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The War Aims of the Russian Provisional Government

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The outbreak of the first World War marked the end of an era in the history of Europe; nowhere was this to be more true than in Russia. At the outset there was a great show of popular support for the war, much more so than for the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. Anti-government and revolutionary activity had soon revived following the temporary hiatus after the seemingly successful Revolution of 1905, but it disappeared almost entirely in the rise of national feeling and loyalty that accompanied the declaration of war on August 1, 1914. On July 8 the Duma met to vote on war credits, which were quickly adopted. The parties of the left refused to vote for reasons of principle, but they still joined in a call for national defense. Outstanding revolutionaries like the Marxist/ Plekhanov, and the anarchist Prince Kropotkin supported the war, fearing that a German victory would mean the triumph of militarism and reaction. In addition, the Russian alliance with the western democracies, France and England, appealed to some radical and liberal intellectuals. The only dissidents were emigrant social Democrat leaders such as Lenin and Trotsky, who advocated turning the war into a civil war. The Mensheviks supported the war to the extent of national defense, but they emphasized a quick peace with no annexations or indemnities. The conservative newspaper Novoe Vremia in an article written three years later about the beginning of the war said, "The people closed their ranks around—


2 Ibid.

3 W. H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution 1917-1921 (New York, 1965), p. 64. Only the first volume of Chamberlin's work was used as source material; all page numbers refer to that volume.

4 Ibid.
around the throne. All political bickering stopped. All political parties, including the Social Democrats, united for the struggle against the foreign foe. Frustrated in the far east after 1905, dominance in the Balkans and control of the straits had again become Russia's primary aims in foreign policy. The government's policy in the Balkans led Russia into the war, and once the war had started, the imperial government began negotiations with the other Allied governments to make sure that its long cherished goals would be realized if the war ended successfully for the Allies. In the spring of 1915 Russia expressed the desire to annex certain territories at the end of the war. These territories were Constantinople, the Bosporus and the Dardanelles, and certain adjacent islands and coastlines necessary for free usage of them and their security. Both France and Britain agreed to the satisfaction of this demand upon Russian recognition of a series of their claims in the Ottoman Empire and other areas. The Treaty of London in 1915 was the formal acceptance of these terms. Italy also agreed after its entry into the war. Russia was promised Armenia, Erzerum, Trebizond, and northern Kurdistan by the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916, and at the Allied conference in Petrograd during January, 1917 Russia obtained the freedom to settle the eastern boundaries of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Briand-Pokrovskii Agreement. The contents of these secret treaties represented the war aims of the tsarist government. Obviously it would gain a great deal if the war were carried to a victorious conclusion by the Allies.

5 Browder and Kerensky, I, 141.
6 Ibid., II, 1054-1055. 7 Ibid.
8 David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (Boston, 1937), IV, 86-87.
9 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1056-1057.
The patriotic glow of the first weeks of the war soon faded in Russia. The demands of the war put unbearable strains on the country, and gradually Russia collapsed militarily, economically. Military defeat and internal conditions broke the morale of the country and caused the revival and growth of pacifist and revolutionary feeling. As the deprivations and the sense of bitterness and hopelessness grew, so did the discontent. Revolution or drastic change seemed inevitable and to many people desirable, but no one expected the collapse of the monarchy when it came on March 17. Although accompanied by riots, strikes, and meetings of the garrison in Petrograd, the revolution was almost bloodless. The tsarist government was not really destroyed, it collapsed of its own corruption and ineptness.

The initial stages of the revolution were leaderless and spontaneous. From the rubble two organizations arose that were to share political power in the new Russia, the Temporary Committee of the Duma and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. On March 17 the Duma created and elected a Temporary Committee to restore order and to establish relations with public organizations and institutions; that evening it began work to create a new government for Russia. The Soviet revived about the same time and also created a Temporary Executive Committee. From the first, it was the Soviet that commanded the loyalty of the majority of the population of the city, and it quickly began to assume some of the duties of authority. It was obvious that if the government to be set up by the Temporary Committee of the Duma was to have any power, it must have the support of the Soviet.

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10 Chamberlin, p. 64.  
11 Ibid., p. 73.  
12 Ibid.  
13 Ibid., pp. 81-83.  
14 Ibid., p. 83.
The Soviet rejected the idea of taking power itself; most of its leaders felt that this was the bourgeois revolution and that the socialist one would follow. Sukhanov, a Soviet member at the time, wrote that while avoiding the responsibilities of power, the Soviet retained the right to criticize and make demands on the government.

On March 14 an agreement between the Temporary Committee of the Duma and the Executive Committee of the Soviet was reached. The Duma Committee accepted certain demands of the Soviet, mostly concerning civil rights and the calling of a constituent assembly, and the Soviet issued a declaration of support for the Provisional Government. During the negotiations two men, Paul Miliukov and Alexander Kerensky, stood out, and they were to be the outstanding members of the Provisional Government. Miliukov had been the leader of the Constitutional Democrats in the Duma, and he now represented the more conservative groups in the country. He played a leading role in the negotiations, and Sukhanov wrote of him, "It was clear that Miliukov here was not only a leader, but the boss of the right wing." Kerensky had also served in the Duma; he was a Trudovitch, a very moderate socialist. His views were not actually in sympathy with those of most of the Soviet members, but he was an emotional, stirring orator who had a way with a mob and had been elected to the Soviet's Executive Committee. He accepted the position of Minister of Justice in the Provisional Government, although the other Soviet leaders opposed participation of its members in the cabinet.

