

## IV. The Russian Revolution

### A. The End of Romanov Rule

1. The poorly equipped Russian army was no match for the German war machine. By 1917, more than 7 million Russian soldiers had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.
2. Nicholas II proved to be an inept ruler. As battlefield losses mounted and shortages of food worsened, Nicholas moved his headquarters to the front in a futile attempt to rally his troops.
3. In early 1917, food shortages in Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg) led to spontaneous demonstrations and strikes.
4. Nicholas ordered his troops to restore order, but the soldiers refused and instead supported the demonstrators. On March 12, 1917, Nicholas II abdicated, ending three centuries of Romanov rule.

### B. The Provisional Government

1. A provisional government led by Alexander Kerensky replaced the tsar.
2. Despite mounting losses, the provisional government continued the war against Germany. This fateful decision to pursue an unpopular war weakened the provisional government and played a key role in its demise.

### C. Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution

1. While the Russian army was falling apart, the Germans helped Lenin return to Petrograd. Lenin arrived at the Finland Station on April 3, 1917, and promptly urged his followers to overthrow the provisional government.
2. Lenin's key ideas
  - Lenin denounced gradual reform, arguing that capitalism could only be destroyed by class conflict.
  - Lenin insisted that a communist revolution was possible in a non-industrialized country such as Russia.
  - Lenin argued that Russia's relatively small working class could not develop a revolutionary class consciousness. Instead, leadership would have to come from a highly disciplined group of professional revolutionaries.

## Crash Course

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3. Lenin's slogan of "Peace, Land, and Bread" captured the popular imagination and enabled the Bolsheviks to win widespread popular support.
4. Lenin sensed that it was time to act. "History will not forgive us," Lenin wrote, "if we do not seize power now." On the night of November 6, 1917, the Bolsheviks occupied most government buildings. The next day Lenin proclaimed establishment of a new Bolshevik government.

### D. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

1. Lenin realized that the survival of the Bolshevik regime depended upon ending the war with Germany.
2. In March 1918, the Bolsheviks reluctantly agreed to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Under the terms of this treaty, Russia lost a quarter of its European territory and a third of its population.
3. It is important to note that Russia later repudiated the treaty, and it was declared null and void by the Allies.

### E. Civil War

1. By the summer of 1918, several "White" armies attempted to overthrow the Bolsheviks.
2. Led by Leon Trotsky, the Bolsheviks responded by forming a highly disciplined Red Army.
3. The civil war between the Whites and the Reds lasted from 1918 to 1920. The divided and poorly led Whites lost to the better-organized Red Army.

**NOTE:** Lenin's pivotal role in the Russian Revolution has generated significant number of multiple-choice questions on the APEURO exam. Be sure you study Lenin's key ideas. It is interesting to compare Lenin's decisive leadership with the weakness and vacillation of Tsar Nicholas II and Alexander Kerensky.