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THE RELUCTANT REVOLUTIONARIES: THE
PETROGRAD SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND
SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES 1917.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE RELUCTANT REVOLUTIONARIES: THE PETROGRAD
SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES 1917

A DISSERTATION
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degree of
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VIRGIL DEWAIN MEDLIN

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THE RELUCTANT REVOLUTIONARIES: THE PETROGRAD
SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES, 1917

A DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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PREFACE

The Russian Revolution has been the subject of memoirs and the object of research for over a half century. While some aspects of the revolution have received considerable attention, others have been inadequately treated or neglected. Historians have spent much effort studying the Bolsheviks in order to explain their success in November 1917. Similarly, some scholars have compiled exhaustive treatises detailing the errors of the Bolshevik opposition in order to explain the triumph of November. The popular masses and the institutions constructed by the revolutionaries, however, have received only slight study or distorted treatment. The chasm between revolutionary enthusiasm and organization, usually a fundamental contradiction in revolution, makes the study of revolutionary institutions in 1917 essential for understanding the Russian Revolution. The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was, without doubt, the most important revolutionary institution in 1917 Russia. The study that follows examines not only the structure of the Petrograd Soviet, but the decisions made by that body and the basis on which it made them.

The Petrograd Soviet has been the object of only one book-length study, G. I. Zlokazov's Petrogradskii sovet rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov v period mirnogo razvitiia revoliutsiia (The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies during the Peaceful Period of the Development of the Revolution)

(February-June 1917) (Moscow, 1969). The work covers only one-half of the pre-November period of the Petrograd Soviet and suffers from distortions common to all U. S. S. R. party histories of the period. The only non-communist work to treat the Petrograd Soviet in any detail is Oskar Anweiler's Die Rätebewegung in Russland 1905-1921 (The Council Movement in Russia 1905-1921) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958). The Petrograd Soviet is not the main object of Anweiler's research which is in no way exhaustive on any aspect of the Soviet movement in 1917. A few scholarly articles cover certain narrow aspects of the Soviet in 1917, but their subjects taken together make up only a very slight portion of the total picture of the institution. No exhaustive treatment of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies between March and November 1917 exists; in the following study the author attempts to realize such a treatment.

Some technical observations are necessary. All dates for events concerning the Petrograd Soviet and the Russian Revolution are given in the New Style (Gregorian) calendar, not the Julian calendar in use in 1917 Russia and which was thirteen days behind the Gregorian. The transliteration system from the Russian is that of the Library of Congress with the following modifications: (a) ligatures have been omitted; (b) in direct quotation of materials already in English translation the transliteration system in the translation is retained; (c) a few proper names which have become standardized in English in other transliterations

have been given in the customary form, e.g., Trotsky, Kerensky, and soviet, not Trotskii, Kerenskii, and sovet. Throughout this study the term soviet refers only to the political institution prior to 1918 and not the current common usage of the word to refer to the people or government of the U. S. S. R.

I owe an especial debt of gratitude to Dr. Henry J. Tobias, the supervisor of this dissertation. Despite a busy schedule chairing a large department, he spent untold hours guiding my work, challenging my concepts of the Russian Revolution, and aiding my written expression. To the other members of my committee, Drs. Russell D. Buhite, Gordon D. Drummond, and Dougald T. Calhoun and to Dr. Robert Nye, I am indebted for many helpful suggestions and particularly for the questions they raised that made me continually reexamine my train of thought as expressed in the dissertation. To my students and my academic colleagues I owe apologies when the writing of this dissertation detracted from my teaching duties. To Dr. Rob Roy MacGregor, who started me on the path of studying history, and Dr. Kenneth I. Dailey, under whom I completed my work for the Masters in history, I wish to express my whole-hearted appreciation. The numerous archives, libraries, and institutions and their staffs that aided me in the procurement of sources I can never repay for their efforts and kindnesses beyond the call of duty. I particularly wish to express my gratitude to Miss Juanita Means, former Reference Librarian at Oklahoma City University, whose bibliographic knowledge never failed me and whose penchant for accuracy kept me vigilant. I wish to thank my parents for being so understanding and supportive of me for all these many years.

Virgil D. Medlin

INTRODUCTION

Soviets (Councils) existed in Russia long before 1917. Examples in Imperial Russia include the Sovet Imperii (Council of the Empire), Sovet Stareishin (Council of Elders), and Sovet Ministrov (Council of Ministers). Among Russian revolutionaries the term developed an especial connotation from its use to designate the revolutionary toiling class bodies established in 1905 and 1917. The institutionalization of revolution around soviets, however, until the Bolshevik coup de grâce in November 1917 was never a permanent, organic part of the Russian revolutionary world. According to Viktor Chernov,¹ the veteran Socialist Revolutionary theorist and party leader, "It was an ad hoc organization of a united socialist and revolutionary front in a militant period, in the fire and storm of advancing revolution."

In the autumn of 1905 the workers of St. Petersburg created an entirely new type of revolutionary organization, a workers' soviet. This new structure allowed the workers of the capital to bridge in part the chasm between revolutionary enthusiasm and organization, generally recognized by scholars as a fundamental contradiction in the 1905 Revolution and a major cause of its eventual failure. Although no more than an oversized strike committee at first, the Petersburg Soviet provided a rallying point for at least one-half of the proletariat of the national capital and as a result came

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to head a political strike already in progress. Inasmuch as the Petersburg Soviet aided the direction of the strike movement, the new body established a solid popular foundation, allowing it to expand its activities even after the termination of the strike which had called it into existence. Thus when the Petersburg Soviet on October 19, three days before the end of the October strike, adopted a decree on the freedom of the press, it became more than a simple strike committee. This political act led the Soviet--at times unwillingly--to organizing an armed militia for protection from the reprisals of reactionary groups and the police, and led it to sponsor the November strike for the Kronstadt sailors and the workers' eight-hour day movement. The Petersburg Soviet became in actuality a de facto, although somewhat cautious, revolutionary government, as the supine tsarist regime appeared determined at times to thrust authority, in the capital at least, on a body trembling at its own actions. As an elective proletarian body (one deputy per 500 workers), entrusted by its electorate with the execution of definite revolutionary policies, the Petersburg Soviet did seek the attainment of political goals, including the overthrow of the existing regime, the establishment of a constituent assembly, and civil liberties for all classes.

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The Petersburg Soviet failed in part because it did not organize the working class of the capital and thereby was unable to channel the workers' enthusiasm. Unskilled in the technique of revolution and without a tradition of organization, the Soviet was unable to

harness proletarian energies and apply them to the task at hand. As a democratic institution--the privilege of being elected as the representative of one's fellow workers (and the constant realization of being recalled if constituent wishes were not followed)--meant to the deputies of the Soviet that they had to follow the dictates of their constituents, if necessary even against their own better judgement. In effect the caprice of the workers, undisciplined and politically inexperienced, determined Soviet policy. The Soviet reversed itself at the desire of its constituents and led the demonstration of October 18. At their will, it sponsored the campaign for an eight-hour working day which many deputies realized was reckless, declared the November strike, and upon its termination returned to the movement for a shorter working day. Consequently, when time came for action in late November neither the Petersburg Soviet nor the workers of the capital had spent sufficient time on organization to defend themselves. Only the apprehension of the regime, unsettled by a year of revolution, prevented the earlier suppression of the Petersburg Soviet.

The failure of the Petersburg Soviet partially resulted from its uncooperative attitude toward the non-proletarian portion of Russian society. Relations with the peasantry scarcely existed. Whether from a lack of understanding of peasant problems or from Social Democratic (the dominant force in the Soviet) disdain toward the peasantry as a political force, the Soviet rebuffed all efforts of the Socialist

Revolutionaries to attract peasant support and enter into relations with the villages. As a purely proletarian organization, the Soviet rejected the aid of the bourgeoisie and liberal intelligentsia, although it did accept the financial support of the liberal Union of Unions. Count Sergei Witte capitalized on this and split the regime's opposition through concessions embodied in the Manifesto of October 17, successfully isolating the Petersburg Soviet from moderate elements in the capital, although this was not immediately apparent even to members of the Soviet. The November strike and the eight-hour day movement revealed, within a short time, the isolation of the Petersburg Soviet in the capital and even the lack of unity in proletarian ranks. In October the proletariat had not achieved victory single-handed; in November, isolated and confronted with the neutrality or open hostility of other classes, the Petersburg workers went down in decisive defeat.

In view of the Petersburg Soviet's composition and philosophy, whether that body could have achieved cooperation with the non-proletarian social elements is a matter of doubt. From the time of its organization the Soviet was in actuality controlled first by Mensheviks and then by Bolsheviks; and although both factions of the Social Democratic party disputed the proper policy for the Soviet to pursue, both were united in their belief that the institution should remain a purely proletarian organization.

When the army was in ferment, the peasantry and workers were quiet; when the workers were aroused, the peasantry remained passive and the army, again obeying its officers, assisted in subduing the urban workers. Worst of all the Soviet, unable to lead the revolutionary workers, endorsed goals (e.g., the eight-hour day) which united the moderate bourgeois elements with the government and wasted proletarian strength needed for the attainment of more decisive revolutionary goals.⁷

Failure also stemmed from the Petersburg Soviet's meager efforts toward promoting the construction of a national soviet organization. The Soviet sent two deputies to the Volga region, two to Odessa, and a representative to the Moscow Soviet. Soviets in Moscow, Odessa, and several cities in the Baltic region in turn sent delegates to Petersburg. These few exchanges and an abortive effort to convoke an All-Russian Workers' Congress were the extent of the Petersburg Soviet's campaign to unite the Russian working class through a national Soviet.

The Soviet example in the capital achieved more than that body's own efforts at national organization. Soviets sprang up all over Russia in late November and early December 1905 in imitation of the successful establishment of a workers' council in Petersburg. These Soviets, however, arose too late; the flood tide of reaction ran strong and belated uprisings in

Moscow and other cities enabled the regime to crush them without great difficulty. Once again revolutionary spirit had outdistanced revolutionary organization and the proletariat, assuming a task it had not equipped itself to undertake, paid a heavy toll in defeat, starvation, and death.

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Two diametrically opposite views of the Petersburg Soviet emerged from the experience of the 1905 Revolution. V. I. Lenin's public view in 1905 of the Soviet was not his private viewpoint. In Novaia zhizn' he wrote, "Circumstances may force us to participate in non-Party organizations . . . ; such participation . . . is admissible only if the independence of the workers' party is fully protected, and if the Party members or groups 'delegated' to non-Party unions or soviets are controlled and directed by the Party as a whole." His real view of the Soviet, however, was not in line with the thinking of the rest of the Bolshevik party and he was persuaded not to publicize it: "The Soviet must proclaim itself the provisional revolutionary government, or form such a government, and be sure to draw in new deputies to this end--not only from workers but also, first, from sailors and soldiers, who are already reaching out for freedom everywhere; second, from the revolutionary peasantry; third, from the revolutionary bourgeois intelligentsia"

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With the failure of the 1905 Revolution, however, Lenin saw alliance between the Soviet and the bourgeois intelligentsia as useless and formulated the concept of a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

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Lenin's post-mortem view was a

solitary outlook, as the majority of revolutionaries saw the failure of 1905 largely the result of non-cooperation with the bourgeoisie. As the Menshevik F. I. Dan wrote of these contrasting metamorphosis of Leninism and non-Leninism (here Menshevism): "More and more Menshevism began to turn the struggle for 'bourgeois' political democracy and its preservation into its own paramount task, reformistically subordinating to it the 'class' socialist objectives of the proletariat. Bolshevism, on the other hand, stressed the 'construction of socialism'; it cast aside and attacked the very idea of a 'consistent democracy' that from the very birth of Bolshevism had been its fundamental fraction slogan" ¹² Lenin's position was essentially the ¹³ rejection of democracy and the advocacy of dictatorship. For the majority of Russian socialists the 1905 Soviet experience meant that in the future they should minimize the socialist demands of their programs so as not to estrange the masses from their liberal allies. The Soviet appeared destined for obscurity.

The most significant view of the Petersburg Soviet, however, in 1905 was probably not that of the parties and their leaders, but rather that of the masses. Few bothered to consult the anonymous masses who had reared the Soviet on their shoulders and for a brief day had stood face to face on equal terms with tsardom. The memory of those people was long, and the lessons they learned were bitter. Eleven years following their defeat by the autocracy the workers of Petersburg (then Petrograd), catching their breath after the collapse of autocracy, once more gathered in

their factories to elect delegates to another Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Their experiences and those of the revolutionary intelligentsia would clash before November 1917.

According to the last president of the Imperial State Duma, Mikhail V. Rodzianko, the soviet movement existed right up to 1917, as the "Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies had existed without break, though secretly, since 1905 and had never ceased its agitation."¹⁴ While the Social Democrat, N. N. Sukhanov, admits in his voluminous memoirs of 1917 that elections to soviets may have taken place occasionally between 1905 and 1917, "they were illegal, accidental, and without concrete aims."¹⁵ The study of the 1917 Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies that follows shows Sukhanov's assessment essentially to be correct, not Rodzianko's.

FOOTNOTES

1. V. M. Chernov, Rozhdenie revoliutsionoi rossii; fevral'skaia revoliutsiia (Paris-Prague-New York, 1934), p. 216.
2. W. S. Woytinsky, Stormy Passage: A Personal History through two Russian Revolutions to Democracy and Freedom: 1905-1960 (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., c. 1961), p. 36; Leon D. Trotsky, "Sovet i revoliutsiia," in Istoriia soveta rabochikh deputatov g. S.-Peterburga, ed. Leon D. Trotsky et al. (St. Petersburg, n. d.), p. 12.
3. For an analysis of the decree on freedom of the press see Thomas R. Hall, "The Petersburg Soviet of Workman Deputies in the Revolution of 1905," Ms. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1942, p. 58, ftn. 69.
4. Ibid., p. 175.
5. Woytinsky, p. 44.
6. Hall, passim.
7. Solomon M. Schwarz, The Russian Revolution of 1905: The Workers' Movement and the Formation of Bolshevism and Menshevism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c. 1967), passim, particularly, the chapter, "The Soviets of Workers' Deputies," pp. 167-195.
8. See Hall, chapter vi, "Relations of the Petersburg Soviet with Other Cities," pp. 96-107.
9. V. I. Lenin, Sochineniia, X, pp. 57-64 as quoted in Schwarz, p. 194.
10. Ibid., p. 3 (Pravda, November 5, 1940), as quoted in Schwarz, p. 190.
11. Alfred G. Meyer, Leninism (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1962), pp. 124-128. Meyer appears to be mistaken concerning Lenin's view of the 1905 Soviet possibly because he was unaware of Lenin's private view which was not released until 1940 in Pravda (and which is so carefully contrasted with his public 1905 printed view in Schwarz, pp. 191-194).
12. F. I. Dan, The Origins of Bolshevism, ed. and trans. by Joel Carmichael (London: Secker & Warburg, 1964), p. 330.
13. David S. Anin, "The February Revolution: Was the Collapse Inevitable?" Soviet Studies, XVIII (1967), p. 453.

14. M. V. Rodzianko, "Gosudarstvennaia Duma i fevral'skaia 1917 goda revoliutsiia," Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii, VI (1922), p. 63.
15. N. N. Sukhanov, Zapiski o revoliutsii (7 vols., Berlin-Petersburg-Moscow, 1922-23), I, p. 86.

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF "REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY"

Like the March coup d'état the instigation and formation of the Petrograd Soviet must remain forever beyond partisan claims. The socialist parties were hopelessly bankrupt, and thus the early days of the Soviet were a heyday for independent radicalism. The Socialist Revolutionary (SR) movement survived in the capital only as a "skeleton of a few illegal groups with no generally recognized center."¹ The minuscule Menshevik faction nearly fell apart with the arrest on February 9, 1917 of a number of the members of the Labor Group of the Central War Industries Committee. The Bolsheviks were nearly in limbo. Aleksandr Gavrilovich Shliapnikov (Belenin), head of the Russian Bureau of the Bolshevik Central Committee, admitted that its efforts were uncoordinated and that the party was entrenched only in the navy. It did not occur to him that "this would be the last and decisive battle against tsarism."² The SR S. D. Mstislavskii admitted that "The revolution caught us, the party men of the time, sleeping like the foolish virgins of the gospels."³ The SR leader, V. M. Zenzinov, wrote of the March days, "The revolution struck like lightning from the sky Let us be frank: it was a great and joyful event, unexpected even by those of us who had been working toward it for many years and waiting for it always."⁴ Socialist leaders, such as Zenzinov and

O. A. Ermanskii (Menshevik Internationalist) were in the streets observing the demonstrators' activities, while I. Iurenev (Interdistrictite) and K. S. Grinevich (Menshevik Internationalist) delivered rousing speeches urging the masses to further actions. The socialist parties apparently held no meetings at all to capitalize on this outbreak; even the Bolshevik leadership was reluctant to bring the March days to a head in a showdown with the regime. Such inaction and indecision most likely stemmed from the majority of top-ranking socialist leaders, such as Viktor Chernov, I. G. Tseretelli, V. I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, F. I. Dan, Iu. Martov, and many others being in exile.

Party leaders in Petrograd, however, did make some attempts toward united action to organize the revolution on an institutional basis. According to N. N. Sukhanov, the revolution's contemporary chronicler, meetings held on March 8 and 9 discussed the question of raising a soviet. F. A. Cherevanin (Menshevik Defensist) presented such a proposal at a March 9th meeting at which time, Sukhanov notes, "instructions for elections [to a soviet] were issued by this meeting... and successfully carried out by the factories of the capital." Elections, however, did not immediately follow in the factories, though workers at the Franko-Russkii and Promet plants did elect representatives to a soviet on March 9.

The developments of March 9 had a strong impact on many lower ranking members of the various parties, but the rank-and-file were more interested in raising revolution than in ordering it

into a soviet. For example, at the Vyborg district meeting of Bolsheviks that evening N. F. Sveshnikov summarized the party's position: "The atmosphere was exalting, but we felt the absence of common leadership, and bad communication from other districts. Correct revolutionary guidance by the Central Committee was really needed." The Vyborg district committee endorsed a resolution introduced by I. D. Chugurin calling for a general strike, intensifying the struggle with the police and the reaction to the rising emotions among the masses. The Bolshevik Central Committee responded coolly to Chugurin's proposal. Once street fighting broke out Bolshevik activists urged an armed uprising and demanded that the central committee of their party issue a written appeal to the workers to take up arms. The committee did publish a diatribe against the war, tsarism, and the bourgeoisie, but did not urge the raising of revolution. The Petersburg committee at this point, ignored its superior, the central committee and decided to issue its own pamphlet and create workers' committees in each factory. These Bolshevik activists decided that they should escalate the conflict from a general strike to one of an armed uprising if the government took strong measures against the workers.

On March 10 activist Bolshevik leaders held a meeting which discussed, among other things, creating a soviet. One member of the underground Vyborg District Bolshevik Committee, N. F. Sveshnikov, recalls that at the district meeting that evening reports were received that many factories had already started to

elect representatives to a soviet. The Petersburg Bolshevik Committee did not issue, contrary to some assertions, an appeal on March 10 for the creation of soviets. Iurenev, an eye-witness, later wrote that "essentially the slogan of a soviet advanced by the Petersburg committee remained on paper and there were no concrete actions in the sense of the organization of soviets...." On that same night of March 10-11 members of Petersburg Bolshevik Committee were arrested by the police and further efforts to establish a soviet were largely paralyzed.

Differences between the Bolshevik Central Committee and its Petersburg committee over revolutionary strategy and establishing a soviet grew dramatically after March 9. Aleksandr Shliapnikov, as head of the central committee, set a policy of concentrating Bolshevik efforts on organizing workers for a May Day movement. The central committee was clearly organization oriented, while the Petersburg committee was action and mobilization oriented. Shliapnikov did not feel that the attainment of revolution was possible much less that it would lead to the establishment of soviets. The radical Vyborg district Bolsheviks, however, encouraged the first strikes and demonstrations, contrary to directives of the central committee. Even when Shliapnikov tried to restrain the Viborg activists, to avoid provoking an uncontrollable political reaction, the Petersburg committee responded by adopting a resolution calling for a three-day general strike.

The arrest of the Petersburg committee and the government's

vigorous response dampened activist Bolshevik spirits for raising and sovietizing (ordering) a revolution. Concerning events, as of the evening of March 11, V. Ia. Kiaurov wrote ". . . the revolution is liquidating itself. The demonstrators are disarmed. No one is capable of further response to a government that has taken such decisive measures." ¹⁰ Chugurin repeatedly proposed to Shliapnikov that armed commandoes be organized to continue the struggle, but the Bolshevik leader always rejected this, fearing that this would excite the soldiers against the workers. Shliapnikov thought it best "to continue the work of propaganda" in order "to win over the soldiers and paralyze ¹¹ tsarism."

Similar differences and attitudes were also common among the non-Bolshevik revolutionary elements. On March 10th at the apartment of the well-known writer, Maxim Gorky, various socialist sub-leaders met and, according to I. Iurenev, decided on Gorky's ¹² motion to issue illegal pamphlets to the workers. No practical results came of a second meeting the following day which happened to coincide with the regular 6-7 P. M. meeting at A. F. Kerensky's flat of the so-called Information Bureau of the Parties of the Left. Attending the session were Kerensky, Chkheidze, Zenzinov, M. I. Skobelev (Menshevik-Defensists), and N. D. Sokolov (non-party lawyer, close to Menshevik-Internationalists), I. Iurenev, Pëtr Aleksandrovich (Left SR), Znamenskii and Berezin (Trudoviks), H. Erlich (Bund), A. V. Peshekhonov (Popular Socialist), and O. A. Ermanskii. ¹³ Surprisingly, the right

wing among those present, Kerensky, Erlich, and Zenzinov, insisted on the continuation of the struggle, whereas the most radical of all, Iurenev, feeling the impact of the Bolshevik Petersburg Committee's arrest declared: "There is no revolution nor will there be. The movement of the troops is dwindling away to nothing and we must prepare ourselves for a long period of reaction." ¹⁴ As Zenzinov wrote of the encounter:

We were maintaining that the tide of revolution was rising, that we should prepare ourselves for decisive events; Iurenev, who considered himself to the left of us, was clearly trying to throw cold water on what we were saying. It was obvious to us that this attitude was not merely his own, but also that of the Bolshevik organization in Petersburg. Iurenev did not hold with forcing the pace; he maintained that the incipient movement would not be successful, and even insisted that the excited workers must be calmed down.¹⁵

None of the previous mentioned meetings led to any unified action toward ordering the revolution. A session, however, called by the sub-leaders of a number of moderate Mensheviks resulted in a formal call to form a soviet of workers' deputies. Activists from all districts in Petrograd, in agreement with members of the Imperial State Duma Social Democratic leadership, met on March 10 at the headquarters of the Consumers' Union of Workers (one of the few legal workers' organizations still in existence). The meeting opened about 3 P. M. with 30 to 40 representatives from almost all thirteen districts of the capital, including a number of district officials of the Cooperatives Union. Among

those attending were N. S. Chkheidze, the Menshevik Duma leader and later chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, the previously mentioned Cherevanin, and I. G. Volkov and N. Iu. Kapelinskii, leaders of the cooperative movement in Petrograd. After discussing the situation, they decided to call a council of workers' deputies modeled on the St. Petersburg Soviet of 1905. The Workers' Cooperatives and boards of workers' sickness-benefit-funds were to organize elections in the various factories. An all-city center set up in the office of the Petrograd Union of Workers' Cooperatives would receive all information from the districts. The initial assembly of the Soviet was scheduled for the following day. The representatives present spread the news of these plans to the factories in their districts.

Word of the plan to form a soviet spread in the capital with remarkable speed. I. Gordienko, a Bolshevik worker, heard street agitation that same day urging the election of a soviet. The Menshevik organ, Rabochaia gazeta, on March 20 reported: "It was unanimous among the masses and on the second day of the revolution--on Saturday the 25th of February [March 10] --one heard the slogan: it is necessary to create and organize a soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies." An Okhrana agent, Shurkanov, at the time noted:

The question of the creation of a soviet of workers' deputies is proposed.... The election of deputies to a soviet of workers' deputies is being carried out in factories; and probably tomorrow morning or at least by tomorrow evening a soviet of workers' deputies will begin its function.¹⁸

The Petersburg committee of the Bolshevik party reacted to the Menshevik proposal to form a soviet by reluctantly proposing, on the Interdistrictites' demand, to create an "information bureau for the guidance of factory committees," only to have Shliapnikov reject their proposition. After the imprisonment of the Petersburg committee, Shliapnikov was even more skeptical toward raising revolution much less soviets and "did not find the strength within himself to issue instructions the following day"19

Momentarily the Menshevik initiative was also hampered, for the police rounded up the leaders of this movement on the night of March 10-11, along with the five Bolshevik sub-leaders. After issuing the Menshevik appeal for the convocation of a soviet, several of these representatives left the headquarters of the Consumers' Union of Workers for a meeting at the offices of the labour group of the Central War Industries Committee. The revolutionaries were under police surveillance, for as soon as the representatives arrived on the premises of the labor group of the War Industries Committee, they were arrested. (Still yet another segment of the labor group attended a joint meeting with the representatives of the public organizations in the Municipal Duma, and though not arrested the imprisonment of their colleagues apparently curtailed their efforts). That same night Interior Minister A. D. Protopopov ordered the arrest of over one hundred other persons, all sub-leaders of the revolutionary parties. The government did not arrest leaders such as Shliapnikov, Zenzinov, Iurennev, and Ermanskii, but the imprisonment of the one hundred sub-leaders resulted in a

loss of local leadership needed to establish a soviet as an organizational base of the revolution.

While the workers initially responded enthusiastically to the proposal to create a soviet, the street fighting that broke out that same day overshadowed that effort. Nonetheless, elections to a workers' soviet did occur. For example, in the Vyborg district the Parviainen Factory workers elected deputies on March 11. F. Z. Evseev (Bolshevik) recollected that in the tool shop of the munitions factory workers had prepared for the formation of a soviet before March 12. F. A. Lemeshev, I. G. Gavrilov, and V. Ia. Kaiurov (Bolsheviks) recalled workers electing deputies to the soviet on March 10 and 11.⁽²⁰⁾ Such lower party echelon activities contrasted strangely with the beliefs of top level Bolshevik leaders and their lieutenants that a revolution was not in progress and would not develop out of the current disturbances.

The soviet movement received renewed force when insurgents attacked the Kresty prison in the Vyborg district and released a number of political prisoners. Among these men were K. A. Gvozdev and B. O. Bogdanov, leaders of the labor group of the Central War Industries Committee, which had made the first serious efforts toward establishment of a soviet. While the Bolsheviks from Kresty went off to fight in the streets, Gvozdev and Bogdanov and others concerned with giving direction to the revolution through the organizational base of a soviet went to the Tauride Palace. Its geographical

proximity to the workers' district was not the only reason the palace became the center of revolutionary insurgency, as the Soviet Russian historian, E. N. Burdzhakov, explains:

The new social strata, which participated in the revolutionary struggle for the first time, looked upon the State Duma as something like popular representation and upon the Duma leaders as fighters against the tsarist regime. They regarded the Duma as [their] center and deemed it possible to sever themselves from the past in the least painful way with its assistance. The soldiers, having broken their oaths to the tsar and joined the people, wished to obtain approval of their conduct from this "legal institution." The officers who had joined the soldiers, and the masses of the city population who supported the uprising, endeavored to absolve themselves from responsibility for their actions by the authority of the Duma. This is why the slogan: "To the Tauride Palace! To the State Duma!" met with wide support from the popular masses.²¹

A few activist Bolsheviks in the Vyborg district appealed to insurgents to make the Finland Station the center of the uprising, but they too soon joined with those heading for the Tauride Palace.

At the Tauride Palace insurgents met the socialist deputies of the Duma, Chkheidze and Skobelev, and requested that Kerensky arrange with M. V. Rodzianko for a meeting room in order to organize a soviet. The Duma president expressed his opinion on the danger of granting such a request to which Kerensky replied: "What's dangerous about it? After all, somebody must take charge of the workers."²² Thus the enormous meeting hall of the Duma Budget Commission, room 12, was open about 3 or 4 P. M. to the socialists--quite appropriately on the left wing of the palace.

Prince S. P. Mansyrev, a Kadet who witnessed ~~this~~ event, recalled that in this group were seven or eight men who told him that they had just come from Kresty prison and that ~~they~~ intended to establish a soviet under the chairmanship of G. S. Khrustalev-Nosar, the all but forgotten president of the 1905 Soviet. "It was thus by our collaboration," commented the ~~prince~~ bitterly, "that this little group of suspects could proclaim the Soviet."²³

Those present at this preorganizational meeting were to a man intelligentsia: Chkheidze, Skobelev, Bogdanov, Gvozdev, Broido (Mensheviks); shortly joined by the lawyer Khrustalev-Nosar, the Mensheviks Sokolov and Grinevich and the Cooperatists Volkov and Kapelinskii. The Mensheviks Groman, Frankorusskii, Sokolovskii, G. S. Pankov; the Bolsheviks Shliapnikov and P. A. Zalutskii; the SR E. B. Surin; the Bundist Erlich; and the Internationalists Sukhanov and I. M. Steklov probably also attended,²⁴ but not Kerensky though he had arranged the meeting place.²⁵ This gathering constituted itself as a "Provisional Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies" and quickly issued the following appeal to the populace of the capital:

Citizens! The representatives of the workers, soldiers, and inhabitants of Petrograd who are meeting in the State Duma, announce that the first meeting of their representatives will be held to night at 7 o'clock in the evening within the confines of the State Duma. All troops which took the side of the people should immediately elect their own representatives, one person per one company. Factories elect their own deputies, one person per one thousand

people. Factories which have less than a thousand workers elect one deputy from each factory.²⁶

Until recent years Soviet Russian historians dated a Bolshevik appeal for a soviet from March 11 or one day earlier than the manifesto from the Tauride Palace.²⁷ However, the Soviet Russian historian, Burdzhhalov, has proven that this appeal was actually edited on March 12 and published on March and therefore after the victory of the revolution.²⁸ More importantly, however, the Bolshevik manifesto did not call for elections to a soviet,²⁹ but rather for a provisional revolutionary government! Some party members feared the soviet concept, since they knew the Bolshevik party to be so weak that the Mensheviks would control it.³⁰ Soviet Russian historians have now acknowledged that the "bourgeoisie" came to power in March because of better organization and political ability than the Bolsheviks.³¹

This last manifesto, which also contained all the planks of that party's platform, appeared in a supplement to the first issue of Izvestiia, the Petrograd Soviet's organ. The Bolshevik Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich explained how he seized the printing works of the popular daily, Kopeika, offered the newspaper to the Soviet Executive Committee, received approval, and proceeded to print the first issue of Izvestiia. Though an editorial board had been elected, Bonch-Bruevich, on his own, issued a Bolshevik supplement which was completely out of step with the program of the new Soviet Executive Committee. Later he wrote:

This was among my early sins committed in Izvestiia, sins for which later, as more of them accumulated, I was asked to make public confessions and for which I was subjected to an interrogation by that Pope of Menshevik bigots, Tseretelli himself, and was finally deprived of my mandate in Izvestiia because of my Bolshevik convictions.³²

The Interdistrictites and Left SR's on March 12, before the Bolshevik manifesto appeared, also published an appeal for the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government, indicating that they, like the Bolsheviks, were hostile toward the establishment of the Petrograd Soviet. The Interdistrictite Iurenev maintained in his memoirs that the manifesto called for elections to a soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies and that this call for elections was the first to appear. Two leaflets were printed in quantities of 300,000 about 10 P. M. on March 12 on the confiscated presses of Novoe vremia. Approximately 200,000 copies were distributed, the rest to be distributed at the Tauride Palace the following morning. Furthermore Iurenev maintained that these manifestos were the first materials to be printed in the same printing house that issued the first edition of Izvestiia of the Petrograd Soviet. However, as already seen, the Mensheviks on March 10, two days before the Iurenev initiative, issued a call for a soviet, and again on the afternoon of March 12 called for the organizational meeting of a soviet. Indeed, the first meeting of the Soviet opened a half hour before the Interdistrictite appeal was even printed. Thus Iurenev's initiative was not the first call for a soviet. Furthermore,

the latter's appeal did not call for a soviet, according to reports and documentation other than Iurenev's, but for a provisional revolutionary government. On March 15 Iurenev's associates tried to issue a pamphlet, which the Soviet confiscated, calling for the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government by the Soviet, non-cooperation with the Provisional Government, and the complete break of soldiers with officers. ³³ Clearly neither the Bolsheviks, nor the Interdistrictites or Left SR's wished a soviet to convene.

The provisional executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet did not limit itself to convoking the organizational meeting of that body. Measures were taken to organize supplies for the mutinying, scattered, and homeless military units that had abandoned their barracks. "The Provisional Supply Commission", headed by V. G. Groman and Frankorusskii, set up a soldiers' supply base in the Tauride Palace and the citizens of Petrograd to assist in feeding the hungry soldiers. As Sukhanov noted in his memoirs:

For the armed, hungry, shelterless, terrorized and ignorant masses of soldiery now represented no less a danger to the cause of the revolution than the organized forces of tsarism. Indeed, there might be doubts as to the existence of the latter, but the former were there to be seen.³⁴

As incredible chaos reigned in the streets of Petrograd, the Soviet set about to order the situation. If the revolution was to be successful, the disorder of the streets had to be stilled and the soldiers organized to defend the Tauride Palace against counterrevolutionary forces. One of the members of the provisional

executive committee, Kapelinskii, telephoned socialist officers to give leadership to organizing the peasant soldiers. Thus the provisional committeemen turned to the SR's and specifically to the remnants of the 1905 SR military organization, as there was no doubt that the majority of the rebellious peasant soldiers leaned in the direction of "agrarian socialism." Two officers of the defunct SR officers' organization of 1905, Colonel S. D. Mstislavskii (S. D. Maslovskii), and Lieutenant V. N. Filippovskii, were charged with heading a provisional military committee: Mstislavskii, a highly competent officer, was "cooling his heels" at the time as the librarian for the General Staff Academy. Mstislavskii wrote of the military situation he had come to command:

Our situation was catastrophic. It is true that [General] Khabalov made essentially a gross error by withdrawing his troops from the center of the city and giving the "rebels" a chance to surround them from all directions But was there really a revolutionary atmosphere in the city? . . . I remember crowds of unarmed soldiers roaming about the city, juveniles engaged in arson, and automobiles driven madly about the streets. If only we had one cohesive unit which maintained its composition. We had neither artillery, nor machine guns; neither commanding officers, nor communications. With the exception of Filippovskii . . . who arrived fifteen minutes after me there were no officers.³⁶

Mstislavskii's first attempts to organize the soldiers gathering in the Tauride Palace were fruitless. The troops, exhausted and hungry, flatly refused to obey orders, preferring instead to join in the organizational meeting of the Petrograd Soviet that was

about to convene. Engulfed in a human flood, the military committee transferred its activities to the Duma side of the palace, next to the study of the deputy Duma chairman, N. V. Nekrasov. Here, Kerensky and Nekrasov met Mstislavskii and seemingly approved of the latter's military activities. Here also were twenty front-line officers, none connected with the local soldiery, but the only soldiers momentarily willing to aid Mstislavskii. Armaments consisted of four unlubricated machine guns and when a young soldier was ordered to commandeer vaseline, he reported, to Mstislavskii's great indignation, that none was available as no shops were open for business at so late an hour. Though they had no arms, Mstislavskii nevertheless dispatched officers to such strategic positions as the Nikolaev and Tsarskoe Selo railway stations, hoping that they might pick up some revolutionary soldiers on the way by the "vendée system." He also managed to form a shock detachment of some fifty soldiers under the command of Ensign Petrov. Eventually some obvious precautions were taken, some strategic posts occupied, but the result of their indefatigable labor was "merely to reduce chaos to confusion." ³⁷ Ironically the commanders of both the imperial troops and the revolutionary troops believed in the superiority of the other side.

The organizational meeting of the Petrograd Soviet scheduled for 7 P. M. on March 12 made it improbable that factory workers and military units could conduct elections for delegates to the Soviet in only four hours. Fighting still

raged in the streets when the appeal was distributed through the capital. "Would the workers and soldiers even respond to the appeal?" some questioned. These leaders apparently were anxious to form a soviet as quickly as possible, regardless of the reaction of the insurgents to their appeal. Sokolov ~~was~~ even convinced that the session should open immediately upon the arrival of twenty to thirty delegates from the workers.

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By 7 P. M. only socialist intelligentsia had collected at the Tauride Palace to organize a soviet. To his dismay the Bolshevik leader Shliapnikov found no delegates from the workers and won approval to delay the opening of the session for an hour and a half. When Shliapnikov telephoned a number of Bolsheviks to attend the opening Soviet session to increase his party's influence, they ignored his order. Lower echelon party members were highly suspicious of a soviet created by intelligentsia and refused to attend as, "The Bolshevik comrades were too busy fighting in the streets."

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The first session of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies opened in room 12 of the Tauride Palace at 9 or 10 P. M. About 50 delegates attended with mandates voted by factories and military units and another one to two hundred with no mandate; no official regulations about representation apparently existed. Shliapnikov notes, "a majority of delegates, if not all, had merely 'oral' credentials without any other certifications from their factories. But who could check on it? It was decided that the meeting of that day was merely an initiative meeting,

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and the real meeting with normal representation would be held later." ⁴² As noted, most of those in attendance, were not factory or military delegates, but rather socialist intellectuals and party leaders. Thus the organizational meeting of the Soviet was actually packed with persons who seemingly had nothing to do with the uprising. However, the revolution consisted of more than mobilization and if its goals were to succeed had to draw the mobilized into a politically participant forum or institution. While the men in the Tauride Palace may have initiated little of the uprising, their actions allowed the mobilization process to continue. They were the organizers of the revolution's institutional basis.

Who were the men in the left wing of the Tauride Palace that night? A partial listing is available: Aleksandrovich (Left SR), Baturskii, Skobelev, Chkheidze, (Menshevik Defensists), Braunstein, Grinevich, Frankorusskii, Sokolov (Menshevik Internationalists), Erlich (Bund), Gvozdev, Groman, Khrustalev-Nosar (Mensheviks), Iurenev (Interdistrictite), Kapelinskii (Cooperator), P. A. Krasikov, Kerensky, Znamenskii (Trudoviks), Pankov (Left Menshevik), Peshekhonov (Popular Socialist), Shliapnikov, Molotov, Zalutskii (Bolsheviks), Surin (SR Internationalist), Sukhanov, Steklov (Internationalists), Zenzinov (SR Defensist). Mstislavskii and Filippovskii (SR Defensists) were meeting as the military committee at the time. Kerensky may have appeared at the meeting briefly. While the presence of all of the above is attested by at least two witnesses, the attendance of Avilov,

Demianov, Potresov, and Tikhonov is noted by only one eye-witness. The following day I. M. Bramson, N. V. Chaikovskii, V. B. Stankevich [Vladas Stuchka] (Trudoviks) M. G. Rafes (Bund), N. S. Rusanov (SR), and V. Chernolusskii (Popular Socialist) arrived. Presumably Volkov and Broido who attended the evening organizational meeting of the provisional executive committee meeting were present, whereas Bogdanov who also attended that session is specifically noted by Sukhanov as not at the later session. ⁴³

The organizational meeting of the Petrograd Soviet opened in the midst of the exhilaration caused by the victory of the rebellion. Chaos set in as new groups kept pouring into the hall; "God knows with what mandates or intentions," wrote Sukhanov. ⁴⁴ Sokolov ran about seating deputies, trying to determine if they were delegates with or without a mandate (consulting or voting representatives). Sokolov finally opened the session sometime before 10 P. M. The first order of business was the selection of a presidium. Menshevik-Defensists nominated Khrustalev-Nosar for permanent chairman only to be met with vehement opposition from Shliapnikov. The Bolshevik leader proposed the expulsion of the 1905 Soviet chairman on the grounds that he was a renegade, a collaborator with the reactionary newspaper, Novoe vremia, and an anti-Semite. The proposition for ⁴⁵ expulsion passed without rebuttal, 33 or 35 votes to 10. The delegates then proceeded to elect to the presidium the Duma deputies, Chkheidze, chairman, and Kerensky and Skobelev, vice-chairmen. For the secretariat Gvozdev, Grinevich, Sokolov, and

Pankov were nominated and elected. At this point Chkheidze delivered a short speech in which he stressed the significance of the revolution, informed the delegates of the formation of the Temporary Committee of the Duma, and appealed to the Soviet and the "democracy" to consummate the revolutionary upheaval. He concluded his speech with the words: "Long Life to the Revolution! Long Life to the Revolutionary Army!"⁴⁶ Kerensky also appeared briefly, made an emotional speech, and disappeared to⁴⁷ the Duma wing of the palace, both characteristic of his future actions.

The meeting proceeded, with Skobelev and Chkheidze taking turns at presiding, to set up committees to deal with specific problems. The assembly approved a credentials committee, to be headed by Gvozdev, a supply commission, to be headed by Groman and Frankorusskii, and elected a literary commission composed of Avilov, Bonch-Bruevich, Sukhanov, Sokolov, Peshekhanov, Steklov, and Grinevich. The literary commission was ordered to draft an appeal for immediate issue to the citizens of⁴⁸ Petrograd.

Frankorusskii, speaking for the food supply commission, revealed the critical state of food supply in the capital. He asked for authority to confiscate the food stocks of the commissary department as well as all other private and public food supplies, in order to make provision for soldiers and the general population of the capital. The meeting immediately empowered the commission to do as proposed and its heads, Groman and⁴⁹ Frankorusskii, withdrew to begin work.

The military problem constituted a serious danger for the revolution. The tenor of the decisions made by the session indicated a higher degree of optimism than what the military commission warranted. The Menshevik Braunstein proposed to restore order by organizing a militia in every city district under commissars (the first use of the term) to be dispatched by the executive committee. How the commissars were to organize disciplined revolutionary forces out of hungry mobs to face a trained military force was not even considered.

Some members of the executive committee did retire to discuss defense with the military commission which had just come under the control of the Temporary Duma Committee's representative, Colonel Engelhardt. Duma president Rodzianko and the Soviet leader Sokolov had a violent exchange concerning the appointment of Engelhardt and only the conciliatory attitude of the SR's Mstislavskii and Filippovskii resolved the matter. Sokolov, however, refused to be reconciled and retired to the Soviet to request that the body define its relationship with the military commission. Regardless of who led the commission, aside from a few improvisations, "hardly anything was being done," commented Sukhanov. The executive committeemen, seeing the defense of the city a problem apparently beyond the capabilities of the commission, returned to the Soviet to tackle this urgent task only to find that the session had just closed.

While discussion of the military problem continued outside the Soviet forum, the premier meeting of the Soviet plenum transacted other business. The session voted to publish a central news organ.

They appropriately adopted the title Izvestiia (News) and elected to the editorial board the members of the literary commission. While the independents Sukhanov, Steklov, and Sokolov in the first weeks controlled the editorial policy the Bolshevik Bonch-Bruевич for a brief time had some input and influence.

The session also took up the danger of counterrevolutionary propaganda. After the members of the literary commission--except Grinevich who polished the final draft of the Soviet's first appeal--returned to the session of the Soviet a debate arose concerning freedom of the general press. Steklov urged that all presses be halted pointing to the danger of counterrevolutionary agitation, while Sokolov and Sukhanov fought for the absolute freedom of the press. Finally, a compromise was reached and newspapers were to be published on each editor's responsibility. At this time a question was placed before the Soviet on whether presses should be taken over for revolutionary use; Peshekhonov opposed it and apparently the proposition failed as no presses were confiscated.

Sometime after midnight the assembly turned from commissions to consumating the structure of the Petrograd Soviet. An executive committee was established and members appointed to
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it. In the first days of the revolution this committee, rather than the presidium issued all orders and business. Chkheidze, Skobelev, and Kerensky as well as Gvozdev, Sokolov, Pankov, and Grinevich became members automatically as they made up respectively the presidium and the secretariat. Those

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elected included P. A. Krasikov (Pavlovich), Sokolovskii, the very popular non-party candidates, Steklov, Kapelinskii and Sukhanov, and Shliapnikov and Aleksandrovich.

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Sukhanov noted that the workers' delegates did not even know the people for whom they voted. Party members present voted for "their own", in so far as they knew them! In order to increase the influence of his own party Shliapnikov proposed that each socialist party should be given the right to send two delegates to the committee; this was approved. The Mensheviks sent Bogdanov and Baturskii; the Bolsheviks, V. Molotov (Scriabin) and Zalutskii; the SR's, Rusanov and Zenzinov; the Bund, Erlich and Rafes (the latter soon replaced by Liber); the Trudoviks, Bramson and Chaikovskii (the latter soon replaced by Stankevich); the Popular Socialists, Peshekhonov and Charnoluskii; the Interdistrictites, Iurenev; and the Latvian Social Democrats, P. I. Stuchka [not Stankevich-
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Stuchka] and M. Iu. Kozlovskii. Though Shliapnikov raised the important question of establishing district soviets in Petrograd, the late hour made a detailed discussion of the problem impossible and the session voted to refer the matter to the executive committee which was to dispatch representatives to each district to organize local soviets.

The first session of the Petrograd Soviet ended about 4 A. M. Workers and soldiers had often interrupted the proceedings demanding the floor to report the adhesion of a new group to the revolutionary cause. These emotional and incoherent speeches were enthusiastically welcomed and applauded but

accomplished nothing. The great importance of this session was that the radical intelligentsia gained the recognition of the revolutionary masses and moved forward with the institutionalization of the revolution through the establishment of the Petrograd Soviet.

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At the close of the first session of the Soviet, the executive committee under Chkheidze's chairmanship withdrew in order to establish the substructure of the Soviet. The first item discussed was the establishment of local soviets. The committee decided to dispatch "commissars for establishment of popular power in the districts of Petrograd." Shliapnikov, Peshekhonov, and Surin were appointed commissars of the most volatile districts, Viborg, Lesnoi, and the Petrograd-side respectively. The committee then endorsed the resolution of the Soviet plenary session concerning the creation of a workers' militia and established rallying points in each district for wandering, homeless soldiers. Furthermore, the activities of the military commission were to be scrutinized through the eyes and ears of Sokolov and Aleksandrovich who were named to this commission.

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Chkheidze and Kerensky were appointed to the Temporary Duma Committee to act as "watchdogs" and representatives of the Soviet. According to Shliapnikov:

The executive committee entrusted them with preventing [the Duma Committee] from taking a course which might conflict with that of the executive committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. They had to watch over the activities of the State Duma Committee

and should not permit Gospoda (Messieurs) Miliukov and Rodzianko to compromise with the remnants of tsarism behind the back of the people who stood up for the revolution.⁵⁹

By sending Chkheidze and Kerensky as "watchdogs" of the Temporary Duma Committee, the executive committee had therefore presumed that the Temporary Committee of the State Duma, not the Petrograd Soviet, would take state power (as Marxist dogma required that the socialists not do so). The position of the Soviet in relation to the Duma Committee was to watch over the latter's activities so that the liberals would not chart a revolutionary course detrimental to the toiling masses. All members of the executive committee, including the Bolsheviks, shared these views.

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In accordance with the decisions made at the pre-dawn session of the executive committee on March 13, the first proclamation of the new body to the people of Petrograd and of Russia was issued that same day:

The old regime has brought the country to ruin and the population to famine. It was impossible to bear this longer, and the inhabitants of Petrograd came out on the street to express their dissatisfaction. They were greeted by a volley of bullets. In place of bread, the tsar's ministers gave them lead.

But the soldiers would not act against the people and turned against the Government. Together with the people they seized guns, arsenals, and important governmental institutions.

The fight is still on and must go on to the end. The old power must be completely crushed to make way for popular government. In that lie, the salvation of Russia.

In order to succeed in this struggle for democracy, the people must create their own governmental organ. Yesterday, February 27, there was formed at the capital a Soviet of Workers' Deputies, made up of representatives of factories, mills, mutinied troops, and democratic and socialistic parties and groups. The Soviet, sitting in the Duma, has set for itself as its main task the organization of the popular forces, and the fight for the consolidation of political freedom and popular government.

The Soviet has appointed commissars to establish the people's authority in the districts of Petrograd. We invite the entire population of the capital to rally at once to the Soviet, to organize local committees in their districts, and to take into their hands the management of local affairs.

All together, with our forces united, we will fight to wipe out completely the old Government and to call a constituent assembly on the basis of universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage.⁶¹

Though the early morning March 13 session of the executive was short, its members exhausted, and the following manifesto hastily drawn up, nevertheless, the document is more remarkable for what it failed to mention than what it did proclaim. Though no comprehensive program was possible, at this early date and under unsettling conditions, the problems of land, peace, and state power were not mentioned. Though the proclamation called for a government based on the will of the people, it did not state whether this government was to be formed from the Soviet or from the Duma Committee, nor what the socialists' relationship to the new government would be.

Before the relationship of the soviet to the government could be worked out, the new body had to attend to ordering its

own internal operations and relationships. Sukhanov wrote of the first regular session of the executive committee on March 13 and those that followed during the first days: "They were not meetings, but a frenzied and exhausting obstacle race . . . neither at that session nor in the general during the days that followed could there be any question of fulfilling

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a program of work." The work of the executive committee was interrupted by an endless stream of persons who thought their business urgent. "In a great majority of cases these emergency matters were not worth a barley-corn . . . I remember," Sukhanov noted, "only unimaginable hubbub, tension, hunger, and the feeling of irritation at these 'exceptional reports.' There was simply no way of stopping them." Not

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only was the environment disrupting but the executive sessions themselves were chaotic. The chairman's seat was usually vacant, for Chkheidze was on twenty-four hour call and "spoke practically without stopping. . . . He would scarcely have time to return to the meeting of the executive committee and take his things off before some delegate would burst in with a categorical demand for Chkheidze . . . and the tired and sleepy old Georgian would get his fur coat on again with a resigned look, put on his

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hat, and disappear from the executive committee." The plenum of the Soviet was, if possible, even more chaotic. Its sessions took on an atmosphere of a political circus, mass-meetings in which meaningless, hysterical phrases were proclaimed by anyone able to gain the attention of the sweat-soaked delegates packed

in the hall. In the words of Sukhanov, the assembly finally⁶⁵ acquired the look of a mass-meeting in a riding-school," as chairs and tables disappeared from the hall and delegates craned their necks to see the presidium which along with several busy-bodies stood atop a lone table trying to direct the meeting! As a result, the executive committee was almost from the first forced to ignore the plenary Soviet, particularly after the delegates showed little concern about the practical measures being under taken by the executive. The plenary body considered approval of the executive's actions as little more than a formality, and says Sukhanov, this formality was no obstacle for⁶⁶ the committee.

As the methods and procedures of operation were worked out, the executive turned to issues and problems. The need to arm the workers had been recognized at the first session of the executive committee on March 13. However, the second meeting at 11 A. M. that same day not only made no further progress toward organizing a workers' militia, but the Soviet executive even refused recognition to a delegation of the workers' militia of the Sestroretsk district declaring that they did not represent⁶⁷ the totality of that district's population. The action of the executive committee presumably followed, as the result of the Duma Committee's directive calling for the creation of a⁶⁸ city militia under the command of D. A. Kryzhanovskii. In fact, the executive committee issued a manifesto calling for support of the Duma-created militia:

In the Municipal Duma a citizen's militia is being organized. Even students are called to participate in it. The representative body of the revolutionary proletariat, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies has decided to unite the central organ of the workers' commissariats with this Duma organization... Remember, comrades that you take part in the militia at the instruction of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Remember that the Soviet of Workers' Deputies is your highest authority.⁶⁹

The purpose of the workers' militia, however, had been to create a fighting force to oppose the expected counterrevolution, as every revolution from the time of the French Revolution had to a degree suffered from the sword of reaction. While the Duma leaders like the socialists also feared the forces of autocracy, they considered the restoration of order essential to mounting an effective defense. Yet, the workers' militia and the city militia worked at cross-purposes; the former to bolster the defense of the revolution by seizing more weapons, the latter to restore order by confiscating arms. The Soviet decision to aid in the restoration of order and then mount a defense resolved the conflict, but in favor of the Duma initiative.

The Soviet leaders, however, knew that the revolution could not succeed with workers alone; the organized support of the soldiery was absolutely essential. Therefore at the second meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, after presenting the organizational measures that the executive committee had taken to which the Soviet plenum voted its consent, the Menshevik leader, Steklov, expressed the opinion of the majority of the socialist leaders that "It is necessary to rely not only on the workers but also on other groups. We won't be able to hold out without

the other representatives of other strata of the population." ⁷⁰

As will be remembered, the executive had appointed Chkheidze and Kerensky as "watchdogs" of the Duma Committee, however, unlike 1905 the socialists this time were willing to cooperate with the liberals and bourgeoisie. The soldiers, however, unlike the workers and party groupings remained unorganized. Engelhardt had issued orders in the name of Rodzianko on March 12 to all officers and soldiers: "(1) all individual soldiers and military units should return to their barracks immediately; (2) all officers should return to their units and take necessary measures to restore order; and (3) commanders of units should appear at the Tauride Palace at 11 A. M. on March 13 in order to receive further instructions." ⁷¹ Rodzianko's orders met with a hostile reception from the soldiers who immediately protested to the executive committee of the Soviet. According to M. Rafes, a Bund leader, Chkheidze and Kerensky, who were also members of the Duma Committee, told the soldiers that the order had not been discussed by the Duma Committee, and that ⁷² Rodzianko had issued it on his own. The soldiers demanded that the Soviet arrest Rodzianko. The Soviet executive did deliver a protest to the Duma Committee though Shliapnikov tells us that "no proper appraisal" was reached by a majority. According to Engelhardt, his attempt to restore order and discipline among the soldiers was denounced as counterrevolutionary by the Petro-⁷³grad Soviet. To calm the outraged soldiery, the representatives of the executive committee in the military commission issued the

following directive on March 13 which ordered them to: "1) assemble at their barracks by regiment, 2) appoint temporary commanders and junior officers, 3) establish guard units, seize streets, railway stations, and other important public and state institutions, 4) bring an end to (aimless) driving of automobiles in the streets, 5) organize food supply in the regiments and barracks, 6) establish communications between the general good centers and barracks, 7) not leave the soldiers for a long time in the barracks without attention, leadership, and information from the insurgent populace, 8) regard the Peter and Paul Fortress and the Tauride Palace as strong points of all of Petrograd, 9) establish local bases from the local barracks of individual regiments, and 10) isolate the officers who did not join the people or who might exert harmful influence upon the soldiers." ⁷⁴ To appease the infuriated soldiery Col. Engelhardt issued the following statement which appeared the morning of March 15:

On this day of March 1 a rumor circulated among the soldiers of the Petrograd Garrison to the effect that in regiments officers are confiscating arms from soldiers. These rumors were checked in two regiments and were found to be false. As Chairman of the Military Commission of the Temporary Committee of the State Duma, I announce that the most resolute measures, including execution of the guilty, will be applied to prevent acts of this nature on the part of officers.⁷⁵

During the morning of March 14 a preparatory session with members of the executive committee concerning the rights and

allegiance of the soldiers was held by deputies of the military units that had carried out elections the previous day. The meeting ran into the scheduled noon session of the Petrograd Soviet and Chkheidze, Skobelev, and Sokolov left for the plenary meeting over which Sokolov presided; they were shortly joined by the soldier delegates. As acting chairman, Sokolov delivered an introductory speech in which he stressed the necessity of maintaining a relationship between the Soviet and the military commission of the Duma Committee in view of the fact that "the revolution" possessed few officers. Only through this linking, he asserted, could the experience and knowledge of the officers be available to the soldiery. He proposed that soldier representatives be nominated to the commission, adding that they might even play a leading role in it. Then Sokolov proposed the discussion of three questions: (1) to which organization should the soldiers be subordinate? (2) should arms be turned over the officers? (3) what should be the relationship between soldiers and officers? 76

The soldiers were determined that they would enter into the revolution as they willed. While the revolutionary intelligentsia recognized from the first the importance of the soldiery, as shown by the manifesto of March 12 calling for the election of soldier delegates to the Soviet, nevertheless, the intelligentsia felt that the soldiers should not become too deeply involved "in the disrupting influence of politics." Approximately twenty delegates from the troops of the Petrograd garrison took part in debating the soldiers' position. 77 The

Bundist soldier representative, S. Z. Klivanskii (Maksim) maintained that the Duma Committee was attempting to disarm the soldiers and once they had done so would "snuff out the revolution." He called for a Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, or a Soviet of the Petrograd garrison and the union of a Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. F. F. Linde, a Menshevik-Internationalist soldier seconded the proposition for a Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for "no one can win against the workers and soldiers together--they are the whole people." A. P. Borisov, a Menshevik and member of the Lithuanian Life Guard Reserve Battalion, castigated the officers in the military commission as free-loaders "who recognize the revolution, but who joined it only after it was evident that there was no danger in doing so." He urged definitive action as "everything is undecided." The SR engineer, Iu. A. Kudriavtsev, of the Red Cross Automobile Section, opposed any "liquidation of the Commission" and proposed that "Soviet representatives enter the Commission and control its activity." In spite of Klivanskii's and Linde's opposition, a compromise was suggested:

The soldier mass is organized in the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The opinion of the Military Commission will be recognized, in so far as it does not deviate from the opinion of the Soviet. Soldier deputies are to be sent to participate in the Military Commission.

