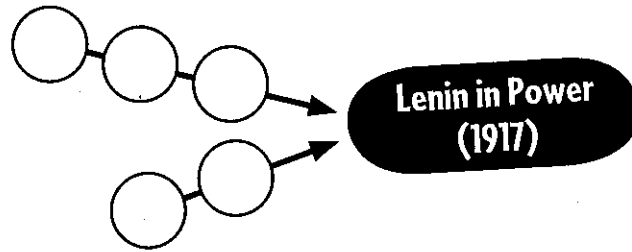


# The Russian Revolution

## Big Idea

The fall of the czarist regime and the Russian Revolution put the Communists in power in Russia. As you read, use a chart like the one below to identify the factors and events that led to Lenin coming to power in 1917.



## Notes

## Read to Learn

### Background to Revolution (page 772)

#### Making Inferences

*The German word for city is burg. The Russian word for city is grad. What can you infer about why the city of St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd in 1914?*

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Russia was not ready for the challenges of World War I. Czar Nicholas II took personal charge of the army, though he did not have military skills. Millions of Russian soldiers were killed or wounded. Meanwhile, the czar's wife, Alexandra, came under the influence of a man named Grigori Rasputin. He seemed to have magical powers to stop her son's uncontrolled bleeding. While the czar was away at war, Rasputin influenced government decisions through Alexandra.

Economic disasters on the home front added to public unrest. In early 1917, the Russian government started to ration bread. Mothers working in the factories did not have enough to feed their children. At the beginning of March, working-class women held strikes in Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg). They demanded "Peace and Bread." Other workers joined them. A general strike shut down all the factories in Petrograd.

Many soldiers in Petrograd refused to shoot at the crowd. Instead, they joined the demonstrators. The Duma, or legislative body, set up a provisional (temporary) government. No longer supported by the aristocrats or the army, the czar resigned. Alexander Kerensky headed the provisional government. He made the mistake of deciding to keep Russia in the war. That angered the workers and peasants. **Soviets**, or councils representing workers and soldiers, sprang up all over Russia.

**From Czars to Communists** (page 774)**Formulating Questions**

*Which question would best help lead to an understanding of the events of November 16, 1917?*

— *How old was the Winter Palace?*

— *Who was using the Winter Palace?*

— *What was the architecture of the Winter Palace?*

The Bolsheviks began as a small group within a Russian party that followed the ideas of Karl Marx. Their leader was a radical known as V. I. Lenin. Lenin was out of the country when the provisional government took power in March 1917. German leaders, at war with Russia, wanted to cause problems in Russia. Hoping Lenin would cause trouble, they shipped him back to Russia in April 1917.

Lenin believed that only violent revolution could end the capitalist system. The Bolsheviks promised to end the war, redistribute land, and put committees of workers in charge of factories. They promised to transfer power from the provisional government to the soviets. By the end of October, Bolsheviks made up a slight majority in the soviets of Moscow and Petrograd.

Leon Trotsky was the head of the Petrograd soviet. He was a dedicated revolutionary. On November 6, Bolsheviks seized the Winter Palace, headquarters of the provisional government. The provisional government quickly collapsed.

A Congress of Soviets from all over Russia was meeting at the time. Publicly, power passed from the provisional government to the Council of Soviets. Real power remained with Lenin. He ended the war with Germany in March 1918 by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. However, Russia sank into civil war.

Liberals, moderate socialists, and czarists opposed the new Bolshevik, or Communist, government. Many liberals wanted a constitutional monarchy. Many socialists wanted gradual reform and democracy.

The Allies were very concerned about the Communist takeover. They also wanted to bring Russia back into the war. They sent aid to the anti-Communist forces in Russia. From 1918 to 1921 civil war raged between the Communists, or Reds, and their opponents, or Whites.

The Communists had several advantages. Unlike their opponents, they had a unified goal and were able to translate their beliefs into practical instruments of power—such as their policy of **war communism**, which ensured the Red Army had supplies. They had a strong leader in Leon Trotsky, commissar of war. They also used terrorist techniques through their secret police, the Cheka. Finally, because foreign armies were helping the anti-Communist forces, the Communists could appeal to Russian patriotism. By 1921 the Communists were in total command of Russia. It was a centralized, one-party state.

