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Russian Provisional Government of 1917
Background Guide

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Hello,

Welcome to the Russian Provisional Government of 1917. 1917 was a tumultuous time across the world, and we wanted to bring out the chaotic nature of the year in a truly unique way. The Russian Provisional Government’s time on the world stage was greatly overshadowed by both the February and October revolutions, and we wanted to bring this body to light. There have been numerous times in which a government has failed, but none like this government. While being in power for less than a year, the provisional government continued to drag Russia down into WWI, failed to stop the hemorrhaging of the economy, and failed to deal with the growing revolutionary fervor that was sweeping the country. Will you as delegates continue upon a similar path? Or will you change the course of the government and rewrite history, saving or degrading Russia? Our staff is excited to meet all of you and we can’t wait to see what you all as delegates have in store for this committee.

Sincerely

The staff of the Russian Provisional Government 1917

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Before the Revolution: 1900 – 1917

Introduction

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Russian Empire rose above all other nations as the largest country at the time. In 1900, the empire had close to 126 million people, and vast stretches of land that were, for the most part, useful but unused. Serfdom had been a dominant feature of the Russian economy until 1861, and Russia had been slow in attempting to industrialize and progress. Because of this sluggish advancement, the Russian Empire was stuck as an agricultural country that had coal and petroleum as its only developing industries, and without any means of modern transportation. Additionally, as the country had just left serfdom behind a short time ago, most peasants had very minor say in government and political processes, and those who held power were opposed to the idea of sharing it.

Tsar Nicholas II: A Great Family Man

Another major source of discontent within the Russian Empire was Tsar Nicholas II, who prioritized the time spent with his family above all else. Although he was described as a cordial man who was highly educated and well qualified, he was also easily influenced and wavered often in political discussions. Additionally, Nicholas II believed that he was chosen by God to be tsar, and remained an obstinate advocator for the right of the sovereign. Nicholas II held onto the autocracy that had been in place from his father’s rule, despite having a clear lack of interest in politics during his reign. This decision to keep the autocracy was another major factor in the continued discontent of the Russians -- having Nicholas II as the sovereign meant that the empire was led by someone with no knowledge or interest in how to run the country. Because his main interest as tsar was to preserve the Romanov dynasty, there was little emphasis on societal change, which accelerated the rise of the revolution. Furthermore, the tsar would often feel jealous towards officials and nobles who had risen in power, and used intimidation as a tactic to exert his control over the Russian population.

Given that Nicholas II was not well versed in the politics of the time, and paid little attention to his monarchical duties, the decisions he made for the country led to failure in several fields. The first critical mistake that Nicholas II made was to declare war against Japan, which was a strong ally of Britain. The Russian Empire was far from ready to enter any sort of conflict, which became clearer once Japan had made the first move to attack. Throughout the entire Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the Russians suffered constant defeats and lost substantial amounts of money, which in turn had destabilized the Russian economy. After the great failure of the Russo-Japanese War, there was Bloody Sunday, and finally the Revolution of 1905, which altogether resulted in the decaying of any national pride.

The Revolution of 1905

Starting with a St. Petersburg factory strike in December of 1904, the Revolution of 1905 became a massive protest resulting in approximately 150,000 workers striking in 382 factories across the city, and escalated into a city-wide blackout on January 21st, 1905. These peaceful protests were lead by Father Georgi Gapon, who demanded better conditions for workers, improved wages, fair elections, freedom of speech, and an end to the failed Russo-Japanese war. After factories and mills shut down one after one, Gapon wrote a petition to the Tsar on behalf of workers and citizens, asking for equal treatment and human respect. The petition also included political and economic demands that addressed the oppression felt by the Russian people, and called
for universal education, freedom of press, separation of church and state, equality before the law, and many more requests concerning fundamental human rights. In response to these events, all public areas within St. Petersburg were immediately declared closed, and masses of people rallied around Father Georgi Gapon -- in fact, more than 150,000 people signed the petition that Gapon had written to the Tsar. With the support of the people, Georgi Gapon led a massive procession of workers to the great Winter Palace to present their petition, where they were met with machine guns and swords. This extremely unjust act of violence was the starting point of the Revolution of 1905, and January 22d, 1905 became known as Bloody Sunday -- a day that extinguished any hope the Russians had towards the Tsar’s ability to rule for his people. This revolution was only concluded on October 30th of 1905, when the Tsar agreed to publish the October Manifesto, which was a series of proposed reforms that granted freedom of speech, conscience, meeting, and association, and declared that no law could come into being without being approved by the newly established State Duma.

The February Revolution

The first event of the Russian Revolution, the February Revolution, took place at Petrograd (modern-day St. Petersburg) from March 8th to March 16th of 1917, and resulted in the deaths of 1,443 people. On March 8th, violence broke out between the police and hungry citizens protesting over food rations. The most prominent causes of the revolution were discontent from World War I, Tsar Nicholas II, and the aristocrats; while the Tsar and the upper class could enjoy well-fed, worry-free lives, the majority of the Russian population was relatively poor, and facing starvation on a daily basis. Additionally, the string of military failures had drained the country even more, and the peasants were suffering from the strained economy. With the number of unhappy citizens at an all-time high, strikes began to break out in protest of the tsar, the rationing of bread, the police, and the war. In response to these riots, countless civilians were shot and killed by police forces, which only lead to more discontent amongst the people. The chaos paralyzed the capital, and soon many of the military forces mutinied, leaving it in a state of anarchy. Discontent was widespread among the populace, and within days the Tsar was pressured to abdicate the throne for his younger brother, Michael. He too agreed to cede power to the members of the state parliament, the Duma, who prior to this did not hold much real power. These members proclaimed the formation the Provisional Government, bringing stability back to Russia and ruled until elections could be made for the Constituent Assembly. These new leaders now face an increasingly desperate challenges, from providing for the restless, revolutionary citizens to stabilizing the Russian economy to fronting the threat of the Great War. Their actions will shape Russia’s future in the eyes of its citizens and the world.

The War So Far…

On the eve of the Great War, things were actually looking fairly good for the Russian Empire. They had a strong alliance with France, sandwiching the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires between them (McMeekin). Negotiations between France and Russia resulted in an agreement that if war were to break out, France initially would do the bulk of the fighting and deploy the most men. When war finally did break out, Russia sent fewer men to the front than they were supposed to and focused on taking Austria’s territories in Galicia rather than pressing the Germans on their poorly defended eastern front.

The Russian military had some unique problems and advantages. Russia’s large size and relative lack of railroads made the movement of men and supplies slow and difficult. Russia was in possession of more cavalrymen than any other belligerent and the nature of the Eastern Front, as well as the use of cavalry as
mounted infantry, allowed Russian cavalry the opportunity to play a decisive role on the battlefield, unlike the Western Front where cavalry proved to be near obsolete (Stone, 2015). The command structure was still feudal in structure with serfs at the bottom and nobles at the top. Unfortunately, noble birth does not necessarily translate into competency of any kind, as Russian soldiers quickly and painfully discovered. Also, to the common soldiers’ dismay, human life was cheap to Russian generals and Russian tactics relied heavily on weight of numbers. As expected, morale was not high among the common soldiers.