G. M. Paléologue, the French ambassador in Petrograd, recognized Kerensky's importance at once, "His influence with the Soviet is great. He is a man

15 Browder and Kerensky, I, 117-118.
16 Ibid., p. 120.
17 Ibid., p. 118.
18 Chamberlin, p. 89.
we must try to win over to our cause. He alone is capable of making the
Soviet realize the necessity of continuing the war and maintaining the alli-
ance. He correctly surmised Kerensky's views on the war, too. In one of
the many addresses he made to mobs of soldiers in March, Kerensky told them
that they had a double obligation, carrying on the war and the revolution.

The new government, which had been formed, was obviously going to
have to make a decision on the question of Russia's role in the war. In
determining its position on this issue, the government was under pressure
from both internal and external bodies. The factions within Russia had di-
vagrent attitudes towards the war, and they each sought to bring the govern-
ment's policy into alignment with their own. The Allies also wanted the
Russian government's stand to be sympathetic to their policies.

Among the people and the army the desire for peace was intense.
Kerensky believed that Russia was physically tired and spiritually revolted
by the war and that the Russian people sought naively but honestly and sin-
cerely an escape from the hopeless situation into which Europe had blundered.
During the first days of the revolution there were frequent rumors of
revolution in Germany and they were widely accepted. Kerensky attributed
these sentiments to a great popular faith "that the Russian Revolution
would kindle the fires of fraternity in the hearts of all the working people
of the world and that by common impulse the workman and peasants of all
belligerent countries would put a stop to the patricidal war."

21 Ibid., p. 169.
22 Ibid., p. 50.
There were two socialist attitudes towards the war. The commencement of war in 1914 had caused a crisis in international socialism. The International had traditionally adopted an anti-war, pacifist policy, denouncing war as capitalist and imperialist; but when the war broke out, nationalism proved stronger than socialism, and most European socialists remained loyal to their governments and cooperated in the war efforts of their countries. The few who refused to cooperate met at Zimmerwald in Switzerland in 1915 and Zienthal in 1916 and denounced the "capitalist" war. Socialism was split into two camps, majority socialists who supported the war effort in their countries and minority socialists who continued to oppose it. In Russia the greatest number of the socialists belonged to the moderate groups, the Social Revolutionary Party and the Mensheviks, and had initially supported the imperial government in the war. The revolution was accompanied by a renewal of anti-war sentiment, which became more intense because of the possibility that peace might be achieved with the change in government. All patriotism and national feeling did not disappear overnight, however, and the Soviet was dominated by moderates until the end of the summer.

The Soviet position towards the war was not pacifist, but "defensist", i.e., it wanted to end the war quickly but not at the cost of a separate peace with Germany. It advocated restoring the army, continuing the war, and at the same time urged the government to drop all annexationist claims and push the Allies to a revision of the treaties with regard to the war aims. The Soviet's position was stated in an editorial in Izvestiia, the Soviet newspaper, on March 31. The editorial noted that the members of the Soviet did not desire conquests but liberty for all people. It said the Russians would continue to fight to protect their liberty until the people of the Austro-German coalition laid down their arms.²³ It appealed to the people of

²³ Browder and Kerensky, II, 1080.
Europe to push their governments to renunciation of conquests and adoption of the principle of self-determination. More importantly, it also demanded that the Provisional Government openly renounce policies of conquest.\(^\text{24}\) The theme of "fighting to protect Russian liberty" reappeared in a later Izvestiia editorial, which pointed out the dangers of a separate peace, German victory in the west and subsequent turning on Russia, and reminded the soldiers that they were now defending the freedom of new Russia.\(^\text{25}\) The socialists wanted peace, but they had many reasons for continuing the war: to expel the enemy from Russian territory, to prevent a German offensive to take Petrograd and restore tsarism, to destroy Prussian militarism, and to honestly fulfill the obligations to the Allies.

Even the Bolsheviks, the radical Russian socialists, held a similar position at first. March 25, Stalin, Kamenev, and Muranov returned from exile and took over Pravda, the party newspaper. In the March 28 issue Kamenev wrote that the Bolsheviks did not want a separate peace, but the initiation by the Provisional Government of steps toward negotiations to bring about a general peace. He called for obedience and devotion to duty on the part of all Russians until unilateral peace negotiations were possible. The party wavered along these lines till Lenin arrived in the middle of April and gave it direction. He held that war was an imperialist struggle between the capitalists of the world for world domination and exhorted the people to demand an immediate end to the war, to stop fighting the Germans, and turn on the ruling classes. Lenin was hardly a pacifist, for he advocated

\(^{24}\) F. A. Goldin, Documents of Russian History 1914-1917 (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1964), p. 376.

