

Russian Revolution 1917-21

The Challenge of Communism

The Reaction to Industrialization and Liberalization in the West



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin
1917



The Russian Revolution

Historical Trend

- The Russian Revolution combined the political aspirations of the French Revolution with a response to the Industrial Revolution.
- The Russian Revolution provided an alternative to Capitalism, the complete restructuring of industrial society, Communism.



Economic Causes

- Peasant majority
- Food and fuel shortages
- Striking workers
- Inefficient transportation system

Political Causes

- Enormous losses in World War I
- Autocracy
- Weak and ineffectual rulers
- Spread of Marxist ideas
- Charismatic leaders, such as Lenin and Trotsky

Social Causes

- Extremes in classes
- Deprivation resulting from World War I
- Peasants' desire for land

REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

The Romanov Family

- Ruled Russia for 300 years
- Czar Nicholas II-incompetent ruler
- Wife of Nicholas II (Alexandra) was German born
- Royal family lived in luxury while most of Russia lived in poverty.
- Russia was a medieval society of peasants and landlords; backward!
- Russia had not yet industrialized, nevertheless it would be the first place where a Communist state would be built



Leading to Revolution

Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)

- ▶ Result of increasingly expansionist Russian foreign policy in the East; intended as a way to increase the prestige of the autocracy at home and abroad, but resulted in a humiliating defeat for Russia.
- ▶ This war marked the first time any Asian power had defeated a European power in a real war. With the defeat, Japan emerged as a major threat to Russian interests in the east and, in Russia, even moderates lost confidence in the old regime.



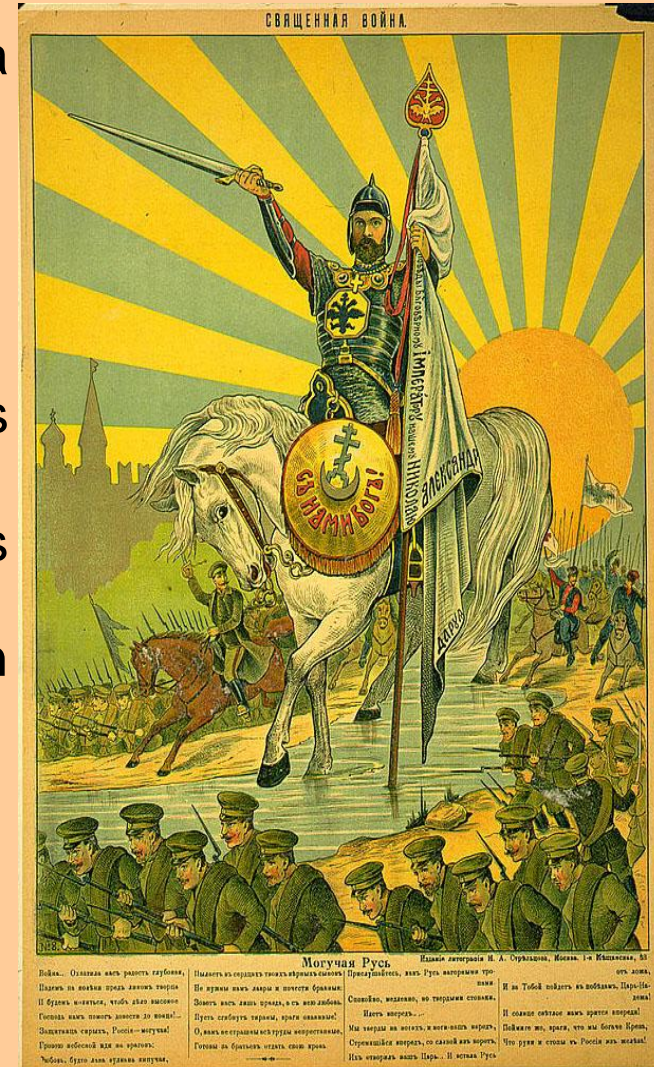
Bloody Sunday

- ▶ Czarist troops open fire on a peaceful demonstration of workers in St Petersburg.
- ▶ January 9, 1905; peaceful marchers in St. Petersburg carried a petition to Tsar Nicholas II asking for higher wages, a shorter work day, better working conditions, a legislative assembly (Duma), and universal manhood suffrage, hoping reform would come from above.
- ▶ In reaction, Nicholas II ordered his guard to fire into the unarmed crowd; when news of one hundred dead and hundreds more wounded escaped, public opinion almost universally turned against the old regime.



Leading to Revolution

- 1905 October General Strike sweeps Russia which ends when the Tsar promises a constitution.
- 1905 December In response to the suppression of the St Petersburg Soviet, the Moscow Soviet organizes a disastrous insurrection that the government suppresses after five days
- 1906 The promised parliament, the Duma, is dissolved when it produces an anti government majority even though elected on a narrow franchise.
- 1911-1914 A new wave of workers unrest ends with the outbreak of the First World War; Russians patriotically support the Czar and Russia in the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Russian nationalism was strong at first . . .



