The Russian Revolution
1917 to 1921
Ineffective Military

- There were four reasons that the Russian army suffered devastating *defeats* during the *early* years of World War I.
  
  1. Russia’s *military* was not prepared for the total war of World War I.
  
  2. They had no competent military *leaders*
Ineffective Military

3. Russian industries were not able to produce the weapons needed for such a large scale war.

4. Russian troops entered the war without adequate training or supplies.
Russian troops during World War I
Severe Losses

Given these **conditions**, it is not surprising that the Russian army suffered extreme **losses**, particularly in the earlier years of the war.

Between 1914 and 1916, 2 million Russian soldiers were **killed** and another 4 to 6 million were **wounded** or captured.
Ineffective Leadership

There were many reasons that Czar Nicholas II was an ineffective leader.

He was an absolute ruler, and attempted to have complete power and control over Russia.

He relied on the army and a bureaucratic system to keep his country stable.
Ineffective Leadership

- In addition, Czar Nicholas II **insisted** on making all **decisions** himself, and refused to delegate responsibilities.

- It was obvious that he lacked the **ability** and the **experience** to make these decisions.
Ineffective Leadership

The Czar was also shielded from reality by his German-born wife Alexandra.

Alexandra was a willful and stubborn woman, who was overly influenced by a man named Grigor Rasputin.
Nicholas and Alexandra’s wedding photograph

Czar Nicholas II, the last of the Romanov monarchs, and the final Czar of Russia
Rasputin

Rasputin was an uneducated Siberian peasant who claimed to be a holy man.

Alexandra believed Rasputin’s claims because he helped her only son Alexei, who suffered from hemophilia.
Grigor Rasputin, “The Mad Monk”
With the Czar away at the battlefront, Alexandra made all the important decisions.

However, before any decision became official, she consulted Rasputin.
Rasputin

- Alexandra referred to Rasputin as, “her beloved, never-to-be-forgotten teacher, savior, and mentor”.

- Rasputin became extremely powerful and did not hesitate to interfere in government matters.
Frustration Builds

As Russian **leadership** continued to make poor military and **economic** decisions, the Russian people grew more and more **frustrated** with the **monarchy** and absolute rulers.
Even the wealthy, upper class who had supported the monarchy for years, felt the need to take action in an attempt to improve the situation.
In December of 1916, Rasputin was assassinated.

He was shot three times, tied up, and thrown into the Neva River which runs through St. Petersburg.

Somehow, he managed to untie the knots underwater, but he ultimately drowned.
Frustration Builds

In early 1917, **food** supplies were low. The price of bread increased dramatically, and the Russian government implemented bread **rations**.

Many of the **women** who stood in the long **lines** waiting for bread, were also factory workers who worked 12 hour days.
Waiting in long lines for bread rations.
The March Revolution

In early March 1917, a series of strikes led by working class women broke out in Russia’s capital city of Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg).

About 10,000 women marched through the city demanding “Peace and Bread”
The March Revolution

- They were joined by other workers who also demanded an end to the aristocracy.

- They called for a general strike, which shut down all the factories in the city on March 10, 1917.
The General Strike of 1917
The March Revolution

- Aristocracy - the very highest class in a society, including those that hold hereditary titles.

- General Strike - one that involves workers in all or most industries.
The March Revolution

- Alexandra sent word to Nicholas, and he sent troops to break up the demonstrations.

- They were given orders to shoot the demonstrators if it became necessary.
The March Revolution

- However, soon large numbers of soldiers also joined the protests and refused to fire on the large crowds.

- A provisional government was established that was made up of middle class representatives.
The March Revolution

- Provisional Government - an emergency governmental authority that is set up to manage a political transition.
The March Revolution

The government tried to persuade the czar to step down.

Nicholas no longer had the support of the army or the government he had controlled in the past.

On March 15, 1917, Nicholas stepped down as ruler of Russia.
This ended the **dynasty** of the **Romanov** family who had ruled Russia for more than 300 years.

It was also the **end** of the czarist system and the Russian **monarchy**.
The March Revolution

- The provisional government decided to remain in World War I and continue fighting in order to preserve Russia’s national honor.

- This was a huge political mistake.
The March Revolution

After years of **suffering** due to poor decisions made by an ineffective government, neither **workers** nor **peasants**, supported this decision. They wanted an **end** to Russian participation in World War I.
The Rise of Lenin

- The provisional government now faced opposition from a group called the Soviets.

- Soviets - councils made up of representatives who were workers and soldiers.
The Rise of Lenin

- They were mainly socialists who represented the interests of the lower classes.

- One large Soviet group was called the Bolsheviks.
The Rise of Lenin

The Bolsheviks - a Russian political group founded by Vladimir Lenin that was made up primarily of workers who considered themselves leaders of the revolutionary working class.
The Bolsheviks
The Rise of Lenin

Bolsheviks based their political beliefs on the teachings of Karl Marx,

They were led by Vladimir Lenin.

They became a political group that was dedicated to violent revolution.
The Rise of Lenin

- Lenin’s ultimate goal was to **destroy** the **capitalist** system.

