

The Russian Revolution

By: Anton Pannekoek

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Translated by Bram Jumelet

V.

On the sixth, seventh and eighth of November the workers, peasants and soldiers of Russia took political power into their hands.

In its outer appearance the revolution is already distinguishing itself from previous ones. It was not what the bourgeois press so eagerly calls a “coup of the maximalists”, the product of a good conspiracy. And it wasn't a revolution like most. Like the Russian March revolution, it was an irresistible rupture led by the people, which, growing under unbearable pressure, overthrew the existing government. It was the flow over of authority into the hands of a new power, prepared and executed in the eye of the public. Its solid results were predicted by its frontmen, a testimony of which is Lenin's article on the third of November in *de Bote*. It was the inevitable result of the overall developments in 1917.

The March revolution was a revolt against the war. Behind the war was the imperialist bourgeoisie; but it did not rule itself and did not have sufficient strength to organise the entire state according to its aims. When rotten Tsarism collapsed, the dominance of the bourgeoisie could not collapse with it, for the bourgeoisie was the opposition. The rebellious masses only saw Tsarism and instinctively rose up for peace; they could not wage a conscious struggle for peace against the bourgeoisie at that time. The seven months of revolution in Russia, from March to November, became a period of learning; in this time the Russian masses ripened through their harsh experiences and disappointments in the struggle towards freedom and power. First, and most swiftly, they disposed the openly imperialist members from the government; it would take much longer for the petit-bourgeois democrats and the social-patriots to unmask themselves as paving the road for, and eventually as straight out accomplices of, the bourgeoisie and counter-revolution. The entire weight of significant influence that the Mensheviks and social-revolutionaries had on the peasant and soldier delegates had to be overcome before the masses could free themselves. Not because they were convinced by theory and oration, but by the hard logic of facts, because it was absolutely impossible to tolerate the government any further: the soviets had to take power. But to the very end the Mensheviks and all half-hearted elements (for example, the group around *Nowaja Sjizn*, Gorki's paper) would resist. They were hesitant about the great act of proletarian dictatorship, they attempted to sow fear, distrust and hesitation in the hearts of the delegates. “No division in the revolutionary camp”, they yelled, “now that the counter-revolution wants to attack”; “no civil war, now that the Germans are approaching”; “no uprising a few weeks before the constituent assembly meets”. But the soviets understood that they had to choose: either counter-revolution, Kornilov or someone similar to seize power, while the forces of counter-revolution, the hungry unwilling soldiers in impotent anger deserted and

plundered the land until it would descend into chaos. Or these forces would organise themselves towards a valiant deed, the conquest of power for the people. They chose the latter.

How did that go? Troubled by the German offensive, and by the rumour that Kerenski's government would flee to Moscow and leave Petrograd to starvation and the Germans, the Petrograd soviet at the beginning of November formed a "military committee" that would organise its defences. On the fourth of November, this committee of delegates of the garrison organised a meeting, in which they recognised the committee as their guiding organ. In the meantime the "Soviet Central Executive Committee", which was a remnant of the past and consisted mostly of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, held a meeting and accepted a resolution calling on the workers to remain calm. But this opposition from a body that no longer represented the spirit of the masses as a whole remained without influence. Instead, a message came from Kaloega; the soviet that saw a majority speak out in favour of the Bolsheviks was overtaken and murdered by a group of Cossacks. This would drive the Peterburgians towards even more action. After a proposal by the military committee targeted at the commander of Petrograd, asking for collaboration (which meant factual control of all military jurisdiction by the committee) was denied, they send out a proposal to the garrison, asking them to protect the revolution and only to accept commands that had been approved by the military committee. The general populace would be targeted on the sixth of November with a proclamation which stated that commissars would be appointed for city neighbourhoods, acting as representatives of the soviets in the battle against counter-revolution. After the military staff had declined to allow a representative of the soviets to check on the taken measures, all parts of the garrison were given the assignment by telephone, to inform the military committee about all orders given to them by the military staff, and only to act on them after their explicit approval. This was, as Trotsky would acknowledge later that evening at the Petrograd soviet, the beginning of the seizure of power, and Kerensky immediately started taking countermeasures. He ordered troops from the south to march on Petrograd, and on the seventh of November ordered that the bridges connecting the working class neighbourhoods to the inner city be raised, while patrols of aspiring officers and some troops still loyal to the government would confiscate and collect cars. But, with the help of a torpedo boat sent from Kronstadt, the revolutionary troops occupied the bridges and lowered them. Hereafter, together with the troops from Kronstadt, they marched to the inner city, where after a short battle the government buildings were seized. The ministers were captured and held on a military ship; Kerensky however, managed to escape into the arms of his loyal troops. The proletarian revolution had been victorious in Petrograd under circumstances where its triumph would become quite likely for all of Russia.

