Revolution and Civil War in Russia

Objectives

- Explain the causes of the March Revolution.
- Describe the goals of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the November Revolution.
- Outline how the Communists defeated their opponents in Russia's civil war.
- Describe the goals of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the November Revolution.
- Analyze how the Communist state developed under Lenin.

Terms, People, and Places

- Russkiy narod
- V. I. Lenin
- Bolsheviks
- March Revolution
- Civil War
- Soviet
- Proletariat
- March 1917
- World War I
- Nicholas II
- Duma
- Romanov dynasty
- Tsar
- War Minister
- Right(bytes)
- Bolshevik
- Commisar
- Cheka
- Decracy
- Czar
- Czars
- Nihilists
- Socialists
- Socialist Revolutionaries
- Socialist
- Liberty
- Social Democrats
- Labor
- Social Democrats
- People's
- Russian
- Duma

Prepare to Read

Voices From the Front

"Oh War Minister!

We, soldiers from various regiments, . . . ask you to end the war and its bloodshed at any cost. . . . If this is not done, then believe us when we say that we will take our weapons and head out for our own hearts to save our fathers, mothers, sons, and children from death by starvation (which is right). And if we cannot save them, then we’d rather die阵 then die of our native land that has killed, poisoned, or frozen to death somewhere and cast into the earth like a dog.

—Letter from the front, 1917

The voices from the front joined voices at home, calling for change in Russia.

Focus Question: How did two revolutions and a civil war bring about Communist control of Russia?

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The March Revolution Ends Tsarism

Teach

Instruct

■ Introduce: Vocabulary Builder

Have students read the Vocabulary Builder term and definition. Ask them to predict how Russian soldiers felt about fighting without crucial equipment.

■ Teach

Draw a flowchart with three boxes on the board. Label the boxes Problems Before the War, Impact of the War, and End of Tsarism. Have students take turns coming to the board to note information from this subsection in the chart.

■ Quick Activity

Divide students into groups. Ask each group to create a list of problems that the provisional government faced after the tsar stepped down. Then, using the Think-Write-Pair-Share strategy (TE, p. T23), have students share their answers. Tell students to read further to see how the provisional government did or did not deal with these problems.

Independent Practice

Have students study the images on this page, and then reread the first paragraph under the section title again. Ask students to write a paragraph explaining why Tsarina Alexandra might have believed that the people would never revolt against the tsar.

Monitor Progress

As students write their paragraphs, check that they understand that although the tsar and his family were showered with celebrations, they had little contact with the Russian people themselves, and as did not understand their discontent.

Answers

Caption

The image of Rasputin shows that Tsarina Alexandra was out of touch with reality, while the Fabergé egg represents a detached royal family with no connection to their subjects.

Debates on the front, shortages at home, and poor decisions by the tsar and government leaders.

Solutions for All Learners

Advanced Readers

Read to students that World War I strained Russia’s resources. The army suffered defeats, mass desertion, and violent rebellion. Ask students to assume the role of a newspaper reporter accompanying the Russian troops. Have them research and write an article describing how and why Russian troops turned against their officers and the tsar to become the Bolsheviks.

Gifted and Talented Students

Ask students to research and address such factors as socio-economic conditions, Bolshevik propaganda, conditions at the front, and the relations between the troops and their officers.
Lenin and the Bolsheviks

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870–1924) was born in 1870 to a middle-class family. He adopted the name Lenin when he became a revolutionary. When he was 17, his older brother was arrested and hanged for plotting to kill the tsar. The execution branded his family as a threat to the state and made the young Vladimir hate the tsarist government.

A Brilliant Revolutionary

As a young man, Lenin read the works of Karl Marx and participated in student demonstrations. He opposed Marxist ideas among factory workers along with other socialists, including Nadezhda Krupskaya (nah DYEZ duh kroop SKY uh), the daughter of a poor noble family. In 1895, Lenin and Krupskaya were arrested and sent to Siberia. During their imprisonment, they were married. After their release, they went into exile in Switzerland. There they worked tirelessly to spread revolutionary ideas.

Lenin’s View of Marx

Lenin adopted Marxist ideas to fit Russian conditions. Marx had predicted that the industrial working class would rise spontaneously to overthrow capitalism. But Russia did not have a large urban proletariat. Instead, Lenin called for an elite group to lead the revolution and set up a “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Though this elite revolutionary party represented a small percentage of socialists, Lenin gave them the name Bolsheviks, meaning “majority.”

