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LSEMUN 2026

INTERMEDIATE CRISIS COMMITTEE

The Streets of Petrograd: The Russian Revolution of 1917

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Backroomers - Faiz Naeem, Annika Mishra, Owen Tsai

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Table of Contents

Director's Welcome	3
Introduction to the Team	4
Key Terms	6
Topic Background	8
<i>The February Revolution</i>	8
<i>The Provisional Government</i>	10
<i>The Petrograd Soviet</i>	12
<i>Dual Power</i>	14
<i>Marxism in Russia</i>	15
The State of Russia	18
The Agenda	22
Internal Political Climate	25
Crisis Mechanics	30



Director's Welcome

My name is Leo, and I am the director of LSEMUN 2026's Russian Revolution crisis committee! I am delighted to welcome you all to what will be an eventful few days as we delve into one of the more colourful periods of the early 20th century.

For those of you who are particular fans of historical crisis, we hope the more intimate setting of wartime Petrograd will be a new and challenging setting for you to explore through your characters. For those of you who are fans of military-oriented crises, although we are mostly forfeiting regular military forces, we are looking forward to the various strains of violence you will devise to achieve your goals. Good luck to all of you (and don't forget to write a good security directive!)

Everyone is no doubt aware of the figures of Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, but they merely make up a fraction of the men and women assembled admit the cold and hunger of the capital, to determine the fate of Russia. Among the members of the Petrograd Soviet and Provisional Government are some remarkable personalities, every bit as memorable as the Bolsheviks, and given the turbulent times, each character can at least be assured of a chance of victory.

What I am perhaps looking forward to the most, in this particular crisis, is the simulation of a fascinating historical trajectory. In spring 1917, no one believed the Bolsheviks would win. They were neither the largest left-wing party, not the most popular, and were mocked and scorned by their fellow socialists. When Lenin returned to Russia, he predicted that he and the Bolsheviks would, by the end of the year, either be "swinging from a tree", or in power - and if any bookies were around, the odds they would have offered for the latter must have been very long indeed. And yet, despite the winds of revolution seeming to blow against the Bolsheviks from the beginning of our story, the Russian Revolution is not transition from feudal autocracy to a democratic state, or even to a moderate, democratic, socialist state. Lenin won, and it was his state and his legacy that transformed Russia into the Soviet Union, with the consequences faced across the world and through the 20th century to the present. For those familiar with the gap between February and October, there are so many things that could have, should have, gone differently, where the Bolsheviks go down in history as a bright, but brief spark on the revolutionary stage of history. It is up to you to determine their fate, as well as the fate of all others in Russia. Will the weekend wrap up with history having repeated itself, or will Lenin be swinging from a tree?

I look forward to meeting you all, and I cannot wait to get started.

Kind regards,
Leo



Introduction to the Team

Assistant Crisis Director – Petar Petrov

Greetings everyone! My name's Petar, and I am thrilled to be Assistant Crisis Director for you in this year's LSEMUN. I've been part of MUN for the better part of 7 years now, and it's been an eventful journey to say the least. Between a number of specialised committees that I got used to both chairing and delegating over the years, I did also develop a soft spot for crisis, though I admit, it does at times feel like I need to do more of it. For the past two years, I've been a delegate and a backroomer at LSE's crisis committees, both years doing something Russian-related. As such, I will be happily continuing the tradition this year by helping Leo run the Russian Revolution. As always with these things, it's been great fun to build this committee (you really do learn all kinds of random things writing character guides), so I hope you enjoy it.

Frontroom Chair – Rue Park

Hey guys! 안녕하세요! I have a life outside of MUN but I'm incredibly excited to welcome you to this committee. I've done over 35 conferences but by like the 10th I am still reaching a point of increasing returns. I hope to see you guys soon!

Frontroom Chair – Robin Haller

Here is the timeline of my life with the important stuff:

- 2005 - I was born on a cold December day in New York to parents of Swiss and Japanese descent.
- 2010 - I lost my first tooth to much consternation and melancholy whilst biting into a candied apple.
- 2017 - While pursuing the great sport of ball hockey, my face was the unintentional victim of a wayward hockey stick forcing me from the field into the hospital for stitches. The damage was immeasurable.
- 2020 - Knowing that I would become the annoying politics student that I am, I decided to join MUN during 9th grade on a whim and have never looked back.

Backroomer – Faiz Naeem

Hey everyone, I'm very excited to be your backroomer for this crisis! I've been doing MUN for just under a couple of years now, and this is my second time backrooming. I'm looking forward to seeing the strategy of delegates in how they deal with the crisis and - more importantly - seeing the chaos that ensues.



Backroomer – Annika Mishra

Hello, my name is Annika, and I'm super excited to be part of the team for this crisis! I've been doing MUN for about 8 years now and don't intend to stop anytime soon. I love the dynamic and highly adaptable nature of crisis committees, and I look forward to seeing you guys soon & all the chaos you bring to the Russian Revolution!

Backroomer – Owen Tsai

Hi, I'm Owen, and I'm a final year PPE student at UCL. I've been doing MUN for 3 years now, and this is the first, and perhaps the only time I will be involved in Crisis in a MUN conference. I intend on making it a blast for myself, my team and especially for all of you delegates - of course, a lot of that will be up to what you come up with during LSEMUN. See you there!



Key Terms

Term	Definition
Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP)	Formed in 1898, it was one of Russia's earliest revolutionary movements/groups, and in 1903, it split into two different factions: the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks (Thatcher, 2007).
Socialist Revolutionary Party (SRs)	The largest Russian political party in terms of support during the revolutionary years (Smith, 2011). Primarily, they gathered support across the youth and peasantry who sought democracy and transformation of the countryside (Smith, 2011).
Bolsheviks	Far-left faction of the RSDLP led by Vladimir Lenin, which split from the Mensheviks at the Second Party Congress in 1903 (Lankina, 2022). They favoured a closed party system consisting of and run by professional revolutionaries and supported the idea that a dictatorship was needed to accommodate and accelerate the transition to a socialist society, thus placing importance on the working class from which it drew its support from (Lankina, 2022).
Mensheviks	Faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party which split from Lenin's Bolsheviks at the Second Party Congress in 1903 (Garcia, 1985). Compared to the Bolsheviks, they were less radical and favoured an open socialist party that would be governed democratically (Garcia, 1985).
Russian Provisional Government	Temporary authority formed by members of the Duma in the wake of the February Revolution (Katkov, 1997). It was only supposed to be a temporary government that would rule Russia until the Constituent Assembly decided on a permanent government later (Katkov, 1997).
Bloody Sunday	On Sunday, 22nd of January 1905, over 100 unarmed demonstrators, led by Father Gapon, marched peacefully to the Winter Palace to present a list of complaints about better working conditions in factories and demanding better treatment (Figes, 2014). When they advanced closer to the palace, while some soldiers fired warning shots into the air, others panicked and fired into the crowd of protestors (Figes, 2014). About 200 people were killed, and 800 were wounded as a result. This was the immediate trigger for the 1905 Revolution (Figes, 2014).
April Theses	Vladimir Lenin expressed his ideas for Russia's future upon his return to the country in April 1917 (Lenin, 1917). He called for the provisional government to be overthrown and replaced