Things soon began to go wrong for the Russians. The defeats suffered at Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes in 1914 reversed Russian gains in German territory and shook Russian confidence in their ability to win the war (McMeekin). Lack of railways hampered Russian mobilization efforts, while their German adversaries’ abundance of railways eased their efforts. Russian generals eventually realized that their best chance of making meaningful gains in the war would be by focusing their offensive capabilities on Austria-Hungary, against whom Russia had enjoyed the most success on the Eastern Front and who came close to collapsing at more than one point during the conflict.

Fortunately for the Russians, the war against the Ottomans was actually going well. Russian forces enjoyed much success against the Ottomans in the Caucasus mountains.

**Important Dates**

- 1914: Russian forces suffered disastrous defeats at the First Battle of Masurian Lakes and the Battle of Tannenberg, losing a quarter-million men and their morale shaken.
- 1915: The Great Retreat. Large swathes of Russian territory are occupied and Russian morale and Romanov prestige are shaken.
- 1916: Brusilov Offensive makes gains in Galicia and Bukovina. Russian forces suffer almost twice as many casualties as their foes and the offensive suffers from a strange combination of excellent tactics and lack of grand strategic thinking.
March 1917: Abdication of the Tsar. Discipline in the Russian army is low, disappearing almost overnight in forces deployed against the Ottomans.

As the Interim Government takes power, the Russian military is in very bad shape. Close to 9 million men have been killed, captured, or wounded ("Russian Army in the Great War 1914-1917"). At this point in time Russia has around 6 million soldiers at hand. Russian artillery pieces are of surprisingly high quality, though the lackluster industry and transportation infrastructure makes producing equipment and supplying it to troops a long and difficult process.

The Imperial Russian Air Force has performed admirably so far. Russia currently has 716 aircraft, 1236 pilots, and 357 observers at the ready (Wilson). The Muromet bombers are highly effective aircraft, but the rest of Russia’s airfleet is outdated and will lose most dogfights with German aircraft. Most aircraft engines have to be imported and there are production problems with aircraft frames. Russia’s lack of transportation infrastructure and aviation mechanics delays equipment repairs and deliveries.

The Russian Navy is split between the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Arctic, and the Far East (Siberian Flotilla). The Baltic Fleet includes 8 battleships, 9 cruisers, 30 destroyers, and 26 submarines (Russian Navy Organisation and Fleet, 1914-1922). The Black Sea Fleet had 2 dreadnoughts, 8 pre-dreadnoughts, 13 large destroyers, 3 destroyers, 11 torpedo boats, and 16 submarines. The Arctic Fleet had 1 pre-dreadnought, 2 protected cruisers, 6 torpedo boats, and 2 submarines. Most of the Siberian Flotilla’s submarines and torpedo boats were transferred to the Black Sea and the Baltic, mainly via railroads, and the rest of the ships in the flotilla were functionally useless. Admiral Kolchak is the supreme commander of the Russian Navy at this time. As has been previously noted above, Russian logistics are a nightmare. The only warm water ports Russia has are located on either the Black Sea or the Pacific Ocean. Ottoman control of the Dardanelles effectively blockades Russia’s Black Sea ports. Vladivostok, Russia’s primary port in the Pacific, is about as far away from Moscow as the Equator is and Russia’s lackluster railroads are not up to the task of transporting supplies from there to the front. This leaves Arkhangelsk, with its subarctic climate and seasonal usefulness, as Russia’s best source of foreign supplies. Russian factories and farms have recently been seeing severe drops in production, with there not always being enough food or other supplies to properly supply the army or civilian populace. One morbid result of this lack of production is the issuing of second-hand uniforms to soldiers, who understandably do not like the feeling of wearing dead men’s clothes. The Russian military cannot afford to lose or needlessly expend too much in the way of equipment/supplies as Russia cannot easily replace those losses.

The common Russian soldier, never particularly known for his discipline, has become a rather onerous, insubordinate creature that does not like obeying, or even hearing, orders. The Caucasus Army, the only Russian force that has consistently overcome its foes, has suffered a catastrophic breakdown in discipline and is hemorrhaging men to desertion (Reynolds, 2011). The reasons for this abysmal situation are as follows: 1, no Russian territory has been lost to the Ottomans and thus the Russian soldiers see little reason to continue fighting them; 2, discussions during fraternization between Ottoman and Russian soldiers have led the latter to believe that the two nations should be friends rather than enemies; 3, rumors of land redistribution have caused many soldiers to return home so as to benefit from said redistribution (Reynolds, 2011). Fortunately, the armies in Europe have not suffered such a severe breakdown (Stone, 2015). Rather than deserting en masse, they have simply formed soldiers’ committees that question every order and debate over whether or not to follow said orders. The vast majority of officers see no other option than to acquiesce to these soldiers’ committees as their
men have simply stopped following orders. This lack of discipline and unwillingness to follow orders has had and will continue to have disastrous consequences on the battlefield.

**Economy**

Russia’s pre-revolutionary economy was in the midst of its own period of transition. In the late 1800s, Russia’s economy was still very much agrarian. Despite having a population greater than any European nation, and one growing at a faster rate than any country save the United States, Russia’s cities weren’t very prominent: a vast majority of its population continued to live in rural areas (Curtis). Given that most of the Russian economy was based in agriculture, one would think that their farming technology and techniques would be quite advanced, however Russia lagged significantly behind in that field as well. About 80 percent of rural land was controlled by former serfs and peasants, most of which lacked the proper knowledge to successfully manage their land. The other fifth was controlled by wealthier individuals in larger estates, but this didn’t particularly lead to any efficiency gains, as they failed to create large-scale fields, often dividing their land up with numerous gardens and grain fields, leaving little for grazing or other crops (Florinsky). On top of that, Russia’s climate was hardly favorable to an agricultural economy; it’s lands were often less than fertile and hard to grow on for even advanced farmers (Florinsky).

Industrialization began in the mid 1800s, but progressed very slowly. While some high percentage increases were seen in the coal and textile industries, this was due more to the fact that they had previously been producing such low numbers (Seton-Watson). In absolute terms, their industry remained small when compared to many European countries. To some degree, Russia’s lack of industrialization was due to competition from European countries: Russia was forced to spend huge amounts of government money to drive development, but its output was still generally undercut by rival nations, causing the debt to balloon.

