

The June Offensive: The Impact of the June Offensive on the Russian Revolution

By: Nathan Kookan

The events of the February and October Revolutions in Russia in 1917 have been the subject of an immense body of historical literature, establishing a clear timeline of how the revolution began with the overthrow of the Tsar in February and culminated in the Bolshevik seizure of power in October. Historians have debated, analyzed, and established the historical significance of the key revolutionary events of that year; The February Revolution, the April Crisis, the July Days, the Kornilov Affair, and the declaration of Soviet Power. Recent scholars like Matthew Rendle and Igor Grebenkin have contributed significantly to understanding the revolution within the context of the Great War, building on the authority of Allan K. Wildman's significant social history on the Russian Imperial Army to include diverse studies on the officer corps as well as soldiers and command staff. Allan K. Wildman, with his two-volume study "The End of the Imperial Russian Army," published in 1980 and 1987, established a body of work on the final days of the Russian Imperial army, capturing the experience of soldiers, officers, and command staff during the revolution and comprehensively discussing the deeply rooted social issues plaguing the army. Matthew Rendle and Igor Grebenkin's works qualify and quantify both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary activity within the army's ranks, most notably among the officer corps, and explores the relations between soldiers, officers, and command staff. However, one revolutionary event remains relatively understudied compared to the other widely recognized historical events of the revolution due to its military nature. Even the historians who focus on the revolution through the lens of the Russian army pay it little attention or incorporate it into a larger theater of discussion. That revolutionary event is the June Offensive of 1917.

In June of 1917, the Provisional Government of revolutionary Russia launched a major military offensive against the Austro-German forces in Galicia on the 300-kilometer span of the Southwestern front, pushing toward Lvov. Already facing strained soldier-officer relations, mass desertions, and failing supply lines, the offensive took only days to collapse. The offensive shattered soldiers' morale, confidence in the Provisional Government, and furthered the disintegration of the army. Coming right after a political crisis over the issue of the Russian state's war aims and the democratization of the army and soldier-officer relations, the June Offensive of 1917 had established the war as one of the most central and contentious issues of the Russian Revolution. Not only was it a turning point in the war, but it was as Louise Erwin Heenan describes it, it was a "phase of revolution."¹ It clearly demonstrated the failure of the Provisional Government to properly respond to popular revolutionary aspirations and contributed significantly to the later flashpoints of revolutionary conflict that were the July Days and the Kornilov Affair. The offensive also served to bind moderate socialists to the liberals on continuing the unpopular war, the same way liberals had been bound to conservatives in continuing the Tsarist war at the outset of the February Revolution. Building on the work of the only English-language scholar to study this event, Louise Erwin Heenan, this essay seeks to explore the role of the June Offensive in the Russian Revolution as *the* central event of the Russian Revolution. Analyzing the state of the Russian army before and during the revolution, I aim to explore the relations between soldiers, officers, command staff, as well as their relationships with the Provisional Government around the June Offensive. I seek to explain why the Provisional Government insisted on launching the offensive and to explore the reasons why it ultimately failed. This essay ultimately aims to weave the June Offensive into the story of the February Revolution, examining its consequences on the political course as a turning point of the

revolution and the political leanings and attitudes of social groups within the military surrounding the offensive throughout the course of 1917.

The Russian Imperial Army

In order to understand the June Offensive and the collapse of the Russian army during the Russian Revolution of 1917, one must first investigate the structure, state, and history of the Russian army leading up to the revolution and even before the great war. In his monograph on the Russian army entitled *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Old Army and the Soldiers' Revolt*, Allan K. Wildman claimed that “the upheaval in the Army cannot be viewed separately from the social upheaval.”² Wildman acknowledges that mass armies absorb and represent the conflicts of their societies at large, and become a social and political microcosm of the nation at large.³ The Russian Imperial army was the only Tsarist institution to completely carry over into the revolution intact and faces its political developments head on as a symbol of the old order.⁴ Critical contemporaries, largely liberals and socialists, viewed the Russian Imperial Army as a bastion of aristocratic privilege and autocratic power. However, the social composition of the army and the officer corps had undergone significant change since the time of the Great Reforms, including more non-noble elements as modernization took precedent over preserving the social hierarchy.

The monarchy and the Army were closely bound together in a wide-sweeping set of moral, physical, and cultural ties.⁵ The nobility was given the duty of being the exclusive military class in the early modern Muscovite state, and nearly all organs of state power were militarized from the bureaucracy to the organization of noble families.⁶ Under Peter the Great, however, the military and civilian hierarchies were separated and the state structure operated

under a more secular and western tone.⁷ Status was solely derived from service to the state, with military service being of much greater social value than civilian service or service to the Holy Synod.⁸ The highest grade of service, and therefore status, to the Tsar was given by the officer corps of the regiment of the guards.⁹ Guard officers were from the highest pedigree and groomed for their positions from very early on in their lives, with everything from their school, type of arms, and their regiment planned from birth for generations upon generations.¹⁰ Thus, the officer corps of the regiment of the guards was created as and remained an organ of aristocratic power, privilege, and influence, as well as being a symbol of service to the Tsar. These guard officers enjoyed extensive privileges and elite education, which allowed them to disproportionately swell the upper ranks of the command staff and build a solid conservative core in the upper command staff.

After Russia's sobering defeat in the Crimean war, the autocracy realized that widespread reforms bringing modernization and westernization were desperately needed. In this context, the upper ranks of the Russian Imperial Army were dealing with reforms that were eating away at its sacred traditions and institutions. The leadership of the army, in undergoing the process of professionalization due to the Miliutin reforms of the 1870s, was also becoming less aristocratic.¹¹ A growing pool of *raznochintsy*, middle class, clergy and peasants, was penetrating into the ranks of the officer corps and lower command staff upon completion of military training at junker schools and professionalized military academies.¹² By 1894, only 53 percent of junker school trainees were of noble origin, and by 1905 only 37 percent of junker school trainees were of noble origin.¹³ In 1912-13, only 9 percent of students at the Alekseevsk military school were of noble origin, down from 43 percent in 1876-7.¹⁴ The incentive to become an officer was great, as the privilege and status awarded, despite being of non-noble origin, was substantial. However,

nobles were still afforded great privilege and streamlined promotions, still dominating the upper military leadership, to which the increasingly non-noble elements within the army and lower ranks of the officer corps, looked upon with great disdain.¹⁵

The Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905 broke the insulation of military personnel from revolutionary rhetoric. An army composed of men from all backgrounds, classes, and ages brought into the army during years of reforms, who were more educated than previous generations due to increased industrialization and social reforms, had experienced the collective trauma of defeat and revolution.¹⁶ Bolshevik, Menshevik, and Socialist Revolutionary military sections sprang up and focused on agitation in the military ranks.¹⁷ Mobilization of heterogenous reservists had brought to the army the popular revolutionary rhetoric that accompanied the unrest of the Revolution of 1905, ending generations of insularity from national political developments.¹⁸ The Great Reforms of the 1860s had created an increased urban population that became increasingly politicized and organized, allowing peasants to voice their concerns through the courts and petitions.¹⁹ The army came to be equally subject to radicalization as was any other part of Russian society due to the influx of politically activated reservists.²⁰

