

How accurate is it to say that lenin's leadership?

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



How accurate is it to say that Lenin's leadership was the most important reason for the Bolshevik's success in the revolution of November 1917?

Lenin's leadership was to a large extent an important cause of the Bolshevik's success in the November 1917 revolution. This is because of Lenin's great leadership skills, including his personality and timing, and his use of propaganda.

Other factors to why the Bolsheviks succeeded included Trotsky's role, which was debatably more important, and the problems with the Provisional Government, which made it unpopular, increasing support to the Bolsheviks and meant that any future revolution was inevitable. Lenin's leadership was crucial in a number of respects. He was a brilliant orator so the Bolsheviks were well led. At the Central Committee meeting on the 23rd October 1917, Lenin forced through an agenda item, when the leading Bolsheviks, Zinoviev and Kamenev, disagreed on it.

This was crucial because Lenin was in exile in Switzerland and had fled to Finland more recently because of disasters resulting from the July Days. This shows how Lenin was obviously still the determined leader of the Bolsheviks, and in the face of a united opposition, he was still capable to force his views upon the party. Furthermore, Zinoviev and Kamenev's correct interpretation of Marx was not enough to stall Lenin's wish for an armed uprising. Lenin slightly changed Marxist theory by stating that the bourgeois revolution had enough time to complete industrialization.

This further established how influential Lenin within the Bolsheviks and no one could compete with him even if it was obvious that his Marxist theory was wrong. The Bolshevik's success would not have occurred in the armed

<https://assignbuster.com/how-accurate-is-it-to-say-that-lenins-leadership/>

uprising of the November 1917 revolution without Lenin's leadership skills. Lenin's leadership skills is linked to his popular slogans which gained support to the Bolsheviks whilst making the Provisional Government unpopular. Furthermore, Lenin was determined to transform the political state in Russia by overthrowing the Provisional Government.

Before Lenin's return in April 1917, the leading Bolsheviks, such as Kamenev and Stalin, actually supported the Government. There were major problems for the government, counting the central issues. People were suffering from the hardships of World War I including: a huge number of deaths at the front, hyperinflation, transportation breakdowns, empty shelves in stores and lack of fuel to heat people's homes. These issues were linked in a cruel circle; the only way to end the economic and social crisis was to get out off war but by doing so, that would mean the withdrawal of foreign aid, which would create an economic crisis of its own.

The central issues dissatisfied the proletariat, soldiers and peasants. When Lenin returned, he promised his most popular slogans, which were 'Peace, Land and Bread' and 'All Power to the Soviets' which were designed to gain support for the Bolsheviks and undermine the Provisional Government. 'Peace, Land and Bread' was a popular message because 'peace' meant an instant end to conflicts and referred to Bolshevik opposition to war; 'bread' meant a promise of food in the towns and cities, and 'land' meant all of it to be nationalised for the peasantry.

This was a popular message in a country tired of war and faced food shortages. This emphasised the Provisional Government's support for the unpopular war and proved their failure to help the land and food shortages.

<https://assignbuster.com/how-accurate-is-it-to-say-that-lenins-leadership/>

Lenin's solution 'All Power to the Soviets' made the workers and peasants believe that the Provisional Government was made up entirely of landowners and middle classes who would not look out for them. The slogans, therefore, allowed Lenin to give support to the Bolsheviks that they will have power whilst making the Provisional Government look weak and dependant on the 'strong' Bolsheviks.

This is linked to how the weakness of the Provisional Government helped the Bolshevik's support rise. It was the Provisional Government, which led to direct attempts to defeat it; the Bolsheviks were lucky that the Provisional Government was weak. General Kornilov, dissatisfied with the Provisional Government and the muddled state of the army, called for its overthrow. He wanted a return of the death penalty for abandonment, the elimination of the Soviets and the appointment of himself as new leader.

Kerensky firstly made proposals to Kornilov by asking him to join a coalition. When rejected, he had to ask the Petrograd Soviet to help him defend the capital. They agreed, but only once he had released the Bolshevik prisoners. He was therefore put into an unpleasant position of having to give weapons to a group of people who were wanted to defeat his government. In the end, Kornilov surrendered. The results were disastrous for the government. Politically, it lost support on both Left and Right.

The Right-Wing were shocked that Kerensky had armed the communists. The Left were shocked that Kerensky had tried to compromise with Kornilov and turned instead to the organisation of the Bolsheviks. Militarily, the army lost all trust in the government and started to collapse. The Provisional Government was now extremely unpopular and helped make revolution

inevitable with more Bolshevik support. Furthermore, The Kornilov Affair had followed the arming of the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC).

The MRC did not give its guns back to the Provisional Government once the crisis was over, which meant that there was an armed radical group at the core of the Petrograd who were progressively undertaking the orders of the Bolsheviks. In addition, the failure of Kornilov to get to Petrograd highlighted the power the MRC had over soldiers. Clearly, after the Kornilov Affair, the Provisional Government could no longer trust the troops to protect them if their opponent were in the MRC. The Kornilov Affair therefore made the revolution inevitable.

This is linked to Trotsky, who led the MRC, and how his role was crucial to the success of the Bolsheviks in the revolution. It was Trotsky who was the mastermind behind the actual planning and accomplishment of the uprising ever since he joined the Bolsheviks in May. Trotsky started the Pravda, a new workers-oriented newspaper, which got the Bolsheviks ideas across and helped the party run its own propaganda machine. Furthermore, on the evening of 24th October 1917, orders were given for the Bolsheviks began to occupy the railway stations, the telephone exchange and the State Bank.

The next day the Red Guards, a private Bolshevik army established by Trotsky, surrounded the Winter Palace. The Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) of the Petrograd Soviet was set up to defend Soviets from Germans after the June offensive collapses. It was under the control of Trotsky and the Red Guards occupied crucial areas of Petrograd and arrested most of the Provisional Government, who were in the Winter Palace. Many of the members of the Provisional Government were arrested, but did not offer any

<https://assignbuster.com/how-accurate-is-it-to-say-that-lenins-leadership/>

confrontation. The MRC, however, did win over the support of the Peter/Paul fortress, with its 100,000 rifles. This shows how Trotsky had also organised and executed the Bolsheviks' takeover with great competence. Trotsky was an important contribution as he was the organiser and gave the Bolsheviks the military power to win against the Provisional Government, which ended up numbering over 10,000. To conclude, Lenin's leadership was crucial to a number of respects. However, other factors such as Trotsky's role, including his great organisational skills, and the weakness of the Provisional Government, which helped increase Bolshevik support, are arguably more crucial.

Lenin was a brilliant speaker and powerful within the party. In the face of a united opposition between Zinoviev and Kamenev, Lenin was still able to force his views upon the party, which shows how no one could compete with him. His two famous slogans 'All Power to the Soviets' and 'Peace, Land and Bread' allowed Lenin to give support to the Bolsheviks that they will have power. However, Lenin was lucky that the Bolsheviks' opponent, the Provisional Government, was weak.

There was little support for the Provisional Government within the Petrograd. The Provisional Government failed to tackle the worst issues like the food shortages for example. The Kornilov Affair also created political and military problems for the government, which made revolution inevitable. Furthermore, Trotsky played a much important role as he gave the Bolsheviks the military power due to his organisational and timing skills. Lenin did help the Bolsheviks succeed in the November 1917, but only to a certain extent.