Once the position of the soldiers vis-à-vis other revolutionary groups was defined, the soldier delegates turned to their own internal affairs. On the proposition of returning weapons to

officers, discussion was short. Klivanskii opposed the action, while another soldier suggested that weapons other than firearms be returned to the officers. Vakulenko (non-party), of the Jäger Life Guards Battalion, proposed that weapons "be under the control of elected non-commissioned officers."

The relationship between officers and men resulted in a heated discussion. This question essentially concerned only the returning officers and not those few officers who had remained with their troops and resolved any differences. The problem had arisen as the result of the Military Commission's order that officers return to their units and restore order. "They are trying to put the soldiers under their thumb again," exclaimed the soldier-delegate Marchenko, "and they are behaving even worse than before." "The officers have come back, and sided with us, in order to get around us," chimed Melenchuk, a Semenovskii guardsman, adding, "Now we are the bosses--the workers and us. We won't allow them to get around us." Emotional complaints spewed forth about incidents of corporal abuse and officers' demeanor toward troops. Marchenko finally posed the question: "what powers remain with the officer, and what with us?" Linde opposed the return of any officer "who did not participate in the revolution," and added, "we must assert our will and choose" "Those who do not unite with us, are to be driven away from the battalion," demanded another. However, as Sokolov had pointed out at the opening of the session, the revolution needed the officers. Representatives

of the Preobrazhenskii battalion complained precisely of this, stating that they had no officers even for instruction. Then Klivanskii stressed that not all officers should be accepted by the troops, especially those who had abused their position, insulted and offended their men, or who had used corporal punishment. The officers, however, who are acceptable to the men should be addressed "as citizens, like themselves." He also noted that the "defense of the Fatherland against the external enemy" made the retention of the officers essential and that order had to be reestablished and anarchy mastered. These expressions were all well and good but these soldier delegates came from the Imperial Guards and their officers were not likely to meet even the least of these propositions. As one soldier put it, "We, the Guards, have a special sort of officer. The first hundred aristocratic families. We would scarcely have one left [were we to follow these guidelines]." Finally debate ended and a full program was decided on in a draft resolution presented by Klivanskii. It proposed that the soldiers form a soviet and join the workers' soviet; that all troop units send their representatives to the Petrograd Soviet; that no weapons be returned to officers; that the question of arms, as well as the economy of units, were both to be included under soldiers' control; and that discipline was to remain the same (as formerly) while on military duty. To these points were added the suggestion that the Duma Military Commission be accepted only insofar as it did not diverge in policy from that of the Soviet, as

well as providing for despatch of soldier delegates to participate in the commission. These and the other decisions were then presented to the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet.

The Soviet leaders quickly overcame their hesitations about soldier-participation in politics. Sokolov even pressed for election of soldier representatives to the executive committee; the result of which was to coopt ten soldier delegates onto the executive for three days (but who in fact remained on the committee for over a month): Sadovskii, Paderin, Badenko, Linde, Sokolov (a Kadet!), Kudriavtsev, Borisov, Klimchinskii, Barkov, and Vakulenko. "It was assumed," wrote Shliapnikov, "that elections of deputies to the Soviet from the garrison would occur. . . and that these delegates then would elect new executive committee members." At about 8 P. M. the executive committee in accordance with the soldiers' wishes resolved to constitute a "Soldiers' Section" to which delegates were to be elected on the basis of one delegate per company; the Soviet now became the "Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies." As for the proposed measures concerning the soldiery, the executive committee, after a brief discussion, decided to publish a single order that "should be distributed today." The executive appointed a committee to
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compose the order with Sokolov acting as draftsman.

In order to insure their new position in the revolution, the soldier-delegates also sought the endorsement of the Duma Committee. Late in the evening of March 14 twenty soldier delegates approached Engelhardt and asked him to frame an order

containing their demands. According to the British military attache, Sir Alfred Knox, Engelhardt told him that same day that the soldiers' demands were "fairly moderate, but embodied the idea of regimental committees." It provided only for the election of junior officers and for a certain measure of control by soldiers of the domestic economy of units. Engelhardt conveyed the proposals to the Duma Committee but found categorical opposition. The delegation withdrew after Engelhardt announced the Duma leaders' decision and presumably returned to the Soviet Executive Committee where the decision was soon made to draw up the order. Engelhardt relates that sometime after the delegation had withdrawn a soldier delegate from the Soviet asked the colonel what he proposed to do and when Engelhardt replied that the action was thought premature, the soldier turned on his heel, saying: "So much the better. We will write it ourselves."⁷⁹

The exact evolution of the soldiers' order indicates how considerable the influence of the soldiery was in the first days of the Soviet. Sukhanov has left us his highly descriptive portrait of what transpired:

Around 10 o'clock, going back behind the curtain of room 13, where the executive committee had been in session shortly before, I found the following scene: N. D. Sokolov was sitting at a table writing. He was surrounded on all sides by soldiers, standing, sitting, and leaning on the table, half-dictating and half-suggesting to Sokolov what he should write. There flashed through my mind Tolstoy's description of how he used to make up stories together with the children in the school at Iasnaia Poliana.

It appeared that this was a committee elected by the Soviet to compose an "order" to the soldiers. There was no agenda and no discussion of any kind, everyone spoke, and all were completely absorbed in the work, formulating their collective opinion without any voting. I stood and listened, extraordinarily interested. When the work was finished they put a heading on the sheet: "Order No. 1" . . . Its contents were completely covered by decisions of the Soviet and had nothing terrible in them.⁸⁰

The content of the document was essentially Klivanskii's five point resolution which he had brought up in the Soviet. A. N. Paderin (Bolshevik) recalled that only one argument arose: whether the proposition should be called an appeal or manifesto, as Sokolov suggested, or an order (prikaz) as the soldiers⁸¹ insisted. The final draft of the order was presented to the executive committee after no more than a half hour where it was approved without further discussion and sent on to the plenary Soviet. The soldiers in the Soviet were "beside themselves with joy"⁸² when the full Soviet approved the order. The order was immediately issued in leaflet form that same night and in Izvestiia the following morning:

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Order No. 1

To the garrison of the Petrograd District, to all the soldiers and sailors of the guard, army, artillery, and navy, for immediate and strict execution, and to the workers of Petrograd for their information:

The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has resolved:

1. In all companies, battalions, regiments, parks batteries, squadrons, in the special services of the various military administrations, and on the vessels of the navy, committees

from the elected representatives of the lower ranks of the above-mentioned military units shall be chosen immediately.

2. In all those military units that have not yet chosen their representatives to the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, one representative from each company shall be selected, to report with written credentials at the building of the State Duma by ten o'clock on the morning of the second of this March.

3. In all its political actions, the military branch is subordinated to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and to its own committees.

4. The orders of the Military Commission of the State Duma shall be executed only in such cases as do not conflict with the orders and resolutions of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

5. All kinds of arms, such as rifles, machine guns, armored automobiles, and others, must be kept at the disposal and under the control of the company and battalion committees, and in no case should they be turned over to officers, even at their demand.

6. In the ranks and during their performance of the duties of the service, soldiers must observe the strictest military discipline, but outside the service and the ranks, in their political, general civic, and private life, soldiers cannot in any way be deprived of those rights that all citizens enjoy. In particular, standing at attention and compulsory saluting, when not on duty, is abolished.

7. Also, the addressing of the officers with the titles "Your Excellency," "Your Honor," etc., is abolished, and these titles are replaced by the address of "Mister General," "Mister Colonel," etc. Rudeness toward soldiers of any rank, and, especially, addressing them as "thou" [ty] is prohibited, and soldiers are required to bring to the attention of the company committees, every infraction of this rule, as well as all misunderstandings occurring between officers and privates.

The present Order is to be read to all companies, battalions, regiments, ships' crews, batteries, and other combatant and noncombatant commands.

PETROGRAD SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES

March 1, 1917

The Left SR's and Interdistrictites, it will be remembered, were vehemently opposed to the Soviet; they were determined that the soldiery not be organized in support of that body. Almost at the same time that "Order No. 1" was being prepared, another manifesto was being drawn up in Petrograd; it became confused with "Order No. 1." While "Order No. 1" did not sanction the election of officers by the soldiery, this proclamation did so; called for troops to take matters into their own hands, sanctioned violence, and called for the complete break of the rank and file with the officers' corps:

Comrade soldiers! It has happened! You have revolted, the oppressed, enslaved peasants and workers have revolted, and the autocratic government has fallen to the ground with a clash and with disgrace. . . . Soldiers! Be on guard lest the lords of the nobility deceive the people! Go to the Duma and ask it: Will there be land for the people, will there be freedom, will there be peace? . . . In order not to be deceived by the noblemen and officers--this Romanov gang--take power into your own hands. Elect your own platoon commanders, company commanders, and regimental commanders, elect company committees for taking charge of food supplies. All the officers must be under the control of these company committees. Accept only those officers whom you know to be friends of the people . . . Soldiers! Now that you have revolted and won, former enemies will come to you along with your friends--officers who have called themselves your friends. Soldiers! The tail of a fox is more to be feared than the tooth of a wolf. Our only loyal friends and brothers are the workers and peasants. Get into closer contact with them! . . . Your representatives and workers' deputies must become the Provisional Government of the people and from this government you will obtain land and freedom! . . ."84

P[ress] B[ureau] Mezhduraionnyi (Interdistrictite)
Committee of the RSDRP

P[ress] B[ureau]. Committee of
the Socialist Revolutionaries

The executive committee of the Soviet upon learning of this proclamation resolved to suspend its publication until it could be discussed the following morning. Sukhanov, usually quite radical in his views, personally confiscated several bales of the manifesto in V. M. Molotov's possession but not without a row.⁸⁵

Chkheidze and Kerensky addressed a communication to the Petrograd garrison pointing out that the manifesto "was a deliberate forgery, perpetrated by agents provocateurs."⁸⁶ While not exactly true, a great many provocative leaflets were being distributed about the city during the first days of the revolution. The actual authors of the proclamation were not the organizations named in the document but the work of Aleksandrovich and Iurenev. While Iurenev was only criticized by his Soviet colleagues, the SR party when it convened for its first Petrograd Conference on March 15 sternly reprimanded Aleksandrovich and repudiated his actions.⁸⁷ Aleksandrovich, however, was not overly bothered by such action and posed as being completely faithful to the SR party. He was the nucleus around which Left SR's would gravitate.

To confound the situation still further A. I. Guchkov issued on March 17 an "Order No. 1" in the name of the Ministry of War. This order demanded that every soldier stand his ground and make no changes in the status quo.⁸⁸ This action improved nothing and forced Guchkov to appeal to the Soviet to clarify

its "Order No. 1." Though only the Aleksandrovich-Iurenev appeal called for election of officers, officers nevertheless were either confirmed or dismissed by their troops. Those dismissed were sometimes turned over to the Military Commission; others were arrested by their men or allowed to return to their quarters. The radical manifesto had shocked a number of Petrograd Soviet deputies and these responded quickly to Guchkov's request to issue a second order so as to clarify the first and formed a joint committee along with members of the Military Commission under the chairmanship of General Potapov, a friend of Guchkov's with socialist connections. Order No. 2 of the Petrograd Soviet which appeared on March 19, ⁸⁹ attempted to clarify differences between the Aleksandrovich-Iurenev order and that of the Soviet. Election of officers had not been sanctioned by the Soviet's Order No. 1, but as some elections had taken place all officers so selected "up to the present time and confirmed or submitted for confirmation by the army authorities must remain in force." The purpose of the committees, it explained, was to allow the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison "to share in the general political life of the country." Order No. 2 also confirmed giving wide civil rights to the soldiers and ending the old military order greetings between officers and troops. Finally, this second order also noted that Order No. 1 had been issued primarily to the Petrograd garrison, but it did not specifically dismiss the notion that it applied throughout the military. ⁹⁰ Therefore the Soviet had to issue another directive,

Order No. 3 which appeared in Izvestiia on March 8/21, specifically stating that Orders No. 1 and No. 2 applied only to the soldiers of the Petrograd Military District.

* * *

The question of state power was first discussed on March 14-15, the problem being raised in the March 14th morning session of the executive committee. Several members, however, were absent and debate was deferred to a meeting later that evening. Russian socialists essentially advocated one of three types of policy vis-à-vis state power: 1) a coalition of socialists and bourgeoisie, 2) non-cooperation by socialists with the bourgeoisie and establishment of a socialist revolutionary government, and 3) socialist cooperation but not participation in a bourgeois government. The majority of Russian socialists held to this last view, while the left wing, Bolsheviks, Left SR's and Inter-districtites urged non-cooperation; and Bundists and Popular Socialists, the right wing, advocated the policy of coalition. The agenda of the evening session included 1) character and class composition of the first revolutionary government; 2) demands to be made of this government; and 3) personal composition of the ministries. Erlich, a Bund leader, maintained in the discussion that followed that if the new government was to have a revolutionary character the leaders of the Soviet would have to participate in it. Rafes, also a Bundist, explained:

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The working class of Russia is taking such an active part in the development of the revolution that without its direct participation in the creation of the state life, the revolution would hardly be carried out to a favorable end. It is indispensable to lead the active work of the working class in the direction of revolutionary state construction.⁹³

Apparently the left wing was not too vocal about creating a socialist revolutionary government. Some historians have maintained that the first days of the revolution were an era of good feeling among "socialists"⁹⁴ and, as a result, that the Bolshevik failed to form their own faction in the Soviet until March 22,⁹⁵ that the majority policy exerted "strong influence" on the Bolshevik leaders to support the Provisional Government, and that some Bolshevik members of the Soviet voted on March 15 for the formal transfer of power to the Provisional Government.⁹⁶ That only 19 out of 400 deputies present voted for a socialist revolutionary government⁹⁷ bears out this last point. Until Lenin's return to Russia in April, the pages of Pravda called for Bolshevik support of the Provisional Government and cooperation with the other socialist parties. Though Shliapnikov writes that "only eight members stood for the revolutionary democracy" on March 14, he admits that the Bolsheviks shared with the Mensheviks the belief that the revolution was a bourgeois-democratic revolution.⁹⁸ According to Sukhanov, a decision was made by a vote of 13 to 7 or 8 that "we should not send representatives of democracy to the ministry of Miliukov and should not demand their participation in it."⁹⁹ Rafes, however, tells us that this

decision was not final. The March 14 meeting was considered only a preliminary discussion and the question was put on the agenda for the next session on March 15. In the meantime the various parties were asked to poll their membership and report the stand of each organization at the executive committee session which was to convene shortly before the plenary Soviet the following morning.

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After the Soviet leaders had decided not to take state power, they set about formulating the demands to be made of the new government. Sukhanov had devised a set of conditions to impose on the Provisional Government which he now presented to the Soviet. A good many of the demands had been voiced by the Progressive Bloc of the State Duma before the revolution. These included political and religious amnesty, guarantee of basic freedoms, universal suffrage in election of local administration, and abolition of discriminatory organizations, a proposed popular militia to replace the police, and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The third point in Sukhanov's program called for abstention of all efforts (but not advocacy) to predetermine the future form of government; that is, until the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. Points eight and nine, however, were radical and derived directly from a recognition of the elemental force of the Petrograd garrison: (8) no disarmament and no withdrawal from Petrograd of the army units that took part in the revolutionary movement; and (9) the enjoyment of full civil and political rights by the soldiers. The entire program dealt

with immediate conditions. No attempt was made to force any socio-economic or foreign policy scheme on the country; indeed, notes Sukhanov, ". . . it was vital to wait as long as possible."

As no major objections were raised the program was quickly
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adopted.

The debate turned to whether the Soviet should support the Provisional Government even if it did not accept some of the Sukhanov program. The Bundists and Popular Socialists argued for unconditional support of the new government "insofar as" the basic ideas of the Soviet were honored. Sukhanov urged support of the Provisional Government only if it met all the conditions. This latter became the viewpoint of the rest of the executive

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committee. Concerning the make-up of the new government, the executive committee decided on a hands-off policy. The bourgeois leadership could form their ministry from whatever circles they wished. The executive committee refused to have any influence at
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all on its personnel.

Things, however, took a different turn, for the same night that produced "Order No. 1" resulted in an even more important action concerning state power. Some members of the Soviet Executive Committee on their own initiative joined with the Temporary Committee of the Duma in a meeting that led to the formation of the Provisional Government. According to Sukhanov, "On my own responsibility I went over to the right wing of the Palace to arrange about the meeting. It was best to work through Kerensky" 104
Failing, however to gain Kerensky's immediate

support, Sukhanov to his surprise came upon Chkheidze and Sokolov in the Duma chambers and quickly obtained their agreement "for an immediate 'constituent' conference."¹⁰⁵ When Nekrasov delivered

this proposition to his Duma colleagues, Miliukov notes that they "willingly accepted this proposal" and set the session for 12 midnight, a half hour later.¹⁰⁶ Sukhanov maintained that the

bourgeoisie had to assume power or the revolution would perish, as the disunity of the socialists made the creation of a State apparatus of power impossible. "The existing State machine . . . might obey Miliukov, but would not obey Chkheidze," he continued.¹⁰⁷

So as not to deprive the bourgeoisie of the hope of winning power, the conditions of the socialists were to be minimal, that is, the required freedom of agitation in order to prevent the "dictatorship of capital."¹⁰⁸ The question was whether or not the

"propertied classes of Russia consent to accept power under such conditions? And the task therefore is to compel them to take power."¹⁰⁹ As the old Menshevik A. Potresov put the matter: "At

the moment of the bourgeois revolution, the best prepared, socially and psychologically, to solve national problems is this same bourgeoisie. . . . even if it be only for a brief period of history."¹¹⁰

The SR leader Viktor Chernov tells us that "neither theory or doctrine won out in the ranks of Soviet democracy, but it was a direct feeling of the 'burden of power' that triumphed, when socialist doctrinaires of 'bourgeois revolution' proposed--with 'profound theoretical justifications'--to transfer this burden from their shoulders to the shoulders of the privileged

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 class." Why then did the Soviet not take power? First of all, says Chernov, because this was the line of least resistance, for the socialists were beset by disunity. Secondly, the socialist leaders were in exile and their lieutenants in Petrograd hesitated to assume the trying responsibility. Thirdly, the bourgeois leaders were well-known throughout Russia whereas the socialists, masked by pseudonyms, were targets for reactionary legend. Fourthly, the socialist leaders were "absolutely ignorant of the technique of governmental administration and its apparatus." Finally, the bourgeois parties had more than a decade of "public existence and stable, legal organizations," while the socialist groups had incurred 112 periodic decimation at the hands of the tsarist regime.

Chernov's points require some qualification. First, none of the Duma deputies had experienced much first hand about the mechanics of government. Thus while the socialist deputies were ignorant of the techniques of government, in practice so were the bourgeoisie. The liberals and socialists had worked all of their lives for change with little or no attention being paid to understanding the operation of institutions once the revolution was achieved. Their sudden thrust into positions of command in March 1917 left them unprepared. The first days of the revolution clearly revealed their ineptitude in solving practical matters, such as transport, food supply, and military organization. Second, while only remnants of the socialist parties remained in 1917, the following of the liberal parties was relatively small by comparison with that of the socialists and hardly better organized.

The fear of counterrevolution, haunting the Soviet leaders like a specter, made them reluctant to assume state power. "When at the beginning of the revolution," Skobelev recalled later, "I went to the entrance

of the Tauride Palace to meet a group of soldiers . . . and to make a speech to them, I was almost certain that I was making one of my last speeches, and that in a few days I would be shot or

hanged." ¹¹³ Steklov on April 12 at a Soviet conference stated that, at the time, the victory of the revolution, even in a moderate bourgeois form, was uncertain. The mutinous soldiery was without leadership and organization and could hardly be expected to face well-ordered tsarist forces. "Every moment we expected ¹¹⁴ that they would come and arrest us, if not shoot us," he said.

Sukhanov, usually calm and collected, recollected later that if Cossacks or any organized force had attacked, "we could not have looked anywhere for salvation and they would have conquered the ¹¹⁵ revolution with their bare hands." The experience of the 1905

Revolution in which the bourgeoisie were pushed into the arms of reaction by radical socialist demands had resulted in the socialists moderating their goals in order to gain bourgeois support in a united revolutionary front. The 1905 experience had also made possible not only close collaboration between the SR's and the Mensheviks but even ideological domination of the ¹¹⁶ former by the latter. The metamorphosis of the SR leadership after 1905 seems to have been the most important single factor that contributed to accommodating the Constitutional Democrats. This position came about not only from the terrible 1905 disaster, but the result of the war and adoption of defensism, as well as the indicated fear of inexperience in ministerial governing as opposed to Kadet "expertise."

As the Soviet Executive Committee had adjourned earlier, no mandate existed for the negotiations concerning state power into which Chkheidze, Sukhanov, Sokolov and Steklov entered with the Duma committeemen. In fact, they were in violation of the decisions made earlier that day. These men, however, apparently felt no strong need to have a formally authorized delegation, "nor was there any necessity," wrote Sukhanov, to have a meeting with the full membership of the executive committee. Steklov did take notes in order to make a report to the Soviet. In fairness to these leaders, however, it must be emphasized that "Order No. 1" had only minutes before been approved under the strong pressure of the insurgent soldiery. Sukhanov expected the demand for the Soviet to establish a provisional revolutionary government to mount with increasing vigor unless action was taken that very night.¹¹⁷

The negotiations between the Soviet leaders and the Duma Committeemen over state power opened at midnight. Representing the Soviet were Chkheidze, Steklov, Sukhanov, Sokolov, Skobelev,¹¹⁸ Filippovskii among others. Those representing the Temporary Duma Committee included thirteen or fourteen liberals and¹¹⁹ left-wing monarchists, most notably Miliukov and Nekrasov.¹²⁰ Kerensky attended as a representative of both sides. After an informal start the session took on a businesslike and "responsible"¹²¹ tone. Once the Duma Committeemen realized that the socialists were equally aware of the danger to the revolution of the "reign of anarchy," they made direct proposals of mutual

support, all of which Sukhanov described as desultory conversation obscuring the central question:

The Provisional Committee of the State Duma, which had taken executive power into its hands, was still not a government, even a "provisional" one; the creation of this government still lay ahead. . . . The Soviet . . . wished to express its relationship to the government being formed in the right wing, make clear its views on the tasks of that government, and state demands which in the name of the entire democracy it was presenting to the government created by the revolution.¹²²

The meeting turned from the question of where state power should reside to specific qualifications of that power. Steklov read the Sukhanov program which had just been adopted in the plenary Soviet and explained it point by point using every argument he could to sustain the socialist requirements. Many of the "propertied" persons present, Sukhanov tells us, appeared uneasy and perplexed.¹²³ However, "Nekrasov remained completely serene, and on Miliukov's face it was possible even to detect signs of deep satisfaction," for the latter had been expecting some binding peace program.¹²⁴ Miliukov, as spokesman for the other side, replied: "The conditions of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in general are acceptable and in general they may constitute the groundwork for an agreement with the committee of the State Duma. Nevertheless there are some points to which the committee definitely objects."¹²⁵ Miliukov openly rejected point three of the Soviet program which concerned the future form of government, and he wished to limit the civil liberties

of the soldiery. This Russian European was not really afraid,
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Sukhanov tells us, of the freedom of the army or of a Consti-
tuent Assembly so long as they were based on a constitutional monarchy.

Miliukov knew that unless a constitutional monarchy was estab-
lished at once a de facto republic would probably come into exis-
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tence; "They wanted to establish a republic at once," he wrote.

The Soviet Executive Committeemen, however, did not want to
bind themselves to any form of government until the Constituent
Assembly could make the decision in the name of the people.

While the Soviet had appealed to the people to struggle against
the autocracy, none of its proclamations had called for the aboli-
tion of the monarchic principle. Chkheidze and Sokolov labelled

Miliukov's proposition utopian and absurd if he thought the
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Soviet would sanction the defense of the Romanovs. In principle

therefore, the socialists could not accept the proposal for
preservation of the monarchy, but would not deny the right of
Miliukov's group advocating such a policy independently of the
Soviet. As for the civil liberties of the soldiery, Miliukov
granted the rights of citizens to soldiers "to the limits
allowable under military and technical conditions," and he
defended the "retention of strict military discipline in the
structure and the carrying out of military service," while
introducing equality for soldiers "in civil rights." He agreed
to "not disarming and not sending out of Petrograd those troops
which had taken part in the revolutionary movement" and which had

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just assured the victory of the revolution.

For their part the Soviet leaders agreed to limit civil rights of soldiers to off-duty hours, and, according to Miliukov,¹³⁰ also concurred to drop the demand for the election of officers. The Monarchist V. V. Shul'gin had asked the Soviet chairman why the socialists were so insistent on an elected officer corps, Chkheidze "raised his thoroughly tired eyelids, rolled his eyes and answered in a whisper: 'In general everything has failed. . . a miracle is needed in order to save. . . We must try it. . . . It cannot be any worse. . . because, I tell you. . . everything has failed. . . .'" Shul'gin also recalled, "Miliukov was carrying on an endless argument about 'the elected officers' corps' . . . that there was no such thing in the world, and the army would disintegrate."¹³¹ The Sukhanov program, however, included no such demand. Possibly the Aleksandrovich-Iurenev order, issued only a few hours before the meeting, calling for election of officers became confused in Miliukov's and Shul'gin's minds with the executive committeemen's program in much the same way as it became confused with the Soviet's "Order No. 1." Sukhanov, however, notes that he did not see the other order until after the joint meeting.¹³² In any case election of officers was not part of the Sukhanov program nor part of the Soviet's "Order No. 1." Sukhanov stated that the demands "were in the first place a minimum, and secondly absolutely categorical and final." He observed that "among the masses an incomparably broader program was developing with every day and every hour, which the

masses were following and would follow." The Soviet leaders were trying to direct this movement and keep it within reasonable limits he stated, "But if these limits were under the complicated circumstances, to be imprudently settled, and not in accordance with the stride of the movement, then a spontaneous explosion would sweep them away together with all of the contemplated governmental 'combinations.'" He concluded: "Either we could stop this spontaneous explosion or nobody could. Real power therefore was either ours or nobody's. Only one solution was possible: to agree to our conditions and accept them as the governmental program." ¹³³ Miliukov countered, "These were your demands addressed to us. But we have our own demands of you. . . ."

He asked the executive committee to take immediate action to restore law and order and establish contact between soldiers and officers. He also requested that a Soviet appeal inform the public of the formation of a government with Soviet sanction that should be recognized as legitimate by the masses and enjoy their confidence. He suggested also that in this appeal the Soviet request popular confidence in the officers' corps and that the soldiery concede their recognition of the commanding staff. ¹³⁴ To Miliukov's surprise the Soviet leaders accepted all of his demands and he openly revealed his satisfaction.

Sukhanov started to compose the proclamation to be issued by the executive committee but found "my head was as empty as my stomach," and was relieved by Sokolov. ¹³⁵ Sukhanov found Sokolov's draft "really disastrous," being nothing more than an

explanation to the soldiers of the characteristics of the officers' corps. Worse it gave the impression that no relationship should exist between officers and men and that the former perhaps "should

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be attacked root and branch." Miliukov certainly did not

consider Sokolov's draft acceptable and set about with Sukhanov re-drafting it, and getting it approved by the Soviet leaders.

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Sukhanov wrote that Miliukov "added a third (and last) paragraph to the second paragraph that I had written, and fixed his signature below mine."

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Miliukov's draft appealed for the people to strive to arrest anarchy and lawlessness lest the revolution and the people's freedom fall into ruin, and further, that differences between the soldiery and the officer corps

be reconciled to protect the revolution from the military forces of reaction.

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Miliukov, at the time, was obviously elated:

"This is almost the same thing that I had told the soldiers from the tower of the regiment barracks. And it was accepted for publication in the name of the Soviet!"

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The session of March 14-15 with the Soviet leaders transformed the Temporary Committee of the Duma into a revolutionary institution. No longer could it claim to be an organization functioning within the legal system of the old regime. While attempting to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the masses of the Russian people by seeking the endorsement of the popularly supported Soviet, the Miliukov group agreed to policies that made the government in essence impotent and dependent on the Soviet and the whims of the masses.

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Sukhanov saw this as the only course of action open to Miliukov:

He understood that without an accord with the Soviet no government could either arise or remain in existence. He understood that it was entirely within the power of the executive committee to give authority to a bourgeois regime or withhold it. He saw where the real strength lay, he saw in whose hands were the means of assuring the new government both the indispensable conditions for work and its very existence. Miliukov realized that he was accepting power not from the hands of the monarch in Tsarskoe Selo, as he had counted on doing throughout the preceding decade, but from the hands of the victorious revolutionary people.¹⁴³

Actually both the executive committee and the temporary committee were charting a dangerous course. The Duma Committeemen were faced with demands by the High Command, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the requirements of the Soviet, which represented to them the masses of people. The executive committeemen were similarly, however, faced with the demands of the right, the bourgeoisie and more importantly the army, on the one hand, and, on the other, the elemental strength of the garrison barracks and the streets, or the stikhiia. Another three weeks had to pass before "democratization" of the army really began to erode the authority of the High Command and thus in the first days the military was a very real power with which to reckon. As for the stikhiia, Kerensky had warned at the very outset of the revolution, on March 8, that the masses would flatten everything unless their demands were satisfied. ¹⁴⁴ Such were the Scylla and Charybdis for the revolutionaries at that time.

FOOTNOTES

1. Oliver H. Radkey, The Agrarian Foes of Bolshevism (New York: Columbia University Press, c. 1958), p. 128.
2. A. Shliapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god (4 vols., Moscow and Leningrad, 1923-1931), I, pp. 131-32; I, p. 87.
3. S. Mstislavskii, Piat' dnei: nachalo i konets fevral'skoi revoliutsii (Berlin, St. Petersburg, Moscow, 1922), p. 12.
4. "Smysl sobytii," Delo Naroda, No. 1 (March 15/28, 1917); Vladimir M. Zenzinov, Iz zhizni revoliutsionera (Paris: Tipografiia I. Rirakhovskag, 1919).
5. Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," Novyi zhurnal, XXXIV (1953), p. 201 and R. Kovnator, "Nakanune fevralia," Revoliutsionnoe iundshestvo (Leningrad, 1924), p. 189, concerning Grinevich and Iurenev. Concerning the meetings of parties at this time, materials are scant. The SR, Markov, suggests that there were no organized efforts from above to direct the lower organizations (see I. Markov, "Kak proizoshla revoliutsiia," Volia rossii No. 3 (1927), pp. 95-96. The leader of the Menshevik Internationalists, O. A. Ermanskii, states in his memoirs no meetings of his organization, the Initiative Group, took place during the March days (O. A. Ermanskii, Iz perezhitogo, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), pp. 140-50. See N. N. Sukhanov, Zapiski o revoliutsii (7 vols.; Berlin-Petersburg-Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Z. I. Grzhebina, 1922), I, p. 45.
6. Sukhanov, I, pp. 34-35; Victor Chernov, The Great Russian Revolution (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 101.
7. Ocherki istorii leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS (Leningrad, 1962), I, p. 447.
8. Sveshnikov, "Otryvki iz vospominanii," Petrogradskaia pravda (14 March 1923); I. Iurenev, "Mezhraionka, 1911-1917 gg.," Proletarskaia revoliutsiia (PR), No. 2 (25) 1925, pp. 139-40.
9. Shliapnikov, I, p. 87.
10. Sveshnikov; Kiaurov, "Shest'dnei fevral'skaia revoliutsii," PR (1923), p. 105.
11. Shliapnikov, I, pp. 90, 103-05, 122; "Vospominaniia I. D. Chugurina," deposited in the Leningrad Party Archives, quoted by I. P. Leiberov, "Petrogradskii proletariat v. bor'be za pobeda fevral'skoi burzhuazno-demokraticheskoi

- revoliutsii v Rossii," Istoriia SSSR No. 1 (1957), p. 37. Only the Interdistrictite committee issued a declaration (with no mention of a soviet) to the workers, quoted in E. N. Burdzhakov, Vtoraia russkaia revoliutsiia i vosstanie v Petrograde (Moscow, 1957), p. 155.
12. Iurenev, p. 137.
 13. Ibid., p. 138. Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," p. 207. Zenzinov claims that Grinevich was also at the meeting at Kerensky's apartment, but Iurenev states that Sokolovskii came for him. Though Kerensky does not mention in The Catastrophe: Kerensky's Own Story of the Russian Revolution (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1927), p. 6, the editors do state in R. P. Browder and A. F. Kerensky, eds., The Russian Provisional Government (3 vols.; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), I, p. 32 ftn., that A. G. Shliapnikov was also there.
 14. Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," p. 209; A. Kerensky, The Catastrophe, p. 6, Kerensky, The Crucifixion of Liberty (New York: John Day Co., 1934), pp. 236-37; Iurenev, p. 138.
 15. Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," p. 210.
 16. "Kak obrazovalsia Petrogradskii Sovet," Izvestiia Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, No. 155 (August 27/ September 9, 1917), pp. 6-7.
 17. I. Gordienko, Iz boevogo proshlogo (Moscow, 1957), p. 58.
 18. "Fevral'skaia revoliutsiia i okhrannoe otdelenie," Byloe, 29, No. 1 (1918), pp. 174-75. The Soviet historian, Andreev, used the above quotation in his work on the Soviets, p. 40 (A. M. Andreev, Sovety rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov nakanune Oktiabria, mart-oktiabr' 1917 g. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1967), to show Bolshevik influence in organizing the Petrograd Soviet, but the English translation misquotes Shurkanov and mistranslates Andreev, p. 21, "the Bolsheviks[sic.] had raised the question of forming a Soviet of Workers' Deputies in the near future. . . ."
 19. Kiaurov, p. 157; Iurenev, p. 138.
 20. "Vospominaniia uchastnikov Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii v Petrograde" (Leningradskii partiinyi arkhiv, Fond 4000, opis' 5, d. 1533, l. 1) as cited in Andreev, p. 39. The English edition of 1971 does not give this nor the following sources, p. 21: F. Evseev, "V Petrograde v 1917 g. (Vospominaniia deputata Petrogradskogo Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov)," Sovety deputatov trudiashchikhsia, No. 1 (1957), p. 91; F. A. Lemeshev, "Narvskii raikom bol'shevikov ot

- Fevralia k Oktiabriu 1917 g.," Krasnaia letopis', no. 5-6 (1932), p. 122; I. Gavrilov, "Na Vyborgskoi storone v 1914-1917 gg.," Krasnaia Letopis', No. 2 (1927); V. Kaiurov.
21. Burdzhhalov, p. 202.
 22. Kerensky, Russia and History's Turning Point (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1965), pp. 199, 232; Kerensky, Crucifixion, p. 274; Kerensky, Catastrophe, p. 16.
 23. Prince S. P. Mansyrev, Vospominaniia, ed. Alexieff (Paris, 1925), p. 268.
 24. Mstislavsky. p. 22; Izvestiia, No. 155, Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," pp. 214-16; Sukhanov, I, pp. 86-87.
 25. Kerensky, The Catastrophe, p. 29. Kerensky, Russia and History's Turning Point, p. 199.
 26. Izvestiia revoliutsionnoi nedeli, No. 1, February 27/March 12, 1917), p. 1.
 27. "Ko vsem grazhdanam Rossii," PR No. 1 (13) 1923, pp. 125-26, 167.
 28. Burdzhhalov, "O taktike bol'shevikov v marte-aprele 1917 goda,:" Voprosy istorii, No. 4 (1956), pp. 40-41. The Soviet Russian historian, Andreev, in spite of this, writes of this manifesto in such a way that implies, and incorrectly so, that the Bolshevik manifesto was published on March 12. Further, while this manifesto may well have influenced, as Andreev claims, the election of deputies from the Neva District on March 13, it must be noted that the organizational meeting of the Soviet took place the night of March 12-13 and that a number of deputies had already been elected prior to any knowledge of the Bolshevik manifesto. Andreev, p. 41.
 29. "Ko vsem grazhdanam Rossii," PR No. 1 (13) 1923, pp. 125-26, 167. One Soviet Russian interpretation claims that once the soviet was formed that it would set up a provisional revolutionary government, while another argues that a provisional revolutionary government and not a soviet was called for, because the fundamental task was preventing the social chauvinists from restraining revolutionary development. (N. Ia. Ivanov, I. P. Leiberov, V. E. Mushtukov, G. A. Pochebut, and I. S. Smolin, Petrogradskie bolsheviki v trekh revoliutsiakh (Moscow, 1966), pp. 229-30, 203-04; E. D. Chermenskii, "Fevral'skaia burzhuaznodemokraticheskaia revoliutsiia 1917 goda," Voprosy istorii, No. 2 (1957), p. 10.) Indeed some Soviet Russian historians have developed

inconsistent interpretations: (1) that the party did not neglect the soviets, and (2) that the party underestimated the significance of the soviets. (Ivanov et al., pp. 229-30, 203-04).

30. A. M. Sinitsin, "O rabote Instituta istorii akademii nauk SSSR v 1958 godu," Voprosy istorii, No. 5 (1959), pp. 204-05; K. I. Sedov "Obshchee sobranie otdeleniia istoricheskikh nauk AN SSSR," Voprosy istorii, No. 5 (1958), pp. 180, 182; A. A. Sheviakov, "O zadachakh obshchestvennykh nauk v svete postanovleniia TsK KPSS ot 9 ianvaria 1960 g.," Voprosy istorii, No. 5 (1960), p. 193; P. I. Kabanov, A. I. Kozachenko, and I. G. Riabtsev, "Po stranitsam zhurnala 'Istorii SSSR'," Voprosy istorii, No. 7 (1960), p. 145.
31. "XI mezhdunarodnyi kongress istoricheskikh nauk v Stokgolme," Voprosy istorii, No. 12 (1960), pp. 3-4, 24, 28-29; G. P. Shurbovanyi, "Obshchee sobranie otdeleniia istoricheskikh nauk AN SSSR," Voprosy istorii, No. 12 (1960), pp. 111-12.
32. Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, Na Boevykh postakh fevral'skoi i oktiabr' skoi revoliutsii (Moscow, 1931), p. 12; The manifesto was later published in a revised form in Pravda and other Bolshevik newspapers. Pravda of March 5/18, p. 2 dated the manifesto February 26/March 11 but, as cited in footnote no. 28, this has been disproved. Bonch-Burevich, p. 41, notes that the manifesto was also issued as a leaflet, which Andreev incorrectly implies in his work on the soviets, was printed before, not after the Izvestiia Supplement (see Voprosy istorii KPSS, VI (1964)).
33. Shliapnikov, I, pp. 339-40. Appendix 24, pp. 261-62; Iurenev, pp. 142-43.
34. Sukhanov, I. p. 87.
35. Mstislavskii, pp. 18-20.
36. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
37. Ibid., p. 23-25, 29; Radkey, p. 132; see "fevral'skaia revoliutsiia v Petrograde," Krasnyi arkhiv, XLI-XLII (1930), pp. 63-102 for the numerous orders issued by the military commission and the communiques it received. According to Stankevich, Lt. Filippovskii remained uninterruptedly at his post for 72 hours. V. B. Stankevich, Vospominaniia, 1914-1919 (Berlin, 1920), p. 85.
38. Shliapnikov, I, p. 117.
39. Ibid., pp. 117-18.

40. Ibid., p. 118.
41. Shliapnikov, p. 120 claims that 40 to 45 delegates had the right to vote. Sukhanov, I., p. 127 does not specify how many of the 250 persons (his figure) had the right to vote, nor does the article, "Kak obrazoval'sia Petrogradskii Sovet," which states that there were 125 to 150 delegates at the meeting. Burdzhhalov, pp. 213-14.
42. Shliapnikov, I, p. 119.
43. Sukhanov, I, pp. 127-57; Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," pp. 215-18; A. V. Peshekhonov, "Pervyia nedeli: iz vospominanii o revoliutsii," Na chuzhoi storone, I (1923), pp. 261-65; D. A. Kovalenko and D. B. Oznobishin, "O revoliutsionnom tvorchestve rabochikh mass posle sverzheniia samoderzhavii," Voprosy istorii, No. 1 (1958), p. 24; U. S. S. R., Gos. arkhiv Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii i sotsialsticheskogo stroitel'stva Leningradskoi oblasti (GAORSS LO), Fond 7384, opis' 7, d. 7, 11, 8, 152; d. 8, 1. 13 as cited in Andreev, p. 45; Velikaia oktiabr'skaia sotsialisticheskaia revoliutsiia: Khronika sobytii (4 vols.; Moscow, 1957), I, p. 8.; Shliapnikov, I, pp. 119-22.
44. Sukhanov, p. 127.
45. Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," XXV, p. 216; Sukhanov, p. 129; Svetskoy, Khrustalev-Nosar (Moscow, 1925), p. 45; Shliapnikov, I, p. 120.
46. "Kak obrazoval'sia Petrogradskii sovet," p. 7.
47. Sukhanov, I, pp. 128-29.
48. Ibid., I, pp. 129-131, 133.
49. Ibid., p. 130-131.
50. Ibid., p. 132.
51. Ibid., p. 133.
52. Ibid., p. 141 notes the hour around midnight and that after this they returned to elect the committee, p. 148.
53. Ibid., Sukhanov, pp. 176-77.
54. Shliapnikov, p. 121; Sukhanov, I, p. 149, states that Steklov, Kapelinskii and himself received in all 37-41 votes, and Shliapnikov and Aleksandrovich, 20-22 votes; "Kak obrazoval'sia Petrogradskii soveta," p. 7.

55. Ibid., p. 179; Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni," p. 218.
56. Sukhanov, I, pp. 149-53.
57. M. Rafes, "Moi vospominaniia," Byloe 19 (1922), p. 190.
58. Shliapnikov, I, p. 125; Izvestiia Petrogradskogo Soveta rabochikh deputatov, No. 1 (February 28/ March 13, 1917), p. 1.
59. Shliapnikov, I, p. 125.
60. Ibid.
61. Izvestiia Petrogradskogo Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, No. 1 (February 28/ March 13, 1917).
62. Sukhanov, I, p. 183.
63. Ibid., p. 184.
64. Ibid., p. 185.
65. Ibid., p. 190.
66. Ibid., p. 189.
67. G. I. Zlokazov, "O zasedanii Petrogradskogo Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov 28 fevralia 1917 g.," in Oktiabr' i grazhdanskaia voina v SSSR: sbornik statei k 70-letiiu akademika I. I. Mintsia (Moscow, 1966), pp. 53-55.
68. Izvestiia revoliutsionnoi nedeli (Petrograd), No. 2 (February 28/March 13, 1917).
69. Izvestiia Petrogradskogo Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, No. 2 (March 1/14, 1917).
70. G. I. Zlokazov, "O pervykh shagakh deiatel'nosti Petrogradskogo Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov (konets fevralia-- nachale marta 1917 g.," Soveta i soiuz rabochogo klassa i krest'ianstva v Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii (Moscow, 1964), pp. 11-12.
71. U. S. S. R., Tsentral'nogo gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, (TsGIA SSSR) fond 1175, opis'2, d. 170, ll. 6-7 as cited in Burdzhhalov, p. 275; see also Izvestiia revoliutsionnoe nedeli (Petrograd), No. 3, March 1/14. N. Avdeev, ed., Revoliutsiia 1917 goda; khronkia sobytii (Moscow: Gos. izdatel'stvo, 1923), I, p. 43. John Boyd, "The Origins of Order No. 1," Soviet Studies, XIX (January 1968), p. 362,

- ftn. no. 14 miscites this as page 42 of Avdeev, and also gives a loose translation which he attributes as a direct quotation. Browder and Kerensky, I, p. 62 mistakenly cite the issue of Izvestiia as No. 4, rather than No. 3.
72. Rafes, p. 193.
 73. Obshchee delo (Paris), March 16, 1921; Shliapnikov, I., p. 171.
 74. U. S. S. R., Tsentral'noi gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii SSSR (TsGAOR SSSR), d. 170, ll. 6-7 as cited in Burdzhakov, p. 275.
 75. Izvestiia revoliutsionnoi nedeli (Petrograd), No. 4, March 2/15. Browder and Kerensky, I, p. 62 incorrectly cite this as No. 3, March 1).
 76. Izvestiia Petrogradskago soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, No. 3, March 2/15, 1917.
 77. Ibid. The debate is taken from the minutes of the meeting as reproduced in V. I. Miller, "Nachalo demorativizatsii staroi armii v dni Fevral'skoi revoliutsii, "Istoriia SSSR", No. 6 (1966), p. 26. Also see excerpts of the debate in Aleksei Tarasov-Rodionov, February 1917 (New York: Covici Friede, 1927), pp. 138ff.
 78. Ibid.; Shliapnikov, I, p. 173.
 79. See Engelhardt's memoir in Obshchee delo (Paris), March 18, 1921. Rodzianko's version differs slightly from this, see M. V. Rodzianko, "Gosudarstvennaia Duma i Fevral'skaia goda Revoliutsiia," Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii (Berlin, 1922), VI, pp. 74-75; also Rech', No. 177, July 30/ August 12, 1917; Sir Alfred Knox, With the Russian Army, 1914-1917; Being Chiefly Extracts from the Diary of a Military Attache (2 vols.; New York, 1921), II, pp. 568-69, Kerensky, Catastrophe, pp. 161-64).
 80. Sukhanov, I, p. 265-66.
 81. A. N. Paderin, "Letter to the Editor," PR, VIII-IX (31-32) 1924, pp. 401-03.
 82. Shliapnikov, I, p. 174.
 83. Izvestiia Petrogradskago soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, March 2/15, 1917. The original in the handwriting of Sokolov is in U. S. S. R., Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii SSSR (TsGAOR SSSR), fond

- 3348, opis' 1, dom 173a, 11.6-12 cited in Velikaia Oktiabr'skaia sotsialisticheskaia revoliutsiia: Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Rossii posle sverzheniia samoderzhavii (Moscow, 1957), p. 759, ftn. 68. This corrects George Katkov, Russia 1917: The February Revolution (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 368 contention that the original draft has never been found, as well as Boyd, p. 361.
84. Shliapnikov, I, pp. 261-62, 190. A photographic reproduction is given in "Khronika-Nakhodki-Fakty," Voennistoricheskii zhurnal, No. 11 (1966), p. 111.
85. Sukhanov, I, p. 294-95.
86. Kerensky, Catastrophe, p. 48.
87. Delo naroda (Petrograd), No. 1, March 15/28, 1917.
88. Text of Guchkov's Order No. 1 is given in Shliapnikov, II, p. 249.
89. N. D. Sokolov, "Kak rodilsia Prikaz No. 1, " Ogon'k, No. 11 (13 March 1927); Posledniia novosti (Paris), September 20, 1936, P. 2. Text of Order No. 2 is given in Rech' (Petrograd), No. 56, March 7/20, 1917.
90. Protocols of the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee which concern this order are available in PR, No. 1 (13) 1923, pp. 310-48; and also Pokrovskii and Iakovlev, I, pp. 296-97 (Browder and Kerensky, II, p. 851 miscites these pages as 396-97).
91. Sukhanov, I, p. 255.
92. Ibid.
93. Rafes, p. 194.
94. M. S. Iugov, "Sovety v pervyi period revoliutsii," Ocherki po istorii Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii, ed. M. N. Pokrovskii (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), pp. 114-17.
95. Ibid., 119-20, 123.
96. E. D. Chermenskii, "Vtoraia burzhuazno-demokraticheskaia revoliutsiia v Rossii," Istoriia SSSR, II (1965), pp. 630-31.
97. Pervyi legal'nyi Peterburgskii komitet bol'shevikov v 1917 g. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), p. 10.
98. Shliapnikov, I, pp. 178-186.

99. Sukhanov, I, p. 255.
100. Rafes, p. 220.
101. Sukhanov, I, pp. 256-60, 243; Izvestiia Petrogradskogo Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, No. 4, March 3/15, 1917.
102. Sukhanov, I, p. 260.
103. Ibid., p. 261.
104. Ibid., p. 267.
105. Ibid., p. 270.
106. P. N. Miliukov, Istoriia vtoroi russkoi revoliutsii (1 vol. in 3 parts; Sofia, 1921-1924), I, p. 45.
107. Sukhanov, I, pp. 17-18.
108. Ibid., p. 255.
109. Ibid., p. 231.
110. A. N. Potresov, "Rokovye protivorechiia russkoi revoliutsii," Delo (Moscow), No. 3/6 (1917), p. 119.
111. Viktor Chernov, Rozhdenie revoliutsionnoi Rossii; fevral'skaia revoliutsiia (Paris-Prague-New York; Iubileinii komitet po izdaniia trudov V. M. Chernova, 1934), pp. 246-48.
112. Ibid., p. 243.
113. A. I. Denikin, Ocherki russkoi smuty (5 vols.; Paris-Berlin, 1921-26), I, Pt. 1, p. 47.
114. Izvestiia Soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, No. 32, April 5/18, 1917, p. 4.
115. Sukhanov, I, p. 200.
116. David S. Anin, "The February Revolution: Was the Collapse Inevitable?" Soviet Studies, XVIII (1967), p. 450.
117. Sukhanov, I, p. 116.
118. P. N. Miliukov, Vospominaniia, 1859-1917 (New York: Chekhov Publishing Co., 1955), II, pp. 306, 307; Sukhanov, I, p. 271, does not name Filippovskii or Skobelev.
119. Present were Prince George L'vov, V. N. L'vov (no kin to the prince), Rodzianko, Miliukov, Nekrasov, Godnev, S. I. Shiklovskii,

V. V. Shul'gin, Adzhmov and four or five other persons, see Miliukov, Vospominaniia, II, p. 306; Sukhanov, I, p. 271-72.

120. Kerensky, Catastrophe, p. 55.
121. Sukhanov, I, p. 274.
122. Ibid., pp. 274-75.
123. Ibid., p. 276.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid., p. 277.
126. Ibid., p. 278.
127. Miliukov, Vospominaniia, II, p. 307.
128. Ibid., p. 279.
129. Miliukov, Vospominaniia, II, p. 307.
130. Ibid.
131. V. V. Shul'gin, Dni (Belgrade: Izdatel'stvo M. A. Suvorin, 1925), p. 231.
132. Sukhanov, I, p. 292.
133. Ibid., I, p. 281. The English translation in the Joel Carmichael edition is abridged (without translator's ellipses). (N. N. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917: Eyewitness Account, ed., abridged and trans. by Joel Carmichael from Zapiski o Revoliutsii (7 vols.; New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 123.
134. Ibid., I, pp. 281-283.
135. Ibid., I, p. 289.
136. Ibid., p. 298.
137. Ibid., p. 299.
138. Miliukov, Vospominaniia, II, p. 307.
139. Sukhanov, I, p. 299.
140. Miliukov, Vospominaniia, II, p. 308.

141. Ibid.
142. Leonard Schapiro, "The Political Thought of the First Provisional Government," in Richard Pipes, ed., Revolutionary Russia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 103.
143. Sukhanov, I, p. 282.
144. Russia, Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Stenograficheskie otchet, (32 vols.; Petrograd: Gos. tipografiia, 1906-1917), 4th sozyv, sessia 5 1917, pp. 1649-50.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET

The political and social makeup of the Petrograd Soviet partially reveals why that body persevered in the political ideology that it held and made the decisions that it did. Some features and characteristics of the Petrograd Soviet are immediately discernable from a survey of its most prominent members, but the available sources are not abundant enough to give a thorough-going survey of its entire composition. Records of general meetings do not exist; affairs of the various commissions are poorly preserved in the U. S. S. R. archives; and no general roll of deputies with an indication of party affiliation exists.¹ Partially the state of sources is a reflection of the disorder and confusion that generally reigned in the Petrograd Soviet and its executive committee. Balloting for the Soviet plenum was chaotic and the number of members of that body uncertain, even to its own executive.² As Viktor Chernov related, "If there was one thing the Soviets did not resemble, it was a regular governmental institution."³

The general power structure of the Petrograd Soviet is the one overriding feature of the institution that must be noted from the first. As seen previously, the executive committee completely dominated the Soviet plenum. With the creation of the bureau of the executive committee, the executive in turn was preempted. Dominating the bureau was a group

of five Mensheviks and one Socialist Revolutionary, referred to unkindly by opponents and jokingly by its own members as the "Star Chamber." What allowed the "Star Chamber" of I. G. Tseretelli, N. S. Chkheidze, M. I. Skobelev, F. I. Dan, Abram Gotz (SR), and V. S. Voitinskii to develop such a structure and thereby dominate the Petrograd Soviet? An illumination of the class and party structure of the capital Soviet offers some understanding for the dominant position of the Menshevik-SR bloc leadership.

The election of the first deputies to the Petrograd Soviet largely determined thereafter the makeup of its plenum. By the ground rules for the election soldiers were to elect one deputy from each company and workers one deputy for each 1,000 men and one from each factory with less than a thousand workers. In mid-March soldier deputies numbered approximately 2,000 whereas the workers had only 800 deputies, a ratio of soldiers' to workers' delegates of 2.3 to 1.⁴ Originally the companies in question were those making up the swollen reserve regiments of the capital, as each of these companies numbered a thousand or more soldiers.⁵ If only these companies of 1,000 troops each had elected deputies, at most this would have meant the election of 271 deputies as the Petrograd garrison numbered approximately 271,000 men.⁶ Soon, however, every company, regardless of size--and most consisted of 150 to 400 men--sent a deputy to the Petrograd Soviet. Furthermore while the original appeal to elect deputies was limited to troops of the garrison, on March 18 the Petrograd Soviet adopted a special resolution which "advised the election of candidates from units based in the suburbs."⁷ This meant that some 466,800 troops had deputies in the Soviet.⁸ Yet this was not all. Some army units beyond, and some naval

units within the limits of the capital took advantage of this resolution to send representatives to the Petrograd Soviet, e.g., the Cruiser Aurora, the 6,203 men of the Second Baltic Depot, Kronstadt, plus army units far from the capital--even some front line troops.⁹ Most of the deputies came from combatant units made up of 150 to 400 men per company.¹⁰ In the household guards--Egerskii, Grenaderskii, Preobrazhenskii, Volynskii, and Petrogradskii regiments--the average, however, was 111 to 420 men per deputy.¹¹ Each reserve regiment had in the Petrograd Soviet from 15 to 36 deputies, depending on the number of companies that made up the regiments.¹² In addition, small units of command staff clerks and other service staff sent deputies, as did military hospitals, infirmaries, military depots, and military service shops. From 47 non-combatant detachments 36 sent 83 deputies from a constituency of 6,130 persons or one deputy per 136 men. The staff and service personnel of 16 military academies sent 67 deputies, of which 40 deputies came from nine of the academies having a constituency of 4,293 persons or one deputy per 107 men. The majority of soldiers' deputies, as can be seen, came, however, from the combatant units.¹³ In June 768 soldiers' deputies gave their military service positions as follows: 387 privates, 58 officers, 36 military cadets, 35 clerks, 250 non-commissioned officers. Of the total 902 deputies in the Soldiers' Section at the time, 421 came from 28 infantry regiments, 52 from military schools, 63 from volunteer units, 22 from artillery units, 20 from three ships' companies, 27 from technical units, 8 from motorized units, 4 from the Cruiser Aurora, 51 from command personnel and sentries, and about 200 from command staff clerks, military hospitals, military depots, military service or repair shops, and other military installations.¹⁴

As for the workers, their 800-plus deputies came from a population of some 380,000 blue-collar industrial workers and 120,000 white-collar employees.¹⁵ Large and intermediate enterprises employed 97 percent of the indus-

trial workers, leaving 11,400 or 3 percent of the blue collars working in small enterprises.¹⁶ The white-collar employees included workers from the Petrograd railway junction, the city tram company, the municipal enterprises, the post office, telegraph and telephone exchange, small artisan enterprises, trade union establishments, teachers of primary schools, and workers from medical foundations.¹⁷ A study of some 90 enterprises, comprising approximately one-sixth of all industries in Petrograd, shows that deputies were generally chosen from these large plants within the limits or close to the limits of standard representation.¹⁸ To give but one example, the largest enterprise in the capital, the Putilov iron works, sent 40 deputies from 30,000 workers or an average of one deputy per 750 men.¹⁹ The following table illustrates the representation from 90 of Petrograd's enterprises:

SOVIET DEPUTIES CHOSEN FROM 90 ENTERPRISES²⁰

Number & Percentage of Deputies Chosen According to Following No. of Workers							
Up to 50	51-150	151-300	301-500	501-700	701-900	901-1000 & More	
1 (No.) 0.4%	-	8 3.5	13 5.5	18 7.5	117 47.2	89 35.9	Total 246 100%

As the above table indicates, plants employing over 700 workers sent 83.1 percent of the deputies elected. The six largest enterprises in the city: Putilov, Truboch, Obukhov, "Treugol'", Okhten, and Baltic, alone sent nearly 100 deputies to the Petrograd Soviet.²¹ Though this analysis of 90 or one-sixth of the enterprises in Petrograd cannot be considered an exact copy of all elections to the Soviet for all

the factories in the capital, nevertheless, the figures are a significant indication that the majority of workers' deputies came from the intermediate and largest plants. An analysis of the representation of the small plants adds further proof to this thesis.

