



11. THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

Area of Study 1: Russia

IN THIS LESSON YOU WILL

- ✦ Revise the main tensions in Russia by 1917, through Historiography.
- ✦ Look at the Russian war effort by 1917.
- ✦ Examine political pressure the government faced by 1917.
- ✦ Continue to explore the role of Rasputin in the downfall of the Tsar.
- ✦ Examine social tensions in Russia by 1917.
- ✦ Examine the February Revolution; causes and outcomes.



“ALL AROUND ME
THERE IS TREACHERY,
COWARDICE AND
DECIT.”

TSAR NICHOLAS II ON HIS ABDICATION

1. REVISION

HISTORIANS' VIEWS HANDOUT

1. The Tsar; what “obstinate” decisions had he made by 1917 to “erode” the Old Regime?

2. Liberals; why were they “forced” into the revolutionary camp by 1917?

3. What was “ironic” about Bloody Sunday?

6. “A government who could offer no more than...gallows...could not endure.” How does this reflect the reprisals that had been occurring?

4. Why had the 1905 Revolution given Russia “nothing more than breathing space?”

*Russia
Post
1905*

5. Why was the 1905 Revolution a “prelude.”



2. THE RUSSIAN WAR EFFORT LATE 1914-1916

THE WAR EFFORT

- * March 1915: Russia forces capture 120,000 Austrian soldiers in Galicia (modern Ukraine).
- * June 1915: Russian government forms a Central War Industries Committee to address a dire shortage of rifles and other weapons.
- * July 1915: Russia forces begin retreating from Poland and Galicia in large numbers. Most withdraw to behind Russia's border.
- * July 1915: Russia is forced to surrender Warsaw to German/Austrian troops.
- * Update your notes on "Military Defeats."



A 1914 German cartoon, predicting defeat over the Triple Entente

3. POLITICAL PRESSURE

POLITICAL CHAOS



- ❖ Please read page 70-2 of “Reaction and Revolution.”
- ❖ Add **Union of Zemstvos** (formed July 1914), **Union of Municipal Councils** and **Zemgor** to your glossary.
- ❖ **We will return to this slide for some questions, let’s come some clarification first.**

REMEMBER THIS?

*Left Wing:
Radical*

*Right Wing:
Moderate*

Reformers

*Bolshevik
SDs*

*Menshevik
SDs*

*Populists...
Socialist
Revolutionaries
SRs*

Kadets

Octoberists

Maximalists

Revolutionaries

Revolutionaries

1. Why was the Progressive Bloc considered liberal conservative?

PROGRESSIVE BLOC; LIBERAL CONSERVATIVES

- ✦ Those sympathetic to the Tsar; who want to avoid Revolution.
- ✦ *“The whole purpose of the Progressive Bloc was to prevent revolution so as to enable the government to finish the war.”* Vasliy Shulgin, a member of the Progressive Bloc and an ardent monarchist.



KEY DATES



- * October 1914: The 5 Bolshevik deputies in the Duma are arrested. They are tried in February 1915 and exiled to Siberia.
- * As we know the fourth Duma had voluntarily disbanded during the War. (See the extract from Figes in homework task #4 for their reasoning).
- * June 1915: The Duma reconvenes;
- * August 1915: The Kadets, the Octobrists and other liberal-conservatives form an alliance and begin demanding political reforms of Ministers. **This is called the Progressive Bloc.**
- * Late August 1915: The Tsar prorogues (discontinues) the Duma and leaves Petrograd for the army headquarters at Mogilev (as he has assumed leadership of the Russian Army).
- * 6th February 1916: The Duma reconvenes in Petrograd.
- * Update your notes on the Progressive Bloc & the Duma 1916. Add **Progressive Bloc** to your glossary.

POLITICAL CHAOS



- ✿ Please read page 70-2 of “Reaction and Revolution.
- 2. Why was the Zemgor a threat to Tsardom?
- 3. What was the Progressive Bloc?
- 4. In the period 1915-16 the government had “four Prime Ministers, three foreign secretaries, three ministers of defence and six interior ministers.” What does this suggest?

