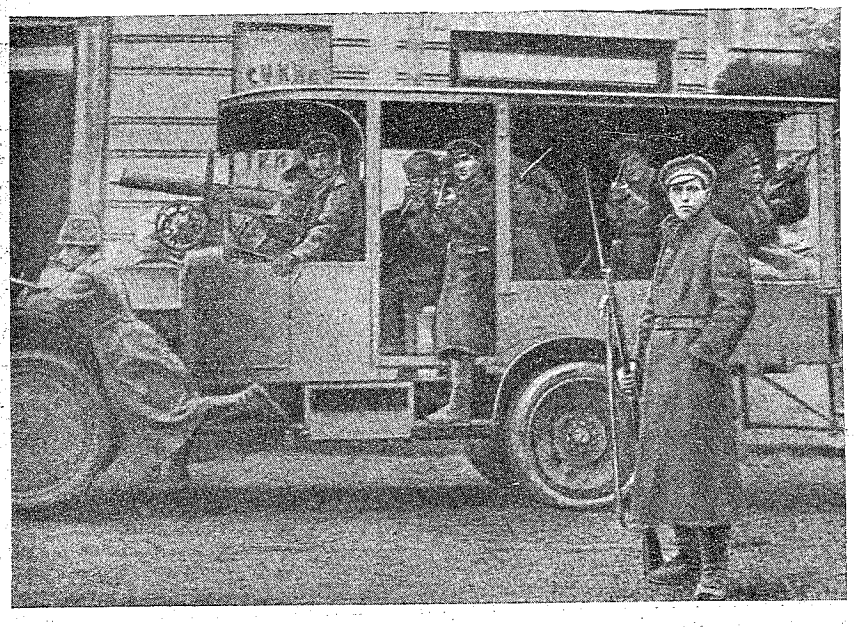
That same day, October 28, a detachment of 50 workers from factory No. 38 was ordered by the Military Revolutionary Committee to occupy Gazetny Street and to drive towards Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street. Another detachment, consisting of men of the 56th Regiment, was ordered to advance along Bryusovsky Street.

The Gazetny Street detachment occupied house No. 7 in that street, and the Bryusovsky Street detachment occupied the Girls' High School.

The first detachment dislodged the cadets from house No. 1 at the corner of Nikitskaya and Gazetny Streets and captured 36 rifles, 24 revolvers and 18 hand grenades. The enemy fled in panic.

This victory greatly encouraged the men.

In the City District, Sadovaya Street, from Zemlyanoi Val to Karetny Ryad, was occupied by Red Guards and men of the 56th and 251st Regiments. The Sukharev Market was transformed into an armed camp, at the approaches to which trenches were dug. Barricades were erected at the corner of Sretenka Street. A large number of motor trucks were parked in the square outside the premises of the District Military Revolutionary Committee, which had its headquarters on the second floor of a tavern at the corner of Sukharev Square and 1st Meshchanskaya Street. The ground floor, the staircase and the corridors were thronged with soldiers and workers.



Red Guards in Moscow

This building was a target for the cadets ensconced on the roofs of the high buildings in the vicinity. Often bullets sped through the windows and several people were hit. A soldier from the Spassky Barracks suggested that a machine gun should be mounted on the Sukharev Tower from where it would be possible to keep the square and the surrounding houses under fire. This proposal was adopted. Some soldiers stealthily hauled a machine gun to the tower and as soon as the cadets from the attic of a neighbouring house fired again the machine-gunners at once replied. The enemy fire from this quarter ceased.

"We can use strategy without the assistance of officers," said the men proudly, pleased with the result of their work.

Red Guards, in groups of ten, after obtaining arms at the Headquarters of the City District, went off in motor trucks to the scene of the fighting. From here detachments of Red Guards went off to assist the Moscow Soviet and the 56th Infantry Reserve Regiment, who were trying to dislodge the cadets from the General Post Office, the Telegraph Office and the Inter-City Telephone Exchange.

The Military Revolutionary Committee of the City District was given the task of capturing the Central City Telephone Exchange. The first attack on this building which was launched from the direction of Bolshaya Lubyanka, was repulsed by the cadets.

The Sokolniki District Military Revolutionary Committee was instrumental in obtaining supplies of shells from the shell dumps at Rayevo Farm.

The Sokolniki tramcar depots set up their own Military Revolutionary Committee, which took over the job of forming and feeding Red Guards. This was in the nature of a "reserve regiment" of the October Revolution in Moscow. In a matter of three or four days it mustered about 3,000 worker Red Guards and put them through a short course of instruction in the use of arms. The canteen set up at the workshops fed about 1,500 Red Guards per day.

Nearly all the detachments which arrived during the days of the fighting from the environs of Moscow, such as Rayevo Farm, Kolchugino, Mytishchi and Kolomna, received their brief training in this "reserve regiment."

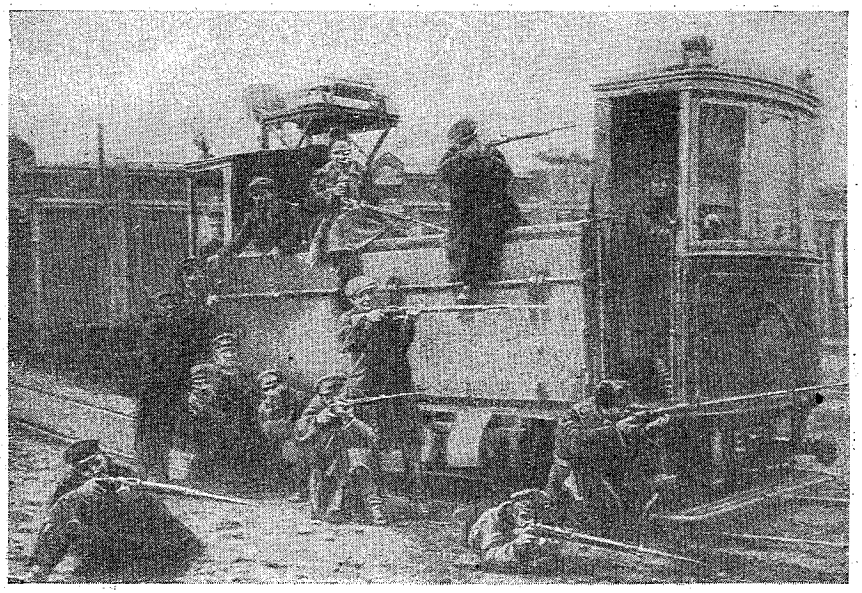
The Basmanny and Blagusha-Lefortovo Districts were given the task of capturing the Alexeyevsky Military School, which in addition to the regular students was occupied by about 400 cadets well supplied with machine guns. The main fighting force in this area consisted of the workers of Heavy Siege Artillery Workshops. Of the 3,000 men employed there, 900 were Bolsheviks. They were organised on military lines and divided up in squads and companies. In the workshops there was a considerable number of guns, but no more than a hundred rifles. The well-armed cadets could capture the guns and it was therefore necessary to make haste. Trenches were dug at the approaches to the school and the men took up their positions. The cadets were called upon to surrender and were told that they would be allowed to go unharmed if they did so. In reply to this they suddenly opened fire, killing five and wounding ten workers. The Military Revolutionary Committees of both districts started a regular siege of the school.

The military units in this district consisted of a Cycle Battalion, three companies of the Telegraph and Searchlight Regiment, the 2nd Automobile Company and the 661st Home Guard Unit, the latter consisting of men over forty years of age. In the very first days of the insurrection the Cycle Battalion had been sent to guard the Moscow Soviet. Of the rest, the Blagusha-Lefortovo District had sent several detachments to the centre. It was necessary to protect the districts, to keep guard at Headquarters, and have guards posted at the factories; for all this men were required. Consequently, the siege of the Alexeyevsky Military School was conducted mainly by the workers of the Heavy Artillery Workshops and a small detachment of cyclists.

The workers in the districts were entirely on the side of the Revolutionary Committees. Very often workers' wives seized individuals conducting agitation against the Soviet Government and brought them to the Headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee saying:

"Those who are against the Soviets are on the side of the bourgeoisie, and therefore, enemies of the people."

The only people who were avowedly on the side of the cadets were the students of the Higher Technical School. The Military Revolutionary Committee ordered a search to be made in this school and confiscated all the arms found there.



Red Guards of the tramway depot

The cadets had transformed the Alexeyevsky Military School into a fortress. They honeycombed it with machine-gun nests. The thick walls of the buildings served as excellent protection against bullets. At a joint conference of the Military Revolutionary Committees of the Basmanny, Blagusha-Lefortovo and Rogozhsky Districts it was resolved to bombard the school. The workers of the Heavy Artillery Workshops chose Japanese howitzers for the purpose, but there were no means of hauling them into position. The workers took off their belts, wove them together, thus forming thick traces, and hauled the guns in that way. There were no range finders for the guns, as the officers had concealed them, so it was decided to haul the guns nearer to the building and to fire at close range, but this was prevented by a machine gun mounted at the main entrance to the building. Under a hail of bullets the Red Guards dragged a gun slowly and labouriously right to the bridge, about 400 paces from the entrance. This daring threw the cadets into confusion. The workers jumped up and fired over open sights at the school. After the second shell the machine gun was silenced. Meanwhile, a thorough search was made at the workshops and gun sights were found. With the aid of these a regular artillery bombardment of the school commenced.

In the Rogozhsko-Simonovsky District, factory after factory stopped work on the morning of the 28th, as soon as the workers heard the Military Revolutionary Committee's call for a strike and the factory sirens sounded the alarm. The workers made their way to the two District Soviets, one in the Rogozhsky District and the other in the Simonovsky Sub-District. The first to arrive was the detachment from the Zolotorozhsky tramway depot. They were soon followed, hastening one after the other, by detachments from the Guzhon Works, the Podobedov Works and the Mars, Karavan, Danhauer and other factories. The working women employed at the Ostroumov, Keller and Sumin factories marched to the district headquarters to enrol in the first-aid units.

Everybody hurried to Alexeyevskaya Street, where the Rogozhsky Soviet, the Staff, and the District Committee of the Bolshevik Party were situated. No arms were available. On leaving the tramway depot the workers had said:

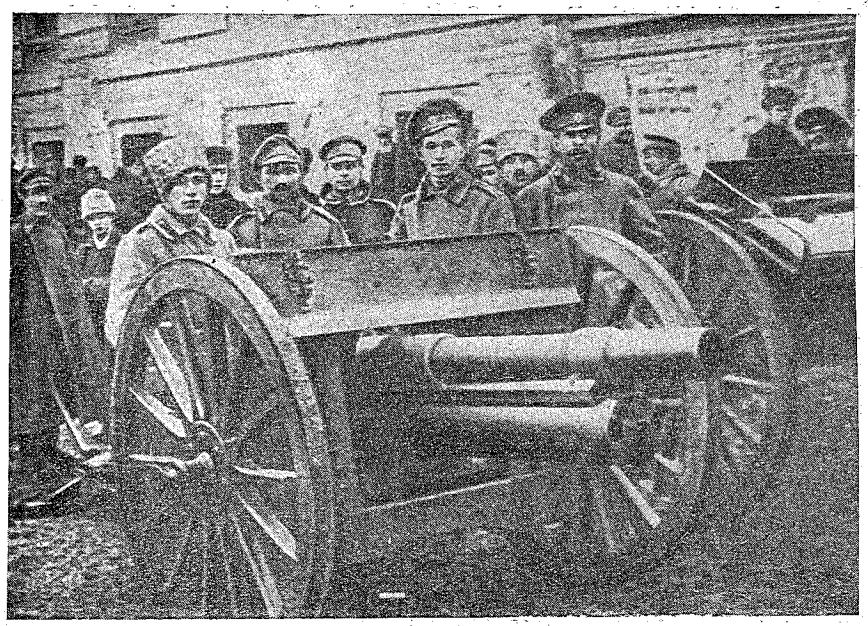
"When the rifles arrive, let us know; we'll be around for them within ten minutes."

And this is exactly what happened. When the first batch of rifles arrived the tramway men were informed. They hurried back to the depot, armed themselves and, fifty strong, went out to take up their positions in Varvarskaya Square. The same thing occurred at the Simonovsky Sub-District Soviet.

In the Zamoskvorechye District, where Professor Sternberg, the astronomer and a member of the Bolshevik Party, was at the head of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the Red Guards cleared the Kamenny Bridge of cadets and occupied the Krimsky Bridge. A detachment of the 193rd Regiment marched to the latter bridge through Zubovsky Boulevard and joined the Zamoskvorechye Red Guards. Red Guards also occupied the Commercial Institute after dislodging a force of Whiteguard university students: 87 of the latter were arrested.

The premises of the District Committee of the Bolshevik Party in the Zamoskvorechye District resembled an armed camp. All the rooms were crowded with workers whom "Dvinsks" and men of the 55th Reserve Infantry Regiment were showing how to handle rifles and revolvers. The workers were burning with eagerness to go into battle. The Red Guards of a number of factories took charge of definite sectors. The Michelson Works formed a Red Guard unit of 200 and a first-aid unit of 150. The workers of the Telephone Factory and the electric power station occupied the Chugunny Bridge and held it against the cadets. The workers at the power station switched off the light in the districts occupied by the Whiteguards. The Postavshchik Works sent a detachment of 50 men. The workers at the Danilov Textile Mills guarded the district against attacks by Cossacks likely to appear on the road from Kashira.

The workers at the tramway depot displayed heroic efforts. They transported arms, performed reconnoitring work and organised a splendid detachment of fighters. They boarded up the double windows of the tram cars and filled the space between with sand, thus making an improvised armoured



Artillery outside the Moscow Soviet during the October days

train. With this they tried to launch an attack on the cadets on the other side of the Kamenny Bridge, but the cadets cut the trolley wire and the train came to a standstill. When shovels were needed to dig trenches, the tramway workers issued them from their workshops under receipt, and saw to it that they were returned. They felt that they were the masters and took great care of the workshop property.

In Kotly, in the rear of the district, some Cossacks were quartered, not many, as most of them had been sent to the central part of the city; but they might have caused panic by a sudden raid. The workers of the Danilov Textile Mills sent agitators among them. A meeting was held after which the Cossacks agreed to surrender their arms. The district was cleared of minor groups of Whites. When the rear had thus been made safe, all the armed detachments were sent to positions on the Moscow River.

In the Khamovniki District the cadets occupied School No. 5 in 1st Smolensk Street, near the Smolensk Market. The cadets also held the whole of the Arbat.

This was the district where the Central Army Food Depot which supplied food to the Moscow garrison was situated. The depot, on the corner of Ostozhenka Street, was occupied by the cadets. The district was given

the task of holding the Bryansk Station and of capturing the food depot. It was also necessary to hold the Krimsky Bridge by which communication was maintained with the Zamoskvorechye District. Main attention, however, was concentrated on the 5th Cadet School in Smolensk Street.

Late at night on October 27, on receiving news of Ryabtsev's ultimatum, the men of the 193rd Regiment immediately came out. They were reinforced by Red Guards and led in two detachments to attack the Krimsky Bridge.

On the morning of October 28, the officers of the regiment who had their quarters in a building opposite the men's barracks, opened fire on the latter. The soldiers snatched their rifles and stormed the officers' quarters. Many of the officers were bayoneted to death. The officers' treacherous attack roused such indignation in the regiment that the men demanded that they be sent into position at once. At noon three companies marched through the Presnya District to Khodinka camp to cover the artillery.

The Chairman of the Committee of the 193rd Regiment led a company to assist the forces besieging the food depot. By combined assault the depot was captured. The last cadet motor truck loaded with provisions left under fire of the revolutionary troops.

The Khamovniki and Zamoskvorechye detachments—the latter crossing the Krimsky Bridge—drove the cadets far down the Ostozhenka, along Prechistenka Street to the very Headquarters of the Moscow Military Area in that street, and into a side street to the Ostozhenka. Here the cadets offered stubborn resistance. Reinforcements reached them and in the evening of October 28 the cadets launched an offensive in the Ostozhenka and in Prechistenka Streets. In the Smolensk Market this offensive was supported by an armoured car.

After the raid by the officers, the Dorogomilovo Revolutionary Committee was re-organised and quickly formed several detachments of workers, railwaymen and soldiers from the convalescent companies.

On the night of October 28, in response to the appeal of the Revolutionary Committee, 200 workers from the tramway depot arrived with tools and dug trenches near the Borodinsky Bridge, in the Plyushchikha, on the Smolensk Boulevard, and in Prechistenka Street.

That same night, in the Zamoskvorechye District, huge bales of cotton were brought up on a motor truck and under cover of these the Red Guards dug trenches in the Ostozhenka. Trenches were also dug in the Zamoskvorechye District near Kamenny Bridge, and barricades were put up near the Moskvoretsky Bridge.

The task allocated to the Butyrka and Sushchevsko-Maryinsky Districts was to prevent the infiltration of Whites into these districts, and to provide Red Guard reinforcements for the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee.

The Presnya District was given the following tasks:

1. To prevent the Whites from reaching the Bryansk and Alexandrovsky Railway Stations.

2. To prevent the cadets from capturing the Khodinka camp and the artillery stored there.

At about 11 a.m. on October 28, members of the Presnya District Military Revolutionary Committee went to the Khamovniki District Committee to request that a detachment be sent to protect the artillery. In less than an hour a detachment of soldiers marched to the Khodinka. When they arrived they found that the 5th Battery had already left for the Moscow Soviet, cautiously making its way to the central part of the city. Near Strastnaya Square the battery was suddenly attacked by Whites, but the artillerymen drove them off with running rifle fire. On arriving at the square the artillerymen found the men of the 193rd Regiment. Sending their horses to the rear to take cover, the artillery opened fire on the City Militia Headquarters. The first gunfire was heard in the central part of the city.

This cannonade greatly raised the spirits of everybody in the Presnya District. New detachments were quickly formed and these joined in the attack along the Sadovaya line from Karetny Ryad to the Novinsky Boulevard.

The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Railway District had its headquarters in the Nikolayevsky Railway Station, in the Sokolniki District. This district was the converging point of the most important railways—the Yaroslavl, Kazan and Nikolayevsky. As now, the Nikolayevsky Station had direct connection with the Kursk Railway Station. The Moscow Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union had its offices in the Nikolayevsky Station.

There was no fighting at the railway stations, except for the Bryansk Railway Station, but the Military Revolutionary Committees of the various railways rendered excellent service during the Moscow insurrection: 1) They occupied the stations despite the "neutrality" of the Railwaymen's Executive; 2) They prevented the movement of White troops to Moscow; 3) They established communication with Petrograd through the Yaroslavl Railway Station; 4) They found about 40,000 rifles at the Kazan Railway Station; 5) They completely isolated the Moscow Bureau of the Railwaymen's Executive, and on the Kursk Railway the Military Revolutionary Committee arrested the compromising railway committee; 6) The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Railway District sent all its detachments free from other duty to the central part of the city. The railwaymen Red Guards of those lines which ran through the fighting area took an active part in the fighting.

By the night of October 28, the position of the Military Revolutionary Committee had greatly improved. The cadets had been unable to extend the area they occupied; on the contrary, they were almost completely surrounded, and the workers' detachments were pressing them to the central part of the city. All the railway stations were in the hands of the revolutionary forces. The cadets received no outside reinforcements, whereas new revolutionary detachments kept on arriving at the Moscow Soviet. Outside the Moscow Soviet guns were in position, and their very presence there roused the spirit of

the men. But the main thing was that detachments were now being formed on a mass scale. If the Military Revolutionary Committee sent a request to a given district for a hundred men, three hundred arrived. The masses of the people rose for the struggle. The districts hummed like disturbed beehives; and the initiative they displayed in organising their forces was unprecedented.

On the night of October 28, Lieutenant Rovny again communicated with General Headquarters. Of his former arrogance there was no longer a trace.

"The centre, for the most part, is in our hands," he reported, "except for the district adjacent to the Governor-General's residence [*i.e.*, the Moscow Soviet—*Ed.*].

"The suburbs are in the hands of the Red Guard and the mutinous section of the soldiers.

"Zamoskvorechye is not within the sphere of our operations. . . .

"In view of the insufficiency of forces and the fatigue of the troops who are loyal to the government, it is not possible to clear Moscow of insurgents speedily."[52]

Rovny concluded his melancholy report with a request for speedy assistance.

General Headquarters, however, was well aware of the mood of the Whites in Moscow. Dieterichs concluded the conversation with a threat. He told Rovny "for his personal information" that he had received instructions if necessary:

". . . to remove from the actual performance of duties every officer without exception. . . ."[53]

After his conversation with Moscow Dieterichs called up the Western Front and urgently requested that assistance be sent to Moscow at once, and from the nearest district. Western Front Headquarters replied that the Committee in Minsk had forbidden them to do that.

"But you can send forces from the Minsk Area and not from the front," pleaded Dieterichs.

"The situation here, in the rear, is that everywhere the Bolsheviks have risen in revolt and are seizing power," answered Western Front Headquarters. "Troops are needed everywhere. Evidently there are reserves in Kaluga, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Area is demanding the dispatch of troops from Kaluga to Smolensk, Rzhev and Vyazma. I will immediately report to the Commander-in-Chief and inform you of the result."

"Please do, it is very important. Very important, I repeat a second time," said Dieterichs, imploringly.[54]

With great difficulty they managed to find a unit. Orders were issued to send to Moscow three squadrons of the Nizhni-Novgorod Dragoons, who were either in Kaluga or else on the way to Smolensk; nobody knew for certain where they were.

On the morning of October 29 the revolutionary forces launched a decisive offensive. A detachment of 70 cyclists occupied the Maly Theatre. The City Militia Headquarters were captured. The siege of these premises had been greatly hindered by the fact that the approaches to them from Strastnaya Square had been under the fire of the cadets who occupied the Nikitsky Gate. Rising above the premises was a tall building, No. 10 Maly Gnezdnikovsky Street, the roof of which was surmounted by a tower. The Red Guards hauled a machine gun to this tower and poured a hail of bullets into the courtyard of the City Militia Headquarters. Artillery fire was opened from Strastnaya Square and a combined assault was launched against the premises. After the first successful gun shot they were stormed by a Red detachment.

With a loud cheer a detachment of soldiers raced through the boulevard and the adjoining streets and reached the windows of the first floor of the Militia Headquarters. The commander of the detachment ordered the men to lie down in front of the railings and open fire. The men were just about to do so when the Red Guards rushed forward, smashed the windows with the butts of their rifles and forced their way into the premises. The soldiers followed the Red Guards. This bold assault caused utter panic among the cadets, who had already been scared to death by the machine-gun and artillery fire. They stopped shooting and literally poured down the stairs from the upper floor. About two hundred well armed cadets and university students surrendered to a detachment of fifty or sixty men. Escorted by a half score of men, they were marched off to the Moscow Soviet.

The combined assault on the City Militia Headquarters was crowned with success.

In this bold attack Sergei Barbolin, twenty years of age, and Zhebrunov, nineteen years of age, the youth organisers in the Sokolniki District—perished. Barbolin was a capable and energetic organiser, ready to lay down his life for the revolution. He performed an enormous amount of work among the youth and spent whole days in the factories. Zhebrunov had been the breadwinner of his family since the age of fifteen, and had tramped nearly all over the country in search of work. Every spare moment he could find he spent at his books, and next day shared his newly acquired knowledge with his comrades. The two youth organisers were close friends and were known among their comrades as "the inseparables." In the days of the fighting they carried out a variety of functions, but they were not satisfied with this. They were eager to go into battle. Arming themselves with rifles, they left their district and reported at the centre. They were sent to join the detachment that was to storm the City Militia Headquarters. A burst of machine-gun fire killed Zhebrunov outright and mortally wounded Barbolin.

The Red Guard units consolidated their positions in the side streets leading to the Moscow Soviet and advanced along Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street, which became the border line between them and the cadets. That same morning the revolutionary forces stormed and recaptured the General Post Office and Central Telegraph Office. On regaining possession of the Telegraph Office the Red Guards discovered that the Telegraph Employ-

ees' Committee had intercepted the telegrams of the Soviet Government and that it had disconnected the towns where the revolution had been successful. Some of the members of the Committee were arrested and the matter was reported to the Military Revolutionary Committee. The latter sent a special Commissar to the Telegraph Office.

In the Lefortovo District, after the workers of the Heavy Artillery Workshops had found the gun sights, the artillery fire became more effective. Shells burst in the premises of the Alexeyevsky Military School. The majority of the cadets and members of the staff who were holding the place, surrendered, but the cadets of the senior classes continued to offer resistance.

In the Khamovniki District small groups of Red Guards of three to five men, threading their way through back doors and courtyards of houses, filtered into the enemy's rear and suddenly attacked the cadets with hand grenades and rifle fire. In the Ostozhenka, the men of the 193th Regiment mounted a mortar in their trench, which was only about two hundred paces from the enemy's lines. A rapid fire was kept up: to raise one's head above the trench meant death.

The Red Guards of the Zamoskvorechye District, where fighting had ceased for a time, occupied the bridges across the Moscow River. Armed detachments were sent to conduct joint operations with the Khamovniki District against Military Area Headquarters. Furthermore, one of the most important functions of the Zamoskvorechye District was to ensure the steady functioning of the electric power station, and this was successfully fulfilled.

The exceptional importance of the Zamoskvorechye District during the October days lay in the fact that in that district were concentrated numerous factories which supplied men for the Red Guard units. On October 29, the Party Fighting Centre took up its headquarters in the Commercial Institute in that district; and here the editorial offices of the *Sotsial-Demokrat* and of *Izvestia* of the Moscow Soviet were also situated.

In the Presnya District the Military Revolutionary Committee, on October 29, organised and armed as many as 600 men. Here the 1st and 2nd Militia Stations were occupied, and a Cossack patrol was captured in Voskresensky Field.

On the night of October 29 three-inch guns from the 1st Artillery Reserve Brigade arrived in the Presnya District. One of them was mounted in Kudrinskaya Square and fire was opened at the belfries of the Kazan and Devyatinsk Churches, which were occupied by cadets. Another gun was mounted near the Zoological Gardens and a third near the Gorbaty Bridge.

An extremely important function of this district was to hold the Alexandrovsky—now Byelorussian—Railway Station, which the Military Revolutionary Committee on that line had occupied without meeting with any resistance. The operations of the armed forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee developed successfully. The cadets and officers sur-



The Battle in Kudrinskaya Square, Moscow

From a painting by G. Savitsky

rendered an extremely important position in the centre of the city like the City Militia Headquarters.

At 9 p.m. on October 29, Military Area Headquarters reported to General Headquarters as follows:

"... the enemy's forces are growing and he is hourly becoming more audacious.

"The suburbs are entirely beyond our reach.

"... Today the Bolsheviks occupied all the railway stations, and in the centre of the city they have occupied the City Militia Headquarters, as well as the General Post Office and Central Telegraph Office, which had to be abandoned owing to the fatigue of the detachment which had successfully repulsed repeated assaults. The detachment had to be transferred to the Telephone Exchange.

"The Alexeyevsky School, where a company of cadets has remained, is stubbornly defending itself, although the Bolsheviks' heavy artillery has destroyed the upper part of the building and has caused fires. . . .

"... Assistance is urgently needed as, without prospects of support, the situation is by no means promising."[55]

The further success of the Red forces was fully assured.

6

ARMISTICE

While promising aid to Moscow, General Dukhonin failed to take into account the fact that at a number of extremely important points along the route to be taken by the troops, power had already passed into the hands of the Bolsheviks. Thus, on October 28, the workers were in control of Vyazma, Kolomna, Shuya, Kazan, Tsaritsyn, Minsk, Novgorod, Toropets, Rechitsa, Vitebsk, Rzhev, Podolsk, Bryansk, Yegoryevsk and Ryazan.

Kerensky countermanded the order to dispatch the dragoons from Kaluga to Moscow and, instead, ordered them to be sent to Petrograd by passenger train. A number of armoured cars which were to have been sent to Moscow from Kaluga were also ordered to Petrograd.

In place of the dragoons two Hundreds of Kuban Cossacks were sent to Moscow, but about thirty kilometres from Vyazma the local Soviet had torn up the rails. The Cossack officers then tried to get their men to Moscow by a roundabout route, but they were held up in Tula.

The Cavalry Brigade which had been sent from the South-Western Front via Gomel, Orsha and Vyazma met with an unexpected obstacle in

Orsha. The 623rd Infantry Regiment, which had been ordered to Petrograd, blocked the station with its trains and declared that not a single unit would be allowed to pass either to Petrograd or to Moscow.

Dukhonin's attempt to summon Cossacks from the Don also failed. In reply to his request, Ataman Kaledin stated that to send forces to Moscow "extreme urgency would have to be proved in order to justify it in the eyes of the Cossacks."[56]

The slanderous statements of the representatives of the "Committee of Public Safety" circulated among the soldiers at the front to the effect that "the Bolsheviks had organised a pogrom in Moscow" and that "in Moscow drunken gangs were burning everything and slaughtering innocent people" also proved unavailing.

The vigilant revolutionary workers and soldiers prevented counter-revolutionary reinforcements from reaching Moscow, and the "Committee of Public Safety" received no armed assistance from outside. But they were buoyed up by the thought that help was on the way. Troops were expected to arrive from the South-Western Front by October 30. The fall of Petrograd, where the cadet insurrection had started, was expected hourly. If only they could gain time, even a day or two! In this the "Committee of Public Safety" had the support of the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union.

On October 29, this Railwaymen's Executive, through its Moscow Bureau, presented the following ultimatum to the Military Revolutionary Committee and to the "Committee of Public Safety."

"Immediately cease civil war and unite for the purpose of forming a homogeneous revolutionary-Socialist government."[57]

It threatened to call a general strike of railwaymen at midnight on October 29

"if hostilities in Petrograd and Moscow do not cease by that time."[58]

The Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee again agreed to enter into negotiations. At midnight, on October 29, an armistice was declared and announced by telephone and special messengers. The Red units would not believe the report. Victory was already in their grasp and suddenly an armistice was declared! When an artilleryman was handed the order to cease fire he read it, crumpled it up and threw it aside, saying:

"I can't make it out!" and he went on firing.

A second order was needed to compel him to cease fire.

It was only with great difficulty that a suspension of hostilities was achieved.

The bombardment of the Telephone Exchange continued.

This ultimatum of the Railwaymen's Executive served the interests of the counter-revolution. One of its active defenders subsequently wrote:

"The railwaymen's ultimatum greatly raised the spirits of the 'Committee of Public Safety'. . . ."

And therefore "the 'Committee of Public Safety' readily agreed to an armistice."[59]

The Railwaymen's Executive took the initiative in forming a Conciliation Committee consisting of representatives of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee, the "Committee of Public Safety," the Moscow Menshevik organisation, the (former) Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, the Council of the Post and Telegraph Employees' Union and the Moscow Bureau of the Railwaymen's Executive, and submitted to it the following draft of an agreement:

"1. The units, both of men and of officers, specially formed in connection with the armed conflict, shall be disbanded.

"2. Both sides shall issue an order to surrender the arms seized for the purpose of organising fighting squads during the period of hostilities.

"3. A committee consisting of representatives of both sides on a parity basis, and of representatives of the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union shall be formed for the purpose of supervising the fulfilment of the above obligations.

"4. A body shall be set up in Moscow to co-ordinate and direct the normal functioning of all government bodies and be vested with extraordinary powers. This body shall continue to function until the question of the organisation of local authority is decided by the central government. It shall consist of the following: seven representatives of the City Administration, seven representatives of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, two representatives of the Gubernia Zemstvo and one representative each from the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies in the gubernia, the Central Council of Trade Unions, the Post and Telegraph Employees' Union and the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union. The Military Revolutionary Committee and the 'Committee of Public Safety' shall be abolished.

"5. The Provisional Committee (*i.e.*, the body specified in the foregoing point) shall appoint a special commission of enquiry to ascertain the causes which gave rise to civil war in Moscow and to fix the responsibility of individuals and organisations.

"6. When agreement is reached the troops of both sides shall return to their respective units and place themselves at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Moscow Military Area, who shall act by authority of the Provisional Committee."[60]

The Military Revolutionary Committee, on its part, submitted the following draft of an agreement to the Conciliation Committee:

"1. All power in Moscow shall be vested in the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

"2. Special units (both officers' and men's) shall be disbanded.

"3. In the interests of defending the revolution, the Red Guard shall remain; the White Guard shall be disbanded. All superfluous arms shall be transferred to the arsenal.

"4. When agreement is reached the troops of both sides shall return to their respective units."[61]

It goes without saying that the Conciliation Committee accepted the Railwaymen's Executive draft as a basis for discussion.

The representatives of the two camps met in the "Royal Pavilion," at the Kursk Railway Station, on the night of October 30.

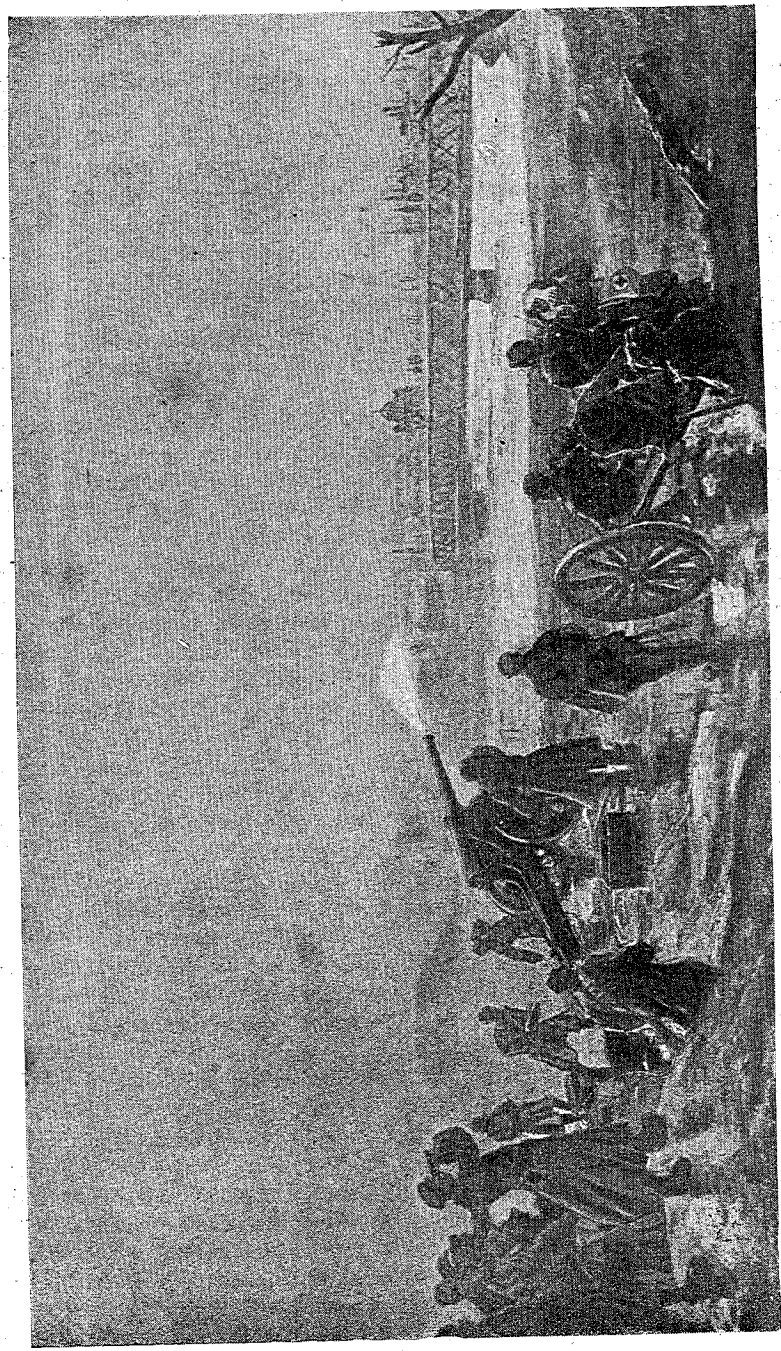
The situation was extremely tense. Now and again shots were heard. Rudnyev, reproaching the Bolsheviks, charged that the Red Guards were violating the armistice. The Soviet representatives expressed astonishment at Rudnyev's fine sense of hearing which enabled him to determine who was responsible for the shooting. The members of the Railwaymen's Executive—several of whom were present—pleaded with the two sides to refrain from bickering and to get on with the discussion.

The Bolsheviks' draft was declared to be utterly unacceptable. Rudnyev and Scherr did all they could to drag out the negotiations. They insisted on the dissolution of the Red Guard and the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Points 1, 3 and 6 of the draft submitted by the Railwaymen's Executive were accepted by all, including the representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee; but the latter objected to points 2 and 5 and to that part of point 4 which concerned the composition of the governing body. They finally accepted them only upon the categorical demand of the Railwaymen's Executive. As the discussion had not finished, it was resolved to prolong the armistice for another twelve hours.

At last, the negotiations came to an end. The representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee left the station and were about to enter their automobile when Rudnyev and Scherr came hurrying from the building. Their automobile had disappeared. The Military Revolutionary Committee representatives agreed to take them to the Moscow Soviet, and from there they were taken to the City Duma, in an ambulance waggon.

That same day, October 30, the terms of a likely agreement became known in the districts. The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Blagusha-Lefortovo District, in conjunction with representatives of the district staff of the Red Guard and the district staff of the military units, demanded that the agreement should include recognition of the authority of the Congress of Soviets, the provisional transfer of power to the Moscow Soviet, including the administration of Area Headquarters, the surrender of arms and the arrest of all Whiteguards, whose fate was to be decided by the Congress of Soviets, or by the government authorised by it.



From a painting by V. Meshkov

A shot at the Kremlin

Similar resolutions were adopted at meetings of the military units. Thus, already on October 29, when the news of the conclusion of the armistice was received, a full meeting of representatives of Battery Committees of the 1st Reserve Artillery Brigade resolved:

"To obey the order of the Military Revolutionary Committee and to cease hostilities, but at the same time . . . to urge the Military Revolutionary Committee to make no concessions during the negotiations, for the salvation of Russia and the revolution must be placed above the interests of the capitalists."[62]

Similar resolutions were adopted in all the other districts.

The Whiteguards, however, failed to adhere to the armistice proclaimed at midnight on October 29.

At 6:30 p.m. on October 29, Ryabtsev issued a formal order to cease all hostilities, but an hour before the official commencement of the armistice, at 11 p.m., that night, the chief of the guard of the White Headquarters in the Nikitsky District ordered a detachment of cadets commanded by a lieutenant to meet the "Death Battalion" which was to arrive at the Bryansk Railway Station from the front, and to clear its route of Bolsheviks. The Arbat was still in the hands of the cadets. The detachment reached the Smolensk Market without hindrance just when the armistice commenced. The Whiteguards sent out a party to reconnoitre the position at the Borodinsky Bridge, which was held by twenty Red Guards. On reaching the bridge the cadet patrol told the Red Guards that they were from the 193rd Regiment and were allowed to pass. They proceeded to the Bryansk Station and then doubled back towards the Smolensk Market and attacked the Red Guards on the bridge. The latter, taken by surprise, opened fire, but they were surrounded and overcome. The cadets threw two of the men into the river, killed six, and took the remainder prisoner. Leaving a patrol on the bridge to meet the expected "Death Battalion," the Whiteguards stormed the 2nd Khamovniki Militia Station, where they took ten prisoners and captured eighteen rifles.

At 6:25 a.m. next day, the "Death Battalion," numbering 176 men, arrived at the Bryansk Station. They marched unhindered to the Smolensk Market, where they were met by a detachment of cadets and directed to the Alexandrovsky Military School.

The news of the cadet raid and of the arrival of this shock battalion caused a furore in the Khamovniki District.

The local Military Revolutionary Committee ordered to the Bryansk Railway Station a half-company of the 193rd Infantry Reserve Regiment commanded by Lieutenant Sulatsky, a Bolshevik. The station was occupied at 10 o'clock that night. The representatives of the Railwaymen's Executive and the station commandant protested and threatened to summon the cadets, but the Chairman of the Regimental Committee ordered the men to remain pending further instructions from the Military Revolutionary Committee.

That day another detachment of shock troops arrived at the Bryansk Station, where they surrendered to the Red Guards. The men stated that they had been deceived and had been sent to Moscow ostensibly for the purpose of receiving equipment. On learning that a struggle was on between the soldiers and the cadets, they decided to place themselves at the disposal of the Khamovniki Military Revolutionary Committee.

Simultaneously with the raid in the Khamovniki District and the Bryansk Station, the cadets in the vicinity of the Nikitsky Gate began to occupy positions in the so-called neutral zone which had been mapped out by a special commission. From here they launched an attack upon the positions held by the Red forces from the Nikitsky Gate to the Tverskoi Boulevard. They were hurled back, however, by artillery fire from the guns near the Pushkin Monument. The Red Guards recaptured their positions that same day.

In the City District the indignation of the Red Guards and soldiers at the perfidy of the Whites found expression in a resolute attack on the Central City Telephone Exchange. In the Lefortovo District the assault on the Alexeyevsky Military School ended at noon on October 30 with the surrender of the cadets. Thirteen machine guns, numerous rifles and other war material were captured.

One of those to fall in the fighting for this school was an old Bolshevik worker, P. P. Shcherbakov. At the beginning of the imperialist war he had been the secretary of the District Committee of the Bolshevik Party. At the end of 1915 he was arrested together with Comrade Molotov—who was on Party work in Moscow at that time—and exiled to the Irkutsk Gubernia. On his return from exile after the February Revolution Shcherbakov organised the textile workers in the Lefortovo District. In the October days he performed ambulance work in a small detachment of Red Guards.

The purpose of the ultimatum presented by the Railwaymen's Executive was now obvious to everybody. Under cover of negotiations they wanted to lull the vigilance of the Moscow workers and soldiers, bring up reserves, occupy points of vantage and strike a decisive blow at the Moscow proletariat.

The designs of the Whites failed, however; the unflagging vigilance and revolutionary initiative of the workers and soldiers upset the plans of the counter-revolutionaries. On the other hand, the exposure of the treacherous designs of the compromisers silenced the advocates of a "bloodless" cessation of the insurrection; they now confined themselves to protests against the extensive use of artillery.

The breach of the armistice by the Whiteguards roused indignation also in the provinces. Detachments of Red Guards and soldiers arrived in Moscow daily to go to the assistance of the Moscow proletariat and garrison.

The Moscow Revolutionary Committee rejected a proposal to prolong the armistice, refused to accept the draft agreement submitted by the Rail-

waymen's Executive and at 11:55 p.m. on October 30 it sent the "Committee of Public Safety" the following telephone message:

"The armistice ends at midnight tonight. The All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union has proposed that it be extended for twelve hours. In view of the fact that the agreement which was adopted (by the Conciliation Committee) is unacceptable both in principle and in form (points 2, 4, 5 and 6) the armistice cannot be prolonged. If you consider it necessary and desirable to prolong the armistice please inform us by telephone. Negotiations are possible only on the basis of the platform adopted by the Soviets in their last resolution. The text of our resolution will be sent to you tonight through the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union."[63]

The text of the resolution referred to in the above-mentioned telephone message reads:

"To the Committee of Public Safety.

"The Military Revolutionary Committee submits the following as the essential terms for ceasing hostilities (peace):

"1. All power in Moscow shall be transferred to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which shall set up a body vested with full power and to consist of: 7 (seven) representatives of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (the political parties to have proportional representation) and one representative each from the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies (1), the Gubernia Soviet of Workers' Deputies (1), the Moscow City Duma (1), the Zemstvos (1), the Council of District Dumas (1), the Central Bureau of Trade Unions (1), the Municipal Workers' and Employees' Union (1), the Red Guard (1), the All-Russian Railwaymen's Union (1) and the Post and Telegraph Employees' Union (1), 17 (seventeen) in all.

"This body shall be set up at the first plenary meeting of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and shall remain in existence pending the formation of a government by the Constituent Assembly.

"2. The cadets and Whiteguards shall be disarmed, the Military Revolutionary Committee guaranteeing their freedom and personal safety. (Adopted unanimously.)"[64]

Convinced of the utter collapse of their plans, the counter-revolutionaries made one more attempt to put off the moment of their defeat.

On the night of October 30, after the armistice had expired the "Committee of Public Safety" convened a conference of representatives of the Menshevik Unionists, "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Bund, the old Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies and the Menshevik Regional Bureau of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. This conference proclaimed itself a "united inaugural body" and decided to bring pressure to bear upon the belligerent sides with a

view to putting a stop to further bloodshed and to forming in Moscow a special organ of government to take the place of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the "Committee of Public Safety" which were to be "immediately dissolved."

The counter-revolutionaries counted on gaining time with the aid of the compromisers and "neutral" organisations, for they had not yet given up hope of reinforcements arriving from the front.

On October 31 this "inaugural body" sent its delegates—Mensheviks and Unionists—to the Military Revolutionary Committee, and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries at the City Duma, with the object of "intervening in the struggle." The Military Revolutionary Committee refused to treat with them, however.

That same day a delegation from the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies came to the Military Revolutionary Committee and offered their platform as a basis for an agreement to cease hostilities. Their standpoint was almost identical with that of the Military Revolutionary Committee. The delegates stated that they had not given their representatives on the "Committee of Public Safety" any mandate to fight the Soviet troops.

The decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets and the Council of People's Commissars on land and peace had had a powerful effect upon the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies. The members completely veered round in their opinion, and this marked the end of Socialist-Revolutionary influence.

While the negotiations were proceeding, Military Area Headquarters made feverish efforts to secure assistance. Lieutenant Rovny pulled all the wires at his command in an endeavour to secure the dispatch of a detachment reinforced with armoured cars from Kaluga. If they could not send a full detachment, let them send at least part of one, he pleaded.

Kravchuk, one of Ryabtsev's deputies, secretly left Moscow and on reaching Smolensk tried to ascertain through General Headquarters the whereabouts of the cavalry which had been promised for October 30. Kravchuk was put in touch with Dukhonin.

"The position of the troops in Moscow is critical owing to the shortage of ammunition and provisions," he reported. "The men are firm and steadfast. The ammunition and food depots are occupied by the Bolsheviks. At the time of my departure a detachment was being organised for the purpose of attacking the depots. Whether this has been successful, I cannot say. If it was not successful, the garrison cannot hold out for long, and it is quite possible that we shall have to fight our way out of Moscow. . . .

"The Committee for the Salvation of the Revolution urgently requests the speediest and most energetic assistance."[65]

In reply Dukhonin informed Kravchuk which units had been dispatched to Moscow and added that a formation of six battalions with artillery was being got together on the Rumanian Front specially for the purpose of

being sent to Moscow. Moreover, another request had been sent to the Don to send Cossacks immediately.

"With your assistance we shall save Moscow," answered Kravchuk, overjoyed at this news. [66]

In the evening of October 30 a crowded meeting was held in the City Duma. Among those present were the "Committee of Public Safety," the old Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, the Moscow Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and representatives of various political groups in the City Duma. The tone of the assembly was more like that of a funeral than of a political conference. Amidst gloomy silence Rudnyev announced the breakdown of the negotiations. A further struggle was inevitable, he said, and for this the blame rests with the Bolsheviks. He and several other speakers commented on the special role which had been played by the Railwaymen's Executive. The representatives of the latter got up and said that the Bolsheviks had rejected their terms, whereas the "Committee of Public Safety" had agreed to them. In view of that, the Railwaymen's Executive would now actively oppose the Bolsheviks and would create no further obstacles for the transport of troops to Moscow.[67]

This statement was received in silence, for all those present were perfectly well aware that the transport of troops in no way depended upon these people who had accidently found themselves on the crest of the revolutionary wave like foam on the incoming tide.

Suddenly the electric lights went out; the Bolsheviks had cut off the light in the districts occupied by the Whites and the feeble glimmer of candles accentuated the funereal character of the assembly.

