The Russian Revolution
Richard Pipes

- **Thesis** – Russian Revolution = Lenin
- Leftist, but not Communist
- American from Poland; Jewish
- Early Revisionist often questioned by neo-revisionists for focus on Lenin as the core of the revolution.
Vladimir Ilitch Ulianov

• Born 1870; Father died and brother executed by Alexander II for an assassination plot in 1886
  – Is this why Lenin became a Communist – Histo says No.

• University of Kazan – “reticent and unsociable”
  – Expelled due to a harmless student protest
  – Exposure to radical literature began
  – Hatred for autocracy, lawlessness, police, liberals and bourgeoisie – Struve (friend in 1890s) → personality shift
Lenin 2.0

- Wants to mix Marxism with German Social-Democratic philosophies and anarchistic terror
- Two types of people: Friend and Enemy
  - Unable to tolerate dissent; silence and suppress dissenters
  - Seeds of totalitarian mentality
- Inspired fear; cruel, but at no physical risk to himself
- No individuals, just states and parties
  - Could not understand that normal people wanted to live in peace (105)
- Bolsheviks – “pseudo-intellectuals looking for certainty in an uncertain world” (104)
Roots of Bolshevism

- War (Crimea, Russo-Japanese, WWI)
- Nicholas II and weak leadership
- Poor economic conditions
- Agrarian, feudal society (still serfs in late 1800s)
Bolshevism vs. Leninism

• One in the same; “conceived in his own image…”
• Communist Russia does away with opposition
• Lenin had no personal life ➔ dedicated to cause
• Influenced by Lenin’s life experiences with workers, intelligentsia, liberals, absolutism
Bolshevism vs. Marxism

• Marxism + Social Democrats

• “Worker, if left to himself, would not make revolution, but come to terms with the capitalist (105) workers need to be led by socialist party of professional revolutionaries (don’t betray class)

• Social intelligentsia would lead (not Marx)

• Need clandestine effort to implement Split w/SD
• **Mensheviks** – Split over way revolution should be handled (now vs. later) in 1906-07
• Bolsheviks join SRs on collectivization and giving land to peasants (win peasant support)
• Supported self-determination for minorities
• Funded by bourgeois and bank robberies (107-08)
• Lenin welcomed war because it would attract peasants to Bolshevism.
• Called for the defeat of Russia as “least evil”
• Provisional Government wanted to win the war
February Revolution

• True Crane Brinton Stage #3
• Spontaneous and gained nationwide acceptance \rightarrow largely socialist/liberal/intellectual backed, but Bolsheviks prospered from the fall of czar. (113-15)
• **April Theses** – Renounce war, deny support of Provisional Gov’t., nationalization of land and bank, soviet control of production/distribution (117)
War and Propaganda

• Clausewitz’s focus on total destruction (119)
• Avoid Counterrevolutionary backlash
• Tirailleurie (skirmishing) – find weak points and attack there
• Gustav le Bon – *Crowd Psychology* → learned how to manipulate large crowds
April-June, 1917 (119-121)

- Bolsheviks still behind SRs and Mensheviks
  - Slogans say others were hypocrites → TRUE revolution
  - World Revolution promised groups everything b/c Russia didn’t matter →
  - April Riots – Weak

- **Syndicalism** – Anti-Marxist – vertical integration of workers; almost Corporatist!? Uses it to gain worker support in 1917 → destroys it in 1920.

- **Red Guard** – Private army financed by GER →
  - Antiwar propaganda against “bourgeoisie’s war”
June-July, 1917 (125-127)

- June antiwar/anti-Kerensky demonstration cancelled prematurely; people disgruntled by RUS in WWI
- **July Revolt** – Lenin flees prior to putsch in Finland
- Trotsky & others seize power in name of Soviets
  - Mensheviks and SRs walk out, leaving Bolsheviks
  - Lenin returns to lead coup→ loses his nerve→ fails→
  - Bolsheviks arrested and Lenin flees back to Finland
  - Lvov resigns and Kerensky takes over
Kornilov Affair (8/17; 132-35)

- Army loses its strongest general’s support
- Weakening of army key to forming single-party state
- Kornilov Comm-in-Chief by Kerensky who feared right more than left
- Lvov deceives Kerensky into thinking Kornilov was plotting overthrow as revenge over firing

THEN tricks Kornilov into saying he wants to be dictator
• THEN Lvov tells Kerensky, who demands he puts Kornilov’s demands in writing & demands dictatorship in Kornilov’s name.

• THEN the misunderstanding on the phone $\rightarrow$

• Kerensky dismisses Kornilov
Kerensky’s Folly

• Kornilov requests martial law in Petrograd, having no clue what’s going on (proof of no Korn. putsch)
• Kerensky’s telegram firing Kornilov received as a forgery by generals → finds out about Lvov. → Kerensky won’t back down even after misunderstanding is discovered →
• Kornilov enraged & *actually rebels*
• **Pipes** – No Kornilov plot, but a real Kerensky plot
  – Failed and achieved exact opposite result for Kerensky
  – Bolshevik gains in popularity (nearly 50% of seats)
Aftermath

• Bolsheviks released from prison, gain power in Soviets (nearly 50%) → Kerensky, to stop Kornilov’s imaginary coup gives 40K guns TO BOLSHEVIKS!

• Pipes – Pandering to the Left lost Kerensky the army, and they didn’t save him in October. Lenin had “fresh hope” due to split (136)
September

- Trotsky takes over Petrograd Soviet & wants to use this power to take over the others
- Coup talk rekindled
  - Zinoviev and Kamenev against it; instead, assume legit power at 2\textsuperscript{nd} Congress of Soviets
  - Lenin thought they were “insane”; only way was armed insurrection in Moscow and Petrograd
  - Everyone in Central Committee disagreed with Lenin
- Why Now? Didn’t want to get overruled by SRs wrecking his mandate. Needed to do it before Constituent Assembly met or they’d be striking a gov. run by SRs instead of bourgeois. Ispolkom gives in to Lenin’s demands; fatal mistake (139-140)
Red October

• PG ready to give Petrograd to GER navy ➔ Ispolkom condemns move “capital of revolution”

• Menshevik move to create Committee of Revolutionary defense ➔ goes awry b/c Bolsheviks vote for it and control military LEGALLY ➔

• Time to strike. Coup on 10/25 & 2\textsuperscript{nd} Congress would ratify it.
Coup d’État

- Trotsky orchestrates control of the army through Milrevkom
- Kerensky didn’t arrest them b/c he thought he could permanently crush Bolshevik uprising; still more afraid of Right, so he didn’t activate loyal forces
- Milrevkom took businesses and utilities
- Kerensky escapes → Lenin doesn’t take Winter Palace, but sends out a declaration as if he had.
The Morning After...

- People had no idea what had happened overnight but, “Petrograd was in the iron grip of armed Bolsheviks and nothing would ever be the same.”
- Winter Palace taken and PG cabinet arrested at 2am
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} Congress begins with a Bolshevik/Left SR supermajority at 1am on 10/26
Results

• Lenin is Party Chairman
• All other prominent Bolsheviks are his cabinet in a stacked Sovnarkom
• Moscow and other cities fall to Bolsheviks throughout November/December; countryside follows in Summer 1918.
• People fooled by continuity (stocks didn’t move)