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THE CHOICES PROGRAM

*Explore the Past...Shape the Future
History and Current Issues for the Classroom*

From the Choices Program

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The Russian Revolution



THE CHOICES PROGRAM

Explore the Past... Shape the Future

History and Current Issues for the Classroom

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Director
Susan Graseck

Curriculum Developer
Andy Blackadar

Curriculum Writer
Sarah Cleveland Fox

International Education Intern
Rebecca Leaphart

Office Assistant
Bill Bordac

Professional Development Coordinator
Lucy Mueller

Program Coordinator for Capitol Forum
Barbara Shema

Program Associate
Madeline Otis

Staff Associate
Anne Campau Prout

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Program develops curricula on current and historical international issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.

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Thomas J. Biersteker
*Director, Watson Institute for
International Studies*

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Daniel Field
Professor of History, Emeritus, Syracuse University

Stephen P. Frank
Associate Professor of History, UCLA

Abbott Gleason
Barnaby Conrad and Mary Critchfield Keeney Professor of History,
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Patricia Herlihy
Professor of History, Emerita; Professor of International Relations (Research),
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Ronald Grigor Suny
Professor of Political Science and History, University of Chicago

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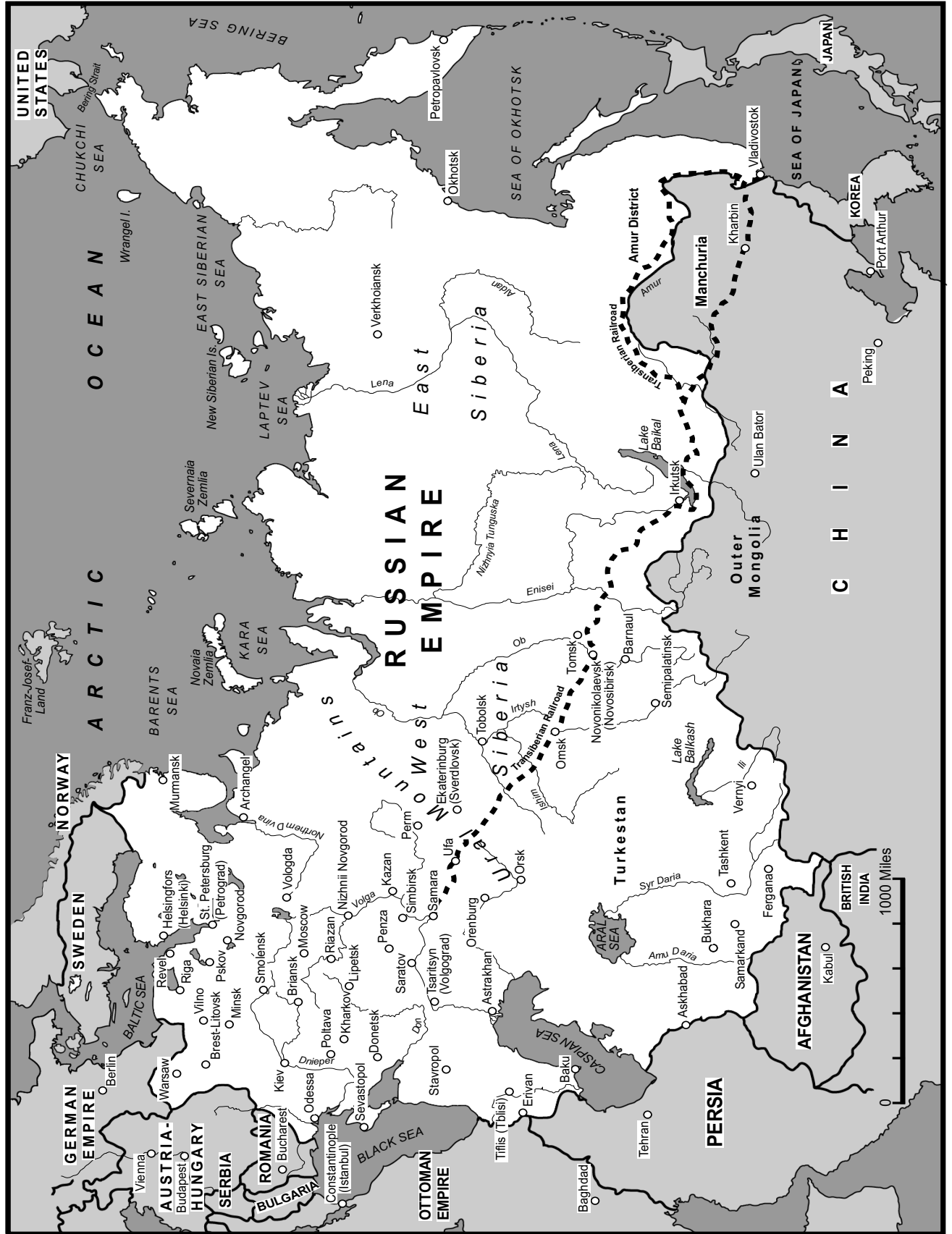


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The Russian Empire



Introduction: Before the Revolution

In 1861, the Russian Empire extended seven thousand miles from east to west and encompassed one-sixth of the surface of the globe. Stretching from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea, from Prussia to the Pacific, Russia was the world's largest country. An empire as diverse as it was large, Russia held seventy-four million people who spoke more than one hundred different languages, came from over one hundred distinct ethnicities, and practiced most major and many minor religions. Trying to hold together the huge and diverse empire created enormous problems for Russia's rulers.

How was Russia governed?

Though Russia was unrivaled in size, it was considered by many Western Europeans to be an extremely backward country. The Renaissance and Reformation, with their emphasis on the importance of the individual, had hardly touched Russia.

Since 1613, Russia had been governed by the tsar (emperor) who possessed complete authority. Though the state bureaucracy assisted the tsar in the operation of his government, no political parties were permitted. Below the tsar and his bureaucracy were privileged nobles who owned much of the country's land. Below them was the majority of the population, millions of serfs (peasant farmers) who worked the land in virtual slavery.

Tsarist Russia had no legislature and no constitution. Russian subjects were not entitled to freedom of speech, assembly, or worship. Any public dissent or opposition was stifled or stamped out by the tsar's secret police. The government carefully censored all publications. Though the power of the tsar was absolute and life was filled with hardships, many Russians regarded the tsar as a representative of God and a force for good.

What were the political groups struggling for the future of Russia?

The tsars had the loyalty of much of the gentry (land-owning nobility) and the masses. But generations of repression by the government, and the suffering of millions had generated political movements among intellectuals seeking change in Russia. There were also numerous non-Russian minorities (including Poles, Jews, Finns, and Ukrainians), seeking to free themselves from the tsar's rule. Although there were many different groups, by the early twentieth century they could be divided into two basic categories: socialists and liberal reformers.

Socialists: There were many socialist groups with differing goals and plans. The socialists hoped to create a classless society that would end the exploitation and suffering of the peasants and workers. This included dismantling the capitalist economic system by taking the "means of production" (land, factories, etc.) from the owners and placing them in the hands of the state. The socialists knew that they would have to rally peasants and workers to their side.

Liberal Reformers: Liberalism was a political ideology based on the ideas of the Enlightenment. Liberal reformers believed that they could put in place western constitutional practices and the rule of law to solve Russia's problems and correct the injustices of the past.

The readings in this unit will take you back to a time when Russia's future hung in the balance and will help you to explore the competing visions for Russia. The first reading explores the events from the emancipation of the serfs to the Revolution of 1905. Part II covers the period from 1905 to the eve of the Revolution in early spring 1917. You will then be asked to address the questions Russians debated at that time. An epilogue explores the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and its impact on the twentieth century.

Part I: The Beginning of the End—1861 to 1905

Not only did Russia lag behind Europe politically, but its industry and trade were also largely underdeveloped. The Industrial Revolution, steaming ahead in Europe, had barely begun in Russia. Modern agricultural technologies, chemical fertilizers, and advanced crop rotation—all well known on Western European farms—were rarely used in Russia. Russian grain yields were the lowest in Europe.

Who were the serfs?

In 1861, nearly 90 percent of the Russian population consisted of subjugated peasants—serfs and state peasants—who were mercilessly exploited. While serfdom had long since disappeared in the West, where it was scorned as a relic of the Middle Ages, it still flourished in the Russian countryside. Serfs lived in approximately 750,000 small villages dispersed throughout the Russian Empire. Most serfs farmed the land communally on open-field strips, using the same techniques employed by previous generations. They worked the land of the nobles or the state and paid rent to their landlords in the form of cash, produce, or labor. On the bottom rung of the social ladder, these uneducated laborers lived in misery, struggled through hard times and periodic famines, and occasionally rebelled against their masters. The serfs, producing the food that fed the giant country, made up the unstable foundation of the Russian Empire.

What was life like for the serfs?

For most peasants life was extremely harsh and lasted an average of only thirty-five years. Living very simply in small, dark, and dank cottages, the peasants often shared their modest homes with chickens and other farm animals. Most lived in remote villages that lacked schools or communication with the rest of the world. The head of each household maintained authority over its members and their belongings. In general, the interests of the collective family unit came before those of the individual.

Russian peasant family units were grouped together in communes. These communes typically consisted of between four and eighty households that worked together to farm the communal land. In addition, the communes maintained order, equitably reapportioning land and administering justice. As a result of out-dated farming techniques, a short growing season, a harsh Russian climate, as well as the high demands of most landlords, the majority of serfs lived in deep poverty.

How did the serfs feel about the tsar?

Despite a hard life full of misery and periodic famine, the serfs did not, on the whole, blame the tsar for their fate. Traditionally, they considered the tsar to be a good-hearted monarch who loved each one of his subjects and wished peace and harmony for even the poorest among them. To millions of illiterate Russian peasants steeped in the traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church, the tsar was a representative of God. The tsars used the Russian Orthodox church as a means to control



Russian peasants.

Photo courtesy of the New York Public Library.

the peasants and crush their political opponents.

Tsar Alexander II

Tsar Alexander II (1855-81) came to power at a time when economic pressure and social unrest were growing in Russia. Many of the tsar's advisors had noted that Russia was quickly falling behind the industrializing countries of the West. The inept performance of Russia's army against British and French forces during the Crimean War of 1853-56 served to focus their concerns. Modern navies and weaponry had enabled the French and British to triumph over Russia on Russian territory. The defeat in the Crimean War, coupled with an antiquated agricultural system and the worsening economic problems forced Russia to consider national reforms.

What was Alexander II's first step toward modernization?

Some of the tsar's advisors believed that the first step towards Russia's modernization was the elimination of the system of serfdom. In 1861, by the stroke of the tsar's pen, tens of millions of serfs were liberated and a new system of land transference was established. The state allotted land belonging to ex-serfholders to peasant communities; it encouraged—and eventually required—the peasants to acquire these allotments through forty-nine-year mortgages. The ex-serfholders got immediate compensation, and the state took on the job of collecting the mortgage payments. The serfs were granted personal freedom.

“It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to await the time when it will begin to abolish itself from below.”

—Tsar Alexander II
to Moscow nobility, March 1856

How did the peasants feel about the new land-transfer system?

Most peasants initially welcomed emancipation. It did not take long, however, for

peasant moods to sour as the unfair nature of the new system began to sink in. Nobles, compensated directly by the state, kept the best land for themselves while the state sold less valuable land to the peasants at prices above its worth. The payments proved to be a substantial burden. Paying rent to the nobles had merely been replaced by paying the state. In addition, the peasants, legally bound to the commune, could not leave without paying their share of the commune's total payments. The peasants' social position had technically changed, but poverty among peasants increased more rapidly than prosperity.

To make matters worse, between 1861 and 1917, the population of the empire more than doubled while agricultural productivity stagnated. This overpopulation was a major cause of peasant poverty. With climatic conditions severely restricting growing seasons, Russia's farmable land (only about 11% of its total) was under severe pressure from the population explosion.

How did the nobles feel about the emancipation of the serfs?

Like the peasants, the nobles began to question the reforms of the 1860s. With the loss of their serfs, many nobles could not adjust to their new circumstances. They were not prepared to exchange their life of comfort and ease for a life working the land as farmers. Many nobles continued spending money as they did before, despite their lower income. As a result, many nobles accumulated large debts. In order to pay off these debts, these nobles were forced to sell even more pieces of their land. With this came increasing discontent.

What other reforms did Alexander II institute?

In addition to the emancipation of the serfs, the tsar and his government instituted other reforms. Alexander II introduced jury trials and relaxed censorship laws. The tsar also created local elected assemblies known as *zemstvos*, which were established to address issues such as road maintenance, irrigation, primary education, and taxation. Although

nobles generally dominated the *zemstvos* and the power of the local councils was meager, for Russia the councils represented a significant departure from the absolute authority of the tsar.

The “Tsar Liberator,” as he was nicknamed for his efforts, also took steps to increase industrial production. To reduce the industrialization gap between Russia and the West, Russia began an ambitious program of state-supported reforms. In addition to setting up state-run industries, the Russian government invited foreign and domestic entrepreneurs to build factories in Russia. Millions of former serfs, forced off the land by the population explosion, supplied potential factory owners with a large pool of cheap labor.

The tsar’s expansion of the railroad system also provided the former serfs with opportunities for employment. When Alexander II took the throne there was only one railway line in Russia. The tsar realized that advances in transportation needed to be a high priority if Russia wanted to modernize. To build railroads, steel was necessary. Russia’s vast coal and iron ore resources supplied the raw materials for steel making, and new mills were erected. Russian railroads expanded to approximately 15,500 miles by 1880. Ultimately, the expansion of railroads facilitated increased grain exports. Grain exports were a vital source of foreign currency, which could then be reinvested into more industrialization.

Why did some people grow frustrated with industrialization?

Not everyone thought that industrialization benefited Russia. Many sections of the population were largely disappointed with the results of the reforms. A group of educated, city-dwelling Russians adopted an extremist approach. They did not seek compromise with the government, they sought its overthrow. These “populists,” as they were known, opposed industrialization, and objected to capitalism’s impact on the peasantry. They argued that capitalism destroyed rural peasant communities by breaking up the communes and forcing people into the cities. They wanted

to maintain the Russian peasants’ traditional communal group ethic because they believed it guaranteed equality among the people and represented Russia’s future. They became increasingly convinced that only through revolution would they be able to attain real land and liberty for the Russian people.

Populist attitudes led thousands of students and intellectuals to “go to the people” (the peasants) in 1873-4. Their effort was motivated by the desire to establish personal connections with the downtrodden peasantry. Many of these were propagandists, convinced that they could persuade the “simple folk” to join the revolutionary cause. The movement “to the people” ended with the mass arrests of the young radicals.

Why did some of the populists resort to violence?

Unable to convince the peasants to adopt their radical program, many populists went underground and turned to violence. In 1879, The People’s Will, an extreme terrorist group of populists, secretly formed. After six unsuccessful attempts on Tsar Alexander II’s life, the group finally achieved its goal. In 1881, the People’s Will assassinated the tsar.

Tsar Alexander III

In response to his father’s assassination, the new Tsar Alexander III (1881-94) began his reign by launching a harsh crackdown against political activity in Russia. The new tsar wanted nothing to do with reforms. Instead, in an attempt to reestablish order, he enacted counter-reforms.

What steps did Alexander III take to roll back his father’s reforms?

Alexander believed that western ideals were incompatible with “the very nature of Russian character.” He felt that it was necessary to purify Russia from non-Russian and revolutionary elements. To this end, the tsar employed a policy called Russification, which aimed at assimilation of non-Russian peoples. The policy, which especially targeted

languages and religions, hoped to turn non-Russians into “true Christians, loyal subjects, and good Russians.” Poles, Finns, and Jews, among others, were encouraged to accept the Russian language, administration, and Russian Orthodox religion. Rigid censorship was imposed.

Russia’s secret police redoubled its efforts against suspected revolutionaries. The secret police were at liberty to imprison, exile or sentence revolutionaries to death. New officials called “land captains,” recruited from the lower nobility, were granted an array of powers over the peasants, who called them “little tsars.” Most alarming to the peasants, the land captains could order public whippings for minor offenses, such as failure to pay taxes or pasturing cattle on nobles’ estates.

With public dissent and opposition stifled, those who chose to voice disagreement with the regime had to do so illegally. Disgruntled Russians, especially those privileged to receive higher education, chafed under the many restrictions that pervaded their lives.

“They give us a comprehensive education, they inculcate in us the desires, the strivings, the sufferings of the contemporary world, and then they cry, ‘Stay slaves, dumb and passive, or else you will perish.’”

—Political theorist Alexander Herzen

What were the consequences of the 1891 famine?

In the summer of 1891, the situation worsened. Famine and disease struck the thirty-six million peasants who lived between the Ural Mountains and the Black Sea (an area twice the size of France). The government tried to



The Tsar’s residence is called the Winter Palace. In front of the palace stands Alexander’s Column.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images.

handle this crisis by itself, but both the bureaucracy and the transport system proved not to be up to the task.

With the Russian economy dependent on the constant infusion of foreign currency, the government actually encouraged grain exports during the famine.

“Even if we starve we will export grain.”

—Russian government slogan

Hungry and discontented, the peasants became increasingly bitter. Many communities staged small-scale revolts and land seizures.

For months the government banned newspaper reports on the famine, calling it just a “poor harvest.” In November 1891, the government admitted the truth and asked the public to form voluntary aid organizations. Volunteers and committees sprung up all over Russia in response. In the end, half a million peasants perished from famine and disease in 1891-1892. The famine crisis crystallized a political and social awakening among educated Russians.

Why did the ideas of Karl Marx hold such appeal after the famine of 1891?

One important piece of the political awakening involved the ideas of Karl Marx. In 1872, Marx's book *Capital* had been ignored by the Russian censors, who felt that it was too difficult for anyone to bother to read. The censors would ultimately realize their mistake. Although the work had sold slowly in Europe, it became a hit with Russian intellectuals.

After the failure of their “to the people” movement, intellectuals seized upon Marx's ideas as a means for transforming their society. Marx was a sharp critic of the capitalist economic system and the processes of industrialization. His ideas held great appeal because they explained the social world systematically. He argued that ultimately, through the efforts of the working class, a socialist, classless society would develop that would end exploitation and provide for all members of society.

Marx's ideas were adapted into a political philosophy known as Marxism. Marx's appeal among Russian intellectuals grew dramatically after the 1891 famine because his ideas seemed to offer explanation for the causes of the famine. Many intellectuals also believed Marx's “European ideas” could help Russia become more like Europe.

The intellectuals knew that they would have to rally the peasant and working classes—the “masses”—to their cause through education and organization. Marxists refer to this process as building “class-consciousness.”

“We seized upon Marxism because we were attracted by its sociological and economic optimism, its strong belief, buttressed by facts and figures, that the development of the economy, the development of capitalism, by demoralizing and eroding the foundations of the old society, was creating new social forces (including us) which would certainly sweep away the autocratic regime together with its abominations. With the optimism of youth we had been searching for a formula that offered hope, and we found it in Marxism.”

—Nikolai Valentinov

Tsar Nicholas II

In the midst of these difficult times Tsar Nicholas II (1894-1917) assumed the throne after the death of his father, Alexander III. Though determined to rule with the absolute authority as his ancestors had, he lacked the

More about Marxism

The writings of the German philosopher Karl Marx provided Russian intellectuals with a “scientific” system to analyze the world. Two of his most important works were the books: *The Communist Manifesto* (1848, written with Friedrich Engels) and *Capital* (1867).

Marx viewed human history as a series of struggles between social classes. These struggles, which he argued date back to the dawn of humanity, involve a fundamental conflict between the owners of property (land or factories) and those who labor on that property. This relationship surrounding the ownership of property is called the “relations of production.” In each of a series of historical stages, the oppressed lower classes eventually rise up against the property-owning class and overthrow it.

According to Marx, industrial capitalism would be the final stage. This stage pits factory owners against factory workers. In a revolution, workers would seize power from factory owners. Eventually, private property would be abolished and a socialist society would evolve. Marx believed capitalism would be succeeded by an economic system—socialism—in which the people themselves control the “relations of production.” With the end of capitalism, workers would labor out of a sincere desire to contribute to the well-being of their fellow humans.

intelligence and strong personality of his father. Like his father, Nicholas II relied heavily on the secret police and heavy-handed tactics to maintain order. He was a reluctant reformer whose weakness led his advisors to jockey for power. Russia could scarcely have had a less competent ruler at a worse time: a tsar determined to lead from the throne, yet incapable of providing the leadership Russia needed.

Why did peasants migrate to the cities?

As food shortages worsened, more and more peasants flocked to the cities to fill jobs created by increasing industrialization. Russia's urban population increased from seven to twenty-eight million. Though industrialization had been under way in Russia for some time, government efforts spurred it ahead in the 1890s and into the twentieth century. Russian officials introduced policies that helped bring more money into the country. It could then reinvest the money in industrialization. Russia also borrowed huge amounts of money from France.

“The inflow of foreign capital is...the only way by which our industry will be able to supply our country quickly with abundant and cheap products.”

—Finance Minister Count Sergei Witte

The system of modernization succeeded in moving Russian industrialization forward. By 1913 Russia would be the fifth largest industrial country.

What were some of the negative effects of industrialization?

As industrialization increased, jobs on railways and in dockyards, mines, construction sites, and factories opened. The millions of the new working class lived in overcrowded and unsanitary housing and worked for more than twelve hours a day. Pay was low and conditions were extremely unsafe.

Workers banded together. Many urban workers belonged to groups organized around rural regions of origin. These ties helped



Nicholas II and his family.

Photo courtesy of Jupiter Images.

maintain the values of egalitarianism and collective action that drove life in the peasant communes. Hostility toward authority, which stemmed from years of oppressive conditions as peasants and serfs, grew.

This hostility toward authority, coupled with the poor living and working conditions, culminated in large-scale strikes. Some workers began to organize illegally. Once organized, the workers, on occasion, showed great solidarity, standing up to management and state authority. The working class came to be seen as a promising source of recruits for the ranks of Russia's revolutionary political parties.

How did the system of modernization contribute to growing unrest?

The long period of repression and unrest began to boil over near the turn of the century. By 1902 it was clear that the policies introduced under the system of modernization had brought in their wake enormous pressures on Russian society. It was also plain that the system, like the agrarian decrees of the 1860s, created more problems than it solved.

In addition, an economic downturn in 1899 led to dissatisfaction among the small middle class. Their restlessness was rooted in envy of the freedom enjoyed by Western businessmen. Nobles suffered as their own incomes diminished and the countryside be-

came more dangerous. Uprisings, strikes, and discontent across the country reached a new level by 1903.

Throughout society, Russians were extremely unhappy with the autocracy, angered by its disregard for human life and liberty. Other ethnic groups (i.e. Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, Armenians, etc.) were also pressured by the constant focus on Russification. People wanted a constitution, and their patience was nearing its end. The pieces and players were in place for Russia's revolutionary era.

What were the major political groups that sought change in Russia?

Though open political dissent was stifled by the tsar, two broad political groups opposed to the tsar had emerged in Russia by the first years of the twentieth century. The first group consisted of liberals who supported evolving to a more Western European system of government. They came largely from the middle class. These liberals valued individual liberty and saw the role of the state as protecting the rights of citizens. The second group consisted of socialists, who worked to gather the support of workers and peasants for revolutionary change in Russia. The two major revolutionary socialist parties of early twentieth-century Russia were the populist Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) and the Marxist Social Democrats (SDs),

The Socialist Revolutionary party was the most radical. Its ancestors were the People's Will (the terrorist cell responsible for the assassination of Alexander II twenty years before) and, more broadly, the entire populist movement. The SRs, whose slogan was "Land and Liberty," were known as a party of the peasants. In reality, they were a party of intellectuals who saw themselves as leaders championing the peasants' cause.

They called for two monumental changes: socializing all land and transferring it to the communes, and replacing the monarchy with a democratic republic. Both of these ideas had some support among the peasants—Russia's largest social group. The SRs had three prob-

lems: the peasants' wide geographic dispersal, which complicated effective political activity; the party's loose organization; and police opposition. Like the People's Will, the SRs engaged in political terrorism. In 1902, starting a campaign of violence, they murdered the tsar's minister of the interior. Other assassinations soon followed.

Other radicals turned to Marxism and formed the Social Democratic party. They believed that as Russia industrialized and became more capitalistic, it was becoming more fertile ground for socialist activity focusing on the working class instead of the peasantry. In 1902 Vladimir Lenin, one of the most radical SDs, insisted that a successful revolution depended on revolutionary intellectuals building a stronger sense of working-class consciousness among workers. Lenin wanted to form a radical party to lead the workers into revolution. The next year, the Social Democratic party split in two: the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Lenin was a Bolshevik, who because of his political views spent some seventeen years of his life outside of Russia.

How did war with Japan increase tension?

The first fires of Russia's revolutionary era were kindled by the spark of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). The construction of the Trans-Siberian railroad line had brought Russia and Japan into conflict over their ambitions in Manchuria and Korea. Tsar Nicholas II and his advisors assumed that war with Japan would be easy.

The war proved disastrous for Russia. The army fought with outdated weapons and was poorly supplied. Thousands of Russian soldiers' lives were wasted in bayonet charges against well-fortified machine gun and artillery positions. As casualties and expenses mounted, the opposition increased its criticism of the government and the cry for a new constitution grew louder. In December, Japan captured twenty-five thousand Russian prisoners and seized Russia's Pacific fleet. A war which Russia's interior minister had welcomed as "a short victorious war" to stem the revolutionary movement, ended in clear

defeat. The defeat provided fuel for the fires of Russia's revolutionary era.

The 1905 Revolution

A short time later the revolutionary era began. On January 9, 1905 in St. Petersburg, 150,000 workers, their wives, and children peacefully marched to the tsar's Winter Palace to bring a petition of economic grievances to him. The marchers carried religious icons and crosses, as well as large portraits of the tsar, and sang hymns as they made their way to the center of the city. Thousands of the tsar's troops confronted the demonstrators and fired on them, killing forty and wounding hundreds. There were clashes elsewhere that day in the capital. By day's end, approximately two hundred lay dead and eight hundred were wounded.

"Bloody Sunday," as the day was later known, permanently altered the attitudes of the people toward the tsar and his government. The centuries-old view of the tsar as a benevolent protector of the people was destroyed. Frustration turned to anger around the country.

"I saw these looks of hatred and vengeance on literally every face—old and young, men and women. The revolution had been truly born, and it had been born in the very core, in the very bowels of the people."

—Bolshevik Martyn Liadov

Later that day, enraged workers rampaged through the streets, heaving rocks at the troops, assaulting policemen, looting stores, and breaking into the houses of the rich. Until then, it had been mostly liberals, revolutionary activists, and university students who advanced the idea of limits on the tsar's authority. Workers and peasants now joined the fray.

What began as a demonstration became a revolution. The events of Bloody Sunday were followed quickly by an increase in public violence and demonstration all over Russia. There



"Bloody Sunday." A poster depicts the events of January 9, 1905.

Photo courtesy of the New York Public Library.

were uprisings by workers, students, liberals, soldiers and peasants alike. The *zemstvo* congress called for a constitution and countless individuals and societies called for reforms.

"We can no longer live like this," declared the headline of a leading newspaper. Many Russians began repeating this phrase among themselves.

How did Tsar Nicholas deal with the worsening situation?

The rapid changes within Russia and the increasing complexity of the world required strong and creative leadership on the throne. Tsar Nicholas II was anything but that leader. He refused to accept that danger faced his dynasty, despite the fact that the rest of his government was terrified by the deteriorating situation. He was convinced that foreign agents had instigated the march on Bloody

Sunday and that most of his subjects were happy with his leadership. During the autumn of 1905, as his empire seethed with discontent, he spent much of his time hunting birds. When an advisor told him he might need to make some political concessions to calm the situation, Nicholas replied, “one would think you are afraid a revolution will break out.” The advisor replied, “Your majesty, the revolution has already begun.”

“The tragic aspect of the situation is that the Tsar is living in an utter fool’s paradise, thinking that He is as strong and all-powerful as before.”

—From the diary of an advisor to the tsar,
October 1, 1905

The Revolution of 1905 climaxed in September and October with the first general strike in Russian history. The strike was led by a workers’ council (known as a Soviet), which was led by Leon Trotsky. He belonged to the Mensheviks—a socialist group who believed that a post-revolutionary government would initially have to be led by the middle class. The government, economy, and public services ground to a halt as millions of workers protested. Lawlessness exploded around the country.