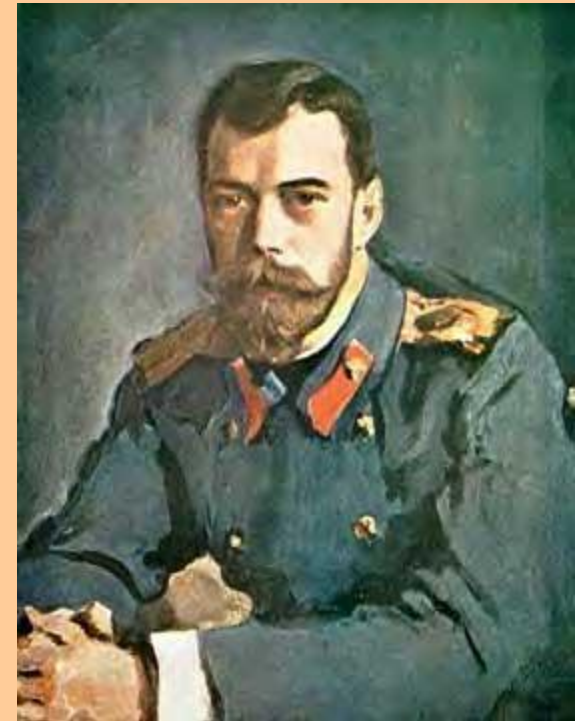
Outbreak of World War I 1914

- Great Power rivalries and tensions erupted in war August 1914. Due to complex treaty obligations, Europe went to war upon the killing of one man.
- Austro-Hungarian Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, Serbia by a Serbian nationalist
- Austria Hungary declared war on Serbia, Russia declared war on Austria Hungary and Germany declared war on Russia. France and Britain declared war on the Central Powers (Germany , Austria-Hungary & Turkey)
- Russia was poorly equipped to fight.



Russia in WWI

- Patriotic gesture Nicholas II went to the front to personally take charge; incompetent leadership
- 1915 over 2 million Russians died at the front while suffering defeats at the hands of the Germans
- Soldiers did not have sufficient rifles, ammunition or medical care; thousands died of disease and neglect. Anger grew with each defeat.
- While Nicholas II at front, he leaves domestic affairs to wife, Alexandra, who was influenced by her mentor, the mysterious monk Rasputin. Result: famine, shortages of essentials, popular anger!



“Mad Monk”

- Alexandra relied on a “holy man” Rasputin for advice on ruling Russia
- Alexandra believed that Rasputin could keep her hemophiliac son Alexi alive.
- Rasputin wasn’t trusted by the government or people and had many enemies. Rasputin was a hedonist, heavy drinker and mystic
- Prince Felix Yussoupov poisoned and shot Rasputin. Fellow assassins threw him into the Neva River.
(12/29/1916)
- Hard to kill, Rasputin died of drowning! A very tough man!



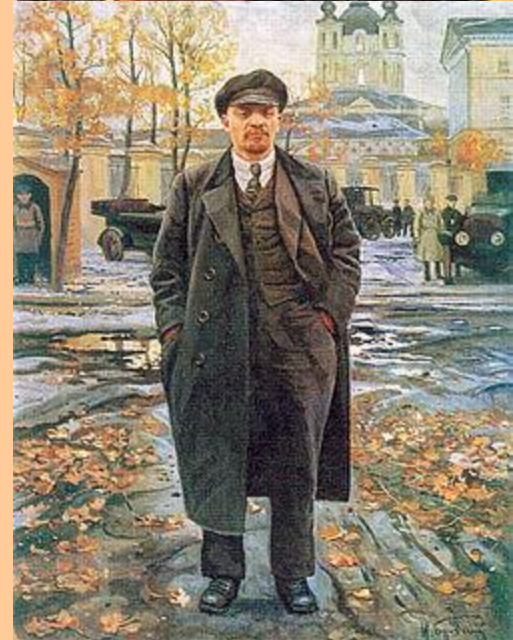
March Revolution 1917

- St. Petersburg-Marchers through the streets shouting “**Bread, bread, bread**”
- Troops refused to fire on demonstrators
- Czar abdicated
- **Duma** set up provisional government (Kerensky)
- Russia continued in WWI
- Revolutionary socialists plotted own course. Many set up **Soviets**, councils of workers and soldiers, to provide democratic representation and work within the provisional government.



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924)

- Marxist revolutionary, author, lawyer, economic theorists, political agitator
- Fascinated by technology, Lenin believed that Capitalism and Industrialization were the most powerful forces reshaping the world.
- Adapted the Communist theories of Marx to support a Russian Revolution.
- Created a new ideology, Marxism-Leninism, which postulated that a Dictatorship of the Proletariat could be created through violent revolution, then industrialization could occur afterward as part of state socialism that would eventually lead to Communism that could then be exported to other countries into a worldwide movement.
- Lenin led the Bolsheviks as they strove to seize total power and completely remake the political, social and economic landscape of Russia.



