

# RED RUSSIA

## THE TRIUMPH OF BOLSHEVIKI. (By John Reed.)

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The real revolution has begun. All the swift events of the last eight crowded months—the sudden debacle of Czarism in February, the brief, inglorious attempt of Miliukov to establish a safe and sane bourgeois republic, the rise of Kerensky and the precarious structure of hasty compromise which constituted the Provisional Government—these were merely the prologue to the great drama of naked class struggle which has now opened. For the first time in history the working class has seized the power of the state, for its own purposes—and means to keep it.

To-day the Bolsheviks are supreme in Russia. The ominous onward march of Kaledine, self-proclaimed military dictator and restorer of middle-class order, has stopped—his own Cossacks are turning against him. Yesterday Kerensky, after his defeat and the surrender of his staff at Galchina, fled in disguise. The news has just come that Moscow, after a bloody battle that wrecked the Kremlin and smashed thousands of lives, is undisputedly in the possession of the military Revolutionary Committee. As far as anyone can see, there is no force in Russia to challenge the Bolshevik power. And yet as I write this, in the flush of their success, the newborn revolution of the proletariat is ringed round with a vast fear and hatred.

Last night two thousand Red Guards—the proletarian militia organized and armed by Trotzky just before the final clash—swung down the Zagarodny in triumph. Ahead a military band was playing—and never did it sound so appropriate—the Marseillaise. Blood-red flags drooped over the dark ranks of the marching workers. They were going to meet and welcome home to "Red Petrograd" the saviors of the new proletarian revolution—the troops who had just fought so desperately and so successfully against Kerensky and his Cossacks. In the bitter dusk they tramped, singing, men and women, their fall bayonets swinging, through streets faintly lighted and slippery with mud. And as they marched they passed always between crowds that were hostile, contemptuous, fearful.

The proletarian revolution has no friends except the proletariat. The bourgeoisie—business men, shopkeepers, students, landowners, officers, political office holders and their fringe of clerks and servants and hangers-on, are solidly in opposition to the new order. The moderate Socialist parties—though they may find themselves forced by circumstances

to combine with the Bolsheviks—hate them bitterly. But these elements are so far powerless. Their military strength is represented only by part of the Cossacks, and the Junkers—cadets of the Officers' Schools. While on the side of the Bolsheviks are ranged—the whole rank and file of the workers and the poorer peasants; and the soldiers and sailors are with and of them. On one side the workers, on the other side, everybody else. For the moment the cleavage has all the clear and beautiful distinctness of familiar theory.

### Peace, Bread, Land.

And at this date—I am writing Nov. 4—the workers are in complete control. No one can know what the next few days may bring forth. If they can persuade the other Socialist parties to join with them in accomplishing their gigantic immediate programme of Bread, Peace and Land for the Peasants, this proletarian government will probably last until the Constituent Assembly—and after that in history, a pillar of fire for mankind forever.

This is the moment toward which all revolutions tend. The course of every revolution is toward the left, swifter and swifter. The government, which would retain power in revolutionary times, must do the will of the revolutionary masses—or smash it with cannon. The Provisional Government did neither.

Since last February, when the roaring torrents of workmen and soldiers bearing upon the Tauride Palace compelled the frightened Duma to assume the supreme power in Russia, it is the masses of the people—workmen, soldiers and peasants—who have forced every change in the course of the Revolution. It was they who hurled down the Miliukov Ministry. It was their Soviets—their Council of Workingmen's and Soldiers' Delegates—which proclaimed to the world the Russian peace terms—"no annexations, no indemnities, the rights of peoples to dispose of themselves." And again in July, it was the spontaneous rising up of the unorganized masses, again storming the Tauride Palace, which forced the Soviets to assume power in the name of the proletariat.

The Bolshevik party was the ultimate political expression of this popular will. It was useless to hunt down the Bolsheviks as rioters and imprison them—as was done after the riots which grew out of the July demonstrations. Useless, too, to fling at them the accusation manufactured by provocateurs and reactionaries and repeated until it was believed by all the world, that they were the paid agents of Germany. Unable to substantiate the accusations against the arrested Bolsheviks, the Provisional Government was obliged to release them, one by one, without trial, until of the original hundred less than twenty remained in prison.

### All Power To Soviets

Meanwhile, day by day, the Bolshevik power was growing. It was bound to grow. For the whole Bolshevik programme was simply a formulation of the desires of the masses of Russia. It called for a general, democratic, immediate peace (that is, the army, sick of war); the land

to be immediately at the disposal of the Peasant Land Committees (that got the peasants); and control of industry by the workers (that got labor). The demand that the government should be simply the Soviets of the Workingmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, without participation by the propertied classes, until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the end of November, when the political form of the new Russia should be definitely decided—this completed their programme. And it is worthy of remark that when the Bolsheviks first demanded that all power should be given to the Soviets, the majority of the Soviets were still bitterly anti-Bolshevik. It is a mark both of their utter consistency and of their complete confidence in the approaching triumph of their cause. Their cry, "All power to the Soviets!" was the voice of the Russian masses; and in the face of the increasing impotence and indecision of the ever-changing Provisional Government, it grew louder day by day.

