

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION IN 1917 AND ITS IMPACT ON ICELAND



**Exhibition in The National and University Library
of Iceland opened in November 2017**

The Russian Revolution in 1917 is one of the most dramatic events of the 20th century and it had a profound influence on politics around the world. It was a series of uprisings in Russia that first led to the collapse of the dictatorship of the Russian emperor, but then to the taking power of soviets under the control of the Bolsheviks. The causes of the revolution were multifaceted. There was not much political freedom in Russia compared to other European countries. The Emperor's oppression was directed against both political opponents and people from other groups in the community. Land ownership was unequal and a small group of landowners owned most of it. Growth in cities and increased industrialization led to the emergence of a special labor force in Russia in late 19th century. There was a sharp rise in population growth in the largest cities, Petersburg and Moscow, and laborers lived there in poverty. During the International Women's Day (March 8 or February 23, according to the old Russian calendar) in 1917, women in a textile factory in Petersburg began strike, which soon merged with protests because of bread shortage. In the next few days, all industrial activities in the city were paralyzed. A part of the soldiers that was sent to St. Petersburg to prevent the strike joined the protesters and then the government resigned. In March the emperor Nicholas II resigned and a preliminary government took power.

In 1917, the influence of the radical arms of the Russian Socialist Democrat Group, the so-called Bolsheviks, increased. Their leader was Vladimir Ilitsj Uljanov who called himself Lenin. In September, the Council in Petersburg freed arrested victims and one of them, Leon Trotsky, was appointed President of the Council. In October, Lenin turned to Russia, and the Communist Party's central government officially agreed to take power. The so-called October Revolution began in Tallinn on October 23, 1917, but two days later in St. Petersburg (October 25 or November 7th according to our calendar). The revolution occurred relatively quickly and did not cause many deaths. The provisional administration was resolved from power, but instead an advisory board was appointed under the auspices of a representative. Among

the first actions of the government were to bring all the land into the hands of farmers, national banks, delegate council boards, raise wages and establish an eight hours working day. Bank deposits and property of the Church were confiscated.

The reports in Iceland about the Russian revolution were at first very few, as World War I was in full swing. On March 17, 1917, a brief report in *Morgunbladid* revealed that the Russian emperor had dropped power and was a prisoner of the parliament. On 20 March, there was a detailed article in the paper that discussed the revolution in Russia positively and talked about the new liberal regime, and that "Eastern Europe could expect a more rapid growing development in the next few years than anyone would have dreamed about."

The newspaper *Visir* said on November 8 that there were serious conflicts between the Russian government and "Maximalists" (Bolsheviks). A larger article appeared in the newspaper on November 10,

MORGUNBLADID

Erl. simfregnir.

frá fréttaritara (saf. og Morgunbl.).

Khöfn 15. marz.

— Síðastliðinn sunnudag hófst stjórnarbylting í Rússlandi.

Þingið neitaði að samþykkja boð keisarans um að slíta þinginu. Voru 12 þingmenn kosnir í nefnd og því lýst yfir, að hún myndaði nýja stjórn í Rússlandi.

Nýja stjórnin handtók alla stjórnar meðlimi keisarans.

Þrjátíu þúsund manna setuliðsins og fólkið í Petrograd fylgja nýju sjórninni að málum.

Á þremur dögum náði nýja stjórnin öllum völdum í Petrograd og gat þá út tilkynningu til þjóðarinnar um stjórnarbyltinguna, sem væri nauðsynleg til þess að koma á betra skipulagi á samgöngur innanlands og útvega matvæli.

Langard. 4 argange

17. 133

marz 1917 tölublað

Khöfn 15. marz

Astaðan til stjórnarbyltingarinnar í Petrograd er matvælskortur. Duman (þingið rússneska) hefir sett á laggirnir framkvæmdanefnd og er Rodzianko þingforseti formaður hennar.

Í Moskva er allsherjarverfall.

Kartöfluskortur er í Bretlandi.

Brauðkorn Frakklands er 40% minna en venjulega.

Þjóðverjar hata sökt hinu víðkunna norska skipi Storstad Var það á leið til Belgíu með matvæli.

Labori málferzlumaður er dæinn.

Brauðskamtur í Danmörku verður frá byrjun næsta mánaðar sennilega 315 gr. á mann daglega.

Kaupmannahafnarbúar ná ekki að sér kartöflum vegna stífltra frosta.

VÍSIR

Fimmtudaginn 8. nóv. 1917.

Símskeyti

frá fréttaritara 'Visis'.

Kaupm. höfn. 7. nóv.

Bretar hafa hafið nýja sókn í Flandern og tekið þorp in Mosselmarkt, Passchendael og Gonberg.

Alvarlegar skætur milli rússnesku stjórnarinnar og Maximalista. Stjórnarherinn hefir Petrograd á valdi sínu.

(Símskeyti frá 6. nóvember ekki komið fram).

LÖGRJETTA

NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY OF ICELAND

Compilation: Ólafur J. Engilbertsson and Arnaldur Sigurðsson. Special thanks: Sverrir Jakobsson.
November 2017.