In Western Europe, many leading socialists had come to think that socialism could be achieved through gradual and moderate reforms such as higher wages, increased suffrage, and social welfare programs. A group of socialists in Russia, the Mensheviks, favored this approach. The Bolsheviks rejected it. To Lenin, reforms of this nature were merely capitalist tricks to repress the masses. Only revolution, he said, could bring about needed changes.

In March 1917, Lenin was still in exile. As Russia stumbled into revolution, Germany saw a chance to weaken its enemy by helping Lenin return to Russia in a special train. He greeted a crowd of fellow exiles and activists with this cry: “Long live the world-wide Socialist revolution!”

The November Revolution Brings the Bolsheviks to Power

Lenin threw himself into the work of furthering the revolution. Another dynamic Marxist revolutionary, Leon Trotsky, helped lead the fight. To the hungry, war-weary Russian people, Lenin and the Bolsheviks promised “Peace, Land, and Bread.”

The Provisional Government’s Mistakes

Meanwhile, the provisional government, led by Alexander Kerensky, continued the war effort and failed to deal with land reform. These deci- sions proved fatal. Most Russians were tired of war. Troops at the front were deserting in droves. Pogonina wanted land, while city workers demanded an end to the desperate shortages.

A Hard Man to Kill

The death of Gregory Rasputin was perhaps even more bizarre than his strange life. Nobles feared his influence in the court. To get rid of him, in December 1916, a group of nobles lured Rasputin to the palace of Prince Felix Yusupov, where they served him poisoned cakes and wine. Rasputin was not affected. Next, Yusupov shot him through the chest with a revolver. Rasputin fell, but when the conspirators examined the body, Rasputin got to his feet and began to attack Yusupov. Then Rasputin attempted to escape. He ran outside, but was shot again. The conspirators then clubbed him unconscious. After flinging Rasputin into the icy Neva River, they watched him sink. Later, the body of Rasputin—poisoned, shot, and badly beaten—was recovered from the river and autopsied. The cause of death? Drowning.

Answers

History Background

A Hard Man to Kill: The death of Gregory Rasputin was perhaps even more bizarre than his strange life. Nobles feared his influence in the court. To get rid of him, in December 1916, a group of nobles lured Rasputin to the palace of Prince Felix Yusupov, where they served him poisoned cakes and wine. Rasputin was not affected. Next, Yusupov shot him through the chest with a revolver. Rasputin fell, but when the conspirators examined the body, Rasputin got to his feet and began to attack Yusupov. Then Rasputin attempted to escape. He ran outside, but was shot again. The conspirators then clubbed him unconscious. After flinging Rasputin into the icy Neva River, they watched him sink. Later, the body of Rasputin—poisoned, shot, and badly beaten—was recovered from the river and autopsied. The cause of death? Drowning.

BIOGRAPHY

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Lenin (1870–1924) was the son of a teacher and his wife who lived in a little town on the Volga River. Vladimir lived with his parents and five siblings in a rented wing of a large house. By all accounts he was a happy child. Vladimir excelled at school and began to question the tsarist government. He attended university in St. Petersburg. As a student, he was interested in politics.

Spain Sample: The execution of his brother caused Lenin to question and reject the tsarist government.

Germany hoped that Lenin would stir up trouble in Russia and disrupt Russia’s war effort, which he did.
The November Revolution Brings the Bolsheviks to Power

Instruct
- Introduce Ask students to read the introductory sentences and the three black headings under The November Revolution Brings the Bolsheviks to Power. Have students predict what they will learn under each heading. Then have them read to find out whether their predictions were accurate.
- Teach Using the Idea Wave strategy (TE, p. 722), have students discuss the changes in government. Ask What mistakes did the provisional government make? (It continued the war against public opinion and failed to resolve land disputes.) How did the Bolsheviks come to power? (The Russian people started to revolt. The Bolsheviks, promising peace, land, and bread, took over Petrograd and Moscow, ousting the provisional government almost bloodlessly.) What changes did the Bolsheviks make immediately? (They ended private ownership of land, gave land to peasants to use, and gave workers control of factories and mines.)
- Analyzing the Visuals Draw students’ attention to the Infographic on this page. Ask students to discuss how the events of World War I influenced events in Russia.

