

THE MOSCOW BOLSHEVIKS ON THE EVE OF AND DURING THE OCTOBER DAYS OF 1917

By O. PIATNITSKY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE conditions under which the political struggles of the working class developed in Moscow during the period of the February Revolution differed somewhat from those under which the Petrograd proletariat was waging the struggle, under the direct leadership of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

February found the labour movement in Moscow at a lower level of class development than in Petrograd. The basic cadres of the Petrograd workers were composed of fully class-conscious proletarians, chiefly metalworkers and workers in heavy industry who had lost their contact with the village. In Moscow the bulk of the workers, primarily textile workers, came from among the peasants and freed itself of petty bourgeois influences more slowly than in Petrograd.

This characteristic of the composition of the proletariat explains also the tardiness with which the strike struggle developed in Moscow during the years of the imperialist war compared with Petrograd. Thus, in 1916, of the 58,000 workers who downed tools on the anniversary of January 9, all over Russia, 45,000 struck in Petrograd alone. In the printing workers' strike of October, 1916, the total number of strikers throughout the country reached 181,000, the Petrograd workers marching far ahead of the rest of the country with 139,000 strikers. During the January strikes of 1917, however, this relationship changed in favour of the provincial proletariat. The total number of workers who struck in Russia for purely political reasons was 162,000, of which 95,000 were in Petrograd. Among the workers employed in the war industry, 88,000 went on strike in Petrograd in January, 1917 (in forty-four factories) and 45,000 struck work in sixty-two factories in Moscow.

The difference between the conditions of political struggle in Moscow and Petrograd did not disappear after the February Revolution as well. It will be remembered that the tsar's government was overthrown by the forces of the advanced proletariat of Petrograd and its garrison, which in turn revolutionised the hitherto inert sections of the workers, thereby creating a basis for their bolshevisation. Moscow was destined merely to remove the agents of the tsar's government, who were caught unawares

by the revolutionary overthrow and found themselves unprepared to resist.

During the first months following upon the February Revolution, the influence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks over the workers of Moscow was noticeably stronger than that of the Bolsheviks. The social-collaborationists had a majority in the shop committees, district soviets, soldiers' and workers' central soviets. Only in the trade unions were the positions of the Bolsheviks very powerful from the very first days of the February Revolution.

In June, during the elections to the Moscow City Duma, in which for the first time the working masses took full part, the collaborationists obtained an overwhelming majority: the Bolsheviks received 75,409 votes or 11.8 per cent. of the total; this was 998 votes less than the number of votes received by the Mensheviks, 33,000 less than were received by the Cadets, and 300,000 less than were cast for the Socialist-Revolutionaries. It may be assumed that in May the Bolshevik Party organisation had about 11,000 members.

In the factories, mills and soldiers' barracks, the Bolsheviks had to conduct an uphill struggle against the supporters of the collaborationist parties which openly allied themselves in the soviets and acted as a united front against the Bolsheviks at the mass meetings. The Bolsheviks utilised every question of the daily struggle in the factories and barracks (wages, leaves of absence, overtime, high cost of living, delay in the payment of wages, etc.; poor food, orders to be sent to the front, the barracks, etc.) in order to link up the struggle for these demands with the attitude towards the Provisional Government and the imperialist war. The Bolsheviks suffered a good many defeats at the meetings in May and the first half of June.

After the July days the counter-revolutionary forces who were organised under the protection of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries became particularly active in Moscow. The bourgeois and the Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik press in Moscow did everything possible to portray the July events in Petrograd in a distorted form. The social collaborationist Moscow Soviet forbade demonstrations and meetings in the open air. The wave of chauvinist slander at

the Bolshevik Party and at Comrade Lenin which swept on from Petrograd exercised a powerful influence at first in Moscow, frightening the backward workers and soldiers away from the Bolsheviks. A situation was created when in many cases the Bolsheviks were unable to speak in the factories, mills and barracks.

In the latter half of July, however, there was a definite break in the attitude of the masses towards the Bolsheviks. The offensive undertaken by the Provisional Government at the front and its outcome on the one hand and the inability of the government and of the social-collaborationist parties which supported it, to corroborate in any way the charges which they advanced against the Bolsheviks—on the other, aroused the ire of the workers and soldiers against the collaborationists.

In Moscow, in contrast to Petrograd, the Provisional Government did not openly raise the question of despatching the garrison to the front.

The social collaborationists attempted to make wide use of the differences between the political situation in Moscow and Petrograd and applied a policy of "civil peace" towards the Cadets, on the one hand, and the Bolsheviks on the other. The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had a majority on the executive committees of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, sought by all means to disguise their differences with the Bolsheviks. They did not allow the local organs of the Provisional Government to employ repressions against the Bolshevik press of Moscow. This policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries exercised a certain influence over a section of the Bolsheviks, who were working in the Moscow Soviet, despite the fact that the Moscow Bolshevik organisation in the factories, mills and barracks conducted a ceaseless struggle against the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, exposing their hypocritical collaborationist policy.

