

action to defend the Revolution. A demonstration was organized for July 17 in Petrograd. All parties, including the Bolsheviks, tried to prevent the demonstration, the Bolsheviks because they knew counter-revolutionary gangs had been organized to provoke a clash, which under the conditions they considered premature. But the determination of the masses was inflexible, and in spite of all opposition an armed demonstration was decided upon. The moderates abandoned the revolutionary masses to their fate, but the Bolsheviks, realizing the futility of prevention, resolved to abide by the decision to demonstrate. "It would have been possible," said Trotsky, "to deprive the masses of any political guidance, to decapitate them politically, as it were, and to leave them, by refusing to direct them, to their fate. But we, being the Workers' Party, neither could nor would follow Pilate's tactics: we decided to join in with the masses and to stick to them, in order to introduce into their elemental turmoil the greatest measure of organization attainable under the circumstances, and thus to reduce to a minimum the number of probable victims." The peaceful demonstration was converted into an uprising by the armed interference and provocation of counter-revolutionary forces, and after two days of savage fighting the uprising was crushed; and a counter-revolutionary reign of terror ensued. The Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists actively co-operated with the government in disarming and imprisoning the Bolsheviks, establishing "revolutionary order," and crushing the left wing of the Revolution. This uprising, however, in spite of its defeat, went far toward preserving the Revolution: its temporary defeat assured ultimate victory, and it paved the way for the overthrow of the moderates in the Council, which occurred completely a few months later.\*

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\* We are at present passing through days of trial. The steadfastness of the masses, their self-control, the fidelity of their "friends," all these things are being put to the acid-test. We also are being subjected to this test, and we shall emerge from it more strengthened, more united, than from any previous trial. Life is with us and fighting for us. . . . We need revolutionary power. The Tseretelli-Kerensky policy is directly intended to disarm and weaken the left wing of the Revolution. If, with the aid of these methods, they succeed in establishing "order," they will be the first—after us, of course—to fall as victims of this "order." But

The uprising crushed, the Bolsheviks disarmed and imprisoned, the counter-revolutionary forces became active. The Kerensky government decided to hold a Conference in Moscow, out of which could be snatched a mandate for its acts. This conference was completely counter-revolutionary. The Bolsheviks, naturally, were excluded from participation.<sup>1</sup> The delegates were hand-picked, consisting of 400 delegates representing the three Dumas, conservative and reactionary; delegates from industry, science and Zemstvos, and a small minority of Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary representatives of the Councils. Milyukov was active at this Conference, as was General Korniloff, who demanded complete discipline in the army and the re-introduction of the death penalty. The army was again to become an instrument against the Revolution. The Cadets challenged the Councils either to assume full control of the government or else cease their "advisory" function. From the bourgeois as well as from the proletarian standpoint, the coalition government had become an impossibility. But the Mensheviks cravenly avoided the challenge. Tschiedse answered hesitantly: neither a government of the Councils *nor* a dictatorship. Again the moderates avoided action, and again they betrayed the Revolution. The seizure of power was the only way out.

But the masses insisted upon action. The Moscow Conference was a failure from the government's point of view. In his final address to the Conference, Kerensky said: "The Russian Government does not regret having called this Conference, for although it has not secured practical results, it has given an opportunity to all Russian citizens to say openly what they have on

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they will not succeed. The contradiction is too profound, the problems are too enormous, to be disposed of by mere police measures. After the days of trial will come the days of progress and victory.—Leon Trotsky, "The July Uprising," in the Petrograd *Vperiod* of July 25, 1917.

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<sup>1</sup> In an article in *Pravda*, Zinovieff points out that the Cadets were at first suspicious of the Moscow Conference, considering it a part of Kerensky's Bonapartist policy, the policy of a dictatorship merging both forces in himself. And this was precisely the purpose of the Conference, although the Cadets finally participated.