

The Russian Revolution

-Key Concepts-

I. Pre-Revolutionary Russia



- Only true autocracy left in Europe
- No type of representative political institutions
- Nicholas II became Tsar in 1884
- Believed he was the absolute ruler anointed by God
- Revolution broke out in 1905
 - Russo-Japanese War (1904)

II. The Revolution of 1905



- The creation of a discontented working class
- Vast majority of workers concentrated in St. Petersburg and Moscow
- Help from the countryside: poor peasants
- No individual land ownership

II. Revolution of 1905 (cont)



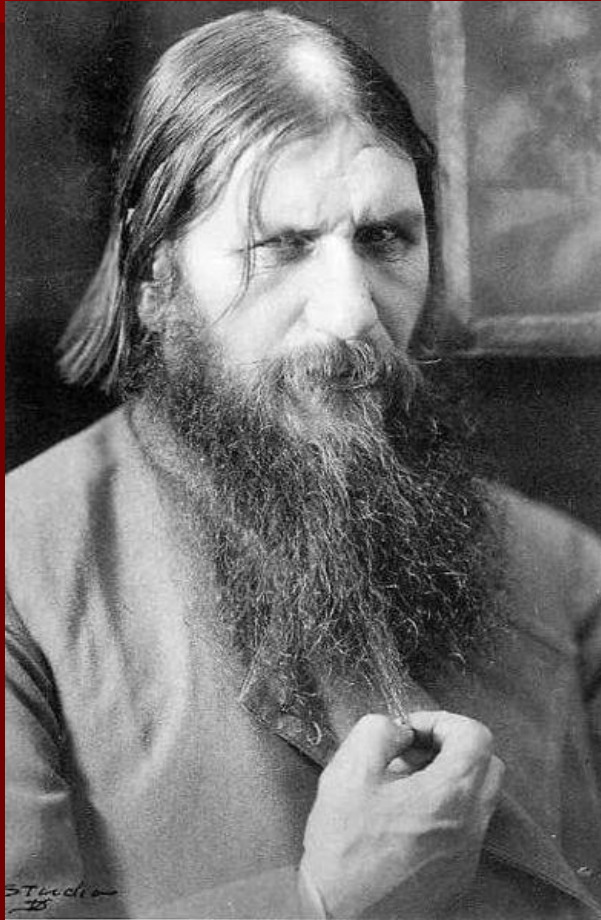
- Russia industrialized on the backs of the peasants
- Tremendous historic land hunger among peasants
- Real winners of the 1905 Revolution: Middle Class
 - Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadets)
 - Duma

III. Conservatism Continues: 1905-1917



- Tsar paid no attention to the Duma
- Duma harassed and political parties suppressed
- Nicholas was personally a very weak man
- Tsar became increasingly remote as a ruler

IV. Alexandra: The Power Behind the Throne



- Even more blindly committed to autocracy than her husband
- The influence of Rasputin over Alexandra
- Origins of Rasputin's power
- Scandals surrounding Rasputin served to discredit the monarchy

Alexis: Alexandra's Son with Hemophilia



V. World War I: “The Last Straw”



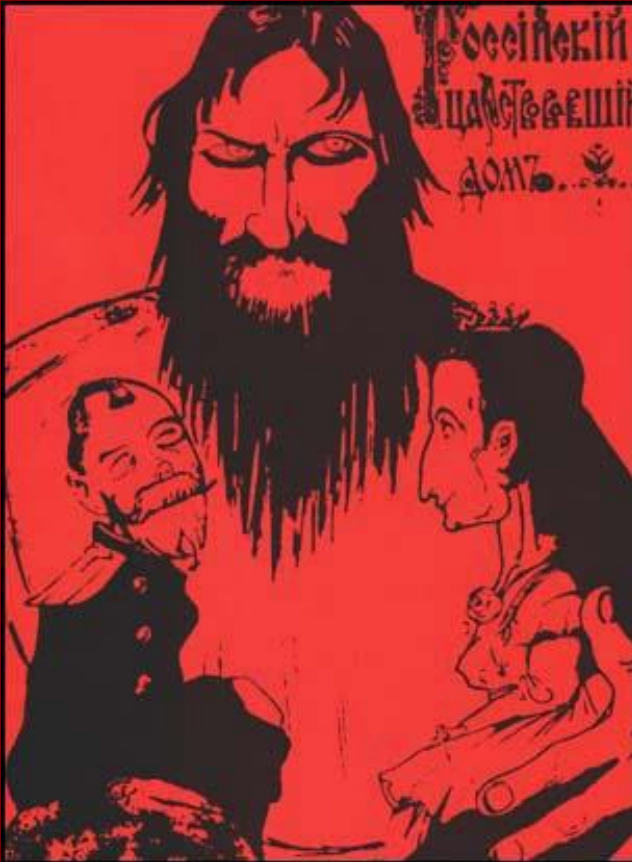
- War revealed the ineptitude and arrogance of the country's aristocratic elite
- The Russian “Steam Roller”
- Corrupt military leadership and contempt for ordinary Russian people
- Average peasant has very little invested in the War

V. World War I (cont)



- Poorly supplied troops
- Result: Chaos and Disintegration of the Russian Army
 - Battle of Tannenberg (August, 1914)
- Spreading Discontent