In the mid 1890s, control of the economy was given to Sergei Witte, the Minister of Finance. He instituted major reforms to the Russian economy, modernizing it to compete with rival states. He set in place high tariffs to encourage the growth of domestic industries, set the ruble on the gold standard, and raised taxes on the peasantry (Gatrell). He greatly expanded Russia’s rail system and ensured that it was mainly under state control, while also encouraging foreign loans to grow industry. These policies generated mixed results: industrial production and railroad mileage increased significantly, but agriculture lagged and import growth outpaced export growth (Gatrell). The Russo-Japanese war took a toll on this growth, as huge numbers of able-bodied men were sent to the battlefield, limiting production back home.

In 1906, Pyotr Stolypin became Prime Minister of Russia and introduced more reforms to industrialize and modernize the Russian economy. He mainly focused on agricultural reform, breaking up the communal peasant farms, increasing education, and forming smaller, local banks to provide cheaper credit to peasant farmers. However, many peasants feared striking out on their own and remained in the “safety” of the collective farms (Curtis). Stolypin was assassinated by a double agent in 1911.

Despite Stolypin’s death, the economy continued to grow at a tremendous rate, especially in the industrial areas. In fact, by 1914, Russia’s steel production was on par with that of France and Austria-Hungary. Russia’s overall economic gains, mainly driven by industrialization and the growth of factory-based manufacturing, were concentrated disproportionately in the hands of the factory-owners (the Russian government itself owned many factories, as did foreign investors, along with some Russian aristocrats). Unfortunately, right at that time Great War began and, like the Russo-Japanese War, stifled economic growth. Over 10 million men were sent to fight in the war, leaving few behind to work the fields and the factories, with
major food and fuel shortages ravaging the cities as well. What’s more, the high number of casualties and injuries both reduced the population of able-bodied man and caused serious discontent among those who were working. Before the Revolution, Russian economic programs mainly focused on railroad construction, developing industry, and reforming the agricultural system. However, the with the economy’s growth stagnating, new programs will need to be implemented.

At the start of the 1900s, Germany was the biggest supplier of Russian imports (providing nearly half), followed by Britain, China, and the United States. Likewise, it was the biggest destination of Russian exports (although at about only 30%), followed by Britain and Holland (Florinsky). Leading up to the Great War, however, France began to grow in importance, as Russia switched alliances in its favor; trade with France increased greatly, but access and support from France’s financial institutions was especially important. However, during the Great War, trade routes were largely blocked by Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, so trade was dramatically reduced. To make up for this loss, Russia increasingly grew its trade with Persia and China. Russia’s biggest exports were foodstuffs at 55 percent and raw materials and semi-manufactured goods at 37 percent. Russia’s biggest imports were raw materials and semi-manufactured goods (led by coal, cotton, oil, and chemicals) at 47 percent and manufactured goods at 33 percent (Florinsky).

Along with the economic modernization, Russia’s living standards also began to climb. Modern drainage systems and piped water systems were being created throughout the country, and most major cities had them by the early 1900s, with the rest being built rapidly. The education expanded and improved rapidly throughout the early 1900s, especially at the primary level. Both boys and girls increasingly attended school through the secondary level.

**Revolutionary and Other Political Groups**

**Mensheviks & Bolsheviks**

Both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks were originally unified as the Russian Social Democratic Worker’s Party. After a dispute in 1903, the party split into the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, with Lenin spearheading the Bolsheviks and Martov as the leader of the Mensheviks. Lenin believed that the party should require its members to be professional revolutionaries, while Martov believed the requirements should be broader and amass more people. The Bolsheviks also tended toward more radical ideas, and believed the method for achieving socialism in Russia was primarily though violent measures and alliances with other radical parties. The Mensheviks, on the other hand, were more open to working with less radical parties, such as the Constitutional Democrats, and trying to reach their goals through legal routes and compromise. With the exception of perhaps the unorganized anarchists, these two parties are the most radical in Russia.

**Socialist Revolutionaries**

The Socialist Revolutionary Party or the SRs, is a leftist revolutionary socialist party. The SRs are more agrarian focused and have always tried to appeal to poor peasants with their proposal for land distribution. The party also supports democracy, unlike some of its more radical contemporaries on the left. The SRs are willing to cooperate with other political groups, and for that reason make up a sizable amount of the members of the Provisional Government. Many of its members have supported Russia’s war effort, and are against the Bolsheviks trying to launch another revolution. The party is staunchly secular and anti-monarchist in nature.
Kadets, Progressivists, and Octobrists

Not all revolutionary groups are left-wing. The February Revolution was actually led by many centre-right liberal parties, most notably the Progressivists, Kadets, and Octobrists, in the order of least to most conservative. These parties have few differences, mainly the debate between those who want a republic and those who want a constitutional monarchy. Most of the current members of the Provisional Government are members of one of these three parties. These parties advocate slow change for Russia, and hold the preservation of order as their highest priority. These parties are also generally very supportive of the war effort.

Separatist Movements

The aftermath of the February Revolution has left most of Russia’s vast ethnic minorities demanding greater autonomy, and many even seeking outright independence from Russia. The nationalist question of these minority groups is another huge concern which the Provisional Government needs to address. These minority groups include Poles, Finns, Ukrainians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Georgians, Romanians, Cossacks, Mongolians, Chinese, Kazakhs, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Uighurs, Siberians, and many others. Russia’s enemies in the Central Powers are openly scheming with many separatist groups to create independent splinter states from Russia in territory they occupy. Currently this is the case for Poland, where Germany has established the Kingdom of Poland as its client state.
Allied/Entente Powers

Russia currently maintains amiable relations with all the Allied/Entente powers. Russia’s principal allies are Britain and France, the other two largest forces of Entente Powers. Russia has historically exercised considerable influence over the Balkans, especially with its Slavic and Orthodox brethren, whose pan-nationalism Russia actively supports. The closest relations were with Serbia, who Russia came to defend in 1914 in the face of an Austro-Hungarian invasion, thus causing World War I. Unfortunately, Serbia was entirely conquered by the Central Powers in 1915, with the remnants of its army now stationed at the Macedonian (Greek) front, where little progress is being made.

Romania

Romania, a non-slavic Orthodox state with a Hohenzollern monarchy, is another ally in the war. Romania has long been courted by both the Entente and Central Powers. They decided to remain to neutral in the beginning of the war as they waited to see how the war would progress. They were finally successfully lobbied into joining the Allied war effort in 1916 after the success of the Brusilov Offensive. Their entrance into the war gave Russia much needed support on the Eastern Front. Unlike the other allies, they have actual geographic proximity to Russia, and are thus able to directly assist in the war on the Eastern Front. Unfortunately, like Russia, Romania has not fared well in the war. Soon after entering the war, Romania was besieged by a combined force of all the Central Powers, who achieved decisive victory over the ill-prepared Romanians. Currently all of Romania is occupied with the exception of Moldavia and the Central Powers seem poised to conquer the rest. Very little can be expected from Romania at this moment, as they more than have their hands full.

