



Soviet federalism from below: The Soviet Republics of Odessa and the Russian Far East, 1917–1918

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Abstract

In early 1918, the Bolshevik-dominated Third Congress of Soviets declared the formation of a new composite polity—the Soviet Russian Republic. The congress's resolutions, however, simultaneously proclaimed a federation of national republics and a federation of soviets. The latter seemed to recognize regionalism and localism as organizing principles on par with nationalism and to legitimize the self-proclaimed Soviet republics across the former Russian Empire. The current article compared two such non-national Soviet republics, those in Odessa and the Russian Far East. The two republics had similar roots in the discourses and practices of the Russian Empire, such as economic and *de facto* administrative autonomy. They also took similar organizational forms, were run by coalitions, and opposed their own inclusion into larger national and regional formations in Ukraine and Siberia. At the same time, both of the Soviet governments functioned as *ad hoc* committees and adapted their institutional designs and practices to the concrete—and very different—social and international conditions in the two peripheries. The focus of the Odessa and Far Eastern authorities on specific problems and their embeddedness in the peculiar contexts reflected the very idea of federalism as governance based on decentralization and nuance but contradicted the party-based centralization and the exclusivity of the ethno-national federalism in the consolidated Soviet state.

Keywords

Empire, federalism, Odessa, Russian Far East, Soviet

Introduction

During the extended period of the Russian Revolution of 1917, several non-ethnic Soviet republics emerged across the former empire, including the Soviet Republic of Odessa (January 18–March 13, 1918) and the Soviet Republic of the Far East (January 7/April 10–September 17, 1918).¹ The two republics relied on non-Bolshevik political imagines of a free port or a duty-free zone and of local or regional autonomy, were run by coalitional authorities, at least nominally, and opposed their own belonging to larger national and regional formations in Ukraine and Siberia, both anti-Bolshevik and Soviet. The two republics were never formally recognized as such by the Bolshevik central government, although it communicated with their authorities, and were ultimately taken over by foreign armies—the Central Powers in the case of Odessa and the Allied Intervention in the case of the Russian Far East.

The two republics—maritime gateways of the nascent, composite Soviet polity—showed the Bolshevik leadership another level of the empire's complexity in addition to ethnic diversity, with the ethno-national sentiments making the Bolsheviks shift from their initial plan of a unitary proletarian state (Rakhmetov & Iakovlev, 1930, p. 72) to the more nuanced approaches to diversity management. The two peripheries contributed to the Bolshevik consent to make Russia a federation, but, unlike the more homogeneous regions (or at least those having coherent nationalist groups to claim such homogeneity), they were to become

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part of a federation of soviets rather than that of national republics.

Both principles made it into the legal foundations of the new regime—the equivocal resolutions of the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies (Petrograd, January 10–18, 1918) which was supposed to take the role of the forcibly dissolved All-Russian Constituent Assembly (Petrograd, January 5–6, 1918). The congress proclaimed the Soviet Russian Republic a federation of free national republics in one resolution, but in another one called it a federation of soviets (*sovety* or “councils”) with broad local autonomy for regions. The central Soviet authority was supposed to only observe the foundations of the “Russian Federation of Soviets” and was not to violate the rights of different regions which entered the federation. The regional Soviet republics were supposed to decide on their own forms themselves. This right to regional self-determination conformed to the 1913 program article by Iosif Stalin, in which he favored the regionalist approach to decentralization (Stalin, 1946; *Tretii Vserossiiskii s’ezd Sovetov rabochikh, soldatskikh i krest’ianskikh deputatov*, 1918, pp. 90–94).

In its beginnings the “Great October Revolution” was a local event in Petrograd, a *coup d’état*, purposefully planned and executed by Vladimir Lenin and Lev Trotskii and a rather small group of their followers in the Bolshevik and Left Socialist Revolutionary (SR) parties on October 25–26, 1917. Most researchers, however, share the astonishment with the resilience of the Bolshevik authority, rather than with their initial success (see, for instance, Hildermeier, 2013, pp. 36–37). Yet the formation of the new Soviet regime that led to a fundamental, violent change in political, economic, and social relations took months after the coup. While the factual history of the October Revolution in the capital, Petrograd, is now well-researched and firmly anchored in the consciousness of a broader international public, this is not equally true for the revolutionary events in the peripheries of the former Russian Empire. Furthermore, the events which echoed the October coup in Petrograd demonstrated the contingency and fragility of the Bolshevik regime, as well as the very absence of coherence among their ranks.

The research on the Revolution of 1917 for a long time followed a rather centralist tradition and focused mostly on the two capitals, Petrograd and Moscow. With some notable exceptions, most historians shared the silent assumption that the same revolution took place all over Russia. In a way, many Western researchers followed the interpretation of the Soviet historiography, which understood the revolution as a uniform process in all of Russia and left no place for studies of national, regional, or local differences. It was the collapse of the Soviet empire and the emergence of several new states on its former territory that led to a general shift in historiography. Historians increased their attention to the non-Russian nationalisms and to the regional differences. There are still very few regional and local studies of the

events in 1917–1918, although some works had already demonstrated the importance of peripheral perspectives for the understanding of the revolution as a whole (Badcock, 2010; Badcock et al., 2015; Figes, 1989; Friedgut, 1989; Getzler, 1983; Penter, 2000; Pipes, 1964; Raleigh, 1986; Sablin, 2016, 2018; Snow, 1977; Suny, 1972).

With the “imperial turn” (Gerasimov, 2017; for an overview of literature, see Sunderland, 2016) in historiography opening up national and local histories of the revolution, the spaces between “Russian” and “non-Russian” peripheries, such as the non-Ukrainian majority city of Odessa or the multiethnic region of the Russian Far East, remain understudied. Seeking to highlight the significance of local factors on such “middle-ground” peripheries and open up a new, comparative discussion, this article looked for similar patterns and differences in the revolutionary processes in the two maritime peripheries at the two different ends of the empire. Investigating the national, regional, and social factors that shaped the revolution in their complexity and interconnections, the article also sought to contribute to the understanding of the new Soviet regime in the making, specifically the new and diverse institution of soviets.

Reaching back to the experience of the Russian Revolution of 1905–1907 and the anti-parliamentarism of anarchist intellectuals and activists (Kriven’kii, 1998, pp. 230–234, 241–242; Kropotkin, 1906, pp. 89, 101), the soviets quickly turned from the idealized bodies of class-based socialist democracy, alternative to its liberal counterpart, into an instrument of the Bolshevik party dictatorship. Between Lenin’s incorporation of the anarchist anti-parliamentarism into the Bolshevik program and the consolidation of the new unequal and indirect representation in the Soviet Constitution of 1918 (*Rossiiskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Federativnaia Sovetskaia Respublika*, 1918), the practice of *soviet* rule in the peripheries proved as diverse as the empire itself. Although the geneses of the two regimes in Odessa and the Russian Far East were similar, with roots in the imperial practices and discourses, their functioning heavily depended on the particular social and ethnic constellations, as well as the international contexts.

