Krasnoiarsk, 1917:
The Making of Soviet Power in Central Siberia

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SPECIAL TERMS

Governmental, Administrative, and Social Organisations

**AVC**: Accounting-Valuation Commission (Russian: *uchetno-otsenochnaia komissiia*), Soviet provisions regulatory body, established April 1917.

**CBTU**: Central Bureau of Trade Unions, socialist-led coordinating body for trade union activity in Krasnoiarsk, established April 1917.

**CPC**: City Provisions Commission, municipal provisions regulatory body, established 1915. In June 1917 renamed City Provisions Committee (also CPC).

**CPS**: Committee of Public Safety, supra-class revolutionary authority body, established March 1917.

**EGACS**: Eniseisk Guberniia Association of Consumer Societies, regional consumer cooperative federation.

**GC**: Garrison Committee, independent (non-Soviet) military organisation led by garrison junior officers, established July 1917.

**GPC**: Guberniia Provisions Committee, Provisional Government-sponsored procurement body, established March 1917.

**GubEC**: Guberniia Executive Committee of Soviets, coordinating body for local urban soviets in Eniseisk guberniia, established June 1917.

**UEB**: United Executive Bureau, joint Soviet-Committee of Public Safety body, established March 1917 to coordinate work between two organisations.

**UTIE**: Union of Trade-Industry Employees, trade union of shop clerks, of pre-revolutionary origin.

**UWE**: Union of Women’s Equality, liberal feminist organisation, established March 1917.
Political Organisations and Parties

**LSRs**: Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, a left-wing break-away faction of PSR (see below).

**PPF**: Party of People’s Freedom, liberal political party, widely known as Kadets.

**PSR**: Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries.

**RSDWP**: Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party.

Note: all Russian organisation names have been abbreviated according to their English-language translations given in the text.

Frequently-Used Russian Terms

**Artel’**: small-scale, semi-formal cooperative or collective organisation formed in workplaces, military units, and other professional and social locations.

**Chinovnik**: government functionary (pl. *chinozniki*). During the Russian revolution, the term *chinoznik* was often used derogatively to signify centrally-appointed or unaccountable state officials. Sometimes used interchangeably with *biurokrat* (bureaucrat).

**Gubernator**: Tsarist-era provincial governor (pl. *gubernatory*).

**Guberniia**: Russian province.

**Frontovik**: soldier evacuated from military front lines (pl. *frontoviki*).

**Kruzhok**: small-scale political discussion circle, often organised informally and secretively amongst close associates (pl. *kruzhki*).
**Narod**: “the people”. Collective term of belonging, usually used to denote lower-class population, of pre-revolutionary origin. In 1917 sometimes used interchangeably with “the democracy” (*demokratiia*) and “the mass” (*massa*; pl. *massy*).

**Oblastnik**: Siberian regionalist (pl. *oblastniki*); member of Siberian regionalist movement (*oblastnichestvo*).

**Paika**: state financial allowance issued to soldiers’ wives or dependent family members.

**Praporshchik**: ensign (junior-ranking officer) in Tsarist army (pl. *praporshchiki*).

**Soldatka**: soldiers’ wife or financially-dependent female family member (pl. *soldatki*).

**Uezd**: District, sub-division of *guberniia*.

Note: the Library of Congress system has been used for the transliteration of Russian terms, except for quotations from English-language secondary sources.
ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the formation of power structures in a revolutionary setting. It takes as a case study the central Siberian city of Krasnoiarsk, in which a powerful Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies emerged during the period March–October 1917. The Krasnoiarsk Soviet was an elective council established during the overthrow of Tsarist authorities. Throughout 1917, it became a vital component of an emerging local and regional power structure, assuming growing responsibility for a number of core state tasks. As well as providing a new empirical case study to English-language literature on 1917, the thesis employs a nuanced analytical approach which challenges existing conceptualisations of state power in revolution and the role played by local soviets.

State power in revolutionary Russia has often been viewed as something to be contested between different political groupings and organisations seeking to assert their own outright control. This view is captured neatly by the formulation of “dual power”, in which soviets and Provisional Government organisations constructed alternative power bases in an attempt to wield outright control. Accordingly, the soviets’ growing political strength indicated an ability to marginalise other groups and organisations seeking to wield power. By contrast, this thesis does not seek to explain how power in revolutionary Krasnoiarsk was “captured” or otherwise controlled by the Soviet alone. Instead, it applies a critical interpretation of state power proposed by Bob Jessop and other theorists, who view the state as a site of interaction and negotiation between multiple autonomous organisations and social actors, all of which have a stake in the way it operates in practice. It focuses on the emergence of a “soviet power” writ small, in which the Krasnoiarsk Soviet became an authoritative organisation within a broader constellation of revolutionary actors. Without denying the Soviet’s centrality within this power structure, the thesis does not explain its role simply as the monopolisation of authority over other would-be contenders. Rather, it sees the Soviet’s importance in its ability to establish itself as a focal point for interactions between multiple actors which, collectively, shaped state power at a local and regional level. It considers how the forms and practices of revolutionary power developed through these interactions and how these interactions in turn transformed the roles of actors and organisations engaging them.

In order to unpick the complex and dynamic processes of revolutionary power, the thesis employs three core methodological concepts: institutions, mobilisation, and ideology. It makes several important and original arguments. Firstly, it emphasises the autonomy of social actors which supported the Soviet and engaged in its politics, demonstrating the extent to which they were able to shape its political functions and structures according to their own concerns. Secondly, it reveals the importance of skilled administrative personnel to Soviet work, highlighting the invaluable practical roles they played in the regulation of provisions and their ability to influence Soviet policy measures on this issue. Thirdly, it demonstrates the close cooperation between the Soviet and other local governmental and administrative bodies, including the city Duma and provisions regulatory organisations, which remained vital to fulfilling state functions throughout 1917. Finally, it discusses how the Soviet and socialist activists challenged established power relationships between Krasnoiarsk, as a locality, and all-Russian state authorities, revealing the growing importance they attached to securing greater local autonomy in revolution and the changing ways local actors viewed their role in wider all-Russian politics.
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THE AUTHOR

Alistair Dickins holds a BA in modern history and an MA in modern European history, both of which he gained from the University of East Anglia, Norwich (UEA). In conjunction with this PhD, he completed two separate twelve-week periods of archival research in the city of Krasnoiarsk, where he worked at several local and regional bodies, including the State Archives of Krasnoiarsk Krai (GAKK) and the Krasnoiarsk Krai Museum of Regional Studies (KKKM).
INTRODUCTION ★ Social Revolution, Soviet Power

A social revolution is an attempt by “subordinate groups to transform the social foundations of political power.”¹ The state occupies a central place in this process. Revolutions seek simultaneously to depose existing state elites whilst establishing viable power structures through which their participants can pursue their own political ambitions. This thesis examines this dual revolutionary process during the 1917 Russian revolution in the central Siberian city of Krasnoiarsk, focusing particularly on the role of the city’s powerful Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. The Krasnoiarsk Soviet was an elective council comprising a socialist leadership and elected representatives of local workers and soldiers. Established in early-March 1917, it played a vital role in overthrowing local Tsarist authorities. Over the following months, it also engaged in different areas of state authority, becoming a key component of a new power structure at both a local and regional level. This thesis is the first in-depth English-language study of revolutionary politics in Krasnoiarsk and the first work to closely examine the development of revolutionary power in Siberia in 1917 since Russell Snow’s valuable but dated 1976 study, The Bolsheviks in Siberia, 1917-1918.² Drawing simultaneously on original primary research conducted in Krasnoiarsk and on current historiographical debates on state power in revolutionary Russia, it explores the complex processes by which the city Soviet became an authoritative organisation in its own right and the ways it sought to transform the local institutions of power. This introduction first outlines the historiography on state power and local soviets during the Russian revolution before explaining the value of Krasnoiarsk as a case study and outlining the methodological approach taken to address the topic.

Conceptualising Soviet Power: Research Objective and Questions

Local soviets were central to challenging and restructuring state power in revolutionary Russia. The first soviets emerged briefly during the abortive revolutionary upheavals of 1905 as a means to coordinate working class and socialist political struggles. In 1917, they became a mass phenomenon. During the February Revolution in Petrograd, Russia’s flagship Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies was formed by socialists to coordinate mass revolutionary action. In the provinces, local soviets organised over the following days and weeks as news of revolution in the capital arrived, helping orchestrate the overthrow of local Tsarist authorities and establish new authority structures. By late-March, over 600 soviets existed across the Russian Empire. During the first months of revolution, they asserted themselves as powerful revolutionary organisations, establishing worker, soldier, and sometimes also peasant constituencies whilst assuming responsibility for local governmental and administrative duties. Long before the overthrow of the Provisional Government in October, soviets had become vital components of the revolutionary state, enacting a de facto “soviet power” (vlast’ sovetov) in many localities.

Soviets’ increasing prominence in 1917 is often portrayed as their accumulation of power at the expense of other revolutionary contenders. At an all-Russian level, historians have typically described the relationship between the Petrograd Soviet, which held mass popular support, and the Provisional Government, which claimed formal state authority, as one of “dual power” (dvoevlastie). This approach and terminology is derived from contemporary political discourse in 1917, which pictured the Soviet and Provisional Government as potential contenders for state power. At the outset of revolution, they tolerated one another in an uncomfortable power-sharing agreement in which neither encroached on the other’s

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prerogatives.\(^6\) Throughout 1917, however, possibilities for sharing power were constricted by successive political crises, as increasingly discontented workers, soldiers, and peasants were drawn towards the radical socialist left, who advocated the Soviet’s “single power” (*edinovlastie*).\(^7\) In the provinces, classic studies explain local soviets’ rapidly rising authority by the lack of any viable contenders for power emerging after the overthrow of Tsarism. According to Oskar Anweiler, local soviets stepped into a virtual power vacuum after February 1917:

> In the Russian provinces the revolution had destroyed the old administration. Czarist officials, from provincial governor down to the lowliest village policeman, were deposed within a few days or weeks, and some were arrested.\(^8\)

Meanwhile, Israel Getzler’s pioneering history of revolution in the garrison town of Kronstadt attributes the local soviet’s strength in 1917 to the fact that it “had been left alone to enjoy a lengthy period of political and social incubation”, enabling it to, “happily and undisturbed, build its own system of self-government and administration, creating virtually from scratch a rich and impressive political and social culture[...].”\(^9\)

The “dual power” thesis offers a compelling historical narrative and is consonant with contemporary revolutionary language from 1917, which emphasised

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\(^9\) Getzler, *Kronstadt*, viii
state power as something to be contested by rival groupings. Nonetheless, it has limited analytical value for understanding how state power operated in practice during revolution. As Bob Jessop argues, states never operate with complete autonomy of their own; nor can their power be wielded by any single coherent grouping. Rather, state power is closely linked to the “broader social environment” in which it operates and is continually influenced, contested, and transformed by multiple social actors who engage and contribute to different spheres of state activity in order to press their own agendas. Indeed, insofar as states assert meaningful power, they must acknowledge the potentially autonomous agency of social actors, whom they engage as active partners in fulfilling their own core tasks. Studying revolutionary power in 1917 in these terms shifts attention away from how contending groups sought to usurp their political rivals towards the ways in which multiple actors contributed to a dynamic and interactive political process. As William Rosenberg notes, the “cluster of offices” conducting official state work in 1917 must be situated within the constant interactions with a variety of social actors with whom they engage: “these relational processes themselves inscribe values onto ‘the state’, and consequently construct its meaning – often in terms quite different from those objectivized by its officials.”

Although Rosenberg’s argument is acknowledged in principle by many Western historians, there remains a lack of empirical research, especially at a local level, to demonstrate what it meant for the constitution and exercise of power in

10 Wade, Russian Revolution, pp. 208-234.

11 Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper note the need to separate “categories of practice”, by which contemporary actors describe everyday experiences and practices, and “categories of analysis” which have real explanatory value for academic analysis: “Beyond ‘Identity’”, Theory and Society, 29 (2000), pp. 1-47, here pp. 4-6.


This thesis addresses this issue directly in relation to Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary politics. It examines the emergence in 1917 of a local “soviet power” writ small, in which the Krasnoiarsk Soviet asserted itself as an authoritative organisation within a broader constellation of actors and organisations. Without denying the Soviet’s centrality within this power structure, it does not seek to explain its role simply as the monopolisation of authority over other would-be contenders. Rather, it sees the Soviet’s importance in its ability to become a focal point for interactions between multiple organisations and actors who, collectively, shaped revolutionary state power at a local level. It considers both how the forms and practices of revolutionary government developed through these interactions and the ways in which they themselves transformed the roles of the actors who engaged them. I seek to answer several core questions. How did the Krasnoiarsk Soviet become an authoritative organisation in its own right? How did it interact with other groups and organisations? How (far) did these interactions transform the way state power was exercised and how did they shape the way different groups and organisations, including the Soviet itself, operated? Finally, what role did local actors understand themselves to be playing in a wider all-Russian revolution and how did they relate during this period to power structures elsewhere in Russia, including central state bodies in Petrograd? Alongside these questions, I also consider what this case study can tell us about the broader experience of social revolution in Russia, providing comparison between Krasnoiarsk and other localities and asking what implications this study raises for our understanding of “soviet power” more generally.

**Historiography**

This thesis contributes to a growing body of local studies by Western historians which detail how power was constituted and exercised across the Russian Empire during 1917 and the subsequent civil war.\footnote{Key works in this field include studies of the provinces: Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Baku Commune, 1917-1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution*, Princeton University Press (1972); Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia, Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution (1917-1921)*, Clarendon Press (1989); Donald Raleigh's, *Revolution on the Volga* and *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-
local level, these studies challenge the understanding of power as something to be contested by rival groupings. Contrary to visions of local revolutionary councils operating in splendid isolation, historians have shown that multiple organisations co-existed with soviets throughout 1917, including coalition political organisations (often called Committees of Public Safety) and pre-revolutionary municipal authorities. Following the established historiographical lead, some historians conceive the existence of multiple organisations as a form of “dual power” in which the most powerful amongst them vied for overall control,16 or even as a fractious “multi-power” (mnogovlastie) in which no-one asserted genuine authority.17 However, the continued existence of multiple power structures suggests different conceptualisations of revolutionary power are needed. In various localities, soviets coordinated their nascent governmental roles with Committees of Public Safety, urban dumas, and rural zemstvos, actively working together to achieve common goals.18 As Sarah Badcock argues, this reality blurred the boundaries between


16 Suny, Baku Commune, pp. 69-72; Raleigh, Experiencing Russia’s Civil War, pp. 25-28. Demonstrating the existence of dvoevlastie across the Russian Empire in 1917 was a priority for Soviet-era studies: Andreev, Mestnye Sovety; E.N. Babikova, Dvoevlastie v Sibiri, Izdatel’stvo Tomskogo universiteta (1980).


18 Badcock, Politics and the People, pp. 11-14; Retish, Russia’s Peasants, pp. 134-136; Alistair Wright, “The Establishment of Bolshevik Power on the Russian Periphery: Soviet Karelia,
different organisations’ roles and responsibilities, highlighting the limitations of the “dual power” paradigm for explaining how power was exercised in practice at a local level.\textsuperscript{19}

Local studies also highlight the ways in which social actors influenced revolutionary power structures, particularly through interactions with organisations claiming political authority over them. The relationship between power and people is often perceived as one of success or failure, in which different political elites sought to gain popular support for their respective projects. Peter Holquist and Michael Hickey locate the weakness of liberal politics at a local level through its failure to establish electoral structures corresponding to popular conceptions of political participation,\textsuperscript{20} while Badcock suggests localised divisions in power did not exist between different organisational structures so much as between “leaders” and their “electors”.\textsuperscript{21} The ability of particular organisations and their leaderships to gain popular followings is an important element of revolutionary politics, but it tells only half the story. The role of the “masses” in revolution was not simply to validate or reject pre-designed political projects, but also to actively and creatively contribute to emerging power structures. As Yanni Kotsonis observes, the relationship of social actors to authority structures only makes sense when viewed as part of a


\textsuperscript{21}Badcock, \textit{Politics and the People}, pp. 87-122.
“relationship of power.” Several historians consider how people nominally subject to the authority of revolutionary power structures sought to exert their own agency upon them in order to make them work for themselves. Adeeb Khalid and Jeff Sahadeo highlight how revolutionary authority structures in Turkestan were shaped through interactions between settler Russians and native Muslim populations, contributing to developing national agendas in the region. Aaron Retish similarly shows how state bodies in Viatka province during the civil war were engaged by peasants in land disputes, simultaneously shaping peasants’ own relationship to political authority structures and the roles adopted by the state locally.

Besides noting the dialectical character of popular interactions with political authority structures, we must consider also how the practical realities of government, particularly the administrative functions the exercise of power entailed, shaped revolutionary politics. As Daniel Orlovsky has argued, “Until we move away from a model of pure working class (and peasant) revolution toward one that integrates the experience of the lower middle strata [i.e. administrative personnel]”, historical understandings “must remain incomplete and even distorted.” The administrative roles of revolutionary government raise the important question of political

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legitimacy: who is entitled to participate in revolutionary power? Despite the professed class character of much revolutionary politics, numerous studies demonstrate that often non-proletarian administrative personnel were critical to maintaining basic state functions in 1917 and the early-Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{26} State administration also raises the issue of historical agency: once participating in power structures, how do administrators influence the way they function? As Orlovsky has emphasised, administrative personnel held long-standing professional and ideological goals, which they pursued in a revolutionary context.\textsuperscript{27} More recently, Holquist shows how administrative specialists actively shaped the formulation and execution of state policy under successive regimes during the Great War, 1917, and civil war.\textsuperscript{28}

Finally, it is necessary to recognise that power and politics have distinctive geographic and temporal qualities. Research into local revolutionary events has considered how the “geography of power”, that is, the distribution of state authority


\textsuperscript{28} Holquist, \textit{Making War}. 
across geographical space, was constituted in war and revolution. While many “national” studies of revolution focus on power structures in Petrograd, recent research into the localities demonstrates that people outside the capital often acted autonomously according to their own agendas. Considerable light has been shed on economic dimensions of power, particularly provisions (prodovol’stvie) and land distribution, in which localised concerns informed the actions of local organisations, often against the orders of “higher” state bodies to which they were formally subordinated. Several studies also highlight attempts by local revolutionary authorities to expand their prerogatives in representative politics against the wishes of state officials appointed in Petrograd. Such acts of localised autonomy are widely cited as evidence of the disintegration of all-Russian power structures during a revolution which “dealt a deathblow to centralized state authority, making all power relationships largely voluntary”. This analysis reflects the language and concerns of


30 Although Communist-era Russian historians extensively researched local revolutionary events, their work often focused on the ways in which local actors conformed to political patterns established in the capital, particularly by recognising the rising authority of the Bolshevik party and soviets, rather than illustrating local political variations and peculiarities. For a useful critique, see Ziva Galili y Garcia, “[Review of A.M. Andreev, Mestnye Sovety i organy burzhuaznoi vlasti]”, Russian Review, 45:1 (January 1986), pp. 83-84.

31 Lih, Bread and Authority; Badcock, Politics and the People, esp. pp. 211-237; Raleigh, Revolution on the Volga, pp. 179-189.


33 Quote from Raleigh, Experiencing Russia’s Civil War, p. 25. See also Badcock, Politics and the People, p. 3; Figes, Peasant Russia, pp. 30-69; Richard Stites, Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian
all-Russian governmental agencies based in Petrograd during 1917. However, it does not explain how local actors perceived their place within a broader revolutionary picture. To be "local" is a "relational and contextual" act of self-identification which is continually legitimised against non-local categories. Regardless of the pressures to enact locally-informed policy measures, the context in which revolution occurred meant no locality existed in isolation from national politics. As much as revolution enabled people to assert local autonomy, it also invited them to consider their place within a wider all-Russian body politic. Joshua Sanborn demonstrates that wartime state practices intersecting 1917 engaged people across the Empire, encouraging them to think of themselves in terms of a broader, national community. Building on Sanborn's analysis, Retish argues that peasants in war and revolution understood their actions as part of a national political movement, identifying themselves simultaneously as local actors and contributors to a broader all-Russian revolutionary process.

Historians have also demonstrated the importance of placing revolution within a broader temporal framework, highlighting how Russia's revolutionary transformation fed into ongoing social, economic, and political developments. The work of Sanborn and Retish contributes a wider historiographical movement which locates revolution in its immediate wartime context. This has helped shift the focus of research from earlier historical questions of whether war hastened or delayed revolution towards considering how wartime practices contributed to the

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34 Orlovsky, "Reform during Revolution", p. 110.


36 Joshua A. Sanborn, Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905-1925, Northern Illinois University (2003).

37 Retish, Russia’s Peasants, esp. pp. 95-129.
constitution of revolutionary power. Holquist demonstrates how practices of state provisions regulation and surveillance deployed during revolution and civil war built on governmental processes begun during the Great War under the Tsarist regime. Francine Hirsch and Alexei Kojevnikov similarly show how experiences of wartime government encouraged the young Communist regime to forge political alliances with scientific experts, enabling the latter to pursue agendas which first came to prominence during the Great War. This thesis addresses these complex and overlapping historiographical issues in the light of events in Krasnoiarsk, analysing how they were manifested in the city’s emerging revolutionary power structures.

Krasnoiarsk: Framing a Provincial Revolution

Located in central Siberia, Krasnoiarsk sits at the geographic heart of the former Russian Empire, approximately equidistant from Moscow and Petrograd to the west and Vladivostok to the east (see maps below). In the final years of Tsarism, it occupied a prominent location on the exile route and was an important transit point for prisoners on their journeys east and north. From 1822, it served as the provincial capital (gubernskii gorod) of Eniseisk guberniia and the focal point of

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41 George Kennan, Siberia and the Exile System: II, James R. Osgood, McIlvaine & Co. (1891), pp. 368-371. Although formally barred from remaining in Krasnoiarsk due to their political status, many returned to the city after their terms of exile elapsed or were given dispensation to settle in the city, becoming active participants in local social and political life.
provincial state administration. Nonetheless, Tsarist-era Krasnoiarsk struck many observers as a parochial backwater, lacking the basic social and economic provisions of modern city life. It had no university; buildings were overwhelmingly wooden; streets were largely unpaved and lacked electric lighting. English journalist, Morgan Philips Price, of future fame for his dispatches from the Russian revolution, who visited the city in 1910, reported “[p]rimitive conditions and superficial imitation of Western culture […] on every side”:

The streets were simply wide cart tracks full of ruts, without any attempt at paving except for a few boards put down in the dirtiest places for the benefit of the foot-passengers, while modern conveniences which one finds in European Russia, such as drainage, paving, lighting and water supply, from public resources did not exist.

Bleak comparisons with European Russia nevertheless belied Krasnoiarsk’s growing regional importance, especially following the arrival of the Trans-Siberian railway in the late-1890s, which transformed it into one of a handful of Siberian boom cities. In the two decades after the railway’s construction, the city population nearly quadrupled, from around 25,000 to over 90,000 (figure 0.1). Krasnoiarsk was typical of cities along the Trans-Siberian railway, whose populations swelled


46 Aziatskaia Rossiia, tom pervyi, p. 349.
spectacularly during this period, enabling many to become *de facto* regional power centres by the early-1900s. In Krasnoiarsk, the railway prompted rapid economic and demographic developments. Alongside Omsk to the west and Chita to the east, it became a focal point for skilled repair and maintenance work along the line. Local railway workshops employed around 3,000 workers, making them the largest single industrial enterprise in the city.\(^{47}\) An influx of migrant labour spawned two sprawling working-class districts, Nikolaevsk and Alekseevsk, alongside the workshops to the city's west, which grew to a combined population of over 20,000 by 1914.\(^ {48}\)

### Table 0.1: Krasnoiarsk city population, 1829-1917.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>2,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1859</td>
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<td>1869</td>
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<td>1879</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>27,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>92,911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Labour migration similarly helps account for Krasnoiarsk’s ethnic and gender composition. Despite its distance from European Russia, the city’s population was overwhelmingly Slavic with indigenous Siberian peoples conspicuous by their absence. By the outbreak of war, around ninety-percent of residents were ethnic Russians; Poles and migrants from the Baltic provinces comprised the only significant national and ethnic minorities.⁴⁹ Like other Siberian railway cities, the economic basis of migration meant pre-war Krasnoiarsk also witnessed a significant gender imbalance, with males totalling some sixty-percent of the population.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, reliable transport links made Krasnoiarsk a regional military centre. During the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war, it provided an important transit point for troops travelling eastwards.⁵¹ Subsequent international tensions ensured continued military buildup. In 1910, M.P. Price pointedly observed local barracks which gave the impression of Siberia being “under an army of occupation.”⁵² During the Great War, Krasnoiarsk became the centre of military mobilisation in Eniseisk guberniia, hosting a garrison comprising over 25,000 troops and a separate prisoner-of-war camp, located four miles outside the city, which held around 15,000 Magyar, Austrian, German, and Ottoman POWs.⁵³

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⁵⁰ A significant gender imbalance was typical of Siberian railway cities during this period: Aziatskaia Rossiia, tom pervyi, p. 349.

⁵¹ Reichman, “1905 Revolution”.

⁵² Price, Siberia, p. 25.

Figure 0.1: Voskresenskaia ulitsa (present-day Prospekt mira), main high street.

Source: GUNBKK, Kraevedcheskii zal, photo album entitled "Krasnoiarsku - 350 let", l. 36.

Figure 0.2: Railway workshops.

Figure 0.3: Siberia in the Russian Empire, 1914.

Copyright Riccardo Bof, 2015.
Figure 0.4: Eniseisk guberniia.
Figure 0.5: Krasnoiarsk, 1914.
Krasnoiarsk’s demographic development contributed directly to its revolutionary politics, enabling political exiles, workers, and soldiers to work in tandem at particular historical junctures. War with Japan in 1904 and 1905 sparked major local upheavals, involving all three groupings. Following industrial unrest at the railway workshops in summer and autumn 1905, the 2nd Railway Battalion, a specialist military unit composed largely of skilled workers, was brought in to the city to maintain production. After several weeks, the disgruntled battalion mutinied, establishing a joint soviet with railway workers and socialist exiles which seized control of Krasnoiarsk throughout December 1905. The so-called “Krasnoiarsk Republic” (Krasnoiarskaia respublika) was crushed after a month by loyalist troops. Nonetheless, Krasnoiarsk re-emerged as a key revolutionary location in 1917 when a powerful Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies was again established. From the outset, the 1917 Soviet included a strong contingent of left-wing socialist exiles and quickly expressed hostility towards the Provisional Government and local Committee of Public Safety, becoming the first Siberian soviet to endorse the overthrow of the Provisional Government in late-October. Throughout this period, it also assumed responsibility for different governmental roles, mediating social and economic conflicts and actively engaging in local administrative tasks, particularly the organisation of provisions.

Krasnoiarsk provides a valuable case study to consider the dynamics of local soviet power. Firstly, the presence of a powerful Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies offers a chance to consider the social origins and bases of the soviets in 1917. As a representative body, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet functioned as the political juncture between local workers, soldiers, and the socialists who aspired to lead them. Unlike many other joint worker-soldier soviets in 1917, which formed gradually by merging distinct worker and soldier bodies, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet existed as a united organisation almost from the outset. How was it possible for socialists to coordinate action with workers and soldiers so quickly? Historians of the 1905

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54 Reichman, “1905 Revolution”.

55 For a useful summary of Krasnoiarsk Soviet actions, see Snow, Bolsheviks in Siberia.

revolution demonstrate that the initial emergence of soviets rested on the prior socialisation of their respective participants, building on extensive joint activity and shared political space which transcended social boundaries and provided the networks of trust and organisation necessary to facilitate further joint work. By contrast, the soviets of 1917 have been widely portrayed as the logical expression of a polarised class society, with the 1905 experience providing an organisational model which “seemed to Russian workers and soldiers automatically the most suitable form of uniting along class lines at a time of political and social upheaval.” This perspective was a fulcrum of Soviet-era historiography and had its own local inflections for Krasnoiarsk, where the rapid establishment of a joint worker and soldier soviet was cited as evidence for continued local “revolutionary traditions” begun by the 1905 Krasnoiarskaia respublika.

In reality, soviets’ emerging authority in 1917 must be located in their immediate revolutionary conditions. In a valuable corrective to the interpretation that soviets were "natural" expressions of class politics in revolution, Donald Raleigh has argued that their ability to gain mass support was closely linked to their


willingness to tackle the intimate concerns of the local population.\textsuperscript{60} This thesis reaffirms Raleigh's contention whilst emphasising also the autonomous agency of participants as a factor in turning the Krasnoiarsk Soviet into a genuinely popular political organisation. In short, the Soviet was not simply a vehicle for accumulating the political support of would-be constituents but rather the product and basis of joint work between them and socialists. At the outset, its establishment was made possible by ties linking socialists with local workers and soldiers. These provided the means to mobilise people quickly in joint political activity without, at least initially, precluding their participation in other revolutionary authority structures, including the supra-class Committee of Public Safety. The consolidation of support behind the Soviet, a process ongoing throughout 1917, cannot be reduced to popular endorsement of its socialist leaders. It also depended on its engaging workers' and soldiers' own participatory political structures, which operated autonomously of the Soviet itself, particularly trade unions and military committees. These structures provided the basis for active mass participation in revolutionary politics and meant the Soviet became not just a site of cooperation between socialists, workers, and soldiers, but also a mechanism for them to negotiate a mutual political relationship.

This study also makes an important and original contribution to existing literature on the soviets in 1917 and on revolutionary politics more generally by considering the practical administrative roles assumed by the Krasnoiarsk Soviet. It challenges the often unquestioned "proletarian" character of soviets by considering the agency of personnel who enabled the Krasnoiarsk Soviet to engage in governmental administration. This aspect of soviet politics has been largely overlooked prior to the overthrow of the Provisional Government. Alexander Rabinowitch, for example, argues that "a handful of unpaid volunteers easily recruited from among deputies" was enough to keep local soviets running before October 1917.\textsuperscript{61} Other historians observe the increasing dependence of soviets on skilled administrators, highlighting the ability of talented soviet members and


\textsuperscript{61} Rabinowitch, Bolsheviks in Power, p. 225.
deputies to gain legitimacy through their organisational skills.\textsuperscript{62} Nevertheless, these studies leave the important question of how administrators influenced soviet functions largely untouched. This thesis develops the historiographical debate by turning attention specifically towards the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s commissions (komissii), which assumed responsibility for the technical management of its administrative functions. Although local soviet commissions have been acknowledged by historians, there has thus far been little close analysis of their roles and practical functions.\textsuperscript{63} This thesis, by contrast, focuses on the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s Accounting-Valuation Commission (Uchetno-otsenochnaia komissiia), which was established to handle trade and provisions regulatory measures. The Accounting-Valuation Commission became the Soviet’s most powerful commission and was maintained by an enormous professionalised staff. It demonstrates the growing practical and political importance of dedicated administrators to the Soviet’s work in 1917. Furthermore, it shows that, although formally subordinated to Soviet leaders, administrative personnel exerted considerable autonomy of their own, contributing actively to the roles and functions which the Soviet adopted.

The Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s governmental roles also provide an opportunity to reconsider how soviets interacted with other local authority structures. Governmental administration brought the Soviet into operational contact with other organisations, shaping the ways power was exercised in practice. These organisations included the city Duma, a municipal body of pre-revolutionary origin, which was completely re-elected in July with a massive socialist majority. These elections brought the Duma and Soviet into a visible shared political space, enabling high-profile socialists and Soviet leaders to assume leading Duma roles.\textsuperscript{64} Meanwhile,

\textsuperscript{62} Useful observations in this regard were made by John L.H. Keep, \textit{The Russian Revolution: A Study in Mass Mobilization}, Weidenfeld and Nicolson (1976), p. 127; Getzler, \textit{Kronstadt}, p. 50. More recently, Badcock has considered in depth the growing authority of skilled administrators in local revolutionary organisations: \textit{Politics and the People}, esp. pp. 100-105.

\textsuperscript{63} A good example of this is Getzler, whose work provides a broad overview of the Kronstadt Soviet’s commissions without examining in detail how their work was conducted and managed in practice: \textit{Kronstadt}, pp. 49-50.

\textsuperscript{64} See chapter 4.
the Soviet used its governmental role to foster an active relationship with city Duma departments, particularly its City Provisions Commission, which interacted continually with the Soviet Accounting-Valuation Commission. Joint work between local soviets and municipal authorities has long been recognised in principle. In a groundbreaking 1969 article, William Rosenberg argued that socialist involvement in local dumas meant “dual authority may have effectively ended on the municipal level in the summer of 1917 though it continued on a national level right up to the Bolshevik coup.”

Nonetheless, subsequent historical studies have not fully explored the political and administrative consequences of dumas’ re-election, typically portraying municipal politics as a platform for socialists to spread political messages rather than a meaningful component of revolutionary government in its own right.

This thesis develops Rosenberg’s original contention in a different direction by considering how the Krasnoiarsk Duma was actively integrated into an ensemble of local political and administrative organisations, enabling it to contribute meaningfully to the way power operated in partnership with the Soviet. It demonstrates that many socialists saw the Duma and its departments as critical components to an emergent local power structure and actively sought to integrate it into revolutionary governmental work.

Finally, this thesis considers how revolution transformed the geography of power in Siberia. It has been argued that attempts to extend local autonomy in Siberia were dominated by self-proclaimed regionalists (oblastniki), liberal minded intellectuals with long-standing demands for federal government; while some socialists were sympathetic to their demands, many advocated “extreme centralism”,


viewing federation as a dangerous distraction from the class struggle. This thesis reveals the limitations of this interpretation. In 1917 Krasnoiarsk, oblastniki were a weak political grouping with little formal organisation and played little role in revolutionary politics. Soviet activists, by contrast, used their prominence in local governmental structures to redress the power relationship between the locality and capital. The Soviet’s local authority role brought it into direct contact with all-Russian state authorities, including Provisional Government-appointed commissars and the Ministry of Interior, providing it with an opportunity to press for greater local authority. Throughout 1917, socialists increasingly upheld local prerogatives against those of central state authorities, expressing the redistribution of power on a geographic basis as a key aim of revolution. The Krasnoiarsk Soviet also forged organisational relations between local soviets in Eniseisk guberniia and Siberia more generally, including a Guberniia Executive Committee of Soviets, established in June to coordinate joint work across Eniseisk guberniia, and a Central Siberian Bureau of Soviets, formed in September and linking local soviets as far apart as Tomsk and Vladivostok. This emerging web of regional-level soviet organisations highlights the dual meaning of “being provincial”. Revolutionaries in the provinces were in an all-Russian relationship with state bodies based in the Russian capitals; they were also integrated into networks of mutual relations between one another. Regional power structures which emerged around the Krasnoiarsk Soviet allowed it and other local soviets to collectively push for the reorganisation of relations between themselves and all-Russian government bodies whilst also constituting a power relationship between one another.

The time period considered in this thesis spans roughly the eight months from the overthrow of Tsarism in Krasnoiarsk, in early-March 1917, to the overthrow of the Provisional Government, which the Krasnoiarsk Soviet endorsed in late-October. My focus on this time period is based partly on empirical, and partly on practical, considerations. During these eight months, the multiple power arrangements outlined above crystallised. Focus on this period therefore sheds light on the

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changing dynamics of state power. However, by ending my study in October 1917, I do not wish to suggest that the formal overthrow of the Provisional Government marked an end point to the development of revolutionary power. Rather, the post-October period in Krasnoiarsk, which witnessed the city’s rapid descent into armed conflict and civil war, deserves close study in its own right and is beyond the scope of this thesis. October was not an impenetrable historical frontier. Where necessary, I draw attention to specific developments in revolutionary power which transcended the pre-/post-October divide.

Methodology: Linking Structure with Agency

To understand the dynamic processes underpinning revolutionary politics, historians must consider both structural factors and the human agencies which interacted with them. Some theorists of revolution have juxtaposed structure and agency as mutually-exclusive categories, emphasising the ways structural factors limit the choices available to historical actors. In practice, however, structure and agency operate as interactive and mutually-constitutive forces. Insofar as they serve to regulate and inform human behaviour, structures are continually produced and reproduced by the more-or-less knowledgeable actors whom they affect. As such, they are “both constraining and enabling”. Structures might limit the choices available at a given instance. Nonetheless, by providing concrete frameworks for action, they also allow actors to express agency within existing systems and thereby

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69 Cf. Skocpol’s highly influential States and Social Revolutions.
to influence how those systems operate.\textsuperscript{70} This thesis draws on three historiographical concepts to highlight the interactions between structure and agency: institutions; mobilisation; and ideology.

Institutions are the frameworks which structure human conduct in given situations. They include both formal rules and regulations and informal procedures and practices, as well as the organisational and material arrangements supporting them, which determine the roles people adopt and the ways they engage in them. A central feature of institutions is their relative endurance over time. Although embedded in particular organisational practices and systems of operation, they often continue to influence how people act beyond the life spans of the organisations which originally fostered them.\textsuperscript{71} Many theorists argue institutions adhere to a historical “path”, whereby established rules and procedures determine and constrict future alternatives, meaning historical outcomes at any given point in time are predictable outcomes of pre-established institutional arrangements.\textsuperscript{72} This approach has been applied to the Russian revolutionary case by Don Rowney, who argues that power structures established during and after 1917 were predictable outcomes of prior governmental arrangements; despite revolutionaries’ claims to be building a new order, the strength of existing material and procedural arrangements ensured “institutional survival” across the revolutionary divide.\textsuperscript{73}

Institutions are not, however, unchanging structures serving only to constrain historical choices. Retroactively drawing “paths” between points in time artificially reduces historical agency to a monolithic force pulling decisively in predictable


\textsuperscript{71} W. Richard Scott, \textit{Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests (3rd Ed.)}, Sage (2008), pp. 48-49.


directions and obscures the ways different groups and individuals seek to exert autonomous agency. As Jos Raadschelders argues, “the past presented in terms of paths is at best testimony to a reconstituted logic that is bound by context and time.”

To be a meaningful analytical concept, institutions must be demonstrated to interact with actors attempting to direct the course of events at specific historical junctures. Institutional frameworks exist in a reciprocal relationship with those engaging them; they simultaneously shape and are shaped by human actions.

Several historians of revolutionary Russia have traced such institutional developments. Craig Brandist shows that early-Soviet linguistics was shaped by interactions between multiple academic disciplines, producing novel institutional frameworks which facilitated innovative policy and research agendas.

Similarly, Holquist argues that the “political practices” of provisions management and surveillance adopted by different regimes during revolution and civil war functioned in a “mutually constitutive and symbiotic relationship” with autonomous ideological political. For the purposes of this thesis, institutions are considered for the ways they constitute an environment in which actors operate when seeking to exercise their own autonomous agency. They are seen as providing the basis for relatively stable organisational practices and forms with the capacity to endure over significant periods of time whilst nevertheless being continually shaped by human actors and the circumstances in which they operate.

I use the concept of mobilisation to account for how people became involved in revolutionary politics. Mobilisation is portrayed by some historians as synonymous with the cooption of society by political elites onto pre-determined political

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75 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, pp. 94-96.


projects. Here, I adhere to the more general definition of mobilisation suggested by Charles Tilly, which implies no fixed power relationship: “the process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participant in public life.” According to Tilly and other sociologists, the capacity for collective action is dependent on access and control over “resources” required to achieve a particular aim. This analytical framework has been most widely applied to studies of American and European social movements, which identify pre-existing organisational structures and networks as essential to mobilising social actors for political action. Despite its grounding in analyses of Western liberal society, however, this model has also been utilised by scholars of revolution, highlighting how groups form and engage in struggles against repressive and authoritarian regimes.

How people mobilise for collective action provides valuable indications of where they plan to go and how they might get there. Firstly, tracing specific political mobilisations highlights active concerns of particular groups at particular times. By collectively organising, actors identify actual causes by which to define their own political interests; organising around these concerns helps them define their own political identity and relationship to other actors, empowering them to engage in

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78 See, for example, Remington, Building Socialism, p. 11.


82 For a concise overview, see Tilly, From Mobilization to Revolution, p. 81

certain political roles whilst implicitly precluding others. Secondly, the structures contributing to group mobilisation indicate how people can act collectively. Existing organisations and networks often encompass established practices, or “repertoires”, of collective action which enable groups to act “without the burden of learning or inventing wholly new techniques of contention.” Established repertoires allow certain forms of collective action to be developed, highlighting how particular participatory practices become embedded in politics. Understanding how people mobilise is therefore critical to understanding how they become involved in revolutionary events. The broad definition employed here conceives of mobilisation as a potentially creative process in which groups may structure their own political involvement.

Finally, I seek to account for what people understood they were doing in revolution through a broad concept of ideology. Ideology is seen by some theorists as a codified structure of thought deployed as an external guide for practical action. By contrast, I consider ideologies to be fluid constructs shaped by the interplay of existing social conditions and human agency. As William Sewell argues:

Ideological structures undergo continuous reproduction and/or transformation as a result of the combined wilful actions of more or less knowledgeable actors within the constraints and the possibilities supplied by pre-existing structures. Ideologies are “transpersonal” and are therefore continually defined and redefined by actors at different levels of politics. In order to trace shifting their structures, it is

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86 Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, pp. 168-171.

necessary to account for words and actions committed by different groups and individuals in the name of political causes during a particular historical period. This approach demands a dual analytical approach. Firstly, we must consider how political logics are discursively constructed through contemporary discussions and debates; secondly, these logics must be analysed in relation to the actions of those involved in their formulation to highlight how political thought is manifested in practice and how this practice in turn influences political thought.

Sources

This thesis draws on a wide array of primary source material, most of which has not been previously consulted by Western historians. This includes archival research conducted in Krasnoiarsk. Important documents are located in the two branches of the regional archive of Krasnoiarsk krai (GAKK), including the former party archive. Fond r-258, “Krasnoiarskii Soviet, 1917”, holds a vital collection of documents related to local Soviet activities, including the minutes of meetings of both the Soviet and other revolutionary organisations, particularly soldiers’ committees, and the Soviet’s bureaucratic correspondence with other administrative bodies which provides clues as to its operational relationship with different organisations. Fond P-64, “Krasnoiarksii istoricheskii partiinyi arkhiv (Istpart)”, contains fragmentary Soviet records, including details on Soviet membership in March 1917, as well as an enormous collection of memoirs (see below). Fond 827, “Eniseiskoe zhandarmskoe upravlenie”, holds police reports leading up to 1917, giving snapshots of local social and political life before revolution, while fonds 161, “Krasnoiarskoe gorodskoe upravlenie”, and 173, “Krasnoiarskaia gorodskia Duma”, hold reports from the city Duma and other municipal organisations for 1917. Besides the documents held at GAKK, the library of the Krasnoiarsk Krai Museum of Regional Studies (KKKM) contains an impressive collection of rare published and unpublished documents, including pamphlets and memoirs, which are organised into irregularly-ordered fonds.

Local newspapers and journals, which I consulted at the main city library (GUNBKK) and KKKM, provide important information on political developments throughout 1917. I have used newspapers extensively to map out Krasnoiarsk’s
changing political landscape. The daily publication of the Soviet, *Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta*, provides useful information on the Soviet and the socialist parties and popular organisations with which it interacted. Party-affiliated newspapers, representing various Social-Democratic and Socialist-Revolutionary groupings and the liberal Kadets have been extensively used in my research. These documents can be problematic, as they view politics through party eyes, marginalising the experiences of non-party groupings. Nevertheless, they offer crucial details of party politics throughout the period in question and are vital sources for considering the discursive construction of ideologies. Several contemporary journals also helped me trace political organisations and authority structures, both during and preceding revolution. These include the Krasnoiarsk city Duma journal, *Vestnik krasnoiarskogo obshchestvennogo upravleniia (VKGOU)*, which was published throughout the pre-revolutionary war period and provides records of municipal politics, particularly the activities of the city Duma and its provisions organ, the City Provisions Commission. Unfortunately, the journal ceased publication in spring 1917, meaning that information on these bodies for most of 1917 was gathered from less reliable party political newspapers. Further vital information on local and municipal administration and politics, particularly in the months prior to revolution, was gained from the journal of city consumer cooperative, Samodeiatel’nost’ (in 1915, entitled *Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitelei*; thereafter renamed *Samodeiatel’nost’*). This journal allowed me to map out the relationship between cooperative activists and city provisions organisation and also to trace the formal and informal networks through which socialists organised before 1917.

A final important source for my research is memoirs. These come from an enormous local Istpart (Party History) collection gathered mostly in the 1950s and 1960s from participants in revolutionary events. Several important Istpart memoirs are published in heavily edited format in primary collections, although most remain

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88 On this point, see discussion of “non-partyist” activities in chapter 3, part 2.

as unpublished manuscripts in the former party archive (GAKK, fond P-64, opis 5). I located a small number of memoirs also in KKKM. Although memoirs are valuable sources, the nature of post-facto subjectivity makes them problematic, raising the possibility of memory being reconstructed in the light of subsequent events and agendas.\textsuperscript{90} This is particularly so for memoirs gathered by Istpart, which worked with the express intention of telling revolutionary history from a party perspective.\textsuperscript{91} The memoirs I consulted provided much of the basis for Soviet-era historians' work on revolutionary Krasnoiarsk and adhere to a heavily “Bolshevised” narrative of revolutionary events, focusing on the Bolshevik party's struggles with its political rivals and the linear progression of revolution towards soviet power. Nonetheless, they provide details otherwise unavailable in other sources and are vital in tracing the locations and actions of individuals otherwise missing from contemporary records. They also provide important descriptions of organisational procedures and routines as they worked in practice. Wherever used, memoirs are compared with other sources to corroborate and sharpen the details they provide.

**Thesis Structure**

The thesis covers revolutionary events in Krasnoiarsk and the emergence of soviet power from several distinct angles. Its five chapters are ordered thematically, rather than chronologically, although successive chapters build on details and arguments developed earlier in the thesis. Chapter one examines the outbreak of revolution, considering how people mobilised to overthrow local Tsarist authorities and established revolutionary authority structures which replaced them. Unlike other chapters, which cover the whole period March-October 1917, only the first days of March are considered here. I focus on several social groups during this short time


period, including socialists, public activists, and workers and soldiers, considering how they organised and interacted with one another.

Chapter two discusses the strengthening of the Soviet as a political representative organisation. It analyses how socialists sought to organise workers and soldiers into a coherent political constituency around the Soviet’s elective deputy system. I consider the Soviet’s socialist leaders’ designs for political representation as a reflection of their own rapidly-crystallising revolutionary agendas and trace the ways the Soviet engaged with autonomous worker and soldier organisations, demonstrating that different groups played an active role in determining how they participated in Soviet politics.

Chapter three investigates the dynamics of party politics and the changing ways parties sought to control the Soviet in 1917. It problematises the oversimplified historiographical narrative of “Bolshevisation” of Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary politics by considering how parties influenced Soviet organisational forms and practices. I trace how party activists introduced parties as functioning components of Soviet politics, viewing this process as part of an interactive relationship between parties and elective politics which transformed both in different ways.

Chapter four discusses the changing “geography of power” in and around Krasnoiarsk. It investigates local actors’ efforts to secure and expand their own roles in all-Russian revolutionary politics through interactions with formal authority structures at a local, regional, and national level, considering, in turn, local conflicts with centrally-appointed commissars, the work of the Krasnoiarsk city Duma, and the regional-level organisation of soviet activities in Eniseisk guberniia and Siberia more generally.

Chapter five considers the Soviet’s administrative governmental roles, focusing particularly on provisions management. It highlights the reasons for Soviet intervention in the provisions question and the ways it sought to engage with it, considering particularly the activities of the Accounting-Valuation Commission, through which Soviet efforts were directed. The chapter brings into focus questions of administrative agency and inter-organisational relations in revolution, demonstrating how administrative personnel influenced the formulation and
execution of Soviet policy and highlighting close operational relations between the Soviet and other administrative bodies.
CHAPTER I ★ A Revolution in March: Mobilising against Tsarism

Tsarist rule in Krasnoiarsk fell in a matter of days to a rapid and decisive political mobilisation. At the beginning of March 1917, workers, soldiers, socialist intelligentsia, and other social actors overthrew local Tsarist authorities, establishing a new revolutionary order fronted by a Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, which aspired to represent proletarians and military units, and a broader Committee of Public Safety (CPS), which claimed representation of all social groups in the city. This chapter considers the outbreak of revolution in Krasnoiarsk and the establishment of the city’s Soviet and CPS, focusing on how people mobilised for revolution and the revolutionary authority structures they helped create.

Mobilisation is the process by which social actors become active participants in political events.¹ It requires control of “resources”, including formal and informal organisational structures and networks which allow people to act as cohesive groupings.² The importance of pre-existing organisational structures and networks in revolutionary mobilisation has been demonstrated by historians of the February Revolution in Petrograd, who have overturned previously commonplace ideas of the “spontaneity” of revolution. The meticulous research of Tsuyoshi Hasegawa indicated the existence of numerous local and factory-level socialist organisations which helped initiate protests.³ More recently, Michael Melancon has convincingly argued that these organisations provided the “planning, preparation, organization, and leadership” required to transform popular protest into revolution.⁴ By contrast, remarkably little is known of how the overthrow of Tsarism was organised in the

¹ For a full discussion, see thesis introduction.


Russian provinces. Some historians have assumed that provincial revolutions followed as automatic responses to events in the capital, leaving the time it took for news to reach a locality as the main contingent factor determining when revolution occurred. As Rex Wade contends:

revolution spread easily and quickly to the provincial cities and then to the countryside. Generally the local revolutions triumphed so easily, and there was such a feeling of them being a general action against a handful of impotent old officials, that in many cities there was something of a festive air to it all.

The recent local turn in Western historiography challenges some assumptions of a simple revolutionary contagion from centre to periphery, providing glimpses of close-knit groups of activists working to organise and coordinate on their own initiative. Nonetheless, existing studies lack systematic analysis of the organisational structures and networks used to mobilise locally, leaving key questions unanswered. Which structures contributed to local revolutionary mobilisations? How were these established in authoritarian political conditions? And what kinds of collective action and organisation did they facilitate?

Krasnoiarsk provides a valuable opportunity to consider these questions. Due to tremendous geographical distance from Petrograd and interrupted Empire-wide communications networks, the city organised for revolution in relative isolation. Local organisations and networks were critical to challenging Tsarist authorities, enabling a core of activists to rapidly mobilise the local population and establish the

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6 Wade, *Russian Revolution*, p. 50.


8 Donald Raleigh offers lengthy analysis of the conditions of local politics prior to revolution in 1917, but nevertheless gives little indication of how these affected the ways in which the overthrow of local Tsarist authorities was achieved: *Revolution on the Volga*, chapters 1-2.
Committee of Public Safety and Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. Moreover, the rapid establishment of the CPS and Soviet, which both relied on extensive cooperation between different social groupings, provides focus on the social basis for revolutionary action, helping situate local revolutionary events in their broader social and temporal contexts. Various historians have argued that the formative experience of constructing soviets in 1905 was critical to their re-emergence in early-1917, “prov[ing] that these organizations could adapt instantly to widespread needs in a new revolutionary rising.”

This argument, a fulcrum of Communist-era historiography, has its own specific inflections for Krasnoiarsk, where the existence of a joint worker-soviet soviet during the 1905 *Krasnoiarskaia respublika* led Russian historians to suggest local “revolutionary traditions” between workers and soldiers provided a basis for joint revolutionary action twelve years later. Close analysis of events on the ground helps break down such deterministic explanations for emerging revolutionary alliances. Although, by uniting socialists, workers, and soldiers, the 1917 Krasnoiarsk Soviet resembled that of 1905, there was no straight line linking the two: leading activists involved in the overthrow of Tsarism arrived in Krasnoiarsk only after 1905 and had no direct experience of the city’s first soviet; moreover, the mechanisms through which they organised for revolution in March 1917 were firmly rooted in structures which developed over the preceding years, particularly during the Great War. This chapter highlights the importance to revolutionary action of legal organisations and networks established around Krasnoiarsk’s consumer cooperative movement and military garrison, both of which expanded dramatically during war and provided the means for rapid mobilisation of socialist exiles, workers, and soldiers. Finally, the simultaneous establishment of the Soviet and CPS allows us to consider how emerging revolutionary bodies sought to reconstruct authority in early-March, the relations which existed between them, and the balance of power in the

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aftermath of the collapse of Tsarism, shedding further light on revolutionary power arrangements outside Petrograd.

This chapter considers these issues in five sections. It first traces those individuals who acted to bring down Tsarist authorities, asking who formed the activist core in early-March and how they coordinated their activities. The next three sections investigate how local activists worked with different social groups to establish new revolutionary authorities, firstly considering the CPS and mobilisation of "society", then the Soviet and mobilisation of workers, and thirdly the mobilisation of soldiers. The final section considers relations between the Soviet and CPS, testing the validity of the "dual power" thesis during the first days of revolution.

The Start of Revolution: Mobilising an Elite

How attempts to overthrow local Tsarist authorities began and the ways they were organised depended heavily on local circumstances. In localities situated close to Petrograd, where rumours of revolution began to circulate even before the overthrow of authorities in the capital, brief and dramatic popular uprisings unseated Tsarist elites.\(^{11}\) Further afield, where the arrival of news from Petrograd depended on long-distance communications systems, revolution was often delayed until early-March, when local activists received word of events in the capital and sought to mobilise the population around them, and typically took place with little violence.\(^{12}\) In Krasnoiarsk, revolution began as an elite mobilisation of socialists and public activists and was organised via well-developed social networks within the city, enabling rapid mobilisation and coordination of various different groups and actors.

The final years of Tsarism in Krasnoiarsk were marred by growing economic hardship and political tensions. Between 1914 and 1916, living costs rocketed: average prices for flour and meat increased by eighty percent, while the cost of

\(^{11}\) Getzler, *Kronstadt*, pp. 19-25; Phillips, "‘A Bad Business’".