Britain

From the Crimean War to clashing imperial ambitions in Asia, Russia and Britain have always had a strained relationship. Russia was troubled by the Entente Cordiale between Great Britain and France signed in 1904. Russia and France already had a mutual defense agreement that said France was obliged to threaten Britain with an attack if Britain declared war on Russia, while Russia was to concentrate more than 300,000 troops on the Afghan border for an incursion into India in the event that Britain attacked France. The solution was to bring Russia into the British-French alliance. However, grudges were put aside during the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. The convention brought shaky British–Russian relations to the forefront by solidifying boundaries that identified respective control in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet. It delineated spheres of influence in Persia, stipulated that neither country would interfere in Tibet’s internal affairs, and recognized Britain’s influence over Afghanistan. The agreement led to the formation of the Triple Entente. The Triple Entente was an association between Great Britain, France, and Russia, the nucleus of the Allied Powers in World War I. The Anglo-Russian Entente and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 made both countries part of the Triple Entente. Both countries were then part of the subsequent alliance against the Central Powers in the First World War. Although initially neutral, following the invasion of Belgium, Britain joined France and Russia in World War I against Germany and Austria.
France

Russia’s foremost ally since the signing of a military alliance in 1881. Unfortunately, it was the signing of this very alliance that set Russia on the path to clash with Germany. Russia and France have not always had such good relations, mostly with a history of wars between the two. However, their alliance was deemed necessary to contain an aggressive Germany and maintain a balance of power in Europe. When Germany initiated its plan for the war, the Schlieffen Plan, the majority of the German army focused their efforts on the Western front, to knock out France. These efforts were stalled not only because of efforts of the French and British armies and the stubbornness of Belgium to capitulate, but also due to Russia’s invasion of East Prussia in late 1914. While Russia was beaten back and forced to retreat, it redirected German divisions, taking pressure off of the French. France is Russia’s greatest ally in the war, and this body should take advantage of their support, although limited because of the carnage of the Western front.

Japan

Although technically an ally in the war, relations between Japan and Russia have been historically poor and culminated in the Russo-Japanese war, where Russia was humiliated. Since then Japan has become a regional power with a powerful military. Relations with Japan have improved since the war, while Germany currently has colonies in Asia, their ability to fight has been significantly limited and Japan has already begun to occupy some of these territories. As an ally, the body can use Japan to assist in the war. Russia does not have significant capability to operate in Asia, nor confront Japan. However, it will be difficult to ignore Japan if the body wishes to operate in Asia.

Central Powers

Germany and Russia are currently enemies engaged in bloody fighting on the Eastern Front. Many of Russia’s nobility are of German descent, and Tsar Nicholas II and Kaiser Wilhelm II are cousins. These two nations have long been allies in their history, starting with the Holy Alliance in 1815 and the Three Emperors League of 1973. In 1879, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck formed a Dual Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary, with the aim of mutual military assistance in the case of an attack from Russia. The establishment of the Dual Alliance led Russia to take a more conciliatory stance, and in 1887, the so-called Reinsurance Treaty was signed between Germany and Russia: in it, the two powers agreed on mutual military support in the case that France attacked Germany, or in case of an Austrian attack on Russia. Germany was somewhat worried about Russia's potential military modernization while Russia feared Germany's already established military power. In 1907 Russia went into a coalition with Britain and France, the Triple Entente. The ultimate result of this was that Russia and Germany became enemies in World War I. The Eastern Front saw Germany successful, with victories at Tannenberg, First and Second Masurian Lakes and Lake Naroch. With Germany continuing to advance eastward, and the Russian army deteriorating, the fall of important cities like Moscow and Petrograd may be inevitable. This body must confront Germany to stop their advance, or make peace to end the slaughter. During the war, Germany has consistently been open to negotiations with Russia for an end to hostilities, which Russia has refused under pressure from their allies. Germany has since hardened its position considerably as more hardline elements have taken control of political and military leadership. Outside of the Kaiser, Germany is now administered by Field Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff, the hawkish victors of the Eastern Front who have prioritized German strategy in the East. The German military is adopting a more aggressive
posture than ever before and the concessions it is demanding from negotiations will only get more severe the more victories the Germans score.

**Austria-Hungary**

Austria and Russia were again allies with the German Empire in the 19th century through the Holy Alliance and Three Emperors League. However, in order to counter Pan-Slavism, Austria occupied Bosnia in 1878. This brought Austria into conflict with the Principality of Serbia, an autonomous (de facto independent) state within the Ottoman Empire under Russian influence and protection. Serbia was elevated to a kingdom in 1882, as the Ottoman Empire further decayed. When the Ottomans attempted to assert control over Bosnia, Austria formally annexed it in 1908, against the protests of Serbia and Russia, during the Bosnian crisis. The German-Austrian-Russian alliance ended because of conflicts of interest between Austria-Hungary and Russia in the Balkans. The lasting result was bitter enmity between Austria-Hungary on one side and Serbia and Russia on the other. After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria by Serb nationalists of the Black Hand secret society, Austria delivered the July Ultimatum to Serbia demanding that the Austrian police and military have the right to enter Serbia. Serbia rejected this which led to the Austrian invasion of Serbia, the first battle of World War I. Russia and Austria would fight to the point of exhaustion on the bloody Eastern Front. As of now, efforts against Austria-Hungary have been fairly successful, such as the Brusilov Offensive crippling their army. German divisions are now filling in the gaps where Austria Hungary has rescinded. Austria-Hungary is on the verge of collapse, with their military capacity deteriorated, and the domestic situation is tense.

**Ottoman Empire**

The Ottomans are arch-enemies of the Russian Empire, and their most hated adversary. As the self-proclaimed successors to the Byzantine Empire, the recapture of Constantinople has remained the Russian’s foremost objective for centuries. The Ottomans and Russians have fought endlessly throughout the centuries. Russia has expanded considerably at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. Russia has proclaimed itself as the protector of Christians in the Ottoman Empire and has ambitions to claim the Holy Lands as its own. Through the 19th and early 20th centuries, Russia was helping Ottoman’s Slavic and Christian minorities revolt against Ottoman rule. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908, stripped power from the Ottoman Sultan and royal court and handed over political control to the military. The Ottoman Empire is now a de-facto military state, where the Ottoman generals, under German supervision, make the decisions. The Ottoman empire entered the war in 1914 to try to revert their decline and fight against Russia most of all. The Ottoman’s glaring incompetence and complete dependence on German support has led the German military to manage and coordinate much of the Ottoman war effort. The Ottoman Empire is perhaps the weakest of the Central Powers, and without German support is unable to support itself. The military campaign against the Ottomans is the only campaign in which the Russian military has been achieving victory, highlighting their military deficiencies.

