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Revolution and dictatorship: Russia 1917–53 for AQA

MICHAEL LYNCH

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Revolution and Dictatorship: Russia

1917–1953
for AQA

MICHAEL LYNCH

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In memory of Catherine May Burns Sweeney (1915–2001)

Caution: Several of the historical extracts in this book contain words that are vulgar and offensive.

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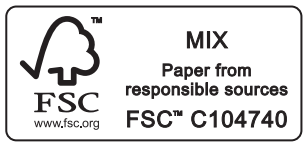

Contents

Dedication

Keith Randell (1943–2002)

The *Access to History* series was conceived and developed by Keith, who created a series to 'cater for students as they are, not as we might wish them to be'. He leaves a living legacy of a series that for over 20 years has provided a trusted, stimulating and well-loved accompaniment to post-16 study. Our aim with these new editions is to continue to offer students the best possible support for their studies.

Introduction: about this book

This book has been written primarily to support the study of the following course:

- AQA: Revolution and Dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953.

The writer hopes that student readers will regard the book not simply as an aid to better exam results, but as a study which is enjoyable in itself as an analysis of a very important theme in history.

The following explains the different features of this book and how they will help your study of the course.

Beginning of the book

Context

Starting a new course can be daunting if you are not familiar with the period or topic. This section will give you an overview of the history and will set up some of the key themes. Reading this section will help you get up to speed on the content of the course.

Throughout the book

Key terms

You need to know these to gain an understanding of the period. The appropriate use of specific historical language in your essays will also help you improve the quality of your writing. Key terms are in boldface type the first time they appear in the book. They are defined in the margin and appear in the glossary.

Profiles

Some chapters contain profiles of important individuals. These include a brief biography and information about the importance and impact of the individual. This information can be very useful in understanding certain events and providing supporting evidence to your arguments.

Sources

Historical sources are important in understanding why specific decisions were taken or on what contemporary writers and politicians based their actions. The questions accompanying each source will help you to understand and analyse the source.

Interpretations

These extracts from historians will help bring awareness of the debates and issues that surround this fascinating history topic.

Chapter summaries

These written summaries are intended to help you revise and consolidate your knowledge and understanding of the content.

Summary diagrams

These visual section summaries at the end of each section are useful for revision.

Refresher questions

The refresher questions are quick knowledge checks to make sure you have understood and remembered the material that is covered in the chapter.

Question practice

There are opportunities at the end of each chapter to practise exam-style questions relevant to your course. The exam hint below each question will help you if you get stuck.

End of the book

Timeline

Understanding chronology (the order in which events took place) is an essential part of history. Knowing the order of events is one thing, but it is also important to know how events relate to each other. This timeline will help you put events into context and will be helpful for quick reference or as a revision tool.

Exam focus

This section gives advice on how to answer questions in your exam, focusing on the different requirements

of your exam paper. The guidance in this book has been based on detailed examiner reports since 2017. It models best practice in terms of answering exam questions and shows the most common pitfalls to help ensure you get the best grade possible.

Glossary

All key terms in the book are defined in the glossary.

Further reading

To achieve top marks in history, you will need to read beyond this textbook. This section contains a list of books and articles for you to explore. The list may also be helpful for an extended essay or piece of coursework.

Online extras

This new edition is accompanied by online material to support you in your study. Throughout the book you will find the online extras icon to prompt you to make use of the relevant online resources for your course. By going to www.hodderhistory.co.uk/accesstohistory/extras you will find the following:

Activity worksheets

These activities will help you develop the skills you need for the exam. The thinking that you do to complete the activities, and the notes you make from answering the questions, will prove valuable in your learning journey and helping you get the best grade possible. Your teacher may decide to print the entire series of worksheets to create an activity booklet to accompany the course. Alternatively they may be used as standalone activities for class work or homework. However, don't hesitate to go online and print off a worksheet yourself to get the most from this book.

Who's who

A level history covers a lot of key figures so it's perfectly understandable if you find yourself confused by all the different names. This document organises the individuals mentioned throughout the book by categories so you know your Kamenev from your Kerensky!

