The Beginning and End of the Bolshevik Revolution

October 24, 2007

Questions

- What were the Revolution's goals?
- Why did the Bolsheviks survive?
- Did they have mass support?
- When did it end?
  - The Role of Stalin

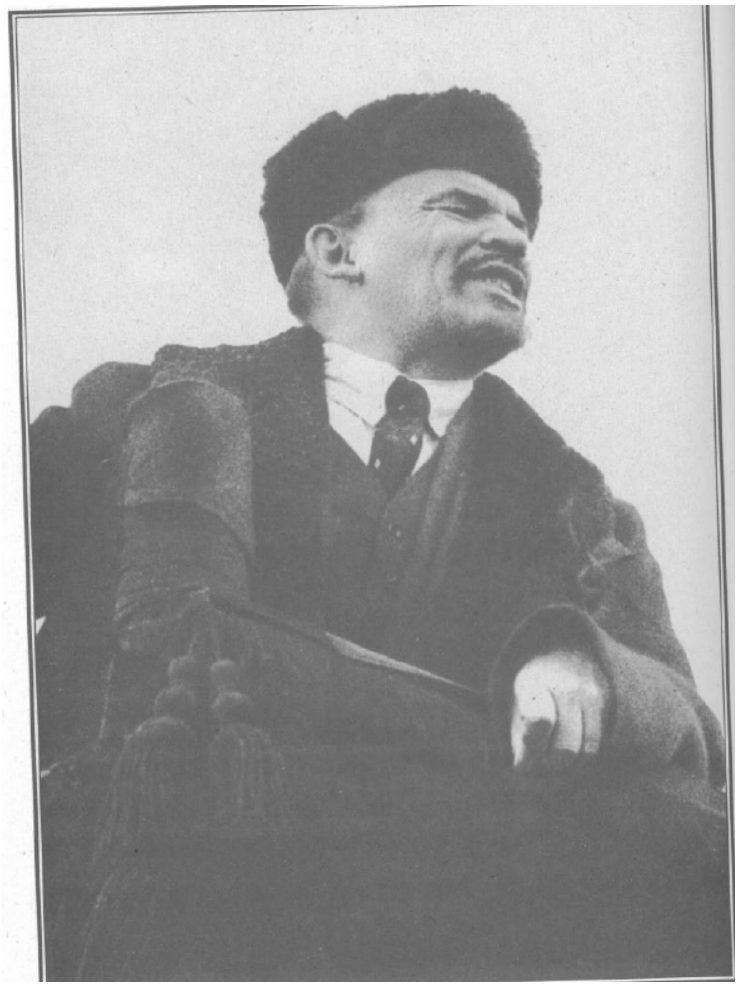
Elections to the Constituent Assembly, November 12, 1917

PartyVotes	(Millions)	Percent
SRs	16	38
Bolsheviks	10	24
Ukrainian SRs	5	12
Liberals	2.1	5
Mensheviks	1.3	3
Other	7.7	18
Total	42.1	

