

# 10 – The First World War, and the Russian Revolution and the USSR until 1939

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## Key Terms

First World War

Schlieffen Plan

Gallipoli Campaign

Lusitania

The Fourteen Points

Treaty of Versailles

Command Economy

Walter Rathenau

*Russian Revolution and USSR*

Alexander III

Constitutional Democrats  
(Kadet)

Vladimir Lenin

Revolution of 1905 ... Czar

Nicholas II

October Manifesto

Bloody Sunday

Alexander Kerensky

Rasputin

March Revolution

Dictatorship of The  
Proletariat

Five-Year Plans

Farm Collectivization

Communes

The Purge Trials

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## OVERVIEW

The beginning of the First World War marked the height of European power on this planet; its ending marked the beginning of the decline. Great empires fell in this war: the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, German, and Ottoman. Others (Britain and France), which had reached the zenith of imperialist expansion by 1914, saw their economies all but extinguished by 1918. A generation of young European men was decimated in the trenches of France, on the plains of Eastern Europe, and on other global battlefronts.

It was the first “total war,” involving mass civilian populations in a war effort that required rationing, employed both sexes in war plants, and pumped up popular fervor with distorted propaganda.

Narrow nationalism flourished with the fall of the old ethnically diverse empires when dominant ethnic groups formed the basis for smaller nation-states such as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Hungary. The triumph of communism in Russia was a direct result of the war; Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany were indirect results. The drain of Europe’s resources made the United States the world’s leading creditor and greatest producer, and the unresolved issues of the vindictive and haphazard peace process led inevitably to the Second World War.

Meanwhile, Czarist Russia had been in decline for some time. Defeats in foreign wars tended to lead to domestic reform in Russia, and the losses in Crimea in 1856 and against Japan in 1905 led to massive change, such as the slow emancipation of the serfs and the creation of the Duma, a Russian legislature. The brutal exploitation of rural peasants under feudal serfdom

changed to oppression of industrial workers in factories, which led many to call for another way.

The Revolution of 1917 began as an attempt at reform by the middle class and some enlightened nobles. When the moderates maintained Russia's unpopular involvement in the war, the radical Marxist Bolsheviks seized power and established the communist regime that would change the politics of the twentieth century.

## Events Leading to the First World War

**June 28, 1914:** Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, was assassinated along with his wife in Sarajevo, capital of the Austrian province of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- When evidence was uncovered that high Serbian officials had plotted the murder, Austria sought German support to crush Serbia.
- Kaiser Wilhelm issued the infamous *blank check*, promising backing for any action Austria might take.
- Serbia turned to “big brother” Slav, Russia, which in turn got a guarantee of French support against Germany and Austria in a similar *blank check*.

**July 23, 1914:** Austria presented an ultimatum to Serbia that would make Serbia a virtual protectorate of Austria.

**July 28, 1914:** Austria declared war on Serbia after pronouncing the Serbian response inadequate. Russia mobilized.

**August 1, 1914:** Germany declared war on Russia.

**August 3, 1914:** France declared war on Germany.

**August 4, 1914:** Britain declared war on Germany after German forces violated Belgium's neutrality in their campaign to invade France.

## The First World War

### The Combatants

*The Allies:* Britain, France, and Russia (1914), formerly the Triple Entente.  
Italy (1915)

United States (1917)

Russia out (1917)

*The Central Powers:* Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire.  
Bulgaria

### The Western Front

**August-September 1914:** Germany's *Schlieffen Plan* for a rapid invasion of France failed. Since a *war of attrition* (wearing down of the resources and morale of the enemy) was to Germany's disadvantage because of the superior land mass, resources, and population of its enemies, Germany aimed for a quick victory.

### **The Strategy of the Schlieffen Plan**

1. Defeat France in six weeks, as in the Franco-Prussian War.
2. Hold off Russia, which the German high command estimated would take six months to fully mobilize.
3. Invade France through neutral Belgium, by being granted access, in order to outflank the French armies and seize Paris.

