

# **Russian Revolution**

## **Part 3**

**Naseem Ashiq**

- **The Tsar dismissed the first Duma within 75 days**
- **he re-elected second Duma within 3 months**
- **He did not want any questioning of his authority or any reduction in his power**
- **He changed the voting laws and packed the third Duma with conservative politicians**
- **Liberals and revolutionaries were kept out**
- **By 1911, food shortages had become acute.**
- **On March 8, thousands of women demonstrated in the streets for bread.**

- Workers protest **in Petrograd town**
- This town was captured by the workers
- Rasputin was assassinated in late 1916
- Members of the St. Petersburg Soviet were arrested
- **All political parties were illegal in Russia before 1914**
- The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party had to operate as an illegal organisation
- Some Russian socialists felt that the Russian peasant, not workers, would be the main force of the revolution

- They formed **the Socialist Revolutionary Party** in 1900
- This party struggled for peasants' rights
- It demanded that land belonging to nobles be transferred to peasants
- Social Democrats disagreed with Socialist Revolutionaries about peasants
- Lenin felt that peasants were not one united group
- Some were poor and others rich, some worked as labourers while others were capitalists who employed workers

- **Given this ‘differentiation’ within them, they could not all be part of a socialist movement**
- **Together with the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, the protesters worked with peasants and workers during the revolution of 1905 to demand a constitution**
- **They were supported in the empire by nationalists (in Poland for instance) and in Muslim-dominated areas by **jadidists** who wanted modernised Islam to lead their societies**

## Russia and World War I

- **Germany, Austria and Italy formed the Triple Alliance**
- **Russia, Britain and France formed Entente Cordiale**
- **Austria attacked Serbia**
- **Russia tried to help Serbia**
- **The consequences of the war proved disastrous**
- **the Tsar refused to consult the main parties in the Duma**

- **Anti-German sentiments ran high**
- **The renaming of St Petersburg – a German name – as Petrograd**
- **The Tsarina Alexandra's German origins**
- **The involvement of Rasputin**
- **Thousands of ill-equipped and ill-trained Russian soldiers and peasants were perished**
- **About 1.7 million men perished**
- **5 million were wounded at the end of the war**
- **The prices of food grains increased**
- **Industrial equipment disintegrated**
- **By 1916, railway lines began to break down**

- **Able-bodied men were called up to the war**
- **there were labour shortages**
- **small workshops were shut down**
- **Large supplies of grain were sent to feed the army**
- **By 1916, riots at bread shops were common**
- **A coalition was formed in the Duma which forced the Tsar to abdicate the throne**

## Mass protests:

- **23rd February 1917/8th March 1917**
- **Socialists celebrated International Working Women's Day**
- **Food insecurity among women textile workers**
- **They were forced to strike and march through the factory areas of Petrograd**
- **"Bread for the Workers"**
- **women workers waved their hands at the factory workers and shouted, "Come out!"  
"Stop working"**

- 400,000 workers in the city joined the strike the next day (February 24/March 9)
- the Police Headquarters were ransacked
- On March 2/March 15, Nicholas abdicated
- The February Revolution
- Nicholas II abdicated following the uprisings
- A Provisional Government was established under the leadership of Menshevik leader Alexander Kerensky
- The Russian calendar
- The March Revolution = February Revolution

- **Russia followed the Julian calendar until February 1918**
- **This calendar was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar**
- **A section of the Soviets did not recognize the Provisional Government**
- **freedom of speech**
- **Freedom of association was also ensured**
- **Upholding freedom of press and religion**
- **and encouraged liberal reforms**
- **Continued participation in World War I**
- **There were setbacks**

- Lenin came to Russia from Switzerland
- opposed the Provisional Government
- He declared that the war be brought to a close
- land be transferred to the peasants
- banks be nationalised
- These three demands were Lenin's **'April Theses'**
- He also argued that the Bolshevik Party renamed itself the Communist Party
- Leon Trotsky was also arrested
- Spoke for a working class government

- The government banned the newspaper **Pravda ("Truth")**
- Communist Party newspaper from 1918 to 1991

## October Revolution/Bolshevik Revolution

- **Kerensky's government failed**
- **The land, peace and security of the Russians were not preserved**
- **The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, challenged the Menshevik government on October 15, 1917**
- **On 16 October 1917, Lenin persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and the Bolshevik Party to agree to a socialist seizure of power**
- **A Military Revolutionary Committee was appointed by the Soviet under Leon Trotskii**

- Trotsky drew up a detailed plan
- the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered **the ship Aurora** shelled the Winter Palace
- They were overthrown **on October 25, 1917**
- Kerensky left the country
- The date of the revolution was 25 October 1917 according to the Julian calendar.
- But after the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, **Revolution Day is celebrated on November 7 every year**
- Lenin came to power with the help of the 'Red Army'

- **At a meeting of the All Russian Congress of Soviets in Petrograd**
- **the majority approved the Bolshevik action**
- **Russia withdrew from World War I**
- **Seized the land held by the nobles and distribute it to the peasants**
- **Made factories public property**
- **Most industry and banks were nationalised in November 1917**
- **New uniforms were designed for the army**
- **A clothing competition was organised in 1918**

- **the Soviet hat (budeonovka) was chosen.**
- **Lenin became the head of the republic**
- **Later USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republic) was established**
- **He continued until his death in 1924**
- **The Bolshevik Party was renamed the Russian Communist Party**
- **Public ownership was emphasized**
- **Centralized planning was implemented**
- **Advances in Economics and Technology**

## Lenin (1870-1924):

- On 22 April 1870
- Born in Simbirsk
- Real name Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov
- His older brother Alexander was executed for attempting to assassinate Nicholas II
- and was arrested in 1895
- Later he was exiled to Siberia
- In 1899 he wrote the book 'Development of Capitalism in Russia'
- after escaping from Siberia, Lenin reached Switzerland

- In 1900, he planned to start a newspaper in Geneva called '**Iskra**' (**Spark**).
- Iskra was founded in: 1900
- It was founded by:
- Lenin, Georgy Plekhanov, Julius Martov, Pavel Axelrod, Vera Zasulich, and Alexander Potresov
- In 1903 he became the leader of a radical revolutionary group called the Bolshevik Party.
- Lenin withdrew from World War I with the Treaty of **Brest-Litovsk (1917)**
- A new constitution was adopted in 1918

- In March 1921, he introduced the **New Economic Policy (NEP)**
- On December 30, 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed
- He successfully solved the problems of unemployment, food shortage and slow industrial growth.
- Trade, commerce, communication, industries and banking were nationalized
- England and France supported the counter-revolution in Russia

- With the help of the **Red Army and the 'Cheka'** secret police (OGPU and NKVD), foreign and domestic threats were crushed
- Lenin died on January 21, 1924 in Gorky.

### **Sources:**

**1. Alexander Shlyapnikov, On the Eve of 1917.**

**Reminiscences from the Revolutionary Underground**

**THANK YOU**