\(^{12}\) Raleigh, *Revolution on the Volga*, pp. 75-79; Badcock, *Politics and the People*, pp. 31-34.
vegetables and dairy products grew to between two and eight times pre-war levels.\textsuperscript{13} Local police observed general discontent with war and the government. From late-1915, wide support was reported amongst railway workers for “defeatist” positions on the war, while municipal employees were also chided for their questionable political attitudes.\textsuperscript{14} The final months of the old regime saw several major disturbances. In January 1916, local printers downed tools over pay and conditions, halting the city’s publishing industry for several weeks and prompting rumours of a general strike.\textsuperscript{15} Five months later, a deadly city-wide pogrom erupted over the high cost of food, as residents attacked the stores and homes of Jewish traders.\textsuperscript{16} Nonetheless, as in other provincial cities, revolutionary organisation in Krasnoiarsk remained weak and conspiratorial groups of socialists struggled to establish an organisational foothold amongst the local population.\textsuperscript{17} Before the outbreak of war in 1914, embryonic socialist party committees established by dedicated activists were incessantly infiltrated by police spies and routed in a wearying cycle of reconstruction and repression.\textsuperscript{18} Over the following years, clandestine political circles (\textit{kruzhki}) functioned amongst exiles and some local workers, but they were limited to personal contacts and remained vulnerable to police infiltration.\textsuperscript{19} Opportunities for city-wide revolutionary organisation were

\textsuperscript{13} Figures in \textit{Vestnik krasnoiarskogo gorodskogo obshchestvennogo upravleniiia} (henceforth, \textit{VKGOU}), 12-13, July 21, 1916, p. 54. See also chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{14} Political survey of Eniseisk gubernii, 1915: GAKK 827/1/282, ll. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{15} Memoirs of strike organiser, Dolbeshkin, GAKK P-64/5/156, ll. 8-18.


\textsuperscript{17} Suny, \textit{Baku Commune}, pp. 59-68; Raleigh, \textit{Revolution on the Volga}, pp. 66-73.


extremely restricted. Amid rising social and political unrest, gendarmes reported in 1915 that “[Political] Organisations do not exist, all sentiments are held amongst individual personalities.” Repeated efforts by political exiles to establish a stable political base amongst the local population were foiled. In January 1916, several Social Democrats sought to transform the city printers’ strike into a general political strike. Gendarmes, well informed of the plot, scuttled the “strike committee” a day before the planned action, detaining its leaders and arresting dozens of local socialists; the following day passed off without incident. By June, following further arrests of local socialists, police reported with satisfaction that revolutionary work had been “interrupted, [and] apathy and fear of new arrests continues.”

While the revolutionary underground provided little stability, socialists capitalised on legal opportunities to organise, particularly around consumer cooperatives, which grew rapidly in size and number across the Russian Empire in the last decades of Tsarism. Between 1913 and 1917, workers and political exiles in Krasnoiarsk helped established a vibrant cooperative movement around city consumer cooperative, Samodeiatel’nost’, and regional consumer cooperative federation, the Eniseisk Guberniia Association of Consumer Societies (EGACS). During the war years, local consumer cooperation expanded remarkably, as residents flocked to cooperative sales counters for shelter from consumer goods price rises. Samodeiatel’nost’ membership grew from 320 in September 1913, to over 2,500

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20 GAKK 827/1/282, l. 2.


22 Political survey of Eniseisk guberniia, June 1, 1916: GAKK 827/1/282, l. 22.

23 Eugene M. Kayden, Alexis N. Antsiferov, The Coöperative Movement in Russia during the War, Yale University Press (1929), chap. 2.

three years later, while its sales turnover trebled in the same period.\textsuperscript{25} The cooperative movement's fortunes were bolstered by leading cooperators' participation in municipal initiatives to combat food price rises, particularly through the city Duma's City Provisions Commission, which engaged Samodeiatel'nost' and EGACS leaders in order to tackle rising living costs from mid-1915 onwards, enabling cooperators to secure significant government loans and sales concessions for their organisations in the process.\textsuperscript{26}

Legal organisation provided socialists with valuable opportunities to establish stable organisational networks during times of heightened repression.\textsuperscript{27} Social-Democratic exiles arriving in Krasnoiarsk joined party comrades at Samodeiatel'nost' sales counters and offices, while Socialist-Revolutionaries gathered around the more agrarian-focused EGACS.\textsuperscript{28} For individuals with much-needed clerical and administrative skills, consumer cooperation became a means to assert considerable influence. Moisei Frumkin (1878-1938), an experienced Bolshevik activist, statistician, and future Communist finance commissar, arrived in Krasnoiarsk in late-1915 following exile in nearby Kansk uezd and was quickly elected onto the Samodeiatel'nost' executive board.\textsuperscript{29} He was joined in March 1916 by Nikolai Meshcheriakov (1865-1942), a fellow Bolshevik exile and former student at St. Petersburg's Technological Institute, who assumed responsibility for the

\textsuperscript{25} Samodeiatel'nost' potrebitelia, 9-10, September-October 1916, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{26} Declaration of City Provisions Commission: VKGOU, 9, July 1, 1915, pp. 42-43.


\textsuperscript{29} M.I. Frumkin, “Avtobiografiia”, \textit{Bol’shaia biograficheskaia entsiklopediia} (2009): http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc_biography/30396/%D0%A4%D1%80%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BD. Accessed 06/05/2015.
cooperative’s cultural and educational activities.\textsuperscript{30} The Menshevik, Anatolii Baikalov (Baikaloff), a leading Siberian theorist of consumer cooperation and future anti-Communist émigré writer, held secretarial positions in both Samodeiatel’nost‘ and EGACS, where he worked alongside prominent Socialist-Revolutionaries, including Vissarion Gurevich and Nil Fomin.\textsuperscript{31} Legal activism enabled socialists to enter local public and political life, promoting extensive cooperation across party lines and facilitating city-wide organisational networks.\textsuperscript{32} As Communist-era historians emphasised, personal links connected cooperatives to illegal socialist circles, in which several prominent cooperators were actively involved.\textsuperscript{33} At the same time, the cooperative movement’s semi-institutionalised status within the city’s municipal provisions apparatus provided individual activists with public profiles, particularly Frumkin, Meshcheriakov, and Baikalov, who became \textit{de facto} Samodeiatel’nost‘ and EGACS representatives on the City Provisions Commission.\textsuperscript{34}

Despite its formally legal status, Krasnoiarsk’s consumer cooperative movement and the various networks – legal or otherwise – which it fostered, meant socialists were not unorganised or incapable of mobilising by 1917. Nonetheless, memoirists maintain that any political crisis was largely unanticipated. Gurevich recalls that, “before the February revolution of 1917, there were no open displays of


\textsuperscript{32} Gurevich and Frumkin both recall fraternal relations across political factions: M.I. Frumkin, “Fevral’- oktiabr’ 1917g. v Krasnoiarske”, \textit{Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia}, 9 (1923), p. 140; Gurevich, “Fevral’skaia Revoliutsiia”, pp. 112-113.

\textsuperscript{33} Safronov, \textit{Oktiabr’ v Sibiri}, p. 129. Prominent cooperators were active in underground socialist circles, including Bolshevik Samodeiatel’nost‘ board member, Sergei Bal’batov, who recalls unofficial circles existing around the cooperative before 1917. S.P. Bal’batov, “Avtobiografiia”, KKM v-f 1843, Avtobiografiia, p. 1; \textit{Samodeiatel’nost‘}, 8, November 1915, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{34} Participant data from the City Provisions Commission in \textit{VKGOU}, 1915-1916.
agitation and protest, as there had been before the October revolution of 1905.”

Frumkin goes further still, contending:

The February events appeared unexpectedly for us. On our horizon there were no signs visible, not only of the quick outcome of revolution, but also of more-or-less-significant individual outbreaks.36

Gurevich and Frumkin’s protestations of ignorance echo interpretations of the “spontaneous” nature of the overthrow of Tsarism dominant in European and Soviet historiography at the time their memoirs were published (1927 and 1923, respectively); they should be treated rather lightly.37 As Melancon observes of Petrograd, there is ample evidence (including from the memoirists’ own accounts!) that people were aware of a major political crisis brewing.38 In January 1917, following murmurs of mass worker demonstrations in Petrograd, socialists were put into a heightened state of alert when a State Duma deputy for Eniseisk guberniia, Vostrotin, visited Krasnoiarsk to gauge support amongst local politicians and public activists for an anticipated “overthrow of the regime” (perevorot) in the capital.39 Gurevich was apparently so convinced of an unfolding political crisis that he penned an article for the Samodeiatel’nost’ journal which its editor, Meshcheriakov, refused to print for fear of reprisals against the cooperative.40 Despite Meshcheriakov’s reticence, however, he and other socialists intensified their own organisational efforts. Frumkin recalls agreeing to establish a legal socialist newspaper with Meshcheriakov and two local SRs, Nil Fomin and Evgenii Kolosov.41 Meanwhile, gendarmes reported renewed attempts to strengthen and unite clandestine socialist


36 Frumkin, “Fevral’-oktiabr”, p. 140.


38 Ibid., pp. 4-14.

39 Frumkin, “Fevral’-oktiabr”, p. 140.


41 Frumkin, “Fevral’-okriabr”, p. 140.
circles in the city through the formation of an illegal “united organisation” of Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries.  

News of revolution in Petrograd finally reached Krasnoiarsk via the railway telegraph office on February 28, 1917, in the form of a telegram sent by State Duma member, Bublikov. Local Tsarist authorities immediately suppressed the information, but rumours of a secretive communication from the capital broke out the following day. On the morning of March 2, these rumours were confirmed to several well-placed cooperative activists by “trusted individuals” within local government. Drawing on the networks around the city’s cooperative movement, local socialists gathered to discuss the situation. Gurevich, Fomin, and Baikalov arrived at the Eniseisk Guberniia Association of Consumer Societies offices to demand their fellow cooperators take action, but were rebuffed by the EGACS board, which feared reprisals. Undeterred, the three headed to the Samodeiatel’nost’ headquarters, where a separate meeting was hastily organised amongst prominent cooperative activists, including Frumkin and Meshcheriakov. Alongside cooperators, the meeting was also attended by several underground socialist activists, including future Krasnoiarsk Soviet chairmen, Iakov Dubrovinskii and Aleksei Okulov. Although active in local socialist circles, Dubrovinskii and Okulov were not, themselves, participants in the cooperative and were likely informed of the meeting via personal contacts. Dubrovinskii (1882-1918), a left-wing Menshevik exile and the younger brother of prominent Bolshevik activist, Iosif, was noted by gendarmes as a leading member of local socialist circles. He held close ties to various cooperative activists, including Frumkin, with whom he had helped organise the abortive SD “strike committee” to lead the printers’ strike in January 1916. Meanwhile, the Bolshevik, Okulov (1880-1939), was born in Eniseisk guberniia to gold merchants but had spent many years in

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43 Gurevich, “Fevral’ skaia Revoliutsiia”, p. 115.

44 Ibid., pp. 115-116.

45 Bogaev, Meshalkin (eds.), Boitsy revoliutsii, pp. 72-75. On Dubrovinskii and Frumkin’s role in SD strike committee: GAKK 827/3/55, ll. 33-34, l. 64.
European Russia and emigration before returning to Krasnoiarsk in 1916. Gendarme reports identify him as a participant in the illegal socialist “united organisation” established in January 1917, through which he may have also had contacts with cooperators, although he was probably informed of the meeting at the Samodeiatel’nost’ offices on March 3 by his sister and prominent Samodeiatel’nost’ activist, Glafira Teodorovich, who was also in attendance that day.

The Samodeiatel’nost’ meeting swiftly prepared for action. After electing an “interparty committee” and drafting a leaflet to spread news of revolution, a team of activists was dispatched to petition Krasnoiarsk’s mayor, Potylitsyn, to convene a session of the city Duma. Upon their arrival, Potylitsyn, whom Frumkin

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46 Bogaev, Meshalkin (eds.), Boitsy revoliutsii, pp. 159-162.
47 GAKK 827/1/283, ll. 12-13.
disparagingly recalls as a “trusted servant of the [Tsarist] governor”, initially denied reports of revolution before finally acknowledging the situation in Petrograd and agreeing to summon Duma members and “outstanding citizens” to a private meeting the same evening.\(^49\) Who comprised the team which made contact with the mayor is not entirely clear: most probably, however, it included City Provisions Commission participants, Frumkin, who later recalled the episode with clarity in his memoirs, and Baikalov, whom Gurevich notes as a participant at the private meeting that evening.\(^50\) It is possible their actions were coordinated with sympathetic city Duma members, with whom they had personal ties through wartime municipal work. Writing in summer 1917, the respected local doctor and liberal city Duma member, Vladimir Krutovskii, who held personal acquaintance with Frumkin, recalled being part of a “group of deputies” who demanded the Duma be convened on March 2.\(^51\) At any rate, Duma members were key to widening the organising circle of revolution. Under the combined pressure of public activists and liberal Duma members, the private meeting convened by mayor Potylitsyn that evening acknowledged the need to take some form of action and called a public session of the city Duma for the following day, March 3, to discuss the matter further.\(^52\)

**The Committee of Public Safety: Mobilising Society**

The initiative of cooperative activists on March 2 helped establish a broad revolutionary leadership through which to mobilise Krasnoiarsk’s population. The first evidence of wider political mobilisation came on March 3, when public

\(^{49}\) Frumkin, “Fevral’-oktiabr’”, p. 141. Although Frumkin suggests this meeting was a public session including also several "social organisations", Gurevich recalls it as a smaller, private meeting in preparation for a public meeting the following evening: Gurevich, “Fevral’skaia Revoliutsiia”, p. 116. Duma records document the public meeting on March 3, confirming Gurevich’s chronology: *VKGOU*, 5-6, March 3, 1917, pp. 1-4.


\(^{51}\) *Sibirskie zapiski*, 4-5, August-October 1917, p. 106.

\(^{52}\) Gurevich, "Fevral’skaia Revoliutsiia", p. 116.
organisations representing Krasnoiarsk’s organised, activist society (obshchestvo), gathered at the pre-arranged Duma meeting to establish the city’s first revolutionary authority, the Committee of Public Safety (Komitet obshchestvennoi bezopasnosti: CPS).\textsuperscript{53} Public activism had expanded in the decades before revolution, as Russians enlisted \textit{en masse} onto professional, educational, economic, and charitable organisations.\textsuperscript{54} By 1917, these organisations and the civic activism they promoted offered both a vision and a vehicle for organising mass political participation.

At six o’clock on the evening of March 3, representatives from eleven public organisations gathered at the premises of City Board (Gorodskaiia uprava) for a joint public meeting with local Duma deputies. Public activists had used the day to organise their members and elect delegates. Several were closely linked to the activist core already established around Samodeiatel’nost’. Samodeiatel’nost’ itself was represented by a four-man delegation, including Frumkin and Meshcheriakov.\textsuperscript{55} Meshcheriakov also represented the local branch of the Imperial Technological Society while Baikalov was one of two EGACS representatives. Other participants of the previous day’s events included Gurevich, who represented a “Bureau of United Democratic Organisations”, presumably the interparty committee established by activists the day before, alongside a Bolshevik, Aleksandr Shlikhter.\textsuperscript{56} Other organisations to send representatives to the meeting held close ties to municipal government. They included the local War-Industries Committee, established by local


\textsuperscript{54} B.N. Mironov, \textit{The Standard of Living and Revolutions in Imperial Russia, 1700-1917}, Routledge (2012), p. 437.

\textsuperscript{55} Gurevich, “Fevral’skaiia revoliutsiia”, pp. 118-119.

authorities in 1915 to coordinate the production and procurement of materials needed for the military; the Free Firefighting Society, which operated as an important component of local government throughout the pre-revolutionary period; two Jewish charitable organisations; and the southern-Eniseisk Congress of Gold-Mining Industrialists.\textsuperscript{57} These organisations seem to have assembled delegations with the help of activist Duma deputies, particularly Krutovskii, who had extensive links to voluntary and professional organisations and who recalls their rapid mobilisation during the day.\textsuperscript{58} A delegation of railway workers, organised with the help of local socialists (see below), also attended the meeting.

In the face of feverish mobilisation, Tsarist authorities remained conspicuously inactive. The situation was drastically different to revolutionary events in Petrograd, where loyalist government forces and revolutionaries engaged in days of bloody street battles, but mirrored other provincial towns, where the resolve of bewildered Tsarist officials and security forces quickly wilted.\textsuperscript{59} Following the overthrow of their superiors in Petrograd, political and geographic isolation in the provinces placed even willing servants of the old regime in a bind: without orders from Petrograd on how to proceed, they now dithered while events overtook them. The situation in Krasnoiarsk was further complicated by the absence of Tsarist governor, Gololobov, who was in Irkutsk on March 2 and returned only the following day. By this time, one local newspaper, \textit{Eniseiskii krai}, had begun openly printing news of revolution in Petrograd. Nonetheless, a meeting of prominent officials


convened by the governor declined to act in the vain hope of a reversal of fortunes while, outside, word of revolution spread unhindered.⁶⁰

While public organisations rallied their members, the rapid spread of news attracted many otherwise unaffiliated residents – including throngs of workers and soldiers – to the City Board premises.⁶¹ By evening, such large crowds had gathered that the meeting had to be relocated to the larger city theatre, several streets away.⁶² Here, Krutovskii recalled jubilant scenes:

[...] all the stalls, boxes, balconies, and the gallery were densely filled by the public. Delegates and deputies from different organisations and charitable societies, which had already succeeded in gathering beforehand on that day surrounded the [duma] members on the stage. The session of the duma truly turned into a political rally [miting]. Speeches flowed in a river. The bunch of city [duma] members faded into the background.⁶³

Amidst the euphoria, the meeting voted to endorse the Provisional Government before establishing a twenty-one-person provisional Committee of Public Safety (CPS), including representatives of the Duma and all assembled public organisations.⁶⁴ The venerable Krutovskii, who was elected chair, promptly dispatched a telegram notifying the Council of Ministers in Petrograd of the CPS’s formation: “The authority of local representatives of the old power has been rocked. The population do not trust them.”⁶⁵

By drawing its membership and legitimacy from local public organisations, the CPS closely resembled revolutionary public committees established simultaneously

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 120.
⁶² Public Duma meeting minutes: VKGOU, 5-6, March 3, 1917, p. 3.
⁶³ Sibirskie zapiski, 4-5, August-October 1917, p. 106.
⁶⁴ VKGOU, 5-6, March 3, 1917, p. 4.
⁶⁵ Quoted in Pimashkov (ed.), Krasnoiarsk, pp. 276-277.
These organisations based their authority firmly on the principle of societal “enlistment”, in which government was deemed to be effective “to the extent that it earned the confidence of society and enlisted its representatives into full membership of the political class.” In Krasnoiarsk, establishing a public committee was seen as both a political and practical imperative. Amongst the first to call for a public committee were socialists, particularly those involved in local public activism, who reconvened at the Samodeiatel’nost’ offices on the afternoon of March 3 to discuss the issue of revolutionary authority. Their visions of a joint committee of public organisations drew on existing models of supra-class organisation. Gurevich, who was present at the meeting, suggests inspiration came from the Union of Unions, which had existed to coordinate broad public opposition to Tsarism in 1905. More recent precedents must also have informed socialists, many of whom had experienced collaborative work between government and “society” through wartime municipal organisations, including city Duma commissions on provisions and refugees. Throughout the war, Samodeiatel’nost’ leaders vigorously pursued wider social representation in local politics, achieving notable success in the Duma’s City Provisions Commission, which agreed to co-opt representatives from outside the restrictive Tsarist census via public organisations, including cooperatives and trade unions. Gurevich’s memoirs suggest the city Duma’s ability to circumnavigate the electoral census was firmly in the minds of socialists, who decided to establish a new

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66 Similar public committees formed across the Empire under a variety of names: Andreev, *Mestnye Sovety*, pp. 26-29.


69 Gurevich was secretary and deputy chair of the Krasnoiarsk City Committee for Refugees until the body was shut in spring 1916: Gurevich, “Fevral’skaia Revoliutsiia”, pp. 113-114. See also chapter 2.

authority through the Duma because of its authority to convene commissions which included representatives of non-census society.\textsuperscript{71}

The CPS also constituted a measure to draw social actors into practical political work as soon as possible in order to stave off the destructive potential of a disorganised “popular movement”, which was feared might lapse into wanton violence unless properly organised. This fear was not unfounded: while revolution proceeded peacefully in most localities, wherever street protests took the lead in deposing hated Tsarist authorities, the risk of violence was very real.\textsuperscript{72} Faced with the toe-curling prospect of unrestrained popular revolution, even members of the old guard looked to public activists to pacify residents. On the evening of March 3, the Duma meeting was read a telegram from the Tsarist governor of Irkutsk guberniia, Pil'ts, who had reluctantly sanctioned a Committee of Public Organisations in Irkutsk the day before and now urged his counterpart, Gololobov, to “turn to representatives of public circles” to prevent “anarchy” “by their influence on the population.” A preoccupation with the risk of chaos was reflected by the meeting, which pointedly tasked the CPS with securing “order and calm in the city.”\textsuperscript{73} The concern to maintain public order was typical of revolutionary activists across Russia during this time, who reacted with alarm at the possibility of mass violence and “hooliganism” which was associated by liberals and socialists alike with popular political unrest.\textsuperscript{74} In Krasnoiarsk, the need for a new authority structure to avert such disorder was also surely rooted in recent memories of the May 1916 pogrom, which served as a vivid reminder of the dangers of uncontrolled mass actions.

\textsuperscript{71} Gurevich, "Fevral'skaia revoliutsiia", p. 119.


\textsuperscript{73} VKGOU, 5-6, March 3, 1917, pp. 3-4.

The Soviet I: Mobilising Workers

While the Krasnoiarsk Duma and public activists set about establishing a revolutionary coalition of all social classes, socialists began organising local workers. Workers’ first public appearance in revolution came on the evening of March 3, when a delegation from the railway workshops arrived at the public Duma meeting. Over the following days, their emergence as an organised revolutionary force was confirmed by the establishment of the city Soviet, which sought to unite workers into a class-specific revolutionary organ. According to Gurevich, the formation of a soviet was first mooted by socialists at the Samodeiatel’nost’ offices on March 3.75 A Social-Democratic leaflet published that evening urged “citizens of Krasnoiarsk” to send delegates to a “Soviet of workers’ deputies”.76 How far organisation had progressed by this stage is unclear. Gurevich, who was not involved in its establishment, dates the first elections of deputies to March 3, claiming the Soviet first met that evening. By contrast, Frumkin and Ivan Khalimon, a railwayman who helped organise the Soviet, both recall the first elections being held at the railway workshops on the following day.77 It therefore seems likely that, as was the case in Petrograd several days before, any first session of the Krasnoiarsk Soviet held on March 3 involved only an initiatory group of socialist organisers.78

75 Gurevich, "Fevral’skaia Revoliutsiia", p. 119.

77 Gurevich, "Fevral’skaia Revoliutsiia", p. 120. Frumkin, “Fevral’-oktiabr’”, p. 142; Khalimon, unpublished memoir, GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 5. Frumkin incorrectly dates the Duma’s public meeting to March 2, suggesting the Soviet was established on March 3. However, his chronology of events agrees with Khalimon’s memoirs.

78 Socialist intelligentsia organised a “Provisional Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies” in Petrograd on February 27, in whose name they issued appeals for workers to elect deputies: Hasegawa, February Revolution, pp. 330-331.
By 1917, Krasnoiarsk’s industrial workforce numbered over 10,000, around a third of which was employed at the city’s railway workshops.79 As in 1905, when railway strike committees provided the organisational basis for the first Krasnoiarsk Soviet, railwaymen were the first workers to mobilise for revolution. On March 3 and 4, socialists gathered at the Samodeiatel’nost’ headquarters sent at least two delegations to the workshops, urging workers to elect representatives first to the public Duma meeting and then to the projected Soviet of Workers’ Deputies.80 Surviving data on worker elections in early-March reveal railwaymen elected sixty-eight of the eighty-six worker deputies sent to the CPS and Soviet over the following days.81 Positing the continuation of distinct “revolutionary traditions” amongst local railway workers, Communist-era historian, V.P. Safronov, attributed their rapid mobilisation to a continuing workers’ movement in the workshops.82 Certainly, by late-1915, local gendarmes were wary of the possibility of any socialist activity close the railway workshops, where, as one report warned, “a large percentage of workers remember the days of the Krasnoiarskaia respublika.”83 Nonetheless, despite (or due to) officials’ concerns, conditions at the railway workshops by 1917 were not conducive to revolutionary organisation. The strategic importance of Russia’s transport networks in war resulted in strict employment regulations barring political exiles from the workshops, while worker participation in strikes or political activities resulted in speedy dismissal.84 Evidence of wartime political organisation amongst railway workers is underwhelming. In July 1914, the declaration of war stoked tensions amongst some railwaymen, who expressed opposition to the conflict whilst nevertheless rejecting open, “demonstrative acts” (demonstrativnye vystupleniia) of

79 Figures on Siberian worker populations in Safronov, Oktiabr’ v Sibiri, p. 51. These figures do not appear to include white-collar workers and employees (sluzhashchie), who organised extensively in 1917: see chapter 2.

80 GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 5; Frumkin, “Fevral’-oktiabr’”, p. 142.

81 Lists of first Soviet and CPS deputies from workers and soldiers: GAKK P-64/3/82, ll. 1-4.

82 Safronov, Oktiabr’ v Sibiri, pp. 89-95.

83 GAKK 827/1/282, l. 2.

dissent, evidently for fear of reprisals. Industrial organisation at the workshops likewise remained minimal, with no permanent union existing before 1917. The only strike of significance to break out in the workshops during the war, in February 1916, resulted in the dismissal of forty workers.

In place of more overtly political organisation, consumer cooperation offered the main point of contact between railway workers and socialists. From its establishment in 1913, Samodeiatel'nost' included numerous activists from the railway workshops and railwaymen seem to have comprised a majority of its original membership. By mid-1916, the cooperative had a firm organisational base amongst local workers, with two of its four trade counters operating in the worker district of Nikolaevsk. Alongside questions of trade, consumer cooperation also served the purpose of bringing railway worker and intelligentsia socialists into regular contact and joint work, bridging the social gulf which divided the two groups. In 1915 and 1916, at least fourteen different railway workers served alongside socialist exiles on the cooperative’s board, totalling around half its total membership. At celebrations to mark the cooperative’s third anniversary, in September 1916, Samodeiatel'nost'

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85 Gendarme agent reports on SD activities in railway workshops, July 19, 23, 1914: GAKK 827/1/351, ll. 3-5.


88 Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitelia, 7, June 1916, pp. 9-10.

89 On the role of legal organisations facilitating worker-socialist contact, see Bonnell, Roots of Rebellion, pp. 332-333. Worker memoirists stress the significance of joint worker-intelligentsia work: Sysoev, "Vospominaniia", pp. 2-3; GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 5.

90 Samodeiatel’nost’ board elections: Samodeiatel’nost’, 4-5, June-August 1915, p. 13; Samodeiatel’nost’, 8, November 1915, p. 12; Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitelia, 3, March 1916, p. 7; Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitelia, 11-12, November-December 1916, pp. 16-17.
secretary, A.F. Sal’strem, hailed the collaborative ethic on the board, where “the jacket of the city intelligent and the blouse of the railway worker were united.”

In the first turbulent days of revolution, cooperative activists fulfilled a critical mediatory role between railway workers and the socialist intelligentsia, enabling information to reach the workshops and broaching the social divide between the two groups to facilitate joint action. On March 3, while socialists at the Samodeiatel’nost’ offices prepared a delegation to organise worker elections to that evening’s Duma meeting, several determined railway workers spread word amongst colleagues. Arriving at the railway foundry that morning for work, Samodeiatel’nost’ board member, Ivan Khalimon, was informed of revolution in Petrograd by a railwayman and fellow cooperator, Novikov. At Novikov’s instigation, Khalimon went round each workshop in turn, spreading the news and urging workers to attend a meeting with socialists outside the workshops that afternoon. Khalimon was not the only one to act. In the wagon shop, the painter and cooperator, Dmitrii Osharov, learned of revolution when Aleksei Savvateev, a railwayman and prominent Samodeiatel’nost’ board member, appeared bearing a telegram with the news. According to Khalimon, rumours that gendarmes would disperse the planned meeting dissuaded most workers from leaving their benches on March 3 and a socialist delegation, including Dubrovinskii and Okulov, was received in a square near the workshops by around only thirty railwaymen. Nonetheless, the gathered workers elected several individuals to the Duma session that evening, ensuring they would be represented at the Committee of Public Safety’s establishment and no doubt alerting more reticent workers to the possibility for action. On March 4, workers defied gendarmes in large numbers to attend a second meeting with socialists, this time in the railway assembly shop, where they were urged to elect deputies to the proposed Soviet of Workers’ Deputies.

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92 GAKK P-64/5/686, l. 5.
93 Memoir excerpts, various: GAKK P-64/5/686, ll. 4-5.
94 GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 5.
95 Ibid.
Besides providing links between workers and intelligentsia socialists, worker-cooperators also took the lead organizing elections. Khalimon’s memoirs identify two Samodeiatel’nost’ board members, Zaitsev and Kozlov, as representatives elected by the thirty-or-so railwaymen at the meeting with socialists outside the workshops on March 3. The published minutes of the Duma meeting that evening note Zaitsev and a certain Poduzov, probably also a Samodeiatel’nost’ activist, joining the CPS as worker representatives. Records indicate numerous worker cooperators were also elected deputies to the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies in the following days. Of fifty-five Soviet deputies and candidate deputies elected by railway workers before March 9, 1917, nine were Samodeiatel’nost’ board members at some point between 1915 and late-1916, while a further four are identified as cooperative members in a membership list from January 1915. In at least six of the nine railway workshops to hold Soviet elections between March 4 and 9, one or more long-term Samodeiatel’nost’ member or board member was amongst the deputies elected.

96 GAKK P-64/5/686, l. 5. Zaitsev and Kozlov were elected to the Samodeiatel’nost’ board in late-November 1916: Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitelia, 11-12, November-December 1916, p. 17.

97 VKGOU, 5-6, March 3, 1917, p. 3. Poduzov may be A.F. Poduzov, deputy chair of the Samodeiatel’nost’ revision commission from August 1915: Samodeiatel’nost’, 6, September 1915, p. 17. Confusingly, surviving lists of worker representatives from March 1917 identify Kozlov and a certain Ershov, identified by neither Khalimon nor Duma minutes, as railway worker representatives to the CPS. List of delegates to CPS and Soviet, dated March 9, 1917, GAKK P-64/3/82, l. 4.

98 Lists of railway workshop deputies, GAKK P-64/3/82, ll. 1-4. Names of Samodeiatel’nost’ members to January 1, 1915, in Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitelia, 3, June 1915, pp. 26-30. Names of Samodeiatel’nost’ board members compiled from cooperative meeting minutes in Samodeiatel’nost’ and Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitelia, June-August 1915-November-December 1916. Noting that complete lists of Samodeiatel’nost’ board members are not available and the published list of rank-and-file members does not account for the period 1915-1917, when cooperative membership more than trebled, the actual figure for worker-cooperators elected to the Soviet was probably considerably higher. Due to incomplete data, including missing first names and patronymics and probable spelling errors, I have excluded a further dozen Soviet deputies from the railway workshops from the number of confirmed Samodeiatel’nost’ activists and members.
suggesting cooperators in many instances took leading roles in organising elections amongst their workshop colleagues (see figure 1.3). They included several workers active in spreading the news of revolution on March 3: Khalimon was one of two deputies from the foundry; Osharov, one of six elected by workers in the wagon shop; and Savvateev, the only full deputy of the wheel shop. Their importance to these elections is further indicated by the fact that each was nominated to the Soviet Executive Committee by their workshop colleagues. 

Cooperative activists’ roles in worker elections suggest a close correlation between their pre-revolutionary organisational experience and revolutionary organisation. Despite its legal status, Samodeiatel’nost’ served the purpose of acquainting local workers with the means and methods of elective organisation crucial to revolutionary mobilisation. As Victoria Bonnell notes, legal organisation “provided many workers with their first opportunity to participate in or even to observe a voluntary association organised along democratic lines.” In pre-revolutionary consumer cooperatives, legal regulations ensured an elective and

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99 GAKK P-64/3/82, ll. 1-4. Alongside Khalimon, a certain "Novakov" – quite possibly Khalimon's shop colleague and cooperator, Novikov, who first informed him of revolution – was elected as a candidate deputy from the foundry; I have not included him in the number of Samodeiatel’nost’ activists amongst railway worker deputies above.

100 Bonnell, Roots of Rebellion, p. 237.
broadly participatory structure, vesting final authority in a general assembly (obshchee sobranie) of all members which elected and scrutinised a smaller executive board (uprava). 101 In Krasnoiarsk, members’ active participation in discussions and elections was understood as a crucial element of cooperative work. In early-1916, Samodeiatel’nost’ cooperative journal, Samodeiatel’nost’ potrebitel’ia, affirmed:

The active, thoughtful relationship of every member of the society is the basis of our social work. Every member of the society must take active part in general work, raise their suggestions, analyse [and] critically evaluate the projects of the Board. 102

Taking leading roles in the continual debates and regular elections which underpinned the pre-revolutionary cooperative movement may, indeed, have provided individual workers with an opportunity to forge profiles as reliable activists and competent organisers amongst their workshop colleagues. As Robert Weinberg argues of worker politics in 1905, experienced organisers could assume leading roles in revolutionary work “precisely because they had earned the esteem of their coworkers and could be relied upon to promote workers’ interests.” 103

Clear articulation and strength in debate were vital to marking out potential leaders. One worker memoirist admiringly recalls Khalimon as “a developed worker [who] could argue with opponents, [who] could speak up [vystupit’].” 104

Throughout 1917, Khalimon, Osharov, and Savvateev all assumed active roles in revolutionary politics, including positions in the city’s governmental and party-political organisations.

The existence of vibrant participatory practices amongst Krasnoiarsk’s railwaymen also offers a plausible explanation for their rapid uptake of elective political models enshrined in both the Soviet and CPS. As literature on the 1905 soviets has demonstrated, existing systems of elective delegation functioning at a

101 Kayden, Antsiferov, Cöoperative Movement, pp. 45-46. This model was upheld in the Samodeiatel’nost’ charter: Ustav Krasnoiarskogo Obshchestva Potrebitelei, pod nazvaniem ‘Samodeiatel’nost’, Krasnoiarsk (1913), pp. 6-14, copy in library of KKKM.


103 Weinberg, Revolution of 1905 in Odessa, p. 196.

104 GAKK P-64/5/725, l. 2.
factory and workshop level provided workers with understandings of electoral procedures and familiarity with collegial leadership structures, enabling them to participate in soviet elections. A tendency to send recently-elected cooperators to the Committee of Public Safety and Soviet suggests workers utilised electoral repertoires developed during previous years of cooperative organisation. Exposure to pre-revolutionary cooperative organisation in Krasnoiarsk may have also provided comprehension of large-scale elective practices to railwaymen who were not, themselves, intimately involved in cooperative activism. Indeed, the two-tiered internal structure of pre-revolutionary consumer cooperatives closely resembled the general assemblies and executive committees of revolutionary soviets, ensuring individuals familiar with cooperative organisation would not have found soviet elections a novelty.

The Soviet II: Mobilising Soldiers

Almost invariably, the actions of armed forces determine the outcome of revolutionary events. In 1917, Russia’s rear garrisons were critical to ensuring the swift defeat of Tsarist authorities, providing revolutionaries with much-needed

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107 A similar point is made by Bonnell, who compares the 1905 soviets’ electoral systems with those of subsequent trade union councils. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*, p. 241.

armed force and strength in numbers. Krasnoiarsk hosted one of Siberia’s largest garrisons, comprising five regular military formations totalling over 25,000 men and officers, including the 14th, 15th, and 30th Siberian Rifle Reserve Regiments, one Cossack Division, and the 717th Infantry Brigade. In the first week of March, the entire garrison defected to the revolution. Besides securing the overthrow of the old regime, the participation of the military provides a striking illustration of alliance-building across social boundaries, as soldiers joined forces with civilian revolutionaries to establish a joint Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.

Theorists frequently link the defection of armed forces in revolution to soldiers’ close social ties with restive civilian populations. According to Misagh Parsa:

> The probability of defection increases if relatively close links exist between members of the armed forces and the civilian population. Armies largely staffed by conscripts are especially vulnerable to defection because the recruits maintain contact with the rest of the population.

In Krasnoiarsk, the months before revolution witnessed rising discontent amongst rank-and-file conscripts, prompting gendarmes to warn that “amongst the populous garrison of Krasnoiarsk there reigns general and serious dissatisfaction.” The potential for civilian unrest to influence soldiers was of particular concern. During the deadly pogrom of May 1916, soldiers disobeyed orders to quell rioters, instead beating an officer who threatened to discipline them for insubordination. The following month, gendarmes noted grimly that further outbreaks of mass violence might realistically gain support from disenchanted young soldiers, in which case they...
would prove extremely difficult to stop. By the end of the year, the situation was considered so bad that special “punitive companies” were formed to maintain order in the garrison.

Nonetheless, it was not mass conscription per se, but rather the specific social and structural conditions in which the garrison operated, which turned Krasnoiarsk’s soldiers into a potentially revolutionary force. A major role was played by socialists drafted into the army from 1914 onwards, who helped establish secretive, small-scale political circles (kruzhki) in barracks. Participants in garrison socialist circles included former railway worker and Bolshevik veteran of the 1905 Krasnoiarskaia respublika, Boris Shumiatskii (1886-1938), who was enlisted into the army in 1915. Socialist activity within the garrison was boosted by the Tsarist government’s February 1916 decision to relax restrictions on drafting politically-unreliable individuals into the army. In Siberia, the easing of draft restrictions brought into city garrisons numerous political exiles, who sought to organise a network of clandestine “military organisations”. In January 1917, a number of exiles from Turukhansk krai entered companies of the 14th and 30th reserve regiments in the Krasnoiarsk garrison. Within weeks, gendarmes reported they had established new “company circles”.

In his important commentary on the Petrograd uprising, Melancon attributes the “crisp progress of the soldiers’ uprising and its almost seamless coordination with the workers’ demonstrations” to active “preparation and leadership” by socialists

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114 Political survey of Eniseisk guberniia, June 1, 1917: GAKK 827/1/282, ll. 22-23.
116 Gromazdskii, “Na zare Sovetov Krasnoiarska”, Nezabyvaemoe: Vospominaniia uchastnikov, p. 55; Pozdniakov original memoir manuscript, GAKK P-64/5/493, ll. 36-38.
117 Batalov, Bor’ba bol’sheviki, pp. 53-54.
119 GAKK 827/1/283, l. 6.
Similar conclusions could be suggested of Krasnoiarsk, where soldier-exiles took the initiative to begin organising soldiers for revolution. According to Shumiatskii, even before civilian socialists had begun to organise, rumours of revolution sparked garrison activists into action:

It was decided to make thorough checks, but, alongside this, to believe everything in this news that we wanted. Thanks to this, one of our members, not waiting for the results of the checks, for no one in the Krasnoiarsk colony of political exiles knew anything of the revolution, began a round of the garrison units on the evening of March 1, after the muster, holding short meetings and electing ‘deputies’ amongst them.121

Shumiatskii himself spent at least one sleepless night organising soldiers. In the 6th company of the 14th reserve regiment, the soldier-exile, Boris Ivanov, remembers Shumiatskii bursting into his unit’s barracks with three other soldiers in tow, shouting news of revolution and urging the men to elect “deputies”.122 By March 3, Shumiatskii was wanted by garrison authorities, who were aware of his actions, and narrowly escaped arrest at the Duma’s public meeting that evening.123

Nonetheless, the extent to which soldier-exiles provided “leadership” and “seamless coordination” with civilian revolutionaries in Krasnoiarsk is debateable. From the outset, civilians and soldiers mobilised separately. As Shumiatskii’s account makes clear, on March 1, soldier-exiles set about organising elections to a “soviet” without any instructions from civilian activists and before any such a body had been seriously discussed outside the garrison. A joint worker-soldier soviet therefore formed in similar fashion to elsewhere in Russia, through the merger of initially-independent workers’ and soldiers’ bodies.124 On March 3, civilian activists publically invited “representatives of military units” to enter “the structure of the Soviet of

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120 Melancon, “Rethinking”, pp. 32-33.
121 GAKK P-64/5/686, l. 3.
122 Ivanov, “Vo glave”, p. 27.
124 Mints, Istoriia velikogo oktiabria, p. 692.
workers’ deputies.” The Krasnoiarsk Soviet of Soldiers’ Deputies “declared soldiers would “organise, together with workers, into a Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.” This agreement was likely reached between well-placed civilian and soldier socialists, including Shumiatskii, who toured the railway workshops with Meshcheriakov, Dubrovinskii, and Okulov on March 4 to urge elections to the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies, rallying workers with the news of soldiers’ defection. Several soldier deputies were present at the Soviet’s inaugural meeting that evening. Nonetheless, confusion remained over the relationship between workers’ and soldiers’ organisations. The following day, Krutovskii reported to the city Duma that three separate revolutionary committees existed: the CPS, a “Soviet of workers’ deputies”, and a “Soviet of soldiers”.

Moreover, despite their increasingly close ties to civilian revolutionaries, soldier-exiles proved incapable of orchestrating the defection of more than a handful of garrison units. Soviet membership data indicates the earliest elections of soldier deputies were conducted in eight separate units, all of which had socialist activists – often exiles – amongst their men. They included six companies of the 14th reserve regiment and two Cossack hundreds (sotnias), which returned a combined total of seventeen deputies. Most of these individuals were linked by common membership in clandestine socialist activities. At least five of the seventeen deputies were active in the united socialist organisation established by Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries in early-1917, while a further four or five at least were exiles from Turukhansk krai who had previously helped establish company socialist circles. Cossacks’ participation during this initial revolutionary mobilisation is particularly

125 Quoted in Burdzhalov, Vtoraia russkaia revoliutsiia: Moskva, front, periferia, pp. 318-319.
126 Leaflet of Soviet of Soldiers’ Deputies: GAKK 173/2/12, l. 15.
127 GAKK P-64/5/685, ll. 5-6.
128 Ibid.
129 VKGOU, 5-6, March 3 [sic], 1917, p. 5.
130 GAKK P-64/3/83, l. 4. Data on soldier-exiles active before the revolution collated from Batalov, Bor’ba bol’shevikov, p. 52; Ivanov, “Vo glave”, pp. 25-26; January 1917 gendarme report: GAKK 827/1/283, l. 12.
notable, since their contribution to revolution was largely whitewashed from both Communist-era historiography and memoir accounts.\textsuperscript{131} Several Cossacks held close ties with socialist activists, including Vasilii Zhdanov, of the division’s third hundred, a Bolshevik and co-founder of Krasnoiarsk’s militant Bolshevik-Pravdist faction (see chapter 3).\textsuperscript{132} Nonetheless, the clandestine, personalised nature of socialist organisation in the garrison severely limited opportunities to establish organisational networks between different regiments. In his unpublished memoirs, Aleksandr Pozdniakov, a local shop clerk and socialist sympathiser serving as a scribe in the 15\textsuperscript{th} regiment, recalls knowing of socialist circles in the garrison but having no contact with other regiments before March 1917.\textsuperscript{133} In the garrison’s remaining regiments, elections did not occur until after March 4.

With little organised socialist influence beyond a handful of units, turning the garrison to revolution fell to junior officers, who arrived at the Soviet and Committee of Public Safety over the following days, bringing soldiers with them. The first officer defections came on the evening of March 4, when several 30\textsuperscript{th} regiment officers attended the first Soviet meeting and announced their intention to join “the people”.\textsuperscript{134} The following afternoon, over one-hundred officers of 14\textsuperscript{th} reserve

\textsuperscript{131} Frumkin erroneously recalls that all garrison units except the Cossacks elected soviet deputies on March 3: “Fevral’-oktiabr”, p. 142. This position is likely informed by widespread counter-revolutionary stereotyping of Cossacks and the “de-Cossackisation” campaigns after 1917: Shane O’Rourke, The Cossacks, Manchester University Press (2007), chap. 10.


\textsuperscript{133} Pozdniakov’s recollections of socialist weakness in the garrison were, unsurprisingly, deleted from memoir excerpts published in Za vlast’ Sovetov: sbornik dokumentov. The original member transcript – including the editor’s striking-out of the offending passages – is in the former party archive: GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 6. Khalimon recalls the regiment as the 31\textsuperscript{st}, although no such regiment was in the city at the time. Gurevich, who recalls the first news of officer defections reaching the CPS at the same time, identifies the regiment as the 30\textsuperscript{th}, which fits closely with

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regiment, half of whose units had still not defected, gathered to discuss events. At the instigation of two ensigns (praporshchik), Tikhon Markovskii and Galinovskii, the meeting pledged allegiance to the revolution, electing six junior officers to the Soviet and CPS. In the 15th regiment, which formally remained loyal to the old regime until March 5 or 6, junior officers took the initiative to organise their men over the heads of senior commanders. In the 4th company, the praporshchik, Sergei Lazo, surreptitiously spread news of revolution amongst the men. Pozdniakov similarly recalls a praporshchik adjutant in his unit organising the publication of leaflets bearing the news.

These junior officers were a direct product of wartime military conditions. As Peter Kenez has shown, heavy officer casualties during the first years of war prompted the mass promotion of semi-educated, non-noble trainees into junior command positions, producing a socially heterogeneous officer corps. Despite government checks, numerous socialists were inadvertently enlisted as junior and non-commissioned officers, while the growing number of peasants and workers in the lower officer corps likely meant, as Krasnoiarsk gendarmes warned in late-January 1917, that many more were vulnerable to “corruption” by socialist ideas. Several praporshchiki were close to political exiles in the garrison. Before being enlisted into the army, Sergei Lazo (1894-1920) had been a student in Moscow, where he participated in Socialist-Revolutionary circles; after arriving in Krasnoiarsk in late-1916, he established close ties to local left-wing SRs, including Nikolai Mazurin, a fellow soldier. In the 30th regiment, meanwhile, Tikhon Markovskii

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135 GAKK r-258/1/8, l. 115. Markovskii was elected to the Soviet and Galinovskii to the CPS.


137 Pozdniakov, "1917 god", p. 11.


140 Lazo, Sergei Lazo, pp. 3-8.
(1885-1918) reputedly had contact with socialist circles and Bolsheviks exiles in the garrison.141

Junior officers were ideally positioned to lead soldiers into revolution. Occupying the lowest rungs of the military command structure, their day-to-day oversight of units lessened the social distance between them and rank-and-file soldiers, allowing them to gauge and act upon their moods and concerns.142 Soldiers in revolt had few qualms about challenging military authority they considered to be illegitimate, dismissing and even killing commanders standing in their way. Nonetheless, officers who endorsed their units’ participation in revolution saw their legitimacy to lead reaffirmed.143 Several junior officers who helped their units defect

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142 Hasegawa, *February Revolution*, p. 166.
were rewarded with impromptu promotions. In Boris Ivanov’s company, a sympathetic non-commissioned officer who helped organise Soviet elections was promptly named company commander.\footnote{Ivanov, “Vo glave”, p. 27.} In the 4\textsuperscript{th} company of the 15\textsuperscript{th} regiment, soldiers likewise replaced their despotic second-lieutenant with Lazo.\footnote{Lazo, Lazo, pp. 7-8.} Following the army’s defection, junior officers would become leading military voices in revolution, while a core of junior officers – notable amongst them Lazo and Markovskii – maintained and strengthened revolutionary leadership positions through the Krasnoiarsk Soviet, establishing themselves as vital strategic allies to its predominantly civilian leadership.

The Soviet and the Committee of Public Safety: Unity amid Uncertainty

By the evening of March 4, Krasnoiarsk had two functioning revolutionary bodies, the Soviet and the Committee of Public Safety. Each comprised different sections of the city’s emerging revolutionary elite and offered a distinct vision for political authority. The CPS, based on the premise of “enlistment”, sought to engage all social classes in revolutionary politics; its leadership included public activists prominent in wartime initiatives to draw the local population into government. The first CPS Executive Committee, elected on March 3, included liberal city Duma member, Krutovskii; the Socialist-Revolutionary, Gurevich; two Mensheviks, Baikalov and another cooperative activist, A.B. Shneider; and the Bolshevik, Shlikhter. Shlikhter, who had earned a radical political reputation through his involvement in the 1905 revolution in Odessa, held close links to local underground socialist circles, but was also integrated into public activism and was tasked by the CPS with coordinating work with public organisations.\footnote{Gurevich, “Fevral’skaia revoliutsiia”, p. 121. On Shlikhter, see B.F. Bagaev, P.N. Meshalkin (eds.), \textit{Boitsy Revoliutsii}, Krasnoiarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo (1982), pp. 247-250.} The Soviet, by contrast, focused efforts exclusively on workers and

\footnote{Getzler, \textit{Kronstadt}, pp. 24-25; Wildman, \textit{End of Imperial Army}, 1, p. 192.}
soldiers. Its leadership included socialists grounded in the revolutionary underground who had taken the initiative to organise worker and soldier elections. The first Soviet presidium, elected on March 5, was headed by Dubrovinskii, who remained Soviet chairman until August, while Shumiatskii was elected presidium deputy chair. Okulov, who would eventually replace Dubrovinskii as Soviet chairman, became the presidium’s leading local spokesman.

The simultaneous appearance of two revolutionary authorities was typical of events in the Russian provinces and is cited by some historians as evidence of “dual power” emerging at a local level. The “dual power” paradigm offers an adequate if overtly deterministic interpretation for relations between the Provisional Government and Petrograd Soviet, which occupied carefully-delineated spheres of authority to ensure neither encroached on the other’s prerogatives. However, as Badcock warns, “the balance of power in Petrograd did not reflect the balance of power outside the capital”, where different revolutionary authorities often cooperated extensively. In Krasnoiarsk, the CPS and Soviet worked closely together during the first days of revolution. On March 5, CPS chairman Krutovskii informed the city Duma that Soviet delegates had “entered into the structure of the Committee [of Public Safety] and joint work has been established between all Committees.” Several days later, the Soviet and CPS formalised relations by forming a United Executive Bureau (UEB), including six members of each, to coordinate their respective activities.

Local power-sharing arrangements between public committees and soviets were common across the Russian Empire at this time and have been interpreted by

147 “No. 1” (Soviet EC minutes, March 5, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 35.

148 Andreev, Mestnye Sovety, pp. 50-55; Suny, Baku Commune, p. 72.

149 Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, “Problem of Power”.


151 VKGOU, 5-6, March 3, 1917, p. 5.

152 The Soviet EC agreed to join a UEB on March 6 (”No. 2”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 42) although the Bureau’s establishment was only announced to the Soviet plenum on March 15 (”No. 8”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 56).
historians as a manifestation of the relatively conciliatory, optimistic mood during the first weeks of revolution. Cooperation between the Krasnoiarsk Soviet and CPS, however, must be placed in its immediate ideological and political context. For CPS leaders, organisational unity with the Soviet provided an opportunity to further extend wartime institutions of public enlistment in revolutionary politics. By drawing in representatives from the Soviet, the CPS could utilise the latter as a vehicle through which to engage workers and soldiers in a broad and cohesive power structure. The prominence in the CPS of socialists versed in wartime principles and practices of public enlistment helped it engage the Soviet in this agenda. Shlikhter who held wide respect amongst local Social Democrats, was instrumental in convincing leftist Soviet leaders, many of whom were suspicious of supra-class politics and viewed the CPS as a “bourgeois” organisation, to endorse the UEB.

More immediately, however, cooperation between the CPS and Soviet reflected a belief amongst revolutionary activists that they must set aside political differences to secure the gains of revolution. By March 4, the old regime had still not been completely overthrown in Krasnoiarsk: local state officials had not been detained, while, in the garrison and police stations, Tsarist generals and gendarmes remained at large. Meanwhile, knowledge of events in Petrograd remained hazy and fears spread of a possible counter-offensive by old regime loyalists. According to Gurevich, the gravity of the situation was recognised by all during the first CPS meetings, which witnessed:

none of the [political] dissonance which would later make itself known [...] it seemed that all in attendance, not excepting Social-Democrat Bolsheviks, were

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155 Gurevich, “Fevral’skaia revoliutsiia”, p. 129.
imbued with consciousness of the exceptional importance of the moment and with a feeling of responsibility.\textsuperscript{156}

The tense situation also convinced Soviet activists of the immediate need for cooperation with the CPS. On the night of March 4-5, the two organisations joined forces to depose the old guard. With the help of workers and socialists, military officers at the Soviet mobilised their men to tackle the Tsarist police forces, while the CPS – kept abreast of developments by the well-connected Baikalov – directed troops to occupy governmental and security buildings. In several quarters of the city, tense standoffs ensued. Troops under CPS authority had to break down doors to one police station, where gendarmes sought to barricade themselves in before giving themselves up.\textsuperscript{157} Meanwhile, soldiers and workers sent by the Soviet to round up gendarmes in Nikolaevsk district arrived just in time to prevent a lynching at one police station, where angry residents had gathered “in a confused state”.\textsuperscript{158} Besides these incidents, however, the arrest of officials proceeded remarkably swiftly and bloodlessly. By dawn on March 5, Krasnoiarsk was under the joint jurisdiction of the CPS and Soviet.\textsuperscript{159}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Revolutionary mobilisation in Krasnoiarsk was achieved with remarkable speed and coordination, ensuring the bloodless fall of the old regime and the rapid establishment of new revolutionary authorities. Established organisations and networks, particularly those entrenched in local society and politics by the Great War, linked revolutionary activists to different sections of the city’s population. Public

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., pp. 120-121.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., p. 123.

\textsuperscript{158} GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 6.

\textsuperscript{159} Gurevich cites the date of the arrests as March 4, although Khalimon’s date of March 5 more closely tallies with the chronology of key events, particularly the Soviet’s establishment and defection of soldiers. Gurevich, “Fevral’skaia Revoliutsiia”, pp. 122-124; GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 6.
organisations provided mobilising structures and a leadership through which socialists and Duma members could actively engage local “society”. By contrast, the mobilisation of workers and soldiers was more complex. Amongst railway workers, consumer cooperation was vital, providing socialists with information networks which could be utilised at short notice and an organisational foothold in the railway workshops. Mobilising soldiers was trickier still. The supposed “revolutionary traditions” of the Krasnoiarskaia respublika provided no practical mechanisms for soldiers to join revolution. Instead, wartime developments were critical. As Melancon suggests of Petrograd, socialists enlisted into the garrison in 1916 and early-1917 played a role in soldiers’ defection; however, the main impetus for action came from within military ranks, particularly through junior officers who volunteered themselves and their men for revolution. There was no mystical unity between the garrison and the workshops to ensure the smooth and seamless establishment of a joint Soviet. Soldiers’ entry into revolution was very much on their own terms. The organisational discontinuities between the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s military and civilian constituents would remain evident throughout 1917.