	with communist working class leadership. They were published in the newspaper publication 'Pravda' on April 7th (Lenin, 1917).
Cadets	A political group (Cadet was an acronym for Constitutional Democrats) that wanted Russia to become a democratic republic governed by a constitution and an elected parliament (Tyrkova-Williams, 1953). They were hence at odds with the Bolsheviks who wanted a communist government led by the proletariat. Their main support came from professional workers and the bourgeois (Tyrkova-Williams, 1953).
Dual Power	Refers to the two governments that Russia had following the February Revolution which were the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet (Hasegawa, 2017).
Duma	The Russian legislature from 1905-17 established by Tsar Nicholas II after he agreed to allow the formation of a national legislature after the uprising of 1905 (Kovalev and Kulik, 2017).
Petrograd Soviet	Representative body of the city's (the capital of Russia at the time; now Saint Petersburg) workers and soldiers was established in March 1917 (Figes, 2026). During the February Revolution, the members of the Petrograd Soviet declared themselves to be the government of Russia but found out they were competing for the position with the Russian Provisional Government (Figes, 2026).
Proletariat	Refers to the working class/workers (namely in the industrial sector) "in a constant struggle against the bourgeoisie" (Ruth, 2022).
Bourgeois or "Burzhui" (colloquial)	The "capitalists," hated by the working class and blamed for the country's poor economic condition (Kingston-Mann, 2008). This hatred was employed by Lenin to ultimately inspire a bottom-up revolt (Kingston-Mann, 2008).
Soviets ("councils" in Russian)	In the early 20th century, Soviets were governing bodies that were similar to labour unions and mainly existed on the local level where they made collective policy decisions for their respective regions (Rigby, 2008). The idea of the Soviets was popular amongst various socialist parties such as the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries (Rigby, 2008).



Topic Background

The February Revolution

In February 1917, the people of Russia had suffered for two and a half years of gruelling war, and in the streets of Petrograd, the situation was turning increasingly grim as the snow continued to fall and the temperatures continued to plummet (Figes, 2014). Food and fuel shortages had long become a recurring part of life in the capital of Petrograd (modern day St Petersburg), but the severe winter of 1916-17 was rapidly sapping any lingering support (Figes, 1996).

The huge sums required for Russia's continued participation in the First World War plunged Russia into economic woe (Figes, 2014). Having exhausted revenue through taxation, foreign loans, and war bonds, the government elected to print more paper money (ibid.). Breaking from the gold standard, between the summer of 1914 and the end of 1916, the amount of paper roubles in circulation increased by over 600%, leading to predictable inflation in essential goods (ibid.). Even worse, price increases were not matched by increases in wages for the urban workforce, so real pay has declined steadily across all economic classes (Cliff, 1986). The poor workers are starving, the middle class are struggling to make ends meet, and the rich capitalists are having to shut down their factories due to a lack of fuel (Figes, 2014).

However, even for those with money, there is less and less food entering the capital (Hasegawa, 2017). Out in the countryside, the widespread conscription of the peasantry into the army combined with the relegation and dysfunction of the civilian train network in favour of essential military services, has led to severe scarcities of food, fuel, clothes, and other essentials (Figes, 2014). Large estates in the countryside are suffering from a lack of labour, as agricultural workers have migrated to the cities, or were handed a rifle and a uniform and told to go and shoot some Germans (ibid.). Any available grain is diverted to the eight million men on the front lines, rots in train carriages before it can be transported to Petrograd, or never even reaches the market - the peasants refusing to sell their produce for worthless paper currency now suffering from runaway inflation (ibid.). This combination of inflation and scarcity means that, for those in the cities, the supply of the basic goods necessary for survival is irregular and dysfunctional at best and non-existent at worst, with catastrophic humanitarian and political consequences (Cliff, 1986).

To make matters worse, the men appointed to deal with these crises and run the country have been routinely mocked and scorned for their incompetence (Lyubin, 2017). Ministers have been appointed based on blanket favouritism and loyalty to the royal family - some ministers last only months before being replaced, and even among those who stick around, none appear to be skilled at running their various



portfolios, as well as making no effort to alleviate the people's suffering (Figes, 2014). The Duma, the Russian parliament, has tried to push back against the incompetence of the ministry, but are largely powerless to act due to the limits imposed on them by the Tsar (ibid.). To put it mildly, all of this had led to an upswell of opposition – from all classes – against the reign of Tsar Nicholas II, the scion of the Romanov dynasty that has ruled Russia since 1613 (ibid.). From empty bellies to military defeat, everyone had a reason to hate the Tsar.

Things finally reached a boiling point on the 23rd of February – International Women's Day (Gatrell, 2015). The women of Petrograd, who had spent the freezing winter waiting days and days in line for enough bread to feed their family took to the streets to air their grievances (Figes, 2014). However, seemingly spontaneously, these women went around to all the factories and demanded that the men come and join them and were largely successful (ibid.). Combined with a sudden thaw in the freezing temperatures, by that afternoon, there were hundreds of thousands of protestors on the streets, and major industries were shutting down (Gatrell, 2015).

The military was largely unprepared to meet this threat (Stone, 2015). The garrison in Petrograd was crammed into overcrowded barracks and mostly consisted of husbands and wounded troops from the front line, with little appetite to stick with the regime (Figes, 2014). Many of the Petrograd garrison had no interest in putting down the protests, and many downright sympathised with the people (Gatrell, 2015). When the Tsar, currently at military headquarters, ordered the protests to be put down, and a few loyal regiments fired on the crowd (killing dozens of people), but this only radicalised the rest of soldiers even further (ibid.). On the 27th of February, the Petrograd garrison mutinied on a massive scale – roughly 25,000 soldiers joined the protestors in the streets, while only a couple of thousand remained loyal to the regime (ibid.). Seizing the initiative, the leaders of the various socialist parties within Petrograd convened at the Tauride Palace and declared the formation of the **Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies** to represent the workers and soldiers of the city (Hasegawa, 2017).

With the situation becoming increasingly anarchistic, the Russian Duma decided to act (Figes, 2014). Although the Tsar had dismissed them, many members were determined not to let the capital slip into anarchy, and so also on the 27th of February, they gathered at the Tauride Palace to decide what to do (Gatrell, 2015). This led to the formation of the Temporary Committee of Duma Members, acting in a quasi-official capacity, taking authority as the last vestiges of tsarist authority in Petrograd disintegrated (ibid.). This Committee would eventually become the **Provisional Government of Russia**, claiming to be the legitimate governing authority upon the deposition of the Tsar (ibid.).

With the disorder in the capital so great, the Russian military now believed that unless the Tsar was removed from power, the anarchy would make maintaining the



war effort impossible (Stone, 2015). All Russian senior generals agreed that, for the sake of the nation, their commander-in-chief had to resign (Getrell, 2015). Tsar Nicholas, who had been trying to return to Petrograd but whose train had been halted by mutinous soldiers, saw the writing on the wall and agreed to abdicate (Figes, 2014). Although he named his brother as his successor, the very next day, that brother signed his own abdication, bringing 300 years Romanov rule to an end (Getrell, 2015).

With the downfall of the monarchy, this leaves the fate of Russia and her people in the hands of the Provisional Government, the Petrograd Soviet, and the men and women therein. The destiny of millions of people and perhaps even the world is in their hands, amid the chaos on the cold, icy, and perilous streets of Petrograd.

The Provisional Government

The Provisional Government was formed from the ashes of the old State Duma, which itself has only been around since 1906 (Keep, 1955). Despite being dissolved by Nicholas on the eve of his abdication, the Duma continued to sit in a quasi-official capacity, and so most of the senior leadership were already assembled when Nicholas abdicated - two of their members bore witness to him signing the abdication document and carried the news back to Petrograd (ibid.). Recognising that the capital could collapse into total anarchy at any moment, the Duma reorganised itself into the Provisional Government to serve as stewards of the state until a new political constitution can be drafted for Russia (Bagchi, 2018). However, they have rolled back the most autocratic parts of the Tsarist state; there is now total freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and abolishment of all legal restrictions based on religion, class, or race (Bagchi, 2018).

