Promises and Power

Trace the causes and consequences of Russia's 1917 revolutions.

WH.6.3 "Explain the causes and consequences of the Russian Revolutions of 1917 and the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle two conditions that helped cause the February Revolution, underline two reasons the Bolsheviks gained support, and number three consequences of their takeover in the order they appear.

From Bread Lines to a New State

1. In February 1917, crowds in Petrograd waited for bread while Russian soldiers faced heavy losses in World War I. Food shortages and rising prices had made daily life harder for workers and their families. Many people also resented Tsar Nicholas II, who held great power and had failed to address their demands. Strikes and protests spread, and soldiers ordered to stop them instead joined the crowds. Without their support, the tsar abdicated. A Provisional Government took charge, but it kept Russia in the war. The decision left a major source of anger unresolved.

2. By the fall of 1917, soldiers still wanted to leave the war, and peasants wanted land. The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, promised "peace, land, and bread." Their message drew support from people frustrated with the Provisional Government. In October, Bolshevik forces overthrew that government in Petrograd and claimed power in Russia. The new rulers issued a land decree that recognized peasants' seizures of estates. In March 1918, they signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, withdrawing Russia from World War I at the cost of vast territory. Peace with Germany did not mean peace at home.

3. The Bolsheviks fought a civil war against groups that opposed their rule. War, hunger, and harsh government policies devastated communities. The Bolsheviks won, but their leaders banned rival political parties and concentrated power in the Communist Party. In 1922, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and a federation of republics in the Caucasus formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR. On paper, its republics had their own governments; in practice, Communist Party leaders in Moscow directed major decisions. The revolutions had ended the tsar's rule and taken Russia out of World War I, but they also led to a new, tightly controlled state.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the war and the soldiers' actions help bring down the tsar in February 1917?

2. Why did the Bolsheviks' promise attract support after the Provisional Government took power?

3. How did the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk fulfill one Bolshevik promise while creating a cost for Russia?

4. How did the outcome of the civil war affect political power in the USSR?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence museum label titled "Promises and Power." Make a claim about whether the new Soviet state met the demands that drove the revolutions, and support it with at least three linked details from different parts of the passage.

Promises and Power

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle two conditions that helped cause the February Revolution, underline two reasons the Bolsheviks gained support, and number three consequences of their takeover in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the war and the soldiers' actions help bring down the tsar in February 1917?	**War losses and shortages fueled protests. When soldiers joined the crowds instead of stopping them, the tsar lost their support and abdicated.**
2	Why did the Bolsheviks' promise attract support after the Provisional Government took power?	**The government kept Russia in the war, while soldiers wanted peace and peasants wanted land. The Bolsheviks promised both.**
3	How did the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk fulfill one Bolshevik promise while creating a cost for Russia?	**It took Russia out of World War I, fulfilling the promise of peace, but Russia gave up vast territory.**
4	How did the outcome of the civil war affect political power in the USSR?	**After winning the civil war, Bolshevik leaders banned rival parties and concentrated power in the Communist Party. Party leaders in Moscow directed major decisions in the USSR.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Promises and Power: The new Soviet state met some demands that drove the revolutions, but it limited political freedom. Wartime losses and food shortages had helped turn people against the tsar, and the Provisional Government angered many by staying in the war. The Bolsheviks promised peace and land, then withdrew Russia from the war and recognized peasants' seizures of estates. Yet civil war brought more hunger, and Bolshevik leaders banned rival parties after their victory. By 1922, the USSR had replaced the tsar's rule with a state whose major decisions were directed by Communist Party leaders in Moscow.

Accept other well-supported claims about how fully the Soviet state met earlier demands. Responses should connect conditions in 1917 to Bolshevik actions and the political system established in the USSR.