

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

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(Continuation)

3.—HESITATION OF THE MILITARY-REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE. SURRENDER OF THE KREMLIN AND THE OPENING OF HOSTILITIES.

THE initiative in the fighting directly after the receipt of the news concerning the capture of power in Petrograd was in the hands of the military-revolutionary council.

The offensive organised in the districts began on October 25th prior to the receipt of a telephone order from the Party centre.

At the same time the Party centre, at about noon of October 25th, issued orders to occupy the main post office, telegraph and telephone exchange.

However, in the fulfilment of this order a misunderstanding occurred. Next to the post office and telegraph was located the inter-urban telephone exchange. Upon occupying it, the detachment considered its task to have been fulfilled, whereas in reality it was necessary to occupy the central city telephone exchange in the Militinsky pereulok, which it did not do.

From October 26th until November 8th the bourgeois newspapers, *Russkoye Slovo*, *Utro Rossii*, *Russkie Vedomosti*, *Ranneya Utro*, were not published.

Even before the end of the meeting of the Plenum of the Moscow Soviets, at midnight of October 26th, the military-revolutionary committee met at the building of the Soviet and took up its work.

The Party centre, which met at the same time in the same building, adopted a number of decisions, dealing with the capture of the Kremlin, in which was the arsenal, the seizure of the State

bank and railway stations, etc. These orders were conveyed to the Bolshevik members of the military-revolutionary committee for execution and were carried out by them through the military-revolutionary committee, contrary to the protests of the Mensheviks. These decisions were conveyed to the staff of the military-revolutionary committee and to the executive committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies for execution.

Within the Kremlin were stationed the 56th reserve infantry regiment and about 1,500 members of the arsenal corps who were of Bolshevik sentiments. At the same time, however, the headquarters of Colonel Ryabtsev, the commander of the forces, the staff of the Ukrainian forces headed by Colonel Onufrienko, two armoured cars, many officers and the First Officers' Schools were also quartered there.

It was necessary to strengthen the Kremlin garrison by soldiers devoted to the Soviets; the choice fell upon the 193rd reserve infantry regiment which was quartered in the Khamovniki barracks and which was to be reformed, i.e., despatched to the front by an order of Ryabtsev of October 15th.

On the night of October 25th, E. Yaroslavsky, who was appointed Commissar of the Kremlin, went to Khamovniki and brought a company of soldiers which at 5 a.m. arrived in the Kremlin and received arms from the arsenal.

Upon receipt of news to the effect that the *Junkers* had occupied the riding school and city Duma at 3 a.m., October 26th, the military-revolutionary committee, despite Menshevik protests, despatched to the printing shop of the *Izvestia* of

the *Moscow Soviet* an order to the garrison stating that :

"The entire Moscow garrison must be immediately brought into fighting readiness, each army unit must be prepared to march out on the first order of the military-revolutionary committee No orders coming from others than the military-revolutionary committee or not bearing its signature are to be executed."

On October 26th all the workers of the military-revolutionary committee, with the exception of those on H.Q. duty, proceeded to the districts.

In all the districts the Soviets elected military-revolutionary committees. The Bolshevik section of the district military-revolutionary committees proceeded to act immediately without waiting for the sanction of the district soviets.

The most painful question in the districts was that of arming the workers. For this reason the district Party centres and military-revolutionary committees saw to it that trucks should be sent immediately to the Kremlin under the protection of the Red Guards with the demand for arms. Only three of these trucks succeeded in reaching their destination, as, after a company of the 193rd infantry reserve regiment arrived there, the *Junkers* surrounded the Kremlin, stopping the trucks arriving from the districts, and arresting the Red Guards who came as their escorts.

In the evening of October 26th, in response to a demand from O. Berzin, the Kremlin Commandant, twelve machine-guns with ammunition and 70,000 rifle cartridges were issued to him. These machine-guns were immediately placed on the Kremlin walls, by order of Berzin.

In every district persons in military uniforms passing through the streets had to give up their arms. The arms were taken away not only by Red Guard patrols, but also by volunteers, who were thus acquiring arms to participate in the coming battles. There were cases when Red Guards with rifles, minus cartridges, disarmed officers and *Junkers* who were excellently armed.

On October 26th all the police stations were also occupied.

Only the police headquarters of Moscow, which subsequently served as one of the most important positions of the Whites during the *Junker* offensive upon the Moscow Soviet, remained unoccupied.

The executive committee of the police trade unions was on the side of the soviets. The Bolsheviks conducted work among the ranks of the police and entered their membership in accordance with a decision of the Moscow Committee of the Party adopted in April. As a result the bulk of the police followed the Bolsheviks.

In connection with the action of the *Junkers*

in throwing a cordon around the Kremlin and intercepting the trucks sent to the Kremlin for arms, the Party centre at 12 noon sent the following telephone message to the district Party organisations :

"The staff headed by Ryabtsev is assuming the offensive. Our automobiles are being stopped and attempts have been made to arrest members of the military-revolutionary committee. This situation should be made clear at the meetings in the factories and mills and the masses should be immediately called upon to make a demonstration of real force before the staff. It is therefore necessary for the masses to begin to act independently under the leadership of district centres with a view to the actual establishment of the power of the Soviets in the districts. Occupy the Commissariats."

The Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party on October 26th issued an appeal to the workers and soldiers to take up the offensive against the staff of the Moscow military district in order to release the revolutionary soldiers who were locked up in the Kremlin by the *Junkers*.

At 4 p.m., October 26th, the district military-revolutionary committees received a telephone message from the centre proposing "to refrain from offensive actions."

Apparently such an order had been issued in connection with negotiations opened between V. F. Nogin and Ryabtsev.

As a result of these negotiations "the two sides came to the conclusion that all actions carried out by both parties must be annulled. The *Junkers* will be removed and the military-revolutionary committee will withdraw its units" from the Kremlin (i.e., the company of the 193rd regiment). "The representatives of the military-revolutionary committee are to send a representative to headquarters."

In the evening of October 26th a special meeting was held by the Moscow committee, district committee and regional bureau of the Party in view of the fact that sharp differences had developed between the members of the military-revolutionary committee and the Party centre on the negotiations with Ryabtsev. This meeting, after a serious exchange of views, passed a categorical decision to discontinue all negotiations with Ryabtsev and issued orders to the military centres to open a determined offensive. In the evening of the 26th the negotiations were discontinued.

In the morning of October 27th the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries began to circulate rumours about the fall of the Council of People's Commissars and the victory of Kerensky. The military-revolutionary committee instructed P. G. Smidovich and O. A. Piatnitsky to get into con-

tact with Petrograd and ascertain the real state of affairs.