In its first few weeks of existence, the Provisional Government has been recognised by foreign powers and the Russian military and has enjoyed genuine widespread support among the Russian people (Katkov, 1997). News of the fall of the Tsar and the elevation of men to the government based on at least some kind of merit has sparked celebrations across the country (ibid.). Most importantly, the Petrograd Soviet (see below) has entered into a working relationship with the Provisional Government, guaranteeing its survival (although this relationship is largely a one-way street) (Cliff, 1986). Consequently, the government can exercise the levers of state (as dilapidated and ill-functioning as they are) without significant internal opposition, and its decrees can be expected to be followed across Russia (ibid.). However, the men now running Russia have stewardship of a badly battered nation, exhausted from the ravages of war and years of mismanagement, and with the Tsar out of the way, they can expect to bear the brunt of future discontent from the masses (Katkov, 1997).



As the government was born from the old Duma, the membership is uniformly liberal and conservative, dominated by the Kadet, Octoberist, and Progressive parties, with a smattering of moderate socialist representatives (Wade, 2005). Leading the government is **Prince Lvov**, acting as Prime Minister and Interior Minister. A liberal noble, Lvov has taken on multiple roles in an attempt to salvage the deteriorating war effort, most notably as head of the All-Russia Union of *Zemstvos*, local councils out in the countryside, and leader of *Zemgor*, a large NGO for wounded soldiers, making him a prudent choice for the role (Lyubin, 2017). Other key members are Foreign Minister **Pavel Milukyov** and Minister for Justice **Alexander Kerensky**. Kerensky is particularly influential, as he also sits inside the Petrograd Soviet, making him a key link between the two bodies (ibid.).

The Provisional Government - Key Ministers		
Role	Name	Party
Prime Minister	Prince Lvov	Kadet
Foreign Minister	Pavel Milyukov	Kadet
Minister of Justice	Alexander Kerensky	SR
Minister of Finance	Mikhail Tereschchenko	Octoberist
Minister of Agriculture	Andrei Shingarev	SR
Minister for War and the Navy	Alexander Guchkov	Octoberist
Minister of Trade and Industry	Aleksandr Konovalov	Progressive
Minister of Transport	Nikolai Nekrasov	Progressive
Minister of Education	Alexander Manuilov	Kadet
Minister of Welfare	Sofia Panina	Kadet
City Commissar for Petrograd	Dmitry Shakhovskoy	Kadet

Given the size of the Petrograd Soviet, the Provisional Government has since moved to the Mariinsky Palace as their main base of operations.



The Petrograd Soviet

The concept of workers' "soviets" as both organisational and political units was first developed during the 1905 Revolution in Russia. Initially a combination of strike committees and political forums, soviets were self-organised councils of workers convened around economic units – individual factories and workshops elected their own soviets, usually formed of well-respected and charismatic workers (Kayali, 2013). Soviets were initially a pragmatic step for the working class to effectively mobilise and combine their strengths; individual factories would elect representatives, who would then go off to debate strategy with other factory representatives, and in turn the soviet would become the supreme decision-making organ of the labour movement (ibid.). In 1905–6, the wider revolution ultimately failed, but the memory of the soviets was still a powerful and active presence in the minds of the working class (Ascher, 1998). For the left-wing parties, the soviets also had a strong ideological element – as they were composed of elected representatives of workers, a soviet could claim to have more legitimacy than any “democratic” bourgeois government (Kayali, 2013).

Consequently, with the chaos in Petrograd and the downfall of the Tsar, both the left-wing political parties in Petrograd and the workers and soldiers out on the street did not gravitate towards the Duma, but instead on forming the Petrograd Soviet. Although the left-wing leaders did not anticipate the Tsar falling so rapidly, they moved quickly to stay one step ahead of events (Cliff, 1986). On the afternoon of the 27th of February, tens of thousands of people gathered outside the Tauride Palace, looking for leadership (ibid.). Inside, several socialist leaders, along with left-wing Duma members, announced the creation of the Soviet of Workers Deputies, and called for workers and soldiers to elect their own representatives (Walsh, 1950).

Immediately after forming, the Soviet decreed one order of supreme importance. Looking to restore military discipline in Petrograd before the Russian generals looked to restore order by force, on the 1st of March the Soviet issued **Order No.1** (Trotsky, 1930). This was a command for all mutinous soldiers to be placed back under command of their officers – but with major strings attached (ibid.). Officers were to be disarmed, and if they issued any order that did not align with the wishes of the Soviet, those orders were to be disregarded (ibid.). Finally, every military unit was required to elect a committee of representatives from the lower ranks, to act as political representatives (Browder, 1961). In this way, the military garrison of Petrograd was placed firmly under the control of the Soviet (ibid.).

In practice, the Petrograd Soviet is a large and unwieldy body, composed of hundreds of workers and soldiers' deputies, with more showing up every day as more factories and regiments elect deputies to go and represent them (Cliff, 1986). Anticipating this, the leaders who gathered on the 27th of February also created the self-selected



Executive Committee of the Soviet, a streamlined body consisting of socialist leaders who would make decisions on behalf of the thousands of workers and soldiers crammed into the Tauride Palace (ibid.). This Executive Committee included two representatives from every major socialist party, including the SRs, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, and Popular Socialists (aside from the Menshevik-Internationalists, who only have one) (Garcia, 1985). Although rivalries and personal animosities run deep between these factions, the Soviet is intended to be a free and open congress of all leftist leaders, to put aside their differences and work together (Cliff, 1986).

Among the key leaders are **Nikolai Chkheidze** (Menshevik), who serves as Chairman of the Soviet (Garcia, 1985). His Menshevik colleagues, Matvey Skobelev, and Irakli Tsereteli, serve as the Vice-Chairman and the main negotiator with the Provisional Government (ibid.). The Socialist Revolutionaries are led by an informal triumvirate of **Victor Chernov**, **Maria Spiridonova**, and **Andrei Argunov**, while the Popular Socialists are represented by **Vera Figner** and **Aleksey Peshekhonov** (ibid.). The smaller, but more radical, Menshevik Internationalists are led by **Julius Martov**, while the Bolshevik party is dominated by the recently returned **Vladimir Lenin**. **Leon Trotsky**, although aligned with the Bolsheviks, has historically been an independent figure, looking to unite the various left-wing factions (Cliff, 1986). Crucially, one major act of the government has been a general amnesty for political crimes (Bagchi, 2018). Many socialist leaders have been stranded abroad, facing arrest and imprisonment should they return, but the amnesty means all the major leaders have been able to return to Russia to take control of the situation (ibid.).