4. RASPUTIN AND THE TSARINA

RASPUTIN; CONTROL AND DEATH

- ❖ When Nicholas II left for war in 1915, he left Alexandra in charge. She continued to seek Rasputin for advice.
- ❖ This further flamed the salacious rumours circulating about the pair. It did not help that Rasputin himself would often boast that he was having a sexual relationship with the Tsarina.
- ❖ It also aggravated people that Rasputin was having so much political influence over the nation. For example on **June 20th 1916** (Julian Calendar), following Rasputin and the Tsarina's advise the Tsar ordered the dissolution of the fourth Duma.
- ❖ **In October 1916** (Julian Calendar), the conservative Alexander Protopopov is appointed interior minister. Again this is at the behest of the Tsarina and Rasputin. Protopopov is responsible for the deaths of millions of Russian troops.
- ❖ Update your notes on Rasputin & Duma 1916. Add **Alexander Protopopov** to your glossary.



RASPUTIN, THE TSARINA AND WORLD WAR 1



RASPUTIN DIES

- ✿ He was eventually murdered in December 1916. You can read about this on page 73 of “Reaction and Revolution.”



5. MORE POLITICAL PRESSURE

THE DUMA IS RECONVENED (AGAIN)



- ❖ November 1st 1916: The Duma reconvenes (again). It would not *completely* be forced to dissolve again. **It immediately calls for an overhaul of the government!**
- ❖ December 1916: The Tsar is warned by his advisors that the army would no longer support him if there was a Revolution.
- ❖ Update your notes on the Duma ~ 1916.

