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AN ANALYSIS OF ALEXANDER KERENSKY'S HANDLING OF
GENERAL LAVR KORNILOV

Michael Korzinstone

The revolution that broke out in Petrograd, the capital of Russia, in February of 1917, would be the first of two revolutions that would characterize that year in Russian history. The fall of the Tsar, Nicholas II, effectively ended the Romanov dynasty. Out of this revolution emerged the 'Dual Authority', an unofficial and uneasy partnership between the "Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers', Sailors' and Workers' Deputies," and a Provisional Government headed by Prince Lvov. The Provisional Government was to govern, and the Soviet was to act as a watchdog, making sure that the government considered the interests of workers and soldiers.¹ By the summer of 1917, due to the crushing burden of maintaining the increasingly unpopular war effort, the mandate of the government seemed to be breaking down. The spread of local Soviet bodies throughout Russia, the growth of trade unions, and worker control of the factories were all evidence of dissatisfaction with the Provisional Government.² This sentiment reached an apex in early July when the Bolsheviks staged an unsuccessful putsch against the government. Two days after the suppression of the uprising, Alexander Fedorovich Kerensky took charge of the

Michael Korzinstone is at the Wharton School. As a Senior at Upper Canada College in Toronto, Ontario, he wrote this IB Extended Essay for Dr. Stephen Johnson during the 2002/2003 academic year.

Provisional Government and proceeded to arrest Bolshevik leaders such as Leon Trotsky and Lev Kamenev.³ According to Michael Lynch, “a fortnight after the July Days, the Bolshevik Party stood on the verge of destruction.”⁴ One major issue facing Kerensky was the state of the military and its inability to wage an effective campaign against the Germans during the First World War.⁵ Aleksei Brusilov, who of all the old Tsarist generals had made the greatest efforts to adjust to the new political and military of Russia, had not succeeded in elevating the battle worthiness of the army.⁶ Kerensky turned to General Lavr Kornilov, the son of a Siberian Cossack, to take control of the army, restore its capacity to fight, and thus elevate the government’s strength and authority. Kerensky’s relationship with Kornilov, however, was not without complication, and on August 27, 1917, a final break occurred. The events that transpired between the two men have since been referred to as the ‘Kornilov Affair.’ How then, did Kerensky’s handling of General Kornilov affect the position of the Provisional Government? An investigation of a variety of primary and secondary sources suggests that Kerensky’s decision to pursue a campaign against an alleged counterrevolutionary plot headed by his Commander-In-Chief, General Lavr Kornilov, fatally weakened the position of the Provisional Government and enabled the Bolsheviks to recover from their July debacle and seize power in Russia in October 1917.

One can gain insight into the significance of Kerensky’s handling of General Kornilov through an evaluation of the historiography surrounding it. According to Jorgen Munck, most historians have been in “complete agreement that the Kornilov revolt was one of the turning points of the Revolution.”⁷ Munck, however, suggests that there is “considerable difference” with respect to many details and interpretations. George Katkov and William Chamberlin confirm Munck’s interpretation of the historiography, as they both believe that the Kornilov Affair was of prime importance in contributing to the fall of Kerensky’s Provisional Government.⁸ Katkov and Chamberlin, characterized by Michael Lynch as representing the ‘optimist’ and ‘pro-Bolshevik western’ schools of thought, respectively, also confirm Munck’s

suggestion that differences in opinion exist over some of the details and general interpretations of the affair.⁹ Such a divergence in opinion can be observed in Katkov's belief that there was no Kornilov plot to stage a *coup*, but that it was the "confusion created by Kerensky" which resulted in the "denunciation and dismissal of Kornilov as a counterrevolutionary."¹⁰ As a result of this, according to Katkov, there was "disorganization" and "disorientation" in the Russian political system and military, which culminated in the fall of the Provisional Government.¹¹ Chamberlin disagrees, and believes that it was Kornilov's "mission...to head the unsuccessful counterrevolutionary movement against the Provisional Government."¹² Edward H. Carr, another member of the 'pro-Bolshevik western' school of thought, believes, like Chamberlin, that in 1917 Russia experienced an attempted "military coup from the Right—the Kornilov insurrection."¹³ Orlando Figes, however, sides with Katkov, suggesting that Kornilov was "far from plotting the overthrow of the Provisional Government," and that the notion of a Kornilov *coup* is merely an "enduring myth of the Russian Revolution."¹⁴ When examining Soviet historiography, the matter is clearly defined; a counterrevolutionary conspiracy was under way which included Kerensky acting as a puppet of the capitalists.¹⁵ Finally, Richard Pipes suggests that the Kornilov Affair resulted from Kerensky's "sense that...the army was likely to breed a counterrevolutionary Napoleon," and his ensuing decision to engineer a plot to topple the General.¹⁶ Pipes, an American member of the 'non-determinist' school of thought, argues against the notion that the Bolshevik seizure of power was inevitable, but instead, that it was Kerensky's scheming that "enabled the Bolsheviks to recover from their July debacle."¹⁷ Clearly, one can find a consensus amongst historians that the Kornilov Affair played a significant role in altering the course of events in Russia in 1917. There is, however, discrepancy when addressing the issue of whether it was Kerensky's responsibility or not.

