

The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism

Backwards Planning Curriculum Units

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How to Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called “enduring understandings.” The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

1. Start with the “essential questions” listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won’t know which one.
2. Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.
3. Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide’s topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. Use the “show set up” function in PowerPoint to present with “two monitors.” Have yours set to include the ‘notes view’ and let the projector show only the slides to the students.

You don’t need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it’s broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the “enduring understandings.” Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.

4. Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint

presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

5. End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 20-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

6. If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
Chief Education Officer
Social Studies School Service

The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism: Backwards Planning Activities

Enduring understandings:

- In the late 1800s, Russia made some efforts at reform and industrialization, but it remained a vast, mostly peasant society ruled by highly autocratic tsars out of touch with the discontent rising among their peoples.
- World War I devastated Russia's army and created conditions of deep unrest which led to the overthrow of the tsar and the initial stages of the Russian Revolution.
- Lenin's Bolsheviks were able to seize control of Russia in late 1917 when the Provisional Government failed to satisfy Russian desires for peace and peasant demands for easier access to land ownership.
- The civil war following the Bolshevik seizure of power was devastating. During this phase, the Bolsheviks alienated many peasants through drastic measures of "war communism," but after the civil war, Lenin's New Economic Policy eased pressures on peasant owners and other small merchants and businesses.
- Under Stalin, the NEP ended and the era of five-year plans imposed strict government control over the rapid industrialization of key sectors of the Soviet economy.
- Stalin's efforts to foster rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture also resulted in massive unrest, the deaths of millions, purges within and outside the Communist Party and a vast prison labor system.
- De-Stalinization under Khrushchev in the 1950s eased some of the worst totalitarian excesses of the Soviet system, but it did little to end the stagnation and inefficiency of the communist command economy.
- In the 1980s, the efforts at reform by Mikhail Gorbachev were too little and too late to prevent the unraveling of the Soviet system and the Soviet Union itself.

Essential questions:

- Why were the reform efforts in Russia prior to 1914 so ineffective at improving life and removing the deep discontent of Russia's poor?
- Why was the Bolshevik faction able to take control of Russia in November 1917, even though it was a small organization even compared with other revolutionary parties?
- Were the millions of deaths and millions sent to the Gulag in the 1930s a terrible but necessary price the Soviet Union had to pay to industrialize rapidly, or were they completely unnecessary from any economic point of view?
- Why did Khrushchev decide to criticize Stalin as he did in his famous "secret speech" to the Twentieth Party Congress?
- Why were Gorbachev's efforts at reform ultimately unable to save Soviet communism and hold the Soviet Union together?

Learning Experiences and Instruction

| Students will need to know... | Students will need to be able to... |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that in 1917, Lenin's Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd and began to create a communist society for all of Russia 2. that in 1921, the Bolsheviks emerged triumphant from the Civil War that devastated the country 3. that at a cost of millions of lives, Stalin's ruthless leadership centralized Soviet industrial development through a series of five-year plans 4. that Stalin sped up industrial growth but also created an inefficient and increasingly stagnating economy 5. that in the context of Cold War tensions and pressures, Soviet economic inefficiency finally brought about the downfall of Soviet communism 6. that Mikhail Gorbachev presided over and helped facilitate the changes that brought an end to Soviet communism. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. read and interpret primary source documents about the history of the Soviet Union 2. understand some of the reasons for both the rise and fall of Soviet communism 3. identify some major figures from the various stages of Soviet history 4. understand and debate certain key controversies having to do with the rise and fall of the Soviet Union 5. identify causal relationships between various events and developments during this period. |

These lessons incorporate the following learning activities to help students reach the enduring understandings:

- Overview of essential questions and basic understandings
- Class discussion of subject matter questions in the World War I presentation
- Teacher introduction of common terms and ideas in the essential questions and related projects
- Provide students with primary source materials from which they will complete the related projects in the unit
- Students conduct research in groups to be used later in individual and group projects
- Informal observation and coaching of students as they work in groups
- Evaluation and delivered feedback on projects and research reports
- Students create and present their unit projects
- Posttest made of multiple-choice questions covering the presentation, with one or more essential questions as essay questions

Project # 1: The Kronstadt Uprising

Front Page

Overview:

In this lesson, students work in groups as reporters and editors covering the Kronstadt Uprising in March 1921. In this uprising, revolutionary sailors rebelled against the Bolsheviks whom they had supported during the 1917 Revolution. Red Army soldiers were sent across the ice from Petrograd to the Kronstadt fortress, where they subdued the rebellious sailors on March 17th. The upheaval dramatically demonstrated the tensions within revolutionary forces in Russia as the Bolsheviks under Lenin consolidated their power. Having collected information about this event and its historical context, students in each group write articles and lay out a newspaper “front page” and an “editorial page” in which they present their stories and provide commentary by key observers of the events of March 1921.

Objectives:

In completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- better understand the events of March 1921 and the significance of an uprising against the Bolsheviks by men who had been among their strongest supporters
- write news stories and editorial content regarding the Kronstadt uprising
- create “front pages” highlighting the details and impact of that uprising.

Time required:

Four class periods

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, printer, word-processing and publishing software such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher (should you elect to have students complete the project electronically), poster board, glue (if you want students to assemble pages manually), copies of newspapers of the era (on microfilm or online, if available), “Kronstadt Uprising Newspaper Information Form” (provided)

Procedures:

Divide the class into several small groups. Each group should first gain greater background knowledge about the Kronstadt uprising in March 1921.

In 1920, the Bolsheviks had finally defeated forces arrayed against them in Russia's Civil War. The devastating effects of that turmoil included massive famine caused in part when angry peasants destroyed crops or reduced what they grew in response to the Communist Party's forced grain requisitioning. In early 1921, peasant uprisings and strikes by industrial workers in Petrograd and elsewhere were spreading.

Kronstadt was a naval fortress on an island in the Gulf of Finland about 35 miles from Petrograd. The sailors at that fortress had been among the most militant and active in the revolutionary upheavals of 1917. But by 1921, they were deeply unhappy about Bolshevik rule and were on the verge of revolt. In February of that year, they expressed solidarity with the protests on the mainland and issued a set of demands. These included calls for open elections to the Soviets and freedom of speech, press and assembly. In early March, a Provisional Revolutionary Committee at Kronstadt called for a "Third Revolution" to complete the work of the two earlier ones in 1917.

The Bolshevik authorities refused to negotiate with the rebels at Kronstadt and instead issued threats against them. Then on March 7th, the Bolsheviks began to send Red Army soldiers across the ice to take control of Kronstadt. The assault finally succeeded ten days later. Thousands of Kronstadt sailors and Red Army soldiers were killed in the fighting, and hundreds more of the Kronstadt rebels were rounded up and shot in the weeks and months after the rebellion was put down.

Ask students to speculate as to how a newspaper in the U.S or England might have covered the events of February and March in Kronstadt and Petrograd. Next, explain to the students that they'll be working in groups to create newspaper "front pages" covering the Kronstadt rebellion. In addition to basic news coverage of the uprising and related events on a front page, students should add an "editorial page" that includes the newspaper's own editorial, opinion columns, letters to the editor, and perhaps editorial cartoons and others illustrations.

Each group should try to include most of the following on its front page or editorial page:

- A front-page headline story on the events of March 1–17, 1921
- Other articles on recent events in Russia in 1920 and 1921
- A story on Lenin and the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917
- A story about the Kronstadt sailors and their role in the 1917 revolution as well as in this 1921 upheaval
- An account of the various representative committees formed by the Kronstadt sailors in 1921
- Opinion columns by famous observers of the upheaval, perhaps by Leon Trotsky and Emma Goldman
- The newspaper's own editorial about the uprising
- Several letters to the editor about the situation from the following: a pro-Bolshevik worker in Petrograd, an anti-Bolshevik worker in Petrograd, a Kronstadt sailor who escaped over the ice to Finland during the uprising; a Red Army soldier who took part in the attack on the Kronstadt sailors

Once you've introduced the lesson to the class, have students begin research using the related Web sites and by filling out the "Kronstadt Uprising Newspaper Information Form" to assist them in completing the project. Allow sufficient time for students to complete their research. Once finished, students should take their information and shape it into news stories to include on the front page and editorial page.

Evaluation:

Once student groups have completed their front pages, evaluate the finished product using a suitable rubric. You may wish to use a school- or district-developed rubric, or the sample rubric included with this lesson.

Suggested Web resources:

The following is a sampling of possible resources for the small group's work. You should supplement this list by assisting students in finding related information via a reputable search engine.

- <http://libcom.org/history/1921-the-kronstadt-rebellion>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kronstadt_rebellion
- <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/RUSkronstadt.htm>
- http://struggle.ws/russia/izvestiia_krons1921.html
- <http://struggle.ws/russia/mett.html>
- <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/goldman/works/1920s/disillusionment/ch27.htm>
- <http://libcom.org/library/kronstadt-bolshevik-propaganda>
- http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/berkman/kronstadt/berkkron.html

The Kronstadt Uprising Newspaper Information Form

| | |
|--|--|
| Stories and/or editorial comments you worked on | |
| Significance of stories or editorials (i.e., why they should be included in the newspaper) | |
| What the stories show about the fall of the Kronstadt uprising | |
| What the stories show more generally about the first few years of the Russian Revolution | |

The Kronstadt Uprising Newspaper Rubric

| Criteria | Excellent (4) | Good (3) | Fair (2) | Poor (1) | Student score |
|--|--|--|---|---|---------------|
| Research | Information form completely filled out; evident that story or stories were well researched | Information form filled out; adequate information included in the story or stories | Information form incomplete; sketchy information included in the story or stories | Information form incomplete; little or no relevant information included in the story or stories | |
| Historical accuracy | Highly detailed, accurate or plausible portrayal of events or ideas | Portrayal of events or ideas generally accurate or plausible | Portrayal of events or ideas rarely accurate or plausible | Inaccurate portrayal of events or ideas | |
| Creativity | Layout of newspaper pages shows exemplary level of creativity and thought | Layout of newspaper pages shows generally high level of creativity and thought | Layout of newspaper pages somewhat difficult to read; flow of page generally acceptable | Layout of newspaper pages very difficult to read; flow of page unacceptable | |
| Additional criteria as set by teacher | | | | | |
| Cumulative score | | | | | |

Project #2: Stalinism in Images— Propaganda and Reality

Overview:

In this lesson, a small group of students assembles a display of visual images on the Stalinist era in Soviet history. The images (photos, poster art, cartoons, paintings, etc.) should be chosen so as to illustrate dramatically the power of the visual image both to reveal and distort reality. Students group the images into several categories. But they then also use a checklist to designate each image as mainly “realistic” or mainly “distorted propaganda” on the nature of Stalin’s rule. Students write text to accompany each image and assemble all the images in a well-organized museum-style bulletin-board display or as a PowerPoint presentation. The group organizes a presentation of the images to the class and explains the selections it made.

Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- identify several dramatic images that help illustrate the nature of Stalin’s rule
- understand how visual propaganda helped shape Soviet views of Stalin and his rule
- better understand how visual images have the power both to shape and to distort the way we think about the real world.

Time required:

Four class periods (with one period for a presentation to the class)

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, word-processing and PowerPoint software, a printer, the “Visual Images of the Stalin Era Checklist” (provided)

Procedures:

Assign students to one small group. The group’s task is to assemble several kinds of visual images on Stalin and his rule of the Soviet Union from 1928–1953. Have the group use the suggested Internet resources or other print resources to find approximately 20–30 photos, cartoons, posters, and other visuals about Stalin’s Soviet Union. Students should try to find images that can be grouped under these four headings:

- Images of Stalin himself
- Images about Stalin’s Five-Year Plans and Soviet industrialization
- Images of life in the Soviet Union under Stalin
- Images critical of Stalin or Stalin’s Soviet Union

Once all the images have been chosen, divide them up evenly among the students in the group. Have each student analyze his or her images using the “Visual Images of the Stalin Era Checklist.” The following is a more complete explanation of each of the elements making up that checklist.

- **Visual distortion:** Changes or exaggerations in size, shape, emotions, or gestures often add extra meaning to the objects in a poster or cartoon. Odd camera angles and cropping can distort the way objects appear in a photo as well.
- **Selectivity:** What an image leaves out is often as important as what it includes. Pay close attention to what the image includes and how it is included. Notice what is stressed and what is underplayed. Think about what is not shown, and why it is not shown.
- **Visual symbols:** A visual symbol is any image that stands for some other thing, event, person, abstract idea or trend in the news. For example, an octopus in a cartoon or poster may stand for a powerful person, nation, or business with many “tentacles” controlling many other things.
- **Stereotypes:** A stereotype is a vastly oversimplified view of some group. Stereotypes are often insulting. Yet they may provide a shorthand way to make a complex point quickly. They also reveal broad cultural attitudes. You should be critical of stereotyping, yet also notice how it may contribute to making a point dramatically and forcefully.

After analyzing each visual using the checklist, the group should then discuss the visuals and label each one as either “realistic” or “distorted.” It should assemble all the images in a well-organized bulletin-board display or as a PowerPoint presentation, and it should plan and carry out a presentation of the visuals and a discussion of them with the entire class. A broader focus of the discussion should be on how visual images can shape our understanding and distort it as well in very powerful ways.

| |
|--------------------|
| Evaluation: |
|--------------------|

After the group’s presentation, you should evaluate students based on their presentation skills as well as on their research skills in completing the “Visual Images of the Stalin Era Checklist.” While you may wish to develop your own rubric for this project, a sample rubric is included as a guideline.

Suggested Web resources:

The following is a sampling of possible resources for the small group's work. You should supplement this list by assisting students in finding related information via a reputable search engine.

Images of Stalinist Russia and Stalinist Propaganda

- http://www.google.com/search?q=Images+of+Stalinist+Russia&hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB_en&biw=1173&bih=504&prmd=ivns&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=Oc5HTv6fNKXHsQKR-92RCA&ved=0CBoQsAQ
- http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB_en&biw=1173&bih=504&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=Images+of+Stalinist+propaganda&oq=Images+of+Stalinist+propaganda&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&gs_sm=e&gs_upl=4751615023510150766110110101910101312131213-11110
- http://www.yale.edu/annals/siegelbaum/images/siegelbaum_photos.htm
- <http://www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/chairman/sovintro.php>
- <http://eng.plakaty.ru/posters?cid=1>

Soviet cartoons and other drawings from the decade before Stalin's rule

- <http://www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/chairman/sovintro.php>

Visual Images of the Stalin Era Checklist

| Image to be analyzed | |
|--|--|
| Visual distortion (in size, shape, gestures, cropping, camera angle, etc.) | |
| Selectivity (what is included and what is left out) | |
| Visual symbols (shorthand images that sum up or stand for other ideas) | |
| Stereotypes (oversimplified, often insulting, views of a group) | |

Visual Images of the Stalin Era Rubric

| Criteria | Excellent (4) | Good (3) | Fair (2) | Poor (1) | Student score |
|---|--|--|---|--|------------------|
| Checklist: analysis of the visual according to the checklist items | Student clearly and accurately describes the visual using all or most of the checklist items | Student adequately describes the visual using most of the checklist items | Student only vaguely describes the visual using some of the checklist items | Student fails to adequately describe the visual using any of the checklist items | |
| Small-group discussions: contribution to group's efforts in classifying the visuals | Student makes clear and highly relevant comments in deciding which visuals are realistic and which are distorted | Student makes helpful comments in deciding which visuals are realistic and which are distorted | Student makes only a few vague comments in deciding which visuals are realistic and which are distorted | Student makes little or no contribution to the group's efforts to decide which visuals are realistic and which are distorted | |
| Presentation: contribution to the group presentation | Student makes a substantial contribution to the display or PowerPoint | Student makes an adequate contribution to the display or PowerPoint | Student makes a minimal contribution to the display or PowerPoint | Student makes no contribution to the display or PowerPoint | |
| Cumulative score | | | | | |

Project #3: The Fall of Soviet Communism— A Panel Discussion

Overview:

With the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev as Soviet Premier in 1985, many people hoped that a new era of reform and moderation would prevail in the Soviet Union. Instead, Gorbachev's policies and actions were soon overtaken by a rapid unraveling of Soviet control over Eastern Europe, the collapse of Soviet communism, and by 1991, the end of the Soviet Union itself. In this lesson, a small group prepares for and conducts a panel discussion of the fall of Soviet communism. Was it due to pressures from the West, from the effects of Gorbachev's reforms, or from deeper flaws that would have doomed the Soviet system in the end no matter what? Students take on the role of important figures from the time as a way to present varying views on these and other explanations for the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- identify several people who played important roles in the final days of Soviet communism
- understand some varying ideas regarding the causes of this dramatic turning point
- more effectively discuss and debate these conflicting viewpoints.