Independent Practice
Ask students to write a paragraph explaining why Lenin’s promise of “Peace, Land, and Bread” was appealing to the Russian people.

Monitor Progress
Read aloud the black headings in this subsection and ask students to summarize the content under each.

Answer
The soldiers, workers, and peasants did not support the provisional government because the provisional government continued the war and did not address land reform.

Questions
1. How were the Bolsheviks able to seize power from the provisional government?
2. What changes did the Bolsheviks make immediately?
3. What were some of the effects of the Bolshevik takeover?

Differentiated Instruction
- Special Needs
- Less Proficient Readers
- English Language Learners

Use the following study guide resources to help students acquire basic skills:
- Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide
- Adapted Note Taking Study Guide, p. 241
- Adapted Section Summary, p. 242

In July 1917, the government launched the disastrous Kerensky offensive against Germany. By November, according to one official report, the army was “a huge crew of tired, poorly clad, poorly fed, embittered men.” Growing numbers of troops mutinied. Peasants seized land and drove off fearful landlords.

The Bolshevik Takeover
Conditions were ripe for the Bolsheviks to make their move. In November 1917, a group of Red Guards—armed factory workers—joined mutinous sailors from the Russian fleet in attacking the provisional government. In just a matter of days, Lenin’s forces overthrew the provisional government without a struggle.

The Bolsheviks quickly seized power in other cities. In Moscow, it took a week of fighting to blast the local government out of the walled Kremlin, the former tsarist center of government. Moscow became the Bolsheviks’ capital, and the Kremlin their headquarters. “We shall now occupy ourselves in Russia in building up a proletarian socialist state,” declared Lenin. The Bolsheviks ended private ownership of land and distributed land to peasants. Workers were given control of factories and mines. A new red flag with an entwined hammer and sickle symbolized union between workers and peasants. Throughout the land, millions thought they had at last gained control over their own lives. In fact, the Bolsheviks—renamed Communists—would soon become their new masters.

Checkpoint
How were the Bolsheviks able to seize power from the provisional government?

Special Needs

Less Proficient Readers

English Language Learners

Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide
Adapted Note Taking Study Guide, p. 241
Adapted Section Summary, p. 242

INFOGRAPHIC

1914
July
Russia enters World War I.
August
Germans defeat Russians at the Battle of Tannenberg.
1915
June–September
Russians retreat from German-Austrian offensive.
1917
March
The March Revolution forces Tsar Nicholas to abdicate. The Duma sets up a provisional government.
April
Lenin returns to Russia to instigate revolution.
November
The provisional government fails to end the war and resolve internal problems. The November Revolution brings Bolsheviks to power.

Solutions for All Learners

Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide
Adapted Note Taking Study Guide, p. 241
Adapted Section Summary, p. 242
Reds appealed to nationalism and urged Russians to drive out the Whites. Japan seized land in East Asia that tsarist Russia had once many. Britain, France, and the United States sent forces to help the might overthrow the Communists and support the fight against Sus, and Central Asia were eventually subdued.

Latvia, and Lithuania broke free, but nationalists in Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Central Asia were eventually subdued. The Allies intervened in the civil war. They hoped that the Whites might overthrow the Communique and support the fight against German Britain, France, and the United States sent forces to help the Whites. Japan secured land in East Asia that tsarist Russia had once claimed. The Allied presence, however, did little to help the Whites. The Reds appealed to nationalism and urged Russians to drive out the foreigners. In the long run, the Allied invasion fed Communist distrust of the West.

Opposing Forces: For three years, civil war raged between the “Reds,” as the Communists were known, and the counterrevolutionary “Whites.” The “White” armies were made up of tsarist imperial officers, Mensheviks, democrats, and others, all of whom were united only by their desire to defeat the Bolsheviks. Nationalist groups from many of the former empire’s non-Russian regions joined them in their fight. Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania broke free, but nationalists in Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Central Asia were eventually subdued.

1918 March Bolsheviks sign Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

June–July Civil war erupts between the Reds (Bolsheviks) and the Whites; the Reds execute the tsar and his family.

November All-Russian Congress (commissars) meets in Petrograd.

1920 November Communist (Red) government wins Civil war, after years of bloody fighting.

Thinking Critically
1. Identify Central issues: Describe Russia’s performance in World War I.
2. Draw Conclusions: How did involvement in World War I affect events within Russia?

