

# IGA-677 / RusNatSecPol / Lecture 5

## Building Communism

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## Today's objectives

1. *Identify*: key groups of actors central to Russian Civil War
2. *Understand*: how Bolsheviks were able to support war effort
3. *Discuss*: trade-offs between ideological purity and economic development/performance

## Picking Sides

How would you expect the average member of each group to align?

- |                  |                           |                       |                |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| a) Peasants      | d) Military officers      | f) Landed aristocracy | i) Clergy      |
| b) Urban workers | e) Military rank-and-file | g) Bureaucrats        | j) Bourgeoisie |
| c) Minorities    |                           | h) Cossacks           |                |

The choices are:



Figure 1: Reds



Figure 2: Whites

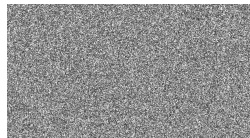


Figure 3: Third Party

# War Communism

## Who Were the Bolsheviks?

- radical faction of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP(b))
- ideological split from Mensheviks, 1903
  - a) “minority” Mensheviks supported:
    - ☒ cooperation with bourgeoisie
    - ☒ Russian participation in WWI
    - ☐ use of terrorism, violence
    - ☐ collectivization of agriculture
  - b) “majority” Bolsheviks supported:
    - ☐ cooperation with bourgeoisie
    - ☐ Russian participation in WWI
    - ☒ use of terrorism, violence
    - ☒ collectivization of agriculture
- support base: factory workers, soldiers
- party banned in 1914 due to war stance
- Lenin in exile until April 1917



Figure 4: Lenin and Friends

## The Revolutionary Moment

### 1. February Revolution

- mass protests, mutinies in Petrograd lead to regime change
- dual power: Provisional Council/ Government (SRs, Mensheviks) vs. Petrograd Soviet of Workers' & Soldiers' Deputies (Bolsheviks)
- main disagreements: WWI, death penalty on front, land reform

### 2. October Revolution

- Petrograd Soviet seizes power, announces new cabinet
- pro-Bolshevik soldiers, sailors storm Winter Palace, arrest PG
- "left" SR faction backs Bolsheviks
- Mensheviks, SRs oppose coup
- armed opposition forms almost immediately



Figure 5: Man Yells at Crowd



Figure 6: Crowd Reacts

National legislative elections held 20 days after October Revolution  
... they do not go well for the Bolsheviks.

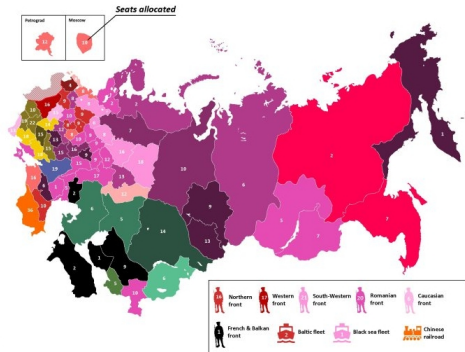
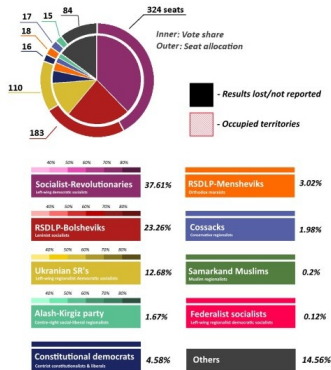


Figure 7: 1917 Russian Constituent Assembly election results

## How to lose a country, in 3 simple steps

1. Dissolution of Constituent Assembly
  - Bolsheviks lose Nov 1917 elections
  - Lenin disbands Assembly, begins repression of rival parties
2. Agricultural policy
  - Bolsheviks keep PG's state monopoly on grain sales
  - announce "produce dictatorship" to address urban food shortages
3. 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
  - Bolsheviks sign peace treaty with Germany, Austro-Hungary
  - default on all allied commitments
  - territorial concessions: Finland, Baltics, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland

Each of these moves was *deeply* unpopular.  
Why did the Bolsheviks do this?  
Did they have any better options?



Figure 8: A Bad Policy?



Figure 9: A Bad Deal?



# Russian Civil War

## Fallout from Brest-Litovsk

1. Political isolation
  - left SRs oppose treaty, leave Bolshevik government in protest
2. Foreign occupation / intervention
  - Germany, Austria occupy Ukraine
  - Entente troops land in Murmansk, Vladivostok, Odesa, Sevastopol
  - flow of weapons to opposition
  - foreign weapons, aid to opposition
3. Food crisis worsens
  - no flow of Ukraine grain to cities
  - food prices spike, breadlines form
  - Soviets take emergency steps to requisition grain by force



Figure 10: Help Arrives

## Russian Civil War

Year	Key Events
1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don Cossack uprising in South</li> <li>- Japanese invasion of Far East</li> </ul>
1918	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ukraine (UNR) declares independence</li> <li>- Don Cossacks defeated, for now</li> <li>- Czech legion captures Trans-Sib railroad</li> <li>- Allied invasions of n. Russia, Siberia</li> <li>- Failed Bolshevik takeover of Finland</li> <li>- Bolsheviks capture, lose, reoccupy Kyiv</li> <li>- Kolchak seizes power in Siberia</li> <li>- Polish-Ukrainian War in Galicia</li> <li>- Failed Bolshevik invasion of Baltics</li> </ul>
1919	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Denikin's forces take s. Russia, Ukraine</li> <li>- Red counteroffensives in south, Siberia</li> <li>- Bolsheviks retake Kyiv</li> <li>- Denikin's forces defeated in s. Russia</li> <li>- Most foreign troops withdrawn</li> </ul>
1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kolchak's forces defeated in Siberia</li> <li>- Poland captures w. Ukraine, w. Belarus</li> <li>- Wrangel's forces defeated in Crimea</li> <li>- Whites evacuate by Black Sea</li> </ul>

