

# The Character of the Russian Revolution

THE first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution of November 7, 1917, was celebrated universally in Russia. Prior to and during the course of the celebrations a flood of inquiries poured in to the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks) for information and suggestions concerning the character of the event and the phases that should be emphasized. The Bolshevik Revolution was an historical event of enormous importance, and its character still a matter of discussion. The Regional Committee, accordingly, worked out a summary of the points to emphasize in speaking and writing about that great proletarian event. *The Revolutionary Age* re-prints this document as of interest to all workers and Socialists:

## 1—An Historical Survey of the Bolshevik Revolution

A preliminary outline of the character of the Revolution of March, 1917: 1) characterize the activity of the first Provisional Government (Lvov-Milyukov) as well as the Coalition Government (Kerensky) as bourgeois in composition and policy, emphasizing the attempts of these governments to degrade the Revolution to their imperialistic aims—the great demonstration of May 2-3 against the imperialistic policy of the Government and Milyukov, and the offensive of July 1; discuss the international character of the Revolution as indicated in the declaration of the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen's Delegates, March 27, 1917, calling upon the international proletariat to struggle for peace and against Imperialism.

2) The land question and the labor question (peasantry and proletariat) were questions identified with general economic problems; emphasize the utter refusal of the Provisional Government to act on the demands of the workers and peasants—the bourgeoisie sabotaging production to starve the Revolution, the Government arresting land-committees of the peasants which seized the lands, etc.

3) The different parties in the March Revolution—the counter-revolutionary character of the bourgeois parties (Cadets, etc.), the treason of the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionists who accepted the bourgeois government and a bourgeois policy; the revolutionary consistency of the Bolshevik policy, which on all issues pursued a revolutionary course.

4) The events of July, 1917, as marking a turning point in the development of the Russian Revolution—the offensive of July 1, to restore discipline in the army and placate the Allies; the mass demonstrations of July 16-17, the Government's use of troops and counter-revolutionary gangs against the workers, and the measures of repression used against the revolutionary masses; the reactionary sweep after July: the Moscow Conference, at which the bourgeois reaction and the counter-revolutionary generals dominated;

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the plot of Kornilov: the surrender of Riga to the Germans by Kornilov to frighten the Revolution, Kornilov's rebellion and his campaign against Petrograd; the Democratic Congress and the Preliminary Parliament—all these events were, on the one hand, an open organization and campaign of the counter-revolution against the workers and peasants, and, on the other, a growth toward the Revolution of November 7 under the slogan, "All power to the Soviets." During this critical period the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionary party were openly allied with the counter-revolution.

5) The November Revolution—the organization in Petrograd of the Military Revolutionary Committee; the uprising of the masses and the overthrow of the government of Kerensky; the sessions of the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workmen, Peasants and Soldiers, and the heroic struggle of the workmen and soldiers against the counter-revolution.

6) The Congress decreeing all power to the Soviets; the organization of a revolutionary Government, the Council of People's Commissaires, the decrees giving the land to the peasants, on peace, and on workmen's control of industry; the struggle for peace (Brest-Litovsk negotiations); the Constituent Assembly, an organ of bourgeois power and against the workmen's and peasants' revolution, and its dissolution by the Council of People's Commissaires; the acceptance of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, as a means of securing a respite for reorganization, and the struggle of revolutionary propaganda against German Imperialism.

7) The November Revolution in the Ukraine and the Don, its defeat there owing to the bourgeois alliance with international Imperialism.

8) The *intelligentsia's* sabotage and its opposition to the proletarian revolution, proof of its being a petty bourgeois counter-revolutionary group chained to the interests of capitalist society.

9) The subsequent events and tactics of the left Social-Revolutionists (uprising in July, 1918) characterize them as a petty bourgeois party, and their tactics as counter-revolutionary. Intervention and the Czecho-Slovaks.

10) The fundamental decrees issued by the Soviet Government, measures to restore the country, place all power in the masses, and develop communist Socialism.

## 2—The Achievements of the November Revolution

1) The November (Bolshevik) Revolution is a Socialist Revolution which placed the land and the factories, and all state power, in the hands of the toilers. The substance of the Soviet decrees as Socialist

measures to realize the emancipation of the working class and realize communism. The organizations and institutions established through the November Revolution as means of realizing mass emancipation, and the contrast in the position of the toilers before and after the Bolshevik Revolution.

2) The basic principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Toilers and the constitution of the Soviet Republic as expressing the movement for emancipation.

## 3—The Significance of the Bolshevik Revolution for the International Proletarian Movement

1) The November Revolution in Russia has been a stimulus to the workers in other nations, awakening them and putting before them the issue of the destruction of Capitalism and war as a immediate problem.

2) The Bolshevik Revolution prepared the way for the organization of the Third International, the International of Revolutionary Socialism, and this marks the beginning of the end of Capitalism and Imperialism.