Workers in small enterprises and all other workers in any category (excluding large plants) had a total representation of only 200 deputies.²² This largely came about because workers in small plants elected their deputies to the Petrograd Soviet by uniting a few enterprises so as to conform to the regulation of one deputy per 1,000 workers. For example, on March 23 a united gathering of 1,040 industrial workers from five intermediate and small plants elected one deputy to the Petrograd Soviet; and 640 workers from three plants and 950 workers from two tanneries also elected one deputy.²³ Small enterprise workers, as a result of such methods, had so few deputies to represent them in the Soviet that workers in plants numbering less than 500 were invited by the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet to a general meeting to elect deputies, one per every 500 workers.²⁴ Workers in domestic industry and a portion of the white-collar employees elected representatives to the Petrograd Soviet only after organizing professional unions. Fifteen of 34 such organizations sent 43 deputies to the Petrograd Soviet.²⁵

The social composition of the constituencies from which the soldiers' and workers' deputies to the Petrograd Soviet were chosen was greatly colored by a large percentage of peasants. Most of the soldiers were raw recruits of peasant origin; undoubtedly, many of the workers were also peasants. In 1917 ten of the fifteen million men

under arms were peasants, and in a country 80 to 85% peasant in population this meant a large percentage of the urban working population was in the military service, that is, one-fourteenth of the peasant population was in the army, compared to one-seventh of the non-peasant population.²⁶ The early draft calls greatly depleted the ranks of the urban working force and generally only peasants remained to fill positions. In the 1158 enterprises of Petrograd new workers composed over 40% of the work force by 1917.²⁷ While some white-collar types, such as bank clerks, made up part of the new workers, probably the largest percentage of new males were peasants (the number of women increased considerably in some industries).²⁸ Regardless of how many new workers were peasants, the Russian workers, except in skilled positions in heavy industry, even before the war could be considered at best half-proletarian (many being peasants who were marginal workers living near urban centers).²⁹

Partisan politics until 1917 made little headway among the workers of Petrograd and scarcely had touched the peasants in uniform or at the bench. The SR agrarian program, however, quickly lured the peasant in the capital and as the SR delegation swelled in numbers, partisan politics emerged in the Soviet plenum.³⁰ The SR's could count on the support of over 400 members in full standing (i. e. , registrants who accepted the party whip) and on sympathizers from among those not inscribed on any party roll to bring its voting strength to well over 1,000 members of the Soviet.³¹ This appears to have been

more than enough votes to override any opposition the SR's faced prior to late July. The SR numerical nomination of the Soviet plenum occurred so soon in March 1917 that some minority (numerically) parties accused the SR's and their allies, the Mensheviks of purposefully giving the soldiers and small factory workers electoral preference in the initial elections.³² Though on the surface such an accusation might seem justified, nothing was further from the truth, inasmuch as the small factories, as already demonstrated, were not over-represented in the Soviet plenum. As for the soldiers, according to the Bolshevik leader Shliapnikov, the SR's and Mensheviks initially opposed the admission of soldier deputies and gave in only reluctantly.³³

The Petrograd Soviet was not split into populists versus marxists, but divided along party lines. The party alignments were fairly well defined, though the marxists, unlike the populists, split into smaller factions. The SR's fairly quickly swallowed up any populist opposition from the Trudoviks (Toilers) and the Popular Socialists. Joining the SR's was the Menshevik wing of the Social Democrats. The Bundists and Cooperativists were followers of the Menshevik-SR bloc. With the return of Iu. Martov, the father of Menshevism, the Menshevik Internationalists split in late May from the Menshevik center and a lively quarrel began. The following of the Martov group, however, was so feeble numerically that it never offered any serious challenge to the bloc. The sister party of the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks, were of course against the bloc. Their strength, however, until the commencement of a number of irregular

elections in June was slight: 22 deputies as of March 22, 65 by mid-April, 100 by mid-May. Just prior to the June relections the Petrograd Soviet plenum consisted of about 1500 deputies with mandates: 902 soldiers' deputies and about 600 workers' deputies. The party composition of the Soldiers' Section was 306 SR's, 298 Mensheviks, 105 Bolsheviks, and 198 deputies divided among Menshevik Internationalists, Trudoviks, Popular Socialists, Edinstvo Social Democrats and others. The reduction in the number of soldiers' deputies resulted partially from the transfer of some 50,000 Petrograd garrison troops and their deputies to the front during March and April. As for the Workers' Section its party composition is not precisely known. As the Bolsheviks received about half of the seats in the Workers' Section in the June relections, 300 deputies at least and probably as many as 500 of the total of this section were Mensheviks and SR's and their sympathizers prior to the election (100 of these were SR's if not more as the party had 400 registered deputies under the whip). All parties in the Petrograd Soviet looked upon the institution as a parliament, as a place to advance their party programs among the "revolutionary democracy" and articulate it into the political consciousness of the masses.³⁴

As intelligentsia dominated the various socialist parties, so they also dominated the Petrograd Soviet. The executive committee that initiated the first elections were intelligentsia, as was the executive elected at the first plenum meeting. As late as the end of March only seven of the executive committee's 42 members were workers.³⁵ New members with deliberative votes were coopted onto the executive after the initial elections, as no further elections were held until September.³⁶ By mid-April mechanical additions to the committee raised its total membership to 90 with only 10 coming directly from the plenum.³⁸

The executive committee added so many members that it became too unwieldy to handle daily affairs efficiently. The committee had created a number of special commissions or sections on March 16 to alleviate some of the pressure of day-to-day affairs: 11 departments consisting of international affairs, labor, military, legislature, propaganda, Soviet administration, press, local Petrograd affairs, and extra-metropolitan. Each department consisted of an executive committeeman and staff.³⁹ To coordinate the work of these departments and prepare questions for discussion at the Soviet's plenary meetings, the executive created a special bureau on March 27, composed initially of seven members and three candidate members.⁴⁰ On April 23 Tseretelli proposed that the executive set a bureau to coordinate its work in much the same way as the special bureau coordinated the work of the departments. Tseretelli found the executive committee too divisive and suggested that a bureau composed of homogeneous personalities might overcome this by preparing questions for discussion in the full committee. When the executive rejected this, Tseretelli proposed two days later that all current affairs become the autonomous concern of the various departments, yet within limits defined by the executive.⁴¹ He suggested that the special bureau take over all matters of great importance, or those requiring solution as a matter of policy. To integrate the work of the departments and the special bureau Tseretelli recommended that the executive select representatives from the various departments to compose the special bureau. While the executive retained final authority, questions even of national importance would not come before the committee until analyzed by the special bureau. As the special bureau had members from all parties it also became too unwieldy to deal realistically with daily affairs, though chaired by Chkheidze and run by its vice-chairmen, Tseretelli and Chernov. Tseretelli, however, found it a more workable apparatus than the 90 member executive for the operations of the homogenous

bureau that he did form by caucusing with colleagues outside of official meetings--the "Star Chamber."

The "Star Chamber" was the real decision-making body in the Petrograd Soviet. An informal group of five Mensheviks and one SR met early each morning at Skobelev's apartment where the leader of the "Star Chamber," Tseretelli, was staying at the time. No records of meetings were kept nor are there any memoir accounts available of what was transacted. Voitinskii, a member of the group, reports that not only were problems discussed and how they were to be solved, but that the group even drew up resolutions and plans to be submitted to the bureau (thereby to the executive committee and from there to the Petrograd Soviet plenum).⁴³ Each member of the "Star Chamber" carried out some responsibility. Tseretelli engineered the programs and led the discussions of the group. Dan assisted Tseretelli at the meetings and saw to it that the Mensheviks stayed in line beyond Tseretelli's policies. Gotz kept the SR's whipped into shape for the group. Chkheidze guided the Petrograd Soviet plenum and its executive committee in the service of the chamber. Skobelev and Voitinskii acted as trouble-shooters in the barracks, at the front, in factories, and the latter along with Dan guided the editorial policy of Izvestiia, the Petrograd Soviet's news organ. Dan wrote articles and declarations for Izvestiia explaining the Petrograd Soviet's policy in terms of the Menshevik party program, while Voitinskii tried to reach a broader audience of workers and soldiers.⁴⁴ Thus like its English namesake, the "Star Chamber" wielded considerable political influence and met in secret deliberation on a great variety of subjects.

All six members of the "Star Chamber" were closely bound to one another. Tseretelli, Gotz, Dan, and Voitinskii, during tsarist exile in Siberia, developed an ideological union with reference to the First World War; a significant achievement as the war had split all socialist parties in Europe and as Gotz was a populist SR, Voitinskii at the time a Bolshevik, and only Tseretelli and Dan, Mensheviks. Four of the group were from the same region, the Caucasus; Tseretelli, Chkheidze, and Voitinskii being Georgians, and Skobelev a native of Baku. Tseretelli, Skobelev, and Chkheidze served in the Imperial State Duma; Tseretelli being the leader of the Mensheviks in the Second Duma until exiled, and Chkheidze the Menshevik leader in the Third and Fourth Dumas.⁴⁵ Union also resulted from intellectual compatibility. Gotz, Chkheidze, and Skobelev were willing followers of Tseretelli,⁴⁶ while Dan and Voitinskii, both intellectuals and leaders, found Tseretelli's ideas and their own usually in accord. As Trotsky noted, Gotz concerned himself with "kitchen matters" and preferred to work behind the scenes.⁴⁷ Skobelev at 37, two years older than Tseretelli, had only joined the Mensheviks in 1912, having worked with Trotsky on the Vienna Pravda from 1907 to 1912.⁴⁸ As for Chkheidze, he was at 53 the oldest member of the Petrograd Soviet executive. Though a tireless worker in the Petrograd Soviet's behalf, the accidental shooting of his son shortly after the March coup so unnerved him that at times he sat in meetings completely lost in his thoughts, neither hearing nor seeing anything.⁴⁹ Feodor Dan, next to Martov, was the most gifted of the Menshevik theoreticians

and a grand party organizer.⁵⁰ He, however, became Tseretelli's lieutenant in mapping out party strategy because the Georgian was the heart and the will of the Mensheviks. Voitinskii was happy to serve as a tactician for the Tseretelli-Dan strategies.⁵¹

Tseretelli led the Petrograd Soviet because he was a brilliant, beloved spokesman of the majority and a politician of the first order. According to V.D. Nabokov, the Kadet head of the Provisional Government's chancellory, Tseretelli's ideas conformed to the usual Marxist pattern, and Nabokov adds, he expressed those ideas with brilliant clarity.⁵² A.F. Kerensky speaks of the Georgian as one of the most beloved leaders of the Russian democracy.⁵³ Typical of foreign contemporary opinion was that of Sir Bernard Pares, the British dean of Russian studies, who found the tall, lean Georgian a gentle and chivalrous man--a quality that the Soviet leader retained throughout the tribulations of the revolution.⁵⁴ As for Tseretelli's political acumen, V.B. Stankevich who served with him on the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet, tells us: "On the whole the history of the committee, from the point of view of its organization and membership, could be divided into two periods, one prior to and the other following the arrival of Tseretelli. The first was a period replete with hazards, vacillations, and vagueness, when anyone who wished could use the name and organization of the committee. . . . With the appearance of Tseretelli [April 2] the character of the committee changed radically. He joined . . . with a deliberative vote only. The first day he modestly declined to express his opinion since he

was as yet unfamiliar with the general situation. The following day he delivered a long speech, seemingly groping for firm ground. . . . On the third day Tseretelli arrived as self-confident leader of the committee and the Soviet . . . the latter at once changed from a medley of all sorts of people into an institution, into an organ."⁵⁵ Because Tseretelli was a man of integrity, conviction, personal magnetism, and oratorical greatness, a man who "knew what he wanted, had a definite plan, believed firmly in it, and was able from the framework of this plan to examine and deal with particular issues that came up, "he was a man who commanded respect even from his political enemies."⁵⁶ In a time of confusion when most men had a great many self-doubts, a man like Tseretelli understandably became the leader of the Petrograd Soviet. At 25 years of age he was the most popular speaker in the Second Duma, the leader of the Mensheviks, and even the recognized mouthpiece of the Bolsheviks.⁵⁷ For one so young to be recognized as party leader in 1907, it is little wonder that Tseretelli became Menshevism's spokesman a decade later.

Beyond its own immediate members the "Star Chamber" usually had several other prominent Petrograd Soviet leaders at its service. The ideological position with reference to the World War (Siberian Zimmerwaldism, discussed in Chapter III) that bound the six members of the "Star Chamber" together, was also a strong element binding other socialists to the six. Two Siberian Zimmerwaldists who regularly attended the meetings of the "Chamber" were V.A. Anisimov and K.M. Ermolaev. Anisimov was a member of

the executive presidium of the Petrograd Soviet and Ermolaev a member of the Menshevik Central Committee.⁵⁸ Frequent participants at the meetings included Liber (Bundist), Chernov (SR leader), and the Siberian Zimmerwaldists,⁵⁹ S.L. Vainstein and N.S. Rozhkov, Bogdanov and Gvozdev (Menshevik Soviet executive committeemen), Peshkhonov (Popular Socialists leader), and Avksent'ev (SR chairman of the All-Russian Peasants' Soviet).⁶⁰

The "Star Chamber" quite naturally evoked some opposition as it broke the cardinal Soviet position of arriving at decisions in free and open discussion. A group of ten members of the executive committee (later others joined) banded together as a sort of counterweight to the "Star Chamber." To mock Tseretelli's attempt to assemble a bureau of like-minded executive committeemen they took the name Homogeneous Bureau.⁶¹ Like the "Star Chamber" this diverse political group met each day. The radical independent Social Democrat Sukhanov belonged despite his view that the Homogeneous Bureau was fundamentally submissive to the right-wing Petrograd Soviet majority.⁶² The fact that Liber was a member of the Homogeneous Bureau and a frequent participant in the "Star Chamber" and usually followed the Tseretelli line would tend to give some credence to Sukhanov's opinion. In the Petrograd Soviet Tseretelli was the "leading spirit, of course," wrote Sukhanov, "Consequently half of the Soviet dictatorship and all the corresponding honors, and all the odium--must be laid to his account."⁶³ The numerically feeble opposition to the "Star Chamber" could do nothing, maintained Sukhanov, against pseudo-Mameluke soldier deputies and a Swamp of young unstable de-

uties with shifting views "instinctively attracted towards peace and the cause of the proletariat . . . headed by the binary stars Chkheidze and Skobelev."⁶⁴

The SR-Menshevik bloc leadership froze their control of the Petrograd Soviet by not sanctioning general re-elections to the plenum. Even the Bolsheviks, however, admitted on March 15 that the social and party composition of the Petrograd Soviet plenum with new elections would not have changed at the time, as the Bolsheviks were only beginning to develop their work under legal conditions.⁶⁵ Initially, however, re-elections were not sanctioned by the executive committee because no majority could be mustered to decide of what a mandate should consist. To reduce the standard of representation, so that a workable number of deputies of 1,000 or less would make up the Petrograd Soviet plenum, the plenum already in existence would have had to sanction such a proposition. That meant making a good two-thirds of the 3,000 elected in March resign their authority, practically a hopeless business. Bogdanov on March 15 proposed an artificial and cumbersome way to alleviate the difficulty: leave the existing Soviet plenum for ceremonial, historical sessions--"without debates but for any kind of practical work form a small Soviet out of it by allowing one delegate for each 2,000 citizens (soldiers and workers) and one delegate for each organization or union. Neither the Petrograd Soviet plenum nor the executive committee ever carried the question of new mandates or re-elections to a conclusion until just prior to the November coup of the Bolsheviks. Matters were simply eased by the

routine activities of the mandate commission, which mercilessly weeded out the mandates and by a month and a half later had reduced the Petrograd Soviet plenum by half of the 3,000 members of March.⁶⁶ Eventually the full Soviet was reduced to about 1,000 members as a result of the strict surveillance of irregular elections that began in late April with the recall of a deputy by the Putilov metal works;⁶⁷ soon other deputies were recalled by the same method as at Putilov.

The executive committee discussed the possibility of new elections on May 28 and set up a commission to prepare a draft order on the holding of elections.⁶⁸ The bureau of the executive committee on June 6, however, decided that only partial elections and not general elections were to be held.⁶⁹ Izvestiia warned the next day that "Re-elections to the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies reflect badly on the work of the Soviet;" the editors urged the electors "to be cautious" in their choices. The partial re-elections resulted in a considerable transformation of the full Petrograd Soviet. The Bolsheviki won about half of the seats in the Workers' Section and more than a quarter in the Soldiers' Section during late May and June.⁷⁰ On June 13 the Workers' Section adopted a Bolshevik resolution for the first time demanding the transfer of all power to the Soviets.⁷¹ The SR-Menshevik bloc, however, continued to control the full Soviet through the Soldiers' Section and the substantial number of deputies under its whip in the Workers' Section, and by refusing to put executive re-elections on the agenda.

The SR-Menshevik bloc also attempted to retain control of the Petrograd Soviet through the district soviets of the capital. In April the bloc briefly attempted to transform the thirteen district soviets of Petrograd into local bases for the implementation of their decisions. The Petrograd Soviet created an Interdistrict Conference of Soviets in April to co-ordinate the activities of the various city district soviets and align them much more closely to the city Soviet.⁷² Two representatives from each district soviet were coopted onto the executive committee of the capital Soviet. V.A. Anisimov, a regular participant of the "Star Chamber," was made chairman of the Interdistrict Conference of Soviets and sought to move the district soviets along the lines decided by the "Star Chamber."⁷³ A number of economic questions were discussed in May by the interdistrict conference but its meetings were suspended in June at the time of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and not reconvened until the July days led the city Soviet to call for assistance from the district soviets to collect arms from the workers. The districts in July refused to follow the directives of the city soviet and became increasingly rebellious thereafter. The Menshevik-SR bloc leaders, however, had already dropped the idea of building on the districts and from June on had concentrated their efforts on the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.⁷⁴

The Menshevik-SR leaders solidified their control of the

Petrograd Soviet in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. On March 31 the Petrograd Soviet executive committee issued an appeal to all local soviets throughout the nation to send representatives to Petrograd for a congress of soviets.⁷⁵ Approximately 600 delegates arrived in the capital, 470 of them with mandates, from 120 cities and towns.⁷⁶ The All-Russian Cossack Congress sent 11 delegates, each army sent eight deputies, and each soviet sent two delegates (one each from the soldiers' and workers' sections).⁷⁷ A great many local soviets, for some reason or another, did not send representatives.⁷⁸ As a result, the committee organizing the congress decided to consider the March congress not a plenipotentiary Congress of Soviets, but a preliminary All-Russian Conference which would prepare for the Congress. The All-Russian Conference between April 11 and 16 discussed the war, the forthcoming Constituent Assembly, workers' and soldiers' problems, organization of local soviets and regional associations, but most importantly it established the guidelines for the convocation of the Congress. The following rates of representation was established: soviets elected by between 25,000 and 50,000 people were to send two delegates; 50-75,000, three delegates; 75-100,000, four delegates; 100,150,000, five delegates; 150-200,000, six delegates; and over 200,000, eight delegates. Soviets representing less than 25,000 people were to unite with other soviets and send delegates according to the general rates.⁷⁹

In order to unite the Soviets throughout the country and to establish permanent contacts between them, the All-Russian Conference

recommended the calling of regional congresses of soviets and the election of regional committees. The delegates to such congresses were to be elected from all the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in a given region. The Conference urged that the regional associations of Soviets include representatives of the organized working peasants.

The leadership of the Petrograd Soviet wrote instructions on the procedure to be followed in calling regional congresses of soviets and the setting up of regional associations of soviets. The Petrograd Soviet guidelines called for dividing the country up into thirteen regions. These regional congresses and district associations were to link the All-Russian organization with the local soviets.⁸⁰

The Menshevik-SR leaders concentrated their efforts on seeing to it that they controlled the executive committee of the All-Russian Congress that was to meet in June. Through the executive of the All-Russian organization they could control all the soviets in the country, they felt, or at least set up guidelines for national policies. Once more the hand of the "Star Chamber" went to work, as a frequent participant of that body's sessions, Bogdanov, was given the work of organizing the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

The "Star Chamber" gained control of the Congress, thereby buttressing their control over the Petrograd Soviet. As in the Petrograd Soviet, the number of soldiers' deputies was almost double the number of peasants' (not in uniform) and workers' deputies combined, as some two-thirds of the 20,323,000 persons that took part

in the Soviet Congress elections were soldiers. As in the capital Soviet, the breakdown of votes by party shows that the Menshevik-SR bloc had a large majority, the opposition never exceeding 160 votes on any issue during the course of the congress; SR's 285, Mensheviks 248, Menshevik Internationalists 32, Bolsheviks 105, Unaffiliated Socialists 73, Interdistrictites 10, Bund 10, Edinstvo Social Democrats 3, Popular Socialists 3, Trudoviks 5, Anarchist-Communists 1.⁸²

Though the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VsTsIK) emerged from the congress plenum, only half of its 300 members were elected by vote of the Congress. One hundred more were elected by provincial soviets, and the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet designated the last fifty. Furthermore, provincial soviets members returned to their homes after the termination of the Congress and functioned there as the designated representatives of VsTsIK. The remaining two hundred VsTsIK members constituted the permanent headquarters in Petrograd. As with the Petrograd Soviet executive, VsTsIK eventually created a permanent bureau which in turn chose a smaller board of directors presided over by the Petrograd Soviet chairman Chkheidze. The board was responsible for the overall direction of the work of the All-Russian Soviet. As elections to VsTsIK were on the basis of proportional representation, so that all of the socialist parties were represented in proportion to their numerical strength in the Congress,⁸³ the Menshevik-SR bloc held the majority of the seats. The Social Democrat Sukhanov noted another reason for "Star Chamber" control: "The Central Executive Committee membership included, of course, both

Kerensky and Lenin. But they never came once. In general a good half was made up of dead souls, who scarcely ever appeared in the Soviet center."⁸⁴ As with the Petrograd Soviet, the Menshevik-SR high command set up a control, in the case of the Central Executive Committee, a board of directors, but in fact, the real governing and decision-making body was the "Star Chamber" under the command of I.G. Tseretelli. As an interesting bit of double-talk, the Congress voted to establish the principle that the socialist ministers were responsible to VsTsIK for their actions, when in fact the controlling forces of VsTsIK were these same socialist ministers.

From the time Tseretelli returned to the capital from exile on April 2 until Trotsky became chairman of the Petrograd Soviet in September, Tseretelli charted the policies and decisions of the capital Soviet. Behind all of Tseretelli's actions lay his unshakable belief in the cause of revolutionary defensism which called for a body and soul commitment to a diplomatic quest for peace.

FOOTNOTES

1. S. A. Artem'ev, "Sostav Petrogradskogo Soveta v marte 1917 g.," Istoriia SSSR, No. 5 (1964), p. 112.
2. Izvestiia, March 23/April 5, 1917.
3. V. M. Chernov, Rozhdenie revoliutsionnoi rossii: fevral'skaia revoliutsiia (Paris-Prague-New York: Iubileimii komitet po izdaniia trudov V. M. Chernova, 1934), p. 226.
4. Petrogradskie bol'sheviki v Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii (Leningrad, 1957), p. 21; M. Lu're, "Bor'ba bol'shevikov za Petrogradskii sovet v 1917 g.," Propaganda i agitatsiia (Organ Leningradskogo OK i GK VKP (b), No. 12 (1937), p. 37; N. N. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917: An Eyewitness Account (2 vols; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), I, pp. 222-23.
5. Ocherki po istorii Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii, ed M. N. Pokrovskii (Moscow, 1927), p. 116; A. Shliapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god (Moscow-Leningrad, 1923-31), I, pp. 193-94; N. N. Sukhanov, Zapiski o revoliutsii (Berlin-Petersburg-Moscow, 1922-23), II, p. 226
6. B. M. Kochakov, "Sostav Petrogradskogo garnizona v 1917 godu," UZ LGU, No. 205, Seriiia istoricheskikh nauk, vyp. 24 (1956), p. 64
7. U. S. S. R., Archives, Leningrad, GAORSS LO, F. 1000, op. 73, d. 7, l. 3 as cited in Artem'ev, p. 113, ftn. 6.
8. Kochakov, p. 64
9. U. S. S. R., Archives, Leningrad, GAORSS LO, F. 1000, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 10, 13, and 108, as cited in Artem'ev, p. 113, ftn. 9.
10. U. S. S. R., Archives, Leningrad, GAORSS LO, F. 1000 1917, op. 1, d. 1, "Anketnye listy na delegatov v Sovet rabochikh i soldatskikh ot voinskikh chastei," as cited in Artem'ev, p. 114, ftn. 11.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. M. N. Potekhin, "K voprosu o vzniknovenii i sostave Petrogradskogo Soveta v 1917 g.," Istoriia SSSR, No. 5 (1965), p. 234.

15. Statisticheskii spravochnik po Petrogradu (Petrograd, 1919), pp. 40-41, 8. According to XII let diktatury proletariata. Ekonomiko-statisticheskii sbornik po g. Leningradu i Leningradskoi oblasti (Leningrad, 1932) on January 1/14 1917 there were 384,638 workers in Petrograd.
16. Statisticheskii spravochnik po Petrogradu i Petrogradskoi gubernii (Petrograd, 1922), p. 50.
17. Artem'ev, p. 121.
18. Spisok fabrichno-zavodskikh predpriatii Petrograda (Petrograd, 1918), passim.
19. M. Mitel'man, 1917 god na Putilovskom zavode (Leningrad, 1939), p. 40.
20. Spisok fabrichno-zavodskikh prepriatii Petrograda (Petrograd, 1918).
21. U. S. S. R., Archives, Leningrad, GAORSS LO, F. 7384, op. 7, d. 17-21, as cited in Artem'ev, p. 123, ftn. 48.
22. Ibid., p. 126.
23. Ibid., p. 121.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 122.
26. TsSK, Statisticheskii ezhegodnik Rossii 1916 g., vypusk 1 (Moscow, 1918), pp. 50-51; NKZ, Sel'koe khoziastvo Rossii v XX veke, sbornik statistiko-ekonomicheskikh svedenii za 1901-1922 gg. (Moscow, 1923), p. 21.
27. Voprosy istorii, No. 1 (1961), p. 58.
28. S. O. Zagorsky, State Control of Industry in Russia during the War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), pp. 51-53.
29. Margaret Miller, The Economic Development of Russia, 1905-1914 (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1967), pp. 224-26.
30. Oliver H. Radkey, The Agrarian Foes of Bolshevism: Promise and Default of the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries, February to October 1917 (New York: Columbia University Press, c. 1958), p. 134.
31. Pervyi legal'nyi Peterburgskii komitet bol'shevikov v 1917 g. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), pp. 3-4.

32. Shliapnikov, I, pp. 193-94.
33. Ibid., pp. 192-94; II, p. 90.
34. This view is expressed in Oskar Anweiler, "Political Ideology of the First Leaders of the Petrograd Soviet in the Spring of 1917," in Richard Pipes, ed., Revolutionary Russia: A Symposium (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1969), pp. 148-49. Sukhanov, Zapiski, II, p. 166 cites the small Martov following
35. Leon Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution (New York, 1932), I, p. 216.
36. A. M. Andreev, Sovety rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov nakanune Oktiabria, mart-oktiabr' 1917 g. (Moscow, 1967), p. 45.
37. Petrogradskie bol'sheviki v Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii, p. 21; Artem'ev, p. 127.
38. Izvestiia, February 28/March 13, 1917 called for the addition of the socialist parties' deputies; on March 18/31, 1917 district soviet representatives were authorized, see B. Ia. Nalivaiski, ed., Petrogradskii sovet rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov: protokoly zasedanii ispolnitel'nogo komiteta i biuro I. K. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925), p. 60. Representatives were sent from the Moscow Soviet, Kronstadt, Hel'singfors, Vyborg, Pskov, Luga, and other cities (see Artem'ev, p. 127, ftn. 72).
39. Nalivaiski, p. 10.
40. Ibid., p. 47. The men named to the bureau were Chkheidze, Steklov, Muranov, Gvozdev, Pavlovich, Bogdanov, Kapelinskii; candidates were Grinevich, Stuchka, Sokolovskii.
41. Ibid., pp. 103-04; The Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif., Nicolaevsky Collection, V. S. Voitinskii, "Gody pobed i porazhenii," p. 58.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., pp. 59-60.
44. Ibid.; W. S. Woytinsky, Stormy Passage: A Personal History through Two Russian Revolutions to Democracy and Freedom, 1905-1960 (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., c. 1961), pp. 254, 258.
45. Ibid., p. 247.
46. Sukhanov, Zapiski, II, pp. 288-90; Chernov, pp. 312-13.
47. Trotsky, p. 248.

48. V. B. Stankevich, Vospominaniia, 1914-1919 (Berlin: Izdatel'stvo I. P. Ladyzhnikova, 1920), p. 82; A. F. Kerensky, The Prelude to Bolshevism (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1919), p. 311.
49. Sir Bernard Pares, My Russian Memoirs (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), p. 173; Stankevich, p. 82; V. M. Chernov, Pered burei (New York: Izdatel'stvo Imeni Chekhova, 1953), pp. 320-22.
50. Stankevich, pp. 83-84; Kerensky, p. 292.
51. Sukhanov, Zapiski, II, p. 291.
52. V. D. Nabokov, "Vremennoe pravitel'stvo," Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii, I (1922), pp. 68-69.
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54. Pares, p. 579.
55. Stankevich, pp. 87-90.
56. Voitinskii, p. 36.
57. Woytinsky, p. 130; B. I. Nikolaevskii, "I. G. Tseretelli," Sotsialisticheskii vestnik, No. 730 (June 1959), pp. 119-22; No. 731 (July 1959), pp. 141-43; No. 732-33 (August-September 1959), pp. 159-63; No. 734 (October 1959), pp. 196-200; No. 735 (November 1959), pp. 219-22; No. 736 (December 1959), pp. 243-45; No. 738-39 (February-March 1960), pp. 49-52.
58. Voitinskii, pp. 59-60; I. G. Tseretelli, Vospominaniia o fevral'skoi revoliutsii (2 vols; Paris: Mouton & Cie., 1963), I, p. 11.
59. Ibid. Voitinskii states that they were regular members.
60. Ibid.
61. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, I, pp. 315-16.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., II, p. 359.
64. Ibid., I, pp. 228-29.
65. Pervyi legal'nyi Peterburgskii komitet bol'shevikov v 1917 g., pp. 3-4.
66. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, I, pp. 222-23; Nalivaiski, pp. 48-9.

67. Andreev, pp. 196-97.
68. Ibid., pp. 197-98.
69. Nalivaiski, p. 252.
70. Shestoi s"ezd RSDRP(b): protokoly (Moscow, 1958), p. 14.
71. Izvestiia, June 2/15, 1917.
72. Rex A. Wade, "The Rajonnye Sovety of Petrograd: The Role of Local Political Bodies in the Russian Revolution," Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas N.F., Band 20, Heft 2 (Juni 1972), pp. 237-38.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Andreev, p. 130.
76. 1917 god. Petrogradskii Sovet rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov (Moscow-Leningrad, 1931), chast' 1, p. 272.
77. Ocherki po istorii Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii, II, p. 149.
78. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, I, p. 255.
79. Vserossiiskoe soveshchanie sovetov rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov (Moscow, 1927), p. 221.
80. Andreev, p. 136.
81. Rech' (Petrograd), No. 136, June 26, 1917.
82. Ibid.; Sukhanov, Zapiski, IV, pp. 199-200 gives slightly different figures for the Congress.
83. Rech' (Petrograd), June 22, 1917.
84. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, II, pp. 384-85.

CHAPTER III

FURY OVER WAR: A PYRRHIC VICTORY FOR REVOLUTIONARY DEFENSISM

By March 1917 every facet of Russian society had voiced a position on the war. Overwhelmed with the task of consummating the revolution, however, neither the Petrograd Soviet nor the Provisional Government mentioned war or peace in their initial programs. What type of war effort therefore was the new Russia going to conduct? Paul N. Miliukov, the new Foreign Minister, and the Russian General Staff had long advocated a war to a victorious end. The initial reaction of the majority of Russian socialists was to liquidate the war at once through the concerted efforts of international socialism. The struggle, however, was for a universal, not a separate peace. As Iu. Martov, the father of Menshevism explained, "A separate peace would only be the overture to a continuation of the war, but on the side of the Central Powers. Separate peace thus being a mere fiction, I reject it and commit myself to general peace." From 1914 Lenin alone of Russian socialists advocated the transformation of the war into a civil war so that the Russian and German peoples could come to a separate peace over the graves of their belligerent governments.¹ Yet how did the socialist majority propose to achieve universal peace particularly in the face of Miliukov's pro-war stand. Until the return of Tseretelli and his Siberian Zimmerwaldian cohorts, the Petrograd Soviet had no

definite program of action. Tseretelli's program of "revolutionary defensism," advocating defense of the revolution while liquidating the war, clashed sharply with the pro-war factions. The portent was perhaps civil war unless these groups moderated their differences.

As the Petrograd Soviet leaders had made no foreign policy demands of the new government at the time of its formation, Miliukov seized the first opportunity to assert his own position. Many of the men who made up the Provisional Government had opposed the regime of Tsar Nicholas II for its ineffectiveness in prosecuting the war. Even Kerensky had not opposed a war fought for national defense. Therefore on March 17, three days after the Provisional Government took office, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the consent of his ministerial colleagues, dispatched a foreign policy statement to Russia's allies. In addition to announcing the formation of the new government, the note reaffirmed existing treaties and vowed to fight the war to a victorious end:

In the domain of foreign policy, the cabinet . . .
 will remain mindful of the international engagements
 entered into by the fallen regime, and will honor
 Russia's word

 Faithful to the pact which units her indissolubly to
 her glorious Allies, Russia is resolved, like them to
 assure . . . an era of peace among nations

 The Government . . . will devote all its energy to
 bring the war to a victorious conclusion, and will
 apply itself to the task of repairing as quickly as
 possible the errors of the past, which have hitherto
 paralyzed the aspirations and the self sacrifice of
 the Russian people

Miliukov assumed that the ostensible bungling of the war effort by the tsarist regime was the root cause of patriotic Russians not supporting

the war. He then carried his logic a step further and expounded the theory that the revolution was primarily a protest against the slackness of the Imperial Government in conducting the war.³ The liberal Baron B. E. Nol'de, legal adviser to the Provisional Government, interpreted such a hypothesis as "one of the most naive self-deceptions of this epoch, rich in all kinds of fictions."⁴

The "war to a victorious conclusion," however, was for Miliukov also a war of imperialistic annexations. On March 20 the Foreign Minister revealed the government's foreign policy objectives to the Russian nation and emphasized: "The Government will observe sacredly the alliances which bind us to the other powers, and will unswervingly carry out the agreements entered into by the Allies"⁵ For Miliukov this meant realizing Russia's share of the spoils at the war's end. He did not want the Allied agreement of 1915 to become a mere "scrap of paper" at the conclusion of hostilities and therefore renewed the efforts of his predecessor to press the General Staff to undertake an expedition against Constantinople. As the operation required 200,000 to 250,000 men, General M. V. Alekseev, the chief of staff, labelled it inopportune as long as the military situation along Russia's 1100
6
mile front remained insecure. On March 23rd Miliukov called for Russian possession of the Turkish Straits and remarked that their neutralization was "even less acceptable" to Russia than if the Turks continued to control them. He declared that Russia was fighting to unite the Ukrainian people of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the Russian Ukraine and to obtain Constantinople and the Straits.⁷

Though Miliukov's imperialism was anathema to the socialists, the Petrograd Soviet, because of its numbers and diversity of socialist opinion, was slow to formulate a united response. However, as early as March 16, the day before Miliukov's first dispatch to the Allies, N. S. Chkheidze and N. N. Sukhanov of the executive committee, discussed the issuance of an appeal to European socialist parties and workers to join together and force a general peace on the belligerent governments.⁸ The appearance of Miliukov's March 20th statement provoked Sukhanov into writing a strong and forceful rebuttal to the Foreign Minister's views.⁹ Though written for immediate issue in Izvestiia, the executive committee altered it slightly and presented it to the Petrograd Soviet plenum for debate.¹⁰ Chkheidze, fearing that the still patriotic Soldiers' Section might vote down the manifesto, emphasized fighting for peace during the discussion. He noted:

We will not put down our rifles. We propose to the Germans to overthrow Wilhelm II as we overthrew the autocracy. If the Germans do not heed us, we will fight for our freedom to the last drop of our blood. We make these proposals arm in hand. We are not tired and we are not pleading for peace. The slogan of our proposals is: DOWN WITH WILHELM!!

Though Sukhanov heatedly accused Chkheidze of making an erroneous interpretation of the proposed Soviet manifesto, the soldiers nevertheless voted reluctantly for the declaration. The manifesto of March 27, a "Call to the Peoples of the World," reflects the fervor and faith of the Russian socialists during the first weeks that the revolution could conquer the war:

. . . The Russian people now possess full political liberty. They can now assert their mighty power in the internal government of the country and in its foreign policy. And, appealing to all people who are being destroyed by the monstrous war, we announce that the time has come to start a decisive struggle against the grasping ambitions of the people to take the decisions on the question of war and peace into their own hands. Conscious of its revolutionary power, the Russian Democracy announces that it will, by every means, resist the policy of conquest of its ruling classes; and it calls upon the peoples of Europe for a concerted, decisive action in favor of peace

Toilers of all countries: we hold out to you the hand of brotherhood across the mountains of our brothers' corpses, across the rivers of innocent blood and tears, over the smoking ruins of cities and villages, over the wreckage of the treasures of civilization. We appeal to you for the reestablishment and strengthening of international unity. In it is the pledge of our future victories and the complete liberation of humanity.

PROLETARIANS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!¹²

On March 31 the Petrograd Soviet, in response to non-socialist organs that found the manifesto deplorable but not in basic conflict with Miliukov's position, published a blistering editorial in Izvestiia attacking the slogan, "War to the Victorious End." It emphasized that the capitalists who dominated all belligerent governments had imperialistic aims. That such were the motives of the Central Powers was beyond doubt. The desires of the Russian imperialists, however, to have Constantinople, of British imperialists to have Mesopotamia, of French imperialists to have Syria, were no less deplorable. The editorial concluded by reaffirming the principles laid down in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal manifestos of 1915 and 1916 calling for the cessation of hostilities on the basis of no annexations and no indemnities. The socialists emphasized that the very real differences between the bourgeoisie

and themselves "could never be obscured by the poisonous fog of chauvinism."¹³

The breach between the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government over the war derived from a deep socialist theoretical commitment. Russian socialists, whether populist or marxian, all accepted as irrefutable truth Marx's position that war is the inevitable attribute of the capitalist system. The majority regarded the manifesto of the Zimmerwald Socialist Conference, written by Leon Trotsky, as a testament of faith. For them the World War was a logical outcome of the imperialist system by which the exploiters of all lands attempted to "foster their greed for profit by the exploitation of human labor and of the natural resources of the entire world." They believed that the leaders of the various socialist parties throughout Europe had betrayed the working class by suspending the class struggle for the duration of the war. They were certain that the socialist who voted war credits to their national governments to carry on the war and who had even participated in these governments had actually accepted responsibility for the war. If these socialist leaders had refused to cooperate with the imperialists and had not forsaken the international solidarity of the working class, the war would not have followed.

While Russian socialists generally agreed on the cause of the war, they differed in their attitudes toward its liquidation. Viktor Chernov, the Zimmerwaldist leader and ideologue of the Socialist Revolutionary party, found four tendencies among Russian socialists:

1. To end the war immediately, regardless of cost. Even a bad peace would be better than continuing a war which could only aggravate national hatreds, contribute to the mass destruction of human life and property, and lessen moral sense and decency.
2. To make internal sabotage and to destroy the military organizations of the state. This was dictated by the desire to defeat one's own government which was assumed to be worse than the external enemy. To change the imperialist war into a civil war.
3. To accept the war completely so that the threatened national interests could be protected. To generate a united war effort and to postpone all factional and party strife and the solution of all social issues until the end of the war.
4. To produce an internal revolution during the war in order to change the character of the war. To give the war new revolutionary aims in place of the old conservative, imperialistic aims.¹⁴

These differences in attitudes toward the war often crossed party lines. The Leninists alone were completely homogeneous in their attitude toward the war, advocating the second tendency on Chernov's list, and then only after the arrival of their leader in Petrograd.

The view toward the war, however, that triumphed in the Petrograd Soviet and in Russia before November was the fourth tendency on Chernov's list, that of the Siberian Zimmerwaldists. A few months after the outset of the First World War, a small band of tsarist political exiles living in Siberia formulated under Tseretelli's guidance a unified position on the armed conflict. As Zimmerwaldists, the Siberians stood for a general peace and for the reestablishment of the Second International as essential steps toward the restoration and preservation of peace. The task therefore was to reunite the various factions of the socialist move-

ment. The Siberians maintained that Russia's unilateral withdrawal from the war would achieve nothing. Tseretelli accepted the position of August Bebel, the German socialist leader, that a just defense was possible, but Belgium alone, Tseretelli noted in 1914, "is conducting a defensive war."¹⁵ He stamped ultrapatriotic defensism as wrong but considered accomodation with moderate defensism possible. The theme of a just defense, however, became largely overshadowed by the Siberians' strong antiwar position. They did not sufficiently elaborate precisely what they meant by a just defense, yet as long as the Siberians did not overly emphasize this last element in 1917, their style of Zimmerwaldism provided the basis on which most Russian socialist could unite. That is, they agreed to strive for peace while defending the revolution against the German imperialists: revolutionary defensism.¹⁶

Revolutionary defensism was also the basis on which most socialists and non-socialists could come to some accord, yet it had to triumph in the Petrograd Soviet before such a compromise was possible. On April 3, 1917 the executive committee debated the questions of war and peace. Sukhanov opened the session with an attack on Chkheidze's interpretation of the Soviet's declaration of March 27, labelling the view a capitulation before Miliukov. Noting the prevalence of propaganda for war to a victorious end, he called for the mobilization of all proletarians and soldiers into a Soviet sponsored peace campaign which would absolutely refuse to follow the tsarist military program. Miliukov, he said, had

coopted the tsarist policy and the Soviet had to force the Provisional Government to make an overt announcement, together with the Allies, of a peace proposal on the basis of no annexations or indemnities. Sukhanov insisted that to follow Miliukov's policy would result in war without end, hunger, and catastrophe. On the other hand, to follow a policy of immediate peace would not weaken the morale of the troops or sabotage the defense of the revolution. These peace proposals, put forward by the Petrograd Soviet, would "purify the war of the stain of imperialism." To call upon the German and Austrian socialists to renounce their socialist-patriotic policies while at the same time practicing defensism at home in Russia was useless. If the enemy rejected the peace proposals of the Petrograd Soviet, the army would know "that it was really spilling its blood for the revolution and for freedom."¹⁷ His speech attempted to show that the Petrograd Soviet faced a contradictory position: defense and peace. For Sukhanov the way out of this dilemma was to have an exclusive commitment to peace.

Apparently for Sukhanov, defense, like law and order, would somehow be taken care of without the Petrograd Soviet's aid. His proposed campaign for immediate peace in the army and among the working class would have meant the destruction of the government, yet Sukhanov desired neither its overthrow nor any change in the existing relationship with it. Many of Sukhanov's associates shared these misconceptions. They sincerely believed that the German proletariat would accept the proposals and, together with the other proletarians of Europe, would

force their respective governments to make universal peace. Iu. Larin, a Menshevik Internationalist, even suggested that peace was possible by simply telegraphing this demand of the Russian Revolution to the belligerents.¹⁸

Tseretelli changed the emphasis of the whole debate from peace to defense. "His beautiful voice rang out like a bell and the blue veins across his forehead showed plainly," as he reproached Sukhanov. In his maiden address in the executive committee, he attacked Sukhanov's proposals because they had not mentioned defense against the enemy, support for the army, discipline and fitness for battle, or working for defense on the home front. Indeed, Sukhanov's resolution amounted to the virtual exclusion of national defense from the slogans of the revolution. To Tseretelli's consternation defensists in the executive committee seized upon his remarks to emphasize that any struggle in Russia for peace was unpatriotic, dangerous to the front, and useless to all save Imperial Germany. The German Social Democrats, they noted, were not conducting a campaign for peace, but were vigorously defending the despot, Wilhelm II. News of a German attack at Stokhod, inflicting heavy casualties on the Russian positions, appeared to justify the worst fears of the defensists, momentarily silencing any rebuttal.

The next day, April 4, the Petrograd Soviet leaders reached a compromise in order to stand united against Miliukov. Tseretelli determined that peace receive equal emphasis with defense, worked out a single resolution which with minor changes an overwhelming majority of the executive committee approved. In response to a Bolshevik demand for some

steps in the peace campaign, the executive passed a Tseretelli proposition that the contact commission request the Provisional Government to issue an official statement renouncing any intentions of seeking annexations or indemnities at the war's end.¹⁹

From Swiss exile Iu. Martov, leader of Menshevik Internationalism, sent an alternative to Tseretelli's revolutionary defensism and Lenin's separate peace propositions. He proposed that the Petrograd Soviet demand that the Allies begin negotiations at once for a universal peace and that if they rejected the ultimatum Russia should break with them and wage a separate war in case of German attack. Martov did not agree with Tseretelli that such an action would result in a separate peace. As a minimum, Russia would prove at home and abroad that she had no interest in either German or Allied imperialism and would regain her freedom of action, having disentangled herself from Allied obligations. The worst result would be a separate war, not a separate peace, should the Germans launch an offensive to take advantage of Russia's isolation. Martov found Tseretelli's revolutionary defensism based on the weak instrument of persuasion, utilizing only diplomatic and political pressure that had failed to halt the war in the first place. As for Lenin's program, peace did not have to wait until after a social revolution (civil war) had liquidated capitalism and imperialism in Europe. Furthermore, Lenin's separate peace with the German people depended on the slight hope of civil war breaking out and destroying Kaiserdom. Russia needed more than mere persuasion and chance to end the war and only a real ultimatum would achieve anything. For Martov, "either the revolution will kill the war or the war will kill the revolution."²⁰

Martov's proposition was probably unrealistic. Even had it triumphed in the Petrograd Soviet prior to the adoption of Tseretelli's revolutionary defensism, trying to force it on the government probably would have led to civil war; a real possibility as revealed by the consequences of Tseretelli's attempt to implement the more cautious policy of revolutionary defensism. Without the support of a majority of Russian society an ultimatum to the Allies would have carried no force. The ultimatum itself was a faulty concept. Even if the Allies agreed to open negotiations for a universal peace, armistice was possible only if the Germans agreed. As Martov's proposition attracted virtually no attention at all, clearly no hope existed for its success.

On April 6 the Petrograd Soviet opened its offensive against Miliukov's war policy in a meeting between the government and the Soviet's contact commission. Tseretelli stated as diplomatically as possible that the plight of the army and of the rear and the disaffection and apathy of the soldiers and workers resulted from the war policy of the Provisional Government. The government had to renounce all war aims except defense of the fatherland. Such a statement would allow the Soviet to mobilize the soldiers and the workers in an all out effort to defend the country and the revolution. Prime Minister L'vov asked how the Soviet leaders could speak of the government's aggressive tendencies or its imperialistic designs: "Isn't a large area of our country occupied by the Germans? Do the Soviet delegates know exactly what they want?" The commission, however, insisted the

government declare that Russia's only war aim was defense of the fatherland against external aggression. Miliukov refused, but Finance Minister M. I. Tereshchenko responded that such a document was possible. The "Left seven" now emerged in the cabinet apparently finding grounds on which to achieve a compromise with the Soviet leaders.

Two days later, on April 8, the Provisional Government invited the contact commission to the Mariinski Palace, stating that the cabinet had now met the Soviet's request for a statement on war aims. It read in part:

. . . The defense of our inheritance by every means, and the liberation of our country from the invading enemy, constitute the foremost and most urgent task of our fighters, defending the nation's liberty.

Leaving to the will of the people, in close union with our Allies, the solution of all problems connected with the World War and its conclusion, the Provisional Government considers it to be its right and duty to declare at this time that the purpose of Free Russia is not domination over other nations, or seizure of their national possessions, but the establishment of a firm peace on the basis of self-determination of peoples. The Russian people does not intend to increase its world power at the expense of other nations. It has no desire to enslave or downgrade any one. In the name of the loftiest principles of justice, it has removed the shackles from the Polish people. But the Russian people will not permit their fatherland to emerge from this great struggle humiliated and sapped of its vital forces.

These principles will be made the basis of the foreign policy of the Provisional Government, which is unswervingly executing the will of the people and defending the rights of our fatherland, fully observing, at the same time, all obligations assumed toward our Allies.²¹

This declaration was sheer double-talk and did not satisfy the Zimmerwaldists in the Petrograd Soviet. Addressed only to "The Citizens of

Russia," not Russia's Allies, it renounced any desires for annexation, yet by implication at least, managed to retain phrases which in no way narrowed the meaning of Miliukov's original note of March 18. Tseretelli noted that the document made no direct allusion to the renunciation of annexations of foreign territories, and that it reaffirmed existing treaties. Thus, it ought to have included a statement on the revision of these treaties together with a corresponding communicating to the Allies. Miliukov's response was that he had "in mind some such address to the Allies concerning a revision of treaties. Just now I consider the moment unfavorable, but I see no obstacle to taking such a step shortly."²²

When the executive committee refused to accept the Provisional Government's declaration in its original form, the government promptly produced a revised version. To the passage stating that "the purpose of free Russia is not domination over other nations, or seizure of their national possessions" was added the phrase "or forcible occupation of foreign territories." The vast majority of the executive committee accepted this version and on the surface it seemed to bring the Petrograd Soviet, the Provisional Government and the General Staff together: the Soviet calling for revolutionary defensism; the Provisional Government seemingly willing to go along with this concept in their proclamation; and the Supreme Commander determined to keep the Russian armies on the defensive until he believed them capable of mounting an offensive.²³

Tseretelli on April 10 at the All-Russian Conference of Soviets called on the government to use its influence to impose the Soviet peace program on the Allied powers. The Georgian Menshevik thus

This conference adopted Tseretelli's position in a resolution that praised the modified declaration of the Provisional Government on war aims and then added:

. . . The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will support with energy all the efforts of the Provisional Government along this line. They call on all peoples, both Allied and enemy, to bring pressure on their governments to renounce their plans of conquest. In addition to this, each nation, in both coalitions, should insist that its government persuade its Allies to make a general renunciation of annexations and indemnities

Russia's revolutionary people will continue to do its best to bring about peace on the basis of brotherhood and the equality of free nations, as soon as possible. An official renunciation of all ideas of conquest by all of the governments would be a most powerful means to bring the war to an end on these terms.

While the resolution appealed to the workers, peasants, and soldiers of Russia to defend the nation as long as war continued,²⁴ the Soviet now not only insisted that the Russian government renounce its own annexationist ambitions, but required the government to persuade the Allied governments to do the same. This objective became the key element in the Petrograd Soviet's foreign policy program down to the Bolshevik coup. This resolution also made it plain that the Soviet leaders were intent on dispatching the Provisional Government's declaration of March 27 to the Allied governments; they would not have it restricted simply to the Russian nation. While the Soviet's foreign policy goals slowly took shape, Miliukov in no way altered his own position.

As soon as the All-Russian Soviet Conference ended, the Petrograd Soviet dispatched delegates to the All-Russian Congress of the Fronts at Minsk in order to consolidate its position on peace with the soldiers. To their delight, Chkheidze, Tseretelli, Gvozdev, and Skobelev found the soldiers generally in accord with the Petrograd Soviet's peace efforts. The troops asked Tseretelli if the Provisional Government had made an effort to bring about peace? Had the Allied governments or Germany responded to the Petrograd Soviet's call for a general peace? Could Russia make a separate peace with Germany? Tseretelli told the assembled soldiers' delegates what the Provisional Government and the Soviet had done to put the question of peace before the Allies and Germany. Although he could report no favorable response to these proposals, the soldier-delegates reportedly accepted the Petrograd Soviet's position that while the war continued, the army had to maintain its fighting capacity and that a separate peace with Germany was out of the question. While radical leftists remained silent, rightwing elements demanded: "What law gives us the right to compel other nations--England, France, and Germany--to bow to the will of a small band of Russian workers and soldiers?" Tseretelli retorted that "the call for a general peace proceeded not from "a small band of Russian workers and soldiers' but from all revolutionary Russia, which was striving to awaken a fraternal response in the peoples of all other belligerent countries." That the rightwing could even express such sentiments was an indication that anything less than revolutionary defensism would probably have aroused considerable resistance from a majority of the soldier-delegates. Clearly the defeatists were an insignificant segment.²⁵

The Petrograd Soviet not only garnered mass support in its struggle for revolutionary defensism but also the talents of returning exiled socialist leaders. In particular, the SR leader Viktor Chernov, one of the most important returning exiles, moved the Soviet foreign policy program forward. He reported that in Western Europe the Petrograd Soviet's campaign for a democratic peace had made a tremendous impression, but declarations of the Foreign Minister had created the impression that the Provisional Government was out of step with the "revolutionary democracy." Chernov suggested that the deputies urge the Provisional Government to send the Soviet's "Declaration on the Aims of the War" to the Allies as a diplomatic note. As this idea accorded with the frequently expressed views of the men on the executive committee, its members decided to raise the question at the next session between the contact commission and the ministers.²⁶

Chernov made use of every forum to attack Miliukov's policy. In the press Chernov used Professor Miliukov's own writings to lash "Miliukov-Dardanelskii," "Miliukov the Conqueror" into submission. Not only should Miliukov resign, but the "Augean Stables" of the Foreign Ministry and its envoys should be cleaned out. At the April 24th meeting between the commission and the government Chernov raised the issue of sending the Soviet's April 9th declaration to the Allies. He had already learned that Prime Minister L'vov had no objections to sending the declaration as a diplomatic note. Miliukov, however, maintained that the note would only increase apprehensions in Paris, London, and Washington that Russia was about to conclude a

separate peace. Skobelev and Tseretelli countered that more important apprehensions existed at home and recounted the intense interest of the soldiers at the Congress of Fronts on the peace question. A majority of Miliukov's colleagues in the cabinet now disagreed with him and the Foreign Minister finally consented to sending the note. However, he attached a proviso, to which no one paid any attention at the time, that he would send a covering note of his own along with copies of the "Declaration of the Aims of the War."²⁷

If Miliukov intended to procrastinate in sending the note, Kerensky made this impossible. In violation of an understanding among the ministers on non-disclosure, Kerensky revealed to a reporter that the Provisional Government was considering the transmission of a note on war aims to the Allies. The news report suggested that such a note had already been drafted. Kerensky claimed that he was a victim of careless reporting. Guilty or innocent Kerensky's April 27 repudiation of the story, which noted that "The government has not discussed and is not preparing any note on the question of war aims," was equally provocative and hardly innocent. Public clamor for the dispatch of such a note increased dramatically, especially as the Foreign Minister talked frankly of acquiring Constantinople and on April 26 told the Manchester Guardian correspondent that Russia "must insist on the right to close the Straits to foreign warships and this is not possible unless she possesses the Straits and fortifies them." On April 28 Delo naroda, the SR organ, repeated its demand of April 24 that the government communicate the Soviet's April 9th declaration to the Allies and singled out Miliukov alone as standing in the way of compliance, not the government as a whole.

