Peter I (r. 1696-1725)
Catherine II (r. 1762-1796)
Nicholas I (r. 1825-1855)
Alexander II (r. 1855-1881)
Alexander III (r. 1881-1894)
Nicholas II (r. 1894-1917)

“The Great” – Westernization, Modernization, Power & Progress
Meritocracy – Table of Ranks (1722)
Foreign Bureaucrats
Division of the Empire into 50 provinces
Holy Synod – State administer Church
St. Petersburg (1703)

Establishment of schools – artillery, engineering, military medicine
Militarism, Russia’s first Navy
Great Northern War (1700-21)
Territorial Expansion “warm water port”
Reduced the power of the Boyars and Russian Orthodox Church
St. Petersburg (1703)
“City built on Bones”
“Window to the West”
Russian Versailles
1914 – St. Petersburg – Petrograd
1924 – Leningrad
1991 – renamed St. Petersburg
German Princess
Married Peter III (r. 1762-1796)
Expanded Russian borders – Black Sea
Partitioned Poland (1772, 1793, 1795)
Enlightened Despot?

Philosophes – Voltaire, Diderot
Questioned serfdom, torture, capital punishment
New Schools – Elementary, Engineering, Teacher training
Charter of the Nobility (1785) – increased power of nobles

(c. 1742-75)
Cossack
Claimed to be Peter III
25,000 peasant followers
Claimed to end serfdom
Uprising brutally crushed
Executed in Moscow

(1801-1825)
Grandson of Catherine II
Befriended and fought Napoleon
Congress of Vienna (1814-15)
Early hopes of liberalism gave way to conservatism during his reign
Decembrists Revolt (1825–1855) – secret society of revolutionaries
Motto “autocracy, orthodoxy, nation”
Suppressed liberal thought

Crimean War (1853-56) – turning pt. – backward industrially
Potential rebellion
“better from above, than below”
REFORMS – educational, judicial, military, local
1861 – Emancipation of the serfs

Local assembly – provincial self-government
1864-1917
Districts elected representatives (only wealthy could vote)
Controlled education, public health, roads, agriculture, commerce
Replaced by the soviet (council)

Mir – Russian peasant communities – corporate body, reallocated land periodically
16th century – 1917 Bolshevik Revolution
Freed all Russian serfs (1/3 of population)
Land given to the Mir
Insufficient amount of land, archaic agricultural methods

Several attempted assassinations
Successful assassination 1881 (People’s Will)
Western liberal ideas continued to plague Russian autocracy

“Russification”
Designed to target reformers
Poles, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Armenians
Forced to adopt Russian language, culture, and religion
Greater good for all of Russia
Persecution of Jews – pogroms (to wreak havoc, demolish violently)
**Nicholas II**

- (r. 1894-1917)
- Last Russian Emperor, Tsar, Romanov
- Two War – Russo-Japanese War 1904-05
- WWI – 1914-18
- Despite the loss of territory, massive casualties, stubborn supporter of the right of the sovereign

**Russo-Japanese War**

- Imperialistic ambitions for Russia
- “Warm Water Port”
- Domination over Korea and Manchuria
- Trans-Siberian Railway (1891-1904)
- Japanese Victory
- 400,000 casualties Russia
- One of the immediate causes of Revolution of 1905

**Revolution of 1905**

- Military disaster = domestic upheaval
- Century of autocratic rule
- Massive demonstration – 200,000 unarmed
- “God Save the Tsar”
- Workers – general strike, reduction of work day, increase in wages, end to War
- Police and Cossacks open fired – 100 killed, 300 wounded = BLOODY SUNDAY
- Dress rehearsal for the Revolutions of 1917

**Attempted Reforms**

- October Manifesto - constitution – full civil liberties, religion, speech, assembly, universal male suffrage
- Duma – consultative body, no law could be made without approval, no real power dismissed by Nicholas II
- Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers
- Peter Stolypin (1862-1911) – Peasants allowed to sell land to the mir and move to cities, property rights advanced, zemstvos strengthened
- Nicholas thwarted the attempts – Stolypin assassinated

**Why was there a Communist revolution in Russia in 1917?**
Factors that led to the Communist revolution in 1917.

- The weakness of Tsar Nicholas II
- The discontent of the peasants
- The discontent of the workers
- Russian failures in the First World War
- The failure of the Duma
- Opposition of the Communists
- Rasputin and scandal
- The February Revolution 1917

The Tsarina Alexandra

- The Tsarina Alexandra, the wife of the Tsar, was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria.
- She was seen as a foreigner by the Russians and her influence on the Tsar was well known.
- She leaned heavily on Rasputin to help cure her son of his “bleeding episodes”. He had hemophilia, a known royal disease caused by inbreeding.