\(^{25}\) Browder and Kerensky, pp. 905-906. \(^{26}\) Ibid., p. 1074.

\(^{27}\) Chamberlin, p. 115.

\(^{28}\) Browder and Kerensky, pp. 904-905.
transforming the war into a class struggle,

Refusal of military service, strike against war and such things are mere stupidity, ... work directed to the transforming of the war of the peoples into civil war is the sole socialist work in the epoch of the imperialistic armed clash of the bourgeois classes of all nations... 29

In the spring and summer of 1917 this program was far too radical for many people in Russia, and Lenin started with little support; even most of the members of the Soviet thought he was completely unrealistic. Lenin, however, knew the possibilities of a wartime situation. He represented the future, not the present mood of the masses, and his radical viewpoint was eventually to win for the Bolsheviks their allegiance.

The conservative classes, the Cadets, and the right wing socialists wanted victory in the war above all else. On March 15 an editorial in Russkiia Vedomosti, a conservative newspaper, declared that Russia needed above all "an executive power" which was aware of its responsibility to the country and had the ability to lead Russia to victory in the war. They were thoroughly committed to prosecution of the war, maintenance of the existing treaties with the Allies, and securing the aims recorded in those treaties. They considered the acquisition of the territories included in the treaties as necessary for the future development and safety of Russia. Miliukov was the spokesman of this group and while he was Foreign Minister, the Cadet viewpoint dominated the Provisional Government. He wanted above all to maintain the treaties with the Allies, but he was forced by popular demands to modify the language if not the intent of his statements somewhat,

29 Browder and Kerensky, I, 128.
30 Chamberlin, p. 118. 31 Ibid., p. 119
32 Browder and Kerensky, I, 143.
emphasizing the "liberating" nature of the war and the desire for peace.\textsuperscript{33} He was reluctant to do even this because it alarmed the Allied governments so much. He was completely a traditionalist as far as the national problems and interests of Russia were concerned.

The attitude of the Allies toward Russia after the revolution was ambiguous. Essentially they were willing to support any government that continued to participate in the war. They had considerable financial reasons for wanting to maintain a sympathetic government; England had made extensive loans to both the imperial and the Provisional governments, and France, the United States, Japan, and Italy had also extended credit. Militarily Russia had done poorly in the war, but the Russian contribution should not be underrated; through forcing the Central Powers to maintain troop strength in the east, it had taken pressure off France and England on the western front. The American Ambassador, David Francis, recognized this and decided that it was very important that the Russian army continue to maintain the eastern front, in order to prevent the transfer of German units to the battlefields of France.\textsuperscript{35}

It was generally hoped in the Allied countries that the revolution was at least partially a protest against suspected pro-German influences at the old Court and that it would mean more vigorous prosecution of the war by Russia. The message of Lloyd George to the Premier, Prince Lvov, on March 24 was typical of the greetings to the new government. It expressed, on the part of Great Britain that Russia had become a democracy and confidence that this-

\textsuperscript{33} Chamberlin, p. 107.

\textsuperscript{34} Browder and Kerensky, I, 508.

\textsuperscript{35} David R. Francis, Russia from the American Embassy, April, 1916-November, 1918 (New York, 1971), pp. 124-125.

\textsuperscript{36} Chamberlin, p. 103.
this development would strengthen the determination of the Russian people to prosecute the war until the Central Powers were defeated.

At the same time the Allies were worried by the war weariness, the shattered economy, the crumbling army, and the emergence of political elements that demanded an end to the war or alteration of Allied and Russian war aims. In spite of noble phrases about liberty and democracy struggling against oppression, they had no intention of giving up the acquisitions promised to them in the treaties. All their sympathy and support was accompanied by admonitions against changing the war aims, encouraging strengthening the government and the army, and going through with plans made for a joint Allied offensive in spring 1917. They could not understand the delicate balance the Provisional Government had to maintain between the various shades of opinion at home in order to secure support. Maurice Paléologue, the French Ambassador, continued to demand that Miliukov issue a plain and completely unambiguous statement on Russia's intentions in the war, the one thing it was impossible for him to do. After reading the first declaration of the Provisional Government, he went to Miliukov and angrily told him,

A determination to prosecute the war at any cost and until full and final victory isn't even mentioned! The name of Germany does not occur! There isn't the slightest allusion to Prussian militarism: No reference whatever to our war aims!39

Miliukov was constantly having to reassure the Allies of Russia's determination not to make a separate peace or revise her war aims. Disturbed by the Allied attitude and actions, Kerensky felt that the Allies were undermining the Provisional Government. The position of Russian representatives at Allied councils deteriorated, important decisions were made without consulting

37 Lloyd George, II, 507.
38 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1039-1041.
39 Paléologue, III, 754.
40 Kerensky, p. viii.
the Russian delegates, sharp notes were sent to the government about internal affairs, and supplies from the Allies fell below what was promised and sometimes were defective.