The Whiteguards received no assistance, but a constant stream of reinforcements flowed into the ranks of the revolutionary forces. Sailors came from Petrograd. While the cadet insurrection in Petrograd was at its height and the troops of Krasnov and Kerensky were moving toward the capital, Lenin and Stalin found it possible to send aid to Moscow. On October 29 Lenin, addressing a conference of representatives of the Petrograd garrison referred to the attempted cadet revolt, and reported on the situation in Moscow. "In Moscow," he said, "they [the cadets—*Ed.*] have seized the Kremlin, but the suburbs, where the workers and the poorest section of the population in general, live, are not in their power."

That very day, on Lenin's instructions, 500 Kronstadt sailors were dispatched by special train to assist the revolutionary forces in Moscow. They arrived in the evening of October 30 and immediately joined the ranks of the revolutionary fighters.

On October 30 Sverdlov sent a group of technicians from Petrograd to man the Moscow radio station.

7

THE RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES

Hostilities were resumed at midnight on October 30 with an artillery bombardment.

Two guns in the Khamovniki District tried, unsuccessfully at first, to bombard the Military Area Headquarters in Prechistenka Street.

Three guns in the Presnya District opened fire on the Alexandrovsky Military School, Povarskaya Street and the Nikitsky Gate.

After the Alexeyevsky Military School surrendered, the guns of the Heavy Artillery Workshops were turned on other sectors. Two howitzers were placed near the Andronyevsky Monastery with the object of bombarding the Kremlin, but at the request of the Rogozhsky District they were dispatched to the Krutitsky Barracks for the purpose of shelling the 6th Officers' Training School of the Chevaliers of St. George. There was no need for them to open fire, however. On seeing the guns, about a hundred cadets surrendered. This was at 3:30 p.m. on October 31.

The two guns were then mounted on Shvivaya Hill, from where they bombarded the Maly Nikolayevsky Palace and the Spassky Gate of the Kremlin.

The roar of the guns and bursting shells and the arrival of reinforcements from the provinces infused the Red Guards and soldiers with fresh energy.

The Nikitsky Gate was being battered by the artillery in Strastnaya Square. The detachment which had captured the City Militia Headquarters launched an attack along the Tverskoi Boulevard with the object of capturing Gagarin's house at the other end of the boulevard, *i.e.*, at the Nikitsky Gate. No cover was available. Through the bare trees in the boulevard the cadets were seen running in all directions after every shot.

The Red Guards signalled the artillerymen to cease fire. Silence reigned. Only the rattle of a single cadet machine gun was heard. Suddenly, the Red Guards jumped to their feet and rushed forward. The cadets increased their fire. The ranks of the advancing Red forces thinned, but they continued the charge with loud cheers. It seemed that not a hundred, but thousands of men were engaged in this attack. The cadets failed to withstand the onslaught. The building was captured and some of the cadets were taken prisoner. The rest retreated and fortified themselves in the houses along Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street, whence they kept up a constant fire on the building they had just vacated. It was dangerous to approach the windows. Many of the Red Guards who did so were wounded. There was a shortage of bandages. Near the building about a score of killed and wounded men were lying. Not far away, a group of soldiers were sitting—some smoking, others munching chocolate which had been captured from the cadets—listening to the strains of an accordion. The instrument had been taken from a music shop on the ground floor of this building which had been wrecked by the artillery.

Somebody protested against the music, but the men still in the line and continuing to fire shouted:

"No! Keep on playing! It's jollier to die for the Soviets like that!"

Mounting two machine guns on the top floor, the Reds successfully held Gagarin's house.

The Rozhdestvenka Street was occupied by Red Guard detachments right up to Teatralny Proyezd. The cyclists who had captured the Maly Theatre opened fire on the City Duma where the "Committee of Public Safety" sat. Bolshaya Dmitrovka Street was also in the hands of the Reds, who had fortified themselves in house No. 2 at the corner of that street and Okhotny Ryad.

Having finished with the cadets, the Lefortovo and Rogozhsky Districts were ordered by the Staff of the Central Military Revolutionary Committee to launch a general offensive. The Lefortovo District sent about 450 men to support the offensive in the centre of the city and at the City Telephone Exchange. The Rogozhsko-Simonovsky District forces began to advance in the direction of Lubyanskaya Square.

Along their respective routes the Red Guard detachments were sniped at by individual Whiteguard snipers and squads of Whiteguards organised by the house committees in the different streets. Suspicious houses had to be searched. This greatly retarded the advance of the detachments. The Military Revolutionary Committee issued an order making it compulsory for the house committees to deliver all arms in the possession of their tenants to the District Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

By order of the Staff of the Military Revolutionary Committee the artillery mounted near the Moscow Soviet opened fire on the Hotel National. Under cover of this gunfire a detachment of fifty men advanced towards the hotel with the object of capturing it, and another detachment of equal strength, was sent to capture the premises of the Food Department of the Municipal Administration on the corner of Tverskaya Street and Okhotny Ryad.

A delegation from the Bolshevik Committee in Kimri-Savelovo arrived in Moscow to offer assistance. The delegates reported that armoured cars were available in Savelovo, and V. V. Artishevsky, a veteran Bolshevik, was immediately commissioned to go there and fetch them. He returned on November 1 with two armoured cars. A request for two armoured cars was also sent to the Military Revolutionary Committee in Kazan.

In the Dorogomilovo District, on October 31, a detachment of Red Guards again occupied the Borodinsky Bridge. M. I. Shlomin, a Bolshevik worker, was sent to the Moscow Soviet to fetch arms, but on reaching the Smolensk Market the cadets held up the motor truck, dragged Shlomin from it and shot him. [68]

The heaviest fighting took place in the Ostozhenka and Prechistenka Streets. It was difficult to advance here as the streets were swept by the machine-gun fire of the cadets. A drizzling rain was falling, the shallow trench-



Fighting at the Nikitsky Gate *From a drawing by G. Savitsky*

es were flooded and the Red Guards were obliged to lie in the mud and water. Now and again they took turns to warm themselves in a neighbouring tea shop, which served as a first-aid centre and food base. In the trench there was a boy of thirteen named Andreyev, the son of a smith employed at the Michelson Plant, who insisted on remaining in the trench while the men were away at the tea shop. On leaving, the men left their rifles on the parapet of the trench and the boy would fire each rifle in turn to show the cadets that the trench was not deserted. While so engaged he accidentally allowed his rifle to slip from his hand on to the parapet of the trench and in trying to retrieve it he exposed his body. The cadets spotted him and riddled him with machine-gun bullets. For three days the little hero battled with death. When his comrades from the trench came to visit him he asked them anxiously:

"Well? Have you captured the Headquarters? Have you beaten the cadets?"

On hearing the reply: "Yes," the boy, forgetting his wounds, uttered a loud "Hurrah!" and died with a smile on his lips.

Hemmed in on all sides, the cadets tried to force their way through the Presnya District to the Bryansk and Alexandrovsky Railway Stations, where, they knew, the shock troops were detraining. After stubborn fighting

they captured Kudrinskaya Square. Another White detachment captured Sadovo-Kudrinskaya Street and Sennaya Square, thus threatening to outflank the Red forces. The Presnya District Military Revolutionary Committee decided to regroup its detachments and to muster fresh forces for another attack.

The Central Military Revolutionary Committee issued orders to all the district staffs to send all their available men.

From Rayevo Farm came 500 Red Guards and 14 Grenadiers with grenades. Rayevo Farm, situated seventeen kilometres from Moscow, was a large ammunition depot staffed by about 8,000 men. As soon as the news of the fighting in Moscow reached Rayevo the Bolsheviks there formed a Military Revolutionary Committee. The 84th Detachment which guarded the depot had its headquarters in Perlovka, nearby. A group of Bolsheviks went to this detachment, arrested the officers and demanded that they should deliver up their stock of arms, threatening to surround them with the troops of the Rayevo garrison if they failed to comply. The officers were impressed by this threat and gave up 800 Berdan rifles. These were used to arm the soldiers at Rayevo Farm. In all, Rayevo sent a thousand men to Moscow and kept the city supplied with shells.

That same day, October 31, the Military Revolutionary Committee, mustering forces for a decisive attack, ordered the Serpukhovo Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to send 300 men, the Rzhev Soviet to send "as many as possible" machine guns and soldiers, and the Podolsk Soviet to send 1,000 Red Guards. [69]

All that day General Headquarters made exceptional efforts to find troops with which to relieve the counter-revolutionaries in Moscow. It sent a request to Cherkassy for three battalions of shock troops, but it was informed that these had already left for Kiev to suppress a Bolshevik insurrection there. It then requested that three other battalions, one from each of the armies on the South-Western Front, be sent instead.

General Headquarters turned to every front, to every army and even to every division in the endeavour to procure at least some little assistance for Ryabtsev, but everywhere the same reply was received: Even if it were possible to entrain, it would be impossible to get beyond Orsha or Vyazma. The garrisons at the junction stations near Moscow refused to allow any troops to go to Ryabtsev's aid. On the other hand, detachments of Red Guards and soldiers proceeding to the aid of the insurgents were given every facility to reach their destination. The threat uttered by the Railwaymen's Executive remained a dead letter. The rank-and-file railwaymen helped the revolution in defiance of their leaders.

8

THE DEFEAT OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

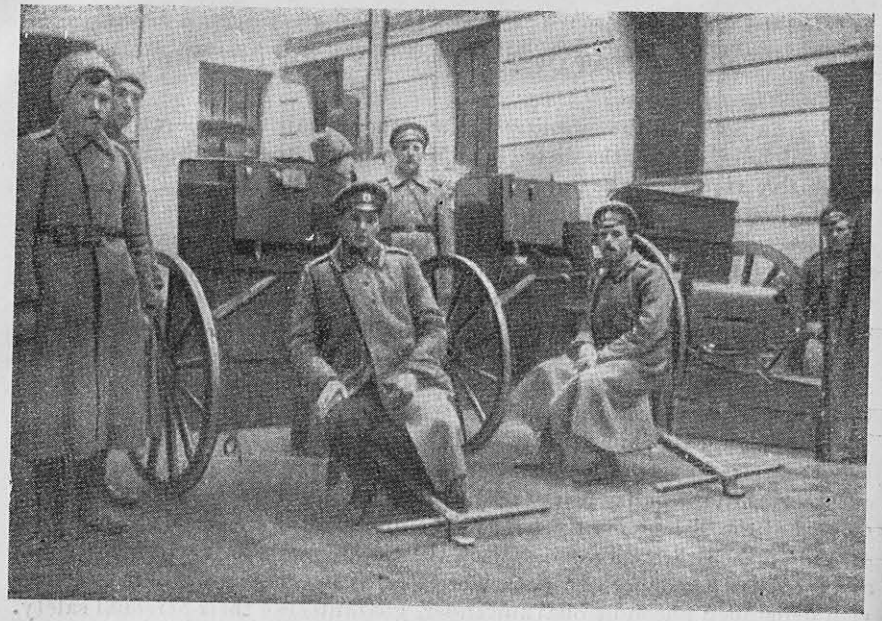
Beginning with the morning of November 1, military operations developed splendidly in all the districts of Moscow, and that day became the day of decisive victory of the Soviet forces.

The first success was the capture of the Telephone Exchange in Milyutinsky Street. This tall, fortress-like building, with few windows, was well adapted for defence. The Whites had blocked the entrances with logs and dismantled iron gates and had barricaded the street. They maintained such a heavy machine-gun and rifle fire that it was impossible to approach the building. Well supplied with food and ammunition, they were in a position to withstand a siege of many days. Inside the building the telephone staff continued with their work, maintaining contact with the Whiteguard centre.

Usiyevich, the commander of the besieging forces, sent a request to Staff Headquarters for artillery and at dawn, on November 1, the Red Guards planted a mortar in the belfry of a nearby church and began to bombard the upper storeys of the Telephone Exchange. The first shell dropped on the roof; the second crashed through a window on the top floor where it wrecked a room and wounded a number of cadets. The latter then waved a white flag. Usiyevich demanded unconditional surrender, guaranteeing their personal safety. Ten minutes later the cadets and officers began to file out of the building and to stack their arms.

At 5 a.m., on November 1, the Staff of the Military Revolutionary Committee sent three detachments of fifty men each to Theatre Square, one to be posted near the Maly Theatre, another near the Grand Theatre, and the third near the Hotel Central in Petrovka Street. A three-inch gun was planted near the Grand Theatre to bombard the City Duma. At the same time the detachment in Okhotny Ryad, after receiving reinforcements, captured the Hotel Continental. This made it possible to place a second gun in Teatralny Proyezd and to bombard the Hotel Metropole. Red units appeared almost at the walls of the Kremlin. The detachments of the Zamoskvorechye District, on the opposite side of the Moscow River, kept the battlements of the Kremlin walls under constant machine-gun and rifle fire, but the thick walls afforded the cadets excellent protection.

An important role on the Staff of the Zamoskvorechye District was played by Professor P. K. Sternberg, lecturer on astronomy at the Moscow University, a scientist of European repute, who had joined the Bolsheviks as early as 1905. On his appointment as a member of the Zamoskvorechye District Military Revolutionary Committee, Professor Sternberg set to work with the greatest energy. Exceedingly kind-hearted, he was greatly moved by the sufferings of the wounded. So distinctly a civilian, with all the characteristics of the old style intellectual, he caused considerable astonishment when he appeared in the firing line. But a brave revolutionary heart beat



Cadets guarding the Telephone Exchange

beneath this mild exterior. Prof. Sternberg displayed remarkable firmness and determination, and the example he set inspired the Red Guards to perform feats of bravery and self-sacrifice.

The problem of how to capture the Kremlin was the subject of repeated discussion at Staff Headquarters. A worker employed at the Michelson Plant suggested that entrance to the Kremlin be gained by means of the Neglinka, a small tributary of the Moscow River. This rivulet flows through an underground tube with an outlet near the Kremlin. The idea was that men should row up the tube at night in boats, enter the Kremlin that way and take it by storm. Finally it was decided to bombard the Kremlin.

That same morning a conference of district staffs was held at the Headquarters of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee. The conference demanded that all the technical means available, even aerial bombing, should be used against the Whites, and that decisive operations should be commenced against the cadets in the Kremlin and the Alexandrovsky Military School. The Military Revolutionary Committee accepted this plan of action, but banned aerial bombing and the bombardment of the City Duma. The 7th Ukrainian Heavy Artillery Battalion, which until then had been neutral, was sent to take up a position on the Sparrow Hills. On November 1 the artillery which was shelling the Kremlin from Shvivaya Hill was reinforced with heavy guns.

On the morning of November 1 the Presnya District launched the attack. The Presnya artillerymen began to shell separate buildings in which the Whites had fortified themselves, as the Military Revolutionary Committee had given orders that only buildings which were definitely known to be cadet bases should be bombarded. This was done to avoid unnecessary destruction and loss of life. By 11 a.m. the Red Guards had recaptured Sennaya and Kudrinskaya Squares. In the Kudrinskaya Square barricades were hastily erected as a defence against attack from the direction of the Novinsky Boulevard.



Cadets on the battlements of the Kremlin

Orders were received from the Central Military Revolutionary Committee to occupy the whole district down to the Nikitsky Gate and to effect a junction with the detachment operating there. Here the situation had been complicated by a conflagration which had broken out in the morning in Gagarin's house, shortly after its capture by Red Guards. The fire had started in a drug store on the ground floor; its cause was never ascertained. Taking advantage of the flames, the cadets hurled back the Red detachments and occupied Bartels' baker shop at the corner of Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street and Tverskoi Boulevard. The fighting in this district was very heavy and was accompanied by repeated bayonet charges and counter-charges. The Military Revolutionary Committee sent a detachment of 100 men, and by the evening the Red Guards occupied one side of Nikitskaya Street, to the right and left of the burning building.

In the City District, after capturing the Telephone Exchange, the Red Guards with two machine guns launched an attack on Kitai-Gorod (the ancient, walled city of Moscow—*Ed.*) and captured the Polytechnical Museum. The cadets who were guarding the Nikolsky, Vladimirsky, Ilyinsky and Varvarsky Gates had neglected to guard the Prolomny Gate, which also

led to Kitai-Gorod. After capturing the Prolomny Gate the Red Guards, by means of flanking fire, dislodged the cadets, first from the Vladimirsky Gate and then from the Ilyinsky and Nikolsky Gates. At 8 p.m. the Red Guards were still advancing along Ilyinka and Nikolskaya Streets.

The forces from the Rogozhsko-Simonovsky District, after capturing positions along the Kitai-Gorod wall from the Moscow River to the Polytechnical Museum, captured the Varvarsky Gate and continued their attack along Varvarka Street.

The forces from the Khamovniki District, having advanced through the Plushchikha and the adjacent side streets, launched an attack along the Smolensk Boulevard and Levshinsky Street. The 5th Officers' Training School was successfully bombarded, but the sudden appearance in the Smolensk Market of an armoured motor truck filled with cadets compelled the Red Guards to retreat.

In Ostozhenka and Prechistenka Streets heavy fighting continued. The cadets desperately defended the approaches to the Military Area Headquarters and the Alexandrovsky Military School, the centres of their resistance. The fight became protracted and developed into a battle for positions. The Red detachments were fatigued by incessant fighting. Unaccustomed to lengthy operations, the Red Guards were depressed by the protracted nature of the fighting.

The Zamoskvorechye Military Revolutionary Committee sent its best fighters to this quarter. The group that was defending the position in Ostozhenka Street was commanded by Peter Dobrinin, a young man of twenty-three, a Bolshevik worker employed at the Telephone Apparatus Factory. Passing from trench to trench Dobrinin cheered up his men, imbuing them with fresh courage and confidence. The Red Guards seemed to see him always and everywhere, and everybody wondered whether he ever slept. During one of the battles he was wounded, a bullet passing right through his shoulder, but he continued to command his section, infecting his men with his own courage and determination. Fearing that he would be outflanked by the cadets, he himself went out reconnoitring and penetrated into the enemy's rear. During one of these expeditions he was killed. His body was found only after the Whites were defeated.

In the same street, Lusik Lisinova (Lisinyan) also met her death. She was a student at the Commercial Institute and one of the organisers of the Third International Young Workers' League. During the fighting in the Zamoskvorechye District, Lisinova rendered first aid to the wounded, carried dispatches under enemy fire, and received reports. On learning of the strained situation in Ostozhenka Street she said very emphatically: "I must be out there with the men," and she went into the firing line. At 1 p.m. on November 1 a cadet bullet struck down this heroic girl, whose heart burned with ardent love for the cause of the proletariat.

The Whites failed to dislodge the Red Guards from the trenches.

At night on November 1, the line ran through the end of Plushchikha



Red Guards who took part in the fighting at the Nikitsky Gate

and Neopalimovsky Street, embracing part of the Smolensk Boulevard from Neopalimovsky Street to Zubovskaya Square, and then across Prechistenka, near the fire brigade station, and Ostozhenka, near Korobeinikov Street.

At the close of day, on November 1, the general situation was as follows: The Red Guards' attack on the Red Square and the City Duma continued. The cadets occupied one side of Nikitsky Street, Nikitsky Boulevard and the Arbat. They also occupied Prechistenka and Ostozhenka Streets, where their base—Military Area Headquarters—was situated, right up to the border of the Khamovniki District. The Zamoskvorechye District had thwarted the cadets' attempts to force their way to the other side of the Moscow River and had sent reinforcements to its detachments attacking Military Area Headquarters. The Red Guards who were advancing through the side streets from Povarskaya and Prechistenka Streets strove hard to obtain a foothold in the Arbat in order to cut communications between the Alexandrovsky Military School and the 5th Officers' Training School.

On November 1, the Military Revolutionary Committee called up additional reinforcements in preparation for a decisive assault. The Shuya

Military Revolutionary Committee was ordered to send 500 soldiers fully armed and equipped. The Tver Military Revolutionary Committee was ordered to entrain the 57th and the 196th Infantry Reserve Regiments and also a detachment of heavy artillery. A detachment of 90 men arrived from Mytishchy, and another detachment of 180 from Kolchugino. These were sent to the Sokolniki workshops to take supper and rest, after which they were to go into the firing line.

That same day a train arrived at the Kursk Station with 400 men of the 250th Infantry Reserve Regiment with 10 machine guns from Kovrov, 300 men of the 197th Regiment from Alexandrov and 70 men of the 82nd Infantry Reserve Regiment from Vladimir; 350 sappers arrived from Staritsa, of whom 100 were sent to the Zamoskvorechye District. Reinforcements came flowing in an unending stream. It seemed as though the whole of the Moscow Region had risen against the Whites.

The news of this mass enthusiasm reached the counter-revolutionary camp. Messages were received by telephone. Witnesses arrived who had seen the Red forces detraining. Members of the Railwaymen's Executive sent in lists of the railway cars which had arrived. The worst news was that of the arrival of heavy artillery. At regular intervals the roar of heavy guns was heard, causing the Kremlin to tremble to its foundations. This had a particularly depressing effect upon the Whites.

The Whiteguards became more and more convinced that they were doomed and that their struggle was hopeless. The officers broke down under the nervous strain. They no longer dreamed of victory, their one thought now was to save their lives. Again the compromisers came on the scene, this time the most "radical" of them. The very appearance of these solicitors in the cause of the Whites was an omen of the approaching defeat of the cadets. On the night of November 1 a delegation representing the Menshevik Unionists and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries appeared at the Headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee—obviously with the knowledge of the "Committee of Public Safety"—with a proposal for an immediate armistice and the formation of a Provisional Committee, 40 per cent of the members of which were to be Bolsheviks, 40 per cent representatives of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties, and 20 per cent Internationalist Mensheviks. The delegates asserted that a similar agreement had already been reached by the Socialist parties in Petrograd.

The Military Revolutionary Committee, on its part, proposed an agreement on the following terms: The cadets were to be disarmed. All power to be transferred to the Soviets. An organ of government to be set up consisting of the Military Revolutionary Committee supplemented by representatives of other organisations, 17 members in all.

The delegation withdrew to submit these terms to the "Committee of Public Safety." The latter, however, influenced by the successes achieved by the revolutionary troops and the Red Guards, had decided to capitulate even before the mediators arrived.

The position of the "Committee of Public Safety" and its staff was hopeless. A definite split had occurred among the cadets, and a rift had occurred even in the Whiteguard staff. In the latter there was definite opposition to Ryabtsev, who was accused of being irresolute and of compromising with the Soviets.

On the other hand, a section of the cadets realised that the "Committee of Public Safety" was deceiving them. Their eyes were opened to a large extent by a group of cadets from the Alexeyevsky Military School who had surrendered in the Lefortovo District. These cadets came to the Party Centre in the Zamoskvorechye District and offered to go to the Alexandrovsky Military School to convince the cadets that further resistance was useless. The delegation was escorted to the Alexandrovsky Military School on November 1 and returned just when the Military Revolutionary Committee was negotiating with the delegation of Unionists and "Left" Socialist Revolutionaries. The result was that the rift among the cadets became even wider than among the leaders of the "Committee of Public Safety."

The decisive attack launched by the Reds, and the artillery bombardment of the cadet stronghold, accelerated the process of disintegration in the Whiteguard camp. At 6 a.m. on November 2, Rudnyev, without waiting for the return of the "radical" solicitors, sent the Military Revolutionary Committee a letter of capitulation. Writing on behalf of the "Committee of Public Safety" he stated that he

> "under present conditions considers it necessary to put a stop in Moscow to the armed struggle against the political system that was being introduced by the Military Revolutionary Committee and to adhere to the ordinary methods of political life, leaving it to the future to decide the question of the local and central government throughout Russia."[70]

An hour later another delegation representing the six "Socialist" parties, headed by S. Volsky, presented itself to the Military Revolutionary Committee for the purpose of obtaining mitigation of the terms of capitulation. The delegates resorted to every device imaginable to influence the members of the Military Revolutionary Committee. They appealed for mercy; they threatened them with the judgment of history; they alleged that certain concessions had been made in Petrograd, and painted a scene of horror for which, they said, the Bolsheviks were responsible.

When the "Committee of Public Safety" presented its ultimatum to the Military Revolutionary Committee and the cadets massacred the soldiers in the Kremlin, the representatives of these "Socialist" parties fled from the Moscow Soviet to the Whiteguard camp. When the proletarian revolution was victorious they came to plead on behalf of the Whiteguards.

Yielding to the importunity of the delegation, Smirnov, who was subsequently proved to have been an enemy of the people, made the following proposals on behalf of the Military Revolutionary Committee:

"1. The Committee of Public Safety must be dissolved.

"2. The cadets and the Whiteguards are to be disarmed.

"Officers are to retain their arms, and the Military Revolutionary Committee guarantees their freedom and personal immunity.

"3. For the purpose of determining the procedure of capitulation a committee shall be set up consisting of representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee and of the organisations acting as mediators.

"4. On the acceptance of the aforementioned points by the parties concerned, the Military Revolutionary Committee shall forthwith order the cessation of artillery bombardment."[71]

On the morning of November 2, the Military Revolutionary Committee, in the absence of a number of its members, gave its consent to this draft agreement by a majority vote.

While the final terms of capitulation were being drawn up at the Moscow Soviet, hostilities continued. The heavy guns sent shell after shell into the Kremlin, while the Red Guards steadily compelled the cadets defending its approaches to fall back on their base.

At 10:55 a.m. on November 2, the Hotel Metropole was cleared of cadets and Kitai-Gorod was entirely occupied by Red Guards. Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, the detachments which were released after the capture of the Hotel Metropole occupied the City Duma and the Historical Museum. The cadets and the "Committee of Public Safety" had vacated these buildings and had retired to the Kremlin at 3 a.m. on November 1, owing to the artillery bombardment.

In these operations an active part was taken by the so-called "Volga units," *i.e.*, reinforcements which had arrived from Vladimir, Shuya, Alexandrov and Kovrov, headed by M. V. Frunze, who personally directed operations against the Whites in the Lubyanka Street and during the capture of the Hotel Metropole, the City Duma and the Kremlin. To reinforce the revolutionary forces of the Moscow proletariat a detachment of Red Guards and revolutionary sailors was sent from Petrograd, headed by a member of the military organisation of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. On October 31, a detachment of Petrograd Red Guards arrived and placed themselves at the disposal of the Staff of the Red Guard and the Military Revolutionary Committee of the City District. They were promptly sent to occupy fighting positions in the vicinity of Sukharev Square. That same day, on the orders of Lenin and Stalin, 2,000 additional Red Guards and sailors left Petrograd for Moscow. They arrived early in the morning of November 1 and took part in the fighting. Speaking at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party Lenin said: "There is now no point in negotiating with the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union. Troops must be dispatched to Moscow."[72]

Speaking a second time at this meeting, Lenin said: "Assistance must be given to the Muscovites, and our victory will be certain."[73]

The arrival of the Petrograd Red Guards and sailors hastened the defeat of the Whiteguards in Moscow.



"... the Kremlin was surrounded by the Soviet forces. The artillery fired point-blank at the Nikolsky Gate"

From a drawing by N. Khristenko

The cadets in the Kremlin kept the Hotel Metropole and Okhotny Ryad under machine-gun fire. To put a stop to this the gun in Lubyanskaya Square was turned against the Spasskaya Tower of the Kremlin. Simultaneously, the guns of the Heavy Artillery Workshops on Shvivaya Hill also bombarded it. A shell hit the Kremlin clock, stopped it and silenced the machine gun.

At 2:37 p.m. on November 2, the Kremlin was surrounded by the Soviet forces. The artillery fired point-blank at the Nikolsky Gate. By 7 p.m. the Arcade in the Red Square was captured. In Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street, the exchange of fire between the cadets and Red Guards who occupied opposite sides of the street continued until dusk. From the direction of Kudrinskaya Square the Red Guards advanced along Povarskaya and Bronnaya Streets, right up to the Nikitsky Gate.

In the Khamovniki District the cadets tried to break through to the Bryansk Station but encountered strong resistance. The skirmishes with the cadets in the side streets on both sides of the Arbat ceased.

The detachments from the Zamoskvorechye District launched an attack on the Kamenny Bridge and compelled the cadets to retreat. The Red Guards captured Military Area Headquarters in Prechistenka Street. Before the

final assault on this building Red Guard Nikolai Sichev, taking about thirty hand grenades with him, climbed a telegraph pole to the top of a house nearby. From there he crept to the roof of the Military Area Headquarters and, reaching over the eaves, threw his hand grenades through the windows. The panic this created among the cadets hastened the fall of this Whiteguard stronghold.

The men of the Zamoskvorechye District dislodged the Whites from the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. The cadets fled to the Alexandrovsky Military School.

The Whiteguard Staff begged for quarter and they too offered to start negotiations for terms of capitulation.

9

THE CAPITULATION OF THE WHITES

The Military Revolutionary Committee entrusted the negotiations to Smidovich and Smirnov, who, on their own responsibility, departed, in certain particulars, from the terms which had been submitted to the "Committee of Public Safety" that morning. A fifth point was added to the agreement, which read as follows:

"On the signing of this agreement all prisoners on both sides are to be forthwith released."[74]

Points 2 and 3 were also altered for the worse. An addendum was made to point 2 allowing the students of cadet schools to retain "arms needed for training" and point 3 was amended to allow the Whiteguard officers to have a representative on the Committee which was to decide the procedure of disarming the cadets. In its final form the agreement read as follows:

"November 2, 1917, 5 p.m.

"1. The Committee of Public Safety shall dissolve.

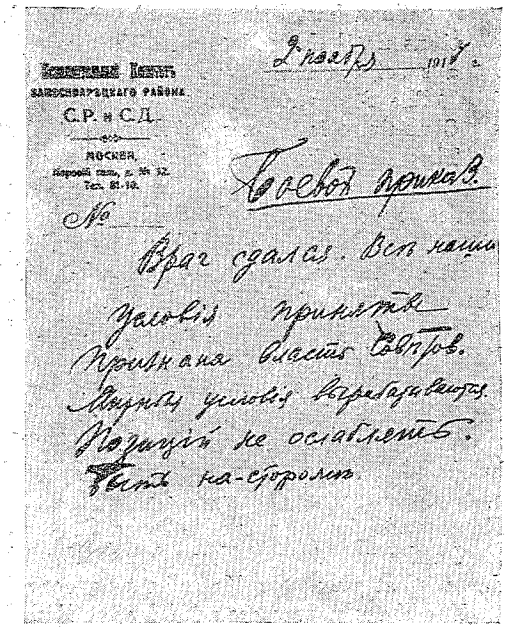
"2. The Whiteguard shall return its arms and dissolve. Officers are to retain the weapons due to their rank. Cadet schools are to retain only such arms as are needed for training. All other arms must be returned by the cadets. The Military Revolutionary Committee guarantees to all their freedom and personal immunity.

"3. To decide the mode of disarming referred to in point 2, a committee shall be set up consisting of representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee, representatives of the commanding personnel, and representatives of the organisations acting as mediators.

"4. The moment this peace treaty is signed both sides shall immediately issue orders for the cessation of all firing, and of all other hostilities, and take resolute measures to ensure the implicit obedience of these orders on the spot.

"5. On the signing of this agreement all prisoners on both sides shall be forthwith released."[75]

When Smidovich and Smirnov reported the final text of the agreement to the Military Revolutionary Committee, most of the members of the Party Centre and those members of the Military Revolutionary Committee who had been absent from the morning meeting were now present. Strong objections to the treaty were raised by a number of the comrades and a lengthy debate ensued. True, the treaty was ultimately ratified, but this was entirely due to the fact that it contained the main thing: the recognition of the Soviet power in Moscow and of the defeat of the Whiteguards.



Facsimile of the combat order issued by Staff Headquarters of the Zamoskvorechye District announcing the surrender of the enemy, but ordering the revolutionary forces to remain vigilant in their positions

At 9 p.m. on November 2, the Military Revolutionary Committee issued the following order:

"To all the forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

"The revolutionary forces are victorious. The cadets and the Whiteguards are surrendering their arms. The Committee of Public Safety is to be dissolved. All the forces of the bourgeoisie have been utterly defeated and are surrendering on our terms.

"All power is vested in the Military Revolutionary Committee.

"At a high price, the Moscow workers and soldiers have won power in Moscow.

"All for the protection of the gains of the new workers', soldiers' and peasants' revolution!

"The enemy has capitulated.

"The Military Revolutionary Committee orders the cessation of all hostilities (rifle, machine-gun and artillery fire).

"When hostilities cease the Soviet forces must remain in their positions until the cadets and Whiteguards have surrendered their arms to a special commission.

"The forces are not to disperse until the Military Revolutionary Committee issues a special order to that effect."[76]

The people in the districts were aware that negotiations were proceeding for the capitulation of the cadets, but taught by the experience of the armistice of October 29 and 30, the masses had no confidence in the sincerity of the Whites. On November 3 skirmishes continued here and there.

The condition of some of the cadet units which were scattered all over the city may be judged by the tenor of a message sent to the White Headquarters by Staff Captain Mylnikov. On November 3 he was in the Arbat. From there he sent a message to Headquarters asking for information about the state of affairs and expressing indignation at the fact that although in the firing line, he had no knowledge of how the fighting was proceeding.

At 10:35 a.m. on November 3, the Smolensk Market was entirely in the hands of the Red Guards. Here an ambush was arranged to hold up the cadets who, after the treaty was signed, made an attempt to flee from Moscow *via* the Bryansk Railway Station.

On the morning of November 3, the 5th Cadet School surrendered. At dawn, that day, the Kremlin was occupied.

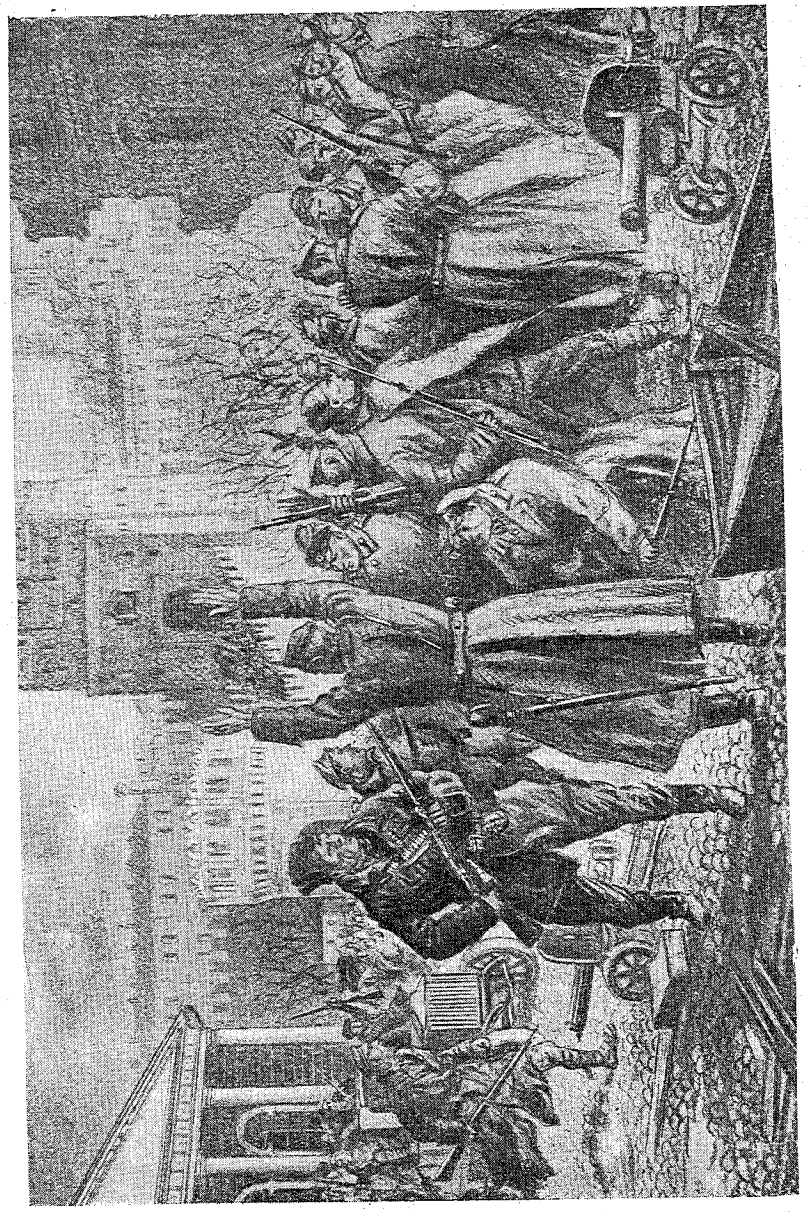
The Kremlin was occupied by the Red Guards after the cessation of the bombardment at 3 a.m. Before that only a few individual Red Guards had managed to filter through.

The capture of the Kremlin crowned the victory in Moscow.

The formal surrender of the officers and cadets was then proceeded with. The fact that the officers were allowed to retain their arms, that the freedom and personal immunity of all the counter-revolutionaries had been guaranteed, that is to say, were allowed to go unpunished for all their misdeeds, and that all the Whiteguard and cadet prisoners were released caused great dissatisfaction among the masses. On November 3 representatives of the District Committees gathered at the Headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee and demanded the annulment of the treaty, the arrest of the cadets and Whiteguards, and the execution of the leaders of the counter-revolution.

The workers and soldiers who had been fighting the cadets in the streets of Moscow for six days and nights promptly rectified the blunder committed by the leaders of the insurrection. Not only were the officers not "allowed to retain the arms due to their rank," but they had to be packed off to gaol in order to save them from being lynched. They were released later, in conformity with the treaty. On leaving the prison they had to disguise themselves in privates' greatcoats in order to escape the fury of the masses.

The places where the cadets and officers were disarmed were thronged with vast crowds of workers and soldiers who made no secret of their hostility towards the neutral Commissars, and even towards the representatives of



From a drawing by A. Yermolayev

Disarming the Whiteguards outside the Riding School (on the left)

the Military Revolutionary Committee who were supervising the disarming and liberation of the officers and the cadets in conformity with the treaty.

A Menshevik writer in the newspaper *Vperyod* described the following scene he witnessed outside the Alexandrovsky Military School, which vividly illustrates the temper of the masses.

> "On arriving at the Alexandrovsky Military School on the morning of November 3, I found an extremely grave situation. Groups from different units, both military and civilian, had gathered in the street, extremely undisciplined, and loudly and angrily demanded the immediate arrest and even lynching of the cadets and officers. They threatened to bring up artillery if we failed to carry out their demands. Two guns that were standing in the square (three-inch) were turned on the school. The situation in the streets was extremely tense. The threats against the Commissars might have been put into effect any moment. Efforts were made to intimidate us."

The class intuition of the workers did not deceive them. After the capitulation, the leaders of the "Committee of Public Safety" proceeded to organise sabotage in all the government offices in Moscow. The officers set about recruiting men for a counter-revolutionary army, and sent Whiteguards to the Don, where Kaledin was forming his bands. The bulk of the officers and cadets who had fought the workers and soldiers in Moscow joined the ranks of the counter-revolution that was being organised in the Don and in the Ukraine.

The lack of firmness which the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee displayed even at the last moment towards the utterly exposed class enemy caused the proletarian revolution nothing but harm.

The October insurrection in Moscow was a genuinely popular insurrection. It was effected by the broad masses of the workers and soldiers.

Its strongholds were the factories, where the workers chose the best of their men to go into the fighting line, and supplied the arms and everything else that was needed to achieve victory. By their revolutionary ardour and class consciousness the industrial proletariat exercised enormous influence upon the masses of the soldiers. It drew them into the struggle and led them.

The masses of the workers and a section of the garrison demanded from the district revolutionary centres an uncompromising policy, firmness and resolute action. Attack and not defence, was the slogan of the masses. Taught by the lessons of the insurrection of December 1905, the Moscow workers were aware that victory could be achieved only by a determined and sanguinary struggle, a vigorous offensive. The district centres, on their part, urged the central leading bodies of the insurrection to adopt offensive

tactics. Thanks to the revolutionary initiative and heroic determination of the advanced workers in the districts a number of errors committed by the leaders were rectified. Victory was achieved thanks to the devotion of the masses.

In Moscow, as in Petrograd, one party, the Bolshevik Party, exercised undivided leadership of the insurrection in its organisational as well as in its subsequent stages. In Moscow, no less than in Petrograd, the real inspiration of the insurrection came from Lenin, whose leadership the Moscow Bolshevik organisation accepted without hesitation. From the very beginning of the October battles in Moscow, Lenin, the genius of the Socialist revolution, closely watched the course of the struggle and rendered the Moscow proletariat and its Bolshevik organisation every assistance.

To the aid of the Moscow workers the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, headed by Stalin, sent considerable armed forces. The forces sent by Lenin and Stalin enthusiastically fought and defeated the Whiteguard mutinies side by side with the proletarian detachments of Moscow. The arrival of revolutionary reinforcements from Petrograd, Ivanovo-Voznesensk and other towns immeasurably strengthened the position of the revolutionary forces and caused demoralisation in the ranks of the counter-revolutionaries.

The grave mistakes committed during the October days in Moscow were due to the fact that the "main rules of the art of insurrection," to which Lenin had repeatedly called attention in his letters, were violated by the leading bodies both during the organisational stage of the insurrection as well as during the armed struggle itself. As if foreseeing the possibility of such mistakes Lenin had written in his letters that

> ". . . armed insurrection is a *special* form of the political struggle, subject to special laws, to which we must give our serious attention."[77]

The mistakes committed during the October days in Moscow were due to the fact that these *special* laws of armed insurrection were not sufficiently understood, and often ignored, or forgotten.

In Petrograd, the counter-revolutionary revolt of the cadets was ruthlessly suppressed in the course of one night. In Moscow, however, the leaders betrayed tardiness and lack of determination. Some of the members of the leading bodies were even guilty of treacherous vacillation, which served to protract the struggle. In spite of Lenin's exhortation that "once it (*i.e.*, insurrection—*Ed.*) is begun, remember firmly that you have to *go to the very end*,"[78] the Moscow Bolsheviks committed mistakes even when setting up the leading bodies, and this hindered the achievement of victory. To the mistakes committed during the first days of the struggle the following must be added:

1. No technical preparations were made for the insurrection. The leading bodies were formed too late. At the beginning of the insurrection the transmission belts from the Bolshevik Party to the soldiers were not sufficiently strong.

2. On the instructions of the Party Centre, the Military Revolutionary Committee accepted Mensheviks as members. In Petrograd, *defence*, including the invitation of other parties to send representatives to the Military Revolutionary Committee, was a cover for *an offensive*. In Moscow, the acceptance of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks on the Military Revolutionary Committee was taken seriously.

3. At the opening of hostilities the Military Revolutionary Committees, central and district, lacked comrades familiar with military operations. The military-technical weakness of the Central Military Revolutionary Committee may partly be explained by the fact that the leaders of the insurrection failed to take prompt measures to capture and hold the arsenal and powder magazines for the purpose of arming the workers and soldiers.

4. In Petrograd the insurrection was exceptionally well organised. In Moscow, however, things were allowed to drift in their own way, particularly in the initial period. As Lenin taught: "Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination* and take the *offensive* absolutely and without fail. Defence means the death of the armed insurrection!"[79]

On both the Military Revolutionary Committee and the Party Centre in Moscow there were men who had no confidence in the forces of the proletarian revolution and who denied that Socialism could be victorious in Russia. They were opposed to armed insurrection. They counted on being able to avert an insurrection. Both before and during the insurrection they entered into treasonable negotiations with the class enemy. The enemy took advantage of these negotiations and gained time in which to organise his forces. By deceit he captured the Kremlin, surrounded the Moscow Soviet and presented an ultimatum to the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Guided by the advice of Lenin and Stalin, the Moscow Bolshevik organisation thrust aside the waverers, broke down the opposition to insurrection and achieved a decisive victory over the counter-revolution.



Chapter Eight

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AT THE FRONT

1

AT GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

ON THE NIGHT of October 25, General Baluyev, Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front, enquired of General Headquarters what action to take with regard to the telegrams he was receiving announcing the arrest of the Provisional Government.

"I request General Headquarters to give instructions, and immediately," he said, "as I cannot conceal the telegrams of the Military Revolutionary Committee from the troops."[1]

Next morning, General Dukhonin informed Baluyev what measures General Headquarters had taken.

"As telegrams are beginning to arrive with various orders from the Bolsheviks," he stated, "we have appointed members of the Committee to be on constant duty at Headquarters in Moghilev and at the railway station to hold up the telegrams."[2]

General Headquarters tried to conceal from the soldiers the news of the overthrow of the Provisional Government. Situated in the rear of the Western Front, in the backward provincial town of Moghilev, General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief served as the centre of concentration of the monarchist generals and army officers who constituted its immense staff. To protect this hotbed of counter-revolution the most "reliable" troops were retained, such as the 1st Shock Regiment and a battalion of Chevaliers of St. George. Numerous central bodies of the militarised bourgeois organisations, such as the Union of Zemstvos and Cities, and the War Industry Committee, also had their offices at General Headquarters. At the head of General Headquarters stood General N. N. Dukhonin, Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Actually, he was the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, for Kerensky, who officially held that post, was merely a straw man, the "political figurehead."

Dukhonin had only just embarked upon his high career. At the beginning of the war he was in command of a regiment and later served as Quartermaster-General on the Staff of the South-Western Front. He had been appointed Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief only in September 1917. Dukhonin was a monarchist. In view of the situation which had arisen he, as General Denikin wrote subsequently, "very reluctantly travelled with the revolutionary democracy."[3] He hoped, with the assistance of all sorts of conciliation committees, to restore the discipline of the rod in the army and to continue the war to a "victorious finish," but he was doomed to disappointment.

Dull and narrow-minded, Dukhonin acted entirely in conformity with the advice and instructions of that outstanding personality in the camp of the counter-revolution, General Alexeyev, Chief of Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief under Nicholas II and later under Kerensky. As General M. D. Bonch-Bruyevich stated:

> "Alexeyev had such enormous influence upon Dukhonin that before issuing any order the latter always consulted Alexeyev on the direct wire."[4]

At General Headquarters there was an All-Army Committee, consisting of 25 members, each representing one of the fronts, armies, fleets, and so forth. As was the case with all Army and Front Committees which had been elected in the spring or summer, the majority of the members of the All-Army Committee were either Mensheviks or Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Committee played no independent role whatever; it merely rubber-stamped the orders of General Headquarters. A characteristic example of this is quoted by the Whiteguard A. A. Dickhof-Derenthal, who was at General Headquarters at that time.

> "One day, shortly before the Bolshevik insurrection, the All-Army Committee that had been set up at General Headquarters sent Kerensky one of their 'regular documents' commencing with the words: 'We demand. . . .'

> "Kerensky returned this document with the following marginal note:
>
> "'The All-Army Committee has no right to "demand" anything from its Supreme Commander-in-Chief. . . . It may only "request."'
>
> "This incident found its way into the press and General Dukhonin was beside himself with rage over it.
>
> "'How can such things be communicated to journalists?' he asked indignantly.
>
> "But . . . time passed . . . no earthquake resulted from this affront to democratic majesty and, calming down, General Dukhonin himself began, in his sprawling handwriting, to blue-pencil the 'demanding' telegrams with the stereotyped comment: 'They have no right to demand!'"[5]

The Chairman of the All-Army Committee was Staff Captain S. N. Perekrestov, a resolute opponent of the Soviet Government and a zealous supporter of General Dukhonin.

The Moghilev Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was controlled by the Mensheviks, Bundists and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Soviet of Peasants' Deputies entirely followed the lead of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. There was no independent Bolshevik organisation in Moghilev right up to the October days; there was only a Bolshevik group in the united Social-Democratic organisation.

