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THE RUSSIAN MODERATE PARTIES

IN THE FOURTH STATE DUMA

1912 - February 1917

Raymond Pearson

Thesis submitted to the University of Durham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
September 1972

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The Russian political parties commonly regarded by contemporaries as the 'moderates' (the Kadets, Oktobrists and Progressists) together comprised the fulcrum of the Fourth State Duma. By exploiting their pivotal position between the extremes of Right and Left, and drawing upon their exceptional professional experience and parliamentary expertise, the moderates in large measure determined the policies and actions of the Duma over the five years preceding the fall of tsardom. Despite the closeness of their basic interests in the face of estrangement from the nation, the hostility of the tsarist government and the developing revolutionary situation, party politics were never more vicious or obsessive. Over the period 1912-1917 the Kadet party led by Paul Milyukov cynically exploited the fortuitous collapse of its traditional Oktobrist rival and successfully resisted the challenge of the new Progressist group to emerge as the dominant authority within the Duma. However the Kadet parliamentary triumph proved hollow in the broader context. On being confronted by the mounting challenges of peacetime, wartime and finally revolution, the Duma moderates at each stage more clearly demonstrated their failings and limitations. The greater the crisis, the more selfish were their tactics ; the greater the danger, the closer their association with the tsarist establishment. On the collapse of tsardom in February 1917, the Duma moderates received the legacy of power not through their proven abilities but from the total absence of effective competition. The fate of the Provisional Government, the moderates in power, was predetermined by their performance over the five years of the last State Duma.

PRELIMINARIES

No part of the material offered in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree at Durham or any other university.

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My acknowledgements must go to the supervisors of my research, Professor W.V.Wallace, now of the New University of Ulster, and Professor E.D.Chermensky of Moscow State University. My thanks are also owing to the British Council for making possible an academic year's study in the Soviet Union.

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The transliteration system employed is that of The Slavonic and East European Review, with two exceptions :

When the SEER system differs from that of a source, the SEER system is employed in the text and the original system reserved for quotations, references and the Bibliography ;

The usage Nicholas and Alexandra is preferred to Nikolai and Aleksandra in referring to the Tsar and Tsaritsa, partly from deference to increasing popular usage, partly to differentiate them conveniently from other leading personages.

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Unless specifically stated otherwise, all dates cited are Old Style.

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SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

ALEXANDRA	The Letters of the Tsaritsa to the Tsar 1914-16, Intro. Bernard Pares, London 1923.
ARR	Arkhiv Russkoy Revolyutsii, Edieted I.V.Gessen, 22 volumes, Berlin 1922-6.
ASEER	The American Slavic and East European Review (renamed the Slavic Review in 1962).
BROWKER	Paul Browder and Alexander F. Kerensky, The Russian Provisional Government 1917, 3 vols, Stanford U.P. 1961.
BUCHANAN	Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia and other Diplomatic Memories, 2 vols, London 1923.
CHERMENSKY	Yevgenii D. Chermensky, Bor'ba Klassov i Partiii v Chetvertom Gosudarstvennom Dume, unpublished Ph.D thesis, Moscow State University 1947.
CHERNOV	Viktor M. Chernov, The Great Russian Revolution, Translated and abridged Philip E. Mosely, Yale U.P. 1936.
DYAKIN	Valentin S. Dyakin, Russkaya Burzhuazia i tsarism v gody pervoy mirovoy voiny, 1914-1917, Leningrad 1967.
GDSO	Gosudarstvennaya Duma : Stenograficheskie Otchety. Unless specifically stated, all reports refer to the Fourth Duma.
GDSO:UKAZATEL'	Index to Duma stenographic reports, published at the end of each parliamentary session.
ENGEL'HARDT	Memoirs of Boris A. Engel'hardt : Rukopisnii Otdel Biblioteki imeni V.I.Lenina, fond 218, OP 305-6, pp.276-730.
GRAVE	Betta B. Grave, Burzhuazia nakanune Fevral'skoy Revolyutsii, Moscow 1927.
GURKO	Vladimir I. Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past : Government and Opinion in the Reign of Nicholas II, Edit. H.H.Fisher, London 1958.
KA	Krasnii Arkhiv, 105 vols, Moscow 1922-1941.
KATKOV	George Katkov, Russia 1917 : The February Revolution, London 1967.
KERENSKY	Alexander F.Kerensky, The Kerensky Memoirs : Russia and History's Turning-Point, London 1966.
KLYUZHEV	Archive Fond of Ivan S. Klyuzhev : TsGIAL, f.669.

KOKOVTSOV — Vladimir N. Kokovtsov, Out of My Past : Memoirs, Edit. H.H. Fisher, Stanford U.P. 1935.

LAVERYCHEV — Vladimir Ya. Laverychev, Po Tu Storonu Barrikad : iz istorii bor'by moskovskoy burzhuazii s revolyutsei, Moscow 1967.

MILIUKOV — Pavel N. Miliukov, Political Memoirs 1905-1917, Edit. A.P. Mendel, Michigan U.P. 1967.

MPK — Monarkhia Pered Krusheniem, Edit. V.P. Semennikov, Moscow 1927.

NICHOLAS — The Letters of the Tsar to the Tsaritsa, 1914-1917, Edit. C.E. Vulliamy, London 1929.

PADENIE — Padenie Tsarskogo Rezhima : Report of the Special Investigatory Commission of the Provisional Government, Edit. P.E. Shchegolev, 7 vols, Moscow 1924-7.

PALEOLOGUE — Maurice Paléologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs, 3 vols, London 1923-5

PARES — Bernard Pares, The Fall of the Russian Monarchy, New York 1939, republished in Vintage Books 1961.

POLICE — Records of the tsarist Police Department : TsGAOR, f.102.

RODZYANKO — Mikhail V. Rodzyanko, Krushenie Imperii, Leningrad 1926.

SEER — The Slavonic and East European Review.

SHUL'GIN — Vasilii V. Shul'gin, Dni, Belgrade 1925.

TAKTIKI — Otchyot Partii Narodnoy Svobody : Taktiki Fraktsii. Three consecutive annual instalments : 1912-13, 1913-14 and 1914-15.

TROTSKY — Leon Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, Translated Max Eastman, London 1965.

TsGAOR — Tsentral'nii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Oktyabr'skoe Revolyutsii (Central State Archive of the October Revolution, at Moscow).

TsGIAL — Tsentral'nii Gosudarstvennii Istoricheskii Arkhiv v Leningrade (Central State Historical Archive, at Leningrad).

UNPUBLISHED ARCHIVAL SOURCES

The unpublished primary sources which proved most valuable in the course of my researches in the Soviet archives (December 1966 to July 1967) are most conveniently divided into four basic categories :

Records of State Institutions. The complete file of the 'Chancellry of the Council of Ministers for State Duma Affairs' from July 1914 to February 1917 (TsGIAL, fond 1276, opis' 10, delo 7, pp.1-478) provides an almost comprehensive documentation of the government's relations with the wartime Duma. Though only a record of official decisions and communications, not the minutes of ministerial discussions about the Duma, this file is fundamental to the topic, particularly since the 'Chancellery of the State Duma' (TsGIAL, f.1278) unhappily provides no such complete and well-ordered document run from the Duma side.

Personal Testimonies. These are scattered without readily discernible scheme of arrangement throughout TsGAOR, TsGIAL and the Lenin Library Manuscript Department. The personal fondy are of very uneven size and quality, and very much a lucky dip as regards historical value. The most useful proved to be, on the government side, the Stürmer fond (TsGAOR, f.627) and, on the Duma side, the fondy of the party leaders Milyukov, Guchkov and Rodzyanko (TsGAOR, f.579, 555 and 605) and the detailed parliamentary diaries of the Duma veteran Klyuzhev (TsGIAL, f.669) and the Duma newcomer Engel'hardt (Lenin Library Manuscript Department, f.218).

Party Documents. While providing a greater insight into the moderate party fractions than the published stenographic minutes of the Duma sittings and commissions, the party documents proved less enlightening than might have been expected. Oktobrist records are generally the most ordered and businesslike but come to an abrupt stop in January 1914 (Oktobrist Fraction : TsGAOR, f.125). Kadet records are the most irregular and evasive. Only the most formal occasions were completely minuted, for example the VI Kadet PartyCongress in February 1916 (TsGAOR, f.523, opis' 3, delo 5, pp.1-147). All other meetings, even important party conferences, were either very indifferently recorded or indeed passed without written record : Kadet Fraction (TsGAOR, f.125) and Kadet Party (TsGAOR, f,523). Few Progressist records proved available, the Archive staff assuring me that the paucity of documentation did not even justify a seperate fond for the Progressist Party.

Police Department Records. Where party documentation proved disappointing overall, the deficiency was amply compensated by the ordered and meticulous files of the tsarist Police Department (TsGAOR, f.102). The police records provide a chronologically complete account of Duma activity frequently at variance to that offered by party sources. Chernov affected to find the police reports 'in general extremely one-sided' but they constitute a vital corrective to the bland propaganda of the political parties. (1) With its reporters legally entitled to attend all party gatherings, its undercover agents infiltrated into all parties, with the backing of a nationwide organisation and the ample funds of the Ministry of Interior, the Police Department performed the function of political intelligence bureau

very competently. With the confidentiality of their opinions and identities guaranteed, the police informants covering the Duma moderates appear to have been both sober and shrewd, free from the sensationalism of the agents covering the revolutionary and proletarian movements, who were tempted to maintain a note of emergency to justify their continued employment.

The political judgement of the Police Department was reflected in the balance of its parliamentary coverage : dividing its attention equally between the Kadets and Oktobrists until early 1914, the Department thereafter concentrated on the Kadets, allowing the Oktobrists and Progressists together to lapse into a subsidiary interest. The most valuable police files proved to be the 'General Duma reports' (TsGAOR,f.102,delo 307/A) submitted by the Department's regular team of lobby correspondents, and the 'Party reports' (TsGAOR,f.102,delo 27) submitted by the individual undercover agents within each party. The latter file was further divided by province and major town : the most useful for the topic were predicatably the Petersburg (delo 27/57) and Moscow (delo 27/46) divisions.

While each of the four categories of archival source suffers serious limitations and even distortions, the weakness of one source was usually compensated by the strengths of another. Though individually suspect, the composite effect of these sources, especially when integrated with the very considerable volume of published material, was to provide a rounded and balanced coverage of the politics of the Duma moderate parties from 1912 to 1917.

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1 CHERNOV 448.

THE RUSSIAN MODERATE PARTIES
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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1. The emergence of the 'Moderates'

The most persistent feature of the Russian political tradition in the nineteenth century was the concept of inescapable confrontation between the forces of Taardom and Revolution, which could only be resolved by the complete victory of the one and the utter liquidation of the other. The very first years of the twentieth century however seemed to admit a new and promising political option. The most permanent impact of the train of events which came to be dubbed the 1905 Revolution was made by the Tsar Nicholas II's manifesto of 17 October which promised Russia for the first time a representative national assembly with full legislative authority. A constitutional 'Third Course' emerged to challenge and (many hoped) to supersede the sterile and wasteful earlier pattern of political development.

The month of October 1905 witnessed not only the concession of the October Manifesto but the formal establishment of the Constitutional-Democratic (or Kadet) Party and the Union of 17 October (commonly known as the Oktobrists).[1] Although the positions and programmes of the two parties were very different at their foundations in the heightened revolutionary atmosphere of late 1905, the parliamentary experience of the next five years was to have the effect of drawing the Kadets and Oktobrists significantly closer together. The most potent factor influencing their changing political positions was the recovery of the tsarist government from the trauma of 1905, expressing itself in the first instance in a campaign to minimise the concessions extracted under revolutionary duress and subsequently in an offensive against the most permanent of the

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1 E.E.Chermensky, Burzhuazia i Tsarism v Pervoy Russkoy Revolyutsii, Moscow 1970, pp.158-174 & 197-201 ; G.Aronson, Rossia nakanune Revolyutsii, New York 1962, p.163.

products of the October Manifesto, the State Duma.

While 1905 appeared to offer real hope to reformers, the future pattern of Russian political life was effectively decided in the contests of the next year. Political initiative started to flow back to the govern--ment from the very first days of 1906. The new Fundamental Laws published in April constituted a catalogue of legalistic devices by which Duma authority and initiative were to be proscribed, a transparent attempt to revert as closely to the pre-revolutionary situation as the circumstances of 1906 and the Imperial promise would permit.[2] This first unequivocal indication of the government's future technique of keeping to the letter of the October Manifesto while cynically disregarding its spirit was confirmed by the short career of the first Duma : the sanguinely-labelled 'Duma of the People's Hopes' was suffered to run a mere seventy-two days before an impasse in its relations with the government occasioned summary dissolution.[3]

As the numerically dominant 'fraction' in the First Duma, the Kadets bore the prime responsibility for conducting the defensive campaign to safeguard the gains of 1905.[4] Their only recourse was to attempt to rally all available areas of support against the government revanche but none proved capable of stemming the deterioration in the position of the Duma. The possibility of harnessing sympathetic foreign resources to the Duma cause recommended itself but the enormous loan from Western Europe secured by the tsarist government in April 1906 both provided the Tsar with

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2 B.Dmytryshyn(Ed.),Imperial Russia : a source book 1700-1917,New York 1967,pp.317-324 ; also L.Schultz,'Constitutional Law in Russia' in Russia Enters the Twentieth Century,Ed.G.Katkov,London 1971,pp.44-7.

3 V.A.Maklakov,The First State Duma,Indiana U.P. 1964,p.14.

4 Party groupings within the Duma were termed 'fractions' ; 179 of the total 478 First Duma deputies were Kadets : P.N.Miliukov,Political Memoirs 1905-1917,Ed.A.P.Mendel,Michigan U.P. 1967 (cited hereafter as MILIUKOV),p.96 ; also A.Tyrkova-Williams,'The Cadet Party',Russian Review,vol.12,no.3,1953,p.179.

interim financial independence of the Duma and demonstrated convincingly that international politics and high finance took instant priority over the most sincere French and British concern for Russian constitutionalism.[5] Talk of the formation of a coalition cabinet drawing upon both government and Duma personnel briefly raised hopes in May and June of 1906 but the intractability of the Kadet leader Pavel Milyukov (still determined to adhere to the principles of 1905 in greatly reduced circumstances) and the accelerating self-assurance of the government combined to bring the tentative negotiations to naught.[6]

The final Kadet failure was the most traumatic of all. The classic resource available to the Duma was the active support of the nation ; the critical force which had secured the 1905 victory could always be summoned to defend its gains. But the political weapon brandished so confidently by the first Duma leaders to browbeat the government proved by mid 1906 to be nothing but ineffectual bluff. The truth of the Duma's loss of contact with the nation and inability to command nationwide revolution at a moment's notice could not have been displayed more cruelly. The Vyborg Appeal calling for a mass demonstration of national solidarity with its representatives in the Duma echoed hollowly in the ears of its embarrassed authors, a political fiasco from which the morale of the Kadets was never completely to recover.[7] From their experience of 1906,a premature test of

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5 O.Crisp,'The Russian Liberals and the 1906 Anglo-French Loan to Russia', Slavonic and East European Review (cited hereafter as SEER),vol.39,no. 93,June 1961,pp.497-511 ; also T.Riha,A Russian European : Paul Miliukov in Russian Politics,Notre Dame U.P. 1969,pp.114-5.

6 Maklakov,The First State Duma,pp.184-204 ; MILIUKOV 108-116 ; also R.L.Tuck,'Paul Miliukov and the negotiations for a Duma Ministry 1906', American Slavic and East European Review (cited hereafter as ASEER), vol.10,no.2,1951,pp.117-129.

7 Maklakov,The First State Duma,pp.218-232 ; V.N.Kokovtsov,Out of My Past : Memoirs,Ed.H.H.Fisher,Stanford U.P. 1935 (cited hereafter as KOKOVTSOV),p.155 ; also P.Enticott,The Rise of the Constitutional-Democratic Party in Russia 1904-6,unpublished M.Phil. thesis,London 1968,pp.298-307.

their political skills, the Kadets emerged with nothing but an aura of ineffectual martyrdom. In immediate terms, the government's prosecution of the signatories of the Vyborg Appeal hit the Kadet party very hard, contributing to its greatly reduced representation in subsequent Dumas ; in the long term, the lessons of 1906 were to remain with the Kadets to the end of their political days.[8]

To the Union of 17 October, whose more modest ambitions had hitherto attracted less attention and less support than the Kadets, the events of 1906 confirmed its belief in the necessity of compromise and collaboration with the government. In an interview given to Novoe Vremya on 27 August 1906, the Oktobrist leader Aleksandr Guchkov expressed his party's complete support for the actions of the government (headed since the previous month by Stolypin) and tacitly approved both the field courts-martial instituted as a counter-revolutionary measure and the controversial dissolution of the Duma. A small group on the Oktobrist Left wing led by Dmitrii Shipov declared itself unable to support Guchkov's policy of 'blank cheque' support for the government and quit the Oktobrists to form the independent 'Party of Peaceful Renewal'. [9] However the Oktobrist majority, seeing in the Duma dissolution and Kadet failure the collapse of the only viable alternative, quickly reconciled itself to the political realism of the Guchkov line. [10]

The year 1907 served only to emphasize the bleak facts of the previous year. The career of the Second Duma demonstrated the humiliating ineffectiveness of 'the People's Wrath' while the confident

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8 MILIUKOV 145 ; also Riha, A Russian European, p.134 and L.Strakhovsky, 'The Statesmanship of Peter Stolypin', SEER, vol.37, no.89, p.352.

9 Chermensky, Burzhuazia i Tsarism, pp.330-334 and G.A.Hosking, Government and Duma in Russia, 1907-1914, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge 1970, pp.38-9.

10 MILIUKOV 139 & 158 ; A.F.Kerensky, The Kerensky Memoirs, London 1966 (cited hereafter as KERENSKY), p.95 ; Chermensky, Burzhuazia i Tsarism, pp.334-5.

unscrupulousness of the government over the Shornikova episode augured grimly for the future of Russian constitutionalism. The government was now sufficiently assured of its powers to effect the crucial counter-revolution : the new electoral laws of 3 June 1907 smashed for all time the representative rationale of the State Duma. In 1905 optimists had projected a government reformed by the Duma ; in 1907 the Duma was reformed to suit the government.[11] The tsarist system proved prepared to tolerate the tame Third Duma which opened in November 1907. With the revolutionary situation calmed and the extreme elements which had been so in evidence in the Second Duma filtered from the Third, even the Tsar was prepared to admit privately to Stolypin that 'this Duma cannot be reproached with an attempt to seize power and there is no need at all to quarrel with it'. As a harmless sop to Russian society and convenient window-dressing to West European allies, the Third Duma encountered a significant measure of toleration by the government, which found it more expedient to maintain the Duma than to provoke opposition by an unnecessary dissolution.[12]

Within the Third Duma, the three basic political courses were represented very differently : the Right-wing groups were present in considerable strength, resting content with their self-appointed rôle of watchdog of the autocracy ; the revolutionary Left was almost entirely excluded by the slanted June electoral laws ;the remaining political groups in the middle position found themselves in a particularly exposed and vulnerable situation. The first Kadet reaction, as voiced for example by Mikhail Chelnokov, was of total despair :

> Duma affairs are no cause for rejoicing : just sitting here we are betraying Russia and ourselves ; we are gradually getting lost in trifles, losing our perspective, forgetting everything, learning nothing and little by little changing into bureaucrats ... we are insulated from real life here,we are losing contact with the people,

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11 MILIUKOV 158-9 ; N.P.Yeroshkin,Istoria Gosudarstvennikh Uchrezhdenii Dorevolyutsionnoy Rossii,Moscow 1968,pp.270-1.

12 B.Pares,The Fall of the Russian Monarchy,New York 1939,republished in Vintage Books 1961(cited hereafter as PARES),p.109 ; KERENSKY 103.

> getting accustomed to living only in our imaginations, not having the opportunity to see or speak to our electorates. It is simply a wasting-away of brains and the exercise cannot continue much longer. (13)

Borne high by the flood of 1905, the Kadets now found themselves stranded and helpless, left high and dry by the rapid ebb of revolution. Morally bound by the now acutely embarrassing party programme which was largely the product of the heady revolutionary optimism of 1905, the Kadets were confronted by the stark political lessons of 1906 and 1907.[14]

Rather than martyr Russian democracy gloriously but uselessly, moderate apologists for the Third Duma were to find comfort in the historical patterns of Western Europe, which offered proof of successful constitutional development born of equally unpromising early circum--stances.[15] Isolated from external resource and patently at the mercy of the government, the Third Duma learned to pocket its pride and husband its all too meagre internal resources. With survival as first priority, careful self-interest replaced strident declarations of principle as the dominant feature. Some years later Milyukov was to remark of the Third Duma :

> The "heroic" age of its life was really at an end. Thenceforward the Duma was to live in obscurity. After a few months of meteoric splendour, there followed long years of a very modest existence... The Duma with its changed composition tried to adapt itself to its political environment. The new majority renounced bold schemes for the general reform of Russia and devoted themselves to the rather ungrateful task of self-preservation. (16)

Political sights were lowered to cover at most the implementation of the October Manifesto. While the reforming groups for shame retained the political programmes of the revolutionary period, their morale and tactics

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13 M.V.Chelnokov to Countess Uvarova, 29 October 1907 quoted in Istoria SSSR, 1965:2, p.213.

14 MILIUKOV 164 ; also F.J.Piotrow, Paul Milyukov and the Constitutional-Democratic Party, unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford 1961, p.239.

15 M.Baring, The Mainsprings of Russia, London 1914, pp.126-7 ; Times, 22 April 1911(New Style), 5f ; PARES 117.

16 P.Milyukov, 'The Representative System in Russia' in Russian Realities and Problems, Ed.J.D.Duff, Cambridge 1917, p.27.

were determined by the hard facts of the post-revolutionary period.

The Oktobrist fraction enjoyed the same moral and numerical preponderance in the Third Duma that the Kadets had so briefly experienced in the First.[17] But, warned by the Kadet experience and the continuing government recovery, the Oktobrists deliberately set out to establish permanent collaboration with the government, which Soviet historians have dubbed the '3rd June System'.[18] Within weeks of the convening of the Third Duma there emerged a political understanding between Guchkov and Stolypin which effectively converted the Oktobrists into what rivals in their outrage termed the 'government party'.[19] Meanwhile the Kadets, setting aside the aura of martydom left over from the First Duma, soon pursued a more realistic policy line and adjusted to the reduced circumstances of the Third Duma. Despite the extravagant despair of some of his lieutenants, Milyukov affected to view the future with equanimity :

> I had no doubts of course that there was a place for the Kadet fraction even in the "Lords" and "Lackeys" Duma of June 3rd ... In this respect I was the least implacable of all our "leaders". I always believed that the very idea of popular representation,even though distorted, carried within itself the germ of future internal development. (20)

The Kadets almost embarrassingly quickly settled for the rôle of 'opposition to the Oktobrist 'establishment' ; on one unguarded occasion Milyukov was even to refer to himself as belonging 'to His Majesty's Opposition and not to the opposition to His Majesty'.[21]

The political moderates emerged more and more clearly as they reconcil-

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17 G.A.Hosking,'Stolypin and the Octobrist Party',SEER,vol.37,no.108 (January 1969),p.142.

18 For example,A.Ya.Avrekh,Tsarism i Tret'eyunskaya Sistema,Moscow 1966 & V.S.Dyakin,Russkaya Burzhuazia i Tsarism v gody pervoy mirovoy voiny, Leningrad 1967,Chapter 1 : Tsarism i burzhuazia v tret'eyunskoy monarkhii.

19 Milyukov,'The Representative System',p.31.

20 MILIUKOV 164-5 ; also Pietrow,Paul Milyukov,pp.239-242.

21 For Milyukov's London Mansion House speech,see Times, 3 July 1909(n/s), 14e ; for Russian comment,see Rossia, 21 June 1909 and Golos Moskvy, 23 June 1909.

-ed themselves to the limited horizons of the Third Duma. The differences in party programme, social composition and party legend mattered less and less as time went by. The political harassment of the Kadets had effectively broken their revolutionary spirit and diluted the principles for which they had stood so bravely in 1906 ; by the middle years of the Third Duma the Kadets had moved perceptibly towards the Oktobrist position. The differences between the Kadets and the Oktobrists started to become less fundamental than their similarities. Lenin remarked that just as the Oktobrists were the 'government party', the Kadets were only the 'tolerated opposition' and their basic positions differed very little. Further to this he contended that the Oktobrists and Kadets were but variants of the same phenomenon :

> The Oktobrist is a Kadet who applies his bourgeois theories to practical life. The Kadet is an Oktobrist who in his hours of leisure, when he is not plundering the workers and peasants, dreams of an ideal bourgeois society. The Oktobrist will learn a little more about parliamentary manners and the political humbug of playing at democracy ; the Kadet will learn a little more about the business of bourgeois intrigue ; but they will merge,they will merge inevitably and infallibly. (22)

While Lenin certainly overstated his case in 1908, his fundamental point was more premature than inaccurate. With time the differences in the moderate Duma camp receded still further and the 'moderates' emerged ever more clearly as a universally recognised political grouping.

The 'principle' of society collaboration with the government was applauded in the prestigious and influential collection of essays entitled Vekhi which appeared in 1909. Vekhi welcomed the intelligentsia's break from exclusive commitment to the nineteenth-century concept of Revolution and its new emphasis on cooperation between society and the tsarist establishment. Milyukov affected to disagree with Vekhi, and most notably

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22 Quoted in J.V.Stalin(Ed.),The History of the Civil War in the USSR, London 1937,vol.I,p.14 ; also Lenin,Collected Works,Fourth Edition, London 1963,vol.18,pp.49-52.

with the opinions of Peter Struve, but the conduct of the Kadet party after 1909 was largely consistent with the principles of Vekhi.[23] Lenin was later to remark that the Vekhi opinions were 'the clear,distinctly expressed views, not of an individual, but of a class, for as a matter of fact, the entire mass of the Octobrist and Cadet bourgeoisie in Russia during 1907-1914 subscribed to them'.[24] Although the publication of Vekhi occasioned a political furore by pointing the contrast between the revolutionary policies of 1905 and the compromising tactics of 1909,it was intended to lend retrospective approval to the Oktobrist experiment in collaboration and, most particularly, the Kadet volte-face in relations with the government.

Ironically, it was in the year of Vekhi's publication that the principle of constructive collaboration began its process of decomposition. Notwithstanding the stress laid by Soviet historians on the mutual benefits of the '3rd June System', the Guchkov-Stolypin compact was always essentially precarious. The Oktobrist policy towards the government, though starting out with better prospects, was in the long term no more successful than the earlier Kadet policy. If the Oktobrist failure was less dramatic than the Kadet, its agony was the more protracted. The privileged position of the Oktobrist fraction survived intact for a mere eighteen months over late 1907 - early 1909. By mid 1909, irritated by Guchkov's stubbornly independent and occasionally unnecessarily provocative line, Stolypin had begun to search for a more subservient Duma ally, shifting inevitably towards the Right wing until he settled tentatively on the Nationalists.[25] The camp-followers of the Right attracted to the Oktobrist banner by its privileged position started to desert almost at once : Oktobrism began to lose

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23 N.P.Poltoratzky,'The "Vekhi" Dispute and the Significance of "Vekhi"', Canadian Slavonic Papers,vol.9,no.1(Spring 1967),pp.86-106.

24 Lenin,Collected Works,vol.20,p.129 (original underlining).

25 Padenie Tsarskogo Rezhima : Report of the Special Investigation Commission of the Provisional Government,Ed.P.E.Shchegolev,7 vols, Moscow 1924-7 (cited hereafter as PADENIE),vol.vi,pp.301-2(testimony of Milyukov) ; also Hosking,'Stolypin and the Oktobrist Party',pp.144,150 and 153-4.

membership to both Right and Left from the very first sign of rift with the government in spring 1909.

The secession of the 'Gololobov group' began a steady drain to the developing Nationalist fraction to the Right of the Oktobrists.[26] With the closing of the gap between the Kadets (who were drifting to the Right) and the Oktobrists (who were moving further Left), the earlier and neglected Party of Peaceful Renewal received a dramatic stimulus to its development. Coupled with the tactical advantage of its position between the Kadets and Oktobrists was the increasing support and patronage of, in particular, Moscow industrialist circles. With the rapid development of the industrialist and commercial classes came a growing ambition for political participation which was earliest and most forcibly expressed by the Moscow group led by Pavel Ryabushinsky. Following the foundation of a newspaper in 1909 to publicise the industrial interest (Utro Rossii), Ryabushinsky promoted the most promising parliementary fraction of the Third Duma as the future voice of the industrialist interest. After years in the doldrums, the Party of Peaceful Renewal entered a period of spectacular develppment over the last two years of the Third Duma.[27]

The declining '3rd June System' was conclusively and irreversibly dissolved in the course of 1911. The Western Zemstvos crisis of March-April 1911 demonstrated bothe the flimsy constitutionalism of even the relatively moderate Stolypin and the vulnerability of the State Duma to growing government and court hostility. In the last resort the Duma was more than ever at the mercy of the government, its own resources and authority almost

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26 Hosking,'Stolypin and the Octobrist Party',pp.142-3 & 150-3 ; MILIUKOV 159 & 220 ; V.Y.Laverychev,'Lenin o klassakh i partiakh mezhdu dvumya burzhuazno-demokraticheskimi revolyutsiami' in V.I.Lenin i istoria klassov i politicheskikh partii v Rossii,Ed.M.P.Kim,Moscow 1970,pp.166-7.

27 Laverychev,'Lenin o klassakh',pp.167-8,197 & 202 ; Avrekh,Tsarism i Tret'eyunskaya Sistema,p.158 and 'Lenski Rasstrel i Krisis Tret'eyunskoy Sistemy',Voprosi Istorii,1964:2,p.158 ; MILIUKOV 160 ; Lenin,Collected Works,vol.18,pp.81-2 ; Hosking,Government and Duma,pp.275-7.

negligible both in the constitutional and power-political contexts. Shocked by this dramatic exposé of their isolation and impotence, the Duma moderates rounded upon Stolypin as the perpetrator of their humiliation.[28] Just as the Vyborg Appeal had spotlighted the bankruptcy of Kadet policy towards the government, the Western Zemstvos crisis now spotlighted the bankruptcy of Oktobrist policy and of the '3rd June System'.

However the Duma still needed the goodwill of Stolypin.[29] The Western Zemstvos crisis had at the outset been a product of Stolypin's difficulty in maintaining a moderate constitutional course in an increasingly reactionary milieu. The understandable but unfortunate antagonism of the Duma moderates resulting from the crisis only further weakened Stolypin's position and had he not been assassinated in September 1911 he would almost certainly have been replaced in office.[30] As it was, the death of Stolypin profoundly affected the moderate cause within both government and Duma : the only conceivably effective barrier to the influx of reaction into the ruling establishment was removed ; the Duma lost the only ally of sufficient stature to cocoon the legislative institutions against the increasingly reactionary climate of court and bureaucratic Russia ; and any close relationship between a moderate Duma fraction and the government in the style of the '3rd June System' was now completely out of the question.

After September 1911, government and Duma alike underwent a period of anxiety and protracted crisis.[31] Within the structure of government, the death of Stolypin left a political void which it would hardly be an exaggeration to say remained the fundamental preoccupation of the Tsar and

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28 Hosking, Government and Duma, pp.187-202 ; PADENIE, vi, 301 (Milyukov) ; E.D.Chermensky, Bor'ba Klassov i Partii v Chetvertoy Gosudarstvennoy Dume 1912-1917 gg., unpublished Dectoral thesis, Moscow 1947 (cited hereafter as CHERMENSKY), pp.30-2.

29 A.Levin, 'Peter Stolypin : a political appraisal', Journal of Modern History, December 1965, p.445 ; Hosking, Government and Duma, pp.203-7.

30 Krasnyi Arkhiv, 105 vols, Moscow 1922-41 (cited hereafter as KA), vol 74, pp.189-190 ; MILIUKOV 226 & 228-230 ; PADENIE, vii, 7 (Shingarev).

31 Milyukov, 'The Representative System', p.33 ; Riha, A Russian European, p.190.

his ministers until the February Revolution itself. Within the Third Duma, fears of an unconstitutional outrage against the legislative institutions were matched by growing apprehension about the next constitutional hazard : the elections to the Fourth Duma.

2. The election campaign to the Fourth Duma

The Fourth Duma elections scheduled for autumn 1912 confronted the Duma moderate fractions with two distinct causes for concern. Both fundamental relationships - with the government and with the nation - presented apparently insuperable problems. As regards the government, Vyborg had proved the failure of a candid opposition policy and the Western Zemstvos crisis the failure of a collaborative policy. The apparent impossibility of maintaining either principal political course confronted the moderate fractions with the unenviable task of concocting a third course which was both tolerable to the government and consistent with party programmes. The relationship with the government was of more than academic interest since the attitude of the government was expected to be a major factor in the Fourth Duma elections. Although such a drift seemed to invite election disaster, the Third Duma moderates found themselves drawn into an oppositional stance by circumstances. All prospect of a return to collaboration with the government had gone ; Stolypin's death ushered in a resurgence of reactionary influence ; and even the maintenance of the Duma as a legislative institution was considered in question.[32] The recent elimination of the constructive alternative left the Duma moderates with little option but opposition to the government.

The relationship of the Duma moderates with the electorate was no less fraught for they were well aware that their position in the country was

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32 M.V.Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma i Fevral'skaya 1917 goda Revolyutsia' in Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia, Ed.S.A.Alekseyev, Moscow 1926, pp.3-4.

considerably weaker than on the occasion of the last election. The menace of a government with whom they could foresee no amicable relationship and the realisation of their estrangement from the nation made the prospect of the Fourth Duma elections daunting in the extreme. One effect was to draw the Duma moderates closer together to preserve the reputation of the Duma as a representative institution, for it was upon the 'democratic principle' that the Duma's legality, resource and resilience were believed to depend. Almost every fraction of any sizeable representation in the Third Duma tacitly accepted this line and through all the polemics of the election period no moderate fraction was to accuse another of being unrepresentative or out of touch with the nation. Once an attack on these lines was launched, the charge would inevitably rebound not only upon the head of the accuser but upon all moderate fractions. The subsequent revelations might well further alienate the Duma from the nation, ruin the Duma in the eyes of Western Europe (whose sympathies had been cultivated by the moderates since the inception of the Duma) and provoke a government coup against the legislative institutions.[33] The self-interest of the Duma deputies demanded a conspiracy of silence which was especially marked at the time of Duma elections but was maintained without serious breach throughout the Third and Fourth Dumas.

The Kadet fraction had most to gain and most to lose from the approach--ing elections. As the principal party of opposition to the Oktobrist hegemony of the Third Duma, the Kadets had high hopes that the collapse of the '3rd June System' would be reflected in poor Oktobrist returns at the polls, thereby offering the Kadets a greatly enhanced rôle in the Fourth Duma.[34] However in no other fraction was the contrast so stark between prestige and public image on the one hand, and national support and party

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33 CHERMENSKY 3 & 41.

34 Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Oktyabrskoy Revolyutsii (Central State Archive of the October Revolution, at Moscow ; cited hereafter as TsGAOR), fond 579(Milyukov fond),opis' iii,delo 61,st. 3.

organisation on the other. Obsessively aware of their critical weakness in the country at large, the Kadets initiated their preparations for the Fourth Duma exceptionally early. In mid 1910, a clear two years before the elections, the Moscow Kadet Central Committee voiced its apprehension about the future in a five-page initial report. After a lengthy description of the ailing Kadet provincial organisation on the occasion of the last elections in 1907, the report glumly concluded :

> Over the last three years our party organisation has suffered even more : administrative and judicial persecution, the absence of contacts between deputies and their electors, the unaccustomedness of society to continuous political activity and many other reasons have led to the still greater disarrangement of the local organisations. (35)

The Kadet party was heading for disaster in the elections unless measures other than the traditional appeal to the electorate were launched. The report recommended an electoral bloc with the Party of Peaceful Renewal :

> This group should be compelled to operate hand in hand with the Party of Popular Freedom for such an electoral alliance has become both essential and inescapable ... the mutual nature of our electoral interests and the reciprocal aspect of the establishment of joint electoral organisations at the local level must be stressed to demonstrate that, owing to the temporariness of the arrangement, there is no danger to the party. (36)

The ensuing debate confirmed the basic findings of the report and authorised a detailed province-by-province survey of electoral characteristics which was presented at the Kadet 1911 Spring conference.[37]

The Autumn conference in the same year endorsed the tactic of electoral alliance without being specific about the partners in the arrangement :

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35 TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),iii,61,1-5 (quotation p.3) ; hereafter the annotation of archival material will be standardised thus : (1) Archive collection(by abbreviation),(2) Fond number(and designation),(3) Opis' number(in Roman numerals),(4) Delo number(in Arabic numerals),(5) stranitsa number(s).

36 The Kadets used the name 'Party of Popular Freedom' in preference to 'Constitutional-Democratic Party' increasingly after 1907. Quotation : ibid,p.4.

37 31-page survey : TsGAOR,f.125(Kadet Fraction),ii,10,5-36 ; the Peters--burg Town Committee had drawn up its list of local election candidates by late 1910 (Kolyubakin to Kadet Central Committee, 2 December 1910) : TsGAOR,f.125(Kadet Fraction),ii,9,1.

> In such cases where independent party activity in elections is impossible because of local circumstances, the local organs of the Kadet party may enter into agreement with other groups of independent society elements, with the exception of anti-constitutional and nationalistic elements, and form joint electoral committees. (38)

By mid January 1912 the Moscow Kadet leaders, trying to retain their election initiative within the party, were agitating strongly for a full congress to unite the neglected provincial members behind the Kadet leader--ship, to determine the party electoral campaign and to publicise the party to the country.[39] However Milyukov and the senior Central Committee in St. Petersburg declined to attempt to solve one problem by posing a greater. The relationship of the Kadet leadership to the Kadet party was a close parallel to that of the Duma and the country : a party congress was as revealing about the former relationship as was a general election about the latter. A Kadet congresss was a hazard to be avoided at any time ; especially was it to be averted in 1912 when any party crisis would react unfavourably upon the voting to the Fourth Duma.[40]

The Moscow and Petersburg Central Committees and the membership of the Kadet fraction were agreed that hopes for improving their position in the Fourth Duma rested upon an electoral bloc. The crucial question was with whom to ally. The obvious candidate in all respects was the Party of Peaceful Renewal, which in April 1912 renamed itself the Progressist party.[41] Two features recommended the Progressists as the ideal electoral partner : their growing popularity and financial backing by the Moscow industrialist group made them tipped as the fraction most likely to succeed ; and their patent inexperience and naïveté (for they were only in the process of emerging as a major parliamentary fraction).[42] Milyukov could

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38 Clause II of Report 2 of Kadet conferemce,20-1 November 1911 : TsGAOR, f.102 (Police Department : cited hereafter as POLICE),xiii,27-1912,9.

39 Moscow Police report of 27 January 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/46,1-2.

40 See VI Kadet Party Congress,18-21 February 1916 : Chapter Five,2.

41 Laverychev,Lenin o klassakh,p.168.

42 Ibid,pp.167-8 & 197-8 ; also Times,23 September 1912(n/s),3f.

feel confident that the Kadet party would attract to itself much of the popularity enjoyed by the Progressists while exploiting Progressist diffidence to force Kadet policy on the joint electoral bloc.

Should the electoral bloc spread wider ? Or in more precise tactical terms, was the electoral alliance with the Progressists sufficient to guarantee Kadet success in the elections ? Fedor Rodichev, the leader of the Left-wing Kadets, and the Moscow Central Committee favoured extending the bloc to the Left.[43] Milyukov, Vasilii Maklakov, the Right-wing Kadets and the Petersburg Central Committee favoured extending the bloc further Right to the Oktobrists. Chelnokov, the chairman of the Kadet election committee, supported the Milyukov line :

> An upsurge in the mood of society like that of 1905 has not occurred and may never occur ... conservative groups and parties have significantly gained strength and organised. These conditions dictate above all else the permissibility of any kind of compromise with Right groups up to and including the Right-wing Oktobrists, just so long as the electoral slogans do not contradict the basic principles of the Kadet programme. (44)

As an exponent of the Right-wing Kadet position, Milyukov feared that the growing unpopularity of the government in the country and the natural desire to adopt a brave posture before the electorate could well prompt a general Kadet shift towards the Left.

Milyukov however was set on acquiring a share in government patronage. While the Oktobrists had become completely disenchanted with the Stolypin government after March 1911, their ostensible successors the Nationalists had by no means revived the '3rd June System', indeed in Decemeber 1911 the Nationalists pointedly refused any association with the government of Stolypin's successor Kokovtsov.[45] It was also evident that whatever the ambitions of Guchkov for the greater independence of the Oktobrist Union,

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43 TsGAOR, f.125(Kadet Fraction), ii, 10 ; POLICE, xiii, 27/46(Moscow), 1 ; TsGAOR, f.6/c, 9, 124 quoted in CHERMENSKY 36.

44 POLICE, xiii, 27/57(Petersburg), 14-15.

45 KOKOVTSOV 285-9 ; also P.N.Milyukov, Vospominania 1859-1917, New York 1955-6, vol.II, p.158.

the Oktobrist majority desired a return to the '3rd June System'. In these circumstances it was likely that the Oktobrists would still enjoy a large measure of government patronage at the Fourth Duma elections. The intense enmity of Milyukov and Guchkov rendered impossible a formal alliance with the main body of the Duma Oktobrists but the emerging Oktobrist Left wing appeared both amenable to Kadet overtures and sufficient to attract a significant proportion of government patronage to the 'bloc'. Milyukov's policy of expediency was clear : alliance with the Progressists to share their popularity and alliance with the Left-wing Oktobrists to share their government patronage.[46] There were at base just two means to success in the Duma elections : extensive support in the country and government patronage. The Kadets personally enjoyed neither but by adroit electoral alliance could enjoy the benefits of both.

The Kadet Central Committeee meeting of 12-14 March 1912 dutifully endorsed the Milyukov stratagem of an electoral bloc towards the Right, albeit with tactical reservations :

> At the same time we must treat the bloc with particular care and not allow the concept to take root in the mass of the electorate. We must emphasise to the masses on every suitable occasion that the bloc is something temporary, a mask. (47)

Within the Kadet leadership, self-confidence bred optimism. I.V.Gessen sanguinely conjectured that the Kadet fraction in the new Duma might muster one hundred deputies.[48] However at this point the ever watchful and well-informed Police Department intervened to torpedo the Kadet scheme. The bloc had been elaborated by the Kadet leadership on the understanding that it would be tactfully revealed to the provincial Kadets when all top-level negotiations with the Progressist and Left Oktobrist executives were complete. In late March the Ministry of Interior (hereafter MVD) authorised

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46 CHERMENSKY 58.

47 POLICE,xiii,27/57(Petersburg),12.

48 Speech of 10 March 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/57(Petersburg),1-2.

the publication of full details of the electoral bloc as collected by the Okhrana in the semi-official government press organ Rossia.[49] The furore engendered by this well-timed disclosure almost aborted the bloc, as indicated by a triumphant report of the Moscow Okhrana chief, Zanyazin :

> The article in the government organ Rossia revealing the Kadet plans to shelter under the flag of the non-party Progressists and thereby "slip by" at the elections has produced a powerful impression in Kadet circles ... and elicited the greatest embarrassment and discontent. The opinion is expressed that thanks to this premature leak, the whole thought-out plan can be considered exploded. (50)

The chorus of complaint from the provincial Kadets released by this scandal stemmed from a number of causes. At a time when the Kadets in the provinces were well to the Left of the Duma Kadets, approximating to a Trudovik and even Menshevik position, the proposal to ally with the Oktobrists provoked almost unanimous condemnation.[51] The idea of hanging on to the coat-tails of the more popular Progressists to gain votes delivered a profound shock to the amour-propre of the older-generation Kadets who could not reconcile themselves to the exigencies of the political situation.[52] Finally the provincial Kadets were exasperated that they had been simply left out of all election plans : the Kadet electorate and provincial organisation which constituted the foundation of the party and its moral authority to participate in the Duma had been casually ignored by the Kadet executive in a manner which the provinces were bound to resent.[53]

At almost precisely this juncture, when the Rossia scandal was compell--ing the Kadet leadership to reconsider the range and direction of the projected bloc, the arguments of the provincial Kadets and Moscow Central Committee for alliance to the Left were dramatically reinforced. On 4 April

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49 Moscow report of 5 April 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/46,10.

50 Ibid.

51 Petersburg report of 14 April 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/57,4.

52 Moscow report of 5 April 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/46,10.

53 Petersburg report of 14 April 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/57,4.

a police regiment shot down some two hundred and seventy men, women and children protesting about living conditions on the remote Lena goldfields.[54] Alexander Kerensky was to set the significance of the shootings very high : 'just as the insane slaughter of the workmen on the 9th January brought about the Revolution of 1905, now the Lena Massacre of the 4th April 1912 was the signal for a new burst of public activity and revolutionary agitation![55] Like Bloody Sunday, the Lena Massacre achieved its immediate object only at the cost of inflaming all sectors of public opinion against the government. The effect of the massacre upon fellow workers in Petersburg and Moscow was predictable in impact but almost unprecedented in scale :

> The Lena Massacre had been the signal for a new workers' movement. One felt that a new wave of opposition and revolutionary energy was rising throughout the land ... The wave of political strikes started with 700,000 workers immediately after the Lena Massacre. (56)

Josef Stalin in one of his earliest articles for Zvezda exulted that 'the Lena shooting has broken the ice of silence - and the river of the people's movement has begun to flow'.[57] The Duma moderates spoke out indignantly in Duma sitting and at a Kadet meeting on 16 April Milyukov 'considered it essential to pacify society by a promise from the Duma tribune to investigate the Lena incident and punish all the guilty'.[58]

While the protests of the Duma moderates were sincere enough, the Lena Massacre could not have come at a worse time for Kadet electoral plans. At the critical juncture when Milyukov was attempting to show the desirability of alliance to the Right, the mood of the country swung violently to the Left. The current political mood proved irresistible. The Okhrana reported

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54 KERENSKY 81-3 ; A Short History of the USSR, Moscow 1965, vol.I, p.294.

55 A.F.Kerensky, The Crucifixion of Liberty, London 1934, pp.123-4 ; also Avrekh, 'Lensky Rasstrel', p.74, where the same comparison is made.

56 Kerensky, The Crucifixion, pp.161 & 165.

57 J.V.Stalin, 'The Ice Has Broken', Zvezda, no.32, 19 April 1912 quoted in J.Stalin, Works, vol.II(1907-1913), London 1953, p.245.

58 Duma sitting of 9 April 1912 : Stenograficheskie Otchyety Gosudarstvenn--oy Dumy, sozyv III, sessia V, zasedania 99, st. 1658-1714 ; Petersburg Kadet Town Committee, 16 April 1912 : POLICE, xiii, 27/57, 8.

that at a top-secret meeting between the Kadet fraction and the Moscow and Petersburg Central Committees on 10 May, 'it was decided to arrange in the most immediate future a joint meeting of the leaders of the Kadet and Left parties to consider the question of how to respond to the approaching revolution, which the Kadet leaders unanimously consider premature'.[59] Kadet alarm, so evident from the use of the word 'revolution' in a formal motion, turned the emphasis of the electoral bloc from the Right to the Left. A hurriedly-convened Kadet conference of 12-14 May came up with the following revised formula for membership of the bloc :

1. Agreements with groups further Right than the Union of October must be considered inadmissible ...
2. Agreements with the Union of 17 October generally to be considered undesirable and harmful, although in certain circumstances permissible with the agreement of the Central Committee. In particular, the support of Oktobrist candidates like Guchkov is inadmissible ...
3. Agreements with the Progressists, the Party of Peaceful Renewal, to be considered compulsory ...
4. Blocs with Left parties both desirable and essential. (60)

The radical shift was clear : despite Milyukov and the Kadet leadership's predilections, the Lena Massacre capped the Rossia scandal to force the Kadet electoral bloc to the Left. The whole episode of the electoral bloc proved both the hyper-sensitivity of the Kadet leadership over the election period (contrasting so starkly with its high-handedness at all other times) and the vulnerability of the Duma moderates to the crucial external forces which remained totally outside their control.

The electoral strategy of the Progressists was less sophisticated than the Kadet. the pre-election period was dominated by the energy of the Moscow industrialist group led by Ryabushinsky and its ambition to convert the modest and lack-lustre Party of Peaceful Renewal into a powerful Duma agent. Over late 1911 Ryabushinsky welcomed the initial tentative Kadet suggestions of an electoral bloc and through early 1912 worked hard to ensure that the

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59 Petersburg report of 13 May 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/57,25.

60 Petersburg report of 14 May 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/57,26 ; also Moscow report of 13 July 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/46,24-6.

bloc was between political equals. A Moscow Progressist Bureau was formally established on 17 March 1912, employing the name 'Progressists' in preference to the 'Party of Peaceful Renewal' for the first time. In its 4 April issue of Utro Rossii, the Moscow Bureau both declared the principle that 'it is high time that the merchant class should step into the political arena' and officially and rather self-consciously announced its metamorphosis into the Progressist Party.[61] In the course of the next month a Petersburg Progressist Bureau was established and definite electoral alliances between the Progressists and Kadets of both capitals agreed.[62]

However despite their remarkable organisational growth in the pre-election period, the Progressists were still unable to treat with the Kadets on equal terms. Notwithstanding their undoubted energy and promise, the new Progressists were thoroughly dominated by their senior partner in the electoral bloc. 'Gromoboi', the leader writer for Golos Moskvy, commented perceptively in mid 1912 that the Progressists 'could become the Left centre and not just Milyukov's marionettes' but at present were able to comprehend only their own weaknesses.[63] Not without rough justice, Stalin sarcastically remarked 'Oh, don't think that the Progressists are Kadets ! No, they are not Kadets at all ; they will only vote for the Kadet candidates, they are only the non-party servants of the Kadets'.[64] The Progressists passed the period of the electoral bloc in the belief that they benefited from the association far more than the Kadets. In fact the reverse was true. The Kadets allied with the Progressists because the bloc combined maximum electoral advantage and the company of an easily-manipulated

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61 V.Ya.Laverychev, Po Tu Storonu Barrikad, Moscow 1967 (cited hereafter as LAVERYCHEV), pp.89-90 ; Hosking, Government and Duma, pp.275-8.

62 Golos Moskvy, 29 April 1912 and Utro Rossii, 1 May 1912 ; also LAVERYCHEV 90 and CHERMENSKY 58.

63 'Before the Elections', article by 'Gromoboi' : TsGAOR, f.555(Guchkov), i, 515, 1-3 (quotation p.3.)

64 'How They are Preparing for the Elections', Zvezda, no.32, 19 April 1912 quoted in Stalin, Works, vol.II(1907-1913), p.248.

political satellite with minimal risk to their own freedom of action. The new Progressist party was unscrupulously used by the Kadet leadership to advance its own interests in the all-important elections.

The Oktobrists were confronted with a dual crisis over the election period. The bankruptcy of the '3rd June System', on which the Oktobrists had placed all their political capital, left the fraction with distressingly little to bring to its electorate. The universal dissatisfaction with the record of the Third Duma naturally - if a little unjustly - concentrated on the fraction which had more than any other determined the character of the Third Duma.[65] Although aware of the general hostility, the Oktobrist fraction launched no special efforts to improve its public image. It was agreed that legislation was to be stepped up and continued until the very end of the Third Duma session in the hope that each bill that completed the legislative process would boost the credit of the Oktobrists and safeguard their vote at the polls.[66] A confident front was maintained towards the general public,as for example in interviews given to Russkoe Slovo :

> We can expect a small shift to the Left in the Fourth Duma and the Opposition will grow numerically by 8-10 percent but this increase will be at the expense of the Right ...It may be that we will concede a few seats to the Progressists but again we are confident that the loss will be at the expense of the Right wing. (67)

Throughout the election period, Oktobrist activity hardly merited the term 'campaign', ostensibly resting content with completing legislative business and retaining a lofty sang-froid in the face of universal criticism.

But immediately behind the public image of quiet confidence the Oktobrists were in a chronically fragmented condition. From the first moment of Stolypin's withdrawal of favour, the Oktobrists had experienced a

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65 Times, 23 September 1912(n/s),3f ; TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),iii,61,3-4.

66 Oktobrist Central Committee, 3 March 1912 : Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv v Leningrade (Central State Historical Archive at Leningrad ; cited hereafter as TsGIAL),f.666(Klyuzhev),i,8,142 ; also TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),i,29,3.

67 Russkoe Slovo, 25 March 1912 ; also quoted in TsGIAL,f.669(Klyuzhev),i, 8,174.

draining of membership both to Right and Left. The Western Zemstvos crisis only exacerbated the growing problem of unity. In the summer of 1911 the fraction majority still hoped for a revival of the '3rd June System', closely associating with the recently-favoured Nationalists in the hope of sharing their patronage and privilege.[68] However with the return of Guchkov to the leadership of the Oktobrists in November 1911 (following his flamboyant renunciation of politics over the Western Zemstvos crisis), the official party line resumed its basic trend away from association with the government towards a more oppositional stance.[69] Over the winter 1911-1912 a steady polarisation of Oktobrist opinion raised the spectre of a fundamental split in both fraction and Union. With each passing month the dichotomy in the fraction was revealed more clearly, culminating in the voting over the military budget in mid May 1912 :

> After the voting against the ship-building programme, the leaders of Oktobrism can count on the sympathy of the Opposition but the rank-and-file Oktobrists on the sympathy of the government parties. The Oktobrists themselves admit their lack of unity on fundamental issues . .. they call themselves a "coalition medley". The sole logical raison d'être of this coalition is personal politics ... the centre of the coalition was and remains Guchkov. (70)

This frank comment by Russkoe Slovo demonstrated that on the election eve the Oktobrist fraction was more divided than ever before.

Russkoe Slovo also made plain that the responsibility for maintaining or disrupting the Oktobrist 'coalition medley' was Guchkov's. Guchkov found himself trapped by the timing of the Fourth Duma elections : the point for the grand debate on the future of Oktobrism coincided with the prelude to the new Duma. In fear of a split which would ruin the Oktobrist Union at the polls, Guchkov was compelled very much against his own nature to impose a year's moratorium on the discussion of fundamental policy.[71] The tensions

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68 TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),ii,2,3 and f.579(Milyukov),iii,61,4.

69 Hosking,Government and Duma,pp.190-1 ; J.F.Hutchinson,The Octobrists in Russian Politics 1905-1917,unpublished Ph.D thesis,London 1966,p.196.

70 Russkoe Slovo, 1 June 1912 ; also TsGIAL,f.669(Klyuzhev),i,10,56 and 'Chronicle',Russian Review,vol.i,no.4,1912,p.159.

71 TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),i,515,2-3.

evoked by this artificial stifling of party debate emerged clearly but on this occasion Guchkov proved the quality of responsibility which had always been so conspicuously lacking in his leadership in the past. Guchkov's speeches for the period demonstrate a diplomacy and tact rarely found in either his actions or published utterances. Even at the traditional Oktobrist banquet on 7 June Guchkov's self-restraint produced only the most diluted version of his real views : 'Guchkov invited the fraction to look not to the past but to the future and wished the Fourth Duma greater success and greater results than those accomplished by the Third Duma'.[72]

Given the stark necessity of judicious inaction, various features of the Oktobrist position may have persuaded Guchkov that a 'soft-sell' approach to the elections was not necessarily so unfortunate. The Oktobrist electorate, fundamentally the landed interest of central European Russia, was proverbially loyal and stable and unlikely to be radically affected by either the propaganda campaigns of rival parties or the recent Leftward movement in the country as a whole.[73] On the government side, the well-known political affiliations of the new premier Kokovtsov furnished Guchkov with hope that, in despair of the undisciplined Nationalists bequeathed by Stolypin, government patronage would be exercised in favour of its former favourite and ally.[74] Thus temporarily to suspend his own ambition to move towards opposition offered Guchkov two advantages in the election period , a reasonably united Oktobrist party and the prospect of government patron-age. With such results anticipated from a policy of inaction, it was both unnecessary and dangerous to mount a full Oktobrist election campaign.

Through all their election preparations, the Duma moderates were resigned to the fact that government pressure would play at least a critical and very possibly a crucial rôle. However while the government was equally convinced of the fact, its electoral policies were hardly less factional

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72 TsGIAL,f.669(Klyuzhev ; cited hereafter as KLYUZHEV),i,10,71.

73 Milyukov,'The Representative System',p.39 ; TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),ii,2,11.

74 CHERMENSKY 50.

than those of the Duma parties. The assassination of Stolypin in September 1911 had effected a profound upset in the balance of power within the government. Stolypin had occupied the offices of Council Chairman and Minister of Interior, the two most powerful government agencies, as well as fulfilling many of the functions of Foreign Minister (after the disgrace of Izvolsky over the Bosnian crisis).[75] Moreover Stolypin always insisted that collective decisions be made within the Council of Ministers, which would then be communicated to the Tsar by the Chairman alone, completely replacing the traditional system of private reports submitted by each minister individually to the Tsar.[76] The office of super-minister was now dismantled and its constituent functions allocated to three separate individuals : Kokovtsov added the Chairmanship to his current folio of the Finace Ministry, Makarov was appointed Minister of Interior and Sazonov was for the first time allowed full responsibility as Minister of Foreign Affairs.[77]

September 1911 represented an attempt by the Tsar to take back the power and authority which had necessarily or accidentally devolved upon Stolypin. Nicholas and Alexandra hoped to exploit the fortuitous removal of Stolypin to place obstacles to the emergence of any similar 'Grand Vizier' who (they believed) might again detract from the authority and prestige which must be the Tsar's alone. The prominent Oktobrist Sergei Shidlovsky saw September 1911 as a turning-point :

> The government as something united and corporate ceased to exist... From the time of Stolypin's death, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers in practice ceased to be the head of the government, and we heard corroborated rumours that the Tsar considered this particular office completely unnecessary, sayng that each minister should report to him on the affairs of his own ministry and nobody and nothing else was needed. (78)

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75 I.V.Bestuzhev,'Russian Foreign Policy, February-June 1914',Journal of Contemporary History,vol.I,no.3(1966),pp.104-5.

76 Hosking,Government and Duma,pp.5-7.

77 MILIUKOV 230-1 ; KA,vol.74,pp.190-1 ; S.I.Shidlovsky,Vospominania 1861-1922,2 vols,Berlin 1923,I,pp.198-9 ; Bestuzhev,'Russian Foreign Policy', pp.104-5.

78 Shidlovsky,Vospominania,I,198-9.

On appointing Kokovtsov Chairman, Nicholas pointedly remarked 'Please don't follow the example of Pyotr Arkad'evich [Stolypin - R.P.] ,he somehow always tried to screen me off - it was him all the time, and because of him I became invisible'.[79] At her first audience with Kokovtsov, the Empress too made plain her dislike for the man whom she believed had overshadowed the Tsar :

> You must not try to follow blindly the work of your predecessor. Remain yourself ; do not look for support in political parties ; they are of so little consequence in Russia. Find your support in the confidence of the Tsar - the Lord will help you. I am sure that Stolypin died to make room for you and this is all for the good of Russia. (80)

In practice it became apparent at an early stage that the Tsar was not so much retrieving delegated power as redistibuting that power amongst a number of ministers instead of allowing its concentration in the person of a super-minister. The separation of the Chairmanship and the MVD proved crucial to the ministerial power balance. Under Stolypin the moral authority of the Chairmanship and the executive authority of the MVD had complemented each other perfectly ; the forcible separation of these functions almost immediately spawned bitter rivalries. Within months the authority of the Chairmanship suffered a drastic decline, prompting a challenge from the increasingly ambitious MVD.

As the first major issue confronting the post-Stolypin government, the Fourth Duma elections became a trial of strength between the Chairmanship and the MVD. Kokovtsov, accustomed to serving under a Chairman whose personal and political dominance over his ministerial colleagues had been almost unshakable, assumed (like Guchkov) that government policy towards the Duma would now be his prerogative alone. A moderate in the manner of Stolypin by political persuasion, Kokovtsov's attitude to the Duma was tolerant and benign.[81] Over the first months of 1912 Kokovtsov performed the thankless

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79 Ibid,p.198.

80 KOKOVTSOV 283 ; also MILIUKOV 232.

81 KOKOVTSOV 323-4.

task of peacemaking between the Tsar and the Duma over the growing rumours about the influence of Rasputin.[82] In June 1912 Kokovtsov went so far as to threaten resignation in order to persuade a reluctant Nicholas formally to thank the Third Duma for its endeavours and thereby set the seal of imperial approval on the Duma.[83]

Kokovtsov went further than support for the Duma as an institution by promoting the fortunes of the Duma party which he found most sympathetic. In autumn 1911 Kokovtsov argued that on grounds of both political desirability and financial stringency he intended radically to cut back government subsidisation of the Right. When in February 1912 Markov Two and Purishkevich, the leaders of the Right fraction, presented bills for 960,000 roubles as election expenses, Kokovtsov flatly refused to pay. He relented only when Makarov argued that to bankrupt the Right so near election-time was tantamount to promoting a swamping of the Fourth Duma by the Opposition.[84] In March Kokovtsov attempted to lend the advantage to the Oktobrists by acts of cordiality to the Third Duma which won the grudging approval of even the Times correspondent in Petersburg :

> The Premier finds the practice of returning bills which have not been sanctioned before dissolution unnecessary. Moreover, the closing session will be prolonged until July, the General Election taking place in the autumn. Many highly useful measures will thus be expedited and deputies will not come before their constituents empty-handed. (85)

This decision, dove-tailing so neatly with declared Oktobrist policy, provided additional grounds for believing that government patronage in the elections would be exercised in favour of the Oktobrists.

Makarov however quickly dissolved the bond of trust that had made him Kokovtsov's nominee for the MVD in September 1911.[86] His actions as

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82 KOKOVTSOV 290-304 ; MILIUKOV 234-5 ; M.V.Rodzyanko, Krushenie Imperii, Leningrad 1927 (cited hereafter as RODZYANKO),pp.36-59.

83 KOKOVTSOV 304 & 318 ; MILIUKOV 237 ; RODZYANKO 59-60.

84 KOKOVTSOV 324, 328 & 338 ; MILIUKOV 279-280.

85 Times, 21 March 1912(n/s),5a ; also RODZYANKO 60.

86 KOKOVTSOV 277 ; MILIUKOV 231 ; 'Interesnaya nakhodka : delo Kokovtsova', Voprosi Istorii, 1964:2, p.98.

Minister of Interior contrived to upset all concerned. The Emperor and Empress were irritated by Makarov's inability to suppress the attacks upon Rasputin published over the months of December 1911 and January 1912.[87] Makarov's mishandling of the Rasputin affair only sharpened his determination to perform well in the matter of the Duma elections. On 12 January 1912 Makarov issued a secret circular to provincial governors requesting their estimates of the future election results.[88] The replies suggested that while the Kadets were likely substantially to increase their representation, the Right wing was disappointingly weak and government patronage was essential to its strong representation.[89] Makarov concluded from these rather alarmist individual assessments that all government pressure must be exerted in favour of the Duma Rights and Nationalists. At first all proceeded smoothly for Makarov's schemes : his minor victory in persuading Kokovtsov to foot the Right bill for election expenses in February was matched by successful disruption of the opposition parties (of which the Rossia disclosure was the most striking).

However immediately following the MVD's most dramatic coup, Makarov found himself under extreme pressure as a result of the Lena Massacre episode. Not only was Makarov technically responsible for the police actions in the first instance but he attempted to shrug off protests in the Duma chamber with the callous remark 'So it was,so it will be'.[90] The subsequent furore compelled Kokovtsov to intervene to save Makarov and to appoint a government commission of enquiry in an attempt to mollify public indignation.[91] The Lena Massacre had even greater impact upon government policy than upon the Kadet electoral campaign in that it polarised opinion

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87 KOKOVTSOV 290-5 ; MILIUKOV 234.

88 TsGAOR,f.6/c,247,1 quoted in CHERMENSKY 44.

89 POLICE,27-1912,35-69 quoted in CHERMENSKY 44.

90 11 April 1912 : Stenograficheskie Otchyoty G. Dumy,sozyv III,sessia V, zasedania 102,st. 1953 ; Vladimir Gurko,Features and Figures of the Past, Government and Opinion in the Reign of Nicholas II,Ed.H.H.Fisher,London 1958,p.520.

91 KOKOVTSOV 308-9 ; KERENSKY 82.

within the Council of Ministers. To Kokovtsov, the episode proved the need for a moderate centre in the new Duma which would reflect the mood of the country and avoid the blatant provocation of a Duma whose representation was clearly 'stacked'. But to Makarov, still bruised from his encounter with outraged public opinion, it proved the necessity of an obedient Right-dominated Duma with which the government could associate with harmony.[92] The Lena Massacre affair both highlighted and accentuated the dichotomy within the Council of Ministers. By late spring 1912 the split in the Council was overt and the stronger group emerging. Kokovtsov's moderate course was opposed by a majority of the ministers, thereby rendering his position most awkward and false :

> Discussions in the Council always made me unhappy. They demonstrated my isolation and helplessness. By public opinion I was regarded as the head of the government and responsible for its policies ; actually my power to formulate and direct such policies was undermined by a split within the Council. Moreover my opponents in the government had the support of the Tsar. (93)

In practice Makarov pursued the electoral policy of his own choice, confident that while actual political resource backed his own policy, the responsibil--ity and unpopularity of that policy would fall upon Kokovtsov. Kokovtsov's frankly ephemeral authority could not match the executive day-to-day direction of the electoral operation by Makarov.[94]

Acting on Makarov's instructions, Sabler the Procurator of the Holy Synod issued in May a secret circular mobilizing the clergy for the elections.[95] Kharuzin was commissioned to arrange the details of the election-fixing, performing the same service for Makarov that Kryzhanovsky had performed for Stolypin in the elections to the Third Duma.[96] The

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92 KOKOVTSOV 323-5 ; 'Interesnaya nakhodka',pp.98-9.

93 KOKOVTSOV 349 ; 'Interesnaya nakhodka',p.100.

94 'Interesnaya nakhodka',pp.99-101 ; P.G.Kurlov,Konets Tsarisma,Moscow 1923,pp.170-1 ; PADENIE,vi,303(Milyukov).

95 E.D.Chermensky,'Vybory v IV Gosudarstvennuyu Dumu',Voprosi Istorii,1947: 4,p.23 ; Kurlov,Konets Tsarisma,p.171 ; PADENIE,vi,302(Milyukov).

96 KOKOVTSOV 324 ; MILIUKOV 280 ; 'Interesnaya nakhodka',pp.102-4.

Police Department embarked upon a campaign of harassment of opposition parties, most effectively in the provinces but with greater circumspection in the capitals too. A correspondence between the Police Director Beletsky and the Petersburg Town Governor Bendorf illuminates the nature of the police campaign. Bendorf's report on the Kadet conference of 12-14 May was met by Beletsky's acid enquiry 'on what grounds this meeting was permitted by the police, since it contravenes the law of 4 March 1906 ?'.[97] Bendorf explain--ed that 'similar meetings have been held periodically throughout the period of the activities of the Third Duma, at the beginning and end of its sessions , without the permission of the authorities, as they have no public character'.[98] Bendorf's two grounds of 'non-public character' and 'precedent' were considered by Beletsky who (after consultation with Makarov) replied that henceforward the practice must be changed and the law of 1906 strictly enforced.[99] Punctilious application of the law, in declaring both public meetings and private party assemblies subject to police permission and supervision, virtually liquidated electoral campaigning. The choice for the Duma parties was either deliberate illegality or near-impotence. By the eve of the elections, the Police Department had effectively reduced the campaigns of all the moderate parties to the level of frustrated legality. Even the tactical dexterity of the Kadets gained them little when confronted by police harassment which limited their activities to newspaper editorials and posted party propaganda.

By July and August of 1912 the moderate fractions were well aware that their political futures lay out of their hands. The absence of a public forum (since the dissolution of the Third Duma on 9 June) and the pitiably proscribed sphere of operations left by police harassment threw the moderates upon the mercy of the country and the government. Different estimates of the

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97 Beletsky to Bendorf, undated : POLICE,xiii,27/57,29 ; the law of 4 March 1906 prohibited public associations.

98 Bendorf to Beletsky, 27 June 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/57,33.

99 Beletsky to Bendorf, 8 July 1912 : ibid,p.34.

relative importance of these two critical external forces produced widely varying forecasts of the complexion of the new Duma. At a secret meeting of the Kadet Central Committee in Moscow 15-17 August 'many of the committee members, on the basis of facts from both official and party sources, declare that the Duma will be greatly further Left ... and that elections within the zemstvo organisations indicate the sympathy of the local people for the progressive tendency'.[100] Milyukov however laid greater stress upon government pressure and saw little cause for optimism :

> When at the end of November [1911 - R.P.], I asserted in fraction meetings that in the summer would come the maximum offensive of the reactionaries against all that is honourable and legal in Russia, many of my colleagues considered me a gloomy prophet, but unfortunately facts have surpassed the most gloomy expectations ... Without doubt, the Fourth Duma will be an exact copy of its predecessor, only its centre will shift from the Oktobrists to the Nationalists. (101)

With this fatalistic jeremiad Milyukov opted out of the campaign altogether by spending the remaining time before the elections on a working holiday in the Balkans.[102] As on a number of subsequent occasions Milyukov, apparently in the belief that his presence or absence would have negligible influence on political developments, simply quit the field. But Milyukov's action only symbolised the resignation with which all the moderate parties came to face the elections.[103] Realising that, both on account of government action and their own inadequacies, their varied campaign activities had been of only marginal influence, the Duma moderates had now no choice but to await the verdict in the greater contest between the voice of the Russian electorate and the artifice of the MVD electoral machine.

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100 POLICE,xiii,27-1912,22.

101 Ibid, 23-4.

102 MILIUKOV 247-9.

103 CHERMENSKY 49-50.

CHAPTER TWO : THE FOURTH DUMA

1. The Elections

The electoral system established by the laws of 3 June 1907 was of a complexity which almost beggars description and defies any attempt at an adequate brief survey.[1] The suffrage arrangement, described by Paul Gronsky as 'one of the most complicated that ever existed', was devised in order to lend the electoral authorities maximum practical discretion : neither universal, equal nor direct (since the concession of these principles might well benefit the opposition), the voting system did boast the secrecy of the ballot (since it offered a constitutional cloak for the operations of the electoral authorities).[2] The electorate was summarily divided into four electoral curiae : the landowners, the town-dwellers (sub-divided into two groups), the peasants and the proletariat. The introduction of this artificial distinction by class was designed to fragment the opposition on the principle of 'divide and rule' and to enhance the control exercised by the election organisers. The process of election typically consisted of three seperate and consecutive stages : election to the local assembly, election to the provincial electoral assembly and finally election to the State Duma. Each assembly was elected solely to determine the composition of the subsequent higher assembly. Such a contrived three-layer sequence naturally multiplied the opportunities for government pressure, enabling the local authorities to screen and sift the candidates for election to the Duma.[3] The more 'reliable' the curia, the more straightforward was its

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1 Attempts at brief surveys include P.Gronsky, War and the Russian Government, Yale U.P. 1929, pp.12-16, Milyukov, 'The Representative System', pp. 35-8 and Yeroshkin, Istoria Gosudarstvennikh Uchrezhdenii, p.271 and diagram 8 ; the only full descriptions of the 1912 elections are Chermensky, 'Vybory v chetvertuyu gosudarstvennuyu Dumu', Voprosi Istorii, 1947:4, pp. 21-40 and CHERMENSKY 67-129.

2 Gronsky, War and the Russian Government, pp.12-13.

3 Ibid, pp.13-15 ; Milyukov, 'The Representative System', pp.35-8 ; CHERMENSKY 67 & 74-129.

electoral machinery: the major landowners curia featured only the final two electoral stages. The more 'suspect' the curia, the more complex and protract--ed was the machinery : the peasant and proletariat curiae featured at least three electoral stages. The basic principle was that 'the more democratic the voter, the more stages have to be passed'.[4]

At the most critical electoral stage - the provincial assembly which elected the deputies to the Duma - the 'direct' Russian electorate constitut--ed only a tiny proportion of either the total population of the Russian Empire (about 150 million in 1912) or the'nominal' electorate.[5] The total 'direct' electorate amounted to just 5,252 individuals, who were arbitrarily distributed between the curiae in the following proportions :[6]

Landowner	2,594 electors	=	49.4 % of 'direct' electorate
Town (1)	788	=	15
Town (2)	590	=	11.2
Peasant	1,168	=	22.2
Proletariat	112	=	2.1

The enormity of this travesty of national representation was graphically demonstrated by Milyukov :

> The number of electors givem to the various constituencies varies in opposite proportion to the number of the population. Thus for instance one fifth of a million of landed gentry have the right to choose 2,594 electors, one-half million of wealthy citizens choose 788 electors, eight millions of the middle class choose only 590 electors, twelve million of working-men choose 112 electors, seventy million peasants choose 1168. It works out at one elector for every 230 of the landed gentry, for every thousand wealthy citizens, for every fifteen thousand middle-class citizens, for every sixty thousand peasants, and for every 125,000 working-men. (7)

The whole electoral system was heavily weighted in favour of the class considered to be politically most 'reliable', against the classes which had proved their 'unreliability' in 1905, and was so constructed as to offer the

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4 Milyukov,'The Representative System',p.37.

5 Estimated population of the Russian Empire in 1913 was 155.4 million : Cambridge Economic History of Europe,Cambridge U.P. 1966,vol.I,p.63.

6 Milyukov,'The Representative System',pp.35-6 ; also E.A.Goldenweiser,'The Russian Duma', Political Science Quarterly,vol.29,September 1914,p.417 and CHERMENSKY 67.

7 Milyukov,'The Representative System',pp.35-6.

MVD every possible opportunity to determine the composition of the Duma.

General elections were as unfamiliar to the tsarist government as to the political parties but on each occasion the MVD improved past techniques of electoral falsification and added to its already impressive repertoire. The blatantly illegal and the quasi-legal devices of the MVD to secure an amenable Fourth Duma surpassed all its previous efforts. Again it is Milyukov who offers the best brief description of the various means employed:

> What a campaign this was ! Everyone who was the least bit suspect politically was unceremoniously eliminated from participation in the elections. Whole categories of people were deprived of their electoral rights or the possibility of participating in the elections.Undesirable elections were annulled. Pre-election meetings were not permitted and it was forbidden even to speak, write ot print the names of undesirable parties. The electoral congresses were divided into arbitrary groups in order to create an artifiwial majority. (8)

In the provinces, out of the eye of the national and world press, electoral abuse reached a new peak.[9] While the MVD was constrained to be a little more circumspect in the capital cities, its efforts there were hardly less decisive. In his description of the electoral campaign in the St Petersburg Workers Curia, the Bolshevik Badayev covered a catalogue of devices by which the MVD suborned the elections. Only workers at factories employing more than fifty men possessed the vote even at the lowest level. Only workers employed continuously for six months before the elections enjoyed the vote, thereby eliminating the substantial casual and seasonal labour force as well as offering the police the opportunity to exclude known trouble-makers by securing their dismissal on the eve of the elections. The suffrage which in theory extended to all householders over 25 was in practice restricted to those paying house-tax. The election dates were kept secret until the last possible moment in the hope of gaining a snap-vote victory over the Left parties. Elections were deliberately timed to coincide with three-day factory holidays when a considerable proportion of the proletariat might be

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8 MILIUKOV 280.

9 See for example the experience of Boris A. Engel'hardt in Mogilev province : Rukopisnii Otdel Biblioteki imeni V.I.Lenina (Lenin Library Manuscript Department),f.218, OP 305-6 (cited hereafter as ENGEL'HARDT),xii,pp.301-311 ; also Chermensky,'Vybory',pp.34-7.

expected to be away from the capital. Complaints about illegalities and irregularities were invariably 'mislaid' by the bureaucracy until after the elections, by which time even the most persevering complainant conceded the pointlessness of further protest.[10] Complaints about electoral malfeasance flooded into both the MVD and the offices of leading politicians, offering abundant proof of the determination of the government to fabricate a national assembly convenient to itself.[11]

The fortunes of the moderate parties in the Fourth Duma were by now in the hands of the government and (more tenuously) the country. While the moderates were unhappy and ill-at-ease with both the relationships crucial to their future, the Kadets and Oktobrists differed in the relative import--ance which they ascribed to the two factors. The Oktobrists placed the greater part of their hopes upon government patronage and by implication downgraded the rôle of their electorate.[12] The Kadets woke up to the unpalatable fact that their only hope of avoiding annihilation by the MVD now lay with a substantial measure of popular support. Uneasily conscious of the fickleness of the electorate, fear dominated the Kadets as the elections commenced. In the month following the Lena Massacre, the Kadets had been anxious that the Leftward shift in the political climate might benefit the Extreme Left parties at the expense of the moderates.[13] By the election eve, this anxiety had been replaced by the fear that apathy on the part of an electorate disappointed by the performance of the Third Duma might allow the MVD complete control over the composition of the Fourth Duma. A police agent attending a Kadet meeting in July commented on this growing belief :

> In Moscow Kadet circles, news of the most complete apathy on the part of the electors towards the elections is making a dispiriting impress--ion. The Kadet centre asserts ... that there is mass dissatisfaction

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10 A.Badayev, The Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma, London 1930, pp.6-23 passim.

11 See local Kadet complaints sent to Milyukov : TsGAOR, f.579(Milyukov), i, dela 49(Orlov), 51(Yaroslavl'), 57(Tambov), 59(Odessa) and 209(Voronezh) ; also Rech', 11 and 13 October 1912.

12 CHERMENSKY 49-50.

13 Petersburg reports of 13 & 14 May 1912 : POLICE, xiii, 27/57, 25 & 26.

> in the provinces and that this will find an outlet at the elections. Indifference pervades the small electors i.e. the element on which the Kadets especially rely. (14)

The first stage of the elections was marked by extreme tension on the part of the candidates and relative indifference on the part of the electorate, who on the basis of past experience were not sanguine about the prospects for the new Duma. Stanley Washburn, the resident Times correspondent in St Petersburg, confirmed this impression of universal insouciance, explaining that 'everyone knows now about how much - or rather how little - the legislature can expect to do ; the public has realised that it is not going to find in the fourth Duma what have been vaguely called "the fresh forces of Russia"'.[15] As if to confirm the moderates' worst fears, a last-minute conference of provincial governors called by the MVD in early September heavily underlined the necessity of throwing the full weight of government patronage behind the Right wing.[16]

The initial elections at the local level were set in motion with the formal publication of the lists of registered voters on 8 September.[17] Contemporary opinion of the electoral expectations of the moderate parties furnished Washburn with the material for his Times article 'Prospects of the Parties'. In the Oktobrists he found little to praise and legitimate cause for profound dissatisfaction :

> The party whose fate will be watched with the greatest interest ... will have to suffer for any disappointment with the achievement of the third Duma ... They will carry the main responsibility for the acquiescence of the Duma in the shelving or curtailing of all sorts of needed reforms.

The Progressists were dismissed almost as a make-weight in the electoral 'progressive bloc' organised by the Kadets :

> One can hardly speak of a party. They represent an attitude of mind ... In the fourth Duma, they are almost certain to be stronger. There is being organised a Progressive Block which will bring them into touch

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14 Moscow report of 5 July 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/46,18.

15 Times, 23 September 1912(n/s),3f.

16 MILIUKOV 280 ; KOKOVTSOV 336-7.

17 Times,23 September 1912(n/s),3f.

> with Left Octobrists and Right Cadets ; it aims not at a programme, but at a platform ; and leaving a maximum of independence to individuals, it will probably unite some of the best voices in Russia in favour of what would most generally appeal to all.

Washburn reserved his guarded approval for the Kadets, for although 'they can hardly gain much on their present 50 seats ... they will be a strong,resolute and capable element in the cause of progress in the fourth Duma'.[18]

The results of the primary elections released in mid September appeared to dash any residual moderate hopes. The mobilisation of the clergy ordered by Sabler exceeded the most optimistic Right expectations to the extent of actually embarrassing the government. 'In forty-nine provinces, out of 8,764 representatives, 7142 were clergymen' : some 80% of the first-stage electors to the Duma were priests.[19] Although the current results constituted only the first stage of the electoral process, the prospect of a clerical-dominat--ed Duma was no less alarming to the government than to the moderate parties. It was waggishly rumoured in political circles that Kokovtsov had been given the choice of dissolving the 'Pope's House' or surrendering the premiership to the Procurator of the Holy Synod.[20] Overwhelmed by the unexpected volume of clerical representation, the MVD hurriedly issued instructions to filter off a sizeable proportion of its own supporters :

> Thanks to the skilful pressure of the Home Office and the Holy Synod, the clerical majority secured at the primaries refrained from delegating a large majority of priests to the provincial electoral colleges and in most cases obediently voted the list of lay electors endorsed by the local authorities ... the clerical deputies are now expected to number 60 instead of over 200. (21)

Having averted at the second electoral stage the clerical Duma threatened by the first stage, the MVD had now to decide just how Rightist the Duma should be in order to act accordingly at the third and crucial electoral stage.

While a substantial body of Right opinion saw no dilemma but that of 'packing' the Duma with the maximum representation of the Right, some leaders

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18 All three quotations : Times, 23 September 1912(n/s),3f.

19 MILIUKOV 280.

20 Times, 4 October 1912(n/s),3c.

21 Times, 16 October 1912(n/s),5d ; also MILIUKOV 280.

were not anxious to see a blatantly packed Rightist Duma. As early as 1 September, Purishkevich, the leader of the Extreme Right in the Third Duma (and subsequently in the Fourth too), rather unexpectedly indicated the dangers of a provocatively gerrymandered Duma :

> I fear that by this election campaign we are entering upon the path of creating a government Duma, that could reduce it to the same address as the chancellery of the Minister of Interior. In such an eventuality the people will be disillusioned of the independence of the State Duma ... and in the idea of popular representation, which will give a push to the growth and success of revolutionary tendencies in the Empire. (22)

Purishkevich here introduced the concept of the Duma as a political safety--valve, a line which subsequently enjoyed considerable currency amongst the moderate Right. In early October, the moderate Right groups reacted to the prospect of losing out to the Extreme Right by similarly warning that 'such a falsification of public sentiment is calculated to revive the unrest of 1905'.[23] The precise influence of these warnings upon government policy is difficult to assess. However it is unlikely that the MVD responded in any significant measure to the charge that its policy was embarrassing the government by its success, especially when the electoral operation was already two-thirds completed.

Party electioneering had its last proscribed opportunity over the two weeks between 2 October (when the elections to the provincial assemblies were completed) and 18 October (when the election of the deputies to the Duma by the provincial assemblies commenced).[24] The Kadet party gamely attempted a last campaign although it must have realised that the contest was essentially over. A Kadet Address to the Moscow electorate published on 10 October avoided the question of political principle almost entirely by concentrating a withering fire upon the Oktobrist Union :

> For five years the Oktobrists and their Right allies have directed the activities of the State Duma - now is your opportunity to deliver your judgement decisively and firmly on their activities ... In judging

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22 Quoted in Rech', 1 September 1912.

23 Times, 18 October 1912(n/s),5c.

24 Times, 16 October 1912(n/s),5d and 2 November 1912(n/s),5f.

> their legislative programme, they displayed their total readiness to take any measures to proscribe and emasculate essential reform and devoted themselves to the interests of the privileged classes alone. (25)

The Kadet Address had little of any constructive import with which to close its condemnation : did the electorate want a continuation of Oktobrist rule or 'do you want the Duma to declare loudly and insistently the necessity of another path for Russia, which alone can bring our country liberty, order, prosperity and strength ?'.[26] Even allowing for the fact that it was specifically aimed at the Moscow electorate as part of a Kadet campaign to storm the Oktobrist citadel, this Address was typical of the tone of the final Kadet effort. With little real alternative to offer to the discredited Oktobrist line, the Kadets still set out to capitalise on the disgrace of their rival by enthusiastically leading the universal chorus of condemnation.

The Oktobrist Union by contrast failed even to mount an Address and passed the election period without a campaign worthy of the name, actions variously interpreted as indolence or guilt. Chermensky has suggested that 'the Central Committee of the Oktobrists decided to refrain from publishing an electoral declaration and even from organising election meetings for wider sections of the electorate ... because they placed all their hopes on government "patronage"'.[27] Whilst not attempting to deny the validity of this interpretation, the chronic internal condition of the Oktobrist Union must also have played a considerable part. Even amongst the Oktobrists who agreed with the basic policy of Guchkov, the element of risk (not to mention wounded amour-propre) involved in total reliance upon the government prompted some criticism. In a letter to the Oktobrist Central Committee in August, N.S.Avdakov expressed deep misgivings :

> It is essential to make clear whether the Union of 17 October even exists. If it does, then we must organise its activities quickly and

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25 POLICE,xiii,27/46(Moscow),29.

26 Ibid.

27 CHERMENSKY 49-50.

> energetically. Otherwise, we must acknowledge that the Union of 17 October will not exist much longer. (28)

Yet despite the sense of foreboding with which the Oktobrists put all their electoral eggs in the government basket, the past record of the Oktobrists in the Third Duma and the fragmented state of the Union effectively precluded any alternative electoral policy.

The MVD seems to have passed the final electoral fortnight with a similar fatalism, but one born of supreme confidence. When the Moscow Town Governor suggested to the Police Director that the Department of Posts might confiscate the Kadet election addresses currently in the mail, Beletsky was in no hurry to reply that 'in my opinion, confiscation of the addresses ..., being as they are only the usual pre-election bulletins, would only aggravate the situation and serve no real purpose'.[29] Beletsky's reasons for inaction are unproved. Practical grounds may have dictated his decision : by the time that the confiscation proposal appeared for consideration, most of the mailed addresses had already been delivered. It is also possible that Beletsky did not consider the rewards sufficient to justify the operation : why make martyrs of the Kadets unnecessarily ? Most probably however, the dramatic success of MVD manipulation of the first two electoral stages engendered a confidence that the composition of the Duma was by now predetermined,rendering superfluous party campaigning and last-minute MVD action alike.

From 18 October the provincial electoral assemblies were authorised to select their deputies to the Fourth Duma ; the third and final stage of the protracted '3rd June' electoral process was smoothly and speedily executed. With the first sitting of the new Duma scheduled for 15 November, the release of the final electoral returns on 28 October allowed the politically-aware a brief fortnight to attempt to project the composition of the Duma which

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28 Letter of 17 August 1912 : TsGAOR,f.160(Oktobrist Union),I,76,27 quoted in CHERMENSKY 49.

29 Bendorf to Beletsky, 13 October 1912 : POLICE,xiii,27/46(Moscow),30 ; Beletsky to Bendorf, 17 October 1912 : ibid,31.

the MVD-manipulated elections had presented Russia for the next five years.[30]

2. The Composition of the new Duma

It would be unrealistic to assume that any parliamentary institution can maintain itself totally without change but although the five-year duration of the Duma naturally involved alterations in composition, prompted by factors ranging from party crises to the resignations or deaths of individual deputies, the fundamental pattern of the Fourth Duma remained that determined by the elections of September-October 1912. The present section attempts to establish a profile of the Fourth Duma by considering its composition under eight headings : party affiliation, electoral demography, nationality, religion, occupation and class, education, age and parliament--ary experience.[31]

Party affiliation.The effect of the 1912 elections may be judged most conven--iently by comparing the official Duma statistics on fraction membership for the last session of the Third Duma and the first session of the Fourth :[32]

Fraction	Third Duma: *sessia* V	Fourth Duma: *sessia* I	+ or -
Rights	51	64	+ 13
Nationalists	91	88	+ 30
Centre	-	33	
Oktobrists	130	99	- 31
Progressists	36	47	+ 11
Kadets	53	57	+ 4

30 Times, 2 November 1912(n/s),5f.

31 Comparisons with the Third Duma on some of the eight headings may be drawn from C.Jay Smith Jr,'The Russian Third State Duma : an analytical profile', Russian Review,vol.17,no.3,July 1958,pp.201-210.

32 Spisoki chlenov Gosudarstvennoy Dumy po partyinym gruppirovkam in the Appendices to the Stenograficheskie Otchyety,sozyv III,sessia V,st. 19-24 and sozyv IV, sessia I,st. 19-24.

Nationalities	27	21	- 6
Trudoviks	11	10	- 1
Social Democrats	13	14	+ 1
Unaffiliated	23	4	- 19

It must be noted immediately that the party representation which emerged from the Duma elections was by no means sacrosanct. Party affiliation was the most transient aspect of the Fourth Duma, the most sensitive barometer of the mood of the Duma and its response to major political and national issues. Each Duma session brought changes in the relative numerical strength of the major fractions which adjusted the initial election distribution. The influx of a considerable body of new deputies into the Fourth Duma also meant that precise fraction affiliation remained unfinalized until well into the 1912-13 session.

Yet despite these caveats, the fact remains that the 1912 elections dictated party distribution to an extent unmatched by all other influences combined. The most striking lesson of the elections was that the two principal electoral factors had effectively cancelled each other out. Government patronage, though perhaps a little disappointing, had proved its strength in boosting the representation of the Right wing by 43 seats (from 142 to 185). However the opposition movement in the country at large had managed to penetrate the 3/rd June electoral system to inch up the representation of the Left wing by 9 seats (from 140 to 149).[33] The government had cause for both self-congratulation and anxiety. While the representation of the Right had been substantially augmented, MVD influence in the elections had been decisive rather than overwhelming. The popular opposition movement, which showed every sign of developing further, seemed powerful enough to threaten even the MVD control of the electoral process. The martyr to the increased representation of both Left and Right wings was the Oktobrist fraction in the axis position in the Duma ; the overall effect of the 1912 elections

33 'Right wing' : Rights(64),Nationalists(88) and Centre(33) ; 'Left wing': SDs(14),Trudoviks(10),Nationalities(9),Kadets(57) & Progressists(47).

upon the Duma was to strengthen the political extremes of Right and Left at the expense of the Centre. The axis position which had in the Third Duma raised the possibility of a constructive relationship with the government was now seriously undermined. Perhaps the greatest misfortune of the 1912 elections was that neither electoral force had defeated the other : each had triumphed in its own sphere, leaving the political centre without the support of either.

Electoral Demography. Even over the relatively brief existence of the Duma, the various regions of the Russian Empire had developed distinct political allegiances. The decision of both the MVD and the more organised Duma fractions to institute detailed surveys upon which to base their election activities demonstrated that the complex pattern of electoral demography was readily appreciated.[34]

The overall voting pattern was well-established. The extreme eastern areas of the Russian Empire,particularly Siberia and Trans-Baikal, were invariably Left in sympathy, providing much of the support for the Extreme Left fractions in the Fourth Duma. This arose partly from the regular presence of political exiles banished from European Russia (whose energies in exile were employed converting the local population) but principally from the radical leanings of a vigorous frontier society.[35] The extreme western areas of the Russian Empire were just as reliably Right in sympathy. The high proportion of Jewish, Polish and Baltic minorities had prompted the government to institute a rigorous system of repression designed to ensure the primacy of the Russian tongue and way of life. As a result, the privileg--ed class which enjoyed Duma franchise was composed of Russifiers passionately convinced of the need to defend the Russian cause against the ambitions

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34 MVD : survey of January 1912(POLICE,247,1 quoted in CHERMENSKY 44) ; Kadets : 31-page survey of early 1911(TsGAOR,f.125,ii,10,5-36) and 77-page survey of early 1912(POLICE,xiii,27-1912,35-112).

35 Milyukov,'The Representative System',p.39 ; C.Jay Smith,'The Russian Third State Duma',pp.208-9.

of subject minorities.[36] Between the Right stronghold of the West and the Left stronghold of the East lay the heartland of European Russia. Much of the Ukraine, part of the Volga lands and the territory between the capitals were dominated by the landowning influence, which meant, translated into political terms, by Oktobrism. A section striking westward towards Moscow from the Far East illustrated growing support for the moderate line over the Extreme Left : Far East and Trans-Baikal(Menshevik), Siberia and Trans-Ural (Trudovik), Volga valley(Kadet and Progressist) and Kazan'(Oktobrist).[37] A comparable section striking eastward towards Moscow from the Baltic again demonstrated growing support for the moderate line, but this time over the Right : Vil'na(Extreme Right), White Russia(Nationalist) and Tver and the Moscow environs(Oktobrist).[38] The East represented the political Left,the West represented the Right, and central Russia the moderate position.

Onto this broad chart of correlation between geographical region and political complexion must be superimposed the allegiance of the urban communities. Electorally-speaking, there were only seven urban centres : St Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Riga, Warsaw and Lodz. These cities enjoyed the privilege of electing directly to the Duma from the initial electoral stage, which cut down MVD opportunities for interference and greatly increased the chances for the selection of moderate deputies.[39] The

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36 Milyukov,ibid,p.39 ; C.Jay Smith,ibid,pp.207-9.

37 Mensheviks A.I.Ryslev(Amur constituency) and I.N.Man'kov(Irkutsk) ; Trudoviks V.M.Vershinin(Tomsk) & V.I.Dzubinsky,M.S.Rysev and A.S. Sukhanov(all Tobol'sk) ; Kadets V.I.Almazov(Saratov),N.A.Gladysh(Samara) and M.S.Adzhemov,M.S.Veronkov,A.A.Nazarov,V.A.Kharmelev and F.V.Chernyach--ukin(all Don Cossacks) ; Progressists V.V.Klenov,A.M.Maslennyakov and N.N.L'vov(all Saratov) and A.I.Nevikov,V.S.Obedovsky and A.P.Sidorov(all Samara) ; Oktobrists I.A.Bazhanov,P.F.Bychkov and I.V.Godnev(all Kazan'). Spisok chlenov Gosudarstvennoy Dumy po izbiratle'nyim okrugam in Appendices to Stenograficheskie Otchyety,sozyv IV,sessia I,st. 9-18.

38 Rights G.G.Zamyslevsky and V.P.Yuz'vyuk(both Vil'na) ; Nationalists F.I.Ol'khovsky,P.M.Shmyakov and A.I.Mukhin(all Vitebsk) ; Oktobrists M.I.Aref'ev,V.I.Veremev,A.P.Kramarev,A.A.Ledyzhensky and N.M.Shubinskoy (all Tver) and A.Z.Tantsov,A.G.Lelyukhin and V.S.Fil'gin(all Smolensk). Ibid,9-18.

39 The electoral allocation of seats was respectively 6,4,2,2,2,2, and 1 : ibid,10,12,13,14,15,16 & 17 ; also Milyukov,'The Representative System', p.38 and Gronsky,The War and the Russian Government,pp.15-16.

Kadets did particularly well in the capitals, storming the Oktobrist bastion of Moscow to take all four seats, and only conceding two seats out of six in St Petersburg.[40] The location of the remaining five cities along the western periphery of the Empire, together with the greater freedom of operat--ion allowed the MVD outside the capitals, greatly reduced the chances of similarly sweeping victories for the moderates but even so, the Kadets and Progressists jointly managed to secure Riga and Lodz.[41] Warsaw proved the exception to all rules, returning a Menshevik and a deputy to the Polish Kolo ; Kiev saw the joint victory of the Kadets and Nathonalists ; Odessa, perhaps the most cosmopolitan of all the cities, returned two deputies for the Right.[42] Parallel to the'cities' were the 'industrial provinces', which were conceded seperate Workers' Curiae on the strength of the size of the proletariat. In the six industrial provinces of St Petersburg, Moscow, Vladimir, Yekaterinoslav, Kostroma and Khar'kov, the Bolsheviks swept the board.[43] The cities and industrial areas thus tended to constitute islands of the Left in the sea of moderate and extreme Rightism that was European Russia.

Nationality. That the Fourth Duma was overwhelmingly Great Russian by nation--ality may be most readily gauged by considering the meagre exceptions. There existed three parliamentary groups which were specifically 'nationality fractions' : the Polish, the Lithuanian-cum-White Russian and the

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40 Moscow : V.A.Maklakov,N.M.Novikov,M.V.Chelnokov & N.N.Shchepkin(Kadets); Petersburg : P.N.Milyukov,F.I.Rodichev,A.I.Shingarev & L.A.Valikhov (Kadets) and M.D.Kalugin & A.A.Varyshnikov(Progressists). Source : ibid, 13-14 & 15-16.

41 Riga : S.P.Mansyrev(Kadet) and I.P.Zalit(Progressist) ; Lodz : M.K. Bomash(Kadet). Ibid, 13 & 14.

42 Warsaw : E.I.Yagello(Menshevik) and S.N.Alekseyev(Kolo) ; Kiev : S.A. Ivanov(Kadet) and V.Ya.Demchenko(Nationalist) ; Odessa : S.V.Levashev & Archpriest Anatolii(Rights). Ibid, 10,12 & 17.

43 Respectively A.S.Badayev,R.V.Malinovsky,F.I.Samoilov,G.I.Petrovsky,N.R. Shagov and M.K.Muranov : ibid, 9-18 ; also Gronsky,The War and the Russian Government,p.15.

Mohammedan. Numbering respectively 7, 6 and 6, all experienced a drop in representation as a result of the Fourth Duma elections.[44] Their numbers prevented their ever being more than spokesmen for their nationalities for (even combined) their Duma weight was negligible. By 1912 the members of the 'nationality fractions' had resigned themselves to this proscribed rôle and become accustomed to standing outside Duma politics. Placed for convenience's sake on the Left of the Duma spectrum, the 'nationality fractions' normally attended the Kadet fraction, whose self-chosen rôle as champion of subject nationalities was still uncompromised. As a political influence the 'nationality fractions' could be almost entirely discounted.

Not all nationalities deputies chose to stand aside from politics as members of the 'nationality fractions'. Many joined established 'political' fractions. As a natural consequence of the Russification policy, nationality deputies tended to give their allegiance to the Left wing. The three Georgians in the Fourth Duma exercised a proportionately immense influence over the Extreme Left, providing the leadership of the Menshevik fraction (I.S.Chkheidze and A.I.Chkhenkeli) and the secretaryship of the Trudovik fraction (V.L.Gelevani).[45] By contrast however, the two Armenians possessed negligible influence.[46] German influence was considerable and concentrated almost exclusively in the Oktobrist fraction : a self-sufficient group of seven Baltic Germans, four of them barons, constituted a formidable pressure

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44 Polish fraction membership dropped from 11 to 7, Lithuanian-cum-White Russian 7 to 6, Mohammedan 9 to 6 ; Spisok chlenov Gosudarstvennoy Dumy po partyinym gruppirovkam in Appendices to Stenograficheskie Otchyety, sozyv III, sessia V, st. 19-24 and sozyv IV, sessia I, st. 19-24.

45 Unless stated to be otherwise, all the statistics in this section 'The Composition of the New Duma' are from the official Duma records contain--ed in the Appendices to the Gosudarstvennaya Duma: Stenograficheskie Otchyety (cited hereafter as GDSO) under the heading of Ukazatel' (Index). The most valuable sub-divisions are the Spisok chlenov po izbiratel'nym okrugam, pp.19-18, Spisok chlenov po partyinym gruppirovkam, pp.19-24 and Lichnyh Alfabitnyi Ukazatel', pp.57-224. For convenience, all will be cited hereafter as GDSO: UKAZATEL'.

46 M.I.Papadzhanov (Kadet) and A.K.Demyanovich (Centre) : GDSO: UKAZATEL' 164 & 96.

group.[47] Deputies of Baltic nationality who chose to join an established fraction numbered five, three within the Progressist camp.[48] Polish deputies in the same position numbered only two, testifying to the greater cohesion of the Kolo.[49] Jews in the Fourth Duma numbered just three, all Kadets.[50] A single Swede, Dutchman and Greek completed the all too limited list of non--Russian deputies in the Fourth Duma.[51]

One complication in the abstraction of Duma nationality statistics remains the distinction between the Great Russians and Little Russians. The Left wing of the Nationalist fraction was very obviously Ukraine-based : of the total Nationalist membership of 88, tweleve were elected from the city or province of Kiev.[52] However whilst acknowledging both the rapid development of Ukrainian nationalism over the period under discussion and the need for a measure of care in categorizing the Little Russian element, it is probably legitimate as well as convenient to make no distinction in the Duma context. Setting aside the Little Russians therefore, the total representation of non-Russian nationalities in the Fourth Duma reached just 44 deputies (19 in 'nationality fractions' and 25 in 'political fractions'). The non-Russian deputies, a medley of widely-differing and frequently bitterly-bickering individuals, together constituted a bare 10% of the Fourth Duma total.[53] It

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47 Oktobrist Germans : Baron A.F.Meyendorff,Baron O.M.Engel'hardt,Baron N.B. Wolf(all from Liflyand),Baron G.E.Felkerzam(Kurlyand) and G.A.Bergman, O.R.Brashche and K.Yu.Brevern(all from Estlyand) ; the only non-Oktobrist German was the Progressist I.I.Tsimmer(Don). GDSO:UKAZATEL' 146,220,82, 203,70,73,73 & 208.