The overthrow of Tsarism in Krasnoiarsk suggests greater focus should be paid to the role of organisational structures and networks in facilitating revolutionary mobilisation, and to the forms of collective organisation these enabled. Paradoxically, revolution in Krasnoiarsk owed most to legal and ostensibly non-political organisation. Without opportunities to construct a vibrant revolutionary underground in the city, socialists and workers relied on networks forged in the open, while garrison officers similarly turned established military structures against the regime they were supposed to serve. This conclusion contradicts much received historical wisdom on the Russian revolution, but is consistent with research into revolutionary mobilisations under repressive and authoritarian conditions elsewhere in the world, which shows the importance of legal organisational structures in facilitating collective political action against established regimes.\(^\text{160}\) Meanwhile, networks and organisational structures used to mobilise people in Krasnoiarsk

helped shape their participants’ responses to revolution, putting pre-revolutionary repertoires into motion, as was evident in the establishment of revolutionary authorities. The CPS followed precedents of public activism in Krasnoiarsk, while railway workers’ ability and willingness to join the Soviet owed much to the electoral practices of the city consumer cooperative, Samodeiatel’nost’.
CHAPTER II ★ Forging Constituency: The Krasnoiarsk Soviet and Popular Politics

The overthrow of Tsarism left Krasnoiarsk with two nascent revolutionary authorities, the Soviet and Committee of Public Safety. Despite the careful balance of power established between these organisations at the outset of revolution, the Soviet was quickly able to assert its own authority, becoming the focal point for local political activity. Key to this development was its ability to engage social actors in its own work. Over spring and summer 1917, the Soviet built up a large political constituency consisting primarily of workers and soldiers. This constituency was integrated into Soviet work through a complex system of elected deputies, whereby autonomous collective organisations would elect formal representatives to the Soviet. The deputy system was vital for the Soviet to secure popular support, enabling it to speak in the name of tens of thousands of city residents. At the same time, it provided the Soviet’s constituents with their own agency through which to shape its activities according to their own conceptualisations and agendas. This chapter investigates this dual aspect of constituency creation, considering how Soviet leaders sought to engage social actors in revolutionary politics and this in turn enabled social actors to influence Soviet politics.

A constituency, according to political theorist Andrew Rehfeld, is the way groups are defined for the purpose of electing political representatives. Creating constituency structures is a vital component of states’ efforts to establish power relations between themselves and the populations they seek to govern, enabling political leaders to establish the means and parameters of legitimate political participation through formal representative mechanisms. At the same time, constituency structures are also influenced by the agency of social actors who engage them and often seek to mould their functions to meet their own political concerns. The interplay between political leaders and their constituents was central to revolutionary politics in 1917, determining which organisations gained political authority and how they related to social actors. Historians have demonstrated how

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social actors spurned political projects conflicting with their own worldviews, particularly the ill-fated visions of universal citizenship proposed by the Provisional Government and its local supporters, which were often rejected in favour of class-based alternatives. However, the role of society in revolution was not simply to validate or reject alternative visions laid before it by competing political elites. Wherever they actively engaged revolutionary authority structures, social actors influenced how they functioned in practice, using and adapting political practices and structures to press their own concerns.

The ways social actors influenced representative politics in revolution is central to the issue of local soviets’ rising political authority. Soviets’ ability to attract mass support in 1917 is explained by Raleigh as a reflection of their willingness and ability to address popular concerns, enabling them to step into a power vacuum inadequately filled by more hesitant liberal authorities. By contrasting the fortunes of soviets with Provisional Government bodies, this approach highlights an important aspect of revolutionary politics. However, it does not account for how different social actors sought to influence the structures and practices of those authorities with whose politics they engaged. This chapter extends Raleigh’s argument by considering how different social groups, by participating in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s representative politics, sought to influence its structures and practices according to their own agendas. By engaging the local population, the Soviet’s elective deputy system gave political agency to groupings comprising different social identities and often espousing their own, distinct political agendas. This turned the Soviet into an arena of political interaction, contestation, and negotiation between its socialist leaders and the multiple social groupings they sought to represent, initiating a

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4 Raleigh, "Political Power in the Russian Revolution".
complex internal political process which would determine how Soviet class politics would be practiced. For the Soviet's socialist leaders, elective politics was envisaged as a means to bind together the city's impoverished classes into a cohesive political body – often referred to collectively as “the people” (narod), “the democracy” (demokratia), or simply “the mass” (massa) – capable of effectively withstanding its common enemy, the “bourgeoisie” (burzhuaziia). This vision cast revolutionary society according to what Ernesto Laclau terms a “ populist logic”, discursively separating it into a cohesive majority struggling against a hostile, obstructive minority. Nonetheless, the ability of Soviet leaders to pursue this vision hinged on the willingness of social actors to actively engage Soviet politics. Workers, soldiers, and other social groupings quickly established their own collective organisations, including trade unions and military committees, through which they elected Soviet deputies. These organisations articulated their members’ intimate social and political concerns, formulating agendas which socialists had often not anticipated and obliging Soviet leaders to balance their own ambitions with their constituents’ immediate concerns.

This chapter traces the interactive process of Soviet constituency formation in five different sections. The first section discusses socialists’ visions for popular politics and the Soviet, considering how they sought to engage the local population and why. The following two sections detail the formation of worker and soldier organisations in turn, considering how they coordinated their activities with the Soviet and asking how far workers and soldiers adhered to socialists’ vision for popular political participation. The final two sections detail women and national minorities, two social groupings on the fringes of revolutionary politics who nevertheless sought to assert themselves as legitimate collective actors, challenging Soviet leaders to reconsider how different social actors were represented.

The Soviet Deputy System: A Socialist Vision for Popular Politics

When Tsarist authorities in Krasnoiarsk were deposed on March 5, the Soviet was still a relatively formless body with only a tentative organisational foothold amongst

the local population. It had no permanent headquarters and was actively supported by only a small section of the local workforce and garrison. Over the next few days, Soviet activists sought to strengthen their presence in local politics. The Soviet set up permanent residence in the large Women’s Eparchial College, located on Krasnoiarsk’s main high street, Voskresenskaia ulitsa, while its Executive Committee established a daily newspaper, *Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta*, with a print-run of 6,000, to keep the city population informed of its activities.6 These moves were accompanied by a concerted effort to draw more local residents, particularly workers and soldiers, into Soviet work. *Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta* quickly became a billboard for socialist appeals for wider political engagement. In its first issue, on March 14, the newspaper declared the Soviet to be the legitimate means for “the people” to express its political interests and urged all local workers and soldiers to elect Soviet deputies from their own ranks.7 Over the following weeks, the call met an enthusiastic response. By late-March, the Soviet had some 250 deputies;8 two weeks later, this figure had swelled to 326, nearly double the membership of the Committee of Public Safety.9

As its membership expanded, Soviet leaders elaborated a complex and hierarchical deputy system, which sought to integrate elected representatives of workers and soldiers through a network of base-level collectives and organisations. According to instructions presented by the Soviet Executive Committee in April, deputies were to be elected by workers’ collectives at a factory, workshop, and trade union level, and by soldiers from each garrison company, command, and regiment. They would be bound by the decisions of their respective collectives via strict policy mandates and subject to recall by their electors at any time. All deputies gathered in weekly Soviet general assemblies (plenums) to discuss major political issues collectively, while a smaller Executive Committee (EC) and presidium sat daily to

6 "No. 8" (general assembly minutes, March 15, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, p. 56.
8 Records of Soviet deputies, March 1917: GAKK P-64/3/82, ll. 5-15.
handle day-to-day Soviet affairs.\textsuperscript{10} This complex deputy system was typical of local soviets in 1917 and represented a balance between centralised control and direct political participation, allowing political leaders to transmit influence directly down to their constituents whilst providing workers and soldiers with a direct say in proceedings.\textsuperscript{11} Although authority was hierarchically ordered, each organisational level, from the EC down to the worker and soldier collectives which elected Soviet deputies, would remain directly accountable to that immediately below it through constant elections and recall, holding the entire system in tension and safeguarding against abuses of authority (figure 2.2).

Studies of large-scale organisations show that incorporating members through base-level collectives can aid active participation by providing groups with collective mechanisms through which to engage with larger organisational structures whilst also maintaining their own cohesion and solidarity.\textsuperscript{12} The potential for such organisational structures to promote mass political work had already been demonstrated by the soviets of 1905, which coordinated city-wide action amongst workers through a network of elected factory representatives; the adoption of a similar organisational model in 1917 was, certainly, an acknowledgement of its effectiveness.\textsuperscript{13} Nonetheless, while the basic soviet model can be traced back to 1905, it also addressed socialists’ current political concerns. For activists seeking to fashion a new political order, engaging society directly in political work was vital to establishing a stable revolutionary order. Unless integrated into a formal and disciplined political process, it was widely feared people might turn to unpredictable, chaotic, and violent actions, threatening both social stability and revolutionary order.

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{IKS 16}, April 22, 1917, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{11} Getzler, \textit{Kronstadt}, pp. 48-52.

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Fears of mass disorder had been prevalent during the first days of revolution, when activists worked quickly to avert mob justice and violent protest (see chapter 1). Over the next weeks, these concerns were heightened by the deteriorating state of local security. Following the relatively orderly and bloodless overthrow of Tsarist authorities, Krasnoiarsk witnessed a growing security crisis as an undersubscribed, underpaid, and often corrupt militia struggled to assert its authority.\textsuperscript{14} Newspapers reported soldiers roaming the streets in a state of intoxication, insulting, threatening, and robbing passers-by, while ordinary Soviet deputies were accused of conducting unauthorised “arrests”, something the EC condemned as a “disgrace which leaves a stain on the whole soviet.”\textsuperscript{15} These instances again raised the prospect of mob violence witnessed during previous popular upheavals, including Krasnoiarsk’s deadly May 1916 anti-Jewish pogrom. Amid public outcry over the conduct of some workers and soldiers, the Soviet urged its supporters to submit to designated authority structures and not follow “enemies of freedom” seeking to undermine the new revolutionary order by fomenting violence and “pogroms”.\textsuperscript{16}

By contrast to chaotic and disorganised actions, extensive social organisation would provide the basis for safe and responsible political participation. Soviet activists portrayed collective elections and the mandating of deputies as a means to enable the politically-inexperienced masses to grasp both their newfound political rights and the responsibilities accompanying them. Revolution gave the people a say in power, but individuals could not act unilaterally: “the will of individual people must be organised; all activities of individual representatives of the people must stem from those goals and those paths established by the general will of the people.”\textsuperscript{17} This formulation was echoed by other organisations, including the Committee of Public Safety, which likewise urged residents to form unions and professional organisations

\textsuperscript{14} Archival fond on people’s militia: GAKK 131/3/37. On militia incompetence and corruption, see IKS, 41, May 13, 1917, p. 3; Svobodnaia Sibir’, 28, May 9, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{15} GAKK r-258/1/38, ll. 19-20, 77-78. “No. 6” (EC minutes, March 12, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{16} IKS, 13, March 30, 1917, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{17} IKS 7, March 22, 1917, p. 1.
through which to support the new revolutionary order.\textsuperscript{18} The belief in engaging people in organised political activity provided some basis for political commonality between Soviet leaders and liberals. In demanding organised political action, socialists freely borrowed from liberal terminology of citizenship, contrasting the active, responsible citizen (\textit{grazhdanin}) with the disengaged commoner (\textit{obyvatel'}).\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Figure 2.1:} Women's Eparchial College, seat of Krasnoiarsk Soviet.

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\caption{Women's Eparchial College, seat of Krasnoiarsk Soviet.}
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Source: GAKK P-7835/8/68.
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\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Eniseiskii krai}, 51, March 5, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{19} On languages of citizenship in 1917: Orlovsky, "Corporatism or Democracy", pp. 77-79. For these terms' use in Krasnoiarsk, see, for example, Soviet activists' address to soldiers' wives on April 7: \textit{IKS 16}, April 9, 1917, pp. 2-3.
\end{footnotesize}
Figure 2.2: Krasnoiarsk Soviet representative structure.
Although Soviet activists shared some practical concerns with liberals, their vision for the deputy system also reflected an aspiration to root revolutionary politics in a wider organised movement based on socio-economic class. Socialists contended that the people still had everything to gain in revolution and required an extensive and autonomous organisational base of their own in order to secure future victories. As Izvestia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta warned, the overthrow of Tsarism had “conquered only the external forms of the political structure of Russia, but all around us are still unfulfilled tasks of conquest in the economic sphere.” Workers had still not achieved the eight-hour working day or social insurance; peasants were still deprived of land. Only by organising collectively and working in unison with one another could the poorest classes achieve these gains. Socialists’ preoccupation with extensive class-based organisation and popular unity was vividly revealed on March 10, during a city-wide demonstration to mark the overthrow of Tsarism. The demonstration had been called by the Soviet EC on instructions from the Petrograd Soviet as a display of general revolutionary unity and was pointedly advertised as a gathering of all local “citizens.” It drew tens of thousands of residents, including not only workers and soldiers, but also school students, middle-class professionals, and liberal activists and organisations now represented by the Committee of Public Safety. Despite its supra-class veneer, however, the event was used by socialists to remind workers and soldiers of the dangers posed by hostile social forces and the need to strengthen their own organisational base. Speaking on behalf of the Soviet, Aleksei Okulov praised the working class for delivering the death blow to the autocracy before warning that “the business of liberation is only beginning [and workers] must prepare themselves for the coming onslaught against the positions of capitalism in the struggle for Socialist Revolution.” Okulov’s words were echoed by fellow Bolshevik and prominent cooperator, Nikolai Meshcheriakov, who had played an important role in establishing the supra-class CPS but now likewise looked towards a new period of popular struggle. Praising workers and their new-found soldier allies for overthrowing

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21 "No. 10" (Soviet EC declaration of March 10 demonstration, issued March 8, 1917), Za vlast’ Sovetov, p. 39.

Tsarism, Meshcheriakov warned they must not now “rest on their laurels. [The proletariat] wants and will conduct the struggle further and expects new victories on this path.”

Socialists’ visions for popular politics cast revolutionary society according to a “populist logic”, discursively dividing it into two opposing camps: on the one hand, the common narod, whose component groupings must unite to achieve further revolutionary gains; on the other, a hostile “bourgeoisie” fighting to maintain its own political and economic dominance. By basing itself on an organised movement of workers and soldiers, the Soviet’s deputy system would become the political vehicle


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23 Ibid.

for this struggle. Forming class-based collective organisations through which to elect Soviet deputies was a crucial first step in a broader transformative process in which previously-inactive individuals would become engaged class-conscious political participants. For the Soviet’s predominantly Social-Democratic leadership, trade unions, which soon became vital components of Soviet electoral politics (see below), were a potent symbol of this process. By organising workers into “fighting units” against capital, unions enabled them to recognise both their common class interests and their collective strength, providing the proletariat with a means to “act and appear [vystupat’] together” as a unified force. On March 12, the Soviet EC formally endorsed the creation of trade unions as a means to organise “the masses” to the furthest possible extent. In turn, it was hoped workers might demonstrate the value of class-based organisation to soldiers, whom socialists frequently dubbed “peasants in greatcoats” and “sons of the narod” to emphasise their commonality with the proletariat. Soviet activists pressed workers to invite soldiers to their meetings and organisations as “friends” and political allies. Concretely, by bringing together elected representatives of workers’ and soldiers’ collective organisations in general assembly meetings, the Soviet deputy system itself would provide a vehicle for enacting popular unity in revolutionary politics. Armed with mandates from their respective constituent organisations, worker and soldier deputies could collectively agree on a common political agenda, working “hand-in-hand” with one another to “proclaim the people’s path”. The populist understanding of popular politics embodied by the Soviet deputy system reflected established interpretations of revolution common to different socialist tendencies, which had long anticipated the overthrow of Tsarism to begin a period of intensified popular struggle against capitalist exploitation. In the immediate term, the urgency to organise the people was heightened by the belief that

26 “No. 6” (Soviet EC minutes, March 12, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 47.
28 IKS, 1, March 14, 1917, p. 1.
29 For a useful overview, see Hickey, Competing Voices, pp. 9-10.
the “bourgeoisie” was strengthening its own political position. This was spurred particularly by the establishment of the Provisional Government, which had formed amid the tumult of popular revolution in Petrograd in late-February and was dominated at the outset by prominent liberal members of the Russian State Duma. The Provisional Government was portrayed by many socialists as a usurpation of power by bourgeois elites. *Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta* drew explicit contrasts between “the people”, heroically sweeping Tsarism from power in street demonstrations, and the representatives of “large capital” in the State Duma, quietly conspiring to take power.30 The analysis was reiterated by Bolshevik-leaning Social Democratic newspaper, *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, which duly noted “the first lesson of revolution: power falls to those more powerfully organised.”31

The liberal Provisional Government did not merely evince the relevance of class struggle in revolution; it was also a sign of the fragility of the entire revolutionary enterprise to which socialists had committed. Self-evidently, a “bourgeois” government would not by its own volition pursue the interests of the people, which ran counter to its own. Worse still, faced with the prospect of further change, it might turn against the very movement which had brought it power. It was only a matter of time, *Krasnoiarskii rabochii* warned, before:

> the Rodziankos, Guchkovs, and Miliukovs brought to the summit of power by revolution will grow afraid of [its] further development [...] and, before the approaching terrible wave of social transformation [*sotsial'nogo perevorota*], throw themselves into the arms of reaction.32

Such warnings drew on a bleak history of revolutionary failures, particularly during the political upheavals of 1905, when socialists accused “the bourgeoisie” of abandoning the struggle against Tsarism in favour of partial reforms. For key Soviet leaders, 1905 and its aftermath had been a bitter personal experience, reminding them of what they now stood to lose. The Soviet’s first two chairmen, Dubrovinskii and Okulov, were both involved in revolutionary action in European Russia during

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1905 and subsequently endured lengthy periods in exile and emigration. Meanwhile, Soviet deputy chairman, Shumiatskii, had participated in the 1905 *Krasnoiarskaia respublika* as a young railwayman and had suffered arrest and imprisonment after loyalist troops retook Krasnoiarsk from revolutionaries.\(^{33}\)

As Hickey argues, the perception of an imminent bourgeois threat to popular revolutionary aspirations quickly undermined local supra-class political sentiment by portraying collaboration with the bourgeoisie as, at best, a temporary evil and, at worst, a naïve and potentially dangerous error.\(^ {34}\) By mid-March, supra-class politics in Krasnoiarsk was facing sustained criticism from left-wing socialists, who called upon workers and soldiers to strengthen their own class-based organisations in preparation for an “inevitable” rift with the bourgeoisie.\(^ {35}\) This solution represented an outright repudiation of the supra-class ethic fostered by the Committee of Public Safety and by no means went uncontested. Centrist and right-leaning socialists, including prominent Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who had helped establish the CPS, launched a spirited defence of supra-class unity, maintaining that only an alliance of all classes could strengthen the fledgling revolutionary order.\(^ {36}\) Nonetheless, their dissenting voices were quickly marginalised in the Soviet. On March 22, Okulov, speaking on behalf of the Soviet presidium, addressed general assembly deputies, condemning the Provisional Government as an organ of the “imperialist bourgeoisie” and urging they prepare for a future split. The presidium’s position drew heated objections from the Menshevik, Andrei Shebunin, and right-wing SR, Evgenii Kolosov, both vocal advocates of continued support for the Provisional Government in their respective party organisations, who urged the Soviet to ally itself with the bourgeoisie for tactical reasons. Accepting that the people and government would diverge in the future over “socio-economic demands”, Shebunin

\(^{33}\) Biographical data on Dubrovinskii, Okulov, and Shumiatskii in Bagaev, Meshalkin (eds.), *Boitsy revoliutsii*.

\(^{34}\) Hickey, “Discourses of Public Identity”.


\(^{36}\) On local SR and Menshevik politics during this time, see chapter 3.
and Kolosov nevertheless maintained the Provisional Government should be supported while “affairs are moving with the bourgeoisie in [terms of] purely political interests.” Their pleas were rejected by the Soviet general assembly, however, which endorsed the presidium’s position by a majority of 138 votes to 104.37

The repudiation by local revolutionary organisations of political collaboration with the bourgeoisie was commonplace across the Russian Empire during spring 1917 and meant that revolution in the provinces often developed in contrary motion to Petrograd.38 Outside the capital, different classes had typically been united after the overthrow of Tsarism through agreements between local public committees and soviets; over the following weeks, however, while the Petrograd Soviet and Provisional Government gradually moved towards national coalition, many local soviets withdrew support for supra-class politics.39 The hostile attitude of the Krasnoiarsk Soviet towards class collaboration at an all-Russian level was replicated at a city level by increasingly strained relations between it and the pro-Provisional Government CPS. Although the two organisations had formally established relations between one another through the joint United Executive Bureau (UEB), there is scant evidence that the Soviet paid the arrangement much regard in practice. Throughout March and April, Soviet leaders unilaterally engaged in different areas of local politics deemed relevant to their constituents, from labour and the army to provisions regulation, blithely ignoring the CPS and UEB (see below and chapters 4 and 5). Formal relations between the Soviet and CPS finally collapsed in late-April following the Miliukov note, which reaffirmed the Provisional Government’s support for Russia’s pre-revolutionary war aims, leading to the formation of an all-Russian coalition government. For many local socialists, the April crisis provided concrete evidence of the Provisional Government’s hostile class interests, demonstrating its inability to fulfil a popular revolutionary mandate. On April 28, the Soviet EC resolved to withdraw all representatives from the CPS and UEB, citing the “bourgeois

37 "No. 13" (general assembly minutes, March 22, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 69-70.


class direction of the Provisional Government and the divergence of its actions from the will and interests the revolutionary democracy.”

The decision was confirmed in the Soviet general assembly the following day by a crushing majority of 139 votes to 1, with ten abstentions, ending all political cooperation between the Soviet and CPS.

The Soviet’s split from supra-class politics revealed an exclusionary edge to its leaders’ visions for popular politics. While making great efforts to engage workers and soldiers in revolutionary politics, Soviet activists expressed a fear that they must not unwittingly lend support to organisations contradicting their own class interests. Over the following months, this approach to popular politics would become steadily more pronounced as socialists began to disrupt channels for mass political participation which they deemed politically hazardous. It would become an important factor in Soviet representative politics, which sought to monopolise the political support of its constituents at the expense of other organisations. What opportunity would this give social actors to shape revolutionary politics for themselves?

Trade Unions: Class and Power in Revolution

The elaboration of Soviet representative politics ran alongside efforts by the local population to organise. Amongst the most notable of these was the workers’ union movement. Unions were only one form of worker organisation in 1917, coexisting with autonomous factory committees and regular workplace rallies (mitingi). But they are by far the best documented and served as important vehicles for integrating workers into elective Soviet politics, giving valuable insight into the processes underpinning worker politics. By 1917, only one permanent union existed in Krasnoiarsk, the small shop-clerks’ Union of Employees in Trade-Industry Enterprises (UETIE), with 150 members. Revolution, however, unleashed a wave of activity. By late-March, at least nineteen local unions existed; by late-October, this

40 “No. 23” (EC resolution on UEB membership, April 28, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 79.

41 “No. 24” (general assembly minutes, April 29, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 91.

42 Zol’nikov et. al., Rabochie Sibiri, pp. 172-177.
number had grown to over forty, with a likely membership exceeding 15,000.\textsuperscript{43} They included several sizeable industrial workers’ organisations. The railway union, organised around the city’s railway workshops, had 2,300 members by June, while unions of woodworkers, leatherworkers, metalworkers, builders, and printers, claimed a combined membership of over 1,000. Unions of white-collar employees (\textit{sluzhashchie}) also flourished. UETIE membership swelled to some 400, while a further twenty white-collar professions unionised, including teachers, municipal employees, and bank staff.\textsuperscript{44}

Although they brought together workers on an industry-wide basis, unions were firmly rooted in intimate workplace communities at a shop-floor and individual enterprise level which could mobilise at short notice and provided the basis for wider labour organisation.\textsuperscript{45} The railway union, formally established in early-April, was based around autonomous committees which emerged in Krasnoiarsk’s dozen-or-so workshops, brigades, and offices in early-March. By March 10, three separate “unions” of railway conductors, employees, and workers had already formed.\textsuperscript{46} The following month, delegates of the main workshops and offices agreed to form a single union organisation, dividing workshops and offices into separate “sections”, each with its own board (\textit{uprava}).\textsuperscript{47} In his memoirs, railwayman and union activist, Khalimon, recalls workers were recruited in workshops by shop union representatives, who collected subsidies and issued membership tickets, while the entire workshop complex was integrated into an autonomous railway “Soviet of

\textsuperscript{43} For a detailed list of unions established in Krasnoiarsk at this time, see Dement’ev, “Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia bor’ba”, pp. 309-312. Figures for union membership extrapolated from incomplete data in \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii 161}, October 4, 1917, p. 3.


\textsuperscript{45} This feature of Russian labour organisation is highlighted by Bonnell, \textit{Roots of Rebellion}, pp. 222-224.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{IKS 1}, March 14, 1917, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 23, April 12, 1917, pp. 3-4.
Workers’ Deputies” which regulated internal questions of order and production. Similar arrangements existed in the food-processing and leatherworkers’ unions, which organised workers into autonomous branches according to trade, and the printers’ union, whose work was coordinated by “elders” elected at each of Krasnoiarsk’s half-dozen printing workshops.

Coordinating union work was a complex task demanding skilled and experienced organisers. Workers with direct experience of strikes and collective protest were able to unionise most easily. This seems to have been the case for printers, who had direct experience of organising between different print workshops through a series of coordinated strikes staged in January 1916; it is likely that the printers’ union, one of Krasnoiarsk’s best organised and most active throughout 1917, drew on networks developed at this time. In industries where workers had less experience of collective protest, leading roles were assumed by experienced worker socialists, including former political convicts who had cut their teeth in pre-revolutionary labour activism. These politicised labour activists were typified by Il’ia Belopol’skii (1884-1918), a Bolshevik exile who first arrived in Siberia in 1910 following several years’ underground activism in Odessa. In 1915, Belopol’skii was relocated on the grounds of ill-health to Krasnoiarsk, gaining employment in a local leather factory and becoming active in illegal socialist circles. In spring 1917, he took a leading role in union activity, helping organise both his leatherworker colleagues and also local food-processing workers. Belopol’skii’s enthusiasm and drive was replicated by exiles in other industries. Local-born railwayman, Aleksei Rogov, who had been arrested and expelled from Krasnoiarsk after the 1905

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48 Khalimon memoir: GAKK P-64/5/688, l. 1.

49 Food-processing and leatherworkers’ unions structure: Sibirskaja Pravda 1, April 2, 1917, p. 4. Printers’ union structure: Krasnoiarskij rabochii, 50, May 18, 1917, pp. 3-4.

50 Memoir of 1916 printer and Bolshevik exile, Dolbeshkin: GAKK P-64/5/156, ll. 8-18.


52 Belopol’skii reports on leatherworkers’ activities, April-August, in Sibirskaja Pravda.
revolution, returned to the railway workshops in March to help unionise his former colleagues, while Aleksei Gretsov, a founder at the Enisei shipping company's mechanical factory, helped establish the metalworkers' union in April.\(^5^3\)

**Figure 2.4**: Il'ia Belopol'skii.

![Il'ia Belopol'skii](source: GAKK P-7835/9/43)

**Figure 2.5**: Aleksandr Rogov.

![Aleksandr Rogov](source: GAKK P-7835/9/395)

Unions helped workers collectively address both workplace conditions and existing power relations between themselves and their employers, enabling them to simultaneously improve their material situation and assert human dignity as equal members of revolutionary society.\(^5^4\) Throughout spring, blue- and white-collar organisations alike challenged the balance of workplace power. In March, photographers and shop-clerks demanded shorter working hours, improved

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workplace hygiene, and polite address from employers. The following month, the printers’ union shut down Krasnoiarsk’s entire printing industry for a week in dispute over working hours, pay, and hygiene, and demanded direct supervision (kontrol’) over managerial decisions on hiring and firing. The printers’ strike won major concessions and was quickly followed by strikes of woodworkers and leatherworkers, which raised similar demands.

Workers’ campaigns underpinned the relationship of unions with other political organisations and became an important factor in determining which political organisations they engaged and how. Throughout March, workers’ representatives approached both the Soviet and Committee of Public Safety with complaints of maltreatment at the hands of management, excessive workloads, and poor pay. While they received a frosty response from the CPS, which shied away from industrial disputes, workers’ demands were enthusiastically upheld by the Soviet, which established a dedicated Workers’ Commission in mid-March to address working conditions. On March 22, the commission decreed an eight-hour working day in all city enterprises, excluding those in which shorter hours posed “serious technical difficulties”, where the matter would be investigated further. This early engagement set the tone for subsequent months, allowing the Soviet to become an intermediary in conflicts between workers and employers. Throughout spring and summer 1917, Soviet leaders intervened in numerous industrial conflicts, forming conciliation chambers comprising worker, employer, and Soviet EC representatives to negotiate settlements. Their involvement in workplace affairs coincided with a shift

55 Sibirskaya Pravda, 1, April 2, 1917, pp. 3-4.
56 IKS, 20, April 14, 1917, pp. 3-4; IKS 23, April 20, 1917, p. 3.
57 Sibirskaya Pravda, 3, May 1, 1917, p. 4; Sibirskaya Pravda 7, May 29, 1917, p. 4.
58 Resolution of railway depot workers on working hours: Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 4, March 14, 1917, p. 4; minutes of workers’ meeting at city water-pumping and electrical station regarding working conditions, March 15, 1917: GAKK 161/3/23, l. 2.
59 “No. 10” (EC minutes, March 19, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 61.
60 “No. 14” (general assembly minutes, March 22, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 69.
61 Detailed records of union meetings in Sibirskaya Pravda, 1-3.
in union support towards the Soviet and away from the Committee of Public Safety. In March, unions typically elected representatives to both the Soviet and CPS; by mid-April, although they continued to elect Soviet deputies, reports of union meetings show elections to the CPS had tailed off.62

Workers’ unionisation and engagement in Soviet politics stoked socialist hopes for a politically-independent, organised working class. In April, prominent socialists, including the Bolsheviks, Shumiatskii, Frumkin, and Belopol’skii, formed a Central Bureau of Trade Unions (CBTU) to unite all labour organisations adhering to “fighting class principles”.63 The CBTU quickly asserted itself as a symbolic and practical focal point for militant worker politics. Upon establishment, it helped the Soviet organise May Day celebrations, dispatching activists to union meetings to explain the holiday’s significance, gathering funds for a demonstration, and convincing workers to attend with banners proclaiming allegiance to socialism and the workers’ movement.64 On a practical level, the CBTU provided advice and representation for workers during negotiations with employers and gathered funds from different trade unions to support striking workers.65 CBTU activists were quickly acknowledged as legitimate partners in labour disputes by the Soviet EC, which used them to mediate workers’ strike demands between itself and individual unions.66 By June, the CBTU claimed to have led “around ten strikes” in the city.67

The CBTU provided an organisational platform for workers to express themselves as part of a cohesive, class-conscious movement. Nevertheless, it faced

62 Extensive details of union meetings and elections in March and April in Sibirskaiia Pravda, 1-3.

63 Sibirskaiia Pravda, 2, April 17, 1917, p. 4; Sibirskaiia Pravda 5, May 15, 1917, p. 3.

64 Sibirskaiia Pravda, 2, April 17, p. 4; Sibirskaiia Pravda 3, May 1, p. 4.


66 Sibirskaiia Pravda, 3, May 1, p. 4; “No. 27”, “No. 28”, “No. 96”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 97, 99-100, 224-225.

difficulties engaging some workers.\textsuperscript{68} By June, the CBTU had ten affiliated unions, with a combined membership of over 2,000 workers.\textsuperscript{69} However, it struggled to gain support from white-collar employees and professionals. Published records indicate that CBTU meetings were attended by only three white-collar organisations: the Union of Trade-Industry Employees, a regional union of chancellery employees, and the land surveyors’ and draughtsmen’s union.\textsuperscript{70} Its relative inability to engage white-collar employees in militant class politics suggests both organisational and political differences existed between them and socialist labour activists. In the first instance, rank-and-file employees’ and professionals’ workplace skills may have meant they were more able to organise without the help of revolutionary socialists, allowing them to formulate political concerns with relative independence. While Krasnoiarsk’s largest blue-collar unions were led by left-wing socialists, major white-collar unions retained greater political independence.\textsuperscript{71} The teachers’ union, for example, operated entirely separately from socialist politics, even standing its own candidates to city Duma elections in July against Social-Democratic and Socialist-Revolutionary party lists, a move condemned by both parties as weakening socialist influence amongst workers.\textsuperscript{72} Moreover, white-collar employees’ greater job security and control over their own working conditions, as well as their relatively diverse social backgrounds, may have meant they were less likely to see the world in terms of a binary opposition of classes.\textsuperscript{73} Many white-collar employees took a relatively conciliatory approach to workplace disputes. While printers, woodworkers, and leatherworkers shut down

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Sibirskaiia Pravda, 5, May 15, 1917, p. 3.}

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 79, June 22, 1917, p. 4.}

\textsuperscript{70} All three unions listed at CBTU meeting on June 12: \textit{Sibirskaiia Pravda, 12, June 22, 1917, p. 4.}


\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Nash golos, 63, June 10, 1917, p. 1.} For results of city Duma elections, see figure 4.1, chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{73} David Mandel makes this point for Petrograd’s skilled “worker aristocracy”: \textit{Petrograd Workers and the Fall of the Old Regime: From the February Revolution to the July Days, 1917, Macmillan} (1983), pp. 34-36.
their workplaces during spring in order to force concessions from employers, shop clerks organised a joint commission with the local merchants’ society, peaceably negotiating an eight-hour working day across all trade enterprises in the city.74

By summer, the CBTU was also facing problems keeping blue-collar workers’ organisations actively involved in its work. Its growing organisational difficulties were highlighted by efforts to organise a city conference of trade unions. The conference was first proposed by CBTU activists in June in order more closely integrate unions “standing on the basis of the proletarian class struggle” into a cohesive city-wide movement.75 The following month, however, it was indefinitely postponed.76 This coincided with a general lull in CBTU work, which declined over the summer; newspaper reports of its meetings disappeared in July and August altogether. In early-September, CBTU chairman, Belopol’skii, finally returned to the matter of the conference, whose delay he blamed on overwork and underpreparation of key activists and the “apathetic attitude” of some unions.77 The conference was finally held on October 1, drawing representatives from twenty-four unions with a combined membership of 12,169 workers.78 However, only forty-one of sixty-six invited union representatives attended. Several unions sent no representatives whatsoever and only one of eighteen representatives invited from the railway workers’ union, by far the largest in Krasnoiarsk, attended.79 The disengagement of unions seems to have signified a wider breakdown in local union work. During the conference, Belopol’skii, speaking on behalf of the CBTU, reiterated his concerns that member unions were not pulling their weight, placing the burden on a few

74 *Sibirksaia Pravda 9*, June 8, 1917, p. 4. Joint commission minutes: GAKK r-258/1/23, l. 16.

75 *Sibirksaia Pravda 12*, June 22, 1917, p. 4.

76 *Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 106*, July 26, 1917, pp. 3-4.

77 *Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 141*, September 7, 1917, p. 4.

78 *Krasnoiarksa rabochii, 161*, October 4, 1917, p. 3.

79 *Znamia truda, 66*, October 6, 1917, p. 3. (Untitled historical report on union activity in Krasnoiarsk, 1905-1917), KKM inv. 782 (“vospominanii uchastnikov revoliutsionnykh sobytii v 1905 g.”), l. 22.
overworked individuals.\textsuperscript{80} Meanwhile, labour activists delivered their own damning verdicts on the state of union work in general. Some organisations, particularly the printers’ union, were reported as continuing to work effectively. In others, however, the situation was verging on “disastrous”. Woodworkers’ and leatherworkers’ union activists, for example, reported “the most complete lack of culture amongst [our] members, inexperience in organisation, in self-control, [and] the indiscriminate exit of members, [which is] turning into a stampede.”

An organisational “malaise” amongst unions was common across Russia during summer 1917, reflecting the problems activists faced maintaining worker engagement.\textsuperscript{81} In Krasnoiarsk, this situation partly reflected the difficulties many rank-and-file workers faced adapting to the organisational rigours of union activism. In general, Krasnoiarsk had witnessed limited organised labour activity before 1917. At the city trade union conference in October, union activists’ emphasis on workers’ “inexperience in organisation” suggests that, even by this stage, many were unable to handle the practical tasks of union organisation. By contrast, activists’ praise for the printers’ union, whose rank-and-file members had a relatively extensive history of workplace organisation, indicates workforces experienced in conducting labour protest before revolution retained a distinct organisational advantage.

At the same time, unions’ struggles to maintain worker engagement also reflected the changing nature of labour organisation. Over the summer, workers in many industries began diverting attention to industry-wide organisation and back towards their own workplaces. Committees formed at individual factories and workshops had provided the basis for union work organised across whole industries during the spring. Over the summer, however, many began to function independently to address increasingly bitter struggles between workers and management, drawing some of Krasnoiarsk’s most capable labour organisers away from wider union activities. In late-May, workers at the Enisei mechanical factory, who had helped establish the metalworkers’ union the previous month, formed their own factory committee to monitor the activities of managers, whom they suspected of asset

\textsuperscript{80} Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 161, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{81} Koenker, Moscow Workers, pp. 177-178.
stripping and scaling back production. The committee was chaired by Gretsov, the political exile who had played a key role in organising the metalworkers’ union.\textsuperscript{82} The picture was similar at the municipal water-pumping and electrical station, where workers engaged in a lengthy and bitter dispute with management over job security and pay. During spring, disputes at the station were mediated through the metalworkers’ union.\textsuperscript{83} In July, however, station workers bypassed the metalworkers’ union, establishing direct supervision over production through their own dedicated factory committee.\textsuperscript{84} Meanwhile, reports from this period suggest that labour disputes at the railway workshops, whose workers were conspicuously underrepresented at the city trade union conference in October, were increasingly channelled through workers’ own Soviet of Delegates, which handled complaints against management independently of the CBTU.\textsuperscript{85} There is some evidence socialists sought to engage Krasnoiarsk’s budding factory and workshop committees outside the city’s union movement. In late-June, Bolshevik labour activists established a Factory Committee Centre (FCC) at a meeting attended by representatives from several local enterprises, including the railway workshops.\textsuperscript{86} The FCC was headed by Boris Shumiatskii, who seems to have ended his CBTU work in order to focus on his new role. It functioned on some level throughout the following months and was represented at the trade union conference in October by Shumiatskii, who argued factory committees should now assume the political functions of unions, which were failing to address proletarian concerns.\textsuperscript{87} However, it made little impression on local politics and was virtually ignored by the local press after July.

While workers’ renewed focus on labour organisation at a factory and workshop level hindered the establishment of the city-wide proletarian movement envisaged by the CBTU, it also exposed a growing difference of opinion between many

\textsuperscript{82} Sibirskiaia Pravda, 8, June 4, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{83} Sibirskiaia Pravda, 7, May 29, 1917, p. 4; Sibirskiaia Pravda 9, June 8, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{84} Sibirskiaia Pravda, 16, July 6, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{85} Sibirskiaia Pravda, 17, July 9, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{86} Sibirskiaia Pravda, 15, July 2, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{87} Delo rabochego, 14, October 26, 1917, p. 2.

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rank-and-file workers and socialist labour activists regarding the aims and purposes of working class politics. Shumiatskii may have endorsed independent factory and workshop committees as the basis for a new kind of worker politics, but others expressed concern at workers’ preoccupation with their own workplace conditions. Throughout 1917, socialist newspapers reported rumbles of discontent from socialists and union organisers regarding workers’ unwillingness to participate in engage in “politics” outside their own workplaces. In September, as CBTU leaders began reporting worker disengagement from union work, the Bolshevik, Nikolai Meshcheriakov, complained workers were only attending meetings which addressed “economic” questions. Meshcheriakov chided them for valuing “minor economic conquests” over class struggle “in the political arena”, warning that, without more general political organisation, revolutionary gains remained insecure. His complaints should not be taken as evidence that workers were becoming politically disengaged; insofar as workers challenged power relationships they experienced at a shop-floor level, their workplace struggles were overtly political. Indeed, they would provide the basis for growing worker engagement with overtly “political” issues over the summer, particularly the question of state power (see chapter 3). Nonetheless, socialists’ growing frustrations highlight their inability to effectively channel this energy in directions they either anticipated or desired.

Trade unions provide valuable insight into the contested nature of revolutionary politics and reveal how workers engaged with socialist efforts to build new participatory structures. By integrating workers into Soviet politics, unionisation fulfilled a key organisational aim of socialists. However, it was no easy matter to establish a cohesive class-conscious movement with unions at its core. The evidence of CBTU efforts, which dovetailed with those of the Soviet EC, suggests socialist labour organisers consistently struggled to engage white-collar unions in wider projects for proletarian politics. Meanwhile, amongst many rank-and-file blue-collar workers, a continued focus on improving their intimate workplace conditions as the basis for political activity meant labour organisations often confounded socialists’ visions of a proletariat united by general class solidarities and integrated

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88 E.g. complaints from railway workshops: Sibirskaiia Pravda, 3, May 1, 1917, p. 4.
89 Krasnoiarskiia rabochii, 139, September 5, 1917, p. 2.
into wider revolutionary politics. These findings are consistent with research into other cities in 1917, suggesting Krasnoiarsk’s workers conformed to broader political trends evident across Russia during this period.

Soldiers and Officers: A Community, Fragmented

Like workers, Krasnoiarsk’s soldiers organised extensively in 1917, establishing elective committees throughout the city garrison. Following the overthrow of Tsarism, electoral practices were quickly implemented across all regiments, brigades, and commands. Committees were formed at a company (rotnyi) level and integrated through elected delegates into an overarching regimental (polkovoi) committee, often called a “soviet”. This system was first established in the 14th Siberian Reserve Rifle Regiment in mid-March and soon replicated in the 15th and 30th Rifle Regiments, the 717th Infantry Brigade, Cossack Division, and Military Hospital. The new electoral order effectively established each company as an autonomous self-governing unit and built upon long-standing military traditions of participatory organisation in the Tsarist army, particularly the universal soldiers’ artel’, through which soldiers administered company funds and provisions on a collective basis before 1917. In the 15th Rifle Regiment, the establishment of elected committees was explicitly formulated as the reorganisation of the regimental economy “on the basis of the artel” (na artel’nykh osnovakh). Committees across the garrison, especially at a company level, quickly assumed the functions of the pre-revolutionary artel’, turning attention to questions of finance and food. At the same time, they also signified a


92 IKS, 7, March 22, 1917, p. 3.

93 IKS, 10, March 25, 1917, p. 3; minutes of company committees in GAKK r-258/1/8, r-258/1/23.
growing concern to engage in revolutionary politics and dovetailed with Soviet efforts to organise soldiers by providing a collective platform through which to elect deputies. By late-March, some 200 military deputies had been elected to the Soviet.94

Rank-and-file soldiers immediately turned to military committees to redress their lack of rights inside the army and out and assert their basic equality in revolutionary society. In March, committees challenged the Tsarist army's most despotic practices, arresting and replacing particularly hated commanders and demanding an end to petty abuses of military authority, including mandatory saluting of officers when not on duty, unpaid officers' servants (den'shchiki), and unpaid soldier labour in regimental workshops. Soldiers also claimed the same basic rights as civilians, demanding an end to internal surveillance measures inside barracks, unhindered movement outside barracks, and the right to live in their own apartments.95 From the outset, they engaged the Soviet as a means to both secure and legitimise these demands. Soldiers' deputies kept the Soviet EC closely informed of their desires to replace officers, often requesting it formally authorise committees' decisions to do so and ratify soldiers' nominations for their replacement.96 The EC, for its part, quickly established a dedicated Soldiers' Commission which gathered complaints and abolished officers' den'shchiki, saluting when not on duty, and surveillance in barracks.97

Alongside rank-and-file soldiers, the new military order drew support from many junior officers, particularly ensigns, so much so that Russian historian, M.V. Shilovskii, terms the reorganisation of Siberian rear garrisons “a revolution of the praporshchiki”.98 Junior officers became a crucial element of an educated and

94 GAKK P-64/3/81, ll. 5, 9.

95 IKS, 12, March 29, 1917, p. 3; GAKK r-258/1/23, ll. 26, 217.

96 "No. 11" (EC minutes, March 20, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 62-63; IKS, 12, March 29, p. 3; GAKK r-258/1/23, ll. 26-27.

97 Formation of Soldiers' Commission: "No. 6" (EC minutes, March 12, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 46-47. IKS, 7, March 22, 1917, p. 3.

articulate “committee class” which managed and maintained committee work, serving alongside military scribes as the chairmen and secretaries of regimental and company meetings. They also became visible members of soldier politics at a city level. Of forty-four soldiers’ representatives elected to the Krasnoiarsk Soviet Executive Committee in March, nineteen were junior officers, including sixteen praporshchiki. For many junior officers, who had helped lead their men into revolution during the overthrow of Tsarism, participation in committee politics signified a commitment to recasting their relationship with rank-and-file soldiers along more fraternal lines. Arriving at the Krasnoiarsk Soviet on March 5, the 14th regiment praporshchiki, Markovskii and Kokosov, implored soldiers to see them as “comrade friends”, begging they forgive officers’ “unconscious mistakes of the past”. In the 30th regiment, officers elected their own “presidium”, inviting soldiers’ representatives to discuss with them the “life of the regiment”, and sent representatives to attend regiment committee meetings. These actions challenged the suspicions of both the rank-and-file and many in military command. On March 27, a meeting of the 30th regiment noted “citizen officers feel bewildered with the establishment of the new order and hold themselves far back from the mass of soldiers” and urged officers to enter into “one friendly family with soldiers for the great battle for [our] young freedom.”

While committees restructured military authority, they did not attempt to abolish order or discipline in the army, instead reinforcing many basic military structures. With Soviet support, committees moved to restore flagging discipline, demanding strict observation of military protocol for soldiers on duty and attendance of military drill, and tackling unauthorised soldier actions such as the sale of clothing and military equipment. This disciplining role closely reflected the concerns of


100 GAKK P-64/3/81, ll. 5-6.

101 “No. 2” (general assembly minutes, March 5, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, pp. 38-39.

102 GAKK r-258/1/8, l. 155; IKS 12, March 29, pp. 3-4.

103 Meeting of soldiers’ and officers’ delegates, March 27: IKS, 12, March 29, p. 4.


105 IKS, 12, March 29, p. 4.
officers, who reaffirmed the need for an effective, orderly, and hierarchical army. On March 5, having announced their “friendship” with rank-and-file soldiers, the praporshchiki, Markovskii and Kokosov, pointedly reminded the Soviet of the importance of military discipline and leadership at a time of war.\footnote{106} These sentiments were also supported by many rank-and-file soldiers, who used committee meetings to hold their fellow men to the obligations of military duty. In late-March, soldiers of the 30\textsuperscript{th} Regiment’s 3\textsuperscript{rd} company decried individuals taking extended leave from their units on the pretext of illness as “very harmful to the mood of [their] comrades”, demanding a special Regimental Commission be established to halt the practice. The meeting minutes declared bluntly: “We know who is genuinely unwell.”\footnote{107} Such statements revealed the widespread conviction amongst soldiers that, during war, a just and equitable military should place equal obligations on all its men. This was reiterated throughout 1917 by commonplace demands from soldiers that individuals deferred from service on the grounds of health or employment be called into the army.\footnote{108}

Socialists quickly acknowledged military committees as the basis for a new era of soldier organisation, praising them for “restor[ing] discipline and order” in the garrison and engaging soldiers in revolutionary politics. Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta reported enthusiastically on company committees in the 14\textsuperscript{th} regiment, where “Soldiers are beginning to consciously participate in civil life. They willingly go to assemblies and rallies, [and] avidly listen to speeches of orators and propagandists.”\footnote{109} Nonetheless, by summer, committees were facing a similar organisational malaise to trade unions. In June, one soldier reported committee work was waning in the 717\textsuperscript{th} Brigade, where as few as 100-120 of the brigade’s 1,200 men attended meetings: “the further [time goes by], the worse and worse [attendance becomes].”\footnote{110} Similar issues seem to have afflicted the 15\textsuperscript{th} Regiment, which

\footnote{106}{“No. 2” (general assembly minutes, March 5, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 39.}
\footnote{107}{GAKK r-258/1/38, l. 46.}
\footnote{108}{GAKK r-258/1/12, l. 79.}
\footnote{109}{IKS, 13, March 30, 1917, pp. 3-4.}
\footnote{110}{IKS, 72, June 20, 1917, p. 3.}
strengthened rules on attendance at regiment committee meetings during this time.\textsuperscript{111} By autumn, Soviet activists were complaining barely half of soldiers’ deputies attended meetings, making it impossible to discuss important questions and “lead[ing] to unfair reprimands against elected organs of the revolutionary democracy” by soldiers.\textsuperscript{112}

Soldiers’ fluctuating participation in elective revolutionary politics was partly linked to changes in Krasnoiarsk’s military population, which remained unstable throughout 1917. Firstly, soldiers’ obligations to war ensured the constant transfer of troops to and from the city. Throughout spring and summer, reservists who had first built committees and established links with the Soviet were dispatched to the front and replaced by soldiers evacuated from the front (\textit{frontoviki}) as-yet uninitiated into local politics.\textsuperscript{113} In an effort to maintain elective politics amongst soldiers, the Soviet sought to establish new committee structures for troops leaving Krasnoiarsk. In April, following the first summons of troops to the front, Soviet leaders ordered existing soldiers’ deputies help establish elective committees on all military trains (echelons) leaving the city. These committees would handle all internal life on trains, ensuring the continuation of participatory practices begun in Krasnoiarsk.\textsuperscript{114} Nonetheless, troop movement inevitably hindered local committee work. In June, the bulk of the garrison was called up to the front, including most units from the 14\textsuperscript{th}, 15\textsuperscript{th}, and 30\textsuperscript{th} Siberian rifle regiments, diminishing Krasnoiarsk’s soldier population from around 25,000 to 8,500.\textsuperscript{115} The summons dealt a harsh blow to military committees. In the 14\textsuperscript{th} regiment, whose men left Krasnoiarsk on June 24, committee work was halted for a month before new company and regiment representatives could be elected.\textsuperscript{116} Soviet activities were similarly hampered by the departure of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} \textit{IKS}, 54, May 30, 1917, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{112} \textit{IKS}, 158, October 10, 1917, pp. 3-4.
\item \textsuperscript{113} \textit{Frontoviki} arriving in Russian rear garrisons in 1917 were notoriously difficult to integrate into existing military and political structures: Badcock, \textit{Politics and the People}, pp. 153-154.
\item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{IKS}, 24, April 21, 1917, pp. 1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Dement’ev, “Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia bor’ba”, p. 39.
\item \textsuperscript{116} \textit{Sibirskiiia Pravda}, 19, August 9, 1917, p. 3.
\end{itemize}
soldiers’ deputies with their units. In June, in order to mitigate disruption of its work, the Soviet requested all soldiers serving on its Executive Committee remain in Krasnoiarsk. Nonetheless, the exodus of troops had drastic implications for soldier participation in the Soviet. The following month, the EC admitted that “after the dispatch of the garrison to the front, the Soviet has not been full”, noting a “significant number” of military units now had no elected deputies whatsoever. Soviet leaders warned that the garrison’s lack of integration into revolutionary politics left it vulnerable to counter-revolution and hurriedly issued orders for the comprehensive re-election of Soviet deputies by all military units.

Besides military call-ups to the front, the constant turnover of soldiers was also exacerbated by seasonal “farm work” (polevye raboty), which drew increasing numbers of men away from the garrison and back to their home villages. Throughout spring, rank-and-file peasant soldiers expressed desires to return home to help relatives and neighbours deprived by war of their strongest men to sow and harvest crops. The issue of farm work was addressed on March 29 by the Soviet EC, which pledged to support soldiers’ demands and petition regional military authorities in Irkutsk for short-term leave to be granted. In early-April, it succeeded in extracting minor concessions from Irkutsk for soldiers over forty years old to be granted leave. However, this failed to placate younger recruits, who inundated the Soviet over the following weeks with appeals for more general leave. In a letter to Izvestii Krasnoiarskogo Soveta, one soldier demanded:

Is it really [sensible] that we just lie on our bunks in the barracks and eat up the last reserves of bread, and leave incapacitated workers, who can only feed themselves with their labour, to work the fields?

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117 “No. 43” (EC minutes, June 10, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 125.

118 “No. 57” (Guberniia EC minutes, July 21, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 150-151.

119 IKS, 14, April 7, 1917, p. 3.

120 IKS, 15, April 8, 1917, pp. 3-4.

121 IKS, 58, June 3, 1917, p. 1.
Under growing pressure, Soviet leaders increasingly addressed soldiers’ appeals on its own authority. From late-April onwards, the EC began granting leave for farm work to wounded reservists and frontoviki, issuing its own permits for them to travel back to their villages.\textsuperscript{122} By May, the volume of soldiers in transit around Krasnoiarsk was so great that the EC installed paid commissars at the city pier and train station to limit disruption to civilian transport.\textsuperscript{123} Nevertheless, shipping companies soon complained soldiers were diverting vessels to get home, hindering the transport of goods and risking sailors’ lives.\textsuperscript{124} Soviet intervention in the matter of farm work peaked during summer amid renewed demands from soldiers and many company committees for wholesale leave.\textsuperscript{125} On August 12, following repeated attempts to negotiate new terms of leave with Irkutsk military authorities, the Soviet EC unilaterally issued new travel permits to evacuated frontoviki, individuals temporarily deferred from military service, and reservists not facing imminent transfer to the front.\textsuperscript{126}

Farm work placed another considerable burden on committee politics and the Soviet deputy system by drawing soldiers away from Krasnoiarsk and highlights how structures designed to maximise popular participation could work against the broader aims of revolutionary activists. By addressing demands that men be allowed to return home to fulfil their traditional village roles, the Soviet and military committees were forced to acknowledge soldiers’ overlapping social identities and their conflicting local loyalties. Although enlisted into the military, many peasant soldiers still considered themselves integral to the rural economy; despite being stationed in Krasnoiarsk, they also maintained an active concern for the fate of their home villages.

At the same time, the issue of leave exposed underlying tensions in the garrison between rank-and-file soldiers and their unit commanders, including many

\textsuperscript{122} IKS, 28, April 26, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{123} IKS, 47, May 20, 1917, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{124} GAKK r-258/1/33, l. 54.