On August 8, 1917, the Moscow Committee of the Bolsheviks held a meeting, together with the representatives from the cells and district committees, to discuss the form of the protest against the Moscow State Conference. On the basis of reports of the delegates, indicating an improvement of the sentiments in every district, factory and barrack, the Moscow Committee decided to make preparations for and carry out a one-day's strike of protest against the Moscow State Conference. The preparations for this strike were conducted in the factories and mills, trade unions and district soviets. The working masses took a stand in favour of a strike. The trade unions supported this decision. The Soviet of Workers'

and Soldiers' Deputies voted against the strike by a majority of 364 to 304. The All-City Conference of Bolsheviks, held on August 10, issued, with the consent of a Conference of the forty-one trade union executives, a call to the Moscow workers to go on strike on August 22, the day of the opening of the Moscow State Conference. To this call about 400,000 workers of Moscow responded. The entire industrial life of the city was paralysed. This tremendous strike showed that the Moscow workers were picking up speed and catching up with the revolutionary proletariat of Petrograd.

However, the final exposure of the social-collaborationist parties before the Moscow workers and soldiers and their isolation from the toiling masses took place only after the collapse of the Kornilov uprising.

The Moscow Bolsheviks gained a majority in the Soviet of Workers' Deputies only a few days after the Bolsheviks of Petrograd.

The relatively late growth of the revolutionary movement in Moscow, compared with Petrograd, and its lagging behind the revolutionary upsurge of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison prior to the October Revolution, had a certain effect upon the preparations for and progress of the uprising in Moscow.

* * *

I.—PREPARATIONS OF MOSCOW BOLSHEVIKS FOR THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION.

During the first days of the Kornilov mutiny, the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party passed a resolution in which the fighting tasks confronting it at the time were described as follow:

"The task of the Party and the proletariat consists under these conditions of the technical co-ordination of the forces aimed directly at the suppression of the Kornilov movement (membership in special fighting organisations), criticism of the half-heartedness of the petty-bourgeois socialists, systematically spurring them on in the direction of resolute measures, and the independent organisation of fighting centres of the working class. The basic line of conduct must be directed at the capture of the power by the proletarian organisations."

The Moscow Committee proposed the following immediate measures, urging that nothing must be neglected in their application:

1. Immediate arming of the workers and soldiers.
2. Energetic mass arrests of the counter-revolutionaries, particularly the Cadet centres and their military organisations.
3. Closing of the bourgeois newspapers and con-

fiscation of their print-shops. 4. Release of all arrested Bolsheviks. 5. Regulation of food and housing shortage.”

The appeal issued by the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (B) to all the party organisations in the region urged them to pursue the same line as was decided upon by it in co-operation with the Moscow Committee and gave detailed instructions as to how this policy should be carried out locally.

The appeals of the Moscow Committee and Regional Bureau of the Party met with a widespread response among the masses. The Party organisations of the Moscow (at that time Central-Industrial) region immediately proceeded to organise locally “labour centres” of representatives of all the labour organisations; mass labour demonstrations began to take place everywhere, demanding arms for themselves (for the Red Guard) and for the soldiers, the arrest of the leaders of the local counter-revolutionary organisations and the closing of the bourgeois press which was supporting Kornilov. At the same time tens of deputations began to flood the Moscow “organ of revolutionary action,” the regional bureau of soviets and the Moscow Soviet, advancing demands contained in the appeals of the leading Moscow Bolshevik organisations.

Under the pressure of the masses which came into motion at the first news of the Kornilov conspiracy, the Moscow Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries addressed a proposal to the Bolsheviks on August 14, to establish a united front in the struggle against the counter-revolution. The Bolsheviks made a primary condition the repeal of all repressive measures against the Bolsheviks and of the regulations issued after the July events forbidding the Bolsheviks from entering the barracks of the troops quartered in Moscow. These demands were complied with and the Bolshevik fraction of the Soviet sent representatives to the “Sextet of Action,” organised by the Moscow Soviet from representatives of its three fractions.

On August 29, when Kornilov had already started his rising, the Plenum of the Moscow Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, together with the Executive Committee of Peasant Deputies, unanimously resolved to set up an organ of “Revolutionary Action for the Suppression of Counter-Revolution,” to be known as the “Committee of Nine,” which existed until September 6. Representatives of the Moscow City Hall, the assistant commissar of the Provisional Government, the procurator of the Moscow

Court Chamber, the commander of the forces of the Moscow Military District, and two representatives each of the different Moscow soviets composed the membership of this Committee (“Provisional Committee for the Struggle Against the Counter-Revolution”). The Soviet of Workers’ Deputies was represented by Khinchuk and Nogin. The Soviet of Soldiers’ Deputies—by Muralov and Manievich, and the Soviet of Peasant Deputies—by Pavlov and Vitkovich.

The representative of the Bolshevik fraction declared at the Plenum of the Soviets in connection with the creation of this body that the Bolsheviks

“have entered the Committee of Nine, not as an expression of confidence in the Provisional Government, nor for the defence or protection of this Provisional Government, but solely for the purpose of a *technical* agreement on the struggle against the approaching dictatorship of Kornilov.”

This same Plenum of Soviets passed a resolution demanding that the Provisional Government discontinue its repressions against the Bolsheviks throughout Russia.

The demands formulated in the appeals of the Moscow Committee and Regional Bureau of the Party were supported not only by delegations of individual factories and mills, but also by representatives of the All-City Conference of shop committees of Moscow, which at the meeting of executive committees of the Moscow soviets, held on August 31, strongly insisted upon the immediate solution of the question of the arming of the workers, the arrest and trial of the counter-revolutionary generals, and the suppression of the bourgeois press.