Contexts and roots

In the multiethnic port city of Odessa, the revolution developed in the area of tension between the social revolution in Petrograd and the national revolution in Kiev. After the October Revolution in Petrograd and the proclamation of the Ukrainian People’s Republic by the Ukrainian Government in Kiev in November 1917, Odessa was increasingly caught up in the tensions created by the growing Ukrainian–Russian conflict between the Petrograd-based Soviet government and the Ukrainian Central Rada in Kiev. The Rada made territorial claims to Odessa and the Kherson Province, while complex interrelationships developed between the events in Petrograd, Kiev, and Odessa.

Odessa's proximity to the Romanian Front and the influence of various military organizations there had also significant impact on the course of events.

In the region of the Russian Far East,² the revolution played out differently, yet there were some similarities. The region was claimed by the Bolshevik (Irkutsk) and anti-Bolshevik (Tomsk and Omsk) Siberian governments, while internally there was a competition between two Soviet polities—the Far Eastern one centered in Khabarovsk and the Amur Republic centered in Blagoveshchensk. Moderate socialists, united around *zemstvo* and municipal self-government, and Cossack warlords proved to be the main opposition to the Bolsheviks. The social and national aspects of the revolution intertwined in the competition between the Slavic (Russian and Ukrainian) and East Asian (Chinese and Korean) settlers based on their unequal access to economic resources. Furthermore, there was a regional Ukrainian national movement which sought connection to the Central Rada in Kiev as part of the larger post-imperial Ukraine, while many Koreans envisioned the region as the base for their struggle against the Japanese Empire. The location of Vladivostok, Russia's only functioning ocean port during World War I, in the region made it of prime strategic value for the Allied command, resulting in the naval presence of the United States, Great Britain, and especially Japan there already in late 1917 to early 1918.

In Odessa, the urban population, which was firmly integrated into Russian majority society both culturally and linguistically, rejected the Central Rada's claims to the city. The Ukrainian nationalist movement held a very weak influence even among the small Ukrainian minority. The majority of Odessa's residents did not identify with an autonomous Ukrainian Republic within a Russian Federation, and certainly did not identify with an independent Ukrainian state. At the same time, the Bolshevik Party, which claimed the power of the state in Russia after the Petrograd October Revolution, did not enjoy the same popularity in Odessa as in the capital cities. This was evident, for example, during the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, when the Odessa Bolsheviks gained only 19% of the votes in the city.³ Neither Petrograd nor Kiev promised a path that met with approval among the majority of the urban population. Odessa's residents were left with the choice of the lesser evil.

Odessa is a wonderful case study on account of its socially and ethnically heterogeneous population, which enables an examination of the complex interpenetration of the social and nationalist revolutions of 1917 in Ukraine, and the social mobilization of the urban population along the dividing lines of "class" and "nation." The lack of backing for the Central Rada in the major cities, in which industrial resources and strategically important communication and transport facilities were concentrated, contributed significantly to the failure of the efforts to found a Ukrainian state. In the confused historical situation of the revolution,

and in view of the unresolved power struggle between the Ukrainian Central Rada and the Petrograd Soviet government, a power vacuum developed in Odessa that provided particular opportunities for the evolution of aspirations to local autonomy. They found expression in two competing concepts, the liberal, bourgeois "free city" and the proletarian "Soviet Republic of Odessa."

As an economic concept, local autonomy already had a long tradition in Odessa: From 1819 to 1859, Odessa had been one of the two special economic zones with free ports in the Russian Empire. By this policy, the imperial government intended to attract foreign maritime trade and thereby support the economic development of the whole region of Novorossia. In 1859, the special economic status of Odessa was abolished, mainly to reinforce the integration of the city into the empire and to stop Odessa's development into a "state within a state." Over the ensuing years, local economic autonomy nevertheless remained a priority objective of the economic elites in Odessa (Hausmann, 1998, p. 56). Besides, from 1803 until 1917, Odessa constituted a separate administrative division, a so-called *gradonachal'stvo* ("city governorship"). The head of the *gradonachal'stvo* had the same authority as provincial governors.⁴

When the concept of local autonomy in Odessa came to life again in December 1917, it expressed not so much the demands of the population for economic autonomy, but rather those for political autonomy in the face of "forced Ukrainization." Furthermore, the city dwellers feared that Odessa would become only the "second" city in Ukraine after the Ukrainian capital Kiev, which could negatively influence its economic growth.⁵ The Municipal Duma commission under the leadership of the university lecturer G. I. Tiktin worked out maximum and minimum programs for Odessa's future: the maximum program provided for the institutionalization of Odessa as a sovereign state with full membership in the future Russian Federation. For this, the German city of Hamburg served as a model. The minimum program intended for autonomy within the Ukrainian People's Republic, following the example of Croatia as an autonomous region in Hungary.⁶

The composition of the new government in Odessa remained a disputed issue. Whereas the Municipal Duma demanded the participation of its members in it, some deputies of the city Soviet preferred an entirely soviet organ. In the end, a pragmatic solution was found: a provisional government of the "Free City" of Odessa had been appointed temporarily until the final resolution of the question. Its 10 members included 2 Duma representatives.⁷ It appears that the autonomy concept was also an attempt to integrate the three largest ethno-confessional groups of Odessa's population, namely the Russians, Jews, and Ukrainians. At least this was promised by the new language policy: official languages of the local government would simultaneously be Russian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish.⁸ The project of declaring Odessa a "free city" probably got

the approval of the majority of Odessa's population, although a planned referendum, which could have given more precise information, never took place. The concept had been supported by the Municipal Duma and the local soviets. It found supporters not only in the Constitutional Democratic (KD) Party but also in the socialist parties including the Bolsheviks (for a detailed discussion, see Penter, 2000).

