

MOSCOW HEARS OF THE PETROGRAD UPRISING

Vedernikov, the commander of the Moscow Red Guards, answered the phone and took down the following message from Petrograd:

"Last night the Revolutionary Military Committee occupied the railway stations, the State Bank and the telegraph and post offices. The Winter Palace is now being occupied. The government will be deposed. The Congress of Soviets opens today at five o'clock.

"Nogin is leaving for Moscow tonight.

"The revolution was effected in a perfectly peaceful manner. Not a single drop of blood has been shed. All the troops side with the Revolutionary Military Committee."

Having taken down this message, Vedernikov hastened from the Moscow Soviet to the Dresden Hotel, where the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party had its headquarters. Nothing was known there as yet about the events in Petrograd. It was known that Petrograd was preparing for insurrection, and instructions had been received as to what to do in the event of an uprising. It was known that on October 19 Kerensky's troops had smashed the Soviet in Kaluga and that the same fate threatened twelve more Soviets, the Moscow Soviet included.

With the impressions of the Kaluga events fresh in their minds, the Moscow Committee had been discussing the question of establishing fighting centers, but as yet nothing had been said about immediate action. It had been decided to organize a *Soviet fighting center* consisting of seven people, and the Bolshevik fraction had been instructed to secure the adoption of a motion to this effect at the joint meeting of the Soviets

that had been scheduled for that day. Then the Moscow Committee took up the question of establishing a *Party fighting center*, which was to include two representatives from the Regional Committee of the Party, two from the Moscow Committee, one from the Moscow Area Committee, and, in addition, one representative from the trade unions and one from the Army Organization of the Moscow Committee of the Party.

The discussion of this question had just come to an end when Vedernikov burst in with the message about the events in Petrograd.

What was to be done? The Soviet fighting center was not yet in existence; the plenum of the two Soviets would meet only at 3 o'clock that afternoon, and action had to be taken at once. The Moscow Committee of the Party therefore issued the first essential orders in its own name. Telephone message No. 1 was communicated to the various districts:

"In St. Petersburg the struggle for power has begun. The government is resisting. St. Petersburg is in the hands of the revolutionary center. The Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies is taking measures. Local fighting detachments must be put in readiness without delay. No action is to be taken without instructions from the center. Arrangements must be made for members of the Executive Committee to be on duty day and night. . . ."

At the same time another telephone message was sent to the bicycle detachments requesting them to send out men, three machine-guns and a truck to the Moscow Soviet at once and also one hundred cyclists to guard the Polytechnical Museum, where the meeting of the Soviets was scheduled to be held.

Vedernikov was given the following written order: