

The Russian Revolution

Imperial Russia

The Official Russia

The Tsar

Ruled arbitrary by decree. No parliament until 1905.

Owned everything. No difference state-emperor.

An autocrat society required an appropriate leader.

A patrimonial tradition.

The Civil Service

No education was needed for civil servants.

Promotion on seniority.

Could not be brought to trial – corruption.

Were totally dependant of their superiorities.

No authorities outside the big cities.

Tsarist authority was total but narrow.

The Police

Maintained law and order.

Protected the state against the people.

Had the right to punish.

The Army

Was used to keep the people down.

Revolutions occurred in wartimes.

The Orthodox Church

Preached submission to the existing rulers.

The Peasants

80 percent of the people.

Were loyal to their villages and had nothing in common with the gentry or city-people.

Had no personal property. The family and the commune owned everything.

Autocracy – no individual rights.

Strip-farming.

The land was reallocated every 10-15 year.

Invest the least, extract the most

Some peasants worked part time in the industry.

Factories were located in the country-side.

No professional workers.

The Intelligentsia

Was needed to promote a change.

Did it in the name of the people.

The Political Parties

The Social-Democrats (Mensheviks)

Were inspired by Marx.

Disliked terrorism.

Wanted a “bourgeois” democracy and use its rights to give the power to the workers.

The workers were not interested in politics. They wanted trade unions instead.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Party

Accepted political terrorism,

Wanted workers and peasants to revolt together.

The Revolution 1905

The Rise of the Zemstvas

An elected rural assembly. Often dominated by liberals.

Dealt with roads, health care education etc on a provincial level

1904 Zemstva-leaders met in St Petersburg and voted for a constitution.

The War with Japan 1904-05

The Russians sent troops to defend the Trans-Siberian railway in Manchuria.

Japan suggested spheres of interest. Russia – Manchuria, Japan – Korea.

The Russian rejected this and the Japanese attacked

Until the outbreak of the war only students and Zemstva-leaders wanted a change.

The Bloody Sunday (January 9th 1905)

A peaceful demonstration was fired at by the police.

Nationwide strikes at the universities for the right to choose headmaster.

The police was forbidden to enter the Universities. Revolutionary centres.

May 1905 the Russians lost the battle of Tsushima.

The October Manifesto

Freedom of speech, assembly and association,

A legislative assembly.

All laws must be passed by the assembly.

The Fundamental Laws of 1906

The State Council and the Duma were set up.

The Tsar could dissolve the Duma.

1. Duma 1906. Three months. Dominated by liberals.

2. Duma 1907. The Socialists dominated. Peasants got the right to leave the commune.

3. Duma. Liberal-conservative. Was elected by a restricted right to vote.

The First World War

Russia had a big standing army and was well prepared for a short war.

The withdrawing from the Polish salient

Saved a lot of Russian troops.

Prolonged the war in the east.

Was Russia's main contribution to Germany's defeat.

Made the Duma demand the right to veto ministerial appointments.
Private enterprises started to produce weapons and ammunition.
The war was financed with paper money. High inflation after a long period of stability.
The sale of alcoholic beverages was forbidden and tax revenues sunk.
The inflation created food shortages in the cities.
The peasants benefited from this and cut down production to raise the prices even more.
In the summer of 1916 Nicholas took personal command of the army.
With the Tsar at the front Alexandra and Rasputin appointed and dismissed governors.
The discontent of the people was directed at the Tsarina. Rasputin was murdered.
Liberals and radicals wanted constitutional change.
Monarchists wanted to get rid of the Tsarina.

The February Revolution 1917

Food riots in St Petersburg, Nicholas sent the army and order was restored.
40 civilian casualties. The garrison revolted. Peasants in uniform controlled the city.
The Duma
 Elected an executive branch
 Acted as a government
The Petrograd Soviet
 Elected an Executive Committee
 Acted as a legislative body.
 Ordered army units to elect soldiers committees
The Duma and the Soviet
 Wanted to abolish the tsarist administration.
 Prepare for an Constituent Committee.
This dual command made the Tsar abdicate and thereby destroy the political system.

Vladimir Ilich Lenin 1870-1924

His oldest brother Alexander was executed for taking part in a plot against the Tsar.
Lenin was expelled from the university for taking part in a political meeting.
Lenin turned to radicalism to revenge not of idealism as many other intellectuals.
Lenin thought of politics like waging a war
 We-them, no tolerance
 No compromises, except for tactical ones.
 Cruelty was accepted if it served a good purpose.
The workers seemed to accept capitalism, so professional revolutionaries had to lead them.
1903 Lenin started to build up his own fraction within the Social-Democrat Party.
The Bolsheviks disliked peasant and national minorities, but could use them for the revolution
Lenin wanted Russia to lose the war.