"Comrades", said Lenin on the night of the seventh of November in the Petrograd soviet; "the workers and peasant revolution that the Bolsheviks have argued for is happening right now. What does it mean? It means that we now have our own government, without the participation of the bourgeoisie. The repressed masses will form their own government. The old state-machinery will be uprooted, and a new governing body will arise through the soviets. A new era in Russian history has begun; and the result of this third Russian revolution will finally bring us socialism as its result. Our first task is to stop the war. To make any further war an impossibility, we have to overcome capital. The international workers' revolution will help us to complete this task - a revolution that is starting in Italy, England and Germany. An immediate and just peace that we introduce into international democracy will resonate everywhere most strongly in the proletarian

masses. To strengthen the confidence of the proletariat, we have to make all secret treaties public. In Russia, the peasants are marching arm-in-arm with the workers. We shall gain their confidence with our decision to abolish large landholdings. The peasants will see that only through their alliance with the workers can their class be saved. We shall introduce workers' control of all industries. We have now learned to work together; the revolution is proof of this. We have the strength of a mass organisation, which shall overcome anything and will bring the proletariat closer to world revolution. In Russia we now have to start building a proletarian, socialist state.”

Indeed, a new era has begun. And much more than during the collapse of Tsarism, the proletarian revolution beams a ray of hope around the world: the hope for peace, for freedom and happiness. Wherever proletarians suffer, wherever socialists struggle, wherever people are weighed down by the sufferings of war, all eyes are on Russia. There, it has become a reality: for many of us this is still a vision of the future and a program, for some it is a rigid belief, but for many that have listened to us it is a vague dream, a barely believable fantasy. Like a utopian futuristic novel that has become reality, one that has taken place close to us, and the experience of which we share not as a flawless story, but as a very real enriching event, that makes our era richer than any before. That is what Russia is to us. And we shall not become tired of studying everything that happens there in the tiniest detail - all the struggles and objections that have to be overcome, so simple and seemingly natural, while at the same time so great and magnificent in their significance. All the new great thoughts that swell in their heads have to solve practically all the tasks ahead. All the sunny bliss, which will shine in the eyes of millions, before which they were desperate and lost, and the radiant solidarity and brotherhood which is now warmly lit in their hearts.

But ... it is precisely now, when we require and wish for the most thorough communication, that it seems like a fog has been lowered which separates us from most of what is happening in Russia. When the party of the revolution was still in the opposition, when it was prosecuted and repressed, it could divert some of its resources towards providing regular updates to its European allies through Stockholm. Now that the foreign representatives of the Bolsheviks have left for Petrograd, since all of their forces are required, and the war conditions complicate communication and reliable postal services, we have to rely solely on messages that British correspondents are sending to London. From this endless stream of fallacious news, which throws up a fog-screen around the Russian revolution, polluting and blurring its image, through a mirror image of hate it becomes distorted and malformed. Due to these circumstances, it becomes hard for us to distil and understand what is truly happening. Messages about the ongoing and imminent failure of the revolution - how Kerensky triumphantly marched into Petrograd, how the people were sick and tired of the Bolsheviks, how the armies at the front were supporting the government, how Kaledin (the Cossack general) controlled all grain supplies and famine was imminent for Petrograd, etc. – all of these delusional images, which people believed because they chose to believe were consistently proven wrong. One really has to admire the inexhaustible gullibility of both the authors and their readers, who time and time again either made up new fantasies or believed in them. After all this, they finally had to acknowledge that the maximalists were winning and decided that they were no more than a bunch of fools and criminals – a method of historiography well known to the Paris Commune. Moreover, they would mostly report about the military situation and the truce, because this is what concerned

