

The Russian Revolution



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Options in Brief

Option 1: Create a Liberal Democracy

The time has come to build a liberal democracy in Russia! We support the Provisional Government until a Constituent Assembly can be elected to enact needed political and social reforms. Representatives of the people must be chosen by universal suffrage; government is best guided by the ballot box, not mob violence. Educated persons can provide necessary leadership. Russia deserves to be guided by the rule of law—law that respects the freedom and dignity of every human being. Individual rights, such as the right to speak, write, and worship freely, should be safeguarded. Private property should be protected and free enterprise should be encouraged. The civil and cultural rights of minority peoples should be respected, but the integrity and unity of the Russian state has to be preserved. The sacrifices of our brave soldiers and sailors must not be in vain. We will defend the fatherland!

Option 2: Respect the Peasants

The exploitation of the peasants must end! Land and liberty! The peasants are the backbone of Russia, yet it is they who suffer the most. All land should be granted to the peasants without compensation to the nobility. The traditions of the commune will be observed; the equality of all peasants will be guaranteed, while private ownership of land will not be reintroduced. Peasants and workers share the brotherhood of toil. Agriculture is more important than urban industries, which will only grow if the rural economy progresses first. We support the civil and cultural rights of minority peoples. Participation in the soviets, the Provisional Government, and the upcoming Constituent Assembly will help to achieve these aims. We should work with the Socialist Revolutionary Party to advance the cause of the peasants. Abroad, Russians must fight to defend their country and, after the war, we will work internationally for a peace of justice.

Option 3: Work Toward a Future Socialist Society

Karl Marx's ideas mirror what is happening now in Russia. Russia is industrializing rapidly, and this process is both creating an urban lower class and exacerbating class conflict. However, Russian capitalism is still in its infancy, and it will be a long time before Russia is ready for socialism. We must trust in our wise Menshevik leaders to guide us to that eventual goal. For now, active participation in the soviet's development of a strong labor party to prepare for future Constituent Assembly elections, and cooperation with the Provisional Government will move Russia toward a better tomorrow. We support self-determination for minority groups, but this must be decided by the Constituent Assembly. Russia should defend itself against aggression. After the war, together with our brothers throughout the world, we will strive for a just peace.

Option 4: Organize Now for a Second Revolution

Marxist theory is sound, but must be adapted to Russian conditions. With the February Revolution, the time is ripe for radical change. It is true that, at present, Russia's urban lower class lacks sufficient class-consciousness to overthrow capitalism. However, an elite group of well-organized, highly-disciplined, dedicated revolutionaries can teach and lead the workers to achieve this goal. A second revolution is needed in Russia! All power to the soviets! Peace, land, and bread! All peoples of Russia should join the cause of the Bolsheviks! The Provisional Government is an empty shell; after a period of organization and subversion, we can topple it. Russia must withdraw from the war and conclude an immediate peace. Land should be confiscated from the nobles and redistributed by the peasants themselves. City workers must be fed. Long live the international socialist revolution!

Option 1: Create A Liberal Democracy

The time has come to build a liberal democracy in Russia! With the February Revolution and the abdication of the tsar, we can create a society guided by the rule of law. In the spirit of our French, British, and American historical ancestors, we have the opportunity to establish here, in our beloved Russia, a state characterized by limited government and the protection of individual rights.

The days of tsarist coercion are gone, never to return. We support the Provisional Government until a Constituent Assembly can be elected to enact needed political and social reforms. Already, Russia has transformed itself into a beacon of freedom. The Provisional Government has passed measures

- a. to guarantee freedoms of speech, press, and assembly;
- b. to rescind legal restrictions based on class, race, and religion;
- c. to provide a general amnesty;
- d. to establish universal adult suffrage;
- e. to reform the justice system (including abolishing capital punishment); and
- f. to introduce democratic local self-rule.

We have an optimistic faith in the goodness of the Russian people. Despite the many challenges that face us, the resilience and cooperative spirit of our people will carry us through the difficult days ahead. Our liberal leaders seek to look after the welfare of all people, not just one class. The people can be relied upon to be patient while a legal framework is put in place to safeguard public order and private property.