The army disliked General Headquarters, was suspicious of it, and regarded it as being mainly responsible for the failure of military operations. As Lenin wrote:

> "The Kornilov mutiny fully revealed the fact that the army, the entire army, *hates General Headquarters*."[6]

The suspicions of the rank and file of the army were fully confirmed during the October days. General Headquarters were the first to attempt to hinder the Soviet Government's efforts for peace. More than that, General Headquarters came out in opposition to the Soviet Government. On October 26, Dukhonin sent telegrams to the Commanders-in-Chief of the different fronts and to other high army commanders in which he explained the attitude of General Headquarters towards the prevailing situation as follows:

> "General Headquarters, the Headquarters Commissar and the All-Army Committee share the point of view of the government and have decided to do everything to prevent the army from falling under the influence of the insurgent elements and at the same time to render the government full support."[7]

This was the program of action of General Headquarters and of the supreme army organisations at Headquarters.

For a whole week—from October 25 to November 1—Dukhonin was in direct telegraphic communication with the high commands of the different fronts, probing the possibilities of mobilising reliable units for the purpose of suppressing the revolution and issuing orders in that direction.

On October 28, in a conversation on the direct wire with General Lukirsky, Chief of Staff of the Northern Front, he said:

"Units have been sent from the South-Western Front to Kiev to deal with the Bolsheviks."[8]

In a telegram addressed to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, dated October 31, he stated that "all measures are being taken" to reinforce the government troops in Moscow. At the same time he tried to make arrangements for the reliable units to occupy the strategically most important points on the routes to Petrograd and Moscow. In his conversation with General Lukirsky he stated:

"I have given orders to the troops of the 17th Corps firmly to hold the railway stations at Dno and Orsha. These orders have probably been carried out. The officer sent on a locomotive to investigate and verify has not yet returned."[9]

In conformity with instructions of General Headquarters, Aristov, chairman of the committee for forming shock battalions, reported on October 31 that the shock battalions scattered over the different fronts were ready for action against the Bolsheviks. In a telegram addressed to the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union, published on October 31, the All-Army Committee stated: "All measures undertaken by General Headquarters are carried out under our supervision."[10] Thus, the compromisers on the All-Army Committee took General Headquarters under their wing.

General Headquarters was extremely lavish with threats. It issued orders right and left demanding that the Bolshevik insurrection be stopped, threatening that the entire army on active service would back this demand by force. On October 31, Dukhonin sent a telegram to Novocherkassk, addressed to M. Bogayevsky, the second in command of Ataman Kaledin, the leader of the monarchist counter-revolution that was being organised in the Don Region. This was in reply to Bogayevsky's offer to organise a punitive expedition against the Bolsheviks. Dukhonin stated:

"The Cossacks' readiness to become the guardians of public security is a stand-by to us all at this difficult juncture. . . . We shall fight to the very utmost to restore the Provisional Government and the Council of the Republic, and thereby restore order in the country."[11]

The extensive mobilisation of counter-revolutionary forces conducted by General Headquarters came to an abrupt end on November 1. By that time Dukhonin had received news of Krasnov's capitulation near Petrograd, and of Kerensky's flight. On November 1 he issued an order announcing that he had taken up the duties of Supreme Commander-in-Chief. In the same order he stopped the movement of troops to Petrograd. After all the threats he had uttered to crush the Bolsheviks, this was tantamount to a confession of the failure of the "crusade" which he had planned. Dukhonin adopted a waiting attitude, meanwhile drawing "reliable" units to General Headquarters.

2

THE OCTOBER DAYS ON THE NORTHERN FRONT

On the Northern Front the news of the revolution in Petrograd spread like wildfire.

On the morning of October 25, an army telegraph operator arrived at the offices of the newspaper *Brīvais Strēlnieks*, and looking round inquiringly for a moment, asked for the editor. The editor responded, whereupon the operator called him aside and furtively handed him a telegram which had arrived from Petrograd by a roundabout way, *via* Reval and Yuryev. It appeared that the compromising Army Committee of the Twelfth Army had put their members on constant duty at the telegraph instrument and there had held up telegrams addressed to revolutionary organisations. This telegram had also been intercepted, but the operator had made a copy and had brought it to the offices of the Bolshevik newspaper with the suggestion that "it should be brought to the knowledge of the masses." The telegram ran as follows:

"Last night the enemies of the people passed to the offensive. . . . A plot is afoot to strike a treacherous blow at the Petrograd Soviet. The newspapers *Rabochy Put* and *Soldat* have been suppressed."[12]

The telegram went on to urge that no troops ordered to Petrograd to support the counter-revolution should be allowed to pass. Shortly after this it became known that the Provisional Government had fallen and that a new government was in process of formation.

On the Northern Front there were three armies: the Twelfth, the First and the Fifth. Of these, the most important was the Twelfth Army, which was disposed in the immediate vicinity of the capital. On learning of the insurrection in Petrograd, the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Twelfth Army, which hitherto had existed in secret, immediately came out in the open. It had its headquarters in the town of Venden, quite close to the trenches.

On the morning of October 26 the Military Revolutionary Committee in Venden issued a manifesto in which it announced its existence to the army units and the inhabitants. Following the example of Red Petrograd, it stated, a Military Revolutionary Committee had been formed in the area of the Twelfth Army with the object of uniting all the revolutionary forces of that army. This Military Revolutionary Committee consisted of representatives of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, of the revolutionary Latvian Social-Democratic organisation, the Bolshevik military organisation in the Twelfth Army, the Executive Committee of the Lettish Rifles, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies of the Twelfth Army, and also of the Soviets of Soldiers', Workers' and Landless Peasants' Deputies of Venden, Volmar and Yuryev.

"Not a single soldier of the Twelfth Army must be sent to Petrograd for the shameful purpose of 'pacification,'" said the manifesto.[13]

Relying on the Bolshevik military organisation and on the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Lettish Rifles' Deputies, the Military Revolutionary Committee proclaimed itself the organ of the government in the Twelfth Army. It immediately endorsed the decision of the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Lettish Rifles' Deputies to call several Lettish regiments from the front for the purpose of occupying the towns of Venden, Volmar and Valk. A Lettish Reserve Regiment stationed in Yuryev was ordered to place itself at the disposal of the local Military Revolutionary Committee and to occupy the railway station in order to prevent troops from being moved in the direction of Petrograd.

All these orders were promptly carried out. On October 27, the 1st and 3rd Lettish Rifle Regiments entered Venden, and the Military Revolutionary Committee thus received the armed forces it required. On October 28 in a conversation over the direct wire with General Cheremisov, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front, General Y. D. Yuzefovich, Commander of the Twelfth Army, reported as follows:

"The Letts are giving most trouble, and the situation as far as they are concerned is the worst. The 1st and 3rd Regiments, which arrived in Venden yesterday, remained, seized the railway and telegraph stations and arrested many of the officers of two regiments of the 1st Brigade."[14]

The Lettish Rifle Regiments were among the detachments of the revolution which not only promptly and unhesitatingly went over to the side of the Soviet Government, but actively defended it by force of arms.

In Valk, in the rear of the Twelfth Army, 80 kilometres from Venden, events developed somewhat differently. This town was the headquarters not only of the Staff of the Twelfth Army, but also of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies of that army. This body, which was bitterly hostile to the Soviet Government, had been in office without new elections since the spring, and, therefore, had remained predominantly Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik. It conducted a furious campaign against the Bolsheviks. It issued manifestos assuring General Headquarters and Kerensky of the full support of the Twelfth Army. It sent "detachments of the Death Battalion" to tear down the posters of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Its shock troops even attempted to raid the offices of the *Brīvais Strēlnieks*, but on encountering a guard of armed Letts they beat a hasty retreat.

Convinced that it lacked the forces to resist the revolution, this body decided to open negotiations with the Bolsheviks in order to play for time until the Army Command found troops with which to protect Valk and to continue the struggle against the Bolsheviks. In the evening of October 26, this Soviet offered to open negotiations with the Bolsheviks. The offer was accepted and the negotiations lasted all night. The Bolsheviks adopted a perfectly clear position—all power must be transferred to the Soviets.


Brīwais Strēlnieks

Facsimile of the heading of *Brīvais Strēlnieks* the organ of the Lettish Rifle Regiment

After quibbling for a long time the Army Soviet at last pledged itself not to take any hostile action; but the very next morning it formed a "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" for the area of the Twelfth Army and resumed its campaign against the Bolsheviks with redoubled vigour.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the negotiations, General Yuzefovich, Commander of the Twelfth Army, began to concentrate his most reliable troops in Valk. In a conversation with Cheremisov on the direct wire on October 28 he reported:

"From the moment the mutiny started I deemed it necessary, in view of the gravity of the situation, to move to Valk the 20th Dragoon Regiment and, moreover, I have ordered the rest of the regiments of the 17th Cavalry Division to move nearer to the vicinity of Valk. . . . We cannot allow the Letts to capture Valk."[15]

But this was of no avail. On October 29 the 6th and 7th Lettish Rifle Regiments reached Volmar, half-way between Venden and Valk. These revolutionary regiments were on the march to the latter town where the Staff of the Twelfth Army was situated. Two or three days later Yuzefovich reported to Cheremisov the following:

"I have no effective forces. . . . The 17th Cavalry Division is more reliable, but it has passed a resolution to remain neutral and to go into action only to put a stop to riot and plunder."[16]

In the last days of the month, while the revolutionary regiments were on the way to Valk, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks called a Congress of the Twelfth Army in Venden. The delegates for this Congress had been elected before the October events and the elections had been strongly influenced by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. At the Congress the vote split into two almost equal parts, one in favour of the Bolsheviks and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the other in favour of the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. Of the seven seats in the Presidium three were won by the Bolsheviks. S. M. Nakhimson, a Bolshevik, was elected chair-

man of the Congress, but a recount was demanded and when this was taken M. A. Likhach, a Right Socialist-Revolutionary, and later on one of the leaders of the White government in Archangel, was elected. Outside the building where the Congress was held there was a vast crowd of soldiers from the local garrison and numerous delegations from the front who loudly expressed their solidarity with the Bolsheviks and demanded that all power be transferred to the Soviets.

On nearly every question the voting at the Congress resulted in a majority for the so-called "Kuchinites," *i.e.*, the Right wing led by the Army Commissar Kuchin, a Menshevik. But although Chernov, the Socialist-Revolutionary chief, was present at the Congress, the vote on the attitude to be taken towards the October Revolution resulted in a victory for the Left *bloc*, which polled 248 votes against 243. The new Army Committee was elected on a parity basis, 22 members from the Right and Left *blocs* respectively.

During the election the Bolsheviks advanced the following demands, which the Congress adopted:

1. Another congress must be called in two weeks' time at which a new Army Committee is to be elected.
2. The new Army Committee must not contain a single one of the old members of the Executive Committee of the Army Soviet, *i.e.*, the Kuchinites.
3. The "Committee for the Salvation" must cease its activities.

The newly elected Army Committee had two chairmen: one a Menshevik and the other a Bolshevik. Under these circumstances the Committee was, naturally, unable to do effective work.

Meanwhile, the Lettish regiments were nearing Valk. On November 4 Yuzefovich reported to Cheremisov:

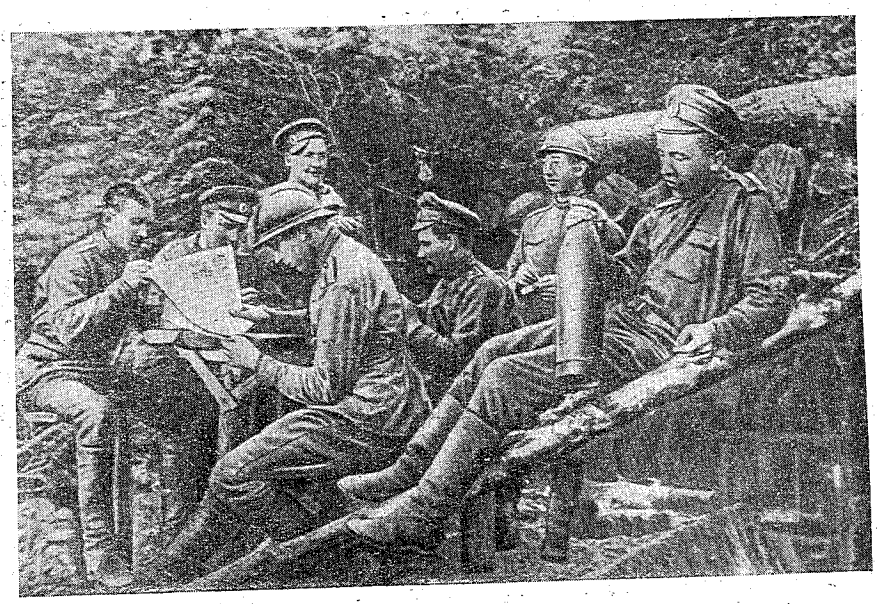
> "This morning, the 6th Tukkum Regiment left Volmar on its own accord, and with four officers proceeded to Valk in marching order, intending to spend the night in Stakelin, where it is to be joined by the 1st Battery of the 42nd Heavy Artillery Battalion. . . . There are rumours that the 7th Regiment will follow the 6th to Valk."[17]

Yuzefovich complained that he had no means of preventing these movements of the Bolshevistically-minded regiments. To this Cheremisov replied:

> "What can I do to help you? If you have no reliable troops to depend upon, still less have I."[18]

It was perfectly true, no troops loyal to the tsarist generals could be found, although there were more troops on the Northern Front than on any other. This explains the consternation and irresoluteness of the High Command, and of Cheremisov in particular.

On November 5, the 6th Lettish Regiment, headed by a band, marched into Valk. The actual leadership of the army passed into the hands of the Bolsheviks. At the Special Congress of the Twelfth Army held on November 14 and 15, the Bolsheviks had an overwhelming majority. The Left *bloc* at the



Men of the Lettish Rifle Regiment reading the *Brīvais Strēlnieks* in the trenches

Congress, headed by the Bolsheviks, won 48 out of the 60 seats on the Army Committee, while the so-called "Socialist" *bloc*, consisting of the Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Trudoviki, won only 12 seats.

The centre of the Northern Front was occupied by the First Army, which had its headquarters in the township of Altswannenburg. Here the October events did not develop as smoothly as in the Twelfth Army. At the very beginning of the October Revolution the Army Committee of the First Army expressed opposition to the idea of supporting the Provisional Government. In a conversation with Dukhonin over the direct wire, on October 26, General Lukirsky stated:

> "The First and the Fifth Armies have declared that they will follow not the government, but the Petrograd Soviet. I am informing you of the decision of the Army Committees."[19]

Later, however, the Army Committee of the First Army wabbled very considerably, and in this reflected the tactics of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, who exercised considerable influence over the Committee. While refusing to render the Kerensky government any assistance whatsoever, the Committee lacked the determination to recognise the new government. The enemy took this as a sign that the Committee was changing its position. On October 29, General Lukirsky, in a conversation over the direct wire

with General N. V. Pnevsky, Chief of Staff of the First Army, stated the following:

"The Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front has just informed me . . . that the Committee of the First Army has decided to support the Provisional Government."[20]

On these grounds Lukirsky proposed that "corresponding infantry units, fully reliable, should be chosen from this army to join Kerensky's troops which are mustering near Petrograd."[21]

Pnevsky expressed surprise at this and said that evidently there was some misunderstanding, for the Army Committee "was by no means inclined to support the Provisional Government." "There are no absolutely reliable regiments in that army," he added.[22]

On October 31, the First Army received from Gatchina a demand, signed by Kerensky, for troops to be sent near Petrograd. Next day, Baranovsky, Quartermaster-General of the Northern Front, telegraphed to Kerensky and to Dukhonin as follows:

"Communicating following telegram: 'Neuswannenburg, October 31, 1 p. m. With reference to telegram No. 174, 12:20 p.m., October 31, from Gatchina Palace, signed by Kerensky, Avksentyev, Gotz, Voitinsky, Stankevich and Semenov, I hereby report that the Congress of the First Army has unanimously resolved not to send a single regiment. Notbek.'"[23]

Thus ended all the attempts of the enemies of the revolution to obtain reinforcements from the First Army. After this, the Command of the First Army did not dare even so much as hint at sending troops.

On October 30 the Second Congress of the First Army was opened in Altswannenburg. The Congress was attended by 268 delegates, of whom 134 supported the Bolsheviks, 112 supported the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and the rest supported the Internationalist Mensheviks. The Bolshevik group, however, lacked Party leaders. As Lieutenant S. A. Sebov, the Vice-Commissar of the First Army, stated in describing the proceedings of the Congress:

"Among the Bolsheviks there did not appear to be any leading Party workers, and even their reporter, an officer, stated that although he was speaking on behalf of the Bolsheviks, he himself was not a Bolshevik, but was simply imbued with the spirit of the masses."[24]

On the main item on the agenda—the current situation—two resolutions were submitted to the Congress, one by the Bolsheviks, and the other by the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Bolshevik resolution demanded unqualified recognition of the Soviet Government and immediate support for it by armed force. The Socialist-Revolutionary resolution, while not denying recognition of the Soviet Government on principle, proposed that the question of rendering it armed assistance be postponed until "the situation became clear." The latter resolution was supported by the Internationalist Mensheviks. The voting resulted in a tie. A "Conciliation Committee" was elected, which submitted the following formula to the Congress:



Lettish Rifles

"In the event of the receipt of information of a counter-revolutionary movement, half of the army shall move to Petrograd, while the other half shall remain at the front."[25] This formula was adopted.

The Congress adopted a manifesto which was sent out by telegraph addressed: "To All! To All! To All!" The manifesto stated:

"We deem the Kerensky government deposed and request that you join the First Army and support the Military Revolutionary Committee."[26]

The Congress also adopted a resolution demanding the formation of a "homogeneous Socialist government," to which was added the proviso that in this government the parties should be represented "in the same proportion as at the Second Congress of Soviets."[27] Twenty-five delegates voted against this resolution and 30 abstained from voting.

Thus, the Congress slipped into the position of the compromising parties, although the rank and file of the army were on the side of the Bolsheviks.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries boasted that at the Congress they had secured the adoption of "neutral" resolutions, but this did not help them to neutralise the masses of the soldiers. Speaking of the soldiers of the First Army, the above-mentioned Lieutenant Sebov observes with a note of chagrin:

"The success of the Bolshevik movement is the cause of great joy among them. No government but a Bolshevik government, or rather, a peace government, can be successful."[28]

The Congress elected a new Army Committee of 60 members, some of whom were elected as representatives of their respective political groups and some as representatives of the different army divisions. The Bolsheviks had 35 seats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 19, and the Mensheviks six. The newly elected chairman was a Bolshevik, and of the two new vice-chairmen, one was a "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary and the other a Menshevik. Two secretaries of the Presidium were elected, one a Bolshevik and the other a "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary. Thus, the very composition of the Presidium of the new Army Committee of the First Army, in which the two Bolsheviks were opposed by three compromisers, old hands at the political game, prevented the Bolsheviks from carrying through the line of their Party.

The Army Committee continued to wabble until the middle of November, when another Army Congress was called, which provided firmer Bolshevik leadership. But there can be no doubt that even in the initial period of the October Revolution, the First Army was entirely on the side of the Bolsheviks. Some of its units were ready to support the Soviet Government by force of arms. All the attempts of the counter-revolutionaries to obtain reinforcements from the First Army failed.

The left flank of the Northern Front was occupied by the Fifth Army with headquarters in Dvinsk. On the night of October 24, E. M. Sklyansky, the Chairman of the Army Committee, a Bolshevik, then in Petrograd as a delegate to the Second Congress of Soviets, informed the Bolsheviks in the Fifth Army of the insurrection which had started in the capital. On receipt of this information the Bolshevik group in the Army Committee immediately set up a Military Revolutionary Committee. On October 27, the latter informed the Petrograd Soviet that armed units from the Fifth Army could be sent to Petrograd to support the insurrection.

Meanwhile, General Headquarters was persistently demanding that troops should be sent to assist Kerensky. The Command of the Fifth Army was willing to carry out this demand but, as General Popov, its Chief of Staff, informed General Lukirsky in a conversation over the direct wire, this task was complicated by the "Bolshevik temper of the Army Committee and of the other newly elected committees." Popov then went on to inform Lukirsky that the Army Committee had received a telegram from the Second Congress of Soviets requesting that units of the Fifth Army be sent to reinforce the insurgent Petrograd garrison. This telegram was discussed at a meeting of the Army Committee and "was defeated by a fluke majority," he added.

Next day Popov reported to General Baranovsky at the Headquarters of the Northern Front the following:

> "An acute situation is arising in the army. . . . Last night the Army Committee, by a majority of only three votes, decided to send to Petrograd 12 battalions, 24 machine guns and cavalry, artillery and units of engineers, ostensibly for the neutral purpose of settling the conflict in Petrograd. Today, October 30, the representatives of the Bolshevik section of the Army Committee called on the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and demanded that this decision be carried out. The Commander-in-Chief categorically refused and decided to prevent the Army Committee from carrying out its intention at all costs, and to use all the means available for the purpose with the utmost determination. Consequently, a special column, comprising three arms, has been mustered in Dvinsk and at the Dvinsk railway junction. Furthermore, the 1st Cavalry Division has been ordered to block the railway at Rushony Station. . . . According to information received, the Army Committee has decided to arrest the Commander-in-Chief, the Staff and the Commissars."[29]

These conversations over the direct wire reflected the intense struggle that flared up in the Fifth Army around the question as to which side to support: the revolution or the counter-revolution. The Army Command attempted to render effective assistance to Kerensky. On October 29, the Staff of the Northern Front ordered the urgent dispatch of the 1st Armoured Car Detachment to be placed at Kerensky's disposal.

Next day, at 3:40 p.m., General V. G. Boldyrev—subsequently a member of the active counter-revolutionary Regeneration League, and member of the Directorate which paved the way for the Kolchak government in Siberia—began to carry out this order, but the relation of forces was such that to do so he had to resort to a ruse. To prevent the dispatch of the Armoured Car Detachment from reaching the knowledge of the Bolsheviks who were watching the railway stations, a detachment of six armoured cars was sent by road to Rezhitsa, 85 kilometres from Dvinsk. Here the cars were to be loaded on a train, to proceed further in the direction of Petrograd.

"Entrainment at Dvinsk was impossible," General Baranovsky reported to Dukhonin.[30]

The Bolsheviks learned of the dispatch of the detachment early next morning and immediately picked from the reliable units a small detachment of about thirty men, with five machine guns and sent them by rail to Rezhitsa to intercept the armoured cars and turn them back to Dvinsk. On arriving at Rezhitsa, the commander of the detachment saw that armoured cars were being loaded on the flat cars of a freight train. To prevent the train from proceeding on its way the rails were torn up at a short distance from the station. Being small in numbers, this Bolshevik detachment could not at once launch a frontal attack against the well-equipped armoured cars. After pulling up the rails and leaving several men at the station for observation, the commander and his men went into the town to seek reinforcements; but except for the Guard Company, and about 150 men confined in the guardroom for expressing opposition to the Provisional Government, there were no military units in Rezhitsa. Without wasting time, the men of the Bolshevik detachment set off for the guardroom, released the prisoners, supplied them with arms and equipment from the garrison stores and, in addition, procured ten machine guns.

The Bolshevik detachment thus grew to a force of 200 men with ten ma-



Bolsheviks capture a Whiteguard Armoured Car Detachment in Rezhitsa

[From a drawing by V. Shcheglov

chine guns. This force suddenly attacked the Armoured Car Detachment just as they had finished loading the cars on the train and were ready to proceed on their way. Part of the detachment went over to the side of the Bolsheviks. The commander and officers, who had offered resistance, were arrested and detained in the very guardroom from which the men who had just attacked them had been released. The train, loaded with armoured cars, was turned towards Dvinsk.

While these events were proceeding, Dukhonin, speaking to Baranovsky over the direct wire, said:

"Please tell me whether the Armoured Car Detachment is leaving. It must be dispatched forthwith. . . . I order this in the name of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, and request you to inform me by telegraph of the execution of the order, for it is extremely urgent."

"I shall transmit your order at once," Baranovsky hastened to answer, and he went on to inform Dukhonin that the detachment "had entrained in Rezhitsa, but was later detained and the commander of the train arrested."[31]

This was the decisive moment. The Bolsheviks had proved that they had effective support in the army. The Army Command realised that they

were on dangerous ground and could offer no resistance to this formidable popular force. By November 1 all the most important army institutions in Dvinsk—the centre of the area occupied by the Fifth Army—were in the hands of the Bolsheviks. The bulk of the soldiers were on the side of the Soviet Government.

General Boldyrev, the Commander of the Army had been reluctant to confess that he was losing authority. The previous day, replying to an enquiry made by General Cheremisov over the direct wire as to whether it was true that the Military Revolutionary Committee was preventing the transmission of certain telegrams, he had said in a contemptuous manner:

"Is that likely of a committee which plays practically no role? On the first day it tried to play the high hand and even countermanded my orders, but on receiving a stern rebuff it abandoned these attempts."[32]

On November 1, however, in another conversation with Cheremisov, he sang a different tune. He said despondently:

"This is what happened. Dvinsk is practically in the hands of the Army Committee. . . . The arrest of the commanding personnel is by no means precluded. True, the Chairman of the Army Committee has just informed me that there is no danger from that quarter, as they too recognise our authority as regards the conduct of operations and preserving the stability of the front, but in view of the lack of effective forces anything may happen."[33] "So far, the entire leadership is in the hands of the Bolshevik Army Committee," he observed in concluding his report to Cheremisov.[34]

That is how the October days passed off in the Fifth Army, which was one of the first to come over entirely to the side of the Soviet Government.

Meanwhile, grave events were unfolding in the rear of the Northern Front. The counter-revolutionaries there tried to muster forces for the purpose of commencing decisive operations against Petrograd, but they met with resistance at every step. The struggle raged mainly at the railway junctions, in the centre of which was Pskov, the headquarters of the Staff of the Northern Front and of its numerous administrative departments. The small provincial town of Pskov had scarcely any working-class population. The presence of the Staff of the front, and of other military bodies with their huge retinue of officers, was unfavourable for the extensive organisation of the revolutionary forces. Moreover, at the beginning of the October events, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries predominated in the local Soviet.

The Bolsheviks had a firm footing in several of the units of the garrison and in several factories, but the issue here was decided, not only by the relation of local forces, but also by the arrival from the front of units which General Headquarters were sending to assist Kerensky. The local Bolsheviks were confronted with the task of winning these troops to the side of the proletarian revolution, or, if this proved unsuccessful, at least to neutralise them and, in the last resort, to prevent these armed forces from proceeding further against Petrograd.

At the very beginning of the October events the Bolsheviks in the Pskov Soviet succeeded in getting a decision passed to set up a Military Revolutionary Committee. In their confusion, the compromisers allowed candidates nominated by the Bolsheviks to slip into the Committee. After that, on the motion of the Bolsheviks, new elections for the Pskov Soviet were appointed. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries agreed to this under pressure of the armed workers and soldiers who came to the meeting and demanded that the Soviet should be immediately dissolved and new elections held. The newly elected Soviet assured the Bolsheviks of its complete support.

When Kerensky arrived in Pskov after his flight from Petrograd, the situation he found there was such that he thought it wiser not to show himself in public; in this he was strongly supported by Cheremisov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front. On October 27, in a conversation with Dukhonin over the direct wire, General Lukirsky described the situation in Pskov as follows:

> "So far, things are quiet in the Pskov garrison and the temper of the men is satisfactory. Last night there was a stormy meeting of the Executive Committee of the United Organisations of the Northern Front. It resolved to arrest all the Commissars and to take all the government institutions under supervision. Early this morning the Revolutionary Committee took 200 men from the infantry garrison under its command. A few moments ago they posted a guard at the Telegraph Office of the Staff of the Northern Front in order to control all correspondence. I am talking to you on the instrument at the house of the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front."[35]

While this conversation was taking place, the Military Revolutionary Committee was already beginning to occupy the post, telegraph and other offices. Just at that moment, however, the Cossacks who were on the way to assist Kerensky suddenly appeared on the scene. They occupied the railway station, the artillery depots and the barracks, and arrested several members of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Evidently, this was a force of two Cossack Hundreds which General Lukirsky, by order of General Headquarters, had detained specially for the purpose of gaining control of the situation at this extremely important railway junction, and in the immediate rear of Krasnov's "army."

The members of the Military Revolutionary Committee who had escaped arrest quickly mobilised a reserve battalion and a motorised company, and that night, the revolutionary units attacked the Cossacks. In the course of the fighting several men were wounded, but the Cossacks were surrounded. Realising that they were overpowered, they promised to take no part in suppressing the revolution. Later on the situation in Pskov fluctuated as different army units arrived. On October 28, Lukirsky informed Dukhonin that the guards of the Military Revolutionary Committee had been withdrawn from the Telegraph Office. Cheremisov reported the same thing to General Yuzefovich, the Commander-in-Chief of the Twelfth Army.

> "Here, in Pskov," he said, "the Revolutionary Committee painlessly dissolved last night; the control over the telegraph instrument was removed earlier in the evening."[36]

But on October 28, General Lukirsky, by order of Cheremisov, urged the Fifth Army to hasten the dispatch of the 3rd Urals Cossack Regiment to Pskov.

> "This is necessary," he said, "in view of the disorders that are developing in Pskov, near the prison and the distribution centre. . . . Besides that it is extremely necessary to supplement the Pskov garrison with an absolutely reliable infantry unit: a regiment, or a shock battalion."[37]

But no "reliable" units from the front arrived, and all the efforts of the Staff of the Northern Front to find such were in vain. By this time the Bolsheviks had liberated from the Pskov prison over 300 soldiers and several officers who had been arrested under Kerensky for expressing opposition to the Provisional Government. These released prisoners considerably augmented the forces of the Military Revolutionary Committee, which, in spite of Cheremisov's assurances, had no intention of dissolving.

General Cheremisov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front, understood the temper of the soldiers better, perhaps, than any of the other generals. This young commander, who was reputed to be "democratically minded," came to the forefront during the February Revolution. During Kerensky's June offensive he was in command of the Twelfth Army Corps, which broke through the enemy's lines. His relations with Kornilov were strained. When the latter relinquished the post of Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Cheremisov was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the Northern Front. Weighing up the situation in the very first days of the October Socialist Revolution he opposed the idea of sending troops from the front to assist Kerensky. True, this was prompted not by friendly sentiments towards the revolution, but by the conviction that the task was an impossible one. Probably, his detestation of the petty-bourgeois parties, which he regarded as being mainly responsible for discrediting the commanding personnel in the eyes of the soldiers, had something to do with it. This is vividly revealed by the following remarks uttered in conversation with General Yuzefovich which he held over the direct wire on November 4.

> "The notorious 'Committee for the Salvation of the Revolution,' which belongs to the party that has ruled Russia for about eight months and has persecuted us, the commanding personnel, as counter-revolutionaries, and now has its tail between its legs, is slobbering and begging us to save them. While the Bolsheviks are successfully carrying on propaganda among the troops, these gentlemen do nothing but quarrel among themselves and call for help from the commanding personnel. It is absolutely disgusting."[38]

One cannot but admit that the description is very apt.

Voitinsky, the Commissar of the Northern Front, took a different attitude. He had previously belonged to the Bolshevik Party but had been expelled at the beginning of the February Revolution and had joined the Menshevik camp. During the October days he came out as an uncompromising enemy of the Soviet Government. To offset the Military Revolutionary Committee in Pskov he organised a "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" with its headquarters in the Commissar's office, and this committee gradually set up numerous branches at the front and in the rear.

Accompanying Kerensky in his crusade against Petrograd, Voitinsky unceasingly called upon the Staff of the front to send reinforcements, but all these efforts were futile. The Bolshevik forces grew daily. Subsequent attempts to move the Cossacks north of Pskov encountered the armed resistance of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

On November 3, in a conversation with Dukhonin over the direct wire, Cheremisov conveyed to the latter the report of N. S. Trikovsky, chief of the Pskov garrison, who described the situation in Pskov as follows:

> "I hereby report that the local garrison of the town of Pskov is entirely in the hands of the revolutionary organisations of the extreme trend, and is in touch with the Military Revolutionary Committee of Petrograd."[39]

Thus, the revolution was victorious in the rear of the Northern Front, the most important in relation to revolutionary Petrograd. The attempts of counter-revolutionary General Headquarters to entrench itself in the rear of the Northern Front and to use this as a *place d'armes* for an attack on Petrograd were thwarted. In relation to the other fronts, where the counter-revolutionaries still continued their endeavours to muster forces, the Northern Front became the outpost of the proletarian revolution.

3

THE OCTOBER DAYS ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Next to the Northern, the most important front for the successful accomplishment of the proletarian revolution was the Western Front. The latter was the nearest front to Moscow and, with the exception of the Northern Front, the nearest to Petrograd. In the rear of the Western Front was that hotbed of the militarist counter-revolution, General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The trenches of the Western Front stretched from Dvinsk to Pinsk. Its headquarters were situated in Minsk. As in the

case of the Northern Front, three armies were disposed here: the Third, the Tenth and the Second.

The Second Army occupied the extreme left flank of the Western Front—the Pinsk marshes. It had its headquarters at Slutsk, but its most vital centre was Nesvizh, situated closer to the trenches. The Committee of the Second Army also had its headquarters in that town. On October 26, the Bolshevik group of the Army Committee received news of the insurrection in Petrograd and forthwith called upon the Committee to recognise the new government. The Committee, two-thirds of whose members were compromisers, declined. The Bolsheviks thereupon resigned. Many of them hastened to different parts of the front to rouse the soldiers in the trenches for the struggle in support of the Soviet Government, while those who remained in Nesvizh, assisted by comrades who had arrived from Minsk, developed the activities of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Already before the October events had begun the Bolsheviks had summoned to Nesvizh the 32nd Siberian Regiment to offset the 2nd Urals Cossack Division which was then quartered in the town. On October 26 the Siberian Regiment was already close to the town. The Bolshevik members of the Army Committee launched a campaign among the units of the Second Army in favour of electing new Divisional and Corps Committees, of electing delegates to the Army Congress which was to meet on November 1, of establishing control over the staffs and telegraph, and also of seizing the corps newspapers. In most of the regiments, the Regimental Committees were already Bolshevik, the exceptions being several regiments of the 9th and 3rd Siberian Corps. In the former, Ukrainian nationalist influence, and in the latter, Socialist-Revolutionary influence, was strong. But command over the regiments was captured very quickly; the officers proved to be so isolated that they could offer no resistance. The temper of most of the units in the Second Army can be judged by the resolution that was adopted on October 27 at the joint meeting of Regimental, Company and Command Committees of the 18th Karsky Grenadier Regiment, which read as follows:

> "Only recently we experienced the Kornilov adventure, and now that traitor Kerensky is again advancing on Petrograd to suppress freedom and to drench the city with the blood of the proletariat who are dying in battle in the streets. The Karsky Regiment declares—and let the traitors and butchers know this—that we are ready to lay down our lives for the workers and peasants. We stand for the transfer of power to the Soviets, for peace and for land. Long live the Military Revolutionary Committee!"[40]

The spirit among the Grenadiers was particularly revolutionary. In the two divisions of the Grenadier Corps, which occupied the trenches near Nesvizh, the Bolsheviks had conducted a vigorous campaign in favour of new elections of the Divisional Committees. On their own accord they fixed the date on which the Second Congress of the Division was to be held,

viz., October 28. At first the Divisional Committee tried to ignore the demand for the convocation of the Congress, but when it saw that the delegates were assembling in spite of it, it yielded to the *fait accompli*.

Two hundred and fifty delegates arrived for the Congress. The day of the opening was raw and cold. Rain and sleet fell all day, turning the ground into a veritable quagmire. The Congress was held in the Divisional Staff dining room, which was nothing more than a large, dilapidated barn. The tables were arranged round the walls to serve as the delegates' benches. Having no place in which to hold their group meeting, the Bolsheviks limited themselves to ascertaining the party affiliation of the delegates. This was done in the following way: before the Congress was opened the Bolshevik delegates and their sympathisers were requested to go to the left side of the shed and all the rest to the right. The overwhelming majority of the delegates lined up on the left; on the other side there was a handful of men, headed by the members of the old committees.

The entire Congress took the stand of the Bolsheviks. Almost without debate it adopted a resolution expressing no confidence in the compromisers, supporting the Soviet Government and demanding new elections of the committees. This Bolshevik resolution polled 210 votes, the resolution moved by the Socialist-Revolutionaries polled only 35. The crestfallen compromisers thereupon resorted to demagogy. They got up and demanded that the Bolsheviks should "say here and now, quite openly, whether they can guarantee that peace will be concluded with the Germans tomorrow."[41] Before the Bolsheviks could reply, a private of the 5th Kiev Regiment, non-party, rose from the back benches and expressed himself in the following plain, but vivid and convincing terms:

> "You must not think that the Bolsheviks will take from their pockets and put before us right here peace, bread and land, as easily as taking a pipeful of tobacco from a pouch. No, we shall have to fight for peace and land. And we shall fight for these side by side with the Bolsheviks."[42]

The Socialist-Revolutionaries refused to participate in the election of the new Divisional Committee on the grounds that it was "impossible to work jointly with the Bolsheviks." As a result, only Bolsheviks and their sympathisers were elected. The Congress decided to recall the old representatives of the division from the Corps Committee and to send new representatives, Bolsheviks, in their place.

The 1st Grenadier Division also accepted the lead of the Bolsheviks. A general meeting of its Regimental and Brigade Committees held on October 27 discussed the question of convening an Army Congress and resolved that:

> "Being of the opinion that the activities of the Army Committee are out of harmony with the will and demands of the masses . . . we demand the dismissal of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Social-Democratic members. The Bolshevik group is to act as the Revolutionary Committee of the Second Army pending the convocation of the Army Congress. . . . We shall back our demands by armed force. . . . We shall obey only the orders that are sanctioned by the group to which we entrust our forces. We shall place ourselves at its disposal at the first word of command."[43]



The Congress of delegates of the Grenadier Corps *From a drawing by S. Boym*

After the Divisional Congresses, a Congress of the whole Grenadier Corps was called. Straight from the Divisional Congresses, late at night, the Bolshevik delegates of the 2nd Division walked to Corps Headquarters, a distance of about eight kilometres.

During the morning of October 29 the delegates busied themselves with the preparations for the Congress. They took possession of the small corps printing plant, where the *Izvestia* of the Executive Committee of the Grenadier Corps was printed, and one of the delegates, a compositor by trade, took his place at the type case. The printing of the compromising *Izvestia* was stopped at once and Bolshevik leaflets were set up and printed instead.

The opening of the Congress was fixed for the next day, October 30, as the arrival of several more delegates was expected. Meeting in small groups, the delegates engaged in a lively discussion of the questions that were to come up on the morrow. Suddenly, at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the

hum of voices in controversy was interrupted by the sharp ringing of the telephone. This was a call from the Staff of the 2nd Grenadier Division. Somebody reported in an excited voice that the Germans had suddenly started an offensive on the sector occupied by the division.

Taking advantage of a favourable wind the Germans started a gas attack and in the course of an hour released three gas waves. The wind veered soon after, however, and dispersed the gas. At 4 p.m. a heavy artillery duel commenced, in which it was roughly estimated 150 guns on each side were engaged. Shells screamed continuously and the guns roared in the immediate vicinity of the premises where the delegates to the Congress were gathered. German shells burst and emitted clouds of asphyxiating gas. Round about 5 p.m. Corps Headquarters reported that the Germans had launched an attack under cover of their artillery, and that their infantry had rushed the trenches on the sector occupied by the 7th Taurida Grenadier Regiment.

The delegates were filled with anxiety. The suspicion arose in the minds of many that this was an act of treachery and that the Generals and the Provisional Government had come to an arrangement with the Germans to surrender this sector of the front in order to suppress the revolution. The Bolshevik group held a meeting and decided that the Congress must be held at all cost.

The Congress was opened at 5 p.m. in a large dugout which served as the staff clubroom. The necessary precautionary measures were taken. The tables were piled with gas masks, and buckets of water were handy. At the entrance to the dugout straw was piled for bonfires. The artillery kept pounding away without interruption. The fields echoed with the roar of guns, and the thick beams of the dugout shook with the impact of the detonations. But the meeting proceeded in a calm and organised manner.

The Congress was opened by the Chairman of the Corps Committee who, immediately on declaring the Congress open announced his resignation and vanished. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, would not surrender their positions. On the plea that "the situation at the front was critical" and in an endeavour to intimidate the delegates by stressing the danger created by the German offensive, they proposed that a united Corps Committee be formed "on a parity basis." The Congress emphatically rejected this proposal. In the resolution it adopted it heartily welcomed the revolution that had been accomplished in Petrograd and declared its readiness to rise in defence of the Soviet Government at any moment. The Congress elected a delegate to go to Petrograd to convey greetings to the leader of the proletarian revolution, Lenin. The newly elected Bolshevik Corps Committee immediately took over the command of the corps, occupied the radio station, and set up control over the Staff.

Soon after the delegates had dispersed the artillery fire subsided. Evidently, the Germans had calculated that the revolution in Petrograd had shaken and weakened the front and had attempted to take advantage of this. Their attack, however, encountered determined resistance. The fight-



Men of the 7th Taurida Grenadier Regiment in a counter-attack against the Germans, Oct. 30, 1917
From a drawing by A. Malinovsky and V. Bayuskin

ing became very fierce and drew to a close only at night. The Grenadiers who put up a stubborn defence, lost as many as 1,500 men in killed and wounded, but they repulsed all the Germans' attacks. Remarkable coolness, fighting efficiency and determination were displayed precisely by those regiments which had been the first to go over to the Bolshevik revolution. This was admitted even in the confidential report of the generals wherein it was stated:

"On October 30 it was revealed that the staunchness and fighting spirit of the units, after all, enables them to put up a stubborn defence of their positions and to deliver sharp, local blows. The fighting on October 30 even roused a certain amount of enthusiasm and elation among the majority of the men."[44]

How many reams of paper had been used up to prove that the Bolsheviks had disintegrated the army and were responsible for the soldiers' wholesale desertion of the front! The Constitutional Democrats had heaped slander on the Bolsheviks; the Socialist-Revolutionaries had poured obscene abuse upon them; and the Mensheviks, foaming at the mouth, had made scurrilous charges against them. This was a repetition of what had occurred near Riga in August 1917. For months the Constitutional Democrats, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had been conducting a campaign of calumny against *Okopnaya Pravda* and *Okopny Nabat*, the Bolshevik newspapers for soldiers published in Riga. They accused the Bolsheviks of being paid agents of the Germans, of inciting the men to desert, to commit treason, and what not. But when Riga had to be defended against the Germans it was precisely the Bolshevik regiments, which had been imbued with the ideas propagated by *Okopnaya Pravda* and *Okopny Nabat* that distinguished themselves by their bravery. This could not be hushed up. All the newspapers, except the Socialist-Revolutionary *Dyelo Naroda*, published the report of the Secretary of the Ministry for War, Savinkov—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders and a bitter enemy of the Bolsheviks—in which he referred to the firmness and courage displayed by the Bolshevik regiments which had defended Riga. In this report Savinkov said:

"There were [near Riga—*Ed.*] . . . Bolshevik regiments which fought with exceptional courage and lost as much as three-fourths of their effectives, whereas other regiments failed to withstand the slightest enemy assault."[45]

The Germans had hurled their best forces into the attack on Riga. The units of the Northern Front were obliged to withstand a heavy blow. Entire divisions perished. The notorious Voitinsky, the Assistant Commissar of the Northern Front, was compelled to state in the press that the soldiers were fighting staunchly, suffering heavy casualties, but holding up the enemy's advance.[46] The Lettish Rifles fought with exceptional heroism at Riga. Exhausted though they were, they charged again and again.

Not only Voitinsky, but other Commissars of the Provisional Government on various fronts also felt obliged publicly to refute in the press the

slanders of the bourgeois newspapers. Thus, Lunchinsky, the Assistant Commissar of one of the armies on the Rumanian Front, published a statement to the effect that the newspapers were printing garbled reports about the retreat of the Russian forces in the region of Novoselitsa and making it appear that this was a deliberate opening of the front. Like Voitinsky, Lunchinsky was obliged to admit that the enemy's offensive, launched with numerically superior forces after heavy artillery preparation, had been checked. In spite of the fact that the enemy was firing gas shells, the men rushed to counter-attack, displaying great valour and heroism.[47] And these were the regiments in which Bolshevik influence was strong. The same thing happened on other fronts that August, long before the October Revolution.

But in October the Bolsheviks came into power; the defenders of the bourgeoisie were driven from the army. The soldiers were given a clear and definite idea of the aims of the struggle. And the soldiers who but yesterday had refused to take part in the offensive in the interests of the bourgeoisie, were today fighting and dying for the Soviet regime. The transfer of power to the people stimulated the fighting spirit of the soldiers and inspired them to fight for the Soviet motherland they had newly acquired.

The masses of the people, and the army and the navy, rightly regarded the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution as a guarantee against the utter defeat of the country by German imperialism. The undisguised treason of the Russian capitalists and landlords who had committed one treacherous deed after another, who had surrendered Riga, Esel and Dago, and who were obviously ready to surrender Petrograd to the Germans as long as the revolution was suppressed, opened everybody's eyes. The masses of the people regarded the Bolsheviks as the only force capable of organising the defence of the country and of bringing the war to a close. Lenin's dictum: "From October 25 onwards we are Defencists," expressed the sentiments of the entire people which was mustering its forces for the purpose of defending the land and liberty it had won as a result of the proletarian revolution. The countless published and unpublished resolutions passed by military units on all fronts, in all armies, corps, and divisions, confirmed the fact that the army and the navy, which had been betrayed by the Kornilov generals, were ready to defend their country now that it was free. There was not a case before the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, and particularly after it, of any military unit failing to perform its duty. More than that, the army tried to retain that part of the commanding personnel which was still capable of fighting sincerely in defence of the country. The Soviet Government did all in its power to facilitate this.

One of the first measures taken by the Soviet Government was to build up a strong army administration. For this purpose it was decided to utilise the services of the military experts, even of the highest rank, but only on condition that these ex-officers worked honestly and sincerely to defend the country. Thus, two days after the arrest of the Provisional Government,

General Manikovsky, the Minister for War and Admiral Verderevsky, Minister for the Navy in the last Provisional Government, were released from the Fortress of Peter and Paul, and both were offered work on national defence. General Manikovsky accepted a post in the War Department and subsequently served in the Red Army. On October 30, the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet ordered all staff officers of the Petrograd Military Area and officials of the Ministry for War and Ministry for the Navy immediately to resume their duties.[48] On October 27, the 10th Special Regiment of the Petrograd garrison passed a resolution welcoming the victory of the revolution and the inauguration of the Soviet regime.

> "Only such a regime," stated the resolution, "in which there is no internal discord and which trusts the people (democracy) is capable of extricating the country from economic chaos and of defeating German imperialism."[49]

The soldiers realised that the spearhead of the October Socialist Revolution was directed against Russian and German imperialism. They fought the Russian bourgeoisie which had driven them into an unjust war, and the German militarists, whom they had been fighting for three and a half years.

Even while the struggle for the victory of the proletarian revolution was still proceeding the soldiers felt instinctively that the Russian bourgeoisie were secretly negotiating with the German imperialists, who feared the revolution of the masses of the people of Russia no less than the Russian imperialists. After the victory of the revolution these apprehensions concerning the likelihood of a deal between the Russian and German imperialists grew. An imperialist attack on the young Soviet Republic was to be expected primarily from Germany. Consequently, the masses of the soldiers at the front demanded not only peace, but also the preservation of the vitality and fighting efficiency of the army, so that it might be in a position to deal with any attack that was made on Soviet Russia.

