

# October, Civil War, and the Shaping of Soviet Power

## Советская власть / Sovetskaia vlast'



Boris Kustodiev, *Bolshevik* (1920)

The Day after the Taking of the Winter Palace, Nov. 8 1917



Proletariats of All Countries, Unite!

Seal of the Russian Socialist Federated Socialist Republic (1918)

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics  
СССР / U.S.S.R.  
December 30, 1922



April 17 Demonstration of Veterans and Invalids  
“The Fatherland is in danger. The blood shed by us demands war until victory. Comrade-Soldiers immediately to the trenches. Return Lenin to Wilhelm.”



18 June Demonstrations. “Peace to the Entire World. All Power to the Soviets. All Land to the People. Down with the Minister-Capitalists”



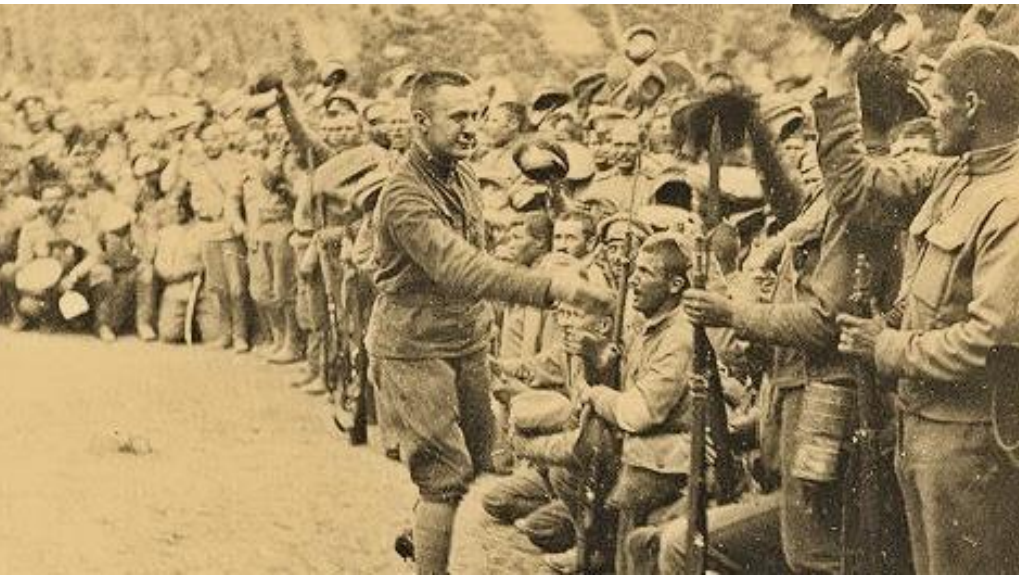
July Days in Petrograd [3-7 July 1917] and PG suppression of Bolsheviks



Lenin in Hiding in Finland, Aug 1917

# Political Polarization April-July 1917

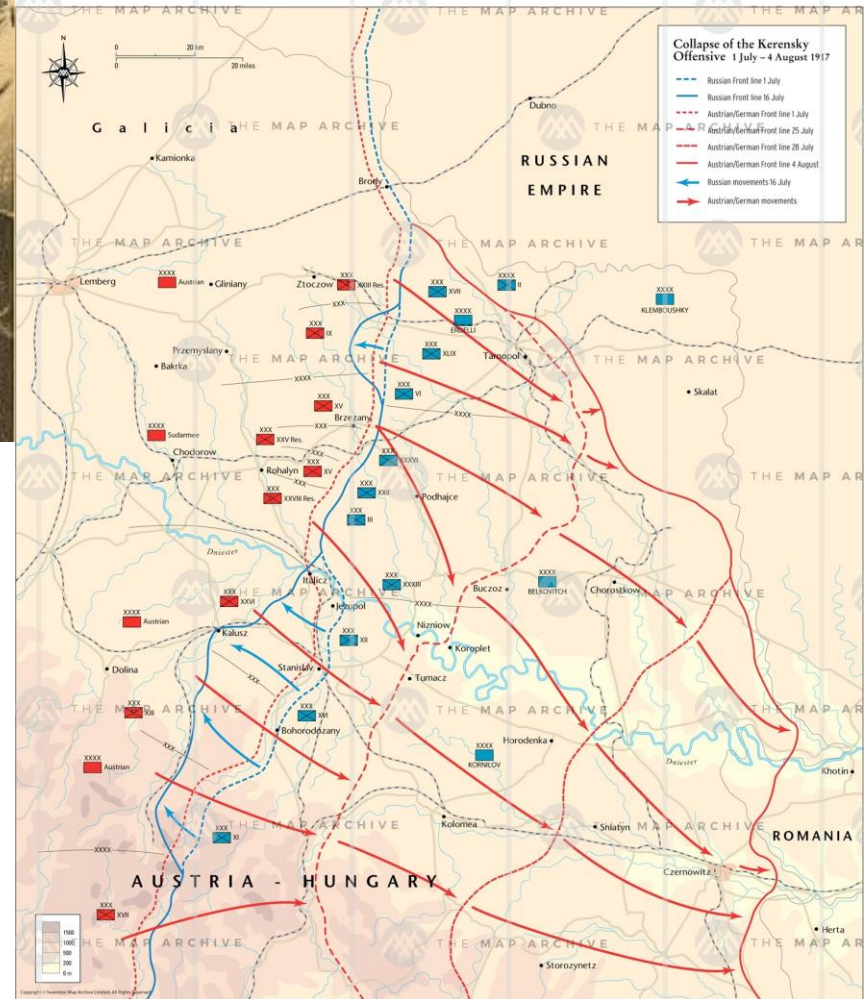
# The Kerensky Offensive, June-July 1917



