

UNIT 10 – The Russian Revolution

(1917)

- The Russian Revolution
 - Background
 - Tsar Nicholas II
 - The beginning of the revolution
 - Lenin's succession
 - Trotsky
 - Stalin
 - The terror and the purges



Background



In 1900 Russia was a poor country compared with Western Europe. **The peasants** were no longer serfs, but their life was still poor and primitive. They had no say in the government.

Tsar Nicolas II had **absolute** power in Russia, he had complete control over the government. **Educated people** believed that big reforms were necessary in Russia.

In **1905** Russia's defeat in a war with Japan provoked rebellion. Rebellion broke out, after troops fired on striking workers in the capital, **St. Petersburg**.

The Tsar created a parliament, the **Duma** with the promise of a more democratic government, but this did not happen.

In 1917 Russia suffered the impact of the First World War. More than 1,5 million soldiers had died by the end of 1917.

- Inflation increased prices a lot.
- There was hunger and food shortages.

The beginning of the Revolution

In February **1917** riots broke out in Petrograd. The Tsar lost support and control: his soldiers refused to fire on the mobs or deserted to join the rioting workers.

It's the same city!!

Until 1914	St. Petersburg
1914 – 1924	Petrograd
1924 – 1991	Leningrad
1991 to the present	St. Petersburg

In March the Tsar gave up the throne (abdicated) and a **provincial government** was formed under the leadership of **Kerensky**. A **republic** was declared.



This government was going to have opposition from the revolutionaries who wanted power for themselves.

Among them was the **SDLP** (Social Democratic Labour Party), a marxist party:

- they wanted to set up a communist state based on the ideas of the 19th century political thinker Karl Marx.
- The party split into **Bolsheviks** (the majority) who wanted a small party and were led by **Lenin**; and **Mensheviks** (the minority) led by **Martov**, who wanted a mass party.

During the war, Lenin was in exile in Switzerland. When the February Revolution came, he returned to Russia. The Germans helped him to return because they hoped he would cause another revolution and that Russia would end the war.



Lenin wrote a document called the **April thesis**, promising “peace, bread, land and freedom”.

He wanted:

- the end of the capitalist war.
- power for the soviets: elected committees of workers, peasants and soldiers.
- A revolution against the provisional Government as soon as possible (he adapted Marx's ideas to the Russian context, this was called **marxism-leninism**).



Leon Trotsky set up the **Red Guards**, a Bolshevik military force.

On the 23rd of October (1917) a revolution took place. The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, attacked the winter Palace in St. Petersburg

and seized power. (In fact, this happened in November, because Russia used a different calendar).

Bolsheviks moved the capital to **Moscow** and made peace with Germany: Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918)

Tsar Nicolas II and his family were **imprisoned** and in 1918 they were **executed**, including Anastasia, the Tsar's daughter.



In 1918 **civil war** broke out between the **Bolshevik Red Army** (led by Trotsky) and **anti – communist White Russians**. This ended in victory for the Bolsheviks (1921).

The Bolsheviks expected communist revolutions to break out all over Europe but, except for a small one in Germany, they did not. However, **communist parties** did

exist in other countries. As allies of the Soviet government, they worked for an international revolution.

The communist party was **the only** legal party 1921.

The 1920s were a period of economic reconstruction after the destruction of war (NEP)

He set up the *Cheka* (secret police) and labour camps.

The *Kronstadt* naval base mutinied. They wanted free speech and press, free elections for soviets, free trade unions, sale of peasants' grain ... but the red army ruled by Trotsky attacked them and put down the mutiny.

In 1921 Lenin introduced a **New Economic Policy** to restore order and increase prosperity after the chaos of Revolution, Civil War, and War Communism.

- Peasants could sell surplus food produce and pay tax on profits.
- It allowed small non-state-owned businesses (such as shops ...) and they could make a profit.
- Vital industries (coal, iron, railways ...) stayed in state hands.

By 1928 the economy recovered to the level of 1914.

In 1924 a new constitution established the **USSR** (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). Each republic had a government but they all had to be communist, and the system was run centrally by the **Politburo** (senior council)

Lenin died in 1924.

Lenin's succession

- **Trotsky:** He was the most able and popular. He led the Red army. But he was too arrogant and he had been a *menshevik*.

- **Stalin:** He was General Secretary of the party and according to Lenin he was too rude and ambitious.

Trotsky wanted revolution to spread to other countries. Stalin wanted Communism in one country at the moment. Stalin controlled the party. Trotsky was isolated and thrown out of the Communist Party (1927).

He was exiled to Siberia, then forced to leave the USSR in 1929.

Under Stalin the state planned the industry and agriculture with a commission called **Gosplan**. A **five year plan** set targets for all basic industrial factories and workers. They started in 1928. In 10 years the USSR had almost doubled its industrial output but the price was misery and low living standards for Soviet workers. Private property disappeared. It was important to increase food production to supply workers in towns and cities.

In 1929 Stalin began **collectivising all farms** (*kolkhos*). Some peasants refused this change and did not want to give up lands, especially the **kulaks** (richer peasants). Stalin called them enemies of the people. Around 10 million were shot or sent to **Labour Camps**, many died from starvation or cold.

Many kulaks burned their crops and killed livestock. This caused a **famine** in Ukraine where 5 million people died.

By 1937 collectivization was almost completed, kulaks had been eliminated and the peasants were afraid of Communist powers.

Another type of collectivisation were the **state farms** (*sovkhos*): owned completely by the state, peasants worked as labourers, so they received wages even if the farm did badly.

The terror and the purges

Joseph Jughashvili changed his name to **Stalin** (man of steel). He was the leader of Russia by 1930 and was determined to get rid of any rivals. Stalin ordered a purge of people he believed were involved in conspiracies against him. Soon the purges reached ordinary people. Anyone suspected of disloyalty to Stalin was taken away by the **NKUD** (the new secret police).



Most were **shot** or sent to **Labour Camps (gulags)**.

By 1939 approximately **3 million** people were dead **9 million** were political prisoners. Trotsky condemned Stalin's purges from his home in Mexico, calling for a new revolution (1937).

He was murdered by one of Stalin's agents in 1940.

Stalin ruled as a **dictator**:

- He controlled all information. Artists, writers, newspapers, radio, cinema ... had to follow the Party line and spread propaganda.
- History was re-written so that Stalin became more important in the story of the October Revolution than he really had been at the time.
- Trotsky became a *nonperson*; his name was removed from history books, articles and even photographs.

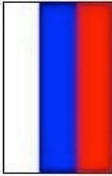
TASKS:

1. How were peasants' conditions of life by 1900 in Russia?
2. Was Tsar Nicolas II a democratic or theocratic leader? Explain your answer.
3. Compare the 1905 and 1917 rebellions. How were they similar and different.
4. Link:

-Trotsky	-He wanted a mass party.
-Stalin	-According to Lenin he was too rude and ambitious.
-Lenin	-He promised peace, bread, land and freedom.
-Nicolas II	-He was the leader of the provisional government.
-Martov	-He led the Red Army.
-Kerensky	-He created the Duma.
5. True or false: if they are false correct them:
 - SDLP was a Marxist party divided in 2 groups: the *Red Army* and the *White Russians*.
 - The Germans helped Lenin to return to Russia because they thought this was good for them.
 - The Russian revolution happened in October 1917.
 - Cheka is a region in the West of Russia.
 - Lenin created the five year plans.
 - *Kolkhos*: are peasants' private property.
6. Define these words:
Serfs, tsar, Duma, bolsheviks, republic, politburo, cheka, gosplan, kulaks, sovkhos, gulags, dictator.
***How could you do a puzzle? and then define those words.**
7. Explain the meaning of: NEP, SDLP, USSR, NKVD.
8. Do you think that, today, Anastasia's mystery could be possible? Explain your answer.
9. What were the main beliefs of the Communists?
10. What important part did Lenin play in the revolution?
11. What happened at Brest – Litovsk?
12. What were the results of the Civil War on the economy ...
13. What was the *Kronstadt* rebellion?
14. What was the main difference in ideas between Stalin and Trotsky?
15. Why did Stalin want to collectivise all farms?
16. They said: "there would have been no revolution in Russia without the First world war". Give the main arguments to support this view. (about 12 lines)
17. Compare the work and importance of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin.

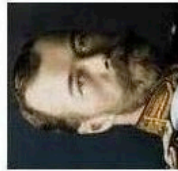
Find out more at...

