Jetton "Long Live the Constituent Assembly", Provisional Government period, 1917.

In brass, measures 35.6 mm in height (incl. eyelet), 26.5 mm in width. The obverse features an allegorical female figure sitting on a crescent moon with a flag in her arms and the date 1917. The reverse has lettering in Art Nouveau style: ■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ("Long Live the Constituent Assembly".)

The jetton is in excellent condition. There are no significant dings, scratches or other wear. The raised details of the artwork and inscription are beautifully crisp. A very good amount of original "gilt" mint luster is clearly visible in recessed areas on both sides. There are a couple of tiny blemishes that do not detract from the overall appearance of this piece, while the toning to the brass is uniform and attractive.

The Provisional Government came about as the temporary measure after the downfall of the Russian Monarchy in early 1917. Its ultimate goal was to establish the Constituent Assembly - i.e. fully fledged representative government. Due to the constant squabbles within the Provisional Government over the details of future laws and elections, this promise was not fulfilled soon enough. The breakup of the Russian Army and growing anarchy throughout the country led to the left-leaning elements in the government gradually taking over, while the attempted coup within the higher ranks of the military compelled the Provisional Government to arm the radicalized, Communist-dominated Soviets as protectors. This led to the coalition of Bolsheviks, Anarchists and Left Social-Democrats (SR) easily usurping power in November 1917 in the so-called "Great October Socialist Revolution."

Initially, the new Bolshevik-controlled government promised to carry on with the plan for the Assembly. When the elections were held later that month however, its results were not in favor of the radicals. Lenin in particular had been growing edgy about the idea of representative government. The Bolsheviks then simply clamped down and in January 1918, after the Assembly's first few hours in session, permanently dissolved it thus ending Russia's first experiment in parliamentary democracy.

After the years of Civil War, Red Terror and purges, a mere mentioning of the Constituent Assembly would be considered more than a little bit politically incorrect. Very few people were brave or reckless enough to own any memorabilia specifically dedicated to it. Consequently, Constitutional Assembly jettons are exceedingly rare, at least the ones in good condition - not dug up after a century in the ground.

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$120.00

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