

The Russian Revolution



Mr. Deger adapted from
Mr. Masters: Crestwood
College

Pre-Revolutionary Russia



- **Only true autocracy left in Europe**
- **No type of representative political institutions**
- **Oppression of non-Russian groups**
 - Jews (Pogroms)
 - Polish
- **Nicholas II became tsar in 1884**
- **Believed he was anointed by God**

The Czar's Crises

- Industrialization & Economic Growth
 - Issues? Conditions, low wages, child labor
- The Russo-Japanese War
 - Sparked unrest at home
- “Bloody Sunday”—The Revolution of 1905
 - More than 1,000 wounded; results in the creation of the short-lived Duma (legislature)
- World War I
 - High death tolls, poorly equipped troops, incompetent leaders (Czar, Czarina, Rasputin)

Conservatism Continues: 1905-1917



- Tsar paid no attention to the Duma; it was harassed and political parties suppressed
- Nicholas was personally a very weak man; he became increasingly remote as a ruler
- Numerous **soviets** thus began to appear

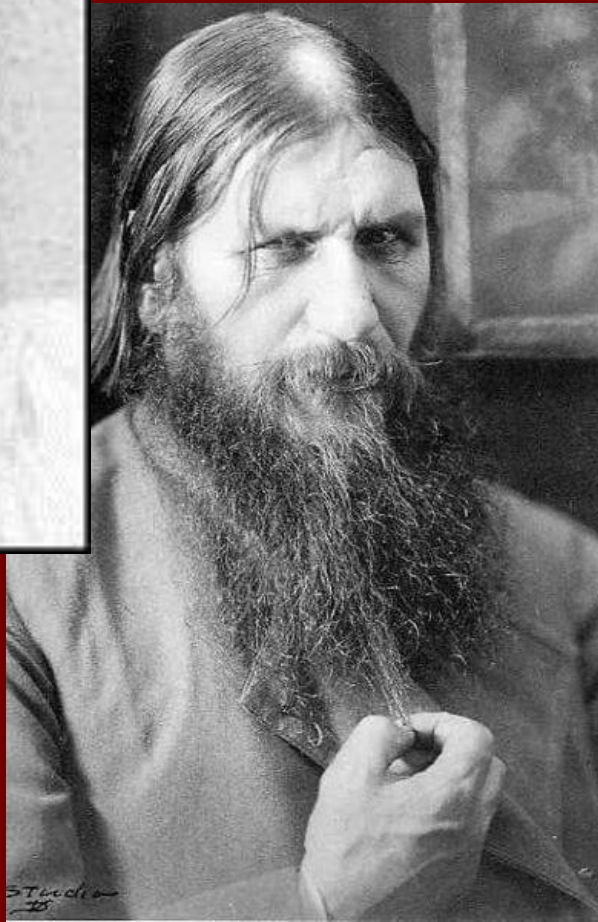
Russian Marxists

- Marxist revolutionaries want to overthrow the Czar and est. a “Dictatorship of the Proletariat”
- Russian Marxists split into two groups
 - Mensheviks (Moderates)
 - Bolsheviks (Radical)
 - Leader: Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (LENIN)
 - Engaging and ruthless
 - Flees Russia to avoid arrest in the early 1900s

Alexis: Alexandra's Son with Hemophilia



Alexandra: The Power Behind the Throne



- Even more blindly committed to autocracy than her husband
- She was under the influence of Rasputin
- Origins of Rasputin's power - ?

- Scandals surrounding Rasputin served to discredit the monarchy

World War I: “The Last Straw”



Abführung russischer Kriegsgefangener. An der Spitze ein 15jähriger russischer Kriegsfreiwilliger