The revolution in the Russian Far East was informed by several comparable discourses and developments inherited from the empire. Just as the free-port status was taken from Odessa, a duty-free regime (*porto franco*) was introduced in the recently annexed Amur territory (Priamur'e) in the 1860s, attracting settlers from Europe and Asia and contributing to the booming rise of Vladivostok and a less dramatic yet significant development of Khabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk. Despite the abolition of duty-free trade in 1900, the population continued to grow in the region thanks to the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway and the extension of Russia's military presence. The duty-free regime was reintroduced during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, and keeping it proved to be a prime issue for regional administrators, business circles, and peasant settlers alike. In the Third and Fourth Duma of the Russian Empire, the deputies from the Amur, Maritime, and other North Asian regions campaigned against its revocation individually and as part of the Siberian caucus. The consolidation of the region, which became commonly known as the Russian Far East during the Duma debates, was also stimulated by the formation of the Priamur Governor Generalship with the center in Khabarovsk in 1884 and the brief existence of the Viceroyalty of the Far East (1903–1905), which did not survive the Russian defeat against Japan (Milezhik, 2007; Safronov, 2012; Stephan, 1994, pp. 67–68). Despite the predominance of opposing voices in the region, the duty-free regime was abolished in the ports of the Far East on January 16, 1909, although some goods indispensable to the settlers remained free of tariffs (Gorchakov et al., 1999, pp. 66–79; Troitskaia, 2012, pp. 326–334).

The similarities between the two discourses (especially on the part of federalism and autonomism) notwithstanding (Von Hagen, 2007), Siberian Regionalism proved much less potent as Ukrainian nationalism. The idea that North Asia was different from the rest of the empire in economic and ethnographic terms (Iadrintsev, 1892) and the slogan of its autonomy seemed to have attracted interest only among regional intellectuals. Siberian Regionalism nevertheless contributed to the debates on the reconstruction of the Russian Empire into a federation (or a unitary state with autonomies) and, since the late 1917, helped rally the anti-Bolshevik opposition around Siberia as a polity alternative to Soviet Russia. Although there were some supporters of Siberian Regionalism in the Russian Far East, the general attitude toward being part of an autonomous Siberia before the October coup in Petrograd was disinterest. The seven

representatives of the Amur and Maritime Regions were a minority among the 182 delegates at the Siberian Regional Congress in Tomsk in October 1917, and none of them joined the Siberian Executive Committee, which was supposed to coordinate the formation of the autonomy (*Pervyi Sibirskii oblastnoi s'ezd 8-17 oktiabria 1917 goda v g. Tomске: Postanovleniia s'ezda*, 1917).

This did not mean that Far Eastern politicians were reluctant to defend regional interests. On the contrary, the socialist State Duma deputy Aleksandr Rusanov, who was appointed Commissar of the Provisional Government for the Far East, and others participated in revolutionary self-organization of the Russian Far East, which involved *inter alia* the convocation of regional congresses of soviets and the formation of the Far Eastern Committee of Soviets in Khabarovsk.⁹ Regional authorities appealed for the reintroduction of duty-free trade, but the Provisional Government rejected it.¹⁰ Overall, regional politics featured few confrontations until the fall of 1917. With the exception of Vladivostok, where like in other major urban centers of the empire anarchism and radical socialism gained a foothold over the summer of 1917, those politicians and activists who supported democratic change through universally elected self-government bodies (zemstvos and municipal dumas) and the All-Russian Constituent Assembly predominated in the region. Even the Social Democrats had only split into the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in the fall of 1917.¹¹

Rusanov's initiative to conceptualize a Far Eastern autonomy, however, brought little result, and a minor congress of revolutionary authorities, which he convened on the matter of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in August 1917, agreed that only a fourth level of zemstvo, that is economic self-government, was desirable for the Russian Far East.¹² The formation of the universally elected zemstvos, which were supposed to be the main step toward the elections to the Constituent Assembly, was interrupted by the coup in Petrograd. The vast majority of regional organizations, however, voiced their support of Rusanov and the forming zemstvo authorities.¹³ The supporters of the organized Ukrainian and Korean movements in the region also tended to join the moderate socialist coalitional authorities.¹⁴ The November 1917 elections to the Constituent Assembly became a major success for the SRs in the Russian Far East (with only one Bolshevik elected thanks to the Vladivostok voters), reaffirming the broad support of the population for democratic development.¹⁵

Just like in the case of Odessa, the first proper revolutionary government in the Far East—in the sense of one claiming supreme authority—emerged as a response to the political chaos of the October Revolution in Petrograd and the formation of a Siberian Soviet government in Irkutsk. Rusanov convened the First Territorial Congress of Municipal and Zemstvo Self-Governments (Khabarovsk, December 11, 1917) of three representatives from the Amur

Region and six from the Maritime Region and passed his authority to it. The congress then formed the Provisional Bureau of Zemstvo and Municipal Authorities under the SR Mikhail Timofeev. In its first act, the Bureau proclaimed supreme civil authority in the Russian Far East.¹⁶ Although there was a Bolshevik representative from the Maritime Region, Abram (Aleksandr) Krasnoshchekov who recently returned from the United States (where he was naturalized as Abraham Stroller Tobinson), he only supported the transition of authority from Rusanov to the congress but not from the congress to the Bureau (Troitskaia, 2017, pp. 309–311).

Organizational forms

The first coalitional constellations in both Odessa and the Russian Far East did not survive until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Indeed, by the end of 1917, the different social, ethnic, and political groups of Odessa population united in their support of the “free city” as a pragmatic concept of local autonomy, which appeared to be an opportunity for them not to get involved in the Ukrainian–Russian conflict and to run their own politics in Odessa. But the Ukrainian–Russian dualism of the concept was possible only within a Russian Federation. After the Central Rada had declared the independence of Ukraine on January 9, 1918, the concept lost its basis. In addition, there were several other reasons why the city dwellers withdrew their sympathies from the Central Rada and actively or passively supported the Soviet government in Petrograd.

In January 1918, the growing tensions led to struggles between the Red Guard and Ukrainian soldiers in the streets of Odessa. With the support of warships of the Black Sea Fleet, the Red Guard won the battle and the “Soviet Republic of Odessa” was established under the leadership of Bolshevik emissaries from Petrograd. Following the model of the Soviet of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom) in Petrograd, the new government of Odessa was called the “Soviet of People’s Commissars.” As in Petrograd, it consisted nearly exclusively of Bolsheviks, some of them emissaries from the party headquarters. In formal terms, the new government of Odessa subordinated both to Sovnarkom and to the new regional Soviet government of Ukraine in Kharkov, which had been formed already in December 1917.¹⁷

Just like the Central Rada, the Extraordinary Siberian Regional Congress (Tomsk, December 6–15, 1917) refused to recognize Sovnarkom and the Irkutsk Soviet government (Tsentrosibir’) and established provisional Siberian authorities, which in January 1918 consolidated into the Provisional Siberian Government, which nevertheless had soon to relocate to the Chinese Eastern Railway Zone. In late December 1917, major street battles, second only to Moscow in death toll, took place in Irkutsk, but the Bolsheviks managed to keep control of the city (Shilovskii, 2004).

