

Russia's Peasants in Revolution and Civil War

How did peasants experience and help guide Russia's war, revolution, and civil war? Why in the end did most agree to live as part of the Bolshevik regime? Taking the First World War to the end of the Civil War as a unified era of revolution, this book shows how peasant society and peasants' conceptions of themselves as citizens in the nation evolved in a period of total war, mass revolutionary politics, and civil breakdown. Aaron Retish reveals that the fateful decision by individuals to join the Revolution or to accommodate their lifestyle within it gave the Bolsheviks the resources and philosophical foundation on which to build the Soviet experiment and reshape international politics. He argues that peasants wanted more than land from the Revolution; they wanted to be active citizens. This is an important contribution to our understanding of the nature of the Russian Revolution and peasant—state relations.

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# Russia's Peasants in Revolution and Civil War

Citizenship, Identity, and the Creation of the Soviet State, 1914–1922

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### Note on terms and usage

Dates through January 1918 are given in Russia's Julian calendar, which ran thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar. Russia adopted the Gregorian calendar in February 1918 and dates from that point forward reflect the change. I use the Library of Congress system of transliteration for Russian, Udmurt, and Mari except for names commonly known in English (for example, Trotsky instead of Trotskii). I have eliminated the soft sign at the end of place names (Kazan instead of Kazan') to make the text flow better. For style and readability, I have tried to keep foreign terms to a minimum and anglicise most plurals. This is a provincial history and I often refer to the province (guberniia), the districts (uezdy) of the province, and the rural administrative townships (volosti) within the districts. As volosts appear so often and an accurate English translation is clunky, I use the Russian term throughout the text without the soft sign (volost, instead of volost'). In the revolutionary era, Russia's peasants travelled in versts (approximately 1.07 kilometres), measured grain in puds (approximately 36 pounds or 16.4 kilograms) and funts (approximately .90 pounds or 0.41 kilograms) and marked off land in desiatinas (approximately 2.7 acres).

I use the following abbreviations when I refer to Russian archival materials: f. for collection (*fond*), op. for inventory (*opis'*), d. for file (*delo*), l. and ll. for folio and folios (*list* and *listy*), and ob. for verso (*oborot*).



Frontmatter

More information

## Glossary

artel cooperative organization of peasants

Cheka Extraordinary Commission for the Struggle

against Counter-Revolution and Sabotage

derevnia village fel'dsher paramedic

gubispolkom provincial executive committee

ispolkom executive committee of soviet or committee

kolkhoz collective farm

kombed(y) committee(s) of the poor peasantry

Komuch Committee of Members of the Constituent

Assembly. Anti-Bolshevik regime in the Lower

Volga in 1918

kustar' peasant handicraft

kumyshka alcoholic home-brewed ritual drink associated

with Udmurts and Maris

Narkomnats
Narkomprod
People's Commissariat of Nationalities
People's Commissariat of Food Supply
People's Commissariat of Enlightenment
People's Commissariat of Agriculture
NKVD
People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs

obshchina land commune

otkhodnichestvo network of peasant out-migration to the factories

or urban areas

otkhodnik peasant migrant worker

prigovor(y) resolution(s) passed by village, communal or

volost assembly

Prikomuch The Urals Region Committee of Members of the

Constituent Assembly. Anti-Bolshevik regime

centred in Viatka in 1918

razverstka compulsory levy of grain and goods

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x Glossary

selo village, usually a larger village that houses the

main volost religious building

skhod village, commune, or volost assembly

soldatka soldier's wife

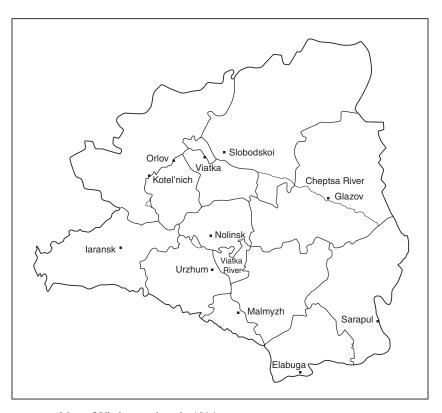
SR member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party

starosta village elder starshina volost elder

zavod factory or factory town

zemstvo semi-autonomous local governmental body





Map of Viatka province in 1914



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#### Acknowledgements

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