### **Why the Schlieffen Plan Failed**

1. The Belgians protested and put up unexpectedly stiff resistance.
2. The Russians mobilized with great speed, drawing German forces to the Eastern Front to bolster the Austrians in the field.
3. The French counterattacked heroically at the *Battle of the Marne River* (September 5, 1914) to stop the German drive to Paris.

### **The Western Front Stalemated into Trench Warfare**

1. The trench lines extended from the North Sea coast to the border of Switzerland in the South.
2. The bloody, costly fighting, after the Battle of the Marne, achieved no significant breakthrough for either side.
3. Technological developments in weaponry were far in advance of the infantry tactics:
  - machine guns
  - massed artillery
  - poison gas
  - tanks
  - submarines
  - aerial strafing
  - barbed wire
  - bombing from aircraft
4. The result was the slaughter of a generation of young Western Europeans in the trenches of France and Flanders (region of Northern France and parts of Belgium).
5. The *Battle of the Somme*, July-November 1916, typified this stalemate and was one of the bloodiest battles in history, with over 1,200,000 soldiers killed or wounded; the *Battle of Verdun* lasted through most of 1916 and is another example where fixed fortifications failed at a cost of 700,000 casualties. The fortifications at Verdun were supposedly impenetrable, but the Germans annihilated the fortress and the

surrounding area, proving the futility of fixed fortifications in the modern era.

- The Battle of the Somme lasted from July until November 1916 and saw changes of territory amounting to only 125 square miles.

## **The Eastern Front Remained a Mobile War**

**1914:** German forces, under *Paul von Hindenburg* (1847-1934) (later a president of the postwar Weimar Republic) and Erich Ludendorff won important victories over the Russians.

- • The Russians pushed the Austrians out of Galicia (Western Poland).

**1915:** A year of Central Powers' successes.

- • Combined German-Austrian forces pushed the Russian forces out of Poland and inflicted awesome casualties.
- Bulgaria entered the war on Germany's side (Germany and its allies became known as the Central Powers).
- The Germans overran the Balkans.
- The British launched the *Gallipoli Campaign* to knock the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), which had joined the Central Powers, out of the war by landing at the Dardanelles, a vital control point for access between the Aegean and Black Seas.

- This campaign failed as the Ottomans drove back the combined British, Indian, and Australian troops and held the straits.

**1916:** The Germans pushed deep into Russian territory.

- Czar Nicholas II went to the front to take personal command of the troops in a conflict in which Russia was being outfought and out-produced.
  - The Russians were still using single-shot rifles that had to be reloaded after each shot
  - while the Germans used machine guns.
  - Millions of Russians – soldiers and civilians – were slaughtered or starved in this war.
  - Nicholas was no help, and he was now personally responsible for the ongoing defeat of his army by the Germans, who continued to advance.
  - The people of Russia wanted peace and food.
- The Gallipoli Campaign failed, and its planner, future British prime minister Winston Churchill (1874-1965), resigned his post as First Lord of the Admiralty, in charge of the navy.

**1917:** The Russians retreated and the war spread.

- The Russian czar abdicated in March; the provincial government under Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970) continued the war.
- The Bolsheviks seized power in November and eventually pulled Russia out of the war.
- The Russian withdrawal from the war was exactly what the Allies did not want.
- This left Germany with only one front on which to fight, but the United States had joined
- the Allies just before Russia pulled out of the war, somewhat balancing the loss of Russia as an ally. .
- If Russia had stayed in the war, the Central Powers could have been defeated sooner.
- The Japanese, who had joined the Allies, attacked parts of China in a bid for colonial
- territory and natural resources.
- Near the end of the war Turkish forces slaughtered around a million Armenian civilians in what is becoming widely termed the *Armenian Genocide*.
  - Difficult to rule a multi-ethnic empire.
  - Accusations of disloyalty during First World War added to this slaughter.

## **Waging the War**

The First World War was the twentieth century's first *total war*, whereby the entire civilian populations of the belligerent nations were mobilized for winning the war.