The October Revolution 1917

Phase 1 - The July Debacle

Mistrust and staying out of the Provisional Government was Lenin's tactic.
The Mensheviks joined and thus made the Bolsheviks the sole alternative.

The Germans supported the Bolsheviks to create chaos.
A major Russian offensive failed and made the government weak.
The Bolsheviks sent armed supporters into the streets. The army restored law and order.

Phase 2 – the Seizure of Power

The Kornilov Affair

Kornilov was appointed to restore the discipline in the army.
Was supported by the liberals and conservatives.
Accepted a false offer of dictatorial power.
Kerensky lost confidence in the army.
Kerensky broke with the liberals and the conservatives.
This made the Bolsheviks the sole alternative.

The Constituent Assembly

The Mensheviks got 40% and the Bolsheviks 24% of the votes.
The Bolsheviks convened a Congress of Soviets in Petrograd.
The Military Revolutionary Committee acted in its name before it even met.
The Military Revolutionary Committee controlled key positions in the city.
The Winter Palace was assaulted.
The Constituent Assembly was declared counter-revolutionary.

The One Party State

Domestic politics

The revolution was carried out in the name of the Soviets.
The Bolsheviks – 1918 renamed the Communist Party - kept the real power.
The Politburo was set up 1919 and Russia was ruled by decree just like before 1905.
The opposition accepted Bolshevik rule to get law and order.
Lenin thought that the different nationalities voluntarily supported the Bolsheviks.
When he found out that they did not he imposed federalism in theory.
Propaganda created a surrogate reality.
The Orthodox Church was persecuted, which caused resistance among the people.

Foreign politics

Lenin wanted to make peace with Germany.
The party thought it was to betray the revolution.
The Russians tried to delay the peace negotiations. The Germans went in to Russia.
The Russians accepted the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.
The following principles guided the Russian foreign policy
Keep the political power at any cost.
Secure socialism in Russia, revolutions in other countries came second.
Making peace with imperialist countries is acceptable to gain temporary advantages.
Foreign policy must be conducted unemotionally.
Divide and rule to promote Bolshevik interests.

The Red Terror

Was triggered by an attempt to assassinate Lenin 1918
The Bolsheviks turned to terror because they regarded 90% of the population as enemies.
No written laws 1917-1922. “A socialist sense of justice” guided the courts work.

The first concentration camps were established 1918
Revolutionary Tribunals took care of “political crimes”
The local Soviet was held responsible for the assassination of the Tsar and his family.

The Civil War 1917-1920

The Whites were not monarchists and the Tsar did not claim the throne.
The Greens (peasants) and the Blacks (anarchist) operated behind the lines.

The Whites

Did not correlate their fronts.

Had no government

Consisted of a lot of nationalities

Wanted to restore imperial Russia’s borders.

20 million people lived on territory controlled by the Whites.

The whites collapsed when the British withdrew their support.

The Southern Army

Was based in Rostov, dominated by liberals. Slack discipline

The Siberian Army

Dominated by the SR:s. Led by an admiral.

The Northwestern Front

Was denied access to Finish territory.

The Reds

Controlled the Russian heartland

70 million people and most of industry.

Great Russians.

Lead by an oligarchy.

Kept up discipline with severe punishments. Barrier detachments.

The War Communism 1918-1921

The war communism revealed how the Bolsheviks wanted Russia in the future.

Nationalization of the means of production.

Liquidation of private commerce. A government controlled distribution system.

Abolition of money.

Plan-economy

Compulsory labour.

Money were to be abolished by creating inflation. 1913 – 1, 1922 – 100 million

The peasants were forced to deliver their “surplus” – famine.

Communism for Export

In theory the Communists wanted a world revolution.

After the defeat against Poland 1921 the gave priority to the Soviet Union.

The Comintern tried to promote revolutions abroad.

Russian actions in the West shattered to socialist parties and thereby weakened them.

Workers in the West were not indifferent to nationalism an enjoyed some social security.

The only ones positive to the Soviet Union in the West were businessmen.

Communism in Crises

NEP 1921-1928

The peasants were deprived of their grain and uprisings occurred.

The communists accepted a free market for food.

They still controlled wholesale trade, heavy industry, banks, transportation, foreign trade.

Economic liberty was accompanied by intensified political suppression.

The Criminal Law of 1922 allowed punishment without proof.

The drought of 1921 worsened the famine created by the Communists.

The Soviet Union received aid from the US 1921-1923. 9 million people were saved.

Soviet-German relations developed and deepened especially on the military field.

The centralization of power created a huge bureaucracy within the party and the state.

Bureaucrats according to Marxist theory served the interest of the workers.

This made it impossible for Communists to understand the problems of bureaucracy.

There were twice as many bureaucrats as industrial workers.