The Provisional Government officially had come into existence on March 16. Kerensky was the only socialist member; conservative attitudes predominated among the rest of the Cabinet members. Besides Miliukov as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the other members of importance were: Prince G. E. Lvov - Premier and Minister of the Interior, A. I. Gutchkov - Minister of War and Marine, and M. G. Tereshchenko - Minister of Finance. On March 19, the government made its first declaration. On the subject of the war it promised, "to provide our army with everything necessary to bring the war to a victorious conclusion." The government also bound itself explicitly to fulfill "unswervingly" the alliances that had been concluded between the tsar and the Allies. Ignoring the evidence of popular anti-war sentiment, the government expressed confidence that it was executing the will of the people.

On March 17, Miliukov prepared the government's first statement on foreign policy. It was in the form of a note to the Russian ambassadors abroad to be communicated to the foreign ministers of the countries which they served. It declared that the new Russian government would "follow the democratic principles of consideration toward the small and the great nations, of freedom of their development, and of good understanding among peoples" but it emphasized Russia's determination to observe the agreements contracted by the old regime and to prosecute the war to victory. The contents of

41 Browder and Kerensky, I, 1040.
42 Kerensky, p. 109.
44 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
this note suggest that it was intended to assure the Russian allies of Russia's continuing participation in the war. It included phrases about protection of the rights of small nations and the desire for peace, but these were used by the western Allies too and hardly likely to arouse concern. A few days later Miliukov requested and quickly received from the Allies confirmations of the agreements made by the imperial government. Obviously the revolutionary government had not abandoned the war aims of the tsarist regime.

The Soviet, however, reflecting the anti-war wishes of most of the people, found Miliukov's statements unsatisfactory. Although the exact terms of the treaties made by the imperial government were still secret, the intentions toward Constantinople, the straits, and the Balkans were well known, and the Soviet began to press the government to renounce all annexationist views. All the members of the Provisional Government felt that Russia should continue the war to a decisive victory in collaboration with the Allies for the sake of national interests, but after learning of the terms of the secret treaties, they recognized the need for altering at least the phraseology of Russia's war aims to reflect the opinions generally held by the public and supported by the majority of the Soviet. Miliukov was the only Minister completely opposed. Kerensky, Tereshchenko, and Lvov favored the issuing of a declaration as demanded by the Soviet, and they persuaded their colleagues. Reluctantly Miliukov drafted a document with the aid of his associates; it was a compromise between Miliukov's views and the wording requested by the Soviet, and it was published as a domestic statement, not a diplomatic note. The declaration was released on April 9, and although it mentioned that the government intended to observe the obligations to the Allies and defend the country's rights, it firmly asserted that the government's aim was "not

47 Browder and Kerensky, II, 104.
48 Ibid., p. 1045.
49 Ibid., p. 1039.
domination over other nations, or seizure of their national possessions, or forcible occupation of foreign territories, but the establishment of a stable peace on the basis of the self-determination of peoples." It defined the army's task as being the defense of Russia and the freeing of Russian territory held by the enemy.

About the same time Kerensky in an interview given a British journalist, advocated the internationalization of the straits and Constantinople. When the interview was published in Britain, it caused an uneasy reaction in the British government. On April 14 Miliukov sent a note to the Russian embassies in Rome, Paris, and London refuting Kerensky's statement and reassuring the Allies that Russia would not renounce the treaties because they obtained certain "vital interests" for the country. The note also stated that the Russian public and army firmly supported the government's position.

These words may have been soothing to the Allies, but they were not truthful. In reality, the views of the population were much closer to those of the Soviet. It was natural that the Soviet's aims should be so close to those of the population, since it was composed of directly elected representatives of the people. Soon after the revolution the Soviet issued an "Appeal to the Peoples of all the World." Announcing the fact of revolution in Russia, the Appeal called for all people to commence a struggle against "the acquisitive ambitions of all countries" and make the question of war or peace their decision. Through this, it proposed, international unity could be restored and the liberation of man achieved, the aims to which the Russian people were pledged. The Appeal affirmed the determination of the Russian democracy to oppose the policy of conquest and to achieve peace. It included the Soviet's reason for continuing to support the war effort, pro-

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50 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1046.  
51 Ibid.  
52 Ibid., 1057-1058.  
53 Ibid., p. 1077.
tection of the achievements of the revolution. 54

The government, however, ignored the popular demand for a change in war aims expressed in the Soviet's pronouncements. To the Allied ambassadors it especially emphasized its decision not to alter the war policy. Sir George Buchanan, the British ambassador, obtained unofficial reassurances from Miliukov that the Provisional Government was determined to restore discipline in the army and continue the war before he would recognize the government. Miliukov made the same statement to Paléologue, but the French ambassador couldn't accept the discrepancy between the public and private or diplomatic pronouncements of the government. He continued to insist on certainty in the government's statements. Miliukov explained the difficulty of working with the Socialists and the necessity of keeping their support. When Paléologue became angry over the Provisional Government's first declaration, Miliukov attempted to point out the need for duplicity, "he argued that the manifesto was intended specifically for the Russian nation." Francis also interviewed Miliukov on the 18th of March, but was satisfied with information he received and recorded in his journal, "Rodzianko and Miliukov both assure me that the Provisional Government will vigorously prosecute the war."

