

Unit 8: The Russian Revolution 1917

- Event where Russians overthrew their Czar & created a new (communist) government- 1st Communist country in history
- Like all political revolutions, the Russian Revolution took place bec. Russians were unhappy with their gov't for several reasons/causes.

The Russian Revolution of 1917



What was the Russian Revolution?

The Russian Revolution of 1917, was actually two revolutions, one in February, and one in October of 1917. At the time, Russia used a different calendar than we use today, so they call these revolutions the March Revolution and November Revolution because their calendar was thirteen days ahead of what is commonly used today. The November Revolution is also referred to as the Bolshevik Revolution.

Before the Russian Revolution, the country was ruled by a king, called a **czar**, named Nicholas II. There was discontent [dissatisfaction] in Russia because the government was corrupt and ineffective, there was widespread poverty in the country, there was a scarcity of food, and the Russians suffered massive losses in World War I.

As a result, in February of 1917 (The March Revolution), Czar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate [give up the throne] and power was given to a group of elected officials called the Duma. The Duma ruled until October, when it was replaced by the events of the November Revolution.

Led by a man named Vladimir Lenin, a group of Communists named the Bolsheviks took control of the Russian government in a bloodless coup [a forced overthrow of the government in which no one was killed] called the November (or Bolshevik) Revolution. The Bolsheviks gained support from the peasants, urban workers, and soldiers by promising “peace, land, and bread.”

The Bolsheviks signed a peace agreement with Germany, taking Russia out of WWI. After winning a civil war that lasted from 1917 to 1922, the Bolsheviks set about transforming Russia into the world’s first **Communist** nation. They renamed Russia the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)**, also known as the Soviet Union. A soviet was a local ruling council elected by workers.

1. Where and when did the Russian Revolution took place?

2. What caused the Russian Revolution?

3. What were the effects of the Russian Revolution?

Directions: Read the letter below and answer the questions that follow.

Letter to Russian War Minister Alexander Kerensky from soldiers fighting in WWI, August 18th, 1917.

Mr. War Minister!

We, soldiers from various regiments[...]ask you to end the war and its bloodshed at any cost. If this is not done, then believe us when we say that we will take our weapons and head out for our own hearths [homes] to save our fathers, mothers, wives, and children from death by starvation (which is nigh [near]). And if we cannot save them, then we'd rather die with them in our native lands than be killed, poisoned, or frozen to death somewhere and cast into the earth like a dog.

Remember that all your threats about the death penalty and discipline and the eloquent words of orators will cease to have any effect on us then-- it will be too late. You know we are all tired, both at the front and in the rear, and we cannot endure another autumn and winter, nor do we have any wish to.

For a second time we ask you, Mr. War Minister, put an end to the slaughter. Only by doing this can you keep the enemy from penetrating deep inside Russia and save us both from this invasion and from starvation.

- Soldiers

1. Who wrote this?	2. Who was the audience?	3. When was this letter written? What was happening at that time?	4. Why was this letter written?
4. Based on the letter above, what problems existed in Russia in 1917?			

Causes

- Early 1900s, Russia was 'backward' & peasants lived in poverty
- People thought Czar Nicholas II abused his power by denying the rights of people (corrupt & persecuted minorities)
- 1904, Russia defeated by Japan
- Revolution of 1905:
 - Russians held protests for reforms
 - Czar Nicholas II shot at them in "Bloody Sunday"
 - ppl began to hate the Czar
 - he made some reforms (limited) like freedom of speech & Duma (elected gov't)