them. They would remain silent about the internal reorganisation of society (or they would only report on it when they deemed it extremely foolish), partly because it was beyond the scope of their sight, and partly because such measures might resonate well with the workers of their own country. In this field they remained completely dependent on the short and formal messages of the new Russian government itself. This government was not a government of many words or great speeches, but a government of deeds. They had to act; the reorganisation and construction of a new society required such great force that no time was left for elaborate statements and explanations about goals and resources. As a result of all of these factors, our knowledge of events in Russia remains fragmented and uncertain.

VI

The workers and soldiers did not conquer power in one blow. A proletarian revolution, as is proven once again, is completely different to the bourgeois revolutions of the past. During the latter, the great masses of the people mainly remained passive; the overthrow of the government by a small group usurping the position of another could be resolved in a matter of days. But the proletarian revolution is a self-liberating act of the masses; this cannot happen suddenly, for it is a process of ripening, a process of the masses gaining consciousness. The upheaval in Petrograd, itself a product of this process of ripening, could therefore only be the beginning of such an event, which requires time to extend all over Russia.

First, they had to overcome a lot of resistance. They were not certain of the support of a majority of the army. They were, however, convinced that most soldiers supported the Bolsheviks' peace programme, but their representatives in the army committees were mostly Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. These were chosen in earlier times, when their authority and influence could restrain the soldiers. And it seems now that these leaders have most sharply turned against the new regime. Already, during the early days of revolution, the social patriotic minority of the Petrograd soviet together with the bourgeoisie withdrew so as to bring the proletarian revolution to an end. They formed a "Committee for the Saviour of the Fatherland and Revolution", which joined forces with Kerensky to organise a counter-revolution as soon as he could start approaching the city with his troops. The imprisoned socialist ministers, which were released on parole, diligently participated in this conspiracy.

Kerensky and his troops, strengthened by the Cossacks, marched to Gatchina, and revolutionary forces from Petrograd were moving towards him. The railroad workers' trade union attempted to divert the upcoming civil war by forming a committee of all socialist parties, a committee that would form a socialist coalition government; if the battle continued, the railroad workers would prevent troops from either party being transported. From the very beginning, the Bolsheviks had kept the gates open for a fair representation of Soviet-oriented parties in their new government and declared that they were open for concessions and negotiations. But the central army committee (consisting of social patriots, whereas the regiment committees which were closer to the soldiers were mostly Bolshevik) refused any such negotiations and demanded the complete subjugation of the "insurgents", alongside with a socialist ministry that excluded the Bolsheviks.

Under these conditions the battle was inevitable; on the 12th of November the troops in Petrograd drove back the attackers at Tsarskoye Selo. When, on the 14th of November, <Pavel>

Dybenko traveled to Gatsjina to negotiate with the Cossacks, it turned out that they had lost their fighting spirit. More so when emissaries of the third front army had visited them to declare that they would be attacked if they turned against the revolution. When this happened, they switched to the side of the people and decided that they wanted to capture Kerensky; however, he had fled as soon as he saw the negotiators coming. This is how the first act of counter-revolution led to nothing. Following these events, the last remnant of trust that the social patriots still enjoyed among certain sections of the soldiers was lost. The power that they had placed in opposition to the proletarian revolution was as empty and hollow as the rule of feudal lords. It rested on positions of leadership which they were called to do, and now they were determined to sit it out, even though the masses that had elected them at the time had experienced a strong change of heart. Hence the new government's tactic of only using violence when necessary, when you have to defend yourself, but of maintaining negotiations with the masses who oppose you, trying to win them to your side. Their most powerful weapon in this struggle was the series of domestic economic measures that were taken.