On September 3, the Executive Committee of the Soviets approved a Red Guard Constitution worked out by the Commission, and on the following day the Bolshevik section of the Presidium of the Executive Committee sent copies of this Constitution to the various districts, urging the immediate organisation of fighting units and staffs on the basis of this Constitution, and the appointment of delegates to the central staff.

However, owing to sabotage on the part of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers’ Deputies, which was controlled by the Socialist Revolutionaries, the formal approval of this Constitution by the plenums of the soviets took place only on the very eve of the October Revolution (October 24). While this obvious sabotage could not frustrate the organisation of a Red Guard in the districts, nevertheless, by delaying the arming of the Red Guards, it substantially affected

the preparation of an armed uprising, as the Red Guard received sufficient arms only during the actual days of the October fighting.

The backbone of the Red Guard of Moscow consisted of the Bolshevik fighting units, which were organised during the first days of the February Revolution.

The Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries not only sabotaged the decision to arm the workers and create a Red Guard, but even took back the permission to enter the barracks already given to the Bolsheviks. Such speedy violation of obligations undertaken by them was due to the fact that the Moscow Bolsheviks not only quickly succeeded in capturing the sympathies of the masses by their programme and fight against Kornilov, but also in organising and consolidating this growing influence in the factories and barracks.

In Moscow this process of Bolshevisation of the masses was given formal shape in the vote of the Plenum of the Moscow soviets on September 5, when for the first time in Moscow the deputies of both the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets voted in their majority for the programmatic Bolshevik resolution demanding a resolute struggle "for the capture of power by the representatives of the proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry."

The adoption of the Bolshevik resolution forced the social collaborationist majority in the executive committee and presidiums of both soviets to resign.

On September 19 the election of new executive committees of both soviets was held, on the insistence of the Bolsheviks, on the basis of proportional representation, and gave the Bolsheviks a majority in the executive committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies (32 Bolsheviks, 16 Mensheviks, 9 Socialist-Revolutionaries and 3 "Obiedinentsi" (unionists).

In the executive committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, however, a majority though not absolute, was again gained by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who secured 26 places; the Bolsheviks gained 16 places, the Mensheviks 9, and non-party 9. Such a result of the elections was possible only because the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies was composed of the same membership as has been elected in the first days of February Revolution. The demands of the soldiers' masses, of the general meetings of the soldiers of the various units, and of the Bolshevik fraction of the Soviet for new elections of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies were opposed by the Socialist-Revolutionary executive committee. These elections were held only after the October Revolution.

This fact could not but seriously influence the tempo of development of the fighting against the Provisional Government.

The sharpening of the revolutionary crisis and the drift of the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses of Moscow in the direction of Bolshevism were revealed most strikingly during the municipal elections to the district dumas held on September 24.

In these elections the Bolsheviks received 49 per cent. of the total vote, the Cadets 26 per cent., the Socialist-Revolutionaries 14.6 per cent., the Mensheviks 4.3 per cent., and the non-partisans 5.8 per cent. Thus, the number of votes cast for the Bolsheviks in these elections increased nearly two and a half times compared with the June elections (175,000 votes): the Cadets received 92,300 votes against 109,000 in June, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 51,800 against 375,000, the Mensheviks 15,300 against 76,000 in June.

The elections to the district dumas revealed a particularly striking change of sentiment amongst the soldier masses, 90 per cent. of whose votes were given to the Bolsheviks. This shift among the soldiers, which was a direct result of agitation and organisation, carried out, despite all obstacles, in the garrisons by the Military Bureau of the Bolshevik Party, reflected at the same time the growing revolutionary sentiments amongst the toiling masses of the peasantry.

During the first months of the revolution the Party work of the Bolsheviks in the village was weak, especially in those agricultural regions where the peasantry was influenced by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the poor peasants remained entirely unorganised. The Moscow Regional Bureau of the Party, together with the Military Bureau of the Moscow Committee, decided, in order to improve the organisation in the village, to unite the city workers with the soldiers into *zemliachestva* (organisations of persons originating from the same localities), and use them for directing the work in the village. In this way the connections of the individual workers and soldiers with the village who used to go there for vacations periods were given some organised character.

In the Moscow province, as well as in the whole country, the Socialist-Revolutionaries not only urged the peasants to wait for the solution of the land question until the Constituent Assembly met, but participated directly in punitive expeditions sent out by the Provisional Government to put down peasant revolts. During March to June the Moscow province was backward in the growth of the agrarian movement, but during July-September the place held by the Moscow region

in the agrarian movement considerably grew in importance compared with the rest of the country. The growth of the spontaneous agrarian movement testifies to the decline of the influence of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which sought to retard this movement, and persuade the peasants to delay the solution of the land question until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

At the end of September the growth of peasant uprisings in the Moscow province became extremely pronounced, and Lenin wrote (on September 29, 1917) in the article *The Crisis is Ripe*, that under the conditions then existing in Russia these uprisings were a symptom of the approach of the turning-point of the Revolution.

Everything pointed to the fact that the proletarian revolution was going over from the period of mobilisation of forces to the period of storm and direct struggle for power.

