The 1917 Revolution
The Organization of the First Totalitarian Dictatorship in Europe
by Alexander Kerensky

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen and my young friends:

These past quite three-quarters of a century which I was in political work because my political life began very early when I was only a student in St. Petersburg, and now Lenigrad University. In this time, it was a very interesting period in Russian history because the end of the empire and the monarchical system in these last months. 1902 was the beginning of people's movement which began step by step, surrounded by more and more people, freely accepted the piece for the installation in Russia a constitutional monarchy based on profound social reforms because Russian social structure was extremely different from a structure in Western Europe and in United States. Russia's social structure was unique in actual and in practical people. We were nearly 75% peasants, 10 or 12% industrial people and the bourgeois and capitalistic class less than 20%.

But it must be understood that intellectual people, intelligentsia of the middle and the high class in Russia was also different and never interested before 1901 of all large number of corporations. The Russian intelligentsia was an organization in which young people of students from different universities, young girls, people from different classes and many of them from the high classes of society.

I not explain to you why the question not only of complete freedom of political freedom, religious freedom, social freedom, but also the question of profound social reforms was an essential of the interior history of Russia from the end of the 18th century. During this period, the Russian political movement for organization of democratic country, in this time it was not question of republic or not, or monarchy. The majority of the population did not dream at this time of republic because in all Europe only one country was republic--France. All others were monarchical. Europe was monarchical country at this time. All kinds of freedom and organization of political democracy was based in Russia on the large and profound social reforms, especially agrarian and for working class.
I was from 1906, a member of the corporation in Petersburg, but I have not any interest in criminal affairs. My life was consecrated to the defense of the people who accused by the old government criminal because they tried for the liberation and creation of new democratic Russia. For me, it was very important because political defense must be very often. I think I remained in Petersburg maybe three months, no more than four months a year because I go and visit all Russian towns in Siberia, in Turkestan, in Baltic and others and I defend these political accused of all classes and all professions - workers and soldiers and writers. The organization of different committees and for me it was very useful and needed because organizing the defense in these different towns, I always asked my friends to organize for me some kind of consultation with representatives of local people of different classes and different parties. So, I think not without exaggeration, that I knew Russia, the people of Russia, much better than those who remained all the time in towns with books and understood the historical events, the explanation of the historians. I was directly the life and immediately directly I had the decision - what to do in this day. It is a secret of any man who likes to vote really serious political, practical business! You must understand the situation immediately, the moment of the event.