The formation of the first Soviet government in the Russian Far East, however, was less violent. The Bureau of Zemstvo and Municipal Authorities did not become a *de facto* government on December 11, 1917. Krasnoshchekov, who participated in both the self-government congress and the Third Far Eastern Congress of Soviets, about to start in Khabarovsk, organized the arrest of Rusanov through the Khabarovsk Soviet (Popov, n.d.). At the latter congress, which opened under Krasnoshchekov’s chairmanship on December 12, 1917,¹⁸ the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs were a majority due to the radicalization of local soviets. Despite some opposition from moderate socialists, the congress proclaimed Soviet rule with the goal of “abolishing private property and establishing socialist democracy” on December 14, 1917. Although the declaration of Soviet rule included support for the Constituent Assembly, it cautioned workers, soldiers, and peasants that “real balance of economic power” and not “debates and paper constitutions” of the parliament would resolve the issues of class struggle (Zav’ialova et al., 2015, pp. 205–206). On December 20, 1917, the congress elected the new Far Eastern Committee of Soviets.¹⁹

Yet the Bolsheviks did not establish a solid Soviet government in the region. The involvement of the Allied forces in the Chinese Eastern Railway Zone resulted in the consolidation of anti-Bolshevik forces there. Furthermore, in late December 1917–early January 1918, Japanese and British ships entered the port of Vladivostok. Attempting to consolidate their rule in view of the foreign support for municipal and zemstvo bodies, on January 5, 1918, the Bolsheviks and their allies reformed the Far Eastern Committee of Soviets into the Far Eastern Territorial Committee of Soviets of Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants’ Deputies and Self-Government Bodies (Dal’kom), opening to zemstvo representatives. Krasnoshchekov (chairman) and other Bolsheviks took up most of the seats in the Khabarovsk-based Soviet government.²⁰

The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in Petrograd the very next day seemed to have consolidated the Soviet regime, “legitimized” by the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Yet the relations between the Soviet governments on the ground proved challenging to a large extent due to their different approaches to the very idea of Soviet rule. The relationship between the Soviet Republic of Odessa and the Soviet government of Ukraine was characterized by rivalry. Already the organizational structure of the Soviet Republic of Odessa, which had its own Commissar for Foreign Affairs, expressed its autonomous power claims.²¹ Until March 1918, three independent Soviet republics—of Odessa, Crimea and Donetsk–Krivoi Rog—had been established in Ukraine and competed with each other for food and other resources. The individual Soviet governments felt responsible at best toward Petrograd but not toward the Kharkov Ukrainian Soviet government, which claimed authority over whole Ukraine (Vargatiuk & Kuras, 1990, pp. 601–604).

In contrast to the radical Irkutsk Soviet government, Krasnoshchekov's conciliatory stance toward zemstvo prevailed in the Russian Far East, despite the opposition of the Vladivostok Soviet and the leader of Blagoveshchensk Bolsheviks Fedor Mukhin. With zemstvos supposedly representing the peasants, Dal'kom built a system different from that implemented by Sovnarkom, which gradually eliminated zemstvo. At the same time, it reserved only 5 out of 23 seats for regional zemstvo, while the remaining 18 passed to the soviets of workers,' soldiers,' and (still barely existing locally) peasants' deputies. This ensured the soviets' control over Dal'kom. The Maritime Regional Zemstvo Assembly nevertheless sanctioned the authority of Dal'kom, which proclaimed itself the "supreme body of Soviet government" in the Far East on January 7, 1918. The support of the Maritime Zemstvo helped Krasnoshchekov ensure peaceful dissolution of the still lingering Bureau of Zemstvo and Municipal Authorities. Dal'kom, however, did not subordinate to Irkutsk and also established own Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (Popov, n.d.; Semenov, 1969, pp. 15, 31–37, 44, 47, 50–51, 129). A more radical Soviet emerged in Blagoveshchensk, where Mukhin came to prominence thanks to the support of sailors of the Amur Flotilla and metalworkers. It did not openly challenge Dal'kom, yet carried out its own policies substituting zemstvo and municipal bodies with soviets (Tsyppin et al., 1933, pp. 36–46).

The Republic of Odessa: a social revolution

Unlike in Petrograd and Moscow, where the Bolshevik leadership had been setting the tone in the soviets since early September, the Odessa Soviet, which was still dominated by the SRs and Mensheviks in January 1918, was not suited as the headquarters of the October Revolution. Among the most radical forces and bearers of the revolutionary movement that led to the establishment of the Soviet government were the qualified industrial workers. This "vanguard" of the working class, from whose ranks the majority of the Red Guards were recruited, included above all the workers of the armament factories and railway workshops as well as the seamen of the merchant fleet. However, their number in Odessa was much smaller than in the capitals. The Bolsheviks in Odessa found important support in the "Soviet of the Unemployed." Odessa had an influential unemployed movement in 1917, which created its own soviet and stormed onto the city's political stage with radical demands. Due to the war, revolution, and economic decline, a very large new underclass had developed in the city, made up of a diverse array of people (Penter, 2015). According to the trade unions, approximately 6,000 qualified workers and 5,000 unskilled workers were affected by unemployment in October 1917. In addition to this, there were approximately 10,000 unemployed soldiers and a large number of unemployed people

from graduate professions, whose precise number was difficult to determine.²²

The unemployed Jewish teacher Khaim Ryt recognized the revolutionary potential of this diverse new underclass. Ryt himself remembered later:

We understood the term "unemployed" very broadly: we included all those who at that time could not and did not find work for their workers' hands. As it turned out in retrospect, all the miserable people, from professional beggars to factory workers or craftsmen who had been thrown onto the streets by war or revolution, gathered there.²³

Together with the large number of the unemployed and the general power vacuum, the emergence of Ryt, a talented orator who was capable of uniting the underclass under the flag of unemployment, proved a major factor for the movement's success. The Soviet of the Unemployed was also attractive to groups within the urban Jewish population. As far as is apparent from the sources, interethnic conflicts were of no significance within the Soviet of the Unemployed. By contrast to other parts of Russia, where the records show that the unemployed movement occasionally became involved in anti-Semitic pogroms, this was not the case in Odessa (Budnitskii, 2006, p. 275; Kleinbort, 1925, pp. 288–290; Kolesnikov, 1923, pp. 37–39; Penter, 2000, pp. 298–320).

When fighting for power in Odessa broke out, many jobless men also joined the ranks of the Red Guard and took part in battles against the Ukrainian Central Rada's troops. In return, however, they wanted a stake in "Soviet power" and made massive demands that went as far as participation in local government with the same number of representatives as the workers' and soldiers' soviets. The great influence of the Soviet of the Unemployed on the first Soviet government is testified by the memoirs of Vladimir Iudovskii, the Bolshevik chairman of the Odessa Soviet of People's Commissars:

Khaim Ryt stirred up the unemployed against us, and if he did not agree with us, then he operated with these unemployed people. He indisputably held a special kind of power in his hands (Iudovskii, 1927, pp. 143–144).