\textsuperscript{125} GAKK r-258/1/8, l. 15; r-258/1/23, ll. 182, 252; r-258/1/37, l. 6.

\textsuperscript{126} “No. 63” (general assembly minutes, August 12, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Soviet, pp. 162-164.
junior officers. Junior officers’ support for the Soviet and military committees had been critical at the outset of revolution, signifying genuine aspirations that the relationship between themselves and their men be recast in more equal and conciliatory terms. Nonetheless, many officers soon voiced concerns that, by unilaterally resolving questions such as farm work, elective committees and the Soviet were undermining commanders’ legitimate military prerogatives. The first signs of trouble came in early-April, when the 15th regiment praporshchiki, Lazo and Dembitskii, announced to the Soviet EC that they and their fellow officers would not abide by Soviet orders to issue soldiers with short-term leave. The statement caused uproar, prompting Lazo, who claimed not to have read it beforehand, to hastily retract his name. Dembitskii, who obstinately stood by the statement, was expelled from the EC meeting.

Tensions between the Soviet and some officers grew over the following weeks, culminating with the establishment of an independent Garrison Committee (GC), which was elected on July 5 under the leadership of Cossack ensign (khorunzhii), Sotnikov, and a handful of other junior-ranking officers from various regiments. The GC provided a platform for disaffected unit commanders to reassert their own military prerogatives. It immediately zeroed in on the issue of farm work, declaring all Soviet travel permits for soldiers void and demanding soldiers remain with their units pending formal orders from military authorities. Matters came to a head in August, following the Soviet EC’s unilateral decision to grant wholesale leave to soldiers. On August 18, Soviet actions were condemned by a lively GC meeting, where several speakers demanded the Soviet be deposed and its leaders arrested. These calls were quickly beaten back by GC chairman, Sotnikov, who anxiously sought to quell his fellow officers’ anger. The following day, however, anti-Soviet officers

127 Raleigh likewise notes tensions in the Saratov garrison between socialists, who sought to rapidly transform military life, and “cadre soldiers” intent on maintaining existing military structures: Revolution on the Volga, p. 100.

128 IKS, 18, April 12, 1917, pp. 3-4.

129 GAKK r-258/1/8, l. 56.

130 GAKK r-258/1/8, l. 54.
summoned a punitive military expedition from Irkutsk on the pretext that the Soviet was instigating “disorders”\textsuperscript{131}. Their efforts, which likely did not have GC backing, were thwarted by Soviet negotiators, who peacefully intercepted a military echelon \textit{en route} from Irkutsk and convinced it to abort its mission, while company committees in the garrison sabotaged attempts by several officers to arm soldiers against the Soviet\textsuperscript{132}. Nonetheless, the episode served sufficient warning to Soviet leaders for the need to exercise political hegemony over the garrison. Two days later, the Soviet EC, with unintended irony, condemned the Garrison Committee for “interfer[ing] in its sphere of activities” and ordered all units to withdraw their representatives from the organisation\textsuperscript{133}. Following the GC’s abolition, the Soviet consolidated all military deputies into a single, semi-autonomous Soldiers’ Section, which assumed complete authority over all internal questions of military life, as the sole legitimate expression for the military in revolutionary politics\textsuperscript{134}.

The Soviet’s complex relationship with military personnel highlights its leaders’ continued struggle to control its own constituents. The garrison provided a vital source of support for the Soviet but nevertheless constituted an unstable political community. Soldiers and officers maintained a clear sense of military identity which they used to distinguish themselves from civilian society. However, they never constituted a cohesive grouping, with different ranks and units expressing varied and often conflicting political demands reflecting their own intimate concerns. This dual fragmentation confounded socialist visions for a cohesive popular constituency but was tacitly acknowledged by the Soviet’s repeated attempts to engage soldiers and officers on their own terms. This was vividly illustrated by the establishment of a self-governing Soldiers’ Section in late-August, which

\textsuperscript{131} “No. 67” (EC minutes, August 18, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Soviet}, p. 169.


\textsuperscript{133} “No. 71” (Guberniia EC resolution on Garrison Committee, August 20, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Soviet}, p. 182. Archival records of GC meetings stop after this date, suggesting the Soviet’s efforts to halt its work were successful.

\textsuperscript{134} “No. 73” (general assembly minutes, August 28, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Soviet}, pp. 183-186.
simultaneously sought to confine all military politics within the Soviet whilst granting soldiers and officers the autonomy to handle their own internal affairs as they saw fit.

Women: The Silent Minority?

As the challenges faced in organising workers and soldiers demonstrated, Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary society was far from cohesive. While different groupings organised collectively, they remained riven by complex internal divisions and overlapping agendas. This posed a challenge for Soviet activists seeking to construct a coherent popular constituency, but also allowed marginal social actors with their own particular concerns to assert themselves as legitimate revolutionary participants. For women, who had been traditionally marginalised from power, revolution provided unparalleled opportunities to assert their own political agency.135 Female voices in Krasnoiarsk might be easily overlooked. Typically for Siberian railway towns, whose population had expanded before 1917 through rapid inward labour migration, Krasnoiarsk had a decidedly masculine demographic, with males constituting around sixty-percent of the city’s pre-revolutionary population.136 Following the overthrow of Tsarism, women cut marginal figures in revolutionary politics and were heavily outweighed by men in the Soviet. By late-March, only a handful of the Soviet’s approximately 350 deputies and candidate deputies were female, while as few as five women participated in Executive Committee meetings during the period March-October.137 Nonetheless, women were not silent: various female activists, including experienced socialists, workers, and soldiers’ family


136 Pre-revolutionary census data from 1911: *Aziatskaia Rossiia, tom pervyi*, pp. 348-350. Krasnoiarsk’s wartime transformation into a regional military centre likely accentuated this gender imbalance.

137 GAKK P-64/3/82, ll. 7-12. EC membership records, March-October 1917, from Krasnoiarskii Sovet. Only known female EC members and those with feminine name endings (-a and -aia) have been included here. Soviet minutes list a further six unknown individuals with gender-ambiguous name endings (-o and -ykh).
members \textit{(soldatki)}, sought actively to raise their political profile as legitimate collective actors.

Female workers occupied tenuous positions in working-class society. As across Russia, female employment had rapidly accelerated during the war as industries drew in women to replace men enlisted into the army.\textsuperscript{138} Women increasingly entered traditionally male-dominated workplaces, including the railway, where over one quarter of workers guarding and servicing local lines were female by 1917.\textsuperscript{139} The Bolshevik exile and labour activist, D.P. Dol'beshkin, who helped organise the Krasnoiarsk printers' strike of January 1916, similarly recalls women as prominent in the city's printing workshops,\textsuperscript{140} while reports on workers' meetings in 1917 indicate a significant proportion of workers in tailoring and food production were female.\textsuperscript{141} Nonetheless, women remained marginalised in the workplace, suffering both exploitation as cheap labour from management and hostility from higher-ranking male colleagues, who feared for their own job security.\textsuperscript{142} Dol'beshkin's memoirs recall "hidden and open antagonism" between male and female workers as a major obstacle to pre-revolutionary labour organisation in the printing workshops, where the female worker "felt herself completely browbeaten and subordinated."\textsuperscript{143} Women played limited roles in union work in 1917. Incomplete data suggests they made up around one-third of members in CBTU-affiliated unions by June.\textsuperscript{144} However, female workers were severely underrepresented at a leadership level. Between March and October, the boards of both the railway workers' union and CBTU were entirely male. One solitary woman,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{139} Zol'nikov et al., \textit{Rabochie Sibiri}, p. 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{140} Dol'beshkin memoir: GAKK P-64/5/156, ll. 8-9.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} \textit{Sibirskaia Pravda}, 1, April 2, 1917, p. 4; \textit{Sibirskaia Pravda}, 3, May 1, 1917, p. 4; \textit{IKS 19}, April 9, 1917, p. 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{142} McDermid, Hillyar, \textit{Women and Work}, pp. 145-146.
  \item \textsuperscript{143} GAKK P-64/5/156, ll. 8-9.
  \item \textsuperscript{144} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 79, June 22, 1917, p. 4.
\end{itemize}
A.V. Shtein, sat on the printers’ union board during this period, serving as its chair between March and May. The situation was only slightly better amongst food-processing workers, whose first union board consisted of twelve men and two women; and tailors, whose seven-person union board elected in April included two women.

The underrepresentation of women workers in revolutionary politics was quickly raised as an issue by a handful of female socialists. On March 8, Lidiia Subottina (1881-1960), a university-educated actress and Bolshevik exile, reminded a meeting of socialist activists that women had suffered “equally with men” for revolution in “prison, forced labour, and on the executioner’s block” and thus had an equal “right to participate in the common construction” of revolutionary society. Following women’s prominent roles in the February Revolution in Petrograd, Subottina’s concerns resonated amongst local socialists. A week later, Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta praised women for braving “the bullets of Tsarist executioners” in the capital and urged them to join the Soviet in greater numbers to secure equality with men. Krasnoiarskii rabochii, meanwhile, urged male workers to involve women in their struggles: “Make space, comrades, and admit women into your ranks. They must be, and will be, trusted allies to you in your great, final battle.”

Socialists’ emphasis on female contributions to revolutionary politics also reflected a lurking concern that, unless organised quickly, women might unwittingly be drawn towards hostile class enemies. Attention was focused by a liberal-led Union of Women’s Equality (UWE), which formed in March with the stated goal of uniting

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145 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 4, March 14, 1917, p. 4; Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 45, May 11, 1917, p. 4.

146 IKS, 19, April 13, 1917, pp. 3-4; IKS, 22, April 16, 1917, p. 4.

147 Eniseiskii krai, 55, March 10, 1917, pp. 3-4.


149 IKS, 2, March 16, 1917, p. 1.

150 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 10, March 21, 1917, pp. 2-3.
women “without differentiation of classes or political persuasions.” The UWE appealed directly to women workers, whom it urged join its ranks so as to better “illustrate and resolve questions of the protection of labour.”151 By mid-April, it had 300 members and had begun organising literacy classes and political discussion groups for local women.152 These efforts drew scorn from Social-Democrat newspaper, Krasnoiarskii rabochii, which published a series of scathing articles condemning the UWE as a “bourgeois” ploy to draw women away from their male comrades.153 Over the following weeks, Subottina and several other Bolshevik women, including Glafira-Teodorovich, a Soviet EC member and sister of Aleksei Okulov, and the Polish political exile, Ianina Pekazh (see below), assumed responsibility for ensuring the UWE did not distract women workers from the class struggle, disrupting its meetings with lengthy speeches on the evils of bourgeois politics and shouting down liberal speakers.154 Their campaign culminated on June 1 with a meeting of Social-Democratic activists, chaired by Teodorovich and Pekazh, which declared involvement in the UWE to be unacceptable and demanded all female workers quit the organisation.155 Their position was swiftly endorsed by the Soviet EC, which condemned the UWE “as an organisation of the bourgeoisie”.156

Despite their hostility to “bourgeois” feminism, women's weak integration in revolutionary increasingly convinced female socialists of the need for dedicated female organisations. Throughout the spring and summer, women Bolsheviks balanced attacks on the UWE with constructive efforts to unionise predominantly female professions.157 Focus quickly centred on a domestic servants’ union,

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152 Nash golos, 18, April 12, 1917, p. 3; Svobodnaia Sibir', 16, April 25, 1917, p. 4.

153 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 13, March 24, p. 3.


155 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 61, June 1, 1917, p. 4.

156 “No. 40” (EC minutes, June 4, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 121.

established in late-March at a meeting called by Teodorovich and Subottina. By June, the union had 142 members, all but five of them women. During this period, it provided a focal point for female labour organisation, organising meetings for both domestic servants and other female workers. These events brought together rank-and-file female workers, who expressed their own concerns for better working conditions and social rights, including child care, and prominent female socialists, including Subottina, who regularly addressed meetings with demands for proletarian unity. During the summer, continued work to integrate women workers into labour politics prompted demands for an explicitly female union movement. Following a failed attempt to unionise laundresses in August, Bolsheviks announced plans to unite all female workers into a single union alongside domestic servants. How far these plans progressed is unclear: subsequent newspaper reports provide little information on the projected union of women workers and neither it nor the domestic servants' union attended the city conference of trade unions in October. Nonetheless, the proposal for a women-only labour organisation signified the culmination of female activists' efforts to raise women workers' profiles in revolutionary politics, marking a similar shift in attitudes towards gender-specific politics to elsewhere in Russia at the time.

While women workers slowly emerged as a political grouping in their own right, soldatki were also beginning to stake their claim as revolutionary actors. The term soldatki generally denotes soldier's wives, but was often extended during the Great War to include any female family members financially dependent on men in the army or on the state allowance (paika). Although often weakly integrated into formal

158 *Sibirskia Pravda, 1*, April 2, 1917, p. 4.

159 *Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 79*, June 22, 1917, p. 4; (Untitled historical report on union movement in Krasnoiarsk, 1905-1917): KKM inv. 782 ("Vospominaniia uchastnikov revoliutsionnykh sobytii 1905 g.").

160 *Sibirskia Pravda, 5*, May 15, 1917, p. 4; *Sibirskia Pravda 6*, May 22, 1917, p. 4.

161 *Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 121*, August 12, 1917, p. 4.

162 KKM inv. 782 l. 22.

political structures, their precarious financial position and outspoken criticism of increasing living costs made them visible actors at a local level.¹⁶⁴ By 1917, soldatki had become a matter of official concern to authorities in Krasnoiarsk, where the Duma's City Board (gorodskiaia uprava), which administered the paika, warned disgruntled crowds were arriving daily at its premises to demand payment, hindering its administrative work and "threatening excesses".¹⁶⁵ The Krasnoiarsk Soviet quickly sought to engage with soldatki directly, establishing itself as a leading advocate for their demands. On March 20, the Soviet EC resolved to support soldiers’ families as part of the “poorest classes”, demanding the doubling of the basic state allowance and its extension to common-law wives and children.¹⁶⁶ The question of allowances was debated on April 7 at a public meeting attended by representatives of the Soviet and the City Board, which provided a first opportunity for soldatki to air their grievances directly. Despite their increasingly difficult situation, one speaker explained, soldatki had not raised demands earlier as they had believed war would be ended by revolution: “But, as is now shown, the war may be protracted further, and it is necessary for soldatki to think about the improvement of their difficult situation.” These concerns were acknowledged by Soviet EC representative, Erkomaishvili, who declared soldatki to be “proletarian masses” and urged they support Soviet efforts to help them. To the dismay of the City Board, which warned government coffers were already empty, the meeting voted to endorse the Soviet EC's resolution of March 20, demanding the Provisional Government double the paika and calling on local organisations to work to support soldiers’ families ineligible for allowances.¹⁶⁷


¹⁶⁵ GAKK 171/1/2410a, l. 17.

¹⁶⁶ IKS, 7, March 22, 1917, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ IKS, 16, April 9, 1917, pp. 2-3.
From May onwards, Soviet attempts to engage soldatki crystallised around a dedicated commission which sought to provide practical relief and political representation for soldiers’ families. The Soldatki Commission organised a census of soldiers’ families with the help of military committees and announced plans to open a crèche for their children and to locate plots close to the city to grow potatoes.\textsuperscript{168} The following month, it began inviting soldatki to attend weekly meetings at the Soviet EC premises.\textsuperscript{169} Newspaper reports of the commission’s work are sketchy, but at several points it enabled soldatki to express their concerns collectively. In June, soldatki issued appeals through Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta for financial support from local workers and solidarity with their menfolk at the front.\textsuperscript{170} Meanwhile, the commission forwarded petitions to the Soviet EC requesting it secure soldatki with access to scarce goods, including firewood, and organised a delegation to Petrograd to rally support for the demand to raise the value of the paika.\textsuperscript{171}

Krasnoiarsk’s soldatki provide a useful illustration of both the possibilities and limitations for popular participation in local revolutionary politics in 1917. With the help of Soviet activists, they were able to organise as a collective grouping, raising a common voice at particular moments. The Soviet Soldatki Commission, which brought together socialist activists with soldiers’ family members, pressed particular concerns upon the Soviet, integrating soldatki into its broader political constituency. Their voices were, certainly, quieter than those of local workers and soldiers and were rarely heard in formal political proceedings; sources give little indication of prominent activists emerging from soldatki ranks. Nonetheless, to the extent that they acted collectively, they were not silent. Like female workers and socialists, they succeeded at important junctures in formulating and expressing their own concerns, thereby asserting themselves as legitimate participants in Soviet politics.

\textsuperscript{168} IKS, 45, May 18, 1917, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{169} IKS, 72, June 20, 1917, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{170} IKS, 72, June 20, 1917, p. 1; Safronov, Oktiabr’ v Sibiri, p. 279.
\textsuperscript{171} IKS, 110, August 5, 1917, p. 3.
National Organisations: Exclusions and Exceptions

Revolution did not just entail great socio-political upheaval, but also the disintegration of a multi-national empire. Following the overthrow of Tsarism, national agendas and tensions, some stemming from longstanding imperial policies, others from the immediate context of war, leapt to prominence.\textsuperscript{172} Non-Russian national minorities were marginal players in revolutionary Krasnoiarsk. By the outbreak of war, the city had relatively high ethnic homogeneity, with ethnic Russians comprising approximately ninety-percent of its population.\textsuperscript{173} Compared to other major Siberian cities, native Siberians were entirely absent from local revolutionary politics.\textsuperscript{174} Nonetheless, war provided a catalyst for national politics to emerge at a local level by bringing thousands of new non-Russian residents into the city. These included refugees evacuated from the Baltic coast and Poland, non-Russian soldiers, and central-European prisoners of war (POWs). At different junctures, these groupings sought to organise collectively, asserting their right to contribute actively to local revolutionary politics, often through their own national organisations. This presented Soviet activists with a conundrum. In organising along national or ethnic lines, minority national groupings risked subverting general class-based solidarities by segregating themselves from their Russian class comrades. Nevertheless, the Soviet’s concern to engage all potential constituents meant it could not simply ignore national minorities willing to cooperate in its political work.

Non-Russian refugees were one of the most assertive proponents of national politics in revolution. As Peter Gatrell observes, refugees evacuated and expelled from Russia’s western borderlands to its interior raised the profile of national minorities. On the one hand, their own cultural and linguistic traditions, as well as their refugee status, differentiated them from local Russians. On the other hand,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{172} Joshua A. Sanborn, \textit{Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire}, Oxford University Press (2014), esp. chap. 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{173} See thesis introduction.
  \item \textsuperscript{174} See, for example, the role of Buriats in Irkutsk, Verkhneudinsk, and Chita: James Forsyth, \textit{A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia’s North Asian Colony, 1581-1990}, Cambridge University Press (1992), pp. 271-276.
\end{itemize}
national minority refugees interacted with compatriot diaspora communities already settled across the Russian Empire, prompting an upsurge in civic and cultural activity amongst national minorities in many localities and raising hopes amongst self-styled national leaders for a new era of national and ethnic consciousness.\footnote{Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I*, Indiana University Press (1999), p. 142.} Compared to European Russia, which absorbed the greater bulk of displaced peoples, Siberia was relatively insulated from the wartime refugee crisis.\footnote{Zol'nikov et. al., *Rabochie Sibiri*, p. 34; I.V. Nam, *Natsional'nye men'shinstva Sibiri i dal'nego vostoka na istoricheskom perelome (1917-1922 gg.)*, Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta (2009), p. 68.} Nonetheless, by 1917, some 10,000 refugees had settled in Eniseisk guberniia.\footnote{Dement'ev, "Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia bor'ba", p. 38.} Krasnoiarsk's Latvian and Polish populations, in particular, swelled considerably. In 1913, only 233 Latvians lived in Krasnoiarsk.\footnote{I.V. Lotkin, *Pribaltiiskaia diaspora Sibiri: istoriia i sovremennost’,* Omskii gosudarstvennyi universitet (2003), p. 45. Figures on Krasnoiarsk's 1917 Latvian population are given by Latvian political exile and subsequent memoirist, Andrei Gun, as 3,000: GAKK P-64/5/136, l. 1. They are supported by Safronov, whose work drew extensively on local memoirs: Safronov, *Oktiabr' v Sibiri*, p. 581.} By 1916, the figure was four times as high, thanks largely to evacuated Latvian industrial workers who took employment at the city's railway workshops; by 1917 Latvians numbered around 3,000.\footnote{I.V. Nam, *Natsional'nye men'shinstva*, p. 492.} The Polish population also grew significantly, if less spectacularly. By 1914, Krasnoiarsk had Siberia's largest Polish population, at almost 6,000.\footnote{Nam, *Natsional'nye men'shinstva*, p. 492.} During the war, some 11,000 Polish refugees arrived in Siberia, with most settling in the region's western provinces.\footnote{Leonid Kazimirovich Ostrovskii, “Poliaki zapadnoi Sibiri v kontse XIX-pervoi chetverti XX veka”, unpublished PhD dissertation, Novosibirskii gosudarstvennyi arkhitekturostroitel'nyi universitet (2014), p. 306.} Reports of Polish refugee activity in Krasnoiarsk from 1917 suggest a few hundred may have arrived in the city by this time. Latvian and Polish refugees were instrumental in...
raising the profile of national minority politics in wartime Krasnoiarsk. Their national status was quickly inscribed onto refugee aid, which crystallised around national committees.\(^{182}\) Local efforts to feed and shelter refugees began in autumn 1915 through a municipal Committee for Refugee Relief. However, the municipal committee was shut by Tsarist authorities the following March, leaving refugee relief to national committees, including local branches of the Central Citizens’ Committee of the Kingdom of Poland and the Latvian Central Committee for Refugee Aid.\(^{183}\) Meanwhile, refugees integrated themselves into existing diaspora communities through national civic and educational organisations, including Latvian- and Polish-language schools and a Latvian Charitable Society.\(^{184}\)

By 1917, Krasnoiarsk’s socialists faced a budding national movement. National minority socialists took the initiative to organise their compatriots for revolution. Local Polish socialists were divided between a majority left-wing Social-Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPL) and a minority centrist Polish Socialist Party (PPS), which had stronger nationalist leanings but remained without a formal party organisation in Krasnoiarsk until August.\(^{185}\) SDKPL activists, by contrast, quickly established ties with Russian Social Democrats, forming an autonomous Polish Section of the local Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party (RSDWP) organisation in March under the leadership of Ianina Pekazh (1885-1918), an exile who had arrived in Krasnoiarsk in 1915, and an exiled doctor, Viktor Maerchak.\(^{186}\) The Section opened a club in the railway college, holding political meetings, cultural activities, and literacy classes, which were advertised in Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta, and soon gained the backing of the Soviet EC as a legitimate

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\(^{182}\) Gatrell, *Whole Empire*, p. 143.


\(^{184}\) Nam, *Natsional’nye men’shvinstva*, p. 165.

\(^{185}\) Nam, *Natsional’nye men’shvinstva*, pp. 152, 154.

In April, Section members joined Soviet-led May Day celebrations alongside local workers and soldiers, a move publically applauded by Soviet leaders. However, Soviet leaders blocked (as yet unorganised) PPS members’ efforts to mark May Day. Following a request by members to attend celebrations alongside the Soviet with their own banners demanding Polish national independence, Soviet EC deputy chairman, Shumiatskii, informed confounded PPS members that “we consider [your] participation unacceptable, as your organisation unites also bourgeois elements in its structure.”

While it worked with the Soviet to face down the threat of overtly nationalist Polish socialism, the Polish Section also sought to draw Poles away from non-socialist national organisations. On April 4, a meeting of 300 people called by Polish liberals with the intention of endorsing the Provisional Government and calling for Polish national independence was taken over by Pekazh and Maerchak, who were elected to chair proceedings. At their urging, the meeting condemned the Provisional Government, declaring a Polish Democratic Republic to be possible only through the international solidarity of peoples from all belligerent nations. Section members were seemingly absent at a second meeting, a week later, which backed Polish national independence and urged supra-class unity to end internal divisions between Poles. However, they became increasingly active amongst refugees, whom they sought to mobilise over the issue of aid. On May 18, a meeting of fifty refugees declared no confidence in the Central Citizen’s Committee to deliver aid locally and organised a separate Union of Polish Refugees under the leadership of Pekazh and Maerchak to collectively administer relief to Polish refugees and their families.

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187 *IKS*, 72, June 20, 1917, p. 4.

188 *IKS*, 20, April 14, 1917, p. 4; *IKS* 23, April 20, 1917, p. 3.

189 Letter from PPS activists to Soviet EC, April 17, 1917: GAKK r-258/1/38, l. 113.

190 *IKS*, 14, April 7, 1917, p. 4.

191 *Svobodnaia Sibir’,* 13, April 18, 1917, p. 3.

192 *IKS*, 50, May 25, 1917, p. 3.
Polish socialists’ struggles to lead their national compatriots were replicated amongst Latvian refugees. In March, a small core of pro-Bolshevik Latvian Social Democrats, including worker refugees with leading positions in the Latvian Charitable Society, organised their own RSDWP Section through which they similarly sought to expand their political influence amongst their national compatriots. Latvian Section members immediately assumed control of the Latvian Charitable Society, which they used to pass an “SD platform” and distribute the militant Latvian Social-Democratic organ, Cīņa. Their work was halted on May 25, when they were narrowly voted off the Society’s board in favour of a “non-party” platform, resuming only in October when a new board, composed entirely of Section members, was elected. The Section also mobilised refugees over dissatisfaction with local relief work, agitating against leaders of established refugee organisations. In May, a meeting of Latvian refugees censured the Eniseisk guberniia representative to the Central Latvian Committee for Refugee Aid and demanded his removal, prompting Section members to establish a regional network of self-governing refugee committees under the leadership of two Latvian SDs, K. Mishke and E. Galvin. The move prompted a complete break with the Central Latvian Committee, which halted funds to the committees.

National politics also reverberated in the garrison. By 1917, mass conscription and armed service in war enabled different national minority groupings to press the case that they were now worthy participants in an all-Russian body politic and should be granted greater cultural and political freedoms. National minority soldiers sought to pursue this vision in revolution by establishing their own autonomous military units. In spring, Polish soldiers established a “military

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193 Nam, Natsional’nye men’shinstva, p. 165; GAKK P-64/5/136, l. 1. On the strength of Bolshevik support amongst evacuated Latvian workers, see Gatrell, Whole Empire, pp. 159-160.

194 Nam, Natsional’nye men’shinstva, p. 167.

195 Ibid., pp. 166-167.

196 Sanborn, Drafting the Russian Nation, pp. 74-78.
committee” in the Krasnoiarsk garrison to press demands for Polish national units.\footnote{Nam, \textit{Natsional'nye men'shinstva}, p. 155.} Their call was echoed by a group of Ukrainian soldiers and officers, who formed a national committee in early-June, inviting their compatriots to withdraw from existing regiments and enter exclusively Ukrainian units.\footnote{Ukrainian soldiers’ committee resolution, June 1, 1917: GAKK r-258/1/23, l. 154.}

Proposals for national military units proved extremely controversial. The organised strength and insistence of non-Russian soldiers soon convinced the Provisional Government not to oppose the demand.\footnote{Sanborn, \textit{Drafting the Russian Nation}, pp. 80-81.} However, many socialists in Krasnoiarsk, fearing national segregation might disrupt soldiers’ revolutionary unity, maintained implacable hostility. Separate national units were rejected in principle by the RSDWP Polish Section on May 4 and, two days later, by “a group of military Poles,” who warned they would only “aid the establishment of bourgeois rule in Poland” and urged Poles to “go hand in hand with Russian soldiers and workers and, by common forces, fight the general enemy – capitalism.”\footnote{Nam, \textit{Natsional'nye men'shinstva}, p. 156; IKS, 37, May 6, 1917, p. 3.} Their hostility was reiterated by rank-and-file troops, who widely viewed separate national units as an affront to the principle of equal duty in war for all soldiers.\footnote{Sanborn, \textit{Drafting the Russian Nation}, p. 82.} A public meeting of 2,500 soldiers rejected Ukrainian national units, warning “any division of the democracy weakens the front and the revolution”, and invited Ukrainian soldiers to return to their original units for the “common struggle for a common freedom.”\footnote{Soldiers’ resolution, undated: GAKK r-258/1/23, l. 18.} In early-June, Soviet deputies voted by an overwhelming majority to reject national committees in “the interests of revolution” and popular unity.\footnote{“No. 39” (general assembly minutes, June 3, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Sovet}, pp. 118-119.} The ruling seems to have settled the issue, which was not raised again in the Soviet before the Provisional Government’s overthrow in October.
Despite their hostility towards potentially divisive national military organisations, socialists anxiously looked to engage displaced foreign soldiers. Some of their most striking efforts focused on Krasnoiarsk’s 15,000 Magyar, Austrian, German, and Ottoman POWs, who were interned in a mammoth camp four miles outside the city proper.\textsuperscript{204} POWs’ voices are rarely heard in contemporary documents. Nonetheless, at certain points, they became visible revolutionary participants. Politically radical prisoners, particularly well-educated socialist junior officers who brought their ideological convictions into the camps, provided one means for political engagement.\textsuperscript{205} One camp inmate, Ernst Shomadi, recalls at least two underground groups of German, Austrian, and Magyar socialists existing by 1917.\textsuperscript{206} In revolution, POW socialists made fervent attempts to engage the Soviet. In April, 200 “prisoner officers” successfully petitioned the Krasnoiarsk Soviet to attend May Day celebrations and demonstrate their “strong and steadfast sympathy with your attempts towards the freedom of peoples.”\textsuperscript{207} Shomadi recalls some 1,000 officer and rank-and-file POWs joining celebrations, where a senior German NCO spoke to profess solidarity with the Russian people, declaring the revolution to be a turning point for the “whole world”.\textsuperscript{208} 

POWs were also encouraged to engage in politics through regular Soviet constituency organisations, particularly trade unions. By 1917, POWs had become a ready source of cheap labour in Siberia.\textsuperscript{209} Published accounts of labour organisation from Krasnoiarsk reveal camp inmates working in various industries, including construction, food processing, leather production, and printing. Socialist labour activists became leading advocates for POW unionisation, which the CBTU publically


\textsuperscript{205} Davis, “Prisoner of War Camps”, pp. 150-151.

\textsuperscript{206} Shomadi memoir: GAKK P-64/5/730, l. 1.

\textsuperscript{207} Petition of POW officers: GAKK r-258/1/38, l. 91.

\textsuperscript{208} GAKK P-64/5/730, l. 1; \textit{IKS}, 28, April 26, 1917, p. 3.

upheld as a means to promote international proletarian unity.\footnote{Sibirskaja Pravda, 2, April 17, 1917, p. 4; Krasnoiarskii rabochii 141, September 7, 1917, p. 4.} During the first flush of industrial organisation in spring, various unions inducted POWs. In April, at a unionising drive amongst sausage workers, an Austrian prisoner begged to be permitted to join the food-processing workers’ union, declaring “In the union there are no national differences, and workers of the whole world are brothers.” His speech drew applause from Russian colleagues and he was duly admitted into the union.\footnote{IKS, 19, April 13, 1917, pp. 3-4.} Meanwhile, Krasnoiarsk socialists achieved resounding success in unionising POWs at the large Znamensk glass factory, forty kilometres away, where 150 Austrian Social Democrats organised alongside local workers and were addressed at meetings in German by the Bern-educated Menshevik-internationalist and Krasnoiarsk RSDWP activist, Iakov Bograd.\footnote{Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 42, May 6, 1917, p. 4; Tsiklina-Vekshina memoir: GAKK P-64/5/699, ll. 24-25.} Nonetheless, many workers remained suspicious towards foreign prisoners amongst their ranks, whose low wages and weak bargaining position they feared might undermine efforts to improve working conditions. In April, tanners complained Russian workers were being replaced by POWs and threatened to strike unless the former were reinstated, while builders demanded the Soviet investigate prisoner labour in view of local unemployment.\footnote{Sibirskaja Pravda, 3, May 1, 1917, p. 4.} During a strike in June, sausage makers, who had welcomed the Austrian POW into their union two months earlier, similarly urged the Soviet EC to prevent any Austrian prisoners being enlisted as strike breakers.\footnote{Soviet letter to sausage factory owner, June 3, 1917: GAKK r-258/1/36, l. 34.}

Engaging national minorities in local revolutionary politics was a tricky business which counted on balancing their concerns with those of established local activists. For many socialists, including both ethnic Russians and non-Russians, national organisation remained an awkward topic, raising fears of popular disunity and “bourgeois” infiltration into revolutionary class politics. This position was clearly
reflected in the Soviet's opposition to separate national organisations in principle, which contrasted with the more flexible approach of the Provisional Government and, in subsequent years, leading members of the Communist Party, who would openly promote raising national consciousness as a steppingstone towards achieving socialism. Nonetheless, a concern to engage all potential supporters in revolutionary work resulted in socialists making notable exceptions to this general rule, enabling the Soviet to recognise and even promote particular national organisations which served to partially segment local revolutionary politics along national lines. By pressing causes specific to national groupings, these autonomous organisations enabled their members to formulate distinct understandings of revolutionary class politics. National organisations also helped prominent national minority socialists unite the activities of many of their compatriots with the Soviet, thereby establishing themselves as legitimate representatives for national minority groupings in Krasnoiarsk.

Conclusion

Over the course of 1917, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet became a vital centre of political activity for different social groupings, situating itself amidst a complex web of overlapping elective institutions. For leftist socialists, the Soviet's prominent role was to signify a wider transformation of revolutionary politics along the lines of a class-based popular movement. The autonomous collectives through which Soviet constituents elected deputies would act as intermediaries with the Soviet's predominantly intelligentsia leadership whilst ensuring workers and soldiers were not drawn unwittingly into supporting their class enemies. Nevertheless, Soviet structures proved flexible enough for social actors to define their own roles in revolutionary politics. Through trade unions, workers engaged the Soviet as a means to transform their own economic conditions and power relations at a shop-floor level. These roles dovetailed in many respects with Soviet activists’ visions for class politics; yet workers’ focus on their own intimate conditions also led to rifts with

socialists, including prominent union leaders, who sought to ensure they engaged actively in city-wide union and class politics. The situation was even more marked in the case of soldiers and junior officers, who constituted a deeply fractured political community, pursuing multiple and often conflicting agendas simultaneously. Most strikingly, the ways in which the Soviet's representative structures operated were actively transformed by its activists' efforts to engage social actors who were inadequately represented through conventional worker and soldier politics. These included both women and national minorities, who gained recognition as collective revolutionary actors in various guises through dedicated, extraordinary organisational measures endorsed by the Soviet, including particularistic socialist and labour groupings and Soviet commissions.

These instances highlight the malleability of political structures in 1917, adding a further dimension to the question of revolutionary political authority. While different bodies vied with one another to secure the support of social actors, their own structures and functions were simultaneously shaped by the multiple demands these actors placed upon them. Accordingly, the formation of constituency structures by local soviets should not be seen simply as a matter of their drawing mass support away from competing liberal supra-class projects. It also entailed a complex internal political process in which multiple groupings sought to influence the meaning of class politics according to their own conceptualisations. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes clear that a crucial factor in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet's ability to establish a broad political constituency lay precisely in the fact that its socialist leaders could not unilaterally impose their own visions upon social actors. By actively engaging different groupings, socialists acknowledged them in fact as legitimate partners in the Soviet's politics, giving them a direct say in the way its structures and functions operated in practice.
CHAPTER III ⭐ Factions, Fractions, and Coalitions: The Changing Face of Soviet Party Politics

Political parties played a prominent and influential role in Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary power structure in 1917. Party groupings – particularly the Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party, Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and various political factions which accompanied them – rapidly established themselves as recognisable and authoritative political groupings at a local level. Socialist parties gained formal recognition as legitimate organs for policy contestation in the Soviet and its Executive Committee, enabling their members to gain prominent leadership positions and pursue their own political agendas through the Soviet’s electoral institutions. This chapter examines the establishment of party organisations in Krasnoiarsk, considering how they enabled local actors to pursue different political agendas and, in particular, their impact on Soviet politics.

Historians have widely portrayed party politics in Krasnoiarsk as following a linear path towards “Bolshevisation”, in which Bolsheviks constructed a wide local support base and dominated local revolutionary authorities, marginalising political opponents in order to implement their own radical policy agendas. Communist-era historians lauded the city as a “citadel of Bolshevism”, citing the supposed political hegemony of local Bolsheviks as proof that Leninism could secure a mass following in Siberia.¹ Western historians have, likewise, focused on the particularly “Bolshevik” tenor of party politics in the city.² Russell Snow’s generally measured appraisal of Siberian party politics ultimately reaches a similar conclusion, attributing the “success of the Bolsheviks” in Krasnoiarsk to “the fact that they had no opposition whatsoever”:

They controlled the City Duma, the Soviet, and all of the trade unions. They had long since intimidated the old gubernia administration. The right Socialist


² Pereira, White Siberia, pp. 30-31; Anweiler, The Soviets, pp. 119-200.
Revolutionaries and Menshevik-defencists had no support in the city and the Kadets and military officers did not dare to try to resist them openly.³

The certainty with which this historiographical narrative traces the rise of Bolshevism in Krasnoiarsk obscures the ways local actors used parties to transform the institutions of revolutionary politics. In electoral politics, parties exist as a means of enabling like-minded individuals to determine and promote distinct political agendas, providing an organisational platform through which they can collectively influence government policy. To do so, parties must simultaneously mobilise broad political support for their own political positions and gain formal recognition in authority structures as legitimate participants in policy formulation.⁴ During the Russian revolution, this was a far from straightforward process. Prominent political actors put considerable emphasis on the need for strong party roles in revolutionary politics. As Holquist notes, “All party activists, regardless of their particular affiliation, shared the belief that they alone were the legitimate channels for political expression” and worked diligently to ensure party groupings assumed formal policy-making roles in revolutionary authority structures.⁵ Nonetheless, parties often failed to maintain effective organisational cohesion amongst their own members, whose loyalties shifted under the pressure of recurrent political crises and personal feuds, resulting in the repeated division and reorganisation of local party groupings. At the same time, activists frequently struggled to mobilise broader popular support for party organisations amongst local populations who had little experience in party work before 1917 and generally remained weakly integrated into party life during the year.⁶

³Snow, Bolsheviks in Siberia, p. 195.
⁵Holquist, Making War, p. 113.
⁶The standard English-language work is Koenker, Moscow Workers, pp. 187-227. More recently, Koenker’s findings have been reiterated in provincial settings: Badcock, Politics and
The organisational and political challenges facing party activists in Krasnoiarsk meant local party politics was not a straightforward battle between opposing ideological groupings, but rather a fluid and dynamic process which was continually shaped by the changing circumstances in which local parties operated. This chapter builds on Snow’s analysis of party politics in revolutionary Siberia, which focused almost exclusively on the role of Bolsheviks and Social Democrats, by emphasising the organisational fluidity and constant interactions between different party groupings and activists. More specifically, it gives detailed focus to the question of how parties influenced, and were influenced by, revolutionary political practices and structures in Krasnoiarsk. While socialist parties quickly secured recognition as participants in Soviet policy, they remained unstable political groupings in their own right. Throughout 1917, they underwent dramatic organisational changes, as the personal and ideological relationships upon which they were established were rocked by political crises at both a local and national level. These, in turn, transformed the ways activists sought to enact party control over the Soviet. The increasingly fractious relationship between different party groupings was gradually institutionalised in the Soviet EC, where party control was transformed from a system of open political contest, in which all party groupings were recognised as equally legitimate participants, to one of partisan exclusivity, in which left-wing “internationalists”, particularly Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries, marginalised their “defencist” opponents and established their own political dominance. At the same time, rapid organisational changes in local party politics impacted on the ability of party groupings to mobilise wider political support, particularly in the Soviet general assembly, where the backing of rank-and-file deputies remained critical to voting through any policy measures. Understanding these complex dynamics is crucial to explaining growing left-wing socialist influence in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet. Moreover, it provides valuable insight into the fluid relationships between political groupings in revolution and the ways these changed institutional arrangements underpinning Soviet party politics.

This chapter traces the changing face of local party politics and the way it was manifested in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet in five separate sections. The first section outlines the different party groupings established in Krasnoiarsk in the first weeks of revolution, noting the aspirations of activists involved in their creation and their attempts to form effective local organisations. The second analyses the emergence of powerful party fractions in the Soviet, which became the primary means for socialist parties to control Soviet policy-making functions. The third looks at growing political rifts during spring and summer 1917 within socialist parties, which fractured between “internationalist” and “defencist” wings, considering how these affected local party organisations and their members’ personal and political loyalties. The fourth examines the effect these rifts had on relations between different parties, focusing on the emergence of a powerful “internationalist” bloc of Bolsheviks, Left-SRs, and anarchists and the ways this bloc sought to transform the mechanisms of party control in the Soviet. The final section revisits the question of popular support for parties, considering how internationalists gained the backing of rank-and-file Soviet deputies and asking whether mass support for their policy positions signified the emergence of deeper party loyalties amongst Soviet constituents.

Building Party Organisations

By the outbreak of revolution, political parties had little organised presence in Krasnoiarsk. At certain points before 1917, party organisations had functioned actively. Social-Democratic and Socialist-Revolutionary groups were heavily involved in the 1905 Krasnoiarskaia respublika, while a local Kadet organisation was registered in the city during this time. Over the following years, however, party organisations fell into disrepair amid increased Tsarist repression. By 1917, several dozen Social Democrats were scattered between various clandestine party “circles” (kruzhki), while Socialist-Revolutionaries, who were less numerous still, seem to have

had no functioning party organisation of their own.\textsuperscript{8} Local liberals similarly struggled to maintain party activities. Despite repeated attempts to resurrect a local organisation, the Kadets had become largely inactive by 1914.\textsuperscript{9} In March 1917, the task of reconstructing local party organisations thus fell to small groups of dedicated local activists, who sought to organise collectively and engage the local population directly in party work. The largest local parties were socialist, including Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party (RSDWP) and Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (PSR) organisations, which were flanked by a militant Bolshevik “Pravdist” faction and a tiny but vocal group of anarchist-communists, while non-socialist party politics was dominated by the Kadet-led Party of People’s Freedom (Partiia narodnoi svobody: PPF). These groupings organised autonomously of national party groupings and closely reflected established local networks and political concerns amongst their respective members.

As early as March 2, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks involved in overthrowing local Tsarist authorities established a Social-Democratic party “initiatory group”, which soon announced the formation of a local RSDWP organisation and set about publishing a party newspaper, \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii} (The Krasnoiarsk Worker).\textsuperscript{10} From the outset, the organisation’s leadership closely resembled the core of left-wing activists active during the overthrow of Tsarism. Its first permanent committee, elected on March 7, brought together various well-educated, established party men, a clear majority of whom were Bolsheviks.\textsuperscript{11} Its most senior member, in both age and party experience, was the forty-nine-year-old Aleksandr Shlikhter, a political exile and influential public activist who had begun Social-Democratic activism as a medical student in the late-1890s and joined the Bolsheviks in 1903. He was joined by several other prominent left-wingers, including Samodeiatel’nost’ cooperative board

\textsuperscript{8} V. Safronov \textit{et al.}, \textit{Mezhdu dvumia revoliutsiiami}, pp. 159-160. See also chapter 1.


\textsuperscript{11} Dement’ev, “Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia bor’ba”, p. 301.
member, Frumkin, and Soviet presidium member, Okulov, both Bolsheviks who had begun party work in the late-1890s and early-1900s, respectively, as well as Soviet chairman, Dubrovinskii, a Menshevik with strong left-wing sympathies.\textsuperscript{12} To their political right stood Menshevik intellectual and leading local theorist of the consumer cooperation movement, Anatolii Baikalov, who had publically advocated gradual political change during the war and maintained a markedly more cautious approach to his leftist party comrades on questions of revolutionary power throughout 1917.\textsuperscript{13}

The RSDWP’s left-wing majority quickly determined its political line, establishing a wary position on the war and Provisional Government. On March 12, the party committee repudiated all aims of military conquest in war whilst urging the proletariat to defend revolution “from encroachments from without and within the country”, and pledged conditional support for the Provisional Government with the significant caveat that, as a government of the “imperialist bourgeoisie”, it could not ultimately fulfil the aims of revolution.\textsuperscript{14} By comparison to later RSDWP policy positions, this represented a compromise of sorts. However, the tone alienated centrist and right-wing Mensheviks. Andrei Shebunin, a Menshevik rifleman and early proponent of unity with the Provisional Government in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet, objected strongly that the proletariat was too weak to carry the revolution alone and must not scare off the bourgeoisie. However, as in the Soviet, his arguments gained little traction amongst RSDWP members, who backed the party committee’s position by ten-to-one.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Details on Shlikhter, Okulov, and Dubrovinskii in Bogaev, Meshalkin (eds.), \textit{Boitsy revoliutsii}, pp. 72-75, 159-162, 247-250. Details on Frumkin in M.I. Frumkin, “Avtobiografiia”, in \textit{Bol’shaia biograficheskaia entsiklopediia}.

\textsuperscript{13} Baikalov’s pre-revolutionary writings featured prominently in regional cooperative journals, particularly \textit{Sibirskaiia derevnia}, in which he advocated a gradual expansion of electoral and administrative rights for local government: see e.g. \textit{Sibirskaiia derevnia}, 2, February 1916, pp. 2-5.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{IKS}, J, March 14, 1917, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 9, March 19, 1917, pp. 2-3. On Shebunin’s involvement in early Soviet debates on political power, see chapter 3.
Despite these political divisions, however, the joint participation of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the RSDWP revealed a common enthusiasm for organisational unity. This was typical for Social Democrats in early-1917, especially in Siberia, where almost all party organisations established in spring united Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.\textsuperscript{16} Despite their relative marginalisation within the RSDWP, Krasnoiarsk’s Mensheviks swiftly rejected organising separately, declaring any “narrow factional politics to be harmful [to Social-Democracy] and unacceptable from the perspective of the interests of the general [revolutionary] movement.”\textsuperscript{17} The organisation’s predominantly Bolshevik leadership, meanwhile, demonstrated its commitment to party unity by declining to recognise the factional Bolshevik Central Committee in Petrograd as the legitimate Social-Democratic party organ, a position it would maintain until late-June. Party members at meetings emphasised their political commonality by referring to themselves as “Social Democrats”, rather than as “Bolsheviks” or “Mensheviks”.\textsuperscript{18}

Social Democrats quickly set about expanding their influence amongst the local population, launching a major recruitment drive in order to formally register new party members. By late-March, the RSDWP had become Krasnoiarsk’s largest party organisation, with some 300 members; by June, this figure had risen beyond 2,000.\textsuperscript{19} This rapid growth, Frumkin recalls, was built on Social Democrats’ close connections to local workers, especially from the railway workshops, who provided three-quarters of new RSDWP members.\textsuperscript{20} The organisation’s ability to attract workers was highlighted on March 19, when a meeting to establish a party branch in the Nikolaevsk and Alekseevsk worker districts drew 150 participants, over twice that of a meeting held simultaneously in the city centre.\textsuperscript{21} The meeting elected a

\textsuperscript{16} Shilovskii, \textit{Politcheskie protsessy}, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 19, April 7, 1917, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{18} Shilovskii, \textit{Politcheskie protsessy}, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 22, April 11, p. 3; Dement’ev, “Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia bor’ba”, p. 301.

\textsuperscript{20} “Fevral’-oktiabr’”, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 10, March 21, 1917, pp. 3-4.
district sub-committee amongst workers involved in pre-revolutionary socialist circles and cooperative work alongside Social Democrats, including the railwaymen Dmitrii Osharov, Ivan Khalimon, and Aleksei Savvateev, who had all helped socialists organise railway workers during the overthrow of Tsarism.\footnote{Krasnolarskii rabochii, 12, March 23, 1917, p. 3.}

Nonetheless, as was common across Russia at this time, party politics struggled to engage many workers, who had little direct experience of pre-revolutionary party work and showed little understanding of party differences.\footnote{Koenker, Moscow Workers, pp. 190-191.} Aleksandr Pozdniakov, a long-standing cooperator and sales clerk serving in the city garrison, who would go on to become a prominent Bolshevik, remembers being unable to join any party organisation in the first weeks of revolution due to his ignorance of different parties’ programmes. This situation, he recalls, was common to “many others still inexperienced in the details of party struggle.”\footnote{Pozdniakov, “1917 god”, p. 14.} In the railway workshops, Social Democrats likewise warned many workers remained disengaged from party life. In May, one worker-activist complained:

there are no party cells [in the railway workshops], any vital work is lacking. The Nikolaevsk District Committee of the RSDRP is not fully linked with us. It is impossible to live like this, it is necessary to organise, to be prepared, because time does not wait [...].\footnote{Sibirskia Pravda, 6, May 22, 1917, p. 4.}

While RSDWP activists fought to expand their influence into wider society, their new organisation also faced an early ideological challenge from a small but vocal faction of Bolshevik “Pravdists”, which organised on March 5.\footnote{Shumiatskii, “Il’ia Belopol’skii”, in Sokolov (ed.), Eniseiskaia ssyl’ka, p. 124.} The Pravdists were a close-knit group of worker revolutionaries who had been initiated into party work through clandestine underground circles. They included the leatherworker and political exile, Il’ia Belopol’skii, who had cut his teeth in pre-revolutionary Social-
Democratic circles in Odessa; Soviet deputy chairman, Boris Shumiatskii, who began party work as a railway worker in Krasnoiarsk around 1905; and Aleksei Rogov, a former railwayman who had endured extended periods of political exile and forced labour following his role in the 1905 *Krasnoiarskaia respublika*. Although formally existing as a faction within the RSDWP until late-May, Pravdists maintained extensive autonomy, establishing their own local newspaper, *Sibirskaia Pravda*, and unanimously acknowledging the Bolshevik Central Committee in Petrograd as the leading Social-Democratic party organ.

The Pravdists' partisan loyalties quickly brought them into conflict with RSDWP leaders, whose positions they condemned as unworthy of "consistent Bolsheviks". Through *Sibirskaia Pravda*, the faction lambasted the RSDWP for uniting Bolsheviks with Mensheviks and for their mass recruitment policy which, they warned, substituted "quantity" for "quality" by involving in party work "non-proletarian elements [...] standing far aside from the views of Soc[ial]-Democ[racy]." The Pravdists justified their critiques of RSDWP work with incessant references to the Bolshevik party programme, leading historians to portray them as Krasnoiarsk's first ideologically-committed Leninists. However, their political intransigence also reflected their members' past political experiences. As dedicated political conspirators, Pravdists were initiates of the "norms of the underground" which pervaded clandestine pre-revolutionary party work and which emphasised maintaining high ideological standards and strict discipline amongst all activists. Their unwillingness to compromise on core programmatic questions highlighted a more general belief that these organisational norms be maintained in revolution, a concern they shared with many other experienced partisans across the Russian Empire in early-1917, who shunned the open, mass politics of larger party

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27 Ibid., pp. 124-125.

28 Pravdist acknowledgement of Bolshevik CC: *Sibirskaia Pravda*, 2, April 17, 1917, p. 3.

29 Shumiatskii, "Il'ia Belopol'skii", p. 124.

30 *Sibirskaia Pravda*, 1, April 2, 1917, p. 4.


organisations in order to preserve the close comradeship and ideological integrity to which they were accustomed.33

Like Social Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries quickly initiated party work of their own, holding a series of local meetings and establishing a permanent party committee on March 15. Krasnoiarsk's PSR organisation was dominated by politically-moderate centrists with experience in legal pre-revolutionary public activism, who dominated the party committee. They included the lawyer, Vissarion Gurevich, who had been instrumental in the establishment of the Committee of Public Safety on March 3, and regional cooperative activists, Nil Fomin and Ivan Kazantsev, pre-revolutionary colleagues of the right-wing Menshevik, Baikalov, who shared his concerns for gradual political change.34 These individuals quickly succeeded in steering the PSR organisation into the centre ground, pledging support for the continued cooperation of all classes in revolution, a defensive war, and conditional support for the Provisional Government until the Constituent Assembly had convened.35

While prominent PSR leaders retained a penchant for class conciliation and gradual reform, Socialist-Revolutionaries were nevertheless an ideologically heterogeneous grouping and the party’s first committee united various political tendencies. On the right was outspoken and combative Evgenii Kolosov, editor of the literary newspaper, Nash golos, which served as de-facto PSR organ until mid-May, when the party organisation established its own newspaper, Znamia truda. A former law student, Kolosov had been an SR terrorist in St. Petersburg in the early-1900s but later distanced himself from the party after emigrating to Europe. During the Great War, he became a staunch patriot, returning to Russia with the intention of serving in the army, and only resumed active party work in early-1917. Before his departure from Krasnoiarsk in July, Kolosov was the party’s most committed supporter of the

33 Suny, Baku Commune, pp. 83-84; Raleigh, Revolution on the Volga, pp. 142-143.

34 Nash golos, 3, March 18, 1917, p. 3.

35 Eniseiskii krai, 53, March 8, 1917, p. 3.
Provisional Government and a forthright advocate of “war ’til victory”. To the left, meanwhile, were the young praporshchik, Sergei Lazo, and soldier-exile, Nikolai Mazurin, both former student revolutionaries and close personal acquaintances who perceived revolution as a chance for rapid and fundamental political change and expressed vocal hostility to the war and Provisional Government. The willingness of these politically-diverse individuals to work together was typical of local Socialist-Revolutionary organisations in 1917, which united members from various different tendencies, and reflected a widely-held conviction that the party should overcome factional politics. Indeed, for party activists in Krasnoiarsk, political unity was not something to be restricted to SRs alone: the PSR organisation led efforts to unite all socialist groupings, going so far as to propose a local “federation” with the RSDWP. The idea seems to have been treated seriously by some Social Democrats, who attended SR meetings during these first weeks, before being finally rejected in late-March on the grounds of programmatic differences.

Despite their ambitions for revolutionary unity, SRs faced considerable challenges mobilising local support. Through spring, the organisation grew steadily but unspectacularly, attracting around 800 members by July. Much of its membership was focused in the garrison, where there existed several pockets of party activists. In early-April, soldiers in the 6th company of the 30th regiment established a PSR subcommittee, probably the first formal party organisation to be formed by local soldiers in 1917. Meanwhile, junior Cossack officers actively

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37 Bagaev, Meshalkin (eds.), Boitsy revoliutsii, pp. 117-120, 132-133.