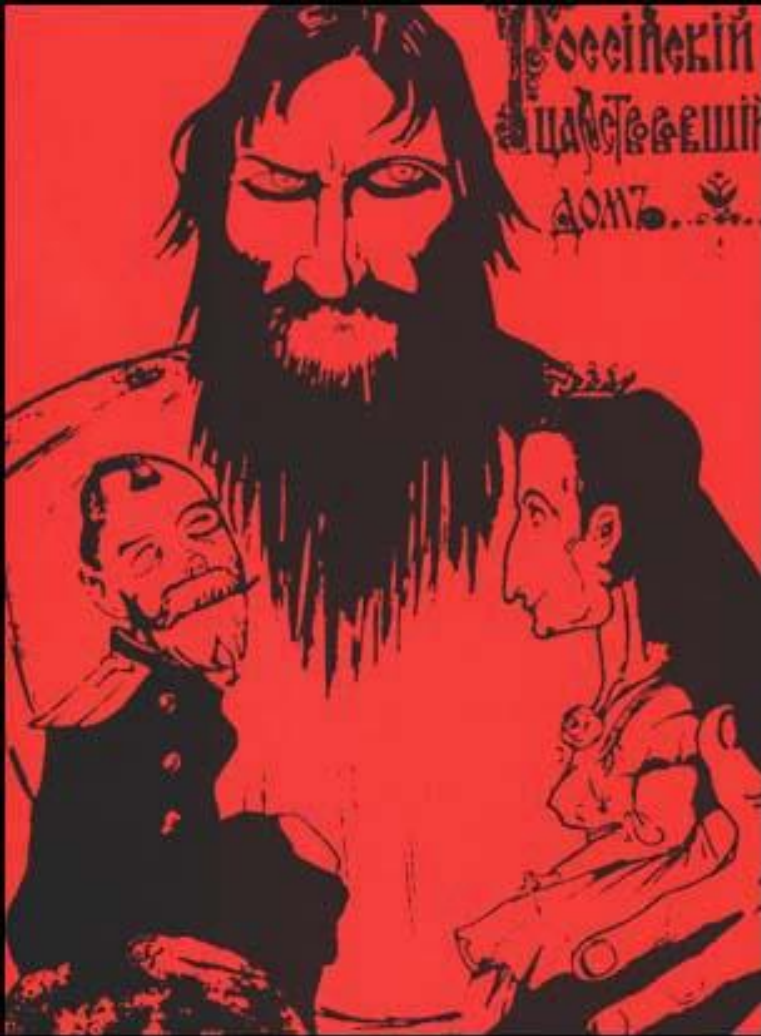
- War revealed the ineptitude and arrogance of the country's aristocratic elite
- Corrupt military leadership had contempt for ordinary Russian people
- Average peasants had very little invested in the War

World War I (cont)



- ill-trained, ineffective officers, poorly equipped (Russia was not ready for industrial war) – the result was mass desertions and 2 million casualties by 1915
- Result: Chaos and Disintegration of the Russian Army
- Battle of Tannenberg (August, 1914) – massive defeat at hands of Germany

The Collapse of the Imperial Government



- Nicholas left for the Front—September, 1915
- Alexandra and Rasputin throw the government into chaos
- Alexandra and other high government officials accused of treason

The Collapse of the Imperial Government (cont)



- **Rasputin assassinated in December of 1916**
- **Complete mismanagement of the wartime economy**
- **industrial production plummeted, inflation and starvation were rampant, and the cities were overflowing w/ refugees**
- **they became a hotbed for political activism, and this was ignited by serious food shortages in March 1917, esp. in St. Petersburg**

The Two Revolutions of 1917



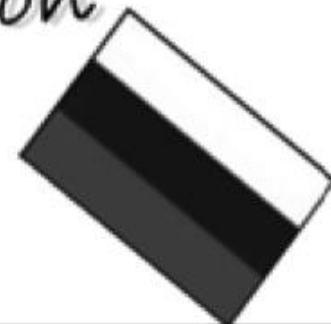
- The March Revolution (March 12)
- The November Revolution (November 6)

The March Revolution



- **Origins: Food riots/strikes**
- **Duma declared itself a Provisional Government on March 12**
- **Tsar ordered soldiers to intervene; instead they joined the rebellion...the Tsar thus abdicated on March 17**
- **the Menshevik Alexander Kerensky headed the Provisional Government**
 - **Very Popular Revolution**
 - **Kerensky favored gradual socialist reform/ saw the war effort as #1 priority**

Recipe for the Russian Revolution



100 years of social unrest
100 years of ruthless treatment of
peasants
1 Assassination of Czar Alexander II
1 Czar Nicholas with weak leadership
1 defeat in Russo-Japanese War
1 Bloody Sunday
Handful of losses in WWI

Mix ingredients together and agitate with
revolutionaries, and wait for the
revolution to rise.