Alexander Kerensky, War Minister, at the front, May 1917



Long Live The People The Land Freedom Peace



Collapse of the Kerensky Offensive, 1 June-4 August 1917

# The Kornilov Affair, 27-30 August 1917



Lavr Kornilov, Commander-in-Chief of Russian Army, July 1917



Alexander Kerensky, Minister-President, July-October 1917



The Red Guard of the Vulcan Factory, Petrograd, c. late summer 1917

# The Autocratic System

We Rule

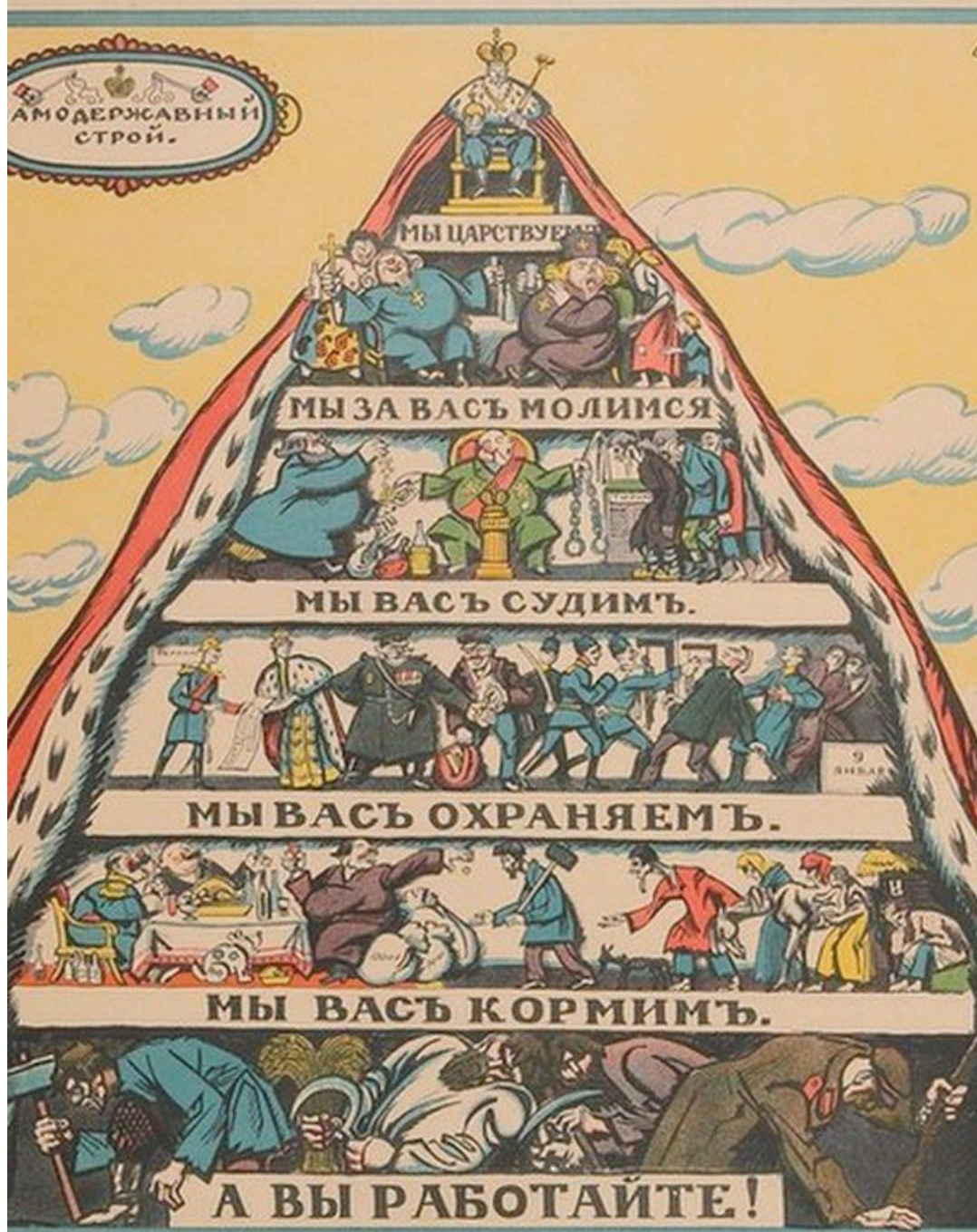
We Pray for You

We Judge You

We Protect You

We Feed You

And You Work!



Kto--Who  
Кто  
Kogo--Whom  
Кого

Vladimir  
Mayakovsky  
and Alexei  
Radakov.

Summer  
1917

# Working Classes and Industrial Workers



Putilov Works, Petrograd

A.I. Konovalov, Moscow textile magnate, Minister of Trade and Industry in first PG



Red Guards, Petrograd, autumn 1917

## Late 1917

- All-Russian Council of Trade Unions registers 2.75 million workers in 2000 unions
- 68% of enterprises employing over 200 workers have some form of worker's control
- 200,000 Red Guards in industrial centers and company towns



← Land  
and  
Freedom  
Long Live  
The  
Democratic  
Republic



## Peasantries and Peasant Revolutions



# Bolshevik Seizure of Power or “The October Revolution”

To the Citizens of Russia.

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. State power has been transferred into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Deputies, the Military-Revolutionary Committee, which stands at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison.