48 Progressists : M.I.Grodzitsky(Orenburg),I.P.Zallit(Riga) and Ya.Yu. Goldman(Kurlyand) ; also the Kadet I.M.Ramot(Liflyand) and the Trudovik F.O.Keinis(Kovno). GDSO:UKAZATEL' 93,106,90,175 & 116.

49 R.V.Malinovsky(SD) and E.I.Yagello(SD). GDSO:UKAZATEL' 139 & 222.

50 E.BGurevich(Kurlyand),N.M.Friedman(Kovno) and M.K.Bomash(Lodz). GDSO: UKAZATEL' 94,206 & 72.

51 Respectively V.K.Vinberg(Kadet),PP.Shreder(Progressist) and P.V.Sinadino (Centre). GDSO:UKAZATEL' 79,218 & 189.

52 A.I.Savenko,V.Ya.Demchenko,G.A.Vishnevsky,N.N.Chikhachev,N.A.Zhilin,K.P. Grigorovich-Barsky,P.F.Mershchy,M.V.Mitrotsky,A.L.Tregubov,S.E.Steiger, P.T.Naselenko and K.E.Suvchinsky. GDSO:UKAZATEL' 183,95,81,211,105,91, 147,149,200,218,154 & 195.

53 The official membership of the Fourth Duma was 442 : GDSO:UKAZATEL' 19-24.

is hardly necessary to underline that the 90% Russian dominance within the Fourth Duma reflected not the actual demographic balance within the Russian Empire but only the direction of the nationalities policy of the tsarist government.[54]

Religion. The statistics for the religious persuasions of the members of the Fourth Duma are especially revealing when contrasted with those of the First Duma (the closest to a genuine representative assembly that Russia was to achieve under the Tsars) : [55]

	First Duma	Fourth Duma
Russian Orthodox	343 = 76.4%	387 = 88.1%
Roman Catholic	63 = 14.1	20 = 4.6
Lutheran	15 = 3.3	14 = 3.3
Muslim	14 = 3.3	7 = 1.6
Jewish	11 = 2.7	3 = 0.7
Others	2 = 0.2	8 = 1.8

Two points are immediately apparent : the 'natural' hegemony of the Russian Orthodov faith was reinforced between 1906 and 1912 by government manipulat--ion of the electoral system ; and the statistics for religion closely mirror those for nationality. To the government of Nicholas II, minority religions and nationalities were essentially manifestations of the same problem. Accordingly, just as the representation permitted the non-Russian nationalities in the Dumas dropped to a mere 10%, the representation of the non-Orthodox faiths was reduced to an almost identically low level. Examin--ation of the Fourth Duma membership on the basis of nationality and religion illuminates both the extent to which the State Duma had been forcibly incorporated into the overall imperial policy of the tsarist government and

54 1897 Census : Great Russians 44.32% of total, Ukrainians 17.81%. In other words, 55.7 % of the Empire was non-Great Russian (R.Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union : Communism and Nationalism 1917-23, Harvard U.P. 1964, p.2).

55 Goldenweiser, 'The Russian Duma', p.419 ; Goldenweiser's statistics differ slightly from those in GDSO:UKAZATEL' but to no significant extent.

the desperate weakness of the Duma's claims to being a representative assembly by late 1912.

Having established the identity of those elements largely excluded from the Fourth Duma, it is essential to consider more closely the composition of those elements which evaded or were allowed to pass the government filter.

Occupation and Class. Eight broad catogories of occupation may be abstracted from the Duma statistics available, represented in the Fourth Duma in the following proportions : [56]

Land	Landowners	63	=	15%	111	=	27% total
	Zemstvo personnel	48	=	12%			
Intelligentsia					69	=	17%
Clergy					49	=	12%
Peasants[57]					47	=	12%
Civil servants					43	=	10½%
Armed Forces					35	=	9%
Industrial/Commercial					31	=	7½%
Industrial Proletariat					12	=	3%
					397	=	98% of 413[58]

The flavour of the Fourth Duma emerges at once. Though not dominated by landowners (for the landowner representation of 15% lay second to that of the intelligentsia), it was an assembly whose leading interest was land. The combined interests of the landowners and zemstvo personnel constituted a land interest which clearly outstripped its nearest rival (by 27% to 17%). The Fourth Duma was equally clearly dominated by traditional forces : the

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56 The basic source for this sub-section remains GDSO:UKAZATEL',on occasion supported by the most widely-employed Duma 'handbook' M.P.Boievich(Ed.), Chleny Gosudarstvennoy Dumy : Nashi Deputaty, St Petersburg 1913.

57 While the electoral peasant curia officially returned 74 deputies,less than 50 were actually peasants, the balance being made up by small landowners : CHERMENSKY 122-3.

58 Of the total 442 deputies, the nineteen in the 'nationality fractions' have been excluded on grounds of 'non-politics', personal details proved insufficient on ten, and a final sixteen fell into none of the eight designated categories. These statistics therefore cover only 397 of the total 442 deputies.

land, priest, peasant, military and bureaucratic interests together commanded 71% of total Duma membership while the more progressive elements (the intelligentsia, industrial and commercial capital, and the proletariat) held a weak numerical position.

A great deal about fraction identity is revealed by comparing the distribution of categories of occupation fraction by fraction :

Fraction	Land Owner	Land Zemstvo	Intell.	Clergy	Peasant	Civil Serv.	Milit	Indust	Prol.
Right	13	1	5	22	14	6	2	2	0
Nationalist	12	10	8	20	17	12	13	0	0
Centre	7	3	0	2	3	9	8	1	0
Oktobrist	30	22	13	0	3	11	3	9	0
Progressist	1	3	14	5	3	0	5	13	2
Kadet	0	9	24	0	3	5	4	4	0
Trudovik	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	2	0
Menshevik	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Bolshevik	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	63	48	69	49	47	43	35	31	12

The forces of tradition obviously adhered to the Duma Right wing. Of the land interest in the Duma, only 12% (13 out of 111) were to the Left of the Oktobrist fraction. The Orthodox clergy were grouped overwhelmingly on the Right wing : all but 7 (or 13%) were affiliated to the Nationalist or Right fractions. The peasants were marginally more widely distributed, admitting the possibility of isolated groups on the Left wing, but even so the clear majority (65%) were again in the Nationalist and Right fractions. The civil servants too were a Right-wing phenomenon : all but 5 of the 43 were of an Oktobrist or further Right position. Finally for the Right came the military, only 9 (or 25%) of whom were further Left than the Oktobrist position. Despite untypical actions by exceptional individuals , the traditional slant of the landowners, clergy, peasants, civil servants, and soldiers was expressed in firm commitment to the Right-wing fractions.

The more progressive forces of society were equally committed to the moderate and Left-wing fractions. The ranks of the intelligentsia, while quite widely spread, concentrated their numbers on the three moderate fract--ions which together commanded 51 (or 73%) of intelligentsia representation. Of the total intelligentsia representation, 24 (or 34%) were Kadet, 14 (or 20%) Progressist and 13 (or 19%) Oktobrist. Industrial and commercial representation, whilst comparatively slight, was also an essentially moderate phenomenon : the Kadets, Progressists and Oktobrists commanded 26 (or 80%) of its Duma strength. The industrial proletariat inevitably made a poor showing in the Duma membership : of a total of 12, 6 were Bolsheviks, 4 Mensheviks and two Progressists. While the peasant in the Fourth Duma tended to be Right in his allegiance, the industrial worker was without exception committed to the Left.

The above statistics for occupation and class are particularly valuable in establishing the flavour and balance of the Fourth Duma as a national assembly, illuminating the complex Duma fraction spectrum and providing a first insight into the distinctive identities of the leading fractions.

Education. The education of the Duma deputies may be most conveniently discussed under six headings : university, technical, military, religious seminary, secondary level and primary level only. Statistics on this basis present the following profile of the Fourth Duma membership : [59]

University	134	=	31% of total
Secondary	57	=	14%
Primary only	56	=	14%
Military	46	=	11%
Religious Seminary	46	=	11%
Technical	38	=	9%
	377	=	90%

59 Information on the education of deputies proved available and easily categorised on only 377 of the total 442, hence the figures differ slightly from these quoted in 'Occupation and Class'.

The Fourth Duma featured a considerable measure of representation for each level and type of education : 31% had enjoyed a university education but 28% had at most a secondary education ; the three principal types of vocation--al training had approximately equal representation ; university education, school education and vocational training were present in very comparable proportions.

More informative of the bearing of education upon fraction identity are the more detailed statistics for the individual fractions :

Fraction	Univ.	Tech.	Milit.	Seminary	2-ary	1-ary
Right	10	7	5	22	7	14
Nationalist	17	3	18	21	8	12
Centre	9	4	9	3	2	5
Oktobrist	45	6	12	0	15	8
Progressist	15	9	0	0	10	4
Kadet	34	7	1	0	8	3
Trudovik	3	0	0	0	4	2
Menshevik	1	1	1	0	2	4
Bolshevik	0	1	0	0	1	4

A further breakdown of the university-education statistics is also revealing. More useful than the bare distribution of university graduates among fract--ions is the proportion of each fraction with a university education :

Kadet	34 university-educated of fraction of	57 = 65% of fraction
Oktobrist	45	99 = 45%
Progressist	15	47 = 33%
Trudovik	3	9 = 33%
Centre	9	33 = 27%
Nationalist	17	88 = 19%
Right	10	64 = 16%
Menshevik	1	9 = 13%
Bolshevik	0	6 = 0%

An educational pattern emerges : if it is assumed, probably correctly, that a university education was superior to that of the other five categories,

the best-educated were the moderate fractions (ranging from 65% to 33% graduate), the next best-educated were the Right wing (ranging from 30% to 15% graduate), and the worst-educated were the Left wing (ranging from 13% to zero graduate). The universities of Moscow and St Petersburg commanded most allegiances : of the total 134 graduates, 54 had attended Moscow and 40 St Petersburg, the remaining 40 being spread thinly over the less prestig--ious provincial universities.[60] Amongst the moderate fractions, which together commanded 94 of the 134 graduates, the same dominance was felt. Interestingly enough, whilst Moscow graduates swamped the Petersburg graduat--es in the moderate fractions, precisely the reverse was true amongst the Right-wing fractions, possibly indicating the different political atmospheres prevailing at the 'government' University of St Petersburg and the 'society' University of Moscow.[61]

Technical education echoed the pattern of university education : 22 moderate deputies, 14 Right wing deputies and only 2 Left wing deputies had undergone technical training. While the Kadèts and Oktobrists headed the lists for university education, the Progressists led for technical education. The distribution of deputies with primary education <u>alone</u> again corroborated the pattern, this time in negative :

Bolshevik	4	Primary-educated <u>only</u> of fraction of	6	= 66% fraction
Menshevik	4		9	= 45%
Right	14		64	= 24%
Trudovik	2		9	= 22%
Centre	5		33	= 15%
Nationalist	12		88	= 14%
Progressist	4		47	= 8½%
Oktobrist	8		99	= 8%
Kadet	3		57	= 5%

60 Moscow 54, St Petersburg 40, Kiev 11, Kazan' 6, Neveressiisk 6, Khar'kov 5, Yuriev 5 and Tomsk 2. The universities of the remaining five are unspecified, very possibly foreign. <u>GDSO:UKAZATEL'</u> 57-224.

61 Kadets : 17 Moscow graduates to 7 Petersburg ; Oktobrists : 17 to 12 ; Progressists : 10 to 5 ; Rights 4 Petersburg to 2 Moscow ; Nationalists 9 to 3. <u>GDSO:UKAZATEL'</u> 57-224.

The figures for primary education alone fall into the familiar grouping : the Left wing (over 25%), the Right wing (25-10%) and the moderates (less than 10%). Thus the figures for university, technical and primary education all postulate a fundamental tri-partite division of the Duma.

Age. The average age of the Fourth Duma deputy on election was 44.2 years. Although the life expectancy in Russia in 1912 was still remarkably short, the Fourth Duma average was still sufficient to refute any accusation that the Duma was an assembly of greybeards.[62] A further breakdown of the statistics fraction by fraction again proves rewarding. The age of the aver--age deputy within each Duma fraction in November 1912 was as follows :

Right	41
Nationalist	46
Centre	42
Oktobrist	47
Progressist	44
Kadet	48
Trudevik	38
Menshevik	34
Belshevik	33

A pattern similar to that already remarked for education appears : the fractions with the oldest membership were the moderates (Kadets and Oktobr--ists generally in their late '40s), the next oldest the Right wing (Centre, Nationalists and Rights generally in their early '40s), and the youngest the Left wing (Belsheviks, Mensheviks and Trudeviks in their '30s). The youngest members of the Duma, and even more so their supporters outside the Duma, readily equated youth with the Left wing, a fairly justifiable conclusion in the circumstances. But many fell into the trap of equating old age with the Right wing which, as the Duma statistics demonstrate, was patently untrue. The membership of the Fourth Duma was in any case comparatively young ; but

62 Expectation of life at birth in European Russia, 1895 : 31(male), 33 33(female) ; 1926 : 42(male), 47(female). The Cambridge Economic History of Europe,vol.vi, p.82.

even the oldest deputies the Fourth Duma had to offer were typically not reactionaries but moderates.

A second pattern may be discerned by comparing the age of the fraction membership with the age of the fraction itself. The older fractions which had contrived a continuous Duma career since 1906 tended both to rely upon their veterans and to attract an older membership. The veteran Kadet and Oktobrist fractions enjoyed the oldest membership in the Fourth Duma (48 and 47 respectively in 1912) while the recently-emerged Progressist fraction had an average age of 44, marginally but significantly lower. Similarly, the newly-created Centre fraction's average of 42 was appreciably lower than that of the neighbouring Oktobrist and Nationalist fractions (47 and 46 respectively).

The tentative conclusion may be drawn that the average age of the membership of a Duma fraction depended upon two factors : the position of the fraction in the Duma spectrum and the age of the fraction itself.

Parliamentary experience. The total number of Fourth Duma deputies with parliamentary experience was 123. The first conclusion is both glaring and crucial : since only 123 (or 29%) of the Fourth Duma membership had partic--ipated in one or more earlier Dumas, it followed that 71% had no parliament--ary experience. The explanation for the low level of experience is probably two-fold. The victimization by the MVD of known 'trouble-makers' - the defeat of Guchkov in Moscow being the prime example - undoubtedly claimed a proportion of those Third Duma deputies who had wished to continue their parliamentary careers.[63] But more seriously to Duma morale, disillusionment on the part of some Third Duma deputies dissuaded them from standing for re-election in 1912.[64] The large proportion of new deputies may be interpreted not as a healthy symptom of a virile national legislature in the natural process of renewing itself but in part as a reflection of that

63 MILIUKOV 282 ; KLYUZHEV,i,8,174.

64 ENGEL'HARDT,xi,299-301 ; KLYUZHEV,i,8,181.

legislature's faltering belief in itself.

A fraction by fraction survey of the Duma experience of the Fourth Duma membership reveals the following table :

	Right	Nat.	Cent.	Okt.	Prog.	Kadet	Trud.	Men.	Bel.
1st Duma only	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
2nd Duma only	1	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	0
3rd Duma only	11	16	5	31	4	12	2	1	0
1st & 2nd Dumas	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1st & 3rd Dumas	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
2nd & 3rd Dumas	3	3	2	7	1	7	1	0	0
1st,2nd & 3rd Dumas	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0
	15	20	8	42	7	27	3	1	0

To the Kadets belonged the claim of the longest experience of the Duma : three Kadets had sat in all four Dumas (a record that no other fraction could approach) and a further seven had sat in all but the First Duma (a record that only the Oktobrists could equal and none could better).[65] However the Oktobrist fraction enjoyed the strongest force of continuity from the Third Duma : 38 Oktobrist deputies from the Third Duma were re-elect-ed to the Fourth ; not surprisingly the Kadets followed next with 23 deputies.

The basic pattern which has become familiar under the headings of 'Education' and 'Age' emerges again on drawing up a table illustrating the degree of parliamentary experience within each fraction :

Kadet	27 with Duma experience in fraction of	57	=	48% of total
Oktobrist	42	99	=	42%
Trudovik	3	10	=	30%
Centre	8	33	=	25%

65 'Three Kadets' : F.I.Rodichev,V.A.Kharmalov and K.L.Bardizh ; 'a further seven' : M.S.Adzhemov,M.S.Verenkov,F.A.Yeremin,V.A.Maklakov,M.V.Chelnokov and A.I.Shingarev ; 'the Oktobrists could equal' : I.S.Klyuzhev,S.V. Lukashevich,L.G.Lyuts,N.N.Opochinin,A.Z.Tantsov,K.N.Timirev and N.A. Khomyakov. GDSO:UKAZATEL' 179,206,67 ; 57,83,104,138,209,216 ; 119,134, 137,162,196,199 & 208.

Nationalist	20 with Duma experience in fraction of	88	=	22% of total
Right	15	64	=	21%
Progressist	7	47	=	15%
Menshevik	1	9	=	12%
Bolshevik	0	6	=	0%

The greatest parliamentary experience lay with the moderate fractions (over 30%), the lesser lay with the Right wing fractions (20-25%), and by far the least experienced was the Left wing (below 15%).

The various statistics on the composition of the Fourth Duma start to lend some substance to the (at first sight) rather arbitrary bracketing of the Oktobrist, Kadet and Progressist fractions under a collective title. These three fractions featured certain fundamental similarities which simul--taneously marked them off from all other fractions. Their central position around the fulcrum of the Duma offered each the possibility of a parliament--ary eminence out of all proportion to fraction size or national support. All three were linked by their high recruitment from the intelligentsia : 51 of the 69 intelligentsia deputies in the Fourth Duma were Kadet, Oktobrist or Progressist. Educationally the three fractions headed the Duma membership : 94 of the total 134 university graduates were Kadets, Oktobrists or Progressists. Over half of the deputies with Duma experience (69 out of 123) were Kadets or Oktobrists alone. Even the age pattern of the Duma placed the three fractions in the same camp. The composition of the Fourth Duma, subsequently corroborated by party activities throughout its duration, established not a straightforward distinction between 'Government' and 'Opposition' but a tri-partite division with the central Kadet-Oktobrist-Progressist group seperating the extremes of Left and Right. Although the above parliamentary statistics cannot be either the sole or the definitive basis for judgement, and certainly cannot justify the term 'Moderates', they do provide reasonably satisfactory <u>prima facie</u> evidence for grouping the three fractions together.

The Fourth Duma was a multi-party assembly with a spectrum of eight (and subsequently even more) parliamentary fractions, none of which even approached an absolute majority. The approximate balance of the Extreme Left and Right forces both lent the central Duma fractions enhanced authority and subjected them to exceptional political strain. The crucial importance of the moderate fractions in the Fourth Duma lay less in their not inconsiderable numerical strength - 203 deputies of the total 442 - than in the pivotal positioned which opened to the Oktobrists, Kadets and Progressists the possibility of determining the overall character and policy of the Duma. The Contest between the three fractions for that elusive authority was a vital component in the history of the Duma over the last five years of tsarist Russia.

The Oktobrist fraction was the obvious front-runner in such a contest but suffered a crisis of policy and internal unity which threatened radically to weaken its bid for power. Like the other moderate fractions, the Oktobrist fraction was notable for the range of its social composition : of the total Oktobrist membership of 99, 52 represented the land interest, 13 the intell--igentsia, 11 the civil servants, 9 the industrial/commercial interest and 3 each of the military and peasant interests. Of the eight categories of occupation only two (clergy and proletariat) were absent. Yet despite the comparatively wide range of representation, the political balance was decisively in favour of the land interest. 47% of the entire land interest in the Fourth Duma was concentrated in the Oktobrists (52 deputies out of 111) ; within the fraction itself, the land interest commanded more deputies than all the other interests combined (52 out of 99). With such a heavy numerical preponderance, one could be pardoned for assuming that the land interest was the sole director of Oktobrist policy. But while this was largely true for the Fourth Duma, it had not always been the case. In the early Third Duma, the fraction was led less by the land interest than the

commercial interest headed by Guchkov. The complicated machinery of the Union of 17 October, its committees without number and the complex relations of provincial organisation, Central Committee and Fraction Bureau encouraged the emergence of party bureaucrats. The land deputies with their formal education, love of their country estates and traditional viewpoints had not the time, knowledge or inclination to become party operatives. The commercial class with its pragmatic background, acquaintance with business practice and firm grasp of finance and paperwork proved the recruiting-ground for the party organisation men. Partly from ambition, partly by default, both the fraction and the Union as a whole came to be dominated by the commercial interest, particularly the Moscow clique headed by Guchkov.[66]

The succession of crises after 1909 served to estrange the Oktobrists from the government, fragment the diverse range of the Union and undermine the 'unnatural' commercial leadership of the fraction. The emergence of the Progressists filtered off a significant proportion of the 'commercial Oktobrists' to leave the land interest numerically even more preponderant. The results of the Duma elections confronted the Union with the crisis of its relations with the government. To have its numbers slashed from 130 to 99 was disaster enough but the realisation that the government upon which it had relied so heavily for election success had chosen to abandon it delivered a stunning blow to Oktobrist morale. In the words of the unsympathetic Milyukov ,

> The Oktobrists, the former centre, were particularly badly hit, suffering the double effect of government action and society indignation against them for their conduct in the Third Duma ... The Oktobrists entered the Fourth Duma not only without direct government support but even against the wishes of the government. They were thus freed from the obligation which constrained S.I.Shidlovsky to say in the Third Duma that the Oktobrists, regardless of the terms, would be "always with the government" '. (67)

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66 Hutchinson, The Octobrists, p.374 ; LAVERYCHEV 59 ; DYAKIN 30-2.

67 'Taktiki Fraktsii v svyazi s obshchim politicheskim polozheniem', a regular section of the annual Kadet publication Otchyet o Deyatel'nosty Fraktsii Narodnoy Svobody, published over the Fourth Duma period in three successive instalments : Sessia I(1912-3), Sessia II(1913-4) and Vo Vremya Voiny(covering up to Sptember 1915). Cited hereafter as TAKTIKI. This quotation : TAKTIKI, 1912-3, p.6.

To top this catalogue of catastrophe, the guiding spirit of Oktobrism Guchkov was defeated at the Moscow polls, succumbing to a joint campaign of MVD victimisation and Kadet incitement of popular dissatisfaction with the Third Duma.[68] Although Guchkov was later elected to the State Council, his forcible exclusion from the Duma and Oktobrist fraction exacerbated the developments already in motion. Still further advantage was offered the land interest to remove the last vestiges of commercial direction (now numbering just 9 deputies out of 99) and convert the Oktobrist fraction into essentially a pressure group for the landed interest. The removal of Guchkov from direct control of the fraction also permitted the free development of all the divisive elements against which Guchkov had been vainly fighting in the latter half of the Third Duma.

Yet despite Oktobrist difficulties, there seemed little reason why the Oktobrist fraction should not play a major rôle in the Fourth Duma. The fraction was still the largest in the Duma with 99 deputies, almost a quarter of the total membership. Its provincial organisation had proved resilient under considerable pressure from both MVD and rival electioneering. It enjoy--ed a length of Duma experience second only to the Kadet and by far the strongest force of continuity from the Third Duma. Assuming that the problem of internal unity could be overcome, the Fourth Duma prospects for the Oktobrist fraction though less glittering than in autumn 1907 still seemed excellent. Although the Oktobrists could not hope for a revival of their hegemony of the early Third Duma, they still had a clear advantage over their rivals for parliamentary authority.

The Progressist fraction, the youngest and smallest of the moderate fractions, was in many respects the most intriguing. The initial period of Progressist development was stunted by two fundamental weaknesses. The fraction was essentially a parliamentary creation owing little to bread

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68 MILIUKOV 282 ; Utro Rossii,20 October 1912 ; KLYUZHEV,i,8,174.

support in the country ; unlike other fractions, the Progressists were not the parliamentary representatives of a national party, though attempts were made to sponsor such a party from Moscow and St Petersburg. The Progressist leader ~~was~~ Buryshkin was to admit in exile that 'outside the walls of the Duma, the Progressist party virtually did not exist'.[69] The second weakness was their low parliamentary experience: only seven of the fraction's 47 deputies had served in earlier Dumas, a figure of 15% compared with the Duma average of 29%. Progressist inexperience was all the more glaring in the central moderate position between the Kadets and Oktobrists, the two most experienced fractions in the Duma (48% and 42% respectively). The explanation for the low experience level is two-fold. The Progressist fraction was essentially a recent Duma phenomenon, emerging distinctively only on the eve of the 1912 elections and fighting a general election for the first time. The Progressist fraction also served the same function for the new deputies of the Left as did the Centre fraction for those of the Right : new deputies attached themselves to the Progressists to allow themselves the freedom of considered choice before committing themselves to the closer discipline of an established fraction. As also in the case of the Centre fraction, these deputies often came to value their independence too highly to surrender it and were content to allow a temporary sojourn with the Progressist fraction to become permanent residence.[70] Thus the Progressist fraction emerged and expanded rapidly in the course of 1912 but necessarily featured a very low level of deputies with parliamentary experience.

However the fraction was not without its advantages. In social composition it was the most well-balanced fraction in the Duma : 14 intelligentsia deputies, 13 industrial/commercial, 5 soldiers, 5 priests, 4 landed interest, 3 peasants and 2 industrial workers. Of the eight categories of occupation

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69 P.A.Buryshkin, Moskva Kupecheskaya, New York 1954, p.284 ; also DYAKIN 35.

70 Official Fourth Duma lists, sessia I, : 'full' Progressist members 32, 'associate' members a further 15 (GDSO:UKAZATEL' 23) ; also ENGEL'HARDT, xii, 317-8 & 321.

employed in these statistics, the Progressists could claim representation from all but the civil servants. The fraction was led numerically by not one interest but two : the intelligentsia and the industrial/commercial interest. It could also claim to be the best-qualified spokesman for industry : 13 of the total 31 deputies representing the industrial interest were Progressists (with the Oktobrsists coming next with 9) and two of the twelve proletarian deputies (all the others being concentrated in the Social Democratic fraction). The close support of the Moscow clique of Ryabushinsky had certain undeniable advantages. Industrialist backing lent the Progressist fraction a financial security which the Oktobrists could envy and was beyond the wildest optimism of the Kadets. The Moscow industrialists were prepared to underwrite the regular losses incurred by Utro Rossii and the Progressist fraction throughout the Fourth Duma period in order to maintain a spokesman for industry at the level of educated opinion and the national representative assembly.[71] There is also little doubt that the energy and raw drive of emergent Russian industry communicated themselves to the Progressist fraction to effect the accelerating self-assurance and initiative which became increasingly apparent after the 1912 elections. Although the Progressist fraction could never really claim the support of a national organisation or party, the resources and determination of its industrialist backers appeared more than sufficient to sponsor a political challenge to the Duma authority of its prestigious rivals.

The Kadet fraction enjoyed a respect that not even a Right-wing newcomer to the Duma like Engel'hardt could deny :

> Into Kadet ranks enter in the main the representatives of the free professions ... By educational standards it [the Kadet fraction & R.P.] certainly takes first place in the Duma : significantly more than half of its members have enjoyed higher education. It possesses the most

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71 S.P.Mansyrev,'Moi Vospominania' in Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia, Ed.S.A. Alekseyev, Moscow 1926,p.258 ; also LAVERYCHEV 66 & 97.

> comprehensive political programme and is the spokesman for the hopes and ambitions of the Russian bourgeoisie and liberal nobility. (72)

There was certainly much to admire in the Kadet fraction. It provided a safe refuge for a significant number of nationality deputies and spoke out boldly against the government policy of Russification.[73] It was the most experienc--ed and best educated of all Duma fractions. Although the fraction enjoyed the reputation of spokesman for the intelligentsia, it could not be dismiss--ed as a mere pressure-group for the liberal professions. A common feature of all three moderate fractions was the relatively wide-ranging nature of their recruitment and composition. In each case, while the predominance of the industrial, intelligentsia or land interest was irrefutable, few occupations or interests were entirely unrepresented. Of the 57 Kadet deputies, 24 (some 40%) represented the liberal professions, 9 the land interest, 5 the bureaucratic, 4 the industrial/commercial, a futher 4 the military and 3 the peasant. Of the eight categories of occupation, all but two (priests and industrial workers) possessed some measure of representat--ion. Contributory factors to the social balance of the fraction included its central position, which encouraged the meeting of representatives of most political persuasions and class backgrounds, and the long-established nature of the fraction. The moderate fractions as a whole approximated most closely to the concept of a parliamentary 'party', the two political wings (especially the Extreme Left) approaching the more limited composition and aims associated with the term 'pressure group'.

However the Kadet fraction was not without its problems. While the fraction was comparatively healthy in its parliamentary milieu, the Kadet party as a national organisation was declining at a disastrous rate, to the extent that by mid 1913 one of its own leaders was to term it 'a head without

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72 ENGEL'HARDT,xii,317 & 322.

73 Nationality deputies in the Kadet fraction included V.K.Vinberg(Swede), E.B.Gurevich(Jew), M.I.Papadzhanov(Armenian), I.M.Ramet(Estonian), N.M. Friedman(Jew) and M.K.Bomash(Jew) : GDSO:UKAZATEL' 79,94,164,275,206 & 72.

a body'.[74] Financial troubles dogged the Kadets throughout their political career, the result of dwindling national membership and also the reason for the failure of the Kadet Central Committee to remedy the decline. The 1912 elections posed the Kadets a nightmare on both financial and membership grounds. The elections could reveal to every impertinent eye the extent of the Kadet collapse in the provinces ; only adroit alliance and the fortuit--ous Leftward shift of the national mood in 1912 averted the anticipated exposé. The elections dealt the Kadet party a financial, and indirectly a membership blow. All available financial resources were utilised in the Kadet electoral campaign, leaving very little in reserve. At the first meeting of the new Kadet fraction on 8 November 1912, it was announced that the Central Committee could only afford to pay 10% of election expenses incurred by local Kadet branches.[75] Since the costs involved were often vey high, the weight of the remaining 90% of expenses frequently bankrupted the local Kadet organs.[76] The 1912 elections both pauperised the Kadet party and provided a dramatic stimulus to the already disastrous collapse of its provincial organisation. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the 1912 elections weakened the Kadets so badly that they could not weather another general election.

The Kadet situation, though superficially healthy - Duma representation rose from 53 to 57 as a result of the elections - was in reality desperate. Given that the party must crash at the next elections, the fraction had the five years of the Fourth Duma to attempt to avert catastrophe and save both itself and the party from the political graveyard. The Kadets' only immediate hope was to press the tactics that had saved them at the recent

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74 Ariadna Tyrkova at Kadet Central Committee meeting on 14 May 1913 : TsGAOR,f.6/c.,15,10 quoted in CHERMENSKY 171 ; also DYAKIN 39 and Riha, A Russian European, pp.195-8.

75 POLICE,xiii,27/57(Moscow),42 ; also TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,9,6 and f.125(Kadet Fraction),i,12,5-6.

76 For example, the Kadet campaign in Moscow cost 24,500 rubles, in Kiev 18,000 and in Riga 22,500 : POLICE,xiii,27/57(Moscow),42.

elections : to employ their parliamentary expertise to maximum effect and to continue to work for the downfall of the Oktobrist hegemony of the Duma.

The effect of the 1912 elections was to throw open the political situation in the Duma. The rivalry of the three moderate fractions was never so keen and so bitter. But though their parliamentary ambitions were similar, the three fractions viewed the Fourth Duma very differently : to the Progressists it was their first chance, to the Oktobrists their second, and to the Kadets their last chance.

CHAPTER THREE : THE FOURTH DUMA IN PEACETIME

1. The Oktobrist Crash (November 1912 - December 1913)

When the Fourth Duma opened on 15 November 1912 it was apparent that the mood of the country was not only hostile to the government but profoundly dissatisfied with the Duma itself. Stanley Washburn claimed that,

> Unprejudiced observers in all the provinces report that the Opposition spirit (and by "opposition" in this sense is meant dissatisfaction with the delay in reforms as distinct from a desire to be identified with the Parties who sit on the Left) pervades all classes of the community. (1)

The 'delay in reforms' was interpreted as partly the design of the government but partly the fault of the compromising Third Duma. Milyukov noted a universal impatience with the minutiae of the legislative process :

> Russian society felt the need of stronger excitement than the everyday routine work of the Duma, which was apparently condemned to sterility... The public was not the least interested in the question of how to handle the legislative rubbish left over as a legacy of the Third Duma. (2)

The 1912 elections brought home to the moderate fractions the breakdown in their relations with the government and the country. Though the moderates were never prepared to admit their isolation in public, their private meetings proved that they realised that the distance between the Duma fractions and their extra-Duma suppert was widening. While deficiencies in party organisation and membership could be covered in part by accusations against the MVD for perverting the representative principle, all the moderate fractions were most grateful for a convenient scapegoat.

If the management of the Duma elections was any basis for judgement, the government had now embarked upon a policy of open hostility towards the State Duma ; in such circumstances the isolation of the Duma moderates from the country increased their vulnerability to government attack. If, as seemed likely, the coming sessions of the Fourth Duma were to witness a

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1 Article 'Meeting of the Fourth Duma', Times, 29 November 1912(n/s), 7f.

2 MILIUKOV 284-5 ; A.A.Kizevetter, Na Rubezhe Dvukh Steletii, Prague 1929, p.515.

power struggle between government and Duma, the individual fractions must rally all possible support for their defence. As the government position showed every sign of moving steadily to the Right, the Duma moderates had little choice but to attempt closer links with the country.

Fearing a rancour on the part of the Duma over the elections which might sabotage relations permanently and strengthen Rightist demands to reduce the powers of the Duma, Kokovtsov secured the approval of the Emperor for the removal of Makarov as Minister of Interior, adroitly delaying the announcement until the day before the first Duma sitting for maximum effect. Kokovtsov hoped that the dismissal of Makarov would both express a measure of government apology and remove the most obvious stumbling-block to future relations between government and Duma.[3] However, as Rodzyanko was to remark, the first weeks of the new Duma were remarkable as much for parliam--entary disorder and fraction strife as for the expected attacks on the government :

> The mood of all parties from the Oktobrists Leftwards was exceptionally heightened, one could even say bitter towards the government, but the internal dissension in the Duma was such that the State Duma was not in a position to elect a vice-president for over a month because there was no agreement on candidates. If it is added that the rumours of an imminent coup to reduce the Duma from a legislative to a consultative rôle, and of the possibility of its dissolution in the light of its inability to reach agreements between parties even in the election of the presidium, spread wider and wider, it may be seen how the direct danger to the authority of the representative assembly grew for us into a very real threat. (4)

The early sittings of the first Duma session graphically demonstrated that the elections had not only secured a parliamentary majority openly dissatisfied with the government but in 'disestablishing' the Oktobrists had terminated the past balance and relative stability of the Duma.

The Kadet fraction was the quickest to exploit the discomfiture of the Oktobrists to attempt to improve its relationship with the country. Follow --ing the ceremonial opening of the Fourth Duma and the election of the Duma

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3 KOKOVTSOV 326-7 ; Times,28 November 1912(n/s),5c.

4 Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',pp.3-4.

presidium (which will be discussed below), the first major item on the agenda was the submission of legislative proposals for consideration by Duma open sitting, the first opportunity for ambitious fractions to play to the gallery. The Kadets swept the board with seven eye-catching bills : proposals for freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, freedom of the individual, freedom of assembly, freedom of unions, equality of all citizens before the law and universal suffrage.[5] Soviet commentators have condemned this programme as transparently dishonest : there was not the slightest likelihood of any of the Kadet bills becoming law and the Kadets were cynically 'window-dressing' to draw support to the Kadet flag.[6] In his later years Milyukov strenuously denied the charge : 'we decided that the time was appropriate for introducing as part of the Duma legislation the Kadet project for civil liberties which bore the "stamp" of October 17 ...introducing them was not a mere demonstration'.[7] Milyukov asserted that the most effective means of reviving the confidence of the Russian people in the Duma was a challenge to the government to fulfil the seven-year-old promise contained in Clause One of the October Manifesto 'to grant the population the inviol--able foundations of civil freedom based on the principles of genuine personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and assoc--iation'.[8] This greater Duma need accounted for the Kadet fraction's insist--ence on the immediate implementation of the October Manifesto.[9] Milyukov

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5 For the original texts of the bills, see TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),dela 44, 417,418 & 419. Hereafter the annotation of Duma Stenographic Records will be standardised thus : (1) GDSO (Gosudarstvennaya Duma : Stenograficheskie Otchyoty), (2) Sessia (session) number in Roman numerals, (3) Zasedania (sitting) number in Arabic numerals, and (4) Stolbets (column) number also in Arabic numerals. Unless specifically stated, all references will relate to the Fourth Duma (Chetvertyi sozyv). The Kadet bills' reference is therefore GDSO,I,6,154-5.

6 CHERMENSKY 149 & 185 ; A Short History of the USSR, vol.I,p.297.

7 MILIUKOV 286.

8 Dmytryshyn, Imperial Russia : a source book 1700-1917, p.314.

9 Speech by Milyukov, 13 December 1912 : GDSO,I,11,601-2 ; also MILIUKOV 286.

omitted to point out that in this particular instance what was good for the Duma was even better for the Kadet fraction : the Kadets would take the credit for the Duma's return to fundamental reform.

The Kadets were not the only party represented in the Fourth Duma to include the October Manifesto in their party programme : from the Oktobrists through to the Extreme Left, Clause One of the October Manifesto appeared consistently.[10] While five fractions paid lip-service to the October Manifesto in December 1912, only the Kadets actually made any attempt to secure its implementation. The explanation lay partly in the superior expert--ise of the Kadet fraction and partly in the reduced circumstances of its rivals. Neither SDs nor Trudoviks, seperately or together, could muster the thirty signatures necessary to initiate Duma legislation.[11] The Progressists were still bound to the Kadets by the electoral 'progressive bloc' and overawed by their prestigious partner.[12] The Kadet fraction's chief rival for the legislative limelight was of course the Oktobrist fraction, temporar--ily stunned by its loss of government patronage, its reduced representation and the defeat of Guchkov at Moscow. As a result, the Oktobrists were far slower off the mark than usual, letting slip the initiative to the Kadets.

Of the nine bills submitted to the Fourth Duma on fraction initiative on 3 and 5 December 1912, seven were Kadet.[13] The Kadet deputies had held meetings to discuss their plans for the Duma well before the start of the session and were organised for action before most rival fraction memberships had even arrived in St Petersburg.[14] The Kadets were able to arrange their legislative proposals well in advance of their rivals because 'our jurists

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10 V.Ivanovich, Rossiiskie Partii, Soyuzi i Ligi, St Petersburg 1906, pp.5-6 (SD Programme), 14-15 (Kadet Programme) ; S'ezd Progressistov, 11, 12 i 13 noyabrya 1912 goda, St Petersburg 1913, pp.22-3 (Progressist Programme) ; TsGAOR, f.579, I, 387, 1-8 (Oktobrist Programme of 1907).

11 14 SDs and 10 Trudoviks : GDSO:UKAZATEL' 24.

12 ENGEL'HARDT, xii, 326.

13 GDSO, I, 6, 154-5 and I, 7, 251.

14 Report on Kadet meetings of 8 & 13 November 1912 : POLICE, xiii, 27/57, 41-2.

had prepared excellent texts, which were supposed to have been introduced into the Second Duma, and these texts had been printed'.[15] By early prepar--ation and taking quick advantage of the temporary disorientation of its main rival, the Kadet fraction burst out of the eclipse it had suffered during the Third Duma. To this end almost any publicity was good publicity. The Kadets followed up their legislative coup by introducing a formula to conclude the Duma debate on the government Declaration on 15 December which demanded not only the implementation of the October Manifesto but a democrat--ic electoral law, the reform of the State Council and a government in which the country had confidence. Such a radical formula was inevitably rejected by the full Duma vote but the publicity gained for the Kadets as proponents of fundamental reform was ample compensation.[16]

The Oktobrists were compelled to rest content with the single and much less eye-catching bill for universal primary education.[17] When the Kadet proposals were later examined in open sitting and parliamentary commission, the Oktobrists had little alternative but to support their Kadet rivals in demanding the implementation of the Manifesto which furnished their name. The legislative bills advanced in December 1912 were an opportunity not only for attracting popular support to the new Duma but for one-upmanship between the more ambitious fractions. On this occasion the Kadets proved most successful, thereby drawing the fire of rival fractions furious at being outmaneuvred and piqued that the Kadets should take the credit for putting the current combative spirit of the Duma into print.

The intricacies of the legislative process were by no means the only endeavours to involve the Duma moderates in early 1913. All Kadets were aware that legislative bills alone could not draw the Duma closer to the country for any extended period and the initial impact made by the Kadet

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15 MILIUKOV 286.

16 GDSO, I,14,894-8.

17 GDSO, I,7,251 (sitting of 5 December 1912).

programme must be followed by convincing party action.[18] Despite a strong body of more conservative opinion among the Kadets, the Left wing led by Rodichev took the initiative within the fraction in early January 1913. Rodichev demanded an immediate shift towards stronger opposition and the summoning of a party congress to improve liaison between the provincial organisation and the Kadet executive organs. The attendant police reporter made the following remarks :

> The question of the necessity of calling a party congress has arisen amongst the Kadets, either a congress or maybe a conference ... necess--itated by the need to consider a whole list of questions determining the future line of policy of the Kadet fraction in the State Duma ... [for] the supporters of the so-called "Left movement" headed by F.I. Rodichev hold that the party has settled too complacently for the rôle of "His Majesty's Opposition" and must adopt a sharper line towards the government or lose the sympathy of the liberal circles of society. (19)

At a Kadet conference to debate the shift to the Left held 31 January - 3 February 1913, two lines of policy were agreed : a move for greater unity of action within the Duma (which meant reviving the electoral 'progressive bloc') and a reform programme radical enough to win converts and complement the seven Kadet legislative bills. Resolution 2. of the conference stated :

> The effective strengthening of the State Duma as both legislative and political force can be achieved only by the implementation of three basic conditions : democratization of the electoral law, fundamental reform of the State Council and responsible ministries. (20)

This programme was clearly more radical than that offered by the Kadets to the Duma on 15 December 1912 : within two months the term 'government in which the people have confidence' had become 'responsible ministries'. A further Kadet conference with the participation of provincial delegates held 20-24 February 'possessing the authority and importance of a party congress' formally ratified the policy of the Left Kadets.[21]

The Left Kadets took action precipitately : in open sitting of the Duma on 8 February, Rodichev attacked both government repression and Duma weakness

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18 Report of 4 February 1913 : POLICE,xix,27,7.

19 Report of 5 January 1913 : POLICE,xiii,27-1912,17.

20 Report of 4 February 1913 : POLICE,xix,27,10 ; also TsGAOR,f.579(Milyuk--ov),I,372,1 and TAKTIKI,1912-3,p.8.

21 Undated report : POLICE,xix,27,13.

,concluding a fighting speech on the freedom of the individual with the provocative phrase 'there will be no freedom without force'.[22] The violence of Rodichev's expression thoroughly alarmed fractions to the Right of the Kadets and, as further reports corroborated this initial impression of a new Kadet policy, the opposition of the Right Wing mounted. On 12 March the Duma Press commission rejected the Kadet Press bill ; the next day the Kadet Electoral bill was defeated in open Duma vote 206-126 ; and again on 13 March the Duma rejected by 142 votes to 92 a Kadet proposal to establish a Civil Liberties commission.[23] Even the Oktobrists, who had suffered most from electoral abuse, turned against the Kadets in the vote over the Elect--oral bill.[24] By shifting Left so dramatically, the Kadets antagonised the fractions to the Right and provoked a reaction which could condemn them to perpetual minority opposition.

Equally significantly, the Kadet Right wing rebelled in protest against the new official policy. The Right Kadets emerged rapidly to challenge the take-over effected by their Left Kadet colleagues. At an early January meet--ing, the police reporter was content to mention the group only in passing ; 'as for the so-called Right current in the party (the leader of which is V.A.Maklakov), it is differentiated only by its being rather less obsequious to the Jews, Finns and Poles than the mass of the party'.[25] By late February the same reporter was remarking that 'a group of Maklakovites has been form--ed which demands from the party a more flexible and compromising policy'.[26] Maklakov certainly opposed the current Kadet policy,though ostensibly on practical grounds rather than on principle. Engel'hardt quotes his saying,

> I am a Kadet but I do not recognise two points of the Kadet programme - direct elections and responsible ministries. I do not reject these points but I do not see any likelihood of their implementatio-n under existing circumstances. (27)

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22 GDSO,I,21,1507-1516 (quotation st. 1514).

23 TsGIAL,f.1278(Duma Chancellery),I,2431,4 ; GDSO,I,28,2167-2222.

24 MILIUKOV 286.

25 Report of 5 January 1913 : POLICE,xiii,27-1912,17.

26 Report on Kadet conference,20-4 February 1913 : POLICE,xix,27,13.

27 ENGEL'HARDT,xii,325.

On 12 March Maklakov scandalised the Kadets when, as the Kadet delegate to the Duma Press commission, he voted against his own party's bill.[28] Later the same day Maklakov organised his group of Right Kadets to demand from the fraction a 'working programme' of reforms as opposed to 'chimeric demonstrat--ions'. The issue was postponed until the Kadet Central Committee meeting of 15 March when, in the words of the ever-present police reporter,

> Twelve individuals - all personal friends of Maklakov - made a formal protest against the line of Milyukov. The Kadet fraction was occupying itself with fruitless projects, which were condemned to failure and were positively harmful at the present time when the internal situation of Russia demanded from the Opposition a closer relationship with the government. (29)

The rebellion of twelve deputies (of a Kadet fraction total of 57), headed by the very able and immensely respected Maklakov, was a most effective challenge to the Leftward shift. It did not appear as if the Kadet fraction could long encompass both a Rodichev and a Maklakov.

Despite the hopes entertained by Rodichev and Milyukov for winning greater support in the country, it did not seem that the Kadet move to the Left was practical Duma politics. The policy had precipitated an internal fraction split and threatened to throw the Oktobrists into the arms of the Duma Right. At just this juncture a new development not only cancelled the Kadet shift Left but actually reversed it. The policy of the Oktobrist leadership to move into opposition to the government (suspended over the election period) was resumed in spring 1913, inviting a political response from the Kadets. While the Kadet majority, headed of course by the Right wing of Vasilii Maklakov, was more than sympathetic to some form of collab--oration with the Oktobrists, the Left wing was antagonistic. At first Milyukov managed to restrain the fraction from pursuing any line by stress--ing rumours of Oktobrist disagreement. A police report of 22 May made the following general remarks on the Kadet mood :

> There has been a protracted meeting of the Kadets on the Oktobrist issue. The Kadets are treating the facts very carefully, ascertaining all the available information and have stated that a real split is

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28 TsGIAL, f.1278(Duma Chancellery), I, 2431, 4.

29 POLICE, xix, 27, 25-6.

> occurring in Oktobrist ranks. Shingarev has summed up the position in the phrase "there is no Oktobrist fraction". Yet everybody claims that the rumour that the Left Oktobrists will cross over to the Progressists or form their own party is quite premature. (30)

Milyukov attempted to divert the attention of the fraction from developments on the Right wing by emphasising the decision taken earlier in the year to shift towards the Left :

> Reaffirming the decision taken by the meeting of 2-3 February 1913, the meeting of 25-6 May recognises the following as the immediate tasks of the fraction in the State Duma :
> 1. The uniting of the greatest possible section of the State Duma for the purpose of strengthening its oppositional mood.
> 2. More systematic exploitation of the budgetary rights of the State Duma for the purpose of parliamentary struggle. (31)

Only the prorogation of the Duma on 25 June and the subsequent mass exodus to the country saved the Kadet Left policy from defeat.

When the Kadet deputies returned for the start of the new Duma session on 15 October, the attitude of the fraction majority towards the Left policy had hardened into complete rejection. The debate was conducted in Moscow 5-6 October on the occasion of the jubilee of Russkie Vedomosty, when just two items were placed on the agenda for discussion : 'the mood in the provinces' and 'on a bloc with the Oktobrists'. The feeling of the meeting on the first item was that although, as the Left Kadet Nekrasov reported, there was a definite Leftward movement of the popular mood, 'it was noted that society was not at the same time inclined to demand or support extreme measures but there exists a hope that a compromise may be worked out, into which the government could enter'.[32] Having qualified its forebodings about the mood of the people (and thereby implicitly denied the necessity for a Left policy), the majority opted for alliance with the Oktobrists:

> The majority present at the meeting was for agreement with the Oktobrists and the leader of the party Milyukov was left in an insignificant minority on the question. Milyukov was categorically against such an agreement. Chelnokov,Kishkin and others recognised the desirability of an agreement, stating that if the Kadets did not enter into a bloc with

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30 POLICE,307-1913,96.

31 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,17,13(meeting of 26 May 1913).

32 POLICE,xix,27,60 and xiv,147-1913,5-6.

> the Oktobrists, they were playing into the hands of the Right groups .. Despite the protests of Milyukov, it was decided to initiate negotiat--ions with the Oktobrists. (33)

By autumn 1913 not only had the Kadet fraction cancelled its initial Left--ward policy but had committed itself in principle to a giant parliamentary bloc to the Right. The Kadet majority had decided that closer identification with extra-parliamentary support, though desirable, must take second priority to the exigencies of parliamentary politics. The Kadet bills of December 1912 and the radical programme of February 1913 were allowed to lapse ; they had proved impractical Duma politics.

The problems of the Progressist fraction over this period lay less in political tactics than parliamentary self-confidence. The original Progress--ist fraction programme for the Fourth Duma drawn up in late October 1912 was a blend of Oktobrist and Kadet points, clearly delineating the position of the Progressists in the Duma spectrum. The first six points were :

> 1. Concern for the internal unity and external might of Russia.
> 2. Decisive and persistent struggle for the implementation of the principles of the conservative-monarchist system introduced by the Manifesto of 17 October.
> 3. The protection of the rights and aspirations of lawful institutions.
> 4. The elimination of the arbitrariness of administrative power and the establishment of a system of legality in the life of the country.
> 5. The implementation of freedom of conscience ...
> 6. The elimination of infringements upon national peculiarities,cultur--al independence and the native tongues and religions of national--ities within the Empire. (34)

In October 1912 the Progressist fraction was in the process of transition from the Oktobrist position (whence the fraction had originated) to the Kadet position (which it would soon reach and subsequently pass).

However the First Progressist Congress of 11-13 November 1912 baldly declared the need for the withholding of credits from the government as an instrument of political coercion and the obligation to pursue fundamental reform even at the risk of Duma dissolution :

> Progressists should cherish and defend the rights, dignity and import--ance of the State Duma as an institution ... but there is no necessity to cherish the Fourth Duma. We should not thoughtlessly provoke its

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33 Ibid,pp.61 and 6-7 respectively.

34 POLICE,274,2,3 ; also Lenin,Collected Works,vol.18,pp.441-3.

> dissolution but nor should we be afraid of it, and circumstances may arise when it will be necessary consciously to reckon with dissolution and even hasten it, if that lies in our power. (35)

Although a proportion of the ostensible extremism of the congress must be attributed to its timing (conducted in the shadow of the perverted elections) and an eagerness to posture heroically on the eve of its debut as a power in the Duma, the change in stress between the October fraction programme and the November congress resolutions testified to the energy of the new Progressist movement. Much of this vigour stemmed directly from industrial--ist support : speaking of the growing power of industry in a speech in September 1912, Ryabushinsky stipulated 'we must not be silent, we must demand, threaten - not beg as we have done up to now - and compel the government to take account of us'.[36]

The early actions of the Progressist fraction were however more in tune with the moderate points of the October fraction programme than the bombast of the industrialist-dominated November congress. On 14 November the Progressists arranged a meeting of all Left and moderate fractions to discuss joint policy over the elections to the Duma presidium.[37] On 5 December they made their first incursion into legislation by submitting a proposal for the introduction of universal primary education designed to undercut the Oktobr--ist bill tabled the same day.[38] In the debate that followed Kokovtsov's Declaration for the government, a Progressist formula demanding co-operation between government and Duma to implement the October Manifesto was adopted by the Duma in the face of rival formulae advanced by the Nationalists, Kadets and Trudoviks.[39] On 28 February 1913 the Progressists on their own initiative drafted a bill to replace the existing State Council by a body entirely elected from the country.[40]

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35 S'ezd Progressistov,11,12 & 13 noyabrya 1912 goda,p.6.

36 POLICE,27/46(Moscow),B,32 quoted in LAVERYCHEV 92.

37 KLYUZHEV,i,11,47.

38 GDSO,I,7,251 ; TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),414(Oktobrist bill) and 416 (Progressist bill).

39 GDSO,I,14,894-8(sitting of 15 December 1912).

40 TsGAOR,f.826(Dzhunkovsky),I,212,5.

The Progressists expended a great deal of thought in the spring and summer of 1913 considering their position as a 'bridge' between the Kadets and Oktobrists. With the Leftward movement of the Kadets halted and the Oktobrist fraction showing positive indications of moving Leftward into opposition (considered below), the Progressist fraction was excellently placed to promote a giant moderate bloc in the Duma. However the task was a premature test of Progressist initiative and put serious pressure on the discipline of the fraction. A police report for 22 May noted that while 'the Progressists view developments more optimistically than the Kadets and strongly hope that the Oktobrists will attach themselves to them', they did nothing to facilitate agreement and readily subscribed to the current Kadet policy of 'wait and see'.[41] At the Second Progressist Party Congress on 5-6 October 1913, there was a clear split between those who possessed the self-confidence to advocate an opposition bloc against the government and those who believed that to do so would be to fight above the Progressist weight. The police reporter pointed out that many Progressists chose to fly in the face of the brave resolutions passed at the previous congress : 'the Progressist Right wing, fearing that the Kadets strengthened by the Oktobrists would enter into direct conflict with the government instead of constructive legislative work, do not support a bloc'. The final Congress decision was to suspend judgement until the Kadet conference of late October and the Oktobrist Congress of early November.[42] Thus while the Progressist fraction made tentative forays into independent action over the first year of the Fourth Duma, it was still infinitely more comfortable as an auxiliary of the Kadets. In late 1913 Progressist action was still contingent upon the decisions of the experienced Kadet and Oktobrist fractions. While the trend of Progressist development was becoming more committed, the fraction could not be termed a force for the moderates until it mustered the courage to emerge from under the Kadet wing and accept the responsibilities and

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41 POLICE,307-1913,96 ; also Lenin,Collected Works,vol.19,p.238 and LAVERYCHEV 99.

42 POLICE,xix,27,61 and xiv,147-1913,7.

hazards of political independence.

Relations between the Duma and the government over the first six months of the Fourth Duma were far less hostile than the mood of the first sittings might have led one to expect. The Declaration delivered by Kokovtsov on 5 December avoided controversial issues, advanced a vague programme of minor reforms and closed with a homily on the advantages of Duma good behaviour.[43] Despite their militant mood, the moderates found the Deaclaration disappoint--ingly unprovocative and quickly settled down to the time-consuming but unavoidable procedures which started every new Duma.[44] The operation of parliamentary otdely to check the right of each deputy to represent his constituency occupied the first two months of the session.[45] At the same time elections were conducted to membership of the Duma commissions ; including special bodies set up to meet exceptional needs, thirty-two commissions involving 858 places were 'up for auction'.[46] The elections to commission memberships, always a lengthy process, on this occasion spilled over into the 1913 Winter Session.[47] Duma open sittings became rare as the bulk of fraction manoeuvre and bargaining was translated into the lobbies and committee-rooms. The formalities, otdely enquiries and commission elect--ions finally gave place to preliminary readings of government and Duma-initiated bills in early 1913.[48] Even now there was no clamour for the immediate implementation of major government reforms ; if government legisl--ation were delayed, all the better for Duma-initiated legislation which would now take pride of place on the Duma agenda. Such was the glamour of

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43 GDSO,I,7,260-281 ; KOKOVTSOV 351-2.

44 Milyukov in Rech',8 December 1912 ; Purishkevich on 7 December 1912 : GDSO,I,8,290.

45 GDSO:UKAZATEL' 25-30.

46 Ibid,31-47 ; Obzor Deyatel'nosty Kommissii i Otdelov,sozyv IV,sessia I, St Petersburg 1913 ; Diagram 9 in Yereshkin.

47 The last two 'standing commission' memberships were announced on 11 May 1913 : GDSO,I,43,1050.

48 First discussion of legislative bills in open Duma sitting, 8 February 1913, : GDSO,I,21.

the Kadet civil liberties bills that the moderates had little patience for petty legislation of the kind that had constipated the Third Duma. With so much necessary Duma business to occupy its attention and interest, the Duma hardly raised its eyes to consider its relations with the government until spring 1913.[49]

The government too did its best to conduct its affairs with minimum recourse to the Duma. After his Declaration on 5 December, Kokovtsov withdrew to concentrate all his attention upon the administration of the state. While this apparent repudiation of close liaison with the Duma has been interpreted by some commentators as deliberate ostracism, it is probable that the premier's coolness towards the Duma contained as much embarrassment as hostility.[50] The first session of the new Duma found Kokovtsov in an unenviable position. He had been instructed by the Empress at his first audience 'do not look for support in political parties ... find your support in the confidence of the Tsar'.[51] Kokovtsov attempted to make this policy work despite his own sympathy for the Oktobrist viewpoint and in his memoirs claimed that his policy of disassociation from the Duma was the only practic--al one in the light of the fraction power struggle :

> I tried to steer a straight course. I solicited favour from no-one, shunned all intrigue and bided my time till the Duma made some order out of its party chaos. This, I believe, was the wise course to follow, for there was no-one in the Duma upon whom to rely ; all the groups sought power, influence and government support ; but none had any definite policy. (52)

Kokovtsov was also acutely embarrassed by MVD policy in the Duma elections. Although Kokovtsov had opposed Makarov's patronage of the Right, his dismiss--al of Makarov now made of the premier the only target for Duma anger over MVD electoral abuse. Although he may never have visualised his position in such terms, Kokovtsov effectively had a choice : either to disclaim respons--ibility for government electoral policy and cast the blame on to the MVD,

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49 Hutchinson, The Octobrists, p.208.

50 Ibid, pp.208-9 ; R.B.McKean, Russia on the eve of the Great War, p.32.

51 KOKOVTSOV 283 ; MILIUKOV 232.

52 KOKOVTSOV 351.

which would involve admitting his own defeat at the hands of Makarov ; or to accept the blame for the MVD's actions, present a front of cabinet solidarity to the Duma and, at the cost of alienating large sections of moderate opinion , retain prestige as leader of the government. Kokovtsov's self-esteem would not permit him to sacrifice the respect in which he believed he was univers--ally held. By tacitly accepting the burden of MVD misdemeanours he created for himself an impossible relationship with the Duma. The entire Duma Left held him responsible for the perversion of the elections ; most painfully, the Oktobrists whom he had always favoured as the natural Duma ally of the government now berated him mercilessly for 'his' electoral policy.[53]

A succession of incidents exacerbated the existing tensions between government and Duma. At the Romanov tercentenary celebrations in February 1913, Duma representation was so proscribed as to constitute (in the view of the Duma President Rodzyanko) an unequivocal slight to the national assembly. The offence was taken all the more to heart because Rodzyanko had only recently gone to considerable trouble and not a little unpopularity in the Duma to accommodate the wishes of the Tsar regarding the suppression of gossip about Rasputin. Snubbed both at the ceremonial service in the Kazan' Cathedral and the reception at the Winter Palace, Rodzyanko staged a public scene forcibly to extract from court protocol the prominence which he believed the Duma deserved.[54] A man quite as sensitive on matters of amour propre as Kokovtsov, Rodzyanko was furious that his services to the Emperor be repaid so churlishly. The whole unfortunate episode irritated the Duma, alienated Rodzyanko, again embarrassed Kokovtsov and exasperated Nicholas (who throughout the proceedings had envisaged the tercentenary more as a family than a state occasion).[55]

Soon afterwards the Duma became alarmed by disclosures about the Right

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53 KOKOVTSOV 351 ; Vladimir Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past, (cited hereafter as GURKO), p.527.

54 RODZYANKO 65-6 & 69 ; KLYUZHEV, xii, 143 & 147.

55 MVD report on the episode : TsGAOR, f.826(Dzhunkovsky), I, 212, 1-3 ; also KOKOVTSOV 360-1.

wing. It had been assumed that the very presence of a fraction within the Duma by now indicated a strong measure of support for that institution. This preconception was badly jolted in Duma open sitting on 1 March when the Right leader Purishkevich pointedly declared that 'the sooner the Duma is dissolved the better'.[56] Rumours of a Rightist plot, an intrigue between court circles and the Duma Right fraction, circulated freely.[57] The Kadet fraction embarked upon some political espionage and triumphantly produced the agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the combined Right and Nationalist fractions held on 3 March. The first three items on the agenda scandalised the entire Duma :

1. The necessity of the dissolution of the Fourth State Duma.
2. The necessity of changing the law for elections to the State Duma.
3. The necessity of changing the Duma practice of arriving at decisions by majority vote. (58)

The crisis was not in fact as serious as the Duma moderates feared. The debate on the first item at the 3 March meeting revealed that only the compilers of the agenda, the ruling clique of the Right fraction headed by Purishkevich and Markov Two actually supported the dissolution of the Fourth Duma. Not only was the entire Nationalist fraction opposed to dissolution, even the rank-and-file of the Right fraction rebelled against their leaders. The priests and peasants who constituted such a high proportion of the Right and Nationalist fractions, though of tenacious Right persuasions, stubbornly supported the existence of the Duma as a talking-shop for the people and seriously considered withdrawing from their fractions. The Nationalist leadership issued an immediate disavowal of the Right leaders' proposals and an unqualified declaration of support for the Fourth Duma. Even the Right leadership could not contemplate the defection of a full half of its fraction membership and was forced to retract. The only direct casualty of the affair was Meshkovsky, the secretary of the Right fraction, who was compelled to

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56 GDSO,I,25,1880-4 (quotation st.1884).

57 POLICE,307A-1913,49 ; KLYUZHEV,xii,17-18.

58 Goles Moskvy,6 March 1913 ; KLYUZHEV,xii,35.

resign for his carelessness with party documents.[59]

The 'Rightist Plot' both encouraged the Leftward movement of the Duma moderates and sharpened the quarrel with the government. The moderate fractions drew together in disassociation from the policies of the Extreme Right. As Vladimir L'vov, the leader of the Centre fraction, was reported as saying,'when the issue concerns defending the national representation from threatened attack, all party differences are sunk ; conservatives and liberals unite in the defence of the State Duma'. The Kadets and Progressists met to discuss the common danger and tentative feelers were extended to the Oktobrists.[60] The Leftward movement in the Kadet fraction received a strong fillip and Left Kadets spoke out bravely against the suspected machinations of the government. It was universally believed that the Right leaders could not seriously have debated an issue as fundamental as Duma dissolution without the whisper of suppert from the highest places. Rodzyanko's postscript to the whole affair was that 'on the government side, the desire if not the actual determination ... to kill the Duma was clear'.[61] Relations between the Duma and government deteriorated into open hostility.

The State Budget for 1913-14, debated by the Duma from 10 May to 15 June 1913, proved to be a battleground between government and Duma. Criticism of the Budget started as always with the MVD estimates, which were finally despatched with an elaborate warning formulated by the Oktobrists as to the danger of equating firm government with police rule.[62] Unfortunately the Budget examination was also employed by the Duma, by now spoiling for a row with the government, deliberately to bait Kokovtsov. In his dual capacity as Finance Minister and Council Chairman, Kokovtsov was forced to abandon his adopted aloofness and appear before the Duma for the first time since

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59 Rech',7 March 1913 ; KLYUZHEV,xii,35 & 180-1.

60 Rech',ibid ; KLYUZHEV,ibid,181.

61 RODZYANKO 76.

62 Sitting of 21 May 1913 : GDSO,I,52,1939-1947 ; also TAKTIKI,1912-3,17 and Kizevetter,Na Rubezhe Dvukh Stoletii,p.516.

December 1912 to defend his Budget.[63] The Duma unrestrainedly levelled at his head all the pent-up criticism and suspicion which had been mounting over the previous five months. The Budget commission president Alekseyenko challenged Kokovtsov : 'we have given you good finances, now you give us good government' ; Vasilii Maklakov regretted the passing of Stolypin's administration and the deterioration of government to a 'caricature' of its former self.[64] Leading Duma moderates joined in fierce denunciation of Kokovtsov's record as head of the government. Kokovtsov's irritation at being subjected to this almost gratuitous barrage of criticism mounted rapidly.

The crisis came over the sphere in which Kokovtsov was most personally involved and therefore most sensitive, the Ministry of Finance. Mention has already been made of Kokovtsov's attempts to cut back subsidization of the Right, a campaign which he postponed for electoral reasons. In January 1913 Kokovtsov returned to the attack and pruned the generous 'Special Fund' subsidies to the Right.[65] The Right fraction's antipathy towards Kokovtsov was consequently at its height in spring 1913. Towards the end of the Budget debates on 27 May, Markov Two followed a stinging attack on Kokovtsov's 'mishandling' of the state finances by interrupting a Finance Ministry statement with the provocative phrase 'You are not to steal'.[66] Markov's motivation for this outrageous accusation is not entirely clear. Possibly the phrase slipped out in the heat of the moment. A more sinister interpret--ation would suggest that there was no attack more likely irremediably to wreck relations between government and Duma. At the Council of Ministers' meeting which immediately followed Markov's 'accusation', Nikolai Maklakov (Minister of Interior) and Shcheglovitov (Minister of Justice) preached the

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63 GDSO,I,42,910-950.

64 GDSO,I,42,910 (10 May 1913) and 55,117(27 May 1913).

65 GURKO 527-8 ; A.L.Siderov,'Delo Kokovtseva',Voprosi Istorii, 1964 : 2, pp.107-8.

66 GDSO,I,55,66 ; also TAKTIKI,1912-3,p.20 and KOKOVTSOV 365.

complete closure of the Duma.[67] It is possible that the Right leaders in the Duma were in collusion with the reactionary elements in the government and that Markov's remark was deliberate provocation designed both to provide the excuse for the dissolution of the Fourth Duma and to effect the downfall of the moderate administration of Kokovtsov.[68]

The majority of the Council of Ministers, while opposed to Duma dissol--ution, agreed with Kokovtsov that such a charge brought in open sitting could not pass unnoticed. Kokovtsov demanded a corporate Duma apology. The Duma Council of Elders however, realising the enormous implications of such an apology, refused. Once the Duma admitted responsibility for the speeches of its deputies, a single unscrupulous individual had the power to ruin the Duma. One provocative speech by a Markov or Purishkevich could taint the entire Duma and render it subject to immediate dissolution as a seditious assembly. For the Duma leaders to have accepted the principle of responsib--ility would have placed the future of the Duma in the hands of those bent upon its destruction.[69] Kokovtsov, temporarily blind to all considerations but his offended honour, answered the Duma refusal with a 'Ministerial Boycott'.

Announced to the Duma on 31 May, the 'Boycott' was in force for the next five months.[70] Ministers refused to attend the Duma or co-operate in the legislative process. It quickly became apparent that the normal business of the Duma could not operate : legislation ground to a halt, Duma questions and interpellations remained unanswered and the ministers worried how the 'Boycott' would affect the as yet incomplete Budget examination.[71] The

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67 KOKOVTSOV 366 ; KLYUZHEV,xiii,23.

68 Shcheglovitov had been implicated in the Shornikova Plot which provided the pretext for the dissolution of the Second Duma : PADENIE,ii,346-8 (Shcheglovitov) ; also McKean,Russia on the eve of the Great War,p.36.

69 RODZYANKO 78 ; KOKOVTSOV 366 ; PADENIE,vi,133-4(Volkonsky) ; Hosking however condemns the Duma for its 'touchiness' and 'petulance' : Hosking, Government and Duma,pp.288-9.

70 KLYUZHEV,xiii,27.

71 Ibid,22 ; Rech',5 June 1913 ; GURKO 528 ; RODZYANKO 78-9.

psychological impact of the 'Boycott' upon the Duma and society was enormous and yet its precise effect upon Duma activity and government business was probably slighter than at first appears. After making allowance for the three and one half month summer recess, the 'Boycott' was operative over only the final three weeks of the first session (8-25 June) and the initial two weeks of the second session (15 October-1 November). Even so the blame must lie with Kokovtsov for taking offence too easily, demanding a corporate apology which in its own interests the Duma could not provide, and persisting in the 'Boycott' long after its ineffectiveness was proved. Kokovtsov considered a duel with Markov beneath his dignity but did not scruple to cripple legislat--ion and penalise both Duma and government over a personal slight.[72] Kokovtsov's conduct of the affair was not only unstatesmanlike but politically dangerous for in allowing personal pride and the passion of the moment to cloud his judgement, he exposed his administration to effective undermining by the reactionary wing of the Council of Ministers.

By mid 1913 the administration Of Kokovtsov was weakening fast. Kokovts--ov had exasperated the Empress by refusing to suppress press reports about Rasputin in early 1912.[73] He had annoyed the Emperor by insisting upon the same authority as Stolypin within the Council of Ministers when a more astute politician would have realised Nicholas's intense dislike of Stolypin and the 'Grand Vizier' status that his memory evoked.[74] In a milieu increasingly sympathetic to traditional reaction and police rule, the only possible recommendation for moderate government was a high measure of success and political calm. Far from achieving rapport with the State Duma, Kokovtsov's administration had precipitated the greatest crisis in relations between Duma and government since the Western Zemstvos furore.

The Beilis trial brought Duma condemnation and international censure of the Kokovtsov administration to a head. The details of how a poor Jew,

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72 GURKO 528.

73 KOKOVTSOV 306 ; MILIUKOV 283.

74 Shidlovsky, Vospominania, vol.I, p.198.

Mendel Beilis was accused in Kiev of the ritual murder of a Christian child are sufficiently well-known to render superfluous any brief account here.[75] Public involvement in the case was great, as Milyukov recalled :

> The high point of public indignation was reached when ... for thirty-five days, with the encouragement or the direct assistance of the authorities, there unfolded in Kiev a vile picture of perjury, bribed experts and obliging efforts on the part of the procurator to wring a verdict of "guilty" from the specially-selected, semi-literate peasant jurors. (76)

During the trial itself, which ran from mid-September until 28 October 1913 (when the defendant was found 'not guilty'), public opinion ran so high that police action was allowed full rein. Milyukov calculated that 'during the Beilis trial, 102 penalties were meted out to the press, including the arrest of six editors ; 120 professional and cultural-educational societies were either closed or declared illegal'.[77] The police follow-up to the trial, which included the prosecution of twenty-five prominent Petersburg barristers continued until the very outbreak of war.[78]

The Beilis affair had three quite distinct effects upon the Russian political situation. Educated society was roused against the government as never before : just as the Lena Massacre had incited the workers, the Beilis affair inflamed the liberal elements. The trial backfired on the reactionar--ies : far from rallying the forces of the Right, the publicity and unfavour--able verdict split the Right camp dangerously, dividing the Extreme Rights from the moderate Rights. The Beilis case was a repetition of the 'Rightist Plot' episode on a national stage, isolating the extreme reactionaries and compelling moderate Rightist leaders like V.V.Shul'gin to disassociate them--selves entirely from them.[79] Finally, despite the fact that Kokovtsov was

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75 The most recent studies : Maurice Samuel, Blood Accusation: the Strange History of the Beilis Case, London 1967 and Hans Rogger, 'The Beilis Case : Anti-Semitism and Politics in the Reign of Nicholas II', ASEER, vol.25, no. 4, December 1966, pp.615-629.

76 MILIUKOV 285 ; also Baring, The Mainsprings of Russia, pp.281-2.

77 Ibid ; also Baring, p.141.

78 KERENSKY 85-6.

79 Sydney Harcave, Years of the Golden Cockerel: The Last Romanov Tsars 1814-1917, London 1968, p.401.

at this time on extended semi-official visits to Paris and Berlin, the Beilis affair with its detailed coverage by national and world press further discredited the Kokovtsov administration.[80] Although the trial was a symptom not of his own policies but those of his reactionary colleagues Maklakov and Shcheglovitov, Kokovtsov was again compelled to accept the responsibility and blame as titular head of the government.

Kokovtsov spent seven weeks away from Russia in Western Europe, providing ample opportunity for the Extreme Right within the Council of Ministers to undermine his administration. Although there is no incontrovertible evidence that the Beilis trial was timed to coincide with Kokovtsov's absence, the trial proved the opening round in a Rightist campaign. Even before the Beilis verdict was reached, the reactionary ministers were contemplating their next move. The first to attempt to advance his career was Nikolai Maklakov. On 14 October, the day before the opening of the new Duma session, Maklakov submitted to Nicholas a proposal for the dissolution of the Duma :

> The Duma is sharply raising the temperature of society. Unless this is met by immediate measures and strong action from Your government, the complete disruption of all our lives is unavoidable ... Two measures are essential : the dissolution of the Duma and the immediate declaration in the capital of a state of "Special Protection". (81)

Nicholas's reply to Maklakov on 18 October was distinctly approving :

> I have read your letter and find myself sympathetic to its content ... I consider it both essential and beneficial that My long-held opinions concerning changes in the Fundamental Laws pertaining to the State Duma be considered in the Council of Ministers. (82)

The Council however rejected Maklakov's scheme. A majority of the Council, even without Kokovtsov to rally the moderates, still valued the Duma as a representative and legislative institution, while one cannot exclude the possibility that many ministers preferred a moderate Chairman to the ebullient 'Nicholas III' as pace-setter in the Council.[83] Maklakov

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80 KOKOVTSOV 378-393.

81 V.P.Semennikov(Ed.),Monarkhia Pered Krusheniem,Moscow 1927 (cited hereafter as MPK),p.93.

82 MPK 92 ; for both letters, see also PADENIE,v,193-6(Maklakov).

83 Maklakov's nickname : KLYUZHEV,xii,199.

ruefully reported the verdict to Nicholas on 22 October, including the pointed snub 'the Council has decided that as a general rule Duma matters remain outside the competence of the Ministry of Interior and fall within the jurisdiction of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers alone'.[84] Maklakov's attempt at a constitutional coup had been frustrated not only by the antipathy of the Council of Ministers towards the scheme but its defence of the prerogatives of the Chairman even in his absence. On the other hand, while Maklakov had suffered defeat on this occasion, there was no doubt that he had won the Tsar's favour and therefore his chances of eventual success were high.

Shcheglovitov, a much more flexible and cunning politician, exploited Maklakov's failure to mount his own political coup. Maklakov's deputy-minist--er Beletsky was in no doubt of Shcheglovitov's manipulation of his chief :

> Maklakov acted under the hypnosis of Shcheglovitov and very much follow--ed Ivan Grigorovich in his policies. Maklakov was still young but Ivan Grigorovich, a personality with a good brain and strong politics, had long ago learned how to operate. N.A.Maklakov found in Ivan Grigorovich a leader, and Ivan Grigorovich made quite a lot of use of him. (85)

The Council rejection which meant temporary disgrace for Maklakov left Shcheglovitov unscathed. Shcheglovitov set out to promote his own candidacy for leader of the government, but not by a frontal assault on the State Duma ; he could inflict greater damage on the Kokovtsov administration by raising the 'Boycott' in Kokovtsov's absence.

The second session of the Fourth Duma had opened on 15 October with the 'Boycott' still in force. However individual ministers immediately began to compromise the principle of boycott. From the very start of the session, while not personally attending Duma sittings and commissions, ministers sent representatives to collect and relay information on major topics of common interest.[86] This minor fissure in the boycott rapidly widened to become a

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84 MPK 94-5 ; TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),ii,158,19.

85 PADENIE,iii,368(Beletsky) ; Rogger,'The Beilis Case',pp.621 & 624-7.

86 No minister attended the Duma 15 October-1 November 1913 but three vice-ministers did : GDSO,II,stol. 42-3(Finance), 298-300(Justice) and 339 (MVD).

sizeable breach. Grigorovich, Minister for the Navy, was most anxious that Admiralty credits held up by the 'Boycott' be passed by the new session and, counting on the Tsar's concern for Russia's military performance and sympathy for any action calculated to diminish the authority of the Council Chairman, made a successful appeal for permission to appear before the Duma. Other ministers followed Grigorovich's example, each pleading 'special contingency' and 'essential credits', until it became general practice within the Council of Ministers to bypass the 'Boycott' by appealling over the head of the absent Kokovtsov direct to the Tsar.[87]

With the 'Boycott' dissolved in all but name, Shcheglovitov set out to usurp Kokovtsov's authority over Duma affairs for his own advancement. In the last days of October Shcheglovitov approached Rodzyanko with a formula for settlement : in exchange for a directive by Rodzyanko to the Duma forbid--ding any recurrence of the Markov accusation, the government was prepared to raise the 'Ministerial Boycott' at once.[88] Rodzyanko was only too willing, especially since the rumours that Shcheglovitov was shortly to succeed Kokovtsov as Council Chairman were becoming increasingly authoritative.[89] The Duma was quite prepared to forgive provided the initiative for the settlement came from the government side. Markov Two, disconcerted that the 'Boycott' should be ended by his own here within the government, was prevail--ed upon to issue a statement bordering upon an apology, and both sides declared that honour was satisfied. On 1 November 1913 the 'Boycott' was ended.[90] Shcheglovitov was content that while Maklakov may have impressed the Tsar by his enthusiasn for autocracy, his own reputation had been greatly enhanced by the apparent ease with which he restored rapport between government and Duma.

Kokovtsov returned to St Petersburg from Berlin on 8 November and

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87 RODZYANKO 86-9 ; GURKO 528.

88 KOKOVTSOV 395-6 ; also Hosking, Government and Duma, p.291.

89 KOKOVTSOV 396 footnote.

90 GDSO, II, 8, 540-1 ; Times, 15 November 1913(n/s), 13f.

interviewed each minister to determine the developments during his seven-week absence.[91] He realised at once that the Right wing of the Council had taken advantage of his absence and even though two of their projects (the Beilis trial and Maklakov's attempted coup) had not brought the Right the rewards anticipated, they had served to discredit his administration in the eyes of the Duma, the nation and indeed the world. He also realised that his personal position as Council Chairman had been under severe pressure and while it had withstood the assault of the Maklakov proposal, it had suffered definite reverses in the compromising and subsequently the raising of the 'Ministerial Boycott'.[92] He now possessed just one advantage over his ministerial opponents : because the 'Boycott' had been raised without his participation, he was fortuitously out of an awkward political impasse and benefited from renewed relations with the Duma without the humiliation of a personal surrender. The sole course of action now open to Kokovtsov was to gamble all his remaining and fast-dwindling political capital upon an alliance with the Duma. Kokovtsov's only hope both for the survival of his moderate administration and arguably the very existence of the State Duma was to recreate the stable relationship that Stolypin had engineered with the Oktobrists in the early Third Duma.

To this end Kokovtsov announced in mid November a new era of cooperation between government and Duma and, most significantly, intimated the need for close relations between his administration and suitable Duma fractions.[93] The effect of Kokovtsov's coy advances upon the Duma was prodigious. The first fortnight of the session had been gloomy and pessimistic, with rumours of the Maklakov proposal reducing Duma deputies to near despair. Many moderate deputies were so convinced of dissolution that they anticipated the event by retiring to their constituencies, as Utro Rossii deplored :

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91 KOKOVTSOV 395-6.

92 Ibid.

93 Rossia, 12 November 1913 ; ENGEL'HARDT, xii, 320.

> Whispers and rumours of the imminent dissolution of the Fourth Duma have been circulating. Boredom has reigned in the State Duma, a feature in large part explained by the small numbers attending the open sittings of the Duma. A good half of the deputies have been absent without permission. (

Utro Rossii was concerned lest absenteeism admit the possibility of a Right 'procedural majority' since,

> On the list of Duma absentees, the Kadets, Progressists and Oktobrists take first place. The most conscientious in discharging their respons--ibilities are the peasants and priests and, generally speaking, the whole Right wing of the Duma. (94).

Kokovtsov's overtures to the Duma raised the moderate fractions from their malaise and boosted the morale of the entire assembly. The jeremiads of the Right press were gradually stilled as the prospect of Duma dissolution faded. To the Left wing, Kokovtsov's attiude meant at least the continued existence of the Duma ; to the Right-wing fractions was opened up the glittering prospect of close alliance with the government.

The impact of the government's projected rapprochement upon the Oktobrists can only be fully appreciated by taking the narrative through from the first days of the Fourth Duma. Despite the psychological and numerical damage inflicted by the 1912 elections, the Oktobrist fraction was still the most important political unit in the early Fourth Duma. The numer--ical axis of the Duma passed just to the Right of the central Oktobrist position. The Oktobrist membership of 99, still the largest in the Duma, straddled the Duma axis, lending it the weight to tilt the parliamentary balance either way. Excluding the Oktobrists, the Left totalled 149 and the Right 185. The affiliation of the Oktobrists was crucial : if they joined the Left, the result was a clear Left victory 248-185 ; if they joined the Right, the result was a crushing defeat for the Left 149-284 ; even if they abstained, the Right carried the vote 185-149.[95] The Left moderates had to win Oktobrist support in order to stand any chance of influencing the policies of the Fourth Duma. The Oktobrist hegemony of the Third Duma seemed

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94 'Absenteeism in the Duma', Utro Rossii, 27 November 1913, 2.

95 Figures calculated from GDSO:UKAZATEL' 19-24.

likely to be succeeded by hegemony of the Fourth Duma, albeit with less stress on numerical weight and government patronage and more on strategic position.

The first attitudes adopted by the Oktobrist fraction in the Fourth Duma were predictably anger towards the government and an accompanying hatred of all fractions to its Right. The Oktobrists negotiated an alliance with the Left to support the candidature of Rodzyanko for Duma President to prevent the election of a Nationalist leader. At the first vote Rodzyanko received 234 votes to the Nationalist Balashev's 147 (with the other candidates Volkonsky, Khomyakov and Purishkevich getting 10, 1 and 1 respectively) ; at the second and straight vote, Rodzyanko defeated Balashev by 251 votes to 150.[96] Thus at the very first occasion for such a contest, the Left combined with the Oktobrists to overwhelm the Nationalists and Rights. In his post-election speech Rodzyanko emphasised that this parliam--entary alliance was one of principle as well as fraction convenience :

> I have always been and will continue to be a convinced supporter of that representative system on constitutional principles which Russia was granted by the Manifesto of 17 October 1905, the consolidation of which must remain and constitute the primary and unpostponable concern of the Russian representative assembly. (97)

The tone adopted by Rodzyanko voiced the antagonism felt by many Oktobrists towards the government and found particular expression in profound antipathy towards the Nationalist fraction. Lyuts, a very centre-line Oktobrist, considered that 'any combination with the Nationalists is absolutely impossible ; the Oktobrists will neither associate with the Right nor vote with the Right ; with the moderate groups we can negotiate'.[98] The Oktobrists were very short with the emerging Left Nationalists who diffidently approach--ed them ; finally the Left Nationalist leaders lost patience and quit in disgust, complaining that 'the Oktobrists always give us the cold shoulder .. and always answer "we are not yet organised and have yet to elect represent--atives to initiate negotiations" '.[99]

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96 GDSO,I,1,5 &6(15 November 1912).

97 GDSO,I,1,7 ; also Kizevetter,Na Rubezhe Dvukh Stoletii,p.516.

98 Interview in Vechernoe Vremya recorded in KLYUZHEV,xi,8.

99 KLYUZHEV,xi,44(Statement of Savenko,Chikhachev and Shul'gin).

However it would not be true to say that jealousy of the fraction which had usurped its place as darling of the government entirely clouded Oktobrist political judgement. The Oktobrists were for example prepared to negotiate with the Nationalists over the apportionment of the presidencies of Duma commissions in an attempt to retain as much as possible of their past hegemony of the Duma commission system. At a fraction meeting on 30 November 1912 the Oktobrists agreed to surrender nine commission presidencies to the Nationalists (whilst retaining fifteen for themselves). A final quarrel over the presidency of the Education commission was reluctantly settled in the Nationalists' favour on 1 December.[100] Even when the emotions of the Oktobrists were unprecedentedly inflamed, the experience of the Third Duma would not allow them to forget their most precious interests.

Throughout this period Guchkov, chafing at his exclusion from the Duma, made strenuous efforts to direct the fraction from outside. A Guchkov-inspir--ed attempt by the Oktobrist Central Committee to reserve for itself a permanent seat on the Fraction Bureau was supported by the fraction Left wing but defeated in overall fraction vote on 16 January 1913.[101] Accepting defeat and tacitly recognising its future exclusion from the seat of politics, the Central Committee settled for a pathetic appeal to the fraction for constant liaison and passage of information.[102] For the rest of its exist--ence the Oktobrist fraction operated increasingly remote from the Oktobrist Union outside the Duma and without the charismatic personality of Guchkov to inspire and direct its activities. With the repudiation of these past factors of discipline and cohesion, the unity problem of the Oktobrist fraction rapidly developed into a major crisis.

On 22 January 1913 the Left-wing Oktobrist Opochinin persuaded the

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100 TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),ii,4,45-8(30 November 1912) & 54-5 (1 December 1912).

101 Ibid,76-7(16 January 1913).

102 Letter from Lindeman(Vice-President of Oktobrist Central Committee) to Antonov(President of Oktobrist Fraction Bureau), 24 January 1913 : TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),ii,21,61.

fraction to authorise exploratory negotiations with fractions to the Left.[103] At the same time it was clear that the fraction as a whole preferred to bide its time rather than take precipitate action im favour of either wing. The Fraction Bureau elections on 5 February returned strictly centre-line Oktobrists while in the elections to the Fraction Presidency the centre-line nominee Antonov defeated his Left-wing challenger S.I.Shidlovsky by 50 votes to eight.[104] Even so the exposure of the 'Rightist Plot' had the effect of stepping up Oktobrist approaches to the Left, and in the Duma Finance commission on 12 March the Oktobrists made their first direct move against the government when their representatives Savich and Bennigsen launched a strong attack on Kokovtsov.[105] On 24 March Oktobrist and Progressist delegations met to work out a practical scheme to co-ordinate their Duma activities.[106]

With the fraction moving towards definite commitment to the Left, the Oktobrist Right wing became restive. On 9 April the popular daily Russkoe Slovo printed the rumour that the Right Oktobrists were about to be expelled from the fraction. A couple of individual desertions by Oktobrists received maximum publicity in the press, particularly the defection of Baron Meyendorff in mid April.[107] On 11 May Right-wing Oktobrists met the Centre leaders L'vov and Krupensky, thereby acutely embarrassing those Oktobrists attempting to cement agreement with the Progressists.[108] The MVD lobby correspondent made the following shrewd observations soon after :

> Everywhere one notices the restlessness of the Duma, the responsibility for which lies with the Oktobrists ... The fascinating thing about the relations between the Duma Oktobrists and the Oktobrists in the provinces is the real split that is emerging. This split may be

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103 TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),ii,4,83-4.

104 Ibid,88.

105 KLYUZHEV,xii,186.

106 TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),ii,3,19-21.

107 Goles Moskvy,4 May 1913 ; Times,19 May 1913(n/s),5b.

108 TsGAOR,f.115(Oktobrist Fraction),ii,3,34.

> observed in the Duma fraction, which is currently under the influence of the provincial Oktobrists ... The Oktobrists will soon leave the Chamber in the company not only of Progressists and Right Kadets - Maklakov's clique - but of Left Kadets, Trudoviks and Socialists ; or so you hear in the lobbies. Mind you, not all the Oktobrists will follow this course, only one section. (109)

This observer was perceptive enough to detect the two issues which were to ruin the Oktobrist fraction : the split between the fraction wings, each pulling in opposite directions, and the split between the more conservative fraction and the more militant provincial Oktobrists. By the end of the first parliamentary session the Left Oktobrists, responding to the encourage--ment of provincial Oktobrists,were seeking to dominate fraction policy and were demanding the immediate implementation of the October Manifesto.[110]

The summer recess (26 June-14 October 1913) only partly interrupted the developments within the Oktobrist Union and Fraction. The parliamentary recess did not stem the rising mood of Russian society and public interest was caught by a spate of congresses held at Kiev, which served as a political focus while the Duma was out of session. As the correspondent of the semi--official Rossia commented :

> At the Kiev congresses threre is a new spirit of drive and unanimity among the wide circles of Russian society, delegates of which have travelled from every corner of this great country ... The bolder, more lively interest of the most varied levels of society in social and political life really hits you in the eye. (111)

At the Kiev Congress of Municipal Representatives in late September, Guchkov made his attitude as President of the Oktobrist Union clear, dismissing the anaemic petty reforming - the Oktobrist Fabianism - of the fraction, and asserting quite categorically that ' further delay in the execution of necessary reforms and further deviation from the principles proclaimed in the Manifesto of 17th October 1905 threatens the country with grave convuls--ions and ruinous consequences'.[112]

Oktobrists outside the Duma warmly supported Guchkov and eagerly

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109 Report of 22 May 1913 : POLICE,307-1913,96.

110 For example, Oktobrist fraction meeting 28 May 1913 : KLYUZHEV,xiii,16.

111 Rossia,9 October 1913 ; also Kizevetter,Na Rubezhe,pp.517-8.

112 Russian Review,vol.II,no.4(November 1913),pp.217-9 ; Novoe Vremya,21 September 1913 ; also Hutchinson,The Octobrists,pp.215-6.

prepared for the Congress projected for 7-10 November, at which the future direction of Oktobrism was to be settled.[113] A police report noted the enthusiasm of the Moscow Oktobrists for a Leftward move towards the Kadets and estimated that some thirty Oktobrist deputies were believed to support this course.[114] On 20 October, the MVD lobby correspondent again came up with the kind of report that makes one qualify strictures about Okhrana ineptitude. The Oktobrist fraction was drifting Left through the influence of the country in general and the Oktobrist Union in particular but there was no conviction about the move within the fraction :

> It is clear to all those close to the ruling Oktobrist circles that a serious desire to move Left is totally lacking ... Guchkov, in pushing the party Left towards the Kadets, is executing an entirely personal manoeuvre, employing the mood of the moment to boost his sadly diminished popularity ... Antonov has stated with great conviction that the party majority stands on his policy and not on that of Guchkov ... In general it would be a mistake to speak of a genuine Leftward movement of the Oktobrist mass, but just the fear among Oktobrists of the possibility of new revolutionary agitation. (115)

It was plain that the Oktobrist Congress was to be not just a gesture to satisfy the provinces but the actual arena for the thrashing-out of Oktobrist policy. On 31 October a closed meeting of the Oktobrist Central Committee revealed that the two sides were almost equally divided.[116] Guchkov now looked to the Congress both to reassert his personal predominance over the Oktobrist movement and to mandate the Oktobrist Fraction to move Left into opposition to the government. Moscow Oktobrists saw themselves as the spokesmen for the Oktobrist provinces, with a duty to insist upon their fraction demanding the promises of the October Manifesto and preferably forcibly excluding the Right-wingers of Shubinskoy altogether.[117] Uninvolved parties looked forward eagerly to a political scrap to relieve the monotony of the current Duma session :

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113 Report of 8 October 1913 : POLICE, xiv, 147-1913, 3-4.

114 Ibid, 16-18 (12 October 1913) ; also Novoe Vremya, 13 October 1913.

115 Ibid, 20-22 (20 October 1913).

116 Golos Moskvy, 1 November 1913 ; Otchyet TsK Soyuza 17-ogo oktyabrya o yego deyatel'nosty, 1 oktyabrya 1913-1 sentyabrya 1914, Moscow 1914, pp.6-7.

117 See Moscow Oktobrist V.A.Shipov's interview in Utro Rossii, 6 November 1913 ; Golos Moskvy, 6 November 1913.

> Guchkov or Shubinskoy ? The conference must choose one or the other. If nothing comes of the present confrontation, them the moment for reconstruction and identification with society will be lost ... and the catastrophe of Oktobrism will be inevitable. The conference is the struggle of Oktobrist political courage, sincerity and valour with opportunism. Who will win ? (118)

The Congress opened in St Petersburg on 7 November. The Okhrana attend--ance figures are probably the most trustworthy : of the total 190 attending, 95 were fraction deputies, about 40 were Oktobrists from the capitals St Petersburg and Moscow (including the Oktobrist Central Committee) and some 50 were delegates from the provinces.[119] An attempt to avoid the washing of any Oktobrists linen in public by restricting the admittance of press reporters to known sympathisers was moderately successful. The Okhrana reporter judged that 'the general composition of the congress features a preponderance of past and present Duma deputies, although on the other hand the predominance of provincial representatives over representatives of the capitals'.[120] This balance predetermined the spirit and decisions of the Congress. The Left-inclined delegates from the provinces and capitals allied with the Left-inclined fraction minority to defeat the conservative fraction majority. The bulk of the agenda was given over to speechifying since the more delegates gave voice, the more democratic the Congress appeared to be. Decisions were arrived at by acclamation and not vote. The events of the next month were to prove that some twenty-five deputies strongly supported the Guchkov line from the total fraction membership of ninety-nine. A conjectural vote in the Congress would have been 115 for Guchkov and seventy against (all but twenty-five of the Oktobrist Fraction).

The highlight of the Congress was Guchkov's speech as President of the Central Committee on 8 November, in which he declared,

> The ship of state has lost its course and is aimlessly tossing on the waves. Not only has the government failed to arouse sympathy and confidence, it is incapable of inspiring even fear ... It is natural in such circumstances that the government sheulf find itself solitary,

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118 Birzhevie Vedomosty, 7 November 1913.

119 Undated report on Oktobrist Congress : POLICE, xiv, 147-1913, 74.

120 Ibid, 76 & 78 (quotation).

> abandoned by all ... the sympathy and confidence which the government attracted in the time of Stolypin has receded in an instant from the government of his successors. The honeymoon is over ... Where is govern--ment policy, or rather lack of policy, leading us ? Towards inevitable catastrophe. (121)

Guchkov concluded that as the earlier contract between government and Oktobrism had been dissolved by bad faith on the government's part, he could only declare it void from the Oktobrist side. Future Oktobrist policy must be to abandon subservience to the government and ally with the other oppositional parties within and outside the Duma :

> We must not leave to the professional opposition, to the radical and socialist parties, the monopoly of opposition to the government ... In so doing, we should foster the dangerous illusion that the government is combating only radical utopias and socialist experiments - whereas it is actually opposing the satisfaction of the most moderate and elementary demands of public opinion. (122)

The Congress closed on 10 November with the passing of political resolutions, one of which (Point 5.) was the decision that,

> The parliamentary fraction of the Oktobrist Union, as its organ, take upon itself direct conflict with the harmful and dangerous direction of the government, employing in full measure all legal means of parliamentary action. (123)

The best that the fraction majority could secure as the fruits of a rear--guard action was the acceptance of a proviso expressly forbidding the fract--ion to sacrifice its identity in any form of multi-fraction bloc.[124]

Opposition reactions were approving but disbelieving : the Kadet Shingarev doubted that 'in the Duma, Oktobrism will assume the Guchkov spirit' ; the Progressist Konovalov commented sourly 'a tragi-comedy : Guchkov is a general without an army'.[125] Doubts notwithstanding, the Kadets and Progressists could not let slip the opportunity of a moderate bloc against the government and, despite the misgivings of some (including Milyukov),

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121 Guchkov's own copy of the speech : TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),i,508,1-21 ; also Rech',9 November 1913,4-6 ; English translation : Russian Review, 1914,no.1,pp.141-158.

122 TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),i,508,15 & 17.

123 TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),i,572,2 ; Otchyot TsK Soyuza 17-ogo oktyabrya, pp.9-11 ; Rech',11 November 1913.

124 TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),i,572,2 (Point 7.).

125 Comments in regular column 'Parliamentary Notebook',Rech',10 November 1913,5.

agreed to initiate approaches to the Oktobrist fraction.[126] At precisely the same instant, Kokovtsov launched his capaign to attract the moderate Right to the side of the government. At no other time had the strain upon Oktobrist unity been greater : to both Left and Right wings of the Oktobrist fraction were extended the political prizes that they sought. Unfortunately for Oktobrist unity these same prizes were mutually exclusive : the Oktobrist response to the political overtures of the government and the opposition constituted the supreme crisis of Oktobrism both in the country and in the State Duma.

The Oktobrist debate began at once. The Left Oktobrists argued that the Congress had mandated the fraction to move into opposition and that agreement with the Kadets and Progressists was implementation of that mandate. The fraction majority argued that not only had the Congress explicitly condemned entry into any multi-party bloc but that it was madness deliberately to sabotage a 'special relationship' with Kokovtsov by over-precipitate links with the 'professional Opposition'.[127] On 20 November, twenty-two Left Oktobrists demanded the immediate implementation of Congress Resolution 5. Voting in the fraction resulted in a defeat for the demand by 42 votes to 25, while Bennigsen's compromise motion that the Congress Resolution would be effected 'as circumstances permitted' was carried by 41 votes to 18. At an extraordinary fraction meeting on 29 November, the Left Oktobrists again demanded that the fraction pass immediately and publicly into opposition, and again they were outvoted.[128] The Left Oktobrists started to withdraw from the fraction in protest : by 2 December, eleven deputies had already resigned.[129]

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126 Utro Rossii, 13 November 1913, 3.

127 RODZYANKO 84.

128 The wording of the formula expressing the fraction's attitude to the Congress Resolution was vital. The Left minority stipulated 'direction' (rukovodstvovatsia), the majority only conceding 'drawing support' (pocherpnut' podderzhku) : TsGAOR, f.115(Oktobrist Fraction), i, 37, 1 and Otchyot TsK Soyuza 17-ogo oktyabrya, pp.11-12.

129 Ibid, pp.52-63. Dele 37 of the Oktobrist Fraction Fond is a complete collection of resignations over the period November 1913-January 1914.

Guchkov held to the course he had chosen to the bitter end, with no comcessions to the political future of the Oktobrist fraction as in the previous year. He succeeded in bringing pressure to bear upon the fraction Bureau which on 2 December came down on the side of the Left Oktobrists : in other words, from that date the Left Oktobrist line was official Oktobrist fraction policy. Resignations from the Right-inclined remainder of the Oktobrists now started to pour into the Bureau office.[130] In a last bid to prevent disintegration, Guchkov called a combined Fraction and Central Committee meeting on 6 December but his message brought no joy to the majority : the fraction was the organ of the Oktobrist Union and must there--fore implement Resolution 5. of the November Congress.[131] The torrent of resignations became a flood. In the period between 2 December and the end of the month, the fraction Bureau received fifty resignations (and this on top of the eleven submitted before 2 December).[132] Guchkov struck a brave attitude in the face of the complete disintegration of the fraction :

> This separation I find both natural and desirable ... In the period of collaboration between the government and the Oktobrist Union, certain elements were attracted because of the greater power they acquired ... It is perfectly natural that these elements should now fall away. (133)

However Guchkov's glib talk of purging away the dross of the Oktobrists could not disguise the extent of the disaster for the 'time-servers' inherit--ed from the Stolypin era constituted a full half of the fraction.

The process of disintegration continued remorselessly throughout December 1913 and January 1914. Twenty Left Oktobrists, whom Klyuzhev hailed as the 'leaders of the Oktobrist rebirth', set up as an independent fraction (the so-called 'Novembrists') and were to remain so for the rest of the Fourth Duma.[134] Some twenty-three centre-line Oktobrists met at Rodzyanko's

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130 26 resignations,3-6 December 1913 : TsGAOR,f.115,i,37.