Kerensky's decision to placate the left rather than to keep his promises for military reform is the factor that can be attributed with initiating tensions between Kornilov and Kerensky. Kornilov indicated that he would accept the appointment as Commander-

In-Chief and “bring the people to victory and to a just and honourable peace,” only once a commitment was made by the Prime Minister to accept certain reforms.¹⁸ In Kornilov’s opinion, it was imperative that Soviet Order No. 1 be abolished, and that measures be taken to ensure that commanders be afforded the respect and disciplinary authority that was required to wage effective warfare against the German enemy.¹⁹ Kerensky’s acceptance of these proposals was sent by telegraph to Stavka, Russian military headquarters, on July 29, 1917. According to Richard Pipes, Kerensky “neither could nor would” keep his promises. Kerensky could not deliver on his pledges for reform because he was not a free agent, but the “executor of the will” of the Soviet, which viewed Kornilov’s suggested reforms as counterrevolutionary and unacceptable.²⁰ According to Orlando Figes, Kerensky’s political strategy relied on the premise of “straddling right and left,” allowing him to maintain his position as the central figure in his coalition Provisional Government.²¹ For this reason, Allan Wildman believes that “Kerensky deftly avoided committing himself,” fearing alienating socialist supporters.²² Pipes suggests that the issue of military reform “became the main source of conflict” between Kornilov and Kerensky.²³ By deciding to placate the left rather than to adhere to his promises, one can clearly see how Kerensky initiated tensions with Kornilov.

The divisiveness observed at the Moscow State Conference of August 12-15, between the political left and right over the reform issue, was what implanted the illusion of a counterrevolution in Kerensky’s mind. Kornilov, frustrated with the government’s lack of resolve in implementing his reforms, said to his colleague, General Lukomsky, “Mr. Kerensky evidently does not wish me to be present at the State Conference in Moscow, but I shall certainly go there, and will insist on my requests being accepted and fulfilled at last.”²⁴ Many historians, including Ronald Kowalski, have come to view the Moscow State Conference as the critical turning point in the relations between Kornilov and Kerensky.²⁵ When Kornilov arrived at the Bolshoi theatre, the site of the conference, he was greeted by crowds of right-wing Kadets and non-socialists who cheered him. Kerensky interpreted Kornilov’s

popularity as a direct threat, later saying that “after the Moscow Conference, it was clear to me that the next attempt at a blow would come from the right, and not from the left.”²⁶ Richard Pipes developed the theory that once this conviction lodged in Kerensky’s mind, it became an “*idée fixe*” and everything that happened subsequently “only served to reinforce it.”²⁷ Regarding his controversial speech to the conference, Kornilov later wrote in his deposition, “I thought it essential to make known to the country the real state of affairs in its armed forces, and to point out how necessary it was to raise their battle worthiness.”²⁸ Conservative newspapers such as *Novoe vremia* openly criticized Kerensky following Kornilov’s speech, and made claims that “at the helm of the ship of state are people who oppose the idea of defending the state.”²⁹ No evidence exists to suggest that Kornilov formulated this political campaign, but Pipes suggests that Kornilov, “as its beneficiary...came under suspicion.”³⁰ General Lukomsky noted in his account of the Kornilov Affair, that Kornilov confided in him and said, “I have no personal ambition. I only wish to save Russia, and will gladly submit to a strong Provisional Government.”³¹ Kornilov was not planning a *coup*; however, after the Moscow State Conference, Kerensky was convinced that a counterrevolution was brewing on the right.

