

Module 03: 1917 — Did the War Cause a Revolution?

Evidence 24: The Formation and Program of the Provisional Government, March 2/15, 1917

A

Introduction

In an effort to stabilize the country and stem the potential radicalism of the Soviet, the Provisional Government committed itself to implementing a broad range of civil and political liberties, as well as a general amnesty. In keeping with the liberal principles of many of the cabinet members, the new governing body pointedly identified itself as "provisional," pending the election and convening of a Constituent Assembly.

Question to Consider

- What evidence does the document provide related to the power of soldiers at this volatile moment?

Document

Formation and Program of the Provisional Government

Citizens, the Provisional Executive Committee of the members of the Duma, with the aid and support of the garrison of the capital and its inhabitants has triumphed over the dark forces of the Old Regime to such an extent as to enable it to organize a more stable executive power. With this idea in mind, the Provisional Committee has appointed as ministers of the first Cabinet representing the public, men whose past political and public life assures them the confidence of the country.

Prince George E. Lvov, *Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior*

P.N. Miliukov, *Minister of Foreign Affairs*

A. I. Guchkov, *Minister of War and Marine*

M. I. Tereschenko, *Minister of Finance*

A.A. Manuilov, *Minister of Education*

A. I. Shingarev, *Minister of Agriculture*

N. V. Nekrasov, *Minister of Transportation*

A.I. Konovalov, *Minister of Commerce and Industry*

A. F. Kerenski, *Minister of Justice*
VI. Lvov, *Holy Synod*

The Cabinet will be guided in its actions by the following principles:

1. An immediate general amnesty for all political and religious offenses, including terrorist acts, military revolts, agrarian offenses, etc.
2. Freedom of speech and press; freedom to form labor unions and to strike. These political liberties should be extended to the army in so far as war conditions permit.
3. The abolition of all social, religious and national restrictions.
4. Immediate preparation for the calling of a Constituent Assembly, elected by universal and secret vote, which shall determine the form of government and draw up the Constitution for the country.
5. In place of the police, to organize a national militia with elective officers, and subject to the local self-governing body.
6. Elections to be carried out on the basis of universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage.
7. The troops that have taken part in the revolutionary movement shall not be disarmed or removed from Petrograd.
8. On duty and in war service, strict military discipline should be maintained, but when off duty, soldiers should have the same public rights as are enjoyed by other citizens.

The Provisional Government wishes to add that it has no intention of taking advantage of the existence of war conditions to delay the realization of the above-mentioned measures of reform.

President of the Duma, M. RODZIANKO

President of the Council of Ministers, PRINCE LVOV

Ministers MILIUKOV, NEKRASOV, MANUILOV, KONOVALOV, TERESCHENKO, VL. LVOV, SHINGAREV, KERENSKI

Source:

Izvestiia, No. 4, March 3/16, 1917. Alfred Golder, ed., *Documents of Russian History, 1914-1917*, translated by Emanuel Aronsberg (New York: The Century Co., 1927): 308-09.