And then I was elected to the Russian parliament in 1912. From this time I was also a kind of leader of all democratic opposition inside of parliament and in the country. It is not because I am but such happened. And we read that Russia developed very quickly. There is a very strange legend that before the Bolsheviks in Russia all the population was illiterate except the aristocracy, that education was privilege of the privileged family, that the Russian people not understand even the western word freedom because they never have the freedom and not like to be free, they prefer to be under the yoke of some kind of irresponsible monarch. This is completely legend. In Russia in my time, in European Russia and I speak of the provinces, because there is a different situation there now all Arabic language mainly but not Russian. In 1913, more than 78% of young boys and girls in villages educated only with capacity not only to read
and to write but to work higher and higher in the educational system. The idea of human freedom is very personally known by all, the quality implanted in the soul of every man and woman, this desire to be free. And totalitarian dictatorship is dictatorship of people who like unlimited freedom find themselves with complete subjugation of the majority of people of their class. Totalitarian dictatorship was created by first war. So, in Russia the word freedom, the word social justice, was very known. In 1905, on the throne of absolutistic monarchy, all peasantry, all workers, intelligentsia, even middle class and many of the aristocratic class, participate in this revolution. And we receive the constitutional manifest of 1795 based on political, social and spiritual freedom of human beings with large political and national rights because in my time it was not only organizational freedom in Russia but the quality of different peoples in Russia. Because majority was Russians, you have Ukrainians, you have Georgians, you have Armenians and others. All these people received right to organize communally again and especially after July when they became parties. Social rights, social question was always very close with the development of political freedom in Russia. This happened, for instance, in some western countries. The class regime is very big in Russia because the class of capitalists was very little and the education of this people was different. And so, ladies and gentlemen, you must understand that here not represent some mode of freedom which tried to introduce European freedom in barbaric country. I want to represent you here the people who fight and develop all democratic step by step institution of freedom from the beginning of 19th century, even the end of the 18th century, and we have in the middle of the 19th century, the period of Emperor Alexander II, which introduced in Russia very large political reforms and liberated the peasants and created free universities and an excellent system of justice which exists now not in Soviet Russia, but in many other countries. When this period of totalitarian dictatorship passed this principle of humanity, freedom and social justice was restored. What happened? Happened very much and tragic. 1914 was the beginning of enormous world crisis which continues even now. All these troubles in Europe, completely new type of dictatorship a totalitarian
dictatorship never was before. It was the creation of the first universal war because there is an enormous difference between wars before 1914 and the 1914 war. The last war was in British South Africa with Boers, and Russian war with Japan in Manchuria. These were all classical wars, armies organized to fight but majority of peace civil population remained untouched. In the beginning of the first war when they understood all Europe was divided into two, irreconcilably coalitions. One was England, France, Russia, later Italy and many little second-class states for freedom and for democracy. The other coalition was Germany, Hungary, Turks and Bulgaria which held different plans. Openly Germany dreamed at this time of world Germany and European Germany. In the beginning of the war, before the beginning of the war with arms and blood, the western democracies declared that we now have the last war against war, after the victory of democratic countries the war would disappear as also all remnants of totalitarian regime. We believed, the young generation for restoration of installation in the whole world of permanent peace based on justice and democracy and this was tremendous enthusiasm. I remember this because at that time I was very active and I know that because of this war, the soldiers but the whole population was mobilized. All men and women from 18 years old were in the hand of government for the war. The organized armies in the millions of millions and so a population. Even the first women were forced to work in factories and other in some kind of mobilization, not of army, but mobilization of people for a decisive fight for the creation of new world of peace, justice and equality. It was promised - you know very well the results. The result was a capitulation peace between totalitarian dictatorship Germany, and second it was in Versailles, the peace dictated to Germany and their allies by western leaders of democracy of which your state secretary, Lansing of Wilson, in his diary last days before the Versailles treaty, wrote, and I read them because diaries of Lansing until now are not published but I received this and he repeated every day, we will sign now the peace which will contain the war. It is because Versailles Treaty was Germany and her allies more merciless even than You see, in this time, the result of the war created a new type of population, between the young and the middle, which disillusioned in so-called formal
democracy and tried to find some new way of life, who despised the old phrases of democratic governments. It was wrong - maybe not completely wrong - but in general wrong. But it is a fact and this masses of population who lost their normal life, lost their houses, lost their work, became some kind of gypsy. This was in essence material in which these totalitarian ideas, which never existed before in Europe, developed very strongly and quickly. Kommunist Manifesto of Marx of 1848 in which he said, "Your business is first to destroy all social and political structure of the existing world until the last stone, and what come after? He not know. He said, we will see, we will see. It was a slogan which accepted very well by Lenin because he was destructive, but not creative. In a few months, all very developed industrial, agricultural, organization in Russia disappeared. And in 1913 the French diplomat wrote in a book for a time in Asia, Robinson, the equality of human race, and his idea was; Marx said, only the choice class is workers who will create out of destruction of the existing system the new world of peace, love and paradise, if you like. Little dictatorship of the people and ideas of developed in committee, not complete but society, surrounded by famous composites. The ideas of Marx, through one of his disciples in England came to Germany and in Germany developed a new type of authoritarian dictatorship, complete antagonist to the authoritarian dictatorship of the so-called Marxian reality. But Marx was proud that he was the only one who professed the victory of proletariat and by the creation of new paradise. You see the situation, and when in Russia, will not speak just now of any interior situation in Russia, is not my subject today. After education Empire, the Russia's 160 million population with 13 million mobilized soldiers on the front which is from Baltic to Mesopotamia, completely relations to our allies, because the line from Baltic Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey and Turkey in Mesopotamia was closed because of the relations of Russia with their elites. But Russian people against Russians thinking that all these bad events were the result of the desire of Russian people to govern all others. Russian people never have idea in my time worked very closely with representative of Albanian, Georgian, Estonians, Ukranians...
except Ukrainians from Galatia, who were with Russia because centuries western Galatia was under the yoke, in the frontier of Hungary and Austria. It was not a revolution. A revolution is always continuous movement of free people for people who like to be free fight against the old regime which does not give freedom. So, revolution in October was not revolution. It was the conspiracy under the most interesting circumstance happening from a location in Russia the first authoritarian dictatorship. Lenin and us made propaganda in October, and even in September of 1917 under provisional government myself, we decided that Kerensky, under pressure and pressure proliferation with right together with them to destroy all the freedom we were receiving during February revolution. I decided myself to destroy all the work between others and myself toward the creation of large, free, democratic, based on social rights and social justice and they promised to control the constitution immediately. The constitution assembly would be master and lord of Russia when they came to govern, the information was dispersed, same day in which was convoked, and after this Lenin and Bolcorin declared in June in Moscow that from the beginning of work in Russia in 1917, we had the aim to suppress the bourgeois democracy and to create a dictatorship of proletariat. That dictatorship of proletariat was not free because Lenin was not a very simple man. He understood how to create the personal dictatorship. He said that in time of troubles very often all the wisdom and all the plans of this or that class is concentrated in the head of only one man, who in this tragic moment is more important than all of this or that class. It was a prepared to explain his own unlimited dictatorship and very easy for the necessity to have the second superman — Stalin.