Key Members of the Petrograd Soviet				
Popular Socialists	Mensheviks	SRs	Menshevik Internationalists	Bolsheviks
Aleksey Peshekhonov	Nikolai Chkheidze	Victor Chernov	Julius Martov	Leon Trotsky
Vera Figner	Matvey Skobelev	Maria Spiridonova	Nikolai Sukhanov	Vladimir Lenin
Yakov Kuznetsov	Irakli Tsereteli	Andrei Argunov		Joseph Stalin
	Fyodor Dan	Catherine Breshkovsky		Lev Kamenev
	Lydia Dan	Nikolai Avksentiev		Grigory Zinoviev
		Maxim Gorky		Alexandra Kollantai



Dual Power

The Provisional Government and Petrograd Soviet first formally communicated around midnight on 1 March 1917, when a Soviet delegation crossed the Tauride Palace to meet with the Duma's Temporary Committee (prior to the official formation of the Provisional Government itself) (Trotsky, 1930). Both sides agreed on an urgent need to restore order and prevent the capital from slipping into anarchy, which would only bring the Russian generals imposing order through force (Cliff 1986). The Soviet agreed to support the Provisional Government as long as they abided by the following provisions:

1. *An immediate amnesty for all political prisoners;*
2. *The immediate granting of freedom of speech, press and assembly;*
3. *The immediate abolition of all restrictions based on class, religion and nationality;*
4. *Immediate preparations for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, elected on the four-tail suffrage (universal, direct, secret and equal), to determine the form of government and the constitution of the country;*
5. *The abolition of all the police bodies and, in their place, the creation of a people's militia with elected officers responsible to the organs of local self-government;*
6. *Elections to these organs on equal, direct, secret, and universal suffrage*
7. *A guarantee that the military units having taken part in the revolution would neither be disarmed nor sent to the Front;*

These were concessions the Provisional Government were willing to make; many of the Duma already agreed with several of these principles (Cliff, 1986). But, given the raw street power the Petrograd Soviet could muster, it was perfectly possible for them to push aside the government and rule directly if they wished; to smother the burgeoning Provisional Government in its crib.

However, the Soviet have their own ideological and pragmatic reasons for supporting the government (Trotsky, 1930). Ideologically, this was a necessary step in the Marxist-ordained revolution (see below), but more immediately, maintaining the Provisional Government would allow the Soviet to continue organising and mobilising, adopting more of an oversight position while the government handled the day-to-day business of running the country and the war (ibid.). Many inside the soviet also believe the government will make a useful scapegoat for the many unpopular policies that would surely be necessary to adopt (ibid.).

Consequently, the Provisional Government exists at the discretion of the Petrograd Soviet (Garcia, 1985). The soviet has an effective monopoly on force within Petrograd, being the direct representatives of the soldiers, and can muster additional muscle from the workers of Petrograd (Cliff, 1986). The Provisional Government, on the other hand, has no reliable means of enforcing its decrees without the support of the soviet (Walsh, 1950). However, this is not to say the



Provisional Government is totally powerless – as long as it enjoys the support of the soviet, it is perfectly capable of going about its business to address the many problems facing Russia (ibid.). It should also be noted that the government tends to hold similar views and have been colleagues within the Duma for years, and all know and respect each other relatively well, while the soviet’s Executive Committee is composed of multiple leftist parties, many of whom do not trust one another (Browder, 1961).

At the start of the crisis, the respective roles of each body in this system of dual power have solidified. The Provisional Government sees itself as the temporary guardian of the state until a new order can be established, to be decided by convening the Constituent Assembly (Cliff, 1986). It maintains the legal framework of the Russian state, is committed to the war effort, and aims to tackle the problems facing Russia using the limited powers at its disposal.

The Petrograd Soviet, on the other hand, sees itself as the legitimate representative of the workers and soldiers of Russia (Garcia, 1985). The soviet controls key industrial sectors, including the railways, telegraphs, heavy industry, and war industries (Hasegawa, 2017). It also exercises direct oversight of the Russian military (ibid.). With this power, they have agreed to support the Provisional Government and enforce its decrees, so long as the government sticks to the promises they made listed above (Cliff, 1986).

Marxism in Russia

To fully understand the Petrograd Soviet’s support for the Provisional Government, it is important to understand the ideological beliefs underpinning the decisions of the left-wing leadership, all of whom are well-educated socialist thinkers. To cut a very long story short, the following is an oversimplified summary of Marxism to explain why the Soviet has so far chosen not to directly reach out for power. According to Marx’s analysis of history, human civilisation first had to pass from a feudal stage to a capitalist stage, and only then to a communist stage of economics and government (Wolf & Leopold, 2025).

This was all easily applicable in the present in the West, which had long since undergone widespread democratic and industrial shifts from a feudal to a capitalist society, but Russia was, by comparison, lagging far behind (Harding & Taylor, 1983). The vast majority of the Russian population at this point in time are peasants, and Russian industry is sparse and undeveloped – this is especially problematic when the urban working class, created by the rise of industry, are meant to be the core revolutionary class Marx identified as the agents of a socialist revolution (ibid.). The country was, in essence, still heavily feudalistic; the abolition of serfdom had only occurred a generation earlier, and the Witte boom of the late 1800s had still not



brought Russia up to par economically with the rest of Europe (ibid.). As a backward, overwhelmingly agrarian country, according to Marxist analysis, Russia first has to undergo a “bourgeois-democratic revolution,” the first step of a “two-stage revolution” to hand power to the capitalists, who then would bring about a period of industrial development under parliamentary democracy necessary for a future transition to socialism (the second revolution) (Wolf & Leopold, 2025).

Without this period of bourgeois control, there was a strong belief that an urban socialist revolution would be starved or crushed by a bourgeois or peasant-led counter-revolution if it did not first secure the stability of a bourgeois state (Harding & Taylor, 1983). Leaders within the Soviet all knew the history of previous European revolutions (1789, 1848, and 1871) and feared that taking power too early would trigger a reactionary counter-revolution (Trotsky, 1930). They also believed that the masses were too illiterate and politically inexperienced to govern. Supporting a liberal government allowed the masses to go through the “school of democracy” within a framework of political freedom (Harding & Taylor, 1983).

The Theory of Permanent Revolution

The exact length of this period of capitalist development is vague and unclear, and so is a source of division. The “moderate” socialists believe a long period of development is needed and insist on the collaboration of the propertied classes (the bourgeoisie) in government, and so support collaboration with the Provisional Government (Garcia, 1985). However, the more “radical” socialists, especially influenced by the thinking of Leon Trotsky and his theory of **Permanent Revolution**, believe the underdeveloped Russian capitalist class are too weak to lead the democratic revolution (Trotsky, 1930). They believe, with support from industrial states abroad (who will surely be undergoing their own socialist revolutions in the near future) the working class can carry out its revolution earlier than in advanced Western countries by bypassing the decades of capitalist development (ibid.).

Consequently, this has led to a divide forming across party lines between “moderates” (including the Popular Socialists and Mensheviks) and the “radicals” (Bolsheviks) (Garcia, 1985). The SRs are heavily divided on the issue, although no parties are unanimously “moderate” or “radical.” (ibid.). In practical terms, this means that the “moderate” socialists are committed to supporting the Provisional Government and want to see it succeed, whereas the “radicals” want to dispose of the government and allow the soviet to rule alone as the supreme instrument of government (Browder, 1961). This has already proven to be a heated topic of debate with the Soviet’s Executive Committee, and within each party, and has triggered further debates about exporting the revolution abroad to gain support from industrial countries (vital according to the theory of Permanent Revolution) or to consolidate their gains as they are (Figes, 2026).



Socialism and the Great War

The outbreak of the Great War led to a great crisis among all socialist parties in Europe (Papayanis, 1973). All acknowledged that a great power conflict was an imperialist war that did nothing but lead to the deaths of millions of the working class (ibid.). However, far from opposing the war, many socialist parties, for a variety of reasons, elected to support their national war efforts, fearing the ramifications of defeat. (Sassoon, 2000). For example, in Russia, many socialists believe defeat and occupation by the autocratic Kaiser would seriously diminish the prospects of overthrowing the decaying Tsarist monarchy (Papayanis, 1973). Many more were also proud Russians, and in the end could not put class interests ahead of national interests (Garcia, 1985).