Further research

While further reading of books and articles is helpful to achieve your best, there's a wealth of material online, including useful websites, digital archives and documentaries on YouTube. This page lists resources that may help further your understanding of the topic. It may also prove a valuable reference for research if you decide to choose this period for the coursework element of your course.

CHAPTER 1

Context: Revolutionary Russia in 1917

Russia's geography and peoples

In 1917, Russia covered over 8 million square miles (22 million square kilometres), an area equivalent to two and a half times the size of the USA today. At its widest, from west to east, it stretched for 5000 miles; at its longest, north to south, it measured 2000 miles. It covered a large part of two continents. European Russia extended eastward from the borders of Poland to the Urals mountain range. Asiatic Russia extended eastward from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean. The greater part of the population, which between 1815 and 1914 had quadrupled from 40 million to 160 million, was concentrated in European Russia. It was in that part of the empire that the major historical developments had occurred and it was there that Russia's principal cities, **St Petersburg** and **Moscow**, were situated.

The sheer size of Russia tended to give an impression of great strength, but this was misleading. The population contained a wide variety of peoples of different ethnicities, language (see Table 1.1), religion and culture. Controlling such a variety of peoples over such a vast area had been a major problem for all Russian governments before 1917 and would remain so after.

KEY TERMS

St Petersburg The traditional capital of Russia; in 1914, for patriotic reasons, it was retitled Petrograd, a Russian form of the name to distinguish it from the original German form.

Moscow In 1918, for security reasons, the Bolsheviks made this the new Russian capital.

Table 1.1 The major nationalities of the Russian Empire according to the census of 1897 (in millions, defined according to mother tongue)

Great Russia	55.6	Bashkir	1.3
Ukrainian	22.4	Lithuanian	1.2
Turkic/Tatar	13.4	Armenian	1.2
Polish	7.9	Romanian/Moldavian	1.1
White Russian	5.8	Estonian	1.0
Yiddish (Jewish)	5.0	Mordvinian	1.0
Kirgiz/Kaisats	4.0	Georgian	0.8
Finnic	3.1	Tadzhik	0.3
German	1.8	Turkmenian	0.3
Azerbaijani	1.7	Greek	0.2
Latvian	1.4	Bulgarian	0.2

The social structure of tsarist Russia

The striking features of the social structure of Russia in 1917 were the comparatively small commercial, professional and working classes and the preponderance of peasants in the population (see Figure 1.2, page 3).

Figure 1.1 Map of Russia in 1917.

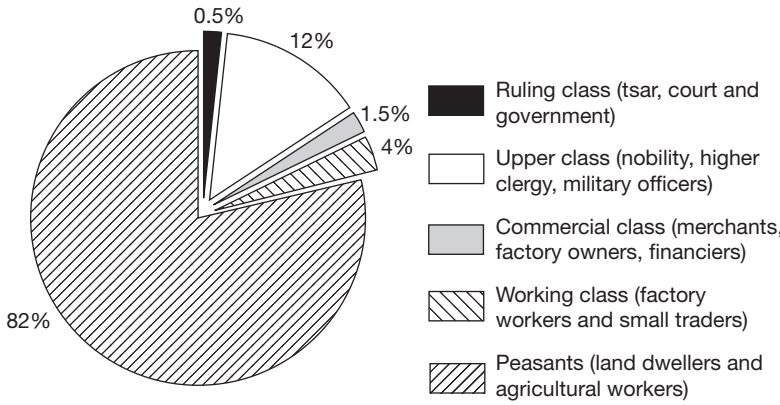

Figure 1.2 The class structure of the Russian population in 1917.

The Russian economy

Russia had been at war with Germany and Austria-Hungary since 1914. War is a time when the character and structure of a society are put to the test in a particularly intense way. The longer the war lasts, the greater the test. By 1917, Russia was in grave economic difficulties. These difficulties were evident in three particular areas: inflation, food supplies and transport.