Soviet Political Ideology



- More radical and revolutionary than the Provisional Government
- Most influenced by Marxist socialism
- Two Factions
 - “Mensheviks”
 - “Bolsheviks”

Founder of Bolshevism: Vladimir Lenin



- His Early Years
 - Exiled to Siberia in 1897
- Committed to Class Struggle and Revolution
- Moved to London in 1902 and befriended Leon Trotsky

Lenin Steps into This Vacuum



- **Amnesty granted to all political prisoners in March of 1917**
- **Lenin's arrival in Petrograd**
- **A tremendously charismatic personality**
- **"Peace, Land, Bread"**
- **"All Power to the Soviets"**
- **He preached that the war was a capitalist/imperialist war that offered no rewards for the peasants/workers; he also felt the war was over w/ the czar's abdication**
- **Bolshevik party membership exploded; their power was consolidated**

The November Revolution



- Nov. 6, 1917...
- this was the ideological aspect of the revolution, w/ the coup itself planned by **Leon Trotsky**, who had gained the confidence of the army (= the "Red Miracle")
- Lenin went on to consolidate his power in Jan. 1918
- All private property was abolished and divided among the peasantry
- Largest industrial enterprises nationalized
- Revolutionary army created with Trotsky in charge = "Red Army"
- Bolshevik Party renamed Communist Party in March of 1918

November Revolution (cont)

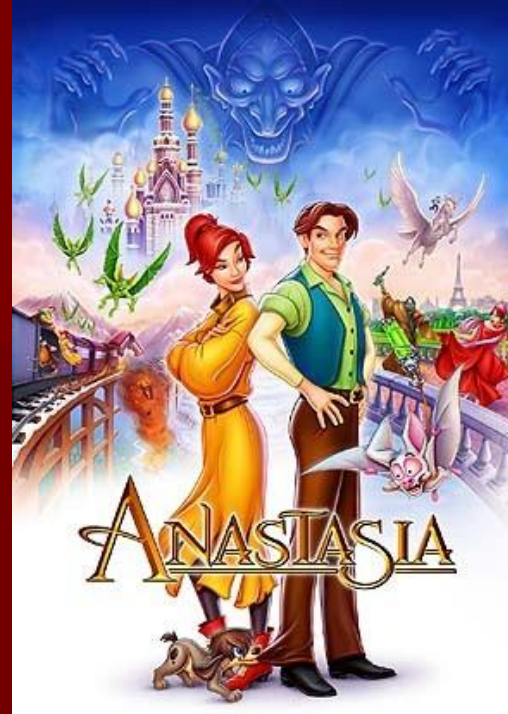


- Lenin's 1st task was to get Russia out of the war so he could concentrate on internal reform...
- The **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** negotiated with the Germans, giving them much Russian territory, population, and resources
- Civil War followed, 1917-1920
→ "Reds" versus "Whites"
- Complete breakdown of Russian economy and society

- Lenin's most pressing problem after the November Revolution was to deal with his opponents, who had mounted a full-scale civil war.
- These opponents were loosely called the "**Whites**", while Lenin's forces were known as the "**Reds**".
- Lenin's army was able to win this war by 1920-21.
- **WHY?**



- Lenin made use of Revolutionary Terror (the **Cheka** – a secret police force) to keep the citizens in line.
- They were responsible for killing the czar and his family, including the youngest daughter Anastasia, in 1918.
- Overall, there was a period of strict governmental/economic control known as War Communism.



The house, where the Royal family was executed



- **Foreign intervention** (eight western nations, notably France, aided the Whites) promoted a sense of nationalism that aided the Reds. Lenin used this as a propaganda device. The intervention of the western nations was based on ideological grounds (a fear of communism) and practical ones (Lenin's refusal to pay the czar's debts).
- By 1921, the Civil War was over, but the Soviet land and economy were devastated, leading Lenin into a program of economic reform known as the NEP. He also re-named his nation the USSR.