The two comrades went to the hall of the Moscow Bureau of the E.C. of the All-Russian Railwaymen's Union (which was then located in the building of the Gendarmerie Department of the Nikolaev Railway) for the purpose of telephoning to some member of the government in Petrograd, or the military-revolutionary committee. The right Socialist-Revolutionary Garr, a member of the union, did not allow the representatives of the Moscow military-revolutionary committee to use the telephone, but started negotiations personally, telling them only what he thought necessary.

For this reason Piatnitsky, who had conducted Party work among the railwaymen of the Moscow junction, remained in the military-revolutionary committee of the railway district in order to establish reliable connections with Petrograd over the head of the Railwaymen's Union. In this he finally succeeded. Since the wire by which the Railwaymen's Union was connected with the Ministry of Ways and Communications in Petrograd passed through the station of the Northern Railway, the military-revolutionary committee of this railway was not only able to ring up Petrograd itself (it called on the telephone the member of the Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union, Khrulev, a worker of the northern line who was an internationalist, and who informed it concerning the Petrograd events), but was able to control all conversations between the Moscow Bureau of the Railwaymen's Executive and Petrograd. The control organised at the station of the Northern Railway thus intercepted the telegrams sent by Ryabtsev, particularly those concerning the movement of troops, the shipment of arms, etc.

In connection with the fact that Ryabtsev on October 27th proposed that representatives of the military-revolutionary committees should be sent to him to discuss "modes of arming" the workers, the struggle within the Bolshevik leading bodies was resumed. Those workers who had been in disagreement with the decision of the Moscow committee, regional bureau and district committee, to discontinue negotiations, demanded a revision of this decision. In view of these differences a joint meeting of all the available members of the Party centre and of the Bolshevik section of the military-revolutionary committee was called. Here two points of view wrestled against each other. "By a majority of nine against five it was decided to reopen negotiations with Ryabtsev." (From a report by V. N. Yakovleva.)

In the evening of October 26th a meeting was

held by the district commissars of the military-revolutionary committee to discuss the "general plan of action of the revolutionary army."

In the course of two days, on October 26th-27th, negotiations were conducted both with Rudniev, the representative of the Committee of Public Security, and Ryabtsev, the Commander of the Forces.

Rudniev and Ryabtsev deliberately dragged out these negotiations until the receipt of a telegram from headquarters and the western front stating that the troops requested by them had been sent out and that the first reinforcements from the front would arrive in Moscow on October 28th. From this moment the right-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries and the bourgeois representatives from the Committee of Public Security discontinued all talk of an agreement; an ultimatum was prepared which Ryabtsev sent to the military-revolutionary committee at 7 p.m. October 27th.

The Soviet of Officers' Deputies called a meeting of officers supporting the Provisional Government in the morning of October 27th and prepared a detailed plan of crushing the Soviets and disarming the units supporting them.

The negotiations with Ryabtsev and the instructions given in this connection to the districts (at 4 p.m. October 26th) to refrain from offensive actions could not but disorganise the districts. However, the masses of workers and soldiers, once brought into motion, continued to prepare for a decisive struggle despite instructions to desist from offensive actions.

The isolated skirmishes with *Junkers* and officers accompanied by their disarming, which began already on October 26th, continued in many places.

It was clear that the workers and soldiers were opposed to any agreements with the White Guards and *Junkers*.

During the negotiations in the Kremlin with Ryabtsev on October 27th the soldiers very nearly tore him to pieces.

V. P. Nogin who, at 7 p.m. October 27th, telephoned to the military-revolutionary committee Ryabtsev's ultimatum to dissolve and commit for trial the military-revolutionary committee threatening to start hostilities against the Soviets, strongly urged the resumption of negotiations with Ryabtsev. Simultaneously with the Ryabtsev ultimatum, the Mensheviks, the true agents of the bourgeoisie, resigned from the military-revolutionary committee. Ryabtsev's ultimatum was rejected.

At 10 p.m. October 27th, following upon Ryabtsev's ultimatum, the *Junkers* opened the offensive.

The available members of the military-revolu-

tionary committee and Party centre, at a joint conference, responded by a decision to call upon the Moscow proletariat to proclaim a general strike and rally all forces to defeat the White Guards. It was decided necessary to send V. P. Nogin, the Chairman of the Soviet, back to Petrograd.

In the morning of October 28th, Berzin, the Kremlin Commandant, deceived by Ryabtsev and the *Junkers*, after the company of the 193rd reserve regiment had been removed from the Kremlin, and the Kremlin Commissar, E. Yaroslavsky, left with it, in accordance with an agreement with the military-revolutionary committee, surrendered the Kremlin.

Ryabtsev gave Berzin 25 minutes to open the Troitsky and Borovitsky gates, leave five hostages at the gate, remove all the sentries and patrols, lay down arms and line up the 56th regiment near the monument of Alexander II., threatening otherwise to open gun-fire.

The soldiers at a meeting of the company committees responded by a rejection of this ultimatum: "We will not surrender the Kremlin, we must die anyway, let us at least die with arms in our hands." Nevertheless Berzin succeeded in persuading the soldiers to surrender their arms.

During the surrender of the Kremlin the *Junkers* simultaneously mowed down the soldiers in the Kremlin from machine-guns in two places: the soldiers of the 56th regiment near the Alexander II. monument and the soldiers of the arsenal in the arsenal yard.

This massacre of the soldiers aroused tremendous indignation among the Moscow garrison. On the same day (October 28th) a garrison meeting elected a provisional committee of soldiers' deputies of ten members to co-operate with the military-revolutionary committee.

This garrison meeting proclaimed the Socialist-Revolutionary Menshevik Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies to be a traitor to the Revolution.

On October 28th the members of the Party centre went to the different districts to inform them of the situation of the centre, which proved to be practically cut off from the districts, and to call upon them to develop a most energetic offensive from the districts in order to release the centre. On the same day the Party centre sent to the region comrades with the request for the speediest reinforcements.

On October 28th the military-revolutionary committee, the central bureau of Trade Unions, the Moscow committee of the Party and the Moscow organisation of the Social-Democracy of Poland and Lithuania issued an appeal to the workers to show "to our enemies that the over-

whelming majority of the Moscow population is against them."

The Moscow proletarians enthusiastically responded to this call and all Moscow factories stopped work.

The same evening, *Skobelevskaya Ploshad* (Soviet Square now), where the Soviet was located, was being fired upon from all sides. The Soviet was surrounded by *Junkers* from *Okhotny Riad* and the side streets entering into *Nikit-skaya Street*.

The military-revolutionary committee and its staff worked out a plan for breaking through this White Guard cordon. The offensive from the Soviet developed in every direction. Barricades were erected and trenches dug around the Soviet.