Thus, the first order issued by the newly formed Military Revolutionary Committee of the Second Army called upon all departments and the entire commanding personnel to continue to perform their respective functions. The Revolutionary Committee took all the measures in its power to prevent the normal life of the army from being disturbed and its fighting efficiency impaired.[50] Shortly afterwards, the Congress of the Second Army made a declaration in which it reaffirmed that military operations and army administration in the different units were to be conducted by the existing bodies, under the control of the Commissars of the Army Military Revolutionary Committee.[51] When negotiations for an armistice were opened with the Germans, the Soviet Government, in an order issued to the army and navy, stated:

> "Stand firm in these last days. Exert all efforts and hold the front in spite of privation and hunger. Success depends upon your revolutionary staunchness."[52]

The bulk of the army and navy was well aware that until peace was concluded it was necessary to stand fast, arms in hand, prepared for all contingencies.

In the 9th and 50th Corps of the Second Army, the Bolsheviks won power as quickly as in the Grenadier Corps. A slight hitch occurred only in the 5th Division of the 9th Corps, where the Ukrainian Nationalists tried to place obstacles in the way of the Bolsheviks.

On October 27 and 28 the Congress of the 3rd Siberian Corps was held. The delegates to this Congress had been elected before the October events. At the Congress the vote was equally divided between the Bolsheviks and the compromisers. The Congress elected a Corps Committee on a "parity basis," but this body proved utterly inefficient, and the Bolsheviks were obliged to dissolve it. In this corps, too, actual power passed into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

On October 31, the Bolshevik delegates who had been elected by the men for the Army Congress began to assemble in Nesvizh. The compromising Army Committee tried to prevent the Congress from meeting, but neither the Committee, nor the Commissar, nor the Commander-in-Chief of the Army possessed effective forces to do this. The Congress which opened on November 1 in the castle of Prince Radzivil, elected a Military Revolutionary Committee for the Second Army and issued a special declaration concerning the introduction of revolutionary law in the army.

By this declaration all power in the army was vested in the executive organ of the Congress—the Army Committee. Counter-revolutionary activities were to be stopped by the immediate dismissal and arrest of the culprits. All those who openly refused to recognise the new government were liable to arrest. The Commissar of the Provisional Government was dismissed and the "Committee for the Salvation" on this front was proclaimed treasonable to the country and the revolution and its members subject to arrest. All the Unit Committees were granted the right to nominate candidates for the post of commanders, which nominations were to be endorsed by the higher committees. Political leadership, cultural and educational activities and questions concerning the utilisation of the armed forces for all sorts of civil functions were proclaimed to be matters with which only the committees were competent to deal.

That is how the October Revolution was accomplished in the Second Army, which greatly augmented the Bolshevik forces.

The Tenth Army occupied the centre of the Western Front and had its headquarters in the small town of Molodechno. The manner in which the news of the insurrection in Petrograd was received in this army was described in *Pravda* of November 4, 1917, by the delegates of the 107th Troitsky Regiment, as follows:

> "The news of the revolution arrived on October 26. It was welcomed with enthusiasm and loud cheers. A meeting of the entire regiment was held and a resolution was passed pledging the new government full support. . . . On the 27th, another telegram arrived announcing the capture of Petrograd by Kerensky, urging that no confidence be placed in the Military Revolutionary Committee, and also announcing the arrest of the Bolsheviks. But nobody believed this telegram."[53]

Several days previously, the 107th Troitsky Regiment had passed a resolution calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets. Delegates of this regiment visited a number of other regiments in this division such as the 105th, 106th and 108th, and canvassed support for this resolution. Everywhere the soldiers unanimously expressed their agreement with it. Even in the shock battalion the overwhelming majority of the soldiers supported the resolution, only a small handful protesting and demanding the arrest of the delegates.

A copy of the resolution was sent to the Committee of the 27th Division in order that the delegate from the division might convey it to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. At first the Divisional Committee refused to accept the resolution, but when the delegates threatened to take it to the Congress themselves, they pretended to yield. They accepted the copy of the resolution, but failed to send it to the Congress.

Such was the situation on the eve of the October Revolution not only in the 27th Division but also in the other units of the Tenth Army. By that time the rupture between the masses of the soldiers and the compromising Unit Committees was complete.

On receiving the news of the insurrection in Petrograd, the Army Committee of the Tenth Army, jointly with the Government Commissar issued a manifesto to the troops prophesying the doom of the revolution. On October 28, a conference of representatives of Regimental, Divisional and Corps Committees, or rather, of the higher officials of these committees, most of whom were compromisers, was held in Molodechno. But even at a conference of this description about fifty delegates voted in favour of the Bolsheviks. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks mustered about 100 votes. A small group of representatives took up a "neutral" position and on all questions abstained from voting.

The conference was a stormy one. The Bolsheviks demanded unqualified recognition of the Soviet regime and of the government set up by the Second Congress of Soviets. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks denounced the insurrection and proposed that the Petrograd "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and Revolution" be recognised as the source of power and that it should be entrusted with the task of forming a government. The Bolsheviks refused to be represented on the Conciliation Committee that was appointed to draft the resolution and left the conference. After that, the compromisers passed their resolution and elected to the Army Committee another fourteen of their supporters from among the delegates. The conference instructed this Army Committee to set up a "Committee for the Salvation of Freedom and the Revolution"

and "to establish close contact with the analogous committee of the Western Front."

But nothing could check the progress of revolutionary events in the Tenth Army. In a confidential report on the Western Front we read:

> "On October 29, the Committee of the Staff of the 2nd Siberian Rifle Division established control over the Staff's telephone and telegraph offices. Telegrams signed by Commissars and the Committee were destroyed. The divisional commander and the commandant of the Staff were arrested, but soon after released."[54]

In the regiments and divisions events developed at a rapid pace. On November 7, the Third Congress of the Tenth Army was opened in Molodechno, attended by 600 delegates, of whom nearly two-thirds supported the Bolsheviks. During the election of the Presidium, 326 votes were cast for the Bolshevik ticket and 183 votes for the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik ticket; eight Bolsheviks and only four compromisers were elected. The Congress was opened by the Chairman of the old Army Committee, the Menshevik Pechersky, who deliberately tried to intimidate the delegates:

> "Do you realise," he said, "that we are already at our last gasp, that the country is perishing? . . . Before us is the prospect of the cessation of railway traffic, isolation from the centre, starvation, rioting . . . anarchy and disaster, the certain doom of the country."[55]

But intimidation was no longer effective. One after another delegates from the different units got up and read the instructions they had received, indicating that their constituents were wholly on the side of the new regime. These instructions expressed a unanimous demand for the immediate dissolution of the old Army Committee. So strong was this demand that the old committee was obliged to place its resignation in the hands of the Presidium of the Congress even before a new committee had been elected.

The Congress adopted a resolution recognising the Soviet regime and pledging unqualified support for the Council of People's Commissars.

The last item of business was the election of a new Army Committee. The result of the election ensured the Bolsheviks the leading role. A Military Revolutionary Committee was set up, which forthwith proceeded to wipe out all traces of counter-revolution in the army. The struggle had to be waged mainly against the compromisers, whose resistance here was stronger than in any other army on the Western Front. The commanding personnel, having no backing among the troops, remained more or less passive.

The situation in the Third Army during the October days was similar to that which prevailed in the First Army on the Northern Front. The majority of the members of the Committee of the Third Army were Left wing Socialist-Revolutionaries who as soon as the news of the insurrection in Petrograd was received the Committee issued a manifesto calling upon the soldiers to remain calm, but the committees of many of the units of this army had already passed Bolshevik resolutions. A secret

report of the Military Political Department of the Staff of the Western Front noted that:

> "The colour of these resolutions, which is strongly Bolshevik, indicates that Bolshevik agitation—the growth of which was unanimously reported by all the corps commanders—has not been in vain, and that quite intensive preparations for a Bolshevik insurrection have been made among the troops."[56]

In another report, special reference was made to the revolutionary temper prevailing in the 15th Corps of the Third Army. The report stated:

> "Rumours about current events which have only just reached the masses of the soldiers, threaten to create serious complications; the masses have been corrupted by Bolshevik agitation and may prove to be most susceptible to all kinds of propaganda. The Corps and Divisional Committees are hostile to the Provisional Government, Kerensky and the bourgeoisie."[57]

One of the first to go over to the proletarian revolution was the 6th Division of the 15th Corps. At a general meeting of Unit Committees of the 6th Division, held on October 29, a resolution was passed welcoming the transfer of power to the Soviets. This resolution was unanimously supported by the 22nd, 23rd and 24th Regiments of the Division, by the Engineers' Company and by the artillery.

More turbulent was the development of the October events in the 35th Corps of the Third Army. A Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee was set up in this corps during the very first days of the October Socialist Revolution. It promptly broke off all connections with the compromising Corps Committee, and established control over the Corps Staff and the commanders. Thus, the Commander of the 55th Infantry Division fulfilled his functions under the supervision of a private. Kerensky's telegrams were either intercepted, or else delivered with a note refuting their contents.

General D. P. Parsky, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, wanted to send a punitive expedition against the insurgent corps and for this purpose detailed three regiments and two brigades of the 2nd Turkestan Cossack Division, which was stationed in the rear of the Third Army. This division was regarded as being more or less reliable; and with its aid the command hoped to restore "order." But to put its threat into operation proved to be a task beyond its powers.

On November 2, the Second Congress of the Third Army was held in Polotsk, the headquarters of this army. The Congress was convened by the compromising Army Committee in the hope of obtaining support in the army, but the majority of the delegates proved to be Bolsheviks. To the Presidium of this Congress four Bolsheviks, three Socialist-Revolutionaries, two Mensheviks and one Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionary were elected.

Before the Congress was opened, on November 1, a Conciliation Committee had been set up for the purpose of drafting a general declaration.

This Committee consisted of 16 members, four from each of the respective political groups—Bolshevik, Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary and Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionary. The Committee sat nearly all night and the whole of the next day. Finally, the Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionaries left the Committee, stating that they would submit their own resolution to the Congress. The rest of the groups reached an agreement on the basis of the decrees on peace and land and the other decisions of the Second Congress of Soviets, as well as the legislative acts of the Council of People's Commissars; but the resolution it drafted also contained a clause calling for the formation of a "united Socialist government on the basis of agreement between the two camps of democracy."

Later, at the Congress, the reporters from the different units read the instructions they had received from their constituents. Not one of them spoke in favour of supporting the Provisional Government. The army was on the side of the Bolsheviks. The "conciliatory spirit" displayed by the compromisers in their negotiations with the Bolsheviks can easily be explained. Lacking support in the army they were obliged to manoeuvre in the effort to achieve "agreement between the two camps of democracy." But the Bolsheviks of the Third Army, although taking the path towards such an "agreement," were by no means beguiled by these tendencies towards unity. The spokesman for the Bolshevik group said:

> "Our program is: power to the Soviets. We are prepared to make concessions to the Right wing of democracy, but we shall not retreat a single step from the aim of deepening and expanding the revolution."[58]

In the end the resolution drafted by the Conciliation Committee was supported by all the groups with the exception of the small group of Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Congress then passed a resolution which proclaimed that from now on all authority in the army was vested in the Army Committee.

In the new Army Committee the Bolsheviks obtained 30 seats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 22, the Mensheviks four, the Maximalists four and the non-party Socialists six. A Bolshevik was elected chairman; and a Socialist-Revolutionary (the Chairman of the old Army Committee), a Menshevik, and a Bolshevik were elected vice-chairmen. In addition, four secretaries—a Bolshevik, a Socialist-Revolutionary, a Menshevik and a Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionary—were elected. By order of the Congress, the Army Committee set up a Military Revolutionary Committee on which all the groups were represented in proportion to their strength at the Congress.

The Military Revolutionary Committee informed the Commander-in-Chief of the Army that no order of his would be obeyed without its sanction. The Commander-in-Chief had no effective means of resisting this control.

The inter-party agreement reached at the Congress soon broke down, however. At one of the first meetings of the Army Committee the question arose of sending revolutionary reinforcements to Minsk; the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries fiercely opposed this. On a vote being taken 33 votes

were cast in favour of the proposal and 24 against. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries lodged a protest on the ground that the decision to dispatch troops "was contrary to the decision of the Army Congress" and would give rise to civil war, the very thing which they had "exerted all efforts" to avoid. Soon after, the compromisers left the Military Revolutionary Committee, which was pursuing a firm revolutionary line.

The Bolshevisation of the army proceeded at a rapid pace. On November 18, the Military Revolutionary Committee dismissed General Parsky, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, for refusing to enter into peace negotiations with the Germans. Lebedev, the Chief of Staff and Nechayev, the Chief of the Polotsk garrison, were dismissed at the same time. Sub-Lieutenant Anuchin, Chairman of the Army Committee and a Bolshevik, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and Chudkov, a private in the Motor Transport Unit, was appointed chief of the garrison. Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee were appointed to the various departments at Staff Headquarters. Thus was the October Revolution brought about in the Third Army.

In Minsk, the centre of the Western Front, and the headquarters of the General Staff of that front, news of the events in Petrograd was received on the same day, *viz.*, October 25. The Presidium of the Minsk Soviet, which consisted entirely of Bolsheviks, immediately issued Order No. 1, proclaiming that it had taken over power in the city.

By 2 p.m. that day, the order was posted all over the city. At the same time, all the Bolsheviks who were under arrest were released from the prisons and guardrooms where they had been held and assembled outside the premises of the Soviet in Petrograd Street. While still in custody they had organised a fighting unit, but they lacked arms. Soon, machine guns, rifles and the necessary ammunition were procured from the artillery depot, and the liberated Bolsheviks were formed into what was known as the 1st Revolutionary Minsk Soviet Regiment, which occupied all the sentry posts in the city. The Soviet appointed its Commissars to the Post Office, the Telegraph Office, and other public offices.

None dared challenge the authority of the Minsk Soviet. The Front Committee, the City Duma, and other bodies remained inactive. Even Staff Headquarters of the front, from which most danger was apprehended, calmly received the Commissars appointed by the Soviet.

Desiring not to interfere with the operations of Staff Headquarters of the front, the Minsk Soviet, on October 26, issued an order, in which it stated:

> "The Executive Committee hereby informs all units of the front and the local garrison that all the military orders of an operative character issued by General Baluyev, Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front, must be implicitly obeyed. The political side of the activities of Staff Headquarters of the Western Front is practically controlled by the Minsk Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."[59]

In the evening of the same day, a Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee of the Western Region was formed in Minsk, with A. Myasnikov as the Chairman.

Kerensky's march on Petrograd served as a signal for the agents of the counter-revolution in Minsk to take action. The centre of counter-revolutionary activity was shifted to the Front Committee of the Western Front. On October 27, a "Western Front Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" was formed in Minsk, under the leadership of the Menshevik Kolotukhin, the Provisional Government's Commissar of the front and a member of the Front Committee. Soon after the formation of this Committee its armed patrols appeared in the town and demanded that the sentries of the Military Revolutionary Committee should surrender their posts to them. The Socialist-Revolutionaries issued a manifesto and had it posted all over the town. At 3 p.m. Cossacks appeared, and the streets and public squares were occupied by other cavalry units. Artillery and machine guns were placed in Svoboda Square. A violent collision seemed inevitable.

The armed forces of the counter-revolution were estimated at approximately 20,000 men. The "Committee for the Salvation" had at its disposal the Caucasian Cavalry Division, stationed in the vicinity of Minsk, a Corps of Polish Legionaries, and other units. Against these the Bolsheviks could muster the 1st Revolutionary Minsk Soviet Regiment, numbering about 2,000 men, and a small detachment of Red Guards, consisting mainly of railwaymen. Of the units of the local garrison only the crews of the anti-aircraft batteries were wholly on the side of the Bolsheviks. The Minsk Soviet did not succeed in getting assistance from the front, which was about 100 kilometres from the town.

Subsequent events proved that the forces of the "Committee for the Salvation" were much less numerous than had been assumed, but they certainly far outnumbered those of the Minsk Soviet. The "Committee for the Salvation" presented an ultimatum to the Military Revolutionary Committee demanding complete submission. Immediately on the receipt of the ultimatum, a conference of the Bolshevik Regional Centre was convened. The alternative that confronted the conference was: either to reject the ultimatum and, relying on the forces available, to enter into an unequal battle, or open negotiations with the "Committee for the Salvation" in order to gain time in which to draw revolutionary units from the front. The Minsk Bolsheviks chose the latter. Negotiations were opened, as a result of which an agreement was reached on the following terms:

"1. The 'Committee for the Salvation' abandons the idea of sending armed units to Petrograd and Moscow, and will not permit such to pass through Minsk.

"2. The 'Committee for the Salvation' recognises the amnesty granted by the Minsk Soviet to the political prisoners, but is of the opinion that these should be disarmed.



Myasnikov addressing the men of the 1st Revolutionary Minsk Soviet Regiment during the issue of arms

From a drawing by S. Volutsky

"3. The Minsk Soviet shall appoint two representatives to the 'Committee for the Salvation of the Revolution.'

"4. The 'Committee for the Salvation' shall be temporarily vested with all power in the region of the Western Front."[60]

The artillery and machine guns were removed from the square. The sentries of the Military Revolutionary Committee surrendered their posts to the units of the 2nd Caucasian Cavalry Division and took up their quarters in the barracks not far from the premises of the Soviet. The town found itself in the power of the "Committee for the Salvation." Neither side however, adhered strictly to the obligations it had undertaken. The "Committee for the Salvation," which had undertaken not to transfer troops from the front to Petrograd and Moscow, violated this undertaking at the slightest opportunity. At the same time, the news which was received from the front was not at all encouraging for the "Committee for the Salvation." Division after division and corps after corps, expressed opposition to the Provisional Government and support for the Soviet regime. The ground was slipping from under the feet of the compromisers. At a meeting of the "Committee for the Salvation" held on November 1, a representative of the Congress of the Grenadier Corps of the Second Army appeared and stated that the Grenadiers condemned the activities of the "Committee for the Salvation" on the Western

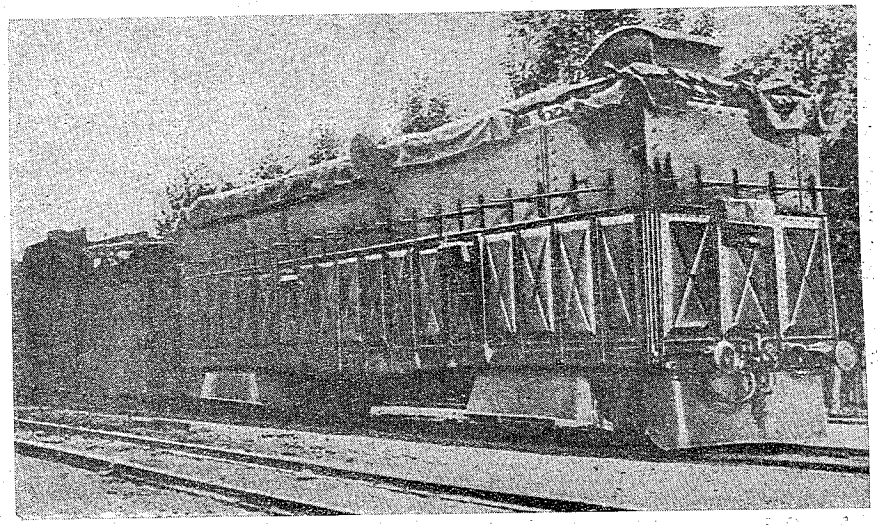
Front, demanded that it should recognise the revolution which had been brought about and submit to the new government, and threatened to dissolve the "Committee for the Salvation" by force if it failed to do so. The corps would take all measures to secure the fulfilment of these demands, said the representative.[61]

Resolutions were not the only means with which the front came to the assistance of the Minsk Bolsheviks. As soon as the request of the Minsk Soviet for assistance was received by the Second Army, the Military Revolutionary Committee of that army decided to send to Minsk an armoured train which was at the disposal of the Grenadier Corps and was then on the siding at Khvoyevo. A member of the Committee named Prolygin, a railwayman and a sergeant in the army, was commissioned to take the train out. On the morning of October 29, Prolygin arrived at the siding and came to an arrangement with the train crew to move in the direction of Minsk. The officers and the engine-drivers, who refused to submit, were arrested, and Prolygin drove the train himself.

The train moved slowly and cautiously, as there was a danger that the track might be blown up. At Negoreloye Station a delegation from the Minsk "Committee for the Salvation" came out to meet the train and tried to persuade the soldiers not to go any further, but they failed. The train proceeded on its journey. In view of this, the Minsk "Committee for the Salvation" ordered a gang of workers to go out and pull up the railway tracks. On the way the workers learned what was in the wind and arrested their foremen; and on meeting, at Fanipol Station, the delegation of the "Committee for the Salvation" returning from Negoreloye, they arrested them too.

Thus both attempts to hold up the armoured train failed. When this became evident the Menshevik Kolotukhin, Chairman of the "Committee for the Salvation," together with a staff officer of the Western Front named Zavadsky, rushed off in an automobile in the direction from which the train was travelling. They stopped at the 712th verst post, got out and walked towards the railway track. A small white cloud from an exploding shell rose above the embankment. Noticing this, the workers ran to the scene. Kolotukhin and Zavadsky beat a hasty retreat to the woods, abandoning their car and tools. On arriving at the scene of the explosion the workers found the rails torn up. The design of the counter-revolutionaries to wreck the train failed however, for it had already passed this spot. On the night of November 1 the armoured train arrived in Minsk. It was followed by a battalion of the 60th Siberian Regiment, which had also been dispatched by the Second Army. The arrival of these units put an end to the domination of the "Committee for the Salvation" in Minsk.

A meeting of the Minsk Soviet was held in the theatre. The chief speaker was Comrade Myasnikov, who moved a resolution in favour of endorsing the Soviet regime. Thousands of hands were raised in favour of it. Backed by real armed force, the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee again proclaimed itself the seat of governmental authority on the Western Front.



The armoured train which arrived in Minsk from the Second Army

General Baluyev, Commander-in-Chief of the Front, with whose backing the "Committee for the Salvation" had established its short-lived rule in Minsk, was obliged to declare his "readiness" to co-operate with the Bolsheviks. Concerning this, Comrade Kamenshchikov, a participant in the events in Minsk, relates the following:

> "In reply to Baluyev's letter, the Military Revolutionary Committee decided to submit the following demands to him: The cavalry must be immediately withdrawn from Minsk. Colonel Kamenshchikov was to be appointed commander of the troops in Minsk and its environs and also commandant of the town. . . . Baluyev accepted all these demands except one: he refused to issue the order appointing me commander of the troops in Minsk and its environs. I took up that post by order of the Military Revolutionary Committee."[62]

The relation of forces in Minsk underwent a change. As a result of Bolshevik propaganda, the Caucasian Cavalry Division refused to support the counter-revolution. The attempt of the Menshevik Kolotukhin, Commissar of the front and Chairman of the "Committee for the Salvation" to wreck the armoured train discredited that Committee. On November 4, Kolotukhin himself was arrested.

Thus the Soviet regime triumphed in Minsk, the centre of the Western Front.

Several other points in the rear of the Western Front played an important part in bringing about the proletarian revolution, *viz.*, Orsha, Smolensk and Vyazma.

Orsha, an important railway junction, was on the direct line between General Headquarters and Petrograd, and between Minsk and Moscow. General Headquarters clung to Orsha very tightly. It was no accident that the 2nd Kuban Cossack Division was kept in the environs of the town; its function was to ensure the execution of General Headquarters' order at this important point. In the very first days of the October Socialist Revolution troops began to arrive here en route for Petrograd and Moscow to crush the proletarian insurrection. The Orsha Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was controlled by compromisers—Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Bundists.

The position of the Bolsheviks in Orsha during the October days was an extremely difficult one. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Orsha Soviet held on October 6, Colonel Shebalin, commandant of the town, said:

"The Bolshevik insurrection in Petrograd will soon be liquidated. All the main points have already been captured by the cadets. In Orsha we shall crush every attempt at insurrection."

In reply to this the voices of the Bolsheviks were heard in protest, crying: "Throw him out! Remove him!"

The Colonel was followed by the chief of the militia Ivanov, a Menshevik. Glancing maliciously in the direction of the Bolsheviks he began his speech by saying:

"On my orders the militia today occupied the railway station. Machine guns have been placed wherever necessary. I shall not permit any Bolshevik outrages. . . ."

A Cossack officer from the Kuban Division assured the compromisers that the Cossacks were entirely on their side.

The Soviet adopted a resolution to form a "Committee for the Salvation." Representatives of the City Duma were also included in this Committee, whereupon the Mayor of Orsha, the veteran Bolshevik P. N. Lepeshinsky, resigned.

The Bolsheviks conducted energetic activities in the factories and among the units of the garrison. They demanded new elections for the Soviet, and when the compromisers refused to hear of this, the new elections were held without official sanction.

On October 27 a meeting of the Soviet took place at which the Bolsheviks had a far larger representation than before. It was a stormy meeting. The compromisers refused to recognise the credentials of the newly elected deputies.

The Bolsheviks spent the next day, October 28, in the factories and among the units of the garrison. The attempt of the compromisers to prevent the elections from being held failed. At the artillery depot an officer who got up to oppose the Bolsheviks, was almost lynched by his men; he was saved by the Bolsheviks.

The newly elected Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies met that very same day. Not a single compromiser was present. The Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bundists held a meeting of the old Soviet. At

this first meeting of the new Soviet a Military Revolutionary Committee was formed, which immediately established connection with all the units of the garrison and appointed its Commissars to them. It dispatched soldiers to the station to keep watch over incoming trains.

On learning that a Military Revolutionary Committee had been established in Orsha, the Minsk "Committee for the Salvation" appointed the Right Socialist-Revolutionary Makarevich Commissar of the Orsha junction. Makarevich arrived in Orsha on October 29 where he was immediately arrested.

Meanwhile, two troop trains carrying the 623rd Infantry Regiment, which was under Bolshevik influence, arrived in Orsha. The Military Revolutionary Committee held them up at the station and persuaded the men to perform guard duty in the town. With the aid of these soldiers the Kuban Cossack Division was kept in check. Later on, the Bolsheviks won over the rank-and-file Cossacks to their side.

The position of the counter-revolutionaries was becoming precarious. On October 31, the Commander of the Kuban Cossack Division, Nikolayev, who was entrusted with the function of ensuring the free passage of troops going north to assist Kerensky and Krasnov, telegraphed General Headquarters as follows:

"The Bolshevik Committee has brought into the town a company of the 623rd Infantry Regiment, two troop trains of which are still at the station. Large armed units of this Bolshevik force are patrolling the town, particularly the Telegraph Office which is occupied by 10 Cossacks. Tomorrow they propose to occupy all the public buildings and to force upon me their demands, which today I categorically rejected. I have no forces at my command to counteract them; the squadrons from Minsk have not yet arrived; the dispatch of armoured cars is desirable."[63]

The men of the 623rd Regiment held up 300 Siberian Cossacks who were proceeding from Minsk to Smolensk.[64]

On November 1, Colonel Shebalin, the commandant of the town, who on October 26 had boastfully stated that he would "crush every attempt at insurrection," telegraphed direct to Dukhonin as follows:

"The situation in Orsha is critical. On the morning of the 1st, Uzlovaya (junction) Station and the town will be in the hands of the Bolsheviks. Ultimatums have been presented to all the authorities. The dragoons have not arrived, I have no means with which to take counter-measures. A whole regiment of infantry is in trains at the station, and this evening a company from this regiment marched into town. To save the situation, send by 8 o'clock, 4 armoured cars and a battery. I am telegraphing over the heads of the intermediate authorities because I am impatient with anxiety."[65]

But telegrams were of no avail. The Bolsheviks were in complete control of the town. The Orsha Military Revolutionary Committee blocked the dispatch of counter-revolutionary forces from the front.

The Bolsheviks resorted to all sorts of devices to hold up troop trains. Part of the troops they won over, others they disarmed. If resort to force threatened to cause bloodshed, the trains were shunted out to sidings beyond the station and left in such a way that not only was it impossible to unload, but even difficult for the men to leave the cars. After staying on these sidings for a day and a night the soldiers would beg the commandant to dispatch them "in any direction he pleased."

Smolensk lies on the direct route from Minsk to Moscow. At that time it was the headquarters of the Minsk Military Area, then under the command of General Leshch. The Commissar of the Provisional Government for the Area was Galin, who shortly before had dispersed the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in Kaluga. The town was crowded with troops and army administration officers of the Western Front. The most reliable forces were concentrated around Area Staff Headquarters. A large section of the troops of the garrison, however, favoured the Bolsheviks.

On October 26, immediately on the receipt of news of the insurrection in Petrograd, the Smolensk Soviet met. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries demanded that the Soviet should condemn the insurrection, but their resolution was defeated by an overwhelming majority. Thereupon they left the Soviet and went to the City Duma, where all the counter-revolutionary forces were gathered. That same day the City Duma announced the formation of a Smolensk "Committee for the Salvation." The Bolsheviks, who remained in the Soviet, formed a Military Revolutionary Committee consisting of four Bolsheviks, two "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and one Anarchist.

Soon the Military Revolutionary Committee received information that Headquarters of the Military Area had ordered the Cossacks to prepare for an attack on the Soviet. The Bolsheviks began to fortify the building, which formerly had been the Governor-General's mansion, and placed three mortars in the garden. Distrusting the staff of the Telephone Exchange, they got in touch with the artillery detachment—the unit most loyal to the Soviet—by means of a field telephone line. A military guard was posted in the Soviet building and machine guns were placed at the windows.

The "Committee for the Salvation" proclaimed martial law in the town. Cossacks and armoured cars patrolled the streets. Patrols were also posted on the roads on the outskirts of the town.

By forging the signature of the Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries on the "Committee for the Salvation" obtained 41 machine guns from the aviation depot. This "success" encouraged the compromisers and they hastened to other military units, but everywhere they met with a rebuff. In the light artillery detachments the agitation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks ended with . . . the arrest of the officers. Then they made an attempt to demoralise the units that were most loyal to the Bolsheviks. With this end in view some unknown person sent a large supply of alcohol to the heavy artillery detachment, but the drunken carousal that began among the men was soon stopped by the intervention of the Bolsheviks. In the town the atmosphere became more tense and it was evident that the inevitable climax was approaching.

At 8 p.m. on October 30 a full meeting of the Smolensk Soviet was opened. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary, M. I. Smolentsev, the delegate who had returned from the Second Congress of Soviets in Petrograd, made his report. Everybody in the crowded hall hung on to every word he uttered. His story of the heroic fight put up by the Petrograd proletariat was greeted with enthusiastic applause. Suddenly, the Right Socialist-Revolutionary Kazakov, accompanied by two military men, appeared in the hall. Kazakov strode to the platform and interrupting the speaker, presented an ultimatum.

> "The 'Committee for the Salvation' demands," he said, "that the members of the Soviet should surrender their arms and immediately leave the premises. I'll give you thirty minutes for this. If the demand is not complied with, fire will be opened on the building."[66]

This announcement caused consternation in the hall. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries advised the deputies to disperse. The workers' representatives and the delegates from the army units, however, proposed that the ultimatum should be rejected, but the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries were already making for the doors. In the street they were all arrested by the counter-revolutionaries. About 40 Bolsheviks remained in the building, determined not to submit to the ultimatum. They made ready to defend themselves and dispatched the representatives of the artillery detachment to their unit for assistance, letting them out of the building unobserved. All lights in the rooms and corridors were extinguished.

The Bolsheviks who were standing at the windows saw shadowy figures of Whiteguards in the garden darting from tree to tree, drawing closer to the building. Soon a shot was fired from the garden. This was answered by a shot from the windows. A hot exchange of fire ensued. The Cossacks tried to rush the building, but were hurled back. The attack was repeated several times, but was repulsed every time. The besieging force far outnumbered the defenders, however, and this began to tell. The defenders tried to get into telephone communication with the army units, but they found that the telephones had been disconnected. Suddenly, the field telephone which connected the Soviet with the light artillery detachment buzzed with a message from the representative of the detachment who had been sent for assistance. He reported that measures were being taken to defend the Soviet.

Suddenly, at about 2 a.m. the firing ceased. A delegation from the "Committee for the Salvation," was seen approaching the building, preceded by the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary Smolentsev, whom the Cossacks had arrested and were bringing along as a hostage. The delegation called upon the defenders of the Soviet to surrender, but the Bolsheviks once again emphatically refused.

The firing was then resumed. Ignoring the bullets of the Whiteguards one of the defenders ran into the garden and trained a mortar on the premises of the City Duma, where the "Committee for the Salvation" was in session. The shell hit the roof of the City Duma building and caused considerable damage. Shortly afterwards the City Duma building and the Military Area Staff Headquarters were bombarded by light artillery. At about 4 a.m. the regiment that was guarding the town marched towards the centre, exchanging shots with the troops of the "Committee for the Salvation."

The "Committee for the Salvation" was thrown into confusion. It sent another delegation to the Soviet, but the demeanour of this one was quite different from that of the first. It proposed that the hostilities should cease and that representatives be sent to the City Duma for negotiations.

The Military Revolutionary Committee demanded: 1) that the "Committee for the Salvation" be dissolved; 2) that Military Area Headquarters should cease hostilities and immediately withdraw the Cossack units from the town; 3) that all prisoners be released.

After prolonged negotiations the terms of the Military Revolutionary Committee were accepted; but next day the "Committee for the Salvation" and Military Area Headquarters violated the agreement. With the aid of the Cossacks they attempted to seize the artillery batteries. Fighting was resumed. Detachments from the Motor Transport School, from the Guard Regiment and the Sappers' Battalion came to the artillerymen's assistance. The Whiteguards fled.

Skirmishes with the forces of the "Committee for the Salvation" occurred in different parts of the town throughout the day on October 31. At last, the units of Military Area Headquarters were disarmed. The Cossacks left the town; some of them were disarmed. On November 1, after the Cossacks had left, Galin, the Commissar of the Provisional Government, fled from Smolensk. After achieving victory in the town, the Military Revolutionary Committee posted strong forces at the railway junction. Several trains which were proceeding to Moscow with troops to suppress the insurrection were held up and the men disarmed.

A by no means unimportant role in holding up troops en route to Moscow to crush the insurrection was played by the Military Revolutionary Committee in Vyazma, which during the October days took over power in that town without encountering resistance. Fighting occurred here later.

On October 29, the Vyazma Military Revolutionary Committee was notified of the approach of a train carrying troops to Moscow. The army units and the Red Guard in the town were immediately mobilised for the purpose of holding up these troops. Late at night, the Military Revolutionary Committee received a telegram from the commander of these forces demanding that it should lay down its arms.

Three trains filled with Cossacks were already at Redyakino Station, only a few miles from Vyazma. Disagreement arose in the Military Revolutionary Committee. By a small majority it was decided to open negotiations and to

send delegates to Redyakino Station. The Cossacks took advantage of this to move right up to the town and then refused to negotiate. Only then did the Military Revolutionary Committee move a machine-gun detachment and infantry units against them. Fighting ensued in which the Cossacks sustained heavy losses. To gain time they now expressed willingness to negotiate with the Military Revolutionary Committee, but the latter demanded that they should unconditionally lay down their arms. The Cossack officers were stubborn, however, and firing was resumed and kept up until the Cossacks finally laid down their arms. Other troops, including armoured car detachments, shock troops and machine-gun units trying to proceed to Moscow to assist the Whiteguards, were also disarmed.

In consolidating the success of the Great Proletarian Revolution, the Western Front and its rear played an important role.

4

THE COURSE OF THE REVOLUTION ON THE SOUTH-WESTERN, RUMANIAN AND CAUCASIAN FRONTS

The circumstances under which the Great Proletarian Revolution developed on the South-Western, Rumanian and Caucasian Fronts were more complicated than on the Northern and Western Fronts. The struggle for Soviet power in the south was waged not only against the generals and the counter-revolutionary organisations, but also against the nationalist bodies in the respective areas which were hostile to the Soviet regime. These were the Ukrainian Central Rada, the bourgeois organisations in Transcaucasia, and the Rumanian authorities.

On hearing of the events in Petrograd, the Front Committee of the South-Western Front decided to take measures to prevent a Bolshevik insurrection. The temper of this Committee, however, did not by any means reflect that of the masses of the soldiers at the front and in the rear. These men received the news of the insurrection in Petrograd much later than the men on the other fronts, but as soon as they heard of this great event they hastened to express their solidarity with the Petrograd workers and soldiers. On October 31, General Grishinsky, Chief of Staff of the Seventh Army, reported to Staff Headquarters of the South-Western Front as follows:

> "In the 22nd Corps intense Bolshevik agitation is being conducted by the men of the 6th Regiment who have passed a resolution supporting the Bolsheviks. . . . At a joint meeting of the Regimental, Divisional and Corps Committees of the 1st Guards Corps, after a stormy debate, the following resolution was passed: 'This joint meeting declares its complete

solidarity with the Petrograd garrison and the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies in their struggle for the establishment of a strong revolutionary government. . . ."[67]

On November 2, General Promotov, Commander-in-Chief of the Eleventh Army, telegraphed to Front Headquarters:

"The 5th Army Corps is in a very restless mood and sympathy towards the Bolsheviks is growing, especially among the infantry. In the 7th Infantry Division the men's attitude towards the commanding personnel has grown much worse. In the 32nd Army Corps, the 403rd Polish Regiment, with the exception of the machine-gun and other small detachments, has passed a Bolshevik resolution protesting against the withdrawal of troops from the front. The 48th Heavy Artillery Detachment has passed a similar Bolshevik resolution. . . . Bolshevik temper among the units of the corps is growing."[68]

The centre of the revolutionary movement in the rear of the South-Western Front was Vinnitsa, where there was a strong Bolshevik organisation. The local Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was entirely on the side of the Bolsheviks, and the large local garrison also followed their lead. In this town events began to come to a head before the insurrection in Petrograd. Meetings were held by the different army units at which resolutions were passed demanding the immediate transfer of power to the Soviets. In view of the "dangerous mood," the authorities decided to withdraw from Vinnitsa and send to the front the units which had been most infected with Bolshevism. Among these was the 15th Reserve Regiment. On learning of this decision, the regiment marched in full strength to the Vinnitsa Soviet, where its representatives stated that the men would not leave for the front without the Soviet's orders. After a meeting outside the premises of the Soviet the regiment returned to barracks in full marching order. This action met with the approval of the other units of the garrison. A Military Revolutionary Committee was formed, which decided to hold up the dispatch of the 15th Regiment to the front and to allow no arms to be issued without its sanction. It ordered the aircraft unit to patrol overhead, ostensibly for the purpose of making training flights, but actually to watch for the approach of Provisional Government troops.

On October 24, N. I. Jordansky, the Provisional Government Commissar of the South-Western Front and a Menshevik, was informed of the action of the 15th Regiment and forthwith dispatched to Vinnitsa a detachment of troops with armoured cars under the command of his assistant T. D. Kostitsin and Colonel Avraamov. The detachment arrived in Vinnitsa on October 25 and made a futile attempt to remove the arms from the local depot. The guards stated that they would allow no arms to leave the place without the sanction of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the Soviet. Kostitsin was obliged to enter into negotiations with these bodies. At a joint meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the Executive Committee of the Soviet, Kostitsin submitted proposals to the effect that the 15th Regiment be sent to the front immediately; that arms be issued, and that the Bolsheviks who were fomenting sedition among the troops be arrested. These proposals were referred for discussion to a full meeting of the Soviet, which almost unanimously, only four voting against, rejected them. The Soviet, in its turn, demanded the immediate dismissal of all the Commissars of the Provisional Government, the arrest of Kostitsin and the disarming of his detachment. Kostitsin called for assistance, and that same day detachments of cadets with armoured cars and artillery arrived.

On receiving the information that Kostitsin was dispatching armoured cars against the Soviet and that the cadets were preparing for an attack, the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered the units of the Vinnitsa garrison to go into action. The cadets suddenly opened fire on the Soviet. Fighting commenced. The armoured car detachments and the aircraft unit joined the insurgents and were also brought into action.

The insurgents outnumbered the cadets and the latter were forced to retreat. On the morning of the 29th, the cadets, receiving fresh reinforcements, began to bombard the town with artillery and launched an attack from the railway station. The Vinnitsa garrison and the workers put up a stubborn resistance, but this time the weight of numbers was on the enemy's side. The insurgents were obliged to retreat. Late at night they stated that they wanted to negotiate. Kostitsin got into communication with Jordansky on the direct wire and asked for instructions. Jordansky demanded the unconditional surrender of the revolutionary troops. After this, part of the insurgents scattered in the surrounding countryside, and part were disarmed. Individual detachments continued for some time to offer stubborn resistance, but at last even they were obliged to surrender.

The events in Vinnitsa roused the attention of General Headquarters, and Dukhonin was evidently anxious about the probable outcome of the struggle. On October 29, in a conversation he had over the direct wire with Baluyev, in which he informed the latter of the events in Vinnitsa, he said: "We have remained masters of the battlefield in spite of the fact that the Bolsheviks bombed the troops who are loyal to the government from the air."[69]

Nevertheless, on October 30, he again enquired of Staff Headquarters of the South-Western Front: "Has the affair in Vinnitsa definitely been liquidated?"[70]

General Stogov, the Chief of Staff, replied: "No definite report to that effect has been received yet, but it has been reported that the fighting is over and that the insurgents are in flight, but the loyal troops are so fatigued that they cannot go in pursuit."[71]

General Headquarters had every reason to be alarmed about the insurrection in Vinnitsa.

Near by, in the environs of Zhmerinka, the 2nd Guard Corps was stationed. A representative of the Vinnitsa Military Revolutionary Committee

appealed to the nearest artillery brigade of this corps for assistance. At meetings of the different units of the brigade reports were made on the fighting in Vinnitsa. A committee of three was elected to organise active operations. A neighbouring regiment of infantry decided to act in conjunction with the Artillery Brigade. Bolshevik delegates from Vinnitsa visited other regiments of the corps. In some of them they were obliged to call the men together themselves as the Regimental Committees, consisting, in the main, of Socialist-Revolutionaries, declared that they would not permit any meetings to be held or action to be taken.

Next day, the corps was ready for action. A meeting of delegates from all the units was held at which the plan of operations was discussed. It was decided to advance in three directions: Vinnitsa-Kiev-Bar. The leadership of the operations was vested in the Military Revolutionary Committee, which was then and there elected. Commissars were appointed to the different units. On the following day the corps marched off in conformity with the plan. Several of the officers who refused to accompany their men were arrested. The Kexholm Regiment set out with its commander at its head, and with all its other officers.

The Artillery Brigade and the Kexholm and Volhynia Regiments entered Zhmerinka with band playing and flying colours, inscribed with the motto "All power to the Soviets." They occupied the railway station, removed the guard, stopped the movement of Provisional Government troop trains to Moscow, and dispatched some of their units to Kiev and the artillery to Vinnitsa. The railwaymen rendered the insurgents every assistance.

But the assistance of the 2nd Guards Corps came too late. The insurrection in Vinnitsa was already crushed. A Commission of Enquiry was sent to Vinnitsa to punish the offenders. On October 30, the representatives of the City Administration expressed their gratitude to Assistant Commissar Kostitsin for his "firmness and lack of hesitation, so rare among representatives of the government these days."[72]

The front, too, failed to render the Vinnitsa Bolsheviks timely assistance. The compromisers on the South-Western Front did all in their power to hinder the triumphant progress of the proletarian revolution. They formed "Committees for the Salvation" which operated in conjunction with the Ukrainian Rada, as was the case, for example, in the Special Army. The "Committees" practically entrusted political authority to the tsarist generals in command of the army.

In the middle of November a Special Congress of the Armies of the South-Western Front was called by the compromising higher bodies of the army organisations with the object of securing support for the government which was being formed at General Headquarters with Chernov at the head. In the course of preparing for this Congress however, the whole plot burst like a soap bubble. Striking proof of its failure were the instructions received by the delegates who were elected to this Congress. A summary of these instructions showed that 150 units, two armies, two corps, one garrison and one

divisional staff were in favour of the Soviet regime and of recognising the Council of People's Commissars. On the other hand, 102 units, three corps, one division and one garrison favoured a homogeneous Socialist government comprising all Socialist parties. All the instructions called for the immediate transfer of the land to Land Committees, and the immediate conclusion of an armistice and peace.

The Congress was opened on November 18 in Berdichev. Approximately 700 delegates were present with a right to voice and vote, and about 100 with the right to voice only. Of the delegates with a right to voice and vote 267 were Bolsheviks, 213 Socialist-Revolutionaries—of whom about 50 were "Lefts"—47 Mensheviks, 73 Ukrainians—of whom some were Nationalists—and a number of non-party delegates.

The Socialist-Revolutionary centre attached exceptional importance to this Congress and had mobilised its leading forces for it. Before the Congress opened a meeting of the Socialist-Revolutionary group was held attended by Avksentyev, who arrived specially for the purpose, but meeting with the open hostility of a section of the group, he abandoned the idea of addressing the Congress. The Central Committee of the Menshevik Party was represented at the Congress by Weinstein.

Reports from the different units were taken as the first item on the agenda. These once again proved that the majority of the soldiers on the South-Western Front backed the revolution. Of the 25 speakers, who read the instructions they had received, 14 demanded the organisation of Soviet government in the localities and support for the Council of People's Commissars; 11 spoke in favour of forming a homogeneous Socialist government on the basis of the platform and decisions of the Second Congress of Soviets. The overwhelming majority of the speakers urged the necessity of holding new elections for the All-Army, Front and Army Committees.

Many of the delegates, acting on their instructions, demanded the prosecution of the organisers and ringleaders of the counter-revolution, including Kerensky, the dissolution of the Cossack government in the Don Region, and the disbandment of the shock battalions. A heated debate arose over a telegram received from the Executive Committee of the Soviet of the Rumanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet and the Odessa Region—which was still controlled by the compromisers—calling upon the Congress to assist the All-Army Committee in its preparations to offer armed resistance to the revolutionary troops who were marching on General Headquarters. Despite the efforts of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to secure this support, the Congress declared that "the Central Army Committee was out of harmony with the temper of the broad masses" and called upon it to resign forthwith.[73]

The question of power was debated for three days. Weinstein, speaking on behalf of the Mensheviks, stated that the Bolsheviks "were leading Russia into an abyss." Bulat, the spokesman for the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, told such fantastically wild stories about the Bolsheviks that

the entire hall rocked with mocking laughter. A sharp struggle ensued over the three resolutions that were submitted to the Congress, one by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik *bloc*, another by the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, Ukrainian Nationalists and non-party *bloc*, and the third by the Bolsheviks. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik resolution was put to the vote first and was defeated. Then, in order to secure the defeat of the Bolshevik resolution, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik *bloc* voted for the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary and Ukrainian resolution. This resolution was adopted as a basis, whereupon the Bolsheviks categorically refused to take any further part in its discussion. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries then found themselves in the minority, and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, taking advantage of this, secured the adoption of several amendments.

The vacillation of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries threatened to disrupt the further proceedings of the Congress. When the resolution as amended was put to the vote it was defeated by the votes of the Bolsheviks and the non-party delegates, as well as of its original authors, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. Attempts to reach an agreement on a common resolution failed. The Bolsheviks withdrew from the Congress and decided to appeal to their constituents. They were followed by the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and the non-party delegates. Many of the soldiers from the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik *bloc* also left. The Congress was thus broken up. Next day, however, the various party groups reached an agreement on the organisation of a Provisional Military Revolutionary Committee, which was to be the supreme authority on this front, on the understanding that another Congress of the front would be held three weeks later. The Military Revolutionary Committee, which was elected that same day, consisted of 18 Bolsheviks, nine Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, five "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, two Mensheviks and one non-party. A Bolshevik was elected chairman. The Ukrainians, stating that they would submit only to the Ukrainian Central Rada, refused to sit on the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Two days later the Military Revolutionary Committee issued its Order No. 1 proclaiming that supreme power in the country was vested in the Council of People's Commissars. It also ordered the release of all political prisoners and the withdrawal of all legal proceedings on charges of having conducted political propoganda against the offensive and of having failed to carry out military orders.