6. SOCIAL UPHEAVAL

THE PEOPLE

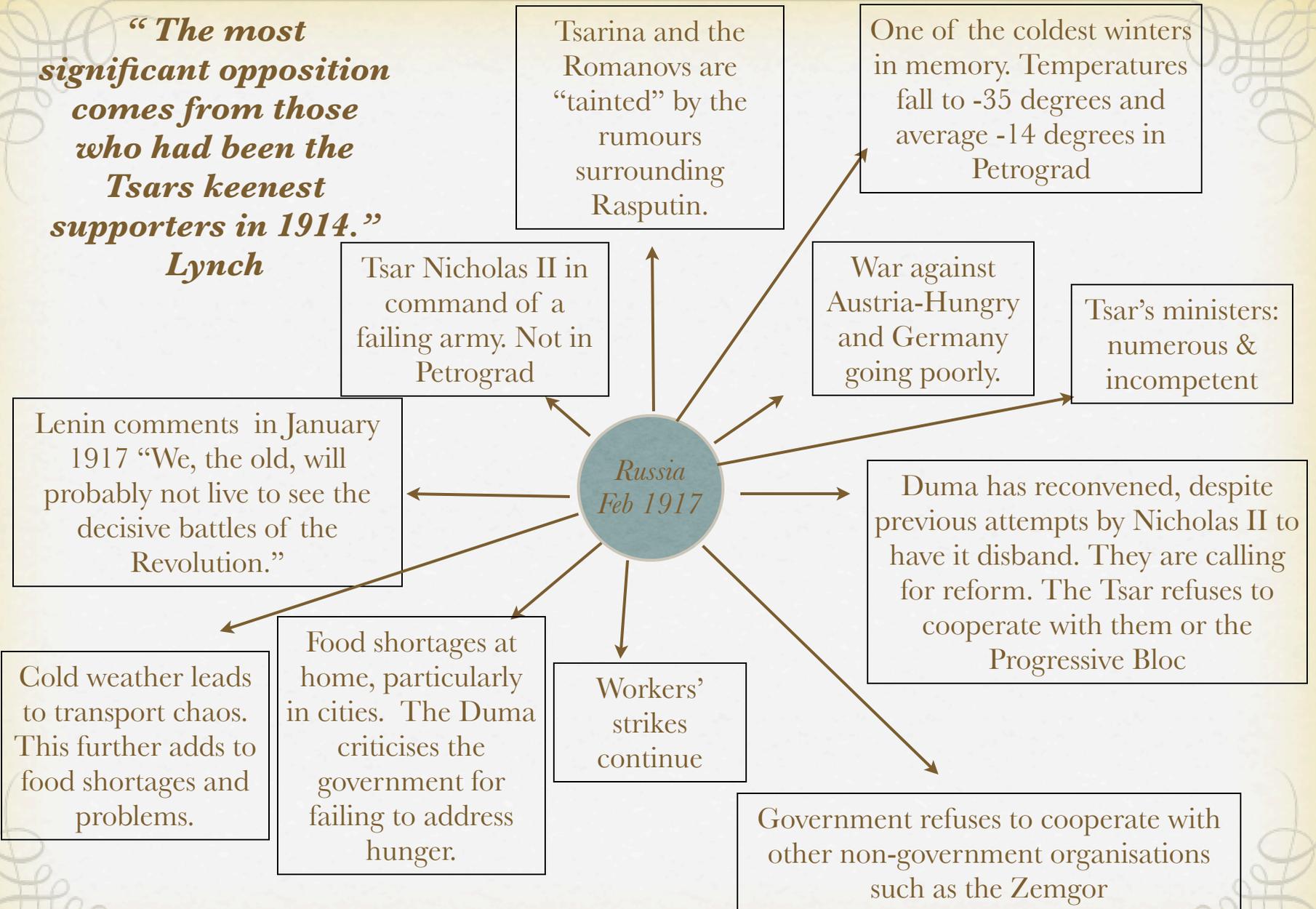


- ❖ Early 1917: Putilov steel factory strike (Petrograd) as it was closed and workers stood down due to cold weather.
- ❖ January 9th 1917 (Julian): 140, 000 - 150, 000 Russians strike on the 12th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.
- ❖ February 14th 1917 (Julian): More than 100, 000 people are still on strike. The Duma attacks the government for failing to respond to food shortages.
- ❖ Update your notes on social tensions.



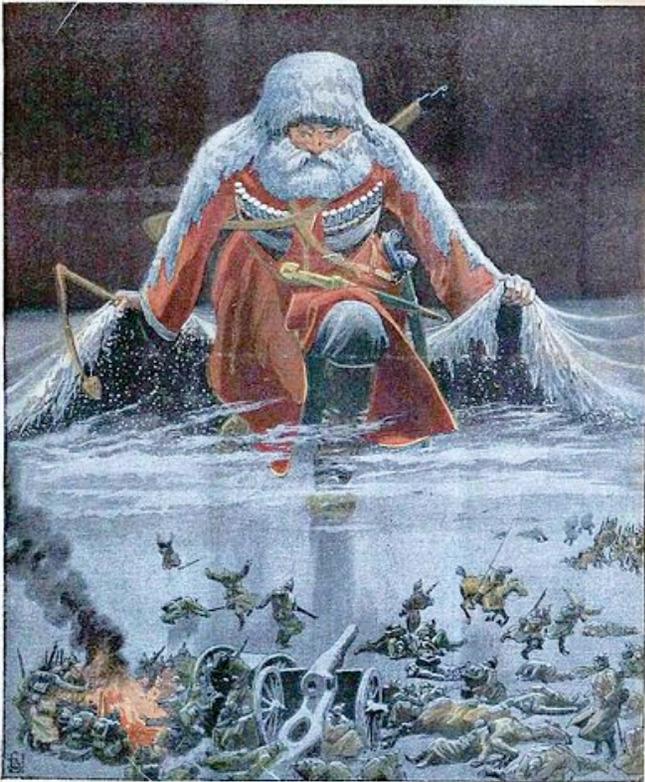
7. RUSSIA BY FEBRUARY 1917

“The most significant opposition comes from those who had been the Tsars keenest supporters in 1914.”
Lynch