Many units were called to fire upon civilians in order to suppress local unrest, and some units promptly refused. On January 7, 1906, the governor of Tomsk Guberniia reported that “discharged reservists beat up the *volost*’ elder, freed arrested peasants, and threatened to tear up the *volost*’, burn down administrative buildings, and murder the police captain and his men.”²¹ In June of 1906 in Tambov, the Seventh Reserve Cavalry Regiment was sent to subdue a peasant revolt in a village called Petrovka and refused to follow orders to fire.²² Many officers and soldiers around the time of the 1905 revolution organized politically and drafted resolutions for the first time, as Matthew Rendle describes, “It was a formative experience for many who played

pivotal roles in 1917.”²³ However, the image of soldiers’ brutal repression of rebellious workers and peasants persisted, feeding the popular view of the army, and the officer corps in particular, as an instrument of counterrevolution protecting the institutions of autocracy.

The Great War

The greatest and final challenge the Russian Imperial Army would face before its total collapse would be that of the First World War. By the end of 1915, 3.4 million casualties were suffered by the Russian army, and in the first ten months of the war casualties exceeded 3 million.²⁴ At the onset of the war, the Russian army faced “poor field communications, disproportionate firepower, an archaic supply system” and a heavy defeat at Tannenberg in East Prussia.²⁵ However, the Russian Army managed to push deep into Galicia and Austrian Poland and fend off German advances in Poland proper.²⁶ Despite these particular successes, ammunition expenditures, supply consumption, and casualty rates “astronomically exceeded all prewar calculations.”²⁷ Mismanagement by the autocracy and the army command staff had eaten away at Imperial Russia’s economy, contributing to significant shortages on the home front. On the topic of sweeping government failures, Kadet leader Pavel Miliukov addressed the Fourth Russian State Duma on November 1st, 1916, asked “Is it stupidity or treason?” when decrying the disastrous persecution of the war effort by the Tsarist leadership.²⁸

In the rear, mass mobilization faced a significant degree of resistance in the countryside. Across provincial Russia, mobilized reservists deserted, revolted, police were beaten, property was destroyed, riots occurred, even collection and distribution centers and public infrastructure was destroyed.²⁹ The war effort prompted the army to conscript almost half of the rural labor force’s males and requisition the livestock and horses of peasants.³⁰ Conscription left families

without male providers and families were denied pay from their husband's military service.³¹ A May 14th 1916 letter to the war minister from peasant women expounded their suffering from the war, "We...have given the government our husbands, our sons, our brothers, our fathers. And now that is not enough for the government. It is going to exterminate us with hunger."³² In Mogilev and Kazan, mobilized reservists tore through aristocratic estates, looting them, and rallied peasants to join them.³³ Many villages were openly hostile to conscription and requisition of their provisions as illustrated in two July 23rd police reports from the Kazan and Stavropol' provinces.³⁴ The first report describes mobilized reservists setting fire to and rampaging through aristocratic estates, while the second report describes reservists refusing to deploy to the front and refusing the requisition of their horses as they proceeded to destroy a *zemstvo* school.³⁵ Historian John Keep succinctly describes the state of the war on rural Russia, stating that civilians "in town and country found themselves caught up in a desperate struggle to meet the insatiable demands of a conflict in which prospects of victory seemed ever more remote."³⁶

However, most soldiers were still committed to their posts and not willing to face the consequences of active revolt.³⁷ Rather, they resigned themselves to "self-wounding, voluntary capture, foot dragging, or desertion to the rear."³⁸ In 1916 a group of severe mutinies occurred in which entire units refused orders to attack.³⁹ A report from the 22nd Infantry Division describes two regiments blocking a third regiment from being moved up for an attack and threatening to fire, and in the 17th Rifle Regiment of the 20th Siberian Rifle Division, An anonymous letter "warned the commanding officer that the regiment would not take part in the attack," prompting them to be swapped out with another regiment.⁴⁰ The 223rd Odoevskii Regiment mutinied but remained in fighting condition, after which 23 agitators were selected for trial and five were executed.⁴¹

The war also contributed significantly changed the composition of the army, accelerating the existing trends of past reforms. From April 1914 to January 1917, the army swelled from 1.2 million personal to 6.6 million, and the officer corps swelled from 40,590 to 145,916.⁴² Officers were dying at staggering rates, prompting the command staff to set up officer training schools and commission an unprecedented number of **NCOs** (Give a brief sentence about what NCOs are).⁴³ The result was an officer corps of extremely heterogenous backgrounds with a lower standard of training. In 1916, only 4 percent of junior officers were of noble origin. ⁴⁴This influx chipped away at the strong conservative base of the officer corps, creating a social division between the lower and upper commands. The increasingly non-noble officer corps contributed significantly to the development of an overwhelming anti-autocratic consensus in early 1917 and began a shift toward a more liberal and moderate socialist core of officers.

Altogether, numerous military failures, crippling supply shortages, unprecedented human losses, and colossal economic strain alienated and disaffected much of the population, including soldiers. As the war progressed and the Russian army continued to experience a deteriorating fighting capability, the social transformations and divisions in the army came to a head. As the developing anti-autocratic consensus crystallized into the February Revolution of 1917, the monarchy fell because, as Peter Kenez writes, “the army was unwilling to defend it.”⁴⁵ The increasingly weary, tired, and politically inclined army found themselves in the midst of a revolution in which they felt their voices could be heard and their conditions could improve. To some, it spelled the end of the war, and to others, it meant that the Tsarist autocracy’s mismanagement no longer stood in the way of successfully prosecuting the war.

The February Revolution: Fault Lines Surface

The February Revolution began on February 23, 1917, triggered by International Women's Day marches. Workers protest on the streets of Petrograd and massive strikes ensued, and the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison that were ordered to fire on the protestors soon joined them after initial clashes. The Petrograd Soviet formed and created the Executive Committee while the Duma convened and created the Provisional Committee, which would soon share power with the Petrograd Soviet as the Provisional Government on March 3rd. The Petrograd Soviet agreed to support the Provisional Government as the legitimate revolutionary government in so far as it upheld its promise to protect and serve the interests of workers, soldiers, and peasants. The Tsar abdicated on March 2nd, and thus began the short life of "democratic" revolutionary Russia.

The Petrograd Soviet's first order of business on March 1st, 1917 was the issuance of Soviet Order No. 1. The collapse of the army in the coming June Offensive would be rooted in the shockwaves of Order No. 1. In a successful move to seize soldier loyalty from the Provisional Government, Order No. 1 consisted of measures politically empowering soldiers over their own officers and called upon them to form committees and pass resolutions. At the outset of the February Revolution, neither the Petrograd Soviet nor the Provisional Government had any real power over the masses and effectively had little real administrative ability, being only days old. Order No. 1 spawned thousands of committees pledging their support to the Petrograd Soviet before the Provisional Government could even begin to exercise real authority.