Link to Geography

A Land of Many Nations Geography had long favored the growth of the Russian Empire. The vast land stretching from Moscow had few natural obstacles to halt the advance of the Russian armies. For nearly four centuries, the empire grew steadily. This growth was a mixed blessing, however. In 1897, a census revealed that the Russians were a minority in their own empire. More than half the people under tsarist rule were not Russians. The population included Poles, Finns, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvian, Turkic peoples, and other groups.

Nationalism led to the rise of new political parties among the peoples. In addition to social and economic reform, the parties’ leaders hoped for some degree of self-rule. Radical dreamed of independent nations, which contributed to unrest in the Russian empire.

Vocabulary Builder
withdraw—(with DRAW ul) v. to remove; to leave

1920 November

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Russia Plunges Into Civil War

Instruct

Introduce Display Color Transparency 161: Russia Before and After the Revolution 1914 and 1921. Point out the borders of the Russian Empire before World War I and in 1921. Then point out the line of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Ask How did Russia’s territory change from 1914 to 1921? (Russia lost control of the Baltic States, Finland, and Poland.) Point out that Russia did not lose as much territory as it would have if the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had stood. Ask students to consider how Russians may have felt about losing so much territory. Color Transparencies, 161

Teach Ask: Who were the Reds? (the Communists) the Whites? (a collection of groups who opposed the Reds) How did the Reds motivate the Russian people to support them? (by force and terror)

Quick Activity Show students The Fall of the Tsar From the Witness History Discovery School video program. After watching the video, point out that the Bolsheviks murdered the tsar and his family in captivity. Ask them to explain why the Bolsheviks thought the tsar was dangerous. (He served as a symbol of the old form of government; conservative Whites might have tried to bring him back to power.)

Independent Practice

Have students review Lenin’s promises of Peace, Land, and Bread. “Then have them write a paragraph explaining whether Lenin delivered on these promises by 1921.

Monitor Progress

As students work on their paragraphs, circulate to ensure their answers include examples from the text and show an understanding of Lenin’s actions.

Answers

Thinking Critically

1. Russia performed poorly in the war; it was defeated by the Germans and continually retreated until it eventually withdrew in 1917.
2. Economic conditions got worse, and leaders were preoccupied with matters abroad. Revolutionaries were able to take advantage of the widespread unhappiness and bring about the overthrow of the provisional government.

Chapter 26 Section 5 843
Building the Communist Soviet Union

Instruct

■ Introduce Ask students to recall that the Bolsheviks were an elite party representing just a small percentage of socialists. Based on their reading, ask students to predict how the new government set up by the Bolsheviks will operate after the end of the civil war.

■ Teach Work with students to find evidence in the text to support the following generalizations: (1) In some ways, the Soviet Union remained similar to the old Russian empire. (2) Lenin retreated from pure communism. Write the evidence on the board.

■ Analyzing the Visuals Have students look at the photograph on the next page. Ask them to describe the scene. Then ask How did Lenin’s New Economic Policy address some of the devastation caused by years of warfare? (It allowed for some people to develop economically and survive independent of government assistance.)

Independent Practice

Have students work in groups to write one generalization of their own about the Soviet Union during this period.

Monitor Progress

Check the Reading and Note-Taking Study Guide entries for student understanding. Check answers to map skills questions.

Answer

The Reds used foreign intervention as a rallying point, supplied their troops by taking crops from peasants, trained the Red Army using terror tactics, and controlled the center of Russia.

844 World War I and the Russian Revolution

Brutality was common in the civil war. Counterrevolutionary forces slaughtered captured Communists and tried to assassinate Lenin. The Communists shot the former tsar and tsarina and their five children in July 1918 to keep them from becoming a rallying symbol for counterrevolutionary forces.

War Under Communism

The Communists used terror not only against the Whites, but also to control their own people. They organized the Cheka, a secret police force much like the tsar’s. The Cheka executed ordinary citizens, even if they were only suspected of taking action against the revolution. The Communists also set up a network of forced-labor camps in 1919—which grew under Stalin into the dreaded Gulag. The Communists adopted a policy known as “war communism.” They took over banks, mines, factories, and railroads. Peasants in the countryside were forced to deliver almost all of their crops to feed the army and hungry people in the cities. Peasant laborers were drafted into the military or forced to work in factories. Meanwhile, Trotsky turned the Red Army into an effective fighting force. He used former tsarist officers under the close watch of commissars, Communist party officials assigned to the army to teach party principles and ensure party loyalty. Trotsky’s passionate speeches roused soldiers to fight. So did the order to shoot every tenth man if a unit performed poorly.