Private property should be protected and free enterprise should be encouraged. Russia's economy will thrive when the people become aware that entrepreneurial initiative will be rewarded. Previously, the Russian state has spearheaded the process of modernization. Today, economic leadership roles need to be assumed by individuals themselves—whether they are peasants, workers, landholders, or industrialists. Capitalism is the wave of the future in Russia. The integrity and unity of the Russian state must be preserved. We support the authority of the state and oppose federalism. The blood of many gallant soldiers and sailors has been spilled in defense of the Russian Empire. Their sacrifices must not be in vain. All Russians must unite to defeat the Central Powers. We will defend our fatherland!

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 1

1. Liberal democracy and capitalism represent the leading edge of modern political and economic thought. Russia needs to look forward, not backward.

2. The road of revolution is fraught with danger to law and order. We must proceed cautiously, with an eye to appropriate historical precedent.

3. The current international borders of the Russian state must not be altered, and there should be no concessions to those ethnic groups seeking even limited autonomy within Russia.

4. We must honor our dead by defending Russia against the Central Powers.

Supporting Arguments for Option 1

1. The February Revolution has provided Russia with an opportunity to join the family of civilized western nations. Our political and economic models can be such successful countries as France, Great Britain, and the United States.

2. All the peoples of Russia need to be a part of this process. Hasty elections to the Constituent Assembly would produce a poorly-designed legislature. The Provisional Government will serve ably as temporary

guardian of the state until a fair electoral process is established.

3. Russians have long been the dominant ethnic group within the old Russian Empire. Russian political and cultural leadership needs to be maintained as a basis for unity within the new Russian state. At the same time, the civil and cultural rights of minority peoples must be respected.

4. With military victory, the Russian people will have higher regard for their new government.

From the Historical Record

N.V. Nekrasov, January 1917

“In the trials Russia will face, we will not appear in the role of suppressors of the revolution. The government has destroyed itself. Our task will be entirely constructive; in the storm and chaos we will have to create a new government that will be able to calm the country immediately and get down to vast creative work.”

Paul Miliukov, January 1917

“Revolution must not take us by surprise. We are the only restraining and organized force, the only force that could save the government and reconcile it with the rough raging sea of people.”

Declaration of the Provisional Government, March 27, 1917

“The old regime has gone. The State Duma has forgotten its party differences, has united in the name of the salvation of our homeland and has taken upon itself the creation of a new regime. All citizens should have confidence in this regime and should combine their efforts to allow the government created by the Duma to complete its great task of liberating Russia from the external enemy and establishing peace inside Russia, on the basis of law, equality and freedom.... Forget all your party, class, estate and national differences! The

united Russian people should rise up and create conditions in which all citizens can live peacefully....”

Central Committee of the Constitutional Democrats in connection with the formation of the Provisional Government, March 3, 1917

“Citizens!... The old regime left the defense of the country in a seriously disorganized state. Its criminal inaction and clumsy measures have brought ruin to our finances, to production and transport and to supplying the army. It has seriously damaged our economic structure. The Provisional Government, with the vigorous and active cooperation of the people, will devote all its strength to remedying these defects which the old regime left behind. But time does not stand still. The blood of many sons of Russia has been needlessly spilt over the last 2 1/2 long years of war, but the country is still exposed to a powerful enemy, occupying whole regions of our state and now, at the birth of Russian freedom, threatening us with new and decisive pressure. The defense—at whatever cost—of our own national honor and the expulsion of the enemy from inside our borders: this is the first urgent and vital task of our troops, defending the freedom of the people.”

Prince Georgii E. Lvov, head of the first Provisional Government, April 27, 1917

“The great Russian revolution is truly miraculous in its majestic, quiet progress under the red glow of the World War.... The miraculous thing about it is not the fairylike unbelievableness of the change itself, not the colossal alterations that have taken place... but the very essence of the guiding spirit of the revolution. The freedom won by the Russian revolution is permeated by elements of a world-wide, universal nature.... The soul of the Russian democracy has turned out to be, in its very nature, the soul of the world democracy. It is ready not only to merge with the world democracy but also to take a position of leadership and guide the world democracy on the road of human development laid out by the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.”

Option 2: Respect the Peasants

The peasants are the backbone of Russia. Approximately 80 percent of Russia's population are peasants, while most of the remainder are but one or two generations removed from peasantry. The peasants grow the food that keeps Russia alive. Thanks to their toil, Russia was the world's leading pre-war grain exporter. If there is a social class that deserves respect, it is the peasantry. Tragically, far from receiving anything resembling respect, the peasants instead receive horrible abuse. Russian peasants were the last in Europe to be released from serfdom. Since then, the peasants have still been heavily dependent on their former masters—the nobles.