Time required:

Four class periods (with one period for the panel discussion)

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, word-processing and PowerPoint software, a printer, the "Fall of Soviet Communism Student Handout" (provided)

Procedures:

Assign students to one small group. The group's task is to prepare a panel discussion with one or more moderators and five group members who each take the part of one of the following figures:

- **Yelena Bonner:** A human-rights activist who became famous while aiding her dissident husband, physicist Andrei Sakharov. Sakharov died in 1989, but Yelena remained involved in public life well after the collapse of Soviet communism, and she often spoke about it.

- **Ronald Reagan:** U.S. President from 1981 to 1989. He was a strong foe of Soviet communism who predicted it would fail, but he also met several times with Mikhail Gorbachev to seek arms agreements and to deal with other security matters.
- **Mikhail Gorbachev:** General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1985 until 1991. He attempted to reform the Soviet system, sought arms-control agreements with the West, and remained involved in Soviet politics until the Soviet Union itself dissolved in 1991.
- **Margaret Thatcher:** Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1979 to 1990, who took a strong stand against Soviet communism. But she also encouraged and supported Gorbachev’s reforms while also backing Ronald Reagan’s diplomacy regarding the Soviet Union.
- **Lech Walesa:** Polish trade-union leader who helped found, inspire, and lead Poland’s *Solidarity*, the first independent trade union in Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe. He served as President of Poland from 1990 to 1995.

The student group should assign one or more students to research each of these figures and prepare for a panel discussion in which one student will play the part of each figure and will express the views of that figure regarding the fall of Soviet communism. The panel members will also answer questions posed by a moderator or moderators. The moderator(s) should develop a set of questions ahead of time and let the panel members know in advance what those questions are. They may wish to use a PowerPoint presentation to focus attention on their questions and keep the panel discussion on track. Here are some suggested questions:

- In general do you think Soviet communism collapsed because of outside pressures or forces beyond its control? Or did it collapse due to its own inherent flaws?
- What, in your view, was the basic problem with or flaw in Soviet communism, if there was one?
- Do you think the fall of communism was due more to the actions of certain leaders or to forces beyond any one individual’s ability to guide or control? Explain your answer.
- What role, if any, did you play in bringing about the fall of Soviet communism?
- Of those taking part in this panel, whose views about society do you agree with most? Why?
- Of those taking part in this panel, who do you think did the most to bring about the collapse of Soviet communism? Why?

Have the group use the suggested Internet resources or other print resources to find out more about the five individuals on the panel. Ask each student in the group to use the “Fall of Communism Student Handout” to organize what they learn from their research and the group’s discussions. Using these handouts and the research the group members do, have the group conduct the panel discussion in front of the entire class. Allow time for questions from the audience.

Evaluation:

After the group’s presentation, you should evaluate students based on their presentation skills as well as on their research skills in completing the “Fall of Communism Student Handout.” While you may wish to develop your own rubric for this project, a sample rubric is included as a guideline.

Suggested Web resources:

The following is a sampling of possible resources for the small group's work. You should supplement this list by assisting students in finding related information via a reputable search engine.

Yelena Bonner

- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/politics-obituaries/8585381/Yelena-Bonner.html>
- <http://reason.com/archives/2011/06/28/elena-bonnors-rich-legacy>
- <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1990/may/17/on-gorbachev/>

Ronald Reagan

- <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/ronald-reagan-and-the-fall-of-communism>
- <http://www.theamericans.us/reagan-American%20Myths.html>
- http://wais.stanford.edu/History/history_ussrandreagan.htm
- http://www.cephasministry.com/nwo_tear_down_this_wall.html

Mikhail Gorbachev

- <http://webdiary.com.au/cms/?q=node/1358>
- <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/COLDgorbachev.htm>
- <http://www.historytoday.com/archie-brown/signposts-why-did-communism-end-when-it-did>
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/C0112205/communismfalls.html>

Margaret Thatcher

- <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/essential/biography.asp>
- <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/what-we-can-learn-from-margaret-thatcher>
- <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,988166,00.html>

Lech Walesa

- <http://www.gdansk-life.com/poland/solidarity>
- http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1983/walesa-bio.html
- <http://www.historyguide.org/europe/walesa.html>
- http://age-of-the-sage.org/historical/biography/lech_walesa_solidarity.html

Fall of Soviet Communism

Student Handout

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of the figure you are researching: | |
| Summarize this figure's role in the fall of Soviet communism: | |
| Summarize this figure's main views about the problem that brought down the Soviet Union: | |
| What is your own opinion of this figure's ideas and his/her role in the fall of Soviet communism?: | |

The Fall of Soviet Communism Rubric

| Criteria | Excellent (4) | Good (3) | Fair (2) | Poor (1) | Student score |
|---|--|--|--|--|------------------|
| Handout: summing up the key details about this figure's role in and/or views about the fall of Soviet communism | Student identifies and explains accurately and clearly the essential details | Student describes some key details accurately and has a good sense of their importance | Student describes a few details adequately but not with a good sense of their importance | Student describes a few details but not very accurately at all | |
| Handout: taking a stand on this figure's views about the fall of Soviet communism | Student accurately identifies this figure's views and expresses a well-reasoned opinion about them | Student adequately identifies this figure's views and expresses a well-reasoned opinion about them | Student only vaguely describes this figure's views and expresses an opinion about them | Student fails to describe clearly this figure's views or expresses an opinion about them | |
| Presentation: contribution to the group presentation | Student makes a substantial contribution to the effectiveness of the panel discussion | Student makes an adequate contribution to the effectiveness of the panel discussion | Student makes a minimal contribution to the effectiveness of the panel discussion | Student makes no contribution to the effectiveness of the panel discussion | |
| Cumulative score | | | | | |

Extension Activities

1. Research biographical information about a key figure in Soviet history. Write a report on your research, or present it in a creative form such as an illustrated storybook for children.
2. Research a particular event in Soviet History. Create a page for a newspaper that might have appeared the next day. Include a news article, an op-ed piece, and a political cartoon. *Decide if your newspaper will be objective, or if it will represent official government propaganda on the event! Write and illustrate your paper accordingly!*
3. Research information about a non-Russian ethnic group in the Soviet Union. Create an illustrated poster on traditional dress, customs, language, religion, or other distinctive features of the group. Include a map and chart showing where the group lives and what percentage of the population they represent.
4. Use a newspaper archive (available in most libraries) to print out a least five press clippings describing key events in the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. Organize the clippings into a collage. Add a brief paragraph of explanation for each clipping in which you explain the significance of the event and your reasons for choosing it.

Discussion Questions

1. How valid are the principles of Marxist philosophy?
2. Speculate on what might have happened if Lenin had expelled Stalin from the Communist Party.
3. How did *glasnost* and *perestroika* contribute to the end of the Soviet Union?

Related Web Sites

Marxists.org International Archive

<http://www.marxists.org/>

An outstanding resource for original writing by dozens of important Marxist philosophers and politicians, as well as secondary sources on Marxism in world history.

“Seventeen Moments in Soviet History.”

<http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php>

A site of images, documents, sound files, and film clips on key events in Soviet history spanning 1917 to 1991.

“Soviet Archives Exhibit.”

<http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/soviet.exhibit/soviet.archive.html>

Library of Congress website with primary source documents on key events or processes in Soviet History.

The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism: Multiple-Choice Quiz

1. What is distinctive about Soviet geography?
 - A. Its territory lies primarily in the frigid arctic
 - B. The entire Soviet Union lies in Asia
 - C. It encompasses a wide variety of geographic regions
 - D. The Soviet Union is larger than Africa
2. How was 19th-century Russia affected by the Congress of Vienna?
 - A. It gained territory
 - B. It lost territory
 - C. It exchanged territory with Poland
 - D. It expanded east to Japan
3. According to Karl Marx, who would lead the communist revolution?
 - A. Capitalists
 - B. Bourgeoisie
 - C. Professional revolutionaries
 - D. Workers
4. What background did Lenin bring to his life's work?
 - A. Training in law
 - B. Training in terrorism
 - C. Experience as a worker in factories and mines
 - D. Military experience on the front in the Crimean War
5. Base your answer to question 5 on the following quotation from Lenin:

“That the organization must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolutionary activities as a profession;”

How does this quotation reflect Lenin's approach to communist revolution?

 - A. He felt peasants would play a crucial role in the revolution.
 - B. He felt the revolution should be led by people trained in professions.
 - C. He felt the Bolshevik Party should lead the revolution.
 - D. He felt that professionals should become revolutionaries.

6. Which event took place in part as a result of the other three?
 - A. “Bloody Sunday” massacre
 - B. Establishment of the *Duma*
 - C. Defeat in the Russo-Japanese war
 - D. Emergence of *Soviets* to lead strike activities

7. In the summer of 1917, what did the Bolsheviks promise the Russian people?
 - A. Private property, wage increases, freedom
 - B. Land, peace, bread
 - C. Peace, jobs, freedom
 - D. Freedom, peace, land

8. In the first and last free elections after the revolution of November 1917, what was the result for the Bolsheviks?
 - A. They won a clear majority
 - B. They tied with the Mensheviks
 - C. They won less than a quarter of the national vote
 - D. They did not win a place on the ballot

9. What were the main characteristics of “War Communism”?
 - A. Nationalization of industries, grain surpluses seized from peasants
 - B. Protection of workers’ rights, expansion of free market trade
 - C. Working class trained as revolutionaries, implementation of fixed prices
 - D. Proletariat revolution, abolition of *Duma*

10. In what way did Lenin’s New Economic Policy motivate peasants to increase agricultural production?
 - A. Prices for agricultural products were increased
 - B. Peasants were encouraged to work seven days a week
 - C. Peasants were able to sell agricultural products for private profit
 - D. High performing peasants received additional land

11. All of the following are characteristics of totalitarian societies *except*
 - A. one party rule
 - B. use of mass media to spread ideology
 - C. use of police and military power to control or limit opposition
 - D. emphasis on maintaining the satisfaction of citizens with the government

12. In what way did the political-economic system of the U.S.S.R. differ from communist society as described by Karl Marx?
- A. The U.S.S.R. remained a predominately agricultural society
 - B. Planning and production were directed by central government offices
 - C. Communist Party members studied the political theory of Lenin, not Marx
 - D. The U.S.S.R. industrialized more rapidly than Marx predicted

13. Base your answer to question 13 on the following quotation pertaining to the collectivization of agriculture:

“That a radical turn of the countryside towards socialism may be considered as already achieved” (emphasis added). (Pravda, March 1930)

What aspect of totalitarian societies does this quotation illustrate?

- A. Government propaganda
 - B. Charismatic leadership
 - C. One party rule
 - D. Government control of personal lives
14. What dark chapter of Soviet history do these events illustrate?
- 5,000 leaders arrested
 - Kulaks shipped to remote Siberian camps
 - Mandatory food exports increased
 - Food imports prohibited
 - Up to 25,000 deaths per day
- A. Civil War
 - B. The Great Patriotic War
 - C. Famine the Ukraine
 - D. The creation of the gulag system
15. How did Soviet Communism affect the lives of millions of women?
- A. Women entered the work force by the thousands
 - B. More women worked in heavy industry than men
 - C. Women resisted the pressure to enter the work force and stayed home
 - D. Women were unable to enter the work force due to the lack of support services such as child care

16. What impact did Stalin's purges have on Soviet leadership?
- A. They removed ineffective leaders, opening job opportunities for newcomers
 - B. They motivated non-members of the Communist Party to join the Party
 - C. Communist Party members were motivated to work harder for the U.S.S.R.
 - D. They decimated Soviet leadership and instilled terror in the survivors
17. What is the origin of the phrase "iron curtain" to describe the division between western Europe and the Soviet bloc?
- A. The use of torture methods by Stalin
 - B. The expansion of the steel industry after World War II
 - C. A speech by Winston Churchill
 - D. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" against Stalin
18. What did the U.S.S.R. achieve in the era after World War II?
- A. They conquered Japan and Korea
 - B. They launched the satellite Sputnik and put a man in space
 - C. They broke the sound barrier in flight
 - D. They saw an expansion of communism into western Europe including Austria and Italy
19. What problems contributed to the breakdown of the U.S.S.R. in the later part of the twentieth century?
- A. continued purges and wars of expansion in Europe
 - B. collapse of heavy industry, agricultural failure
 - C. shortages of consumer goods, stifling of freedom and dissent
 - D. Worldwide rejection of Marxism, mass emigration
20. What was one of the significant consequences of Gorbachev's policy of "*Glasnost*"?
- A. A shift in the control of production and distribution from central offices to regional offices and individual factories
 - B. Public discussion of significant social problems including alcoholism and juvenile delinquency
 - C. Mass emigration of Jews out of the U.S.S.R. to Israel
 - D. The opening of the Berlin Wall

The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism: Multiple-Choice Quiz Answer Key

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. B
7. B
8. C
9. A
10. C
11. D
12. B
13. A
14. C
15. A
16. D
17. C
18. B
19. C
20. B



What empire:

- Was founded in the midst of a world war;
- Nurtured dreams of social justice and peace;
- Crushed those dreams with terror and stagnation;
- Brought the world to the brink of nuclear destruction;
- Closed the 20th century with a legacy of struggle and uncertainty?

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Essential Questions

- Why were the reform efforts in Russia prior to 1914 so ineffective at improving life and removing the deep discontent of Russia's poor?
- Why was the Bolshevik faction able to take control of Russia in November 1917, even though it was a small organization even compared with other revolutionary parties?
- Were the millions of deaths and millions sent to the Gulag in the 1930s a terrible but necessary price the Soviet Union had to pay to industrialize rapidly, or were they completely unnecessary from any economic point of view?

Essential Questions (continued)

- Why did Khrushchev decide to criticize Stalin as he did in his famous “secret speech” to the Twentieth Party Congress?
- Why were Gorbachev’s efforts at reform ultimately unable to save Soviet communism and hold the Soviet Union together?

USSR History: The Short Version

- March 15, 1917: Tsar Nicholas II abdicated
- November 1917: Bolshevik revolution
- 1924: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- 1985: Mikhail Gorbachev in power, initiated *glasnost* and *perestroika*
- 1989: USSR declined to intervene in East German demonstrations; Berlin wall opened
- 1991: Gorbachev resigned, republics formed
Commonwealth of Independent States

Soviet history spans seven decades of the 20th century. With the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, centuries of royal power came to an end. The Bolshevik revolution led to the implementation of communist economic and social policies. In 1922, when Russia became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the nation was still a largely agricultural country. Over the course of the next seven decades, the USSR became an industrialized world power. However, the repressive, top-down implementation of a planned society never fully met the needs of the people. Discontent grew in the 1980s, ultimately leading to the collapse of communist regimes across Europe. Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union's last leader, resigned on Christmas Day in 1991.

The Soviet Union was a dominant world power throughout most of the 20th century.

Geography of the USSR



The USSR was a massive territory. As this slide shows, its vast extent embraced both Europe and Asia. When the sun rose in the east, it was still dinner time (the previous day) in the west! Geographic conditions varied from permafrost at the Arctic Circle to temperate and even Mediterranean climatic zones in the south. As with any territory of comparable size, a wide variety of natural resources existed within its boundaries.

- 8,650,000 square miles
- Two continents
- 1/7th world land mass
- 11 time zones
- Ecological zones: Tundra, Taiga, Humid-Continental, Steppe, Mediterranean
- Natural resources: Timber, mineral ores, precious stones and metals, oil, natural gas, farmland

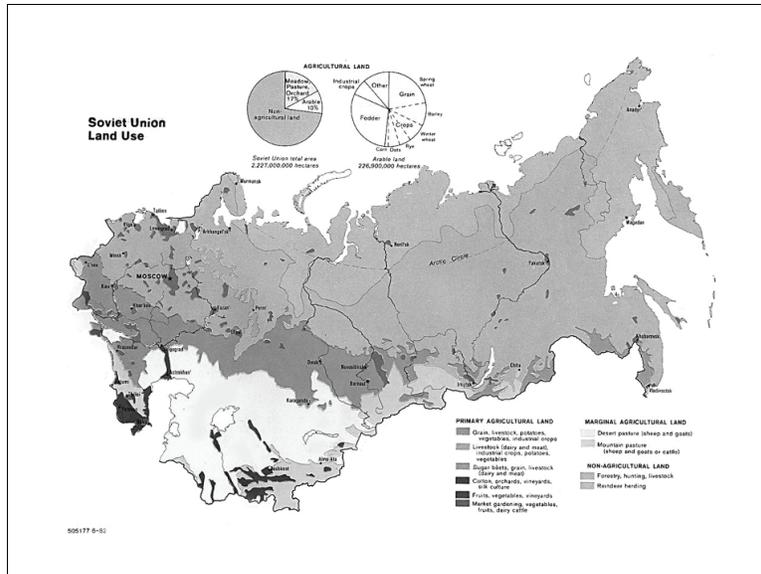
Diversity of Soviet Geography



Above: Returning from a hunt in Altai province

Left: fishing in the Dnieper River

These pictures illustrate some of the geographic variation that existed within the Soviet Union. How might this variation have affected the cultural adaptation of the peoples of different regions? (Cultural adaptation involves using different technologies to exploit specific kinds of food resources, different methods of building shelter, transporting goods and people, and so forth.)