Thus, the attempt of the opponents of the Soviet regime to find support on the South-Western Front came to nought. Nevertheless, during the subsequent course of events it became necessary to resist the strong pressure of the counter-revolution on this as well as on the neighbouring Rumanian Front.

On the Rumanian Front the compromisers felt themselves masters of the situation even more than on the South-Western Front. When the first

news of the insurrection in Petrograd arrived they at once, in conjunction with the generals, exerted all efforts to organise the counter-revolutionary forces for the purpose of counteracting the impending events. The Staff of the front, which was headed by the monarchist General Shcherbachev, had its headquarters in Jassy. Here a peculiar sort of "Military Revolutionary Committee" of the Rumanian Front was formed on the initiative of the Commissar of the front Tiesenhausen. This committee consisted of Tiesenhausen himself, who was a Right Socialist-Revolutionary, his deputy Andrianov, also a Right Socialist-Revolutionary, and of two Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and three Mensheviks from the Front Department of the Executive Committee of the Rumanian Front, Black Sea Fleet and Odessa Region Soviet.

Cloaked by a name which the soldiers regarded as a symbol of the struggle for establishing a Soviet regime, the compromisers feverishly began to organise their forces. Imitating the other Military Revolutionary Committees whose name they adopted as a shield, they first of all proclaimed that henceforth all authority at the front was vested in their fictitious Military Revolutionary Committee. Then they called for the immediate formation of similar committees in the armies, corps and divisions throughout the Rumanian Front and placed them in control of the telegraph, instructed them to scrutinise all orders that were resumed, and also imposed upon the duty of "preventing unauthorised action." For the determined suppression of "every sort of outrage and anarchy," it was decided to form a "mixed Revolutionary Division of the three arms to consist of comrades who were most loyal and devoted to the cause of the revolution."[74]

Planning to organise a punitive detachment to combat any attempt at insurrection—the "Revolutionary Division" was actually intended for this purpose—the compromisers strove to obtain more active assistance from the front for their operations. With this aim in view, they decided to convene a Special Congress of the Front on October 30 in the Rumanian town of Romana, the headquarters of the Fourth Army.

The greatest care was devoted to the formation of the "Revolutionary Division." On October 26 an urgent telegram signed by General Shcherbachev and the "Military Revolutionary Committee" was sent to all army and corps commanders and Commissars instructing them to proceed immediately to form the "Revolutionary Division," and to do it in such a way as to ensure that its personnel would be "most reliable and devoted to the cause of combating insurrection which was spreading to the front." It was intended to supply the division with an abundance of munitions of every type and to concentrate it at specially chosen points by the evening of October 30.

The process of forming this mailed fist of the counter-revolution proved to be a slow one, however. Try as they would, the compromisers could not prevent news of the revolutionary events in Petrograd from reaching the regiments at the front. Some of the units disposed near the South-Western

Front received the news rather early. This is evident from the fact that already on October 26, a joint meeting of Regimental Committees of the 32nd Division of the Eighth Army resolved to send the following telegram to the Petrograd Soviet:

> "The 32nd Division greets the true fighters for freedom, land and peace, and declares that if the Provisional Government attempts to arrange another blood bath for the working people, the 32nd Division will place all its armed forces at the disposal of the Bolsheviks."[75]

That same day, the 165th Division of the same army sent the Petrograd Soviet a telegram, which left no doubt whatever about the true sentiments of the soldiers.

The Special Congress of the Front was opened on October 31. About 80 Socialist-Revolutionaries, 40 Mensheviks and 15 Bolsheviks were present. There were only two items on the agenda: current events, and the formation of a "Revolutionary Division." Assistant Commissar Andrianov addressed the Congress and outlined the program of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. In the course of his speech he stated that the Bolshevik insurrection was a challenge to the other parties and that "those who joined them must bear responsibility for a grave crime against the state."[76]

Andrianov was followed by the representative of the Bolsheviks who showed that the insurrection against the Provisional Government had been a necessity. "If the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Menshevik Social-Democrats attempt to suppress this movement, they stand in danger of finding themselves on the same side of the barricade as the bourgeoisie," he said with great emphasis in concluding his speech.[77] Another Bolshevik delegate spoke in the same strain.

The reports afterwards delivered by delegates from the different units revealed that the mood and sentiments of the soldiers were by no means in favour of the organisers of the Congress. Even some of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik speakers were obliged to admit that the soldiers sympathised with the Bolsheviks. Thus, the representative of the 3rd Turkestan Division, a Menshevik, stated that he had been elected only because he had been in the division for three years, but the division itself was entirely Bolshevik. In his opinion, it had been corrupted by "reinforcements from Tsaritsyn." Another representative of this division stated with emphasis that the insurrection of the Petrograd proletariat was a fight "for their rights, for their liberation from the yoke of capital. The division would render the Provisional Government no support whatever."[78] The proposals adopted by the Congress as the basis for a resolution on current events contained the following point: "This Congress of the Front deems the Bolshevik insurrection to be revolutionary, but inopportune and inadmissible."[79]

On behalf of the Socialist-Revolutionaries the Chairman of the Congress, Lordkipanidze, moved an amendment to this point, condemning the Bolshevik insurrection. After a stormy debate this amendment was adopted, whereupon the Bolsheviks left the Congress.

The "Military Revolutionary Committee" which was endorsed by the Congress contained the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who had been on the Provisional Committee. The Bolsheviks and the Ukrainians refused to appoint their representatives to it.

The Congress approved of the proposal to form a "Revolutionary Division" and instructed the "Military Revolutionary Committee" to proceed with this.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries had intended to use this Congress as a means of mobilising forces to combat the impending insurrection of the soldiers at the front, but it failed to achieve this object. It revealed that, notwithstanding their apparent majority, the position of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks on the Rumanian Front was as precarious as it was on the other fronts. Here, too, the masses were swinging to the side of the Bolsheviks, and this compelled the various Army Committees to refrain from taking part in the formation of the "Revolutionary Division." Thus, the Committee of the Sixth Army stated:

> "We are of the opinion that the preservation of order and unity in the army is the best pledge of its loyalty to the revolution and that participation in the formation (of the "Revolutionary Division") may cause discontent and give rise to excesses among the masses of the soldiers."[80]

A Congress of Peasants' Deputies of the Rumanian Front, held later, also condemned this plan. In its resolution this Congress stated:

> "Having received news of the formation on the Rumanian Front of a division to be dispatched to Petrograd, this Congress expresses the opinion that such action is impermissible and emphatically protests against it."[81]

The "Revolutionary Division" was never formed.

In spite of the compromising resolutions passed by Army and Corps Committees, individual corps and divisions, and later entire armies, began to go over to the Soviet regime. A vivid picture of the revolutionary events that were maturing on the Rumanian Front was presented by the Special Congress of the 48th Division of the Fourth Army. Counter-revolutionary officers who attempted to speak at this Congress were howled down and pelted with abuse; and when feeling developed to the pitch that insignia badges and stripes were ripped off, the officers made for the doors amidst the jeers and derision of the soldiers.

On the last day of the Congress General E. F. Novitsky, the Commander of the Division, was arrested. The movement which began at the Congress of the 48th Division ended with a revolution throughout the Fourth Army. General A. F. Ragoza, the Commander-in-Chief, was arrested and the Army Commissar, the Socialist-Revolutionary Alexeyevsky, was obliged to give an undertaking to leave the Rumanian Front. Released several hours after

his arrest, General Ragoza wrote a statement to the *Journal of the Fourth Army* requesting that he be released of his command. "No new commander could now cope with his task in the army," he stated.[82]

A Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee was set up in this army. The old Army Committee, which had kept back from the soldiers the orders issued by the new government, was dissolved. At the last meeting of this Committee, which was held in the presence of a large audience of soldiers, a number of these telegrams were read.

"Comrades, did you know about this telegram?"—asked a Bolshevik soldier, reading a telegram proposing that peace negotiations be opened.

"No, we did not. The scoundrels! Down with them! Chuck them out!"

"And did you know about this telegram?"—and the soldier read the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to cease military operations along the entire front.

"No, we did not. They kept it from us, the traitors! Put a bullet through their heads. They have fooled us long enough!"—came the reply.

The Chairman, a Menshevik, swooned. The old Committee went out of existence.

That is how the masses of the soldiers on the Rumanian Front reacted to the October Revolution. Their sympathies were entirely on the side of the Soviet Government. Nevertheless, here as on the South-Western Front owing to the circumstances already indicated, the complete triumph of the Soviet regime was delayed. The action of the Ukrainian Central Rada and of the Rumanian authorities created on these fronts the complicated situation of civil war.

On the Caucasian Front there were five Army Corps: the 1st, 4th, 5th and 6th Caucasian Corps and the 2nd Turkestan Corps. In October 1917, these, together with smaller units comprising a total of about 200,000 men, were held in readiness for action against the Turks. There was also a special Expeditionary Corps in Persia.

The news of the Great Proletarian Revolution quickly roused the masses of the soldiers on this remote front too. The confidential dispatches of the Staff of the Caucasian Front noted this with alarm during the very first days of the insurrection in Petrograd. Thus, the dispatches sent between October 21 and 28 stated:

"The majority of units at the front and in the rear calmly received the news of the Bolshevik insurrection in Petrograd."

Nevertheless, they contain statements like the following:

"As a result of the Bolshevik insurrection and the latest order concerning disciplinary authority, the mood of the 4th Cossack Rifle Division has undergone a definite change for the worse. As a result of the agitation conducted by certain individuals, the 25th Caucasian Rifle Regiment is rapidly disintegrating. . . . Excitement prevails in the 6th Caucasian Rifle Division."[83]



A meeting of a Regimental Committee at the front during the October days
From a drawing by S. Boym

Later the dispatches of the Staff of the Caucasian Front began to note the growth of Bolshevik influence. According to the dispatches sent in the period from October 28 to November 4 this was particularly to be observed in the 506th Pochayevsky and 508th Cherkassky Regiments. Later a still further increase of Bolshevik influence and the growing popularity of Bolshevik slogans among the soldiers was noted. Still later this growing Bolshevik influence was emphasised even more strongly.

This was also commented on in the dispatches of commanders of individual units and of fortified zones. Thus, the Commander of the 5th Turkestan Rifle Division reported to Front Headquarters that Bolshevism predominated in his regiments. Major-General Siegel, Commander of the Erzerum Fortified District, in characterising the influence of different political parties in the units under his command, noted the growth of the number of Bolsheviks in the district. This growth must have been very rapid, for in his next dispatch, under the heading "Influence of Political Parties," he wrote that the Bolsheviks were predominant.

In the rear of the Caucasian Front events had taken the same turn. For instance, a confidential dispatch of the Staff of the Caucasian Military Area dated October 27 observes that: "In Tuapse, on October 26, the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies resolved to seize power." The dispatch went on

to say that the soldiers' committees in the other garrisons of the Caucasian Military Area were working "in contact with the army commanders" and that "the Socialist-Revolutionaries exercised most influence."[84]

Soon, however, the "influence" of the Socialist-Revolutionaries began to wane. Thus, in a dispatch dated November 18 we read:

"In Pyatigorsk, Botlikha, Temir-Khan-Shura, Kutais, Tuapse and Novorossiisk, the Bolsheviks exercise most influence."

The same dispatch stated that the Baku Bolsheviks had appointed their Commissars to all the military bodies. "This latter measure," says the dispatch, "met with the approval of the majority of the soldiers."[85]

Later, the dispatches of the Staff of the Caucasian Military Area noted the growing influence of the Bolsheviks in the garrisons of Tiflis, Vladikavkaz, Georgievsk, Petrovsk, Erivan, Sarikamysh and other towns. Here, too, the Great Proletarian Revolution was ardently welcomed. As was noted in one of the dispatches, the soldiers eagerly watched the events that were unfolding in Petrograd and Moscow.

Nevertheless, the specific features of the Caucasian Front put their impress on the development of the revolutionary events in this region. The conditions under which the Russian soldiers found themselves here were different from those on the other fronts. The inhabitants of the war zone and the hinterland belonged to different nationalities. The customs and languages of the local inhabitants were alien to the Russian soldiers. In the past the autocracy had fomented enmity among the different nationalities of this region as well as between them and the Russians. The Russian soldiers felt like aliens here. The population distrusted them, for they associated the Russian military with tyranny and slavery. The dominant idea among the soldiers in the Caucasian Army was: "Let's get back home as soon as possible." They wanted to return to Russia, where the last fight was proceeding against the landlords and other exploiting classes. Even the auxiliary forces began to arm. In a dispatch to General Przhevalsky, Commander-in-Chief of the Front, General Odishelidze, the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army stated: "A new form of psychosis has appeared in the army—a universal demand for arms by all the auxiliary units and commandos."[86]

On November 11 the "Transcaucasian Commissariat," a counter-revolutionary body consisting of Georgian Mensheviks and representatives of other Trancaucasian petty-bourgeois parties, was formed in Tiflis. With the aid of the Bolsheviks the soldiers at the front quickly discerned the class character of this Commissariat and heartily distrusted it. In this connection it is interesting to note the statements made by the officers, quoting the words of the men: "The commandos which demand arms usually advance the following motive: the Transcaucasian government has seceded from Russia; the arms are Russian and therefore should be taken back to Russia."[87]

The Commander-in-Chief of the 6th Caucasian Corps reported to Staff Headquarters of the Front that the 18th Caucasian Rifle Regiment had openly sided with the Bolsheviks. It had decided:

"Not to recognise the Caucasian Regional Soviet (the Transcaucasian Commissariat) but to obey Lenin, to whose assistance we must go."[88]

Such was the temper of the soldiers on the Caucasian Front. Here, too, the counter-revolution failed to find support.

5

THE DISSOLUTION OF GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

General Headquarters made feverish preparations to check the triumphant progress of the revolution at the front. The leaders of the compromising parties, which had been defeated in Petrograd, flocked to Moghilev.

On November 4, Verkhovsky, ex-Minister for War in the Provisional Government, and Chernov, Feit and Shokherman, members of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, arrived at General Headquarters. They were followed somewhat later by Gotz, Skobelev and others. By that time "General Headquarters was teaming with all sorts of former and future would-be . . . statesmen." Members of different army committees, representatives of different organisations, and all sorts of other "people with plans" arrived in a steady stream.[89]

In Moghilev, too, were the representatives of foreign missions, for the Allied diplomats were dictating their terms to General Headquarters. The former had refused to recognise the Soviet Government and had entered into direct relations with Dukhonin, thus emphasising that they regarded General Headquarters as the only organ of government.

In conjunction with the counter-revolutionary generals, the All-Army Committee and the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who had arrived at General Headquarters resolved to set up in opposition to the Council of People's Commissars a new government which was to be under the wing of General Headquarters.

On the night of November 7, a telegram signed by the All-Army Committee was sent from General Headquarters to the various army organisations of the front ordering "the army on active service, represented by its Front and Army Committees, to take the initiative in forming a government," and to nominate candidates for the post of Prime Minister.[90] The telegram went on to state that "on its part, the All-Army Committee nominates for this post Victor Mikhailovich Chernov, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party."[91]



Chernov's dream: "a ministerial portfolio"
Cartoon by V. Deny

In the evening of November 8, Chernov addressed a meeting of the Moghilev Soviet in the role of prospective Prime Minister. Moghilev was preparing to become a second Versailles.

Without the support of the army, however, the idea of fighting the Soviet Government was hopeless; the masses of the soldiers were unwilling to fight for alien interests. They were willing to go on fighting the Germans if this was in the people's interests. They were willing to fight staunchly for the Soviet regime. But they were most reluctant to continue the war in the interests of the capitalists. The counter-revolutionaries decided to play on the ardent desire of the soldiers to end the war which was inimical to the people's interests, and General Headquarters made an attempt to seize the initiative in concluding peace with Germany. It goes without saying that this was not prompted by any desire to meet the wishes of the people. Their purpose was to win the support of the soldiers by promising them an early peace and then to use them to overthrow the Soviet Government.

The watchword of the counter-revolutionary campaign at the front was the same as that which had failed in Petrograd, *viz.*, the setting up of a "homogeneous Socialist government," which, it was claimed, was the only kind of government that would be capable of securing an immediate peace.

Demands for the speedy conclusion of an armistice, and for the formation of a "Socialist government" as an essential condition for this, came pouring into General Headquarters from Army Committees of different armies on the South-Western and Rumanian Fronts.

Thus, the "Committee for the Salvation," of the Special Army of the South-Western Front demanded an immediate armistice and the formation of a "Socialist government." The All-Army Committee made the demagogic statement that the only obstacle to peace was Lenin's government. Only yesterday these men just as emphatically demanded the continuation of the war in conjunction with the Entente. The whole purpose of this campaign was clear, *viz.*, to take the wind out of the Bolsheviks' sails. Moreover,

Dukhonin himself would not have been averse to opening negotiations for an armistice had the political circumstances been different.

> "Bearing in mind the complexity of our present political life," he said, "I, perhaps, would have undertaken the burden and responsibility at that moment and would have proceeded to carry out the task of bringing peace to Russia by means of an agreement with the Allies and the enemy countries, but in the position I was in it was impossible for me even to think of such a task."[92]

With soldier-like candour Dukhonin expressed what the hardened politicians were trying to conceal by florid phrases such as that peace negotiations could be opened in the name of any government except the Bolshevik government.

It was "impossible even to think of such a task," but the generals, too, had no scruples about stealing the Bolsheviks' peace slogan.

On November 10 the representatives of the Allied missions handed Dukhonin an official protest "against the violation, in any way, of the terms of the treaty of September 5, 1914," by which Russia solemnly undertook not to cease hostilities separately and not to conclude a separate peace. Behind the scenes, however, the Allied ambassadors advised their governments to permit Russia to open negotiations with Germany. This, of course, was done not with the object of supporting the effort for peace initiated by the Bolsheviks but of "taking the wind out of their sails." For example, Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, telegraphed to his government in London as follows:

> "In my opinion, the only safe course left to us is to give Russia back her word and to tell her people that, realising how worn out they are by the war and the disorganisation inseparable from a great revolution, we leave it to them to decide whether they will purchase peace on Germany's terms or fight on with the Allies. . . .
>
> I am not advocating any transaction with the Bolshevik government. On the contrary, I believe that the adoption of the course which I have suggested will take the wind out of their sails, as they will no longer be able to reproach the Allies with driving Russian soldiers to the slaughter for their imperialistic aims."[93]

Later, General Headquarters received a telegram, signed by the Italian Attaché, stating that, in principle, the Allies would not object if Russia, having collapsed under the burden of the war, concluded a separate peace with Germany.

Thus, the representatives of the Entente backed General Headquarters in the hope of being able in this way to overthrow the Soviet Government. But the compromisers who had flocked to General Headquarters could not agree among themselves. The All-Army Committee was in almost constant session, but could not reach a final decision on the question of forming an "all-Socialist" government and of offering armed resistance to the Bolsheviks.

At last, the All-Army Committee was obliged to state that the attempt immediately to form a government at General Headquarters had failed.

It resolved: 1) Not to recognise the authority of the Council of People's Commissars; 2) That a government should be formed of representatives of all Socialist parties, from the Populist Socialists to the Bolsheviks; 3) That the neutrality of General Headquarters be protected by armed force, and that no Bolshevik troops be permitted to enter.

The Committee did not confine itself to issuing a declaration but informed the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union by direct wire that "in order to avoid a collision which would be fatal to the cause of the revolution [the Committee] nominates for the post of Supreme Commander-in-Chief a person who enjoys the confidence of both sides." The Railwaymen's Executive approved of this proposal and promised to submit it for discussion to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

Incidentally, as soon as the representatives of the Entente became convinced that the compromisers and General Headquarters were incapable of setting up a government they disavowed the Italian Attaché's telegram, declaring it to have been a forgery.

The first task that confronted the Soviet Government was to frustrate the counter-revolutionary designs of General Headquarters and of their advisers. Already on October 27 the Soviet Government had offered peace to the belligerent powers, but twelve days elapsed and no answer was received, whereupon, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, on November 8, handed the ambassadors of the Allied powers a note proposing that an immediate armistice should be concluded on all fronts and that peace negotiations should be opened. At the same time, General Dukhonin, Supreme Commander-in-Chief, was ordered:

> "Immediately on the receipt of this to propose to the military authorities of the enemy armies the immediate cessation of hostilities with a view to opening peace negotiations."[94]

General Dukhonin sent no answer. Thereupon, Lenin, together with Stalin, at about 4 a.m. on November 9, got in touch with General Headquarters by direct wire, summoned Dukhonin, and categorically ordered him to proceed to open negotiations for an armistice. Dukhonin refused to do so. It became obvious that the tsarist generals—General Headquarters and the Army Staffs subordinate to it—were preparing to combat the proletarian revolution. The civil war at the front was entering a new phase.

Lenin and Stalin dismissed Dukhonin from the post of Commander-in-Chief, and on the morning of November 9 they issued an appeal to the soldiers at the front by radio, calling upon them to frustrate the counter-revolutionary designs of General Headquarters.

> "Soldiers!" said Lenin. "The cause of peace is in your hands! Do not allow the counter-revolutionary generals to frustrate the great cause of peace, surround them by a guard in order to avert acts of summary justice unworthy of a revolutionary army and to prevent these generals from evading the trial that awaits them. Maintain the strictest revolutionary and military order.
>
> "Let the regiments at the front immediately elect plenipotentiaries to start formal negotiations for an armistice with the enemy.
>
> "The Council of People's Commissars empowers you to do so.
>
> "Keep us informed in every possible way of every step in the negotiations. The Council of People's Commissars is alone empowered to sign the final treaty of armistice.
>
> "Soldiers! The cause of peace is in your hands! Vigilance, restraint and energy, and the cause of peace will triumph!"[95]

Thus, the opposition of the generals was countered by an appeal to the masses for revolutionary action. These were the only correct tactics to adopt in the complicated situation created by the counter-revolutionary struggle against the Soviet Government. Lenin emphasised that the Council of People's Commissars called upon the entire mass of the soldiers to take up the struggle for peace. Their function was to prevent the counter-revolutionary generals from frustrating the effort for peace. The generals were to be watched with revolutionary vigilance.

> "The soldiers were warned to guard the counter-revolutionary generals," said Lenin. ". . . If advantage is taken of the moment when the soldiers open negotiations for an armistice to commit treachery, if an attack is made during the fraternisation, it will be the duty of the soldiers to shoot the traitors without any formalities."[96]

At the same time Lenin pointed out that peace was impossible as long as a man like Dukhonin was at the head of the army.

> "When we opened negotiations with Dukhonin," he said, "we knew that we were going to negotiate with an enemy, and when one has to deal with an enemy one must not postpone action."[97]

Lenin's appeal to the army to take the cause of peace into its own hands strengthened the influence of the Soviet Government at the front and won it numerous new supporters. Even on the more conservative fronts, like the South-Western and Rumanian, the masses of the soldiers began to take a more vigorous part in the revolutionary struggle for peace.

Simultaneously, measures were taken to destroy the hotbed of counter-revolution at General Headquarters. On Lenin's orders a mixed detachment consisting of two echelons of the Lithuanian Regiment and a company of sailors from the Baltic Fleet were sent from Petrograd to occupy General Headquarters. Detachments for the purpose of occupying General Headquarters were also formed at the front and Ter-Arutyunyants was commissioned to go from Petrograd to the Western Front for this purpose. On November 10, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief appointed by the Council of People's Commissars left Petrograd on a special train for the front. In the evening of November 11 he arrived in Pskov, and by telephone summoned General Cheremisov, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front. This summons

was confirmed in writing. Cheremisov sent an evasive reply. He did not wish publicly to recognise the new Supreme Commander-in-Chief, but was not averse to entering into relations with him. Cheremisov was dismissed from his post of Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front, but was ordered to continue acting in that capacity until his successor was appointed. However, on November 13, he left Pskov for Petrograd, where he was detained.

On November 12, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief arrived in Dvinsk, the headquarters of the Fifth Army. General Boldyrev, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fifth Army, like Cheremisov, failed to answer the summons to appear before the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. He called up General Headquarters and informed Dukhonin of this. Dukhonin answered:

"I think you have acted quite correctly. . . . May the Lord protect you."[98]

Boldyrev assured General Headquarters that he would firmly pursue his line to the very end, but this end unexpectedly came very soon. That same day he was dismissed and arrested, and General Antipov was appointed in his place.

On the night of November 11, representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee, accompanied by a large armed detachment, appeared at the Headquarters of the Western Front in Minsk and called upon General Baluyev, the Commander-in-Chief, to obey the instructions of the Soviet Government to open negotiations for an armistice. Baluyev refused. He was thereupon informed that he was dismissed and that Colonel Kamenshchikov, a Bolshevik, had been appointed in his place. Baluyev was obliged to hand over his command. On hearing of this, Dukhonin at once telegraphed Baluyev, stating that he had done wrong in handing over his command in this way, but it was already too late. General Headquarters tried to transfer the command of the Western Front to General M. N. Yaroshevsky, Chief of Supply for the front. Dukhonin sent him a telegram stating:

"In view of General Baluyev's indisposition, I order you to take over command of the Western Front." [99]

General Yaroshevsky, however, dared not obey Dukhonin's order. General B. S. Malyavin proved to be more enterprising. Claiming to act in conformity with clause 112 of the Army Field Regulations, he proclaimed himself acting Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front, but his activities in this capacity went no further than signing the order of his self-appointment. By order of the new Commander-in-Chief of the Front, Malyavin was arrested.

The resistance of the generals on the fronts, and that of General Headquarters, was not completely broken, however. On the day following the dismissal of Generals Boldyrev and Baluyev, Dukhonin, in a conversation over the direct wire with General Shcherbachev, Commander-in-Chief of the Rumanian Front, stated:

"General Headquarters continues to adhere to the view expressed in my telegram to you on November 9. I shall continue to fight the usurpers until a governmental authority recognised by the whole country is established."[100]

Dukhonin's openly mutinous statements prompted the Soviet Government to issue an order proclaiming him an enemy of the people. Dukhonin's orders were to be neither transmitted nor obeyed. All persons who supported him were liable to prosecution. The officers who were honest and loyal to their country obeyed the lawful Soviet Government. A typical example of such an officer was General N. A. Danilov, Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army.

On November 14, the Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee arrived at the headquarters of the Third Army in Polotsk, and at a meeting of the Army Committee discussed the question of occupying General Headquarters. The Army Committee decided immediately to form a detachment for this purpose to be chosen from the 35th Corps which had been most conspicuously revolutionary during the October days. Reliable military men were sent to reconnoitre the position in Moghilev. They were instructed to ascertain the condition of the enemy's forces, and to endeavour to win over as many of the men as possible and form at least a small detachment which, at the necessary moment, would take armed action inside the premises of General Headquarters. The detachment of the 35th Corps of the Third Army was to advance on Moghilev from the North *via* Orsha, and was to assist the mixed detachment which was marching on Orsha from Petrograd. A second detachment for the occupation of General Headquarters was formed in Minsk and consisted of the 1st Minsk Soviet Revolutionary Regiment, the 60th Siberian Rifle Regiment, the armoured train under the command of Prolygin, two armoured cars, a company of infantry and sappers. This detachment marched on Moghilev from the South, *via* Zhlobin.

On learning of these preparations, General Headquarters hastily called for Cossacks and shock battalions from the South-Western Front; but the Cossacks were no longer the standby they had been before. They had become permeated with Bolshevik ideas. The 4th Siberian Cossack Regiment which arrived at General Headquarters began to waver. The shock battalions, however, were firmer.

On November 17, General Headquarters learned that the Petrograd mixed detachment was approaching Moghilev. "The sailors are coming!"—was the cry that rang through General Headquarters. On the night of November 17, a meeting of the All-Army Committee was held to discuss the formation of a "central authority." Representatives were present from the Caucasian, Rumanian and the South-Western Fronts. There were no representatives from the Western and Northern Fronts. These had not even replied to the All-Army Committee's invitation. Among those present were Dukhonin, Stankevich—the Supreme Commissar of the Provisional Government—the staff officers and representatives of the shock battalions, which had arrived to protect General Headquarters.

Instead of discussing the question of the "governmental authority" the meeting was obliged to deal with less ambitious matters. All those present were excited by the news of the approach of the Soviet detachment. After a lengthy discussion it was at last decided by a small majority, a large number abstaining, that: 1) As far as possible General Headquarters be retained in present hands; 2) Measures be taken immediately to transfer General Headquarters to Kiev; 3) Negotiations be opened with the Council of People's Commissars with a view to avoiding a conflict; 4) The (committee's) arguments be backed by the threat of armed force; 5) Armed force not to be resorted to under any circumstances; 6) The Supreme Commander-in-Chief be appointed with the consent of the All-Army Committee and the All-Russian Executive Committee; 7) The question of peace and armistice be withdrawn from the competence of General Headquarters. But these decisions were of no practical value whatever. Colonel Greim, who was present at the meeting stated that if General Headquarters remained inactive, the doom of the entire army was sealed. He proposed that everybody, "should remain at his post at all costs and continue his work."[101] "The mood prevailing among the staff officers was that of flight," said General M. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, who was at General Headquarters.[102] The behaviour of the staff officers was fully in keeping with this.

But another danger threatened General Headquarters. The Moghilev Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which up to now had been an obedient tool of the compromisers, began to veer round. Influenced by events, the units stationed in Moghilev became permeated with revolutionary sentiments. The agitation conducted by the Bolsheviks who had arrived to reconnoitre the position, such as those from Polotsk, for example, was the final touch. A new Soviet was elected, and at last, at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Moghilev Soviet held on November 18, the Bolsheviks completely triumphed over the compromisers. While the meeting of the Central Army Committee was in progress at General Headquarters and threatening resolutions were being adopted, the Executive Committee of the Moghilev Soviet elected a Military Revolutionary Committee, which included representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Western Front and of the different armies.

At about 5 a.m. on November 19, Dukhonin telephoned Stankevich, the Supreme Commissar of the Provisional Government, urgently requesting him to come and see him at once. "Very important news has been received," he said. When Stankevich arrived he found the higher officers of the General Staff gathered in Dukhonin's room. The "news" which had been received was that units which only very recently had heen regarded as "reliable," now refused to protect General Headquarters.

At this crucial juncture, Stankevich, formerly a lieutenant of a sappers' unit, very shrewd, "a real Jesuit" as General Bonch-Bruyevich described him, advised Dukhonin to flee and told him that he had an automobile in readiness for the purpose. Dukhonin accepted the advice. Leaving General Headquarters alone, he went to the place where Stankevich was to have been waiting for him in his car. When he got there, Stankevich had not yet arrived. Dukhonin thought better of it and returned to General Headquarters. "The automobile, which arrived soon after, carried only Stankevich from Moghilev," relates Bonch-Bruyevich.[103]

When all possibility of offering armed resistance had vanished, General Headquarters decided to remove to another place; some proposed Kiev, others Jassy, the headquarters of the Rumanian Front, but this plan could not be carried out. A crowd of excited soldiers appeared outside the premises and declared that they would allow nobody to leave.

An operations conference of the General Staff was then called and it was decided to order the All-Army Committee to dissolve and all its members, as well as all those present at the conference, to disperse; but it was impossible for them to disperse as General Headquarters no longer possessed any means of transportation. It had even become difficult to leave the premises. Dukhonin told his entourage that "his own orderly was watching him."

On November 19 the Moghilev Military Revolutionary Committee issued the following proclamation:

> "Acting on the order of the Government of People's Commissars appointed by the will of the October Revolution, the Moghilev Military Revolutionary Committee, consisting of representatives of the Executive Committee of the Moghilev Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of representatives of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Western Front and of its armies, proclaims itself the supreme authority in the town of Moghilev and its environs, and assumes control over the activities of General Headquarters."[104]

Dukhonin, dismissed from his post, was placed under domiciliary arrest. The Central Army Committee was proclaimed dissolved and its members also placed under domiciliary arrest.

Revolutionary troops were approaching General Headquarters from the north and south. From the north the trains carrying the Petrograd detachment were approaching Orsha, and in the south the detachment formed in Minsk was approaching Zhlobin. General S. I. Odintsov was dispatched on a locomotive from Orsha to Moghilev to ascertain what the position was at General Headquarters. The conviction prevailed that the latter would offer resistance. On arriving in Moghilev and investigating the situation General Odintsov, at 5:10 p.m. on November 19, reported by wire that General Headquarters was not in a position to offer any resistance whatever.

On the night of November 19 events occurred in Moghilev in which General Headquarters were directly involved and which had far-reaching consequences in the subsequent stage of the revolution. Generals Kornilov, Denikin, Lukomsky, Romanovsky, Markov, Erdeli and the other leaders of the counter-revolutionary mutiny which had been suppressed in August,



General Kornilov and his accomplices in the August mutiny in the Bykhov Prison

escaped from the prison where they had been held in the town of Bykhov, 20 kilometres from Moghilev. While in Bykhov Prison they were "guarded" by the Tekinsky Regiment and the Chevaliers of St. George. When the climax was approaching at General Headquarters Dukhonin advised the "prisoners" to take flight and gave the order for their release. General Denikin, the future leader of the counter-revolution in the South, gives the following account of this incident.

"On the morning of the 19th, Colonel Kusonsky of the General Staff appeared at the prison and reported to General Kornilov:

"'. . . General Dukhonin has ordered me to inform you that all the prisoners are to leave Bykhov at once.'

"General Kornilov summoned the commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Erhardt of the Tekinsky Regiment, and said to him:

"'Release the generals at once. Have the Tekinsks ready to march by midnight. I will go with the regiment.'

"That night, (November 19), the commandant of the Bykhov Prison informed the guard of Chevaliers of St. George of the order he had received to release General Kornilov, who would go to the Don. . . . At midnight the guard was lined up, the General appeared, bade farewell to the men, thanked his 'jailers' for the excellent way they had performed their duty, and made them a present of 2,000 rubles. . . .

"At 1 a.m. the slumbering Bykhovites were roused by the clatter of hoofs. The Tekinsky Regiment, with General Kornilov at its head, marched to the bridge, and crossing the Dnieper, vanished into the gloom."[105]

Denikin, Lukomsky and the other generals who had been held in custody in Bykhov changed into mufti and left for the Don by train.

That same night the representatives of the foreign missions, the members of the All-Army Committee and a number of the staff officers, including Quartermaster-General Dieterichs, Colonel Kusonsky, Chief of the Operations Department, Sergievsky, Chief of Communications, and nearly all the officers of the Operations Department, fled from Moghilev, leaving the army even without operational directions.

On the morning of November 20, the sailors' detachment entered Moghilev. In their black greatcoats and fur hats, their rifles slung across their shoulders, they marched slowly through the deserted streets of the town. Dukhonin was under arrest in the Commander-in-Chief's special train. A crowd of soldiers, excited by the news of the flight of Kornilov and the other counter-revolutionary generals, had gathered outside his car, demanding that he be surrendered to them. They were pacified only with difficulty by the assurance that the Soviet Government would put Dukhonin on trial for his crimes. But soon the soldiers again raised a commotion and pressed still closer around the car. In spite of all the entreaties and efforts of the guard to prevent it, Dukhonin was dragged out and killed.

The Tekinsky Regiment, under the command of General Kornilov, proceeded in a south-westerly direction. Fearing pursuit, Kornilov hastened to leave the Moghilev Region, and in order to cover up his tracks he led the regiment across country, moving mainly at night. General Denikin related that "the inhabitants of the villages on the route fled, or met the Tekinsks with horror."[106]

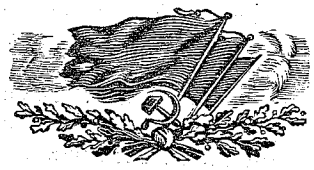
Near Zhlobin, the detachment of revolutionary troops which was marching on Moghilev from the south encountered the resistance of the shock battalions which had left General Headquarters. On November 20, fighting broke out at siding No. 22, between Zhlobin and Krasny Bereg Station, and lasted several hours. At night the shock battalions fled. On November 21, the detachment entered Zhlobin. It went no further, as Moghilev was already occupied by the Petrograd detachment. When Kornilov's flight was discovered the armoured train commanded by Prolygin and two battalions of the 266th Porechinsky Regiment, of the 35th Corps of the Third Army, which had been sent to reinforce the detachment, were sent in pursuit. On November 22 these units started out in the direction of Gomel.

On November 26, the seventh day after his flight, Kornilov approached the Gomel-Bryansk railway, in the vicinity of Unecha Station. From the

village of Krasnovichi, where the regiment had its last bivouac, Kornilov made for the village of Pisarevka with the intention of crossing the railway east of Unecha Station. A peasant whom they met on the road offered to lead the regiment the safest way, but when this guide brought them to the outskirts of a wood nearby shots rang out, fired almost at point-blank range. It transpired that this peasant had deliberately led Kornilov into an ambush set for him by his pursuers.

The regiment retreated to Krasnovichi and then Kornilov changed his route with the intention of crossing the railway west of Unecha. But he barely reached the railway embankment near Peschaniki Station when an armoured train suddenly appeared round the sharp bend and opened fire upon the regiment with all its guns. Many were killed and wounded. Kornilov's horse was shot under him. The regiment scattered. The leading squadron turned sharply and galloped off, followed by the main body. Subsequently it was surrounded and disarmed in the town of Pavlichi, near Klintsi. Kornilov managed to rally small remnants of the regiment after it was hurled back from the railway, but soon, changing into mufti, he deserted them and fled by railway to the south.

Thus, General Headquarters was dissolved, and with it was dissolved the main hotbed of counter-revolution at the front, where numerous plots had been hatched to crush the proletarian revolution. Ahead still lay the struggle against the counter-revolution on the other fronts—the South-Western, Rumanian and Caucasian—to which the remnants of the defeated enemy forces flocked; but this struggle was no longer formidable. On these fronts, too, the tide of popular anger against the age-long exploiters rose. The masses of the soldiers eagerly watched what was happening on the more revolutionary fronts and began to follow their example. The forces of the new government grew. The two most progressive and most powerful fronts—the North and the West—were entirely on its side.





Chapter Nine

ORGANISATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

1

THE ROUT OF THE DEFEATIST BLOC

THE HARBINGERS of the insurrection—the delegates at the Second Congress of Soviets—dispersed to their respective localities. The Smolny Institute—the Staff Headquarters of the revolution—was connected with every part of the country. The "Smolny period" commenced. In the initial stage of the proletarian dictatorship the Smolny was the hub of the seething activities of the Bolsheviks—the builders of the new state administration.

The enemy had not yet been routed. Kerensky was drawing troops to the revolutionary capital; the cadets had risen in revolt; in Moscow a fierce struggle for power was raging. But while the fate of the revolution was being decided by force of arms near Pulkovo and in the streets of Moscow, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks attempted to disrupt the revolution from within and for this purpose transferred their activities to the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union. On

October 29, when the Krasnov-Kerensky offensive near Gatchina was at its height, the Railwaymen's Executive passed a resolution calling for the formation of a homogeneous "Socialist" government.

It was clearly evident to the Bolsheviks that the Railwaymen's Executive, issuing its statement at the very moment when the political question was "on the verge of becoming a military question,"[1] was on the side of the Kornilovs and Kaledins. Its demand for the cessation of hostilities when all that remained to be done was to give the finishing stroke to the Kerensky affair, was downright support for the counter-revolution.

Sailing under "neutral" colours, the Railwaymen's Executive could carry some of the wavering railwaymen in its wake. Moreover, it had the railway administration at its disposal. Something had to be done to render it harmless, to prevent the transportation of Kerensky's troops, and to secure free passage for revolutionary troops which were going to the assistance of Moscow and other centres. At a meeting held on October 29, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party decided to send representatives to negotiate with the Railwaymen's Executive. As Lenin put it, these negotiations were to act as a diplomatic screen for military operations. On the question of changing the composition of the government the Central Committee advanced the following as the main conditions for negotiations: that the government should be responsible to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets; recognition of the Second Congress of Soviets as the sole seat of power, and endorsement of the decrees on land and peace.

The initial meetings of the Railwaymen's Executive's "Commission for Drafting an Agreement between the Parties and Organisations" were held on October 29 and 30 and were attended by prominent representatives of the various Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary groups and coteries.[2] Among them were the Menshevik defencists Dan and Erlich, the Internationalist Mensheviks Martov and Martynov, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries Malkin and Kolegayev, and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries Jacobin and Hendelmann. In addition to representatives of the "Committee for the Salvation" there was also present one of the organisers of the sabotage movement against the Soviet Government by the civil servants, *viz.*, A. Kondratyev. Officially, he represented the Clerks' Union. Representatives were also present from the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, the Government Office Employees' Union, and other organisations.

The political stand taken by these meetings was predetermined by the views of those attending them. In different keys, perhaps, some more and some less openly, both the Right and the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks demanded one and the same thing, *viz.*, the liquidation of the revolution. At the session held on October 29, Hendelmann, representing the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, reminded the Railwaymen's Executive that it was "throwing the last weight in the scales of the contending groups" and demanded the liquidation of the "adventure" and the formation of a Ministry without the Bolsheviks. The "Leftist" Martov demanded the organisation of a government "that would rely on the democratically organised elements, not only the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, but also bodies which had sprung up under universal suffrage."[3] Dan was more candid. He said:

> "The first condition of agreement is: liquidation of the conspiracy; dissolution of the Military Revolutionary Committee; the Congress [the Second Congress of Soviets—*Ed.*] be declared invalid. . . . If this condition is carried out we shall unite our efforts to combat the impending counter-revolution."[4]

This session ended with the election of a committee to draw up proposals regarding the composition of the government and the measures to be taken to avert civil war.

Late that night, in view of the negotiations that were proceeding for an "armistice," the Railwaymen's Executive wired instructions to call off the railway strike which had started, but insisting, however, that the strike committees should not be dissolved, but remain in "full preparedness."

Early in the morning of October 30, the so-called "Special Commission for Drafting an Agreement between the Parties and Organisations" met. Dan, Weinstein, Posnikov, Kamenev, Ryazanov and others were present. Dan addressed the Commission on behalf of the "Committee for the Salvation" and enumerated the demands that were to be presented to the Bolsheviks. These were:

> "To disarm the workers and offer no resistance to Kerensky's troops. To place the troops at the disposal of the City Duma. To release the arrested members of the government. . . ."[5]
>
> "The workers must abandon the idea of engaging in battle with the troops," he stormed. "Every Social-Democrat must insist on this, for it is impossible for the proletariat to resist the bourgeois troops."[6]

Dan was supported by Weinstein. The Mensheviks were already gloating in anticipation of the sweets of victory. They imagined that they were in a position to dictate their terms, for Kerensky's troops were expected to enter Petrograd at any moment.

Dan and Weinstein were followed by Kamenev who treacherously withheld from the Commission the terms the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had laid down in its decision of October 29 for changing the composition of the government. This blackleg believed that the opportune moment had arrived to liquidate the proletarian insurrection. He proposed that an appeal be issued to the proletariat and to the troops to . . . disarm!

At 11 a. m. a joint meeting of the Railwaymen's Executive and representatives of the different political parties was held. By this time the delegation of the Railwaymen's Executive which had gone to see Kerensky had returned to Petrograd and at this meeting it reported the results of

its negotiations. Planson, the representative of the Railwaymen's Executive, was obliged to admit that:

"Discipline in Kerensky's camp is below that in the Petrograd camp, where the workers stand shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers." [7]

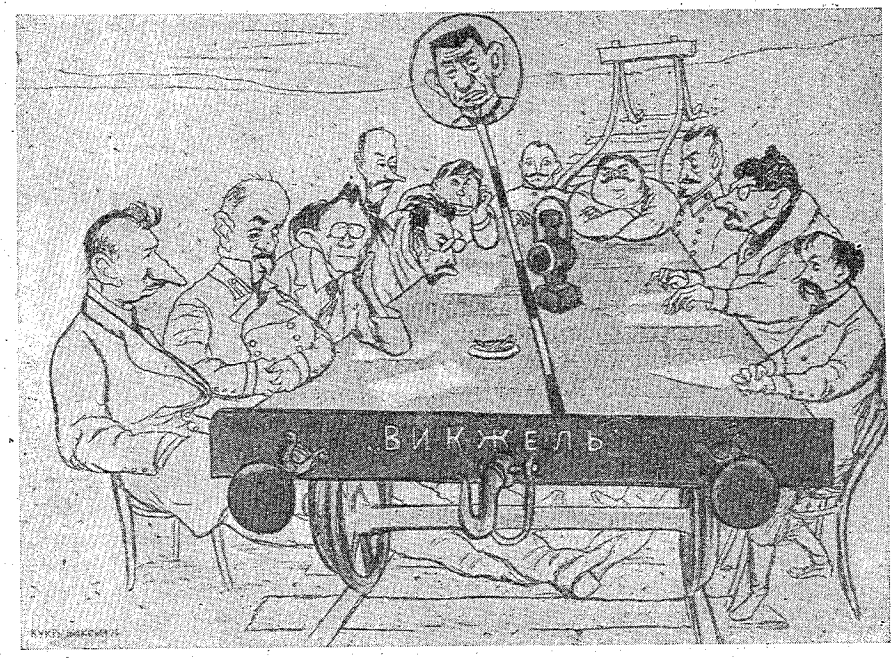
On learning that hostilities had commenced at Pulkovo the Railwaymen's Executive began in the most obvious manner to drag out the negotiations. At one moment Dan threatened the workers of Petrograd with dire punishment and at another promised to plead with Kerensky "to refrain from violence and repression on entering the city." It was decided to adjourn the meeting until the evening, by which time, it was expected, Kerensky would have defeated the revolutionary troops near Pulkovo.

But on October 30 Kerensky's troops sustained utter defeat near Pulkovo. The hopes of the Railwaymen's Executive that the Kerensky-Krasnov forces would enter the revolutionary capital were dashed to the ground. The joint meeting was resumed for the third time that day. The counter-revolutionaries tightly clung to the Railwaymen's Executive in the hope of being able to smash the Bolshevik government with the aid of blacklegs of the type of Kamenev. At this evening session Kamenev spoke again. He tried to cheer up the despondent Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and repeated, word for word, the statement he had made in the morning that it was necessary to form a new government. The meeting adopted the following decision:

"Immediately to conclude an armistice and to issue an appeal to both contending sides to cease hostilities." [8]

At night on November 1, the Railwaymen's Executive Commission met again in the premises of the Ministry for Ways and Communications and sat all night discussing the composition of a "Provisional People's Council" to which the government was to be responsible. At this meeting Kamenev, Sokolnikov and Ryazanov treacherously violated the implicit instructions they had received from the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party to the effect that the government was to be responsible only to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee which was elected at the Second Congress of Soviets. Ignoring this decision, Kamenev, Ryazanov and Sokolnikov gave their consent to the formation of another Pre-parliament. Encouraged by Kamenev's compliance, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks strenuously objected to the inclusion of Lenin in the proposed government.

Kamenev and Sokolnikov not only took part in the discussion of this question, but even failed to insist on Lenin's inclusion in the government. Together with Ryazanov, they participated in the discussion of the candidatures of Chernov and Avksentyev for the post of . . . Prime Minister! The meeting came to a close just before dawn. At the end of the meeting, Kamenev assured the Railwaymen's Executive that the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would agree to the terms it had drafted and promised to take measures to secure the cessation of hostilities on the Petrograd Front. An under-



The "Vikzhel" (Railwaymen's Executive) *Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio*

taking of this kind just when the counter-revolutionary forces were being routed near Pulkovo was tantamount to direct assistance to Kerensky and Krasnov, who would have been glad of an armistice in order to save their forces and recuperate.

On November 1, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party discussed Kamenev's conduct at the conference with the Railwaymen's Executive.

". . .Kamenev's policy must be stopped," said Lenin. "There is now no point in negotiating with the Railwaymen's Executive." [9]

Dzerzhinsky sharply attacked Kamenev and accused him and Sokolnikov of having failed to carry out the instructions of the Central Committee. He moved a vote of no confidence in them, and suggested that they should be replaced by other members of the Central Committee.