- these websites:
 - ✓ www.schoolhistory.co.uk (general information for students- simple language)
 - ✓ www.wikipedia.com (general information)
 - ✓ www.sparknotes.com/history/european/russianrev/quiz.html
- these books from our school library:
 - ✓ BINGHAM, Jane et al.: *The Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of World History*. Usborne.2000. ISBN: 97807-4605361-4 (interesting links to their website)
 - ✓ GANERI, Anite et al.: *Encyclopedia of World History. From the Stone Age to the 21st Century*. Parragon. United Kingdom. 2005. . ISBN: 1-405-45-684-1
 - ✓ McCAFFREY, Susie et al.: *The Usborne-linked First Encyclopedia of History*. 2003. . ISBN: 079450386-1
- and these films:
 - ✓ *Doctor Zhivago* (1965)
 - ✓ *Battleship Potemkin* (about the famous mutiny)
 - ✓ *Reds*
 - ✓ *The lives of others* (it takes place much later but maybe interesting to talk about comunism, secret police, etc.)



The Russian Revolution and The Stalinism

2



Czar Nicholas II
1894-1917



Bolshevik Revolution & Russian Civil War
1917-1923



Stalin
1922-1953

Khrushchev

Romanov Dynasty

Stalinism

Russo-Japanese War
1904-05
Russian defeat of Mukden

February Revolution
Czar Abdicates
1917

1905 Revolution
Bloody Sunday Massacre
Constitution of 1906
State Duma
multi-party system

Constitutional Monarchy
1906-1917

Kerensky's Provisional Government
Feb-Oct 1917

1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany
Red vs. White Civil War

Trotsky's Red Army wins the Civil War

October Revolution
Lenin's Bolsheviks
Power to the Soviets
in Petrograd 1917

Red Terror 1918-22

Murder of the Tsar and of His Family
by the Bolsheviks

War Communism (NEP) 1921-1928

New Economic Policy (NEP) 1921-1928

1924 Soviet Constitution

Dec. 1922
Foundation of the USSR

Creation of the GULAG Agency
1930-1960

1936 Soviet Constitution

Deportation of 2,323,000 Kulaks to Siberia
1930-1936

First 5-year Plan
1928-1933

II 5-year Plan
1933-1937

III 5-year Plan
1938-1941

The Great Purge
1936-38

Nazi-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression
1939

Soviet Invasion of Poland 1939

Nazi Invasion
Battle of Stalingrad
1943

1941-45
Great Patriotic War

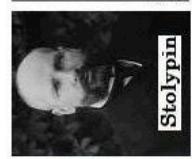
First Soviet Atomic Bomb
Joe One
1949

The Death of Stalin
5 March 1953

Russian Empire

USSR - Soviet Union

1900 1905 1910 1915 1920 1925 1930 1935 1940 1945 1950



Russian defeat 1905

Bloody Sunday 1905

Stolypin

Kerensky

October Revolution

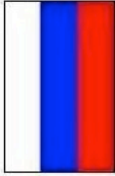
Trotsky

GULAG 1930-1960

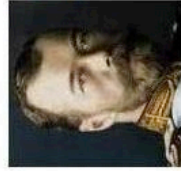
The Purges

Victory over the III Reich, 1945

First Soviet Atomic Bomb



La Revolución Rusa y el Stalinismo



Zar Nicolás II
1894-1917



1917-1922
Lenin



Stalin
1922-1953

Krushev

Dinastía Romanov

Stalinismo

Revolución Bolchevique y Guerra Civil Rusa 1917-1923

Guerra Ruso-Japonesa 1904-05
Derrota Rusa de Mukden

Revolución de febrero 1905
Masacre del domingo Sangriento
Constitución de 1906
Duma electiva
Sistema multipartidista

Derrota Rusa en la I Guerra Mundial 1914-17

Reformas Agrarias de Stolypin 1906-11
PM Stolypin asesinado para acelerar la revolución

Monarquía Constitucional 1906-1917

Gobierno Provisional de Kerensky Feb-Oct 1917

Revolución de Octubre 1917
Abdicación del Zar

1918 Tratado de Brest-Litovsk con Alemania
Guerra Civil Rojos vs. Blancos
Ejército Rojo de Trotsky gana la Guerra Civil

Revolución de Octubre Bolcheviques de Lenin. Poder para los soviets de Petrogrado 1917