Note to teacher: Use the following questions to quiz the class on the map in this slide.

- What agricultural region surrounds Moscow? (Light and dark green: livestock and market gardening.)
- Where were the Soviet Union’s main grain-producing regions? (Orange areas south and southeast of Moscow.)
- What types of activities took place within the vast grey area in the east? (Forestry, hunting, livestock.)

This map illustrates the fact that a country this large had the potential to produce a large number of different kinds of natural resources and agricultural products.

Peoples of the USSR

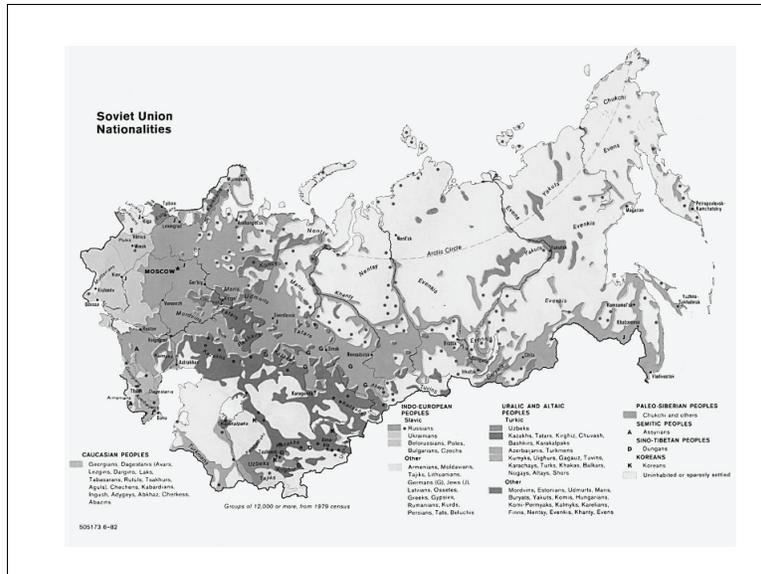
- Up to 100 national groups
- Western USSR: Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian
- Caucasus: Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani
- Soviet Central Asia: Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazakhstani, Kyrgyzstani
- Others: Finnish, Jewish, Inuit



Because of its size, the territory that became the Soviet Union embraced an enormous variety of peoples and cultures. The cultural and national groups listed on this slide illustrate just a part of the human diversity that existed in the Soviet Union.

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

What would have been necessary to unite so many different peoples into a single country? (A common language, a common or official culture, laws that either protect minorities or, conversely, laws that obligate minorities to convert their language, culture, and religion to that of the official or majority group.)



Note to teacher: Use the following question to hold a brief discussion about the map on this slide.

What major nationalities does the map on this slide show, and where did they reside?

19th-Century Russia



Russian Boyar (rich landlord)

- Romanov dynasty
- Territorial expansion after Congress of Vienna
- Decembrist revolt, 1825
- Loss of Crimean War, 1856
- Serfdom abolished, 1861
- Industrial growth
- Political and social repression

The Romanovs were the last dynasty to rule Russia. Alexander I ruled from 1801–1825, followed by Nicholas I (1825–55). Alexander II then took the throne, and ruled until his assassination in 1881. He was followed by Alexander III (1881–1894). Nicholas II was the last Romanov tsar. He ruled from 1894 until his abdication in 1917.

The Congress of Vienna enabled Russia to take Finland, Bessarabia (a region of southeast Europe that lay between the Dneister and Danube Rivers), and territory in Poland. By 1825, the push for liberal reforms fed the Decembrist revolt, which occurred when the Romanov Constantine, who was actually the rightful heir to the throne, passed up the throne in favor of his younger brother Nicholas I. Five leaders of the revolt were executed; several hundred soldiers were also punished.

Russia lost the Crimean War to Turkey; the loss contributed to social unrest at home.

Serfdom had persisted much longer in the Soviet Union than in western Europe; however Alexander II abolished serfdom in 1861. Twenty-two million emancipated serfs did not win economic autonomy, however: they received only small bits of second-rate farmland and were required to pay for it. Russia's agricultural economy thus remained limited.

The Trans-Siberian railroad was built at the end of the 19th century, establishing the potential for increased exploitation of natural resources in the Russian heartland, the development of remote industries and, later, the construction of networks of labor camps and prisons.

During this time, socialist ideas began to find their way into Russia, leading to growing dissatisfaction with royal power and pressure for reform. One of the socialist doctrines was Marxism.

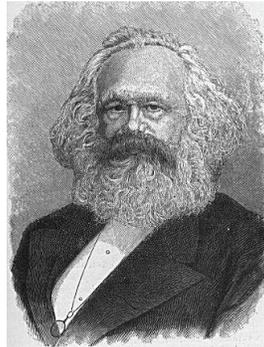
Discussion Questions

1. Russia has throughout much of its history had a very strong, autocratic, often dictatorial government. How might its size and cultural diversity help explain the fact that it has so often been governed by very powerful rulers?
2. In 1861, Russia emancipated its serfs. Explain what this meant and also explain why you think it did not end the growing discontent among poor people in Russia and their anger at their leaders.

1. It often took such strong control to keep all the unruly groups from breaking away or causing other kinds of trouble.
2. Emancipating the serfs meant they were able to own and sell their own land and move away from the landowning nobles who had controlled them. However, they only received tiny plots of land and still faced many other kinds of restrictions.

Karl Marx

- Born May 5, 1818, in Trier, Prussia
- 1841: Received doctorate in Philosophy from University of Berlin
- Expelled from numerous countries due to radical journalism
- Married childhood sweetheart, Jenny
- Leader of International Workingmen's Association
- Died March 13, 1883



Karl Marx was the oldest son in a large family. He had eight siblings. Descended from a long line of rabbis, Marx grew up in a home filled with books and learning. He received an excellent education at a time when Europe was undergoing wrenching social transformations. As the Industrial Revolution expanded, cities grew and the numbers of urban poor increased. Although Marx was not the only person at this time who felt that industrialists had a moral obligation to improve social conditions, he did emerge as one of the most articulate and radical social philosophers of the time. He attacked censorship in Prussia, and he objected to a proposed law prohibiting peasants from collecting firewood, characterizing it as feudal. Eventually, Marx settled in England after being expelled from several western European countries, including France. In England, he collaborated with Friedrich Engels, the son of a Prussian industrialist, to write the *Communist Manifesto*, the 1848 pamphlet that called for a workers' revolution. Marx also authored other works, including *Das Kapital* (1867).

The Communist Manifesto



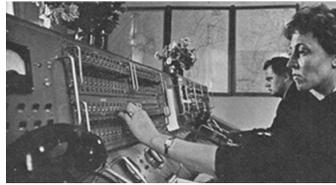
Friedrich Engels

- Co-author Friedrich Engels
- Historical context
 - Expansion of Industrial Revolution
 - Harsh conditions for workers
- “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.”
- Called for revolution against capitalists: “Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!”

Friedrich Engels was an “angel” to Marx in that he provided him with lifetime friendship, intellectual collaboration, and, when the Marx family was in dire straits, financial support. In 1847, the Communist League asked Marx and Engels to write a document summarizing the League’s stance. Marx situated the then-present condition of the working class in history, arguing that throughout time, society has been divided into classes which struggle against each other for resources, wealth, and power. Marx and Engels called for a communist revolution, through which the valuable means of production could be seized by the working class and utilized for the benefit of the entire society.

Principles of Marxist Philosophy

- Means of production
 - Raw materials, tools, labor
- Relations of production
 - Capitalism advocates private ownership
 - Consolidation of property and profit in private hands
 - Alienation of workers



Women manage an electrical power station

In all societies, regardless of how primitive or advanced, humans transform natural resources into tools and materials useful for survival. The means of production are the raw materials, tools, and labor that, when combined, generate items ranging from a loaf of bread to industrial machinery and the products it makes. Social classes have long struggled against each other for ownership of, or access to, the means of production. Capitalism is an economic system which advocates for private or individual ownership of the means of production. When the means of production are held in private hands, the profit generated through production can also be held privately. Workers become “alienated” from their labor, receiving wages that are less than the value of their work. For example, if a worker transforms \$5.00 worth of raw materials into a product that sells for \$50.00, the worker has contributed \$45.00 value to the product. However, in order to make a profit, a capitalist may pay the worker only \$10.00. The capitalist subtracts the cost of the raw materials, the workers’ salaries, and other business expenses from revenue in order to earn a profit.

Marx on Consciousness



Men at work

“It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.”

Karl Marx,
*Contribution to the Critique
of Political Economy*

Marx held that work is so fundamental to human life that it shapes human consciousness. The kind of work we do, the social relations of our work, and the relationship we have to the products of our work determine our outlook on life, our understanding of society, and, most importantly, our political views.

- German caricature of Karl Marx leading workers, like lemmings, over a cliff.
- What opinion does this artist convey?



Needless to say, capitalists, industrialists, monarchists, and the political regimes supported by capitalism found Marx's philosophy and his call to revolution highly threatening. At the same time, many workers found his analysis of their conditions appealing.

Note to teacher: Pose the following question to the class and briefly discuss the cartoon in this slide.

This caricature shows workers being led like lemmings off a cliff. What opinion does this image convey? (Workers are being led to their death by foolishly following Marx's ideas and his call to revolution. The artist is clearly critical of Marx and Marxism.)

Russia



Farmers in Mongolia

- 1890s: Marxism spreads
- 1898: Russian Social Democratic Labor Party founded
- Populists: saw peasantry as key to socialist revolution
- G.V. Plekhanov: sought expansion of social democracy with industrialization
- Lenin: advocated early revolution, organized revolutionary leadership

The spread of Marxist ideas was confined primarily to the cities, where study groups would meet to share and discuss Marxist literature. The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was formed in opposition to the imperial power of the Tsar. It contained a variety of factions. Both populists and socialists emphasized the role of peasants in social revolution, while Plekhanov and Lenin focused primarily on the revolutionary potential of urban, industrial workers.

Lenin: Early Years

- Born 1870, named Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov
- 1887: older brother hanged
- Expelled from university
- Study of Marxist philosophy in contact with Marxist groups
- Continued private study of law, passed university exams



Vladimir Ilyich and his sister

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov would adopt the name “Lenin” later in life, as a pseudonym. Lenin’s older brother was hanged for his part in activities against the tsar. Historians have tried unsuccessfully to attribute this incident to a radicalization of Lenin’s philosophy; however, they have been unable to establish a direct connection. Lenin was expelled from the University of Kazan for reasons that are unclear. It may have had something to do with his association with his older brother and his brother’s participation in activities that opposed the tsar. Lenin continued to study both Marxism and the law vigorously on his own. The fact that he was able to pass law exams solely as a result of private study is a testament to Lenin’s intelligence and perseverance.

Lenin: Career



Lenin, 1918

- Law practice
- 1893: relocated to St. Petersburg
- 1895: arrested
- 1886–1900: Siberian exile
- 1900–1917: European exile with wife

Lenin was arrested for Marxist activities on behalf of the working class in St. Petersburg. He was exiled to western Siberia, where he adopted the pseudonym “Lenin” after the Lena river there. He continued to engage deeply with Marxist philosophy through study and discussion in underground groups. While in exile, Lenin observed Russia’s agricultural problems firsthand; he also came to understand how deeply committed the peasants were to the idea of private ownership of land. This would become a major point of struggle in the Communist Revolution undertaken in Russia after 1917.

Lenin: "What Is to Be Done?" (1902)

I assert:

- that no movement can be durable without a stable organization of leaders to maintain continuity;
- that the more widely the masses are spontaneously drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement and participate in it, the more necessary is it to have such an organization, and the more stable must it be ...
- that the organization must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolutionary activities as a profession

By the early 1900s, Lenin had begun to express his view that the only way an agricultural, predominantly peasant society such as Russia could achieve communism would be through the leadership of a revolutionary communist party. This contrasted with Marx's view that communism would come about through a revolution led by a politically conscious working class.

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks

- Divisions of Russian Social Democratic Labor Party
- Bolsheviks: majority
 - Led by Lenin
 - Professional revolutionaries in centralized party
 - Hierarchy of control and responsibility
- Mensheviks: minority
 - Democratic organization
 - Broader role for membership
 - “Evolutionary” approach to development of socialism
 - Advocated cooperation with bourgeois parties against autocratic rule

The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks split over leadership and strategy at meetings of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (the Second Party Congress) in Brussels and London in 1903. Lenin advocated a centralized party led by a professional revolutionary class that would lead the working class. Leon Trotsky advocated a more democratic approach to the creation of a communist society. Lenin’s position was rejected by the Congress, but when he and his faction won a minor vote over the editorial board of *Iskra* (meaning “spark”), they declared themselves the majority, or “Bolsheviks.”

Discussion Questions

1. Marx said all history is the history of class struggle. What do you think he meant by “class”? Do you agree that all of history can be seen as the struggle of one class against another? Why or why not?
2. Marx used the term “alienation” to describe what happens to workers who labor for wages in a capitalist enterprise. What do you think he means by saying they become “alienated from their labor”? Do you think working for wages in a privately owned enterprise is alienating in this way? Why or why not?
3. Describe the basic similarities and differences between Lenin and Marx. How might conditions in Russia in the late 1800s help explain the differences between the two in how to organize a revolutionary movement?

1. Class for Marx is a category determined by a person’s position within the society’s system of economic production and property. In a capitalist society, those who own the means of production are in one class, the bourgeoisie, and those who work without owning the means of production are in another class, the proletariat. Answers will vary with regard to the question about class conflict and should be discussed.
2. Alienation in this case means having no control over and no sense of ownership of the products of one’s own labor.
3. Marx expected communist revolutions to occur in fully industrialized societies with a large industrial working class. But Russia in the early 1900s was still just starting to industrialize. Most of its poor were peasants who wanted to own their own land. In such a society, Lenin believed a small industrial proletariat could bring about communism if led by a highly disciplined party of professional revolutionaries.

Russia's Growing Troubles

- January 22, 1905: “Bloody Sunday”
- September 1905 defeat
- Nicholas II rejects reform
- Unrest
- Soviets
- October 30, 1905: Duma



Bloody Sunday

On January 22, 1905, a group of poor workers approached the tsar's Winter Palace. They were led by a priest and arrived to petition the tsar for civil rights, the right to vote, and tax relief. They were massacred in an assault that killed over 100 of the protesters and wounded thousands more. As the people of Russia heard of the news, they rioted, went on strike, assassinated government officials, and even led mutinies in the armed forces. That fall, Russia experienced a humiliating defeat in the Russo-Japanese war. As had happened in the 19th century, when losses in the Crimean War had led to reform (the emancipation of the peasants in 1861), defeat at the hands of the Japanese also set the stage for reform. The tsar responded by grudgingly agreeing to the establishment of a parliament, the *Duma*. The *Duma* passed progressive laws that included protection for workers and the expansion of education; however, the tsar had the power to dismiss the *Duma* at will.

Rasputin



Rasputin seated in the center

- Peasant mystic
- Favored by royal family
- Tsarevich Alexis
- Council of State in 1905
- Alarmed Russians
- Undermined support for the tsar

The next male in the Romanov dynasty and heir to the throne, Tsarevich Alexis, suffered from a bleeding disorder called hemophilia. Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin was a Russian monk born in 1872. Half illiterate peasant and half mystic, he appeared to have the ability to stop the young prince's bleeding. Thus, Rasputin gained powerful influence over the Empress Alexandra. Appointed to the Council of State, he wielded his power by placing associates in high positions in government. During World War I, Nicholas II went to be with the troops at the front. His absence enabled Rasputin to further develop his influence over the Empress, the court, and therefore the government. Rasputin's incompetent ministers and inappropriate behavior undermined support for the tsar. Eventually, Rasputin was murdered. It is said that he was extremely difficult to kill: when poison failed to do him in, his murderers shot him several times, then finally packed him in a bag and threw him in in the Neva river, where he drowned.