Consequently, this has led to another divide between the socialists: *defensists*, who support continuing the war, and *internationalists*, who are unwilling to put national interests ahead of the international socialist revolution; as mentioned above, many socialists believed a revolution in Russia was doomed unless paired with a continent-wide revolution (Garcia, 1982). The more moderate parties tend to be more *defensists*, while the more radical parties are *internationalists* (ibid.). The Menshevik party has particularly suffered from this schism (see further below) (Garcia, 1985).



The State of Russia

The Empire

In the aftermath of the revolution, the pillars of the old regime—the imperial bureaucracy, the police, and the Church - have collapsed almost overnight. In the provinces, the old administrative apparatus has vanished as local governors and land captains were removed, often replaced by ad hoc public committees and local soviets (Wade, 2005; Katkov, 1997). Central authority is being increasingly ignored as local communities, ethnic groups, and even villages declared themselves "autonomous republics," leading to a proliferation of local powers (*mnogavlastie*) that the central government have so far proven powerless to control (Wade, 2005). However, despite critical bread shortages in the cities and the ongoing transport crisis, a nationwide period of national rejoicing has followed the revolution, characterized by crowds destroying tsarist emblems, statues of the tsars, and imperial portraits across the country (Katkov, 1997).

Notably, urban areas are faring worse than the peasantry. With so many of their number conscripted for the war, and no attempt made by the Tsar's ministers to requisition grain, the peasants are eating better than ever before (Wade, 2005). A good number have reverted to subsistence farming, with less pressure to grow surpluses.

The Provinces

At the time of the revolution, the Russian Empire is a vast multi-ethnic state covering one-sixth of the globe (Sunny, 2000). The empire's territories are home to numerous non-Russian peoples, including Ukrainians, Belorussians, Finns, Poles, Georgians, Armenians, Azeris, and various Muslim groups in Central Asia (*ibid.*).

However, by the start of 1917, the Empire had already lost significant "rich slices" of its western territory to the Central Powers due to setbacks on the Eastern Front during the war (Lyubin, 2017). All of Poland and parts of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia (the Baltic region), Ukraine, and Belorussia are under German or Austro-Hungarian occupation (*ibid.*). The remaining empire stretches from the Grand Duchy of Finland in the northwest to the Caucasus in the south, and across Siberia and Central Asia to the Pacific, still a huge amount of territory - but the grip of the central government on these territories is rapidly weakening (Gatrell, 1995).

The collapse of the Romanov dynasty has triggered waves of nationalist movements across the Empire (Debo, 1983). In Ukraine, a movement has formed around the nationalist parliament that came together within days of the abdication, who seek cultural freedoms, political autonomy, and radical land reform within a federal



Russian state (Sunny, 2000). Finland, one of the most autonomous parts of the Empire, have renounced fealty to Petrograd, arguing that since the Tsar (who ruled as the Grand Duke of Finland) had abdicated, sovereignty should return to the Finnish parliament (Debo, 1983). The reaction in Transcaucasia is mixed, with Armenians looking to stay close to Russia and Georgia and Azerbaijan expressing more nationalist sympathies (ibid.). The Baltic States are also witnessing a rise in nationalist left-wing movements, seeking greater freedom and self-determination (Sunny, 2000). So far, the Provisional Government has not addressed any demands, only reiterating their duty as stewards to preserve the unity of the Russian state.

The War

By early 1917 most of Europe is in the midst of the Great War, and has already claimed almost ten million lives (Cohen, 1999). Russia is currently fighting Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire (the Central Powers), fighting on the Eastern Front, while Russia's allies, Britain and France, fight on the Western Front (Lyubin, 2017). The United States of America is speculated to enter the war on the side of Russia and her allies in a matter of days (ibid.). With 1916 having gone by without a successful breakthrough on either side, morale across all armies is low (Cohen, 1999).

In the aftermath of the successful Brusilov Offensive in 1916, some of the pressure was taken off the battered Russian army, but by 1917 Russia's war effort is on the verge of disintegrating into pieces (Lyubin, 2017). By the end of 1916, Russia had lost approximately 5,700,000 men, with 3,600,000 of those being dead or seriously wounded (ibid.). The army suffers from a shortage of weaponry, particularly machine guns and artillery shells (Gatrell, 2015). Enemy troops sit in Russian territory, as the front line currently stretches 1,000 miles from the Baltic Sea in the north to the borders of Romania in the south (ibid.). All around, the Russian army in 1917 is in very poor fighting shape.

In addition, the professional officer corps before the war was largely wiped out by 1915 and replaced by a new generation of lower-ranking officers who often sympathized with the ordinary soldiers (Lyubin, 2017). This, combined with the fact that political agitators were often sent to the front and punished, where they simply propagandised their fellow soldiers, has politicised the army, as soldiers increasingly prioritise peace, land, and the freedom to return home over military objectives (Cliff, 1986).

Foreign Relations

The Allies and the Central Powers both consider the Provisional Government as the legitimate government of Russia (Katkov, 1997). The British, French, Japanese, and Germans have embassies in Petrograd, in addition to the United States (ibid.).



Britain, France, and Japan are determined to keep Russia in the war, whereas the Germans are eager to conduct a separate peace with the new government (Carley, 1989). Their ambassadors are willing to open their doors to any ministers to discuss affairs of state.

However, the recognition the embassies extend to the Petrograd Soviet is murky (Katkov, 1997). While they recognise the support and popularity of the soviet, and the power it holds over the government, they have not codified their relationship with the soviet or made any attempt at communication.

Petrograd

The city of Petrograd will be the main location for this crisis, and a custom Google map will be shared to help you navigate the city and its key locations (see mechanics section). The city is in a very dire state. Although the political situation has, for now, stabilised, food and fuel are both in very short supply (Gatrell, 2015). Workers are paid in currency made worthless by inflation, and those unemployed are left to starve and freeze in their homes or on the streets (Hasegawa, 2017). There is a thriving black market, for those who have any money left, but it cannot supply the entire city; the estimated population is around two and a half million starving, freezing, angry inhabitants (ibid.).

However cold, hungry, and fractious, Petrograd remains one of the great capitals of Europe and a large city. Hotels, theatres, parks, and restaurants are just some of the amenities that can be found, although the prices are high and the supply of food, heating, and electricity intermittent. Petrograd is also a major centre of industry, and while many factories lay dark and empty, many more continue to produce steel, textiles, and munitions to be shipped to the front.

Locations

As mentioned above, the Provisional Government and Petrograd Soviet reside in the **Mariinsky Palace** and the **Tauride Palace**, respectively (Katkov, 1997). Other key locations include the **Peter and Paul Fortress**, a major fortification and prison, **St Isaac's Cathedral**, a dominant landmark, and the **Winter Palace**, now vacant, former home of the royal family (ibid.). The full list of locations will be available on the custom Google map, and include the location of party headquarters, foreign embassies, and other locations.

The Petrograd Garrison

The commander of the Petrograd Military District is **General Lavr Kornilov**. Kornilov commands a large garrison, as the Tsar transferred thousands of troops into the capital to quell the unrest during the Revolution (Figes, 2014). Many of these troops subsequently deserted and joined the people, but thanks to General Order No.1 they



have returned to something resembling military discipline (Browder, 1961). As the total force is too large for their standard quarters, the Petrograd garrison has been divided into three groups around the city, in addition to the sailors of the **Kronstadt Naval Base** (Figes, 2014).