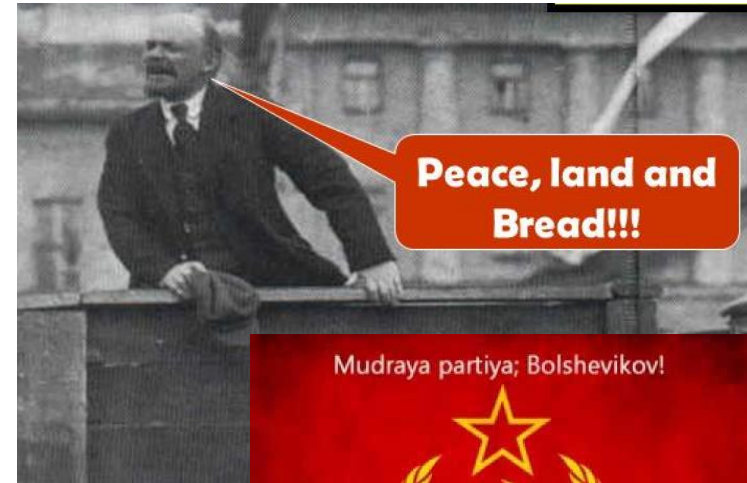


Les Japonais à l'assaut des retranchements de Kin-Tchéou



Causes

- World War I- Russia suffered many casualties in WWI & continued to fight. Many soldiers deserted. WWI created food & fuel shortages at home (starvation) & gov't was ineffective
- March 1917, protests forced Czar to give up throne & provisional (temporary) gov't promised new reforms, but continued to fight in WWI- unpopular & didn't really help peasants & workers
- **Socialist Soviets** (council of workers & soldiers) led by **Vladimir Lenin** set up the **Bolsheviks**-Communists (Revolutionary Socialist Party) & called for a (Marx-Socialist) Revolution- He promised **“Peace, Land, & Bread”**
- November 1917, Communists executed Czar, overthrew gov't & won support of Russians.
- Lenin (March 1918) withdrew from WWI (Treaty of Brest-Litovsk & lost a lot territory) to focus on home issues
- Russia became 1st **Communist** nation



Land Ceded by Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918)



Cause #1: The Peasants' Lives

In 1861, Czar Alexander II issued the Emancipation Manifesto, which was a document that freed all of the 23 million serfs in Russia. The newly freed serfs had no money to buy land and most of them were forced to work in poor conditions with little pay without their most basic needs being met. By 1900, around 85 percent of the Russian people lived in the countryside and earned their living from agriculture. These peasants lived in extreme poverty and became disgruntled with the government and the upper class who had money and owned the land.

In the summer of 1876, Praskovia Ivanovskaia and her friend Galina Cheriavskaia went to work as agricultural laborers. The following are sections of Praskovia Ivaovskaia's recollection of her time:

"At four in the morning, as the sun's rays were just beginning to spill over the steppe, the overseer would wake us, kicking the legs of those who wouldn't get up immediately.... In the morning, we froze from the bitterly cold dew, which drenched our clothing up to the waist. Staggering along, still half asleep, we worked as automatically as robots, gradually warming up a bit."

"At ten, we returned to camp for breakfast, which lasted around half an hour. Despite the camp hubbub, some people preferred to nap instead of eating. Our food was of rather poor quality - very plain and unappetizing. In the morning, they cooked us a watery gruel made from wheat and water with a dose of salt, or buckwheat dumplings as big as cobblestones - one or two of these would satisfy the hunger of even the greatest glutton. The meal was poured into a wooden trough, from which you'd pull the dumplings with long, pointed splinters. We got the same modest fare for lunch and dinner."

"After our brief breakfast, we returned to work. As the day wore on, the heat became so intense that you wanted to take shelter in any available patch of shade. The sun was so strong that the backs of most of the newly arrived vagabonds were practically covered with swollen blisters; later, as their skin toughened up, the burns went away."

"During the busy season, there were no set limits to the work day: if the steward wished, it could last for sixteen hours or more, with only an hour off for lunch..."

"In the evening, after the sun had set, we returned to camp...."Frequently our evening talks ended with the peasants saying: "That's our fate - so it's been written", or, "We're born - we'll die."