On the night of October 28th a mobilisation of fighting forces was carried out in every district. On the evening of October 28th the Party centre decided to remove to *Zamoskvoretsky* district, from where it was easier to organise an offensive upon the centre in case the Soviet should be captured by the *Junkers* and to establish connections with the majority of the districts. The centre got into contact with practically every district. Demands for arms and ammunition came from every side. However, it proved to be no easy matter to obtain cartridges of the necessary make and calibre and supply them to the neighbouring districts. On October 29th a report was received by the Party centre from the military-revolutionary committee of the railwaymen's district that about 40,000 rifles had been found on the Kazan Railway. The Party centre immediately organised the distribution of the rifles to those districts which had not yet received arms.

Soon after the rifles were found, Red Guards captured the *Simonovsky* powder magazines.

Thus the districts received rifles and cartridges. Workers and soldiers began to be armed in the districts and organised into detachments.

From this moment the districts captured the initiative in the fight against the White Guards.

Already by the evening of October 28th the militant activity of the districts sharply changed the situation of the Central Soviet.

An offensive was started upon the police headquarters.

On October 29th the military-revolutionary committee opened an offensive in the centre. A detachment of cyclists consisting of 70 persons occupied the *Maly Theatre* opposite the *Metropole Hotel*, which was held by the *Junkers*.

The siege of the police headquarters on the *Tverskoi Boulevard* begun on October 28th met with tremendous difficulties because the approach to the headquarters from *Strastnaya Ploshad* was under the constant fire of the *Junkers* who occu-

pied *Nikitskie Vorota*. On October 29th the staff of the military-revolutionary committee issued an order to subject the police headquarters to artillery fire. After one direct hit the occupants surrendered the building. The chief of the detachment attacking the police headquarters, G. V. Sablin, continued the offensive upon *Nikitskie Vorota*, which was occupied in the evening of the same day.

Bitter fighting continued for several days for the possession of the *Nikitskie Vorota*. The Reds entrenched themselves in the side streets leading to the Soviet and occupied a number of houses facing *Bolshaya Nikitskaya* Street, which became the border between the Reds and the *Junkers*.

In Lefortovo the majority of the cadets and employees of the cadet buildings surrendered after a severe artillery fire, while the *Junkers* and the older cadets continued to resist.

In Khamovniki the Red Guards on October 29th captured the quartermaster's warehouse and *Katkov Lyceum*, at the corner of *Ostozhenka*, and entrenching themselves on *Krymskaya Ploshad* and the approaches to the *Krymsky* bridge, opened an offensive against the staff of the Moscow military district along *Prechistenka* and *Ostozhenka* streets.

The Red Guards of Zamoskvoretski district, where there was no fighting, occupied the bridges on Moskva river and fought against the *Junkers* stationed on the opposite bank.

This district was of special importance in the October days, as there were many factories in it which served as a reservoir for the formation of Red Guard detachments.

The *Sokolniki* district served as the centre for the reinforcements arriving from the province, who received arms in this district. The *Sokolniki* tramway shops served as the place where the Red Guards gathered and learned to use arms. The Red Guards of the *Sokolniki* district fought in the city district and in the centre.

In the Krasnopresniensky district on Khodynka was located the first reserve artillery brigade, from which the military-revolutionary committee took thirteen zin. guns in the October days. The chief task of the Krasnopresniensky district was the capture of the Alexandrov station with the aid of the military-revolutionary committee of the Alexandrov railway. This was accomplished without any clashes.

The fighting conducted by the armed forces of the military-revolutionary committee developed successfully. The *Junkers* and officers surrendered such important positions as the police headquarters and *Nikitskie Vorota*.

The further success of the Reds appeared to be beyond doubt.

At this moment the executive committee of the All-Russian Union of Railwaymen submitted its ultimatum for the conclusion of a truce. The Moscow military-revolutionary committee accepted the proposal for the cessation of hostilities and resumption of negotiations.

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During the first three days of the struggle for the capture of power by the Soviets in Moscow (October 25th, 26th, and 27th) the leading organs of the uprising committed a number of blunders and mistakes which resulted in the protraction of the struggle.

The following are the chief of them :—

1. The Party fighting centre elected on October 25th even before the Moscow committee of the Party had learned of the capture of power by the Soviets in Petrograd, although it began to work immediately without awaiting for the election by the Plenum of the Soviets of the military-revolutionary committee, and sent out the limited Bolshevist forces to occupy the central post office, the telegraph office and the telephone exchange, nevertheless did not take sufficient measures to "form detachments of the best workers with rifles and bombs to attack and surround the enemy centres" (Lenin).

In Moscow one of the particularly important tasks of the leadership of the uprising was to arm the workers (the Red Guard for the most part had no arms) and the soldiers of the garrison. Arms were stored in the Kremlin arsenal and cartridges in the Simonovsky cartridge and powder magazines.

It turned out that, owing to the insufficient vigilance of the comrades in charge of the occupation of the post office, telegraph and telephone station, the employees of these institutions, even after their capture by the Bolshevik units, supported the counter-revolution and delivered to the city duma and the staff of the military district various telegrams, switched in the telegraph station of the staff of the district for telegraphic conversations and allowed the Committee of Public Security and its staff to conduct telephone conversations.

The leading organs of the uprising failed at first to give sufficient attention to the cartridge and dynamite magazines in *Simonovka*, while the measures to capture the Kremlin arsenal were belated and insufficiently energetic.

On the night of October 25th, as soon as the military-revolutionary committee was elected, the Party centre instructed the Bolshevik members of the committee to pass through it (the committee, it will be remembered, had some Men-

sheviks and Unionist members) a decision to appoint a commissar and commandant for the Kremlin and send army units there sympathising with the Bolsheviks. Such a decision was passed, but was carried out only in the morning of October 26th.

Meantime the *Junkers* occupied the riding school located at the Troitzky gate of the Kremlin. And when in the morning of October 26th motor trucks were sent to the Kremlin for arms, the *Junkers* detained them and posted sentries at the gates to the Kremlin.

2. The commandant and commissar of the Kremlin failed to arrest Ryabtsev and his staff officers who were in the Kremlin, to disarm the *Junkers* and officers, to take full advantage of all the possibilities for putting into fighting order the Kremlin units devoted to the Revolution (they did not appoint reliable crews for the armoured cars), to call the unarmed units of the garrison and Red Guard detachments into the Kremlin to be armed, and to take up the fight against the *Junkers* occupying the riding school; in short, they failed to do everything necessary to make the Kremlin into a citadel of the uprising.

They not only lived in peace with the White Guard staff, but even prevented the soldiers from dealing properly with Ryabtsev. These blunders led to even worse mistakes.