The Allied ambassadors, despite constant reassurances, recognized that the Soviet had all real power. On Paléologue's suggestion, Britain and France sent socialist delegations from their countries to Russia to persuade the Soviet to adopt a pro-war stand. The Allied Socialists arrived in April. They were coolly received in the Soviet and attempted to make conciliatory statements which upset Paléologue and Miliukov very much. Miliukov and Kerensky both warmly greeted the delegates on behalf of the government on

56 Paléologue, III, 748.  57 Ibid., p. 255.
April 18, but their two speeches indicate the differences of opinion in the Cabinet at the time. Miliukov spoke first, emphasizing that the new Russia was more determined than ever to prosecute the war and end German militarism. Afterwards Kerensky made an address, but of a different tone. He announced that the Russian democracy had renounced all aggression and imperialism and urged the French and English peoples to force their "bourgeois classes" to do the same thing.

Paleologue was very pessimistic about the situation in Russia when he was recalled in May. He was sure that the national effort would weaken and that France's aims in eastern Europe would have to be altered. He didn't doubt Miliukov's willingness to continue the war, but felt the new forces must be taken into account. He didn't believe even the Soviet could control the mob and feared Russia would make separate peace with Germany. Francis, in contrast, remained very enthusiastic about the revolution. He was just as eager as Paleologue for Russia to remain in the war, but was delighted at the government's emphasis on the war being dedicated to freedom, democracy, and peace.

The American entry into the war heightened Francis' ebullience. Miliukov, however, was worried by President Wilson's statements on Allied war aims, particularly the phrase "peace without annexations." On May 3 he issued a declaration on Russia's war aims apropos of American participation in the war. Miliukov expressed the idea that the Allied task in the war was the reorganization of the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish empires with the liberation of the nationalities oppressed by them. He included among the particular goals of the Allies "creation of an independent Czechoslovakian state...the

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60 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1051. 61 Ibid.
62 Paleologue, III, 98. 63 Ibid., p. 245.
return of Italians to Italy, of Pumanians to Rumania, the natural unification of the Serbian people, and also the union of the Ukrainian population of the Austrian regions with the population of our own Ukrainian regions..." He firmly and explicitly asserted that the straits must come into Russian possession and that neutralization of them was less acceptable than Turkish control. In deference to the American President, he stated that these goals were in accordance with Wilson's principles and could not be considered as annexations. This statement was a bombshell in the Cabinet, which split into two camps, those who supported Miliukov and those who supported Kerensky, who came out in favor of neutralization of the Dardanelles and no annexations. Francis believed the majority of the Cabinet shared Kerensky's view. An uproar was also raised in the Soviet over the statement; Miliukov had failed to consult the Soviet before releasing it.

This incident added to the growing tension between the Provisional Government and the Soviet, which continued to demand a revision of the government's war aims. Miliukov remained unwilling to alter drastically even the phraseology of the government's statements in deference to the Soviet, for fear of alienating the Allies. In a conversation with Ambassador Paléologue he said, "if the Soviet got its way (on war aims) I should resign my office at once!"

Kerensky represented the view of the Soviet in the discussions with Miliukov, and gradually he won the support of most of the rest of the Cabinet. The struggle came to a head when Kerensky and the Soviet forced Miliukov to

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64 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1044-45.  
65 Ibid.  
66 Francis, p. 109.  
67 Chamberlin, p. 143  
68 Paléologue, III, 795.
send a copy of the April 9 declaration of the government to the Allies. Miliukov insisted that the declaration was a compromise between the opinions in Russia and couldn't be sent to the Allies without an explanation. The government accepted this position, and the accompanying explanatory note was edited by the entire Cabinet and published on May 1. The note said,

Imbued with this new spirit of liberated democracy, the pronouncements of the Provisional Government naturally cannot give any reason to think that the revolution which has taken place will lead to the weakening of Russia's role in the common struggle of the Allies...It goes without saying, as stated in the attached document, that the Provisional Government, while defending the rights of our motherland, will fully observe the obligations taken with respect to our Allies...

The reaction in the streets and in the Soviet began immediately. It was not so much that the content was offensive as that Miliukov's name had become a symbol of imperialism. Street demonstrations on May 3 and 4 demanded Miliukov's resignation. On May 5 the government issued another explanatory note with a tone more conciliatory to the public; it was accepted by the Soviet. The government had already decided, nevertheless, that Miliukov must be shifted to a less dangerous place in the Cabinet and that some of the Soviet leaders should be included in the government. The conservative groups hoped that this would assure more support for the government and gain backing for a planned offensive. Miliukov refused to accept the position of Minister of Education and resigned on May 8; Gutchkov also resigned because of discouragement with the continued disintegration of the army.