Kamenev, in his duplicity, withheld from the Central Committee the fact that he had promised the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks that the Petrograd Red Guards would be disarmed. He also tried to conceal from the Central Committee that the question of keeping Lenin out of the government had been discussed only a few hours previously. "The delegation did not discuss nominations," he said mendaciously.

Trotsky, who in a very subtle and veiled way, supported Kamenev, proposed that representatives of the Petrograd and Moscow City Dumas, at that time hotbeds of counter-revolution, be admitted to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets, and, consequently, to the government. This meant abandoning the Bolsheviks' fundamental principle of "All power to the Soviets."

Lenin vigorously protested against making the slightest concession on the question of the power of the Soviets, and sharply attacked Kamenev's treacherous policy of renouncing the proletarian dictatorship.

"The All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union is not represented on the Soviet, and must not be allowed to be represented," said Lenin. "The Soviets are voluntary organisations, and the Railwaymen's Executive has no support among the masses."[10]

In two other speeches he delivered at this meeting of the Central Committee Lenin demanded that "the waverers must put a stop to this wavering."

"It is obvious that the Railwaymen's Executive sides with the Kaledins and Kornilovs," he said. "There must be no vacillation. We are backed by the majority of the workers and peasants and the army. Nobody here has proved that the rank and file is against us. Either with the agents of Kaledin or with the rank and file. We must rely on the masses, we must send propagandists into the rural districts. The Railwaymen's Executive was called upon to transport troops to Moscow; it refused. We must appeal to the masses, and they will overthrow it."[11]

At this meeting the Central Committee adopted the following resolution:

"Whereas the experience of preceding negotiations has shown that the compromising parties conducted these negotiations not with the object of forming a united Soviet Government, but with the object of causing a split among the workers and soldiers, of disrupting the Soviet Government and of finally tying the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to the policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Central Committee resolves: in view of the decision already adopted by the Central Executive Committee, to permit members of our Party to participate in the last effort to be made today by the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to secure the formation of a so-called homogeneous government with the object of finally exposing the hopelessness of this attempt and of putting a stop to all further negotiations for the formation of a coalition government."[12]

The Central Committee drew up the following terms for the negotiations: recognition of the decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets; relentless struggle against the counter-revolution, and recognition of the Second Congress of Soviets as the sole seat of power.

On the night of November 1, Ryazanov reported to a meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets the results of the deliberations of the Railwaymen's Executive Commission. Again and again Krushinsky, on behalf of the Railwaymen's Executive, and Kamkov, on behalf of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, got up and vehemently urged the necessity of immediately putting a stop to bloodshed. In reply to their howls about imminent disaster and about blood flowing in the streets, Volodarsky, the favourite orator of the Petrograd workers said, addressing himself to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks:

"You say that we must avoid bloodshed. Yes, that is true. But we must remember the blood that has been shed for the fundamental demands of the working class and the peasantry. If you are afraid of blood, then you must do all in your power to hold the positions in defence of which hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and soldiers have been fighting.

"It has been suggested that we should form a Provisional People's Council—something in the nature of a Pre-parliament; and this body is to be built without any definite principle. We shall never agree to the formation of another mongrel body.

"The insurrection of the workers and soldiers was accomplished under the slogan of 'All power to the Soviets!' Concessions on this point are totally out of the question."[13]

On behalf of the Bolshevik group Volodarsky moved a resolution based on the decision adopted by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party several hours previously.

Volodarsky's plain and straightforward statements caused dismay in the ranks of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and Menshevik Unionists. V. A. Bazarov got up and said that the blame for prolonging the civil war would rest on the Bolsheviks, and adhering to his policy of a *bloc* with Kamenev, Ryazanov and others, he stated that the resolution proposed by Volodarsky ran counter to and violated the principles which Kamenev, Sokolnikov and Ryazanov had accepted at the meeting of the Railwaymen's Executive Commission.

Karelin stated that the Bolsheviks' resolution did not satisfy the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary group because it contained much that was categorical and formally uncompromising. On behalf of his group Karelin read a resolution in which it was proposed that a "Convention" of 275 members be formed. In this "Convention" the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets was to have 150 seats, the City Dumas 50 seats, the Gubernia Peasants' Soviets 50 seats, and the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies 25 seats. The resolution also recognised the necessity of accepting the decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets as the basis of the activities of the proposed Convention.

Karelin's tactics fully coincided with Trotsky's. For the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries as well as for Trotsky the important thing was not so much the recognition of the program of the Second Congress of Soviets as the changing of the composition of the governing bodies, the abandonment of the Soviet power. Programs can always be renounced, they held.

On a vote by roll call the Bolshevik resolution polled 38 votes and that of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries 29. Disconcerted by this result

the Socialist-Revolutionaries begged for an adjournment. They were in a serious predicament. By voting against the Bolshevik resolution the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries put themselves in danger of becoming isolated from the masses. Fearing isolation and the loss of all influence, they renounced their own resolution. An hour later, when the session was resumed, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee unanimously adopted the resolution moved by Volodarsky.

Meanwhile, the rift among the petty-bourgeois parties became wider. The leaders of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries were not at all sure that the rank-and-file members of their party would support them in the struggle they had started against the Council of People's Commissars. Their fears were fully warranted. A conference of Petrograd "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries which was held on November 1 called upon the members of their party unreservedly to submit to the Council of People's Commissars and to co-operate with the Military Revolutionary Committee. In retaliation, the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party dissolved the Petrograd organisation of that party.

Uncertain of the support of their rank and file, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries hastened to cement their *bloc* with the Kamenevites. Karelin openly expressed the hope that the latter would within the next few days vote with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and thus form the majority on the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The defeat of Kerensky accelerated joint action on the part of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and Right defeatists on the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

On November 2, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party adopted a decision on the negotiations with the Railwaymen's Executive. By that time the situation had undergone a marked change. Kerensky was utterly defeated. In Moscow the revolutionary troops were capturing position after position. In these circumstances, the Central Committee, on Lenin's motion, passed a resolution which, reaffirming the Central Committee's previous decision concerning an agreement, still more strongly denounced the huckstering of the Railwaymen's Executive. The resolution stated:

> ". . . without betraying the slogan of the power of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies there can be no entering into petty bargaining with the object of admitting into the Soviets organisations of non-Soviet type, *i.e.*, organisations which are not voluntary associations of the revolutionary vanguard of the masses who are fighting for the overthrow of the landlords and capitalists.
>
> ". . . The Central Committee affirms that to yield to the ultimatums and threats of the minority on the Soviets would be tantamount to complete renunciation not only of the Soviet power but of democracy, for such yielding would mean that the majority fears to make use of its majority, it would mean submitting to anarchy and inviting the repetition of ultimatums on the part of any minority."[14]

The last point in Lenin's resolution affirmed the possibility of the victory of Socialism in Russia and indicated the conditions that would ensure this victory. This point read as follows:

> ". . . despite all difficulties, the victory of Socialism both in Russia and in Europe, can be ensured, but only by the unswerving continuation of the policy of the present government. The Central Committee expresses its firm belief in the victory of this Socialist revolution, and calls upon all sceptics and waverers to abandon their waverings and whole-heartedly and with supreme energy to support the actions of this government."[15]

This resolution was a condemnation of the policy of Kamenev and Zinoviev, which was based on the assumption that Socialism could not triumph in one country alone. Lenin's resolution was adopted in opposition to the votes of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov, Nogin and Milyutin. These Right defeatists left the meeting of the Central Committee determined to secure the latter's defeat at the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

Late at night on November 2, at the meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Malkin, on behalf of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary group, categorically demanded that the question of the platform for an agreement between the Socialist parties be reconsidered. Malkin was followed by Zinoviev. This traitor to the proletarian revolution resorted to a well-tried method employed in bourgeois parliamentarism, *viz.*, that of setting up the parliamentary group against the Party as a whole. He read the resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party on the question of agreement with the other Socialist parties and immediately went on to say that the Bolshevik group on the Central Executive Committee had not yet discussed it.

The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks readily agreed to Zinoviev's motion to adjourn for an hour to enable the groups to discuss the resolution. After this "discussion" Kamenev, in the name of the Bolshevik group, moved another resolution, which was in glaring contradiction to that adopted by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. Kamenev's resolution called for the continuation of the negotiations concerning the government with all the parties affiliated to the Soviets, with the proviso that not less than half the seats in the government should be granted to the Bolsheviks. Hence, the other half was to be taken by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. It also proposed that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee be enlarged by the inclusion of representatives of the Railwaymen's Executive, the Peasants' Soviets and the army, but it did not stipulate that new elections of these Soviets and committees were to be held. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries welcomed Kamenev's resolution.

> "The Bolsheviks' resolution is a step in the direction of agreement. Consequently we shall vote for it," said Karelin.[16]

The interests of the revolution, of the as yet incomplete insurrection, called for the immediate rout of the Right defeatists. The compromising fuss and bustle of the handful of Kamenevites and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries had to be opposed by the firm line of the proletarian dictatorship. The meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee at which Kamenev and Zinoviev had so shamefully and treacherously acted contrary to the decisions of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party ended in the small hours of November 3. As soon as Lenin heard of this latest act of disloyalty he drew up an ultimatum to be presented to Kamenev and Zinoviev in the name of the majority of the Central Committee and sent a copy of it to each member of the Central Committee separately with a request that each append his signature. In this ultimatum Lenin denounced the defeatists and in categorical terms demanded strict adherence to Party discipline and the execution of Party decisions.

Having once taken the path of fighting the Bolshevik Party and of compromising with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, this group of defeatists proceeded further, accompanied by the plaudits of the petty-bourgeois parties.

Meanwhile, in the lobbies of the Railwaymen's Executive, the most unscrupulous bargaining was going on around the question of the composition of the so-called "Provisional People's Council." On November 3, the Railwaymen's Executive Commission met again. This time the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party appointed Stalin as their representative. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks sent their leaders to the meeting with the intention of accomplishing what they had failed to accomplish by force of arms near Pulkovo. Among these leaders were the Mensheviks Abramovich, Martov, Yermansky, Martynov, Rosental and Stroyev, and the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries Karelin, Schreider, Spiro, Proshyan, and others. The treacherous policy of Kamenev and Zinoviev had emboldened the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders. Abramovich and Martov furiously attacked the Council of People's Commissars.

> "Oceans of fraternal blood," shouted Abramovich. "There is no government in Russia. . . . Newspapers are not appearing. . . . Martial law. . . ."[17]

On behalf of the Menshevik Central Committee Abramovich moved a resolution which stated:

> "Neither the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, nor its transfer to the Soviets can be recognised by the other sections of democracy under any circumstances."[18]

Martov vehemently denounced the reign of terror and the arrest of Railwaymen's Committees. He forgot to add, however, that the Railwaymen's Executive was itself arresting railwaymen who were demanding active struggle against the counter-revolution.

When Martov, Abramovich and others demanded guarantees for the ces-



V. I. Lenin in the Smolny during the Great October Revolution
From a painting by N. Sokolov

sation of terror, Stalin got up and, addressing Abramovich, asked him in a tone of irony:

"Can anybody guarantee that the troops which are disposed near Gatchina will refrain from attacking Petrograd?"[19]

This meeting proved abortive. Next day, November 4, a meeting of the All-Russian Central Committee was held, at which the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks and the Kamenevites launched a united attack. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries were already talking openly about their *bloc* with the Kamenevites. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary, Malkin, gleefully shouted that Lenin was in "splendid isolation"[20]; and Karelin blurted out his most cherished thoughts when he said:

"The moderate Bolsheviks will influence the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Petrograd Soviet."[21]

Meanwhile, Bukharin was negotiating with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries for joint action against the Council of People's Commissars with the object of restoring the capitalist system and of organising the assassination of the leaders of the revolution—Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov.

The initiative in the attack on the Council of People's Commissars now passed to the Right defeatists who were loudly applauded by the Socialist Revolutionaries. The first to address the meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on November 4 was Larin. He moved the rescindment of the decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the press; and without singling out the question of the press "from the other restrictions imposed by the revolutionary government,"[22] he, in the same breath, proposed that a tribunal be set up with the right to examine all cases of arrest, suppression of newspapers, and so forth. This was in effect an open declaration of no confidence in the Council of People's Commissars. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries lost no time in supporting Larin's proposal.

All this "democratic" pother around the decree on the press, however, was part and parcel of the general offensive which had been launched against the proletarian dictatorship. Krasnov, the cadets and the Whiteguards fought openly with arms in hand, while the Railwaymen's Executive, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks and the Right defeatists acted as saboteurs and disrupters in the rear. The Zinoviev and Kamenev group joined this united front of the counter-revolution. Replying to these alleged champions of "freedom of the press," Lenin said:

"A miserable handful has started civil war. It is not ended yet. The Kaledinites are approaching Moscow and the shock battalions are approaching Petrograd. . . .

"We are quite ready to believe that the Socialist-Revolutionaries are sincere; nevertheless behind them are Kaledin and Milyukov.

"The firmer you soldiers and workers are, the more we shall achieve. If we are not firm we shall be told: 'They cannot be strong yet if they are releasing Milyukov.' We announced beforehand that we would suppress the bourgeois newspapers when we took power. To have

tolerated the existence of such newspapers would have meant ceasing to be a Socialist. . . .

"What freedom do these newspapers want? Freedom to buy huge quantities of paper and an army of hacks? We must deny freedom to a press which is dependent on capital. . . . Since we are marching towards the social revolution we cannot allow Kaledin's bombs to be supplemented by bombs of falsehood."[23]

The workers and soldiers had already learned what this "freedom of the press" meant. Day after day the counter-revolutionary newspapers released a flood of the filthiest lies and slander against them. The Red Guards were accused of raping the members of the women shock battalions, although the women themselves wrote from the Fortress of Peter and Paul refuting these scurrilous charges. The workers and soldiers were accused of destroying historical monuments, such as the Winter Palace, the Kremlin, and other places. Foreign correspondents refuted these slanders, but the counter-revolutionary newspapers persisted in their mendacious campaign and tried to incite the most backward sections of the population against the workers and soldiers. The compositors at the printshops of these newspapers refused to set up this vicious stuff.

Notwithstanding the solid support of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, Larin's resolution was defeated. V. Nogin then got up and read a statement on behalf of a "group of People's Commissars" in which these supporters of Kamenev's and Trotsky's policy of capitulation again demanded the inclusion of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the government and read a statement announcing their resignation from the Council of People's Commissars. This statement was signed by Nogin and the People's Commissars A. Rykov, V. Milyutin and I. Teodorovich. It was also backed by Ryazanov, Commissar for Ways and Communications; N. Derbyshev Commissar of the Press; I. Arbuzov, Commissar of State Printing Plants; Yurenev, Commissar of the Red Guard; G. Fedorov, Director of the Disputes Department of the Ministry of Labour; G. Larin, and Shlyapnikov, Commissar of Labour. As soon as Nogin had finished reading his statement a representative of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary group got up and submitted the following interpellation to Lenin as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars:

"1. Why are not draft decrees and other acts submitted for discussion to the Central Executive Committee?

"2. Does the government intend to abandon its arbitrary and totally unwarranted system of legislating by decree?"[24]

All the declarations of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and of the Kamenev-Zinoviev group pursued the definite object of transforming the All-Russian Central Executive Committee into a bourgeois body, standing in opposition to the Council of People's Commissars. The attacks launched by the traitors at this meeting—Larin's speech and resolution, the statement made by the group of People's Commissars, and lastly, the

interpellation of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries—all proved that the defeatists had agreed among themselves to express no confidence in the Council of People's Commissars and to secure the overthrow of the Soviet Government.

Replying to the interpellation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Lenin said:

"The new government could not but take into consideration in the course of its work the obstacles that were likely to arise if all the formalities were strictly adhered to. The situation was far too grave and brooked no delay. There was no time to waste on polishing up the government's measures, which would only have given them an outward finish without in any way changing their substance."[25]



S. M. Uritsky

On behalf of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary group, Spiro, a member of the Central Executive Committee, moved a resolution expressing no confidence in the Council of People's Commissars. Uritsky moved another resolution which stated in part:

"The Soviet parliament cannot deny the Council of People's Commissars the right to pass, without preliminary discussion by the Central Executive Committee, urgent decrees which come within the framework of the general program of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets."[26]

During the voting on these resolutions Rykov, Nogin, Kamenev, Zinoviev and others left the meeting. This act of treachery was committed with the object of enabling the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries to obtain a majority. But this plan was foiled. Uritsky's resolution was carried by 25 votes against 23.

Thus, the attempt of the *bloc* of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and Right defeatists to overthow the Soviet Government failed.

The situation was extremely critical. The counter-revolutionaries exulted and predicted the downfall of the Soviet Government within the next few days, or even hours.

"The victors are already in a state of utter disintegration!" the Mensheviks howled in their sheet. "One after another the People's Commissars are resigning even before they have visited the Ministries 'entrusted' to them."[27]

enshevik Ministerial Party imagined that the desertion of a few
as "the begining of the end." A party which was divorced from
s could not think otherwise.
memoirs, Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador wrote:
the secession of so many of their leaders would bring the more
ite members of their party into line with the representatives of
er socialist groups, and that a government would be formed from
Lenin would be excluded."[28]
tire bourgeoisie was anticipating, if not the imminent collapse
letarian dictatorship, then at least important concessions that
l to its collapse. The demand that half the seats in the govern-
ld be allocated to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks
cally a demand for the abolition of the proletarian dictator-

lsheviks, however, were not in the least dismayed. In reply to
ands the Bolshevik Party stated through the medium of its in-
leader:
The *only* government that can exist after the Second All-Russian
s of Soviets is a Bolshevik Government . . . *only* a Bolshevik
ment can now be regarded as a *Soviet* Government."[29]
achery of a few deserters failed to shake the unity of the masses
owed the Bolshevik Party "not for one minute, and not one
Lenin expressed it.[30] The coolness with which Lenin received
truck by the traitors was the coolness of the entire Bolshevik
the very time that the Dans and Chernovs were expecting the
collapse of the Bolsheviks, Lenin wrote the preface to the second
his pamphlet *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* in the
which he said:
theoretical arguments against a Bolshevik power are feeble
last degree. These arguments have been shattered.
task now is to prove by the *practical action* of the advanced
he proletariat—the virility of the workers' and peasants' gov-
t."[31]
ire Bolshevik Party supported the Central Committee in oppo-
he blacklegs.
ber of local Party organisations categorically called upon the
return to their posts. Similar demands were made by the work-
ldiers. On November 9, the men of the Finland Regiment sent
n to the Smolny to demand that the People's Commissars who
d should immediately return to their posts and share the burden
bility with the other Commissars "without yielding an inch of
gains, and resolutely to put into operation the decrees which had
lgated."
ces of the blacklegs on the Council of People's Commissars were
. I. Petrovsky, A. G. Schlichter and M. T. Elizarov. The work



J. M. Sverdlov

of the Council was not interrupted for a moment. J. M. Sverdlov was elected to take Kamenev's place as Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The members of the defeatist *bloc* expressed their regret at Kamenev's dismissal from the post of chairman, and 14 "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries voted against Sverdlov's nomination for that post. Kamenev's departure put a stop to the wavering of a section of the Bolshevik group on the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and shattered the hopes of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries of a split among the Bolsheviks.

On November 6, the Railwaymen's Executive resolved to transfer its headquarters to Moscow. This was an admission that their manoeuvres had failed. Events immediately before and after this date fully confirmed Lenin's statement that this Executive was a body without any mass following. Thus, on November 4, the railwaymen on the Nikolayevsky Railway, without consulting their Committee, and contrary to the orders of the Railwaymen's Executive, had dispatched four troop trains to Moscow to assist the revolutionary forces. One of these carried sailors, while another was an armoured train. The railwaymen of the Kharkov junction passed a vote of no confidence in the Railwaymen's Executive. At a joint meeting of representatives of the Chief Railway Committees held on November 13 and 14, at which the result of the "neutrality" of the Railwaymen's Executive

was summed up, the voice of the masses was heard amidst the mumbling of the bureaucracy. The representative of the Ekaterinburg Railway said: "The Executive's platform was unanimously supported"; but he immediately added: "the railway workshops passed a vote of censure on the Executive for its activities."[32] The representative of the Kursk Railway was obliged to confess that "the Bolsheviks' troops" were transported over the Kursk Railway in spite of the ban of the Railwaymen's Executive. The railway bureaucrats were swept away by the whirlwind of the revolution.

2

COMBATING STARVATION AND SABOTAGE

Bonfires were blazing in the square outside the Smolny. At the entrance, Red Guards were scrutinising passes. An endless stream of people flowed into the building. On entering this human flood diverged in two directions, one to the right, to the Military Revolutionary Committee, the other to the left, to the room occupied by the Council of People's Commissars.

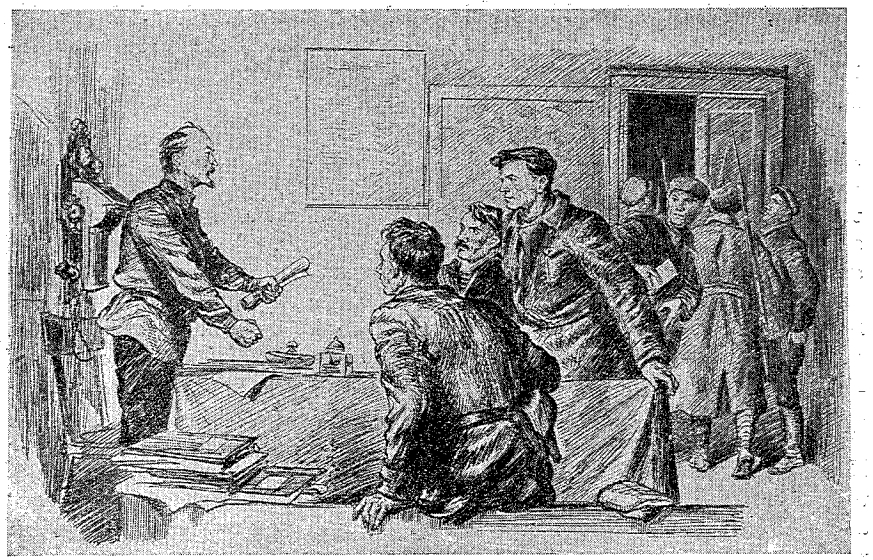
Delegates arrived from distant parts of the country for instructions on how to organise the Soviet administration. Peasants came to receive copies of Lenin's decree on the land. Delegates from the front arrived to receive copies of the decree on peace. Commanders of detachments left the Military Revolutionary Committee with combat assignments and calling Red Guards out of the darkness of the night, went off to the front.

Long queues were lined up outside the baker shops in the revolutionary capital. The saboteurs wanted to strangle the workers with the gaunt hand of famine, which, in fact, they had deliberately and methodically begun to organise on the eve of the Great Revolution. On October 25, 1917, the stocks of grain in Petrograd were sufficient for only one or two days.

Several days before the October victory of the proletariat the Mensheviks had threatened to resort to the weapon of sabotage in their struggle against the Bolsheviks. Thus, on October 20, the Menshevik A. M. Nikitin, then Minister for the Interior, had said:

> "They have no capable forces. Even if they succeed in capturing power we shall refuse to co-operate with them. They will be left isolated."[33]

On the day the Council of People's Commissars was formed the Constitutional Democrats, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries called upon the government officials to refuse to obey the new government. On October



Dzerzhinsky giving instructions to the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee

From a drawing by V. Shcheglov

26 the officials of the Petrograd Special Food Department refused to work with the representatives of the Soviet Government and, headed by the Socialist-Revolutionary Dedusenko, they deserted their posts. The officials of the Ministry of Food and of the Petrograd Food Administration went on strike.

The food situation in revolutionary Petrograd was extremely grave. On October 27 there were only 500 tons of grain in the capital, but the starvation ration of less than a half a pound of bread required 800 tons of grain per day. The flour for bread was no longer mixed with barley but with oats. The counter-revolutionary press gloated over the sufferings of the people. The Menshevik *Yedinstvo*, with the intention of inciting the masses against the Bolsheviks, wrote: "They promised you bread, but they are bringing you starvation."[34]

All the work of keeping the capital supplied with food was conducted under the direct guidance of Lenin and Stalin. Armed with the right to requisition private stocks, the Bolshevik food officials set to work. Units of Red Guards carefully searched the food warehouses, the barges on the river and freight cars in the railway yards and discovered considerable quantities of grain and flour, which were confiscated. By these means the revolutionary capital obtained an additional supply of 5,000 tons of grain, sufficient for ten days.

The food decrees issued by the Soviet Government stimulated the revolutionary initiative of the masses of working people. At the time the counter-revolutionary forces of Krasnov and Kerensky began their advance on Petrograd the food crisis had been considerably allayed in the capital. Measures were taken to increase the shipment of grain from other districts. In the beginning of November the Council of People's Commissars sent ten detachments of revolutionary sailors of fifty men each to escort food trains en route to Petrograd. Scores of speakers and Commissars were sent to the rich grain districts of the South to expedite the shipment of grain. Every day the Military Revolutionary Committee formed detachments of revolutionary sailors and Red Guards to requisition grain from the big landlords and to conduct propaganda among the peasants in the grain producing areas to send grain to Petrograd. The People's Commissariat of Food sent special emissaries all over Soviet Russia to ascertain the whereabouts of food stocks. Some left for Archangel and Murmansk, where, during the war, grain had been shipped abroad. Fifty were sent to Kotlas, where the Northern Dvina meets the Perm-Kotlas Railway. Here, tens of thousands of tons of grain were stored. The stocks of grain in the provinces were very large and in North Caucasus and Siberia amounted to hundreds of thousands of tons.

The provision of grain for Petrograd was greatly hindered by the petty profiteers, or "sack men" as they were called, who swarmed into the grain producing areas and bought grain from the peasants at high prices, thus interfering with government purchases. But the main cause of the food crisis that set in after the great proletarian revolution was the sabotage of the provincial Food Committees, which were controlled by Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik counter-revolutionaries.

The representatives of the revolutionary capital helped the provinces to combat this sabotage on the food front. At the beginning of November the grain reaching the capital did not exceed 15 carloads per day. Hence, notwithstanding the ten days' stock which had been accumulated by requisitioning, it was found necessary, on November 7, to reduce the daily bread ration to three-eighths of a pound. In the middle of November grain shipments considerably increased, notwithstanding the growing dislocation of the transport system. From November 1 to November 30, 15,277 tons of grain reached Petrograd. By the middle of November 1,200 carloads of grain were under way. In view of that, on November 15, the daily bread ration was increased to half a pound. During the first month of the existence of the Soviet Government the food supply of the capital was quite satisfactory. On November 30 it was decided to increase the bread ration to three-quarters of a pound per day, and to issue an additional pound of flour on every food card. In the middle of November the Petrograd Special Food Department began to issue supplementary food rations for young children.

This considerable improvement in the food supply of the capital was due not only to the increased shipments of grain from outside, but also to a number of measures which had been taken to secure additional stocks in the capital itself, as well as to economy in the expenditure of the available stocks. The criminal saboteurs in various offices had left thousands of tons of food standing in the railway yards. These supplies had to be collected, checked, unloaded and carted into the city. In this matter the Food Administration received considerable assistance from the Military Revolutionary Committee, which, at the beginning of November set up an Unloading Commission vested with extensive powers, including the right to confiscate freights if it deemed necessary. The Commission enlisted the co-operation of the masses in the capital. With their aid it, on November 8, found in the railway goods yard in Petrograd alone, 267 tons of wheat flour, 1,434 tons of wheat, 283 tons of rye flour, 100 tons of rye, 750 tons of fish, over 16 tons of butter, 150 tons of granulated sugar, etc. On November 9, at Navolochnaya Station, on the Nikolayevsky Railway, 5 carloads of grain and 15 tons of sugar were found. The Commission discovered similar stocks every day.

The Commission obtained the voluntary assistance of workers, sailors and soldiers in the difficult task of unloading the freight trains and carting the food supplies to the city. On November 8 several thousand sailors and soldiers were engaged in this work, and all the automobiles and tramcars in the city were mobilised for this purpose. On November 14, about 400 workers were engaged in this work at Navolochnaya Station alone. These were workers from the Obukhov Works, the Pipe Works and other large Petrograd factories who performed this work gratis.

The Bolsheviks called for economy in bread. The Food Administrations vigorously combated the widespread evil of issuing double and treble rations. The private supply of food products to co-operative societies, dining rooms and army units was prohibited. All the restaurants in the city were transformed into public dining rooms, and meals were served only on the presentation of food cards. In its appeal to the working people the Commission of the People's Commissariat of Food stated:

> "Nobody should try to grab for himself more than his comrades and neighbours receive. Let every attempt at food grabbing by individuals or groups, no matter under what pretext, be sternly condemned."[35]

The Military Revolutionary Committee dealt drastically with food profiteers. In a manifesto it issued to "all loyal citizens" on November 10 it denounced food profiteers as enemies of the people. It called upon the "working people to lodge information of all cases of food pilfering and food profiteering." "In the prosecution of profiteers and marauders, the Military Revolutionary Committee will be ruthless," it said.[36] In the middle of November the Council of People's Commissars adopted the following decision on "Combating Profiteering," which was published in the press over Lenin's signature:

> "The Council of People's Commissars orders the Military Revolutionary Committee to take the most determined measures to eradicate profiteering and sabotage, hoarding of food, the malicious holding up of

freights, etc. All persons guilty of conduct of this kind are liable to arrest on the warrant of the Military Revolutionary Committee and to confinement in one of the prisons in Kronstadt, pending trial before the Military Revolutionary Tribunal."[37]

Detachments of Red Guards took profiteers into custody, fined them, and confiscated their stocks. Thus, in the course of combating profiteering and sabotage new revolutionary food administration bodies sprang up. The first measures of the Soviet Government ensured a considerable improvement in the food supply in the capital in November. The counter-revolutionary sabotage of the government officials, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks was broken by the organs of the proletarian dictatorship.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries hastened to the rural districts to organise the kulaks for the purpose of sabotaging the food supply.

The sabotage of the food supply officials was augmented by that of the officials of the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, the Interior, Ways and Communications, Labour, State Relief, Commerce and Industry, and others. This sabotage was organised. Not only was the privileged upper stratum of the government officials involved, but also the post and telegraph employees, the junior clerks in the government offices, telephone operators and school teachers. The latter categories, though having no economic interest in preserving the capitalist system, nevertheless firmly believed that it was indispensable.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks succeeded in convincing the civil servants that the Soviet regime would be shortlived; and so certain were they that the new regime would not last more than two or three days that on leaving their offices they left their sugar ration in their desks as a broad hint that the Bolsheviks would not manage to drink a cup of tea before Kerensky returned. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik officials were convinced that running the machinery of state would be the greatest stumbling block to the workers' rule. In their organ they wrote:

"You may be able to arrest Kerensky and to shoot cadets with artillery; but the best piece of artillery cannot serve as a substitute for even a worn-out typewriter; nor can the bravest sailor take the place of the humblest clerk in any government department."[38]

The government officials were joined by the officials of the trade unions which were controlled by the Constitutional Democrats and Mensheviks. On the very day the Council of People's Commissars was formed the Central Committee of the Post and Telegraph Employees' Union demanded the withdrawal from the union of the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee, threatening to call a strike if this was not done. The Management Board of the All-Russian Union of Credit Institution Employees refused to allow Menzhinsky, the People's Commissar of Finance, to attend a meeting of the Board on the ground that only the instructions of the "Committee



"The Bolsheviks will hold power for no more than three days"

Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio

for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution" were valid for it. On October 26, the Menshevik newspaper hastened to sum up the first results of the sabotage in the following terms:

"Only a day has passed since the 'Bolshevik victory,' but the Nemesis of history is already on their track. . . . They . . . are simply incapable of grasping political power, it is slipping from their hands . . . they are isolated from everybody, for the entire clerical and technical staff of the state refuses to serve them."[39]

An important part in organising this sabotage was played by the so-called "Union of Unions," the federation of civil service employees in Petrograd, which was formed on the initiative of A. M. Kondratyev, N. I. Kharkovtsev, M. I. Lappo-Starzhenetsky and other high, pro-Constitutional Democratic officials, and which was controlled by the privileged upper stratum of the government officials in Petrograd. The first step towards forming the federation was taken in July 1917, but it did not assume definite shape until the eve of the October Revolution. Immediately after the proletarian revolution, the "Union of Unions" established contact with the counter-revolutionary "Committee for the Salvation"—the shadow Provisional Government—and the strike committees of the various Ministries, and undertook the leadership of the sabotage of the officials of those Ministries.

Another important sabotage organisation, which was connected with the "Union of Unions," was the so-called "Soviet of Working Intelligentsia Deputies," which was formed in May 1917 and consisted of representatives of the bourgeois, pro-Kornilov intellectuals. This Soviet had 29 representatives on the Moscow Council of State. Like the "Union of Unions," it was led by Constitutional Democrats, and most of its members were of the same political persuasion. Together with organisations such as the Physicians, Engineers, and Agricultural Workers' Unions, the "Soviet of Working Intelligentsia Deputies" maintained communication with "intellectual" organisations like the Union of Cossack Forces, and with anti-Soviet organisations like the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Officers' Deputies and the Manufacturers' Association.[40] The "Working Intelligentsia" issued a daily bulletin for distribution among the striking government officials in which it repeated the slander liberally culled from the columns of *Rech*, *Volya Naroda*, *Dyelo Naroda*, *Petrogradskaya Gazeta*, and other counter-revolutionary rags. The following is an example of the tirades indulged in by this "intellectual" Soviet:

"The impending danger is not only of a political but also of a material nature. The salaries of workers engaged in intellectual pursuits will often depend on the caprice of doorkeepers."[41]

But the "doorkeepers" courageously opposed the sabotage. Thus, Gerasim Ogur, a doorkeeper at the Volga-Kama Bank in Petrograd, refused to join the saboteurs, and to help the Red Guards take control he brought his daughter Maria, a schoolteacher, to the bank. The saboteurs proclaimed a boycott against Gerasim and his daughter. Their names were entered in a "black list" and posted on the doors of the bank; but they refused to be intimidated and continued at their work.

In nearly all the Ministries the junior staffs willingly expressed their readiness to help the workers and Red Guards to build up the new administration. In many cases it turned out that men who for decades had been employed in government offices merely as messengers could be utilised for responsible work. Thus, in spite of the intimidation of the saboteurs, ten members of the Special Credit Department staff of the Ministry of Finance volunteered for work at the People's Commissariat of Finance. Eight of these had formerly been messengers. In the same Ministry, the messengers informed the Commissar of the members of the staff who were in sorest need and who could be won away from the saboteurs.

The saboteurs at the banks and at the Ministry of Finance believed that as a result of their strike the factory workers would not receive their wages and that this would give rise to hunger riots. This is exactly what I. P. Shipov, the Director of the State Bank, an old bureaucrat, Durnovo's placeman and colleague of Stolypin the Hangman and of Stürmer, was driving at. But about a thousand members of the junior staff of the State Bank continued at work in spite of all the efforts of the saboteurs to intimidate them, and wages were paid on time. Soldiers and sailors who had formerly been employed in government offices arrived from the front, took the places of the saboteurs and, side by side with the workers, helped to build up the new edifice of state. The more democratic section of the government officials also opposed the saboteurs.

The Constitutional Democratic Party was the chief inspirer of the counter-revolutionary saboteurs, and the leaders of this party, Kutler, Hessen, Khrushchev, Kiesewetter, and others, were at the head of the sabotage organisations. During these days, Lappo-Starzhenetsky, a high official, an engineer by profession, and one of the most active members of the Constitutional Democratic Party, hurried from one Ministry to another forming strike committees and giving directions to the sabotage leaders. Before the government officials he posed as a champion of democracy. "Why must we strike?"—he asked the awe-struck officials who were not accustomed to receive such gracious attention or to hear such "democratic" speeches from the high and mighty bureaucrats. Because, he said, "Soviet decrees mean loss of freedom and uncontrolled tyranny."[42] The officials were rather hazy about the point as to who were losing their freedom and whose control the Bolsheviks were overthrowing but they voted in favour of a strike because they were convinced that the Bolsheviks could not remain in power long, and this conviction was reinforced by the six weeks' or two months' salary in advance which they received from the sabotage leaders.

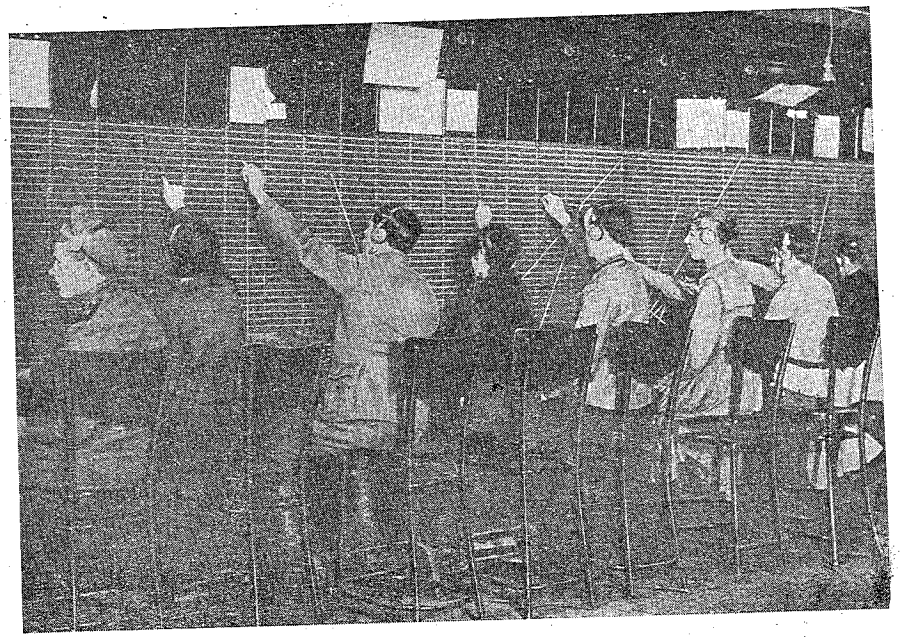
The sabotage leaders were closely connected with the biggest capitalist organisations in the country and received financial assistance from them for the sabotage movement. Lappo-Starzhenetsky himself was connected with the firm of Ericson, with M. Ferrand, the representative of French trading companies, with the United Cable Works, Ltd., Siemens-Schuckert, and other

firms.[43] The saboteurs also received financial assistance from the commercial house of Ivan Stakheyev in Moscow, from the Caucasian Bank, the Tula Land Bank, the Moscow People's Bank, and from a number of private individuals with interests in large-scale industry and commerce.

These capitalists donated large sums of money for the purpose of the strike, for they were aware that the very existence of the landlord and capitalist administration was at stake. According to the evidence of the ex-Vice-Minister of Justice, Demyanov, the members of the deposed Provisional Government drew 40,000,000 rubles from the State Bank and financed the sabotage movement with the money. The sabotage committee of the private bank employees collected 2,000,000 rubles for a strike fund for the government officials and of this money L. Tessler, the chairman of this committee, transferred to A. M. Kondratyev, the chairman of the "Union of Unions," 1,500,000 rubles.[44] The saboteurs also received assistance from the French Mission through the Russo-Asiatic Bank and other banks.[45] Members of this committee also collected money by means of subscription lists, and L. V. Urusov, one of the leaders of the "Union of Unions" and formerly on the staff of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, collected a fairly large sum in this way. The sabotage leaders carefully concealed from the masses of the civil servants the sources from which they obtained their funds. Thus, at the Congress of Postal Employees one of the delegates asked from what sources 200,000 rubles were paid out to the employees of the Ministry of Post and Telegraph, but the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders declined to answer the question.

The struggle against the proletarian dictatorship assumed other forms besides open sabotage. The old bourgeois state administration tried to adapt itself to the new conditions and thus insure itself against complete demolition. This was particularly the case with the very part of the administration which was due to be broken up in the first place, immediately. Thus, at a meeting of the central strike committee, the representative of the "Judges' Union" argued that an exception should be made in their case, that they should be permitted to continue to function in spite of the Bolsheviks' order to dissolve. "The courts must not go on strike," he said. "If they do, self-appointed tribunals will arise."[46] And these tactics were fully approved by the strike committee. The officials were aware that their sabotage would not only hasten the break up of the old state administration, but also stimulate the initiative of the masses in building up new organs of government. "Self-appointed" tribunals were already springing up.

The officials of the Ministry of the Royal Household were also reluctant to go on strike. When the Chancellery of this Ministry was abolished, Prince Gagarin, the Director of the Chancellery, and Baron von der Stackelberg, the Vice-Director, came to Lunacharsky to lodge a protest against this. "We are drawing up memoranda for the Minister, we do not intend to strike and we ought not to be dissolved," they said.[47] The protest of the Baron and the



The Central Telegraph Exchange in Petrograd. Revolutionary working men and women take the places of the sabotaging telephone operators

Prince were of no avail. The Chancellery was abolished. It was evident, however, that the officials were banking on retaining their old staffs and preserving the old state administration.

The Kerensky government had left the old tsarist administration entirely intact with all its trimmings. For example: when Lunacharsky and the officials of the People's Commissariat of Education came to the Winter Palace, they were met by a footman in grey livery, who, in an ingratiating whisper, invited them to take lunch. In the ex-tsar's dining room they found the table loaded with the choicest viands. Famine was rampant in Petrograd, the workers were without bread, but here, everything went on as before. The Hofmarschall had at his command a vast staff of footmen and other servants. Under Kerensky, this was retained. Had the tsar returned he would have found his household in perfect order, and there would have been no need for him to change his habits of life in the slightest degree.

The bureaucracy of the tsarist and Provisional Governments urged the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to preserve the old state administration, but the more democratic section of the administration, the junior officials of the different Ministries, saw through the tactics of the higher bureaucracy. The reactionary trade union bureaucracy also made an attempt to

save the old administration and to forestall the Soviet Government. Thus, when all its efforts to form a new government had come to naught, the Railwaymen's Executive tried to seize control of the Ministry for Ways and Communications. On the instigation of the "Committee for the Salvation" the Post and Telegraph Employees' Union tried to seize control of the Ministry of Post and Telegraph.

These attempts failed, however, and this induced the saboteurs to pass from passive resistance to active sabotage. They ostensibly abandoned their strike and returned to work, but they did all in their power to discredit the new administration. In the State Bank, for example, the officials deliberately mixed up all the books and accounts. Even in the office of the City Directory, the officials mixed up the address files and created utter chaos. These new tactics of the saboteurs were exposed in December 1917 by a group of employees at the People's Commissariat of Labour, in the following terms:

> "The sabotage of these false friends of the people—whose tactics are to attend meetings, take part in debates and pour cold water on every project, to intimidate everybody and to prevent any results from being achieved in order to be able to say to the masses that so much time has passed and yet the Bolsheviks have achieved nothing and have fooled the people—such sabotage must be overcome by means of unremitting practical activity."[48]

The sabotaging officials received financial assistance also from the old All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets and from the underground Provisional Government. The old Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik All-Russian Central Executive Committee continued to meet secretly even after the Second Congress of Soviets. Among those who attended these secret meetings were I. G. Tsereteli, Abramovich, Dan, Broido and Weinstein. Some of the members took refuge at General Headquarters in Moghilev and tried to continue their activities there. In Petrograd a bureau of 25 was set up. With the funds which the old All-Russian Executive Committee should have transferred to its legal successor elected at the Second Congress of Soviets, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks organised sabotage and assisted the "Committee for the Salvation." The salaries of the staff of this "Committee" were paid by the old All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The latter even tried to issue a newspaper, but the workers at the printshop refused to set it up or print it. This obsolete body dragged out a miserable existence. At its meetings the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks discussed such trivial matters as ways and means of obtaining automobiles from the Central Executive Committee's garage, how to get free box tickets for the theatre, and so forth.

The deposed Provisional Government also tried to extend its existence beyond the span allotted to it by history. Six ex-Ministers and twenty-one ex-Vice-Ministers formed themselves into a so-called government, which met at various intervals between November 6 and 16, its composition different every time it met. Among those who attended these meetings were the ex-Ministers Nikitin, Malyantovich, Liverovsky, Gvozdev and Prokopovich, and several ex-Vice-Ministers and permanent secretaries. A "government" of such a composition lacked validity even according to bourgeois standards of legality. Describing this underground "government," one of the meetings of which he had attended, V. D. Nabokov wrote:

> "We had the customary unbearably long-winded interminable speeches, which nobody listened to. The prevailing mood was appalling, and that of some of them, particularly Gvozdev, was simply panicky. The only concrete *method of fighting* discussed was, I think, a *strike of the officials*."[49]
>
> "This was no longer life, but mere existence, and a rather shameful existence at that," wrote A. Demyanov, the ex-Vice-Minister of Justice, in his memoirs.[50]

3

THE AMALGAMATION OF THE SOVIETS OF WORKERS', SOLDIERS' AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES

The firm and determined policy pursued by Lenin thwarted the manoeuvres of the agents of the counter-revolution. Abandoning all hope for the success of the "Kerensky-Krasnov and Railwaymen's Executive" combination, Chernov recommended that the new central authority to be organised should rely on the regional governments which had been formed in the Ukraine, Don, Kuban and Turkestan.

Meanwhile, the Socialist-Revolutionaries carried the struggle against the Bolsheviks to the floor of the Peasants' Congress. During the armed insurrection the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, which was controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, had decided to convene a Congress of Peasants' Deputies on November 10, but as soon as the revolutionary temper prevailing among the lower peasant organisations became apparent it did all in its power to prevent the Congress from assembling. It sent the most confused instructions to the localities as regards the day the Congress was to assemble, rate of representation, and so forth. Many delegates who were already on the way to Petrograd turned back. Many Peasant Soviets, bewildered by the contradictory instructions, refused to send representatives.

On November 8, the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, by 27 votes against 23, decided to convene the Peasants' Congress in Moghilev, the seat of General Headquarters. The motives advanced for this were the demand of Chernov and Gotz that the Congress should be held in a "favourable" atmosphere, which did not exist in Petrograd, and that it was

necessary to secure the close co-operation of the front in the task of "forming a new government."[51]

This, in fact, was an attempt on the part of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries to follow the example of the Provisional Government, which, several weeks previously, had intended to flee from revolutionary Petrograd to what it had regarded as the calmer atmosphere of Moscow. The Socialist-Revolutionaries hoped to find a haven at counter-revolutionary General Headquarters, but they were too late. On November 9, a closed conference of 120 delegates to the Peasants' Congress decided to convene the Congress in Petrograd.

The delegates to the Congress assembled in Petrograd on November 10. A preliminary scrutiny of the credentials showed that the "Left" Socialist Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks had a majority. Taken aback by this unexpected turn, the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies began to manoeuvre. That day it called a conference of delegates from Gubernia and Army Committees, *i.e.*, of representatives of the leading bodies, and secured the adoption of a decision to postpone the Congress until November 30. The assembled delegates were to be given the restricted powers of a conference and, moreover, the delegates from the uyezds, volosts and army divisions, were not to have the right to vote. That evening, the delegates assembled and by a majority vote the Executive Committee's proposal was defeated. All the delegates were given the right to vote, and it was decided to proclaim the assembly itself as an Extraordinary Congress.

Next day, November 11, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries moved that all the members of the Presidium of the Executive Committee be elected to the Presidium of the Congress, with the addition of representatives from all the political groups. This motion was rejected and the Congress decided to elect the Presidium on the basis of proportional representation. Upon this, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries demonstratively left the hall accompanied by several representatives from Gubernia Soviets and Army Committees. At this session the assembly was proclaimed an Extraordinary Congress.