Inflation

The war destroyed Russia's financial stability. Between 1914 and 1917, war costs meant that government spending increased from 4 million roubles to 30 million. Increased taxation at home and heavy borrowing from abroad were only partially successful in raising the capital Russia needed. The **gold standard** was abandoned, which allowed the government to put more notes into circulation. In the short term, this enabled wages to be paid and trade to continue, but in the long term it made money practically worthless. The result was rapid **inflation**, which had become particularly severe by the beginning of 1917. Between 1914 and 1917, average earnings had doubled while the price of food and fuel had quadrupled.

Food supplies

As the war continued, peasants found it impossible to sustain agricultural output. One reason for this was the **requisitioning** by the military of grain, the chief crop in most areas, fertilisers and farm horses. There was the additional problem that inflation made trading unprofitable and so the peasants stopped selling food and began hoarding their stocks instead.

What increased the problems for the ordinary Russian was that the military also had priority in the use of the transport system. The army commandeered the railways and the roads, with the result that the food supplies that were available could not be distributed easily to civilian areas.

KEY TERMS

Gold standard The system in which the rouble, Russia's basic unit of currency, had a fixed gold content, which had given it strength when exchanged with other currencies.

Inflation A decrease in the value and, therefore, the purchasing power of money.

Requisitioning State-authorised seizure of property or resources.

Transport

It was the disruption of the transport system that intensified Russia's wartime shortages. The attempt to transport millions of troops and masses of supplies to the war fronts created unbearable pressures. The signalling system on which the railway network depended broke down; blocked lines and trains stranded by engine failure or lack of fuel became commonplace.

The army

By 1917, the war was going badly for Russia. A critical factor was that the army was hampered by a lack of equipment. This was not because there had been underspending on the military. The problem was poor administration and liaison between the government departments responsible for supplies. Despite its takeover of the transport system, the military was as much a victim of the poor distribution as the civilian population. In the first two years of the war, the army managed to obtain its supply needs, but, from 1916, serious shortages began to occur.

The suffering that the food shortages and the dislocated transport system brought to both troops and civilians might have been bearable had the news from the war front been encouraging, or had there been inspired leadership from the top. There had been occasional military successes, but the gains made were not followed up and were never enough to justify the ever-lengthening lists of dead and wounded. The enthusiasm and high morale with which Russia had gone to war in 1914 had turned by 1917 into pessimism and defeatism. Ill-equipped and underfed, the peasant soldiers who composed the Russian army began to desert in increasing numbers. It was these circumstances that encouraged political revolutionaries to believe they could seize power.

Russia's political parties

Parties in Russia pre-dated 1906 but it was only from that date that they were permitted to exist legally. By 1917, those that had been formed fell into one of two main categories: liberals, who wanted reform of the existing system, and revolutionaries, who wanted to overthrow it.

Liberal parties

Octobrists

The Octobrists were a party of moderates who had been loyal to the tsar and his government and believed that the tsarist system was capable of being improved by measured reform. They largely lost their significance once the tsar had abdicated.

KEY TERM

Duma The parliament that had existed since 1906.

Kadets (Constitutional Democrats)

The Kadets, the largest of the liberal parties and influential in the ***duma***, wanted Russia to develop as a modern liberal state. Following the February Revolution, they pinned their hopes on the election of a Constituent Assembly, believing

that such a body, representative of the whole of Russia, would be able to settle the nation's outstanding social, political and economic problems.

Revolutionary parties

The Social Revolutionaries (SRs)

The Social Revolutionary Party began as a movement among the Russian peasantry, but also gained recruits from among the urban workers. It had two main wings: Left Social Revolutionaries, who claimed that only a policy of terrorism could bring necessary change to Russia, and Right Social Revolutionaries, who, while believing in revolution, were prepared to work with other parties for an immediate improvement in the conditions of the workers and peasants.

The Social Democrats (SDs)

The Social Democrats had come into being in 1898. Their aim was to achieve revolution in Russia by following the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–83), the German revolutionary, who had advanced the idea that human social development was shaped by **class struggle**, a process that operated throughout history. He referred to this process as the **dialectic,** whose final stage would be the violent overthrow of the **bourgeoisie** by the **proletariat**. In 1903, the SDs had split into two separate Marxist parties:

- The Mensheviks believed in a broad coalition of all the Russian progressive parties to work to bring down tsardom and modernise Russia. The Mensheviks played a leading role in the Petrograd **soviet** (see page 6).
- The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin (see page 9), held the belief that only their dedicated party of Marxist believers had the necessary commitment and understanding to achieve genuine proletarian revolution. At the time of the February Revolution of 1917, most of the leading Bolsheviks, including Lenin, were in exile because of their revolutionary activities and thus played no direct part in events.

