

# Russian Bolshevik Revolution

## I. March (February) Revolution - 1917

### A. Protests against Czars government

1. Food and Fuel shortages due to WWI
2. Riots in Petrograd - soldiers joined protesters

### B. Czar Nicholas II abdicates the throne

### C. Provisional government set up

1. Mostly made up of Duma representatives
2. Faced opposition from Petrograd Soviet (workers council)
  - a. Mensheviks
  - b. Bolsheviks
3. Provisional govt. focused on war, rather than social reform

### D. Lenin Returns from Exile - April 1917

1. Organizes the Petrograd Bolsheviks
2. Slogan - "Peace, Bread and Land"

## II. November (October) Revolution - 1917

### A. Bolsheviks stage Coup d'Etat against provisional govt.

1. Mostly bloodless surrender
2. Lenin takes control

## III. Civil War

### A. Opposition to Bolsheviks - The Whites

1. Royalists - want return of the monarchy
2. Liberals - middle class who want capitalist democracy
3. Moderate Socialist- democracy but socialist economy
4. Assisted by the Western countries including U.S.

### B. Reds (Communists) Victorious - 1921

1. Dissent among the Whites
2. Reds are better organized

#### IV. Russia under Lenin

##### A. Terror as a political weapon

1. Restrictions on the Orthodox Church
2. Executed the Czar and his family
3. **Checka** - Secret Police

##### B. **New Economic Policy (NEP)** - March 1921

1. Rebuild destroyed economy
2. Allowed some capitalism
3. Helped stabilize the economy

##### C. Passed Laws granting equality to men and women

##### D. Orthodox Church and nobility lost influence

##### E. Russian now called **Union of Soviet Socialists Republics**

## **Notes – Socialism, Marxism and Communism**

### **“Socialism”**

- Offshoot of industrialization and the problems it created.
- New attitudes about what the government should do for people.
- **Capitalism** is seen as an unjust system (There are always winners and losers). Individuals/private citizens own the **means of production**, private property, free enterprise, free competition and freedom for all individuals.
  
- In socialism, groups (including government or workers) own the means of production (farms, factories, railways and businesses) rather than individuals.
- **The goal:** economic, political and social equality for all people.
- **Utopian** socialists: modeled on Sir Thomas More’s book, created self-sufficient communities, like communes or monasteries without the religious aspect.
- **Marxist**: Followed philosophies of **Karl Marx**. “ **Scientific Socialism**”

### **“Marxism” (Scientific Socialism):**

- **Karl Marx** – German philosopher who lived in London during the 1840’s.
- 1848 wrote **The Communist Manifesto** with Fredrich Engels.
- The struggle between the social classes - employers (**bourgeoisie**) and employees (**proletariat**) is bound to happen.
- **Economics** is the driving force of history – a never - ending struggle between the “haves” and the “have-nots”.

- Eventually, the workers will rise up and take control of the means of production; then will control the wealth in society which means that all the wealth and power will be shared equally.
- Finally, the government will disappear because everyone will be self-sufficient.
- Marx hated capitalism; he thought it was unfair.
- He called for an “international struggle” – famous phrase – Workers of the World Unite!

### **Weakness in Marxist Thought-**

- Predicted a world revolution which did not happen
- Ideas didn't appeal to the workers who were living comfortably.
- Nationalism is stronger than class loyalty. They did not unite with workers from other countries.

### **Communism:**

- Differs from socialism in that it demands a violent overthrow of existing conditions.

### **Leninist:**

- Could not have a revolution of the nature that Marx envisioned because Russia was not developed enough.
- Modified some of Marx's philosophy.