**Bulgaria**

Like most of the Balkan states, Bulgaria had long been courted by both alliances over the years. Bulgaria and Russia have many similarities. Both are Slavic, Orthodox, staunch enemies of the Ottomans, and have Tsars. Russia aided the Bulgarians tremendously in their struggle for independence from the Ottomans. Bulgaria however, valued its independence highly, and did not appreciate Russian meddling in its affairs, nor its
support for other Balkan states, especially Serbia. Russia has been wary of growing Bulgarian strength, at the expense of neighboring states. Russia was especially concerned at the prospect of Bulgaria reclaiming Constantinople from the Ottomans, a primary objective Russia has held for centuries. Russia’s tacit support for the anti-Bulgarian alliance during the Second Balkan War of 1913 soured opinion in Bulgaria toward their ought-to-be ally. Angered at Russia for supposedly abandoning them, and eager to take back the land its neighbors took in 1913, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers in 1915. Their entrance into the war marked a failing of Allied diplomacy, where the Allies were ultimately unable to satisfy Bulgarians demands. Bulgaria is the strongest militarily out of all of the Balkan states, and has found significant success in their new alliance, reclaiming vast swathes of territory from Serbia and Romania. They are currently fighting on the Macedonian front as well as in the Romanian campaign. Bulgaria may be the most agreeable of the Central Powers towards Russia.

Neutral Powers

Switzerland

While officially neutral, relations with Switzerland are rather cold, with Switzerland having their own ambitions towards Russian territory in Finland. They hold a dim view of the Russian imperial presence in Finland and the Baltics in general. Switzerland also enjoys closer relations with Germany, who they supply extensively with iron-ore in particular, which is crucial for the war effort. The Entente has been blockading Switzerland in an attempt to deprive Germany of its shipping, an act which technically violates international law regarding neutrality of shipping. Despite the blockade, shipping between the two countries persists, due in no small part because of Germany’s own large navy.

United States of America

The United States had maintained neutrality in the war so far. However, factors like the sinking of the Lusitania, the Zimmerman telegram and the recent decision of the German government to resume unrestricted submarine warfare had led the American public to become increasingly hostile to the German Empire and the Central Powers. It is no longer the question of “if the United States joins” but “when”. This body should view the United States as a valuable ally, one that could swing the favor of the war. However, it’s questionable if the Russian army can hold out long enough for the United States to declare war and arrive on the continent. This body should take these factors into account when deciding on Russia’s future in the war.

Greece

Russia maintains decent relations with Greece, a non-slavic Orthodox state, currently neutral. Their political position is precarious with an ongoing struggle between pro-Entente and pro-Central Powers factions. Despite their neutrality, the allies are operating the only remaining front in the Balkans from their territory but with no exceptional progress being made. While at the time of the February Revolution Greece remains neutral, a national schism has formed between King Constantine I of Greece and his Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos over whether Greece would remain neutral or join the Entente. Britain and France are also operating in the country to sway Greece to join the war on their side.
Character List

Pavel Milyukov - Foreign Minister
Milyukov was educated at Moscow University and is a leading history scholar. He has vigorously studied international politics, including the Balkans and the Near East. Milyukov was a founding member of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets), which called for liberal reform, including universal suffrage. He continued to lead the party throughout its existence and was elected to the Third Duma. At this time, Milyukov became an editor of Rech, the Kadets’ newspaper. After being reelected to the Fourth Duma, Milyukov’s beliefs shifted to the right with the outbreak of the Great War. While still supporting reform, he became more nationalist and counter-revolutionary (although willing to consider removing the tsar), calling for a constitutional monarchy. Later in his term, he delivered his “stupidity or treason” speech, which demanded the removal of Boris Stürmer as Prime Minister. Following the February Revolution, Milyukov was appointed Foreign Minister. In this position, Milyukov is the chief foreign policymaker and diplomat for Russia. He wants to use this position to keep Russia in the War and ensure that it remains allied with the Entente powers. He recommends that Russia retain a constitutional monarchy. Milyukov is close friends with his fellow Kadets, as well as others on the center-right of politics such as Guchkov and Rodzianko.

Alexander Guchkov - Minister of War
A former official in the tsar’s government, Guchkov was notable because, unlike most high-ranking officials in the tsarist government, Guchkov comes from the peasantry rather than the nobility. His father was a small factory owner and his mother was French. He generally despised the aristocracy, but liked the tsar. Guchkov earned a reputation as a maverick due to his involvement in dangerous activities such as fighting numerous duels and fighting alongside the Boer rebels in the Second Boer War. Guchkov was impressed by the organization of the German government and desired Russia’s government to be fashioned in a similar way. Guchkov’s career took off when he worked with local governments to alleviate the impact of the three years’ famine of 1891-1893. He would rise further as a result of his work with Russian hospitals during the Russo-Japanese war. Soon after he came into the personal confidences of the tsar and tsarina. His relationship with the tsar began to deteriorate when the tsar opposed Guchkov’s desire to reduce the layers of government separating the tsar from the masses. Guchkov’s contempt for Rasputin would lead to the tsarina hating Guchkov. In 1908 he spearheaded military reforms to resolve the problems experienced in the Russo-Japanese war. During the Great War, Guchkov was in charge of overseeing military hospitals and the production of war materiel. Guchkov is a leader of the Octobrist party together with Rodzianko and favors the retention of a constitutional monarchy. His opposition to the tsarist administration was because of their perceived incompetence, not because he opposes monarchy, which he actually supports. Guchkov is considered more of a militarist than most of his liberal contemporaries. He has long been considered one of the most hawkish politicians in Russia, and is a strong supporter of the war effort. Guchkov is a Russian patriot through and through, and willing to do whatever is necessary to save his beloved Russia.

Alexander Kerensky - Minister of Justice
Kerensky began his career by earning a law degree from St. Petersburg University and becoming a defense lawyer. He made a name for himself by defending revolutionaries and writing on the Lena Massacre. Kerensky joined the Freemasons, where he gained many contacts who opposed the monarchy. He was elected to
the Fourth Duma as a member of the Trudoviks, a labor party. He strongly spoke in favor of liberal policies and was staunchly anti-monarchist. Kerensky delivered a speech railing against the influence of Grigori Rasputin and the imperial ministers, which was then followed by Pavel Milykov’s infamous “stupidity of treason” speech. A key member of the February Revolution, he was named Minister of Justice, while also becoming the Vice-Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, the only man to hold a position in both bodies. He supports a continued Russian presence in the War and liberal reform domestically. Kerensky has close relations to political moderates and those on the center-left of the political spectrum. He has a firm distaste for radicals on both sides of the political spectrum. Kerensky is the most respected revolutionary in Russia, and is popular among the Russian populace for his genuine desire to reform Russia into a freer, more equal society.

