

What was the Russian Revolution?



Czar Nicholas II, 1909.

Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicholas_II_by_Boissonnas_%26_Eglier_c1909.jpg

The Russian Revolution of 1917, was actually two revolutions, one in February, and one in October of 1917. At the time, Russia used a different calendar than we use today, so they call these revolutions the March Revolution and November Revolution because their calendar was thirteen days ahead of what is commonly used today. The November Revolution is also referred to as the Bolshevik Revolution.

Before the Russian Revolution, the country was ruled by a king, called a **czar** (sometimes spelled tsar), named Nicholas II. There was discontent [dissatisfaction] in Russia because the government was corrupt and ineffective, there was widespread poverty in the country, there was a scarcity of food, and the Russians suffered massive losses in World War I.

As a result, in February of 1917 (The March Revolution), Czar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate [give up the throne] and power was given to a group of elected officials called the Duma. The Duma ruled until October, when it was replaced by the events of the November Revolution.



Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 speaking to troops in 1920.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/photograph/Vladimir-Lenin>

Led by a man named Vladimir Lenin, a group of Communists named the Bolsheviks took control of the Russian government in a bloodless coup [a forced overthrow of the government in which no one was killed] called the November (or Bolshevik) Revolution. The Bolsheviks gained support from the peasants, urban workers, and soldiers by promising “peace, land, and bread.”

The Bolsheviks signed a peace agreement with Germany, taking Russia out of WWI. After winning a civil war that lasted from 1917 to 1922, the Bolsheviks set about transforming Russia into the world’s first **Communist nation**. They renamed Russia the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)**, also known as the Soviet Union. A soviet was a local ruling council elected by workers.

Source: Adapted from *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. “Russian Revolution of 1917”, accessed January 07, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Revolution-of-1917>.

1. Where and when did the Russian Revolution take place?

2. What caused the Russian Revolution?

3. What were the effects of the Russian Revolution?