In the latter half of September Lenin's historical letter of September 12-14, entitled *The Bolsheviks Must Seize Power*, was received in Moscow. The letter proceeded from the belief that:

"Upon capturing a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the two capitals, the Bolsheviks can and should take the power over into their own hands . . .

"The question is to make the task clear to the Party: to make the order of the day an *armed uprising* in Petrograd and Moscow (including the province), the capture of the power, the overthrow of the government . . . The power must be captured at once both in Moscow and in Petrograd (it does not matter who will begin, perhaps Moscow should be first) and we will then be *certainly and unquestionably* victorious."

Thus the question of an armed uprising was made the order of the day.

In this connection the Plenum of the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Bolsheviks adopted on September 27-28 a resolution declaring the struggle for the power to be the most important task of the day.

The Plenum urged the creation in the big industrial cities of fighting centres, the establishment between them of close contact and the immediate convocation of an All-Russian Congress of Soviets, where the Bolsheviks would demand the transfer of all power to the Soviets, the transfer of all land to the people, the immediate conclusion of an armistice and the offer of a democratic peace to all the belligerent nations.

Lenin's article, *The Crisis is Ripe*, received at the beginning of October, the sixth chapter of

which was intended for distribution among the members of the Central Committee, Petrograd Committee and Moscow Committee, pointed out that "in the Central Committee and among the Party leaders there is a tendency or a view in favour of awaiting the Congress of Soviets against the immediate capture of the power, against an immediate uprising." This tendency, which did not agree with the Central Committee, which together with Lenin urged the necessity of an uprising, was headed by Kamenev and Zinoviev. Nogin and Rykov supported them. Already at the April conference of the Party, Kamenev, in opposing Lenin, delivered a report on behalf of a small group, including a section of the Moscow and Moscow provincial delegation, Comrades Nogin, Rykov, Smidovich, Angarsky, and others. The great influence enjoyed by Comrades Nogin and Rykov among the Bolshevik fraction of the Moscow Soviet could not but adversely affect this section of the fraction which followed them. This group of Bolsheviks, who were deputies of the Moscow Soviet (E. N. Ignatov, Orekhov-Malikhov, K. G. Maximov, G. N. Karzinov, Ratekhin, Voznessensky, Burovtsev and others) sought to oppose the Bolshevik fraction of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies to the Moscow Committee of the Party after the October victory as well.*

Even before the Kornilov days (in May) the Moscow Committee, in order to combat this tendency, sent to the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies Comrades G. I. Lomov-Oppokov, A. S. Bubnov, G. A. Usievich, N. I. Bukharin and others.

V. I. Lenin's letters were discussed by the leading workers of the Moscow Party organisations and members of the Regional Bureau of the Party.

One of the conferences discussing the questions raised by Lenin took place in the apartment of V. A. Obuch on *Mertvy pereulok*. Among those present were N. I. Bukharin, M. V. Vladimirovsky, O. A. Piatnitsky, A. I. Gussiev, N. N. Zimin, E. Yaroslavsky, G. I. Lomov-Oppokov, V. M. Likhachev, V. A. Obukh, V. V. Ossinsky-Obolensky, V. M. Smirnov, V. N. Yakovleva and others.† Two points of view emerged at the Conference. One of them, supported by O. A. Piatnitsky, was that Moscow

* Comrade Ignatov, in reply to a question of whether the fraction of the Soviets would submit to the Moscow Committee stated as follows: "The Bureau of the Fraction informs the Fraction of the decisions of the M.C., but the Fraction may refuse to submit to its decisions."

† The names of all those present at the Conference cannot be ascertained. Different reminiscences give different names.

cannot take the initiative in an uprising, but can and must support an uprising when it begins in Petrograd. The supporters of this view adduced the following principal arguments: first, the workers of Moscow are poorly armed; second, the Moscow Committee is too weakly connected with the garrison, while the Presidium and the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies are controlled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks; finally, the garrison itself is insufficiently armed.

An opposite view was supported by members of the Regional Bureau, G. I. Lomox-Oppokov, V. V. Ossinsky-Obolensky and others. They maintained that, in view of the weakness of the Moscow military authorities, even a small force is sufficient to secure the success of an uprising.

The majority of the meetings and a series of other smaller conferences of leading workers of the Regional Bureau and Moscow Committee supported the view that Moscow cannot start the uprising.

However, regardless of the fact that the majority of the leading Moscow comrades took a stand in opposition to Moscow starting the uprising, the entire work of the Moscow Committee as well as of the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Party, after the discussion of V. I. Lenin's September letter, proceeded along the line of preparation and organisation of an uprising. As regards the masses of workers and soldiers, it became more and more clear that they were in favour of the capture of power by the Soviets, of an armed uprising.

How rapidly the Bolshevik slogans were picked up by the masses became particularly clear from the resolutions of the trade unions, shop committees, army units, etc. The Second Conference of shop committees of Moscow and Moscow *uyezd* (district), held on October 16, passed resolutions coinciding, in the main, with those of the Moscow Regional Bureau and Moscow Committee on the current situation and economic dislocation.

By that time the majority of the shop committees in the factories of Moscow and the Moscow *uyezd* were controlled by Bolsheviks. The Presidium of the Conference consisted of seven Bolsheviks and only one Menshevik and one Socialist-Revolutionary.

Upon taking up the organisation of the forces for a direct struggle of power the Moscow Committee, anxious to mobilise the masses for the Revolution, developed a housing, food, and general economic campaign, pointing out a number of concrete revolutionary measures which the masses must demand from the soviets.