- Propaganda lionized the men at the front and dehumanized the enemy.
- News was censored.
- Economic production was focused on the war effort:
  - Women replaced male factory workers who now were in uniform.
  - Rationing of food and scarce commodities was instituted.
  - People financed the war by buying bonds.
  - Each side aimed at “starving out” the enemy by cutting off vital supplies to the civilian population.
- The war in Europe quickly spread to non-European theaters, transforming the war into a global conflict.
  - The *Arab Revolt* against the Turks in 1916 was exploited by the

British, specifically by their agent, T.E. Lawrence, who fought with the Arabs against the Turks from within the Ottoman Empire, eventually leading to British claims on the mandate of Palestine.

- The Japanese used the war as an excuse for imperialism on the Chinese mainland and elsewhere in the Pacific.
- Hundreds of thousands of colonial soldiers from Africa and Asia were used by both sides during this war.

## Naval Blockades

1. Britain used its superior fleet and sea mines to cut off the Central Powers from overseas trade.
2. Germany employed *unrestricted submarine warfare* to prevent the British from getting vital materials from their colonies and war supplies from the United States.
  - • The sinking of the British passenger ship *Lusitania* in May 1915, with many American passengers, helped turn U.S. public opinion against Germany.
  - • (Note: There is strong evidence to suggest that the *Lusitania* was carrying contraband munitions, as the Germans claimed.)

## Diplomacy

**1915:** Neutral Italy entered the war against the Central Powers (its former allies) with the promise of being given *Italia Irredenta* (unredeemed Italy) and some German colonies and Ottoman territories.

**1917:** The infamous *Zimmermann Note* promised Mexico some of its former American holdings if it entered the war on Germany's side against the United States.

- Arabs and Jews in Palestine were promised autonomy if they joined the Allies.
- Eastern Europeans were promised ethnic control in return for support of the Allies.

## The End of the War

Although the United States had only a small standing army when the war began, it was able to field nine divisions in France by the summer of 1918, in time to help halt the last major offensive of the exhausted German Army. The effects of military stalemate and total war induced the citizens, both military

and civilian, to protest and turn to insurrection in the belligerent nations eventually led to revolutions that changed the international balance of power.

By the fall of 1918, Bulgaria and Turkey had sued for peace, Austria-Hungary had collapsed, and Germany was wracked with revolution. The Kaiser abdicated and fled to neutral Holland, and a provisional German government requested negotiations on the basis of U.S. President Wilson's *Fourteen Point peace plan*.

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, an *armistice* ended the First World War.

## The Peace Settlements

*The Fourteen Points*: Wilson's peace plan, which was never implemented because of the secret treaties and diplomatic maneuvering that had taken place among the Allies before the entrance of the United States in the war.

1. End to secret treaties
2. Freedom of the seas
3. Free trade
4. Arms reduction
5. Just settlement of colonial claims.
- 6-13. Evacuation of occupied territories *and* national self-determination.
14. Establishment of a League of Nations: an international political organization to settle disputes.

## The Paris Peace Conference, January 1919

**The Big Three** – Woodrow *Wilson* of the United States, David Lloyd *George* (1863-1945) of Britain, and Georges *Clemenceau* (1841-1929) of France, made **all** the decisions. Italian Vittorio *Orlando* was also a leader of the conference at its beginning. But he left, upset that Italy was not getting the gains he had hoped for when his country joined the war on the Allied side.

- The Central Powers were excluded.
- The Fourteen Points were compromised.
- Nationality lines in Central and Eastern Europe were blurred.