The "patriarchal" relations established between the Bolsheviks, the full-time workers of the Soviet, and the leaders of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries hampered the freedom of action of the fighting organs of the uprising. The representatives of the military-revolutionary committee, who for two days (October 26th-27th) conducted negotiations with Rudniev and Ryabtsev in the name of the committee, accepted Ryabtsev's promises to restore in the Kremlin the position which existed before October 25th, i.e., to withdraw the *Junkers*, provided the military-revolutionary committee withdrew the company of the 193rd regiment from the Kremlin. The revolutionary committee withdrew the company, but Ryabtsev again posted the *Junkers* around the Kremlin gates as soon as the company left the Kremlin. This mistake was followed by an even graver error. The commandant of the Kremlin surrendered the Kremlin. The White Guards received arms, including rifles, machine-guns and two armoured cars.

The White Guards repaid with treachery for the pacific policy of the commandant and commissar; they not only disarmed the soldiers but placed them under machine-gun fire.

3. The bourgeois newspapers were closed on the night of October 25, but the newspapers of the Socialist-revolutionaries, Mensheviks and

other collaborationists were allowed to continue publication. These papers slandered the Bolsheviks and the workers and soldiers who had risen in revolt. They published false rumours of Bolshevik defeats in Petrograd and of victories on the part of Kerensky.

4. Two Mensheviks and one unionist had been elected to the military-revolutionary committee. This, too, was a very serious mistake. They constantly interfered with the revolutionary actions of the committee. They should not have been elected, but if after having been elected, they interfered with the struggle, they should have been removed.

5. The military-revolutionary committee made its headquarters in the building of the Soviet. The Socialist-revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who were members of the executive committees and presidiums of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were given every opportunity to roam around the whole building, spying out what was taking place there. They reported everything taking place in the military-revolutionary committee to the committee of public security, on which they had representatives. Moreover, when the military-revolutionary committee or its staff summoned some army unit to the Soviet, the Menshevik and Socialist-revolutionary members of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies urged the soldiers to take no part in the "fratricidal war." All of these spies left the building of the Soviet only on October 27 after Ryabtsev has sent his ultimatum to the military-revolutionary committee. The two Menshevik members of the military-revolutionary committee also resigned then.

6. The Moscow Committee of the Party, being in disagreement with the policy of a section of the comrades who worked permanently, from the beginning of the February Revolution in the Executive Committee of the Soviets (Comrades Nogin, Ignatov, Maximov and others) kept them all out of the military-revolutionary committee. But they felt themselves in control of the Soviet (Comrade Nogin was chairman of the Soviet from the time the Bolsheviks captured the majority). The majority of the members of the military-revolutionary committee and of the Bolshevik Party centre had not worked in the Soviet before. The machinery of the Soviet was completely controlled by Comrades Nogin, Smidovich, Ignatov and others. Comrades Smidovich and Ignatov attended the meeting of the bureau of all fractions (on October 25) which passed a resolution in favour of the establishment of a "democratic power," a resolution that was subsequently rejected by the Moscow Committee and by the fraction of the Plenum of the Soviets. This group

of comrades interfered with the development of a vigorous struggle and throughout this period insisted upon negotiations with Ryabtsev and Rudniev.

7. In reply to the demand of the military-revolutionary committee, made on the morning of October 26, to allow arms to pass from the Kremlin and to return the trucks detained by the *Junkers*, Ryabtsev sent a proposal to open negotiations for the arming of the workers, etc. Instead of backing its demands by military action in the districts, the military-revolutionary committee opened negotiations, which, under the influence of V. P. Nogin, who had arrived from Petrograd on October 26, lasted for two days. But even the breaking up of these negotiations took place on the initiative of the White Guards, after they had achieved their purpose. The negotiations not only strengthened the enemy, but by spreading the illusion of the possibility of the capture of power by the Soviets without an armed struggle had a demobilising influence over the work in the districts. After Ryabtsev violated the agreement for the removal of *Junkers* from the riding school, the latter, on October 27, attacked the Dvinsk regiment and subsequently Ryabtsev advanced the most impudent ultimatum for the liquidation of the military-revolutionary committee, arrest and trial of its members (the ultimatum was rejected by the military-revolutionary committee) and, capturing the Kremlin by a trick, massacred the soldiers. V. P. Nogin, on October 28, before departing for Petrograd, attempted to again start negotiations with Ryabtsev and Rudniev.

The *Junkers* utilised the negotiations of October 26 and 27 as follow: (a) they organised themselves and surrounded the building of the Soviet on all sides; (b) they raided the company of cyclists in Petrovsky Park, where they captured machine-guns and the Simonov cartridge and powder magazines, where they seized cartridges, and the first artillery reserve brigade, where they took two 3in. guns (without locks); (c) they gained time hoping to get reinforcements.

The hesitancy of the leading organs of the uprising protracted the struggle and thereby harmed the rebellious workers and peasants.

4.—THE TRUCE CONCLUDED ON THE DEMAND OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE RAILWAYMEN'S UNION, AND THE UTILISATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BY THE WHITE GUARDS.

On October 29, when the strategic position of the military-revolutionary committee had greatly improved and the initiative of the offensive was captured by it, the Moscow Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union,

whose representatives had "resigned" from the Committee of Public Security only owing to the insistence of the Petrograd Executive Committee of the Union, presented the military-revolutionary committee and committee of public security with the ultimatum of the executive committee of the Railwaymen's Union.

The executive committee of the Railwaymen's Union, which conceived of itself as the recognised organiser of the future government, proclaimed itself in Petrograd the head of the Ministry of Means of Communications already on October 25. On October 29 it advanced in Petrograd the categorical demand, which it circulated throughout the country "for the immediate cessation of the civil war, and uniting for the purpose of establishing a uniform revolutionary, socialist government," threatening a general railway strike and proclaiming all those "who continue the disputes to be enemies of democracy and traitors to the country and nation."

The ultimatum submitted by the executive committee of the Railwaymen's Union in Moscow contained the threat to suspend railway traffic at midnight, October 29, "unless hostilities in Petrograd and Moscow are discontinued by that time."

In Moscow the ultimatum coincided with the time when the fighting successes of the workers and soldiers definitely began to threaten the White Guard and *Junkers* with a crushing defeat. On the other hand, the public security committee received news from army headquarters on October 29 to the effect that on October 30, the day of the armistice, troops would begin to arrive in Moscow from the south-western front and that a revolt of *Junkers* was to take place in Petrograd on October 29-30.

The Moscow military-revolutionary committee agreed to negotiate. The truce was proclaimed at midnight, October 29.