Kerensky’s fear of a counterrevolution and his subsequent scheming, rather than Kornilov’s alleged desire to lead a *coup*, was the factor that forced the break between the two men. In mid-August, Savinkov, Kerensky’s deputy, received information from French intelligence sources indicating that the Bolsheviks were planning another putsch for the beginning of September. Kerensky realized the potential to use this piece of intelligence to hurt Kornilov. Kerensky asked Kornilov to send the Third Cavalry Corps to Petrograd in order to suppress the expected Bolshevik putsch; Kornilov complied without hesitation.³² Later, however, after the eventual August 27 break between the two men, Kerensky would claim in a message to Russian soldiers, that “General Kornilov...has now by his deeds demonstrated his treachery. He has withdrawn regiments from the front, weakening its resistance to the pitiless enemy, the German, and he sent all these regiments

against Petrograd.”³³ Harold Williams, a New Zealand born correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, recognized in 1917, that Kerensky had betrayed Kornilov. Williams made this observation when Kerensky reneged on his agreement to deploy troops to Petrograd and “suddenly raised a cry of panic against Kornilov.”³⁴ Kerensky’s handling of the Vladimir Lvov incident further confirms his intent to destroy Kornilov.³⁵ In order to obtain proof of a Kornilov conspiracy, Kerensky initiated a telegraph conversation with Kornilov, in which he impersonated Lvov. Richard Pipes suggests, however, that “this brief dialogue was a comedy of errors with the most tragic consequences.”³⁶ Nowhere does Kerensky explicitly ask Kornilov about his alleged demand for dictatorial powers, but rather makes assumptions based on vague remarks.³⁷ Orlando Figes believes that Kerensky came to realize that “as long as things were kept vague,” he might succeed in exposing Kornilov as a traitor. According to Figes, Kerensky believed that this would result in the revival of his own political fortunes, as the revolution would rally behind him to defeat his traitor.³⁸ On the basis of such weak evidence, Kerensky planned an open break with Kornilov, ignoring Savinkov’s suggestion that he communicate with Kornilov once more, in order to clear up what Savinkov thought to be an obvious misunderstanding. While these events took place, Kornilov proceeded with preparations to quell the anticipated Bolshevik uprising, as had been reported by French intelligence. On August the 27th, at 2:40 a.m., Kornilov cabled Savinkov to tell him that the “corps is assembling in the environs of Petrograd toward evening August 28.”³⁹ If Kornilov’s intentions were to use the troops against the Provisional Government rather than the Bolsheviks, as Kerensky insisted, he would not have forewarned it by telegraph. Kerensky’s scheming reached its pinnacle, when on August 27, he sent a radio-telegram addressed to the whole nation accusing Kornilov of treason. Only once he was accused of rebelling, did Kornilov call for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. Kornilov’s eventual revolt was reactionary, not pre-meditated.⁴⁰ The preceding evidence systematically demonstrates that the final break between Kornilov and Kerensky was not the product of an ambitious general, but rather that of a desperate politician.

One of the most significant by-products of the rift between Kornilov and Kerensky would be the rejuvenation of the Bolsheviks. According to Michael Lynch, “certainly it was the Bolsheviks who gained most” from the Kornilov Affair because “they had been able to present themselves as defenders of Petrograd and the Revolution, thus wiping out the memories of the debacle of the July Days.”⁴¹ In an attempt to suppress Kornilov’s phantom putsch, Kerensky requested help from the Soviet. On August 27, after deliberating, the Soviet approved, on a Menshevik motion, the creation of a “Committee to Fight the Counterrevolution.” Since, however, the Bolsheviks were the only group in the Soviet with a military entity, this action essentially placed the Bolsheviks in charge of the Soviet military contribution.⁴² With respect to this development, Donald Treadgold wrote that “the only ones to profit from the imbroglio were the Bolsheviks, who wrenched from the Soviet an official authorization to form a Red Guard.”⁴³ As Trotsky put it, “the army that rose against Kornilov was the army-to-be of the October revolution.”⁴⁴ The actions taken by Kerensky’s government, according to Moisei Uritskii, “rehabilitated” the Bolsheviks.⁴⁵ Such a rehabilitation was also evident in the government’s decision to release all of the Bolsheviks in custody except for the few that had already been caught up in legal proceedings for their involvement in the Bolshevik uprising in July.⁴⁶ In Figes’ opinion, “without the Kornilov movement, they [the Bolsheviks] might never have come to power at all.”⁴⁷