The response of the executive committee was decisive: it would withhold endorsement of the government's Liberty Loan until Miliukov dispatched the note.²⁸

On May 1 Miliukov fulfilled the letter but not the spirit of the agreement between the government and the Soviet. He transmitted the April 9th declaration but in his covering note to the Allies he completely negated the Soviet's intent of no annexations. He spoke of "the victorious completion of the present war in full accord with our Allies," reiterated "Russia's duty to abide by the agreements assumed toward the Allies," and stated that "the progressive democracies of the world would find a way to establish the guarantees and sanctions necessary to prevent new bloody conflicts in the future." While the ministers saw Miliukov's covering letter as perfectly acceptable (Kerensky quibbled a little), it stunned the Soviet leaders.²⁹ "If Miliukov had consciously striven to cause a rift between the Soviets and the Government," complained Tseretelli, "he could not have used a better method than this document." To the Soviet leaders, these key phrases were simply a restatement of Miliukov's original ideas on foreign policy, and they regarded the note as an outright provocation. Chkheidze remarked: "Miliukov is the evil genius of the revolution." The Foreign Minister had even dispatched the note on May 1, the international labor holiday--a calculated mockery the socialists believed.³⁰

As news of Miliukov's note spread through the Tauride Palace, the initial response was to take violent action. The Interdistrictite Iurenev called upon the Soviet to answer Miliukov's provocation by an appeal for mass protest. Bogdanov, a Menshevik defensist, usually

calm and restrained, was beside himself with rage and endorsed the proposition for an appeal to the populace. The Bolshevik leader, Shliapnikov, called for the commencement of class warfare. Stankevich and Bramson admonished the Soviet not to gamble the fate of the revolution on the tactlessness of a single minister. Kamenev, more restrained than his fellow-Bolshevik Shliapnikov, asked the executive committee if it needed further proof of the correctness of the Bolshevik contention that a bourgeois government must inevitably follow an imperialistic program. Tseretelli assured the executive committee that Miliukov's note violated all aspects of the accord between the contact commission and the Provisional Government. He urged caution because an appeal to the masses might well result in anarchy, violence, and civil war. By a majority vote he received the committee's authorization to reopen negotiations with the ministers.³¹

On May 3, before negotiations could recommence, news reached the Soviet of alarming developments among the populace. The Finland regiment, led by the philosopher-mathematician F. F. Linde, a former executive committeeman, marched out of its barracks under arms and moved toward the Mariinski Palace. Following them were the 180th Rifle regiment, the Moscow regiment, and units of the Klexholm and Pavlov Guards regiments plus sailors of the Second Baltic and Guards Naval Depots. These troops carried placards inscribed "Dismiss Miliukov and Guchkov" and "Down with the Policy of Aggression." The soldiers surrounded the palace and declared that they would arrest Miliukov and the whole Provisional Government. Work stopped in the

factories and crowds moved toward the center of the capital to join the protest. When General Lavr Kornilov, Military Commandant of Petrograd, asked for permission to call out troops for the ministers' protection, the government flatly declined. The executive committee sent some of its members to the scene of the demonstrations to appeal to the populace to go home and the troops to return to their barracks. The Soviet spokesmen pointed out that the executive committee had not called for demonstrations, and if continued, they might lead to bloodshed. The Soviet committeemen asked the people to remain calm and wait for orders "from the leading organ of the Democracy." The crowds dispersed and the troops returned to their barracks.³²

On May 4 supporters of Miliukov staged a counter protest that led to violence, forcing the Soviet to assume momentarily military powers. Banners appeared in the streets calling for "War to the Victorious End," "Support for the Allies," "Down with Anarchy," and "Send Lenin back to Germany." Patriotic, conservative citizens, intelligentsia, and even some soldiers joined in this demonstration. Counter-demonstrations quickly erupted and violence and bloodshed occurred. For a time it appeared that civil war would break out on the streets of Petrograd. General Kornilov ordered troops under his command to protect the government. More troops refused than obeyed Kornilov's order and notified the executive committee of their decision. Kornilov had previously informed the government that of the 125,000 troops under his command only 3,500 would come to the government's defense. Immediately, the executive committee ordered General Kornilov to recall his troops and

issued the following command:

COMRADE SOLDIERS!

In these troubled days let no one come out on the street armed, unless called out by the executive committee. Only the executive committee has the right to give you orders. Every order for the military to come out (except as a matter of routine) should be on a written blank of the executive committee, stamped with its seal, and signed by at least two of the seven men herein named: Chkheidze, Skobelev, Binasik, Filipovskii, Skalov, Goldman, Bogdanov.

Confirm every order by telephoning to No. 104-06

The Executive Committee
Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers'
Deputies

General Kornilov, perturbed by this interference into his prerogatives as a commanding officer, shortly resigned as military commandant of the capital and requested a transfer to the front. Tseretelli explained the Soviet's momentary usurpation of authority:

Normally, the leading majority of the executive committee avoided assuming governmental functions. But at the moment the country stood on the brink of civil war. The first bloody clashes between the demonstrators for and against the government had already occurred. Artillery mounted in the middle of Palace Square was bound to have an inflammatory effect. It was this emergency that prompted the executive committee to appropriate government functions and to employ extraordinary measures in order to save the country from civil war.³³

While the Bolsheviks walked a path apart from the rest of the Soviet, they did not conspire to instigate the April demonstration. In his April theses Lenin had insisted that the Bolsheviks make no compromise with revolutionary defensism. From that time Leninist agitators had

preached to the workers, patiently and persistently, that the war would not end until the overthrow of capitalism. Lenin had insisted from the first that the Provisional Government receive no support because, as government of bourgeoisie, it would follow an imperialistic program. Rank-and-file party members from the garrison regiments and factories, undoubtedly influenced by Lenin's April pronouncements, helped bring about the street demonstrations in the first place. The Bolshevik Central Committee, however, clearly did not become involved in the movement until after it was well underway. On the morning of May 3 the central committee adopted a resolution written by Lenin that condemned the Miliukov note and suggested that immediate peace was possible only by transferring all power to the Soviet; the central committee, however, did not call party members to demonstrate in the streets. Only on May 4 did Lenin appeal for all Bolsheviks to demonstrate in protest. As in the "March days" more militant elements in the party, such as the Petersburg committee and now the Bolshevik Military Organization, agitated for the party to become more radical in its actions. Lenin, unlike Shliapnikov in March, strongly voiced his opposition to such tendencies in his statement of May 7:

We did not know if in this troubled moment the masses would swing in our direction; the question would have been different if they had swung sharply. We proposed a peaceful demonstration but some comrades in the Petersburg committee injected a different slogan. We annulled it but could not stop it in time, and the masses followed the slogan of the Petersburg committee. We acknowledge that the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" is adventurist, that we cannot now overthrow the government. . . . We wanted only a peaceful reconnaissance of our enemy's forces and not to give battle. But the Petersburg committee took a position "a wee bit to the left" . . . To move

"a wee bit left" at the moment of action was inept. We regard this as a grave crime. . . We would not remain in the central committee for a minute if we consciously permitted such a step. It occurred because of imperfections in our organizational machinery. . . Were there mistakes? Yes, there were. Only those who don't act don't make mistakes. But to organize well--that's a difficult task.³⁴

The party endorsed Lenin's position. The crisis, however, had borne out Kamenev's prediction that the rank-and-file would interpret such an appeal as a command to overthrow the Provisional Government. However, Bolshevik propaganda should not receive blame or credit for the initial troop response. The Bolshevik cadre organization in the Petrograd garrison was in embryo in April and the soldiers' outburst apparently native to them.

Street demonstrations in Petrograd lasted for two days and only the intervention of the Petrograd Soviet stopped them. In Moscow demonstrations also broke out for and against the government repeating the pattern of the capital. In the meantime, the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government carried on negotiations to resolve the crisis. When the first disorders erupted, Prince L'vov asked Tseretelli to his home. There the prime minister and Nekrasov expressed surprise at the popular reaction to Miliukov's note. L'vov threatened to resign if the Soviet withdrew its support of the government. Tseretelli explained that the use of slogans associated in the common mind with militant imperialism had aroused the masses. He even suggested to Prince L'vov that Miliukov's resignation would prove highly satisfactory to the Soviet. L'vov countered that Miliukov's resignation would lead to the resignations of all the other Kadet ministers and the fall of the

government. He suggested that negotiations begin at once between the Provisional Government, the Petrograd Soviet and the Temporary Committee of the State Duma.

The executive committee voted to begin negotiations but opened the question to full debate. Chkheidze charged the Soviet plenum to exhibit patience pending the outcome of negotiations. When a Bolshevik proposed that the Soviet take state power into its own hands, V. B. Stankevich responded that the problem was to govern, not take power:

. . . If you find that no negotiations would be of any use and that the Provisional Government should be overthrown at once, then it should be clear that neither demonstrations nor violence are needed. The power, after all, is in your hands, it belongs to you and to the masses behind you. You see that big clock on the wall, don't you? It shows fifteen minutes to seven. This very moment you can order the Provisional Government to resign. Just convey this decision to the government over the telephone, and it will surrender its authority within the next ten minutes. By seven o'clock the Provisional Government will have ceased to exist. Yet it is open to question whether it would be as easy to give the country a new and better government. . . .³⁵

The Soviet plenum voted to await the results of the negotiations between the executive committee and the government.

The negotiations led to a compromise in which no one triumphed. As the session opened, Prince L'vov again threatened to resign if the Soviet withdrew its support of the government. The government was aware, he noted, of the growing distrust the Petrograd Soviet had of its actions, but what had the ministers done to merit this? The ministers reported frankly and specifically the domestic difficulties they faced, stressing the great need of the support of the Soviet for the government. As for foreign policy, Nekrasov and Tereshchenko

found no discrepancy between that advocated by ~~the~~ government and the Petrograd Soviet. The Soviet leaders sympathized with the ministers' desire to minimize foreign affairs in their struggle with internal difficulties, but the socialists would not let ~~the~~ matter lie. Miliukov too would not compromise external affairs for internal concerns. He stated that his sole purpose was to dispel rumors abroad of a separate peace and would not send a new note to the Allies under pressure of street demonstrations. In a last ditch effort he read a note from a minor French diplomat that stated that while France sympathized with the revolution, unless Russia lived up to her obligations under the alliance, French economic aid might cease. France's plenipotentiary Albert Thomas, however, immediately disavowed Miliukov's trump card. Though the Soviet insisted on a new note to the Allies, Tseretelli explained that no one in the Soviet wanted to humiliate the government and even Kamenev claimed that most Bolsheviks (not Leninists) were not trying to overthrow the government. Nekrasov finally invited Tseretelli to help him redraft the note in terms of the April 9th Soviet declaration, thereby explaining away such obnoxious phrases as "decisive victory over the enemy." The phrase "guarantees and sanctions" now referred only to limitations of armaments, international tribunals, and similar objectives. Though a poor explanation, nevertheless it weathered the storm. The government accepted it over Miliukov's objections as did the Soviet plenum by a vote of two thousand to thirteen. Despite all the clamor, the government apparently never officially transmitted the explanation to the Allies, though envoys of the Allies did receive the note.³⁶

The Petrograd Soviet leaders clearly saw the results as a victory for the "revolutionary democracy." Incredibly Miliukov interpreted the results as a personal victory! In an interview with The New York Times he asserted that "Our policy remains unchanged. We have conceded nothing."³⁷ He boasted to a dismayed Albert Thomas that he had won a complete victory.³⁸ Britain's Sir George Buchanan agreed that Miliukov had won a victory in the purely moral sense, but found Tereshchenko's assessment essentially correct that the result was far from a total victory.³⁹ As Buchanan explained later: "L'vov, Kerensky, and Tereshchenko came to the conclusion that, as the Soviet was too powerful a factor to be either suppressed or disregarded, the only way of putting an end to the anomaly of dual government was to form a Coalition."⁴⁰ While Miliukov thought he had managed to get the whole matter passed off as a misunderstanding, obviously he overlooked the fact that the government had made concessions, that the rest of the cabinet had overruled him, and that the Soviet had overruled the government. Furthermore, the Soviet drew practical consequences from its triumph. The government agreed that no major political acts would appear publicly without first notifying the executive committee and that the personnel of the Russian diplomatic corps abroad would undergo a radical shakeup.⁴¹ The Soviet's stand made a mockery of Miliukov's position as Russian Foreign Minister. Under such conditions no minister could have long continued in office, and, if Miliukov resigned, a coalition had to follow. If the triumph of revolutionary defensism meant coalition government and thus the compromising of the Menshevik theoretical position of

non-participation in a bourgeois government, the Soviet had won only a partial victory. The only other possibility was to assume state power and chance civil war.

Not all Soviet leaders opposed coalition with the bourgeoisie. In the first days of the revolution a number of rightwing socialists advocated a coalition government with members from the Progressive bloc of the State Duma. These men renewed their fight for coalition when, as a result of the "April crisis," new voices began to demand the creation of a coalition government. On May 5 a conference of delegates of regimental and battalion committees of the Petrograd garrison met at the Tauride Palace and added their support to the movement when the conference resolved that ". . . the executive committee formulate its opinion regarding the formation of a coalition cabinet." Hundreds of letters and telegrams from diverse parts of Russia, from army organizations, and from peasants' soviets, poured into the Petrograd Soviet's headquarters demanding the formation of a coalition government. The Trudoviks, Popular Socialists, and a considerable number of SR's reacted affirmatively to this pressure. For the moment, however, the Soviet leadership refused to commit itself to more than palliatives to shore up the government, such as an enthusiastic endorsement of the ministers' Liberty Loan.⁴²

The actions of several members of the Provisional Government heightened the demand for the Petrograd Soviet to enter a coalition. The "Left seven" within the government openly expressed their feelings for a coalition. N. N. L'vov, the Procurator General of the Holy Synod, privately informed Tseretelli: "Up to now you have opposed it. How-

ever, the matter cannot be postponed any longer. It is impossible to govern Russia without the Soviet Democracy. . . .Come to us with your programs; it makes sense; we accept it. But you must join the government."⁴³ Following L'vov's personal appeal to Tseretelli, the government publicly announced on May 9 its intention to include persons from "those actively creative elements who have not, until now, had a direct part in the State administration. . . ."⁴⁴ That same day A. F. Kerensky, the nominal Soviet vice-chairman, gave urgency to the government's appeal by announcing that his continued participation in the government was impossible unless the leaders of the socialist parties in the Soviet agreed to send representatives into the cabinet.⁴⁵ The next day the prime minister made a direct appeal to the Soviet chairman which repeated the essence of the May 9th statement and requested that he "bring his matter to the attention of the executive committee of the parties represented in the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of which you are president."⁴⁶ The Soviet had no choice but to make a formal reply to such an overt appeal.

The executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet received Prince L'vov's appeal with mixed feelings. A majority favored a response that would strengthen the authority of the government. Many members of the executive held back, however, from announcing that the Soviet as a body or its leaders as individuals would actually participate in the government. The Menshevik leaders who dominated the SR-Menshevik bloc in the executive committee were not willing to compromise with theory in order to solve the governmental crisis. Their position on state

power therefore remained in May essentially the same as in March when the socialists refused power because the autocratic government had limited Russian economic growth to the point that the country in 1917 was not ripe for a proletarian state. Just as the seizure of power in March would have caused the superstructure to rush far ahead of the actual economic base, the same condition remained true in May and could only create the illusion of a stable proletarian government and thereby lead to destruction of the revolution. The Menshevik organ, Rabochaia gazeta, reminded its readers on May 5 that Russia "has experienced a bourgeois revolution. . . . It is not time for the socialist revolution: there still are not the economic conditions in Russia, there is still not the level of culture and political development in the majority of the population. Following this reasoning, the way for the democratic workers still is not to tie its hands to the management of the state." The Petrograd Soviet had to remain a private institution outside of de jure government. Its function was to propose programs, not be instrumental in carrying them out. Bourgeois government in principle was a repulsive institution to socialists. To participate in it was to lose one's socialist virtue; to lose totally the right to protect and demand reform. The Mensheviks had long advocated that a premature proletarian seizure of power would result in another Paris Commune and consequent destruction before réactionaries.⁴⁷

The Soviet's theoretical position, however, had not matched its practice since the March days. Events before and during the "April crisis" had eroded the subtle theoretical position of the Soviet leaders

with regard to state power and Soviet functions. The Petrograd Soviet had assumed governmental powers at Schlüsselburg Fortress and at Kronstadt when the Provisional Government had not controlled crises there in the first days of the revolution. During the "April crisis" it had dramatically exercised authority to quell street disturbances. Reaction to such demonstrations of power was two-fold. Soviet leaders could hardly blame soldiers and workers, witnessing such exercises of power, for drawing the conclusion that the Soviet could wield power if it desired. Furthermore, such actions also increased the Soviet leaders' preparation for state power. Seeing that Kadet expertise in government was not as great as imagined surely reduced the Soviet leaders' fear of their own incompetence in government beyond what such fears were in March 1917.⁴⁸

The Soviet position did not derive entirely from theory and its practice. Voitinskii, Tseretelli's rightarm man, in retrospect noted that Soviet leaders were "accustomed to look upon government, courts, coercion, police, and other attributes of authority as evils."⁴⁹ Stankevich observed that his colleagues in the Soviet "instinctively and habitually held a negative attitude toward the authorities which always seemed wicked, soiled, and destroyers of the principles of purity"⁵⁰ Such reasoning derived from individual experiences in dealing with tsarist police and courts. Law and order for Russian revolutionaries were part of the natural order of things and would somehow function without the efforts of the Soviet. Such an attitude apparently extended to the whole institution of government, for the Soviet would most likely have done nothing if left to itself.

The Petrograd Soviet leaders attempted to thrash out a unified Menshevik-SR bloc position on the question of coalition government. The Mensheviks tried to keep the SR's harnessed to an orthodox marxist position. Despite token internal party opposition, the SR leaders had voted for coalition and now asked the Mensheviks to join them. The Menshevik Chkheidze found that by "staying out of the government, the Soviet has acquired an authority that has enabled it to channel the mass movement into organized forms, and to maintain a democratic order in the country. . . . If we join the government, we shall arouse expectations in the masses of something essentially new, which we shall be unable to fulfill. . . . Let our comrades, the Populists and Socialist Revolutionaries join the government, not as members of the executive committee, but as representatives of the peasantry. This would place the government on a firm foundation and give it a genuinely democratic character that would be a source of strength."⁵¹

To the SR's this seemed sheer political expediency. Avksent'ev, a "Star Chamber" participant and SR leader, considered no coalition government was possible without the participation of the executive committee. Gotz, the SR "Star Chamber" member, agreed and reasoned that "When any clash between the Soviet and the government jeopardizes the very existence of the latter, the participation of Soviet representatives in the government means, not the surrender of hostages to the bourgeoisie, but the reaffirmation of the policy of the revolutionary democracy."

The Mensheviks disagreed. Skobelev doubted whether the masses would heed Skobelev, the cabinet minister, yet when he addressed the masses

as an officer of the Soviet, they listened and obeyed. Bogdanov admitted the popularity of the plan for a coalition government among the Menshevik rank-and-file but felt this enthusiasm rested "upon the illusion that a coalition government would be able to work wonders immediately." If these expectations remained unfilled, the masses would lose all confidence in the Soviet and the Menshevik party. Tseretelli admitted that the most urgent task of the moment was to maintain the Provisional Government, lest the bourgeoisie fail and the socialists be forced into assuming all state power with inadequate support. He doubted that the inclusion of members from the executive committee in the cabinet would accomplish the desired result. He shared all the apprehensions of his Menshevik colleagues but offered a possible solution: "Among the supporters of the Socialist Revolutionary party, as among our own supporters, there are many democratic elements with organizational links, not to any party nor to the Soviets, but to cooperatives, trade unions, and the peasantry. If the representatives of these democratic intelligentsia were to replace Miliukov and Guchkov in the cabinet, this would go far to ensure complete harmony between the policies of the government and the Soviet, and would allow us to support the government with greater determination."⁵² The bloc came to no unified position, rather it had come close to breaking up over the question of coalition.

At the May 11 session of the executive committee the populists and the marxists officially went on record as split over the coalition problem. Trudoviks, Popular Socialists, and most SR's supported coalition; the Mensheviks almost unanimously opposed it; the Bolsheviks alone de-

manded that the Soviet take state power. The vote was 24 to 22 against coalition with eight members abstaining; a number of committeemen had simply stayed away rather than vote.⁵³ To keep the bloc from falling apart Tseretelli now proceeded with his proposed compromise solution and urged the prime minister to form a government to include socialists close to the Soviet officials. He suggested as likely candidates the SR sympathizers Peshekhonov and Pereverzev and their Menshevik counterparts Prokopovich and Malentovich. Prince L'vov, although greatly disturbed over the refusal of the Soviet to send its leaders into the government, welcomed the suggestion of possible candidates for a new government. The continued insistence of the Soviet leaders that they act as "watchdog" of the government in order to safeguard the rights of the toiling masses, however, did not please him. The Soviet would gladly change the words of its formula, postol'ku poskol'ku (insofar as), Tseretelli informed L'vov, but not its meaning of cooperating with the bourgeoisie except when detrimental to the toiling masses.⁵⁴

On May 14 War Minister Guchkov resigned and destroyed all possibility of Tseretelli's solution. If the executive committee still refused to participate in a government, L'vov now told Tseretelli, the Provisional Government would have no alternative but to resign as a body. Chernov suggested that Miliukov take the post of Minister of Education but the liberal leader would hear nothing of it. Guchkov's resignation was a bitter personal defeat for the Foreign Minister, for he had counted on Guchkov's support to swing the question of coalition in his favor. Since his defeat at the hands of the Soviet on the question of revolutionary defensism, the Foreign Minister had become increasingly pessimistic. Paléologue, the French Ambassador, recollected

later than Miliukov looked like a finished man: "For the first time Miliukov appears to me to be deprived of his courageous optimism, his confidence, and his fighting spirit. In his speech he affects the same assurance as before; but the hollow sound of his voice and his ravaged appearance clearly reveal his internal distress."⁵⁵

Guchkov's action took Miliukov completely by surprise. He was at General Headquarters when General Alekseev showed him a telegram reporting the resignation. Guchkov spoke publicly of "conditions which I have no power to alter and which threaten fatal consequences for the army, for the navy, for liberty and for the very existence of Russia."⁵⁶ Guchkov's resignation meant coalition government; the coalition idea forced Miliukov's resignation. Though his Kadet colleagues, V. D. Nabokov and M. M. Vinaver, urged Miliukov to stay on as Minister of Education in a new government as he himself had confided earlier to them he might do. Miliukov now saw this as simply useless: "It was perfectly plain to me that changing the portfolio of Minister of Foreign Affairs for the portfolio of the Minister of Education would not free me from responsibility for those foreign policies which I have followed during the entire war and which are well-known to the whole world."⁵⁷ Miliukov tendered his formal resignation on May 16, two days after Guchkov's. Both men became determined to sabotage Tseretelli's plans; as Guchkov recollected later, "I had made it my aim--at whatever the cost--to liquidate the Soviet."⁵⁸

Prince L'vov had presented the executive committee with a virtual ultimatum at the time of Guchkov's resignation; now most of the committee agreed that its members had no choice but to enter a coalition government. The Bund, however, came close to splitting off from the Mensheviks. While they adhered to revolutionary defensism to preserve the revolution from the German war machine, most Bundists opposed socialist participation in a bourgeois government. The Bund had gone on record in April against a coalition government with the Kadets.⁵⁹ Rafes alone of prominent Bundist leaders apparently favored participation. Raphael Abramovich, the sole non-defensist in the central Bund leadership, knew, however, that the Jewish organization could not afford another split in the ranks of the working class parties. "We always tried to be the left wing of the Mensheviks," he stated at the time, "the revolutionary conscience of Menshevism. We knew that, were we to leave Menshevism, we would have to unite with the Bolsheviks. Are we ready to do that? No, because a great abyss separates us! Therefore, a split in the Menshevik party would mean only a weakening of the working class because we would have to build a third party."⁶⁰ The Bund defensists, Liber, Erlich, and Esther Frumkin, among others, for once found themselves in complete agreement with Abramovich. Thus the decision to join a coalition government with the bourgeoisie factionalized the Menshevik party further from Menshevik defensists and Martovist Internationalists, but now added a third faction within the party, the Bundists.

Feverish negotiations and debates ensued within the cabinet, among the various socialist parties, and between the Soviet, which represented these parties, and the Provisional Government. A. F. Kerensky and N. D. Avksent'ev acted as the principals in the negotiations between the government and the Soviet. At first the various socialist parties demanded the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of War, although the Kadets and other conservatives unalterably opposed this demand. The socialist also required, for purposes of negotiation, that they receive a total of seven ministries: foreign affairs, war, interior, agriculture, labor, food, and social welfare, although they had agreed among themselves that they would settle for six of them. The Kadets countered that they had to have as many ministries as all of the socialist parties combined. They would give up the Ministry of Agriculture and the newly created Ministries of Posts and Telegraphs, and of Social Welfare, but never those of Foreign Affairs and Interior. Kerensky maintained that Tereshchenko would pursue democratic aims in his foreign policy, even though the cultured sugar magnate was Miliukov's hand-picked choice for the position. Kerensky also noted that as Prime Minister L'vov did not wish to give up the Interior Ministry and as he was generally friendly to the Soviet, the demand for that ministry should not be pressed. After long arguments, Kerensky prevailed. As for the rest of the ministries, neither the Mensheviks nor the SR's wanted to put their top leaders in the cabinet. The Mensheviks particularly were nervous about becoming Bolshevik propaganda targets. Chkheidze insisted that Tseretelli not serve as he was ab-

solutely essential to the operation of the Soviet. At the same time the Mensheviks were most insistent that Chernov accept the Ministry of Agriculture post. Chernov, however, would not serve without Tseretelli and suggested that a lesser known SR receive the post. The Mensheviks and SR's were quick to assign the Trudoviks and Popular Socialists cabinet seats, though their numerical strength did not warrant it. Stankevich described the awful desperateness of the socialist intelligentsia during the coalition crisis:

The situation was becoming more and more hopeless with every minute. All conceivable combinations were exhausted. Every proposal entailed an already familiar cycle of difficulties and objections. Everyone was obviously marking time. The nervous tension had reached its highest limit and gave vent to extreme agitation and irritation. Questions were not even discussed any longer; everyone was simply speaking--or more exactly, shouting--from his corner. Chernov, disheveled and infuriated, was attacking little Peshekhonov, who was squeezed in a corner. Gvozdev was pronouncing some final words of indignation on the confusion of everything that was going on.... Even Tseretelli lost his equilibrium, in spite of my fervent appeals for calm; he was shouting, I think, at Chkheidze... when all of a sudden Kerensky rushed in and announced that a solution had been found. The combination announced by Kerensky was, practically speaking, far from new and there was much to be said against it. But all were glad to be swayed by his mood. They no longer wanted to listen to objections; the dissatisfied were forced to stop speaking.⁶¹

Once Tseretelli saw that no cabinet was possible without him, he accepted the nominal sinecure of Posts and Telegraphs. Chernov became Minister of Agriculture, a trying position for the populist leader, where he could only break his political neck. Skobelev, Soviet vice-chairman, received the post of Minister of Labor with the responsibility of eliminating industrial chaos. Kerensky, nominal Soviet vice-chairman, became Minister of War and Marine and Peshekhonov and Pereverzev, as

Tseretelli had suggested, Ministers of Food and of Justice respectively. Numerically socialists and liberals equally made up the new government, but in point of fact, Tseretelli and Skobelev only lent their names to the new government, not their talents, while Chernov, Peshekhonov and Pereverzev were ineffectual or isolated from decisions. The government now more than ever came under the guiding influence of Kerensky, who now more than ever, attempted to stand above party as the nucleus for all factions.

Why did Tseretelli decide in the end in favor of a coalition government? To save the country from civil war, he maintained. This was his statement at the time of the "April crisis" and remained his view in May.⁶² Continuing instability, he claimed, would lead to armed conflict. Revolutionary defensism had to triumph or civil war would liquidate them; this policy alone offered the possibility of a compromise between socialists and non-socialists. Except for Martov, even Tseretelli's opposition within his own party echoed the same opinion. Coalition was not necessary, Ermanskii explained,⁶³ to solve the cabinet crisis, but to avert civil war. Martov offered no alternative to coalition but demanded to know how the Soviet leaders proposed to overthrow the bourgeoisie in the coming socialist revolution if they were part of the government. Sukhanov alone offered a variant of coalition in which the socialists would dominate with a minority of liberals and radicals so that the former would have more influence concerning government decisions. The paper coalition of Tseretelli's left the Soviet, despite protestations of only nominal support, with partial responsibility for government actions and no more authority than the Soviet had before. Torn between theoretical purity and necessity the Soviet leaders

apparently saw no other choice open to him. To have seized power as Lenin demanded would not only have meant the destruction of orthodox Marxist doctrine, it would most probably have brought civil war.

Revolutionary defensism dominated the Soviet's program for the new coalition. Essentially the program was twofold: first, the struggle to open negotiations and conclude peace without annexations or contributions, based on the principle of the peoples' right of self-determination; second, the strengthening of the army by democratization in order to prevent the defeat of Russia and its Allies, which could damage the cause of the people and the peace. The socialists did not even bother to debate the other hastily drawn points of the program: the struggle against economic disintegration, the defense of workers' rights, and the implementation of agrarian reform. The primary consideration was the formulation of a foreign policy for the new government; they debated only what concerned the struggle for peace. The only objections raised were by the Bolshevik Zinov'ev who found that the initial declaration contained no provisions for the immediate initiation of peace negotiations. Ironically when the communique of the new government appeared, Prince L'vov had altered the text so that it essentially stated that the coalition would merely accentuate certain features of the previous government's policies.⁶⁵

In the end the fury over war was a pyrrhic victory for the Petrograd Soviet. The Soviet leaders while victorious over Miliukov's foreign policy had compromised with the tenets of revolutionary defensism. Siberian Zimmerwaldism, in which Martov had taken so much pride for its 'correct stand' on the war, had now become committed too much to defense

and not enough to peace. The Soviet leaders had even committed themselves to the development of offensive as well as defensive military power, stating that this constituted "the most important task of the Provisional Government."⁶⁶ As for their "two-pronged" peace offensive, in which the government would put pressure on the Allies and the socialists through a unified stand hammered out at Stockholm, the Soviet leaders had allowed the possibility of sabotage by the old tsarist diplomatic agents who remained abroad and by Miliukov's apprentice, Tereshchenko. Furthermore, the Soviet leaders had opened themselves up for attack by the right and the more radical left, thereby endangering the very policies they hoped to realize. While they attempted to join the government as individuals, the subtlety was beyond the reasoning of the popular masses who demanded results from those in office. In the Petrograd Soviet a soldier deputy complained: "Comrade Tserebelli has been a minister for ten whole days. What has been done for peace?"⁶⁷ Lenin noted in Pravda the week the socialists entered the government: "The coalition cabinet has brought no changes. The tsar's secret treaties remain sacred to it."⁶⁸ The unity of the Menshevik-SR bloc left the more apprehensive no place to turn except the lone dissenters with an organized party center, the Bolsheviks. The formation of the paper coalition all but finished the Petrograd Soviet's practice of being watchdog over the Provisional Government. Now to criticize the government implied criticism of the Soviet leaders, something many socialists felt uneasy about doing. Though the Soviet leaders admitted that they had made a "great sacrifice," they nevertheless persisted in their beliefs, taking the next step toward their fulfillment by undertaking a quest for peace by calling an international

socialist conference at Stockholm.⁶⁹

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER IV

THE QUEST FOR PEACE

The Petrograd Soviet probably made the most notable effort toward peace in World War I. Upon the return of the Siberian Zimmerwaldists the Soviet undertook a "two-pronged" peace offensive in which international socialists would pressure their governments through a unified peace stand hammered out at Stockholm, to be followed by diplomatic pressure by the Russian government at an Allied conference.¹ Until the triumph of revolutionary defensism over Miliukov's pro-war stand, Tseretelli limited Soviet peace efforts mostly to propagandizing and negotiating with visiting foreign socialist delegations. If the Petrograd Soviet leaders hesitated to involve themselves in domestic governmental functions, they were much more ready to assert themselves in international affairs. Most Russian socialists were unknown quantities, many had never travelled outside of Russia, and, of those who had, they had usually concentrated on Russian conditions and knew perhaps only an idealized Western world. Novices to a man in international diplomacy, they naturally made unwarranted assumptions and decisions. Perhaps beyond a blind faith in the influence of their revolution, the Soviet leaders probably never realistically appraised their chances for success in obtaining peace.

The Russian Revolution gave European socialists the necessary inspiration to increase their efforts to obtain peace through a reunified Second International. From Swiss exile the veteran Menshevik Paul B. Akselrod first broached the subject of reconvening the International in a letter in the Menshevist organ, Rabochaia gazeta, on April 10. Though no one apparently took much notice of Akselrod's proposition, two days later M. I. Liber, speaking before the All-Russian Conference of Soviets, ² suggested that an invitation to an international socialist conference conclude a resolution then under debate. Tseretelli, however, sidetracked this motion by suggesting that such an invitation become the subject of a separate resolution. Embroiled in controversy with the Russian Foreign Minister over war aims, a month passed before the Soviet acted.

In the meantime the Soviet leaders received peace missions from the well-known Swedish socialist, Hjalmar Branting, and the Danish socialist leader, Frederick I. Borgbjerg. The Swede warmly approved of the Petrograd Soviet's peace policy of no annexations and contributions as announced in its March 27th manifesto. Branting suggested to Tseretelli that the Soviet alone could sponsor the reconvoation of the International, as the Entente socialists would never respond to an invitation from the Dutch or the Danes. ³ The Menshevik Internationalist Iu. Larin found that the situation required more radical measures, e.g., an ultimatum to the belligerents to end hostilities and conclude a peace settlement on the demand of the Russian Revolution. Tseretelli brushed this aside, maintaining that only a united revo-

lutionary force at the front and rear put to the service of peace might overcome all difficulties.⁴ In time the Georgian defined this more precisely as strengthening the army and the government's adoption of the Soviet's position of revolutionary defensism combined with the "two-pronged" peace offensive.

As for Borgbjerg, German State Secretary Alfred Zimmerman and Dr. Alexander (Parvus) Helphand, a Russian-born, naturalized German citizen, collaborated to get the Dane and the German Social Democrat (SPD) leaders together to send a peace offer to the Russians.⁵ The SPD leaders knew of Borgbjerg's official backing, yet were ready to have him carry the message to Russia that Germany wished peace without complusion, that the formula of "no annexations" covered everything except some frontier rectifications and the difficult Balkan situation, and that the Germans would not undertake an of-⁶ fensive against the Russians. The SPD pleaded for peace so that⁷ the German working masses could return home from the trenches. On May 6 Borgbjerg presented the Soviet executive committee the SPD⁸ peace program along with a proposal for an international conference. The committee found the Dane's proposal unsatisfactory and rejected⁹ the SPD program, branding it an offer for a separate peace. Even the Bolsheviks denounced the Danish socialist as "directly or indirectly" "an agent of the German imperialist government"; an ironic point as Helphand was instrumental in Lenin's return to Russia through¹⁰ Germany.

The revolution also brought Allied socialists to Russia. On March 26 British Labour Secretary Arthur Henderson reported to his colleagues

in the War Cabinet that representatives of the French Socialist party were travelling to Petrograd to persuade Russian socialists to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion. His Majesty's Government promptly consented that the well-known labourites, Will Thorne, James O'Grady, and W. S. Sanders, should accompany the French representatives, Marius Moutet, Marcel Cachin, and Ernest

¹¹
Lafont. Though the Bolsheviks and Menshevik Internationalists considered the Entente socialists as "lackeys" of their governments, ¹²

Tseretelli and the majority of the "revolutionary democracy" received them warmly. ¹³

Belgian, Italian, and American delegations also came to Petrograd. Emile Vandervelde, Louis de Brouckère, and Henri de Man came for the Belgians; Arturo Labriola, Orazio Raimonda, Giovanni Lerda, and Innocenzo Cappa for the Italians; and Elihu Root, Charles Edward Russell, and James Duncan for the Americans. Noticeably absent from all of these delegations were ¹⁴ minority or defeatist representatives.

The Entente delegations accepted as incontestable the Soviet peace formula of no annexations and contributions based on the self-determination of nations. They did, however, require a more precise definition of the formula. If this meant a return to the status quo ante-belli, what of Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, and the slavish provinces of the Austrian Empire? What of their self-determination as free peoples? As for contributions, who would pay for the damage done by invaders? While Tseretelli had the greatest sympathy for the Alsace-Lorraine question and considered that the representatives of the working classes ought to elaborate a repa-

ration plan for the populations devastated by invasion, he maintained that the immediate task was to reconstitute the International which could then deal meaningfully with such questions in a democratic peace. No preconditions or acceptance of guilt should precede the conference, except the general agreement to the formula of "no annexations or contributions" based on the self-determination of nations; otherwise the conference would never convene. Even the goal Tsere-telli envisioned for the conference was challenged by the Entente socialists, as they did not wish to liquidate the national union with "their imperialist governments." Of these delegations only the French became so overwhelmed by the revolution's spirit (particularly after witnessing the April demonstrations) that they returned to France and swayed their party in favor of attending the proposed international conference on the basis of the Soviet's formula.¹⁵

Some of the Allies also sent socialist or labor representatives who were members of their governments. The Entente had until mid-spring underestimated the influence of the Petrograd Soviet in Russia. The French had sensed something of its influence when Premier Ribot sent the socialist Minister of Munitions, Albert Thomas, to Petrograd to ascertain whether to recall Ambassador Maurice Paléologue. On May 11 the Soviet's importance became more discernable when the French, British, and Italian governments received the following request from Foreign Minister Miliukov:

The Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies expresses the hope that the French, English, and Italian governments will accord all of their aid to facilitate the departure and travel to Russia of

the following delegations, invited to Petrograd by the executive committee: the delegation of the Italian Socialist Democratic Party; the delegation of the English Independent Labour Party; the delegation of the British Socialist Party; the delegation of the opposition French Socialist Workers' Party, directed by M. Brizon and Longuet. The executive committee awaits an affirmative reply from the French, British, and Italian governments.¹⁶

This message left little doubts in the minds of the Allied leaders of the importance of the Petrograd Soviet. If any doubts did remain, the entrance of socialist leaders into the Russian government on May 18 should have removed them. The British prime minister quickly reversed his previous decision and on May 23 asked Arthur Henderson to undertake a mission similar to that of Albert Thomas, i. e., urge the Russian socialists to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion and replace Sir George Buchanan as ambassador if he saw fit.¹⁷ As Thomas and the Belgian minister Vandervelde had already arrived in Petrograd, they had only to await Henderson's coming to work out a unified Allied position to present the Soviet.

In the meantime initiatives to convene an international socialist conference at Stockholm went forward on three fronts. After Borgbjerg had left for Petrograd, the Danish socialist minister Thorvald Stauning had met with SPD leaders in Copenhagen and with their support demanded that the secretariat of the International take action to reconvene the organization. As the members of the permanent committee were either in exile or occupied territory, the coopted Dutch members, P. J. Troelstra, Hendrik Van Kol, F. Wibaut, and J. W. Al-

barda met with the permanent secretary Camille Huysmans on April 15 at Laren, Holland. Their plan of action was to go to Stockholm, form a committee with the aid of the Dutch and Scandinavian socialist parties, attempt to obtain the collaboration of the Russian socialists, call for an international socialist conference, and then ask for the assistance of the secretariat of the Second International. ¹⁸ On April 22, however, Huysmans in spite of reservations about a unilateral action, invited all affiliated sections of the International to attend a conference at Stockholm on May 15. Two days before Huysmans' action, Branting had reasserted his opinion that the Petrograd Soviet alone, not Troelstra could issue such an invitation. He told Albert Thomas that he had not given any encouragement to the Dutch initiative. ¹⁹ The British, French, and Belgian majoritite socialists immediately contested the Dutch action.

The Bolsheviks initially supported a conference at Stockholm but with certain qualifications. Lenin on his return to Petrograd from Swiss exile stopped at Stockholm on April 13 and discussed the calling of an international socialist conference. Before leaving Switzerland he claimed to have communicated with left socialists in Germany, France, and England. The Germans and some French socialists had accepted proposals for a congress at Stockholm, but the English had refused. Lenin declared that he would return in a fortnight to Stockholm at the head of a Russian peace delegation. He was certain that he had public sentiment at Petrograd behind him and would win over Chkheidze, the Soviet chairman, without difficulty. On April 16

Lenin arrived in Petrograd but did not return within a fortnight with a delegation to Stockholm. Branting, commenting on Lenin's statement at Stockholm, remarked that the conference being organized by Lenin was in opposition to the International conference and had as its object a German-Russian separate peace. ²⁰ Indeed, within a month Lenin had pushed through the Bolshevik Central Committee a denunciation of the Stockholm "patriotic" conference, though the International Socialist Committee (the executive of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal socialist conferences) partially nullified this a day later on May 10 by calling on socialists to meet at Stockholm to decide on what position to adopt toward the Dutch-proposed conference. ²¹

The Petrograd Soviet now attempted to seize the initiative in calling an international socialist peace conference for Stockholm. Branting, Liber, and Akselrod had urged the Soviet to undertake such an effort and on April 24 the two-week old Soviet department of international relations received instructions to make preparations for such a meeting. ²² On May 8 F. I. Dan introduced a motion in the executive committee to call a socialist conference in a neutral country to discuss peace terms. The following day and again on May 15 the Soviet issued declarations to this effect. ²³ The formal invitation circulated as a diplomatic note only after May 27, but the foreign press reported it abroad one day before the appearance of the International Socialist Committee's invitation. ²⁴

In this appeal the Petrograd Soviet declared it had "decided to take the initiative in calling an international conference of all

socialist parties and fractions of all countries." ²⁵ The Dutch-Scandinavian Committee, however, had already undertaken the initiative to such a conference. Then inexplicably and in spite of the fact that the Soviet had just issued a statement calling an international conference, the Mensheviks sent greetings to the committee at Stockholm "who have taken the initiative [*italics mine*] in convoking an international socialist conference at Stockholm and we are all ready to participate there and to collaborate energetically to its success." ²⁶ Why such contradictory action occurred is not clear as I. G. Tseretelli was the chief Menshevik leader as well as the prime-mover in Soviet foreign policy (though he had declined the chairmanship of the Soviet's committee of foreign relations). ²⁷

While the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee expressed a willingness for cooperation, the Petrograd Soviet continued to set the preliminary conditions of the conference without consultation and did not hasten to "participate and collaborate" with the Stockholm committee. ²⁸ Instead the Soviet set up a commission on May 21 to work on the conference and assume the exclusive initiative in convening the conference, though allowing for Dutch-Scandinavian assistance and that of other socialists. ²⁹ On June 2 the Soviet summoned the conference at Stockholm for July 8 and specified, as in the May 9 and 15 declarations that only organizations should attend which (1) accepted "peace without annexations or indemnities founded upon the self-termination of nations," (2) accepted the binding decisions of the conference, and (3) terminated the party truce between socialists and their imperialist governments. ³⁰ The Soviet justified the neces-

sity of this manifesto because the revolutionary situation required urgency, the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee and the International Socialist Committee represented only segments of international socialism, and because the initiative of both organizations had, for the most part, met rejection from non-neutral socialists. As leaders of the Russian Revolution, they felt that they alone had the prestige necessary to convene an international socialist
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 peace conference.

The socialist-balanced reorganization of the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet's May 9 and 15 appeals for an international socialist conference gravely concerned the British Prime Minister. Was the Eastern Front in danger of folding? Lloyd George had accepted as a matter of course the British and American labor and French and Belgian socialists' rejections of Stockholm but now the initiators of the appeal were members of the Provisional Government. Though the American, French, and Italian governments within days were to refuse passports to socialists travelling to Stockholm, Lloyd George had an open mind concerning the Soviet proposition as of May 21 when he cabled Albert Thomas:

I should be very glad to know what you think as to the desirability of French and English Socialist Delegates attending Stockholm Conference.

I understand that German Socialists of both sections are to be there, and also Russian Socialists. I am afraid, that, unless the Allied cause is represented also, bad impression may be produced on Russian Socialists. Our case is, from a democratic point of view, very strong. . . . As far as war aims are concerned, I do not think there is any great difference between those of France and England and those of Russia. We could accept the declaration of the

new Russian Government. . . that. . . a general peace should not tend toward either domination of other nations or the seizure of their national possessions, or the violent usurpation of their territories, and that it should be a peace without annexations or indemnities and based on the rights of nations to decide their own affairs, provided that by those phrases it was not intended that the French and British should be bound to restore to Turkish or German misgovernment the populations in Africa and Mesopotamia which they have rescued from it, and also that it was understood that the provinces which have been torn from France by German militarism should be restored to her.

If this case were put properly, it might produce an important effect not only on Russian, but even on German opinion. . . if Socialists from France and England are prevented from attending, conclusions will be overwhelming that their Governments are afraid to allow them to speak freely to their Russian Allies. . . .

It would no doubt be proper to see that none of the delegates were anti-patriotic, or in favor of peace at any price or any separate peace by Russia, but subject to that, it would probably be necessary to allow French and British Socialists to be represented by those whom they might select.³²

This cautious, but pro-Stockholm stand remained the British Prime Minister's position until the late July meetings of the Allied powers revealed the possibility of Russia's military defection from the war.

Three days after Henderson arrived in Petrograd, the British Labour Secretary telegraphed Lloyd George that Thomas, Vandervelde, and himself agreed that the Soviet had to define its peace formula.³³ Thomas and Vandervelde had informed the Soviet that they could accept the formula only if "it does not exclude deliverance in accordance with the wishes of inhabitants or reparations." As for Stockholm, the duo insisted on "the exclusion of German and Austrian

majorities so long as they continue to tolerate their Governments." Henderson, Thomas, and Vandervelde also insisted "that before considering the Stockholm Conference there should be [an] Allied Conference in London to prepare joint policy and settle conditions of participation."³⁴ On June 16 Henderson telegraphed Lloyd George that the Soviet had a tendency towards meeting their views, but the true Russian position was: "Conference will be only successful if Socialists regard themselves not as representatives of individual movements of belligerent factions but as representatives of the individual movement of working classes towards a common goal of universal peace."³⁵ Though Tseretelli finally consented to sending an observer to the proposed Allied conference in London, he feared it might prejudice the Soviet's role of arbitrator between socialists of the two belligerent coalitions. Tseretelli explained the Soviet's peace strategy in clear terms:

All previous attempts to reestablish the International were destroyed as a consequence of a ferocious mutual hostility of two blocs of socialist majorities created in the two belligerent coalitions. Only from the moment when the appeal to recreate international socialist unity was made by the Russian Revolution did the convocation of a conference become really feasible. This happened because the Russian Revolution, which received the sympathetic feeling of the whole world democracy, showed by its actions that its international policy was free from the nationalistic passions borne of the war. We wish to preserve this position at the conference, in order to appear as the conciliatory force between two hostile blocs and promote that agreement that one could reach only at the close of a war: at the same time the refusal of socialists from both belligerent coalitions to support their imperialist governments. If in the place of this, the representatives of the Russian Revolution would go to the Stockholm conference as part of the socialist bloc of the Entente states, bound by the decisions of the bloc in all basic

questions, the independent role of the representatives of the Russian Revolution would be reduced to nothing and thus would be lost the opportunity to use the prestige of the Russian Revolution for the creation of a unitary, international socialist democracy.³⁶

Tseretelli maintained that the true enemy was imperialism. To destroy the power of imperialism was to resolve the war and all future wars. For the working masses and their socialist leaders to direct their hostilities toward one another, French, English, and Russians against Germans and Austrians, when they should be directing them toward the handful of imperialist in their own countries was insane. Why accuse the German or French working masses of war guilt, when the imperialist were the obvious guilty parties? All socialists united on equal footing and participating in harmony could mount an all-out assault to destroy imperialism.³⁷ While Tseretelli agreed that all Entente socialists functioned in democratic societies, had sent representatives into their governments, had supported the policy of defense, and had discouraged the imperialist cravings of their respective bourgeoisie, the Russian socialists alone had entered their government to seek a general peace without annexations and indemnities.³⁸

While Henderson and Thomas relaxed their position, Vandervelde "obstinately resisted, and remained to the end inflexibly opposed to peace talks with the Scheidemanns, Davids, and Noskes."³⁹ The Georgian Soviet leader almost broke down into tears when the Belgian socialist remained intransigent. Even Henderson remarked to Lloyd George that he did not "feel much good would be done by trying to establish much more intimate relations at present."⁴⁰

Nevertheless Henderson desired to accommodate the Soviet leaders and yet not damage the Allied cause. On his way home Henderson gave an interview at Stockholm on July 17 that showed his open mind to a meeting there; he had not, however, dropped his insistence on a consultative conference (as opposed to a binding one) and for a more precise definition of the Soviet's peace formula.⁴¹ Albert Thomas thought if his ministerial colleagues decided to issue passports for Stockholm, he must go to the conference even without obtaining any of the desired pre-conditions (e. g., German admission of war guilt, the return of Alsace-Lorraine,⁴² etc.). As the French government had no intention of allowing French nationals to journey to Stockholm, Thomas' position allowed him to accommodate his fellow ministers and the pro-Stockholm stand taken by his party as well as the Soviet. For Tseretelli the only hope was that the Soviet peace offensive would gain enough momentum to sway the British government in favor of the conference and thereby the rest of the Allies.

As of June, however, the Soviet and Dutch-Scandinavian initiatives still lacked coordination. On June 2 the latter asked the Petrograd Soviet to send a delegation to Stockholm as a preliminary to the plenary conference.⁴³ The Dutch-Scandinavian Committee had arranged nonbinding, preliminary audiences between the committee and the separate national delegations and hoped that the national delegations from neutral countries and from both belligerent camps would meet face to face in a "plenary conference"

before June 10. The committee had not wished this, but the Belgians felt that separate interviews with different sections of the International might develop the basis on which to convoke the full conference. ⁴⁴ Branting, who had come to dominate the Stockholm committee, found the Russians blatantly independent, ignoring the existing organization of the International. This echoed Vandervelde's view that the Russian socialists "believed that the prestige of their revolution would put them in a position to impose their peace formula on the other socialist parties, including the German majority socialists." To realize even this would have been remarkable, but the Soviet leaders demanded more: "You socialists of all countries must force your governments to state definitely and clearly that the platform of peace without annexations or indemnities on the basis of the self-determination of peoples is also their platform" ⁴⁵ Though the ill-defined power relationship between the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government had allowed the "realization" of such a demand in Russia, no such division of state power existed in other countries. Branting criticized the Soviet invitation for regarding the main object of the conference as the liquidation of the party truce between socialists and their belligerent governments and for demanding that those attending the conference carry out unflinching all conference decisions. ⁴⁶ Vandervelde, Henderson, and Thomas had criticized the invitation along the same lines, now the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee's position meant probable compromise for the Soviet's stand.

On July 2 the first part of the Petrograd Soviet's delegation, Iosif P. Goldenberg, E. Smirnov, and V. N. Rosanov (Mensheviks) arrived in Stockholm followed a few days later by the Bundist Henrik Erlich and the SR N. S. Rusanov.⁴⁷ The Soviet delegation fused with the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee on July 11 and two days later the new joint body published an invitation to a plenary conference at Stockholm on August 15.⁴⁸ The invitation led off with "Proletariats of all nations, unite your forces" and announced that the present call came from the Petrograd Soviet, sanctioned by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and supported by the "effective cooperation" of the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee. The provisional agenda was (1) the World War and the International, (2) the peace program of the International, (3) the ways and means of carrying the aims into effect. The summons was a compromise between the proposed objectives for the conference of the Soviet delegation and the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee. The Petrograd Soviet had called on all socialist parties to liquidate the party truce; now the policy was to induce the parties to do this. Although the binding character of conference decisions remained, this now meant that each socialist section would fulfill "without hesitation or deviation" general conference decisions, "insofar as they are in conformity with its principles [*italics mine*]" The questions of war guilt and reparations, though raised in the meetings, remained unsettled, as the Russians opposed placing war guilt on the agenda and argued that reparations had to come from a tax

levied on wealth as the rich bore the greatest war guilt. As all all of the socialist sections of the International had learned of the various programs submitted in preliminary audiences, the Russians opposed drafting a proposed peace formula based on the preliminary reports that the committee had heard. The Soviet delegates considered predigested decisions, even if only a basis for deliberation, only something to complicate matters.⁴⁹ The Russian view prevailed.

Following their "better late than never" success at Stockholm the Soviet delegation minus Rosanov, who remained at Stockholm with the rest of the committee, set out for consultations with the British, French, and Italian socialists. As the Russians had difficulty in obtaining passage to London, the British government flattered them by placing them on an official government ship.⁵⁰ The British action, however, was probably more than it appeared, for on June 29 the Foreign Office had telegraphed Henderson, then in Petrograd preparing to return home, that the F. O. "wished to know when Soviet delegates will arrive in England so as to prevent them from falling into wrong hands."⁵¹ Thus perhaps more than mere coincidence saw the Russians and Henderson on board the same ship that sailed from Bergen. Rusanov found Henderson impressed with the ideals of the Russian Revolution but disturbed with the leadership's "impracticality," i. e., their unbusiness-like character and political incapability in general.⁵²

Henderson continued to insist on a consultative conference and a more precise definition of the Soviet peace formula. The Soviet delegates arrived in London on July 24 and the next day the British Labour Executive, despite all their arguments, adopted Henderson's position.⁵³ The Russians met some success as Lloyd George cabled Henderson his approval for the Allied socialist conference.⁵⁴ In the meantime the Russians along with Henderson, Ramsay MacDonald, and James Wardle went to Paris for a meeting scheduled with the French socialists.⁵⁵

In Paris a committee of six, Erlich and Goldenberg for the Russians, Jean Longuet and Pierre Renaudel for the French, and MacDonald and Henderson for the British, set about on July 30 to work out differences raised in opening discussions with the full French Socialist party. In a July 31 published declaration the six endorsed the invitation of July 13, delayed the conference from August 15 to September 9-16 at Stockholm, and arranged for an inter-Allied conference at London on August 28-29 to precede the general conference. Representatives going to Stockholm would include both pro-war majorities and defeatist minorities. Finally, while the socialist sections were to reveal at the conference the manner in which they proposed to carry the general decisions of the meeting into effect, they were not bound to any specific action in their respective countries.⁵⁶

The Soviet delegates' tour of Italy from August 4 to 15 was a minor triumph. Only the small prowar minority that had supported Italy's entrance into the war was skeptical of the

proposed Stockholm Conference. The majority position was antiwar and emphatically pro-Stockholm. The Russians received acclaim in Florence, Milan, Rome, and Bologna and articulated their position in precise language. On August 4 Goldenberg declared before a highly excited crowd of 40,000 workers at Turin that "The Soviet has issued this call because it is profoundly convinced that the day that autocratic governments will have disappeared from the world, the International of liberty and peace will not only be an aspiration but an accomplished fact." The prowar faction came around to the Soviet position after Goldenberg rejected the prospect of a separate peace between Russia and Germany and proclaimed his complete faithfulness to the Zimmerwald peace formula, adding: "The influence of the Soviet, however, is not limited to the war. It has politically transformed Russia by seeing to it that the government, under its pressure, promulgates a series of laws which are assuredly the most liberal in the world." Following this declaration, Filippo Turanti, the founder of Italian socialism, hailed the Russian delegates as "true patriots," who were attempting to align the destiny, the interests, and the defense of their country with those of the majority of Russia's citizens. On August 6 the delegates arrived in Rome and the next day reached an agreement with the Italian Socialist party regarding the scope and program of the Stockholm Conference. The leader of the majority party, G. M. Serrati, centered his

concern mostly on tactics to keep the conference from breaking up over the inevitable question of war guilt. Though the Italians insisted on the reunion of the Italian-speaking sectors of Austria with Italy, they did agree to "accept and apply the decisions in the spirit of socialism and internationalism in order to achieve the union of the workers by joint action directed toward the hastening of the conclusion of the war."⁵⁷

In the meantime the Allied War Conference of July 25 and 26, which revealed the near-total collapse of the Russian army, doubtless made Lloyd George more than skeptical about the Stockholm Conference. According to the prime minister, however, what turned him against Stockholm was the action of the socialists at Paris. The point of a consultative or a binding conference was as important to Lloyd George as to the socialists.⁵⁸ The July 31 socialist press declaration showed that Henderson had allowed himself to drift from a consultative towards a binding conference.⁵⁹ Perhaps Lloyd George reasoned as did Premier Ribot: if the Allied socialists would allow themselves to drift from their principles before Stockholm, what might they agree to at Stockholm? The prime minister's rejection of Stockholm, however, came at 5:30 P. M. July 30 before the socialists had come to a decision on Stockholm.⁶⁰ The question of a consultative or binding conference at that time therefore was probably not the basis of Lloyd George's rejection, though he may well have reasoned that this aspect of the meeting had moved in that direction. Nevertheless, with British, French, and American popular opinion against the conference, most of the British Parliament and the War Cabinet, and the U.S.,

French, Italian, and Belgian governments, no wonder Lloyd George finally dropped Stockholm when he learned of status of the Russian Army.