The executive committee of the Railwaymen's Union appointed a conciliation committee of representatives of the military-revolutionary committee, the public security committee, the Moscow Menshevik committee, the old Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, the Soviet of the Union of Post and Telegraph Workers and the Moscow Bureau of the executive committee of Railwaymen's Union, which submitted the following draft agreement:

"1. The mixed units, both of soldiers and officers, formed specially in connection with the armed clash are to be disbanded.

"2. Both sides issue a decision to surrender arms captured for the organisation of fighting units during the period of the hostilities.

"3. A commission, consisting of an equal number of representatives of both sides and a representative of the executive committee of

Railwaymen's Union, is organised for the purpose of controlling the fulfilment of these obligations.

"4. A body uniting and directing the usual activity of all the local authorities and vested with special powers is to be created in Moscow; this body is to be in existence, pending the solution by the central government of the question of the organisation of power locally. It is to be composed of seven representatives of the city administration, seven representatives of the Moscow Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies, two representatives of the provincial *Zemstvo*, one representative each of the provincial Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, and one representative each of the Central Council of Trade Unions, of the Post and Telegraph Workers' Union and the Railwaymen's Union. Both the military-revolutionary committee and the public security committee are to be disbanded.

"5. The provisional committee, i.e., the body provided for in clause 4, sets up a special investigation committee to inquire into the causes of the civil war in Moscow and the responsibility of individuals and organisations.

"6. Upon the conclusion of an agreement the troops of both sides are sent back to their units and placed in charge of the commander of the Moscow military district, who is to act as the representative of the provisional committee."

The military-revolutionary committee on its part submitted to the Conciliation Commission its own draft agreement in the following terms:

1. All power in Moscow is in the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

2. The mixed units, both of officers and soldiers are disbanded.

3. The Red Guard is not abolished, in the interests of the defence of the Revolution. The White Guards are abolished. Surplus arms to be returned to the arsenal.

4. Upon the conclusion of an agreement the troops of both sides are to be returned to their units.

The commission rejected the draft agreement submitted by the military-revolutionary committee and made the draft agreement submitted by the Railwaymen's Union a basis for the discussion. The representatives of the military-revolutionary committee on this conciliation committee—P. G. Smidovich, P. E. Kushner and N. I. Muralov—accepted three clauses of the Railwaymen's draft (1, 3 and 6), and after an ultimatum from the Railwaymen's Union, clause 4, as relating to the composition of the government.

The discussion of the question of an agreement was not completed, however, and the conciliation committee decided to prolong the armistice for another twelve hours.

The Moscow military-revolutionary committee rejected the prolongation of the armistice, refused to agree to the draft agreement of the Railwaymen's Union, and sharp at midnight resumed the hostilities on all the fighting fronts.

The position of the representatives of the military-revolutionary committee — Smidovich, Kushner and Muralov—at the conciliation committee of the Railwaymen's Union caused the Party fighting centre to resolutely raise the question of those members of the military-revolutionary committee who had not been elected by the Soviets, and had been co-opted to the committee without agreement of the Party centre.

During the discussion of this question the Party centre submitted to the military-revolutionary committee the demand to exclude those Bolsheviks who had been co-opted without the knowledge of the Party centre, and proved to be in too pacific sentiments (Smidovich, Kushner, Roseholz and others).

The truce proclaimed at midnight of October 30 was actually broken by the White Guards, which made it necessary for the Red Guards to continue the fighting.

Thus, the object of the ultimatum of the Railwaymen's Union became clear to all: under cover of negotiations to betray the vigilance of the Moscow workers and soldiers, in order to bring reinforcements, occupy positions of advantage and deal a decisive blow at the Moscow proletariat.

The attempt of the Whites was not crowned with success. The relentless vigilance and revolutionary initiative of the masses of workers and soldiers smashed the plans of the counter-revolution. At the same time the exposure of the treacherous designs of the collaborationists forced the followers of a "bloodless" completion of the uprising on the military-revolutionary committee to remain silent, and limit themselves subsequently to opposing the extensive use of artillery.

The violation of the truce by the White Guard aroused indignation in the province as well, and many Red Guard and soldier detachments began to arrive in Moscow daily in aid of the Moscow proletariat and garrison.

The treachery of the Whites put an end to all talk of the possibility and desirability of continuing the truce for the purpose of concluding an agreement between the military-revolutionary committee and the public security committee.

5.—PROGRESS OF HOSTILITIES AFTER THE TRUCE
AND THE CAPITULATION OF THE WHITE GUARD
STAFF.

By order of the staff of the military-revolutionary committee hostilities were resumed after the "truce" (which did not actually take place) by the opening of artillery fire at midnight of October 31.

On November 1, Red Guard detachments began to fire upon the telephone exchange from a gun placed on a belfry. The *Junkers* put out a white flag. G. A. Ussievich, who took a most active part in this siege, issued the demand for unconditional surrender, guaranteeing the enemies' personal safety. Ten minutes later the *Junkers* and officers began to come out and lay down their arms.

The same morning a conference of representatives of district staffs was held, under the chairmanship of I. N. Stukov. This conference decided to resort in the struggle with the *Junkers* to all technical weapons, including guns and airplanes, and to start a determined offensive against the City Duma and the Kremlin.

On this day the hostilities developed splendidly.

The general situation towards the end of the day was as follows: The offensive of the Red Guards upon the Red Square and the City Duma was continued and the Duma was cleared of the *Junkers* at 3 a.m. November 2, while they still remained in the Kremlin and in the Riding School. The *Junkers* held one side of Nikitskaya street, Nikitsky Boulevard and Arbat; Prechistenka and Ostozhenka streets, where they had the district staff, were occupied from the Cathedral of the Saviour. Zamoskvoretzky district frustrated the attempts of the *Junkers* to break through to the other side of the river. The Red Guards advancing by the side streets from Povarskaya and Prechistenka streets, attempted to capture at least a small section of Arbat in order to cut off the communications between the Alexander Military School and the Fifth Officers' School.

On the night of November 2 negotiations were resumed, this time for the surrender of the *Junkers*.

At 10.55 a.m. the Metropole Hotel was cleared of the *Junkers*. At the same time the forces advancing upon Chinatown occupied the whole of China-town. About 200 Red Guards, who had been kept prisoners at the Metropole, were released. With the capture of the Metropole, the *Okhotny Riad* detachments occupied the City Duma and the Historical Museum, from where the *Junkers* and the public security committee had retreated to the Kremlin at 3 a.m., apparently under the pressure of the artillery attack upon the Duma.

Upon the capture of the Metropole by us, the *Junkers* subjected it to machine-gun fire from the Kremlin. They also fired upon Okhotny Riad from the Kremlin tower. To stop the machine-gun fire the gun stationed on Lubianskaya Ploshchad began to fire upon the Spasskaya tower of the Kremlin. Simultaneously gun-fire began to be directed at the tower from Mastiazhart works on Shvivaya Gorka, and after the Kremlin clock had been smashed the machine-gun was silenced.

