

DOCUMENT 11:
'170 Million Recruits', editorial in *The International*, March 23, 1917.

The Socialist International has become a far more tremendous thing by the Russian Revolution. It means that a people of 170 million has swung into line with the great proletariat of all countries, on its march to the Revolution by the side of which this and all previous ones are but 'shopkeeper's riots' in immensity.

J.M.G. ably explains in another column the economic factors which have made this revolution possible. But while it is necessary to warn the workers of the partial value only to them of the conquest of political rights, the importance of this step forward in the world's history can hardly be exaggerated. The rising capitalist class cannot achieve its political revolution without the aid of the workers, nor without sharing the fruits with them. The capitalist looks only to the immediate necessities of industry, no matter if his successors have to reap the whirlwind. The proletariat must look to the end; for in its fight the means and the end, the method and the objective, are at one. The Capitalist seeks a political railroad for his system. He cannot win it without providing a railroad to the working class revolution.

We see two streams in this, as in all previous revolution. The Industrial Capitalist cry is now 'ORDER'. The proletarian driving power cries 'LIBERTY'. But the workers having won their 'Programme of the Day', and the Capitalist the control of the State, the two streams immediately disunite and the class war begins on the last lap to the Socialist Revolution. Now is the dangerous hour. Now the dominant capitalist cry will be '*order*', and it will be enforced at the cannon's mouth if necessary, 'tearing the side of the proletariat', as Marx once said, if the workers are not organised independently and strong to bear the shock of the recoil.

But it seems to us that the Russian workmen are so organised in the industrial centres. The independent existence of a 'Council of Workmen' dictating terms all night to the Duma; scotching the Regency scheme; sanctioning capitalist control meanwhile, knowing that it has not the material means at hand (namely highly organised industry and a highly organised industrial working class), to push forward yet to the Socialist Revolution; sending back troop trains bound to suppress the revolution – all this augurs a working class conscious of its mission, and recognising this as a half-way house to it.

Only Russians can feel the thrill of the wonderful deliverance involved in a free press, free speech, and political liberty. Note, however that the right to combine is won as a result of the workers combining.

This is a bourgeois revolution, but arriving when the night of capitalism is far spent. It cannot be a mere repetition of previous revolutions. It partakes infinitely more of a victory for the proletariat, as well as for the industrial capitalist. Now the two classes pursue their several ways; one 'to prosecute the war abroad' and 'law and order' at home; the other to pursue the class war at home and 'the Socialist Republic in all countries.' Let us look forward with great hope to the entry of the Russian elemental mass into the International class struggle for human emancipation. The day of its coming seems immeasurably nearer by this awakening.