131 Rech',7 December 1913 ; also Hosking,Government and Duma,p.273.

132 24 resignations,7-31 December 1913 : TsGAOR,f.115,i,37.

133 Interview given to Geles Samary,17 December 1913.

134 KLYUZHEV,xiii,64.

on the evening of 6 December to form a new fraction, the 'Zemstvo-Oktobrists'.[135] A further twenty-seven Oktobrists resigned without joining either new fraction and a final twenty-nine remained within the traditional fraction. However this Oktobrist 'rump' was further depleted over the course of January 1914 when twenty-five resigned : some joined the Zemstvo-Oktobrists, some associated with the Centre fraction, a number formed a so-called 'independent group' while a few continued their Duma careers as independents. By late January 1914 just four deputies remained to represent the fraction which only two months before could muster ninety-nine.[136] The process of destructive polarisation which had started with the defection of the Gololobov group (to the Right) in 1909-10 and continued with the emergence of the Progressists (to the Left) in 1911-12 had reached its dramatic climax. The career of the Oktobrist fraction demonstrated the intolerable strains of the central position, at one and the same time the most powerful and the most vulnerable in the Duma. In December 1913 the unity and integrity of the Oktobrists was irretrievably lost : the Oktobrist fraction in the Duma was ruined.

2. The Defence of the Duma (January-June 1914)

Kokovtsov probably realised that the collapse of his Duma favourite meant both the bankruptcy of his last bid to establish cordial relations with the Duma and the doom of his own administration. His powerlessness was brought home by the Tsar's refusal to dismiss the reactionary Minister of Education despite Kokovtsov's protestations that Kasso was the greatest single stumbling-block between government and Duma.[137] Maklakov, sensing both the decline of Kokovtsov's position and the strong candidacy of Shcheglovitov as new Council Chairman, attempted once again to advance his

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135 Russkie Vedomosty, 7 December 1913, 3.

136 TsGAOR, f.115 (Oktobrist Fraction), i, 37 ; see also TsGAOR, f.826 (Dzhunkovsky), i, 210 and Guchkov's comments in Golos Samary, 17 December 1913.

137 Report of 23 January 1914 : POLICE, xv, 27/57 (Petersburg), 2-3.

own fortunes. Knowing the Tsar's antipathy for Moscow, Maklakov appointed the reactionary B.V.Stürmer to the vacant office of Mayor.[138] Two issues were involved in the appointment : the traditional right of Moscow to elect its own Mayor rather than submit to an imperial appointment and the legality of the Minister of Interior deliberately evading the constitutional approach to the Sovereign via the Council of Ministers. Kokovtsov realised that the Moscow appointment was a test-case in his power conflict with Maklakov. Should Maklakov prevail, then the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers would become an empty authority which could always be circumvented by ministers close to the Tsar. At a hastily-convened Council meeting, the ministers proved unanimous in their opposition to Maklakov.[139] With the backing of the great majority of society and the overwhelming support of his ministerial colleagues, Kokovtsov was prepared to make Moscow a resignation issue. A painfully embarrassing confrontation with Nicholas at Livadia secured victory for Kokovtsov but although the immediate battle against the MVD had been won, the war to maintain moderate government in an increasingly reactionary milieu was already lost. Nicholas's distrust was aroused to an unprecedented level by Kokovtsov's insistence that the Council Chairmanship be confirmed in its traditional power and authority.[140]

The strength of Kokovtsov's position in the government had always been his direction of state finances. Finance Minister with only six months' break since February 1904, he was regarded by many experts, himself included, as indispensable to the Russian economy.[141] This reputation guaranteed his tenure as both Finance Minister and Council Chairman long after his failure in the latter office had been widely acknowledged. Since it was considered unthinkable to relieve Kokovtsov of one office without the other, Kokovtsov did not finally lose the Council Chairmanship until his direction of the Finance Ministry came under fire.[142] The spirit of penny-watching which

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138 KOKOVTSOV 395-6 ; also LAVKRYCHEV 96-7.
139 KOKOVTSOV 396.
140 Ibid,397-400.
141 Ibid,457-466.

had permitted the Russian economy to recover so rapidly from the war against the Japanese was out of place by late 1913 and Kokovtsov's critics argued that parsimony had become the end not the means of the Ministry of Finance.[143] The Balkan Wars and the distinct possibility of larger-scale war in the near future meant that financial stringency was not only unnecessary but militar--ily dangerous. A succession of rows with the War Minister Sukhomlinov attracted the attention of the Emperor, who unhesitatingly backed the plans for an expanded military budget.[144] Having created the prosperous state of Russian finances which made military involvement feasible, Kokovtsov now barred the way to the traditional pursuits demanded by Great Power status.

Kokovtsov recieved the long-expected rescript of dismissal on 29 January 1914.[145] His failings had been numerous and fundamental. Kokovtsov was an excellent Minister of Finance but a poor Chairman, an industrious and conscientious administrator but an execrable politician.[146] He permitted the MVD to outflank his titular leadership, personally precipitated a five--month contretemps with the Duma which was patently against the interests of both the Duma and his own administration, accepted responsibility for spheres over which his control was minimal and allowed his reactionary colleagues to make of him a society whipping-boy for their own activities. Kokovtsov's failure as Council Chairman was attributable at base to a personality which could dominate and inspire a single government ministry but was unequal to the tactical demands of the highest ministerial office. Kokovtsov was also unfortunate in occupying, like the Oktobrists in the Duma, the central position where the political strains were most acute. Kokovtsov himself believed that the basic reason for his downfall was that 'the liberals considered me too conservative and the conservatives considered

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142 KOKOVTSOV 409.

143 Ibid,439 ; GURKO 518-9 & 529.

144 Ibid,344-9 & 362-4 ; Vasilii Gurko,Memories and Impressions of War and Revolution in Russia 1914-1917,London 1918,pp.vii-viii.

145 KOKOVTSOV 419-420 ; also MILIUKOV 282.

146 Harcave,Years of the Golden Cockerel,p.392.

me too liberal'.[147] While the Oktobrist crash was by no means the sole reason for Kokovtsov's fall, the occurrence of the latter close upon the heels of the former demonstrated the mutual inter-dependence of the moderate elements within government and Duma.

Within the Duma, the Oktobrist crash effectively liquidated the Oktobr-ist hegemony to which the Duma had become accustomed since 1907. All Duma fractions found the Oktobrist experience advantageous in some respect. On the Right wing the Nationalists, appalled by the prospect of the Oktobrist fraction tearing itself to pieces and aware of how easily they could share the fate of the Oktobrists, hurriedly sank their own differences and rallied their membership to retain a fundamental Nationalist identity.[148] Fractions neighbouring on the Oktobrists benefited by the addition of ex-Oktobrist deputies : the Centre fraction recruited successfully from the Oktobrist Right wing and the Progressists anticipated close parliamentary alliance with the Left Oktobrists (a hope in large part realised after February 1914).[149] The collapse of the Duma centre could only strengthen both the Right and Left wings of the Duma : even when fractions could not benefit directly from the 'Oktobrist Partition' (like the Rights and SDs), the absence of the traditional Duma authority offered the possibility of a greatly-expanded voice and rôle in the future sessions of the Duma.

The fortuitous collapse of the Oktobrists could not have come at a better moment for Milyukov and the Kadets. The Oktobrist crash opened up vistas of a complete Kadet comeback after the party's eclipse since 1907. The Duma Christmas recess (8 December 1913-13 January 1914) was not wasted : the Kadet Central Committee initiated a campaign to negotiate a coalition of all moderate parties at the provincial level.[150] While the Kadets protested the advantages of greater unity amongst the moderates in the country, the operation smacked to a great extent of forcible merger, a callous exploitat-

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147 KOKOVTSOV 517.

148 Novoe Vremya, 10 December 1913 ; KLYUZHEV, xiii, 58.

149 KLYUZHEV, xiii, 129.

150 Report of 14 January 1914 : POLICE, xv, 27-1914, 9.

-ion of the Oktobrist crash. With the Oktobrist fraction in pieces and the vast majority of provincial Oktobrists adhering to the Left Oktobrist position, the Kadets were judging that provincial Oktobrism was territory ready for poaching and more sympathetic to the Kadet than to the Nationalist banner. An enquiry sponsored in late November 1913 by Russkoe Slovo confirm-ed that the Oktobrist following was still a prize worth the winning : while the Oktobrist Union was currently incapable of unified or coherent action, its membership was still relatively stable, the steady defection of provinc-ial Nationalists into the Union compensating for its losses to other parti-es.[151] The surge of political affiliation was moving from Right to Left, lending the advantage to the Kadets and offering proof that in the event of a merger with the Oktobrists, the Kadets would not be binding themselves to a moribund organisation.

The political positions of the Kadet and Oktobrist organisations could hardly have been more contrasted. The Oktobrists were strong in the country and entirely disrupted in the Duma ; the Kadets were strong in the Duma but dangerously weak in the country. Milyukov would probably have preferred a weaker Oktobrist Union for he was well aware of the critical state of the Kadet provincial organisation. A Kadet Central Committee meeting of 14 May 1913 had discussed the extent of the damage : by the estimation of the Moscow Kadets, only nine provincial organs were still in existence and Kadet committees operated in only ten towns. If the Kadet party was, in the words of a delegate, 'a head without a body' in May 1913, the subsequent seven months offered no evidence whatsoever of revival.[152]

However Milyukov had no intention of surrendering one iota of the authority which he currently wielded over the Kadet party. If a merger with the Oktobrists would enhance that authority, Milyukov was the first to proclaim the merits of 'united opposition' ; but if the Oktobrists appeared

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151 Quoted in report of 29 December 1913 : POLICE,xix,27,57.

152 TsGAOR,f.6/c,delo 15,pp.10-17 (quotation from Ariadna Tyrkova p.10) quoted in CHERMENSKY 171-5.

too powerful for the Kadets to dominate, Milyukov opposed such an 'elision of principle'. Throughout the summer of 1913, the bulk of the Kadet fraction had supported closer collaboration with the Oktobrists ; Milyukov opposed the move at every stage.[153] To Milyukov's delight, the Oktobrist crash opened up the prospect of a proportion of the Duma Oktobrists - a proportion large enough to be useful but small enough to offer no resistance to Kadet authority - being drawn into close association with the Kadets.[154] He also envisaged taking advantage of the furore within the Oktobrist Union to lend vital support to his own feeble provincial organisation. Ever astute to the tactics of power politics, Milyukov intended to exploit Oktobrist weakness for the greater good of the Kadets.

In mid 1912 the Kadets had affected greater electoral stature by clambering upon the backs of the Progressists ; over the winter of 1913/1914 Milyukov planned to resuscitate the dying Kadet provincial organisation by immediate transfusions of Oktobrist blood. A police report for January 1914 estimated that some seven hundred Kadets and Oktobrists met throughout European Russia in the course of December and early January for the purpose of effecting closer union and a firmer line against the government. The police reporter was in little doubt of the success of the Kadet initiative :

> All Kadet efforts have been directed to sow the greatest possible discord between the society elements of the "moderate line" (ie. the provincial Oktobrists) and their delegates to the State Duma ... This "agitation" has succeeded brilliantly. The provincial Oktobrists have been propagandized in the sense desired by the Kadets. They hate the Shubinskoy group and incline towards the group led by Khomyakov and Shidlovsky ... Almost all the information on the activities of the Kadet emissaries sent into the provinces over the Christmas recess suggests that there was no real difficulty, just a succession of complete victories for Kadetism. (155)

With the initial stage of the Kadet campaign well under way, Milyukov held out high hopes for a parallel improvement in Kadet fortunes within the Duma.

Within the government meanwhile, the dismissal of Kokovtsov heralded a

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153 Golos Moskvy, 12 November 1913, 4 and 14 November 1913, 2 ; also Rech', 4 December 1913, 2 and POLICE, xiv, 27, 60.

154 Rech', 8 December 1913, 5 ; Birzhevie Vedomosty, 30 November 1913, 2.

155 Report for 14 January 1914 : POLICE, xv, 27-1914, 10.

shift towards the Right. Rumours of the impending fall of Kokovtsov suddenly made the moderates aware of his value : a police reporter wryly noted that 'now that Kadet circles are convinced of the dismissal of Kokovtsov, it emerges that they warmly support the current premier'.[156] Milyukov saw in his dismissal the removal of the last obstacle to the reaction that had been exerting increasing pressure on the Duma over the previous year :

> The political meaning of the change was not entirely clear ... one possibility was the cabinet breakdown - the complete absence of unity between the views of the Chairman and those of the reactionary members of the cabinet. Kokovtsov's fall must mean a fresh victory for reaction. Kokovtsov has contained the full spate of reaction by moderates reasoned behaviour. (157)

The spirit of foreboding that now dominated the moderate fractions was only partly relieved by conjecture as to the identity of Kokovtsov's successor. Witte had been advancing his own candidature over the last few months by playing the part of 'apostle of temperance' in the State Council debates on the Liquor Licensing bill, a cause which he knew to lie close to the heart of the Emperor.[158] A police reporter summed up the opinion of the Petersburg moderates in the words 'Witte will be appointed unless the court party insists upon the appointment of Shcheglovitov'.[159] Shcheglovitov, without question the darling of the Extreme Right inside and outside the Duma, universally regarded as the 'coming man' in the government, was the hot favourite to succeed Kokovtsov.[160] The Duma moderates were left with the forlorn hope that another moderate in the style of Kokovtsov would succeed to the premier--ship. The correspondent of the Russian Review spoke for most of the Duma moderates in regretting,'perhaps the ablest head in the babinet is Krivoshein at the Ministry of Agriculture ... but as he is unlikely to be a candidate for the premiership, his ability leads rather to the prolongation of the

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156 Report of 20 January 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,16 ; also Times,12 and 13 February 1914(n/s),8c and 5b respectievly.

157 TAKTIKI,1913-4,7.

158 KOKOVTSOV 407-412,422 & 444-5 ; GURKO 530-1.

159 Petersburg report of 23 January 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/57,2.

160 Sergei D. Sazonov,Fateful Years 1909-1916,London 1928,p.280.

present indefinite position'.[161] Even aside from his personal preference for the rôle of éminence grise, Krivoshein was currently convalescing from a serious illness in the Crimea and not at hand at the crucial moment to press his own candidature.[162]

On 30 January 1914 Prince Goremykin was appointed as the new Chairman of the Council of Ministers.[163] The shock in society at the nomination of this particular non-runner was profound : he was widely held to be (as in 1906) the leader of a caretaker administration, which would shortly be succeeded by the strong Chairmanship of Shcheglovitov or Krivoshein.[164] Milyukov was convinced of this explanation :

> Decrepit not only in years but in his senile indifference to everything, Goremykin was not looking for power ... It was Krivoshein, a very intelligent man who understood the situation better than the majority of those around him, who dreamed up the idea of Goremykin ... While willing to direct events, Krivoshein did not want to bear the respons--ibility and deliberately remained in the background. Goremykin suited him in that he was a vacuum, inert, and would not interfere in any plans. (165)

There was a strong element of wishful thinking in Milyukov's argument : he hoped that the most moderate minister still in the cabinet would prove to be the power behind the throne of the reactionary Goremykin.

The most satisfying interpretation of Goremykin's appointment must take into greater account the intentions of the Tsar. Milyukov's interpretation conspicuously ignored any part that Nicholas might play, an omission that set him off on the track of conspiracy and secret influence. But when Nicholas dismissed Kokovtsov, the imperial rescript emphasised that,

> The experience of the last eight years has thoroughly convinced me that the union in one person of the posts of Chairman of the Council of

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161 Russian Review, vol.3, no.1 (February 1914), p.171.

162 Report for 4 February 1914 : POLICE, xv, 27-1914, 19-20 ; Letter of Musin-Pushkin, 18 February 1914 : KA, vol.61, pp.132-3 ; KOKOVTSOV 438-9 ; GURKO 531.

163 KOKOVTSOV 413 & 439 ; MILIUKOV 284.

164 Golos Moskvy, 1 February 1914 ; KLYUZHEV, xiii, 108 ; Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarst--vennaya Duma', pp.20-1.

165 MILIUKOV 284 ; GURKO 531 ; KLYUZHEV, xiii, 108 ; also Russian Review, vol.3, no.2 (May 1914), p.172.

> Ministers and Minister of Finance or Minister of Internal Affairs is incorrect and inconvenient in such a country as Russia. (166)

The last thing that Nicholas wanted was a 'Grand Vizier', an all-powerful minister of the style of Witte or Stolypin. This determination automatically decided the candidature of Witte himself, Maklakov (who would have become both Chairman and MVD) and Shcheglovitov (who would have become both Chair-man and Minister of Justice). The logical course open to Nicholas was the introduction of a complete outsider who could not combine the office of Chairman with any ministry brief already held in the cabinet. Goremykin was not appointed to lead a 'provisional' administration, indeed his chairmanship was not terminated until January 1916. Nicholas intended Goremykin as the unambitious leader of a cabinet in which individual ministers were so balanced that no single minister could emerge to challenge the authority of the Tsar. The new balance in the cabinet was less the product of a power struggle between ministers than the deliberate creation of a Tsar obsessively anxious to maintain the semblance of his own autocracy.[167]

The reduced Chairmanship of Kokovtsov was accordingly succeeded by the even weaker Chairmanship of Goremykin. Duma society was hopeful that the debilitation of the Chairmanship would promote the increased authority of the moderate faction in the cabinet led by Krivoshein and Sazonov, and in certain restricted spheres, as for example their insistence on the retention of the Duma as a legislative assembly, the more liberal ministers were indeed able to hold their position.[168] But Nicholas's scheme to forestall the rise of a super-minister was frustrated by his over-estimation of the authority of the Chairman and under-estimation of the power of the MVD. By the January 1914 'arrangement', Nicholas severed all links between the Chairmanship and ministerial level. By so drastically pruning the effective authority of the Chairmanship, Nicholas both sponsored the inter-ministerial intrigues which

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166 KOKOVTSOV 418.

167 Milyukov later conceded much of this : MILIUKOV 282-4 ; Nicholas even referred to his 'coup d'état' of January 1914 : KA, vol.47/48, p.43.

168 MILIUKOV 284.

were to weaken the government so disastrously in the war period and removed another obstacle to the rise of the ambitious MVD. As Kokovtsov remarked in his memoirs, 'Maklakov's main purpose was to undermine the position of the Chairman of the Council ... and find favour for himself before the Tsar and the public'.[169] Maklakov's early efforts at harassing the Duma had been almost entirely frustrated but the removal of Kokovtsov, his replacement by a reactionary and the further weakening of the Chairmanship not only lent Maklakov unprecedented freedom of action but provided a stimulus to MVD ambition.

Maklakov took advantage of the slacker discipline exercised by Goremykin to promote a full-scale campaign against the Duma. A police report for 5 February noted that signs of strain between the Duma and the new administration were already manifesting themselves :

> Neither Goremykin nor Bark have informed Rodzyanko of their appointments nor have they paid him visits. Bark sent the Duma President his visiting card but the premier did not even do that. Rodzyanko is very touchy on matters of Duma prestige. Milyukov and Shingarev are trying to calm him down. (170)

Whether accidental or calculated slight, the first trivial contacts between the Duma and the Goremykin administration augured the deterioration of relations which naturally accompanied the onslaught of the reactionary ministers against the State Duma. In the words of Milyukov, with the appoint--ment of Goremykin 'immediately began a campaign, and one after another followed a succession of attacks upon the most fundamental principles of our parliamentary activity'.[171]

The first move was simultaneously an encroachment upon Duma financial powers and a corollary to the January 1914 'arrangement' of the government. On 11 February a radical change was announced in the powers of the Committee of Finances. This body, hitherto a humble bureaucratic organ convened to lend technical assistance to the Minister of Finance, became a permanent

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169 KOKOVTSOV 446.

170 Petersburg report of 5 February 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/57,1914,8.

171 PADENIE,vi,305 & 359(Milyukov).

institution with greatly extended responsibilities and the right of direct approach to the Tsar.[172] The new membership of this key financial body was determined by the Tsar alone. The Duma felt that its financial powers were being seriously infringed upon, though the L'Humanité report on the subject may have been too sensational :

> The Committee is considered in the Russian parliamentary world, including the Oktobrist party, clear treason to the national representation... the right of parliament in financial matters, it is hardly necessary to underline, is completely annihilated.

But while the new Committee diminished the financial rights of the Duma (and State Council), it equally significantly diminished the authority of the Ministry of Finance :

> The Committee's president will have the right of report, that is to say, the right to present the conclusions of the Committee on all financial matters direct to the Tsar. By the same token, the power of the Ministry of Finance is necessarily reduced and relegated to second place. (173)

The initiative for the new Committee was not at first apparent. Neither Duma nor Finance Minister would of course abandon one iota of crucial financial power. Maklakov, currently wooing the new Minister of Finance Bark, would not be so crass as to sabotage the liaison by direct attack on his prerogatives. There is no evidence to suggest that Goremykin had even heard of the Committee of Finances, let alone entertained coherent designs for its future.

By a process of elimination one arrives again at the obvious yet frequently overlooked seat of power, the Tsar. In his rescript of 29 January 1914, Nicholas had criticised Kokovtsov not only as Council Chairman but as Minister of Finance : 'the department of finance can be managed only by somebody new ... it cannot continue any longer in this manner'.[174] It appears that Nicholas was not content with the mere substitution of Bark for Kokovtsov. The obvious motivation for the promotion in the status of the

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172 Article 'La Douma perd ses derniers droits', L'Humanité, 10 March 1914 (n/s) as collected in the Foreign Press Fond of the MVD : POLICE, dele 307A-1914,35.

173 Both quotations, ibid, p.35.

174 KOKOVTSOV 418 ; MILIUKOV 283.

Committee of Finances was once again Nicholas's determination to prune the powers of the would-be overmighty minister and take more power to himself. Kokovtsov, partly by dint of ability, partly by the length of his tenure, had created of the Ministry of Finance a power stronghold of his own. This stronghold Nicholas intended to demolish both by expelling the present occupant and systematically breaching its walls. There was probably at least as much desire on the part of Nicholas to reduce the powers of the Ministry of Finance as to weaken the powers of the Duma.

Goremykin's policy as regards the Duma has been described as 'a cat and mouse game'.[175] This is to ascribe to Goremykin a cunning and a restraint of which he was incapable. Goremykin still lived in the world of autocracy and simply could not comprehend or - in his eyes - condone the political dev--elopments of the last ten tears. One must not be too hard on Goremykin : he was already sixty-six in 1905 and it was too much to expect him to serve his political apprenticeship when he was already past retiring age.[176] As Council Chairman, Goremykin fought his own private battle to restore the only world he understood. He supported any move by fellow ministers to limit Duma authority and proved the ideal Chairman for Maklakov's campaign.[177] He was not above a personal contribution to the campaign when the opportunity presented itself. On 7 March 1914, he answered Rodzyanko's complaint that Duma interpellations directed at the Council Chairman remained unanswered with the curt statement :

> The State Duma is only permitted to approach ministers with interpell--ations because they are subordinated to the law of the Senate ... but the Chairman of the Council of Ministers does not stand subordinate to the Senate. (178)

Goremykin judged that the Council Chairman was responsible to the Tsar alone, and need only reply to Duma communications if the Tsar so required. The issue had far-reaching implications : since the only official liaison between Tsar

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175 CHERMENSKY 225.

176 Shidlovsky, Vospominania, vol.II, p.34.

177 CHERMENSKY 223 ; also Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, 2 vols, London 1923 (cited hereafter as BUCHANAN), vol.I, p.165.

178 TsGAOR, f.4, i, 3, 68 quoted in CHERMENSKY 223.

and Duma was the Council Chairman, the absolute allegiance of that official to just one party necessarily meant the constitutional isolation of the other.[179] Goremykin's stand on this principle of exclusive allegiance was legally incontestable, with no avenue of constitutional redress available to the Duma.

Shortly afterwards the government launched its next sortie against the Duna, this time over the sensitive and constitutionally critical issue of parliamentary privilege. On 24 March the Menshevik leader Chkheidze made some hasty remarks in open Duma sitting to the effect that 'Russia's problems can only be solved under a republic'.[180] The reactionary nespaper Grazhdanin immediately ran a campaign urging the prosecution of the Extreme Left fract--ions for treason. On 29 March the Council of Ministers acquiesced : it was decided to prosecute Chkheidze under Clause 129 of the Penal Code for 'incitement to rebellion'.[181] The Council deliberately delayed publishing its decision until the day after the close of the Winter Session in the hope that the Duma Easter recess would both take the steam out of the Chkheidze affair and provide time to rush through the early stages of the prosecution to presnt the Duma with a fait accompli on its return.[182] As on so many other occasions, the government employed its control of the timing of the Duma sessions to lend itself the political advantage.

Perhaps the most dangerous and potentially far-reaching attack by the government occurred early in the Spring Session. The uncompromising attitude of Kasso to the fundamental educational reforms put up by the Oktobrists in both Third and Fourth Dumas had united the Duma majority against all legisl--ation advanced by that minister.[183] To escape from his predicament Kasso

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179 The official Duma record was censored by Rodzyanko : GDSO,II,54,199 ; Article 'Le Gouvernement et la Douma',Journal de Génève,6 May 1914(n/s), in MVD Foreign Press Fond : POLICE,307A-1914,55.

180 POLICE,307A-1914,55 ; also Times,9 May 1914(n/s),7c.

182 1914 Winter Session closed 28 March, Spring Session opened 15 April : GDSO,II,57,410 and 58,417.

183 MILIUKOV 205-7 ; Times,20 June 1914(n/s),7d.

came up with a remarkable tactical device. In Duma sitting, the Assistant Minister of Education Taube dropped a constitutional bombshell :

> By the terms of Clause 57 of the Duma Regulations, the Duma does not possess the right to initiate legislative projects if the government has already indicated that legislation on the topic will be forthcoming from a government department. (184)

In other words, the government had only to announce a legislative programme covering all principal fields of Duma interest and the Duma was powerless to advance its own bills. Once the announcement was made, the opportunities for obstruction and filibustering were endless : the government had only to adv--ance a reactionary bill, see it buried in commission and finally rejected, then submit the same bill with negligible adjustments to minor sub-clauses. 185 Taube's loaded interpretation of Clause 57 gave over complete practical control of legislation to the government. Le Courier Européene agreed that,

> The statement of Baron Taube demonstrates a new and most effective mode of attack upon the legislative powers of the Duma. .. You must realise, as Professor Milyukov has pointed out, that Taube's interpretation amounts to a state revolution. Stage by stage, the government is trying to depress the Duma to the level of a purely consultative assembly.(186)

Over the Winter and early Spring Sessions of 1914 the Duma was subjected to a barrage of attacks upon its constitutional and parliamentary rights to which self-preservation alone dictated a spirited response.

At the same time as the Goremykin administration invited opposition from the Duma moderates, the situation in the country at large forced the moderates in the same direction. The oppositional mood of society had develop--ed steadily since the Lena Massacre and by the winter of 1913/1914 was giving the moderate parties clear cause for concern.[187] There appeared to be two distinct and superficially contradictory trends : an overall shift to the Left and a decline in the moderate position. Both trends were exemplified

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184 Article 'Ministère Goremykine at Douma',Le Courier Européene,25 April 1914(n/s) in MVD Foreign Press Fond : POLICE,307A-1914,51 ; also TsGAOR f.826(Dzhunkovsky),281,57.

185 PADENIE,vi,305(Milyukov) ; also Riha,A Russian European,p.209.

186 POLICE,307A-1914,52.

187 Report of 11 February 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,30.

by the First Congress of Teachers, held 26-30 December 1913. The teaching profession was a traditional recruiting-ground for moderate, and particularly the Kadet, parties but a police reporter exploded any residual hopes that this might still be the case by late 1913. His report advanced the following tentative figures for the political affiliations of the Congress delegates :

40% of the teachers were 'non-political'(unattached to any party)
Of the remaining 60% : 10% Rights or Nationalists
2% Oktobrists
12% Kadet or Progressists
20% SDs
55% SRs or Trudoviks (188)

If this situation reflected a traditional area of moderate support, the out--look for the moderate parties on a national level was very gloomy indeed. Other evidence pointed the same lesson. The number of provincial newspapers with which the Kadet Press bureau had formal contacts fell from 26 in 1911 to 16 in 1913 ; by January 1914 the bureau president Izgoyev was reporting that 'it can be confirmed that there is no Kadet press in Russia at present. 189 The mounting evidence that significant and hitherto reliable sections of the populace were turning away from the moderate parties demonstrated the need for a renewed campaign of publicity-catching activities in the Duma.

The moderates were compelled by the failure of their relationships both with the government and the country to adopt a more dynamic and oppositional policy line. Even at the moments of their worst relations with Kokovtsov, they had been constrained by the knowledge that their hostility could only benefit the reactionaries within the government. The one consolation about the dismissal of Kokovtsov was that the moderates need now feel no compunction about launching an attack against the governemnt designed primarily to enhance their own reputation. The Duma Opposition was spoiling for a fight even before the government declared war. In the context of early 1914, each combatant was glad to see its opponent showing some spirit. Goremykin and Maklakov blatantly fostered an atmosphere of antagonism in the hope that the

188 Report of 3 January 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,5.
189 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),i,31,29-30,81-3 & 90(quotation).

Duma could be tempted into providing grounds for dissolution or, most conveniently, the reduction of the Duma to a consultative assembly. The Duma Opposition led by the Kadets was thankful that the new administration's attacking line both united the Duma fractions as never before and provided a public arena in which the Duma leaders could posture heroically before a grateful and appreciative country. Behind the ostensible struggle for the survival of the Duma in early 1914 there was an element of charade : both government and Duma were attempting by passage of arms to draw their very different but equally fickle backers to a closer identification with the champion of their choice.

An atmosphere of antagonism towards the government emerged amongst the Duma moderates from the very instant of Kokovtsov's dismissal. A mere five days after the fall of Kokovtsov a police reporter was already noting that 'the mood amongst the Opposition is hostile ; there is no hope of a "change for the better" ... in general the mood is very heightened and in moderate opposition circles the same spirit holds sway as in 1904'.[190] Simultaneously, a campaign for greater range and unity of the Opposition was under serious discussion :

> The basic question of intra-Duma life is the desire common to all fractions except the Social Democrats for the formation of a majority strong enough to affect the implementation of their decisions ... and stimulate the interest of provincial society in the Duma. (191)

The leaders of the Opposition initiative were predictably the Kadets, though Milyukov found the Kadet rank-and-file less receptive to the strategy of attack upon the government than to the policy of parlaimentary coalition to which they had been converted in the course of 1913. A Kadet Central Committee meeting on 17 February 1914 saw the Kadet Left wing, now led by Nikolai Nekrasov, again urging more fundamental policies to ensure Kadet leadership of Russian society. Nekrasov proposed not only that 'the Kadet Party should put an end to the tactics of passive defence and cross over to

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190 Report of 4 February 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,19-20.

191 Report of 3 February 1914 : POLICE,307A-1914,18.

the attack' but that Kadet influence should be extended into the Army officer corps and, even more urgently, 'we must not ignore the fact that the workers are in the highest degree an active force ... we allow the Social Democrats to monopolise this sphere far too readily'.[192]

However the Kadet Right wing was still reluctant to explore unknown territory, particularly in the light of the eminently successful negotiations with the provincial Oktobrists which were turning the Kadet fraction towards the Right rather than the Extreme Left. The Right Kadet Izgoyev considered that,

> The Kadet Party would not succeed if it attempted to link itself with the worker and peasant masses ... it is essential to abandon the idea of a complete united opposition and rather present our own slogans and defend our own authority... It is useless to hope that we can play the leading rôle in worker and peasant circles. (193)

The Kadet majority also voiced its apprehension about any future power contest between government and Duma ; even Rodichev completely changed his tune from the brave notes of just a year before, advising the party that 'at the moment we should be thinking in terms of tactics of defence rather than attack'.[194] The bulk of the Central Committee, awed by the prospect of outright collision with the government, referred the whole issue of Kadet tactics to the imminent Party conference.

The Kadet conference of 23-25 March was by far the most important event among the Kadets in the months preceding the outbreak of war. The first issue debated by the conference was Nekrasov's proposal to attempt to extend Kadet influence to the workers. Milyukov glossed the issue by concluding that the unreliability of worker support precluded a Kadet campaign of recruitment but that 'there can be no doubt that in the current broad-based

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192 TsGAOR, f.6/c, delo 31, 104-5 quoted in CHERMENSKY 230 ; TsGAOR, f.523(Kadet Party), i, 31, 104-5 cited in I.S.Rozental', 'Russky liberalizm nakanune pervoy mirovoy voiny i taktika Bol'shevikov', Istoria SSSR, 1971:6, pp. 58-9. The identical delo and pagination in the two archive references bear witness to the radical reorganisation of TsGAOR between the completion of the two secondary works (1947 and 1971 respectively).

193 Quoted in CHERMENSKY 231-2 and Rozental', p.60 ; see also opinion of Vasilii Maklakov in Russkie Vedomosty, 23 February 1914, 3.

194 TsGAOR, f.6/c, delo 31, 107 quoted in CHERMENSKY 232 ; confirmed by Rozental', 'Russky liberalizm', pp.59-60.

political movement amongst the mass of the workers, the existence of the State Duma plays a most powerful rôle'.[195] The embarrassing subject of the Kadet organisation in the country surfaced briefly. The Central Committee blandly reported that 'the last election campaign showed that the repuatation of the party in the eyes of society opinion stands high and the election organisation of the party enjoyed great authority and influence'.[196] The decline in provincial Kadet branches was glibly blamed on the familiar scapegoat, the MVD, and even here the official Kadet account took pains to assure the members that 'this does not mean that the party is ceasing to function in the provinces'.[197] With long-neglected fundamental issues again shelved, the conference debated the more congenial topic of Kadet tactics vis-à-vis the government of Goremykin and Makhkov.

Party conferences in the period 1912-17 were invariably further Left than the Duma fractions which claimed to represent their views. The fundamental division between the Oktobrist Union and Fraction at the November 1913 Congress had precipitated the ruin of the Fraction and left the Union without unified representation at Duma level. The Kadet fraction was fundamentally little happier in its relations with Kadets outside the Duma. The conference of March 1914 urged upon the 'defensive' fraction majority the need for open conflict with the government to unite both Duma opposition and the country behind the Kadets. The conclusions from the debate on general Duma tactics included the following :

> Point 3. The implementation of the task demands the organisation of all opposition forces in the country and State Duma for political struggle.
> Point 4. The aim of the united efforts of the Opposition to be the isolation of the government.
> Point 5. The Fraction of People's Freedom to organise more frequent attacks from the floor of the Duma,more questions to ministers ... and advance legislative projects possessing the closest practical interest for the democratic strata of the population. (198)

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195 TAKTIKI,1913-4,10 ; for full coverage of Nekrasov's proposals,see Russkie Vedomosty,27 March 1914,2-3.

196 TAKTIKI,1913-4,12 ; Russkie Vedomosty,27 March 1914,3.

197 Ibid,12.

198 Ibid,11.

The Conference resolution, destined to become the slogan of the Opposition over the next few months, was couched thus :

> As in 1905, change can only be achieved by the unified effort of all progressive forces of Russian society ... AS OUR IMMEDIATE TASK FOR ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY, WE PROPOSE THE POLITICAL ISOLATION OF THE GOVERNMENT. (199)

With the Duma Winter Session closing only three days later on 28 March, the Kadet fraction had no opportunity to implement the Conference resolutions immediately but prepared the onslaught mandated by the Conference for the Spring Session just three weeks away.

The Progressist fraction for the first time played a major part in Duma affairs by its independent contribution to the raising of the political atmosphere of the 1914 Winter Session. The initial meeting of all Left and moderate fractions to consider the possibility of a unified front against the government on 27 January was sponsored by the Duma Progressists, with Aleksandr Konovalov in particular attempting to forge a united Opposition. But although the meeting came out in favour of the co-ordination of Opposition activities and the creation of an inter-fraction bureau as the executive of the unified Opposition, the urge towards alliance could not override the jealousies of the constituent fractions : 'the participants at the meeting were sympathetic towards the idea of forming such a bureau but no definite commitment was undertaken'.[200] Despite the luke-warm success of this venture, the Progressists were in no way downcast. By late February they were experiencing an upsurge of self-confidence, for the twenty-strong Left Oktobrists group had attached itself to them rather than to the Kadets.[201] Stung by the attacks of the Goremykin administration and flushed with new-found self-assurance, the Progressist fraction started to opt for open warfare.

At first Progressist initiative was overdependent upon Kadet support. On 1 March 1914 the government arranged a secret meeting between War Minister

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199 TAKTIKI, 1913-4, 10 (capitals in the original).

200 KLYUZHEV, xiii, 106 ; Rech', 4 February 1914 ; also LAVERYCHEV 101-2.

201 KLYUZHEV, xiii, 129.

Sukhomlinov and all fraction leaders (except the Extreme Left) to draw the Duma into close rapport with government policy over War Credits.[202] Sukhomlinov was clearly incompetent but the government stratagem of subordin--ating the Duma to its wishes by making it privy to state secrets proved to be effective.[203] The strictures of Chkheidze were largely deserved :

> We are told that we were not invited because we are against militarism on principle. This is true, but there is another even better reason. We are not disposed to play the part of government lackeys. (204)

Milyukov's lieutenant Andrei Shingarev and the Progressist leader Ivan Yefremov tentatively suggested making the passing of the Credits contingent upon government concessions in legislation but were howled down by a majority dizzy with self-induced patriotism. When Milyukov offered no support for his hard line, Yefremov readily acceded to the majority viewpoint.[205]

Like the Kadets, the Progressists too entered the year 1914 with plans both to adopt a stronger line towards the government and to expand their support in society ; but unlike the Kadets it was decided to make serious efforts to create support amongst the Extreme Left. The decision was taken at a meeting in late February at Ryabushinsky's and initiated by Konovalov early in March.[206] An 'Information Committee' to sponsor the growth of the Opposition outside the Duma was established on 4 March - the exact equivalent to the Progressist-inspired 'Inter-Fraction Bureau' within the Duma proposed at the meeting of 27 January.[207] Though it is likely that the fraction leader Yefremov held no high hopes for the 'Information Committee', the Moscow industrialist trio of Konovalov, Ryabushinsky and Morozov lent the scheme their total support, even to the extent of entering into financial transactions with the Bolshevik Skvortsov-Stepanov. By late March a trial

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202 KLYUZHEV,xiii,142 ; KERENSKY 117 & 125-6 ; Times,16 March 1914(n/s),8a.

203 KERENSKY 125-6 ; PADENIE,vi,359-360(Milyukov) and vii,30(Shingarev).

204 L'Humanité,13 April 1914(n/s) quoted in POLICE,307A-1914,46.

205 KLYUZHEV,xiii,142 ; Report of 3 February 1914 : POLICE,307A-1914,18 ; Lenin,Collected Works,vol.20,pp.155-7.

206 LAVERYCHEV 104 ; Rozental','Russky Liberalizm',p.57.

207 TsGAOR,f.63,1913,47,48,62-4 cited in Hosking,Government and Duma,pp. 282-3.

alliance had been agreed between Progressists and Mensheviks at both local and Duma levels, contributing to the still-growing self-confidence of the Progressist fraction.[208]

A meeting on 8 April (during the Easter recess) found the Progressists adding independent action to initiative : the fraction advocated the employ-ment of Budget control as a weapon against the government 'not stopping short even at the cost of Duma dissolution'.[209] The Peterburgsky Kurier noted the aggressive spirit of the Progressists and published an interview with the fraction secretary Titov in which he stated that 'the province of politics is growing and expanding to include the passage of credits ; budgetary struggle is both necessary and unavoidable'.[210] On the eve of the Duma Spring Session, the Kadets began to realise that the crash of the Oktobrist fraction had not eliminated their only rival for Duma leadership. A new power for the moderates was emerging to challenge Kadet hegemony of the Opposition. The moderate fractions were now under pressure to shift to the Left by reason of government attack, society discontent and party politics.

But precisely at this moment the government campaign was abruptly terminated. The virtually unanswerable government assaults on Duma rights and privileges over the Winter Session were cleverly contrived but badly timed. The start of the Spring Session on 15 April, with the vital State Budget and War Credits awaiting examination, found the Duma united as never before and determined to attack. The danger to the government lay in the fact that not only was the 'professional opposition' (to use Guchkov's phrase) in combative mood but the allegiance of the Right wing was seriously in doubt. As a result, not only was the government campaign of harassment called off but attempts made to soothe the fears of the Duma moderates whose votes were now crucial. Goremykin conceded a measure of contact with the Duma President and the Duma was given to understand that parliamentary privilege would be respected and

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208 LAVERYCHEV 105-6 ; Rozental','Russky liberalizm',pp.57-8 & 60-3.

209 CHERMENSKY 239.

210 Peterburgsky Kurier,13 April 1914 ; also KLYUZHEV,xiv,8.

the 'Taube interpretation' of legislation shelved.[211] The most obvious rationale for the Duma attack on the government was removed at a stroke.

However the government quitting of the field had little effect upon the campaign of the Duma moderates. In part the explanation lies with the inflam--ed passions of the Duma majority : the deputies refused to abandon a contest for which the government was in large part responsible at the convenience of the government. The period of the Budget debate was the only point in the parliamentary calendar when the Duma had the political advantage and for the first time it appeared as if the Duma was incensed enough to refuse the government Budget. If the first of the reasons for the Duma campaign was now largely effaced, the remaining two were more potent than ever. The country showed every sign of supporting a Duma offensive, the provincial memberships of the Kadet and Oktobrist parties were encouraged by the campaign and the rapidly developing strike movement among the industrial proletariat was starting to revive memories of 1905. Perhaps even more significantly, the Kadet and Progressist fractions found themselves matched in a contest for the leadership of the Duma moderates, the Duma Opposition and, in its present outraged mood, of the Fourth Duma itself.

The Progressists seized the initiative by organising the Duma defence of parliamentary privilege. At the second sitting of the Spring Session, Progressist agitation (supported by the entire Left and moderate camps) induced the Duma commission for Judicial Reform to appoint a special sub-committee to formulate a bill to guarantee parliamentary privilege ; as a gesture of goodwill towards the government, it was agreed to establish a Duma disciplinary court to punish the abuse of parliamentary free speech.[212] Agitated by its new rival's ploy, the Kadets attempted to cap the Progressist campaign by advocating blackmail of the government to preserve Duma rights. A Kadet motion submitted to the Duma on 21 April stated :

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211 KLYUZHEV,xiii,144 ; also CHERMENSKY 239.

212 Times,2 May 1914(n/s),9c ; R. McKean,Russia on the eve of the Great War,pp.148-9.

> We, the undersigned, demand that the State Duma desist from its examination of the bill concerning the state budget for 1914 until the legislative bill on the establishment of free speech for deputies, currently under consideration by the Judicial commission,is effected.213

Though the Kadet motion and a slightly milder Progressist alternative were both rejected (by 164 to 80 and 157 to 99 respectively), the rival motions of 21 April 1914 represented the high point of moderate opposition in the pre-war period and a first peak in the running battle between the Kadets and Progressists for Opposition leadership.[214]

However the Kadet tactic was itself capped by the actions of the Extreme Left. The Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Trudoviks decided to refuse the Budget until their demands were met, submitted the most radical motion of all (which was defeated by 140 votes to 76) and in a gesture of protest against the government brought the Duma proceedings of 22 April to a complete standstill.[215] The moderates were not prepared to go so far, especially as the presence of Goremykin in the Duma that day raised some hopes of an improvement in relations. While the Kadets and Progressists judiciously abstained, the Oktobrists voted enthusiastically for the expulsion of the Extreme Left. Twenty-one of the twenty-four Extreme Left deputies were formally excluded from the next fifteen Duma sittings.[216] The moderates actively or tacitly accepted the necessity for a temporary purging of the Duma membership in the interests of retaining some measure of contact with the government. The moderate fractions were prepared to compete up to a certain point for party reasons but had no intention of forever destroying hopes of a revived rapport with the government.

While the Duma moderates took care to disassociate themselves from the obstruction tactics of the Extreme Left, the response from the industrial proletariat was prompt and unequivocal : 80,000 Petersburg workers and 25,000 Moscow workers came out on strike in sympathy with the suspended

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213 GDSO,II,61,749.

214 Ibid,750-1.

215 GDSO,II,62,785 ; also Times,6 May 1914(n/s),7a.

216 Ibid,785-806 ; also Pietrow,Paul Milyukov,p.281.

Duma deputies.[217] The moderates were not a little alarmed that the Extreme Left could summon up such instant support and at the Kadet Central Committee meeting of 23 April Izgoyev frantically indicated the developing social forces outside the walls of the Duma :

> There is too little flexibility in Kadet tactics ... For the party to concentrate solely on the Duma and completely ignore the country is dangerous. The country wants to do something but this Duma has given them nothing and consequently they are not interested in it. (218)

The moderates came under considerable fire from their provincial memberships for their failure to support the suspended deputies. In a later debate Vasilii Maklakov rather plaintively related how he had been taken to task by his constituents and 'I, a Moscow deputy, had to make a trip to Moscow to give an explanation to my electorate why I had not voted against the exclusion of the Bolsheviks'.[219] Just as the pressure on the moderates from the government was removed, pressure from the country was increased.

The Kadet response was to step up its campaign of opposition to the government, albeit never prejudicing residual hopes of an improved relationship in the future. In practice, this took the form of concentrating fire upon pre-selected government targets, warning the government of the folly of its policies but avoiding giving offence to the liberal sector of the Council of Ministers. On 28 April Milyukov attacked Rasputin by name in the debate on the budget of the Holy Synod, concluding that 'the fate of Russia ... is in the hands of this hermit ; first free the state from the captivity of upstarts, the hierarchy from the captivity of the state and the church from the captivity of the hierarchy, and only then speak of reforms.'[220] On 2 May Milyukov launched a personal attack upon Nikolai Maklakov for plotting against the constitution, 'demonstrating that a whole series of his statements coincided with the Bulygin Duma Act of August 6, 1905, that is, with

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217 TsGAOR,f.6/c,18,3 cited in CHERMENSKY 285-8.

218 Quoted in CHERMENSKY 290 ; also TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),i,31,172 cited in Rozental','Russky liberalizm',p.66.

219 GDSO,II,81,504(12 May 1914) ; TsGAOR,f.63,1914,L,49,66-7 cited in Rozental','Russky liberalizm',p.66.

220 GDSO,II,68,1347(28 April 1914) ; also KLYUZHEV,xiv,23.

the decree on the legal-consultative Duma which preceded the October Manifesto'.[221] Kadet and Progressist deputies followed one another to the Duma tribune less to sever all contacts with the government than to jolt it into full realisation of the dangers into which it was leading both the Duma and itself.[222] Milyukov argued that Maklakov's policy at the MVD was actually creating revolution : 'the government attacks revolution, not knowing that the reason for revolution is really its own policies'.[223] The Progressist Mansyrev envisaged the government bringing down the Duma in its own fall : 'I do not see the means of fighting the present direction of police activity ... we are all trying by every means to prevent the pronunc--iation of the crucial word but that word must be uttered ; not here but there - on the streets'.[224] Perhaps most significantly, the menace of revolution dominated the thinking of Vasilii Maklakov, most Right-wing of the Kadets :

> The country understands the impotence of our speeches and the hopeless--ness of the "path of loyalty". The country instinctively falls into error and adopts the slogan "Abandon the path of loyalty, let force decide"... If the movement passes us, overtakes the Duma, not employing either us or legal means .., it is the beginning of the end ... There is only one way of averting a revolution - make it yourself ! To revive faith in the Duma as the symbol of peaceful development in Russia, the Duma must turn to opposition and even to extreme opposition. (225)

Fear of revolution, the most extreme symptom of the breakdown of their relationship with the country, emerged in moderate ranks for the first time since 1905 in the Duma Spring Session of 1914.

Progressist activity over this period experienced a definite decline. The last Progressist success was seeing their motion to establish immunity for deputies from prosecution for speeches in the Duma adopted by an over--whelming majority on 25 April.[226] But having provoked the Kadets into

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221 GDSO,II,72,1662-1678 ; quotation from MILIUKOV 287.

222 See Mushin-Pushkin's evaluation, 19 April 1914 : KA,vol.61,p.134.

223 GDSO,II,72,1670 (2 May 1914).

224 Ibid,1671.

225 Ibid,81,504-7 (12 May 1914).

226 Times, 9 May 1914(n/s),7c.

strong action by their early initiative, the Progressists failed to maintain the challenge. The Progressist fraction could not summon up the necessary self-esteem to regard itself as a serious rival of the Kadets ; the Progress--ist mentality was still that of the lieutenant and lagged behind the political rôle of which the fraction was capable. Added to this problem of confidence was the ambiguous attitude of industry at the time. The VIII Congress of the Delegates of Industry and Commerce in early May 1914 advocat--ed two almost mutually-exclusive lines of policy.[227] The developing strike movement constrained the alarmed industrialists to demand sterner measures by the MVD to suppress the labour movement. At the same time the reactionary policies of the government were having adverse effects upon foreign invest--ment and the Congress demanded the assumption of a more moderate line.[228] Implicit though unstated was the principle that the Duma could only influence the government by preserving some sort of relationship with it, therefore policies of illegality and obstruction were undesirable. Though the Congress resolutions were little more than crude expressions of industrial self-interest, their contradictory nature flustered the Progressist fraction and contributed to its already ebbing self-confidence. Lastly, the Duma expulsions of 22 April effectively dissolved the Progressist alliance with the Extreme Left by emphasising the difference in tactics between the Duma Left and the Duma moderates. The Progressist bloc with the Left failed its first test within the Duma, the repercussions of which were felt inside and outside the Tauride Palace. Outside the Duma, the Progressists were discredit--ed and were forced to close down their 'Information Committee' ; inside the Duma, the collapse of their tentative parliamentary bloc capped the other factors in draining the Progressists of their political self-assurance.[229] Opposition initiative passed back from the Progressists to the Kadets.

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227 Times, 18 May 1914(n/s),7c ; also CHERMENSKY 236.

228 CHERMENSKY 238 ; Ruth A.Roosa,'Russian Industrialists and "State Socialism" 1906-17',Soviet Studies,vol.23,3(January 1972),p.413.

229 LAVERYCHEV 106-7 ; Rozental','Russky liberalizm',pp.61-4.

The Budget examination provided the great opportunity for the Duma moderates and Left to deliver a massive rebuke to the government by rejecting the estimates of those ministers whom they wished removed. In such a situation, the allegiance of the Duma axis - the Oktobrists - proved crucial to the government and Opposition alike. Since the cataclysm of the previous December, the Oktobrists had constituted an unreliable political quantity. The Zemstvo-Oktobrists grew from the original twenty-three to about sixty in the first days of the Winter Session, and conducted their first formal meeting on 18 January 1914.[230] The next day the Oktobrist Union held a jubilee to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the zemstvo. A four hundred-strong gathering of Oktobrists unanimously elected Guchkov as chairman of the festivities, who immediately took the carefully-prearranged opportunity to deliver a challenge to the government. Guchkov used the jubilee for in effect reconvening the Oktobrist Congress, his principal aim being to convert the new Zemstvo-Oktobrist fraction to opposition. Guchkov first flattered his predominantly landed audience : 'it can be openly asserted that the October Manifesto and our national representative institution are the result not of strikes but the zemstvo movement - a victory for the zemstvo'. He concluded on a note of 'sweat and tears' : 'Our paths now lead us to violent struggle, inevitable sacrifice and suffering ; but they lead us at the same time to conquest and to victory'.[231]

The support for Guchkov's oppositional views outside the Oktobrist fractions seemed as tumultuous as ever but the Zemstvo-Oktobrists were not won over to opposition. An intrigue to oust Rodzyanko (the Zemstvo-Oktobrist leader) from the Duma presidency and replace him with the Left Oktobrist Khomyakov foundered over Milyukov's reluctance to make an enemy of the Zemstvo-Oktobrist fraction.[232] At the Progressist-organised meeting of 27 January, the Left Oktobrist group participated but the all-important Zemstvo-

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230 KLYUZHEV,xiii,137 & 99.

231 TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),I,509,1-3 (both quotations p.2).

232 Report of 20 January 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,13-16.

Oktobrists held aloof.[233] The Zemstvo-Oktobrist Varun-Sekret was quoted in interview as stating quite categorically that 'the Zemstvo-Oktobrists will never enter into any long-term agreement with the Opposition'.[234]

But although the majority of the Zemstvo-Oktobrists was probably still opposed in principle to agreement with the 'Professional Opposition', fraction unity was the most potent factor demanding an independent line of policy. Klyuzhev, himself a Left Oktobrist, remarked that 'the physiognomy of the "new group" of Zemstvo-Oktobrists is evident with startling clarity - it has no physiognomy'.[235] The Zemstvo-Oktobrists were very much 'those who were left', a conservative group huddling together for company, without the principles or initiative of either Left or Right Oktobrists. The real tragedy of the Zemstvo-Oktobrists was that the disintegration of December 1913 had solved none of their problems : the Zemstvo-Oktobrist fraction was just like the pre-Congress Oktobrist fraction with smaller dimensions. In place of a ninety-nine strong Oktobrist fraction subject to split, there appeared in early 1914 a sixty-strong Zemstvo-Oktobrist fraction equally likely to disintegrate.[236] A police report for 3 February 1914 remarked upon precisely this feature :

> The composition of the present Zemstvo-Oktobrist group has changed only quantitively and not qualitatively. In the previous fraction, on the Left flank was Khomyakov and on the Right, Shubinsky. In the present fraction, on the Left flank we have Alekseyenko, and on the Right, Bennigsen. (237)

Acutely aware of the predicament, the Zemstvo-Oktobrists studiously avoided moves either to Left or to Right in the interests of fraction unity, thus staving off further split but at the risk of becoming a political and parliamentary non-entity.

Only non-party issues could tempt the Zemstvo-Oktobrists from their

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233 Report of 3 February 1914 : POLICE,307A-1914,18-19.

234 Russkie Vedomosty, 29 January 1914.

235 KLYUZHEV,xiii,137.

236 Ibid,139.

237 POLICE,307A-1914,19.

chosen isolation. The Budget of the hated Kasso was such an issue, and as early as February 1914 the Zemstvo-Oktobrists 'booked' a voting agreement with the Left Oktobrists (and implicitly with all the Duma Opposition) to oppose the Education Budget.[238] Other issues on which the Zemstvo-Oktobrists agreed to vote with the Opposition were the defence of parlaimentary privilege and the denial of the 'Taube interpretation' of legislation.[239] Realising the danger of allowing the Zemstvo-Oktobrists to ally (however briefly) with the Opposition, the government set out to woo the Zemstvo-Oktobrists away from the Left. Its earliest move was to invite Alekseyenko, President of the Duma Budget commission and a leader of the Zemstvo-Oktobrists, onto the newly-constituted Committee of Finances. Alekseyenko attracted considerable criticism for allowing his membership to go through but argued that, as the sole Duma representative on the Committee, his increased authority and the information to which he would gain access had decided him to accept the government invitation.[240]

With the opening of the Spring Session, the attitude of the Zemstvo-Oktobrists became crucial. The government knew it could rely on the allegiance of the Right and Nationalist fractions, both too involved in internal disciplinary problems to pursue independent lines vis-à-vis the government.[241] Together with the apparently docile Centre fraction, the government could drum up 185 votes to support its Budget and War Credits ; to guarantee success, it needed 219 votes (the total membership of the Duma at this time being 437 deputies).[242] The government therefore required a further thirty-four votes, which could only be made available by the sixty-strong Zemstvo-Oktobrist fraction.

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238 Report of 10 February 1914 : POLICE,307A-1914,20-1.

239 KLYUZHEV,xiv,34.

240 POLICE,307A-1914,35 & 23.

241 Report on Nationalist and Right fractions : POLICE,307a-1914,19 ; also report of 14 January 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,11.

242 64 Rights, 88 Nationalists and 33 Centre : GDSO:UKAZATEL' 19-21 ; for the attitude of the Centre fraction,see KLYUZHEV,xiv,25.

Having succeeded in committing the Left Oktobrists to membership of the Opposition since mid February, the Duma Left now tried hard to draw the Zemstvo-Oktobrists the same way.[243] As President of the Oktobrist Union, Guchkov again tried to make the Zemstvo-Oktobrists obey the mandate of the November Congress by an interview in Peterburgsky Kurier :

> At the moment political conditions augur well for the concentration of progressive elements. The progressive elements of the country must exploit the opportunity otherwise - and I fear to say this - the chance for a peaceful solution to the present crisis will be completely lost... I consider that the constitutional parties must move over to decisive action : the refusal of Credits. (244)

The appeals of the Opposition and their own party leader proved insufficient to overcome the conservatism and subservience of the Zemstvo-Oktobrists in the voting over the first major Budget item, the estimates of the MVD. At the final vote, the Zemstvo-Oktobrists supported the government and secured the passage of the MVD Budget by the slimmest possible margin : 186 votes to 185.[245]

The slenderness of government victory betrayed the uncertainty of the Right moderate fractions in their allegiance to the government. The Zemstvo-Oktobrists had only supported the government after long debate. The Centre fraction was equally unsure and Vladimir L'vov expressed his views of the MVD in strong language :

> The Centre group believes that we are standing at a terrible crossroad. The Minister of Interior knows in advance that the road which he has chosen is that of non-consideration of the rights of the national representation. This road is dangerous, for the government will not be guided by the forces of society, even the moderate elements, and consequently has no hope of support. (246)

The MVD Budget had not been passed without being pointedly cut by the Duma, and accompanied by a formula condemning Nikolai Maklakov for 'creating dissatisfaction and the deepest discontent in wide and otherwise peaceful

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243 KLYUZHEV,xiii,129.

244 Peterburgsky Kurier, 12 April 1914.

245 KLYUZHEV,xiv,23-5.

246 Ibid, 25.

sectors of the population'.[247] Encouraged by Zemstvo-Oktobrist vacillation, Guchkov again appealed for Oktobrist commitment to opposition :

> We are now entering a period of parliamentary struggle by means of the Budget ... When the Commons - the Lower House in England - entered upon the path of budgetary struggle, they knew not into what extremes such a course would lead. They thought only of their duty. (248)

The chances of persuading the Zemstvo-Oktobrists to join the Opposition seemed greatly improved after the MVD Budget vote.

Excitement in the Duma grew intense with the very real possibility of a government defeat. A three-cornered verbal brawl between Milyukov, Kerensky and Purishkevich led to their expulsion from the Duma for one sitting on 13 May.[249] On 16 May commenced the debate in which the Zemstvo-Oktobrists were not only ready to vote with the Opposition but eager to lead the attack : the budget of the Ministry of Education.[250] Their vote was decisive. In the absence of Kasso, the Duma formally rejected the Education Budget, attaching the following Oktobrist formula of explanation :

> The Minister ... has not only failed to make any attempt immediately to implement vital reforms passed long ago by this assembly, he has even put obstacles in the path of the implementation of any reforms which have been advanced by the initiative of the Duma. (251)

The significance of the action was immense. Although the rejection meant in practical terms only the repetition of the Education Budget passed the previous year and was therefore in no sense financially catastrophic, the moral blow administered by the Duma was prodigious. In the opinion of Hans Rogger, the government suffered a profound shock : 'the Opposition had succeeded for the first time in the history of the Duma in rejecting a specific portion of the Government Budget for the purpose of political protest'.[252]

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247 GDSO,II,73,1710 (4 May 1914).

248 Peterburgsky Kurier,10 May 1914.

249 GDSO,II,83,606-8 ; Times,27 May 1914(n/s),7b.

250 GDSO,II,85,757 ff. ; KLYUZHEV,xiv,37.

251 GDSO,II,91,1333-4 (21 May 1914).

252 Hans Rogger,'Russia in 1914', Journal of Contemporary History, 1966:4, p.97.

It is doubtful whether the Duma moderates seriously considered pressing their attack. The prime targets for Opposition abuse, the MVD, Justice and Education Ministries, had all been chastened by the Budget examination and neither Kadets, Progressists nor Oktobrists wished to sabotage relations between Duma and government permanently. In any case, the future close alliance of the moderates presupposed a degree of government flagrancy which the Goremykin administration was now careful to avoid. Even before the conclusion of the Budget examination on 10 June, the Opposition campaign was effectively over. Weeks before the end of the Spring Session, the exceptionally warm and oppressive weather brought forward the traditional flight from the capitals into the countryside.[253] On 3 June, eleven days before the session formally closed, Klyuzhev remarked that,

> The deputies are disappearing. The scent of the countryside is pervading the Tauride Palace and nothing can prevent mass exodus ... With each day, the Duma benches become more depleted. Some 128 deputies are already absent from the Duma. (254)

The political effect of the 'flight to the country' was not only to reduce the atmosphere of the Duma but to weaken the Opposition. The Opposition needed all its manpower to mount any effective challenge to Right dominance of the Duma, but absenteeism was notoriously more prevalent amongst the moderate deputies than amongst either Extreme Right or Left.[255] The absenteeism experienced by the moderate fractions towards the end of the Spring Session largely accounted for the easy passage of the War Credits through the Duma on 10 June. Though the leaders of the Kadet and Progressist fractions voted against the War Credits (supported by Guchkov from outside the Duma), their numerical strength was already lost.[256]

The Tsar was reported as having expressed his gratitude to the Duma for passing the War Credits but their passage owed as much to absenteeism amongst the moderates as to patriotism amongst the Right. The Kadet and Progressist

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253 Meriel Buchanan, Petrograd, the City of Trouble 1914-1918, London 1919, pp.12-14.

254 KLYUZHEV, xiv, 35.

255 See 'Absenteeism in the Duma', Utro Rossii, 27 November 1913, 2.

256 GDSO, II, 106, 883-8 (10 June 1914) ; also CHERMENSKY 454.

leaders found one small consolation in the passing of the 'Godnev Amendment', a proposal submitted by the Left Oktobrist Godnev that unused sums of meney voted for specific purposes must be returned and not spent at will. Sadly and inevitably, even this modest attempt to increase Duma budgetary powers was convincingly defeated in the State Council.[257] Partly by choice and partly by necessity, the Opposition offensive petered out well before the close of the Spring Session. Despite actions which went further towards open hostility towards the government than ever before, the moderate leaderships faced the summer recess only too aware of the unsatisfactory and inconclusive nature of the confrontation.

Once the Budget examination was complete (10 June) and the Duma session prorogued (14 June), the government had no need to foster the friendship of even the Duma Rights. The Duma would not reconvene until October and present--ed no real threat until the next Budget in April 1915. Maklakov,now freed from dependence upon any section of the Duma and smarting at his treatment at the hands of the Opposition, returned to the attack, attempting a constitutional coup d'état while the Duma was dispersed and powerless to defend itself. Encouraged by a conversation with the Emperor the previous day, Maklakov submitted a proposal to the Council of Ministers on 18 June for reducing the Duma from a legislative to a consultative assembly. As Milyukov had contested in his Duma speech of 2 May, Maklakov now advanced the case for abandoning the October Manifesto and reverting to the August 1905 Bulygin Duma.[258] Perhaps rather surprisingly, the whole Council of Ministers united against the proposition ; Maklakov again found himself isolated and defeated within the Council.[259] The Emperor readily agreed to drop the question for the time being, magnanimously declining the offer of resignation submitted by the bewildered and humiliated Maklakov, who for the

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257 Article 'Le Conflit Budgétaire entre la Douma et le Conseil de L'Empire' in L'Humanité,13 July 1914(n/s), in MVD Foreign Press Fond : POLICE, 307A-1914,94 ; also PADENIE,vi,306(Milyukov) and McKean,Russia on the eve of the Great War,pp.166-8.

258 GDSO,II,72,1662-1678 ; MILIUKOV 287 ; PADENIE,vi,306-7 & 358(Milyukov).

259 PADENIE,vi,306-7 & 358(Milyukov) and ii,435-7(Shcheglovitov).

second time had been manipulated into releasing and accepting the responsib--ility for the Emperor's ballons d'essai.[260]

The decision of the Council of Ministers, whilst essentially the same as that reached in October 1913, was probably fortified by two considerations not pertaining the previous year. The internal situation of Russia in mid 1914 was troubled by a strike movement almost unparalleled in its history : over the first six months of 1914, some 1,449,000 strikers invaded the streets, more than the total striking force for 1913 (itself a bad year for industrial unrest).[261] In St Petersburg, the firing by the police upon a crowd of 12,000 Putilov strikers on 3 July converted an industrial episode into a social crisis. By its instinctive reliance upon police repression, the MVD provoked the industrial proletariat of both capitals into open rebellion.[262] Soviet statistics estimate that the striking force in St Petersburg escalated from 7,000 on 1 July, through 90,000 on 4 July to an unprecedented 200,000 on 11 July.[263] Pourtalès, German Ambassador to St Petersburg, was rumoured to have despatched a coded cable to Berlin to the effect that Russia was in the throes of internal revolution and quite unable to conduct a war.[264] The international climate also militated against the reduction or removal of the Duma. Three days before the Council of Ministers considered Maklakov's scheme, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo.[265] The fever of war was universal in Europe and the likelihood of Russian involvement was considered high. With such an internal and external situation, the government could not afford to alienate the Duma. The government proved unprepared deliberately to provoke public opinion and risk a repetition of 1905 at a time when the national legislative assembly

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260 PADENIE,ii,437-8(Shcheglovitov) and iii,133(N.Maklakov).

261 Istoria KPSS,Moscow 1965,vol.I,p.142.

262 A Short History of the USSR,Moscow 1965,vol.I,p.297.

263 Istoria KPSS,vol.I,p.157.

264 KERENSKY 127-8 ; Felix Yusupov,Rasputin,London 1934,p.77.

265 KERENSKY 119 ; PARES 180 ; Hosking,Government and Duma,p.295.

could be uniquely valuable in rallying the country against both foreign and domestic dangers.

Early 1914 had seen a rapid escalation in the crisis of relations between government and Duma. Alarmed by their fading influence in a country which was shifting rapidly towards open opposition, antagonised by a succession of attacks by the Goremykin Administration and impelled by a growing competition for Duma leadership, the moderate fractions in the Duma adopted more radical means of struggle than ever before. Responding to a tentative Progressist challenge, the Kadets assumed the leadership of an Opposition which temporarily extended further towards the Right position than ever before to include the shattered but still powerful Oktobrists. The parliamentary contest having been cut short by the Duma summer recess, political initiative passed back to the government, finding its most reactionary manifestation in the intrigues of Maklakov. However the constitutional position of the State Duma was 'frozen', partly by the indulgence of the majority of ministers, partly by the exceptional internal and external stresses of Russia in July 1914.

CHAPTER FOUR : THE FIRST YEAR OF WAR

1. 'The Sacred Union'(July 1914-January 1915)

On the evening of 19 July 1914 Germany formally declared war on Russia.[1] Great play was made at the time of the emotional reception accorded by Russian society to the outbreak of war.[2] With the passage of time more critical judgements have made themselves heard, as for example the opinion of Vladimir Gurko :

> It cannot be said that the war was popular with the peasants. They experienced no patriotic exultation. The war aroused among them a muffled, submissive, sullen discontent ... [but] Although the war excit--ed neither patriotism nor indignation among the peasant and factory workers, it deeply stirred the patriotic sentiments of the educated classes. (3)

Hans Rogger claims to detect a large measure of police organisation about the 'war enthusiasm' of the proletariat in July 1914 and even the French Ambassador Paléologue had his doubts about the genuine spontaneity of the populace's welcome for the war.[4] But whether the more emotional manifestat--ions sprang from the hysteria of the moment or were stage-managed by the police, the fact remains that the outbreak of war entirely dissolved the current crisis of relations between government and country. A strike of 27,000 Petersburg workers on the day that war was declared represented the culminating-point of the 1914 strike movement and the collapse of labour agitation until the summer of 1915.[5] The war permitted the tsarist government a full year's respite not only from proletarian unrest but from opposition from the Duma.

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1 Journal Intime de Nicolas II,1914-18,Paris 1934,Entries for 19 & 20 July 1914 ; BUCHANAN,I,205 & 211-2 ; PARES 186-7.

2 RODZYANKO 95 ; Shidlovsky,Vospominania,II,14-15 ; A.T.Vasiliev,The Ochrana ,London 1930,pp.31-2 ; A.A.Oznebishin,Vospominania chlena IV-oy Gosudarstvenney Dumy,Paris 1927,pp.205-6.

3 GURKO 538 ; also V.Chernov,The Great Russian Revolution,Yale U.P. 1936 (cited hereafter as CHERNOV),p.55.

4 Rogger,'Russia in 1914',pp.107-8 ; Maurice Paléologue,An Ambassador's Memoirs,London 1923 (cited hereafter as PALEOLOGUE),vol.I,pp.57-8.

There had been no war during the eight years of the Duma's career and the present hostilities raised for the first time the question of the rôle of the Duma in wartime. Although the Duma moderates had voted against the so-called 'War Credits' on 10 June, six weeks before the outbreak of war, even the government was prepared to acknowledge that the action had been a political demonstration, in no way casting aspersions on the patriotism of the Duma as a whole. As early as December 1912 the Duma moderates and promised the government a 'blank cheque' in the event of war :

> Maklakoff, Constitutional Democrat, said that his party, although the political opponents of the Government, would in the event of war forget their enmities, mindful only of the fact that the Government was defending the interests of Russia. The representative of the Progressists spoke in a similar sense. (6)

The Council of Ministers was sufficiently sure of the patriotism of the Duma to reach unanimous agreement on the propaganda value of a Duma sitting. Trepov, Governor-General of Kiev, had suggested this to Goremykin on the very eve of war :

> It would be useful from all points of view to call the State Duma, if only for a single day, in order to underline the complete solidarity of all levels of the populace at this moment of crisis, and their preparedness to serve the Throne and the country with all their strength. (7)

The Council recommendation was fully approved by Nicholas, who personally welcomed the opportunity 'to be at one with my people' : on 20 July, a one-day 'historic sitting' of the State Duma was announced for the twenty-sixth.[8]

However the granting of this exceptional situating did not resolve or even touch the question of the rights of the Duma in wartime. On 24 July (on the eve of the Duma sitting) it was learned from Rodzyanko that the government was unlikely to recall the Duma until November 1915.[9] The Duma leaders of most party persuasions were angry that Rodzyanko should be so intoxicated

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5 Kurlov, Konets Tsarisma, p.208 ; KERENSKY 128 .

6 Times, 21 December 1912(n/s), 5b and 5c.

7 Letter dated 14 July 1914 : TsGIAL, f.1276(Council of Ministers), x,7,1.

8 TsGIAL, f.1276(Council of Ministers), x,7,2 ; GDSO, II,-, page 3 and column 1(sitting of 26 July 1914).

9 TAKTIKI, War period, p.10 ; PADENIE, vi, 307(Milyukov).

by the patriotic euphoria of the moment as to forget his responsibilities as Duma President.[10] The government motion to shelve the Duma for sixteen months was not only an insult to the national representation but, in that the Duma had to be convened to pass the State Budget, a direct violation of the Fundamental Laws.[11] Rech' inveighed against government obtuseness in rejecting close identification of the state and people at a time of national crisis. The Duma Council of Elders sent a collective rebuke to Goremykin, who declined either to answer or receive a Duma deputation.[12] Snubbed by official channels of communication, the Duma leaders resorted to more indirect petition :

> The deputies with surprising unanimity condemned the decision of the government as unrepresentative of the mood of the Duma and country. A deputation of seven (Milyukov, Konovalov, Alekseyenko, Varun-Sekret, Antonov, Shein and Khvostov) visited Krivoshein. (13)

Krivoshein, already sympathetic to the Duma and antagonistic to the reactionary primacy of Goremykin and Maklakov, readily agreed that an earlier convocation than November 1915 was necessary to preserve the present salutary atmosphere of cooperation and goodwill.

Krivoshein put the Duma point of view to the Council of Ministers, including the desire of the majority of members to continue Duma sessions in wartime exactly as in peacetime.[14] Goremykin reported the gist to Nicholas :

> After the congregation of a considerable number of Duma deputies, there has grown up a unanimous desire to approximate to the customary duration of a Duma session, following the current recess in its activities. The most prominent representatives of all political persuasions in the Duma speak this way. (15)

At the Council meeting of 25 July, a compromise solution was reached between the reactionary wing (led by Goremykin and Maklakov), who disapproved of any

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10 Rech',24 July 1914,1 ; P.L.Bark,'Vospominania',Vozrozhdenie,April 1965, p.87.

11 Rech',24 July 1914,1 ; PADENIE,vi,307-8(Milyukov).

12 Rech',24 July,1 and 26 July,3 ; PADENIE,vi,308(Milyukov).

13 TAKTIKI,War period,p.10 ; Rech',26 July,3.

14 TAKTIKI,ibid ; MILIUKOV 306 ; PALEOLOGUE,I,272-3 ; Shidlovsky,Vospominania,II,21.

15 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,4.

Duma session in wartime beyond the purely ceremonial, and the liberal wing (led by Krivoshein and Sazonov), who envisaged a Duma rôle in wartime closely resembling that of peacetime. According to the official Kadet account,

> As a result of these negotiations, the time question has been resolved - not as favourably as that pressed for by the deputation i.e. 15the October 1914 - but all the same much earlier than that originally envisaged by the Government. The new date - "not later than" February 1st 1915. (16)

The compromise date naturally carried a safety clause for the Ministers' Council : the new date was set 'always permitting, if circumstances show it to be inevitable, to postpone the Duma convening to a later date'. By the 'agreement of 25 July', ratified by the Tsar the next day, the State Duma occupied a compromise position between full peacetime rights and the excess--ively cramped function ascribed to it by the reactionary wing of the Council.[17] The constitutional issue was not settled and future political advantage rested with the government.

At the same time as a détente was being reached over the constitutional issue, the Duma fractions were discussing their attitudes to the war and the government. From 18 to 26 July the Duma Council of Elders met daily at Rodzyanko's office with a view to formulating a relationship with the govern--ment to which it had so recently been violently opposed. From outside the Duma the press organs of the moderate parties came out strongly in favour of a moratorium on differences with the government. The Oktobrist Golos Moskvy declared that 'the moment has come when all party differences,"questions of programme" and "class contradictions" must take second place ... there can only be one party in Russia at this juncture - the Russian'. The Progressist Utro Rossii agreed that 'there are in Russia neither Rights, Lefts, govern--ment or society but only a united Russian nation'.[18] Milyukov too envisaged a suspension of internal conflicts in the face of the common enemy :

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16 TAKTIKI,War period,p.10 ; also PADENIE,vi,308(Milyukov) and Rech', 26 July 1914,3.

17 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,pp.4(quotation) and 9.

18 Golos Moskvy,18 July 1914 ; Utro Rossii,20 July 1914.

> At the moment that war was declared all these differences faded into the background before a general display of healthy patriotism .., the explosions of nationalist sentiment that occurred simultaneously and everywhere identically. The French called it "union sacrée", the sacred union. (19)

More practically, the Kadet Central Committee published an appeal in Rech' on 20 July urging that,

> No matter what our attitude towards the government's domestic policy, our first duty is to preserve the unity and integrity of our country ... Let us postpone our domestic disputes ; let us not give our adversary even the slightest chance of relying on the differences that divide us. (20)

The same day a manifesto from the Tsar appeared to match the moderates' appeal, trusting that 'in this year of terrible trials, internal disagreements be forgotten, the union of the Tsar with the people be strengthened and all Russia stand united to repel the enemy's criminal attack'.[21]

But the Duma leaders were not unanimous in their adoption of this policy of 'sacred union'. Kerensky led an Extreme Left movement to exploit the war to force from the Tsar fundamental reforms in the spirit of the October Manifesto. A debate between Milyukov and Kerensky dominated the Council of Elders' meetings immediately prior to the Duma 'historic sitting'. In the vote of the Council of Elders, Kerensky claims to have enjoyed the support of the Progressists, Mensheviks, Trudoviks and even Left-wing Kadets. However Milyukov's proposal gained the support of all representatives to the Right of the Kadets and defeated the Kerensky motion. Kerensky did manage to persuade Rodzyanko to mention both the successful and defeated motions in his interview with the Tsar on the morning of 26 July, an undiplomatic concession on Rodzyanko's part received most frostily by the Emperor.[22]

The 'Historic' Duma sitting of 26 July passed off in the spirit of Milyukov's 'sacred union'. In his opening speech Rodzyanko asserted that 'the war has suddenly put an end to all our domestic strife ; the Russian

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19 MILIUKOV 305 ; also CHERNOV 53-4.

20 also in MILIUKOV 305.

21 GDSO,II,-,1 (sitting of 26 July 1914).

22 KERENSKY 129-130 ; TAKTIKI,War period,p.5.

people has not known such a wave of patriotism since 1812'.[23] Goremykin, Sazonov and Bark made confident speeches calculated both to inspire the members of the Duma and impress the Allied ambassadors who were present.[24] Spokesmen for the national minorities rose to vow allegiance to the Russian cause, followed by a succession of representatives of the leading Duma fractions.[25] Milyukov for the Kadets announced :

> We are fighting for the liberation of the Motherland from foreign invasion ... We are united in this struggle. We set no conditions and we exact nothing. On the scales of war, we simply place our firm will for victory.

Even so, Milyukov made it clear that the armistice between the Kadets and the government was only temporary : 'the fraction is by no means changing its attitude towards questions of internal affairs but only postponing the parliamentary struggle until the time when the general and national danger is past.'[26] Kerensky resigned himself to the prevailing spirit of 'sacred union' while making his own reservations perfectly plain :

> Peasants, workers and all of you who desire the happiness and well-being of the country, steel yourselves for the great trials ahead of us, gather your strength and, having defended your country, you will free it. (27)

Only the Bolshevik fraction braved the inflamed patriotism of the Duma but even its actions were 'couched in cautious terms, much was left unsaid' and the fraction opted to abstain from voting on the War Credits rather than opposing them.[28] The 'Historic' sitting fulfilled its government purpose of demonstrating solidarity between country and state before both national and international audiences. The government had successfully averted any move by the Duma Opposition to make political capital out of the war situation and secured a virtual 'blank cheque' from the Duma Rights and moderates.

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23 GDSO,II,-,6 ; also PALEOLOGUE,I,56.

24 Ibid,cols 7-8,8-12 & 12-17 ; also PALEOLOGUE,I,68-70.

25 Ibid,cols 18-29 ; V.V.Shul'gin,Dni,Belgrade 1925(cited hereafter as SHUL'GIN),p.60.

26 GDSO,II,-,24 & 25 ; also in KERENSKY 133 and TAKTIKI,War period,p.6.

27 Ibid,19 ; also KERENSKY 132-3.

28 N.Krupskaya,Memories of Lenin,Panther History,London 1970,p.246.

The government initiated a series of measures in the spirit of the 'sacred union'. On 3 August, the Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nikolai published a manifesto on Polish autonomy, a concession calculated to secure the allegiance of the population of the inevitable battlefield. On 18 August, St Petersburg was renamed Petrograd as part of a campaign to eradicate German influence from Russian public life.[29] Apparently in the conviction that patriotism was as heady an intoxicant as vodka and that the two were readily interchangeable, the Russian Empire introduced Prohibition from 23 August.[30] The government was even prepared to tolerate the emergence of society organisations which might sublimate the political drive of the educated classes. Russian society organised itself for the war effort with an enthusiasm which even Paléologue, snug in the French Embassy, could admire;

> All the social organisations are equipping themselves for war. As usual the signal is given by Moscow, the true centre of national life and the place where the spirit of enterprise is more developed than anywhere else. The idea behind the movement is to go the help of the Government in the fulfillment of the complex tasks which the bureaucracy, idle, corrupt and blind to the needs of the people, is incapable of performing for itself. (31)

The Union of Zemstvos, which had provided excellent support during the Japanese War, received Imperial permission for a renewal of its activities on 12 August ; a similar organisation, the Union of Towns sprang into existence at the same time, claiming recognition from the government a few days later.[32] It was for the most part through the agency of the Zemstvo and Town Unions that Russian educated society satisfied its desire to serve the war effort and to play its part in the 'sacred union' of state and country considered so essential to victory.

However within weeks of the 'Historic' Duma sitting, the greater part of the spirit of 'sacred union' had evaporated. The actions of the government,

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29 Letopis' Voiny za Polgoda, January 1915, p.1 ; KLYUZHEV, xv, 69 ; PALEOLOGUE, I, 84 & 108.

30 PARES 219 ; Times, 21 and 26 October 1914(n/s), 8e and 10a respectively ; KOKOVTSOV 422 ; M.Miller, The Economic Development of Russia 1905-1917, London 1926, pp.125 & 284.

31 PALEOLOGUE, I, 76-7.

32 MILIUKOV 313-5 ; KLYUZHEV, xv, 69 ; Letopis', p.1.

some the result of wartime necessity, others the manifestation of distrust of Russian society, became increasingly distasteful to the moderates and put strain on the 'sacred union'. The powers of the government were increased from the very first days of the war. The 'agreement of 25 July' amounted to a declaration that the wartime g-overnment would be operating for the most part without the State Duma. Although the Duma was not rejected outright as a wartime phenomenon, its uses were closely proscribed and its meetings were to be rare and selective. By the same token, legislation through the normal Duma and State Council channels was automatically impossible and the govern--ment assumed the entire responsibility for legislation (as permitted by Clause 87 of the Fundamental Laws).[33] The authority of the government was also increased by extended powers devolved from the Tsar. In late July Nicholas still envisaged assuming personal command of the Russian army.[34] By an imperial rescript of 24 July the Council of Ministers was authorised to assume extra powers while the Tsar was at the Stavka,the Army Headquarters in the Field. In effect, Nicholas was establishing a regency council with all civil powers for the duration of his military leadership. As it turned out, the Council of Ministers prevailed upom Nicholas to appoint Grand Duke Nikolai as Commander-in-Chief but the rescript of 24 July was not rescinded and the ministers entered autumn 1914 with greater and more independent power than ever before.[35]

The Duma moderates might well have accepted the greatly enhanced powers of the government as justified by war necessity had not various ministers employed them to repress society and launch attacks on the constitutional position of the recessed Duma. With the experience of the 1914 Budget fracas still very much in mind, the government seriously considered the liquidation of the Duma's financial rights. In mid August a proposal was put up to the

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33 PADENIE,iii,311-2(Goremykin) ; during the premiership of Goremykin(Janua--ry 1914-January 1916),Clause 87 was employed 384 times : ibid,p.310.

34 Sazonov,Fateful Years,p.291 ; Journal Intime de Nicolas II,entry for 19 July 1914 ; BUCHANAN,I,216 ; PALEOLOGUE,I,56 and II,58 ; PADENIE,vii, 118(Rodzyanko).

35 PADENIE,iii,302-4(Goremykin) ; also PARES 219.

Council of Ministers that for the duration of the war taxes should be raised by decree.[36] The furore caused by rumours of this motion rocked the confid--ence of the Duma moderates in the 'sacred union' and a declaration of protest drawn up by the Progressists and Moscow Kadets even reached the pages of the national press. The certainty of almost united Duma opposition persuaded the Council to withdraw the motion ; the whole question of the Duma's budgetary rights was discreetly allowed to drop.[37]

Inevitably it was Maklakov at the MVD who led the campaign to reduce the position of the Duma and contain the activities of educated society. Censorship and the prohibition of public meetings proved effective weapons for Maklakov's purpose. War censorship had been introduced on 20 July, the day that Russia declared war, and was increasingly rigorously enforced in the course of autumn 1914. By mid September the newspapers Zavety and Russkoe Bogatstvo had suffered complete closure and Den' and Russkie Vedomosty were flailing under the weight of MVD fines.[38] In November Rodzyanko approached Maklakov with a request to permit a congress of public organisations (for which he had already secured the approval of the Grand Duke Nikolai). Maklakov peevishly retorted :

> I cannot give you permission for convening such a congress ; it would be an undesirable and universal demonstration to the effect that there exist disorders in supplying the army. Besides, I do not wish to give permission since under the guise of delivering boots, you will make revolution. (39)

Maklakov's statement highlighted the MVD's fear of Russian society, its preoccupation with the prestige of the government and its determination (while tacitly accepting the indispensable aid that society had to offer) to disclaim any such formal obligation as the much-vaunted 'sacred union'.

Maklakov's major offensive was launched at the Duma itself. Parliament--ary privilege had been successfully defended by the Duma in the Spring

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36 ENGEL'HARDT,xii,329 ; also CHERMENSKY 477.

37 Utro Rossii and Russkie Vedomosty,29 August 1914 ; also Moscow report of 29 August 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/46b,1914,11-12.

38 Moscow report of 23 September 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/46b,1914,15.

39 RODZYANKO 104-6 ; also Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.10.

Session ; in early November Maklakov returned to the attack. The Bolshevik fraction's attitude to the war was dictated by Lenin in Switzerland,who from the security of that neutral state demanded forthright opposition to the 'imperialist war' by the workers' representatives.[40] The five deputies of the Bolshevik fraction attended an illegal conference to discuss wartime tactics from 2-4 November, only to be arrested on the last day on a charge of treason.[41] The motives of Maklakov for this action are open to a variety of interpretations. The most obvious is that the government was simply incarcer--ating elements suspected of treason of of 'spreading alarm and despondency'. Maklakov's pre-arrest report to the Tsar leaves this impression :

> The members of the Bolshevik fraction are preparing to call a conference with the participation of exiled Social Democrats for the purpose of drawing up the tactical means of propagandising the idea of the immediate dissolution of the war and the overthrow of the monarchical form of government in Russia.

Badayev, the Bolshevik fraction leader, substantially agreed :

> The Okhranka was prepared for our conference ... the tsarist government had long been searching for a pretext to liquidate the Bolshevik fraction of the State Duma ... because the Duma Bolshevik fraction was the mouthpiece of the revolutionary movement and the organisational centre of the mass of workers. (42)

But it is also possible that Maklakov was indulging a personal vendetta against the Duma as revenge after his earlier defeat on the very same principle of parliamentary privilege. It may also be that Maklakov expected the reaction from Duma society to be sufficiently ill-advised as to provide grounds for the dissolution of the Duma in its absence. Provocation was the MVD's most recently developed and therefore favourite device. The MVD's provoked 'Shornikova Plot' had provided the pretext for the dissolution of the Second Duma, and Maklakov may have hoped that the 'Bolshevik Plot' of November 1914 would serve the same purpose for the Fourth Duma.

Whatever Maklakov's motivation for the arrests, the reaction from society was surprisingly mild. Even the most partisan Soviet accounts cannot

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40 A Short History of the USSR,I,319 ; Krupskaya,Memories,pp.246-252.

41 'The Arrest of the Five Bolshevik Deputies',KA,vol.64,pp.31-2 & 35-9 ; also Badayev,The Bolsheviks,pp.213-7.

42 KA,vol.64,pp.31(Maklakov) & 31-2(Badayev).

muster a 'workers' response' to the Bolshevik arrests so it may be safely assumed that there was none.[43] The Duma deputies' enthusiasm for the war almost entirely smpthered their disapproval at the unconstitutional action of the government. Even Kerensky readily postponed the reckoning until after the war :

> The living forces of Russoan society do not attack or oppose Maklakov. For the time being our path runs parallel with that of the government. But we expect much more from victory in the war of liberty than the government ... You understand that after the war Maklakov will be brou--ght to account. In the meantime we will be silent and rest content.(44)

Rodzyanko sent Goremykin a formal letter of protest on 30 November but was to make no attempt to raise the issue as a Duma question or interpellation.[45] Far from protesting against the arrests, the Kadets completely disavowed the Bolsheviks, intimating that such 'traitors' deserved all they got : 'the whole population from top to bottom stands for the war ; defeatists are not an influential group and may be punished with impunity'.[46] If Maklakov had hoped for an outburst on a scale which could justify the dissolution of the Duma, he was disappointed. Though the government continued to press for the harshest brand of justice for the Bolshevik deputies, and only the intransig--ence of the Grand Duke Nikolai prevented the case from being transferred to a military court carrying the death penalty, the whole 'Bolshevik Deputies' affair fell rather flat, lending little credit or advantage to any of the parties involved.[47]

Soon after the arrests Maklakov decided to take action against the public organisations. At the Council of Ministers' meeting on 18 November, Maklakov demanded that the Unions of Zemstvos and Towns be strictly confined to medical and sanitary duties, and requested authorisation that the MVD be

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43 A Short History of the USSR,I,319 ; CHERMENSKY 472-3 ; Badayev,The Bolsheviks,pp.214-221 ; I.Tsereteli,Vospominania o Russkoy Revolyutsii, Paris 1963/4,vol.I,p.10.

44 Police report of 8 November 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/57,1914,28.

45 KA,vol.64,pp.46-9 ; Badayev,The Bolsheviks,pp.220-1 ; RODZYANKO 107.

46 Rech',6 November 1914 ; also Lenin,Collected Works,vol.21,p.172.

47 KA,vol.64,pp.50-1 ; CHERMENSKY 473.

empowered to intervene at any level of the Unions. At the subsequent Council meeting on 25 November, Maklakov received his authorisation.[48] The power was now his to take direct action both against the expanding sphere of influence of the Unions and against Kadet dominance of the Union of Towns. A police report for 30 November provided precise information on the extent to which the Union of Towns was Kadet-controlled : the Union President Chelnokov was a Kadet and of the twenty-two-strong Executive Committee of the Union, sixteen were Kadets and two were Kadet sympathisers.[49] From late November Maklakov attempted to reduce the influence of the Unions but was effectively stymied by the shortcomings of the bureaucratic and military machines, which made the increasing support of the Unions vital to the war effort. Maklakov also attempted to reduce Kadet control of the Union of Towns but Kadet concentration at the administrative and executive levels made it hazardous to remove their personnel without a public furore, apart from the military danger of weakening such an indispensable war organisation. On both scores the Unions received a large measure of support from the military authorities, who in their own interests protected the Unions from the attempted incursions of the civil government.[50]

Meanwhile the first three months of war had convinced Goremykin of the political and military necessity of secret government. At the Council meeting of 9 November, Goremykin secured approval in principle for the secrecy of Council proceedings, a decision within its jurisdiction under the terms of the Rescript of 24 July.[51] On 18 November Goremykin wrote to Sukhomlinov confirming that henceforth the activities of the Council were to come under the heading of 'classified information' and that the Ministry of War was to assume responsibility for the censorship in the war zone. A similar directive

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48 TsGIAL,f.1274,547-1914,10-11(18 November) & 14-20(25 November) ; also TsGIAL,f.1282(MVD Chancellery),I,732,76-92 cited in DYAKIN 68.

49 POLICE,xv,27/46b,1914,37.

50 Riha,A Russian European,pp.220-1 ; PADENIE,v,204(N.Maklakov).

51 PADENIE,iii,320(Goremykin).

to Maklakov on 4 December stipulated that in future 'the press can publish no information about the activities of the Council of Ministers except that released through the [official-R.P.] information bureau'.[52] By this scheme Goremykin intended, in the words of the President of the Provisional Government Investigation Commission, that 'you and your group of ministers should retain power and that your activities should be secret and suffer no criticism'. Despite Goremykin's ostensible victory, secret government was however imperfectly implemented : Sukhomlinov and Maklakov argued between themselves and their Chairman about the responsibilities of censorship administration and the unofficial 'grapevine' by which Duma society learned of the activities of the Council of Ministers suffered little effective diminution of its powers.[53]

As the government started to employ its exceptional powers to undermine the position of the State Duma, the elation of the 'Historic' Duma sitting disappeared, to be replaced by mounting gloom amongst the moderate deputies and a growing awareness that their leaders had let slip the supreme moment for negotiation with the government. A police report for 4 November described the fall in enthusiasm after late July :

> The aggregate of relevant factors has completely changed the mood of those Kadet groups who initially hoped that the "Historic" sitting of the State Duma would open a new page in the history of relations between state and society. Complete disillusionment and growing irritation are emerging in speeches along the lines that some protest or other must be launched against the present tactics of the government.

Only the patent futility of such a gesture had prevented the Kadets from employing the good offices of Rodzyanko to present a petition to the Tsar :

> Some [Kadets - R.P.] consider such an address completely useless from the point of view of results, others categorically stand out against it, holding it to be the greatest tactlessness publicly to announce the dissatisfaction of society at this time. (54)

A succession of Kadet meetings to discuss a deputation to the Tsar revealed that the rift between the Left Kadets and the party majority was deepening.

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52 PADENIE,iii,320-1 & 324(Goremykin).

53 Ibid,322(quotation) and 324(arguments).

54 POLICE,xv,27-1914,53-4 & 55.

The Left Kadets already disavowed the 'sacred union' and demanded pressure on the government for the immediate recall of the Duma, while the centre and Right Kadets opposed a deputation as drawing domestic and foreign attention to society discontent. At the Kadet Central Committee meeting of 19 August, the whole proposition of deputations and addresses was defeated and the hope expressed that discreet and clandestine pressure upon the government might secure a wartime Duma without the necessity for recourse to an open campaign.[55]

On 22 August a police report noted that although the State Duma had been out of session for almost four weeks, the Tauride Palace was still the congregating place for a large proportion of Duma deputies. The ostensible pretext for this activity was the sittings of the Duma Aid Committee, an independent organisation for war work employing some 3,000 nurses financed by public and Duma subscription, which from the very start performed the function of a Duma information centre. By late August the Okhrana was report--ing that the Aid Committee sittings were being employed for political discussion.[56] The explanation of the phenomenon owed much to the Tsar him--self. A decision of the Emperor, relayed from Sukhomlinov to Goremykin on 28 July, stipulated that 'members of the State Duma who enlist in the ranks of the army in time of war are not permitted to resign their offices as Duma deputies', a ruling which became common knowledge on its communication to Rodzyanko on 2 August.[57] The decision, motivated presumably by a desire to quarantine the potentially disruptive Duma membership from the army in the field, had the effect of barring the Duma deputies from all activities except service in the public organisations and in the Duma itself. A significant proportion of Duma deputies took up positions at the administrat--ive level of the Zemstvo and Town Unions but a large number found them--selves barred from any activity except that of the Duma itself and

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55 TsGAOR, f.6/c, 31, 183-4 & 188 quoted in CHERMENSKY 478-480 ; also TsGAOR, f.523, i, 32, 3-12 (Minutes of Kadet Central Committee meetings of 25-6 August 1914) quoted in DYAKIN 64.

56 POLICE, 307A-1914, 109-114 ; also Rech', 2 August 1914.

57 TsGIAL, f.1276 (Council of Ministers), x, 7, 9 & 10.

consequently set themselves with a will to founding a Duma substitute. By attempting to head off one problem before it started, the Tsar only contrib--uted to an illegal crypto-Duma which naturally promoted the only activities to which it was allowed recourse.

By late August 1914 the 'unofficial Duma' was considering the rumours that the last redoubt of the Duma, Budget examination,was under discussion in the Council of Ministers. The threat alarmed the Kadets in particular :

> The Kadets spiritedly debated the question of the necessity of the recall of the State Duma to discuss taxation matters ... They say that the government wants to dismiss the Duma and "go it alone" over the introduction of new taxes.

The Moscow Kadets demanded that Rodzyanko and the Duma presidium resign in protest unless the Duma was either in session or definitely promised by 15 September.[58] The nerve of the Kadet fraction, which more than any other had put its signature to the 'sacred union', was under great strain by the autumn of 1914, inducing Maklakov to issue a secret MVD circular ordering the utmost vigilance in respect to the oppositional parties and 'in particular, hiding under the flag of the "Constitutional-Democratic Party", the Left wing of the Opposition, with its republican leanings'.[59] The Kadet party became the primary target for Okhrana surveillance.

Both Kadet and MVD attention over the course of September and October concentrated on the Union of Towns. The First Congress of the Union on 12-14 September aroused Maklakov's suspicions from the first : through Goremykin he secured the Tsar's approval for pre-publication censorship to prevent the Congress speeches and resolutions from appearing in the press.[60] Irritated by the government's victimisation, the concluding speech of the Congress by the President of the Moscow Municipal Duma, Astrov, betrayed a distinctly 'political' note : 'the war ... will give us the opportunity not only to defeat our external enemies, but the solution to the more complex problems

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58 Report of 29 August 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/46b,11 ; also Utro Rossii, 29 August 1914.

59 MVD circular of 2 September 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,87.

60 PADENIE,iii,325(Goremykin).

of internal construction and renovation'.[61] At the same time the Kadets were recovering from their fit of nerves and, inspired by Milyukov, were making strenuous efforts to broaden the basis of their support.[62] The Kadets mounted a campaign to wrest the leadership of the Union waway from the Oktobrists, who had sponsored the emergence of the organisation only a month before. At the First Congress, the Kadets successfully toppled the Oktobrist Bryansky as Head of the Union and got Chelnokov elected as his successor.[63] Following this coup, a flurry of Kadet meetings took place in early October at which Milyukov declared that 'the present time is the most effective for the rebirth of all-powerful public organisations under the flag of, and on the grounds of philanthropy and aid to war victims'.[64]

Maklakov's surveillance over the Kadets and the Unions of Towns and Zemstvos was increased. On 14 October an MVD secret circular was issued requiring provincial governors to present reports on the activities of local Kadets.[65] But while it transpired that the provinces could still be safely ignored as a political factor, events in the capitals demanded the MVD's constant attention. A police report for 18 October regretted that,

> The Tauride Palace is becoming more and more the centre for the exchange of all kinds of news. Life beats more strongly here, the "monies" of the Duma members are constantly changing hands ... the frustrated are seeking here, at the centre, the solution or explanation of those issues and doubts which are arising in the provinces. (66)

On the next day Maklakov received a report that Chelnokov, the new Kadet Head of the Union of Towns, was on a tour of the major provincial towns drumming up support for both the Town Union and the Kadet party.[67] The Union of Towns, far from remaining non-political, appeared to be the front

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61 Report of 30 September 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,34.

62 Reports of 22 and 24 September 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/46b,16-22.

63 Moscow report of 17 September 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/46b,13-4 ; also Petrograd report of 30 September 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,34 and Golos Moskvy,17 and 21 September 1914.

64 Report of 10 October 1914 : POLICE,xv,27-1914,40.

65 POLICE,xv,27-1914,41.

66 POLICE,307A-1914,117.

67 Moscow report of 19 October 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/46b,23.

for the creation of a nationwide revitalised Kadet movement. Throughout the late autumn of 1914 continued a clandestine manoeuvring for position on the part of both government and major Opposition groups, a silent war of which few signs ever escaped to penetrate the public image of 'sacred union' maintained by both sides.

Since the 'Historic' Duma sitting, political initiative and advantage had rested with the government ; with the munitions crisis of late 1914 the advantage tipped towards leading society groups, In wartime, the civil government was ultimately dependent upon Russia's military performance. Thoroughly imbued with the concept of the short Bismarckian war, few combat--ants were entirely free from a munitions shortage by December 1914, but Russian lack of foresight was crowned by incomprehensible stupidity on the part of the War Ministry. As early as mid August Rodzyanko, acting on rumours reaching Shingarev, enquired of Sukhomlinov about munitions shortages but received bland assurances of sufficiency.[68] When in mid September Joffre, the French Commander, enquired about Russia's munitions needs, Sukhomlinov assured Paléologue that no shortage was likely in the foreseeable future. As late as November, an agitated Paléologue was still getting no satisfaction from the War Ministry :

> I am getting reports from many quarters that the Russian army is running short of ammunition and rifles. I have been to General Sukhomlinov ... but he kept answering "Don't worry,I've prepared for everything", and has produced for me the most comforting figures. (69)

The whole sorry business was revealed to the Allied ambassadors in early December : Paléologue heard from the Grand Duke Nikolai himself that military operations were having to be curtailed from lack of ammunition ; Buchanan received the information independently from the Chief of the British Military Mission at the Stavka shortly afterwards.[70] Confronted by incontrovertible evidence, Belyayev (Chief of Staff to the War Minister) admitted the exist-

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68 PADENIE,vii,23(Shingarev).