The *Treaty of Versailles* ended the war with Germany but **never settled** the explosive issues that had led to war in the first place. *Many of its provisions provided grist for Nazi propaganda mills in the 1920s and 1930s.*

## Provisions of the Treaty of Versailles

1. Certain German territories were ceded to the Allies (such as Alsace to France, Schleswig to Denmark, West Prussia to Poland, control of the

mineral-rich Saar region to France), and German overseas colonies were distributed among the Allies,

2. Germany was blamed for starting the war in the infamous "war guilt" clause, article 231.
3. The German army and navy were severely cut back to 100,000 servicemen.
4. The Rhineland (the vital strip between France and Germany) was to be demilitarized and occupied by Allied troops.
5. The *League of Nations* was created to intervene in international disputes and prevent future wars. It was a weak organization, and the United States never joined.
6. Germany had to pay *indemnities* for the civilian damage done in the war, totaling \$33 billion. That is over \$500 billion when adjusted for inflation to 2014 dollars.

## The Causes, Events, and Results of the First World War

### Causes of the First World War

- Historians generally agree that the German military buildup and the personal will of Kaiser Wilhelm II to use his new military, especially his navy, helped cause this war.
  - His offer to Austria to pay any war reparations if they were defeated also helps historians perceive the immediate causes of the war in this light.
- Events leading to the war include the Balkan Wars, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, and increased conflict and bickering over colonial such as the *Fashoda Incident* and the *Boer War*.
- Sidney Bradshaw Fay and Henry Elmer Barnes stated that the First World War was inevitable, and blame rested on all the nations equally.
- They blamed Austria-Hungary and Serbian nationalism (Gavrilo Princip's assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife) as short-term causes.
- They saw the long-term causes as militarism (arms race and economic rivalry), the alliance system, imperialism, and nationalism (*MAIN*).
- This view was accepted and led to the Treaty of Versailles not being fully enforced against Germany, which may have helped lead to the Second World War.



- German historian *Franz Fischer* refuted the now classic view stated above, using German secret documents as evidence in 1961. “He believed that Germany did not will and covet the Austro-Serbian war.
- Fischer said Germany was worried about Russia; Germany’s growing ambitions for colonies and more territory in Europe, and its attempt to distract the socialist menace at home, all led to the First World War.

## Events of the First World War

- The war quickly became a global conflict, with the colonial empires of all belligerent nations becoming involved to some degree or another.
- This war was fought by people who lived on six continents.
- The Germans quickly advanced on Paris, but the *Battle of the Marne* stopped them before they could take the French capital.
- Both sides built miles of parallel trenches, leading to a stalemate in which battle after battle saw each side attempt to break through the enemies’ lines.
- At the *Battle of Verdun*, the Germans again tried to break through, leading to over 700,000 killed and wounded.
- The *Battle of the Somme* was the allied counterattack, costing over 1,200,000 casualties (killed, wounded, and missing) for no clear gain.
- The Eastern Front saw Germany destroy the Russian army and that loss led to the abdication of the tsar and the eventual Russian Revolution.
- Led to the Russian Revolution
- In the only major naval engagement, the *Battle of Jutland*, the German navy failed to break through the British naval blockade and from then on resorted to submarine war
- fare, which drew in the United States.
- American involvement decided the outcome of the war due to the productive capacity of the United States, which escaped warfare at home.
- Revolutions overthrew monarchies in Russia, Germany, Austria, and the Ottoman
- Empire, resulting in each one pulling out of the war or calling for an armistice.

## Results of the War

- The war cost over \$300 billion. That is over \$4.5 trillion in 2014

dollars when adjusted for inflation.

- The Russian, German, Austrian, and Ottoman Empires ended.
- The war strained the resources of all the as they experimented with command economies.
- National unity was reinforced for a time, but .also caused great hardship due to lack of supplies, to disruption and dislocation.
- The war contributed greatly to the increased involvement of the government in society,
- leading to increased propaganda.
- The war also contributed to women's suffrage.
- Many social customs faded out, and society became more open (at least for a time).
- There was also a rapid development of new technology.
- The economy was greatly hurt by the war, as world trade had been totally disrupted,
- changed to a wartime economy, and then had to transition back.
- The Russian Revolution put the world's first communist country on the map.
- A patchwork of weak, ethnically mixed states was created for political conveniences in Central and Eastern Europe.
  - New nations such as *Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia* were created in Europe as a result of the *Treaty of Versailles*.
- The German and Ottoman colonial possessions were divided up between France and Great Britain, and the *British Mandate system* was imposed in the areas Britain controlled.
  - This mandate system disturbed the balance of power.
  - Remains a factor today in the unrest in the Middle East, where the bulk of these territories were located.
  - Made worse by the presence of oil there and by historical Western support for dictatorial regimes there.
- Turkey modernized, and Kamal Ataturk created 'secular democracy in Turkey that endured for over a century; Turkey has been literally and figuratively a bridge between Europe and Asia.
  - In the 1990s a suspension bridge between the continents was built in Istanbul, and one can travel from Asia to Europe and back without leaving Turkey.
- Over 25 million people died as a result of the war, and another 21