~~Order No. 1~~ The Order stipulated that soldiers were to form committees; send representatives to the Petrograd Soviet; put all political activities of the committee under the authority of the Petrograd Soviet; that orders of the Duma shall only be complied with if they do

not contradict orders from the Petrograd Soviet; that all arms were to be kept under the control of the committees and not the officers; that soldiers shall have the rights of citizens; and that the use of hierarchical language in the military shall be abolished.⁴⁶ **(Is this meant to be quoted or paraphrased? If paraphrased, try to condense, or break up this chunk).** Soldiers were brought directly into the revolutionary political process and were afforded the ability to make their voices heard. They joined the rush to organize politically and were eager to express their dissatisfactions through official channels. The officers could not contain soldiers' desires for the implementation of Order No. 1, and any attempts to curtail their newfound freedom would be perceived as counter-revolution.

Members of the army high command were shocked at the issuance of **the order or The Order (The mention of Order No. 1 is repetitive in this section. For the sake of the reader try to re-word if possible).** ~~Order No. 1.~~ In telegrams from Commander Alekseev to War Minister Guchkov, the commander in chief demanded that orders were to be approved by the Stavka before being issued to the army.⁴⁷ However, command staff and senior officers realized that the presence of officers in soldiers' organizations could curtail the effects of Order No. 1, and act as organs of power for the command staff. The command had begun to exert influence from above on soldiers' committees, leading to many deputations of Kadet officers.⁴⁸ Some members of the upper command ~~actually~~ felt that the democratization of the army was not sewing disorder, but arresting it and preventing the disintegration of the army for the time being.⁴⁹ However, there was no doubting that Order No. 1 and **its** consequences were an affront to military discipline and the traditional structure of the army.

Order No. 1 swept through the ranks and illustrated the importance of political representation to the army. A soldier's assembly in the Petrograd Military District on March 2nd,

1917 acted on ~~Order No. 1~~, issuing a resolution calling for “Equal rights-the rights of citizens,” increased pay, improved provisions, shortening the general term of service, and electing a representative to the Petrograd Soviet.⁵⁰ However, soon after the issuance of Order No. 1, fearing a breakdown of discipline in the military, the Petrograd Soviet was pressured by the Provisional Government to issue Order No. 2 on March 7th, clarifying that soldiers were not to elect their own officers. Then, on March 9th, the Petrograd Soviet issued Order No. 3, clarifying that the previous two orders applied only to the Petrograd Military District. A March 10th letter to the Petrograd Soviet from soldier A. Korolzhevich expresses his disdain at the issuance of Order No. 3. He expounds that “[If Order No. 1 is revoked] almost nothing will have changed for us soldiers... As much as we were gladdened, we will now be miserable. The old apparently will be the new.”⁵¹ Another letter to the Petrograd Soviet from the 61st Siberian Rifle Regiment on March 18th directly calls for action against their officers who are preventing them from organizing, “The gentlemen officers are issuing punishments just as they always have and are not giving us any of the freedom that our brothers have won... Which is why we ask you, Gentlemen deputies, to free us from the old rule and arrest them.”⁵²

However, the soldiers of the 61st Siberian Rifle Regiment still took care to include their commitment to the war, “All of us our willing to lay down our lives for our freedom and for our existence and our dear homeland and to defeat the cursed enemies.”⁵³ Just as the Petrograd Soviet supported the Provisional Government in so far as it upheld its duty of implementing revolution, this regiment supported the war effort in so far as their newfound rights were acknowledged and upheld. Another letter to the Petrograd Soviet from soldier Vasili Anifimov from March 13th states “The citizen officers pledged to hold discussions with soldiers, but they did not, and they do not want to.... Not a single soldiers’ assembly has met...It is necessary to

accelerate the dispatch of special plenipotentiaries to explain and strengthen the soldiers' confidence in the bright future of Russia and the Provisional Government."⁵⁴ While Anifimov does not give a direct expression of support, he does give a stern warning that conditions must improve in order for the Provisional Government to win the confidence of soldiers.⁵⁵ Fearing reprisals and disorder, many officers withheld information from the rear from their soldiers, entrenching the deeply-rooted mistrust between soldiers and officers.

Support for the Provisional Government in the outset of the February Revolution appears to be a common theme, at least on the surface, despite the confusion and disaffection from the issuance of Order No. 2 and Order No. 3. Despite the wishes of officers and the Provisional Government, soldiers outside the Petrograd Military District continued to organize in violation of Order No. 3, and by early April soldiers' committees were universal, valid institutions respected by the higher command.⁵⁶ Now connected to the constant flow of political developments in the rear, soldiers were encouraged to challenge the authority of officers.⁵⁷ However, this did not come without due unrest. Officers, even if they were elected, resented their diminishing authority in the wake of soldier committees.⁵⁸ In the Moskovskii Regiment, officers were disarmed, one was shot, and soldiers elected their own commanders.⁵⁹ Igor Grebenkin argues that officers largely supported the revolution until it became clear that it was transforming the military into an "arena of political struggle."⁶⁰ However, though soldier-officer relations were strained, officers would be accepted in many cases if they simply remained idle in the barracks and heeded soldiers' wishes. Soldiers "frequently took arbitrary actions, such as liberating their arrested comrades from the guardhouse" while junior officers, fearing reprisals, "simply looked the other way."⁶¹ In a larger context, the Provisional Government wished to work with the fragile committee structure of the army, and proceeded cautiously in maintaining democratization while

attempting to restore order from the Petrograd Soviet's unrest caused by the issuance of Order No. 1.

Committee work, particularly above the regiment level, attracted the most educated among the ranks.⁶² Mostly educated, urban, and highly political junior officers dominated the committee structure and presented liberal and moderate socialist political positions.⁶³ Wildman calls them the "committee class," who would continuously alienate their soldier constituencies through May and June through fervent support for the war, the June Offensive, and for restoration of order in the army.⁶⁴ This phenomenon led to a mass of liberal and Menshevik soldiers' deputies presenting a patriotism unparalleled by troops at the front.⁶⁵ The command staff had begun to exert influence on the committee structure, invading the space of the revolutionary organs at the cost of sacrificing military tradition. This rising "committee class" could explain why the increasingly non-noble, heterogenous social composition of the officer corps did little to transform the image of the repressive tsarist officer many fondly held. Grebenkin argues that officers' actions cannot be explained by their social backgrounds, but rather by their "specific situation, the environment, as well as their expectations for the revolution."⁶⁶

The surface consensus seen in the aftermath of the February Revolution promised further support for the war in so far as the rights of soldiers as citizens and political participants were respected. However, fault lines of conflict on the issues of soldier rights were presenting, as committees began to stray from the revolutionary aspirations of their constituencies and exacerbate the long-standing grievances against officers and command staff through the next flash points of revolutionary conflict. Above all, the issuance of Order No. 1 illustrated the widely the first failure of "dual power," and its one clear result was that soldiers declared their

loyalty overwhelmingly to the Petrograd Soviet, and not the Provisional Government, as any significant retraction in the revolution could have possibly meant their execution for treason.

