

Chapter 16 Section 3 Notes

I. Background to Revolution (pages 514–516)

A. Due to a lack of experienced military leaders and technology, Russia was unprepared for World War I. The Russian army was poorly trained and equipped and suffered terrible losses.

B. By 1917, the Russian will to continue fighting in the war had disappeared.

C. Czar Nicholas II relied on his army and government to keep him in power. His wife **Alexandra** cut him off from events. She was strongly influenced by **Grigori Rasputin**, who claimed to be a holy man. Though he had no military experience, Czar Nicholas II insisted on commanding the army in the field and was away from the capital. In his absence, Alexandra made important decisions with the help of Rasputin.

D. The Russian people became increasingly upset with the czar and his wife due to military and economic disasters. Conservatives wanted to save the deteriorating situation and assassinated Rasputin late in 1916. However, this did not save the monarchy.

E. In March 1917, working-class women led a series of strikes in the capital city of **Petrograd**. They were upset about bread shortages and rationing. They called a general strike that shut down all the factories.

F. Alexandra reported the situation to Nicholas, describing the demonstrators as hooligans. Nicholas responded by ordering troops to break up the crowds with force. However, many soldiers refused to shoot and joined the demonstrators. On March 12, the Duma, or legislature, met and established a provisional government. The government then urged the czar to step down, which he did.

G. The provisional government was headed by **Alexander Kerensky** and decided to continue fighting the war. This was a grave mistake, as it upset workers and peasants who wanted to end the years of fighting.

H. The government was also challenged by the **soviets**—councils representing workers and soldiers—who came to play an important role in Russian politics. Soviets sprang up around the country, and were mostly made up of socialists.

II. The Rise of Lenin (page 517)

A. The **Bolsheviks** were a small faction of a Marxist party. They were led by **V.I. Lenin**, and were dedicated to a violent revolution to overthrow the capitalist system.

B. Lenin lived in Switzerland between 1900 and 1917. When the provisional government was formed, he went to Russia hoping that the Bolsheviks could seize power. German military leaders helped him travel to Russia in an attempt to create disorder.

C. Lenin believed that the Bolsheviks should try to gain control of the soviets. He saw the soviets as groups already in place that could help overthrow the provisional government.

D. The Bolsheviks promised to end the war, redistribute land to the peasants, transfer control of factories and industries from capitalists to the workers, and transfer government power to the soviets.

E. Three slogans summed up the Bolshevik program: “Peace, Land, Bread,” “Worker Control of Production,” and “All Power to the Soviets.”

Discussion Question

What promises did the Bolsheviks make to the Russian people?

III. The Bolsheviks Seize Power (page 518)

A. By the end of October, 1917, the Bolsheviks had 240,000 members and held majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow soviets. On November 6, the Bolsheviks seized the Winter Palace and the provisional government collapsed.

B. Lenin turned over power to the Congress of Soviets, which represented soviets throughout Russia; but held on to the real power in a Council of People's Commissars, which he ran.

C. The Bolsheviks renamed themselves the Communists. In March of 1918, Lenin ended the war with Germany, giving up a lot of territory including eastern Poland, **Ukraine**, Finland, and the Baltic provinces. He believed that these territories would eventually return to Russia as the socialist revolution spread through Europe.

Discussion Question

How did the Bolsheviks gain power over the Russian government?

IV. Civil War in Russia (page 518)

A. Soon after the Communists took power, civil war broke out in Russia. Many people were opposed to the Communists, including groups loyal to the czar, liberals, and anti-Leninist socialists. They were aided by the Allies, who gave them troops and supplies, hoping Russia would rejoin the war.

B. The Communist (Red) Army fought in many places between 1918 and 1921. The opposing, or White, forces first attacked from **Siberia** in the east. Other attacks came from the Ukraine and the Baltic regions.

C. By 1920, the Red Army had defeated most of the White forces. The Communists then gained control over Georgia, Russian Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

D. The royal family was captured by the Communists and moved to a mining town in the **Urals**, where they were eventually killed.

Discussion Question

Why did the Allies oppose the Communist government in Russia?

V. Triumph of the Communists (pages 518–519)

A. The Communists won the civil war in part because they had an excellent army. As commissar of war, **Leon Trotsky** had brilliantly organized the army and instituted rigid discipline.

B. The opposition to the Communists was not unified and was torn by political differences and mistrust. They lacked a common goal. Some wanted to restore the czar. Others wanted a more democratic government.

C. The Communists had a strong sense of purpose and conviction. They were also able to put their ideals to work in practical ways, for example by controlling banks, farms, and industries to serve the Communist war effort, a policy known as **war communism**.

D. The Communists also used revolutionary terror to further their goals. The Cheka, or secret police, sought out anyone who opposed the Communists and created an atmosphere of fear among the people.

E. When the Allies sent troops to oppose the Communists, the Communists used this act to appeal to Russian patriotism. They asked Russians to join with them in fighting foreign attempts to control the nation.

F. By 1921, the Communists had complete control of Russia. The country had become a centralized state dominated by a single party. Because of the role of the Allies in the civil war, the Communists mistrusted them and remained hostile.

Discussion Question

What promises did the Bolsheviks make to the Russian people? *(They promised to end the war, redistribute land to the peasants, transfer control of factories and industries from capitalists to the workers, and transfer government power to the soviets.)*

Discussion Question

How did the Bolsheviks gain power over the Russian government? *(Their membership grew very large, and, on November 6, 1917, they seized the seat of the provisional government, which then collapsed, leaving them in power.)*

Discussion Question

Why did the Allies oppose the Communist government in Russia?
(They wanted Russia to rejoin the war effort.)