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

- Vladimir Ilyich Lenin adapts Marxist ideas to Russian conditions
 - Lenin believed that a violent revolution could restructure society and that industrialization could take place later.
- Marxists** - Those who followed the orthodox theory as laid out in the **Communist Manifesto**; called for violent overthrow of the government, international workers' union, and a focus on the urban centers of industrial society and a redistribution of wealth.
- Set up “**Dictatorship of the Proletariat**”
 - Lenin ‘s brother was killed for attempting to kill Alexander III. Lenin hated the Czarist government
 - Germany helped Lenin return to Russia to cause trouble and destabilize Russia
 - Marxists believed the working class (proletariat) will rise up and overthrow the government to establish a Dictatorship of the Proletariat as an intermediate step towards Communism and the end of history.



Bolsheviks & The November Revolution of 1917

- Bolshevik means “majority”—Bolsheviks favored a communist revolution and a worker’s state over the Provisional Government.
- “Peace, land, and bread”—Bolsheviks promised this to the Russian people.
- Red Guards – armed factory workers joined munitions sailors from the Russian fleet in attacking provisional government; Overthrew the provisional government!
- New symbol of government – Red flag with entwined hammer and sickle symbolized union between peasants and workers
- Bolsheviks were renamed Communists
- Lenin became the de facto ruler of Russia and leader of the revolution.



Russian Civil War

- Lenin signed Treaty of Brest Litovsk with Germany. Gave up territory and population in exchange for peace. Russia was out of World War I and ready to transform into a communist nation.
- Civil war lasted for 3 years—Bolsheviks won and consolidated their power, creating the Soviet Union in 1922.
- Reds were Bolsheviks who supported the revolution and were trying to establish a communist state.
- Whites were counterrevolutionaries loyal to Czar who were trying to topple the Bolsheviks.
- Greens anarchists who favored socialism without strong central government
- National groups Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania able to break free
- National groups that were unable to break free were incorporated into the new Soviet Union.

The Execution of Czar Nicholas II

- Fearful that the Czar could become a rallying point against the regime, the Bolsheviks (Reds) determined that Czar Nicholas and his family needed to be executed to save the revolution.
- Night of 16/17 July 1918 Nicholas and his family were herded into the basement of the governor's house in Yekaterineburg (Urals) and shot. There were no survivors. The skeletons were discovered in 1991 and reburied with honors.
- The Czar and his family were killed to ensure that the revolution could not be turned back, that it would continue. In effect, the past had been eradicated in Russia and there was only the future left.
- Daughter Anastasia was rumored for years to have escaped, but there is no proof of this.



Allied Invasion: The West Intervenes!

LEX MILLER FULFILLS VOW HE MADE 31-YEARS AGO

When he made 31 years ago when he, and infant daughter first set foot on American soil has been fulfilled by Miller, an AC painter.

After escaping the tyranny of Communist Russia, Mr. Miller promised that he would aid others to reach America and enjoy its opportunities.

His dream was filled when Jacob Diener, his wife and four children, displaced by Communists, arrived in Flint under the sponsorship of the Millers.

They are now located in a modern seven room home provided by Mr. Miller, the Dieners a home for the first time in 20 years.

It was a terrible experience for the Dieners, as for the millions of others who started when they didn't fit into the Communist scheme of things. Mr. Miller was a wealthy farmer in a colony of Germans of German descent along the Volga river when his troubles began in 1918.

EXPULSED INTO SIBERIAN CAMP



FLEE COMMUNIST RUSSIA—Alex Miller, AC painter, shown with wife and daughter, Kathryn, at Polish border. At the time the picture was taken in 1921, the Millers, terrorized by rising Communists, had fled their native village on the Volga and traveled 3,500 miles by horse and covered wagon on the first leg of a journey that eventually brought them to the wonderland of America.

- Japan seized land in East Asia from Russia
- Britain, France and U.S. helped Whites because they wanted Russia to continue in war against Germany
- Allied attempts failed and led to long term communist distrust of the West—has lasted up to the present!
- The Soviet Union would eventually incorporate the old Russian Empire and would provide a countering force to the rising power of the West in the world.

Civil War Ends

- Communists adopted a policy of “war communism”
- Cheka – secret police (forerunner of the KGB) formed to root out dissent and keep Lenin in power.
- Trotsky turned Red Army into effective fighting force
- Trotsky passionate speeches and strict tactics made him popular and a rival to Lenin.
- By 1921, Communists defeated scattered foes and claimed victory.
- Lenin now faced a chaotic nation of famine, millions dead and an economy in ruins. He ruled until his death in 1924.



