

True, this opposition of the bourgeoisie was rather of a harmless nature, for it was also in opposition to any "non-parliamentary" steps, but it isolated the autocracy completely. It gave "aid and comfort" to the working class who remained as revolutionary during the war as it had been before the war. Social patriotism had very few adherents among the socialist workers of Russia. The orgies of reaction and the sudden but aggressive "patriotism" of the acknowledged leaders of capitalism were enough to overcome the effect of the manifesto of the "willful group" of social patriots, in which they called upon the workers of Russia to abstain from strikes and to stop their revolutionary activities. The "historic mission" of Russia, as it was seen by the Miljukoffs and Guchkoffs, the leaders of the Russian imperialism, who demanded the conquest of Constantinople and the Dardanelles and the annexation of Galicia, was an effective antidote to the call of the social patriots "to crush German imperialism." The untold sufferings of the masses during the war, the brutality of the servants of czarism in their war upon the working class, poured oil upon the smouldering resentment of the proletariat. The revolutionary movement grew, and it was manifest to everyone that *the hour was near*.

At the beginning of March, 1917, the food situation in Petrograd became serious. The "lines" at the stores and at the bakeries were getting longer every day and the rations shorter. Riots of "liners," mostly wives of workers, were spreading, unorganized though they were; street demonstrations were held in different parts of the city; proclamations of the Petrograd committee of the Social-Democratic Party were widely circulated. The police at once realized the nature of these riots and demonstrations, for all these outbreaks soon developed into one continuous demonstration with banners, speakers and organizers. A call for a general strike was the reply of the social democracy to the brutal treatment of the demonstrators by the police. In two days the entire working population of Petrograd was on strike, industrial and commercial life was at a standstill, no papers came out (with the exception of a "bulletin" distributed free of charge), not a car was running. "Down

with war," "Down with imperialism," "Down with capitalism," "Down with autocracy," "Bread and freedom," "Freedom and peace" were the inscriptions on the banners, the theme of the speeches, the watchword of the proclamations. In vain did the military governor threaten with court martial those who would not obey his command to return to work, in vain did he promise clemency to the "loyal subjects" who would betray their comrades. The strike went on, demonstrations continued day and night. At the call of the Social-Democratic Committee the workers of all the factories, mills, shops, workers' organizations elected delegates to form the now famous and powerful Council of Workers' Deputies, which took charge of the entire situation.

At the same time the Duma was struggling with itself. The members earnestly and seriously debated a bill calling for the transfer of the control of food supplies to local governments (zemstvoes and cities) which the government would not allow. The debate was still in progress when the czar ordered the closing of the session. The Duma was in a state of tumult and affright, the progressive block could find no way out of the situation until from the left someone cried out, "We must refuse to go." They elected an executive committee which found no better occupation than to get into telegraphic communication with the czar and ask him for reforms. For even then the representatives of the bourgeoisie were afraid of the revolution. And their fear was not unjustified. For impossible as a socialist revolution at the present moment is, even to the most extreme, it was clear from the start that the Russian proletariat has been too well trained in the theory and practice of socialist thought to be satisfied with the old type of bourgeois revolution.

But "the street was boiling," battles were being fought between the workers and the police. The garrison of Petrograd, which had been "neutral" in that time of struggle, turned their guns against the forces of the old regime, began to send representatives to the council which had now righteously assumed the name of Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. This was on the eleventh of March, and on the fourteenth the revolution triumphed, the old regime was overthrown, the council was in control of the situation.