At 2.37 p.m. the Kremlin had been surrounded by the Soviet troops. Artillery fire was directed against the Nikolskay gate.

Simultaneously with the attack upon the City Duma, a detachment of Red Guards and Dvinsk regiment soldiers attacked the old University building and occupied it.

By 7 p.m. all of Chinatown had been occupied by us. The *Verkhnie Torgovye Riady*, historical museum and city duma had also been occupied.

From *Kudrino* the Red Guards successfully advanced along *Povarskaya* and *Bronnaya* streets towards *Nikiitskie Vorota*.

In the *Khamovniki* district the *Junkers* attempted to break through to Briansk station, but met with powerful resistance. The artillery in *Khamovniki* continued to fire upon the fifth officers' school.

Zamoskvoretsky district started an offensive along Kamenny Most (Stone Bridge) and drove out the *Junkers*. The Red Guards from Ostozhenka captured the staff of the district, and from Zamoskvorechye drove the *Junkers* out of the Cathedral of the Saviour. The *Junkers* escaped to Alexander School and attempted from there to make their way towards the Briansk station.

That negotiations for the surrender of the *Junkers* were being conducted was known to the district, but the masses, taught by the lesson of the truce of October 29-30, no longer believed in the sincerity of the Whites.

The agreement for the surrender of the Whites was signed at 5 p.m., and the military-revolutionary committee issued an order to discontinue hostilities at 9 p.m. November 2.

Nevertheless, skirmishes continued here and there during November 3 as well. For this reason, the staff of the military-revolutionary committee issued an order to the detachments operating on Ostozhenka and Prechistenka streets, stating:

"In case of hostilities on the part of the enemy the detachment must take all measures and open peace negotiations with them, but should it prove to be impossible to start peace negotiations or should the enemy continue his

offensive after the negotiations, all military action should be taken to repulse the enemy."

At 10.35 a.m. November 3, the Smolensky market was completely in the hands of the Red Guards; ambushes were established here in order to interfere with the movement of the *Junkers*, who attempted, after the signing of the surrender agreement, to flee from Moscow towards the Briansk station. The section from the Borodinsky Bridge, from the corner of Protochny pereulok and Novinsky Boulevard, Smolenskaya street, and the embankment of the Moskva river, had been held by the *Junkers* of the 5th Officers' School at the time of their surrender. The Left Socialist-revolutionary, who was working in the staff of the military-revolutionary committee, Lieutenant A. Vladimirsky, at the head of a detachment of Dvinsk regiment soldiers, issued forth into this district for the purpose of reconnaissance and placed two guns at Briansk station.

In the morning of November 3 the 5th Officers' School surrendered.

At 4 p.m. the Alexander Military School began to be disarmed.

The Kremlin was occupied by the Red Guards after the cessation of the artillery fire at 3 a.m. November 3. Before that time only individual Red Guards had penetrated into the Kremlin. They found the soldiers, headed by Berzin, kept as war prisoners, and the *Junkers* of the 1st Officers' School, who had refused to march upon Alexander School, and declared that they had not participated in the fighting, but merely did guard duty. The *Junkers* who had taken an active part in the fighting, left the Kremlin after the surrender order and went to Alexander Military School, while some of them managed to make their way into private houses.

The situation of the public security committee and its staff became hopeless. Among the *Junkers* a definite split had occurred. A similar split took place in the staff of the White Guards themselves, some of whom accused Ryabtsev of half-heartedness and a tendency to co-operate with the Soviets.

The Minister of Food, S. N. Prokopovich, who took an active part in the public security committee, sought to get an appointment with General Brussilov, desiring to proclaim him as military dictator. On the other hand, a section of the *Junkers* began to realise that the public security committee had betrayed them.

The demoralisation which set in, both among the commanding officers and among the rank and file of the White *Junkers*, also affected the public security committee in the adoption of its decision to capitulate. The determined offensive of the Reds and the artillery attack upon the *Junkers'*

strongholds further intensified this demoralisation.

At 6 a.m. November 2, Rudniev sent to the military revolutionary committee his letter for capitulation, in which the public security committee stated that:

"Under the given conditions it considers it necessary to discontinue in Moscow the armed struggle against the political system practised by the military-revolutionary committee, passing to political methods of struggle and leaving to the future the solution on a national scale of the question of the structure of power in the centre and locally."

At 7 a.m. November 2 a delegation of six "socialist parties," headed by S. Volsky, came to the military-revolutionary committee during the discussion of the conditions for the surrender and disarming of the *Junkers*. This delegation exercised powerful pressure upon the members of the military-revolutionary committee, seeking to mitigate the conditions of surrender. Under its pressure the following agreement was adopted:

1. The public safety committee discontinues its existence.
2. The White Guards return their arms and are disbanded. The officers retain the arms due to their rank. The *Junker* schools retain only arms necessary for training. All other arms must be returned by the *Junkers*. The military-revolutionary committee guarantees them personal freedom and safety.
3. For the solution of the question of the means by which the disarming mentioned in clause 2 was to be carried out a commission is formed of representatives of military-revolutionary committee, of the commanding officers and of the organisations which took part in the mediation efforts.
4. From time of the signing of the peace treaty, both parties immediately issue an order for the cessation of all firing and other hostilities and take determined measures to enforce these orders.
5. Upon the signing of the agreement all war prisoners of both sides are immediately released.

When P. G. Smidovich and V. M. Smirnov acquainted the military-revolutionary committee with the final text of the agreement, a majority of the members of the Party centre and those members of the military-revolutionary committee who had been absent at the morning meeting were present. The agreement aroused sharp opposition and might not have been approved had not V. M. Smirnov declared that in case of its rejection he, as an army officer who had signed the

agreement, would have to place himself at the disposal of the public security committee.

The workers and soldiers who took part in the battles of November 2 and 3 immediately corrected the leniency of the leading organs of the uprising: not only were the officers not allowed to retain arms "due to their rank," but in many cases the officers and *Junkers* had to be dressed in soldiers' uniforms to protect them against the masses. Many of them had to be sent to jail to be released from there on the basis of the agreement. The *Junker* schools were no longer allowed to function.

The mere fact that the capitulation of the counter-revolution assumed the form of a treaty concluded between two equal parties as it were, rather than the form of conditions of surrender, aroused protests and perplexity among the Moscow workers and soldiers.

When, in the evening, members of the military-revolutionary committee and party centre visited the district party centres and military-revolutionary committees, they found that the report of the treaty for the surrender of the *Junkers*, and conditions of this surrender was received not only without enthusiasm, but with definite hostility, especially in those districts which bore the brunt of the fighting. Nevertheless, the treaty was carried out by the districts, even though their discontent with its conditions did not weaken.