69 PALEOLOGUE,I,217 & II,21 ; also Sazonov,Fateful Years,pp.286-7, BUCHANAN,I,219 and GURKO 549.

70 PALEOLOGUE,I,221 ; John Hanbury-Williams,The Emperor Nicholas II as I Knew Him,London 1922,pp.19-20.

-ence of a dangerous munitions shortage in confidence to Paléologue and Buchanan on 5 December.[71]

The munitions crisis had three distinct political effects on the Russian government. The first was acute embarrassment before its war allies, rising to terror that the crisis might permanently damage Allied military cooperation. Paléologue and Buchanan complained loudly, first to Sazonov and on 6 December to Goremykin, accusing Sukhomlinov not only of inefficiency and lack of foresight but deliberate deception in his relations with Russia's Allies.[72] With its war effort increasingly dependent on imported materials (particularly from France anf Great Britain), the Russian government could not afford to endanger its relationship with its Allies. Stemming from this embarrassment and the grave military situation which occasioned it was a perceptible decline in the self-confidence of the government. The third consequence was an awareness at the highest government level that to make good the munitions shortage, the Goremykin Administration must establish an immediate constructive rapport with Russian society. Within six months of the outbreak of war, the Russian government was compelled to appeal to the wealth and talents of society to survive a military crisis of its own making. From the moment that the munitions crisis was officially (but not publicly) recognised in early December, concessions on the part of the government towards Russian society were inescapable. In sordid practical terms, the government needed the active cooperation of industry as a crucial component in recovery in time for the 1915 campaign, and a meeting of the State Duma to authorise the substantial extra sums necessary to remedy the immediate military crisis.

The Council of Ministers approached the Duma leaders from mid December with a view to contracting a mutually-satisfactory political bargain. The extent to which the government recognised the Kadets as leaders of the Duma may be gauged by the fact that the initial negotiations were with the Kadets

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71 PALEOLOGUE,I,222 ; BUCHANAN,I,219.

72 PALEOLOGUE,I,223-4 ; BUCHANAN,I,219.

alone. In return for agreement to the Military Budget and a demonstration of unity with the government, Krivoshein (the Council negotiater) offered the Duma three concessions : a government declaration of goodwill towards society, a short Duma session early in the New Year, and a promise that the 1915 Budget would be submitted to the Duma without recourse to Clause 87 of the Fundamental Laws.[73] In relation to the government's needs, Krivoshein's terms were laughable ; it can only be conjectured that Krivoshein did not expect the terms to be accepted, only to provide a basis for bargaining. In offering the Duma nothing but a brief session during which its every action and utterance was dictated by the government, the Goremykin Administration could only hope that the spirit of 'sacred union' among the Duma leaders was sufficiently strong to gloss over political developments since the 'Historic' Duma sitting. In this preposterous gamble the government proved completely successful. Despite its weak bargaining position, the government achieved its aims without fundamental concession : on 20 December Krivoshein secured the agreement of the Duma Council of Elders to the government terms.[74]

Although Milyukov led the movement within the Council of Elders to meet the terms, the Kadets were not all as intoxicated by the spirit of 'sacred union' as their leader. Indeed early in October the Moscow Kadets became so shrill in their abuse towards the MVD that the Petrograd Kadets, fearing a rift in the 'sacred union', ordered a halt to 'irresponsible' speeches :

> At the meetings of the leaders of the Kadet Party, it was decided temporarily to hold back from any criticism whatsoever and maintain a policy of restraint towards the government. (75)

The Kadet Central Committee meeting on 21 December reiterated this line :

> If it is foreseeable that the Duma sittings will be employed for a succession of oppositional sppeches against the government, it would be better to oppose the recall of the Duma with all our strength.

However, accepting that it would be unpatriotic to refuse a Duma session offered by the government in its hour of need, the Central Committee agreed

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73 CHERMENSKY 484-5 and DYAKIN 65 (no primary documents cited).

74 CHERMENSKY 487 ; TsGAOR,f.523,I,32,105-121(Minuted of Kadet Central Committee meeting of 21 December 1914) quoted in DYAKIN 65.

75 Moscow report of 9 October 1914 : POLICE,xv,27/46b,1914.22.

to ratify Milyukov's action of the previous day.[76] Even so, the meeting failed to resolve the question of Kadet relations with the government and it was only after considerable debate that a general meeting on 1 January 1915 agreed to maintain the Milyukov policy line and not return to the opposition--al policy of pre-war politics.[77] A police report for 3 January 1915 observed that the Left wing of the Kadet fraction was agitating for a full Kadet conference to settle the question of relations with the government.[78] Another report noted that the Left-wing Kadet minority was demanding that the Duma session be employed for raising such issues as the arrest of the Bolshevik deputies, government censorship and the legality of the extended use of Clause 87. However, although the Left wing gained a minor victory in establishing that Kadet deputies who tabled questions against the government would not be disciplined by the fraction, it was clear by early January 1915 that the majority of the Kadet Central Committee and Fraction were for maintaining the policy of 'sacred union'.[79]

There is little documentary evidence available to suggest that the Oktobrists or Progressists pursued any independent policy in the first six months of war. Corporate Oktobrist policy effectively ceased to exist as the fraction members dispersed to service in the public organisations (most notably the Russian Red Cross and the Union of Zemstvos). The Oktobrists started the war period with control over both the Union of Towns and Union of Zemstvos ; however the Union of Towns was lost to the Kadets as early as September 1914 and even the Union of Zemstvos (to which most Oktobrists now attached themselves) came under increasing pressure from the Leftward move--ment of public opinion. The financial and subscription difficulties of the Oktobrist Golos Moskvy epitomised the general Oktobrist decline : in December 1914, the editorial board of Golos Moskvy for the first time

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76 TsGAOR,f.6/c,32,109-110 quoted in CHERMENSKY 485.

77 Moscow report of 10 January 1915 : POLICE,xv,27/46,46.

78 POLICE,xv,27/46b,44.

79 Moscow report of 10 January 1915 : POLICE,xv,27/46,46 ; also TAKTIKI, War period,p.11.

admitted non-Oktobrists (the Kadet Fal'bark and the Progressist Rzhevsky).[80] The Oktobrist movement was still disintegrating and diffusing, the protracted and painful consequence of the Congress of November 1913. Amongst the Progressists, the fraction leadership was content to follow the Kadet line while the industrialists who had sponsored the career of the fraction in peacetime were now too preoccupied with their profits in supplying the war effort to have recourse to Duma politics.[81] The Okhrana concentrated its attention on the Kadets on the assumption that the leadership (if not the initiative) of any opposition against the government would come from this quarter. There are no grounds for believing that the Police Department was seriously in error in this assessment.

On 11 January 1915 the Tsar agreed to convene a Duma session on the twenty-seventh. The next day he signed a ukaze for the prorogation of the Duma on 29 January until 1 November 1915.[82] With the Duma unwittingly helpless in his grasp, Goremykin informed the delighted Rodzyanko that a Duma session had been granted, though with the warning that 'in view of the war situation, the duration of the imminent session will be of an altogether brief extent'.[83] The government had taken every precaution before permitting a Duma session : it had secured the promise of the Duma leaders that there would be no departures from the government-decided programme ; it waited until the anticipated trouble-maker, the Kadet fraction, had made its harmlessness apparent ; and it released the news of a Duma session only after its three-day duration had already been decided and documented.

With the preparations for the charade complete, the government could afford to appear generous. The Duma Budget commission held its preliminary meeting on 8 January, its subsequent Budget examination commanding regular

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80 DYAKIN 68-9.

81 ENGEL'HARDT,viii,598-9.

82 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,pp.22,25 & 29-30 ; also PADENIE,iii,305(Goremykin).

83 TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,29-30.

and conscientious attendance from government officials.[84] The Budget commission meetings were conducted in the closest secrecy, which allowed the Duma representatives to be judiciously critical. The MVD came under fire for its activities but Maklakov was content to suffer criticism when there was little chance of it spreading beyond the forty-four members of the Budget commission.[85] The government achieved a master-stroke of diplomacy by appointing Ignat'ev Minister of Education on 18 January.[86] Kasso had died in November 1914 and the Education Ministry had remained vacant since that time. By appointing the liberal and popular Ignat'ev to the post, Goremykin left Duma society with the impression that some concrete advantage had been won from the government. The Rech' leader for 21 January 1915 enthused :

> The appointment of Count P.N.Ignat'ev as Minister of Education remains at the centre of public interest ... It would hardly be a mistake to state that up to this time no single appointment has aroused such general satisfaction and hope.

As a final 'concession', Goremykin permitted Rodzyanko to arrange a meeting of the entire Council of Ministers with the Duma Defence commission on 25 January. The atmosphere of the meeting confirmed the earlier arrange--ment of 20 December 1914.[87] Only the Kadet leaders introduced a note of discord : Milyukov and Shingarev attacked the wartime policy of the MVD and 'demanded the dismissal of Maklakov as the violater of the "sacred union"'. Maklakov contemptuosly dared the Kadets to break the 'sacred union' by attacking him publicly : 'Go there [to the Duma - R.P.], the government does not fear criticism in public, we will answer you there'. Sukhomlinov too naturally came under attack, while Goremykin played the unaccustomed rôle of soothing and reassuring the Duma leaders.[88] The meeting of 25

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84 TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,19 & 31 ; Russkie Vedomosty,13 January 1915.

85 TAKTIKI,War period,p.12 ; PADENIE,vii,21(Shingarev).

86 Article 'What we expect from the new Minister', Birzhevie Vedomosty,10 January 1915 ; KLYUZHEV,xv,66 & 72 ; PADENIE,iii,317(Goremykin) and vi,309(Milyukov).

87 TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,36 ; TAKTIKI,War period,12 ; PADENIE,vi,309(Milyukov).

88 MILIUKOV 309 ; TAKTIKI,War period,13 ; PADENIE,vi,309-311(Milyukov) and vii,22 & 27(Shingarev).

January was an extension of the closed sessions of the Duma Budget commiss--ion : the government was prepared to face criticism and meet the Opposition because of the circumscribed nature of the confrontation. For the price of private criticism from a sector of the Duma membership, the government gained the money essential to its military recovery and the placid Duma session vital to its political self-assurance.

The spirit of 'sacred union' pervaded the Duma session of 27-29 January 1915. As planned, a demonstration of unity between Duma and govern--ment was mounted by the representatives of all leading fractions and nationalities. The sentiments of Savenko, orator for the Nationalist fraction serve as a typical example : 'in time of war, there are no parties and no nationalities in Russia, but only a single,strong,terrible,granite Russian monolith'. Yefremov,orator of the Progressist fraction, though subscribing to this view, permitted a suggestion of criticism to colour his speech : 'we, the representatives of the people, may not embark upon criticism of the activities of our government, even though it sometimes actually hinders the expression of the vibrant patriotism of the people'.[89] With the Bolsheviks forcibly excluded, it was left to Kerensky to declare against the Duma policy of non-criticism of the government :

> The country has been surprised and shocked by this terrible silence, by this absence of truth over the last six months. It should know that there are people who understand and recognise that this silence cannot continue. (90).

However Kerensky's attitude was overwhelmed by the insistence of the Duma majority on continuing the Duma rôle of July 1914. At the closed meeting of 25 January even the Kadets (the most critical group represented) had been careful to point out that they were intent only on removing 'violaters of the sacred union' not dissolving the 'union' itself.[91] On 28 January in Duma sitting, Milyukov spoke for the great majority of the Duma when he vowed 'just as then on 26 July .., so today, in our appeal for unity, we are

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89 GDSO,III,2,61(Savenko) & 54(Yefremov).

90 Ibid,46 ; also Milyukov,'Fevral'skie Dni',p.162.

91 TAKTIKI,War period,12 ; also Utro Rossii,27 January 1915.

performing not a political gesture but our exacting civic obligation'.[92]

On the second day of the session the Duma expressed its 'civic obligat--ion' by passing the State Budget without opposition.[93] On the third day Goremykin announced to Rodzyanko the decision made as long ago as 12 January : the Duma was prorogued until November.[94] The Duma had again played the rôle dictated by the government and had outlived its usefulness within three days. Duma apologists hesitantly advanced a claim that the January session represented a victory over the government but an awareness that the Duma had been cynically 'used' by the government for its own ends quickly took possession of public opinion. The official Kadet account published in September 1915 attempted to resolve the two interpretations :

> The January session of the State Duma particularly strengthened its authority and increased its importance ... but the general impression was that the session - by no fault of its own of course - did not fulfil its function. There was strengthened not only the authority of the Duma but the conviction of the need for a long session. The period "no later than November" seemed too distant. (95)

The patent weakness of the explanation betrayed the declining Kadet belief in the 'sacred union' after the Duma session of January 1915.

The 'sacred union', a concept introduced and sustained by the Kadets and their fellow moderates, was treated by the government and particularly the MVD as a valuable Duma delusion which it could exploit. As Milyukov himself conceded later 'what was meant as a truce was taken to mean capitulation'.[96] The concept had hardly been a practical policy even in the first heady days of war but the Duma moderates added unreasonable obstinacy to their earlier gullibility by refusing to learn the lessons of the first six months of wartime government and take political advantage of the munitions crisis. The 'sacred union' had ceased to exist at government level

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92 GDSO,III,2,50 ; also TAKTIKI,War period,12.

93 GDSO,III,2,154 ; MILIUKOV 309.

94 GDSO,III,3,281 ; TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,40.

95 TAKTIKI,War period,13 ; also PADENIE,vi,311(Milyukov).

96 TAKTIKI,1916,p.9 quoted in Riha,A Russian European,p.218.

as early as September ; by November, the Left Kadet Kolyubakin was already warning his party that the 'union' had disappeared at the common level :

> An enormous change in the mood of the country has taken place since the time of the "Historic" Duma sitting of 26 July ... The mood has collapsed and everywhere has been replaced by colossal disillusion--ment. (97)

By January 1915 the 'sacred union' existed only in the minds of the Duma Rights and moderates, but with a tenacity which persuaded the moderates to abandon the political instrument which had been employed with such success over the last weeks of peace. The Duma leadership chose to sacrifice its very real budgetary powers to a concept which was chimerically sanguine at the best of times and ludicrous in its untenability by the time of the Duma session of January 1915.

2. 'The Progressive Bloc' (February-August 1915)

With the Duma safely prorogued until November, the government seemed set to revert to its policy of repression and harassment. The trial of the Bolshevik deputies, approved by the Emperor on 28 December but prudently postponed until after the Duma session, eventually returned verdicts of guilty and imposed sentences of exile in Siberia upon the five defendants but aroused little interest still less outrage on the domestic scene.[98] When the Moscow Kadet Russkie Vedomosty ran a survey through its readers on 25 January on the effects of the war upon the peasant, Maklakov waited only for the Duma session to pass before ordering both 'the necessity of instit--uting for the future stricter surveillance over the newspaper Russkie Vedomosty' and an all-round tightening-up of press control.[99] The one month's imprisonment imposed on the Kadets Peter Struve and Vasilii Maklakov in March for their conduct during the Beilis trial again seemed to point

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97 TsGAOR, f.6/c, 32, 53 quoted in CHERMENSKY 480-1.

98 KA, vol.64, p.51 ; Badayev, The Bolsheviks, pp.232-241.

99 POLICE, xvi, 27/46, pp.3-4(article), 5(Police report), 10(Maklakov's reply) & 12(general directive, 12 February 1915).

the lesson that the moderates would be bearing the brunt of a renewed government offensive in the near future.[100]

However by comparison with its pre-war activities and, even more pertinently, its operations during the first six months of war, the repression of the government in early 1915 was distinctly muted. Indeed from December 1914 onwards, the antagonistic front presented to the Duma and country by the Goremykin Administration progressively softened. The change in attitude was not surprisingly hardly a voluntary transformation of character but the result of increasing pressure exerted by the war effort. The munitions crisis judged so alarming in December 1914 had no actual military impact until the new campaign 'season' opened in Spring 1915, leaving the government several months in which to redevelop its military resources, dutifully financed by the Duma session of January 1915. However the events of Spring 1915 brought no comfort to either government or High Command. The breaking of the Myassoyedov scandal confirmed the public in its growing belief that Russian ill-success in the war owed more to treason than to German superiority in arms.[101] The mysterious destruction by explosion of the Okta munitions factory, the largest in Russia, on 31 March did nothing to counter the universal sense of German conspiracy.[102] When the campaign season reopened in March 1915, the munitions shortage still crippled the Russian war effort.[103] German units posted to stiffen Austrian resistance proved the vital ingredient which sent over the Austrian army from defence to attack : from late April 1915 the Austro-German offensive pushed back the Russian armies with ever-increasing speed. Over the summer of 1915 the Russian retreat from Galicia became a rout.[104]

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100 Russkie Vedomosty, 15 March 1915.

101 PALEOLOGUE, I, 299-301 ; RODZYANKO 108 ; GURKO 549-550 ; SHUL'GIN 80 ; TsGIAL, f.1276(Council of Ministers), x, 7, 42-3.

102 PALEOLOGUE, I, 329 ; Times, 1 May 1915(n/s), 7b.

103 MILIUKOV 311 ; Gurko, Memories, pp.102-3 ; A.S.Lukomsky, Memoirs of the Russian Revolution, London 1922, pp.18-19.

104 Gurko, Memories, pp.107 & 111 ff. ; Gilliard, Thirteen Years, p.134 ; R.H.Bruce Lockhart, The Two Revolutions, London 1967, p.55.

The intimate relationship between military success and government self-confidence has already been remarked. Each major military event produced a political backlash : victory brought renewed self-confidence to the govern--ment to the exclusion of society forces ; but defeat sapped the morale of the government, forcing it to turn to society for moral and material support. The Duma session of January 1915 was the first major political result of military failure, although not on this occasion exploited by the Duma moderates. The military disaster of spring and summer 1915 occasioned a series of tactical opportunities which the moderates (at first reluctantly) utilised for their political advantage. The Left Nationalist leader Shul'gin held that the government had a moral account to settle with the nation :

> For this defeat the government had to pay. But what with ? With the only currency which was acceptable in payment - it had to settle its debt by the concession of power, however seemingly, however temporarily. (105)

At the practical level, the government was compelled to make concessions in order to harness the country's energies and talents to the state apparatus ; at the public relations level, the government had little choice but to conciliate the country with political concessions, the only acceptable commodity which it had to offer in lieu of military victory.

The 'Liberal Phase' which briefly held sway over summer 1915 was forced upon the Russian government by the anonymous pressures of the war and owed very little to Russian society and the State Duma. The process of 'liberalisation' assumed three overlapping stages. The first was the gradual admission of non-government elements into the structure of the government. Initially the government attempted to meet all problems by drawing upon the resources and personnel of the government alone. The fuel crisis of early 1915 was tackled in such a manner. The cheapness and ready availability of foreign coal in peacetime had stunted the exploitation of native fuel resources. With the coming of war and the remarkably effective German blockade, the Russian war effort was thrown back on dangerous overdependence

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105 SHUL'GIN 78-9.

upon its own poorly organised coalfields. The government's response was to establish the Fuel Committee on 31 March.[106] The fuel crisis was aggravated by the problem of transport : as a commodity vital to the war effort, coal took priority over foodstuffs on the railways, resulting in the spoiling of food, consequent food shortages in the larger cities and the injection of moral contoversy into the whole issue of fuel and food. The government's response was identical : the creation of the Provisions Committee on 19 May.[107]

Both these new institutions were composed of government personnel alone, with no account taken of the merchants and industrialists whose cooperation and counsel were essential to the solution of the problems. However 19 May marked not only the setting-up of the Provisions Committee but a most significant breakthrough in society participation in government. Rodzyanko used his privileged access to the Emperor in the first five months of 1915 to preach the advantages of close collaboration between the Duma and the government. Claiming that the private meetings with government leaders in March 1914 and January 1915 had proved the value of cooperation and the trustworthiness of the Duma delegates, Rodzyanko advanced a scheme for the Duma and industry to aid the war effort through a commission attached to the Ministry of War. Despite Sukhomlinov's opposition, Nicholas on 13 May decided to adopt Rodzyanko's plan.[108] Dismayed that his incompet--ence be exposed in future before strangers, Sukhomlinov fought an effective rearguard action : at the Council of Ministers' meeting of 23 May he won an assurance that the proceedings of the Duma Commission would be entirely secret and its accounts armour-clad, that is to say, neither subject to Duma approval nor included in the annual Budget statement.[109] Despite

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106 Letter of Nicholas II to Alexandra,2 March 1915 : The Letters of the Tsar to the Tsaritsa 1914-1917,Ed. C.E.Vulliamy,London 1929(cited hereafter as NICHOLAS),p.31 ; S.O.Zagorsky,The State Control of Industry in Russia during the War,Yale U.P. 1928,p.38.

107 Zagorsky,ibid,pp.83-4 ; MILIUKOV 312-3.

108 RODZYANKO 113-6 ; TAKTIKI,War period,16 ; Lukomsky,Memoirs,p.19 ; Times,8 June 1915(n/s),8c.

109 CHERMENSKY 492.

these limitations, Rodzyanko's delight was enormous for there was no denying the importance of his achievement : for the first time Duma and industry delegates were to be permanently attached to one of the most powerful government ministries and privy to all its actions.

The reception of the Commission in Duma circles was very mixed,meeting violent opposition from the Kadets :

> The Right ... maintained a cautious silence, the Nationalists and Oktobrists welcomed my efforts but the Kadets, encouraged by their leader Milyukov, entirely unexpectedly ganged up against my undertaking, declaring that any contact and joint endeavour with the War Ministry of Sukhomlinov would be shameful for the Duma ... they,the Kadets, would not participate in the newly-formed Commission under any circum--stances. (110)

Milyukov was piqued that the first successful act of cooperation between Duma and government should be engineered by Rodzyanko, whom he held in very low esteem, and not himself. The Progressists followed the Kadet lead in rejecting participation in the new Commission, thereby leaving the Right to monopolise the Duma representation.[111] However Rodzyanko was as ambitious for the Oktobrists as for the Duma as a whole, and contrived to exclude representation from the Right of the Oktobrists. Partly from sour grapes on the side of his moderate rivals, partly from his own machinations, Rodzyanko finally headed a deputation of four Duma delegates to the Commission, all of whom were fellow Oktobrists.[112] At the very instant of a resounding victory for the Duma, party politics soured the achievement.

The party political element persisted through the first meetings of the new Commission. The attention of the Duma was concentrated upon Rodzyanko's 'pilot scheme' to ascertain whether this experiment in wartime collaboration would end in failure and the defiant ossification of a government which refused to mend its ways, or prove acceptable and engender a succession of similar opportunities for society participation. The first meeting of the Commission on 1 June calmed most government fears but at the cost of

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110 RODZYANKO 117 ; also report of 27 May 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,20.

111 MILIUKOV 316 ; see discussion in Kadet Central Committee 10 June 1915 : TsGAOR,f.523,i,32,175 cited in DYAKIN 78 ; the Kadet fraction agreed in principle to participate only on 11 June : Milyukov,Istoria Vtorey Revolyutsii,Sofia 1921-4,vol.I,p.25.

flagrantly ignoring old society loyalties and exacerbating the element of party political rivalry. The War Ministry was considering the nationalisat--ion of all war industry, a step naturally opposed by the industrialist lobby and publicised by the Progressist (and to a lesser extent the Kadet) fraction. Rodzyanko and his Zemstvo-Oktobrist colleagues on the Commission, partly because their predominantly landed fraction had nothing to lose from the nationalisation of industry, partly from a craven eagerness to avoid giving offence to the government on the first occasion, supported the as-yet tentative government move.[113] By this action Rodzyanko alienated the power--ful industrialist sector and supplied ammunition to those critics who accused him of employing his Duma office for party interests. At the same time however, he had discovered a way of promoting the greater power of both Duma and Oktobrists simultaneously. The Duma Oktobrists received the first fillip to their self-confidence since the 1913 crash. The government was reassured of the feasibility of cooperation with society elements and conceded further experiments in collaboration. On 7 June a Commission for Munitions was established, admitting once again four delegates from the Duma.[114] From the two initial Commissions were to spring the five Special Councils which established permanent institutional collaboration between government and Duma created in August 1915.

The second major aspect of 'liberalisation' was the substitution of more liberal ministers for the most hated reactionaries. The simplest and most dramatic gesture of concession to society, it was at the same time the one which could be reversed most speedily and with least harm to the structure of government. Sensing the direction of events, power groups within the government exerted pressure to exclude individual ministers. Sazonov, Krivoshein and Kharitonov, the liberal wing of the Council of

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112 Namely Savich, Protopopov, Dmitryukov and Rodzyanko himself : KLYUZHEV, xiv, 156 ; also Lenin Library Manuscript Department, fond 260(P.P. Ryabushinsky), iv, 10, 5.

113 TsGVIA(Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvenni Voyenno-Istoricheskii Arkiv), f.369, 174, 98 quoted in CHERMENSKY 495 ; Zagorsky, State Control, pp.87-8.

114 Zagorsky, State Control, pp.84-5 ; PALEOLOGUE, I, 347.

Ministers, stepped up their campaign against the reactionary wing, agitating particularly for the removal of Sukhomlinov. With reports of the Russian retreat becoming daily more alarming, with Rodzyanko joining his complaints to those of both cabinet and country, Sukhomlinov was in any case the obvious scapegoat : on 12 June he was dismissed as Minister of War and replaced by the popular and able General Polivanov.[115]

Maklakov too fell from power at this time. The blocking of his personal ambition, his constant out-manoeuvrings by Shcheglovitov and the crushing weight of the MVD in wartime discouraged and frustrated Maklakov to the point of actual physical illness. Maklakov petioned Nicholas for dismissal in March,though playing his rearguard action against the Duma to the last :

> The State Duma and its President strive wherever possible to increase their own power and importance in the state and, by the same token,are endeavouring to diminish the powers of Your Imperial Majesty ... I have always pressed upon Your Majesty the necessity for diminishing the rights of the State Duma and reducing it to the level of a consultative institution. (116)

On 4 June Maklakov's resignation was finally accepted, to be made public on the thirteenth. It is likely that the dismissal of Maklakov was effected more in sorrow than in anger, and there is no indication that Maklakov was in disgrace or considered unfit for the post of MVD.[117] Unfortunately the popularity of his 'liberal' successor Prince Shcherbatov was matched by his incapacity as Minister, a fact hardly out of keeping with his only previous administrative experience as Director of the State Stud.[118]

A second wave of dismissals was decided at a meeting of the Council of Ministers at the Stavka on 13 June, though only made official on the Tsar's return to the capital in early July. The two arch-reactionaries in the Council were removed : Sabler(Procurator of the Synod) was dismissed on 5

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115 Sazonov,Fateful Years,pp.283-8 ; RODZYANKO 122-3 ; Lukomsky,Memoirs, pp.20-1 ; GURKO 551 ; Nicholas's letter of 12 June 1915 : NICHOLAS 57.

116 Letter of Maklakov to Nicholas,27 April 1915 : MPK 96 ; also quoted in RODZYANKO 121-2 ; also PALEOLOGUE,I,308.

117 See Nicholas's letter to Maklakov,12 August 1915 : MPK 97 ; also Times, 21 June 1915(n/s),7f ; also DYAKIN 77.

118 Kurlov,Konets Tsarisma,p.177 ; Oznobishin,Vospominania,p.211.

July, Shcheglovitov the following day.[119] Their successors were less popular and liberal than the earlier replacements but were welcomed nevertheless as symptoms of the trend away from reaction. Samarin, the new Procurator, was Marshal of the Moscow nobility ; Aleksandr Khvostov, the new Minister of Justice, while a crony of Goremykin, had the reputation of being industrious and scrupulously honest.[120] Milyukov only regretted that Goremykin had not been removed with the rest of his reactionary clique :

> The retention of Goremykin continued to cast a special shadow on the Government. This man was an immoveable stone weighing down upon Government policy, and his person symbolised the absence of any substantial change in the direction of that policy. (121)

Sazonov's group within the Council rested content with only Goremykin to tackle :

> Goremykin had the powerful protection of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna and,under the circumstances,it would have been hard to obtain his dismissal. And besides,we thought that without Shcheglovitov who was the soul and brain of the reactionary party,and without his other supporters,Goremykin's part in the Government would be insignificant. (122)

By early July 1915 the only survivor of the reactionary wing of the Council as it had existed in early 1914 was the Council Chairman, whose influence, though considerable, was not expected long to resist the pressure of the influx of more liberal colleagues.

With the arch-reactionaries removed from the Council of Ministers and society representatives consolidating a bridgehead on the periphery of government, only the Duma was needed to express the ambitions of Russian society. The last Duma session had been prorogued 'until not later than November 1915'.[123] Within weeks of this closure, individuals began campaigning for a much earlier recall. On 25 February Kerensky wrote to Rodzyanko

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119 RODZYANKO 122 ; Rech',6 July 1915,1.

120 The full first name will be used when referring to Khvostovs(as in the past with Maklakovs) to avoid cofusion : Aleksandr A. Khvostov(the Uncle),Minister of Justice July 1915-July 1916 and MVD July-September 1916 ; Aleksei N. Khvostov(the Nephew),Duma deputy and MVD September 1915-March 1916.

121 MILIUKOV 318.

122 Sazonov,Fateful Years,pp.284(quotation) & 288-9.

123 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,40 ; GDSO,III,3,281.

insisting that the only antidote to the insidious activities of the MVD was, in the first instance, the recall of the Duma :

> The authoritative intervention of Russian society is essential. The State Duma must do everything it can to protect the nation from this perfidious stab in the back. I beg you, as official President of the Duma, to insist on the immediate recall of the State Duma. (124)

However the actual organisers of the emerging Duma agitation for a new session were the Progressists. As early as March the Progressist deputies still in Petrograd voted to initiate a campaign for a Duma session and issued instructions recalling all fraction members to the capital.[125] Yefremov approached Milyukov with a view to uniting with the Kadets in a propaganda campaign but encountered unexpected opposition :

> [The suggestion ? R.P.] met at first far from unanimous acceptance even amongst the Opposition fractions.Both Maklakov and Milyukov coldly retorted ... that a long session of the Duma in time of war was inappropriate,and to embark upon a session at such a time(March-April) was undesirable ... Milyukov declared himself to be against "switching horses in mid-jump". (126)

Spring 1915 found the Kadet leadership unsure of its ground. In early April Milyukov embarked upon a lecture tour of the Volga towns only to discover that his policy of 'sacred union' was not tolerated by audiences unanimously and openly hostile to the government.[127] Disturbed by his findings, Milyukov was the motive force behind a Kadet Central Committee circular issued on 29 April requesting urgent information on the provincial Kadet attitude to the war, the government and Kadet policy.[128]

In early May Yefremov returned to the capital from witnessing the start of the retreat from Galicia, and at an extraordinary meeting of the Duma Council of Elders demanded the immediate recall of the Duma and a government

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124 Letter in Rodzyanko Fond : TsGAOR,f.605,I,70.

125 It is now possible to compare the 'official' Kadet account of events (TAKTIKI,War period,pp.13-40) with the 'official' Progressist account by Yefremov(two identical copies in the Archives : Ryabushinsky Fond, Lenin Library Manuscript Department,f.260,delo 4/10,pp.1-23 and Milyukov Fond,TsGAOR,f.579,delo 386,pp.1-23).

126 Since the two copies of the 'official' Progressist account are identical even to pagination,references hereafter will for convenience quote only the Milyukov copy.This quotation : TsGAOR,f.579,386,2.

127 Report of 14 April 1915 : POLICE,27-1915,3-6.

128 Report of 29 April 1915 : POLICE,27-1915,20b,4.

responsible to the Duma. Yefremov's eye-witness reports not only confirmed the Progressists in their policy but converted the majority of Duma Kadets.[129] Initiative was slipping away from Milyukov because of his insistence upon the by-now ridiculous 'sacred union'. While Milyukov hesitated, the Progressists were usurping Kadet leadership of the Opposition, the Oktobrists were enjoying a revival of fortunes initiated by Rodzyanko's War Commission and the bulk of the Kadet fraction was cleaving dramatically towards the Progressist viewpoint. The Duma Committee for Aid became more and more the clandestine Duma, commanding regular attendance from all fraction leaders except the Extreme Right.[130] By 29 May all Duma fraction leaders had agreed to the recall of their deputies in anticipation of an imminent Duma session.[131] Milyukov however had not changed his attitude. A police report asserted that Milyukov's agreement to recall Kadet deputies was by reason of the pressure of Kadets already in Petrograd and not because Milyukov had been converted with the majority of his fraction to the desirability of a Duma session : 'Milyukov spoke out against such a recall, declaring it condemned to failure as a poor copy of the Vyborg meeting'.[132]

If by mid May Milyukov was already at odds with the majority of the Kadet fraction, it was not until early June that he was compelled to yield. The Kadet Party Conference of 6-8 June was forced upon Milyukov by the possibility of widespread Kadet revolt against the atrophied 'Milyukov line'.[133] The immediate impression from the conference minutes is of almost unanimous attack upon Milyukov's leadership. Milyukov had to explain away the policy of 'sacred union', now so patently futile that no Kadet could recall how he had ever been persuaded of its value. He had to suffer a

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129 Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579,386,2-3 ; Milyukov ignored Yefremov's part entirely in his own account : PADENIE,vi,312.

130 Report of 27 May 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,19 ; PADENIE,vi,312(Milyukov).

131 PADENIE,vi,312(Milyukov).

132 Report of 4 June 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,16.

133 N.Lanin on the Kadet Party Conference of June 1915 : KA,vol.59,p.110 ; on the provincial Kadet pressure for a conference,see DYAKIN 66-7.

tirade of abuse from the provincial delegates (spearheaded as usual by Moscow) while radical resolutions in the spirit of the Progressist demands were passed overwhelmingly, most notably,

> Resolution 5. It is deemed essential for the practical co-ordination of the resources of the country and their proper employ--ment in the interests of the defence of the homeland :
> (a) To form a cabinet capable of directing the organisat--ion of the war home front and safeguarding the internal peace of the country and the close collaboration of state and society.
> (b) To recall the State Duma immediately. (134)

In the debate over Kadet policy, criticism was widespread : the bulk of attack came from fourteen leading provincial delegates but five fraction deputies and three Central Committee members joined in the witch-hunt. The provincials fell into three groups as to future policy : the largest demanded 'direct action' and a government responsible to the Duma ; the second group urged the immediate development of the ailing provincial organisation to revive a national Kadet movement ; and the mildest of Milyukov's provincial critics stipulated a Duma session to implement a programme of solid legislative work.[135]

However Milyukov managed to avert the greater danger posed by the conference. Not enjoying the status of a Party Congress, the conference had no formal authority over the Kadet executive.[136] Of the 60 delegates invited to the conference, 28 were Duma deputies, 5 Central Committee members and 26 provincial representatives ; as a numerical result, the representat--ion was weighted against the provincial delegates and a vote of 'no-confidence' in Milyukov required not only the unity of the 'provincials' but the defection of a significant proportion of the Duma fraction.[137] All proceedings of the conference were conducted in closed session and the resolutions submitted to the conference were deliberately vague, bearing the nature of recommendations rather than directives. As a result of the

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134 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),ii,39,1 ; also reports of 9 June 1915(POLICE, 307A-1915,69) and 17 June 1915(POLICE,27-1915,42-4).

135 KA,vol.59,pp.111-145(Minutes of Conference).

136 Ibid,p.145.

137 Undated report on Kadet conference : POLICE,27-1915,36.

'arrangement' of the conference, Milyukov escaped with an inconclusive drubbing out of the public eye. His sole gain from the conference was the adoption of his formula demanding 'A Ministry of Public Confidence' over the provincials' slogan 'A Ministry Responsible to the Duma'.[138] But in spite of averting the greater danger which a Kadet congress or conference always presented, Milyukov was still forced to jettison the policy of 'sacred union' and join the Duma Opposition campaign for a new session, complete with a conference-approved slogan which demonstrably reversed previous Kadet wartime policy.[139]

Milyukov was acutely aware that although remarkably little Kadet dirty washing had been exhibited in public, Duma circles appreciated that a reversal of Kadet policy had been effected by the party conference in defiance of his leadership. Milyukov could not purge his party, but he could silence his critics by improving the position of the party vis-à-vis other rivals for power. The obvious rival in June 1915 was the Progressist party, with its successful record in uniting the Opposition. As Yefremov proudly recorded :

> To the credit of the Progressists,it was by their initiative that the collecting together of the Opposition had taken place. Also, by the recommendation of the Progressists to all fractions to recall their members to Petrograd, there was engineered the greatest possible number of Duma deputies at the Council of Elders to demonstrate the attitude of the Duma towards a renewed session. (140)

Opportunities for Milyukov squashing his impudent rival were not long emerging. The first chance arose after 11 June when the Progressist Central Committee, encouraged by the success of Rodzyanko's Commission, published its plan for a supreme executive organ for defence, in which the government, Duma and industry would participate jointly and equally to co-ordinate the war effort.[141] The ingenuous nature of the conception, the fundamental questions to which it offered no solution and the Progressists' complete commitment to the plan made it an obvious target for Kadet attack. A

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138 KA,vol.59,pp.119-122.

139 Undated report on Kadet conference : POLICE,27-1915,51.

140 Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579,386,4.

141 Ibid,7-8 ; Report of 11 June 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,73 ; first advanced in Utro Rossii,26 May 1915 ; also DYAKIN 87 & 72-3.

preliminary skirmish on 12 June gave the Progressists grounds for hope that their plan would soon be adopted by the whole Opposition.[142] The showdown over the plan occurred at a meeting on 23 June : the Progressists, convinced in their own minds that their plan represented the solution to all Russia's problems, eagerly explained their 'Committee of State Defence'.[143]

To explode this pipedream presented no great difficulties to the Kadet leaders. Milyukov and Shingarev cogently argued that the Progressist plan, whilst of course desirable in the extreme, had no chance whatsoever of implementation. The gains which Russian society had secured so far (the War Commission and Munitions Commission) were not so much victories over the government as compromises made under war duress. The pattern for the future must be to advocate moves which the government would find easy to accept in a spirit of compromise, particularly institutional extensions of the existing state structure. The Kadets harboured no hopes for the creation of some chimeric super-society organ, but recommended the creation of four new government ministries, for Labour, Local Government, Supply and War Measures. For the Duma to introduce any element of competition was to sabotage its recommendations from their inception in the eyes of the government ; the stress must be on compromise and constructive participation,not on competition and inevitable exclusion. The Progressist plan was heavily defeated by the meeting, and so demoralising was the effect that the plan was abandoned as quickly by the Progressists as it had been rejected by the Opposition as a whole.[144] Milyukov's first attack on his rival was conspicuously successful both in reviving Kadet drooping fortunes and mocking Progressist claims to be the new leader of the Left.

Negotiations were going on all this time for a Duma session. On 9 June the Duma Committee for Aid unanimously commissioned Rodzyanko to approach Goremykin with a view to securing an earlier date than November 1915 ; the

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142 TsGAOR,f.579,386,9 ; KLYUZHEV,xvi,24 ; Russkie Vedomosty,13 June 1915.

143 TsGAOR,f.579,386,7-9.

144 Ibid,9 ; Kadet Central Committee decision to oppose Progressist plan, 16 June 1915 : TsGAOR,f.579,695,1 cited in DYAKIN 85.

following day, the more official Council of Elders (albeit with only Kadets, Progressists, Oktobrists and Trudoviks represented) set Rodzyanko the same task.[145] At an interview on 11 June Goremykin, by now resigned to the necessity for ministerial changes, held out hope for an earlier session of the Duma but asked Rodzyanko for time to reconstitute the Council of Ministers. Certain ministers would have to be dismissed in order to make government-Duma relations practicable ; otherwise, as Goremykin said, 'at the first appearance of Maklakov, every fraction would attack him and willy-nilly I would have to prorogue the Duma'.[146] At an extraordinary meeting of the Council of Elders to discuss this reply on the thirteenth, Yefremov and Milyukov clashed violently. Yefremov moved the necessity of bringing to bear 'direct pressure' on the government to force a favourable decision from the temporising Goremykin. Milyukov rounded on Yefremov in exasperation :

> I don't understand you Progressists. The government is coming to meet us. They have dismissed Maklakov and Sukhomlinov and given their promise of an early Duma recall... It's all printed in the newspapers. What more do you want ? (147)

Milyukov proposed a 'cooling-off' period of at least a week to allow the government time to prove its good faith, a motion carried despite the opposition of the Progressists, Trudoviks and Mensheviks.[148]

The very same day (13 June), the Council of Ministers' meeting at the Stavka heard Nicholas order not only the second batch of dismissals (as detailed above) but further concessions to society :

> It is essential to bring forward the date of the convening of the legislative organs in order to listen to the voice of the Russian people... I have decided that the renewal of the activities of the Duma and Council will be no later than August. (149)

Goremykin set out to secure the best possible terms for the government : having announced a forthcoming Duma session sine die on 16 June, he

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145 TsGAOR,f.579,386,3 & 6 ; TAKTIKI,War period,19 ; Reports for 9 June 1915(POLICE,307A-1915,62) and 11 June 1915(POLICE,307A-1915,71).

146 KLYUZHEV,xvii,167-8 ; also TAKTIKI,War period,19, PADENIE,vi,312-3 (Milyukov) and POLICE,307A-1915,73.

147 Quoted in KLYUZHEV,xvi,18.

148 POLICE,307A-1915,75-7 ; TsGAOR,f.579,386,6-7 ; Utro Rossii,14 & 17 June 1915 ; PADENIE,vi,314(Milyukov).

149 RODZYANKO 123 ; TAKTIKI,War period,19.

attempted to impose conditions on the Duma leaders.[150] Rodzyanko repeated the gist of Goremykin's proposals to the Council of Elders on 20 June : the government declined to set an opening date until an agenda was agreed. Goremykin was trying to repeat the stratagem which had proved so successful in January 1915, of only permitting a session if the Duma was guaranteed placid. On 24 June a Duma deputation headed by Milyukov received the same 'conditional' answer.[151] However the political circumstances of late June 1915 were very different from those only six months previous. Goremykin realised that he could not resist the persistent Duma campaign for very long. It was already ten days since the Emperor made his decision and Goremykin could not barter with the Duma any longer without both irritating and compromising the Emperor. On 27 June Goremykin abandoned his ineffectual bluff and set the Duma opening date for 19 July.[152]

Early July witnessed a futher example of the divergence of the Kadets and Progressists. At the same 13 June meeting at the Stavka, Nicholas decided to accept the experimental Rodzyanko Commission : on 27 June an imperial ukaze converted the provisional 'Duma Commission to the War Ministry into the permanent 'Special Commission on Defence'.[153] Coming on the same day that the date of the Duma session was announced, the Special Commission caused considerable confusion amongst the Duma fractions. When in early July the individual fractions were invited to put up representatives to the Special Commission, party reactions differed considerably. The Progressists refused to submit a candidate on the grounds that the Commission was a front organisation from which Duma participation would gain merely a simulacrum of power in exchange for a major share of the blame for government shortcomings : 'such a framework, while laying upon the members of the legislative

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150 Utro Rossii and Rech',17 June 1915.

151 TAKTIKI,War period,20 ; Undated report : POLICE,307A-1915,79-80 ; TsGAOR,f.579,386,7 ; MILIUKOV 317 ; Rech',25 June 1915.

152 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,64-5 ; TAKTIKI,War period,20 ; Rech',9 July 1915 ; PADENIE,vi,313(Milyukov).

153 RODZYANKO 123.

chambers great moral responsibility and defending ministers from attack, gives the former no real power to influence the decisions of the government'[154] To the chagrin of Milyukov, the Kadet fraction was by and large in sympathy with this attitude. The Kadet leader saw in the Special Commission a golden opportunity for collaboration between government and Duma which jejeune Progressist-inspired scruples must not be permitted to obstruct. Despairing of the 'negative' attitude of the Kadet deputies, Milyukov took the issue over the head of the fraction to the Central Committee where he could be sure that his own view would prevail. A Kadet delegate to the Special Commission was elected, but Milyukov's chicanery prompted a minor rebellion within the fraction : Nekrasov, the leader of the Left Kadets, resigned from the Central Committee in protest at Milyukov's dictatorial manipulation of fraction affairs.[155] The affair went no further at this time beyond proving to Milyukov that when setting out to oppose Progressist ventures, Kadet solidarity behind his leadership could not be automatically assumed.

The period of summer 1915 has been represented as one of growing harmony and identity of interests in Duma political life, but while this judgement has some merit with regard to the month of August 1915, it does not hold true for the earlier months. Although the spring and summer of 1915 ostensibly witnessed a growing spirit of alliance in the interests of exploiting the government's current 'liberal phase', Duma party politics operated as viciously as ever only just below the surface. The early initiative of Rodzyanko brought the Oktobrists back into the political picture for the first time in almost eighteen months and aroused the Kadets and Progressists from the torpor of the 'sacred union' philosophy. As in 1914, political initiative sprang from the Progressists in the campaign for a Duma session but again proved unable to resist the Kadet counter-attack. At a time when one might have expected a sinking of party differences in the

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154 Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579,386,15.

155 POLICE,27-1915,50 ; also Birzhevie Vedomosty,9 July 1915.

interests of the Duma and the war effort as a whole, fraction jealousies and party politics played as powerful a rôle as ever.

Perhaps the most important reason for the Progressists' renewed initiative in early 1915 was the agitation of their industrialist backers. Until that time Russian industry had been more than content to supply the war effort and cull increased profits from its ready patriotism. By spring 1915 however the government, disturbed by rumours of exorbitant war profit--eering and anxious to establish direct control over a sector so crucial to the war effort, was seriously considering the nationalisation of war industry. The industrial lobby awoke to the danger immediately and instituted two parallel operations to protect its position. The first was a public relations exercise to change the 'grasping' image of industrial capital. Government incompetence in the past was employed as an argument : every mistake and misdemeanour of the government was spotlighted to discredit the concept of nationalisation. At the same time the patriotism of industry was played up : as an alternative to state nationalisation, the slogan the 'self-mobilisat--ion' of industry was desperately publicised. Russian industry counted on enjoying greater freedom and independence as a reluctant volunteer than as a state conscript.[156]

The second industrialist operation was to make its voice heard official--ly by both government and country. For this industry needed the Progressists as its public spokesman and the State Duma as its public forum. The initiat--ive of Yefremov in campaigning for an earlier Duma session received growing support : Pavel Ryabushinsky demanded the recall of the Duma as early as April 1915. His lone voice made little impact until the IX Congress of Representatives of Trade and Industry on 26-28 May, when he secured formal Congress backing for his campaign.[157] The same Congress created the third of the wartime public organisations, the War Industries Committee, which established local organs of industry designed to improve technical and

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156 Zagorsky, The State Control, pp.76-7,82 & 87-8 ; also DYAKIN 74.

157 Progressist account : TsGAOR, f.579,386,3 ; TAKTIKI, War period, 17 ; Times, 10 & 11 June 1915(n/s), 7b & 8d respectively ; GURKO 550.

administrative efficiency and synchronise the resources of Russian industry with the demands of the war effort.[158] This new organisation, again fundamentally a response to the threat of nationalisation, was the institut--ional manifestation of the slogan the 'self-mobilisation of industry'. The War Industries Committee, numbering seventy-three local organs within two months, drew together Russian industry into a permanent structure which annual congresses had never been able to provide.[159] The speed of develop--ment of the War Industries Committee was evidence not only of patriotism and eagerness to serve but of a determination to protect the interests of the industrialist sector.

However the cause of industry in the Duma was by no means an easy one. The Progressist fraction was not as effective (or as reliable) as its industrial backers could have wished. Added to this, the early initiatives of Rodzyanko were almost entirely at the expense of the industrialist sector. As has already been described, Rodzyanko was so eager to reassure the government that its concession of the Duma War Commission had been a sound move that on 1 June he publicly supported (and therefore encouraged) the government move towards nationalisation. This action in itself betrayed the changing nature of the Oktobrist fraction (which had the monopoly of representation on the Commission) : in its earlier career Oktobrism had been led by the industrialist sector headed by Guchkov. By 1915 the Zemstvo-Oktobrists were essentially a landed interest group ,prepared to attack industry in its own interests. In the ironic confrontation, Guchkov (President of the War Industries Committee and past leader of the Oktobrist fraction) faced Rodzyanko (President of the Duma and leader of the new exclusively-landed Zemstvo-Oktobrists). The industrialist camp was not unnaturally alienated not only from the government but from the Duma, which appeared to be lightly abandoning the principle of society private

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158 For Congress resolutions, see Novoe Vremya,28 May 1915 ; also KLYUZHEV, xiv,163 ; KERENSKY 136 ; DYAKIN 75-6.

159 A.Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda,Moscow 1922-3,pp.99-100 ; CHERMENSKY 493 ; Zagorsky,The State Control,p.89.

enterprise to purchase dubious political advantage from the government : the Duma was staking money not its own to secure winnings it refused to share.

Rodzyanko underlined this bad impression only weeks later. Not content with alienating industry as a whole, Rodzyanko contrived to estrange Moscow industrialists altogether. Over-anxious to preserve the prerogatives of his precious War Commission, Rodzyanko's conception of the infant War Industries Committee was very proscribed. A guest at the ceremonial opening of the Moscow War Industries Committee on 25 June, Rodzyanko blandly informed the astonished delegates that the local committees would serve only to distribute war orders, with the War Industries Central Committee acting as a clearing-house for government contracts. Ryabushinsky, the President of the Moscow War Industries Committee, flatly refused to accept this reduced definition of his duties and claimed full organisational and executive rights, not just the routine allocation of contracts.[160] With his sights concentrated on collaboration with the government, Rodzyanko betrayed his chronic insensitivity to factors outside the sphere of the Duma and Zemstvo-Oktobrist fraction.

A final row in the course of July 1915 delineated and institutionalised the gulf seperating the Duma and the industrialist camp. Following the creation of the Special Commission on Defence (out of Rodzyanko's War Commission), joint meetings of the Duma Finance and Army-Navy commissions recommended three new Special Commissions to cover the vexed questions of fuel, food and transport.[161] The Right-wing fraction representatives, fearing an influx of Bolsheviks onto privileged government bodies, insisted that no delegates from industry were to be invited to serve on any Special Commission that might be created. The two Duma commissions, anxious to secure Duma solidarity in order to present a front of unanimity in negotiation with the government, agreed to the Right proposition. On 25-27

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160 Moskow report of 28 June 1915 : POLICE,343,I,72 quoted in B.B.Grave, Burzhuazia nakanune Fevral'skoy Revolyutsii,Moscow 1927 (cited hereafter as GRAVE),pp.6-10 ; also DYAKIN 76.

161 TsGIAL,f.1278,v,447,5-187(Stenographic minutes of Finance and Army-Navy commissions,23-30 July 1915) cited in DYAKIN 90-1 ; also SHUL'GIN 67-73.

July the First Congress of the War Industries Committees met (symbolically enough) in Moscow, still seething over the recent decision, which was put down to the Duma jealously coveting its monopoly of political access to the government. The Congress, which had initially envisaged institutional contacts with the Duma, now publicly and dramatically abandoned the scheme.[162] Estranged by what it regarded as a Duma snub, the Congress huffily severed all contacts. The War Industries Committee would now be elected entirely by delegates of the provincial and local committees, admitting no Duma representatives at any level and appointing no delegates to the Duma.[163] A belated attempt to repair the damage and rebuild political bridges was made : the Progressist fraction, acting for its industrial patrons, forced a vote in the Duma on the representation of the War Industries Committees in the Special Commissions. The Progressist motion scraped through by 141 votes to 138, albeit with a Zemstvo-Oktobrist caveat stipulating that delegates were to be nominated by the War Industries Central Committee and not the local committees, in the hope that by this device 'irresponsible' Bolshevik elements would be excluded.[164] By this time however, the damage to relations was already done and preserved for all time in the rapidly institutionalising structure of the War Industries Committees.

All three major public organisations suffered similar alienation from the State Duma. In part this stemmed from the early reluctance of the Zemstvo and Town Unions to make themselves a target for MVD harassment or even closure by becoming too closely associated with the political activities of the Duma. Ignorance of political and parliamentary matters also dissuaded the Unions from involvement in what was traditionally within the jurisdiction of the Duma alone. However another element in the estrangement came from the Duma itself, with its jealousy of the growing power and labour force of the public organisations and its insistence on the Duma's monopoly of political

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162 CHERMENSKY 522 ; DYAKIN 91 & 94.

163 Rech',28 July 1915,4 ; Zagorsky,The State Control,p.90.

164 Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579,386,16 ; GDSO,IV,4,300-2 & 324 (sitting of 1 August 1915) ; also DYAKIN 91.

initiative and access to the government. But despite the Duma, the public organisations were becoming such a power in the land that they implicitly at least represented a challenge to both government and Duma. A police report of 13 June regretted that with every move made by the Zemstvo and Town Unions, the technical expertise which had been the rationale for granting permission to these bodies was becoming subordinated to political discussion and manoeuvre.[165] There was little doubt that while the public organisations were only gradually becoming 'political' and still readily deferred both to government and Duma, the traditional confrontation was now complicated by new society forces to which both parties felt antagonistic.

The emergent forces of society were all the more alarming for having their geographical concentration in Moscow. Since the outbreak of war Moscow had experienced a rebirth, its strategic situation at the nodal point of the communications system of European Russia making it the natural headqurarters for the Union of Zemstvos, Union of Towns, War Industries Committees and all the ancillary 'home-front' organisations. Until mid 1915, partly in sublimation of the political activities from which both government and Duma excluded it, Moscow threw all its abundant energies into the war effort alone. After mid 1915 Moscow developed a political voice of its own and the proven organisational capabilities and growing self-assurance of Moscow started to shift into the political arena. The failures and shortcomings of the government and Duma in Petrograd only encouraged Moscow society in its challenge for the leadership of the war effort. By contrast with the energy of Moscow, Petrograd was becoming increasingly introverted, swept by intrigue ,rumour and waves of despair which enveloped Duma deputies and government ministers alike. The advance of the German and Austrian armies in the summer of 1915 threatened Moscow more than Petrograd but evoked in the former a spirit of stubborn resistance which only threw into greater relief the collapse of morale in the capital. Paléologue noted the disgust felt by Moscow towards Petrograd in his diary entry for 29 June 1915 :

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165 POLICE,343,I,72 quoted in GRAVE 19-20.

> The citizens of Moscow are utterly furious with high social and Court circles in Petrograd, whom they accuse of having completely lost touch with national feeling, hoping for a defeat, and preparing the way for a betrayal. (166)

Stanley Washburn wrote from 'Moscow the Defiant' in very similar vein in late October :

> If the Germans ... would draw their conclusions from Moscow rather than Petrograd,it is safe to assert that there would be less optimism in Berlin.No matter how cheerful people feel at the front Petrograd always sees the dark side.It is difficult for any human being to stay there for two consecutive weeks and preserve any true perspective of Russia .. In Moscow one finds quite the reverse : Petrograd is filled with apprehensions,while Moscow is defiant. (167)

As Moscow came to view itself more and more as the heart of the war effort, it began to see the Duma as the society hostage held by the government in its Petrograd stronghold, needing sturdy support in its relations with the government from the forces of Moscow.

It was clear from the moment that the Duma session opened on 19 July that any residual hopes for a repetition of the tame Duma of January 1915 were groundless. In an earlier conversation with Shul'gin, even Milyukov conceded the necessity of the Duma voicing the complaints of the populace :

> Above all else it is necessary to lend an outlet to this irritation. They expect the Duma to brand the culprits for the national catastrophe. If this safety-valve is not opened in the State Duma, the irritation will express itself in other ways. The Duma must sternly condemn the mistakes and perhaps even determine the punishment. (168)

Stephen Graham made the same point in a September issue of the Times :

> The failure of the Russian arms meant the rise of the Duma.As long as the Russian army was winning victories and driving the Austrians back, the political conscience of the nation was at rest,but when the change in fortune came and the loss of great fortresses and cities,a thousand voices began to ask questions.The Duma became the voice of the people, proclaiming anxiety,pain,dread. In great stress better that the people have a voice,otherwise they may go mad. The Duma affords a great relief. (169)

An outburst of pent-up criticism of the government's conduct of the war

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166 PALEOLOGUE,II,27 ; also BUCHANAN,I,246 and Bruce Lockhart,The Two Revolutions,p.54.

167 Article 'Moscow the Defiant',Times,3 November 1915(n/s),9e ; also communication from Buchanan to Grey,19 August 1915(n/s) quoted in Grey, Twenty-Five Years 1892-1916,London 1925,vol.II,pp.211-2.

168 SHUL'GIN 62.

169 Article 'The Duma and the War',Times,6 October 1915(n/s),6a.

dominated the first few days of the session. On the very first day, Paléologue noted that the Duma opened 'in an atmosphere which is heated, heavy and full of the promise of storms ; men's faces seem charged with electricity ; the prevailing expression is anger or intense apprehension'.[170] The sitting of 20 July held that the individuals responsible for the munitions shortage must be held liable legally as well as morally.[171] The Duma pressed its point by passing a resolution demanding legal proceedings against Sukhomlinov, with the possibility of treason not ruled out.[172] The antagonism of the Duma towards the government appeared to offer no possibil--ity of compromise or even the avoidance of immediate prorogation.

Milyukov however set out to prevent the Duma committing itself to an heroic death. The official Kadet account oversimplified the process to the point of mendacity : 'from the first day of the session, the Fraction of the People's Freedom, better prepared than the rest,.. was the ideological leader of the Duma majority'.[173] This record misleads on two counts. Milyukov experienced rather more difficulty weaning away the Kadets from continued antagonism to the government than the account suggests.As Rodzyanko observed:

> The Kadets and Lefts allied to introduce a whole list of complaints.The Oktobrists opposed this,saying it was not the time for recrimination but for organisation for practical work.Certain Kadets were preparing to bring up the question of a Responsible Ministry,and it was no small task to dissuade them.On almost all questions,Milyukov supported the Oktobrists against the Progressists. (174)

Milyukov had also to fight off a serious Progressist challenge for Opposition leadership. The first pre-sessional meeting of the Progressist fraction took place on 9 July, that of the Kadets on the thirteenth, the Oktobrists on the fifteenth and the Nationalists and Centre on the sixteenth.[175]

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170 PALEOLOGUE,II,39.

171 GDSO,IV,2,189-190 ; RODZYANKO 126.

172 PALEOLOGUE,II,40 ; BUCHANAN,I,247 ; Lukomsky,Memoirs,pp.30-33.

173 TAKTIKI,War period,24.

174 RODZYANKO 126.

175 Report of 19 July 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,pp.88,105,109 & 113-4 ; Kadet account : TAKTIKI,War period,23 ; Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579, 386,10-11.

The presence of all Progressist deputies in Petrograd a full ten days before the Duma opening was a considerable advantage in organising their activities for the session. At the Council of Elders' meeting of 17 July, Milyukov again explained the practical advantages of pressing for government commiss--ions employing Duma representation and specialist advice ; as on 23 June, the Progressist 'Committee of State Defence' was heavily defeated in favour of the more modest Kadet proposition.[176] Provoked by this unnecessary repetition of past defeat, the Progressists decided to test reaction to the slogan 'A Ministry Responsible to the Duma', which they intended putting up to the Duma. At a special meeting on 18 July of all moderate fractions except the Kadets (who were pointedly not invited), the Progressists moved their slogan for the first time. Predictably its tone was too extreme for the Nationalists who suggested the formula 'A Ministry enjoying the Confid--ence of the Nation' as an alternative. Apart from the Zemstvo-Oktobrists (who abstained) and the Nationalists (who naturally voted for their own formula), all those present supported the Progressist slogan. With the support of four-fifths of the votes cast, the Progressists confidently anticipated victory on the larger stage :

> This vote gave the Progressists fraction the right to hope that the formula of Responsible Ministry would be accepted by the Duma.The fraction considered that this formula alone contained sufficient clarity and exactness, and that the formula for the Confidence of Society in essence said nothing at all. (177)

On 19 July the Progressist and Nationalist formulae were advanced in open Duma sitting. To Progressist amazement, the Kadets supported the Nationalist slogan, prompting (to Progressist despair) the Zemstvo-Oktobrists to switch from abstention to support for the same slogan.[178] When the votes were counted, the Nationalist formula of 'A Ministry of Confidence' had a comfortable majority ; all the Progressists' careful preparations and political reconnaissance had been brought to nought.[179] Milyukov could

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176 POLICE,307A-1915,118 ; TAKTIKI,War period,23.

177 Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579,386,11-12.

178 Ibid,13 ; GDSO,IV,1,72 & 90-1 & 2,189-1916 ; SHUL'GIN 63.

179 GDSO,IV,2,196(191 votes to 162).

defend his action by indicating the compromise slogan of the June Party Conference ; in fact the move was motivated by his vindictive jealousy of the challenging rôle played by the Progressists.[180] Although by their voting pattern the Kadets had committed themselves to the moderate Right, apparently vacating the leadership of the Left to the Progressists, Milyukov had demonstrated not only that the Progressists were no match for the Kadets in political manoeuvre but that the Kadet fraction represented the fulcrum of Duma politics.

Milyukov's victory over the rival slogans lent the Kadets renewed moral authority within the Duma. Just as significantly, the defeat of the formula of 'Responsible Ministry' precipitated a split within the Progressist fraction : a Right-wing minority led by N.N.L'vov rebelled against the official fraction slogan in favour of 'A Ministry of Public Confidence', formally quitting the Progressist fraction in the last days of July.[181] The defection of the L'vov group not only considerably weakened Progressist hopes of again challenging the Kadets but added solid numerical advantage to Milyukov's moral victory. Soon after the initial spate of denunciation, Kadet authority and policy came to dominate the Duma session.[182]

The government had now to be reassured that the Duma was not merely a spiteful and capricious critic deserving no better than prompt prorogation but a constructive force for the greater coordination of the war effort.[183] At a Duma closed sitting to discuss the war on 28 July, Milyukov (for the Opposition) and Savenko (for the moderate Right) warmly supported the endeavours of the new War Minister Polivanov, stressing that the Duma's quarrel lay only with corruption and incompetence not with the basic direction of the war effort.[184] On the thirty-first the Duma Army-Navy commission

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180 Report of 17 August 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,145.

181 Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579,386,13-14 ; Rech',23 July 1915.

182 The Kadets even managed to break the traditional Oktobrist hold over the Duma Army-Navy commission - Shingarev was elected Chairman (the first non-Oktobrist ever) : Utro Rossii,22 July 1915.

183 Council of Ministers, 24 July 1915 : ARR,vol.18,p.23 ; Riha,A Russian European,pp.226-7.

184 GDSO,IV,3,233-6 ; TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,89.

(now under Kadet chairmanship) decided to institute closed-session daily meetings, to which the War Minister had an open invitation and the rights of inspection and veto over the commission minutes.[185] While insisting on its own close involvement with the minutiae of the war effort, the commission thereby supplied the initiative for frank confidential relations with the government. Milyukov hoped by this demonstration of rational and responsible behaviour to offset the bad impression left upon the government by the ferocious if well-deserved campaign of recrimination which had opened the session.

However by the first week in August it was widely rumoured that those forces in government and court hostile to the Duma had made political capital out of its initial actions and had already secured agreement in principle to an early prorogation.[186] On 5 August Goremykin confirmed the rumours by confiding to Rodzyanko that in his personal opinion the Duma would be prorogued in mid August.[187] Duma attendance fell off sharply. A survey of absenteeism sponsored by Rech' and Utro Rossii found that 37 Rights and Nationalists, 26 Centre and Oktobrists, 6 Opposition and 11 non-party deputies were absent by 6 August ; eighty deputies, one fifth of the total membership, had quit the Duma in the course of the survey week. The motive for the exodus was the universal belief in the imminent prorogation or even dissolution of the Duma, an opinion held most firmly by the Duma Right wing which was consequently most subject to dwindling numbers.[188]

In alarm the Duma moderates met together in the Council of Elders on 6 August to insist upon a long Duma session, a motion endorsed by all fractions except the Extreme Right.[189] For the first time almost the entire

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185 POLICE,307A-1915,128-131 ; Rech',1 August 1915,4.

186 Report of 5 August 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,134 ; Rech',4 August 1915,5 ; PADENIE,vi,315(Milyukov).

187 POLICE,307A-1915,134 ; TAKTIKI,War period,29.

188 Rech',4 August 1915,4 ; A.Grunt,'Progressivnii Blok',Voprosy Istorii, 1945,no.3/4,p.109 ; TAKTIKI,War period,29 ; Utro Rossii,6 August 1915 ; PADENIE,vi,315(Milyukov).

189 Report of 6 August 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,135 ; TAKTIKI,War period, 29-30.

Duma membership was unanimous upon a policy at variance with that of leading government circles. The political phenomenon which came to be called the 'Progressive Bloc' was born at the meeting of 6 August, prompted by the threat of Duma prorogation. The only effective counter-measures to such a move within the Duma could come from the Right, which was unusually depleted by its over-precipitate acceptance of the fact of prorogation ; for once Duma absenteeism worked to the advantage of the Opposition.

If the Bloc was created by the Duma moderates, it owed its first initiative to the promise of ministerial support. The 'coming man' in the cabinet was generally acknowledged to be Krivoshein, a minister both able and sympathetic to the cause of the Duma. Observing the unprecedentedly united nature of the Duma, Krivoshein projected an alliance which would benefit both parties. Vladimir Gurko was in no doubt about Krivoshein's initiative :

> The power behind the formation of the Bloc was,I believe,Krivoshein,who was anxious to become head of the government.He thought that if he could effect a union of the moderate Right elements,especially the Octobrists with whom he had long been sympathetically and closely connected,and those elements of the Opposition,which at the beginning of the war had declared themselves ready to support the government in the work of defence,he would have support in his campaign to become head of the government.Once he had achieved this goal he thought that such a bloc would continue to support him,and this would mean cooperation not friction between government and legislature. (190)

A 'liberal conspiracy' between the Duma majority and Krivoshein was contract--ed, lending the newly-formed Bloc the initial confidence to expand its scope and support. However, as Milyukov was quick to point out, the Bloc rapidly developed its own momentum, escaping from the limited function ascribed to it by Krivoshein and abandoning its original author en route.[191]

While the motive factor in the emergence of the 'Progressive Bloc' was the contract with Krivoshein, it increasingly gave pride of place to the steadily expanding base of the Bloc. On 9 August, a meeting at Rodzyanko's established the principle of an inter-fraction Bloc.[192] The participants,

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190 GURKO 555 & 571-2(quotation) ; also DYAKIN 100-1.

191 PADENIE,vi,316(Milyukov).

192 TAKTIKI,War period,29-30.

inspired by Milyukov, were eager to retain the unanimity of attitude express--ed at the meeting of 6 August and especially concerned to extend the bounds of the Bloc as far to the Right as possible. The Extreme Right fraction was clearly beyond the limits of practical possibility but the Nationalists were by no means as monolithic in their doctrines. On several occasions, the split between the Right-inclined Nationalists of Balashev and the Left-inclined Nationalists of Shul'gin had widened, only to be hastily patched. The issue of Bloc membership smashed Nationalist unity for all time : the Left group, hereafter known as the 'Progressive Nationalists', opted for membership of the Bloc, casting off all links with the Nationalist main body.[193] At the opposite extreme of the Duma spectrum, the Mensheviks and Trudoviks though declining membership were demonstrably sympathetic, thereby delineating a Bloc which extended from almost the most extreme Left position as far as the Nationalist position.[194] In the early stages the range of the Bloc was still comparatively meaningless since the only obligation of membership was agreement to joint agitation for the continuance of the current Duma session. At a later stage the adherence of the Progressive Nationalists was to complicate the drawing-up of a Bloc Programme but the propaganda value of a Nationalist group within the Bloc was always considered sufficiently high to compensate amply for any inconvenience.

The second stage in the process of broadening the Bloc base was an approach to the State Council. To unite the progressive elements of both legislative chambers would immeasurably increase the prestige and bargaining power of the Bloc. On 10 August the leaders of the Bloc sounded representat--ives of the Academic, Centre and Non-Party groups of the State Council.[195] Mutual sympathy was unmistakable, despite the State Council's impatience with the Duma concentration on political programmes :

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193 Undated report : POLICE,307A-1915,135 ; TAKTIKI,War period,29-30 ; Rech',10 & 11 August 1915,3-4 & 4 respectively ; Utro Rossii, 12 August 1915.

194 TAKTIKI,War period,35-6 ; KERENSKY 139.

195 KA,vol.50/51,pp.122-6 ; POLICE,307A-1915,136.

> The concept of a legislative programme as the sole basis for rapproche--ment encountered quite energetic opposition ... The critics maintained that the mood was too nervous for calm legislative work, and it was vital to put the organisation of effective authority as the first priority. (196)

Guarded agreement to a political entente centred on the concept of a defensive bloc to agitate against the prorogation of the Duma and State Council. A second meeting with the Council leaders on 12 August produced more tangible results : four delegates from each chamber were nominated to a commission to formulate a Bloc programme.[197] The Bloc commission took just two meetings, on 14 and 15 August, to complete the programme, despite the fundamental disagreement of the Duma Progressive Nationalists and Council Academic Group with the amnesty and Jewish rights clauses advanced by the Bloc majority. However a spirit of fraternal compromise and the application of judicious phrasing (particularly over the Jewish clause) preserved the unprecedented front of unity between the Duma and State Council members.[198]

The preface to the Bloc Programme demanded two basic conditions for the political future :

> 1. The formation of a united government, composed of individuals who enjoy the confidence of the country and who have agreed with the legislative institutions upon the fulfillment, at the earliest possible time, of a definite programme.
> 2. Decisive changes in the methods of administration employed so far, which have been based upon a distrust of public initiative.

Eight measures were cited which required immediate attention, perhaps the most important of which were :

> No.1. By means of imperial clemency, a termination of cases instituted on charges of purely political and religious transgressions ...
> No.2. The return of those exiled by administrative decree for matters of a political and religious nature ...
> No.3. The complete and decisive cessation of persecution on religious grounds, under any pretext whatsoever ...
> No.4. The immediate drafting and introduction into the legislative institutions of a bill for the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland.
> No.5. The inauguration of a programme aimed at the abolition of restrictions upon the rights of Jews.

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196 KA,vol.50/51,pp.123-4 ; also TAKTIKI,War period,30 and PADENIE,vi,315 (Milyukov).

197 KA,ibid ; TAKTIKI,War period,31 ; Rech',27 August 1915,3.

198 KA,vol.50/51,pp.126-9(14 August) & 130-7(15 August) ; also KERENSKY 141 and SHUL'GIN 65.

A legislative programme of twelve less urgent measures, including the introduction of the volost' zemstvo and the confirmation of the laws of prohibition, concluded the Bloc Programme.[199] When the Programme was agreed on 15 August, the Bloc leaders could still claim almost complete unanimity between Duma and Council participants.

Again the base of the Bloc was broadened but this time at the initiative of neither its ministerial patron, Duma founders nor Council collaborators. Moscow educated society, since mid July particularly anxious to develop its political voice, intervened unasked to organise more general support for the Bloc. In the official Kadet account Milyukov could not dispute the rôle played by Moscow in the Bloc campaign : 'Time did not wait ; in the country the mood of society was heightening and Moscow was the organ which gave this mood definite shape'.[200] In a later account, Milyukov attempted to share the honours between the two capitals :

> The political mood which was aroused in the lifetime of the Bloc swung backwards and forwards from Petrograd to Moscow, and from Moscow to Petrograd ... It is clear that this mood manifested itself in both Moscow and Petrograd and that the Progressive Bloc was the product of a joint agreement. (201)

'Agreement' or no, the Moscow leaders flung themselves into a campaign of support with enthusiasm. News of a police massacre of strikers at Ivanovo-Voznesensk on 10 August revived the moral outrage of the Lena massacre and further encouraged the Moscow campaign.[202] On 13 August the Moscow industrialist and Progressist groups published their 'Defence Cabinet' in Utro Rossii :

Chairman	Rodzyanko
Minister of Interior	Guchkov
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Milyukov
Minister of Finance	Shingarev
Minister of Trade and Industry	Konovalov
State Comtroller	Yefremov
Minister of Agriculture	Krivoshein
Minister of Education	Ignat'ev
Minister of War	Polivanov (203)

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199 KA, vol.50/51, p.133 ; Milyukov's own copy : TsGAOR, f.579, delo 385.

200 TAKTIKI, War period, 28.

201 PADENIE, vi, 318 (Milyukov).

202 GURKO 563 ; DYAKIN 97 ; LAVERYCHEV 124.

Moscow's 'ideal' cabinet allowed the retention of three liberal ministers currently serving in the government (Krivoshein, Polivanov and Ignat'ev) and judiciously distributed the moderate party representation amongst the remaining ministerial posts : two Oktobrists (Rodzyanko and Guchkov), two Kadets (Milyukov and Shingarev) and two Progressists (Konovalov and Yefremov).Such a blatant example of skinning the bear before it was caught thoroughly embarrassed the Blov leaders in Petrograd.

The Moscow leaders maintained the pressure. On 16 August Konovalov and Ryabushinsky convened a meeting of the leaders of Moscow society 'for the vital organisation of special "coalition" committees, directed by a Moscow Central Coalition Committee, to sponsor widespread agitation for the purpose of backing the programme of the "Progressive Bloc" '.[204] The Moscow Central Coalition Committee immediately became an arena for conflict between the Progressist and Kadet viewpoints. Konovalov and Ryabushinsky demanded a petition to the Emperor containing an ultimatum that either the Council of Ministers be entirely re-staffed by society representatives or society would withdraw all aid, material and moral, from the war effort. Vasilii Maklakov headed the Kadet response, indicating the advantages of compromise, the impossibility of employing ultimatum tactics in wartime and the feasability of a joint society and government 'Ministry of Confidence'.[205] With the final decision deferred until the opinion of the Bloc leaders became known, the Committee temporarily settled for agreement on the necessity of closer links between the public organisations to enable a giant 'Congress of Society' to meet in the foreseeable future.[206] Just as the Duma Bloc had quickly outrun the leadership of Krivoshein, Moscow was showing every sign of outrunning the Bloc leadership in Petrograd.

In the capital the Bloc was entering its final stage. After 15 August the Bloc was confonted with the question of what to do with the completed

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203 Note Milyukov's attempt to play it down : Rech',15 August 1915,4.

204 TAKTIKI,War period,132 ; Rech',17 August 1915,3.

205 Moscow report of 17 August 1915 : POLICE,343,4,28 cited in DYAKIN 104-5 ; also CHERMENSKY 543-4.

206 POLICE,ibid ; for a deliberately vague account,see Rech',17 August,3.

Programme : Shidlovsky opposed even attempting to approach Goremykin ; Yefremov demanded a Bloc delegation direct to the Emperor. Choosing to avoid the immediate responsibility, the Bloc decided to put the issue directly to the individual fractions, thereby gaining in democratic aura what would arguably be lost in the few days' delay required to arrange the fraction votes.[207] Goremykin, alive at last to the danger, attempted to sink the scheme by enticing away the Right Wing and reducing the Bloc's allegiance to the familiar confines of the 'professional Opposition' : on 15 August he invited the Oktobrists and Nationalists to form a new Centre Right group in the Duma which would enjoy government patronage and privilege after the style of Stolypin and would create a firm stabilising bond between government and Duma in the future.[208] The offer which had split the Oktobrists in 1913 had never been as explicit as that moved by the reactionary Goremykin, but the Bloc Right Wing chose to prefer the earlier contract offered by the more trustworthy at the inception of the Bloc. The fact remained that Krivoshein within the Bloc, the fractions of the Right were still uneasy : at the Bloc meeting of 17 August the Left Nationalists continued to wrangle with the Kadets over the clause on Jewish rights, a contest in which Milyukov finally compromised to safeguard Bloc unity ; at the same meeting the Centre fraction stipulated that it could only sign the Bloc Programme as long as it bore no suggestion of ultimatum.[209] But towards the government, the Bloc maintained a parade-ground discipline which not even Goremykin's admittedly tempting offer could disrupt.

Also on 17 August the Council of Elders agreed to put to all fractions the proposal that after the passage of essential war projects a programme of more general legislative bills be placed upon the Duma agenda.[210] Insofaras an official Duma organ, the Council of Elders, was proposing a political programme of legislation unconnected with the war,this decision demonstrated

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207 KA,vol.50/51,p.137 ; Progressist account : TsGAOR,f.579,386,19.

208 Shidlovsky,Vospominania,II,37-40 ; TAKTIKI,War period,31 ; PADENIE,vi, 316(Milyukov) ; Russkie Vedomosty,17 August 1915.

209 V.N.L'vov's caveat : KA,vol.50/51,pp.120,138 & 144.

210 Rech',18 August 1915,4.

the universal desire to operate as in peacetime and symbolised the growing closer identification of the Duma and Bloc. This identification was largely justified by the numerical allegiance of the Bloc : some 300 deputies of the Duma total of about 430 were affiliated to the Bloc.[211] With 70% of the Duma within the Bloc, it was hardly surprising that by late August the terms 'Duma' and 'Bloc' had become virtually interchangable both in the public and ministerial mind.

While the Bloc was solving its problems by caution and compromise, developments in Moscow were moving ever faster. Dzhunkovsky, Director of the Police Department, noted on 17 August that another 'ideal cabinet' was being projected : 'the Moscow society organisations have come out unanimously in favour of a Society Ministry, the formation of which would be entrusted to Prince L'vov'.[212] The public organisations, still estranged from the Duma, were thinking in terms of snubbing both government and Duma personnel in favour of their own leaders. The rivalry between Progressists and Kadets in Moscow grew more intense, the former constantly attempting to expand from their industrial stronghold, and the latter desperately fending off bids for their control of the official organs of Moscow civic life. In a closed session of the Moscow Municipal Duma to debate Army supply on 18 August, the Progressists attempted to persuade this traditionally Kadet institution to switch allegiance from the Kadet formula of 'A Ministry of Confidence' to their own formula of 'Responsible Ministry'.[213] The Progressist bid, though defeated, was not wasted. The Moscow debate was the signal for civic institutions throughout the provinces to introduce political issues onto their agendas, discover their allegiances and determine their attitudes to the rapidly developing political crisis in Petrograd. Messages of support for the Bloc

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211 Progressive Nationalists(about 20), Centre(33), various Oktobrists(99), Progressists(47), Kadets(57), nationality fractions(21), Trudoviks(10) and Mensheviks(9) total 296 deputies : GDSO:UKAZATEL' 19-24.

212 Published in Utro Rossii, 14 August 1915 ; Police report : TsGAOR, f.826 (Dzhunkovsky), I, 212, 5(quotation).

213 Report of 19 August 1915 quoted in GRAVE 22-3 ; also Utro Rossii, 19 August 1915 and MILIUKOV 323.

began to flow in a steadily increasing stream from every corner of the Empire. At a superficial level at least, the Bloc now had a claim to nationwide support.[214]

On 19 August the Duma participants in the Bloc gave final agreement to the Programme.[215] Rodzyanko attempted to secure for the Bloc the greatest possible numerical advantage by forbidding the prolonged absence of deputies from the Duma without prior permission fron the Duma Chancellery.[216] The Duma fractions within the Bloc, as decided at the meeting of 15 August, voted on what next to do and agreed that the Programme was not to be published.[217] The Centre and Progressive Nationalists had made it clear that they would not tolerate any suggestion of ultimatum ; publication would leave no room for manoeuvre ; and the Bloc must make it as easy as possible for the government to accept the Programme, a practical concession to government amour propre which public negotiation could only injure. It was decided to put the Programme to the cabinet corporately at an unofficial level, with no public limelight to stiffen government resistance or encourage Duma posturings. On 22 August the Bloc leaders privately signed the Programme, and two days later the Centre, Academic and Non-Party groups of the State Council pronounced their formal agreement and joined the Bloc.[218] That familiar 'political postman' Krupensky was commissioned to submit the Programme to the Council of Ministers.[219] A ceremonial signing of the Programme took place in Duma sitting on 25 August despite the agitation of the Extreme Right and Markov Two's furious denunciation of the 'treachery' of the Progressive Nationalists.[220]

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214 CHERMENSKY 549 ; Stalin(Ed.),The History of the Civil War in Russia,I, 8 ; Riha,A Russian European,p.230.

215 TAKTIKI,War period,p.32.

216 Report of 21 August 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,149 ; Rech',18 August 1915,4

217 KA,vol.50/51,p.138.

218 Ibid,p.159 ; TAKTIKI,War period,32-4 ; Rech',25 August 1915,4 ; GURKO 573-5.

219 Grunt,'Progressivnii Blok',p.113 ; GURKO 572 ff.

220 GDSO,IV,14,1039-1047 ; TAKTIKI,War period,35.

At the last moment even the Moscow industrialist group preferred to rally to the Bloc Programme rather than continue to take issue over the relative merits of rival slogans. A War Industries Committees' conference called and dominated by Moscow (only thirty-four of the 100 delegates were from neither Moscow nor Petrograd) decided on 25 August to support the Bloc formula of 'A Ministry of Confidence'.[221] After disputing throughout the period of the Bloc formation even the more radical elements of Moscow 'society' were now prepared to settle for the Bloc compromise in order to present a unified front to the government.

Unfortunately for the policy of 'an open treaty secretly arrived at', the Bloc Programme leaked into the Moscow press. The precise circumstances of the 'leak' remain obscure but suffice to say that the 26 August evening editions of the Moscow press had a journalistic 'scoop' on their hands.[222] The very same evening, the Council of Ministers met to consider the confidential document it had received and commissioned Kharitonov to approach the Bloc leaders with a view to establishing their precise demands.[223] The Bloc leaders now found themselves in an awkward position :

> In view of the differences of opinion over the question of publishing the Bloc Programme, its printing in the Petrograd papers had been prevented. However it appeared in a somewhat garbled text in the Moscow papers on August 26. After this, further restraint was meaningless. On August 27 the Programme was released to the Petrograd papers, even though a group of Bloc adherents (as was announced subsequently by certain State Council members) did not approve of the step. (224)

The deputation from the Council of Ministers (Kharitonov, Aleksandr Khvostov, Shcherbatov and Shakhovskoy) now found itself meeting the Bloc in very different circumstances than those originally envisaged by either side.[225] Kharitonov, the ministerial spokesman, finally conceded that there appeared

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221 Report of 25 August 1915 quoted in GRAVE 24-6.

222 TAKTIKI,War period,36.

223 Ibid ; GURKO 575-6 ; M.Cherniavsky(Ed.),Prologue to Revolution,New Jersey 1967,pp.180-208. An annotated English translation of the notes of Secretary A.N.Yakhontov of the meetings of the Council of Ministers, 24 July-2 September 1915,originally published in ARR,vol.18.

224 TAKTIKI,War period,36.

225 Ibid ; KA,vol.50/51,pp.145-9 ; KERENSKY 140 ; MILIUKOV 329.

to be few real differences between the Bloc and the Ministers' Council but these were sufficiently fundamental to be outside their competence and must accordingly be submitted to the Emperor.[226] Despite the unfortunate circumstances of the negotiations, the ministerial delegation reported back to the Council of Ministers on the twenty-eighth in a favourable light. The Council expressed its sympathy for the Bloc Programme but, as Kharitonov had warned, declared the agreement of the government to be within the province of the Tsar alone.[227]

It is vital to the understanding of the political crisis of late August 1915 to appreciate that the emergence of the Progressive Bloc was only one of two fundamental issues confronting the government at this time. While the month of August was for the Duma and the educated societies of Petrograd and Moscow the era of the Progressive Bloc, the attention of the Council of Ministers was concentrated very largely on an entirely different stream of events. The summer rout of the Russian forces had persuaded the Emperor that his duty lay with the army and he must assume the responsibility of Commander-in-Chief. On the personal level, Nicholas had been dissuaded from taking the supreme step in 1904 and 1914, disappointments which had only confirmed the step in the Emperor's perverse mind.[228] The fatalism to which Nicholas became increasingly subject may have engendered within his complex and elusive personality a desire to sacrifice himself for the good of his country ; in Vasilii Maklakov's succinct phrase, 'the Sovereign was not seeking laurels, he was offering himself as a redeeming sacrifice'.[229] From as early as June 1915 the Empress conducted a campaign to blacken the reputation of the Grand Duke Nikolai, whom she accused of harbouring plans

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226 KA,vol.50/51,pp.145-9 ; MILYUKOV 330 ; Rech',28 August 1915,4.

227 TAKTIKI,War period,36 ; ENGEL'HARDT,viii,616 ; PADENIE,vi,317(Milyukov) ; Rech',29 August 1915,6 ; Cherniavsky,Prologue,pp.209-218.

228 Sazonov,Fateful Years,p.291 ; Nicolas II,Journal Intime,20 September 1914 ; Gilliard,Thirteen Years,p.136.

229 Vasilii Maklakov,'On the Fall of Tsardom',SEER,vol.18,no.52(July 1939), p.76 ; also PALEOLOGUE,II,65.

to oust Nicholas from the throne and take power himself as Nicholas III.[230] When the Court Minister Count Frederiks on one occasion attempted to defend the Grand Duke, Alexandra angrily replied :

> Would you prefer that he [Nicholas - R.P.] should go on giving up his power piecemeal to the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievitch,who exacts it under the pretext that General Headquarters need it and that everything must be subordinated to the exigencies of war ? He has insisted that the Ministers go and work with him at Baranovichi,he encroaches on the Tsar's authority in every branch of the Administration ... The Emperor is dethroned "de facto" and I can see the time is coming when the Grand Duke will openly take his place. (231)

Returning from a tour of inspection of the front on 29 June, Nicholas spent the next seven weeks at Tsarskoe Selo, where the continuous attendance and dominance of the Empress must have furnished a vital component in his decision.[232]

However Nicholas's assumption of the supreme command was not merely a matter of personal ambitions and court intrigues. Since June 1915 Krivoshein (at that time in particularly high favour with the Emperor) had pleaded the necessity of both cooperation with Russian society and a centralised military dictatorship. In early July Krivoshein recommended the immediate removal of Goremykin and the establishment of a War Council headed by the War Minister Polivanov, with Krivoshein himself as vicegerent in charge of the civil administration.[233] Over the course of July the arguments in favour of a war dictator were dramatically reinforced by the deteriorating military situation. On 16 July Polivanov delivered his famous speech to the Council of Ministers 'the Fatherland is in danger', in which he described the disorganisation at the Stavka, the defeatism in Petrograd and the chaos of the home front.[234] The most controversial issue was the relationship between the civil government and the Stavka. As the German and Austrian armies advanced

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230 For example,Alexandra's letters of 12,17,24 & 25 June 1915 : ALEXANDRA, 89,100-1,109 & 110 respectively ; also PALEOLOGUE,I,285-6 and II,65 ; BUCHANAN,I,239 ; RODZYANKO 218.

231 Quoted in Countess Kleinmichel,Memories of a Shipwrecked World,London 1923,p.199.

232 Bernard Pares' commentary in ALEXANDRA,pp.xxviii-xxix.

233 GURKO 555-6 ; SHUL'GIN 78-9.

234 ARR,vol.18,pp.15-17 ; GURKO 556-7.

steadily eastward, enveloping Warsaw on 24 July, Brest-Litovsk on 13 August and Vil'na on 5 September, the war zone under the authority of the Stavka shifted closer to the heart of European Russia.[235] After mid July the Russian retreat brought Petrograd within the war zone and the Council of Ministers felt its powers dwindling to a dangerously low level. If Petrograd was in the war zone, was the capital to be administered by the MVD for the civil authorities or the VI Army for the military authorities ?[236]

Krivoshein insisted that the latest events made dual power quite impossible and authority must be vested in a single centralised body, preferably the War Council which he had been advocating.[237] Shcherbatov, the Minister of Interior, protested that neither the MVD nor the Stavka could solve this particular riddle, which must be submitted to the Emperor directly for his decision. However Goremykin, while accepting the serious nature of the dilemma, pleaded that court politics favoured extreme caution : with the backstairs campaign against the Grand Duke Nikolai at its height, the ministers must not allow their appeal to the Tsar to be exploited by the anti-Grand Duke caucus. In the interests of maintaining stable direction of the war effort, Goremykin secured the reluctant assent of the Council to the postponement of any appeal to the Emperor.[238]

However the clash between the military and civil authorities grew worse. Time and again Goremykin had to step into heated Council debates and warn his colleagues that their open criticism of the Stavka could only lead to the dismissal of the Grand Duke.[239] Inevitably there came a point when, as Sazonov explained, the problem of divided authority was threatening to disintegrate the entire structure of government :

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235 PALEOLOGUE,II,41,60 & 77 ; also W.S.Churchill,The Unknown War : The Eastern Front 1914-1917,London 1941,pp.304-7.

236 ARR,vol.18,pp.18-19 ; GURKO 557 ff. ; M.T.Florinsky,The End of the Russian Empire,1931,republished Collier 1961,pp.72-6.

237 ARR,vol.18,p.18(Council meeting of 16 July 1915).

238 Ibid,pp.19(Shcherbatov) and 21(Goremykin).

239 For example, Council meeting of 24 July 1915 : Cherniavsky,Prologue, p.26.

> Governmental power was divided between innumerable military and civil bodies and there was no-one to put an end to the anarchy which continued unchecked, exciting people's minds and shattering the very principle of authority. (240)

Despite general solicitude for the Grand Duke, there was no alternative but to refer the problem to the Tsar, the supreme authority alone capable of creating a reformed hierarchy of power to fit the straitened military and political circumstances. It seems that the submission of this problem to the Tsar finally decided him to assume the office of Commander-in-Chief.

The reaction to Nicholas's decision was everywhere hostile. A protracted Council meeting on 10 August devoted entirely to a discussion of the Taar's decision revealed that all the ministers except Goremykin were strongly opposed to the move, and even Goremykin later expressed his anxiety about the risk the Emperor was taking.[241] The ministers feared two principal reper--cussions. As Sazonov admitted to Paléologue, the dynastic risk was immense :

> Henceforth it is the Emperor who will be personally responsible for all the misfortunes with which we are threatened.If the inefficiency of one of our generals involves us in a disaster,it will not be merely a milit--ary defeat but a political and social one at the same time. (242)

The dangers inherent in the Emperor's personal identification with military eventuality was not the only problem to tax the apprehensive ministers. With Nicholas safely removed to the Stavka, the inevitable power vacuum in the capital could only be filled by one unwelcome personality. No minister of even the most diluted liberal tendencies could welcome the entrance of the Empress onto the political stage. Sazonov even dared to himt at this reason for ministerial opposition to the Emperor's face, only to find the audience abruptly terminated.[243]

The reaction of the Duma was equally disapproving, as Gurko described :

> The news created a tremendous sensation,especially among the members of the opposition.The Duma members present were all monarchists,opposed to and afraid of revolutionary movements during the war,and among them the

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240 Sazonov,Fateful Years,p.290.

241 Ibid,pp.291-2 ; Cherniavsky,Prologue,pp.91-5.

242 PALEOLOGUE,II,58 ; also BUCHANAN,I,238 and Denikin,'Fevral'skaya revolyutsia i armia',p.190.

243 Sazonov,Fateful Years,p.292 ; PADENIE,vii,220(Shcherbatow).

> Tsar's decision aroused many fears.They regarded the Stavka ... as a sort of corrective to the extreme Right policies of the Tsar but they felt that under Nicholas II the Stavka would lose its corrective influence.Krupensky's news seemed to draw together all present ,despite their varying political opinions. (244)

This Duma unanimity came as a significant fillip to the development (though not the programme) of the Progressive Bloc. Rodzyanko rather hysterically begged the Council of Ministers to petition Nicholas not to assume the military command, an attitude certainly backed by the Duma majority.[245] When the decision was publicly released on 14 August, the response from society was again unfavourable : 'the news has produced a deplorable impression ; it is objected that the Emperor has no strategic experience ; he will be directly responsible for defeats ; and lastly he has the "evil eye"'.[246] At just this moment the Duma Army-Navy commission presented its report on the war effort to the Emperor. After predictable complaints about the chaos caused by divid--ed power, the Duma commission recommended the resolution of the problem of authority by the appointment of a War Dictator. The intention of the commiss--ion was in fact to promote the elevation of Polivanov to the supreme milit--ary office but the report, couched in language intended to avoid offending imperial sensibilities, was apparently taken by the Emperor as Duma corrob--oration of his decision.[247] As on so many other occasions, mutual misunder--standing served only to widen the gulf which seperated Duma and Tsar.

The most determined effort to change the Emperor's mind came from the cabinet. At a meeting of the Council on 20 August the ministers individually pleaded with Nicholas not to take the fatal step but made no impression upon the now adamant Emperor.[248] In desperation Samarin organised the ministers to make a corporate 'resignation issue' of the decision. With the signature of all ministers except Goremykin (who refused to oppose an Imperial decision

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244 GURKO 573 ; also Buryshkin,Moskva Kupecheskaya,p.319.

245 GURKO 568 ; Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.15.

246 PALEOLOGUE,II,60-1 ; also George T.Marye,Nearing the End in Imperial Russia,Philadelphia 1930,p.241 and GURKO 567-8.

247 MPK,267-8 & 270-5 ; also PADENIE,vii,32-3(Shingarev).

248 Sazonov,Fateful Years,pp.291-2 ; MILIUKOV 330 ; GURKO 570.

however unwise) and Polivanov and Grigorovich (whose military oaths precluded such a declaration), a formal letter was sent to the Emperor concluding :

> We venture once more to tell you that to the best of our judgement your decision threatens with serious consequences Russia,your dynasty and your person.At the same meeting you could see for yourself the irreconcilable difference between our Chairman and us in our estimate of the situation in the coutry,and of the policy to be pursued by the Government.Such a state of things is inadmissible at all times and at the present moment it is fatal.Under such conditions we do not believe we can be of real service to Your Majesty and to our country. (249)

The letter was despatched on 22 August, the same day on which Nicholas left for the Stavka to assume the office of Commander-in-Chief.[250]

Although the submission of the Bloc Programme to the Council of Ministers coincided with this crisis of relations between the Council majority and the Tsar, the Bloc leaders had high hopes that the atmosphere of crisis would benefit the Bloc campaign and force from the reactionary establishment concessions unthinkable at any other time. On 28 August the atmosphere in Duma and society circles was confident and optimistic.[251] It did not seem possible for the Bloc demands to be refused when so many weighty factors were in favour. The Duma was united as never before and enjoyed the support of a large sector of the State Council ; the Bloc demands were relatively mild, partly to accommodate the unprecedented number of differing participants, partly to make it as dignified as possible for the government to concede; Petrograd and Moscow society was organised to lend the most effective moral support to the Bloc ; with the exception of Goremykin alone, the entire Council of Ministers accepted the Bloc Programme and recommended compromise ; even the provinces had woken up to the significance of the political campaign being staged in the capitals. For participants and onlookers alike, it was difficult to imagine why or how the Progressive Bloc could fail.

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249 Sazonov,Fateful Years,P.294 ; also Cherniavsky,Prologue,pp.166-7.
250 Sazonov,Fateful Years,p.295 ; Rech',23 August 1915,4.
251 Rech',29 August 1915,2 ; GRAVE 29.

CHAPTER FIVE : THE SECOND YEAR OF WAR

1. The Collapse of the Bloc (September-December 1915)

On 29 August Goremykin set out for the Stavka with a clear brief from the Council of Ministers to secure the sanction of the Emperor for compromise with the Bloc.[1] In the light of the favourable reception accorded the Bloc Programme by the Council the previous day, the Bloc meeting of 29 August greeted his mission with confidence.[2] Even so only the most sanguine adherents of the Bloc failed to consider the possibility of refusal. The Kadets took the line that in the unlikely event of the prorogation of the Duma, the Bloc would appeal over the heads of the ministers directly to the Sovereign through the Duma presidium ; the Progressists insisted that the Duma would disobey the command to disperse and appeal to the country for support.[3] The Bloc leaders soon found themselves having to justify their words for when Goremykin was received in audience by Nicholas on the thirtieth he pleaded not for negotiation with the Bloc but the immediate prorogation of the Duma. Nicholas's response was uncharacteristically prompt : Goremykin returned to Petrograd the next day with the Imperial authorisat--ion for prorogation in his pocket.[4]

By 1 September rumours and counter-rumours were rife and the threats of the Bloc leaders becoming more extreme. The Progressists swore that in the event of prorogation they would recall their delegates from the newly-created Special Councils as a first step towards complete withdrawal from the war effort. The Kadets were equally explicit, threatening a total boycott of the war unless their political demands were met.[5] But although

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1 ARR,vol.18,pp.119-124 ; PADENIE,vi,317(Milyukov).
2 KA,vol.50/51,pp.150-4.
3 TsGAOR,f.6,343,2,27553 quoted in GRAVE 31.
4 MILIUKOV 331 ; Nicholas to Alexandra,31 August 1915 ; NICHOLAS 78.
5 TsGAOR,f.579,386,22 ; POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,17 ; PALEOLOGUE,II,75.

the Kadets publicly identified with the Progressists in their attitude, the threats of the Bloc leaders proved to be the weakest kind of bluff.[6] On 2 September Goremykin privately informed Rodzyanko that the Duma was to be prorogued the next day.[7] Nicholas had authorised Goremykin to prorogue the Duma 'not later than 3 September', and when the apprehensive deputies assembled that morning in open sitting, they were met with a fait accompli to which they mounted no challenge or show of resistance. In the watchful presence of officers of the government, Rodzyanko meekly declared the Duma session prorogued.[8]

Shocked into submission by the cool arbitrariness of this unexpected act, the fighting spirit of the Bloc leaders abruptly disappeared. At the Council of Elders' meeting earlier the same morning of 3 September, the Bloc majority prevailed upon its more militant colleagues to abandon or at least postpone immediate action in the interests of maintaining Bloc unity.[9] The Kadet account attempted to play down the gravity of the situation and gloss over the divisions within the Bloc :

> In the spirit of all the tactics of the Bloc, it was unanimously decided to receive the break in activities with complete composure in order to set an example to the country ... By this decision was demonstrated the unity of the Bloc. (10)

The Kadets were easily persuaded, only too aware that their earlier threats, now so patently ineffectual, were a political embarrassment ; even the Left Kadet leader Nekrasov conceded the necessity of 'operating only by parliam-entary means'. A hastily-convened meeting of the Oktobrist Central Committee demanded that there be no withdrawals from legislative or state institutions and urged the Bloc to 'maintain its rôle of an organisation bringing pacification to the country'.[11] The Progressists were considerably harder

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6 TsGAOR,f.579,386,23 (Progressist account).

7 RODZYANKO 132 ; TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,4,99.

8 RODZYANKO 133 ; GDSO,IV,16,1207-8.

9 TsGAOR,f.579,386,22-3 ; Times,17 & 18 September 1915(n/s),8e & 6d.

10 TAKTIKI,War period,39.

11 Russkie Vedomosty,4 & 8 September 1915 quoted in DYAKIN 119.

to convince but acceded to the Bloc majority after a brief tussle with their consciences.[12]

Equally seriously, a depressed Bloc meeting on the evening of 3 September decided that although the prorogation must be viewed as 'an uncharacteristic and transitory episode', the Bloc was still an extension of the Duma and could not function independently of it.[13] The Bloc which commanded the loyalties of over two-thirds of the Duma dissolved not because of government persecution or repression but from an internal crisis of confidence. The decision of the Tsar not only prorogued the Duma but, at one remove and with the defeatist complicity of its members, had the effect of proroguing the Progressive Bloc. The Bloc went into voluntary liquidation until the self-confidence of its members recovered from the brutal shock of the rejection of the Bloc campaign.

The self-assurance of the Bloc, evaporating quite literally overnight, was replaced by an attitude of abject servility toward the government.[14] When the government curtly and without any evidence of embarrassment inform--ed the representatives of the recessed Duma that the 1916 Budget was ready for examination, the Duma delegates hastened to comply.[15] Commencing on 15 September, the Duma Budget commission dutifully worked its way through the state estimates as though relations between government and Duma had never been more cordial.[16] If there had existed a spirit of resistance towards the government, this was the moment for counter-attack. The Duma leaders could claim that the arbitrary and unwarranted closure of the session prevented constructive collaboration with the government, opening up the exploitation of the current financial need of the government to extract political concessions. Two factors prevented such a Duma response. In the

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12 TsGAOR,f.579,386,23 ; RODZYANKO 132-3 ; TAKTIKI,War period,39-40.

13 KA,vol.50/51,pp.154-5 ; press statement : Russkie Vedomosty,10 September 1915 ; TAKTIKI,War period,40.

14 Stalin termed the whole Bloc campaign 'a revolt on their knees' : Stalin (Ed.),The History of the Civil War,I,27.

15 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,4,102.

16 POLICE,307A-1915,150.

first place, Goremykin had taken steps against just such an eventuality (as will be described below) ; and perhaps most significantly, the complete and utter collapse of Duma morale precluded any possibility of organised opposition to the government.