Between August 1, the day Henderson returned from Paris, and August 11, the day he tendered his cabinet resignation, a complicated chain of events occurred that led to the destruction of the Soviet peace program. The British Foreign Office cabled Sir George Buchanan, H. M. G.'s Ambassador to Russia, on August 1 concerning the Stockholm Conference: "The main arguments in its favour are that Russian Government desire it, that our refusal to attend would be put down to some sinister imperialistic motive, and that if only Russian, Neutrals, and Germans took part in the proceedings, latter would dominate the situation." On August 2 Buchanan urged a pro-conference stand:

So far as I know non-Socialist members of the Government like Minister of Foreign Affairs would much prefer that the Conference should not take place, as they are afraid that any talk about peace might have a bad influence on the army. They will, however, place no obstacle in the way of the attendance of the Russian Socialists, though they will not consider themselves in any way bound by any decisions which the conference may take. They much hope Socialists (of) other countries will attend conference so that Russia may not be the only country represented at it. Socialists on the other hand are all in favour of conference though I am informed that their expectation of its results have fallen very much of late. . . . Intimate friend of Kerensky to whom I spoke about conference today said that he earnestly hoped that British Socialists would attend conference as a refusal to on our part would expose us to attack in Socialist circles here and be attributed to motives which you mention.

I do not feel myself competent to express opinion but my personal view has been always that it would be

a mistake for us to leave the field clear to Germans and to render our attitude liable to misconstruction here. As we have no intention of being bound by its decisions I do not see how attendance of British Socialists can cause any prejudice to our interest.⁶²

Again on August 4 Buchanan telegraphed the Foreign Office and argued for the conference.⁶³ In light of Allied opinion as a whole, however, the F. O. discounted Sir George's view. The minutes of the F. O. for August 5 also reveal that its anti-Stockholm position resulted in part from an anti-Soviet stance: "It looks more and more as if participation in the Conference will merely serve to strengthen the hands of the 'Soviet' as against the Provisional Gov't."⁶⁴

Lloyd George, however, needed some justification if the British government refused to issue passports for Stockholm--in effect reject Stockholm. It came unexpectedly the next day in a note from the Russian chargé d'affaires in London, Konstantin Nabokov. Nabokov's note of August 8 was nothing more than a truism but it carried a terrific impact:⁶⁵

Urgent & Strictly Confidential.

London, 8th August, 1917.

Your Excellency,

In a telegram I sent to the Russian Foreign Minister three or four days ago I gave him an account of the statements made in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister and Mr. Henderson concerning the latter's visit to Paris, as well as of Mr. Bonar Law's statement regarding the Stockholm Conference and of the discussions which were taking place in the different labour Organizations of Great Britain as to the desirability of sending delegates to Stockholm. I also drew the Russian Foreign Minister's attention to the reply given

by the American Federation of Labour to the French Confederation Generale du Travail. In conclusion I said the following: "I consider it absolutely necessary, with a view to safeguarding the stability and closeness of our union with Great Britain where the majority of public opinion is adverse to the Conference, that I should be in a position to declare most emphatically to Mr. Balfour that the Russian Government, as well as His Majesty's Government, regard this matter as a party concern and not a matter of state, and that the decisions of the Conference, should it be convened, would in no way be binding on the future course of Russian policy and of Russia's relations with her Allies."

In reply to this message I have just received the following telegram:- "I entirely approve of the declaration to be made to His Majesty's Government in the sense suggested by you, and you are authorised to inform the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that, although the Russian Government do not deem it possible to prevent Russian delegates from taking part in the the Stockholm Conference, they regard this Conference as a party concern and its decisions in no ways binding upon the liberty of action of the Government."

I hasten to lay before you the above information as I fear that the impression has hitherto prevailed that in the words of one of the London newspapers "Russia ardently desired the Stockholm Conference", and this argument has been put forward in order to influence British public opinion in favour of the Labour and Socialist Parties of Great Britain participating in the Conference.

I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's most obedient, humble Servant,
(Signed) C. Nabokoff.

The Rt. Honble. Arthur James Balfour, P. C. , M. P.,
etc. etc. etc.

Essentially the Nabokov document deals with two points: differentiating between a "party concern" (the Soviet parties) and a "matter of State," and emphasizing the nonbinding character of the conference. These two points are precisely those that Henderson also stressed and which Lloyd George and the War Cabinet knew as his stand. Neither Nabokov nor Russia's Foreign Minister

Tereshchenko stated that the Russian government did not desire the conference's convocation, but Nabokov did present Tereshchenko's reply in such a way that allowed the British Foreign Office to read this into the note. That the F. O. did read the communiqué this way is clear from the F. O. minutes for August 8: "This shows, to unexpected degree, how far the influence of the Soviet has declined within the last few weeks. . . reply that H. M. G. welcome this further proof of the identity of view which exists between the two Governments." Henderson was immediately sent a copy of Nabokov's note as was Lloyd George.

On August 10 a telegram from Albert Thomas to Lloyd George strengthened the British impression that the Kerensky government, which had assumed office only on August 6, concurred that the conference should not meet. Thomas had received word from Eugène Petit, his close associate in the French Embassy in Petrograd, that "Kerensky ne veut pas de Congrès." Henderson, while waiting at No. 10 Downing Street to see Lloyd George, heard of this telegram from Paul Mantoux of the French Embassy staff in London. The following afternoon the French chargé d'affaires, M. de Fleurian, officially informed the Foreign Office of the telegram. Paul Cambon hinted later that Thomas had seen the handwriting on the wall and had by late July conformed to the wishes of Ribot. Only two days after sending Lloyd George the "Kerensky" telegram, Thomas publicly spoke out against the proposed Stockholm Conference.

The two communiqués did in fact reflect Kerensky's and Tereshchenko's private positions concerning the conference; they could not, however, admit this publicly. A dispatch from Ambassador Buchanan to the Foreign Office on August 12 confirms this: "Both Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs admit that they would rather it not meet but that as they could not prevent Russian Socialists going to it they would like other Allied Socialists to go too." ⁷² The F. O. minutes in response to this read: "Russian views on the subject appear to vary from day to day." ⁷³ The British government thus took the communiqués from Nabokov and Thomas at face value. They did not understand the position of the government in Russia in relation to the Petrograd Soviet, and therefore they assumed that they could strengthen the Provisional Government against the Soviet by repudiating the conference. Lloyd George's memoirs as well as the writings of Lord Milner and others in the War Cabinet at the time confirm this. ⁷⁴ The Lloyd George government, however, was ready to accept what it wanted to hear and was deaf to sage advice from its ambassadors, Sir Esmé Howard in Stockholm and Sir George Buchanan in Petrograd. The F. O. made no attempt to confirm through its ambassador to Russia that such was indeed the position of the Provisional Government. Britain would never have committed such a démarche against another of her wartime allies.

Lloyd George hoped that his government would not have to confront the issue and that British labour itself would kill the proposition.⁷⁵ He had tried to make clear to Henderson in an August 8 cabinet meeting that the government was not about to allow the British socialists to take part in the conference. Henderson's position, as Labour Party Secretary, however, was that British labour would make a decision independent of outside agitation; he would not serve as Lloyd George's instrument within the Labour Party Conference.

When the Labour Party Conference opened, Henderson and Lloyd George had clearly drawn the lines. The prime minister had tried his best to influence Henderson to a neutral position, if not one in opposition, to the Stockholm Conference. Upon hearing that the labour minister at the opening of the party conference had passionately (to Lloyd George's mind) endorsed the Stockholm Conference, the prime minister sent a further copy of Nabokov's note with the request that "he would communicate it to the Conference"⁷⁶ (emphasis mine). Henderson had already made reference to Nabokov's note when he stated that the Russian government (August 6) had recently changed:

We are bound to recognise that there has been a tremendous change. The Provisional Government then in power is no longer in office. It has been replaced by an entirely new Coalition under the leadership of that brave soul, Kerensky. I admit that such evidence as I have, though it is very slight, suggests that there has been some modification of the position of the new Government as compared with the old, on the question of the proposed Conference.⁷⁷

Henderson spoke of Nabokov's note as slight evidence, because it essentially confirmed his position that the Stockholm Conference was a party affair and nonbinding on the government. He therefore had no reason to make a special point of the note. Lloyd George, however, wanted the note emphasized and attempted to force Henderson to influence the voting of the labour conference through it. Labour voted 3-to-1 to attend Stockholm.⁷⁸

Defeated, Lloyd George now mounted a personal attack against Henderson which resulted in grave damage to the Russian cause. By discrediting Henderson, the prime minister hoped to block the Stockholm Conference. Therefore, towards evening of that same day, the prime minister asked Nabokov if he had any objections to H. M. G. publishing in a letter to the press the "gist of your government's message to you" concerning the Stockholm Conference.⁷⁹ No sovereign government would ever allow another government to publish the "gist" of a matter within the context of an open communiqué. Furthermore, no chargé d'affaires has such a license; the request was a clear breach of diplomatic protocol. At the same time Lloyd George formulated this request of Nabokov, the Thomas telegram arrived. The War Cabinet minus Henderson discussed the entire affair, along with the Nabokov and Thomas notes that same evening. Lloyd George presented a letter for public release to force Henderson's resignation which the cabinet quickly approved.⁸⁰ About 7 P. M. Henderson learned of the Thomas telegram, while waiting to see

the prime minister. Lloyd George, however, did not mention the telegram to Henderson during the course of their discussion that night but clearly vented his displeasure.⁸¹ The next morning Henderson sent Lloyd George his resignation which the prime minister promptly sent along to the press with a long covering letter in which he asserted that Henderson had deceived the Labour Party Conference, misled his colleagues in the War Cabinet, and opposed the wishes of the Russian government.⁸² The government had informed the press of everything as the accounts contained a wealth of detail.⁸³ Essentially, the newspapers stated that the Russian government was against the Stockholm Conference and Henderson had knowingly withheld this information.⁸⁴ The Daily Express, surprisingly, told its readers that "M. Kerensky and his colleagues are entirely indifferent to the conference."⁸⁵

On August 12 at 9 P. M. a telegram from Sir George Buchanan arrived at the Foreign Office, stating the true position of the Provisional Government toward the Stockholm Conference. Surprisingly, the Lloyd George government did not refer to this communiqué and reveal the correct position of the Russians during the heated debate in the House of Commons on August 13.⁸⁶ On August 13 Kerensky's denial that he was against the conference appeared in the London newspapers.⁸⁷ When Ramsay MacDonald questioned the government about this, Bonar Law responded that the initiative in disclosing the real attitude of the Russian government was

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Russian. The Kerensky message contained in the Thomas telegram and the Nabokov were therefore differentiated, and while the former was repudiated, the Nabokov note was not. Nabokov issued no new statements and only received a sharp reprimand from

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Tereshchenko, yet he continued to hold his post--thus his note continued to support the Lloyd George government. Kerensky and Tereshchenko issued denials to the press that they were against the conference and attempted through Sir George to gain redress

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through the British government. On August 15 Buchanan cabled the F. O. that Kerensky begged the British not to refuse passports for the Stockholm Conference; that Nabokov had made a grievous

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"gaffe." The minutes of the F. O. concerning this telegram

read: "I scarcely think M. Nabokov's note quite merits these strictures. If his translation is accurate, the phrase, 'although the Russian Gov't do not deem it possible to prevent Russian delegates from taking part' - the words of the Russian Gov't., not M. Nabokov - is open to the inference that they do not want them

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to take part." The F. O. replied to Buchanan on August 17 that neither Lloyd George nor Nabokov ever stated that the Russian government did not want the conference, but that the new Russian government was not promoting it and could not prevent delegates

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from attending it. The F. O. found that Lloyd George and Na-

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bokov had acted with perfect propriety. On August 20 Buchanan again wired the F. O. that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs continued to insist that the denial of passports for Stockholm was

a grave error. The Russian minister stated that he took no exception to his official telegram being quoted but objected to Lloyd George quoting Nabokov's covering letter: "If correspondence of this kind were made public in connection with internal political controversies His Excellency did not see how frank and confidential intercourse between two governments was to be carried out." ⁹⁵ The F. O.'s response to this was: "An exaggerated importance appears to have been attached to M. Nabokov's letter. The matter may be allowed to drop." ⁹⁶ Indeed, Lloyd George had attached an exaggerated importance to Nabokov's letter on August 9-13. What was the results of the British prime minister's fast and loose play for Russia?

When the Russian messages released by Lloyd George appeared in the press, a storm of controversy erupted in Petrograd. The announcement appalled the Soviet delegates promoting the Stockholm Conference in visits to London, Paris, and Rome. They immediately telegraphed Petrograd for an explanation. ⁹⁷ Kerensky's first denials appeared in the London press on August 13 and two days later he released an official statement:

The Provisional Government considers that the solution of questions affecting war and peace appertains exclusively to it, in union with the Governments of the Allied countries, supported by the Allied democracies.

The Socialist conference at Stockholm, as the Russian Government has pointed out on various occasions, is a conference of particular political parties, and, as such, can lay no claim to formulate decisions which could in any way bind the Government.

The Government has always been far from intending to refuse Russian Socialists passports for Stockholm, its view being that it is useful that questions concerning war and peace should be submitted for discussion to the Socialist Internationale, and in the person of the Prime Minister as well as of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has similarly informed the Allied Governments that it considers it undesirable to raise any obstacles whatever to the participation of Socialist organizations in the Conference.⁹⁸

When a journalist asked Kerensky directly "that M. Albert Thomas declared you said that you personally are opposed to the Stockholm Conference," Kerensky responded: "Nothing of the sort . . . I have insisted again and again that any opposition offered to it by the Allied Governments. . . is simply playing into the German's hands."⁹⁹ The next day Tereshchenko commented further that his statement was reported out of context and had been in response to a specific request from Nabokov. The position of the Provisional Government had not changed from that of May 1st when Tereshchenko first took over the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Russian government had communicated none of the comments or interpretation communicated by Nabokov to the British government. Finally, Tereshchenko emphasized that Kerensky did not send a telegram respecting the conference to Thomas or anyone else.¹⁰⁰

The official Russian responses to what had happened in London somewhat calmed the nervous socialists in Petrograd. Izvestiia reported on August 17 that the revolutionary democracy felt assured of the intentions of the government in carrying out the foreign policy goals of "revolutionary defensism." The following

day the Menshevist Rabochaia gazeta accused the Allies of using "naked force"; that their action constituted a breakup of the "union sacre"; that the imperialist bourgeoisie had declared war against the entire socialist proletariat of Europe. The Bolshevik organ, Rabochii i soldat, accused their Russian socialist opposition of being two-faced in their criticism: "What is this? Brazen insolence or pitiable confusion?" ¹⁰¹ Rech', the Kadet newspaper, saw Tereshchenko as finally having liberated himself from the Petrograd Soviet. They took his response that the conference was a party affair and not binding on the government as a major departure from previous policy, and praised it. Tereshchenko, the liberals felt, now sounded and acted somewhat ¹⁰² like a foreign minister.

The Petrograd Soviet leaders immediately grasped Kerensky's protestations as their newspapers' pronouncements indicate. Within the SR party only the Petersburg organization took action against the government by censuring the socialist ministers in the cabinet for not performing their duty better. Beyond this reprimand, however, they suggested nothing more than a drastic ¹⁰³ shakeup of the diplomatic corps. Livshits and Burstein led the floor fight in the Soviet plenum to cut off debate on the question when Martov demanded an investigation of the entire ¹⁰⁴ affair. Martov had from the start no trust in the Tseretelli-Dan "two pronged" policy of a conference of socialists at Stockholm followed by a conference of Allied governments in London.

He reportedly said of Stockholm that socialist delegates would "go there as commis voyageurs of external affairs" for the government. ¹⁰⁵ Concerning the Allied governments' conference, Martov insisted that they were imperialists who would understand only a real ultimatum. He and Lenin alone offered alternatives to the Tseretelli peace program.

While the majority socialists in the executive committee were able to close the debate momentarily, they were unable to do anything apparently about the growing clamor that soon raged outside the forum of the Petrograd Soviet. The demise of the Stockholm Conference left them without a peace program. As they refused to engage in a separate peace, this opened the masses, who desired peace at all costs, to mobilization by Lenin and his cadres. The quest for peace had assumed priority in all revolutionary policies. Had the leadership gambled everything on obtaining peace through the Tseretelli-Dan strategy? What economic, social, and political reforms had they undertaken to insure that internal war did not break out while they undertook the quest for peace?

FOOTNOTES

1. Writings on this subject include the following, none of which make extensive use of archival materials: Rex A. Wade, "Argonauts of Peace: The Soviet Delegation to Western Europe in the Summer of 1917," Slavic Review, XXVI, No. 3 (September 1967); idem., The Russian Search for Peace, February-October 1917 (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1969); Hildamarie Maynell, "The Stockholm Conference of 1917," International Review of Social History, V (1960).
2. M. N. Pokrovskii and Ia. A. Iakovlev, eds., Vserossiiskoe soveshchanie sovetov rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, Vol. IV in 1917 god v dokumentakh i mater'ialakh (10 vols; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1929-39), IV, pp. 95-97.
3. I. G. Tseretelli, Vospominaniia o fevral'skoi revoliutsii (2 vols; Paris: Mouton & Cie., 1963), I, pp. 272-73.
4. Ibid.
5. See E. A. B. Levan and W. B. Scharlau, The Merchant of Revolution: The Life of Alexander Krasin (Princeton, N.J.: 1897-1924 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 192-204, 213-14.
6. Philipp Scheidemann, Memoirs of a Social Democrat (2 vols; New York, 1929), I, pp. 331-32; France, Archive diplomatiques Guerre 1914-1918, Vol. 1204, Socialisme, III, 195, Rapst (Copenhagen) to Ribot (Paris), May 20, 1917.
7. Ibid.
8. Austria, Hauschofstaats archiv (Wien), Literarisches Bureau (Presse leitung) P. A. Akten, Pl. 116 (alt 87): Dänemark 1917, Z ad 23/pc "Borgbjerg's Bericht über seine Reise nach Petersburg," pp. 1-18.
9. M. N. Pokrovskii and Ia. A. Iakovlev, eds., Petrogradskii sovet rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov: protokoly zasedanii ispolnitel'nogo komiteta i buiro i. k., Vol. I in 1917 god, I, pp. 123-26; Tseretelli, I, pp. 277-81.

10. Pravda (Petrograd), No. 41, April 26/May 9; see also V. I. Lenin, The Revolution of 1917, Vol. XX in Collected Works (New York: International Publishers, 1929), Part 1, p. 380; Part 2, p. 401; N. Avdeev, Revoliutsiia 1917 god (Moscow, 1923), II, pp. 258-60.
11. David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (London, 1933-36), IV, p. 1855; Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), War Cabinet 24/3 G (War) Series, Papers 101-50, Paper 150, "Reports on the Visit of the Labour Delegation to Russia, April-May, 1917."
12. Tseretelli, I, pp. 179-81; see also contradictory reports of F. H. Bruce Lockhart, British Agent (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933), p. 180 and Morgan Philips Price, My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution (London, 1921), p. 192 who report the unfavorable side only and the favorable reports of the British delegates and that of Sir Bernard Pares: Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), War Cabinet 21/44, File 18/E/60 Pares to H. T. Baker, War Office, April 27, 1917; also Journal de Petrograd, April 7/20, 1917, p. 2 for similar report.
13. Tseretelli, I, pp. 179-81.
14. N. W. Sukharov, The Russian Revolution: An Eyewitness Account 1917 (2 vols; New York, 1952), II, p. 300
15. Tseretelli, I, pp. 171-82; Bruce Lockhart's account, p. 182 is inaccurate.
16. France, Archive diplomatiques, Guerre 1914-1918, Socialisme, III, 129, Izvolskii (Paris) to Quai d'Orsay, May 11, 1917.
17. Lloyd George, IV, p. 1887 had rejected an earlier mission made up of Henderson, George Roberts, and W. F. Purdy. See ibid., pp. 1891-93 for prime minister's reversal of this decision.
18. Emile Vandervelde, Three Aspects of the Russian Revolution (New York: Scribner's, 1918), pp. 210-11; Camille Huysmans, "Preface," in Comité Organisateur de la Conférence Socialiste Internationale de Stockholm, Stockholm (Stockholm: Tidens Förlag, 1918), vii; interview of Troelstra, Het Volk (Amsterdam) April 20, 1917 reprinted in Gazette de Hollande, April 21, copy in Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), Foreign Office 371/3005, 388, Russia, File 54134. The French learned of the conference first and reported the information: France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Archives diplomatiques (Paris), Guerre 1914-1918, Vol. 1204, Socialisme, III, 19, The Hague to Quai d'Orsay, April 16, 1917.

19. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), Foreign Office 371/3005, 355, Russia, File 54134, Townley to F.O., April 18, 1917; Alexandre Ribot, Letters to a Friend: Recollections of My Political Life (London: Hutchinson, 1924), p. 230; France, Archives diplomatiques (Paris), Guerre 1914-1918, Vol. 1204, Socialisme, III, 39, Thomas to Ribot, April 20, 1917.
20. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), Foreign Office 371/3005, 335, Russia, File 54134; Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm), April 14, 1917; France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Archive diplomatiques (Paris), Guerre 1914-1918, Vol. 1204, 13, Tiebaut (Stockholm) to Quai d'Orsay, April 15, 1917; Social Demokraten (Stockholm), April 18, 1917; Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), Foreign Office 371/3005, 363, Russia, File 54134, Howard (Stockholm) to F. O., April 19, 1917.
21. Archiv für Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung (C. Grünberg, editor), III, pp. 503-04; Vsesoiuznaia kommunisticheskaia partiia. Resolutsiia (Moscow, 1927); same in Lenin, The Revolution of 1917, Part II, appendix, pp. 401-03.
22. Pokrovskii and Iakovlev, I, p. 161.
23. Izvestiia, No. 51, No. 52, April 27/May 10, April 28/May 11, 1917; Pokrovskii and Iakovlev, I, pp. 123, 322-23.
24. L'Humanite (Paris), May 10, 1917; The Times (London), May 10, 1917.
25. Izvestiia, No. 55, May 2/15, 1917, pp. 1-2.
26. Huysmans, xvi.
27. Tseretelli, I, p. 172.
28. Huysmans, xvii-xix; Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), Foreign Office F. O. 371/3006, 293, Russia, File 54134, Intelligence Bureau to F. O.; Social Demokraten (Stockholm), May 22, 1917.
29. Pokrovskii and Iakovlev, I, p. 139; Stockholm Dagblad, May 29, 1917.
30. Izvestiia, No. 72, May 21/June 3, 1917, p. 3. Huysmans said he received May 20/June 2 the Soviet declaration of June 1, but this is inconsistent with Soviet's records as well as Izvestiia's report and report of Howard to F. O., June 2, Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3006, Russia, File 54134.

31. Pokrovskii and Iakovlev, eds., Pervyi vserossiiskii s'ezd sovetov rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov, Vol. II in 1917 god, II, Part 1, pp. 428-34.
32. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3005, 524, Russia, File 54134, Lloyd George to Thomas.
33. Vandervelde, pp. 216-17.
34. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3006, 150, Russia, File 54134, Henderson to Prime Minister, June 5, 1917. See also Izvestiia, No. 79, May 31/June 13, 1917, pp. 2-3 and No. 90, June 13/26, 1917, p. 5.
35. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3006, 238, Russia, File 54124, Henderson to Prime Minister, June 16, 1917. See Izvestiia, No. 78, May 30/June 12, 1917, p. 3 for a report of Henderson's appearance before the executive committee.
36. Tseretelli, I, pp. 208-09.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Vandervelde, p. 218.
40. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3006, 239, Russia, File 54134, Henderson to Prime Minister, June 16, 1917.
41. _____, F. O. 371/3014, 101n., Russia, File 54134, Intelligence Bureau to F. O.; France, Archive diplomatiques (Paris), Guerre 1914-1918, Vol. 1204, Socialisme, III, 1917, p. 153, Thiebaut (Stockholm) to Paris, July 17, 1917; Stockholm Tidningen, July 17, 1917.
42. Mary A. Hamilton, Arthur Henderson: A Biography (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938), p. 132.
43. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3006, 299, Russia, File 54134, Intelligence Bureau to F. O. Date incorrect by Huysmans as detailed in footnote 30.
44. Vandervelde, p. 212.
45. Ibid., p. 225; Izvestiia, No. 55, May 2/15, 1917.

46. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3006, 300, Russia, File 54134, Intelligence Bureau to F. O.
47. Social Demokraten (Stockholm), July 2, 1917.
48. Huysmans, xix; Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv (Stockholm), Hjalmar Branting archives; Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3007, 105-09, Russian File 54134; Social Demokraten (Stockholm), July 12, 1917
49. Ibid.
50. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3013, 230, Howard to F. O., July 21, 1917.
51. Same in F. O. 371/3007, 18, Barnes to Henderson, July 29, 1917.
52. The Hoover Institution (Stanford, Calif.), Nicolaevsky Collection, N. S. Rusanov, "Argonavskii mira," ms. memoir, pp. 39-40; Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3006, 239, Russia, File 54134, Henderson to Prime Minister, June 16, 1917.
53. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3013, 247, Lord Bertie (Paris) to F. O., July 20, 1917.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. _____, F. O. 371/3014, 17, Russia, File 54134, Lord Bertie (Paris) to F. O., July 31, 1917; L'Humanité (Paris), July 31, 1917; Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3014, 102, Russia, File 54134, Intelligence Bureau to F. O.
57. L'Humanité (Paris), August 17, 1917; Avanti! (Milan), August 4, August 8, 1917; Alberto Malatesta, I socialisti italiani durante la guerra (Milano: A. Mondadori, 1926), pp. 153-54; Andreina de Clementi, "La revolution d'Octobre et le mouvement ouvrier Italien," La revolution d'Octobre et le mouvement ouvrier Européen (Paris: E. D. I., n.d.), pp. 111-14.
58. Lloyd George, p. 1903.
59. L'Humanité (Paris), July 31, 1917.
60. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), War Cabinet, CAB 23/13, No. 199 (a), 47, July 30, 1917, 5:30 P. M.
61. _____, F. O. 371/3014, 69, Russia, File 54134.

62. _____ . F. O. 371/3014, 77, 78, Russia, File 54134.
63. _____ . _____ , 85, Russia, File 54134.
64. _____ . _____ , 79, Russia, File 54134.
65. _____ . _____ , 105, Russia, File 54134.
66. _____ . _____ , 104, Russia, File 54134.
67. France, Archives nationale, 94 AP 189, Rapports de Petit, 2e dossier (Juin-Septembre 1917) "Rapports a Albert Thomas sur la situation: 30 juillet-12 aout 1917."
68. Great Britain, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XCVII, p. 922.
69. _____ , Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3014, 131, Russia, File 54134.
70. Paul Carbon, Correspondance, 1870-1924 (Paris: Grasset, 1946), III, p. 417.
71. The Times (London), August 15, 1917, p. 5.
72. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3014, 120, Russia, File 54134.
73. Ibid., p. 119.
74. Lloyd George, IV, pp. 1911-12. Milner was against the Soviet from the first as shown in his letters to Lloyd George (see Lloyd George Papers, Milner to Lloyd George, 1st June 1917, The Lord Beaverbrook Library, London), as an example. Secretary Lord Hankey's diary reveals his opposition to a compromise peace (entries of August 10 and 11, 1917).
75. Lloyd George, IV, p. 1910.
76. Ibid., p. 1914.

77. Hamilton, p. 150.
78. Ibid., p. 154.
79. Lloyd George, IV, p. 1917; quote from Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 800/205, 178-79.
80. Lloyd George, IV, p. 1917.
81. Hamilton, p. 159.
82. Lloyd George, IV, pp. 1918-20.
83. Ibid.
84. Hamilton, p. 154.
85. Ibid.
86. Great Britain, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, August 13, 1917, XCVII, cols. 911-936.
87. The Times (London), August 13, 1917.
88. Great Britain, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, August 16, 1917, XCVII, cols. 1520-24.
89. Konstantin Nabokov, The Ordeal of a Diplomat (London: Duckworth, 1921), pp. 151-52.
90. The Times (London), August 16, 1917.
91. Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3014, August 17, 1917, 189-92.
92. Ibid., 189.
93. Ibid., 193.
94. Ibid., 196.
95. Ibid., 217.
96. Ibid., 216.
97. N. N. Sukhanov, Zapiski o revoliutsii (7 vols; Berlin-Petersburg-Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Z. I. Grzhebina, 1922-23), V, pp. 136-40.
98. The Times (London), August 16, 1917; Great Britain, Public Record Office (London), F. O. 371/3014, August 17, 1917, 203.
99. Great Britain, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, August 16, 1917, XCVII, cols. 1499-1500, quoting Arthur Ransome's report in the Daily News (London).

100. Izvestiia, No. 134, August 3/16, 1917.
101. Rabochii i soldat (Petrograd), August 6/19, 1917.
102. Rech' (Petrograd), No. 180, August 3/16, 1917.
103. Delo naroda (Petrograd), No. 119, August 5/18, 1917.
104. Ibid., No. 124, August 11/24, 1917; Sukhanov, Zapiski; V, pp. 139-40.
105. Alfred Rosmer, Le mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre (2 vols; Paris, 1936, 1959), II, p. 201.

CHAPTER V

THE SOVIET AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS

I. The Economy

Though the revolutionary parties had long advocated economic reform, none of them had a definite economic program at the time of the outbreak of the revolution. Only N. N. Sukhanov and V. G. Groman of the members of the Petrograd Soviet's executive committee had any real knowledge of economics and Sukhanov admitted that he had forgotten what he used to know and "felt like a complete dilettante in such matters."¹ Groman, however, as early as March 17, informed Sukhanov of a definite organizational scheme for the Russian economy that he had formulated long before the collapse of the autocracy. Essentially, all branches of the economy had to be regulated by the state. "The state must undertake . . . the de facto organization of the national economy, and thereby also the distribution of manpower. So I now propose that a committee for the organization of the national economy and labor be set up," he stated.² The acute shortage of grain had largely prompted Groman's theory of regulation. The supply problem could not be corrected, according to Groman, without an immediate bread monopoly, and a bread monopoly could not be introduced in isolation without regulating all other branches of the economy and fixing prices. S. N. Prokopovich, the well-known contemporary econo-

mist and moderate Social Democrat, agreed with Groman but maintained that the weak Provisional Government could not realize such a program.³

While the Petrograd Soviet initially attacked the economic problem on human rather than theoretical grounds by purging reactionary bureaucrats engaged in carrying out the economic program of the late regime, other forces in Russian society sought to mold economic policy to their advantage. The commercial entrepreneurs wanted no state regulation and maintained that the revolution brought freedom from even the minimal tsarist wartime economic policy. The industrialists, however, maintained that if commerce had a free hand, the industries working for the war effort would come under unfavorable conditions. They therefore proposed the elimination of the commercial middlemen and state control to bring producers and consumers into direct contact. The cooperative societies also demanded the curtailment of commercial interests and demanded state intervention to help them take the place of private commerce as the cooperatives should be exempt from state controls. The workers too demanded control but this usually meant joint determination by labor and capital in each enterprise, not governmental supervision. A. I. Konovalov, Minister of Trade and Industry, agreed to institute state control of production as well as distribution. He supported limiting the profits of capital, nationalizing Russia's underground riches, and passing broad social legislation for labor. Konovalov maintained that capital-labor control of production would lead only to economic warfare in industry; state control was the only

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viable plan.

The Petrograd Soviet leaders added their efforts to those of Konovalov to place the nation's economy under state control. They maintained, as did Konovalov, that state control was necessary to avert internal war between capital and labor and save the economy and thereby the revolution from ruin. When the Soviet leaders joined the coalition cabinet in mid-May, doubtless they understood that responsibility for the economic fate of the nation lay, in the eyes of the masses, partially with the ruling Soviet majority. Therefore upon its formation the new coalition government at the insistence of its socialist members issued a forceful statement concerning the economy: "The Provisional Government will consistently and resolutely combat the economic confusion in the country by the systematic enforcement of state and public control over industry, transport, commerce, and the distribution of products, and if necessary will have recourse to the organization of production." This broad declaration, threatening control of production in addition to that of distribution, required a more precise definition to become operatable. Within days the economic department of the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet supplied the essentials for a broad program of state regulation of the economy. "For branches of industry," read this program, "the time is right for the formation of regulating state trusts (coal, oil, metals, sugar, paper); and finally, for almost all branches of industry current conditions demand a regulative participation of the state in the distribution of raw materials and finished products, and also in the fixation of prices. . . . Simultaneously with this is the necessity of placing under control . . . all credit

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institutions." On May 29 the executive committee adopted this program, addressed it to the Provisional Government, admonishing the liberal segment of the cabinet that the non-fulfillment of the economic task had destroyed the old regime and resulted in the reorganization of the new government. That same day M. I. Skobelev, Soviet vice-chairman and Labor Minister, reported to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, "We have convinced the Provisional Government of the necessity of such decisive intervention by state power" in struggling with economic chaos. 7

The Petrograd Soviet's economic position was largely only the logical outcome of measures resorted to by the old regime. The socialists regarded vigorous state intervention in the economic life of the nation as typical of wartime policy in all belligerent countries. In England this took the form of state control, in Germany of a mixed and unofficial organization of supply and of compulsory syndication. Arthur Henderson, British Labour Party Secretary and War Cabinet Minister, expressed the ideas of the Petrograd Soviet leaders as well as his own, when he stated before the Moscow Trade Exchange Committee: "You should know that all industry, all work for supplying the army has been brought under strict supervision by the English government, and there are almost no conflicts with the workers. . . . The interests of the state must come first. . . . Do not think that this is socialism. This is merely a temporary necessity, for the state is fighting for its very existence, for its integrity." 8 Skobelev echoed this when he declared: "When we speak of energetic intervention of the state in production with the idea of regulating and controlling it, we do not, of course, mean socialist production nor state socialism, but the minimum

of measures which is necessary in national business life, and which has already been realized in England." ⁹ While Soviet leaders did concur with Henderson's view on state control, they, unlike their capitalist counterparts, did not see economic reforms as inconsistent with the spirit of such a position.

In response to the Petrograd Soviet's demands a conference of representatives from the ministries of labor, trade and industry, and finance drew up a program for state regulation of the economy. They advised the supervision of industry and the banks financing it through government commissars delegated to take part in the management of the various enterprises. The conference recommended a state monopoly of coal and petroleum along with the compulsory syndication of all other enterprises under state control and considered more stringent state intervention desired in mining, smelting, and textiles. State control of production and distribution was to be effected through the intermediary of the existing committees of supply. ¹⁰

On May 31 Konovalov resigned, destroying the united front of the Soviet and the ministers against excesses by capital and by labor. Tseretelli recollected later that Konovalov was a man who desired to make headway, but that he had no will-power and feared his fellow industrialists. In the middle of his last speech before the cabinet, he suffered a nervous breakdown and sobbing said: "Control over industry under the circumstances our revolution has developed, will become the uneducated worker's tyranny, and it will ruin Russian industry." The cabinet prevailed upon him without success to understand that a democratically organized state control would protect

industry, not destroy it. "This scene made an all the more pitiful impression," recounted Tseretelli, "since Konovalov, a weak and harmless being, stood in crying opposition to the political sabotage which had been forced upon him by his milieu, the blind and egotistical bourgeois autocratic exertion of power. . . ." ¹¹ Konovalov had indeed been caught in a cross-fire. Only days before his resignation, the industrialists had accused him of treason to his class for siding with Tseretelli, Chernov, and Skobelev over government demands. ¹² On May 24 Skobelev had carried the argument to the Petrograd Soviet, calling for the confiscation of 100 percent of the capitalists' excessive profits over the past two years of the war. ¹³ Tseretelli admitted later that the "revolutionary democracy" did try to place the primary burden on wealth, but at the same time the Soviet also tried to make the workers understand that sacrifices by labor were in order: incessant strikes and arbitrary lowering of output by workers menaced all efforts at rejuvenating the nation's economy. ¹⁴

With Konovalov's resignation Tseretelli and his supporters were faced with a dilemma. As Chernov explained: "Should they give the coalition with the political representatives of commerce and industry, or, for the sake of coalition, renounce the extensive program of reconstruction which they had laid down? They flinched and gave way, a fatal retreat!" ¹⁵ Tseretelli had entered the coalition to avert civil war, to leave it meant he would face the same prospect. It appeared that the Soviet leaders had no choice but to compromise with the "political representatives of commerce and industry" and hope that they could persuade the working class to relax their demands. As a result, the special declarations prepared by Skobelev

and Stepanov, Acting Minister of Trade and Industry, were sacked. The government had proposed to syndicalize private enterprises in the chief industries under state supervision; now this was dropped. The Provisional Government now contemplated only limited state intervention in the national economy. The Petrograd Soviet still suggested that substituting the state for private owners would eliminate one of the causes of the conflict--the workers' conviction that the owners made excessive profits. Even before Konovalov's resignation, the government, however, doubted that such a transfer would increase output and distribution, first, because of the government's financial embarrassment, and secondly, because of the difficulty the government would have in dealing with the organs of labor control that had de facto sprung up in these industries. The Provisional Government, therefore, decided to introduce only a state monopoly in the trade of fuel and a more rigorous control over the distribution of metals. The government also contemplated instituting controls over cotton and leather goods along the same lines as those in metals and fuels respectively. Though the Petrograd Soviet on May 29 had demanded state monopolies of meat, salt, and bread and a state trust in sugar, the Provisional Government enacted only a monopoly of grain and of sales in sugar.

On July 6 the All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets adopted a resolution of the Petrograd Soviet, spelling out the fiscal demands of the "revolutionary democracy": (1) limit the issuance of paper money,

- (2) reform the income tax and tax on war profits (removing tax loopholes),
- (3) enact a high extraordinary property tax for emergency expenditures,
- (4) radically reform death duties and tax unearned increments and luxuries,
- and (5) exact no indirect taxes on articles of general consumption.

The government's response to these fiscal demands resulted in the drafting of legislation to reform the income tax, the war profits tax, and death duties, and the enacting of an extraordinary income tax levy and a general property tax. The general property tax and death duties reform never passed into law and only the impulsive spirit of the revolutionary period compelled the government to sanction the extraordinary income tax levy. The most effective argument for its introduction was the immensely popular idea among the representatives of the Petrograd Soviet of confiscating one-fifth of all private property for the benefit of the treasury. Despite Soviet opposition, the government did introduce higher indirect taxes on such consumer items as tobacco. To eliminate the necessity of issuing more paper money, the government hoped to float loans at home and abroad. Though considered by the socialists a tax on future generations, the Petrograd Soviet on May 5 openly supported a "Liberty Loan" to utilize some twelve billion rubles of free funds in banking institutions. On July 11 the All-Russian Congress of Soviets pleaded for support of the "Liberty Loan," at which time only three of the twelve billion free rubles had been subscribed. Through contributions from the soldiers and workers the Petrograd Soviet subscribed more than 400,000 rubles. Moscow Jewish organizations alone gave 20 million rubles. As for the capitalists, the moderate socialist organ, Den', complained: "On the minister's first list, the upper bourgeoisie is conspicuous by its absence."

The Petrograd Soviet demanded not only a new economic program but insisted that the success of any program depended on a complete reorganization of all existing administration. The Soviet leaders required that the makeup and functions of the economic administration accord with the ideas of the revolutionary socialist parties. They maintained that unofficial as well as state institutions, such as the war industries committees, the zemstvos and town unions, etc. needed reorganization. The Soviet leaders also suggested the creation of new bodies to settle questions not dealt with before the
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revolution.

In response to the Petrograd Soviet's call for reorganizing the nation's economic administration, the government reconstituted and thoroughly reorganized the work methods of the committees of supply, the primary intermediary to effect state control. Representatives of labor organizations, cooperative societies, and the democratic intelligentsia made up the new membership. Supplementing these committees, controlling the several branches of industry and finance, were general committees or councils of supply to deliberate on general economic policy and coordinate the work of all the committees. A supreme economic committee supervised all these committees, controlling labor conditions
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and the economic policy of the nation as a whole.

The supreme economic committee and its subcommittee, the economic council, grew out of the May 29th Soviet resolution calling for a high government organ to deal with questions of economic control and planning.

Upon the recommendation of M. I. Skobelev, the Menshevik Labor Minister and "Star Chamber" representative, the government approved of the two economic organs on June 9. Skobelev and five other cabinet members drew up the legislation and on July 4 the government established the economic council and the supreme economic committee. The economic council only began its work in August, and then dissolved after only eight sessions. Because of its diverse class and party composition, debates in the council, on almost every subject, emerged in sharp controversy, and as the debates were of a very general and theoretical character, the practical work became concentrated in the eight minister-member supreme economic committee.

Did the efforts of the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government yield any positive results? The government hoped to remove the existing abuses in fuel and metal distribution, abolish profiteering, and put an end to the excessive rise of prices on the open market. The introduction of the fuel trade monopoly and the stricter supervision of metal distribution, however, did not seriously alter previous practices of distribution and supply. The special council had already forbidden private purchases without its permission, and in theory the state directed all distribution, as permits for the sale and transport and assignment of each quota to each category of consumers rested with the government. By the regulations of 1916 the special council had the right to declare fuel and metals state property, yet the council did not avail itself of this right before August 1917. The law did what the special council might

have done on its own authority. As for the fuel trade monopoly, it related only to Donetz coal and did not apply to other kinds of fuel, such as petroleum and wood, or even to coal from other mining districts. Cotton and leather goods controls were similarly unsuccessful. Possibly the only commodity that yielded any practical results from the grain monopoly decree of April 7 was in the cereals industry. Owing to the shortage of sugar and the consequent necessity of regulating the distribution of local supplies, a quasi-state monopoly of sugar existed prior to March 1917. A central office controlled the purchase price of raw sugar and enforced an equitable distribution among the refineries. The pressing need for more revenue after March 1917 led to the making of sales in sugar a state monopoly. As for taxes, besides being nigh impossible to collect, the extraordinary income tax died in postponements, while the popular masses were unable to pay increased regressive taxes because inflation had reduced their purchasing power by half. True the depreciation of the ruble had by this time reached such a low that had the government increased the rates of 1913 five times, receipts would have only equalled those of 1913. Prices, however, rose faster than wages, even if taxes did not increase as rapidly as wages. Nevertheless, Torgovo-Promyshlennaia gazeta repeated a highly popular capitalist argument in its August 15, 1917 issue: "The increase in scales of indirect taxations by no means corresponds to the increased nominal purchasing power of the population, especially of the working class."

Finally, while not a complete failure, the "Liberty Loan" was by no means sufficient to arrest the monetary crisis and the government had no choice but to issue more and more paper currency.

The results of the economic efforts of the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government were negligible. The attempt to establish state control and implement a democratic financial policy failed. At the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in July, Groman, the architect of state control for the Soviets, angrily denounced capital as the cause of the failure, adding that "the industrialists' opposition to government intervention must be crushed."²⁸ The Petrograd Soviet leaders urged a forced loan on capital, but the government suggested the freezing of funds first to allow the entrepreneurs to come around and rally to the government. The working class, however, had had enough of industrial lockouts and entrepreneurial sabotage, real or imagined, had never understood the Petrograd Soviet's support of state control as opposed to workers' control, and knew only that their economic condition had worsened. The effect of price increases between May and August 1917 alone halved real wages.²⁹ The result was the revolt of labor.

2. The March of Labor

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies in 1917 was ostensibly the organ of Russian labor. It stood for the immediate social and economic improvement of the toiling masses and the establishment of trade unions as labor economic organs. The leaders of the Petrograd Soviet attempted to organize and lead politically and economically from "above." The majority of Russian labor, unskilled and undisciplined, however, attempted to create organs from "below," as they had in 1905 when the Petersburg Soviet emerged from a strike committee. In the first months of the revolution these bodies generally cooperated to promote the welfare of Russian labor, the portent was that the factory committees would eventual clash with the soviets and trade unions.

The "Star Chamber" usually worked through Skobelev, Bogdanov, and Gvozdev to solve labor problems. Bogdanov was completely at home in the political problems of the labor movement. From the moment he arrived from Kresty prison to help organize the Soviet, he tore into the work of setting up links with the factory workers. While Bogdanov delved into organizational matters, Gvozdev worked directly with workers' delegations that came to the Soviet or went directly to factories to settle disputes. Skobelev planned and coordinated the Soviet's labor program. Tseretelli and the rest of the "Star Chamber" did not usually become directly involved in labor matters. Tseretelli recollected later how he observed the efforts of Soviet personnel, the socialist parties, and the labor unions to secure the greatest possible gains yet direct the proletariat

toward attainable goals. In practice this consisted primarily of appeals to calm and prudence against demagogical promises, and of explanations that persistent work would lead to the formation of a class organization and state apparatus that would restore the war-ruined industry and thereby also the workers' lot. As Tseretelli knew: "This was the only road, a slow but secure one, on which the necessary social reforms could be achieved."

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From the first days of the revolution the Petrograd Soviet was deeply involved in the economic life of the capital. The executive committee handled numerous specific requests from labor for the restoration of public facilities and operation of private enterprises. On March 18 the Soviet issued a general appeal for Petrograd laborers to return to work. This did not mean, Izvestiia declared, that the worker was not to promote proletarian aspirations while combatting by his daily labor the economic threat to the revolution:

Simultaneously with the resumption of work the Soviet . . . calls for the immediate establishment of all types of workers' organizations and for the strengthening of existing organizations for the purpose of consolidating the positions gained and achieving further gains.

These workers' organizations will act as the base in the further revolutionary struggle for the complete liquidation of the old regime and for the realization of the class ideals of the proletariat. 32

On March 20 Izvestiia was more specific about local labor organization and the demands labor should make of capital. Workers were to demand pay for the days in the streets fighting for the nation's freedom, collective agreements, control of factory and shop administration, shift work to

avoid excessive and exhaustive labor, division of work to halt unemployment, regulation of women's and children's work, workers' militias to guard factories and mills, and the takeover of production under proper direction if employers for personal reasons ordered work stoppages. The Petrograd Soviet endorsed the formation by workers of factory and shop committees and sanctioned their control of factory and shop administration, of the proper organization of work, and of the proper dispensation of labor forces as well as control of working conditions. The Soviet empowered the committees to takeover production only with the supervision of a Petrograd Soviet commissar and approval of a trade union deputy and the district party organization.

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The Petrograd Soviet's endorsement of factory committees did not necessarily mean that the body favored factory committees. The Soviet considered itself the political organization of the workers and looked forward to the organization of trade unions as the economic organs of labor. The Petrograd Soviet, led by Mensheviks who were trade unionists, only sanctioned the existing fact of the committees in hope of ordering them toward Soviet goals. As craft unions, initially organized by trades and only later on a mass line, were slower to develop than the easily mass organized and numerous factory committees, the Petrograd Soviet had no choice but to recognize the committees. Eventually, the Soviet hoped that the trade unions would absorb the factory committees. The Soviet's recognition of the factory committees, however, was not always enough to overcome the employers' opposition, with the result that violence occurred.

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On March 22 the Soviet admonished both capital and labor about work stoppages. While the overwhelming majority of workers had returned to their jobs, announced Izvestiia, misunderstandings and conflicts had arisen. Workers who had not received proper redress from their employers concerning their demands were not to stop work but to strive toward their realization through factory and district committees, the trade unions, and the Soviet. Workers were not to resort to violence. The Soviet promised to present as soon as possible a list of general economic demands to the manufacturers and the Provisional Government on behalf of the workers. Obstinate employers were threatened with the municipalization of their enterprises or their takeover by workers' organizations.³⁵

Petrograd manufacturers, heeding the rising tide of separate worker demands, sought to obtain a general agreement with the Soviet. On March 23 the Petrograd Association of Manufacturers reached an accord with the Soviet on the immediate introduction of an eight-hour working day (overtime for more hours), the establishment of factory committees and chambers of conciliation.³⁶ The Soviet promised that administrative personnel would not be removed without the examination of chambers of conciliation and then never forcefully. By this agreement factory committees were to sanction any overtime, to represent the workers in relations with the government and other public institutions, formulate questions of the workers' socioeconomic life, settle interpersonal problems of workers, and represent workers before the factory management. The committees were not empowered to take over factory production. Furthermore, they were to settle all disputes between management and labor in chambers of conciliation consisting of equal numbers of workers and management members. Central Chambers of Conciliation consisting of equal numbers of Soviet and

representatives of the manufacturers' association were to settle all disputes not settled in the local chambers. While the factory committee role was clearly limited by the agreement, the workers gained the general acceptance of the committees and of the eight-hour day plus a procedure to settle disputes with capital other than through violence. The Bolsheviks attempted without success to persuade workers to reject the agreement and refuse to return to their jobs. By the end of March, however, over 300 Petrograd enterprises had introduced the eight-hour day and every plant had a factory committee. According to the SR leader Viktor Chernov, "This important conquest. . .gave the Soviet unprecedented popularity among the workers and strengthened its authority for a long time to come. . . ." The agreement, however, had a major flaw: how to come to terms on a standard wage and immediate increase in pay. According to Tseretelli, the industrialists acknowledged the need for an increase in wages, as wages at the time of the outbreak of the revolution were a little less than three rubles a day (with a purchasing power equivalent to that of one gold ruble). The Moscow daily, Utro rossii, found that workers would have had to receive double their wages to recover their purchasing power of the early war years and tripled them to receive a higher standard of living. As this condition was not cleared up even later, the basis for industrial conflict between management and labor remained.

Not all employers were willing to abide by the Soviet-Association of Manufacturers' agreement. Any number of manufacturers did not like the eight-hour working day or the factory committees, but only some tried to

sabotage it by claiming that the workers were "living like gentlemen" while Russian soldiers were dying in their trenches. ⁴² Newspapers of the tenor of Rech' (the Kadet organ) and Russkaia volia repeatedly published unconfirmed reports that workers were only concerned with their own interests and were "ruining the cause of defense." ⁴³ The Social Democrat, Sukhanov, described the result of this agitation:

One could see workers and soldiers, in the last stages of irritation, linked in a fierce battle of words. . . .

Of course, the workers were accused of excessive demands, of absolute unwillingness to work and of ignoring the interests of the front. The starting point of the irritation was . . . the eight-hour day. Fishers in troubled waters were speculating on the inability of the muzhik (peasant) in the soldiers' gray cloak to understand this proletarian demand. There is no such standard of work at the front or in the village. Yet here were factory loafers, unwilling to work longer hours, enjoying a free and easy life by other people's sacrifices in the trenches!

Delegations of soldiers from the front went to the capital to check on the workers. Soviet representatives met these delegations, conducted them to the factories where the workers won them over, and then sent the deputations back to the front for propaganda. Occasionally, reported Izvestiia, factory committees even promised the soldiers to deduct a day's pay from the salary of each worker to aid the men in the trenches. ⁴⁵ The attempt to sour relations between the soldiers and workers heightened the tension between capital and labor.

Some workers expanded the terms of the Soviet-Association of Manufacturers' agreement. A few of the more powerful factory committees in Petrograd introduced preliminary measures of workers' control over certain

phases of production and distribution. Some committees assumed a role in the formulation of work rules and the hiring and firing of workers (rabochii or blue-collar) and employees (white-collar). In some cases control arose as the result of managerial personnel having temporarily abandoned factories in the uncertainty of the first days of the revolution (particularly high-ranking officers in charge of government armament plants). In others the factory committees clashed openly with management. The executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet admonished the factory committees that it "emphatically opposed improvised--especially anarchist--demonstrations," and urged the workers to comply with the decisions of the local soviets. The Bolshevik organ, Pravda, on April 7/20 denounced worker sabotage which could only "foster an anarchical spirit." The Soviet, however, took no action as most of these committees understood "control" prior to November 1917 as "joint deter-
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mination," not the "domination" of their factories.

On May 24 the labor section of the Petrograd Soviet, in response to declarations by the Conference of Petrograd Factory Committees of State Enterprises and from the Provisional Government, issued new work rules to the factory workers. These rules were much closer in spirit to the Provisional Government's decree of May 6, but did allow a small degree of the control provided by the factory committee conference. Following the Petrograd Soviet's suggestion, the majority of the workers adopted a position somewhere between the bold factory committee conference's stand and the modest program of the government. The Petrograd Soviet's

list of factory committee functions included:

participation in formulating work rules and in seeing that they are observed; participation in surveying the sanitary conditions in the enterprise and in the implementation of measures for the protection of labor; participation in the management of infirmaries, schools, and nurseries located in the enterprise.

Until early September, when the Menshevik Minister of Labor issued two restrictive circulars on workers' control, Petrograd Soviet leaders took no further action with regard to the factory committees. ⁴⁷

When several prominent members of the Petrograd Soviet in mid-May joined a coalition government of socialists and liberals, the Soviet leaders focused their attention on moving the government toward concessions for the popular masses. M. I. Skobelev, Soviet vice-chairman and "Star Chamber" trouble-shooter, attempted to institute through his Labor Ministry post what really amounted to the Petrograd Soviet's May 29th labor program. The government was to undertake the regulation of the labor supply over the entire country, for each district and every branch of industry. To this end Skobelev proposed a general obligatory labor conscription. The state would fix wages; the government would set a minimum wage and control the terms of collective contracts between employers and employed for whole branches of industry. Lastly a board of conciliation in every industrial enterprise working for the civilian population would adjust all disagreements and conflicts between workers and employers; and in some cases, a court of compulsory arbitration would make adjustments in those enterprises engaged in military work. Despite sharp objections on the part of manufacturers, Skobelev, nevertheless,

took this program as the guiding principle in his work and endeavored
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by every means to give it effect.

Tseretelli recounted later how the decision to regulate conditions between capital and labor occurred. Industrial magnates from the Donetz Basin demanded that the government intervene energetically against the outrageous demands of the workers. Tseretelli with the full support of his fellow cabinet members called upon the "kingdom of manufacturers" to abandon methods that would result in "making the evil worse." Poor wages and a soaring cost of living, he noted, contrasted sharply with the considerable profits of the magnates. The ministers could not forcibly demand restrictions upon the laboring classes, he remarked, without exacting from capital the necessary concessions of placing production under democratic control. Rather than maximalist mass demands, Tseretelli found the workers making sincere efforts to reach reasonable solutions, e. g., that capital increase wages in reverse proportion to the wage scale. The innate hostility of the magnates to the previously illegal
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labor unions made government intervention a necessity.

