

but a bourgeois and not a Socialist revolution, rests on a proletariat possessed of a far clearer class consciousness, and which has far more clearly realized its implacable antagonism to the bourgeois world, than any proletariat participating in any of Europe's earlier victorious revolutions.

To maintain their position in this paradoxical situation implies in itself a gigantic task on the part of the Russian Socialists. And now it is a question of accomplishing that task in the midst of the most terrible world war history has ever known.

The army that went to war with the 1905 traditions of defeat and dissolution has fallen asunder as a consequence of the long fruitless fighting, full of the most painful losses and humiliations. Only that made possible the revolution which was carried through by the army as much as by the civil population.

All rose in March against the regime of the Czar; some because it did not carry on the war vigorously and successfully; others because it carried on war at all. The latter constituted the great majority; to this category belonged the proletarians and the peasants as well as the great mass of the middle class. All longed for peace, peace the revolution would bring.

Among the pacifists, however, one could distinguish two currents, one crying for peace at any price in order to put a stop to the slaughter and hunger; another composed of men, who, while they in nowise underestimated the great significance of that endeavor and had an eye to the realization of political goals at the conclusion of peace; yet now rejected the peace of brutal Might, whether the consequences of such peace would fall on foreign peoples or on the people at home. They willed a peace that corresponds not only to the commandment of physical self-preservation, but also to the conditions requisite for the re-establishment and strengthening of international democracy and the political foundation for the proletarian struggle.

The Socialists who thought thus could not well agitate for a simple laying down of arms with no regard to whatever results might follow therefrom. But neither could they simply leave to the bourgeoisie the army.

In peace time it would have been conceivable that the Socialists would have contented themselves with the thought that Russia under existing conditions could not become a Socialist State, and that it would be enough for the nonce to make of her the world's freest bourgeois republic, with one of the farthest reaching social polity's

withal. That alone would have been an enormous gain not only for the Russian people, but for all peoples. But in the midst of war to abdicate to the bourgeoisie the power the proletariat had won in and through the war, that would have meant to turn over the army to the bourgeoisie and intrust it with the formulating of the war aims and the concluding of peace; it would have meant a conjuring forth of the danger of a useless prolongation of the war for anti-democratic annexationist purposes.

The very war which made so enormously difficult the position of all governments, which to an awe-inspiring extent aggravated the evils heaped up by the regime of Czarism, which heightened to the extreme the army's and the civil population's demands on the government and at the same time caused the means of satisfying those demands rapidly to shrink together—that very war compelled the Russian Socialists to exert themselves to the limit of their strength, in order to keep the bourgeoisie from establishing itself in supreme command.

To attain this, however, two roads were open, and it was over the question of which road to travel that the split of the Russian Socialist forces came about. The one wing, the Mensheviks, sought to circumscribe the all-powerfulness of the bourgeoisie through a coalition cabinet; the other the Bolsheviks, which aimed at the same goal through a dictatorship of the proletariat, which, true enough, had to derive support also from the revolutionary element of the peasantry. The Bolsheviks held forth the prospect of immediate peace if the proletariat alone were to take the government into its hands and with force keep the bourgeois elements down, incurring the risk, of course, of letting loose a civil war thereby.

The Bolshevik way of reasoning was the one most simple, the one that closely corresponded to the proletariat's position as a class. But also the one that threatened to aggravate to the extreme the antagonisms between the high aims of the proletariat and the low stage of development of the country.

The dictatorship of the proletariat means the inhibition of capitalist production. The capitalist mode of production becomes an impossibility under a proletarian regime. Is Russia already equipped to put in its place a Socialist mode of production? Besides, the Russian working class is neither sufficiently strong nor sufficiently developed to be able to take over the entire apparatus of government and supervise its needs. Therefore the danger lay close at hand that the proletarian regime would strive to dissolve the power of the state instead of conquering and reshaping it. And in that country, where a few advanced centers are in danger of being pulled down