The decision of the Moscow Committee adopted

on this question on October 7, before the Conference of shop committees, says:

"The Soviets must carry out these measures regardless of authorisation, by means of decrees, and capture power in this way as well. One of the important conflicts arising out of this practice will raise and force the soviets to decide the question of the capture of the central power."

The resolution of the Central Committee in favour of an uprising (adopted October 10) and Lenin's October letter (of October 3-7) to the Moscow and Petrograd Committees of the Bolsheviks ("if power cannot be captured without an uprising, it is necessary to make the uprising at once") were heatedly discussed by all the active members of the Moscow organisation.

Simultaneously, we received the statement of L. B. Kamenev and G. E. Zinoviev, addressed to the Central Committee, Petrograd Committee, and Moscow Committee, and the fractions of the soviets, which insists upon a "defensive position," rejection of an armed uprising and the necessity of waiting for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly in which the Bolsheviks would have to play the rôle of a "strong opposition organisation." The Moscow organisation of Bolsheviks unhesitatingly rejected the proposal of Kamenev and Zinoviev, believing that it would inevitably lead to the strengthening of the bourgeois democratic parliamentary coalition government, and the collapse of the revolution.

With the adoption of the decision of the Central Committee of the Party calling for an armed uprising, all debates as to whether Moscow can or cannot start the uprising,* whether it is timely or not, came to an end. In this way the chief differences existing between the leading workers of the Moscow Committee and the Regional Bureau of the Party were eliminated.

The Moscow Committee and the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Party proceeded to work out measures for the capture of the power by the Soviets. On October 14, the Moscow Regional Bureau, acting on a report of V. N. Yakovleva, who had just returned from Petrograd, joined without a discussion in the decision of the Central

* On October 8, two days before the historical meeting of the Central Committee which decided the question of the uprising, Lenin, in his letter "To the Comrades Bolsheviks participating in the Regional Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region," wrote:

"Near and in Petrograd—this is where this uprising can and should be decided and carried out in the most serious, best prepared, speedy and energetic manner possible."

By this time Lenin no longer raised (as he did in the article, "The Bolsheviks Must Seize Power" and "The Crisis is Ripe") the question of the possibility of starting the armed uprising in Moscow.

Committee of the Party passed on October 10, stating that "an armed uprising is inevitable and is fully mature," that it is necessary "to discuss and decide all practical questions from this angle," and sent the following instructions to the localities:

1. In solving the conflicts concerning the despatch of troops, disarming of garrisons, etc., arising locally, the local organisations were requested to discontinue the previous practice of compromises so that these conflicts might be brought to the stage of a conflict with the representative of the central authorities, avoiding at the same time bloody clashes, which are permissible only under conditions and in the interests of a general offensive.

2. In those parts of the region where power was already in the hands of the Soviets, the local organisations must conduct a campaign for proclaiming the power of the Soviets, the power in the given locality, without, however, going to the point of bloody clashes.

3. The local organisations were requested to create labour centres of the type recommended by the Regional Bureau during the Kornilov days. The big local organisations were to send representatives to the smaller organisations of the same province. The same meeting of the Regional Bureau drew up the texts of tentative telegrams to each big centre separately, which were to be sent by the Regional Bureau as a signal for a general uprising.

To co-ordinate the actions at the time of the uprising and lead it, it was decided to set up a Party fighting centre in Moscow, consisting of two representatives of the Regional Bureau, two representatives of the Moscow Committee and one representative of the district committee. The Party fighting centre was charged with direction of the work and actions of the comrades composing the Soviet fighting centre of the Moscow Soviet, and co-ordination of the entire work at the time of the uprising throughout the province. The Party fighting centre was to be vested with dictatorial powers.

The work in the province connected with the realisation of the decision of the Regional Bureau soon yielded results. Thus, already on October 16, the Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Vladimir *Gubernia*,* acting on a report of a representative of the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party, unanimously and without a debate, declared the Provisional Government and all parties supporting it to be a government and parties of treachery to the Revolution and betrayal of the people.

In connection with the preparations for an armed uprising the Moscow Committee delegated O. A. Piatnitsky to the Central Committee. He arrived in Petrograd already after the meeting of the Central Committee. There he met Comrades J. M. Sverdlov, J. V. Stalin and had a long conversation with V. I. Lenin, who at that time lived illegally in Petrograd.

Upon returning from Petrograd, O. A. Piatnitsky, on October 18 or 19 (the exact date cannot be ascertained) called an inter-district meeting of the Moscow activists, which was addressed by O. A. Piatnitsky and V. N. Yakovleva. This meeting was held at corner of First Brestskaya Street and Vasilievsky pereulok in the hall of the Party organisation of the railway district.

"The meeting (which was attended by all the district committees) definitely and resolutely recognised an open armed struggle inevitable. True, there were isolated voices about a shortage of arms, forces, etc., but the Moscow activists almost unanimously supported the view of the Moscow Committee that it was necessary to go over to an armed struggle for the capture of power by the Soviets."*

On October 22 the Moscow Committee of the Party adopted a plan of the reorganisation of the Committee. A number of commissions were appointed, including the fighting body of the Moscow Committee, consisting of a secretariat (M. F. Vladimirsky, O. A. Piatnitsky and I. B. Zivtshivadze), a member of the Military Bureau of the Moscow Committee, and a member of the Commission of the Red Guard, and a Red Guard Commission, which consisted of the district organisers of the Red Guard, and a Military Commission of the M.C.