The April Crisis: Division Deepens

The revolution's first crisis unfolded over the issue of war aims in April of 1917. It established the war as the most contentious issue of the Revolution early on in 1917. Dubbed the "April Crisis," it resulted from the Provisional Government's March 27th declaration on war aims primarily authored by Foreign Minister Pavel Miliukov. The declaration read "It shall unswervingly carrying out the people's will and defend our motherland's rights, while fully observing the obligations that we have assumed in relation to our allies."⁶⁷ On April 18th, Pavel Miliukov informed Russia's allies in a secret note that Russia would stand by Tsarist agreements concerning the annexation of Ottoman territory, "that the Provisional Government, while defending our motherland's rights, will fully adhere to the obligations taken on in relation to our allies."⁶⁸ Miliukov's note was published, causing mass protests in Petrograd on the 20th and 21st of April that called for Miliukov's resignation, peace without annexation or indemnities, and more broadly an end to the war.

On March 14th, the Petrograd Soviet had issued a statement on war aims, "To All the World's People," opposing annexation and calling upon the proletariat of belligerent nations to rise and call for peace.⁶⁹ Accounts indicate that some soldiers accepted this as a viable course of action, feeling a sense of brotherhood with the proletariat of belligerent nations. An April 13th letter to War Minister Aleksandr Guchkov from soldiers of the 64th Infantry Division asked for peace and proclaimed, "they are not our enemies but are our brothers in the cross and in the divine commandments."⁷⁰ German sources highlight a notable degree of fraternization among

enemy troops, with German intelligence officers often able to speak to Russian soldiers disguised as “socialists.”⁷¹ However, other accounts reveal a failure to reconcile this perception with reality. The 186h Artillery Division from the 12th Army perceives German militarism as a threat to the revolution, stating, “Russia is awaiting an answer to this appeal; but comrades, the German people are still silent, Wilhelm’s regiments, having taken advantage of our summons, have left insignificant units against us and come crashing down in a great mass on our allies...” As the Petrograd Soviet continued to support revolutionary defense, the contradictory war policy of moderate socialists became clear. **Heenan** (contextualize this individual, who is he?) describes this confusing policy succinctly, writing that “The German soldier was the Russian soldiers’ brother; but he must be killed, while the Russian officer—a class enemy—must be obeyed.”⁷²

During the All-Russian Conference of Soviets of March 29th-April 3rd, leaders of the Petrograd Soviet passed a resolution supporting revolutionary defensism and the Provisional Government, maintaining that “Free Russia’s aim is to establish a stable peace ~~on the basis of~~ **based on** self-determination. The Russian people do not intend to increase its world power at the expense of other peoples. Its aim is not to enslave or humiliate anyone.”⁷³ The Petrograd Soviet had unintentionally bound itself to the Provisional Government in implicit support for Miliukov’s secret war aims of conquest, demonstrating that it was unable to put together a coherent policy on the war.⁷⁴ As Miliukov himself writes in his history of the Russian Revolution, “It did not adopt any decision, either in the night session or in the morning, except one to review the situation together with the Provisional Government.”⁷⁵ Facing massive public pressure from mass demonstrations in the streets, the two organs of “Dual Power” issued respective clarifications on the matter. The Provisional Government clarified the language used in its initial statement, stating that the Miliukov note did not contradict its statement on war

aims.⁷⁶ The Petrograd Soviet rushed to issue its own explanation to maintain its position of supporting the Provisional Government on the grounds that it rejects “imperialist war aims.”⁷⁷ Miliukov resigned from his post, but the April Crisis had renewed the issues it was inescapably intertwined with, democratization and discipline in the army, the war, and “Dual Power.”

The Miliukov note served to radicalize the army and diminish their initial support for the war as the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet’s perceptions and rhetoric were beginning quickly to fall behind reality. Once content with revolutionary defensism and the ability to make their voices heard, soldiers began to become disillusioned with the Provisional Government and the war effort and increasingly called for peace. Soldiers from the Finnish Guards Regiment Battalion Committee drafted a more moderate letter on April 20th that limited their malice solely to Miliukov, conducting a peaceful protest in tandem with their officers supporting the Petrograd Soviet’s position on the war.⁷⁸ An April 20th resolution by the Petrograd Garrison’s Reserve Electro-Technical Battalion Committee was so radical and class-oriented that it was published in *Pravda*, the Bolshevik publication, calling the Provisional Government a “faithful servant not only of the imperialist countries, but also of the German and Austrian governments, as it assists them in strangling the German proletariat’s evolving struggle for peace.”⁷⁹ The resolution demanded that the government “take the most energetic steps to work out a platform with the Allied governments for peace without annexation or indemnities.”⁸⁰ A late April letter to the chairman of the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies from a soldier in the 753rd Reserve Regiment called for outright peace and denounced the Petrograd Soviet’s continued support for the war, “We have heard that you want war and to support our dear allies [*sic*] England. Well, you can support them yourselves... Our 753rd regiment is standing now in reserve but we won’t go back down into the trenches any more.”⁸¹ The letter clearly

differentiates between the broader state goals of the Provisional Government and the reality of life on the front and the growing alienation of soldiers from political leadership.

As the first liberal cabinet of the Provisional Government collapsed, the moderate socialists of the Petrograd Soviet joined the liberals in a new coalition government. Alexander Kerensky became the War Minister of the new coalition government, and together with the moderate socialist and liberal cabinet, would have the final say on issue of war aims and the coming June Offensive. On May 5th the coalition government declared a “preliminary” revision of war aims and called for “peace without annexations or indemnities,” illustrating that their policy on the war was no more coherent than the former cabinets’.⁸² The liberals’ unwillingness to authentically revise their war aims, and the moderate socialists’ eroding ability to sell revolutionary defensism to the masses resulted in the establishment of the Bolsheviks as the sole conduit of achieving peace through the revolution.

Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik party, convinced the Bolshevik leadership to adopt his April Theses as the party’s official platform in April. The April **These** called for complete peace, calling out revolutionary defensism as a “cloak for a war of conquest, to enrich the capitalists,” and calling for steadfast opposition to the Provisional Government.”⁸³ He promised land, bread, and peace, along with a whole host of class-based reforms and the creation of a soviet government. Most importantly, he, and the Bolshevik party by extension, separated **himself themselves?** from the moderate socialists on the issue of the war and participation with the Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks promised peace, not “total victory,” and not “revolutionary defensism.” A letter from the soldiers of the 727th Novo-Silidginsky Regiment published in **Pravda** (**contextualize this publication in one sentence? What is it? Why is it important?**), called for an end to the war and proclaiming, “Haven’t the bourgeoisie and the

capitalists already filled their pockets with bloody coins? We workers and peasants, dressed in our gray overcoats, do not need this bloody slaughter.⁸⁴ Despite being published in *Pravda*, the Bolshevik party's central publication, it nonetheless shows that the Bolshevik position resonated with some soldiers. The mass-radicalization of soldiers was well underway, simply **because due to the fact that**, as Heenan articulates, "... the Russian people wanted peace more than they wanted any particular political system."⁸⁵ The failure of liberals and moderate socialists to accept a sweeping anti-war consensus continued to cost them the allegiance of soldiers and widespread popular support.

Rhetoric of the Offensive

The June Offensive was planned by the Tsarist government but executed by the First Coalition Government of liberals and moderate socialists. At the three meetings of the Entente military staffs in Paris, Chantilly, and Mogilev, the Tsarist government had pledged to launch a support sometime in the middle of 1917. After the meetings in Paris and Chantilly decided on simultaneous offensives on the Austro-German forces, the meeting at the Stavka in Mogilev in December of 1916 decided the fate of the June Offensive. General Brusilov proposed an offensive along the Southwestern front, pushing toward Lvov, followed by secondary offensives on all fronts.⁸⁶ Though no final decision was made, a consensus was reached that the offensive would push through the Southwestern front.⁸⁷ General Alekseev made the final decision, sending the offensive's plans to the Tsar and receiving approval without changes on the 24th of January, 1917.⁸⁸ As Minister of War in the Coalition Government, Alexander Kerensky, bound by the Tsarist government's agreements to the Entente and determined to bring order to the revolution, ordered the June Offensive on June 16th, 1917.⁸⁹

Kerensky had hoped that a “significant Russian contribution to Germany’s defeat” would give Russia leverage in the peace settlement, and that the moderate socialists followed suit in this mode of thinking.⁹⁰ Whether there were guarantees that this was solely to preserve the possibility of a peace without annexation or indemnities is unknown, as Iuli Martov’s speech observed. When initially arguing for the offensive at the Smolensk Soviet, Kerensky, in a more moderate tone, argued that an offensive would force the Germans to agree to “a general peace with no annexations or indemnities and the right of national self-determination.”⁹¹ The Declaration of May 5, upon which the Coalition Government established a significant degree of its legitimacy, rejected a separate peace but argued for a general peace based on military strength.⁹² This policy did have grounds in pragmatism, as a German victory on the western front would almost certainly guarantee an all-out offensive on the eastern front, and by extension an all-out offensive on the revolution.

Moderate socialists largely supported the war, with only internationalists opposing it as a minority of the soviets. The June 19th session of the First All-Russian Congress of Soviet hosted speeches by Menshevik revolutionary defensists, Socialist Revolutionary defensist Viktor Chernov, and a Menshevik-Internationalist.⁹³ Irakli Tsetereli, a Menshevik defensist, defended the Provisional Government’s “revised” position on war aims, while supporting the June Offensive whole-heartedly in a manner reminiscent of the Provisional Government’s earlier “total victory” stance.⁹⁴ Socialist Revolutionary defensist Viktor Chernov also peddled a defensist platform, but he offered a more hardline attitude, “As soon as peace becomes possible on the principles formulated by revolutionary Russia’s urban and rural working class and army, then the war must not continue for a single moment.”⁹⁵ Menshevik defensist Matvei Skobolev used more revolutionary language, but displays what earlier in the year would be the words of a

Kadet agitating against the democratization of the army, “We awoke to the belief that the war will not snuff out the revolution; the revolution will snuff out the war.”⁹⁶ Iuli Martov, a Menshevik-Internationalist, the sole opponent of the offensive and the war in the congress, clung to frail hope that international socialism would bring the war to an end.⁹⁷ Despite this, his words offered a clarity found in none of the other speeches. He recognized that the offensive was planned under the Tsarist administration, and he recognized the contradictory nature of the Coalition’s move toward the offensive, calling it “this latest overthrow of the Russian revolution’s policy.”⁹⁸

With the help of moderate socialists, the revolutionary committee structure of the military had been employed in the full service of preparing for the offensive.⁹⁹ Army congresses were used to generate enthusiasm for the offensive, restore discipline, quickly mobilize, and train and prepare for the coming offensive.¹⁰⁰ The organs of revolutionary power had been transformed into instruments of what would have been called counter-revolution earlier in the year.¹⁰¹ Resistance to orders from above had been previously pacified through influence on the committees from senior officers and the high command, but the coming offensive had facilitated significant front mutinies.¹⁰² Though observed as a larger phenomenon of “trench bolshevism,” many significant acts of unrest occurred in units without major Bolshevik influence.¹⁰³ These soldier mutinies, though removed from the Bolsheviks politically, signified to the Coalition Government the very real threat of radical political platform that adequately interpreted and responded to the popular aspirations of soldiers.

The Bolsheviks responded to the coming offensive by organizing mass demonstrations, banned by the government, in the capital to counter pro-offensive demonstrations sponsored by the Petrograd Soviet. The Bolshevik’s June 18th appeal to workers and soldiers to join the

protests included the slogans, “All Power to the Soviets,” and “Revise the ‘Declaration of Soldiers’ Rights.’”¹⁰⁴ While including the radical call for Soviet power, the Bolsheviks’ also appealed to a fundamental desire of soldiers, the preservation of their newfound voice in the face of restored authority in preparation for the offensive. Liberal publications lashed out against the Bolsheviks, accusing them of treason, working with German spies, and calling their demonstrations “dull and perfunctory.”¹⁰⁵ However, the Bolsheviks did not have to do much to garner support from soldiers, as they were the only party actively opposing those who were “impelling them toward what they could only perceive as senseless slaughter.”¹⁰⁶

Kerensky’s Offensive: The Last Straw

The Seventh, Eighth, and Eleventh armies lay in wait on the Russian lines of the Southwestern front, extending from the Western front south to the Romanian front.¹⁰⁷ Their objective was to push through Galicia to capture Lvov, pushing back the Southern German Armies and the Austrian Second, Third, and Fourth Armies.¹⁰⁸ Russian artillery outgunned the Austro-German forces two-to-one due to the arrival of allied military aid, and carefully-selected volunteer shock units were made to head the charge.¹⁰⁹ On the 16th of June, the Russians bombarded the Austro-German lines between the Seventh and Eleventh armies in Galicia for two days in the largest Russian artillery barrage of the war.¹¹⁰ Then, on the 18th of June, Kerensky, who had been touring regiments on the front rallying them to advance, writes, “It was zero hour. For a second we were gripped by a terrible fear that the soldiers might refuse to fight. Then we saw the first lines of infantry, with their rifles at the ready, charging toward the front lines of German trenches.”¹¹¹