Mikhail Tereshchenko - Minister of Finance

Tereshchenko was born to a very wealthy family and was educated at Kiev University and Leipzig University. He inherited a number of sugar factories and also used his wealth and contacts as a financier. He joined the Freemasons where he met many fellow liberals. He was elected to the Fourth Duma with moderate views, although he was a member of the Progressive Bloc. Following the outbreak of the Great War, he helped organize Red Cross hospitals and was a prominent member of the Military-Industrial Committee. Tereshchenko supported the Russian war effort, even following the February Revolution. He was named the Minister of Finance in the new Provisional Government, for which he has to deal with the wartime economy and national debt, among other problems. Addressing the various problems plaguing the Russian economy will be a foremost concern for Tereshchenko. Tereschenko is a prominent politician with connections to other political moderates such as the Kadets, Octobrists, and Progressivists. He is also a very pro-business politician, seeking to develop Russia economically, and maintains extensive business connections.

Alexander Konovalov - Minister of Trade and Industry

Konovalov was born to wealthy parents and was educated in England. He inherited their businesses, which were mainly comprised of textile manufacturing. He joined the Freemasons, in which liberal views were the norm. He was a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party, but later became a leader in the Progressive Party, which was more business-oriented, and was elected to the Fourth Duma. He was a key figure in organizing the Progressive Bloc, which called for liberal reforms within Russia. During the Great War, he was Vice President of the Military-Industrial Committee. Following the February Revolution he was named the Minister of Trade and Industry. Konovalov is a more conservative member of the Provisional Government, with promoting businesses and industrialization as some of his main goals. He desires to modernize and develop the Russian economy and address the multitude of issues plaguing it.

Alexander Manuilov - Minister of Education

Born in April 1861, Manuilov is an economist as well as a politician. Before rising to power as the Minister of Education in the Provisional Government, he was the Rector (President) of Moscow State University, and helped found the Constitutional Democratic Party, also known as the Kadets. Through his time spent as rector, Manuilov developed connections in academic circles across the nation, who he now coordinates for the good of the Russian state. Manuilov also has extensive connections with liberal political groups, like his own Kadet party. One of Manuilov’s objectives will be to reduce the radicalization of the Russian populace being spread by radical movements like the Bolsheviks, who have been spreading their propaganda at
universities. He will coordinate the educational system to bring more moderate liberal teachings to the Russian people. He is close friends with all the other liberal (center-right) politicians in the committee.

Andrei Shingarev - Minister of Agriculture

Shingarev started as a doctor working in the Voronezh region. Within a decade he became well known for his work on studying the health of peasants and improving sanitation in Russian villages. This, combined with his years of activity in the local government, has earned him the respect of officials in regional governments and the love of Russian peasants whose health and well-being were improved by his work. Shingarev came to be considered an expert on local governance and problems faced by the peasantry. Shingarev was a leading member of the Kadets and a Freemason. He is also a strong supporter of local governments. Trying to improve the terrible agricultural situation in Russia will be a priority for Shingarev and a most difficult task, which his predecessors were unable to solve. Shingarev is a liberal and a member of the Kadet party. He considers other liberals and moderates to be his political allies.

Nicolai Avksentiev - Minister of Internal Affairs

Nikolai Avksentiev was born to a Jewish family in 1878 in Penza. He became a leading member of the Socialist-Revolutionary party (PSR). However, he became part of a group known as the Heidelberg SRs, which was influenced greatly by neo-Kantian philosophy and Marxism. During WWI he sided with the defencists of the PSR and associated with the freemason lodge known as “the Grand Orient of Russia’s Peoples”. Avksentiev was a member of the Imperial Duma and became a staunch supporter of the February Revolution. He has been appointed Minister of Internal Affairs, which is responsible for policing, emergency management, immigration, overseeing local governments, and overall administration of the Russian state. Avksentiev’s priority will be to bring stability and order back to the Russian domestic sphere. He despises the Bolsheviks for their extremism and their undermining of law and order in a time of national emergency.

Mikhail Rodzianko - Vice President

Born on February 21st, 1859 in the Russian Empire, Mikhail Vladimirovich Rodzianko is the vice-president of the Third Duma of 1907. As a senior politician and statesman, he was a loyal but critical supporter of Tsar Nicholas II. In 1905, Rodzianko and a few others had founded and become leaders of the right-wing Octobrist party, which strongly advocated for constitutional monarchy and a responsible government. Rodzianko came from a noble family with Ukrainian origin and received his education at the Corps des Pages, which was a military academy that trained the nobility within Imperial Russia. Mikhail is an extremely pious man, and is described as tall, powerful, and the fattest man in Russia. He is close friends with his fellow Octobrist, Alexander Guchkov, as well as George Buchanan, who is the current British Ambassador in St. Petersburg. Rodzianko maintains extensive connections across Russia from his years as a leading statesman, especially among those on the political right. Rodzianko is more hawkish than most of his fellows, and a strong supporter of the war effort. Rodzianko is the most prominent Ukrainian in Russia at this point and has a considerable powerbase in his native Ukraine.

General Lavr Kornilov - Commander of Petrograd military district.

Lavr Kornilov is the finest commander in the Russian Army at this time. Born the son of a Cossack in Turkestan, Kornilov embarked on a military career from a young age. His military prowess and keen mind led
him to steadily rise through the ranks, earning many decorations along the way. He became active in military intelligence where he specialized primarily in Asian affairs, serving as Russia’s military attaché in China until 1911. When WWI started, he fought fiercely against the Austro-Hungarians until his forces were overwhelmed by the enemy and he himself was captured. Never giving up, he orchestrated his own escape from capture and returned to Russia where he subsequently became a national hero. He excelled in future fighting during the war, being crucial to the planning and implementation of the successful Brusilov Offensive. Following the revolution, the Provisional Government knew that the security of the capital district was a task of utmost importance and thus placed Kornilov in command of this vital military district. All forces in the area of the capital are under his command. Kornilov is highly popular among his troops and well respected among the military and right-wing circles. General Alexei Kaledin is his best friend, and together they share a distaste for revolutionary groups who they view as saboteurs. Kornilov would not hesitate to remove the disloyal revolutionary elements if they started undermining the Russian state and the war effort. A firm disciplinarian, Kornilov believes that the breakdown in discipline is most responsible for the ongoing deterioration of the Russian military, and he actively supports measures to reinstate discipline in the military.

Sergei Sazonov - Ambassador to Britain/the Entente

Sazonov is Russia’s foremost diplomat and a highly respected statesman, having served as foreign minister from 1910 to 1916. Despite having been a prominent member of the previous Tsarist administration, Sazonov’s diplomatic skills are crucial to the Provisional Government. Serving officially as ambassador to Britain, Sazonov is unofficially the representative to entirety of the Entente. These nations respect Sazonov more than any other figure in Russia, as he has been coordinating policy with them for more than a decade, making him old friends with much of the Entente policy establishment. Sazonov seeks to lobby Russia’s allies for increased support and to keep Russia committed to the promises it made to the Entente, namely staying in the war. As a Tsarist, Sazonov is conservative politically, but primarily focuses himself on foreign policy matters.