But while the Bloc surrendered without a semblance of resistance, its sympathisers within the Council of Ministers fought hard. On 2 September Goremykin informed an astounded Council that the Tsar had decided against further negotiations with the Duma, which would be prorogued the next day ; as to the collective letter of resignation submitted by the eight 'liberal' ministers, the Emperor was pleased to command all ministers to remain at their posts.[17] With time to consider the enormity of the decision, the Council mounted a full-scale protest at the meeting of 4 September. Goremykin was accused of acting directly contrary to the wishes of the Council majority by delivering a report to the Tsar which gave a false impression both of the mood of the Duma and the recommendations of the Council . Goremykin argued in return that the Council Chairman alone constituted the official channel of communication between the Duma and the Tsar, hence he was perfectly within his rights to follow his own advice to the exclusion of fellow ministers.[18] The meeting broke up in disorder, leaving Goremykin determined to escape from the present intolerable position : on 14 September he travelled to the Stavka to appeal to the Emperor to decide between the Council majority and its chairman. Nicholas promptly summoned all ministers concerned to a Council meeting at the Stavka on 16 September, which was to be the 'showdown' between Goremykin and his opponents.[19]

Acutely aware of their audience and that they were fighting for their political lives, the two sides attacked each other without mercy.[20] At first Nicholas may have hoped for an accommodation with the liberal group : to

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17 Chermiavsky, Prologue, pp.227 & 235 ; MILIUKOV 331 ; Sazonov, Fateful Years, p.295.

18 Police report of 6 September 1915 : TsGAOR, f.6, 343, 2, 25557 quoted in GRAVE 43.

19 G.Katkov, Russia 1917: The February Revolution, London 1967 (cited hereafter as KATKOV), p.152 ; NICHOLAS 89-90 ; GURKO 579-580.

quote Goremykin, 'all of them got a good scolding from His Majesty the Emperor for the August letter and for their behaviour during the August crisis'.[21] But Nicholas quickly perceived that there was no possibility of the two antagonistic groups continuing in the same cabinet : either Sheherbatov and Samarin would have to go, or Goremykin. There does not seem to have been any doubt in Nicholas's mind as to who should remain :

> From all corners of Russia come the warmest congratulations from my truly loyal subjects. It would be useful for you worthy ministers to spend some time here at the front to refresh your minds. I hope that henceforth you will be unhesitatingly follow my orders as well as the instructions of Ivan Logginovich, whom I intend to retain at the head of the Council of Ministers for a long time. (22)

In a letter to the Empress dated 17 September, Nicholas observed that 'yesterday's sitting has clearly shown me that the Ministers do not wish to work with old Gor. in spite of the stern words which I addressed to them , therefore on my return some changes must take place'.[23] Nicholas's decision to purge the Council awaited only his return to Petrograd to be translated into fact. The ministerial letter of 21 August had clearly identified the disruptive elements within the cabinet and, as Sazonov described,

> It decided the fate of the Ministers who signed it : six of them, including myself, were gradually got rid of during the following year and only two, supposed to be less dangerous, remained in office till the downfall of the monarchy. (24)

Within ten days of the 16 September meeting the two most committed advocates of collaboration with the Duma Bloc had been summarily removed, clearing the way for the refurbished authority of Goremykin as Council Chairman and the dedicated reaction of the new occupant of the MVD.

The third protagonist in the political crisis was the collection of public organisations centred on Moscow. While the Duma prorogation elicited only disappointment and resignation in the capital, in Moscow it generated a more dynamic response. Ryabushinsky went furthest in expressing the

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20 ARR,vol.18,p.136 ; MILIUKOV 331 ; GURKO 580-1.

21 Cherniavsky,Prologue,p.243 ; GURKO 579-580 ; NICHOLAS 90.

22 A.N.Naumov,Iz Utseplevshikh:vospominania,New York 1955,vol.II,p.306.

23 NICHOLAS 91.

24 Sazonov,Fateful Years,p.295.

disillusionment of the higher society circles in Moscow when on 4 September he called for the withdrawal of all war aid to the government.[25] To universal surprise the Moscow proletariat responded to the political crisis with enthusiasm : while Petrograd could muster only 2,500 strikers, 17,800 came out in sympathy with the Duma in Moscow.[26] A Soviet commentator claims that the official police figures are grossly misleading and suggests that the total striking force in the capitals may have touched 70,000.[27]

Whatever the exact figures, this unforeseen manifestation of support from the urban proletariat alarmed the Duma for, far from being cheered by the workers' response, the Bloc leaders dreaded the approach of a fresh revolutionary situation. Konovalov for the Progressists was apprehensive :

> It is essential immediately to take every measure to prevent the people from reaching that state of morale when it is so overwhelmed by despair that it appears there is only one course open - the path of force and every kind of excess. (28)

Kerensky feared the government was attempting to provoke the Opposition into committing itself to premature revolution :

> To prevent the government seizing the opportunity to explain away its military failures and its growing repression, the Trudovik fraction must maintain its tactics of restraint and appeal to the workers not to strike ... the activities of the government must be viewed as provocation. (29)

At a meeting on 5 September, the Duma Kadets regretted what they regarded as a potentially explosive situation.[30] Guchkov too felt constrained to make the Oktobrist position clear : 'we demanded that the government enter into an agreement with the demands of society not for revolution but to strengthen the government for the purpose of the defence of the homeland from revolution and anarchy'.[31]

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25 Moscow police telegram of 4 September 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,25157 quoted in GRAVE 38.

26 Moscow Police telegram of 5 September 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,341,2,804 quoted in GRAVE 40.

27 CHERMENSKY 571.

28 Moscow Police report of 29 August 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,2,27553 quoted in GRAVE 30.

29 Report of 4 September 1915 : POLICE,243,345-D,1915,25-6.

30 Moscow Police telegram of 5 September 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,341,2,804 quoted in GRAVE 40 ; TsGAOR,f.523,32,196-202(minutes of Kadet Central Committee

Believing that a policy of restraint was essential if revolution in Moscow was to be averted, the public organisations followed the Bloc lead. At a giant meeting drawing attendance from all parties, public institutions and organisations on 5 September in Moscow, unmistakable antagonism towards the government was muted by fear of the terrible consequences of forthright criticism.[32] At another open meeting the following day Chelnokov, while agreeing that the imminent congresses of the Zemstvo and Town Unions should formally consider demands for a renewed Duma session and a Ministry of Public Confidence, insisted that the congresses must also publish an appeal for calm together with a petition to the Tsar to restore law and order in the capitals.[33]

The Moscow congresses which met 7-9 September were the obvious rallying-point for political opposition to the government. Even the Empress was alive to the possibility of the congresses being a substitute for the recessed Duma :

> Now the members of the Duma want to meet in Moscow to talk over every--thing when their work here is closed - one ought energetically to forbid it, it will only bring great troubles. If they do that - one ought to say that the Duma will not then be reopened till much later - threaten them. (34)

If the Bloc leaders were to make a quick recovery from the prorogation, it was to the congresses that they must turn as the political and organisational heirs of the Duma.

However from outside and from within the Congresses, the Bloc leaders continued to plead for calm. To the Moscow Kadets on 8 September Milyukov stressed the virtues which he claimed to distinguish in the Progressive Bloc, played down the 'temporary' interruption in the activities of the Duma and

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meeting of 5 September 1915) quoted in DYAKIN 120.

31 Moscow Police report of 8 September 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,2,25534 quoted in GRAVE 50.

32 Moscow Police report of 6 September 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,2,25557 quoted in GRAVE 40.

33 Undated Moscow Police report : TsGAOR,f.6,343,2,26380 quoted in GRAVE 48 ; Chelnokov also signed an appeal for calm as Head of the Moscow Municip--al Duma : Rannee Utro,6 September 1915 cited in DYAKIN 120.

34 Alexandra to Nicholas,2 September 1915 : ALEXANDRA 135 (also 138).

condemned the militant tendencies of the Progressists as criminally irresponsible.[35] Kerensky too publicly reiterated his plea for restraint.[36] The efforts of the Duma moderates proved largely successful : though the debates were stormy, the official resolutions passed on the final day of the Congresses were relatively mild. The Kadet element within the Union of Towns prevailed over the Progressist minority and lent official support to the restrained criticisms put up by the joint Kadet and Left Oktobrist establish--ment within the Union of Zemstvos.[37]

Public interest centred on the decision of the Congresses to make a personal appeal to the Emperor through a deputation elected equally from the Zemstvo and Town Unions.[38] Anticipating that the Towns Union might elect radical representatives, the Zemstvo Union deliberately selected delegates of known moderate views : the Right Kadet L'vov (Union President) and the Oktobrists Kamensky and Maslov. As it turned out however, the moderate cause was not lost within the Towns Union : the Kadet Chelnokov joined the Progressists Astrov and Ryabushinsky to represent the Towns Union on the deputation.[39] Overall the deputation membership of two Oktobrists, two Kadets and two Progressists gave the Kadets a pivotal leadership. The attitude of the Congresses towards the deputation differed significantly. The prevalent feeling within the Towns Union was that the Congress should not disperse until the deputation was received as a guarantee against 'treachery' on the part of the government and faint-heartedness on the part of the deputation. But the majority of the Zemstvo Union proposed the adjourning of the current Congresses until after the reception of the delegation. The final word lay with the delegation itself, which by a predictable four-to-two vote favoured the latter course. The Congresses closed on 9 September despite

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35 POLICE,xvi,27/46(Moscow),1915,39.

36 POLICE,243,345-D,1915,42.

37 TsGAOR,f.627(Stürmer),14,4-5 ; KLYUZHEV,xvii,7 ; GRAVE 56-7.

38 TsGAOR,f.627(Stürmer),14,5 ; PALEOLOGUE,II,83 ; also DYAKIN 122.

39 Moscow Police report of 9 September 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,2,25949, quoted in GRAVE 53-4 ; KLYUZHEV,xvii,6 ; Buryshkin,Moskva Kupecheskaya,p.190.

disquietude on the part of a large proportion of the delegates.[40] The hopes of Duma society now rested on the Congresses' delegation.

In presenting his report on the Congresses, the Director of the Police Department recommended that all projected congresses and conferences be banned.[41] However the current occupant of the MVD, Prince Shcherbatov, had every intention of securing for the delegation a fair hearing before the Tsar : on 11 September the joint-chairmen of the delegation, L'vov and Chelnokov, were informed that the Tsar would receive them shortly.[42] But within days the moderate cause suffered a substantial setback. Shcherbatov's report on the events of the previous month delivered to Nicholas on 16 September clearly revealed his sympathy for the Progressive Bloc and the Congresses.[43] At the cabinet showdown on the afternoon of the same day, Shcherbatov showed himself too hostile to Goremykin to be tolerated any longer.[44] Nicholas decided both to purge his Council and reject the petition of the Congresses. On 20 September an embarrassed Shcherbatov relayed Nicholas's decision that no delegation of a political nature could be received by the Emperor.[45]

The impact of this communication upon the dispersed Congress delegates was hardly less shattering than that of the Duma prorogation on the Bloc members some three weeks previously. Again the effect was not to provoke the Opposition into direct action but to convince it of the uselessness of further agitation. On 27 September the Towns Union made a public statement : the collapse of the Russian war effort was the fault of the government alone, for the army and nation had consistently done their duty ; the only solution to the political and military crisis was the immediate transfer of power

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40 Document selections quoted in GRAVE 53-4 & 56-7.

41 GRAVE 56.

42 Report by L'vov,Kamensky and Maslov quoted in GRAVE 58.

43 Shcherbatov's Report : TsGAOR,f.627(Stürmer),14,1-6.

44 ARR,vol.18,p.136 ; GURKO 579-581.

45 Report by L'vov,Kamensky and Maslov quoted IN Grave 58 ; POLICE,27-1915, 60 ; PALEOLOGUE,II,84 ; BUCHANAN,I,248-9.

to a coalition government held responsible to a reconvened Satate Duma.[46] The document was a despairing apology for the political impotence of the public organisations. On 29 September the six members of the Congresses' delegation considered their position : the Congresses' members had long ago returned to their war employment and could not be mustered to provide effective support for a campaign to force their attentions upon the Tsar. The delegation dispersed in silence after a formal vote against fresh congresses of the public organisations in the near future.[47] In the face of the intransigence of the Tsar, the leaders of the public organisations reacted in precisely the same way as the Progressive Bloc. Like the Duma Bloc and like the Bloc sympathisers within the Council of Ministers, the public organisations restricted their political campaign to confines of their own choosing.

Probably the most significant feature of the post-prorogation crisis was the rôle played by the Progressive Bloc. It had always been assumed that in the event of a political clash between the Tsar and the nation, the Duma would spearhead the national movement. This did not prove to be the case in September 1915. Since this represented their first tentative foray into the political arena, the public organisations looked to the Progressive Bloc for guidance and direction. Not only did the Duma Bloc fail to give a lead to the public organisations, it positively discouraged their assumption of a strong political line. Far from welcoming the arrival of a new and powerful political agent upon the scene, the Duma leaders jealously discerned a potential challenger to their own monopoly of political action. To avert the danger the Bloc leaders, with Milyukov, Guchkov and Konovalov at the fore--front, exercised their authority to calm the proletariat whose response to the Duma plight had proved so embarrassingly effusive, and to restrain the public organisations which were tempted to take up the Opposition campaign

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46 KLYUZHEV,xvii,10-11.

47 Rech',30 September 1915 ; also CHERMENSKY 592.

against the government. During September the impetus of the society campaign was controlled less by the defensive repressive actions of the government than the insistent restraining influence of the Duma Bloc. For the month after the prorogation of the Duma, society was policed not by the MVD but by the Progressive Bloc.

When seeking explanations for the defeat (as distinct from the collapse) of the Progressive Bloc, the circumstances of the Emperor must figure prominently. With so many advantages working for the Bloc, only the Tsar himself was sufficiently powerful to upset the odds for success. Travelling to the Stavka from Petrograd on 23 August, Nicholas felt the burdens of political leadership falling from his shoulders with immense relief. In undertaking the office of Commander-in-Chief in a sphere far removed from the demoralising defeatism of the capital and the claustrophobic domesticity of life with Alexandra, Nicholas experienced a feeling of elation which he himself compared to the emotion following Holy Communion.[48] Refreshed by his welcome remoteness from 'the poisoned air of Petrograd', Nicholas quickly absorbed from his Chief-of-Staff Alekseyev a soldier's healthy contempt for the antics of office-bound civilians.[49] The spirit of cautious optimism which pervaded the Front contrasted starkly with the extravagant despair of those safe in the capital. As Nicholas remarked to Pierre Gilliard,

> You have no idea how depressing it is to be away from the front. It seems as if everything here saps energy and enfeebles resolution. The most pessimistic rumours and the most ridiculous stories are accepted and get about everywhere ... At the front there is only one thought - the determination to conquer. All else is forgotten and, in spite of our losses and reverses, everyone remains confident. (50)

Into this fresh atmosphere of hope and determined action, all the more intoxicating because of its brief duration, burst Goremykin with tales of rebellion within and outside the government. With hindsight, it is plain that the greatest mischance of the political crisis was that the two issues of the Bloc Programme and Nicholas's assumption of military command coincided.

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48 Nicholas to Alexandra, 25 August 1915 : NICHOLAS 70.

49 PALEOLOGUE, II, 90 ; Naumov, Iz Utseplevshikh, II, 36.

50 Gilliard, Thirteen Years, p.137 ; also MILIUKOV 333.

To Nicholas, remote from political events at Baranovichi, it seemed hardly coincidental that the Duma should consort with the liberal wing of the Council of Ministers precisely at the time when he had received an illegal attempt to force his hand from those same ministers. The ministerial letter of 21 August and the Bloc Programme of 22 August were expressions of the same coalition aimed at forcing fundamental reform in the midst of war and preventing the Emperor continuing as Commander-in-Chief. This impression of conspiracy against the Autocracy was accentuated by the single biased account to which Nicholas had access - that of Goremykin - and the single biased inspiration to which he was subjected - that of Alexandra.[51] Browbeaten by the correspondence of the Empress and exasperated by the report of Goremykin, Nicholas allowed his irritation to manifest itself in a precipitate action which many considered contradicted the recent direction of his thought.[52]

But while the personal circumstances of the Tsar palayed the crucial rôle in the prorogation of the Duma, they provide no insight into the utter collapse of the Bloc immediately on receipt of the imperial ukaze. In point of fact many of the political factors which appeared to support the Bloc were either quite illusory or faded into insignificance when viewed in a wider context. Into the first category enters the much-vaunted support for the Bloc within the Council of Ministers. It has already been suggested that the timing of the ministerial letter to Nicholas could not have been more unfortunate for the Bloc. Under these circumstances, the open sympathy for the Bloc of the same group of ministers at the Council meeting of 28 August proved more of a hindrance than a help in recommending the Bloc to the Emperor. Ever sensitive to any encroachment upon his autocratic prerogatives, Nicholas classed the Duma with the 'rebel' ministers and meted out punish--ment to both in equal measure.

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51 See the barrage of appeals from Alexandra to close the Duma : ALEXANDRA 117(23 August), 127(28 August), 130(29 August) & 131(30 August).

52 For example, KERENSKY 140.

Leaving aside the unfortunate coincidence of the Bloc campaign and the ministerial protest, sympathy for the Bloc on the part of even a number of ministers was no guarantee of victory. Nicholas insisted that matters relating to the Duma were the monopoly of the Chairman of the Council, to the official exclusion of even the Minister of Interior. Added to this was the fact that effective 'rebellion' by ministers against the Tsar was impossible. In the event of the submission of individual or collective resignations, the Tsar could either accept or flatly refuse them. Kokovtsov in November 1913, Maklakov in March 1915 and later Trepov in December 1916 furnish examples of ministers whom Nicholas would not allow to resign until a time convenient to himself. Naumov in October 1915, Aleksandr Khvostov in June 1916 and Golitsyn in December 1916 are instances of individuals whose reluctance to assume ministerial office was overridden by command of the Emperor. Ministers were totally dependent upon the Tsar for their appoint--ments, retention in offive and termination of service. Despite their ostensible power, the complete dependence of the ministers upon the whim of the Tsar meant that the sympathy or antipathy of even a number of ministers provided little concrete resource in approaching the Tsar.

It has already been indicated that when the government demanded the convening of the Duma Budget commission to consider the 1916 Budget, the Bloc leadership made no attempt to exploit the Duma's financial prerogatives to extract political concessions. At first glance, this is stark evidence of the extent to which the Bloc's ability to fight back had disappeared. However while the crash in Duma self-confidence was an accomplished fact, the financial aspects of the Duma dilemma were more complicated than appears at first sight. Goremykin had always taken pains to attempt to ensure that any wartime session granted the Duma would be harmless : his machinations before the Duma session of January 1915 testify to his determination in this respect. While unable to proscribe the 1915 Summer Session of the Duma in quite the same way, Goremykin prepared for the worst. Since the Duma's only

real power lay in its perusal of the State Budget, Goremykin reasoned that to remove or at least threaten to remove this privilege would render the Duma completely harmless.

On 19 June, with the prospect of a Duma session on the horizon, Goremykin persuaded the Council of Ministers to consider the principle of taxation by decree in the future (reviving the motion of August 1914).[53] If the government could raise taxes without recourse to the Duma, the Duma would survive merely as a government luxury which could be dispensed with whenever circumstances dictated. On 27 June, encouraged by guarded Council agreement to his taxation scheme, Goremykin conceded the Duma session commencing on 19 July.[54] Goremykin secured the approval of the Emperor and the announcement was brazenly made a mere five days before the Duma met. The promulgation baldly stated that under the terms of Clause 87 of the Fundamental Laws, taxation could be raised by decree for the next two-and-a-half years.[55] At one stroke the financial rights of the Duma were effectively bypassed until January 1918. Only the Tsar's indulgent attitude towards the Duma kept Goremykin from summarily dismissing the legislative assemblies. The moment that the Tsar's political opinion coincided with that of his chief minister, the Duma could be safely prorogued. That moment came at the Stavka on 30 August. After prorogation Goremykin contemptuously offered the Duma the most menial form of financial collaboration : it was required to pass the 1916 Budget in the certain knowledge that refusal would mean the withdrawal of even this servile function. With morale lower than at almost any time in the history of the Duma, the Bloc leaders were prepared to accept this travesty of its financial prerogatives rather than attempt to argue the point.[56]

The Bloc had proved no match for the establishment over tactics. At base there could be only two effective approaches to the government in August

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53 PADENIE,iii,313(Goremykin).

54 TAKTIKI,War period,20 ; MILIUKOV 317.

55 PADENIE,iii,313(Goremykin).

56 POLICE,307A-1915,150.

1915 : clandestine pressure or the threat of open rebellion after the manner of 1905. The first method was infinitely more suited to the Duma members, guaranteed the widest measure of society support and offended few patriotic scruples as to the morality of extracting concessions under war duress. To quote a perceptive police reporter, the Kadets ideally wanted 'to effect a peaceful revolution clandestinely [za spinayu - original] with the sanction of the government itself'.[57] Unhappily, the clandestine nature of the Bloc barely survived its inception : widening membership multiplied the chances of a public contest with the government, Moscow initiated its own unsolicited campaign of support, the Bloc Programme leaked into the press and the whole Bloc campaign escaped from the confines of the Duma into the streets. The completely public nature of the campaign by the time the Bloc approached the Council of Ministers on 27 August sabotaged any hope of clandestine pressure and stiffened the resistance of the Tsar and the Rightist establishment.

The only real alternative now wad to abandon 'pressure' and pass on to open rebellion. However the Bloc leaders were frankly terrified to attempt any raising of the populace. The only precedent - the Vyborg Appeal - had proved an unmitigated disaster and no-one with any experience of that traumatic event ever mustered the confidence to repeat the experiment. The Bloc leaders were trapped by their own limitations. 'Clandestine pressure' was the only weapon they were prepared to employ in wartime and once this approach was spent, the weaknesses of the Bloc and of the Fourth Duma itself precluded the only alternative means of political warfare. In its last stages the Bloc campaign was consciously or unwittingly an exercise in bluff ; when that bluff was called, the realisation of their political impotence hit the Duma moderates harder than ever before.

The prorogation of the Duma ushered in a period of growing government reaction. At first some moderates still seized upon any faint indications of a continuing 'Liberal Phase'. The Emperor proved as unpredictable as ever,

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57 Petrograd report of 23 October 1915 : POLICE,xvi,27/57,1915,44.

perhaps now regretting his earlier over-hasty decision. On 27 September the new Minister of Interior Aleksei Khvostov joined Goremykin in proposing the extension of pre-issue censorship from the areas of 'Reinforced Protection' to the whole of the Russian Empire. The Council of Ministers agreed that the failure of the Bloc had prompted a collapse in morale suffivient to tolerate putting back the clock to the pre-1905 days of censorship byt Nicholas, as on so many occasions the despair of his ministers and critics alike, turned the proposition down flat .[58] Nicholas also mystified the Right by his choice of new ministers. When in late October Krivoshein was forced by ill-health to retire from the Chief Administration of Agrieulture, Nicholas appointed in his stead not a reactionary but the moderate Right Naumov.[59] Moreover, as a gesture of gratitude to the departing Krivoshein, Nicholas formally elevated the Chief Administration of Agriculture to the status of a Ministry, thereby endowing Naumov with greater official powers than his predecessors.[60] The next day (27 October) the reactionary Minister of Communications Rukhlov was brusquely dismissed and replaced by the moderate Right Aleksandr Trepov.[61] 'Altus', the political commentator of Utro Rossii, confessed himself quite bewildered by the changes :

> The Left did not want the retirement of Krivoshein but the Right did - and they won. The Rights did not want the removal of Rukhlov but the Left did - and they won ... I would not be surprised if I read in tomorrow's papers that in the place of Krivoshein and Rukhlov were appointed two ministers from among the Duma deputies. (62)

Kolokol, the most extreme Right of the daily newspapers, could make no more sense of the changes than its Progressist rival :

> In the last analysis, who will win ? Just what is the political direct--ion these days ? Where is Russia heading : to the Right, to the Left, forward or backward ? You ask but you find no answers. (63)

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58 Marye, Nearing the End, pp.268 & 271.

59 See Krivoshein's scrap-book of press-cuttings : TsGIAL, f.1571(Krivoshein), I, delo 237 ; also PADENIE, i, 330-1(Naumov).

60 The distinction is between Glavnoe Upravlenie and Ministerstvo : Utro Rossii and Russkie Vedomosty, 27 October 1915.

61 Rech', 28 October 1915 ; also DYAKIN 134.

62 Utro Rossii, 30 October 1915.

63 Kolokol, 31 October 1915 cutting in TsGIAL, f.1571, I, 237, 15.

It is likely that the Emperor, now uncertain of the correctness of his decision to prorogue the Duma, was disposed to prevent a complete flooding of the cabinet by reactionaries, which would sabotage all hope of reconcil--iation with the Duma.

With the passage of time however the reactionary course gathered strength. The forces of the Right responded to the challenge of the Progressive Bloc with the organisation of their own 'Black Bloc'. After the Duma prorogation, a succession of provincial Rightist congresses combined to flaunt the victory of the Right in the faces of the crushed moderates and kept the general public well aware of the ascendancy of reaction.[64] Within the newly-constituted Council of Ministers, the driving force was the Minister of Interior, Aleksei Khvostov, recruited from the Right fraction of the Duma. Enthusiastically taking up the banner of his earlier predecessor Maklakov, Khvostov set out to undermine the Council Chairmanship, seize the initiative within the cabinet and expand the authority of the MVD within the structure of government.[65] Towards the country Khvostov's policies were unequivocally repressive. To give two examples, an attempt by the Union of Towns to foster a new public organisation, a Co-operative Union, was cynically and ruthlessly suppressed[66] ; and the ban on all congresses and conferences recommended by the Police Director as early as 9 September and rejected by Shcherbatov was implemented by Khvostov from 6 November.[67]

The principal target fror Khvostov's antagonism was the Duma. From the moment of his appointment Khvostov instructed the police to institute maximum surveillance over the Duma fractions and demanded a detailed weekly

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64 Russkoe Slovo, 12 August 1915 ; PADENIE, vi, 316 (Milyukov) ; Moscow Monarch--ist Congress 20-3 September (POLICE, 307A-1915, 153), Nizhni-Novgorod Congress of the United Nobility 20-3 November (POLICE, 307A-1915, 177) and Petrograd Monarchist Congress 21-3 November (PADENIE, vi, 196 and vi, 319 : Markov Two and Milyukov) ; TAKTIKI, War period, 37-8.

65 TsGIAL, f.1276 (Council of Ministers), xi, 1027, 1-17 cited in DYAKIN 134-6 ; PADENIE, i, 331-2 & 337 (Naumov) ; also LAVERYCHEV 179.

66 POLICE, 27-1915, 61 & 307A-1915, 201 ; Rech', 4 November 1915.

67 Police report of 9 September 1915 : TsGAOR, f.6, 343, 25949 quoted in GRAVE 56 ; Ban of 6 November 1915 : POLICE, 27-1915, 112.

report on Duma activities.[68] However in the opinion of the MVD the political crisis was over by mid November : from that date Khvostov discontinued the regular reports and reverted to the normal practice of leaving it to the judgement of the Director of Police to place the most important decisions before the Minister.[69] Given that calm was now restored, political initiative lay with the government. The rescript which prorogued the Duma had promised a new session 'not later than November 1915', on which the defeated Bloc placed what remained of its shattered hopes.[70] Goremykin and Khvostov judged that the political situation was now sufficiently quiescent to break that promise. On 23 November an imperial rescript baldly stated that 'due to special circumstances' the November session of the Duma would not now take place.[71] The next day Goremykin informed the Duma Budget commission, the only official institution of the recessed Duma, that a new session would be convened only when the commission had completed its examination of the 1916 Budget.[72] It seemed as if the future Duma, should it exist at all, would be limited to purely financial functions.

Immediately on assuming the post of Minister of Interior, Khvostov set about preparations for elections to the Fifth Duma.[73] If the Fourth Duma ran its full constitutional course, its last session was scheduled to close in June 1917 but with the uncertainties of war and the recent activities of the Duma Opposition, Khvostov felt justified in initiating preliminary plans. Of eight million roubles set aside for government expenses in the Duma elections, Khvostov spent some 980,000 roubles in late 1915 and 320,000 in early 1916, the greater part going to the organisations of the Right and for

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68 POLICE,xvi,27/57(Petrograd),26 ff. ; Utro Rossii,30 September 1915 ; PADENIE,iv,276-9(A.N.Khvostov) ; Times,14 October 1915(n/s),7c ; also DYAKIN 129-131.

69 POLICE,xvi,27/57(Petrograd),138.

70 GDSO,IV,16,1207-8 (sitting of 3 September 1915).

71 POLICE,307A-1915,173 ; Russkie Vedomosty,24 November 1915.

72 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,14,108 & 115 ; MILIUKOV 333 ; Times,7 December 1915(n/s),6b ; PADENIE,vi,319(Milyukov).

73 MPK 224 ; PADENIE,vii,26(Shingarev).

the subsidisation of the Right press.[74] A proportion went into preparing a detailed examination of the electoral patterns of 1912 with a view to excluding all parties to the Left of the Zemstvo-Oktobrists in 1917. This report, known as the 'Khvostov Memorandum', was the blue-print for the state-created Fifth Duma.[75] The future of the Duma as a representative institution of any power seemed bleak : the government had secured financial independence from the Duma, the plans for its successor were already under way, and all that remained for the Fourth Duma was a pitiable rôle as part-time government auditor.

As the autumn of 1915 saw the position of the recessed Duma growing ever weaker, the Bloc members proved that they could not withstand the disappointment of defeat. The first and arguably the only Duma fraction to recover from the Bloc defeat was the Kadet. The Kadet Central Committee spent the greater part of the fortnight after prorogation calming and restraining society. A Kadet meeting on 3 September authorised the immediate circulation of instructions not to take hasty action but to work for the war effort as conscientiously as ever. The same meeting included a report from the sub-committee on the next Party Congress recommending its postponement until the new Duma session.[76] During late September and October, the Kadets busied themselves in preparations for the Congress, where (it was hoped) the party and fraction would receive a clear mandate in the light of the present troubled situation. A plenary session of the Kadet Central Committee on 5 October agreed to hold the Congress in the first week of the new Duma session, at that time anticipated for late November.[77]

Provincial Kadet conferences held throughout October were intended not only to elect delegates to the forthcoming Congress but to evaluate the

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74 MPK 224-5 ; 'Iz vospominanii Beletskogo',Byloe,vol.20(1922),p.199.

75 MPK 225 & 228-241.

76 Moscow report : POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,22-3 ; TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party), iii,10,13-14.

77 POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,33 ; TsGAOR,f.523,iii,10,11-12 ; also Moscow Police report of 2 October 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,27,28145 quoted in GRAVE 63-4.

Kadet position. The opinions were very mixed, representing the whole Kadet spectrum from the crypto-Trudovik to the crypto-Oktobrist positions. The Saratov Conference of 10-11 October supported the Milyukov line and preferred steady persuasion of the government to any attempt at wider agitation.[78] The Samara Conference of 20-21 October condemned the Milyukov line, demanding the Kadet fraction abandon the compromising Progressive Bloc in favour of a close alliance with the Extreme Left parties and the workers' movement.[79] The Kiev Conference, also held 20-21 October, adopted a central position, rejecting the wild schemes of the Left Kadets in favour of concentration on the Progressive Bloc and its employment to exert pressure on the government.[80] It appeared there was no unequivocal mandate from provincial Kadetism and whatever was decided by the forthcoming Congress would represent no more than one sector of Kadet opinion. In these circumstances it seemed legitimate for the fraction and Central Committee to follow their own inclinations at least until the Congress met.

Only gradually did the Kadet organs throw off the despair which had enveloped them in early September, a process most clearly demonstrated in their changing attitude to the government. On 22 September the Kadet fraction resigned itself to a government hardened against the Progressive Bloc and limited its actions to the collection of documentary material which could be used against the government at a later date.[81] There were no plans at all for a further trial of strength with the government, only the forlorn hope that events would turn the way of the Bloc sometime in the future. A plenary session of the Kadet Central Committee on 5 October confirmed this course : Kadets everywhere were required to watch, record and document all instances of government abuse and maladministration for a future day of reckoning.[82]

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78 POLICE,27-1915,124-5 & 169 ; also POLICE,69-b,3.

79 POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,40-1 ; also POLICE,27-1915,20-b,33 & 68,10-11.

80 POLICE,xvi,27-1915,32-b,8 and 27-1915,126 & 227.

81 Report of 22 September 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,152.

82 Moscow report of 5 October 1915 : POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,33 ; also TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,10,11-12.

This resolution was issued on 13 October as a Central Committee circular to the provincial organisation, with a sanguine footnote suggesting that good behaviour on the part of the general public might still win over the government.[83] The sterility of this exercise from the point of view of practical politics betrayed just how far Kadet confidence had fallen since late August. The eminent historian who headed the Kadet movement employed the months of political defeat to convert his party into an historical research team. With a hopeless political situation confronting him, Milyukov abandoned practical activities in favour of an academic exercise, presumably in the belief that any activity was better than none in preventing a further collapse of morale.

However Milyukov was not the only source of initiative within the Kadet fraction and the month of October saw a number of attempts to break away from the sterile exercise prescribed by its leader. The Left wing in particular refused to be bound by the defeatist attitude of the Central Committee. The Left Kadets headed by Nekrasov interpreted the Bloc defeat as proving the need for closer association with the Extreme Left fractions and the workers' movement.[84] On 1 October they organised a giant meeting in Petrograd with the object of sounding the idea of a organisation of local residentd' committees to make the voice of the proletariat more powerful and articulate. By parading as the sponsors of the scheme the Left Kadets hoped to build bridges between the Kadet party and the re-emerging workers' movement.[85] Unhappily a second meeting on 8 October resulted in a chaotic scrap between the various workers' groups, each claiming the monopoly of legitimate representation of the proletariat and only united in scornfully rejecting the Kadet attempt to patronise them.[86] The Okhrana reports paint a sorry picture of Kadet failure : of the new local residents' committees

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83 Report of 13 October 1915 : POLICE,27-1915,98.

84 POLICE,27-1915,26-28 & 44-5 and xvi,27/57,1915,59.

85 Petrograd report : POLICE,xvi,27/57,1915,29-31.

86 Ibid,38-41.

raised by the Left Kadets, a few were taken over by the workers themselves, more were absorbed by the Extreme Left parties (especially, oddly enough, the Trudoviks), but the great majority simply withered away from lack of support.[87] A final effort to reach the Moscow workers on 15 November was indignantly boycotted ; the Left Kadets abandoned the workers' movement in disgust to the Trudoviks and S.D.s.[88] A simultaneous approach to the Extreme Left parties had a similar reception. The Trudoviks of Kerensky were tuned to the workers' movement from mid September and enstered into close alliance with the Mensheviks soon after.[89] As the Left Kadets' closest neighbour, the Trudoviks were committed to a move away from the Kadets and three seperate meetings on 2, 6 and 8 October revealed that no hope of coalition existed.[90] Neither the direct approach to the workers nor the indirect approach by way of the Extreme Left parties proved remotely encouraging to the dispirited Left Kadets. While the Milyukov line seemed unnecessarily defeatist, the Left Kadets quickly learned that their radical schemes could provide nothing more constructive.

The activists on the Kadet Right wing were hardly more successful. In seeking (like the Left Kadets) to broaden the base of the Kadet movement in order to muster greater resources for a future contest, the Right Kadets had in mind two potential areas of support. At the Central Committee plenary session of 5 October, the Right Kadets sponsored a resolution calling for closer relations betwwen society forces in Russia and Western Europe.[91] Accepted by the meeting as Resolution Six, this scheme was not as chimeric on the grounds of practical politics as at first appears. The Right Kadets hoped to persuade Russia's Allies substantially to increase their pressure on the Tsar's government for concessions to liberalism. But while the germ

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87 POLICE,xvi,27/57,1915,66-73(report of 30 October) & 87-96(9 November).

88 Ibid,126-8 ; also Birzhevie Vedomosty,16 November 1915.

89 POLICE,243,345D-1915,49 ; also TsGAOR,f.623,14,6.

90 Report of 8 October 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,159.

91 Moscow report : POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,33 ; also TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,10,11-12.

of the idea was reborn in the autumn of 1915, attempts to put the scheme into practice did not mature until the spring of 1916 (see below).

The most surprising direction in which the Right Kadets moved was towards the traditional bastion of reaction, the United Nobility. In the first days of October, a group of the nobility broke away from the main body and formed what came to be known as the 'Young Nobility'.[92] On 10 October the Moscow Kadets debated the significance of the breakaway group and opted for a policy of contact :

> It is essential to exploit by all means the incipient movement within the camp of the nobility. Every Kadet with connections in that quarter must use all his influensce for its development and by the patronage of the growing movement ... to draw this movement under the Kadet flag. We must try to undermine the existing organisation of the nobility,that is to say,to paralyse the authority of the Strukov group and in its place substitute a group of progressive nobility. (93)

To split the United Nobility with its congress only six weeks away, to enhance the authority of the Progressive Bloc by claiming a sector of the nobility among its active adherents and immediately to increase both the prestige and the practical resource of their party were prizes which the Kadets could not let pass. Throughout October 'feelers' were extended, though in an atmosphere of mounting doubt. On 1 November the Moscow Kadets decisded to call a halt to the negotiations on the grounds that the move could well split the Bloc should details of the secret negotaiations get out, and that approaches towards the Right were undesirable in this period of a reviving workers' movement.[94] The Okhrana, which had been watching this development with anxiety, reported on 8 November that the Kadets appeared to have abandoned all moves in the direction of the 'Young Nobility'. A week later, a confirmative statement closed the police dossier on this fascinating but short-lived Kadet enterprise.[95]

As leader of the Kadets, Milyukov made only two closely-related political

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92 POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,58 and 27-1915,75.

93 POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,page B-8.

94 Ibid,34-5.

95 Ibid,B-12(report of 8 November 1915) & 34-6(report of 15 November).

moves in the aftermath of prorogation. On 25 October he called a joint meeting of the leaders of the Progressive Bloc and the heads of the public organisations, hoping to revive the early spirit of the Duma Bloc. Unfortun--ately the meeting only revealed conflicting and contradictory attitudes : Guchkov (for the War Industries Committees) demanded direct action ; Chelnokov (for the Right wing of the Towns Union) advocated a 'wait-and-see' policy ; Astrov (for the Left wing of the Towns Union) demanded direct attack on the government ; and L'vov (for the Zemstvo Union) attempted to play the 'trimmer' while making plain his sympathy for Chelnokov's opinions.[96] The meeting, a failure in that no real understanding between the Duma leaders and the public organisations emerged, yet provided the stimulus for a brief revival of Bloc activity.

On 28 October Milyukov took the opportunity of calling the first meeting of the Bloc since 3 September, but ran into difficulties at once.[97] Seeing little chance of a long Duma session in the immediate future and worried lest the Bloc atrophy through lack of exercise, Milyukov took the view that the Bloc must learn to function independently of Duma sessions. The State Council representatives however considered that the extra-parliamentary activity must be left to the public organisations and the most the Bloc could legally do was to prepare for the next Duma session.[98] It was tragically clear that its Council delegates were going to condemn the Bloc to virtual impotence. A meeting on 2 November repeated this stalemate, for the feeling that the promised Duma session was imminent encouraged the Council members in their obstinacy.[99] On 5 November the Bloc drew up a Resolution comprising six points connected with the war effort and six political demands (the latter carefully muted to avoid offending the

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96 KA,vol.52,pp.144-151 ; also KERENSKY 142-5.

97 KA,vol.52,pp.151-7 ; also KERENSKY 145-6.

98 Ibid,pp.151-2(Milyukov),153(Ol'sufiev),156(Stakhovich) & 156(Kovalevsky).

99 Ibid,pp.161-3 ; universal anticipation of a Duma session : reports of 2 & 10 November 1915(POLICE,243,345D-1915,57 & 61).

sensibilities of the Council representatives).[100] On 12 November the two-way split within the Bloc became three-way : the Council delegates accepted only the first (non-political) points of the Resolution ; the Right Blocists were prepared to accept the political demands but stipulated that the Resolution be presented privately to the Emperor ; and the Left Blocists (led by Yefremov) insisted upon the publication of the entire Resolution. All three groups threatened to quit the Bloc unless their views were respected.[101] Appalled at the fragile nature of the Bloc alliance, Milyukov delayed the convening of the next meeting to allow time for tempers to cool.

On 23 November came the bombshell : the promised Duma session was postponed indefinitely.[102] A Bloc meeting on 26 November presented Milyukov with an appalling dilemma : if the Bloc stepped up its activities, it would lose its Council representation ; if it accepted the postponement of the Duma without protest, it would lose the Progressists.[103] On 28 November the Progressists showed they were not bluffing by publicly withdrawing their delegates from the Special Councils.[104] In alarm Shidlovsky (the Bloc President) and Milyukov privately agreed that the Bloc mount some form of agitation, if only to keep the Progressists within the Bloc. The challenge to the Council delegates was implicit and on 9 December the Centre Group of the State Council formally quitted the Bloc.[105] All the painful concessions and compromises to accommodate the Council representatives had proved vain against the tide of events. And yet far from purging the Bloc of its less reliable elements and clearing the way for an energetic campaign, the defection of the Council Centre Group only impressed more deeply upon the Bloc's remaining adherents the fragility of the Bloc coalition and the

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100 KA, vol.52, p.165.

101 Ibid, 170-6.

102 POLICE, 307A-1915, 173 ; Russkie Vedomosty, 24 November 1915.

103 KA, vol.52, pp.181-3.

104 Report of 30 November 1915 : POLICE, 307A-1915, 173-6 ; Russkie Vedomosty, 29 November 1915 and Utro Rossii, 1 December 1915.

105 Rech', 2 December 1915 ; also DYAKIN 143-4 and CHERMENSKY 625.

necessity of most careful consideration before the smallest action. The loss of the Council Centre Group shocked the Bloc back into non-activity and it was a full two months before the Bloc members mustered the courage to call a fresh meeting.[106] Thus even the schemes of the experienced Milyukov came to naught : the public organisations were still too contradictory and independent-minded to forge a close alliance with the Bloc ; while in defeat the Bloc itself proved to be the sum of its members' weaknesses rather than the aggregate of component strengths.

If the Kadets only with difficulty began a recovery from the prorogation crisis, their fellow moderates fared even worse. The Oktobrists suffered the blows of the government with the fatalistic resignation of a party whose spirit was broken and which had abandoned hopes of regaining political power. The attitude of the Oktobrists was best expressed in the famous 'Mad Chauff-eur' parable published by Vasilii Maklakov in late September. As the most Right-wing of the Kadets, Maklakov was very close to the Oktobrist position and provided a striking apológia for the weakness of Oktobrist policy. The author, travelling by car over dangerous mountain roads, is appalled to discover that his chauffeur drives so badly that he threatens all the travellers inside with almost certain death. Maklakov describes the dilemma of the leading passenger at some length :

> W What must you do ? Force the chauffeur to vacate his seat ? That would be fine in a cart,at usual times,at slow speed,on the flat.At such a time it would save the situation,but can it be done on a winding road in the mountains ? He still has the wheel and drives the car - if you are not strong and skilful,one false move or hasty arm movement will crash the car.You know this,and he knows it too and smiles at your fears and impotence : "Don't try to grab".He is right. You dare not try to grab the wheel.Perhaps fear or exasperation might lead you to forget the danger to yourself and make a grab for the wheel and risk a crash - but wait ! It's not just yourself who is involved.Your mother is with you, and your action will kill her as well as yourself.

The only course to take in such a situation is not to distract the chauffeur and hope for the best, judiciously ignoring the complaints of those whose judgement if inferior to one's own :

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106 KA,vol.52,p.184 : next Bloc meeting, 28 January 1916.

> So you restrain yourself.You postpone the reckoning with the chauffeur until the danger decreases and you are on the flat again.You let the chauffeur keep the wheel.More than this,you try not to get in his way, even helping him with advice,directions and co-operation.You are quite right - this is necessary.But what will you experience at the thought that even your restraint will not carry you through,that even with your help the chauffeur cannot drive ! What will you suffer if your mother, seeing the danger,begs you for help and,not understanding your behaviour ,accuses you of inaction and fear ? (107)

Maklakov succinctly sketched the psychology of the Oktobrists (and to some extent the entire moderate camp) in Aesopian language, stressing the apprehensive terror of a political group whose policies were reduced to hoping for the best and whose energies were debased to the level of humouring a government which it knew to be incapable. Meanwhile the organisational death agony of Oktobrism continued : the official Oktobrist organ Golos Moskvy closed down in July 1915 and the Central Committee was hard put even to organise a celebrative Oktobrist jubilee to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the October Manifesto.[108]

The Progressists found themselves threatened by complete disintegration. The nub of the crisis was the profound dissatisfaction of the industrialist camp with the direction of Progressist fraction policy. In view of the competition for government contracts, the current high profit margin on war orders and the continuing threat of state nationalisation of war industry, the industrialists were anxious to secure the maximum possible influence over the government. However Yefremov at the head of the Progressist fraction , rarely sympathetic to the cause of the industrial combines, was moving the Progressists into open opposition to the government. The anti-industrialist Progressist deputies led by Yefremov and Titov had organised themselves to the extent of founding a newspaper Finansovaya Gazeta (financed by Titov's banking contacts in Petrograd) to publicise their views : from June 1915, the Progressist camp was split between the Moscow-orientated industrialist

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107 Article Tragicheskoe Polozhenie first published in Russkie Vedomosty, 27 September 1915,2 and subsequently repeatedly republished e.g. GRAVE 65 and KATKOV 178-9. The translation quoted is mgown.

108 Russkie Vedomosty,18 October 1915 ; also DYAKIN 151.

lobby (Utro Rossii) and the Petrograd-orientated intelligentsia (Finansovaya Gazeta).[109] With an eye to its industrialist patrons, the more servèle Progressist Central Committee stipulated on 2 October that 'the Fraction must under no circumstances depart from the path of parliamentary struggle and must remain within the Progressive Bloc'.[110] The spirit of the directive barely survived the month : on 3 November the Duma Progressists initiated meetings with the Kadets to consider withdrawing representation from the Special Councils.[111] To the Kadets, the discussions were intended to wring a Duma session from the government under threat ; to the Progressists, the negotiations were in deadly earnest. On the twelfth Yefremov threatened at a meeting of the Progressive Bloc to withdraw his fraction from the Bloc unless its full political Resolution was published.[112]

A police report of 17 November revealed the complicated stresses of the Progressist position. The industrialist backers were divided in their attitudes, the majority seriously considering withdrawing support from the Progressist fraction in favour of the more moderate and tractable Kadets :

> The indecision of the organisation of industrialists,oscillating over the question of whether to associate with the political platform of the Kadets or Progressists,is exciting the Kadets to the greatest extent possible,since they eagerky wish to attract the industrialists to their party. (113)

The minority resolutely supported the Progressists despite Yefremov's policies : Konovalov threatened to resign as President of the Council of Industrial Congresses unless support of the Progressists was maintained.[114] The debate in the wings made no apparent impression upon Yefremov. In response to the government postponement of the Duma session, a move which Yefremov insisted must be met with direct action, the Progressist fraction

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109 DYAKIN 146.

110 Report of 2 October 1915 : POLICE,307A-1915,157.

111 Report of 3 November 1915 : POLICE,27-1915,102.

112 KA,vol.52,pp.170-177.

113 POLICE,xvi,27/57(Petrograd),1915,124-5.

114 Ibid,122-6 passim.

withdrew its five representatives from the Special Councils.[115] A statement released on 30 November claimed that this action was more than a protest against the postponement of the Duma. The Special Councils were under government not Duma control, the Duma representation was too small to have any chance of outvoting the government, the government deliberately channelled the Duma delegates into sub-committees where they were out of their depth in technical minutiae, and in that they had no legislative or executive authority, the delegates were allowing the government to 'use' the Duma to share responsibility for misdeeds over which it had no control.[116] But while Yefremov, a majority of the Progressist fraction and a minority of industrialist support agreed with putting political considerations first, a leaderless fraction minority, the mass of the party outside the Duma, and an articulate majority of the industrialists deeply regretted the decision.

The last group shifted its attention towards the Kadet fraction. The Progressists had been consistently defeated by the Kadets over the course of 1915 : was it better to support the perennial challenger or the constant winner ? The Progressists certainly enjoyed closer links with industry but by their recent actions had forfeited the confidence of the bulk of industry : would it be advantageous to transfer support to the more 'professional', more adroit Kadets, whose moves to effect compromise with the government seemed more realistic than the Progressists' ill-judged antagonism ? The doubts of the industrialists in the capitals was echoed by Progressist opinion in the provinces. The shock of the decision of 28 November smashed the already desperately weak Progressist provincial movement : the majority of local Progressists deserted in protest to the Kadets, and even the loyal minority showered the Progressist Central Committee with complaints about the leadership of Yefremov, urging an immediate return to the Special Councils.[117] To match the rift in the provincial organisation, a group of

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115 POLICE,307A-1915,171,173 & 176.

116 Ibid,173-6 ; Progressist statement also in Utro Rossii,1 December 1915.

117 For example,from the Don province : POLICE,27-1915,20-b(Don),30.

Duma deputies led by E.Trubetskoy quitted the Progressist fraction in protest in early December.[118]

With time the reasons for industry abandoning the Progressists appeared all the stronger : the Progressist fraction failed to protect the cause of big industry in two major crises. In early December the militant Congress of Middle Industry publicly attacked the War Industries Committees, claiming that as a creation of big industry run for the benefit of big industry, the Committees were allocating the plum government contracts to their patrons. The Progressist fraction could understandably do little to resolve the conflict but its failure to act was seen by many industrialists as further proof of Progressist impotence.[119] More dramatic was the contest over oil pricing. The scandalously excessive profits of the oil monopolists had prompted the Special Council on Fuel to recommend the compulsory fixing of oil prices on 21 November. In response, a meeting next day of the Council of the Congress of Representatives of Industry agreed to a system of price-fixing as long as there was no nationalisation of the oil industry.[120] However the indignation against the oil monopolists reached such a pitch that on 20 December the Oktobrist Klyuzhev advocated nationalisation of oil as the only answer to the abuse. On 22 December a set-piece contest took place in the Duma Budget commission. For nationalisation stood Klyuzhev : as the landed party, the Oktobrists had no vested interests to lose and stood to gain the gratitude of the entire nation. For price-fixing stood Titov, secretary of the Progressist fraction, the embarrassed champion of free enterprise. In the vote that followed the debate, Klyuzhev won a convincing victory and the assurance that oil nationalisation would be put to the Duma the moment it opened.[121] The Oktobrists won some prestige but the Progress--ists failed again as the spokesman of industry. Once more the industrialists

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118 Rech',12 December 1915.

119 Petrograd Police report of 16 December 1915 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,3,36490-b quoted in GRAVE 15-18.

120 KLYUZHEV,xvii,33.

121 Ibid,45-6(20 December) & 47(22 December).

moved closer to commitment to the Kadets.

By the New Year 1916 the government had in most respects completely recovered its confidence after the crisis of August-September 1915. From the Duma the government now expected little trouble : the arbitrary postponement of the Duma session in November had proved that the Duma membership was in no position to launch a counter-offensive. The Progressive Bloc had sunk in the early days of September, to resurface in a grotesquely water-logged condition for a brief period in November, only to disappear again. Within the Duma there appeared to be little to fear from the Duma fractions. The Right was content with a recessed Duma, the Left was powerless until the time when the workers' movement reached greater proportions, the Oktobrist fraction was silently decomposing, and the Progressists showed every sign of tearing themselves and their supporters to pieces.

Only the Kadets represented a potential threat. Khvostov covered the Kadets carefully throughout the recovery period : on 30 October a police cirular demanded all available information on the various Kadet projects to expand their support ; a supplementary circular on 7 November requested detailed reports on the surveillance of the Kadet provincial conferences.[122] Although Khvostov judged the crisis to be over by mid November, he maintained his close watch on the Kadets. A final report on the political developments of 1915 submitted to Khvostov on 28 December ruled out all fractions as dangerous except the Kadets.[123] The Kadets were the only fraction which could be said to have weathered the September crisis. The Kadets seemed likely to secure the monopoly of organised opposition for the internal dissensions of the Progressists made possible their elimination as a Duma force and the transference of their resources to the Kadets. While no-one could pretend to be satisfied with the current political situation, the Kadets had salvaged far more from the defeat of the Bloc than their moderate

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122 POLICE,27-1915,94(30 October) & 249-250(7 November).

123 Report of Police Director Beletsky, 28 December 1915 : POLICE,xvi, 27/46,1915,61.

rivals : the crisis had relatively enhanced the Kadet position even while the fortunes of the Duma and Progressive Bloc suffered a profound slump.

2. The Kadet Crisis (January-June 1916)

Early 1916 brought significant changes to the positions of both the Kadet party and the Duma as a whole. Having escaped the full force of the trend towards disintegration and internal collapse which had always afflict--ed the Oktobrists and was now assailing the Progressists, the Kadets too were soon to be struck down by the prevailing political 'epidemic'. The position of the Duma however improved after its lowest ebb in late 1915 though, given the desperate weakness of the moderate fractions, it is hardly surprising that its partial recovery over early 1916 owed nothing to the efforts of the Duma parties and was essentially a by-product of inter-ministerial politics within the government.

Goremykin's excessively proscribed conception of the Duma function was starting to cause unease at the highest level by late 1915. While Goremykin assumed that the prorogation of the Duma and the purging of the Council of Ministers gave him carte blanche in the pursuit of reactionary policies, the Emperor never wished to sever contacts with the Duma irrevocably. Soon after the postponement of the promised Duma session, the Empress pointedly remarked how of late the attitude of Goremykin differed from that of Rasputin :

> Our Friend has been with the old man [Goremykin - R.P.] who listened to him very attentively but was most obstinate.He intends asking you not to call the Duma at all (he loathes it) - and Gregory told him it was not right of him to ask such a thing of you - they must be shown a little confidence. (124)

On 19 December Rodzyanko precipitated the immediate crisis by accusing Goremykin of inexcusable neglect of the deteriorating supply situation. Rodzyanko's penultimate paragraph warned :

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124 Alexandra's letter of 29 November 1915 : ALEXANDRA 231 ; see also Vasilyev, The Ochrana, pp.153-4.

> If the Council of Ministers fails to take such steps as may yet save our country from disgrace and humiliation,the entire responsibility will rest upon you,Ivan Logginovitch.If you feel that you lack strength to bear this heavy burden and to use all available means to help the country to emerge onto the high road of victory - have the corage to own this and make way for younger and more energetic man. (125)

Exasperated by this scathing and to some extent gratuitous attack, Goremykin was confirmed in his determination to ignore the Duma, thereby bringing to a head the issue of relations with the Duma within the government.

As the cabinet crisis materialised, two candidates emerged as possible successors to Goremykin. The first was Aleksei Khvostov. Accurately sensing the area of the Emperor's disssatisfaction with Goremykin, Khvostov set out to add the Council Chairmanship to the MVD by providing an alternative to the blind reaction of Goremykin. Like Shcheglovitov in October 1913, Khvostov planned to recommend himself to the Emperor by proving himself the only individual with the expertise to resolve the critical relationship between government and Duma. At a private meeting in early January, Khvostov promised Rodzyanko and Milyukov a standard Duma session - in effect raising the new 'Ministerial Boycott' - in exchange for a guarantee of Duma 'good behaviour'. Rodzyanko eagerly gave the required assurance while even Milyukov was prepar--ed to express sympathy for the 'deal' (whilst hedging his agreement about with sufficient provisoes to make disavowal practicable should the deal turn sour).[126] Khvostov could now report that his adroit management had secured in advance the calm Duma session originally envisaged by the Emperor.

However unfortunately for Khvostov (and apparently unknown to him), the crisis engendered a backstairs campaign for a rival replacement for Goremykin. On 20 December an anonymous document entitled 'What is to be Dône' was brought to the attention of the Empress, who was so favourably impressed that she passed it on to the Emperor. The paper called for a break with the brittle reaction of Goremykin which, by refusing a Duma session, only irritated the masses against the government and cast the Duma in a

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125 Original document located in TsGIAL,f.1626(Goremykin),i,1897,1-6 ; this translation by Bernard Pares : PARES 306 ; also RODZYANKO 143.

126 TsGAOR,f.155,479,2-3 ; MILIUKOV 335 ; PADENIE,vi,323(Milyukov).

thoroughly undeserved heroic mould. The alternative was a new 'soft' line. The Duma was to serve not as the spokesman of the people but as the safety-valve for society tensions. By feeding the Duma a meagre but savoury diet of small reforms, a tolerable simulacrum of rapport could be achieved between government and country. Neatly packaged and irresistably simple, the plan was sold to the Imperial couple at precisely the right moment. Once the paper's acceptance was assured, its author was identified as Boris Stürmer.[127]

Two rival candidacies for the Chairmanship thus emerged : Khvostov challenged through his governmental position at the MVD while the machinery of backstairs influence promoted its creature Stürmer. Of far greater interest to the Duma was the fact that the 'hard' line of Goremykin was under strong pressure and both the rival replacements had committed themselves to a milder line towards the Duma and an early reconvened session.

For the first ten days of January 1916 the rival candidacies were debated by the Emperor and Empress in their private correspondence.[128] With the private debate still continuing and Alexandra apparently wearing down the half-hearted opposition of her husband to Stürmer, the contest quickly assumed a more public aspect. In completing its examination of the 1916 Budget by the late days of December, the Duma Budget commission challenged Goremykin to fulfil his November pledge and call the Duma.[129] On 11 January 1916 a fundamental split in the Council of Ministers demonstrated the urgency of the problem of Goremykin's replacement. Together with three of his ministerial colleagues Goremykin opposed anything more than a 'financial Duma' and proposed that five days were ample for the Duma to complete these functions. Partly from a vestigial respect for the rights of the legislative assemblies, mostly from intuition that the time was ripe for the downfall of Goremykin, Khvostov and the surviving 'liberal' ministers denied the feasability of recreating the Duma of January 1915 and pressed

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127 Report of 23 February 1916 : POLICE,307A-1916,57-60.

128 ALEXANDRA 251 & 256 ; NICHOLAS 128.

129 MILIUKOV 333 ; Times,7 January 1916(n/s),8d ; PADENIE,vi,321(Milyukov).

for a standard Duma session.[130] Goremykin responded to the cabinet crisis in precisely the same way as in late August 1915 : he appealed to the Emperor to support him and overrule the Council majority. On 17 January Goremykin demanded of Nicholas a Duma prorogation 'blank', with spaces for dates and conditions which would be inserted by himself according to the exigencies of the moment.[131]

It was now clear to Nicholas not only that Goremykin was too set upon the ruin of the Duma to be suffered any longer but that he had departed from the 'butler' rôle which had ensured his survival through earlier crises. The very next day Nicholas interviewed Stürmer and asked for his reaction to Goremykin's contention that 'the Duma must be limited in its activities exclusively to the examination of the Budget and its duration must be limited to those activities'. Mindful of the moderate image projected by his promoters, Stürmer replied :

> I think that if the Duma exceeds the permitted limits of its work it can always be quickly prorogued but I see no reason for lack of faith in the Duma ... I consider that the Duma can and should function.;; I have never been one who would say that the Duma is impermissible because it is dangerous. (132)

Nicholas was evidently satisfied with Stürmer's attitude of hopeful pragmatism and agreed with the Empress's choice : on 20 January Goremykin was formally dismissed and replaced as Council Chairman by Stürmer.[133]

In point of fact Stürmer, the puppet of a backstairs clique which included Rasputin and Gurlyand (who 'ghosted' the document 'What is to be Done'), had little sympathy for the Duma.[134] Stürmer showed early signs of his natural reactionary bent : on his very first day as premier he surprised Nicholas by demanding the dismissals of Sazonov, Ignat'ev and Naumov.[135] But Stürmer had been appointed to provide an alternative to Goremykin-style

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130 PADENIE,i,332(Stürmer) and vi,322 & 325-6(Milyukov).

131 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,171.

132 PADENIE,i,222-3(Stürmer).

133 Ibid,222 and vi,321(Milyukov) ; RODZYANKO 146.

134 CHERMENSKY 632-3.

135 PADENIE,i,333(Naumov) ; also PARES 318-9.

reaction and had little choice but to keep to the liberal pragmatic image so successfully projected by his backers. The circumstances of his appoint--ment bound him in particular to the 'Duma ticket'. Denied a purge of the remaining moderate ministers within the Council and in keeping with the undertaking made to the Emperor at his initial interview, Stürmer was compelled to attempt a working relationship with the Duma and set a date for a new session.[136]

With the prospect of the Duma opening on 9 February, the Duma membership prepared for its first public platform since early September 1915. However the activity which marked the fortnight before the new session bore only the most superficial resemblance to the 'campaign' of August 1915. When on 28 January the Progressive Bloc met for the first time in two months, the participants contented themselves with chatter about the current political situation.[137] On 30 January the Moscow Council of Society Leaders attempted to prompt the Bloc by publishing its own programme : Point 3. demanded a 'Ministry of Confidence', Point 5. stressed the need for closer Duma contacts with the public organisations, and Point 8. called for the extension of society authority into the vexed issues of transport and supply.[138] The Bloc seemed anxious to observe Point 5. in particular for its meeting of 2 February included invited representatives of the Zemstvo and Town Unions.[139] In truth the initiative within the Moscow Council stemmed from the Unions, who were now more anxious to establish links with the Duma than ever before in fear of an MVD campaign of persecution. The weak co-operative movement had already largely succumbed to MVD repression and time alone would ensure its complete extermination.[140] On 26 January an imperial edict stipulated

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136 A Duma session commencing on 9 February was announced on 25 January : TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,178 ; also Times,8 February 1916(n/s),8c.

137 KA,vol.52,p.184.

138 TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),2827,1-2 ; also Moscow Police report of 7 February 1916 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,1,5677 quoted in GRAVE 84-5.

139 KA,vol.52,pp.187-194.

140 Report of 28 March 1916 : POLICE,307A/3/1916,201 ; also POLICE,xvi,1916, 46-b,6 & 10 quoted in LAVERYCHEV 139.

that future orders for foreign products could only be placed through the government.[141] The implications for the public organisations were far-reaching : if the Unions could not order independently of the government, the edict amounted to forcible incorporation of the public organisations into the state structure. Alarmed by this latest threat to their independence , the Unions were very ready in February 1916 to latch on to the Duma.

The familiar Bloc rows continued: on 4 February the Progressists again found themselves in a minority supporting the 'Responsible Ministry' slogan in defiance of the Bloc majority and again Yefremov threatened to quit the Bloc rather than rest content with 'A Ministry of Confidence'. By 8 February the quarrels of November 1915 had been revived. A Bloc progamme of legislat--ion proved to be impossible since the Right fractions within the Bloc would accept only war legislation while the Left fractions insisted upon extensive political reform.[142] The day of the opening of the Duma dawned revealing a Bloc quite as divided and conflict-torn as at any point since September.

On 9 February, the first day of the Duma session, Nicholas confirmed suspicions of his sympathy towards a reconvened Duma by unexpectedly attending the opening ceremonies. Rodzyanko was to claim that the Tsar's appearance was a triumph for his own influence but Milyukov insisted that Rodzyanko was as taken by surprise as anyone, only learning of the imminent arrival a bare hour in advance.[143] Although the Duma deputies saw the visit as a last-minute gesture of goodwill, Nicholas had been considering the move for some months. As early as 15 November 1915, even the Empress was reminding him of the idea : 'one must call the Duma together even for a quite short time, especially if you, unknown to others, turn up there it will be splendid, as you had thought before of doing'.[144] By 4 February Nicholas had decided : 'I want to return in order to be present at the

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141 TsGIAL,f.1274,1916,17,4.

142 Bloc meetings of 4 & 8 February 1916 : POLICE,307A/3/1916,pp.1-3,9 & 12-14 ; for the original slogan drafts,see TsGAOR,f.579,delo 383.

143 RODZYANKO 148-9 ; MILIUKOV 336 ; PADENIE,vi,328(Milyukov).

144 ALEXANDRA 225 (also letter of 13 November 1915 : 219).

opening of the State Duma and State Council ; please do not speak of this as yet'.[145] Of the success of the Tsar's visit there was no doubt. Nicholas's appearance in the Duma was greeted with an enthusiasm and facile optimism summed up in Rodzyanko's phrase, 'the Tsar is in the Duma, Praise be to God, now everything will change for the better'. Perceiving that the Tsar was quite as moved as the Duma members, Rodzyanko seized the opportunity to attempt a constitutional coup de theâtre :

> Your Majesty, use this glorious moment to announce here and now that you are granting a responsible ministry. You cannot imagine the great--ness of this act which would without question pacify the nation and favourably resolve the war. (146)

However Nicholas was not so overwhelmed by emotion completely to forget himself and passed on with a non-commital 'I shall think about it'.[147]

The Tsar's visit to the Duma had the effect of taking the ground from under the proponents of a renewed offensive against the government. The spirit of elation and hope generated by the visit overlaid the poor impress--ion made by Stürmer's first ineffectual appearance in the Duma and the disappointing government declaration that followed.[148] Stanley Washburn echoed the opinions of the optimists in a report for the Times :

> For the first time in history,the Emperor attended the opening of the Duma ... A step of great resolution and tremendous significance, irrespective of party,which has instantly shed radiance on internal affairs and will effectively purge the poisoned currents of domestic policy. (149)

It was in this atmosphere that the Duma sitting of 9 February reached the final item on its agenda, the Resolution of the Progressive Bloc. The document which had been desultorily bickered over within the Bloc since the previous November by now represented no more than the lowest common denominator of its varied participants. It offered no constructive political

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145 NICHOLAS 144 ; Nicholas told the Stavka on 7 February : Hanbury-Williams, The Emperor Nicholas,p.80.

146 RODZYANKO 148-150 ; POLICE,30A/3/1916,15 ; BUCHANAN,II,5.

147 RODZYANKO 150 and PADENIE,vii,130(Rodzyanko).

148 GDSO,IV,1220-5 ; MILIUKOV 337 and PADENIE,vi,328(Milyukov) ; Times,24 February 1916(n/s),7a-7e.

149 Times,24 February 1916(n/s),8d.

programme, only an impotent appeal to the government to change its ways. Rodzyanko described it as 'a declaration urging the government to give ear to the voice of the people'.[150] Even if the Bloc had been able to mount an impressive Declaration, it is doubtful whether it could have overcome the artificially-elated atmosphere of the first sitting. From the government viewpoint, the Tsar's visit could hardly have been more successful : at no cost whatsoever to itself, the government had secured a moderate Duma session. The relief which attended the opening of the long-awaited Duma session blended with the optimism generated by the Tsar's visit. The attack--ing line of the Progressists now evoked little sympathy and was tacitly dropped until the Bloc mood recovered from its exaggerated optimism. The Oktobrists again found hope in judicious inactivity and the endeavours of their party leader Rodzyanko. However the Kadets, by far the strongest fraction in the Bloc by early 1916, were confronted by perhaps their most dangerous crisis : the VI Kadet Party Congress.

Party congresses were dangerous exercises for the Kadets and their Central Committee had gone to great pains to avoid calling one for over eight years.[151] The 'constitutional' right of the Congress to mandate the Central Committee and Fraction was a recurrent nightmare to these institut--ions, which fully realised how out of touch they were with the general membership. Every conference summoned by the Central Committee since 1907 had supplied alarming proof of how increasingly Left in sympathy the provincial organisation had become. Added to this was the undeniable fact that the Kadet provincial organisation was now only a shadow of its former self. The fall-off in Kadet membership since 1906 had been judged alarming by the V Congress in October 1907, and the collapse in the subsequent eight years had been nothing less than disastrous.[152] While an attempt could be

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150 GDSO,IV,1247-1252 ; RODZYANKO 151 ; Times,24 February 1916(n/s),7f and Times(Russian Supplement),29 April 1916(n/s),5b.

151 Riha,A Russian European,pp.156-8 ; Piotrow,Paul Milyukov,p.252.

152 Kadet Central Committee report of 1907 : TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii, 14,1-4 ; Moscow Kadet report of 1910 : TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),iii,61, 1-4 ; also Riha,A Russian European,pp.156-8 & 197.

made to disguise the extent of Kadet provincial collapse by claiming that all meetings were 'hastily-convened unrepresentative conferences', a formal congress could betray the Kadet disaster for all to see.

It is hardly surprising to learn, in these circumstances, that the VI Congress was forced upon the Central Committee. In the early stages of the Leftward trend in the provinces, the relatively small area separating the views of the provinces from those of the Central Committee meant that the Committee could still conceal the fact of variance and retain provincial loyalties. But by mid 1915 the provincial organisation had moved so far Left that it approximated more closely to the line of the Progressists, Trudoviks and even Mensheviks than to official Kadet policy. The Kadet Conference of June 1915 had demonstrated the danger and thereafter police reports provide ample evidence of the growing gap between provincial Kadetism and its Central Committee. By late July 1915 the Kadets in the Kaluga and Don provinces had opted for the 'Responsible Ministry' slogan rather than the official Kadet 'Ministry of Confidence' ; by late October 1915 rebellions against the Milyukov line were well advanced in Moscow and Samara.[153] In late December 1915 the Kostroma Kadets were protesting about the limitation of future Duma sessions to budgetary functions ; and on 5 January 1916 the police noted that the Samara Kadets had refused direction from the Central Committee and had formed a local bloc with the Mensheviks.[154] Finally a police report submitted on the eve of the Congress stated that there existed a full-scale revolt against the Milyukov line :

> In the last few days, numerous protesting members of the provincial Kadet groups have moved a declaration against the Kadet fraction, amounting to threats to defect to the Progressists in the event of the Kadet fraction's further disavowal of the basic points of the Kadet Programme. (155)

The Kadet VI Congress was essential to prevent the remaining provincial organisation from throwing off all links with the central Kadet organs.

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153 POLICE,xvi,27-1915,30-b(Kaluga),5 and 20-b(Don),17 and 27/46,1915 (Moscow),103-6 and 40-1(Samara).

154 POLICE,xvi,27-1915,35-b(Kostroma),3 and 68(Samara),33.

155 Report of 17 February 1916 : POLICE,27-1916,4.

The composition of the Congress as it convened on 18 February presented a very real threat to Milyukov. Of the total 127 delegates, there were fifty-eight provincial representatives as against thirty-six fraction deputies.[156] The provincial Kadets could be expected to oppose the Milyukov line while the presence of the Left Kadet rebels meant that not even Milyukov's fraction colleagues could be relied upon to support the 'official policy'. The crucial debate followed Milyukov's 'Report on the Kadet Fraction and its Tactics', delivered on the morning of 19 February. The Congress minutes record the speeches of twenty provincial delegates in this debate, without exception antagonistic towards Milyukov. The provincial rebellion was headed by the Moscow spokesman Mandel'stam : Milyukov was mistakenly leading the party towards the Right when the correct course was to approach the growing workers' movement ; to effect a transfer of power to (at very least) a Ministry of Confidence, the Kadet fraction must not halt before open conflict with the government even at the risk of Duma dissolution ; and in order to avoid a perpetuation of the lamentable lack of communication between provinces and central organs, annual congresses must be instituted.[157] The Left Kadets of Nekrasov readily supported Mandel'stam and gleefully anticipated a massive rebuke to Milyukov which would transfer tactical initiative to the Left wing of the fraction. At this stage it did not seem beyond the bounds of possibility that the VI Congress would break Milyukov both as leader of the Kadet Party and director of the Progressive Bloc.

Incredibly, Milyukov not only survived but triumphed. His strategy and tactics in the situation forced upon him were nothing less than masterly. Much of the work was done before the Congress even met. Milyukov took a lesson from the MVD manual in arranging the preparatory provincial confer--ences in October 1915. The system of voting delegates to the Congress was indirect, through the provincial conferences, a device corresponding closely

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156 TsGAOR, f.523(Kadet Party), iii, 5, 102 ; delo 5 of the Kadet Party Fond comprises the official minutes of the VI Congress kept by the Secretary of the Central Committee A.A.Kornilov, covering 147 hand-written pages.

157 TsGAOR, f.523, iii, 5, pp.20-33(Milyukov), 34-58, 60-63, 66-68, 75-86, 93, 95-99 & 102(provincial speakers) and 95-6(Mandel'stam).

to the curia system of Duma elections. Responsible centre-line representativ--es were always despatched by the Central Committee to explain the official policy to the provincial hotheads : Vasilii Maklakov was the 'trouble-shooter' most commonly employed.[158] In this manner there was a good chance of the most rabid critics being filtered off. The scheduling of the Congress only ten days from the start of the Duma session was exquisite. While claiming that this was the ideal time for taking tactical decisions, Milyukov could be sure that it was also the moment of maximum optimism and least grounds for criticism. Not only was the Duma too short-lived in its current session, for fair judgement but the new Council Chairman had hardly settled in sufficiently to present a sure target. And although the threat of rebellion against the Kadet executive organs was dangerous enough, Milyukov was well aware that the Progressists were currently too obsessed with their own problems to exploit the Kadet rebellion. In February 1916 the Progress--ists and Oktobrists presented no threat and rebellion against the official Kadet line was tantamount to consigning oneself to political oblivion. To the delegates assembling at the VI Congress, there seemed no practical alternative to Kadetism and little chance for any variety but the Kadetism of Milyukov.

Milyukov forestalled a certain amount of criticism by indicating a more activist course for the Kadet fraction. By raising the Bloc banner on the opening day of the Duma session, Milyukov sought to demonstrate the deter--mination of the Kadet leadership of the Bloc.[159] Milyukov underlined the point the next day, on 10 February, when he impressed upon an audience of Kadets in Moscow the need for a more militant Bloc policy towards the government in the future, a course which he admitted to be dangerous but absolutely necessary.[160] The timing of these faintly surprising opinions

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158 For Maklakov at the Saratov conference in October 1915 : POLICE,27-1915, 124-5 & 169.

159 MILIUKOV 337 ; RODZYANKO 151.

160 Moscow report of 10 February 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46-b,1 ; also quoted in GRAVE 71-2 from f.6,27,46,B,291267.

and the circumstances of their delivery lead one to the cynical conclusion that they were made largely for effect. The fact that Milyukov's most radical opinions were expressed in Moscow, the centre of Left Kadet opposition to the official line, can hardly have been accidental. By shifting official fraction policy towards the position expected from the Party Congress only a week away, Milyukov planned to steal the thunder of his critics.

The Central Committee had also prepared the composition of the Congress with meticulous care on the principle of divide and rule. It was certainly true that at first sight Milyukov's position appeared weak, but a more thorough analysis of attendance figures gives a very different picture : of the total 127 delegates, seventeen were from the Kadet Central Committee, thirty-six were fraction deputies, three State Council deputies, thirteen Kadets from earlier Dumas and fifty-eight provincial representatives.[161] The central Kadet organs in fact outnumbered the provinces sixty-nine to fifty-eight. Even so, the provincial representation was slanted : fourteen Petrograd delegates and eleven Moscow delegates gave the capitals a total of twenty-five of the total fifty-eight places, while the anticipated trouble-maker Kiev was allotted only five places.[162] As a result the division into sides, which came over most clearly in the policy debate of 19 and 20 February, emerged as follows : all the 'true' provincial delegates (thirty-three), most of the Moscow Kadets (seven out of eleven) and a Left Kadet minority within the fraction (about five) joined to form a Left-inclined opposition numbering about forty-five. The Central Committee (seventeen), the fraction majority (about thirty), the Council representat--ives (three), the deputies from past Dumas (thirteen), the Petrograd Kadets (fourteen) and the Moscow Kadet minority (four) rallied to form an 'official' bloc of about eighty. By close supervision of the numbers of delegates, Milyukov and the Central Committee secured a comfortable majority for the 'official line'.

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161 TsGAOR, f.523, iii, 5, 1-2.
162 Ibid, 2.

Finally Milyukov took pains to ensure that no Kadet dirty linen was washed in public. Each day of the Congress the credentials of all delegates were carefully checked before admission. The press was excluded completely, and fobbed off with a brusque official statement only released on 22 February, the day after the Congress closed.[163] The Congress orgaźnisers thereby imposed virtually newstight conditiond to avoid public scandal should the party official line be successfully challenged.

The almost hysterical protests of the provincial delegates were countered by various stratagems. Grigorovich-Barsky, the spokesman for Kiev, complained that the Kadet Party was ruled from Petrograd without reference to or knowledge of the provinces, and urged the Kadet central organs to take steps to remedy the disastrous decline in provincial membership which had resulted from their past neglect. The Central Committee response was to refer the issue to a party commission, to lie buried until a the February Revolution prompted a hurried exhumation.[164] Mandel'stam for Moscow demand--ed annual congresses to ensure close rapport between the provinces and the central organs but so effective was the Central Committee 'whip' discipline that the question was never even put to the vote.[165] The Left Kadets won an important victory by getting their resolution for approaches to the Left carried by forty-six votes to twenty-seven ; but Milyukov countered by winning overwhelming support for Kadet allegiance to the Progressive Bloc (seventy-three votes to fourteen) and 'A Ministry of Confidence' as the Party slogan by a comfortable majority (fifty-one votes to thirty-two).[166]

The last hope of the Left Kadets was to force through an expansion of the membership of the Central Committee, the executive which ruled the party between congresses. Yielding to provincial pressure, the Central Committee

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163 POLICE,307A/3/1916,67 ; TsGAOR,f.523,iii,9,9-10.

164 TsGAOR,f.523,iii,5,97-100(Grigorovich-Barsky) & 118(Committee decision).

165 Ibid,pp.95-6 & 118.

166 Voting figures were not entered in the official Kadet minutes ; these figures are from the Okhrana reporter : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46-b,5-6.

recommended an increase in membership to forty-five (from forty), but Nekrasov won a further increase to fifty places.[167] Nekrasov and the Left Kadets held the belief that the larger the Central Committee, the greater the provincial representation. In fact the reverse proved tarue : the provincial delegates could not organise swiftly enough to secure unanimity behind their candidates, the central organs were longer prepared and better organised, the Milyukov establishment skilfully victimised known trouble-makers (Mandel'stam received only forty-two votes and failed to make the Committee), and the sheer distance and time involved precluded the regular attendance of all but a handful from the provinces. When the elections to the expanded Central Committee were complete, the Left Kadets were dismayed to find that twenty-five were re-elected members of the previous body and a mere three places were taken by 'true' provincial delegates.[168] The plan had rebounded upon the Left Kadets and left them, with three provincial delegates out of the fifty-strong Central Committee, in a weaker position than before. The expansion of the Central Committee turned out to the advantage not of the Left Kadets who sponsored the change but the establish--ed Milyukov faction.

The Congress closed on 21 February with only vague recommendations and the membership of the new Central Committee as its legacy. The Central Committee emerged from the Congress with enhanced authority and greater independence within the party. The Congress resolutions released to the Press the next day were agreed not by the Congress but by the Central Committee, which met immediately on the closure of the Congress on the after--noon of 21 February.[169] This meeting also selected the officers of the Central Committee, another exercise in which the Congress played no part, and marked a fresh advance in the party dictatorship of Milyukov.[170] Since

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167 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,5,33.

168 Ibid,pp.74 & 94.

169 TsGAOR,f.523,iii,9,3-6.

170 TsGAOR,f.125(Kadet Fraction),ii,13.

1907 the President of the Central Committee had been Ivan Petrunkevich, an elder statesman whose undoubted prestige, declining health and endearing senility had served Milyukov's purpose admirably. His financial contacts also recommended him for, to quote a single instance, it was only thanks to a gift of 5,000 roubles he made available in September 1912 that the Kadet electoral campaign to the Fourth Duma had been completed.[171] In early 1916 however Petrunkevich was compelled to stand down through ill-health. On 21 February the first election to the Presidency of the Kadet Central Committee for almost ten years returned the following results : Milyukov 22 votes, Shakhovskoy 7 voted and Rodichev 1 vote. President of the Kadet Fraction since 1907, Milyukov now added the Presidency of the Central Committee. The elections to the four vice-presidencies characterised Milyukov's stranglehold over the party organisation. Two centre-line Kadets from Petrograd (Vinaver and Shakhovskoy) were joined by two centre-line Moscow Kadets (Kishkin and Dolgorukov), promoted by Milyukov in an attempt to mollify the provincial capital. The Left Kadet Nekrasov received only one vote for his candidacy for vice-president.[172] All in all, the VI Congress had not proved the nightmare feared by the Central Committee. Despite a considerable measure of dissatisfaction, the 'official line' had been confirmed. Perhaps even more significantly the Central Committee had emerged from the Congress with increased moral and organisational weight and Milyukov had extended his formidable authority from the Fraction to the Central Committee to institute a more monolithic centralised Kadet executive than had ever before existed in the history of Kadetism.

However although Milyukov had turned an anticipated disaster into a resounding personal victory, there were a number of factors which made the triumph hollow in the wider context. At the same Central Committee meeting of 21 February the Kadets gazed despairingly at the twin problems of finance and provincial membership. The Congress had mandated the Central Committee to

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171 TsGAOR,f.523,iii,9,6.

172 Ibid,pp.1 (elections to Presidency) & 2 (Vice-Presidencies).

develop the provincial party but there was no hope of its successful implementation. Shingarev warned that the funds available barely sufficed to sustain the central party administration ; the provinces could not expect recruitment campaigns financed by the Central Committee but must sponsor their own development. The Committee Secretary Kornilov agreed : even when the party had numbered 100,000 at the height of the 1905 Revolution, its finances had been unsound ; with the much reduced membership of 1916 the Central Committee could barely finance its own operations, making a recruit--ment drive in the provinces impossible except at a purely local level. Predictably and inevitably, no decision was taken. The whole dilemma was to be placed before the provincial Kadets at an unspecified future date.[173] While Milyukov was extending his power over the executive organs of Kadetism, broader developments in the country at large were corroding its provincial organisation. Milyukov was assuming greater and greater authority over less and less : while his tactical expertise won a convincing victory at the VI Congress, he could offer no solution to the fundamental problems which were undermining his authority in the wider context.

The political atmosphere of the 1916 Duma Winter Session recalled that of 1913 rather than 1915. There was no attempt on the part of the moderates to return to the spirited Bloc campaign of August 1915. Both Duma and government had made their positions clear in the contretemps of September 1915 and now had little to say to one another. To repeat the conflict seemed superfluous, and the months of February and March 1916 were passed with both protagonists attempting to operate independently of the other so as to reduce the occasions for painful contact. As Milyukov anticipated on the eve of the session, the government and the Duma were now 'in the position of fellow-travellers, seated in the same train compartment but avoiding acquaintance with one another'.[174] The government held aloof from working

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173 TsGAOR, f.523, iii, 9, 6-7 (Shingarev and Kornilov) & 7 (Committee decision).

174 Milyukov in Rech' editorial, 8 February 1916 ; also Milyukov's speech of 10 February 1916 : GDSO, IV, 1308-1323.

relations with the Duma : Stürmer refused to reply to a Duma zapros against illegal war censorship ; he ignored a personal appeal by Rodzyanko for better relations ; he declined to meet Duma representatives to discuss the co-operative movement.[175] The Progressive Bloc continued to devote itself to the misgivings of its members at the expense of parliamentary action. On 14 February, the Progressive Nationalists introduced a programme of procedural reforms to the Bloc : by greater organisation (cutting down on time allotted to wasteful open debates, increasing the number of sittings, stifling pointless and repeated zaprosy etc.), the Duma might become more productive and rescue the prestige of the Bloc. The Bloc members agreed in principle, quarrelled over details and tacitly allowed the programme to lapse.[176] On 19 February the Bloc cravenly decided that the government's apparent sympathy for the volost' zemstvo made this reform of prime importance, which should assume first priority in the Duma's endeavours.[177] Offered such a poor lead by the Progressive Bloc, it was hardly surprising that the Duma settled down to a plodding programme of petty legislation (according to Stürmer's plan). On 21 February, the Duma Agriculture and Army/Navy commissions agreed to meet in joint session to find a solution to the supply question ; on the twenty-second, the Duma Finance and Budget commissions met in joint session the better to examine the State Budget.[178] The Duma continued on its constitutional way, inexorably conscientious, as though the events of 1915 had never been.

The only false note was struck on 25 February when, in accordance with his promise to Khvostov the month before, Rodzyanko warned the Bloc members not to attack Rasputin or launch campaigns against the government on pain of early Duma prorogation. Although the amour propre of the Bloc required its

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175 TsGAOR,f.4,i,24,6 quoted in CHERMENSKY 648 ; POLICE,307A/3/1916,33-4 ; Times,2 March 1916(n/s),7c ; also censorship debate in Duma : GDSO,IV, 21,1673-1697.

176 TsGAOR,f.579,delo 1327.

177 POLICE,307A/3/1916,38.

178 Ibid,pp.44 & 71.

leaders to protest at this attempt to silence opposition and each categoric--ally refused to gag his fraction, the ban was in practice fully operative.[179] A police report for 29 February confirmed that the Duma was still cowed after its defeat of September 1915 and noted that while the Duma Bloc opposed the government, under no circumstances could it be termed pro-German, and the Duma opposition was effectively emasculated by its own patriotic scruples. Even the Kadets, patently the chief trouble-makers amongst the Opposition, in practice held a remarkably Right position, certainly well Right of the Progressists and even some Oktobrists, while their patriotism could not be doubted.[180] The report of 29 February lent the government hope that for the duration of the war at least, the moderate opposition presented no great threat and could be tolerated with an acceptable margin of safety.

March saw a slight raising of the parliamentary temperature but not enough to justify serious government apprehension. The workers' movement which began a fresh offensive in January 1916 alarmed the government and Duma equally. When 100,000 workers demonstrated on 9 January, the police arrested the Petrograd ringleaders, conscripted them and in mid February despatched them to the front line.[181] When Milyukov came out in support of the police action in a speech to the Army/Navy commission on 23 February, the government felt encouraged to approach the Bloc with a view to formulat--ing a common policy on the pressing issue of the militarisation of war industry.[182] The Special Council of Defence meeting of 28 February revealed a split between the Bloc Right, which supported militarisation, and the Bloc Left, with Milyukov and Konovalov profoundly dubious about the political wisdom of so drastic a measure.[183] By 4 March the Kadets had decided that, while supporting strong measures against the revived workers' movement, they

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179 POLICE,307A/3/1916,75 & 201 ; TsGIAL,f.1278,x,7,201 ; MILIUKOV 337.

180 Moscow report of 29 February 1916 : TsGAOR,f.6,27,6350 quoted in GRAVE 75-81.

181 MPK 163 ; Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda,I,142-3 ; LAVERYCHEV 133.

182 TsGIAL,f.1278(Council of Ministers),4357,37.

183 TsGVIA,f.369,174,12-13 quoted in CHERMENSKY 678-9 ; PADENIE,vi,333.

opposed factory militarisation. The Progressists enthusiastically backed the Kadets and, against the wishes of Rodzyanko, insisted on debating the measure in closed Duma sitting on 7 March.[184] The voting pattern of the Special Council was repeated : the Right wing led by the Oktobrists (who had now no industrial interests to observe) favoured militarisation ; the Duma remainder led by the Kadets and Progressists (who were competing for the backing of the powerful industrial lobby) opposed militarisation.[185]

A way out of the immediate impasse proposed by the War Minister Polivanov received majority support. For the time being the government would try appeasement of the workers : the Special Council of Defence would raise the wages of workers in war industries, permit workers' organisations and set up an instrument of arbitration for labour disputes drawn from the Duma and State Council.[186] However, mortified that Polivanov should contract such a 'bad' bargain with the Duma without even reference to himself, Stürmer instructed his War Minister to sever links with the Duma.[187] Polivanov chose instead to flout Stürmer's directive and introduced the militarisation issue at the next meeting of the Special Council of Defence on 9 March. Although the divided attitude of the Bloc leaders persisted, Polivanov identified himself still more closely with the Duma.[188] On 13 March he gave permission for a shortened account of the Duma closed sitting of 7 March to be published, thereby siding defiantly with the Duma expressly against Stürmer's authority.[189] This final act of insubordination crowned a vicious and prolonged backstairs campaign against Polivanov headed by the Empress.[190]

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184 Kadet Central Committee meeting of 4 March 1916 : TsGAOR,f.523,iii,9, 11-19 ; also MPK 119.

185 GDSO,IV,32,2837-2888 ; Stürmer's report to the Emperor,14 March 1916 : MPK 164 ; PADENIE,vi,333(Milyukov).

186 TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),371 ; MPK 114 & 164 ; PADENIE,vi,333(Milyukov) ; GDSO,IV,32,2887-8.

187 MPK 114 & 164 ; Alexandra's letter of 6 March 1916 : ALEXANDRA 289-290.

188 MPK 120 ; TsGVIA,f.369,174,72 cited by CHERMENSKY 661-670.

189 MPK 120 ; MILIUKOV 339 ; PADENIE,vi,334(Milyukov).

190 See Alexandra's letters of 9 January,6 & 12 March 1916 : ALEXANDRA 260, 290 & 297.

On 15 March Polivanov, whom Knox described as 'undoubtedly the ablest military organiser in Russia' and Paléologue as 'the last line of defence of the existing regime', was dismissed.[191] The repercussions of the militarisatioh issue were broad indeed : the government lost its most able War Minister, the Council of Ministers one of its few remaining moderates, the Duma perhaps its last hope for a constructive relationship with the government, and the Bloc its precariously-maintained show of unity.

The second major issue of the 1916 Winter Session confirmed the growing reactionary tone of the government. On 9 January the Police Department had issued a circular hinting that a few pogroms for the populace to let off steam would not come amiss, a suggestion taken up with gusto in the western borderlands of the Empire.[192] On 26 February the Duma Left introduced a zapros against anti-semitism timed to coincide with the start of the Duma examination of the MVD Budget.[193] On 8 March, debate in open Duma sitting revealed a dangerous split between the Kadets, who being largely financed by Jewish sources not unnaturally waved the banner of racial equality vigorously, and the anti-semitic Zemstvo-Oktobrists and Right wing. Encourag--ed by this evidence that he was not alone in his persuasions, the author of the original circular, the Police Vice-Director Kafafov attended the Duma on 10 March. His argument that the circular had been intended to be informative not directive deceived no-one but with the Bloc Right wing cynically accepting Kafafov's explanation, the Kadets were forced to agree in the interests of maintaining the Bloc.[194] The March debate over anti-semitism confirmed the fragile nature of the Progressive Bloc, the elision of principle required to maintain such a broad-based alliance, and provoked a

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191 Knox, With the Russian Army, II, 412 ; PALEOLOGUE, II, 227 ; also Lukomsky, Memoirs, p.33 and RODZYANKO 155-6.

192 PADENIE, ii, 125 & 135(Kafafov) ; Times, 26 February and 11 March 1916 (n/s), 5b & 5f respectively ; also CHERMENSKY 661.

193 GDSO, IV, 27, 2360(26 February 1916) ; Times, 11 March 1916(n/s), 5f.

194 GDSO, IV, 33, 3025-3042(8 March 1916) & 34, 3137-3146(10 March 1916) ; POLICE, 307A/3/1916, 114 & 165-7 ; L.Greenberg, The Jews in Russia : the Struggle for Emancipation, 2 vols, Yale U.P. 1965, II, p.120 ; M.F.Hamm, 'Liberalism and the Jewish Question', RR, vol.31, no.2(April 1972), 165-8.

crisis amongst Jewish circles which was to threaten the integrity of the Kadet fraction.

The final development which gave the government cause for concern in early 1916 was the relationship between the Progressice Bloc and extra-Duma support. On 2 March Khvostov informed Stürmer that the Bloc had established a permanent bureau for co-operation with other society organisations, a development which he judged potentially dangerous.[195] On 4 March the Kadet Central Committee viewed the question of the public organisations with similar apprehension. It was feared thet the Town and Zemstvo Union congresses scheduled to meet 12-14 March would prove an embarrassment by their outspoken hostility to the government and insistence that the Bloc share their views. Vinaver believed that the two Unions were associating with the Duma only in fear of the government, and the answer to the problems of both Unions and Bloc was to push through the Duma a bill for the legalisation of the public organisations.[196]

As it happened, fears again proved unjustified for while the two Congresses were spirited in their criticism of the government, they did not wish to provoke its wrath with the doubtful patronage of the Duma as their only protection. The Congresses' resolutions passed on 15 March demanded a network of society organs including unions of workers, peasants and co-operatives, with the Duma Bloc as its political spearhead. Milyukov was quick to reciprocate : on the sixteenth he emphasised the necessity of meeting the government challenge with a Bloc-led society alliance .[197] However the Bloc in general and the Kadets in particular did little more to seal the 'society alliance'. While Shingarev employed the closed Duma sitting of 25 March to declare that the war would have been lost but for the effotts

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195 Khvostov note : TsGAOR,f.627(Stürmer),delo 40.

196 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,9,19-27(Vinaver p.19) ; Moscow police report of 15 February 1916 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,1.5382 quoted in GRAVE 86 ; also Empress's letter of 16 March 1916 : ALEXANDRA 304.

197 PADENIE,vi,334-5(Milyukov) ; Moscow Police reportd of 6 & 13 March 1916 : TsGAOR,f.6,343,1,8554 & 8041 quoted in GRAVE 88-92 & 94 ; also CHERMENSKY 654 and LAVERYCHEV 134-5.

of the public organisations, appeals from local co-operatives being systematically picked off by the MVD were ignored by the Bloc.[198] The Bloc bureau for co-operation never developed to any significant extent, the divisions between the public organisations persisted and the projected 'society alliance' against the government remained a chimera.

The government had reasonable cause for satisfaction with the record of the Winter Session of 1916. Although the Duma Budget commission completed the State Budget in the last days of March and the Duma was no longer really necessary to the government, its patent harmlessness encouraged even the most reactionary elements to take a tolerant view.[199] The fact that the militarisation debate was approaching its final stage encouraged Stürmer to entertain thoughts of a further session. In late March the Allied ambassadors, worried lest the current wave of strikes disrupt the war effort, prevailed upon Stürmer finally to introduce into the Duma a bill for the militarisation of war industry.[200] The bill reached Duma open sitting on 4 April, where it was welcomed by the Right (led by the Oktobrist Savich) and opposed by the Left (led by the Progressist Konovalov). Precisely at this dramatic juncture the debate had to be guillotined for the closure of the session, leaving both Duma and government determined to take up the debate again at the earliest opportunity.[201] The restrained nature of the Winter Session virtually guaranteed its successor. Even Stürmer was forced to admit 'I was deeply content that the first session of the Duma ended without any misunderstandings and entirely agreeably ... the first session of 1916 passed in the most desirable fashion'.[202]

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198 Report of 28 March 1916 : POLICE,307A/3/1916,187-192(Shingarev) and 201(appeals from co-operatives to the Bloc).

199 MILIUKOV 339 ; PADENIE,v,164(Stürmer) ; the exception was the Empress : letter of 17 March 1916 (ALEXANDRA 305).

200 TsGIAL,f.1278(Council of Ministers),I,4357,161 ; Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda,I,151.

201 TsGIAL,f.1278,I,4357,161 ; GDSO,IV,47,4333-4340 ; Rech',4 April 1916.

202 PADENIE,v,164(Stürmer); also conversation of Konovalov with Guchkov in April 1916 : TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),i,1436,1.

The following two months of Dum activity were profoundly affected by the temporary absence of Milyukov from the Russian scene. The Kadets had always been the party with the closest contacts with Western Europe and the Central Committee meeting of 5 October 1915 had reiterated the necessity for even closer links.[203] Through the British Ambassador Buchanan, Milyukov suggested to the Allies in January 1916 that a Russian parliamentary delegation visit Western Europe for the purpose of mutual information and encouragement. Suspicious of the rôle to be played by the delegation, Markov Two thought that the wartime emergency demanded that the delegation be above all a team of military experts ; Milyukov in reply pleaded that since the visit was also intended as a gesture of Allied solidarity on the tenth anniversary of the State Duma, the representation should be wider. Milyukov's argument won the day and on 17 February an Anglo-Russian banquet sealed the agreement that a delegation would be welcomed in Great Britain in April.[204]

However while the delegation seemed a good idea in February, by the time that April approached its wisdom was seriously in doubt in some quarters. A minor crisis arose over the delegation at the Kadet Central Committee meetings of 30 and 31 March. At the first meeting, the Central Committee argued energetically against Milyukov leading the delegation : the two-way trip via Scandinavia was dangerous, Milyukov would miss the anticipated Spring Session of the Duma and the Progressive Bloc was at a critical stage of its development. The value of the delegation was admitted but could not a substitute for Milyukov be found to head it ? No other party was sending its president on the trip and the Kadets had more to lose from the loss of Milyukov than any other party. Milyukov argued in reply that the presence of the Kadet President as spiritual head of the delegation would guarantee their reputation in Western Europe as the champions of the Russian constitutional movement. So set was Milyukov on leading the delegation that he agreed to

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203 POLICE,xvi,27/46,1915,33 ; TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,10,11-12.

204 MILIUKOV 340 ; Times,9 February and 27 March 1916(n/s),7d and 7e ; also CHERMENSKY 722 & 726-7.

quit only if the overwhelming majority of the Central Committee opposed him.[205] On 31 March Milyukov repeated his determination to go. Shingarev, who was also committed to the delegation, stated that if forbidden by the Central Committee he would withdraw from the delegation but also resign from the chairmanship of the Duma Army/Navy commission in protest. The obduracy and scarcely veiled threats of Milyukov and Shingarev overcame the opposition of the Central Committee and they got their way.[206] On 16 April the parliamentary delegation left Russian on its scheduled two-month trip ; by the time it returned to Petrograd, the repercussions of Milyukov's absence had been felt throughout the Duma.

With every objection put up by the Central Committee amply justified, it is important to isolate the fundamental motive of Milyukov in insisting on participation in the delegation. Engel'hardt, who was the sole military expert on the delegation, saw the invitation as a confidence-trick to keep Russia in the war. With rumours of Russia moving towards a Seperate Peace with Germany, the primary concern of Britain and France was to apply suitable pressure to prevent the onslaught of the German war machine from falling on the Western Front alone.[207] Milyukov in his public statements attached most importance to identifying the Kadets with the Russian constitutional movement in the eyes of Western Europe :

> For me personally this was an opportunity to reinforce the Russian Progressive tendencies through public European recognition and thereby to open a new door for our influence just at the moment when another door was being slammed in our faces. (208)

As the only party leader on the delegation, Milyukov naturally dominated both the delegation itself and the attention of the Western leaders. And yet the fact that Milyukov and the Kadets were readily accepted by the West as the forces for progress in Russia, while lending them a pleasing

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205 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,9,37-41(Committee arguments 37 &39, Milyukov 38 & 40).

206 Ibid,47-58 ; also LAVERYCHEV 121.

207 ENGEL'HARDT,ix,656.

208 Note that Milyukov devoted an entire chapter of his memoirs to 'The Duma Delegation Visits Our Allies' : MILIUKOV 340-360.

international aura, seemed to offer little beyond moral support for the improvement of the Kadets' position within Russia.

It is possible that Milyukov had an ulterior political coup in prospect. At its most modest, it may have taken the form of instituting a regular channel of publicity about the Progressive Bloc Aoutside Russia : a police report of 9 May stated that Bloc circles had recently been debating the establishment of a Duma Information Bureau in London or Paris.[209] The Kadets may have been more ambitious : a police report of 29 February described a Kadet scheme for persuading the Allied governments to lend money to the by-now impecunious Russian government with Duma auditing as a condition of the loan.[210] But while the direction of Kadet thought is clear, evidence is scanty about the precise steps taken to implement their schemes. The Kadets were probably correct in believing that only by exploiting the Duma's financial prerogatives could permanent concessions be extracted from the tsarist government. These prerogatives were currently under fire : the ukaze of 14 July 1915 had effectively transferred financial power to the government ; the Duma perusal of the Budget since then was little more than a contemptuous gesture by a government which appreciated the value of project--ing a liberal aura towards its Western Allies. In such a situation the Kadets considered means to exert financial pressure on the government through the good offices of a sympathetic third party.