The Russian army smashed through enemy lines on the 18th and 19th of June. The Austro-German forces were pushed back an average of over two miles along the Southwestern front, and the Russians had “captured several fortified villages, 29 guns, 300 officers, and 18,000 men.”¹¹² The victories of June 18th and 19th were hailed across the country, but the offensive was halted the next day. Units settled into Austrian trenches, refusing to attack unless more artillery cleared the way, flanks were opened up by mass desertions, and captured towns were looted of liquor caches.¹¹³ A battalion set to replace Kal’nitskii’s 35th division of the Eleventh Army refused to budge with two other regiments in their division following suit.¹¹⁴ Significant amounts of troops in the rear sectors refused to support the front in its most dire times of need, demanding further artillery support or express orders from the Petrograd Soviet.¹¹⁵ Shock units and “death battalions,” created to bolster the loyalty and morale of the troops, had been killed off and only “attracted bitterness from the units who refused to fight or retreated in disorder.”¹¹⁶ Even divisions who had the most success in breaking through enemy lines had still suffered massive casualties and demanded immediate replacement.¹¹⁷

Halts in the advancement of the troops were blamed on Bolshevik agitation, but a pattern of regiments completely shutting down with little to no Bolshevik influence emerged. The XXII Corps had made significant advances and were crucial to the push on the town of Brzezany, but were promptly pushed back, and according to General Obruchev, “... not only willfully deserted the trenches in the night of June 19, but ridiculed those soldiers who remained in the trenches.”¹¹⁸ The I Guard Corps, who had assured commissar Stankevich that they would follow “all legitimate orders of the Provisional Government,” refused to move to their assigned positions.¹¹⁹ The Eighth Army, under General Kornilov, which a command report from June 23rd

states was the host of severe Bolshevnik agitation, was the most successful of the armies attacking on the Southwestern front.¹²⁰

The Southwestern front was an absolute failure, wrought with general disorder, massive losses, and paralyzed regiments. General Selivachev reported on June 30th, “All corps of the army after the unsuccessful battles of June 18-20 are in the highest degree demoralized. The consistent flouting of battle orders, unauthorized departures from positions, and refusals to replace other units on the line have become an everyday occurrence. The work of committees of all denominations yields no results.”¹²¹ The secondary attacks on the Northern and Western fronts were likewise doomed to failure, with every army, division, regiment, and battalion suffering similar fates.

A reconnaissance attack of the Russian Tenth Army lost 12,200 men on a single day, with its divisions losing more than half of their troops.¹²² The Second Army’s commander gave a stark report, claiming that “not a single unit in his army was reliable, while the commander of the Third Army reported that one of his corps could only be relied on for defense.”¹²³ The 28th Division, reported to be in relatively good order, utterly collapsed upon combat.¹²⁴ An officer of the Western Front Command Staff sent a report to the Supreme High command Staff describing soldiers of the 1st Siberian Corps, the 62nd Siberian Regiment, half of the 63rd Siberian Regiment, and men of the 3rd Regiment refusing to advance.¹²⁵ Perhaps the most disheartening symptom of collapse was the mutiny of the 703rd regiment, who had directed their anger at leaders of the Petrograd Soviet, beating members of the Executive Committee who had been sent to persuade unruly units, including the author of Order No. 1, N.D. Sokolov.¹²⁶ General Denikin, unable to control the soldiers, reassigned them to the rear, recounting, “depriving myself at one stroke without a shot being fired of 30,000 troops.”¹²⁷

Though Bolshevik agitation appears not to be a factor in the collapse of the offensive, Bolshevik activity among the attacking armies was not entirely the hyperbolic projection of the command staff. Closer to the center of revolutionary activity, Petrograd, the soldiers of the Northern and Western front armies were more exposed to Bolshevik agitation and presented radical behavior. The 436th Novoladozhskii Regiment, who published *Okopnaia Pravda*, the Bolshevik front newspaper, had influenced the XXXVII Corps, and the 135th Division was under constant agitation by soldiers from Kronstadt.¹²⁸ The 436th Regiment joined Latvian and Estonian peasants in plundering German estates, and the 135th Division had killed General P. A. Noskov during a riot over their transfer to the front.¹²⁹

As an unprecedented level of mutinies, desertions, and disorders proliferated through the front, and a complete and decentralized rout began. Units met independently and decided upon retreat, passing resolutions against the offensive and refusing orders to reinforce futile positions in the wake of Austro-German counterattacks. The “Death Battalion” of the Eleventh army captured 12,000 deserters near the city of Volochisk in a single night.¹³⁰ However, without disciplinary measures owing to the legacy of Order No. 1, there was little punishment for these men. Large swaths of the Russian army were reduced to roving, unorganized bands of men retreating eastward. The Southwestern Front Committee addressed the war ministry, the Soviet Central Executive Committee, the Peasant’s Soviet, and the Commander in Chief with a harrowing report, “There is no longer a trace of authority and obedience to command... For hundreds of miles the soldiers stream to the rear, with weapons and without. Knowing there is no risk of punishment, they flee without shame, sometimes by entire units.”¹³¹

The Russian army had experienced the revolutionary organs of power that gave them their voice, committees, congresses, the soviets, all used to send them to certain death in the

trenches. The brief respite from generations of social grievances had opened and closed in the blink of an eye. They had experienced those revolutionary organs of power used to repress them and begin to restore the authority that their resentment of toppled the Tsar. They had been sent deep into enemy territory on a war to protect a revolution that promised “peace without annexation or indemnities,” to kill the Austro-German proletariat that those in the Petrograd Soviet called their brothers. The June Offensive had collapsed, and with it the notions of the February Revolution that inspired them to stay in the trenches, and through all this only the most radical political party, the Bolsheviks, accurately articulated and catered to their sentiment. As contemporary historian Igor Grebenkin saliently states, “The destruction of the traditional foundations of military life was replaced by the destruction of the organizational unity of the army...”¹³²

The Last Gasp of Authority and the Call for Soviet Power

On July 2nd, the First Coalition Government collapsed, sparked by tensions between the liberals and the moderate socialists over Viktor Chernov’s land directives and the issue of Ukrainian autonomy. The Kadets resigned in protest of the Coalition Government’s publishing of an agreement to grant the Ukrainian Rada independent administrative authority. The next day, armed protests erupted in the streets of Petrograd, owing to soldiers’ disillusionment from and hostility to the June Offensive coupled with the growing grievances of urban workers. Soldiers of the Petrograd garrison and other urban centers were particularly set off by instructions to disband and remove units that had refused to join the June Offensive. Soldiers of the 1st Machine Gun Regiment planned armed protests, electing a Provisional Revolutionary Committee to recruit other army units to join the demonstrations.¹³³ Working with active Bolshevik and

anarchist elements, even including sailors from the Kronstadt naval base, the protests swelled with armed soldiers and workers into the tens of thousands. The protests took on a darker tone than that of February, with armed clashes, looting, leaving up to four hundred dead. The demonstrators demanded power be transferred to the Petrograd Soviet, among calls for an end to the war. In the midst of the chaos, the Bolsheviks refused to take command of the protests, and the Petrograd Soviet moved to denounce the demonstrations as a Bolshevik uprising, deeming them counter revolutionary.

