

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

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

The Bolsheviks constituted an actual revolutionary movement, not a group of intellectuals and mongers of dogmas. They worked out a program, a practical program of action meeting the revolutionary requirements of the situation in Russia. Revolutions do not rally round dogmas, but programs. The sense of reality of the revolutionist is expressed in this, that he translates his revolutionary aspirations into a revolutionary program in accord with the historic conditions, and which can rally and unite the masses for action and the conquest of power. Revolutions make their own laws, their own programs. Revolutions are the great edu-

cator and developer of class consciousness and action. It is the great merit of the Bolsheviks that they were revolutionists *in action*, using the prevailing situation to educate the masses and develop their consciousness and revolutionary struggles.

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

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

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

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