million soldiers were wounded, leaving a generation grieving after losing many of their best leaders.

*The Second World War broke out in Europe 20 years after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.*

# The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union until 1939

## Chronology

### 1881-1894

Czar Alexander III (r. 1881-1894), reacting to the assassination of his predecessor by radical socialists, instituted a reactionary policy of “Russification, orthodoxy, and autocracy.”

### 1890s

Russia industrialized, but the great mass of its population was still made up of rural peasants whose quality of life was comparable to that of farmers in the West during the Middle Ages.

- Since the French were eager for Russian support against the Germans, they granted loans and credits that enabled the Russians to build factories, import Western technology; and expand the railroad system.
- The *Trans-Siberian Railroad* linked European and Asiatic Russia.
- A commercial middle class grew in influence.
- A proletariat of exploited workers also grew.
- Political parties were formed to meet the demands of these new elements.
  - *Constitutional Democrats (Kadets)* reflected the aims of the new middle class and some liberal landowners for parliamentary government and gradual reform.
  - Social Revolutionaries (Narodniks) stressed the glories of Slav culture (Slavophiles) and sought to keep Russia agrarian.
  - *Marxists* urged radical revolution.

### 1903

A meeting of the Russian Marxist Congress resulted in a split in the party when *Vladimir I. Lenin* (1870-1924) favored a party of elite revolutionaries instead of an open democratic organization.

- • When most of the attendees walked out in protest, Lenin convinced those remaining to endorse his ideas.

- Although his supporters made up a minority of the party, he called them *Bolsheviks* (majority) and referred to the actual party majority as *Mensheviks* (minority).

## 1904-1905

*The Russo-Japanese War*: Competing over Manchuria (a mineral rich province of China), Russia and newly modernized Japan came to blows.

- What the czar hoped would be a “short, glorious war” to divert unrest in his realm was a devastating defeat, the first in modern times of a European power by a nation outside of Europe.
  - A surprise attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur in Manchuria, a defeat at the Battle of Mukden on Manchurian soil, and the sinking of the Russian European fleet in Tsushima Straits brought a peace mediated by President *Theodore Roosevelt*.
  - The Treaty of Portsmouth granted Japan Russia’s railroad rights in Manchuria, half of the Sakhalin Islands off Russia’s Pacific coast, and a guarantee of Japan’s protectorate in Korea.
  - Humiliated, Russia suffered from the Revolution of 1905 before the war was even over.
- *The Revolution of 1905*: Faced with the growing unrest of the working class, *Czar Nicholas II* (r. 1894-1918) commissioned a Russian Orthodox priest, *Father Gapon*, to organize a conservative union to counteract the radical Marxists.
  - Gapon, horrified by the conditions in St. Petersburg (the czarist capital), led a peaceful protest march of tens of thousands of workers and their families on Sunday, January 22, 1905.
  - Troops fired on the crowd, killing hundreds. This “Bloody Sunday” provoked general strikes, peasant uprisings, and the formation of workers’ revolutionary councils, *soviets*.
  - In the *Zemstvos* (the provincial councils elected by landowners and peasants and set up in 1864 by Czar Alexander II (1818-1881) as part of his great reforms), the liberals . demanded reforms.
  - The *October Manifesto*: After a general strike was called by the Soviet of Petersburg, Nicholas II issued a promise for reform.
- Its major provisions were a constitution, civil liberties, and a Duma (legislature) to represent all classes.