The Reds’ position in the center of Russia gave them a strategic advantage. The White armies were forced to attack separately from all sides. They were never able to cooperate effectively with one another. By 1921, the Communists had managed to defeat their scattered foes.

Checkpoint

How did the Red army defeat the White army to end the civil war?

Building the Communist Soviet Union

Russia was in chaos. Millions of people had died since the beginning of World War I. Millions more perished from famine and disease. Lenin faced the enormous problem of rebuilding a shattered state and economy.

New Government, Same Problems

In 1922, Lenin’s Communist government united much of the old Russian empire into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), or Soviet Union. The Communists produced a constitution that seemed both democratic and socialist. It set up an elected legislature, later called the Supreme Soviet, and gave all citizens over 18 the right to vote. All political power, resources, and means of production would belong to workers and peasants. The Soviet Union was a multinational state made up of European and Asian peoples. In theory, all the member republics shared certain equal rights. Reality, however, differed greatly from theory. The Communist party, not the people, reigned supreme. Just as the Russian tsars had, the party used the army and secret police to enforce its will. Russia, which was the largest republic, dominated the other republics.

Lenin’s New Economic Policy

On the economic front, Lenin retreated from his policy of “war communism,” which had brought the economy to near collapse. Under party control, factory and mine output had fallen. Peasants stopped producing grain, knowing the government would only seize it.
In 1921, Lenin adopted the New Economic Policy, or NEP. It allowed some capitalist ventures. Although the state kept control of banks, foreign trade, and large industries, small businesses were allowed to reopen for private profit. The government also stopped confiscating peasants for grain. Under the NEP, peasants held on to small plots of land and freely sold their surplus crops. Lenin’s compromise with capitalism helped the Soviet economy recover and ended armed resistance to the new government. By 1928, food and industrial production climbed back to prewar levels. The standard of living improved, too. But Lenin always saw the NEP as just a temporary retreat from communism. His successor would soon return the Soviet Union to “pure” communism.

Stalin Takes Over

Lenin died in 1924 at the age of 54. His death set off a power struggle among Communist leaders. The chief contenders were Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. Trotsky was a brilliant Marxist thinker, a skillful speaker, and an architect of the Bolshevik Revolution. Stalin, by contrast, was neither a scholar nor an orator. He was, however, a shrewd political operator and behind-the-scenes organizer. Trotsky and Stalin differed on the future of communism. Trotsky urged support for a worldwide revolution against capitalism. Stalin, more cautious, wanted to concentrate on building socialism at home first.

Eventually, Stalin isolated Trotsky within the party and stripped him of party membership. Trotsky fled the country in 1929, but continued to suggest a civil war, the Bolsheviks finally drove the provisional government in place. Trotsky put a provisional government in place. Trotsky urged support for a world-wide revolution against capitalism. Stalin, more cautious, wanted to concentrate on building socialism at home first.

In 1922, Lenin had expressed grave doubts about Stalin’s ambitious plans. Stalin, however, was neither a scholar nor an orator. He was, however, a shrewd political operator and behind-the-scenes organizer. Trotsky and Stalin differed on the future of communism. Trotsky urged support for a worldwide revolution against capitalism. Stalin, more cautious, wanted to concentrate on building socialism at home first.

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In village after village, he noted, “no one…where Russian families were hibernating and waiting for death.”

In the government Lenin set up, the Communist Party, not the people, controlled the government. The economy under the NEP allowed some capitalist ventures.

**Assess and Reteach**

**Assess Progress**
- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.
- Visit Teaching Resources, Unit 6, p. 6.
- To further assess student understanding, use Progress Monitoring Transparencies, 112.

**Reteach**

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary.


**Extend**

Assign half the class the American Revolution and the other half the Russian Revolution. Have each group research the ideology behind their revolution, the manner in which it was carried out, and its legacies. Then, have each group present its research.

**Answer**

In the government Lenin set up, the Communist Party, not the people, controlled the government. The economy under the NEP allowed some capitalist ventures.

**Progress Monitoring Online**

For additional assessment, have students present its research.

**Online Resources**

Web Code: naa-2651.