Furthermore, the decision to leave arms to the officers, the total impunity of the counter-revolutionaries as expressed in the guarantee of their freedom and personal safety and the clause providing for the immediate release of all imprisoned *Junkers* and White Guards, aroused general indignation. This discontent found its expression in the speeches of representatives of the district military-revolutionary committees at a conference held between them and the military-revolutionary committee on November 3, and the resolutions and decisions of the general meetings of the workers and soldiers.

The representatives of the district military-revolutionary committees demanded the annulment of the treaty, the imprisonment of the *Junkers* and White Guards, and the death penalty for the leaders of the counter-revolution.

The leaders of the public security committee proceeded to organise sabotage in every institution of Moscow: their specialists, the army officers, began to enroll recruits into the counter-revolutionary "volunteer" army and despatch White Guards to the Don, where Kaledin was forming his bands. The bulk of the officers and junkers, who had fought against the workers and soldiers in Moscow, went to fill the ranks of the

counter-revolution organised on the Don and in the Ukraine.

The humanity displayed by the Petrograd and Moscow revolutionary committees towards the clear-cut class enemies (the release of the "socialist" ministers in Petrograd, who immediately went to Moscow to organise a provisional government, the release of General Krassnov, against his word of honour, the impunity accorded to the officers and *Junkers*, despite the fact that they had murdered and executed the imprisoned revolutionaries), proved to be only harmful to the proletarian revolution.

The victorious proletarian dictatorship at first treated its enemies with too much leniency. The class enemy, who began the struggle against the Soviet power, forced the Bolsheviks to attack him with fire and sword.

After the victory over the White Guards and establishment of Soviet power in Petrograd and Moscow, the Moscow revolutionary committee issued the following manifesto:

"TO ALL MOSCOW CITIZENS.

"Comrades and Citizens,

"After five days of bloody battles the enemies of the people who raised an armed hand against the revolution have been completely routed. They have surrendered and have been disarmed. At the price of the blood of the valiant fighters, the soldiers and workers, victory has been gained. Henceforth a people's government, the power of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will be established in Moscow.

"The Moscow victory consolidates the world historical victory of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison. Amidst the roaring of the world war the central state power in the capital of Russia has passed into the hands of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. This is the power of the people itself, of workers, soldiers, peasants. This is a power of peace and freedom, it is a power which has offered peace, transferred the land to the peasants, abolished capital punishment which had been introduced by the traitor to the Revolution, Kerensky. The supreme representative body of the entire Russian democracy has appointed it. Anyone who will raise an armed hand against it will be swept away by the revolutionary people.

"The Moscow bourgeoisie, by the machine-guns of the *Junkers* and revolvers of the White Guards, proclaimed an uprising against the people's government. They wanted again to return the land to the landlords, to restore capital punishment, to delay the peace.

"The tremendous heroism of the soldiers and

Red worker guards saved the Revolution.

"Having broken the resistance of the enemy the military-revolutionary committee declares, in the name of the workers and soldiers:

"All measures will be taken to restore the normal life of the city. The factories and mills will be started on an order of the committee. The banks, offices and stores will open on its directions. Everything will be done to assure food for the city. The violators of revolutionary order, robbers, plunderers, marauders, alcohol vendors, will be tried by a merciless tribunal.

"Comrades and citizens,

"The whole world is going through a colossal crisis, the war provoked by capital has led to a deep upheaval and stirred the working masses in every country. The proletarian revolution is growing everywhere. To the Russian working class has fallen the great honour to be the first to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. For the first time in the history of humanity the toiling classes have taken power into their own hands, having captured freedom by their own blood. This freedom they will not let go from their hands. The armed people stands guard of the revolution.

"Glory to those who have fallen in the great struggle!

"May their cause become the cause of the living!

"The military-revolutionary committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."

The land of the Soviets has put into operation the factories and mills, as was promised by the military-revolutionary committee in its manifesto. It has consolidated and widened the gains of the October Revolution.

CONCLUSION.

1. The October uprising in Moscow was a true people's uprising. Despite the tardiness and sometimes hesitancy of the leading organs of the uprising the greatest masses of workers and soldiers rallied to the armed struggle. The factories and mills were the strongholds of this uprising. The workers gave the best fighters, supplied arms and everything for the victory. By their revolutionary enthusiasm and class-consciousness they exercised a powerful influence over the soldier masses, carrying them into the struggle and leading them. The working masses and part of the garrison spurred the district revolutionary centres on to offensive actions, to a spirit of irreconcilability, steadfastness and determination, during the uprising. The district centres in turn insisted upon the taking up of offensive tactics by the central leading organs of

the uprising. Thanks to the revolutionary creative spirit and heroic determination of the vanguard workers many of the mistakes committed by the central leadership were corrected in the districts. Thanks to the self-sacrifice of the masses victory was achieved.

2. In Moscow, as in Petrograd, the organisation in charge of the uprising was completely controlled by a single party, the party of the Bolsheviks. The fact that in Moscow, during the first days of the uprising, representatives of the collaborationist parties entered the military-revolutionary committee to sabotage it, clearly revealed to the great masses that at all the stages of the armed struggle they were mortal enemies of the uprising, agents and spies of the counter-revolution. When the victory inclined towards the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, directly or through the so-called "International Wing" of the revolutionary parties (Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Social-Democrats, United Internationalists and other "Left" parties), exercised pressure upon the military-revolutionary committee, prompting it first towards negotiations with the White Guard staff and then towards mitigation of the conditions of surrender of the White Guards. If the social collaborationists failed to protract the uprising still further, and mitigate the conditions of surrender even more, it was only because, during the period of preparations, the Bolsheviks had already succeeded in isolating these parties from the masses while in the process of the armed struggle the masses completely turned away from them.