While virtually all troops are loyal to the soviet, after years of agitation and propagandising the various socialist parties have managed to win over various regiments to their side (Hasegawa, 2017). Each political party will start off with a great deal of influence over a section of the Petrograd garrison, although this influence may wax or wane depending on events elsewhere.

Law and Order

As mentioned in the agreement of dual power, the government has agreed to “*the abolition of all the police bodies and, in their place, the creation of a people's militia with elected officers responsible to the organs of local self-government.*” However, this has to some extent proven as unnecessary, with most of the police self-demobilising during the chaos of the revolution. Municipal control over the city rests in the hands of City Commissar **Dmitry Shakhovskoy**, who controls the remaining police forces to maintain order until a new citizens’ militia can be created (Hasegawa, 2017).

Turf

Each political party has their own territory within Petrograd. Poorer, working-class areas and key industrial sections support the Bolsheviks, SRs, and Mensheviks, while the wealthier areas support the Kadets, Progressives, and Octoberists (Smith, 2011). Your turf represents the main base of support for your political party and will affect most resources factions can muster, in terms of manpower, money, and material. It is also possible for turf to change hands, either as a result of force, intrigue, or changing perception of your party. Your turf is also where your Party HQ is located and where your party newspaper is printed before being distributed throughout the city; turf may also contain particular resources, such as a steel factory or a foreign embassy. The division of turf will be shown on the custom google map. Your turf is not a watertight stronghold - you cannot man every street and alley leading to your territory, nor will everyone in your turf be slavishly loyal to your party. However, you would be wise to take caution when operating in turf that is not your own.



The Agenda

With the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet now wielding power, they are now under significant pressure to begin addressing the social, economic, and political issues that threaten to tear the country apart. Addressing these issues will lead to greater support within both bodies from the relevant demographic; failure will create discontent and anger.

Urban Workforce

The conditions faced in Petrograd are faced by workers in other cities across Russia - critical bread shortages, freezing temperatures, lack of fuel, unemployment, filth, mud, disease, and general misery (Lyubin, 2017). Housing is severely overcrowded; a 1904 survey in Petrograd found an average of sixteen people per apartment, with six people to every room, and this was before the population boom since the start of the war (Wade, 2017). Managers often treat workers like property rather than people, including flogging workers for misdemeanours, conducting degrading body searches, and docking pay for petty infringements like using the toilet during working hours (ibid.). To resolve these issues, the soviet is seen as far more legitimate and popular than the government, and many would prefer to see the soviet rule directly (Hasegawa, 2017). The Mensheviks and Bolsheviks draw most of their support from this class.

Beyond better pay and an eight-hour day (as well as basic human dignity and respectful treatment), more radical workers have begun to demand the election of factory managers and supervisors (Hasegawa, 2017). Workers have already formed their own soviets, but this was to elect representatives to the Petrograd Soviet, not to take control of the operation of factories and industries into their own hands (ibid.). This issue has divided socialist parties, as while they recognise workers' control to be positive in principle, the realities of wartime demand means many fear that without leadership from above, productivity will surely collapse (Hoffmann, 2017).

The Peasantry

Although conditions for much of the peasantry are better off than those in the cities, it's hardly an easy life. Making up over 80% of the population, the peasantry still live in a state of crippling poverty and land shortage, with most land controlled by the gentry, leaving only small plots for them to grow enough food to feed themselves (Gill, 1978). Farming methods remain primitive, utilizing wooden scratch ploughs and manual labor for sowing and threshing (ibid.). Millions of households are unable to feed themselves without falling into debt to local usurers known as "kulaks." (ibid.). The Russian military's scorched-earth policy during retreats has also



delightfully created millions of ragged, starving refugees who drift through the interior, further destabilising rural life (Lyubin, 2017).

The primary peasant demand is the compulsory expropriation of gentry land - the direct seizure and equal redistribution of all gentry, crown, and church land among those who actually worked the land (Gill, 1978). Many peasants have already taken matters into their own hands, evicting land captains and establishing local communes, conducting land reform on the principle of socialisation (ibid.). The SR's, who are by far the most popular party among the peasantry, are eager to expand socialisation of land; their land programme is one of their key goals (Smith, 2011).

In this context, "socialisation" of land means the land is to be taken out of the market and becomes "national property," but its actual management and distribution would be left to the autonomous village communes (Smith, 2011). In contrast, "nationalisation" also means removing land from the market but placing the land under the control of the state (Dupis, 2005). The peasants, unsurprisingly, prefer the former.

The Military

The miserable existence of the average Russian soldier cannot be overstated. On the front, the years of war have bled into one another, until all they can remember is a constant haze of cold, blood, and death, without bullets for their guns and boots for their feet (Lyubin, 2017). Unsurprisingly, after suffering 6 million casualties, and with victory nowhere near the horizon, the primary demand of the Russian soldier is an immediate end to the war (ibid.). The Russian army is not yet in a state of mutinous revolt, nor a state of self-demobilisation, but a combination of low morale, poor supplies, and the politicisation of the rank and file means the Eastern Front could collapse at any time (Stone, 2015).

Soldiers also share similar demands to the urban workforce and the peasantry. Like the workers, soldiers are treated inhumanely by their officers, and demand better treatment and respect; specifically, to be granted their full civil rights when off duty (Lyubin, 2017). In addition, most of the soldiers are effectively peasants in uniform, recently conscripted and handed a rifle and a uniform (Stone, 2015). Consequently, these conscripts want to get out of the army and get back to their villages, to get in on the land reform movement (ibid.).

General Order No.1 has gone some way to restore order in the aftermath of the revolution, but it is unclear if the order applies solely to troops in Petrograd, or the entire army (Browder, 1961). Many politicised regiments at the front have taken this



order to mean the latter, and to the dismay of their generals have already disarmed their shocked officers and proceeded to form soldiers' committees (Stone, 2015).

The senior leadership of the military remains intact as it was prior to the abdication of the Tsar (Stone, 2015). Among the high command, there remains a general consensus to keep fighting the war or at least end the fighting on terms favourable to Russia (ibid.). Given how badly the war was being mismanaged by the Tsar, the generals are content with the Provisional Government as the new central authority and hope they will restore Russia's fortunes in the war (Lyubin, 2017). However, the military leadership are highly distrustful of the soviet, both as a political institution and as a negative influence on military discipline (Stone, 2015). They are already unhappy with Order No.1 and the subsequent democratisation within the army (Browder, 1961).

Currently, the Provisional Government has not yet sought peace negotiations, and is determined to continue the war, seeing it as a key test of their credibility (Stone, 2015). However, addressing the key issues facing the army is essential, as if the army collapses, the Germans will invade Russia and likely depose the Provisional Government, or impose a humiliating surrender treaty.

The Constituent Assembly

We must not forget that the Provisional Government is just that - provisional. Neither the ministers, nor the Petrograd Soviet, initially envisioned the government as anything more than stewards, to govern the country in the build-up to the Constituent Assembly, where a new, permanent, political constitution will be adopted for Russia and all issues of state, and governance will be resolved (Rendle, 2017). In other words, The Constituent Assembly is envisioned as a sovereign national parliament, tasked with determining the country's permanent form of government, drafting its constitution, and providing a legal mandate for the kinds of long-overdue reforms Russia needed that had been blocked by the autocracy of the Tsar (ibid.). As part of their deal with the soviet, the Provisional Government has promised to convene a Constituent Assembly to be elected through "four-tail suffrage," defined as universal, direct, secret, and equal adult suffrage, including women (Figes, 2014). It is intended to be the first fully democratic parliament in Russian history, after centuries of autocratic rule (ibid.).