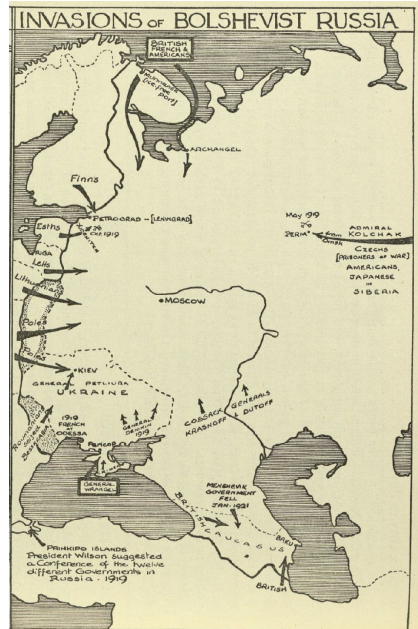




Figure 12: Net territorial losses and gains

## Governance During War

## **Problem:** how to finance war effort?

- no tax revenue due to anarchy
- black market, barter economy
- food shortages, famine
- labor shortages in cities, rural areas

## **Solution:** “War Communism”

1. Nationalization of banks
  - all deposits, savings confiscated
2. Nationalization of all industries
  - heavy industry 75% state-owned
  - agriculture 12% state-owned
3. Compulsory labor regime
  - labor units formed in Red Army
4. Requisitioning of grain from farmers
  - doesn't prevent famine, but provokes peasant uprisings
5. Red Terror
  - repression of “class enemies”



Figure 13: Give Us Bread

# Post-War Communism

## A Dictatorship, If You Can Keep It

- by 1921, Bolsheviks had won civil war
- but the country was devastated

### 1. Human toll

- up to 9 million dead from violence, famine, repression
- 1-2 million refugees, exiles abroad

### 2. Economic toll

- grain production down 56%  
(from pre-war 1913 levels)
- livestock production down 73%
- industrial production down 70%

### 3. Political toll

- Bolsheviks still widely despised
- international diplomatic isolation
- losing support among soldiers, sailors (1921 Kronstadt uprising)



Figure 14: Now What?



## New Economic Policy, 1921-1928

Policy area	War Communism	New Economic Policy
<i>Agriculture</i>	Grain requisitioning	Grain taxation
<i>Heavy industry</i>	Nationalization	Nationalization
<i>Light industry</i>	Nationalization	De-nationalization
<i>Private property</i>	Forbidden	Small private enterprise allowed
<i>Private trade</i>	Forbidden	Permitted
<i>Foreign trade</i>	State monopoly	State monopoly
<i>Banks</i>	State monopoly	State monopoly
<i>Economic goals</i>	Mobilize resources for war	Stop economic crisis
<i>Political goals</i>	Establish party dictatorship	Maintain party dictatorship

### *Discussion:*

In what ways was NEP an economic success, but ideological failure?

## Results of NEP

1. Industry, agriculture recovers
  - output returns to prewar levels
2. But couldn't reap full benefits of capitalism or socialism
  - no employment expansion beyond what market allows
  - no incentive for peasant communes to consolidate, fully feed urban industrial class
3. Ideological divide in party
  - leftists see NEP as heresy
  - NEP creates new "class enemies" (NEPmen, kulaks)



Figure 15: The NEPman

## Five Year Plan

## Debating Industrialization Policy

1. Nikolay Bukharin
  - advocated co-development of heavy industry and agriculture
  - proposals:
    - reduce price of manufactures
    - improve terms of trade for agro
2. Yevgeniy Probrzhenskiy
  - advocated heavy industrialization, at expense of agriculture
  - proposals:
    - surplus extraction over taxation
    - stack terms of trade against agriculture (higher consumer goods prices, low grain prices)

*Discussion:*

Who won this debate, and why?



Figure 16: Impossible?

<b>Policy area</b>	<b>New Economic Policy</b>	<b>Five Year Plan</b>
<i>Agriculture</i>	Grain taxation	Collectivization
<i>Heavy industry</i>	Nationalization	Nationalization
<i>Light industry</i>	De-nationalization	Nationalization
<i>Private property</i>	Small private enterprise allowed	Forbidden
<i>Private trade</i>	Permitted	Forbidden
<i>Foreign trade</i>	State monopoly	State monopoly
<i>Banks</i>	State monopoly	State monopoly
<i>Economic goals</i>	Stop economic crisis	Rapid industrialization
<i>Political goals</i>	Maintain party dictatorship	Consolidate Stalin's rule

# NEXT MEETING

*Collectivization, Industrialization, Famine* (Th, Sep. 21)

- Stalin asserts control
- things to consider:
  - what happens when prices, profits become irrelevant, and output targets become everything?
  - was mass famine of 1932-1933 preventable?