Under the old regime, the government has attempted to “help” the peasants. May the Good Lord preserve us from such “help” again! The “reforms” of Alexander II and bloody Nicholas drove good people off the land and redoubled human misery. These “reforms” brought nothing but Stolypin's neckties and carriages. Thank God that those accursed bloodsuckers are gone for good! The exploitation of the peasants must end!

Land and liberty! It is time that the peasants received their due. All land should be granted to the peasants without compensation to the nobility. The timeless traditions of the Russian commune will be observed. Equality of all peasants will be guaranteed. Russia will only progress if the rural economy progresses first. Agriculture, the most important sector of our economy, will feed the factory workers in our cities. The Russian people must be a single family of brother-laborers. The Russian people have pulled themselves free and thrown off the heavy chains of tsarist oppression. Now Russia can be rebuilt, like a beautiful new house, by all its inhabitants.

Participation in the soviets and the Provisional Government are necessary so that the voice of the people can be clearly heard. In addition, we should work with the Socialist Revolutionary Party to advance the cause of the peasants. Countless peasant members of our brave Russian army have enriched our soil with their own blood, shed by the hated invaders. The sacrifices of our heroes must be repaid through the defeat of the Central Powers! After victory, we will seek a peace of justice with our international brothers.

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 2

1. Since the peasants are the foundation of Russian society, any serious attempt to improve conditions in this country must begin with the peasants.

2. Land should belong to those who make it productive. Peasants have a right to the land and the gentry do not.

3. The current international borders of the Russian state should remain intact.

We are reluctant to consider limited autonomy for ethnic groups within Russia.

4. The Russian army is a peasant army, and peasants are men of the soil. Countless peasants have given their lives to defend that soil; their sacrifice must not be in vain. We must defeat the Central Powers and seek a peace of justice!

Supporting Arguments for Option 2

1. The great mass of the Russian people are either peasants, or one or two generations removed from peasantry. Since they comprise what is, by far, the largest social class, their needs should take first priority in post-tsarist Russia.

2. For centuries, Russian peasants have been treated abominably by the landowners and the state. Our leaders must seek to right countless grievous wrongs committed against the peasants. Only then will the people bear true loyalty to the new Russian society.

3. Only the Constituent Assembly has the legitimate right to decide basic political questions for all of Russia, including the minority areas.

4. Participation in the soviets and the Provisional Government represents our best hope for an eventual government of national unity, to be chosen by all the people. Land reform will come, but it can wait for the moment. Our first task is to defend our Russian homeland against invasion.

From the Historical Record

Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), "On the Russian Peasantry"

"For hundreds of years the Russian peasant has dreamt of a state with no right to influence the will of the individual and his freedom of action, a state without power over man."

Peasant Duma deputy from Saratov (to a delegate of the nobility), 1907

"We know about your property, for we were your property once. My uncle was exchanged for a greyhound."

Alexander Kerensky in a speech to the liberals in the Duma, February 15, 1917

"The historic task of the Russian people at the present time is the overthrow of this medieval regime but you wish to fight only "by legal means".... You consider your duty done once you have concluded your diagnosis of the ills of the country. I say to you that your speeches on the necessity of calm at all costs are either the naive sentiments of superficial thinkers or just an excuse to avoid the real fight, just a pretext to stay safely in your warm armchairs.... You don't want to listen to anybody but yourselves but soon you will have to listen, for if you do not hear the warning voices, you will encounter the harsh facts."

Resolutions of the Conference of the Petrograd Socialist Revolutionary Party, March 2, 1917

"1. In view of the fact that the danger of a counter-revolution is not yet passed, and that the question of the moment is to make fast the political revolutionary conquests already attained, this Conference believes that it is urgently necessary to stand behind the Provisional Government, in so far as it carries out its announced political program...

2. This Conference, however, reserves to itself the right to change its attitude toward the Provisional Government, should it decline to live up to its programs....

3. ...the Conference calls on all members of the...Party to take active part in the organization of the popular masses by participating in the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, by forming peasants' unions and other organizations having for their object the defense of the interest of the people."

Resolutions of the Peasants' Union in the Morskoj Korpus, April 8, 1917

"1. That it is necessary to go on with the war for freedom, but that the Russian people has no need of conquests; that the Russian people, after freeing the areas ruined by the belligerents, needs a peace in the interest of the laboring classes of the world....