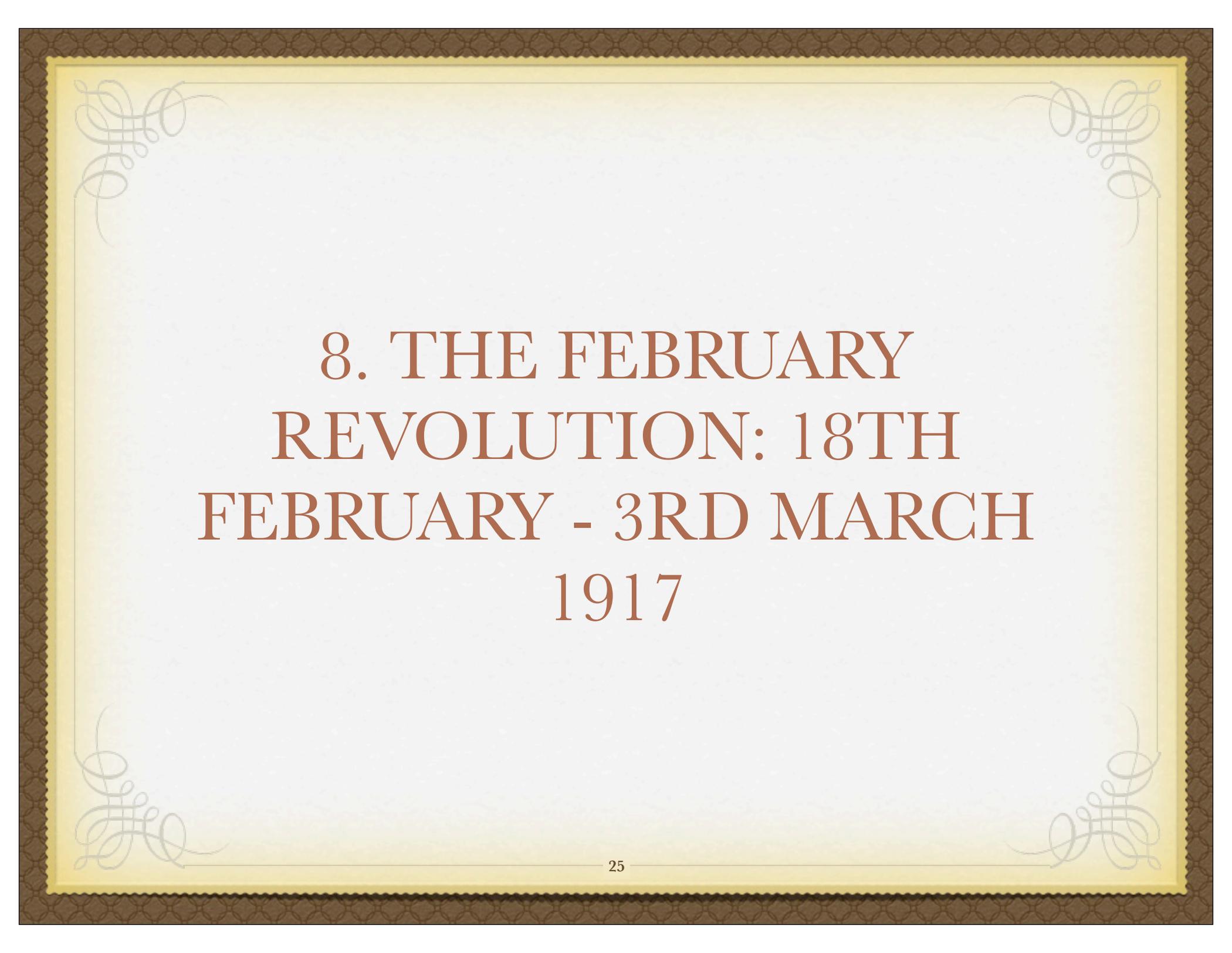
WINTER 1916-17

Le Petit Journal
ADMINISTRATION 5 CENTS SUPPLÉMENT ILLUSTRÉ 5 CENTS AGENNEMENTS
Le dimanche de Noël pas de vente
27^{ème} Année — 49 — Numéro 1,707
DIMANCHE 9 JANVIER 1916
BUREAU DE RÉDACTION: 27, R. de Valenciennes
REDACTION: 27, R. de Valenciennes
IMPRIMERIE: 27, R. de Valenciennes