VI. The Collapse of the Imperial Government



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

VI. The Collapse of the Imperial Government (cont)



- Rasputin assassinated in December of 1916
- Refusal to receive assistance of the Russian Middle Class
- Complete mismanagement of the wartime economy

VII. The Two Revolutions of 1917



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

VIII. The March Revolution



- Origins: Food riots and strikes
- Duma declared itself a Provisional Government on March 12th
- Tsar abdicated on March 17th
- Composition of the Provisional Government
 - Alexander Kerensky
- Very Popular Revolution
- The Petrograd Soviet
 - Order #1

IX. Soviet Political Ideology



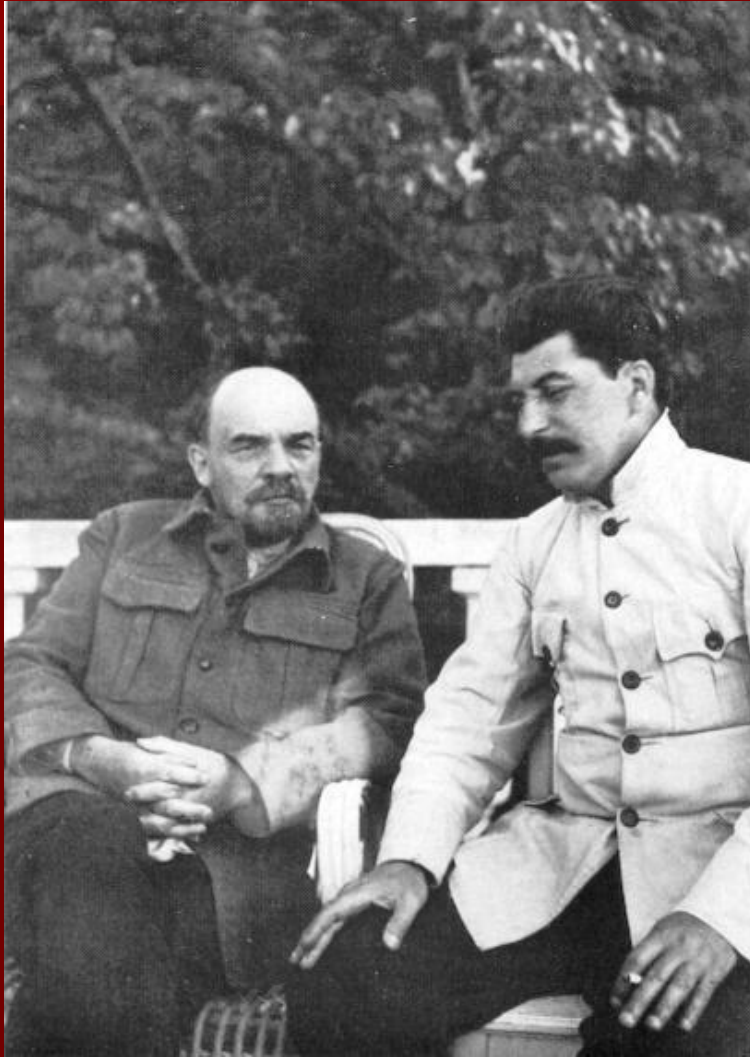
- More radical and revolutionary than the Provisional Government
- Most influenced by Marxist socialism
- Emulated western socialism
- Two Factions
 - “Mensheviks”
 - “Bolsheviks”

X. Founder of Bolshevism: Vladimir Lenin



- His Early Years
 - Exiled to Siberia in 1897
- Committed to Class Struggle and Revolution
- Moved to London in 1902 and befriended Leon Trotsky
- *What is to be Done?* Tract

X. Lenin (cont)



- Key role of the Party in the revolution
 - “Dictatorship of the Proletariat”
- Bolsheviks split from the Russian Socialist Party in 1912
- Character of the Bolshevik Party
 - Joseph Stalin
 - *Pravda*

XI. Vacuum of Leadership in Russia



- Petrograd Soviet dominated by Mensheviks
- Failure of the Provisional Government
- Workers refusing to work and soldiers refusing to fight
- Peasants were expropriating the land outright
- Power was literally lying in the streets of Petrograd

XII. Lenin Steps into This Vacuum



- Amnesty granted to all political prisoners in March of 1917
- Lenin's arrival in Petrograd
- A tremendously charismatic personality
- "Peace, Land, Bread"
- "All Power to the Soviets"
- Bolshevik party membership exploded
- Consolidation of Bolshevik power

XIII. The November Revolution



- The events of November 6
- Council of People's Commissars
- All private property of wealthy was abolished and divided among the peasantry
- Largest industrial enterprises nationalized

XIII. November Revolution (cont)



- Political Police organized: CHEKA
- Revolutionary army created with Trotsky in charge
 - “Red Army”
- Bolshevik Party renamed Communist Party in March of 1918
- The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk negotiated with the Germans
- Terms of the Treaty

XIII. November Revolution (cont)



- Humiliating Treaty would be nullified since all of the west was on the verge of revolution
- Civil War fought between 1917-1920
 - “Reds” versus “Whites”
- Complete breakdown of Russian economy and society

XIV. Interpreting the Russian Revolution



- The official Marxist Interpretation
 - The importance of a permanent international revolution
- Function of Russian History and Culture
- Imposed Revolution on an unwilling victim
- A Social Revolution