



# REVISION – RUSSIA 1894-1917



*Tsar Nicholas I (1894-1917)*

*Russian Revolution February/March 1917*

*Russian Revolution October/November 1917*

**MATERIAL:** Morris = 122-148 / 186-200

## OVERVIEW 1894-1917:

**Nicholas II; Absolute ruler – Autocrat**

**Economy** – Agriculture economy with problems

**Economy** – Agriculture - Government initiatives

**Economy** – industrialization

**Economy** – urbanization

**Sergei WITTE'S reforms:**

- Protectionism and taxes
- Foreign investments
- “Gold Standard”

**Political Opposition 1894-1905:**

- Liberals (after 1905 “Kadets” and “Octobrists”)
- Socialist Revolutionaries
- Social Democratic Party - Split 1902-05 between “Mensheviks” and “Bolsheviks”

**Russo-Japanese War 1904-05**

**Russia 1905** – Bloody Sunday

**Russia 1905** – Bloody Sunday - Popular Reaction – “1905 Revolution”

**Russia 1905** – October, November, December Manifestos

**New Constitution** – Fundamental Laws of 1906

**Peter STOLYPIN** – Reforms (Land, Loans & Electoral)

**Dumas 1906-1907 – 1907-1917**

**Russia in WWI – major military campaigns 1914-1916**

*Battle of Tannenberg / Battle of the Masurian Lakes (1914)*

*Galician Campaign (1914)*

*Campaign around Lake Naroch (1915)*

*“Brusilov Campaign” (1916)*

## FEBRUARY/MARCH REVOLUTION

- **Petrograd February/March 1917**
- **Tsar Nicholas II abdicates**
- **Dual Power System;** Provisional Government / Petrograd Soviet
- **Lenin returns to Russia** – Publish April Theses (Pravda)
  - Land, Bread and Peace
  - All Power to the Soviets
  - No co-operation with the Provisional Government
- **April** - Government Crisis
- **May-June** – First Coalition Government / First All-Russian Congress of Soviets
- **June** - WWI “Kerensky Offensive”
- **July Days** - Riots in Petrograd (Lenin fled to Finland...)
- **July** - Second Coalition Government
- **August** – Kornilov Revolt
- **August/September** - Crisis
- **August/September** - Election to the Petrograd Soviet (and other local Soviets)
- **September** – Third Coalition Government