"In fact, we were rarely able to talk at all: after the day's work, our limbs shrieked with weariness, our exhausted bodies demanded rest and peace. "

1. How long was the peasants' work day?

2. How did the working conditions add to peasant unrest before the Russian Revolution?

Cause #2: Working Conditions and Bloody Sunday (January 22, 1905)

At the beginning of the 20th century the Russian industrial employee worked on average an 11 hour day (10 hours on Saturday). Conditions in the factories were extremely harsh and little concern was shown for the workers' health and safety. Attempts by workers to form trade unions were resisted by the factory owners, and in 1903, a priest named Father George Gapon, formed the Assembly of Russian Workers. Within a year it had over 9,000 members.

1904 was a bad year for Russian workers. Prices of essential goods rose so quickly that real wages declined by 20 per cent. When four members of the Assembly of Russian Workers were dismissed at the Putilov Iron Works, Gapon called for industrial action. Over the next few days, over 110,000 workers in St. Petersburg went out on strike.

In an attempt to settle the dispute, George Gapon decided to make a personal appeal to Czar Nicholas II. He drew up a petition outlining the workers' suffering and demands. This included calling for a reduction in the working day to eight hours, an increase in wages and an improvement in working conditions.

Over 150,000 people signed the petition and on January 22, 1905, Gapon led a large procession of workers to the Winter Palace in order to present the petition to Nicholas II. When the procession of workers reached the Winter Palace, it was attacked by the police and the Cossacks [Russian Soldiers]. Over 100 workers were killed and some 300 wounded. The incident became known as Bloody Sunday.

Bloody Sunday sparked waves of strikes and violence across Russia in support of worker's rights and against the Czar. The violence following Bloody Sunday became known as the Revolution of 1905. In response, Czar Nicholas II reluctantly promised more freedom and approved of the creation of the Duma, the first parliament in Russia. Nicholas II dissolved the Duma in ten weeks and many of the problems plaguing Russian workers continued.

3. What types of poor working conditions inspired the industry workers to approach the Winter Palace on January 22, 1905?

4. What were the worker's demands?

5. What would have been some of your thoughts if you were with the workers who were being killed by the Czar's soldiers at the Winter Palace?



Painting commemorating Bloody Sunday created before 1917.

Cause #4: Czar Nicholas II's Military Woes



Political cartoon that depicts Japan beating Russia in the Russo-Japanese War published in the Brooklyn Eagle in 1904.

Source: <http://www.indiana.edu/~j1915/ww.html>

Popular support for a country's leader has always depended largely on their success as a military leader. Czar Nicholas II experienced several disappointments which turned the peasants and workers against him. The Russo-Japanese War and World War I showed the Czar's weakness and paved the way for revolution.

In the late 1800s, Russia and Japan were imperialist powers. Both competed for control of Korea and Manchuria. The two nations signed a series of agreements over the territories, but Russia broke them. In retaliation, Japan attacked the Russians at Port Arthur, Manchuria, in February 1904. Though Russian soldiers and sailors went confidently to war, the Japanese defeated them. News of repeated losses sparked unrest at home and led to revolt in the midst of the war.

In 1914, Nicholas II made the fateful decision to drag Russia into World War I. Russia was unprepared to handle the military and economic costs. Russia's weak generals and poorly equipped troops were no match for the German army. Before a year had passed, more than 4 million Russian soldiers had been killed, wounded or taken prisoner. German machine guns mowed down advancing Russians by the thousands. Defeat followed defeat. As in the Russo-Japanese War, Russia's involvement in World War I revealed the weakness of czarist rule and military leadership.

The war was destroying the morale of Russian troops. Soldiers mutinied, deserted, or ignored orders. On the home front, food and fuel supplies were dwindling. Prices were wildly inflated. People from all classes were clamoring for change and an end to the war. Neither Czar Nicholas nor Czarina Alexandra proved capable of tackling these enormous problems.