On October 9, Count Witte, a senior adviser, presented the tsar with a list of recommended reforms, which came to be known as the October Manifesto. The reforms outlined in the manifesto included an expansion of civil liberties, a limited monarchy, a legislature elected by universal suffrage, and legalization of trade unions and political parties.

“The slogan of “freedom” must become the slogan of government activity. There is no other way of saving the state.... The advance of human progress is unstoppable. The idea of human freedom will triumph, if not by way of reform, then by way of revolution.”

—Count Sergei Witte

Opposition Political Groups in 1905

Liberals: Favored evolutionary change towards a more Western European system of government. There were two main liberal parties, the Octobrists and the Constitutional Democrats (Kadets).

Kadets: Concentrated on political reforms and the introduction of civil rights and universal suffrage.

Octobrists: Named for the October Manifesto of Tsar Nicholas, which they saw as a basis for cooperation. They opposed universal suffrage.

Socialists: There were two major socialist parties: Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries. They favored a revolutionary remaking of Russian society.

Social Democrats: Developed political ideology based on Marxism. Split in 1903 into the **Bolsheviks** and **Mensheviks**.

Socialist Revolutionaries: Favored transferring land to the peasant-run communes. Radical group that utilized terrorist methods. They often disagreed with the Marxist ideology of the Social Democrats.

Nicholas’s top advisors frantically urged the tsar to sign this October Manifesto. Nicholas very reluctantly signed.

How did the manifesto split the liberals?

While millions of Russians joyously hailed the manifesto and cancelled the general strike, others of various liberal political groups were divided about their feelings concerning the manifesto. Some, like the liberal Octobrist party, saw the document as the basis for good-faith cooperation with the government. This party supported moderate political reforms and a limited suffrage and was willing to participate in a post-manifesto government. Other liberals, like the Constitutional Democrat

Mensheviks and Bolsheviks

Mensheviks: The Mensheviks were Marxists who wanted a socialist party where the masses participated in all aspects of the party structure. Political repression under the tsar forced them to operate in secret, but they were not comfortable with the methods of the Socialist Revolutionaries and opted for a patient and gradual approach to political change. The Mensheviks believed that Russia was not ready for socialism—it would come to Russia only after it had been achieved in the West. The Mensheviks’ goal was to pave the way for that revolution by organizing the workers and helping them toward greater class consciousness.

Bolsheviks: The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, were Marxists who favored a socialist party that was directed from the top by a small, elite core. Lenin believed that only a secret and highly trained organization of militant revolutionaries could prevail. In Russia, they would need to become a tight-knit, highly disciplined group before the masses could be properly brought to the party. Lenin argued that workers needed the leadership of Bolshevik leaders to guide their work in the street and the factories.

(Kadet) party, questioned the tsar’s willingness to deliver on the promises of the manifesto. They withheld acceptance of the manifesto and worked for further concessions. In addition to splitting the liberals, the manifesto also increased the separation between the liberals and the socialists. After October, the liberals focused on moderate political reforms while the socialists pursued radical political and social change.

How did conservatives react?

To the dismay of many liberal political groups, unrest continued to increase. Socialist-inspired violence was now met by violence from conservatives, much of it sponsored by the tsar. Just hours after the October Manifesto was signed, fighting broke out again on the streets. The divide between the conservatives and the revolutionaries polarized the country.

The most influential conservative group was the Union of the Russian People (URP), formed in October to mobilize pro-tsarist sentiment. The tsar, who wore the Union’s

badge, provided money for its newspapers and secretly supplied it with weapons. The Union formed paramilitary groups called the Black Hundreds, which paraded through the streets displaying banners, crosses, and portraits of the tsar, while concealing brass knuckles and knives in their pockets. The Black Hundreds took to the streets beating Jews and those they suspected of having democratic sympathies.

How did the tsar attempt to put down the revolution?

Encouraged by the display of violence from conservatives, the government now felt that the time had come to repress the revolution. In early December the government shut down the St. Petersburg Soviet (workers’ council) and arrested its leaders. News of the Petersburg Soviet’s dispersal prompted an armed revolt by the Moscow Soviet, where the Bolsheviks had much influence. The police and army tried to subdue this uprising but the workers fought back. More than a thousand people died in savage street fighting before the

Anti-Semitism

During the reign of Tsar Nicholas II, Jews were frequent targets of organized violence known as pogroms. Although the pogroms were not instigated by the government, the tsar saw these pogroms as acts of patriotism by “loyal Russians.” Nicholas hoped to use widespread anti-Semitism to rally opposition to those who opposed his regime. The campaign drove many Jews toward the revolutionary movement.

government restored order.

Throughout the country, socialists were arrested, imprisoned, flogged, exiled, killed, or forced into hiding. The army razed entire villages and imprisoned thousands of peasants. When the jails filled up, peasants were simply shot. Estimates of the number killed by the tsarist's regime during the six months after the October Manifesto total fifteen thousand with an additional twenty thousand wounded and some forty-five thousand people deported or exiled.

What were the results of the October Manifesto?

Within six months of issuing the October Manifesto, Nicholas enacted his interpretation of its provisions. Freedom of the press, assembly, and association were introduced in Russia. For the first time in history, Russians could now legally form political parties and labor unions. (The government could still place particular provinces under martial law, thereby revoking these and other freedoms.) Plans were announced for elections and for the organization of the new government.

The tsar was to share power with a two-chamber legislature. Half the members of the upper house, the State Council, were to be appointed by the tsar and the other half were to be elected by the nobility and clergy. The lower house, the State Duma, was to be comprised of elected representatives. The Crown kept the power to appoint and dismiss ministers; declare war and make peace; dismiss the Duma at his whim; and enact laws when the Duma was not in session, although the new law was nullified if the Duma did not approve at its next session.

The peasants and workers had grown in political awareness and power, but these new political reforms fell short of the sweeping

social change they had sought. Their living conditions remained the same, and the hardship they faced in the factories continued.

It soon became obvious that Nicholas had signed the manifesto only to defuse the October crisis. The tsar disdainfully regarded the new legislature as an advisory, not a law making body, and maintained the right to revoke the concessions he had made in the October Manifesto. The tsar felt his actions were consistent with the letter of the document, but they were clearly not in accord with its spirit.

How did the different political factions see the October Manifesto?

Russia's radicals saw this new plan as a sham; the Socialist Revolutionaries and some Social Democrats boycotted the first Duma elections. The liberals were divided, since the Octobrists decided to participate fully in the new government while the Kadets preferred an oppositional role. The Kadets won the largest number of seats. When the Duma convened in April 1906, the Kadets demanded the abolition of the State Council, the seizure of large landed estates, amnesty for all political prisoners, and a ministry responsible to the Duma. Nicholas was not about to consider any of these proposals. In July he dissolved the Duma and called for new elections, hoping that the voters would seat a more conservative majority. But this time the socialist parties decided to participate in force and, to the dismay of the tsar and his advisors, they made substantial gains at the expense of the liberals and conservatives. Deep conflict pervaded the government.

During the Revolution of 1905 the divided Russian people failed to coordinate their efforts and the armed forces stayed loyal to the tsar. As a result, the government shuddered, but did not fall.

Note: During the period covered in this reading, Russia used a calendar which was thirteen days behind the one used in Western Europe. Russia adopted the Western calendar in 1918. The revolutions of 1917, known to Russians as the February and October revolutions (and referred to this way in these pages), took place in March and November according the Western calendar.

Part II: “We Can No Longer Live Like This”—1905-1917

With the Revolution of 1905, the Russian people had won new political and social freedoms. By the time the revolution was put down, newspapers had sprung up, and political parties had been formed. The Duma had also been established. These changes ensured that the tsar could no longer exclusively control politics. Russians had tasted new freedoms and developed a sense of their power to influence events. When the government regained its footing, it realized that it could not revoke the new political freedoms without convulsing society once again. Never again would the Russian people place their full trust in the tsar.

How did the various political groups regard the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution?

The workers and peasants that made up the rank and file of the socialist movements were not nearly as interested in political freedoms as they were in social reform, and they had learned that liberal leadership would not help them achieve their goals. Returning to the harsh drudgery of their jobs, the demoralized former strikers took heart at the numbers of workers who gradually came forward to join their unions. Those who owned property—the more conservative nobles and the small middle class—came away from the 1905 Revolution with genuine fear of the lower classes.

“The wave of anarchy that is advancing from all sides, and that at the present time threatens the legal government, would quickly sweep away any revolutionary government: the embittered masses would then turn against the real or presumed culprits; they would seek the destruction of the entire intelligentsia [class of intellectuals]; they would begin indiscriminately to slaughter anyone who wears German [i.e. European] clothes.

—Prince E.N. Trubetskoi, November 1905

In February 1906 the liberal Kadet party formally denounced the strikes, the land seizures, and the Moscow uprising. Among many intellectuals, deep pessimism prevailed over the future.

“...whether we remember or forget, in all of us sit sensations of malaise, fear, catastrophe, explosion.... We do not know yet precisely what events await us, but in our hearts the needle of the seismograph has already stirred...”

—Poet Alexander Blok

Who was Petr Stolypin (1862-1911)?

Onto this uncertain stage stepped Petr Stolypin. Appointed as prime minister in 1906, Stolypin was from an old noble family and supported the monarchy. Stolypin understood that the crown’s survival depended on two factors: the restoration of order and genuine cooperation with the Duma. Stolypin believed that agrarian reform was essential if the problem of peasant rebellion was to be cured. Stolypin believed that a stable land-



Peasants making bricks by hand.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

owning class of peasants, which would have a comparable stake in Russia to that of the gentry, had to be created.

“First of all we have to create a citizen, a small landowner, and then the peasant problem will be solved.”

—Petr Stolypin

Stolypin confronted an enormous task. The country continued to be wracked by peasant unrest and terrorism. During 1906 and 1907, Socialist Revolutionaries and anarchists killed or injured nine thousand people. Forty-five hundred of their victims were officials.

During Stolypin’s first three years in office, the government shut down hundreds of radical newspapers and labor unions. Almost sixty thousand political prisoners were executed, imprisoned, or exiled without trial for participating in allegedly radical activities. The army tried thousands of peasants in field courts-martial. Many were executed. The hangman’s noose became known as “Stolypin’s necktie,” and the railroad cars used to transport political prisoners to Siberia were dubbed “Stolypin carriages.”

How did Stolypin attempt to bring about agrarian reform?

Stolypin wanted to create a class of prosperous, conservative small farmers, much like the families that worked the land in France and the United States. To achieve his aim, Stolypin sought to break up the village communes in which peasants held land collectively.

Acting with the tsar’s power to rule by decree when the Duma was not in session, Stolypin enacted his most important law in November 1906. This law enabled peasants to separate from the commune and set up private farms.

Stolypin believed that the agrarian problem could not be solved by taking over private estates, as advocated by liberals and Socialist Revolutionaries: there simply was not enough land in private possession to meet the needs

of the rapidly growing peasant population. For Stolypin, the solution lay in more intensive cultivation to yield larger harvests. He wanted to drive the poorer and inefficient peasants off the land by allowing them to sell to more productive and wealthier peasants.

He thought the best means to this end was to allow privatization of peasant landholdings. Stolypin also gave peasants the right to homesteads in Western Siberia where agriculture was possible. Some 2.5 million moved to Siberia.

The new law set up procedures for a household to withdraw from the commune and claim ownership of its allotment of land. The household could then set up its own farm or sell the land. Between 1906 and 1916, 2.5 million households filed petitions to claim ownership of their allotments. This sum represented 14.5 percent of total communal acreage. Those who used the new legislation tended to be poorer peasants who wanted to sell their allotments.

Why did the socialist-bloc refuse to work with Stolypin?

The Duma’s socialists disliked Stolypin and refused to work with him, in part because the electoral law favored the rich, so that the peasants and workers whom the socialists championed were grossly underrepresented in the Duma. With this impasse, the tsar dissolved the second Duma in June 1907.

Acting when the Duma was dissolved, Stolypin drastically changed election laws. The new system of voting favored large landowners and the wealthy. One percent of the population now elected the Duma. By changing the election laws, Stolypin produced a third Duma with a conservative majority, which then approved the new election laws.

Stolypin’s brutal repression of radicals, persistent attempts to weaken the communes, and high-handed style of governing made him many enemies. In September 1911, while attending the opera, he was assassinated by a double agent who served both the police and the terrorist cause. It was never learned which

side the assassin was working for at the time of the murder. It is even possible that jealous high-level officials in the tsar's government were involved.

A Country in Turmoil

Russia between 1911 and 1914 was a country in turmoil. The political impasse continued as a fourth Duma was elected in 1912. The new Duma was as unrepresentative of the entire population as was its predecessor. A resurgent conservative bloc hoped to restore its ideal Russian social order. The Union of the Russian People (URP), gained more adherents as it stepped up its street campaigns and violence against Jews and those they suspected of harboring revolutionary ideas. The tsar supported the URP, hoping that someday it would become the basis for a political party able to challenge the socialists. It would never become a significant political factor.

What were the economic conditions?

Although the political environment was chaotic, economic conditions were mixed. In 1906, the Ministry of Finance negotiated a series of massive loans from Western European banks so as not to be dependent on appropriations from the new Duma. This sparked renewed growth of both Russian and foreign-owned industries. Iron and coal production increased as did Russia's imports and exports. Russia was the world's leading grain exporter.

But conflict increased on the land and in the factory. Between 1910 and 1914, seventeen thousand peasant disturbances were reported in European Russia. Workplace violence returned with a vengeance in 1912, after the massacre of 350 striking gold miners in Siberia by government troops. During the following two years, three million laborers participated in over nine thousand strikes.

On the eve of World War I, the highly volatile Russian Empire stood poised on the edge of disaster. In addition to the sharp political divisions, ethnic tensions simmered just under the surface. Ukrainians, Jews, Poles, Finns, Latvians, Armenians, and many other

ethnic groups harbored grievances against the Russian rule. They also had their own political aspirations. They often resented each other as well as the Russians who ruled and lived among them.

All these passions were held in check only by a weak tsar and weak government. Sooner or later there would again be violence.

How did World War I affect Russia?

In August 1914 Russia joined World War I as a member of the Allied Powers. Despite Russia's progress between 1885 and 1914, the country's industrial capacity still lagged far behind that of the other countries fighting in WWI. Serious weapons shortages were one major problem that Russian troops faced.

“Unarmed men had to be sent into the trenches to wait till their comrades were killed or wounded and their rifles became available.”

—Report from a British officer in Russia

Germany's heavy artillery often destroyed Russian units before they ever saw their foe. The Russian armies lacked the guns and shells to respond. By the end of 1916, Russia's casualties were approximately 3.6 million dead or badly wounded, in addition to 2.1 million prisoners of war.

“They drove us and we went. Where was I going and why? To kill the Germans! But why? I didn't know. I arrived in the trenches, which were terrifying and appalling. I listened as our company commander beat a soldier, beat him about the head with a whip. Blood poured from the poor man's head. Well, I thought, as soon as he begins to beat me, I'll skewer him with my bayonet and be taken prisoner. I thought who really is my enemy: the Germans or the company commander? I still couldn't see the Germans, but here in front of me was the commander. The lice bit

me in the trenches. I was overcome with dejection. And then as we were retreating I was taken prisoner.”

—A Russian draftee

Poorly armed, poorly trained, and led by cruel and often incompetent officers, the Russian armies and soldiers suffered greatly.

When Russian armies retreated, the Russian military commanders applied a “scorched-earth policy” of destroying anything that might be of use to the advancing German military, including shelter and food supplies. Millions of Russian refugees streamed eastward where they interfered with the movements of the Russian military. In addition the refugees required shelter and food which were in short supply. The influx of hungry and discontented refugees brought more problems to Russia’s cities.

How did Russia finance its war effort?

Russia financed its war effort by increasing taxes, securing foreign loans, and increasing the supply of paper money six times over. Government debt and inflation skyrocketed. Between 1914 and 1916, prices tripled, but wages only doubled. The pressures on the urban population rose even higher as some six million war refugees and new hires crowded the cities. Capitalists raked in record profits while workers strained to pay daily expenses.

How did the Russian public regard the war?

While the war had initially been greeted by public displays of patriotism, the huge losses and obvious incompetence of the tsar’s government demoralized both soldiers and civilians. Just as with the famine of 1891-2, educated society decried this mismanagement and created its own voluntary organizations (approved by the government) to increase war production, coordinate the military supply effort, and provide social services.

During the summer of 1915, the Duma, which had not been in session for almost a year, reconvened. Two-thirds of its members

formed a broad coalition called the Progressive Bloc, composed of all factions—except extremists—on both the socialist and conservative sides. The Bloc’s chief concern was winning the war, and its members were convinced that this could not happen unless the tsar appointed a new ministry supported by the public. Remarkably, some of the tsar’s own ministers openly agreed with the Bloc and volunteered to step down in favor of new appointees acceptable to the Duma.

Defying the Bloc’s demands, Tsar Nicholas fired many of his ministers and dismissed the Duma. In addition, he decided to go to the front and, despite his total lack of military experience, assume personal command of the army. He did so in the hopes of reviving the morale of the troops.

The Monarchy Self-Destructs

Nicholas’ decision to go to the front allowed his wife, the Tsaritsa Alexandra (who was German by birth), to play a more significant role in Petrograd (as the capital had been renamed in 1914, in a patriotic change from the German-sounding St. Petersburg). Opposed to any sort of political reform, the empress persuaded her absent husband to replace many of his remaining ministers with her own favorites. She, in turn, relied on the counsel of Rasputin, the peasant “holy man,” who had acquired considerable influence at court due to his mysterious healings of her hemophiliac son. Convinced that she and Rasputin were Nicholas’s only indispensable advisors, Alexandra peppered her husband with letters on governmental matters.

“And guided by Him [God] we shall get through this heavy time. It will be hard fighting, but a Man of God [Rasputin] is near to guard yr. [your] boat safely through the reefs—little Sunny [Alexandra] is standing as a rock behind you, firm and unwavering.”

—Tsaritsa Alexandra

Who was Rasputin?

Nicholas's dependence on his wife, together with her complete trust in the semi-literate Rasputin, severely damaged the prestige of the monarchy. Rasputin's reputation was scandalous. He openly bragged of his control over jobs in the government and church hierarchies. He received bribes and sexual favors from those who desired his intervention on their behalf. Rasputin himself encouraged false rumors that he had been sexually intimate with Alexandra. These tales alienated Russians of all social backgrounds, from other members of the royal family to the lowest-ranking foot soldier.

This appearance of appalling corruption in high places extended to the war effort. It was said that the tsaritsa and her circle were German spies and that Nicholas gave his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm II, advance notice of Russian troop movements. These rumors, although untrue, nevertheless infuriated many members of the public, who increasingly directed their wrath over Russia's wartime failures at the royal family. Some prominent Russians, including members of the royal family, privately discussed the need for a coup d'état. They became persuaded that a change in leadership could revive the war effort, preserve the state, and stave off a revolt. In December, 1916 Rasputin was murdered in a plot involving three nobles, including the tsar's favorite nephew. After Rasputin's death, Nicholas and Alexandra grew ever more isolated and more resistant to reform.

How did the war affect the civilian population?

World War I both created and exacerbated severe economic difficulties. By late 1916,



Rasputin (center) surrounded by members of the court.

Photo courtesy of Jupiter Images.

with the mobilization of some fifteen million men and the direction of all resources to the war effort, the population endured shortages of boots, firewood, kerosene, soap, sugar, and textiles. While good harvests produced plenty of food in rural areas, the railroads could not get food to the cities fast enough to satisfy demand. By the winter of 1916-17, the cities confronted a critical food shortage.

Led by women (who stood in line for hours to secure food for their families), riots began to occur. To make matters worse, during that winter a serious fuel shortage coincided with the coldest weather in years. The temperature in public workplaces and private homes in Petrograd was reported to have stayed between forty-four and fifty-nine degrees Fahrenheit. The police, whose job it was to monitor urban unrest, recorded ominous signs. Unrest and anxiety grew in intensity, reaching new sections of the general population.

“Mothers, exhausted from standing endlessly at the tail of queues, and having suffered so much in watching their half-starving and sick children, are perhaps much closer to a revolution than (the Duma leaders).”

— Police report

“We will soon have a famine.... In the suburbs of Petrograd you can see well-dressed women begging on the streets. It is very cold. People have nothing to burn in their stoves. Here and there at night they tear down wooden fences. What has happened to the twentieth century! What has happened to Civilization! The number of child prostitutes is shocking. On your way somewhere at night you see them shuffling along the sidewalks, just like cockroaches, blue with cold and hungry.”

—Writer Maxim Gorky

At the same time, the number of strikes approached that of the pre-war period. Workers began to call openly for a change of regimes. These strikes stimulated the socialist parties to renewed recruiting activity in the factories, universities, and army garrisons. In the barracks, demoralized soldiers, disgusted at the futility and the huge human costs of the war, decried governmental paralysis.

By this time, the government, led by an obstinate tsar, had proven itself to be incompetent. The divisions in Russian society were clear. Conditions were ripe for a revolution.

The 1917 Revolution Begins: The February Days

In February 1917, the capital city of Petrograd experienced the first upheavals of the Russian Revolution. The weather that winter was unusually bitter, with the average temperature for the month an icy fifteen degrees below zero. Petrograd’s latitude made matters worse. The city was located so far north that the sun, when it was visible at all, could be observed just a few fleeting hours each day.

How did geography affect the revolution?

Petrograd’s geography played a significant role in the course of the revolution. The city was built where the Neva River emptied into the Gulf of Finland. The river, its branches, and a network of canals divided the city into

separate districts. The city center, surrounded by the Neva and the Fontanka Canal, was the enclave of the prosperous and the powerful. It contained the tsar’s splendid Winter Palace, government buildings, and elegant residences. Smaller palaces and fashionable stores lined the well-policed main street which radiated southeast from the city center. Ringing Petrograd’s core were the gritty industrial suburbs; these districts were situated on islands. The largest factories were located here, along with the grimy apartment buildings which housed the workers. The city’s stylish core could be isolated from the industrial suburbs by drawbridges.

Early 1917 saw two great strikes in the capital, each of which idled tens of thousands of workers and scores of factories. Labor unrest and student protests occurred daily. On February 22, in response to a labor dispute, managers at Russia’s biggest metal and munitions plant locked out all thirty thousand of their workers. Angry workers marched toward the city center but were stopped by police. Some workers met with Alexander Kerensky, a socialist leader in the Duma. They warned him that “something very serious might happen.”

Compared with the preceding weeks, Thursday, February 23, was a somewhat warmer day, with a high temperature of 5 degrees below zero. It was the start of several days of mild weather, with high temperatures from February 24-28 ranging from 6 to 46 degrees above zero. The better weather prompted Petrograd’s residents to emerge from their homes onto the streets. These days witnessed the demonstrations and bloody clashes which brought the 300-year-old Romanov dynasty to an end.

What was the strike of the women textile workers?

February 23 was International Women’s Day for the socialists. That morning, at several factories in the industrial district of Vyborg, frustrated women textile workers met to vent their anger over the serious food shortage. They were furious that ten to twelve hours of labor a day had to be followed by hours

waiting in line at the food stores, with no guarantee that any provisions were available. Clamoring for “Bread!,” they left their factories and headed for the metal plants, looking for their men.

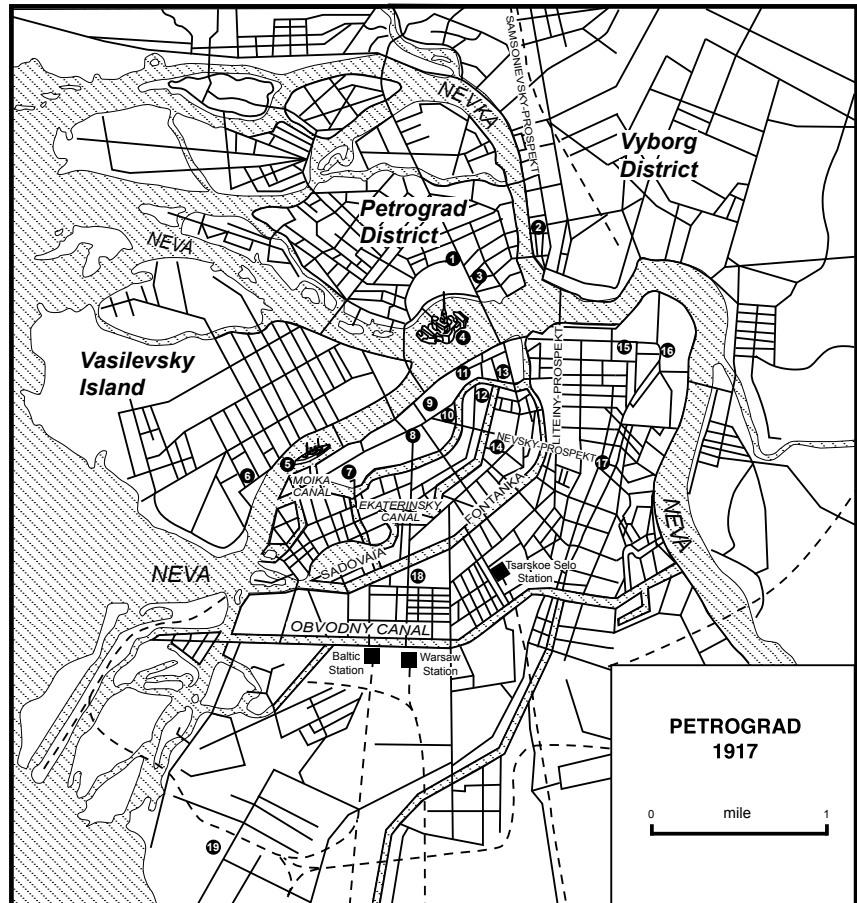
**“Down with the war!
Down with the high
cost of living! Down
with hunger! Bread
for the workers!”**

—Chant of women textile workers

Throng of militant women textile workers surged from one factory to another as additional workers joined the crowd. Eventually, over 100,000 workers, one-third of the city’s total, went on strike, and some tried to march to the city center before going home.

On Friday, February 24, workers went to their factories, but not to perform their normal tasks. Instead, they met to organize a continuation of the strikes and demonstrations of the previous day. More than 200,000 strikers—the largest number since the start of the war—left their jobs and tried to march to the city center. Many were armed with tools, knives, and pieces of iron.

“Comrades, if we cannot get a loaf of bread for ourselves in a righteous way, then we must do everything: we must go ahead and solve our problem by force.... Comrades, arm yourselves with everything possible—bolts, screws, rocks, and go out of the



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Gorky's house | 11 Winter Palace |
| 2 Bolshevik headquarters, Vyborg District | 12 Pravda editorial offices and printing plant |
| 3 Kshesinskaya Mansion | 13 Pavlovsky Regiment |
| 4 Peter and Paul Fortress | 14 City Duma |
| 5 Aurora | 15 Tauride Palace |
| 6 Finland Regiment | 16 Smolny Institute |
| 7 Central telegraph office | 17 Znamenskaya Square |
| 8 War Ministry | 18 Petrograd Regiment |
| 9 Palace Square | 19 Putilov factory |
| 10 General Staff headquarters | |

factory and start smashing the first shops you find.”

—A striker

Despite opposition from the authorities, many strikers, joined by students, housewives, shop clerks, and other sympathizers assembled at Znamenskaya Square in the city center. This square was an enormous open space centered on a mammoth statue of the tsar’s father, Alexander III, on horseback. Before dispersing, the throng listened to fiery anti-tsarist speakers.

It was difficult if not impossible for many to hear what was being said. But after years of political repression, those in the square knew that they were witnessing the beginning of something important. The open defiance of the tsar in front of the police meant that the old order was crumbling.

What role did soldiers play in the growing demonstrations?

During the next two days, events became increasingly violent. On Saturday, a general strike nearly shut down private businesses and public services as marchers filled the streets. Middle-class residents began to join the protests. The crowds became bolder, while some soldiers, assigned to assist the police, openly expressed hesitation about taking action against the marchers.

Many of these soldiers were new recruits and came from the working-class areas of Petrograd. As a result, many of the soldiers had much in common with the demonstrators. Women demonstrators often pleaded with the soldiers, telling them of the hardships their families faced while their male relatives were away fighting in the war.

These pleas weakened military discipline. In a memorable incident, one unit of Cossacks (irregular cavalry) refused to help the police quell a demonstration. Furthermore, this

unit charged the police and killed their commander. That night the tsar, having received reports of the strife in the capital, sent a telegram from his military headquarters ordering the use of decisive armed force to suppress the conflict. Sunday was a day of bloody confrontation. Large numbers of demonstrators converged on the city center, where they were met by soldiers under orders to fire into the crowds. Hundreds of demonstrators were gunned down. The worst clash occurred at Znamenskaya Square, where soldiers of the Volynsky Regiment killed over fifty protestors.