## OCTOBER/NOVEMBER REVOLUTION

## TSAR NICHOLAS II - FACTS:

- **Nicholas II; Absolute ruler - Autocrat.** influenced by the death of his grandfather (Alexander II) and his father's Minister of Religious Affairs - the Procurator of the Holy Synod; Konstantin Pobedonostev. He sternly believed in absolute autocracy, religious orthodoxy and anti-semitism. Instruments for his autocratic rule were; *Secret Police - "Okhrana" and millions of informers, Pogroms, All trade unions and political parties were forbidden, No elected parliament - all appointments and dismissals were made by the Tsar, No constitution, Censorship, Aristocracy with privileges given by the Tsar, Orthodox Church with privileges given by the Tsar, The Officers were recruited from the Aristocracy - who depended on the privileges given by the Tsar, Largest standing army in the world. Political incompetent – (according to Morris – and so was his wife):\_\_\_\_\_*
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- **Economy – Agriculture economy with problems;** About 97 million people (out of 127 million people 1897) were peasants. Lots of problems: *less than 1/3 could read and write, average life expectancy was under 40 years of age, low prices on bread (= low income), the equipment was usually very old - often made of wood, the farming methods were inefficient and gave low yield, frequent harvest failures, the population increase in the later part of the 19th century decreased the land available to the peasants (the aristocracy still had huge land masses). Between 1877-1897 we saw a 25% increase in the rural population and in between 1897-1917 we saw another 25% increase. This led to subdivision of land (average peasant holding 1877 = 35 acres - in 1905 = 28 acres and it continued to decrease up to 1917), redemption payments (from the emancipation of the serfs 1861). The local peasant council of elders (the Mir) decided about the land and the payments since they were responsible to the State for the redemption payments.., the peasants were not allowed to leave the commune without the approval of the Mir (internal passports), the Land Commandants (always an aristocrat) decided about local laws, taxation, etc... and he punished those who did not accept his decisions, no (or very little) investments were made:\_\_\_\_\_*
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- **Economy - Agriculture government initiatives;** Exploit "Virgin Land" (in the east - Siberia. 750 000 peasants migrated to Siberia 1896-1900) and the establishment of a *Land Bank* (1886) – (Former State land was sold. Low interests on loans). **Still – agrarian problems:** The Mir (village council who 1861 took over the responsibilities of the redemption payments) -Starvation exports - Lack of direct financial investments in agriculture (very primitive farming methods - low yield):\_\_\_\_\_
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- **Economy – Witte's reforms;** (*Sergei Witte – Minister of Finance 1892-1903*), **Protectionism and taxes** – to protect the industry and create capital for industrial development; **Foreign investments** – increased a lot under Witte's time in charge (France stood behind 33% of the total foreign investments in 1914. Then came Great Britain (23%), Germany (20%), Belgium (14%) and the US (5%) - Germany was the country that received most of the Russian export (mostly agrarian products) with Great Britain as the next largest receiver...); **"Gold Standard"** – the Russian currency (roubel) was elevated to the Gold Standard\_\_\_\_\_
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- **Economy - industrialization;** Compared with the western countries was Russia's industrial power very modest. In terms of Russian economy the industrialization was more impressive (In 1890 – the industrial output was worth 1502 million roubles – 1912 the industrial output was worth 5738 million roubles) around 40% of the industries were textile industries 1910. Russia had four major industrial regions:

- St Petersburg and the shores of the Baltic
- Moscow and the provinces of Nizhni Novgorod and Vladimir
- Poland
- The Donbas and Krivoi regions

- **Economy - transportation;** The roads of Russia were poorly developed. It was easier to use rivers and lakes. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century came the railroads. By 1905 it had increased enormously. Now Russia had 59,616 km of tracks. The most famous railroad was the Trans-Siberian railroad which linked St Petersburg with Vladivostok. It was built between the years 1891-1904. Still the Russian railroads were not very well developed compared with the western world. The Russian merchant marine was small: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Urbanization;** With the first industrialization in the 1890's came a greater urbanization. The living conditions for the workers were usually very poor. The cities were not built for this population increase. Between 1867 and 1897 Moscow increased its population 197%, Warsaw 253%, Baku 702% and Lodz 872%. Many had to live in cheap wooden lodging houses or large tenement buildings. They ate cheap black bread, cabbage soup and buckwheat porridge - and drank vodka! The working conditions were not better than the living conditions but by the end of the 1890's a few laws for the protection of workers had come (In 1892 it became forbidden to employ children less than 12 years of age. The same year saw a ban of female labor in the mines (1892). In 1896 an eleven-an-a-half-hour working day was legally instituted. This law was widely ignored by the employers.... In 1903 factory inspectors were introduced): \_\_\_\_\_

- **Political Opposition 1894-1905: Liberals** (small group who wanted free elections and a national parliament – a constitutional monarchy). We see two liberal “parties”: **Octobrists** (conservative liberals – they believed in a more moderate form of constitutional monarchy); **Kadets** (more leftist liberals); **Socialist Revolutionaries** (Started with “populists” – they wanted to get rid of the Tsar and his government. Russia was agrarian and this should be the basis for the government. Land to all peasants living in specific communes – some parts of the SR used “terrorism” - assassinations); **Marxists** (Started slowly in the 1880's but with the increasing industrialization and urbanization this group increased. The biggest party was the **Social Democratic Party** - Split between “**Mensheviks**” and “**Bolsheviks**”. Both these fractions believed in a workers revolution but the Mensheviks were willing to work together with other groups while the Bolsheviks believed in a core of professional revolutionaries who educated the country under a centralized “*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*” A more conservative Marxist Party was the **Trudoviki**). \_\_\_\_\_