7. What effect did the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War have on the Russian people?

8. Why were the Russian people unhappy with their country's involvement in World War I?

Cause #5: The March Revolution (1917)



Protesters during the March Revolution, 1917.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Feb_1917.jpg

In March 1917, women textile workers in Petrograd led a citywide strike. Soon afterward, riots flared up over shortages of bread and fuel. Nearly 200,000 workers swarmed the streets. At first the soldiers obeyed orders to shoot the rioters but later sided with them. The soldiers fired at their commanding officers and joined the rebellion. Large crowds gathered, shouting “Down with the autocracy!” and “Down with the war!”

The local protest exploded into a general uprising- the March Revolution. It forced Czar Nicholas II to abdicate (give up) his throne. The czarist rule of the Romanovs, which spanned over three centuries, had finally collapsed. The March Revolution succeeded in bringing down the czar, yet it failed to set up a strong government to replace his regime.

Leaders of the Duma established a provisional government, or temporary government. The provisional government kept the country in World War I and was too weak to make the changes that peasants and workers demanded. Instead, power in the cities grew in local councils of workers called Soviets. In many cities, including Petrograd, the soviets had more influence than the provisional government.

The March Revolution of 1917 dethroned Nicholas II but failed to put a strong government in his place.

9. What spurred the March Revolution of 1917?

10. How successful was the provisional government set up by the Duma?

Cause #6: Industrial Workers Support a Growing Revolution



Workers protesting in Chiatura, Russia in 1917.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chiatura_workers_demonstration_1917.jpg

Rapid industrialization stirred discontent among the people of Russia. The growth of factories brought new problems. Among these problems were grueling working conditions, miserably low wages, and child labor. Unions were outlawed. Still, exploited laborers who worked in factories and built the railway lines organized strikes. Workers were unhappy with their low standard of living and lack of political power. The gap between rich and poor was enormous.

Amid the widespread unrest of workers and other members of Russian society, various revolutionary movements began to grow. They also competed for power. The group that would eventually succeed in establishing a new government in Russia followed the views of Karl Marx. These revolutionaries believed that the industrial class of workers would overthrow the czar. The industrial class would then form “a dictatorship of the proletariat.” In such a state, the workers would rule.

In 1903, Russian Marxists split into two groups over revolutionary tactics. The Mensheviks wanted a broad base of popular support for the revolution. The Bolsheviks supported a small number of committed revolutionaries willing to sacrifice everything for radical change.

The major leader of the Bolsheviks was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov. He adopted the name of Lenin. He had an engaging personality and was an excellent organizer. He was also ruthless. These traits would ultimately help him gain command of the Bolsheviks. In the early 1900s, Lenin fled to Western Europe to avoid arrest by the czarist regime. He maintained contact with other Bolsheviks. Lenin then waited until he could safely return to Russia.

11. List four reasons why life was difficult for workers in Russia in the early 1900s.

12. Why would the workers follow the Bolsheviks? What about the Bolsheviks beliefs appealed to Russian workers?

Timeline of the Russian Revolution

1887
Lenin's brother is hanged for plotting to kill Alexander III

1894
Czar Alexander III dies of an illness and his son, Nicolas II, becomes the ruler of Russia

1896
Nicolas II is crowned czar of Russia

1903
The Russian Social Democratic splits up into two different factions: Mensheviks and Bolsheviks

1905
Bloody Sunday begins in St. Petersburg begins the 1905 Russian Revolution

1906
A constitution is created, making promises made by Nicolas II to have civil liberties and elect a parliament

1914
World War I begins and Czar Nicholas II assumes supreme command of the Russian Army

1917
The February revolution begins with a strike, demonstrations, and mutinies in Petrograd

1918
The new Bolshevik government converts into a communist party and Czar Nicholas II and his family are executed

U.S.S.R. Under Lenin

- Civil War (1918-1921): Reds (communists) defeated Czar loyalists (Whites) & gained control of Russia, ruling through military & secret police & censorship
- 1922, **USSR** (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) or **Soviet Union**, bunch of “Republics” that were united by workers in socialist economy
- Under Lenin, workers & peasants can elect representatives to a congress, but it was controlled by Communist Party.
- Atheism & elimination of class distinction (called each other comrade) became policy
- Lenin’s “New Economic Policy” - Lenin realized Russia needed some elements of capitalism in order to effectively get socialism (communism) started
 - So he allowed peasants to sell surplus for profit & small manufacturers were allowed to resume control of their businesses



Who was Vladimir Lenin? What were his political beliefs?