Despite the Prime Minister’s immediate success in suppressing General Kornilov’s “revolt,” the political outcome of the affair was one that was not favourable for Kerensky, leaving him unable to govern and Russia in a state of political instability. Boris Kolonitskii suggests that “Kerensky’s victory over Kornilov was his own political defeat, in that his political base, the coalition of ‘living forces’, was undermined, and his personal authority plummeted.”⁴⁸ William Chamberlin agrees with Kolonitskii, and suggests that “although Kornilov’s *coup* collapsed without firing a shot, its political consequences were momentous... it knocked the feeble underpinning of confidence completely from under the Provisional Government.”⁴⁹ Following the Kornilov Affair, Kerensky

took measures to satisfy his desire to continue his old policy of trying to balance himself between the conservative and radical forces in the country.⁵⁰ He made concessions to the left by summoning the “Democratic Conference” in Petrograd on September 14, from which delegates of the propertied classes would be excluded. In addition, Kerensky appeased the left by appointing the anti-Kornilov, General Verkhovsky, as War Minister, and by appointing Admiral Verderevsky, who was popular with moderate socialists, to the post of Naval Minister. Kerensky, however, simultaneously tried to form a new coalition government in which the Kadets of the political right would be included. The developing political polarization of Russia, however, surfaced at Kerensky’s conference where the events were ultimately a microcosm for the situation throughout Russia.⁵¹ One can look to the September 20th edition of *Den’*, a Russian newspaper, for an effective summary of the developing crisis of political polarization. Regarding the conference, the article stated that “the struggle of opposite political aspirations did not allow it [the conference] to tell the exhausted nation anything else but the story of the deep and dangerous crisis which was undermining it.”⁵² The political fallout from the Kornilov Affair clearly hurt Kerensky; however it also gave way to a great increase in Bolshevik political fortunes. According to Chamberlin, up to the Kornilov Affair, the Provisional Government owed whatever stability it had to the fact that the majority of the Soviets offered it formal support due to their moderate socialist majorities.⁵³ After the Kornilov Affair, however, the center-left Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries lost many supporters who were gravitating to the Bolsheviks on the extreme left.⁵⁴ This polarization also helped elevate Kadet fortunes, as non-socialists moved from the centre to the right. Kerensky’s wife clearly summarized the situation when she said that “the prestige of Kerensky and the Provisional Government was completely destroyed by the Kornilov Affair; and he was left almost without supporters.”⁵⁵ Clearly, the political outcome of Kerensky’s break with Kornilov was not one that was favourable for Kerensky, as it left the Provisional Government without many supporters and stimulated the growth of the Bolshevik movement.

One can determine that as a result of Kerensky's campaign to 'save the revolution', he lost complete control of the Russian army, a fact that would later contribute to his demise. Kerensky and Kornilov's mutual counter-accusations of treachery were, according to George Katkov, "particularly confusing and demoralizing to the troops." According to Katkov, these accusations also helped fuel Bolshevik claims that a counterrevolution was "rearing its ugly head."⁵⁶ The culprits, according to the Bolsheviks, were the officers, landowners and capitalists posing as sympathizers of the revolution but really supporters of Kornilov, with a hidden agenda to return to Petrograd as the ruling class of Russia.⁵⁷ The susceptibility of the soldiers to such propaganda translated into behavior of an anarchical nature, including the arbitrary lynching of officers.⁵⁸ According to Jorgen Munck, the Kornilov Affair left the Supreme Command with a greatly diminished authority that suffered "irreparable damage."⁵⁹ Kerensky's loss of control over the Russian army would eventually lead to his demise. In October, when the prospect of a potential Bolshevik insurrection took a more prominent position in Kerensky's mind, he went to the headquarters of the Petrograd Garrison to personally assume control of operations there. Upon his arrival, however, he learned that the Garrison was completely disaffected and would not, therefore, offer resistance to a Bolshevik putsch.⁶⁰ As a result of Kerensky's break with Kornilov, Kerensky would lose complete control of the Russian army, and would not be afforded its protection when the Bolsheviks staged their *coup* in late October.

