

unduly important in the discussions of the professional revolutionary circles. And yet the Russian movement stood on the eve of a revolution, both wings of the party were on the brink of the great mass struggle of the proletariat. When, in the winter of 1904, mighty strikes agitated the whole country, both organizations grew tremendously, and the question of tactics superseded that of organization in importance. Both wings were face to face with the realization that the revolution could be won only by an armed uprising, that the overthrown feudal regime could be replaced only by a provisional revolutionary government whose duty it would be to call a constitutional assembly to proclaim the democratic republic. But here, too, opinions differed. The Bolcheviki maintained that the uprising, recognized by all as inevitable, must be propagated and organized. The Mensheviks denied the necessity of preparation, and favored working from within in the hope of creating the guarantees for a successful revolution by electing representatives of the Social Democracy into the provisional government. The Bolsheviks were opposed to participation because they believed that the proletariat should refuse to accept the responsibility for a bourgeois government, even if it bore the stamp of a revolutionary government.

It was in 1905, the year of the revolution. Political strikes and uprisings were occurring in close succession. The working class strove, heroically, to draw the rest of the population, by its mass demonstrations, into the struggle. But the movement among the farmers and in the army was sporadic, and collapsed, without organizing or spreading out. The liberal bourgeoisie stood apart, waiting, ready at any time to effect a cheap compromise with the threatened Czar regime. In October a general strike broke out all over the country. Absolutism was forced to respond to the powerful pressure, and presented the nation with a Prussian constitution and with those liberties that the disorganized government dared not refuse. The soviets of the labor delegates were in complete control of the cities, great popular meetings were held day and night, the banished and the imprisoned were freed,

and for the first time Socialist newspapers were sold on the streets. For two months the Socialist proletariat left reaction to its fate, but the heroic struggle was in vain. No other class of the population came to its support. In the meantime reaction had collected its forces, and in December it struck its decisive blow. The uprising in Moscow was suppressed, and with it the others as well. A state of siege and military justice supplanted the liberties the proletariat had so dearly won. An impotent parliament and a miserable suffrage were the only tangible effects that remained.

The influence of the party increased with every new phase of the Revolution. Driven by the widely organized movement, by the sharp political struggles and by the dangerous isolation of the proletariat, a growing desire for unity took possession of the party. But the resulting unification of the existing organizations could not wipe out the differences between them. On the contrary. The tactical differences had been increased and intensified by the impetus of the movement.

The Bolsheviks believed that the revolutionary movement of the working class is reaching a new and a higher level. They contended that the overthrow in December was only a temporary setback, and conceived it to be the duty of the Socialist movement to oppose the ideals of bourgeois constitutional democracy that have been inoculated into the Russian people, to extend the scope of the revolutionary struggle. And in accordance with this conception the Bolsheviks boycotted the National Duma and concentrated upon the organization of Socialist fighting and militant organizations.

The Mensheviks, at that time, held no definitely established point of view. Plechanov, with a part of the Caucasus, favored participation in the Duma elections and a concentration of the movement upon the election of proletarian representatives. Another group were in accord with the Bolsheviks, while a third group demanded political participation, but opposed participation in the Duma. There were thus three distinct groups, representing varying tactics, within the Mensheviks: (1) favoring practical political work according