Russia During World War I

- 15 million men mobilized, 50% killed, wounded, or captured
- Shortages provoke crises
- Riots in Petrograd
- Petrograd Soviet
- March 14th: Duma's "Provisional Committee" reconstituted as "Provisional Government"
- Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne



Russian prisoners of war

Russia was unprepared for war. Despite late 19th-century advances in industry, Russia remained an overwhelmingly agricultural society that did not have the infrastructure or weaponry to mobilize millions of soldiers and fight effectively. While soldiers did their best on the front, the lack of food and fuel intensified the dissatisfaction of the Russian people. Troops sent in to control riots joined the melee instead. When the *Duma* appealed to the tsar for intervention, he failed to respond. In March, his advisers recommended abdication.

Abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, March 1917



Tsar Nicholas II

“In these decisive days in the life of Russia we have thought that we owed to our people the close union and organization of all its forces for the realization of a rapid victory [in war]; for which reason, in agreement with the Imperial *Duma*, we have recognized that it is for the good of the country that we should abdicate the Crown of the Russian State and lay down the Supreme Power.”

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions with the class.

- Based on the text, what reason did the tsar give for abdication? (He wrote that it was for the good of the country.)
- What were the real reasons for his abdication? (Loss of power, loss of credibility, public pressure, and his inability to provision the Russian people adequately with food and fuel.)

Statement of Grand Duke Mikhail, March 16, 1917

“I therefore request all citizens of Russia to obey the Provisional Government, set up on the initiative of the Duma and invested with plenary powers, until, within as short a time as possible, the Constituent Assembly, elected on a basis of universal, equal, and secret suffrage, shall express the will of the nation regarding the form of government to be adopted.”



The Grand Duke

Though Tsar Nicholas II abdicated in favor of his brother, the Grand Duke, the Duke refused to serve. In this document, he waived power to the Provisional Government led by Prince Georgi Lvov. Neither the Provisional Government nor the Constituent Assembly, which would be elected shortly, would lead Russia effectively during this time.

Lenin's "April Theses"

- "First stage of the revolution" would lead to power for bourgeoisie; "second stage" would put power in hands of proletariat and peasantry
- Rejected Provisional Government as instrument of the bourgeoisie
- "Soviet of Workers' Deputies is the only possible form of revolutionary government"
- Called for nationalization and redistribution of land
- Reorganized Russian Social Democratic Labor Party as the Communist Party

Lenin had been in exile when the tsar abdicated in March of 1917. He returned to Petrograd on April 16, 1917. He felt that the bourgeoisie Provisional Government was able to seize power because Russia's proletariat was inadequately prepared for revolution. He wrote, "This peculiar situation demands of us an ability to adapt ourselves to the specific conditions of party work amidst vast masses of the proletariat just wakened to political life." In addition to supporting the Soviet of Workers' Deputies as the only possible revolutionary government, Lenin also called for specific actions. He anticipated seizures of land, the collectivization of agriculture, and the nationalization of banks and industries.

Lenin, Petrograd, April 17, 1917



Lenin addressing the people of Petrograd on April 17, 1917. Notice how he commands the podium and speaks with confidence. This confidence would lead Russia to revolution in just a few months.

1917: The Fateful Summer

- Provisional Government
- Refused to grant land to peasants
- Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies issued "Order #1"
- Bolshevik Party grew
- Promised "Land, Peace, and Bread" to Russia
- Riots in Petrograd



Soldiers in Petrograd, 1917

Lenin's call for revolution was rejected by the RSDLP (Russian Social Democratic Labor Party). However, his "April Theses" paved the way for rejection of the Provisional Government. Peasants believed that Lenin's call for the nationalization of land meant that land would be taken from landlords and given to them. Thus, they supported Lenin against the Provisional Government as he promised "Land, Peace, and Bread." Lenin's Bolshevik Party grew from 20,000 to 100,000 members. "Order #1" instructed soldiers to obey the Provisional Government, but only if their instructions did not violate decrees by the Soviet. In the summer of 1917, Trotsky, who had returned to Russia from New York City, threw his support behind Lenin. In July, the Russians began an unsuccessful offensive against the Germans. Between July 16th and 19th, hundreds of people were killed or wounded in riots in Petrograd. Rumors spread that Lenin was a German spy, and he fled to Finland.

Lenin, October 24, 1917



“...I urge comrades to realize that everything now hangs by a thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not to be solved by conferences or congresses (even congresses of Soviets), but exclusively by peoples, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed people...

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

The seizure of power is the business of the uprising; its political purpose will become clear after the seizure...

The government is tottering. It must be given the death-blow at all costs.”

In his work *The State and Revolution*, Lenin clarified his interpretation of Marxist theory. While the proletariat or socialist state should “wither away” after the socialist revolution, the bourgeois state must be overthrown by violent means.

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

What is Lenin calling for in this speech? (Giving the “death-blow” to the government, or overthrowing it.)

November 6–7, 1917

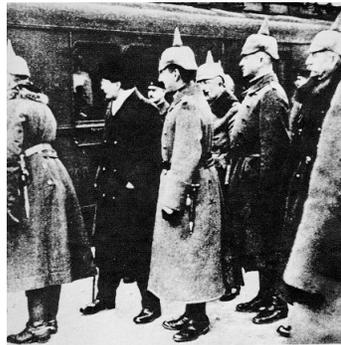
- Bolshevik membership swelled to 200,000
- Soldiers deserted military units
- Red Guard occupied part of Petrograd
- Members of Provisional Government arrested
- “Council of People’s Commissars” established
- Soviet Revolutionary Military Committee commanded Petrograd



Alexander Kerensky of the Provisional Government

The November Revolution (October Revolution by the western calendar) was preceded by a power struggle between Premier Kerensky of the Provisional Government and General Lavr Kornilov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army. During the crisis, Premier Kerensky called upon the Bolsheviks for support. He had even provided them with weapons. Thus, he unwittingly strengthened the very forces that would bring the Provisional Government to ruin. Lenin pushed the Petrograd Soviet to agree to revolution, and on the night of November 6–7, the uprising commenced.

After the Revolution



Trotsky (dark coat) at Brest-Litovsk

- Bolsheviks won only 24% of vote in national elections
- Lenin dissolved Constituent Assembly
- Cheka
- Farmland to peasantry
- Factories transferred to workers
- March 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

In late November, national elections confirmed widespread support for the Socialist-Revolutionary party, which won 58% of the vote, more than twice what the Bolsheviks would win. Nonetheless, Lenin moved quickly to consolidate power. The “Commission for Suppression of Counterrevolution,” or *Cheka*, was formed to limit dissenting views. At the Constituent Assembly’s first and only meeting in January of 1918, though the Bolsheviks were significantly outnumbered, Lenin managed to seize control. The Red Guard (Bolshevik army) dissolved the Assembly, sent the delegates home, and the Assembly never met again. Lenin began to undertake economic reforms he had long planned, namely the nationalization of land and industrial production. The 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended Russian involvement in WWI and gave Germany 1.3 million square miles of Russian land. (Russia would renounce the treaty when the Allies concluded their war with Germany in the fall of 1918.)

The Fundamental Law of Land Socialization, February 1918

- Article 1. All private ownership of land, minerals, waters, forests, and natural resources within the boundaries of the Russian Federated Soviet Republic is abolished forever.
- Article 2. Henceforth all the land is handed over without compensation (open or secret) to the toiling masses for their use.
- Article 3. With the exceptions indicated in this decree the right to the use of the land belongs to him who cultivates it with his own labor.

The Fundamental Law charged community government offices and soviets with the responsibility for distributing land. The law also provided pensions for rural people unable to work on the land and insurance for farmers and farms.

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

In what way do these provisions reflect the Marxist ideal, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need”?

Discussion Questions

1. After the 1905 crisis, the Tsar allowed a Duma, or representative assembly, to meet. Why was this assembly never a real solution to the growing discontent in Russia with the nation's rulers?
2. Based on the text in slide 27, what reason did the tsar give for abdication? What were the real reasons for his abdication?
3. What actions or failures to act by the Provisional Government made it easier for Lenin to increase support for the Bolsheviks in the summer and fall of 1917?

1. Russia's *Duma* under the Tsars never had effective power. The Tsar could dissolve it whenever he wanted to.
2. He wrote that it was for the good of the country. The real reasons were loss of power, loss of credibility, public pressure, the disorder at the front in the war, and his inability to provision the Russian people adequately with food and fuel.
3. The Provisional Government continued to try to win the war against Germany even as massive disintegration of units and protests and desertion by soldiers was taking place; it refused to give peasants any real hope of gaining greater control over their lands; etc.

Discussion Questions (continued)

4. In January 1918, the newly elected Constituent Assembly met. In the elections for it, the Bolsheviks had won less than half as many votes as another revolutionary party supported by the peasants. Lenin quickly disbanded the Constituent Assembly. How do you think he justified this action against a democratically elected body that was supposed to write a constitution for Russia?

4. Answers may vary and should be discussed. Some students may note that Lenin was not a strong advocate of parliamentary democracy and believed real power should arise out of the industrial proletariat and be led and controlled by the small party of Bolshevik revolutionaries.

Civil War: 1918–1921

- Reds (Bolsheviks) led by Trotsky
 - Controlled Petrograd and Moscow
 - Controlled factories, seized resources
 - Promises to peasantry and non-Russian nationalities
- Whites
 - Monarchists, tsarists, industrialists, landlords
 - Scattered, disorganized
 - Lacked appealing program for Russia
- Tsar Nicholas II and family murdered
- Millions dead, homeless
- Many die in the resulting famine as well

While the Red army was led by Leon Trotsky, the White army was supported with military aid from several foreign powers, including the United States. Leon Trotsky implemented the conscription and compulsory training of all able men between 18 and 40 years of age, and improved army discipline. By 1920, five million men served in the Red army, including soldiers who had fought previously for the tsar. The tsar's family were transported by train to Siberia in 1917. They were held for several months until the night of July 16, 1918, when they were executed.



The royal children, murdered during the Civil War: Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, Aleksei

How does the royal family express its wealth and elegance in this image? How do the customs of royalty conflict with the ideals of communism?

Note to teacher: Have students examine the image. How does the royal family express its wealth and elegance in this image? (The girls' elegant gowns, sashes, and carefully dressed hair; the military dress of the young crown prince.) The customs of royalty conflict with the ideals of communism because royalty guarantees hereditary power and wealth. Communists believed that power and wealth should be shared equally by all people, regardless of social background.

“War Communism”



Red Army patrol

- Centralization of production and distribution
- Nationalized industries
- Peasants surrendered grain surpluses
- Resistance:
 - Assault, torture, murder of officials charged with collecting grain
 - Reduction in agricultural production

Desperate times called for desperate measures. In the spring and summer of 1918 during the civil war, the Bolsheviks declared emergency measures, claiming that they would lead Russia toward communism. By nationalizing industries and seizing grain surpluses from farmers, they gained control of resources that would support the Red army to victory over the Whites. However, resistance was fierce. Russian peasants had yearned for their own land and agricultural freedom since the emancipation of 1861. They deeply resented the interventions of the state. By cutting their agricultural production, they limited what the state could seize; however, they also inadvertently contributed to the famine that would sweep Russia in the years after the civil war.

Lenin's New Economic Policy

- Attempt to restore economic productivity
- End of food seizures
- Peasants turned over a percentage of crops, were free to sell the balance for profit
- State retained control over major industries
- Small business restored to private ownership
- Large enterprises remained under government control



Russian peasants

After the civil war left up to 15,000,000 Russians dead from conflict, famine, and disease, the New Economic Policy was initiated in March of 1921. It represented a form of modified capitalism in that peasants were permitted to sell a portion of their crops for profit. As a result, agricultural production increased and Russia began to recover from the years of famine that had followed the civil war. The government also allowed small-scale manufacturing to function on a private basis. Though controversial due to its capitalist elements, the NEP did assist with economic recovery in post-civil war Russia.



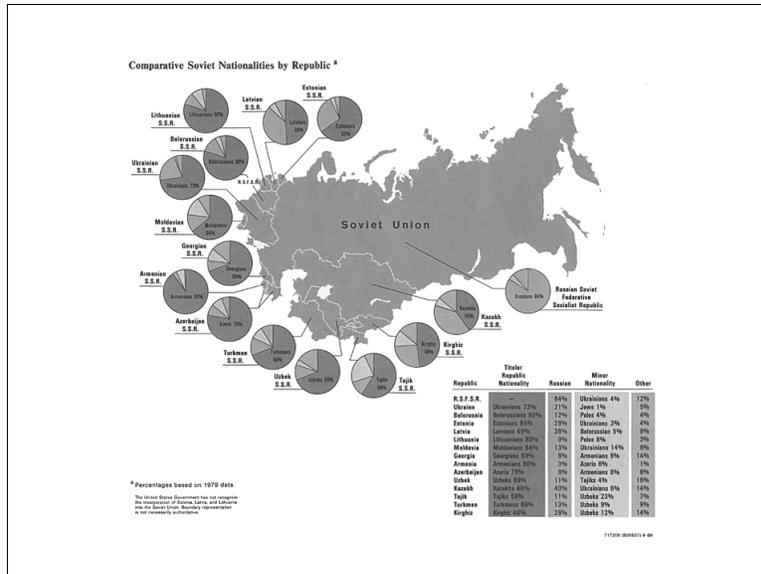
A farm market under Lenin's New Economic Policy

In what ways did the NEP motivate farmers to increase food production?

Notice the plentiful supply of crops in the farmers' stands, and the simple dress of the people shopping at the market.

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

In what way did the NEP economic policy encourage farmers to increase food production?
(By permitting them to control and sell their own surplus agricultural products.)



Even after political unification, the republics of the USSR remained extraordinarily diverse in culture, language, religion, and nationality.

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions about the map in this slide with the class.

- Which republic was the largest geographically? (RSFSR)
- Which republic had the greatest percentage of Russians? (RSFSR)
- Which had the smallest percentage of Russians? (Armenia)
- In which republics did the primary or titular nation have less than 50% of the population? (Latvia, Kazakh, and Kirghi)
- Which republic had a Jewish population of 1%? (Ukraine)

Lenin's Death

- 1922: Health declines
- Strokes
- Died in January 1924



Lenin's health declined significantly beginning in 1922. He had a series of strokes that left him increasingly debilitated. He died in January 1924.

Lenin's body was embalmed and placed on display in Red Square, Moscow.



Mourners wait to pay respects to Lenin

As this picture shows, Lenin was revered by thousands of mourners. His contributions to Marxist theory are so significant that today Marxism is frequently referred to as Marxism-Leninism. Communists today still study and comment on his work.

Discussion Questions

1. Read the provisions of the Fundamental Law of the Land, 1018, as stated on slide 35. Do these provisions fit with the ideas of communism as described by Marx and Engels? Why or why not?
2. On July 16, 1918, the Bolsheviks had the entire family of the Tsar shot. Why do you think they felt a need to execute the royal family?
3. Explain why crop production shrank during the time of war communism and the Civil War, from 1918 through 1921, and why crop production increased substantially during Lenin's "New Economic Policy."

1. Answers may vary and should be discussed.
2. Answers may vary and should be discussed. Some students will consider this a purely vengeful act, others may stress the fear the Bolsheviks might have had about future efforts to restore monarchy to Russia.
3. Peasants often destroyed their crops themselves rather than turn them over to the government without compensation; peasants also lacked any incentive to plant and raise additional crops for which they might receive no payment. Under the NEP (New Economic Policy) they again could make profits on sales of their crops and hence had incentives to produce more again.

Joseph Stalin (Dzhugashvili)

- Born December 21, 1879, in Georgia
- Son of a shoemaker and laborer
- 1895: accepted at Tiflis Orthodox Theological Seminary
- 1899: expelled, taught Marxism
- 1902: first arrest results in 18 months imprisonment, three years Siberian exile
- Prior to 1917, spent up to nine years in prison or exile



Georgia had been conquered by Tsar Alexander II prior to Stalin's birth. Georgia was a non-Russian territory in which many young people, (including Stalin) studied the work of Marx, Lenin, and other revolutionary authors. Ostensibly expelled from seminary for failing to appear for a final exam, Stalin asserted that he had been expelled for possessing Marxist propaganda. He adopted the name "Stalin," meaning "man of steel," as a revolutionary pseudonym.