2. ...that the Russian people, having thrown off the yoke of autocracy, desires neither a limited nor an unlimited tsarist government, but a democratic republic.

3. ...that the land should be handed over to the workers, and that each person who tills the soil with his own hands has the right to the use of it.”

Alexander Os'minin, peasant writer, 1917

“We are standing for the people to become the masters of their own lives, for our country to become a single family of brother laborers, without rich or poor—in short for the Kingdom of God to come to our land.”

Option 3: Work Toward a Future Socialist Society

The ideas of Karl Marx can guide Russians to a bright future. Marx's ideas mirror what is happening now in Russia. Russia is industrializing rapidly. This process is both creating an urban lower class and exacerbating class conflict. Since the 1890s, Russia has seen population growth in the cities and an increasing number of strikes and labor violence.

But we are not quite ready for socialism. According to Marx, industrial capitalism is the final stage of history. This stage pits factory owners against the factory workers. In a socialist revolution, the workers will overthrow the owners and seize power. Eventually, private property will be abolished and capitalism will be succeeded by an economic system—socialism—in which the people will labor out of a sincere desire to contribute to the well-being of their fellow humans. However, in Russia, industrial capitalism is still in its infancy; and therefore, Russia is not yet ready for socialism. We must be patient and allow the lower classes to develop enough class-consciousness to organize for the final defeat of capitalism. We must also trust in our wise Menshevik leaders to guide us to this eventual goal.

Active participation in the soviets provides us with the best opportunity to contribute to the new Russia. The soviets control the armed forces, transportation, and communications. They are workers' organizations pursuing workers' objectives. The brave deeds of the Petrograd workers of the glorious February Revolution must be advanced through the organization of a strong workers' political party. This workers' party must be active in the upcoming elections to the Constituent Assembly.

Although led by liberals and capitalists, the Provisional Government is putting together a temporary post-tsarist political structure. In time, by working in this political structure, revolutionaries will come to know the true nature of the class enemy, and will be better-prepared to defeat it in the final conflict.

It is true that the Great War is the savage result of destructive competition between corrupt bourgeois states and, as such, is contemptible. However, the progress made in Russia since February must be protected from German invaders. When Russia is under attack, all of her children must lay aside their differences and defend the fatherland. We must win the war so that a just peace will nurture our social revolution!

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 3

1. Karl Marx has provided an ideology based on scientific laws of history. This philosophy positions socialist revolutionaries within an historical stream flowing from the dawn of man, through the French Revolution, to a future when man can finally control his own destiny.

2. Industrial capitalism is the crucial fact of modern economic life. Its great promise and its awful pitfalls embody the present and future of Russia. The workers must master industrial capitalism in order to transcend it.

3. The current international borders of the Russian state must not be altered. In principle, we accept the right of ethnic groups to self-determination within Russia. However, we are opposed to any efforts at territorial autonomy or separation before the election of the Constituent Assembly.

4. The progress made in Russia since February must be protected from German invaders. We must win the war so that a just peace will nurture our social revolution!

Supporting Arguments for Option 3

1. While the final socialist revolution will eventually occur, Russia has just entered the stage of bourgeois-led industrialization. This stage must be well-advanced before the lower classes acquire enough class consciousness to organize for the defeat of capitalism. We must not interfere with the process of historical inevitability.

2. For the present, we must actively participate in the soviets, which have become the most powerful institutions in Russia. We must organize a strong workers' political party. In addition, cooperation with the Provisional

Government will give a voice to the workers in the post-tsarist political structure.

3. The Constituent Assembly will represent all of Russia, and any important political issues, such as self-determination for nationalities, must only be considered after its election.

4. When Russia is under attack, all of her children must lay aside their differences and defend the motherland. After our victory, the international brotherhood of workers will unite in a just and fair peace.

From the Historical Record

Central Committee of the Social Democrats, February 27, 1917

“Citizens! The strongholds of Russian tsarism have fallen. The prosperity of the Tsarist gang, built on the bones of the people, has collapsed. The people have risen and the capital is in their hands. Units of revolutionary troops have come over to support the uprising. The revolutionary proletariat [property-less laborers] and the revolutionary army must save the country from the downfall and final ruin which the Tsarist government was preparing. The Russian people through its huge efforts, its blood and at the cost of many lives has thrown off the slavery of centuries.

