

## **The Russian Revolution Student Worksheet**

### Introduction:

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was really two separate revolutions. The pressures of the First World War were so extreme that in February, 1917, a provisional (temporary) government took over from the Tsarist regime that had ruled Russia for nearly five hundred years. In April, the leader of the extreme socialist party known as the Bolsheviks, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, returned to the Russian capital of St. Petersburg and declared that the revolution was not complete. In particular, the provisional government's plan to remain in the war bothered Lenin. In October, he called for the Bolshevik seizure of power. After grabbing power in October, he appointed Feliks Dzerzhinskii to lead a secret police organization to suppress all dissent. In this lesson, you will learn how the Bolsheviks undermined the revolution and took it for themselves.

All Web links for this lesson can also be found at:

<http://www.socialstudies.com/worldlinks.html>.

### Directions:

#### **Lenin's April Theses**

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/04.htm>

1. Read number 1 of the "Theses." Why was Lenin opposed to Russia's continuing participation in World War I?
2. Lenin admits in number 4 that his party, the Bolsheviks, was a minority in the workers' Soviets (councils). What did he recommend the Party do to overcome this disadvantage?
3. In numbers 5, 6, and 7, what else did Lenin call for?

#### **Lenin's Call to Power**

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/calltopower.htm>

4. Lenin calls for the seizure of power not by the Soviets but on their behalf. Who would really have been in charge in such a situation? What might the popular opinion have been of such a government?
5. Why did Lenin say that it wasn't important who took power from the provisional government? Do you believe this assertion? Why or why not?
6. In the April Theses, Lenin talks about placing power "in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants." Does the October "Call to Power" echo the April Theses, or had Lenin's primary concerns seem to have changed at this point?

#### **"Organisation of an Extraordinary Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution"**

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/a.k.harrington/cheka.html>

7. Lenin accuses the bourgeoisie of committing the “vilest crimes” in order to thwart the revolution. What were these “crimes”?

8. What were the powers and duties of the “Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution”?

9. What would be the likely results of Lenin’s establishment of an unlimited government agency to fight counterrevolution? Could such an institution really represent placing power in the “hands of the proletariat”? Explain.