To implement the Soviet program Skobelev formed a central committee in July for the distribution of labor supplies; the Minister of Labor presiding over representatives from various government departments and public organizations. This committee, really nothing more than the old Special Committee for the Preliminary Drafting of Labor Legislation, now at least had a socialist minister for its head. It consisted of eight representatives from the Petrograd Soviet, eight from the employers, one from the Union of Zemstvos, one from the Town Unions, and two from the War Industries Committee. The Department of Labor Supply of the Ministry

of Labor became the executive of the central committee. A representative of the employers, the industrialist V. A. Auerbach, viewed the work of this committee as a battle ground between employers and labor:

The Ministry of Labor was definitely Menshevist in its directing personnel, and drew strictly Marxist scholars into its work With their wide erudition the latter with remarkable ease reenforced their arguments by reference to laws and customs of all countries, to the resolutions of congresses, etc. The reports which preceded examination of draft bills were carefully and sensibly prepared. It was obvious that everything had been thought out and arranged. Our avowed enemies, the members of the workers' faction of the committee were armed to the teeth. When, at the first session, we were showered with formulae, quotations, persons, and cities, and all of this with unusual ease and even grace we seemed absolutely routed before the battle began.⁵¹

Auerbach reveals how the employers were able to make a comeback and finally defeat the workers: "Carefully concealing our despondence, but realizing our lack of preparation, we tried to make up for it by eloquence and ingenuity." When the workers brought up their recommendations, the employers labelled them as "inopportune" during wartime. "In this way the moment of decisive struggle might be delayed, but it could not be averted or escaped without defeat." The Council of Congresses of Industry and Commerce organized a special labor section to collect materials, draw up reports, memoranda, etc. And finally:

We felt ourselves sufficiently armed. Nevertheless, we, of course, could not hope to overtake our opponents who had spent years in preparation. We had to educate ourselves so that the expostions of shrapnel, crammed with formulae, citations, names, should not start a panic in our ranks.

All projects introduced by the delegates entailed considerable expenditures for the treasury. The employers started to demonstrate what each improvement won by the revolution would cost the country. Their calculations panicked our opponents. . . .

Even on questions which were incontestable, such as sickness insurance, old age insurance, we just shrugged our shoulders asking how they could proceed at the national level without upsetting the whole economy.

The employers were willing to concede nothing more than the setting up of committees to study the workers' questions. Inasmuch as they came to nothing, Auberbach labelled these committees, "sterile victories."⁵² As a result, the attempt of the Petrograd Soviet to promote change from above through the government met defeat, leaving the workers with no alternative but to use traditional labor weapons to gain satisfaction. The militant language of Auberbach, envisioning the situation as internal war, reveals that no other alternative was left to the workers, particularly as the Soviet had no intention of destroying the coalition and thereby plunging the country into immediate civil war.

Failing to gain concessions from "above" through the government, the Petrograd Soviet attempted to gain them from "below", by channeling the workers' discontent into trade unions that would impose economic sanctions on capital. The means would assume a non-violent form of economic pressure, rather than political pressure. The SR-Menshevik bloc leaders of the Soviet therefore directed their efforts through the trade unions which they dominated in the pre-November period. While the All-Russian Trade Union Council consisted of equal numbers of Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and SR's, the political union of the latter two allowed them to dominate the Bolshevik members, Shliapnikov and Riazanov.⁵³ True the secretary of this council, A. Lozovskii, shortly became a Bolshevik, but

with no resources or organization he managed to send only one organizer to the provinces and publish two issues of the monthly journal, Professionalni vestnik.⁵⁴ At the first congress of trade unions in January 1918, a Menshevik delegate stated that for the past six months the council "has done absolutely nothing."⁵⁵ Though the efforts of the council were feeble, the Mensheviks and SR did gain a majority among the rank-and-file of the trade unionists. At the July 1917 All-Russian Trade Union Conference the Mensheviks and SR's on the basis of their strength in local trade union organizations gained a majority of the representatives. At that conference the trade unions resolved that they "wholeheartedly and in every way support the actions of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies," and that the trade unions and the Soviet must have "one single common banner"; nothing less therefore than a total endorsement of the Menshevik-SR bloc then dominating the Soviet.⁵⁶ The conference branded as enemies those who were attempting to splinter the working class movement, a reference to the Leninists, labelled the factory committee movement as "economic anarchy" and called upon them to become organs of a centrally determined trade union policy.⁵⁷ On June 12 Skobelev had appealed to the First Conference of Petrograd Factory Committees to support state control and preserve trade unionism. He had based his argument on Marx's stages of history, declaring: "We find ourselves in the bourgeois stage of revolution. The transfer of enterprises into the hands of the people would not at the present time assist the revolution."⁵⁸ Peaceful unionism and settlement of differences by arbitration between labor and capital was the only real solution to the problem that confronted the Russian worker. At the trade union con-

ference in July several speakers echoed Skobelev's words. V. P. Grinevich, a Menshevik trade union leader, again pointed up the Marxist framework of historical development: "For us it is very important to know that we are acting in a period of bourgeois revolution." ⁵⁹ The Menshevik N. Cherevanin agreed that the revolution was not yet ready to progress from the bourgeois to the socialist stage of development. P. A. Garvi, the well-known trade unionist, added that only "if the working class comprised half of the population" could the workers properly take control of industry. . . the organizations of control must be such as . . . to speak and act in the name of the entire revolutionary democracy of Russia. . .and ⁶⁰ not of only one interested portion--the workers." Grinevich added that if labor was to represent all the working class and not simply separate enterprises of workers, then the factory committees had to come under trade union control. While the Menshevik-SR bloc received the support of the All-Russian Trade Unions, in Petrograd the factory committees remained the strongest local labor organization and they were Bolshevik in their outlook and activity. Therefore in actual practice, the trade unions were not able to give the Petrograd Soviet leaders much support beyond ⁶¹ verbal expressions.

With the failure of the Petrograd Soviet to move the government toward labor concessions (lest the coalition split up) and the inability of the weak trade unions to assume the leadership of economic sanctions against capital from "below," the workers began to take action on their own initiative. On June 30 the Bolshevik dominated Central Council of Petrograd Factory Committees called for workers to demand transfer of state ⁶² power to the Petrograd Soviet. Two weeks later the July days" (July 16-18) forced the Bolsheviks to support a movement that they did not want ⁶³ to head and brought the factory committees and industrialists, as ex-

claimed by a speaker at the August 20 Second Conference of Petrograd
Factory Committees, to a state of industrial warfare.⁶⁴ Employers
asserted that they were forced to curtail production or close shop
because of workers' control and shortages of fuel and raw materials.
The workers replied that the employers were resorting to lockouts, shut-
downs, and large-scale dismissals of employees. Both arguments had
merit, but differences could not be reconciled. The employers, however,
following the "July days" rarely tried to undermine the factory commit-
tees; they did vigorously try to curb workers' control. They pointed
out that the May 6 decree had only legalized the committees and had not
given them power to control production. In mid-July therefore, the
Petrograd Society of Manufacturers declared workers' control illegal.⁶⁵
Even with management and labor at odds, outright seizure of factories
by the committees was only sporadic before the Bolshevik coup. Wide-
spread tactics such as the dismissal of administrative personnel in-
cluding engineers was quite common to the degree that workers found
themselves incapable of operating enterprises which they had taken over.⁶⁶

Despite the Petrograd Soviet's admonition to halt violence and
lockouts in industry, economic chaos increased rapidly after the "July
days." In July 1917, 206 factories closed and 47,754 ceased work. In
August and September 1917, 231 enterprises closed and 61,000 left their
jobs. The factory closures of these months compare with 125 closures
in June, 108 in May, 55 in April, and 74 in March.⁶⁷ In addition, the
number of workers put out of work during this period from March to May
was small compared to the period after June. Closures were highest in
Moscow and Petrograd, regions where the factory committees and the

largest industries predominated. The number of closures was highly significant as 75 percent of the total 420,000 workers employed in Petrograd was in 12 percent of the total 1158 enterprises of the region, and as 55 percent of the workforce in the Moscow area held jobs in 7 percent of the enterprises of that city. Most of the workers in Petrograd were employed in the metal industry where workers' control was strongest and Bolshevism most prevalent. It is perhaps significant that pig-iron production in 1917 compared with previous years declined considerably in the post-July period (compared with 1916 a decline of 16 percent in the pre-July period but 35 percent in the post-July months).⁶⁸

Conditions did not improve. Clashes between the forces of labor and management increased in violence outside of the capital. The newspaper, Russkaja volia, reported on October 11 that the Donetz basin raged with anarchy. By the time of the Bolshevik coup the Donetz was threatened by a general strike which seemed likely to assume aspects of civil war.⁶⁹ On September 13 the French Embassy vigorously protested the "threatening character" of the laboring masses toward enterprises in which the French had invested capital.⁷⁰ Russkija vedomosti declared on October 2: "There is no government in Russia, no law, no political actions. . . . With the new upsurge of the Bolshevik wave in Petrograd, the number of outrages and excesses in factories and mills has arisen."⁷¹ Inasmuch as the Petrograd Soviet was powerless to direct the workers in the capital and in the nation as a whole, such disturbances only tended to detract from its claim to be the national voice of the workers and soldiers.

3. The Peasant Colossus

The Petrograd Soviet in the weeks that followed the March overturn was the beneficiary of revolutionary exhilaration and often received the enthusiastic support of the peasantry. To the peasant the Soviet was initially either a vague adjunct to the government offering moral support, or more frequently, an agent for observing and controlling the government's activities. This latter conception of the Soviet reflected both a suspicion of government in general and a strong belief in the class nature of government. The same belief was expressed in resolutions that singled out A.F. Kerensky as the representative of the "revolutionary democracy" in the cabinet. The identification of democracy with a class was not too pronounced in the first weeks of the revolution. Although often viewed with suspicion, the Provisional Government was considered more or less representative of the nation. The following selections from peasant resolutions present the peasant attitude toward the Soviet, the war, and the government in the first period of the revolution.

Early in March a volost' (county) assembly resolved, "To recognize the authority of the Provisional Government and to submit to all its directives."

A volost' executive committee voted to send a delegate to the peasant congress in Petrograd, "entrusting him to express the following desires: 1. The war must be carried through to a conclusion without annexations or contributions; there cannot be a separate peace . . . 3. To support with every effort the new free order."

Peasant representatives of nine villages agreed, on the question of war. "to join the voice of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Petrograd and Moscow to demand that the Provisional Government declare that we are conducting the war without aim of conquests or contributions and we demand the earliest possible cessation of the war and a peoples' peace."

A delegate at the first Congress of Soviets said, "Dear comrades, one of the speakers said that here the voice of the lower ranks is not heard. I, a peasant, in my turn will speak of how the peasantry talks and expresses confidence in, and regard for, the Provisional Government. The peasantry entirely joins with the Provisional Government."

A volost' assembly sent a telegram expressing confidence in the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The telegram added, "May God help the valiant Russian warrior to bring the war to a satisfactory end, without pursuing plans of conquest".⁷²

The revolution in Petrograd created a feeling of expectancy in the village. Habit and a lack of confidence among the peasants created a feeling of dependency on Petrograd. A journalist who travelled through the provinces found great enthusiasm for the revolution everywhere. At the same time the common people lacked political experience, and so there was a diffusion of authority and a lack of self-confidence. "Let someone come to us from Petrograd, if only for a day or two," they said to him in Velikie Luki, Pskov Province. He found that "city" representatives were met with undisguised joy and gratitude. At the summons of a "city" representative the people of an entire county or volost' would gather immediately. Peasant emissaries even made special trips to the cities to get a speaker to explain the revolution to the peasants. According to the Bulletin of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, many inquiries revealed that peasants in the provinces were anxiously awaiting general directives or a statute on local administration, particularly in the organization of volost' government.⁷⁴

The initial response of the city revolutionaries to the peasants' expectations was negative. The city did not take the initiative but merely reacted to events in the village, particularly to disturbances. The revolutionary intelligentsia called for restraint, for order, for legality. When the first rural violence flared up in Kazan Province on March 22, the urban response was repression, though Petrograd acknowledged ". . . that the use of arms at the present time in the suppression of agrarian disorders is inadmissible." The "rioters" were, however, to be held "criminally responsible".⁷⁵ The Kazan peasantry was dumbfounded and the provincial congress of peasant deputies raised a strong protest. As disturbances often resulted from garbled stories and rumors carried by deserters from the front, the Soviet leaders granted five per cent of the garrison troops in Petrograd short leave to carry news to the villages. When rumors of the revolution were quickly confirmed or denied by some sort of authority, the transition in the village was usually peaceful.⁷⁶

The Petrograd Soviet leadership understood the importance of land reform, but peace held first priority. As Sukhanov tells us, "Land--this was the age-old, unchanging cry of the 'lord of the Russian earth', the peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the Russian democracy . . . yet if the revolution didn't finish the war, the war would strangle the revolution . . .; deprive the people of bread, land, and the whole revolution . . ." ⁷⁷ The Soviet did not entirely neglect land reform for the peace effort. Resolutions on the land question were plentiful, but the Soviet itself took no practical steps toward land reform. Sukhanov recollected later how this affected the peasant:

The Government was still keeping secret its opinion about the foundations of the future reforms. Were they being prepared? How was work proceeding, and along what lines? All this was unknown, and it disturbed the peasants. . . land speculation was beginning . . . Wholesale deals . . . began to be made. In these circumstances, there wouldn't be much left of our land resources in a few months' time. This alone was enough to upset the peasants. Swarms of emissaries appeared in the Ex. Com.--asking, demanding, threatening. Immediate guarantees of land reform and immediate steps to preserve our land resources from pillage were essential.⁷⁸

Despite peasant demands, the Petrograd Soviet leaders, however, took no steps toward land reform. Instead Izvestia warned on April 8:

It will not be by means of violence, or fires, or murders and arbitrary measures that the free people will achieve its will, but, by the authoritative voice which will be heard from behind the walls of the Constituent Assembly, elected by all the people. In this way, too, will the land question be resolved.

The capital Soviet organ did demand, in this same editorial, that the government do more than merely "consider" the land problem; that it openly declare immediately that "the people will receive all of the land without redemption and without new taxation, that the hour draws near when the free tiller will till free land!" A Menshevik resolution adopted on April 16 at the All-Russian Conference of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies repeated Izvestia's warning on land seizures. The conference implored the peasantry to await the Constituent Assembly's division of the land. Such verbal sentiments did not satisfy the peasant long. While the Soviet contemplated using violence during the April crisis to force its peace program on the government, it did little more than urge land reform.

The Soviet's inaction on land reform partially derived from divergent views on the agrarian question in the Menshevik-SR bloc. The Mensheviks tailored agrarian program to a more rigidly conceived outlook on the course of Russian history than the populists. Anticipating an interlude of capitalist development after the bourgeois revolution, they accepted the necessity of political cooperation with the more democratic elements of society while conditions ripened for a transition to socialism. As a result, the Menshevik program shared certain characteristics with the liberal Kadet or Constitutional Democratic program. It too called for expropriation of private holdings above a certain norm, and for the transfer of this land along with that of churches, of monasteries, and of the imperial family to public ownership. The most distinctive feature of the Menshevik program was "municipalization", i.e., the transfer of large land parcels to autonomous local agencies for distribution among the peasantry, or for use in the public interest as locally determined.⁷⁹ Regional authorities were to determine, on the basis of local conditions, the norms above which land would be appropriated. All communal land and individual peasant holdings below the norm were to be inalienable. The Mensheviks feared that an attempt to nationalize all land would propel the peasants into the ranks of the counterrevolution. To prevent the accumulation or reconstitution of large holdings they proposed in 1917 to restrict purchase of peasant lands to public agencies.⁸⁰ The Menshevik program stipulated that peasants pay rent for the use of confiscated land at locally established rates to state and local organs (zemstva) to provide for social needs such as schools and hospitals.⁸¹ The state was to assume outstanding obligations of the confiscated lands-- a progressive income tax to absorb the cost. On

the question of halting sales and mortgages on land the Mensheviks opposed. the Kadets and joined their socialist colleagues, the SR's and Bolsheviks. An All-Russian Conference of Mensheviks in May 1917 called for an immediate government decree on the prohibition of all private land transactions, except for those authorized by the land committees. The Mensheviks held the land committees responsible for regulation of gentry-peasant relations, normalization of rents and wages, establishment of conciliation chambers, and for arranging the rental and cultivation of unworked gentry lands. In addition, the Mensheviks expected the committees somehow to carry out their designated functions in preparing materials and projects for land reform to present to the Constituent Assembly.⁸²

The SR agrarian program, proposed in essence by the Trudovik delegates in the First and Second State Dumas (the "Project of the 104" and its successors), was the socialization of the land and the elimination of private property in land.⁸³ Land was to be redistributed on egalitarian principles and on the basis of consumption norms (i.e., in amounts adequate to provide for the basic necessities of life) to those who worked it. The extra land in holdings above the consumer norm was to be taken from its owners without compensation and redistributed by the communes. The commune was a gangway from contemporary bourgeois society to the future socialist society. Several weeks elapsed after the March coup before the party formulated a clear policy. A conference of the Moscow party organization on April 2-3 came out against land seizures and recommended the organization of "committees of rural deputies as revolutionary organs of local state authority" to prepare for the land reform and to settle disputes.⁸⁴ The conference also recommended the cessation of transactions in land and the enforcement of the Stolypin laws. A conference of the Petrograd party organization on April 18 passed similar resolutions, but suggested the establishment of land committees with broad powers instead of the less definite committees of rural deputies.⁸⁵

The SR Third Party Congress of June 8-17 issued a definitive stand: "Convinced that all property in land must be destroyed and that the land must become general people's property without redemption payments for equal use on the basis of a labor norm, the Third Congress of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries believes that the fundamental law on land, which shall firmly establish these principles, must be promulgated by the National Constituent Assembly."⁸⁶ The resolution condemned land seizures and demanded the transfer of all land to the control of land committees, although it hedged in regard to large specialized farms.

As with the workers and soldiers, the peasants did not wait for the direction of the Petrograd Soviet or some other urban soviet, but set about to solve their problems on their own initiative. Three fairly distinct types of organization made their appearance in the countryside: the executive committee, the soviet of peasant deputies, and the Peasant Union. As with the factory and soldiers' committees, the Petrograd Soviet sanctioned de facto situations but attempted to limit their activities. Soviets of peasant deputies were usually established later than executive committees, and it was often difficult to organize them at the volost' level.⁸⁷ Sometimes the executive committee was subordinate to the soviet, but very often the two types of organizations existed side by side. The soviets had their own executive committee, which, however, did not usually compete with the county or volost' executive committees. The soviet concerned itself with organizational work and proselytizing, not with day-to-day administration. The same organizations were found at the provincial level as at the county level, but provincial

capitals were strongholds of soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies and peasant influence therefore weak. Peasant organizations obtained representatives in the workers' and soldiers' soviets and executive committees but they always played a secondary role. Peasant congresses, formed late in the spring or summer, more and more approximated political party conventions as they lost their non-partisan character and became dominated by the Socialist Revolutionary Party.⁸⁸

In Petrograd the Soviet leadership often forgot or ignored the practical purposes of local peasant organizational work. For the political parties and quasi-political organizations of the capital, the primary goal in agrarian affairs was control of a national All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies. On March 28 the chief committee of the All-Russian Peasant Union announced with the permission of the prime minister and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies that it would initiate the organization of an All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies.⁸⁹ On May 6 the SR organ, Delo naroda, stated that "The slogan of the moment is to organize the workers' toiling democracy of the village! Organize it into Soviets of Peasants' Deputies which will join as a third section the existing Soviets of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies." When the Congress met on May 17 of the 1,115 delegates a plurality were SR's, along with a large number of non-party and unknown party delegates.⁹⁰ The SR's consolidated their victory in the executive committee which included Kerensky, Chernov, and Avksent'ev, among others. Those who were defeated in the elections to the executive indicates the

overwhelming strength of the SR's: Lenin, Gorky, Plekhanov (Russian marxism's father), Peshkhnov, Mazurenko and Tseretelli. Mazurenko was the most active and prominent member of the Peasant Union, while Tseretelli, though dominant in the Petrograd Soviet, was rebuffed by the peasantry.⁹¹ The SR's, however, had not gained their strength between March and May, 1917, but more so because of their long association with the peasantry as the party of the agrarian toiler. The peasant soviet congress like those of the workers' and soldiers' was dominated by a revolutionary intelligentsia attempting to lead and organize from above. As with the workers and soldiers, the intelligentsia were to find their efforts frustrated by the ever more urgent demands of the masses from "below". The SR V. Ia. Gurevich has characterized the executive committee of the peasant congress as men wanting to:

organize an authorized representative center that was to defend the interests of the peasants as well as the peasants' movement, keeping it within definite bounds. We thought that the disorderly seizure of the lands of the nobility would lead to the ruination of the project for the socialization of the lands; would break the peasants' front; would lead to conflicts among the peasants themselves and between the peasants and the landlords.

Politically this All-Russian Peasants' Soviet

would represent the majority of the Russian people; would have close relations with the army; would secure the support of the majority of the Russian people for the Provisional Government; and would create a counter-weight, in case of need, to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and straighten their line of conduct.⁹²

The peasant congress executive gave primacy not to land reform but to preparations for elections to the Constituent Assembly as that body would solve the land question.

Events soon proved that the well-intentioned members of the intelligentsia, who led the SR's and the Peasants' Soviet, lost out because they tried to compromise, because they supported policies which, while they represented the wishes of the peasants, postponed any definite settlement of the agrarian problem until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. To the Russian peasant no Constituent Assembly was needed to overthrow the tsar, so why was one needed to get the land due them? Disappointed in the leadership of the SR's, the mass of population listened to agitators and extremists. The peasants took matters into their own hands and seized the land. According to a critical analysis by the moderate Popular Socialist S. P. Mel'gunov, "The agrarian movement reached its climax in July with 1122 violations. Then it starts to diminish with 691 violations in August and 629 violations in September. These summaries will be clearer if we refer to the headings; e. g., Demolition of Estates--236 in July; 180 in August; and 112 in September."⁹³ Expropriations were usually conducted by volost' committees, not by peasant mobs, and extreme violence was generally avoided. One might have expected the land question to lead to a more or less equal distribution of violence throughout central Russia, the area of the greatest concentration of population. In fact the sacking and burning of estates occurred in only a few areas. Since the peasants, in the absence of police or organized opposition, could take the land with impunity, extreme violence usually required an incident--incitement to violence by a soldier (deserter) or a provocative act by a landowner-- to give direction and purpose to the general feeling of resentment, frustration, and despair.⁹⁴ The Soviet's all or nothing support of revolutionary defensism cost the intelligentsia the goodwill of the peasantry that the March coup had generated.

4. The Destruction of the Military

The Petrograd Soviet was active in Russian military affairs from the first days of the revolution. Initial Soviet actions, however, were primarily responses to the activities of the garrison troops of the capital, and later, only part of a design to bolster the revolutionary diplomacy of Siberian Zimmerwaldism. As the revolution owed much of its success to the rebellious Petrograd garrison, the workers' Soviet took on the function of being a soldiers' organ and addressed itself to reform reform. Military reform, however, if it meant weakening the defense of the nation, had to be weighted against the more vital demand of protecting the revolution from the German war machine. Soviet leaders believed that until the war could be liquidated through its peace program, the soldiers' will could be strengthened only by military reforms. Being largely political oriented in their thinking, Soviet leaders conceived this reform as the democratization of the military. Intellectual prisoners of the French Revolution, in this regard, they fought for democratization in an effort to transform the military into an effective fighting revolutionary force as had the French with their forces in 1792-1793. The SR leaders Viktor Chernov confirms this:

"There was a chance to unite the field officers and the mass of privates . . . Through this union alone could the old army have been recreated as a revolutionary army. Trust the field officers, who have lived the same trench life . . . ! Promote capable field officers boldly . . . ! With this slogan the leaders of the French Revolution had reorganized the royal army."⁵⁵ Working against democratization was

the General Staff which felt that the process was the root cause of the disintegration of the military. Did democratization bring about the destruction of the military or was it as Chernov insisted in his memoirs of not carrying the process far enough? A case of the army being devoured by mutual distrust between lower and upper ranks and the field officers left in the middle "between hammer and anvil"? Or was the disintegration caused by something else? the tragic July offensive?

The offensive to democratize the army opened with the March days. The process began the moment the revolutionary intelligentsia called on the rebellious garrison troops to elect representatives to a Soviet. The Workers' Soviet became also a Soldiers' Deputies soviet and soldier-representatives were coopted into its executive committee. The Soviet elections led to the formation of political organizations and groups within the army and navy units of the Petrograd military district. A few military committees, as with the factory committees, appeared even before the appeal for their formation.⁹⁶ Where committees had not been organized, the Soviet soldier-deputies called for their formation in Order No. 1. These soldier-deputies demanded and received from the revolutionary intelligentsia the sanctioning of social equality for the Russian private. For example, the private had been forbidden, prior to Order No. 1, to smoke on the street, to ride inside street cars, to attend public meetings or entertainment, and even to read books or newspapers without his commanding officer's consent. The importance of these political and social actions is to understand that they needed no urging from the revolutionary intelli-

gentsia to swell up from the ranks. From the first socialist leaders struggled to give leadership to the soldier masses and attempted to order them behind the Petrograd Soviet; from this struggle came concessions in the form of democratization.

The response of the High Command to the democratizing actions of the Petrograd soldiers was immediate and damning. Thinking that the newly organized liberal Provisional Government governed in Petrograd, the General Staff condemned Order No. 1 and censured communications from the Petrograd Soviet. General Alekseev demanded that all orders be transmitted through Stavka (Russian G. H. Q.) and furthermore that "only orders of the government can be valid for the army, whereas the orders of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which is unknown and does not belong to the framework of governmental authority, are not valid and will not be announced to the troops."⁹⁷ General Alekseev immediately arrested and court-martialed disruptive elements. The Petrograd Soviet responded with a blistering attack on Alekseev in the March 21st issue of Izvestiia, declaring that the "spirit of the bloody tsar lives on in the Chief of Staff." Attempting to head off a crisis, War Minister Guchkov now confessed to Alekseev the weakness of the Provisional Government before the Petrograd Soviet and begged the general to compromise: "The Provisional Government does not have at its disposal any real force, and its orders are carried out only to the extent permitted by the Soviet . . . which possesses the most important elements of real power One may say directly that the Provisional Government exists

only so long as the Soviet permits it. Especially in the military sphere it is possible now to give only such orders as do not definitely conflict with the orders of the above mentioned Soviet."⁹⁸ The General Staff was so ill-informed of events in Petrograd that Guchkov's message came as a great shock. Alekseev faced with no alternative but compromise, sent a coded secret communique to all commanders on March 24. The orders of the government, he explained, were transmitted only with the Soviet's consent. "Everything is based on compromise" and it therefore became "unfortunately" necessary for the army "also to move along the path of compromise," he stated. Among the members of the Soviet, Alekseev noted, were moderates "who recognized the necessity of continuing the war to victory, preserving the army, discipline, and order, and supporting the commanders." He advised that soldiers' committees already formed should be allowed to continue and that officers should be introduced into them in order to influence them toward discipline and order. Not only were company and regimental formed, but division, corps, army committees as well. Completing the structure was a series of army and front congresses from mid-April to mid-May.⁹⁹

Though the High Command could not prevent the formation of committees in the army and navy, the General Staff did attempt to set their operational limits. On April 12 General Alekseev ordered that the committees could mediate between soldiers and their commanders on all questions of internal military life; military questions and training, however, were beyond their competence. All elected committeemen were freed from active duty while they served on the committees. Com-

mittee chairmen were given the right to use all means of communication and printing at the military's disposal except where it would interfere with military operational work. Finally, Alekseev ordered that all committees were to be composed of one officer for every two soldiers.¹⁰⁰ On April 29 Alekseev's order was superseded by one from the Minister of War. Guchkov, under pressure from the Petrograd Soviet, ordered that the number of officers on committees be reduced and declared that the committees now had the power of taking "rightful measures against abuses by commanding officers in the respective units." Furthermore, regimental commanders could appeal but not suspend decisions made by regimental committees.¹⁰¹ Though Guchkov withdrew this order, on the demand of Stavka, nevertheless it led to additional confusion as Stavka, War Ministry, and illegal committees now existed.

The Mensheviks and SR's received the full sentiments and loyalty of the leadership of the army and front congresses. By decisive majorities the congresses endorsed the Menshevik-SR position on the war and pledged support of the Provisional Government "insofar as" its actions were in line with Soviet policy. Regimental and company committees were somewhat variegated, being sometimes officer directed or more sympathetic initially to the government than to the Soviet, and frequently lacking a clear cut party or ideological orientation. SR's and Mensheviks, however, usually dominated even the regimental and company committees even in the first weeks. The social composition of the committees contributed to the SR-Menshevik influence. While the Southwestern Front Committee consisted only of army organizations, on the Northern Front and Western

Front workers' and peasants' deputies participated with soldiers in electing committee members. Articulate dissidents, where present, found election fairly easy, as the political education of the masses of soldiery, ignorant, illiterate men that most of them were, was so low that they grasped for any straw in the wind that promised salvation. These dissidents initially, however, were not very outspoken for radical party causes, even where they had strong support, as did the Bolsheviks in the Western Front Committee (five members out of nine), the Eleventh Army Committee (Ensign Krylenko and several supporters), and the Special Army (three members of perhaps ten). Some dissidents even had to conceal their party affiliations, so as not to appear disloyal to the authority of the Petrograd Soviet.¹⁰²

Though the Petrograd Soviet easily attracted the leadership of the committees in the army, the establishment of a regular channel of information to the soldiers in the trenches was slow to appear. The Soviet organ Izvestiia was seldom seen there in the early weeks, except on the Northern Front which lay near Petrograd and no regular system to distribute the newspaper was ever put into effect thereafter. For information of the revolution soldiers had to rely on liberal newspapers or the organs of the respective army committees which began publication of their newspapers late. Despite the high rate of illiteracy in the Russian army, the demand for socialist newspapers, official Petrograd Soviet publications, and pamphlets on political and social questions outran the readily available supply. In the absence of propaganda appeals by organized parties the soldiers at the front in March and April--except in sectors close to the northern urban centers--reacted primarily to political events rather than socio-economic

concerns. Yet the Petrograd Soviet failed to take advantage of this response to political matters to build a mass soldier-supported political base. The Petrograd Soviet issued only one appeal to have an impact on the frontline soldier, Order No. 1, and this decree was not even intended for the soldier in the trenches.¹⁰³

Order No. 1 made the name of the Petrograd Soviet well-known to all frontline soldiers, yet the frontline soldier more than likely could not clearly distinguish the Soviet from the Provisional Government. The Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government both represented revolutionary authorities which commanded equal authority. Furthermore Duma deputies, not Soviet representatives toured the front to normalize relations between officers and men and explain the revolutionary events in the capital.¹⁰⁴ They minimized the role of the Soviet as an auxiliary body which "supported" the government. They emphasized that the army was now under the command of the new revolutionary government and urged the soldiers to observe discipline toward their superiors. The soldiers' committees and new titles for officers ("Mr. Captain," "Mr. Doctor," "Mr. N. C. O.") they endorsed and induced the officers to accept such innovations as well as the disposal of tsarist emblems. In contrast Petrograd Soviet envoys accepted the role of trouble-shooters in northern garrison cities (Helsinki, Kronstadt, Reval, and Vitebsk); from the local soviets of these places their appeals reached the front only indirectly.¹⁰⁵ The non-socialist press did all within its power to promote the government at the expense of the Petrograd Soviet. As the Soviet neglected to supply propaganda to

the contrary, the soldiers were left with a one-sided picture.

The end result of the anti-Soviet propaganda campaign did not enhance governmental authority and the command structure at the expense of the Petrograd Soviet and the army committees. Allegations that the workers were slacking in war production, the Petrograd Soviet was destroying the authority of the new revolutionary government, the Petrograd garrison soldiers were celebrating the revolution rather than preparing marching companies for the front, the peasants hoarding grain, resulted in the soldiers in the trenches sending delegations to the rear to investigate the situation.¹⁰⁶ These delegations, often with Kadet-oriented officers at their head, arrived in the capital complaining that the Petrograd Soviet was undermining the government and not using its authority to line up the workers and peasants behind the war effort.¹⁰⁷ Soldiers toured factories and barracks in Petrograd to see for themselves every instance of "sabotage" cited by the non-socialist press. The result of their personal contact with Petrograd Soviet leaders and with factory workers and garrison troops convinced the front delegations that organs such as Rech' and Ruskiia vedomosti had deceived them and slandered the name of the Petrograd Soviet. While the non-socialist press had hoped to create the psychology of a levée en masse as had France in 1792: "war to full victory" and "soldiers to the trenches, workers to the benches," the front delegations now saw this as an attempt to split workers from soldiers, the front lines from the rear. Before the delegations returned to the front, they made certain that the Petrograd Soviet and the workers and garrison troops

supported defense; they now understood this, however, to mean not a war of conquest, but one in defense of the revolution while liquidating the war: the Petrograd Soviet's position of "revolutionary defensism."

The failure of the anti-Soviet press campaign resulted in April in a flood of pro-Soviet resolutions from the frontlines. Many emphasized that the Provisional Government would receive the support of the soldiery only "insofar as" it carried out the specific obligations undertaken in agreement with the Petrograd Soviet.¹⁰⁸ The First and Second Infantry divisions of the Guards regiments even went so far as to tell the roving Duma deputies, Maslennikov and Shumakov: "If the Provisional Government does not work hand in hand with the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, it will be abolished"¹⁰⁹ Many resolutions expressly condemned the campaign of the bourgeois press to slander the workers and declared a "boycott" of such publications. Attempts by officers to force the issue of endorsing the old slogan of "war to full victory" only led to their exclusion from committee work and a deepened distrust of officers as such. During April the newly completed hierarchy of the soldiers' committees became fully mobilized in support of the Petrograd Soviet, which they regarded as the "watchdog" of the Provisional Government. Although this concept penetrated the rank-and-file with varying degrees of intensity, it became most fully assimilated by the less aristocratic junior officer, the more educated type of non-commissioned officer or soldier, and the "army intelligentsia": doctors, clerical workers, etc.¹¹⁰

While the Petrograd Soviet gained the support of the leadership

of the soldiers' committees, the common soldier primarily continued to follow his own instincts. He welcomed the revolution primarily because it offered a ray of hope of an early end to the war and a new life back in the villages. His new "freedom" he interpreted basically as a de-legitimization of all the authorities who formerly had oppressed him and inflicted indignities. For a while the revolutionary fervor of March continued to linger and compel him to defend his new freedom against the German war machine and to maintain faith in his officers and carry out military commands. However, when he came to the conclusion that his superiors were taking advantage of him to continue the war and learned that the Petrograd Soviet had to police the Provisional Government, appeals to discipline fell on deaf ears and the common soldier rebelled against being manipulated by patriotic speechmaking in the name of the revolution. The Fifth Army military censor registered in early February three optimistic letters to each pessimistic one, in March and early April the ratio had changed to four to three and thereafter pessimism set in. Coincidentally, instances of soldiers arresting their officers and collective refusals by troops units to executive orders sharply increased in the month of April. More damaging was the massive fraternization with the enemy which began with the Easter holidays in April.¹¹¹

Spontaneous fraternization had occurred at Easter time the previous two years, but in 1917 the German High Command decided on a full-fledged campaign to promote the breakup of the Russian front. Intelligence officers, sometimes posing as Social Democrats and revo-

lutionaries, were well supplied with small gifts and propaganda leaflets and even a Russian language newspaper, Russkii soldat. One pamphlet hailed the Petrograd Soviet's "Manifesto to the Peoples of the World," noting that Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg had spoken favorably of it before the German Reichstag. The Germans claimed that Russian officers were concealing from their men Germany's peaceful intentions. One after another the company and regimental committees took a stand against fraternization, even committees dominated by Bolsheviks initially. Fraternization nevertheless continued and the committees began to swim with the tide so as not to lose influence over their constituencies. Lacking guidance from the Petrograd Soviet, fraternization appeared to many soldiers as a way to realize the strategy of the Soviet manifesto that the "peoples" must force peace on their governments. A number of military reports from the field blamed fraternization and the general decline in discipline on the influence of the Petrograd Soviet's peace formula, and some even pleaded for the sending of Soviet agitators to clear up the "misunderstanding."¹¹²

Although a pacifist mood overtook the men in the trenches, the committeemen at the corps and army levels called for vigilance against the German General Staff's attempts to subvert the "revolutionary army." The All-Russian Conference of Soviets, they emphasized, required that until the Germans accepted the Soviet peace formula the army had to maintain its fighting capacity. During April the mood of the committeemen, especially at the upper levels, became increasingly defensist.¹¹³

The chairmen of the Fifth and Twelfth Armies committees even appeared before the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet and bitterly accused the body of vacillation and demanded a clear-cut policy on fraternization. As a result, a special proclamation to the front appeared on April 18, denouncing as treason fraternization with the enemy and failure to promote the revolution.¹¹⁴ This declaration and the work of Soviet commissars appointed to the front resulted in a **precipitous** decline in fraternization. Nevertheless, some committees, most notably that of the Second Army, inclined in the other direction and "declared that the army would fight to the end only on the condition that the actual intentions of the Allies were made known, and Russia given a guaranty that the war was not being waged for capitalist gain."¹¹⁵ Not until the formation of the first coalition government in May and the adoption of clear revolutionary defensist resolutions at army and front congresses did the committee structure as a whole become united behind efforts to restore discipline and make preparations for a defensive offense. Such efforts clearly cost them much of their prestige with the soldiery: e.g., as a naval officer recounted later, "With every day that passed, the members of the committee were noticeably moving to the right, but at the same time there was an obvious decline in their authority among the soldiers and sailors."¹¹⁶ The added degree of discipline and morale in response to the cooperative efforts of officers and committeemen varied greatly from unit to unit, but the committees enjoyed and exercised authority only as adjuncts to the Petrograd Soviet rather than any inherent con-

viction of the need to do so.

Confronted with such problems, the Petrograd Soviet leaders decided to launch a campaign to halt the disintegration of the army. This campaign also became one of the main policy goals of the new coalition as Tseretelli, Skobelev, and Chernov were members of the cabinet and Kerensky War Minister. The Soviet opened its campaign on June 12 with a fervent appeal to the army to take precautions against fraternization. The appeal reminded the troops that chances for a democratic peace would fail if the Russian army proved incapable of defending the nation. "The country and revolution are in danger" was the cry that echoed across the country. Delegations from the front arrived at plenary meetings of the Petrograd Soviet with sacks of gold and silver medals to aid the nation's defense fund. Their speeches before the Soviet deputies were fervent as they pledged their lives to the defend the nation. Soviet deputies in turn visited a number of military congresses in hopes of raising the morale of the common soldier. Kerensky became the mouthpiece of the Petrograd Soviet at these congresses. Though he did not share the Soviet's principles regarding the reorganization of the army, he was in complete agreement with the efforts of Tseretelli and his colleagues to strengthen the army and the defense of the nation. "You will carry peace, justice, and truth on the tip of your bayonet," he told the soldiers. At this hour, Tseretelli maintained later, Kerensky stood as one with the Soviet, the military committees at the front, and the common soldier.¹¹⁷

The prospect of a new slaughter, however, dampened these verbal

campaigns and deep anxiety set in among the troops. Unit after unit took their officers as hostages, deliberately sabotaged technical preparations, and openly declared their Bolshevik sympathies inasmuch as Lenin alone openly opposed an offensive. On every sector of the front Bolshevik newspapers began to appear in great numbers, their pages filled with marked hostility to the thought of active operations. Communist authorities cite the phenomenal figure of 300,000 items being distributed by 30 Bolshevik newspapers during June alone at the front.¹¹⁸ Even making allowances for communist statistical distortions the fact that the command structure and the soldiers' committees failed despite great efforts, to cut off this propaganda flow, reveals some degree of the volume. The Bolsheviks used no regular distribution mechanism, such as the mail, to convey their literature to the front; their conduits were the marching companies of the reserve units in urban centers and from soldiers returning from leave.¹¹⁹ The reserve trainees had attended Bolshevik troop rallies in the cities and absorbed elements of Bolshevik propaganda. Some of these men became party agitators as the result of their regular attendance at courses and lectures operated by the military organizations of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd and Moscow. At the front these replacements seriously undermined efforts to increase discipline.¹²⁰ Ironically the Petrograd Soviet was responsible for sending these radicalizing forces to the front, as the socialist leadership decided on May 1 to resume sending combat replacements to the front from the Petrograd garrison. Voitinskii, the trouble-shooter of the "Star Chamber," found it increasingly difficult to dispatch these troops to

the front and that each dispatch turned the Petrograd garrison more and more against the Menshevik-SR leaders in the Soviet.¹²¹

Discipline at the front was by no means uniformly bad. Cooperation between committeemen and the more flexible commanders had achieved some notable successes, mainly through exhaustive speechmaking. The Soviet sent out teams from the rear of workers, students, and political figures who toured the units to see to it that offensive spirit did not falter. Commanders sometimes noted that units markedly improved after such visitations, but more often than not the troops initially responded enthusiastically to dynamic oratory, applauded vigorously, and then settled back into a state of demoralization. The famous "Iashka" Bakchareva organized women's battalions of death and sent them to the front in an attempt to shame the men into fighting. "The League of Personal Example" toured the front, working diligently to restore discipline and morale in the rank-and-file. Shock battalions made up exclusively of volunteer civilians appeared to prove the support of the rear to the men at the frontlines. The Bolshevik cry, however, that the coalition government had compromised itself to the imperialist aims of the Allies cut very deep into such efforts.¹²²

Soviet envoys and soldiers' committees hierarchy in committing themselves to the offensive, sacrificed their influence among their constituency. They allowed themselves to become fire brigades and police forces to bring dissident units back into line and purge them of dissident Bolshevik or anarchist elements. The front commissars of the Petrograd Soviet whose position was transformed into a coappoint-

with the War Ministry by Kerensky, were obliged to carry out a number of sensational police actions against Bolshevik regiments on the eve of the offensive, in which the latter were surrounded by loyal cavalry and artillery units and forced to lay down their arms and to surrender their dissident agitators. These actions utterly failed to restore order and morale, as the men remained demoralized with or without the agitators. In retrospect the Petrograd Soviet leaders staked their entire political fortune on a successful offensive, the failure of which was alienate their soldier constituency at the front. The hollow shell of the committee structure that remained became after the collapse of the offensive in July the prey of reactionary Kornilivite officers who heaped the entire responsibility for the failure on them. The Bolsheviks even suffered in the post-July reaction, particularly after the failure of their Petrograd fiasco (July 16-18). The great mass of soldiers were **thoroughly** tired of high-flown slogans and promises and kept their thoughts to themselves.¹²³ Why did the Petrograd Soviet leadership commit itself to an offensive in the summer of 1917?

The Petrograd Soviet leaders came out openly for strengthening the army following the disastrous defeat at Stokhod in late March when ten thousand prisoners were taken and the Russian forces were thrown back several miles by the German troops. At the All-Russian Conference of Soviets Tseretelli declared the Petrograd Soviet in favor of defending the revolution by strengthening the army and approving the possible necessity of active operations. The Conference approved Tseretelli's motion by the overwhelming majority of 325 votes to 57 against. At the same time decisions determining tactics and strategy in the field were

left in the hands of the military.¹²⁴ The strengthening of the army did not mean that the Soviet leaders had forsaken democratization of the army; they expected both. As General Denikin recalled later, "Chkheidze and Skobelev advocated full democratization of the army . . . and in private conversation they admitted the necessity of rigid military discipline. . . ."¹²⁵

The Petrograd Soviet leaders, while admitting the possible necessity of active operations, refused to sanction an offensive until circumstances at the front and in the government forced them to do so. To meet the French offensive in April, the Germans shifted troops from the Eastern to the Western Front. Not acting to counter this German move, Soviet leaders found, was tantamount to accepting a separate peace, a shift in policy the Menshevik leaders would not accept. In order to maintain their policy of a general peace, the Petrograd Soviet leaders therefore had to change their attitude toward offensive operations. Then in May the Soviet leaders joined a coalition government. As members of the government they had to take responsibility for the offensive. In view of developments at the front and in the government, the executive committee therefore, led by Tseretelli, gave overt approval to "preparations for an offensive." The Mensheviks had not changed their principles because of internal party developments, but because of extra-partisan events. The Menshevik desire for a general peace without annexations and indemnities was as strong as ever:

The question became if not peace by diplomacy or international appeals, then how? The answer was war. If Bethmann-Hollweg had forgotten about the Russian front he had to be reminded. If the language of peace in international diplo-

macy was only for show then Russia had to correct this. It was necessary to show Russia was strong. It was necessary to make the soldiers understand that the path of peace rested through the enemy trenches. A victory was necessary to compel foreign powers to listen to Russia and the voice of its democracy. Active operations were not only permitted but necessary. ¹²⁶

Any thought of a separate peace was simply out of the question. A separate peace Tseretelli maintained would lead to destruction of the Allies and "the destruction of the Allies would be the beginning of the destruction of the Russian armies. And the destruction of the military power of revolutionary Russia would lead to a common grave, bringing death to the revolution, death to freedom, and death to Russia." In June the Petrograd Soviet reminded Germany that "Russia was interested in uniting all democratic peoples in the belligerent countries for the struggle against imperialism. And this would be rendered impossible if the German imperialists used the striving for peace in order to obtain a separate peace to destroy the Allied armies."¹²⁷ Revolutionary defensism once more had conquered and now meant the gambling of the army on an offensive. The new line was so strong that when opposition to the change in policy appeared in Izvestiia, the Soviet organ, new editors were immediately selected who supported the Soviet leaders.¹²⁸ The Menshevik party even developed a split between the Martov internationalists and the revolutionary defensists as a bloodless purge of the former took place at party and editorial posts.¹²⁹

The Petrograd Soviet leaders staked their peace efforts on an army that they themselves did not ascertain was combat ready. First, the government had destroyed the chain of command just three weeks before

the offensive was to open. On June 5 Kerensky replaced the Supreme Commander, Alekseev, with Brusilov, a rapidly promoted front commander. On June 14 the War Ministry replaced the chief of staff along with four of the five front commanders.¹³⁰ Thus none of the new front commanders knew their subordinate commands or their officers. Equally disastrous, Kerensky created a number of new regiments and divisions out of old divisions. These new formations were never trained for their new assignments; officers and men remained unknown quantities to one another. The command conducted no offensive training exercises, nor tested any of the offensive operations in mock battle. Most disastrous of all, the command changed the operational plans for the offensive more than once in quick succession. As Alekseev pointed out, Brusilov's initial plan of battle was not militarily sound, and, as finally modified, allowing each commander "a free hand in starting operations as the armies would be ready," was a strategic blunder of the first order.¹³¹ The Germans, aided by their railway network, found it easy to defend themselves against these disorganized attacks. The plan of battle, as it unfolded, in and of itself doomed the offensive even without taking into account whether the morale of the troops was sufficient or not. Yet Tseretelli, Kerensky, Nekrasov, or Tereshchenko never thought to question the soundness of the strategy, though briefed fully on the Brusilov operation.¹³² As Tseretelli related later:

The offensive plan accepted by us . . . was tuned to the conditions of our army. It is impossible to expect that the army, tired from the long war and not yet recuperated from the losses it suffered, would suddenly go through enemy lines in an irresistible march. We decided to begin

action gradually on all fronts, slowly pushing a path forward first on one part of the front, then on another, then on a third, etc. This tactic would make it possible for us to utilize our numerical advantage over the enemy, depriving him of the possibility of concentrating forces in order to strike at any one point.¹³³

In point of fact precisely the opposite happened. As Alekseev had warned, the Germans, without pressures on other fronts, quickly reinforced the Austrian lines on the Southwestern Front (the first front to attack) and through use of superior communications and railway networks moved to crush other fronts as they developed. The July offensive turned into a complete fiasco. Beyond the immediate military consequences, the Allies simply wrote Russia off. On July 14 General Foch sent a memorandum to representatives of the Allied governments, meeting in Paris, noting the possibility of Russia's defection from the war. England's David Lloyd George, previously receptive to the Soviet's plan for an international peace conference, now turned against Stockholm and gave it its coup de grâce. The offensive in the name of revolutionary defensism to save Russia from a separate peace came too late after the disastrous April French offensive to justify it on that ground in July. By July it became a gamble justifiable only on the basis that it would, first, reverse the disintegration of the Russian army by raising troop morale--at the time a highly debated proposition--and secondly, fulfill a modicum of obligation to the Allies by keeping the German forces tied down on the Eastern Front. As Stankevich knew: if Russia had no strength left to wage war, it had still less power to impose international peace--only now the July fiasco had revealed the former and thus doomed the latter.¹³⁴

5. The Nationality Question

On March 16 Izvestiia, the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, called for the Provisional Government to grant "all nationalities the right of nationality and cultural self-determination." While many minorities of the old Russian Empire welcomed this statement, in reality the definition of nationality came to mean Poland, Finland, and possibly the Ukraine (this last according to SR definition), not White Russians, Moslems, Jews, and other non-Russian peoples of the empire. Indeed the problems of the national minorities did not even rate a special commission in the Soviet, even though 60 percent of the population was non-Russian in 1917.⁽¹³⁵⁾ Only out of a sense of fairness did a majority of the Soviet vote to admit a solitary Armenian delegate.¹³⁶ While initially largely sympathetic to the problems of the national minorities, the Soviet leadership became fearful that the war would conquer a divided nation and thereby the revolution and reacted negatively to minority demands. Only when the nationality movement grew to such proportions as to appear to threaten revolutionary defensism did Soviet leaders focus their attention on the problem and attempt to resolve it. The SR leader, Viktor Chernov, admits in his memoirs that the pressure of the national minorities, "which could have been a constructive force, was transformed into a destructive force."¹³⁷ As with all other questions, except war and peace, the majority of the Petrograd Soviet leadership tried to relegate all decisions on the nationality question to the Constituent Assembly.

Only the Poles and the Jews initially received any real redress to their grievances. On March 28 the Petrograd Soviet sent greetings to a Poland

completely "independent in national and international affairs." The Polish problem was solved by the German occupation of the country and therefore the Provisional Government, following the lead of the Petrograd Soviet's declaration, proclaimed itself in favor of an independent (139)

Poland on March 30. The 5,600,000 Jews of the Russian Empire, who had no regional territory of their own and thus were no threat to the territorial integrity of the nation and its defense, were freed from many of the tsarist discriminatory acts by a proclamation of equal rights on April 1. Though the government abolished some 650 discriminatory laws against Jews, anti-semitism did not disappear, but on the political level it became a monopoly of the most reactionary elements (which were on the defensive). The proclamation was a half-hearted response to the Soviet's March 16th call for "cultural self-determination" and, according to P. N.

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Miliukov, was in answer to Jewish claims. Clearly the decree applied primarily to the Jews, as Leon Trotsky noted: "The proclamation of equal rights meant nothing to the Finns especially, for they did not desire equality with the Russians but independence of Russia. It gave nothing to the Ukrainians, for their rights had been equal before. . . . It changed nothing in the situation of the Letts and Esthonians. . . ; did not lighten . . . the fate of the backward peoples and tribes of Central Asia, who had been held down. . . not by juridical limitations, but by economic and cultur-
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al ball and chain." While equal rights might satisfy the politically dormant petite bourgeois Jewish majority, the demands of the 1,400,000 working class Jews remained essentially the same after April 1. The Bund, the majority Jewish socialist party, welcomed the equal rights decree but supported the Soviet view of settling minority demands at the Constituent Assembly.¹⁴² The

Bundists called for "national-cultural autonomy" which would united the Jews throughout the whole nation around schools and other institutions. This program, however, in the words of Leon Trotsky, "melted in those first days of freedom like wax under the sun's rays." ¹⁴³ The other major Jewish socialist party, the United Jewish Socialist Workers' Party (a union of Zionist-Socialists and the Jewish Socialist Labor Party after May), advocated a Russian federation similar to that of the U.S.A. which would have "national-personal" autonomy derived from a central governmental organ to deal with education and the social welfare of Jews, Poles, or Letts, or Tatars wherever they happened to reside in Russia. ¹⁴⁴ The majority of Russian Jews voted for the largest political group, the Zionists, who, concerned with building a home in Palestine, played a less active political role in 1917 than their socialist counterparts. In the case of neither the Poles nor the Jews were the Petrograd intelligentsia overly enthusiastic about minority rights, lest they encourage other nationality demands. --

The Finnish question was the first of the nationality problems to blow into the open. The Finns were not completely satisfied with the March 20th manifesto of the Provisional Government. The manifesto nullified imperial ordinances and decrees relative to Finland since 1890, amnestied all Finnish political prisoners, and guaranteed the right of self-government to the Finns. ¹⁴⁵ Finns wanted independence from Russia; in the beginning both the socialist majority of the Finnish Sejm or Diet as well as the non-socialists opposition agreed on this point. ¹⁴⁶ Russian socialists in the Soviet hierarchy saw Finland as an independent state. Russian socialists felt that only the Constituent Assembly, however, could come to an agreement with the Finnish Sejm as to whether Finland would become a member of the Russian federation, an ally or merely a neighbor. ¹⁴⁷ The Menshevik faction

urged this view in April and in June chided the government for its inertia.¹⁴⁸ The SR's in May agreed to independence for Poland but not for Finland, because some SR's suspected the Finns of being pro-German, but the propositions primarily were adopted because most SR's were preoccupied otherwise and they adopted Vishniak's proposal out of haste.¹⁴⁹ Only Lenin of all socialists urged that the Finns be granted their maximum program. As C. Jay Smith has pointed out, however, Lenin's ultimate aim "was to achieve a voluntary union of Russia and Finland, made possible through the triumph of socialism in both countries."¹⁵⁰ In the midst of the July uprising in Petrograd the Soviet found itself not only confronted with a crisis in the capital but also in Finland where the Sejm was preparing to enact a law to exercise supreme power in Finland. The Soviet leaders attempted to mediate between the Provisional Government and the Sejm. A Finnish delegation pledged its word to Viktor Chernov that if the Provisional Government accepted without change a draft law enlarging the rights of the Sejm, they would not present any new demands or offer more difficulty before the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. The government sent the proposal to its grave by referring it to the juridical commission.¹⁵¹ The Soviet chairman Chkheidze went to Helsingfors with a delegation to persuade the Finns to be calm but failed in its efforts.¹⁵² As a result on July 18, the Sejm voted to assume all powers in Finland except for matters of foreign policy and military affairs.¹⁵³ The Provisional Government under its new Minister-President Kerensky ordered the Sejm dissolved and new elections to be held, though the socialist ministers in the government insisted the move was a mistake.¹⁵⁴ While the Menshevik organ, Rabochaia gazeta, protested the move, the Soviet organ, Izvestiia, and the SR organ, Delo naroda, endorsed the government's action.¹⁵⁵ Fortunately for Petrograd the Sejm in a split decision voted to promulgate the dissolution order and the new elections returned a non-socialist majority siding with Kerensky. The national question in Finland now became secondary to an internal struggle for Finnish power.¹⁵⁶

Ironically, two days before its fall to the Bolsheviks on November 7, the Provisional Government issued a decree recognizing "in principle" the independence of Finland except in military and foreign affairs; precisely what the Finns had demanded in July.¹⁵⁷ The Petrograd Soviet had been party to a policy that had turned the Finns from a constructive force into a destructive one for revolutionary defensism.