The task of the working class and the revolutionary army is to create a Provisional revolutionary government which will stand at the head of the new-born republican order. The Provisional revolutionary government must draw up temporary laws to defend the rights and liberties of the people, to confiscate church, landowners', government and crown lands and transfer them to the people, to introduce the eight-hour working day and to summon a Constituent Assembly on the basis of a suffrage which is universal, without regard to sex, nationality or religion, direct, equal and secret....

Citizens, soldiers, wives and mothers! All to battle! To open battle with tsardom and its troops!

The red flag of revolt will be raised right across Russia! Everywhere take freedom into your own hands, overthrow the tsarist lackeys, summon the soldiers to the struggle! ...

Forward, there is no return!

Merciless struggle under the red flag of revolution!

Long live the democratic republic!

Long live the revolutionary working class!

Long live the revolutionary people and the revolutionary army!”

V. A. Bazarov, March 2, 1917

“The energy and unity of revolutionary democracy have already forced the bourgeoisie to take a number of steps beyond the line the ruling class was originally unwilling to cross....

But in order to prevent the transformation of this revolutionary path into [one of] counterrevolution, the democratic [camp] should participate energetically in the Provisional Government to prevent it from stopping half-way [and] push it further and further....”

Resolution of the Second Moscow military equipment factory, March 5, 1917

“The Provisional Government that emerged from the revolution speaks for the interests of the bourgeoisie, and therefore the working class can support this government only insofar as its policy will not run against the interests of the broad toiling masses. At the same time, the working class must organize itself for the defense of its class interests and the consolidation of all the achievements of the revolution.”

Editorial, Rabochaia Gazeta (Menshevik newspaper), March 31, 1917

“Time and again we warned the workers against an unorganized economic struggle... We cautioned the workers against thoughtless steps; we urged on them restraint and organization in the interests both of their class and of the struggle for economic and political freedom being conducted by the proletariat. But in making these comradely appeals we were also well aware of how unavoidably disorganized and chaotic the struggle would be during this early period. One has only to remember how the industrialists exploited the helplessness of workers laboring under wartime regulations and squeezed them of their remaining strength.... After having made a revolution, can one blame such workers for also wanting to attain a more humane existence?”

Rabochaia Gazeta, March 25, 1917

“Democracy grew up during the last ten years. The crumbs of freedom that were left in Russia after the struggle in 1905—the shadow of popular representation, the pitiful freedom of the press—slowly but steadily did their educative work. If not for that [work], Democracy could not have proven itself...in the days of the revolution. But now that it has—there is hope for the future.”

N.S. Chkheidze, speaking in the Petrograd Soviet, March 14, 1917

“We make this offer with weapons in our hands. The slogan for the revolution is ‘Down with [the German Kaiser] Wilhelm!’”

Irakli Tseretelli, speaking in the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee, March 21, 1917

“We should not consider the defense of the country as something which does not concern us, something we don’t talk about. It should be for us one of the basic tasks of the Revolution, without which we should not be able to conclude a democratic peace and preserve the achievements of the Revolution.”

Socialist pamphlet directed to the peasants, 1917

“[Under socialism] want and hunger will disappear and pleasure will be equally accessible to all. Thieving and robbery will come to an end. In place of compulsion and coercion there will be a kingdom of freedom and fraternity.”

Option 4: Organize for a Second Revolution

The ideology of Karl Marx provides a superb framework for action, but it must be adapted to Russian conditions. It is true that, at present, Russia's urban lower class lacks sufficient class-consciousness to overthrow capitalism. However, precise, skilled organization of the lower classes can and will make a decisive difference. With the February Revolution, the time is ripe for radical change. The workers can be taught and led to achieve this all-important goal.

We will stop at nothing in our quest to reach the broad, sunlit uplands of socialism. The hard, sharp edge of determination of this vanguard has been forged during years of tsarist oppression. Toughened by persecution, imprisonment, and exile, the revolutionary vanguard understands that now is the time for courage, sacrifice, and boldness, not just in thoughts, but in heroic deeds!

The brave workers of Petrograd showed us the way in February. When they acted, bloody Nicholas and the other Romanov wolves turned tail and ran. But our work is far from done. A second revolution is needed in Russia! All Russians should join the cause of the Bolsheviks! All power to the soviets! Peace, land, and bread!

The Provisional Government is a powerless empty shell. We are told to wait until its leaders see fit to devise elections for a Constituent Assembly, and that this Assembly will be the true government of a new Russia. Political participation in this deceptive farce is laughable. The aims of the Provisional Government are to perpetuate the leadership of the ruling class and to oppress the workers and peasants. After a period of organization and subversion, the lower classes, led by its vanguard, will send the Provisional Government where it belongs—into the dustbin of history.