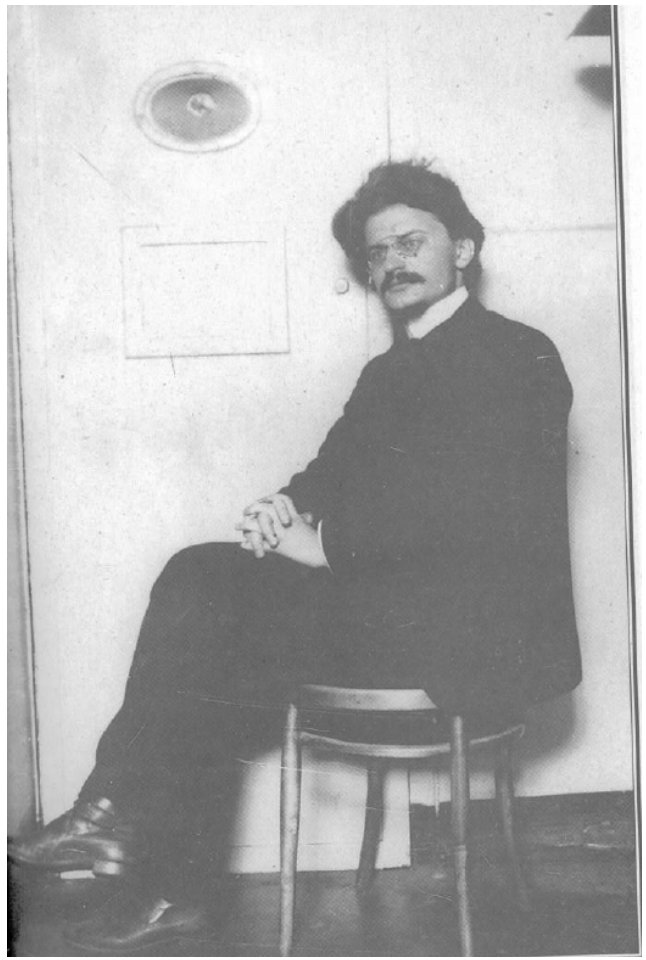
The Civil War, 1917-1920

- Provoking the War
  - Council of People's Commissars: all Bolsheviks
  - Elections for Constituent Assembly
  - Spread of Soviets
  - Peace with Germany, March 1918
  - Capital moves to Moscow, March 1918
  - Civil War begins, Summer 1918

Lenin Harangues the Crowd, 1918



Trotsky in jail, 1906



The Petrograd Soviet



White Army Officers



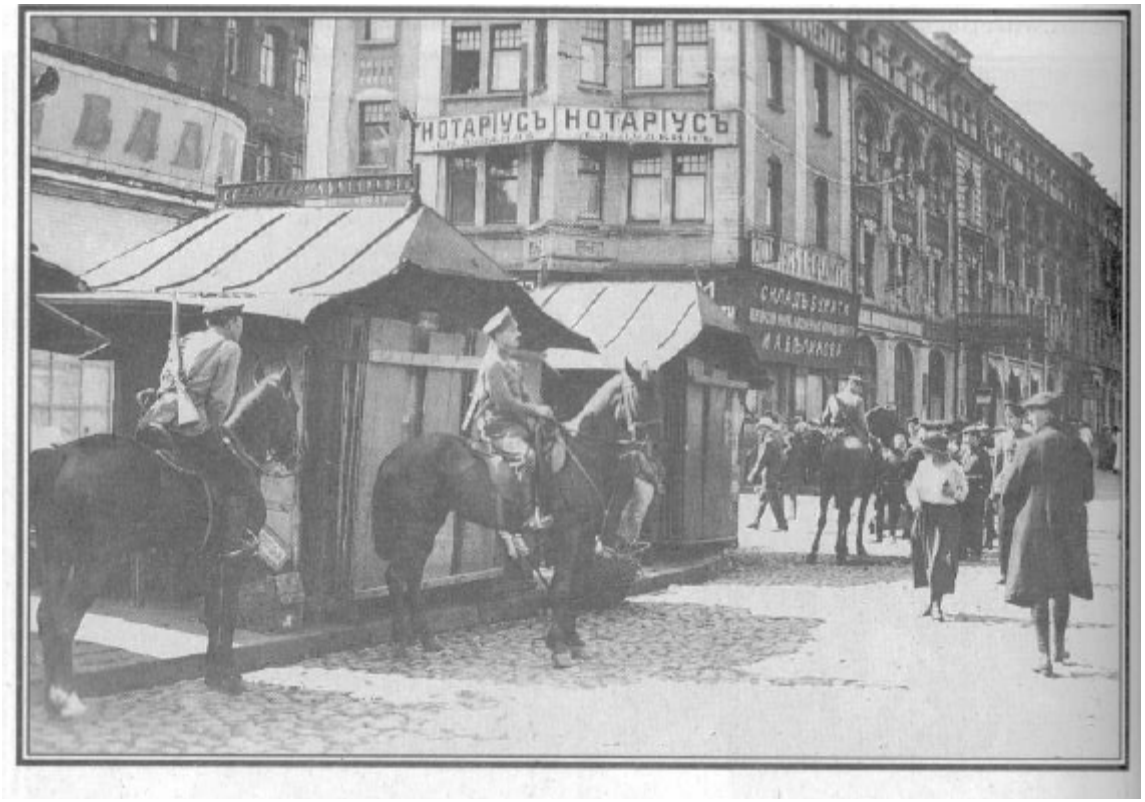
Red Army Soldiers Make Decisions



Putting the Ruling Classes to Work



War on the Market



Moscow, May 1919

Requisitioning Peasant Grain



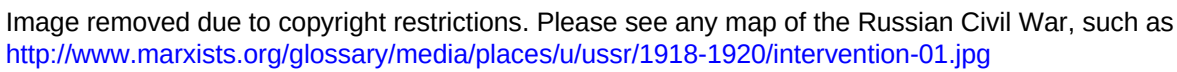
Harvest Failure in the Volga, 1921



Victims of Starvation, 1921



Russia during the Civil War


Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see any map of the Russian Civil War, such as http://www.marxists.org/glossary/media/places/u/ussr/1918-1920/intervention-01.jpg

Enemies and Friends

- Enemies of the Bolsheviks
  - Tsarists
  - Cossacks
  - Nationalists [Poles, Ukrainians, etc]
  - Foreigners [British, U.S., Japan, Czechs, etc.
  - The “Whites” are not unified
- Supporters
  - The Red Army
  - The Cheka: Red Terror

Bolshevik Advantages

- Control of Central core of Russia
- Railroad workers and printers
- The key: whom will the peasants support?
- Mass warfare: a political war
- Bolshevik “patriotism”
- How to Feed the Troops?