69 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1097. 70 Kerensky, p. 133.
71 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1098. 73 Kerensky, p. 134.
72 Chamberlin, p. 143. 74 Chamberlin, p. 148.
75 Kerensky, p. 134.
During the period of the crisis Kerensky had been attempting to persuade the Soviet to join in a coalition government; after negotiations over terms it accepted. It joined on the condition that the government direct its foreign policy towards securing a peace based on self-determination of peoples, no annexations or indemnities, and preparations for negotiations with the Allies on revising the treaties. The Soviet agreed to support an offensive at the front, having recognized that its appeals were not activating much response abroad and hoping that there would be more reaction if Russia were in a strong position militarily. In the new Cabinet, Kerensky became Minister of War; five other Socialists were included; and the rest of the posts were filled with conservatives and non-socialist moderates, including Tereshchenko as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Prince Lvov remained as Premier, but from the start Kerensky dominated, and together with Tereshchenko and Nekrasov ran the government.

The issue of war aims had caused the change in government, and the policy of the coalition was determined by a desire to avoid any conflict with the Soviet on this subject. The government took no firm or concrete steps to repudiate the war aims of the imperial or the previous revolutionary governments, but it adopted a policy of conciliation with the Soviet as far as possible. The Cabinet was completely willing to adjust its public and diplomatic language and methods so as not to alienate the Soviet and the people. It maintained this new stand towards the Allies as well as the Russian public, perhaps feeling secure that the Allies would never consent to a revision of the existing treaties even if the Russian government officially asked for a conference to consider this. The government's true position can only be judged by its deeds; it never renounced or even made

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76 Chamberlin, p. 147. 77 Ibid., p. 148.
public the secret treaties with the Allies. The war aims had not significantly changed from those represented by the treaties, although the government's public pronouncements concealed this. On May 18, the day after it was organized, the coalition government issued a declaration of its program. It adopted as its aim in foreign policy the establishment of a general peace without annexations or indemnities and based on the right of self-determination. In answer to the demands of the Soviet, the government promised to take measures towards a revision of the inter-allies agreements. The declaration also stated that the government was convinced that an Allied defeat would make the conclusion of a just peace impossible and that therefore the Russian army would continue to fight. This idea and the idea of national defense were the reasons used by the Provisional Government to justify its participation in the war and to create public support for this participation.

Tereshchenko, the Foreign Minister, was a wealthy young manufacturer who belonged to no political party. He proved to be fairly agile in maintaining a balance between not seriously offending the Allied governments and keeping on good terms with the Soviet. On May 19 he issued a communique to the press discussing his program. Russia wanted to establish peace as soon as possible, he noted, but it could not break its ties with the Allies without betraying its honor. Peace must be without annexations or indemnities and based on the right of self-determination; it must be an international peace. The new Foreign Minister committed the government to take steps to arrange a conference with the Allies concerning ways to secure peace. He maintained that the Allies could hardly be considered as annexationists at a time when Russia, Belgium, France, and Serbia were occupied by the Germans.

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Tereshchenko also observed that the Russian army must be prepared to continue fighting and even take the offensive if Russia were to be in the position of strength necessary for achieving its aims.

Kerensky's task as Minister of War was to restore the fighting capacity of the army. The government had definitely decided on an offensive for the early summer. The conservatives hoped the offensive would bring a successful end to the war and terminate the upheaval at home, and the moderate socialists thought it would raise Russia's prestige and force the Allies and Germany to take its peace program more seriously. Kerensky was acceptable to both groups. Izvestiia wrote on his appointment, "From now on, the Ministry of War will be headed by a minister who is a revolutionary to whom the army can blindly and without reservations entrust its fate." Kerensky began a round of visits to army units; his program was to make appeals to the soldiers and to take certain administrative measures to make use of the democratic institutions in the army. "Forward to the battle for freedom!" was his slogan. The offensive began on July 1, and was initially successful; once faced with strong German units, however, it collapsed completely. By July 24 the whole episode was over, and the state of the army was worse than ever. The hopes that an offensive at the front would lead the country out of the crisis were destroyed.

On July 15, four Cadet Ministers resigned from the Cabinet in protest against the failure of the Socialist ministers to restore the army or control the workers. Soldiers and workers began demonstrations calling for the

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79 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1103-1104.  
80 Kerensky, p. 184.  
81 Browder and Kerensky, I, 165.  
82 Ibid., II, 919.  
83 Kerensky, p. 195.  
84 Chamberlin, p. 164.  
85 Ibid., p. 169.
Soviet to assume all power. The demonstrations grew and there were suspicions of a Bolshevist coup, but the Bolshevik leaders did not feel that the time was ripe to seize control. The unrest reached a peak on July 17, and the powerless government could do nothing to restore order in Petrograd. The Soviet too was unable to control the mob. The Provisional Government and the Soviet were in a helpless position until the demonstrators, lacking a definite goal, were discouraged by the arrival of loyal troops.

After struggling for several days and at one point even resigning temporarily, Kerensky was able to create a new coalition government with himself as Prime Minister on August 6. Supposedly the members renounced all party ties in order to be completely free to take the steps necessary to save the country; actually there were more socialist members than non-socialists, but they were generally right-wing socialists. This change in the Provisional Government resulted in no changes in foreign policy or war aims. The Soviet continued to give the government and its policies resolute support. The Allies, seriously frightened by the ominous developments, became more anxious and demanding, and Tereshchenko sent another reassuring dispatch to them.

