

Russia Withdraws

In 1917 an event occurred which the Germans hoped would alter the course of the war. Czar Nicholas II of Russia abdicated (resigned) in March. His resignation led to Russia's withdrawal from the war nine months later.

When World War I broke out, Russia honored its obligation to France and joined the fight against the Central Powers. The Russian army fought bravely, but poor leadership, defeats, and desertions undermined the army's morale and determination. In addition, Russia had been plagued for centuries by corruption, poverty, and peasant uprisings, and it was ripe for revolution. Appeals to the czar for permanent reforms were ignored. Consequently, on March 18, 1917, Nicholas II was forced to give up the throne, ending three hundred years of Romanov rule. A democratic provisional (temporary) government under Alexander Kerensky took control of the nation.

Kerensky did his best to keep Russia in the war while implementing democratic reforms. However, the provisional government was out of touch with Russia's peasants and workers, who demanded even more radical changes. On November 7, 1917, Kerensky's government was overthrown and replaced by a government led by Nicolai Lenin. When Lenin came into power, the Bolshevik (Communist) Revolution began. This revolution turned Russia into a dictatorial state.

Lenin soon arranged for an armistice (agreement) with Germany that removed Russia from the war. The armistice became official in March 1918, with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Russia's withdrawal enabled the Germans to shift more than one million troops from the eastern front to the west for one final offensive maneuver in 1918.

Number the following events to put them in chronological order.

1. _____ The Bolsheviks seize power in Russia.
2. _____ The Germans transfer one million troops from the eastern front to the west.
3. _____ Czar Nicholas II abdicates.
4. _____ Russia withdraws from the war.
5. _____ A provisional government takes control of Russia.

Explain the significance of the following names.

6. Nicholas II _____

7. Alexander Kerensky _____

8. Nicolai Lenin _____

9. Treaty of Brest-Litovsk _____
