

The background of the book cover is a reproduction of Raphael's fresco 'The School of Athens'. It depicts various ancient Greek philosophers in a classical architectural setting. Plato is on the left, pointing upwards, while Aristotle is in the center foreground, gesturing downwards. Other figures like Socrates, Pythagoras, and Euclid are visible in the background.

# RHYME AND REASON

Geopolitics in a changing world  
Analysis and predictions

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**PUTIN, BREAD, AND PEACE:  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

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**W**omen are the true revolutionaries. They went to the streets and asked for bread and peace (хлѣбъ и миръ) in Petrograd (now Saint Petersburg, Russia) on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1917. Their protest was so effective that International Women's Day has been celebrated on the same day ever since. Lenin and Trotsky were taken aback and did not expect the revolution to begin with women. The Czar, Nicholas II, abdicated also because of these women just a week later, on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1917.

The women of Petrograd were fed up with war. It had taken away fathers, husbands, and sons. Until the last stages of a lost war, women are not mobilized. A war-time city is easy to recognize since its appearance is remarkably feminine. The political discussions are led and decided by them while the men die in droves at the front.

The 8<sup>th</sup> March reminds one that real revolutions are led by women or least require their active participation. Aristophanes, the greatest ancient Greek comic playwright, wrote *Lysistrata* in 411BC, a comedy about women who go on a sex-strike to stop men from fighting the Peloponnesian war, between Athens and Sparta 431-404. Aristophanes had noticed the central role of women in society to promote change during a war. In 1917, Anatoly Luncharsky (People's Commissar for Education) wanted that the 'timely Aristophanic comedy' to 'find its place in the worker's theatres'.

The women of Petrograd on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1917, asked for bread and peace. The simple slogan indicates the absence of men in their cities or in the country but also the collapse of the distribution system which comes from the militarization of society and especially of the state budget.

Putin today appears to have militarized the budget of the Russian Federation. Some estimates claim that it is 7.1% of GDP in 2024 (more than three times each NATO ally). There are questions about the effectiveness of the supply chain and distribution of goods within Russia. The women's slogan of bread and peace appear to bring us back to one hundred years ago.

Russia in 1917 collapsed and disintegrated into civil war. While women today may take a leading role in expressing discontent, China will prevent a disintegration of the Russian Federation. China needs the transport routes which connect it to Europe, via Russia. That means China will force a settlement which will open the border between Russia and the European Union. If Putin will not do it, he may be replaced. Will the next president of Russia end the war and restore the distribution of necessities? Bread and peace. That is the true revolution. Women are leading it.