The Ukrainian nationality movement was even more deadly for the Soviet cause of revolutionary defensism than the Finnish. Inasmuch as the cities of the Ukraine were considerably russified by 1917, two opposing organizations arose, one dominated by Russians, the Executive Committee of the Council of Combined Social Organizations (IKSOOO), and the other organized by Ukrainians, the Ukrainian Central Rada (Council). The Kiev Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was a member of the IKSOOO and largely a "Great Russian" institution in sympathy. The Rada, while founded by an association of intellectuals of moderate political views, became inclined to pursue a program of national aspirations. While initially willing to wait for the All-Russian Constituent Assembly to ratify officially the right of Ukrainians to self-rule, the Rada, under pressure of Ukrainian soldiers and peasants, found itself committed to an ever more radical national program, one which brought it into direct conflict with Petrograd and the Russian revolutionaries.¹⁵⁸ While sympathetic to Ukrainian rights, the Petrograd Soviet leaders were adamant in their opposition to granting significant nationality rights before the Constituent Assembly. The Mensheviks maintained that "this national movement showed nationalist and bourgeois qualities wherein bourgeois and peasants were fighting the Soviets. Further, federalism found allies there [Ukraine] among reaction-

aries like A. Shul'gin."¹⁵⁹ The SR's developed a contradictory position: while national autonomy, they maintained, should always be encompassed within the bounds of federation and never develop into separate statehood, nevertheless, the Ukraine should have a separate coinage and postal system and even homogeneous Ukrainian regiments, etc. (such separate institutions being obvious temptations for the Ukrainians to strive for independence). The SR program, however, was completely nullified by that party's position that a proportional representative All-Russian Constituent Assembly (not autonomous Ukrainian representation) would decide which points of the SR program should become law. As the American historian Oliver H. Radkey has noted, "Whether even Vishniak's Poland would have gotten through those gates is a moot question," much less the Ukrainian program.¹⁶⁰

The Ukrainian question exploded over demands of Ukrainian troops in the Russian army. Ukrainian soldiers upon hearing of the March overturn of tsarism began to speak their native tongue and form organizations of Ukrainian soldiers. With the establishment of the Rada in Kiev many of these men recognized only orders of the Rada.¹⁶¹ In Kiev Ukrainians demanded the formation of separate Ukrainian units and a Ukrainian National Army. The formation of eight Latvian Rifle Regiments in 1916, the organization of a Polish Corps under General Dovbor-Musnitski, and the government's approval on April 24, 1917 for a Czecho-Slovakian army encouraged the Ukrainians to demand a separate army for the 994,300 Ukrainian soldiers in the Russian army.¹⁶² At first only units made up exclusively of volunteers were allowed, and then approval was given to 4,000 men who "deserted" to

form a Ukrainian regiment. During the July offensive Ukrainian soldiers refused to move up to the front unless under the blue and yellow Ukrainian flag.¹⁶³ This movement was reenforced by the actions of the First Ukrainian Military Congress which voted to negotiate with the Petrograd Soviet on the formation of Ukrainian units in the army. Already the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet had informed the congress that the question of national troop units was being discussed by a special commission (assisted by the general staff and the nationalities organizations) and that the proposition would be placed on the agenda of the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets. In the meantime the capital Soviet leaders asked the military congress to refrain "from arbitrary, unauthorized action" pending the decision of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.¹⁶⁴ As early as April 2 the Petrograd Soviet had rejected the formation of national units in favor of the formation of a revolutionary army. They still opposed in early June the formation of Polish units, as they would be "an instrument of reaction to stifle Polish freedom after the liberation." The existing Latvian Rifle regiments were to be the only exception. Thus with much emotion "in the midst of yelling" the Petrograd Soviet rejected the Ukrainians' demand for autonomous regiments (partially because the Ukrainians had informed the Provisional Government's right-wing that the regiments would be devoid of Bolshevik elements and that they would fight a "War to the finish").¹⁶⁵ "We were socialists only in name," admitted one of the Ukrainian delegates, V. K. Vinnishenko. "In reality, we were democrats, republicans, not socialists."¹⁶⁶ The Petrograd Soviet was not fooled about

their politics, and insisted that demands be introduced along party, not national lines.

The Provisional Government then heightened the conflict. On June 14 War Minister Kerensky declared the forthcoming Second Ukrainian Army Congress "inopportune" and was supported by the Petrograd Soviet as well as the Kiev Soviet and the IKS000.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the Ukrainians declared that the congress would be convened on June 18. On June 17 an angry crowd of 3,000 persons protested against Kerensky's prohibition on the congress. At the Petrograd Soviet the Ukrainian Rada was accused of double-dealing for attempting to justify its action as nothing more than the sanctioning of an expression of national feeling, when in fact the Rada was the source for inflaming that nationalism. Finally, on June 23 the Rada issued its first Universal declaring that the Ukrainian people would henceforth decide their own fate, but without separation from Russia. Although this "Supreme Law" announced that the leaders in Kiev would not declare an independent Ukraine, and would abide by the decisions of the forthcoming All-Russian Constituent Assembly, Petrograd rejected the Universal on June 30, appealing to all Ukrainians for cooperation at a time when the army was engaged in the July offensive. The Rada persisted in its position.¹⁶⁸

Tseretelli, the chief architect of Petrograd Soviet policies, now developed a compromise that saved the Ukrainian situation from worsening; at the same time, however, it opened the opportunity for the Kadet ministers to bring down the coalition. Tseretelli and Tereshchenko, for the government,

went to Kiev to induce the Ukrainians to moderate their demands. On their own initiative Kerensky and Nekrasov (with Tereshchenko a triumvirate in the cabinet) joined the delegation. The Rada was transformed into a regional preliminary parliament based on proportional representation for non-Ukrainians and Ukrainians alike, while the secretariat of the Rada became the local agent of the Provisional Government. Though not definitive until sanctioned by the Constituent Assembly, the Ukraine by this agreement would act as an autonomous unit but within the framework of the "revolutionary front of the nation-wide democracy." On the military question Kerensky was adamant in his opposition to the territorial formation of troops, as it would have meant weakening the army by a massive reorganization program. "Closer national union" of Ukrainians would be allowed only where "technically feasible and not injurious to the army's fighting power." The Rada approved the agreement 100 votes to 70 but with many abstentions. In Petrograd the Kadet ministers rejected the compromise.

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Tseretelli tried to save both the agreement and the coalition of socialists and liberals that he had entered only under the threat of civil war. If the Kadets resigned, the coalition might well be doomed; on the other hand, if the compromise with the Ukrainians were not accepted, the results could be equally disastrous, especially for the military in the midst of the July offensive. The Kadets asserted that the agreement permitted too much autonomy for the Ukraine, autonomy not based on a decision made in the forthcoming Constituent Assembly. Furthermore, the negotiators

had exceeded their authority, as granted by the rest of the cabinet. Tseretelli insisted that the agreement was not a surrender to the Ukrainians, but the very best compromise possible under the circumstances. The Ukrainians he noted had withdrawn their most unpalatable demands. The Kadets, nevertheless, resigned from the government when the socialists and the Kerensky triumvirate refused to withdraw the Ukrainian agreement.¹⁷⁰

While the Ukrainian issue was important to the Kadets, it also served as an excuse to end the "illusion of unity" of the coalition. Miliukov and the Kadet ministers had exhausted the patience of Tseretelli and the Petrograd Soviet by refusing to play the role of "bourgeois ministers", reading from a script written by Menshevik leaders. Tseretelli was anxious to maintain the "democratic united front" with the Kadets, but actually played a major role in its downfall by refusing to pursue any political program but the Menshevik one. The Kadets probably did induce the cabinet crisis in order to force Tseretelli into accepting more points of the Kadet program. The resignation of the Kadets forced the socialists to reconsider their position on government in revolutionary Russia. Once more policies in support of revolutionary defensism had led the Petrograd Soviet leaders to an ever more impossible position vis-a-vis the popular masses.¹⁷¹

The Petrograd Soviet either ignored or rejected outright the demands of other nationalities. The Moslem Provisional National Shuro (Council) sought to cooperate with the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet only to be rebuffed by the latter. Chkheidze, the Petrograd Soviet chairman, categorically vetoed Moslem participation in the government on the

ground that parties, not nationalities should compose the coalition. Tseretelli also threw his weight against such participation. Despite differences between the Petrograd Soviet leaders and the Moslem Shuro, the latter did not hesitate to unite with the former against General Lavr Kornilov's march on Petrograd in September 1917 (Shuro sent agitators breaking up the Caucasian Cavalry, the so-called Savage Division, marching on Petrograd to overthrow the Petrograd Soviet and the Kerensky government). Like other minorities, the Moslems wanted a centralized Russian republic in which they would participate in the central administration and have their own cultural autonomy. In Belorussia half of the area was occupied by German and Polish troops and political activity was highly embryonic with the Russian SR's at first and then the Bolsheviks in the fall of 1917 giving direction to the Belorussians. Due to the prominence of a number of Georgian Mensheviks in the Petrograd Soviet and the coalition governments (Tseretelli, Chkheidze, Voitinskii), Georgians generally advanced no national demands until after November 1917. Armenians were supporters of any Russian government as long as it was anti-Turkish; they therefore cooperated with both the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet. Azerbaijani nationalists, masking their pro-Turkish sympathies, cooperated with Petrograd until the Turkish conquest of Transcaucasia in the spring of 1918. The close proximity of Petrograd worked against the nationalist movement in Estonia. Estonians favored a federal republic, to be implemented by the All-Russian Constituent Assembly,

in which the government would recognize the right of self-determination of the peoples of Russia and the use of Estonian in official communications in Estonia. Such modest demands found no argument in Petrograd. In Lithuania, as it was occupied by German troops, little more could be done other than the holding of a provisional Sejm in Petrograd which split into a right wanting amiable separation from Russia and a left demanding that national goals should be above revolutionary ones. Though Latvians in Petrograd and Moscow enthusiastically supported the Petrograd Soviet policy on the nationality question, and there was much discussion about a democratic federated Russian republic (to include Latvia), in reality the anti-Russian feelings of the general populace and the pro-German attitude of the Lettish barons and farmers made such talk inconsequential. Inasmuch as these national groups presented no problems on the scale of the Finnish and Ukrainian questions, their fate was slighted in favor of more pressing issues before the capital Soviet.

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At the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in June the Petrograd Soviet leaders, through Voitinskii and Liber, made their point-of-view on the nationality question unmistakably clear. The nationality question had to be viewed from a revolutionary standpoint first and foremost. The defense of the revolution had to be guaranteed if the rights to be granted by the Constituent Assembly were to be realized. "At this time," explained Liber, "there is not so much the need for making an agreement on the rights of peoples, as for fighting to protect those rights. To speak of self-determination is meaningless as long as no guarantee has been found for harmonious

relations between nations." The revolutionary democracy was not against minority rights, only their priority in the order of the goals of the revolution. The minorities had to help defend the revolution against the German conqueror, the enemy of the freedom of all peoples, they emphasized, and once freed from this oppression could discuss the structure to be founded on the principle of the self-determination of peoples. On the motion of Voitinskii the congress approved "the general principle of granting each nation autonomy." Unilateral decisions by an national group were expressly condemned, however. While the Petrograd Soviet had endorsed cultural autonomy as early as the beginning of May, political and military autonomy were to be limited to the goals of revolutionary defensism. As Viktor Chernov wrote, instead of a great power for constructive work, the pressure of the nationalities was turned into a destructive force: "Petty haggling with each nationality now awakening to historic life, constant dread of getting the worst of a bargain, obstinate striving to postpone and evade payment on the notes presented by history, such was the policy bequeathed by the Provisional Government." ¹⁷³ Such too was the legacy of the Petrograd Soviet.

6. The Constituent Assembly

The Petrograd Soviet leaders postponed most reforms either to avert civil war or because they were democrats and relegated such decisions to the expected Constituent Assembly.¹⁷⁴ Did they, however, use their influence to a sufficient degree to see that the assembly convened at a propitious time?

The ultimate aim of the liberation movement in Russia since the 1870's was the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The 1905 Revolution revived the idea and the first proclamation of the Petrograd Soviet on March 13 called for a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage.¹⁷⁵ The following day Sukhanov broached the subject before the executive committee. Though later indifferent to the body, at the time he urged the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly in order to reinforce "with a legal framework the work of the provisional catastrophe period and make the new status permanent and capable of organic evolution, wider scope, and development to its logical conclusion."¹⁷⁶

On the night of March 14-15 discussions between the Temporary Committee of the State Duma and the Soviet leaders led to agreement on the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The two groups, however, disagreed on a date for the convocation. The Soviet leaders demanded an immediate start on organizing elections and the elections themselves as soon as possible. The liberals considered elections impossible during wartime, particularly in the army.

The liberals also disputed the Soviet leaders' demand that the socialists alone should decide questions concerning the proposed Constituent Assembly.¹⁷⁷ On March 26 the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet leaders again discussed the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The parties now agreed that only "intensified military activities" might delay the opening of the assembly, that the date of convocation would come no later than the middle of summer (though the Soviet leaders considered the date quite late), that the army would participate in elections, and that the government and the Soviet would work out conditions regulating the assembly's elections and its work.¹⁷⁸

Following these initial steps toward convoking the Constituent Assembly, the Petrograd Soviet and the government tended to neglect the matter. According to Voitinskii, "In the beginning the leaders of the Soviet were not seriously interested in this issue, believing it not very important whether the Constituent Assembly convened three months sooner or later."¹⁷⁹ In the government the conviction arose that the assembly could convene only during a lull in military operations, i. e., not before autumn.¹⁸⁰ The Kadets began to urge postponement of elections in order to elect a "better" assembly. They maintained that national elections should follow only after the establishment of strong local administration and the careful preparation of voter lists.¹⁸¹ Even Buchanan, the British Ambassador, urged postponement, claiming the elections would prove disruptive in the armed forces.¹⁸²

Delay enveloped the activity involved in summoning the assem-

bly. Though the government on March 21 took steps to convoke a special council to draft election laws for the assembly, the council was not established until April 7. While Chkheidze on April 6 urged the speeding up of the process summoning the assembly, the Soviet leaders, once the council was set up, delayed its work for two months by bickering over the number of seats allocated to the socialists.¹⁸³ Stankevich noted additional complications in convoking the assembly, when he declared before the All-Russian Conference of Soviets in April that "the Constituent Assembly cannot be summoned before September" as local self-government had not drawn up the electoral lists.¹⁸⁴ Reformed local self-government, however, did not exist; the municipal reform statute appeared only on April 28 and the zemstvo (rural) reform as late as June 3.¹⁸⁵ Chernov questioned later why the voters' list for the Constituent Assembly was not drawn up at the same time as those for municipal and zemstvo elections?¹⁸⁶ "This was an insolent question, regarded by the liberal bourgeois wing of the government and its learned commission of jurists as an insult to the eternal principles of constitutional law," the SR leader wrote.¹⁸⁷

By June "the Soviet had realized the danger of further delay"; Voitinskii recalled later, and therefore used its influence in the coalition government to set the date for elections to the assembly on September 30 and its convocation on October 3.¹⁸⁸ F. F. Kokoshkin, the Kadet head of the special council, had had a serious clash with Tseretelli and Chernov over convoking the assembly as early as October 3, and though the Soviet leaders won out in the government,

Kokoshkin's Kadet-dominated council succeeded in delaying the convocation date.¹⁸⁹ In addition to needing more time to draw up the voters' lists, the Kadets even found that not enough paper was available for the sealed envelopes required for secret balloting.¹⁹⁰ Despite protests from the Soviet leaders, the Provisional Government on August 22 delayed the convocation of the Constituent Assembly until December 11.¹⁹¹ While the Soviet leaders acknowledged the need for some delay, they found the convocation date of December 11 inordinately late.¹⁹² On September 25 the SR Central Committee "unanimously decreed, as an ultimatum" that "the convocation of the Constituent Assembly must not be delayed." Chernov remarked that by this late date this was "a conversation in the realm of shadow."¹⁹³ "This was the chief disease of the 1917 Revolution--tardiness," the SR leader added.¹⁹⁴

Tseretelli recollected later that the chief mistake of the Petrograd Soviet leaders was allowing the delay of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.¹⁹⁵ While the Soviet did initially neglect the Constituent Assembly, were they also guilty of too readily accepting the Kadet position that technical election difficulties made postponement inevitable? Could elections have occurred earlier than November 26?

N. D. Avksent'ev, the SR chairman of the All-Russian Peasants' Soviet and a frequent participant in "Star Chamber" deliberations, became Minister of Interior in August and thereby general supervisor of the voting machinery for the Constituent Assembly. He found the electoral process beset with difficulties and therefore

urged that the populace vote in at least one local election before voting for the assembly. He remarked that in some areas the peasants had even refused to vote.¹⁹⁶ Were technical election difficulties, the vastness of Russia, the lack of a democratic tradition causes for delaying the elections? True the political consciousness of the peasantry was low, but if political education was necessary, when would the elections take place? In such a case the government had to accomplish something more than provisional solutions. Russian had elected four national assemblies, the first two on a fairly broad franchise. Furthermore, the lack of a democratic tradition did not prohibit elections from finally taking place after the Bolshevik coup. Technical difficulties had not prevented a hardly democratically trained France in 1848 from mounting an election in two and a half months after the outbreak of revolution, and, though much smaller than Russia, the progress in communications by 1917¹⁹⁷ more than offset this last disparity.

While some have accused the Soviet leaders of merely "tailing along behind the Kadets" in delaying the Constituent Assembly, the matter was probably much deeper than this.¹⁹⁸ Throughout the revolution the Soviet leaders had to compromise to avert civil war. They joined a coalition government for this reason alone; they compromised on their peace program for this reason; they came close to transforming their policy of revolutionary defensism into patriotic offensism; they preached calm and patience to the masses concerning reforms. When their peace program faded away, nothing remained except the glimmer of the Constituent Assembly to which they had de-

ferred so much and which they finally also deferred into oblivion. Was it the specter of civil war that led to this tragic decision? No testimony exists to support such a supposition, only the record of the Soviet leaders' past actions leads to such a conclusion.

Was a Constituent Assembly really necessary to accomplish reforms? As democrats the Soviet leaders certainly thought so. Yet, as Sukhanov noted later, "It did not, after all, occur to anyone that the question of concluding peace could wait for the Constituent Assembly. Nor would anyone, least of all the employers themselves, expect the conditions of labor to remain the same after the revolution had been accomplished. . . . For what we were in the midst of was a revolution. . . ." ¹⁹⁹ The Soviet leaders apparently never realized that the Kadets did not wish a Constituent Assembly unless built upon the wake of nationalism resulting from a military victory over the Germans. ²⁰⁰ While the Soviet leaders risked all in April to force the Miliukov-oriented government to accept its peace program, they never appeared willing to do so for reforms and the Constituent Assembly. Would they continue to act as reluctant revolutionaries even in the face of popular uprisings urging them onward?

FOOTNOTES

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3. P. V. Volobuev, Ekonomicheskaiia politika vremennogo pravitel'stva (Moscow, 1962), pp. 141, 389; Vestnik vremennago pravitel'stva (Petrograd), No. 61, May 24/June 6, 1917, p. 3 gives Prokopovich's statement.
4. A. I. Konovalov, "Moscow Stock Exchange Address," April 1/14, 1917 in A. J. Sack, The Birth of Russian Democracy (New York: The Russian Information Bureau, c. 1918), pp. 258-71; S. O. Zagorsky, State Control of Industry in Russia during the War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), pp. 167-70.
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6. "Ekonomicheskaiia programma ispolnitel'nogo komiteta soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov," in P. O. Gorin, ed., Organizatsiia i stroitel'stvo sovetov R. D. v 1917 godu: sbornik dokumentov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo kommunisticheskoi akademii, 1928), p. 203.
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8. Victor Chernov, The Great Russian Revolution, trans. and ed. Philip E. Mosely (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), pp. 213-14.
9. Gornozadodskoe delo (Kharkov), No. 26-27 (1917), p. 16059.
10. Zagorsky, p. 176.
11. I. G. Tseretelli, Vospominaniia o fevral'skoi revoliutsii (2 vols; Paris: Mouton & Cie., 1963), I, pp. 439, 433-34.
12. Konovalov's resignation message is given in Vestnik vremennago pravitel'stva (Petrograd), No. 57, May 18/31, 1917, p. 3.
13. Rech' (Petrograd), May 14/27, 1917.
14. Tseretelli, I, pp.
15. Chernov, pp. 215-16.
16. Ibid.

17. Zagorsky, pp. 227-28.
18. Ibid., pp. 233-34.
19. Izvestiia, No. 100, June 24/July 7, 1917, p. 6.
20. Alexander M. Michelson, Paul N. Apostol, Michael W. Bernatzky, Russian Public Finance during the War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), pp. 191-214; 259, 261, 268-80; 379-81, 385-401.
21. Michelson, pp. 389-90. The Soviet resolution and the All-Russian Soviet appeal are given in Izvestiia, No. 48, April 23/May 5, 1917, p. 2 and Izvestiia, No. 103, June 28/July 11, 1917, p. 1. The quotation from Den' (Petrograd), May 10/23, 1917 issue; also see Chernov, p. 220.
22. Zagorsky, pp. 180-83.
23. Ibid., pp. 186-87.
24. Z. Lozinskii, Ekonomicheskaiia politika vremennago pravitel'stva (Leningrad, 1929), p. 48; Russia, Vremennogo pravitel'stva, Zhurnally zasedanii vremennago pravitel'stva (Petrograd: Gos. tipografiia, 1917), No. 91.
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27. Russia, Vremennago pravitel'stva, Zhurnally zasedanii vremennago pravitel'stva (Petrograd: Gos. tipografiia, 1917), No. 137, July 19/August 1, 1917 gives discussion of the tobacco increases; Utro rossii (Moscow), July 22/July 5, 1917 discusses the purchasing power of the workers.
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31. Tseretelli, I, pp. 49-50.
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33. Izvestiia, No. 8, March 7/20, 1917, p. 1.

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35. Izvestiia, No. 10, March 9/22, 1917, p. 1.
36. Ibid., No. 12, March 11/24, 1917, p. 1.
37. Torgovo-Promyshlennaia gazeta, March 16/29, 1917.
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172. For Shuro's offer see Serge A. Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 155; for Belorussia see Pipes, pp. 73-75; W. S. Woytinsky, La Democratie géorgienne (Paris, 1921), p. 86 discusses the Georgians and the Petrograd Soviet; for the Armenians see Pipes, pp. 101-102; for the Azerbaijani see ibid., p. 99; for the Baltic peoples see Dimanshtein, pp. 224-60.
173. For Liber's statement and other discussions of the national question at the Congress see Dimanshtein, pp. 98-116. Chernov's statement is in op. cit., pp. 286-87.
174. Woytinsky, p. 312; Tseretelli, I, p. 474.
175. Izvestiia, No. 1, February 28/March 13, 1917, p. 2.
176. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, I, p. 107.
177. Ibid., pp. 122-23, 147.
178. Izvestiia, No. 14, March 14/27, 1917, p. 2.
179. Woytinsky, p. 312.
180. P. N. Miliukov, Istoriia vtoroi russkoi revoliutsii (Sofia, 1921-23), Part 1, pp. 68-69.
181. Chernov, p. 407; Woytinsky, p. 312.
182. George Alexander Lensen, ed. and trans., War and Revolution: Excerpts from the Letters and Diaries of the Countess Olga Poutiatine (Tallahassee, Florida: The Diplomatic Press, n.d.), p. 64.
183. Den' (Petrograd), No. 56, May 11/24, 1917, p. 1.
184. Chernov, p. 408.

185. Robert Paul Browder and Alexander F. Kerensky, eds., The Russian Provisional Government 1917: Documents (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961), I, pp. 261, 272.
186. Chernov, p. 408.
187. Ibid.
188. Woytinsky, p. 312.
189. Chernov, pp. 408-09, Woytinsky, p. 312.
190. Woytinsky, p. 312.
191. Browder and Kerensky, I, pp. 452-53.
192. Rabochaia gazeta (Petrograd), No. 130, August 11/24, 1917, p. 1. Izvestiia, No. 140, August 10/23, 1917, p. 3.
193. Chernov, p. 409.
194. Ibid.
195. Tseretelli, II, p. 403.
196. Delo naroda (Petrograd), No. 121, August 8/21, 1917; Volia naroda (Petrograd), No. 88, August 10/23, 1917; Sukhanov, Zapiski, V, p. 130.
197. Radkey, p. 356.
198. Ibid.
199. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, I, p. 188.
200. N. Rubinstein, K istorii uchreditel'nogo sobraniiia (Moscow-Leningrad, 1931), pp. 7-11.

CHAPTER VI
THE SOVIET UNDER SIEGE

1. The Urban Masses in Revolt

From July 16 to 18 workers and soldiers emptied onto the streets of the capital demanding the abolition of the Provisional Government and the assumption of state power by the Petrograd Soviet. The popular outbreak followed upon a rising wave of strikes in Petrograd factories, political friction between authorities in the capital and the masses of nearby Kronstadt, the Provisional Government's storming of a popular anarchist center, the transfer of more troops to the front from a Petrograd garrison increasingly rebellious over projected offensive operations, and an aborted mass demonstration set for June 23.

Did the governmental crisis, the July offensive, a partisan political conspiracy (i. e. by the Bolsheviki or anarchists), or socio-economic needs of the masses and the very lives of the soldiers precipitate the outbreak? A mass protest stemming from a political cause constituted a severe challenge to internal stability and thus a threat to the Petrograd Soviet's policy of revolutionary defensism; an outbreak springing from socio-economic demands was a clear indictment of the Soviet's policy of provisional change until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

The first signs of overt popular unrest occurred among the workers. From the latter part of May and throughout June worker unrest swept the country from end to end with the large concentration of workers in the capital leading the way. As Trotsky noted in his history of 1917, "The strikes were especially stormy among the more backward and exploited groups of workers. Laundry workers, dyers, coopers, unskilled workers, shoemakers, paper-box makers, sausage makers, furniture workers, were striking, layer after layer, throughout the month of June."¹ While the impulse to strike reached the most backward and least organized groups of workers, the skilled and organized workers turned from individual economic strikes to making political demands that might lead to bettering their increasingly impoverished condition. As early as April 26 the workers of the Old Parviainen metal factory passed a strongly worded resolution demanding among other things, the retirement of the Provisional Government, "which only slows up the revolution"² During May and June more and more factories passed similar resolutions. On June 13 the Workers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet, reflecting the spontaneous reelections to the Soviet plenum that began in May, passed a Bolshevik resolution that power should be in the hands of the Soviets.³ On June 30 the newly created Central Council of Factory Committees called on workers to go into the streets and demand the transfer of state power to the Soviets.⁴

Other events occurred during this time that spurred the popular masses to demand the transfer of state power from the government coalition to the Soviet. The Anarchist-Communists, one of two major anar-

chist organizations in Petrograd, momentarily confiscated the printing press of the rightwing newspaper Rusaskaia volia on June 18. While the government and Petrograd Soviet leaders had long looked askance at the anarchists' seizure of the villa of the former tsarist minister Durnovo, until the attack upon the conservative organ, the Anarchist-Communist were left alone. Two days after the confiscation, the Minister of Justice ordered the anarchists to vacate the Villa Durnovo. They refused to comply and the Vyborg soldiers and workers supported their neighbors through strikes and mass protests. The executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet received appeals from the popular masses to take steps against the eviction and to secure "to the 'toiling people' the possession of the villa." Once more the Petrograd Soviet became the mediator between the government and the populace. At its afternoon session on June 21, the bureau of the Soviet Executive Committee requested the government to rescind temporarily its ultimatum to the anarchists. L.D. Sokolov and I. P. Goldenberg of the bureau drafted an appeal to those on strike to resume work, while A. R. Gotz and V. A. Anisimov of the "Star Chamber" went to Villa Durnovo to formulate a compromise with the anarchists. Gotz and Anisimov reported to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, then in session, that the anarchists demanded not only retention of the villa, but the release as well of all socialists and anarchists arrested since March, and the confiscation for socialist and anarchist purposes of Rech' (the Kadet organ), Rusaskaia volia, and the rightwing paper, Novoe vremia. Instead the Congress voted a resolution quite similar to that of the Petrograd Soviet executive's, urging workers to return to their jobs and affirming the absolute unacceptability

of armed demonstrations without the specific authorization of the Petrograd Soviet. The Congress, with the government's acceptance, postponed the eviction of the anarchists from Villa Durnovo, pending an investigation of the matter. According to Tseretelli, the failure of the Congress and the government to deal decisively with the anarchists, led to worse consequences later: "The indecisiveness exhibited by the Congress and the government on the matter of the Anarchists reassured the Bolshevik Central Committee, while the unrest on the Vyborg side heightened tension in the capital." Furthermore, that the matter came up before the Congress rather than the government handling the situation revealed the weakness of the Provisional Government. By assuming the responsibility for dealing with the affair, the Soviet Congress indirectly encouraged the mass psychology of "All Power to the Soviets."⁵

Besides the increasing number of strikes and spontaneous popular protests such as the Villa Durnovo affair, the first report of organized protest occurred in the Petrograd garrison on June 5. The Bolshevik Military Organization informed its party's central committee that the Pavlovskii, Izmailovskii, Grenadier guards, and the 1st Reserve Infantry regiments, among others, "were ready to go out on their own if a positive decision were not adopted at the center," of the Bolshevik party.⁶ At nearby Kronstadt naval base plans were underway for a mass garrison demonstration in the capital when the Bolshevik Military Organization added their efforts to organize the protest and include participation by the Petrograd garrison. On June 17 several hundred Kronstadt sailors and troops from the Petrograd garrison staged a peaceful demonstration in honor of the dead heroes of the March coup d'état.⁷ Bolshevik leaders

heatedly debated the proposition for a mass demonstration of soldiers and sailors, as all party members acknowledged that the Petrograd Soviet would vigorously oppose such a move.⁸

While popular unrest grew, central authority came under attack from local and provincial soviets. In the capital the Schlüsselburg district soviet declared their sector a free republic and organized a red guard of former criminals and undesirables. Schlüsselburg issued a decree "nationalizing" the land and all factories in the district. The capital Soviet chairman, after great difficulty, persuaded the Schlüsselburg Soviet to nullify its decree. The Tsaritsin, Krasnoiarsk, and Krasnodar Soviets, among others, telegraphed the Petrograd Soviet that they would only recognize the authority of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, then in session, as the legitimate government of Russia.⁹ At nearby Kronstadt, the Petrograd Soviet received what was in essence a challenge to its authority. The Kronstadt Soviet had arrested a number of officers at the time of the March coup, but by continuing to hold them "in pre-trial custody" had assumed governmental powers. Neither the Petrograd Soviet nor the Provisional Government recognized Kronstadt's right to perform governmental functions, but the capital took no action against the usurpation until the Kronstadt Soviet issued a decree on May 29 declaring that it exercised sole local authority and on national matters would deal directly with the Petrograd Soviet. The action followed an attempt by Voitinskii, the "Star Chamber's" trouble-shooter, to gain the transfer of the incarcerated Kronstadt officers to Petrograd. Now the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet summoned the leaders of the Kronstadt Soviet to Petrograd to explain their resolution. As the statement was less than satisfactory to

Petrograd, Tseretelli and Skobelev went to Kronstadt, gained the Kronstadt Bolsheviks' agreement to their program, exacted a promise from the Kronstadt Soviet to transfer all prisoners to the government and obtained a declaration of Kronstadt's obedience to the Petrograd regime. Under pressure from the local sailors, however, the Kronstadt Soviet reversed the Tseretelli compromise and reaffirmed itself as sole authority in Kronstadt. On June 9 Tseretelli carried through the Petrograd Soviet a resolution condemning the "apostasy" of "anarchist" Kronstadt from the "revolutionary democracy," by a majority of 580 votes against 162, with 74 abstentions. The next day the All-Russian Peasants' Congress opened in Petrograd and after hearing Tseretelli's report on the Kronstadt situation, refused to hear Trotsky's rebuttal and even threatened to "refuse foodstuffs to Kronstadt." While Trotsky claimed credit for resolving the crisis on practical grounds by releasing the officers, in fact Kronstadt yielded under the threat of the mainland's big guns. While the authority of the central governmental apparatus was saved, it had been won at a price. As Trotsky announced in defense of Kronstadt on June 9 before the Petrograd Soviet plenum, "when a counter-revolutionary general tries to throw a noose around the neck of the revolution, the Kadets will soap the rope, and the Kronstadt sailors will come to fight and die with us."¹⁰

The rising wave of strikes, the unrest in the Petrograd garrison and the Villa Durnovo and Kronstadt affairs brought to a head a demand initiated in the garrison on June 5 that the Bolsheviks lead a mass demonstration in the streets of Petrograd to transfer "All power to

the Soviets". As a result, the Bolshevik leadership voted to sponsor a demonstration for June 23. Though both the Soviet Congress and the Petrograd Soviet on June 21 outlawed any armed demonstration not authorized by the capital Soviet, the Bolsheviks, nevertheless, enticed even supporters of the other socialist parties inasmuch as the demonstration appeal was for the transfer of state power to the Menshevik-SR controlled Petrograd Soviet and All-Russian Congress of Soviets.¹¹

Though the Bolsheviks tried to make the preparations for the demonstration as secret as possible, the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee learned of it on the afternoon of June 22 and immediately informed the presidium of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the Provisional Government. Both the Petrograd Soviet and the Soviet Congress had not only condemned unauthorized armed demonstrations, but also had voted the Provisional Government their full cooperation and support. As the demonstrators would be armed and demanding "All Power to the Soviets", the decisions of the Soviet bodies would appear to be repudiated by the very popular masses they were supposed to represent. Furthermore, as Tseretelli recalled later, "The direct consequence of this demonstration would be corpses on the streets of Petrograd, the discrediting of the democracy unable to protect the capital from such eruptions, and the strengthening of counterrevolutionary currents in the country."¹²

The Soviet bodies set about at once to halt the demonstration. Chkheidze, Gotz, Dan, and Tseretelli of the Congress presidium drafted an appeal to the populace which the Congress plenum adopted at a

12:30 A. M. meeting. It partially declared:

The Bolshevik Party calls you into the streets.

This appeal was prepared without the knowledge and authorization of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies . . . , the All Russian Congress . . . , the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies and all the Socialist parties.

Do not do what you are called upon to do.

In this uneasy time you are called into the streets to voice a demand for the overthrow of the Provisional Government, the support of which the All-Russian Congress has just acknowledged as necessary

Not a single demonstration should be held today.¹³

The Congress also appointed a Bureau for Counteracting the Demonstration and outlawed all demonstrations for a three-day period. After the session members of the Congress fanned out across the capital to persuade the workers and soldiers not to demonstrate. "All night long, without a wink of sleep," reported the Moscow Izvestiia, "a majority of the Congress, more than five hundred members, dividing themselves into tens, traveled throughout the factories and shops and military units of Petrograd, urging everyone to stay away from the demonstration The Congress had no authority in a good many of the factories and shops, and also in several regiments of the garrison. . . . The members were frequently met in a far from friendly manner, sometimes hostilely, and quite often they were sent away with insults."¹⁴ Particularly revealing is the report of Congress member, N. Voronovich, who represented the Luga garrison. He recalls an exchange between Dr. Levich, a Congress member, and the Reserve guards of the Grenadier regiment:

'What do you want?' asked Levich, 'Do you demand the proclamation of Soviet power?'

The crowd of thousands confirmed his words.

'It is excellent' continued Levich, 'Let it be your way. We will notify the Soviet authorities. Just who among you will rise to the head of authority? A Council of Ministers?'

'Down with Ministers,' roared the crowd, 'All Power to the Soviets!'

'Just which Soviet will assume power?' asked Levich, 'The Soviet of Petrograd or the Soviet of Kronstadt?'

The crowd of soldiers was dumbfounded . . . a grenadier stepped forward and announced: 'Neither the Petrograd Soviet nor the Kronstadt Soviet will elect the Government. The Congress of Soviets will do so.'

'There, we have come to an understanding with you,' smiled Levich, 'This means that the Supreme Organ of State Power is the Congress of Soviets.'

'Correct,' roared the crowd, 'All Power to the Soviets. Down with the Provisional Government!'

'On behalf of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets,' continued Levich, 'I suggest that you obey the decisions of this Congress and return to your barracks to await its orders . . .'¹⁵

At 2:00 A. M. on June 23, the day set for the demonstration, the Bolsheviks reversed their position and joined the Congress members in the streets and the barracks calling on the workers and soldiers not to demonstrate that day.¹⁶

On June 24 a commission of Mensheviks and SR's met to consider how to prevent similar threats in the future. According to Tseretelli, the solitary account of the meeting, a bitter split developed within the Menshevik-SR leadership: Gotz, Liber, and Ermolaev supporting Tseretelli, and Dan, Bogdanov, and Khinchuk opposing him.

"We cannot satisfy ourselves with an ideological fight with the Bolsheviks and verbal prohibitions of armed demonstrations," Tseretelli maintained, "but must at the same time adopt practical measures to make it impossible for them to consider armed attacks on the democratic system."¹⁸ Tseretelli demanded the disarming of military regiments and units of the Red Guard under Bolshevik control. The opposition argued that such action was contrary to democratic principles and would only strengthen the Bolsheviks. They required only public condemnation of the Bolsheviks and the prohibition of future armed demonstrations. Though a majority of the commission favored the latter measures, Tseretelli took his argument later that same day to a closed session of the highest Soviet organs: the presidium of the Congress, the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee, and the bureaus of each of the Soviet parties. This meeting demanded an explanation from the Bolsheviks for what Dan called a "political adventure". Kamenev (in Lenin's absence) asked what all the fuss was about, as the Bolsheviks had merely scheduled a peaceful demonstration which "flowed out of the right of the revolution and which had never been questioned before". "Where," asked Kamenev, "was there any illegality in this? Where was there any disloyalty?"¹⁹ Tseretelli, his face white as a sheet jumped to his feet and interrupted those questioning Kamenev, charging:

What has happened is nothing but a plot against the revolution, a conspiracy for the overthrow of the government and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, who know that they can never get this power in any other way. The

conspiracy was rendered harmless when we discovered it. But it may be repeated tomorrow. They say that counter-revolution has raised its head. That is not true. Counterrevolution has not raised its head, but lowered it. Counterrevolution can penetrate to us only through one door: through the Bolsheviks. What the Bolsheviks are doing is no longer ideological propaganda. It is a plot. The weapon of criticism is not being replaced by criticism with weapons. Let the Bolsheviks accuse us as they will. Now we will go over to other methods of struggle. The revolutionaries who cannot wield their arms worthily must have their arms taken away. The Bolsheviks must be disarmed. We will not permit any conspiracies.²⁰

Kamenev immediately screamed back at Tseretelli: "Mr. Minister, if you are not talking wildly, do not confine yourself to words. Arrest me and try me for plotting against the revolution!"²¹ The Bolsheviks stormed out of the meeting. Tseretelli now became the object of attack. Sukhanov found the evidence insufficient to support a charge of conspiracy against the Bolsheviks. The Inter-districtite A. V. Lunacharskii maintained that the Bolsheviks intended only a peaceful demonstration and had always been "against Blanquist conspiracies." The SR S. Saakian and the Trudovik V. Bronzov suggested that reactionary Black Hundreds had made the demonstration appear worse than intended. Iu. O. Martov, the leader of the Menshevik-Internationalists, however, cut to the heart of the debate: "Much has been said here about Bolshevik adventurism, but don't forget that you are dealing not with a small group of Bolsheviks but with the great masses of workers who stand behind them. Instead of trying to attract these masses of workers away from Bolshevik influence, you hasten to measures which create a gulf between you and the more active part of the prole-

tariat Instead of applying force, shouldn't we tell the workers that their dissatisfaction is justified and that the Congress will speed up the passage of reforms in the control and organization of industry?" The right socialists, Kerensky, Avksent'ev, Znamenskii, Liber, A. A. Vilenkin, a Fifth Army delegate, came to Tseretelli's defense. When the meeting adjourned for each delegation to discuss the question before taking a final vote, the SR-Menshevik bloc approved by a narrow margin an initial proposition by Dan that demonstrations be permitted only with the knowledge and approval of the Soviets, that military units might take part in such demonstrations, and that any party disobeying this position be excluded from the Soviets. Tseretelli reluctantly accepted the resolution and the Soviet Congress adopted it the evening of June 25.²²

At the June 25th meeting the Soviet Congress also voted to schedule a peaceful demonstration on July 1 as a farewell parting for the socialist delegates about to go abroad to make preparations for the international peace conference at Stockholm. The real reason for the demonstration, however, was to appease the Bolsheviks and channel the popular unrest into support for the Soviet Congress. The trio that opposed Tseretelli on condemning the Bolsheviks for June 23 proposed the demonstration; Chkheidze was skeptical and Voitinskii "violently opposed it, arguing that the masses of workers in the capital knew nothing about our delegation or believed what the Communists had told them. Besides, the Bolsheviks had made all their preparations for a demonstration, while the major-

ity of the Executive Committee had not had time even to get flags and placards ready."²³ The Bolsheviks saw that they could turn the demonstration to their advantage and they resolved "to transform the demonstration, against the will of the Soviet."²⁴ Inasmuch as Pravda on June 27 made these Bolshevik intentions public, Petrograd Soviet leaders made a feeble attempt to limit parade banner slogans to those approved by the Soviet organizers. When this failed to come to a vote, a few delegates urged the cancellation of the demonstration. The majority of the Petrograd Soviet, however, felt confident of their position with the popular masses and underestimated the strength of the Bolsheviks and anarchists.²⁵

Though the Soviet Congress even appointed a special committee under the supervision of Bogdanov to oversee the demonstration, the Bolsheviks turned the demonstration to their complete advantage. When Sukhanov went to the Champ de Mars to watch the demonstration, he saw only banners inscribed with Bolshevik slogans: "All Power to the Soviets", "Peace to the Huts--War to the Palaces," and "Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers." A small group from Plekhanov's Edinstvo faction paraded under a banner inscribed, "All Power to the Provisional Government," only to be set upon brutally and dispersed from the march. Some Anarchist-Communists, the only demonstrators to carry arms, called for the establishment of the commune and the abolition of the government and of capital. While some of the demonstrators at the reviewing stand exacted from Chkheidze a promise to look into the recent arrest of the editor of the Bolshevik Military Organization's frontline newspaper, Okopnaia

pravda, a force of Anarchist-Communists and soldiers assaulted the prison in which editor F. P. Khaustov was being held and gained his release. Not only were a number of political prisoners released at the same time, but some 200 dangerous criminals as well. As the Anarchist-Communists and army of the escapees went to the anarchist headquarters after the prison breakout, the Provisional Government responded by storming the Villa Durnovo.

The next day the Petrograd Soviet heard long and loud protests about the government's assault on the Durvono Villa, the "murder" of the Anarchist-Communist leader Asnin during the course of the raid, and the mass arrest of Anarchist-Communists. The Petrograd Soviet's executive committee set up a special investigation committee and ordered the immediate release of those arrested at the raid not accused of specific crimes. Despite these actions, the threat of renewed demonstrations arose.²⁷

The next day, July 3, the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet heard rumors that the First Machine Gun regiment was urging troops of the Petrograd garrison to support an armed demonstration. While the Villa Durvovo raid had raised the tempers of the First Machine Gun regiment, the real cause of their renewed activity was an order of the government's on July 3 that the large stocks of garrison weapons (e. g., 500 machine guns from the First Machine Gun regiment) and the transfer of as much as two-thirds of some garrison regiments to the front lines. Only the day before the government had officially announced the opening of the July offensive against the Austrians and Germans. Now the government

demanded these soldiers' lay their lives on the line and forgot its promise that units participating in the March coup would not be disarmed or removed from Petrograd. The Petrograd Soviet executive committee sent the following telegram to all garrison units:

According to information received by the Executive Committee, the First Machine Gun regiment has sent delegates to all units with a proposal to demonstrate against the Provisional Government. The Executive Committee's Military Section absolutely condemns the machine gunners' call, which acts against the All-Russian Congress and Petrograd Soviet and is a stab in the back of the army heroically and selfishly fighting at the front for the triumph of the revolution, the establishment of universal peace, and the common good of all people²⁸

The Bolsheviks added their efforts to those of the Petrograd Soviet and the machine gunners halted their activity but not without issuing a solemn warning: "If the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies threatens this and other revolutionary regiments with forcible dissolution, in response we will likewise not stop at using armed strength to break up the Provisional Government and other organizations supporting it."²⁹

The machine gunners, though ordered to send 30 detachments, finally agreed to transferring 10 units from the First Machine Gun regiment to the front, but only after great difficulty and the urgent appeal of the All-Russian Congress. The last straw came on July 13 when a representative of the military section of the Petrograd Soviet tried to mediate with the machine gunners on a new governmental request to transfer additional large numbers of men and weapons to the front lines. This time the regiment did not

even trust its leaders and insisted on initiating an armed demonstration to overthrow the Provisional Government. Indeed, the machine gunners informed the Bolsheviks that with large stock of weapons at their disposal they alone could overthrow the government. The Anarchist-Communist encouraged the machine gunners in their preparations for the demonstration, while the Bolshevik Military Organization made plans in case a demonstration materialized (though the Bolshevik Central Committee ordered its military organization not to participate in the movement and to take all measures necessary to prevent an outbreak). Negotiations between the military section of the Petrograd Soviet and the regimental committee of the machine gunners resulted in a "last" shipment of troops to the front on the night of July 15.³⁰

When negotiations resumed between the Military Section of the Petrograd Soviet and the machine gunners' regimental committee the next day, a Provisional Revolutionary Committee was set up and emissaries selected to mobilize the garrison against the government. While the Litovskii, Volinskii, and Preobrazhenskii regiments rejected the machine gunners appeal, being "benevolently neutral," the Moskovskii, 180th Reserve Infantry, Finliandskii, Grenadier, and Pavlovskii regiments as well as the Sixth Engineer battalion appear to have received the call favorably. Ten to twenty thousand Kronstadt sailors and some thirty thousand Putilov metal workers soon joined the machine gunners' appeal. By 7:00 P. M. on July 16 the capital was in turmoil.³¹

The Petrograd Soviet leaders first learned of the mobiliza-

tion of a new demonstration at 11:00 A. M. on July 16. The executive committee had just approved Tseretelli's motion that the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets take up the reorganization of the cabinet (the Kadet ministers having resigned that day). At an afternoon meeting of the bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and All-Russian Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies the delegates learned that Russian forces at the front were everywhere under attack by the Germans and suffering heavy casualties. Both the news of the Kadet resignations and the reversal at the front appeared in the evening press of July 16, undoubtedly escalating the tumult already gripping the capital.³²

Tseretelli and the other Soviet leaders followed their usual practice of dealing with a crisis by issuing an appeal for order and sending delegates to the workers and soldiers to halt the movement. By 7:00 P. M. the following appeal appeared throughout Petrograd:

COMRADE SOLDIERS AND WORKERS:

Contrary to the clearly expressed will of all socialist parties, without exception, certain obscure persons are calling you to go out armed into the streets. It is in this way that you are asked to protest against the disbandment of regiments which have discredited themselves at the front by criminally violating their duty to the revolution.

We, authorized representatives of the revolutionary democracy of all Russia, issue this statement to you:

The disbandment of regiments at the front was carried out at the insistence of army and frontal organizations and in compliance with the order from our Minister of War, Comrade A. F. Kerensky, who was selected by us.

An action taken in defense of the disbanded regiments is an action against our brothers who are shedding their blood at the front.

We remind comrade soldiers that no military unit has the right to go out armed without a call for such action by the Commander, who acts in complete accord with us.

Anyone who violates this resolution during the troubled days that Russian is going through will be denounced by us as traitors and enemies of the revolution.

All available measures at our disposal will be adopted for implementing the present resolution.

BUREAU OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF SOVIETS OF
WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES
BUREAU OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE OF PEASANTS' SOVIETS³³

In addition to this posted proclamation, all units of the Petrograd Military District received telegrams instructing that "Some military units have violated the instructions of the All-Russian Congress which has prohibited armed demonstrations Comrades, beware of provocateurs. Defend your Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies against the forces of disorganizers who undermine it. Save the unity of the revolutionary forces" ³⁴ As for sending Soviet delegates among the demonstrators, no one wanted the assignment. Finally, Kamenev and Shliapnikov, Bolsheviki, agreed to confront the workers and soldiers. The appeals of the Soviets, unlike previous situations, this time fell on deaf ears, and the demonstration continued to expand. ³⁵

At 7:00 P. M. on July 16 a meeting of the Workers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet, scheduled originally for July 14³⁶ resulted in a further erosion of Menshevik-SR bloc dominance in the capital Soviet. While the original purpose of the meeting was a Bolshevik proposal for dealing with counterrevolution,³⁷ once Kamenev, Trotsky, and Zinov'ev learned from their party headquarters that the Bolshevik party could not contain the demonstration then in progress, they proposed that the Petrograd Soviet assume the task of insuring that the demonstration would be peaceful.³⁸ In a bitter exchange between the proponents of this plan and the Menshevik-SR bloc, the latter walked out of the meeting and the Bolshevik proposition carried, including a vote in favor of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets taking governmental power.³⁹ While the decision appears to have had no significant affect on the demonstration,⁴⁰ it did require, even if momentarily, the Menshevik-SR leaders to shift their base of power to the board of directors in the bureau of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets.

At 10:00 P. M. the machine gunners appeared at the Tauride Palace and demanded that the Soviets assume state power. Chkheidze and Voitinskii asked the troops if their appearance in the streets meant that they no longer recognized the power of the All-Russian Executive Committee. The soldiers responded that they recognized the executive, but they had heard rumors that the executive committee was about to enter a new coalition with reactionary capital. The machine gunners demanded, "All Power to the Soviets!" Voitinskii informed the soldiers that the All-Russian Executive Committee was about to

meet and would make decisions in conformity with the desires of all the Russian people. not a solitary regiment. The soldiers announced that they would wait for the executive's decision.⁴¹

At midnight the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet opened in extraordinary session. Dan immediately called on all members present to bind themselves to the decisions of the session or leave the meeting. Trotsky, Riazanov, Uritskii, and Iurenev (Interdistrictites) walked out of the meeting. Sukhanov and Mariia Spiridonova heatedly attacked the Dan-Chkheidze proposition, but it passed by an overwhelming majority. Trotsky returned later with several Bolsheviks and also attempted to reverse the decision but without success. The session passed in charges and counter-charges. Then one concrete proposition exploded like a bomb: Tsere-telli suggested that the plenum of the All-Russian Soviet convene in Moscow, where it could work free from mob pressure. The proposition attracted support only from the peasant delegates who did not visualize the political implications: admittance by the Soviets that they could not maintain stability even in the capital much less the nation. Bogdanov at sunrise finally called for adjournment of the session and proposed that all members mingle with the workers and soldiers to head off any impending demonstrations scheduled for that day. As the meeting closed the following appeal was adopted:

COMRADE WORKERS AND SOLDIERS!

. . . The All-Russian executive organs of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies indignantly oppose all attempts to influence their will by force. It is outrageous that a

part of the garrison in one city should attempt to force its will on the whole of Russia by means of armed demonstration. . . .

The All-Russian executive organs of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies demand that such demonstrations, which bring shame to revolutionary Petrograd, be ended once and for all. The Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies call on all those who defend the revolution and its conquests to wait for the decision of the lawful organs of democracy on the government crisis. All those to whom the cause of freedom is dear must accept this decision, which will be an expression of the voice of all revolutionary Russia.⁴²

Despite the Soviet efforts, by 10:00 A. M. on July 17 demonstrations were again in progress. The Bolsheviks had circulated an appeal at 4:00 A. M. emphasizing the need for a new power which only the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies could realize; the Bolsheviks urged the demonstrators to be peaceful.⁴³ At 10:30 A.M. machine gunners from Oranienbaum and sailors from Kronstadt descended on Petrograd and marched straightaway to Bolshevik headquarters where a reluctant Lenin addressed them.⁴⁴ The Bolshevik leader informed the throng of his confidence in the eventual realization of "All Power to the Soviets" but admonished the sailors to be peaceful, determined and vigilant. In fact, Lenin opposed the demonstration as being inopportune.⁴⁵ Let down by Lenin's comments, Sverdlov encouraged the sailors, workers, and soldiers to demand the dismissal of the government and await further instructions should the Soviets refuse to assume state power.⁴⁶

Violence increased on July 17, mostly the result of wild and accidental shooting, resulting in the death or wounding of some 400 persons between July 16-17.⁴⁷ The demonstrators began to direct their hatred at the Soviet leaders (the Provisional Government seemed to be something bygone). The Kronstadt sailors and a huge throng of workers surrounded the Tauride Palace in which the Soviet Executive was in session. When some anarchists shouted for explanations from Justice Minister P. N. Pereverzev about the continued Villa Durnovo imprisonments, Tseretelli informed the crowd that the matter was none of their business and that in any event the minister was unavailable as he had resigned--which was not true. The crowd attempted to seize Tseretelli who escaped behind the doors of the palace. Sailors then began to break down the doors of the Tauride, demanding an accounting for the imprisonments from another minister. Chernov, the popular peasant leader, elected to brave the crowd, but no more than got out the door of the palace than his interrogators searched him for weapons. When he attempted to condemn the Kadets and explain the Soviets' position, the crowd became more hostile and a giant sailor stuck his fist under Chernov's nose and shouted: "Take power, when we offer it to you, you son of a bitch!"⁴⁸ Chernov attempted to get inside the palace but some Kronstadters seized him and dragged him into a nearby car. Trotsky at Chkheidze's suggestion hastened to free Chernov. Sukhanov's description of what followed indicates just how far mobocracy had captured the spirit of the masses:

The mob was in turmoil as far as the eye could reach All Kronstadt knew Trotsky and, one would have thought, trusted him. But he began to speak and the crowd did not subside. If a shot had been fired nearby at that moment by way of provocation, a tremendous slaughter might have occurred and all of us, including perhaps Trotsky, might have been torn to shreds. Trotsky, excited and not finding words in this savage atmosphere, could barely make the nearest rows listen to him. . . . He was listened to with hostility. When he tried to pass on to Chernov himself, the ranks around the car began raging....

Trotsky stretched his hand down to a sailor who was protesting with special violence. But the latter firmly refused to respond Let Chernov go? Then why had they been summoned? Not knowing what to do, the Kronstadters released Chernov.⁴⁹

While the crowd, minus most of the Kronstadters, milled around the Tauride Palace, a combined session of the executives of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies opened, only to be repeatedly interrupted. At 4:30 P. M. ninety representatives of Petrograd Factory Committees invaded the meeting demanding that it take power immediately. Tseretelli informed them that a plenary session of the Central Executive Committee would discuss that question at a meeting in two weeks. In the meantime the socialist ministers had no intention of shirking their responsibilities as had the Kadets.⁵⁰ Shortly thereafter the 176th Reserve regiment appeared and though it had been summoned to support the demonstration for "All Power to the Soviets," as no one gave it such instructions, Dan came out of the Tauride Palace, welcomed the regiment and stationed the men as guards around the very building they were supposed to lay to siege.⁵¹ At 7:00 P. M. 30,000

Putilov metal workers suddenly surrounded the Tauride Palace. A few Putilovites broke inside the palace and searched high and low for Tseretelli, as he had responded so impersonally earlier to the factory committeemen. Not finding him they broke into the session of the executive committees, demanding that the Soviets take power. Chkheidze, in front of whose nose a rifle danced manifested complete self-control, pushed a proclamation into the worker's hands and said, "Here, please take this, Comrade, read it. It says here what you and your Putilov comrades should do. Please read it and don't interrupt our business. Everything necessary is said here." All of the workers quickly stole out of the hall, yet all the manifesto said was that the demonstrators in the streets should return home, lest they be considered traitors to the revolution.⁵² Though a dramatic gesture by the frontier-seasoned Georgian, the Soviet leaders could think of nothing else to propose to the rank-in-file at a moment of extreme tension. Outside the Tauride Palace, the Putilov workers quickly drifted away; they had been caught in a cloudburst on the way to the palace and were wet to the skin. As Sukhanov noted in his memoirs, the rain more than anything probably influenced them to return home; a downpour routed the demonstrators earlier that same day.⁵³

Inside the Tauride Palace the Soviet leaders continued to debate the question of the transfer of state power to the Soviets. At 1:00 A. M. the assembly suddenly grew silent. Sukhanov captured the drama of the scene:

. . . Suddenly a noise was heard in the distance. It came nearer and nearer. The measured tramping of thousands of feet was already clearly audible in the surrounding halls . . . The hall again grew agitated. Faces looked anxious, deputies leaped from their seats. What was it? Where was this new danger to the revolution coming from?

But Dan appeared on the platform as though out of the ground. He was so filled with glee that he tried to conceal it, at least partially, but assuming a somewhat more serene, objective, and balanced expression.

"Comrades!" he called out, 'be calm! There is no danger! Regiments loyal to the revolution have arrived to defend the Central Ex. Com.'

