

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

²A short reflection on these demands [of the peasants, for the expropriation of the lands without compensation, and the abolition of private ownership and of hired labor] will show the absolute impossibility of securing the aid of the capitalists in their realization—in fact, the impossibility of avoiding a break with the capitalists, a determined and merciless struggle with the capitalist class, in short, a complete overthrow of their rule. In fact, the confiscation of all private ownership in land means the confiscation of hundreds of millions of bank capital, with which these lands, for the most part, are mortgaged. Is such a measure conceivable unless the revolutionary plan, by the aid of revolutionary methods, shall break down the opposition of the capitalists? Besides, we are here touching the most centralized form of capital, which is bank capital, and which is bound by a million threads with all

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

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

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

the important centers of the capitalist system of this great nation, which can be defeated only by the equally well-organized power of the proletariat of the cities. . . . Only the revolutionary proletariat can actually carry out the plan of the impoverished peasants—Nikolai Lenine, “Workers and Peasants,” in *The New International*, February, 1918.