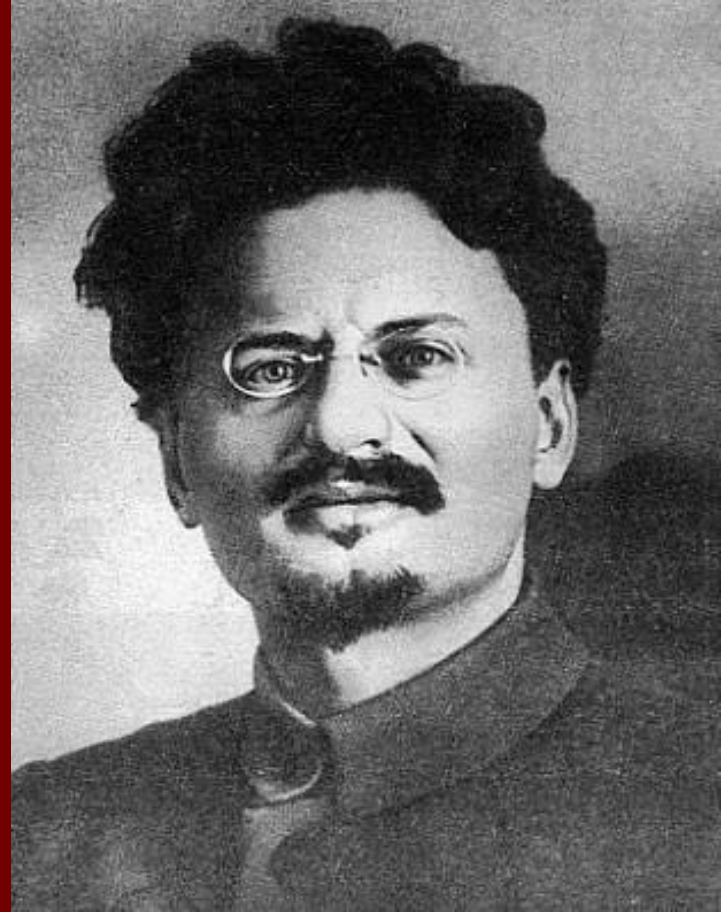
THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

- The USSR faced serious eco. issues w/ the conclusion of the wars
- Western nations refused to trade w/ them, and Lenin was at 1st determined to apply his Marxist principles, which failed
- In Mar. 1921 Lenin relented and introduced the NEP
 - It was an attempt to rebuild agri. and industry through a free market system (it was a pragmatic measure – Lenin could not yet take on the peasants; it did cause a rift w/in the Comm. Party) – many *dissidents* were shipped off to the gulags
 - The NEP did work; Lenin was presumably ready to return to Marxist principles
 - But his health deteriorated after a 1922 stroke, and Lenin died in 1924: this created a power vacuum and a struggle b/n Trotsky and Stalin