Russian failures in the First World War

In the first few months of the First World War, Russia fought better than had been expected. Russian forces attacked Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1914 and were only pushed back after fierce fighting at the battle of Tannenberg.

In 1915, Tsar Nicholas II assumed personal command of the Russian armed forces. This was a risky policy; any defeats would be blamed on him. As it turned out the Tsar was a poor commander. The Russian army lost confidence in the Tsar after a string of serious defeats. The Russian soldiers, poorly trained and equipped, lacking in basic items such as rifles and ammunition, suffered from lowering morale. Thousands of men deserted.

Without the support of the army, the Tsar’s position became increasingly precarious.

Failure of the Duma

In 1905 Russia lost a war with Japan. This defeat caused strikes in the Russian cities, the Tsar nearly lost control. Nicholas II offered to call a Duma, or parliament, with free elections. This was accepted by the demonstrators.

When the Duma met, it began to criticise the Tsar and demanded changes. Nicholas II did not like this at all. The Duma was dismissed and new elections, controlled by the Tsar, were called.

It became clear that the Duma would be shut down if it criticised the Tsar. As long as the Tsar had control of the army, his power could not be broken.

The discontent of the Workers

Industrialisation began much later in Russia than in Western Europe. Huge iron foundries, textile factories and engineering firms were set up. Most were owned by the government or foreigners, and were located in the big cities such as St Petersburg or Moscow. By 1900 20% of Russians were workers living in cities.

Working conditions in the new industrial towns were hard. Pay was very low. Although strikes and demonstrations were illegal, they often took place. Strikers were frequently shot by the Tsar’s soldiers or secret police.

‘The whole day we pour out our blood and sweat. Every minute we are exposed to danger.’
Union leaflet 1898

The discontent of the Peasants

Russia was a rural society with over 90% of the people being poor peasants. Until 1861 the peasants had belonged to their masters, who could buy and sell them like animals.

When the peasants were freed in 1861 they were given small amounts of land for which they had to pay back the government. As a result most farmers were in absolute poverty. Agriculture was in desperate need of modernisation.

In contrast, a small number of upper-class people held most of the wealth and power. This aristocracy had large town houses and country estates.

Very often the peasants do not have enough allotment land. They cannot feed themselves, clothe themselves, heat their homes, keep their tools and livestock, secure seed for sowing and lastly pay their taxes.
Police report into country conditions 1905
Tsarevich Alexei

- Desperate to provide an heir to the throne, Alexei was born to the Romanovs after the birth of four daughters.
- Unfortunately, Alexei had hemophilia and was deathly ill.
- The Tsar, eager to save his son and please his wife, allowed Rasputin to heavily influence the care of the Tsarevich. It is unknown how he was able to help stop the child’s bleeding episodes.

Rasputin and Scandal

While Tsar Nicholas II was absent commanding Russian forces during the First World War, he left the day to day running of Russia in the control of his wife Tsarina Alexandra. Alexandra came increasingly under the influence of Gregory Rasputin, a ‘holy man’ who appeared to be able to heal the haemophilia of Prince Alexis, the heir to the throne.

Rasputin used his power to win effective control of the Russian government. But this aroused envy and he was murdered in 1916. Rasputin’s influence undermined the prestige of the royal family, but his murder came too late to save them.

