

# The Russian Revolutions



# ST Cause: World War I

- ▣ The tragedy of WWI hit Russia most severely
  - Weak leadership of Nicholas II contributed to such tragedy
  - Liberals and socialists unsuccessfully call for change
- ▣ Turning Point: Nicholas II moves to Eastern Front
  - Result: Rasputin gains influence over Alexandra
  - Life continues to worsen in WWI Russia



# March Revolution 1917

- ▣ Women's march led to widespread riots, led by the soviets, over shortages of bread and fuel
  - Reason for success?
    - ▣ Soldiers joined the protesters
- ▣ Provisional gov't led by Alexander Kerensky
  - Forced Nicholas II to abdicate
- ▣ Was this a liberal or socialist revolution?



# Problems for the Provisional Government

- ❑ Kerensky kept Russia in the war and failed to give land to the peasants
  - Result: Democracy → Anarchy
- ❑ Local soviets, esp. the Petrograd Soviet gained more and more authority
  - Army Order No. 1
- ❑ Germany returns Lenin to Russia
  - Bolshevism grows within the Petrograd Soviet



# Lenin's Bolsheviks

- ▣ Lenin's Marxism
  - Violent Revolution
  - Utilization of peasants
  - Necessity of professional revolutionaries
- ▣ Despised Mensheviks for evolutionary focus
- ▣ Called for "All power to the soviets" and "Peace, land, and bread"



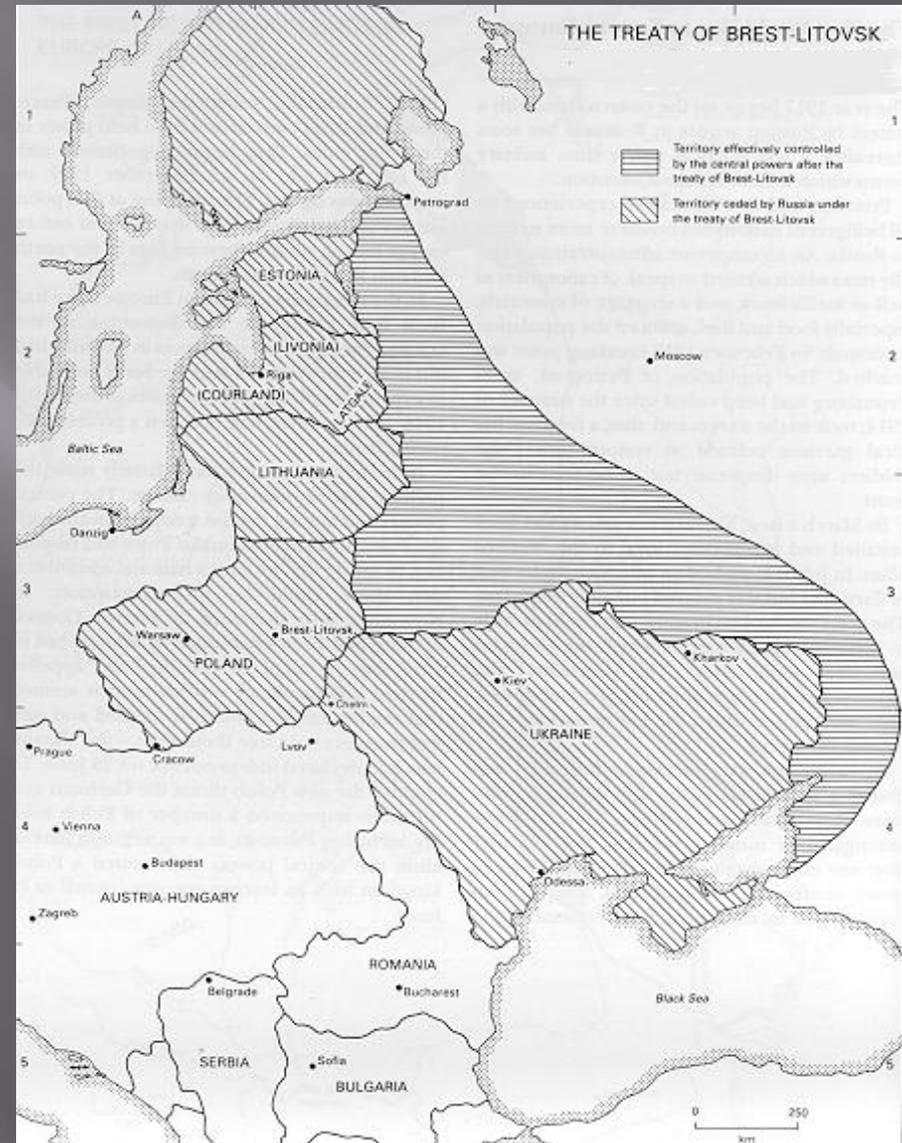
# Bolshevik Revolution 1917

- With Lenin as the “brains”, Trotsky provided the “muscle”
  - Trotsky formed the Bolshevik Red Guard, which toppled the Provisional Gov't on November 6
- Seizure of power was perfectly planned to coincide with the congress of soviets
  - Bolshevik majority voted Lenin as head of a new government
  - Promised that a Constituent Assembly would be formed to develop a new constitution



# Lenin's Immediate Reforms

- ▣ To appease:
  - Distribution of land to the peasants
  - Factories given to the workers
  - Ended the war by signing a treaty with Germany
- To survive:
  - Disbands the Constituent Assembly due to Bolshevik minority



# The Russian Civil War

- Less radical Russians were angered by the treaty and Lenin's dismissal of the assembly
- White Army forms
  - Monarchists
  - Liberals
  - Mensheviks
- Legacy: 14 million died during this time



# Bolshevik Victory!

- ▣ But why?
  - Contrasting organization of both armies
  - Failure of West to support the White army
  - Development of “War Communism”
  - Use of terror tactics to establish obedience



# Lenin's Socialist Experiment

- ▣ New Economic Policy
  - Not communism
  - A combination of socialism and capitalism
- ▣ USSR
  - Goal: To contain nationalism
  - Led by the Communist Party
  - Lenin was Dictator!

