

# The October Revolution

Why were the Bolsheviks able to come to power? What happened during the Revolution? How did the Bolsheviks manage to gain power without a fight?

# Kornilov Affair, September 1917



- General Lavr G. Kornilov, 1870-1918
- Prime Minister Aleksandr Kerensky
- Hughes apparatus
- Sept. 9: dismissed Kornilov
- Kornilov tried to march on Petrograd
- Stopped by soviet cooperation
- Increased Bolsheviks' popularity
- PG (Kerensky) moved right.
- Masses (“demokratiia”) moved left.

**September 1917**: the Bolsheviks take control of the Petrograd Soviet, and the prominent Bolshevik Leon Trotsky, leader of the Red Guards, becomes its president.



# Build up to Revolution

- By September 1917 the Bolsheviks had a majority in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets (although they weren't necessarily the most popular party).
- Less cooperation between the Soviet and the Provisional Government.

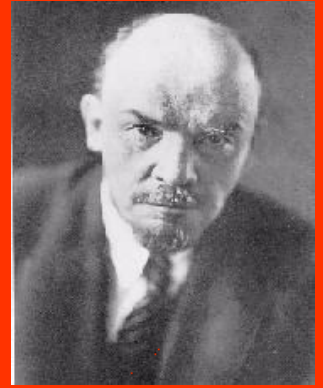
- Lenin continued to call for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and said that the time was right for the Bolsheviks to launch a takeover attempt.



“History will not forgive us if we do not assume power” Lenin



# Kerensky and Lenin



- Kerensky tried to strengthen the Provisional Government by re-shuffling the cabinet and proposing a “Pre-Parliament” be set up before the constituent assembly election.
- Lenin wanted a revolution before the meeting of the All Russian Congress of Soviets (late October) and the November Constituent Assembly elections, because he felt these might limit the Bolsheviks power.

# October (1917) Revolution

- Military-Revolutionary Committee
- Second Congress of Soviets
  - Bolshevik majority
- Kerensky cracked down
  - Sacked Min. of War Verkhovskii.
  - ordered 2/3 of garrison to front.
  - shut down Bolsheviks' newspapers
- Lenin convinced Bolsheviks to seize power.
- Red Guards took key points of Petrograd.

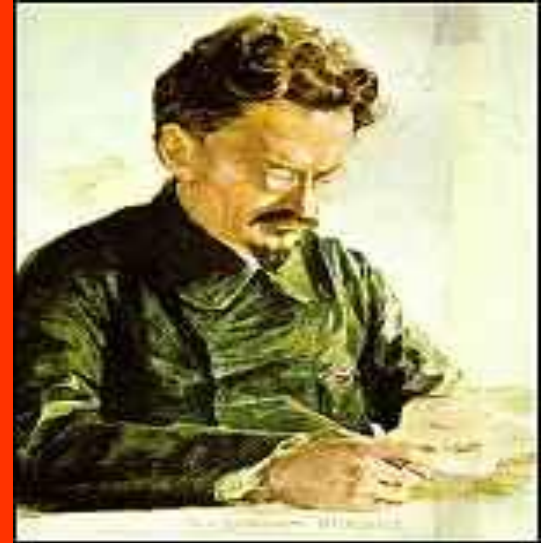


# Revolution begins!!!!

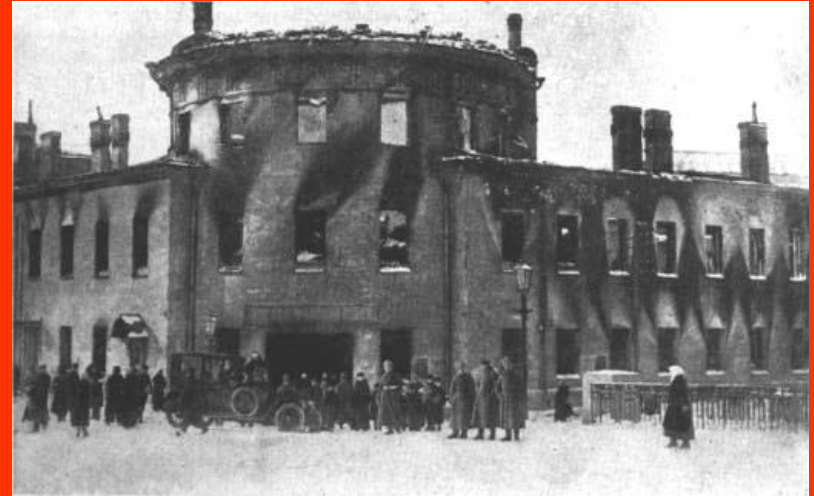


- Lenin reacted to Kerensky's actions by ordering the uprising to begin.
- Trotsky had organised the plans for the action as he was chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and part of the Military Revolution Committee (MRC).