The July Days, however, had other results that were far reaching. In reaction the government and the conservative classes pushed further right, and suppression of the Bolsheviks and other radical leftists began. The mood of the people became more radical, and they were more insistent on the accomplishment of their demands. The Provisional Government had failed to solve the basic problems confronting the country; both the conservative elements in the population and the masses of workers and soldiers began to look elsewhere.

86 Chamberlin, p. 173.  
87 Ibid., p. 187.  
88 Browder and Kerensky, II, 970.  
89 Ibid., p. 1123.
The conservative reaction centered in the Kornilov conspiracy to take over the government from the right. The plot led by General Kornilov failed to oust the Provisional Government, but it was immediate impetus for its downfall. The discontented masses were aroused to revolutionary action, and the distrust created between the socialists groups and the conservative ones resulted in the gradual falling of moderation even in the Soviet. On September 13 it adopted a Bolshevik resolution. The government again turned to the right for support, which alienated it even more from the people. Its goals were meaningless for most Russians. It refused to publicly alter its basic position in foreign affairs, and put forward no real answers to the popular demands for "bread" and "land" either.

The rapid decline after the Kornilov came at a time when Kerensky believed he had hopes of being able to end some of the internal pressure on the government through achieving peace on the southwestern front. Motivated by the increasingly radical atmosphere in Russia, Kerensky had reconsidered the techniques if not the basic goals of his foreign policy. Although the government would not consider a separate peace with Germany, and had ignored several German offers because of a sincere fear of German intentions, it was seriously considering an offer from Austria-Hungary. Without Berlin's knowledge the government of Austria-Hungary had requested the Provisional Government for a separate peace. Tereshchenko had been preparing a plan for negotiations with Bulgaria and Turkey to bring about their exit from the war. With Austria commencing the move, Kerensky felt certain that Bulgaria and Turkey would soon follow its example. He hoped to arrange a peace in the southwest and secure some type of Russian control over the straits.

90 Chamberlin, p. 277.  
91 Ibid.  
92 Ibid.  
93 Ibid.
This arrangement was being made without the knowledge of the Allies. Typically for diplomatic maneuvers, it was progressing very slowly; too slowly to be an advantage for the Provisional Government.

During the late summer and fall the Provisional Government was also making plans for an Allied conference to be held in Paris. The Soviet had demanded such a conference since spring; it wanted a discussion of the Allied treaties and agreements with revision of the war aims as a goal. In Izvestia as early as April 15, Tseretelli, a Soviet leader, said, "We are declaring that the Russian democracy considers it necessary for the Provisional Government to enter into negotiations with the Allied powers for the purpose of working out a general agreement on this platform (no annexations)...." This demand was repeated in almost every pronouncement the Soviet made. Finally in June, Tereshchenko prepared a note proposing an Allied conference and sent it with Thomas, the French Socialist, when he left Russia. On June 16 the note was published in Russia. Pledging loyalty to the Allied cause, it proposed the convening, as soon as the situation became favorable, of an Allied conference to revise the agreements on the subject of the basic aims of the war. The only agreement that was not to be considered was the one which obligated each country not to conclude a separate peace. No invitations were sent through official diplomatic channels at that time, however. The move was heartily endorsed by the Socialist organizations and press.

In July Bakhmet'ev, the Russian ambassador in Washington, recommended to Tereshchenko that the United States be invited to the proposed conference, because America was giving direct support to the democratic direction in Russian foreign policy and would probably support Russia at the conference.

94 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1082. 95 Ibid., pp. 1120-1121.
96 Ibid.
On July 78 Tereshchenko cabled a reply to Bakhmet'ev agreeing with him on the wisdom of securing of American support, but informing him that the proposed conference must be postponed in view of the failure of the offensive and the July Days; he emphasized that all efforts were to be concentrated on the continuation of the war.

After several further postponements the conference was definitely scheduled for Paris on November 16. The Russian delegates were to be Tereshchenko, General Alekseev, and one representative to be elected by the revolutionary democracy. Kerensky issued an appeal on October 74 which stated the government's policy on the conference. He said that the Russian representatives at the conference would work to reach "the solution of common questions and military problems" and an agreement with the Allies based on the principles of the new Russia. At the same time, he concluded, the government would continue its war efforts for the country and the "common, Allied cause."

The Executive Committee of the Soviet drew up instructions for the Soviet's delegate. They wanted an agreement to be concluded on war aims based on the principles of no annexations, no indemnities, and self-determination.

The instructions also included several specific suggestions on territorial matters, such as neutralization of the straits, and it had guarantees to prevent future wars, such as abolition of secret treaties, elimination of economic blockades, and gradual disarmament. It endorsed the creation of a League of Nations, if all states were to be on equal footing, and it proposed Allied negotiations with Germany and Austria-Hungary as soon as they renounced seizure by force.