Like the demoralization and insubordination of the soldiers in the military, the state of affairs in town and country were also good indicators of the weakness of Kerensky's Provisional Government after the suppression of the Kornilov revolt. Many peasants believed that members of the property-owning and educated classes, like the officers, were counterrevolutionaries who supported Kornilov's pseudo-mutiny.⁶¹ Under the influence of deserting troops who traveled through the countryside, peasants were encouraged to engage in their own social warfare against the privileged. A state of near-anarchy ensued.⁶² The October 1st edition of *Russkiiia vedomosti* read, "the wave of pogroms grows and

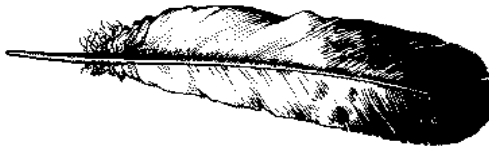
expands to overflowing throughout Russia...the unbridled mob, with darkest animal instincts unleashed, loots and pillages everything that it finds at hand.”⁶³ The government’s inability to control this havoc is demonstrated by a pair of documents, both addressed to provincial, regional, and municipal commissars. The first document is a letter that was written by the Minister of War, Major General Verkhovskii, which informed the commissars of his recently issued Order No. 51 of October 11. In the letter, Verkhovskii outlines the nature of this order, an order largely formulated to restore order throughout Russia. After explaining the methodology that was selected to accomplish this grave task, the Minister concluded by saying, “the goal is set, the means are furnished.”⁶⁴ The inability of the government to control the unruly behavior in the countryside can be determined by examining the second document, a telegram dated on October 21st from the Minister of the Interior, Boris Nikitin. It should be noted that Nikitin acknowledges in his telegram that there is an “incessant growth of anarchy, which threatens the internal situation of the country.”⁶⁵ Considering that ten days earlier, Nikitin’s colleague, the Minister of War, said “the goal is set, the means furnished,” one is made aware of the government’s inability to control the havoc throughout Russia. From the preceding evidence it is clear that following the Kornilov Affair, Kerensky’s Provisional Government lost not only the ability to control the military, but the ability to control domestic affairs as well.

Lenin’s writings to the Bolshevik Central Committee in the autumn of 1917 are good indicators of how Lenin believed that the Kornilov Affair provided the Bolsheviks with the necessary prerequisites for a successful *coup*.⁶⁶ To illustrate why he believed that Russia was ripe for the plucking, Lenin wrote on September 14th, that during the July days, “we did not yet have a majority among the workers and soldiers of the capitals. Now we have majorities in both Soviets.” Lenin wrote that this change in fortunes was “created only by the history of July and August...by the experience of the Kornilov Affair.” Lenin also wrote that during the July Days, “there was no general revolutionary upsurge of the people. Now there is, after the Kornilov Affair. This is proven by the situation in

the provinces.” A third significant factor that Lenin believed would allow the Bolsheviks to wage a successful putsch compared to July, was that “at that time there were no vacillations on a serious, general, political scale among our enemies.” Lenin also communicated to the committee, that in July, the Bolsheviks “could not have retained power...before the Kornilov Affair, the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd.” In Lenin’s mind, however, after the Kornilov Affair, “the picture is entirely different.” The preceding statements made by Lenin in his letter to the Bolshevik Central Committee clearly demonstrates how Lenin believed that the Kornilov Affair was crucial in establishing the essential pre-requisites for a successful insurrection.

Upon taking the reigns of the Provisional Government in July of 1917, Kerensky sought to restore the military’s ability to fight. One measure taken by Kerensky to help improve Russia’s position in their bloody conflict with the Germans, was to promote General Lavr Kornilov to the post of Commander-In-Chief of the armed forces. Kornilov, however, was hesitant to unconditionally accept this post, fearing that without the implementation of various military reforms, his efforts would be fruitless. Thus, Kornilov communicated to Kerensky that he would only accept the position if Kerensky promised to implement his proposed reforms. On July 19, 1917, Kerensky agreed. How then, did Kerensky’s handling of General Kornilov affect the position of his own government? Kerensky had hoped that his appointment of the General to the position of Commander-In-Chief would help revitalize the military, and thus strengthen his government’s authority. This, however, was not the case. Upon the completion of an investigation of a broad collection of primary and secondary sources, evidence was found to suggest that Kerensky came to view Kornilov as a dangerous rival, and as a result, an illusion developed in his mind of a counterrevolution brewing on the right. The investigation has also shed light on Kerensky’s pre-emptive actions to subdue this phantom counterrevolution, and its ensuing effects. Kerensky’s decision to force a break between himself and Kornilov resulted in a polarized political arena, a dysfunctional