However, the exact form of the Assembly beyond that of a democratically elected, representative assembly has yet to be determined (Rendle, 2017). It is still unclear how the election will be organised, how electoral boundaries will be drawn, the details of proportional representation, and the logistics for organising voting for millions of soldiers at the Front and millions more dislocated all throughout Russia (Figes, 2014).



Internal Political Climate

Political Parties

Each political party has their own views on the major challenges facing Russia. You will each receive a party guide, viewable only to members of your party, which will go into more detail on your party's beliefs and resources.

Octoberists

The Octoberists are a moderate, liberal, constitutional monarchist party that was founded immediately after the 1905 Revolution (Hutchinson, 1972). Taking some inspiration from the liberal Decembrists revolt in 1825, the Octoberists are staunchly pro-Tsarist and represent a right-wing, anti-revolutionary, liberal constitutionalist approach (Hutchinson, 1972). It should be noted that they are not specifically pro-Tsar; they are just as fed up with Nicholas as everyone else, but they view the continuation of the monarchy – ideally under Nicholas' brother, Grand Duke Mikhail – as essential for the future of the country (Kipp, 1970). As a result, they are closely associated with the royal family.

That being said, they do realise the necessity of a *reformed* monarchy and that a representative body should be vested with genuine power. In the past, working heavily with Sergei Witte and former Prime Minister Stolypin, they argued in favour of a strong parliamentary democracy, holding an elected government to account, while maintaining a strong central executive in the form of the Tsar, as well as holding together as much of the empire as possible, objecting to political autonomy for ethnic minorities (Steinwedel, 2001).

Much of the military leadership supports the Octoberist Party, yet their support system rests upon two groups: nobles who see them as the lesser of the possible evils and those of the upper class who favoured abandoning Tsar Nicholas II and running the war more effectively, but are terrified that too much reform could lead to revolution (Galai, 2004).

Progressive

The Progressive Party was originally founded in 1906 as the Party of Peaceful Renovation by defectors from the left wing of the Octoberists and right wing of the Kadets (Levin, 1973). The party represents a liberal middle position between the more right-wing Octoberist party and centrist Kadets, and as such is in an ideal place to lead the new provisional government, being palatable to all sides (ibid.). Initially, the party was more of a loose coalition known as the “Progressive Bloc” within the Duma, attracting virtually everyone dissatisfied with the running of the war and who believed in much-needed reform to stave off revolution (ibid.). With the fall of the Tsar, the bloc has now stabilised into a formal political party, one of the strongest in the Duma (ibid.).



Many of the leaders of the bloc, including now-Prime Minister Prince Lvov, took the lead in organising private organisations and networks to support the war effort, but the Tsar, in his infinite wisdom, saw these patriotic efforts as a threat to his regime and refused all external assistance (ibid.). As a result, the Progressives already have a pretty good idea of what it was going to take to get Russia out of the hole dug by the Tsar and his terrible ministers and have connections across all of Russian society (ibid.).

Ideologically, the party represents the middle stream of conservative liberalism, offering a palatable middle ground between the liberal Kadets and the conservative Octobrists. Industrialists, intelligentsia and the upper middle classes are the mainstay of the party's support, who are determined to stave off revolution from below. Whilst they aren't against abolishing the monarchy in principle, the Duma members' interactions with the Tsar have been nothing but sources of anger and mind-numbing frustration, and they would prefer the Duma to manage the rest of the war before reinstalling a monarch.

Kadets (Constitutional Democrats)

The Kadet Party is the largest in the Provisional Government and has been one of the most prominent political parties during the last few years. The Kadets were founded at the height of the 1905 Revolution, forming from centre-left and centre-right coalitions, occupying a more radical, nationalist and democratic platform than many contemporary bourgeois parties. Of all the Duma parties, they have been the most vocal about demanding deep-seated change. While the Octoberists and Progressives pushed for reforms in response to the immediate mismanagement of the war, the Kadets pushed for wider reform for the future prosperity of Russia after the war. They do not see the Provisional Government as an emergency stopgap; indeed, they would very much like to see this style of democratic government confirmed by the Constituent Assembly.

The Kadets are a liberal, nationalist party that supports the continuation of the war and a united Russia; with their platform modelled on many liberal parties in Europe, they have a more internationalist leaning, drawing from the middle classes, liberal members of the intelligentsia, and the bourgeoisie, all seeking to ditch the feudal trappings of Tsardom and modernise the Russian state under capitalism. However, as a "big-tent" party, this rough goal is the one thing they all collectively agree on. There are disagreements in the party over its support for a Constitutional Monarchy or a Republic, the extent of regional autonomy for the provinces, and land reform.

Popular Socialists/Trudoviks

The most moderate of the left-wing parties, the Popular Socialists emerged from the broader Trudovik (Labour Group) movement, a loosely knit agrarian party advocating for the peasantry which became a significant force in the first Duma in 1906 (Figes, 2014). Their rise was facilitated by the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), who decided to boycott the elections to the First Duma (ibid.). In the absence of the SRs, the Trudoviks



became the "obvious choice" for peasants seeking radical land reform, and indeed many Trudoviks were once members of the SRs, disillusioned with the terrorism and radicalisation of that movement. While the label of "Trudovik" continues to be applied, by 1917 their platform has now been taken up within the Soviet by the Popular Socialists (Mahowald, 1993). It is tricky to draw a line between the Trudoviks and Popular Socialists; one can still find references to the Trudoviks as a separate organisation in 1917 (Mahowald, 1993). However, the Popular Socialists were much more of a centralised political organ, and so these two groups (which represent almost entirely the same set of views) have been merged under their name. However, with the reemergence of the SRs into national politics, the main base for the Popular Socialists has shifted away from the rank and file of the peasantry to petty members of the bourgeoisie, including clerks, shopkeepers, and peasants primarily concerned with material conditions, rather than radical revolution (Mahowald, 1993).

Make no mistake, the Popular Socialists are still a socialist party and do support radical reforms such as the redistribution of land, but they are strict adherents to Marx's historical analysis. They generally favour cooperation with the propertied classes to stabilise a "bourgeois" revolution before transitioning to socialism, and as a result are strong supporters of the Provisional Government (Mahowald, 1993). Whilst among the smaller socialist parties, they still have an equal seat at the table and have better relations with the Duma parties than any other socialist party (Mahowald, 1993).

Mensheviks

The Menshevik and Bolshevik parties were originally one party, the Russian Social and Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), splitting into the current parties in 1903 (Garcia, 1985). In light of revolutionary victory, many are calling for reunification of the parties, but most accept that in their current differing beliefs that is not possible (ibid.). Ideologically, the Mensheviks are a traditionally Marxist party that is centred around the urban proletariat; they share many of the same views as the Bolsheviks, but a combination of personality clashes, and disagreement over tactics and a handful of major ideological issues means they are now rivals for the support of the Russian working class (Figes, 2014).

Although larger than the Bolshevik party (less restrictive membership requirements were another reason for the split), the Mensheviks are divided over continuing the war (Figes, 2014). However, this is less of an ideological question for them – pragmatically, losing the war to Germany would be disastrous, yet many recognise it would be political suicide to keep up the fight for long (ibid.).

Where the party is unified is in the belief that there must be a bourgeois-democratic revolution, which means that most of the party is inclined to support the Provisional Government (Garcia, 1985).