Transition From Lenin to Stalin

- 1922: Joseph Stalin becomes General Secretary of the Communist Party
- Lenin advocated removal of Stalin
- Struggle between Trotsky and Stalin
- 1929: Trotsky exiled



Stalin, Lenin, and Trotsky

As General Secretary of the Communist Party, Stalin gave key government offices to his supporters. Lenin soon became aware of the fact that Stalin was using political office to advance his own power instead of advancing the interests of Russia or the Communist Party. In 1923, Lenin proposed Stalin's removal from the position of General Secretary, but the continued decline in Lenin's health prevented him from carrying this out.

After Lenin's death, a power struggle developed between Trotsky and Stalin. With the aid of other powerful communists, Stalin forced Trotsky out of the party and then into exile. He was murdered in Mexico by Stalinist agents in 1940.

Party Service



- *Marxism and the National Question*
- 1917: member Bolshevik General Staff
- Commissar of Nationalities and Commissar of the Army
- 1922: Directorship of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate
- 1922: General Secretary of the Communist Party

Stalin wrote *Marxism and the National Question*, which offered a thoughtful consideration of the problems of creating a unified, socialist state despite the presence of dozens of competing nationalities. This brought him to the attention of Lenin, but despite the merits of this work, Stalin is not known for his intellect or philosophy. Stalin advanced from one political position to the next until he achieved total control over the Communist Party and, therefore, of the Soviet Union as well.

Characteristics of Totalitarianism

- One-party rule
- Ideology
- Propaganda
- State control
- Mass media and industrial technology
- Police and military repression



Totalitarian societies fall under the “total control” of a single political party and state apparatus. They are often created through the leadership of a charismatic individual (such as Lenin) and the development of a cult of personality around the dictator (such as that created around Joseph Stalin). However, if the controlling political party can maintain a functioning economy and an effective apparatus for social control, a totalitarian society can also persist despite leadership by individuals who lack dynamic or exciting personalities. Totalitarian societies become unified through complex belief systems called ideologies, and these ideologies permeate daily life through work, school, sports, art, and more. A 20th-century phenomenon, totalitarian societies rely on mass media (particularly the radio and newspapers) to propagandize, to create a “cult of personality” around the leader, and to communicate state ideology. Totalitarian governments suppress dissent through networks of informants, persecution by the police and the military, long prison terms for minor or trumped-up crimes “against the state,” and even assassination.

The USSR vs. Marxism



- Leadership by centralized Communist Party, not the proletariat
- Under Stalin
 - Ownership of the means of the production held by the state
 - “Command economy” under state direction and control
 - Series of “five-year plans” drove agricultural and industrial production to new highs
 - “Socialism in One Country”
 - Use of terror and murder to establish and maintain control

Karl Marx envisioned a revolution of the international working class that would lead to the emergence of communal ownership of the means of production and a fully developed communist society. He did not envision the transition to communism led by a revolutionary party. He did not envision party control of society and the state. Lenin’s New Economic Policy actually seemed to represent a step backward from the path to communism. Thus, Stalin’s aggressive direction of Soviet society and economy, as well as his vision of achieving socialism in one country by itself, represented radical departures from Marxist theory.

Collectivization of Agriculture

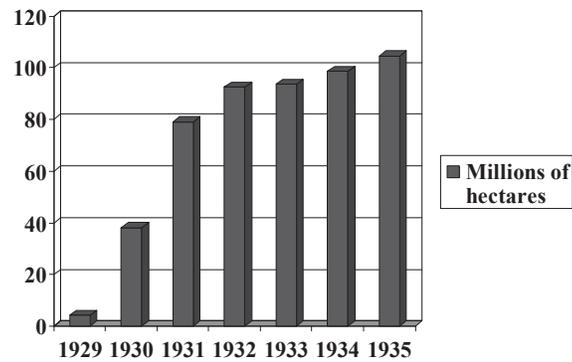
- Undertaken by force
- Government seized 25 million privately owned farms
- Kulaks
- Farmers forced to work at gunpoint
- Resisters imprisoned or murdered



Protest against the kulaks

Millions of Soviet peasants were deeply attached to their own farms and their autonomy as independent farmers. The wealthier farmers, or kulaks, fiercely resisted collectivization, resorting to sabotage of their own property and livestock to slow the process. In some cases, 50% or more of key livestock (horses, cows, sheep) were slaughtered by farmers who preferred to see the animals die rather than fall into the hands of the state. Millions of peasants were forced into starvation, imprisoned, exiled, or murdered for resisting collectivization.

Collectivization of Farms: 1929–1935



The years 1929–1931 showed the most significant growth. In 1929, 57 collective farms totaled 4.2 million hectares. In 1930, 86 farms totaled 38.1 million hectares, while by 1931, 211 farms totaled 79 million hectares.

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following with the class.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of collectivization? (Advantages: when farmers pool land, tools, and labor, they should in theory be able to work more efficiently. Disadvantages: when farmers lose their private property, autonomy, and individual profit, they lose motivation to work.)

Collectivization of Agriculture: Soviet Propaganda

“The Soviet government’s successes in the sphere of the collective-farm movement are now being spoken of by everyone... It is a fact that by February 20 of this year 50 per cent of the peasant farms throughout the USSR had been collectivised. That means that by February 1930, we had overfulfilled the five-year plan of collectivisation by more than 100 per cent.

What does all this show? *That a radical turn of the countryside towards socialism may be considered as already achieved*” (emphasis added).

Pravda, March 2, 1930

Official Soviet texts, including articles from Soviet newspapers, represented a one-sided point of view. They could never be read as news. Rather, they functioned solely as propaganda. This text offers a good example of propagandistic praise for the collectivization program. Note how no alternative view is presented, and that the article claims unequivocal success.

Collectivization of Agriculture: The Dark Side (1932)

The following measures should be undertaken with respect to these villages [where sabotage has occurred]:

1. Immediate cessation of delivery of goods, complete suspension of cooperative and state trade in the villages, and removal of all available goods from cooperative and state stores.
2. Full prohibition of collective farm trade for both collective farms and collective farmers, and for private farmers.
3. Cessation of any sort of credit and demand for early repayment of credit and other financial obligations.
4. Investigation and purge of all sorts of foreign and hostile elements from cooperative and state institutions, to be carried out by organs of the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate.

“Kulaks,” or rich peasants, were among those who most fiercely resisted Soviet collectivization. This document describes measures taken against kulaks.

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following with the class.

What impact might these measures have had on affected villages? (They would have been cut off from normal economic activity and possibly forced into bankruptcy and starvation. The “foreign and hostile elements” who were purged may have been arrested, imprisoned, exiled, or murdered.)

Repression in the Ukraine

- 1929: 5000 arrested
- Kulaks
- Between 3 and 5 million dead
- Resistance
- 1932: mandatory food exports increased
- Borders closed to food imports



Starving orphans

The government justified mass arrests of Ukrainian cultural leaders and scientists in 1929 by accusing the detainees of plotting a revolt. Soviet military power enabled the repression. The government stripped Kulaks of all their possessions and shipped them to remote Siberian camps. The borders were closed to prevent food from being imported, leaving the Ukrainians to starve. Ukrainian resisters burned houses, slaughtered animals, and assassinated government officials. Officially, the Soviet Union denied the existence of a famine, and used staged tours and other forms of propaganda to persuade the rest of the world. In 1933, the United States formally recognized the Soviet Union and Stalin's government as legitimate. In the spring of 1933, up to 25,000 Ukrainians died *every day*. In the end, up to one out of four Ukrainians died due to imprisonment, execution, or starvation.

Kolkhoz vs. Sovkhoz



Farmers in the USSR, circa 1950

- Collective vs. state farm
- *Kolkhoz*
 - Collective farm
 - Owned and operated by members
 - Products delivered to the state at fixed prices
 - Families permitted to cultivate their own crops on small plots of land
- *Sovkhoz*
 - Farmers paid salaries as state employees
 - Substantially less productive than private plots

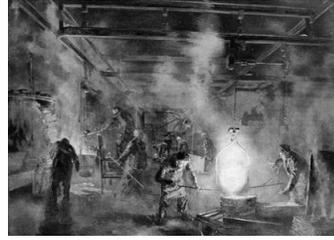
Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions with the class.

Why might agricultural productivity have been highest on the small plots of land farmers were permitted to cultivate for themselves? (Farmers had control over the land and the agricultural produce. They could sell or exchange the products as they wished. They had higher levels of motivation to farm.)

Private plots accounted for only four percent of the farmland in Russia, but they produced over one-third of the fruit, milk, meat, eggs, and other non-grain, agricultural products.

Industrial Production

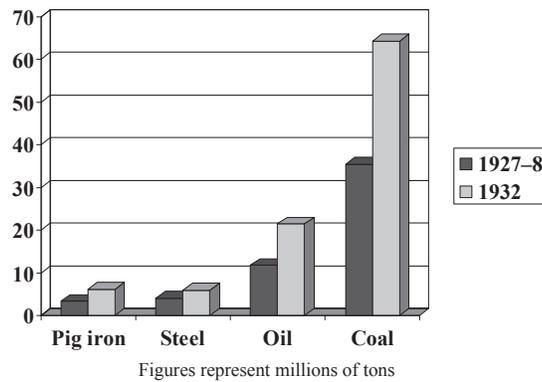
- Emphasis on development of major industries (oil, coal, steel, electricity)
- Inadequate attention to production of consumer goods (housing, clothing, furniture)
- Persistent shortages
- Use of forced labor to meet industrial targets



Steel workers

Stalin's first five-year plans had an extraordinary level of success for the USSR, but the costs were very high: the basic needs of civilians were neglected, and the system of forced labor camps developed in this period profoundly violated the basic civil and human rights of the individuals imprisoned in them.

Production: First Five-Year Plan



Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions with the class.

- In what areas did the greatest increase in production occur? (Oil and coal)
- Why were these industries important? (They provided the energy needed to power all other industries)

Women in Production

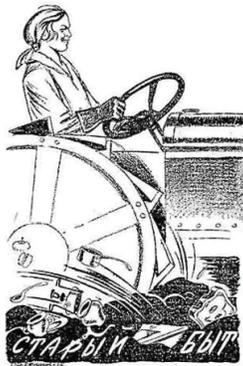


A group of women engineers

- Women entered the workforce
- Child care liberated women's labor
- Women in male fields
- Women continued to dominate traditionally female fields

Communist societies around the world have pushed hard to bring women into full employment in the work force. In order to do so, these societies found it necessary to collectivize work normally undertaken by women as unpaid labor, such as cooking, cleaning, and child and elder care. While women were granted education and training that enabled them to enter traditionally male-dominated fields (such as heavy industry), women continued to dominate traditionally female sectors of employment such as education, child care, health care, and the service industry.

Role of Women in Production

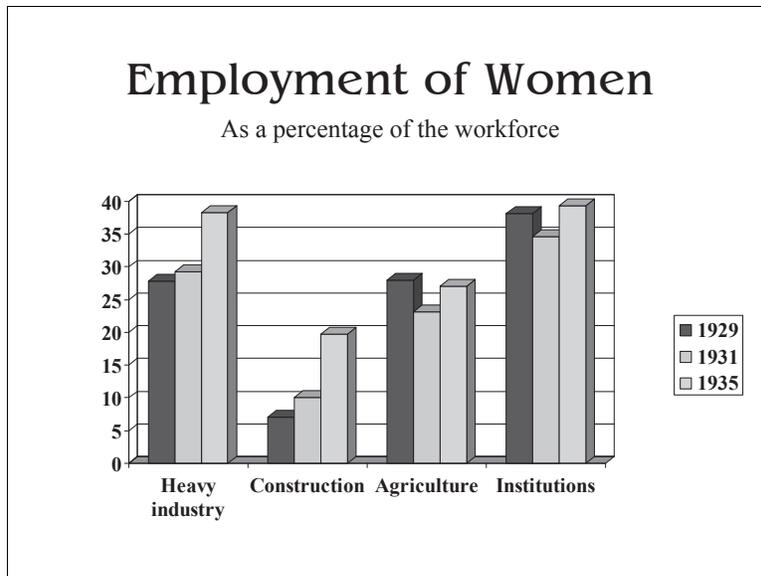


Title "Old Way of Life":

- What is the woman doing?
- What objects are being broken up under the tractor?
- What message does this image convey?

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the questions on this slide with the class.

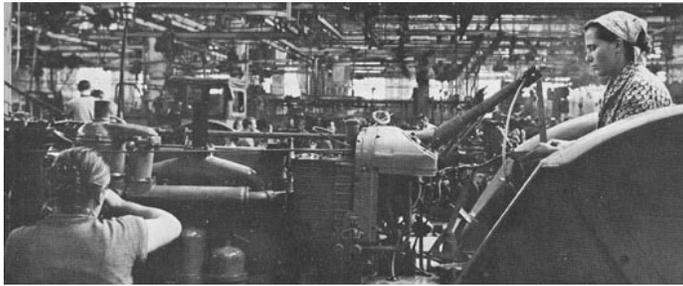
The woman is driving a tractor. She is driving over domestic items such as cooking pots and dishes. The message is that women will take on new roles in the Soviet Union, displacing their old domestic responsibilities.



Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions with the class.

- “Institutions” refers to education, health care, government, and administration. In which area did women make the greatest gain in employment? (Construction—the percent of women nearly tripled)
- In what area did women have the highest percentage of employment? (Institutions)

Subsequent Five-Year Plans



- Second plan, 1933–1937
- Third plan, 1938–1941
- Fourth plan, 1946–1950
- Fifth plan, 1951–1955

The image shows women at work in heavy industry building tractors. World War II interrupted the Soviet Union's five-year economic plans, as shown by the gap between the Third and the Fourth plans. The Soviet government continued to implement five-year plans even after 1955. As a whole, the Soviet economy remained driven by central planning commissions and the Communist Party until the mid-1980s, when Mikhail Gorbachev implemented policies of *perestroika*.

Secret Police

- Monitored telephones
- Read mail
- Used informants
- Stopped riots with tanks and military power
- “Traitors” arrested, imprisoned, executed



Black Ravens (police vehicles)
Boris Jeremejewitsch
Wladimirskij, c. 1930

The painting in this slide, titled *Black Ravens*, depicts the police vehicles that were used in making arrests. The arrival of the Black Ravens at anyone’s home could mean death for the occupants. Painting: Oil on canvas by Boris Jeremejewitsch Wladimirskij, c.1930.

Purges

- 1921: “Periodic Purge” introduced
- “The Great Terror”
- Rid party of unreliable or selfish members
- “Show trials”
- Up to 13 million deaths



Nikolai Ivanovich
Bukharin



Christian Georgievich
Rakovsky



Genrikh Grigor'evich
Yagoda

Early purges included court hearings that resulted in the dismissal of Party members. Later purges included trials, convictions, and summary executions. Millions were arrested and tortured until they made false confessions, then executed. By 1930, close to 760,000 individuals had been sentenced to forced labor in Soviet camps. By 1941, 8 million prisoners worked at forced labor.

The Great Terror: An Official Soviet Point of View

“[The ‘defeated exploiting classes’] began to revenge themselves on the Party and the people for their own failure, for their own bankruptcy; they began to resort to foul play and sabotage against the cause of the workers and collective farmers, to blow up pits, set fire to factories, and commit acts of wrecking in collective and state farms, with the object of undoing the achievements of the workers and collective farmers and evoking popular discontent against the Soviet Government.”

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

In the Soviet Union, as in other communist societies, school books represented the official or state point of view. According to this text, why did the purges occur? (The text blames the victims, accusing them of acts of sabotage and violence against the Soviet Union.)

Stalin's "Great Terror" 1934–39

- December 1, 1934: Sergey Kirov murdered
- Potential victims: "Opportunistic elements":
 - "Reformists, social-imperialists, social-chauvinists, social-patriots, social pacifists"
- Stalin's directives:
 - Accelerate cases against suspected individuals
 - Judges should not hold up death sentences
 - Death sentences should be carried out immediately



Sergey Kirov

Sergey Kirov was the Communist Party leader of Leningrad. His murder was blamed on a plot concocted by a group of old-guard communists. The group was tried in August of 1936, found guilty, and promptly executed. Ironically, one of the last victims of the purges was N. I. Ezhov, chief of the secret police and a major assassin. In 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, thousands of army officers and military experts had to be released from prison camps in order to work on behalf of the Soviet Union against a real enemy.

Victims of Purges: Party and Military Officers

| Organization | Membership before Purges | Purge victims |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Politburo | 9 | 5 |
| Central Committee | 139 | 98 executions |
| Communist Party | 1,874,488 | Approx. 300,000 |
| Armed forces (officers and commanders) | 70,679 | 35,367 |

These data represent victims purged only from the Communist Party and high military offices. Millions of other individuals were arrested, tried, tortured, imprisoned, and, in many cases, executed.