## 1906

A Duma was elected, but did not include the Marxists, who boycotted the elections because they mistrusted the czar's motives.

- Nicholas dissolved the Duma anyway because it demanded that his ministers be answerable to it.
- Reforms were instituted, including the strengthening of the *Zemstvos*, abolishing the peasant debt for the emancipation of serfs in the 1860s, thereby creating a wealthy peasant class, the *kulaks*, who farmed large tracts of land and hired workers.

### 1914

With the outbreak of the First World War, the government suspended the Duma so that political bickering would not compromise the war effort.

- A national union of *Zemstvos*, made up of the various local elective districts, was organized to increase productivity
- *Rasputin* (1869-1916), "the mad monk," began to influence Czarina Alexandra after he claimed to have cured the czar's only son of hemophilic episodes.

### 1915

Horrific losses at the front provoked the national union of *Zemstvos* and the middle class to demand that the Duma be reconvened to initiate reforms.

### 1916

The Duma met for the first time since its disbanding and, with support of its dominant conservatives, criticized the czar's government.

- Rasputin, whose sway over Alexandra had poisoned her advice to her easily influenced husband, was murdered by a band of young noblemen.
- The czar attempted to suppress any reform.

### 1917

The March Revolution: Food riots broke out in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), and when the czar ordered the Duma to dissolve and troops to suppress the disorder, neither obeyed.

- Workers and soldiers in Petrograd organized the radical legislative bodies called soviets.
  - Rebellion spread throughout the country and to the troops at the front.
  - Soldiers deserted by tens of thousands.
- On March 14, the Duma formed a provisional government under *Prince Georgii Lvov* (1861-1925).
- *Alexander Kerensky* (1881-1970), a moderate member of the soviets,

played a major role in running the Provisional Government.

- On March 15, the czar abdicated.
- On March 17, Russia was proclaimed a republic.
- *Lenin* and other *Bolshevik* leaders came back from exile to Petrograd in April.
  - Their demands to the provisional government:
    1. Russia withdraw from the war.
    2. The Petrograd Soviet runs the government.
    3. Land was to be distributed to the peasants, and factories were to be controlled by the workers' committees (soviets).
- After an abortive coup in July, Lenin and the Bolshevik leaders fled to Finland.
- Prince Lvov turned over the provisional government to Kerensky.

The *October Revolution* (November 1917 by the Western calendar).

- Kerensky's government failed to win the support of the people because of continued shortages and because it stayed in the war against the Central Powers.
- Lenin returned to Petrograd with the rallying cry of "Peace, Land, Bread."
- *Leninist Doctrine*; According to orthodox Marxism, a social revolution is possible only in highly developed capitalist countries, such as those in the West during this period.
  - Since Russia was virtually a feudal society and primarily agrarian, some Bolsheviks argued for a coalition with the middle classes until Russia had developed sufficiently.
  - Lenin argued that since Western Europe was ripe for revolution, a Marxist seizure of Russia would precipitate such takeovers elsewhere, and these in turn would help
  - Russia to bypass the capitalist stage.
  - Lenin won the support of Leon Trotsky (1870-1940), Joseph Stalin (1878-1953), and most of the Bolshevik leaders.
- *October 6-7*: The Bolsheviks stormed the *Winter Palace*, headquarters of Kerensky's government, and seized other key centers in Petrograd.
  - Kerensky's provisional government fled.
  - The Congress of Soviets, representing the local soviets formed all over Russia.
  - Established a Council of People's Commissars.
- Lenin as head, Trotsky as foreign minister, and Stalin as nationalities

minister.

- Within months, the government abolished the freely elected legislative assembly and established a secret police organization, the Cheka, also variously known later as the OGPU, NKVD, MVD, and KGB.

## 1918

The *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* was proclaimed, in tune with Leninist doctrine: The Bolsheviks renamed their party “Communist.”