But whether Milyukov ever broached the subject in official Western European circles or not (and there are no records of such a conversation), such a project could have little hope of acceptance.[211] While generally sympathetic to the aspirations of the Duma, the British, French and Italian governments were only prepared to take action to reinforce Russian obligations towards the Allies and ward off any threat of a Seperate Peace.

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209 TsGAOR,f.6,20,46 quoted in GRAVE 119-120.

210 TsGAOR,f.6,27,6350 quoted in GRAVE 79-80 ; Open letter from Moscow industrialist Smirnov to Albert Thomas in Russkie Vedomosty,4 May 1916 ; Rodzyanko's guarded remarks in 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',pp.19-20.

211 MILIUKOV 349-352.

To promise Milyukov one atom of the ambitious Kadet scheme would justifiably irritate the Russian government and might well accelerate its pro-German trends and turn it irretrievably against its Western Allies.At the same time, if the Russian government were to move closer to a Seperate Peace, a Duma committed to the Western Allies would prove a most valuable agency to oppose the trend ; in the event of the tsarist government going over to Germany, the Duma would be the only sympathetic and war-committed Russian force at Allied disposal.The Allied reception of the Russian deputation was accordingly friendly and respectful but completely non-political. Through Britain, France and Italy Milyukov was fêted and flattered but in his heart he must have recognised that the most ambitious of Kadet 'Grand Designs' stood no chance.[212] Even so, the European trip could be viewed less as a Kadet defeat than a Kadet failure to discover a convenient Deus ex machina.

If Milyukov's performance on the international stage exposed his limitations, his absence from Russia highlighted his domestic indispensabil-ity. The Duma as a whole, the Progressive Bloc,and the Kadet party in particular were profoundly influenced for the worse by Milyukov's absence. Within the Kadet party elements hostile to Milyukov's 'dictatorship' of the movement took the opportunity to attempt political coups which Milyukov would have no alternative but to accept on his return. The first rebellion came from Moscow, where the self-confidence of the local Kadets had increased pari passu with the growing self-assurance of the second capital itself. As early as October 1915 police informants had been reporting serious arguments between the Moscow Kadets and the Central Committee : on 17 October Milyukov defended his policies against the attacks of Mandel'stam, to reveal that the Moscow Kadets were equally divided between the two viewpoints.[213] At the VI Party Congress Mandel'stam repeated his attack upon the official

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212 Milyukov's diary of the trip : KA,vol.54/55,pp.14-43 ; Engel'hardt's diary : ENGEL'HARDT,ix,632-660.

213 Police report of 19 October 1915 : located by Grave in 1927 in TsGAOR, f.6,27,31334 (GRAVE 68-71) and by myself in 1967 in TsGAOR,f.102,27-1915, 103-6. Another example of the continuous reorganisation of the Soviet historiaal archives.

line but found Milyukov's position within the party too entrenched. Burning with frustration at the inefficacy of his rebellion, Mandel'stam ordered a Moscow post-mortem on the Congress for 28 February. Again he attacked Milyukov, accusing him of leading the party into crypto-Oktobrism and deliberately ignoring (and ignorant of) wider circles of Russian society. While Milyukov was obsessed with Petrograd and the State Duma, the real answer to the problem lay in the organisation and leadership of society, especially the peasant and proletarian masses.[214] But despite the wide support for his views amongst the Moscow Kadets, Mandel'stam proved unable to translate this moral backing into political reality while Milyukov was personally in command. Once Milyukov departed the scene, however temporarily, the Moscow Kadets were prepared to take action.

On 26 April, a bare ten days after the delegation left Petrograd, the Moscow Kadets attacked. Headed by Kishkin, they demanded the immediate adoption of the 'Responsible Ministry' slogan, insisted that the approaching Duma session be productive (especially with reference to legislation on co-operatives and peasant rights), and claimed full rights for Moscow within the Kadet movement. The Moscow Kadet minority who supported the official line, headed by Kornilov, vainly attempted to stem the rising tide of rebellion.[215] Curtly informed by the Central Committee that it could not accommodate the demands of an unrepresentative cabal, the Moscow Kadets arranged a two-day plenary meeting for 10 and 11 May. With the greater authority lent by the plenary title, the Moscow Kadets claimed equality for the Moscow Committee with the Petrograd Central Committee, insisted upon the immediate subsidised development of the provincial organisation and pressed for regular institutionalised channels of communication between the central organs and the provinces.[216] These Moscow resolutions took pride of place

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214 Report of 28 February 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27/46-b(Moscow),3-6 ; also Police report of 1 August 1916 : TsGAOR,f.6,27,46,8 quoted in GRAVE 81-3.

215 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,9,pp.64,67,68 & 71(Kishkin),64-5,67 & 69 (Kornilov),68(Vinaver) and 69(Izgoyev).

216 Ibid,pp.72-78.

on the agenda of the Central Committee meeting in Petrograd on 19 May : firstly, regular information about not only the Petrograd Committee but the Moscow Committee was to be circulated in the future ; secondly, the Kadets must join battle with the government for fundamental reform by all parliam--entary means ; thirdly, contacts with the public organisations must be increased ; and fourthly, a party commission must be appointed to prepare for the Fifth Duma elections.[217] The Moscow Kadets had chosen their moment well to make a bid for equality with Petrograd. Even so, they still had not the self-confidence to challenge Milyukov to his face ; the underhand and conspiratorial nature of the bid was in itself a tribute to Milyukov's supremacy and betrayed the fundamental timidness of the Moscow rebellion.

Almost simultaneously with the Moscow rebellion came an allied yet seperate movement within the fraction. The Left Kadets had emerged as a political grouping earlier than the Moscow Kadets but until 1916 had fulfill--ed the rôle of a ginger group within the fraction rather than attempt political independence. The unsuccessful attempts of the Left Kadets to approach the workers' movement and the Extreme Left parties over October 1915 had left them thoroughly chastened through the winter of 1915/1916. With the VI Party Congress, the fortunes of the Left Kadets rose sufficiently to foster a revival. Although failing to extend their authority within the party structure - a disappointment shared with the Moscow Kadets - Nekrasov and the Left Kadets gained minor tactical victories, including Congress support for their approaches to the Left.[218] The Left Kadets also preferred to bide their time rather than challenge Milyukov directly. On the very first day of the new Spring Session (16 May), made bold by the knowledge that their party boss was at that moment in Paris, the Left Kadets rebelled against the Kadet official line and petulantly voted with the Progressists

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217 Paper 'A':'On Kadet Organisation',Paper 'B':'On Tactics in the Duma and BLOc',Paper 'V':'On Contacts between the Bloc and associated organisations' and Paper 'G':'On the Elections to the Fifth Duma' : TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,9,79 ff.

218 TsGAOR,f.523,iii,5,105 & 109 ; POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46-b(Moscow),5-6 ; see MILIUKOV 366 for the briefest possible mention of the Left Kadets.

in defiance of the Bloc Bureau.[219] Thus two rebellions against Milyukov's authority were mounted almost at once : the Moscow Kadet challenge to the Central Committee and the Left Kadet defiance of the Fraction Bureau in mid May furnished solid grounds for believing that the Kadet movement, which had so far escaped serious split, would succumb at last to the prevailing political disease.

To these more predictable crises caused by Milyukov's absence was added a third more unexpected development. The Jewish lobby had always exerted a disproportionately large influence over the Kadets through its financial services but up to 1916 had preferred to remain in the political background. It had been a great disappointment when, in deference to the prejudices of the Progressive Nationalists, Milyukov had struck the Kadet principle of 'the immediate removal of all religious and national restrictions' from the Programme of the Progressive Bloc in favour of a formula of 'gradual advance along the road to Jewish equality'.[220] In early 1916 the Kadets were attacked for abandoning the Jews by their own Jewish deputy Friedman.[221] In desperation at continuing civil and military persecution and the inefficacy of Kadet patronage, the Jewish community in the capitals split into two camps. One group rejected the Kadets as Jewish champions, particularly in view of Milyukov's apparent condoning of police anti-semitism in the Kafafov debate of 10 March, and turned to the Extreme Left.[222] The more well-connected group sought to employ its influence over the Kadet party to force through the reforms which had failed to come about through the Progressive Bloc. In early March 1916 the Jewish group within the Kadet Central Committee (consisting of Vinaver, Gessen and Rodichev) attempted to secure Kadet

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219 GDSO, IV, 48, 4446 (16 May 1916) ; KLYUZHEV, xvii, 109 ; MILIUKOV 342.

220 Police report of 9 September 1915 : TsGAOR, f.6, 343, 2, 25949 quoted in GRAVE 55 ; Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 119 ; Hamm, 'Liberalism and the Jewish Question', pp.163-4.

221 GDSO, IV, 52, 4883-9 (7 June 1916) ; Novyi Put', 1916, no.19, p.12 cited in Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 120.

222 Friedman in Novyi Put', 1916, no.20 cited in Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 120 ; Hamm, 'Liberalism and the Jewish Question', pp.170-2.

sanction to the attaching of a Jewish rights' clause to the Volost' Zemstvo Bill. Milyukov, realising that the Right wing of the Bloc would never tolerate such an unwelcome graft, argued that the implementation of Jewish rights must be temporarily postponed to preserve the unity of the Bloc.[223] Milyukov put up the same explanation for refusing Kadet support for the Duma interpellation against police anti-semitism in mid March.[224] It became plain to the Jewish Kadet group that the initial impediment to Jewish rights was Milyukov himself, who was perfectly ready to sacrifice them to the principle of the unity of the Progressive Bloc. As with the Moscow Kadets and Left Kadets, the Jewish group lay low until the departure of Milyukov offered the opportunity for an internal coup.

The Central Committee meeting following the VI Congress on 21 February had elected four vice-presidencies : the two Petrograd appointees were Vinaver, the Jewish leader, and Prince Shakhovskoy. On 31 March the Central Committee agreed that Shakhovskoy would be temporary President during Milyukov's absence.[225] On 19 May, when the Moscow Kadets placed their resolutions before the Central Committee in Petrograd, Vinaver made his bid for power. He argued that since he and Shakhovskoy were of equal official status within the party, the nomination of Shakhovskoy as interim President had no real meaning. By offering his support to the ~~Jewis~~ Moscow Kadets, Vinaver got himself elected to chair the meeting of 19 May. Counting on Moscow's gratitude for his sympathetic chairmanship, Vinaver proposed that a Jewish rights' clause be inserted into the Bill on Peasant Rights currently taking shape in Duma commission. Without Milyukov to argue the wider politic--al context, Vinaver's proposal passed the Central Committee by seventeen votes to thirteen. Simultaneously, Vinaver consolidated his forward position within the Kadet power structure by getting himself elected chairman of the

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223 KLYUZHEV,xvii,102 ; also CHERMENSKY 696.

224 Greenberg,The Jews in Russia,II,120.

225 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,9,pp.1-2(elections to vice-presidencies) and 63(Central Committee decision of 31 March 1916).

party commission to prepare for the Fifth Duma elections.[226] Within the confines of the Kadet party, the Jewish group's coup had been conspicuously successful : the group leader occupied an entrenched position at the heart of the Kadet Central Committee and for the first time in the Fourth Duma the Kadets were committed to legislation for Jewish rights.

Milyukov's absence had equally serious repercussions outside the Kadet party. The peasant deputies in the Duma had resented the proposed Peasant Rights' Bill since its inception, seeing it as a deceitful attempt by the Duma establishment to win support which it did not deserve. The new Kadet proposal to tack a Jewish rights' clause onto the already meagre bill roused the peasant deputies to fury.[227] Convinced that nothing in the interests of the peasant could come from the present fraction arrangement, a movement sprang up in late May for the creation of an independent peasant fraction. The instigators of the movement were the three Kadet peasant deputies led by Levanidov, who by their actions presented yet another threat to the unity of the Kadet fraction.[228] The existing fractions regarded this most recent development with the gravest concern. Peasants constituted 29% of the Right fraction and 27% of the Nationalists so the Duma Right wing had no cause to welcome this particular Kadet crisis : the peasant 'revolt' sparked off by the Jewish coup within the Kadet party affected the Right fractions far more seriously than the moderates and Left.

Even so, the Duma Opposition had little cause for self-congratulation. In the absence of Milyukov, there existed no single authority recognised by all the constituent members of the Bloc. It was fortunate for the Bloc that the first month of Milyukov's trip coincided with the Duma recess between Winter and Spring sessions for,true to the conscience of its Right members,

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226 TsGAOR,f.523(Kadet Party),iii,9,pp.74(Vinaver's proposal),73-4(Vinaver's election),74-9(debate and vote on Jewish clause) and 79(Vinaver's election to party commission).

227 Speeches of peasant deputies : GDSO,IV,52,4797-8(Kalinin),52,4889-4890 (Chistov) and 53,4992-3(Tyvonchuk) ; also CHERMENSKY 697-8.

228 The Kadet peasant deputies : Levanidov,Afanas'ev and Durov (GDSO:UKAZ--ATEL' 131,64 & 101) ; Russkie Vedomosty,22 June 1916.

the Bloc continued to function only during the Duma sessions.[229] But once the Spring Session opened on 16 May, the Bloc came under immediate strain. As described above, the Left Kadets joined the Progressists in flouting the voting instructions of the Bloc Bureau on the very first day of the session. In all 116 deputies from a total Bloc membership of some 300 were fined by the Bloc Bureau for disobedience, a large proportion for a combination claiming unity of aims and actions.[230] The Jewish Rights' clause angered not only the peasants but the whole Right wing of the Bloc. The Centre, Zemstvo-Oktobrists and Progressive Nationalist fractions refused to counten--ance any Jewish concession, threatening (as Milyukov had anticipated in March) to withdraw from the Bloc rather than concede.[231] Not a single Duma fraction benefited from the absence of Milyukov : the Kadets were rent by an internal power conflict, the fractions of the Right were menaced by the loss of large proportions of their membership, and the precariously-maintained Progressive Bloc was threatened by the polarisation of the Left and Right wings of the moderate camp.

To cap the Bloc's problems, Stürmer now felt sufficiently confident to abandon his 'soft line', show his true colours and dispense with the Duma. The liberal image created for Stürmer by his backers in January 1916 deceived no-one by May. Stürmer now chose to revive the traditional defensive tactics of Goremykin : the day before the session opened, Stürmer secured a prorogation 'blank' enabling him to close the Duma at a moment's notice without reference to the Emperor.[232] Despite the fact that the Duma was expending the greater part of its time and energy on internal problems, Stürmer was set on prorogation at the earliest opportunity. On 1 June, a bare two weeks into the new session, Stürmer informed Nicholas that the

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229 Milyukov was away from Petrograd 16 April to 18 June 1916 ; the Duma Easter recess ran 4 April to 9 May 1916.

230 KLYUZHEV,xvii,109.

231 Ibid,112.

232 PADENIE,v,173-8(Stürmer).

necessary documentation for the summer recess was complete and needed only the Emperor's decision on a date.[233] Even within the Duma a not inconsider--able body of opinion saw little reason to continue the session much longer : at the Council of Elders' meeting on 5 June the Oktobrist Godnev opposed continuing after June on the grounds that war work and the deliberate absenteeism of the Right would make a constitutional Duma quorum impossible.[234]

On 7 June Stürmer's weekly report to the Emperor proposed the immediate prorogation of the Duma and Council on three grounds. Over the first weeks of the session (16 May-7 June), the Duma had held only four open sittings attended by an estimated 150-200 of the total 430 deputies. The low Duma morale indicated by these figures had been admitted by Rodzyanko who openly advocated early prorogation. In the second place, the State Council was currently being stirred up by trouble-makers like the ex-premier Kokovtsov, who personally supported the closest possible Council links with the Duma Bloc. Stürmer recommended the Council's early prorogation and a purging of its opposition elements at the elections in autumn 1916. Finally, the reforms advanced by the Duma Bloc were unsuitable for implementation in time of war ; Stürmer argued that prorogation would be the kindest way of post--poning government consideration of the reforms until after the war.[235] Persuaded by Stürmer's logic, Nicholas agreed that the Duma be prorogued on the twentieth ; Rodzyanko was informed that the Duma had one week to conclude its affairs before the summer recess.[236]

On the very eve of prorogation the parliamentary delegation returned from Western Europe but too late for Milyukov to do anything beyond voicing bland assurances that the European constitutional movement was firmly behind the Progressive Bloc. On 19 June the delegation members attended the Duma Army/Navy commission to deliver their reports but found time only for the

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233 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,214 ; also MPK 121.

234 Rech',6 June 1916 ; also CHERMENSKY 703.

235 Original report of 7 June 1916 : TsGAOR,f.627(Stürmer),delo 42,1-4 ; also published in MPK 122-5 ; see also PADENIE,v,165-6(Stürmer).

236 Rodzyanko was informed on 12 June 1916 : MPK 124-5.

detailed and comprehensive statement of Milyukov. The reports of Milyukov's colleagues were submitted the next day : Shingarev in particular received a rapturous response for his enthusiastic description of the success of the delegation in the last open sitting of the Duma session.[237] After his 'recharge' in constitutional Western Europe, Milyukov argued that it was time for the Bloc to act, for with the Allied victory in sight, the Russian parliament must sell itself to Europe to extract constitutional concessions from the tsarist government at the forthcoming Peace Conference.[238] No-one appears to have been so tactless as to point out that for Milyukov to demand Bloc action on the day before the Duma closed for four months was quite grotesque.

Stürmer could rest content with the thought that the Duma had closed calmly, the Duma delegation had returned too late to initiate an opposition campaign, and the Bloc and its fractions were currently involved in internal problems which even Milyukov's tactical skill would be tested to resolve. Rodzyanko delivered the epitaph on the 1916 Spring Session in his memoirs :

> The deputies were not conscientious in attending sittings and often there was no quorum. The Rights made sharp attacks in the hope of cutting short the Duma and in general the atmosphere was so strained that it was hard to accomplish anything. The perpetual conflict seemed fruitless, the government did not wish to listen, disorder increased and the country went to the dogs. Hopes were placed on the Duma but unfortunately it was powerless. (239)

Even Rodzyanko's personal position was far from secure and the Empress anticipated his downfall in a gleeful letter to the Emperor : 'there is a great chance that he [Rodzyanko - R.P.] won't be re-elected because his party is furious he did the thing clumsily and asked you to close the Duma because they were tired'.[240] On 24 June Klimovich, the Director of the Police Department, submitted an eleven-page report on the State Duma which

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237 Zhurnal Kommissii IV Sozyva Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, chast' II, pp.350-394 ; also KA, vol.64, pp.5-30 ; GDSO, IV, 60, 5792-5799.

238 Zhurnal Kommissii, pp.91-2 ; published in full in KA, vol.58, pp.5-23 ; also PADENIE, vi, 336 (Milyukov).

239 RODZYANKO 161-2.

240 Letter of 23 June 1916 : ALEXANDRA 362.

reflected both the confidence which the government felt now in its relations with the Duma and the fragmented and chaotic state into which the Duma had fallen. Klimovich noted that the Bloc fractions had been divided from the start of the Winter Session, in part still shocked after the defeat of September 1915, and Milyukov's absence had exacerbated the trend towards parliamentary disintegration. The K Jewish coup within the Kadet party had caused repercussions throughout the Duma, fragmenting the Kadets, disrupting the Bloc and even threatening the ostensibly remote Right wing. The moderate camp of the Duma had never been so divided and upset as in June 1916.[241]

The Klimovich report would have made depressing reading for Milyukov. He had returned from a pleasant if limitedly successful visit to Western Europe to find his political house and neighbourhood in almost unbelievable disorder. His only solace was that the start of the summer recess allowed him up to four months out of the glare of publicity to put his house back in order. In that time he had to put down the rebellions within his party, re-establish his authority and attempt the thankless task of patching the Progressive Bloc for operation in the next Duma session.

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241 Klimovich Report, 24 June 1916 : TsGAOR, f.627(Stürmer), delo 44, pp.1-11, esp.pp.2-6(Duma divisions) & 6 and 9(Jewish coup).

CHAPTER SIX : THE DEVELOPING REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

1. The Bloc 'Storm-Signal'(July-November 1916)

The Duma summer recess was equally welcome to the Bloc and the govern--ment : both Milyukov and the Emperor needed the break from parliamentary confrontation to set their respective political organisations to rights. While Milyukov had to repair the Bloc and Kadet party of the divisions which had emerged in the course of his trip abroad, Nicholas planned a fundamental reorganisation of government to meet the increasing demands and strains of the wartime situation. Krivoshein had first advanced a scheme for a civil dictatorship in July 1915 but Nicholas's assumption of military command and decision to allow greater play to the Duma had effectively pushed the concept into the background. By late spring 1916 the plan was again 'under active discussion'.

The reasons for the re-emergence of the 'civil dictator' scheme are not elusive. The deteriorating situation in the country seemed the product of poor organisation rather than shortages of manpower, raw materials and capable personnel. The Oktobrist Vice-President of the Duma Protopopov said of the situation in mid 1916 :

> Finances were in disorder, exchange of goods was disrupted, the productivity of the country took a tremendous drop ... the communication routes were in total disorder ... the dual authority (Military Head-quarters and Government Ministry) on the railroads led to terrifying disorders ... The cities starved and trade, constantly in fear of requisitions, was stifled ... speculation resulted, not as a fundamental sickness, but as a manifestation of insufficient production and exchange. (1)

Another colleague of Milyukov who served on the Duma delegation stressed the dilemma of authority within the state :

> There was no-one to put things in order. The authorities were everywhere, supposedly giving orders, and there were a lot of them. But there was no directing will, no plan, no system ; and there could not be any, given

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1 Quoted in MILIUKOV 362 ; also Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.21.

> the general discord among the executive authorities, and given the absence of legislative work and genuine control over the work of ministers. The supreme authority was imprisoned by harmful influences and forces. It provided no motivating force. (2)

In the increasing chaos of authority, a greater centralisation of civil government seemed essential to the maintenance of the Russian war effort.

The courage to attempt radical reorganisation was a by-product of the military successes of the Spring campaign. On 4 February Erzerum on the Turkish front had fallen, the first Russian feat of arms since 1914 itself. On 22 May was launched the Brusilov Offensive against Austria-Hungary, which by late June had claimed some 217,000 prisoners alone in the steady Russian advance to the Carpathians.[3] With the apparent turn in the tide of Russia's military fortunes, the government experienced a brief resurgence of self-confidence and the Tsar prepared to tackle problems which he had hitherto been anxious to shelve.

Nicholas's own circumstances were a vital component in the re-emergence of the civil dictatorship scheme. Nicholas had bravely assumed the command of the Russian army in August 1915 in the hope of resolving the critical relations between the military and civil authorities but it had become abundantly clear that in practice no one individual could sustain both commands. After some months of conscientious attendance at the Stavka, an environment which he found infinitely preferable to the capital, Nicholas was forced to make a choice between his political rôle as Tsar and his military rôle as Commander-in-Chief. The prospect of the opening of the 1916 campaign season and the vision of a triumphal progress into Europe reminisc--ent of Alexander I decided him to opt for military command. After April 1916 he abandoned the practice of making regular visits to the Stavka from Tsarskoe Selo in favour of making his permanent domicile at the Stavka, from which he made rare and reluctant trips back to the capital.[4]

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2 MILIUKOV 362-3.

3 PALEOLOGUE, II, 186, 268 & 286 ; Lukomsky, Memoirs, pp.35-9 ; PARES 359-368.

4 After April 1916, Nicholas made only two (linked) trips away from the Stavka before December : to Tsarskoe Selo (18-25 October) and Kiev (26-

On committing himself to his military rôle, Nicholas sought to fill the resulting vacuum in civil authority by the creation of a dictator. In early June the conditions for establishing a civil dictatorship were uniquely favourable. Recognising that the four-month summer recess offered him the opportunity to attempt a political experiment without a Duma audience, Nicholas argued in a letter to Alexandra that,

> It is imperative to act energetically and to take firm measures in order to settle these questions once and for all. As soon as the Duma is adjourned I shall call all the Ministers here for the discussion of these problems and shall decide upon everything here. (5)

If, when the Duma reconvened, the experiment had proved successful, the Bloc would be compelled to condone the new system because of its efficient prosecution of the war effort ; if the experiment failed, the failure would owe nothing to the Duma and relations as they existed before June could be reinstituted without government embarrassment or loss of face.

Encouraged by the Emperor, Alekseyev the Chief of Staff (and a prime mover of the civil dictator scheme) produced a detailed report on 15 June outlining the weaknesses of the home front and recommending the creation of what he termed a 'Supreme Minister for State Defence' :

> Just as in the military theatre all power is concentrated upon the supreme commander, in the same way throughout the internal provinces of the Empire ... power must be collected into the hands of a single all-powerful figure, who might well be called the Supreme Minister for State Defence. Such a person, enjoying the highest possible confidence of Your Majesty, would have the following responsibilities : to unite, lead and direct by his sole will the activities of all ministers, state and society institutions situated outside the limits of the theatre of war ... For his activities and prerogatives he would answer to Your Majesty alone. (6)

Overwhelmed by the deceptive simplicity of the scheme, Nicholas immediately adopted Alekseyev's plan for his own.

The Council of Ministers was summoned to the Stavka to discuss Alekseyev's memorandum on 28 June, a week after the prorogation of the Duma.

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29 October) ; Alexandra however made six trips to the Stavka (3-17 May, 6-12 July, 27 July-3 August, 22 August-4 September, 2-12 October and 14 November-2 December). Sources : ALEXANDRA 311-461 & NICHOLAS 163-312.

5 Letter of 11 June 1916 : NICHOLAS 207 (see also 210).

6 MPK 259-266 (quotation 264) ; also RODZYANKO 164.

The bulk of the ministers were in their own interests fundamentally opposed to the scheme but were understandably reluctant to condemn a project so evidently fostered by the Emperor. To avoid the basic direction of criticism and save embarrassment, the ministers reduced the issue to one of personal--ities and questioned the availability of suitable candidates for the new post.[7] Nicholas's own candidate was Stürmer. Since early March (when Aleksei Khvostov was dismissed for plotting against Rasputin) Stürmrer had temporarily filled the offices of both Council Chairman and MVD, a combinat--ion which in Nicholas's eyes prepared Stürmer admirably for the rôle of civil dictator.[8]

It was now clear that the Tsar was so captivated by the dictatorship scheme that it was bound to be implemented in some form. Attempts from both outside and within the government to dissuade Nicholas met with no success. Rodzyanko, commissioned by the Bloc to plead the rival cause of collaboration with society, made no headway at the Stavka with the Emperor who (not for the last time) remarked that 'Rodzyanko has talked a lot of nonsense'.[9] Downcast that this same collaboration which he too advocated had been so lightly rejected, Naumov resigned from the Ministry of Agriculture.[10] Even Stürmer protested at his candidacy for dictatorship, arguing that the joint offices of Council Chairman and MVD were onerous enough without the addition of the rôle of dictator.[11] Yet despite Stürmer's objections, the antipathy of the recessed Duma and the muted but unmistakable opposition of the Council of Ministers, the will of the Emperor proved (as in September 1915) powerful enough to override all other factors combined.

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7 PADENIE,i,240-2(Stürmer) and i,344(Naumov) ; MILIUKOV 363 ; Nicholas's letter of 27 June 1916 : NICHOLAS 221 ; Semennikov in MPK 256.

8 MILIUKOV 338 ; R.Fülop-Miller,Rasputin : the Holy Devil,Collins Reprint 1967,pp.239-250 ; RODZYANKO 155 ; NICHOLAS 152 and ALEXANDRA 299.

9 Rodzyanko's audience with Nicholas,25 June 1916 : RODZYANKO 166-7 and NICHOLAS 219.

10 PADENIE,i,224-5(Stürmer) and i,337-341(Naumov) ; Osobyi Zhurnal Soveta Ministrov,18 June 1916 : TsGIAL,f.1276,xi,348,127-133 cited in DYAKIN 185.

11 PADENIE,i,224-5(Stürmer).

The dictatorship was hurried through without regard for either domestic or foreign sensibilities. On 1 July it was agreed that Stürmer assume the rôle of civil dictator. His admittedly heavy load of responsibilities was to be lightened by a ministerial reshuffle : Stürmer would drop the arduous MVD in favour of the 'lighter' Foreign Ministry, from which Sazonov (who was absent from this meeting) would be dismissed.[12] The impact of Sazonov's dismissal upon Duma circles and Russia's Allies was prodigious, being universally interpreted as confirmation of the rumours concerning a Seperate Peace. Paléologue and Buchanan even pleaded with the Emperor for Sazonov's retention but without success.[13] However the most sinister interpretation of Nicholas's motives was false. The dismissal of Sazonov was only incidentally an international event ; although Nicholas must have appreciated the damaging effect of the change upon Russia's relations with her Allies, he was temporarily obsessed by the determination to subordinate all considerations to his civil dictatorship project.

Unfortunately for Nicholas, good timing was the only merit of the attempted dictatorship. It had been apparent from his earliest days that Stürmer had not the personality or stature to command respect from the Duma, still less obedience from his ministerial colleagues.[14] Beyond the unsuitability of the candidate, the very first move in creating the dictatorship was demonstrably foolish : no matter how onerous the MVD might be, it was quite impossible to effect a 'dictatorship of the rear' without control of the MVD. The decision of 1 July designed to make Stürmer's tenancy of the dictatorship feasible in practice doomed the operation from its inception. Even the transposition of the unambitious Aleksandr Khvostov

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12 PADENIE,i,286(Stürmer) ; Sazonov,Fateful Years,p.307 ; MPK 258 ; Osobyi Zhurnal Soveta Ministrov,1 July 1916 : TSGIAL,f.1276,xx,113,1-3 cited in DYAKIN 219.

13 PALEOLOGUE,II,301-2 ; BUCHANAN,II,16-17 ; also PADENIE,i,244-5 & 282 (Stürmer) and vi,343(Milyukov) ; MPK 12-14.

14 Rodzyanko dismissed Stürmer as 'an utter non-entity', Shul'gin as 'absolutely unprincipled and a complete nullity' : Rodzyanko,Reign of Rasputin,p.178 and SHUL'GIN 79.

to the MVD in place of Stürmer only offered the 'dictator' an opportunity to operate without the traditional competition of the Minister of Interior; but what he needed was the authority which only the MVD could provide.[15] Without that authority even the delegated powers of the Emperor proved insufficient to implement the concept of civil 'dictatorship'.

Stürmer's attempts to expand his field of operations met with the stolid resistance of vested interests within the government, which had little choice but to raise their hats to the concept of Dictatorship but were not prepared to concede without a struggle when they felt their own positions were threatened. An attempt to transfer the Special Council of Defence to his own jurisdiction encountered such opposition from the War Ministry and the Duma delegates that Stürmer was forced to drop the idea.[16] Realising both the material and symbolic importance of the supply question, Stürmer argued in his report to Nicholas on 21 August that the patent incapacity of the new Minister of Agriculture Bobrinsky necessitated the transfer of supply to his own office ; but the Fabian tactics of his bureaucratic opponents delayed the decision until Stürmer's failure in other fields proved to Nicholas the imprudence of adding to the Dictator's duties.[17]

Badgered for decisions on subjects about which he understood little and overwhelmed by the sheer volume of work for which he was held responsible, Stürmer played more and more for effect. Making no headway at the expense of established ministries, he attempted to prove his energy by simply adding to the government structure. On 29 July he created the Cost of Living Commission, a pathetic institution on a shoe-string budget, whose sole raison d'être appeared to be to serve as evidence of the Dictator's endeavours.[18] In his report of 1 August he tentatively suggested the creat--ion of a Ministry of Health, a proposal welcomed by the Emperor but turned

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15 PADENIE,i,268-9(Stürmer) and v,449(Aleksandr Khvostov).

16 RODZYANKO 169.

17 Report of 21 August 1916 and editorial comment : MPK 146-7.

18 MPK 144-5 & 150-1 ; TsGIAL,f.1276,xv,14,3-4 cited in DYAKIN 226-7.

down by the Council of Ministers. An appeal by Stürmer was upheld by the Emperor in a written decision of 25 August, to which the Council of Ministers had reluctantly to submit.[19] But although Stürmer had won his point, the contest only highlighted the three-fold nature of his weakness. Stürmer was only contriving new and relatively inoffensive bureaucratic accessories because he was unable to make headway within the traditional government structure ; the new institutions he contrived served only to exacerbate the critical problem of divided authority ; and on major issues, Stürmer was able to defeat the vested interests within the government only by direct appeal to the authority of the Emperor, which defeated the whole point of the exercise.

By late August the fundamental failure of the Dictatorship was universally acknowledged, and even Stürmer was prepared to abandon the notion of Dictator and settle for the less demanding rôle of 'government co-ordinator'.[20] The practical outcome of the Dictatorship experiment was the reverse of its intention, not the enhancement and centralisation of power but, in Milyukov's phrase, total 'paralysis of authority'.[21] The collapse of the Stürmer dictatorship however promoted its successor : as the dictatorship of Stürmer faltered, it was challenged by the Empress's patronage of the MVD.

After April 1916 political initiative within the government largely devolved upon the Empress for the Emperor was too remote at the Stavka at Baranovichi to exercise close control and too absorbed in the successes of the Brusilov offensive to check the arbitrary actions of his consort. Alexandra's appetite for power grew immeasurably over this period to the extent of totally conquering her former social awkwardness : 'I am no longer the slightest bit shy or afraid of the ministers and speak like a waterfall in Russian ... they see I am energetic and tell all to you and that I am your wall in the rear'.[22] By early September Alexandra was heading the

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19 MPK 139-140 & 153 ; KA,vol.56,p.132.

20 Stürmer himself made the distinction between Diktator and Rasporyaditel' : PADENIE,i,242.

21 MILIUKOV 361.

attack on Stürmer's collapsing dictatorship, indicating the universal nature Of Stürmer's uppopularity and lack of success and, by implication, her own political foresight in diagnosing the problem at an early stage.[23] The object of the campaign was to convince Nicholas of his lack of touch with the political situation in the capital and persuade him to abandon politics to her.

Alexandra now advanced her own protégé, Protopopov. Nicholad had taken a liking to Protopopov at their first meeting in July and was disposed to believe that he would enhence government relations with Russian society by favouring the Vice-President of the Duma. Alexandra emphasised this point in her campaign to get Protopopov installed as Minister of Interior :

> Gregory begs you earnestly to name Protopopov. You know him and had such a good impression of him, happens to be of the Duma (is not Left) and so will know how to be with them ... I think you could not do better than name him ... he likes Our Friend since at least four years and that says much for a man. (24)

Though worried by Stürmer's performance as Dictator, Nicholas was still not so convinced of his failure as to welcome the intrusion of a potential rival. In his letter of 9 September he agreed that while,

> It seems to me that this Protopopov is a good man ... and Rodsianko has for a long time suggested him for the post of Minister of Trade, Our Friend's opinions of people are sometimes very strange, as you yuourself know - therefore one must be careful especially with appointments to high offices ... This must be thought out vey carefully. All these changes make my head go round. In my opinion ~~there~~ they are too frequent. In any case they are not good for the internal situation of the country as each man brings with him alterations in the administration. (25)

However Nicholas had to concede that the movement against Stürmer was not merely a product of his wife's fertile imagination for a majority of the Council of Ministers led by Trepov was currently lobbying him for Stürmer's

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22 Letter of 22 September 1916 : ALEXANDRA 409.

23 Letters of 13,14 August and 7 & 20 September 1916 : ALEXANDRA 385,386, 394 & 404 ; the best expression of Nicholas's first doubts about Stürmer is in his letter of 14 August 1916 : NICHOLAS 246.

24 Letter of 7 September 1916 : ALEXANDRA 394 ; for Nicholas's early attitude to Protopopov, letter of 20 July 1916 : NICHOLAS 233 ; also Milyukov,'Fevral'skie Dni',p.169.

25 Letter of 9 September 1916 : NICHOLAS 256-7.

dismissal.[26] On 10 September Nicholas agreed to Protopopov's appointment, although demonstrating his reluctance to declare the Dictatorship a failure prematurely by insisting that Protopopov serve a probationary term as acting Minister of Interior.[27]

On the fourteenth, Nicholas summoned Stürmer to render an account of his stewardship, an encounter as embarrassing for the former as it was humiliating for the latter. Although Stürmer survived the double onslaught for the time being, Nicholas's faith in him was badly shaken :

> Old Stürmer cannot overcome these difficulties. I do not see any other way out, except by transferring the matter to the military authorities, and that also has its disadvantages. It is the most damnable problem I have ever come across !!! (28)

The challenge of the Empress had been substantially successful : with the appointment of Alexandra's ambitious protégé to the MVD, the failure of the dictatorship scheme was tacitly admitted.

The final stage of Alexandra's plan was to expand the authority of the MVD into her own 'dictatorship of the rear'. The dictatorship projected by the Emperor was an artificial superimposition upon the traditional structure of government ; the Empress chose to back the fastest-developing movement within the government, the rise of the MVD to challenge the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers for supreme executive power. Under Protopopov, the MVD's recent but interrupted drive for power received the full backing of the Empress. By November 1916 Stürmer had been effectively demoted to the function of traditional Council Chairman and authority within the government was flowing to Protopopov. The Emperor's candidate for the 'dictatorship of the rear' had been replaced by the Empress's.

The coincidence of the prolonged Duma recess (as planned by the govern--ment) without doubt muted the response of the Duma moderates to the

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26 PALEOLOGUE,III,34 (entry for 14/27 September 1916) ; also Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.17.

27 Letter of 10 September 1916 : NICHOLAS 258 ; also MPK 110 and Felix Yusupov,Rasputin,London 1934,p.89.

28 Letter of 20 September 1916 : NICHOLAS 266 ; also KERENSKY 178 and MILIUKOV 368.

dictatorship 'trials'. Political activity by the Duma parties between the end of the Spring Session and late September 1916 seems to have been negligible, with a number of vital issues arising during the summer passing almost without comment. At first sight this must seem surprising. Surely the dictatorship scheme was sufficiently important to the Duma to warrant close attention and commentary by the leading parties ? Surely the fragile condition of the Progressive Bloc at the moment of prorogation could not remain unattended until the Autumn Session ? And yet there is strikingly little evidence of more than perfunctory salon conversation about the dictatorship, and even less record of any attempt to repair the rifts in the Duma Bloc. Indeed no record survives of any formal Bloc meeting between 20 June and 3 October 1916.[29] Clearly the policy formulated in autumn 1915 that the Bloc would be operative only duting Duma session was still closely adhered to a year later.

Similarly, although the Okhrana judged that the divisions within the Kadet party had never been so dangerous as in late June on Milyukov's return from Western Europe, there is no concrete evidence of any attempt at 'patching' for several months.[30] The Duma recess served as an arbitrary yet universally recognised guillotine on the discussion of politics at the national level, leaving the Duma deputies to turn their energies to the war effort or local politics. Petrograd was abandoned to the government and Moscow presented the only picture of any significant political activity. The importance of the imminent municipal duma elections roused the Moscow Kadets to a measure of action but even so a police report for 15 August suggested that while prepared to brand the government for the tribulations of Russia, the Moscow Kadets were at heart unwilling to precipitate further fragmentation of the party by joining battle over major issues, and were quite content to accept the enforced period of party recuperation which the

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29 KA,vol.56,p.82 ; POLICE,27/57(Petrograd),6-7 cited in LAVERYCHEV 143.
30 Moscow report of 3 July 1916 : POLICE,xvii,46-b,6.

Duma summer recess offered.[31] The tentative conclusions which may be drawn about the Kadet position over the summer of 1916 seem only negative. The party was so split that, like the Zemstvo-Oktobrists since late 1913, its members preferred to avoid major issues in fear of further disintegration. When the party indulged in political activity at all it was to secure local victories in which national politics were utilised only for limited propaganda purposes.

As on a number of earlier occasions, Milyukov's actions as leader of the Kadets over summer 1916 have attracted a certain amount of adverse criticism. If the internal state of the party was so precarious, what impelled him to spend all August and early September on lecture tours in England and France ? Not only would his further absence prevent him from undertaking a repair job on his party, it could logically be expected to exacerbate the condition created by his previous expedition. Milyukov has been accused of gross dereliction of duty both to his party and the Progress--ive Bloc by repeatedly deserting these organisations when they so demonstr--ably depended upon his presence and leadership.[32] It is possible that Milyukov the historian had still not completely succumbed to Milyukov the politician. Despite the parliamentary professionalism which so clearly marked him out from his Duma colleagues, Milyukov was not a complete political animal, never abandoned the pursuits of his academic profession and always retained some features of the political dilettante. It is also possible that as a 'Russian European' Milyukov was led both by his politics and his scholarship to place excessive stress upon contacts with the West, to the regular neglect of Russian domestic developments.

However it is more than likely that Milyukov judged that the party and Duma situation in mid summer 1916 was so stagnant that his presence or absence would have only marginal impact :

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31 POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46-b(Moscow),8-9 & 12-14.

32 CHERMENSKY 735 ; also August-September 1912 (see Chapter One, 1) and mid 1903,when Piotrow calls him 'excessively casual' and 'strikingly absent' on important occasions : Piotrow,Paul Milyukov,pp.54 & 63.

> I spent all of August and part of September on this second trip. The first question upon my return, naturally enough, was whether or not I was late for what had been happening in Russia during this time ... With regard to Russia's internal situation as described above, I was not late. That situation had remained essentially unchanged. (33)

He may well have reasoned that nothing could be done to tackle the problems of the Kadet fraction until the Duma reconvened. The Duma deputies were dispersed throughout the country and public organisations, the Bloc was non-operative out of Duma session, and the possibility of collecting more than a handful of Kadets for the discussion of fundamental issues remote. Milyukov recognised the impossibility of even attempting answers to the Kadet dilemma until a date for the new session was set.

Mid September however saw a perceptible rise in political tempo desptte the lack of any definite date for the Duma. The principal reason was the heightening atmosphere in the capitals caused by the growing economic and social repercussions of the war effort. Milyukov was inclined to blame the tension on the fact that top-level politics were escaping into the streets :

> Everything previously known only to the more or less tight circle of the devoted became during this time the property of the public at large, including the rank and file citizen. The barometer of the domestic mood rose accordingly. (34)

A police report for October noted the heightening mood with disquiet but failed to discern any party political complexion to the change :

> By the beginning of the month of September of this year, an unusual rise in opposition and animosity was sharply noticeable among the widest and most diverse strata of the residents of the capitals. Again and again complaints against the administration and harsh and merciless condemnation of government policy were heard ... but the mood of the broad masses is "Oppositional" and not "Revolutionary", standing outside the strict limits of party platforms. (35)

Aside from the anonymous social forces which threatened government and Duma alike, a political clash of personalities was in evidence by late September : Milyukov returned from Cambridge to reassume the leadership of the recessed

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33 MILIUKOV 373.

34 Ibid ; also Petrograd Police report of 28 January 1917 quoted in GRAVE 125.

35 The distinction is between oppositsionnost' and revolyutsionnost' : KA, vol.17,pp.6 & 25 ; also Petrograd report of 30 October 1916 : POLICE, 167,19 quoted in GRAVE 138-9.

Duma Bloc and on 18 September the appointment of Protopopov as acting Minister of Interior provided the first major talking-point since the installation of Stürmer as Dictator.[36]

Protopopov's elevation provoked speculation which polarised into two mutually exclusive interpretations. Optimists (including the Russian industrialists and Allied ambassadors) hailed the appointment as promise of extensive government recruitment in the Duma and a new era in relations between government and Duma.[37] The Duma moderates were at first disposed to look kindly on Protopopov : in a guardedly optimistic editorial, Rech' agreed that 'while the appointment of Protopopov is isolated and by its isolation fortuitous,.. it must promote a favourable atmosphere for a more peaceable Duma attitude towards Stürmer'.[38] Yet even as the Russian moderates read these lines, Protopopov confitmed the pessimists' belief that the appointment was nothing more than a sop to the Duma and Protopopov himself either a dupe or a traitor. On 21 September Ptotopopov dashed liberal hopes by extending the ban on conferences instituted by Khvostov : henceforth all meetings whether open or closed were to have police represent--ation, which was empowered to terminate the proceedings without explanation or appeal. This precautionary measure, though directed far less against either 'society' or Duma circles than against the workers' movement, incited all sectors of the populace against the government.[39]

In its party political manifestation, the revival of the opposition movement in the capitals may be dated from Protopopov's edict. The Kadets returned to national politics apprehensively. At an unofficial Moscow Kadet meeting on 18 September, fear of the imminent dissolution of the present Duma concentrated discussion on the agenda item 'Party strength on the eve of

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36 PADENIE,vi,342(Milyukov).

37 Russkoe Slovo,20 September 1916 ; CHERNOV 35.

38 Rech',21 September 1916 ; also Vasilii Gurko,Memories,pp.185-6.

39 PADENIE,vi,342(Milyukov) ; GRAVE 154 ; MILIUKOV 376.

the Fifth Duma Elections'.[40] Only days later on 23 September, at the first formal meeting of the Moscow Kadet Committee since June, the principal complaint was that patriotism disarmed any wartime opposition movement against the government. Kishkin anticipated a revolution only at the end of the war but Kizevetter believed that the government was relying on the traditional Russian lethargy which had in the past always been the decisive factor maintaining the existing government in power : 'I am very much afraid that this silent infinite patience is not an expression of conscientious patriotism but only that dull submissiveness and downtroddenness which has characterised our entire Russian history.' [41]

While the Kadets debated their fears, other groups pressed a more vigorous line. Rumours of a 'socialist plot' were circulating and Kerensky, Skobelev and Chkheidze were widely believed to be consolidating their position with the workers preparatory to revolution.[42] At a congress of presidents of regional War Industries Committees held secretly 26-27 September in defiance of the police ban, its President Guchkov proposed outright war against the government. As described by Stürmer,

> Guchkov announced that an agreement to take up arms in battle against the state power was essential to save Russia from the supply crisis - through the organisation of society forces ; the congress, under the chaitmanship of Guchkov, passed a resolution of struggle against authority. (43)

Opinions differed as to the line of the Duma upon reassembly. Paléologue was convinced that no trouble need be expected from the Duma moderates :

> The liberal parties in the Duma have made up their minds not to take up any of the Government's challenges and to defer their claims. The danger will not come from them. A military defeat, a famine or palace revolution - that's what I'm particularly afraid of. (44)

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40 Moscow report of 18 September 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46,11-12.

41 Moscow report of 26 September 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46,19(Kishkin) & 20(Kizevetter) ; also Moscow report of 20 September 1916 : POLICE,643, 3,23734 quoted in GRAVE 139-140.

42 PALEOLOGUE,III,50-1.

43 Loyal report of 9 October 1916 : MPK 160 ; also POLICE,1916,347,4,242 & 246-7 cited in LAVERYCHEV 150.

44 PALEOLOGUE,III,55 (entry for 28 September/11 October 1916).

The Police Department however, apparently on the basis of the few Duma deputies whose opinions were readily available, reported that the Duma could be expected to be oppositional and anticipated a denunciation of government policy in Rodzyanko's opening speech.[45]

The first three weeks of October saw the opposition movement accelerat-ing and broadening to a degree alarming to all moderates. The transport and supply crises were now so advanced that the living conditions of the twown populace were deteriorating dramatically : Washburn noted that 'nowadays the food problem comes first in public interest, with almost every other topic, the war included, nowhere in comparison'.[46] This economic collapse provided the major factor in promoting a revolutionary situation in the capitals. In conversation with Bernard Pares, Konovalov judged that 'it was in October that living conditions really became alarming, and it was from this time that the revolutionary mood must be dated'.[47] A police report for October quoted by Florinsky substantially agreed :

> In the opinion of the spokesmen of the Labour Group of the Central War Industries Committee, the industrial proletariat of the capital is in the verge of despair and it believes that the smallest outbreak due to any pretext will lead to uncontrollable riots, with thousands and tens of thousands of victims. Indeed the stage for such outbreaks is more than set ... groups of responsible workers find it difficult to prevent the masses from bursting into demonstrations growing out of the lack of necessities and the rise in the cost of living. (48)

Another factor was that the military successes which had buoyed up government confidence over the past few months were over. The brilliant Brusilov offensive had been halted and replaced by the campaign to save Rumania, with whom Stürmer had unwisely contracted military alliance in early August.[49] The German army of Mackenson proved more than a match for the

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45 Report of 29 September 1916 : POLICE,xvii,307A/3/1916,78-9.

46 Washburn's article 'The Food Problem in Russia',Times(Russian Supplement) 28 October 1916(n/s),2a and 2b.

47 PARES 384 ; also POLICE,167,67 quoted in GRAVE 131.

48 Florinsky,M.T,The End of the Russian Empire,Collier Paperback 1961,175-7.

49 PARES 368 ; PALEOLOGUE,III,50 ; Alekseyev had warned Nicholas of the dangers of alliance with Rumania : NICHOLAS 274.

Rumanians : by late December the advance of the German army necessitated the transfer of one quarter of the Russian forces to defend the Rumanian front. The enormous length of the Russian front by late 1916 stretched Russia's military resources to the extent that she became incapable of accomplishing anything more than a purely defensive 'holding the ring'.[50] At the same time the military emergency increased the need for efficient organisation on the home front and rendered the problems of the civil government all the more critical. As in the previous year, pari passu with the change in military fortunes came the familiar ebbing of government self-confidence.

A third factor in the acceleration of the opposition movement was the imminent Duma session promised for 1 November. The Duma deputies assembled exceptionally early, each with news to report of developments in the country at large, and immeasurably increased the gathering momentum of the opposition movement. The Moscow Kadets rejected the advice of Milyukov (to concentrate fire upon the person of Stürmer alone) to come out boldly in favour of attack upon the government as a whole.[51] The Kadets were anxious for their image as leaders of the Opposition for, in the words of Vasilii Maklakov, 'the indignation of the country had risen to such heights that the Duma did not wish to be left behind'.[52] Popular feeling against the Duma itself was running high :

> At the lower levels of society they accuse the Duma ... of deliberately refusing to come to the aid of the general masses. The most bitter accusations in this respect are addressed not only to the Oktobrists but to the Kadets too. (53)

A joint meeting of S.R.s and S.D.s on 9 October also 'registered the undoubt--ed fall in the influence of the progressive-liberal political current led by the Kadets and remarked the complete bankruptcy of the Duma and Progress-

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50 Lukomsky, Memoirs, pp.40-45 ; Vasilii Gurko, Memories, pp.145-6, 158-162 & 191-202 ; PALEOLOGUE, III, 52-3.

51 Meetings of 30 September and 1 October 1916 : POLICE, xvii, 46-b, 13-16 ; also TsGAOR, f.579(Milyukov), 698, 1-7.

52 Maklakov, 'On the Fall of Tsardom', SEER, vol.18, no.52(1939), p.90.

53 Moscow report of 20 October 1916 : POLICE, 167, 46-1916, 75 quoted in CHERMENSKY 756 ; also Petrograd report of 30 October 1916 : POLICE, 167, 19 quoted in GRAVE 138.

-ive Bloc'. Perhaps even worse than dislike for the Duma moderates was indifference towards them. Another police repott for the month of October noted that 'outside traditional political allegiances, the broad mass of the people are little interestsed in the State Duma'.[54]

Meetings of Moscow society were arranged by Konovalov to discuss the political situation (5 and 6 October) and the supply crisis (9 October). The principal feature of the meetings was their domination by party polemics, and the police reporter noted that Konovalov flagrantly exploited his position as organiser to hit out at his Kadet rivals : 'Konovalov hurled at the leaders of the Moscow Kadets charges of being inactive, doctrinaire, over-academic and, most important, estranged from democracy'. He readily bracketed the Kadets with the Oktobrists as conscious or unconscious stooges of the tsarist government :

> After the Oktobrist-ministers, as if we have not suffered enough, will come the Kadet-ministers. Maybe in a few months we shall have a ministry of Milyukov and Shingarev. Everything depends on us : the imminent session of the State Duma must be the decisive onslaught on authority, the last charge at the bureaucracy. (55)

The rising opposition movement persuaded even Rodzyanko to demand a Duma session earlier than that promised for 1 November but the requst was peremptorily dismissed by the Emperor on 9 October, dashing Rodzyanko's hopes for repeating what he considered to be his personal success of summer 1915.[56]

Moderate and conservative political forces were by now acutely anxious. Milyukov confessed that a Kadet meeting which he attended in Moscow on 1 October had proved a rude awakening :

> There has been a metamorphosis in the mood of Moscow. The most naturally inert and ignorant circles have begun to speak in the language of implacable revolutionaries. I would think that the mood of Moscow out--strips that of Russia as a whole ... Meanwhile it seems that it has

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54 KA,vol.17,pp.30(S.R. and S.D. meetings) and 26(lack of interest in Duma).

55 Moscow report of 12 October 1916 : POLICE,xvii,46-b,7-8.

56 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,227 ; Stürmer's loyal report of 9 October 1916 : MPK 161.

> still to reach Petrograd and the provinces ... Moscow wishes to express her own feelings and she cannot and will not be silent. (57)

To Milyukov's alarm, he realised that the London and Paris of mid 1916 were more familiar and comprehensible to him than the Moscow of 1916. The political effect of this discovery was to convince Milyukov of the necessity of controlling and channelling the opposition movement. He expressed this belief at the renewed Bloc meetings of early October but found the Bloc participants as far from unanimity as ever. At the meeting of 3 October, the first since June, a meandering debate closed with Shingarev's warning 'I don't know whether it is too late for us ; we are on the brink of a catastrophe'. A second meeting proved equally fruitless while a third (on 13 October) vividly demonstrated the range and woolly-mindedness of the members' thought. Kapnist argued the necessity of 'breaking the government's neck' but Vasilii Maklakov insisted that 'this Duma is not a politically mature institution, the majority is volatile and rejects the principle of a responsible ministry ... more than a ministry of confidence is quite beyond us'. Yefremov uttered the last word in confusion of thought with the claim : 'I am a defender of theocracy ,,, but having come so far, I find that a responsible ministry is the only remedy'.[58] The problem of inducing the varied members of the Bloc to adhere to a single coherent policy seemed as insuperable as ever.

While the Bloc dithered, social forces outside the Duma relentlessly pushed towards open conflict with the government. On 15 October Prince L'vov came out in support of an immediate congress on the supply crisis, a giant society congress in the near future and pledged the full support of the Union of Zemstvos to a Duma stand against the government.[59] On the streets of Moscow and Petrograd the workers demonstrated, precipitating the first isolated incident in which troops sided with the workers against the police.[60]

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57 POLICE,xvii,27-1916,9 which also appears in abridged version in GRAVE 142-3 and further edited in Riha,A Russian European,pp.260-1.

58 KA,vol.56,pp.82-3(3 October 1916) & 87(13 October).

59 POLICE,343,4 quoted in GRAVE 144-5.

60 PALEOLOGUE,III,73-5 ; Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda,I,238.

The Duma moderates found themselves swept along in spite of themselves by the vigour of the opposition movement : on 18 October the Duma Budget commission went so far as formally to condemn the recent transfer of supply to the jurisdiction of the MVD.[61]

The government became increasingly apprehensive. In his loyal report of 9 October, Stürmer confided his belief that the Duma membership would attack the government not only from personal conviction but in order to play to the electoral gallery on the eve of the Fourth Duma's dissolution :

> The imminent session of the State Duma promises to be highly restless .. with criticism of all measures undertaken by the government. The whole membership of the Duma is preparing to speak, impelled by considerations of the new elections in 1917 and by the desire to distinguish themselves before their electorates in the interests of re-election.

As in the past, the government was less concerned about the violence of Duma expression than the wide currency that it enjoyed. Stürmer toyed with the idea of calling the Duma but enforcing closed sessions which would effectively 'exclude the possibility of the publication of the stenographic records and their appearance in the press'.[62] The height of government alarm was reached with the police report of 20 October :

> This opposition mood has reached exceptional proportions which were not attained in the broad mass of the population even in the period 1905-6 ... Russia is on the brink of revolution and Petrograd is more than close to an armed uprising. (63)

By 31 October, Stürmer noted in his report to the Emperor that the Duma majority was convinced of the necessity of adopting 'the path of systematic battle with the government ... and the publication from the height of the Duma rostrum of criminal propaganda throughout the country demanding a change in the existing structure of government'.[64] Desperate to avert such a calamity, Stürmer resorted to open threats :

> I draw the attention of the members of the Duma to the fact that the immediate consequence of the dissolution of the Duma would be the

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61 TsGIAL, f.1278(State Duma), v, 330, 463.

62 Both quotations : Stürmer's report of 9 October 1916 (MPK 161).

63 KA, vol.17, pp.5-6 ; also POLICE, 167, 67 quoted in GRAVE 129.

64 Stürmer's loyal report of 31 October 1916 : MPK131.

> speedy despatch to the front line for military service of all members of the legislative chambers in the liable age group. (65)

However the increasingly extreme utterances of both government and Duma were symptoms of a severe attack of nerves and there were attempts from both sides to cool the situation. The government acted first : in the hope of avoiding a collision course, Protopopov arranged a meeting with his ex-colleagues of the Duma Bloc for 19 October. The personal animosity of Milyukov and Protopopov almost aborted the meeting from the start and Protopopov was quick to protest at the total lack of cooperation from the Bloc past and present :

> I came here for your support but I am not finding it. If it must be done, I shall carry on alone. You have never once invited me to the Bloc, I have not attended a single meeting ... Why is it that you treated even Khvostov better than you treat me?

After a semi-apology from the Bloc leaders for putting Protopopov in the dock, there was a serious attempt at political bargaining but the demands of Yefremov proved impossible for Protopopov to swallow. Nothing concrete emmerged from the meeting. Protopopov parted in exasperation : 'Gentlemen, I have made the experiment of cooperation but unfortunately it has proved unsuccessful ; this is my last attempt ; what more can I do ?'.[66] The government's appeasing move had been rejected and, true to Protopopov's last words, the government retreated into itself and adopted a defensive stance.

Among the Duma moderates there was still considerable doubt as to the wisdom of attacking the government. The familiar dilemma of the Bloc in wartime reappeared. A majority of Kadets and Progressists proposed adding their weight to the opposition movement to avoid being overtaken as political leaders, and pressing the advantage against the government despite the risk of revolution or military collapse. Milyukov, a minority of Kadets and

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65 PADENIE,v,72(Stürmer - quotation) and vi,347(Milyukov) ; also PALEOLOGUE,III,88.

66 See booklet published by the Progressive Bloc, copies of which may be found in the Rodzyanko fond (TsGAOR,f.605,delo 73) and Milyukov fond (TsGAOR,f.579,delo 382) ; also included in Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda,II,99-107 ; quotations pp.3 & 7 of Bloc booklet.

Progressists and the whole Oktobrist camp led by Rodzyanko, fearing revolut--ion more than the present government, proposed employing the Bloc to channel the energy of the opposition movement into securing particular concessions from the government.

A succession of Bloc meetings over the last ten days of October became the principal arena for the clash between the two viewpoints. At a meeting on 20 October debate centred on the degree of support which the Duma might expect in a political crisis : Krinsky for the Left Kadets argued that to attack the government 'would earn colossal popularity' but Shingarev for the Right Kadets feared that 'popularity' was an ephemeral political factor :

> The Vyborg Manifesto was a mistake ... The people did not rise and the Manifesto remained incomprehensible even to the intelligentsia. In the army they are now saying that a palace revolution is necessary but I am a great sceptic of revolution in general ... let us instead initiate a campaign of parliamentary moves. (67)

At the meeting of 22 October argument centred over whether to attack the premier, the administration or the whole governmental structure. A tri-partite division emerged with Milyukov, the Right Kadets and the Oktobrists in the centre, and the Left Kadets and Progressists, and the Progressive Nationalists at the two extremes : Milyukov found his position under fire from both the Left (headed by Yefremov) and the Right (led by Shul'gin).[68] The subsequent meeting on 24 October however saw the triumph of the Milyukov viewpoint : Milyukov persuaded both Yefremov and Shul'gin that his centre line was preferable to the ascendancy of the opposite wing and promised a firm stand against the government. Shingarev gamely attempted to define the common ground of the compromise but only succeeded in highlighting its political feebleness :

> The only hope is that the Duma is not estranged from the country. Our only strength is moral authority ... The issue must be faced right now and you must not fear to show your attitude to the government ... the issue must be presented point-blank : the government <u>or</u> the Duma. (69)

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67 20 October 1916 : <u>KA</u>,vol.56,pp.88-93(Krinsky and Shingarev pp.90 & 92).

68 22 October 1916 : <u>KA</u>,vol.56,pp.99-102.

69 24 October 1916 : <u>KA</u>,vol.56,pp.102-6(Shingarev p.105).

Even so, while confessing sympathy for the anger of the Left, Milyukov had secured a tactical victory for his traditional policy of restraint.

But while Milyukov had engineered a victory for his policies within the Bloc, he was less successful within his party. The Autumn conference of the Kadet party held in Petrograd 22-24 October, the first since the internal coups of May, proved a complete upset for Milyukov's hopes for political restraint. Anticipating strong opposition, Milyukov adopted his usual tactic of holding closed sessions and excluding the public and press.[70] Milyukov rather desperately defended his position on tactical grounds :

> In its struggle with this upheaval the government will find itself in a vacuum - it will have no-one to lean on ... At the ultimate moment, frightened, it will grasp for us and it will then be our task not to destroy the government, which would only aid anarchy, but to instil a completely different content into it, that is to build a genuine constitutional order. That is why, in our struggle with the government, despite everything, we must retain a sense of proportion ... To support anarchy in the name of the struggle with the government would mean to risk all the political conquests which we have made since 1905. (71)

The Left Kadets and provincial delegates hit out hard : Milyukov was person-ally attacked for being out of touch with the mood of Russia and spending more time seeking foreign contacts than preserving the links in the Kadet organisation. Prince Pavel Dolgorukov concluded a personal account of the Autumn conference with the observations :

> Milyukov sees the centre of attention as the parliamentary struggle with the government ; the "provincials" insist on shifting the centre of attention to the organisation of the masses, to a rapprochement with political groups to the Left ... Finally, as always, Milyukov succeeded in defeating his opponents and made them follow him. But this was accomplished only after a prolonged and heated struggle. The conference showed that the party's Left wing is growing constantly stronger. (72)

Despite the device of holding the conference <u>in camera</u>, the strength of the Left Kadet opposition to Milyukov quickly became known in Duma circles. Milyukov was now caught between the Party and the Bloc : his seriously-challenged authority within the party compelled him to shift his ground

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70 <u>Birzhevie Vedomosty</u>,27 October 1916.

71 Report of 2 November 1916 : <u>POLICE</u>,27,26524 quoted in GRAVE 147-8.

72 Quoted in Moscow report of 2 November 1916 : <u>POLICE</u>,27,26524 quoted in GRAVE 146 and in Riha,<u>A Russian European</u>,pp.261-2 ; also <u>Novoe Vremya</u>,27 October 1916 and <u>TsGAOR</u>,f.579(Milyukov),1106,1-4.

towards the Left in order to retain party leadership but this very move challenged the tactical victory which he had just secured over his Left Kadet and Progressist opponents within the Bloc.

In the interests of party unity and his own leadership, Milyukov was forced to abandon his policy of restraint. Once the decision was made, he could find arguments to sustain a policy of attack : the Duma must once again become the spokesman for the Russian people in order to regain the full confidence of a nation disappointed by the passivity of its past conduct. As Milyukov now remarked to Paléologue, 'certain things will have to be said from the tribune - otherwise we shall lose all authority over our constituents and they will turn to the extreme parties'.[73] The new move was greeted with enthusiasm by society forces outside the Duma. Rodzyanko received a message from the Union of Zemstvos on 29 October assuring him that,

> In the decisive battle of the State Duma for the institution of a government capable of uniting all the living forces of the country and carrying out nation to victory, "Zemstvo Russia" will stand at one with the people's representatives.

A similar resolution from the Union of Towns on 31 October stressed that 'the decisive hour has arrived - delay is intolerable and all efforts must be bent for the establishment of a government which in union with the people will lead the country to victory'.[74] Ostensibly, the identification of the Duma moderates with the larger opposition movement was was now complete.

However the Bloc meetings of 30 and 31 October provided the venue for still further controversy over Duma action. Following its precedent of August 1915, the Bloc attempted to broaden the base of its campaign by alliance with the State Council but the majority of the Council delegates, while sympathetic to the general line of the Bloc, refused to countenance the accusation of treason prepared against Stürmer. Vladimir Gurko probably spoke for the Council majority in saying,

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73 PALEOLOGUE,III,88-9.

74 TsGAOR,f.605(Rodzyanko),74,2 ; both messages are also quoted in full in Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',pp.29-31.

> As a member of the upper chamber, I categorically state that as regards the declaration as a whole, the majority will go along with the Duma, but as they will not suscribe to this clause. I would be the first to protest against the accusation of treason.

Milyukov gladly seized on the principle of Bloc unity to rationalise a compromise entirely to his own liking and the projected speech was toned down to avoid alienating the Council delegates.[75] The cautiousness of the Council members combined with trepidation about the Duma session now only two days away to prompt a dramatic collapse of self-confidence on the part of the Right wing of the Bloc. At the meeting of 31 October Shul'gin roundly condemned the Milyukov line for inciting rather than expressing the opposition movement :

> Now the Kadets are introducing a proposal to base agreement on the principle of active struggle with the government ... but we are not prepared to go to the barricades on that basis. The Duma must be the safety-valve for letting off steam, not for making steam.

While the Bloc Right wing found the Kadet line unduly provocative, the Left wing led by Yefremov deplored Milyukov's retreat over the treason charge and considered the edited declaration too anaemic :

> The declaration is both weak and feeble. I cannot be silent any longer. There is an infinitely more crucial issue arising here than the question of editorial modifications. Are we agreed that we must do more, appreciating the necessity for further struggle with the government and the "personal regime" ? We fear that the Zemstvo-Oktobrists do not accept even the necessity for attack ... [and] today I have seen the disagreement is deeper than I realised ... It is a fundamental split in the Bloc organisation.

Despite the soothing reassurances of Milyukov and Shidlovsky, Yefremov delivered his bombshell : 'the decision of the Progressists is not to subscr--ibe to the declaration and consequently to quit the Progressive Bloc'.[76]

The Progressist decision rocked the self-confidence of the Bloc on the very evening prior to the opening of the Duma session. Although the decision announced by Yefremov was by no means unanimous - a Progressist 'rump' led by Orlov-Davydov refused to quit the Bloc - the repercussions could hardly have

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75 Bloc meeting of 30 October 1916 : KA,vol.56,pp.110-114(Gurko p.113) ; also GURKO 582-3 and SHUL'GIN 80-5.

76 Bloc meeting of 31 October 1916 : KA,vol.56,pp.114-7(Shul'gin 114, Yefremov 116-7, Milyukov and Shidlovsky 117) ; also PADENIE,vi,346 (Milyukov) and Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.33.

been more serious.[77] The action of the Progressists persuaded the Left Kadets to give practical consideration to breaking away from the authority of Milyukov and forming a new fraction with the Yefremovist Progressists.[78] The double threat to the unity of the Progressive Bloc and his own Kadet fraction and party posed a terrifying dilemma for Milyukov. To refrain from attack (his own original policy) would keep the Right wing of the Bloc content at the expense of losing the Progressists, probably losing most of the Left Kadets and conceivably even his own party leadership, not to mention again disappointing the opposition movement in the country. To attack the government mercilessly (a line personally deplored by Milyukov) could possibly lose the Bloc the allegiance of the moderate Right fractions but had the advantages of retaining Left Kadet and Progressist allegiances, reviving the prestige of the Duma as the national spokesman and saving his personal position as party leader. There was more than a risk of Bloc disintegration either way but Milyukov characteristically chose the course which offered the surest guarantee for his own national and party authority. Milyukov's decision to attack was not prompted by 'a momentary aberration' : while his commitment to a policy of assault upon the government was untypical, the action was for Milyukov the logical response to the predicament of the Duma in the country and his own position within the disintegrating Kadet party and Bloc in the exceptional circumstances of late 1916.[79]

All who attended the first day of the new Duma session on 1 November eagerly anticipated a forthright attack on the government. The Council of Ministers, informed of developments within the Bloc by their police reporters and undercover agent Krupensky, prudently departed immediately after Rodzyanko's opening speech.[80] After the warm-up in the form of Shidlovsky's

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77 Report of 8 November 1916 : POLICE,xvii,307A/1/1916,89 ; also Utro Rossii,2 November 1916.

78 Ibid ; also PADENIE,vi,91-2 and Rech',1 & 5 November 1916.

79 The phrase is Katkov's : KATKOV 194 ; also Riha,A Russian European,pp. 263-4.

80 PADENIE,vi,91-2(Milyukov) ; PALEOLOGUE,III,91 ; GURKO 547.

reading of the Bloc Declaration, Milyukov rose to speak.[81] His speech was not marked by great political insight, striking oratory or convincing argument but there was no doubt of the immediate impact of this succès de scandale. Milyukov used the knowledge that the presiding officer Varun-Sekret knew no German to read out passages from the Neue Freie Presse describing the baneful influence of the Empress upon Russian politics. He followed this with a catalogue of accusations against Stürmer, hesitating after each charge to enquire rhetorically 'Is this stupidity or is this treason?'. Finally he attempted to cover himself against future legal redress by remarking,

> Does it matter, practically speaking, whether we are dealing with stupidity or treason ? The government persists in claiming that organising the country means organising a revolution and deliberately prefers chaos and disorganisation. Is this stupidity or is this treason? Choose either, the consequences are the same. (82)

The charge of treason directed explicitly at Stürmer (and implicitly at the Empress) lent Milyukov's speech enormous notoriety. Milyukov was to remark with pride some years later that,

> The impression it produced was as if a blister filled with pus had burst and the basic evil, which was known to everyone but had awaited public exposure, had now been pin-pointed ... My speech earned the reputation of a storm-signal for the revolution. Such was not my intention but the prevailing mood in the country served as a megaphone for my words. (83)

Rodzyanko dared not authorise the publication of a complete stenographic record of the speech but pirated versions were typewritten by the thousand to satisfy a public eager to learn the worst.[84]

The government was thrown onto the defensive by the shock of Milyukov's 'storm-signal'. Stürmer asked his colleagues for authorisation to prosecute Milyukov as a political criminal but the other ministers, anxious for a return to calm, persuaded him to sue for slander instead.[85] The passivity

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81 GDSO,V,1,10-13 (Shidlovsky).

82 GDSO,V,1,35-48 (Milyukov) ; for the speaker's own copy,see TsGAOR,f.555, delo 60 ; also PADENIE,vi,346-7(Milyukov) and SHUL'GIN 85-6.

83 Milyukov,Istoria Vtoroy Russkoy Revolyutsii,Sofia 1922-4,II,277.

84 PALEOLOGUE,III,93, ; ŠUL'GIN 56-7 ; Milyukov,'Fevral'skie Dni',p.170.

85 PADENIE,i,266(Stürmer) and vi,347(Milyukov).

of the ministers under fire only encouraged the Bloc onslaught. The Duma expected to hear philippics from the demagogues of the Extreme Left (and Kerensky and Chkheidze predictably attacked the government on the first occasion) but what surprised the Duma and alarmed the government was the mobilisation of the moderate Right in the campaigm.[86] At the second sitting of the Duma on 3 November, the usually mild-mannered Shul'gin concentrated his wrath on the person of Stürmer :

> A man without convictions, ready for anything ... who understands nothing about state affairs ... who does not attend here, offers no explanations, refutes no accusations but resorts to legal redress against Milyukov... We will fight this government until it goes. On the home front is the Duma. It watches , listens,finds out and when necessary, speaks out. (87)

Even Vasilii Maklakov abandoned his self-chosen rôle as 'trimmer' of the Duma moderates to add his considerable talents to the denunciation of Stürmer and his administration :

> This ministerial kaleidoscope, in which we fail even to get a glimpse of the faces of the ministers involved ! This cabinet without a programme, ministers without opinions, without faith in one another, without mutual respect, without even tokens of solidarity. The sum of it all is the present government of Stürmer ... which paralyses and enfeebles the strength of all Russia ... We have now parted company with the old regime in Russia and before each minister stands a dilemma : serve Russia or serve the regime. To serve both is as impossible as to serve God and Mammon. (88)

Appalled at the broad spectrum of attack from the Extreme Left through to the Nationalists, Stürmer in his loyal report of 3 November held out no hope whatsoever for avoiding prompt Duma prorogation.[89]

Yet despite Stürmer's misgivings, the Council of Ministers authorised the Ministers for War and the Navy, Shuvayev and Grigorovich, to approach the Duma in the interests of the war effort.[90] The visit of the two ministers

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86 GDSO,V,1,13-22(Chkheidze) and 28-33(Kerensky) ; a seperate transcript of the Chkheidze speech is in the Milyukov fond : TsGAOR,f.579,delo 454.

87 GDSO,V,2,67-71 ; seperate transcripts are in both the Milyukov fond (TsGAOR,f.579,delo 456) and Guchkov fond(TsGAOR,f.555,delo 62) ; see also the speaker's own account in SHUL'GIN 86-88.

88 GDSO,V,2,130-1 ; a seperate transcript is in the Milyukov fond : TSGAOR, f.579,delo 455.

89 MPK 132-3 ; also PADENIE,i,229(Stürmer).

90 TsGAOR,f.627(Stürmer),15,2-3 ; also PARES 393 and CHERMENSKY 776.

to the Duma on 4 November was greeted rapturously by the Bloc and both sides repledged their oaths of loyalty to the pursuit of victory in the war. Milyukov exultantly claimed that 'the Ministers for War and the Navy took their stand on the side of the Duma and the nation'.[91] The element of misunderstanding which converted a reconnaissance mission into an acclaimed Duma triumph demonstrated the relief with which the Bloc welcomed the slightest sign of concession from the government. Stürmer was acutely embarrassed by the episode, which was interpreted by all as 'proof that these two ministers are not in solidarity with the remainder of the Council of Ministers' and that the Duma had secured two converts from the government camp.[92] Stürmer believed the Duma to be jeering at the 'Dictator' who could not impose even the most rudimentary discipline over his ministers. Personally distressed, without resource or hope for the future, Stürmer was clearly at the end of his political usefulness.

The Milyukov 'storm-signal' was destined to take pride of place in Duma and particularly Kadet hagiography. In later years the all-important exigencies of the moment were forgotten and the speech seen as a deliberate and conscious advance in the movement against tsardom. In the scramble for a place in the history of the Russian revolution, Kadet apologists were to claim the 1 November speech as 'the beginning of the revolution'.[93] The immediate consequences of the speech seemed impressive enough. Stürmer was discharged, the inevitable end of a protracted and painful process. Under fire from the Empress since mid August and from the Council of Ministers since mid September, the 'Dictator' had in practice been reduced to mere Council Chairman by October. The last justification for holding even this post was his successful handling of the State Duma and Alexandra was quick

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91 GDSO,V,4,203-5 (Shuvayev) ; MPK 135 ; PALEOLOGUE,III,94-5 ; Rech' editorial,6 November 1916(quotation).

92 Stürmer's report of 7 November 1916 : MPK 135 ; also ENGEL'HARDT,xii,728.

93 For example : Mandel'stam in Rech',28 March 1917 ; Tyrkova-Williams in From Liberty to Brest-Litovsk,London 1919,p.3 ; Petrunkevich in Iz Zapisok Obshchestvennogo Deyatelya,Vospominania,Berlin 1934,p.355 ; and Milyukov himself in Istoria Vtoroy Russkoy Revolyutsii,I,34.

to furnish the Emperor with the fullest details of his glaring failure in this respect.[94] On 8 November Nicholas agreed to his removal :

> I have been thinking of old Stürmer. He, as you rightly say, acts as a red flag not only to the Duma but to the whole country alas. I hear this from all sides ; nobody believes in him and everyone is angry because we stand up for him... I reproach him for his excessive prudence and his incapacity for taking upon himself the responsibility of making them all work as they should do ... He is coming here tomorrow and I will give him leave for the present. (95)

As Milyukov was to relate, Stürmer's downfall (announced on 10 November) was accounted a personal triumph by the delighted Duma Bloc :

> The first impression from the dismissal of Stürmer was that this was a complete victory for the Duma following its onslaught upon Stürmer. It seemed as if in effect this was the first step towards ministerial responsibility in that an individual, having received a harsh judgement, was dismissed. (96)

The second major consequence of the 'storm-signal' was Milyukov's triumphant return to political ascendancy. A police report for 8 November observed that 'the hero of the hour is Milyukov ; there is no doubt that his popularity in the Duma, Bloc and his own fraction has reached its zenith'.[97] In the country, type-written and mimeographed cppies of his speech brought the name of Milyukov to everyone with an interest im politics or a taste for 'seditious' literature.[98] Milyukov's authority within the Bloc was again impregnable. Although the Progressists were still sulking in isolation, there was every ground for hope that they could be enticed back into a Bloc which had survived possibly the greatest test to its unity so far. While the speech did not draw the Left Kadets unconditionally back into line, it did arrest the Leftward drift of the Kadet minority and instilled into the majority a new breezy self-confidence :

> The Kadets are persuaded that the government cannot refuse the demands of the Progressive Bloc ... The Kadets have attained incredible political influence over the last weeks, their opinions are believed and they are aided by the restlessness in society ; Milyukov has become the regular hero of the day. (99)

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94 Alexandra's letters of 7,8 & 9 November 1916 : ALEXANDRA 436-7.

95 Letter of 8 November 1916 : NICHOLAS 296.

96 PADENIE,vi,348(Milyukov).

97 POLICE,xvii,307A/1/1916,89.

98 MILIUKOV 377-8 ; also KATKOV 165 and Riha,A Russian European,p.266.

Milyulov's last-minute switch in tactics on the eve of the Duma session had been amply vindicated and everything which he could reasonably have hoped for from the speech had come to pass.

The immediate consequences of the 'storm-signal' suggested an authority which was in reality largely illusory. The Duma attack had provided only the final push in the fall of Stürmer, not its deciding element. The Bloc uncertainty about tactics was by no means resolved by the success of early November and the moderate groups were far from unanimous about how to exploit their famous victory. At the Bloc meeting of 8 November, the first since 31 October, Milyukov prudently attempted to place recent events in perspective :

> I would not call the substitution of Trepov and Protopopov for Stürmer a great event but ... an electric spark emitted here is running over the country. Under the influence of the feeling of mortal danger which we have pointed out here, the country is rousing itself.

His colleagues, while quick to congratulate themselves on their recent success, preferred to postpone decisions about future policy until the formation of the new administration.[100] In Moscow the local Kadets recovered from the intoxication of victory earlier than in Petrograd and experienced a full return to their old qualms about the relative strengths of Duma and government. A police reporter described the mood of the 9 November meeting of Moscow Kadets as,

> Clearly showing utter perplexity at finding solutions, complete recognition of their own impotence and awareness of the power of the government. None of the Kadets believe that the government will meet the demands of the Bloc <u>in full</u> and in the last analysis, the whole question for the Kadets is who should replace Stürmer ... In their private conversations the Kadets demonstrate a strong inclination to compromise ... The Kadets talk of the possibility of a "Society Cabinet" only in their official statements, and in their private discussions are reconciling themselves to a partial renovation of the present cabinet. (101)

The early collapse of confidence in Moscow Kadet circles was soon to communicate itself to Petrograd.

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99 Report of 19 November 1916 : <u>POLICE</u>,xvii,307A/1/1916,157.

100 <u>KA</u>,vol.56,pp.117-8.

101 <u>POLICE</u>,xvii,27-1916,46(Moscow),28 (original underlining).

It also emerged that the promises of support given by the public organisations provided little real reinforcement in a duel with the government The point was proved when on 5 November the MVD adopted its now traditional device of slapping a ban on the congresses of the Zemstvo and Town Unions. While the Union of Towns was tempted to defy the ban, the more staid Union of Zemstvos meeting on the sixth resolved 'under no circumstances to operate by illegal means, nor under any circumstances to assemble a congress by revolutionary means'. Not prepared to defy both the government and its senior partner, a meeting of the executive of the Union of Towns the next day reluctantly followed suit.[102] The provocative action of the MVD was accepted by the public organisations with little more than statutory complaint, demonstrating that in November 1916 they were still not prepared to follow the Bloc into battle, even had the Bloc wished to lead.

With the fall of Stürmer came the task of reconstituting the Council of Ministers and, ever sensitive to appearances and the claims of the Duma upon his prerogatives, Nicholas insisted that 'while these changes are in progress the Duma will be prorogued for about eight days, otherwise they would say it was being done under pressure from them'.[103] Despite Nicholas's transparent motive for instituting the Duma break of 10-19 November, all the changes made were deliberately calculated to weaken the resolve of the militants and offer hope to the moderates. The Council of Ministers was reconstituted with the clear purpose of appeasing the Duma. On 10 November, and despite the qualms of the Empress who saw her plans for Protopopov threatened, Stürmer was replaced by the moderate Right Aleksandr Trepov.[104] On the sixteenth the despised and incompetent Minister of Agriculture Bobrinsky was succeeded by Rittikh, whose training under Stolypin and Krivoshein guaranteed a measure of efficiency and rendered him acceptable to moderates everywhere.[105] Two

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102 POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46,30 ; also CHERMENSKY 777-8.

103 Letter of 10 November 1916 : NICHOLAS 298 ; TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,243.

104 Alexandra's opinion of Trepov : letters of 7 & 10 November 1916 (ALEXANDRA 436 & 438) ; also PALEOLOGUE,III,34.

105 PARES 393 ; Times,25 November & 1 December 1916(n/s),8b and 7a.

of the most disliked ministers of the government had been removed to placate the Duma and their replacements specially selected to avoid giving offence. The Duma and Council of Ministers now cooperated in a campaign for the removal of the third Duma bête noire still remaining in the government.

The campaign was only possible because of the Emperor's mounting doubts about Protopopov :

> I am sorry for Protopopov - he is a good honest man but he jumps from one idea to another and cannot make up his mind on anything. I noticed that from the beginning ... It is risky to leave the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the hands of such a man in these times. (106)

Divining the political breeze, Trepov made the removal of Protopopov a condition of his tenure as Chairman of the Council at his interview with Nicholas on 10 November.[107] Nicholas's agreement elicited a torrent of protest from Alexandra. Rightly judging that her husband's independence of mind ran in direct proportion to his distance from her side, Alexandra packed for the Stavka at once.[108] Her letters before departure show her insistence on Protopopov's retention :

> I entreat you don't go and change Protopopov now, he will be alright, give him the chance ... Don't change anybody until we meet, I entreat you, let's speak it over quietly together ... Protopopov venerates Our Friend and will be blessed, he is not mad ... Don't make any changes till I have come.

and

> Put off Trepov until we have met ... I am but a woman fighting for her Master and Child, only don't pull away the sticks upon which I have found it possible to rest ... Only when you tell Trepov you won't change Protopopov, don't for goodness' sake mention my name - it must be your wise wish. (109)

Alexandra arrived at the Stavka on 13 November and remained until 3 December; the evidence suggests that the stay was not a very pleasant one for Nicholas :

> Yes, these days spent together were difficult but only thanks to you have I spent them more or less calmly. You were so strong and steadfast - I admire you more than I can say. Forgive me if I was moody and unrestrained. (110)

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106 Letter of 9 November 1916 : NICHOLAS 297.

107 Vasilii Gurko, Memories, p.180 ; Gilliard, Thirteen Years, pp.178-9.

108 Vasilii Gurko, Memories, p.180 ; Yusupov, Rasputin, p.140.

109 Letters of 11 & 12 November 1916 : ALEXANDRA 439-441.

110 Nicholas's letter of 4 December 1916 : NICHOLAS 299.

Alexandra naturally had her way and at Trepov's second audience with the Emperor on 16 November, both Protopopov's dismissal and Trepov's own subsequent offer of resignation were refused.[111] In an unprecedented attempt at joint action, Trepov and other ministers appealed to Rodzyanko to use his influence to oust Protopopov but Rodzyanko's visit to the Stavka was to prove no more fruitful than Trepov's.[112] Trepov was eventually driven by desperation to the rash course of attempting to bribe Rasputin to get rid of Protopopov.[113] Neither approach worked : the attempted bribe put Trepov in the wrong morally and earned him the hatred of the Empress, while the tentative collaboration of Duma and Council was never to develop. Protopopov was retained in spite of his estrangement from the Duma, the Council of Ministers and the Emperor himself.

Trepov took care to initiate good relations with the Duma from the very start of his administration. On 11 November, only the second day of his appointment, Trepov held exploratory courtesy talks with Rodzyanko. After asking Rodzyanko's advice on a replacement for Protopopov, Trepov invited him (as described above) to join the Council of Ministers in a combined operation for his removal. Its complete lack of success in achieving its object did not disgrace the exercise in the eyes of Rodzyanko and the Duma.[114] On the first day of the reconvened session on 19 November, Trepov turned his seductive arts upon the more susceptible of the Duma moderates : an assurance of a complete review of the question of agricultural price-pegging set out to woo the landowning Oktobrists, while his public disclosure of the Straits Agreement guaranteeing Russian acquisition of Constantinople at the end of the war was intended to dispel rumours of a Seperate Peace and recommend the mew administration in particular to the Kadets. In both

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111 PALEOLOGUE,III,105-8 ; Vasilii Gurko,Memories,pp.180-2 ; Gilliard, Thirteen Years,p.179.

112 Byloe,February 1918,p.151 ; R.P.Browder and A.F.Kerensky,The Russian Provisional Government 1917,3 vols,Stanford U.P. 1961 (cited hereafter as BROWKER),I,9-10.

113 A.A.Mossolov,At the Court of the Last Tsar,London 1935,pp.169-173 ; PADENIE,ii,60-1(Trepov) ; ENGEL'HARDT,xii,728 ; Yusupov,Rasputin,p.118.

tactical ploys Trepov secured a considerable measure of success.[115]

The Duma was faced with the familiar dilemma of what attitude to take to a new administration. Was it to treat the Trepov cabinet as a new government without responsibility for the misdeeds of its predecessor, and attempt rapprochement ? Or was the 'new' government merely 'a reseating of the musicians' in which nothing fundamental was altered, necessitating a continuation of the November assault ?[116] The response to the dilemma varied widely, demonstrating once more the disunited nature of the Duma membership. The Duma Left decided to press the attack. On 8 November the Progressists, Trudoviks and Mensheviks jointly announced their future boycott of the government.[117] The Progressist attitude to the new Trepov cabinet was summed up by Utro Rossii on 11 November as 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'. A police report of 19 November confirmed the existence of a 'Left alliance' which included some Left Kadets as well as Progressists:

> Considering the tactics of the Progressive Bloc mistaken and having lost faith in their leaders, the Left Kadets and various Progressists, while not yet having decided to join the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries, are very close to their point of view. (118)

On 16 November, a group of Petrograd Progressists addressed a policy statement to Rodzyanko declaring that,

> The progressive-democratic group of municipal councillors and electors of Petrograd declare any collaboration by the State Duma with the Trepov cabinet to be against the interests of the country and call upon the State Duma to continue in unison with the country the persistent struggle for power. (119)

The same day, Yefremov released a nine-page defence of Progressist actions over the previous month which concluded :

> I do not expect large-scale changes. If the cabinet of Trepov is a little less reactionary than the Stürmer cabinet .., it is all the same

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114 See Rodzyanko's account in KA,vol.56,pp.118-9.

115 GDSO,V,6,251-9 ; TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,252-274 ; Vasilii Gurko,Memories, p.189 ; Milyukov's Rech' editorial,20 November 1916.

116 The phrase is Milyukov's : Rech' editorial,11 November 1916 ; see also special article by J.Y.Simpson in Times,29 December 1916(n/s),5d.

117 TsGIAL,f.1278(State Duma),4357,403 cited in CHERMENSKY 791.

118 POLICE,xvii,307/A/1/1916,156.

119 TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),381,1.

> to us. Doubtless it will be infinitely far from the cabinet that Russia needs ... For us Progressists, standing for battle with the regime, the position is clear - the fight with the government has only begun. (120)

And yet on the opening day of the reconvened session, a fundamental rift in the 'Left alliance' between the 'suicidal' and the 'tactical' Left emerged at once. The Trudoviks and Mensheviks initiated a policy of obstruction, were forcibly expelled from the chamber and excluded from the next eight Duma sittings. The Left Kadets and Progressists, far from joining them, even voted for their exclusion, preferring the more supple and adroit strategy of Milyukov.[121] The 'Left alliance' had collapsed at its first test.

On the Duma Right wing, 19 November was an equally distressing day, with the dogged loyalty of the Right rank-and-file to the government in power suffering a double shock. The Trepov Declaration revising agricultural price-pegging, whilst welcome to the landowning sector, incensed the peasant deputies for whom a price freeze was advantageous. The peasant deputies condemned the Declaration as a ploy by the new administration to ingratiate itself with the Progressive Bloc at the expense of its traditional loyal support.[122] Anger at being taken for granted was topped by astonishment at the public defection of the most famous leader of the Right. In a speech which surpassed even that of Milyukov in impact, Purishkevich categorically condemned the government of Stürmer and Protopopov, and demanded the banish--ment of Rasputin and all other 'dark forces' from Russian political life.[123] If the speech of the leader of the Duma Opposition met with approval, the degree of criticism expressed by the leader of the Right stunned educated society. The Duma Right hurriedly expelled Purishkevich from the fraction to which he had suddenly become a painful embarrassment, while the Okhrana was

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120 TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),delo 453,1-9(quotation p.9) ; also Utro Rossii, 15 November 1916.

121 GDSO,V,6,240-251(19 November 1916) ; TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),2184,1-2 ; RODZYANKO 180 ; PADENIE,vi,348-9(Milyukov) ; KERENSKY 180 ; Rech', 20 November 1916.

122 Vasilii Gurko,Memories,p.189 ; also CHERMENSKY 798-800.

123 GDSO,V,6,229-318 ; TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,290-327 ; V.M.Purishkevich,Dnevnik Purishkevicha,Riga 1921,p.6.

authorised to conduct a thorough investigation into the 'Purishkevich affair'.[124] In a fury of desperation, the other Right leader Markov Two rounded on Rodzyanko, calling him a 'babbling blackguard' at the Duma sitting of 22 November and earning himself a richly-deserved exclusion from the Duma for fifteen sittings. Within a week the Right fraction split between the followers of Purishkevich and of Markov.[125] The Duma Right disintegrated, leaving the new administration with few hopes for the traditional allegiance of the Right (and therefore even more disposed towards the moderates).

In contrast to both wings of the Duma, the opposition drive against the government in the moderate camp began to falter. The Bloc meeting of 11 November showed the delegates outwardly determined on government acceptance of the entire Bloc Declaration, but the Moscow Kadets were already pre-empting the issue by arguing the necessity of cooperation with the new administration.[126] On the thirteenth both the Petrograd and Moscow Kadet Committees passed resolutions supporting collaboration with Trepov, thereby demonstrating that the level of political self-assurance in Petrograd was dropping to that of Moscow. The police reporter noted of the Petrograd meeting, 'even the representative of the Left wing of the Kadets, Rodichev, supported businesslike cooperation ... in general yesterday's meeting of the Kadets has shown that their spirits are starting to fall.'[127] The continuing decline in morale expressed itself in a debate at the next Bloc meeting on the efficacy of a Duma boycott should the government prove intransigent.[128] A police report of 19 November registered a further drop on the barometer of Kadet self-confidence :

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124 Report of 23 November 1916 : POLICE,xvii,307A/1/1916,176-190 ; TsGIAL, f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,394-408.

125 GDSO,V,7,370-1(Markov on 22 November 1916) ; Police report of 28 November 1916 : POLICE,1916,307A,iii,2,132 ; also Times,12 December 1916, 8c and Manchester Guardian,6 January 1917(both n/s),6g.

126 Bloc meeting of 11 November 1916 : KA,vol.56,pp.118-120 ; Moscow Kadet meeting of 11 November 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46,32-3.

127 Report of 14 November 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46,36-7.

128 Bloc meeting of 18 November 1916 : KA,vol.56,pp.126-131.

> Just noe the Kadets fear not only the dissolution of the Duma ... but that the war may finish without their decisive vote, and the supply and Polish questions may be decided without their participation. What will become of the "Party of the People's Freedom" if it has no influence on the affairs of the people ? With all the dexterity of a conjuror, Milyukov is throwing all the blame onto the government. (129)

The nine-day Duma recess worked more to the advantage of the government than the Duma opposition movement. While the Trepov administration made its preparations, the early oppositional spirit of the Duma, although maintained by the Left and emerging dramatically on the Right, largely evaporated amongst the moderates.

There was a variety of reasons for the declining commitment of the moderates to attack. Two of the three principal targets for Duma hostility had been toppled and the third seemed impregnable to Duma and cabinet campaign alike. With the worst features of the regime gone and the new Trepov administration making clear moves towards cooperation with the Duma, most Oktobrists and Bloc Right-wingers had little desire to advance further. With his authority within the Bloc and Kadet party now unchallengeable and the threat of fraction disintegration reduced, Milyukov returned to the 'soft-sell' policy towards the government which he had always personally favoured.

Most Kadets and Oktobrists also suffered a fundamental lack of self-confidence in dealings with authority, believing that an all-out assault could well prove more damaging to its authors than to the government. Memories of the Vyborg Appeal still haunted the Kadets and the fear that the country would not support their actions never left the moderate parties. They may well have been right : on 10 November Protopopov issued an MVD circular to provincial governors requesting impressions of the impact of the Bloc 'storm-signal'. The answering reports suggested that nationwide interest was transient.[130] The moderates preferred to keep uncompromising assault as an unknown and therefore overestimated 'ultimate weapon'. Partly out of lack of self-assurance, partly from tactical considerations, the moderates

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129 POLICE,xvii,307A/1/1916,161.

130 Ibid,97.

consistently avoided a fight to the death, always preferring to keep room open for manoeuvre and negotiation.

Internal divisions also sabotaged any hope of a sustained offensive against the government. Factional squabbles reappeared the moment that tension dipped. Reference has already been made to the price-pegging issue wich united the Left with the peasant Right against the landowning interest as represented by the Oktobrists. At the Duma sitting of 29 November, the land interest counter-attacked by accusing industry of exorbitant war profits : the Zemstvo-Oktobrist Stempkovsky claimed that the rise in the profits of the Progressist Konovalov's textile combine from 813,000 roubles in 1913 to 7,101,000 roubles in 1915 could only be explained by war-profiteering.[131] The antipathy of landowner and peasant was again aroused, this time over the introduction of the volost' zemstvo. The peasants united in opposition to the Oktobrist bill, which they believed constituted a landed scheme desighed further to exploit the peasant.[132] The effect of all these squabbles was two-fold : they tended to mark off the propertied moderates from the extremes of Left and Right on the basis of self-interest ; and they absorbed the greater part of the energies of the Bloc which were diverted from the larger conflict between Duma and government.

A final factor in the decline of the moderates' opposition campaign was that fear dominated the psychology of the moderate parties. Fear of a Seperate Peace and the accompanying international humiliation of Russia was on the rise in autumn 1916, while the fear of government provocation was to dominate the Duma over the winter of 1916/1917.[133] A more immediate fear was of the dissolution of the Fourth Duma. The Bloc membership of late 1916 almost without exception preferred the existing unsatisfactory and unrepres--entative arrangement to the prospect of elections to a Fifth Duma, with the

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131 GDSO,V,10,558 ; for a discussion, see CHERMENSKY 800.

132 GDSO,V,15,1051-1072(13 December 1916) ; also CHERMENSKY 802.

133 For example, Rodzyanko's article 'Provokatsia' in Sovremennoe Slove, 4 December 1916.

likelihood of more extensive MVD gerrymandering and the exposure of their own complete isolation from the country. The Kadet fear of the dissolution of the Fourth Duma noted by the police on 19 November (see above) did not decrease with time ; indeed in early December the deputies were seriously concerned for their personal safety :

> At the present moment anxiety about the fate of the State Duma pervades the Progressive Bloc, and particularly the fate of individual deputies belonging to the Left wing. The prospect of dissolution is particularly menacing to the Bloc, for in the even of such an act of repression, the deputies would be deprived of their parliamentary immunity and the whole Left wing of the Bloc, including the Kadets, would be entirely in the power of the government. (134)

Even more terrifying than the prospect of government repression was that of revolution. By late November 1916 the emergence of revolution as a universally acknowledged threat had the Kadets, Progressists and Oktobrists, all with substantial stakes in the maintenance of public order, starting to tremble for their interests and investments. There was no doubt in the mind of the Okhrana that in the last resort the moderates would prefer to ally with the government on any terms to avert revolution :

> The Kadets quite literally comtemplate an approaching revolution with feelings of horror and panic. This horror is so great that if there was only the tiniest possibility of agreement with the government, if the government offered the slightest concession, the Kadets would run to meet her with joy. (135)

With the Duma fractions so dogged by fears and weaknesses, the parliamentary advantage could only lie with the government.

The 'storm-signal' of early November 1916, a tactical response to urgent internal and external pressures rather than a deliberate decision by the Bloc to declare war on the government, had entirely spent its force by the end of the month. Having secured its immediate objects in the fall of Stürmer and the stilling of the disintegration of the moderate camp, the moderate Right returned to the traditional Bloc policy of restraint. Having

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134 Report of 7 December 1916 : POLICE,307A/1/1916,21 ; Oznobishin, Vospominania,p.250.

135 Report of 11 December 1916 : POLICE,343,1916,106-7 ; also Moscow report of 2 November 1916 : POLICE,27,26524 quoted in GRAVE 148 and Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.28.

given expression to the welling discontent of the nation, the moderate Left fell prey to its own doubts and fears. While other political groups both to the Left and Right courted disaster by their impetuous prosecution of a campaign of assault, the tactics and policies of the moderates became dominated by careful self-interest.

2. 'The Word and the Vote'(December 1916-February 1917)

From December 1916 the craven policy of the Duma moderates towards the government not only profoundly weakened extra-Duma support for the 'moderate' course but actually contributed towards the developing extremism in Russian politics. Encouraged by the weak line advanced by the moderates and confident that his position at the MVD was secure against both Duma and cabinet attack, Protopopov stepped up his policy of repression. A new Police Act was effected under Clause 87 extending the arbitrary powers of the police, first employed in the banning of the December congresses of the Zemstvo and Town Unions.[136] On 9 December the two congresses convened in secret to pass resolutions condemning the closures and exhorting the Duma to fight on their behalf.[137] Only two days later however the congresses were already beginning to despair of their traditional links with the Progressive Bloc and issued a joint appeal to the Duma and to the army for support.[138]

The congresses' doubts proved justified : while prepared to do the minimum of introducing an official interpellation against the closures, the Bloc obligingly banned all public discussion of the subject at MVD request.[139] Their faith in the Bloc severely shaken, the Unions turned to the Left as their mouthpiece in the Duma. In defiance of the MVD and Duma ban, Kerensky

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136 Report of 9 December 1916 : POLICE,307A/1/1916,37 ; also POLICE,343,4 & 347,29664 quoted in GRAVE 152 & 157 ; MILIUKOV 379.

137 TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),2857,1-2 ; PALEOLOGUE,III,130-1 ; POLICE,1916, xx,46,116 cited in LAVERYCHEV 156 ; Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda,II,107-113.

138 POLICE,343,ZS,1916,112 quoted in CHERMENSKY 808 ; Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda,II,113-115.

139 KERENSKY 180-1 ; MILIUKOV 379 ; Times,29 December 1916(n/s),5e.

read out the congress resolutions to the Duma on 13 December. The Town Union demanded prompt and vigorous action from the Duma :

> The State Duma must carry on the struggle with this shameful regime with unremitting energy and strength to the bitter end. In this struggle the Duma will be backed by the entire nation. The Union of Towns calls upon the Duma to do its duty and remain in session until the principal task - the setting-up of a responsible ministry - is accomplished.

