

Evaluate the role of lenins leadership in the success of the bolshevik revolution...

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



The year 1917 was a turbulent year for Russian politics with two revolutions occurring within the space of seven months, of the two the most significant was the Bolshevik revolution, led by a prominent Marxist Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, the skilled and dedicated political activist.

Vladimir was born on the 22 of April 1870 to a respectable family, his father, Nikolay Ulyanov was the inspector of schools for the province of Simbirsk, and because of his educational background, Vladimir (Also known as Lenin) was an extremely intelligent boy. In 1887 one of the most significant events in his life occurred, his brother Alexander, was implicated in a plot to kill the Tsar and was hung, this event triggered Lenin's Revolutionary inclination, and was a key event in the path he chose to take. In the autumn of 1887 Vladimir enrolled as a student at Kazan University. After three months he was expelled and exiled to Kokushkino. The next year he was allowed to return to Kazan, but not permitted to enroll at the university, During this period of idleness, Lenin decided to expand his mind, he became a Marxist by 1889 after reading Das Kapital, the influential thinking of Karl Marx, a German socialist.

In 1889 Vladimir and his family moved to Samara, here he was allowed to sit the law exam and passed with high honors, he practised law for a 3 months before becoming a full time revolutionary (1). After moving to St Petersburg, Lenin joined a revolutionary group who called themselves the League of the Emancipation of the Working Class, after being incarcerated, Lenin wrote many books the most significant of which being " The development of

capitalism in russia” after his release he was exiled to siberia where he met his bride to be Nadezhda Krupskaya, They married in 1898(2)

Later on in his political life, lenin joined the social democratic party, Formed in 1883 by George Plekhanov, It combined all the small socialist groups in st Petersburg at the time, wich had been operating seperately. Vladimir assumed the name Lenin while he was a part of this (3) group, Lenin proved to be a skilled political thinker, however, his interpretation of Marxist work differed from the rest of the social democrats, He believed that a Revolutionary party could only be achieved through restricted membership to professional revolutionaries and that the Bourgeois stage of revolution could be skipped, he felt that the Bourgeois in russia were not strong enough to carry out a successful revolution. It was this view that caused the split in the social democrats in 1903, Those that agreed with lenins views on socialism joined the bolsheviks (or Majority) and those that did not became the mensheviks (or Minority), It was lenins views on the bourgeois stage of marxist theory that encoraged the bolsheviks to work against the provisional govournment(1)

After the abdication of the Tsar and the provisional govournment taking control of russia the two sides, the bolsheviks and the mensheviks, contrary to the bolsheviks ideals, the two socialist groups were willing to co-operate with the provisional govournment, at this moment, the Lenin was away from russia in exile, and to illustrate his effect on the revolution it is important to comment of the reletive disorgonisation of the bolshevik party prior to Lenin’s return in april of that year saw a great deal of action within the

bolshevik party, unlike most of the bolsheviks at the time lenin had not only a vision to aim for, but a plan on how to get there, the so called " April Thesis", his first step was to gain a majority in the soviets, the unions as they were in russia, who, at the time of the march revolution, had been sharing power with the provisional government which has been described by some historians as " Dualism"(4), lenin's plan, by gaining a majority in the soviets was to gain control of the only powerful organisation able to take control of the government, after he gained control of the soviets, he began to gain support from the peasants, he used such slogans as " peace bread land", and " all power to the soviets"

Lenin soon received help from an unexpected source, General Kornilov was appointed as the supreme commander of the German armies, he believed that the provisional government lacked the backbone needed to rule Russia, he also blamed them for the state the Russian troops were in, as a result of Kerensky's rejection of Kornilov's suggestion to dissolve the soviets, Kornilov ordered his troops to march on Petrograd (formerly St Petersburg) to turn Russia into a military dictatorship, the bolsheviks rallied to Petrograd's defence and Kornilov was repelled, this action by Kerensky in arming the bolsheviks to defend Petrograd was an important event as it gave the bolsheviks the means to take control of the government(5)

Another example of Lenin's effect on the revolution, was when he made the decision to actually take the capital by force, it began when Kerensky decided to move the capital to Moscow, this gave the Petrograd soviets the threat of losing its power, although Lenin wasn't there to force add the

weight of his own personality and convictions, he succeeded in a vote, 10 votes to 2, the red army took began the advance and by 6 p. m recieved a note from lenin ordering the advance further “ the situation is impossibly critical. it is clearer than clear that now, in ruth, a delay in the uprising is equivilent to death we must, no matter what, this evening, tonight arrest the govournment, we cannot wait!! we might lose everything!!” On the 25 October, the bolsheviks had taken the city, although lenin was the main force behind the attack, it is important to note that trotsky held a crucial role in the final stages of the revolution, his quick thinking and good decisions effectively won the bolsheviks petrograd, and in turn the bolshevik dictatorship wich soon followed.(6)

Another important effect lenin had was the ending of the war, lenin followed the policy of peace at any price, this was important as it effectively destroyed the revolutionary situation wich had toppled both the tsar and the provisional govournment, the treaty of brest-litovsk wich germany imposed was humiliating to russia, and all of the bolsheviks social revolutionary allies and some of the bolsheviks wanted to refuse the treaty, however, lenin fought them all saying that, “ russia simply couldnt fight on”, and trotsky’s plan of neither peace nor war almost led to disaster, the bolsheviks accepted the treaty and in doing so lost a quarter of her population a third of its textile industry three quarters of its iron and coal.(7)

It is widely believed that without Lenin’s influence, russia would not have become a socialist state, and, although it is impossible to predict all of the “ what if” scenarios, this is a fairly true statement, there where many

instances where his sharp thinking dedication and decisive action were a key part of the bolshevik victory, for example, the soviets co-operation with the provisional government, lenins leadership and “ april thisis” got the revolutionaries back on the revolutionary path, the kornilov affair, in which general kornilov attempted to install a military dictatorship, Lenin’s skillful manipulation of the situation allowed him to gain absolute power, Lenin convincing the soviets to take power, this was largely due to lenins forceful nature and drive, it is doubtful that they would have attempted a coup without lenins insistance and finily lenins treatment of the war, he removed a popular disturbance wich toppled two regimes and sacrificed land people and wealth in order to keep the revolution alive, in summary, lenin was undoubtably the most important socialist influence in russia.