3) The development of the proletarian revolution in the West and the oppositional, counter-revolutionary attitude of the imperialists of all countries toward Soviet Russia is convincing proof of the great influence of our Revolution on the workers of the world.

## 4—Our New Problems and the Conditions of their Realization

1) The main problem—organizing the defense of Soviet Russia against international Imperialism. It is necessary to form a mighty Red Army, and to organize aid for the workers of the West in their developing revolutionary action against the imperialistic war and against Imperialism.

2) The conditions necessary to realize this fundamental task are, among others: completing the organization of the whole economic life on Socialist principles, unity of the workmen and poorer peasants, military training for all toilers, continuing the relentless struggle against the bourgeoisie and for an iron dictatorship of the proletariat.

3) Finally, it is necessary to point out that our ultimate goal—Communism—can be realized only on conditions that the international proletariat revolution shall triumph, or have begun to triumph.

Accordingly, all for the world Revolution!

In all their speeches the comrade-agitators must point out the influence of the imperialistic war on the origin and progress of the Bolshevik Revolution.

In proposing this plan to the comrade-agitators, the Regional Committee at the same time considers it necessary that the local organizations shall define the celebrations and the character of the slogans.

# Soviet Russia Speaks to Britain

IN order to obtain the consent of the workers of Britain to the unwarranted act of aggression against us, your Government gives the following as their reasons for landing troops in our country:

1. That they have come to stamp out anarchy and restore order.

It is not true. Your Government and the French Government are themselves responsible for what disorder there is in Russia. Ever since the Revolution the agents of the French and British Governments have been conspiring with the counter-revolutionaries, giving them moral encouragement and financial assistance for the purpose of undermining the power of our Workmen's Government and to bring about its downfall. Your Government and the French Government are co-operating with the Czecho-Slovaks, who have blocked the access to our food supplies. The serious food shortage in our country is aggravating the disorganization. If there is disorder your Governments are responsible for it. Remember when a capitalist Government enters a country where there has been a revolution for the purpose of restoring "order," it always means that they intend to crush the Revolution. That is what the German Government did in Poland, in the Ukraine, in the Baltic Provinces, and in Finland. That is what your Government wants to do in Russia. They do not want to restore order. They want to restore the Czar.

2. That they have come to help the Russian people.

In the first place is it helping to bring war amongst a people already exhausted by war? We do not want war. We want peace. We want to be left alone to consolidate the gains of our Revolution, to reorganize

[A copy of a leaflet, printed in English, dropped over the British lines on the Vologda Front, by Bolshevik aeroplane. Like leaflets are also printed in French, Italian, Russian, and even Japanese.]

our social and economic life in such a manner to secure to the workers the products of their labor. Your Government is not helping to do this. It has sent you here to prevent our doing it. Your Government is co-operating with the Czecho-Slovaks, who are suppressing the workers wherever they go. In Samara the workers obtained an eight-hour day. It has been abolished. All working-class organizations, Trades Unions, and such like are suppressed. Wherever the Czecho-Slovaks go they suppress our Workmen's Councils, and establish in their stead an oligarchy of speculators, capitalists, and ex-Czar officers. Your Government will use you to do the same in North and Central Russia. If your Government wanted to help the Russian people it would recognize the Soviet Government of the Workers and Peasants and assist us to reorganize our railways and industries. We, in fact, invited your Government to enter into business relations with us that would have been to our mutual advantage. But your Government made no reply. No—your Government does not want to help the Russian people. It is helping to fasten the yoke of capitalism and Czarism on them again.

3. That the Allied invasion of Russia is welcomed by the Russian people.

It is not true. Who is welcoming your landing? A few starving peasants, whom your Government bribed with promises of food. These poor people are not glad to see you. They are only eager for the food

they hope you will bring. Who else is welcoming you? The ex-landlords of Russia, who are expecting you to restore to them the land, forests, and mines which are now the property of the whole Russian people. The Capitalists, who want you to overthrow our Workmen's Governments and compel us to become their wage slaves again. The chinovniks, the ex-officials of the Czarist Government, who want you to restore to them their soft jobs, to resume their old game of bribery and corruption for which Russia in the past was notorious. Yes, this crowd, with their hangers-on, are very pleased to see you here. They will flatter you and make a fuss of you; all the while they have a supreme contempt for you, for you are only working men whom they are using as their tools. The Russian commander at your head, General Gurko is a reactionary of the worst description. He was arrested by Kerensky for his monarchist propaganda. The agents of your Government helped him to escape. His only object in joining you is to use you to restore the Czar.

Comrades! Do not put your trust in this reactionary gang. Do not permit yourselves to be used as the tools of the enemies of liberty. Never let the shameful thing be said that the English workers permitted themselves to be used to crush the Russian Revolution.

Fellow workers! Be loyal to your class and refuse to do the dirty work of your masters.

(Signed) LENIN. President of the Council of Peoples' Commissaires.

(Signed) TCHITCHERIN. Peoples' Commissaire of Foreign Affairs.