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Russian Revolution of 1917

Russia experienced great changes in the latter half of the 1800's and in the early 1900's. For example, the *serfs* (rural slaves) were freed in 1861. However, they received little land and were heavily in debt. In the towns and cities, industrialization altered the face of Russian society. Discontented Russians formed a number of political organizations, all of which the government tried to repress. As civil unrest grew, the foundation for the Russian Revolution was laid. Use this webquest to learn more about the background and long-term effects of this important revolution.



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The Russian Revolution of 1917 led to major social, political, and economic changes in Russia.

To answer the following questions, start by reading the article "Russian Revolution of 1917."

1. The Russian Revolution of 1917 was a series of rebellions that swept away what form of government?
2. The revolution laid the foundation for what political union that ruled Russia and its neighboring republics for 70 years?
3. In the late 1800's, discontented Russians formed a number of political organizations that fell into four broad categories:
 - a. _____ wanted democratic checks on the power of the czars.
 - b. _____ sought greater independence from Moscow for populations in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and elsewhere.
 - c. _____ sought to start a revolution among the Russian peasants.
 - d. _____ wanted a revolution among the city and town workers.
4. In 1903, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party split into two factions. Who led the faction that became known as the Bolsheviks?

***Users of the *Advanced* database can find extension activities at the end of this webquest.**

5. In January 1905, thousands of people peacefully marched to Czar Nicholas II's Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. They sought better working conditions and a democratically elected assembly. How did the czar's soldiers react to the demonstration?
6. In response to the demonstrations, Nicholas II established an elected lawmaking body to advise him. What was it called?
7. After he dissolved the first two Dumas (elective councils), Nicholas changed the election law so that fewer workers and peasants could vote and so that border regions lost some representation. This resulted in a Duma dominated by _____.
8. Under the influence of whom did Nicholas fill key posts with incompetent and unpopular officials during World War I?
9. Troops sent to stop the February Revolution, a series of strikes and riots over food and coal shortages, ended up doing what instead?
10. In response to the February Revolution, some moderate and liberal members of the Duma set up a provisional government. What did this provisional government force Nicholas to do on March 15, 1917?
11. In March 1917, the provisional government saw its authority challenged when the leaders of workers' groups, left-leaning members of the Duma, and some soldiers created a *soviet* (council) in Petrograd called the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. What name was given to this environment, in which both the provisional government and the Petrograd Soviet claimed authority?
12. Who called for an overthrow of the provisional government after he returned to Petrograd in April 1917?
13. In September 1917, the head of the provisional government released the imprisoned Bolsheviks and allowed them to arm the workers in the face of an attempted coup led by whom?

14. On Nov. 7, 1917 (Oct. 25, 1917, on the old Russian calendar), a Bolshevik-led army of workers, soldiers, and sailors captured _____, which served as the headquarters of the provisional government.
15. Who authorized the Bolsheviks to set up a Council of People's Commissars to run the national government?
16. From which war did the new government quickly withdraw?
17. In 1918, the Bolsheviks moved the capital of Russia from Petrograd to what city?
18. After they gained power, the Bolsheviks changed the name of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. What was its new name, and what name did it later change to?
19. Soon after the October Revolution, counterrevolutionaries known as _____ began organizing resistance.
20. Who set up the Red Army to fight the counterrevolutionaries?
21. For what was the Red Army named?
22. Who gained control of the Soviet Union after Lenin's death in 1924?

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The answers to the following questions can be found in the article "Lenin, V. I."

23. What German social philosopher influenced Lenin's beliefs?
24. Why did Lenin try to help Communist movements in other nations?
25. The Bolsheviks had strict ideas about party membership. Lenin and his followers believed that for the revolution to succeed, _____ should lead the party, and the party should organize the _____.

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The answers to the following questions can be found in the article “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.)”

26. After the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks formed a new Russian government. Who was its head?
27. After a civil war broke out between the Bolsheviks and their opponents, the government _____ Russian industries and set up _____ to control them.
28. After the 1918-1920 civil war, the Red Army invaded _____ and helped put down nationalist independence movements in _____. Communist rule was gradually established in these areas.
29. Following the 1917 Revolution and the civil war, Russia saw workers’ strikes, peasant uprisings, and a sailors’ revolt in response to the country’s economic troubles. This forced Bolshevik leaders to compromise in order to maintain control. In 1921, Lenin established a compromise called the New Economic Policy to strengthen the country. What were some of the key points of this plan?
30. During the formation of the U.S.S.R., what were the first four republics of the U.S.S.R.?
31. Leon Trotsky ranked after Lenin in power, so he was next in line for leadership. Which three people partnered up to oppose Trotsky as Lenin’s successor?

Extension Activity:

Read a World Book article about another revolution (for example: American Revolution, French Revolution, Haitian Revolution, Mexican Revolution of 1910, etc.).

Write an essay that compares and contrasts your chosen revolution and the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Create a strong thesis that draws some sort of conclusion about each revolution’s effectiveness, long-term impact, or leadership goals.

Ideas you may consider to discuss in your essay:

Did they have similar political or economic goals?

How similar or different were their leaders and leadership style?

What were the long-term effects of each revolution?

Teacher Page

Answers:

1. The revolution swept away the Russian monarchy.
2. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also called the Soviet Union
3. A. *Liberals* wanted democratic checks on the power of the czars.
B. *Nationalists* sought greater independence from Moscow for populations in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and elsewhere.
C. *Peasant socialists* sought to start a revolution among the Russian peasants.
D. *Marxists* wanted a revolution among the city and town workers.
4. Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known as V.I. Lenin
5. The czar's soldiers fired on the demonstrators, killing or wounding hundreds of them.
6. The Duma (parliament)
7. This resulted in a Duma dominated by supporters of the czar.
8. Grigori Rasputin
9. Troops sent to stop the uprising joined the demonstrators instead.
10. On March 15, 1917, the government forced Czar Nicholas to *abdicate* (resign his throne).
11. Dual Power
12. V. I. Lenin
13. General Lavr Kornilov
14. The Winter Palace
15. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets
16. World War I
17. Moscow
18. The Bolsheviks also altered the name of their Russian Social Democratic Labor Party to the Russian Communist Party. It later became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
19. Barely a month after the October Revolution, counterrevolutionaries—known as Whites—began organizing resistance.
20. Leon Trotsky

21. The Red Army was named for the red of the Communist flag.
22. Joseph Stalin
23. Karl Marx
24. Lenin hoped that other Communist revolutions would overthrow the governments of other countries.
25. Lenin and his followers believed that for the revolution to succeed, trained professionals should lead the party, and the party should organize the *proletariat* (workers).
26. V. I. Lenin
27. The government took over Russian industries and set up central management bureaus to control them.
28. After the civil war, the Red Army invaded Georgia, Ukraine, and eastern Armenia, and helped put down nationalist independence movements in Belarus (then called Byelorussia) and central Asia. Communist rule was gradually established in these areas.
29. Small industries and retail trade were allowed to operate under their own control. The peasants no longer had to give most of their farm products to the government.
30. Byelorussia, Transcaucasia, Ukraine, and Russia
31. Lev Kamenev, Grigori Zinoviev, and Joseph Stalin

Extension Activity: Answers will vary.