Russia WWI

- Largest army in the world (6,553,000 – 4,652,000 rifles)
- Approximately 15 million Russian men served in WWI
- 9.2 Million killed (military & civilian), 5 million wounded
- Forced conscription, famine, high casualties caused riots in many cities
- March 15, 1917 Nicholas II abdicated
February 22, 1917 Nicholas II leaves Petrograd to visit troops
February 23 International Women's Day demonstration in Petrograd
February 24 Massive strikes and demonstrations occur throughout the capital
February 25 Unrest continues; Mensheviks meet and set up a "Workers' Soviet" Nicholas II orders military to stop riots
February 26 Troops fire on demonstrating crowds Mass mutiny begins in local army regiments Firefights break out between troops and police
February 27 More than 80,000 troops mutiny and engage in widespread looting
February 28 Duma and Workers' Soviet gather separately and begin making decisions about restoring order and establishing a new state
March 2 Nicholas II abdicates the throne; provisional government formed

February Revolution of 1917
Headed by Prince George Lvov – unwillingness to withdraw Russia from WWI made him unpopular
July 1917 replaced by Alexander Kerensky – Socialist Revolutionary Party – champion of the workers – also refused to withdraw from WWI
Petrograd Soviet – (Paris Commune) radical pushed Russia to the Left

Abdication of Czar Nicholas II
March 17, 1917 – Russia Republic
Constituent Assembly
Universal Male Suffrage
Promised a Constitution
Promised redistribution of land to the peasants but took no action

Issued by the Petrograd Soviet (workers council)
Democratically elected committees would run the army
Disastrous – complete breakdown of all army discipline
April 1917 – Germany to undermine the Provisional Government sent Lenin back to Russia sealed inside a train car

TWO MAIN ISSUES – WAR, REDISTRIBUTION OF LAND
Led by Vladimir Lenin
- Small party of professional revolutionaries with a large group of supporters
- Preaching Marxism
- October Revolution 1917

"LENIN AND THE BOLSHEVIKS DID NOT BRING ABOUT THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. THEY CAPTURED IT AFTER IT HAD BEGUN." – RR Palmer

November 1917 (Gregorian Calendar)
- Bolsheviks with the support of the army seize key communication, transportation, and utilities
- Provisional Government fled for lack of support
- Timed takeover coincide with the election of the Congress of Soviets
- Lenin = head of the Council of People’s Commissars (Executive Committee)
- Bolsheviks disbanded the Constituent Assembly

1918–1922
- Bolsheviks formed the Red Army
- Led by Leon Trotsky (1879–1940)
- White Army – tsarists, Cadets, Mensheviks, and Social Revolutionaries

Every scoundrel who incites anyone to retreat or to desert will be shot!
Every soldier who throws away his rifle will be shot!
Trotsky initially supported the Menshevik Internationalists, faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. He joined the Bolshevik Internationalists prior to the 1917 October Revolution, and eventually became a leader within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks). During the early days of the RSFSR and the Soviet Union, he served first as People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs and later as the founder and commander of the Red Army with the title of People’s Commissar of Military and Naval Affairs. He was a major figure in the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War (1918–1923). He also became one of the first members (1919–1926) of the Politburo.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk 1918

To successfully impose Communist control in Russia, Lenin realised that he would have to bring Russia out of the First World War. He feared that the war might bring about an end to Communist rule.

By this time the Russian army was weakened by poor morale, desertions and a break down in discipline. It was incapable of resisting the Germans.

In March 1918 Russia signed a humiliating peace treaty with Germany. Russia lost a huge amount of land in the West. This included about one-sixth of the population (60 million people), three-quarters of its iron and coal and over a quarter of the best farmland in Russia.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk came at a high price for Russia, but Lenin knew he could not defeat Germany and his opponents in Russia at the same time.

Immediate peace with the Central Powers - WWI
- Redistribution of land to the peasants
- Transfer of factories, mines, industrial plants from capitalists to committees of workers
- Recognition of the soviets as supreme power instead of the Provisional Government
The Cheka (or secret police)

In December 1917 Lenin set up a secret police force known as the Cheka. Cheka agents spied on the Russian people in factories and villages. Anyone suspected of being anti-Communist could be arrested, tortured and executed without a trial.

When opponents tried to assassinate Lenin in 1918, he launched the Red Terror campaign against his enemies. It is said that 50,000 people were arrested and executed in this period.

The Civil War 1918-1921

The opponents of the ‘Reds’, Lenin and the Communists, were known as the ‘Whites’. The Whites were a mixture of aristocrats, royalists, churchmen, army officers and many others. The Whites were led by Admiral Kolchak and Generals Deniken and Wrangel.