- Trotsky ordered the Red Guards to seize key points in Petrograd.



-7. November (24 October) 1917. – Bolsheviks occupied key locations in Petrograd; Kerensky fled from the Winter Palace in search for supporting troops.





# Red Guards, October 1917





## Kronstadt sailors



**25<sup>th</sup> October:** In the early hours of the morning, Trotsky's Red Guards helped by the Kronstadt sailors move quickly to take over the bridges and the telephone exchange.

They cut off Petrograd from the rest of Russia.

# Aurora fires a shell

Next, the Red Guards take over government buildings, the banks and the railway station.

Finally, at 9.40pm, signalled by a shell fired from the cruiser Aurora, they move in and take over the Winter Palace, the headquarters of the Provisional Government.

There is no resistance.



# 25 – 27 October

- The Bolsheviks fought for control of Petrograd – although there was little actual fighting because the Provisional Government lacked military support.



# The Winter Palace falls -Victory for the Bolsheviks.

- The Red Guards took over the Winter Palace and Kerensky fled Petrograd.
- 27 October – Lenin announced that the Bolshevik led Petrograd Soviet had seized power in the name of all Soviets.



# MilRevKom's declaration, 25 October (7 November) 1917

Отъ Военно - Революціоннаго Комитета при Петроградскомъ Совѣтѣ  
Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ.

## Къ Гражданамъ Россіи.

Временное Правительство низложено. Государственная власть перешла въ руки органа Петроградскаго Совѣта Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ Военно-Революціоннаго Комитета, стоящаго во главѣ Петроградскаго пролетаріата и гарнизона.

Дѣло, за которое боролся народъ: немедленное предложеніе демократическаго мира, отмена помѣщичьей собственности на землю, рабочій контроль надъ производствомъ, созданіе Совѣтскаго Правительства — это дѣло обеспечено.

**ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТЪ РЕВОЛЮЦІЯ РАБОЧИХЪ, СОЛДАТЪ И КРЕСТЬЯНЪ!**

Военно-Революціонный Комитетъ  
при Петроградскомъ Совѣтѣ  
Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ.

25 октября 1917 г. 10 ч. утра.

"To the Citizens of Russia!

The Provisional Government has been deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies - the Revolutionary Military Committee, which heads the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison. The cause for which the people have fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production, and the creation of a Soviet Government - this cause has been secured.

Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants!"

# Why were the Bolsheviks successful?

## **Role of Lenin**

Organised party

Published Pravda

Avoided capture and organised the coup.

Popular slogans to raise moral and public awareness

## **Role of Trotsky**

Joined Bolsheviks after July Days

Masterminded the events of the coup

Great military leader organised the Red Guard

## **Provisional Government**

Kerensky knew of Trotsky's plan but had lost support of the army and so was helpless

# The Bolsheviks take power

The Bolsheviks took control of the government in an almost bloodless coup between Oct 24 and 26 1917.

## Land

Land taken from Church, Nobility etc and given to peasants. Land not taken over by the State (yet)

## Press

All non -Bolshevik papers were banned

The first decrees

## Factories

All factories put under control of workers committees

## Peace

Lenin ends the war sends Trotsky to negotiate with Germany. Treaty of Brest-Litvosk

Establishes the CHEKA



# October (1917) Revolution

- Proclaimed new government: Soviet of People's Commissars (SovNarKom)
  - Decree on Land
  - Decree on Peace
  - Hold CA elections