The District Party Committees have already organised special commissions to work out a plan for the capture of power by the soviets. The Moscow Committee of the Party decided that all commissions set up by the Moscow Committee should include some workers among their members so that when concrete decrees, resolutions, decisions are issued, they would help to formulate the practical aspects in them.

The district meetings which followed the inter-district conference revealed the prevalence of militant sentiments in all districts. At the same time, the struggle throughout the region against the despatch of the revolutionary regiments to the front was growing more and more intense. Already in September the Moscow Military Dis-

* An Outline of the History of the October Revolution in Moscow, by M. Vladimirsky. *The October Days In Moscow*, p. 265.

* County.

strictly ordered the entire garrison of the city of Wladimir, which was almost completely controlled by the Bolsheviks, to proceed from the city to an unnamed place of destination. The Plenum of the Moscow Regional Bureau, held on September 27-28, instructed the Bolshevik Wladimir Soviet to leave the garrison in Moscow and adopted the following desolution:

"Seeking to preserve all the revolutionary forces for the forthcoming realisation of the slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets,' the Regional Bureau requests all local organisations resolutely to fight against the plan, which is being systematically pursued, for the weakening of the revolutionary centres by the withdrawal from them of the revolutionary army units."

In those places where this decision was carried into effect, the Bolshevik regiments refused to obey the marching orders.

The military organisation of the Moscow Committee, which conducted the work in the units of the Moscow Garrison, and was connected up with the garrisons of the region and with the front, directed its work towards securing the re-election in all the units of the Moscow garrison, first, of the company and then—in October—of the regimental committees. As a result, at the time of the October uprising, the company committees in all the units of the Moscow garrison had been re-elected. As regards the elections of the regimental committees they had been held in only some of the units and were completed only by October 27. The new elections of company committees gave a definite majority to the Bolsheviks already by the end of September. As a result of this work it became possible to oppose the Socialist - Revolutionary - Menshevik Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies by a newly organised force as represented by the garrison meeting of company committees, which subsequently played an important part in the organisation of the mutiny in the Moscow garrison.

A campaign for revolutionary fraternisation between the workers and soldiers was developed in the district. Thus, on the eve of the October uprising the Krasnopressnensky Soviet of Workers' Deputies, in response to a proposal of the Bolsheviks, organised a huge demonstration of the workers of all factories of the district, who with banners and slogans, "All Power to the Soviets," marched to the First Artillery Reserve Brigade quartered at Khodynka, in which the old battery, division and brigade committees had not been re-elected, and organised a great meeting there with the participation of 6,000 soldiers. Following upon the meeting, the soldiers,

together with the workers, proceeded with music, banners and revolutionary songs to the Vagan-kovskoye cemetery, where at the tomb of N. E. Bauman they swore to continue the struggle to the bitter end. The workers of the Michelson plant undertook similar patronage over the 25th reserve infantry regiment.

On October 22 the Military Bureau of the Moscow Committee, together with the Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party, called a Regional Conference of military organisations for the purpose of securing unity in the actions throughout the province. This conference clearly revealed the intense hostility of all the garrisons of the region towards Kerensky and the Provisional Government. The news from Petrograd of the speedy development of events made it necessary to close the conference on October 23 without discussing the entire agenda. The delegates had to be on the spot at the decisive moment.

"In the evening of October 23 a Conference (of the Military Bureau of the Moscow Committee) was held with representatives of the districts and military units. The question of the impending armed uprising was discussed. Representatives of the army units maintained without hesitation or doubt that the time was ripe, that it was no longer possible to wait, that the moment was opportune to arouse the soldiers for an armed struggle."*

Thus were brought out the Bolshevik sentiments of all the garrisons of the region and of Moscow itself. In Moscow, however, as stated above, the official leadership of the masses of soldiers still remained in the Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, of which only a fourth of the membership were Bolsheviks.

This could not but have influenced the work of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee, which was forced, only after its formation, to organise a provisional committee of Soldiers' Deputies, this taking fully three days (October 26, 27 and 28).

The suppression of the soviets in Kaluga, carried out by detachments of Cossacks and cavalry sent from the front, emphasised the necessity of passing immediately to determined action.

On October 25 a Party fighting centre was formed with the following members: V. N. Yakovleva and M. N. Stukov, from the Regional Bureau; M. F. Vladimirov, O. A. Piatnitsky, from the Moscow Committee; V. I. Soloviev,

* From *February to October*, p. 79. Reminiscences of O. A. Varentzova, who worked in 1917 in the Military Bureau of the Moscow Committee.

from the Moscow District Committee; V. Z. Kozelev, from the Central Bureau of trade unions, and E. Yaroslavsky, from the Military Bureau. I. S. Kieselstein and T. A. Saprnov were appointed candidates by the Regional Bureau and District Committee respectively.

Subsequently V. N. Podbelsky was appointed candidate by the Moscow Committee and later elected full member at a special session of the Moscow Committee, Regional Bureau and District Committee, held on October 26.