The unemployed were a real social force with the potential to become dangerous for the recently installed Soviet government in Odessa. This was also evident when the slogan "All power to the Soviet of the Unemployed!" was heard at mass demonstrations of unemployed people.²⁴ The unemployed directed massive demands not just at the bourgeoisie, but also at the workers, whom they called "aristocrats." When conflicts between the workers and the unemployed escalated, the nascent Soviet government wanted to resolve the problem by "cleansing the city" of the unemployed. Above all, the numerous unemployed people who had moved to the city were to be sent back to their

home regions. However, the Soviet government did not succeed in implementing this plan.²⁵ On February 19, 1918, the presidiums of the different soviets in the city jointly declared the Soviet of the Unemployed to be an “anti-Soviet” organization.²⁶

A few days earlier, Ryt had stated at a meeting of the Soviet’s Executive Committee, “Indeed, there are two powers in the city, two social forces—they are the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies and the Soviet of the Unemployed. The power apparatus will soon fall, but the flag of anarchism will remain.”²⁷ The Soviet of the unemployed even managed to demand a contribution of 10 million rubles from the Odessa bourgeoisie (an extraordinary amount for that time). Ryt believed that the Workers’ Soviet only united the skilled workers and therefore no longer represented the quintessence of the revolution but had outlived its time and needed to be replaced by the Soviet of the Unemployed.²⁸ With his Soviet of the Unemployed, Ryt posited a concept that was intended to integrate all the representatives of the underclasses, including traditionally stigmatized groups, and as such was opposed to the Soviet and trade union functionaries’ attachment to “elitist” ideas about the superiority of certain occupations and the characteristics of different classes.

In the context of the political split and given that the first Soviet government in Odessa was soon deposed by the invasion of the Central Powers, its activities were quite provisional and uncoordinated. Just as in Petrograd, the most important political posts were held by a small Bolshevik elite. The lack of binding guidelines led to the commissars handling the applications of the urban citizens according to their “own revolutionary awareness,”²⁹ as a coworker of the Commissar for Labor remembered. The decrees of the People’s Commissars were often issued according to their role model in Petrograd, but this was not necessarily always the case. For example, while the Soviet government in Petrograd had merged all private banks and declared them to be state property, Leonid Ruzer, the Commissar for Finance in Odessa, was seeking the cooperation of the private bankers.³⁰ The municipal budget continued to be administered by members of the Municipal Duma. Even though the Duma was officially disbanded on February 20, its technical apparatus was indispensable for the Soviet government. Therefore, all employees and members of the Duma were instructed to stay at their posts until further notice. All the supply facilities stayed under the control of the Duma as well.³¹ The independence of the Soviet government in Odessa from the central authorities also became visible during the imminent territorial conflict with Romania, caused by the occupation of Bessarabia by the latter. In this situation the Soviet republic of Odessa was able to pursue an autonomous foreign policy, signing a peace treaty with Romania at the end of February 1918, which led to the withdrawal of Romanian troops from Bessarabia.³²

There can be no doubt that the short term of the first Soviet Government in Odessa was terminated by external factors, namely the invasion of the Central Powers. Still, while retreating from Odessa, the people’s commissars could not ignore the fact that they had nearly no support among the city population. They were able to gain the sympathies of the lower classes for the fight against the Central Rada as fast as they had lost them when it became evident that the Soviet government was not able to resolve the urgent social and supply problems of the city. The Soviet government destroyed its initial support with unpopular slogans like the repeated call for mobilization. Another reason for the loss of trust was its failure to restore order and to effectively fight the increasing crime. In fact, after the change of power, the criminals in Odessa experienced “paradisiac times” and the city turned more and more into a “legal vacuum.”³³ Hence, the short period of the first Soviet government in Odessa was to a large extent a period of complete anarchy and powerlessness.

In the years of the Russian Civil War, authorities changed in Odessa nine times. The Red Army, the Ukrainian nationalists, and Anton Denikin’s White Army competed for power together with the German, Austrian, and French troops. During this turbulent period violent crimes were on the rise in the city, and the lines between criminal and revolutionary activity remained fuzzy (Yeykelis, 1997). Soviet control was finally consolidated in February 1920. From 1920 onward, Odessa was part of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic and part of the newly founded Soviet Union since late 1922. The concept of local autonomy in the form of an independent Soviet republic of Odessa was not to be relaunched. The economic enterprises of the city and the port had suffered enormous destruction during the Civil War, which confronted the new Soviet government with major reconstruction tasks. At the same time, Odessa had not been hit by anti-Jewish violence to the same extent as many other cities in Ukraine, which were convulsed by pogroms in 1918–1919. This partly owed to the well-organized Jewish self-defense units in Odessa (Abramson, 1999; Klier & Lambroza, 1992).

During the New Economic Policy (NEP) era, the Soviet government kept a rather loose grip on the city, permitting private trade to contend with shortage and social problems. During the first half of the 1920s crime in Odessa remained rampant, and black marketeering as well as smuggling across Romania flourished. The Bolshevik government repeatedly declared war against bandits and gangs who terrorized the population. Odessa played a prominent role in the cultural explosion that emerged (to a large degree outside of state control) in literature and film in the 1920s. The open atmosphere of the Black Sea port city in the 1920s is testified to by the literary works of Isaak Babel, Il’ia Il’f, and Evgenii Petrov—the mythmakers of Odessa in the early Soviet literature (King, 2012, pp. 177–200; Tanny, 2011, pp. 82–90).

The Republic of the Far East: a nexus of global politics

Given the configuration of the Far Eastern periphery in terms of its territory, population density, and international situation, the events there developed along a different logic. Despite its conciliatory stance toward *zemstvo*, Dal'kom launched radical policies, involving confiscations, requisitions, and censorship, in January–February 1918. As an authority, Dal'kom was present only in the cities of Khabarovsk and Vladivostok and the mining settlement of Suchan. Military-revolutionary committees in Vladivostok and Khabarovsk arrested bank directors, managers, newspaper editors, and officers. Dal'kom's land redistribution, which included allotments to Koreans, received cold reception from Cossacks and old settlers. Grain requisitions caused further hostility, and the SRs remained popular in rural areas throughout 1918. The Red Guard of arsenal workers, the sailors of the Amur Flotilla, garrison troops, the "internationalists" (former German and Austrian POWs), and Korean groups, however, became the backbone of the new regime, while the demobilized soldiers and Cossacks, many of whom returned home thanks to the Soviet truce with the Central Powers, helped the Bolshevik regime in Transbaikalia (Stephan, 1994, pp. 114–115, 117–118; Tsyppkin et al., 1933, pp. 36–46).