With the shock of the disintegration of the army and the armed protests, the likes of which had not been seen since February, the government set out on a war path against the Bolsheviks. After quelling the unrest of the demonstrations, the Provisional Government published documents alleging that the Bolsheviks were receiving money from Germany, and that Lenin was in fact a German spy.¹³⁴ The Provisional Government raided and shut down the editorial offices of *Pravda*, as well as the party headquarters. Bolshevik leaders were captured and arrested en masse, forcing Lenin to go into hiding in Finland. In solidarity with the Kadets, Prime Minister Lvov too stepped down following the collapse of the Coalition Government, recommending Kerensky in his place, “In order to save the country, it is now necessary to shut down the Soviet and shoot at the people. I cannot do that. Kerensky can.”¹³⁵

In parallel to the crackdown in the rear, Kerensky, as prime minister, followed suit on the front in attempt to contain the complete collapse of the military ranks brought on by the June Offensive. A report drafted by commissars under General Kornilov, now commander of all three armies of the Southwestern front, was sent to Kerensky on the 9th of July. The report detailed the German counterattack on the Eleventh Army that began on July 6th, informing Kerensky of the “fatal crisis” of the morale of the troops of the June Offensive.¹³⁶ “For a distance of several

hundred versts long files of deserters... who have lost all shame and feel that they can act altogether with impunity, are proceeding to the rear of the army.”¹³⁷ Kornilov had issued a July 8th order authorizing command personnel to fire on deserters, and had been pressuring Kerensky to implement strict disciplinary measures, threatening to resign. Kerensky promptly replied with an order to the army and navy, “that military discipline be restored, implementing the full force of revolutionary power, including recourse to force of arms.”¹³⁸ The order also granted the authority “to shoot without trial all those who rob, use force on, to kill peaceful citizens, and all those who refuse to carry out military orders,” as well as instituting military censorship.¹³⁹ The order solidified the disillusionment with the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet, as long as it participated in the Provisional Government, among many soldiers.

Fully committed to the agenda of restoring firm civil and military authority, Kerensky replaced General Brusilov with General Kornilov as supreme commander of the Russian military, owing to his relative fame and hardline stance on the crisis of mass disorder, mutiny, and desertion among the ranks. The chaos of the June Offensive had radicalized the right as much as it had radicalized the common soldier. Kornilov, along with members of the command staff and officer organizations, came to believe he could salvage the Russian state from utter ruin at the hands of reckless left-socialists, and that the Provisional Government had grown impotent and incompetent. As the supreme commander, Kornilov came to represent the last hope of the right against the onslaught of revolutionary chaos, enjoying widespread support among officers for his military reforms.

After the Moscow State Conference, in which Kornilov clamored for order to the applause of conservatives, tensions broke out between him and Kerensky over mutual distrust. On the 27th of August, Kornilov’s mutiny fell through as he overestimated his support from the

army, who were broken by the June Offensive. Though many officers supported Kornilov, they supported his image and his policy for a stronger government and military but failed to mobilize their support into counterrevolutionary action when the time came. Matthew Rendle characterizes the officer corps as a highly heterogenous social group that is unfairly marginalized to being studied solely in tandem with the Kornilov Affair.

The high command of the army lost its legitimacy in one fell swoop. The Petrograd Soviet had appealed to the Bolsheviks for aid, who raised 25,000 Bolshevik “Red Guard” armed workers, who “defended” the capital from the long-awaited counter-revolutionary thrust.¹⁴⁰ With the threat from the far right vanquished, the far left was emboldened, energized, and legitimized into a viable oppositional force capable of challenging the frail Provisional Government.

The Kornilov Affair marked a massive shift to the left in popular politics. In August and September of 1917, all left socialist parties made massive gains in elections to the soviets, and by October the left socialists boasted majorities in every single major soviet. In the Petrograd city дума, the 20th of August elections saw the Bolsheviks win 33.5 percent of the vote.¹⁴¹ In September 19th elections to the Moscow Soviet, electing majority Bolshevik executive committees and a new presidium, while gaining a majority in the Moscow city дума.¹⁴² Elections to other mass organizations and political organs followed suit. As Kerensky was forming the third coalition government, many had come to associate the Kadets with Kornilov’s counterrevolution, the war, and political inaction. The Soviet’s authority increased, the Bolsheviks’ influence grew, the disintegration of the army further intensified, and the peasant revolution in the countryside reached crisis levels. The third coalition government was practically powerless, committed to limited action until the Constituent assembly, while socialists actively discussed forming an all-socialist government that would exclude propertied

elements. At the Second Congress of Soviets on the 25th of October, the Bolsheviks made up 300 of the 570 delegates, and together with the left socialist revolutionaries formed a majority.¹⁴³ As the Red Guards seized control of strategic points and besieged the Winter Palace, the Second Congress convened. As they debated bourgeois inclusion in the new all-socialist government, the October Revolution was well underway. Amid massive food and supply shortages to cities and the front, as well as the looming prospect of widespread starvation in the countryside, the Bolshevik's seizure of power appeared to some to be a path to salvation. To conservatives and liberals, it was the final push over the edge into the depths of anarchy and civil war. The prime beneficiaries of the chaos and disorder of the February Revolution and the utter ruin of the June Offensive were the very perpetrators of the October Revolution.

Conclusion

Heenan characterizes the June Offensive as the central event of the Russian Revolution and as the “straw that broke the camel’s back” of Russian democracy. She also characterizes the decision-making behind the offensive as foolish, if not outright suicidal. However, the hubris and ignorance of the June Offensive is easier to identify in hindsight. Kerensky’s reasoning behind the offensive was relatively sound. Without leverage, appeasing popular demands for peace would mean granting damning annexations and indemnities and violating the rights of the Russian people to self-determination. Though the offensive explicitly appeared to violate the philosophy of revolutionary defensism on the surface, the possible leverage in a peace negotiation from a military success of such scale would preserve the policy as a viable course of action by preserving territorial integrity. Kerensky was fending off a violent conquest by an imperial power to protect revolutionary Russia as well as striking at Bolshevik influence, who

were widely held as German agents of sorts. A successful offensive would also mean a substantial increase in foreign military and civilian aid if the Russian army were to show promise on the battlefield. However, this reasoning is simply not reconcilable with the state of the Russian army at the time and the amount of anti-war sentiment and war weariness among the Russian army and population. If anything, it was a shot in the dark in hopes of achieving the impossible. Heenan correctly characterizes the offensive as a fatal gamble. Wildman characterizes the June Offensive as an episode in the long process of the disintegration of the Russian Army going back to the Great Reforms. He does not define it as a central event in the revolution, as his study is a massive work spanning decades of the Russian Imperial Army, but he does attribute the utter ruin of the army to the scale and style of destruction brought by the June Offensive. He makes sure to give due attention to the June Offensive's small and sporadic successes but does not shy away from its sheer collapse. His study provides nuance where Heenan's provides a one-dimensional argument, but the findings of this essay would give more credence to the centrality of the June Offensive argued by Heenan.