38 Badcock, Politics and the People, pp. 67-68.

39 Nash golos, 1, March 16, 1917, p. 3.

40 Sibirskaia Pravda, 1, April 2, 1917, p. 4.


42 Nash golos, 15, April 8, 1917, p. 4.
promoted the PSR’s centrist policy position amongst rank-and-file Cossacks, prompting accusations from Bolsheviks that they were being excluded from Cossack politics. Nonetheless, the PSR struggled to organise local workers, a situation likely reflecting its activists’ relatively marginal positions in city consumer cooperation and pre-revolutionary worker circles. In mid-March, plans for a party committee in Nikolaevsk district, where the RSDWP had scored immediate success, were delayed while party leaders sought out local activists to organise it. The district committee was finally established several days later after three activists were dispatched from the city centre to help out.

Besides the RSDWP and PSR, several smaller party groupings organised during March. On the extreme left stood Krasnoiarsk’s tiny but vocal anarchist-communists. Avowed anti-authoritarians, anarchist-communists maintained outward hostility to formal political processes and cannot properly be called a party grouping. Nonetheless, their organisation fulfilled many of the core functions of a party, actively publicising policy positions and participating in Soviet electoral politics. Unlike SRs and SDs, anarchists had virtually no established local presence; by 1917, as few as five anarchist exiles were active in Krasnoiarsk. This situation was reflected in their difficulties organising. An “initiatory group of anarchist-communists” was established only in late-March, following the arrival of little-known exile, Vladimir Kaminskii (born 1889), who quickly became the most prominent local anarchist


44 SRs were predominantly involved in the regional consumer cooperative federation, EGACS, rather than the SD-led Samodeiatel’nost’: see chapter 1.

45 Nash golos, 6, March 22, 1917, p. 2.

Rejecting the idea that the political “overthrow” (perevorot) of Tsarism constituted “revolution” (revoliutsiia), the group advocated “fundamental changes in the existing [social] structure” through “a voluntary federation of individuals and groups”. At different moments in 1917, growing popular discontent saw anarchist-communist critiques of war and government become increasingly relevant. Nonetheless, the group’s activists struggled to mobilise any considerable support at any point in 1917, recruiting no more than a few dozen members, and did not establish a regular press organ until December.

To the right of Krasnoiarsk’s socialist parties were the liberal Kadets, who established a local branch of the Party of Popular Freedom on March 7 and publicised their activities through the daily newspaper, Svobodnaia Sibir’ (Free Siberia). The party’s committee drew together a core of liberal public activists and city Duma members, including local party chairman, D.E. Lappo, A.P. Osnovskii, F.F. Filimonov, and A.P. Kuznetsov. These men were all well-established in local educated society and charitable organisations, and several had helped establish the Committee of Public Safety on March 3. Their formation of a local party committee signified a continued concern to make liberal voices heard in revolution. At a meeting on March 8, PPF committee members underlined their commitment to the post-Tsarist political order by unanimously voting to identify themselves as “republicans”, rather than

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48 AK manifesto: IKS, 20, April 14, 1917, pp. 2-3.


52 VKGOU, 5-6, March 3, 1917, p. 3.
“constitutionalists”, as they had been known before revolution. Nonetheless, they struggled to establish a serious presence in local politics. The PPF immediately set itself apart from all socialist parties, unambiguously endorsing both the Provisional Government and the slogan “war ’til victory”, and was consequently shunned by both Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries as a “bourgeois” organisation. Meanwhile, it struggled to mobilise broad social support. As Hickey argues of Smolensk, although prominent in educated society and well-known to local reformist elites, liberals “had little currency amongst [the] lower classes”, with whom they had little social contact. This was particularly problematic in Krasnoiarsk, which, without a university, lacked the liberal social support base of other major Russian cities. The PPF grew rapidly in the first weeks of revolution, gaining 200 members; by summer, however, membership growth had stagnated and party meetings drew only a few dozen individuals.

Fractions: Vehicles for Soviet Party Politics

Amid ongoing efforts to construct viable party organisations, socialists turned their attention to institutionalising parties within local authority structures, particularly the Soviet. Their task was aided by the presence of prominent party activists in key leadership positions. From the outset, the Soviet presidium was dominated by left-wing Social Democrats, while both SD and SR leaders were active in the Executive Committee. In the first weeks of the Soviet’s existence, these individuals set aside their respective political differences to secure party control over Soviet policy-making functions. By March 5, local party groupings had been allowed to nominate representatives to sit on the Soviet Executive Committee. This arrangement was criticised by one Soviet deputy, Seleznev, who urged EC members to conduct their

53 Eniseiskii krai, 55, March 10, 1917, p. 4.
55 Hickey, “Moderate Socialists”, p. 16.
work “without indulging in partisan disagreements” and criticised the presence of party members. Seleznev’s objections were angrily rebuked party activists, including the Bolsheviks, Erkomaishvili and Markovskii, who insisted parties alone brought “planning and organisation into the instinctive [stikhiinoe] movement.” The Socialist-Revolutionary, Ivan Kazantsev, who chaired the meeting, endorsed their sentiment, urging parties be given the “deciding voice” in the EC.  

This early Soviet debate fed into a wider political discourse which portrayed party organisation as vital to the internal political coherence of elective bodies. In April, a provincial conference of RSDWP organisations in Krasnoiarsk declared the organisation of fractions “in all non-party organisations” to be a pre-requisite to effective proletarian representation, demanding “the separation of Social-Democratic fractions for the disciplined conducting of [...] class politics.” Socialist-Revolutionaries were no less adamant, demanding party organisations take control of elective bodies to consciously guide through policy measures “in the interests of the labourers”. As one commentary explained, “political parties are completely inevitable and necessary in our time. Without them, conscious participation in the political life of the country is unthinkable.” This sentiment extended well beyond the Soviet and its socialist leadership. During municipal Duma elections, which were held on July 2, both socialists and liberals expressed fierce hostility towards groups which submitted electoral lists independently of party organisations. Writing in Nash golos, the right-SR, Gnevushev, contended “non-party” groupings united contradictory political tendencies, warning Duma representatives elected without party affiliation could not be held accountable to their electors by party discipline. The sentiment was echoed in Svobodnaia Sibir’, which warned citizens that non-party lists divided otherwise cohesive political groupings and could not control their members if elected (Duma elections detailed in chapter 4).  

57 “No. 5” (general assembly minutes, March 5), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 39-41.  
58 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 37, April 30, 1917, p. 4.  
59 Sibirskaja derevnia, 12, June 11, 1917, pp. 11-12.  
60 Nash golos, 59, June 6, 1917, pp. 1-2; Nash golos, 63, June 10, 1917, p. 1.  
Throughout March and April, socialist party activists steadily consolidated control over the Soviet and its Executive Committee, monopolising control over its formal policy-making functions. On March 14, the Soviet EC established a Propaganda Commission as its political outreach organ to local workers and soldiers, allocating PSR and RSDWP representatives two seats each; Kadets were explicitly excluded from the commission. Direct party control over Soviet leadership was cemented a month later, on April 13, by the election of a new Soviet EC. On the suggestion of Social Democrats, elections were held by party list, ensuring candidates could only be nominated by a formal fraction. Party fractions competed for a share of twenty seats, which were distributed according to proportional representation, while elected EC members were supplemented by two representatives nominated by the RSDWP and PSR fractions each, and one anarchist-communist. This formula for party control closely reflected the relatively conciliatory mood amongst socialists during the first weeks of revolution and returned a finely-balanced EC in which SDs predominated but had no automatic majority (figure 3.1).

In their campaign to assert control over Soviet policy, party activists faced spirited opposition from a group of self-professed “non-partyist” (bezpartiinye) activists. Non-partyist activities are elusive in Krasnoiarsk’s local press, which was dominated by party-political interest. However, isolated reports give some clues as to their work. In April, Nash golos reported politically unaffiliated Soviet deputies “uniting into a specific group.” A week later, Svobodnaia Sibir’ reported a local organisation of some 200 non-partyists had been established in Krasnoiarsk and was planning to open a club. Non-partyists were active and vocal in Soviet EC elections on April 13, where they stood a list against RSDWP and PSR candidates. When the general assembly convened to hold elections, one non-partyist, Seleznëv – presumably the same as had objected to parties’ presence in the Soviet EC on March 5

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62 “No. 7” (EC minutes, March 14, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 53.

63 “No. 18” (general assembly minutes, April 13, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 84; IKS, 22, April 16, 1917, p. 4.

64 Nash golos, 20, April 14, 1917, p. 3.

65 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 15, April 21, 1917, p. 4.
demanded the session be chaired by an individual without party affiliation “to remove frictions [...] and any suspicions of any kind of agreement by the presidium with the parties.” The suggestion raised uproar from party activists, who warned the transfer of Soviet leadership away from experienced party activists would weaken the Soviet’s organisational integrity. The debate ended when Soviet chairman, Dubrovinskii, suggested new candidates be nominated for his position. Alongside Dubrovinskii, ten individuals were nominated, almost all prominent Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries. One-by-one, each withdrew their candidature, leaving Dubrovinskii to reassume his position unopposed to “thunderous applause”. The non-partyists’ defeat was sealed by the subsequent vote to re-elect the EC, where they secured barely one-sixth of votes cast, taking only four of twenty available seats.67

The non-partyists’ defeat on April 13 ended any self-professed opposition to party politics in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet. Soviet minutes after this date do not mention the group, which seems to have faded away as a coherent organisation. Nonetheless, despite their vocal opposition to partisan politics, non-partyists may not have represented the effective alternative to party domination they first appear to be. Various historians emphasise non-party groups in 1917 as indicators of anti-party sentiment. Getzler argues non-partyists in the Kronstadt Soviet represented “pure sovietism” fitting “admirably into Kronstadt’s early revolutionary and markedly

66 *IKS, 23, April 20, 1917, p. 4.

67 "No. 18" (general assembly minutes, April 13, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 84-85. Unlike the Soviet RSDWP, PSR, and anarchist-communist fractions, non-partyists were also not entitled to supplementary party seats on the EC.
soviet landscape before it was ploughed up by party-mindedness.”68 Badcock similarly cites non-party groupings as evidence that “party politics did not embrace all ordinary people”. 69 However, these analyses overlook a fundamental organisational feature of non-partyist groups: despite their stated opposition to partisan divisions, non-partyists nevertheless accepted the principle of party fractions as legitimate vehicles of political contestation in elective politics. By participating in Soviet elections as a formal fraction, Krasnoiarsk’s non-partyists actively contributed to parties’ institutionalisation in the Soviet EC. Indeed, their collusion in Soviet party politics may not have been entirely accidental. According to Svobodnaia Sibir’, the local non-partyist organisation did not repudiate party politics outside the Soviet in principle, setting its key aim to examine different party programmes with a view to becoming “active members” of whichever party best fitted their views.70

The Soviet’s fractional system, as established by mid-April, closely reflected the initially conciliatory agendas of socialist parties, placing emphasis on balanced and equal party contestation. This arrangement represented the highpoint for pluralistic party politics in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet and would underpin multi-party control of its EC until September, when new EC elections were held. Nonetheless, it also signified a dramatic redistribution of political authority at an executive level away from rank-and-file Soviet deputies to prominent party activists. By controlling its EC, two-dozen party leaders could claim to speak on behalf of some 10,000 worker and 25,000 soldier Soviet constituents, the vast majority of whom were not party members. While party membership served as the basis for political control in the EC from mid-April onwards, party affiliation in the Soviet general assembly was not recorded at any point during the year, suggesting party identities had limited importance to many rank-and-file deputies.

68 Getzler, Kronstadt, p. 38.

69 Badcock, Politics and the People, p. 84.

70 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 15, April 21, 1917, p. 4.
Despite the initially conciliatory tone of socialist party politics, late-spring and early-summer was marked by growing splits amongst Krasnoiarsk’s socialist parties, which divided into increasingly antagonistic “internationalist” and “defencist” camps. These splits led both Social-Democratic and Socialist-Revolutionary organisations to fracture into several new party groupings, exposing the increasing ideological divisions between their members, especially in their attitude towards the Provisional Government and war. No less importantly, organisational splits signified a rupture in the personal relationships that activists had committed to building when they first established new party organisations.

Political divisions in the RSDWP, which had appeared during the party’s first policy debates in March, were laid bare over the following weeks, as dominant Bolsheviks gradually edged right-wing Mensheviks from leadership positions with the help of several left-wing Menshevik allies. On April 9, Baikalov, the organisation’s most prominent right-wing Menshevik, was removed from the RSDWP committee by elections which established a new eleven-person committee comprising at least nine Bolsheviks and the left-wing Menshevik, Dubrovinskii. The marginalisation of the RSDWP’s right wing was replicated in the Soviet several days later, where the party fraction stood a list of twenty-one exclusively left-wing candidates for EC elections, including at least eight Pravdists.

Social-Democratic divisions were exacerbated in late-April by the Miliukov note and the establishment of a national coalition government, which confirmed leftists’ forebodings that the “bourgeoisie” was trying to draw popular support from legitimate revolutionary authorities. In late-April, a regional RSDWP conference in Krasnoiarsk withdrew all support from the Provisional Government and demanded, with the enthusiastic backing of Krasnoiarsk party activists, “the transfer of all power into the hands of the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Deputies” and an end to war through Europe-wide popular uprisings. The shift in political mood over

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71 *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, 22, April 9, 1917, p. 3.

72 *IKS*, 19, April 13, 1917, p. 3.

73 *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, 37, April 30, 1917, pp. 3-4.
the following weeks brought RSDWP leaders increasingly close to positions endorsed by Bolshevik Pravdists, who had demanded the soviets assume power at their own regional conference, held in Krasnoiarsk several weeks earlier. The common ground between the two groupings was demonstrated on May 20, when the Soviet RSDWP fraction voted through a radical mandate for Krasnoiarsk Soviet representatives to the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in Petrograd, demanding the soviets assume power and popular uprisings against war in Europe. With the backing of RSDWP leaders, the Pravdist, Shumiatskii was elected one of two Soviet delegates to attend the Congress.

By late-May, there was a serious prospect that the RSDWP organisation might split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The militant Pravdists acted first. On May 27, with the backing of the Bolshevik Central Committee in Petrograd, now actively promoting the establishment of independent Siberian Bolshevik organisations, Pravdists issued an ultimatum demanding the RSDWP expel its “defencist” minority. The ultimatum was swiftly rejected by RSDWP leaders, including Frumkin, who gravely warned that party divisions would strengthen “the more unified elements of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie”, prompting Pravdists to formally leave the organisation with around 100 RSDWP members. Over the following weeks, however, RSDWP leaders’ demands for continued unity were steadily undermined by further political turmoil. On June 23, following the Provisional Government’s launching of a new military offensive, 1,500 RSDWP members again voted for an immediate transfer of power to the soviets. Two days later, the RSDWP organisation finally declared allegiance to the Bolshevik Central Committee.

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74 *Sibir skaia Pravda*, 3, May 1, 1917, p. 2.

75 “No. 33” (instructions to Krasnoiarsk Soviet delegates to I All-Russian Congress of Soviets), *Krasnoiarski Sovet*, p.109.

76 “No. 34” (general assembly minutes, May 20), *Krasnoiarski Sovet*, pp. 110-111.

77 Snow, *Siberian Bolsheviks*, pp. 159-161.

78 *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, 63, June 3, 1917, p. 3; *Sibir skaia Pravda*, 8, June 4, 1917, pp. 2-3.

79 *Sibir skaia Pravda*, 14, June 29, 1917, p. 3.
The RSDWP’s acknowledgement of the Bolshevik CC was not simply the culmination of ideological splits with the party’s minority Mensheviks; it was also the final breach of an unspoken agreement established amongst party leaders in March that individuals would set aside factional differences for the common good of Social-Democracy. The move was almost certainly coordinated in advance with Pravdists, who, having withdrawn from party meetings a month earlier, mysteriously attended the vote on June 25. Mensheviks, by contrast, claimed not to have been informed of the decision to vote on that very day. Following the vote, around thirty Mensheviks, with the exception of Dubrovinskii and several other self-declared internationalists, left the RSDWP to establish their own tiny Menshevik party organisation. Meanwhile, RSDWP leaders and Pravdists hastily sought to repair ties, announcing urgent negotiations to establish a new all-Bolshevik organisation.

Matters were propelled by the escalating political crisis at a national level, particularly bloody anti-government demonstrations in Petrograd, news of which slowly filtered through to Krasnoiarsk over the following days. On July 9, against the heated objections of Krasnoiarsk’s (now independent) Mensheviks, the RSDWP endorsed a public demonstration of workers organised by Pravdists in solidarity with protests in Petrograd under the slogans “down with the ten capitalist ministers” and “all power to the soviets”.

A week later, the two announced a formal merger, establishing a new organisation under the name RSDWP (Bolshevik-Internationalists).

While Social-Democratic party unity crumbled, Socialist-Revolutionary politics witnessed similar problems as party centrists struggled to hold together right- and left-wing activists. Following the Miliukov note in April, the PSR moved to reiterate its cautious support for the Provisional Government, backing the formation of a

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80 Ibid.
81 Menshevik report on split from RSDWP: Delo rabochego, 6, September 6, 1917, p. 4.
82 Sibirskaja Pravda, 14, June 29, 1917, p. 2.
83 “No. 83” (report from Krasnoiarskii rabochii), Za vlast’ Sovietov: sbornik dokumentov, pp. 145-147.
national coalition whilst demanding greater efforts to promote peace through international socialist cooperation. This position did not appease Kolosov, on the party’s extreme right, who continued to advocate “war ‘til victory” through *Nash golos* and soon quit the PSR committee. Meanwhile, his antics antagonised leftists, who rebuked the PSR for maintaining any affiliation with *Nash golos*, which remained closely associated with the organisation despite the establishment of a dedicated local party organ, *Znamia truda*, in mid-May, and demanded its leaders denounce Kolosov’s position.

**Figure 3.1:** Bolshevik-led anti-government demonstrations, July 9, 1917.


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87 *IKS, 36*, May 5, 1917, p. 4.
Over the following weeks, increasingly embittered left-wing SRs exercised increasing independence from the party’s centrist leadership. On May 20, the unity of the PSR Soviet fraction, which included members from all political tendencies, was rocked when prominent left-wingers broke ranks to back the RSDWP’s radical mandate for the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Against the heated objections of his fraction comrades, Nikolai Mazurin was elected alongside the Pravdist, Shumiatskii, to represent the Soviet in Petrograd. This dissent was replicated in the Soviet EC, where Sergei Lazo formally resigned his position as PSR fraction representative, citing his inability to speak freely “on questions of principle”, and established an unofficial Left-SR (LSR) fraction in the Soviet with around twenty-five other party members. Published Soviet records show left-wing SRs progressively withdrew from the PSR fraction in the EC over the following weeks; in mid-June, unable to work with its majority centrists, they stopped attending EC meetings altogether.

Left-SRs formally split from the PSR organisation following the Bolshevik-organised anti-government demonstrations on July 9, which several dozen Left-SRs attended against the explicit orders of PSR leaders. As with Social Democrats three weeks earlier, the LSRs’ unilateralism signified not just a growing ideological division within the PSR but also a breach of trust between its members. PSR leaders condemned LSR actions, issuing an ultimatum for them to submit to party discipline or be expelled from the party “as an anarchist group”. The ultimatum prompted an indignant response from LSRs, who condemned SR leaders for betraying “our party’s glorious name” and walked out to establish a small independent party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries Internationalists (LSR-Internationalists).

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88 “No. 34” (general assembly minutes, May 20), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 110-111.
89 IKS, 47, May 20, 1917, p. 4; Dement’ev, “Soiuiz levoradikal’nykh sil”, p. 204-205.
90 Data for SR Soviet EC attendance, May-June, collated from Krasnoiarskii Sovet.
91 Report of LSR meeting, which decided to attend demonstration: Sibirskaia Pravda, 17, July 9, 1917, p. 4.
92 Nash golos, 93, July 16, 1917, p. 3; Nash golos, 94, July 18, p. 2.
93 Internatsionalist, 1, July 20, 1917, p. 2.
The Internationalist Bloc: Between Programme and Personality

While growing divisions between internationalists and defencists shattered socialists’ early desires for party unity, they also provided the impetus for new collegial relations to emerge across party lines. Throughout summer and autumn, a powerful bloc of internationalists emerged in Krasnoiarsk, drawing together Bolsheviks, Left-SRs, and anarchist-communists in common political work. The bloc was most evident in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet, where internationalists cemented joint control over the Executive Committee. Their increasing dominance overturned the careful balance of party power established in April and enabled internationalists to pursue a common policy programme which coalesced around the slogan “power to the soviets” (vlast’ sovetam). At the same time, the internationalist bloc provides valuable insight into the changing personal dynamics of party politics, revealing how activists sought to construct new working relations between one another and how these were institutionalised in the Soviet’s party system.

The potential for cross-party cooperation had been demonstrated in May, when leftist Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries combined to push through a radical mandate for Krasnoiarsk Soviet delegates to the Congress of Soviets in Petrograd, and again in early-July, when internationalists joined forces at local anti-Provisional Government demonstrations in the city. Optimism for a more general internationalist coalition was given its biggest boost, however, by the Left-SRs’ split from the centrist PSR organisation. On July 16, the Bolshevik Krasnoiarski rabochii welcomed the LSRs’ new-found independence, noting the “extremely desirable possibility for collaborative work amongst all internationalist elements in Krasnoiarsk in the interests of the Russian revolution and international socialism.”94 Left-SRs were no less enthusiastic, adopting the title “internationalists” to emphasise their commitment to the cause of “international socialism”, particularly their opposition to the war and bourgeois political power.95 During this period, Bolsheviks and LSRs also strengthened ties with local anarchist-communists, who accompanied

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95 Internatsionalist, 1, July 20, 1917, p. 1.
them at public meetings with their own fierce critiques of war and government.96 These developments caused liberal newspaper, *Svobodnaia Sibir*', to cast an anxious leftward glance over an emerging “tendency” of “Bolsheviks, internationalists, and anarchists” who ranged against centrist and right-wing SRs and Mensheviks and “so touchingly and zealously defend one another” in political debates.97

The internationalist bloc quickly made itself felt in the Soviet EC, where new Bolshevik, Menshevik, and LSR-Internationalist fractions were established in correspondence with changes in local party organisations, receiving two representatives each.98 Published records reveal an increasingly steady left-wing majority at Soviet EC meetings over the following weeks. In July, an average EC meeting might be attended by three or four Bolsheviks and LSRs, alongside one anarchist-communist, but only two Mensheviks and SRs; in August, some nine or ten Bolsheviks, LSRs, and anarchist-communists attended each EC meeting, to only three or four Mensheviks and SRs.99 By September, concerted steps were underway to cement internationalist control. On September 3, the number of anarchist-communist EC representatives was increased from one to two, a move justified as bringing the group in line with other party fractions, despite their local organisation’s relative numerical insignificance.100 Formal internationalist control was secured the following day when new EC elections were held. Speaking for the Bolshevik and LSR-Internationalist fractions, respectively, Okulov and Lazo proposed Soviet deputies vote for a pre-arranged list of candidates, which included eighteen Bolsheviks and LSRs, but only one Menshevik and SR each. Their proposal sparked an angry exchange with SRs, who boycotted the elections in protest, but was reluctantly

96 *Nash golos*, 87, July 9, 1917, pp. 2-3.
97 *Svobodnaia Sibir’,* 97, August 3, 1917, p. 4.
98 *Internatsionalist, 1*, July 20, 1917, p. 4. Published records show Mensheviks attended EC meetings from at least July 7: “No. 53” (Guberniia EC minutes, July 7, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*, p. 143.
99 Data for Soviet EC attendances, July-August, collated from *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*.
100 “No. 78” (Guberniia EC minutes, September 3, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*, p. 194.
endorsed by Mensheviks, allowing the list to be elected and securing a guaranteed internationalist majority in the EC for the first time.  

<table>
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<th>LSR-Int</th>
<th>Menshevik</th>
<th>PSR</th>
<th>Anarchists</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>3*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>29^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, pp. 197-198.

* Party affiliation of candidates not detailed in source. Numbers of party fraction members given here include only seventeen individuals with known party affiliation out of a total twenty-one elected.

^ Discrepancies between total EC seats and numbers elected due to incomplete data on party affiliation of elected EC members.

The EC’s re-election ended the careful balance between party groupings established in April, guaranteeing outright internationalist control over Soviet policy and the complete marginalisation of their defencist adversaries. Most immediately, this new arrangement reflected a heightened urgency for political change amongst left-wing socialists. By September, the issue of governmental power had been placed squarely on the national political agenda by the Kornilov revolt, which coincided with an abortive attempt by disgruntled army officers to depose the Krasnoiarsk Soviet by military force on August 18 (see chapter 2).  

Although almost certainly unconnected, the two events confirmed internationalists’ forebodings of a bourgeois plot to derail the revolution from under their noses, prompting both Bolsheviks and Left-SRs to reiterate demands that the bourgeoisie be immediately stripped of power.  

The crisis prompted a flurry of activity in the Soviet EC, which openly began preparations to seize power in Eniseisk guberniia on August 29 by establishing

101 “No. 81” (general assembly minutes, September 4, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, pp. 196-198.


as the highest provincial governmental authority a United Guberniia Executive Committee of Workers’, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Soviets (UGEC), in which the Krasnoiarsk Soviet was represented by five Bolsheviks and one Left-SR.\(^4\) The Soviet EC’s re-election several days later facilitated internationalists’ continued pursuit of demands for “power to the soviets”. When news finally arrived of the overthrow of the Provisional Government, on October 27, Bolsheviks, Left-SRs, and anarchist-communists in the Soviet EC immediately resolved to secure power in Krasnoiarsk, forming a military command staff under joint Bolshevik-LSR control to orchestrate the occupation of public buildings in the city.\(^5\) The action was announced jointly to the general assembly later that day by Lazo and Okulov, who urged deputies to back their decision.\(^6\)

The Soviet’s swift endorsement of the Provisional Government’s overthrow made Krasnoiarsk the first Siberian city to formally declare soviet power and would be cited by Communist-era historians as evidence of the local popularity of the Leninist formula of the soviets as the embryonic organs of future socialist state.\(^7\) Nonetheless, a common resolve for action masked deep-seated ideological divisions amongst internationalists: in Krasnoiarsk, as everywhere, “power to the soviets” remained “an ambiguous slogan, meaning different things to different people.”\(^8\) By October, only Bolsheviks whole-heartedly endorsed the idea that soviets would become permanent state organs. Pravdists’ had viewed the soviets as embryonic state organs since at least mid-April, when they formally acknowledged their potential “to become local organs of revolutionary government.”\(^9\) Over the following weeks, this position gained support amongst RSDWP Bolsheviks, particularly Okulov, who described soviets on May 19 as an emergent revolutionary

\(^{104}\) “No. 75” (Guberniia EC minutes, August 29, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*, pp. 189-190.

\(^{105}\) “No. 99” (Guberniia EC minutes, October 27, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*, pp. 228-229.

\(^{106}\) “No. 100” (general assembly minutes, October 27, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*, pp. 230-232.

\(^{107}\) Zol'nikov, *Rabochee dvizhenie*, pp. 141-142.


\(^{109}\) *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 3, May 1, 1917, p. 2.
authority capable of delivering power directly to the people.\textsuperscript{110} With the enthusiastic backing of Pravdists, Okulov’s position was endorsed by an RSDWP meeting several days later.\textsuperscript{111} The Pravdists’ merger with the RSDWP in July and the subsequent shock of the Kornilov revolt strengthened support for a radical restructuring of state power around the soviets. Okulov soon became the leading local advocate for establishing the soviets as permanent state organs and explicitly advocated their seizure of power to representatives of Siberian soviets in September as the means to achieve “the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.”\textsuperscript{112}

Nonetheless, Okulov and his Bolshevik comrades remained isolated amongst their internationalist allies. By October, the group which came closest to Bolshevik positions on soviets was the anarchist-communists. From late-March onwards, anarchist-communists had proposed an all-Russian “Union of Soviets” to enable the revolutionary masses to exert self-rule.\textsuperscript{113} However, anarchist suspicions of state authority tempered their enthusiasm for permanent power structures, alienating them from all other socialists.\textsuperscript{114} One Socialist-Revolutionary Soviet EC representative, Bogolepov, recalls that anarchist-communist leader, Kaminskii, brought laughter from other internationalists in late-October when he declared his fraction supported “power to the soviets” as a means to bring about “anarchy”.\textsuperscript{115} Over the following weeks, anarchists’ fears that soviets might establish new, despotic power structures brought them to blows with Bolsheviks. October 29, at a public meeting to discuss the overthrow of the Provisional Government, one anarchist, Sokolov, caused outcry by declaring that “Any authority, from wherever it may come, is divorced from the people and acts as a force inimical to it.”\textsuperscript{116} His concerns would be reiterated with growing urgency over the coming months by anarchist-

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 51, May 19, 1917, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 53, May 21, 1917, pp. 3-4.

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{IKS}, 143, September 17, 1917, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{IKS}, 20, April 14, 1917, pp. 2-3.


\textsuperscript{115} Unpublished Bogolepov memoir: GAKK P-64/5/63, l. 8.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 184, November 1, 1917, p. 2.
communists in the Soviet, who resigned their EC positions in December 1917 in protest at its domination by Bolsheviks.\textsuperscript{117}

The Bolshevik vision of soviet power also contrasted with that of their junior coalition partners in the Soviet, the Left-SRs, who maintained their own distinctive party identity and “did not fetishise the soviets”.\textsuperscript{118} By July, LSRs readily acknowledged local soviets as the only bodies able to command popular support and demanded they assume power in order to unseat the bourgeoisie and implement key social and economic reforms.\textsuperscript{119} Nonetheless, party activists paid little attention to soviets’ future state roles, instead envisaging their assumption of power as a short-term process culminating in the convening of the Constituent Assembly, which alone could determine Russia’s political future. According to one Left-SR, Aleksandr Kuznetsov:

> The correct path to the Constituent Assembly lies through a popular government: the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Deputies. The best preparation for the Constituent Assembly: the immediate confiscation of land, supervision of factories and plants, the most terrible irreconcilable struggle with counter-revolution and war, and the transfer of all power into the hands of the soviets.\textsuperscript{120}

This position provided some basis for cooperation with Bolsheviks, who did not openly repudiate the Constituent Assembly before October and frequently tied their own calls for soviet power into demands that it first be convened.\textsuperscript{121} In August, a conference of central-Siberian Bolshevik organisations in Krasnoiarsk condemned the Provisional Government’s repeated postponement of Constituent Assembly elections as evidence of the bourgeoisie’s usurpation of state power and urged local soviets to

\textsuperscript{117} Dement’ev, “Soiuz levoradikal’nykh sil”, p. 207.


\textsuperscript{119} \textit{IKS}, 86, July 7, 1917, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{121} Shilovskii, \textit{Politicheskie protsessy}, pp. 87-88.
ensure elections be held. The cause was taken up by the Krasnoiarsk Soviet EC, which established a commission in early-October to provide electoral assistance to “those parties standing on the Soviet’s platform”. Nonetheless, Left-SRs’ emphasis on the Constituent Assembly as the basis for permanent revolutionary authority distinguished them from Bolsheviks, whose election propaganda portrayed the body as a steppingstone towards the establishment of a soviet republic. Despite its best efforts, the Soviet proved unable to establish a joint LSR-Bolshevik electoral platform. On October 16, a meeting of activists from the two parties roused heated debate and ended with the establishment of separate LSR-Internationalist and Bolshevik electoral groupings.

While the contested meaning of soviet power revealed internationalists’ continued ideological diversity, by September, it also blurred the lines separating them from their defencist adversaries. While defencists had backed continued cooperation with the bourgeoisie from spring, the growing threat of counter-revolution during the summer prompted many to rethink this logic. A sudden leftward shift was most evident amongst SRs, whose party newspaper, Znamia truda, issued an urgent appeal on August 31 for local socialists to unite around the Soviet against bourgeois counter-revolution:

Down with yesterday’s discord amongst the revolutionary democracy! [Let] us all unite under the slogan of struggle against the counter-revolution. With iron and blood we move against the attempt on the freedom gained by the revolution.

This declaration was quickly reinforced by a local party resolution, which declared “the salvation of the revolution from the attempts of the bourgeoisie” required “the

122 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 124, August 17, 1917, p. 4.
123 “No. 93” (Guberniia EC minutes, October 5, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 221.
124 IKS, 172, October 27, 1917, pp. 2-3.
125 IKS, 165, October 18, 1917, p. 1.
126 Znamia truda, 38, August 31, 1917, p. 1.
transfer of power to the revolutionary democracy in the form of the All-Russian Soviets of Wor[kers’], Sol[diers’], and Peas[ants’] Deputies.”

Given SRs’ stated desire for all-socialist unity and even soviet power, what accounts for their exclusion by internationalists during Soviet EC elections just days later? In the first instance, the political loyalties of many SRs remained uncertain. As political theorists emphasise, coalitions depend on mutual trust and are only likely to form between parties confident in one another’s political reliability. By September, having spent the previous months backing a national coalition government, SRs made unlikely allies of Bolsheviks and Left-SRs. Indeed, local SRs soon revealed themselves to be deeply divided on the question of power. On September 22, a regional PSR conference in Krasnoiarsk upheld demands that soviets assume power. However, it revealed weak support for soviet power amongst Krasnoiarsk’s centrist party leaders, including Ivan Kazantsev, who warned: “The possibility of coalition [with the bourgeoisie] diminishes with every day, but, nonetheless, coalition is needed all the more [to guard against counter-revolution].” Kazantsev’s concerns were simultaneously relayed to the All-Russian Democratic Conference in Petrograd by his local party comrade, Nil Fomin, who pledged support for a national coalition over soviet power as the “lesser evil.”

The SRs’ exclusion from the Soviet EC was also a sign of their increasingly fractious relationship with Krasnoiarsk’s internationalists. Left-SRs’ acrimonious split from the PSR in July produced enormous resentment amongst their respective activists, effectively killing prospects of reconciliation between the two groupings.

127 Znamia truda, 45, September 8, 1917, p. 3.


129 Rabinowitch makes a similar point to explain SR and Menshevik reluctance to enter an all-socialist coalition with Bolsheviks at a national level. Rabinowitch, Bolsheviks Come to Power, p. 164.

130 Znamia truda, 60, September 29, 1917, p. 2; Znamia truda, 61, September 30, p. 3.

Meanwhile, prominent Socialist-Revolutionaries fell out spectacularly with Bolsheviks over the summer. In June, *Nash golos* editor, Kolosov, published two inflammatory articles accusing the Pravdist, Shumiatskii, of conduct dishonourable of a revolutionary, including collusion with Tsarist authorities in trials following the 1905 revolution.\(^{132}\) Outraged Social Democrats announced a “revolutionary-social boycott” of Kolosov in response, prompting PSR fraction representatives to withdraw from the Soviet EC before Shumiatskii agreed to temporarily resign his own EC seat.\(^{133}\) Over the following weeks, any remaining good faith between the two parties was extinguished as activists traded increasingly bitter polemics over the revolution’s various ills. In July and August, *Nash golos* launched repeated attacks on local Bolsheviks, whose agitation amongst soldiers it blamed for the failure of Russia’s military offensives. The allegations were condemned by Okulov, who acidly reminded the newspaper’s editors that revolution “had not changed the view on slander, which was, and is, and always will be a dirty business [emphasis in original].”\(^{134}\) These rifts quickly dashed SRs hopes for broader socialist unity following the Kornilov affair. In early-September, just days after issuing its appeal for cross-party cooperation for the good of revolution, PSR newspaper, *Znamia truda*, despaired at the inability of socialists to set aside partisan hostilities, complaining they continued to “reproach one another [for their respective] mistakes, not doing, in reality, anything for the actual ‘salvation’ [of the revolution].”\(^{135}\)

The internationalist bloc provides a useful prism through which to view the changing relations between socialist parties and the ways these impacted on institutional arrangements underpinning Soviet party politics. By September, the principle of fractional control in the Soviet EC, established in April as a means to ensure open policy contestation, had been turned on its head by internationalists, who now secured complete domination of the body. This arrangement enabled them to pursue a common policy agenda of soviet power without interference from their

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\(^{132}\) *Nash golos*, 57, June 3, 1917, pp. 2-3; *Nash golos*, 58, June 4, p. 2.

\(^{133}\) Dement’ev, “Soiuz levoradikal’nykh sil”, pp. 205-206; *IKS*, 81, July 1, 1917, p. 4.


\(^{135}\) Ibid.
defencist adversaries. Nonetheless, it obscured latent differences between internationalists themselves, who disagreed heatedly over the future of revolutionary power. The Soviet's increasingly exclusionary party system was as much a reflection of internationalists' inability to maintain collegial relations with defencists as it was of their own political unity.

The Soviet General Assembly: Policy Endorsement or Party Loyalty?

The consolidation of internationalist control over the Krasnoiarsk Soviet provides valuable insight into the changing relationship between political parties and popular politics. While party leaders could dominate the Soviet EC by regulating its electoral procedures, their ability to pass policy measures depended on winning majorities in the general assembly, whose deputies were directly elected and mandated by the Soviet's predominantly worker and soldier constituents. How was support for internationalist policy achieved in the general assembly? And, crucially, did it signify a deeper loyalty amongst workers and soldiers towards internationalist parties themselves? Although the breakdown of party support in the general assembly was not recorded in 1917, its changing political positions can be traced through the resolutions it endorsed. These corresponded closely to the changing conceptions of organisations which elected Soviet deputies, reflecting broader ideological shifts amongst many local workers and soldiers.

Throughout 1917, the Soviet general assembly increasingly reflected the EC's hostile positions towards the Provisional Government (figure 3.5). On March 22, deputies endorsed a presidium-sponsored resolution pledging conditional support to the Provisional Government whilst acknowledging its "inevitable" inability to enact popular revolutionary demands, by 138 votes to 104. On May 9, the general assembly strengthened this position, voting by 100 votes to 57, with 3 abstentions, to reject the coalition Provisional Government and demanding power be transferred to the soviets. Over summer, opinion swung decisively behind internationalist policy positions. On August 27, following the Kornilov revolt, an EC resolution blaming

136 “No. 13”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 69-72.

137 “No. 30”, Ibid, pp. 102-104.
counter-revolution on political cooperation with the bourgeoisie and pledging “all power to the Soviets” was passed by an “overwhelming majority”.\textsuperscript{138} When news of the Petrograd uprising finally reached Krasnoiarsk on October 27, the general assembly unanimously backed the assumption of power by soviets, demanding “decisive measures” from the EC to prevent bourgeois counter-revolutionary attempts locally.\textsuperscript{139}

**Table 3.3: Soviet general assembly resolutions on the question of power.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>For</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Abstain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Endorsement of Provisional Government while it adhered to popular revolutionary programme</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>No support for new coalition Provisional Government, demand the soviets take power</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>End all political cooperation with bourgeoisie, the soviets to take power</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>Endorsement of overthrow of Provisional Government, decisive measures to be taken against local counter-revolutionary &quot;bourgeoisie&quot;</td>
<td>Unanimous</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Workers**

The Soviet general assembly’s steady shift towards internationalist policy positions was mirrored by the changing political positions of key groups of workers, who likewise moved from conditional support to outright hostility towards the Provisional Government. These were most marked amongst blue-collar industrial workers, who constituted the core of Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary labour movement. In late-March, a Krasnoiarsk district congress of railway unions backed the Soviet’s position of conditional support towards the government by a “crushing majority”.\textsuperscript{140} By early-June, however, the mood was changing. Delegates to a second district railway congress voted ten-to-one for a Social-Democratic resolution condemning the formation of a coalition ministry and demanding the “soonest possible seizure of

\textsuperscript{138} “No. 73”, Ibid, pp. 183-184.

\textsuperscript{139} “No. 100”, Ibid, pp. 230-232.

\textsuperscript{140} IKS, 17, March 30, 1917, p. 3.
power” by soviets. These demands were soon reiterated by other industrial workers. On June 28, a meeting of worker representatives from several factories endorsed the slogans of anti-government demonstrations in Petrograd and backed Pravdist proposals to hold a local demonstration in support of their demands on July 9. The demonstration, which drew up to 10,000 workers, received endorsement from key local unions over the next days, including those of railway workers, metalworkers, woodworkers, leatherworkers, and printers.

For many workers, whose involvement in revolutionary politics was framed from the outset by a concern to address the worst excesses of class inequality on the shop floor, anti-Provisional Government sentiment was spurred by growing workplace conflict. While workers had achieved stunning gains during spring, including the eight-hour working day and improved working conditions, summer saw increasingly bitter struggles, as managers sought to reassert authority and claw back earlier concessions amid worsening economic conditions. Fierce industrial disputes gripped several enterprises where workers demanded soviet power. By late-June, Krasnoiarsk’s railway workshops were in ferment over the Provisional Government’s efforts to reassert managerial authority over workers’ committees, which culminated in an order from Transport Minister, Nekrasov, demanding workers desist from interfering in matters of production. The order provoked outcry from railway workers’ representatives, who warned managers might sabotage production as a pretext to curtailing workplace rights and threatened to arrest such offenders as “enemies of the enterprise”. Several days later, a meeting at the railway workshops pledged to back the political slogans of the July 9 demonstration alongside specific demands for full workers’ supervision (rabochii kontrol’)

141 *Sibirskaya Pravda*, 10, June 11, 1917, p. 3.
142 *Sibirskaya Pravda*, 15, July 2, 1917, p. 4.
143 *Sibirskaya Pravda*, 17, July 9, 1917, p. 4; *Sibirskaya Pravda*, 18, July 16, 1917, p. 4; *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, 92, July 8, 1917, p. 4.
144 On correlation between economic conflict and class politics, see Smith, *Red Petrograd*, ch. 7.
146 *Sibirskaya Pravda*, 15, July 2, 1917, p. 4.
production and the abolition of Nekrasov’s “counter-revolutionary order”. The situation was similar at the Abakan sawmill, the site of Krasnoiarsk’s fiercest industrial battle, where striking workers in late-May had convinced the Soviet EC to requisition the plant and place it under the management of the woodworkers’ union. By July, the mill’s new union-led administration was facing sustained attack from the old management, which instigated criminal proceedings against union activists and threatened them with arrest in an attempt to reassert their own control. On July 5, mill workers endorsed the Bolshevik-led anti-government demonstration, declaring “the slogans of the RSDWP- Bolsheviks are our slogans.”

The example of these struggles seems to have heightened concerns amongst other workers’ organisations that their own gains might too be threatened. On July 5, the board of the printers’ union, which had achieved wide-ranging concessions for its member in April and actively contributed to the strike funds of other workers, voted two-to-one to back the demonstration’s demands, instructing all its members to attend.

The correlation between industrial conflict and demands for regime change highlights the close connections many workers drew between their own workplace conditions and the broader question of governmental power. Throughout summer, left-wing labour activists, who had been instrumental in establishing union organisations in March and April, drew on local labour disputes, particularly at the Abakan mill, which became a Bolshevik cause célèbre, to emphasise the relationship between the Provisional Government’s “bourgeois” character and worsening workplace conditions. Writing in Sibirskaya Pravda in July, the Bolshevik unionist, Il’ia Belopol’skii, warned:

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147 Sibirskaya Pravda, 17, July 9, 1917, p. 4.


149 Sibirskaya Pravda, 18, July 16, 1917, p. 3.

150 Ibid., p. 4.

151 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 92, July 8, 1917, p. 4.
Now, the bourgeoisie are in power, as [was] Tsarism yesterday. And that is why all the legacy of the old regime goes to the service of the gentry landowner, for his protection from the revolution.\footnote{152}{Sibirskaja Pravda, 18, July 16, 1917, p. 3.}

Workers’ resolutions reiterated these arguments, upholding soviet rule as the means of improving their own conditions, a conclusion doubtless informed by the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s own willingness to tackle local industrial disputes. A resolution passed by railway workers in June counterposed the soviets with the coalition Provisional Government, which it described as “capitalist in deeds and socialist in words”, urging soviets assume power to “complete the social tasks of the proletariat and revolutionary peasantry in the current revolution.”\footnote{153}{Sibirskaja Pravda, 10, June 11, 1917, p. 3.} Other resolutions from late-June and early-July variously similarly described soviets as the “protector of the whole working class and poor population” and a bulwark against capitalist influence in government.\footnote{154}{IKS, 81, p. 4; Sibirskaja Pravda, 18, p. 4.}

Workers’ shifting attitudes directly influenced their election of Soviet deputies. By early-July, resolutions demanding soviet power were issued alongside calls for the re-election of the Soviet Executive Committee so that it better reflected the balance of worker opinion.\footnote{155}{IKS, 86, July 7, 1917, p. 4.} On July 28, Svobodnaia Sibir’ reported railwaymen had re-elected their Soviet deputies, returning Bolshevik representatives.\footnote{156}{Svobodnaia Sibir’, 92, July 28, 1917, p. 4.} The printers’ union gradually marginalised pro-Provisional Government voices, issuing its Soviet deputies on July 12 with a mandate repudiating war and political cooperation with the bourgeoisie and demanding power to the soviets.\footnote{157}{Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 97, July 14, 1917, p. 4.}

The following month, the centrist SR, Pavel Irov, withdrew from the Soviet as a union deputy, declaring he
could no longer uphold its mandate, and was replaced with two new deputies, including Bolshevik political exile, Grigorii Veinbaum.\footnote{Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 135, August 31, 1917, p. 4.}

The pattern of worker support for internationalist positions suggests party activists were able to engage workers in party politics by linking partisan agendas to specific popular concerns.\footnote{A similar argument is made regarding peasant SR support by Sarah Badcock, “‘We’re for the Muzhiks’ Party!’ Peasant Support for the Socialist Revolutionary Party during 1917”, Europe-Asia Studies, 53:1 (2001), pp. 133-149, here pp. 137-139.} Their ability to do so raised hopes that labour politics might become more closely linked to party work, particularly amongst Bolsheviks, who sought to consolidate party control over union leadership. By July, Bolsheviks headed Krasnoiarsk’s largest blue-collar organisations, including the railway workers’, printers’, woodworkers’, tanners’, and metalworkers’ unions, several of which pledged active support for the party’s newspapers and election campaigns.\footnote{On union leadership: Dement’ev, “Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia bor’ba”, pp. 215-217. Printers’ and metalworkers’ support for RSDWP newspapers and election campaigns: Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 37, April 30, 1917, p. 4; Sibirskaia Pravda, 7, May 29, 1917, p. 4; Sibirskaia Pravda, 12, June 22, 1917, p. 4.} Over the next months, many trade unions appeared to swing decisively behind the Bolsheviks. At the city conference of trade unions, on October 1, Bolsheviks made up twenty-six of forty-one delegates, against nine politically-unaffiliated individuals, four Mensheviks, one SR, and one Left-SR.\footnote{Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 161, October 4, 1917, pp. 3-4.} The conference duly backed Bolshevik resolutions on soviet power, prompting Mensheviks to object that resolutions were supported on the basis of who proposed them, rather than their content.\footnote{Delo rabochego, 12, October 16, 1917, p. 4.}

Nonetheless, beyond union leaderships, many workers’ party loyalties remained weak. During public meetings, workers showed less interest in activists’ party identity than the messages they espoused, pledging support to whichever individuals came closest to supporting their positions. On August 19, workers cheered both Bolshevik and Menshevik speakers who denounced attacks on the
Soviet in the liberal press, something lauded by Menshevik newspaper, *Delo rabochego*, as a rare example of socialist unity.\(^{163}\) Meanwhile, Bolshevik efforts to engage rank-and-file union members in party work produced distinctly mixed results. On September 10, Bolshevik activists and unionists resolved to establish party cells in all city enterprises in order to integrate workers into party work.\(^{164}\) The project had some success in the railway workshops, where Social-Democratic support had been strongest since spring, uniting several hundred party members.\(^{165}\) Elsewhere, however, activists encountered considerable difficulties. By October, the printers’ union had formed only a small cell with twenty members. Activists in the leatherworkers’ union, meanwhile, condescendingly reported that the “consciousness of the mass is backward, the majority are illiterate, the exception is individual comrades from [amongst political] exiles, who formed a party cell of 16 people.”\(^{166}\)

**Soldiers**

A similarly ambivalent process of party engagement was seen amongst soldiers. The garrison witnessed growing hostility towards the Provisional Government during spring and summer, particularly in response to its war policy. War was a thorny subject for many soldiers, who felt vulnerable to accusations of disloyalty to their service and country, and was initially expressed only when sanctioned by other political actors.\(^{167}\) In March, the political character of soldiers’ resolutions depended largely on which parties’ activists addressed them. On March 19, a meeting of two-hundred officers received Social-Democratic speakers, passing an RSDWP resolution repudiating imperialist aims and advocating Europe-wide popular uprisings. Two days later, a meeting of soldiers of the 30\(^{th}\) regiment addressed by Socialist-

\(^{163}\) *Delo rabochego*, 6, September 6, 1917, p. 4.

\(^{164}\) *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, 148, September 17, 1917, p. 4.

\(^{165}\) Ibid.; *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, 152, September 22, 1917, p. 4.

\(^{166}\) *Krasnoiarskii rabochii*, 172, October 17, 1917, p. 4.

Revolutionaries passed a resolution vowing to defend revolution against the “Germano-Austrian bureaucracy”. Nonetheless, the continuation of war provoked increasing discontent. On April 21 and 23, garrison meetings organised by Social Democrats protested the Miliukov note, passing the first soldier resolutions demanding soviet power. Soldier discontent was further stimulated by the announcement in early-June that the bulk of the Krasnoiarsk garrison would be dispatched to the front. On June 11, meetings of soldiers from the 14th, 15th, and 30th regiments, and the military hospital, declared the assumption of power by the soviets to be the only means of achieving peace.

Soldiers’ resolutions focused on the selfish class interests of the “bourgeoisie” as the root of continued European conflict. An anti-war resolution passed in late-April declared the Provisional Government to represent “the class interests of the liberal bourgeoisie and the nobility”. In June, the military hospital similarly declared that war brought death and ruin to the narod but wealth to capitalists. These declarations closely resembled internationalist formulations on war; nonetheless, they were informed by soldiers’ own intimate grievances. War might, as socialists claimed, bring material gains for some, but soldiers and their families still had to get by with poor food, inadequate healthcare, and low pay. A resolution passed by 800 soldiers on June 13 drew attention to these injustices, demanding the state give all soldiers “the necessary minimum for existence with a family, with a [further] obligation to provide for families of workers and soldiers in the case of the death of a breadwinner.”

Over the following months, discontent over economic conditions became a cornerstone of continued anti-Provisional Government sentiment. In September, the Soviet Soldiers’ Section voted unanimously for soviet power to guarantee specific material improvements, including better medical care for


169 *IKS*, 27, April 25, 1917, p. 4; *IKS*, 28, April 26, p. 4.

170 *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 11, June 18, 1917, p. 4; *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 10, p. 4.

171 *IKS*, 28, p. 4.

172 *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 10, p. 4.

wounded soldiers and higher pay so that their families could “live as humans [po chelovecheski], not be hungry and cold”.

The feeling that war was being pursued by the bourgeoisie at the expense of ordinary people was heightened by a perception that those advocating its continuation did not, themselves, suffer its human consequences. These objections focused, particularly, on the inequity of terms of military service, which were felt to unjustly favour established social and economic elites. In mid-June, 1,000 soldiers supplemented a Bolshevik resolution for soviet power with their own demands that “all supporters of war to a victorious end” be sent to the front:

so they can witness for themselves the charms of this villainy. No service, uniform, situation, even students amongst them, can be freed from this call-up.

*Burzhua to the trenches!* [emphasis in original]

Soldiers also turned their grievances against local “bourgeois” supporters of war by attacking Krasnoiarsk’s jingoistic press, particularly pro-war Kadet-affiliated newspaper, *Svobodnaia Sibir’,* which faced demands it be shut from June onwards.

By autumn, the seizure of power was widely interpreted by soldiers as a licence to silence pro-war voices. When the overthrow of the Provisional Government was announced to the Soviet general assembly on October 27, soldiers’ deputies petitioned the EC to “shut *Svobodnaia Sibir’,* in view of its danger to the current situation”. The suggestion panicked Soviet leaders, who warned such actions were inopportune, but brought “thunderous applause” from other deputies, who responded with demands for another pro-war newspaper, *Golos naroda*, to also be closed.

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174 *IKS, 150*, September 26, 1917, p. 3.

175 *Sibirskaia Pravda, 11*, June 18, 1917, p. 4.


177 ”No. 100” (General assembly minutes, October 27, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, pp. 231-232. *Golos naroda* was the newspaper of Krasnoiarsk’s Popular Socialists (*Narodnye sotsialisty*), a tiny political grouping close to the Kadets. Popular Socialists had little presence in Krasnoiarsk, establishing a local party organisation only in June 1917, and never gained
Compared to workers, there is little direct evidence of how soldiers’ shifting attitudes influenced their election of Soviet deputies, which went virtually unrecorded in the local press. However, the composition of the Soviet Soldiers’ Section, established in late-August to consolidate all military representatives in the Soviet, suggests soldiers’ deputies increasingly backed internationalist positions. The Section’s five-man presidium which, unlike the Soviet EC, was elected by deputies’ free vote and contained no supplementary party representatives, included at least three internationalists: the Bolshevik, Aleksandr Pozdniakov, and Left-SRs, Sergei Lazo and Mikhail Solov’ev.¹⁷⁸

Nonetheless, formal party organisation amongst soldiers remained extremely weak in the garrison, where party was maintained by loose networks of activists.¹⁷⁹ Consistent support for particular parties was reported in only a handful of units where individual party members were active. These included the 1st company of the 14th regiment, whose company committee was led by a certain Tikholaz, a Soviet deputy and self-identified “internationalist” who contributed articles to *Sibirskaiia Pravda.*¹⁸⁰ By contrast to other garrison units, the company’s political positions were regularly detailed in the newspaper and can be traced with reasonable accuracy. Between April and May, it passed several resolutions denouncing the Provisional Government and war and pledging allegiance for *Sibirskaiia Pravda.*¹⁸¹ In August, the company also donated funds to newly-established Left-SR newspaper, *Internatsionalist.*¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ “No. 73” (General assembly minutes, August 28, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet,* p. 186.

¹⁷⁹ This feature of party work amongst soldiers is also highlighted by Allan K. Wildman, *End of Imperial Army, Volume 2,* pp. 36-70; 265-278.

¹⁸⁰ *Sibirskaiia Pravda,* 14, June 29, 1917, pp. 3-4.