The political situation in 1917

At war with Germany and Austria-Hungary since 1914, Russia in 1917 was a nation in violent transition. In February, the tsar (emperor), Nicholas II, had abdicated on his own behalf and that of the ruling Romanov dynasty. This event, known as the February Revolution, marked the end of the centuries-old autocratic tsarist system. There then followed the formation of a **Provisional Government**, a body composed of members from the Russian parliament, the *duma*. It was intended to be an interim government which was to hold office only until an election was held later in the year. Since the election was to be based on **universal suffrage**, the members returned by it would then be entitled to form a Constituent (national) Assembly, empowered to govern with legitimate authority.

KEY TERMS

Class struggle
A continuing conflict at every stage of history between those who possessed economic and political power and those who did not, 'the haves' and 'the have-nots'.

Dialectic The dynamic force that drives the class struggle forward.

Bourgeoisie The owners of capital, the boss class, who exploited the workers but who would be overthrown by them in the revolution to come.

Proletariat The exploited industrial workers who would triumph in the last great class struggle.

Soviet Originally the Russian word for a representative council; it was appropriated by the Bolsheviks to describe their movement.

Provisional Government
A temporary body claiming authority between February and October 1917.

Universal suffrage
An electoral system in which all adults have the right to vote, something unknown in tsarist Russia.

An event as significant as the setting up of the Provisional Government at this time was the formation of the Petrograd soviet. This was a body made up of 'Soldiers', Sailors' and Workers'' representatives, which gathered in the Tauride Palace in Petrograd, the same building that housed the Provisional Government. Thus, it was that these two self-appointed bodies – the Provisional Government, representing the reformist elements of the old *duma*, and the Soviet, speaking for striking workers and rebellious troops – became the ***de facto*** government of Russia. This was the beginning of what became known as the 'Dual Authority', an uneasy alliance that was to last until October.

KEY TERM

De facto A term used to denote the real situation, as compared to what it should or might be in theory or in law.

Steps towards the October Revolution, 1917

The weakness of the Provisional Government

The Provisional Government, which picked up the reins of authority after the tsar's abdication, was really the old *duma* in a new form. From the beginning, it suffered from the two characteristics which weakened it throughout the eight months of its existence:

- It was not an elected body, having come into being as a rebellious committee of the old *duma*, which had defied the tsar's order to disband. In consequence, it lacked legitimate authority and had no claim on the loyalty of the Russian people.
- Its authority was limited by its unofficial partnership with the Petrograd soviet in the 'Dual Authority'.

The role of the Petrograd soviet

The soviet did not set out to be an alternative government. Initially, it regarded its role as supervisory, checking that the interests of the soldiers and workers were understood by the new government. However, in the uncertain times that followed the February Revolution, the Provisional Government often seemed unsure of its own authority. This uncertainty tended to give the soviet greater prominence.

The Bolsheviks return

Once the Bolsheviks, most of whom were in exile, learned of the February Revolution, they rushed back to Petrograd. Lenin arrived in Petrograd on 3 April. The following day, he issued his *April Theses*, in which he spelt out future Bolshevik policy. To the bewilderment of those Bolsheviks who had expected to be praised for their efforts in working with the other revolutionary groups, Lenin condemned all that had happened since the fall of the tsar. He insisted that, since the Bolsheviks were the only truly revolutionary proletarian party, they must:

- abandon cooperation with all other parties
- work for a true revolution entirely by their own efforts

- overthrow the reactionary Provisional Government
- demand that authority pass to the soviets, which, based on the Petrograd model, had been set in place by workers and soldiers in many other Russian cities and towns.