- **Russo-Japanese War 1904-05:** The **Russo–Japanese War**, February 10, 1904 – September 5, 1905) – rival **imperialist ambitions of the Russian Empire and the Japanese Empire over Manchuria and Korea**. The major theatres of operations were Southern Manchuria, specifically the area around the Liaodong Peninsula and Mukden, and the seas around Korea, Japan, and the Yellow Sea. Russia lost this war! The loss was very embarrassing for Russia (and Europe) who had been convinced about their superiority. Russia lost a lot of prestige. The loss of the war also **contributed to the 1905 Revolution in Russia**. The lost war in the Far East **made Russia change the focus on her Foreign Policy**. She now **concentrated more on the development in Europe**. Especially in the weak part in the South-East – the declining Ottoman Empire = the “**Eastern Question**”!

Japan became a power to count on and started her domination of China as well as other areas in the Far East. She would find a new competitor in the Pacific - USA: \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Russia 1905 – Bloody Sunday**; 150,000 people demonstrated in front of the Winter Palace. They were lead by an orthodox priest - Father Gapon. The people of the demonstration wanted to present a loyal petition of "*redress of grievances*". The Imperial troops opened fire. According to the authorities of the time the official numbers of dead were 96 and wounded 331. The different newspapers and other eyewitnesses mentioned over 1000 killed. This triggered the revolt of 1905 (Revolution of 1905): \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Russia 1905 – Bloody Sunday - Popular Reaction**; Strikes / Peasant Revolts / Sporadic mutinies / formation of the first "Soviet": \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Russia 1905 – Nicholas II's reaction**; Tsar Nicholas II wanted to crush the revolt and set up a harsh military dictatorship (with himself as the dictator) but his Generals, leading politicians as well as members of his own family convinced him that it was smarter to choose concessions: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Russia 1905 - Manifestos**; October Manifesto (Several civil liberties and a National Duma), November Manifesto (the redemption payments were cancelled) and the December Manifesto (better pay for the militaries and better treatment): \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Remaining problems 1905**; The Russian peasants still needed land and the political system – Autocracy – had not changed!: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **New Constitution – Fundamental Laws of 1906: Russian Tsar** – Autocrat with full control over the Law, the Church and the Duma. *Council of Ministers* – appointed, directed and dismissed by the Tsar alone. *Council of State (Upper House)* – Half, later all members appointed by the Tsar. *State Duma (Lower House)* – Elected body without any power. Could be dismissed by the Tsar. *Article 87* – Whenever the assembly was not in session the Tsar could rule Russia by decree...: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Peter Arkadyevich STOLYPIN (1862-1911) - Reforms**; Landreforms and agrarian reforms 1906; Settlers to Siberia; "Cooperation": \_\_\_\_\_
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- **Dumas 1906-1917**: 4 different State Dumas; 1. April-July 1906; 2. March-June 1907 (Purishkevich (leader of the "right") – 16 hour speech); Then came "Stolypins' Electoral Laws" that changed the structure of the Duma's – they now became more conservative (they favored the rural rich – mostly the old aristocracy); 3. 1907-1912; 4. 1912-"1917"... A *Zemstvo-system* was established in Poland, *Land Commandants* were replaced by the *reinstated Justices of Peace*, *Compulsory health insurance for industrial workers* was introduced (June 1912, *Universal primary education "within 10 years"* was an adopted official policy in May 1908. The British historian Hugh Seton-Watson were impressed with the Russian development after 1906 and thought that Russia could have developed into a constitutional monarchy if it had not been for WWI: \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Russia in WWI:** The declaration of war was popular. Russia became more “*nationalistic*” and the Tsar was “nearly popular”. St Petersburg became **Petrograd**. Vodka was banned and the German Embassy was plundered. There was no change of rule – the Autocratic system continued. After some catastrophes in 1914-15 Tsar Nicholas I assumed the position as Commander-in-Chief. The liberal opposition grew inside the Duma so therefore it was dismissed. The influence over the Tsar family by **Grigori Rasputin** became a problem. In 1916 Rasputin was killed by some members of the Duma. **Food shortage** due to poor transportation escalated the opposition against the political and military leader of Russia – Tsar Nicholas II:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **Russia in WWI – military campaigns:** The very first Russian campaign 1914 – the ***Battle of Tannenberg*** and the ***Battle of the Masurian Lakes*** failed. Out of 150 000 Russian soldiers only 10 000 managed to escape. Russia managed to advance into ***Galicia*** in 1914 but at late Spring 1915 they were forced back during a joint Austrian-Hungarian and German campaign through the Carpathian Mountains and through Poland. In 1916 Russia launched a disastrous ***Campaign around Lake Naroch*** (Vilna area). This campaign was a desperate demand from France so some of the pressure at Verdun would be relieved. During summer 1916 Russia started its most successful campaign – the “***Brusilov Campaign***”. The Russian troops advanced far into Austrian-Hungarian territory. If Germany had not assisted the Austro-Hungarian troops together with some changes of the offensive by Russian Generals this campaign could have knocked Austria-Hungary out of WWI. Instead Russia got a huge offensive against them. They were forced to retreat. These military defeats were the personal responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief – Tsar Nicholas II. Demonstrations and strikes against the political system and the food shortage became common at the beginning of 1917:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **Petrograd February 1917:** A strike at the *Putilov Engineering Works* February 18<sup>th</sup> 1917 (according to the old Russian calendar) escalated to a lock-out of all workers (over 50 000) and then to mass demonstrations in Petrograd (nearly 240 000 February 23<sup>rd</sup>). The Tsar ordered military troops to end the disorder February 25<sup>th</sup>. This order led to more revolts and mutinies. After two days of total chaos some members of the Duma formed a “*temporary Committee*” and workers together with soldiers and sailors appointed delegates to the “*Petrograd Soviet of Worker’s and Soldier’s Deputies*”. After a few more chaotic days it became clear that the Tsar had lost all control. At the recommendation of his political advisers and his Generals Tsar Nicholas II abdicated March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1917. His brother Mikhail was offered the throne but he refused it “until order was restored and the Russian Assembly had decided what the monarchy would look like in the future”:\_\_\_\_\_
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## RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS 1917 - FACTS:

- **Lenin returns to Russia - April Theses (Pravda):** After the February Revolution Lenin and several other Russian socialists in exile sought to return to Russia as soon as possible. Not only did the German government help the revolutionaries home they also financed their work through secret funds... The April Theses were a series of directives by Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin issued upon his return to Petrograd (Saint Petersburg), Russia from his exile in Switzerland. Here we can clearly see the Bolshevik slogans: "All Power to the Soviets" / "End the war!" / "Distribute all the land to the peasants!" / "No co-operation with the Provisional Government!" After he released the April Theses and started to agitate the party united under its main principles. Lenin was now the undisputed leader of the party!:
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- **April - Government Crisis:** A note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs P.N. Milyukov to the Allied Powers stating that Russia would fulfill her obligations "until victorious" caused problems since he had not informed and got the approval of the Petrograd Soviet. His note was against the Petrograd Soviet Order No 1: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **May-June – First Coalition Government and the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets: Russia in WWI – military campaigns:** The first government was dissolved and a second one called the "First Coalition Government" still under the leadership of Prince Lvov was set up (this coalition included a few more socialists...). This first All-Russian Congress of Soviets lasted 19 days. The Bolsheviks only received around 10% of the seats in the Central Executive Committee which ran all the business until the next meeting (the next election of delegates to that meeting was carried out in all the local Soviets in the autumn): \_\_\_\_\_
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- **June – the Kerensky Offensive:** It was decided by Alexander Kerensky, Minister of War in the Russian provisional government, and led by General Brusilov. Such a decision was ill-timed, because, following the February Revolution, there were strong popular demands for peace, especially within the army, whose fighting capabilities were quickly deteriorating. The Russian Provisional Government was greatly weakened by this military catastrophe, and the possibility of a Bolshevik coup d'état became increasingly real. Far from strengthening Russian army morale, this offensive proved that Russian army morale no longer existed: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **July Days - Riots in Petrograd:** The July Days refers to events in 1917 that took place in Petrograd, Russia, between July 4 and July 7 when soldiers and industrial workers in the city rioted against the Russian Provisional Government. According to some historians the Bolshevik party was behind the revolt attempt. This seems unlikely. Lenin was not in Petrograd when the riots broke out. Kerensky took over the rule of the Provisional Committee and issued an order to arrest leading Bolsheviks accused of starting the July riots as well as co-operating with the enemy (money from Germany to the Bolshevik Party). Lenin and some other Bolsheviks fled the country – and other ones were arrested and put in prison. This was a temporary decline in the growth of Bolshevik influence 1917: The Bolshevik central committee were divided when the riots broke out: \_\_\_\_\_
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- **July - Government Crisis:** The failed offensive in Galicia together with the riots in Petrograd ("the July Days") made Prince Lvov and the First Coalition Government resign:
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- **July - Second Coalition Government:** On July 24th Kerensky became the new Premier and he gathered a socialist majority. One of the first orders the new government gave was to arrest Lenin and other leading Bolsheviks accused of treason. Alexander Kerensky also declared Russia a republic and begun preparations for elections in the "Preparliament", later named the Council of the Russian Republic. When the first Provisional Government had been formed they claimed that they would organize elections to a Constituent Assembly after the war and then discuss if Russia should become a Republic or a Constitutional Monarchy. Now Kerensky went ahead and founded the Russian Republic before the agreed date. This triggered criticism from both left and right. Monarchists saw the declaration of a republican form of government in Russia as unacceptable, while the left considered the declaration a power grab intended to weaken the influence of the soviets... Kerensky was losing support:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **August - Kornilov Revolt:** The Kornilov Affair was a confused struggle between Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army, General Lavr Kornilov and Aleksandr Kerensky. Kerensky was later to claim that the affair was a turning point in the revolution in the sudden revival--and eventual triumph--of the Bolsheviks. In Soviet historiography, the events have been known as the Kornilov Mutiny. There are several theories of who was behind this revolt: 1. Kornilov was behind the revolt – he wanted to establish a military dictatorship in Russia with himself as the ruler. 2. The "*misunderstanding theory*". A messenger gave unclear and perhaps deliberately distorted communications from Petrograd, that Kerensky had authorized Kornilov to impose order in the capital and restructure the government. 3. Historian Richard Pipes points out Kerensky being behind the plot. 4. "Bolshevik theory" - Kerensky planned to use General Kornilov in a coup d'etat - to get rid of the Bolsheviks. Kornilov's attempt to seize power collapsed without bloodshed as his Cossacks deserted the cause. He and some 7000 supporters were arrested. Although Kerensky survived the Kornilov coup, the event weakened his government substantially and paved the way for the Bolsheviks to seize power shortly thereafter in the October Revolution. The fact that Kerensky had also armed the Red Guards meant that when the October Revolution came the Red Army was more powerful than it perhaps could, and should have been:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **August/September - Crisis:** The lack of discipline within the army, the Kornilov revolt with the Bolshevik accusations against Kerensky, escalated take-over of the estates in the provinces (which made peasant soldiers desert in even higher numbers so that they could get back to their villages) and the continuing inflation (which reduced the value of the rouble to about one-tenth of the 1914 value) led to more demonstrations, strikes and lockouts. The Petrograd Soviet now turned to the only functional paramilitary group. They gave the Red Guards the authority to protect the capital:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **August/September - Election to the Petrograd Soviet:** On the 31st of August a local election to the Petrograd Soviet was held. The Bolsheviks achieved the majority of the votes. When the Bolsheviks gained the majority in the Petrograd Soviet the Red Guards were under direct rule of them. At September 23rd Trotsky was elected chairman of the Petrograd Soviet... A few days later they won the majority in the Moscow election and several other major Russian industrial centers saw similar results. Lenins slogan "**All Power to the Soviets**" had now become a reality for the Bolshevik Party:\_\_\_\_\_
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- **September – Third Coalition Government:** Kerensky declared that elections to a Constituent Assembly would be held in November. Kerensky's government was powerless - they had very little confidence both from the right and the left. It would be other forces that changed Russia...:
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- **October Revolution:** Lenin was now convinced the time was ripe for the party to take over the power by force. He bombarded the Bolshevik central committee with demands of action from his various hiding places in Finland. The critiques within the party, especially from Kamenev and Zinoviev feared that a revolt in October would be too big of a risk. Under these circumstances Lenin arrived secretly in Petrograd (October 10<sup>th</sup>). After hours of argumentation within the Bolshevik central committee Lenin managed with ten votes against two to win support for the insurrection. Kamenev and Zinoviev voted against the suggestion. During this struggle Lenin had great support from the new Bolshevik – Leo Trotsky.