- He believed that **violent** revolution was the **only** way to achieve this goal.
Lenin’s goal was to end capitalism.
The Rise of Lenin

He felt **strongly** that the Bolsheviks should work towards gaining **control** of the provisional government, because they **accurately** represented the **dissatisfaction** of the people.
The Bolsheviks made the following four promises to the Russian people.

1. An end to any Russian involvement in WWI.
2. The redistribution of ALL land to the peasants.
3. To transfer the running of factories and industries, from capitalists to committees of workers.

4. To transfer government power, from the provisional government to the Soviets.
By the fall of 1917, the Bolsheviks made up a slight majority in both the Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg) and Moscow Soviets.

The number of party members had grown from 50,000 to 240,000
The Bolsheviks Seize Power

On the night of November 6, 1917 Bolshevik forces took control of the Winter Palace which was the headquarters of the provisional government.

When this occurred, the provisional government collapsed.
Bolsheviks take over the Winter Palace, the headquarters of the provisional government.
The Bolsheviks Seize Power

- Outwardly, Lenin appeared to turn control of the government over to the Congress of Soviets.

- The Congress of Soviets was a group which represented local Soviets from all over the country.

- In reality, the power passed to a Council of People’s Commissioners headed by Lenin.
After the collapse of the provisional government, the Bolsheviks renamed themselves the Communists.

Lenin had promised peace to the people of Russia, but achieving that peace came at a very high price.
The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk – A treaty signed by Russia in March of 1918, with the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.

By signing this treaty, Russia gave up eastern Poland, Ukraine, Finland and the Baltic Provinces.
The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk took away 25% of Russia’s population, 25% of the railway system, 35% of the grain-producing area and 70% of the industry, including 26% of the iron and steel production and 89% of the coal mines. And, as the loser, Russia was fined 6 billion marks.
Additional Losses

- Other than territory, Russia also lost:
  - 25% of its population
  - 25% of its railroad system
  - 35% of its grain producing land
  - 70% of its industry, including iron and steel
  - 89% of its coal mines
  - In addition, Russia was fined 6 billion marks
Civil War in Russia

Following the signing of this disastrous treaty, Russia erupted in civil war.

Because of the treaty, some Russians were strongly opposed to Lenin, and the new Communist government.
The Red Army – the military force developed by the Russian government that fought to protect Communism in Russia.
The Red Army supported Communism during the Russian Civil War.
Civil War in Russia

- The anti-Communists included not only those who had been **loyal** to the Czar, but also **Liberals** and anti-Lenin socialists.

- They were joined by the **Allies**, who had become greatly concerned about the Communist **takeover** that had occurred in Russia.
Civil War in Russia

The Allied Powers sent thousands of troops to Russia to fight against the Communist forces.

By providing this support, the Allies were hoping to bring Russia back into World War I.
But the Red army was committed, and they continued to fight against the Allies and other anti-Communist forces.

The most serious threat that the Red Army faced, was from the Anti-Communist military forces from Siberia.
Civil War in Russia

The **White** Army – the name given to the anti-communist military **forces** from Siberia.
However, by 1920 the Communists had managed to regain control of the governments in Georgia, Russian Armenia, and Azerbaijan.
Meanwhile Russia’s royal family, Czar Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, and their five children, had been captured and sent to a remote mining town.
Czar Nicholas Romanov II, Alexandra, and their five children. The last royal family to rule Russia.

The Romanov children – Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, and Alexei
The Triumph of the Communists

On the night of July 16, 1918 members of the local communist party murdered the former czar and his family.

They then threw their burning bodies into a nearby mine shaft.
The Triumph of the Communists

Against all odds, the Communists had triumphed over multiple opposing forces.

The main reason for this was that the Red Army was a well-disciplined fighting force.
The Triumph of the Communists

Russia’s **commissar** of war was the **leader** of the Red army.

His name was Leon Trotsky, and he was an organizational **genius**.

He did two things to make Russia’s **military** stronger.
Leon Trotsky, Russia’s Commissar of War, and leader of the Red Army.
The Triumph of the Communists

- He reinstated the draft.

- He demanded and enforced rigid discipline.

- Soldiers who disobeyed orders or deserted were executed.
The Triumph of the Communists

- The Communists developed a policy of “war communism” to provide resources for the war effort.

- War Communism – the government control of banks and industries, the seizing of grain from peasants, and the centralization of government administration under Communist control.
The Triumph of the Communists

War Communism accomplished two things.

1. It was a way for the Communist government to **control** the Russian **economy**, Russia’s manufacturing and production, and its food supply.

2. It was a way to **insure** that the Red Army received necessary **supplies**.
The Triumph of the Communists

The Communists formed a **secret** police force that used **fear** and intimidation to **control** the Russian population.

**Cheka** – the name of the Communist Secret Police force.
The Cheka were Lenin’s secret police force. They were led by Felix Dzerzhinsky, a ruthless Bolshevik.
The Triumph of the Communists

- The Cheka began a **movement** which came to be known as the **Red Terror.**

- It was comparable to the Reign of Terror that occurred during the French Revolution.

- The goal of this movement was the **destruction** of anyone **opposed** to the new Communist government.
Communism wins after the Russian Revolution
By 1920, the **Communists** were in complete **control** of Russia.

During the course of the civil war, they had **transformed** Russia into a centralized state, which was dominated by a **single** political party.