Menshevik Internationalists

As mentioned previously, the Mensheviks were heavily divided on the war, suffering more than most. Martov, one of the leading voices of the RSDLP, was the strongest voice of the internationalist faction, arguing against Russia's participation in the conflict, creating a fatal breach between him and his colleagues (Garcia, 1985). Consequently, Martov and a small group of followers formed the Menshevik-Internationalists, repudiating the war as an imperialist venture and campaigning for a general peace (ibid.). While technically a faction within the Menshevik party, the Menshevik-Internationalists are effectively a separate political unit run by Martov, voting separately from the main party in the soviet, publishing their own newspaper, and operating from their own (modest) headquarters (ibid.). For personal and tactical reasons (the split is not near so bitter as the initial Bolshevik-Menshevik split), Martov is keeping his party under the umbrella of the wider Menshevik party (Figes, 2014).

The smallest of the major socialist parties, they are only afforded one seat on the executive committee; however, the Menshevik-Internationalists are not to be taken lightly, as Martov's prestige and influence have earned him the respect of many on the left, if not their allegiance (Figes, 2014). His party has embraced other policies aside from ending the war, which places them on the radical edge of the soviet (ibid.). Rather than allowing for a period of bourgeois rule, they are resolutely opposed to all coalitions with the propertied classes and advocate for the immediate transfer of land to peasants and workers' control of industry (Garcia, 1985). Their internationalist stance also means they generally place class divisions above national interests and are not fussed about maintaining the Russian Empire or cracking down on ethnic minorities (ibid.).

Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs)

The SRs are the largest of the socialist parties, both in membership and diversity of viewpoints (Smith, 2011). The party emerged from the *Narodnik* movement in the 1800s, a movement that literally involved "going to the people" (the peasantry) to attempt to influence the peasants to support their agrarian socialist revolutionary movement (ibid.). Although this ended in failure, the SRs today hold a lot of the same ideas and included some members from the original movement (Figes, 2014). The SRs also pioneered some of the more violent revolutionary tactics scorned by other parties, with the SR Combat Brigade explicitly formed to assassinate key political figures (ibid.).

They are, by a large majority, the most popular party among the peasantry, and advocate for the kind of land reform many peasants are already taking into their own hands (Smith, 2011). This leaves them less represented among the working class in the cities. However, as much of the soldiery are conscripted peasants, they have a fairly decent chunk of support within the rank and file of the military, especially on the front line (ibid.).

However, as a "big tent" organisation, the SRs are highly democratic and decentralised (compared to the other parties) with a flat hierarchy (Figes, 2014). Their size also means there are separate conservative, centrist, and radical factions within the party, and deep



debate over the stance on WW1, support for the government, and the power of the soviet Smith, 2011). Even over land reform, there is a divide between those who favour immediate seizure and redistribution, versus those who would wait for the Constituent Assembly to ratify everything (ibid.).

These factions remain relatively civil, however, and as a united bloc the SRs are a significant power, with a network of supporters and local parties across Russia (Figes, 2014). They are also likely to emerge as the largest party in the Constituent Assembly, given their support among the peasantry, which makes up the vast majority of Russia's population (ibid.).

Bolsheviks

The second major Marxist party, after the Mensheviks. The split between the two in 1903 left the Bolsheviks as the smaller of the two organisations, and over the rest of the decade and beyond, recruitment and membership was lacklustre (Fitzpatrick, 2017). However, they did not necessarily see this as a weakness; whereas the other parties generally embrace larger memberships, the Bolsheviks have long preferred a small group of professional revolutionaries, in line with their belief in the need for a revolutionary vanguard to seize power on behalf of the working class (Fitzpatrick, 2017).

Most of the Bolshevik leadership have been exiled abroad, along with many other socialist leaders, for years, but the amnesty announced by the government has allowed many, including Lenin, to return home (Shandro, 2007). In their absence, the Bolsheviks have pledged their support for the provisional government and have been given two seats in the Executive committee alongside the other parties (Shandro, 2007).

Thus, the Bolsheviks are not necessarily the most broadly popular Marxist faction, but they were the ones with the most uncompromising ideological position in advocating for the direct seizure of power from the Provisional Government.



Crisis Mechanics

Basic Mechanics

The crisis will be split into two cabinets - the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government. Some characters (such as Alexander Kerensky) will have a foot in both camps, but they will be assigned to a primary cabinet. Each cabinet will engage in formal debate, as both the government and the soviet are presumed to be in permanent session. However, as this is a crisis setting and not a standard committee, through either a procedural vote or at the discretion of the chairs, both cabinets can adjourn and resume formal debate at will. Each delegate will receive both their character guide and their party guide, outlining their party's ideologies, assets (such as your party newspaper), territory, and allies and enemies. The Friday session will be a chance for delegates to meet members of their cabinet and blocs and give introductory addresses. Only personal security directives and cabinet directives will be permitted on day one.

Voting Mechanics

Both cabinets can pass laws or other instructions as a whole via cabinet directives. These will need to be submitted by the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government and the Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. The Provisional Government can pass legislation by the majority support of its members. The Petrograd Soviet passes legislation through its Executive Committee, who have been elected by the main body of the soviet. At the start of the crisis, each of the socialist parties have been granted two seats each (except for the Menshevik Internationalists, who only have one), for a total of nine seats. All business put to the committee requires a majority vote to pass. At least one election for the executive committee will be held (scheduled for the end of day one).

Directives

Directives will be passed through the Master of Disaster software. A Discord will also be created for delegates to join, which will be used to communicate backroom announcements (such as directives opening and closing, breaking for lunch, major events, etc), communication between cabinets, and to facilitate drafting cabinet directives before they are submitted on Master of Disaster. Directives will be open for 45 minutes and closed for 15 minutes every hour throughout the day, in addition to a break for lunch. Delegates will be able to submit a maximum of three directives per hour. This time structure has been introduced to help avoid any backlogs in processing directives, which may lead backroom to close directives for long periods arbitrarily, and also give delegates regular 15-minute breaks where there is no



pressure to submit directives. This time can be used for debating with other delegates, drafting individual or delegate directives, or just taking a break (crisis rooms can get quite stuffy!). However, during showdowns or major conflicts, backroom may pause directives temporarily at the director's discretion.

Platforms

Directives will be passed through the Master of Disaster software. If you are unfamiliar with this software, chairs and backroom will be on hand to guide newcomers. A Discord server will also be created for delegates to join, which will be used to communicate backroom announcements (such as directives opening and closing, breaking for lunch, major events, etc), communication between cabinets, and to facilitate drafting cabinet directives before they are submitted on Master of Disaster. Delegates will be given a party chat, where they can communicate with other members of their party. WhatsApp chats can be created by the chairs for the whole committee or individual cabinets. A custom Google map will also be shared. This map will show all the key locations within Petrograd, including civic buildings, party headquarters, turf controlled by political parties, key industries, and military garrisons.

Additional Mechanics

In addition to personal resources, each political party has resources that can be put at the disposal of its members. Each party starts with a newspaper, a war chest, and a core group of supporters. The Provisional Government can pass legislation as the nominal executive. However, if any legislation is rejected by the soviet, this jeopardises the stability and legitimacy of the government. The government is expected to take charge on organising the constituent assembly, negotiating with foreign powers, and addressing the other key issues outlined in the agenda, and will be judged against its progress in these areas.

The Petrograd Soviet's powers are less defined, but as the representatives of the workers and soldiers they are emboldened to pass and vote whatever legislation they see fit, although the main areas include oversight of the military, control of industry, maintaining order, and enforcing the decrees of the government.

Chairs will be observing delegates' performance during sessions of formal debate. This is an era of history where oratory and speeches are still hugely influential in shaping one's reputation. Your performance in this sphere may affect your popularity within your party and out on the street and thus influence the outcomes of your directives.



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