On November 12, the debate on the question of the government was opened. The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries continued to oscillate in their customary fashion and persisted in their efforts to secure the adoption of the Railwaymen's Executive formula of a government formed of representatives of all Socialist parties "from the Populist Socialists to the Bolsheviks." Speaking on behalf of the Railwaymen's Executive, Krushinsky said:

> "The representative organs of revolutionary democracy must serve as the fount of power. The Second Congress [of Soviets—*Ed.*] lacks sufficient authority, and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee should be augmented by representatives from the peasants, the army, trade unions and local government bodies. We shall go on to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee if you, the Peasants' Congress, decide to go on it."[52]

Taking advantage of the vacillations of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Rights made another attempt to capture the Congress. In the name of 150 delegates, the Right Socialist-Revolutionary V. Y. Gurevich, a member of the Executive Committee, stated that they regarded the split as a crime, that they were resuming their places in the Congress, and desired to have a representative of their group on the Presidium. At this juncture Chernov appeared in the hall. The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries moved that he be elected honorary chairman of the Congress. The Bolsheviks, supported by the rank-and-file delegates, strongly opposed this. Kiselev, a sailor, and representative of the Helsingfors garrison, severely criticised the counter-revolutionary policy pursued by Chernov and the leaders of the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets and called upon the peasants to form a united revolutionary front with the workers and soldiers.

"I call upon the genuine, not Avksentyev, peasants to unite with the workers and soldiers," he said.[53]

"Smolny farmers!"—came the snarling retort of the kulak, or capitalist farmer, delegates.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries again left the hall, after which the Congress proceeded to discuss the question of the government. Three resolutions were moved on this point: one by the Bolsheviks, one by the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and a third by the Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionaries. But just before the debate was opened the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries returned to the hall and stated that they would remain at the Congress in view of the importance of the question about to be discussed. On the motion of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Congress voted in favour of the formation of a government consisting of representatives of all Socialist parties "from the Populist Socialists to the Bolsheviks." The Bolsheviks secured the adoption of an amendment to the effect that the government must be responsible to the Soviets.

The "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries manoeuvred hard to secure the adoption of Chernov's resolutions, but they dared not openly oppose the Bolsheviks who enjoyed the backing of the rank-and-file peasant and army delegates. On November 13, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries demanded that the discussion on the resolution be re-opened, but the Congress rejected this demand. Once again the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries left the Congress, this time for good, and decided to hold their own sessions concurrently with those of the Congress.

As a result of the treacherous policy of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Congress refused to hear Lenin's report as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. "If we give the People's Commissars the floor," said Kolegayev, "we shall thereby prejudice the issue on the question of the government."[54]

Lenin addressed the Congress as the representative of the Bolshevik group, but this in no way diminished the importance of his speech. He spoke on the agrarian question and in the course of his remarks he denounced the policy

of the Socialist-Revolutionaries who, as he said "advocate confiscation of the landed estates" but do nothing to carry this out.[55] At the close of his speech Lenin moved a resolution which stated in part:

". . . the complete realisation of all the measures begun constituting the Land Act is possible only provided that the workers' Socialist revolution, which commenced on October 25, is successful, for only the Socialist revolution can ensure the transfer of the land to the working peasantry without compensation. . . .

"An essential condition for the victory of the Socialist revolution . . . is the closest alliance of the working and exploited peasantry and the working class. . . ."[56]

In the course of his speech Lenin had said:

"Landlordism is the basis of feudal tyranny, and the confiscation of the land of the landlords is the first step of the revolution in Russia. But the land problem cannot be solved independently of the other problems that confront the revolution."[57]

He attacked the wavering, compromising policy of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries in the following terms:

"The mistake of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries made was that they . . . had not opposed the policy of compromise on the grounds that the masses were not sufficiently educated. A party is the vanguard of a class, and its function is not to express the average state of mind of the masses, but to lead them. But to be able to lead those who vacillate, one must stop vacillating oneself."[58]

Lenin's straightforward words were levelled directly at the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary leaders. Continuing, he said:

". . . but to this day the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries are stretching out a hand to the Avksentyevs and only their little finger to the workers. If these compromising tactics continue, the revolution is doomed."[59]

The task of the revolution is to bring about a rupture with compromise, and a rupture with compromise means taking the path of the Socialist revolution. Addressing the peasants Lenin ruthlessly exposed the bourgeois narrow-mindedness of the people who claimed to be leaders of the revolution.

"If Socialism can be brought about only when everybody, to the very last man, is developed, then we shall not see Socialism for another five hundred years," he said.[60]

In unison with their allies, the Kamenevs and Trotskys, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries claimed that Socialism could not triumph in Russia. In their newspaper they had described the aspirations of the Soviet Government to bring about Socialism as "the fantastic dream of visionaries and utopians." To this Lenin replied in his speech at the Peasants' Congress as follows:

"The fact is, comrades, a Socialist, proletarian revolution has commenced in Russia. The masses of the people want to be masters of their own destiny. . . . The workers and peasants have covered Russia with their Soviets, they have become masters of their own destiny, and this is not the vision, not the utopia of 'fantastic dreamers'. . . ."[61]

Turning to the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, Lenin said:

"Agreement between us is possible only on a Socialist platform, there can be no other agreement."[62]

The sound organisation of the Bolshevik group at the Congress, the work which the Bolsheviks carried on among the delegates, and especially Lenin's speech changed the temper of the Congress. The overwhelming majority of the delegates represented the army, the men in the trenches, and the poor strata of the rural population. At the Congress 32 mandates from army organisations were read demanding the transfer of power to the Soviets. As a result of the pressure of this section of the delegates the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries were compelled to adopt the Bolshevik demand for the amalgamation of the Soviets. On November 15 a joint meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets and the Extraordinary Peasants' Congress was held at which, amidst tremendous enthusiasm, the first step was taken towards amalgamating the central bodies of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Before the joint meeting with the All-Russian Central Executive Committee the delegates at the Peasants' Congress held a special meeting at which the one word "amalgamation," evoked loud approval. Delegates from the Smolny and from the Red Guard who appeared at the meeting were welcomed with loud and prolonged applause. The representative of the Socialist Labour Party of America, who was present at the meeting, stated in greeting the delegates:

"The day on which the Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and the Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies reached an agreement is one of the most important days in the revolution. It will be loudly echoed all over the world: in Paris, in London, and across the ocean, in New York."[63]

Greetings were conveyed to the peasants on behalf of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets by the Chairman of that body, J. M. Sverdlov, who concluded his speech with the words:

"By amalgamating with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies you have consolidated the cause of the world revolution. This agreement is one of the most outstanding events of the revolution."[64]

The peasant delegates marched to the Smolny to attend a joint session of the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Soviets and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. At the entrance they were met by Red Guards. With streaming banners bearing the inscription: "Long Live the Unity of the Revolutionary Working People," the peasants and Red Guards trooped into the Council Chamber of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The Presidium of the joint session consisted of the Presidiums of the All-

Russian Central Executive Committee and of the Peasants' Congress. The amalgamation was welcomed with enthusiasm by the peasant delegates who spoke at the meeting. R. I. Stashkov, a veteran peasant, said:

> "I represent an Uyezd Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. I have been instructed to say that all power must belong to the Soviets. Up to now we have been living not in the light and air, but in coffins, as it were. But the men who championed the rights of the people suffered more than we. Manacled, they rotted in jail. This is a great day. I did not walk from the Fontanka [the street where the Peasants' Congress was held—*Ed.*] I was carried on wings. I cannot describe my joy to you."[65]

Towards the end of the meeting J. M. Sverdlov moved a resolution endorsing the decrees on land and peace which were adopted at the Second Congress of Soviets. This resolution was carried unanimously.

The amalgamation of the Central Executive Committee of Peasants' Soviets and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee was a significant step forward in consolidating the alliance between the proletariat and the working peasantry. This step greatly facilitated the task of the emissaries of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and of the Military Revolutionary Committee in amalgamating the Soviets of Workers and Peasants in the different localities in the country.

On November 18 Lenin delivered the final speech at the Peasants' Congress in the course of which he stated bluntly that the Bolsheviks were willing to reach an agreement with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries because "many peasants trusted them."[66] The *bloc* with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries was a special form of the united front, which enabled the Bolsheviks to isolate the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and win the peasant masses away from them. In forming this *bloc*, however, the Bolsheviks did not yield on a single point of their program. The important thing for them was to drag the waverers out of the camp of the counter-revolution and to rally around themselves all their temporary allies. As Lenin said:

> ". . . when at war one must not neglect any assistance, even indirect. When at war even the position of the vacillating classes is of enormous importance. The more intense the war the more must we strive to gain influence over the vacillating elements. . . ."[67]

These tactics secured the Bolsheviks victory at the Peasants' Congress. The rank-and-file delegates fully approved of the Bolsheviks' decrees on land and peace. Representatives from the districts stated that the peasants had turned their backs on the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and had welcomed the decrees of the Soviet Government with the greatest enthusiasm. Every day brought fresh news of the victory of the Soviet regime in different parts of the country. According to incomplete returns, Soviet Government had already been established, in addition to Petrograd and Moscow, in Kharkov, Nizhni-Novgorod, Odessa, Ekaterinoslav, Samara, Saratov,

Kazan, Rostov, Vladimir, Reval (in the Baltic), Pskov, Minsk, Krasnoyarsk, Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Tsaritsyn and Ufa. On November 19, the Extraordinary Peasants' Congress elected a new All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies of 108 members, all of whom became members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

4

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY SORTIE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATS

The counter-revolutionaries tried to nullify the achievements of the victorious people by other means than sabotage. One of these was their attempt to convert the Petrograd City Duma into a centre of the anti-Soviet struggle. This body had already acquired experience in the struggle and it was now to be used in furthering it. Under its auspices an "Assembly" of urban and rural local government bodies was called for the purpose of setting the local City Dumas and Rural Councils in opposition to the Soviets. The "Assembly" did not take place, however, as the representatives of no more than twenty towns arrived in Petrograd. The Petrograd City Duma also directed the sabotage of the officials in the various municipal departments, entered into communication with foreign ambassadors and helped to muster the counter-revolutionary forces.

On November 15, the subversive activities of the Petrograd City Duma were discussed at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars and a resolution was passed stating:

> "The Central City Duma has clearly and utterly lost all right to claim that it represents the people of Petrograd as it is in complete disharmony with their sentiments and aspirations."

It went on to say that the Petrograd City Duma took advantage of its privileges "to offer counter-revolutionary opposition to the will of the workers, soldiers and peasants, and to sabotage and disrupt methodical public activities." The Council of People's Commissars therefore ordered the counter-revolutionary Petrograd City Duma to be dissolved. The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks tried to ignore this order, and the Duma continued to function even after the decree of its dissolution had been promulgated.

On November 20, when the members of the City Duma began to assemble, they found the building filled with armed Red Guards and sailors. At 7:30 p.m. the Mayor of Petrograd and the Chairman of the Duma, donning their

regalia, wended their way to the Council Chamber, followed by a crowd of Councillors and members of the staff. The sailors barred their way, but the Duma members went in by another entrance. . . . The meeting of the Duma was opened, but at that moment the armed Red Guards and sailors forced their way into the Chamber and called upon the Councillors to disperse, giving them five minutes in which to do so. In this interval the following resolution was drafted and read:

"Having heard, through the Chairman of the Duma, the statement made by citizen the sailor that the Duma must relinquish its functions by order of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the City Duma protests against violence. . . ."[68]

At this juncture the sailor who had brought the order of the Military Revolutionary Committee glanced at his watch impatiently and observed: "Only two minutes left."

The Councillors hurriedly adopted the resolution, which went on to say that the Council would not dissolve, but would take advantage of the first opportunity to re-assemble.

The period of grace expired. Minutes were drawn up to the effect that the Duma had been dispersed and was signed by Councillors and sailors.

At the meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee held on November 24, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to raise a debate on the question of the dissolution of the City Duma. On behalf of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary group Karelin moved a resolution, the first part of which annulled the decision of the Council of People's Commissars to dissolve the Duma, while the second part proclaimed it dissolved on the grounds that it had "run counter to the sentiments and opinions of the broad masses of the population."[69] This resolution very vividly revealed the character of the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionary windbags. They dared not come out openly in defence of the City Duma, but thought the moment opportune to set the All-Russian Central Executive Committee against the Council of People's Commissars. This manoeuvre failed, however. By a large majority the All-Russian Central Executive Committee endorsed the decree of the Council of People's Commissars to dissolve the Petrograd City Duma.

Having met with a reverse in connection with the Petrograd City Duma, the Constitutional Democratic leaders of the counter-revolution tried to hatch another anti-Soviet plot. Acting as the puppets of the Constitutional Democrats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks called upon the people of Petrograd to come out in a demonstration against the Soviet Government on November 28, the day which the Council of People's Commissars had fixed for the opening of the Constituent Assembly provided not less than 400 deputies had assembled in Petrograd by that date. The members of the deposed Provisional Government who were still at large and of the legally extinct All-Russian Central Executive Committee called upon the deputies to assemble in the Taurida Palace, where the Constituent Assembly was to sit, at 2 p.m. on November 28. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks called upon the workers to come out on strike that day. It was obvious that under cover of the Constituent Assembly a plot was being hatched to overthrow the Soviet Government.

At a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars held on November 20 Stalin proposed that the opening of the Constituent Assembly be postponed. The Council instructed Stalin and Petrovsky to take control of the Committee that was in charge of convening the Constituent Assembly and to scrutinise all the documents in the Committee's possession with a view to ascertaining the actual state of affairs.

Meanwhile, Lenin drafted a decree which empowered the local Soviets to recall deputies from the Constituent Assembly. This decree was adopted by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on November 21, after which a number of Socialist-Revolutionary deputies were recalled, among them being Avksentyev, Gotz, Likhach, Argunov, Breshko-Breshkovskaya and Bulat.

The Central Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party made strenuous efforts to organise an armed demonstration against the Soviets on November 28, and all the members of the Moscow organisation of this party were ordered to come to Petrograd to take part in it.

The Constitutional Democratic Party acted as the political staff of all the counter-revolutionary organisations. In the course of that year it had been extremely active in organising counter-revolutionary demonstrations, but after the October Revolution it preferred to remain in the background and push the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, mainly the former, to the front. The leaders of the Constitutional Democratic Party went underground.

On November 17, all the anti-Soviet newspapers published a manifesto issued by the underground Provisional Government,in which this handful of ex-Ministers called upon the people to rally around the Constituent Assembly and solemnly announced that the opening of the Constituent Assembly would take place in the Taurida Palace at 2 p.m. on November 28. Next day the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered the arrest of the members of the Provisional Government who were still at large.

It was quite evident that the Constitutional Democrats, who had planned this comedy, could not count on immediate success. The reports concerning the election of deputies for the Constituent Assembly throughout the country showed that no more than 100 deputies could arrive in Petrograd by November 28. But their plan was a simple one: they banked on the Bolsheviks prohibiting the illegal opening of the Constituent Assembly. This would provide them with the opportunity of raising the cry that the Bolsheviks were suppressing the Constituent Assembly and of converting the demand for the convocation of that Assembly into a call to defend it as if it were already in existence. This would serve to unite the counter-revolu-

tionary forces in the border regions of the country with the anti-Soviet elements at the centre.

The Constitutional Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks made energetic preparations for the "opening." The legally extinct All-Russian Central Executive Committee provided funds for the purpose of organising the demonstration. The Congress of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which was then being held, decided to take part in the demonstration as a body.

The organs of the proletarian dictatorship were fully aware of these preparations. At a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars held on November 20 it was decided to reinforce the Petrograd garrison and to arm the sailors. It was proposed to concentrate in Petrograd by November 27 ten to twelve thousand sailors, and for this purpose to take advantage of the Sailors' Congress which was then in session in Petrograd.

On the morning of November 28, Shingarev, Kokoshkin and Prince Dolgorukov, members of the Central Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party, and Konstantinov, ex-Vice-Minister for Ways and Communications, were arrested, by order of the Military Revolutionary Committee, at the apartments of Countess Panina.

Only 172 members of the Constituent Assembly had arrived in Petrograd on the day fixed by the plotters for the "opening," but the absence of a quorum did not trouble the counter-revolutionaries in the least. That day, November 28, the Constitutional Democrats, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks organised a counter-revolutionary demonstration. A crowd of excited bourgeois, government officials and army officers marched past the Taurida Palace carrying white and green banners bearing the inscription: "All power to the Constituent Assembly!" and headed by a band playing the "Marseillaise." This hymn of the formerly revolutionary bourgeoisie was intended to inspire these present counter-revolutionaries who had decked themselves in the garb which the bourgeoisie in the West had discarded long ago. The "Marseillaise" and such terms as "Convention," "Committee of Public Safety" and others taken from the period of the French Revolution were quite current among the Russian counter-revolutionary parties in 1917.

Standing behind the railings of the Taurida Palace, Schreider, the Mayor of Petrograd, harangued the multitude and in a voice trembling with pathos declared that November 28 was the greatest day in the history of Russia. Pointing to the Taurida Palace he exhorted the crowd "to swear to prevent anybody from encroaching upon this last refuge of Russia. Let us swear to defend the Constituent Assembly to our last drop of blood." And the crowd in costly fur-lined overcoats or smart and warm army officers' or government officials' greatcoats answered with a loud discordant shout: "We swear!"

After this ceremony Schreider made for the side entrance of the palace followed by a crowd of several thousand armed Whiteguards, cadets, bourgeois and sabotaging officials who swept past the guard, which was too feeble to resist it, and flooded the building. A handful of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Constitutional Democratic deputies then proclaimed themselves an unofficial conference of the members of the Constituent Assembly. The force employed by the Whiteguards is not the only reason why this could have happened. The fact is that a number of the soldiers constituting the guard of the Taurida Palace had been influenced by counter-revolutionary propaganda and these at once unloaded their rifles.



An "anti-Soviet demonstration" *Cartoon by the Kukryniksy trio*

That evening the Council of People's Commissars met in the Smolny. The demonstration and the attempt on the part of the Constitutional Democrats to "open" the Constituent Assembly had completely revealed the plan of the counter-revolutionaries. The sporadic activities of the Kaledinites, Dutovites and of the Ukrainian Nationalists were to be politically united by the counter-revolutionary demonstration in the capital and by the "opening" of the Constituent Assembly. But the genius of Lenin was required to discern the hand of the political staff that was directing this counter-revolutionary plot, *viz.*, the Constitutional Democratic Party. On the surface, only the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were seen, playing the part of the mad dogs of the counter-revolution. The Constitutional Democrats modestly kept in the background, controlling all the

activities of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. It was necessary to strike at the political centre of the counter-revolution. This centre was the Constitutional Democratic Party. Lenin said:

> "It is not true to say that the Constitutional Democratic Party is not a formidable group. The Central Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party is the political general staff of the bourgeois class. The Constitutional Democrats have absorbed all the propertied classes: the elements to the right of the Constitutional Democrats have merged with them."[70]

The party which drew its strength from the economic might of the bourgeoisie, from the political training it had received in the reactionary period of the Third of June Monarchy and from its contacts with the officials in the state administration, was profoundly inimical to the people and extremely dangerous to the revolution. Lenin perceived this.

At 10:30 p.m. the Council of People's Commissars, on Lenin's motion, passed a "Decree to Arrest the Leaders of the Civil War Against the Revolution." This decree read as follows:

> "The members of the leading bodies of the Constitutional Democratic Party, being a party of enemies of the people, shall be arrested and tried by a revolutionary tribunal. The local Soviets are hereby charged with the duty of keeping the Constitutional Democratic Party under special surveillance in view of its connection with the Kornilov-Kaledin civil war against the revolution. This decree shall come into force the moment it is signed."[71]

The decree was signed by Lenin, Stalin, Petrovsky, Menzhinsky, Schlichter, and others.

At that time the Constitutional Democratic leaders—Shingarev, Kokoshkin and Dolgorukov—were already in custody in room No. 56 in the Smolny, the office of the Investigating Commission. Taking advantage of the inadequate organisation of the new administration, the Constitutional Democrats succeeded in penetrating to the Smolny and in establishing communication with the prisoners. Shingarev made the following entry in his diary:

> "Numerous visitors came to see us all day long. Among these were members of the City Duma, representatives of the 'Committee of Public Safety' and others."

At about midnight a Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee entered the room where the prisoners were detained and read to them the decree which had been passed by the Council of People's Commissars. As soon as he had finished the prisoners were surrounded by armed Red Guards. That same night they were lodged in the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

After the July days in Petrograd, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had threatened to proclaim the Bolsheviks enemies of the people.

Referring to this at a meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee held on December 1, Lenin said:

> "We said to them: 'Yes, do so if you can. Try and tell the people that the Bolsheviks, as a Party, as a trend, are enemies of the people.'"[72]

But the Constitutional Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries dared not carry out their threat. They vented their class hatred on individual members of the Bolshevik Party.

The Bolsheviks, however, boldly and publicly proclaimed the Constitutional Democratic Party, or the "People's Freedom Party" as it called itself, an enemy of the people. Already in August 1917, the terms "Cadet" (abbreviation of Constitutional Democrat) and "Kornilovite" had become synonymous terms for the masses. Lenin's decree gave legal sanction to this expression of popular contumely, and throughout the civil war the masses referred to the Krasnovites, Denikinites, Kolchakites and Wrangelites by the common term of "Cadets."

Popular hatred of the Constitutional Democratic Party had been accumulating long before the October Revolution. Milyukov, Shingarev and Lvov were the incarnation of the policy pursued against the people by the Provisional Government. The Constitutional Democrats, organisers of the sabotage and inspirers of the Kaledin mutiny, stood in the path of the mighty popular movement and threatened to turn it back to the hated past. A government communiqué published at the time stated:

> "All the people's gains, including an early peace, are at stake. In the South there is Kaledin, in the East Dutov, and lastly, in Petrograd, the political hub of the country, we have the plot of the Central Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party which is directing a continuous stream of Kornilovite officers to the South to help Kaledin. The slightest irresolution or weakness on the part of the people may result in the collapse of the Soviets, in the collapse of the cause of peace, the doom of land reform, and the restoration of the omnipotence of the landlords and capitalism."

The communiqué went on to say:

> "The Council of People's Commissars pledges itself not to lay down its arms in the struggle against the Constitutional Democratic Party and its Kaledinite troops. The political leaders of the counter-revolutionary civil war will be arrested. The bourgeois revolt will be crushed, cost what it may."[73]

On November 30 a detachment of sailors stopped the illegal "unofficial conference" of the members of the Constituent Assembly in the Taurida Palace.

5

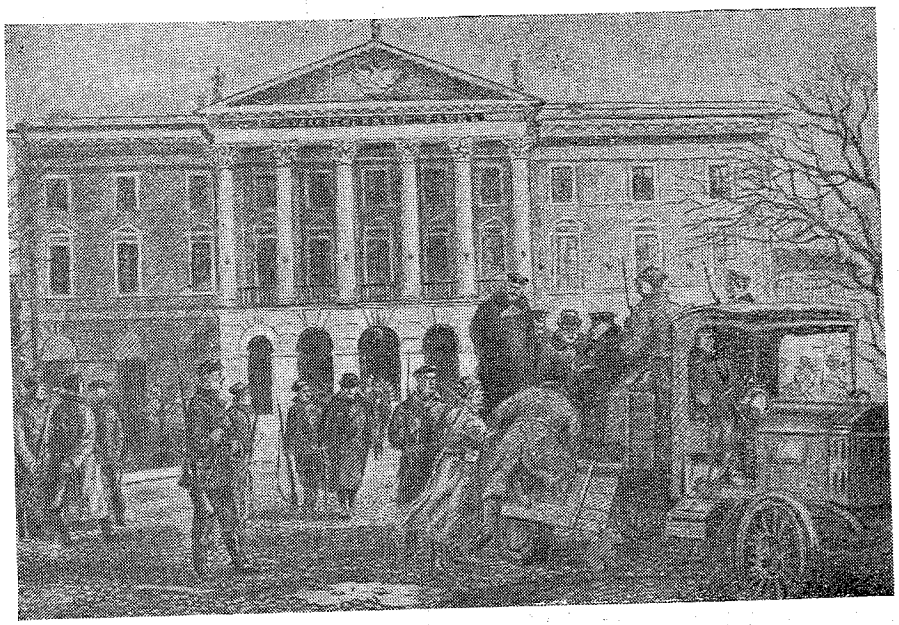
THE BREAK-UP OF THE BOURGEOIS STATE MACHINE AND THE BUILDING OF THE SOVIET ADMINISTRATION

In all the Commissariats the struggle against sabotage accelerated the break-up of the old state machine and the building of a new state apparatus. The introduction of state control of the banks as a preliminary to their nationalisation encountered the hostility of the bank officials, so much so, that before the sum of 10,000,000 rubles could be drawn from the State Bank to the order of the Council of People's Commissars, the Bank Director Shipov had to be arrested and the bank officials threatened with the calling of the Red Guards. This sabotage hastened the nationalisation of the banks. At a meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee held on November 8, a resolution was adopted on the report made by Comrade Menzhinsky ordering "the Council of People's Commissars to take the most vigorous measures for the immediate liquidation of the sabotage of the counter-revolutionaries in the State Bank."[74]

A similar situation prevailed in the People's Commissariat of Post and Telegraph. The sabotage of the officials of the former Ministry of Post and Telegraph was directed by the Central Committee of the Post and Telegraph Employees' Union, which was controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. On its initiative a "business committee" of three, consisting of monarchist officials, was appointed to take charge of the Ministry. To break this sabotage naval telegraph operators were called in from Kronstadt. After taking over the Telegraph Office the sailors, in the middle of November, drove the saboteurs out of the Ministry.

At the Ministry of Labour the Mensheviks were the ringleaders of the sabotage. The Marble Palace, which this Ministry occupied, was deserted, all the desks were locked and not a single official was to be found. In the corridors young princes, the sons of the Grand Duke Constantine, hovered like shadows. Under Skobelev and Gvozdev they had remained masters of the palace. Several days after the October Revolution they were ordered to leave, as they were stealing the palace treasures, and encouraged by their example, the officials stole the cash and carried away the account books. But in spite of the sabotage, the new Commissariat of Labour began to introduce social insurance and workers' control of industry. Workers from the Petrograd factories were called in to augment the staff.

One of the most important tasks that confronted the Soviet Government was to establish revolutionary order in the capital. The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs set up a committee for the maintenance of public order headed by K. E. Voroshilov. The counter-revolutionaries tried to organise hooligan and anarchist rioting in the city. Members of Purishkevich's organisation scattered leaflets in the city giving the addresses of vodka stores, and suspicious characters, disguised as workers, flitted through



Arrest of the sabotaging officials of the State Bank
From a drawing by A. Yermolayev

the streets organising the anarchist elements for the purpose of raiding the wine shops. Under the slogan of: "Let us drink up the last of the Romanov stocks," the counter-revolutionaries tried to cause disorder and anarchy in revolutionary Petrograd. Long queues lined up outside the raided vodka stores. In the Winter Palace and the Hermitage there were sealed cellars containing costly wines. The palace officials deliberately told the guards how to reach these cellars with the object of getting them intoxicated. Thus encouraged, the sentries removed the bricks from the walls with their bayonets and got to the wine. The guard was changed again and again, but without avail. The lure of the wine was too strong. Outside the palace there was a huge line of people, stretching to the Liteiny Bridge and along Millionnaya Street to the Field of Mars, waiting to get into the wine cellars. At about this time over twenty vodka stores had been wrecked in the city. The drunken riots that took place in different parts of the city became a serious menace to revolutionary order in the capital. In some districts these riots developed into anti-Soviet demonstrations. Order was restored only with the aid of detachments of Communists, revolutionary sailors and Red Guards.

An important part in the work of maintaining revolutionary order was taken by the workers' militia. Under the Provisional Government the

City Militia had retained many of the features of the old tsarist police force. This extremely important part of the old state machine was broken up during the very first days of the October Revolution. By a decree issued on October 28, all local Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were instructed to form a workers' militia in their respective districts and to exercise complete control over it.

Neither the Mensheviks nor their inspirers displayed any originality in believing that their sabotage would undermine the position of the Bolsheviks and send them "hurtling over the precipice." During the insurrection of the workers of Paris in 1871, Thiers, the leader of the counter-revolution, resorted to the same methods. When the Communards went to the Municipal offices to carry out their functions they found the premises deserted. When Arthur Arnoult arrived at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs he found nobody there but a caretaker and a floor polisher.

The schemes of the Russian saboteurs were foiled. They imagined that the proletarian revolution would treat the bourgeois state in the same way as all previous revolutions had done, but they were mistaken. The Bolshevik attitude towards the state machine was based on the granite foundation of the theory of Marx and Lenin, which had been tested by the experience of the Paris Commune and by the Russian revolution of 1905. The experience of the revolution of February 1917 still further confirmed the soundness of this theory. Lenin wrote:

> "Take what happened in Russia during the six months after February 27, 1917. Government jobs became the goal of the Constitutional Democrats, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. They did not think of introducing serious, radical reforms. They kept on postponing these 'until the Constituent Assembly met,' and bit by bit postponing the meeting of the Constituent Assembly to the end of the war! But they did not postpone the sharing of the spoils, obtaining jobs as ministers, vice-ministers, governors-general, and so on, and so forth, and did not wait until the Constituent Assembly met. In fact, the game of combinations played in connection with the formation of the government was nothing but an expression of the sharing and re-sharing of the "spoils" that was going on from top to bottom, all over the country, in all the central and local administrations."[75]

Shortly before the proletarian revolution, while living underground after the July days, Lenin enunciated the Bolshevik views on the state in his book *The State and Revolution*. Lenin foresaw that in the impending revolutionary battles the proletariat, which was about to storm the fortress of the capitalist system, would need a precise theory to guide it. It is exactly for this reason that Lenin availed himself of the opportunity afforded by his enforced retirement from public political activities to write this book. The book was not yet finished when the cold weather set in at the beginning of September and Lenin was obliged to move to quarters in Finland. On mounting the locomotive on which he crossed the border, he handed the workman who accompanied him a blue-covered exercise-book and exhorted him to guard it as the apple of his eye, adding that if he (Lenin) should be arrested, he was to deliver the book to Stalin. The locomotive safely crossed the border and Lenin's first question on reaching the other side was whether the exercise-book was safe. On receiving the precious manuscript he carefully put it away.

This blue-covered exercise-book, bearing the inscription "Marxism on the State," contained excerpts which Lenin had copied from the works on the state by Marx, Engels and others, the study of which he began in the reading-room of the Zürich Public Library in Switzerland.

The State and Revolution was finished in Finland in September 1917. In this brilliant work Lenin restores the ideas of Marx on the state which the opportunists, the Russian and other Mensheviks, had hushed up.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx showed that it was necessary for the proletariat to establish its rule and that it needed a state as a special instrument of violence to be used against the bourgeoisie. But he did not in that work indicate how the proletariat should deal with the bourgeois state machine. Marx and Engels were able to formulate this after generalising the experience of the revolution of 1848-1851.

Lenin quotes the following excerpt from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

> ". . . the parliamentary republic, in its struggle against the revolution, found itself compelled to strengthen, along with the repressive measures, the resources and the centralisation of governmental power. *All the revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it.*"[76]

To this Lenin makes the following comment:

> "In this remarkable passage Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto*. In the latter the question of the state is treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage the question is treated in a concrete manner and the conclusion is most precise, definite, practical and palpable; all the revolutions which have occurred up to now have helped to perfect the state machine, whereas it must be smashed, broken.
>
> "This conclusion is the main and fundamental thesis in the Marxian doctrine of the state."[77]

He went on to stress the following:

> "*Break up* this machine, *smash* it—this is what really serves the interests of 'the people,' the workers and the majority of the peasants; such is the 'condition precedent' of the free alliance of the poorest peasants with the proletariat; and without such an alliance democracy is unstable and Socialist reforms impossible."[78]

In his *The State and Revolution* Lenin for the first time enunciated and substantiated the theory that the proletarian dictatorship must assume the form of a Soviet Republic.

Right up to the second Russian revolution in February 1917, the Marxists of all countries had regarded the parliamentary democratic republic as the most suitable political form of organisation of society during the period of transition from capitalism to Socialism. In the 1870's Marx stated that a political organisation of the type of the Paris Commune was the most suitable form of the proletarian dictatorship. But he did not develop this idea any further in his works.

In his *Criticism of the Draft Social-Democratic Program, 1891*, Engels stated:

". . . our Party and the working class can achieve dominance only under a political form such as the democratic republic. The latter is, in fact, the specific form for the proletarian dictatorship. . . ."[79]

Subsequently, this thesis became the guiding principle for all Marxists, including Lenin.

True, guided by the experience of the revolution of 1905, Lenin arrived at the conclusion that the Soviets were the embryo of revolutionary government in the period of the overthrow of tsarism. In 1915, he wrote:

"Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and similar bodies, must be regarded as organs of insurrection, as organs of revolutionary government."[80]

But neither in 1915 nor later—right up to the revolution of February 1917—had Lenin had any experience of "a Soviet Government organised on a nation-wide scale as the state form of the proletarian dictatorship. . . ." (Stalin.)[81] Studying the theories of Marxism, the experience of the Paris Commune, the 1905 Revolution, and particularly the first stage of the revolution of 1917, Lenin arrived at the conclusion that the Republic of Soviets was the state form of the proletarian dictatorship. He formulated this theory in his April Theses, but he expounded it in detail and substantiated it in the autumn of 1917 in his book *The State and Revolution*.

In this book he lays it down that the old state machine must be broken up and replaced, not by a democratic republic, but by Soviets of Workers' Deputies. Stalin arrived at the same conclusion. In an article published in *Pravda* in March 1917, he called for the amalgamation of the Soviets all over the country and for the formation of a Central Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Like Marx, Lenin and Stalin did not devise a new form of government; they studied "*the way* revolutions themselves *'discover'* . . . it, the way the working-class movement itself *approaches* this task and begins, *in practice*, to carry it out."[82]

Just prior to the October insurrection the great leader of the revolution wrote a pamphlet entitled *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* in which, with amazing daring and lucidity, he indicated and provided solutions for the practical problems that would confront the victorious revolution. He attached exceptional importance to what he described as "one of the most serious, one of the most difficult problems that faces the victorious proletariat, namely, the attitude to adopt towards the state."

"By the state apparatus," he wrote, is "meant, first of all, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. . . . Marx taught us, from the experience of the Paris Commune, that the proletariat *cannot* simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and set it in motion for its own purposes, but that the proletariat must *destroy* this machinery and replace it by a new one. . . . This new state machine was created by the Paris Commune, and *of the same type* of 'state apparatus' are the Russian Soviets of Workers,' Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."[83]

Lenin taught the proletariat not only what to do with the bourgeois state machine, but also how to treat those institutions which do not fulfil repressive functions. Further on in the above-mentioned pamphlet he wrote:

"Besides the preponderently 'repressive' machinery, the standing army, the police, and the bureaucracy, there is in the modern state a machinery that is closely connected with banks and syndicates which perform an enormous amount of work in the way of accounting and record-keeping, if one may so express it. This machinery cannot and must not be broken up. It must be forcibly freed from subjection to the capitalists; the latter must be *lopped off, hacked, chopped away* from it together with the threads which transmit their influence; it must be *subjected* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be enlarged, made extensive, more popular."[84]

Lenin had in mind the banks, the post office, the telegraph and the consumers' co-operative societies. But this machinery can be utilised only if the bourgeois state is smashed, only if the capitalists are "cut off, chopped away." Moreover, he emphasised that the proletariat would encounter the resistance of the higher officials even in the non-repressing apparatus. Referring to these, he wrote:

"As for the higher grades of employees, of whom there are very few, but who incline towards the capitalists, we shall have to treat them like capitalists—'with severity.' They, like the capitalists, will *resist*, and this resistance will have to be *broken*. . . ."[85]

The sabotage of the officials hindered the utilisation of some of the parts of the old and discarded state machine that could be used, but at the same time it accelerated the demolition of the old state machine and the creation of a new one. It was in the struggle against this sabotage that the new state administration which grew out of the Soviets was built up.

The Soviet Government that was formed by the decision of the Second Congress of Soviets set to work immediately, but the new Commissariats had neither staffs nor premises. The People's Commissars took up their quarters in the Smolny, in the rooms of which small tables were placed with tablets attached bearing the inscription: "People's Commissariat . . ." stating which Commissariat it was. The Bolsheviks who were appointed as Commissars, weary though they were from sleepless nights during the insurrection, took up their duties at once.

Thus, on October 30, Comrade Menzhinsky was appointed People's Commissar of Finance. With the intention of proceeding forthwith to carry out the government's order he, with the help of another comrade, dragged a large couch into the room occupied by the Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars and attached a slip to the wall above it with the inscription: "Commissariat of Finance." Then, having had no sleep for several nights, he lay on the couch and fell fast asleep. Lenin happened to pass by and seeing the slumbering Commissar laughed and said: "It's a good thing the Commissars begin by recuperating their strength."[86]

During these first days after the October Revolution the People's Commissars rarely visited the old Ministries and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Constitutional Democrats took this as a sign of the Bolsheviks' weakness.

"Nobody seriously believed in their triumph," wrote Demyanov, "and the Bolsheviks themselves were not sure that they had captured power for good. This was indicated by the fact, among others, that at first they paid hardly any attention to that part of the administration which dealt with the state functions of the Ministry."[87]

Like the Mensheviks, the old bureaucrats could not conceive of a state administration without Ministries. The old administration continued to function by inertia. The officials arrived at their offices every morning as usual, and the Ministries continued, as usual, to issue innumerable circulars to all parts of the country. In those cases where the People's Commissars attempted to take over the affairs of their respective Ministries they encountered the passive resistance of the officials. It was enough for the Commissar to appear in the building for all the rooms to become deserted. Only the technical personnel and those officials who sympathised remained in their places.

In the first days of the existence of the Soviet Government the People's Commissars tried to make use of the rump of the old state administration. It was, indeed, only a rump, for it no longer exercised any power. Nevertheless, it had to be taken over; it was necessary to pick up its connections and to collect a loyal staff. In this short period after the October Revolution some of the People's Commissars signed decrees as "Commissars of the Ministry." Thus, A. V. Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Education, stated in the first declaration he issued on the principles on which public education was to be organised:

"For the time being, current affairs must be carried on in the ordinary way, through the Ministry of Public Education."[88]

The growing dimensions of the sabotage proved, however, that the old state machine had to be broken up as much as possible. The result was that very little of it remained that could be utilised. This sabotage assumed the most diverse forms, from open refusal to work to naive attempts to confuse the representatives of the Soviets by formal routine. Thus, when the members of the Collegium of the Commissariat of Post and Telegraph arrived at the Ministry which had administered this department, the officials demanded

proof that the Collegium was really authorised to direct the Ministry. The members of the Collegium presented a document to that effect, signed by Lenin. The officials scrutinised the document, held a whispered consultation and then stated that the document was invalid as it had no file number and bore no seal. Lenin was informed of this. He examined the document, burst out laughing and said:

"They are quite right. An official document like this should have had a seal and a file number. But you are already sitting tight in the Ministry. This proves that a revolution can be made without a file number."[89]

The counter-revolutionaries banked on the Bolsheviks being unable to find the forces with which to man the new state administration, but in this, too, they were mistaken. On October 29 the Military Revolutionary Committee issued the following circular to all the district Revolutionary Committees:

"Inform all factory committees, district trade union committees, sick insurance committees, Party committees, and other proletarian organisations that they are immediately to choose people of both sexes who are willing to work in the revolutionary organisations as bookkeepers, typists, bank messengers, for permanent or temporary employment."[90]

Somewhat later, on November 17, when the sabotage of the government officials was at its height, a similar order was issued by the Petrograd Soviet. It read as follows:

"1 . . . The pernicious bourgeois prejudice that only bourgeois officials can administer the state must be utterly discarded forthwith.

"2. The District and City Soviets must without delay divide into departments, each of which must take a most active part in the work of one or other branch of state administration.

"3. The most class-conscious comrades with organising ability must be chosen from the factories and the regiments; the forces thus obtained are to be sent to assist the various People's Commissariats.

"Every class-conscious worker and soldier must understand that only by displaying self-reliance, energy and enthusiasm can the working people consolidate the victory of the social revolution which has begun. Let every group of workers and soldiers display the organising talent that lies dormant among the people and was hitherto repressed by the yoke of capital and by want."[91]

At first the People's Commissariats enlisted small groups of workers with whose aid they set to work to break up the old administration and to build the new. These people who came to work in the Soviet offices were new in the literal sense of the word. They were people of the new class and had their roots deep among the masses. Lenin said on more than one occasion: " . . . The proletarian revolution is strong precisely because its sources are so deep."[92]

Appointments to leading positions in the new state administration were made by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, by the Military Revolutionary Committee, and personally by Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov. The most active members of the District Soviets, District Committees of the Bol-

shevik Party and of the trade unions, the factory committees, the Red Guard and other organisations were chosen for these positions.

One of the most important Commissariats to be set up was the People's Commissariat for Nationalities. In view of the numerous nationalities inhabiting the country, this state department was destined to play an exceptionally important role. Right from the very inception of the Soviet regime the question as to whose lead the oppressed nationalities would follow—that of their "own" national bourgeoisie, or that of the working class—was one on which the very existence and further progress of the revolution depended. For this reason the Bolshevik Party placed Stalin at the head of the People's Commissariat for Nationalities. Lenin's best disciple, leader and guide of the Bolshevik organisations, Stalin, also enjoyed renown as a Bolshevik theoretician on the national question.

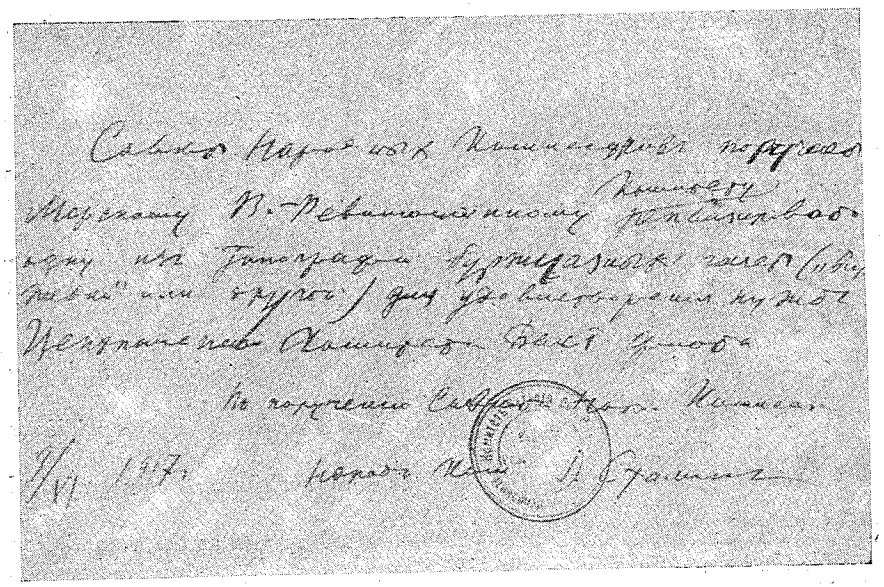
Like the other Commissariats, the People's Commissariat for Nationalities started to function in the Smolny. In a room already occupied by a number of departments, a desk was placed and on the wall above it there was a tablet with the inscription: "People's Commissariat for Nationalities." Up to the end of 1917, the staff of this People's Commissariat consisted of three persons. The "Director of the Chancellery" of this Commissariat was a Bolshevik named Felix Senyuta, who gave up his cobbler's last for a statesman's portfolio.

Stalin soon developed enormous activity in rallying the masses of the oppressed nationalities in the East and the West around revolutionary Russia. In these first days of the existence of the Soviet regime the People's Commissar for Nationalities laid down the principles which guided the policy of the Soviet Government in the national question. On November 2, the "Declaration of Rights of the Nations of Russia" was published over the signature of Lenin and Stalin. This declaration had been drawn up by Stalin. In plain, forceful language, it expressed the hopes and aspirations of hundreds of millions of the oppressed toiling masses all over the world. It read as follows:

"The October Revolution of the workers and peasants has commenced under the common banner of emancipation.

"The *peasants* have been emancipated from the power of the landlords, for landlordism no longer exists; it has been abolished. The *soldiers and sailors* have been emancipated from the power of the autocratic generals, for henceforth generals will be elected and be subject to dismissal. The *workers* have been emancipated from the caprice and tyranny of the capitalists, for henceforth the factories and works will be under the control of the workers. All that is vital and virile is being emancipated from its hated fetters.

"There remain only the *nations in Russia* which have suffered, and are still suffering, oppression and tyranny, whose emancipation should commence immediately and whose liberation should be brought about resolutely and for ever.



Facsimile of the Order of the Council of People's Commissars, signed by Stalin to requisition a printing plant of a bourgeois newspaper for the needs of the Baltic Fleet

"In the epoch of tsarism the nations in Russia were systematically incited against one another. The results of this policy are common knowledge: massacres and pogroms on the one hand, and the slavery of the nations on the other.

"This disgraceful policy of incitement has been abolished, never to be revived. Henceforth, its place will be taken by a policy of *voluntary and sincere* alliance of the nations in Russia.

"In the period of imperialism, after the February Revolution, when power passed to the bourgeoisie represented by the Constitutional Democratic Party, the naked policy of incitement gave way to the craven policy of sowing mutual distrust among the nations in Russia, a policy of pinpricks and provocation covered up by glib talk about "freedom" and "equality" of nations. The results of this policy are common knowledge. Growth of national enmity and mutual distrust.

"This despicable policy of falsehood and distrust, of pinpricks and provocation must be brought to an end. Henceforth, it must be replaced by an open and honest policy that will lead to *complete mutual confidence* among the nations of Russia. . . .

"Only as a result of such an alliance can the workers and peasants of the different nationalities in Russia be merged in a single revolutionary

force capable of repelling every attack on the part of the imperialist-annexationist bourgeoisie.

"On the basis of the above propositions the First Congress of Soviets, in June, this year, proclaimed the right of the nations of Russia to free self-determination.

"In October, this year, the Second Congress of Soviets reaffirmed this inalienable right of the nations inhabiting Russia in a more emphatic and definite form.

"Fulfilling the will of these congresses, the Council of People's Commissars has decided to base its work in relation to the nationalities of Russia on the following principles:

"*1. Equality and sovereignty of the nations of Russia.*

"*2. The right of the nations of Russia to free self-determination, including the right to secede and form independent states.*

"*3. Abolition of all and sundry national and national-religious privileges and restrictions.*

"*4. The free development of the national minorities and ethnographical groups inhabiting the territory of Russia.*

"The corresponding decrees will be drafted as soon as the Commission for National Affairs is formed."[93]

These four points summed up the program of action in the national question of the first proletarian state in history.

On November 22, a manifesto addressed "To All the Toiling Mohammedans in Russia and in the East," written by Stalin, was issued in the name of the Council of People's Commissars and signed by Lenin and Stalin. The manifesto read as follows:

"Comrades! Brothers!

"Great events are occurring in Russia. The bloody war which was launched for the purpose of dividing up foreign countries is drawing to a close. The rule of the pirates who have enslaved the peoples of the world is tottering. Under the hammer blows of the Russian revolution, the ancient edifice of bondage and slavery is being shattered. The world of tyranny and oppression is living its last days. A new world is being born, a world of the working people and of those who are being emancipated. At the head of this revolution marches the workers' and peasants' government of Russia, the Council of People's Commissars. . . .

"The reign of capitalist plunder and violence is crumbling. The soil is burning under the feet of the imperialist robbers.

"In the midst of these great events we address ourselves to you, toiling and dispossessed Mohammedans of Russia and the East.