So it was that, while the "centre" Socialist parties, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionary moderates involved themselves in compromises with the bourgeoisie, the Bolsheviks were rapidly capturing the Russian masses. In July they had been hunted and despised; by September the metropolitan workingmen, the sailors of the Baltic fleet, and the body of the army, had been won almost entirely to their cause.

It was the fate of the hesitating successive ministries of the Provisional Government to be blind to this inexorable trend of affairs. To the Soviets' call for peace without annexations or indemnities, the Government replied by ordering the June offensive into Austrian Galicia. In answer to the whole country's longing for peace, the Government permitted the allies to postpone and again postpone the promised Conference on the Aims of the War, and finally to announce that war aims would not be discussed at all. In regard to the land question, the Government's course was equally indecisive. In the summer Peasant Land Committees, had been appointed for the purpose of temporary disposal of the great estates; but when they began to act, they were arrested and imprisoned. To the agrarian disorders that resulted from the holding back of the long-promised land, the Government replied by sending Cossacks to put down the "anarchy." The army was demoralized by suspicion of its officers; the Government, instead of attempting the democratization of the reactionary staffs, tried to suppress the Soldiers' Committees, and restored the death penalty in behalf of discipline. Industry was in a terrible state of disorganization, a struggle to the death between manufacturers and workmen; but instead of establishing some sort of state control over the factories, and making use of the immensely valuable democratic workmen's organizations, Minister of Labor Skobelev tried to abolish the Shop Committees.

### Kerensky's Collapse

But the final collapse of the Provisional Government may be laid most of all to three colossal blunders; the Galician offensive of June, the Kornilov affair, and coalition with the bourgeoisie.

After the Soviets' world-wide call for peace without annexations and indemnities, the Russian and German armies had fraternized for several months, until, according to the tes-

timony of Rosa Luxembourg\* the German troops were thoroughly unwilling to fight. In June, by tricks, exhortations and lies, the Russians were cajoled into advancing—the whole movement crumbling and crashing down in disaster at Kalusz and Tarnopol; and as a result, the morale of the Russian armies and their faith in their officers irreparably ruined.

Then, after the fall of Riga, came the Kornilov attempt to march on Petrograd and establish a military dictatorship. All the details of the story have not yet come out but it is plain that Kerensky and other members of the Government were in some way involved in the scheme. Whatever the secret facts might be, enough was disclosed to make the masses utterly lose faith in Kerensky as a friend of the revolution. After that event, the Provisional Government was doomed.

Then the Coalition, the last chapter of preparation for the final struggle. At the time of the Kornilov attempt, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets proposed that an All-Russian Congress be called at Petrograd, to broaden the base of the Provisional Government and create some sort of temporary organ or pre-Parliament to which the Ministry could be held responsible until the Constituent Assembly. The basis of the new body was, of course, to be the Soviets; but as the Bolshevik power continued to grow, the Central Committee became anxious, and began to invite all sorts of non-political—and conservative—organizations, such as the Co-operatives, to participate. With the same object, to keep the pre-Parliament from being Bolshevik, it reduced the Soviet membership and increased the representation of the bourgeoisie in the last few days, until, even though the propertied classes had been expressly excluded, it was certain that the majority of the gathering would be "safe."

It was a pre-Parliament carefully calculated to vote for the sharing of governmental power with the liberal Bourgeois party. So far as plans could effect it, even the pretence of a Socialist regime was at an end.

But these plans were not easy to carry out. Russia had been shocked and frightened by the Kornilov affair, with its ominous threat against the very existence of the Republic. Investigation had proved how widespread was the responsibility for that affair and there was profound distrust of the bourgeois politicians. In spite of Kerensky's impassioned speech of self-defence, the Assembly proved to be overwhelmingly against his project of Coalition. But on the Government's plea that the national danger demanded it, Coalition was pushed through by a narrow majority. Compromise had won. The Bolsheviks left the Assembly. The new "representative-consultative" body,

\*"So, you have broken the peace! The Russian Revolution was every thing to us, too. Everything in Germany was tottering, falling. For months the soldiers of the two armies fraternized, and our officers were powerless to stop it. Then suddenly the Russians fired upon their German comrades! After that it was easy to convince the Germans that the Russian peace was false. Alas, my poor friends! Germany will destroy you now, and for us is black despair come again."  
Letter of Rosa Luxembourg, to a Russian Socialist, July, 1917.

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