The goals for which the people have struggled: the immediate proposal of a democratic peace, the abolition of landowner ownership of property, workers control over industrial production, and the creation of a Soviet Government---this objectives have been achieved.

**LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION OF  
WORKERS, SOLDIERS, AND PEASANTS**

The Military-Revolutionary Committee  
Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Deputies

25 October 1917 10 A.M.  
[7 November 1917 N.S.]



Proclamation of the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies announcing the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the transfer of power to the Petrograd Soviet, October 25, 1917.





# Soviet Power

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Moscow, Red Square, 8 Nov 1917. Bolshevik military on parade



Lenin Stalin Kollontai

Council of People's Commissars (SovNarKom)  
Alexandra Kollontai [Social Welfare]  
Joseph Stalin [Nationalities]

## Izvestiia



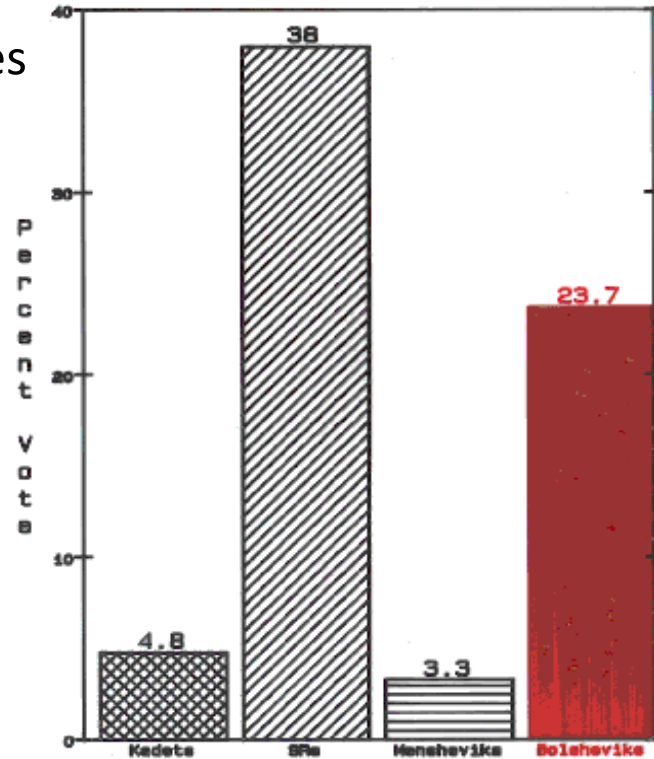
### Central Exec Committee Of Petrograd Soviet Of Workers and Soldiers Deputies

### Decree on Land

# Elections to Constituent Assembly, Nov. 1917



Elections to Constituent Assembly: Grand Totals



SOURCE: Oliver Henry Radkey, *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 78-80.