After the first counter-revolutionary resistance was broken, the authority of the new proletarian regime began to settle. They had had a strong presence in the local soviets in most large and smaller cities. Scattered throughout the country, some small battles were fought with accomplices of the old regime (for example in Moscow), battles that were depicted by the Allied press as bloody stages of murder and destruction. In the great headquarters of Mogilev there was a gathering of the army committee with the generals <Nikolay> Dukhonin and <Lawr> Kornilov; on the 26th of November Havas and Reuters triumphantly announced their plans to reinstate the old regime. But when Krylenko, one of the figureheads of the Petrograd upheaval who was now a commander, marched onto Mogilev on the 3rd of December, the resistance collapsed like a house of cards, and Dukhonin himself was killed by enraged soldiers. The entire army at the front was – especially because of the energetically implemented acts towards peace – in favour of the new regime. The only forces still opposing them were those of the Cossack generals <Alexei> Kaledin (in the south) and Dutov (in the Urals). Kaledin, Kornilov's companion, was the man in whom the bourgeoisie and Allies had put their faith, and they trusted that he could suppress the maximalists' uprising. To protect the industrial cities (Rostov) attacked by him, troops from Petrograd and the front were sent to the south. At the same time during this red December, a call was made addressed to all Cossacks to join the cause of the people and capture the general. It is not yet known whether this strategy has worked. On the other hand, the soviets have seized power in Siberian cities far to the east, Harbin and Vladivostok. The greatest part of Russia has clearly been won for the new administration.

VII

When the proletarian classes have seized power, first they need to take measures to meet their needs and combat their misery; these measures are automatically directed towards socialism. These measures can be found on the economic terrain, are targeted against capitalism and are mostly domestic in scope. These are of the utmost importance for the future, since they open up a new trajectory of development. And because they are so obvious, they will not lead to any problems in which contradictory points of view need to be reconciled. The complications and problems arise when such a nation is exposed from all sides to capitalist contradictions, and thus

becomes a force in the struggle against the remaining bourgeois world. It is through this lens that the troubles of the Russian Revolution must be understood.

How the regime of soviets has started fighting hunger and misery, both immediately and in the future, remains unknown to us. In the beginning, it was predicted that Petrograd would quickly fall into a state of starvation and submit. Afterwards, it seems, none of this was true and the government seems to have succeeded in supplying sufficient food. The railroads, overloaded and devastated by the war, were now at capacity to provide food and supplies. The housing shortage was remedied through the confiscation of large houses and palaces. To organise proper working conditions in industry, workers' supervision over companies (including agriculture, trade and money transfers) with more than five employees was implemented. There was nothing to be found about a decree concerning working hours. This is most likely because it was not needed, since all workers now feel confident enough to determine their own working hours. Throughout the year, workers have won eight and six-hour working days.

To guarantee a healthy financial basis it is absolutely necessary to annul the mountains of debt inherited by Tsarism, including the war loans. Such a measure has been announced, which will greatly reduce state expenditure. For the time being the government managed to save itself through the nationalisation of banks and the confiscation of their gold supplies. Now that it no longer has to send money to foreign lands for war supplies and coupons, this government is in a much stronger position than its predecessor, despite the fact that it no longer receives any subsidies from America. Bourgeois critics paint a bleak financial future, especially when they read that the salaries of state functionaries have been set at 500 Rubles per month. But they forget that the government is not just taxing the capitalists heftily, but that it is also taking control of the most important branches of production.