Gulags



Prisoners marching into the Gulag

- Originally started by the Cheka in 1921
- Located primarily in Siberia and northern Russia
- By 1934, under control of the NKVD
- “Main Directorate for Corrective Labor Camps”
- Prisoners: murderers, thieves, common criminals, political prisoners

The gulags, a system of forced labor camps, were originally started by the *Cheka* in 1921. They were located primarily in Siberia and northern Russia. By 1934, now controlled by the *Cheka*'s successor the NKVD, they held several million prisoners. Gulag prisoners built the White Sea-Baltic Canal, the Moscow-Volga Canal, railroad lines, hydroelectric plants, and infrastructure that supported industrial development in the heart of the USSR. Gulag labor also worked in mines and forestry. Prisoners suffered harsh conditions, including inadequate food and shelter. The death rate was high. After the death of Stalin, the gulag population diminished; however, camps continued to exist into the 1980s.

Appeal from Prisoners to the Bolsheviks

“We are prisoners who are returning from the Solovetsky concentration camp because of our poor health. We...are returning as invalids, broken and crippled emotionally and physically. We are asking you to draw your attention to the arbitrary use of power and the violence that reign at the Solovetsky concentration camp in Kemi... If you complain or write anything (‘Heaven forbid’), they will frame you for an attempted escape or for something else, and they will shoot you like a dog. They line us up naked and barefoot at 22 degrees below zero and keep us outside for up to an hour.”

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

The authors of this letter appealed to the Bolshevik party to investigate conditions in gulag camps and address them. What kinds of abuses did the authors describe?

The Soviet Union in World War II

- “The Great Patriotic War”
- Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact
- Germany invaded Poland
- Germany invaded the Soviet Union
- Germans defeated at Stalingrad
- Germany surrendered



Stalingrad

Germany’s 1938 annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland increased Soviet concern about the possibility of future German aggression. The Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact, signed in August of 1939, allowed Germany to invade western Poland, while the Soviet Union took eastern Poland and expanded into Finland and the Baltics. In 1941, Hitler reneged on the pact and invaded the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union suffered horrific losses in World War II: some estimate that it lost up to 25 million lives. However, from 1943 to 1945 the Soviets gained strength and advanced west through Poland and Germany, occupying territory that would remain under Soviet control until 1989. Germany surrendered in May of 1945.

The Yalta Conference



Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin

- February 4–11, 1945, Crimean Peninsula
- Divided Germany
- Divided Europe into spheres of influence
- Reparations
- Stalin promised free elections in Eastern Europe

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin met at Yalta in 1945 to discuss the final stages of the war and to divide Germany. At this conference, Stalin negotiated masterfully and gained territory, power, and war reparations for the Soviet Union. The Soviet occupation zone in Germany would later become the communist German Democratic Republic. War reparations paid from Germany to the Soviet Union would significantly delay the economic recovery of East Germany after the war and only marginally replace Soviet losses. Stalin would renege on his promise of free elections in Eastern Europe.

Expansion of Communism After WWII

- Poland
- German Democratic Republic
- Czechoslovakia
- Hungary
- Romania
- Yugoslavia
- Bulgaria
- Albania



After World War II, the Soviet Union established communist dictatorships in several eastern European countries, while Yugoslavia and Albania established their own communist governments. Note the location of these eastern European states that would fall within the Soviet sphere. They created a rim or buffer around the Soviet Union. Interestingly, Vienna (a city of “Western,” or capitalist, Europe) actually lies geographically east of the communist cities (East) Berlin and Prague.

**Winston Churchill,
"Iron Curtain" Speech**

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe... All these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.”

March 5, 1946

The metaphor of the Iron Curtain would persist for over forty years after this speech. It reflected the veil of secrecy and lies that concealed Soviet life and life in Eastern Europe. It also reflected restrictions on commerce and travel that confined the vast majority of people of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to the Eastern Bloc.

“Cult of Personality”



Olegai Shovkunenko, Platon Biletsky and Igor Reznik. *Anthem of People's Love*. 1950-51. Oil on canvas. (400 x 600 cm)

Stalin used a variety of media to aggrandize himself and his image

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions with the class.

- Stalin is the man in the gray suit at center right. What are the other individuals in the picture doing? (Applauding him)
- What message does the painting convey? (Stalin is admired, and a hero)

“Roses for Stalin”



Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions with the class.

- The children are wearing uniforms of their soviet youth group. What are they doing? (Presenting Stalin with roses)
- How does Stalin appear? (Proud, well-dressed, composed, heroic)
- What message does the image convey? (Children admired and loved Stalin)

Painted by Boris Jeremejewitsch Wladimirskij, 1949.

Hymn to Stalin

O great Stalin, O leader of the peoples,
Thou who broughtest man to birth.
Thou who fructifies the earth,
Thou who restorest to centuries,
Thou who makest bloom the spring,
Thou who makest vibrate the musical chords...
Thou, splendour of my spring, O thou,
Sun reflected by millions of hearts.

A.O. Avidenko

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following questions with the class.

- A hymn is a song of praise or joy that typically celebrates or praises a deity. What does this poem's title suggest about Stalin? (It suggests Stalin is equivalent to a god)
- What language in the poem further conveys the god-like status of Stalin? (Use of the term "thou")
- According to the poem, what were some of Stalin's achievements? (Creating man, making the earth fruitful, bringing spring, etc.)

Discussion Questions

1. Stalin rose to power as General Secretary of the Communist Party. Given that the USSR was a one-party state, this meant that Stalin held a tremendously powerful position from which to build up his own personal power. Can you explain why?
2. Collective farms were supposed to promote sharing and greater equality among all farmers. Why do you think millions of Russian peasants resisted joining these collective farms?

1. Government jobs and other benefits went mainly to party members, and as head of the party, Stalin was in the best position to decide which party members would benefit most. He was thus able to build up a huge and loyal following within the party.
2. Answers will vary, but students should see that peasants were often motivated mainly by the desire to own their own lands and benefit from them personally.

Discussion Questions (continued)

3. In the drive to force peasants to collectivize, the experience of the Ukraine in 1932–33 has been called a “terror famine.” Why do you think some have given it that label? Based on what you know, does the label seem justified? Why or why not?
4. Despite the ruthlessness with which Stalin implemented his five-year plans, these plans did open up of many kinds of work to women. Was this a real improvement in the lives of women in the Soviet Union? Why or why not?

3. Answers will vary and should be discussed. The term calls attention to the fact that Stalin deliberately cut off all supplies of food to areas where resistance to the collective farms was taking place. Hence he deliberately used famine as a means of terrorizing peasants into joining the collective farms.
4. Answers will vary and should be discussed.

Discussion Questions (continued)

5. The most publicized of Stalin's trials during Stalin's "Great Terror" were trials of other Bolshevik officials, including some who had been loyal Bolsheviks even from before the Russian Revolution. Why do you think Stalin felt a need to try and punish so many of these people?
6. After World War II, Stalin refused to allow the nations of Eastern Europe any real independence of their own. Some say he wanted to keep this region as a buffer against any future attacks from Germany. Others say he wanted to use these nations as a staging point to gain control over the rest of Europe some day. With which of these views do you agree more? Why?

5. Answers will vary, but students should see that such loyal Bolsheviks might be among those most likely to challenge Stalin's one-man rule.
6. Answers will vary and should be discussed. On the one hand, Russia had borne the main brunt of attack from Germany to its west. So its security fears were understandable. On the other hand, Stalin's communist sympathizers were seeking to undermine other nations in Western Europe in hopes of bringing them into the Soviet orbit.

Transition From Stalin to Khrushchev

- 1953: Stalin died
- Political rivals previously eliminated in purges
- Nikita Khrushchev emerged as leader



Nikita Khrushchev

In March of 1953, Stalin had a stroke and died without leaving an obvious successor. A number of senior party officials were in a position to lead the country; however, they were demoted or arrested. Gradually, Nikita Khrushchev, who had made the arrangements for Stalin's funeral, was able to take control. He would lead the country until 1964. He was the son of a peasant family and had been in industry, the military, and Communist Party politics. He would lead an attack on Stalin and his legacy.

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" I

“Stalin originated the concept enemy of the people. This term...made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations... The only proof of guilt used, against all norms of current legal science, was the confession of the accused himself...”

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

Khrushchev's speech, "On the Personality Cult and its Consequences," was delivered to a closed session of the Twentieth Party Congress on February 25, 1957. Compare the accusations made by Khrushchev with the images of Stalin in the previous slides ("Cult of Personality" and "Roses for Stalin"). What impact do you think Khrushchev's speech had at the time? (It stunned the Soviet people and the world; it unmasked the cult that had protected Stalin and his reputation; it opened the door to an investigation of his crimes; it defamed Stalin, demoting him from the status of hero to criminal.)

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" II

“Stalin...used extreme methods and mass repression at a time when the revolution was already victorious . . . Stalin showed in a whole series of cases his intolerance, his brutality and his abuse of power. Instead of proving his political correctness and mobilizing the masses, he often chose the path of repression and physical annihilation, not only against actual enemies, but also against individuals who had not committed any crimes against the Party and the Soviet government...”

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

This slide continues the “Secret Speech” quoted previously. In what way does Khrushchev criticize Stalin here? (He was intolerant, repressive, and brutal)

Major Events of the 1950s



Sputnik



Uprising in
1953, East
Germany



Hungary, 1956



Yuri Gagarin,
the first man
to orbit the
earth, gave
speeches upon
his return

Despite the demotion of Stalin, the Soviet Union was not willing to relinquish control of its satellite states behind the Iron Curtain. In the 1950s, the Soviet Army put down uprisings in Poland, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Uprisings occurred for a variety of reasons, including dissatisfaction with working conditions, lack of consumer goods, and lack of freedoms. Soviet Army rolled tanks into major cities in these countries, using force to retain control over local communist regimes.

The world stood in awe of the Soviet Union when Sputnik, the first satellite, was launched on October 4, 1957. Yuri Gagarin became the first man to orbit the earth in April of 1961. The United States feared that the Soviet Union would lead the world in science and technology, and began to pour resources into science education and scientific research and development at home.

Daily Life in the Soviet Union

- Consumer goods
- Communist Party power
- Informants
- Dissidents



Shoes are scarce in “workers paradise,” 1951

After the hardships of World War II (or the Great Patriotic War, as it was known in the Soviet Union), the people of the USSR rightly expected to see significant economic gains in the post-war period. While all Eastern Bloc societies advanced in the decades after the war, they never advanced as far or as fast as the capitalist countries of western Europe and North America. Consumer goods remained in short supply. The KGB, or secret police, continued to use networks of informants to maintain social and political control. Cruel methods were used to control dissent: psychiatric hospitalization and exile were common. Spectacular defections, such as that by the ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, brought public attention to the continued repression and denial of human rights in the USSR



A line of people waiting for the opportunity to purchase shoes

How would you feel about your government if you had to wait in long lines for essential goods?

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss with the class the question posed in the slide.

It was not uncommon to stand in line for hours to get hard-to-find items such as shoes (as seen in this slide) or tropical fruit. People developed complex personal networks and often used bribery to get the consumer goods and services they desired.



Child-care facility



Senior citizens swimming

Communist societies such as the USSR offered a wide variety of social services to all members of the population. Child-care facilities made it possible for women to work in wage labor at the same rates as men. Recreational programs filled free time and promoted positive feelings about the government.

Youth Associations

- Ages 7–9: “Young Octobrist”
- 9–14: “Pioneers”
- 14–28: “Komsomol”
- Activities:
 - Trips
 - Sports
 - Parades
 - Summer camps
 - Community service
 - Social events
 - International exchange activities



Children wearing Pioneer scarves

The Communist Party created a variety of youth organizations that offered supervised activities for young people and also acted as vehicles for political indoctrination. If all of your friends were members of one of these youth organizations, would you join too? Chances are you would say yes. Very few families in communist societies knew anyone whose children did not participate in the communist youth organizations.

Advantages of Membership in the Communist Party



Only Party members were able to shop at certain stores

- Better jobs
- Better housing
- Access to stores that carried Western goods
- Better educational opportunities for children
- Greater opportunities to travel to non-communist countries

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

Membership in the Communist Party offered many concrete advantages to those individuals who chose to join. How might this have contradicted the stated goals or objectives of Marxism? (The advantages received by Party members created significant social inequalities in society)

Discussion Questions

1. Read Nikita Khrushchev's words from his 1957 speech on slides 83 and 84. What impact do you think Khrushchev's speech had at that time on people in the Soviet Union and around the world?
2. Even with control over all of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union's economy after World War II did not improve the lives of its people much. Long lines and shortages of goods were common. Why do you think that was so?

1. It stunned the Soviet people and the world; it unmasked the cult that had protected Stalin and his reputation; it opened the door to an investigation of his crimes; it defamed Stalin, demoting him from the status of hero to criminal.
2. Answers to this may vary and should be discussed. Basically, students should see that shortages of consumer goods were almost unavoidable in a system where government controlled the productive system and kept it from responding to consumer demand as efficiently as a market system would.

From Khrushchev to Gorbachev

- Khrushchev removed
- Brezhnev
- Andropov and Chernenko
- Discontent
- Mikhail Gorbachev
- Glasnost and perestroika



No Soviet leader would ever have the level of complete control that Stalin had. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization included changes in foreign and domestic policy, especially regarding agriculture. Criticism of his performance in these areas led to his removal in 1964. He was replaced by Alexey Kosygin and then Leonid Brezhnev. Brezhnev led the USSR until his death in 1982, when he was succeeded by Yuri Andropov and then Konstantin Chernenko, two aging, long-time party members. The USSR had survived World War I, civil war, and World War II (including the tens of millions of deaths that resulted from the wars); they had also persevered through repression, terror, forced labor, execution, and famine. However, by the 1980s the world was changing. The Soviet Union's satellite states were discontented. The Soviet Union had achieved extraordinary successes in industrializing and modernizing its society throughout the 20th century. However, in the final analysis, communism could not provide its citizens with the same quantity and quality of consumer goods and the same degree of freedoms enjoyed by other world citizens. In 1985, Soviet politicians turned to a younger man to lead the nation: Mikhail Gorbachev. While he had served the Party for 30 years, he had come of age in the decades during and after Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign. A trained attorney, he had traveled in the West and was well aware of the fact that the Soviet Union lagged far behind capitalist nations in economic development and social satisfaction. Gorbachev quickly implemented two new concepts: *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

| <i>Glasnost</i> | <i>Perestroika</i> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Openness” • Lifted veil of secrecy in the Soviet Union • Disclosed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alcoholism – Corruption – Juvenile delinquency – Discontent – Workers’ absenteeism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Restructuring” • Reduction in Communist Party control over the economy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – State planning commission – 25% reduction in state control of contracts – Increase in “kitchen gardens” (private farming) |

Since the time of Lenin, the Soviet Union had veered away from classic Marxist theory by giving the Communist Party (and not the proletariat) almost complete control of production and industry. While the Soviet Union made extraordinary advances in the 20th century, by the 1980s it had become clear that the nation was beginning to founder under the burden of significant social and economic problems. By lifting the veil of secrecy that shrouded the Soviet Union, Gorbachev invited public discussion about the nature of social problems. He initiated the process of addressing these issues in order to make positive changes in Soviet society. *Perestroika* offered the promise of increasing worker motivation and making economic and productive decisions more efficient.

Growing Troubles



Image courtesy of
<http://www.remote.org/frederik/culture/berlin/>

- 1970s: Workers' protests develop in Poland
- 1980: Lech Walesa and "Solidarity"
- 1989:
 - Summer protests
 - Berlin Wall

In December of 1970, 3000 Polish workers assembled in a Polish shipyard to protest price increases. Over the course of the next several years, a workers' movement would strengthen in its opposition to the communist regime in Poland. Protestors sought more and better food, more favorable prices, and wage increases. In 1980, Lech Walesa emerged as a leader of the workers' movement, which became known as "Solidarity." He demanded wage increases, trade unions, and the release of political prisoners. Protests in Germany began in the spring of 1989 over the question of accurate vote counts in national elections. They escalated over the summer. As thousands of East Germans fled to the West by traveling through Czechoslovakia and Hungary, thousands more protested at home for reform. When the Soviet Union chose not to intervene, a new era in Soviet-satellite relations was initiated. The opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, marked the beginning of the end of communism in Europe and the USSR; it also signaled the beginning of German reunification.