From the beginning, as I hear not one day before yesterday, in the confidence extend the October reaction in Stavka, this organization of communistic party was isolated. It was some kind of closed, if you like, club of conspirators against the essentials, the most elementary rights of normal population. This was a real story of so-called Great October Social Revolution. And now even abroad, the historians began to understand this, and in my presence, practically the aim of Lenin was totalitarian, terroristic dictatorship. And so now you understand that Russia and Russian democracy not perished alone because this
dislocation began in Petersburg and Moscow but continued immediately in all of Europe. The fight of Mussolini on one side and Communists the other side, in Italy began in 1919. In 1922, he became the Duce. In Germany, Stream Movement, that is name of one of her stronger organizations of left Social Democrats or future Communists in Germany began in Italy even before the capitulation of Germany. And after capitulation, you had rewards for the creation of dictatorship of Communists in Moscow; twice in Berlin, in Ukrainian Provinces twice, in Munich, in Hamburg. In all German was the movement that in 1923 it was the beginning of the totalitarian, merciless dictatorship of Hitler together with former killer of first war, General Gutendorf in Germany. When he was arrested and under the judgement of supreme court of Germany in Lipsig, and when the president asked him, but why you use, and always think that you are excellent democrat, he answered because I hate your democracy, I use your machinery and I reprehend your democracy. It was an honest declaration and after this declaration, Hitler became more and more popular. In Russia if Lenin there in September and October of 1917 said to these poor people "I hate your democracy and your reforms. I speak democratically because I hate the democracy," she will disappear immediately because Russian people is a people who concentrated hundreds of years for freedom for organization of a large, democratic empire or republic with equality in national, religious, etc., etc. You are asking me but why it was so. This governing group of Bolsheviks practically practiced anti-socialism and not any communism because socialism must be created by free people, it is very primitive state. Capitalism, a time of tolerance, maybe, with many rights for the people to organize the life of state. is the judgment of many of former adversary of Great October Democratic Revolution understood to be the happy key to freedom. Because in my opinion, any excellent social program which was based on supression and of any human rights of population for the interest of the dictators- all this thing is by the creation of slavery for all people. And now question -- why until now. This is fifty years ago.

Why does this terrible regime continue to exist in Russia? the Hitler regime and Mussolini regime both destroyed by arms during the second war, and the second war western democracies accepted with enthusiasm the support of the fight against those who wanted to prevent fascism the support
dictatorship in history. And so I remember when I was in Europe, in the thirties and in the beginning of fourties, when I and some of my friends tried to explain the western public opinion that they adore the most terrible tyrants in all of history of Europe nobody believed. And when I spoke that all this machinery was created by Lenin and the 18 million gold marks received from Germany. Nobody believed, and I became the eliminator of this leader. But now, after the second war, the documents of secret archives of German foreign affairs ministry were published because they are now in the hands of Greek government and Greek government published, step by step, all these documents and send the copies to our allies in the United States, France. You see that I was published a publication in 1940 until 1950-52. I, myself, and Russian government in western Europe with some kind of very suspicious idiots, who tried to make a coup against this new type of socialistic regime. When I was in one country (I'll not tell you the which) after some period of tremendous tortures and millions dying in concentration camps and some country received a supply of boots and in one of them was written by human blood, "Save us," and I spoke with chief of the government of this state and he answered me, "No, Mr. Kerensky, in your country we always have a very interesting experience of creation of new type of socialistic democratic country. We will see how it is finished." And now we fight against this terrible organization. The period of primitive revolutions which arms were on the squad between governmen and revolutionaries is past forever. The proportion between all this organization of bombs, books, etc. and a completely disarmed population are so strong that never will it be possible to organize some kind of old-fashioned revolution on the streets. I'm not pessimist, I know that the interior movement in Russia right now you will even see in the newspapers all these protests are some kind of so-called liberal regime and many people again are arrested, but this is nothing. The new generation, as before, now became more audacious, and they have now the people inside of communist organization who understand that all this class fury not only of Lenin and Stalin but even of Marx was destroyed not by speeches and doctrines and doctrinal discussions, but by the life itself. How to explain? The most powerful organization is in United States. In United States in which workers movement never accepted any idea of socialism or communism. They
repeat it even now that the best way of life is life in the United States. Ideologically, you have no difference in the mentality of workers and our nation. (It is very important because now, when the states are more isolated, it has possibility to organize discussion between the different parties, change the government, etc., etc. Now, this is the past because now the life, social and material and industrial life, of the whole world is so close that you have no possibility in the same time to organize a local discussion between the parties.) And it is understood in France and here and I think the time is coming when it will be understood in England also, and this understanding of Utopian construction not only of Lenin and Stalin but of government of Marx doctrine was destroyed not by propaganda, by the very fact of life. This now is beginning to open the eyes of many people inside the communistic party, inside. And it is absolutely true, ladies and gentlemen, my friends, that our experiment which was forty years in Russia, Not finished tomorrow, but finished in 2 or maybe 3 years. But if the credo of teaching of this doctrine was broken by life, the system will be broken also. So this totalitarian, dictatorial in Russia will be broken not by fights in streets, but by changing of situations in relations between men in power and men out of power.