

Slide 1

The Russian Revolution

Slide 2



Slide 3



In better times, the departure of the Romanov dynasty might have paved the way for a brighter future for Russia.

Following the collapse of the Czarist regime in the February 1917 Revolution, a provisional government led by Aleksander Kerensky came to power in Russia, and his moderate liberal Government that replaced the tsarist regime did introduce some liberal reforms, including freedoms of assembly and the press, and amnesties for political prisoners.

However, in the face of international pressure from Russia's former allies, the Kerensky Provisional Government refused to end Russian involvement in the war and sought to continue the war with Germany, with a better organised Russian army.

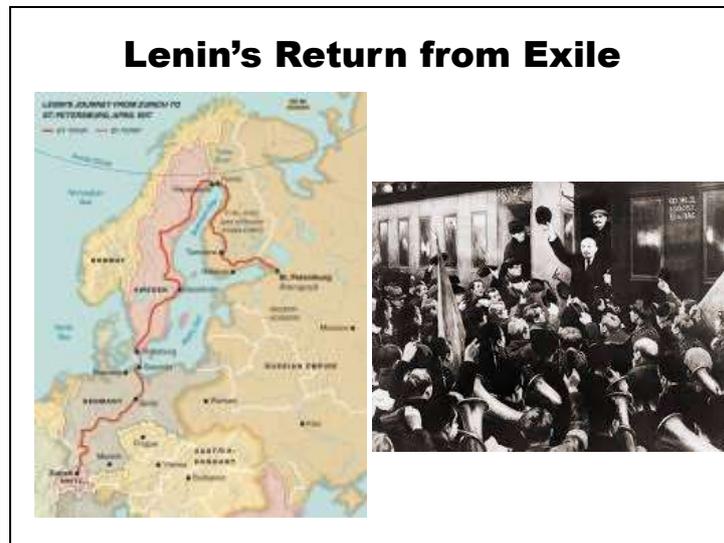
But the defeats, military follies, casualty lists and food shortages continued, and after six months the Provisional Government's popularity had slumped, and Kerensky's support for continuing the war was strongly opposed by a majority of ordinary Russians.

He was subsequently unable to impose order and discipline to the unravelling Russian army or to conduct effective military operations.

By October 1917 a new political force, the socialist Bolshevik Party, had emerged to take control of the nation.

Led by Vladimir Lenin, the **Bolsheviks** promised 'peace, bread and land' – promises that resonated with Russian peasants, workers, soldiers and sailors

Slide 4



It was within this context that the German Government in 1917 implemented one of the successful strategies of the war.

Germany saw in the exiled Russian fanatic Vladimir Lenin 'one more bacillus to let loose in a tottering and exhausted Russia to spread infection'.

Recognising the disorder and chaos that reigned throughout Russia, the German leadership assisted Lenin, then in exile in Switzerland, to travel via special train through German-occupied territory into Russia, where they also provided him with funding for a campaign against the Kerensky government.

Lenin and his Bolshevik allies quickly took a leadership role and played a critical part in the Russian anti-war cause.

Slide 5

Lenin – “Peace, Bread, Land”



Once back in Russia Lenin adopted a slogan of '*peace, bread and land*' which won widespread appeal from the majority of Russian peasants and the army, and resulted in the Communists, led by him, to begin peace negotiations with the Germans.

In November 1917 Russia withdrew from the Allied cause, and eventually signed the Treaty of Brest Litovsk.

Slide 6

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk



Delegates in negotiations for the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, March 1918

However having seized power in Russia in the November Revolution of 1917, the new Bolshevik government under Lenin found itself negotiating with the Germans from a position of extreme weakness.

Bolshevik representative **Leon Trotsky** was given the challenging task of trying to end Russian participation in the War, without giving up substantial Russian territory to the Germans and Austro-Hungarians.

By initially employing delaying tactics, Trotsky hoped that socialist revolutions would spread from Russia to Germany and Austria-Hungary before he had to sign the treaty.

After nine weeks of discussions without agreement, the German Army was ordered to resume its advance into Russia. On 3rd March 1918, with German troops moving towards Petrograd, Lenin ordered Trotsky to accept the terms of the Central Powers.

The Brest-Litovsk Treaty resulted in the Russians surrendering the Ukraine, Finland, the Baltic provinces, the Caucasus and Poland.

Slide 7

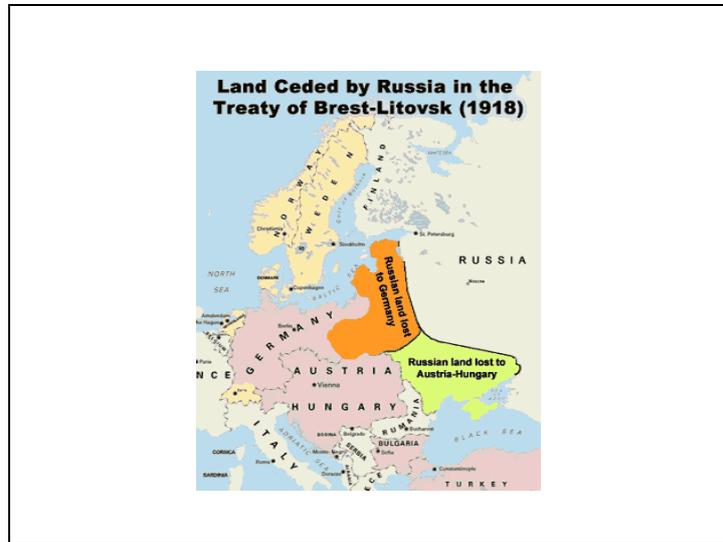


Notes

Under the Brest Litovsk Treaty signed on 3rd March 1918 the Russian Communist Government conceded 1.3 million square miles of productive territory, including Poland, Finland, the Baltic states and most of the Ukraine – a crucial grain growing region and the Russian ‘bread basket’.

This concession would include the surrender of 62 million people to German rule, (1/3 of Russia’s population), 1/3 of its heavy industries including steel and cement, and 3/4s of its coal and iron ore reserves.

Slide 8



At the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, Russia abandoned its previous rule over Finland, most of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, and Belorussia. German plans called for this territory to be reorganized as a series of German-dominated satellite states but the failure of the Spring Offensive in the West and the subsequent German surrender rendered the new order in the East irrelevant.

Slide 9

1918 > 1922