The Soviet's instructions caused great confusion and discontent in the Allied countries, and there was even the possibility of excluding Russia from the conference. Tereshchenko condemned the Soviet for this presumption of authority. The newspaper Rech' expressed the conservative attitude toward the conference, "this formula (no annexations or indemnities) obviously does not take into account the vital interest of the Russian people and no support can be found in it for defending the dignity of Russia as a great power."

These debates were futile, however, because as Kerensky hinted, the Allied governments had already decided to limit the discussion to definite military plans. Then the Bolshevik revolution toppled the Provisional Government before the date of the conference. Russia did not participate in it.

One of the aims of the Soviet's instructions to its delegate to the Allied Conference was for the Allied nations to remove all barriers to the Stockholm Conference. This conference had also been a goal of the Soviet since at least early summer. In the spring of 1917 Dutch and Scandinavian socialists, inspired by the revolution and the Soviet, began efforts to call an international socialist conference. A representative was sent to Russia to secure the cooperation of the Soviet. In spite of the opposition of the Bolsheviks, the Executive Committee of the Soviet approved a resolution to call a conference. The Russian-Dutch-Scandinavian Committee issued an invitation to a conference of minority and majority socialists to be held in Stockholm beginning August 2. The purpose of the conference was to consider the world war, the International, the peace program of the International, and methods for realizing this program and bringing the war to an end soon.

The Soviet also called for a conference. On May 15 the Soviet made an appeal

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102 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1146.
104 Ibid., p. 1130.
103 Ibid., p. 1157.
105 Ibid., pp. 1169-1170.
to the socialists of the world urging support for the conference. The appeal said that the "Russian Revolutionary Democracy" did not want a separate, which would leave Germany and Austria free to deal with the western Allies and "would be a betrayal of the cause of the worker's democracy of all countries."

It called upon the Allied socialists to force their governments to abandon plans for annexations and concluded with an appeal to Austro-German socialists to bring an end to the war in order to save the revolution.

The idea of a conference was favorably received by many socialists, but the Allied governments were hostile. On May 71 the United States refused to issue passports to delegates. In June, France and Italy followed suit, and on August 13 Great Britain did likewise. In announcing this, Lloyd George read a letter from Tereshchenko in which the Foreign Minister wrote that although the government couldn't prevent Russian delegates from going, it regarded the conference as a party affair, not binding on the government.

Lloyd George also said that he had received information that Kerensky opposed the conference. Both Kerensky and Tereshchenko made denials of these statements. Lloyd George was aware of their reasons for doing this and commented, "This last point was the really difficult aspect of the problem. M. Kerensky was still struggling with the power of the Soviet, and to some extent dependent on its good will. He dare not announce his open opposition to it..." After the British incident the Provisional Government made a statement on the Stockholm Conference on August 15. It announced that the government considered the solution to the problems concerning war and peace as exclusively the responsibility of the Russian and Allied governments. The

106 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1172.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., p. 1183-1185.
109 Lloyd George, IV, 142.
statement repeated that the Stockholm Conference was a meeting of specific political parties and could not make decisions binding on the governments. Denying that the Provisional Government intended to refuse passports to Russian socialists planning to attend the Conference, it said that both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs had advised the Allied governments not to obstruct the convention of the Conference. This protestation did not move the Allied governments to reverse their decisions; consequently the Stockholm Conference never took place.

While the demand for peace was growing more urgent, the Provisional Government remained inflexible on the subject of war aims. In late October when the Council of the Republic met, the government again affirmed the same basic goals. Only two weeks before the Bolshevik coup, Tereshchenko told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Council that the minimum conditions for the conclusion of a peace were access to the Baltic Sea, access to the southeastern seas, and assurance of economic independence. These aims precluded hostile foreign control of the straits and self-determination in Poland, Lithuania, or Latvia. This speech was made to a private session of the committee. Public and diplomatic pronouncements were still made in a different tone, obviously used to appease the popular clamor. According to Kerensky, "the language of her diplomacy and her diplomatic methods...did not, of course, in any way prejudice Russia's actions after victory.

It was ironic that even late in October the Provisional Government was not attempting to satisfy the demands of the Russian masses. The mutiny of

110 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1183-1184.
111 Chamberlin, p. 263.
112 Browder and Kerensky, II, 1133. 113 Ibid., p. 1144.
114 Kerensky, p. 130.
the army, the peasant seizures of land, and the growing radicalism of the workers' demands continued. There was no room for compromise. Public sentiment had gone beyond the moderate views of the Soviet. The passionate desire for the end of the war was a major factor in the growth Bolshevist influence among the people. Patriotism as far as the war was concerned had ended in Russia by fall 1917. The one desire was for peace. By failing to answer this demand, the Provisional Government brought about its own downfall. November 7 all of Lenin's work capitalizing on the popular anti-war sentiment came to fruition; the Provisional Government fell with almost no struggle. Kerensky fled Russia on the 14th. With the success of the Bolshevists the question of war aims became a dead issue. Bound by the desires that brought them to power, the Bolshevists' solution to the problem was predetermined. They had agitated for an end to the war, and they realized this goal, at first by ceasing all fighting and then officially in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

115 Chamberlin, p. 337.
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