Watch the [Vladimir Lenin Biography from CloudBiography](#) and answer the questions below.

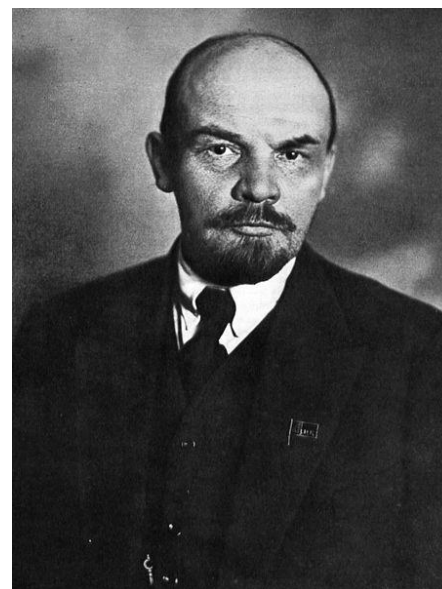
Lenin's Political Ideology [Beliefs] vs. Karl Marx

Vladimir Lenin identified himself as a follower of the ideas of Karl Marx, a Marxist, but his political beliefs showed that he changed Marx's Communism to fit the Russian context. He made his argument for turning Russia into a Communist state stronger by citing Marx.

Marx Believed	Lenin Believed
The working class would be the ones to start the Communist revolution and overthrow the capitalist class	Intellectuals could start the revolution of the working class against the capitalists
In order to get to a Communist state a civilization must first be industrialized and live under the rule of the bourgeoisie [the rich capitalists]	An agrarian country, like Russia, could skip the industrial stage that Marx described and create a Communist state

1. What happened early in Lenin's life that turned him against the Czar?

2. What actions did Lenin take as the leader of the Bolsheviks and the Communist government of Russia?



- April- Nov. 1917

Lenin and Bolsheviks Gain Support Amongst Peasants, Workers, and Soldiers

Lenin returned to Russia in 1917 after being in exile for his political beliefs. When he returned to lead the Bolsheviks, they were not a powerful political party, but they gained popular support from peasants, workers, and soldiers through meetings and speeches when they expounded upon their slogan, "Peace, Land, and Bread." If in power, they promised peace by taking Russia out of WWI. They would take control of all of the land in Russia and re-distribute it evenly to peasants and workers, and end starvation by taking control of farms to produce more food and give it out equally to the population.

1. What was the Bolshevik party slogan?

2. Why would soldiers, workers, and peasants support the Bolsheviks?

- Nov. 1917

November Revolution: Bolsheviks Seize Power

In November, 1917, the Bolshevik party leaders and a group of factory workers who supported them called the Red Guards, joined by some soldiers that left the Russian army, attacked the provisional government in Petrograd. Lenin the Bolsheviks took control of the government in a couple of days and several other similar actions were taken by Bolsheviks in other important Russian cities.

The Bolsheviks set about transforming Russia into the world's first Communist nation. They renamed Russia the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), also known as the Soviet Union.

On the eve of the take-over Lenin wrote a Call To Power, a piece outlining the reasons for the Bolshevik's actions and their plans for when they are in power.

Lenin: Call to Power,
Oct 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.

...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.

...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...

...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.