military, provinces in a state of anarchy, and a revitalized Bolshevik party. When considering this point, one can ponder whether if Kerensky had handled the situation differently and instituted Kornilov's reforms instead of placating the left, would the Bolsheviks have ever been able to recover from their July experience and take control of Russia? If so, would Russia have made a successful transition to democracy through their planned Constituent Assembly, as advocated by Kerensky? While such a suggestion is conceivable, one must realize that the government had other challenges which placed pressure on its sustainability. These challenges included the Provisional Government's desire to continue the greatly unpopular war effort, its difficult task of facilitating a peaceful and orderly transition to a Constituent Assembly, and finally, its challenge of achieving a solution to the Land Question through the aforementioned assembly. Nevertheless, when considering Kerensky's actions, it is found that Kerensky's decision to pursue a campaign against a phantom counterrevolutionary plot allegedly headed by his Commander-In-Chief, General Lavr Kornilov, left the Provisional Government in a desperate state, void of supporters, and enabled the Bolsheviks to recover from their July debacle and seize power of Russia in October of 1917.



¹ In accordance with Marxist theory, many socialists in the Soviet believed that the bourgeoisie had to govern before their inevitable demise, and the ensuing rise of the proletariat. Thus, they believed that a necessary waiting period was required, and the Provisional Government would be allowed to govern until its aforementioned abdication of power. Michael Lynch, Reaction and Revolutions: Russia 1881-1924 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992) p. 42

² *Ibid.*, p. 87

³ Richard Pipes, A Concise History of the Russian Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995) p. 127

⁴ Lynch, p. 88

⁵ General Knox, a British military observer attached to the Russian army, commented to the British ambassador on returning from a visit to the Northern front, that the Russian army was in a 'deplorable state of affairs' and that 'units have been turned into political debating societies.' William Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution: 1917-1918 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935) p. 227

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 193

⁷ Jorgen Munck, The Kornilov Revolt (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1987) p. 8

⁸ Chamberlin, p. 221; George Katkov, Russia 1917: The Kornilov Affair (New York: Longman, Inc., 1980) p. xii

⁹ Lynch, p. 3

¹⁰ Katkov, p. 161

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161

¹² Chamberlin, p. 192

¹³ Edward Hallett Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution: 1917-1923 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950) p. 103

¹⁴ Orlando Figes, A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996) p. 445

¹⁵ This sentiment can be appreciated by examining cartoons drawn by the famous Soviet political satirist and poster artist, Viktor Deni. One of his cartoons in particular, drawn in 1935, depicts Kerensky as a counterrevolutionary puppet in a military uniform, being manipulated by the strings of a capitalist. Ronald Kowalski, The Russian Revolution: 1917-1921 (London: Routledge, 1997) pp. 78-79

¹⁶ Pipes, A Concise History, p. 129

¹⁷ Richard Pipes, The Russian Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) p. 439

¹⁸ Chamberlin, p. 195

¹⁹ Order No. 1, issued by the Petrograd Soviet in March 1917, made all military orders dependent upon its consent and placed discipline at a regimental level under the discretion of soldiers' councils rather than in the hands of officers. Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 441

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 442

²¹ Figes, p. 447

²² Alan Wildman, "The Breakdown of the Imperial Army in 1917," in Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution ed. E. Acton, V.I. Cherniaev and W. G. Rosenberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) p. 25

²³ Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 442

²⁴ "General Lukomsky's account of the Kornilov Affair," in The Russian Provisional Government 1917: Documents Vol. 3, eds. Robert Paul Browder and Alexander Kerensky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961) Doc. 1263

²⁵ Kowalski, p. 73

²⁶ Kerensky "not only saw but needed to see" Kornilov as a counterrevolutionary force. The reason for this, according to Pipes, was that Kerensky believed that to become leader of democratic Russia, he had to represent the democratic left, and to do so, had to share in its fear of a counterrevolution. During the summer of 1917, various reports of counterrevolutionary conspiracies surfaced in newspapers such as the Menshevik Novaia zhizn. Kerensky depended on Menshevik support in the Soviet, and therefore needed to address their concerns. Pipes, Russian Revolution, pp. 445, 447-448

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 445, 447-448

²⁸ Katkov, p. 56; One can achieve an understanding of the divisive effect that Kornilov's ideas had on the delegates by reading an article printed in the August 17th issue of the newspaper, Rech', just days following the conference. According to the article, the Moscow State Conference "shifted the line of demarcation between the representatives of the population into two camps" and by doing so, has "opened the question of the present composition of the government." "Article printed in Rech' on August 17, 1917," in Browder and Kerensky, Doc 1255

²⁹ This claim was made in the August 13 issue of Novoe vremia. Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 447