The Spread of Soviet Power



Children's Drawings: A demonstration



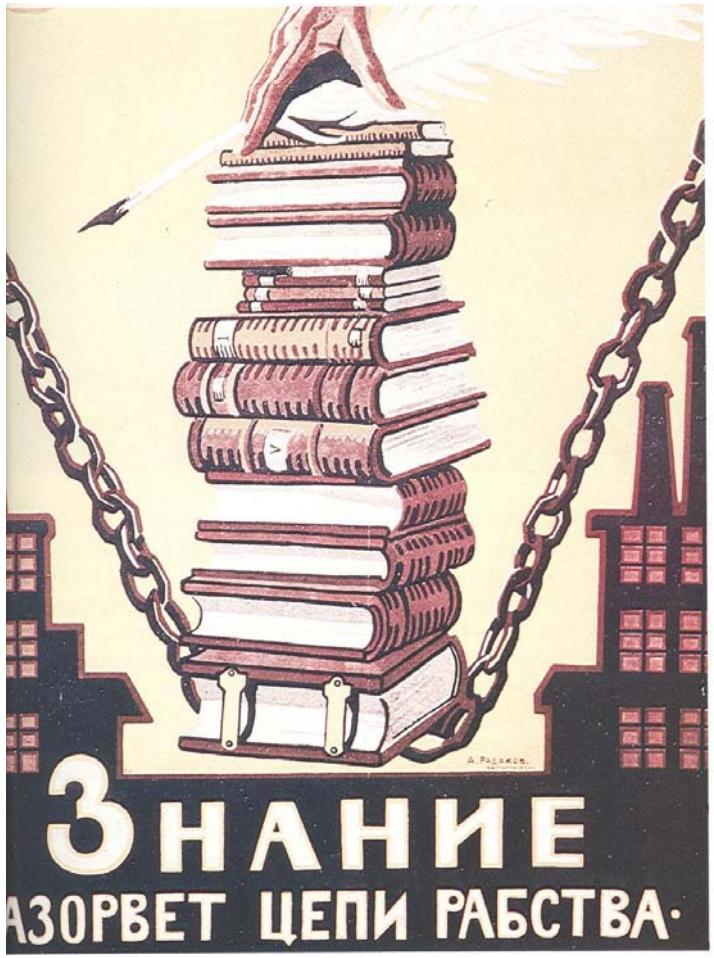
A Bolshevik and a Burzhui :“Down with the Provisional Government”



Literacy: The Road to Communism



Knowledge will Break the Chains of Slavery



Reading Groups



War Communism

- Dominance of the food issue in war
- Abolition of private trade: a future command economy?
- Echoes of the Paris Commune
- The Kulaks as Foes
- Peasant resistance
- Nationalize industry
- Shut down the free press

Begging under War Communism



Results of the War

- Backwardness, isolation, nationalism
- Literacy of new Bolshevik recruits
- Slogans about “burzhui” and “Kapitalist”
- Pride in victory
- Recreation of the Russian empire
- The Kronstadt Rebellion, March 1921
- The need for a New Economic Policy

The New Economic Policy (NEP)

- Taxes replace requisitions
- Restoration of private markets
- The return of money
- Purge of factions within Party
- Stalin becomes General Secretary
- A temporary retreat or a model for a “mixed economy”: “socialism with market characteristics”?

The Death of Lenin and his Successors

- Lenin’s testament damns Stalin and Trotsky
- The death of Lenin; Stalin consolidates power 1924-1927

When did the Revolution End?

- Did Stalin conduct a Second Revolution (1927-1938)?
- Social revolution
- Five Year Plans
- Collectivization
- The Great Purges of 1937-38

The Dying Lenin, 1923



Continuities from Lenin to Stalin

- The proletarian dictatorship = a party dictatorship = a single dictatorship
- Revolutionizing means of production
- Marxist attacks on the peasant
- Purges and Terror began in Civil War
- Personality Cult
- Was there a “pure Leninism” (Gorbachev)?

Legacies and Interpretations

- Eyewitnesses
  - John Reed
  - Maxim Gorky
  - Leon Trotsky
- Eisenstein's October (1927)
- Trotsky's Critique
- Cold War "Totalitarianism" Theory
- Modern Social History

Maxim Gorky