Why was the soldier's mutiny important?

Monday, February 27, was the turning point in the events: the day of the soldiers' mutiny. It began with troops of the Volynsky Regiment who, repelled by their own part in the previous day's carnage, had decided to disobey future orders to fire on demonstrators. When their commander issued this order, he was shot in the back. The Volynsky soldiers left their barracks and set out for other regiments to persuade their troops to join the mutiny. By day's end about 66,000 uniformed soldiers had cast their lot with the striking workers. The military cohesion of the Petrograd garrison was gone. At least 170,000 firearms made their way from military arsenals and weapons factories onto the streets.

Not surprisingly, the streets became even more violent. The crowds invaded prisons and released eight thousand inmates, the vast majority of them common criminals. They took destroyed police stations, along with their records, the court buildings, and prisons. Armed gangs looted shops and broke into the houses of the well-to-do. Some robbed or raped their inhabitants. The February Revolution in Petrograd was violent and bloody.



Men and women stand in line to collect their bread.

Photo courtesy of Jupiter Images.

Casualty statistics varied, but ranged from approximately 1,500 to 7,500 killed or wounded.

Having squandered the support of its own people, and having lost the loyalty of its armed forces, the Romanov dynasty collapsed. On March 2, Nicholas II abdicated, or resigned.

What was the reaction to the abdication of the tsar?

In the aftermath of February's events, many Russians felt a sense of euphoria. A three-hundred-year old dynasty had collapsed in a few days. For several weeks, Russians experienced what seemed to be absolute freedom.

“A miracle has happened, and we may expect more miracles...almost anything might happen.”

—March 23, 1917 poet Alexander Blok

Many viewed the revolution as a great moral rebirth of the Russian people—some likened it to Christ's resurrection on Easter.

Others believed it would take Russia in a more Christian direction and that evil, drunkenness, and theft would vanish.

Dual Authority

As the soldiers' mutiny and prisoner releases of February 27 sealed the monarchy's fate, the would-be leaders of a new Russia gathered in the two wings of the Tauride Palace, the center of a new governing authority in Russia. With some reluctance, several leading officials in the Duma appointed themselves as the new leaders of a Provisional Government. The Provisional Government met in the right wing of the Tauride Palace. In addition to the self-selected Provisional Government, workers and soldiers voted in elections for representatives to a new governmental body—the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Petrograd Soviet met in the palace's left wing. And in March and April, these two bodies attempted to provide leadership in the wake of the tsar's abdication.

The first concern of this new “dual authority” was to restore public order, which



Protesters gather at Znamenskaya Square in February 1917.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images.



Photo courtesy of Jupiter Images.

Headline in *The New York Times* on Revolution in Russia.

could only be accomplished by convincing the thousands of mutinous troops to return to their barracks. Fearful of retribution for their mutiny, the soldiers sought immunity and protection. In response, on March 1 the Soviet unanimously approved Order Number One which gave the soldiers immunity. The Soviet could overrule any military order. As a result, the Soviet received the soldiers' allegiance.

The Provisional Government was led by the Constitutional Democrat party (Kadets). The Kadets were able to seize this power (which in the end proved slight) because many of their more radical socialist counterparts were not interested in negotiating for power within the existing society. Instead, these socialists wanted to create a new society altogether. They advocated revolution rather than gradual change through political development. Additionally, many socialist leaders had been exiled under the tsar and were just beginning to return at the time that the Provisional Government was established.

The Provisional Government sought to exercise formal authority over Russia's domestic and foreign affairs. Prince Georgii Lvov, a well-respected "public man" who had previously gained renown for his services to his country in times of famine and war, was chosen as prime minister.

During its first weeks the Provisional Government passed a series of dramatic reforms. The government outlawed capital punishment, reformed the judicial system, and took steps to place the police under control of local government. The Provisional Government also granted the political freedoms of assembly, press, speech, and universal suffrage. The government repealed legal restrictions that applied to religion, class, and race. Russian citizens struggled to keep track of the new laws and freedoms.

How did the Revolution spread throughout Russia?

The revolution quickly reached the rest of the country by telegraph. In each major city, a Petrograd-style dual authority model was followed, with a Public Committee taking the role of the Provisional Government, while a soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies represented the lower classes. This process occurred with breathtaking speed, amid much popular acclaim. During March and early April, the revolution also came to small towns and villages.

Spring 1917: Russia Debates its Future

The Provisional Government considered itself to be a temporary entity charged with holding Russia together until future elections could be held for a Constituent Assembly, which would create the country's new permanent government. What that government would be was far from certain.

Despite the appearance of dual authority, actual power rested with the Soviet, which was an elected body supported by workers and, most importantly, rank-and-file soldiers. By contrast, the Provisional Government had no support from armed men and existed as the result of decisions made by a small number of political leaders who lacked any popular mandate.

“The Provisional Government has no real power of any kind and its orders are carried out only to the extent that is permitted by the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. The latter controls the most essential levers of power, insofar as the troops, the railways, and the postal and telegraph services are in its hands. One can assert bluntly that the Provisional Government exists only as long as it is allowed to do so by the Soviet.”

—The Minister of War Alexander Guchkov,
March 9, 1917

The dual authority of the Provisional Government and Petrograd Soviet reflected the divisions between the upper and lower classes. Workers and soldiers identified with the Soviet and distrusted the educated and land-owning members of the Provisional Government.

Who was Alexander Kerensky?

One person linked the Soviet with the Provisional Government: Alexander Kerensky. A charismatic personality, the thirty-six-year-old Kerensky was both a skilled orator and a

respected attorney. Although he did not hold the highest job in either entity, he was considered one of the top two or three leaders in both the Soviet and the Provisional Government, and was the only individual who held such a distinction. In his many speeches, he often referred to himself as the “hostage of democracy” who would protect lower-class interests from any hint of infringement by the Provisional Government.

What happened after Lenin’s return from abroad?

Prior to 1917, all the major socialist leaders were exiled or imprisoned. None of these exiles had played a role in the February Revolution. The Petrograd Soviet was led by middle-level Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, who had been engaged in political agitation among workers during the war. After the tsar’s abdication, the Provi-



Photo courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Workers toppled the statue of Tsar Alexander III in protest of the Romanov Dynasty.

sional Government permitted the top socialist leaders to return to Petrograd where they began to assume leading roles in shaping their homeland's future. It became the custom to welcome returning leaders with a reception at the railroad station. Near midnight on April 3, 1917, such a reception was held for Lenin, the Bolshevik leader who had accepted German help to travel via a special train from Switzerland. Except for six months in 1905-6, Lenin had lived outside of Russia for seventeen years. He was greeted in the tsar's former waiting room at the Finland Station by a delegation from the Petrograd Soviet.

Following the reception, Lenin was driven to Bolshevik headquarters at the Kshesinskaya Palace. Speaking from the balcony to a waiting crowd, Lenin assailed the war, denouncing "capitalist pirates...defending the fatherland means defending one set of capitalists against another." With Russia still engaged in fighting World War I, Lenin's words angered soldiers in the crowd who found his words defeatist and pro-German.

What did Lenin call for in his "April Theses"?

The next day, Lenin spoke at a meeting of the Social Democrats. His address scathingly criticized the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet leadership. He called for Russia's immediate withdrawal from the war; a new revolution empowering the workers and the peasants; an end to support of the Provisional Government; abolition of the police, army, and bureaucracy; and the placing of all political authority in the hands of the soviets. Lenin's speech, which became his "April Theses," amazed and enraged many in his Social Democrat audience, who responded to his remarks with boos, catcalls, and whistles.

Each night, irate crowds gathered outside the Kshesinskaya palace, railing at the "German agent" inside. The conservative press attacked Lenin. Soldiers in Moscow protested what they claimed were his pro-German leanings.

“How convenient it is to be friends with the enemies of Russia. The Bolsheviks are given a safe and free-of-charge passage through Germany. In Russia royal waiting rooms are opened for them at railway stations and they live in a luxurious palace—also free of charge.”

—Newspaper *Novoe Vremia*, April 7

Many believed that Lenin was out of touch with the political sentiments of the day. Lenin's arrival exemplified the political upheaval that followed the February days.

“For months in Petrograd, and all over Russia, every street corner was a public tribune. In railway trains, street-cars, always the spurting up of impromptu debate, everywhere...”

—John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*

How did ordinary Russians get involved?

Competing voices clamored to be heard as Russians considered the political options for their future. Millions of Russian people poured into the streets and clamored for "democracy"—something they had never experienced. They were tired of the oppression of the tsar and the secret police, tired of the hunger and shortages after three years of war. At rallies and meetings they sang an anthem from the French Revolution: the *Marseillaise*, but with their own words.

***“We renounce the old world,
We shake its dust from our feet,
We don't need a Golden Idol,
And we despise the Tsarist Devil
Arise, arise, working people!
Arise against the enemies, hungry
brother!
Sound the cry of the people's
vengeance!
Forward! ”***

—Russian adaptation of the *Marseillaise*

The people wanted change, but what was it that they wanted exactly?

The leaders of the new Provisional Government had their own ideas of what the people wanted and what the cries for democracy meant. So many new laws were passed, that Russians had a hard time keeping track of all their new freedoms. Lenin called Russia “the freest country in the world.”

The new political freedoms let loose a torrent of political speech. Kept silent for centuries during the rule of the tsars, Russians everywhere debated what their future should hold.

“The servants and house porters demand advice as to which party they should vote for in the ward elections. Every wall in the town is placarded with notices of meetings, lectures, congresses, electoral appeals and announcements.... Two men argue at a street corner

and are at once surrounded by an excited crowd. Even at concerts now the music is diluted with political speeches by well-known orators.... Book hawkers line the pavement and cry sensational pamphlets about Rasputin and Nicholas, and who is Lenin, and how much land will the peasants get.”

—Harold Williams, a British journalist in Russia

But for the socialists and others outside of the Provisional Government, democracy not only meant choosing a government, but changing society and social conditions as well. For them, the moment presented a chance to gain autonomy and a chance to exact revenge on those who had repressed and misused them.

In the spring of 1917, Russia’s future was uncertain. A tremendous contest for the future of Russia was about to commence. In the coming days you are going to recreate the debate that took place at the time.

Options in Brief

Option 1: Create a Liberal Democracy

The time has come to build a liberal democracy in Russia! We support the Provisional Government until a Constituent Assembly can be elected to enact needed political and social reforms. Representatives of the people must be chosen by universal suffrage; government is best guided by the ballot box, not mob violence. Educated persons can provide necessary leadership. Russia deserves to be guided by the rule of law—law that respects the freedom and dignity of every human being. Individual rights, such as the right to speak, write, and worship freely, should be safeguarded. Private property should be protected and free enterprise should be encouraged. The civil and cultural rights of minority peoples should be respected, but the integrity and unity of the Russian state has to be preserved. The sacrifices of our brave soldiers and sailors must not be in vain. We will defend the fatherland!

Option 2: Respect the Peasants

The exploitation of the peasants must end! Land and liberty! The peasants are the backbone of Russia, yet it is they who suffer the most. All land should be granted to the peasants without compensation to the nobility. The traditions of the commune will be observed; the equality of all peasants will be guaranteed, while private ownership of land will not be reintroduced. Peasants and workers share the brotherhood of toil. Agriculture is more important than urban industries, which will only grow if the rural economy progresses first. We support the civil and cultural rights of minority peoples. Participation in the soviets, the Provisional Government, and the upcoming Constituent Assembly will help to achieve these aims. We should work with the Socialist Revolutionary Party to advance the cause of the peasants. Abroad, Russians must fight to defend their country and, after the war, we will work internationally for a peace of justice.

Option 3: Work Toward a Future Socialist Society

Karl Marx's ideas mirror what is happening now in Russia. Russia is industrializing rapidly, and this process is both creating an urban lower class and exacerbating class conflict. However, Russian capitalism is still in its infancy, and it will be a long time before Russia is ready for socialism. We must trust in our wise Menshevik leaders to guide us to that eventual goal. For now, active participation in the soviet's development of a strong labor party to prepare for future Constituent Assembly elections, and cooperation with the Provisional Government will move Russia toward a better tomorrow. We support self-determination for minority groups, but this must be decided by the Constituent Assembly. Russia should defend itself against aggression. After the war, together with our brothers throughout the world, we will strive for a just peace.

Option 4: Organize Now for a Second Revolution

Marxist theory is sound, but must be adapted to Russian conditions. With the February Revolution, the time is ripe for radical change. It is true that, at present, Russia's urban lower class lacks sufficient class-consciousness to overthrow capitalism. However, an elite group of well-organized, highly-disciplined, dedicated revolutionaries can teach and lead the workers to achieve this goal. A second revolution is needed in Russia! All power to the soviets! Peace, land, and bread! All peoples of Russia should join the cause of the Bolsheviks! The Provisional Government is an empty shell; after a period of organization and subversion, we can topple it. Russia must withdraw from the war and conclude an immediate peace. Land should be confiscated from the nobles and redistributed by the peasants themselves. City workers must be fed. Long live the international socialist revolution!

Option 1: Create A Liberal Democracy

The time has come to build a liberal democracy in Russia! With the February Revolution and the abdication of the tsar, we can create a society guided by the rule of law. In the spirit of our French, British, and American historical ancestors, we have the opportunity to establish here, in our beloved Russia, a state characterized by limited government and the protection of individual rights.

The days of tsarist coercion are gone, never to return. We support the Provisional Government until a Constituent Assembly can be elected to enact needed political and social reforms. Already, Russia has transformed itself into a beacon of freedom. The Provisional Government has passed measures

- a. to guarantee freedoms of speech, press, and assembly;
- b. to rescind legal restrictions based on class, race, and religion;
- c. to provide a general amnesty;
- d. to establish universal adult suffrage;
- e. to reform the justice system (including abolishing capital punishment); and
- f. to introduce democratic local self-rule.

We have an optimistic faith in the goodness of the Russian people. Despite the many challenges that face us, the resilience and cooperative spirit of our people will carry us through the difficult days ahead. Our liberal leaders seek to look after the welfare of all people, not just one class. The people can be relied upon to be patient while a legal framework is put in place to safeguard public order and private property.

Private property should be protected and free enterprise should be encouraged. Russia's economy will thrive when the people become aware that entrepreneurial initiative will be rewarded. Previously, the Russian state has spearheaded the process of modernization. Today, economic leadership roles need to be assumed by individuals themselves—whether they are peasants, workers, landholders, or industrialists. Capitalism is the wave of the future in Russia. The integrity and unity of the Russian state must be preserved. We support the authority of the state and oppose federalism. The blood of many gallant soldiers and sailors has been spilled in defense of the Russian Empire. Their sacrifices must not be in vain. All Russians must unite to defeat the Central Powers. We will defend our fatherland!

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 1

1. Liberal democracy and capitalism represent the leading edge of modern political and economic thought. Russia needs to look forward, not backward.

2. The road of revolution is fraught with danger to law and order. We must proceed cautiously, with an eye to appropriate historical precedent.

3. The current international borders of the Russian state must not be altered, and there should be no concessions to those ethnic groups seeking even limited autonomy within Russia.

4. We must honor our dead by defending Russia against the Central Powers.

Supporting Arguments for Option 1

1. The February Revolution has provided Russia with an opportunity to join the family of civilized western nations. Our political and economic models can be such successful countries as France, Great Britain, and the United States.

2. All the peoples of Russia need to be a part of this process. Hasty elections to the Constituent Assembly would produce a poorly-designed legislature. The Provisional Government will serve ably as temporary

guardian of the state until a fair electoral process is established.

3. Russians have long been the dominant ethnic group within the old Russian Empire. Russian political and cultural leadership needs to be maintained as a basis for unity within the new Russian state. At the same time, the civil and cultural rights of minority peoples must be respected.

4. With military victory, the Russian people will have higher regard for their new government.

From the Historical Record

N.V. Nekrasov, January 1917

“In the trials Russia will face, we will not appear in the role of suppressors of the revolution. The government has destroyed itself. Our task will be entirely constructive; in the storm and chaos we will have to create a new government that will be able to calm the country immediately and get down to vast creative work.”

Paul Miliukov, January 1917

“Revolution must not take us by surprise. We are the only restraining and organized force, the only force that could save the government and reconcile it with the rough raging sea of people.”

Declaration of the Provisional Government, March 27, 1917

“The old regime has gone. The State Duma has forgotten its party differences, has united in the name of the salvation of our homeland and has taken upon itself the creation of a new regime. All citizens should have confidence in this regime and should combine their efforts to allow the government created by the Duma to complete its great task of liberating Russia from the external enemy and establishing peace inside Russia, on the basis of law, equality and freedom.... Forget all your party, class, estate and national differences! The

united Russian people should rise up and create conditions in which all citizens can live peacefully....”

Central Committee of the Constitutional Democrats in connection with the formation of the Provisional Government, March 3, 1917

“Citizens!... The old regime left the defense of the country in a seriously disorganized state. Its criminal inaction and clumsy measures have brought ruin to our finances, to production and transport and to supplying the army. It has seriously damaged our economic structure. The Provisional Government, with the vigorous and active cooperation of the people, will devote all its strength to remedying these defects which the old regime left behind. But time does not stand still. The blood of many sons of Russia has been needlessly spilt over the last 2 1/2 long years of war, but the country is still exposed to a powerful enemy, occupying whole regions of our state and now, at the birth of Russian freedom, threatening us with new and decisive pressure. The defense—at whatever cost—of our own national honor and the expulsion of the enemy from inside our borders: this is the first urgent and vital task of our troops, defending the freedom of the people.”

Prince Georgii E. Lvov, head of the first Provisional Government, April 27, 1917

“The great Russian revolution is truly miraculous in its majestic, quiet progress under the red glow of the World War.... The miraculous thing about it is not the fairylike unbelievableness of the change itself, not the colossal alterations that have taken place... but the very essence of the guiding spirit of the revolution. The freedom won by the Russian revolution is permeated by elements of a world-wide, universal nature.... The soul of the Russian democracy has turned out to be, in its very nature, the soul of the world democracy. It is ready not only to merge with the world democracy but also to take a position of leadership and guide the world democracy on the road of human development laid out by the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.”

Option 2: Respect the Peasants

The peasants are the backbone of Russia. Approximately 80 percent of Russia's population are peasants, while most of the remainder are but one or two generations removed from peasantry. The peasants grow the food that keeps Russia alive. Thanks to their toil, Russia was the world's leading pre-war grain exporter. If there is a social class that deserves respect, it is the peasantry. Tragically, far from receiving anything resembling respect, the peasants instead receive horrible abuse. Russian peasants were the last in Europe to be released from serfdom. Since then, the peasants have still been heavily dependent on their former masters—the nobles.

Under the old regime, the government has attempted to “help” the peasants. May the Good Lord preserve us from such “help” again! The “reforms” of Alexander II and bloody Nicholas drove good people off the land and redoubled human misery. These “reforms” brought nothing but Stolypin's neckties and carriages. Thank God that those accursed bloodsuckers are gone for good! The exploitation of the peasants must end!

Land and liberty! It is time that the peasants received their due. All land should be granted to the peasants without compensation to the nobility. The timeless traditions of the Russian commune will be observed. Equality of all peasants will be guaranteed. Russia will only progress if the rural economy progresses first. Agriculture, the most important sector of our economy, will feed the factory workers in our cities. The Russian people must be a single family of brother-laborers. The Russian people have pulled themselves free and thrown off the heavy chains of tsarist oppression. Now Russia can be rebuilt, like a beautiful new house, by all its inhabitants.

Participation in the soviets and the Provisional Government are necessary so that the voice of the people can be clearly heard. In addition, we should work with the Socialist Revolutionary Party to advance the cause of the peasants. Countless peasant members of our brave Russian army have enriched our soil with their own blood, shed by the hated invaders. The sacrifices of our heroes must be repaid through the defeat of the Central Powers! After victory, we will seek a peace of justice with our international brothers.

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 2

1. Since the peasants are the foundation of Russian society, any serious attempt to improve conditions in this country must begin with the peasants.

2. Land should belong to those who make it productive. Peasants have a right to the land and the gentry do not.

3. The current international borders of the Russian state should remain intact.

We are reluctant to consider limited autonomy for ethnic groups within Russia.

4. The Russian army is a peasant army, and peasants are men of the soil. Countless peasants have given their lives to defend that soil; their sacrifice must not be in vain. We must defeat the Central Powers and seek a peace of justice!

Supporting Arguments for Option 2

1. The great mass of the Russian people are either peasants, or one or two generations removed from peasantry. Since they comprise what is, by far, the largest social class, their needs should take first priority in post-tsarist Russia.

2. For centuries, Russian peasants have been treated abominably by the landowners and the state. Our leaders must seek to right countless grievous wrongs committed against the peasants. Only then will the people bear true loyalty to the new Russian society.

3. Only the Constituent Assembly has the legitimate right to decide basic political questions for all of Russia, including the minority areas.

4. Participation in the soviets and the Provisional Government represents our best hope for an eventual government of national unity, to be chosen by all the people. Land reform will come, but it can wait for the moment. Our first task is to defend our Russian homeland against invasion.

From the Historical Record

Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), "On the Russian Peasantry"

"For hundreds of years the Russian peasant has dreamt of a state with no right to influence the will of the individual and his freedom of action, a state without power over man."

Peasant Duma deputy from Saratov (to a delegate of the nobility), 1907

"We know about your property, for we were your property once. My uncle was exchanged for a greyhound."

Alexander Kerensky in a speech to the liberals in the Duma, February 15, 1917

"The historic task of the Russian people at the present time is the overthrow of this medieval regime but you wish to fight only "by legal means"... You consider your duty done once you have concluded your diagnosis of the ills of the country. I say to you that your speeches on the necessity of calm at all costs are either the naive sentiments of superficial thinkers or just an excuse to avoid the real fight, just a pretext to stay safely in your warm armchairs.... You don't want to listen to anybody but yourselves but soon you will have to listen, for if you do not hear the warning voices, you will encounter the harsh facts."

Resolutions of the Conference of the Petrograd Socialist Revolutionary Party, March 2, 1917

"1. In view of the fact that the danger of a counter-revolution is not yet passed, and that the question of the moment is to make fast the political revolutionary conquests already attained, this Conference believes that it is urgently necessary to stand behind the Provisional Government, in so far as it carries out its announced political program...

2. This Conference, however, reserves to itself the right to change its attitude toward the Provisional Government, should it decline to live up to its programs....

3. ...the Conference calls on all members of the...Party to take active part in the organization of the popular masses by participating in the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, by forming peasants' unions and other organizations having for their object the defense of the interest of the people."

Resolutions of the Peasants' Union in the Morskoi Korpus, April 8, 1917

"1. That it is necessary to go on with the war for freedom, but that the Russian people has no need of conquests; that the Russian people, after freeing the areas ruined by the belligerents, needs a peace in the interest of the laboring classes of the world....

2. ...that the Russian people, having thrown off the yoke of autocracy, desires neither a limited nor an unlimited tsarist government, but a democratic republic.

3. ...that the land should be handed over to the workers, and that each person who tills the soil with his own hands has the right to the use of it.”

Alexander Os'minin, peasant writer, 1917

“We are standing for the people to become the masters of their own lives, for our country to become a single family of brother laborers, without rich or poor—in short for the Kingdom of God to come to our land.”

Option 3: Work Toward a Future Socialist Society

The ideas of Karl Marx can guide Russians to a bright future. Marx's ideas mirror what is happening now in Russia. Russia is industrializing rapidly. This process is both creating an urban lower class and exacerbating class conflict. Since the 1890s, Russia has seen population growth in the cities and an increasing number of strikes and labor violence.

But we are not quite ready for socialism. According to Marx, industrial capitalism is the final stage of history. This stage pits factory owners against the factory workers. In a socialist revolution, the workers will overthrow the owners and seize power. Eventually, private property will be abolished and capitalism will be succeeded by an economic system—socialism—in which the people will labor out of a sincere desire to contribute to the well-being of their fellow humans. However, in Russia, industrial capitalism is still in its infancy; and therefore, Russia is not yet ready for socialism. We must be patient and allow the lower classes to develop enough class-consciousness to organize for the final defeat of capitalism. We must also trust in our wise Menshevik leaders to guide us to this eventual goal.

Active participation in the soviets provides us with the best opportunity to contribute to the new Russia. The soviets control the armed forces, transportation, and communications. They are workers' organizations pursuing workers' objectives. The brave deeds of the Petrograd workers of the glorious February Revolution must be advanced through the organization of a strong workers' political party. This workers' party must be active in the upcoming elections to the Constituent Assembly.

Although led by liberals and capitalists, the Provisional Government is putting together a temporary post-tsarist political structure. In time, by working in this political structure, revolutionaries will come to know the true nature of the class enemy, and will be better-prepared to defeat it in the final conflict.

It is true that the Great War is the savage result of destructive competition between corrupt bourgeois states and, as such, is contemptible. However, the progress made in Russia since February must be protected from German invaders. When Russia is under attack, all of her children must lay aside their differences and defend the fatherland. We must win the war so that a just peace will nurture our social revolution!

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 3

1. Karl Marx has provided an ideology based on scientific laws of history.

This philosophy positions socialist revolutionaries within an historical stream flowing from the dawn of man, through the French Revolution, to a future when man can finally control his own destiny.

2. Industrial capitalism is the crucial fact of modern economic life. Its great promise and its awful pitfalls embody the present and future of Russia. The workers must master industrial capitalism in order to transcend it.

3. The current international borders of the Russian state must not be altered. In principle, we accept the right of ethnic groups to self-determination within Russia. However, we are opposed to any efforts at territorial autonomy or separation before the election of the Constituent Assembly.

4. The progress made in Russia since February must be protected from German invaders. We must win the war so that a just peace will nurture our social revolution!

Supporting Arguments for Option 3

1. While the final socialist revolution will eventually occur, Russia has just entered the stage of bourgeois-led industrialization. This stage must be well-advanced before the lower classes acquire enough class consciousness to organize for the defeat of capitalism. We must not interfere with the process of historical inevitability.

2. For the present, we must actively participate in the soviets, which have become the most powerful institutions in Russia. We must organize a strong workers' political party. In addition, cooperation with the Provisional

Government will give a voice to the workers in the post-tsarist political structure.

3. The Constituent Assembly will represent all of Russia, and any important political issues, such as self-determination for nationalities, must only be considered after its election.

4. When Russia is under attack, all of her children must lay aside their differences and defend the motherland. After our victory, the international brotherhood of workers will unite in a just and fair peace.

From the Historical Record

Central Committee of the Social Democrats, February 27, 1917

“Citizens! The strongholds of Russian tsarism have fallen. The prosperity of the Tsarist gang, built on the bones of the people, has collapsed. The people have risen and the capital is in their hands. Units of revolutionary troops have come over to support the uprising. The revolutionary proletariat [property-less laborers] and the revolutionary army must save the country from the downfall and final ruin which the Tsarist government was preparing. The Russian people through its huge efforts, its blood and at the cost of many lives has thrown off the slavery of centuries.

The task of the working class and the revolutionary army is to create a Provisional revolutionary government which will stand at the head of the new-born republican order. The Provisional revolutionary government must draw up temporary laws to defend the rights and liberties of the people, to confiscate church, landowners', government and crown lands and transfer them to the people, to introduce the eight-hour working day and to summon a Constituent Assembly on the basis of a suffrage which is universal, without regard to sex, nationality or religion, direct, equal and secret....

Citizens, soldiers, wives and mothers! All to battle! To open battle with tsardom and its troops!

The red flag of revolt will be raised right across Russia! Everywhere take freedom into your own hands, overthrow the tsarist lackeys, summon the soldiers to the struggle! ...

Forward, there is no return!

Merciless struggle under the red flag of revolution!

Long live the democratic republic!

Long live the revolutionary working class!

Long live the revolutionary people and the revolutionary army!”

V. A. Bazarov, March 2, 1917

“The energy and unity of revolutionary democracy have already forced the bourgeoisie to take a number of steps beyond the line the ruling class was originally unwilling to cross....

But in order to prevent the transformation of this revolutionary path into [one of] counterrevolution, the democratic [camp] should participate energetically in the Provisional Government to prevent it from stopping half-way [and] push it further and further....”

Resolution of the Second Moscow military equipment factory, March 5, 1917

“The Provisional Government that emerged from the revolution speaks for the interests of the bourgeoisie, and therefore the working class can support this government only insofar as its policy will not run against the interests of the broad toiling masses. At the same time, the working class must organize itself for the defense of its class interests and the consolidation of all the achievements of the revolution.”