A few short news reports are talking about reforms in the areas of justice, education and the army. A decree on the eight of December abolished all existing tribunals and replaced them with elected people's tribunals. Even the lower judges are elected and will pass judgment, not according to a book of law, but through their own conscience (in line with an old Russian custom). All the while, everyone is allowed to be a prosecutor or defender. A committee has been called into life, under the presidency of <Anatoly> Lunacharsky, to reorganise education. In the army, the soldiers have started electing their own officers and staff, where officer is no longer a distinct rank, but merely a leader. In these straightforward democratic reforms, expressed in just a few simple phrases, we can see a world of oppression and cruelty, of arbitrariness and servility, of stupidity and class rule crumble before our very eyes. A new world, a new set of principles of freedom and equality are towering above our heads. How deep is the distinction between such a true democracy, and the "democracy" which is being advertised in Western Europe!

The most important and greatest of all of these reforms, the one that is partially driving the revolution, is agrarian reform. To the peasants the land! This was the slogan with which the Bolsheviks conquered power, for in this way they forged a steady coalition between workers and peasants. This slogan was necessary, because in this predominantly agrarian country, the working class can only capture political power when workers and peasants are united into a single force against the bourgeoisie and large landowners, who represent exploitation. A decision

of the soviets on the 10th of November determines that the claims of large landowners, monasteries and noble families on large swathes of land will be lifted, and that these lands will be placed at the disposal of the peasant committees. The peasants' small plots of land will not be expropriated, for every citizen has a right to as much land as he can work, without the assistance of hired forces. On the 11th of December, <news agency> Havas announced that decree had been issued, according to which all the land had been declared national property and private ownership of land had been lifted. We can make several deductions from these short reports; on the one hand, we see sheer agrarian state socialism, on the other it seems to be cutting up all land into tiny farms, which – as in France after 1789 – turns the owners of these plots of land into property fanatics, which represents the worst stumbling block for genuine socialism later. We have noticed that neither of these are correct. From the appendix in the last message we can determine that the houses, sheds and machinery belonging to these lands remain state property, and are lent out to the farms. It seems that the intention is to keep all of the great machinery and goods in one place, which can then be used in common. The small farms had been quite primitive and unproductive, whereas the large agricultural fields were already leaning heavily on machinery and modern techniques. If these can be made into large cooperative companies under the guidance of the peasant committees, a new period of agricultural development will commence. The declaration of all land as national property is a theoretical declaration, one that connects with an old Russian idea (from the times of village communism) that land can never be private property.

The second great question guiding this Russian revolution is that of peace. The soldiers overthrew the bourgeois coalition-government in order to achieve peace. But peace is not only dependent on Russia. The question of peace suddenly places the new proletarian state between feuding imperialist states; and now its actions acquire meaning as a force in the conflicts between them. More so because the forces of the competing groups were mostly in cancelled each other out; now, the disintegration of Russia suddenly meant a much stronger position for Germany and its allies. Imperialist judgments now strangely confuse socialist ones; the German social patriots, the cowardly servants of German Imperialism, extended a warm message of sympathy to Lenin. In France and England, however, only the internationalist opposition did so. And the many Socialists who were hoping for a revolution in Germany probably have mixed feelings about the peace treaty that oscillate between their sympathy for this beautiful struggle for the liberation of the Russian people and their fear that, lacking a German revolution, the European one would be kept at bay.

At the time, the Bolsheviks had repeatedly declared that their programme stood for a common European peace — not a peace between Russia and Germany, but one between the peoples of Europe. Not a peace with the German Kaiser, but a peace without conquests by either side, no peace where Germany held on to Poland, Lithuania and Courland. But the logical circumstances under which they took power in Russia forced them to sign a pact with Germany and its Kaiser, while the Germans kept control over these regions. Being revolutionary socialists, they despise the German autocracy, but despite this they are faced with the fact that Russia can no longer wage war; the peasants no longer want to fight and they lack the resources to wage a war. Militarily, a proletarian democracy — especially fighting in defence of its own freedom — simply is not strong enough to defeat the strongest military organisation that contemporary imperialism knows. It can therefore never be the duty of proletarian Russia to fight German

imperialism militarily. They can only indirectly do so, by bringing into being a powerful force through the example it sets for the German working masses, and allowing them to follow in their footsteps. The German proletariat now awaits the task of destroying German imperialism for the simple reason that no other force will be able to do so.