The Whites were supported by Britain, France, Japan and the USA, countries that were alarmed at the possible spread of communism. At the same time, Lenin fought a war against Poland, a new country formed by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

Although in a very dangerous position, the Communists were able to win the Civil War. This was because the Whites were divided, while the Reds controlled the key cities, industrial centres and communication links. Trotsky’s tough leadership of the new Red Army proved decisive in the victory over the Whites.

The execution of Tsar Nicholas II

July 1918

After his abdication in March 1917, Tsar Nicholas II and his family were arrested and sent to Siberia.

In July 1918, the Romanovs were in Ekaterinburg, with a White army closing in on the town. Local communists were worried that the Tsar might be a rallying point for the Whites. As a result, Tsar Nicholas, his wife, their five children and four attendants were shot and bayoneted.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ROMANOVS?

JULY 16, 1918 THE ROMANOVS ARE SHOT TO DEATH.
The Kronstadt Revolt 1921

War Communism made Lenin’s government very unpopular. Discontent amongst the peasants led to violence in the cities. Workers went on strike, in spite of the death penalty for striking.

The most serious opposition to Lenin’s government came in March 1921. Sailors at the Kronstadt naval base near Petrograd revolted. They accused Lenin of breaking his promise to help the workers.

Lenin ordered the Red Army to put down the revolt. This caused 20,000 casualties and the leaders of the revolt were executed. However, the mutiny was a warning to Lenin that he might have to relax War Communism.
1922 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Unique Party-State Dualism
Party – representation of the proletariat
(CPSU) Communist Party of the Soviet Union
State – worked to carry out policies
Central Committee – several hundred top
CPSU officials
Politburo – policy bureau – dozen men –
decision making

Capitalism destroyed by a violent revolution
Socialist revolution possible in a backward
country like Russia
Revolution determined by human leadership
not historical laws
Highly disciplined workers’ party led by a
dedicated elite of intellectuals

Success of the New Economic Policy 1921
To regain popular support, Lenin relaxed War
Communism with the New Economic Policy
(NEP). Smaller industries were returned to private
ownership and peasants could sell their surplus on
the open market. This was a return to capitalism
and competition.

Lenin hoped that NEP would give Russia ‘a
breathing space’ to get back on its feet. Most of the
Communist Party saw the need for NEP, but some
were against it.

On the whole NEP was a success. But it did create
some problems. Some peasants, the Kulaks, became
rich, while ‘Nepmen’ or businessmen made a profit
in the towns. Some saw NEP as a betrayal of
communism and return to the old system.

Women – equality, divorce, birth control, abortion
Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952) – Soviet Feminist
sought to educate women
Komsomol – Communist
Youth League – promote
socialist values
Sergei Eisenstein – films
Russia History
When Lenin died in 1924, he had been very successful in imposing a communist dictatorship in Russia. He had defeated all of his opponents and established a strong communist government. As each of the areas formerly belonging to the Tsar came under communist control, they were turned into socialist republics. In 1923 these became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

**TROTSKY vs. STALIN**

**Leon Trotsky**
- 1879–1940
- Leader of the Red Army
- “Permanent Revolution” - international

**Joseph Stalin**
- 1878–1953
- “Man of Steel”
- “Socialism in One Country”
- General Secretary of the Communist Party
- Preserved some revolutionary goals
- No hereditary Czar, no privileged class, improved standard of living
- New upper class – professionals, factory managers

**5 YEAR PLANS (1928)**
- Economic Growth – Heavy Industry
- Propaganda – better life, pay differentials, incentives, cruel punishments
- 2nd only to the U.S
- Bureaucratic waste, errors, high production cost, poor quality, housing shortage, low standard of living, little investment capital
“WORKER STATE” – right to employment, leisure time, annual paid vacations, social security, old-age, accident, sickness insurance, medical and hospital care

Labor Conditions? – lateness, absence, fined sent to Labor Camps

GULAG

Collective Farms (1929)
Agricultural output
25 Million Farmers
Forced farmers to pool their land, livestock, equipment
Kulaks refused – 1932 entire class eliminated – forced labor camps, or killed
Several Million Kulaks
Stalin’s policies – 18 Million

20 Million Deaths = Starvation, Forced Labor Camps, Purges