The officer corps presents a conundrum in studying the June Offensive. Though they were increasingly of non-noble origins from the Great Reforms to the massive casualty rate of officers in World War I, the image of the counterrevolutionary officer persisted and even strengthened in late 1917. Several explanations arise, such as the downward pressure from senior officers and command staff and the formation of the "committee class" as Wildman describes. However, though this appears to be a lackluster argument, the study of the officer corps is an exceedingly understudied field of scholarship on the Russian Revolution. Matthew Rendle and Igor Grebenkin, contemporary historians on the Russian Revolution, are providing invaluable studies on the officer corps and giving nuance and depth to a field that was once exclusively

pegged to the study of the Kornilov Affair. Matthew Rendle argues that the officer corps were not inherently counterrevolutionary and that their professional interests transcended political positions. Grebenkin delves deeper into military tradition and the transition from serving the revolutionary government to operating under Soviet government and in civil war.

The Russian Army served as a microcosm of Russian society at large, bereft with long standing social grievances, suppressed aspirations, and deteriorating conditions. The February Revolution transformed the Russian Imperial Army from a caste system in personal service to the Tsar into a radical experiment in revolutionary democracy overnight with the issue of Order No. 1, just as it had done to Russian society with the advent of “dual power.” The shock wave sent through the army spurred soldiers to organize politically and wrest power from the officers and command staff, who they correctly perceived as vestigial organs of the autocracy, in one fell swoop, if only for a short while. However, the Provisional Government embarked on a process of converting the committees, commissars, and deputies into organs of control and authority in preparation for the coming June Offensive. The hopeful consensus of early 1917, support for the war and the Provisional Government in exchange for democratization, had begun to erode. Given democratization, the soldiers were to have it slowly stripped from them and their voices were to be duly ignored as they were thrown into certain death in the conquest of enemy territory, but without annexations or indemnities, in an offensive born of “revolutionary defensism.” Alienated from the liberals and moderate socialists of the Provisional Government on the issue of war aims, due to Miliukov’s note, and denied their rights ordained in Order No. 1, the soldiers returned from the disastrous offensive as roving bands of broken men longing for peace. Meanwhile the Offensive had elevated General Kornilov to power and given the 1st Machine Gun Regiment the alienation it needed to arrest the nation in the July Days. The June Offensive was the final

threshold before the political center was thoroughly hollowed out, intensifying social and political polarization and radicalizing both left and right, ultimately leading to the collapse of revolutionary government and sewing the seeds for the Bolshevik takeover in the October Revolution.

Notes

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- ² Wildman, Allan K. 1980. *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press., xv.
- ³ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, xv.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 3-4.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-7.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, xvi.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 15.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ¹⁴ Rendle, Matthew. 2010. *Defenders of the Motherland: The Tsarist Elite in Revolutionary Russia*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 9.
- ¹⁵ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 8-9.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ¹⁹ Hickey, and Hickey, Michael C. 2011. *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood., 7-8.
- ²⁰ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 44.
- ²¹ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 62.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ Rendle, *Defenders of the Motherland*, 12.
- ²⁴ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 3.
- ²⁵ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 82.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.
- ²⁸ Hickey, 37.
- ²⁹ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 78.
- ³⁰ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 46.
- ³¹ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 78.
- ³² Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 57.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.
- ³⁶ Keep, John L. H. *The Russian Revolution: A Study in Mass Mobilization*. 1st ed. *Revolutions in the Modern World* (New York, N.Y.). New York: Norton, 1976., 28.
- ³⁷ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 115.

- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 116.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 117-118.
- ⁴² Peter Kenez. "Changes in the Social Composition of the Officer Corps during World War I." *The Russian Review (Stanford)* 31, no. 4 (1972): 369-75., 369.
- ⁴³ Kenez, "Changes in the Social Composition of the Officer Corps during World War I," 373-374.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 374.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 374.
- ⁴⁶ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 187-188.
- ⁴⁷ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 76.
- ⁴⁸ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 247.
- ⁴⁹ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 80.
- ⁵⁰ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 119.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 122.
- ⁵² Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution: 1917*, 108.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 109.
- ⁵⁴ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 123.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 247.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 226.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 199.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 194.
- ⁶⁰ Igor Grebenkin, "Revolution and Counterrevolution," 214.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 224-225
- ⁶² Steinberg, Mark D. 2001. *Voices of Revolution: 1917*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press., 119.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 248.
- ⁶⁵ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 125.
- ⁶⁶ Grebenkin, "Revolution and Counterrevolution," 213.
- ⁶⁷ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 184.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 187.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 182-183.
- ⁷⁰ Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution: 1917*, 118.
- ⁷¹ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 336.
- ⁷² Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 126.
- ⁷³ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 184-186.
- ⁷⁴ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 35.
- ⁷⁵ Miliukov, vol. 1, 73.
- ⁷⁶ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 190-191.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 77.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 189-190.
- ⁷⁹ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 189.

- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 189.
- ⁸¹ Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution: 1917*, 119.
- ⁸² Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 38.
- ⁸³ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 110-11
- ⁸⁴ Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution: 1917*, 124.
- ⁸⁵ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 129.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 16.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 17.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 17-18.
- ⁸⁹ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 230-231
- ⁹⁰ Wildman, Allan K. 1987. *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*. Volume II. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, xiii-xiv.
- ⁹¹ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 228.
- ⁹² Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 51.
- ⁹³ Ibid., 236.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 237.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 237-238.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 239.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid., 242-243
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 243.
- ⁹⁹ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, xiv.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., 73.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 234.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 244.
- ¹⁰⁶ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, 111.
- ¹⁰⁷ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 109.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 74, 111.
- ¹¹⁰ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, 89.
- ¹¹¹ Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 111.
- ¹¹² Ibid., 111.
- ¹¹³ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, 91-92.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid., 92.
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid., 92-93.
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- ¹¹⁷ Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, 93.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid., 94.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., 95.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid., 98.
- ¹²¹ Ibid., 93.

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- 123 Ibid., 119.
- 124 Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, 110.
- 125 Hickey, *Competing Voices from the Russian Revolution*, 248.
- 126 Heenan, *Russian Democracy's Fatal Blunder*, 119.
- 127 Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, 106.
- 128 Ibid., 101.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 Heenan, 121.
- 131 Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army. The Road to Soviet Power and Peace*, 119-120.
- 132 Grebenkin, "The Disintegration of the Russian Army in 1917," 185.
- 133 Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution: 1917*, 151.
- 134 Walter G moss *History of Russia* 195.
- 135 Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution: 1917*, 156.
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