Constitutional Democrats

4.8%

Socialist Revolutionaries

38%

Mensheviks

3.3%

Bolsheviks

23.7%

National and Ethnic

31.2%

36 million votes;  
48% participation

# All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Struggle with Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, Dec. 1917

## Всероссийская Чрезвычайная Коммисия *Cheka* / ЧК



# Closing of Constituent Assembly, Jan.1918



All Power to the Constituent Assembly (Employees) of the State Bank



"Burzhyi, France, Denikin, S-R Chernov



"Vote for the S-R Party

# Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 3 March 1918

Peredyshka  
Breathing Space  
Передышка



Russian and German soldiers at front, Feb 1918



German-Russian Armistice, 15 Dec 1917

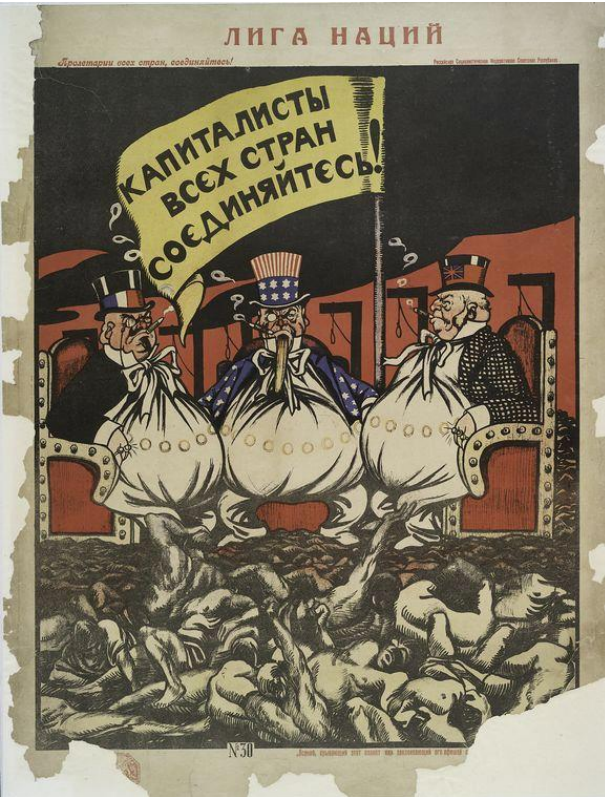
Eleven Days War

# Disintegration of Empire and Reintegration of Nations



# “Foreign Intervention”: 1918-20

League of Nations



Capitalists of All Countries  
Unite [c.1920]



American Expeditionary Force, Vladivostok, 1918



French troops, Odessa, 1919

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 3/18

**Siberia** Admiral Alexander  
Kolchak, 11/18-d.2/20

**Baltic** Gen Nikolai  
Yudenich, 10/19

**South** Volunteer Army, 1918-  
20

- Czech Legion and Trans-Siberian Railroad, 5/18
- Gen Alexei Kaledin, (d. 2/18)
- Gen Lavr Kornilov (d.4/18)
- Gen Mikhail Alekseyev (d.10/18)
- Gen Anton Denikin, 1918-1920
- Gen Baron Peter Wrangel, 1920
- Russo-Polish War, 1920-21

## Civil War, 1917-1920





# “Disenfranchised Persons”

## *Lishentsy*



Selling to eat. 'Women of the former classes'  
sell their possessions on the streets of Moscow.  
Photo by the artist was made by the artist on the



July 1918 Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic denied rights of citizenship to members of “former exploiting classes”: hereditary nobility; clergy; merchants and entrepreneurs; tsarist officials

For a United Russia



Civil War,  
1917-1920

Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!  
Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic



Year One  
of the Proletarian  
Dictatorship  
October 1917  
-October 1918

A snake called BOLSHEVISM has encircled the heart of Russia.  
It seemed nothing could rescue the victims.

But then, in the rays of the rising sun appeared a horseman,  
voluntarily sacrificing himself for Russia's salvation.