It is for this reason that, on the ninth of November, the soviet government set out to achieve its goals and submitted a proposal for a democratic peace on the condition of no annexations and no war tributes, while a truce was swiftly signed. At the same time, it was announced that all secret treaties would be published. It is impossible to estimate the true meaning and value of these publications, which appeared shortly thereafter and continue to appear in *Pravda*. It is a pity, however, that they only provide half of the information, namely everything that was written by the Allies, with all of the treaties between the Central European powers remaining a secret. As things stand, these treaties show only in a one-sided way how the entire war was conceived for imperialist purposes, to gain possession of countries and peoples. They confirm in very practical terms what we always considered theoretical common sense about the nature of this world conflict.

Naturally, the calls for peace fell on deaf ears among the Allied forces, but this did not hinder the Russian government in any way. As soon as <Nikolai Wassilijewitsch> Krylenko reached the army on the 26th of November, he proposed negotiations for a truce with the German headquarters. While on a practical level the eastern front had already laid down its arms and the old guards were sent home, discussions on the 16th of December led to a four-week-long extendable truce as a prelude to the peace negotiations that followed. After three years of suffering during the war, the Russians finally had achieved their peace, at least on a practical level. They gained peace because they had struggled for it in the face of opposition from their rulers. With an inexhaustible persistence, and through heroic class struggle, they overthrew their rulers and asserted their will for peace. They had conquered peace for themselves, but not yet for the rest of the people of Europe, who can only attain peace by conquering it for themselves.

There remain a number of other great problems that are appearing in the Russian revolution. We are witnessing the early dawn of questions that will surely play an important role in future proletarian revolutions too: the question of nationalities and of parliamentarism.

Russia is, like most Eastern European states, a country composed of several nationalities. Western European states are the political organisations of national entities forged by a long and common civic development into amalgamated cultural units. Eastern European states, on the other hand, consist of several nationalities, who were conquered as peasant masses in pre-capitalist times, without a strong state of their own. The intrusion of capitalism, the rise of the bourgeoisie and a class of intellectuals have stirred a national spirit of independence in these peoples – the central feature of Austrian history in the last thirty years. In Russia, such movements only manifested themselves sporadically in the most developed western parts, where most were violently suppressed by the ruling cliques (for example in Finland, Courland, Poland and Ukraine). In opposition to this method, the Russian revolutionaries have raised the demand for the self-determination of all peoples. Now that they are in charge, it speaks for itself that they will not forcibly prevent any peoples from seeking national self-determination. The fact that Finland is organising itself into a sovereign state has their complete approval and the same is true

of Ukraine. The capitalistic idea that a country should be a great, big and mighty one holds no weight with the proletarian regime.

The press already told us that many parts of the old Russia have now declared themselves to be independent "states". Besides Ukraine, they mention Crimea, the Caucasus and Siberia. Despite this, the outcome that the press ascribe to such events, namely that Russia is slowly breaking up into small independent states, with "Russia" becoming a thing of the past, is incorrect. There, where there is no bourgeois class present, they lack the force to form a state, meaning that the force that turns a language-bound mass of people into a unified well-organised state that is clearly distinct from, and in opposition to, its neighbouring states, is absent. Here we shall see the beginning of the organisational forms of the future, ones that belongs to a proletarian socialist country. They will grow up, emerge from, and still exhibit distinct features of the pre-capitalist nationless forms of organisation; groups of people bound by their common language, highly autonomous and forged together into a higher form of unity (call it a federation), because common economic interests (central industries, coal, iron, the world market and commodity exchange) bind them together. Now that there is no longer any oppression from the ruling groups, but cooperation for the common good, for most of Russia there is not a single reason to secede from the greater whole (except for Finland, which through its language and culture is more closely related to Sweden). This is also expressed in the fact that all the peoples of Russia are asked to send delegates to the Constituent Assembly in order to decide on the organisational form of the entire country.