¹⁸¹ *Sibirskaiia Pravda,* 3, May 1, 1917, p. 4; *Sibirskaiia Pravda,* 5, May 15, 1917, p. 4; *Sibirskaiia Pravda,* 6, May 22, 1917, p. 4.

¹⁸² *Internatsionalist,* 5, August 24, 1917, p. 4.
More systematic party work amongst soldiers was hindered, on a practical level, by the constant transfer of troops between Krasnoiarsk and the front, which prevented activists establishing any organisational foothold in the garrison. In June, amid growing anti-war sentiment, Bolshevik Pravdists succeeded in briefly establishing a “military organisation”, attracting up to 800 soldiers to several meetings which were enthusiastically reported in *Sibirskaiia Pravda*. However, the organisation’s activity was cut short by the garrison’s dispatch of the garrison to war later that month and the newspaper’s reports of meetings were replaced in July by letters from soldiers *en route* to the front.

At the same time, a lack of party organisation in the garrison reflected weak partisan identities and continued incomprehension of party differences amongst many soldiers, something highlighted by garrison socialists as a major impediment to their work. In August, an SR in the 15th regiment informed party newspaper *Znamia truda* that, although some men in his unit expressed sympathy for Bolshevik political positions, most “absolutely cannot understand why the struggle between socialist parties is being conducted. [They] do not even know the names of parties.” Even soldiers who professed support to political parties often acknowledged their difficulty comprehending party differences and justified their political allegiances on the basis of broader moral or social considerations. In July, one soldier informed *Sibirskaiia Pravda* that, although understanding little of party politics, he supported the Bolsheviks as his Orthodox faith repudiated murder and theirs was the only party demanding an end to war. Writing to *Krasnoiarskii rabochii* several weeks later, another explained he supported the Bolsheviks despite knowing nothing of the

183 *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 11, June 18, 1917, p. 2. Reports of military organisation meetings in June: *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 12, June 22, pp. 3-4; *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 13, June 25, p. 2; *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 14, June 29, pp. 3-4.

184 *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 18, July 16, p. 3.

185 *Znamia truda*, 14, August 1, 1917, p. 4.

186 *Sibirskaiia Pravda*, 17, July 9, 1917, p. 3.
differences between them and the Mensheviks, as he saw that “workers and all the labouring class follow the Bolsheviks.”

The character of mass support for internationalist policy positions throws the role of parties in the Soviet into sharp relief. Growing frustration at the course of revolutionary politics increasingly drew local workers and soldiers towards anti-government positions and played into the hands of internationalists, who became prominent in many Soviet constituency organisations and secured majority support amongst general assembly deputies. This was critical to enabling the EC to pass its policy measures and highlights the ability of party activists to engage Soviet elective institutions outside the EC to their own advantage. Nonetheless, mass support for internationalist politics remained conditional throughout this period and was tied consistently to the autonomous agendas of workers and soldiers, many of whom showed little concern for party politics on a more abstract level. By October, internationalist support in the general assembly did not signify consistent party loyalties for most Soviet constituents, providing no solid basis for integrating them into party politics more generally.

Conclusion

By October 1917, political parties had become integral parts of Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary politics, although they were unstable organisations in their own right. Despite barely existing as organised groupings before the revolution, local socialist parties rapidly shaped Soviet elective institutions at an executive level in order to secure party control over policy formulation. This entailed a significant redistribution of executive power within the Soviet, transferring authority into the hands of two dozen leading party activists. The ability of parties to gain these powerful Soviet roles reflected, in part, the fact that Krasnoiarsk’s most prominent socialists were also leading members of one or other of the city’s main party groupings. At the same time, it reflected a wider belief amongst nearly all political actors – including members of the enigmatic “non-partyist” organisation – that policy agendas could only be effectively pursued through coherent fractional groupings.

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187 Krasnoiarski rabochii, 120, August 11, 1917, p. 4.
Nonetheless, the character of party control over the Soviet remained fluid and was continually shaped by party activists’ shifting agendas. Socialist parties struggled throughout 1917 to maintain effective organisational cohesion between their different factions. The growing disunity of Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries, which culminated in June and July with the fracturing of Krasnoiarsk’s RSDWP and PSR organisations into opposing internationalist and defencist groupings, revealed their members’ shifting ideological positions and also their inability to maintain effective working relationships with one another. This was closely reflected in the Soviet EC, where internationalists, with Bolsheviks leading the charge, turned the principle of party control to their own advantage, systematically marginalising their defencist adversaries and gaining virtually uncontested control over the body. For all their formal power in the Soviet, however, political parties struggled to penetrate popular politics on a more basic level. Amongst rank-and-file Soviet deputies and the workers and soldiers who elected them, internationalists secured growing support for their policy positions. This support was vital in enabling the EC to pass resolutions through the general assembly; but in most cases it did not reflect the emergence of a deeper allegiance to parties themselves. By October, not even Krasnoiarsk’s Bolsheviks, by far the best organised and most influential party grouping in the city, could seriously claim to command a loyal mass following.
CHAPTER IV ★ Locality and State: The Geography of Revolutionary Power

Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary politics in 1917 was framed increasingly in terms of class. However, the question of power also had a distinct geographic dimension. As Anatloyi Remnev notes, “Power, like any real object or process, has its own temporal and spatial characteristics” which are subject to design and contestation by different actors.¹ The “geography of power”, that is, how authority is arranged and distributed across geographic space, was discussed extensively in revolution, becoming a central point of focus in local politics. Krasnoiarsk’s socialists and Soviet were key players in this debate, defending local prerogatives against the perceived encroachments from central state bodies and interacting with other organisations in the city and Siberia more generally to expand local roles in all-Russian state politics. This chapter examines how and why they sought to do this, asking where their positions fitted into the constantly-changing debate on the role of localities in revolution.

The relationship between individual localities and all-Russian state structures in 1917 has been extensively interrogated by historians. Research on provincial revolutionary events highlights the capacity of local actors to determine their own social and political agendas autonomously of central governmental bodies. This process is often portrayed as a clash between “localism” and “centralism”, in which localities took advantage of the centrifugal forces of revolution to ignore and resist obligations imposed by state authorities.² In practice, however, there was no clear distinction between “local” and “state” politics. As Retish and other historians demonstrate, local actors retained an acute awareness of their wider surroundings in revolution, frequently choosing to frame their actions within a broader, all-Russian context.³ In Krasnoiarsk, people widely debated how actions at a “local” (mestnyi) level would impact on all-Russian, or “general-state” (obshchegosudarstvennyi)

² Raleigh, Experiencing Russia’s Civil War, p. 25; Badcock, Politics and the People, p. 3; Figes, Peasant Russia, pp. 30-69.
³ Retish, Russia’s Peasants, pp. 95-129. For a similar argument, see Sanborn, Drafting the Russian Nation, esp. pp. 20-62.
politics, explicitly linking the city’s role in revolution with that of the Russian capital, Petrograd, and with other localities, and expressing themselves both as local actors in their own right and as part of the wider all-Russian state. While this thesis is concerned with the local dimensions of state power in general, for the purposes of this chapter, the term “state” is understood more specifically in the manner expressed by contemporary revolutionary actors, that is, as political authority structures extending beyond the local level with implications for the entire Russian Empire.

These dynamics of revolutionary politics are particularly noteworthy in Siberia, where demands for a geographic redistribution of power are typically associated with Siberian regionalists (oblastniki). The oblastniki were predominantly liberal-minded, reformist intellectuals who had looked, since the late-1800s, towards Siberia’s establishment as a politically and culturally autonomous region within a broader, federal Russian state. Their federalist agenda has been interpreted as an almost unique political phenomenon in Siberia by some historians. Norman Pereira has contrasted the oblastniki and their demands for federation with the avid “centralism” of other political forces, particularly left-wing Social Democrats, who “tended to regard Siberia as peripheral and only a stepping-stone to the real action at the metropolitan centre.” This analysis closely resembles the views of anti-Bolshevik oblastnik émigrés whose works were published in the West after the revolution. However, it fails to account for the diversity of opinions expressed by different political groupings proposing greater local autonomy from central state bodies in war and revolution. Regionalists played a marginal role in Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary


5 Pereira, White Siberia, pp. 39-43. Smele likewise draws a distinction between Siberia’s “true regionalists” and socialists, who momentarily advocated greater local and regional autonomy in order to win political support: Civil War in Siberia, pp. 15-21.


7 As recent scholarship demonstrates, Siberian regionalism during this period was, itself, far from ideologically cohesive. Liberal intelligentsia seeking to lead the movement interacted with other political groupings, including indigenous Siberian national groupings, who
politics. Following the overthrow of Tsarism, a handful of individuals affiliated to the journal *Sibirskie zapiski*, led by prominent city Duma member and Committee of Public Safety chairman, Vladimir Krutovskii, expressed excitement at “find[ing] ourselves on the verge of an epoch of enormous [political] reshaping”. Oblastnichesto was embraced by some local Kadets, who occasionally publicised the cause in their aptly-named party newspaper, *Svobodnaia Sibir’* (Free Siberia) and upheld demands for an autonomous regional Duma at the party’s first Siberian conference, held in Tomsk in May. Nonetheless, oblastniki themselves had only a very tenuous foothold in local revolutionary politics. While regionalist organisations were established in several Siberian towns and cities, including Irkutsk and Verkhneudinsk, as early as March, Krutovskii and his fellow oblastniki in Krasnoiarsk only organised a party grouping in late-September and failed to attract significant support from the local population during the remainder of the year.


8 *Sibirskie zapiski*, 2, March 1917, p. 143.


10 Shilovskii, *Politicheskie protsessy*, pp. 60-61. In November’s Constituent Assembly elections, the only public elections in which Krasnoiarsk’s oblastniki stood candidates in 1917, they polled last of seven party lists, gaining only 214 out of a total 20,957 votes: *Znamia truda*, 100, November 16, 1917, p. 2. The lack of general support for regionalism in Krasnoiarsk likely resulted from its elite-intelligentsia character, and the difficulties experienced by regionalists in rallying support resembled those of Krasnoiarsk’s Kadets (see chapter 3). Oblastniki did best at Constituent Assembly elections in Tomsk, the intellectual centre of Siberian regionalism and Siberia’s only university city by 1917: Shilovskii, *Politicheskie protsessy*, p. 110.
In debates on local autonomy, Krasnoiarsk’s regionalists were consistently sidelined by the city’s dominant socialists. The liberal political foundations upon which *oblastniki* based their vision for regional federation, with its emphasis on gradual, legal change, left them out of step with the prevailing political mood and resulted in them opposing many demands for more immediate local autonomy in revolution, as manifested by socialists and the Soviet, which they often regarded as inopportune and harmful to broader state interests. By contrast, left-wing socialists, unencumbered by such ideological baggage, quickly emerged as leading advocates for transforming the relationship between the all-Russian state and its localities. Their efforts focused on three aspects of revolutionary power: the issue of central governmental oversight over local organisations; the administrative authority and competency of local administrative bodies; and the relationship of different local organisations to one another. In the first months of revolution, the Soviet led resistance to efforts from the Provisional Government to impose legal oversight over local government through centrally-appointed “commissars”. The Soviet also helped expand local administrative power, in the form of a powerful and self-standing *(samostoiatel’nyi)* municipal Duma, which fell under socialist control following elections in July. Meanwhile, Soviet leaders played a central role in establishing close ties with other localities, both in Eniseisk guberniia and in Siberia more generally, through powerful regional soviet organisations, enabling socialists from different towns and cities to interact with one another and jointly express demands for direct local involvement in all-Russian revolutionary developments.

These three cases provide much-needed focus to the changing conceptualisations of local agency and authority in a Siberian context, demonstrating conclusively that socialists, including Krasnoiarsk’s powerful left-wing Social Democrats, were not simply “centralists” but had an active interest in transforming the localities’ relationship to an emerging all-Russian revolutionary state. They also show the wide appeal of local political autonomy in revolution beyond self-professed *oblastniki*. Indeed, the demands of Krasnoiarsk’s socialists were not unique to Siberia and closely reflected emerging local political agendas expressed by left-wing revolutionaries across Russia more generally. Finally, by drawing attention to power structures established between different localities, these case studies highlight the dual character of “being provincial”: in defining their role in Russia’s wider state
structure, local socialists interacted not only with the state “centre” in Petrograd but also with one another, constructing new power structures amongst themselves on the basis of mutual cooperation.

This chapter considers these aspects of the revolution’s changing geography of power in turn. The first section details Soviet opposition to provincial commissars, considering the motivations behind its rejection of centralised authority in the immediate context of war and revolution. The second focuses on the campaign to re-elect the Krasnoiarsk city Duma, asking, in particular, why socialists attached such significance to engaging pre-revolutionary municipal institutions. The final section considers the establishment of regional soviet organisations in Eniseisk guberniia and Central Siberia, detailing the growing concerns of Krasnoiarsk Soviet activists to tie themselves into a broader network of local revolutionary organisations and highlighting the roles key actors envisaged for local soviets in a future revolutionary state.

Debating Centralised Control: Provincial Commissars

One of the first concerted moves to refashion the relationship between localities and the all-Russian state in 1917 was made by the Provisional Government in Petrograd, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which appointed provincial commissars (gubernskie komissary) from amongst prominent local governmental activists. Provincial commissars were to become permanent state representatives in the provinces and were tasked with maintaining oversight over local organisations, ensuring their activities remain within established legal boundaries. On the one hand, this measure revealed a concern by central authorities to maintain direct oversight over the localities in revolution and continued a longstanding state institution of appointing local agents answerable only to Petrograd, resembling particularly the notorious Tsarist-era governors (gubernatory), who retained overall authority for state affairs at a local level until March 1917.11 Many local actors quickly drew negative associations, comparing Provisional Government commissars

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with unaccountable and venal “functionaries” (chinovniki) or “bureaucrats” (biurokraty) of the recent past. At the same time, provincial commissars represented a first tentative step towards integrating local actors into wider state work by providing an organisational link between them and the activities of central government. The attempt to introduce commissars in Krasnoiarsk, and the hostility it would provoke, provides a useful analytical focus for different views on how local actors were to participate in wider state structures.

The introduction of commissars in Krasnoiarsk faced challenges from the outset, as the Ministry of Internal Affairs struggled to find people with the requisite political authority or will to represent it at a local level. According to ministry rules established on March 5, commissars were to be appointed, in the first instance, from chairmen of zemstvos, rural organs of local government. This was impossible in Siberia, where Tsarist-era restrictions on local government meant zemstvos did not exist until summer and autumn 1917. In an effort to find a suitable candidate for provincial commissar in Eniseisk guberniia, the Provisional Government first approached Krasnoiarsk's conservative mayor, Potyliitsyn, who refused the post, before handing it to the guberniia’s State Duma representative, E.L. Zubashev. This move prompted an angry response from Krasnoiarsk's newly-established Committee of Public Safety (CPS), by now the only local revolutionary body to whole-heartedly endorse the Provisional Government, which objected that the appointment ignored new revolutionary authorities established locally and demanded it be withdrawn. Finally, on April 12, six weeks after the order to appoint provincial commissars had been issued, CPS chairman and prominent regionalist, Vladimir Krutovskii, was appointed.

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12 Orlovsky, “Reform during Revolution”, pp. 103-104.


14 Aleksandr Dement’ev, “Pravitel’stvennye komissary i Komitety obshchestvennoi bezopasnosti: k voprosu o vzaimootnosheniyakh v Eniseiskoi gubernii v 1917 g.”, unpublished manuscript, p. 3.
The difficulties in finding a suitable candidate for commissar were an indication of the reluctance of local actors to accept the appointment of formal state representatives without their consent and mirrored similar conflicts across the Russian Empire, where local revolutionary organisations demanded a say in who was appointed. Nonetheless, Krutovskii’s confirmation as commissar did not end hostility to the institution of centrally-appointed state authority itself, which was most forcefully expressed by Soviet activists over the following weeks. Their critique of commissars drew together two distinct lines of political thought: firstly, that centralised state authority hindered local actors’ ability to administer their own affairs; and secondly, that centralised oversight of local organisations contravened the participatory political order of revolution. The first of these objections reflected a widespread belief that the tasks of state at a local level were simply too extensive and complex to allow for centralised control. This position was typified by Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta on April 12, the day Krutovskii was appointed commissar, which railed against the Tsarist-era practice of ruling the localities through centrally-appointed functionaries. In order to act at all, the newspaper argued, the chinovnik required direction from central authorities, meaning “every order [and] command” must be initiated by a geographically-distant higher authority before being implemented. Moreover, having been issued from the capital, any measures which were finally implemented could not properly address the needs of the local population they would affect. Basic administrative concerns, the article concluded, “must be administered locally, or, as they say, there must exist local self-administration [samoupravelnie]. Thus, all local affairs will be decided better and far quicker.”

The Soviet’s administrative objections to appointed state agents fed into a well-established critique of centralised authority in Russia, particularly amongst advocates of municipal reform, who had long argued that the complexity of governmental administration meant local actors required the authority to address

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16 IKS, 18, April 12, 1917, p. 1.
“local needs” according to their own “self-standing” authority (samostoiatel’nost’).\(^\text{17}\) By 1917, this reformist agenda had been reinvigorated by several years of war, which obliged local administrative bodies, particularly municipal dumas and zemstvos, to address an increasingly diverse range of tasks, including refugee relief, public health, and provisions regulation. These tasks entailed a rapid escalation of local administrative responsibilities and prompted the active mobilisation of “society”, including many administrative specialists who had previously been marginalised from state life, into municipal politics as active partners in formulating and implementing policy.\(^\text{18}\) In turn, it inspired a new faith, particularly amongst local reform advocates and the skilled professionals who were now indispensable to local administrative activity, that local authorities, operating autonomously in tandem with society, were the most effective instruments of state at a local level.\(^\text{19}\)

Demands for direct local control of state administration resonated clearly in Krasnoiarsk, where the city Duma was drawn into a “vast process of public construction” in order to deal with the effects of war. By late-1915, the Duma had assumed responsibility for aiding several thousand refugees evacuated from Russia’s western front and for regulating and supplying consumer goods for the local civilian population, through a dedicated City Provisions Commission (CPC).\(^\text{20}\) The CPC, in particular, became a focal point for growing municipal activity, integrating representatives of local “society” into its work in the form of predominantly socialist professionals.

\(^{17}\) Daniel R. Brower, *The Russian City between Tradition and Modernity, 1850-1900*, University of California (1990), esp. chapter 3. “Samostoiatel’nost’ is often translated into English as “independence”, but actually connotes an ability to handle own affairs, rather than the literal separation from others suggested by the Russian “nezavisimost’”.

\(^{18}\) Lih terms this the “enlistment solution”: *Bread and Authority*, pp. 39-41.

\(^{19}\) For a useful overview of this wartime reformist tendency, see Thomas Porter, William Gleason, “The Democratization of the Zemstvo During the First World War”, in Mary Schaeffer Conroy (ed.), *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia*, University of Colorado (1998), pp. 228-242.

cooperative activists, who provided technical expertise on goods procurement and distribution, and prompted an enormous increase in local administrative expenditure in order to cover the costs of procuring and handling goods, which was funded via a series of loans.\textsuperscript{21} In 1916, the CPC secured loans totalling over one million roubles, roughly equivalent to the entire 1915 Duma budget.\textsuperscript{22} These developments led to calls for local administrative bodies, operating with the active support of the local population, to be given greater authority to manage their work without interference from Petrograd. At a meeting of East-Siberian municipal representatives held in Irkutsk in April 1916, City Provisions Commission chairman, P.V. Veselkov, delivered a speech co-authored by Bolshevik co-operators and regular CPC participants, Moisei Frumkin and Nikolai Meshcheriakov, which warned that efforts to address the provisions crisis were being hindered by centralised “functionary rule” (\textit{chinovnichestvo}) and called for the repeal of all measures which hindered “the development and appearance of social initiative [\textit{obshchestvennaia samodeiatel'nost’}]” at a local level.\textsuperscript{23} These demands were reiterated by the Krasnoiarsk Duma’s journal in a series of articles published in December 1916 and January 1917. The challenges of local administration, it argued, were such that local actors must now assume full control over basic state functions, including policing, taxation, and budgetary control; census restrictions, which prevented local actors from participating in municipal work must be abolished along with the “total subordination of the city administration to the [Tsarist] governor”. This alone could create a “more or less authentic city self-administration, which will not have to glance over its shoulder when conducting its activities”.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} CPC minutes, June 1915-January 1917, in \textit{VKGOU}.


\textsuperscript{23} \textit{VKGOU}, 8, May 3, 1916, pp. 9-16.

Demands for greater local autonomy from centralised oversight did not represent a belief that localities be released from their wider obligations to the state but rather that local actors could and should be entrusted with handling formal state roles on their own authority. In practice, war had obliged local authorities to assume responsibility for many basic state functions, signifying that “local interests” and “state interests” were now indivisible. As the city Duma journal emphasised, “[l]ocal self-administration is a part of state administration” and “cannot be absolutely autonomous, independent of state administration.” This sentiment supports the argument of Retish and other historians that war, by integrating local actors more closely into state life, encouraged them “to go beyond regional affiliations and express nationalist identities.”

By 1917, it also provided the basis for a radical bottom-up vision for reconstructing state authority by devolving basic state responsibilities to local actors, something “which would necessarily entail the decentralization of the Russian state political order” and precluded any significant role for centrally-appointed state agents.

By 1917, the belief that local actors were capable and deserving of wide-ranging state responsibilities undergirded widespread hostility to the re-introduction of centralised state authority at a local level. The Soviet’s vigorous condemnation of the emerging commissar system as an administrative hindrance was reiterated by commentators from across the political spectrum, reflecting a consensus for greater local administrative authority which would become increasingly important over the following months with the re-election of the Krasnoiarsk city Duma (see below). Writing in *Svobodnaia Sibir*, one liberal commentator drew on renowned German constitutional theorist and municipal reform advocate, Rudolf von Gneist, to argue that an active role for “local self-administration” in state affairs must preclude the “bureaucratic decentralisation” embodied by centrally-appointed *chinovniki*. This view was also readily expressed by socialists, particularly those linked to

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26 Retish, *Russia’s Peasants*, p. 29. See also Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation*.


28 *Svobodnaia Sibir*, 81, July 14, 1917, p. 2.
Krasnoiarsk’s cooperative movement, who had gained insight into municipal work through the Duma’s wartime provisions operations. Ivan Lovstov, a member of the executive board of the Eniseisk Guberniia Association of Consumer Societies and the local PSR’s recognised expert on municipal government in 1917, likewise demanded an end to “bureaucratism, the chinovnik method of administering the country” in order to both “weaken the coercive basis” of state power and “liberate central institutions from masses of needless work.”

Alongside their administrative objections to centrally-appointed state agents, Soviet activists’ critique of Provisional Government commissars also presented them as perverting the participatory political spirit of revolution by making state authority unaccountable to the people. This view was typified by Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta, which compared appointed state officials to Tsarist-era “bureaucratic power” (vlast’ biurokraticheskaia), in which Russia had been ruled by a “long staircase of functionaries, at the head of which stood Tsar Nikolai, the very highest functionary.” Each step on this staircase was occupied by a venal and manipulative “little Tsar” (tsarek), who curried favour with his superiors “with a toady smile” whilst lording over his local “subordinates” with “harsh and strict” measures. By contrast, revolution must now institute an era of “democratic power” (vlast’ demokraticheskaia), through directly-elected organisations, particularly soviets, which would allow Russia to be “administered by the mass, that is, the people themselves. The people elects its representatives, the people must see what these representatives are doing, the people must supervise [kontrolirovat’] them.”

The belief that centrally-appointed state officials contravened the spirit of revolution was common particularly to left-wing critics of the Provisional Government’s commissar system in 1917, who emphasised that all political authority must now be fully elected and directly accountable to the people. This was, at its root, a reiteration of the grounding principles upon which soviets’ political authority was based, which sought to make every level of power directly accountable to those

29 Znamia truda, 10, July 6, 1917, p. 4.


beneath it (see chapter 2). But it also revealed an explicitly geographic element to socialists’ conceptualisations of popular politics: to be legitimate, the people must retain direct control over their own political organs at a local level; accordingly, these organs must be able to formulate and enact the political agendas of their constituents without interference from central government. Throughout the spring, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet implemented this radical vision for direct, localised political autonomy in practice by systematically blocking the efforts of Krutovskii to monitor and regulate its actions on behalf of the Provisional Government. A month after his appointment, Krutovskii reported back to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Petrograd that the Soviet was ignoring his orders and even censoring his telegrams, making regular communication with the capital impossible.\footnote{No. 46 (Report of Krutovskii to Ministry of Internal Affairs, May 12, 1917), Za vlast’ Sovetov: Sbornik dokumentov, p. 86.} In early-June, he declared grimly that the Soviet “is developing its activities completely on its own authority [samostoiatel’no], ignoring the Committee of Public Safety, ignoring the oversight of the public prosecutor and my rights of guberniya commissar and other establishments.”\footnote{No. 61 (Report of Krutovskii to Ministry of Internal Affairs, June 6, 1917), Za vlast’ Sovetov, p. 113.} These efforts to maintain local political autonomy were replicated across Eniseisk guberniia by other soviets. The Kansk Soviet, to the east, ignored all attempts by Krutovskii to regulate its activities and unilaterally implemented sweeping local reforms, including the redistribution of all privately-owned land. Meanwhile, in Eniseisk, to the north, Soviet activists responded to a request that they submit to Krutovskii’s authority by protesting “against the intention to reintroduce bureaucracy” and declared menacingly that “appointed officials can rule here only over our dead bodies.”\footnote{Snow, Bolsheviks in Siberia, pp. 111-112.}

The growing controversy between local soviets and commissars in Eniseisk guberniia is portrayed by Snow as a localised dimension of the struggle for political power between left-wing socialists and the Provisional Government.\footnote{Ibid.} Yet this
interpretation obscures a more fundamental divergence of ideological visions between the actors involved. On the one hand, many socialists looked upon revolution as an opportunity to immediately empower the people through local organisations, enabling them to participate actively in revolutionary politics. For the Provisional Government and its predominantly liberal supporters, meanwhile, there remained an overriding concern that the politically-inexperienced masses were unprepared for the responsibilities of government. Indeed, it was feared the ad-hoc organisations in which they participated at a local level – pointedly termed by government officials as “social”, rather than “state”, organisations – would prioritise marginal class interests over the need to create a universal state order on the basis of the rule of law and were therefore fundamentally unsuited to preparing local actors for these responsibilities. These anxieties lay at the base of the commissar system, which revealed the Provisional Government’s willingness to acknowledge the political legitimacy of local revolutionary organisations only insofar as they upheld its own legal standards.

In Krasnoiarsk, these divergent political aspirations manifested themselves in an increasingly fractious debate between supporters and detractors of the Provisional Government and its new, legalist order. Despite their oft-stated concerns for local administrative authority, Krasnoiarsk’s liberals expressed unease at the prospect of mass electoral politics and the “fantastic speed” at which “yesterday’s commoners [obyvateli]” were being transformed into “today’s citizens [grazhdanie]”, prompting one writer to ask in March: “are we sufficiently prepared for the forthcoming examination of our civil maturity?” Over the following months, the refusal of local revolutionary organisations to bow to the Provisional Government’s legal standards answered this question in the negative. Following local soviets’ rejection of Krutovskii’s authority, Svobodnaia Sibir’ condemned their “anarchist” actions for undermining the universal rule of law, demanding: “Where is the


38 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 1, March 28, 1917, p. 4.
guarantee that, tomorrow, a soviet of merchants’ deputies, of middle-class deputies, of administrators’ deputies, or arrestees’ deputies will not gather and issue its own legal orders?"  

The liberal backlash against local revolutionary organisations even drew in many oblastniki, who shared the belief that universal civil equality could provide the only stable basis for future state power. They included, most notably, Krutovskii, who, as well as provincial commissar, remained the leading exponent of Siberian regionalism in Krasnoiarsk. Krutovskii’s commitment to the liberal agenda for gradual and closely-supervised state reform had been demonstrated by his assumption of the post of provincial commissar in April and his frustrating experiences in office hardened his conviction that Petrograd must enforce legal standards on local organisations. Throughout spring and summer, his reports to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the capital emphasised the “illegality” of local soviet actions. These complaints were reiterated in the local regionalist journal, Sibirskie zapiski, where Krutovskii drew a careful distinction between the legitimate aspirations of most Siberians to move towards an orderly and legal federalist structure and “anarchic” local revolutionary committees, which were undermining state order. These committees, he claimed, were dominated by non-Siberian political exiles and shunned the local population, particularly the regionalist intelligentsia, which they excluded as members of the “bourgeoisie” (here Krutovskii was surely referring to his own treatment at the hands of the Krasnoiarsk Soviet and its counterparts across Eniseisk guberniia) in order to enforce their own “arbitrary” and even “criminal” measures.

Amid the growing acrimony, Krasnoiarsk Soviet activists rushed to the aid of local organisations. In June, the Soviet received a report from the Ministry of Internal Affairs which singled out the Kansk and Eniseisk Soviets for their defiance of its orders and called on Krutovskii, as provincial commissar, to take “the most energetic measures to establish order and to inform social organisations of the unacceptability

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40 Reports published in Za vlast’ Sovetov: sbornik dokumentov, pp. 80, 113-114.

41 Sibirskie zapiski, 4-5, August-October 1917, pp. 103-112.
of any kind of unauthorised actions.” These criticisms were heatedly disputed by 
Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta, which defended the right of local revolutionary 
organisations to move “from words to business” and praised socialists in Kansk and 
Eniseisk for assuming power locally, confiscating private land, and ensuring troops 
were still sent to the front for military duty. By contrast, the newspaper chided the 
Provisional Government for failing to recognise the importance of their local initiative 
to the revolutionary politics, declaring sarcastically: “This is how supporters of order 
help the revolution.”

The controversy in Krasnoiarsk over the Provisional Government’s efforts to 
introduce centrally-appointed officials is revealing of the different aspirations local 
actors held for their own roles in state and of how these could shape emerging power 
arrangements. In the immediate term, the assertive opposition of the Krasnoiarsk 
Soviet to Krutovskii’s office, buttressed by the equally intransigent attitude of other 
local soviets, prevented him from establishing genuine political authority at any point 
during 1917. Krutovskii would remain provincial commissar in little more than name 
until late-October, when he was arrested by the Krasnoiarsk Soviet as part of its 
formal declaration of soviet power in the city. More immediately, the Soviet’s dual 
critique of centralised control, which brought together the wartime belief that local 
actors were best equipped to administer their own affairs with the revolutionary 
conviction that politics must now be elected and accountable at all levels, put it at the 
forefront of demands for autonomous political roles for the localities in revolution. 
These would become increasingly important throughout 1917, as socialists began 
constructive efforts to strengthen both municipal authority, through the Krasnoiarsk 
city Duma, and the power of local soviets, through regional-level soviet organisations.

The Municipality in Revolution: Krasnoiarsk’s Socialist Duma

Alongside their attempts to stave off the perceived encroachments of central 
government, Krasnoiarsk’s socialists actively sought to strengthen the capacity of 
local actors to participate in the wider tasks of state. A focal point for this activity was

42 IKS, 72, June 20, 1917, p. 1.
43 Pozdniakov memoir of seizure of power in Krasnoiarsk: GAKK, P-64/5/488, l. 1.
the city Duma. The Duma had been overshadowed in the first flushes of revolutionary enthusiasm by the establishment of powerful new authority structures, particularly the Soviet, which became the primary focal point for popular political participation. Nonetheless, it remained vitally important; by 1917, it was Krasnoiarsk’s only established municipal authority and had the greatest capacity of any single body to handle the complex tasks of governmental administration at a local level. It continued to function throughout the year and was re-elected in July with a massive socialist majority, establishing it firmly as an active component of Krasnoiarsk’s emerging revolutionary power structure and enabling socialists to pursue their own visions for authoritative local self-administration.

The question of how the Duma should respond to revolution was subject to lively discussion throughout March. The issue of new Duma elections was broached for the first time on March 8, when N.A. Shepetkovskii, a prominent liberal, warned fellow Duma members that, while the body could continue to function with its “current composition”, it must soon be re-elected.44 His words received widespread sympathy from other Duma members, several of whom suggested involving the Committee of Public Safety and Soviet in preparations for elections. Nonetheless, concerns remained that elections would not be legal until orders came through from the Provisional Government.45 Another Duma liberal member and City Provisions Commission participant, M.T. Goroshkov, squared the circle by suggesting the CPS and Soviet temporarily delegate representatives to the Duma while the question of elections was being resolved.46 This solution was typical of many localities during the first weeks of revolution, where new revolutionary authorities were frequently invited to supplement existing local duma membership with their own representatives.47 It provoked immediate scorn from the Soviet, however, which

44 On Shepetkovskii’s local political career, see Berdnikov, Lonina, Dva veka krasnoiarskogo samoupravleniia, pp. 157-178.

45 The Provisional Government issued provisional instructions for municipal elections only in mid-April: Browder and Kerensky (eds.), Provisional Government, pp. 261-263.

46 Duma minutes, March 8, 1917: GAKK 173/1/2410a, l. 27.

promptly rejected a formal request that it delegate twenty-two of its own members to attend Duma meetings on the basis that the existing Duma could not meet the demands for “democratic self-administration” and condemned “any replenishment” of its membership short of complete re-election.\textsuperscript{48} The strength of opposition quickly convinced Duma members that elections were inevitable. By the end of the month, they had announced the establishment of a special commission to organise Duma elections “on new bases” (\textit{na novykh nachalakh}) and invited representatives of the Soviet and CPS to participate in its work.\textsuperscript{49}

The prospect of new Duma elections sparked high-profile political campaigns from Krasnoiarsk’s socialist and liberal parties alike. The Kadet-led Party of People’s Freedom, the only major party grouping to have members in the pre-revolutionary city Duma, welcomed the decision to hold new elections whilst urging “informed and authoritative local people” to explain the meaning of elections to the politically-inexperienced population.\textsuperscript{50} This cautious optimism was soon swept aside by the feverish activities of Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who began campaigning for elections in earnest from early-April onwards. Given that pre-revolutionary municipal elections had been restricted to “census society” and the Duma was dominated by financial and intellectual elites, its re-election by the entire city population was viewed by socialists as an opportunity for the masses to test themselves for the first time in open elections against the “bourgeoisie”, something which was impossible in the Soviet due to its class-specific composition. Hopes were stoked by early municipal election results in Petrograd, where socialists gained majorities in district Dumas, prompting the Krasnoiarsk Soviet to hail “a shining victory for socialist parties” in the “first general [\textit{vsenarodnye}] elections in Russia’s history”.\textsuperscript{51} At a local level, Krasnoiarsk’s Social Democrats urged the city’s masses to likewise realise their collective electoral strength, declaring:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} “No. 9” (Soviet EC minutes, March 19, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Sovet}, pp. 57-58.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Duma minutes, March 30: GAKK 173/1/2416, l. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{50} \textit{Svobodnaia Sibir’}, 1, March 28, 1917, pp. 3-4.
\item \textsuperscript{51} \textit{IKS}, 68, June 15, 1917, p. 1.
\end{itemize}
For the first time, elections in our country will occur on the basis of a general and direct electoral battle. The vote of every soldier, every worker, every woman worker, every cabman, every cook, every laundress will be equal to the vote of the capitalist, the chinovnik.\textsuperscript{52}

The sentiment was replicated by SRs, who reminded the city’s “labourers” that, as the “main mass of the population”, they could now become the “masters of the city” and insisted they “snatch it from the hands of the few money bags” who had ruled it in years past.\textsuperscript{53}

Socialists were not disappointed. When elections were finally held on July 2, voters returned a massive socialist majority. The RSDWP took almost half of all votes cast, becoming the Duma’s largest single party, with 41 of 83 seats, a victory tarnished only by the decision of four Mensheviks, who had been included on the party list before the RSDWP organisation had split in late-June, to declare they would form their own separate Duma fraction.\textsuperscript{54} The PSR came second, with 27 seats, with the PPF a distant third, with only 9 seats. The result was celebrated as evidence for widespread Bolshevik support by \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, which hailed the RSDWP's massive majorities in working class districts.\textsuperscript{55} Despite their alarm at a “Bolshevik” victory, SRs also expressed satisfaction that the PSR had achieved a respectable showing and enthusiastically noted the routing of the “bourgeois” Kadets, something which, in view of municipal Duma elections elsewhere in Russia, party activists declared was “neither by chance nor local.”\textsuperscript{56} The Kadets, meanwhile, were left stunned and immediately expressed fears that the new Duma would allow Bolsheviks to pursue “different kinds of socio-economic and political experiments.”\textsuperscript{57}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52] \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 87, July 2, 1917, p. 2. \\
\item[53] \textit{Znamia truda}, 10, July 6, 1917, p. 2. \\
\item[54] \textit{Nash golos}, 78, June 28, 1917, pp. 1-2. \\
\item[55] \textit{Krasnoiarskii rabochii}, 91, July 7, 1917, p. 2. \\
\item[56] \textit{Nash golos}, 84, July 6, 1917, p. 1. \\
\item[57] \textit{Svobodnaia Sibir'}, 74, July 6, 1917, p. 1. \\
\end{footnotes}
The establishment of left-wing majorities in local dumas was commonplace as new elections enabled socialists to extend their influence beyond soviets and into municipal government. In his landmark article on municipal elections, Rosenberg speculated that this development may have marked the end of “dual authority […] on the municipal level in the summer of 1917 though it continued on a national level right up to the Bolshevik coup.”58 Nonetheless, insufficient attention has been paid to the practical implications that socialist engagement in municipal authorities had for the structures and practices of power at a local level. Many Western historians cite municipal elections as an opportunity for socialists to propagandise their broader class-based and party-political agendas amongst the local population rather than engage seriously in the “nuts and bolts” of municipal administration.59 Russian historians have similarly portrayed Krasnoiarsk’s RSDWP election victory as little more than a propaganda stunt to raise their own party’s political profile.60 In 1917, this conceptualisation of municipal election campaigns had high-profile support amongst Bolsheviks at a national level. Just days before local Duma elections, Krasnoiarskii rabochii had published Stalin’s self-satisfied analysis of municipal elections in Petrograd, in which he contended:

The electoral struggle unfolded not around local municipal demands, as ‘often’ happens in Europe, but according to main political platforms. And that is

<table>
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<th>Party of People’s Freedom</th>
<th>RSDWP</th>
<th>PSR</th>
<th>Tenants’ Union</th>
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<td>252</td>
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Source: IKS, 85, July 6, 1917.


59 This view is most strongly proposed by Colton, who contends Moscow Bolsheviks “manifested unvarnished contempt” to practical municipal administration in 1917: Colton, Moscow, p. 80. See also Koenker, Moscow Workers, pp. 196-208.

60 Safronov, Oktiabr’ v Sibiri, p. 216; Shilovskii, Politicheskie protsessy, pp. 69-70.
perfectly clear. At a moment of extraordinary revolutionary shock, complicated by war and ruin, when class contradictions are exposed to their furthest limits, it is completely senseless to hold back in an electoral struggle on local questions [...].61

This image of local Duma elections would be subsequently upheld by the Bolshevik, Moisei Frumkin, a key player in the RSDWP electoral campaign, whose memoirs describe the party’s victory as “completely unexpected” and allege party leaders “did not seek particularly to take up this [municipal] work, preferring to work directly amongst the masses and gather them around the ‘Sovet’ [sic].”62

Despite Frumkin’s protestations, however, contemporary records suggest all parties, the RSDWP included, held genuine aspirations to engage in municipal administration. Throughout party campaigning, socialists widely acknowledged the Duma as a valuable local financial and administrative authority which had a key role to play in securing the as-yet tenuous gains of revolution. In early-April, just days after the announcement that Duma elections would be organised, the RSDWP warned pointedly that the scope of revolutionary politics must be extended beyond the Soviet into municipal administration:

True, Committees of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies stand guard over freedom. But they do not unite the whole revolutionary narod and their sphere of activity does not extend into all branches of life. The city economy, city finances are still in the hands of the old city Dumas, that is, in the hands of the bourgeoisie alone.63

This message was reiterated by PSR activists, who similarly warned that only the city Duma had the capacity to deliver basic public and financial services to local workers.64

62 Frumkin, “Fevral’-oktiabr’”, p. 149.
63 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 21, April 9, 1917, p. 1.
64 Znamia truda, 9, June 29, 1917, p. 3.
Socialists’ willingness to engage the city Duma in practical work was demonstrated by the prominent role of experienced administrative personnel in their election campaigns. In early-April, the RSDWP formed a six-person party “commission for the technical organisation of city elections”, which brought together party members experienced in municipal work. They included Anatolii Baikalov and Frumkin, both prominent executors in local consumer cooperatives who had been active in the Duma’s City Provisions Commission since summer 1915 and had contributed to calls for municipal reform in the months preceding revolution. They were joined by the Bolshevik, Ian Ianson, secretary to the City Provisions Commission board, and Menshevik, Aleksei Muzykin, a trained statistician and economist who had arrived in Krasnoiarsk in early-1917 after four years’ exile in Eniseisk and quickly assumed the position of manager in the Duma’s statistical department. The importance of individuals with administrative knowledge to the campaign was further reflected in the RSDWP electoral list, which was composed in May with explicit instructions to include party members “acquainted with municipal work”. Amongst forty-one Social Democrats ultimately elected to the Duma were Muzykin, Ianson, and Frumkin alongside a dozen further individuals with some experience in wartime municipal administration, mostly through cooperative activism. The situation was similar for Socialist-Revolutionaries, who established a dedicated party

65 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 23, April 12, 1917, p. 3.

66 Frumkin had co-authored P.V. Veselkov’s speech to demanding greater local administrative authority in April 1916 (see above) alongside fellow Bolshevik, Nikolai Meshcheriakov, who was not, himself, involved in the RSDWP electoral commission but would nevertheless remain a vocal proponent for greater municipal authority in 1917. Baikalov, meanwhile, was an active proponent of the extension of the zemstvo into Siberia by spring 1916 in his capacity as a leading local theoretician on consumer cooperation and government reform: Sibirskaia derevnia, 2, February 1916, pp. 2-5.

67 Details on Ianson from RSDWP Duma electoral list: Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 85, June 29, 1917, p. 4.

68 On Muzykin, see Berdnikov, Vsia krasnoiarskaia vlast’, pp. 27-28.

69 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 53, May 21, 1917, p. 4.

70 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 85, June 29, 1917, p. 4.
“section on local self-administration” under the leadership of the cooperator and prominent municipal reform advocate, Ivan Lovtsov. Lovtsov was elected in July alongside fellow cooperators, Ivan Kazantsev and Nil Fomin, at the head of a PSR list which the party proudly announced included candidates experienced in “all branches of the city economy and administration”.

Socialist election campaigns throughout this period thus remained in the hands of individuals with at least some municipal experience, many of whom had a stated interest in maintaining and expanding local administrative powers. This concern was reflected clearly in the RSDWP’s electoral programme. The party’s first statement on Duma elections, published in April, outlined a range of core functions that the new Duma must address, including strengthening its role in managing the provisions question, improving public facilities, and the “municipalisation” (munitsipalizatsiia) of key areas of local economic activity, all of which was formulated as a means to achieve the “expansion of rights and boundaries of competence [kompetentsiia] of local self-administration.” The details of this ambitious programme were elaborated by activists, particularly Baikalov, who published a series of articles in Krasnoiarskii rabochii outlining concrete policy measures, including the construction of cheap housing on vacant city land for the benefit of workers and the expansion of the municipal budget through progressive local taxation. These proposals resonated with those of the PSR, which likewise pledged to expand the city budget through progressive taxation in order to finance

71 Znamia truda, 10, July 6, 1917, p. 4. On Lovtsov’s municipal reform advocacy, see above.

72 “No. 193” (PSR Duma election campaign, June 1917), Krasnoiarskii krai v istorii Otechestva, p. 374.

73 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 21, April 9, 1917, p. 2.

74 Baikalov did not stand for election on the RSDWP Duma list, probably due to his growing estrangement from the party’s leaders (see chapter 3), but nevertheless remained active in the election campaign.

75 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 41, May 5, 1917, pp. 1-2; Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 64, June 4, 1917, p. 2.
the “municipalisation of the city economy”, something party activists explained would contribute to the eventual “socialisation” of land in the city.  

While both Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries justified these proposals in terms of their own overarching class agendas, their electoral programmes closely resembled pre-revolutionary demands for municipal reform. “Municipalisation” – that is, the transfer of responsibility for specific financial and administrative services directly into the hands of municipal authorities – had long been viewed as an important means for strengthening local administrative powers and was raised repeatedly by municipal reform advocates during the war. In January 1917, the Krasnoiarsk Duma journal had demanded greater local control over taxation and municipal budgetary affairs, an arrangement which it predicted would lead to “all important branches of city life be[ing] municipalised.” Through wartime municipal work, many of the socialists who came to determine their parties’ municipal policies would certainly have been party to these unfolding debates. Their continued emphasis on expanding municipal administrative authority suggests they absorbed wartime reform demands into wider party programmes. Indeed, socialists’ municipal programmes fitted into a wider discourse of municipal reform in revolution which enthused also their primary “bourgeois” adversary, the Party of People’s Freedom. The PPF, which portrayed itself as the party of responsible municipal reform, proposed its own ambitious programme, including the extension of free education, cultural provision, and medical aid for the city’s poor, as well as local relief programmes for the unemployed and victims of war, all to be funded through direct progressive taxation under full Duma control.

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76 Nash golos, 42, May 16, 1917, p. 3; Znamia truda, 9, June 29, 1917, p. 3.


79 “No. 192” (Party of People’s Freedom, June 1917), Krasnoiarskii krai v istorii Otechestva, pp. 368-372.
Following their electoral success in July, socialists quickly reiterated their determination to engage actively in municipal work. At the first session of the newly-elected Duma, on August 1, the PSR fraction looked with determination towards socialist involvement in the basic tasks of municipal administration, declaring “The time for pretty words [krasivye frazi] is over; the time for gritty [chernaia] practical work has begun.” These words were echoed by the Duma’s small handful of Mensheviks, who announced they would stand by the RSDWP’s original party programme despite their formal split from its electoral list. The Bolshevik fraction, meanwhile, boldly announced the beginning of a new era of revolutionary politics in which municipal self-administration would operate “in full agreement” with the Soviet to implement the party’s practical aims. The party’s commitment to these lofty ambitions was demonstrated by its nomination of Soviet chairman and newly-elected Duma member, Iakov Dubrovinskii, for mayor (gorodskoi golova), the highest position in the Duma. Dubrovinskii was duly elected to the position by Duma members and left the Soviet EC in order to assume his new role. Meanwhile, Frumkin, the most prominent Bolshevik with municipal experience, was elected deputy mayor. These were heady days for party activists, who continued to express their hopes for municipal government in the city press. Writing in Krasnoiarskii rabochii, the well-established Bolshevik cooperator and City Provisions Commission participant, Meshcheriakov, predicted that local self-administrations would continue to function for the foreseeable future alongside soviets, serving as:

schools for our [party] workers, in which they will learn the running of public affairs and the public economy, that is, as something we have not yet been able to achieve. When we acquire these [municipal] buildings, it will be easier for us to take the task of managing the entire public economy for ourselves.

Meshcheriakov’s formulation of the long-term role for municipal authority provides fascinating insight into Bolsheviks’ attempts to assimilate two distinct revolutionary agendas. On the one hand, his comments betrayed a growing concern to cement

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80 Duma minutes, August 1, 1917: GAKK 173/1/2417, ll. 25-32.
81 Ibid., ll. 31, 43.
party authority at all levels of government. At the same time, they reiterated the wider reformist conviction that municipal administration should now handle core state tasks and would thus provide a means through which to integrate actors at a local level into wider state administration.

Duma socialists’ optimism was quickly dampened by practical challenges, foremost amongst them the dire state of municipal finances, which had been stretched to breaking point by two years of vastly-increased spending programmes. By 1917, the Duma had accumulated a colossal budgetary deficit, which was anticipated to reach between 600,000 and 700,000 roubles by the end of the year. At the opening of the re-elected Duma on August 1, all parties acknowledged the enormous debts run up over the previous years as a major impediment to their proposed municipal programmes. The mood was significantly worsened by the news that the Provisional Government had moved to limit the introduction of new local taxes by municipal authorities. Unlike the Soviet, which was not recognised as a legitimate state organ by the Provisional Government and could thus ignore its rulings with little practical consequence, restrictions on municipal spending placed the Duma in a bind: it now required additional finance at a local level to fund its ambitious projects; however, it was also dependent on the central state budget to continue to operate at all and could thus not risk contravening financial regulations drawn up in Petrograd. This situation brought socialists again to reiterate the need for greater municipal autonomy. Two weeks after the Duma’s re-election, the Bolshevik, Meshcheriakov, delivered a blistering attack on the Provisional Government’s restrictions on local taxation, which he portrayed as a throwback to the “ministerial tutelage” [opeka] of the Tsarist era, declaring:

the business of the democracy is to free its organs of administration from obstacles to its creative activity placed in its path by the Provisional

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83 Frumkin report to Duma on municipal finances, September 25, 1917: Svobodnaia Sibir', 141, September 29, 1917, p. 3.

84 GAKK 173/1/2417, l. 28.

85 Ibid., l. 32. Summary of Provisional Government measures to reform municipal administration: Browder, Kerensky, Russian Provisional Government, Volume 1, p. 311.
Government. The task of the city self-administration is to fight for the complete self-standing authority [samostoiatel’nost’] of democratic organs.86

Despite practical difficulties, however, the socialist Duma worked actively to raise funds within the confines of official restrictions. Through September, rent tariffs on municipal land were adjusted and extra contributions levied from merchants for core municipal services, including fire provision, in an effort to cover existing costs.87 Meanwhile, additional finances were secured via private loans. On September 25, new deputy mayor, Frumkin, proposed turning to local merchants for funds. His suggestion drew a storm of objections from Duma Kadets, whose representative, P.I. Kuskov, argued merchants were now “former people” [byvshie liudi] with no money to spare and suggested instead that the socialist-led Duma turn for contributions to workers’ organisations, including the railway union, which, he alleged, had financial reserves totalling “hundreds of thousands”. Kuskov’s comments were surely disingenuous and likely reflected a conviction that socialists bear the brunt of the irresponsible class politics Kadets now accused them of pursuing. They caused great irritation to Duma socialists, who swung behind Frumkin’s proposals, voting to secure funds from Krasnoiarsk’s merchants’ society.88 Three weeks later, the Duma confirmed it had agreed loans with the society totalling some 400,000 roubles in order to maintain and expand vital municipal services, in particular in the field of provisions supply and distribution, where plans were announced for procuring firewood for city residents ahead of winter.89

By October, the Krasnoiarsk Duma had begun to embody socialists’ bold visions for municipal administration in revolution by expanding public services and local administrative authority. This represented an assimilation of wartime demands

87 GAKK 173/1/2422, ll. 6-11, 37, 41-42.
89 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 155, October 17, 1917, p. 3. Efforts to expand municipal provisions activity continued throughout this period and dovetailed with Soviet measures to regulate local provisions supplies (see chapter 5).
for self-standing municipal administration with socialists’ overarching revolutionary concerns. The Duma thus provides a fascinating example of the continuing institutional diversity in Krasnoiarsk’s local revolutionary politics: while socialists rejected certain Tsarist-era state practices, especially centralised oversight of local governmental activities, they actively engaged others which were perceived to be consonant with their broader revolutionary aims at a local level. The city’s dominant Bolsheviks, by now unanimously declaring their support for “soviet power”, openly acknowledged the importance of existing municipal structures and sought actively to integrate the Duma and its administrative functions into their vision for future state power. The Duma, for its part, operated alongside the city Soviet for the remainder of 1917 and into 1918. In June 1918, when the Soviet was overthrown by White (anti-Bolshevik) armies, a new Duma leadership was established under the Menshevik, Aleksei Muzykin, one of the architects of the RSDWP municipal programme a year earlier but now a staunch anti-Bolshevik.90

Uniting the Localities: Regional Soviet Organisations

Local actors in revolution were tied into a dual geographic power relationship: while the question of local roles in wider state politics put direct emphasis on relations between localities and authorities in Petrograd, a concern to secure wider political influence also prompted local actors to establish organisational ties with one another. Throughout 1917, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet increasingly coordinated its activities with other soviets in Eniseisk guberniia and in Siberia more generally through three regional-level bodies: a Soviet “Information Bureau”, formed in April; the Eniseisk Guberniia Executive Committee of Soviets (GubEC), established in late-June; and a Central Siberian Bureau of Soviets, founded by the first Congress of Central Siberian Soviets which was held in Krasnoiarsk in September. Regional-level soviet bodies were common across the Russian Empire in 1917 and served to greatly extend the political authority of the soviets which initiated them.91 No less importantly, they

90 Berdnikov, Vsia krasnoiarskaia vlast’, p. 28.

provided an opportunity for actors in different localities to establish new power relationships with one another, enabling them to explore new ways of integrating themselves into wider authority structures.

Regional-level soviet organisation in Siberia focused initially on Irkutsk and Omsk, which took the lead in establishing dedicated “Okrug Bureaus” of soviets for east and west Siberia, respectively. These organisations were soon flanked by smaller bodies at a provincial and district level, however, which sprang up across Siberia at the initiative of soviets in important population centres. The Krasnoiarsk Soviet quickly forged relations with other local soviets, sending delegations to nearby Kansk and Achinsk on March 7 to establish organisational links. By mid-March, on the suggestion of Achinsk Soviet representatives, it agreed to a formal “Bureau of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ deputies” through which to share “information [and establish] unity and agreement of activity” with local soviets across Eniseisk guberniia. The following month, the Soviet EC confirmed an “Information Bureau” had been established in Krasnoiarsk “for the coordination of activity with the Soviets of the districts of Eniseisk guberniia”, bringing together representatives from Achinsk, Kansk, Eniseisk, and several smaller soviets, including that of the Znamensk glass factory, forty kilometres away. The activities of this “Information Bureau” went largely unrecorded during the spring. Nevertheless, its establishment marked an upswing in joint activity between the Krasnoiarsk Soviet and its counterparts across Eniseisk guberniia, suggesting it helped cement organisational ties between local soviets. In early-May, when large fires broke out near Eniseisk, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet EC took the lead in organising mass evacuations, dispatching troops to help the effort in coordination with the Eniseisk Soviet. Likewise, at the Znamensk glass

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94 ”No. 4“ (EC minutes, March 7, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*, p. 44.