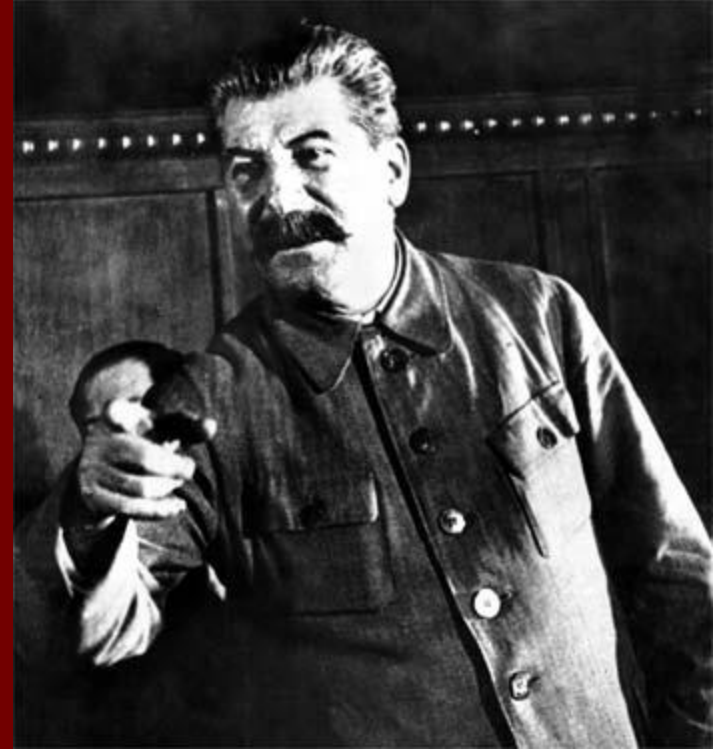
Leon Trotsky

- intellectual, head of the Red Army
- favored the doctrine of *World Revolution*
 - felt that the USSR could not survive as the sole comm. state
 - the USSR must therefore seek to export rev.
 - as a strict communist he opposed the NEP



Josef Stalin

- favored “Socialism in One Country”
 - the USSR should strengthen itself and lead the comm. world by ex.
- as a pragmatist, he supported the NEP
- experienced as a bureaucrat, he became the Party’s General Secretary in 1922
- their power struggle lasted until 1928, when Stalin’s complex system of alliances and ability w/ *realpolitik* allowed him to succeed
- even Lenin’s doubts couldn’t deter Stalin, and many involved in the party hierarchy paid more attention to one another than to Stalin



- in the end, Stalin prevailed over all of them, and Trotsky was forced into exile and eventually murdered in 1940
- Stalin went on to condemn all deviation from the party line
This *Rev. from above* saw the emergence of totalitarianism in the USSR
 - His style of leadership was that of an “office dictator”
 - He also created a “*Cult of Lenin*” and worked to connect himself to the fallen leader



Totalitarianism: Stalinist Russia

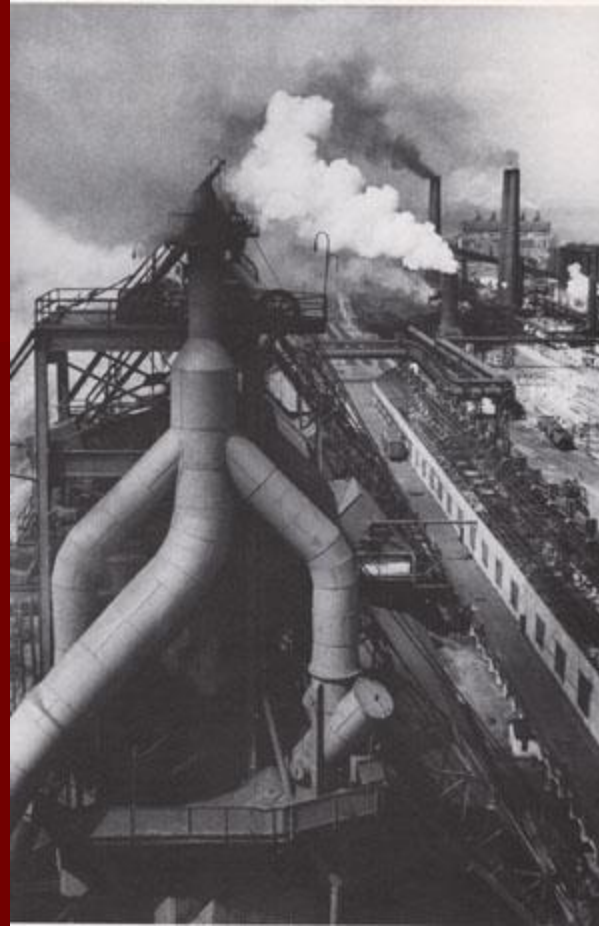
- How did Stalin obtain complete/total control over the USSR?
- Discuss Guided Reading for Section 2