Trotsky became the big organizer of the Bolshevik insurrection. It was Trotsky's ideas that were used. He started by assuring military support. At the 12<sup>th</sup> of October the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet set up a **Military Revolutionary Committee** with the purpose of defending the capital in case the Provisional Government would give it up to the Germans. It was the Red Bolshevik Guards that gained this new authority. This was a perfect screen for the chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky, and its Bolshevik majority. By the 21<sup>st</sup> of October the regimental committees of Petrograd had accepted the Military Revolutionary Committee as their supreme authority. Two days later the troops in the Peter-Paul fortress were won over (after a visit by Trotsky). 100,000's of rifles as well as the military garrisons of Petrograd were now under Bolshevik Command.

During the evening of the **24<sup>th</sup> of October Trotsky ordered his troops to act.** Lenin arrived in disguise to the Smolny Institute. Red Guards took possession over the stations, telephone exchanges, post offices, the national bank and the Tauride Palace. Kerensky had nothing to put up against them. He fled from Petrograd in the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> of October by car.

In the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> of October the "pre-Parliament" (third Coalition Government) was forcibly dispersed by Red Guards. Lenin and Trotsky declared to the Petrograd Soviet that a new Soviet government would be formed. The **Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets** met on October 25-26, 1917, in the Smolny Institute. The retiring central executive committee was replaced by a praesidium largely Bolshevik. Kamenev became the chairman. The leaders of the Mensheviks together with the Right Socialist Revolutionaries demanded that the bombing of the Winter Palace should stop (the cruiser Aurora was bombarding the Winter Palace with blank shots...) and that a left-wing coalition should be formed. If the Bolsheviks did not agree to this they threatened to walk out of the Congress. The Bolsheviks did not give in so the leaders of these parties walked out. Trotsky spoke to them as they were leaving "*You are bankrupt. You have played out your role. Go where you belong: to the dust heap of history*".

In the early hours of the morning the 26<sup>th</sup> of October the Winter Palace was captured (with very little actual fighting). The Congress now declared that the Soviets had assumed power throughout Russia. Lenin showed up to the second sitting of the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in the evening of October 26<sup>th</sup>. He declared that they should now proceed to construct the Socialist order. The Congress established three decrees; ***Decree on Peace / Decree on Land / the establishment of The Council of Peoples Commissars (Sovnarkom)***. This meeting ended five in the morning with the election of a new central executive committee. Two thirds of the places in the new central executive committee of the All-Russian Soviet went to the Bolsheviks! **The first phase of the Bolshevik take-over, the insurrection in Petrograd with the establishment of a Bolshevik leadership, was now over and it had been successful!**

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