The USSR: 1990–1991

- Gorbachev dismantled totalitarian communism
- February, 1990: “Toward a Human, Democratic Socialism”
- Article 6 of 1977 constitution repealed— Communist Party no longer held sole political power
- Severe economic problems
- Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia declared independence



Gorbachev gave little formal regard to Marxism or Marxism-Leninism. His reforms fractured the one-party state, the state’s economic monopoly, and the history of terror and repression in USSR history. In a speech in February of 1990, Gorbachev advocated the “spiritual and political liberation” of the USSR. He effected the transition to multiple-party rule for the first time in 70 years of Soviet history. Yet his reforms could not address the growing troubles confronting the USSR: Industry and commerce verged on collapse, retail trade had declined significantly, grain imports and the imports of consumer goods had increased, and inflation ran rampant. The USSR was beginning to crumble. Satellite countries like Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia soon declared independence from the USSR.

“A Word to the People”

“An enormous, unprecedented misfortune has occurred. The Motherland, our country...is perishing, is being broken up, is being plunged into darkness and oblivion.”

Sovetskaya Rossiya, July 23, 1991

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

This letter, signed by leading public figures including army generals, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and prominent writers, was published in the summer of 1991. What mood do the authors convey? (Deep pessimism)

Surprisingly, despite publication of desperate public sentiments such as this, Gorbachev, his wife, his daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren made plans to vacation on the Black Sea in August of that year.

1991



- Boris Yeltsin
- Gorbachev detained
- Coup failed
- Yeltsin suspended legal status of Communist Party
- Communist party banned
- Gorbachev resigned
- USSR disbanded

On August 18th, Gorbachev's vacation was interrupted by an attempted coup. Plans were made in Moscow to create a State Committee for the Emergency Situation; however, the members of the committee failed to appear for a planned press conference. Army tanks sent into the streets of Moscow were stopped by civilians who asked the young soldiers manning them how they could use force against fellow citizens. By August 21st, the bumbling State Committee had effected only a news blackout of its own decisions. On August 22nd, Gorbachev returned to Moscow and retook limited control, as Boris Yeltsin began to assert his own power. As President of Russia and Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, Yeltsin refused Gorbachev's requests to reorganize the USSR as a "Union of Sovereign States." On December 1st, the Ukraine voted for independence, sounding the death knell for any union. By the end of the month Gorbachev had stepped down and the USSR had been disbanded.

Perestroika, Winter 1991

“Everyone criticizes the ‘time of stagnation’ (Brezhnev years), but during that time there was enough food. Now the shelves are empty, and that is called *perestroika*.”

“I have committed a crime. I have brought five children into the world. I work in a factory and cannot afford to give my children meat or fruit. The best I can offer them is carrots. I am afraid of the future.”

These quotations are from letters received by Lois Fisher, author of *Survival in Russia: Chaos and Hope in Everyday Life*. They reflect the immediate crisis after the dissolution of the USSR, and the lack of everyday necessities such as food. As the USSR collapsed, the institutional structures and routines that sustained daily life collapsed too. This was only the beginning of the troubles Russians would face in the post-Soviet years.

Problems in the Post-Socialist Transition

- Inflation
- Unemployment
- Breakdown in essential services
- Increase in social and health problems
- Increase in ethnic conflict

The post-socialist transition was rife with struggle and difficulty. Between 1992 and 1994, inflation ran as high as 800 percent. Prices soared. Markets for Russian products shrank as the people of central and eastern Europe increased their purchase of western European and American goods. The loss of markets and the breakdown of internal economic institutions in the former USSR caused factories to shut down, forcing tens of thousands of people out of work. Doctors were fired because the state could no longer afford to pay their salaries. The cost of health care and medicine skyrocketed. Stricken with despair, the people of the former USSR became more vulnerable to addictions to alcohol and other drugs. Ethnic nationalities within Russia, such as the Chechens, initiated struggles for independence, but were suppressed violently by the Russian army.

Fatalism

“What communism instilled in us was...this absence of a future, the absence of a dream, of the possibility of imagining our lives differently. There was hardly a way to say to yourself: This is just temporary, it will pass, it must. On the contrary, we learned to think: This will go on forever, no matter what we do.”

Slavenka Drakulic

Note to teacher: Briefly discuss the following question with the class.

Fatalism is the belief or attitude that the future is fixed and humans are powerless to effect change. How do this author’s remarks express a fatalistic point of view? (She writes about the absence of a future and the absence of a dream. She expresses her belief that Communism would last forever)

By the time the USSR collapsed, many people there and in many of the former Soviet satellite states held fatalistic outlooks on life. As a result, millions of people truly struggled with the transition to a “free” society and a market economy.

The Mixed Blessings of Freedom

- Freedom of speech, assembly, and worship
- Freedom to travel, emigrate
- New economic opportunities
- New poverty
- Increased public awareness of social, medical problems
- Significant ecological problems
- Guerrilla conflict and nationalist struggles

Freedom often is a mixed blessing. In Russia, as in the other Soviet and Soviet Bloc countries, the end of communist rule brought unprecedented opportunities. For the first time in decades, people could gather freely, speak their minds openly, criticize the government without fear of reprisal, publish oppositional media, and engage in other activities Americans take for granted. Religious institutions blossomed. Thousands of Jews chose to emigrate to Israel and the United States. Economic restructuring of the Russian economy offered lucrative business opportunities to those Russians savvy enough and sufficiently well-prepared to take advantage of them. However, others plummeted into poverty. Alcoholism, HIV infection, and tuberculosis are just some of the significant health problems affecting Russia today. Russia faces a declining population, with annual births of approximately nine per 1000 people, while deaths hover close to 15 per 1000 people. Twentieth-century industrialization has also had significant environmental costs: air pollution, agricultural pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, ground water contamination, and radioactive contamination pose significant problems in Russia today. Periodic violence in the North Caucasus region threatens to destabilize Russian politics. Only time can tell what the future holds for Russia.

Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, summarize the key ideas of Gorbachev's two stated goals of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.
2. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* were meant to save Soviet communism by improving it and making it work more efficiently. Yet instead, the Soviet Union itself fell apart. Why do you think *glasnost* and *perestroika* were not enough to save Soviet communism from collapse?
3. The Soviet Union's final troubles began with discontent among people in the East European nations that the Soviets controlled. Why do you think the crisis for the Soviet Union began in those nations?

1. *Glasnost* meant "openness" and stood for a policy of more freedom to express ideas and more honest, frank and open discussion of social issues. *Perestroika* meant reorganizing economic institutions to make the system more responsive to the market and to give workers more motivation to work harder.
2. Answers will vary and should be discussed.
3. Answers will vary, but students should see that people in Eastern Europe never accepted communism as fully as people in Russia did, and that once they sensed the hesitancy and weakness of the Soviet leaders, they readily took actions to undermine Soviet control.



The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism

Essential Questions

- Why were the reform efforts in Russia prior to 1914 so ineffective at improving life and removing the deep discontent of Russia's poor?
- Why was the Bolshevik faction able to take control of Russia in November 1917, even though it was a small organization even compared with other revolutionary parties?
- Were the millions of deaths and millions sent to the Gulag in the 1930s a terrible but necessary price the Soviet Union had to pay to industrialize rapidly, or were they completely unnecessary from any economic point of view?

Essential Questions (continued)

- Why did Khrushchev decide to criticize Stalin as he did in his famous "secret speech" to the Twentieth Party Congress?
- Why were Gorbachev's efforts at reform ultimately unable to save Soviet communism and hold the Soviet Union together?

USSR History: The Short Version

- March 15, 1917: Tsar Nicholas II abdicated
- November 1917: Bolshevik revolution
- 1924: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- 1985: Mikhail Gorbachev in power, initiated *glasnost* and *perestroika*
- 1989: USSR declined to intervene in East German demonstrations; Berlin wall opened
- 1991: Gorbachev resigned, republics formed Commonwealth of Independent States

Geography of the USSR



Diversity of Soviet Geography



Above: Returning from a hunt in Altai province
Left: fishing in the Dnieper River

19th-Century Russia



Russian Boyar (rich landlord)

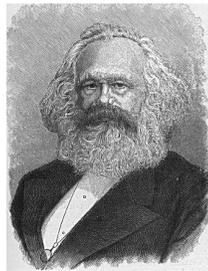
- Romanov dynasty
- Territorial expansion after Congress of Vienna
- Decembrist revolt, 1825
- Loss of Crimean War, 1856
- Serfdom abolished, 1861
- Industrial growth
- Political and social repression

Discussion Questions

1. Russia has throughout much of its history had a very strong, autocratic, often dictatorial government. How might its size and cultural diversity help explain the fact that it has so often been governed by very powerful rulers?
2. In 1861, Russia emancipated its serfs. Explain what this meant and also explain why you think it did not end the growing discontent among poor people in Russia and their anger at their leaders.

Karl Marx

- Born May 5, 1818, in Trier, Prussia
- 1841: Received doctorate in Philosophy from University of Berlin
- Expelled from numerous countries due to radical journalism
- Married childhood sweetheart, Jenny
- Leader of International Workingmen's Association
- Died March 13, 1883



The Communist Manifesto



Friedrich Engels

- Co-author Friedrich Engels
- Historical context
 - Expansion of Industrial Revolution
 - Harsh conditions for workers
- “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.”
- Called for revolution against capitalists: “Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!”

Principles of Marxist Philosophy

- Means of production
 - Raw materials, tools, labor
- Relations of production
 - Capitalism advocates private ownership
 - Consolidation of property and profit in private hands
 - Alienation of workers



Women manage an electrical power station

Marx on Consciousness



Men at work

“It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.”

Karl Marx,
*Contribution to the Critique
of Political Economy*

- German caricature of Karl Marx leading workers, like lemmings, over a cliff.
- What opinion does this artist convey?



Russia



Farmers in Mongolia

- 1890s: Marxism spreads
- 1898: Russian Social Democratic Labor Party founded
- Populists: saw peasantry as key to socialist revolution
- G.V. Plekhanov: sought expansion of social democracy with industrialization
- Lenin: advocated early revolution, organized revolutionary leadership

Lenin: Early Years

- Born 1870, named Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov
- 1887: older brother hanged
- Expelled from university
- Study of Marxist philosophy in contact with Marxist groups
- Continued private study of law, passed university exams



Vladimir Ilyich and his sister

Lenin: Career



Lenin, 1918

- Law practice
- 1893: relocated to St. Petersburg
- 1895: arrested
- 1886–1900: Siberian exile
- 1900–1917: European exile with wife



Documents of Lenin's arrest

Lenin: "What Is to Be Done?" (1902)

I assert:

- that no movement can be durable without a stable organization of leaders to maintain continuity;
- that the more widely the masses are spontaneously drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement and participate in it, the more necessary is it to have such an organization, and the more stable must it be ...
- that the organization must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolutionary activities as a profession

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks

- Divisions of Russian Social Democratic Labor Party
- Bolsheviks: majority
 - Led by Lenin
 - Professional revolutionaries in centralized party
 - Hierarchy of control and responsibility
- Mensheviks: minority
 - Democratic organization
 - Broader role for membership
 - “Evolutionary” approach to development of socialism
 - Advocated cooperation with bourgeois parties against autocratic rule

Discussion Questions

1. Marx said all history is the history of class struggle. What do you think he meant by “class”? Do you agree that all of history can be seen as the struggle of one class against another? Why or why not?
2. Marx used the term “alienation” to describe what happens to workers who labor for wages in a capitalist enterprise. What do you think he means by saying they become “alienated from their labor”? Do you think working for wages in a privately owned enterprise is alienating in this way? Why or why not?
3. Describe the basic similarities and differences between Lenin and Marx. How might conditions in Russia in the late 1800s help explain the differences between the two in how to organize a revolutionary movement?

Russia’s Growing Troubles

- January 22, 1905: “Bloody Sunday”
- September 1905 defeat
- Nicholas II rejects reform
- Unrest
- Soviets
- October 30, 1905: Duma



Bloody Sunday

Rasputin



Rasputin seated in the center

- Peasant mystic
- Favored by royal family
- Tsarevich Alexis
- Council of State in 1905
- Alarmed Russians
- Undermined support for the tsar

Russia During World War I

- 15 million men mobilized, 50% killed, wounded, or captured
- Shortages provoke crises
- Riots in Petrograd
- Petrograd Soviet
- March 14th: Duma's "Provisional Committee" reconstituted as "Provisional Government"
- Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne



Russian prisoners of war

Abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, March 1917



Tsar Nicholas II

"In these decisive days in the life of Russia we have thought that we owed to our people the close union and organization of all its forces for the realization of a rapid victory [in war]; for which reason, in agreement with the Imperial *Duma*, we have recognized that it is for the good of the country that we should abdicate the Crown of the Russian State and lay down the Supreme Power."

Statement of Grand Duke Mikhail, March 16, 1917

“I therefore request all citizens of Russia to obey the Provisional Government, set up on the initiative of the Duma and invested with plenary powers, until, within as short a time as possible, the Constituent Assembly, elected on a basis of universal, equal, and secret suffrage, shall express the will of the nation regarding the form of government to be adopted.”



The Grand Duke

Lenin’s “April Theses”

- “First stage of the revolution” would lead to power for bourgeoisie; “second stage” would put power in hands of proletariat and peasantry
- Rejected Provisional Government as instrument of the bourgeoisie
- “Soviet of Workers’ Deputies is the only possible form of revolutionary government”
- Called for nationalization and redistribution of land
- Reorganized Russian Social Democratic Labor Party as the Communist Party

Lenin, Petrograd, April 17, 1917



1917: The Fateful Summer

- Provisional Government
- Refused to grant land to peasants
- Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies issued "Order #1"
- Bolshevik Party grew
- Promised "Land, Peace, and Bread" to Russia
- Riots in Petrograd



Soldiers in Petrograd, 1917

Lenin, October 24, 1917



"...I urge comrades to realize that everything now hangs by a thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not to be solved by conferences or congresses (even congresses of Soviets), but exclusively by peoples, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed people..."

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

The seizure of power is the business of the uprising; its political purpose will become clear after the seizure...

The government is tottering. It must be given the death-blow at all costs."

November 6–7, 1917

- Bolshevik membership swelled to 200,000
- Soldiers deserted military units
- Red Guard occupied part of Petrograd
- Members of Provisional Government arrested
- "Council of People's Commissars" established
- Soviet Revolutionary Military Committee commanded Petrograd



Alexander Kerensky of the Provisional Government

After the Revolution



Trotsky (dark coat) at Brest-Litovsk

- Bolsheviks won only 24% of vote in national elections
- Lenin dissolved Constituent Assembly
- Cheka
- Farmland to peasantry
- Factories transferred to workers
- March 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

The Fundamental Law of Land Socialization, February 1918

- Article 1. All private ownership of land, minerals, waters, forests, and natural resources within the boundaries of the Russian Federated Soviet Republic is abolished forever.
- Article 2. Henceforth all the land is handed over without compensation (open or secret) to the toiling masses for their use.
- Article 3. With the exceptions indicated in this decree the right to the use of the land belongs to him who cultivates it with his own labor.

Discussion Questions

1. After the 1905 crisis, the Tsar allowed a Duma, or representative assembly, to meet. Why was this assembly never a real solution to the growing discontent in Russia with the nation's rulers?
2. Based on the text in slide 27, what reason did the tsar give for abdication? What were the real reasons for his abdication?
3. What actions or failures to act by the Provisional Government made it easier for Lenin to increase support for the Bolsheviks in the summer and fall of 1917?

Discussion Questions (continued)

- 4. In January 1918, the newly elected Constituent Assembly met. In the elections for it, the Bolsheviks had won less than half as many votes as another revolutionary party supported by the peasants. Lenin quickly disbanded the Constituent Assembly. How do you think he justified this action against a democratically elected body that was supposed to write a constitution for Russia?

Civil War: 1918–1921

- Reds (Bolsheviks) led by Trotsky
 - Controlled Petrograd and Moscow
 - Controlled factories, seized resources
 - Promises to peasantry and non-Russian nationalities
- Whites
 - Monarchists, tsarists, industrialists, landlords
 - Scattered, disorganized
 - Lacked appealing program for Russia
- Tsar Nicholas II and family murdered
- Millions dead, homeless
- Many die in the resulting famine as well



The royal children, murdered during the Civil War: Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, Aleksei

How does the royal family express its wealth and elegance in this image? How do the customs of royalty conflict with the ideals of communism?

“War Communism”



Red Army patrol

- Centralization of production and distribution
- Nationalized industries
- Peasants surrendered grain surpluses
- Resistance:
 - Assault, torture, murder of officials charged with collecting grain
 - Reduction in agricultural production

Lenin’s New Economic Policy

- Attempt to restore economic productivity
- End of food seizures
- Peasants turned over a percentage of crops, were free to sell the balance for profit
- State retained control over major industries
- Small business restored to private ownership
- Large enterprises remained under government control



Russian peasants



A farm market under Lenin’s New Economic Policy

In what ways did the NEP motivate farmers to increase food production?