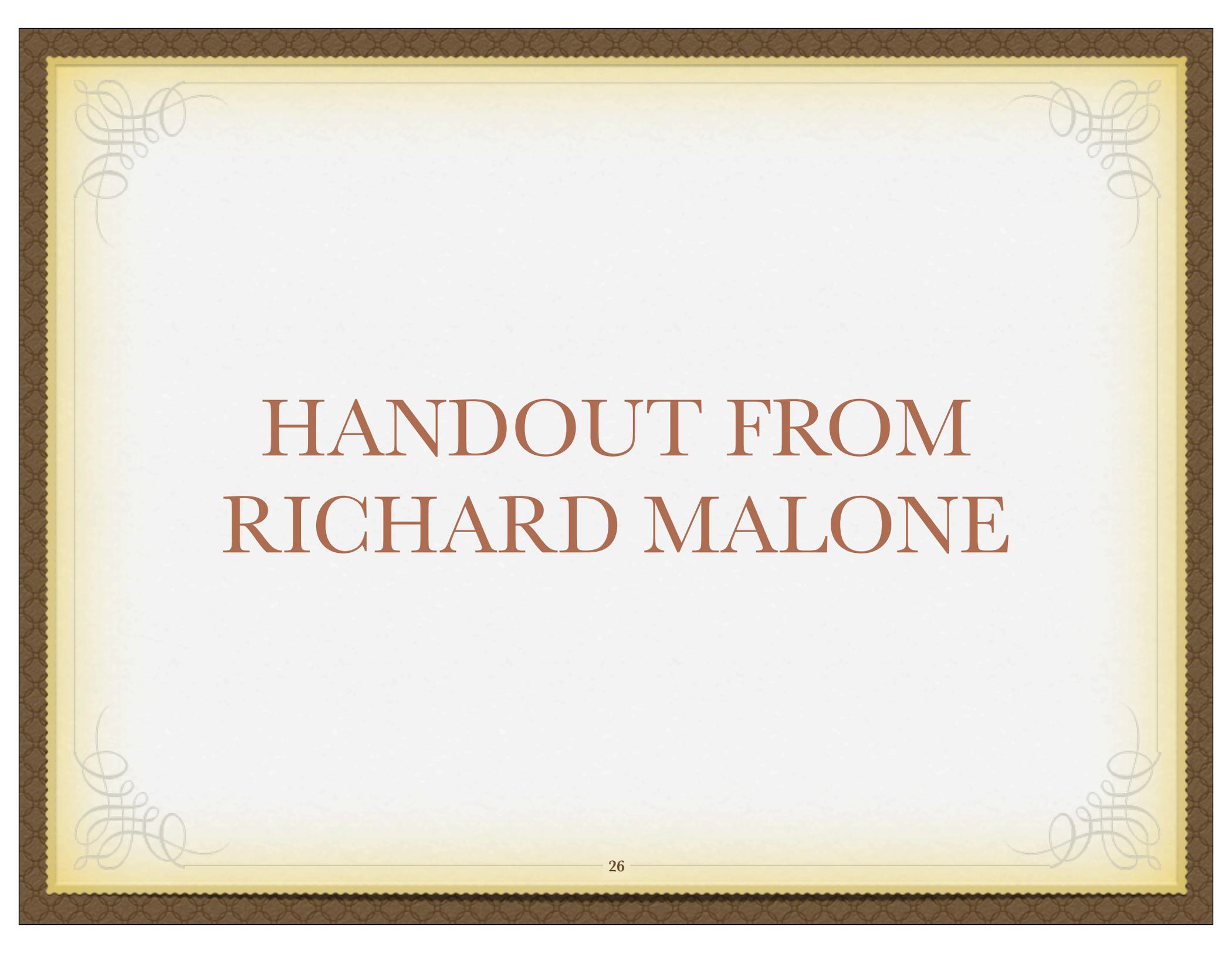


LE GÉNÉRAL HIVER





8. THE FEBRUARY
REVOLUTION: 18TH
FEBRUARY - 3RD MARCH
1917



HANDOUT FROM
RICHARD MALONE

MISTAKE 1: FOOD AND ABANDONMENT

❖ **February 19th 1917:** The government announces food rationing. This leads to chaos and frantic buying of food in the cities where availability is already low. **The February Revolution begins.**

❖ **February 21st 1917:** Having enjoyed Christmas with his family, Nicholas II leaves for the front. He would never return to Petrograd as Tsar again. **(Insert ominous sound effect).**

❖ Update your notes on the February Revolution.



RESPONSE - STRIKES

*Julian
Calendar*

- ❖ **February 23rd 1917 - International Women's Day :**
Thousands of women march on the streets to join the protestors demanded bread and the end of the war. The women were also demanding political equality.
- ❖ **February 25th 1917:** Petrograd is paralysed by city wide strikes (200, 000 - 300, 000 workers). Cossacks do little to quell the protests, as they are generally sympathetic (although there is some violence). Most are happy to 'ignore' the protestors if they are just asking for bread.
- ❖ **Late February:** Khabalov tried to install Martial Law; it is impossible.
- ❖ Update your notes on the February Revolution.



MISTAKE 2: BLOOD



- ✿ Read page 76 of “Reaction and Revolution.”
- ✿ Add **General Khabalov** and **Provisional Committee** to your glossary.
- ✿ **26th February 1917:** Nicholas orders the Petrograd garrison to fire on protestors, dozens are killed. “*I order you to stop tomorrow the disorders in the capital.*” (Tsar to Khabalov). By this date all but a few thousand Petrograd garrison troops remained loyal. Nicholas also orders the Duma to be dissolved. They decline.
- ✿ Update your notes on the February Revolution & Alexander Kerensky (or start them if you haven’t).

DID NICHOLAS MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE?



- ✿ Consider this, however. Petrograd police informed the situation was “minor and controllable” days earlier.
- ✿ The president of the Duma, Rodzianko, called for abdication stating;
 - ✿ *Your Majesty, urgently summon a person in whom the whole country can have faith and entrust him with the formation of a government that all the people can trust.*

RESPONSE - MUTINY

❖ **February 27th 1917:** Two garrisons of soldiers in Petrograd shoot their officers rather than obey orders to shoot protestors. Rioters release prisoners.