The anti-Bolshevik forces, which in the Far East featured the non-radicalized Cossacks, attempted to topple the Soviet regime in March 1918, just when Krasnoshchekov was in Blagoveshchensk seeking to ensure Mukhin's subordination. Krasnoshchekov and other Soviet leaders were arrested, and the moderate anti-Bolshevik leaders attempted to create a coalitional authority of self-government bodies, the Amur peasant soviet, and the Amur Cossacks, with the participation of workers' soviets. Yet the offensive of the 12,000-strong Red Guard, which then also included Ukrainian new settlers, reinforced by the returnees from the front, forced the anti-Bolsheviks to retreat to China later the same month. The forces of the Cossack warlord Grigorii Semenov, which advanced in Transbaikalia, were also pushed to China, but those of Ivan Kalmykov, another Cossack, managed to get a foothold in the eastern part of the Far East for 3 months (Rynkov, 2012, p. 132; Semenov, 1969, pp. 56, 78–81, 86, 88, 90–91, 127; Stephan, 1994, pp. 119–121; Tsyppkin et al., 1933, pp. 48–51).

Following these clashes and the logic of the resolutions of the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, two Soviets of People's Commissars emerged in Chita and Blagoveshchensk in late March—early April 1918. Furthermore, the coalition of Bolsheviks, Left SRs, SR Maximalists, and anarchists under Mukhin proclaimed the formation of the Amur Toilers' Socialist Republic or "the autonomous Amur Socialist Republic" as "part of the Great Russian Soviet Federative Republic" and engaged in even more radical policies than Dal'kom or the Blagoveshchensk Soviet before the proclamation of the new republic. In the

meantime, Japanese and British troops took control of Vladivostok following an attack on Japanese businessmen in early April 1918. In this context, the Fourth Far Eastern Congress of Soviets (Khabarovsk, April 8–14, 1918) foregrounded both defensive nationalist and regionalist slogans. Krasnoshchekov spoke of the "united toiling people of the Far East," which was "detached from European Russia" and "surrounded by a hostile world," and the region of the Far East (which he extended to include the Transbaikal and Yakut Regions). Although he underlined its belonging to Russia and accused the anti-Bolsheviks of conspiring with foreigners, Krasnoshchekov called the congress "a constituent assembly" of the new Far East of the toiling people. The congress's resolution on nationalization called the region "the workers' and peasants' Soviet Republic of the Far East," but mentioned that it remained part of Russia and denounced "the traitors of the people and the Motherland" (Semenov, 1969, pp. 112–113, 115, 118–128, 153; Tsyppkin et al., 1933, pp. 51, 54–57, 61, 63).

Although the Japanese withdrew on April 25, 1918, returning Vladivostok to Soviet control (Moffat, 2015, pp. 55–56), Dal'kom further consolidated its autonomous authority renaming itself the Far Eastern Soviet of People's Commissars (Dal'sovnarkom) on May 8, 1918. This may be seen as a response to the formation of the Amur Republic, which Krasnoshchekov criticized for "separatism" and for which Dal'kom competed with Tsentrosibir.³⁴ Dal'sovnarkom predominantly consisted of Bolsheviks, and Krasnoshchekov was its Chairman and Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The Commissariat of War took over the territorial command of the Red Army, consolidating the region's state-like status. Dal'sovnarkom engaged in independent policies, abolishing, for instance, administrative regions. The Far Eastern Soviet government envisioned the new Far Eastern polity as ethnically inclusive. The Fourth Far Eastern Congress resolved to allot land to foreigners, especially the Chinese and Koreans, on equal basis with the Russians. Dal'kom appealed to Sovnarkom for naturalizing all those Koreans who lived in Russia for many years and worked the land themselves. Dal'sovnarkom eliminated all discriminatory passport restrictions on the Koreans and Chinese making them equal to other foreigners (Klipov, 1957, pp. 106–107; Semenov, 1969, pp. 131, 137–152, 171–175; Tsyppkin et al., 1933, pp. 55–62).

Krasnoshchekov claimed that Dal'sovnarkom allowed full subordination of the region to Moscow without the unnecessary mediation of Tsentrosibir,³⁵ but in practice there was no full subordination. In May 1918, for instance, Dal'sovnarkom received a telegram from the Moscow authorities, forbidding all local bodies to engage in nationalizations without an approval. Dal'sovnarkom, however, interpreted the telegram as an official permission to continue nationalizations. The same month Dal'sovnarkom openly rejected the suggestion of Tsentrosibir for "closer cooperation" (Semenov, 1969, pp. 178–179, 181–182, 185; Tsyppkin et al., 1933, p. 64). Still, Moscow did not seem to recognize the reform of the Soviet

government in the Far East calling Dal'sovnarkom the "Far Eastern Territorial Soviet" but not a "Soviet of People's Commisars."³⁶ According to Vladimir Vilenskii (Sibiriakov) of Tsentrosibir, Krasnoshchekov's "large personal ambition" undermined the united Soviet front in the summer of 1918—during the full-scale Allied Intervention of Japanese, American, British, French, Chinese troops which joined the Czechoslovak Legion already on site—and contributed to the swift collapse of all Soviet governments in North Asia (Tsyppkin et al., 1933, pp. 84–86; Vilenskii-Sibiriakov, 1926, pp. 16–17).

Dal'sovnarkom staked on anti-imperialist solidarity instead. According to Albert Rhys Williams, Chinese officials were benevolent during their negotiations with Dal'sovnarkom in late June 1918, thanks to its policies toward the Chinese (Williams, 1969, pp. 307–316). The stake, however, did not pay off. Although in May 1918 Krasnoshchekov sponsored the creation of the Union of Korean Socialists in Khabarovsk, the majority of Korean activists, many of them being Russian citizens, preferred to side with the SRs. In June 1918, a major Korean congress did not support Dal'sovnarkom despite Krasnoshchekov's speech and promises of "many good things" to the Koreans. Instead, it resolved to demand national self-determination on the basis of "freedom, equality, and fraternity," siding with the moderate socialist opposition to the Bolsheviks (Anosov, 1928, pp. 19–21; Troitskaia, 2004, pp. 11–12).

Ukrainian nationalists also did not submit to Dal'sovnarkom. A regional Ukrainian congress criticized Soviet policies in April 1918 and resolved to continue independent self-organization through ethno-national *radas* (councils). Furthermore, one such *rada* in Manchuria, the Chinese Eastern Railway Zone, proclaimed the territories of Ukrainian settlement in the Far East (the Green Wedge) as part of the Ukrainian state in May 1918. After the Far Eastern Secretariat, the executive body of the regional Ukrainian movement, declared its neutrality in the Russian Civil War in June 1918, Dal'sovnarkom forced its closure and departure from Khabarovsk (Chernomaz, 2009, pp. 165–166, 168, 171, 451–455; Chornomaz, 2011, p. 227; Tsyppkin et al., 1933, pp. 90–94).