Editorial, Rabochaia Gazeta (Menshevik newspaper), March 31, 1917

“Time and again we warned the workers against an unorganized economic struggle.... We cautioned the workers against thoughtless steps; we urged on them restraint and organization in the interests both of their class and of the struggle for economic and political freedom being conducted by the proletariat. But in making these comradely appeals we were also well aware of how unavoidably disorganized and chaotic the struggle would be during this early period. One has only to remember how the industrialists exploited the helplessness of workers laboring under wartime regulations and squeezed them of their remaining strength.... After having made a revolution, can one blame such workers for also wanting to attain a more humane existence?”

Rabochaia Gazeta, March 25, 1917

“Democracy grew up during the last ten years. The crumbs of freedom that were left in Russia after the struggle in 1905—the shadow of popular representation, the pitiful freedom of the press—slowly but steadily did their educative work. If not for that [work], Democracy could not have proven itself...in the days of the revolution. But now that it has—there is hope for the future.”

N.S. Chkheidze, speaking in the Petrograd Soviet, March 14, 1917

“We make this offer with weapons in our hands. The slogan for the revolution is ‘Down with [the German Kaiser] Wilhelm!’”

Irakli Tseretelli, speaking in the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee, March 21, 1917

“We should not consider the defense of the country as something which does not concern us, something we don’t talk about. It should be for us one of the basic tasks of the Revolution, without which we should not be able to conclude a democratic peace and preserve the achievements of the Revolution.”

Socialist pamphlet directed to the peasants, 1917

“[Under socialism] want and hunger will disappear and pleasure will be equally accessible to all. Thieving and robbery will come to an end. In place of compulsion and coercion there will be a kingdom of freedom and fraternity.”

Option 4: Organize for a Second Revolution

The ideology of Karl Marx provides a superb framework for action, but it must be adapted to Russian conditions. It is true that, at present, Russia's urban lower class lacks sufficient class-consciousness to overthrow capitalism. However, precise, skilled organization of the lower classes can and will make a decisive difference. With the February Revolution, the time is ripe for radical change. The workers can be taught and led to achieve this all-important goal.

We will stop at nothing in our quest to reach the broad, sunlit uplands of socialism. The hard, sharp edge of determination of this vanguard has been forged during years of tsarist oppression. Toughened by persecution, imprisonment, and exile, the revolutionary vanguard understands that now is the time for courage, sacrifice, and boldness, not just in thoughts, but in heroic deeds!

The brave workers of Petrograd showed us the way in February. When they acted, bloody Nicholas and the other Romanov wolves turned tail and ran. But our work is far from done. A second revolution is needed in Russia! All Russians should join the cause of the Bolsheviks! All power to the soviets! Peace, land, and bread!

The Provisional Government is a powerless empty shell. We are told to wait until its leaders see fit to devise elections for a Constituent Assembly, and that this Assembly will be the true government of a new Russia. Political participation in this deceptive farce is laughable. The aims of the Provisional Government are to perpetuate the leadership of the ruling class and to oppress the workers and peasants. After a period of organization and subversion, the lower classes, led by its vanguard, will send the Provisional Government where it belongs—into the dustbin of history.

The present war is a horrible example of bloody imperialist competition over the means of production. Russia should immediately renounce its role in this carnage and conclude a peace. Then we can turn our attention to the daily needs of the real masters of Russia: its workers, peasants, and soldiers. Under the leadership of the soviets, land should be confiscated from the nobles and redistributed by the peasants themselves. Private property is the root of all evil. Class struggle is the only avenue to real social change. Familiar with great personal hardships, the Russian workers and peasants possess the will and stamina for the coming conflict. They only need to be guided by a reliable core of trained revolutionaries. All of Europe is poised for the brave new world of socialism. Russia can show the way through decisive action now! Long live the international socialist revolution!

Beliefs and Assumptions Underlying Option 4

1. Russia's suffering people cannot wait any longer. Only a fervent, uncompromising, disciplined elite of trained revolutionaries can organize the urban lower class and peasants for a final successful revolt against the forces of capital.

2. Private property is the root of all evil. The workers and peasants are the ones who make property economically productive. Therefore, they should control that property.

3. Ultimately, the success of international socialism will transform national self-determination into an irrelevancy.

4. The war has been a horrible example of bloody imperialist competition over the means of production. Russia should immediately renounce its participation in this carnage and look after the daily needs of its real heroes: the workers, peasants, and soldiers.

Supporting Arguments for Option 4

1. Familiar with great personal hardships, the Russian workers and peasants possess the will and stamina for the coming conflict. They only need to be taught and led by an effective revolutionary vanguard.

2. It is useless to work with the bourgeois Provisional Government. Its aims are simple: to perpetuate the leadership of the ruling class and to oppress the workers and peasants. In due time, its fate will be sealed.

3. The Provisional Government has denied the right of self-determination to Finns, Ukrainians, and other national minorities. This is nothing less than a mindless continuation of the immoral policies of the hated former tsar.

4. The war is already a lost cause. It is better to admit it now, save the lives of our surviving soldiers, conclude a peace with Germany, and focus our energies on building the brave new world of socialism.

From the Historical Record

Lenin, "Who Are the 'Friends of the People' and How Do They Fight Against the Social Democrats?," 1894

"The Russian worker, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the Russian proletariat [property-less laborers] (together with the proletariat of all countries) along the direct road of open political struggle to the victorious Communist Revolution."

Lenin, 1895

"The democratic struggle is inseparable from the socialist one; (it is) impossible to wage a successful fight for the cause of labor without the attainment of full liberty and the democratization of Russia's political and social regime."

Lenin, 1900

"No single class in history has ever attained mastery unless it has produced political leaders...capable of organizing the movement and leading it.... It is necessary to prepare men who devote to the revolution not only their free evenings, but their entire lives."

Lenin, 1907

"Revolution is a difficult matter. It cannot be made with gloves and manicured fingernails.... A political party is no girls dormitory. Party members should not be measured by the

narrow standard of petty-bourgeois morality. Sometimes a scoundrel is useful to our party precisely because he is a scoundrel."

Lenin, during the early months of World War I

"Is the feeling of national pride alien to us, Russian class-conscious proletarians? Certainly not. We love our language and our motherland."

Leon Trotsky, September 1915

"Working men and women! Mothers and fathers! Widows and orphans! Wounded and crippled! To all who are suffering from the war or in consequence of the war, we cry out, over the frontiers, over the smoking battlefields, over the devastated cities and hamlets: WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!"

Lenin, March 30, 1917

"It has fallen to the Russian proletariat to have the great honor of beginning a series of revolutions.... Russia is a peasant country, one of the most backward in Europe. It is not possible for socialism to triumph there directly, presently. But the peasant character of the country...can lead a vast sweep to the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia and make our revolution a prologue to the worldwide socialist revolution, a step toward it."

Lenin, March 16, Cable to the Petrograd Bolsheviks:

“Our tactics; complete mistrust. No support for the new government. We especially suspect Kerensky. The arming of the proletariat provides the only guarantee.... No rapprochement with the other parties.”

Lenin, Pravda, April 3 and 4, 1917

The first stage of the Revolution has ended. This first stage will certainly not be the last stage of our Revolution.... The Russian working class has as its first ally the mass of the... peasant population of Russia, which numbers many millions and constitutes the enormous majority of the population. This mass must have peace, bread, freedom and land.”

Epilogue: Lenin and the Bolsheviks Take Power

Lenin worried about entering into an alliance with the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. He thought their willingness to compromise would ruin his revolutionary agenda. His April Theses had stunned even his fellow Bolsheviks who had already pledged to support the Provisional Government. Yet Lenin believed that accommodation with the government was not possible. In fact he believed he needed to “smash” it.

The odds were against him and his party of some eighty thousand Bolsheviks. In spite of Lenin’s forceful personality, the Bolsheviks themselves had many factions and its leadership could not agree on many things. Lenin would need his vast array of political skills to move the Bolsheviks and then Russia in the direction he wanted.

What were the issues?

The continuation of the war occupied center stage of the political debate in Russia. The debate over the war took on class overtones as well. Socialists used the war to stir up further hatred and resentment of the bourgeoisie and capitalists.

“We see that the senseless slaughter and destruction of the war is essential to no one but the parasite bourgeoisie.”

—Worker’s Resolution, Dinamo Factory, Moscow

The Petrograd Soviet renounced the war aims of the former tsar and began a peace campaign that led most soldiers to declare their allegiance to the Soviet. The idea of a separate peace was dropped in favor of a position of unity for the defense of Russia while seeking a settlement.

The Provisional Government’s public declaration of its war aims were similar to those of the Soviet, but Foreign Minister Miliukov sent a note to the allies saying that Russia was

still committed to a decisive victory, thereby contradicting both the Soviet and the Provisional Government. Violent demonstrations broke out. Russia teetered again on the brink of civil war.

In the midst of this, worker and peasant unrest continued. More than half a million workers went on strike between April and July 1917 for higher wages, an eight-hour work day, and reliable supplies of food. The strikes expanded beyond the metal and textile workers to include many from barbers, to waiters, and even prostitutes. Added to this volatile mix were the Red Guards, armed groups of workers set up to protect their factories from any threat. They were heavily influenced by the Bolsheviks. By July there were some twenty thousand Red Guards in Petrograd.

Militancy also increased in the countryside. Peasants began seizing land from land-owners and the nobles and burning their houses. As land-owners abandoned their estates, peasants petitioned the Provisional Government for redistribution of land. The government decided to put off any action on the topic before a constituent assembly could be elected in November 1917.

Summer 1917

In June, Alexander Kerensky, the Provisional Government’s new minister of war, pressured the army to go on the offensive against the Germans. It was a disastrous failure. There were over 200,000 Russian casualties; the morale of the troops plummeted even further, and desertions increased.

“Why the hell do we need to take another hilltop, when we can make peace at the bottom?”

—A Russian soldier

The government had gambled that a successful offensive might unite the country in the defense of democracy. Instead they lost



Photo courtesy of Getty Images.

Demonstrators fleeing violence in Petrograd in July 1917.

hundreds of thousands of troops. Popular sentiment led to violent street protests. More than half a million took to the streets of Petrograd in early July.

The Provisional Government assumed the protests had been organized and controlled by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In fact, they had not been. Lenin was not prepared to take advantage of the angry mobs that were on the street, mobs that were filled with Bolshevik sympathizers.

The Provisional Government decided to crack down on the Bolsheviks. Orders were issued for Lenin's and Bolshevik leaders' arrests for high treason. The Provisional Government hinted that it had evidence to support the ru-

mors that Lenin was a German agent. In early August, disguised as a worker and fearing for his own safety, Lenin left for Finland and went into hiding.

“All Power to the Soviets!”

—Bolshevik Slogan

What happened when Alexander Kerensky became prime minister?

Overwhelmed by the task facing him, Prince Lvov resigned and named Alexander Kerensky as his successor as prime minister.

“The only way to save the country now, is to close down the Soviet and shoot at the people. I cannot do that. But Kerensky can.”

—Prince Lvov, July 9, 1917

The belief of the Mensheviks and the SRs that Russia was not ready for a socialist government led them to argue that some sort of national unity government with the Kadets (Constitutional Democrats) was still necessary. Nevertheless, this liberal-socialist coalition found itself in constant turmoil. The socialists were under pressure from constituents in the Soviet and the liberals by landowners, members of the military, and industrialists concerned about the breakdown of order in society. Kerensky saw himself as a national leader able to work with both the socialists and the liberal democrats. Actually, neither political group respected or trusted him.

The country continued toward disaster. Further German military successes moved them closer to Petrograd. Deserters from the Russian army roamed the streets of Petrograd.

Conservative political forces and even some Kadets longed for a restoration of law and order. In August 1917, Russian military forces led by General Lavr Kornilov moved on Petrograd in an attempted coup to restore stability and order. The bid failed in part because Petrograd railroad workers diverted and blocked the troop trains. Printers refused to publish newspapers supporting Kornilov and metalworkers rushed out to meet the troops and to explain that Petrograd was calm and they were not needed. Kornilov was arrested. The army was thrown into disarray.

“Practically speaking, in this hour of terrible danger, I can state with horror that we have no army, while the Germans are prepared at any moment, to strike the last and most powerful blow against us.”

—General Mikhail Alekseev, successor to Kornilov

How did the failure of Kornilov’s coup contribute to the rise of the Bolsheviks?

The failure of the Kornilov coup further weakened the Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks played little role in resisting Kornilov, but public opinion began to swing toward them, in part because they had refused

to have anything to do with the government. Most people were sick of the war as well.

At the end of August the Bolsheviks gained majorities in the Petrograd Soviet at the expense of the Mensheviks and the SRs. By early October 1917, Bolshevik party membership had risen to about 350,000. In addition, Leon Trotsky joined the party from the Mensheviks. Trotsky was a brilliant orator and spoke nearly every day against the Provisional Government.

From Finland, Lenin sensed that the time had come for an armed insurrection and sent instructions back to Russia. Many of his colleagues doubted the wisdom of such a move. They preferred that the Soviets would simply announce that they would no longer recognize the authority of the Provisional Government. Lenin had something very different in mind.

Red October

Lenin returned from Finland and called a secret meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee on October 10, 1917. Only twelve of the twenty-one members were present. Even though many of the rank and file of the Bolsheviks were against an armed insurrection, Lenin’s powerful personality prevailed and the Central Committee voted 10-2 in favor.

Lenin imagined an immediate insurrection. Other Bolshevik leaders were not so sure that the dissatisfied masses were ready to join them.

“The resolution of 10 October is one of the best resolutions the Central Committee has ever passed, but when this uprising will take place is uncertain—perhaps in a year.”

—Mikhail Kalinin

On October 24, the takeover began. The Bolsheviks took over key government buildings, the railroad stations, and set up road-blocks around Petrograd. They also surrounded the Winter Palace, where the Provisional Government was meeting. There was almost no violent resistance and most

Petrograders did not even realize what was happening. The Winter Palace fell in the evening of the 25th; Alexander Kerensky slipped out a side door and escaped the city by car.

What happened at the Congress of Soviets?

While it was clear that the Provisional Government no longer existed, the question remained of exactly who it was who had taken power. The Congress of the Soviets met on October 25. The Bolsheviks had 300 seats out of a possible 670. Angry about the armed insurrection against the Provisional Government, Mensheviks and SRs denounced these events and walked out of the Congress. By their absence, they relinquished their chance to decide the future of the government.

“The masses of the people followed our banner and our insurrection was victorious. And now we are told: Renounce your victory, make concessions, compromise. With whom? I ask: With those wretched groups who have left us.... No one in Russia is with them any longer... here no compromise is possible. To those who have left and to those who tell us to do this we say: You are miserable bankrupts, your role is played out;

go where you ought to go—into the dustbin of history!”

Leon Trotsky, at the Congress of Soviets,
October 25, 1917

There would be no coalition of the socialist parties in the Soviet. On October 26th, it was announced that the Bolsheviks had assumed control of all government functions. Lenin was the head of the government, Trotsky became the People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

Civil War

Although the Bolsheviks had seized claim to the government, it was hardly the end of the struggle. In fact, it was the beginning of a civil war that would convulse Russia. Kadet newspapers called people to arms to save the revolution. Loyalist troops battled Bolshevik forces outside of Moscow.

Lenin realized that to win the Civil War and solidify his power he would have to conclude a peace with Germany and its allies, even though many of his fellow Bolsheviks opposed such a deal. In March, 1918, the treaty of Brest-Litovsk freed Russia from the war, but ceded to Germany vast swaths of the former Russian Empire including Poland, Ukraine, Finland, and the Baltic States. The Soviet Republic lost 34 percent of its population, 32

percent of its agricultural land, 54 percent of its industry, and 89 percent of its coal mines by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. For many in Russia, it was a shameful peace.

What was “looting the looters”?

The nature of the Civil War would have an important effect on how Lenin’s government would evolve. Lenin began to encourage the lower classes to take revenge against the



Photo courtesy of Jupiter Images.

Russians display placards of Lenin , Karl Marx, and Trotsky.

privileged social classes as means of enforcing social justice. This policy of “looting the looters” increased the violence and lawlessness within society. He encouraged all villages and towns to develop their own methods. This was the beginning of what would later be known as the Red Terror—a process designed to intimidate and destroy opponents of the regime.

“In one place they will put into prison a dozen rich men, a dozen scoundrels, half a dozen workers who shirk on the job. In another place they will be put to cleaning latrines. In a third they will be given yellow tickets after a term in prison so that everyone knows they are harmful and keep an eye on them. In a fourth one out of every ten idlers will be shot. The more variety the better...for only practice can devise the best methods of struggle.”

—Lenin

What forces were aligned against the new government?

In 1918, there were a number of White (anti-Bolshevik) armies aligned against the Red Armies of the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks had moved their capital to Moscow, because Petrograd was under threat from one of the White Armies. In addition, Japan, Great Britain, France, and the United States sent soldiers to Russia, partly to guard war materiel sent by the allies so it would not fall into Bolshevik hands, and partly to aid enemies of the Bolsheviks. Japan was also hoping to acquire Russian territory.

Although there were White Armies in different regions of the country, they were not centrally controlled and they did not coordinate their actions. The Whites had support from the old middle and upper classes as well as the officers from the tsarist army. The Red Army also used officers from the tsarist army, but to ensure their loyalty they were paired with political commissars who had to sign all military orders and shared responsibility of military decision making. Both the Red and

White Armies conscripted peasants for their forces. In general, the peasants saw the Bolsheviks as the lesser of two evils, because of their policy of redistributing the land to the peasants. Half a million Red Army soldiers joined the Bolshevik Party during the Civil War.

What were the economic hardships of the Civil War?

Moscow and Petrograd suffered greatly during the Civil War. Millions fled from these decaying cities where there were shortages of food and disease ran rampant. Petrograd’s population decreased by 75 percent. Moscow shrank by more than a half. Huge numbers moved to the countryside where they would be closer to food supplies. Currency lost its value and barter became the primary means of exchange. Peasants hoarded grain and the Bolsheviks began requisitioning it, often by force.

“Down with Lenin and horsemeat. Give us the Tsar and pork!”

—Graffiti during the Civil War

In an effort to end these problems, the Bolsheviks introduced “War Communism.” The program aimed to end private trade, nationalize all industry, collectivize agriculture, and replace the money system with state rationing. These desperate measures were unpopular with citizens; the Bolsheviks felt their revolution was under siege. Lenin himself survived an assassination attempt in August 1918.

What was the Cheka?

In addition to having the Red Army to defend the revolution, the Soviets created the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Struggle against Counter-Revolution, Sabotage, and Speculation, otherwise known by its Russian acronym as the Cheka. Led by Felix Dzerzhinsky, it became an instrument of state terror during the Civil War. Operating outside the bounds of the law, it made arrests, tortured and executed thousands, and took hostages in areas that were suspected of favoring the Whites. One particularly frightening

aspect of the Red Terror was that at times it seemed to be applied randomly. Lenin and the Bolsheviks were trying to terrify society into submission.

“The Cheka is the defense of the revolution as the Red Army is; as in the Civil War the Red Army cannot stop to ask whether it may harm particular individuals, but must take into account only one thing, the victory of the revolution over the bourgeoisie, so the Cheka must defend the revolution and conquer the enemy even if its sword falls occasionally on the heads of the innocent.”

—Felix Dzerzhinsky, Head of the Cheka

The Cheka would become the foundation of a vast police state. Lenin did not hesitate to order the execution or deportation of his opponents. The Cheka employed more than a quarter of a million people, ran concentration camps, and executed the former tsar and his family as well as hundreds of thousands of political opponents.

What was the outcome of the Civil War?

As many as thirteen million died during the Civil War. Two million Russians emigrated to other countries. The Red Army, which had five million soldiers by the end of the war, prevailed on the battlefield.

Nevertheless, the policy of War Communism did not work. A combination of drought and the weakened economy led to widespread famine that resulted in the deaths of as many as five million from starvation and disease. Lenin was forced to acknowledge the War Communism’s failure. In 1921, he introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), which eased restrictions on private trade, and marked a tactical, temporary retreat from a socialist economy.

Against substantial odds, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, had defeated their opponents, consolidated their power, and begun building

a new society which became the Soviet Union in 1924.

It was not to be a democracy based on civil rights and responsibilities for citizens that some had hoped for. Political parties were quickly outlawed by the Bolsheviks and political opponents were eliminated. It was the beginning of seventy years of authoritarian rule.

Stalin and the Terror

Josef Stalin succeeded Lenin after his death in 1924. Stalin ruled the Soviet Union (Russia and fourteen other republics) from 1924-53. Stalin believed that the Soviet Union had to industrialize at all costs in order to defend communism against the capitalist countries of the West. To achieve his goals, Stalin ended Lenin’s NEP and implemented a “command economy.” Under his rule, government planners in Moscow sought to control all aspects of economic activity and to direct the distribution of goods for the whole country.

Stalin was both feared and loved. Many Russians endured tremendous hardships in the name of an idealized yet unclear communist future. To strengthen his own position, Stalin carefully established himself as the ideological successor to Lenin.

Stalin succeeded in making the Soviet Union into an industrial giant. By the time of his death in 1953, the Soviet economy was second in size only to that of the United States.

What was the cost of Soviet industrialization?

Soviet industrialization was accomplished with a very high human cost. As Lenin had before him, Stalin ordered the execution or deportation of those he believed opposed him—a continuation of the Red Terror of the Civil War. Stalin directed a man-made famine against Ukrainians during 1931-1932. As many as eight million died.

In the 1930s, some ten million Soviet citizens also died in what were known as

“purges.” Perhaps a third of these were shot or perished as they were sent into exile or to labor camps in Siberia. The remaining two-thirds died of famine, cold, or abuse. Peasants suffered the most. Stalin’s policies forced them to give up their land and join huge state-run farms. In addition, peasant traditions were smashed and the Russian Orthodox Church was deprived of its authority, thousands of clergy and faithful were killed and lost property. Other religions also suffered.

Nonetheless, Soviet industrial might helped the U.S.S.R. defeat Nazi Germany in World War II. The struggle, known there as the Great Patriotic War, left roughly twenty-seven million Soviets dead. The Soviet soldiers are credited with having destroyed the bulk of Hitler’s forces at great cost to themselves.

What was the Cold War?

After the defeat of Hitler in 1945, the

Soviet Union and the United States began a confrontation that would last for four decades. This world-wide struggle pitted Marxism and totalitarianism against the liberal ideology of capitalism and democracy in a battle for the world’s hearts and minds. During this period, known as the Cold War, both the Soviet Union and the West devoted vast resources to their militaries, but never engaged in direct military action against each other.

In 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved and cast aside its socialist economy and government. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had implemented democratization and political openness as part of a program to restructure and revitalize a stagnant economy. These reforms did not have their intended effect. Instead, they began a series of political events that led the Soviet Union to dissolve itself. In its place were fifteen independent countries whose political ideology had collapsed.

The events of 1917-18 in Russia had profound and far-reaching effects. The Soviet Union initially followed the course laid out by Lenin and went on to utilize the state to develop mighty industrial, military, and scientific capabilities. The Soviet Union became a military superpower feared by the world. It was the first nation to put a man in space. At the same time, the power of the state over individuals was nearly absolute.

As long as it endured, the ideology of the Soviet Union presented a challenge to the political and economic values of the states of the West. To many, Marxist-Leninist ideology now belongs in the “dustbin of history.” But the effects of the Russian Revolution can be felt to this day.

History’s lessons also raise important questions. It is worth considering why those with aspirations of building a liberal democracy in Russia failed to do so in 1917. What conditions existed that allowed Lenin to grab the reins of power and put into place a totalitarian state and not a democracy? What are the roles of citizens in political transitions? What lessons exist for us today as societies undergo political change?

Supplementary Resources

Books

Chamberlin, William Henry. *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1935). 2 volumes.

Figes, Orlando. *A People's Tragedy; The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1996). 923 pages.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). 200 pages.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. *The Structure of Soviet History: Essay and Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). 573 pages.

Ulam, Adam. *The Bolsheviks* (New York: MacMillan, 1965). 598 pages.

World Wide Web

<<http://www.uea.ac.uk/his/webcours/russia/welcome/>>

Documents of the Russian Revolution at the University of East Anglia. Also a wide selection of links. Contains a valuable statement on the pitfalls of web-based research.

<<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook39.html>>

Huge collection of primary sources and documents at Fordham University.

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The Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution traces the history of Russia from the end of serfdom through Lenin's consolidation of power. The unit focuses on the political and economic conditions that led to the fall of the tsar and explores the competing political ideologies that Russian people debated in 1917.

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CHOICES for the 21st Century Education Program

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Director
Susan Graseck

Curriculum Developer
Andy Blackadar

Curriculum Writer
Sarah Cleveland Fox

International Education Intern
Rebecca Leaphart

Office Assistant
Bill Bordac

Professional Development Coordinator
Lucy Mueller

Program Coordinator for Capitol Forum
Barbara Shema

Program Associates
Madeline Otis

Staff Associate
Anne Campau Prout

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Thomas J. Biersteker
*Director, Watson Institute for
International Studies*

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About the Choices Approach

Choices for the 21st Century curricula are designed to make complex international issues understandable and meaningful for students. Using an innovative approach to student-centered instruction, Choices units develop critical thinking and civic judgment—essential ingredients of responsible citizenship.

Understanding the Significance of History: Each Choices unit provides students with a thorough introduction to the topic under consideration. Students gain an understanding of the historical background and the status of current issues. In this way, they see how history has shaped our world. With this foundation, students are prepared to thoughtfully consider a variety of perspectives on public policy.

Exploring Policy Alternatives: Each Choices unit is built around a framework of alternative policy options that challenges students to consider multiple perspectives and to think critically about the issue at hand. Students are best able to understand and analyze the options through a cooperative learning/role-play activity. In groups, students explore their assigned options and plan short presentations. The setting of the role-play may be a Congressional hearing, meeting of the National Security Council, or an election campaign forum. Student groups defend their policy options and, in turn, are challenged with questions from their classmates. The ensuing debate demands analysis and evaluation of the many conflicting values, interests, and priorities reflected in the options.

Exercising Civic Judgment: Armed with fresh insights from the role-play and debate, students are challenged to articulate original, coherent policy options that reflect their own values, priorities, and goals as individuals and citizens. Students' views can be expressed in letters to Congress or the White House, editorials for the school or community newspaper, persuasive speeches, or visual presentations.

Why Use the Choices Approach? Choices curricula are informed by current educational research about how students learn best. Studies have consistently demonstrated that students of all abilities learn best when they are actively engaged with the material rather

than listening passively to a lecture. Student-centered instructional activities motivate students and develop higher-order thinking skills. However, some high school educators find the transition from lecture format to student-centered instruction difficult. Lecture is often viewed as the most efficient way to cover the required material. Choices curricula offer teachers a flexible resource for covering course material while actively engaging students and developing skills in critical thinking, persuasive writing, and informed citizenship. The instructional activities that are central to Choices units can be valuable components in any teacher's repertoire of effective teaching strategies. Each Choices unit includes student readings, a framework of policy options, suggested lesson plans, and resources for structuring cooperative learning, role-plays, and simulations. Students are challenged to:

- recognize relationships between history and current issues
- analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives on an issue
- understand the internal logic of a viewpoint
- engage in informed debate
- identify and weigh the conflicting values represented by different points of view
- reflect upon personal values and priorities surrounding an issue
- develop and articulate original viewpoints on an issue
- communicate in written and oral presentations
- collaborate with peers

Teachers who use Choices units say the collaboration and interaction that take place are highly motivating for students. Opportunities abound for students to contribute their individual talents to the group presentations in the form of political cartoons, slogans, posters, or characterizations. These cooperative learning lessons invite students to take pride in their own contributions and the group product, enhancing students' self-esteem and confidence as learners. Choices units offer students with diverse abilities and learning styles the opportunity to contribute, collaborate, and achieve.

Note To Teachers

In the early spring of 1917, millions of people poured into the streets of Russia and clamored for “democracy.” Democracy meant different things to different people in Russia at the time, and a bloody struggle commenced for the future of Russia.

The Russian Revolution marked the beginning of an effort to remake the world using socialism. Many believed that capitalism and imperialism could be blamed for the destruction of World War I and that socialism could prevent another tragic war. The seventy-year-long experiment with socialism in the Soviet Union and elsewhere would have tremendous and often terrible historical consequences. Understanding the Russian Revolution also helps students to see the origins of the great ideological conflicts of the twentieth century when communism, fascism, and liberal democracy each struggled for the upper hand.