The present war is a horrible example of bloody imperialist competition over the means of production. Russia should immediately renounce its role in this carnage and conclude a peace. Then we can turn our attention to the daily needs of the real masters of Russia: its workers, peasants, and soldiers. Under the leadership of the soviets, land should be confiscated from the nobles and redistributed by the peasants themselves. Private property is the root of all evil. Class struggle is the only avenue to real social change. Familiar with great personal hardships, the Russian workers and peasants possess the will and stamina for the coming conflict. They only need to be guided by a reliable core of trained revolutionaries. All of Europe is poised for the brave new world of socialism. Russia can show the way through decisive action now! Long live the international socialist revolution!

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 4

1. Russia's suffering people cannot wait any longer. Only a fervent, uncompromising, disciplined elite of trained revolutionaries can organize the urban lower class and peasants for a final successful revolt against the forces of capital.

2. Private property is the root of all evil. The workers and peasants are the ones who make property economically productive. Therefore, they should control that property.

3. Ultimately, the success of international socialism will transform national self-determination into an irrelevancy.

4. The war has been a horrible example of bloody imperialist competition over the means of production. Russia should immediately renounce its participation in this carnage and look after the daily needs of its real heroes: the workers, peasants, and soldiers.

Supporting Arguments for Option 4

1. Familiar with great personal hardships, the Russian workers and peasants possess the will and stamina for the coming conflict. They only need to be taught and led by an effective revolutionary vanguard.

2. It is useless to work with the bourgeois Provisional Government. Its aims are simple: to perpetuate the leadership of the ruling class and to oppress the workers and peasants. In due time, its fate will be sealed.

3. The Provisional Government has denied the right of self-determination to Finns, Ukrainians, and other national minorities. This is nothing less than a mindless continuation of the immoral policies of the hated former tsar.

4. The war is already a lost cause. It is better to admit it now, save the lives of our surviving soldiers, conclude a peace with Germany, and focus our energies on building the brave new world of socialism.

From the Historical Record

Lenin, "Who Are the 'Friends of the People' and How Do They Fight Against the Social Democrats?," 1894

"The Russian worker, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the Russian proletariat [property-less laborers] (together with the proletariat of all countries) along the direct road of open political struggle to the victorious Communist Revolution."

Lenin, 1895

"The democratic struggle is inseparable from the socialist one; (it is) impossible to wage a successful fight for the cause of labor without the attainment of full liberty and the democratization of Russia's political and social regime."

Lenin, 1900

"No single class in history has ever attained mastery unless it has produced political leaders...capable of organizing the movement and leading it... It is necessary to prepare men who devote to the revolution not only their free evenings, but their entire lives."

Lenin, 1907

"Revolution is a difficult matter. It cannot be made with gloves and manicured fingernails.... A political party is no girls dormitory. Party members should not be measured by the

narrow standard of petty-bourgeois morality. Sometimes a scoundrel is useful to our party precisely because he is a scoundrel."

Lenin, during the early months of World War I

"Is the feeling of national pride alien to us, Russian class-conscious proletarians? Certainly not. We love our language and our motherland."

Leon Trotsky, September 1915

"Working men and women! Mothers and fathers! Widows and orphans! Wounded and crippled! To all who are suffering from the war or in consequence of the war, we cry out, over the frontiers, over the smoking battlefields, over the devastated cities and hamlets: WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!"

Lenin, March 30, 1917

"It has fallen to the Russian proletariat to have the great honor of beginning a series of revolutions.... Russia is a peasant country, one of the most backward in Europe. It is not possible for socialism to triumph there directly, presently. But the peasant character of the country...can lead a vast sweep to the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia and make our revolution a prologue to the worldwide socialist revolution, a step toward it."

Lenin, March 16, Cable to the Petrograd Bolsheviks:

“Our tactics; complete mistrust. No support for the new government. We especially suspect Kerensky. The arming of the proletariat provides the only guarantee.... No rapprochement with the other parties.”

Lenin, Pravda, April 3 and 4, 1917

The first stage of the Revolution has ended. This first stage will certainly not be the last stage of our Revolution.... The Russian working class has as its first ally the mass of the... peasant population of Russia, which numbers many millions and constitutes the enormous majority of the population. This mass must have peace, bread, freedom and land.”