These differences were irreconcilable and eventually turned into open conflict once revolution was at hand.

While these soviets were planning their vision for the future of Russia, anger with the Czarist regime had finally boiled over into outright revolution in February of 1917. The February Revolution, unlike the revolution of 1905, actually deposed the Czar and created a new republican Russia. Led by Georgy Lvov and Alexander Kerensky, this provisional government would ultimately fail to solve the multitude of problems Russia faced, priming the way for an eventual Bolshevik takeover less than a year later. Of all of the reasons that the provisional government was overthrown, the First World War was perhaps the biggest. Despite the unpopularity of the war, Kerensky did not support the idea of a harsh peace treaty, and thus decided to continue fighting. This was disastrous for them, as "The ministries of Lvov and Kerensky were deposed largely because they wanted to continue the struggle against the Central Powers."[6]

On November 7 (October 25 according to the Julian calendar still in place in Russia at the time), an armed uprising led by Vladimir Lenin took the city of St. Petersburg in a largely bloodless coup, officially ending the provisional government of Kerensky and his Socialist Revolutionaries. Following this, the Bolsheviks began systematically tightening their control over the government, although they still allowed the constituent assembly elections in late November of 1917. This put them at a disadvantage, however, when the Russian people elected a majority of Social Revolutionaries as opposed to Bolsheviks. Lenin finally realized that the new assembly would not support the idea of a Soviet-style republic, and promptly disbanded it, stating that he preferred instead the power of the soviets. This created a significant challenge for the Mensheviks, who were forced to adopt a new strategy to oust the Bolsheviks and regain control by winning majorities in the city soviets. According to Vladimir Brovkin, this strategy was a remarkable success for the Mensheviks, as the Bolsheviks "suffered resounding defeats in the elections to the city soviets in most provincial capitals of European Russia."[7]

6. Litman, Simon. "Revolutionary Russia." *The American Political Science Review* 12, no. 2 (1918): 189.

7. Brovkin, Vladimir. "The Mensheviks' Political Comeback: The Elections to the Provincial City Soviets in Spring 1918." *Russian Review* 42, no. 1 (1983): 3.

Lenin, not wanting the Bolsheviks to lose power, officially prohibited political parties from Russian soviets, with the exception of the Bolshevik party. This was the final straw for the Mensheviks, who abandoned party politics and began an armed struggle to regain power in Russia. This directly precipitated the outbreak of the Russian Civil War, which pitted the Red Army of the Bolsheviks against the White Armies of the royalists, Mensheviks, and anti-revolutionaries.[8]

The Russian Civil War was one of the biggest tests of the new Bolshevik-led Soviet government, which faced famine, manpower shortages, economic devastation, and a war on multiple fronts. Indeed, by the summer of 1918, the lands still directly controlled by the Bolshevik government had been reduced to the area around Moscow, while they continued to fight a defensive war against the White Armies. By early 1919, the war looked to be going extremely poorly for the Red Army, who had been repeatedly pushed back by anti-revolutionaries on all three fronts.[9]

It was during this time that Lenin penned *The Soviets at Work*, documenting his struggles to keep the country alive in the face of so many challenges. First published in April of 1918, Lenin's work is an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at the bureaucracy and politics that afflicted a country torn apart by revolution, and was chiefly concerned with a number of issues, particularly the industrial organization of Russia, convincing the majority of the population that its policies are correct, and the suppression of resistance. The industrial organization of Russia was the broadest and most important issue to overcome, and was further divided into three main economic difficulties: "to raise the productivity of labor, to establish strict and uniform state accounting and control of production and distribution, and to actually socialize production."[10]

To help solve these economic difficulties, Lenin calls for the use of scientists and bourgeois specialists to help the communist cause, a surprising turn of events considering the anti-capitalist sentiments running through the rhetoric of the Bolshevik party. However, this makes more sense when Lenin explains his motives in *The Soviets at*

8. Brovkin, The Mensheviks' Political Comeback, 3-4.

9. Mawdsley, Evan. The Russian Civil War. (New York: Pegasus Books, 2007), 194.

10. Lenin, Vladimir I. *The soviets at work: the international position of the Russian soviet republic and the fundamental problems of the socialist revolution*. 4th ed. (New York: Rand School of Social Science, 1918), 6.