Mighty is the blow of the horseman and, in its powerless rage, the snake  
senses that the hand is firm, its aim true, and there's no avoiding the  
punishing blow. [Volunteer Army, 1918-1920]

# Machinery of State



Leon Trotsky, Commissar of War  
Workers and Peasants Red Army, Jan. 1918  
5.5 million men by 1921

Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (b)  
Russian Communist Party (1918)

Membership:

Spring 1917: 20,000/40,000

March 1918: 118,000/390,000

1920: 600,000



“Tsarist Regiments and The Red Army” (1919)  
What We Fought for      What we fight for  
BEFORE                      NOW

# Nationalized, Bureaucratized, and State-Controlled Economy



Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev,  
1894-1971 (joined party 1918)



Semen Ivanovich Kanatchikov,  
1879-1937 (joined party 1905)

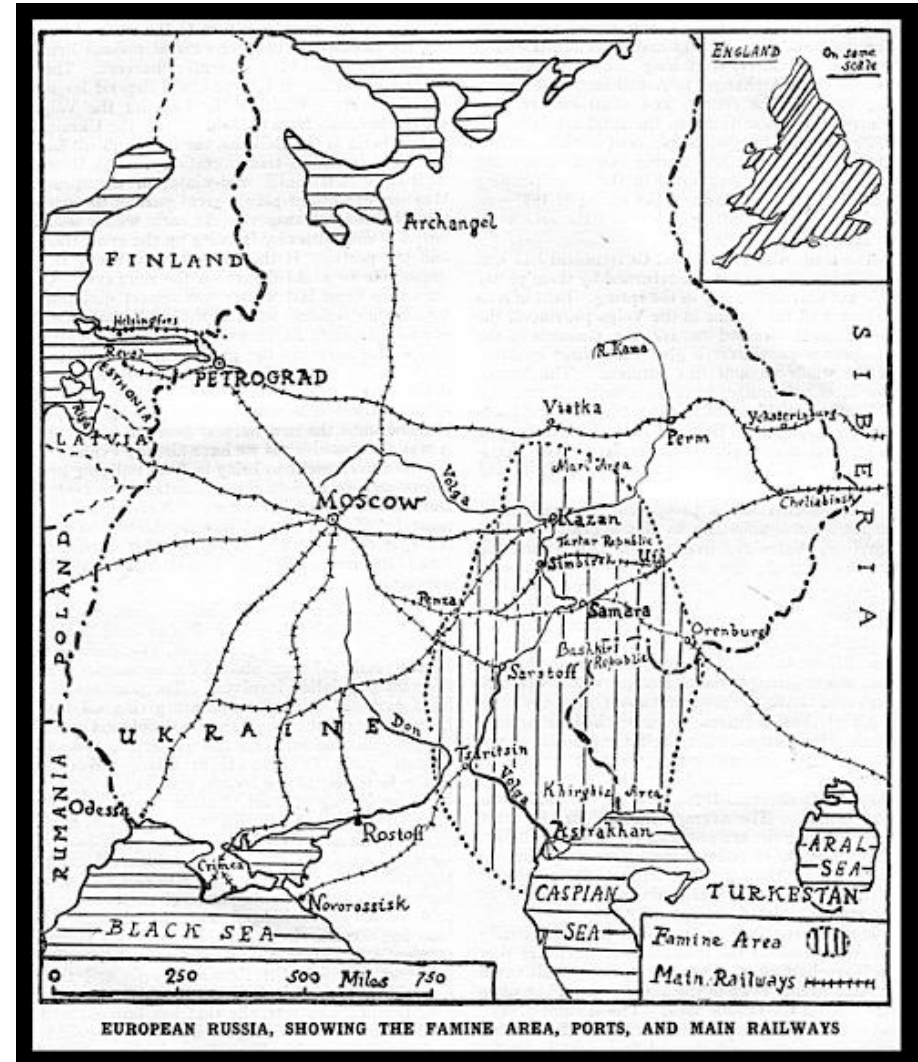
## City Populations

	1910	1920
Moscow	1.5 million	1 million
Petrograd	1.9 million	720,000

## Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh)

- 90 state-managed corporations (glavki) and administrative boards (tsembly)
- bourgeois specialists
- one-man management
- party-controlled trade unions
- black market
- hyperinflation
- grain requisitioning

# The Countryside at the End of the Civil War: Volga Famine, 1921-22



**estimated total civilian deaths, 1914-1922: 7-15 million**

# Outcomes of The Revolution

- a state that was authoritarian, illiberal, and one-party
- an official ideology that was radically secular, anti-clerical, and anti-capitalist
- an official culture that privileged or discriminated against class origins
- a national economy that was nationalized, centralized, and state-managed
- a society still divided between city and countryside
- a politics of mass organizations, mass mobilization, and survival
- an avowedly millenarian communist party seeking to transform the world
- a revolution victorious and a country in ruins