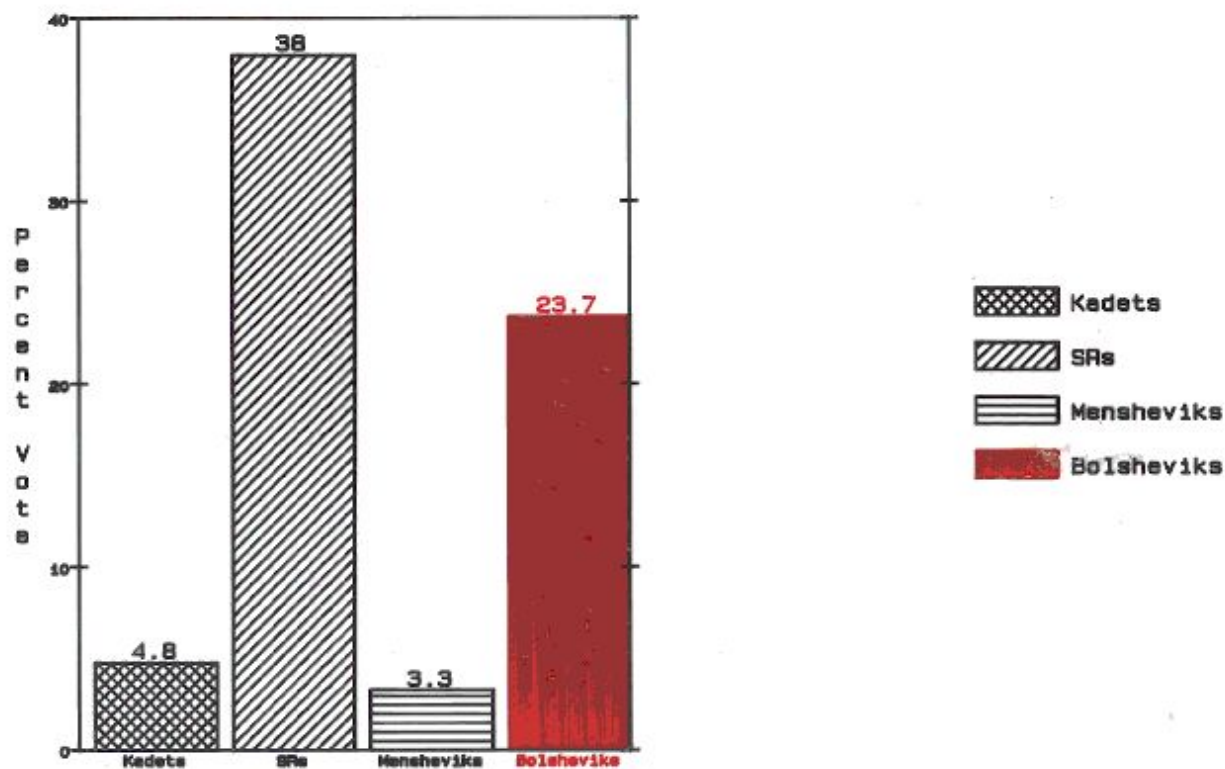


# “All Power to the Soviets!”



- Lack of a majority support for the Bolsheviks; Constituent Assembly elections;
- January 1918. – Red Guards dispersed the Assembly.

Elections to Constituent Assembly: Grand Totals



SOURCE: Oliver Henry Radkey, *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 78-80.

# 1. Who was the Bolshevik leader?

A. Kerensky

B. Lenin

C. Trotsky

## 2. What was Lenin's slogan in April 1917?

- A. All power to the Soviets.
- B. The dictatorship of the Proletariat.
- C. From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.

### 3. What were the "July Days"?

- A. The brief period of success in Russia's offensive against Austria.
- B. An attempted Bolshevik revolution.
- C. The days Lenin spent travelling across Europe to be smuggled into Russia.

**4. Who led the attempted revolt of August 1917, which was stopped mainly by the Bolsheviks?**

- A. Kolchak
- B. Yudenich
- C. Kornilov

## 5. What was the name for the Bolshevik Army?

- A. Red Guards
- B. People's Militia
- C. Kronstadt sailors



## **6. What did Trotsky become in September 1917?**

1. Minister of War
2. President of the St Petersburg Soviet
3. Commissar for Foreign Affairs

**7. What did the Bolsheviks take over on the night of 24-25 October 1917?**

- A. The Winter Palace
- B. The St Petersburg Soviet
- C. The bridges and telephone exchange

## 8. What was the Aurora?

1. Coloured lights in the night sky at the magnetic poles, caused by solar flares.
2. The cruiser that fired a shell signalling the attack on the Winter Palace.
3. The natural authority and "presence" of Lenin when he was giving a speech.