Just then in the Catherine Hall a powerful Marseillaise thundered forth. Enthusiasm in the hall--the faces of the Mamelukes lit up. Squinting triumphantly at the Left, they took hands in an outburst of emotion and standing with bared heads ecstatically chanted the Marseillaise.⁵⁴

The units that came to support the Soviets were from the Izmailovskii regiment, shortly followed by units from the Semenovskii and Preobrazhenskii regiments. Why had these previously "benevolently neutral" units come to the support of the men in the Tauride Palace? First, they knew that A. A. Vilenkin, chairman of the Fifth Army Committee, had promised Tseretelli that loyal troops would arrive in Petrograd no later than July 6.⁵⁵ Second, once these infantry regiments arrived in the capital, the Cossacks had promised the Soviet leaders that they would clear the streets.⁵⁶ Third, the veteran Social Democrat Alexinskii showed documents to these regiments released by Justice Minister Pereverzev which seemed to indicate that a treasonable relationship existed between Lenin and the German General Staff.⁵⁷ With this armed protection of these guards regiments the Soviet executives quickly resolved that "all power must remain in the hands of the present government" and that "only a full meeting of the executive committees has a right to decide" the question of

transferring all power into the hands of the Soviet.⁵⁸

The demonstration petered out on July 18. In the pre-dawn hours that day the Bolsheviks voted to end the demonstration and announced their decision in the daily issue of Pravda. That day the Provisional Government with the concurrence of the Soviet executive committees⁵⁹ launched its campaign to liquidate the demonstration. Governmental forces raided the offices of Pravda and demolished the party's printing shop, "Labor." That afternoon the German spy allegations against Lenin appeared in the press, launching an anti-Bolshevik campaign by reactionary Black Hundreds.⁶⁰ In the meantime the Bolsheviks attempted to reconcile their position with the Soviet executive committees and at Bolshevik headquarters reached an agreement with Liber for a total liquidation of the demonstration in return for safe-conduct and the release of all party members not accused of specific criminal acts.⁶¹ At the Tauride Palace the Kronstadt leaders received a Soviet ultimatum that they give up their arms and leave the capital or be disarmed.⁶² Despite the Soviet guarantee that no further repressive steps would be taken against the Bolsheviks, governmental forces either out of ignorance or conscious disregard continued plans to assault Bolshevik headquarters which followed at 3:00 A. M. on July 19.⁶³ Though some Bolsheviks, incensed by the attacks on Pravda and party headquarters, tried to arouse the masses, soldiers returned to their barracks and workers prepared to return to the factories.⁶⁴ Lenin himself was vehement in his opposition to any renewed struggle for the present.⁶⁵

The rump Provisional Government, with the demonstration liqui-

dated, now upstaged the Soviet executive committees. On July 19 the government ordered the arrest of Lenin, Zinov'ev, and other Bolshevik leaders as well as the Interdistrictite leaders Trotsky and Lunacharskii. Scores of other persons were arrested for participating in the disorders. The next day, upon Kerensky's recommendation, the government decreed that at the discretion of the Ministers of War and Marine, all military units that had engaged in the demonstration were to be disarmed and transferred to the front. The government also ordered the arrest of Tsenroflot, the 67-member Baltic Fleet Central Committee for its refusal to come to the aid of the capital when ordered to do so. All other naval "counter-revolutionary instigators" were ordered arrested within twenty-four hours. On July 22 the Provisional Government created a commission to investigate the participation of military units in the demonstration. Finally, a temporary ban was issued against public assembly and private possession of firearms.⁶⁶

The Soviet leaders' reaction to the government's measures was rather general and mild. On July 20 a joint resolution of the Mensheviks and SR's called upon the government to safeguard "revolutionary freedom and order" and work in agreement with the central organs of the Soviets. They agreed that "special measures might be taken against individuals, but not against political parties or movements as a whole." The government was asked "to wipe out all traces of the old regime, to establish a democratic republic, and to carry out some of the long delayed legislation on land, labor, local self-government, preparation for the elections to the Con-

stituent Assembly, regulation of the economic life of the country, and so on."⁶⁷ The government responded with a declaration that went further to the left than any of its previous statements. It promised that the blood of Russian soldiers would not be shed for aims against the ideals of the "Russian Democracy," that the government would propose an Allied Conference to discuss foreign policy in light of the principles of the Soviets, that elections to the Constituent Assembly would be held on September 30 in a free and orderly way, that local self-government would be instituted as quickly as possible, that radical reforms in labor and economic policy would be forthcoming as well as in agrarian reform, and that all class distinctions, ranks, orders of merit save those won in battle would be abolished.⁶⁸ The Soviet declaration and the government's response brought the resignation of Prime Minister L'vov and the necessity for the Soviet executive committees to come to the rescue of the government or assume state power. In the meantime the rump Provisional Government appointed Kerensky as prime minister while the Kadets and the Soviets exchanged verbal volleys over a new government.

Tseretelli, as orchestrator of Menshevik-SR policy, rejected a Soviet assumption of state power for the same reasons that the Mensheviks had done so in March and April.⁶⁹ Unlike the July days Dan supported Tseretelli fully on this interpretation, as did most of the Mensheviks and SR's despite Martov's eloquent appeal for the seizure of state power.⁷⁰ What Tseretelli did support was "great strides" in reform: the prohibition in land speculation, dissolu-

tion of the State Duma and State Council to liquidate these institutions as bases for counterrevolution, industrial and financial reform, and finally, the declaration of Russia as a republic.

When the second coalition took office, however, the last two points disappeared from the new government's list of reforms.⁷¹ The composition of the new government, for which Tseretelli sacrificed some reforms to achieve, reflected a compromise between Kerensky and Tseretelli. While socialists held all of the important offices in the new government, except foreign affairs and finance, the triumvirate of Kerensky, Nekrasov, and Tereshchenko dominated the cabinet. Tseretelli accepted the post of Temporary Minister of Interior and shortly left it to work full time in Soviet organizations, while the three Kadets in the government resigned their posts after the coalition was only days old.⁷²

Could the Petrograd Soviet leaders have sponsored an alternate plan of government? Martov, who opposed both a socialist seizure of power and coalition with the bourgeoisie until the July days, argued for a "democratic government" based largely on the parties represented in the Soviet, without the organized bourgeoisie. "History demands that we take power into our hands," he urged. No reason exists why "our ministers ought to remain in a minority in a coalition government" when bourgeois ministers such as Tereshchenko, Nekrasov, and Godnev represented no party, only themselves. Indeed, the bourgeois parties had deserted the revolution; they were increasingly becoming counterrevolutionary. The slogan was "All power to 'the democracy'," not "All power to the Soviets," as the government would include social strata not represented in the Soviet (other than the bourgeois parties).⁷³

Tseretelli and Dan rejected Martov's plan of government not on its own merits but because it would lead to the destruction of the policy of revolutionary defensism. As Tseretelli explained:

Should we, the Soviet majority, take power into our hands, would not all of you, from Martov to Lenin, demand of us actions which, in our opinion, would lead to separate war, or would you not want to foist on us your slogan: "No offensive but an armistice"? But such policies are unacceptable to us.

Was Martov's plan of government realistic? Would it have led to civil war? Tseretelli had entered the first coalition in May to avert civil war and thereby protect the policy of revolutionary defensism. While only Miliukov and Guchkov had left the government in May, now the bourgeois parties themselves deserted the government. Therefore was the second coalition in fact only mythical? The resignations that shortly followed its formation appear to confirm this. In light of the popular demands of the July days, Tseretelli avoided the Martov "democratic government" probably because he was indeed fearful that his socialist opposition might well succeed in foisting on him its slogans. Finally, if the Soviet had formed a "democratic government," could the bourgeoisie have mounted an attack on the new government. The middle class was small and the Kornilov affair would reveal whether they were even capable or willing to join in a military coup. The Menshevik-SR bloc had travelled far since the early days of the revolution when they forced their demands on the Provisional Government. In early August they were quite happy merely to have the burden of state power in other hands. Tseretelli's program looked more and more hopeless and headed for bankruptcy.

2. The Specter of Counterrevolution Arises

News on September 8 of an armed march on Petrograd by General Lavr Kornilov took the Soviet in the capital completely by surprise.⁷⁴ Ignorance of preceding events dictated reaction at Smolny (the new Petrograd Soviet headquarters).⁷⁵ The executive committee knew only that General Kornilov, who had just surrendered Riga to the Germans, had announced as a pretender to power and that Prime Minister Kerensky had declared the general "outlaw." The bureau of the executive committee approved of actions by Kerensky without knowing what they were and without knowledge about the Third Corps' march on Petrograd.⁷⁶ Despite the element of surprise, the leadership at Smolny apparently showed little fear that Kornilov would consummate his attempted coup against the government and the Petrograd Soviet.⁷⁷

While astonished at the actual unfolding of a military coup, the Petrograd Soviet leaders had not completely ignored the danger of rising counterrevolution since the July days. On the same day that Tseretelli received word of Kornilov's march, the executive committee had appealed to the workers and soldiers of Petrograd to stay off the streets and to ignore rumors about an uprising set for the next day. The committee warned that the rightwing Black Hundreds intended to use the half-year anniversary celebration of the revolution to bathe the toiling masses in blood.⁷⁸ The Petrograd Council of Trade Unions and the Central Union of Factory Committees urged the populace to heed the executive committee's advice and exercise restraint.⁷⁹

From the first moment the Petrograd Soviet parties heard of Kor-

nilov's attempted coup, they dropped their differences, at least temporarily, and united against their common opponent. The socialist press attacked Kornilov in unison, the Petrograd Soviet through Izvestiia⁸⁰ censored the general and called on the populace of the capital to remain steadfast by the Provisional Government. A committee of all parties was formed to mobilize and organize opposition to Kornilov on September 9, the People's Committee for the Struggle with Counterrevolution, also known as the military revolutionary committee. Headed by the SR officer, V.N. Filippovskii, its membership consisted of three members each from the central committees of the SR, Menshevik, and Bolshevik parties, as well as a Popular Socialist, five members each from the executives of the Peasants' Congress and the All-Russian Soviet Congress, two members from the Petrograd Soviet, one member from Kronstadt, and two members from the Central Trade Unions Council.⁸¹ Despite the fact that a member of the "Star Chamber" proposed the appointment of the committee and despite the variety of groups represented in it, the Bolsheviks dominated the committee, not the "Star Chamber".⁸² Bolshevik strength derived from their dominant influence with the Kronstadt sailors and with the district soviets of the capital that controlled the workers' militia (later the Red Guard).

Following upon the Petrograd Soviet's typical response to any crisis of appointing a committee, also came the usual Soviet appeals to the masses. While issuing a general appeal, the Petrograd Soviet also sought to undercut Kornilov's operations through specific appeals. Thus to all railway workers the Soviet appealed to "detain

troops and send them in another direction" and "obey only the Provisional Government and the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."⁸³ To support the railway workers the Soviet attempted to mobilize the peasantry by identifying the Kornilov and the high command with the enemies of land reform.⁸⁴ Finally, the Soviet issued a direct appeal to the soldiers of the army: "Kornilov has mutinied against the revolution and the Provisional Government . . .; rally to the defense of the country."⁸⁵ Workers in Petrograd were asked to dig trenches, to set up machine guns, and to prepare the resistance of the capital. Kronstadt sailors were called to Petrograd and the Cruiser Aurora, anchored in the Neva river that flowed through the capital, ordered to defend the Winter Palace, the seat of the government.⁸⁶

The response to the Petrograd Soviet's appeals was overwhelming and immediate. Railway workers either sidetracked or delayed trains carrying Kornilov's troops to the capital. Telegraphers declined to transmit messages for the Kornilovites. At every station workers, peasants, and soldiers from local garrisons agitated among the troops. A workers' militia soon appeared, numbering between 25,000 and 100,000 men.⁸⁷ Disorder occurred even at Kornilov's headquarter's. A battalion of St. George Cavaliers declared in favor of the Soviets. Seven officers from Kornilov's own regiment were arrested for insubordination. Soldier-printers ordered to set up and print Kornilov's proclamation did so only when a Tekintsy detachment threatened to shoot them unless they complied, and then the printers actually set up and printed Kerensky's proclamation against Kornilov and got away

with it because the Turkmen could not read Russian.⁸⁸ On September 10 as two echelons of the Savage division approached Petrograd, a delegation of Moslems and Cossacks sent by the executive of the All-Russian Soviet won over these cavalry men when the delegation informed them that no Bolshevik demonstration had occurred in the capital. The misinformed soldiers of the Savage division thereupon sent a delegation to Petrograd apologizing for allowing themselves to be deceived; they paid glowing tributes to their brother Caucasians, Chkheidze and Tseretelli.⁸⁹ According to "Star Chamber" member, Voitinskii, by September 14 troops loyal to the Petrograd Soviet occupied all roads leading from the fronts and Stavka (Kornilov's G.H.Q.).⁹⁰ In fact, the "defection" of the two echelons of the Savage division liquidated Kornilov's march, and he and his command remained isolated at the city of Mogilev. On September 13 the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Congress cabled all Soviets that the Kornilov affair had aborted.

The military revolutionary committee now commenced retaliation against the counterrevolutionaries. On September 14 the committee demanded the dispersal of all Kornilov's forces at Mogilev. Even though the government had set up an Extraordinary Investigation Commission to probe the Kornilov affair, the Soviet committee demanded the immediate arrest of Generals Kornilov, Lukomskii, and Romanovskii. The generals were to be conveyed to Petrograd no later than the following day. The committee directed the Minister of War to see that these measures were carried out in his presence at Mogilev. Until the completion of these actions, the committee ordered

the troops loyal to the Soviet to stand fast and ~~make~~ preparations to advance against Mogilev. The committee rejected any suggestions by the Kadets and General Alekseev of a compromise between Kornilov and the Soviet; it rejected outright any suggestion of a reconciliation between the Provisional Government and Kornilov developing. Not only the Bolsheviki, but the entire membership of the committee, particularly its SR chairman Filippovskii, were in unanimous agreement in this.⁹¹ The SR organ, Delo naroda, damned any armistice with Kornilov as merely prolonging an intolerable state of affairs.⁹²

Members of the Soviet assumed governmental powers during the crisis by arresting as "conspirators" fourteen high-ranking officers. The Soviet incarcerated some 7,000 other "counterrevolutionaries".⁹³ Even the former War Minister, Guchkov, was imprisoned for a short while, as was Kerensky's brother-in-law, War Minister assistant P. Pal'chinskii.⁹⁴ As Chernov wrote, "The Soviet had no time to legalize its actions. It functioned as a genuine revolutionary authority. Without waiting for the numerous secret Kornilovist societies to expose themselves as counterrevolutionaries, it began to make arrests."⁹⁵ Homes were searched and documents seized. The Petrograd paper, Novoe vremia and the Moscow newspaper, Russkoe slovo, were suppressed for printing Kornilov's proclamations. The Kadet organ, Rech', was censored for an editorial which its printers carried to the Soviet in which the Kadets maintained that "Kornilov is not a reactionary" and "has been pursuing the aims which we too consider essential for the salvation of the country."⁹⁶ Though certainly not approved by the Soviet leaders, lynching took place at Vyborg, the crew of the Petro-

pavlovsk shot four of their naval officers, and an army officer was shot by his men for referring to the Soviet as the Sovet sobachikh i rachikh deputatov (Soviet of Dogs and Crayfish Deputies).⁹⁷

In the midst of the Kornilov affair the government had resigned, leaving all power in Kerensky's hands. On September 9 the Soviet Executive Committee adopted a proposition by F. I. Dan that the rump Provisional Government call a democratic conference (to exclude non-socialists) that would dictate the composition of a new coalition which would thereafter be responsible to the conference.⁹⁸ Kerensky countered with a proposal for a six-man "Directory" to have full powers and not be held responsible to the Soviet proposed democratic conference. The counter proposition touched off a bitter debate within the Soviet. Lunacharskii, for the Bolsheviks, demanded a "completely democratic" government. Martov for the Menshevik Internationalists argued that a new Provisional Government should be modeled on previous governments with the Soviet supporting the cabinet "insofar as" it accepted and implemented the Soviet's program as enunciated by Chkheidze at the Moscow State Conference. Once more Tseretelli found a middle road and the executive adopted a resolution calling upon Kerensky to form a new coalition that would fight determinedly against counterrevolution.⁹⁹ Kerensky, however, stuck by his guns, demanding a true coalition to include liberals as well as socialists. Chernov, Skobelev, Avksent'ev, and Zarudni resigned from the government, refusing to serve with bourgeoisie. Kerensky thereupon appointed a "Directory" of four socialists and one non-party affiliate, and proclaimed Russia a republic as of September 14.¹⁰⁰

The same day Kerensky proclaimed the republic Chkheidze for the Soviet Congress and Avksent'ev for the Peasants' Soviet called for a democratic conference to meet in Petrograd.¹⁰¹ The bulk of delegates went to the new rural and municipal councils (500 seats) and central Soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasants (300 seats); local soldiers' organizations received 150 seats, cooperatives, 150, and trade unions, 100; 225 seats went to national minorities, professional organizations, and other groups. Of the 1,582 delegates that attended the conference between September 27 and October 5, 532 were SR's, 305 Mensheviks, 134 Bolsheviks, 55 Popular Socialists and Trudoviks, 41 Kadets, and 97 representing Bundists, Ukrainian Social Democrats, Ukrainian SR's, etc. In the party caucuses that preceded the conference the SR's and Mensheviks were each hopelessly split. Similarly at a plenary meeting of 200 members of the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet could come to no decision and therefore went to the conference with no program and no definite policy.¹⁰²

With such division in the ranks of the socialist parties the conference produced only endless debate. While the formation of the conference on October 2 approved the formation of a coalition, amendments to the motion made coalition impossible. After the failure of a Bolshevik resolution, the conference passed a motion by Tsere-telli to : 1) make the government responsible to a representative institution or pre-parliament until the convening of the Constituent Assembly, 2) to appoint a permanent representative institution from among the members of the democratic conference to be augmented by bourgeois elements should they share in the new government.¹⁰³

In negotiations with the bourgeoisie and Kerensky, Soviet representative acquiesced to according the liberals, 120 to 150 seats in the preparliament, and allowed that the preparliament could question but not interpellate the government, that the preparliament would work on all questions and legislation submitted to it by the government, and that the ministry would not be responsible to the preparliament. Before these concessions more than 400 members of the democratic conference had refused to vote on the proposition of establishing a preparliament, though a majority of 829 votes to 106 with 69 abstentions passed the Tseretelli resolution. Voitinskii recorded the despair of the last day of the conference: "The concluding session was gloomy. Chkheidze sat at a long table on the stage, a picture of melancholy and despair. Many chairs at the table were empty. I wanted to leave also, but Chkheidze implored me to deliver the concluding speech. There was not much to say about the results of the Convention. Then Chkheidze got up and left the stage, forgetting to declare the meeting adjourned."¹⁰⁴ The ministry that now succeeded the "Directory" was neither a coalition nor a government; nothing but a group of men picked by Kerensky from business and intellectual circles, not parties. Tseretelli's coalition compromise had hit rock bottom as the new government offered no unity to the nation to avert civil war; furthermore, the entire policy had resulted in the **postponement of urgently needed reforms for the popular masses.**

FOOTNOTES

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10. W. S. Woytinsky, Stormy Passage: A Personal History through Two Russian Revolutions to Democracy and Freedom, 1905-1960 (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., c. 1961), pp. 284-89; Price, p. 36; Trotsky, pp. 440-45; for the Petrograd Soviet's resolution on the Kronstadt declaration see Izvestiia, No. 76, May 27/June 10, 1917, pp. 4-5; Izvestiia, No. 75, May 26/June 9, 1917, p. 3 for concessions of Kronstadt Soviet.
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CHAPTER VII

THE BOLSHEVIZATION OF THE SOVIET

Bolshevik control of the Petrograd Soviet came only after the internal political organs of the institution had decayed. Many of the commissions created in the first days of the revolution, such as the supply and military commissions, were absorbed by committees of the Provisional Government. The contact commission died a natural death through neglect. The international department for all intents and purposes ceased to function after the demise of the ill-fated Stockholm Conference in August 1917. The agrarian, finance, and labor departments achieved no successes, though Bogdanov labored incessantly for the workers. After the formation of the executive bureau and the first coalition government, those members of the executive committee that remained and were not members of the former bodies, spend most of their time in the newly established lounge.¹ Sittings of the executive committee, as they only endorsed propositions of the executive bureau, often began late and without a quorum. Chkheidze, the president, would ring the bell for the opening of a session, but members of the executive came in at their leisure. Despite threats and persuasive arguments on the part of the Soviet president, he was unable to move the membership of the executive toward constructive work. Even Tsere-telli, who for a while was able to overcome this inertia in the execu-

tive committee, failed to motivate the membership. In the first days after the formation of the first coalition government, Tseretelli reported regularly to the executive committee on the activities of the Provisional Government. As the membership usually knew what the Georgian was going to say, the radical wing of the committee, in order to break the monotony, heckled him and used the occasions to make their own interpellations. Tseretelli initially brushed aside these annoyances but inasmuch as the reports served no purpose other than that of his opponents, he ceased delivering them. In the Petrograd Soviet the desire for work had disappeared, as the leadership of the institution had relegated the decision-making process to the **bureau** and the "Star Chamber" making the rest of the Soviet more or less a rubber stamp.²

The Menshevik-SR bloc leaders of the Petrograd Soviet were also overcome by despair. At the time of the establishment of the Kerensky government in early August 1917, Voitinskii recalled that "In the Tauride Palace a persistent feeling of approaching catastrophe was mixed with apathy." Overwhelmed by the apparent futility of his activities in Petrograd, Voitinskii resigned his duties in the capital and became a military commissar at the front. "When I told Chkheidze I was leaving the Tauride Palace. . . , he said gloomily, "I do not blame you. I wish I could leave too!"³ At the time of the Democratic Conference the same atmosphere of gloom was present among the leadership: "Chkheidze sat at a long table on the stage, a picture of melancholy and despair."⁴ Many of the Soviet leaders had not even bothered to attend the closing session and Chkheidze himself forgot to adjourn the meeting. Tseretelli

became increasingly pessimistic. Since April he had warned that the counterrevolution would march through the left gate, meaning the Bolsheviks.⁵ In the last days before the Bolshevik coup Tseretelli told the Kadet leader, V.D. Nabokov, that the Bolsheviks "will not be able to keep power for long, maybe for only two or three weeks, but think of the destruction. One has to stop them somehow...."⁶ As for those efforts toward halting the Bolshevik tide, Tseretelli remarked after November 7: "Of course, all that we did was like a futile attempt to dam a raging torrent with little chips of wood."⁷ Tseretelli's forced convalescence in the Caucasus to allievate his severe tubercular condition at the height of the Bolshevik crisis, in late October and early November, certainly did not bolster Menshevik-SR spirits.

The Menshevik-SR bloc leaders who guided the direction of the Petrograd Soviet had by September lost their rank-and-file support. The Menshevik organization, which at one time counted 10,000 members in Petrograd, had dwindled away to a handfull. Mensheviks were so despaired that only twenty to twenty-five members usually attended ward meetings in the capital.⁸ The SR's were hopelessly split into three factions, the bulk of members remaining under Chernov's leadership but losing a growing number to the Left SR's.⁹ In September the bloc leaders lost their high posts in the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions to Martovist (Menshevik) Internationalists; positions that they had retained with great difficulty in August.¹⁰ On August 22 the Martovists regained their pre-March 1917 control of the Petrograd Menshevik organization.¹¹ Martovists definitely opposed the policies of Tseretelli.

Following the Kornilov affair, the Petrograd Soviet plenum shifted

sharply toward the Bolsheviks in its voting pattern. In the irregular elections of May and June the Bolsheviks had gained about half of the seats in the Workers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet and approximately one-fourth of the membership in the Soldiers' Section.¹² More irregular elections in September increased the number of Bolshevik deputies, and the dramatic shift of the Petrograd garrison toward the Bolsheviks strengthened their hand in the Soldiers' Section. On September 13 the Petrograd Soviet plenum voted overwhelmingly for a Bolshevik resolution as against approximately 15 votes for one by Tseretelli.¹³ On a roll call vote that dragged on to 3 A.M. in the morning the Bolshevik resolution still carried 279 votes to 115 with 51 abstentions, many of the deputies either refusing to vote against Tseretelli or having left because of the late hour.¹⁴ As the total vote was thin, the Menshevik-SR bloc leaders attempted to override the pro-Bolshevik decision on September 22. The presidium of Tseretelli, Chernov, Skobelev, Dan, Gotz, and Chkheidze demanded a vote of confidence from 1,000 soldiers' and workers' deputies who attended the meeting of the plenum. The Bolsheviks attempting to compromise, proposed that the presidium be elected on a proportional basis. Tseretelli rejected this out-of-hand, demanding to know whether the Petrograd Soviet had actually changed its direction: "We cannot carry out the tactics of the Bolsheviks," he declared.

Trotsky now obscured the question by asking: "Is Kerensky still a member of the presidium?" As the reply was affirmative, Trotsky noted that he "had firmly believed that Kerensky would not be allowed to sit in the presidium. We were mistaken. The ghost of Kerensky now sits between Dan and Chkheidze. . . . When they propose to you to sanction

the political line of the presidium, do not forget that you will be sanctioning the policies of Kerensky."¹⁵ As the balance lay with the soldiers' deputies, who hated Kerensky, Trotsky's ploy changed the emphasis from a vote for the presidium to one against Kerensky. Even so, the Bolsheviks figured that they would be a hundred votes shy, at best, of unseating the present leadership. Yet when the vote was finally tabulated the Bolsheviks won by 519 to 414 with 67 abstentions. With magnificent aplomb Tseretelli made his last statement to the plenum of the Petrograd Soviet: "We withdraw from this tribune in the consciousness that for half a year we have held worthily and held high the banner of the revolution. This banner has now passed into your hands. We can only express the wish that you may be able to hold it in the same way for half as long!" The Menshevik-SR bloc leaders thereupon walked out of the hall. Trotsky later recollected that the presidium took with them to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Petrograd Soviet's two newspapers, all funds and technical equipment as well as automobiles, and all administrative offices.¹⁶

A provisional presidium of the combined presidia of the Workers' Section and the Soldiers' Section replaced the outgoing members until elections could be held. On September 21 the Workers' Section had elected a new presidium; the SR's receiving 102 votes, the Mensheviks 54, the Menshevik Internationalists 10, and the Bolsheviks 239 votes. The new eleven man presidium consisted of six Bolsheviks, three SR's, and two Mensheviks. The Bolshevik G.F. Fedorov had become chairman of the Workers' Section.¹⁷ The Soldiers' Section did not hold new elections until September 26, four days after the defeat of the Menshevik-SR bloc

presidium. Before electing a new presidium for the Soldiers' Section, the soldiers voted for representatives on the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet. The SR's received 155 votes, the Bolsheviks 138, and the Mensheviks 30.¹⁸ Many members of the executive committee were defeated and the chairman of the Soldiers' Section, the right SR V, Zavadye, resigned. Furthermore, the SR votes were for Left SR's, not for Chernov-led SR's, the former supporting the Bolsheviks. The result was that ten Left SR's, nine Bolsheviks, and three Mensheviks entered the executive committee as the Workers' representatives. When the presidium of the Soldiers' Section was elected shortly thereafter, the Bolsheviks received three seats, the Left SR's three, and the Mensheviks one. The Left SR L. I. Diesperov became chairman of the Soldiers' Section.¹⁹ The Workers' Section did not hold new elections for representatives on the executive committee until October 6-7. Of the 396 deputies voting on that occasion, 230 votes went to Bolsheviks, 102 to SR's, 54 to Mensheviks, and 10 to Menshevik Internationalists. Thirteen Bolsheviks (including Fedorov, A.S. Bubnov, A.M. Kollontai, P.A. Krasikov, L.M. Karakhan), six SR's and three Mensheviks now composed the Workers' Section representation on the executive committee.²⁰ Coopted onto the new executive committee were four delegates from political parties, three from public bodies (the trade unions, factory committees, and army organizations), making a combined total with the 22 representatives each from the two sections of the Petrograd Soviet of 51 members. The party allegiance of the members of the new executive committee was Bolshevik, 23; SR, 17; Menshevik, 7; and non-party, 4. Also coopted onto the executive were two representatives from each

of the 13 district soviets in the capital but with non-voting rights. As the Menshevik Internationalists who had made up the core of the original executive did not receive a single seat on the new executive committee, six of their number were coopted onto the body with a consulting voice: Sokolov, Kapelinskii, Sokolovskii, Martov, Steklov, and Sukhanov.²¹ Sukhanov tells us why the Martovists were added to the committee: "In its negative, critical part we . . . were in accord with the Bolsheviks. In the arena of the struggle going on at that time against the coalition and the bourgeoisie we stood at their side."²²

With the elections of new presidia in each section and a new executive committee, a new presidium for the whole of the Petrograd Soviet was in order. While Trotsky and Zinov'ev supported a proportionally based presidium according to party and received the endorsement of the Bolshevik Central Committee on September 19 for such a coalition,²³ Lenin, still in hiding since the July days, chided the party, noting that "the revolutionary proletariat would never do anything worth while in the Soviet as long as the Tseretellis were allowed proportional participation; to let them in meant depriving ourselves of the opportunity to work, it meant the ruin of Soviet work."²⁴ As a result, the new presidium as proposed to the Soviet plenum and endorsed by it on October 8, consisted of four Bolsheviks, two SR's and one Menshevik.²⁵

Leon Trotsky became the new president of the Petrograd Soviet on October 8. There was a hurricane of applause at his election. The only question, says Sukhanov, was where Trotsky would lead the Soviet: "Trotsky's Soviet did not act like an acknowledged State power carrying on a revolution. It did not act by methods of opposition, pressure,

and 'liaison'. It was a latent potential revolutionary force, gathering together the elements for a general explosion For what did it contain but destruction?"²⁶ In his first speech as chairman the newly converted Bolshevik said that actually he had not taken Chkheidze's place as chairman, but, on the contrary, Chkheidze had been occupying his (Trotsky's) place, inasmuch as the 1905 chairman of the Petersburg Soviet was Trotsky. Then he added: "We are all party people, and we shall have to cross swords more than once. But we shall guide the work of the Petersburg Soviet in a spirit of justice and complete independence for all factions; the hand of the presidium will never oppress the minority."²⁷ Sukhanov later reflected: "Heavens! What liberal views! What self-mockery! But the point is that about three years later, while exchanging reminiscences with me, Trotsky, thinking back to this moment, exclaimed dreamily: 'What a happy time!' Yes, wonderful! Perhaps not one person in the world, not excluding himself, will ever recall Trotsky's rule, with such feelings."²⁸ Regardless of Trotsky's intentions on September 24, he nevertheless heeded Lenin's advice and on September 25 scrapped his plan for a coalition presidium in favor of a Bolshevik dominated presidium. This was only the first move away from the spirit of Trotsky's September 24 statement, as Sukhanov noted, "not thinking that in time he would have to disregard it and create a theory to justify its opposite."²⁹

While the takeover of the Petrograd Soviet by the Bolsheviks worried the Menshevik-SR bloc leaders, it by no means made them give up the struggle. Instead these leaders attempted to attract the masses away from such bodies as the Petrograd Soviet to supporting the executive of

the Democratic Conference or the Preparliament. The Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet announced in Izvestiia (no longer the Petrograd Soviet's organ) that with the formation of the Preparliament: "The significance of local Soviets is diminishing, and they have ceased to be general democratic bodies. We want to replace the temporary Soviet set-up by a permanent, comprehensive, and complete organization," that is, a preparliament.³⁰ The Mensheviks and SR's maintained that the current situation was "a crisis of Soviet organization." Delo naroda, the SR organ, stated that ". . . as soon as the new elements of the state organization appeared typical of a modern democratic state--the municipal dumas and the zemstvos--the question arose of the limits to the state competence of the Soviets. . . ."31

Indeed the Preparliament was probably the most popular political institution in Petrograd, and definitely in the country as a whole. Even Sukhanov, who opposed it, admits that the Preparliament was a de facto power.³² The Bolsheviks admitted in late October on two different occasions that the executive committee and the Petrograd Soviet plenum were in total disorganization and producing no practical results.³³

The last attempt to turn the new orientation of the Petrograd Soviet around and in support of coalition government came on September 24. Dan defended the coalition before the Petrograd Soviet plenum; Trotsky spoke for a Soviet government. Coalition was rejected overwhelmingly with only ten votes in favor and seven abstentions.³⁴

With the Preparliament as a competing center of power to the Petrograd Soviet the Bolsheviks either had to gain control of the executive of the All-Russian Congress or mount a seizure of power with the Petro-

grad Soviet as its base. The Bolsheviks therefore demanded the calling of a Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, inasmuch as a congress was to convene every three months until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Lenin hoped to gain control of the Central Executive Committee in new elections and from this all-Russian position declare the Soviet government. The Menshevist Rabochaia gazeta exposed Lenin's plan and declared the convening of a new congress on the eve of elections to a Constituent Assembly inopportune.³⁵ Martov, the left-wing Menshevik leader, even declared that "At the present moment a drift to the Bolsheviks is absolutely out of place. Now the revolution is endangered not by the Right, but by the Left!"³⁶ Despite the well-founded fears of the Mensheviks and SR's that the second congress would be overwhelmingly Bolshevik in its membership, the Central Executive Committee finally agreed to call the congress for November 2. In the meantime the Bolsheviks held a congress of the northern region on October 24 in order to increase the prestige of their political base, the Petrograd Soviet. The congress was overwhelmingly Bolshevik in its sympathies and actions. While the Bolsheviks were strong in the northern region, they were uncertain of their strength in the rest of the country and therefore made preparations for the armed insurrection should they fail in the second congress.³⁷

The military revolutionary committee, the instrument of the Bolshevik armed insurrection, came into being as the result of an October 22 meeting of the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet. The committee met to discuss the danger of approaching German forces that threatened the capital. The Mensheviks proposed the creation of an organ of coop-

eration between the Petrograd Soviet and the military staff of the Petrograd military district which would take measures to insure the defense of the capital. The Bolsheviks capitalized on this proposition so that the resolution which was passed included 1) an appeal to the garrison to take such actions as necessary to mount a defense of the city. 2) that a board composed of representatives from the Petrograd Soviet, the Bolshevik Central Committee, and Tsentrflot, the Bolshevik-controlled Baltic naval committees' center, function alongside the Petrograd military district commander, 3) that the militia (or Red Guard) be reorganized, 4) that exceptional measures be taken to purge the Commanding Staff, and 5) that the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet, the presidium of the Soldiers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet, and representatives from the Petrograd garrison create a committee of revolutionary defense to work out a plan to defend the city. The military revolutionary committee, however, was empowered to do more than merely work out a plan of defense: it could decide which forces, if any, could be withdrawn from the capital, register all personnel of the garrison and towns nearby, take account of all supplies and food-stuffs in Petrograd, protect the capital from riots and desertions, uphold discipline among the masses and soldiers, and so forth. The moderate socialists, by boycotting the committee, simply made the work of its fourteen Left SR's, four Anarchists, and forty-eight Bolsheviks less inhibited. Lazimir was the committee's chairman, but Trotsky was its moving spirit. From this committee the Bolsheviks were able to plot armed insurrection in the name of "defending the conquests of the revolution."³⁸

As the Second Congress of Soviets was postponed to November 7, Lenin decided to present the congress with a fait accompli of the Petrograd Soviet assuming state power.³⁹ First, however, the Bolsheviks had to repudiate the Preparliament which opened on October 20. At that first session Trotsky made a verbal assault on the Preparliament calling for all power to the Soviets, all land to the people, and long life to the Constituent Assembly. As Sukhanov said of this declaration, "Despite all the power and brilliance of his speech Trotsky, as we see, was far from having proved the necessity of the break If they were on the other side of this entire order, then there was really nothing for them to do in the Preparliament. . . . There was only one road for them out of the Preparliament--to the barricades. If they cast away the 'electoral ballot', they must take up the rifle."⁴⁰ The Bolsheviks stomped out of the Preparliament.

The Petrograd Soviet and its military revolutionary committee now prepared to implement an armed seizure of state power. While the Bolsheviks ironed out internal differences between the members of its central committee and Lenin over the dangers of a power seizure, preparations continued apace. On November 3 delegates of the regimental committees in the capital promised full support to the Military Revolutionary Committee and demanded that the All-Russian Congress of Soviets assume state power.⁴¹ On November 4 a proclamation was issued on behalf of the military revolutionary committee accusing the Provisional Government of "having broken with the revolutionary garrison and with the Petrograd Soviet . . . , becoming a direct tool of counterrevolutionary forces." The committee ordered that no directives to the garrison were

to be considered valid unless signed by it.⁴² That same day workers and soldiers throughout the capital observed "The Day of the Petrograd Soviet" which Trotsky hoped would erase from the "consciousness of the workers and soldiers the last hindering recollections of the July days."⁴³ The gigantic review reached its climax at the People's Home where Trotsky in a tense atmosphere of emotional frenzy demanded: "Let this voting of yours be your vow, with all your strength, at any sacrifice, to support the Soviet, which has taken upon itself the great task of bringing the victory of the Revolution to the end, and of giving land, bread, and peace."⁴⁴

On November 5 the Provisional Government aided the Petrograd Soviet's assumption of power by issuing mostly unenforceable but threatening orders. A cabinet meeting that night ordered the closure of the Bolshevik newspapers Soldat and Rabochii Put'.⁴⁵ The next morning the Cruiser Aurora, known to be Bolshevik in its sympathies, was ordered to put to sea on a training exercise.⁴⁶ In an attempt to isolate the Petrograd Soviet, the telephones to Smolny Institute, headquarters of the workers' and soldiers' organization, were disconnected.⁴⁷ A women's battalion appeared at the Winter Palace and military cadets and a few Cossacks were stationed throughout the city in government buildings, at stations and bridges, and communication centers. At the Preparliament a resolution was passed to the effect that "In order to combat active outbursts of anarchy and pogroms, it is necessary to take immediate measures for their termination and to create for that purpose in Petrograd the Committee of Public Safety comprised of the representatives of the municipal corporations and organs of the revolutionary democracy acting in concert

with the Provisional Government."⁴⁸ The leaders of the Preparliament proposed to overcome their opposition by cutting away the wavering elements in the Bolshevik camp through an offer of reforms: 1) the government would announce it had asked the Allies to stop all military action and to start peace negotiations, 2) the government would issue an order putting all land in the possession of the local land committees, and 3) the date for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly would be moved up.⁴⁹

The military revolutionary committee immediately responded to the government's actions by issuing a circular to the Petrograd garrison:

Danger threatens the Petrograd Soviet. During the night counter-revolutionary plotters attempted to call up junkers and shock battalions from the suburbs. The newspapers Soldat and Rabochii Put' have been closed.

We order you to put the regiment into a state of military preparedness and await new orders. Any delay or non-execution of the order will be regarded as treason to the Revolution.⁵⁰

On November 6 Trotsky informed the Petrograd Soviet that all the actions of the Provisional Government were being successfully countered by the military revolutionary committee. He announced that the troops of the Petrograd garrison refused to obey the orders of the Kerensky government, that the Cruiser Aurora had followed the counter command of the military revolutionary committee to remain anchored in the Neva river, and that troops of the Lithuanian regiment and the Sixth Reserve Sappers' battalion were guarding revolutionary presses against counterrevolutionary attacks. Trotsky then continued:

We are asked whether we planned to have an uprising. I replied that the Petrograd Soviet stood for a transfer of power into the hands of the Soviets, and at the present time, today or tomorrow, when the All-Russian Congress of Soviets opens, this slogan will be put into force. Whether this will lead to an uprising depends not on us, but on those who oppose us.

We regard the Provisional Government as nothing more than a pitiful, helpless half-government, which waits for a motion of a historical broom to sweep it off, to make room for a real, popular government. The present government has lost everything -- support, authority, right, morale.

But a conflict in the form of an uprising is not our plan for today or tomorrow, when the All-Russian Congress is about to meet. We believe that the Congress will carry through our plan with considerable force and authority. But, if the government wishes to make use of the hours -- 24, 48, or 72 -- which it still has to live, and comes out against us, then we will meet it with a counter-attack, blow for blow, steel for iron⁵¹

The defense of the headquarters of the Provisional Government at the Winter Palace caused Bolshevik plans to hit a snag and Lenin sounded a call to arms on the night of November 6. "With all my power", he wrote, "I wish to persuade the comrades that now everything hangs on a hair, that on the order of the day are questions that are not solved by conferences, by congresses (even Congresses of Soviets) but only by the people, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed masses." . . . It would be disaster or formalism to wait for the uncertain voting of November 7 . . . the people have a right and a duty. . . to give direction to their representatives . . . The government is tottering. We must deal it the deathblow at any cost."⁵² That same night soldiers of the Petrograd garrison seized the public utilities, the banks, and communication networks in the capital. The Bolsheviks received only token resistance. The next morning, November 7, the city was plastered with posters declaring the Provisional Government deposed.

TO THE CITIZENS OF RUSSIA

The Provisional Government is overthrown. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies--the Military Revolutionary Committee, which stands at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison.

The cause for which the people fought--immediate proposal of a democratic peace, abolition of landlords' property rights in land, workers' control over production, the creation of a Soviet Government--this cause is assured.

Long Live the Revolution of the Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants.⁵³

The Mensheviks and SR's condemned the Bolsheviks, not the Petrograd Soviet for the seizure of power. The Menshevik organ, Rabochaia gazeta, called the coup "a military plot . . . as one recollects from his reading of the history of the South American republics." Lenin now became the equal of Napoleon III.⁵⁴ Izvestiia placed the "blame" squarely on the Bolsheviks: "Yesterday we called the Bolshevik uprising an inane venture. Today, when the attempt was crowned with success in Petrograd, we have not changed our mind. We repeat, this is not a transfer of power to the Soviets, but a seizure by one party--the Bolsheviks . . . They can call themselves whatever they please, but this will not alter the fact that the Bolsheviks alone participated in the uprising." Despite the fact that the Preparliament was dismissed and the city in the hands of the Bolsheviks, except the Winter Palace which fell on November 8, a number of Mensheviks and SR's attended the opening session of the Second Congress of Soviets to plead their view. After firing off several verbal shots, L.M. Khinchuk, on behalf of the Mensheviks, and M. Ia. Gendelman, for the SR's, announced that their delegations would retire from the hall. Rafail Abramovich with fire in his eyes, led the

Bundists from the congress. Martov appealed to the delegates at the congress not to continue in their purpose as the result could only be civil war. He left the hall under a barrage of vulgarities. The Bolsheviks held 390 of the 650 seats at the congress; the Mensheviks of all factions 80, and the SR's 60, the rest going to Left SR's. With the dissident parties absent from the proceedings, the Second Congress of Soviets confirmed the decisions of the Petrograd Soviet and the declaration of a Soviet government assuming state power. A.V. Lunacharskii read a Bolshevik resolution drafted by Lenin: "Backed by the will of the vast majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants, backed by the victorious uprising of the workers and the garrison which has taken place in Petrograd, the Congress takes power into its own hands. The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The majority of the members of the Provisional Government have already been arrested. . . . The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order."⁵⁸ The resolution was approved by the Congress with only two dissenting votes and 12 abstentions. The Bolshevikization of the Petrograd Soviet was complete; the era of Soviet Russia had begun.

FOOTNOTES

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13. Leon Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1934), pp. 803-04; Izvestiia, September 9/22, 1917.
14. Ibid., p. 804.
15. Ibid., pp. 804-05.
16. Ibid., pp. 806-07.
17. Izvestiia, September 9/22, 1917.
18. Soldat (Petrograd), September 14/27, 1917; Rabochii Put' (Petrograd), September 15/28, 1917.
19. A. Andreev, Sovety rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov nakanune Oktiabria mart-oktiabr' 1917 g. (Moscow, 1967), p. 345.

20. Izvestiia, September 26/October 9, 1917.
21. Rabochii Put', September 27/October 10, 1917; Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, II, pp. 530-31.
22. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, II, p. 530.
23. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK KPSS. Protokoly Tsentral'nogo komiteta RSDRP (b): Avgust 1917-fevral' 1918 (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958), p. 47.
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25. Izvestiia, September 26/October 9, 1917.
26. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, II, p. 528.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 529.
29. Ibid., p. 528.
30. Izvestiia, October 12/25, 1917.
31. Delo naroda (Petrograd), October 6/19, 1917.
32. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, II, p. 534.
33. Protokoly Tsentral'nogo komiteta, pp. 69, 117.
34. Trotsky, p. 807.
35. Rabochaia gazeta (Petrograd), October 20/November 2, 1917.
36. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, II, p. 531.
37. Trotsky, p. 817; William Henry Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution 1917-1921 (2 vols; New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965), I, p. 287.
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39. Chamberlin, I, p. 287.
40. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, II, pp. 540-41.
41. Chamberlin, I, p. 302.
42. Ibid., pp. 302-03.

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46. Ibid., p. 615.
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55. Izvestiia, No. 207, October 26/November 8, 1917, p. 1. This was the last issue before the Bolsheviks seized the newspaper.
56. Izvestiia, No. 207, October 26/November 8, 1917, pp. 5-7.
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58. Izvestiia, No. 208, October 27/November 9, 1917, p. 3.

CONCLUSIONS

All revolutions are a collaboration of men, events, and nature-- both immediate and long-term. Were the Petrograd Soviet leaders primarily victims of objective circumstances or primarily the authors of their own misfortunes? Some historians maintain that Russian traditions prevented a democratic solution in 1917, ⁽¹⁾ while others assert that such a failure was neither the product of the deepest historical trends in the Russian past nor a deliberate and untoward reversal of what is presumed to be Russia's natural evolution toward constitutional democracy. ² Other scholars stress immediate circumstances, ³ rather than the preconditions of Russian society as the cause of "revolutionary democracy's" failure. Doubtless, the backwardness of Russian common life, human will, and the World War all influenced the destiny of the Petrograd Soviet. What was the measure of the influence of each of these elements?

In the beginning objective circumstances greatly influenced the course of the Petrograd Soviet. With the socialist parties hopelessly bankrupt, it arose as an ad hoc, united socialist and revolutionary front--a temporary substitute for the trade union and political organizations of the toiling masses. It served as a rallying point for the populace and became a provisional organ of popular control. Under the influence of the mutinous Petrograd garrison this proletarian organ quickly became a Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. As the socialist leaders were in exile, the initial period of its existence was a heyday of independent radicalism. Nevertheless the revolutionary

intelligentsia present in Petrograd built the Soviet from the top down as opposed to mass-controlled organ from the bottom up. While these sub-leaders established some modicum of control by taking the initiative in establishing the Soviet, the elections to the executive committee and the plenum were so erratic and the membership of the two bodies so numerous that the Petrograd Soviet became unwieldy thereafter and floundered for a while. Commissions set up to deal with the more urgent problems were so divisive that they did not function; even the pages of the news organ of the Petrograd Soviet reflected the chaos characteristic of the institution.

Objective circumstances influenced the basic purpose of the Petrograd Soviet more so than the individual rationale of its deputies. With the socialist leaders in exile, the Soviet lacked the ability to assume state power. The Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies also lacked a unanimity of program. Russia, slow to industrialize, had produced only a minuscule proletariat and bourgeoisie, hardly the basis on which the proletariat alone could hope to establish a new state power. In addition, while the Russian High Command opted to cooperate with the bourgeoisie rather than divide the nation before the German war machine, a Soviet assumption of state power would most likely have produced a Cavaignac and the destruction of the revolution. Ignorant of the technique of government, they sought out those whom they overrated as skilled in state power, the Kadets, "the party of university professors," the party that was the "repository of wisdom and statecraft." This error stemmed not so much from theory as from intellectual snobbishness and caste

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prejudice.

Their frame of mind must have had some degree of influence on their position concerning state power. The Mensheviks and SR's supported the orthodox Marxian position which demanded that the bourgeoisie assume state power in a feudal society. Furthermore, as democrats they insisted that the Constituent Assembly decide the ultimate form and repository of state power; that the Petrograd Soviet until that time serve only as a temporary institution. Then too, their great familiarity with historical precedent haunted them; their fear of counterrevolution as justified by any number of reactionary episodes since 1789, including their own revolution in 1905. Their individual experiences with tsarist repression led them to view power not as a socially necessary function but as an entity focusing on the solitary individual. The exercise of power to coerce others was rejected as unethical and acceptable only as a faculty of an individual trying to accomplish a purpose.⁶ As Tseretelli put it: the Soviet had no will to power. Leadership meant only to awaken what was latent in the individual and bring it in line with marxian reality. According to Martov, the Menshevik ideologue, the class struggle was not necessarily a struggle for government: "In revolutionary times state power means organs of revolutionary self-government."⁷ During the March days the absence of any other political decision-making organ forced the Soviet to assume certain governmental functions: the supplying of food and the defense of the city. That it quickly deferred these functions to another temporary institution, the Provisional Government, upon the latter's creation, indicates the certainty of the Soviet's reluctance to assume governmental powers.

If state power rested with the bourgeoisie, what was the role of the Petrograd Soviet? As the socialists put it: they would cooperate with the bourgeoisie "insofar as" the result was not detrimental to the toiling masses. As Chernov complained, the Soviet "thought that by transferring power to the bourgeoisie, while keeping it on a 'short leash' by its 'conditions,' it could later part with it and begin its 'struggles.' It relied on the censitary government's being both a party to the struggle and an impartial umpire enforcing the rule of 'honest battle' on both sides." Sukhanov demanded that the Soviet have "complete liberty of struggle against this enemy" in order "to guarantee complete political liberty, absolute freedom of organization and agitation." Yet how far would the bourgeoisie go in acting as puppets from a Soviet script? If the bourgeoisie became alienated and divided the nation, most socialists agreed that averting civil turmoil had to take precedence over all policies lest it destroy the revolution. Lenin alone did not shrink from the prospect of civil war.

The war question revealed the anomaly of the Soviet position on power. The socialists insisted that the war would either conquer the revolution, or the revolution would conquer the war. Initially divided on the war question the formulation of a program of revolutionary defensism, emphasizing peace equally with defense produced a bloc of Menshevik and SR deputies under the leadership of Tseretelli and his Siberian Zimmerwaldists. The Georgian hoped to liquidate the war through a reunited Second International and by Russian diplomatic pressure, while the Russian army maintained defensive operations. That his peace program catapulted him into chief

strategist of the Petrograd Soviet is testified to by the veteran Bundist Grigorii Aronson: "Few were those who predicted that he would lead it. In the Social Democratic Party. . .there were. . . influential and widely experienced Social Democratic leaders, but somehow by general agreement, Tseretelli was acknowledged the main leader of the democratic revolution. . . ." ¹⁰

While Siberian Zimmerwaldism triumphed in the Petrograd Soviet, the bourgeoisie resisted its adoption by the government. When the cabinet went to pieces during the April crisis, Tseretelli and his associates tried to avoid the exercise of state power only to face the terrible prospect of civil turmoil. To resolve this dilemma they attempted to join the government as individuals, not as representatives of their parties or the Soviet. When they withheld their talents and refused to exercise governmental powers, they in actuality confirmed this position. Therefore, already in May the cabinet represented essentially no one but itself. Further reorganizations of the cabinet made this crystal clear by August.

Their persistent attitude on state power produced several negative consequences. It eroded the party base of the Menshevik-SR bloc. The bloc itself came close to breaking up over the question; fractionalization increased within the bloc parties. Furthermore, revolutionary defensism now included the possible necessity of offensive preparations and operations. In addition, the peace campaign received only the nominal acquiescence of the cabinet and continued to depend on the good offices of Miliukov's apprentice, Tereshchenko, and the old tsarist diplomatic corps.

The Petrograd Soviet's position on state power contributed to its failure by producing in essence a united revolutionary front among socialists and between socialists and bourgeoisie. Though unity was a fiction at lower party levels, it did exist formally at least between the political leaders of the government and the Soviet. As the Bolsheviks alone offered an organized opposition within the Petrograd Soviet and to the government, socialists disaffected with Menshevik-SR bloc policies had no other political center to turn to except Lenin's party. Each successive crisis brought the Bolsheviks an increasing number of followers, many reluctantly, but followers nonetheless. This position ironically contrasted sharply with that of 1905 when the revolution failed largely for lack of cooperation between the proletariat and other social classes.

The threat of destroying state power and enveloping the country in civil war also impinged on the Petrograd Soviet's attempt to realize other socialist goals. Konovalov's resignation as Minister of Trade and Industry signalled the fruitlessness of attempting to improve the immediate lot of the worker and of attempting to halt economic chaos through governmental intervention. The threat of mass resignations from the General Staff retarded the Soviet's attempt to transform the military into an effective revolutionary fighting force. The Soviet even succumbed to the General Staff's demand to mount an offensive operation. To avoid overly alienating the bourgeoisie, they even postponed the establishment of a permanent state power through the Constituent Assembly, thereby opening their provisional institutions up to the prospect of counterrevolution or radical revolution.

While circumstances and belief shaped the Soviet position on state power, the consequences of their views, as democrats, derived entirely from theory. Not only did it limit their field of action, but their ability to do so as well. As an institution that regarded itself as temporary and as the promoter of socialist goals in a bourgeois revolution, it refused to act on a number of pressing problems until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. While this position partially stemmed from the Mensheviks and SR's unreadiness to execute their somewhat hazy programs, it mainly derived from their democratic outlook. Thus the peasants had to await the assembly to receive land; the nationalities to know their fate of independence, federation, or nationalization; and the nation to learn of the new form of government. Indeed, all controversial problems ended up on the proposed agenda of the Constituent Assembly. As this greatly limited its realm of activity, the Soviet became a crisis-solving agency, an agency for calm.

Their democratic outlook made anything more than elemental action impossible. As democrats, they relied solely on the art of persuasion and agitation to accomplish their goals--shunning any suggestion of the use of coercion; a strange outlook as they believed in restructuring Russian society along Marxian lines. Though the Soviet had party whips and troubleshooters in its service and some simulance of organization to take care of the avalanche of daily affairs, the Soviet leaders attempted to resolve crises on a personal level or through hastily constituted committees to carry out instructions and issue exhortations to the populace. Furthermore, the Soviet leaders made no real attempt to organize

their political base beyond nominal acquiescence. Membership in the SR or Menshevik parties was little more than a formality. The Petrograd SR organization, for example, at first considered anyone an SR who paid the initial fee and declared himself an SR. The party fathers apparently did not know how many members made up the organization: 22,696 or 1,000,000.⁽¹²⁾ Under Martov the Mensheviks had adopted the membership policy that they were broad-based, democratized workers' party surrounded by mass-based organizations of revolutionary self-government.¹³ The Bolsheviks, by way of contrast, were a narrow party of "hard" professionals under centralized command. When the supporters of the Menshevik-SR bloc melted away in the late summer and early autumn of 1917, the reason was partly from a lack of ordering the party following into a rank-and-file under some sort of party discipline. Lenin testified to the democracy of the Menshevik-SR type of organization: the Bolshevik "strives to proceed from the top downward, and upholds the extension of rights and powers of the center in relation to the parts," while the "opportunist" Menshevik or SR "strives to proceed from the bottom upward, and therefore, wherever possible and as far as possible, upholds autonomism and 'democracy'."¹⁴ The Menshevik F. I. Dan noted that the paradox of socialism versus democracy had led Menshevism to emphasize more and more after 1905 the latter over the former while the Bolshevik sought socialism at the expense of democracy.¹⁵ Sukhanov simply admitted his own political ineffectiveness when he accused Tseretelli and the "Star Chamber" of establishing a dictatorship over the Soviet. The basic structure of the Soviet remained unchanged after Tseretelli appeared in the institution. The "Star Chamber" did nothing more than the informal caucusing practiced by the leaders of any political organization. That it could obtain the adoption of its program in the executive committee and its bureau through a Menshevik-SR coalition revealed not its tyranny

but its political adroitness.

Did the Soviet leaders have an alternative to their approach to state power? According to "Star Chamber" member Voitinskii, "It is interesting to speculate what would have been the course of events in Russia and abroad if a strong Provisional Government with a vigorous participation of democratic groups had taken over the helm after the March revolution; and if this government had succeeded in convoking the Constituent Assembly and transferring power to a regular government in, say, four or five months." ¹⁶ While the Soviet could not have seized power in March, it could have joined a coalition with the bourgeoisie. Even in May and August how much better it would have been to have had a government of parties rather than a government of men representing only themselves. The policy of refraining from state power while agitating against the bourgeoisie to gain the acceptance of their Soviet program was unrealistic. As the war question and the problem of economic chaos appeared as the only immediate Soviet concerns--all else being deferred to the Constituent Assembly--these propositions would have received a much more realistic handling from a coalition government than from the divided efforts of the government and the Soviet. Indeed was the Soviet position on the questions of war and peace even realistic? As the Soviet modified its policy of revolutionary defensism in May, it could have done so in March with the return of Tseretelli--if it had been willing to sacrifice on its theoretical reasoning. For the Marxian Menshevik, however, their subjective reasoning was part of the objective reality around them--thus what good would it have done to chart a course other than one of realism! In the final analysis the Mensheviks and SR's authored their own misfortunes more so that the objective circumstances surrounding them, for they were captives of their ideological commitments.

FOOTNOTES

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2. See for example, Robert V. Daniels, "The Bolshevik Gamble," The Russian Review, XXVI (October 1967), pp. 331-40.
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