

The Russian Revolution



Spring of 1917 --

- **The Provisional Government** (made up mostly of wealthy landowners and well educated Russians) is in charge on paper and working to create terms for the calling of a “Constituent Assembly” to create the rules for calling into existence a new permanent government
- **The Soviets** (representative bodies that sprang up organically across Russia of workers, farmers and members of the military) also have significant power – they also have the weapons and the backing of the military
- The Soviet in Petrograd is the most influential for obvious reasons
- **Alexander Kerensky** is a highly influential member of the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet – he is one of the few people with strong ties to both groups
- In early April Lenin returns to Petrograd from exile – upon his return he gives a speech where he outlines in “**April Theses**”. He strongly criticizes both the Provisional Government and the leaders of the Petrograd Soviet
- There are growing debates about the future Russia should take...

THE OPTIONS

1. **Create a Liberal Democracy** – *a western style democracy based on universal suffrage. Continue the war to protect Mother Russia.*
2. **Respect the Peasants** – *Massive reforms to benefit the peasants and creation of farming communes abolishing private land ownership. Continue the war.*
3. **Work Toward a Future Socialist Society** – *Russia is not ready for Marxist style socialism, it needs to industrialize more still and the Menshevik leaders will guide Russia to a socialist future. Continue the war.*
4. **Organize Now for a Second Revolution** – *Have an elite group of socialists take control of the state to create a socialist state now. Russia needs a second revolution to overthrow the Provisional government accomplish this. End the war, confiscate land from nobles and feed peasants/workers.*

Your Mission:

- Read your option
- Discuss it as a group
- Be prepared to explain: **Why should mother Russia choose your option over the others?**
- Be prepared to argue your point with the other groups.

Written Assignment:

On a piece of paper to turn in tomorrow respond to the following:

1. Briefly describe each of the 4 options.
2. According to the 4 options, what are the most important concerns for Russia?
3. Which option would you support the most strongly? Explain your answer.