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47

³¹ "General Lukomsky's account of the Kornilov Affair," Browder and Kerensky, Doc. 1263

³² Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 448

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 461

³⁴ I. Zohrah, "The Socialist Revolutionary Party, Kerensky and the Kornilov Affair From the Unpublished Papers of Harold W. Williams," New Zealand Slavonic Journal (1991): 153-154

³⁵ Chamberlin, p. 209; Vladimir Nikolaevich Lvov (not to be confused with Prince George Lvov, the former Prime Minister), a self-appointed "savior" of the country, was Procurator of the Holy Synod in the first Provisional Government. Lvov held this post until July 1917, when he was dismissed by Kerensky's second Provisional Government. After meeting once with General Kornilov and pretending to be a representative of Kerensky, Lvov subsequently met with Kerensky, pretending to be an ambassador of Kornilov. Lvov told Kerensky that the General demanded to be given full dictatorial rights, and that he expected Kerensky's resignation to be forthcoming. According to Richard Pipes, there is little doubt that this message delivered by Lvov to Kerensky had been concocted not by Kornilov, but by Lvov himself. Pipes, A Concise History, pp. 132-133

³⁶ Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 456

³⁷ Figes, p. 450; When Maximilian Filonenko, a member of the Socialist Revolutionary party, saw the tapes from the Hughes Apparatus (a communications device), he observed that "Kerensky never stated what he was asking and Kornilov never knew to what he was responding." Kerensky, however, maintained to the end of his life, that Kornilov had "affirmed not only Lvov's authority to speak in Kornilov's name, but confirmed also the accuracy of the words which Lvov had attributed to him." Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 456

³⁸ Figes, p. 450

³⁹ Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 457

⁴⁰ Furthermore, Pipes makes an important observation, highlighting the fact that if counterrevolutionary plans had been in existence, then some of the generals would have followed Kornilov's ultimate appeal for a coup in Petrograd. They did not, however, and Kornilov was subsequently arrested. Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 461

⁴¹ Lynch, p. 92

⁴² Chamberlin, p. 217

⁴³ Donald W. Treadgold, Twentieth Century Russia (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995) p. 104; It should also be noted,

that when ratifying their security plans, the Provisional Government also requested that the sailors of the cruiser Aurora, known for their Bolshevik sympathies, assume responsibility for the protection of among other things, the Winter Palace. Ironically, only two months later, the sailors of the Aurora would be the first ones to fire on the Winter Palace during the Bolshevik insurrection against the Provisional Government. In addition to this, Kerensky also distributed 40,000 guns to those “defending” the revolution, many of whom would assist the Bolsheviks in their October putsch. Figes, p. 455

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 455

⁴⁵ Moisei Uritskii was a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, a body responsible for determining the day-to-day direction of the party. Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 466

⁴⁶ This amnesty was extended to Leon Trotsky, Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, and P.E. Dybenko, three men who would later play prominent roles in the Bolshevik coup of late October. By October 10, all but 27 Bolsheviks were free and preparing for their next putsch. Ibid, p. 467

⁴⁷ Figes, p. 455

⁴⁸ Kolonitskii’s reference to a “political base,” alludes to Kerensky’s reliance on a coalition of support from the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks on the left, and from the Kadets on the right. Boris I. Kolonitskii, “Kerensky,” in Acton, et al., p. 146

⁴⁹ Chamberlin, p. 277

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 277

⁵¹ At the conference, Kamenev, a Bolshevik representative, urged that no coalition government be established. Kamenev spoke eloquently, and was ultimately successful in persuading the representatives to adopt a firmer stance when dealing with the Kadets, thus signifying a widening in the bridge between left and right. Before Kamenev spoke, the conference passed a resolution in favour of a coalition government with the Kadets, but after the speech, that decision was rescinded in favour of a motion excluding the Kadets from a coalition government. Katkov, p. 125

⁵² “Article printed in Den’ on September 20, 1917,” in Browder and Kerensky, Doc. 1361

⁵³ Chamberlin, p. 277

⁵⁴ Bolshevik gains from the political polarization that ensued after the Kornilov Affair can best be appreciated by

comparing the local election results for the Moscow Soviet from before the affair with the results after. It can be observed that the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks controlled 58.9% and 12.2% of seats in the Moscow Soviet before the affair, respectively. After the affair, that number dropped to 14.7% and 4.2%. The Bolsheviks, however, won an additional 37.8% of the seats in the Moscow Soviet, to control a total of 49.5% of the seats by September 1917. This polarization also occurred on the right, as Kadet control grew from 17.2% of all seats in June 1917 to 35.5% in September 1917. Pipes, Russian Revolution, p. 466