Today, socialism, as imagined by Marx and Lenin, seems to have been consigned to the “dustbin of history,” to use Trotsky’s phrase. Yet it is also worth considering why those who wanted to build a liberal democracy in Russia failed to do so in 1917. What conditions existed that allowed Lenin to grab the reins of power and put into place a totalitarian state and not a democracy? What are the role and responsibilities of citizens in political transitions? What lessons exist for us today as societies undergo political change?

The reading traces the history of Russia from the end of serfdom through Lenin’s consolidation of power. The unit focuses on changing social conditions and political leadership. Although the unit touches on the role of non-Russian nationalities, some teachers may want to emphasize it in more detail. A synopsis of nationality groups in Russia around 1900 is available at <http://www.choices.edu/RussianRevolution.cfm>.

At the core of the unit is a framework of four options Russians considered in 1917. The background reading prepares students to consider the complex political forces at play.

Part I explores Russia from the end of serfdom to the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. Part II examines the revolutionary period of 1905-1917. The Epilogue examines Lenin’s consolidation of power.

Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan: In the following pages you will find a day-by-day lesson plan and student activities. The lesson plan opens with an activity that explores Russian peasant life. An alternative lesson examines Russian geography. On the second day students will engage in an exercise to understand competing political parties. An optional lesson invites students to consider the symbols and language of the revolution. The third and fourth days feature a simulation in which students assume the roles of Russians debating their future in Petrograd’s Znamenskaya Square. The simulation includes undecided Russian citizens who will consider each option group’s presentation. On the fifth day, students examine the Civil War.

• **Alternative Study Guides:** Each section of background reading is accompanied by two study guides. The standard study guide helps students harvest the information from the background readings in preparation for analysis and synthesis in class. The advanced study guide requires the student to tackle analysis and synthesis prior to class activities.

• **Vocabulary and Concepts:** The background reading addresses subjects that are complex and challenging. You may want to review with students “Key Terms” found in the Teacher Resource Book (TRB) on page TRB-61 before they begin their assignment. An “Issues Toolbox” included on page TRB-62 provides information on key concepts.

• **Additional Primary Source Documents:** Materials are included on TRB 52-60 that can be used to supplement various lessons.

The lesson plans offered here are provided as a guide. Many teachers choose to devote additional time to certain activities. We hope that these suggestions help you tailor the unit to fit the needs of your classroom.

Integrating This Unit into Your Curriculum

Units produced by the Choices Education Program are designed to be integrated into a variety of social studies courses. Below are a few ideas about where *The Russian Revolution* might fit into your curriculum.

World History: The inclusion of a unit on the Russian Revolution helps students gain a broader understanding of one of the revolutions that altered the course of history. Besides offering an overview of Russian history, the unit focuses on the economic, political, and social conditions that led to revolution.

Russia's revolution, marked by violence, uncertainty, and ultimately a change of government, was not unlike many other revolutions. Like the American and the French Revolution before it, its outcome would have a profound and lasting impact on the course of history that reverberates to this day.

The study of Lenin's effort to create a new socialist society allows students to understand the birth of an ideological system that would compete directly with the United States and the West for ideological primacy around the world.

Economics: Russia's shift from a rural economy to an urban, industrialized nation offers a case study on economic dislocation and the unrest it created. In addition, the command economy imposed by the Soviet Union, often at the expense of many, illustrates the

difficulties of a Marxist-Leninist economic system, and also introduces students to the consequences of economic decision-making.

Political Science/Government: Why do transitions of government vary from case to case? Why did democracy fail to take root in Russia? Students will explore how Russia's historical conditions created the opportunity for Lenin and the Bolsheviks to assume power.

Additionally, students will examine the role leadership styles play in politics. Lenin's leadership had a critical effect on the country. Why was he able to seize power against all odds and with a relatively small group of followers? What is the relationship between leadership and the citizenry? What is the importance of individuals in political change?

Sociology/Anthropology: What role do different social groups play in a modern, multi-ethnic state? How are class identities formed within states? What forces cause identities to change? The peasants of Russia made up 80 percent of the Russian population at the beginning of the twentieth century. The identities of the peasants, shaped by language, religion, and collective experience, underwent dramatic change over the next sixty years.

With the aid of this unit, students can trace the ways this group responded to a rapidly changing Russian society and the ways social structures and values change over time.

Peasant Life

Objectives:

Students will: Identify characteristics of peasant life in Russia.

Explore and analyze the differing portrayals of peasants in Russian art and by historians.

Speculate about how conditions of peasant life may have contributed to social unrest in Russia.

Explore interdisciplinary approaches to historical issues.

Required Reading:

Before beginning the lesson, students should have read the Introduction and Part I of the background reading (pages 1-12) and completed the “Study Guide—Part I” in the Teacher Resource Book (TRB 4-5) or the “Advanced Study Guide—Part I” (TRB-6).

Handouts:

“Peasant Proverbs” (TRB-7)

“Peasant Life by the Numbers” (TRB-8)

“Peasants in Literature” (TRB-9)

“The Volga Barge Haulers” (TRB-10)

In the Classroom:

1. Focus Question—Write the question “What was it like to be a Russian peasant?” on the board.

2. Thinking about Peasant Life—Tell students that at the dawn of the twentieth century 80 percent of the population of the Russian Empire were peasants. Ask students to recall

information from their reading about peasant life.

3. Examining Peasant Life—Divide the class into four groups and distribute a different handout to each group. If class size requires, create eight groups. Ask students to read their directions and answer the questions provided.

4. Group Responses—After small groups have completed the questions, have everyone come together in a large group. Call on small groups to share their responses to the questions. Ask students to comment on similarities. Are there recurring themes and ideas that appear?

Ask the students if they feel they have enough information to offer hypotheses about life as a peasant in Russia. Why or why not? If yes, what might they be? Add some of them to the board. Ask students if they believe the portrayals of peasants in literature and art are useful to their understanding. What pitfalls might there be in relying on literature or art?

Ask students if they have changed their ideas or assumptions about peasant life. Have the reports from different groups raised any new questions about peasant life? Where do students think they might find answers to these new questions? Do students find any single approach to the question of peasant life most valuable?

Homework:

Students should read Part II of the background reading (pages 13-22) and complete the “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 19-20) or the “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-21).

Study Guide—Part I

1. Fill in the blanks with numbers.
 - a. The Russian Empire in 1861 stretched _____ miles from east to west.
 - b. The Russian Empire had a population of _____.
 - c. More than _____ languages were spoken.

2. List the general goals of the:
 - a. socialists

 - b. liberal reformers

3. List three characteristics of serfs' lives.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

4. List four reforms of Tsar Alexander II.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

5. Why did the populists go “to the people” in 1873-1874?

6. List two consequences of the famine of 1891.
 - a.
 - b.

Name: _____

7. Why was Karl Marx important to Russian intellectuals?

8. Fill in the chart below about major political groups in early twentieth century Russia. (See page eight of your reading.)

Political Group	Goals and Methods

9. How did Bloody Sunday change people’s attitudes towards the Tsar?

10. List four reforms in Tsar Nicholas’s October Manifesto.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Advanced Study Guide—Part I

1. What were conditions like for peasants?

2. What events contributed to the migration of peasants to the cities?

3. What were the fundamental political differences of the Liberal Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, and the Social Democrats?

4. What were the most important results of the Revolution of 1905? Explain.

Name: _____

Peasant Proverbs

Instructions: Below is a selection of peasants' proverbs and a song. Proverbs are concise sayings that are used to convey the values and beliefs of a culture. Proverbs often use symbolism or language from one aspect of life to give advice that can be applied more generally. Read the proverbs and the song below and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates.

Proverbs

- "If you hurry you will make people laugh."
- "Go slowly, you will go farther."
- "No one knows how the poor dine."
- "Bread and water, that is our food."
- "In the forest the trees are unequal and in the world so are men."
- "We all look at the same sun, but we don't eat the same dinner."
- "If the pocket is empty, the judge is deaf."
- "What one man can't bear, the village can."
- "No man is greater than the village."
- "Hit your wife with the butt of the axe, get down and see if she's breathing. If she is, she's faking and wants some more."
- "The more you beat the old woman, the tastier the soup will be."
- "Beat your wife like a fur coat, then there'll be less noise."
- "A wife is nice twice: when she's brought into the house and when she's carried out of it to her grave."
- "Oh it's a jolly life, only there's no one to beat."

Khorovod, a traditional song sung by peasant girls before marriage

They are making me marry a lout
With no small family.
Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh dear me!
With a father, and a mother
And four brothers
And sisters three.
Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh dear me!
Says my father-in-law,
'Here comes a bear!'
Says my mother-in-law,
'Here comes a slut!'
My sisters-in-law cry,
'Here comes a do-nothing!'
My brothers-in-law cry,
'Here comes a mischief-maker!
Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh dear me!

Questions

1. Make at least four generalizations about the values and beliefs expressed in these proverbs.
2. Which three proverbs stand out the most to you? Why?
3. What ideas do the proverbs express about the peasants' relationships to each other and society?
4. What is the central idea of the song? Is it different or similar to the ideas expressed in the proverbs? Explain your answer.

Peasant Life by the Numbers

Instructions: Below are a selection of statistics about peasant life between 1850 and 1914. Read the statistics and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates.

Statistics

The birth rate for peasants from 1850-1900 was fifty per thousand (twice the European average).

In 1900, one in four peasant babies died before the age of one.

The peasant population grew from fifty to seventy-nine million between 1861-1897. This resulted in a growing shortage of land.

Sixty-five percent of the rural population was under age thirty in 1897.

The rate of partitions of land within households rose from 82,000 per year in 1861 and 140,000 per year in 1884.

In 1900, 7 percent of the households had no land at all.

Until 1906, peasants did not have the right to own their allotments of land.

The Russian urban population increased from 7 to 28 million in the latter half of the nine-

teenth century. Most of this can be attributed to peasants looking for work.

Two out of three households were unable to feed themselves without going in to debt.

In 1900, only one in three peasant households had a horse.

In 1914, three out of four living in St. Petersburg were peasants by birth.

In 1890, 60 percent of peasant draftees were rejected for army service for medical and physical reasons.

The literacy rate in Russia rose from 21 percent in 1897 to 40 percent in 1914.

The number of primary schools went from 25,000 to 100,000 between 1878 and 1911.

By 1911, more than half of all peasant children were attending primary school.

By 1904, nine out of ten peasant recruits into the army from the provinces around Moscow and St. Petersburg were considered literate.

Questions

1. Suggest a likely consequence for each of the statistics. Be prepared to share at least five of these with your classmates.
2. List four general trends suggested by all of the statistics.
3. Which two statistics do you think are the most significant? Explain your answer.

Name: _____

Peasants in Literature

Instructions: Below are two short excerpts from two of the great writers of Russian literature: Anton Chekov and Leo Tolstoy. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian artists and intellectuals struggled to understand and portray the role of the peasant in Russia. Read the two excerpts carefully and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates.

From *The Death of Ivan Ilych*

by **Leo Tolstoy, 1886** [In these excerpts from Tolstoy's short story, Ivan Ilych is a terminally ill judge who is being cared for by his servant, a peasant named Gerasim.]

"But just through this most unpleasant matter, Ivan Ilych obtained comfort. Gerasim, the butler's young assistant, always came in to carry things out. Gerasim was a clean, fresh peasant lad, grown stout on town food and always cheerful and bright....

"Gerasim with a firm light tread, his heavy boots emitting a pleasant smell of tar and fresh winter air, came in wearing a clean Hessian apron, the sleeves of his print shirt tucked up over his strong bare young arms; and refraining from looking at his sick master out of consideration for his feelings, and restraining the joy of life that beamed from his face....

"Gerasim did it all easily, willingly, simply and with a good nature that touched Ivan Ilych. Health, strength, and vitality in other people were offensive to him, but Gerasim's strength and vitality did not mortify but soothed him....

"And in Gerasim's attitude toward him there was something akin to what he wished for, and so that attitude comforted him....

"His mental sufferings were due to the fact that at night, as he looked at Gerasim's sleepy, good-natured face with its prominent cheek-bones, the question suddenly occurred to him: 'What if my whole life has really been wrong?'"

From *Peasants*

by **Anton Chekov, 1897**

"In the course of the summer and winter there had been hours and days when it had seemed that these people live worse than cattle, when it had been terrible to live with them; they were coarse, not honest; filthy, not sober; they lived in discord, quarreling constantly, because they did not respect but feared and suspected one another. Who keeps the tavern and makes the people drunkards? A peasant. Who embezzles and drinks up the communal school and church funds? A peasant. Who has stolen from his neighbor, committed arson, given false testimony in court for a bottle of vodka? Who at *zemstvo* and other meetings is the first to declaim against the peasants? A peasant. Yes, to live with them was terrible, yet all the same they were people; they suffered and wept as people do; and in their lives there was nothing for which excuses might not be found."

Questions

1. List five characteristics that Tolstoy uses to describe the peasant Gerasim.
2. List five characteristics that Chekov uses to describe peasants.
3. What conclusions (if any) can you make about peasants after reading these two excerpts from Russian literature?

The Volga Barge Haulers

Instructions: Below is Ilya Repin's painting *The Volga Barge Haulers* (1873), and a contemporary reaction to it published in the *St. Petersburg Gazette*. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian artists and intellectuals struggled to understand and portray Russian life. Examine the painting (it can be seen in color at <http://www.choices.edu/RussianRevolution.cfm>) and the excerpts from the reaction carefully. Answer the questions below. Be prepared to report back to your classmates.

1. What are the most notable details of the painting? Explain.
2. What details does Vladimir Stasov note?
3. Why does Stasov think the painting is important?



**Excerpt from a letter to the *St. Petersburg Gazette*,
by Vladimir Stasov, 1873**

“Merely glance at Mr. Repin’s ‘Barge-Haulers,’ and you will immediately be obliged to admit that no one in Russia has ever dared to take on such a subject, that you have never before seen such a profoundly staggering picture of Russian life, although this subject and this task have stood for so long before us and our artists. But is this not the most essential characteristic of a powerful talent: the ability to perceive, and to instill in his work, that which is true and simple, and which hundreds and thousands of people pass by without remark?”

“In Mr. Repin’s painting there lies the Volga [River], endlessly spreading out before us as if swooning and falling asleep beneath the scorching July sun. Somewhere in the distance we glimpse a smoky steamship, closer to, the quietly swelling sail of a humble little

vessel gives off a golden hue, while in the foreground, a gang of barge haulers tread heavily along the sandbanks, leaving imprints of their bast [fiber] shoes in the damp sand. Harnessed in their straps, and hauling on tow ropes, these eleven men march in step, a living haulage machine, bending their bodies forward and swaying in time inside their yoke. What a docile herd this is, what humble, unconscious strength, and, at the same time, what poverty, what destitution. There is not a single whole shirt on these shoulders which have been burnt by the sun, not a single intact hat or cap: everywhere there are holes and tatters; they are all in rags, with cloth foot bindings....”

“Mr. Repin did not paint his picture in order to stir citizens to pity and wring sighs from them: rather, the types and characters he saw astonished him, he felt keenly the necessity of depicting Russia’s remote, unknown life, and he created in his painting such a scene...”

Geography of Russia

Objectives:

Students will: Practice general map reading skills.

Identify the major geographical landmarks of Russia on a map.

Understand the geography of the Russian Revolution.

Required Reading:

Before beginning the unit, students should have read the Introduction and Part I of the background reading in the student text (pages 1-12) and completed “Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 4-5) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 6).

Handouts:

“The Geography of the Russian Revolution” (TRB 12-16)

Note: Colored pencils might be helpful for each group as students fill in their maps. Teachers may want to prepare an overhead projection of the map “Physical Geography of Russia” on TRB-13.

In the Classroom:

1. Focus Question—Write the question “How does geography affect history?” on the board.

2. Forming Small Groups—Divide the class into groups of three or four. Each group should follow the instructions and answer the questions in the exercise and fill in the map “Physical Geography of Russia (TRB-13) using information from the other maps provided.

3. Sharing Conclusions—After about twenty minutes, call on students to share their findings. Ask students to make connections to Part I of the background reading when they can. How does the size of Russia compare to that of the United States or European countries? What do students think the advantages and disadvantages of governing such a vast land might be? How did climate affect the development of Russian society?

Homework:

Students should read Part II of the background reading (pages 13-22) and complete “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 19-20) or the “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-21).

The Geography of the Russian Revolution

Instructions: Use the information from the map handouts (maps B-G) to fill in map A, “Physical Geography of Russia,” on the following page (TRB-13).

1. Add the cities of St. Petersburg (Petrograd), Moscow, Rostov on Don, Novgorod, Penza, Yekaterinburg, and Vladivostok to map A.
2. Draw a straight line between Moscow and St. Petersburg and using the map scale write down the approximate distance between the two.
3. Circle the Ural mountains on map A.
4. Draw a line that shows the furthest extent of German Occupation in World War I on map A.
5. Use a colored pencil to mark the areas of peasant unrest in 1905 on Map A.
6. Use a pencil to mark the agricultural areas of Russia on map A.
7. What is the predominant form of vegetation in Russia? Mark it on map A.
Predominant form of vegetation:

8. Using a dictionary or the internet, briefly define “tundra.” In what region of Russia is it found?
Mark it on map A.
Tundra:

9. Using a dictionary or the internet, briefly define “perma-frost.” Mark the area of Russia that is **not** covered by permafrost on map A.
Permafrost:

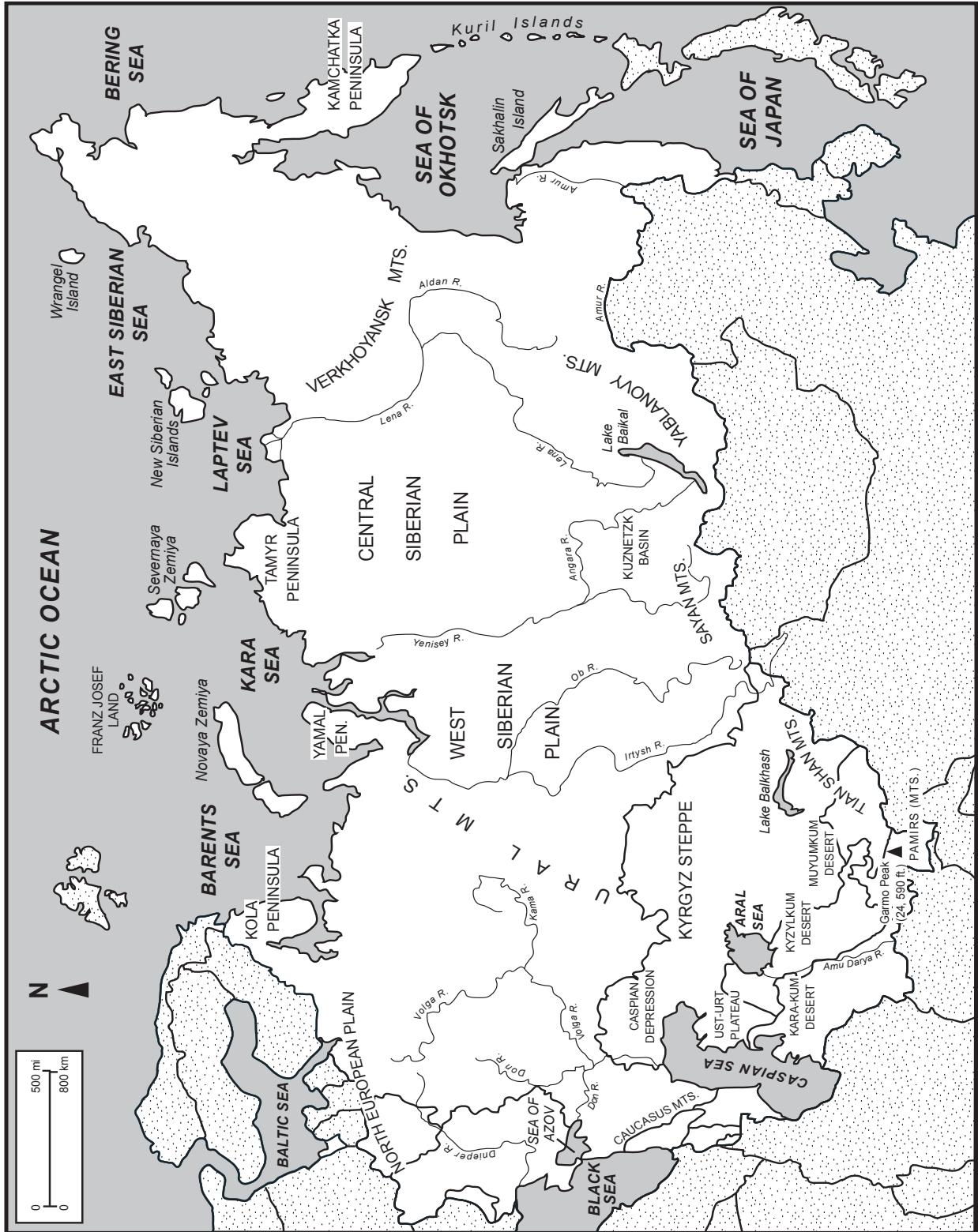
10. The area of Russia that is not covered by permafrost roughly coincides with important information from the other maps. What is it?

11. In what region of Russia are most of the cities located? What explanation might there be for this?

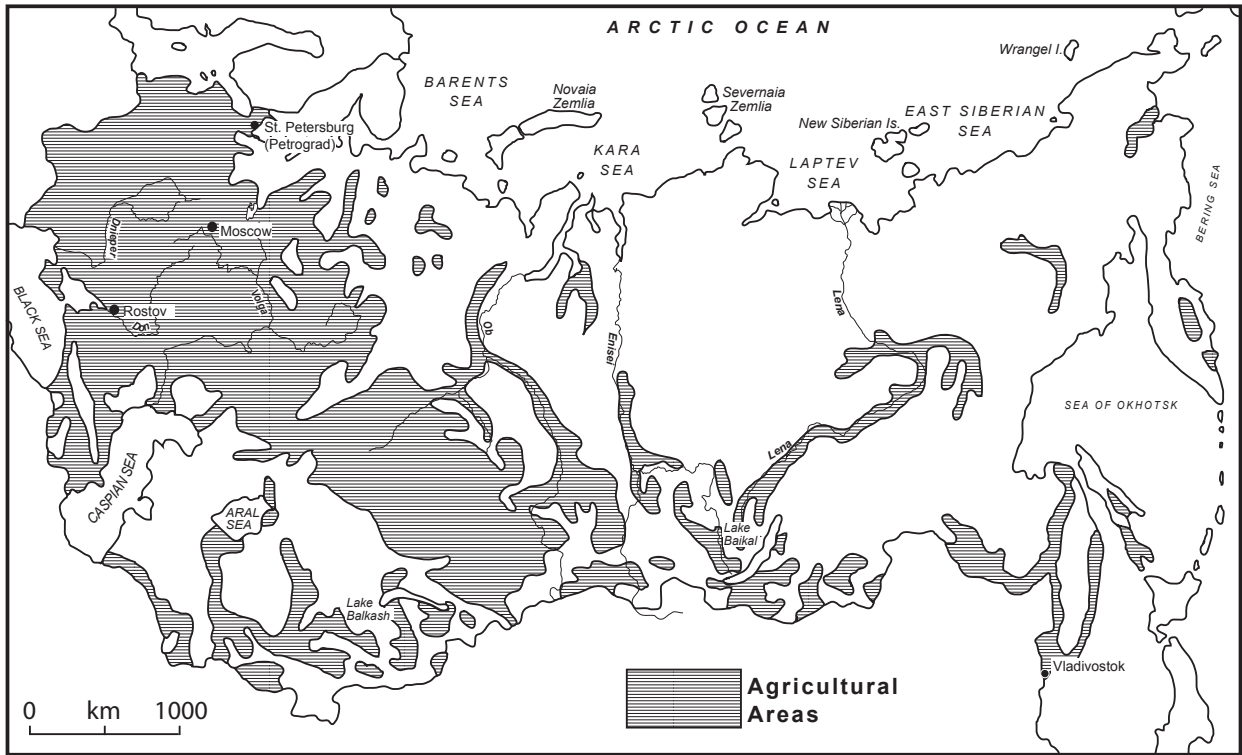
Physical Geography of Russia

Instructions: Fill in this map according to the instructions on the previous page. Use the other maps to gather the information you need.

A.



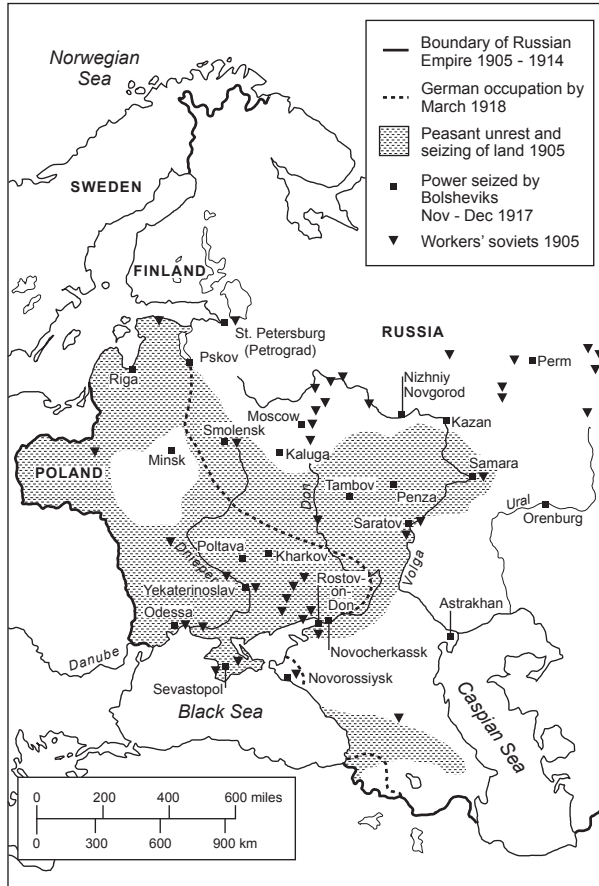
B.



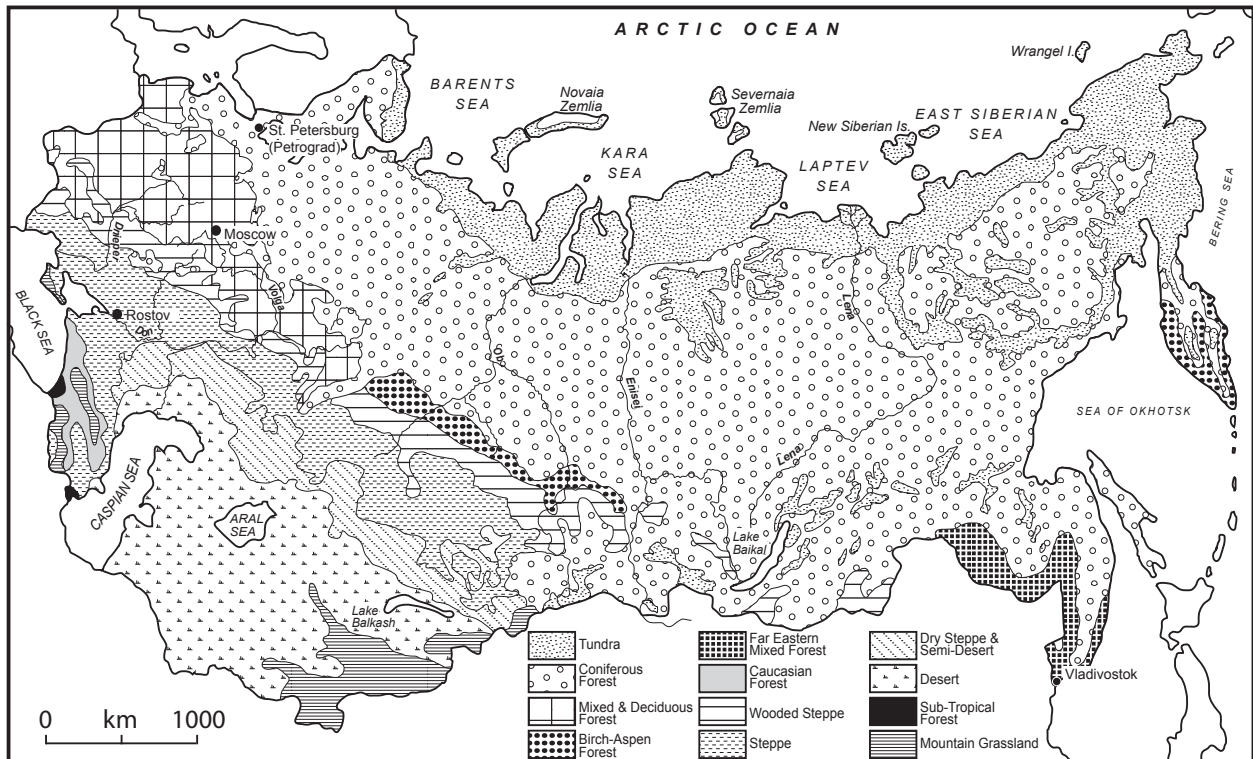
C.