Although they were ultimately toppled by foreign troops, the positions of Krasnoshchekov's and Mukhin's governments among the peasants also dwindled. The Fifth Far Eastern Congress of Soviets (Khabarovsk, August 25–28, 1918) backed Krasnoshchekov's government, opposing the intervention, but a rival peasant congress, which happened simultaneously, resolved to recall Cossacks and peasants from the Red Army and support a democratic authority. Furthermore, it welcomed the Allied forces and demanded that Mukhin's government, loosely subordinate to Dal'sovnarkom, gave up its authority. Following the advance of the Japanese and anti-Bolshevik forces, Dal'sovnarkom formally dissolved on September 17, 1918. Although eventually nationalist mobilization helped the Bolsheviks in view of the intervention, with a large guerilla movement

emerging in the region, some Red Guardsmen and "internationalists" went over to Semenov and Kalmykov (Stephan, 1994, p. 130; Tsyppkin et al., 1933, pp. 87–88).

During the Russian Civil War, Semenov and other warlords controlled much of the region, although it was nominally subordinate to the Aleksandr Kolchak government in Omsk, whereas Japanese and American troops were stationed in major cities and along the railway. The presence of the large intervention force contributed to the large-scale guerilla movement, with different affiliations of individual bands and the participation of Chinese and Korean combatants. With the fall of the Kolchak government in early 1920, several regional governments of different political orientations—from anarchist to monarchist—emerged in the areas east of Baikal. The Bolsheviks and their sympathizers managed to establish the nominally democratic and capitalist Far Eastern Republic (FER) in 1920, Krasnoshchekov, who returned as its leader, drew direct parallels with the 1918 Soviet Republic of the Far East. The FER, however, managed to consolidate its control over the region only in late October 1922, when the Japanese troops departed from the mainland part of the region (remaining nevertheless on Northern Sakhalin) and the last oppositional armed groups were defeated. In November 1922, the FER was transformed into the Far Eastern Region, which had some informal autonomy, and in December 1922 became part of the nascent Soviet Union (Sablin, 2018).

The foreign policy considerations, including the export of the socialist revolution to Mongolia, Korea, and beyond, informed the Bolshevik authorities during and after the Russian Civil War, while the region's diversity also remained an important issue over the 1920s. The Buryat-Mongol activists managed to get part of the region included into their newly formed autonomous republic, but no Korean autonomy was created. The NEP period featured the continued presence of foreign business, with the Japanese receiving especially many concessions. After the Japanese formally ended the occupation of Northern Sakhalin in 1925, the region was transformed in the Far Eastern Territory, and the appeals of the regional officials to formalize its autonomy were denied. The Russian Far East remained nevertheless accessible for foreign business well into the 1930s and, in the case of the Japanese concessions on Northern Sakhalin, into the early 1940s (despite the military clashes in the late 1930s). The continued fears of the Soviet officials to lose the region, however, contributed to the increased military presence in the 1930s and the deportations of the Chinese and Koreans. The deportation of almost all Koreans from the region to Central Asia in 1937 became one of the largest Stalinist ethnic cleansings (Chernolutskaia, 2011; Khromov, 2006; Sablin, 2018).

Conclusion

The imperial structures, featuring economic autonomy and openness, population diversity, and special administrative

status, proved crucial for the design and justification of the first revolutionary authorities in both cases. In ways similar to each other, the two peripheries did not immediately become part of the Petrograd October Revolution. In both cases, it was external factors, including the formation of alternative polities, which contributed to the consolidation of “autonomous” units. When the first Soviet regimes were established, they also proved similar in the most basic organizational forms. Yet, despite taking the names of Soviets of People’s Commissars, the Soviet governments of Odessa and the Russian Far East functioned differently. As *ad hoc* committees, they focused on different issues—the social and economic problems in the former case and the international situation and ethnic diversity in the latter. The two republics relied on different principles, had different memberships, policies, and plans, with the republic of Odessa concentrating on local matters, and that of the Far East supposedly seeking to export the revolution to East Asia.

Ironically, however, the very differences between the two distant Soviet republics may be seen as evidence of genuine makeshift Soviet federalism of 1918. Indeed, the Soviet (Bolshevik and Left SR) leadership in Petrograd offered only rough guidelines and declared its respect for regional autonomy, perhaps without having a clear plan about the ultimate design of a Soviet federation or perhaps as a mere rhetorical device. The rough guidelines reflected in the reliance on soviets, as bodies of unequal representation, and in the formation of Soviets of People’s Commissars, which gave the whole process a dash of structuration. In this respect, the implementation of the principle of regional and local self-determination, alternative to national self-determination, was not region- or locality-specific. At the same time, the adaptation of the respective Soviet governments to specific problems and conditions reflected the very idea of federalism as decentralized and nuanced governance.

Howbeit, the two republics fell to external factors. Although both of them had lost much of the popular support by the time of their dissolution, there is no way to know if they could become part of a more diverse Soviet federation. Krasnoshchekov’s attempts to revive his vision of regional autonomy in the FER (1920–1922) demonstrated, however, that the Moscow leadership was not interested in regional self-determination, let alone any genuine federalism (see Sablin, 2018). Despite the existence of larger administrative regions in Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union, the ethno-national principle became the sole principle of Soviet federalism on paper, while in practice Soviet federalism largely proved nominal.