95 *IKS 5*, March 19, 1917, p. 3.

96 *IKS 22*, April 16, 1917, p. 4.

97 ”No. 26“ (EC minutes, May 2, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Soviet*, pp. 94-96.
factory, revolutionary work was soon coordinated with prominent Krasnoiarsk Soviet members, who made regular visits to deliver political speeches to the workers.\(^98\)

These early efforts helped establish Krasnoiarsk as a focal point for regional-level soviet organisation and provided the basis for intensified organisational cooperation with other localities over the coming months. On June 27, a conference of delegates from local soviets, including Kansk, Achinsk, Eniseisk, and Munisinsk, met in Krasnoiarsk to discuss forming a permanent “guberniia centre” in Krasnoiarsk. The idea was hailed by Okulov, one of the Krasnoiarsk Soviet representatives, as an opportunity to place workers, peasants, and soldiers, the “founding element of local [revolutionary] organisations”, at the heart of a new, regional power structure. It received an enthusiastic response from other soviet delegates, who acknowledged Krasnoiarsk as the “centre of gravity” for soviet politics in the guberniia and agreed to send representatives to its Soviet EC, whose joint meetings would take place under the auspices the Guberniia Executive Committee (GubEC), the “leading revolutionary-political and administrative organ of all Soviets in the guberniia.”\(^99\) Within this organisational framework, activists looked to extend the participatory principles at the heart of soviet politics across Eniseisk guberniia. Delegates from different localities were to participate in all meetings of the GubEC (something which, probably for practical reasons, rarely happened in practice), providing a direct, mandated link to their own soviet constituents, to whom they would return all GubEC decisions for discussion and approval before the body formally enacted them.\(^100\)

The GubEC was presented by its founders as a logical extension of revolutionary organisation on a provincial level. Nonetheless, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s intensified efforts to cement links with other local soviets were also a hard-headed response to the increasingly fractious and uncertain political landscape in which it operated. Most immediately, they reflected a growing concern amongst


\(^{99}\) “No. 48” (GubEC founding conference minutes, June 27, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 134-137.

\(^{100}\) Ibid., pp. 137-138.
leftist Soviet leaders to coordinate activities with organisations sharing their own anti-Provisional Government agenda in order to maximise their collective political influence. Almost all soviets participating in the June 27 conference were headed by “internationalists”: Achinsk, Eniseisk, Minusinsk, and Znamensk Soviets were under Bolshevik exile leadership, while the Kansk Soviet was led by a combination of Left-SRs soldiers and Bolsheviks. As such, they all suffered political isolation. By June, Kansk and Eniseisk, alongside Krasnoiarsk, had established themselves as local bulwarks of opposition to the Provisional Government and were facing sustained criticism from Petrograd for challenging its legal authority. At a regional level, they were politically detached from Siberia’s main power centres, the Omsk-based West Siberian Bureau of Soviets and, particularly, the Irkutsk-based East Siberian Bureau of Soviets, which was dominated by pro-government Mensheviks and SRs and manifested open hostility to internationalist calls for soviet power. Political differences flared on June 5-6, at the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in Petrograd, where the Menshevik chair of the Irkutsk Soviet and East Siberian Okrug Bureau, A.A. Nikol’skii, singled out Krasnoiarsk for criticism, alleging its Soviet had seized local outright power and was operating in open defiance of the Provisional Government, its commissars, and even the Petrograd Soviet, initiating a reign of “anarchy” which destroyed personal liberties and resulted in general economic disorder. His speech prompted outrage from the Krasnoiarsk Soviet EC, which condemned Nikol’skii’s “total perversion of [our] activities”, warning his allegations aided “counter-revolutionary persecution of revolutionary activity in the localities”, and demanded a formal explanation from the Irkutsk Soviet.

The concern to consolidate left-wing soviets’ strength increased over the summer amid growing political tensions, prompting concerted efforts to establish a

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102 IKS, 72, June 20, 1917, p. 1: for a fuller discussion, see above.

103 Agalakov, Sovety Sibiri, pp. 20-22.

104 Reprint of Nikol’skii speech in Nash golos, 68, June 16, 1917, p. 2.

105 “No. 54” (GubEC minutes, July 15, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 147-148.
wider Siberian unification of all internationalist soviets. On August 17, a GubEC meeting – attended, unusually, by deputies from all three of Kansk, Achinsk, and Eniseisk Soviets – agreed to convene a Central Siberian Congress to establish relations with soviets on a wider geographic basis, resolving to approach soviets outside Eniseisk guberniia in order to gauge their positions on key political questions and their willingness to join a permanent “Central Siberian Union [of soviets]”. The proposal to establish a new Siberian soviet body was a clear challenge to the established regional dominance of Omsk and Irkutsk and the proposed “Central Siberian Union” was explicitly formulated by the GubEC as a measure to strengthen the position of “internationalist” soviets in Siberia. The first Congress of Central Siberian Soviets, which finally met in Krasnoiarsk on September 7-11, drew local soviet representatives from Achinsk, Kansk, Minusinsk, Ilansk, Kol'chugino, Barnaul, Cheremkhovo, Tomsk, Novo-Nikolaevsk, and even distant Vladivostok. They were addressed by Okulov, on behalf of the Krasnoiarsk Soviet, who noted that “Up to now, our forces were broken up between the Omsk and Irkutsk regional centres, where we were in the minority” and suggested establishing a new “union of a purely political character.” The proposal was condemned by the lone representative of the East Siberian Okrug Bureau of Soviets, Gnoev, who accused Okulov of attempting to “split the unity of the democracy” and urged continued political struggle “within [Siberia’s existing] regional unifications.” Besides delegates from Barnaul and Cheremkhovo, however, the proposed body was supported by all present, who agreed to form a Central Siberian Bureau of Soviets in Krasnoiarsk to unite “Soviets standing on an internationalist perspective” and elected a five-person committee to lead its work, comprising Krasnoiarsk Bolsheviks, Okulov, Teodorovich, and Veinbaum, and Kansk Left-SR, Zverin.

The Central Siberian Bureau was, most immediately, a practical response to Siberian internationalists’ concerns that their local organisations were threatened by better-organised political adversaries. Fears of an impending counter-revolutionary

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106 “No. 66” (GubEC minutes, August 17, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 167-168.

107 Congress minutes published in IKS, 139, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147 (September 12-22, 1917).

108 IKS, 147, September 22, 1917, pp. 2-3.
onslaught against anti-Provisional Government revolutionary organisations had grown over the summer following repression of internationalists in Petrograd and increasingly flagrant attacks on local revolutionary organisations by the Provisional Government, which began dispatching “punitive expeditions” to re-establish legal order in individual localities which had rejected its authority.\textsuperscript{109} In early-August, a congress of provincial commissars in Petrograd condemned “ruinous dual power” in the localities and demanded the re-establishment of “firm, decisive, and singular authority” across Russia under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.\textsuperscript{110} The proceedings were reported grimly by \textit{Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta} which, paraphrasing Engels’ warning that states could overturn revolutionary challenges through superior armed force,\textsuperscript{111} declared:

Now begins the struggle to disarm the revolution in the provinces and to transplant everywhere the tools for enslaving the masses – a military-
tchinovnik hierarchy; everywhere, [the bourgeoisie] wants to create a network of autocratic […] chancelleries and supply them with ‘ranks of armed people.’\textsuperscript{112}

The present danger was confirmed when, barely two weeks after the provincial commissars’ congress in Petrograd, local anti-Soviet army officers summoned a punitive expedition from Irkutsk, the heartland of Provisional Government support in Siberia, to disperse the Krasnoiarsk Soviet and arrest its leaders on the pretext of “disorders” in the city (see chapter 2). Although quickly quashed, the attempted overthrow of the Krasnoiarsk Soviet cast a long shadow over the Central Siberian Congress in September, where Okulov reminded delegates of the risk of further “punitive expeditions” and urged them to “create the possibility for self-defence”. The position was supported by Tomsk Soviet representative, Kulinich, who warned that

\begin{enumerate}
\item[112] IKS, 119, August 17, 1917, p. 1.
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any further punitive expeditions from Irkutsk against Krasnoiarsk “will be repulsed from Tomsk.” The principle of collective self-defence was confirmed by the founding resolution of the Central Siberian Bureau of Soviets, which pledged to “defend against any attempts on revolutionary Soviets, from wherever they may come.”

At the same time, strengthening cooperation with other “internationalist” soviets provided Krasnoiarsk activists with an opportunity to push their own political agenda on a regional level. Upon its establishment, the Bolshevik-led Central Siberian Bureau was tasked with pressing the East Siberian Okrug Bureau of Soviets in Irkutsk to convene an all-Siberian Congress of Soviets, with a view to rallying support for “power to the soviets” across Siberia. With Okulov at the helm, the Central Siberian Bureau reached a tentative agreement with its counterparts in Irkutsk and Omsk, respectively, to convene an all-Siberian Congress immediately after a second East Siberian Congress of Soviets, which was scheduled for mid-October. In the event, the SR-Menshevik dominated East Siberian Okrug Bureau of Soviets withdrew its support for an all-Siberian Congress at the last minute, prompting the Central Siberian Bureau to organise it on their own initiative on October 16, before the East-Siberian Congress of Soviets had even finished meeting. The resulting gathering of Siberian soviet representatives was held without the presence of many SRs and Mensheviks, who remained at the ongoing East-Siberian Congress of Soviets, guaranteeing a clear internationalist majority. It quickly declared support for “power to the soviets”, electing an all-Siberian Bureau (Tsentrosibir’) under the chairmanship of Krasnoiarsk Bolshevik, Boris Shumiatskii, which would coordinate efforts following the Provisional Government’s overthrow several days later to establish formal soviet power across Siberia.

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113 IKS, 147, September 22, 1917, p. 3.
114 Ibid.
115 Agalakov, Sovety Sibiri, pp. 30-33.
The Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s role in regional organisation secured its political influence across Siberia and is emphasised by Communist-era historian, Agalakov, as an attempt to place itself in a “vanguard of Bolshevik Siberian Soviets.” Nonetheless, this interpretation overlooks the growing importance Soviet leaders, by organising with other localities, attached to the autonomous role of local soviets in revolution. The establishment of both the GubEC and Central Siberian Bureau of Soviets signified, above all, a conviction that local soviets, through their coordinated action, could serve as the basis for lasting political change across a wider geographic area. This belief had been clearly expressed as early as May by Krasnoiarsk Soviet chairman, Dubrovinskii, who argued local soviets should create conditions for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and “dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry” on their own initiative by strengthening their authority amongst the “popular masses” at a local level. This would not undermine, but rather strengthen the authority of the Petrograd Soviet, enabling it to front a powerful revolutionary movement across the whole of Russia: “Revolution is made not only in the centre,” Dubrovinskii concluded, “but also in the localities. In the localities there must be enacted a planned, organised seizure of power by local revolutionary Soviets [...].”

Dubrovinskii’s formulation was, above all, a vote of confidence in the ability of local soviets to contribute actively to wider revolutionary developments through their own, autonomous initiative. This was a wholly consistent position to take for the chairman of a local soviet which prided itself on taking the lead in tackling the intimate revolutionary concerns of its constituents and closely resembled statements issued by other left-wing soviets at the time across the Russian Empire, which likewise upheld their own autonomous roles in revolutionary work. More importantly, by establishing an overarching revolutionary mission for local soviets, it provided a clear rationale for integrating them into wider power structures: by expanding their own organisational scope, soviets could facilitate the reconstruction of revolutionary authority across Russia “from the bottom up”. The same conviction

117 Agalakov, Sovety Sibiri, p. 23.

118 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 53, May 21, 1917, p. 3.

119 Getzler, Kronstadt, esp. ch. 3; Raleigh, “Tsaritsyn ’Republic’”.

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was echoed by delegates to the GubEC founding conference in June, where Feofilatkov, representative of Kansk Soviet, which had been praised by Krasnoiarsk activists just days earlier for its initiative in moving “from words to business”, declared a “guberniia construction [of soviets]” had a key role to play integrating the masses, including the peasantry, into wider revolutionary work and spreading the “idea of revolutionary democracy” in order to facilitate a future “seizure of power”.

The perception that local soviets were central to anticipated revolutionary developments was fuelled over the following weeks by fears that established authorities in Petrograd, including the city’s flagship Soviet, had abandoned the revolutionary course demanded by the masses and were thus no longer capable of commanding the political support necessary to resolve the wider “crisis of authority” in which Russia now found itself. If positive revolutionary change was to happen, it must now be initiated in the localities. In August, Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta drew a pointed distinction between the Petrograd Soviet, whose leaders’ complicity in the Provisional Government’s “bourgeois” rule ensured it had now “become the powerless organisation of ‘part of the population’”, and its provincial counterparts, where:

> alongside the remnants of the Imperial dictatorship, Soviets are still strong. There are even such Soviets there which, not finding themselves under the influence of [class] compromisers, are able to organise genuine revolutionary authority in the localities.

The belief that local soviets, operating autonomously of central bodies, were now the bodies most capable of establishing genuine revolutionary authority underpinned their growing political assertiveness across Russia by late-1917. This has been cited by some historians as evidence of local “separatism” and a repudiation

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120 IKS, 72, June 20, 1917, p. 1 (see above).

121 “No. 48”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 135.

of wider state authority in general. In Krasnoiarsk, it had the opposite effect, reinforcing the conviction that local actors had a wider revolutionary role and must now reach out to establish new all-Russian state structures in place of those now disintegrating around them. This belief blossomed spectacularly at the Central Siberian Congress of Soviets in September, which endorsed a bold vision for revolutionary transformation emanating from the localities and spreading outwards across the entire country. In its first resolution, the Congress praised local soviets, declaring they had already provided the basis for:

the revolutionary construction of the country, insofar as all important measures – whether coming from central authority or enacted on the initiative of the labouring masses in the localities – could only be implemented through the Soviets or alongside their help.

This resolution was most likely penned by Okulov, who took quickly the lead in pressing demands that local soviets assume powerful autonomous roles in constructing a new all-Russian state structure. In the future, he argued, soviets must facilitate “the creative revolutionary initiative [pochin], the autonomous action [samodeiatel'nost’] of the masses” by maintaining complete control over “local issues”. Furthermore, this initiative should now form the basis for any new political authority in the “centre”, which would build on the authoritative actions and popular support of soviets at a local level: “Revolution is not made from the top,” Okulov concluded dramatically, “but from the bottom. Central authority must concentrate only all that is done in the localities, photograph [fotografirovat’] the process of legal and economic changes happening in the localities.”

Okulov’s proposals entailed extensive localised control over both executive and legislative state functions, something Russian historian, Vladimir Shishkin, terms a “model of federalism”, in which local soviets would “work in coordination with the central executive power” but “remain autonomous and maintain the right to social

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123 Stites, Revolutionary Dreams, pp. 53-54; Figes, A People’s Tragedy, pp. 359-360.

124 IKS, 139, September 12, 1917, p. 2.

125 IKS, 146, September 21, 1917, p. 3.
and revolutionary initiatives.”\textsuperscript{126} In fact, this vision came remarkably close to the long-term aims of Siberia’s \textit{oblastniki}, who proposed extensive “legislative autonomy” as a primary basis for achieving political equality between Russia’s regions and central state organs.\textsuperscript{127} It is quite possible that Okulov, born to middle-class Siberians in Eniseisk guberniia in the late-1800s, drew inspiration from regionalist thought. During the Congress, he reiterated established \textit{oblastnik} formulae by criticising the “consistent centralism” (\textit{posledovatel’nyi tsentralizm}) of the old regime, which had ignored the specific “economic, existential [bytovye], ethnographic conditions” in different regions and was particularly “ruinous” for Siberia.\textsuperscript{128} These arguments were too much for some present, including Okulov’s Bolshevik party comrade, Pomerantseva, who reminded him that some “general-state measures” must be handled by central authorities. However, her concerns were lost amid the enthusiasm of other delegates, including Vladivostok Soviet representative, Prokop’ev, who stated bluntly that “revolution from above equals the suicide of the revolution” and argued only local soviets could now “concentrate the vital forces of the country and transfer to them to central organs.”\textsuperscript{129}

The growing concern of Krasnoiarsk's Soviet leaders and their counterparts from other local soviets to address localities' roles in future power arrangement suggests regional-level soviet organisation was not simply undertaken to press a common party-political agenda, but also as a means of securing lasting autonomy for themselves in any future all-Russian power arrangement. By taking the lead in coordinating local soviets' work, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet placed itself at the heart of wider aspirations for local soviet autonomy, bringing together internationalists from

\textsuperscript{126} Shishkin, “Moscow and Siberia”, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{127} Serebrennikov, “The Siberian Autonomous Movement”, pp. 402, 407. These demands were actively publicised by Krasnoiarsk’s \textit{oblastniki} in 1917: \textit{Sibirskie zapiski}, 3, May 1917, pp. 150-152.

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{IKS}, 146, September 21, 1917, p. 3. This reference to Siberia, although extremely suggestive, is extremely rare in the sources I have consulted referring to local soviet autonomy, which generally make no references to either the principle of autonomy on the basis of specific regional differences or any specific status for Siberia.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{IKS}, 146, September 21, 1917, p. 3.
across Siberia to press their demands jointly. This provided Soviet leaders with an opportunity to express themselves simultaneously as autonomous local actors in their own right and as active and legitimate contributors to a wider, all-Russian process of revolutionary transformation. Following the overthrow of the Provisional Government, Siberia’s internationalists would continue to pursue these visions through regional-level authority structures. The All-Siberian Bureau of Soviets (Tsentrособир’), which had been established by the first All-Siberian Congress of Soviets in late-October, soon enacted a “federalist” vision in practice by refusing to recognise state policies declared unilaterally by central state organs without its prior approval. Tensions between Siberian soviets and the Petrograd Sovnarkom came to a head in February 1918, when a second All-Siberian Congress of Soviets unilaterally declared it would not be bound by the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty signed by central authorities with Germany.

Siberian soviets’ emergent federalist agenda during this period was remarkably similar to that espoused by the region’s oblastniki and political formulations expressed by Okulov by autumn 1917 suggest that some local activists may have drawn some of their ideas from a specifically Siberian regionalist heritage. Nonetheless, their core arguments were not unique to Siberia and should be seen in a wider political context in which local revolutionaries across Russia perceived a valuable opportunity to become fully-fledged participants in constructing a new all-Russian state. Demands for local political autonomy, which reached a crescendo across Russia throughout 1918, have been dismissed by some historians as an ill-fated or even utopian fad which was soon overrun by Bolshevik centralisation. The evidence of Krasnoiarsk and Siberia more generally suggests they should be taken rather more seriously. The belief that local soviets should retain wide-ranging autonomy in matters of state was well-established in the ideological formulations of many activists by October 1917. Backed up by a powerful and dynamic regional-level

130 Shishkin, “Moscow and Siberia”, p. 77.

131 Ibid., pp. 77-78.

132 Raleigh, Experiencing Russia’s Civil War, ch. 3; Colton, Moscow, pp. 101-104.
infrastructure, it presented a direct, principled, and coherent challenge to the countervailing centralising agendas of state authorities in the capital.

Conclusion

By late-1917, Krasnoiarsk's left-wing socialists and city Soviet were at the centre of an ongoing campaign to overhaul the established geography of revolutionary power. Their principled rejection of unbalanced power relations between the localities and all-Russian state organs, as manifested by unelected provincial commissars, served to expand the ability of local actors to determine their own administrative and political agendas and placed the question of their relationship to wider state politics firmly on the table. Following the Soviet's efforts to force its re-election, the city Duma provided a focus for expanded local administrative authority under socialist leadership. Meanwhile, Soviet leaders' efforts to unify their counterparts across Siberia served to integrate local actors – albeit on the condition of their “internationalist” political allegiances – into wider power structures and enabled them to collectively press demands for active involvement in all-Russian state politics in the future. Contrary to the subsequent accusations of émigré oblastniki and some Western historians, socialists proved themselves worthy advocates for greater local authority in revolution and their efforts to implement this in practice far outshone those of Krasnoiarsk's marginalised Siberian regionalists. At the same time, growing socialist concerns for strengthening the roles of the localities should not necessarily be seen as something ideologically preconditioned by the Siberian heritage of oblastnichestvo. Although Krasnoiarsk’s internationalists occasionally expressed similar formulations of state federation to oblastniki, their approaches to reconstructing all-Russian power were consistent with those of many revolutionaries in localities in European Russia. They should therefore not be seen simply within a Siberian, but also within a broader all-Russian political and ideological context.

Efforts to transform the geography of power also clearly highlight the changing contours of local revolutionary politics and, especially, the interplay between local actors' fluid ideological formulations and the institutional environment in which they were expressed. Socialists might have rejected Tsarist-era state practices, such as centralised appointment, which they saw as conflicting with the
basic principles of revolution. Yet they willingly endorsed others, including established municipal authority structures, which were perceived as consonant with their overarching political aims and were actively assimilated into the emerging institutional ensemble of local soviet power. At the same time, new political and ideological demands raised by the revolution prompted institutional innovations, most notably the extension of elective soviet delegation mechanisms on a regional basis. These changes were rapid, but they were also fundamental; far from signifying a locality in the grip of centrifugal spasms, they posed a concerted and realistic challenge to Russia’s established state order, reflecting a growing belief that revolution should entail a radical transformation of power relations on a geographic, as well as a social and economic, basis.
CHAPTER V ★ Administering Revolution: The Provisions Question

Over the course of 1917, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet was increasingly drawn into active involvement in the basic tasks of local governmental administration. Its ability to handle these roles provides a key indicator for its potential to become an active component of the wider revolutionary state: not just the political will to wield power, but also the capacity to assume the practical responsibilities which this entailed was critical to cementing the Soviet’s local authority. Chapter four discussed socialists’ attempts to harness the administrative potential of municipal government. This chapter considers how they sought to engage in administrative tasks through the Soviet, focusing on the issue of provisions (prodovol'stvie), particularly the regulation of consumer goods supply and distribution.

How government administration is handled and by whom provides insight into the way power is constituted and exercised in practice, helping break down reified boundaries between the state and society. States are often portrayed as relatively self-contained power structures in their own right, capable of wielding power autonomously over social actors.¹ However, this interpretation accounts poorly for the way they fulfil their own complex functions, particularly the technical minutiae of government administration. In order to handle growing administrative burdens, states integrate social actors into their work, transforming them into active participants in the governing process.² This, in turn, enables social actors to help determine the roles states adopt and the way they are conducted.³ As Rosenberg notes, tracing the interactive relationship between state and society is key to understanding revolutionary power in 1917:

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¹ E.g. Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, pp. 24-32.
² Kotsonis, States of Obligation, pp. 5-7.
³ Studies of the Russian state during the civil war and 1920s highlight the ability of ostensibly non-state actors to influence policy measures in practice: Northrop, Veiled Empire; Retish, Russia’s Peasants; Remington, Building Socialism.
By focusing exclusively on the cluster of offices we have in mind when we use the shorthand ‘state’, we ignore the ways in which these offices were themselves involved in highly complex sets of social processes and relations.⁴

Provisions regulation offers a useful angle for considering the interactive relationships underpinning state administration in revolution. In the midst of war and economic turmoil, measures pertaining to provisions became “one of the most intrusive and prevalent points of contact between individuals and the state”.⁵ Historians have often cited attempts to regulate provisions during this period as evidence of a breakdown in relations between state and society, arguing that divisive “centrifugal” social forces hindered successive regimes’ ability to implement coherent policy measures.⁶ Nonetheless, insofar as revolutionary authorities were able to influence the provisions question, they collaborated extensively with social actors and ostensibly non-governmental organisations, drawing them into a complex administrative process as active and important components of revolutionary power.

Regulating consumer goods was a key policy focus for local soviets, which sought to expand their influence and authority by controlling goods reserves and monitoring private trade.⁷ Involvement in provisions regulation helped turn the Krasnoiarsk Soviet into an active participant in state power, transforming both the Soviet itself and its relationship to other organisations and actors. Within the Soviet, new administrative structures were established to handle the complex tasks which accompanied its role in regulating consumer goods and commercial trade, including a powerful Accounting-Valuation Commission (Uchetno-otsenochnaia komissiia: AVC) which assumed technical responsibility for policy measures. The AVC was rapidly dominated by a core of dedicated administrators and provides a valuable reference

⁴ Rosenberg, “Social Mediation and State Construction(s)”, p. 171.
⁵ Holquist, Making War, p. 12.
⁶ Lih, Bread and Authority; Badcock, Politics and the People, chap. 8.
⁷ For an overview, see Anweiler, The Soviets, pp. 136-137. More detailed local studies include Getzler, Kronstadt, p. 32; Raleigh, Revolution on the Volga, 96. On the Petrograd Soviet, see Hasegawa, February Revolution, pp. 334-335, 341-342.
point for the interactions between the class politics espoused by the Soviet and the administrative expertise required to implement its policy measures. Historians have sometimes assumed that local soviets before the October Revolution maintained their functions independently of outside expertise, handling their growing administrative responsibilities with the help only of their own elected deputies. The Accounting-Valuation Commission shows, on the contrary, that the administrative functions handled by the Krasnoiarsk Soviet were dependent on dedicated administrative personnel well before October. Their participation in policy formulation and implementation raises important questions of agency in revolution and, especially, the soviets, highlighting how ostensibly class organisations were shaped by the governmental responsibilities they assumed. Meanwhile, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s active role in provisions regulation also brought it into direct contact with other local organisations, including a number of provisions regulatory bodies which operated alongside the Soviet Accounting-Valuation Commission throughout 1917. Continual interaction with these organisations was at once constraining and enabling. It subjected the Soviet to influence and constraints from beyond its own organisational boundaries, ensuring that, by contrast to its efforts to build political constituency structures, class politics played a relatively minor role in the formulation and execution of provisions regulatory policies. At the same time, it provided the Soviet with the means to contribute to the broader institutional frameworks in which provisions regulation operated.

The chapter addresses these key issues in five sections. The first section considers why the Soviet became involved in the provisions question, analysing the motivations of Soviet leaders to begin regulating consumer goods and commercial trade in the context of war and revolution. The second and third sections consider the roles of administrative personnel in the Soviet’s Accounting-Valuation Commission, focusing respectively on how skilled administrators were mobilised and the ways in which they influenced AVC operations. The fourth section investigates how administrative responsibilities transformed the Soviet’s relationship to other organisations, mapping out the various bodies which engaged in provisions regulation. The fifth section concludes with an analysis of the broader implications of these interactions for the development of Soviet administrative and organisational structures.

regulation in Krasnoiarsk so as to “locate” its position within a broader network of local actors. The final section considers how far Soviet leaders were able to fulfil their stated intention of transforming provisions regulation to the benefit of their own proletarian constituents by comparing the AVC’s original policy remit with the measures it enacted in practice.

The Political Logic of Provisions Regulation

The expansion of the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s public administrative responsibilities is best analysed through its emerging system of internal commissions. Commissions were internal sub-divisions which enabled local soviets to streamline their administrative work, relieving their political leaders of the technical responsibility for implementing policies and concentrating the resources necessary to engage in specific administrative tasks. They were also a statement of intent, highlighting policy areas which soviets were committed to influence. Beginning in March, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet formed over a dozen permanent and ad-hoc commissions covering issues from workers’ and soldiers’ rights to transport and drunkenness. However, its most powerful administrative organ was the Accounting-Valuation Commission, which was established in April with the goal of inventorying consumer goods and regulating private trade.

The AVC’s establishment reflected the gravity and political importance of the provisions question in wartime Krasnoiarsk. Following the declaration of war in summer 1914, the local consumer goods market had witnessed violent price fluctuations. By July 1916, the average cost of flour and meat had reached nearly double pre-war levels, while the price of many vegetables and dairy products climbed

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9 See the discussion surrounding the establishment of a workers’ commission: “No. 8” (general assembly minutes, March 15, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 56.

10 Getzler, Kronstadt, pp. 34-35.

11 An extensive list of Krasnoiarsk Soviet commissions is given in Zol’nikov, Rabochee dvizhenie, p. 323.

12 ”No. 19 (AVC minutes April 14, 1917)”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 85-86.
A growing provisions crisis framed the Soviet's decision to begin regulating consumer goods distribution and trade. At an Executive Committee meeting on April 4, 1917, Soviet chairman, Iakov Dubrovinskii, argued that addressing rising living costs affected most severely the “broad layers of the population” which the Soviet aspired to represent and had thus been the Soviet's responsibility “from the start”. The question could not, he warned, be fully resolved by the Soviet alone. However, its impact could be softened by concerted action to challenge local speculation, inventor consumer goods, and regulate retail prices. Dubrovinskii's words were echoed by Boris Shumiatskii, who noted that demands for bread had brought the proletariat onto the streets of Petrograd against the old regime. Having seen Tsarism fall to the ravages of hunger, few could doubt the importance the provisions question had on the overall outcome of revolution. Any revolutionary authority which was able to effectively address rising consumer goods costs would greatly strengthen its political influence; those which failed to respond risked political ruin. As Aleksei Okulov argued:

> The main business of revolutionary organisation is the resolution of the provisions question. Taking this business into its hands, the Soviet of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies strengthens its authority amongst the population, attracting new masses to the revolution, by its example revolutionises them and strengthens the power of the revolution; in transferring the question to others, the Soviet [...] loses authority and strength.

After brief debate, the Soviet EC resolved by a resounding majority to establish a commission “to conduct the valuation of goods and organise the correct distribution of inventoried goods.”

The possibility of mass hunger and the unrest it could bring was at the forefront of Soviet leaders' thoughts. As Hasegawa notes of Petrograd, direct intervention in food supply was necessary at a local level to avert “large-scale pogroms and drunken orgies” and socialists “were forced to take some action.”

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14 "No. 15" (EC minutes, April 4, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 77-80.

15 Hasegawa, February Revolution, p. 334.
Krasnoiarsk, the destructive potential of mob violence had been demonstrated in May 1916, when rumours of exploitative price-hikes and nepotism amongst local traders sparked a deadly anti-Jewish pogrom.\textsuperscript{16} When discussing the provisions question in April 1917, the possibility of further pogroms remained an explicit fear of Soviet leaders.\textsuperscript{17} Their concerns were commonplace amongst local authorities during the first weeks of revolution and were heightened by incidents of public disorder.\textsuperscript{18} By April, the threat of food theft was such that the city Duma’s own provisions organ, the City Provisions Commission, appealed to the garrison for day-and-night armed guard at its storehouses.\textsuperscript{19} Whatever security was subsequently put in place failed to prevent drunken soldiers attacking and looting the City Provisions Commission’s meat stores the following month.\textsuperscript{20}

In part, intervention in the provisions question represented an attempt by Soviet leaders to defuse tensions over consumer goods supply whilst also demonstrating their own relevance to resolving basic governmental questions. Following the Executive Committee debate of April 4, the Soviet organised a comprehensive inventory of private stores to ascertain the level of consumer goods supplies in Krasnoiarsk, dispatching twenty teams of volunteers and soldiers around the city and shutting down shops and private storehouses to document their stocks. The teams uncovered vast quantities of goods, including 10,800 \textit{puds} (nearly 180 metric tonnes) of soap, nearly 1,000 \textit{puds} (over sixteen tonnes) of iron bars, and, in one private basement, 180,000 eggs.\textsuperscript{21} On April 7, \textit{Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta} reported the finds to city residents as proof that sufficient goods existed in the city but warned distribution must be organised through a dedicated Soviet commission

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Orekhova, “Evreiskii pogrom v Krasnoiarske”.
\item \textsuperscript{17} “No. 15” (EC minutes, April 4, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Sovet}, p. 78.
\item \textsuperscript{18} See chapters 1 and 2.
\item \textsuperscript{19} GAKK, r-258/1/42, l. 43, 69.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Report of attack on City Provisions Commission storehouse, May 18, 1917: GAKK, r-258/1/42, l. 69.
\item \textsuperscript{21} “No. 16” (meeting of Soviet commissars, April 5, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Sovet}, p. 81. A \textit{pud} is a traditional Russian measure of weight.
\end{itemize}
which would set acceptable prices for merchants to charge for goods and establish “supervision” (kontrol’) over local trade and consumption.22

Table 5.1: Consumer Goods Price Rises in Krasnoiarsk, 1914-1916.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Average Price, 1913-1914</th>
<th>Average Price, 1916</th>
<th>Percentage Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rye Flour (1 pud)</td>
<td>64 k</td>
<td>1 r, 45 k</td>
<td>128%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Flour (1 pud)</td>
<td>1 r, 06 k</td>
<td>1 r, 60 k</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckwheat (1 pud)</td>
<td>1 r, 58 k</td>
<td>4 r, 20 k</td>
<td>152%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats (1 pud)</td>
<td>3 r, 53 k</td>
<td>7 r, 80 k</td>
<td>120%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions (100)</td>
<td>85 k</td>
<td>2 r, 25 k</td>
<td>165%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots (10)</td>
<td>3.5 k</td>
<td>25 k</td>
<td>700%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beetroot (10)</td>
<td>11 k</td>
<td>1 r, 05 k</td>
<td>850%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, first grade*</td>
<td>13.5 k</td>
<td>27 k</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, second grade*</td>
<td>11 k</td>
<td>21 k</td>
<td>52%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, third grade*</td>
<td>10 k</td>
<td>15 k</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk (pitcher)</td>
<td>14 k</td>
<td>50 k</td>
<td>250%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs (100)</td>
<td>2 r, 10 k</td>
<td>5 r</td>
<td>137%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap (1 funt)</td>
<td>13 k</td>
<td>34 k</td>
<td>152%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firewood, birch (1 szh)</td>
<td>4 r, 75 k</td>
<td>9 r, 50 k</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firewood, pine (1 szh)</td>
<td>3 r, 60 k</td>
<td>8 r, 50 k</td>
<td>140%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices in roubles (r) and kopeks (k).
* no quantity given.
* percentage increase calculated in original source at 29%. Percentage increase recalculated here on basis of prices indicated in source.

Despite the immediate need for action, Soviet intervention in private trade also drew on a broader wartime policy logic which asserted the regulation and supply of provisions to be an issue for government. Across Russia, the outbreak of war in 1914 and the subsequent rapid rise in consumer goods prices had prompted government to take an increasingly interventionist approach to provisions markets.23 In the months preceding revolution, various measures were introduced in an attempt to stabilise prices, ranging from localised ad-hoc price controls to centralised state

22 IKS, 14, April 7, 1917, p. 2. Results of inventorying in “No. 16”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 80-81.

23 Holquist, Making War, Forging Revolution, pp. 12-41.
control over the procurement and distribution of certain goods. In his authoritative history of wartime provisions operations, Peter Struve, a leading participant in this process, would argue that growing state regulation of goods was propelled by an increasingly irresistible practical logic in which government agencies were obliged to secure control over goods first at the point of sale and then at the point of production in order to influence prices and supply. At the same time, however, the expansion of regulatory measures also reflected a growing ideological consensus amongst many government officials and public activists that private trade could no longer be trusted to deliver goods from producer to consumer at an acceptable cost.

These developments were closely mirrored in Krasnoiarsk, where the city Duma was sparked into life by consumer goods price hikes. Growing hostility amongst local authorities towards de-regulated private trade was epitomised in June 1915 by liberal Duma member, Vladimir Nikolaev, who declared:

City self-administrations, upon whom falls the closest concern for the needs of the city population, in full awareness of the seriousness of the current historical moment, must immediately set about [with] practical steps for the struggle with the high cost of living.

Amid rising prices, the Duma voted unanimously to tackle high living costs, establishing its own City Provisions Commission (CPC) which quickly engaged a large and vocal contingent of local consumer cooperative activists to aid its work. Over the following months, the CPC was drawn increasingly into the nuts-and-bolts politics of consumer goods regulation. Its efforts focused initially on procuring large quantities of consumer goods in an effort to drive down local market prices, a role

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26 This point is made clearly by Lih, *Bread and Authority in Russia*, pp. 22-23. See also Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution*, pp. 16-21.


28 *VKGOU*, 9, July 1, 1915, p. 39.
which explicitly precluded direct regulation of private trade. By mid-1916, however, chronic shortages of particular goods prompted the CPC to revise its original, minimalist approach of market supplementation in favour of direct measures of regulation and supply. In autumn 1916, it asserted full control over all sugar entering Krasnoiarsk, organising the regulated distribution of stocks via an extensive card-based rationing system (kartochaia sistema).

By 1917, the Soviet’s decision to directly intervene in local consumer goods markets represented a radical but nevertheless logical extension of existing wartime regulations. Indeed, the wholesale inventorying of consumer goods had already been suggested by cooperative activists involved in the City Provisions Commission as early as June 1915, although these calls had never received the necessary support of local Tsarist state authorities to be enacted. Pre-revolutionary provisions work thus contributed to the ideological environment in which the Soviet Accounting-Valuation Commission would operate. Like the CPC, the AVC was born of a conviction that civilian provisions needs could be addressed (in principle, the requisite goods existed) with the correct administrative arrangements. Following its establishment in April 1917, the AVC would actively seek to combine the rationalising technocratic logic of pre-revolutionary provisions management with direct intervention in private trade and punitive measures of enforcement, including the impounding and requisitioning of goods.

Mobilising Administrative and Clerical Personnel

The establishment of the Accounting-Valuation Commission prompted rapid changes in the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s internal structure and composition, as a large body of

29 VKGOU, 3, February 17, 1916, p. 72.

30 VKGOU, 21, November 16, 1916, p. 3. CPC card system is discussed in more detail below.

31 The first references to inventorying private stockpiles of goods in Krasnoiarsk date to June 1915: VKGOU, 8, June 15, 1915, p. 15; VKGOU, 9, July 1, 1915, p. 42. However, the demand for inventorying private goods seems to have been set aside following the Eniseisk gubernia governor’s declaration that there were no legal powers through which to do so. VKGOU, 12, August 15, 1915, p. 39.
skilled administrators and clerical personnel was mobilised to handle its new technical responsibilities. These personnel comprised individuals who would become indispensable to both formulating and executing Soviet provisions operations. Some historians have suggested local soviets were able to handle their administrative tasks before October 1917 with the help only of rank-and-file deputies. However, as Badcock has demonstrated, all local revolutionary authorities in 1917 were heavily dependent on capable personnel and placed great emphasis on securing individuals with the skills needed to handle their growing administrative functions. The Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s provisions operations forced it to mobilise a core of skilled administrators from beyond its own deputies, resulting in it devoting increasing resources to personnel costs, and provides valuable insight into how local revolutionary authorities sought to meet the practical challenges of state administration.

The need for personnel skilled in provisions handling and distribution was evident from early-April, when the Soviet made its first efforts to inventory private goods. Initial inventorying operations were handled by “commissars” drawn from elected Soviet deputies with the help of soldiers and a handful of “trade specialists” (tovarovedy). While Soviet leaders hailed the operation a success, some participants were overawed by the scale of the task and proved unable to contribute meaningful information to the inventorying operation. At a meeting of commissars on the evening of April 5, one noted simply that his team had uncovered a “significant quantity” of paper, envelopes, and soap; another admitted that his team had been unable to take an inventory at Russia-Asiatic Bank as there had been no bank employee (artel’shchik) present to provide it. The challenges of these initial attempts to inventory goods informed the subsequent organisation and composition of the Accounting-Valuation Commission, which began to take shape over the following days. AVC membership was dominated by shop clerks, many of whom were drawn

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32 This view is typified by Rabinowitch: Bolsheviks in Power, p. 225.

33 Badcock, Politics and the People, esp. pp. 100-105

34 Memoirs of inventorying participant, Khalimon: GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 7.

35 "No. 16" (session of commissars, April 5, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 81.
directly from the city’s main shop clerks’ trade union, the Union of Trade-Industry Employees (UTIE). At its inaugural session on April 14, individuals identified as Soviet deputies were already outnumbered by UTIE members.\textsuperscript{36} By May, the AVC’s twenty-five permanent members included only three regular Soviet deputies. Of the remaining twenty-two members, eighteen came from UTIE, with a further one each being delegated from local consumer cooperatives, Samodeiatel’nost’, the Eniseisk Guberniia Association of Consumer Societies (EGACS), and Sudo-Soiuz, and one from the Central Bureau of Trade Unions.\textsuperscript{37}

The predominance in the AVC of personnel coopted from the shop clerks’ union movement and local cooperatives reflected the technical skills they could offer. Shop clerks were experienced in accounting and handling goods, while cooperators had long-standing experience of organising the procurement and regulated distribution of goods. Samodeiatel’nost’, in particular, had developed an extensive rationing system and network of sales counters for supplying goods to its several-thousand members by 1917.\textsuperscript{38} Shop clerks and cooperators were not mutually-exclusive groupings and many individuals involved in Soviet provisions operations were members of both UTIE and Samodeiatel’nost’. A sample of forty-four participants listed in AVC published minutes for the period April-October 1917 reveals at least twenty-seven confirmed members of Krasnoiarsk’s cooperative and shop clerks’ union movement. A number of high-profile public activists attended AVC meetings during this period, including Moisei Frumkin, a prominent Samodeiatel’nost’ executor and participant in the Duma’s pre-revolutionary City Provisions Commission, and Ivan Kazantsev, an EGACS board member who had helped design the City Provisions Commission’s ration-based card system in late-1916.\textsuperscript{39} Numerous lesser-known but experienced individuals were also involved. Mikhail Bubleev, a Samodeiatel’nost’ sales operative who had been elected to the

\textsuperscript{36} "No. 19" (session of AVC, April 14, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Sovet}, pp. 85-86.

\textsuperscript{37} "No. 25" (sessions of AVC, May 1, 3, 1917), \textit{Krasnoiarskii Sovet}, p. 95.


\textsuperscript{39} Kazantsev role in CPC card system: \textit{VKGOU}, 17, September 20, 1916, p. 45.
Soviet by his cooperative colleagues in early-March, helped organise the Soviet’s first inventorying operations in April. Bubleev participated in AVC meetings over the following months, where he was joined by Aleksandr Pozdniakov, a long-standing Samodeiatel’nost’ and UTIE member serving as a scribe in the 15th reserve regiment, and Aleksei Savvateev, a railway worker and Samodeiatel’nost’ board member.

Besides its core membership of trade and goods distribution specialists, the AVC recruited a large auxiliary staff through which to implement its policy measures. On April 14, it requested 160 office workers and sales clerks be made available to support its operations, including ninety UTIE members and seventy soldiers with trade experience. Over the following months, a large body of staff on the ground became integral to AVC operations, assuming the role of Soviet “trade commissars”. Trade commissars were tasked with ensuring shops opened and closed at regular times and sold goods according to AVC-established prices, whilst reporting back any infractions of Soviet regulations. Soviet records suggest that soldiers made up a large proportion of trade commissars during 1917. Their role in Krasnoiarsk was controversial, particularly amongst opponents of Soviet policy. In October, liberal newspaper, *Svobodnaia Sibir*, uncharitably characterised trade commissars as “barely literate soldiers, having never had any kind of relationship to trade.” Most, it claimed, were “simple commoners”, “under-developed”, or just “dim” (*temnovatye*). These criticisms do not capture soldiers’ importance to Soviet administration, however. Soldiers may not have been the principal brains behind Soviet provisions operations and certainly provided much-needed muscle to enforce AVC policy measures. They had participated in the Soviet’s first inventorying of private goods in early-April, subduing and arresting reticent traders who sought to resist the action, and the Soviet’s increasingly interventionist restrictions on merchants over the following months.

40 Bubleev’s election to Soviet in March: GAKK P-64/3/82, l. 8.
41 Data on AVC participants from *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, April-October 1917.
42 “No. 19” (AVC minutes, April 14, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, p. 86.
43 “No. 47” (EC instructions to AVC commissars), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, p. 86.
44 *Svobodnaia Sibir*, 161, October 24, 1917, p. 3.
months implied the continued use of coercive force. Nonetheless, as indicated by the multiple tasks the role of trade commissar entailed, AVC operatives on the ground also needed basic clerical skills, including numeracy and literacy. As Badcock highlights, soldiers with these skills provided valuable administrative assistance for multiple civilian administrative organisations at a local level in 1917. In Krasnoiarsk, the city garrison was recognised as a valuable source of skilled labour by numerous local organisations, which requested troops to fulfil a range of administrative tasks. At the city postal-telegraph offices, where soldiers were employed to plug a shortfall in clerical staff, their contributions were lauded by managers as indispensable to operations.

In mobilising skilled personnel, the Soviet benefited from close ties with various local organisations. The city consumer cooperatives, Samodeiatel'nost' and EGACs, as well as UTIE – the only permanent workers’ union in existence in Krasnoiarsk at the fall of Tsarism – all had established ties to socialist exiles in the city, linking co-operators and sales clerks directly to socialist activists. Meanwhile, the Soviet’s connections to the city garrison, especially through elective company and regimental committees, provided a ready means for mobilising soldiers. Military committees were issued with appeals by Soviet commissions throughout 1917 to supply individuals with administrative skills to fulfil specific tasks, including conducting a general census of soldiers’ wives in May. Archival records reveal that the Soviet also acted as broker between the garrison and other local organisations which requested military personnel for security and administrative purposes.

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45 Memoir of Khalimon: GAKK P-64/5/685, l. 7.
46 Badcock, Politics and the People, pp. 103-104.
47 Details of soldiers working in postal-telegraph offices: GAKK r-258/1/41, ll. 4, 6.
48 This link is made explicitly by Pozdniakov: “1917 god”, p. 13.
49 For example, appeals to military committees to help organise a census of soldiers’ wives: IKS, 46, May 19, 1917, p. 1.
50 Between mid-March and June, 1917, the Soviet liaised extensively with the city postal-telegraph offices to secure soldiers’ labour for the latter: GAKK r-258/1/41, ll. 5, 13, 14.
September, the Soviet also helped secure the release of Cossacks to the nearby village of Shalinskoe to support the local militia: GAKK r-258/1/39, ll. 161-162, 167-171.

Figure 5.1: Soviet EC mandate to Mikhail Buleev to inventor private goods, April 4, 1917.

Source: KKKM, box “Buleev, A.P.; Buleeva-V, Bukmina; Buleev, M.I.”, b/n.

Figure 5.2: Aleksandr Pozdniakov.

Source: GAKK P-7835/9/371.

Figure 5.3: Buleev (standing, back right), with Samodeiatelnost’ colleagues, 1916.

Source: GAKK P-7835/9/57.

September, the Soviet also helped secure the release of Cossacks to the nearby village of Shalinskoe to support the local militia: GAKK r-258/1/39, ll. 161-162, 167-171.
Nonetheless, the Soviet’s efforts to secure administrative staff were hampered by an overall shortage of adequately trained personnel, leading to frictions with other organisations over the allocation of administrative resources. In June, garrison leaders rejected a Soviet request for military secretaries, stating pointedly that they had only two secretaries and that losing them would bring their own administrative work to a standstill. The employment of military personnel was further complicated by soldiers’ military commitments to the war effort: if they became permanent administrators, what became of their duty to the army? When, in June, the bulk of the garrison was called up to the front, the Soviet Executive Committee intervened to prevent three-dozen soldiers employed in local administrative bodies from leaving the city, including four AVC members.

The need to retain reliable personnel also forced the Soviet to commit increasing resources to its administrative operations. By summer, it had begun formally employing numerous individuals. Paid secretaries were hired in June for the Workers’, Soldiers’, and Accounting-Valuation Commissions, respectively, while the Soviet presidium was allocated funds for its own clerk and typist. The Soviet’s incomplete financial accounts, published in Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta, reveal that trade commissars also received regular pay from at least June. Over the course of 1917, an increasing proportion of Soviet finances went towards hiring and retaining staff. In March and April, personnel costs totalled around ten percent of its total expenditure; by early-summer, this figure doubled, becoming the Soviet’s second largest source of expenditure behind only the daily publication of Izvestiia.

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51 Letter from head of Krasnoiarsk garrison to Soviet EC, June 23, 1917: GAKK r-258/1/39, l. 77.

52 Badcock, Politics and the People, p. 121.

53 ”No. 43“ (EC minutes, June 10, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 125.

54 ”No. 41 (EC minutes, June 5, 1917)“, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 123.

55 Soviet accounts for June 1-16, 1917: IKS, 75, June 25, 1917, p. 4.
Krasnoiarskogo Soveta, with commissars belonging to its various commissions accounting for a clear majority of this total.56

The Soviet’s growing administrative costs placed a considerable burden on its own meagre financial resources. As a formally non-governmental body, the Soviet received no state funding and did not levy any kind of regular taxation before the overthrow of the Provisional Government in late-October.57 Published records indicate it faced increasing challenges securing funding during 1917. Initially, the Soviet relied on financial contributions from a small number of wealthy benefactors, who alone contributed around a quarter of its total income for March and April.58 From May onwards, however, presumably as a result of growing political tensions and class divisions in the city, this source of funding disappeared.59 Lacking stable sources of income, the Soviet increasingly transferred the financial burden of its commissions onto those they were tasked with regulating, demanding reimbursement for commissars’ wages from the enterprises to which they were stationed.60 To the ire of the liberal press, the wage bill for trade commissars was handed over to local merchants whose shops they inventoried, while punitive fines

56 Soviet accounts, March-August, in IKS, 13, March 30, 1917, p. 4; IKS, 15, April 8, p. 4; IKS, 47, May 20, p. 4; IKS, 75, June 23, 1917, p. 4; IKS, 87, July 8, p. 4; IKS, 132, September 2, p. 4. These records do not make clear for which commissions paid commissars worked, although the unusually large number of trade commissars needed to maintain AVC operations suggest they alone must have accounted for a significant proportion of personnel costs.

57 The Soviet’s first taxation measures were announced on October 27 alongside the formal declaration of soviet power in Krasnoiarsk and sought to raise revenue from local amusement establishments: “No. 100” (general assembly minutes, October 27, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 231.

58 Soviet income, March-April 1917: IKS, 13, March 30, 1917, p. 4; IKS, 15, April 8, p. 4; IKS, 47, May 20, p. 4.

59 The Soviet seems to have turned increasingly to workers’ and soldiers’ organisations and short-term loans for income during the summer. In June, for example, it secured a loan of 5,000 roubles, more than half its total expenditure for the month, from the Eniseisk Guberniia Association of Consumer Societies: IKS, 75, June 23, 1917, p. 4.

60 GAKK r-258/1/36, l. 44.
for infractions of AVC regulations were also levied, all proceeds going to the Soviet Executive Committee.\textsuperscript{61} Between June and September, the Soviet’s published accounts suggest over one-fifth of its income came directly from fines and contributions imposed on city merchants.\textsuperscript{62}

Soviet Administrators: Between Service and Autonomy

By summer 1917, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s growing dependence on administrative personnel had begun to transform it into the kind of weighty bureaucratic body more commonly associated with the later civil war period.\textsuperscript{63} The increasing prominence of administrative personnel in provisions operations raises important questions as to their relationship with the Soviet’s elected political leadership. Although the mobilisation of social actors into government structures implies their subordination to established political authority, it also gives them formal agency within the state, enabling them to help shape the processes with which they interact.\textsuperscript{64} This reality presented Soviet leaders with an organisational dilemma: while the AVC’s administrators were formally tasked with enacting the Soviet Executive Committee’s pre-established policy mandate, their active engagement implied they would have sufficient autonomy to implement measures they deemed appropriate, enabling them to bring their own knowledge and operating procedures to bear on Soviet policy. How could the EC maintain its own overarching authority over Soviet trade regulation? And how far would this allow AVC administrative personnel to exert their own autonomous agency when implementing policy measures?

Outwardly, Soviet commissions were designed to subordinate administrative personnel to policy mandates set by the Soviet Executive Committee. Commissions would fulfil the “technical” tasks of policy implementation, resolving “minor” issues relating to their own specific areas of administrative competence without

\textsuperscript{61} Svoobodnaia Sibir’, 161, October 24, 1917, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{62} IKS, 75, June 23, 1917, p. 4; IKS, 87, July 8, p. 4; IKS, 132, September 2, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{63} Rabinowitch, Bolsheviks in Power, p. 225.

\textsuperscript{64} Remington, Building Socialism, pp. 11-12.
encroaching on the EC’s prerogative to determine the Soviet’s overall positions on “general” or “political” questions.\textsuperscript{65} The division between “political” and “technical” roles was written into the relationship between the Accounting-Valuation Commission and Soviet Executive Committee. As Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta explained in early-April, while a specialist commission and staff were required “for the most successful and complete execution” of trade regulation, “the dominating significance and commanding leadership remains with the Executive Committee.” The commission’s role thus amounted to the execution of core technical tasks, particularly setting rates of merchants’ profit in the city.\textsuperscript{66} This relationship locked the AVC into a continuous feedback loop, in which it would constantly remain dependent on the Soviet EC for its own political mandate. Soviet leaders also made stringent efforts to assert political oversight over the AVC’s burgeoning corpus of administrators. In early-May, an EC majority was written into the AVC’s own executive organ, seven of whose thirteen members were appointed directly by the Soviet Executive Committee.\textsuperscript{67} Meanwhile, the EC meticulously prescribed the roles of trade commissars, providing commissars with stamped certificates and detailed instructions listing the tasks they would complete. Trade commissars were obliged to report back regularly to the AVC and account for all their actions before the EC.\textsuperscript{68}

Despite these limitations, however, sources suggest the AVC maintained considerable organisational autonomy of its own. Although always keen to maintain oversight over commission work in general, the Soviet EC never actively prescribed detailed policy measures for commissions to follow, instead issuing them with broad statements of principle and parameters of activity within which they could

\textsuperscript{65} This principle was clearly expressed in the establishment of the Soviet workers’ commission in March, which would address “only minor questions; questions of principal, and of a general character, it only discusses, and its decision is transferred to the presidium and general assembly of the Soviet.” “No. 8” (general assembly minutes, March 15, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{66} IKS, 14, April 7, 1917, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{67} ”No. 25” (AVC minutes, May 1, 3, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{68} ”No. 47” (EC instructions to trade commissars), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 132-134; originally published in IKS, 78, June 25, 1917, p. 4.
legitimately operate. The AVC was given a relatively open mandate at the outset, “to conduct the valuation of goods and organise the correct distribution of inventoried goods.”69 Within these broad parameters, its members helped establish policy measures on their own initiative, defining the scope of Soviet provisions regulation in the process and enabling the AVC’s senior administrators to assume considerable authority. Besides setting price controls on goods, the AVC took the lead in implementing new regulatory measures over local trade. A key area of innovation was the forcible requisitioning and distribution of consumer goods, which became a central plank of Soviet policy during the summer. Newspaper reports indicate Soviet trade commissars were engaged in confiscating certain scarce goods from local merchants by late-May.70 Over the following weeks, the AVC regularised these measures into a coherent policy framework. On June 10, it resolved a number of scarce goods, including kerosene, footwear, cotton produce, leather, and paper, be confiscated from private owners and distributed directly to the city population through the City Provisions Commission’s rationing card system.71 A general policy of requisitioning was publically announced several days later by the Soviet EC as part of a raft of new regulations on private trade, which included compulsory registration with the AVC of all goods entering Krasnoiarsk and an outright ban on unregulated small-scale private trade.72 Over the following months, the AVC gradually extended the principle of forcible requisitioning and regulated distribution on a case-by-case basis to cover different scarce goods, including tobacco, which was seized at the Krasnoiarsk railway station at various points in 1917.73

Insofar as the AVC actively helped shape provisions regulatory measures, it provided a platform through which administrative personnel could engage the Soviet EC on an equal footing as autonomous and legitimate participants in Soviet politics.