- Important industries were nationalized.
- Russian Orthodox Church lands were seized.
- Russia pulled out of World War I, surrendering Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, and
- the Ukraine to Germany in the *Treaty of Brest-Litovsk*.

## 1918-1922

The *Russian Civil War* was fought for control of the remainder of the Russian Empire.

- Opposed by czarists, the middle class, many peasants, and socialist factions, the communists were able to win because their enemies could not unite.
- Despite the intervention of many Allied nations, including the United States, which feared the spread of communism, the Red Army under Trotsky conquered European Russia by the end of 1920 and Siberia and central Asia by 1922.
- The Communist International (Comintern), to organize Communism worldwide, was organized in 1919.
  - Lenin also began to institute policies designed to improve economic conditions in the new Soviet Union and rebuild the damage caused by the First World War and the Russian Civil War
    - • Plan was called Lenin’s *New Economic Policy* (NEP).
- Allowed peasants some autonomy in selling their own goods.
- State controlled all banks, foreign trade, and large industrial projects.
- Private ownership of some small enterprises allowed.

## 1922

*Nationalities Reform*: What remained of the Russian Empire was reorganized into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), uniting the various nation groups into a federal entity of major republics and smaller autonomous regions. Cultural identity was encouraged and toleration of various ethnic groups became official policy.

## 1924

The Constitution:

1. Only workers and peasants are allowed to vote for local Soviets.
2. Local soviet select provincial or district soviets that, in turn, choose a republic soviet for each autonomous republic.
3. The *Congress of Soviets* represents all the republics and elects a *Council of People's Commissars* (similar to a government cabinet).

Lenin died at the age of fifty-four, never fully recovering from an assassination attempt in 1920.

- Trotsky was at a disadvantage in becoming Lenin's successor both because he was a Jew in an anti-Semitic society, and because he was considered an intellectual by the rank and file.
- As secretary of the Communist Party, Stalin garnered loyalty within the party by making many key appointments.
- Their policy differences further alienated the men from each other.
  - Trotsky pushed for a worldwide revolution.
  - Stalin argued for a strengthening of Russia by industrialization before it undertook the promotion of worldwide revolution.
    - "Building socialism in one country."

## 1927

- Stalin won the support of the party.
- Trotsky fled the country.
  - Murdered in 1940 by a Stalinist agent.

## 1928

The first *Five-Year Plan* promoted rapid industrialization by centralized planning.

- Coal and steel production were accelerated, and a modern transportation system was developed, using the domestic resources of the USSR, since foreign nations were hostile to the new government.

## EARLY 1930s

- *Farm Collectivization* consolidated small farms into Communes, modernizing agriculture but displacing many peasants, some of whom resisted the process.
- The *kulaks*, who had been the most successful peasant farmers, were destroyed as a class.
  - Between 5 and 12 million people perished by murder and famine.
  - Most deaths were in the Ukraine

## 1933



A second Five-Year Plan was begun that increased production of steel and heavy industry, modernized Soviet factories, created a boom when the West was in the depths of the *Great Depression*, and made Russia a leading industrial power.

### 1936-1937

*The purge trials:* Stalin's paranoid tendencies convinced him of plots within the party and the government to unseat him. Many original Bolsheviks, instrumental in carrying out the revolution, as well as high military officers (some of the most competent), were tried on trumped-up charges.

- As many as 1 million were executed.
- 5 to 7 million were sent to the gulags (Siberian labor camps), where many died.
- Stalin strengthened his hold over the party, the government, and the nation.
- Became one of the century's most powerful dictators.