D.



E.

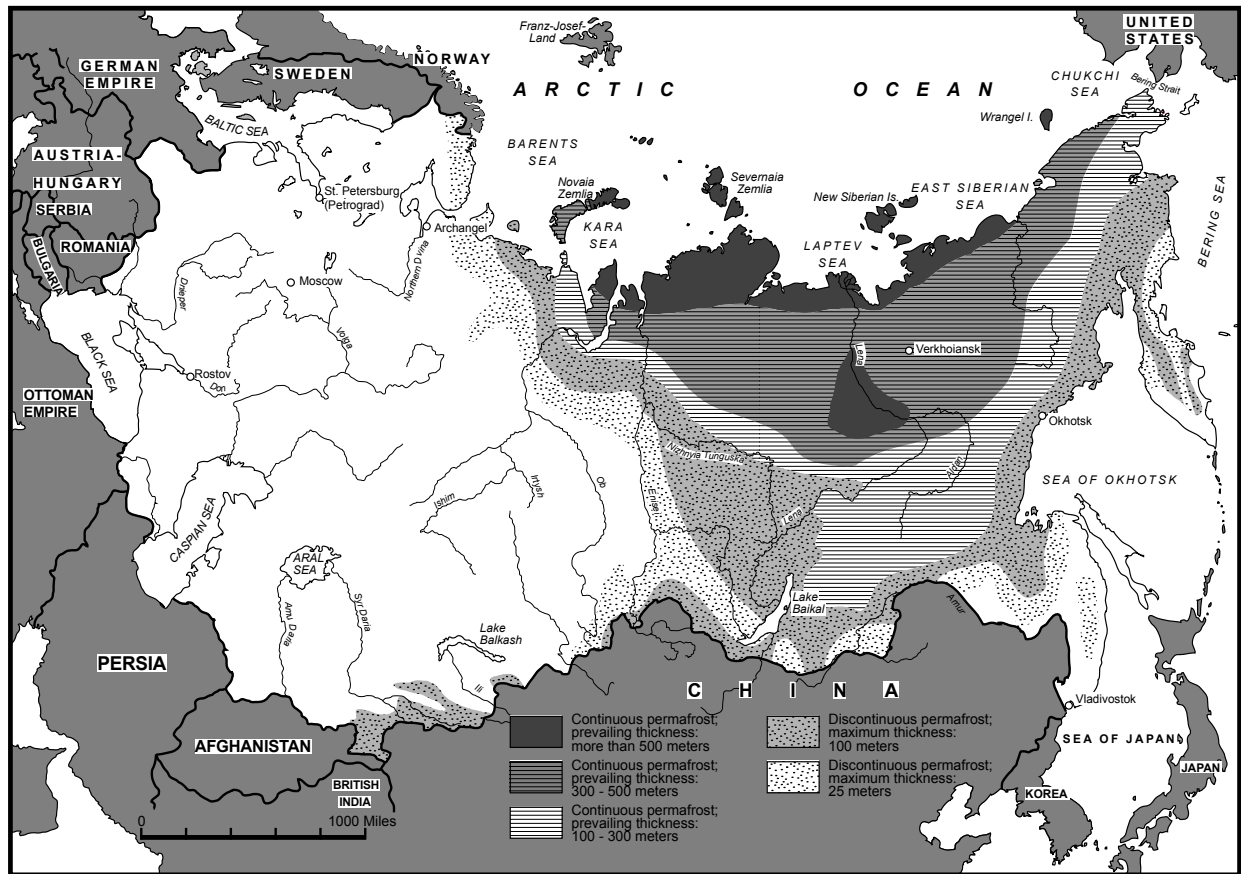


The Growth of Russia, 1855-1904

F.



G.



Understanding the Political Parties

Objectives:

Students will: Identify the different political groups in Russia.

Explore the central political issues of the time.

Use primary sources to understand the different political agendas of the political parties.

Evaluate the significance of these groups and their ideas following the Revolution of 1905.

Required Reading:

Before beginning Day Two, students should have read Part II of the background reading (pages 13-22) and completed the “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 19-20) or the “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-21).

Handouts:

“Fundamental Principles of the Parties” (TRB-25)

“Political Freedoms” (TRB-27)

“Education” (TRB-29)

“The Rights of Workers” (TRB-31)

“Nationalities and Minorities” (TRB-33)

Note on Sources: The complete political platforms are available at <http://www.choices.edu/RussianRevolution.cfm> The vocabulary is often challenging. Some teachers may choose to use these documents to add additional issues that were of concern at the time e.g., agrarian reform. Other teachers may choose only to use one or two of the topics above with the whole class.

Note on Political Parties: Remind students that in 1905 the Social Democrats were a single party with two factions: Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The Octobrists appear only in the handout “Fundamental Principles of the Parties.” They favored a constitutional monarchy based on the October Manifesto of the tsar, a position that gathered little sustained support.

In the Classroom:

1. Focus Question—“What role should government play in the lives of its citizens?”

2. Groupwork—Divide the class into groups of three or four. Give each group one of the handouts. Explain to students that each sheet contains excerpts from the platforms of the political parties active in Russia around the time of the 1905 Revolution. Each group should complete the questions in the exercise.

Note: Remind students that participation in the political process was extremely limited. Political parties were illegal until 1905.

3. Group Responses—After small groups have completed the questions, ask them to briefly summarize their findings to the class.

Ask students to draw distinctions between the parties’ positions on the role of government. Do the distinctions between the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries seem relatively small? Ask students to draw from the background reading to speculate about why they formed different parties.

4. Reinforcing New Knowledge—Divide the class into four groups. Designate different locations of your classroom as the home for each of the political parties. This exercise uses movement and repetition to reinforce students’ understanding of the political parties in Russia.

On TRB 22-23 you will find central ideas from the party platforms taken from “Fundamental Principles of the Parties” (TRB-25) labeled for each of the four student groups. Photocopy the sheets and separate them into individual cards. The cards given to each group do not identify the party. (The parties are identified for teachers on TRB-18 in an answer key).

Give each group the first card (Card 1) designated for its group. Give students one minute to discuss and decide which party the idea written on the card belongs to. They should then send a representative to the designated

location who is prepared to briefly explain why an idea belongs to a particular party.

Keep score of correct answers using the grid on TRB-24.

Students should return quickly to their groups. Distribute the second card (Card 2) to each group and repeat the process with different cards as time permits.

Homework:

Students should read “Spring 1917: Russia Debates its Future” in the student text (pages 23-25) and “Options in Brief” (page 26).

Answer Key

Social Democrats

“...the social revolution of the proletariat will abolish the division of society into classes and thus emancipate all oppressed humanity, and will terminate all forms of exploitation....”

Socialist Revolutionaries

“...Its basic practical aim is to make all layers of the toiling and exploited people awake that they are one working class, that that class is the only hope of their freedom by means of a planned, organized struggle to create a socio-revolutionary upheaval...”

Union of The Russian People

“...we call upon all those honest Russian people, irrespective of their profession or status, who are loyal to the Tsar, the country, and traditional Russian principles, to unite in order to conduct an active struggle by every legal means against arbitrariness, violence, and other repulsive manifestations of the recently granted freedom.”

Kadets

“All Russian citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, or nationality, are equal before the law. All class distinctions and all limitations of personal and property rights of Poles, Jews, and all other groups of the population, should be repealed.”

Octobrists

“[Supports] development and strengthening of the foundations of a constitutional monarchy with a representative assembly elected on a broad franchise....”

Name: _____

Study Guide—Part II

1. Peter Stolypin believed that the crown’s survival depended on what two factors?

a.

b.

2. What was “Stolypin’s necktie”?

3. Fill in the blanks. “Stolypin wanted to drive the _____ and _____

peasants off the _____ allowing them to sell to the _____ and wealthier peasants.”

4. Economic conditions between 1910 and 1914 in Russia were mixed. Fill in both sides of the table with as many examples of both as you can find.

Positive Economic Conditions	Negative Economic Conditions

5. List three ways that Russia financed its costs during World War I.

a.

b.

c.

6. Why was Rasputin an important figure? How was he regarded by many Russians?
7. List two reasons why workers called for a change of government in the winter of 1916-1917.
 - a.
 - b.
8. Why was the soldiers' mutiny of February 27 so important?
9. How did the Soviet gain the loyalty of the soldiers?
10. List five of the political reforms of the Provisional Government.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

Name: _____

Advanced Study Guide—Part II

1. Some historians believe that if Stolypin had not been assassinated, and if his reforms had been given time, they might have prevented the unrest of 1916 and 1917. What might lead these historians to make this claim?

2. How did World War I contribute to the downfall of the tsar?

3. What role did soldiers play during the February Days?

4. What was the significance of “Dual Authority”?

Group 1

Card 1

Group 1

“...the social revolution of the proletariat will abolish the division of society into classes and thus emancipate all oppressed humanity, and will terminate all forms of exploitation....”

Card 2

Group 1

“...Its basic practical aim is to make all layers of the toiling and exploited people awake that they are one working class, that that class is the only hope of their freedom by means of a planned, organized struggle to create a socio-revolutionary upheaval...”

Card 3

Group 1

“...we call upon all those honest Russian people, irrespective of their profession or status, who are loyal to the Tsar, the country, and traditional Russian principles, to unite in order to conduct an active struggle by every legal means against arbitrariness, violence, and other repulsive manifestations of the recently granted freedom.”

Card 4

Group 1

“All Russian citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, or nationality, are equal before the law. All class distinctions and all limitations of personal and property rights of Poles, Jews, and all other groups of the population, should be repealed.”

Card 5

Group 1

“[Supports] development and strengthening of the foundations of a constitutional monarchy with a representative assembly elected on a broad franchise....”

Group 2

Card 2

Group 2

“...the social revolution of the proletariat will abolish the division of society into classes and thus emancipate all oppressed humanity, and will terminate all forms of exploitation....”

Card 3

Group 2

“...Its basic practical aim is to make all layers of the toiling and exploited people awake that they are one working class, that that class is the only hope of their freedom by means of a planned, organized struggle to create a socio-revolutionary upheaval...”

Card 4

Group 2

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Card 5

Group 2

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Card 1

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Scoring Grid

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Card 1				
Card 2				
Card 3				
Card 4				
Card 5				
<u>Total Correct</u>				

The Political Parties in 1905

Instructions: Below are selections from the platforms of various political parties that were chosen to reflect each party's core beliefs. Read the selections and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates with a brief two minute summation of your findings. Listen carefully to your classmate's reports.

Issue 1: Fundamental Principles of the Parties

Social Democrats (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks)

By replacing private with public ownership of the means of production and exchange, by introducing planned organization in the public process of production so that the well being and the many sided development of all members of society may be ensured, the social revolution of the proletariat will abolish the division of society into classes and thus emancipate all oppressed humanity, and will terminate all forms of exploitation of one part of society by another.

A necessary condition for this social revolution is the dictatorship of the proletariat; that is, the conquering by the proletariat of such political power as would enable it to crush any resistance offered by the exploiters. In its effort to make the proletariat capable of fulfilling its great historical mission, international social democracy organizes it into an independent political party in opposition to all bourgeois parties....

....the Social Democratic Party will maintain a position of extreme revolutionary opposition to all the governments which may succeed one another during the course of the revolution...

Socialist Revolutionaries

International revolutionary socialism represents a conscious expression, scientific illumination, and formulation of this movement. Its aim is intellectual, political, and economic emancipation of the working class. It advances above all as an initiating revolutionary minority, as the fighting vanguard of the toiling masses, trying constantly

at the same time to merge with the masses and incorporate them into its ranks. Its basic practical aim is to make all layers of the toiling and exploited people aware that they are one working class, that that class is the only hope of their freedom by means of a planned, organized struggle to create a socio-revolutionary upheaval that consists of:

1. Freeing of all public institutions from control of the exploiting classes.
2. Eliminating, alongside private property in natural forces and in public means of production, the very division of the society into classes.
3. Eliminating the contemporary, stratified, compulsory, repressive nature of public institutions while at the same time preserving and developing their normal cultural functions; that is, planned organization of public work for public good.

Union of the Russian People

The enemies of the Tsar and of the country, by means of deception, threats, and violence, cause strikes in factories and mills, stop trains, disrupt trade, inflict tremendous loss to the entire state, and deprive hundreds of thousands of poor people of work in order to force them into violence through hunger. Our children are deprived of the possibility of education, the sick are dying, not being able to obtain medicine.... The trouble has not stopped in spite of the fact that we have received freedom, the same "freedom" which everyone has demanded so ardently. God only knows how far this anarchy will lead. One thing, however, is certain: we are proceeding directly to the downfall and destruction of the Russian state. This is why we call upon all those honest Russian people, irrespective of their profession or status, who are loyal to the Tsar, the country,

Name: _____

and traditional Russian principles, to unite in order to conduct an active struggle by every legal means against arbitrariness, violence, and other repulsive manifestations of the recently granted freedom.

Kadets (Constitutional Democrats)

I. Basic Rights of Citizens

1. All Russian citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, or nationality, are equal before the law. All class distinctions and all limitations of personal and property rights of Poles, Jews, and all other groups of the population, should be repealed.

2. Every citizen is guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion...

3. Anyone who wishes to express his thoughts orally or in writing has the right to...

II. Government Apparatus

13. The constitutional system of the Russian state will be determined by the constitution.

14. People's representatives are elected by a general, equal, direct and secret ballot, irrespective of their religion, nationality or sex.

Octobrists

[The Union of 17 October saw its main task as establishing a constitutional monarchy, on the basis of the Tsar's October Manifesto.]

1. The preservation of the unity and indivisibility of the Russian state, whilst allowing individual nationalities significant rights in the cultural field;

2. The development and strengthening of the foundations of a constitutional monarchy with a representative assembly elected on a broad franchise....

3. The guaranteeing of civil rights, and the inviolability of the individual, his residence, correspondence and property.

Questions

1. Summarize in a single, concise sentence the basic goal of each party.

Social Democrats:

Socialist Revolutionaries:

Union of the Russian People:

Kadets:

Octobrists:

2. Which parties would you classify as revolutionary? Why?

3. What group(s) within Russian society do you think that each party is trying to appeal to?

Social Democrats:

Kadets:

Socialist Revolutionaries:

Octobrists:

Union of the Russian People:

The Political Parties in 1905

Instructions: Below are selections from the platforms of various political parties that were chosen to reflect each party's beliefs about political freedoms. Read the selections and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates with a two minute summation of your findings. Listen carefully to your classmate's reports.

Issue 2: Political Freedoms

Social Democrats (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks)

The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party therefore sets as its immediate political task the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy and its replacement by a democratic republic whose constitution would guarantee:

1. The sovereignty of the people; i.e., the concentration of the supreme power of the state in a unicameral legislative assembly composed of representatives of the people.
2. Universal, equal and direct suffrage for all citizens, male and female, who have reached the age of twenty;...a secret ballot in these elections....
3. Broad local self-government; regional self-government for localities with special conditions of life or a particular make-up of the population.
4. Inviolability of person and dwelling.
5. Unrestricted freedom of conscience, speech, press and assembly; the right to strike and to form trade unions.
6. Freedom of movement and occupation.
7. Elimination of class privileges and the complete equality of all regardless of sex, religion, race or nationality.

Socialist Revolutionaries

The establishment of a democratic republic with broad autonomy for oblasts and communes, both urban and rural; increased acceptance of federal principles in relations between various nationalities; granting them unconditional right to self-determination; direct, secret, equal, and universal right to vote for every citizen above twenty years of age

regardless of sex, religion, or national origin; proportional representation; direct popular legislation (referenda and initiatives); election, removability at all times, and accountability of all officials; complete freedom of conscience, speech, press, meetings, strikes, and unions; complete and general civil equality; inviolability of the individual and home; complete separation of the church from the state and declaration that religion is a private affair for every individual....

Union of the Russian People

4. Allowing the election of Jews to the State Duma, not more than three persons, elected by the entire Jewish population of the Russian Empire to present in the Duma the special needs of the Jewish population. Such limitation is necessary because of the disruptive, anti-state activity of the united Jewish masses, their unceasing hatred of everything Russian, and the unscrupulousness which they so openly demonstrated during the recent revolutionary movement....

6. The State Duma, the bulwark of autocracy, should not demand any limitations on the supreme authority of the Tsar. It should only inform him of the real needs of the people and of the state and help the Legislator to realize the necessary reforms.

7. The immediate activity of authorities should be directed towards the introduction of a firm order and legality guaranteeing freedom of speech, press, assembly, and unions, and the inviolability of the individual. There should be established a rule that would determine the limits of these freedoms in order to prevent the violation of the established system, the endangering of the rights of other individuals, and thus to protect freedom itself....

Kadets

I. Basic Rights of Citizens

1. All Russian citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, or nationality, are equal before the law. All class distinctions and all limitations of personal and property rights of Poles, Jews, and all other groups of the population, should be repealed.

2. Every citizen is guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion. No persecution for religious beliefs or convictions, or for change or refusal to accept religious indoctrination, can be allowed. The celebration of religious and church ceremonies and the spread of beliefs are free, provided these activities do not include any general transgressions contrary to the criminal code of law. The Orthodox Church and other religions should be freed from state protection.

3. Anyone who wishes to express his thoughts orally or in writing has the right to publish and spread them through printing or any other media. Censorship, both general and special, regardless of its name, must be abolished and cannot be reinstated. For their oral or written transgressions the guilty ones will answer before the court.

4. All Russian citizens have the right to organize public or private meetings, in dwellings as well as in the open air, to examine any problem they wish.

5. All Russian citizens have the right to organize unions or societies without needing permission for it.

6. The right to petition is granted to every citizen as well as to all trade unions, gatherings, and so forth.

7. The person and home of every individual should be inviolable. Entry into a private dwelling, search, seizure, and opening of private correspondence are allowed only in cases permitted by law or on order of the court. Individuals detained in cities or places where courts are located should be within twenty-four hours; in other localities of the Empire not later than days, or be brought before the court. Any detention undertaken illegally without proper grounds, gives a detained person the right to be compensated by the state for losses suffered.

8. No one can be subjected to persecution or punishment except on the basis of law by court authorities in a legally constituted court. No extraordinary courts are allowed.

9. Every citizen has freedom of movement and travel abroad. The passport system is abolished.

10. All the above-mentioned rights of citizens must be incorporated into the Constitution of the Russian Empire and be guaranteed by courts.

Questions

1. Summarize in a single, concise sentence each of the parties' attitudes toward political rights.

Social Democrats:

Socialist Revolutionaries:

Union of the Russian People:

Kadets:

2. Why did the Union of the Russian People not want to allow more than three Jews in the State Duma?

3. What limits did the Union of the Russian People think should be placed on the tsar's authority?

The Political Parties in 1905

Instructions: Below are selections from the platforms of various political parties that were chosen to reflect each party's beliefs about education. Read the selections and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates with a two minute summation of your findings. Listen carefully to your classmate's reports.

Issue 3: Education

Social Democrats (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks)

14. Free and compulsory general or vocational education for all children of both sexes up to the age of sixteen; provision by the state of food, clothes, and school supplies for poor children.

Socialist Revolutionaries

...the Socialist Revolutionary Party...will advocate, defend, and seek by its revolutionary struggle the following...introduction of a compulsory, general public education at government expense....

Union of the Russian People

9. The Union intends to assume the responsibility of providing people with sound education, of developing among the people consciousness in the spirit of autocracy, and of spreading among them Christian foundations, thereby strengthening their patriotism and feelings of debt to the nation, society, and family.

Note: The proposed educational activity of the Union will be accomplished through the opening of a greater number of schools, through the preparation of readings, meetings, talks, distribution of appropriate books and pamphlets, and through the publication of newspapers and journals. The foundation of educational activity of Union schools is included in Appendix 2 of the present charter.

Appendix 2: The elementary school does not at all correspond either to the spirit or the needs of the Russian people. The Union sets as one of its main objectives the education of peasant, city, and working population on firm foundations and the development in them

of political consciousness and principles of Christianity. Village schools should equip the peasant for the necessities of rural life, agriculture, crafts, and domestic industry.

Kadets

VIII. Problems of Education

Public education should be founded on freedom, democracy, and decentralization in order to realize the following goals:

50. The elimination of all restrictions on school admissions based on sex, origin, or religion.

51. Freedom of private and public initiative to found and organize all sorts of educational institutions, including education outside the school; freedom of instruction.

52. Better liaison should be organized between various school classes in order to make easier a transfer from one school to another.

53. There should be full autonomy and freedom of instruction in universities and other institutions of higher learning. Their numbers should increase. The fee for attending lectures should be lowered. Institutions of higher learning should organize education to meet the needs of broad layers of society. Students should have freedom to organize themselves.

54. The number of institutions of secondary learning should increase in accordance with public needs; the fee for these should be reduced. Local public institutions should have the right to participate in the formulation of the education curriculum.

55. A universal, free, and obligatory system of education should be introduced in elementary schools. Local self-government should extend material aid to those who need it.

Name: _____

56. Local self-government should organize institutions for the education of the adult population—elementary schools for the adult, as well as public libraries and public universities.

57. Professional education should be developed.

Questions

1. Summarize in a single, concise sentence each of the parties' attitudes toward education.

Social Democrats:

Socialist Revolutionaries:

Union of the Russian People:

Kadets:

2. What does the Union of the Russian People mean when it says that “The elementary school does not at all correspond either to the spirit or the needs of the Russian people”?

Name: _____

The Political Parties in 1905

Instructions: Below are selections from the platforms of various political parties that were chosen to reflect each party's beliefs about the rights of workers. Read the selections and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates with a two minute summation of your findings. Listen carefully to your classmate's reports.

Issue 4: The Rights of Workers

Social Democrats (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks)

To protect the working class from physical and moral degradation, and also to develop its capacity for the liberation struggle; the party demands:

1. Limitation of the working day to eight hours for all hired workers....
2. A complete ban on overtime work.
3. A ban on night work...with the exception of those (industries) which absolutely require it for technical reasons....
4. The prohibition of the employment of children of school age....
5. A ban on the use of female labor in occupations which are harmful to the health of women; maternity leave from four weeks prior to childbirth until six weeks after birth....
6. The provision of nurseries for infants and young children in all...enterprises employing women.
7. State insurance for workers against old age and partial or complete disability through a special fund supported by a tax on capitalists....
8. The appointment of an adequate number of factory inspectors in all branches of the economy....
9. The supervision by organs of local self-government, together with elected workers' representatives, of sanitary conditions in factory housing....
10. The establishment of properly organized health inspection in all enterprises...free medical services for workers at the employer's expense, with wages to be paid during time of illness.

11. Establishment of criminal responsibility of employers for violations of laws intended to protect workers.

12. The establishment in all branches of the economy of industrial tribunals made up equally of representatives of the workers and of management.

13. Imposition upon the organs of local self-government of the duty of establishing employment agencies (labor exchanges) to deal with the hiring of local and non-local labor in all branches of industry, and participation of workers' and employers' representatives in their administration.

Socialist Revolutionaries

In the matter of labor legislation the Socialist Revolutionary Party sets as its aim the safeguarding of spiritual and material forces of the working class and increasing its capability of further struggle to whose goals should be subordinated all expedient, direct, local, and professional interests of the diverse working strata. In this sphere the Party will advocate: a reduction of the working time in order to relieve surplus labor; establishment of a legal maximum of working time based on norms determined by health conditions (an eight-hour working norm for most branches of industry as soon as possible, and lower norms for work which is dangerous or harmful to health); establishment of a minimum wage in agreement between administration and labor unions; complete government insurance (for accident, unemployment, sickness, old age, and so on), administered by the insured at the expense of the state and employers; legislative protection of labor in all branches of industry and trade, in accordance with the health conditions supervised by factory inspection

commissions elected by workers (normal working conditions, hygienic conditions of buildings; prohibition of work for youngsters below sixteen years of age, limitation of work for youngsters, prohibition of female and child labor in some branches of industry and during specified periods, adequate and uninterrupted Sunday rest, and so forth); professional organization of workers and their increased participation in determining internal rules in industrial enterprises.

Union of the Russian People

The Union of the Russian People sets as its undeviating goal a durable unity of the Russian people of all classes and professions to work for the general good of our fatherland—a Russia united and indivisible.

Kadets

VII. Labor Legislation

41. There should be freedom of labor unions and assemblies.

42. The right to strike should be granted. Punishment for violations of law which occur during or as a result of strikes should be determined in general terms and under no circumstances should be extreme.

43. Labor legislation and independent inspection of labor should be extended to all forms of hired labor; there should be partici-

pation of workers' elected representatives in inspections aimed at safeguarding the interests of workers.

44. Legislation should introduce the eight-hour working day. Where possible, this norm should be immediately realized everywhere, and systematically introduced in other industries. Night work and overtime work should be prohibited except where technically and socially indispensable.

45. Protection of female and child labor and the establishment of measures to protect male labor should be developed in dangerous enterprises.

46. Arbitration offices, consisting of an equal number of representatives of labor and capital to regulate all kinds of hiring which are not regulated by labor legislation, and solving of disputes which may arise between workers and employers, should be established.

47. Obligatory state medical care (for a defined period), accident and work-connected illness compensations, which are to be contributed to by the employers, should be established.

48. State old age security and disability allowances for all individuals who make a living by their own work should be introduced.

49. Criminal responsibility for violation of laws dealing with the protection of labor should be established.

Questions

1. Summarize in a single, concise sentence each of the parties' attitudes toward workers' rights.

Social Democrats:

Socialist Revolutionaries:

Union of the Russian People:

Kadets:

2. If you were a worker in Russia in 1905, which party's position would appeal to you most? Why? (You may consider how the information is presented as well its substance.)

Name: _____

The Political Parties in 1905

Instructions: Below are selections from the platforms of various political parties that were chosen to reflect each party's beliefs about different nationalities and minorities in Russia. Read the selections and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to report back to your classmates with a two minute summation of your findings. Listen carefully to your classmate's reports.

Issue 5: Nationalities and Minorities

Social Democrats (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks)

7. Elimination of class privileges and the complete equality of all regardless of sex, religion, race or nationality.

8. The right of any person to obtain an education in their native language...; the use of the native language together with the state language in all local, public and state institutions.

9. National self-determination for all nations forming part of the state.

Socialist Revolutionaries

...the essence of contemporary socialism is the freeing of all mankind. It seeks elimination of all forms of civil strife among peoples, of all forms of violence and exploitation of man by man; instead, it seeks to introduce freedom, equality and brotherhood of all regardless of sex, race, religion or nationality.

Union of The Russian People

5. The Russian people, as the gatherer of Russian lands and the creator of the great might of the state, enjoy a preferential position in national life and in national administration.

Note: All institutions of the Russian state should be united and should constantly strive to maintain the greatness of Russia and the preferential rights of the Russian people that legally belong to them, so that the numerous minorities that inhabit our country would consider it their privilege to be a part of the Russian Empire and would not consider themselves oppressed.

Note: The Russian language is and should be the official language of the Russian Empire for all of its people....

14. Members of the Union can be only native Russians of both sexes, of all classes and professions, who are dedicated to the aims of the Union, who show an indication that they are firmly acquainted with the aims of the Union and who, when they join the Union, will promise not to enter into an association with a secret organization or an organization that pursues aims that are contrary to those of the Union.

15. All other persons can be accepted as members of the Union only by the decision of the General Meeting of the members of the Union.

Note: Jews cannot become members of the Union.

Kadets

11. The Constitution of the Russian Empire should guarantee all the minorities inhabiting the Empire, in addition to full civil and political equality enjoyed by all citizens, the right of cultural self-determination, namely: full freedom of usage of various languages and dialects in public, the freedom to found and maintain educational institutions and meetings of all sorts having as their aim the preservation and development of the language, literature and culture of every nationality.