To carry out the October Revolution in Moscow and in the Moscow region a Party fighting centre was set up in Moscow even before information was received from Petrograd that the power had been captured by the Soviets, and began to work in the morning of October 25, before the election of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee.

2.—THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES IN THE FIGHT FOR POWER.

As mentioned above, the Bolshevik fraction, on September 5, gained the majority at the joint session of the Plenum of the Soviets of Moscow and on September 19 in the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies. The Soviet immediately decided to adopt a new policy, passing from the collaboration of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries to a revolutionary struggle.

The struggle was conducted along two main lines: for the organisation and arming of the proletariat and against the policy of the employers, who took advantage of the economic dislocation to worsen the conditions of the workers by reducing wages, proclaiming lock-outs and effecting mass dismissals.

The struggle of the Soviets for arming the workers and soldiers began by the demonstration of the shop-committees' representatives at the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet, organised on August 31.

The Presidium of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, together with the staff of the Moscow Military District, interfered with the arming of the workers and the soldiers of the garrison, under various pretexts.

On October 24 the Plenum of the Soviets, despite the objections of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, adopted almost unanimously, by a vote of 374 against 8, with 27 abstaining, the Constitution of the Red Guard.

The Bolshevik Fraction of the Soviet submitted to the enlarged session of executive committees of the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies with representatives of all the trade unions, a number of decrees corresponding to the decisions

of the conference of shop committees, held on October 16.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries opposed the proposal of the Bolshevik fraction urging that a constructive programme should be sent to the Provisional Government. Considering the Party membership of the Executive Committee of Soldiers' Deputies, there was nothing surprising about the fact that the joint executive committee passed the resolution of the social collaborationists by a majority of 46 to 33.*

On October 19 the Bolsheviks again raised the question of "the economic struggle of the workers" at the Plenum of the Soviets, which, following upon a report by N. I. Bukharin and a stormy debate, adopted, by a majority of 332 against 207 and 13 abstaining, the resolution moved by the Bolsheviks.

After the adoption of this resolution the Mensheviks published a statement saying that:

"The measures proposed by the Bolsheviks . . . represent the complete bankruptcy of Bolshevism and that the decree of the Soviets of compliance with the workers' demands and threatening the arrest of the capitalists, represents a virtual capture of the power in the most unwise form . . ."

On October 24, at a joint meeting of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, N. I. Bukharin made public the following decree No. 1 and an appeal to the entire toiling population which had been adopted by the Executive Committee:—

"1. Workers are engaged and discharged by the administration of the firm with the consent of the shop committee. In case of the latter's dissent the question is submitted to the District Soviet of Workers' Deputies, whose decision is binding to both parties. Pending a final decision neither the engagement nor the discharge are regarded as valid.

"2. Engagement and discharge of employees can be carried out only with the consent of the employees' committee.

"3. The said regulations are compulsory upon all enterprises in the City of Moscow . . .

"Those guilty of violating these regulations will be dealt with by the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the most resolute manner, even down to their arrest."

In an appeal to the soldiers, workers and

* The Bolshevik fraction of the executive committees of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies had 43 votes, while the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had 60 votes. In addition, there were three internationalists on the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and nine non-partisans on the E.C. of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies.

peasants the Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies explained why it had decided to interfere with the struggle of the capitalists against the workers and shop committees and exposed a plan of trustified capital supported by the landlords. The appeal ended with a call to be ready to respond to the attack of capital by a concerted and powerful counter-attack all along the front.

The news of the crushing of the Kaluga Soviet received in Moscow on October 21 aroused a storm of indignation among the masses of workers and soldiers of Moscow and the region.

The "Social-Democrat" on October 24th sharply attacked the counter-revolutionary thugs in an article entitled *Civil War Has Begun*:

"War has been declared," says the article.

"In Kaluga the Soviets have been suppressed, their members arrested and some, it is rumoured, shot. The city is run by the Cossacks who were sent by the order of the Provisional Government from the western front. The thing is clear, the government has declared civil war and has already won a victory in Kaluga. What we prophesied has come true. This time it is not Kornilov, but Kerensky, who at the head of the capitalist scoundrels, is openly attacking the people, whom he for seven months had humbugged by his speeches . . . Kerensky and his agents are our open enemies: no negotiations with them. One does not talk to enemies but fights them . . . Immediate resistance must be offered. The time for conversations is past . . ."

On October 25, while the Moscow Committee of the Party was establishing fighting centres of the Party and Soviets, a conference was held of representatives of the bureaux of all the fractions of the Soviet, at which the mayor Rudniev, a Socialist-Revolutionary, announced the events in Petrograd.

The conference adopted the following draft resolution in the name of the Bureaux of all the fractions of the Soviets for the Plenum of the Moscow Soviet, scheduled to be held on the same day at 3 p.m.:

"To restore revolutionary order in Moscow and protect the city against every counter-revolutionary attempt a provisional democratic body is created of representatives of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, the city administration, the Zemstvo, the staff of the district, the All-Russian Railwaymen's Union and Post and Telegraph Workers' Union."

The position of the representatives of the Bolshevik fraction during the discussion of this resolution at the Bureaux of all the fractions of

the Soviets cannot be ascertained with full clarity. Apparently while not objecting in principle to this resolution, the Fraction limited itself to objecting to the mode of representation of the different parties on the committee created.