## Figures and Events of the Russian Revolution

Figure	When	Important Facts
Czar Alexander II	1861	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He emancipated the serfs because:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–He felt pressure from below.</li> <li>–It was his personal will.</li> <li>–He needed to react to the loss of the Crimean War.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• He began the process of emancipation in 1861.</li> <li>• His assassination in 1881 moved Russia to the right.</li> </ul>
Czar Nicholas II	1894-1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The last czar of Russia, he was a better family man than he was a ruler.</li> <li>• Major weaknesses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–His devotion to his German wife, Alexandra, and their children.</li> <li>–His lack of interest in affairs of state from an early age.</li> <li>–His familial responsibilities to his cousins, George V, ruling England, and Wilhelm II, ruling Germany.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Figure	When	Important Facts
Russo-Japanese War	1904-1905	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russia was humiliated when its attempt to take parts of China was foiled by Japan, which defeated the Russian Navy twice, leaving her without a functioning fleet.</li> <li>• This led to the Revolution of 1905 and the creation</li> </ul>

		of the Duma, Russia's legislative body.
Father Gapon/ <i>Bloody Sunday</i>	1905	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A priest, who was state-appointed to help emancipated serfs adjust to their new lives; he circulated a workers' petition to the czar that was considered revolutionary.</li> <li>• Over 200,000 people marched on the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg to present the petition to the czar, but troops opened fire, killing many.</li> </ul>
Peter Stolypin	1905-1911	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He oversaw the creation of the Duma as prime minister to Nicholas II.</li> <li>• His agrarian reforms were very unpopular, and he was assassinated in 1911.</li> </ul>
Gregori Rasputin	1905-1916	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He was a peasant-born mystic healer whom Alexandra believed helped keep the sickly Alexei alive.</li> <li>• His debauchery was legendary and rumors of his influence on the Romanov family helped lead to their downfall.</li> </ul>
First World War	1914-1918	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russia entered the First World War in 1914 to play its traditional role as protector of the Eastern Orthodox faith, this time in defense of Serbia.</li> <li>• Russia was not industrialized enough to be prepared for this war, for which Germany and England had been arming.</li> <li>• Russia was decimated by the Germans, and even though Nicholas II took personal control of the army, they still lost, leading to his abdication in 1917.</li> <li>• The Provisional Government committed to staying in the war, and Lenin used that to help overthrow it in the October Revolution.</li> </ul>
Alexander Kerensky	1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He was the leader of the Provisional Government formed in March 1917, when Nicholas II abdicated.</li> <li>• He and his popular Kadet (Social Democrat) party fought for land reform while he kept the war going as a middle ground in contrast to the Bolsheviks, who wanted to end the war immediately.</li> </ul>

Figure	When	Important Facts
General Kornilov	1914-1918	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He was an important First World War general who stayed loyal to Kerensky as his commander in chief.</li> <li>• Described as having the "heart of a lion and the brains of a sheep."</li> <li>• He led the White Army during the Russian Civil War</li> </ul>

		in which he was captured and killed.
Vladimir Ilyich Lenin	1917-1924	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father of the Russian Revolution.</li> <li>• He was the Russian Bolshevik leader who was banished in 1903 and convinced the Germans to allow him back into the country in 1917.</li> <li>• He promised the people "Peace, land, and bread," and won them over to his side.</li> <li>• His use of the soviets in each town and the educated elite to foment revolution among the masses.</li> <li>• This new take on Marxism led to a successful revolution placing him in power of the world's first communist nation, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), after a brutal civil war.</li> </ul>
Leon Trotsky	1917-1924	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He was Lenin's co-conspirator in the revolution.</li> <li>• He helped issue Army Order Number 1 in which companies voted whether or not to follow commands.</li> <li>• He also took over the military and the train stations during the October Revolution that placed Lenin in power.</li> <li>• He was pushed out by Joseph Stalin, who created a completely totalitarian regime in Russia and eventually had Trotsky killed in Mexico.</li> </ul>
Joseph Stalin	1924-1953	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He ruled the USSR with an iron fist.</li> <li>• He instituted five-year plans to modernize and industrialize while purging his nation of supposed enemies.</li> <li>• Between ruining the agricultural output, causing starvation, and authorizing political imprisonment and killings, it is estimated that Stalin killed more than 50 million of his citizens.</li> <li>• He did, however, rally his people to defeat the German invasion during the Second World War.</li> <li>• His actions and lack of trust with Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill led directly to the Cold War.</li> </ul>