3. In Moscow, no less than in Petrograd, the true inspirer of the uprising was Lenin, who was faithfully and unhesitatingly followed by the great majority of the central committee of the Party. Vladimir Ilyich's letter on the possibility and necessity of an uprising, declaring that "to wait is a crime against the Revolution," were naturally of tremendous importance to the whole Party, to the whole proletariat, to all the toilers of Russia. To Moscow these directions were of the more decisive importance, since these letters, which were addressed directly to the Moscow Committee, strongly emphasised the rôle and duties of Moscow in the uprising. Lenin's letters gave the decisive impetus to the activists of the Moscow organisation to discuss the question of preparations of an uprising, not only within the narrow circle of the leadership, but also to re-organise the entire work of the Moscow organisation for the purpose of immediate preparation of the uprising. If we disregard the proposal of the leading workers from the regional bureau made on July 4th to occupy the post-office, telegraph office, *Russkoye Slovo* (which meant the beginning of

an armed uprising in Moscow), nobody before Lenin's letter ("The Bolsheviks must seize power on September 12th-14th") raised the question of the "possibility that even Moscow must begin." On the other hand, in Moscow, thanks to the authority enjoyed by Comrades Rykov and Nogin in the fraction of the executive committees of the soviets right up to the very uprising and during it, the Kamenev-Zinoviev tendency which opposed the uprising, although without coming out in the open, retained its influence. It was precisely under the influence of Lenin's letters and the central committee's decisions that the Moscow Bolsheviks realised and firmly decided that Moscow can and must come out in support of Petrograd. The Moscow proletariat fulfilled this decision.

4. At the same time the serious mistakes committed in Moscow during the October days by the leadership of the uprising were a result of the fact that "the chief rules of the art of revolution" which Lenin constantly stressed in his letters, were violated by the central fighting organs in Moscow both during the organisation of the uprising and particularly during the leadership of the armed struggle itself. As if foreseeing the possibility of such mistakes, Lenin reminded the Moscovites in his letters that "an armed uprising is a *special* type of political struggle subject to special laws which must be carefully considered." The mistakes committed during the October days in Moscow were a result of the fact that even the majority of the leading Moscow comrades who firmly followed Lenin, did not give sufficient thought to the special laws of the organisation of an armed uprising which the great leader of the October victory stressed in his letters.

In contrast to Petrograd, where the counter-revolutionary uprising of the *Junkers* was immediately and mercilessly suppressed in one night, the leadership of the armed uprising in Moscow displayed tardiness and hesitation which resulted in the protraction of the struggle against the Whiteguards. Contrary to Lenin's instructions: "Begin it (the uprising) in the firm knowledge that you must *go on to the end*," the Moscow Bolsheviks, already during the organisation of the leading organs of the uprising committed mistakes which interfered with the speedy bringing of the uprising to a victorious conclusion. Among the mistakes of the organisation of the uprising were the following:—

- (a) The fighting organs were created late;
- (b) the military-revolutionary committee had among its members Mensheviks and a Unionist (four Bolsheviks, two Mensheviks and one Unionist);
- (c) in the military-revolutionary committees,

both in the centre and in the districts, there were no comrades, at the beginning of the hostilities, who really knew military matters. The fact that the leadership of the uprising failed to assure the immediate and lasting capture of the arsenal and powder magazines so as to arm workers and soldiers was due solely to the military-technical weakness of the military-revolutionary committee;

- (d) being insufficiently equipped in its composition, the military-revolutionary committee proved to be even weaker owing to co-optation of a number of comrades. According to a resolution adopted by the Plenum of the joint Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on October 25th, the military-revolutionary committee had the right of co-optation. But the point was that a large part of the co-opted members did not help to exhibit the necessary energy, speed and determination, that "art and treble daring" which are necessary for the speedy success of an uprising.

5. "Once an uprising is started it is necessary to act with the greatest *determination* and by all means to take up the *offensive*." "The defensive is death to an armed uprising."

Had the Moscow Bolsheviks carried into effect this Marxian law of armed uprising, they, with the overwhelming majority of the workers, and active support of a large section of the garrison and sympathy of its vast majority on their side already at the beginning of the uprising, should have quickly brought to the most important points, in accordance with a previously prepared plan, the most reliable detachments in order to surround the enemy and to force him to surrender, perhaps even without a battle. But some members of the military-revolutionary committee, even after the beginning of the uprising, continued to cherish the hope of the capture of power by the Soviets, not through a struggle, but through repeated negotiations with the class enemy. As a matter of fact, it was only the enemy who utilised these negotiations. He gained time to organise his forces. He succeeded in securing the surrender of the Kremlin by deception, in surrounding the building of the Soviet and submitted an ultimatum to the military-revolutionary committee. Had the counter-revolution—the bourgeoisie, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks — possessed in Moscow any important military units whom the *Junkers* and officers could have led against the Soviet, October 28th might have become a critical day for the uprising. The capture of the Soviet might either have rendered a victory over the enemy more difficult for the districts, or have led to even graver consequences.

The success of the Moscow uprising, despite the fact that the central leadership at certain moments adopted a defensive policy, does not lessen the gravity of this mistake, or weaken the truth of the maxim that "the defensive is death to an armed uprising." This lesson must be learned by the revolutionary proletariat of all countries. In starting an uprising it is wrong to proceed from the hope that such a favourable situation will develop as was the case in the October days in Moscow when the White Guard officers did not have a single reliable military unit, when they even made no attempt to lead the soldiers against the insurgents, and when the social collaborationists were therefore forced to limit themselves to persuading the soldiers to preserve neutrality in the struggle.

By October 29th, thanks to the determined actions of the military-revolutionary committee of the centre, the energy of the districts and revolutionary units of the garrison, the situation greatly improved. The success achieved might have led to complete victory by October 31st had it been continued without hesitation. But the military-revolutionary committee, instead of seeking to achieve daily and hourly even small successes, agreed to a 24-hour truce. True, on the night of October 30th the military-revolutionary committee rejected the decision of the conciliation commission of the executive committee of the Railwaymen's Union to prolong the truce for another twelve hours, as well as the decision for an agreement itself. But the time for the development of the offensive during these 24 hours had been lost. The military-revolutionary committee might have conducted negotiations for the surrender of the White Guards, of course, without,

however, discontinuing the struggle, as was done on November 2nd.

6. The fact that the Party centre was forced to vacate the building of the Soviet at the very beginning of the uprising played no small part in the hesitation displayed by the military-revolutionary committee. Under the fighting conditions which developed on October 27th, the decision of the Party centre and Bolshevik section of the military-revolutionary committee to create two centres of the uprising was inevitable. The military-revolutionary committee might have been cut off and even captured by the White Guards, and it was therefore necessary to create a second central organ to lead the districts as the districts alone could have, and actually saved the centre by their fighting actions. Although the Party centre was in constant contact with the military-revolutionary committee (by constant visits to the Soviet by members of the Party centre in *Zamoskovrechye* and by telephone conversations as a last resort), yet this contact was insufficient. From the early morning of October 28th until the night of November 1st, there were no joint meetings between the Party centre as a whole and the military-revolutionary committee. This could not but contribute towards the many mistakes committed by the military-revolutionary committee and influence the selection of the comrades co-opted by the committee.

"The success of both the Russian and the world revolution depends upon two-three days of fighting," wrote Lenin, urging the Bolsheviks of Petrograd and Moscow to resolutely and firmly carry out the uprising. History has confirmed these words.

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