Terror Rojo 1918-22
Asesinato del Zar y su familia por los Bolcheviques 1918

Comunismo Nueva Política Económica de Guerra (NEP) 1921-1928
1918-1921

Creación de la agencia GULAG 1930-1960

Constitución Soviética 1936

Deportación de 2.330.000 Kulaks a Siberia 1930-36

1er Plan Quinquenal 1928-1933

2º Plan Quinquenal 1933-1937

3er Plan Quinquenal 1938-1941

La Gran Purga 1936-38
Pacto de No agresión Nazi-Soviético 1939

Gran Guerra Patria 1941-45
Invasión Batalla de Nazi Stalingrado 1941-1943

Primer Bomba Atómica Soviética 1949

Muerte de Stalin 5 mar. 1953

Imperio Ruso

URSS - Unión Soviética

1900 1905 1910 1915 1920 1925 1930 1935 1940 1945 1950



Derrota Rusa 1905



Masacre del domingo Sangriento 1905



Stolypin



Kerensky



Revolución de Octubre



Trotsky



GULAG 1930-1960



Las Purgas



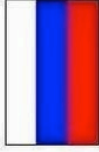
Victoria sobre el III Reich 45



Primera Bomba atómica Soviética 1949



The USSR and the Communist World during the Cold War



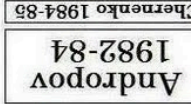
Stalin
1922-1953



Nikita Khrushchev
1953-1964



Leonid Brezhnev
1964-1982



Andropov
1982-84



Mikhail Gorbachev
1985-1991



Boris Yeltsin
1991-1999



Vladimir Putin
1999-2008

Medvedev

The Postwar Tensions 1945-1953

First Soviet Atomic Bomb Joe One 1949

Mao proclaims the People's Republic of China 1949.

Korean War 1950-53

Czechoslovak coup d'état 1948

Berlin blockade & airlift 1947-48

Cominform 1947

Tito-Stalin split 1948

Soviet H-Bomb 1953

German Democratic Republic in the Soviet zone 1949

Peaceful Coexistence 1953-62

1959 Cuban Revolution by Fidel Castro

China's Great Leap Forward 58

Yuri Gagarin the first human in space 1961

Khrushchev's speech on De-Stalinization 56

The Non-Aligned Movement (Bandung Conference) 1955

Second Berlin crisis 1958

The Warsaw Pact (1955-91)

First satellite Sputnik 1957

Hungarian Revolution crushed by the Soviet tanks 1956

China nuclear power 1964

1975 South Vietnam falls. the two countries are united under a Communist government

1969 Gaddafi's pro-soviet coup in Libya

Portugal withdraws from Angola and Mozambique, Marxist governments are installed 1975

1969 Sino-Soviet border conflict

1968 Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia result in Soviet repression.

3rd Indo-Pakistani War

1971 Bangladeshi independence from Pakistan. Soviet support

Chinese Cultural Revolution 66-76

The Détente 1962-75

1975 Summer Olympics in Moscow boycotted by US

Jaruzelski's martial law in Poland 81

The USSR invades Afghanistan 1979

Ogaden War. Somalia attacks Ethiopia 1977

Sino-Vietnamese War

China attacks Vietnam to punish it for invading Cambodia

Death of Mao 1976

Maot Kmer Rouge take power in Cambodia. genocide in "The Killing Fields" 1975

Second Cold War 1975-85

Tiananmen Square Massacre 1989

1987 Gorbachev announces Glasnost and Perestroika

Reykjavik Summit 86 breakthrough in nuclear arms control

Chernobyl disaster 86

Gorbachev & Reagan meet in Geneva summit 1985

1991 Warsaw Pact formally dissolved

Revolutions in Eastern Europe against communism November 1989

Independence of the Soviet Republics 1991

The Collapse of the USSR 1985-91

First Chechen War 1994-96

Yugoslav Wars 1991-1995

Supreme Soviet recognizes the dissolution of the Soviet Union 1991

Soviet coup attempt of 1991

1991 Warsaw Pact formally dissolved

Gorbachev resigns 91

Revolutions in Eastern Europe against communism November 1989

Transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China 1997

Postcommunist Era

Second Chechen War 1999-2009

2000 Kursk submarine disaster

2002 Moscow theater hostage crisis

2010 China is the World's Second Largest economy

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics-USSR

Berlin blockade & airlift 1947-48

First satellite Sputnik 1957

The Berlin Wall is built 1961

Himalayan War Chinese forces attack India 1962

Sino-Soviet split 1960

Cuban Missile Crisis 62

Chinese Cultural Revolution 66-76

1968 Prague Spring

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Russian Federation

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Revolutions in Eastern Europe

November 1989

Transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China 1997

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