12. The Russian language should be the official language of the central administration, army, and fleet. The use of local languages alongside the language in state and public institutions and educational establishment supported by the state or organs of local self-government is determined by general and local laws, and, within their competence, by the institutions concerned. The population of each locality should be guaranteed education in the native language in elementary schools, and possibly in subsequent education.

Questions

1. Summarize in a single, concise sentence each of the parties' attitudes toward nationalities and minorities in Russia.

Social Democrats:

Socialist Revolutionaries:

Union of the Russian People:

Kadets:

2. What might the consequence be of the Social Democrats' position on self-determination for nationalities?

Symbols of the Revolution

Objectives:

Students will: Examine symbols and political writings of the Russian Revolution and understand their historical significance.

Identify contemporary political symbols and assess their power and importance.

Required Reading:

Students should have read Part II of the background reading (pages 13-22) and completed the “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 19-20) or the “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-21).

Handouts:

“Symbols, Songs, and Words of the Revolution” (TRB 36-37)

“Translation of Lyrics of the ‘Marsiliuza’” (TRB-38)

In the Classroom:

1. Getting Started—Write the questions “What is a symbol? What role do symbols play in history?” on the board. Ask students to name a few important historical symbols, i.e., the Statue of Liberty or the Washington Monument.

Distribute the handouts to the class and divide the class into small groups. Assign each group the task of reading the handout and completing the questions.

Note: A rendition of the “Marsiliuza”

is available online at <www.marxists.org/history/ussr/sounds/mp3/proletariat-01/Rabotshaja-Marcelesa.mp3>.

2. Group Responses—After students have completed the questions, have students come together in a large group. Call on groups to share their responses to the questions. Ask students which of the symbols stand out most to them. How did symbols inspire Russians in 1917? What kinds symbols do they consider most powerful or important?

3. Drawing Connections—Ask students to consider contemporary symbols today. Are there examples from their school or community? What roles have songs played in public protest? How do political groups use and exploit symbols?

Extra Challenge:

Ask students to imagine their own fictional “revolution.” It could be a national political revolution like the one in Russia or something smaller in their personal life or at their school. Students should write a short essay or create a project that conveys the symbols of their “revolution.” The symbols should clearly convey the values behind the change brought about by this fictional “revolution.”

Homework:

Students should read “Spring 1917: Russia Debates in Future” in the student text (pages 23-25) and “Options in Brief” (page 26).

Symbols, Songs, and Words of the Revolution

Instructions: Complex political positions and events can often be represented by something seemingly simple or small. Ideas can be transmitted the same way. Below are examples from the era of the Russian Revolution. As you read, see if you can think of examples for each of the categories from life today. Be prepared to report back to your classmates.

The Color Red

Red had been the color of European revolutions since 1789. It was also important in Russia. Red flags and emblems were commonplace during the February Days.

In the Russian language, red is linked with the concept of beauty: the word “red” (*krasnyi*) is a synonym of “wonderful” (*prekrasnyi*) and “beautiful” (*krasivyi*). One old Russian proverb asserted, “Reddest is the best.” Easter (which occurred in 1917 on Sunday, April 2) was called “Red Easter,” and on that day the priests wore red robes.

Red objects turned into revolutionary symbols in 1917. The people of Petrograd wore red ribbons or armbands. In one confrontation, a group of Cossacks (known for their willingness to fire on revolutionary crowds for the tsar) accepted a bouquet of red roses from a little girl with the protestors. The crowd interpreted the acceptance of the bouquet as a sign of solidarity. Red ribbons were given to the Cossacks and tied to their horse manes and tails. During their decisive mutiny on February 27, soldiers tied little red flags onto their bayonets. The Bolsheviks formed the red guards and ultimately, the Red Army.

Changing Names

After the abdication of the tsar, the people destroyed tsarist symbols. Crowds began to “roast eagles”—to remove, set afire, and melt down double-headed eagles, which were emblems of the Russian monarchy. The tricolor flag, which dated from the reign of Peter the Great, was burned. Portraits of Nicholas II and his family were defaced and destroyed. Statues were demolished or covered with red flags and banners.

Petrograd city officials, like those in other

cities and towns, sought to replace public place names tainted by monarchy with new ones more suited to the revolutionary spirit.

Nikolai Street.....became 27 February Street
 Palace Bridge Freedom Bridge
 Mikhail Street..... The Street of Fraternity
 Palace Embankment The Embankment of
 Freedom
 Palace Square.....The Square of 27 February

Naval vessels were renamed “Citizen,” “Republic,” “The Freeman,” and so on. Individuals unluckily surnamed “Tsarev,” “Romanov,” or “Rasputin” petitioned for permission to change names. Before the revolution, “Nikolai” had been the most common male name, but during 1917 it was seldom used for newborns.

As the social order changed, so did forms of address. The people of the new Russia called themselves “citizens” or “comrades.” Workers insisted that their bosses address them with the formal and respectful ‘you’ (*vyi*) instead of the informal one (*tyi*), which for them was a reminder of serfdom. Such demands were based on a belief in universal human rights, which was frequently expressed during the spring of 1917.

Language and Writing

To make the sometimes confusing and dense Marxist political rhetoric accessible to the masses, the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and Socialist Revolutionaries each printed what would become a best-selling pamphlet entitled “Spiders and Flies.” Its symbolic language put the revolutionary struggle in clear, understandable terms. “Spiders and Flies” did more than any other writing to educate the masses about socialist principles.

Name: _____

“The spiders are the masters, the money-grubbers, the exploiters, the wealthy, and the priests, pimps and parasites of all types!... The flies are the unhappy workers who must obey all those laws the capitalist happens to think up—must obey, for the poor man has not even a crumb of bread. The spider is the factory-owner earning five or six rubles every day from each of his workers and impertinently giving them a paltry wage as if it were a kindness.”

—from “Spiders and Flies”
Wilhelm Liebknecht

Geographic Locations

Certain locations in Petrograd acquired symbolic significance during the February days. Beginning with the first workers’ march on February 23, all marches which originated in the industrial suburbs aimed at the capital’s prosperous center and its main street: Nevsky Prospekt. This was the most famous avenue in Petrograd. It was a boulevard two miles long lined with banks, fine stores, hotels, the best restaurants, small palaces, and the Kazan Cathedral. This street served as a reminder of the wide chasm separating the poor from the well-off. It became a battleground between demonstrators and police.

One particularly significant place was Znamenskaya Square. Located at the head of Nevsky Prospekt, the square’s huge open spaces connected it with streets leading to workers’ districts. Centered on an enormous statue of the tsar’s father, Alexander III, riding a horse, the square was a primary destination of marchers and became the focal point of the February Revolution. (See the photo on page 21.)

Your assignment: Make a list of as many political symbols as you can from contemporary culture using the same categories as above.

Color:

Names:

Language and Writing:

In acts of defiance of the tsar’s authority, speakers would climb up on the statute, which they called the “hippopotamus” and give revolutionary speeches.

On February 26, over fifty protestors were killed here by soldiers. After these deaths, the square became known as a “sacred place” of the revolution. Political meetings and protests continued to be held there.

Songs

The singing of songs was an essential element of the Revolution. Singing boosted protestors’ morale, focused their attention, and encouraged onlookers to become participants in the marches. Heard most frequently were the stirring words of the French revolutionary anthem, the “Marseillaise.”

In the streets, people sang a version which they named the “Marsiliuza”; this song quickly became the new national anthem for a short time. (Lenin changed the national anthem to the Internationale in 1917.) It had debuted in 1876 at Russia’s first organized public protest, on the square in front of Petrograd’s Kazan Cathedral. Its words clearly advocated class conflict. The lyrics are on the second handout. A rendition of the song is available online at <<http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/sounds/mp3/proletariat-01/Rabotshaja-Marcelesa.mp3>>.

“[The crowds] were singing ‘Marseillaise’ and when they weren’t doing that they were asking for ‘bread! bread!’”

—Marguerite Bennet
Petrograd, March 15, 1917

Geographic Locations:

Songs:

Are there other categories (and examples) that you might add?

Translation of Lyrics of the “Marsiliuza”

We renounce the old world,
 We shake its dust from our feet,
 We don't need a Golden Idol,
 And we despise the Tsarist Devil.

We'll line up among suffering brethren
 We'll go towards the ones who are hungry
 We will send our curses to villains
 And shall call all the hungry to fight!

Refrain:

Arise, to your feet, working people!
 Arise, hungry brother,
 rise up 'gainst the fiend!
 Let the roar of people's revenge sound loud!
 Forward! To your feet!

The rich are like a savage wolf's pack,
 Who steal the fruits of your strenuous labor,
 They grow fat with your sweat like gluttons,
 You go hungry just so they will feast,
 You go hungry—they play in the market,
 Selling honor and morals on the cheap,
 Making fun at your fate, oh so bleak.

To rest for you is to lie in the grave,
 Every day is without bread. Be prepared:
 The blood-thirsty Tsar wants to take more from
 you,
 Drinking blood from his hardworking people.
 The Tsar needs armies—
 prepare your sons!
 He wants feasts—
 so you give him your blood!

Refrain...

Had enough? Then let's rise, right this mo-
 ment.

From the banks of Dnipro to the depths of
 White Sea,

From the regions of Volga, the farthest Kavkaz
 'gainst the robbers, the dogs—all the
 rich!

Not forgetting the vampire—our Tsar,
 Hurt and kill them, those beasts of damnation
 So the light of the promised new life can shine
 through.

Refrain...

And the blood-colored dawn will be followed
 by sun,

The bright big sun of the truth and the kinship
 of people.

We'll buy peace with the ultimate fight
 We'll pay blood for the laughter of children,
 So will come freedom's hour
 the evil, sin, lies will be gone.

In the kingdom of honest, blessed labor
 Many peoples will merge to be one.

Role Playing the Four Options: Organization and Preparation

Objectives:

Students will: Analyze the issues that framed the 1917 debate over the future of Russia.

Identify the core assumptions underlying the options.

Integrate the arguments and beliefs of the options into a persuasive, coherent presentation.

Work cooperatively within groups to organize effective presentations.

Required Reading:

Students should have read “Spring 1917: Russia Debates its Future” in the student text (page 23-25).

Handouts:

“Presenting Your Option” (TRB-40) for options groups

“Undecided Citizens in Znamenskaya Square” (TRB 41-43) for remaining students

In the Classroom:

1. Planning for Group Work—In order to save time in the classroom, form student groups before beginning Day Three. During the class period, students will be preparing for the Day Four simulation. Remind them to incorporate the background reading into their presentations and questions.

2. Introducing the Role Play—Inform the students that this simulation takes place at Znamenskaya Square in Petrograd.

3a. Option Groups—Form four groups of four to five students each. Assign an option to each group. Explain that the option groups should follow the instructions in “Presenting Your Option.” Note that the option groups should begin by assigning each member a role (students may double up). Ask students to identify the political party or group that their group represents.

Note: Option groups correspond to Liberal Democrats, SRs, Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks. In February 1917 there was little or no remaining public support for the tsar. The Union of the Russian People was no longer a political force.

3b. Undecided Citizens—Distribute “Undecided Citizens in Znamenskaya Square” to the remaining students and assign each student a role. While the options groups are preparing their presentations, these students should develop cross-examination questions for Day Four. Remind these students that they are expected to turn in their questions at the end of the simulation. Note that the citizens are fictional characters.

Suggestion:

Ask the option groups to design a poster illustrating the best case for their options.

Homework:

Students should complete preparations for the simulation.

Presenting Your Option

The Setting: It is late April 1917. Crowds have gathered in Znamenskaya Square in Petrograd and are making speeches and arguing about the future of Russia.

Your Assignment: Your group comprises a variety of individuals who share a common vision for Russia. Your assignment is to persuade the undecided citizens that your option should become the basis for action. On Day Four, your group will be called upon to present a persuasive three-to-five minute summary of your option to these individuals. You will be judged by the undecided citizens on how well you present your option. This worksheet will help you prepare. Your teacher will moderate discussion.

Organizing Your Group: Each member of your group will take a specific role. Below

is a brief explanation of the responsibility of each role. Before preparing your sections of the presentation, work together to address the questions below. The **group director** is responsible for organizing the presentation of your group's option to the undecided citizens. The **political expert** is responsible for explaining why your option is most appropriate in light of the current domestic and international political climates. The **economic expert** is responsible for explaining why your option makes the most sense for the country economically. The **social expert** is responsible for explaining why your group's option offers the best route in terms of social issues. The **military expert** is responsible for explaining why your group's option offers the best route in terms of security.

Consider the following questions as you prepare your presentation:

1. What will be the impact of your option on the people of Russia?

2. What will be the impact of your option on foreign relations?

3. What is your option's long-term vision for Russia?

4. What are your option's short-term strategies for Russia?

5. What potential difficulties might your option's strategy encounter?

6. On what values is your option based?

Name: _____

Undecided Citizens in Znamenskaya Square

The Setting: It is April 1917 and you have joined the crowds on the street in Znamenskaya Square. In the new climate of unfettered political speech, different groups are arguing about the future of Russia.

Your Role: As an undecided citizen in the square, you will listen to the presentations of each option and decide which group presented its option most persuasively. The presentations by the options groups will introduce you to four distinct options for Russia's future. You are expected to evaluate each of the options and complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of the debate. Your teacher will moderate discussion.

Your Assignment: While the four option groups are organizing their presentations, each of you should prepare two questions regard-

ing each of the options. The questions should reflect the values, concerns, and interests of your characters. Your teacher will collect these questions at the end of Day Four.

Your questions should be challenging and critical. For example, a good question for Option 1 from Anatoly might be:

Won't a liberal democracy in Russia lead to more violence and insecurity?

On Day Four, the four option groups will present their positions. After their presentations are completed, your teacher will call on you and the other residents to ask questions. The "Evaluation Form" you will receive is designed for you to record your impressions of the options. After this activity is concluded, you and your classmates may be called upon to explain your positions on Russia's future.



Protestors gather at Znamenskaya Square.

At the Political Meeting

Grigorii—You are a 34-year-old Russian Orthodox priest who serves a parish in the Vyborg district (a major industrial suburb) of Petrograd. You are compassionate and concerned about the spiritual and physical health of your poor working-class parishioners. Several members of your church were killed and injured during the violence of the February Revolution. Optimistic about Russia’s future, yet realistic about the uncertainties ahead, you like to greet others with the phrase “Russia has arisen,” a paraphrase of the customary Easter greeting, “Christ has arisen.”

Anatoly—You are a 45-year-old food merchant who operated a fashionable store on Nevsky Prospekt, Petrograd’s main street, until the February Revolution. During the riots of the February Days, your store was looted. You have begun the arduous task of rebuilding your business. You are worried about the increase in crime, continued street demonstrations, and recurring industrial strikes. You are quite patriotic and support the war effort.

Olga—You are a 25-year-old textile worker from the Vyborg district. You were one of the demonstrators whose protests on February 23 sparked the revolution. You are married to a metal worker, and you have two little children at home, who are cared for during the day by an elderly neighbor. Father Grigorii is your parish priest.

Natasha—You are a 30-year-old coal miner. Your mine is on strike, and you are in Petrograd helping your sister’s family while she is going through a difficult pregnancy. Your brother-in-law is a soldier at the front. You and your husband, also a coal miner, have two children of your own at home. You are physically and emotionally strong, but you also have many fears. You miss your husband and children, you are worried about your sister, you wonder when the miners’ strike will end, and you are distressed by the turmoil in Petrograd.

Vladimir—You are a 32-year-old army sergeant in the Petrograd garrison. Known for

your courage and leadership ability, you were wounded at the front and reassigned to a unit in Petrograd to recover. Your unit consists largely of older reservists, mostly family men. During the February Revolution, horrified by the cruelty of the Cossacks, you persuaded your fellow soldiers to mutiny. In March, you were elected by your regiment to represent it in the Petrograd Soviet. You have a wife and three children at home.

Ivan—You are a 19-year-old sailor at the Kronstadt naval base. Like the many other young sailors at Kronstadt, you have seen a great deal of violence, though not from the war. For one year prior to the February Revolution, you were a trainee on board ship with your officers. Since the usual naval rules were waived for trainees, the officers treated you with more than customary cruelty. When your chance came during the February Days, you and your shipmates mutinied. Dozens of officers, including the base commander, were murdered or imprisoned in dungeons. You like to read radical political pamphlets.

Sergei—You are a 49-year-old peasant. You live in a village on the Volga River near Yaroslavl. You are in Petrograd visiting your only son, a metal worker, who was shot by soldiers during the February Days demonstrations. While this four hundred-mile journey was difficult and expensive, seeing your son has been worth every ruble. You plan to return home in several weeks for the spring planting.

Nina—You are a 38-year-old housewife. You live with your husband (a shipyard worker) and two children in one room of an apartment. To make ends meet, you take in laundry. You also sublet the apartment’s other room to another family. Like many working-class housewives, you are illiterate. Despite your pleas, your husband drinks too much vodka. Sometimes, when he has had too much to drink, he beats you. You dream of a better life, including an education for your children.

Ariadna—You are a 37-year-old public health physician who is active in the tem-

Name: _____

perance movement. Your crusade against alcoholism is only one aspect of your social activism. You also advocate equal rights and educational opportunities for women, and you denounce prostitution. You are the author of a widely-read book on women workers. On March 19 you participated in a demonstration staged by forty thousand women demanding the right to vote.

Nikolai—You are a married 42-year-old postal clerk. Your three children attend school. You have helped organize a postal clerks' union, which has successfully sought an eight-hour day and a wage increase. You favor the election of managers in the postal service. You are weary of poor housing, dirty drinking water, and food shortages. You feel optimistic that the revolution will bring positive results to your union and to Russia as a whole.

Boris—You are a widowed 51-year-old shoemaker. You were born a peasant and learned your trade as an apprentice to the local cobbler. As a young man, you migrated to the capital and set up shop. Your business has done well, and your customers include government officials, soldiers and sailors, and university students. Your son is serving in the navy; his wife and your little granddaughter live with you. You are troubled by war news, the unrest in Petrograd, and your granddaughter's frequent illnesses. When you can, you send money to help family back in your home village.

Katya—You are a 20-year-old law student at the University of St. Petersburg. Your father comes from the nobility and served in the tsar's ministry of finance. You have an intelligent, diligent, and creative spirit. You see yourself as a future contributor to a new Russia. You took part in the March 19 protest in which forty thousand women demanded the right to vote. Your boyfriend, whom you have known since childhood, is a young army officer.

Lidiia—You are a 23-year-old army nurse with two years' service at the front. You are home on leave. For your valor, you were awarded the St. Olga's women's service medal

by the tsar himself. You are fiercely loyal to your comrades, especially brave Mikhail, your lover. You despise the Germans and hope for victory. At the same time, you are aware that the war is going badly and you are sick of all the blood and death.

Anya—You are a 24-year-old soldier's widow with two children. Your husband was killed last year. When you can, you work in your apartment as a seamstress, and you take in laundry. Your mother lives with you and helps with daily work and child care. As a soldier's widow, you receive a very small government pension, which wartime inflation quickly exhausts. As a group, the soldiers' wives (*soldatki*) are politically active. You participated in food riots before and after the February Revolution. On April 11, you and fifteen thousand other *soldatki* marched through the city and presented a list of demands to the Petrograd Soviet.

Dmitry—You are a 39-year-old waiter at an expensive restaurant on Nevsky Prospekt. You became literate at the primary school in your village. Fleeing field labor and your abusive, alcoholic father, you left for the city twenty years ago. You like most aspects of your job, and you pride yourself on your knowledge of good food and wine. However, you have always been offended at the lack of respect you have received from many of your wealthy customers. Recently you put on your best clothes and went on strike. You and your co-workers carried banners declaring, We Insist On Respect For Waiters As Human Beings! Down With Tips: Waiters Are Citizens!

Svetlana—You are a 36-year-old maid at the home of a wealthy industrialist, Konstantin Kuryakin. Your husband, Vadim, is a 38-year-old army sergeant at the front. Your 20-year-old son serves in the navy, and your twin 16-year-old daughters work as domestic servants in the Kuryakin household. You are proud that your family supports the war effort, but you live in constant fear for your husband and son. You send money back to family in your home village whenever you can do so.

Role Playing the Four Options: Debate and Discussion

Objectives:

Students will: Analyze the issues that framed the 1917 debate in Russia.

Sharpen rhetorical skills through debate and discussion.

Cooperate with classmates in staging a persuasive presentation.

Handouts:

“Evaluation Form” for Undecided Citizens (TRB-45)

In the Classroom:

1. Setting the Stage—Organize the room so that the four option groups face a row of desks reserved for the undecided citizens.

2. Managing the Simulation—Explain that the simulation will begin with three-to-five minute presentations by each option group.

Encourage all to speak clearly and convincingly.

3. Guiding Discussion—Following the presentations, invite the undecided citizens to ask cross-examination questions. Make sure that each member of this group has an opportunity to ask at least one question. If time permits, encourage members of the option groups to challenge the positions of the other groups. During cross-examination, allow any member of the option group to respond. (As an alternative approach, permit cross-examination following the presentation of each option.)

Homework:

Students should read the Epilogue (pages 39-45) and complete the “Study Guide—Epilogue” (TRB-47) or the “Advanced Study Guide—Epilogue” (TRB-48).

Name: _____

Evaluation Form: Undecided Citizens

Instructions: Answer the questions below following the simulation.

1. According to each option, what should the future of Russia be?

Option 1:

Option 2:

Option 3:

Option 4:

2. According to each option, what are the most important concerns in Russia?

Option 1:

Option 2:

Option 3:

Option 4:

3. Which of the options would you support most strongly? Explain your reasoning.

Lenin Takes Power

Objectives:

Students will: Examine the Bolsheviks' consolidation of power.

Explore Lenin's leadership role and methods using primary sources.

Work cooperatively in groups to create and present a dramatic fictional recreation of history.

Required Reading:

Students should have read the "Epilogue" in the student text and completed "Study Guide—Epilogue" (TRB-47) or "Advanced Study Guide—Epilogue" (TRB-48).

Handouts:

"Lenin and the Civil War" (TRB 49-50)

In the Classroom:

1. Focus Question—Write the question "Why was the Russian Revolution so violent?" on the board.

2. Getting Started—Divide the class into small groups of four to six. Tell each group to read the handout, and ask groups to read and follow the instructions.

3. Groupwork—Each group should prepare a short a two-to-four minute fictional dramatization of the events that immediately preceded Lenin's writing of the "Order of Execution." Challenge students to imagine a

meeting of Lenin and his colleagues where they find out about this problem in the city of Penza and then try to decide what to do.

Groups should base their dramatization on the reading and class discussions as much as possible. Encourage students to be as creative as possible, but to base their skit closely on what they know about the Russian Revolution.

3. Class Presentations—Ask each group to present for two to four minutes. Following each group's presentation, the class should feel free to ask questions for clarification or elaboration.

4. Debriefing—After all groups have presented, bring the class back together for a brief closing discussion. Ask students what the documents tell us about Lenin. How did the performances attempt to show this?

Ask students to speculate whether the Bolsheviks could have come to power without Lenin. Lenin used all means necessary to reach his goals; do students believe he succeeded? Why was the cost of the Russian Revolution so high in human terms?

Extra Challenge:

Ask students to read the excerpts on freedom and democracy from Lenin's writings (TRB-51). They should write a short essay that examines Lenin's perspective on these two political concepts. What insights do these writings give into Lenin's political priorities?

Name: _____

Study Guide—Epilogue

1. Why was Lenin reluctant to compromise with the Mensheviks or Socialist Revolutionaries?

2. List two reasons why the Provisional Government under Kerensky could not govern.

a.

b.

3. The Bolsheviks did not have a majority at the Congress of Soviets after the October Revolution. How did they manage to assume power?

4. Fill in the blanks. “In March 1918, The Treaty of _____ freed Russia from the war, but ceded to _____ vast swaths of the former _____ Empire, including _____, Ukraine, _____, and the _____.”

5. What was the *Cheka*?

6. Draw a line that connects the proper army with its supporters.

Red Army

Opponents of the Bolsheviks

White Army

Lenin and the Bolsheviks

7. How many Russians died during the Civil War? How many emigrated to other countries?

died: _____

emigrated: _____

Advanced Study Guide—Epilogue

1. Why was Lenin unwilling to compromise with the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries?

2. Why is Lenin’s role in the political maneuvering during “Red October” so important?

3. “Red October was hardly the end of the struggle for power.” Explain the measures Lenin was forced to take to consolidate his power. What issues did he have to contend with?

Lenin and the Civil War

Instructions: Read the “Call to Power” and the “Order of Execution” carefully.

First, using the background reading and this handout, make a short list of what you know about Lenin and his goals and methods.

You and your fellow group members will then create a short skit (two-to-four minutes) about the events immediately preceding Lenin’s writing of the “Order of Execution.” Each group member should have a role in the skit.

Drawing from the background reading, you and your fellow group members should take a few minutes to brainstorm and imagine what the events preceding the writing of this telegram might have been. What might have led Lenin to send this telegram to the city of Penza? Why do you think he decided to take the action he ordered? The dialogue you write should illuminate your answers to these questions.

Try to take yourself back to that time period and imagine a list of possible characters. Lenin, and his faithful secretary and wife Nadezhda Krupskaya could have been there. Felix Derzhinsky the head of the *Cheka* (secret police) might have been there. Trotsky, Stalin, and other assistants could have been there as well. You can include them and others in your skit.

While the dialogue is only limited by your imagination, it should communicate as many details of what Russia was undergoing during the Civil War as possible. The skit should convey the knowledge you have accumulated while studying the Russian Revolution.

Your skit should include Lenin dictating the telegram.

Your performance should be dramatic and energetic. Props and costumes can also enhance your performance.

V.I. Lenin: Call to Power October 24, 1917

The situation is critical in the extreme. In fact it is now absolutely clear that to delay the uprising would be fatal.

With all my might I urge comrades to realize that everything now hangs by a thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not to be solved by conferences or congresses (even congresses of Soviets), but exclusively by peoples, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed people.

The bourgeois onslaught of the Kornilovites show that we must not wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, having first disarmed the officer cadets, and so on.

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

Who must take power?

That is not important at present. Let the Revolutionary Military Committee do it, or “some other institution” which will declare that it will relinquish power only to the true representatives of the interests of the people, the interests of the army, the interests of the peasants, the interests of the starving.

All districts, all regiments, all forces must be mobilized at once and must immediately send their delegations to the Revolutionary Military Committee and to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks with the insistent demand that under no circumstances should power be left in the hands of Kerensky and Co... not under any circumstances; the matter must be decided without fail this very evening, or this very night.

History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious

today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything.

If we seize power today, we seize it not in opposition to the Soviets but on their behalf.

The seizure of power is the business of the uprising; its political purpose will become clear after the seizure....

...It would be an infinite crime on the part of the revolutionaries were they to let the chance slip, knowing that the salvation of the revolution, the offer of peace, the salvation of Petrograd, salvation from famine, the transfer of the land to the peasants depend upon them.

The government is tottering. It must be given the death-blow at all costs.

V.I. Lenin: Order of Execution November 18, 1918

Send to Penza To Comrades Kuraev, Bosh, Minkin and other Penza communists

Comrades! The revolt by the five *kulak* [wealthy peasant] *volosts* [regions] must be

suppressed without mercy. The interest of the entire revolution demands this, because we have now before us our final decisive battle “with the *kulaks*.” We need to set an example.

1. You need to hang (hang without fail, so that the public sees) at least 100 notorious *kulaks*, the rich, and the bloodsuckers.

2. Publish their names.

3. Take away all of their grain.

4. Execute the hostages—in accordance with yesterday’s telegram.

This needs to be accomplished in such a way, that people for hundreds of miles around will see, tremble, know and scream out: let’s choke and strangle those blood-sucking *kulaks*.

Telegraph us acknowledging receipt and execution of this.

Yours, Lenin

P.S. Use your toughest people for this.

Lenin on Freedom and Democracy

V.I. Lenin on Freedom: Excerpted From “What is to be done?”, 1902

“Freedom”—it’s a great word, but under the flag of “freedom of industry” the most rapacious of wars were conducted. Under the banner of “freedom of labor” workers have been robbed. The very same internal hypocrisy is contained in the contemporary phrase “freedom to criticize.” People who are truly convinced that they have advanced the frontier of science would not demand freedom for new ideas to coexist next to old, but to replace them....