Lenin had ulterior motives in demanding the soviets take over government. Although he rejected much of what the soviets had done, he saw them as a power base. Circumstances had made them an essential part of the structure of post-tsarist government. Lenin calculated that the soviets – the Petrograd soviet in particular – offered his small Bolshevik Party the means by which it could obtain power in the name of the proletariat. By infiltrating and dominating the soviets, the Bolshevik Party would be in a position to take over the state.

The essence of Lenin's argument was summed up in two provocative Bolshevik slogans that he coined: 'Peace, Bread and Land' and 'All Power to the Soviets'. But these were more than slogans. They were Lenin's way of presenting in simple, dramatic headings the basic problems confronting Russia:

- 'peace' – the continuing war with Germany
- 'bread' – the chronic food shortages
- 'land' – the disruption in the countryside.

Lenin's analysis was shrewd and prophetic; the Provisional Government's failure to deal with the three principal issues he had identified would lead to its eventual downfall.

The Provisional Government and the war

From the outset, the Provisional Government was in a troubled position. The main problem was the war. For the new government, after February 1917 there was no choice but to fight on. The reason was not idealistic but financial. Unless it did so, it would no longer receive the supplies and **war-credits** from the Western Allies on which it had come to rely. The strain that this obligation imposed on the Provisional Government eventually proved unsustainable. It was a paradoxical situation: in order to survive, the Provisional Government had to keep Russia in the war, but in doing so it destroyed its own chances of survival.

KEY TERM

War-credits Money loaned on easy repayment terms, mainly by France and Britain, to Russia to finance its war effort.

Emergence of Kerensky

The Provisional Government's commitment to the war would have mattered less had the Russian army been successful, but the military situation continued to deteriorate, eroding the support that the government had initially enjoyed. An important figure here was **Alexander Kerensky**, who became prime minister in July. He campaigned for Russia to embrace the conflict with Germany as a crusade to save the revolution. But this took no account of the real situation. The truth was that Russia had gone beyond the point where it could fight a successful war. Suffering heavy defeats at the hands of the Germans and Austrians, whole Russian regiments mutinied or deserted.

KEY FIGURE

Alexander Kerensky (1881–1970)

A leading SR member and anti-Marxist socialist.

Kronstadt

The government's troubles were deepened by events on the island of Kronstadt, a major naval base situated fifteen miles west of Petrograd in the Bay of Finland. Sailors and workers there defied the central authorities by setting up their own separate government. Such developments tempted a number of revolutionaries in Petrograd into thinking that the opportunity had come for them to bring down the Provisional Government. The attempt to do so became known as the July Days.

The July Days

In the first week of July, large-scale demonstrations occurred in Petrograd. These were confused, disorderly affairs, but the Bolsheviks under Lenin supported them, thinking they could be exploited to bring down the Provisional Government. They were wrong. The Provisional Government was still strong enough to crush the rising and scatter the Bolsheviks. **Leon Trotsky** later referred to the July Days as a 'semi-insurrection' and argued that they had been begun by the Mensheviks and SRs. In saying this, he was trying to absolve the Bolsheviks from the blame of having started a rising that failed. Lenin thought it expedient to leave Petrograd and return to the safety of Finland, a move which he frequently made during 1917 to avoid arrest in Russia.

KEY FIGURES

Leon Trotsky (1879–1940)

A Menshevik before joining Lenin's Bolsheviks in 1917. He played a central role in the October Revolution; later became an inveterate opponent of Joseph Stalin. A full profile for Trotsky appears on page 60.

Lavr Kornilov (1870–1918)

Distinguished by his bravery as a tsarist officer, he was a fierce patriot who hated Russia's revolutionaries.

The Kornilov affair, September 1917

In August, Kerensky's government became involved in a crisis that undermined the gains it had made from its handling of the July Days, and allowed the Bolsheviks to recover from their humiliation. General **Lavr Kornilov**, the new commander-in-chief, declared that Russia and the government stood in grave danger of a Bolshevik-inspired insurrection. He informed Kerensky that he intended to bring his loyal troops to Petrograd to save the Provisional Government from being overthrown. Fearful that Kornilov would attack, Kerensky called on all loyal citizens to take up arms to defend the city. The Bolsheviks were released from prison or came out of hiding to collect the weapons issued by the Provisional Government to all who were willing to fight.

