

Causes of the Oct 1917 Russian Revolution – Weakness of the Provisional Government



1. What was the Provisional Government?
2. Who made up the Provisional Government?
3. What were the issues faced by the Provisional Government?
4. Do you think the Provisional Government was doomed to fail from the start?

Was the Provisional Government doomed from the start?



*How the government dealt with the problems of
war, land, food, representation & the growth of
opposition?*

The Tsar has abdicated. A new provisional government is set up. List the problems they face and how they might deal with them.



What was the Provisional Govt.?



- ∞ Temporary govt. formed from remainder of Duma
- ∞ Run country until elections
- ∞ Tackle key issues – war, land, food
- ∞ Rival government – Soviets (council)

Provisional Government



Prince Lvov

- ❧ First PM of the Prov. Govt.
- ❧ He had little experience of government before becoming PM after the abdication of the Tsar.
- ❧ He held liberal views
- ❧ Was not a member of any political party and lacked a power base
- ❧ Not elected by the people; thus failed to command much authority

Provisional Government



Kerensky

- ❧ Originally a moderate Labor representative to the 4th Duma, joined the Social Revolutionaries after Feb Revolution.
- ❧ Took over as premier from Prince Lvov, but was not able to bring about the required changes. Forced to leave Russia after Oct Revolution.

Issues faced by the Provisional Government



How did the provisional Government tackle the key problems

1. WWI - Should they continue war?
2. Land - Should they redistribute land?
3. Social Reform - How much, how far?
4. National Minorities - Should they allow the empire to break up?
5. Economy - How could the economy be resuscitated?

Issues faced by the Provisional Government

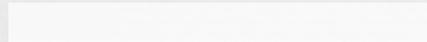


- 6. Representation – When will they call for elections?
- 7. Political opposition – How do you deal with political opposition

How did they deal with these issues?



Why did the Provisional Government
continued with the war?



War



- ⌘ Continued war – loyalty to allies, need for supplies
- ⌘ 1917 offensive – disaster, German advances, desertions



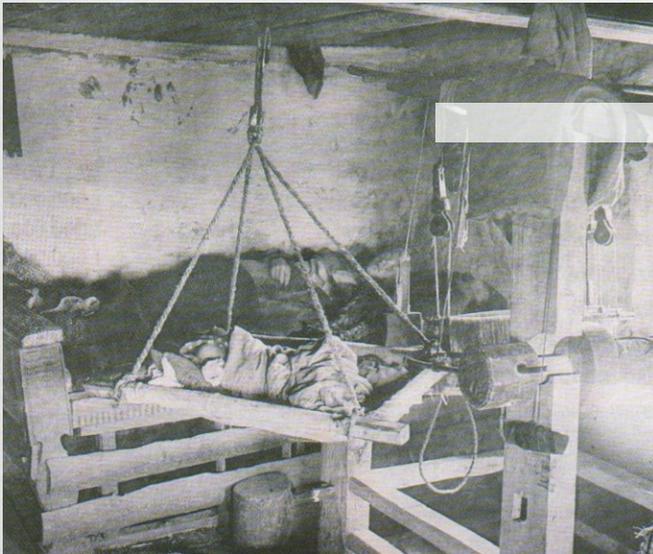
General Kornilov

Land



☞ Provisional govt
unelected – refused to
reform land
ownership

☞ Peasants seized land
illegally from
landowners



Food



❧ Failure to end war -
increased food
shortages in towns &
cities

Representation

- ❧ Soviets – Petrograd & across country
- ❧ 3000 members each representing 1000 workers/soldiers
- ❧ Controlled army, factories & railways
- ❧ Hostile to Provisional Government
- ❧ Dominated by Bolsheviks



Petrograd Soviet

Problems with Provisional Government



- ☞ Petrograd Soviet held true power in Petrograd, and the Communists in control wanted greater changes the government were not ready to provide.
- ☞ The Provisional Government were seen as just a new name for the old government under Nicholas II. Although Alexander Kerensky (Moderate SR) of the Petrograd Soviet later became leader of the Provisional Government, he was unable to push for more changes. The Provisional Government was also slow in calling for elections for the Constituent Assembly.