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Notes

1. This name was used once in an official document, but the formation of the Far Eastern Committee and later the Soviet of People’s Commissars with foreign and war departments implied the claims to the region’s political autonomy throughout the period.
2. Here, the region is understood as the territory of the pre-revolutionary Priamur Governor Generalship encompassing the Amur, Maritime, Sakhalin, and Kamchatka Regions.
3. *Odesskii listok* [Odessa paper], November 16, 1917: 2; *Odesskie novosti* [Odessa news], November 16, 1917: 3; November 17, 1917: 3.
4. In 1917, nine of these *gradonachal'stvo* existed in entire Russia, in Petrograd, Moscow, Rostov, Sevastopol, Nikolayev, Odessa, Baku, Kerch-Yenikale and Yalta, GARF (State Archive of the Russian Federation), f. 1800, op. 1, d. 163, l. 6 (Ministry of the Internal Affairs of the Provisional Government).
5. *Odesskii listok*, December 10, 1917: 2.
6. *Odesskii listok*, December 23, 1917: 2.
7. DAO (State Archive of the Odessa Region), f. R-3,829, op. 1, d. 86, l. 42-43; (Trilisskii, 1927).
8. *Odesskii listok*, December 24, 1917: 3.
9. *Izvestiia Soveta Rabochikh i Voennykh Deputatov gor. Vladivostoka* [News of the Soviet of Workers’ and Military Deputies of Vladivostok], March 25, 1917: 3; *Izvestiia Vladivostokskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Soldatskikh Deputatov* [News of the Vladivostok Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies], May 28, 1917: 4; *Priamurskie izvestiia*, June 24, 1917: 4; June 25, 1917: 4; July 13, 1917: 3.
10. *Priamurskie vedomosti* [Priamur news], April 6, 1917: 2; *Priamurskie izvestiia* [Priamur news], April 22, 1917: 5; April 25, 1917: 2; April 27, 1917: 7; May 16, 1917: 5; June 1, 1917: 4; July 13, 1917: 4; July 16, 1917: 4; July 18, 1917: 4.
11. *Izvestiia Vladivostokskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Soldatskikh Deputatov*, September 10, 1917: 1, 4; September 13, 1917: 1–2; September 19, 1917: 3; September 29, 1917: 3; September 20, 1917: 3; September 21, 1917: 4; September 22, 1917: 1, 3–4; September 26, 1917: 4; September 27, 1917: 4; September 30, 1917: 1–2; October 1, 1917: 1–2; October 5, 1917: 1; October 11, 1917: 3; October 18, 1917: 3; October 19, 1917: 2; October 21, 1917: 1; October 25, 1917: 2; October 27, 1917: 2; *Priamurskie izvestiia*, October 5, 1917: 3.
12. *Priamurskie izvestiia*, August 27, 1917: 3–4; August 29, 1917: 3–4.
13. *Izvestiia Vladivostokskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Soldatskikh Deputatov*, November 1, 1917: 1, 3; November 9, 1917: 1; *Priamurskie izvestiia*, October 28, 1917: 6; October 29, 1917: 2; October 31, 1917: 2–4; November 2, 1917: 3; November 5, 1917: 2; November 30, 1917: 4.
14. *Priamurskie vedomosti*, March 28, 1917: 5; *Priamurskie izvestiia*, August 12, 1917: 1; August 17, 1917: 2; August 20, 1917: 2; (Chernomaz, 2009, pp. 283, 367–369).
15. *Priamurskie izvestiia*, September 23, 1917: 2; November 2, 1917: 2; November 11, 1917: 4; November 16, 1917: 3; November 24, 1917: 4; December 2, 1917: 3; (Tsytkin et al., 1933 pp. 19–25).

16. *Priamurskie izvestiia*, December 12, 1917: 3; (Popov, n.d.).
17. *Golos revoliutsii* [The Voice of the Revolution], January 20, 1918; February 15, 1918; February 27, 1918; *Odesskiiye novosti*, March 1, 1918; *Malen'kii odesskii listok* [Small Odessa paper], January 19, 1918; DAOO, f. P-2, op. 1, d. 143, l. 28-29 (Memoirs of Party members); RGASPI (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History), f. 70, op. 3, d. 60, l. 1–38 (Istpart TsK VKP[b]: Memoirs); (Baker, 2016; Pipes, 1964, pp. 122–123).
18. Albert Rhys Williams (1969, pp. 44, 307–309) described Krasnoshchekov very favorably yet stressed his non-proletarian background of a lawyer and an educator. According to Williams, Krasnoshchekov concealed his belonging to the middle class and was popular among the workers who perceived him as one of their kind.
19. *Izvestiia Vladivostokskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Soldatskikh Deputatov*, December 20, 1917: 2–3; December 21, 1917: 2; December 30, 1917: 1; RGIA DV (Russian State Historical Archive of the Far East), f. R-2,422, op. 1, d. 573, l. 22–23 (S. Kh. Bulygin, The First Soviets in the Far East, 1917–1918); (Popov, n.d.; Tsypkin et al., 1933, pp. 29–32).
20. *Izvestiia Vladivostokskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Soldatskikh Deputatov*, January 6, 1918: 1; *Zabaikal'skii rabochii* [Transbaikalian worker], January 4, 1918: 2; January 5, 1918: 2–3; January 6, 1918: 2; (Petrov & Plotnikova, 2011, p. 155; Tsypkin et al., 1933, pp. 31–36).
21. *Malen'kie odesskie novosti* [Small Odessa news], January 26, 1918: 5; *Malen'kii odesskii listok*, January 19, 1918; DAOO, f. P-2, op. 1, d. 143, l. 28-29 (Memoirs of Party members).
22. *Molot* [Hammer], December 23, 1917: 22–23.
23. DAOO, f. P-2, op. 1, d. 1005, l. 1 (Memoirs of Khaim Ryt).
24. DAOO, f. R-3,829, op. 1, d. 126b, l. 36 (Odessa Soviet of Workers' Deputies).
25. DAOO, f. P-2, op. 1, d. 143, l. 41–42 (Memoirs of Party members).
26. DAOO, f. R-3,829, op. 1, d. 31a, l. 9–10 (Odessa Soviet of Workers' Deputies).
27. *Proiug*, February 7 (20), 1918: 3.
28. DAOO, f. R-3,829, op. 1, d. 31a, l. 15 (Odessa Soviet of Workers' Deputies).
29. RGASPI, f. 70, op. 3, d. 61, l. 10 (Istpart TsK VKP[b]: Memoirs).
30. Later on, he had to explain his policy in the Bolshevik party headquarters, see RGASPI, f. 70, op. 3, d. 60, l. 17-18 (Istpart TsK VKP[b]: Memoirs).
31. DAOO, f. R-3,829, op. 1, d. 126b, l. 37 (Odessa Soviet of Workers' Deputies). In Petrograd the change of power was similar. There most of the new commissariats were merged in the old ministries as well. Most of the civil servants were able to stay in their former position (Altrichter, 1996, p. 17).
32. DAOO, f. P-2, op. 1, d. 143, l. 21 (Memoirs of Party members); GARF, f. 130, op. 2, d. 494, l. 135 (Sovnarkom).
33. DAOO, f. P-2, op. 1, d. 1370, l. 1-11 (Memoirs of Party members).
34. RGIA DV, f. R-919, op. 1, d. 6, l. 10–12 (A. M. Krasnoshchekov, The October Revolution, the Civil War, and the struggle against foreign intervention in the Far East, 1917–1922, dictated to A. N. Gelasimova in 1932).
35. RGIA DV, f. R-919, op. 1, d. 6, l. 6, 12, 16-17 (A. M. Krasnoshchekov, The October Revolution, the Civil War, and the struggle against foreign intervention in the Far East, 1917–1922, dictated to A. N. Gelasimova in 1932).
36. RGIA DV, f. R-786, op. 1, d. 7, l. 136 (From Sovnarkom to the Far Eastern Territorial Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, May 15, 1918).

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