STALIN AND THE FIVE YEAR PLANS

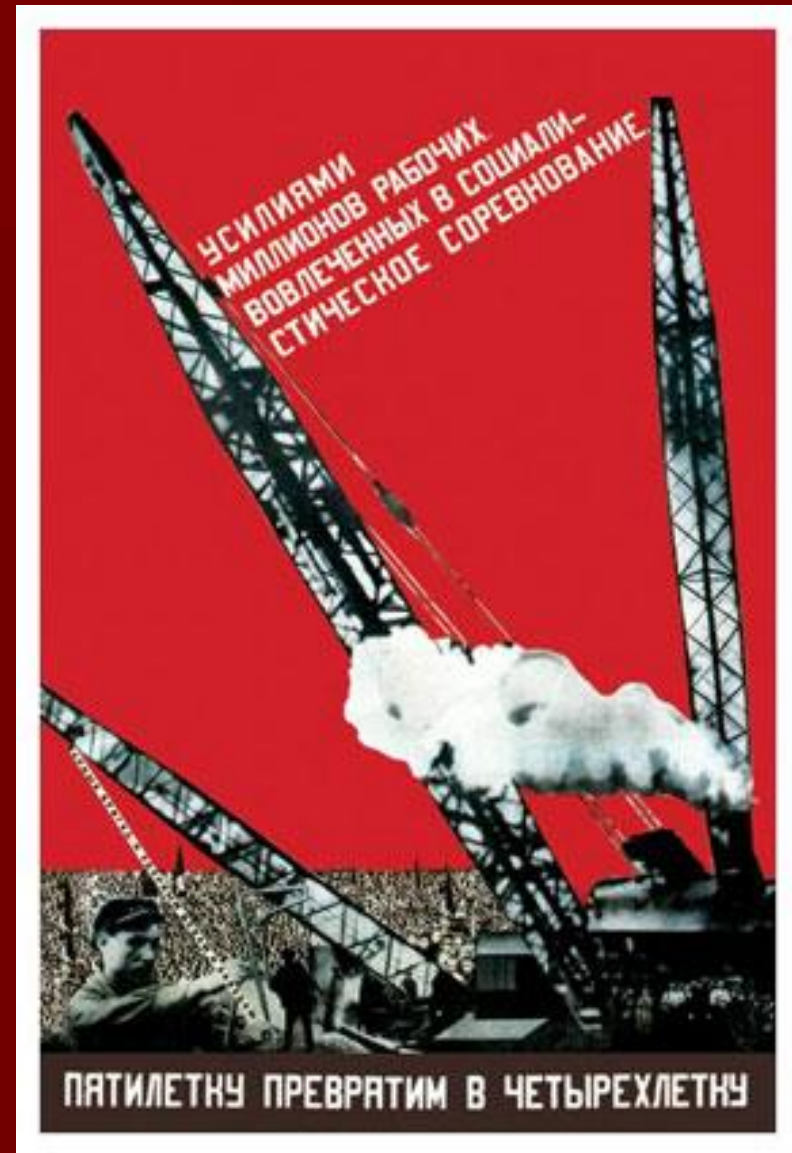
- the Dec. 1927 Party Congress saw the end of the NEP
- the 5 Yr. Plans were Stalin's own vision – they were intended to re-organize Soviet industry/agriculture, in order to catch up w/ the West
 - unrealistic production quotas were set, and tremendous sacrifices and ruthless methods were used to reach them
 - in agri., **collectivization** was implemented – w/ the state taking the proceeds from the **collective farms**
 - peasant opposition was crushed/starved
 - after some protest, the *kulaks* were liquidated, starved in order to feed urban workers (the "*terror famine*")



- **Industrial/urban growth was also stunning, but to achieve it, significant investment was needed along w/ a decline in consumption**
 - **as people sacrificed, the standard-of-living declined**
 - **the plans did not emphasize consumer goods; preference was given to **megaprojects****
 - **workers were praised as “heroes of Soviet labor”, dealing w/ long hours and horrid conditions**
 - **living conditions also deteriorated: overcrowding, food and housing shortages (and women who had gained status following the revolution again lost their freedoms)**



- **Stalin was able to do this b/c the gov't was firmly in place and all threats had been eliminated/reduced through state terror/propaganda**
 - **Stalin combined communism and dictatorship in this time, setting the tone for future communist leaders**
 - **By 1941, the USSR was among the top 3 eco. powers**



- Stalin's paranoia still wouldn't rest...The **Great Purges** (start in 1934)
- Stalin ordered the **NKVD** to crack down on potential opposition – this soon penetrated all levels of Soviet society
- Anyone perceived as a threat was forced to confess in public trials and then executed/shipped to a **gulag** (labor camp)
- Millions disappeared during this time; the party leadership and army officer corps was especially affected