General Mikhail Alekseyev - Supreme Commander of the Military

Born to a military family, Alekseyev followed in his father’s footsteps and joined the Russian army in 1876, graduating from Staff College in 1890, and attaining the rank of general in 1904 when he was appointed Quartermaster General of the 3rd Manchurian Army during the Russo-Japanese War. At the outbreak of the Great War, he was in command of the Southwestern Front, but was transferred to the Northwestern Front in 1915. Starting August 1915, he was supreme commander of all Russian forces. The Great Retreat was undertaken on his orders and this, combined with the defeat at Lake Naroch, led to his belief that Russia could not wage an offensive war against the Central Powers. Although considered one of the best commanders in Russia, his record during the war, like that of the rest of the military, has not been good. Alekseyev is a staunch traditionalist, and only accepted the revolution because he thought it was necessary and inevitable. Alekseyev openly opposes democracy and revolutionary groups most of all, who he believes are responsible for undermining his war effort. He wants to keep Russia from descending into further chaos if at all possible. As leader of the military, he has extensive connections within it, and close relations to right-wing and military figures within the committee.
General Alexei Kaledin - Ataman of the All-Mighty Don Cossack Host, leader of all Russian Cossack groups.

Kaledin is a highly decorated and fierce Russian general, very highly respected among the military and his fellow Cossacks. It was largely thanks to the initiative of Kaledin and his fellow generals that the Brusilov Offensive was so successful. He himself proved his skill during the Battle of Lutsk where his forces were able to crush the Austro-Hungarians in a surprise attack. Following the February Revolution, the assembly of Cossack hosts known as the Krug, assembled and named him Ataman, or leader, of the All-Mighty Don Cossack Host, with the other Cossack hosts acknowledging his authority. He is now therefore the nominal leader of all the Cossacks in Russia, who are acting as an autonomous political entity, thus being directly in control of all Cossack territory, notably the entirety of the Don Province. Kaledin is best friends with fellow general and Cossack, Lavr Kornilov, who served together with him in the war. Like Kornilov, Kaledin has little to no tolerance for the revolutionary movement who he views as undermining the war-effort and the sacred societal order of Russia. As a militarist and a tsarist, Kaledin is the most reactionary figure in the committee.

Anton Kartashev - Minister of Religion

Anton Kartashev was born the son of a miner and a government clerk. Prior to the February Revolution he was a professor of Church History at St. Petersburg University College for Women. He is the leading religious scholar in Russia, and contributed numerous work to this field, earning him the respect of religious leaders. Anton Kartashev is effectively the head of the Russian Orthodox Church at the moment. It is his responsibility to maintain relations with Russia’s various religious groups. As a man who has dedicated his life to studying religion, he considers the anti-religious, atheist revolutionaries to be abhorrent to Russia’s sacred culture.

Nikolai Nekrasov - Minister of Transportation, Governor of Finland

Born October 20, 1871, Nikolai was a renowned liberal politician. In 1905, he helped found the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadet party). He was elected to the 3rd and 4th State Dumas. Nekrasov was an active member of the irregular freemasonic lodge, the Grand Orient of Russia’s Peoples. He was the Secretary General and the elected deputy Chairman of the Duma. At the same time, convinced that Emperor Nicholas II and his court were leading the country down the road to a military defeat and revolution, Nekrasov began plotting with former Duma Chairman Octobrist Alexander Guchkov, Kerensky, Alexander Ivanovich Konovalov and industrialist Mikhail Tereschenko to force Nicholas to abdicate. Nicholas’ 13-year-old son, Alexei, would then assume the throne and Nicholas' more liberal brother, Grand Duke Michael, would become Regent. Following the February Revolution, Nekrasov was appointed Minister of Transportation in the Provisional Government, as well as Governor of Finland. He is more sympathetic to Russia’s minority groups that many of his colleagues, and supports giving more autonomy to these provinces, such as his own Finland.

Viktor Chernov - Minister of Food

Born in Nouvouzensk on December 7th, 1873, Viktor Chernov is from a serf peasant background but has nonetheless managed to rise to the position of Minister of Food. Chernov studied law at Moscow University and was the leader of the illegal students’ union. He was a follower of Paul Lavrov, who was an outspoken radical who was adamant on the need to end serfdom and aristocratic rule. As a result, Chernov was exiled to Tambov, where he began to establish independent socialist peasant brotherhoods. After moving to Switzerland
to study philosophy, he returned to Russia in 1901 to found the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Viktor was also an editor of a journal called Revolutionary Russia, and promoted the idea of immediate nationalization and land division for the peasants. As Minister of Food, Chernov needs to address Russia’s current food situation, notably the food shortages and food hoarding. Chernov is a strong supporter of the Provisional Government and of bringing elections to Russia.

**Grigory Potanin - Siberian Representative**

Potanin, born in October 1835, is an ethnographer and a natural historian by trade. As a young boy, his wealthy family sent him to a military school in Omsk, Siberia, and throughout his life he always came back to Siberia. After being expelled from university in Saint Petersburg and serving time in prison for political demonstrations, he returned to Siberia and began supporting the movement of Siberian separatism. Because of these beliefs, he served another sentence in prison, and during which he wrote a book on Siberian history. He was chosen to represent the Siberian provinces and its people to the Provisional Government. He is staunchly anti-communist, and a firm opponent of the Bolsheviks. He is primarily concerned about his Siberian constituency and their interests. He believes that autonomy for the Siberian people would be ideal. Potanin respects Russia’s ethnic minorities and separatist groups.

**General Radko Dimitriev - Military Commander and Representative to the Central Powers**

General Radko Dimitriev was born in the Ottoman Empire in modern day Bulgaria in 1859. Previously he served as a general in the Bulgarian army, during the Serbo-Bulgarian war, as well as in the first and second Balkan wars. Dimitriev has been a staunch opponent of Russia’s foreign policy, notably its support for Serbia which brought them into this war. He was saddened when Bulgaria entered the war as now his two homes are fighting each other. During WWI, he became a general in the Russian army, where he faced the forces of Austria-Hungary. As Germany moved more divisions on the Eastern Front, Dimitriev’s forces and the rest of the Russian army were forced to retreat on the Great Retreat. In 1916, Dimitriev was reassigned to the Baltic Riga front where he officially remains along with his troops. Unofficially he has been tasked with communicating with the Central Powers as Russia’s unofficial representative. Though loyal to Russia, Dimitriev remains sympathetic towards the Central Powers, particularly to his Bulgarian homeland where he still maintains extensive connections and is well respected from his years as a military leader there. The Central Powers are also eager to negotiate and are more than happy to communicate with Dimitriev.