69 “No. 15” (EC minutes, April 4, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, p. 80

70 IKS, 46, May 19, 1917, p. 1.

71 “No. 45” (AVC minutes, June 10, 1917), *Krasnoiarskii Sovet*, p. 128.

72 IKS, 75, June 23, 1917, p. 4.

The commission's relationship with the Soviet EC thus resembled one of reciprocity, rather than organisational subordination, as EC regulations for commission work at first implied. By tolerating the powerful policy-making roles of the AVC, Soviet leaders tacitly acknowledged the legitimacy of its members' autonomous policy-making roles, suggesting they recognised them not only as valuable administrative assets but also as trustworthy political partners. This highlights an important aspect of administrative politics. While the decision to employ certain individuals in administrative roles was informed by the need for particular skills and technical competence, it was also subject to a political judgement as to who could be entrusted with the authority to enact the policy mandate at hand. Political concerns were always central to the mobilisation of personnel for Russian wartime provisions organisation. Even before 1917, governmental provisions bodies had gone out of their way to marginalise actors deemed politically unsuitable for the task, particularly merchants, who had by far the most experience in matters of trade and distribution before the war but were understood to favour unregulated market mechanisms of goods supply over formal state regulation. By contrast, the mobilisation of cooperators and reformist public activists into provisions work was a clear acknowledgement amongst government officials that they could be trusted to implement regulatory policies.\textsuperscript{74} The decision to draw cooperators into the pre-revolutionary Krasnoiarsk City Provisions Commission was grounded in the understanding that, by contrast to private traders, they were unburdened by merchants' selfish interests and could thus focus on pursuing a non-commercial provisions policy.\textsuperscript{75} Just as the Krasnoiarsk Soviet absorbed the rationalising logic of existing wartime provisions regulation, its willingness to mobilise personnel from local consumer cooperatives and trade unions to implement its own policies signalled Soviet leaders' faith that these individuals would pursue measures consonant with their own regulatory agenda.

The reciprocity between political leaders and administrators also helps explain the willingness of AVC personnel to participate in Soviet politics. The Soviet requested cooperators' and sales clerks' expertise to fulfil its overall objective of

\textsuperscript{74} Holquist, \textit{Making War, Forging Revolution}, pp. 28-30.

\textsuperscript{75} VKGOU, 9, July 1, 1915, p. 41.
regulating private trade. In return, it provided them with the resources and political authority required to shape the content of policy, constrained only by the broad and malleable parameters of the EC's overarching regulatory agenda. Indeed, by providing them with a platform through which to enact direct punitive intervention in private trade, the Soviet facilitated the pursuit of a long-standing aim of many local provisions activists, namely to establish administrative oversight over all local trade in consumer goods.\(^76\) The decision to actively engage provisions administrators and public activists in its work therefore allowed the Soviet to strike a bargain famously identified by Zygmunt Bauman, in which the state can secure scientific complicity in order to implement its policy goals by providing experts with the means to pursue their own complementary professional agendas.\(^77\) Kendall Bailes, and, more recently, Francine Hirsch and Alexei Kojevnikov, have demonstrated that reciprocal relations between state elites and technical and administrative experts, which expanded considerably during the Great War, were critical to enabling revolutionary regimes at an all-Russian level to expand state functions.\(^78\) The evidence from Krasnoiarsk suggests it was no less important to growing local soviet authority in 1917.

**Inter-Organisational Administrative Relations: Contest or Cooperation?**

While provisions administration shaped the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s internal structures and functions, it also brought it into direct contact with other organisations, helping redefine Soviet relations to various administrative bodies. Literature on 1917 often portrays revolution as a struggle between competing groups seeking to secure their own right to rule unhindered, a view enshrined in the “dual power” thesis, whereby different organisations prowled carefully delineated political territories in an unstable interlude before the establishment of singular rule.\(^79\) Following this logic,

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\(^76\) Inventorying private goods had been suggested by CPC members as a necessary regulatory measure as early as June-1915 (see above).


\(^79\) See discussion in thesis introduction.
Communist-era historian, D.M. Zol’nikov, contended the Krasnoiarsk Soviet “invaded all spheres of state and economic life” on its way to seizing outright power in the city.\textsuperscript{80} The realities of administrative organisation in practice highlight the limitations to this interpretation. Throughout 1917, the Soviet and its Accounting-Valuation Commission existed alongside numerous other local administrative organisations which likewise sought to address aspects of the provisions question. These organisations could not simply be ignored; over the course of the year, the AVC entered into constructive and reciprocal relations with them in order to fulfil its own policy goals.

Even before the establishment of the Soviet Accounting-Valuation Commission in April 1917, several dedicated provisions organisations existed in Krasnoiarsk. By the outbreak of revolution, the Krasnoiarsk Duma had its own fully-functioning municipal provisions organ, the City Provisions Commission, which regulated consumer goods supply and prices. The CPC operated alongside various non-governmental organisations, particularly the consumer cooperative, Samodeiatel’nost’, whose leaders had contributed much-needed expertise to the CPC since 1915, helping it distribute rationed goods, particularly sugar, from late-1916 onwards.\textsuperscript{81} Far from narrowing the field of administrative actors, revolution and growing Soviet authority was accompanied by the strengthening of existing organisations and the establishment of new ones. The City Provisions Commission, re-branded the City Provisions Committee (also CPC),\textsuperscript{82} continued to distribute an ever-expanding quantity of scarce goods. From early-March, it was complimented by a regional-level Guberniia Provisions Committee (GPC), established by the city Duma at the instigation of the Provisional Government to direct state-funded procurement.

\textsuperscript{80} Zol’nikov, \textit{Rabochee dvizhenie}, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{81} Samodeiatel’nost’ sales counters were recognised by the CPC as an ideal means to distribute sugar stocks to Krasnoiarsk’s residents in June 1916: \textit{VKGOU}, 12-13, June 21, 1916, pp. 51-54. Following the CPC’s organisation of rationing cards to regulate sugar consumption, several months later, Samodeiatel’nost’ became the main outlet through which sugar rations were distributed, helping distribute nearly seventy percent of all rations in late-1916: \textit{VKGOU}, 21, November 16, 1916, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Svobodnaia Sibir’}, 65, June 24, p. 3; \textit{Svobodnaia Sibir’}, 66, June 25, pp. 3-4.
across Eniseisk guberniia. Following the establishment of the Soviet Accounting-Valuation Commission in April, these organisations remained active and even expanded their activities. By summer, they were being joined by several new organisations, including dedicated provisions organs of city unions, which sought to provide basic consumer goods for their respective members.

In his study of Russian wartime provisions organisation, Lih cites the proliferation of unofficial localised organisations as evidence of “centrifugal forces”, which competed against one another, limiting the state’s ability to take assertive policy steps. In Krasnoiarsk, early debates on the provisions question certainly portrayed provisions as a political territory to be fought over for control. Soviet leaders emphasised the need to take firm and decisive action on the matter to safeguard their own political legitimacy. When the Soviet EC first debated the provisions question on April 4, Socialist-Revolutionary cooperator and City Provisions Commission activist, Ivan Kazantsev, urged the matter be left to the newly-established Guberniia Provisions Committee, which he maintained was better equipped to tackle the provisions crisis. Kazantsev’s proposal was vigorously countered by Soviet deputy chair, Okulov, who maintained the GPC was not a “proletarian organisation” and could thus not command the trust of the local population. The Soviet’s outward hostility towards other organisations was reciprocated by the GPC, which publically declared itself the highest provisions authority in Eniseisk guberniia and reacted with barely-contained fury to the Soviet’s

83 Krasnoiarsk city Duma minutes, March 5, 1917: GAKK, 173/1/2410a, ll. 24-25.

84 At least two union-organised provisions bodies functioned in Krasnoiarsk before the October revolution, belonging to city railwaymen and municipal staff, respectively. The union of the Krasnoiarsk branch of the Tomsk railway formally resolved to establish a “provisions committee” in late-August, although a report in the city liberal newspaper, Svobodnaia Sibir’, indicates they had been receiving goods through special provisions stores as early as May: Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 139, September 5, 1917 p. 4; Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 140, September 6, pp. 3-4; Svobodnaia Sibir’, 31, May 14, 1917, p. 4. In July, the Union of Municipal Employees announced plans to procure firewood for members: Svobodnaia Sibir’, 78, July 11, p. 4.

85 Lih, Bread and Authority, pp. 66-81.

86 “No. 15 (EC minutes, April 4, 1917)”, Krasnoiarskii Sovet, pp. 78-80.
involvement in provisions regulation, accusing it of illegally attempting to “realise
measures of an executive authority independent of the Guberniia Provisions
Committee.”87

Despite the initial sparring between their respective leaders, however, there is
scant evidence to suggest Krasnoiarsk’s various provisions organisations sought
actively to marginalise one another. Different organisations asserted authority over
distinct but complementary roles in provisions regulation, thereby cumulatively
expanding local provisions infrastructure. The Soviet’s core aims for provisions
regulation, outlined in Izvestiia Krasnoiarskogo Soveta on April 7 and reiterated a
week later by the AVC, was to establish and monitor prices for goods sold by private
traders in the city.88 By focusing on commercial trade, the AVC slotted into an
unoccupied administrative space alongside the CPC, which continued its work of
receiving and distributing scarce goods with the help of Samodeiatel’nost’, and the
GPC, which sought to establish itself as the highest organ of state-funded
procurement in the guberniia.

Over the following months, Krasnoiarsk’s various provisions organisations
increasingly worked in tandem with one another to implement their respective policy
measures. In the first instance, this reflected the reality that no single organisation
could fulfil its own tasks independently of the others.89 From the outset, the Soviet
AVC was heavily dependent on external administrative structures for distributing the
goods it inventoried and repriced and made no attempts to establish its own
distribution networks. Its operations were based, in the first instance, on the premise
that commercial trade networks would remain the basic distribution infrastructure
for consumer goods, albeit with vigilant oversight: wherever possible, goods would
be re-priced by Soviet trade commissars in-store, marked with the EC stamp, then

87 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 11, April 15, 1917, p. 4.

88 IKS, 14, April 7, 1917, p. 2; “No. 19” (AVC minutes, April 14, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 86.

89 This is a feature of local governmental administration identified by Alexander Rabinowitch
in Petrograd after October 1917: “The Petrograd First City District Soviet during the Civil
War”, in Koenker, Rosenberg, Suny (eds.) Party, State, and Society in the Russian Civil War, pp.
133-157, here pp. 135-136.
sold via regular trader-customer transactions. Even when merchants were bypassed, commissars were instructed not to disrupt their established commercial networks. In instances of merchants’ non-compliance with Soviet price controls, goods in shops were to be sold directly to the public by commissars at set prices over the same shops’ counters.

While active procurement of goods – nominally the preserve of the Guberniia Provisions Committee – remained outside the Soviet’s remit, the AVC’s requisitioning powers resulted in it handling increasing quantities of goods. The Soviet actively engaged other organisations in order to handle and distribute these goods. Archival records from spring indicate the AVC involved the City Provisions Commission in its decision-making processes regarding inventoried commodities, transferring responsibility for confiscated goods directly to the latter. Following its adoption of requisitioning policies for certain goods in June, the AVC formally adopted the “card system” (kartochnaia sistema) originally established by the CPC in 1916 to ration sugar stocks as the suitable apparatus for distributing confiscated items. By 1917, CPC ration cards were the most extensive and sophisticated means of distributing goods outside private commercial networks. The practicalities of the distributing sugar supplies had spawned a mammoth distribution network of CPC-run stores, commissioned private stores, and cooperative sales counters, which worked in tandem to supply regulated quantities of sugar to consumers. In spring 1917, the CPC elaborated the original sugar cards into a more comprehensive system of provisions booklets, which were used to distribute an increasingly wide range of scarce goods, from kerosene to footwear.

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90 IKS, 14, April 7, 1917, p. 2; Svobodnaia Sibir’, 161, October 24, 1917, p. 3.
91 "No. 83" (Guberniia EC minutes, September 10, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 202.
92 GAKK r-258/1/42, ll. 20, 23-25.
93 "No. 45" (session of AVC, June 10, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 128.
94 VKGOU: 21, November 16, 1916, p. 3.
95 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 118, August 9, 1917, p. 1; Svobodnaia Sibir’, 137, September 23, 1917, p. 4.
The AVC was not alone in relying on other organisations' infrastructure to fulfil its own operations. Even before 1917, there was never any notion of local government bodies establishing regulatory mechanisms and the infrastructure required to maintain their functions from scratch. The pre-revolutionary City Provisions Commission readily acknowledged that existing distribution networks – whether cooperative or merchant – must be coopted, not surpassed: its card-based rationing system, cobbled together from different private shops and cooperative organisations, was an admission of this fact. The emergence of new provisions organisations and regulatory functions in spring 1917 further expanded the need for inter-organisational cooperation. Alongside the Soviet AVC, the Guberniiia Provisions Committee quickly adopted the CPC card system as its chosen means for distributing the goods it had procured. Even trade union provisions organs, the most obvious “self-help” bodies to which Lih attributes the breakdown of the state apparatus, similarly cooperated extensively with larger, more established organisations to fulfil their functions. By October, union provisions committees had official delegates on the Guberniiia Provisions Committee and were working with both the GPC and CPC to secure supplies for their own members.

In practical terms, cooperation between Krasnoiarsk’s multiple provisions organisations reflected a common recognition that they could not fulfil their respective administrative aims without actively engaging one another. At the same time, it was also facilitated by close personal and professional relationships between different organisations’ members. In a narrow field of trained, capable administrators, key individuals participated simultaneously in different provisions organisations, enabling them to coordinate their respective activities (figure 5.4). New provisions organisations in 1917 drew in individuals with a shared history in Krasnoiarsk’s pre-revolutionary provisions apparatus. In March, a core of City

96 VKGOU, 9-10, June 1, 1916, pp. 66-68.

97 Sibirskaiia derevnia, 10, May 28, 1917, p. 2.

98 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 172, October 17, 1917, p. 4. Published minutes indicate the GPC was approached by other city unions with similar requests for provisions: Izvestiia Eniseiskogo Gubernskogo Prodovol’stvennogo Komiteta (henceforth, IEGPK): 1-2, December 23, 1917, p. 21, 26.
Provisions Commission members helped establish the Guberniia Provisions Committee, including pre-revolutionary CPC chairman, Shepetkovskii, who assumed chairmanship of the Guberniia Provisions Committee. Over the following months, Shepetkovskii was joined on the GPC by various former CPC colleagues, including the socialist cooperators, Frumkin and Kazantsev. Socialist provisions experts also provided a means of contact between the CPC, GPC, and the Soviet AVC. Both Frumkin and Kazantsev were active participants in Soviet Accounting-Valuation Commission meetings during 1917 and most likely helped facilitate its joint work with the CPC and GPC.

99 GAKK, 173/1/2410a, l. 25.

100 Details of GPC membership for October in IEGPK: 1-2, December 23, 1917, p. 10, 14, 17.

101 Soviet AVC participation details compiled from Krasnoiarskii Sovet.
**Figure 5.4:** Cross-over of personnel between provisions organisations, 1915-1917.

Sources: VKGOU, 1915-1917; IEGPK; GAKK 173/1/2410a, l. 25; Krasnoyarskii Sovet.
During the summer, personal links between members of different organisations increased as particular individuals worked both to expand the scope of local provisions operations and cement their own roles in different organisations. In June, the increasingly influential Frumkin was elected to a newly-established City Provisions Board, which was tasked with directing CPC work. His involvement in municipal provisions work grew rapidly following the city Duma’s re-election in July, which was widely seen by socialists as an opportunity to extend their influence directly into municipal administration and led to his appointment as Krasnoiarsk’s deputy mayor (see chapter 4). Under Frumkin’s guidance, the Duma expanded its own procurement operations at a local level, in particular redoubling efforts to stockpile firewood ahead of the bitter Siberian winter, which were handled by a dedicated sub-commission established in September. The following month, the Duma also strengthened its ties with both the Gubernia Provisions Commission and Accounting-Valuation Commission by electing new representatives to the two organisations. Frumkin was elected, alongside Shepetkovskii, to sit on the GPC; he also became one of the Duma’s AVC representatives, alongside several other prominent provisions activists, including the Socialist-Revolutionary cooperator and municipal reform advocate, Ivan Lovtsov. The City Provisions Board, meanwhile, was re-elected and established a new leadership under prominent socialists, including the cooperator, G.G. Naidenov, and Bolshevik, Ian Ianson, who had played an important role in the RSDWP’s municipal election campaign. Over the following months, these individuals ensured that the Duma and CPC would retain an active role in distributing provisions in Krasnoiarsk, despite the formal declaration of soviet power in the city. In February 1918, the Duma demonstrated its continued relevance

102 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 65, June 24, p. 3; Svobodnaia Sibir’, 66, June 25, pp. 3-4.

103 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 133, September 19, 1917, p. 3.

104 The city Duma had formal representatives on the GPC from as early as March: GAKK 173/1/2410a, l. 25. However, there is no evidence that it participated formally in AVC work up to this point, suggesting October marked a new watershed in relations between the Soviet and Duma.

105 Svobodnaia Sibir’, 149, October 10, 1917, p. 3.

106 Ibid.
to local provisions operations by reissuing provisions booklets for the entire city population.107

The extensive cooperation between different provisions organisations in Krasnoiarsk reveals the limitations of viewing revolution as a power struggle between rival organisations. Far from marginalising other provisions organisations, the Soviet and its Accounting-Valuation Commission actively engaged them in constructive work, thereby contributing a wider web of administrative organisations whose functions relied on the cooperation of all with all. These dealings enabled the Soviet to actively contribute to regulatory institutions and the complex practices they entailed beyond its own organisational boundaries, in particular the rationing mechanisms built around City Provisions Commission’s sugar cards and provisions booklets. Crucially, the continued existence of multiple provisions organs did not result in a diminution or fracturing of governmental power at a local level, instead expanding the scope and functions of provisions regulation by forging horizontal links between autonomous organisations on the basis of shared policy agendas. This arrangement contradicts much received wisdom on the state in 1917, but tallies with recent research into Russia’s provinces during the subsequent civil war. In his research into Viatka province, Retish has demonstrated that local actors and organisations willingly engaged wider state structures wherever they were identified as potentially constructive partners, while Alistair Wright’s recent work on Karelia highlights the crucial role of autonomous initiative to the establishment and expansion of regulatory provisions infrastructure at a local level.108

Provisions Administration in Practice: A Failure of Proletarian Politics?

The Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s involvement in the provisions question is crucial to understanding how it was able to adapt to the practical demands of state administration. At the same time, it provides a useful lens through which to perceive

107 GAKK, r-760/1/1, l. 25.

the changing ways Soviet leaders understood the tasks of state and their own role in fulfilling them. At the outset, the Soviet EC had emphasised its role as supporting its own constituents’ well-being. As Dubrovinskii argued on April 4, the Soviet must aid the “broad layers of the population” which it represented; Okulov likewise emphasised the need for a “proletarian organisation” to take charge of the provisions question.\footnote{\textit{“No. 15” (EC minutes, April 4, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet}, pp. 77-80.} Insofar as the measures it pursued attacked the financial domination of the mercantile, the capitalist class-enemy \textit{par excellence}, the Soviet’s regulatory agenda were well suited to socialists’ broader aims for class politics. Some historians have emphasised that punitive regulatory measures were a key basis for local soviets’ class politics. Drawing on the example of Krasnoiarsk and other localities, Anweiler likened revolutionary provisions regulation to “the Bolshevik requisitioning system during the [subsequent] civil war, [which was] used as an element of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’.”\footnote{Anweiler, \textit{Soviets}, p. 137.} Civil war-era provisions regulation provides a useful point of comparison for measures in 1917. During this period, concerted efforts were made to slant the distribution and supply of consumer goods in favour of specific social groups, particularly industrial workers, through differential rations.\footnote{McAuley, \textit{Bread and Justice}, pp. 286-287.} These arrangements actively sought to infuse the rationalising technocratic logic of wartime provisions regulation with class politics. Nonetheless, while class politics increasingly came to define revolutionary power in 1917, provisions regulation during this time remained distinct from that of the later civil war. Despite its leaders’ bold initial claims, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet did not seek to implement radical class-based mechanisms of consumer goods control during 1917. The measures to which it contributed reflected, rather, the immediate practical and institutional conditions in which they operated. In turn, these conditions would increasingly colour the way Soviet leaders perceived their own role in the provisions question.

Although much of the premise of the Soviet’s involvement provisions regulation emphasised the need to support its own constituents, the measures it pursued during 1917 did not entail a radical transformation of existing wartime
institutions. Within weeks of the Accounting-Valuation Commission’s establishment in April, the Soviet EC had begun to back away from explicit class formulations as the basis for its trade regulations. In June, when it announced the introduction of punitive measures of requisition against local traders and restrictions on small-scale private trade, the EC revised the premise of its provisions regulations, stating they were now being conducted “in the interests of the fair distribution of goods and foodstuffs between the citizens of Krasnoiarsk city and uezd.” The use of the relatively inclusive term “citizens” contrasted vividly with the increasingly belligerent class rhetoric socialists employed in Soviet debates on political authority and social politics, which divided the population into binary categories of “the people” and its enemies, and instead indicated a commitment to regulatory measures which would not discriminate on the basis of social class.

Through fragmentary records of Soviet regulations, it is possible to trace the meaning of the “fair distribution” of provisions to which the Soviet EC now committed itself. In the first instance, this was a matter of equal access to basic consumer goods for all social groups. Soviet rules for regulating commercial trade, which emphasised reducing the overall prices of goods in private shops, did not fundamentally weight consumption in the city in favour of one social group over another. Rather, they sought to re-establish basic equality of access to essential consumer items which had been undermined by wartime price rises by ensuring that no one class would now be unable to access basic goods available to another. This understanding of equitable provisions policy was nothing new. The principle of ensuring equal access to goods had underpinned the original trade policies of the pre-revolutionary City Provisions Commission in 1915, which sought to force down commercial prices by undercutting private traders in city markets. The rationing card system which the CPC

112 IKS, 75, June 23, 1917, p. 4.
113 On the Soviet’s categorisation of its political constituents, see chapters 2 and 3.
114 IKS, 23, April 20, 1917, pp. 3-4.
115 VKGOU, 9, July 1, 1915, pp. 42-43. Well into 1916, many Commission members saw as minimalist measure which offset any obligation to enter into more concerted measures of provisions distribution: VKGOU, 4, March 2, 1916, p. 56.
subsequently implemented, while curtailing consumer autonomy by limiting consumption levels for particular goods, re-enforced this egalitarian but un-classed ethic. As formulated in 1916, ration cards would guarantee equal portions to all residents, distributing scarce goods according to the size of each household.\footnote{Consumer units were calculated on the basis of households, with cards marked and issued according to family size, meaning the only social structure they obviously leaned towards favouring was the family unit. \textit{VKGOU, 19}, October 19, 1916, pp. 19-25.}

The principle of consumer equality in provisions regulation remained widespread in 1917 and was doggedly defended by the local press as a means to ensure that all social groups were treated the same. Complaints of material inequality were raised by socialists, who condemned bourgeois “cupidity”\footnote{Figes, Kolonitskii, \textit{Interpreting the Russian Revolution}, pp. 169-172.} and urged that existing regulatory measures be extended to ensure greater material equality between different classes. In May, \textit{Sibirskaiia Pravda} publicised demands by local trade unions for all basic consumer items to be made equally available to “all citizens, regardless of differences of social status [\textit{obshchestvennoe polozhenie}]” in rations of “equal quantity and quality”.\footnote{\textit{Sibirskaia Pravda}, 5, May 15, 1917, p. 3.} At the same time, concern for equal access to goods also lay at the heart of liberal conceptions of provisions regulation, which emphasised civil equality over particularistic class interests. Krasnoiarsk’s liberal and centrist press maintained vigilant watch over organisations they suspected of rigging the distribution of goods in favour of local workers, in particular trade union-run provisions committees. In May, \textit{Svododnaia Sibir’} alleged railway workers were receiving sugar through both “their own” stores and City Provisions Commission booklets, warning that “such a privilege is unfair with regards to the remaining citizens of the city, who have to be satisfied with norms for distribution of sugar to consumers [established by the CPC].”\footnote{\textit{Svododnaia Sibir’}, 31, May 14, 1917, p. 4.} Claims of railway workers’ unfair access to goods were angrily refuted by union officials. In October, following similar allegations in the Popular Socialist newspaper, \textit{Golos naroda}, leaders of the railway union’s provisions committee protested that supplies local workers received at union
provisions stores could only be used to supplement official rations up to the level of CPC-established norms, meaning they did not, in fact, receive more than anyone else.\textsuperscript{120}

Besides basic material equality, the other main conceptualisation of “fairness” in 1917 entailed distribution according to need, in which social groups deemed to require scarce goods most urgently were given priority. Archival records show the Soviet EC supported petitions to the City Provisions Commission on behalf of local organisations in especial need of certain items, including the city maternity home, which urgently requested access to cotton goods in May.\textsuperscript{121} This policy went one step further towards an administratively-determined social prioritisation of distribution. Nonetheless, it did not favour any particular class; nor was it unique to the Soviet alone. By late-1916, the CPC had begun distributing certain goods to particularly needy groups, including firewood, which was procured for the benefit of poor residents ahead of the winter.\textsuperscript{122} In 1917, it continued to target distribution towards consumers with specific material needs. Kerosene, which was supplied through CPC ration booklets during the summer, was issued according to the number of rooms in consumers’ homes, details of which were marked on provisions booklets; those with access to electricity would receive none.\textsuperscript{123} Other organisations engaged in goods distribution contributed actively to these policies. Footwear – a desperately short commodity throughout 1917 – was distributed through Samodeiatel’nost’ sales counters in October to groups considered particularly needy, including women workers, the voluntary fire society, and impoverished parents.\textsuperscript{124}

The substance of Soviet policy measures reveal its provisions regulations did not depart significantly from pre-revolutionary wartime institutions. Amid the increasingly class-conscious politics of revolution, what prevented Soviet leaders

\textsuperscript{120} Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 172, October 17, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{121} GAKK 258/1/42, ll. 19-20, 23.

\textsuperscript{122} VKGOU, 21, November 16, 1916, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{123} Svobodnaia Sibir’, 113, August 23, 1917, p. 4; Svobodnaia Sibir’, 137, September 23, 1917, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{124} IKS, 170, October 25, 1917, p. 4.
from pursuing policies for provisions regulation grounded more explicitly in social class? Firstly, the continued interdependence of different administrative actors prevented any one organisation from dictating policy measures. In regulating provisions, the Soviet’s need to cooperate with other provisions organisations, not to mention maintain the active support of its own administrators, meant its political leaders could not unilaterally impose an overt class agenda on its operations. Throughout 1917, the Soviet’s administrative partners retained emphasis on maintaining effective, stable government and showed themselves to be willing to block measures they perceived as harmful to existing provisions operations. Their ability to do so was vividly demonstrated by a long-running dispute between Soviet leaders and the Guberniia Provisions Committee over the management of the Abakan sawmill, which ground flour for Krasnoiarsk and other population centres in Eniseisk guberniia. In late-May, following a prolonged conflict with mill owners, workers successfully petitioned the Soviet EC to requisition the mill and hand its management functions over to the woodworkers’ union. The decision delighted Bolshevik trade unionists, who hailed the move as a victory for workers’ rights, but prompted outcry from the Guberniia Provisions Committee, which supplied the mill with grain. On June 6, the GPC passed a resolution proposed by Ivan Kazantsev, condemning the requisition as a “destructive act” and warning that unions were incapable of handling vital productive work. The matter was brought to a close in mid-July when, following warnings that union mismanagement was damaging production, the GPC established its own supervisory commission to regulate work at the mill and announced it would withhold all deliveries of grain until the Soviet EC handed managerial responsibilities back to the mill’s original owners.

While Soviet leaders quickly learned the value of not alienating their administrative partners, the ways they understood their own roles in state administration were also beginning to conform to administrators’ concerns for

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125 “No. 38” (Soviet EC minutes, May 31, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Sovet, p. 116. See also chapter 3.

126 Krasnoiarskii rabochii, 70, June 11, 1917, p. 4.

stability over rapid political change. By summer, Soviet leaders increasingly emphasised the need for administrative stability in provisions operations, downplaying the need to secure explicitly class-based goals and instead drawing attention to the role local organisations could play in maintaining broader state functions. In early August, Soviet leaders responded to reports that the GPC had refused to provide funds to local provisions organisations in nearby Kansk by warning that such local bodies, although not formally sanctioned by central authorities, had a vital role to play supporting “state interests” and should thus be recognised as competent and legitimate.\(^{128}\) The recognition of “state interests” as being at the heart of the provisions question highlighted a growing concern amongst Soviet leaders that the stability of existing administrative structures and state functions take priority over any more radical restructuring of power, which might further destabilise an already fragile administrative arrangement. This approach to revolutionary politics is most commonly attributed in 1917 to Russia’s liberals, who publicly eschewed class particularism as harmful to stable and effective government from the outset.\(^ {129}\) Nonetheless, as Hickey has demonstrated, involvement in local government also gave many socialists a stake in maintaining existing governmental machinery, encouraging them to equate the stability and continued functioning of state structures with the strength of the revolution more generally.\(^ {130}\)

In Krasnoiarsk, where socialists were becoming increasingly integrated into local governmental administration structures through their roles in both the Soviet and city Duma, a growing concern with stability was framed by growing economic turmoil. By late summer, living costs were on the rise once more, prompting fears of further local unrest amongst city residents, as had been witnessed before revolution. In September, a delegation of local workers to the city Duma reported that the cost of basic consumer goods had risen to between four and five times pre-war levels,

\(^{128}\) “No. 60” (Guberniia EC minutes, August 8, 1917), Krasnoiarskii Soviet, pp. 157-158.


\(^{130}\) Hickey, “Rise and Fall”, p. 30.
representing a doubling of prices since mid-1916 alone, and warned that “the least well-off layer of the labouring masses” was being forced into a “half-starved existence.” Amidst this bleak backdrop, all participants in provisions operations hurried to reaffirm their commitment to maintaining existing regulatory structures and institutions in the face of potential unrest. On October 19, Soviet deputies were addressed by representatives of the Guberniia Provisions Committee, City Provisions Committee, and Samodeiatel’nost’, who called for continued cooperation between all provisions organisations as the only way of effectively addressing the worsening situation. Soviet leaders sprang to their support, urging restraint from their constituents and reminding them of the importance of supporting established provisions organisations. Speaking on behalf of the Soviet EC, the Left-SR, Nikolai Mazurin, warned that economic dissatisfaction and the popular unrest it threatened to bring would play into the hands of “enemies of the people and revolution” and cautioned against taking unauthorised “actions on the grounds of hunger [which] may result in the disunity of the people and may drown the revolution in the blood of the hungry people.”

Soviet leaders’ increasingly cautious tone when dealing with provisions organisation was replicated in other areas of local governmental administration, where the pressures of maintaining existing state and economic functions led prominent socialists to adopt increasingly conservative policy stances, often against the protests of their own party comrades and constituents. The dilemma of balancing the demands of class politics with local governmental responsibilities was vividly illustrated in June, when workers at Krasnoiarsk’s water-pumping and electrical station threatened strike action over a long-running industrial dispute over production and job security. Workers’ demands were immediately endorsed by the Bolshevik newspaper, Sibirskaia Pravda, which urged the Soviet not to place “the needs of the city” before “the interests of workers” and instead back a strike.

132 IKS, 169, October 24, 1917, p. 4.
133 Sibirskaia Pravda, 9, June 8, 1917, p. 4.
Following the newspaper's declaration, however, the Soviet EC was tersely reminded of its governmental responsibilities by local firefighters, who warned that allowing the station to go out of action for even ten minutes could allow fire to spread uncontrolled through the city.134 Over the following weeks, Soviet leaders made concerted efforts to mediate the dispute between workers and managers at the station through a conciliation chamber before the threat of strike was finally averted in early July, when management capitulated to workers' demands.135

The socialist-led city Duma experienced similar pressures following its re-election in July. At the end of August, Duma members debated a petition of two capitalists to lease municipal land on which to build an iron-casting and mechanical factory, which would carry out vital production and repairs of agricultural machinery. Their proposal, which was endorsed by deputy-mayor, Frumkin, gained the backing of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the Duma, as well as the liberal Party of People's Freedom. However, it met fierce opposition from SRs, who warned parcelling out land to private individuals would "predetermine the land question in the city before it has been resolved in principle [by the Constituent Assembly]" and cited the joint support of Social Democrats and the PPF for the measure as evidence of their collusion to secure "bourgeois" class interests. These objections were angrily refuted by the Bolshevik, Glafira Teodorovich, who maintained that Social Democrats belonged to a “strictly class[-based] party and cannot unite with the bourgeois Party of People's Freedom.” Nonetheless, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were sufficiently convinced by the need to expand local production to join forces with Kadets in an unlikely coalition and vote through the proposal.136

Socialists' increasingly measured approach to administrative questions suggests their policy choices were constricted in practice by concerns which transcended social class. By late-summer, Soviet rhetoric of equality between citizens and maintaining existing administrative structures in local government contrasted vividly with the polarised way its leaders portrayed questions relating to political

134 Letter from United Commission for Fire Safety, June 1917: GAKK r-258/1/42, l. 56.

135 Sibirskaja Pravda, 16, July 6, 1917, p. 4.

136 City Duma minutes, August 26, 1917: GAKK 173/1/2417, ll. 7-9, 13.
rights and representation. Policies which sidelined class concerns in favour of stabilising existing state structures may thus be understood as an attempt to balance existing ideological agendas against the practical realities of government. In reality, however, there is no clear-cut distinction between ideology and expediency. Insofar as they inform and legitimise political choices, ideologies are continually reproduced and transformed according to the conditions in which they are expressed. Over the course of 1917, the chastening experience of handling active administrative responsibilities in practice helped transform Soviet leaders’ understandings of revolution, grafting a new recognition of “state interests” onto their existing class-centred worldview.

Conclusion

The administrative roles adopted by the Krasnoiarsk Soviet in 1917 provide a fascinating glimpse of how it was able to influence the exercise of power in practice at a local level. Through the Accounting-Valuation Commission, the Soviet asserted itself as an increasingly authoritative organisation in its own right, initiating policy measures on the regulation of private trade and distribution of consumer goods which expanded the role and ability of local government to address the provisions question. This was not simply a matter of one organisation extending its own control over wider society, however. The experience of governmental administration transformed the way the Soviet operated, exposing it to multiple institutional and ideological influences. Within the AVC, new groups were able to play powerful roles, particularly the shop clerks and cooperators who came to dominate the commission’s work. Through their officially-sanctioned positions, these administrative personnel entered into a reciprocal relationship with Soviet leaders, actively helping define and

137 Similar arguments have been made of the civil war period, in which Communist policies to discriminate in favour of manual workers were continually revised in order to maintain the productivity and political support of other groupings: McAuley, Bread and Justice, pp. 286-294.

138 Sewell, Jr., “Ideologies and Social Revolutions”, p. 60. For a fuller discussion of ideology, see thesis introduction.
implement policy measures. The significance of involvement in provisions administration also extended beyond the Soviet’s organisational boundaries, drawing it into close operational contact with other local organisations, particularly the City Provisions Commission, Samodeiatel’nost’, and the Guberniia Provisions Committee.

Interactions with these organisations had, on the one hand, a constraining influence on the Soviet. Dependent as it was on others to implement policy, it could not unilaterally determine which measures would be taken, instead seeking working agreements with other organisations at every turn. As the Soviet Executive Committee was reminded by episodes such as the Abakan mill requisitioning, losing the support of a strategically important administrative partner could quickly derail its own policy aims. This situation helps explain why, by contrast to Soviet constituency politics, explicitly class-based concerns appear to have played such a minor role in provisions regulation. Nonetheless, cooperation with other organisations was also enabling and helped extend Soviet influence at a local level by giving it a stake in wider institutions of provisions and trade regulation in Krasnoiarsk. By October 1917, Soviet leaders had come to embrace their roles and responsibilities in wider administrative structures, becoming committed partners in ensuring stable local government. These realities of administrative work clash with the widespread view of revolutionary power as something to be fought over and captured by one or another grouping. In practice, taking an active role in state administration was a matter of constant interaction and negotiation between multiple actors occupying autonomous organisational and political platforms.
CONCLUSION ★ Defining Soviet Power in Krasnoiarsk

Between March and October 1917, Krasnoiarsk’s Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies sat at the heart of a local revolutionary process which sought to “transform the social foundations of political power”.¹ Following the overthrow of Tsarism, it engaged actively in key areas of government, establishing political constituency structures for different social groups and maintaining local governmental administration, whilst becoming a leading participant in efforts to expand local roles in wider all-Russian revolutionary politics. This thesis has analysed several components of an emergent “soviet power” (vlast’ sovetov) during this period, highlighting the different ways in which the Soviet contributed to and sought to transform the foundations of state power. In so doing, it has demonstrated that the Soviet was, itself, involved in complex political processes involving interaction, contestation, and negotiation between multiple social actors and organisations. This concluding section revisits my approach to analysing soviet power before addressing the core research questions raised in the thesis.

The main objective of this thesis was to provide an analysis of “soviet power” writ small in Krasnoiarsk. Without denying the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s centrality to emerging revolutionary power structures, the thesis has not attempted to reduce its role to one of monopolising power at the expense of all other revolutionary contenders. Rather, it has considered how the Soviet established a prominent position within a broader constellation of actors and organisations which collectively contributed to state functions. This approach is based on a critical conceptualisation of the state which contends that power can only be exercised through a combination of autonomous social forces interacting with formal governmental bodies.² It portrays the Soviet as a key focal point for a broader interactive governmental process, rather than a domineering force which could direct or control the state independently. By situating itself at the centre of this interactive process, the Soviet engaged in and influenced different spheres of state activity and governmental

¹ Kimmel, Revolution, p. 6. A fuller discussion on the definition of revolution is offered in thesis introduction.

authority. At the same time, this subjected it to different social and organisational influences which helped to shape its own structures and determined the way it operated in practice.

In order to fulfil this objective, the thesis asked several core research questions. Firstly, how did the Krasnoiarsk Soviet become a powerful organisation in its own right? Perhaps the most striking aspect of Krasnoiarsk’s revolutionary politics was the Soviet’s ability to rapidly establish broad social support, particularly amongst workers and soldiers. During the overthrow of Tsarism, local socialists drew together important sections of Krasnoiarsk’s working class and garrison in a revolutionary council structure. This process highlights the complex dynamics of local revolutionary mobilisation and, particularly, the importance of established networks and organisational structures in facilitating revolutionary action and determining the forms it took. The analysis offered in this thesis places the 1917 Soviet firmly in its immediate social and temporal context, challenging the widespread belief that the experience of 1905 provided the basis for the establishment of soviets twelve years later. Contrary to the claims of Communist-era historians, the 1905 Krasnoiarskaia respublika left behind no tangible mechanisms capable of facilitating joint revolutionary organisation between socialists, workers, and soldiers in 1917. Rather, the basic organisational developments contributing to the establishment of the 1917 Krasnoiarsk Soviet sprang from the immediate context of war. Socialists embedded in consumer cooperatives, which expanded greatly during the pre-revolutionary war years, drew on their participatory structures to mobilise railway workers with the help of dedicated worker-cooperators. Likewise, civilian activists coordinated their work with soldiers through a combination of clandestine garrison socialist circles, which formed following the military conscription of socialist exiles and workers, and the initiative of radical junior officers, who likewise achieved prominence in the Tsarist military due to wartime pressures.

Following the overthrow of Tsarism, the Soviet steadily expanded its political authority amongst the local population. Key to this process was the formation of elective constituency structures through which social actors participated in Soviet politics. Socialist leaders, who perceived the Soviet’s elective deputy system as the
organisational basis for popular class-based revolutionary politics, quickly cemented organisational ties with different social groupings. They actively participated in the formation of trade unions and elective military committees, which provided vehicles for workers’ and soldiers’ collective participation in revolutionary politics. These organisations established workers and soldiers as the fulcrum of political support for the Soviet, allowing their members to engage actively in Soviet work through their own autonomous elective mechanisms and providing them with direct agency in revolutionary politics.

In part, organisational links between the Soviet and its core constituent groupings reflected common aspirations between socialists and the local population. Under the initiative of its left-wing socialist leadership, the Soviet took the lead in addressing a diverse range of social concerns, in particular improving local working conditions and reforming the most hated aspects of Tsarist-era military authority. Its approach was markedly different to other local authorities, particularly the Committee of Public Safety, which avoided being drawn into gritty social conflicts and was consequently increasingly marginalised from popular politics. By contrast, the willingness of Soviet activists to engage actual and potential constituents led them into open confrontation with authorities standing in their way, something vividly demonstrated by conflicts with the Provisional Government’s provincial commissars, whose attempts to regulate local soviets’ activities were fiercely resisted.

In the first instance, the evidence from Krasnoiarsk supports Raleigh’s contention that local soviets expanded their political influence in 1917 due to their greater willingness to address active social and economic concerns. At the same time, this thesis has moved beyond Raleigh’s analysis by emphasising the autonomous role the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s constituents played in shaping its internal politics. Social actors engaging the Soviet retained the capacity to articulate and press their own agendas, even when these conflicted with the overall aims of socialist activists. Trade unions were subject to a continual internal struggle between their experienced socialist leadership, which espoused greater worker roles in “politics” outside the workplace, and rank-and-file members, who insisted that the

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3 Raleigh, “Political Power”.
improvement of workplace and living conditions remain the primary basis for their political activities. Soldiers and officers involved in military committees similarly maintained a clear sense of military identity which often distinguished them from civilian society and participated in elective committees and Soviet politics in order to pursue their own changing and multifaceted political agendas. Likewise, relatively marginal social groupings which Soviet leaders had not initially considered integral to their own political visions were able to press their own political concerns upon the Soviet. By mid-1917, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet was obliged to address not only workers’ and soldiers’ demands, but also those of women workers, soldatki, refugees, and POWs, who organised collectively around their own specific agendas.

The autonomous agency of the Soviet’s social constituents was further demonstrated by the ambiguous results of efforts to establish party organisation at the heart of revolutionary politics. By mid-April, socialist party activists had secured formal policy-making roles for themselves and their factions in the Soviet Executive Committee; they maintained effective control of executive power in the Soviet over the following months. In September, this institutional arrangement was successfully transformed by internationalist socialists to cement their own political authority through the election of a pre-arranged multi-party list dominated by Bolsheviks and Left-SRs, enabling them to unilaterally pursue a radical agenda of “power to the soviets”. Nonetheless, party politics retained far less influence amongst rank-and-file Soviet deputies and their electors. Despite a steady shift towards internationalist policy positions, most workers and soldiers proved willing to engage parties only insofar as they conformed to their own political concerns and by-and-large remained isolated from party politics outside the Soviet.

These findings help illustrate an important and often overlooked dimension to the growing authority of local soviets in 1917. Rather than simply accumulating support from social actors at the expense of competing supra-class political projects, the Krasnoiarsk Soviet actively engaged its constituents in an interactive political process of its own which was necessarily reflected in its organisational structures. Despite socialists’ stated ambitions to create an organisation to express the common will of the narod, the Soviet never homogenised the local workers, soldiers, and other social groupings which it sought to represent into a cohesive political grouping.
Instead, Soviet politics became an arena of continual interaction, contestation, and negotiation between its various participants. This important constitutive element of the Soviet’s politics helps reconceptualise the basis for its growing organisational strength. A key organisational role for the Soviet was to provide a political space through which to mediate relations between its socialist leaders and the multiple social groupings which they aspired to represent. This demanded recognition of different social actors’ autonomy to participate in revolutionary politics as they saw fit, enabling them to mould and adapt the Soviet’s participatory practices according to their own agendas. In turn, it highlights the complex process by which new institutional arrangements were established in revolutionary politics. Soviet representative politics involved the active participation of multiple actors who helped shape and create the practices it entailed jointly with Soviet leaders.

Whilst drawing attention to the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s ability to gain a broad social support base, this thesis has also considered the question of how it interacted with organisations and actors not usually associated with local soviet politics. This question has been addressed in order to understand, firstly, how interactions between multiple organisations and actors shaped the ways power was constituted and exercised in a revolutionary situation and, secondly, how these interactions shaped the ways these organisations and actors themselves operated. One important area in this regard is the Soviet’s efforts to regulate provisions and trade. This highlights the administrative implications of local soviet power by illustrating some of the core governmental responsibilities the Krasnoiarsk Soviet assumed and revealing how these were handled in practice. It helps move discussion of the Soviet beyond its role of expressing class-based social agendas by showing how it assumed active governmental roles. In the field of provisions, the Soviet pursued a bold regulatory agenda over local consumer goods trade through its Accounting-Valuation Commission (AVC). Over the course of 1917, the AVC was increasingly drawn into the nuts and bolts of provisions regulation through a raft of increasingly interventionist policies, beginning with sweeping price controls and extending to cover the seizure and forcible redistribution of scarce consumer goods directly to the city population.

The Soviet’s growing administrative authority provides a valuable focus on the issue of agency and political legitimacy in an ostensibly “proletarian” organisation.
While some historians have argued local soviets were able to handle their administrative burdens prior to October 1917 with the help of “unpaid volunteers recruited easily from among elected deputies”, this thesis shows the Krasnoiarsk Soviet was dependent on skilled staff well before this date. Following the establishment of the AVC, a core of professionalised administrators and clerical personnel was hastily mobilised from external organisations, including the city garrison, consumer cooperatives, and the local shopclerks’ union, UTIE. These individuals were indispensable to AVC operations, whose membership they dominated from the outset. By mid-summer, the Soviet was already coming to resemble the kind of weighty administrative body more commonly associated with the civil war period. This development provides important insight into the changing conceptualisation of political agency in revolution. Although many of the organisations through which Soviet administrators were mobilised had close links to local socialists, their personnel were engaged through a process functioning outside the Soviet’s elective deputy structures. By actively contributing to AVC work, administrators and clerical personnel were able to express their own autonomous agency within the Soviet, assuming important roles in the formulation and execution of its regulatory policies, and thus became vital and legitimate actors in local revolutionary politics in their own right. Provisions regulation also helps place the Krasnoiarsk Soviet’s politics within a broader temporal framework, providing further illustration of the importance of war in determining the character of revolutionary power. In establishing the AVC, Soviet leaders absorbed the technocratic logic of existing wartime provisions measures set in train by the municipal City Provisions Commission. Likewise, local regulatory institutions were maintained throughout 1917 with the active help of individuals who began their rise to prominence during the previous years of war, especially cooperative activists, who became essential players in local government administration.

This thesis also draws attention to the broader constellation of organisations amongst which the Krasnoiarsk Soviet operated, highlighting how nominally independent authorities engaged one another in order to influence governmental processes. It clearly demonstrates the limitations of the view that state power in

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revolution was something to be battled over by rival groupings. In practice, the Soviet increasingly sought to exercise power by involving other organisations in its political projects. These organisations included the city Duma, which was re-elected in July following a concerted Soviet campaign, returning a massive socialist majority. Although the involvement of local dumas in revolutionary politics has long been recognised in principle by Western historians, their role is often explained as providing a platform for socialists to expand their ideological and party influence, rather than as a means to bringing municipal structures to play in revolutionary government. This thesis has pushed the discussion in a different direction by considering how the Krasnoiarsk Duma was integrated into the practical work of revolutionary government alongside the Soviet. Prominent local socialists, including left-wing Social Democrats who dominated the Soviet’s leadership, attached enormous practical significance to established municipal structures. These individuals pressed a bold vision for the expansion and entrenchment of Duma activity which was directly informed by pre-revolutionary wartime developments, in which a number of socialist activists were personally involved. The Krasnoiarsk Duma’s re-election provides important insight into the fluid ideological structures which helped guide socialists’ activity, highlighting the diverse political agendas contributing to their visions for revolutionary power. It also offers a striking case of institutional continuity in 1917, demonstrating how ostensibly pre-revolutionary authority structures were assimilated into a broader programme for revolutionary political change.

While leading socialists worked to integrate the city Duma into a broader local power arrangement alongside the Soviet, the latter’s own administrative roles meant it had to interact with other organisations on an increasingly regular basis. The Soviet AVC, in particular, quietly established an active organisational partnership with other local provisions bodies in order to implement its own policy measures. These included the municipal City Provisions Commission (CPC), whose own mechanisms for regulated goods distribution remained crucial to all provisions operations in the city, and the provincial-level Guberniia Provisions Committee (GPC) which, despite initial hostility towards Soviet provisions measures, interacted with both the AVC and CPC throughout 1917. In practice, therefore, the Soviet AVC was only one of several organisations involved in provisions regulation at a local level, all
of which contributed to the continued functioning of administrative structures required to implement policy. The interdependence of different administrative organisations was both constraining and enabling. On the one hand, it prevented any one organisation from unilaterally setting the agenda by which provisions regulation would be conducted. This obliged the Soviet, whose leaders had initially cited class politics as the basis for involvement in provisions regulation, to set aside any more radical agenda for transforming administrative structures in favour of a relatively conservative approach which emphasised maintaining existing governmental infrastructure and organisational stability. On the other hand, it expanded the scope of Soviet AVC activities, enabling it to participate in and contribute to regulatory structures, such as the CPC card-based rationing system, which extended well beyond its own formal organisational boundaries. Although historians have thus far placed little emphasis on the interactions between soviets and other administrative bodies in 1917, the relevance of administrative functions to establishing local soviet power in practice means that findings raised by this thesis may well have direct relevance to other localities. Further case studies are needed to consider how far these conclusions correspond to the situation elsewhere in Russia.

The final question this thesis has considered is how local actors in Krasnoiarsk understood their role within a broader all-Russian revolution and how they related to power structures elsewhere in Russia, including centralised state bodies in Petrograd. Soviet activists played a key role in demanding extensive local authority and autonomy in revolution. These demands were manifested, in the first instance, in heated debates over the role of centrally-appointed Provisional Government “commissars”, whom the Soviet were vigorously opposed on the grounds that they hindered local actors’ ability to manage state functions and limited the scope of popular participation in revolutionary politics. Besides challenging the authority of centrally-appointed state agents, socialists and Soviet activists also took assertive steps to enact demands for greater local roles in all-Russian politics. The belief that local actors should directly administer their own affairs informed socialist efforts to expand and reinvigorate the activities of the city Duma, which became the focal point of demands for greater local control over state tasks and responsibilities, including taxation and core public services. Meanwhile, during the summer and autumn, local Soviet activists also moved to promote closer integration between revolutionary
organisations in different localities through regional-level soviet organisations, including the Guberniia EC and Central Siberian Bureau of Soviets. These organisations signified a growing conviction amongst internationalist socialists that local soviets must take the lead in promoting positive revolutionary developments beyond a local level. By October, they had begun to integrate soviets in Eniseisk guberniia and across Siberia more generally into an impressive regional-level power structure capable of articulating demands for greater local autonomy against the encroachments of central government. Regional soviet organisations would become an increasingly important factor in the relationship between revolutionary authorities in the Russian capitals and Siberia during the civil war, when local soviets collectively sought to assert their own political autonomy and enact a broadly federalist vision of state power at a regional level.\(^5\)

By considering local socialists’ efforts to expand local prerogatives in revolution, this thesis provides valuable contributions to two historiographical debates. With regard to Siberian politics, it has challenged the association made by some historians between demands for greater local autonomy and self-professed Siberian regionalists (oblastniki). In Krasnoiarsk, oblastniki had virtually no organisational presence and were marginalised by demands for the rapid transformation of power relations between local actors and the all-Russian state, which they considered inopportune and dangerous to broader state interests. By contrast, left-wing socialists, often portrayed as dedicated centralisers, increasingly espoused ideological positions which placed local actors at the centre of revolutionary politics. By October 1917, leading Soviet activists, particularly Aleksei Okulov, were publically advocating the extensive reorganisation of state power across the former Russian Empire on a federalised basis in a manner remarkably similar to classical oblastnik formulae. At the same time, demands for local political autonomy and authority should be seen within a broader all-Russian context. Although Okulov’s visions for political decentralisation were formulated in terms similar to Siberia’s oblastniki, they also closely reflected the mood of revolutionaries across the former Russian Empire, who increasingly advocated local initiative as the basis for wider state reconstruction. This was not simply a localised dimension of their power

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struggle with the Provisional Government. Nor did it signify a growing division between “local” and “national” agendas. Rather, socialists espoused a more comprehensive belief that people in Krasnoiarsk had important roles to play as both autonomous local actors in their own right and as participants in broader all-Russian political processes.

In sum, this thesis has highlighted many of the complex interactive processes involved in constituting and exercising state power in revolutionary Krasnoiarsk. It contributes to existing literature by providing a valuable empirical case study in a region of the Russian Empire previously neglected by historians of revolution. Moreover, the approaches it has taken to considering processes of institutional development, political mobilisation, and ideological formulation provide a nuanced analytical framework for considering the forms and practices of state power more generally. The thesis reveals the importance of viewing all participants in revolutionary politics as potentially autonomous actors in their own right capable of engaging the state and contributing to its work according to their own concerns and agendas. It demonstrates that state power in revolution was not something simply to be contested between rival actors and organisations and could not be held by any single cohesive political grouping. In the final analysis, this suggests soviet power in 1917 is best understood not as the assumption by soviets of outright political control in a given locality, but rather as their ability to situate themselves at the centre of an interactive governmental process involving numerous actors and organisations.
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