❖ *“Houses in barracks designed to fit 20, 000 men, by February 1917 there were 160, 000 men living in cramped conditions and waiting to be sent to the front. Comprising of mostly peasants and workers, they had witnessed the shootings the day before and identified with the victims, not the shooters. Fedor Linde, a sergeant in the barracks remembered shouting ‘To arms! To arms! They are killing innocent people, **our brothers and sisters.**’”* Perfect.

❖ Update your notes on the February Revolution.

RESPONSE - POLITICAL ALLIANCES

- ❖ **February 27th 1917:** Mensheviks and striking work reform the “Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers’, Sailors’ and Workers’ Deputies.”
- ❖ Let’s read about this on page 77 of “Reaction and Revolution.”
- ❖ **February 28th 1917:** The Petrograd Soviet and Duma (Provisional Committee) meet to discuss a course of action. Extreme violence on the streets of Petrograd.
- ❖ Update your notes on the February Revolution.



DUAL AUTHORITY 27TH FEBRUARY THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE ASSUMES AUTHORITY.

Enter “Dual Authority,”
“Universal Suffrage,”
“Shlyapnikov” “Stavka”
and “De facto” into your
glossary.

*Russia
February
1917*

Update your notes
on the Petrograd
Soviet & the
February Revolution

Provisional Committee:
*The reformist elements of
the old Duma*

Only Kerensky
was a member
of both

Petrograd Soviet
*The striking workers and
the rebellious troops*



MISTAKE 3 : TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

- ❖ **February 28th 1917:** Nicholas II tries to return to Petrograd.

RESPONSE - SABOTAGE

- ❖ Nicholas is delayed in Pskov as his train was intercepted by mutinous troops.
- ❖ Update your notes on the February Revolution.



MISTAKE 4: MINISTERS

- ✦ **February 28th 1917:** Nicholas II's Council of Ministers stepped down, many fled the city.

RESPONSE - DE FACTO POWER

- ✦ **February 28th 1917:** Proclamation of the Provisional Committee was made.
- ✦ Read about it page 81 of “Reinventing Russia.”
- ✦ Update your notes on the February Revolution.



9. NICHOLAS ABDICATES

NICHOLAS ABDICATES

- * Let's read pages 77-8 of "Reaction and Revolution."
- * **March 1st 1917:** France and Britain formally recognise the Provisional Committee as the official government. The Imperial Guard and the Cossack march in solidarity with the revolution.
- * **March 2nd:** Tsar Nicholas II abdicates in favour of his brother Michael. Provisional Committee declares itself a Provisional Government.
- * **March 3rd:** Michael refuses the throne, stating he would only accept it if it was offered by a constituent assembly. The Provisional Government declares the Revolution has occurred.
- * Add "Provisional Government" to your glossary.
- * Update your notes on the Tsar's abdication.



DID NICHOLAS MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE?



- ✦ He was told by Rodizanko that the only way to save the Russian monarchy was by abdication.
- ✦ Members of the old Duma and members of the **Stavka** (the high command of the Russian Army) inform him that returning to Petrograd would be futile and dangerous. They, too, suggested abdication.

SUMMING UP

- ✦ Let's read pages 78-80 of "Reaction and Revolution."
- ✦ Important points to remember;
 - ✦ Very few Bolsheviks involved in the February Revolution. Lenin was in exile. Trotsky was still in exile. Stalin was in exile.
 - ✦ Petrograd was the central, and only, place of insurrection.
 - ✦ It is characterised by the rebellion of those closest to the Tsar. It was his officers who suggested he abdicated. **Liberal Conservatives.** It was the leaders of the Duma who refused to disband and formed the Provisional Committee & Government. It was his soldiers who mutinied, defected and with the workers formed the Petrograd Soviet.
 - ✦ It was these senior ranking people, who failed to support Nicholas, as opposed to the striking workers who propelled the February Revolution.
 - ✦ We can not underestimated the role war played in the dissatisfaction of the old regime and Nicholas' ultimate abdication.

HAVE YOU?

- ✱ Revised the main tensions in Russia by 1917, through Historiography?
- ✱ Looked at the Russian war effort by 1917?
- ✱ Examined political pressure the government faced by 1917?
- ✱ Continued to explore the role of Rasputin in the downfall of the Tsar?
- ✱ Examined social tensions in Russia by 1917?
- ✱ Examined the February Revolution; causes and outcomes?