When the incredible did occur, there was a sharp difference of opinion among the socialist and labor movements, everywhere. On the one side were the conservative, doctrinaire elements who had accustomed themselves to the thought that the first social revolution must and would come in one or the other of the most highly developed capitalistic nations. They had always expected that Russia, once it had rid itself of the domination of the Romanoff despots, would develop its industrial resources under democratic conditions somewhat similar to those that obtained in the United States, and they vehemently resented this unexpected development for which their program had made no provision. On the other side were those who had realized that the war and the situations it had brought about had decidedly shaken up our old conceptions of social development. Above all they realized that Russia, bled to the limits of its endurance was unable to endure the torture of further warfare. It had become more and more plain that no government could long remain in power which did not take definite steps toward the securing of a speedy peace with the Central Powers. While the formal political control lay in the hands of the duly recognized cabinets, these bodies were able to hold themselves in power only so long as they were tolerated there by the revolutionary elements in the Workmen's and Soldiers' and Peasants' Councils. But none, neither the upholders nor the opponents of the action that definitely established the political domination of the socialist movement in Russia expected that its ascendency would be permanent. Friend and foe alike prophecied that the working-class government of Russia would not, could not last; that Russia was not ripe for a proletarian revolution; that, even if the incredible should happen, and the new government under Lenin and Trotzky should succeed in bringing about a peace between Germany and Russia, that the return of normal conditions in the country would, of course, put to an end Bolshevist supremacy. And yet it persisted, through weeks, through months, and has now reached its second year, more firmly established, more invincible than at any time during the entire period of its existence.

Today we realize, what only a few could see at the time, that the very element which made a proletarian revolution such a monstrous thing in the eyes of its socialist opponents, that is, the non-existence of a strongly developed capitalist class was in fact one of the most valuable assets of the Bolshevist revolution. In the words of one of the most embittered opponents of Soviet Russia, "The power lay on the streets, and no one dared to pick it up." Russia was on the verge of bankruptcy.

The Tsarist government had assumed obligations particularly to the Allied nations that it seemed impossible to meet. Under such conditions, an open break with the Allies was unthinkable, and, at the same time conditions in the country and at the front made further warfare impossible. The fact that there was no strong capitalist class in Russia which could have steered it safely through this critical situation doomed every government that would attempt to meet these obligations to failure at the outset. Moreover, after once the Soviet government had been established, the counter-revolutionary elements had so little unity of purpose, were so hopelessly divided on personal issues that it was possible, even with the depleted resources that remained, to successfully meet and overthrow them all.

As a matter of fact the greatest danger that threatens the Russian revolutionary government is not the opposition of its own exploiting class but that of the great capitalist nations of western Europe and America. At first it seemed as if the liberal elements in these nations would be sufficiently strong to force, if not actual recognition, at least a policy of tolerance and aloofness on the part of their respective governments. Indeed President Wilson, who in those days still fancied himself in the role of liberator to a despot ridden world, at first showed a marked sympathy for the aims and aspirations of the Russian people. Lloyd George, so long as he hoped to rule in England with the sole support of the Liberal Party was inclined to pursue similar tactics. France alone was openly hostile from the start—its capitalists having engaged more heavily in Russian bonds. When Lloyd George found, however, that his only hope for the re-election of a workable parliamentary majority lay in the support of the Unionists, the most reactionary political group in England, he abandoned his position and allowed himself to be driven, by Churchill and others into alliance with counter-revolutionary Russian reactionaries, who aimed to re-establish Russian autocracy, in some form or other in place of the hated Bolshevist regime of the working-class. Wilson, too, underwent a similar metamorphosis. His avowed sympathy and understanding went overboard as soon as he realized liberalism, as a world issue is dead, that the man who hoped to dominate the peace negotiations, and through them the future of the world, must forget all liberal purposes and progressive aims, must be ready to do the bidding of the imperialists of all nations whom the war has made masters of the earth.

Nothing could illustrate this more clearly than the Bullitt affair that recently filled the newspapers. Bullitt,