We are walking in a small, tight group along a steep and difficult path, firmly joining hands. We are surrounded by enemies, and must continue almost always under their fire. We have freely and consciously decided to unite to fight the enemy and not stumble into the neighboring marsh, where dwell those who from the beginning have reproached us for separating into a special group and choosing the path of struggle, and not the path of compromise. And now some of us are beginning to cry: “Let’s go into the marsh!” And when we start to shame them, they object: “What a backward people you are! And aren’t you ashamed to deny us the freedom to call you to a better way? Oh yes, gentlemen, you are free not only to call us, but to go anywhere you like, even if it’s into the marsh. We even consider the marsh to be the right place for you, and are ready to assist you as best we can to move you there. But just let go of our hands—don’t clutch at us and soil the great word “freedom,” because we too are “free” to go where we like—free to fight with the marsh and with those who turn to the marsh....

V.I. Lenin: On Democracy and Dictatorship, December, 1918

It is sheer mockery of the working and exploited people to speak of pure democracy, of democracy in general, of equality, freedom and universal rights when the workers and all working people are ill-fed, ill-clad, ruined

and worn out, not only as a result of capitalist wage slavery, but as a consequence of four years of predatory war, while the capitalists and profiteers remain in possession of the “property” usurped by them and the “ready-made” apparatus of state power. This is tantamount to trampling on the basic truths of Marxism which has taught the workers: you must take advantage of bourgeois democracy which, compared with feudalism, represents a great historical advance, but not for one minute must you forget the bourgeois character of this “democracy”, it’s historical conditional and limited character. Never share the “superstitious belief” in the “state” and never forget that the state even in the most democratic republic, and not only in a monarchy, is simply a machine for the suppression of one class by another.

The bourgeoisie are compelled to be hypocritical and to describe as “popular government,” democracy in general, or pure democracy, the (bourgeois) democratic republic which is, in practice, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the exploiters over the working people.... But Marxists, Communists, expose this hypocrisy, and tell the workers and the working people in general this frank and straightforward truth: the democratic republic, the Constituent Assembly, general elections, etc., are, in practice, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and for the emancipation of labor from the yoke of capital there is no other way but to replace this dictatorship with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat alone can emancipate humanity from the oppression of capital, from the lies, falsehood and hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy—democracy for the rich—and establish democracy for the poor, that is, make the blessings of democracy really accessible to the workers and poor peasants, whereas now (even in the most democratic—bourgeois—republic) the blessings of democracy are, in fact, inaccessible to the vast majority of working people.

Supplementary Documents

Manifesto of 17 October, 1905 On the improvement of order in the state

We, Nicholas II, By the Grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., proclaim to all Our loyal subjects:

Rioting and disturbances in the capitals [i.e. St. Petersburg and the old capital, Moscow] and in many localities of Our Empire fill Our heart with great and heavy grief. The well-being of the Russian Sovereign is inseparable from the well-being of the nation, and the nation's sorrow is his sorrow. The disturbances that have taken place may cause grave tension in the nation and may threaten the integrity and unity of Our state.

By the great vow of service as tsar We are obliged to use every resource of wisdom and of Our authority to bring a speedy end to unrest that is dangerous to Our state. We have ordered the responsible authorities to take measures to terminate direct manifestations of disorder, lawlessness, and violence and to protect peaceful people who quietly seek to fulfill their duties. To carry out successfully the general measures that we have conceived to restore peace to the life of the state, We believe that it is essential to coordinate activities at the highest level of government.

We require the government dutifully to execute our unshakeable will:

(1.) To grant to the population the essential foundations of civil freedom, based on the principles of genuine inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.

(2.) Without postponing the scheduled elections to the State Duma, to admit to participation in the Duma (insofar as possible in the short time that remains before it is scheduled to convene) of all those classes of the population that now are completely deprived of voting rights; and to leave the further development of a general statute on elections to the

future legislative order.

(3.) To establish as an unbreakable rule that no law shall take effect without confirmation by the State Duma and that the elected representatives of the people shall be guaranteed the opportunity to participate in the supervision of the legality of the actions of Our appointed officials.

We summon all loyal sons of Russia to remember their duties toward their country, to assist in terminating the unprecedented unrest now prevailing, and together with Us to make every effort to restore peace and tranquility to Our native land.

Given at Peterhof the 17th of October in the 1905th year of Our Lord and of Our reign the eleventh.

[Signed] Nicholas

Report of the Chief of the Petrograd Okhranka, Major-General Globachev, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on Events in the Capital February 26, 1917

In order to obviate the possibility of revolutionary activists making use of the spontaneous disorders which have broken out in the capital, today, 26 February, around 100 members of revolutionary organizations were arrested before dawn. These included five members of the Petrograd committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party.

Additionally, at a meeting in the evening of 25 February at the premises of the Central War Industries Committee, two members of the workers' group of that committee were arrested. These two had evaded arrest in January, when this criminal group had been liquidated. The other participants at this meeting were asked to disperse.

Today, 26 February, at 3.30 p.m., a crowd gathered near the City Duma. Three blank rounds were fired at this crowd, after which it dispersed.

At the same time live rounds were fired on Ligovskaya Street, resulting in injuries.

Substantial crowds poured out of various side streets onto Znamenskaya Square, where they were met with live rounds, resulting in dead and injured.

In addition, live rounds were fired at the corner of Nevsky and Vladimirsky Avenues, where a crowd of about 1000 had gathered, and also at the corner of Nevsky Avenue and Sadovaya Street, where the crowd had reached approximately 5000. No dead or injured were found at the latter place; presumably the crowd had taken them away.

By 4.30, the entire length of Nevsky Avenue had been cleared of crowds, and on Znamenskaya Square the police collected the bodies of about 40 dead and around the same number of injured. At the same time, the dead body of an Ensign in the Life Guard of the Pavlovsky Regiment, with his saber in his hand, was found at the corner of Ital'yanskaya and Sadovaya Streets. His identity and the circumstances of his death are being investigated.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, on the corner of 1st Rozhdestvenskaya Street and Suvorovskiy Avenue, troops fired on a crowd which had gathered there. Ten people were killed and several were injured, some of whom, it would seem, were taken away by their comrades.

In the course of today's disorders secondary school pupils appeared at various points in the capital. They were wearing large Red Cross armbands on the coats of their uniforms and white aprons under their outer clothes. They set out in groups to Nevsky Avenue as volunteers to pick up the injured and render them first aid. With the same intentions, students at women's higher education institutions entered the places where the injured were being held. They were extremely insolent to the police officers who tried to get them to leave.

During the disorders the rioting crowds in general behaved extremely provocatively towards the troops. In response to requests to disperse, the crowds threw stones and lumps of snow from the street. When the troops fired over the heads of the crowds as a warning, not

only did they not disperse, they responded with laughter. Only when live rounds were fired into their midst was it possible to disperse the mobs. Most of the participants, however, merely took refuge in the courtyards of the nearest buildings, only to reemerge once the shooting had stopped.

It should be mentioned that the dead on Znamenskaya Square included two people in soldiers' uniform, and they were also taken away by the crowd. This circumstance suggests that in all probability those killed were not soldiers, but demonstrators who had put on the uniforms of lower ranking soldiers.

Once the mobs on Znamenskaya Square had been dispersed, the rioters began to congregate on Nevsky Avenue in the area known as Old Nevsky (from Znamenskaya Square to the Aleksandr Nevsky monastery), and on Goncharnaya Street. They then melted away into the buildings on the corners, from where they shot at the troops with revolvers.

According to reports received from our agents, a secret meeting of representatives of revolutionary organizations is scheduled to take place at 8 o'clock this evening in the Eliseev building on Nevsky Avenue. A F Kerensky, the member of the State Duma, and Sokolov, the barrister, will be present. The meeting will consider how best to use the disturbances which have arisen, and how to plan and lead them in future in order to further revolutionary aims. We propose to arrest those present.

[Signed] Major-General Globachev

Lenin's April Theses

[Published in Pravda, No. 26, 7 April 1917]

I did not arrive in Petrograd until the night of April 3, and therefore at the meeting on April 4 I could, of course, deliver the report on the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat only on my own behalf, and with reservations as to insufficient preparation.

The only thing I could do to make things easier for myself—and for honest oppo-

nents—was to prepare the theses in writing. I read them out, and gave the text to Comrade Tsereteli. I read them twice very slowly; first at a meeting of Bolsheviks and then at a meeting of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

I publish these personal theses of mine with only the briefest explanatory notes, which were developed in far greater detail in the report.

THESES

1. In our attitude to the war, which under the new government of Lvov and Co. unquestionably remains on Russia's part a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government, not the slightest concession to "revolutionary defencism" is permissible.

The class-conscious proletariat can give its consent to a revolutionary war, which would really justify revolutionary defencism, only on condition: (a) that the power pass to the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants aligned with the proletariat; (b) that all annexations be renounced in deed and not only in word; (c) that a complete break be effected in actual fact with all capitalist interests.

In view of the undoubted honesty of those broad sections of the mass believers in revolutionary defencism who accept the war only as a necessity, and not as a means of conquest, in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary with particular thoroughness, persistence and patience to explain their error to them, to explain the inseparable connection existing between capital and the imperialist war, and to prove that without overthrowing capital it is impossible to end the war by a truly democratic peace, a peace not imposed by violence.

The most widespread campaign for this view must be organized in the army at the front.

Fraternization.

2. The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness

and organization of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its second stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.

This transition is characterized, on the one hand, by a maximum of legally recognized rights (Russia is now the freest of all the belligerent countries in the world); on the other, by the absence of violence towards the masses, and, finally, by their unreasoning trust in the government of capitalists, those worst enemies of peace and socialism.

This peculiar situation demands of us an ability to adapt ourselves to the special conditions of Party work among unprecedentedly large masses of proletarians who have just awakened to political life.

3. No support for the Provisional Government; the utter falsity of all its promises should be made clear, particularly of those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Exposure in place of the impermissible, illusion-breeding "demand" that this government, a government of capitalists, should cease to be an imperialist government.

4. Recognition of the fact that in most of the Soviets of Workers Deputies our Party is in a minority, so far a small minority, as against a bloc of all the petit-bourgeois opportunist elements, from the Popular Socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionaries down to the Organizing Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), Steklov, etc., etc., who have yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie and spread that influence among the proletariat.

The masses must be made to see that the Soviets of Workers Deputies are the only possible form of revolutionary government, and that therefore our task is, and as long as this government yields to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent explanation of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticizing and exposing errors and at the same time we preach the necessity

of transferring the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers Deputies, so that people may overcome their mistakes by experience.

5. Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers’, Agricultural Labourers’ and Peasants’ Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy. i.e. the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the whole people.

The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6. The weight of emphasis in the agrarian programme to be shifted to the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers’ Deputies.

Confiscation of all landed estates.

Nationalization of all lands in the country, the land to be disposed of by the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers’ and Peasants’ Deputies. The organization of separate Soviets of Deputies of Poor Peasants. The setting up of a model farm on each of the large estates (ranging in size from 100 to 300 dessiatines, according to local and other conditions, and to the decisions of the local bodies) under the control of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers’ Deputies and for the public account.

7. The immediate amalgamation of all banks in the country into a single national bank, and the institution of control over it by the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies.

8. It is not our immediate task to “introduce” socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the control of the Soviets of Workers Deputies.

9. Party tasks:

(a) Immediate convocation of a Party Congress;

(b) Alteration of the Party Program, mainly (1) on the question of imperialism and the imperialist war; (2) On our attitude towards the

state and our demand for a “common state”.
(3) Amendment of our out-of-date minimum program.

(c) Change our name, we must call ourselves The Communist Party.

10. A new International.

Lenin’s Statement of Bolshevik Demands, October 24, 1917

The Councils of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Delegates must at once take every practicable and feasible step for the realization of the Socialist program.

The Bolsheviki demand a republic of the Councils of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Delegates; abolition of the standing army and the police, substituting for them an armed people; officials to be not only elected but also subject to recall and their pay not to exceed that of a good worker.

Sole authority must be in the hands of the Councils of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Delegates. There must be no dual authority.

No support should be given to the Provisional Government. The whole of the people must be prepared for the complete and sole authority of the Councils of the Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Delegates.

A constituent assembly should be called as soon as possible, but it is necessary to increase the members and strengthen the power of the Councils of ‘Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Delegates by organizing and arming the masses.

A police force of the conventional type and a standing army are absolutely unnecessary. Immediately and unconditionally a universal army of the people should be introduced, so that they and the militia and the army shall be an integral whole. Capitalists must pay the workers for their days of service in the militia.

Officers must not only be elected, but every step of every officer and General must be subject to control by special soldiers’ committees.

The arbitrary removal by the soldiers of their superior officers is in every respect indispensable. The soldiers will obey only the powers of their own choice; they can respect no others.

The Bolsheviks are absolutely opposed to all imperialist wars and to all bourgeois Governments which make them, among them our own Provisional Government.

The Bolsheviks are absolutely opposed to “revolutionary defence” in Russia.

The Bolsheviks are against the predatory international treaties concluded between the Czar and England, France, etc., for the strangling of Persia, the division of China, Turkey, Austria, etc.

The Bolsheviks are against annexations. Any promise of a capitalist Government to renounce annexations is a huge fraud. To expose it is very simple, by demanding that each nation be freed from the yoke of its own capitalists.

The Bolsheviks are opposed to the (Russian) Liberty Loan, because the war remains imperialistic, being waged by capitalists in alliance with capitalists, and in the interests of capitalists.

The Bolsheviks refuse to leave to capitalist Governments the task of expressing the desire of the nations for peace.

All monarchies must be abolished. Revolutions do not proceed in fixed order. Only genuine revolutionaries may be trusted.

The peasants must at once take all the land from the landholders. Order must be strictly maintained by the Councils of Peasants’ Delegates. The production of bread and meat must be increased and the soldiers better fed. Destruction of cattle, of tools, etc., is not permissible.

It will be impossible to rely upon the general Councils of Peasants’ Delegates, for the wealthy peasants are of the same capitalist class that is always inclined to injure or deceive the farmhands, day labourers, and the poorer peasants. We must at once form special organizations of these latter classes of the

village population both within the Councils of Peasants’ Delegates and in the form of special Councils of Delegates of the Farmers’ Workers.

We must at once prepare the Councils of Workers’ Delegates, the Councils of Delegates of Banking Employees, and others for the taking of all such steps as are feasible and completely realizable toward the union of all banks in one single national bank, and then toward a control of the Councils of Workers’ Delegates over the banks and syndicates, and then toward their nationalization, that is, their passing over into the possession of the whole people.

The only Socialist International, establishing and realizing a brotherly union of all the workers in all countries, which is now desirable for the nations, is one which consists of the really revolutionary workers, who are capable of putting an end to the awful and criminal slaughter of nations, capable of delivering humanity from the yoke of capitalism.

Only such people (groups, parties, etc.) as the German Socialist, Karl Liebknecht, now in a German jail, only people who will tirelessly struggle with their own Government and their own bourgeoisie, and their own social-patriots, and their own “centrists,” can and must immediately establish that international which is necessary to the nations.

The fraternization between soldiers of the warring countries, at the front, must be encouraged; it is good and indispensable.

Lenin’s Decree on Peace, October 25, 1917

The workers’ and peasants’ government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the support of the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace. By a “just” or “democratic” peace, which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented, and racked by the war, are craving—a peace that has been most defi-

nately and insistently demanded by Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign national groups) and without indemnities.

The government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations and expresses its complete readiness to take decisive measures now, without the least delay, pending the final ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations. The government, in accord with the sense of justice of democrats in general and of the working classes in particular, conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak national group into a large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that group, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation lives in Europe or in distant, overseas lands.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the borders of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether expressed in the press, at public meetings, in the decisions of parties, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression—if such a nation is not accorded the right to decide the forms of [its] state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation and without the least pressure being brought to bear, such incorporation represents annexation, i.e., seizure and violence.

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how the strong and rich nations are to divide the weak nationalities

[narodnosti] they have conquered; it solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other peace terms and insists only that they be advanced by any of the belligerent countries as speedily as possible, and that in the peace proposals there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy. The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotiations quite openly in full view of the whole people. It will proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties endorsed or concluded by the government of landowners and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917. The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties insofar as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landowners and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians.

Proposing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations in writing, by telegraph, and by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of such representatives. In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is appointing its plenipotentiary representative[s] to neutral countries.

The government proposes an immediate armistice to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, and, for its part, considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for a period of not less than three months, i.e., a period long enough to permit the completion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the

final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the government and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France, and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England, a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organizations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a guarantee for us that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the task that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the laboring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

Lenin's Proclamation of November 7, 1917

We have deposed the Government of Kerensky, which rose against the revolution and the people. The change which resulted in the deposition of the Provisional Government was accomplished without bloodshed.

The Petrograd Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates solemnly welcomes the accomplished change and proclaims the authority of the Military Revolutionary Committee until the creation of a Government by the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates.

Announcing this to the army at the front,

the Revolutionary Committee calls upon the revolutionary soldiers to watch closely the conduct of the men in command. Officers who do not join the accomplished revolution immediately and openly must be arrested at once as enemies.

The Petrograd Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates considers this to be the program of the new authority:

First—The offer of an immediate democratic peace.

Second—The immediate handing over of large proprietorial lands to the peasants.

Third—The transmission of all authority to the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates.

Fourth—The honest convocation of a Constitutional Assembly.

The national revolutionary army must not permit uncertain military detachments to leave the front for Petrograd. They should use persuasion, but where this fails they must oppose any such action on the part of these detachments by force without mercy.

The present order must be read immediately to all military detachments in all arms. The suppression of this order from the rank and file by army organizations is equivalent to a great crime against the revolution and will be punished by all the strength of the revolutionary law.

Soldiers! For peace, for bread, for land, and for the power of the people!

[Signed] THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

What Are We Fighting For? Alexandra Kollontai, May, 1919

This is a question that disturbs many, the question that faces the Red Army and the workers, and troubles the peasants. Did not the Communist-Bolsheviks, two years ago, summon us in the name of peace? Why does war continue? Why are we being mobilized yet again and sent to the front?

In order to answer this question one must

understand what is happening all around us, the events that are taking place. As soon as the workers and peasants took power into their hands in October, 1917, they honestly and openly offered peace to all the peoples. However, the workers in the other countries were still too weak, and the predatory capitalists were still strong enough to continue the war. In March, 1918, the Soviet government, desirous of peace, signed the disadvantageous and onerous Brest Peace Treaty with Germany in order to return the ploughman to the field, the worker to his lathe, in order to save the lives of its free citizens.

However, the imperialist predators are not afraid of blood, and place no value on human life. They needed war, and therefore the bourgeoisie of every country mounted repeated attacks upon Soviet Russia and the Soviet Ukraine from outside, while inside the country they encouraged kulak action against the workers and peasants. A new battle front took shape—not Russians against Germans or Ukrainians against the allies, but ‘Reds’ against ‘Whites’, i.e. the working people against the bourgeoisie.

What else could the people do? Should they say: We are against war, we are for peace, and therefore, if the Kolchaks, Denikins and Krasnovs attack us, we will not take up arms?! Let American, or German or Russian capital rule over us once more and introduce amongst us the system that suits it best—it’s all the same to us?!

Of course, not one rationally-minded Red Army soldier, worker or peasant would say anything of the kind.

The peasant soon realizes: if Skoropadsky returns, together with the priests and the landowners, it will be farewell to land and freedom! Once more it will be doff your cap before the village policeman and starve to death while the landowners barns burst with golden grain!

The worker would understand that the return to power of the bourgeoisie would mean a return to lack of rights, to the exploitation of labour, the abolition of the 8-hour working day

and unemployment benefit, that it would lead to the expulsion of the working people from their light and healthy flats to be chased back into damp cellars. It would mean a return to the slavery of hired labour.

The Red Army soldier would remember the prison-like regime of the tsarist barracks, blows by officers, insult and abuse from commanders of the old order, rotten meat for dinner, theft by military superintendents, and his hands would seek instinctively for his protecting rifle.

All the working people taken as a whole cannot fail to understand that now the question is whether the peasants and workers are to be the masters of Russia and the Ukraine, or whether the priests, landowners and capitalists are to return and hang once more like a millstone around the neck of the people.

This is not war, but the working people rising up in defence of their rights, freedom and very life!

We are fighting not in order to annex new lands or enslave or plunder another people, but in order to safeguard ourselves from the capitalist predators. We are fighting in order to secure for the peasant and his children the possibility of peacefully farming the land, in order to give the worker the possibility not only of working at a factory or plant, but of himself participating in the organization of production, himself distributing the national wealth in such a way that each gets his just due, rather than one man getting it all simply because he is a capitalist and takes for himself the lion’s share of the national wealth.

We are fighting in order to defend the right of the workers and peasants to run their own homeland. We are fighting in order to protect the people against the possible return of famine and rising prices. We are fighting in order to create one, united, international fraternal republic of workers and peasants, destroy private-property owners and the predatory rich, and thus put an end to war once and for all.

Our war—the war of the Reds against the Whites—is the revolt of the oppressed against those who are responsible for bloodshed. Our

cry is and will remain 'War on war! Long live peaceful productive labour on behalf of all working people!'

Bulletin of the Kharkov Soviet and the Provincial Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies, 7 May, 1919

Key Terms

Introduction and Part I

empire	means of production
Renaissance	land transference
Reformation	socialism
class	marxism
liberalism	populism
trade	masses
peasants	industrialization
communes	capitalism
emancipation	egalitarianism
agricultural productivity	export
nobles	

Part II and Epilogue

agrarian
gentry
monarchy
abdicate
mutiny
dynasty
democracy
alliance
bourgeoisie
coup
cede
collectivise
police state
ideology

Issues Toolbox

Below you will find brief definitions of political terms as they apply in Russia between 1861 and 1917.

Bourgeoisie

A term used by Marx and Lenin to identify a middle class who attempted to exploit the property-less proletariat.

Capitalism

An economic system in which the means of production are privately owned. Production and distribution of goods is left to individual or market forces.

Communism

A political stage after socialism without social classes, property ownership, and even government. Workers labor out of a desire to help their fellow human beings. All the wealth is shared. Although the Bolsheviks changed their name to the All-Russian Communist party in 1918, the Soviet Union never truly reached its goal of achieving a communist society.

Conservatism

A political philosophy which opposes rapid changes in government and society. A conservative would favor maintaining the tsar's traditional authority with as little change as possible. The Union of the Russian People was a conservative group.

Proletariat

In Marxist and Leninist theory, the proletariat were propertyless workers involved in industrial production of goods. Their income was wages for their labor.

Liberalism

Liberalism is a political philosophy that values individual liberty and the role of the state in protecting the rights of citizens. Liberals favor capitalism as an economic system. The Constitutional Democrats espoused a form of liberalism in Russia. It should not be confused with the contemporary American political use of the term.

Socialism

Socialism is a political and economic system in which resources, property, and income are distributed subject to social control rather than individual or market forces.

Making Choices Work in Your Classroom

This section of the Teacher Resource Book offers suggestions for teachers as they adapt Choices curricula to their classrooms. They are drawn from the experiences of teachers who have used Choices curricula successfully in their classrooms and from educational research on student-centered instruction.

Managing the Choices Simulation

Recognize Time Limitations: At the heart of the Choices approach is the role-play simulation in which students advocate different options, question each other, and debate. Just as thoughtful preparation is necessary to set the stage for cooperative group learning, careful planning for the presentations and debate can increase the effectiveness of the simulation. Time is the essential ingredient to keep in mind. A minimum of 45 to 50 minutes is necessary for the presentations and debate. Hence, if only one class period is available, student groups must be ready as soon as class begins. Teachers who have been able to schedule a double period or extend the length of class to one hour report that the extra time is beneficial. When necessary, the role-play simulation can be run over two days, but this disrupts the momentum of the debate. The best strategy for managing the role-play is to establish and enforce strict time limits, such as five minutes for each option presentation, ten minutes for questions and challenges, and the final five minutes of class for wrapping up the debate. It is crucial to make students aware of strict time limits as they prepare their presentations.

Highlight the Importance of Values: During the debate and debriefing, it is important to highlight the role of values in the options. Students should be instructed to identify the core values and priorities underlying the different options. The “Presenting Your Option” worksheet is designed to help students incorporate the values into their group presentations. You may also find the supplemental activity, *Considering the Role of Values in Public Policy*,

available from the “Faculty Room” on the Choices web site <www.choices.edu> helpful.

Moving Beyond the Options

As a culminating activity of a Choices unit, students can be expected to articulate their own views of the issue under consideration. An effective way to move beyond the options debate to creating individual options is to have students consider which values in the options framework they hold most dear. Typically, students will hold several of these values simultaneously and will need to prioritize them to reach a considered judgment about the issue at hand. These values should be reflected in their own options and should shape the goals and policies they advocate.

Adjusting for Large and Small Classes

Choices units are designed for an average class of twenty-five students. In larger classes, additional roles, such as those of newspaper reporter or member of a special interest group, can be assigned to increase student participation in the simulation. With larger option groups, additional tasks might be to create a poster, political cartoon, or public service announcement that represents the viewpoint of an option. In smaller classes, the teacher can serve as the moderator of the debate, and administrators, parents, or faculty can be invited to play the roles of congressional leaders. Another option is to combine two small classes.

Assessing Student Achievement

Grading Group Assignments: Research suggests that it is counterproductive to give students individual grades on cooperative group assignments. A significant part of the assignment given to the group is to cooperate in achieving a common goal, as opposed to looking out for individual interests. Telling students in advance that the group will receive one grade often motivates group members to

hold each other accountable. This can foster group cohesion and lead to better group results. It may be useful to note that in addition to the cooperative group assignments, students complete individual assignments as well in every Choices unit. The “Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations” on the following page is designed to help teachers evaluate group presentations.

Requiring Self-Evaluation: Having students complete self-evaluations is an extremely effective way to make them think about their own learning. Self-evaluations can take many forms and are useful in a variety of circumstances. They are particularly helpful in getting students to think constructively about group collaboration. In developing a self-evaluation tool for students, teachers need to pose clear and direct questions to students. Two key benefits of student self-evaluation are that it involves students in the assessment process, and that it provides teachers with valuable insights into the contributions of individual students and the dynamics of different groups. These insights can help teachers to organize groups for future cooperative assignments.

Evaluating Student Options: One important outcome of a Choices unit are the original options developed and articulated by each student. These will differ significantly from one another, as students identify different values and priorities that shape their viewpoints. These options cannot be graded as right or wrong, but should be evaluated on clarity of expression, logic, and thoroughness. Did the

student provide reasons for his/her viewpoint along with supporting evidence? Were the values clear and consistent throughout the option? Did the student identify the risks involved? Did the student present his/her option in a convincing manner?

Testing: In a formal evaluation of the Choices approach, it was demonstrated that students using Choices learned the factual information presented as well as or better than students who were taught in a more traditional lecture-discussion format. However, the larger benefits of the Choices approach were evident when students using Choices demonstrated significantly higher ability to think critically, analyze multiple perspectives, and articulate original viewpoints, compared to students who did not use this approach. Teachers should hold students accountable for learning historical information, concepts, and current events presented in Choices units. However, a simple multiple-choice examination will not allow students to demonstrate the critical thinking and communication skills developed through the Choices unit. If teachers choose to test students, they may wish to explore new models of test design that require students to do more than recognize correct answers. Tests should not replace the development of student options.

For Further Reading: Cohen, Elizabeth G. *Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986).

Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations

Group assignment: _____

Group members: _____

Group Assessment	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
1. The group made good use of its preparation time	5	4	3	2	1
2. The presentation reflected analysis of the issues under consideration	5	4	3	2	1
3. The presentation was coherent and persuasive	5	4	3	2	1
4. The group incorporated relevant sections of the background reading into its presentation	5	4	3	2	1
5. The group's presenters spoke clearly, maintained eye contact, and made an effort to hold the attention of their audience	5	4	3	2	1
6. The presentation incorporated contributions from all the members of the group	5	4	3	2	1
Individual Assessment					
1. The student cooperated with other group members	5	4	3	2	1
2. The student was well-prepared to meet his or her responsibilities	5	4	3	2	1
3. The student made a significant contribution to the group's presentation	5	4	3	2	1

Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan

Day 1:

See Day Two of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan.

Homework (before the lesson): Students should read “Part II: 1905-1917”

Homework: Students should read “Spring 1917: Russia Debates its Future.”

Day 2:

Assign each student one of the four options, and allow students a few minutes to familiarize themselves with the mindsets of the options. Call on students to evaluate the benefits and trade-offs of their assigned options. How do the options differ? What are their assumptions about the future of Russia?

Homework: Students should read the “Epilogue.”

Day 3:

See Day Five of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan.

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WATSON INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
BROWN UNIVERSITY, BOX 1948, PROVIDENCE, RI 02912
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