Source: Fordham Modern History Sourcebook. <http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/1917lenin1.asp>

3. What action did the Bolsheviks and the Red Guard take in November, 1917?

4. According to Lenin's Call to Power, how can Russia's problems be solved (li. 4-7)?

5. In whose interest does Lenin claim to take power for (li. 15-18)?

6. How would you have reacted to this Call to Power if you were a Bolshevik? How would you have reacted if you were a member of the provisional government?

- Dec. 1917

Cheka: The Soviet Secret Police Created

[Watch this video on the early Soviet government and the Cheka](#) and read the text below.

To protect the newly-established Bolshevik government from counter-revolutionaries and other political opponents, the Bolsheviks created a secret police, the Cheka (from the Russian for extraordinary committee). One of the first important actions taken by the Cheka was to execute the Czar and his whole family.

Source: Adapted from "Vladimir Lenin." New World Encyclopedia.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vladimir_Lenin

7. What was the Cheka? What was its role in the Soviet government?

- March 3, 1918

Russia Leaves WWI: Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

On March 3, 1918, Lenin fulfilled one Bolshevik promise by removing Russia from World War I. They negotiated with the Germans and agreed to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, under which Russia lost significant territories in Europe.

Source: Adapted from "Vladimir Lenin." New World Encyclopedia.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vladimir_Lenin

8. What were the effects of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk?



Representatives of Germany and Russia at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Negotiations, 1917.
CC-0. A courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and a public domain.

- 1917

-1922

Russian Civil War Demonstrates Bolshevik Military Superiority

[Watch this video on the Russian Civil War](#) and read the text below.

Soon after the Bolsheviks took power, a civil war erupted in Russia. Supporters of a wide variety of political movements took up arms to support or overthrow the Soviet government. Although many different factions were involved in the civil war, the two main forces were the Red Army (communists) and the pro-Imperialist White Army. Foreign powers such as France, Britain, the United States, and Japan also intervened in this war (on behalf of the White Army), though they had little impact. Eventually, the more organizationally proficient Red Army, led by Leon Trotsky, won the civil war, defeating the White Army and their allies in 1920. Smaller fights, however, continued for several more years.

Both White and Red Army forces, during this tumultuous time of war and revolution, "behaved with great brutality and cruelty in areas they controlled. Towns were burned, property destroyed or stolen, peasant farmers' crops and livestock taken by force—if people objected, they faced torture and execution."

Source: Adapted from "Vladimir Lenin." New World Encyclopedia.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vladimir_Lenin

9. What were the two sides of the Civil War named? Who fought on each side?

10. Who won the war? Why were they successful?

- Sept. 1918

Assassination Attempts and The Red Terror

In 1918, there were two assassination attempts on Lenin's life. In the second attempt, Lenin was shot twice. The doctors who treated him decided that it was too dangerous to remove the bullets. He partially recovered, but his health never returned to full strength.

The Communist government responded to the assassination attempts with what they termed the Red Terror. The Red Terror was a campaign of mass killings, torture, and oppression on all who opposed the Bolsheviks that took place from 1918 to 1922. Estimates for the total number of people killed during the Red Terror range from 50,000 to 140,000 to over one and half million.

Source: Adapted from "Vladimir Lenin." New World Encyclopedia.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vladimir_Lenin

11. What was the Red Terror? What was its purpose?

- June, 1918

Lenin Declares War Communism

The Red Terror coincided with the escalation of the Civil War and the implementation of a policy known as “War Communism” which lasted from June 1918 to March 1921. War Communism’s chief feature was the nationalization of private businesses. Nationalization is the process of a government taking ownership of a private business. Nationalism is sometimes called centralization. For example, if a coal mine that was run by a business owner was nationalized, the government would then own that mine, decide who worked in the mine, and decide how to run it.

Through war communism, Lenin hoped to accelerate the process of creating a Communist state where the government owns everything and divides it equally among the country’s inhabitants. To do this, the Soviet government took over people’s private businesses, especially industry, and forced peasant farmers to grow grain for the government and hand it over after it was harvested.