Even the traditionally more conservative Union of Zemstvos, whilst avoiding any suggestion of unconstitutional action, complained in the strongest terms.[140] Kerensky's protests were later joined by Konovalov's, who produced resolutions passed by the War Industries Committees which had held a secret congress on the fourteenth. The same exhortation to the Duma was reproduced :

> An unresponsible government is leading the country to disaster ... Only a responsible government united with the people and with their aid can guide the country out of the cul-de-sac into which the old regime has led us ... the Congress of delegates of the provincial War Industries Committees calls upon the State Duma to carry through its struggle for the establishment of a responsible government to the end. (141)

The position of the three public organisations was the same : in protest at police repression, appeals were launched to the Duma but the refusal of the moderates even to speak in their defence was forging a new political alliance with the Left. The events of mid December left little doubt that the public organisations were starting the process of passing from being a moderate political factor linked with the Duma Bloc to a militant force allied with the Duma Left. The public organisations' lack of confidence in the Duma found increasing expression in the utterances of the Duma Left, most patticularly in the words of Konovalov on 16 December : 'Let the battle be fought to the finish, let there be no concessions or compromises on the way . the task of the country is to back the State Duma in its struggle ; there is no wavering in the country, let there be no reservations in the Duma'.[142]

The forces for political moderation in December 1916 were too few to

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140 GDSO,V,15,1095-8 ; also extracts in TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),delo 2857, KERENSKY 180-1, TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,436 & 439, and RODZYANKO 203.

141 GDSO,V,18,1192-1201(sitting of 16 December 1916) ; also TsGAOR,f.555 (Guchkov),59,8-9.

142 GDSO,V,18,1200-1 ; for some details on the loss of moderate membership to the Left, see Mansyrev,'Moi Vospominania',pp.260-1.

afford the luxury of alienating powerful support. The Emperor was still resisting the reactionary course advocated by his wife but his collapse was expected daily. A police report for 28 November quoted Nationalist circles for the belief that there were two groups locked in power conflict at court : the Nicholas group 'advocating the immediate necessity of meeting the wishes recently expressed in both legislative chambers' and the Alexandra group which 'categorically opposes any change in the course of politics and stands by an earlier conception of government'.[143] Yet Nicholas appeared to favour a measure of trust in the Duma was indicated in his letter of 13 December :

> He [Trepov - R.P.] unfolded his plan concerning the Duma - to prorogue it on December 17th and reassemble it on January 19th, so as to show them and the whole country that in spite of all they have said the Government wish to work together.

However little faith could be placed upon the word of a monarch whose very next letter betrayed an ugly cynicism and brutal disregard for his ministers :

> It is unpleasant to speak to a man one does not like and does not trust like Trepov. But first of all it is necessary to find a substitute for him and then kick him out - after he has done the dirty work. I mean to make him resign after he has closed the Duma. Let all the responsibility and all the difficulties fall on his shoulders. (144)

Although Trepov was a force for moderation within the government, working both for the removal of Protopopov and the evolution of some working relationship with the Duma, it was only too clear that his days as premier were numbered.

Outside the government but still within the bounds of 'official Russia', two new recruits for the moderate course emerged over the last weeks of 1916. The Bloc campaign of early November had not been without impact upon the State Council, whose growing 'unreliability' was best expressed in the debate of 24 November : resolutions were passed demanding 'the decisive removal from governmental affairs of hidden unresponsible forces' (105 votes to 23) and 'the formation of a truly working government, united by a well-defined programme, relying on the confidence and good-will of the country and

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143 POLICE,xvii,307A/1/1916,252.

144 Letters of 13 & 14 December 1916 : NICHOLAS 306 & 307.

consequently capable of collaboration with the legislative institutions'(94 votes to 34).[145] Very similar motions weres passed at the Congress of the United Nobility convening in Petrograd 28 November-1 December. The Congress, comprising 126 delegates from 34 provinces, decided to submit a report on the political situation to the Emperor, the essence of which was an attack upom the 'dark powers' and a plea for a government 'enjoying popular confidence, capable of joint labour with the legislative institutions yet responsible only to the Monarch'.[146]

Two institutions which had hitherto been traditional bastions of reaction now shifted Left to adopt policies extraordinarily close to those of the Progressive Bloc, a measure of the universal recognition of the emergency as well as the relative lack of response of the Bloc. Virtually all organisat--ions and institutions outside the goverhment were responding similarly to the developing revolutionary situation : while the Leftward shift of the State Council and United Nobility provided the Duma moderates with undreamed-of allies, traditional Bloc support was also shifting Left to leave the moderates behind. In December 1916 the moderates began to lose the allegiance of the public organisations to the Left parties, being accidentally recompensed by the defection of groups from the Right.

The final force for the moderate line was of course the Progressive Bloc. The policy of restraint evolved after the 'storm-signal' of early November degenerated into abject servility in the course of December. Despite continuous MVD 'provocation', the Duma moderates declined to respond except to wag an occasional minatory finger. The MVD banning of the Union congresses and their subsequent protests were blandy disregarded by the Bloc, which was not prepared to prejudice the chances of the Fourth Duma running its fdll term. Rodzyanko and the Bloc submissively agreed to hold the Duma debate on internal policy on 13 December in closed sitting to avoid offending the

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145 PADENIE,vi,362-4(Trespov's loyal report of 26 November 1916) and v,166-7(Stürmer) ; PALEOLOGUE,III,114 ; Russkoe Slovo,27 November 1916.

146 Russkoe Slovo,29 November 1916 ; Shlyapnikov,Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda, II,8-9 ; Times,12,14 & 16 December 1916(n/s),8c,7e & 7e.

government.[147] The furthest the Bloc was prepared to go was to warn the government of the risks it was running. Milyukov's sppech of 16 December was typical :

> The air is full of electricity and one feels the approach of a thunderstorm. No-one can tell where or when the first thunderclap will occur but in order that the storm should not break out in a form which we do not desire, we must, in conjunction with the nation at large, try to prevent the storm itself. (148)

The tacit refusal of the moderates to press the opposition campaign to which they had given expression alienated much of their traditional support in the country and sent it over to the Left. The Menshevik Skobelev spoke for many when he accused the Progressive Bloc of listening only to the government, not to the people.[149]

The end of the Duma session made little impact upon the listless activity of the moderates. The prorogation decree, published on 15 December to take effect the next day, was accepted so meekly by the Duma that Konovalov termed it a 'self-dissolution'.[150] The instructions to Kadet deputies for the Christmas recess were to register the mood and spirit of the country, with any possibility of action reserved for the reconvened session.[151] At the last Kadet meeting of the year, a combined Moscow and Petrograd Central Committee session on 21 December, Shingarev produced a familiar tired line of argument :

> Before everything, retain full self-control and restraint ... For the time being there is only one course before us - the path of parliamentary struggle within legal parliamentry limits. Only when this path is completely exhausted, then and only then will we adopt new and unparliamentary methods of combat.

Even the police reporter was affected by the depths to which Kadet morale had sunk : 'greater disillusionment, greater perplexity than that which presently permeates the Kadets would be hard to imagine ; of the exultant

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147 KEREMSKY 180-1 ; Times,29 December 1916(n/s),5e.

148 GDSO,V,18,1179 ; also PADENIE,vi,350(Milyukov).

149 Quoted by Philips Price in Manchester Guardian,20 January 1917(n/s),7e.

150 'Samorospusk' : TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,446-8.

151 Moscow report of 16 December 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46,53.

spirit which precipitated the fall of Stürmer, there remains not a trace'.[152] Milyukov sought relief both from the gloom of the capitals and his downcast and disappointed party by spending his Christmas vacation in the Crimea.[153]

By the last weeks of 1916 the Duma moderates had disillusioned their traditional support and, at one remove, promoted the paths of political extremism and extra-constitutional activity. The recognition of the collapse of the constitutional course engendered a rash of desperate measures from both the Left and the Right to exploit or save the situation. The most dramatic and foolhardy enterprise sprang from the Right : the dynastic duo Prince Yusupov and the Grand Duke Dmitrii Pavlovich became 'haunted by one persistent idea, the idea of delivering Russia from her most dangerous internal enemy'.[154] Purishkevich's speech of 19 November made a profound impression upon Yusupov : 'I am completely under the influence of yesterday's Duma sitting ... Purishkevich's speech made an enormous impression upon everyone, saying that if they could only open Uncle's [Nicholas - R.P.] eyes, they could save everything'.[155] The political desperation which had induced Purishkevich to make his speech now impelled him to join forces with Yusupov to murder Rasputin.[156] The grisly grand guignol which eventually took place at the Yusupov Palace on the night of 16/17 December is too well known to need retelling.[157]

Despite the open rejoicing which greeted the news of the murder, it soon became apparent that its effect would be far from salutory. Within days even Yusupov acknowledged that the successful plot had not achieved its prime object :

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152 Report of 25 December 1916 : POLICE,xvii,27-1916,46,pp.48-9(Shingarev) and 46(reporter's opinion).

153 PADENIE,vi,357(Milyukov).

154 Yusupov,Rasputin,p.73(and 41-3 & 70) ; also M.E.Soloviev,'Kak i kem byl ubit Rasputin ?',Voprosi Istorii,1963:3,pp.211-218.

155 Yusupov's letter of 20 November 1916 : KA,vol,14,pp.233-4.

156 Letter of 8 December 1916 : KA,vol.14,p.235 ; Yusupov,Rasputin,pp.132-3 ; SHUL'GIN 119-121.

157 Yusupov,Rasputin,pp.144-182 & 230 ; PALEOLOGUE,III,131-4 & 142-8.

> With what youthful fervour we had believed that with one blow we could triumph over evil. To us it had seemed that Rasputin was merely a cancerous growth, and that with its removal the Russian Monarchy would be restored to health. We would not admit that this cancer had become so deeply rooted that its work of destruction would baffle even the most radical measures. (158)

That the murder was a mistake was perceived at once by Sir George Buchanan :

> It made the Emperor more determined than ever to be firm ; it set a dangerous example, for it prompted people to translate their thoughts into action ; and it rendered it more difficult for the Emperor to make concessions ... as he would have exposed himself to the suspicion of having yielded out of fear of assassination. (159)

Nicholas returned from the Stavka on 19 December to console his distraught wife and whether he secretly welcomed the murder or not, Rasputin's death kept him at Alexandra's side and under her influence until 22 February, the very eve of revolution.[160] The murder also provided an emotional rationale for reaction similar to that indulged by Alexander III after March 1881. Finally, although the murder took place during the Duma recess and there could therefore be no immediate repercussions upon a Duma session, the timing of the murder within hours of the prorogation threw suspicion upon the Duma. The Christmas recess was an ideal opportunity for the government both to effect a major cabinet reshuffle and determine the fate of the Fourth Duma in its absence.

The overall political effect of the murder was an abrupt shift to total reaction. To assert, as does Kerensky, that the murder 'did not cause the slightest change in the policy of the court' is to obscure the fact that it accentuated and developed the prevailing mood in the government in dramatic fashion.[161] The immediate aftermath was a hardening of government policy : preliminary censorship was quickly instituted in the capitals and the budget of the government 'Reptile Fund' to subsidise reactionary publications was increased.[162] An extensive government reshuffle, destined to be the last in

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158 Yusupov, Rasputin, p.232 ; also SHUL'GIN 122.

159 BUCHANAN, II, 38-9 ; also RODZYANKO 198 & Gilliard, Thirteen Years, p.187.

160 Dnevnik Nikolaya : KA, vol.20, pp.124 & 135.

161 KERENSKY 182 ; both Trotsky and Gilliard considered the rôle of the murder 'colossal' : L.Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, London 1965 (cited hereafter as TROTSKY), p.96 and Gilliard, Thirteen Years, p.187.

tsarist history, removed the few remaining non-reactionaries within the Council of Ministers. On 20 December Nicholas confirmed Protopopov as permanent Minister of Interior, ending the probationary nature of the appointment under which he had laboured since September. This clear indication of the direction of future policy was confirmed the next day when the apolitical Makarov was relieved as Minister of Justive and replaced by the Rasputin-creature Dobrovol'sky.[163] On the twenty-fifth Nicholas interviewed an unsuspecting Prince Golitsyn, President of the Committee for Aid to Russian Prisoners-of-War, at the instigation of the Empress, with a view to replacing Trepov as premier. On offering him the Chairmanship, Nicholas made it clear to his appalled victim that he would brook no refusal. Golitsyn desperately pleaded every disadvantage from ill health to crass ignorance to dissuade the Emperor, but to no avail: two days later, Golitsyn was formally appointed premier.[164] Only two ministerial posts had now to be changed : Ignat'ev, possibly the most enlightened Minister of Education under the tsars, was replaced by the non-entity Kul'chitsky and at the Ministry of War, Belyayev replaced the politically suspect Shuvayev.[165] The slightest suspicion of liberalism filtered off, the Council of Ministers was left to reactionaries and incompetents.

At the same time there began a campaign to bridle the insubordination of the legislative chambers. The State Council was a comparatively easy target. As early as October 1916 Stürmer had recommended to the Emperor adjusting the membership of the State Council to improve its 'reliability'.[166] The resolutions passed on 24 November demonstrated the urgency of the operation and over the course of December the State Council was purged of its

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162 S.Hoare, The Fourth Seal, London 1930, p.120 ; also CHERMENSKY 840.

163 MILIUKOV 369 ; PADENIE, ii, 433-4(Shcheglovitov) and vi, 350(Milyukov) ; RODZYANKO 202 ; Times, 6 January 1917(n/s), 7b.

164 PADENIE, ii, 250-1, 256 & 269-270(Golitsyn) ; PALEOLOGUE, III, 159.

165 L.Strakhovsky, 'Count P.N.Ignatiev : Reformer of Russian Education', SEER, vol.36, no.86(December 1957), p.22 ; Vasilii Gurko, Memories, pp.227-9 ; Manchester Guardian, 11 & 19 January 1917(n/s), 5e & 5f.

166 Stürmer's loyal report of 9 October 1916 : MPK 162.

moderate elements. MVD pressure filtered off the most undesirable candidates to the elected curiae ; punctilious care was taken in the selection of reactionaries to the nominated half of the Council.[167] The operatiom of disciplining the Council was completed according to the earlier promptings of Alexandra to 'put strong-minded Shcheglovitov there, he is the man who ... will allow no disorders and bad things to go on'. Shcheglovitov's appointment as President of the State Council was announced on 1 January 1917.[168] With the State Council now sternly called to heel, the government had both elimin--ated an area of support for the Duma Bloc and reasserted its stranglehold on parliamentary legislation.

Despite a cosy imperial ukaze of 7 January expressing the hope that the new premier would work well with the Duma, there was every sign that the Duma would soom come under fire from the government.[169] The constitutional threat alone was alarming enough : the Emperor enjoyed the rights of Duma prorogation, legislation through Clause 87 in time of emergency and, most immediately, the dissolution of the Fourth Duma after the traditional five-year run. But dangers also threatened from outside the rubric of the constitution. Protopopov was setting his face more and more sternly against the Duma. He had made no headway with his ex-Duma colleagues, indeed his past connection with the Bloc only increased Duma animosity towards him and the government. A persuasive end-of-year report by his deputy Kurlov submitted on 30 December 1916 pressed for the complete abolition of the State Duma and the turning of the constitutional clock back to before 1905.[170] To political expediency was added personal pique when Rodzyanko pointedly and publicly snubbed Protopopov at the Winter Palace reception on 1 January.[171]

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167 PADENIE,ii,427(Shcheglovitov) ; PALEOLOGUE,III,114 ; Hoare,The Fourth Seal,p.123.

168 Empress's letter of 15 December 1916 : ALEXANDRA 457 ; PADENIE,ii,425-6 (Shcheglovitov) ; MPK 427 & 435-6 ; KERENSKY 182.

169 BUCHANAN,II,51 ; R.Wilton,Russia's Agony,London 1918,p.74.

170 P.G.Kurlov,Konets Tsarisma,PP.285-6 ; Russkoe Slovo,3 January 1917.

171 Rodzyanko,The Reign of Rasputin,p.251 ; Prince V.N.Shakhovskoy,Sic Transit Gloria Mundi,Paris 1952,p.197.

At the Council of Ministers on 3 January, Protopopov moved the dissolution of the Fourth Duma but found himself overruled by Golitsyn who, more cautiously, preferred to postpone the Duma session and assess the results before taking a final decision.[172] Although he still did not possess sufficient authority to flout all opposition to his views, by early 1917 Protopopov had been converted to the desirability of immediate Duma dissolution.

Protopopov's plans for early 1917 remain somewhat of a mystery. The device of provoking society into a rash action which could then be exploited by the government had been discussed in political circles since early autumn but the precise motive was a matter for endless conjecture. Milyukov believed that Protopopov intended to repeat Durnovo's Moscow stratagem of December 1905 of inciting an insurrection in order to drown it in blood. The most common Duma fear was that the government was only seeking a pretext to dissolve the Fourth Duma early or, more seriously, to abolish the Duma altogether and return to the pre-1905 autocracy. Many observers, including the United States Ambassador David Francis, claimed to discern a wider significance, believing the government was 'attempting to bring about an uprising of the people in order to give Russia an excuse to negotiate a seperate peace'.[173]

Whatever Protopopov's precise objectives or degree of allegiance to a policy of provocation, he was certainly taking extensive precautions against popular risings by very early in 1917. Kerensky recalled that,

> By the middle of January a special committee under the presidency of General Khabalov, commander of the Petrograd Military District, had drafted a detailed plan for the deployment of troops to be used in conjunction with the police in the event of riots in the capitals. (174)

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172 TsGIAL, f.1276, x, 7, 451-7 ; also PADENIE, ii, 256-9 (Golitsyn) and Petrograd Police report of 29 January 1917 quoted in GRAVE 169.

173 PALEOLOGUE, III, 65-6 ; Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma', pp.33-5 ; Stinton Jones, Russia in Revolution, London 1917, pp.60-1 ; PADENIE, vi, 351 (Milyukov) ; D.Francis, Russia from the American Embassy, p.35.

174 KERENSKY 182-3 ; also evidence of Protopopov, Beletsky, Klimovich and Milyukov : PADENIE, iv, 46 & 93 ; v, 264-5 ; i, 121-2 ; vi, 350-2 ; also Times, 21 April 1917 (n/s), 5a and Vasilyev, The Ochrana, pp.215-6.

At the same time as military plans were laid, the Emperor initiated prepar--ations for the demise of the Fourth Duma : Nikolai Maklakov was commissioned to produce a scheme of gerrymandering and election-fixing in anticipation of the Fifth Duma and by 9 February was reporting enthusiastically on the advanced state of his plans.[175] In January Nicholas also entrusted Golitsyn with three signed but undated ukazes : one for prorogation sine die, another for prorogation until the end of the War and the last for dissolution.[176] With hthis armoury of paper power Golitsyn was invested with total formal authority over the future of the Duma.

It seemed in early January 1917 that the Duma Bloc had everything to fear : the provocation policy of the MVD, the threatened dissolution of the Duma, a seperate peace with Germany, and of course revolution itself. The variety of response amongst the Duma moderates was considerable, cutting across traditional party alignments and confirming the trend to disintegrat--ion which afflicted every Duma fraction. The most spirited and adventurous remedy advanced was the palace revolution plot of Guchkov. The former leader of the Oktobrist fraction had abandoned the pusillanimous Zemstvo-Oktobrists from as early as 1914, and by late 1916 had despaired both of the Duma as an instrument of political progress and the efficacy of constitutional methods. The exclusion of this 'liberal with spurs' from the Fourth Duma by MVD malpractice and the crash of Oktobrist fortunes a year later combined political frustration with his growing sense of hopelessness and extremism.[177] Guchkov's participation in a plot had a similar motive to Purishkevich's : constitutional means were clearly impotent in the face of the political emergency, which must therefore be resolved by unconstitutional 'direct action'. But while Purishkevich's plot (though bloody) was strictly limited to removing a baneful influence on the Emperor, Guchkov came to the painful conclusion that the monarchy could be saved only by the displacement of the

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175 PADENIE,v,287-9(Nikolai Maklakov) ; MPK 98 ; PARES 418-9.

176 PADENIE,ii,265(Golitsyn) ; Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.35.

177 PADENIE,vi,277-8(Guchkov) ; the phrase is Trotsky's : TROTSKY 92.

present occupant of the throne. A conspiracy was mounted, based apparently on two sets of Guchkov's contacts, the military and the masonic. Probably in early October 1916, Guchkov sounded his opinion amongst his masonic colleagues, most particularly Kerensky, Nekrasov, Konovalov, Yefremov and Orlov-Dăydov. All seem to have been recruited to some degree, although the precise extent of individual involvement has been the subject of protracted and acrimonious debate. The leaders of the Left Kadets, Moscow Progressists and Trudoviks all however expressed significant approval for the scheme and attached their memberships to the extra-constitutional solution.[178]

Unfortunately for Guchkov's plans, while many officers at the highest level were sympathetic to a coup, very few were prepared to take action themselves. In the words of General Krymov to the Bloc in early January 1917, the prevailing mood of the officer corps was that 'if you decide upon this extreme course, we will support you'.[179] Guchkov's plan on the ground came to depend on the dedication of a group of cavalry officers headed by Prince Vyazemsky and the possible support of the Army Chief of Staff Alekseyev. Medical misadventure too served to prolong and postpone commitment to a definite coup. At the moment that an embryonic plan to kidnap the Tsar from the royal train on the way from the Stavka to Petrograd was emerging, illness struck down its organisers. Guchkov spent 13 October to 20 December undergoing medical treatment at the remote Caucasian spa of Kislovodsk and was not at hand to inspire the plans to which he was clearly indispensable.[180] Alekseyev too was compelled by overwork to take extended sick-leave from the Stavka from 11 November until 14 February, an occurrence which was taken as a pretext for postponing the coup until March 1917.[181] The plot hung fire until it was overtaken by the greater revolution.

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178 Poslednie Novosty,8,9 & 13 September 1936 ; S.P.Mel'gunov,Na Putyakh k Dvortsomu Perevorotu,Paris 1931,pp.188-193 ; also LAVERYCHEV 158-160.

179 RODZYANKO 205-7.

180 DYAKIN 301.

181 PADENIE,vi,278-9(Guchkov) ; Lukomsky,Memoirs,pp.43 & 50-1 ; Vasilii Gurko,Memories,pp.162-6 ; Denikin,'Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia i armia', p.193.

The Guchkov plot, though dogged by bad luck, betrayed every weakness of the moderate position in extremis. Despite the acknowledged emergency, there persisted a forlorn belief that somehow all would turn out well. Despite Alekseyev's extended absence from the Stavka, Guchkov was still confident enough to drop a broad hint to the Oktobrist Central Committee meeting of 30 December 1916 :

> Guchkov's report was in the most gloomy strain, almost of complete despair of finding any solution with the present fragmented state of society forces and parties. But through all his pessimism Guchkov stressed the possibility of an unexpected solution to the deadlock in the near future, outside the scope and efforts of society. (182)

But although, in the words of the police report of 19 January, 'the majority of high society agreed with the legality of palace revolutions and murders', the Duma leaders followed all other society groups in declining to take the responsibility and initiative for a bold unconstitutional stroke.[183] As Vasilii Maklakov remarked on the possibility of a dynastic palace coup,

> The Grand Dukes are incapable of agreeing on a plan of campaign. Not one of them dares show the slightest initiative, and each of them claims to be working solely on his own behalf. They want the Duma to put the match to the powder. In other words, they are expecting of us what we are expecting of them. (184)

The timorousness of the Bloc leaders was accompanied by the sanguine belief that even now the constitutional alternative was not exhausted ; whilst hedging their bets extensively, the Bloc members who subscribed to the Guchkov plot still clung to the constitutionalism of the Duma above all else.

The same group which seriously considered the Guchkov coup - the Left Kadets and Progressists - operated in other areas on the brink of illegality. On quitting the Bloc on 31 October, Yefremov had offered the following tactical explanation : 'we have not subordinated ourselves to the discipline or commands of a general who is over-cautious but instead have formed a partisan detachment and advanced to a forward position, hoping thereby to draw the entire army after us'.[185] With the decline of the Kadet-led Bloc

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182 Report of 8 January 1917 : POLICE,xvii,27-1917,25.

183 POLICE,1917,xx,57,10 quoted in LAVERYCHEV 166.

184 PALEOLOGUE,III,167-8 ; also KA,vol.14,p.242.

185 TsGAOR,f.579(Milyukov),453,3-4.

campaign after mid November, the Progressist course experienced a brief upsurge of self-confidence. The Progressist majority now had no artificial constraints on its actions of the kind imposed by membership of the Progress--ive Bloc. The Duma members lost by withdrawal fron the Bloc (the Orlov-Davydov group) were amply compensated by the defection in all but name after mid November of the Adzhemov group of Left Kadets into the Progressist camp.[186] Late December 1916 and early January 1917 witnessed a succession of Progressist meetings at Ryabushinsky's and Konovalov's on their home ground of Moscow. Progressist 'direct action' was at its most articulate at a meeting on 3 January where it was resolved that in the event of the Duma being dissolved, its membership would reconvene in Moscow (at a villa placed at its disposal by Konovalov) from where it would appeal to the country for support against the now-isolated government in Petrograd.[187]

This resolution marked the high-water point of Progressist independent development : the brief period over late 1916 when the Moscow and Duma Progressists were in unison was quickly succeeded by a return to the familiar fundamental rift in the party. Alarmed by the prospect of another 'Vyborg', the Progressist fraction soon agreed to rejoin forces with the Milyukov Kadets, inciting the more radical Moscow Progressists to a bitter attack upon the Kadets.[188] At a meeting on 19 January, the Moscow group demanded the adoption of illegal means to bring do-wn the government and the present--ation of an ultimatum on the first day of the new Duma session. Sneering at Kadet 'tactics of restraint', Konovalov declared that 'an impotent Duma is an object of mockery on the part of the government and in the eyes of the people is worse than no Duma at all'.[189] But despite Moscow's efforts, by mid January 1917 the Duma Progressists were drifting back into association

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186 Report of 19 November 1916 : POLICE,xvii,307A/1/1916,156.

187 Report of 6 January 1917 : POLICE,xvii,27-1917,1-2 and report of 5 January 1917 : POLICE,307,1917,406 quoted in GRAVE 165 ; also Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.36.

188 Report of 16 January 1917 : POLICE,xvii,17,20-b,1 ; alsp POLICE,307/A, 1917 quoted in GRAVE 171.

189 Moscow report of 19 January 1917 : POLICE,27-1916,46,60.

with the Kadets and the Bloc. To most Progressist deputies, the act of withdrawing from the Bloc now appeared not as the loosening of intolerable restraints but ill-advised estrangement from the co-ordinating executive of the opposition movement. The Moscow Progressists could throw their weight behind the extra-constitutional schemes of Guchkov ; in disassociation from Moscow's extremism, the Duma Progressists could not long resist the companionship of the Bloc or the moral authority of the Kadets of Milyukov.[190]

The most proscribed response to the political emergency came from the moderates who relied upon constitutional pressure alone : the Zemstvo-Oktobrists. The morale of the Oktobrists remained very low, their political initiative was slight and indeed the grouping was only kept in existence through having its leader as President of the Duma. In so far as the Zemstvo-Oktobrists followed any coherent policy, it was still the hopeless 'Mad Chauffeur' parable of Vasilii Maklakov. Fatalistically rejecting 'direct action' as a political weapon, the fraction rested all its hopes upon Rodzyanko's Duma office and its accompanying privilege of access to the Emperor. Rodzyanko tried to turn Nicholas from his newly-adopted reactionary line but found that his belief in constitutional methods alone frustrated all his efforts. He attempted to secure an extension to the life of the Fourth Duma : the present Duma had run only two normal-length sessions before the outbreak of war (making the peacetime five-year rule unrealistic), and it was the practice of Russia's Allies to postpone elections and maintain the existing parliament until after the war. Despite the Emperor's almost casual rejection of his case, Rodzyanko did not overstep his official functions.[191] When in early January General Krymov met Bloc leaders to assure them that 'the mood in the army is such that everybody would greet the news of a revolution with joy ... if you decide upon this extreme course, we will support you', Rodzyanko indignantly refused :

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190 Moscow report of 19 January 1917 : POLICE,27-1916,46,60 ; also Mansyrev,'Moi Vospominania',pp.257-261.

191 ARR,vol.vi,1922,p.335 ; also KATKOV 219-223.

> I will never support a revolution. I have sworn an oath of loyalty. I must ask you not to discuss such matters in my house ... Palace revolutions are not the affair of the legislative chambers, and I have neither the desire nor the means to incite the populace against the Tsar. (192)

On being approached on a similar mission by the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, Rodzyanko again took care to stress his strict constitutional limitations.[193] However he was sufficiently alarmed to pull no punches in his next report to the Emperor on 7 January :

> The nation realises that you have banished from the government all those in whom the Duma and the people trusted, and replaced them by unworthy and incompetent men ... It is an open secret that the Empress issues orders without your knowledge, that the Ministers report to her on matters of state, and that by her wish those whom she views with disfavour lose their posts and are replaced by incompetent and inexper--ienced persons ... To save your family, Your Majesty should find some way of preventing the Empress from exersising any influence upon politics.

Though apparently affected by this frank appeal at the time, the many warnings delivered on earlier occasions had persuaded Nicholas that Rodzyanko made a habit of 'crying wolf' to enhance his political position. Distrust of Rodzyanko's motives persuaded Nicholas to ignore his advice.[194]

Increasingly aware of the limits which his constitutionalism afforded him, Rodzyanko tried a new approach. On 1 February he suggested to the Special Council of Defence a ceremonial meeting of all Special Councils under the chairmanship of the Emperor to co-ordinate the efforts of the government and society and to air urgent issues. At the subsequent meeting on 4 February Rodzyanko's motion was carried by eighteen votes to nine (with five abstentions), only to be torpedoed by the refusal of the Council President, the new War Minister Belyayev, to communicate the petition to the Emperor.[195] Rodzyanko's attempt at 'unofficial' constitutional appeal to the Emperor, with the object of forcing Nicholas face to face with the issues

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192 RODZYANKO 205-7 ; General P.Wrangel,Memoirs,London 1929,p.5.

193 Rodzyanko,Reign of Rasputin,pp.246-7 ; also CHERNOV 49-50.

194 RODZYANKO 211-3 ; Dnevnik Nikolaya : KA,vol.20,p.127 ; Letter of 7 January 1917 from Irina Yusupova to Grand Duchess Zinaida : KA,14,243-4.

195 TsGVIA,f.369,I,180,pp.201(1 February) and 206(4 February) quoted in CHERMENSKY 863-5 ; also ENGEL'HARDT,xii,727 and Lloyd George,War Memoirs,2 vols,London 1938,I,965-8.

of the day, proved the extent to which the structure of government fostered the isolation of the Autocrat.

What was to emerge as Rodzyanko's last chance was his audience on 10 February. Despite Nicholas's reception, which Rodzyanko described as 'less indifferent than downright brusque', the Duma President presented a detailed report of the dangers of the current situation. Nicholas set his face against the report from the start, tetchily demanding to know 'since Protopopov was your Vice-President in the Duma, why he no longer pleases you ?' and coolly refusing to credit the state of emergency outlined by Rodzyanko : 'my information contradicts this completely ... if the Duma allows itself unrestrained outbursts like last time, it will be dissolved'.[196] Protopopov's ready supply of information suitable for the Emperor proved more than enough to withstand Rodzyanko's appeals. The last official means of access to the Emperor had failed like the others.

There was undoubtedly in Rodzyanko's attitude a basic double-standard, a strong element of waiting for others to do the necessary dirty work. Both Rodzyanko and Vasilii Maklakov had known in advance of the Yusupov plot and had given it all the blessing that their constitutionalist principles would permit.[197] The Duma Oktobrists must have known of the Guchkov plot and in their hearts prayed for the success of their former leader. Even so, Rodzyanko found himself trapped by his political morality : his advice rejected and his constitutional resources exhausted, he found himself at an impasse. With the failure of Rodzyanko's efforts, the Zemstvo-Oktobrists folded their hands and resigned themselves to the worst. Only two factors could work to their advantage now : whether a revolution broke or not, the two most powerful and prestigious society organs were still the Duma and the Progressive Bloc. In both of these the Oktobrists comprised the largest single group and furnished the official leaders - Rodzyanko in the Duma and

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196 RODZYANKO 217-8 ; also KA,vol.20,p.133 and vol.10,pp.169-186.

197 Yusupov,Rasputin,pp.201-2 ; MILIUKOV 379 ; SHUL'GIN 119-121.

Sergei Shidlovsky in the Bloc. The axis position and numerical weight of the Oktobrists could not be ignored even on the brink of revolution.

The Milyukov Kadets were similaraly inhibited by their constitutionalist scruples. Two Moscow meetings on 7 January portyayed the moods which differentiated the Left Kadets from the Milyukov Kadets. At the first, the Left Kadet Nekrasov optimistically (and not altogether realistically) told the leaders of the Zemstvo and Town Unions :

> In the storm and chaos we must create a new government which can quickly calm the country and get down to constructive work. As to what degree we are capable - witness the far-reaching organisations of the Zemstvo and Town Unions. These are now our practical schools - all that has been accomplished on a smaller scale by the Unions must soon be carried out in Russia on a national scale. (198)

At the second meeting the general feeling was summed up by Kizevetter :

> Behind the Town and Zemstvo Unions stands a well-known group of intelligentsia but there is still no effectual broad support for them in the midst of society. One cannot but be disturbed by the fact that there is a slackening of interest in the State Duma ... there is a very dangerous feeling of indifference towards the Duma ... no-one at the present moment can rely upon the mass support of society. (199)

While the Left Kadets fought against their misgivings by allying with the Moscow Progressists, the Kadet majority surrendered to self-doubt. Many were convinced with Shingarev that the moment for compromise had been lost :

> I fear that even if our crazy government is prepared to concede, even if it concedes a government composed of the most reliable men, it will not be enough. The mood has already passed over our heads and is to the Left of the Progressive Bloc. We already have to recognise that we cannot satisfy that mood, already we cannot restrain it. The country is listening to the Left and not to us. It is too late. (200)

The fragmenting nature of the Kadet party and its resignation to forces outside its control was noted by a police reporter in his survey of 16 January in that 'not withstanding a whole series of conferences, first in Moscow and nore recently in Petrograd, the Kadets not only cannot agree about tactics for the immediate future but demonstrate the very sharpest differences of opinion'.[201] At a Bloc meeting on 19 January, the emphasis

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198 Meeting at Kishkin's,7 January 1917 : POLICE,xvii,27-1917,15.

199 Meeting at Dolgorukov's,7 January 1917 : ibid,3-5.

200 Shingarev at a meeting on 8 January 1917 : SHUL'GIN 123-4.

201 POLICE,xvii,27-1917,23-4.

was on restraint and self-control, with no tactical programme fixed for the coming session. At a meeting of Moscow Kadets designed to explain official policy, the Central Committee spokesman Vasilii Maklakov voiced 'official' Kadet reluctance to overstep constitutional bounds :

> The revolutionary path is inevitable. The only question is when to start this struggle ... As long as all parliamentary resources are not exhausted, the Kadets consider this moment has still not arrived. Perhaps the moment is very, very near yet nevertheless there is no sense in forcing events. (202)

Despite the policy failure which condemned them to political impotence, the Kadets refused to overstep constitutional forms.

This is not to say that the Milyukov Kadets were not seeking a way out of their dilemma. One alternative was to induce some other less fastidious political force to do the dirty work from which the Kadets would benefit. Milyukov may have had this in mind when he wrote in a Rech' editorial of 12 December 1916 that 'the public demands which have so far been directed exclusively at the Duma, should turn also to other factors which might influence the course of political events'. However to this scheme there was the objection that whosoever took the fatal step might well cull greater political advantage than those who waited. There was no point in getting Guchkov to pick the hot chestnuts out of the fire if he refused to share them afterwards. The other alternative was to discover a previously unexploited political lever which would leave the constitutional principles of the Kadets and Oktobrists unsullied, but rescue them from their political plight. The only salient external force which might serve was international intervention in the shape of the imminent Allied Military Conference.

In retrospect the military significance of the Petrograd Conference of January 1917, the first Allied conference on the Eastern Front since the outbreak of war, has become overshadowed by political factors. One Soviet commentator has taken the line that 'in reality the principal task of the Allied delegates was to ascertain the internal political situation in Russia

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202 Moscow report of 20 January 1917 : POLICE,xvii,27-1917,46,pp.60(Bloc meeting) & 61(Kadet meeting).

and take any measures necessary to keep Russia in the war'. There is little evidence to corroborate this judgement.[203] If that had indeed been the brief of the Allied delegates, their failure would have been all the more glaring, as Sir Samuel Hoare remarked : 'the Allies were mistaken in sending such a mission at all ; the members of the mission were equally mistaken in almost all the conclusions about the Russian front and the state of Russia'.[204] In reality the delegates were bewildered that a conference intended to be almost entirely military in content had become a political issue within Russia. The government did its best to avoid mutual embarrassment by postponing the preparations against insurrection and putting back the Duma opening from 12 January to 14 February to avoid the conference coinciding with the session.[205] Government determination to avoid exhibiting any political washing to its foreign guests was even pursued to the detriment of diplomatic courtesy :

> The Duma was to meet in a week after the close of the conference. The delegation asked permission to remain in Russia to witness the meeting. A government official intimated to them that if they stayed, the assembling of the Duma would be put off for another fortnight. (206)

The menace in the government refusal to permit a Duma sitting while the Allied delegates were in Russia was not lost upon the Duma moderates.

At first the Kadets at least were uncertain about how the Military Conference might be turned to their political advantage. Indeed the Kadet fraction meeting of 10 January unsolicitedly played into the hands of the government by resolving :

> In view of the fact that the Allied delegations will be visiting Russia, and that the duty of the Kadet Party is to support the continuation of the war to a successful conclusion, it is decided to refrain from any provocative speeches even within the Budget commission. (207)

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203 CHERMENSKY 867 ; also A.V.Ignat'ev, Russko-angliiskie otnoshenia nakanune Oktyabrskoy Revolyutsii, Moscow 1966, pp.102-3 ; lack of evidence has not prevented speculation e.g. Manchester Guardian allegations, 16 March 1917(n/s), 5d and 21 March 1917(n/s), 5d.

204 Hoare, The Seventh Seal, p.219 ; also Lloyd George, War Memoirs, I, 942.

205 TsGIAL, f.1276, x, 7, 451-7 ; PADENIE, ii, 256-9(Golitsyn).

206 Lloyd George, War Memoirs, I, 941.

207 Fraction document of 10 January 1917 intercepted by the Rostov police, 30 January : POLICE, xvii, 17, 20-b, 3.

However the ensuing restlessness of the Kadet membership and the realisation that the Conference was the only foreseeable answer to their dilemma forced the abandonment of this throwback to the discredited policy of 'Sacred Union'. By mid January a police reporter was already noting that,

> The Kadets are placing all their hopes to the most significant degree upon the Allies, and in particular upon the English who, defending the community of interests in the struggle against the enemy, will (while preferably not interfering in the internal affairs of Russia) make representations to the Russian government concerning "a sofetening of the internal line of policy". (208)

With all other avenues explored, the Kadets were compelled by desperation to revert to the stratagem which had let them dowm in April 1906.

The Military Conference ran from 16-31 January (with a subsequent week for official functions). Over that period a succession of approaches were made to the delegates. Welcomed by a pessimistic briefing from Buchanan designed to acquaint him with the facts of Russian political life, Lord Milner, the head of the British delegation, was soon swamped with impressions.[209] Letters from Peter Struve were delivered stressing the dangers of the course set by the monarchy ; casual conversation with Rodzyanko elicited the intelligence that the majority of Duma deputies would refuse to disperse in the event of dissolution.[210] At a banquet for the distinguished visitors on 27 January, the mood of the Moscow Merchants' Club was expressed in the speech of its president, Pavel Ryabushinsky. After dwelling upon the sind of the government and its inability to conduct the war successfully, Ryabushinsky turned to the subject of Allied war loans to Russia :

> It would be expedient if the administrative direction of these sums were under the appointed central control of a commission of the State Duma and our public organisations, in which event purely English control over the sums would become unnecessary. (211)

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208 TsGAOR,f.111,v,664,52 quoted in LAVERYCHEV 169 ; for tsardom's financial dependence upon Great Britain,see Ignat'ev,Russko-angliiskie otnoshenia, p.67.

209 BUCHANAN,II,52 & 54 ; Lloyd George,War Memoirs,I,941.

210 Hoare,The Seventh Seal,pp.189-191 & 194-5 ; KATKOV 223-5 ; Lloyd George,War Memoirs,I,941.

211 Speech text in Ryabushinsky fond : Lenin Library(Manuscript Department),

Two days later, Prince L'vov followed a prediction that threre would be a revolution within three weeks with a strikingly similar offer to Milner :

> The Allies should only grant their future supplies on condition that they were used, or some of them, by organisations in which the Allies had confidence, such as the Unions presided over by himself and Chelnokov respectively. (212)

The two 'deals' differed slightly : the more ambitious emvisaged a Duma-cum-public organisations commission to administer foreign loans, the more realistic was prepared to settle for a clause in future loans allocating a set proportion to the public organisations. L'vov's omission of the Duma was pointed and significant but the essential similarity of the suggestions - exploiting Russian society's good relations with the Allies to extract financial (and therefore constitutional) concessions from the Tsar - is even more striking. The affinity of the offers to the trend of Kadet thought since autumn 1915 is unmistakable.

Milyukov too made personal approaches to Milner and his French counter-part, Gaston Doumergue. To Milner, Milyukov insisted 'that the storm was approaching, that if at the last hour the dynasty would not consent to compromise, its fall was inevitable'. From Doumergue Milyukov received a homily on patience to which he retorted 'we have exhausted all our patience ... if we do not act soon the masses will no longer listen to us'.[213] There is no record of Milyukov suggesting an arrangement as boldly as did L'vov and Ryabushinsky but his overall sympathy with the line of the latter in particular probably showed. On the basis of his visit to the Allies in spring 1916 Milyukov could not be sanguine about the success of the various society approaches to the Allied representatives in January 1917. It is highly probable that Milyukov regarded foreign 'intervention' as the longest of long shots by this time. He rested content with allowing others to take the risks, in the knowledge that he could clain the authorship of the policy in

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f.260, papka 1, delo 26, quotation p.2.

212 Lloyd George, War Memoirs, I, 945-6 ; also conversation between Bloc leaders and General Castelnau : Petrograd Police report of 28 January 1917 quoted in GRAVE 121-2.

213 Milyukov and Milner, : Miliukov, Russia Today and Tomorrow, New York

the unlikely event of its proving successful.

At all events the various approaches failed. The delegates had not expected to have politics thrust in their military faces and took the line that their delegated authority allowed then no competence outside military issues. Bemused but courteous, they listened to the overtures of Russian society and prudently vouchsafed no reply. Towards the end of his satay in Russia, Milner presented the Emperor with an interim report of his findings which not only restricted itself to purely military matters but was quick to stress that 'there can be no question of interference in the affairs of the Russian military authorities'.[214] The Allied delegations finally left Russia on 8 February. To the huge relief of Nicholas and his government, their foreign visitors had from a mixture of diplomacy and ignorance refrain--ed from any attempts to influence Russian internal policy and had made no moves embarrassing to the host government.[215]

What came as a relief to the government was the bitterest of disappoint--ments to the moderates. The Allied factor on which the moderates' last hopes for constitutional action were banked had proved unforthcoming and left a stark alternative : either a constitutionalism rendered impotent by circumstances or an opportunism which necessitated breaking free from traditional constitutional limitations. The Duma moderates had little hesitation in choosing the former course. Fear proved stronger than hate and condemned the moderates to waiting apprehensively but fatalistically for a crisis against which they could mount no effective defence. The month of February 1917 was a time of waiting for the end :

> The basic characteristic of this period was that everybody,including the "street" was now waiting for something, and both sides, having embarked upon an open struggle, were preparing themselves for something. This "something" however remained somewhere behind the lowered curtain

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1922,p.295 ; Milyukov and Doumergue : PALEOLOGUE,III,188.

214 MPK 77-85 ; also Lord Milner,'Before Russia Went West',National Review, vol.105,December 1940,pp.659 & 661 ; Lloyd George,War Memoirs,I,942 ; Lockhart,The Two Revolutions,pp.69-70.

215 PALEOLOGUE,III,184 & 196 ; BUCHANAN,II,54.

of history, and neither side displayed sufficient organisation or will to be the first to raise the curtain. (216)

While both the Duma moderates and the majority of the Council of Ministers hardly dared draw breath for fear of provoking a crisis, Protopopov blundered on with his plans : on 27 January he had the entire Workers' Group of the Central War Industries Committee arrested and imprison--ed. The Petrograd workers, already at a high pitch of tension, saw the arrests as the first direct move by the government against the proletariat of the capitals.[217] Within the government, Golitsyn and his colleagues demanded to know of Protopopov why the arrests could not at least have been postponed until after the Allied delegates had left the country. Their representations had some effect upon the by-now half-insane Protopopov, who agreed to suspend operations for the duration of the Petrograd Conference.[218] However on the very day that the Allied delegates left, on 8 February, the Petrograd Military District was detached from the Northern Front and placed under the martial law of General Khabalov ; the next day Khabalov proceeded to impose a ban on all meetings, public and private, in Petrograd.[219] With the new Duma session scheduled for the fourteenth, it was difficult to interpret the government moves as anything but plans for the immediate suppression of the Duma and any popular movement which might seek to defend it.

The Duma moderates in response were pitiable in their anxiety to avoid giving the government offence. Their only hope for a Duma session rested on preventing the government finding any excuse for its dissolution, which meant the sedation of opposition forces however friendly and the imposition of a strong measure of restraint within the Duma. The Kadets and Oktobrists

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216 MILIUKOV 382 ; confirmed by Blair, Russian Hazard, p.89 and Buryshkin, Moskva Kupecheskaya, p.316.

217 RODZYANKO 216 ; MILIUKOV 384 ; KERENSKY 183 ; PADENIE, vi, 284-8(Guchkov).

218 MILIUKOV 385 ; PADENIE, vi, 288(Guchkov) ; Times, 14 February 1917(n/s), 8b.

219 KERENSKY 183 ; PALEOLOGUE, III, 202 ; Rech', 9 February 1917 ; Vasilii Gurko, Memories, p.264.

spent the first two weeks of February attempting the ignoble task of appealling to the proletariat not to demonstrate on their behalf. Two days after the arrest of the Workers' Group of the Central War Industries Committee, on 29 January, Konovalov and Guchkov held a protest meeting at which Milyukov was invited to speak. In a statement which astounded both organisers and audience, Milyukov not only refused to add his voice to the protests but condemned the interference of the workers in the political contest in which 'only the State Duma can dictate the conditions of the struggle with the government'.[220] Fear of the government combined with acute jealousy for the Duma's political monopoly in Milyukov's demand that the workers mind their own business and refrain from political action. At a Moscow Kadet Committee meeting on 4 February, Milyukov's nerve showed signs of cracking :

> Milyukov wishes to rid himself of the responsibility for a possible false step and its possible repercussions ... The theme constantly recurring in all his conversations is the danger of taking a wrong decision "for which it will be necessary to answer before History and before the whole civilised world". Under "false step" Milyukov clearly means the tactic of further concession to the government and compromise agreements with it. (221)

Faced with Left Kadet pressure for a Duma declaration against the government and a direct campaign against the Empress which plainly secured a large measure of support amongst the Moscow Kadets, Milyukov was forced to concede that 'the new session will be a direct continuation of the glorious November days'.[222]

The Kadet policy of the next fortnight only too clearly contradicted Milyukov's assurance to Moscow. At the Petrograd Central Committee meeting of 6 February, the crypto-Oktobrism of the Kadet majority was typified in the sentiment of the former Left Kadet Rodichev : 'the absolute necessity is to liberate the Tsar and Tsaritsa from the "prison" of the clique which is

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220 Select quotations from the speech are in GRAVE 181-2 and CHERNOV 66-7 ; note Milyuskov's gloss on the whole episode in MILIUKOV 384-5.

221 Report of 4 February 1917 : POLICE,xvii,17,46-b,1-6 (quotation p.6).

222 Testimony of A.V.Peshekhonov cited in CHERMENSKY 856-8 ; also POLICE, xvii,17,46-b,p.5(quotation).

concealing from them the menacing mood of the entire country and directing the government towards the abyss'. The Committee reiterated that nothing could be settled without the Duma, apparently in the hope that if this aphorism were repeated regularly, the workers, the government and the Kadets themselves might continue to believe it.[223] By 9 February Milyukov was so terrified of MVD provocation that together with Rodzyanko he authorised a statement in the press appealing for calm and opposing any demonstrations to greet the Duma opening. The unfortunate coincidence of this appeal appearing next to Khabalov's warnings against civil unrest in many newspapers did little to disabuse the workers and the Left of the conviction that the moderates were playing the government's game.[224] On 10 February Milyukov's editorial in Rech' blamed the demonstrations of the foutteenth in advance on police provocation, arguing that it was still not too late to cheat the government of its design.[225] A last emergency measure proposed by a hastily-convened Central Committee on 13 February was a direct appeal to the Emperot, a recourse rejected by Milyukov (significantly) on its 'unconstit--utional' grounds.[226] When 14 February dawned, a last appeal by Rodzyanko to stay away proved unnecessary : the giant demonstrations so feared by the Duma did not take place. The desperate braking influence of the moderates upon the Petrograd workers' movement achieved its immediate object, but at the price of alienating what little political sympathy had previously existed between them.[227]

The Duma session brought no change in the craven policy of the moderates. The unprecedentedly dispirited atmosphere was admitted by Rodzyanko :

> The mood in the Duma was languid - even Purishkevich made a dreary speech. The impotence of the Duma was felt everywhere ... The Duma maintained its traditional stance and did not precipitate an open break with the government.The Duma had only one weapon - the spoken word. (228)

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223 TsGAOR,f.63,47,511,16 quoted in LAVERYCHEV 165-6 ; also Russkie Vedomosty,6 February 1917.

224 MILIUKOV 385 ; TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,460 ; PALEOLOGUE,III,201-2 ; SHUL'GIN 138 ; Times,26 February 1917(n/s),7d.

225 PADENIE,vi,351(Milyukov).

226 TsGAOR,f.155,878,1917,2 cited in CHERMENSKY 865.

227 Rech',14 February 1917 ; MILIUKOV 385 ; KERENSKY 184 ; CHERNOV 65-9.

Kadet and Oktobrist spokesmen warned the government of the risks it was running but always took care to advertise their strictly constitutional position and activities. Milyukov greeted the new session with the statement 'our only deeds are our words', a claim so dubious that he felt obliged to follow it up in the Duma sitting of 15 February with the less vulnerable alternative 'the word and the vote are for the time being our only weapons'.[229] The Left was roused to fury before and during the session by what it regarded as the moral cowardice of the moderates. In a letter of 11 February to Lenin, the Bolshevik leader Shlyapnikov reported in disgust that 'the liberals and particularly Milyukov behave like scoundrels towards the revolutionary movement'. Kerensky had a field day. In a speech on the fifteenth he attacked the Empress savagely, going so far as to demand the immediate overthrow of the 'tyrants'.[230] Only the determination of Golitsyn to avoid taking offence from the Duma wherever possible (braving the demand of the Empress that Kerensky be hanged for treason) saved the Duma from prompt dissolution as a seditious assembly.[231] Kerensky also vented his spleen on the Duma majority in a political indictment that deserves to be quoted at some length :

> 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 an excuse to stay safely in your warm armchairs ... You not only have no desire, you are unable to break finally with the government because you have never been willing to subordinate your economic class interests, the interests of just one sector of the population, to the interests of the whole ... 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. (232)

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228 RODZYANKO 219-220.

229 GDSO,V,20,1344 ; also KERENSKY 185.

230 Shlyapnikov,Semnadtsatyi God,Moscow 1923,I,65 ; Kerensky's words were deleted from the Duma records at GDSO,V,20,1358 ; KERENSKY 186.

231 TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,464-5 ; PADENIE,ii,261-2(Golitsyn) ; KERENSKY 187.

232 GDSO,V,20,1353-6 ; full text also in Milyukov fond (TsGAOR,f.579,delo 463) and edited text in KERENSKY 186-7.

Kerensky might have been administering the last rites to the Duma moderates and the Progressive Bloc.

Even on the very brink of revolution, the weakness of the Duma moderates was matched by their disunity. The nature of their party dilemma since late 1913 had resigned the Oktobrists to conceding the initiative within the Progressive Bloc to the Kadets. This subordinate rôle had always troubled Guchkov who, at the Oktobrist Central Committee on 30 December 1916, advised the fraction 'not to allow the Kadet party complete primacy in the current political struggle but be sure to attract to yourself the greatest attention!'[233] The old resentment of the Oktobrists against what amounted to Kadet leadership was fired by this recommendation and manifested itself the moment that the Duma reconvened. A police report of 18 February gleefully noted Chelnokov's fears for the future of the Bloc : 'at the moment, in Chelnokov's opinion, the Oktobrists are expressing dissatisfaction about the over-dictatorial manner of Milyukov, who is leading the Bloc according to his own whims and forcing his decisions upon them'. The same report contained the gist of a telephone call from Shingarev to Kishkin in Moscow on the sixteenth which had been tapped by the Okhrana : 'Shingarev definitely confirmed the altogether serious rifts in the Bloc and that heroic efforts will be needed to keep the Oktobrists from their wish to move to meet the government'.[234] The Oktobrist revival was brought about partly by irritation with the 'dictator--ship' of Milyukov and partly by whispers that Golitsyn was seeking allies in the Duma. The rumours that the Nationalist leader Balashev was being offered a ministerial post admitted the distinct possibility that the Oktobrists' traditional place would be usurped by the Nationalists, and all too easily detached the Oktobrists from the Duma Bloc in a last bid for government favour.[235] Memories of the privileged years of the early Third Duma never left the Duma Oktobrists but conditioned their relationship with

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233 Report of 8 January 1917 : POLICE,xvii,27-1917,26.

234 POLICE,xvii,27-1917,46,58 ; Rech',20 February 1917 ; also DYAKIN 315-7.

235 NICHOLAS 311 ; KA,vol.20,p.35 ; GDSO,V,21,1499(Shul'gin on 17 February 1917) ; also CHERMENSKY 884.

the government irrespective of the wider developments over the period of their decline.

The Duma moderates made a sorry spectacle on the eve of the February Revolution. The very most the Progressive Bloc could contemplate behind its public policy of 'the word and the vote' were contingency plans for operation in the event of revolution :

> It was clear to everyone that it was not the business of the Duma to arrange the coup.It was extremely important however to define the role of the Duma once the coup would be arranged.The bloc started with the assumption that,given the coup,Nicholas II would be removed from the throne one way or the other.The bloc agreed on transferring the authorit of the monarch to the legal heir Alexei,under the regency of the Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovitch until Alexei reached maturity.The Grand Duke's gentle character and the young age of the heir seemed to be the best guarantee of a transition to a constitutional system. (236)

This agreement represented the consensus of the Left-orientated groups, desperately but unconvincingly demanding 'direct action', and the Right-orientated groups, fatalistically settling for 'constitutional struggle alone. All groups waited for other political forces to make the first move,avoiding the initiative and responsibility for the imminent crisis. Outside the Duma, the prospect of repression or revolution seemed equally likely if not equally horrifying. Within the Duma, the Left and Right paused in their assault on the government only to hurl abuse at the moderates whom they accused of having lost the powers of both movement and speech. The external dangers to the Bloc seemed matched by internal threats.[237] Though the moderates desperately tried to hold ranks, a Leftward drain of membership threatened the Bloc with a lingering death by anaemia and an unexpected eleventh-hour defection by the Oktobrists threatened the complete disintegr--ation of the moderate camp. More than at any other time in the career of the Duma, only a Deus ex machina could save the moderate parties and the moderate course from annihilation.

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236 MILIUKOV 383-4 ; also Vasilii Maklakov,'On the Fall of Tsardom',pp. 78-9 and Denikin,'Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia i armia',p.194.

237 SHUL'GIN 141-2 ; Police report of 29 January 1917 quoted in GRAVE 175-6.

CHAPTER SEVEN : THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

1. The decision to assume power (23-28 February 1917)

Economic and social factors seem to have been paramount in the sudden upsurge of the workers' movement after 21 February. The alleged bread and flour shortages in the capital led to food riots from 19 February, while the lock-out of their 40,000 employees by the Putilov management on the twenty-second sparked off the general strike which within days brought Petrograd to a complete standstill.[1] Although early Soviet commentators dutifully asserted Bolshevik direction of the movement, a broad spectrum of historians from Leon Trotsky to George Katkov are agreed that far from being sponsored by political parties, the workers' movement developed in spite of the pessimism and alarm of even the Extreme Left groups.[2] The Social-Revolution--ary leader Zenzinov might have been speaking for the entire Left when he admitted :

> The Revolution struck like thunder out of a clear sky, and caught napping not only the government and Duma but the public organisations too. Let us be frank - it came as a great and wonderful surprise for us too, we revolutionaries who had worked for it for long years and had always waited for it. (3)

For the government, the Police Director Klimovich insisted that the February Revolution was 'a purely spontaneous phenomenon and not at all the product of party agitation'. Even the committed partisanship of Trotsky could not entirely smother his historian's respect for the facts ; the furthest he would go was 'to lay it down as a general rule for those days that the higher the leaders, the further they lagged behind'.[4]

Trotsky's judgement was particularly deserved concerning the Duma moderates. On Thursday 23 February, some 87,000 workers from fifty industrial

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1 KERENSKY 187-8 ; PALEOLOGUE,III,213 ; Vasilyev,The Ochrana,pp.220-1.
2 CHERMENSKY 888 ; TROTSKY 121-2 ; KATKOV 252-3.
3 Quoted by Chernov(CHERNOV 139),Milyukov(PADENIE,vi,351),Trotsky(TROTSKY162)
4 Klimovich : PADENIE,i,98 ; TROTSKY 139.

enterprises on strike in sympathy with the Putilovtsy thronged the city centre to celebrate International Women's Day.[5] The government reacted promptly, choosing to interpret what was still a fairly good-humoured demonstration as a direct threat. Whether the authorities' jittery nerves made them over-react to the situation or the demonstration was taken as a convenient pretext for implementing Protopopov's scheme of 'provocation and suppression', there was no doubt of the seriousness with which the demonstr--ations were viewed. At 2 p.m. the administration of Petrograd was transferred from the civil City Administrator Balk to the military commander of the Petrograd District General Khabalov. The menace implicit in this transfer of power seemed unequivocal when Khabalov ordered the immediate closing of shops and offices, a night curfew, the halting of the city transport services and the introduction of cavalry units to reinforce the police.[6] The scene seemed cleared for a decisive confrontation between the city proletariat and the forces of the government.

The reaction of the Duma was distinctly muted. The Progressist Mansyrev was to claim that on the twenty-third 'neither amongst the broad Duma groups nor amongst society in general was any special significance attached ' to the social crisis. While casual conversation inevitably touched upon the situation in the capital, the talk of deputies attending the Duma sitting that day gave no indication that the subject would be tabled for formal discussion. The attention of the Duma moderates was fixed upon the general supply crisis and, at this particylar juncture, upon the attempted collaboration between the Minister of Agriculture Rittikh and Shingarev over the fixing of bread prices.[7] The furthest the Bloc was prepared to go even in acknowledging the crisis was expressed in a motion put up by Milyukov :

(a) The government should take immediate steps to provide food for the population of the capital and other cities and towns ;

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5 TROTSKY 121-2 ; MILIUKOV 386.

6 KERENSKY 189 ; Stinton Jones, Russia in Revolution, pp.60-84.

7 Mansyrev, 'Moi Vospominania', p.262 ; GDSO, V, 23, 1593-7 & 1653-7 (sitting of 23 February) ; Shlyapnikov, Kanun Semnadtsatogo Goda, II, 76-80.

(b) The workers employed in factories of the defence industry should be supplied with food immediately ; and
(c) Town administrators and public bodies should be enlisted straight away in the distribution of food, and food committees should be set up.

It was left to Kerensky to broach the subject of the local crisis and to introduce the amendment 'that the jobless workers from the Putilov works should be taken back and the factory resume operations immediately'. Although the Progressive Bloc was prepared to back this amendment, it was confirmed in its policy of avoiding offering the government any pretext for reprisals against the Duma and declined to exploit the current threatening situation against the government. While the Duma membership privately debated the social and political crisis, the official actions and utterances of the Duma artificially suggested an exclusive preoccupation with practical economic affairs.[8]

On the next day, 24 February, the social situation worsened. Assurances of the adequacy of flour and bread supplies posted overnight throughout Petrograd by Khabalov had no success in calming the atmosphere of emergency. As a result Khabalov proceeded to the next stage of the suppression plan by adding infantry detachments to the Cossack cavalry which had reinforced the police the previous day. The cavalry and infantry regiments were employed to patrol the streets as a show of overwhelming force while the police took action. But although Znamenskaya Square, the principal congregating point, was forcibly cleared by mounted police, the attitude of the attendant troops was by no means certain. The infantry regiments stationed to divide the city with picket lines were newly conscripted and made little effort to conceal their sympathy with the crowds ; the cavalty regiments whose loyalty in the barracks had been unquestioned wavered in the face of confrontation with the common people.[9]

The mood of the Duma on 24 February heralded not an alliance of moderates

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8 KERENSKY 188-9 ; GDSO,V,23,1657 ; TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers), x,7,468 ; also CHERMENSKY 889.

9 See various sources e.g. TROTSKY 123-7, Jones,Russia in Revolution,pp. 80-84, BROWKER 27-31 and MILIUKOV 386.

and proletariat against the government but an attempt at constructive collaboration between Duma and government to tackle what the leaders of both camps declared to be the basic problem. The principal obstacle to cooperation remained Protopopov. The Duma published a challenge by passing an emergency bill to transfer the entire administration of supply from the MVD to the Zemstvo and Town Unions ; Protopopov, acutely aware of both the practical and symbolic significance of the supply issue, responded by a flat refusal to surrender any jurisdiction.[10]

The apparent impasse in relations was broken at the initiative of Rodzyanko. Departing from the discipline of the Progressive Bloc, Rodzyanko attempted to give expression to the traditional and recently-revived Oktobrist policy of expedient alliance with the government. The move was only possible because of the fundamental cleavage in the cabinet between the reactionary Protopopov group and the more moderate Golitsyn group. Golitsyn had long ago become convinced of the necessity of removing Protopopov from the MVD but his petitions to both Nicholas and Alexandra over the course of January had been rejected.[11] When Rodzyanko approached Golitsyn with a request to effect the transfer of supply forcibly, Golitsyn was prepared to negotiate in order both to tackle the supply crisis effectively and to secure the dismissal of Protopopov. At the noon meeting of the Duma Council of Elders on 24 February, Rodzyanko exultantly announced that a joint conference of government and Duma leaders had been arranged for that evening.[12]

The composition and balance of the emergency conference, initiated by Rodzyanko though chaired by Golitsyn, suggested a fair measure of goodwill on both sides : for the government, Golitsyn himself, Rittikh(Minister of Agriculture), Belyayev(War Minister), Grigorovich(Navy Minister), Shakhovskoy (Minister of Trade and Industry) and Kriger-Voinovsky(Minister of Communicat-

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10 GDSO,V,24,1733(24 February 1917) and KERENSKY 189.

11 PADENIE,ii,253-4(Golitsyn) ; Dnevnik Nikolaya : KA,vol.20,p.131 ; Vasilyev,The Ochrana,p.218.

12 TsGIAL,f.1276(Council of Ministers),x,7,466-7 ; Rech',25 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 28-9 ; GDSO,V,14,1734.

-ions) ; for the Duma, Rodzyanko, Nekrasov(Vice-President) and Dmitryukov (Secretary) ; for the State Council, Shcheglovitov(President) and Dietrich (Vice-President) ; and for Petrograd, the Mayor and the Chairman of the Petrograd Province Zemstvo Board.[13] The balance of representation, which was generous to the non-government institutions, did not however represent the unanimous vote of the Council of Ministers. There was a fatal schizophrenia between the Golitsyn group favouring collaboration with the Duma (all of whom took care to attend the conference) and the Protopopov group proposing the suppression of the Duma along with the Petrograd disturbances. The chief opponent of the transfer of supply, Protopopov himself, declared he was too busy to attend the meeting, which not surprisingly went against him in his absence : the Duma, Council and ministerial delegates 'unanimously voted to transfer the food supply in Petrograd immediately to the jurisdiction of the Petrograd Municipal Administration'.[14] At the onset of a revolutionary situation, the Duma moderates (led by the Oktobrists) sponsored cooperation with the government for a return to normal rather than leading the workers to the barricades.

Yet even at this juncture neither government nor Duma appreciated either the full extent of the danger or the speed at which events were moving. The joint decision over the transfer was accompanied by an almost leisurely optimism that once the matter was decided, the danger was past :

> At the same time it was noted that the Petrograd Municipal Administration did not have a suitable organisation at its disposal for this purpose ... As soon as the Petrograd Municipal Administration, in conjunction with the Duma municipal affairs commission, is able to set up a suitable organisation, the whole matter of supplying food to Petrograd will be placed under its jurisdiction. (15)

At a moment when time was at a premium, supply was transferred to an organisation still to be created and the formalities of the transfer entrusted to the notoriously slow Duma bureaucracy. Moreover, the government

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13 Rech',25 February 1917 ; Rodzyanko mistakenly dates this meeting on 25 February : 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',pp.37-8.

14 Rech',25 February 1917 ; also PALEOLOGUE,III,215(entry for 24 February/ 9 March 1917) and Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.37.

15 Rech',25 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 28-9.

and Duma alike failed to recognise that an important political concession which satisfied them neither answered the immediate practical needs of the hungry citizen nor made any impact upon the developing crisis in the capital. At this moment of closer company, government and Duma moderates revealed identical estrangement from the mass of the people.

The ad hoc alliance between the Golitsyn group and the moderate-dominated Duma quickly came under intolerable strains from both the government and the workers' movement. Despite Kadet assurances that ample stocks of bread and flour existed and in defiance of punitive raids in the industrial suburbs, the morning of 25 February again saw the anonymous almost instinctive march of the workers to the city centre. By late morning the centre of Petrograd was again occupied by the workers, who were encouraged to suffer the increasingly vicious actions of the police by the growing sympathy of the cavalry units. At 3 p.m. came the first clear evidence that the obedience of the army could not be automatically assumed : on Znamenskaya Square a police officer was shot down by a'stray' Cossack bullet while leading a charge on the crowd.[16] Alarmed by the incident, Khabalov threatened the strikers (by now numbering 240,000) with conscription to the front line unless they reported back to work by the twenty-eighth. This three-day ultimatum had the opposite effect to that intended, even encouraging the workers to greater excesses during the time remaining.[17]

The impact of these developments upon the Duma moderates was still relatively slight : the Duma met at 11 a.m. to pass a motion demanding the expediting of the transfer of supply and rested content with that limited initiative. Rodzyanko proposed that the next sitting be set for 11 a.m. on the twenty-eighth, thereby arousing the shrill complaints of the Extreme Left who argued that events were moving so quickly that a three-day break was criminal neglect of the Duma's duty.[18] At this point the Kadets demonstrated

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16 TROTSKY 127-130 ; Rech',25 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 30 ; Zenzinov quoted in BROWKER 32 ; KERENSKY 189-190.

17 MILIUKOV 386 ; BUCHANAN,II,59 ; TROTSKY 127-9.

18 KERENSKY 190.

their influence : after a fraction meeting which opted for bringing the next Duma sitting forward one day to the twenty-seventh, the Kadet vote proved sufficient to secuere a majority for its view within the Council of Elders that afternoon.[19] Irritated that his proposal be rejected and the recent understanding with Golitsyn which he had engineered be jeopardised, Rodzyanko insisted that the next meeting be closed to avoid offending the sensitivities of the government.[20] A difference between Kadet and Oktobrists tactics had emerged : while the Oktobrists were committing themselves to the government, the Kadets were hedging their political bets and waiting on events.

But despite the Duma's careful restraint and well-advertised constitut--ionalism, its support within the government was under increasing pressure. Even the apparently trivial bargaining within the Duma membership over the date and form of the next Duma sitting suggested to many ministers that at worst the Duma might be shifting towards the side of the insurgents and at best was insisting on close supervision of government actions. At a meeting of the Council of Ministers on the evening of 25 February Protopopov, angry that the Duma should even demand the transfer of supply, vented his spleen on the Golitsyn group which had acquiesced to the move at the extraordinary conference the previous evening. His antagonism towards Golitsyn at the personal and political level came across clearly with his threat 'to arrest your Rodzyanko and dissolve the Duma'. Despite universal distaste for Protopopov's ravings, more and more ministers were coming to agree that the Golitsyn policy of rapprochement was not the solution to the current crisis. However Golitsyn did secure agreement to defer the decision on the future of the Duma for twenty-four hours, employing the time to commission Rittikh and Pokrovsky to confer with the Duma leaders.[21] Golitsyn's policy of moving to meet Rodzyanko was coming under very heavy fire.

In the meantime a firmer line against the insurgents was initiated. At

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19 Russkie Vedomosty,27 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 39-40.

20 TsGIAL,f.1276,x,7,476 ; also KERENSKY 190.

21 PADENIE,ii,263 & 265(Golitsyn) ; PARES 442 ; KATKOV 286.

the end of the Council meeting Khabalov was called to the telegraph to receive the curt response of the Tsar (since 22 February at the Stavka) to his account of the troubles : 'I order that the disorders in the capital be stopped tomorrow ; such disorders are impermissible during this difficult time of war with Germany and Austria'. After informing the Council, Khabalov issued instructions that in future the sabre and nagaika were to be abandoned in favour of the rifle and machine-gun.[22] In the course of the night of 25/26 February the Okhrana effected a series of raids in the Petrograd suburbs which netted some one hundred revolutionaries and, by most accounts, was completely successful in decapitating the Extreme Left parties and organisations.[23] The precise effect of these actions upon the events of 26 February was difficult to assess. Both Belyayev and the Empress were to send relieved 'All Clear' telegrams to the Emperor at about 11 a.m. but the twenty-sixth was a Sunday, with the industrial workers as if by common consent sleeping late before setting off for the city centre. By early afternoon the crowds matched those of the previous day. Despite Rodzyanko's pleas to use fire-hoses rather than bullets against the insurgents, the troops received orders to shoot wherever necessary.[24]

The principal confrontation of the day was again at Znamenskaya Square but on the order to fire on the crowd, the Volynsky regiment put down its arms, forcing the police to take sole responsibility for the ensuing fusillade which claimed forty lives.[25] Although the immediate object was achieved and the crowd forcibly dispersed, the insubordination of the Volynsky regiment augured badly for the government. This development was taken a stage further when part of the Pavlovsky regiment mutinied in the late afternoon, not only refusing to fire on the crowd but turning their rifles on the police instead. The trend was clear : the sympathy of the

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22 PADENIE,i,190-220(Khabalov) ; also MILIUKOV 386 and PARES 442.

23 TROTSKY 130 ; MILIUKOV 386 ; also KATKOV 288.

24 TROTSKY 99 & 132-3 ; Jones,Russia in Revolution,p.90 ; M.Ferro,La Revolution de 1917,Aubier-Paris 1967,p.68.

25 PADENIE,i,291 ff.(Burtsev) ; also MILIUKOV 387.

soldiers for the insurgent workers was expressing itself in increasing commitment to their side.[26]

When the Council of Ministers reconvened at 9 p.m. on the twenty-sixth to determine the fate of the Duma, the situation required most delicate judgement. Some signs pointed to the weakness of the government position. The insubordination of the Volynsky and Pavlovsky regiments brought home to the ministers the degree to which they were dependent on army loyalty, which could not at present be relied upon for offensive operations against the insurgents. An Okhrana report of the afternoon of 26 February painted a desperate picture for the government :

> The government is without support from anybody ... The bourgeois circles insist upon a change of government and stress the view of continuing the war to a successful conclusion, but the workers advance the slogan "Bread, Down with the Government and Down with the War" ... At present everything depends on the line taken by the armed forces. (27)

However at the finely-balanced state of affairs on the evening of 26 February, it was still possible to interpret events as moving in the direction the government desired. The lapses of companies of two regiments did not necessarily imply the disloyalty of the remainder, and indeed the mutiny of the Pavlovsky company had been dealt with very ably by the Preobrazhensky regiment. The actions of the proletariat on Sunday, their normal free day, could not be taken as typical and the demands of their families could well send the workers back to their jobs early in the coming week. Most telling of all, there was solid ground for belief that the workers' movement had reached its peak and would now subside. The most important cogs in the revolutionary organisations had been removed by the Okhrana sweep and the workers' movement could not be expected to comtinue leaderless. Even Trotsky was to admit that the evening of the twenty-sixth was the turning-point and that all the revolutionary parties (Bolsheviks included) were for abandoning the struggle for the time being.[28] The campaign to restore law and order over the course

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26 'Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia i Okhrannoe Otdelenie', Byloe, I(29), January 1918, p.170 ; also TROTSKY 136 and N.N.Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917, Ed.J.Carmichael, London 1955, pp.28-9.

27 Report of Okhrana agent 'Limonin' : Byloe, I(29), January 1918, pp.174-5.

of the twenty-sixth encountered such little resistance that Sukhanov conceded that 'towards five o'clock it might well have seemed that Tsarism had again won the throw and that the movement was going to be suppressed'.[29] It was still possible to argue on the crucial night that it was necessary only to weather the storm which was already receding and moderating.

With the social and political balance so delicate, the government's relations with the Duma proved of vital importance. The negotiations between Rittikh and Pokrovsky and the Duma are still shrouded in mystery. Precisely who the ministers contacted and what were the nature of the discussions have never been satisfactorily described, with none of the participants caring to divulge any details. Milyukov offhandedly mentions that he was contacted (along with Vasilii Maklakov and the Oktobrist Savich) but 'I do not remember at all what they actually spoke about with me'.[30] Shul'gin has revealed that there was a Bloc meeting on 26 February (presumably connected with the Goremykin initiative), which he condemned for its failure to take a firm line against the government ; Shul'gin may also have had this occasion in mind when he remarked that 'the feeling of the closeness of revolution was so terrifying that through the eleventh hour the Kadets became even softer!'[31] Maklakov may have reinforced this impression of Bloc complaisance by suggesting that the Duma be prorogued to allow time for the formation of a Ministry of Confidence headed by Alekseyev. But whatever the details of the mysterious discussions, Rittikh and Pokrovsky apparently returned to the Council of Ministers with impressions which favoured a firm line.[32]

The Council of Ministers debated the situation from 9 p.m. until shortly after midnight. Protopopov's argument that this was no time for concession as the crisis was already subsiding won the grudging agreement of

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28 TROTSKY 134-7 ; also Ferro, La Revolution de 1917, pp.70-74.

29 Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917, p.25.

30 MILIUKOV 387-8.

31 SHUL'GIN 144-6(Bloc meeting) & 140(quotation).

32 SHUL'GIN 143-6 ; PADENIE, ii, 263-4(Golitsyn) ; Shakhovsky, Sic Transit, p.199 ; Utro Rossii, 5 April 1917.

a majority within the Council.[33] The news of the weak line of the Duma Bloc convinced all that no danger could spring from an early prorogation. Finally, to Protopopov personally, prorogation of the Duma automatically suspended the transfer of supply away from the MVD ; to this extent, Protopopov may have seen the prorogation of the Duma less as an assault on the national assembly than as a defence of his own position. Acceding reluctantly to the prevailing opinion but exercising his prerogative as Chairman by opting not for dissolution but for prorogation, Golitsyn employed a blank (which he pre-dated to the twenty-fifth) shortly after midnight.[34] At 1.58 a.m. on the twenty-seventh Golitsyn sent a telegram to the Emperor telling him of the action,and shortly afterwards despatched the formal decree of prorogation to the Senate from where it would pass to the Duma President.[35] The deed was done : the triumph of Protopopov's optimistic view over Golitsyn's pessimistic converted a minor cabinet reverse into the issue which was to draw the Duma however unwillingly into the revolution against the government.

The news of the prorogation spread quickly and by 9 a.m. many deputies were already at the Tauride Palace discussing what the Duma response must be. A hastily-convened meeting of the Bureau of the Progressive Bloc predictably oscillated between despair and ambition, for as Shul'gin remarked,

> Not everybody understood their impotence.Some believed that now was the moment when we could do something,now that the masses had crossed into "action".And what did they propose ? Sitting at their cosy green velvet-covered tables,they thought that the Bureau of the Progressive Bloc could manage insurgent Russia as it had managed the fractions of the Duma. (36)

When the Council of Elders met in mid morning of the twenty-seventh it was still difficult to assess the political situation with any degree of certainty. The Council of Ministers had been forced to make its most crucial decision at what appeared to be the turning-point of the disturbances ;

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33 TROTSKY 173-4 ; MILIUKOV 387-8 ; Vasilyev,The Ochrana,p.223.

34 Sobranie Ukazenii i Rasporyazhenii Pravitel'stva,I,i,328 quoted in BROWKER 41-2 ; also KERENSKY 190.

35 KERENSKY 193 ; Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Dima',pp.38-9.

36 KERENSKY 193 ; SHUL'GIN 150 & 155(quotation).

within twelve hours the Duma leaders were confronted with a comparable decision with little more information upon which to base the most far-reach--ing judgement in the history of the Duma.

There were two rival attitudes to the prorogation decree within the Council of Elders. The inclination of the Right and moderate Right was to accept prorogation if it was accompanied by the establishment of am ministry of confidence. Maklakov's plan as reported to the Council of Ministers was the most concrete version of this, though in retrospect it is hard to dispel the image of the moderate Right attempting to pass off moral cowardice as an act of political self-sacrifice.[37] By comparison, the retaliatory proposal of the Extreme Left for an official Duma sitting in defiance of the prorogat--ion decree combined a semblance of self-respect with a high degree of theatricality.[38] Once again the Kadets proved to hold the balance and came up with a formula of compromise. It was decided neither to disperse nor to defy the prorogation decree but instead the official but closed sitting scheduled for that afternoon should become a meeting of deputies in their private capacities.[39] Kerensky was later to condemn this compromise as disastrous for the future authority of the Duma :

> The Council [of Elders - R.P.] overruled our proposal, deciding that the Duma convene in "unofficial session" ... Politically and psychologically this meant there was to be a private meeting of a group of private individuals ... The meeting was not one of a state institution and it had no formal authority ... This refusal to continue in session formally was perhaps the greatest mistake of the Duma. It meant committing suicide at the very moment when its authority was supreme in the country and it might have played a decisive and fruitful part had it acted officially ... The Imperial Duma wrote its own death warrant at the moment of the revolutionary renaissance of the people. (40)

But on that morning of 27 February the concern of the Duma moderates who largely determined the decision lay as ever less with their relationship with the people as their relationship with the government. The direction in

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37 ENGEL'HARDT,xii,730 ; Utro Rossii,5 April 1917 ; also CHERMENSKY 902-3.

38 KERENSKY 195-6 ; Milyukov,'Fevral'skie Dni',p.175.

39 SHUL'GIN 157 ; A.Bublikov,Russkaya Revolyutsia,New York 1918,p.17.

40 KERENSKY,The Catastrophe,pp.12-13 ; also MILIUKOV 391.

which the balance of power was tipping was still a matter for conjecture rather than informed judgement and the Duma moderates were not prepared to gamble away the future by adding their names to a movement which might be crushed the next day. In the belief that the Duma had too much to lose to put itself at risk, the moderates were only prepared to gamble on a certainty.

By noon there was much clearer evidence that the position of the government was becoming intenable within the capital. Despite the arrests of the revolutionary leaders and the extreme caution of the remainder, the workers' movement continued under its own impetus ; only two ministers attended their desks this day ; at noon the Okhrana Headquarters ceased to function and was soon occupied by the mob ; shortly afterwards the Law Courts were set on fire.[41] Most significantly, army regiments started to commit themselves unreservedly to the insurgents : in the course of the night of 26/27 February the Volynsky regiment voted to mutiny against the government ; its example was followed over the morning of the twenty-seventh by the Litàvsky, Preobrazhensky and finally the Pavlovsky regiments.[42]

When the 'unofficial sitting' began at 2.30 p.m. there could be no doubt that the stocks of the government in Petrograd were plummeting. The Duma itself was secure against any attempt to enforce the prorogation decree by military action : the selection of the Tauride Palace as the seat of the State Duma had been largely governed by the fact that the site was entirely surrounded by regimental barracks, a location designed to facilitate a military coup in 1906 which now worked to the Duma's advantage.[43] Just before the start of the sitting a company of the Preobrazhensky regiment arrived at the Tauride Palace to defend the Duma against the government, the first to offer their services to the Duma in the course of the Revolution.[44] The response of the Duma deputies to this development was distinctly dubious :

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41 TROTSKY 138 & 143 ; Byloe,I(29),January 1918,p.175 ; Jones,Russia in Revolution,pp.107-116 & 124-5 ; PARES 444.

42 KERENSKY 193 ; TROTSKY 143-4 ; MILIUKOV 390 ; PARES 442.

43 TROTSKY 149.

44 KERENSKY 196-7 ; Jones,Russia in Revolution,pp.141-2.

few except the Extreme Left welcomed the self-appointment of a guard committ--ed to Revolution and which expected the same of the leaders it came to defend.

Following the Preobrazhensky regiment came a horde of insurgents whom the Duma dared not refuse and who rapidly occupied all but a few rooms of the Tauride Palace.[45] Chernov was later to note with satisfaction that the failure of the Duma to go to the Revolution had brought the Revolution to the Duma.[46] The close presence of their revolutionary guard and their equally revolutionary and uninvited guests assaulted the drawing-room sensitivities of the deputies almost beyond endurance. Shul'gin recalled the experienece with a shudder :

> I remember the moment when the blackish-grey sediment, pressing at the doors like a never-ceasing flood, drowned the Duma ... From the first moment of that inundation, repulsion filled my soul ... I felt helpless. Something dangerous, terrifying and abominable had been unleashed which threatened all of us alike. Even the old fighters in our midst shared in the common wave of fear then sweeping over us, as we sat huddled together in a vain attempt to draw courage and support from each other. (47)

The invasion of the Duma quite literally brought home to the Duma deputies the difficulty of maintaining a moderate line in a revolutionary context.

However despite the growing revolutionary pressure, the Duma moderates still steered a cautious and legalistic course. Rodzyanko continued to fulfil his constitutional rôle by informinh the Emperor of developments and propos--ing political solutions. On the evening of the twenty-sixth, he sent a warning telegram :

> It is necessary that some person who enjoys the confidence of the country be entrusted at once with the formation of a new government. There must be no delay. Any procrastination is tantamount to death. I pray to God that at this hour the responsibility may not fall upon the monarch. (48)

Just prior to the convening of the 'unofficial session' Rodzyanko again

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45 Izvestia,no.1,27 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 44-5 ; MILIUKOV 393 ; CHERMOV 77 ; SHUL'GIN 162-4.

46 CHERNOV 78 ; Sukhanov made exactly the same remark : The Russian Revolution 1917,p.37.

47 SHUL'GIN 162-4 ; also CHERNOV 78 and TROTSKY 176.

48 Izvestia,no.1,27 Febraury 1917 quoted in BROWKER 40 ; Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',pp.40-1.

appealed to the Emperor :

> The session of the State Duma has been suspended until April by Your Majesty's Ukaze. The last bulwark of order has been eliminated ... Order the immediate calling of a new government according to the principles reported by me to Your Majesty in my telegram of yesterday. Cancel Your Imperial Ukaze and order the reconvening of the legislative chambers. Make these measures known without delay through an Imperial manifesto. Sire, do not delay ... the hour which will decide the fate of Yourself and of the homeland has come. Tomorrow it may already be too late. (49)

Unfortunately Rodzyanko's telegram arrived in the wake of two unduly optimistic ones from Alexandra and Belyayev, eliciting from Nicholas the now legendary remark that 'fat Rodzyanko has sent me some nonsense which I won't even bother to answer'.[50] Notwithstanding the Emperor's scorn, it cannot be doubted either that Rodzyanko had a realistic grip on the crisis or that he performed his constitutional duty as Duma President as long as this was practicable.

The balance of the 'unofficial sitting' on the afternoon of 27 February reflected the loyalist constitutional stand of Rodzyanko. Shul'gin noted that the 'invasion' of the Duma had the effect of uniting the Duma groups : 'even enemies of many years standing suddenly felt that there was something equally dangerous, ominous and repulsive to them all - the street mob'. Mansyrev witnessed the complete unpreparedness of the Duma membership for anything resembling 'revolutionary action' :

> There was complete confusion amongst the Duma deputies. Almost everybody had expected revolution but now that it had actually erupted, no-one was prepared for it, not even our Duma socialists ... Everyone felt complete unreadiness for any action and the total absence of any plan.51

For just over an hour the future actions of the Duma were debated by almost all fractions. The Extreme Left reiterated its demand for the overthrow of tsarist government and declared itself prepared to accept an interim Constituent Assembly formed of the deputies from all four Dumas (in the calculation that the radical majorities of the first two Dumas were likely

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49 'Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia 1917 goda', KA, vol.21, pp.6-7 ; ARR.vi, 1922, 59 ; Jones, Russia in Revolution, p.130.

50 PADENIE, v, 38 (Frederiks) ; PARES 443 ; TROTSKY 100.

51 SHUL'GIN 158 ; Mansyrev, 'Moi Vospominania', p.264.

to cancel out the conservative majorities of the last two).[52] The most Right solution was oddly enough that submitted by the Left Kadet Nekrasov : power should be entrusted to a popular and firm commander like General Polivanov. This 'dictator scheme' not only angered the Left but found little support even amongst the moderate Right, who were hoping for a compromise plan which, while leaving all the political options open for the future, protected the Duma against possible government reprisals.[53] Milyukov judged the feeling of the meeting accurately by proposing a course which combined circumspection and opportunism :

> I proposed to wait awhile until the character of the disturbances became clearer and in the meantime to create a temporary committee of Duma members "for restoring order and maintaining contact with various persons and organisations". This awkward formula had the advantage of meeting the problem of the moment without determining anything for the future.Limiting itself to the minimum, it created a working body but did not lead the Duma members into criminal action.

Despite the protests of the Extreme Left, Milyukov's formula was the only scheme with a sufficiently low common denominator of content to permit a clear majority : the Council of Elders was instructed to elect the 'Temporary Committee' at once.[54]

By 4 p.m. the Council of Elders had come up with a full membership list for the Temporary Committee. There were no surprises : as Shul'gin remarked, 'in essence it was the bureau of the Progressive Bloc with the addition of Kerensky and Chkheidze ; it was a broadening of the Bloc towards the Left'.[55] The party balance of the Committee was significamt : four Oktobrists (Rodzyanko, Dmitryukov, Shidlovsky and Engel'hardt), two Kadets (Milyukov and Nekrasov), two Progressists (Konovalov and Rzhevsky), one Progressive Nationalist (Shul'gin), one Centre (Vladimir L'vov), one Trudovik (Kerensky)

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52 SHUL'GIN 158 ; PARES 448-9 ; Volya Rossia (Prague),15 March 1921 quoted in BROWKER 45-7.

53 Volya Rossia,15 March 1921 quoted in BROWKER 45 ; Mansyrev,'Moi Vospominania',p.266 ; Shidlovsky,'Vospominania',p.283.

54 MILIUKOV 391 ; also CHERNOV 77 ; SHUL'GIN 158-9 ; Mansyrev,'Moi Vospominania',pp.266-7.

55 SHUL'GIN 162.

and one Menshevik (Chkheidze).[56] The essential non-revolutionary nature of the Committee was symbolised by the Oktobrist hegemony ; while the Committee invited representation from further Left than the strict Bloc confines, the weight of the Committee was at least as far Right as that of the Bloc. Moreover the Committee, headed in practice by Rodzyanko (as Oktobrist leader), took great care to deny the Committee any official Duma status. The moderate leaders were still living in the shadow of their defeat in autumn 1915 : too close identification between Bloc and Duma had on that occasion led to the Tsar's displeasure falling upon both. Such a double reprisal must be avoided in 1917 : should the worse come to the worst, the Temporary Committee would be represented as merely the unofficial executive of a private conference ; the Duma itself had to be protected, with the moral authority to disavow any actions of the Committee.[57]

The careful circumspection of the Duma leaders on the morning and afternoon of 27 February disappointed and even angered many of the insurgents. Sukhanov expressed the misgivings of most of the revolutionary leaders about the rôle of the Duma moderates :

> Power had to go to the bourgeoisie, but was there any chance that they would take it ? What was the position of the propertied elements on this question ? Could they or would they march in step with the popular movement ? Would they, after calculating all the difficulties of their position, accept power from the hands of the revolution ? Or would they prefer to disassociate themselves from the revolution which had just begun and destroy the movement in alliance with the Tsarist faction - Or would they finally decide to destroy the movement by their "neutrality" - by abandoning it to its own devices and mass impulses that would lead to anarchy ? (58)

In the late afternoon of 27 February, it seemed that the latter course of 'neutrality' was being favoured : the name of the Committee was of the most unexceptionable kind, suggesting at most an information and liaison bureau ; both the Committee and the unofficial sitting which fathered it were meticulously distinguished from the Duma and Council of Elders in all

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56 Izvestia,no.2,28 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 47 ; Milyukov,'Fevral'sk-ie Dni',p.175 ; Times,16 March 1917(n/s),7f ; PARES 449.

57 CHERNOV 77 ; Bublikov,Russkaya Revolyutsia,p.18.

58 Sukhanov,The Russian Revolution 1917,p.9.

official bulletins ; and the details of the Committee and its composition were deliberately withheld until almost midnight (by which time further events made mock of any vestigial cautiousness).[59]

Yet even these superficially unremarkable developments needed the atmosphere of revolution which pervaded the Tauride Palace and, most particularly, the emergence of a rival authority - the Soviet. The decision to follow the pattern of 1905 and call a Petrograd Soviet had been taken at a meeting of Extreme Left leaders chaired by Chkheidze on the morning of 25 February.[60] The industrial proletariat of the Vyborg and Petrograd districts responded enthusiastically to the call to elect delegates, invading the Duma on the afternoon of the twenty-seventh to demand accommod--ation for the Soviet. At 3 p.m. the Duma reluctantly allocated Room 13 to the leaders of the insurgents, permitting the most unwelcome house-guest so far into the Tauride Palace.[61] The very existence of a clear rival for authority over the revolution operating inside the same building undoubtedly spurred the Temporary Committee on to greater activity and responsibility over the next twelve hours. Even as the Council of Elders elected the Temporary Committee they knew that the provisional Executive Committee of the Soviet was conducting its founding session only just out of earshot.[62]

The evening of 27 February saw the moderates painfully coming round to accepting the necessity of taking power. The most reluctant of all to take the crucial step, irritating even Shul'gin, was Rodzyanko, who spent the remaining hours of the day desperately searching for means of stabilising the worsening situation.[63] Rodzyanko relied heavily upon his alliance with Golitsyn to retain an element of order and legality. Both despatched telegrams to the Tsar describing the emergency and proposing almost identical solutions. It is unclear whether there was definite collusion but both were

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59 Izvestia,no.2,28 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 47.

60 KATKOV 359 ; Sukhanov,The Russian Revolution 1917,pp.15 & 39.

61 KERENSKY 199 & 232 ; CHERNOV 78 & 102 ; Mansyrev,'Moi Vospominania',p.268.

62 KERENSKY 201.

63 CHERNOV 78-9 ; SHUL'GIN 178-9.

certainly motivated by very similar tactical convictions, Early in the evening of the twenty-seventh Rodzyanko again appealled to the Tsar 'immediately to call upon a person in whom the whole country can have confidence and who would be charged to form a government having the confid--ence of the whole population'. Almost simultaneously a telegram composed jointly by Golitsyn, Bark and Pokrovsky was despatched to the Empror asking him 'to dismiss us at once and nominate a person enjoying the confidence of the sovereign who will not arouse the mistrust of wide sectors of society'.[64]

Rodzyanko and Golitsyn attempted without success to prevent an irrevocable break between the government and Duma. At about four in the afternoon of the twenty-seventh, Shcheglovitov was brought to the Tauride Palace by a group of insurgents, thereby posing Rodzyanko and the moderates a delicate political dilemma. Most were acutely embarrassed by the problem with which the revolution had confronted them. As Kerensky testified, constitutionalism still dominated the Duma moderates :

> The deputies were greatly distressed, and the moderates urged Rodzyanko to have him [Shcheglovitov - R.P.] released since, as the president of a legislative body, he enjoyed personal immunity ... I saw Rodzyanko greet him amiably and invite him into his office as a "guest".

Kerensky seized the initiative and arrested Shcheglovitov in the name of the revolution, daring Rodzyanko to contradict him before the thronged hall, but 'everyone fell back and Rodzianko and his friends, somewhat embarrassed, returned to their rooms'.[65]

At a meeting of the Council of Ministers the same evening, Golitsyn made a last (and strictly an illegal) attempt to improve the image of the administration. Despite his misgivings in usurping the prerogative of the Emperor to recruit and dismiss ministers, Golitsyn decided with Belyayev that the situation was so desperate that the only hope lay in political compromise and in particular the removal of Protopopov. Golitsyn confronted Protopopov with a demand for his resignation and the pathetic individual,

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64 ARR,iii,1922,247 ; PADENIE,ii,267(Golitsyn).

65 KERENSKY 197-8 ; also SHUL'GIN 170-1 ; Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma', p.49 ; Bublikov,Russkaya Revolyutsia,p.19.

thoroughly cowed by the unanimity of hatred and distrust, acceded at once muttering 'now there is nothing left for me to do but shoot myself'.[66] Golitsyn asserted that this 'sacrifice' must be followed by the collective resignation of the entire Council of Ministers and an appeal to the Emperor to create a Ministry of Confidence.[67] In so doing, Golitsyn was going far beyond his powers as Chairman of the Council. In acceding to outside pressure, preferring his own counsel to that of the Emperor, urging a renovated cabinet and then promoting the collective resignation of the present ministers, Golitsyn was himself making a revolutionary departure by invading the imperial prerogative. The fact of revolution drew a revolutionary response even from the Tsar's own government. Golitsyn attempted to cover himself in part against accusations of lèse-majesté by persuading Rodzyanko to arrange for the attendance of the Grand Duke Mikhail at the meeting. Rodzyanko had asked the Grand Duke to come to Petrograd from Gatchina as early as the afternoon of 25 February in order that at least one representat--ive of the ruling dynasty be on hand to act as a rallying-point for loyalist forces.[68] On arriving in Petrograd late on the afternoon of the twenty-seventh, the Grand Duke was conducted almost at once to the Mariinsky Palace in order to lend Golitsyn greater courage and stature by his presence. It is doubtful whether Golitsyn would have gone so far in his actions had it not been for the attendance of one who was regarded in many eyes as the future Regent of the Empire.[69]

Immediately following the Council of Ministers an equally historic meeting took place. The leaders of the government and the presidium of the Duma met together to appeal to the Grand Duke Mikhail to take the political and military initiative in the capital. In the words of Rodzyanko,

> The situation in the capital was reported in detail to the Grand Duke, and it was suggested that the situation could still be saved - he should

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66 PADENIE,ii,267-8(Golitsyn) ; MILIUKOV 388 ; PALEOLOGUE,III,223-4.

67 MILIUKOV 388.

68 Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.38.

69 PADENIE,ii,266(Golitsyn) ; MILIUKOV 388 ; PARES 452.

> assume on his owm initiative the dictatorship of the city of Petrograd, compel the personnel of the government to tender their resignations, and demand by telegraph, by direct wire from His Majesty the Emperor a manifesto regarding the formation of a responsible ministry. (70)

By the time that Rodzyanko produced this account (1922), the embarrassment of admitting any cooperation or collusion between the 'forces of the Revolution' and the 'forces of Tsardom' had induced Rodzyanko deliberately to play down the combined nature of the meeting and the willingness of the ministers to accept dismissal. The rival testimony of Golitsyn before the Investigatory Commission of the Provisional Government in April 1917 was that 'both Rodzyanko and I beseeched Mikhail Aleksandrovich to take the regency and immediately release us, that is the ministers'.[71] Whatever the revisionism of subsequent accounts, it is clear that Rodzyanko and Golitsyn cooperated fully at the two crucial meetings of early evening of 27 February in a last minute attempt to save the situation. However this joint effort to pull a dynastic coup and channel the swelling revolutionary mood into defined political and constitutional ~~channels~~ concessions broke down over the indecision of the Grand Duke. Fearing to assume the enormous responsibility of usurping the authority of the Tsar, however locally and temporarily, Mikhail postponed his decision until he had contacted the Emperor over the telegraph. Following the account of Rodzyanko,

> The irresoluteness of the Grand Duke Mikhail Aleksandrovich contributed to a favorable moment being lost. Instead of taking active measures and gathering around himself the units of the Petrograd garrison whose discipline was not yet shattered, the Grand Duke Mikhail started to negotiate by direct wire with the Emperor Nicholas II ; all his suggestions were completely rejected and thus, in this instance, the attempt of the State Duma failed. (72)

While the other Duma moderates were screwing up their courage to make the crucial decision to seize power, Rodzyanko and Golitsyn intrigued to apply the brakes to the accelerating revolutionary movement by forcing political concessions from the Emperor and instituting the local regency of the Grand

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70 PADENIE,ii,266(Golitsyn) ; KERENSKY 214(Note) ; Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvenn--aya Duma',p.38(quotation).

71 PADENIE,ii,266(Golitsyn) ; also Sukhanov,The Russian Revolution 1917,p.51.

72 Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.38.

Duke Mikhail. Even if the Tsar could not appreciate the political exigencies of the moment, the leaders of both government and Duma were prepared to compromise their oaths of loyalty to save the dynasty in spite of itself.

Throughout the evening of the twenty-seventh effective power drained away from the government and military authorities, increasing the pressure on the Temporary Committee to take power. By 5 p.m. the symbol of Tsardom, the Winter Palace, had been occupied by the Pavlovsky regiment, leaving only two regiments - the Semyonovsky and Izmailovsky - still loyal to the government. At 7.35 p.m. Belyayev admitted the impotence of the local military authorit--ies by requesting immediate external reinforcements from the Emperor.[73] By mid evening the remaining loyal troops commanded by Khabalov and Zankevich were besieged in the Admiralty building with numbers so small and morale so uncertain as to preclude any possibility of government regrouping and counter-attack. At about midnight Khabalov despatched a telegram to the Emperor belatedly confessing that he could not restore order.[74] Its authority intimately linked with that of the military, the government was by late evening defeated and inoperative. Readily accepting the force of the military situation, Golitsyn and his cabinet resigned at about 11.30 p.m.,dispersing within the hour without waiting to hear the Empror's response.[75] As the Council of Ministers surrendered power and the Emperor refused to accept its resignation, local authority in Petrograd fell to whomsoever was willing to take it. The power vacuum could not be expected to last very long and,as Kerensky recalled, the insurgents naturally turned to the Duma for direction :

> From every direction people approached us for instructions and advice. The Provisional Committee which had only just been formed was compelled to act as an executive power. We were like the general staff of an army during war operations ... Hundreds of people wanted attention, gave advice and asked for work ... We had to keep our heads, for it would have been disastrous to waste precious time or to show any lack of self-confidence. We had to decide on the spot what answers to give, what orders to issue, when to encourage and when to discourage... (76)

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73 ARR,iii,1922,249 ; TROTSKY 100 ; Rerro,La Revolution de 1917,pp.76-7.

74 Izvestia,no.3,1 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 52 ; KA,vol.21,pp.8-9 & 15-16 ; ARR,iii,250-1 ; Vasilyev,The Ochrana,p.233.

75 Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',pp.39-40 ; PADENIE,ii,267(Golitsyn).

76 KERENSKY 198 ; also SHUL'GIN 164 & 178.

From the moment that the insurgents invaded and occupied the Tauride Palace, the Duma leaders found themselves borne along by the pressure of events and gradually forced to adopt a strong and radical line in order to retain the allegiance of a revolution which threatened to sweep past and over them.

Three factors finally compelled the Temporary Committee to take power. A joint meeting of the leaders of the Zemstvo and Town Unions, War Industry Committees and the Petrograd Municipal Duma in the early evening of the twenty-seventh unanimously 'welcomed the resolution of the State Duma not to disperse and its decision to take power into its own hands'.[77] In fact, neither of these statements was true at that time. It is possible that the meeting of the public organisations was genuinely misinformed of the exact state of Duma affairs. It is true for example that the only news publication in the period was Izvestia, a hastily-improvised broadsheet run off by the enterprising Committee of Petrograd Journalists ; it is also true that the scrupulous distinction between the Duma and the new 'unofficial' bodies made by Rodzyanko in official communiqués was blamdly disregarded by both Izvestia and the vast majority of insurgents.[78] But it is also likely that the leaders of the public organisations were convinced of the necessity for adding their weight to the revolutionary movement and deliberately issued a misleading and premature statement to stampede the Temporary Committee into assuming power. Whatever the intricacies of the meeting however, the commit--ment of the publiv organisations to revolution must have weighed heavily in the deliberations of the Temporary Committee.