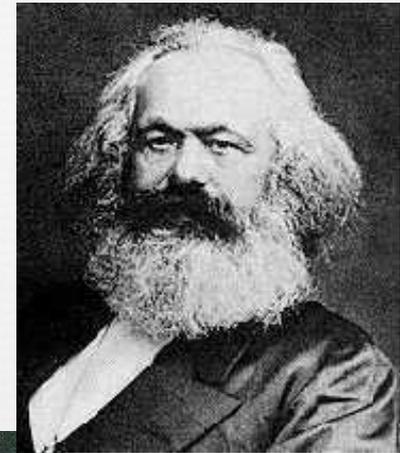
Problems with the Provisional Government:



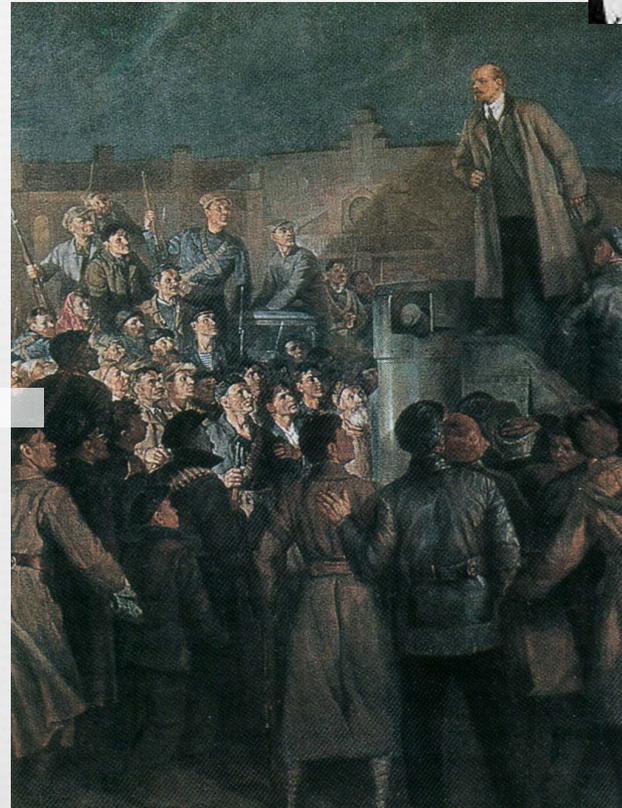
- ∞ The Provisional government was split over all of the issues mentioned. The Social Democrats (Mensheviks and Bolsheviks), Liberals, Social Revolutionaries each had different positions on all the issues.
- ∞ This meant that very few proper decisions were made on key issues facing the people.

Political opposition

- ✧ Socialist Revolutionary Party, Bolsheviks, Mensheviks – inspired by Marx, ‘Das Capital’
- ✧ **April Theses** – ‘Peace, bread, land’
- ✧ Kornilov Revolt – Kerensky turned to Bolsheviks for support



Karl Marx



Lenin's 'Finland Station' speech

Political Opposition

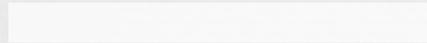


- ❧ The Socialists and Mensheviks in the Provisional Government believed that this stage of the Revolution was not time for a communist government
- ❧ They believed the Provisional Government should be ruled by the bourgeoisie, as part of the overall theory of Marxism.
- ❧ The Bolsheviks disagreed, and advocated a seizure of power, installing a dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry after overthrowing the Tsarist regime.

Plenary



Write a short paragraph describing whether you think the Provisional Government was a success or a failure.



Questions



- ❧ Why was the Provisional Government in Russia unable to consolidate and maintain its power in 1917?
- ❧ Who were Russia's new leaders?
- ❧ What policies did the PG adopt towards the problems of land ownership and the continuation of war?
- ❧ Why was the Provisional Government in Russia unable to consolidate and maintain its power in 1917?

Questions



- ❧ How convincing is the claim that, by October 1917, ‘the Provisional Government was politically bankrupt, having failed in all its main policies’ ?
- ❧ Was the Provisional Government doomed from the start?