The decision of the Moscow Committee of the Party was in sharp discord with the collaborationists and the soothing decision of the Bureau of the different fractions of the Soviets; for the Moscow Committee instructed the Bolshevik fraction of the Soviets to immediately create a soviet fighting centre of three Bolsheviks, one representative of the Red Guard (a Bolshevik), one Menshevik, one Socialist-Revolutionary and one representative of the staff of the Moscow Military District. This decision of the Moscow Committee was not known to the representatives of the Bolshevik fraction at the time of the meeting of the Bureau.

In opening the session, the Chairman, P. G. Smidovich, insisted in his speech upon a unanimous decision of the question of the organisation of the government in Moscow, basing himself apparently upon the draft resolution for the creation of a *coalition* democratic government, adopted at the conference of the Bureaux of the various fractions of the Soviet.

The draft of the "conciliation" resolution concerning the composition of the government was entirely out of harmony with the decision of the Moscow Committee, and the sentiments of the Bolshevik fraction of the Plenum and in complete conflict with the line of the Bolshevik Party. At the meeting of the fraction of the Plenum this draft was subjected to sharp criticism. The representatives of the Bureau of the Bolshevik fraction were told that the resolution adopted by them not only conflicted with the line of the Party and was in disharmony with the political situation, but might serve in poor stead to the Petrograd workers, who had already started the uprising. A section of the comrades continued to defend the "conciliatory" resolution, pointing out that the Bolsheviks might get a majority in the government which it has been decided to organise.

The overwhelming majority voted against the "conciliatory resolution" and adopted the following resolution instead:

"The Moscow Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies elect at this meeting a revolutionary committee of seven members. This revolutionary committee is authorised to co-opt representatives of other revolutionary-democratic organisations and groups with the approval of the Plenum of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The revolutionary committee begins to act immediately,

making it its task to render the utmost assistance to the revolutionary committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."

Two policies, the Bolshevik policy and the collaborationist policy, fought at the Plenum of the Soviets on October 25: the first for support of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison, the second for the betrayal of the struggle under the pretext of awaiting the developments of the Petrograd events. This struggle continued even after the great majority of the Plenum of the Soviets, upon electing a military-revolutionary committee, issued an appeal to the Moscow workers, not to allow the Petrograd proletariat to be defeated, and to help it by all means to gain the victory.

On the night of October 25 to 26 the Moscow Committee of the Menshevik organisation, urging "to conduct a struggle against the mad policy of the capture of the power by the Soviets alone" . . . "against the adventurist policy of the Bolsheviks," sought to make the workers believe that it is prepared "to fight to the utmost against every attempt to suppress the movement of the workers and soldiers by armed force and against all repressions against revolutionary democracy."

The treacherous and hypocritical programme of the Mensheviks on the eve of October predetermined the rôle of their representatives on the military-revolutionary committee, which they joined not "to help capture the power for the soviets, but in order to fight within the military-revolutionary committee itself for its replacement by a general democratic and revolutionary body."

The double-dealing policy of the Mensheviks was in some measure responsible for the indecision displayed during the first days of the uprising by its leadership in Moscow.

* * *

In summing up the preparations of the Moscow Bolsheviks for the October uprising, and the struggle for the power of the Soviets, it must be admitted that between the active workers of the Moscow organisation on the one hand, and the members of the Regional Bureau of the Bolshevik Party on the other, there were serious differences on the question of the capture of the power during the process of the mobilisation of the forces and preparations for the uprising. The leading workers of the Regional Bureau, for the first time, advanced the question of the capture of power as early as July 4, 1917, as soon as the news of the July demonstration in Petrograd was received in Moscow. They then proposed to

occupy the post and telegraph offices, seize the editorial offices and printshop of the "Russkoye Slovo," etc. The Moscow Committee rejected this proposal. It was right in this, as the great masses of the proletariat did not even come out to the demonstration appointed by the Moscow Committee for the July days. On the other hand, the leading comrades of the Moscow organisation underestimated the necessity of preparing the Party members and the masses of workers and soldiers for the capture of power, especially after these masses began to display a change of feelings during the Moscow State Conference. There were also differences between the Moscow Committee and the members of the Bolshevik fractions of the executive committees of the Soviets; among the members of these fractions there were comrades who were generally opposed to the idea of an uprising and who regarded the transfer of power to the Soviets as a peculiar stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The leading workers of the Moscow Committee and regional bureau jointly fought against this opportunist tendency. But it was only after the October battles that it was exposed completely.

Only after the receipt of V. I. Lenin's letter, in which he pointed out the possibility and necessity of beginning the uprising in Moscow, did the Moscow Committee adopt the policy of direct preparations for an uprising.

Among the mistakes committed during the preparations for the uprising, it is necessary to underline the following: Insufficient attention was given to the work among the soldiers, and to ascertaining which units could be fully relied upon at the time of the uprising, and the struggle for the re-election of the Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies was conducted with insufficient energy, as the result of which, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries remained in the Presidium and the Executive Committee of Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies.

In consequence of these mistakes, the fighting centre elected by the Moscow Committee on October 22 failed to take up its work until October 25. For the same reason the Party fighting centre, elected by the Moscow Committee, Moscow Regional Bureau and the District Committee of the Party on October 25 was compelled to take up the direct leadership of the uprising as soon as it learned of the Petrograd events, without preliminary preparations.

(To be continued.)