By this strange twist in the story of 1917, the Bolsheviks found themselves being armed by the very government they were pledged to overthrow. In the event, the weapons were not needed since Kornilov abandoned the advance and allowed himself to be arrested. It was the Bolsheviks who benefited most from these events. They had been able to present themselves as defenders of Petrograd and the revolution, thereby diverting attention away from their failure in the July Days.

The political shift in Petrograd

So considerable were the Bolsheviks' gains from the Kornilov affair that by the middle of September they had a majority in the Petrograd soviet. However, this should not be seen as indicating a large swing of opinion in their favour, but

rather as a reflection of the changing character of the soviets. In the first few months after the February Revolution, the meetings of the soviets had been fully attended. Over 3000 deputies had packed into the Petrograd soviet at the Tauride Palace. But as the months passed enthusiasm waned. By the autumn of 1917, attendance was often down to a few hundred. This worked to the Bolsheviks' advantage. Their political dedication meant that they continued to turn up in force while the members of other parties attended only occasionally. The result was that the Bolshevik Party exerted an influence out of proportion to its numbers, most notably in its overrepresentation on the various Soviet subcommittees.

Lenin's strategy

From his exile in Finland, Lenin constantly appealed to his party to prepare for the immediate overthrow of Kerensky's government. He claimed that the Provisional Government, incapable of ending the war, was becoming increasingly reactionary. This meant that the Bolsheviks could not wait; they must seize the moment while the government was at its most vulnerable. In a sentence that was to become part of Bolshevik legend, Lenin declared: 'History will not forgive us if we do not assume power'. Lenin's sense of urgency arose

SOURCE QUESTION

Why did Lenin regard it necessary to disguise himself as shown in Source A?

SOURCE A

Photo of Lenin, clean-shaven and bewigged, in hiding in Petrograd 1917. Throughout the period April to October 1917, Lenin went in constant fear of being arrested and executed by the Provisional Government. He adopted various disguises, kept continually on the move and frequently fled to Finland. Yet, oddly, as Kerensky later regretfully admitted, the authorities made little concerted effort to capture their chief opponent. This raises the interesting question of whether Lenin exaggerated, or the government underestimated, his powers of disruption.

from his concern over two events that were due to take place in the autumn, and which he calculated would seriously limit the Bolsheviks' freedom of action:

- the meeting of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in late October
- the election for the Constituent Assembly in November.

Lenin was convinced that the Bolsheviks would have to take power before these events occurred. If, under the banner 'All Power to the Soviets', the Bolsheviks could topple the Provisional Government before the Congress of Soviets met, they could then present their new authority as a ***fait accompli*** which the Congress would have no reason to reject.

The elections to the Constituent Assembly presented a different problem. The Assembly was the body on which all progressives and reformers had set their hopes. Once it came into being, its moral authority would be difficult to challenge. Lenin told his party that since it was impossible to forecast how successfully the Bolsheviks would perform in the elections, they would have to be in power before the results were announced. This would provide them with the authority to undermine the results should they go against them.

Despite the intense conviction with which Lenin put his arguments to his colleagues, there were Bolsheviks on the **Central Committee** of the party who doubted the wisdom of striking against the Provisional Government at this point. To convince the doubters, Lenin slipped back into Petrograd on 7 October.

KEY TERMS

Fait accompli
An established situation that cannot be changed.

Central Committee
The decision-making body of the Bolshevik Party.

SOURCE QUESTION

Why was the presence of the Bolsheviks in the soviet meetings shown in Source B so significant?

SOURCE B

A packed meeting of the Petrograd soviet in March 1917. Initially, huge numbers of soldiers and workers, sometimes as many as 3000, attended the early meetings, but by the autumn this had dropped to a few hundred. However, the Bolsheviks kept up their numbers, which gave them a predominant influence in the soviet.

During the next two weeks he spent exhausting hours at a series of Central Committee meetings trying to convince the waverers. On 10 October, the Central Committee pledged itself to an armed insurrection, but failed to agree on a specific date. In the end, by another quirk of fate, it was Kerensky and the government, not the Bolsheviks, who initiated the actual rising.

