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Ask Anything

Left Communist

Russian political faction

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Left Communist, in Soviet history, one of a group within the [Communist Party](#) which in the first half of 1918 opposed Lenin's practical policies for preserving Communist rule in [Russia](#). The group was led by Nikolay I. Bukharin.

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On the industrial issue, the Left Communists insisted that the proletariat should run the economy and that the workers' control of industrial enterprises that had developed during 1917 was a step toward this goal and should not be sacrificed for short-range, opportunistic purposes.



The Left Communists initially had

substantial support within the party. They dominated the Supreme Council of National Economy, an institution created in December 1917 to supervise the economy; in January 1918 there were more votes in the [Central Committee](#) favouring a revolutionary war than a peace treaty. But in March 1918 they were defeated at the seventh Party [Congress](#), which approved the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty; they also lost their positions on the Supreme Council of National Economy and shortly afterward lost their control of the Moscow and Urals regional organizations. When the Soviet government nationalized all large industrial enterprises in late June, many Left Communists considered this to be a correct [economic policy](#) and shifted their support back to Lenin. By the end of the summer the Left Communists no longer existed as a distinct opposition group.

Politics, Law & Government

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CITE



Vla dim ir Len in

prime
minister
of
Soviet
Union

Also
known
as:



Vladimir Lenin Vladimir Lenin, 1918.

Vladimir Ilich Lenin, Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov

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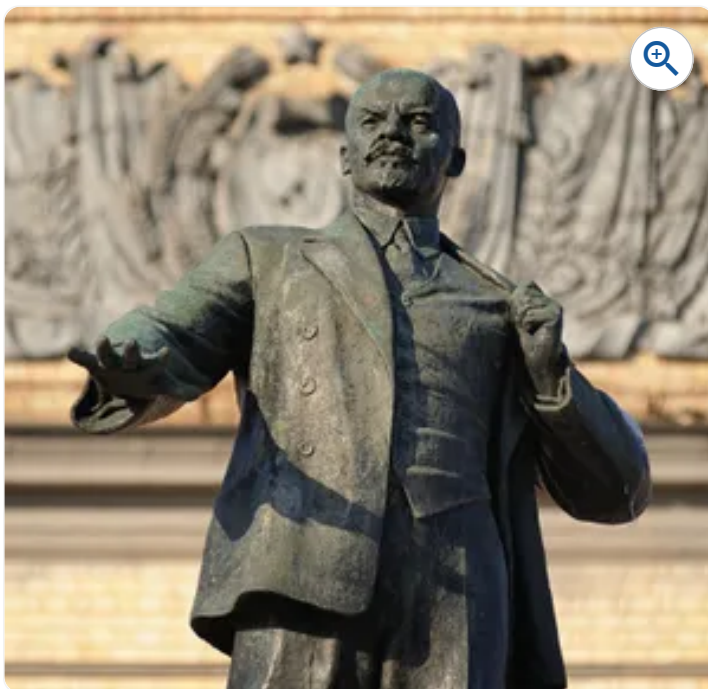


Vladimir Lenin Undated photograph of Russian political figure Vladimir Lenin at his desk.

Vladimir Lenin (born April 10 [April 22, New Style], 1870, [Simbirsk](#), Russia—died January 21, 1924, Gorki [later Gorki Leninskiye], near Moscow) was the founder of the [Russian Communist Party](#) (Bolsheviks), inspirer and leader of the [Bolshevik](#) Revolution (1917), and the architect, builder, and first head (1917–24) of the [Soviet state](#). He was the founder of the organization known as [Comintern](#) (Communist International) and the [posthumous](#) source of “[Leninism](#),” the doctrine codified and conjoined with [Karl](#)

[Marx](#)'s works by Lenin's successors to form Marxism-Leninism, which became the [Communist](#) worldview.

([Read Leon Trotsky's 1926 Britannica essay on Lenin.](#))



Vladimir Lenin Vladimir Lenin, statue in Oryol, Russia.