⁵⁵ Figes, p. 455

⁵⁶ Katkov, p. 122

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 122

⁵⁸ One can achieve an appreciation of this behavior in the September 2nd edition of the Bolshevik paper, Izvestiaa, where accounts of violence in the region of Vyborg were documented. It was written that, "At first three generals and a colonel, who were arrested earlier... on charges of supporting Kornilov, were dragged out of the guardhouse by the crowd, thrown off the bridge, and killed in the water. This was immediately followed by lynchings in the regiments." "Article printed in Izvestiaa on September 2, 1917," in Browder and Kerensky, Doc 1309

⁵⁹ Munck, p. 121; One can best appreciate the lack of control that the government and commanding officers had over the military by considering two important documents. In a jointly signed order to the army and the fleet on September 3rd, Kerensky and General Alekseev (Chief of Staff) ordered that "all troop organizations function in a correct manner," and that they operate "free from any interference in the combat and operative work of commanding personnel." When examining the second document, a military intelligence report from the commander of the 6th Siberian Corps and 3rd Siberian Division, one is made aware of the lack of control that the government had over the military. Written nearly one month after the first document, this intelligence report claims that "the situation of the officer personnel has become very difficult; open hostility and animosity are manifest on the part of the soldiers; the most insignificant event may provoke unrest." Clearly, the previously issued order had not been effective in influencing the conduct of the troops. "Order to the Army and the Fleet of September 3, 1917," in Browder and Kerensky, Doc. 1307; "Military Intelligence Report from the Commander of the 6th Siberian

Corps and of the 3rd Siberian Division: September 20-October 1, 1917,” in Browder and Kerensky, Doc. 1311

⁶⁰ Kerensky’s loss of control over the military can also be observed in the reaction to his subsequent orders to all available Cossack troops stationed in Petrograd to take positions in the streets. The Cossacks replied with a claim that they were already saddling their horses in preparations to leave. Military intelligence, however, refuted this claim, indicating that the Cossacks were lying and did not wish to fight for the Provisional Government. Katkov, p. 128

⁶¹ Katkov, p. 123

⁶² Chamberlin, p. 242; This tension was heightened by Kerensky’s unwillingness to settle the land question before a Constituent Assembly could meet. Land shortage was a chronic social problem in Russia since the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. The February revolution had led the peasantry to believe that they would benefit from a major land redistribution program, and were agitated by Kerensky’s incessant postponement of the issue. Thus, peasants were more inclined to be receptive of calls for social disobedience. Lynch, p. 88

⁶³ “Article printed in Russkiiia vedomosti on October 1, 1917,” in Browder and Kerensky, Doc 1334

⁶⁴ “Letter to Provincial, Regional, and Municipal Commissars from the Minister of War, Major General Verkhovskii concerning his Order No. 51 of Oct. 11, 1917,” in Browder and Kerensky, Doc. 1339

⁶⁵ “Letter to Provincial, Regional, and Municipal Commissars from the Minister of the Interior, Boris Nikitin of Oct. 21, 1917,” in Browder and Kerensky, Doc. 1340

⁶⁶ In his writings, Lenin was more pragmatic about the opportunity presented by the Kornilov Affair, and less willing to wait for the historical determinism of Marxism to run its course. Vladimir I. Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1858-1965) pp. 239-241

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In Evelyn Dickmann's paper on German-American Internment in the Spring 2003 issue of *The Concord Review* (13/3), the numbers given for Japanese and German internees in the U.S. during World War II were questioned.

This paper was challenged by Jane Beckwith, an Advanced Placement English Teacher at Delta High School in Delta, Utah, to whom I extend my gratitude for reporting her concern.

The author reports: "A similar number of ethnic Germans and ethnic Japanese in America were interned during World War II, meaning that they were arrested and placed into specific camps. Approximately 120,000 more Japanese (<http://www.usdoj.gov/osg/briefs/1986/sg860242.txt>) were forced to leave their homes and were placed in relocation centers until they could prove they had another place to live. Unfortunately, many of them had nowhere else to go, so they had to stay in the centers. Recently the terms "internment" and "relocation" have become confused, because both those arrested and those not arrested were treated in much the same manner. But most, if not all, of the Germans and 11,229 Japanese-Americans were arrested (though not necessarily fairly) and officially interned."