Kerensky makes the first move

Rumours of an imminent Bolshevik **coup** had been circulating in Petrograd for some weeks, but it was not until an article, written by two members of the Bolshevik Central Committee, appeared in a journal, that the authorities felt they had sure proof. The writers of the article, **Grigor Zinoviev** and **Lev Kamenev**, argued that it would be a mistake to attempt to overthrow the government in the current circumstances. Kerensky interpreted this as a sure sign that a date had already been set. Rather than wait to be caught off-guard, he ordered a pre-emptive attack on the Bolsheviks. On 23 October, the offices of ***Pravda*** were occupied by government troops and a round-up of the leading Bolsheviks began. The Bolsheviks no longer had a choice; Lenin ordered the planned insurrection to begin.

Trotsky's role

That the Bolsheviks had a plan at all was the work not of Lenin but of Leon Trotsky. While it was Lenin who was undoubtedly the great influence behind the October Rising, it was Trotsky who actually organised it. The key to Trotsky's success in this was his chairmanship of the Petrograd soviet, to which he had been elected in September. On 9 October, the soviet set up the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) to organise the defence of Petrograd against a possible German attack or another Kornilov-type assault from within Russia. It proved a critical decision. Realising that if the Bolsheviks could control the MRC they would control Petrograd, Trotsky used his influence to have himself appointed as one of the **troika** to run the MRC. This meant he had at his disposal the only effective military force in Petrograd. He was now in a position to draft the plans for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. When Lenin gave the order for the uprising to begin, it was Trotsky who directed the **Red Guards** in their seizure of the key vantage points in Petrograd, such as the bridges and the telegraph offices.

The collapse of the Provisional Government

In the three days (25–27 October) that it took for the city to fall under Bolshevik control there was remarkably little fighting. There were only six deaths during the whole episode and these were all Red Guards, most probably accidentally shot by their own side. The simple fact was that the Provisional Government had hardly any military forces on which to call. The Petrograd garrison, which had turned out to defend the government on previous occasions, did not come to its aid now. The truth was that desertions had reduced the garrison to a few loyal officer-cadets, a small group of **Cossacks** and a unit known as the **'Amazons'**.

KEY TERMS

Coup An attempt, usually by a minority group, to seize power from an existing government.

Pravda ('The Truth') The Bolshevik Party's official propaganda newssheet.

Troika A team of three people.

Red Guards Despite the Bolshevik legend that these were the crack forces of the revolution, the Red Guards, some 10,000 in number, were largely made up of elderly factory workers.

Cossacks The remnants of the elite cavalry regiment of the tsars.

'Amazons' A special corps of female soldiers recruited by Kerensky.

KEY FIGURES

Grigor Zinoviev (1883–1936)

A close colleague of Lenin since the formation of the Bolshevik Party in 1903.

Lev Kamenev (1883–1936)

He was to hold various key positions under Lenin between 1917 and 1924.

SOURCE QUESTION

From where would the Amazon recruits shown in Source C have most likely been drawn?

SOURCE C

A contingent of Amazons being trained in 1917. Kerensky had specifically recruited these female soldiers, also known as the 'Women's Battalion of Death', as an example of the fighting spirit of Russia's women.

When the Red Guards approached the Winter Palace, which housed the Provisional Government, they expected stiff resistance, but there was none. The Bolshevik forces did not need to storm the gates; there was nobody defending them. The Winter Palace was a vast building many times larger than London's Buckingham Palace. The Red Guards simply walked in through the back doors. This was enough to make the defenders give up. The Cossacks walked off when confronted by the Red Guards. After that, it did not take much pressure to persuade the cadets and the Amazons that it was better for them to lay down their arms rather than die in a futile struggle.

The sounding of its guns in a prearranged signal by the pro-soviet crew of the cruiser, *Aurora*, moored in the River Neva, convinced the remaining members of the government that their position was hopeless. As many as could, escaped unnoticed out of the building. Kerensky, having earlier left the city in a vain effort to raise loyal troops, fled to the American embassy. He later slipped out of Petrograd, disguised as a female nurse, and made his way to the USA, where he eventually became a professor of history.