Despite all this, they are still facing great difficulties. Ukraine is a key example of one such problem. These people, closely related to their Russian kin (in Galicia they are called Ruthenians) had started to develop a small bourgeoisie and an accompanying intelligentsia (in the cities of Kyiv and Kharkiv). Last summer, these forces formed a provisional government, the "Rada". The Rada was supported by the Bolsheviks in its quarrel with the Kerensky government. Naturally, a friendship arose between the new regime and the Rada. However, due to its composition the Rada had bourgeois aspirations. It wanted to make Ukraine into the biggest possible centralised state. It already declared that all southern provinces up to the Volga river and the Black sea belonged to the Ukrainian state. Because of a general that they had sent to Odessa, it has already led to a conflict with the workers and sailors, who largely feel like they are part of a greater Russia. Will the government in Petrograd interpret the right to self-determination in such a way that, in the face of all of the contradictions between the Rada and the Southern soviets, they will remain strictly neutral? It is all too natural that the bourgeoisie of a people that were once oppressed by Tsarism and are now free feel a strong class contradiction with its proletarian liberators. This, for instance, finds strong reflection in a statement made by the Finnish senate to France, in which they complain that the Russian soldiers, lacking discipline, are provoking the lower classes of Finland for criminal (which means revolutionary) purposes.

The second question that can lead to some difficulties is that of parliamentarianism. The fact that the Kerensky government kept stalling the constituent assembly meetings was one of the grievances against it. As soon as the soviets took power, the first thing they did was call an election so that the constituent assembly could meet. In most parts of Russia, this already happened. The Allied press frequently wrote messages stating that they hoped the Bolsheviks would remain a minority in the constituent assembly. They were hoping to replace the

“unlawful” and violent regime of the Bolsheviks with a “lawful” authority. When 40 or so bourgeois representatives in Petrograd presumed that they were, and could act as the lawful rulers of Russia, this ridiculous display was removed from the Tauride Palace. This move caused the indignant Allied press to send out messages regarding this nefarious act of violence. In reality, there has never been a more lawful regime in Russia than the one we see now; where the previous government leant on nothing, the current one is leaning on the working masses, organised into soviets.

Assuming that, in the upcoming constituent assembly there is a majority against them (which is unlikely, especially given that the left wing of the Social Revolutionary Party, led by Maria Spiridonova, gained a majority against Chernov), will they, filled with respect, hesitate for the “apparent will of the people”? There is no reason to assume such a thing. It is not parliament or the Constituent Assembly that is sovereign, but the people. During this revolution it has been repeatedly proven that the representatives chosen in earlier times would later cease to agree with the views of the masses, who chose them and then gained a deeper insight. Which one is more relevant, the mandate or the deeper insight? Which one is more important, the representative or the masses? This is where the bourgeois and proletarian conceptions of parliamentarianism diverge. In one particular press release, there was talk of Lenin’s proposal to apply the concept of recallability to the constituent assembly. This means that a portion of the voters can demand that their representative must be subjected to a new election when they think that his views are starting to differ from his electorate. This is where we see a new principle acting, the principle that leaders and spokesmen can never place themselves in a position of power towards the masses. All that will happen to implement this new principle, and to prevent that which has been created by the activity of the masses from degenerating into a lecture room, will in the press naturally appear as new violent atrocities conducted by the maximalists. Here too, the problems arise from immature conditions, from old ways of thinking and old methods of production. These will need to be overcome in the struggle, by the needs of a new and emerging world.