At the Stavka meanwhile, Nicholas was still uncertain of the gravity of the events in Petrograd. Whether the accusation that the Emperor's aide Voyeikov withheld Rodzyanko's warning telegrams is true or not, Nicholas had received reassuring telegrams from both Alexandra and Belyayev as late as noon on the twenty-seventh.[79] The Emperor's unawareness of the extent of

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77 Izvestia,no.3,1 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 49.

78 A facsimile of Izvestia,no.1,27 Bebruary 1917 appears in Jones,Russia in Revolution,p.140.The third news item states that 'the Council of Elders, with the orders of the Tsar made known to them,decided not to disperse'.

the crisis had the effect of postponing a response until events had progress--ed too far for an 'unrevolutionary' solution. At a discussion between the Emperor and his advisers in the early evening of the twenty-seventh, Alekseyev counselled concession but Voyeikov countered that the disorders were being exaggerated by Rodzyanko for his own political ends and could be met by military action alone. Nicholas had been as influenced by the events of autumn 1915 as the moderate leaders, drawing the lesson that only firm action was required to dissolve a political crisis. By shortly after 9 p.m. Nicholas had decided to reject any notion of concession and to despatch General Ivanov to restore order in the capital.[80] By the time that the Grand Duke Mikhail contacted the Emperor at 10.30 p.m., the decision for repression was made and the Grand Duke was told none too courteously to keep out of high politics. Golitsyn's submission of the resignation of the Council of Ministers at 11.30 p.m. was answered at 1 a.m. the following day by a testy insistence on the restoration of order and the curt judgement that 'changes in the composition of the ministers are inadmissible in these circumstances'.[81] The recalcitrance of the Emperor brought the schemes of Golitsyn and Rodzyanko to a impasse and confronted the Duma with the stark choice : either the people or the Tsar.

As the Temporary Committee temporised in an agony of indecision, its patent rival was fast developing in stature. As Kerensky recalled,

> The formation of the Soviet earlier in the day was regarded as a critical event since there was now a danger that unless we formed a provisional government at once, the Soviet would declare itself the supreme authority of the Revolution. (82)

From 9 p.m. ran the first plenary session of the Petrograd Soviet, a meeting which though both chaotic and unproductive thoroughly alarmed the Duma. Just as the simultaneous meeting of the Soviet Executive Committee and the Council

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79 Tyrkova-Williams, From Liberty, pp.6-7 ; PADENIE, v, 38(Frederiks) ; PARES 443.

80 ARR, iii, 249 ; PARES 457 ; SHUL'GIN 279-280 ; Hanbury-Williams, The Emperor Nicholas II, pp.148-9 ; V.N.Voyeikov, S Tsarem i bez Tsarya, Helsinki 1936, p.261.

81 KA, vol.21, pp.11-13 ; PADENIE, ii, 267-8(Golitsyn) ; CHERNOV 79.

82 KERENSKY 201 ; also CHERNOV 79 and SHUL'GIN 185.

of Elders spurred on the creation of the Temporary Committee, so the session of the plenary Soviet in the evening forced the Committee through its next major decision. To attempt to determine which factor was crucial in bringing the Committee to its decision may well be to miss the most fundamental point. Whether the pressure from the mob, the demands of the public organis-ations, the recalcitrance of the Emperor or the rival authority of the Soviet finally triggered the crucial decision, the overall rationale for the action was cumulative. Different leaders ascribed varying degrees of importance to these factors. While Kerensky undoubtedly put the demands of the insurgents as of primary importance, Milyukov may well have seen the collapse of the existing government as sufficient justification for taking power. Shul'gin too persistently urged Rodzyanko 'Take power, the position is plain ! If we don't, others will'. As the most cautious and conservative of the moderate leaders, Rodzyanko openly lamented :

> I do not wish to rebel. I am no insurgent. I did not make and do not wish to make a revolution. If it has been made, it is because people did not heed us. I am no revolutionary. I don't want to go against the Supreme Authority ... What shall I do ? Step aside ? Wash my hands of it ? What shall I do ? (83)

Rodzyanko waited for the result of the Grand Duke Mikhail's appeal before committing himself irrevocably. This failure crowned his other unsuccessful attempts to 'de-fuse' the crisis. With all constitutional and practical alternatives eliminated, Rodzyanko was compelled to follow his colleagues.

Shortly before midnight Rodzyanko gave his assent to the Temporary Committee assuming power and the formation of a provisional government. In an attempt both to keep in check the flow of the revolution and retain power for himself and the Oktobrists, Rodzyanko priced his agreement as a promise that 'all members of the Committee unconditionally and blindly subordinate themselves to my command'. Rodzyanko's authority was still sufficient to gain the acquiescence of his colleagues (except Kerensky) to this stiff demand.[84]

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83 SHUL'GIN 179 & 178-9 ; also Milyukov,'Fevral'skie Dni',p.176 and CHERNOV 77 and Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.40.

84 MILIUKOV 395-6 ; KERENSKY 201.

The newly-elected Soviet Executive Committee was now summoned. Just after midnight on 27/28 February, the rival executives produced a working agreement by which the Soviet agreed to subordinate itself to the leadership of the Temporary Committee : rather than provoke an early split in the forces of revolution, the Soviet administrator elected to rum Petrograd, Mstislavsky agreed to concede to his Duma opposite nûber, Engel'hardt.[85] The Temporary Committee's decision to take power had come early enough to catch the Soviet before it realised its full authority and potential. Before the Committee broke up to allow its members some sleep at 2 a.m., it published the first carefully-worded announcement of its momentous decision :

> Under the difficult conditions of internal chaos brought on by the measures of the old regime, the Temporary Committtee of the State Duma has found itself compelled to take the responsibility for restoring national and public order. Conscious of the vast responsibility it has assumed by this decision, the Committee expresses its assurance that the population and the army will assist it in the difficult task of forming a new government that will correspond with the desires of the population and will be capable of commanding its confidence. (86)

The Soviet followed the Committee's example and recessed in exhaustion some two hours later.

Over the twenty-four hours following the decision to take power, the remaining vestiges of tsarist government disappeared entirely. From the early morning onwards, Engel'hardt successfully masterminded the complex operation of establishing Committee authority throughout the capital. The tsarist government ceased operating, the Mariinsky Palace (the seat of the govern--ment) was occupied, and the tsarist ministers either hid out or, anticipating a worse fate at the hands of the mob, surrendered to the Duma.[87] Milyukov, Rodzyanko and Kerensky formally greeted the successive regiments which trooped to the Duma to demonstrate their allegiance to the Revolution.[88] By 2.30 p.m. General Zankevich, trapped with his dwindling body of loyal troops

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85 TROTSKY 179-180 ; KERENSKY 200 ; Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, p.69.

86 Izvestia, no.2, 28 February 1917 quoted in BROWKER 50 ; also Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma', p.41 ; a garbled version appears in Jones, Russia in Revolution, p.157 ; also Bublikov, Russkaya Revolyutsia, p.21.

87 MILIUKOV 388 & 394 ; SHUL'GIN 189-192 ; Jones, Russia in Revolution, 145-9.

88 Izvestia, no.3, 1 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 52 ; TROTSKY 156.

in the Admiralty, recognised the impossibility of his position and telegraph--ed the Tsar that he was evacuating the Admiralty to return to barracks. With the withdrawal of the Izmailovsky (the last loyal regiment) at 4 p.m., the last redoubt of Tsardom in revolutionary Petrograd was abandoned.[89] As the authority of the government evaporated, that of the Duma and Soviet rushed to take its place ; by the evening of 28 February, the authority of the Temporary Committee in collaboration with the Soviet had entirely replaced that of the tsarist government.

2. The formation of the Provisional Government (1-3 March 1917)

28 February also witnessed the first attempts of the Tsar and the Duma moderates to come to terms. Having indignantly refused the collective resignation of a cabinet which (unknown to him) no longer existed, Nicholas was confirmed in his belief that strong action was necessary : in the early hours of the twenty-eighth, the Ivanov expedition was despatched. Nicholas too left the Stavka, though apparently motivated as much by anxiety about his children (all of whom were down with the measles) as by political considerations. At 5 a.m. the imperial train left Mogilev for Tsarskoe Selo, thereby exposing its passenger to infinitely greater stress and danger than at the Stavka.[90] A full thirty-eight hours were to elapse before the diverted train eventually came to rest at Pskov, a period throughout which the Tsar was almost completely incommunicado. At a time when crucial decisions had to be made, the Emperor was out of touch with developments in the capital and could neither learn of events nor effectively respond to them. He was dependent for news on what one tsarist apologist has termed Alekseyev's 'deluge of tendacious [sic] and distotted information'. Nicholas saw little reason to hurry his decisions, unaware that while he 'was still reckoning in

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89 Izvestia,no.3,1 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 52 ; TROTSKY 156.

90 PADENIE,v,300(Ivanov) ; TROTSKY 100 ; PARES 457 ; KERENSKY 212.

days and weeks, the revolution was keeping its count in minutes'.[91] It was under these disorientating circumstances that the Emperor was called upon to make the most critical decision of his reign.

By the evening of the twenty-eighth the Temporary Committee had digested the fact of the success of revolution within Petrograd and started to turn its attention to the country at large and especially to the Emperor. Rodzyanko was most eager to contact the Tsar in order to stabilise the situation before the revolution threatened the dynasty itself. Late that evening Rodzyanko telegraphed the Emperor to request a meeting at Bologoe or Dno the next day.[92] However Rodzyanko never kept his appointment. The Soviet both realised the large element of duress involved in the moderates' decision to take power and anticipated attempts at a 'deal' between the Temporary Committee and the Tsar. The 2 March editorial of the Bolshevik Izvestia clearly expressed this fear :

> The bourgeois parties that have currently joined the Temporary Committee of the State Duma are by no means burning with desire to consummate the revolution and to realise the complete triumph of democracy. The most attractive outcome for them would be a compromise with the old regime, the return to power of Nicholas II in the rôle of "constitutional monarch". However the vitality and solidarity of revolutionary democracy have already compelled the bourgeoisie to take some steps beyond the limits of the position that the ruling class was unwilling to abandon. The Temporary Committee had to ... sanction the arrests of ministers and other agents of the old regime, and to establish a new power by revolutionary means. (93)

The Left leaders Chernov and Sukhanov claimed that Rodzyanko was prevented from travelling to meet the Tsar by the Soviet Executive Committee :

> Rodzianko must not be allowed to see the Tsar.We still don't know the intentions of the leading groups of the bourgeoisie,the Progressive Bloc and the Duma Committee,and no-one can vouch for them ... If the Tsar has any power on his side - which again we don't know - then the "revolution-ary" Duma which "stands for the people" will certainly side with the Tsar against the revolution...We must not create this possibility of the formation of a strong counter-revolutionary force - what the Tsar would not be strong enough to do alone,he will easily be able to do with the help of the Duma and Rodzianko. (94)

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91 A.Goulevitch,Czarism and Revolution,New York 1962,p.248 ; TROTSKY 104.

92 Nol'de,L'Ancien Regime,pp.130-1 ; Shidlovsky,'Vospominania',p.294.

93 Izvestia,2 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 1210 ; note that the Bolshevik Izvestia was very different from the broadsheet Izvestia, now often differentiated as Izvestia Revolyutsionnoy Nedeli (e.g. in BROWKER).

Shul'gin recalled a conversation with Rodzyanko which took place the evening of the same day (1 March) when the Duma President complained :

> This morning I was to have left for the Stavka to meet the Emperor to submit to His Majesty the only possible solution - abdication. But those scoundrels found out about it and just as I was about to set off told me the train would not be allowed to leave ... They said they would not let me go alone but I must take Chkheidze ... who was to be accompanied by a battalion of "revolutionary soldiers". Who knows what outrages they would have committed there. (95)

Thus at least three contemporary accounts indicate either that Rodzyanko was forcibly prevented from keeping his appointment or only permitted under circumstances which he considered unacceptable.

Other commentators, notably George Katkov, contend that the restraint imposed by the Soviet was minimal and that Rodzyanko employed the Soviet as a convenient bugaboo to cover his reluctance to leave Petrograd.[96] Certainly in his telegraph conversation with General Rusky in the small hours of 2 March Rodzyanko advanced very different reasons for his non-appearance at Pskov :

> I very much regret that I cannot come. I will tell you in all sincerity my two reasons for not coming : in the first place, the troops which you are sending to Petrograd have mutinied ... Secondly, I am told that my journey might have undesirable consequences. The unbridled passions of the popular masses must not be left without my personal control, because I am still the only one who is trusted and whose orders are carried out. (97)

Katkov suggests that Rodzyanko was anxious that Rusky continued to believe in his authority over the Revolution, and not only were both reasons bogus but Rodzyanko knew them to be so. He does not however produce any evidence to refute the claim that the Soviet would have prevented Rodzyanko meeting the Emperor. Even so, Sukhanov admitted that the Soviet's decision against Rodzyanko's mission had been reversed by the intervention of Kerensky by midday ; although Rodzyanko might have been prevented leaving on the morning of 1 March, he was free to go by the afternoon.[98] It is probably fair to

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94 Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917, p.110 ; also CHERNOV 82.

95 SHUL'GIN 214 & 239 ; also Shidlovsky, 'Vospominania', p.295.

96 KATKOV 318-9 ; also BUblikov, Russkaya Revolyutsia, pp.25-6.

97 ARR, iii, 255-6 ; also CHERNOV 81-2.

98 Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917, pp.111-112 ; also KATKOV 318-9.

suggest that while Rodzyanko did encounter resistance to his journey from the Soviet, his principal reason for not going was his concern for his authority over the revolutionary movement. If Rodzyanko had set out for Pskov on the morning of 1 March he would have missed the arrival of Prince L'vov (the projected new candidate for premier) the same afternoon and the meeting of the Temporary Committee to finalise the manifesto and composition of the Provisional Government scheduled for that evening. Rodzyanko must have been aware that his self-appointed rôle as 'dictator of the revolution' was universally resented and nowhere more than amongst his Duma colleagues.[99] To abandon the capital at such a time, on no matter how important a mission, was to invite a coup in his absence. Rodzyanko, always acutely sensitive to his prestige and authority, simply did not dare to turn his back on political developments to spend days chasing the Emperor over the disorganised railways of north-western Russia. Nicholas had put himself at an enormous disadvantage by consigning his throne to a railway carriage ; Rodzyanko had no intention of making the same mistake.

Unable to penetrate the Soviet control of the rail route to Petrograd, Nicholas decided not to return to Mogilev but to travel across country to the headquarters of the Northern Front at Pskov, which would serve as a convenient vantage-point from which to tackle the revolutionary capital. Nicholas finally reached Pskov and the welcome of the commander of the Northern Front General Rusky at about 7.30 p.m. on 1 March. Rusky knew more of the events in the capital than Nicholas : Rodzyanko had informed all army commanders through Alekseyev of the Duma take-over of power on the morning of the twenty-eighth and convinced the army High Command of the success of the revolution.[100] Because of the 'unavailability' of Rodzyanko, it now fell to the embarrassed Rusky to negotiate between the Revolution and the Tsar. Rusky was assured by both Alekseyev and Rodzyanko that political concessions

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99 MILIUKOV 394-6 ; also KATKOV 319-320.

100 KERENSKY 201-2 ; Lukomsky, Memoirs, pp.57-8 ; Ferro, La Revolution de 1917, pp.110 & 114-5 ; PARES 459.

were essential in order to calm the revolutionary excesses which threatened the Russian war effort. He appears to have spent the better part of the evening of 1 March attempting to persuade Nicholas to make fundamental concessions, but without success. The turning-point in his campaign was the arrival at 10.20 p.m. of an urgent telegram from Alekseyev :

> The ever-increasing danger of anarchy spreading all over the country, of the further disintegration of the army, and the impossibility of continuing the war under present conditions urgently demand the immediate publication of an imperial act which could still have a calming effect, and this is possible only by calling a responsible ministry and by charging the President of the State Duma to form it.
>
> The news which reaches us gives us reason to hope that members of the Duma under the leadership of Rodzyanko are still in a position to stop the general disintegration and that it would be possible to work with them, but the loss of every hour reduces our last chance to preserve or restore order. (101)

The message prompted an hour-long discussion with Rusky from which the pressed soldier-negotiator eventually emerged victorious. Nicholas was at first only prepared to concede a ministry of confidence but by stressing Alekseyev's initial remarks about the collapse of the war effort, Rusky was able to persuade Nicholas to grant a responsible ministry.[102] Shortly before midnight the Russian Autocrat agreed to surrender his authority over the executive of government in favour of a national assembly. At twenty minutes past midnight Nicholas indicated his surrender by telegraphing to Ivanov at Tsarskoe Selo 'requesting you not to take any measures before my arrival and your report'. Neither arrival nor report was ever to materialise and the Ivanov expedition (which had arrived at Tsarskoe some three hours previously) was effectively called off from the moment that the telegram was received. At about 2 a.m. on 2 March the Emperor signed the formal document granting Russia a legally-responsible constitution.[103]

However the concession intended by Alekseyev and Rusky to satisfy the political needs of the moment conspicuously failed in its object. Rodzyanko

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101 ARR,iii,253-4 ; also KERENSKY 212 and KATKOV 322-4.

102 ARR,iii,255-8 ; PADENIE,vi,268(Guchkov) ; CHERNOV 84 ; KERENSKY 213.

103 KA,vol.21,p.153 ; KERENSKY 213 ; Russkaya Volya,no.2,7 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 102 ; Buxhoeveden,The Life and Tragedy,p.259.

had exploited his monopoly of communication to present a political impression to the army commanders which flattered his own importance but failed to reflect the true state of affairs. Alekseyev and Rusky believed that Rodzyanko could control the situation if armed with the necessary political weapons which they alone could secure. In fact the situation in Petrograd was fast outdistancing the cautious constitutionalism of Rodzyanko. The abdication of Nicholas had already secured almost universal agreement and the principle issue was becoming the future of the monarchy as an institution.

As the Emperor reached Pskov in the early evening of 1 March, the Temporary Committee was in session to complete its 'Manifesto of the Provisional Government'. However while the majority within the Temporary Committee proposed the removal of Nicholas as Emperor, it 'still took for granted that Grand Duke Michael would be Regent until the heir Alexis came of age'.[104] The real argument started when, at about midnight, the Temporary Committee met the Soviet Executive Committee to discuss joint signature of the Manifesto. Controversy centred on the question of the form of future government. The Soviet was overwhelmingly republican in sentiment, the Temporary Committee largely monarchist. The furthest the Soviet was prepared to go to oblige the Duma was the formula 'the Provisional Government must not take any steps to predetermine the future form of government', but Milyukov stoutly defended 'the Romanov monarchy and dynasty, with Alexis as Tsar and Michael as Regent'. Exhausted from lack of sleep, Milyukov only succeeded in damaging his case in the eyes of the Soviet :

> He [Milyukov - R.P.] made some "liberal advances" to us, pointing out that the Romanovs could no longer be dangerous now and that Nicholas was unacceptable to him too and must be removed. He naively tried to convince us of the acceptability to the democracy of his arrangement, saying of his candidates that "one was a sick child, the other a thoroughly stupid man".

Long hours of desultory debate eventually produced an interim formula which was only tolerated because it was by now 4 a.m. and the wording was equally

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104 KERENSKY 206.

disagreeable to both sides. The first major confrontation over the future of the monarchy produced a tired stalemate.[105]

Although arriving too late for the meeting, Guchkov was acutely disturb--ed by colleagues'accounts of the argument and the accelerating trend towards republicanism which prompted it. After conferring with Rodzyanko, Milyukov and Shul'gin about ways of saving the situation, Guchkov concluded that only swift and decisive action could forestall disaster :

> In this chaos we must above all think of saving the monarchy. Without the monarchy Russia cannot live. But evidently the present Emperor must not reign any longer ... If that is so, how can we calmly and indiffer--ently await the moment when the revolutionary rabble destroys the monarchy ? This will inevitably happen if we let the initiative slip from our hands ... Therefore we must act swiftly and secretly, without asking, without taking advice ... we must confront them with an accomplished fact. We must give Russia a new monarch. (106)

Since Rodzyanko had failed to make the journey to Pskov, Guchkov judged his own mission as the only way of preventing a complete slide into revolutionary chaos. Indeed if Guchkov had his way, the revolutionary aspect of recent events could be effectively camouflaged :

> I knew that if he abdicated into our hands, there would be, so to speak, no revolution. The Emperor would abdicate of his own free will, power would pass to a Regent, who would appoint a new government. The Imperial Duma, which had submitted to the ukaze of dissolution and had taken power only because the old ministers had fled, would transfer power to the new government. Juridically-speaking, there would be no revolution.[107]

Aside from general political considerations, the personal side of Guchkov's action cannot be ignored. An element of personal vindictiveness was probably present, for of all political leaders Guchkov had suffered most at the hands of the Emperor and Empress. There may also have been a personal need for a dramatic rôle in the history of these events : Guchkov had played the lead in the forestalled palace revolution ; was he now to be relegated to spear-carrying in the actual revolution ? Guchkov could also leave the capital secure in the knowledge that the composition of the Provisional Government

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105 Quotation : Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917, pp.121-2 (for the whole meeting pp.116-126) ; also MILIUKOV 402-4 and SHUL'GIN 228-236.

106 Quotation : SHUL'GIN 239-240 (whole meeting pp.237-240) ; also PADENIE, vi, 262-3 (Guchkov), MILIUKOV 405 and CHERNOV 83.

107 Curiously, Chernov claims these words for Guchkov (CHERNOV 83) and Shul'gin claims them for himself (SHUL'GIN 241).

was finalised and, come what may, he would be Minister of War. He had every--thing to gain by his dramatic mission to Pskov and, unlike Rodzyanko the previous day, nothing to lose. With Shul'gin (who volunteered to accompany him), Guchkov slipped secretly away from Petrograd - so secretly indeed that there are the widest discrepancies about the time of his departure.[108] Neither knew that very early that morning the Emperor had signed a constitut--ion and rendered a revolution inevitable even in law.

On that same morning of 2 March, shortly ~~before~~ after Nicholas signed the manifesto, a telegraph conversation took place between Rusky and Rodzyanko After expressing the surprise of both the Emperor and himself that Rodzyanko had been unable to come to Pskov, Rusky reported his recent success :

> From the conversations which His Majesty had with me today, I found out that His Majesty the Emperor wanted at first to suggest that you should form a cabinet responsible to His Majesty, but later on, when I took leave of him, His Majesty, meeting the general desire of the legislative bodies and of the people, expressed his final decision, and has authorised me to inform you that he has decided to grant a Ministry responsible before the legislative bodies, charging you with the formation of the cabinet.

Though welcoming the Emperor's conciliatory attitude, Rodzyanko realised that events in Petrograd had passed the point at which such a concession could stem the revolution. Having come straight from witnessing the fierce republicanism of the Soviet Executive Committee, Rodzyanko replied 'with an aching heart' :

> The hatred towards the dynasty has reached extreme limits, but all the people ... have firmly decided to continue the war until its victorious end ... Everywhere the troops have passed to the side of the Duma and of the people, and the threatening demands for abdication in favour of the son, under the regency of Michael Alexandrovitch, have become a very definite demand ... Unfortunately the manifesto has come too late. It should have been published immediately after my first telegram, as I asked His Majesty the Emperor to do. Time has been lost and there is no return to the past. (109)

Although Rodzyanko went no further than indicating the demand for abdication, this conversation triggered off the campaign to secure abdication by the Army High Command.

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108 A selection of departure times : 5 a.m.(SHUL'GIN 240-3 and PARES 464), 2.57 p.m.(KATKOV 336-7), 3.p.m.(MILIUKOV 408), 4 p.m.(KERENSKY 209).

109 ARR,iii,255-8 ; also CHERNOV 81-2 & 84-5 ; KATKOV 327-330.

By mid morning Alekseyev had received details of the conversation from Rusky and decided to effect the abdication. Alekseyev's Quartermaster-General Danilov telegraphed to Lukomsky, Chief of Stalf to Rusky, the sentiments of his superior : 'I ask you to report on my behalf to General Rusky my deep conviction that there is no choice and that abdication should take place ... it is very painful for me to say but there is no other solution'. At 10.15 a.m. Alekseyev issued a circular to all front commanders :

> Now the dynastic question has been put point-blank,the war may be continued until its victorious end only provided the demands regarding the abdication from the throne in favour of the son and under the regency of ~~the~~ Michael Alexandrovitch are satisfied. Apparently the situation does not permit another solution and each minute of further hesitation would only increase the claims ... It is necessary to save the active army from disintegration, to continue to fight against the external enemy until the end, to save the independence of Russia and the fate of the dynasty. It is necessary to put this in the foreground even at the price of expensive concessions. If you share my views, then kindly telegraph through the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front your petition as faithful subjects to His Majesty, advising me of it.(110

Most of the replies had reached Alekseyev by shortly after noon. Apart from General Sakharov, who only supported abdication once he saw that his colleagues had done so, the appeal of 'war necessity' brought an immediate and favourable response from all commanders (including the Grand Duke Nikolai). At 2.30 p.m. Alekseyev concluded the collection of telegrams to Pskov with his own personal appeal to the Emperor :

> I implore you to immediately make the decision which the Almighty will dictate to you ; a delay threatens Russia with disaster ... Participation by the army in matters of internal policy would mean the inevitable end of the war, Russia's shame and her disintegration. Your Imperial Majesty, loves Russia dearly and for the sake of her integrity, of her independ--ence and for the sake of victory you must deign to make a decision.(111)

The campaign for abdication brought an unexpectedly easy victory : within half an hour of receiving the Alekseyev telegram Nicholas had agreed to abdicate.[112] The reasons for the Emperor'rs ready acquiescence were overwhelmingly personal. Alone in Pskov after a nightmare two-day train journey, he felt - and to a lesser extent actually was - isolated from his

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110 ARR,iii,pp.258-9(Danilov telegram) & 259-262(Alekseyev circular).

111 Ibid,pp.261-4(quotation pp.261-2) ; also quoted in BROWKER 95-7.

112 Russkaya Volya,no.2,7 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 103 ; also KERENSKY 213, SHUL'GIN 281-2 and KATKOV 333.

resources, including his autocratic inspiration the Empress. Nicholas's fortuitous visit to Pskov impressed upon him the overwhelming importance of the military both to the Russian war effort and his own immediate future. His over-reliance on Alekseyev had become proverbial and proved a most significant factor in both the granting of responsible government and the abdication itself. Explanations for the abdication stressing external pressures fail to satisfy. The Soviet historian Ganelin claims that 'the principal reason for the decison of the Tsar to abdicate was the complete collapse of the punitive expedition of General Ivanov' yet Nicholsa himself called off the expedition at a time when its failure of morale was still unknown to him. Chernov believed that Nicholas abdicated because he was 'hustled' into it by the concerted campaign of his generals and 'was unable to withstand this cross-fire' but while this interpretation must have some weight it ignores the personaiity of Nicholas.[113] Nicholas seemed to find abdication infinitely easier than granting a constitution ; shortly before the arrival of the generals' telegrams, he confided to Rusky that on mature consideration he was now inclined to abdicate rather than surrender the principle of autocracy. By abdicating Nicholas may have hoped to wipe out the constitutional concessions of his reign and bequeath an uncompromised autocracy to the next-in-line of the Romanov dynasty. Personal self-sacrifice was always attractive to Nicholas, a man of limited gifts drawn to the idea of martyrdom for a cause. Although his strict sense of conscience and duty prevented him ever seeking abdication, Nicholas could concede that abdication provided a political and personal escape. Politically, it favoured the dynasty, the monarchy and possible even a return to autocracy ; at the personal level, Nicholas could rid himself of the burden of supreme office with a light heart and devote himself to the placid uncomplicated existence that he had always craved.[114]

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113 R.Sh.Ganelin, Oktyabr'skoe Vooruzhennoe Vosstanie : Semnadtsatyi God v Petrograde, Leningrad 1967, 2 vols, I, 98 ; CHERNOV 86.

114 Gilliard, Thirteen Years, pp.205-6 ; also KATKOV 332.

When the generals' telegrams arrived, Nicholas had already made up his mind. In the absence of Rodzyanko or other Duma envoy, Nicholas authorised Rusky to transmit telegrams of abdication to the Stavka and the capital ; but precisely at this moment Rusky heard from Rodzyanko that Guchkov and Shul'gin were on their way to Pskov.[115] During the seven-hour wait for the delegates' train to arrive, Nicholas considered not so much the inevitability or otherwise of abdication as the future of the dynasty. At 3 p.m. he consulted the imperial physician Dr Fedorov about the health of the Tsarevich and brooded on his pessimistic diagnosis for the rest of the day. By the time that Guchkov and Shul'gin arrived at 10 p.m., Nicholas had decided to abdicate in favour of the Grand Duke Mikhail rather than inflict the crown upon his twelve-year old invalid son.[116]

Guchkov had come prepared for a long and acrimonious debate and launched into his set speech despite the embarrassment of his audience and (unknown to him) the willingness of the Tsar to agree to abdication. Shul'gin in retrospect claimed to detect in the Tsar's manner the sentiment thet 'this long speech is quite superfluous'. Determined to play his part to the full and unaware that he was breaking down an open door, Guchkov tentatively approached the subject of abdication just as Rusky, arriving late at the meeting, told Shul'gin that the matter had already been decided. After listening to Guchkov's unnecessary peroration with only minor signs of impatience, Nicholas delivered his bombshell : 'I have made the decision to abdicate from the throne ; until three o'clock today I had thought to abdicate in favour of my son Aleksei but now I have changed my mind in favour of my bother Mikhail'.[117] The Duma emissaries' amazement on discovering the Emperor's compliant attitude reflected the speed at which events were moving. When they left Petrograd not only had the Tsar not been approached over

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115 Russkaya Volya,no.2,7 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 103 ; PADENIE,vi,263 (Guchkov) ; SHUL'GIN 282 ; Sukhanov,The Russian Revolution,pp.158-9.

116 Russkaya Volya,no.2,7 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 103 ; Gilliard, Thirteen Years,pp.195-6 ; PADENIE,vi,275(Guchkov) ; SHUL'GIN 282.

117 SHUL'GIN 266-9(quotations 268 & 269) ; also PADENIE,vi,263-5(Guchkov).

abdication but even the news of his granting a constitution had barely reached the capital.

Taken aback by the amenability of the Tsar, Guchkov and Shul'gin overlooked various implications of the decision, most notably that Nicholas's abdicating for his son clearly contravened the Succession Law of 1797.[118] However, hardly able to believe their good fortune, they set out to secure the best possible terms for both parties. The 'deal' which the Soviet feared that Rodzyanko would make with the Tsar was effected by Guchkov and Shul'gin. Lenin was to declare that,

> The handful of landowners and capitalists, with Guchkov and Milyukov at their head, wanted to deceive the will and ambitions of the vast majority and to conclude a bargain with the declining monarchy in order to support and save it. (119)

Although Lenin may have pitched his conspiracy theory a little high, it is clear that the Emperor and the leaders of the Right moderates negotiated in order to preserve, or at least lend the advantage to, a traditional system of government which both sides supported in the face of revolution.

An abdication document was formally signed by the Tsar ; this satisfied the delegates, who were opposed only to Nicholas's tenancy of the throne and vigorously supported both monarchy and Romanov dynasty.[120] The constitution--al terms in the abdication document were deliberately ambiguous, with no explicit reference to the establishment of government responsible to a national assembly. The nearest the document came to determining the future government of Russia was the sentence :

> We bequeath it to our brother to direct the forces of the state in full and inviolable union with the representatives of the people in the legislative institutions on the basis of principles which will be established by them. (121)

Guchkov and Shul'gin were concerned now, with characteristic meticulousness, to concoct an unchallengable juridical link between the government of

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118 J.D.Bergamini, The Tragic Dynasty : a history of the Romanovs, London 1970, p.449 ; Bublikov, Russkaya Revolyutsia, p.27.

119 Lenin, Collected Works, vol.23, p.310.

120 SHUL'GIN 269-276 ; also PADENIE, vi, 265(Guchkov).

121 SHUL'GIN 274 ; Sobranie Ukazenii, I, i, 344 quoted in BROWKER 104.

Nicholas II and the new Provisional Government. As agreed just prior to their departure from Petrograd, L'vov was to be the premier of the Provisional Government, a rather welcome surprise to Nicholas who (like his generals) had always thought in terms of Rodzyanko ; the Grand Duke Nikolai was to be restored as Commander-in-Chief. At the behest of Guchkov and Shul'gin, Nicholas signed documents to this effect, thereby bolstering the legal fict--ion that the Provisional Government was the direct heir and sole beneficiary of the Tsarist government. The documents were back-dated to 3 p.m. the same day, well before the arrival of the Duma delegates, to forestall any accusation of duress.[122]

About 2 a.m. on 3 March Guchkov and Shul'gin began the 160-mile rail trip back to Petrograd, leaving the Emperor alone in his despair to return to the Stavka later the same day.[123] Flushed by self-congratulation after their easy victory, they were confident that the document they read and waved at every stopping-place en route was the political blueprint for the future.[124] They were not to know that events in Petrograd had moved so fast in their absence that the carefully-worded moderate document with which they returned already stood no chance of acceptance. On the previous afternoon (2 March), Milyukov had typically and perhaps unnecessarily decided to announce the as-yet unpublished Manifesto of the Provisional Government to the crowds still thronging the Tauride Palace. His remarks on the collapse of tsardom, though less than truthful about the Duma rôle, were greeted rapturously :

> This happened because no other government in history has been known to equal this one in its stupidity, dishonesty, cowardice or treachery. The presently overthrown government, having disgraced itself, deprived itself of the roots of sympathy and respect which are the ties of any reasonably strong government with its people. We overthrew this govern--ment quickly and with ease. (125)

Even the details of the composition of an overwhelmingly moderate Provisional Government (which will be considered below) received a fair measure of

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122 SHUL'GIN 276-7 ; PADENIE,vi,265,270-1 & 275-7(Guchkov) ; Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.48 ; CHERNOV 96.

123 SHUL'GIN 282-3 ; KA,vol.20,p.137 (Dnevnik Nikolaya II).

124 SHUL'GIN 279 & 283-4 ; also CHERNOV 88-9.

125 Izvestia,no.6,2 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 129.

of approval. Milyukov attempted to leave the matter there but was prevented from withdrawing by loud challenges on the future of the Romanov dynasty, the issue which by now dominated the discussions of both Provisional Government and Soviet. Milyukov had no alternative but to broach this most explosive of issues :

> You ask about the dynasty.I know beforehand that my answer will not satisfy all of you,but I will tell it to you.The old despot who brought Russia to the brink of ruin will either voluntarily renounce the throne or be deposed.(Applause) The power will be transferred to the regent, the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch.(Prolonged bursts of indignation, exclamations of "Long live the republic" and "Down with the Dynasty" ; weak applause,drowned by fresh bursts of indignation) The heir will be Alexei.(Cries of "This is the old dynasty") Yes,ladies and gentlemen, this is the old dynasty,which perhaps you don't like and which perhaps I don't like either.But who we like is beside the point right now.We cannot leave unanswered and undecided the question concerning the form of government.We can visualise it as a parliamentary, constitutional monarchy. (126)

Popular antagonism towards the monarchy was rendering the policy of the moderates more and more difficult, not to mention dangerous to their leader-ship. The furore of criticism aroused by Milyukov's speech dominated the remainder of 2 March.[127]

Milyukov was caught in a dilemma : either to defend the Romanov monarchy and risk the revolution turning against its moderate 'leadership' or to follow the prevalent trend by condemning the monarchy and risk the dangers of a country without formal or legal authority. Milyukov was relying upon Guchkov to secure a <u>détente</u> with the Tsar which could be presented to the Revolution as an acceptable <u>fait accompli</u>. The announcement of Guchkov as Minister of War that afternoon provoked noisy complaint from the mob but elicited a most interesting defence from Milyukov :

> A.I.Guchkov was my political enemy throughout the life of the Duma but now we are political friends. I am an old professor accustomed to reading lectures but Guchkov is a man of action. At this moment, while I speak to you in this hall, Guchkov is on the streets of the capital organising our victory. (128)

Guchkov was indeed taking action though, as Milyukov knew, in Pskov not

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126 <u>Izvestia</u>,no.6,2 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 132 ; also Sukhanov,<u>The Russian Revolution</u>,pp.144-7, CHERNOV 89-90 and MILIUKOV 407.

127 Sukhanov,<u>The Russian Revolution</u>,pp.147-8.

128 <u>Ibid</u>,p.145 ; <u>Izvestia</u>,no.6,2 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 131.

Petrograd. The exigencies of the revolutionary situation forced Milyukov and Guchkov into the same camp, with Guchkov negotiating in the field while Milyukov covered for him in the capital.

For the remainder of 2 March Milyukov hedged his principles as he waited for news from Pskov. At a joint meeting of the Temporary Committee and Soviet Executive Committee that evening Sukhanov pointed out that,

> Nothing would come of Miliukov's stubbornness and his attempts to thrust the Romanovs upon us ... would not help the monarchist cause but at best destroy the prestige of his own cabinet ... We pointed out that it was the position that he Miliukov occupied as leader of the whole right wing that exacerbated not only the question itself but the general situation.

Milyukov wearily put up little resistance to the Soviet :

> Miliukov listened and seemed to acknowledge that we were right. He too had experienced the day's events ... but however risky this gamble on the monarchy may have been, it was still indispensable to Miliukov and Guchkov : a gamble on the monarchy was still less risky than a gamble on bourgeois statesmanship <u>without</u> the monarchy.

In the face of a Soviet argument that the Constituent Assembly would in any case abolish the monarchy, Milyukov could only stoically argue that 'the Constituent Assembly may decide as it pleases ; if it pronounces against the monarchy, then I shall be able to go, but at the moment I cannot'.[129] Later in the evening, Milyukov experienced a more distasteful encounter with the anti-monarchism of the insurgents :

> I saw Rodzianko trotting towards me accompanied by a handful of officers smelling of liquor.In a halting voice he repeated their words,that after my statements about the dynasty they could not return to their soldiers. They demanded that I take back my words.Of course I could not take them back,but seeing the behaviour of Rodzianko,who knew very well that I had spoken not only in my own name but in the name of the bloc,I agreed to announce that I was expressing my own personal opinion. (130)

The mood was moving so irrevocably against the retention of the Romanovs that , in the words of Chernov, 'the majority of the Progressive Bloc felt that the only thing left was to beat an orderly retreat'.[131]

The early hours of 3 March were spent awaiting word from Pskov, with all

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129 Sukhanov,<u>The Russian Revolution</u>,p.153(all three quotations).

130 MILIUKOV 407-8 ; also <u>Izvestia</u>,no.7,3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 133, CHERNOV 90 and Sukhanov,<u>The Russian Revolution</u>,p.146.

131 CHERNOV 90 ; also TROTSKY 193-4.

leaders suspending political discussion until definite news became known. At about 2.20 a.m. a telegram from Guchkov and Shul'gin reached the Tauride Palace.[132] The Duma leaders hurriedly met to discuss the implications of the abdication terms over the next two hours. All but Milyukov accepted, however reluctantly, that the revolution had passed by the Grand Duke Mikhail. Even Rodzyanko was convinced that Mikhail could not become Tsar. With this rather surprising defection and the temporary absence of the leaders of the Bloc Right, Milyukov found himself having to plead the cause of monarchy alone.[133] With all his dislike of Rodzyanko, Milyukov had evidently not expected him to desert the royalist banner. He had now to uphold the monarchy alone and as best he could until his Right moderate colleagues arrived back later in the morning. At about 5 a.m. as the discussion drew to an exhausted close, Rodzyanko contacted General Rusky to ask him to hold the publication of the abdication manifesto until the political situation became clearer :

> It is with great difficulty that we managed to retain the revolutionary movement within more or less tolerable limits, but the situation is as yet far from settled and a civil war is quite possible. Perhaps they would reconcile themselves to the regency of the Grand Duke and the accession of the heir Tsarevitch, but his accession as Emperor would be completely unacceptable ... We would lose from our hands all authority and no-one would remain to appease the popular unrest.

Although Rodzyanko insisted that 'the return of the dynasty is not excluded', the decisions of the next few hours were in fact to determine the future of the Russian monarchy.[134]

The most expedient way for the moderates to solve the problem was to induce the man at the centre of the controversy, Grand Duke Mikhail, to decide not in their favour but in their interests. If Mikhail were to accept the crown, the moderates would be compelled either to follow him into political oblivion or to abandon their proclaimed principles in the interests of self-preservation. If however Mikhail refused the crown, the moderates could convince their consciences that they had been ready to back their principles

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132 KA,vol.22,pp.15-16 ; MILIUKOV 409.

133 KERENSKY 211 & 214 ; Milyukov,Istoria Vtoroy Revolyutsii,pp.295-6.

134 ARR,iii,pp.266-8 ; also CHERNOV 92-4.

but were let down by their candidate. Everything depended on the attitude of the Grand Duke. At 6 a.m. Kerensky phoned ~~to~~ Mikhail to arrange a meeting for eleven o'clock the same morning.[135] All the moderates except Milyukov agreed to press for the refusal of the Grand Duke and elected Rodzyanko and Prince L'vov as spokesmen for the meeting. This transparent attempt to muzzle Milyukov and present the majority viewpoint as unanimous was caustic--ally challenged by Milyukov, a past master at just such tactics. The device of electing two majority spokemen was rejected in favour of allowing the spokesmen for the two extremes to debate before the Grand Duke ; 'having made it clear that none of us would keep silent, we agreed that only two opinions would be expressed at the meeting, Kerensky's and mine - and then we would leave the choice up to the Grand Duke.'[136]

The members of the future Provisional Government began to assemble at the temporary residence of the Grand Duke Mikhail on the Millionaya at about 10 o'clock. The first to arrive were those advocating Mikhail's refusal of the crown, Kerensky, L'vov and Rodzyanko, who may have hoped to steal a march on Milyukov by forcing the crucial decision from the Grand Duke before Milyukov's reinforcements arrived.[137] Guchkov and Shul'gin in fact arrived back in Petrograd at just this time, blissfully unaware of the radical change in attitude towards the monarchy in their absence. Although Milyukov managed to warn Shul'gin by telephone of the mood of the revolution, Guchkov grandly announced the accession of Tsar Mikhail to the station workers and was only rescued from the angry mob with difficulty.[138] Milyukov's policy at the meeting with the Grand Duke was therefore to ensure that the proceed--ings lasted long enough for Guchkov and Shul'gin to cross twown from the Warsaw Station to support his proposals.

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135 KERENSKY 215.

136 MILIUKOV 410(quotation) ; KERENSKY 215 ; Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution p.175 ; also Piotrow, Paul Milyukov, p.351.

137 Vozrozhdenie, vol.24(1952), pp.141-5.

138 MILIUKOV 410 ; CHERNOV 89 ; SHUL'GIN 284-293 ; Bublikov, Russkaya Revolyutsia, pp.27-8.

As arranged, Kerensky initiated the debate. Milyukov rose to counter the majority view, winning his protagonist's reluctant admiration :

> Speaking at great length and with all the force of personal conviction, he tried to prove to the Grand Duke that he should accept the throne. Miliukov was stalling for time - to the obvious embarrassment of the Grand Duke - in the hope that Guchkov and Shul'gin who held similar views would return from Pskow in time to support him. (139)

While the accusation of stalling for time was of course justified, Milyukov was in all likelihood genuinely carried away by the dread that the Grand Duke would be forced into a tragic error :

> I showed that in order to strengthen the new order, a strong governmental authority was needed and that it can be strong only when it relies on the symbol of authority to which the masses are accustomed. The monarchy serves as just such a symbol. The Provisional Government by itself, without the support of this symbol, will simply not survive until the opening of the Constituent Assembly. It will turn out to be a fragile boat which will sink in the ocean of mass disturbances. The country will be threatened by the loss of all sense of state organisation and by complete anarchy. (140)

It was with enormous relief that Milyukov greeted the arrival of Guchkov and Shul'gin at the very end of his speech. The presence of equal support for and against Mikhail's acceptance of the crown now threw the meeting completely open and 'in spite of our agreement, a whole torrent of speeches poured forth'.[141]

However Milyukov's relief at the arrival of his reinforcements was to prove misplaced. Guchkov and Shul'gin had been profoundly shocked by the abrupt change in the atmosphere of Petrograd and though their political philosophies bound them to the chariot-wheels of monarchy, they were starting to feel that the monarchy, however desirable, simply could not survive in the present revolutionary climate. Although they did not go so far as Rodzyanko in denying the feasability of Romanov monarchy, Guchkov and Shul'gin were suffering a profound crisis of confidence. When he finally brought himself to express an opinion, Guchkov conceded the impossibility of Mikhail as Tsar (though suggesting that his Regency, as originally envisaged, might

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139 KERENSKY 215-6.

140 MILIUKOV 411 ; also Milyukov,'Fevral'skie Dni',p.187.

141 MILIUKOV 411 ; KERENSKY 216 ; SHUL'GIN 296 ; PADENIE,vi,266-7(Guchkov).

still be feasible).[142] Milyukov's bearing switched from guarded confidence to near-despair as he realised that the support for which he had waited was proving unexpectedly feeble. Startled that Shul'gin should remain silent and Guchkov lend his support so 'weakly and lifelessly', Milyukov insisted on answering the arguments of his opponents in detail.[143] Shul'gin wrote of him:

> Milyukov seemed unwilling or unable or afraid to stop talking. This man, usually so polite and self-restrained, would not let anybody else speak, interrupted those who tried to answer him, cut off Rodzyanko, Kerensky, everyone ... White as a sheet, his face bluish-grey from lack of sleep, completely hoarse from making speeches in barracks and at street meetings, he croaked and wheezed. (144)

After some two hours of debate, during which the Grand Duke made no comment, the speeches stuttered to a halt. Mikhail begged leave to think alone for a few minutes but then asked permission for Rodzyanko to accompany him. It was natural that Mikhail should turn to Rodzyanko as his political adviser for this combination had been seeking a dynastic solution to the crisis since the first days of revolution. Scenting victory, the majority assented to this departure from the already-shattered collective approach.[145] As throughout the Third and Fourth Dumas, it was the Oktobrist vote which proved crucial to the political balance. Ironically it was the voice of Rodzyanko, a monarchist who could not envisage Tsardom in the context of 1917, which proved decisive over the issue of monarchy :

> It was quite clear to us that the Grand Duke would have reigned only a few hours ; this would have led to colossal bloodshed in the capital, which would have degenerated into general civil war ... The Grand Duke asked me outright whether I could guarantee his life if he acceded to the throne, and I had to answer in the negative. (146)

To the unconcealed delight of the Left and the utter despair of Milyukov and Guchkov, the Grand Duke returned to announce his decision to refuse the crown offered by his brother.[147]

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142 PADENIE,vi,267(Guchkov).

143 KERENSKY 216 ; also SHUL'GIN 296-301.

144 SHUL'GIN 297-8 ; also quoted in CHERNOV 91 and even MILIUKOV 411.

145 SHUL'GIN 301-2 ; PADENIE,vi,267-8(Guchkov) ; Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.44 ; KERENSKY 216.

146 Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.44.

147 SHUL'GIN 302-3 ; PADENIE,vi,267-8(Guchkov) ; KERENSKY 216.

The details of the decision were concluded with almost indecent haste. Nekrasov had even come to the meeting with a daft refusal and the afternoon was spent with Nol'de and Nabokov drawing up the definitive legal document.[148] The message of the act of renunciation signed by the Grand Duke at 5 p.m. the same day was clear and to the point :

> I have taken a firm decision to assume the Supreme Power only in the event that such is the will of our great people, upon whom it devolves by a general vote through their representatives in the Constituent Assembly ; I ask all citizens of the Russian state to pay allegiance to the Provisional Government, which has come into being at the initiative of the State Duma, and which is endowed with full power until such time as the Constituent Assembly ... by its decision on the form of govern--ment expresses the will of the people. (149)

On 3 March 1917 the initial process of revolution was complete : both dynasty and monarchy had abdicated, ostensibly to await the judgement of the people but implicitly for all time, and their authority and power were transferred in practice and at least legalistically to the Provisional Government.

On the same morning the Provisional Government finally published its composition and programme.[150] The developing revolutionary situation which had compelled the formation of the Temporary Committee and its subsequent transformation into the Provisional Government had also determined a shift from the Oktobrist hegemony of the former to a Kadet hegemony of the latter. Ipso facto the shift meant the declining authority of Rodzyanko and the rising power of Milyukov. Despite his defeats, most notably over the issue of the dynasty, Milyukov was the only moderate leader to keep his nerve through the hectic and exhausting days of the February Revolution. The Progressist leaders Yefremov and Konovalov had no independent initiative over the period and shamelessly indicated Milyukov when asked their opinion of any action to be taken. The Social Revolutionary leader Sukhanov was in no doubt of the identity of the rising authority :

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148 MILIUKOV 413 ; MILyukov,'Fevral'skie Dni',p.188 ; SHUL'GIN 303-7.

149 Sobranie Ukazenii,I,1,345 quoted in BROWKER 116.

150 Ratified by the Soviet Executive Committee,2 March : Sukhanov,The Russian Revolution,pp.116-157 and MILIUKOV 402-4 ; Published 3 March : Izvestia,no.7,3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 135.

> Miliukov was at this time the central figure, the spirit and backbone of all bourgeois political circles ... Without him all bourgeois and Duma circles would at that moment have constituted a chaotic mass and without him there would have been no bourgeois policy at all in the first period of the revolution. This was how his role was evaluated by every--one, independently of party, and how he himself evaluated it ... I always considered this fateful man to be head and shoulders above all his colleagues in the Progressive Bloc. (151)

From the instant of the Temporary Committee's decision to take power (at midnight on 27/28 February) until the formal publication of the composition of the Provisional Government (on the morning of 3 March), there waged a power struggle between Rodzyanko and Milyukov.

Rodzyanko's authority declined partly through the anonymous developments of the revolutionary crisis and partly through his personal failings. As a Zemstvo-Okyobrist, he was well to the Right in the Bloc and Temporary Committee and for him to lead the Provisional Government would have been both undiplomatic and unrepresentative. At various points in the crisis, Rodzyanko had alarmed his colleagues by his determination to claim total authority over the revolution. On agreeing to put his name to the seizure of power in the late evening of 27 February, Rodzyanko had laid down the single but uncompromising condition 'that all the members of the committee unconditionally and blindly subordinate themselves to my command', leaving his hearers 'dumbfounded' at his 'ultimatum'.[152] His imperious tones and the subsequent revelation that his actual authority was out of all proportion to his exaggerated claims particularly annoyed the Army High Command. The irritation comes through in the Rusky/Rodzyanko telegrapgh conversation of 5 a.m. on 3 March and the Alekseyev/Rodzyanko conversation an hour later.[153] In a circular to all army commanders at 7 a.m. on the third, Alekseyev expressed the opinion that 'very strong pressure is being brought to bear on the President of the Duma and Temporary Committee, Rodzyanko, by the parties of the Left and the workers' deputies, and there is no frankness or sincerity

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151 Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, p.53 ; also DYAKIN 346-7.

152 MILIUKOV 396(quotation) and CHERNOV 85.

153 ARR, iii, 266-8 ; KA, vol.22, pp.25-7.

in the communications of Rodzyanko'. Alekseyev was later to believe that he had been duped by Rodzyanko for his own ends : 'I can never forgive myself for believing in the sincerity of certain persons and for following their advice by sending the Army-Group Commanders the telegram concerning the Emperor's abdication'.[154] In varying degrees, politicians, soldiers and insurgents alike resented the magisterial tones of the self-appointed 'dictator of the Russian Revolution'.

But for all his bombast, Rodzyanko demonstrated clear incapacity to live up to his claims. Transparently irresolute for most of the time, Rodzyanko made many more enemies than he made decisions. Milyukov was to accuse him of 'cowardice' in the face of difficult circumstances, notably in the incident with the drunken officers on the evening of 2 March.[155] When he forced himself to a decision it was invariably either wrong or too late to satisfy the original demand. The patent incapacity of Rodzyanko and his despised delusions of grandeur fostered a spirit of antagonism well exploited by Milyukov in his campaign to exclude Rodzyanko from real power.

Milyukov first intrigued to exclude Rodzyanko from the Provisional Government. When the membership list was finally published it was Prince L'vov who headed the government as President.[156] L'vov's leadership had certain symbolic advantages : representing 'society Russia' and the patriotic war effort, his Presidency was calculated to reassure Russia's war Allies and dispose them towards early diplomatic recognition of the Provisional Government ; a Right Kadet by persuasion, his position in the party spectrum made him more representative than most of the range of the coalition government ; and although enjoying an enviable reputation as an administrator, his distaste for party politics both suggested a departure from the sordid politickings of the pre-revolutionary period and intimated to Milyukov that he would represent no threat to his own predominance within the government.[157]

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154 ARR,iii,268-9.

155 MILIUKOV 407-8.

156 Izvestia,no.7,3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 135.

L'vov's campaign for the presidency was conducted almost despite the candidate by Milyukov and the Kadets ; L'vov made no efforts to press his candidacy and indeed only turned up at the Tauride Palace on the afternoon of 1 March.[158] However in his concern to exclude Rodzyanko, Milyukov may have been too quick to settle on the first rival candidate who seemed malleable. L'vov was to prove a broken reed and the source of perpetual regret to Milyukov in subsequent months. Although Milyukov was never to admit outright that the Presidency of Rodzyanko might have been preferable, his victory over Rodzyanko over the composition of the Provisional Government soon proved hollow.[159]

Milyukov also made sure that Rodzyanko was unable to make political capital out of his leadership of the Fourth Duma and Temporary Committee. At first Rodzyanko was jejune enough to believe that his non-inclusion in the Provisional Government was recognition of his superior status. Chernov mockingly detailed Rodzyanko's conception of his future rôle :

> The fact that the Government preferred to do without him was to him an added excuse for imagining that he had been placed <u>above</u> the Government. After Grand Duke Michael mentioned in his manifesto ... that the power of the Provisional Government was derived from the Provisional Committee of members of the Duma, Rodzianko became confirmed in his pose and psychology of "progenitor". He assumed that the Provisional Committee had not exhausted its role in creating the Provisional Government ... This Government was merely a ministry which might resign ; them power would revert to its original source, to the Provisional Committee, and to its President Rodzianko. According to this idea, the members of the Provisional Committee were actually kinds of "sovereign rulers". (160)

If Rodzyanko believed this in early March, he was soon disabused of his claims to authority. The Kadets attacked with all the formidable legalism they could muster. At a Kadet Central Committee meeting late on 3 March it was resolved 'that the Temporary Committee of the Duma should be kept in its

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157 Tyrkova-Williams,<u>From Liberty</u>,pp.26-7 ; Shidlovsky,'Vospominania',p.287.

158 CHERNOV 175-6 ; MILIUKOV 396-7 ; also KATKOV 379.

159 MILIUKOV 375-6,396-7 & 399-400 ; CHERNOV 85 & 175-6 ; Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',p.48 ; Bublikov,<u>Russkaya Revolyutsia</u>,pp.33-8 ; also KATKOV 292 & 379.

160 CHERNOV 177(original underlining) ; also SHUL'GIN 305 and Sukhanov, <u>The Russian Revolution</u>,p.156.

inactive state'.[161] Rodzyanko rather forlornly described his defeat in his later memoirs :

> The project of the President of the State Duma was that the Duma would be the bearer of supreme authority and the body to which the Provisional Government would be responsible. This plan was resolutely opposed primarily by the leaders of the Kadet party ... firstly, they argued, the convening of the Duma made the convening of the State Council a juridical necessity ... secondly, the leaders of the Kadet party considered that the convening of the Duma would be pointless since its composition was so bourgeois that it would attract attacks from the extreme elements bent om its overthrow ... thirdly, it was pointed out that given the current state of the country, the government needed to command absolute plenitude of power including the right of legislation.

Rodzyanko was all too easily brow-beaten by the Kadet arguments :

> The leaders of the Kadet party simply did not want an operative Duma so they could enjoy complete power themselves. Under these conditions the President of the State Duma could not take upon himself the responsibility for convening the Duma and considered it more correct to await the time when ... the Provisional Government would need to turn to the Duma to find a bastion against the extraordinary development of revolutionary excesses. (162)

That time never came. As Chernov remarked,'unfortunately for Rodzianko, Prince L'vov, Kerensky and others immediately turned their backs on the institution which had created their government, or rather tossed it aside like a ladder - once useful but now in the way'.[163] As ever, Rodzyanko was trapped by constitutional forms. The President of the Duma proved unable to prolong his political authority either over or through the Revolution, having been manoeuvred out of the Provisional Government into prestigious but impotent obscurity.

In tracing what can only be called Milyukov's triumph in the formation of the Provisional Government, one encounters a fundamantal inconsistency which can only be explained by ambition. When appealling so desperately and (one must assume) sincerely for the retention of the dynasty on 3 March, Milyukov emphasised the absolute necessity of a 'symbol' or 'axis' of traditional authority to stabilise the revolutionary situation. After Mikhail refused the crown, there remained only one such 'axis' of authority acceptable

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161 Vestnik Partii Narodnoy Svobody, 11 March 1917, no.1, p.13 quoted in Ganelin, Oktyabr'skoe Vooruzhennoe Vosstanie, I, 100.

162 Rodzyanko, 'Gosudarstvennaya Duma', pp.56-7(first quotation) & 57(second).

163 CHERNOV 177 ; also Vasilii Gurko, Memories, p.301.

to the broad spectrum of society - the State Duma. Yet Milyukov and the Kadets spearheaded the campaign to abandon the Duma and Temporary Committee ; in recounting Rodzyanko's attacks on the Kadet party in his memoirs, Milyukov was even prepared to admit that 'Rodzianko of course had the "leader" of the Kadet party in mind'.[164] The only consistent explanation must lie with Milyukov's ambition, which involved liquidating his principal rival for authority over the Revolution. However the results of Milyukov's early victory were to benefit no moderate party.By excluding Rodzyanko and asserting the complete independence of the Provisional Government from external control or jurisdiction, Milyukov created a government even more unresponsible than that of the deposed Tsar and contributed to the seepage of political ballast which was to allow the new ship of state to drift into the power of the Extreme Left. Milyukov had coined the phrase 'fragile boat' but rejected the only means of increasing its sea-worthiness in order to retain command. The decision was to prove not only selfish but short-sighted : when the 'fragile boat' foundered, a significant proportion of the responsibility and blame was directly Milyukov's.

For the moment however the power was Milyukov's. The complexion of the Provisional Government was above all his creation. The leaders of the three moderate parties received cabinet office as of right. Milyukov became Foreign Minister, a post which he admitted 'had long been intended for me both by the public and by my comrades'.[165] The new leader of the Progressists Konovalov was the inevitable choice for Minister of Trade and Industry but even if he had not been so well-qualified for the post, party political considerations would have elevated him to ministerial status.[166] Guchkov was Minister of War and, when no suitable candidate could be found, Minister of the Navy too.[167] However Guchkov emerged from the February Revolution with

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164 MILIUKOV 400 ; also Rodzyanko,'Gosudarstvennaya Duma',pp.48 & 56-7 ; SHUL'GIN 184 ; also Piotrow,Paul Milyukov,p.353.

165 MILIUKOV 427 ; also SHUL'GIN 225.

166 MILIUKOV 424 ; Izvestia,no.7,3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 135.

167 Izvestia,no.7,3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 135 ; also SHUL'GIN 225.

greatly diminished hopes and authority. His position among the most Right-wing of the ministers of the Provisional Government offered him little chance of effectively opposing the hegemony of Milyukov, while the likelihood of the revolution shifting still further towards the Left augured the forcible removal of Guchkov from the government in the not too distant future. His self-confidence had been badly shaken and his listless defeatist attitude after February was in marked contrast to the 'Young Turk' of earlier years. Like Milyukov he seriously considered resigning from the Provisional Govern--ment after Mikhail's refusal of the crown but could not weather the moral shock of the February Revolution with the same cynical ease as Milyukov.[168] Milyukov professed great disappointment in Guchkov :

> In the Provisional Government, Guchkov did not live up to his former reputation. I had hoped to find an ally in him but ... he kept to the sidelines, did not often participate in the cabinet sessions ... This is partially explained by his ill-health ... the weakening of his will however must be explained mainly by his pessimism with regard to what had happened ... I considered that it was still possible to fight but he did not support me in the struggle. (169)

Vladimir Nabokov corroborated this judgement :

> From the very beginning Guchkov felt in the bottom of his soul that the cause was lost, and he remained in the government only "par acquit de conscience" ... no-one sounded a note of deep disappointment and scepticism with such intensity as Guchkov. When he began to speak ... I was horror-struck by the sense of something like complete and utter hopelessness. (170)

There could be no doubt that on the basis of party leaders, the Provisional Government was Kadet-dominated.

The remaining ministers were selected from the Bloc membership with just one exception. The need to mollify the Soviet by at least the appearance of concessions to the Extreme Left became apparent at a very early stage and Shul'gin had been the first to propose the inclusion of Left elements on tactical grounds :

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168 MILIUKOV 412 ; CHERNOV 92 ; PADENIE,vi,267-8(Guchkov) ; KATKOV 384-6.
169 MILIUKOV 422.
170 Quoted in MILIUKOV 422.

> When a yacht is on its left tack, before tacking to the right, you must bear further to the left to gain momentum ... If power is thrust upon us, we must seek support by enlarging the Progressive Bloc to the Left. I would invite Kerensky, as Minister of Justice, let us say ... Right now this post has no importance but we must snatch its leaders from the revolution. Among them Kerensky is really the only one ... It is much better to have him with us than against us. (171)

In the event, both Kerensky and Chkheidze were offered ministerial posts and while Chkheidze refused the Labour Ministry on principle, Kerensky decided on the morning of 2 March to accept the Ministry of Justice (being careful to elicit the approval by acclamation of the plenary Soviet later the same day).[172] The composition and complexion of the Provisional Government were a tribute to the ingenuity and expertise of a politician who was adept at leading from behind. The range of the Provisional Government ran from Trudoviks to Centrists, with the Right Kadet position constituting the political axis. Of the eleven ministers in the cabinet, four were to the Left of the Milyukov Kadets (Kerensky Minister of Justice, Nekrasov Minister of Transport, Konovalov Minister of Trade and Industry, and Tereshchenko Minister of Finance) and three were to the Right (Guchkov Minister of War and Navy, Vladimir L'vov Procurator of the Synod, and Godnev State Controller). Milyukov had successfully engineered a cabinet of which he himself was the pivot.[173] Moreover the Right Kadets occupied a commanding rôle through numerical strength : the Right Kadets commanded four votes (Milyukov, L'vov, Shingarev and Manuilov), the Progressists two (Konovalov and Tereshchenko), the Oktobrists two (Guchkov and Godnev), the Centre one (Vladimir L'vov), the Trudoviks one (Kerensky) and the Left Kadets one (Nekrasov).[174]

The Manifesto which accompanied the publication of the membership of the Provisional Government was again an expression of Kadet predominance. The first four 'principles' proclaimed :

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171 Conversation with Shingarev : SHUL'GIN 124.

172 KERENSKY 205-8 ; also MILIUKOV 406 ; Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, pp.140-3 ; CHERNOV 124-5 ; also KATKOV 391-3.

173 Izvestia, no.7, 3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 135 ; Ganelin, Oktyabr'skoe Vooruzhennoe Vosstanie, I, 100 & 116.

174 Izvestia, no.7, 3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 135 ; MILIUKOV 427 ; CHERNOV 172 ; Bublikov, Russkaya Revolyutsia, pp.30-1.

1. An immediate and complete amnesty in all cases of a political and religious nature, including terrorist acts, military revolts and agrarian offences etc.
2. Freedom of speech, press and assembly, and the right to unionise and strike with the extension of political freedom to persons serving in the armed forces as limited by the exigencies of military and technical circumstances.
3. The abolition of all restrictions based on class, religion and nationality.
4. The immediate preparation for the convocation of the Constitutent Assembly on the basis of universal, equal, direct suffrage and secret ballot, which will determine the form of government and the constitution of the country. (175)

The Manifesto harked back to the time when the Kadets presented a revolution--ary face, back to the unfulfilled promises of the October Manifesto and the high hopes of late 1905. In the space of a single breathless week, from Friday 24 February to Friday 3 March, more had been achieved politically and constitutionally than during the entire Duma period. The arid intervening years between 1905 and 1917 when principles were held in abeyance and compromise for survival had been the hallmark of the Duma moderates were over. Hopes for the future of Russia ran high as the Provisional Government, the moderates in power, faced the challenge of Revolution.

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175 Izvestia,no.7,3 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 135 ; also KERENSKY 210.

CHAPTER EIGHT : THE DUMA MODERATES IN PEACE, WAR AND REVOLUTION

The historical treatment of the Duma moderates by later scholarship has been dominated by the availability of primary sources. The Kadets have always received at very least their full share of historical publicity, whether adulatory or censorious, Well before 1917 the Kadets went to great lengths to express their admiration for constitutionalism and to cultivate contacts with the West, thereby attracting the attention and very often the support of foreign statesmen and scholars. With the Bolshevik Revolution, the extensive emigration of Kadet leaders to Western Europe and America made readily available a substantial corpus of personal testimony. The high educational and cultural level of the party soon bore fruit with a steady output of memoirs, apologia and even polemics throughout the lifetime of the Kadet leaders. The voluminous publications of Milyukov and the running battle between Milyukov and Maklakov over Kadet policy in the Duma period were just the highlights of the literary activities of Kadet leaders with the time to ponder their past mistakes. Whether condemned for precipitating the Revolution or commiserated with over the failure of Russian constitutionalism, the Kadets were unanimously accorded the leading rôle amongst the parties of the Fourth State Duma.[1]

While in no way contesting the greater importance of the Kadets, it is undeniable that the concentration of both Western and Soviet interest on the Kadet party has long delayed a proper consideration of the other moderate parties. Only comparatively recently have the Oktobrists been subjected to serious historical study. This is partly owing to the reticence of the Oktobrist leaders : while Rodzyanko published a series of apologia for his performance as Duma President (not as leader of the Zemstvo-Oktobrists), the

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1 An example of condemnation : Goulevitch, Czarism and Revolution, pp.238 & 253-5 ; an example of commiseration : Riha, A Russian European, pp.333-347.

party leader Guchkov wrote very little to defend or explain his actions.[2] This may also be attributable to the background of the membership of the Oktobrist Union. In an article on Guchkov, Louis Manashe made the point that,

> None of the major business figures active in the politics of the day left writings in the form of memoirs or histories of the period comparable to the Maklakov sort. Russian memoir writing seems to have been a preserve, originally staked out by Herzen, of the more literate gentry. (3)

Even recent studies which have avoided dismissing the Oktobrists in a trite phrase have tended to concentrate (probably rightly) on the Third Duma period, thereby neglecting the period after 1912 and prematurely consigning the Duma Oktobrists to political impotence and obscurity.[4]

The Progressists have been the very last to 'surface'. Until almost the last five years the Progressists were readily dismissed as a minor parliamentary group in close attendance on the Kadets. Ariadne Tyrkova-Williams for example fostered this impression :

> Mischievous tongues said that the Progressists were distinguished from the Kadets simply by their refusal to submit to Milyukoff. But their main distinction lay in their greater readiness to submit to the insinuations and solicitations of the Socialists ... The Progressists were of no real importance in the country. (5)

The Progressists made few efforts to correct this interpretation : neither Yefremov nor Konovalov wrote memoirs to compare with those of other moderate leaders ; the Moscow industrialists led by Ryabushinsky apparently rested content that their patronage of the Progressists be forgotten. Menashe's comment on 1905 could well cover the period of the Fourth Duma too :

> The appearance of Russian entrepreneurial groups in the arena of politics represented an historic breakthrough for a class traditionally impotent in the political sphere. Curiously, this is also one of the most neglected aspects of the Revolution of 1905. The role of business groups

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2 Rodzyanko : Gosudarstvennaya Duma i Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia (1922), Krushenie Imperii (1926) and The Reign of Rasputin (1927); Guchkov : fragmented memoirs in Poslednie Novosty, August and September 1936.

3 L.Menashe, 'A Liberal with Spurs : Alexander Guchkov, a Russian Bourgeois in Politics', RR, no.1, 1967, pp.41-2.

4 For example, J.F.Hutchinson, The Octobrists in Russian Politics 1905-1917, unpublished London Ph.D thesis and G.A.Hosking, Government and Duma in Russia 1907-1914, unpublished Cambridge Ph.D thesis 1970.

5 A.Tyrkova-Williams, From Liberty, p.39.

in the united front of liberal opposition is generally overlooked in Western analysis for perhaps the simplest of historiographical reasons : practically all of our immediately available sources on the subject are in the form of memoir literature composed either by members of the bureaucracy (Witte, Gurko, Kokovtsov) or by gentry and intelligentsia figures associated with the zemstvo movement (Shipov, Miliukov, Maklakov et al.). One is tempted to conclude that if Guchkov and Konovalov had written as much as Miliukov or Maklakov our whole understanding of Russian liberalism might be entirely different. (6)

As if in answer to this mute appeal, later the same year (1967) the Soviet historians Dyakin and particularly Laverychev published works throwing new light on the industrialist patronage of the Progressist party in the Fourth Duma period.[7] Although it would appear that much remains in order to place the Progressists in their proper place among the Duma moderates, the past neglect has been tacitly acknowledged and is already in the process of being rectified.

Surrounding all three moderate parties is an aura of sensitivity on the part of the Soviet historical establishment which finds expression not only in Soviet publications but in the selection of materials made available in the archives and academic libraries of the Soviet Union. Despite the excellent document collections of the 1920's and the more relaxed academic atmosphere of the 1960's, the subject of the Duma moderates still suffers from a shortage of primary documentation.[8] However, definite progress in the study of the Duma period is being achieved : though generally being made available only to privileged scholars rather ~~in~~ than in published form, more original material (notably minutes of party meetings and police reports of party activities) is happily being released.

This new primary material has not (as yet) revolutionised traditional conceptions or interpretations of the Duma moderates. It is however providing

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6 Menashe,'A Liberal with Spurs',p.46 (note 13).

7 V.S.Dyakin,Russkaya Burzhuazia i tsarism v gody pervoy mirovoy voiny, Leningrad 1967 and V.Ya.Laverychev,Po Tu Storonu Barrikad,Moscow 1967.

8 Notable document collections : Fevral'skaya Revolyutsia,Ed.S.A.Alekseyev, Moscow 1926 ; Burzhuazia nakanune Fevral'skoy Revolyutsii,Ed.B.B.Grave, Moscow 1927 ; Monarkhia Pered Krusheniem,Ed.V.P.Semennikov,Moscow 1927 ; and of course Krasnyi Arkhiv and Arkhiv Russkoy Revolyutsii,Moscow 1922-41 and 1922-6 respectively.

a corrective to the long-standing Kadet determinist approach dictated by the near-monopoly of Kadet testimony. As in the more well-publicised instance of Soviet historical revisionism, the period of the Fourth Duma is a classic case of published history being the propaganda of the victors. The Kadet appearance in 1917 as the paramount moderate party was the product of a prolonged, frequently vicious and subsequently almost-forgotten power struggle within the Fourth Duma. Whilst not impugning the greater importance of the Kadets overall, it is becoming clear that the Western and Soviet 'obsession' with the Kadets has wrongly and artificially depressed the very considerable significance of the Oktobrists and Progressists.

One of the most striking aspects of the Fourth Duma was the unprecedent--edly high level of inter-action and inter-dependence of the moderate fractions, which found expression in bitter and obsessive party politics. A fundamental cause was the grouping of the moderate fractions aroud the Duma axis in approximately equal strengths. The effect of the 1912 elections was to reduce the Oktobrist hegemony to within striking distance of the Kadet and Progressist fractions ; the effect of the Oktobrist crash of late 1913 was to put all the moderate fractions on a numerical footing. In the spring of 1914, the Zemstvo-Oktobrists numbered 66, the Kadets 55 and the Progressists 40 (though with the active support of a further 20 Left Oktobrists).[9] The career of the Fourth Duma after the Oktobrist crash was dominated by the rivalry of the three moderate fractions for control of the Duma fulcrum.

Partly as a result of party rivalries, political principles compromised in the life of the Third Duma were debased altogether in the Fourth Duma. The advent of war introduced patriotism and the concept of the 'Sacred Union' as justification for eroded principles. The wide membership of the Progressive Bloc necessitated holding party principles in abeyance for the sake of opposition unity. With the coming of revolution, even the most fundamental

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9 Index to Fourth Duma,Second Session(October 1913-June 1914) : GDSO: UKAZATEL' 21-3.

moderate principles took a tumble. Milyukov, downcast by Mikhail's refusal of the crown, declared himself on 6 March a life-long supporter of the Grand Duke's succession.[10] But only four days later, a plenary session of the Kadet Central Committee and Fraction agreed to modify the Party Programme of January 1906 to favour a republic rather than a constitutional monarchy.[11] Philipps Price of the Manchester Guardian made the withering comment ! the Kadets, now unanimously supporting a republic ... are essentially opportunists so their conversion is evidence of the strength of republican sentiment'.[12] Even more astonishing, the Oktobrists, the classic monarchist party, turned their sails to the republican wind. Stanley Washburn of the Times reported in May that Guchkov had announced,and the Oktobrist Central Committee had ratified, the transformation of the Oktobrists into 'a new party uniting the bourgeois and democratic elements' and advocating 'republic--an and liberal principles'.[13] The expedient jettisoning of their basic monarchist principles was only the culmination of a process featured by the moderates since 1907.

Three crucial relationships governed the fortunes of the Duma moderates between 1912 and 1917, each contributing to the decline of political principle and the sharpening of party politics. The relationship with the country, already strained since the 3rd June electoral laws quarantined the Duma from the nation, deteriorated further during the Fourth Duma. The workers' movement of 1912-1914 revealed the gulf seperating the privileged deputies from the urban prolatariat. The national organisations and member--ships of the moderate parties varied from almost non-existent (Progressist) through dying (Kadet) to inoperative (Oktobrist). Every party congress, whether Kadet, Oktobrist or Progressist, revealed the consistent and

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10 KA,vol.5,p.114.

11 Manchester Guardian,26 March 1917(n/s),5d and Times,26 March 1917(n/s),7b ; the recommendation was ratified by the VII Kadet Congress,25-27 March 1917 : Rech',26 March 1917 quoted in BROWKER 1200-1.

12 Manchester Guardian,27 March 1917(n/s),4b (also 5e).

13 Times,31 May 1917(n/s),8a ; also letter dated 12 June 1917 from one P.K. Fomenkov supporting the new party : TsGAOR,f.555(Guchkov),delo 536.

and politically debilitating decline of the provincial party organisation.

To a large extent this national collapse was not the fault of the Duma moderates. As Bublikov remarked, political concern on the part of broad sectors of the populace had evaporated long before the Fourth Duma :

> The interest, such that was still retained in politics, carried a purely sporting character. The public observed with complete political impassiveness, though not without curiousity ... The State Duma definitely enjoyed no support in the country. The government could dissolve it whenever it wished and in the country not even the suggestion of protest was heard ... Every party life declined - and not because it was being killed off by police persecution but because interest in them had fallen off. (14)

Russian society, and especially provincial society, was insufficiently developed and politically-orientated to sustain a constitutional order under extreme pressure from traditional autocracy.

However although the moderate parties were to a considerable degree trapped by their political circumstances (which they could do little enough to improve), the Duma moderates did not help themselves. The Oktobrists prematurely settled for political defeat, the Progressists quickly abandoned their early ambitions to become a national party and not just an industrialist pressure group, and the various Kadet 'reconnaissances' to the Left were never sustained, even by the party's Left wing. In the case of each party, there emerged an internal conflict between the established Petersburg/ Petrograd group concentrating on the Duma and the more vigorous socially-aware group in rival Moscow. Within both the Oktobrists and Kadets, the Moscow group made strenuous but in the last analysis unsuccessful attempts to shake their Duma representatives from their 'ivory tower' attitude and identify with the sweeping Leftward movement of the nation. Finally, Duma jealousy of its prerogatives annoyed and finally estranged the wartime public organisations , who (not without some justification) suspected that the Duma, having secured a position of privilege, wished to slam the political door behind itself to exclude the remainder of Russian society. Though deserving

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14 Bublikov, Russkaya Revolyutsia, p.11.

sympathy for their political predicament after 1906, the Duma moderates made an undeniable contribution to their estrangement from the Russian nation.

The unmitigated failure of their relationship with the country compelled the moderates to place all their political capital on the only alternative, their relationship with the government. While moderate party memberships outside the Duma agitated for opposition to the government, the moderates within the Duma supported a policy of rapprochement. The subsequently well-publicised actions of the Duma moderates against the government were never dictated by acceptance of a mandate from the country. The campaign of early 1914 was the product of a combination of playing to the electoral gallery, defending the constitutional status quo and competition between the moderates for the prestige of 'Champion of the Duma'. The Bloc campaign of August 1915 was initiated by ministerial intrigue, again fostered by Duma concern for the parliamentary status quo and produced a Programme which predated the October Manifesto in the modesty of its demands. The 'Storm-Signal' of November 1916 resulted from exasperation at the Stürmer 'dictatorship', desperation at the developing revolutionary situation and the exigencies of party politics. At no point in the Fourth Duma was the moderates' relation--ship with the country the deciding factor in a parliamentary campaign ; at no point did the Duma moderates approach a full scale onslaught on the institution of tsardom - even during the February Revolution.

By the Fourth Duma, the moderates were fighting not for the country, not even for reform, but for the maintenance of the status quo. No matter how strained the situation of the Fourth Duma, it was preferable to the alternatives. Revolution was a recurrent nightmare to the moderates and as early as August 1915 Sazonov could remark,

> If everything is arranged decently and an opening offered, the Cadets will be the first to come to an agreement. Miliukov is a thorough-going bourgeois and dreads a social revolution worst of all. The majority of the Cadets are trembling for their capital. (15)

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15 Cherniavsky, Prologue, p.199 and ARR, vol.18, p.114 ; also Report of 11 December 1916 : POLICE, 343, 1916, 106-7 and ENGEL'HARDT, xii, 729.

At a less apocalyptic level, the moderates relied upon the government to protect their positions in the Duma. Government manipulation of the elections to the Third Duma had falsified the political complexion of the Duma to the disadvantage of the moderate camp ; ten years later, public opinion had moved so far Left that a fair vote would have deprived the moderates of both their numerical strength and pivotal position in the Duma.[16] By 1917 the govern-ment was the sole protection for the Duma moderates against political ruin. In pursuit of their security the moderates unanimously backed Rodzyanko's plea to the Tsar in January 1917 (with the prospect of elections to the Fifth Duma in the autumn) to extend the life of the present Duma by reason of war emergency and the disruption of normal sessions.[17] The moderates' only hope for survival in the increasingly oppositional and eventually revolutionary situation was to persuade the government to turn the Fourth Duma into a Russian 'Long Parliament'.

The moderates' only card was that, given the trend of public opinion (which even Nikolai Maklakov's ingenuity would be tested to pervert), the Fourth Duma was still the most amenable national assembly that the government was likely to get. However the government skilfully took advantage of the fact that both Oktobrists and Kadets were victims of their past triumphs and tragedies. Oktobrist policy after 1912 was dominated by the desire to return to the golden age of privilege in the early Third Duma ; Kadet policy after 1906 was dominated by the determination at all costs to avoid another Vyborg fiasco. As a result the government adopted a 'stick and carrot' policy towards the Duma moderates : whenever crisis loomed, the government offered the 'carrot' of alliance to the Oktobrists and ~~the~~ brandished the 'stick' of dissolution at the Kadets. Whether employed diplomatically or blatantly, the government's ploy proved an almost foolproof means of bringing the Fourth Duma to heel.

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16 For example, the Okhrana believed the Kadets were too far Right to retain any of their four seats in Moscow in the Fifth Duma elections : Moscow police report of 12 October 1916 quoted in GRAVE 142.

17 ARR, vol.6, p.335 ; also KATKOV 220-3.

Unfortunately for the moderates, it was tragically plain that they needed the government far more than the government needed them. In wartime the government could and did operate with minimal recourse to the Duma. Clause 87 of the Fundamental Laws gave the government virtual legislative independence. The threat of financial indepenedence which was moved in mid 1915 proved sufficient to cow the Duma. The bureaucracy shunned the Duma as a recruiting-ground for government personnel : at the ministerial level, of the forty-three incumbents between 1912 and 1917 only two were taken from the Duma.[18] The unofficial contacts between the government and the Duma that did emerge were invariably at ministerial initiative and designed to benefit the government alone. Individual ministers attempted to 'use' the Duma to improve their own positions within the government, for example Shcheglovitov in October 1913, Kokovtsov in November 1913, Krivoshein in August 1915, Aleksei Khvostov in January 1916 and Aleksandr Trepov in November 1916. Certain ministers regarded as more liberal than most cultivated 'understandings' with the Duma, most notably Sazonov, Ignat'ev, Krivoshein, Polivanov, Naumov and Rittikh. On exceptional occasions the Duma was even invited to reinforce ministerial attempts to influence the Tsar, for example in August 1915 in a campaign to dissuade him from becoming Commander-in-Chief, in November 1916 in a bid for the dismissal of Prótopopov, and in February 1917 in an attempt to bring him to make political concessions. But each incident of contact stressed ministerial initiative and benefit ; once the immediate advantage of the association was secured, the government was quick to terminate the arrangement. Milyukov's hopes for reform by association, the Duma's transformation of the establishment by political osmosis, were further from realisation in the Fourth Duma than ever before.[19] The relationship between the moderates and the government was of stark necessity on the moderates' side but expedience, convenience or even charity on the

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18 Aleksei Khvostov (MVD September 1915 to March 1916) and Protopopov (MVD September 1916 to February 1917) ; for a diagram of ministerial changes 1914-17, see Yeroshkin, Istoria Gosudarstvennikh Uchrezhdenii, p.310.

19 ENGEL'HARDT, iv, 323.

part of the government.

The third crucial relationship, so obsessive to participants but relatively neglected by later historians, was the Duma moderates' relation--ship with each other. The emergence of the Kadets as the dominant moderate party over the course of the Fourth Duma was by no means as inevitable a process as Kadet apologists would have one believe. The Progressists' contribution to Kadet actions was very considerable. The Progressist fraction itself never fulfulled its early promise, embarrassed by a very narrow basis of support outside the Duma and at first disconcerted and then divided by the ambitions of its industrialist patrons. But the Progressists made a decisive impact upon Duma politics by so closely pacing the Kadet fraction that their rivalry stampeded the Kadets through a number of vital decisions. The defence of the Duma in early 1914, the agitation for a Duma session in mid 1915 and the 'Storm-Signal' of November 1916 were all instances of Kadet action taken under severe pressure from the Progressists. The Kadets' most famous victories were Progressist-induced. What reputation the Kadet party earned as a more radical oppositional movement during the Fourth Duma owed as much to Progressist competition as to Kadet integrity.

Even so, Kadet attention was concentrated less on the Progressists than on the Oktobrists. The Kadets were fortunate that the 1912 elections and the Oktobrist crash of late 1913, neither owing anything to the Kadets, quite fortuitously offered the opportunity (though not the certainty) of realising their ambitions. Without the Oktobrist crash, the Kadets could not have hoped to secure the Duma hegemony they enjoyed by late 1916. Even so, it is too convenient to write off the Oktobrists after late 1913 : the period 1914-1917 saw the Duma Oktobrists 'frozen' by their unity problem but only slowly atrophying as a political force. If the Progressists constituted the 'ginger group' within the moderate camp, the Oktobrists still constituted the greater part of the parliamentary 'weight', now lethargic to act but potentially still formidable.

Milyukov's Grand Design was for the Kadets to take over the Oktobrist rôle of Duma fulcrum by stealth, an ambition eventually realised in two distinct stages. The axis of the Fourth Duma ran just to the Right of the central Oktobrist position, leaving the Kadets apparently remote well to the Left. Milyukov had to draw the axis to the Kadets or take the Kadets to the axis ; in practice both were effected. The first stage proved to be the Progressive Bloc. Although the resounding failure of the Bloc in September 1915 seemed to remove any grounds for its continued survival, the Bloc must be seen not only as an important episode ~~to~~ in Duma-government relations but as a turning-point in the Kadet drive for power. The large number of varied participants in the Bloc blurred party principles and policies at a time when Milyukov, edging the Kadets towards the Right, was attempting to cover himself against the criticism of the Progressists and his own Left wing. By excluding the Nationalist and Right fractions, the Bloc also constituted a more Left-orientated body than the complete Duma : the axis of the Bloc was the Left Oktobrist position.[20] Milyukov was the champion of the Progressive Bloc even more in defeat than in August 1915 ; after September 1915 the Bloc was kept alive to be exploited as a Kadet device to offset the natural Oktobrist fulcrum of power.

The retention of the Bloc was not without its price. At the Duma level, action was readily sacrificed to unanimity, reducing the official utterances and policies of the Bloc to an abyssmally low level. At a time when the moderates might have spoken out, most notably during the 1916 Spring Session of the Duma, they were gagged by the Bloc, to the disappointment and later exasperation of public opinion. To the Kadets, the Bloc offered a political advantage which had to be paid for by adoption of a quasi-Oktobrist position : the Duma Oktobrists subordinated themselves to Bloc authority only on the understanding that the Bloc made significant concessions to the Oktobrist

20 The exclusion of the Rights (64 deputies) and the Balashev Nationalists (about 68 deputies) brought the axis of the Bloc some 66 places to the Left of the Duma axis i.e. to the Left Oktobrist position.

viewpoint. The cost of the Bloc was high : to gain authority for the Kadet fraction within the Duma, Milyukov moved the Kadets to the Right (in the face of the complaints of his Left wing) and emasculated the moderate opposition movement.

The second stage was the formation of the Provisional Government. Rodzyanko attempted a last counter-attack against Kadet authority in February 1917, an Oktobrist swan-song interrupted by the outbreak of revolution but incorporated in Rodzyanko's ambition to become 'dictator of the Revolution'. Rodzyanko's bid ended with his exclusion from power and the emergence of a Provisional Government whose balance represented the culmination of Milyukov's efforts of the previous five years. The axis of the Provisional Government was the Right Kadet position - Milyukov's own. Never for a moment losing sight of the priority of the interests of the Kadet fraction, Milyukov exercised his political skills to secure the shifting of the power-axis from the Right Oktobrist through the Left Oktobrist to the Right Kadet position. The composition and balance of the Provisional Government were Milyukov's crowning achievement as a Duma politician, attracting (as Sukhanov conceded) all moderate opinion to the Kadet banner :

> Amongst the bourgeoisie itself the Cadets swallowed up all the others. The more Right groups already seemed unseasonable and vanished like smoke ... The Cadets, "The People's Freedom Party", became the firm stronghold of the entire plutocracy, stolidly flying the banner of statesmanship and order ... From the very first thunderclap of revolution the entire bourgeoisie was consolidated in the "Left" party of the Cadets. (21)

In company which was by no means remarkable for its ability and talent, Milyukov was the outstanding politician of the Duma period. Even his political adversary Chernov was not grudging in his tribute :

> A man of many-sided education, a superior scholar in his special field, with a fine and flexible mind, well-balanced and calm, more the lecturer than the apostle of a political creed, Milyukov also had a decided taste for political life, the will to power and the discipline of a well-trained professional fighter ; he was not discouraged by failure, he accepted defeat philosophically, and like a true sportsman he bore from

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21 Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, pp.213-4 & 252.

> each defeat unshaken faith in the possibility of revanche and zest in preparing for it. He had many qualities which go to make a really great political leader. (22)

Milyukov's indispensability to the Kadet party was never in doubt. Adding the Presidency of the Central Committee to his Presidency of the Fraction in February 1916, his executive control of the party came close to dictatorship. The threat of his resignation caused the disappearance of the most determined and well-supported opposition within the party.[23] As Chernov testified, his parliamentary expertise put all other moderate leaders in the shade :

> The studious side of his nature had been moderated by the long schooling of parliamentary life and struggle, which had taught him to swim with ease in the whirlpool of parliamentary combinations, to manage the back-stage manipulation of the changing feelings and tendencies of the Duma semi-circle... A typical parliamentarian, he was a splendid mediator between disputing parties, a creator of compromises, of elastic formulae which rubbed out contradiction, smoothed away sharp corners, made verbal concessions that did not prevent him from putting through his own program. He possessed a high degree of caution, of nicety in choosing the moment to act, of ability to wait patiently for a favourable situation, economising his strength and not over-exerting it in struggl--ing against the current ... He elevated into a dogma in itself the art of tacking, of discovering flank attacks and the line of least resistance. (24)

Political principle almost disappeared, to be replaced by a flexibility which came very close to bare expediency. Milyukov was a tough political realist with no finesse or lightness of touch : the references to his 'tactlessness' in the memoirs of contemporaries are legion.[25] Milyukov avoided foolhardy stands on principle, thereby escaping the succession of painful humiliations and ignominious backdowns experienced by the Progressists. He preferred not to face vital issues squarely, thereby avoiding a party crash like that suffered by the Oktobrists. Milyukov qualified for no awards for political gallantry or generosity : the Progressists were unscrupulously 'used' in 1912 and mercilessly harassed when they became a threat to the Kadets ; the Oktobrists were exploited and deceived to reduce their initiative and power.

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22 CHERNOV 172.

23 Piotrow, Paul Milyukov, pp.246-9 & 424-5.

24 CHERNOV 172-3.

25 For example, ENGEL'HARDT, xii, 323 and Oznobishin, Vospominania, pp.35, 238 & 261.

Kadet supremacy involved the squashing of rivals and Milyukov showed no squeamishness in his pursuit of that over-riding aim.

Within the Kadet party, Milyukov had no peers : no Left Kadet effectively challenged his authority, and even Vasilii Maklakov, who was probably Milyukov's equal in intellect, never made the transition from political dilettante to party politician. For the Progressists, Yefremov and Konovalov were overawed and outclassed. For the Duma Oktobrists, Rodzyanko's ambition proved out of all proportion to either his tactics or talents. Guchkov was the only party leader of sufficient stature and expertise to have given Milyukov trouble - had he succeeded at the Moscow polls in 1912. Unlike Milyukov, who in the period of his forcible exclusion from the First and Second Dumas successfully 'ruled the Duma from the buffet-room', Guchkov was never able to overcome the handicap of exclusion from the Fourth Duma.[26] The Duma Oktobrists were left with the inferior (albeit more sympathatic) leadership of Rodzyanko, and Guchkov fretted in helpless frustration outside the Duma. By the time that revolution brought Guchkov back into the political limelight, the future for a leader of his monarchist persuasions was already lost. It was by a combination of good fortune and good management that Milyukov secured for the Kadets a position in early 1917 which would have been unthinkable in 1912.

In emphasising the importance of party politics in the Fourth Duma, the concept of the Kadet, Oktobrist and Progressist fractions belonging to a single parliamentary 'camp' is not lost. The process of coming together by the Kadets and Oktobrists over the Third Duma, which in its turn made a vital contribution to the emergence of the Progressists, continued through the Fourth Duma. Far from pointing their unlikeness, the growing emphasis on party politics only demonstrated the close similarities of the moderate fractions. There was little to distinguish the fractions in their response to

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26 S.Ye.Kryzhanovsky, Vospominania, Berlin 1938, p.86 ; also Piotrow, Paul Milyukov, pp.149-150.

the major issues of the day : constitutional monarchy, opposition to revolut--ion, the promotion of Russia as a Great Power, observance of international agreements and commitment to the War were tenets of all three parties. Politically, the fractions were positioned between the extremes of the party spectrum, advocating a middle course between the brittle Reaction urged by the Right and the merciless Revolution preached by the Left. The quarrels of the later Fourth Duma centred on tactics, not aims or principles. Once Kadet dominance had been finally established in the Provisional Government, the other moderate fraction memberships were quick to abandon their Fourth Duma party allegiances and join the expanded Kadet party. In the Third Duma, the power and privilege of the Oktobrist fraction had been a magnet to the Right wing of the moderate camp ; after March 1917, the hegemony of the Kadet party disrupted the fragile and artificial divisions of the Fourth Duma to constitute the centre of the moderate revolutionary camp.[27]

The moderate fractions were positioned not only between the extremes of Left and Right but the extremes of country and government. By 1913 the Duma had lost all credibility as a 'Third Force' in Russian political life. Caught between the two fundamental forces of Russia, by comparison with which their own authority could only be tactical, the Duma moderates followed a policy of 'trimming' against the greater danger. When the government was on the offensive, the moderates headed the defensive movement, as for example over parliamentary privilege in early 1914, the threatened Duma prorogation in August 1915 and the Stürmer 'dictatorship' in November 1916. But when the country's mood was threatening and the government appeared hard-pressed, the moderates exerted their weight against the popular movement, notably in September 1915 and the period December 1916 to February 1917. The 'trimming' policy fostered the growing conviction of the unprincipled nature of Duma politics and the 'unreliability' of the Duma moderates, and at various times thwarted both the government and the country. The mounting irritation of the

27 Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, pp.213-4, 252 & 345-6.

government and nation became directed at the moderate-ruled Duma, which seemed to promote the postponement of the inevitable dénouement only in the interests of upholding its own prestige and authority. By February 1917 both had lost confidence in the Duma and its moderates, and their value to either side was being seriously questioned. 'Moderates' in their principles and position in the Duma spectrum, the Kadets, Oktobrists and Progressists pursued a policy of attempting to 'moderate' the increasingly stark relationship between the rulers and the ruled. In so doing, they drew the fire of both sides.

The qualities of political leadership which brought Milyukov success over the Fourth Duma period were as typical of the Duma moderates as were his failings. One of Milyukov's most serious shortcomings, cruelly spotlighted by the revolutionary situation, was his estrangement from the common people. As Chernov again remarked : 'his chief weakness was a complete lack of feeling for popular, mass psychology ; he was too much a man of the study, hence a doctrinaire ... he never spoke the language of the people ; for him it was a tremendous and alien force'.[28] Milyukov's characteristic of regarding the people as either malleable ignoramuses ot an inhuman mob was now typical not only of the Kadet party but of the moderate camp as a whole. In 1907 Milyukov had quoted Gladstone in describing 'liberalism' as 'confidence in the people' and 'conservatism' as 'lack of confidence in the people'.[29] Over the period 1905 - 1917, commencing with the drama of the Vyborg Appeal, the Kadets had shifted from a 'liberal' to a 'conservative' psychology. The estrangement from the mass of the people which made such a powerful contribution to the collapse of tsardom was hardly less a feature of the moderates who constituted the first Provisional Government.

A related feature of Milyukov's leadership also typical of the moderates was his lack of orientation outside the parliamentary milieu. In the course of the Duma period the moderate deputies became seduced by the privilege,

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28 CHERNOV 172.

29 Milyukov, Vtoraya Duma, St Petersburg 1907, p.28 quoted in Tyutyukin, 'Oppositsia Yego Velichestva', p.217.

prestige and protection offered by the Duma. Chernov called the Duma 'that peculiar little world which in Russia more than anywhere was isolated, protected against the pressure of the street'.[30] It was in this environment, artificially maintained and increasingly out of touch with and unrepresentat--ive of the main stream of Russian life, that the moderates played out their politics and intrigues. The moderates (and especially)Milyukov) were essentially suited to an established constitutional system, not to the revolutionary chaos with which they were confronted in 1917. Like Nicholas II himself, the moderates seemed designed by nature to function within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. Chernov made just this observation on Milyukov :

> He was meant for quiet normal times, when life follows deep, well-trodden paths, not breaking virgin soil recklessly, not for times when irrational popular passions rage, when the entire situation changes constantly, when mighty subterranean shocks overthrow the most magnific--ent constructions like a house of cards. (31)

In conversation with Vinaver in mid 1917, the Kadet Kokoshkin admitted 'you and I were born to be parliamentarians but fate always places us in circumstances where the struggle must be waged along different paths ; thus it was in 1905-6 and so it is again now'.[32] Milyukov may have hoped in March 1917 that his Duma career would serve as a political apprenticeship for the greater world of ministerial office, that 'having practised his diplomatic talents in the Duma corridors and in party conflicts, Milyukov felt himself called to transfer them from the microcosm of parliamentary politics to the macrocosm of international policy.[33] In fact Milyukov proved unable to make the transition from an established parliamentary regime to the volatile world of revolution. Again typifying the moderate camp, Milyukov's later career proved that the Duma period, far from being a preparation for higher things, represented the ideal milieu for his style of expertise and the

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30 CHERNOV 172 ; also Riha,'Constitutional Developments in Russia',p.97.

31 CHERNOV 173.

32 M.Vinaver,Nedavnee : Kharakteristiki i vospominania,Paris 1926,p.135.

33 CHERNOV 175.

practical limit of his considerable but specialised talents.

The position of the Duma moderates declined with each shift away from the peacetime establishment. Powerless to control and often even to influence the major issues and developments of the period 1912-1917, the moderates betrayed their lack of resource with increasing clarity. Each new emergency drove the moderates into closer association with the government. The Duma had never been a trainingground for a Government, only for an Opposition, and an 'Opposition of His Majesty' at that. The moderates were with rare exceptions still 'men of little deeds' and woefully ignorant of the practical demands and responsibilities of central government. In 1909 the Kadet Izgoyev admitted in Vekhi :

> We must at last have the courage to admit that the vast majority of members of our State Dumas, with the exception of thirty or forty Cadets and Octobrists, have not shown themselves to possess the knowledge required to undertake the job of governing and reconstructing Russia.(34)

By late 1915 Vasilii Maklakov, far from detecting an improvement, denied that even the more able Kadets were equal to the task of government : 'we do not understand this business, we do not know the technique, and there is now no time to learn'.[35] Despite occasional sanguine claims, the Duma moderates (although the best of the Duma membership) were at no time a viable substitute for tsarist government, only potentially a powerful corrective. Fashioned by years in the political wilderness and with all the worst features of an 'Opposition mentality', the moderates made their worst showing of all in the Provisional Government.

Well before the collapse of tsardom, the Duma had been incorporated into the traditional structure of government. From being the ambitious national assembly of 1906 with its arrogant slogan 'Let the Executive bow to the Legislature', the Duma had been reduced to something resembling a tsarist P.R.O. for its Western Allies.[36] Cowed by the recovery of the government

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34 Vekhi,p.123 ; also quoted in Lenin,Collected Works,vol.17,p.209.

35 Quoted in SHUL'GIN 147 ; also Oznobishin,Vospominania,pp.35-6.

36 ENGEL'HARDT,i,279.

after 1905, the Duma membership settled for an increasingly servile rôle, a process in which the moderates played the leading part. As Milyukov confessed in 1912,'to acquire the sole right of existence this [Third - R.P.] Duma had to become one of the wheels of the bureaucratic machine'.[37] By the middle of the Fourth Duma, the moderates were reliant upon the government for their political futures in every sense. When tsardom collapsed, supported to the very last by the moderates, the Duma leaders took power in the pursuit of their own party ambitions and the hope of retaining as much of the tsarist establishment as possible. Predictably the demands of government proved too burdensome for individuals without the talent, training or mass support for this unaccustomed exercise of power. Long deprived of wide support in the country, the moderates could not long survive without the comfort and protection of traditional tsarist authority. In late 1915 Sazonov described the tsarist government as 'dangling in mid-air, without support from below or above' ; a mere four months after the February Revolution, Sukhanov made exactly the same comment upon the Provisional Government.[38] The Provisional Government inherited all the weaknesses of tsardom with none of its strengths. The character, conduct and career of the moderates over the late Duma period predetermined the fate of the Provisional Government. The constitutional 'Third Course' hailed with such optimism in the wake of the October Manifesto in 1905 declined irremediably over the career of the four Dumas to collapse completely in the revolutionary year 1917.

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37 Yezhegodnik "Rech'", 1912, p.77.

38 Cherniavsky, Prologue, p.89 and ARR, vol.18, p.60 ; Sukhanov, Zapiski o Revolyutsii, 7 volumes, Berlin 1922, v, 146.

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