"Mohammedans of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Transcaucasia, Chechens and Gortsi of the Caucasus, all those whose mosques and prayer houses were destroyed and whose religion and customs were trampled upon by the Russian tsars and tyrants!

"Henceforth, your faith and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are proclaimed free and inviolable. Build up your national life freely and unhindered. This is your right. Be it known to you that your rights, like the rights of all the nationalities of Russia, are protected by the full might of the revolution and of its organs, the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

"Support this revolution and its authorised government."[94]

In the name of the Council of People's Commissars the manifesto announced the complete annulment of the secret treaties for the seizure of Constantinople and the partition of Persia and Armenia.

In their struggle against the October Revolution, the class enemies of the proletariat had spread rumours to the effect that the Bolsheviks were persecuting religion. These rumours had a particularly pernicious effect upon the backward nationalities whom the tsarist regime had tried forcibly to convert to the faith of the Greek Orthodox Church and who, therefore, identified their struggle for the preservation of their religion with their struggle for the preservation of their nationality. This manifesto dispelled the false rumours spread by the enemies of the proletarian revolution. The new Soviet regime publicly proclaimed the cessation of all national and religious persecution.

The manifesto to Mohammedans vividly revealed what a wide gulf lay between the imperialist and the Soviet national policies. Tsarist Russia was the bugbear of her weaker eastern neighbours. The Mohammedan peoples of Turkey, Persia and other Oriental countries lived in constant dread of sharing the fate of Turkestan and Transcaucasia, which tsarism had converted into its colonies. But a new, revolutionary regime was established, which most emphatically declared that it had put an end to the imperialist policy of tsarist Russia once and for all. The Soviets converted this declaration into action. When the Finnish Diet voted in favour of secession from Russia, the Council of People's Commissars, on December 18, 1917, issued a decree recognising the independence of the Finnish Republic. Later, on December 22, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, after hearing a statement by Stalin, adopted "The Revolutionary Government's Declaration on the Independence of Finland." The policy long pursued by tsarism had caused the masses of the working people of Finland to distrust everything Russian. By ratifying Finland's secession the Soviet Government proved that it had no intention of oppressing other nations in the slightest degree. The Finnish working class became convinced that alliance with Soviet Russia would not lead to national subjugation.

The Soviet Government's decision concerning Turkish Armenia was enthusiastically welcomed among the oppressed nations outside of Russia. In December 1917, Stalin, People's Commissar for Nationalities, issued an appeal in the course of which he said:

"Turkish Armenia is the only country, I believe, that Russia occupied by right of war. This is the bit of 'Paradise' which for many years

has been (and still is) the object of the voracious diplomatic appetites of the West and of the bloody exercises in administration of the East. Armenian pogroms and massacres, on the one hand, and the pharisaical 'intercessions' of the diplomats of all countries as a screen for fresh massacres, on the other hand, and a blood-bedrenched, deceived and enslaved Armenia. . . . It is becoming clear that the path of liberation for the oppressed nations lies through the workers' revolution that was started in Russia in October. It is now clear to all that the fate of the nations of Russia, and particularly the fate of the Armenian nation is closely bound up with the fate of the October Revolution. The October Revolution has broken the chains of national oppression. It has torn up the tsarist secret treaties, which tied the nations hand and foot. It, and it alone, can carry the cause of emancipation of the nations of Russia to its very end."[95]

This appeal of Stalin's was soon followed by the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of December 29, 1917 "On Turkish Armenia," which declared that:

"... the Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia supports the right of the Armenians in Turkish Armenia, which is occupied by Russia, to free self-determination. . . ."[96]

Of extreme world-wide historical significance was the publication by the Soviet Government of the secret predatory treaties concluded by the tsarist government and the Provisional Government. The work of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, like that of other People's Commissariats, was being performed by workers, sailors and Red Guards, now the real rulers of the country. The first nucleus of the staff of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs consisted of workers from the Siemens-Schuckert Works, and it was thanks to them that the archives of the former Ministry for Foreign Affairs were saved. A sailor named Markin undertook the work of publishing the secret diplomatic documents. Unfamiliar with foreign languages he managed to find translators and succeeded in publishing the *Digest of Secret Documents* in six issues. This work was performed very expeditiously, the whole series being published in the course of only six weeks. Markin personally supervised the process of printing. These documents exposed the predatory policy of the tsarist government and the whole system of secret diplomacy. The Diplomatic Corps and the foreign press correspondents in Petrograd snatched up every issue of the *Digest* as soon as it came out. The strike committee of the officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs bought up all the copies it could and destroyed them.

The archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs contained a large quantity of correspondence written in secret cipher. The officials of the Ministry, and Neratov, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, had taken the precaution to take with them the key to the cipher when they left the Ministry. Markin together with several Red Guards sat up whole nights working on these

documents and succeeded in deciphering most of them. Thus, new cipher experts were trained. In his preface to the *Digest of Secret Documents* Markin wrote:

"Let the working people all over the world know how the diplomats in their closets traded in their lives . . . concluded shameful treaties behind their backs.

"Let all and sundry know how by a stroke of the pen the imperialists annexed whole regions. They irrigated the fields with human blood. *Every revealed document is a weapon of the sharpest kind against the bourgeoisie.*"[97]

The publication of the secret treaties was the first step in the international policy of the Soviet Government, which emphatically rejected the predatory policy of the capitalist and landlord government.

The men in charge of the organs of the proletarian dictatorship had trained themselves for the work of statesmanship in the long years of Party activity underground, in exile and as political émigrés abroad. The very first days of the October Revolution revealed what vast talent, what a vast number of organisers, not only of Party work, but also of state administration, lay dormant in the ranks of the vanguard of the Russian proletariat. The metal-workers M. I. Kalinin, who took charge of the capital's municipal affairs, and G. I. Petrovsky, who became People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, and professional revolutionaries like Sverdlov and Menzhinsky—such were the typical organisers and statesmen who had been trained by the Bolshevik Party. The following description of Sverdlov by Lenin summed up the characteristics of all the leaders of the new state:

"... the profound and constant feature of this revolution, and the condition which ensured its victory was, and still is, the organisation of the proletarian masses, the organisation of the working people. . . . It was this feature of the proletarian revolution that brought to the front in the course of the struggle leaders who above all else were the embodiment of this specific factor hitherto lacking in revolution—the organisation of the masses. . . . Sverdlov's wonderful organising talent was cultivated in the course of a long struggle. . . . This leader of the proletarian revolution himself forged every one of his wonderful qualities as a great revolutionary, having experienced and passed through different periods under the most arduous conditions a revolutionary has to endure . . . traversing a long road of underground activity. This is the most characteristic experience of a man who, while constantly engaged in the fight, never became divorced from the masses, never left Russia, always operated in conjunction with the best of the workers and, in spite of the life of seclusion to which persecution condemned the revolutionary, succeeded in training himself to become not only a popular labour leader, not only a leader familiar mainly with practical work, but also an organiser of the advanced proletarians."[98]

During the "Smolny period" the Commissariats dealt with the most diverse aspects of the life of the young republic—from making grants to peasants whose horses had been sequestered under the tsarist regime to nationalising the banks, organising the first food supply detachments and building up an intricate machine for regulating and managing the economy of the country.

Already in the manifesto of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets which announced the victorious insurrection of the workers and soldiers, Lenin had written that the Soviet Government would immediately introduce workers' control of industry. On October 29 and 30, when the roar of the guns of Kerensky and Krasnov were heard at Gatchina and the cadets had risen in revolt in Petrograd, Lenin drafted the regulations governing workers' control.

In this draft Lenin proposed that in all industrial, commercial, financial, agricultural, transport and other establishments employing hired workers or clerical staffs, or giving out work to be done at home, the workers should be placed in control of the production, purchase, sale and warehousing of goods and raw materials, and also of financial transactions. The workers in each establishment were to exercise this control through bodies which they were to elect and which were to enlist the co-operation of representatives of the office and technical staffs. Commercial secrets were to be abolished. The owners of the different enterprises were to be compelled to submit all their books and accounts for control. In his draft Lenin emphasised that the workers' control bodies were to be organs of the Soviets, *i.e.*, organs of the proletarian dictatorship.

On November 14, Lenin's draft was examined and endorsed by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, and on November 15 it was endorsed by the Council of People's Commissars. The introduction of workers' control of industry was a most important Socialist measure. It placed an instrument in the hands of the proletarian state which enabled it to probe into the workings of every industrial and commercial establishment; it deprived the bourgeoisie of the opportunity of utilising its economic power for counter-revolutionary purposes, and it was an important step towards the nationalisation of industry.

At this time the Soviet Government also set to work to build up machinery for managing the economy of the country. On October 26 and 27, a group of members of the Central Council of Factory Committees discussed this question and drew up a scheme for the formation of a Supreme Council of National Economy. Several days later Lenin invited the group to his room in the Smolny and there, seated at a small round table, he examined their scheme, questioned them about every detail and devoted special attention to the proposed personnel of this new body. Lenin stressed the point that with the task ahead of socialising the means of production, the workers' government needed an organ through the medium of which the working class could manage their industries.



Lenin, Stalin and Molotov in the Smolny. *From a drawing by V. Shcheg'ov*

On November 10 the question of forming an Economic Council was discussed at a conference of representatives of Petrograd workers' organisations. At this conference an anarcho-syndicalist proposal was made to transfer the management of industry to the trade unions, but this was rejected. Guided by Lenin, the members of the Central Council of Factory Committees firmly pursued the line of establishing a state organ for the management and regulation of the national economy. A committee of members of the Central Council of Factory Committees was appointed to draw up the regulations that would govern the functions of a Supreme Council of National Economy. In its work the Committee had to contend against the defeatist proposals of Bukharin, who strongly opposed the complete break-up of the old state administration and insisted that the Supreme Council of National Economy should be constituted from the surviving organisations of the Kerensky government, such as the Special Fuel Department, the Economic Committee, etc., which, as was common knowledge, had served as centres of Kornilov counter-revolution in the economic sphere.

Proposals on the same lines were made by Larin, who urged that the Supreme Council of National Economy should contain a large number of capitalists and representatives of the so-called "public organisations." Under this scheme the workers were to have only one-third of the seats on the Supreme Council of National Economy.

At the meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee where these questions were discussed, these proposals were supported by the Menshevik Katel. Lenin opposed them in the following terms:

"... The Supreme Council of National Economy cannot be converted into a parliament. It must be a militant organ for combating the capitalists and landlords in the sphere of economics, just as the Council of People's Commissars is such an organ in the field of politics."[99]

On December 1, 1917, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee passed a decree, signed by Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov, ordering the formation of a Supreme Council of National Economy.

One of the first Commissariats to start functioning was the People's Commissariat of Education. While the workers and soldiers were fighting Kerensky's troops at the approaches to Petrograd and the Military Revolutionary Committee was organising the struggle against the counter-revolution within the capital, the People's Commissariat of Education launched its crusade to abolish illiteracy. The departments which this Commissariat set up give us a clue to the character of its work. Thus, an Extension School Department for out-of-school education was set up under the direction of Nadezhda Krupskaya. A department for training teachers was set up under the direction of L. R. Menzhinskaya. Other departments set up were a Department of Polytechnical Education, an Art Department and so forth. Commissars were appointed to supervise the museums and palaces in the capital and to arrange for the guarding of their treasures. Thus, a reliable guard was posted at the Alexander III Museum as early as October 25.

Two days later the workers and soldiers undertook to guard the Winter Palace and the Hermitage. The People's Commissariat of Education arranged for the publication in large editions of Russian classical literature. The works of Tolstoi, Pushkin and Gorky—printed on the commonest paper of different shades in view of the acute paper shortage—were sold in tens of thousands of copies.

In its decrees the Council of People's Commissars consistently pursued the policy of removing all the barriers that stood between the state administration and the masses of the population. By the decree promulgated on November 10, 1917, the division of the population into estates, and all its concomitant privileges, corporations, civil rank and titles were abolished, and a "single title," common for all the inhabitants of Russia—citizen of the Russian Republic—was introduced.

A decree passed on November 18 ordered all the local Soviets to take "revolutionary measures to impose a special levy on all higher officials" and to "cut all excessively high salaries."

Such were the first steps of the Great Proletarian Revolution in organising the new administration.

The decrees of the proletarian revolution were not ordinary acts of legislation. They were documents which formulated the program of the revolution; they proclaimed, in the form of legislative enactments, a program of action for the masses, the program of action of the Bolshevik Party. As Lenin subsequently stated:

"We had a period when passing decrees served as a form of propaganda. We were jeered at and told that we Bolsheviks failed to see that our decrees were not being carried out; the entire Whiteguard press was full of derision on this score. But this period was a legitimate one; it was the period when the Bolsheviks had just taken power and said to the rank-and-file peasants and to the rank-and-file workers: this is how we would like to have the state administered. Here is a decree, try it."[100]

During this historical period of "initial discussion by the working people themselves of the new conditions of life and of the new problems," as Lenin described it,[101] the inhabitants of the more remote districts of the country were still doubtful about the stability and durability of the new order. In a number of districts the old organs of administration, such as the town and rural councils, continued to exist parallel with the Soviets. To dispel these doubts and to remove this anomaly, Lenin, on November 5, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars wrote an appeal entitled "To the Population," in the course of which he said:

"... remember that *you yourselves* are now governing the state. Nobody will help you unless you yourselves unite and take *all the affairs* of the state into *your own* hands. *Your* Soviets are henceforth organs of state power, fully authorised to decide all questions."[102]

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Military Revolutionary Committee sent emissaries to the provinces to instruct the local Soviets and to see that the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars were put into operation.

6

THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

After fulfilling its function of directing the insurrection the Military Revolutionary Committee did not immediately dissolve; it was transformed from an organ of the Petrograd Soviet into an organ of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. After reaching its triumphant culmination at the centre, the insurrection continued its march through the country, consuming in its flames the old regime and building up the new administration.

The Military Revolutionary Committee sent its emissaries to the provinces, received reports of the progress of the insurrection in the districts, reinforced the weak spots and sent detachments formed in the factories of revolutionary Petrograd to those places where the situation was critical. During the first two weeks after the October Revolution the Military Revolutionary Committee appointed 72 Commissars for the provinces, 85

for army units, and 184 for civil bodies. Its main function, however, changed within the very first few days after the proletarian revolution. At a meeting held on October 30, it defined its new functions as follows:

"1. The Military Revolutionary Committee carries out duties assigned to it by the Council of People's Commissars. 2. The Military Revolutionary Committee is in charge of maintaining revolutionary order. 3. Combating counter-revolution. 4. Protecting the premises of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Council of People's Commissars. To carry out these functions, the Military Revolutionary Committee sets up corresponding departments."[103]

In all, the Committee, on the night of October 30, set up seven departments, the chief of which being: The Investigation and Juridical Department, Requisitions Department, Internal and External Communications Department, and Information Department.

This list alone is sufficient to indicate the range of the Military Revolutionary Committee's functions. But its work extended even beyond these boundaries. It intervened to compel the capitalists to pay the worker Red Guards for the time they had been engaged in the insurrection, and took measures to combat unemployment, profiteering and sabotage. It directed the organisation of the food supply. It continued to direct the insurrection in all parts of the country where it was still proceeding. It took an active part in building up the new government. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fully appreciated the important part the Military Revolutionary Committee was taking in the work of organising the insurrection and the new government. This explains why one of the first and foremost demands of these "conciliators" was for the dissolution of the Committee. This was natural: its dissolution at that moment when the insurrection had not yet been completed throughout the country would have meant the capitulation and disarming of the revolution.

A vast amount of work was performed by the Agitation Department of the Military Revolutionary Committee, which was directed by Comrade Molotov. Every day, from fifty to seventy persons came to this department for literature and information; many requested to be sent to the provinces. Comrade Molotov sent hundreds of these devoted and energetic agitators and organisers to the provinces where they went right among the masses of the working people, introducing revolutionary organisation and order.

About the middle of the second week of November, it became more evident what the main line of the Military Revolutionary Committee's functions were to be. At this time the various departments of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee were beginning to be formed; the Commissariats were getting on their feet, and the Council of People's Commissars was developing its work. In these circumstances, the numerous departments of the Military Revolutionary Committee became superfluous and caused a great deal of overlapping. On November 9, the Military Revolutionary Committee on Comrade Molotov's motion, passed a resolution urging that

it was necessary for the various sub-committees of the Military Revolutionary Committee to work in conjunction with the committees of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. On November 18, the Military Revolutionary Committee began to hand over its affairs to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, but this did not yet mean its liquidation. There still seemed to be an urgent function for it to perform, *viz.*, to combat counter-revolution.

At a meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee held on November 21, however, F. E. Dzerzhinsky moved that a special committee to combat counter-revolution be formed to operate under the control of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets. This was agreed to. With the establishment of such a body, the Military Revolutionary Committee became superfluous. Several days later the Council of People's Commissars adopted a decision to relieve the Military Revolutionary Committee of its multifarious functions and to transfer its departments to the different Commissariats.

In the beginning of December, the Military Revolutionary Committee was able to sum up its glorious activities and nominate its successor. In a statement issued on December 5, it wrote:

"Having fulfilled its military functions during the revolution in Petrograd, and being of the opinion that its functions should be transferred to the Department for Combating Counter-Revolution set up by the Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, the Military Revolutionary Committee resolves: to liquidate all the departments now functioning under its auspices and to transfer all their affairs to the corresponding departments of the Central Executive Committee, to the Council of People's Commissars and to the Petrograd and District Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."[104]

The Military Revolutionary Committee thus ceased to function. In its place arose that terror to all the enemies of the revolution—the Extraordinary Commission, headed by Felix Dzerzhinsky.

Such were the first steps taken by the the Great Proletarian Revolution in organising the new administration.

The victory of the revolution in Petrograd, in Moscow and in the army ensured the victory of the Soviet regime all over the country. True, in a number of regions, owing to national, class and other specifically local conditions, or international relations, the struggle of the workers and the toiling peasantry for power was more protracted, and in many places dragged on for months. But this did not affect the general situation. The October Socialist Revolution triumphed throughout the country. The Council of People's Commissars—elected by the Second Congress of Soviets, which represented the overwhelming majority of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers'

and Peasants' Deputies—became the legitimate and genuinely people's government of the entire country.

Like a mighty flood, the revolution swept away the barrier of sabotage, liquidated the first attempts at rebellion and crushed the resistance of the enemies of the people. The Great Revolution roused millions of people to active political life.

Not a single revolution in human history had destroyed the obstacles standing in the path of the new society as thoroughly and relentlessly as the October Revolution swept away the obstacles standing in the path of the new, Socialist society. And this gigantic task of releasing the land from its feudal fetters was accomplished in the course of the first few weeks of the proletarian dictatorship. The bourgeois state machine was demolished; bureaucracy was shattered to its foundations. The peoples swept away the ancient caste barriers, abolished landlord rule—feudal landownership, and reduced the obsolete feudal institutions to ashes.

But the revolution did not confine itself to breaking up the old. While destroying, the people also built—on a vast scale, and with creative energy. Out of the flames of the revolutionary conflagration an entirely new state administration arose. In place of the old and disintegrated army, the foundations of a new workers' and peasants' army were laid. New organs for the management of the country's economy were created.

Thus, the foundations of Socialist society began to be laid in the very first days of the existence of the Soviet Republic. The successful October Socialist Revolution saved the country from semi-colonial dependence. The Russian capitalists and landlords were to an increasing degree becoming the agents of foreign imperialism. They were preparing for the nations of Russia the fate of China, which for long years had been a plaything in the hands of the stronger powers. The great proletarian revolution paved the way for the free and independent development of the nations of Russia.

The October Revolution was brought about by the workers and toiling peasantry of all the nations of Russia. The Bolsheviks prepared for the revolution in all the national regions and republics—in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic countries, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This ensured the speedy and almost bloodless triumph of the revolution. The proletarian revolution broke the chains of national oppression and laid the foundations for the amalgamation of the nations. Age-long national inequality was utterly abolished and state bodies were set up to guide the national movements, to build up the national cultures and national statehood.

The great proletarian revolution laid really strong and durable foundations for the defence of the country. It paved the way for the removal of the age-long backwardness of Russia and opened up unprecedented prospects for the growth of socialist industry and the reorganisation of agriculture. The triumphant people took the fate of their country and the defence of their motherland into their own hands. As Lenin wrote on the eve of the October Revolution:

> ". . . to make Russia capable of defending herself, to achieve 'miracles' of mass heroism we must with 'Jacobin' relentlessness sweep away all that is old and renew, regenerate Russia's *economy*!"[105]

In September 1917, in his article, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* Lenin said that the enemies of the proletariat and of the other toiling classes had not yet seen the full strength of the resistance of the working people and could not conceive what it would be like when they were in possession of complete power.

> "But the strength of the resistance of the proletariat and the poor peasantry *we have not yet seen*," he said, "for this strength will develop to the full only when power is in the hands of the proletariat. . . ."[106]

He went on to say that when the proletariat captured power "no forces of the capitalists and kulaks, no forces of international finance capital, manipulating hundreds of billions will be able to vanquish the people's revolution. . . ."[107]

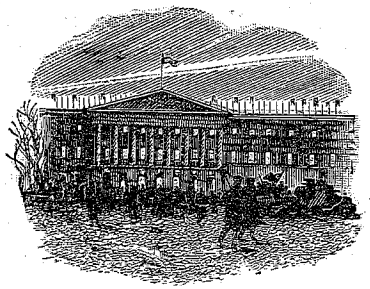
The proletariat took power in October 1917 in order to demolish the old capitalist system, and under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party to build a new Socialist society.

As Stalin has pointed out, the October Socialist Revolution differed *in principle* from all preceding revolutions. For the first time in history the task was undertaken of abolishing the exploitation of man by man in a vast country, and this task was achieved. In his speech at the First Congress of Collective Farm Shock Workers, Stalin said:

> "The history of nations knows not a few revolutions. But those revolutions differ from the October Revolution in that they were one-sided revolutions. One form of exploitation of the working people was replaced by another form of exploitation; but exploitation, as such, remained. One set of exploiters and oppressors was replaced by another set of exploiters and oppressors; but exploiters and oppressors, as such, remained. Only the October Revolution set itself the aim of abolishing *all* exploitation and of eliminating *all* exploiters and oppressors."[108]

The Great October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new era in world history, the era of the building of Socialism, in an area covering one-sixth of the globe. It ushered in a new era in the history of Russia. The proletariat and peasantry of Russia, led by the Bolshevik Party, the Party of Lenin and Stalin, were confronted with the great historical task of organising Socialist production and of preserving the gains of the Great October Socialist Revolution from the impending attacks of the enemies of the proletarian dictatorship.





APPENDICES

TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF

THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR
IN THE U.S.S.R.

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Chapter One

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Chapter Nine

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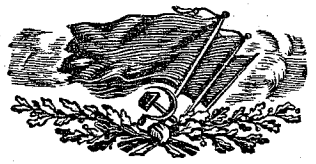

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Bakinsky Rabochy (The Baku Worker)
Birzhevie Vedomosti (Stock Exchange News) Petrograd
Borba (The Struggle) Tsaritsyn
Brivais Strélnieks (The Free Riflemen) Valk
Burevestnik (The Storm Petrel) Minsk
Derevenskaya Bednota (The Rural Poor) Petrograd
Donetsky Proletary (The Don Proletarian) Lugansk
Dyen (The Day) Petrograd
Dyelo Naroda (The People's Cause) Petrograd
Gazeta Vremenovo Rabochevo i Krestyanskovo Pravitelstva (The Gazette of the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government) Petrograd
Golos Desyatoy Armii (The Voice of the Tenth Army) Molodechno
Golos Tretey Armii (The Voice of the Third Army) Polotsk
Internatsional (The International) Nizhni-Novgorod
Izvestia Armeiskovo Komiteta Vosmoy Armii (The Gazette of the Army Committee of the Eighth Army) Moghilev
Izvestia Frontovovo Otdela Rumcherod (The Gazette of the Front Branch of the Executive Committee of the Rumanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet and the Odessa Military Area) Jassy
Izvestia Moskovskovo Sovieta Rabochikh Deputatov (The Gazette of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies) Moscow

Izvestia TSIK i Petrogradskovo Sovieta Rabochikh i Soldatskikh Deputatov (The Gazette of the CEC and Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies)Petrograd
Izvestia Vserossiiskovo Sovieta Krestyanskikh Deputatov (The Gazette of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies) Petrograd
Kavkazsky Rabochy (The Caucasian Worker) Tiflis
Krasnoyarsky Rabochy (The Krasnoyarsk Worker) Krasnoyarsk
Moghilevskaya Zhizn (Moghilev Life) Moghilev
Molot (The Hammer) Minsk
Nasha Gazeta (Our Gazette) Saratov
Nashe Znamya (Our Banner) Rostov-on-Don
Novaya Zhizn (New Life) Petrograd
Novoye Vremya (New Times) Petrograd
Obshcheye Dyelo (The Common Cause) Petrograd
Okopnaya Pravda (Trench Truth) Riga
Okopny Nabat (The Trench Tocsin) Riga
Petrogradskaya Gazeta (The Petrograd Gazette) Petrograd
Pravda (Truth) Petrograd
Prikubanskaya Pravda (Kuban Truth) Ekaterinodar
Privolzhskaya Pravda (Volga Truth)Samara
Proletary (The Proletarian) Kharkov
Proletary Povolzhya (The Volga Proletarian) Saratov
Rabochaya Gazeta (The Workers' Gazette) Petrograd
Rabocheye Dyelo (The Workers' Cause) Tashkent
Rabochy i Soldat (The Worker and Soldier) Petrograd
Rabochy Put (The Workers' Way) Petrograd
Ranneye Utro (Early Morning) Moscow
Rech (Speech) Petrograd
Russkaya Volya (Russian Freedom) Petrograd
Russkiye Vedomosti (Russian Ledger Moscow
Russkoye Slovo (The Russian Word) Moscow
Sibir (Siberia) Irkutsk
Sibirskaya Pravda (Siberian Truth) Krasnoyarsk
Soldat (The Soldier) Petrograd
Soldatskaya Pravda (The Soldier's Truth) Petrograd
Soldatskaya Pravda (The Soldier's Truth) Samara
Soldatskoye Slovo (The Soldier's Word) Petrograd
Sotsial-Demokrat (The Social-Democrat) Moscow
Sotsial-Demokrat (The Social-Democrat) Saratov
Trud (Labour) Moscow
Uralskaya Pravda (Urals Truth) Ekaterinburg
Uralsky Rabochy (The Urals Worker) Ekaterinburg
Utro Rossii (Russia's Morning) Moscow
Vestnik Chetvortoy Armii (Fourth Army Messenger) Romni
Vistnik Lubenskovo Gromadskovo Komitetu (Lubni Army Committee Messenger) Lubni
Volzhsky Dyen (The Volga Day) Samara
Volya Naroda (The Will of the People) Petrograd
Vperyod (Forward) Moscow
Vperyod (Forward) Ufa
Yedinstvo (Unity) Petrograd
Znamya Revolutsii (The Banner of the Revolution) Tomsk
Zvezda (The Star) Minsk
Zvezda (The Star) Petrograd

CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

1917

(All Dates are Old Style)

August 30-31

Liquidation of the Kornilov mutiny.

August 31

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopts Bolshevik resolution calling for the formation of a Soviet government.

The workers of the Franco-Russian, Novo-Admiralteisky, Trubochni and a number of other works in Petrograd, at factory meetings, adopt resolutions calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets and for the immediate arming of the workers.

September 1

Publication of resolutions adopted at workers' meetings in the factories and works in Moscow calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets and for the arming of the workers.

Conference of Bolsheviks in the Western Region and on the Western Front opened in Minsk.

The revolutionary staff in Tsaritsyn issues order to arm the workers.

September 3

Lenin writes "Draft Resolution on the Current Political Situation."

Pravda, which had been suppressed by the Provisional Government in the July days and since then had come out under different titles such as *Soldatskaya Pravda, Rabochy i Soldat, Proletary*, and *Rabochy*, after being suppressed again, comes out under the new title of *Rabochy Put*, the first issue of which contains Stalin's article "The Crisis and the Directory."

September 5

The Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Central Siberia opens in Krasnoyarsk. The Congress adopts Bolshevik resolution calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets.

The Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopts Bolshevik resolution calling upon the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry to fight to capture power. The Soviet adopts a decision to organise a Red Guard.

September 6

Rabochy Put publishes Stalin's articles, "Going Its Own Way" and "Rupture with the Cadets."

September 8

The workers' section of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies elects a Bolshevik presidium.

September 9

Rabochy Put publishes Stalin's article, "The Second Wave."

A general meeting of the workers of the Putilov Works adopts a Bolshevik resolution calling for the introduction of workers' control of industry, for the abolition of the private ownership of the land, and for the arming of the workers.

A Gubernia Conference of Bolsheviks held in Tomsk. The conference adopts a resolution calling for the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

September 10-12

A conference of Bolshevik military organisation on the South-Western Front held in Kiev. The conference adopts a resolution calling for the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

September 10-14

Lenin writes pamphlet, *The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It.*

September 12-14

Lenin writes letter of instruction to the Central Committee and the Petrograd and Moscow Committees of the Bolshevik Party headed "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power."

September 13-14

Lenin writes letter to Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party headed, "Marxism and Insurrection," in which he once again strongly emphasises the necessity of an armed insurrection.

September 14

Publication of Lenin's article "A Fundamental Question of the Revolution."

The formation of staffs of the Red Guard completed in all districts of Petrograd.

The Democratic Conference opens in Petrograd.

September 15

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party discusses Lenin's historic letters, "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power," and "Marxism and Insurrection." On Stalin's motion the Central Committee decides to have these letters copied and sent to all the important Party organisations. Kamenev's treacherous proposal to conceal these letters from the Party is rejected.

The First North-Western Regional Bolshevik Conference opens in Minsk.

September 16

The Omsk Soviet passes a resolution insisting upon the immediate convocation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. It also decides to form a Red Guard.

Rabochy Put publishes Lenin's article, "The Russian Revolution and Civil War. The Bogey of Civil War," and Stalin's article, "Two Lines."

September 17

Lenin removes from Helsingfors to Vyborg.

Rabochy Put publishes Stalin's article, "All Power to the Soviets."

September 19

Rabochy Put publishes Stalin's article, "The Revolutionary Front."

September 20

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party approves of the line pursued by *Rabochy Put* edited by Stalin as being in complete harmony with the line of the Central Committee, and rejects the statement of the opportunists who expressed displeasure at the determined Bolshevik line pursued by the paper.

September 21

Odessa Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies decides to organise a Red Guard.

September 22-24

Lenin writes article, "From a Publicist's Diary. The Mistakes of Our Party."

September 23

A meeting of the crew of the cruiser *Aurora* demands the transfer of power to the Soviets.

September 24-October 1

Lenin writes pamphlet, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*

September 25

Third Coalition Provisional Government formed.

September 27

The Perm Regional Conference of Bolsheviks passes decision immediately to organise a Red Guard.

September 29

Lenin writes article, "The Crisis Has Matured."

October 1

First Regional Conference of Bolsheviks opens in Petrograd.

October 1-2

Lenin writes manifesto "To the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers," calling for the overthrow of Kerensky's counter-revolutionary Provisional Government and for the seizure of power by the Soviets.

October 1-7

Lenin writes "Theses of Report at the Conference of Petrograd Organisations on October 8 and also of Resolution and Instructions to Delegates to Party Congress."

October 2-7

First Regional Congress of Caucasian Bolshevik Organisations held in Tiflis. The Congress elects a Caucasian Bolshevik Regional Committee.

October 3

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party decides to call Lenin to Petrograd.

The Second Congress of the Baltic Fleet passes a resolution calling for the immediate removal of Kerensky from the government as an adventurer "who by his shameless political trickery on behalf of the bourgeoisie is disgracing and ruining the great revolution."

A meeting of soldiers of the First Siberian Army Corps passes a Bolshevik resolution calling for the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

October 3-7

Lenin writes "Letter to the Central Committee, Moscow Committee, Petrograd Committee and to the Bolshevik Members of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets."

October 5

The Congress of Lettish Rifles of the 12th Army in Venden, supported by a meeting of 5,000 soldiers and workers, resolves vigorously to combat the counter-revolutionary Provisional Goverament under the slogan "All power to the Soviets!"

The Second Regional Conference of Bolsheviks in Byelorussia and on the Western Front held in Minsk.

October 6

The Congress of the Sixth Army Corps demands the immediate convocation of the Congress of Soviets and the establishment of a Soviet government.

A conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Petrograd Gubernia

held in Kronstadt passes a resolution refusing to support the Provisional Government and calling for a fight to establish the power of the Soviets.

October 7

Lenin writes, "Letter to the Petrograd City Conference. To be Read in Closed Session."

Lenin secretly arrives in Petrograd from Finland

October 8

Lenin writes article, "Advice from an Outsider," and "Letter to the Bolshevik Comrades Attending the Regional Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region."

Publication of the Appeal of the Second Congress of the Baltic Fleet to the Oppressed of All Countries relating the heroic struggle the revolutionary sailors of the Baltic Fleet were waging against the German Fleet.

Demonstration of the garrison and workers in Ufa under the slogan "All power to the Soviets!"

October 9

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, on the motion of the Bolsheviks, decides to set up a Military Revolutionary Committee for the defence of Petrograd.

A mass meeting attended by many thousands of workers of the Obukhov Works in Petrograd passes a resolution calling for the overthrow of the bourgeois government and the establishment of a Soviet government.

October 10

Rabochy Put publishes Stalin's article "The Counter-Revolution Is Mobilising—Prepare To Resist."

A meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party held, attended by Lenin. The Central Committee decides, on Lenin's motion, to commence the armed insurrection within the next few days. At this meeting the Central Committee elects a Political Bureau.

October 11

Meeting of Putilov workers unanimously adopts resolution calling for the transfer of all power to the Soviets and for the arming of the working class.

October 11-13

Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Northern Region held in Petrograd under Bolshevik leadership.

October 12

The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, in closed session, adopts regulations governing the activities of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

October 13

Rabochy Put publishes Stalin's article, "Soviet Power."

Rabochy Put publishes announcement of the formation by the Petrograd Soviet of a "Workers' Guard Department."

The Baku Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies accepts the resignation of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Executive Committee. A Provisional Executive Committee of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies is elected with the Bolshevik Shaumyan as chairman.

October 13-15

Second Regional Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Ekaterinburg Region held in Ekaterinburg. The Congress demands the immediate transfer of power to the Soviets and the convocation of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the appointed date.

October 14

The Minsk Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies elects a presidium consisting entirely of Bolsheviks.

October 15

Closed session of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party held, which laid down the measures to be taken to prepare for armed insurrection in conformity with the decision of the Central Committee of October 10.

October 16

Meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party jointly with the representatives of Party organisations held, at which the question of armed insurrection was discussed. On Lenin's motion, the meeting adopts decision to prepare for armed insurrection.

A Party Centre, headed by Stalin, is set up for the purpose of guiding the insurrection.

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopts decision to organise "Petrograd Soviet Day," on October 22.

A Regional Congress of Soviets of the Volga Region held in Saratov passes resolution calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets.

A Congress of Soviets of the Vladimir Gubernia elects a Bolshevik Executive Committee. Power is practically in the hands of the Soviets.

October 16-17

Lenin writes "Letter to Comrades," in which he subjects to withering criticism the treacherous utterances of Zinoviev and Kamenev against armed insurrection.

October 16-24

First All-Siberian Congress of Soviets held in Irkutsk. Congress passes resolution calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets and elects the first Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Siberia (Centrosibir)

October 17

All-Russian Conference of Factory Committees opens in Petrograd. Conference expresses itself in favour of the transfer of power to the Soviets and adopts all resolutions proposed by the Bolsheviks.

Regional Conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the South-Western Region held in Kiev passes resolution calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets.

October 18

Novaya Zhizn, No. 156, publishes statement by traitors Zinoviev and Kamenev that they "in the given circumstances" were "opposed to any attempt to assume the initiative in the armed insurrection."

Forewarned by the traitors, the Provisional Government decides to take measures against the anticipated Bolshevik action.

Lenin writes "Letter to the Members of the Bolshevik Party" denouncing the treachery of Zinoviev and Kamenev.

A meeting of the men of the Ismailovsky Guards Regiment expresses the readiness of the regiment to support the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the struggle to transfer all power to the Soviets.

A closed meeting of representatives of Regimental and Company Committees of the Petrograd garrison held in the Smolny and attended by representatives of nearly all the army units in Petrograd and its environs, expresses itself in favour of armed insurrection.

October 19

Lenin writes "Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)" demanding the expulsion of Zinoviev and Kamenev from the Party.

A meeting of the Chasseur Guards Reserve Regiment announces its refusal to obey the Provisional Government and its recognition of the sole power of the Petrograd Soviet, and demands the transfer of power to the Soviets.

Provisional Government troops wreck the Kaluga Soviet. The Kaluga garrison, sympathetic to the Bolsheviks, offers armed resistance.

October 20

Lenin writes an article entitled "A New Fraud Practised on the Peasants by the Socialist-Revolutionary Party."

A conference of factory and oilfield committees of the Balakhan District of the Baku Oilfields passes resolution calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets and for the immediate formation of a Red Guard.

On the night of October 20 the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee appoints Commissars to all units of the Petrograd garrison.

October 20-26

The First Far-Eastern Regional Congress of Trade Unions held in Vladivostok. The Congress expresses itself in favour of transferring all power to the Soviets and of supporting the Second Congress of Soviets in Petrograd.

October 21

A meeting of representatives of Regimental Committees of the Petrograd garrison passes resolution pledging full support for the Military Revolutionary Committee and calling for the convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets. The meeting proposes that "Petrograd Soviet Day" (October 22) serve as a review of the forces of the Petrograd soldiers and workers.

The Tashkent Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, meeting jointly with Company and Regimental Committees, discusses instructions to be given to its delegate to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets and adopts resolution, moved by the Bolsheviks, calling for the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, after hearing Dzerzhinsky's report, decides to strengthen the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet by securing the co-option of a group of comrades headed by Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.

October 22

"Petrograd Soviet Day" held in Petrograd. Huge mass meetings held in army units and factories under Bolshevik influence.

The cruiser *Aurora* receives orders from the Soviet not to leave Petrograd.

In Tsaritsyn a demonstration of workers is held under Bolshevik leadership and proclaims the slogan, "All power to the Soviets!"

The Congress of the Fifth Army held in Dvinsk elects an Army Executive Committee headed by Bolsheviks.

October 23

The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet issues an appeal "To the Inhabitants of Petrograd," announcing the appointment of Commissars to the military units and to specially important points in the capital and its environs.

October 24

Stalin and Sverdlov, members of the Party Centre set up to direct the armed insurrection, jointly with the Bureau of the Military Revolutionary Committee, draw up detailed plan of the insurrection.

By order of the Military Revolutionary Committee, all army units are prepared for action.

Provisional Government hastily takes measures to prevent the insurrection.

All cadet schools are prepared for action. Cadet patrols occupy important points in the city.

The Provisional Government orders the suppression of *Rabochy Put* and *Soldat*, and the immediate arrest of the Bolsheviks who took part in the events of July 3-4.

Petrograd Military Area Headquarters issues an order for the removal and prosecution of the Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee who had been appointed to the military units.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military Area orders the immediate disconnection of telephones of the Petrograd Soviet and the raising of the bridges in order to cut off the working-class districts from the centre.

At 10 a. m., by Stalin's orders, the Red Guards and revolutionary soldiers drive back the Provisional Government's armoured cars and post a reinforced guard at the printing and editorial offices of *Rabochy Put*.

At 11 a. m. *Rabochy Put* appears containing Stalin's leading article, "What Do We Need?"

The garrison of the Fortress of Peter and Paul goes over to the side of the insurgents. All day arms are issued to the army units and the Red Guards from the arsenal of the fortress.

The cruiser *Aurora* is ordered by the Military Revolutionary Committee to lower the bridges across the Neva.

In the evening Lenin writes his "Letter to the Members of the Central Committee" in which he demands the immediate commencement of the armed insurrection.

At night Lenin arrives at the Smolny.

October 25

At 10 a. m. the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee issues manifesto "To the Citizens of Russia," written by Lenin, announcing the overthrow of Kerensky's bourgeois government and the transfer of power to the Military Revolutionary Committee.

At 2:35 p. m. the Special Extraordinary Session of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies opens and the announcement is made of the overthrow of the Provisional Government and of the transfer of power to the Soviets. Lenin delivers report on the victory of the revolution and the tasks of the Soviet Government.

At 2 a. m. on October 26, units of the Red Guard, revolutionary sailors and soldiers capture the Winter Palace. The Provisional Government is arrested.

October 25-27

At 10:40 p. m. on October 25, the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies opens in Petrograd. The Congress adopts the manifesto "To the Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" written by Lenin. On the night of October 26-27 the Congress ratifies the decrees on peace, the land and the formation of the workers' and peasants' government—the Council of People's Commissars. Lenin is elected Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and Stalin, People's Commissar for National Affairs.

October 25

The Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party adopts decision to set up a fighting centre to direct the insurrection.

The joint meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopts a resolution moved by the Bolsheviks to organise a revolutionary committee for the purpose of rendering every assistance to Petrograd.

Moscow Red Guards occupy the Post and Telegraph Offices and Telephone Exchange.

Moscow Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Constitutional Democrats and representatives of other counter-revolutionary parties form counter-revolutionary centre known as the "Committee of Public Safety."

Soviet Government is established in Minsk, Vladimir, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Lugansk, Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Kronstadt and Yuryev.

A North-Western Military Revolutionary Committee is set up in Pskov, consisting of representatives of the Petrograd and Pskov Soviets, of the army, railwaymen and a number of other organisations.

October 26

The Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee issues order to the garrison to prepare all army units for action.

The Moscow Regional Committee and Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party pass decision to cease all further negotiations with the Whiteguards and issue instructions to the fighting centres to continue determined operations.

The Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee, on the instructions of the Party Centre, suppresses the bourgeois newspapers *Russkoye Slovo, Utro Rossii, Russkiye Vedomosti* and *Ranneye Utro.*

Soviet Government established in Kazan, Rostov-on-Don, Ufa, Ryazan, Ekaterinburg, Kamenets-Podolsk, Reval and Venden.

October 27

Pravda, the central organ of the Bolshevik Party, resumes publication in place of *Rabochy Put.*

The Soviet Government issues radio message to belligerent powers making peace proposals.

In Petrograd the Central Committee of the Navy which supported the counter-revolutionary "Committee for the Salvation of the Country and the Revolution," is dissolved. The Naval Revolutionary Committee issues a manifesto calling for support for the Soviet Government.

The Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee rejects the ultimatum of the Commander of the Troops of the Moscow Military Area and calls upon the workers and soldiers to fight.

The first armed collision between the revolutionary troops and the cadets takes place in the Red Square in Moscow.

Soviet Government established in Samara, Saratov, Vitebsk and Yaroslavl.

October 27-31

Soviet Government established in Tashkent.

October 28

Soviet Government established in Nizhni-Novgorod and Tver.

The cadets by a treacherous ruse capture the Kremlin and slaughter the revolutionary garrison.

October 29

The counter-revolutionary mutiny of the cadets in Petrograd is suppressed.

Soviet Government established in Krasnoyarsk.

October 30

Soviet Government established in Voronezh and Gomel.

Moscow Cadets violate the armistice and resume hostilities.

October 30-31

Soviet Government established in Smolensk.

October 31

Representatives of the First, Second, Third, Fifth, Eighth, Tenth and Twelfth Armies inform the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee that they fully support the Soviet Government.

General Krasnov's troops defeated on the Pulkovo Hills. Soviet troops occupy Tsarskoye Selo. White Cossacks retreat to Gatchina.

November 1

Soviet troops occupy Gatchina. General Krasnov and Kerensky's staff arrested. The Cossacks go over to the side of the revolutionary troops.

Soviet Government established in Orel.

November 2

The Council of People's Commissars publishes "The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia," signed by Lenin and Stalin.

At 9 p.m. the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee issues an order to the troops reporting the victory of the socialist revolution in Moscow.

Soviet Government established in Pskov.

The Baku Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies proclaims the establishment of Soviet Government in Baku.

November 3

At 3 a.m. Moscow Red Guards occupy Kremlin, thus consummating the victory of the revolution in Moscow.

November 4

Soviet Government established in Tsaritsyn.

Molotov is appointed Vice-Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

November 5

Lenin, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars writes manifesto "To the Population" announcing the final victory of the proletarian revolution in Petrograd and Moscow, and outlining the tasks of the struggle for the establishment of Soviet Government in the provinces.

November 7

Third Congress of the Tenth Army opens in Molodechno. The Congress elects a new Army Committee on which the Bolsheviks have a majority, and a Military Revolutionary Committee.

November 8

On Lenin's motion J. M. Sverdlov is elected Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

November 9

Lenin, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars, writes "A Radio Message to All" announcing the dismissal of Dukhonin, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, for refusing to obey the Soviet Government, and the appointment of a new Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

November 10

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee ratifies "Decree on the Abolition of Estates and Civil Rank."

November 10-25

Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies held in Petrograd.

November 14

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopts "Regulations Governing Workers' Control" [of industry].

Soviet Government established in Novgorod.

November 15

The Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies amalgamates with the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

November 15-21

The Third Regional Congress of Soviets held in Tashkent elects a Council of People's Commissars and a Central Executive Committee of Soviets for the Turkestan Region. The Congress passes a resolution proclaiming the transfer of power in the provinces to local Soviets and the organisation of Soviets of Mohammedan Workers' Deputies.

November 18

Soviet Government established in Vladivostok and Moghilev.

Extraordinary Congress of Armies of the South-Western Front opens in Berdichev. The Congress elects a Military Revolutionary Committee which in its Order No. 1 announces that supreme power in the country is vested in the Council of People's Commissars.

November 18-20

Third Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies of the Minsk and Vitebsk Gubernias held in Minsk under Bolshevik leadership. The Congress proclaims Byelorussia an inseparable part of revolutionary Russia.

November 19

Soviet Government established in Irkutsk.

November 20

Counter-revolutionary mutiny at Army Headquarters in Moghilev suppressed. Headquarters occupied by Soviet troops.

November 22

The Council of People's Commissars issues an appeal "To All Toiling Mohammedans in Russia and in the East" signed by Lenin and Stalin.

Soviet Government established in Kishinev (Bessarabia).

November 25

The Council of People's Commissars issues an appeal to the toiling Cossacks announcing the gains of the October Revolution and calling for a struggle against counter-revolution.

The Council of People's Commissars issues an appeal "To the Entire Population" calling for a struggle against the counter-revolutionary General Kaledin and Ataman Dutov.

Soviet Government established in Vyatka.

November 26

Soviet Government established in Kursk.

November 27

Soviet Government established in Samarkand.

November 28

On Lenin's motion the Council of People's Commissars adopts the "Decree to Arrest the Leaders of the Civil War Against the Revolution."

Soviet Government established in Kaluga.

November 29

Soviet Government established in Harbin.

November 30

Soviet Government established in Omsk.

December 1

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee ratifies decree on the organisation of a Supreme Council of National Economy.

Soviet Government established in Novorossiisk.

December 2

Soviet Government established in Kostroma.

White Cossack bands led by Ataman Kaledin capture Rostov-on-Don.

December 3-5

First Regional Congress of Bolsheviks in the Ukraine held in Kiev.

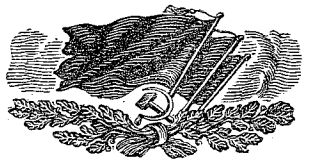
December 4

The Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R. issues a manifesto to the Ukrainian people recognising their right to self-determination and calling upon them to put a stop to the counter-revolutionary activities of the Ukrainian Central Rada.

December 5

Soviet Government established in Ashkhabad.

The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet is dissolved and its functions transferred to the Department of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee for Combating Counter-Revolution.



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