If the [Bolshevik Revolution](#) is—as some people have called it—the most significant political event of the 20th century, then Lenin must for good or ill be regarded as the century’s most significant political leader. Not only in the scholarly circles of the former [Soviet Union](#) but even among many non-Communist scholars, he has been regarded as both the greatest revolutionary leader and revolutionary statesman in history, as well as the greatest revolutionary thinker since Marx.

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Early life

The making of a revolutionary





Little Octobrist badge Little Octobrist badge with a portrait of a young Vladimir Ilich Lenin.

It is difficult to identify any particular events in his childhood that might prefigure his turn onto the path of a professional revolutionary. Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov was born in Simbirsk, which was renamed Ulyanovsk in his honour. (He adopted the pseudonym Lenin in 1901 during his [clandestine](#) party work after exile in Siberia.) He was the third of six children born into a close-knit, happy family of highly educated and [cultured](#) parents. His mother was the daughter of a physician, while his father, though the son of a serf, became a schoolteacher and rose to the position of inspector of schools. Lenin, intellectually gifted, physically strong, and reared in a warm, loving home, early displayed a voracious passion for learning. He graduated from [high school](#) ranking first in his class. He distinguished himself in Latin

his class. He distinguished himself in Latin and Greek and seemed destined for the life of a [classical scholar](#). When he was 16, nothing in Lenin indicated a future rebel, still less a professional revolutionary—except, perhaps, his turn to [atheism](#). But, despite the comfortable circumstances of their upbringing, all five of the Ulyanov children who reached maturity joined the revolutionary movement. This was not an uncommon phenomenon in tsarist [Russia](#), where even the highly educated and cultured intelligentsia were [denied](#) elementary civil and political rights.

As an adolescent Lenin suffered two blows that unquestionably influenced his subsequent decision to take the path of revolution. First, his father was threatened shortly before his untimely death with premature retirement by a reactionary

government that had grown fearful of the spread of public education. Second, in 1887 his beloved eldest brother, Aleksandr, a student at the University of [St. Petersburg](#) (later renamed Leningrad State University), was hanged for conspiring with a revolutionary terrorist group that plotted to assassinate Emperor [Alexander III](#). Suddenly, at age 17, Lenin became the male head of the family, which was now stigmatized as having reared a “state criminal.”



How did Vladimir Lenin change the world? Questions and answers about Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin.

[See all videos for this article](#)

Fortunately the income from his mother’s pension and [inheritance](#) kept the family in comfortable circumstances, although it could not prevent the frequent imprisonment or exile of her children. Moreover, Lenin’s high school principal (the father of [Aleksandr Kerensky](#), who was later to lead the Provisional government deposed by Lenin’s Bolsheviks in November [October, O.S.] 1917) did not turn his back

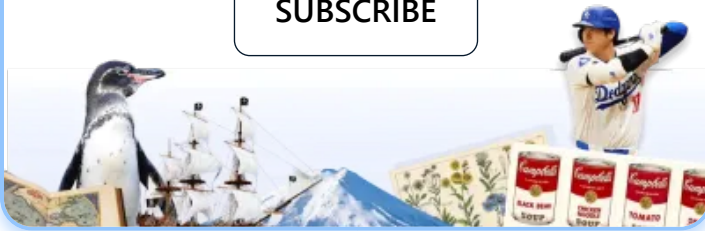
on the “criminal’s” family. He courageously wrote a character reference that smoothed Lenin’s admission to a university.

In autumn 1887 Lenin enrolled in the faculty of law of the imperial [Kazan](#) University (later renamed Kazan [V.I. Lenin] State University), but within three months he was expelled from the school, having been accused of participating in an illegal student assembly. He was arrested and banished from Kazan to his grandfather’s estate in the village of Kokushkino, where his older sister Anna had already been ordered by the police to reside. In the autumn of 1888, the authorities permitted him to return to Kazan but denied him readmission to the university. During this period of enforced idleness, he met exiled revolutionaries of the older generation and avidly read revolutionary political literature, especially Marx’s *Das Kapital*. He became a Marxist in January 1889.

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