**Matkey Skobelev - Minister of Labor, Chairman of Petrograd Soviet, Azerbaijani Representative**

Matkey Skobelev was born in 1885 in Baku to a wealthy oil family. In 1903 he joined the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. However, after the 1905 revolution he went to study in Vienna, where he became a friend and supporter of Leon Trotsky. In 1912 Skobelev was elected to the 4th State Duma, which lasted from 1912-1917, as a member of the Social Democrats. During his time on the Duma he became heavily influenced by the Mensheviks. When the February Revolution broke out Skobelev became chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. Later Skobelev and other Menshevik leaders agreed to join the Provisional Government, with Skobelev becoming the Minister of Labor, as well as the official representative of his native Azerbaijanis. He will now coordinate the labor policy of Russia in addition to managing the primary Soviet in Russia. The Soviets are notoriously unstable and will be difficult to manage. Skobelev’s leftist views and Soviet activity
Skobelev is very well connected to revolutionary groups and Soviets across the nation.

Irakli Tsereteli - Minister of Post and Telegraph, Georgian Representative

Born November 1881, Tsereteli was a Georgian politician, one of the leaders of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and later, the Georgian Mensheviks. A leading member of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917, Tsereteli also serves as Minister of Post and Telegraph in the Provisional Government, as well as the official representative of the Georgians. He is more left leaning than most of the rest of the committee. He has extensive connections in Georgia, as well as with revolutionary groups. As Minister of Post and Telegraph, he is responsible for managing and developing Russia’s communication capabilities, a very important task in a time of national emergency.

Non-Delegate Characters

Prince Georgy Lvov - Prime Minister of Russia

Having descended from the viking princes of Yaroslavl, Georgy Lvov was born in Dresden in 1861. Soon after his family moved back to Russia, to Aleksin in the Tula Governorate. He received a degree in law from the University of Moscow and worked in civil service until 1893. Lvov worked with relief during the Russo-Japanese war, and joined the Constitutional Democratic party in 1905. He won a seat in the first duma a year later, and quickly climbed the political ladder. Lvov would become the chairman of the All-Russian Union of Zemstvos, and a member of the Zemgor. During WWI, Lvov helped to provide relief to the wounded. After Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne as a result of the February revolution, Prince Georgy Lvov was made head of newly formed Provisional Government. His patriotism and liberal ideals are shown in his government, with a focus on democratic elections and commitment abroad to Russia’s allies, by continuing the war effort.

Alexander Kolchak - Commander of the Black Sea Fleet

Alexander Kolchak is Russia’s greatest admiral as well as a scientist and polar explorer, regarded by many on the right-wing as the most fit candidate to become future dictator of Russia. Kolchak is in many senses the epitome of a military officer. He is brave, intelligent, chivalrous, and with an unyielding sense of duty and patriotism. Kolchak is regarded as one of the greatest figures in Russia at this time. Kolchak became the youngest admiral in Russian history, in an officer corps whose ranks are riddled with patronage and nepotism. He has been able to rise so much simply because of his unparalleled competence and skill, which distinguishes him from most of the rest of the Russian military. Kolchak comes a minor nobility house with a strong military tradition. He is descended from the famous Moldavian war hero, Ilias Kolchak, who defected from the Ottoman Empire to Russia in the 18th century. Alexander Kolchak’s early achievements were not military, but scientific, becoming a skilled scientist and polar explorer, undergoing dangerous expeditions that took the lives of many of his comrades. Kolchak distinguished himself on the battlefield during the Russo-Japanese War. Whereas the Russian military was failing, Kolchak was able to achieve many successes, including sinking one of the Japanese flagships with a naval mine, and leading coastal defenses at Port Arthur until his capture. Many began referring to Kolchak after this point as the “Hero of Port Arthur”. When WWI broke out, Kolchak was given command of the Baltic Fleet where he was able to fare surprisingly well against the vastly superior German Navy. He was then transferred to command the Black Sea Fleet, where he succeeded in crushing the Ottoman Navy and coordinated a naval siege of the coast to coincide with an offensive by the Russian army, culminating...
in the successful conquest of Trebizond by the Russian military, one of their greatest military victories in the whole war. He remains commander of the Black Sea Fleet, though the fleet is steadily descending into anarchy following the revolution. Kolchak, like the other military commanders, is demanding that the new government reestablishes order and allows the military to bring discipline back to the armed forces. Kolchak enjoys widespread popularity across Russia and is treated as one of its greatest heroes. Kolchak is utterly void of personal ambitions, existing solely to serve for the greater good of his nation, though many in right-wing circles are openly calling for the establishment of a dictatorship with the war hero Kolchak at its head. For these reasons, Kolchak, or at least his supporters, are considered contenders for leadership in Russia.

Vladimir Lenin - Leader of the Bolsheviks

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov was born in 1870 in the town of Simbirsk (present day Ulyanovsk). His family had been well-off, with his father being awarded the medal of St. Vladimir, making him a nobleman for his work in education. His parents were supportive of the monarchy, particularly the reforms of Alexander II, but they were opposed to radicalism and they worked to stray their children away from such ideas. However, when Vladimir’s father, Ilya, died when Vladimir was 16, he behavior became erratic, and he renounced his faith in God. Vladimir’s brother Sasha, had become increasingly radical due to his association with political groups as he attended the Saint Petersburg University. Sasha would later become part of a plot to Assassinate Tsar Alexander III. He would be arrested and sentenced to death for it. Vladimir would become further radicalized from his brother’s death. Lenin would attend university in Kazan, and become a student activist. After being expelled from university he read revolutionary texts, including Nikolay Chernyshevsky’s What is to Be Done? And Karl Marx’s Capital. From there he became heavily influenced by Marxist thought.

Lenin’s early revolutionary career began with promoting revolutionary cells in industrial centers and writing critiques to capitalism and the current social structure. In 1897, Lenin was sentenced to three years in exile in Siberia. During his time he wrote his longest book to date, The Development of Capitalism in Russia (1899). In 1901 he formally adopted the pseudonym “Lenin” and in 1902 wrote one of his most influential publications “What is to be done?” At the second congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1903, arguments broke out between supporters of Julius Martov and supporters of Lenin. The party split, with the majority supporting Lenin and the minority supporting Martov. From here the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks formed into distinct parties. After the 1905 revolution Lenin began to preach mass and violent insurrection. Lenin heavily criticized WWI, calling it defunct and imperialist. As the February Revolution breaks out and the Provisional Government becomes weak, Lenin as well as other revolutionaries will seek to return to Russia. Unless the Provisional Government can act decisively like the former tsarist regime, these revolutionaries will have free reign to plot and potentially seek to overthrow the government.

Sources


https://www.britannica.com/topic/Menshevik