Discussion Questions

1. Read the provisions of the Fundamental Law of the Land, 1018, as stated on slide 35. Do these provisions fit with the ideas of communism as described by Marx and Engels? Why or why not?
2. On July 16, 1918, the Bolsheviks had the entire family of the Tsar shot. Why do you think they felt a need to execute the royal family?
3. Explain why crop production shrank during the time of war communism and the Civil War, from 1918 through 1921, and why crop production increased substantially during Lenin's "New Economic Policy."

Joseph Stalin (Dzhugashvili)

- Born December 21, 1879, in Georgia
- Son of a shoemaker and laborer
- 1895: accepted at Tiflis Orthodox Theological Seminary
- 1899: expelled, taught Marxism
- 1902: first arrest results in 18 months imprisonment, three years Siberian exile
- Prior to 1917, spent up to nine years in prison or exile



Transition From Lenin to Stalin

- 1922: Joseph Stalin becomes General Secretary of the Communist Party
- Lenin advocated removal of Stalin
- Struggle between Trotsky and Stalin
- 1929: Trotsky exiled



Stalin, Lenin, and Trotsky

Party Service



- *Marxism and the National Question*
- 1917: member Bolshevik General Staff
- Commissar of Nationalities and Commissar of the Army
- 1922: Directorship of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate
- 1922: General Secretary of the Communist Party

Characteristics of Totalitarianism

- One-party rule
- Ideology
- Propaganda
- State control
- Mass media and industrial technology
- Police and military repression



The USSR vs. Marxism



- Leadership by centralized Communist Party, not the proletariat
- Under Stalin
 - Ownership of the means of the production held by the state
 - “Command economy” under state direction and control
 - Series of “five-year plans” drove agricultural and industrial production to new highs
 - “Socialism in One Country”
 - Use of terror and murder to establish and maintain control

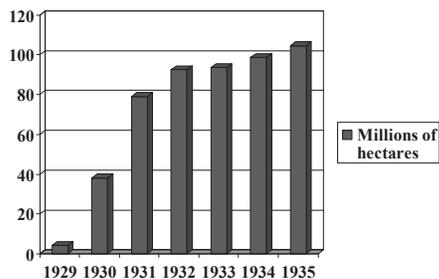
Collectivization of Agriculture

- Undertaken by force
- Government seized 25 million privately owned farms
- Kulaks
- Farmers forced to work at gunpoint
- Resisters imprisoned or murdered



Protest against the kulaks

Collectivization of Farms: 1929–1935



Collectivization of Agriculture: Soviet Propaganda

“The Soviet government’s successes in the sphere of the collective-farm movement are now being spoken of by everyone... It is a fact that by February 20 of this year 50 per cent of the peasant farms throughout the USSR had been collectivised. That means that by February 1930, we had overfulfilled the five-year plan of collectivisation by more than 100 per cent.

What does all this show? *That a radical turn of the countryside towards socialism may be considered as already achieved*” (emphasis added).

Pravda, March 2, 1930

Collectivization of Agriculture: The Dark Side (1932)

The following measures should be undertaken with respect to these villages [where sabotage has occurred]:

1. Immediate cessation of delivery of goods, complete suspension of cooperative and state trade in the villages, and removal of all available goods from cooperative and state stores.
2. Full prohibition of collective farm trade for both collective farms and collective farmers, and for private farmers.
3. Cessation of any sort of credit and demand for early repayment of credit and other financial obligations.
4. Investigation and purge of all sorts of foreign and hostile elements from cooperative and state institutions, to be carried out by organs of the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate.

Repression in the Ukraine

- 1929: 5000 arrested
- Kulaks
- Between 3 and 5 million dead
- Resistance
- 1932: mandatory food exports increased
- Borders closed to food imports



Starving orphans

Kolkhoz vs. Sovkhoz

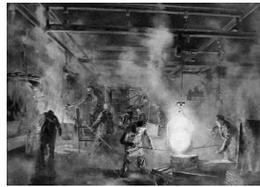


Farmers in the USSR, circa 1950

- Collective vs. state farm
- *Kolkhoz*
 - Collective farm
 - Owned and operated by members
 - Products delivered to the state at fixed prices
 - Families permitted to cultivate their own crops on small plots of land
- *Sovkhoz*
 - Farmers paid salaries as state employees
 - Substantially less productive than private plots

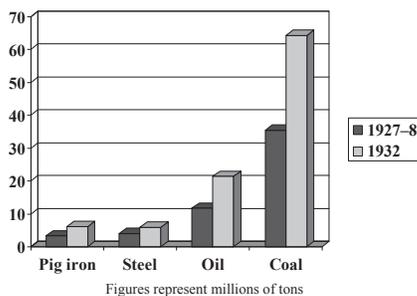
Industrial Production

- Emphasis on development of major industries (oil, coal, steel, electricity)
- Inadequate attention to production of consumer goods (housing, clothing, furniture)
- Persistent shortages
- Use of forced labor to meet industrial targets



Steel workers

Production: First Five-Year Plan



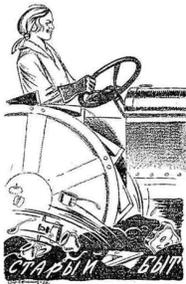
Women in Production



A group of women engineers

- Women entered the workforce
- Child care liberated women's labor
- Women in male fields
- Women continued to dominate traditionally female fields

Role of Women in Production

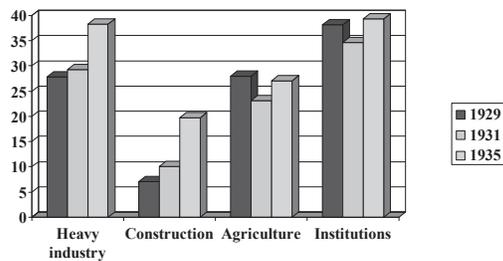


Title "Old Way of Life":

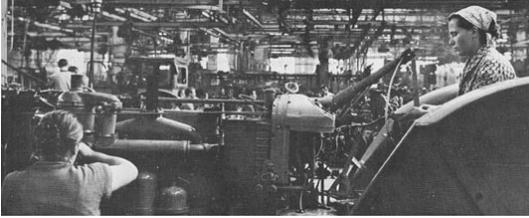
- What is the woman doing?
- What objects are being broken up under the tractor?
- What message does this image convey?

Employment of Women

As a percentage of the workforce



Subsequent Five-Year Plans



- Second plan, 1933–1937
- Third plan, 1938–1941
- Fourth plan, 1946–1950
- Fifth plan, 1951–1955

Secret Police

- Monitored telephones
- Read mail
- Used informants
- Stopped riots with tanks and military power
- “Traitors” arrested, imprisoned, executed



Black Ravens (police vehicles)
Boris Jeremejewitsch
Wladimirskij, c. 1930

Purges

- 1921: “Periodic Purge” introduced
- “The Great Terror”
- Rid party of unreliable or selfish members
- “Show trials”
- Up to 13 million deaths



Nikolai Ivanovich
Bukharin



Christian Georgievich
Rakovsky



Genrikh Grigor'evich
Yagoda

The Great Terror: An Official Soviet Point of View

“[The ‘defeated exploiting classes’] began to revenge themselves on the Party and the people for their own failure, for their own bankruptcy; they began to resort to foul play and sabotage against the cause of the workers and collective farmers, to blow up pits, set fire to factories, and commit acts of wrecking in collective and state farms, with the object of undoing the achievements of the workers and collective farmers and evoking popular discontent against the Soviet Government.”

Stalin’s “Great Terror” 1934–39

- December 1, 1934: Sergey Kirov murdered
- Potential victims: “Opportunistic elements”:
 - “Reformists, social-imperialists, social-chauvinists, social-patriots, social pacifists”
- Stalin’s directives:
 - Accelerate cases against suspected individuals
 - Judges should not hold up death sentences
 - Death sentences should be carried out immediately



Sergey Kirov

Victims of Purges: Party and Military Officers

| Organization | Membership before Purges | Purge victims |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Politburo | 9 | 5 |
| Central Committee | 139 | 98 executions |
| Communist Party | 1,874,488 | Approx. 300,000 |
| Armed forces (officers and commanders) | 70,679 | 35,367 |

Gulags



Prisoners marching into the Gulag

- Originally started by the Cheka in 1921
- Located primarily in Siberia and northern Russia
- By 1934, under control of the NKVD
- “Main Directorate for Corrective Labor Camps”
- Prisoners: murderers, thieves, common criminals, political prisoners

Appeal from Prisoners to the Bolsheviks

“We are prisoners who are returning from the Solovetsky concentration camp because of our poor health. We...are returning as invalids, broken and crippled emotionally and physically. We are asking you to draw your attention to the arbitrary use of power and the violence that reign at the Solovetsky concentration camp in Kemi... If you complain or write anything (‘Heaven forbid’), they will frame you for an attempted escape or for something else, and they will shoot you like a dog. They line us up naked and barefoot at 22 degrees below zero and keep us outside for up to an hour.”

The Soviet Union in World War II

- “The Great Patriotic War”
- Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact
- Germany invaded Poland
- Germany invaded the Soviet Union
- Germans defeated at Stalingrad
- Germany surrendered



Stalingrad

The Yalta Conference



Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin

- February 4–11, 1945, Crimean Peninsula
- Divided Germany
- Divided Europe into spheres of influence
- Reparations
- Stalin promised free elections in Eastern Europe

Expansion of Communism After WWII

- Poland
- German Democratic Republic
- Czechoslovakia
- Hungary
- Romania
- Yugoslavia
- Bulgaria
- Albania



Winston Churchill, “Iron Curtain” Speech

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe... All these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.”

March 5, 1946

“Cult of Personality”



Oleksa Shovkunenko, Platon Blatsky and Igor Reznik. Anthem of People's Love. 1950-51. Oil on canvas. (400 x 600 cm)
Stalin used a variety of media to aggrandize himself and his image

“Roses for Stalin”



Hymn to Stalin

O great Stalin, O leader of the peoples,
Thou who broughtest man to birth.
Thou who fructifies the earth,
Thou who restorest to centuries,
Thou who makest bloom the spring,
Thou who makest vibrate the musical chords...
Thou, splendour of my spring, O thou,
Sun reflected by millions of hearts.

A.O. Avidenko

Discussion Questions

1. Stalin rose to power as General Secretary of the Communist Party. Given that the USSR was a one-party state, this meant that Stalin held a tremendously powerful position from which to build up his own personal power. Can you explain why?
2. Collective farms were supposed to promote sharing and greater equality among all farmers. Why do you think millions of Russian peasants resisted joining these collective farms?

Discussion Questions (continued)

3. In the drive to force peasants to collectivize, the experience of the Ukraine in 1932–33 has been called a “terror famine.” Why do you think some have given it that label? Based on what you know, does the label seem justified? Why or why not?
4. Despite the ruthlessness with which Stalin implemented his five-year plans, these plans did open up of many kinds of work to women. Was this a real improvement in the lives of women in the Soviet Union? Why or why not?

Discussion Questions (continued)

5. The most publicized of Stalin’s trials during Stalin’s “Great Terror” were trials of other Bolshevik officials, including some who had been loyal Bolsheviks even from before the Russian Revolution. Why do you think Stalin felt a need to try and punish so many of these people?
6. After World War II, Stalin refused to allow the nations of Eastern Europe any real independence of their own. Some say he wanted to keep this region as a buffer against any future attacks from Germany. Others say he wanted to use these nations as a staging point to gain control over the rest of Europe some day. With which of these views do you agree more? Why?

Transition From Stalin to Khrushchev

- 1953: Stalin died
- Political rivals previously eliminated in purges
- Nikita Khrushchev emerged as leader



Nikita Khrushchev

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" I

"Stalin originated the concept enemy of the people. This term... made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations... The only proof of guilt used, against all norms of current legal science, was the confession of the accused himself..."

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" II

"Stalin... used extreme methods and mass repression at a time when the revolution was already victorious... Stalin showed in a whole series of cases his intolerance, his brutality and his abuse of power. Instead of proving his political correctness and mobilizing the masses, he often chose the path of repression and physical annihilation, not only against actual enemies, but also against individuals who had not committed any crimes against the Party and the Soviet government..."

Major Events of the 1950s



Sputnik



Uprising in 1953, East Germany



Hungary, 1956



Yuri Gagarin, the first man to orbit the earth, gave speeches upon his return

Daily Life in the Soviet Union

- Consumer goods
- Communist Party power
- Informants
- Dissidents



Shoes are scarce in "workers paradise," 1951



A line of people waiting for the opportunity to purchase shoes

How would you feel about your government if you had to wait in long lines for essential goods?



Child-care facility



Senior citizens swimming

Youth Associations

- Ages 7–9: “Young Octobrist”
- 9–14: “Pioneers”
- 14–28: “Komsomol”
- Activities:
 - Trips
 - Sports
 - Parades
 - Summer camps
 - Community service
 - Social events
 - International exchange activities



Children wearing Pioneer scarves

Advantages of Membership in the Communist Party



Only Party members were able to shop at certain stores

- Better jobs
- Better housing
- Access to stores that carried Western goods
- Better educational opportunities for children
- Greater opportunities to travel to non-communist countries

Discussion Questions

1. Read Nikita Khrushchev's words from his 1957 speech on slides 83 and 84. What impact do you think Khrushchev's speech had at that time on people in the Soviet Union and around the world?
2. Even with control over all of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union's economy after World War II did not improve the lives of its people much. Long lines and shortages of goods were common. Why do you think that was so?

From Khrushchev to Gorbachev

- Khrushchev removed
- Brezhnev
- Andropov and Chernenko
- Discontent
- Mikhail Gorbachev
- Glasnost and perestroika



Glasnost

- "Openness"
- Lifted veil of secrecy in the Soviet Union
- Disclosed:
 - Alcoholism
 - Corruption
 - Juvenile delinquency
 - Discontent
 - Workers' absenteeism

Perestroika

- "Restructuring"
- Reduction in Communist Party control over the economy:
 - State planning commission
 - 25% reduction in state control of contracts
 - Increase in "kitchen gardens" (private farming)

Growing Troubles



Image courtesy of <http://www.remote.org/frederik/culture/berlin/>

- 1970s: Workers' protests develop in Poland
- 1980: Lech Walesa and "Solidarity"
- 1989:
 - Summer protests
 - Berlin Wall

The USSR: 1990–1991

- Gorbachev dismantled totalitarian communism
- February, 1990: "Toward a Human, Democratic Socialism"
- Article 6 of 1977 constitution repealed— Communist Party no longer held sole political power
- Severe economic problems
- Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia declared independence



"A Word to the People"

"An enormous, unprecedented misfortune has occurred. The Motherland, our country...is perishing, is being broken up, is being plunged into darkness and oblivion."

Sovetskaya Rossiya, July 23, 1991

1991



- Boris Yeltsin
- Gorbachev detained
- Coup failed
- Yeltsin suspended legal status of Communist Party
- Communist party banned
- Gorbachev resigned
- USSR disbanded

Perestroika, Winter 1991

“Everyone criticizes the ‘time of stagnation’ (Brezhnev years), but during that time there was enough food. Now the shelves are empty, and that is called *perestroika*.”

“I have committed a crime. I have brought five children into the world. I work in a factory and cannot afford to give my children meat or fruit. The best I can offer them is carrots. I am afraid of the future.”

Problems in the Post-Socialist Transition

- Inflation
- Unemployment
- Breakdown in essential services
- Increase in social and health problems
- Increase in ethnic conflict

Fatalism

“What communism instilled in us was...this absence of a future, the absence of a dream, of the possibility of imagining our lives differently. There was hardly a way to say to yourself: This is just temporary, it will pass, it must. On the contrary, we learned to think: This will go on forever, no matter what we do.”

Slavenka Drakulic

The Mixed Blessings of Freedom

- Freedom of speech, assembly, and worship
- Freedom to travel, emigrate
- New economic opportunities
- New poverty
- Increased public awareness of social, medical problems
- Significant ecological problems
- Guerrilla conflict and nationalist struggles

Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, summarize the key ideas of Gorbachev's two stated goals of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.
2. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* were meant to save Soviet communism by improving it and making it work more efficiently. Yet instead, the Soviet Union itself fell apart. Why do you think *glasnost* and *perestroika* were not enough to save Soviet communism from collapse?
3. The Soviet Union's final troubles began with discontent among people in the East European nations that the Soviets controlled. Why do you think the crisis for the Soviet Union began in those nations?