These measures negatively affected both agricultural and industrial production. With no incentives [motivations like money] to grow surplus grain (since it would just be confiscated), the peasants’ production of it and other crops plummeted, with the result that starvation came to threaten many city dwellers. In the cities, a large and untrained bureaucracy was hastily created to supervise the newly centralized, state-owned economy, with the result that labor productivity and industrial output plummeted. By 1921 industrial production had dropped to one-fifth of its prewar levels (i.e., in 1913), and the real wages of urban workers had declined by an estimated two-thirds in just three years.

Sources: Adapted from “Vladimir Lenin.” New World Encyclopedia.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vladimir_Lenin and <http://www.britannica.com/event/War-Communism>

12. What was War Communism? What was the purpose of War Communism?

13. What were the effects of War Communism on Russia?

14. Was the policy of War Communism successful? Explain.

- 1921

New Economic Plan (NEP): A Temporary Retreat from Communism

Watch this video on the transition from War Communism to the New Economic Plan and read the text below.

The long years of war, the Bolshevik policy of War Communism, the Russian Famine of 1921, and the Civil War took their toll on Russia and much of the country lay in ruins. There were many peasant uprisings, the largest being the Tambov Rebellion. After an uprising by the sailors at Kronstadt in March 1921, Lenin replaced the policy of War Communism with the New Economic Policy (NEP), in a successful attempt to rebuild industry and, especially, agriculture.

Though the goal of Lenin and the Soviet government was to create a truly communist state in Russia, he realized that their economic policies were damaging the country and threatening the Bolshevik hold on Russia. The New Economic Policy included the return of most agriculture, retail trade, and small-scale light industry to private ownership and management while the state retained control of heavy industry, transport, banking, and foreign trade. The peasantry were allowed to own and cultivate their own land, while paying taxes to the state. The New Economic Policy reintroduced a measure of stability to the economy and allowed the Soviet people to recover from years of war, civil war, and governmental mismanagement. The small businessmen and managers who flourished in this period became known as NEP men.

Though successful, the NEP was viewed by the Soviet government as merely a temporary measure to allow the economy to recover while the Communists solidified their hold on power and move the country towards a centralized communist government.

Source: Adapted from "Vladimir Lenin." New World Encyclopedia.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vladimir_Lenin and <http://www.britannica.com/event/New-Economic-Policy-Soviet-history>

15. Why did Lenin start the New Economic Policy (NEP)?

16. How was the NEP different than War Communism?

17. Was the NEP successful? Explain.

- Jan. 21, 1924

Lenin's Death

Lenin's health had already been severely damaged by the strains of revolution and war. The assassination attempt earlier in his life also added to his health problems. The bullet was still lodged in his neck, too close to his spine for medical techniques of the time to remove. In May 1922, Lenin had his first stroke. He was left partially paralyzed on his right side, and his role in government declined. After the second stroke in December of the same year, he resigned from active politics. In March 1923, he suffered his third stroke and was left bedridden for the remainder of his life, no longer able to speak.

After his first stroke, Lenin dictated several papers regarding the government to his wife. Most famous of these is Lenin's testament, which, among other things, criticized top-ranking communists, especially Joseph Stalin. Lenin said that Stalin, who had been the Communist Party's general secretary since April 1922, had "unlimited authority concentrated in his hands" and suggested that "comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post."

Lenin died on January 21, 1924, at the age of 53. Most historians agree that the most likely cause of his death was a stroke induced by the bullet still lodged in his neck from the assassination attempt.

The city of Petrograd was renamed Leningrad in Lenin's honor three days after his death. This remained the name of the city until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, when it reverted to its original name, Saint Petersburg. To memorialize him further, Lenin's body was embalmed and placed on permanent exhibition in the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow on January 27, 1924. His body is still on display today.

Source: Adapted from "Vladimir Lenin." New World Encyclopedia.
http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vladimir_Lenin

18. What did Lenin die from?

19. Who did Lenin warn other Communists about?



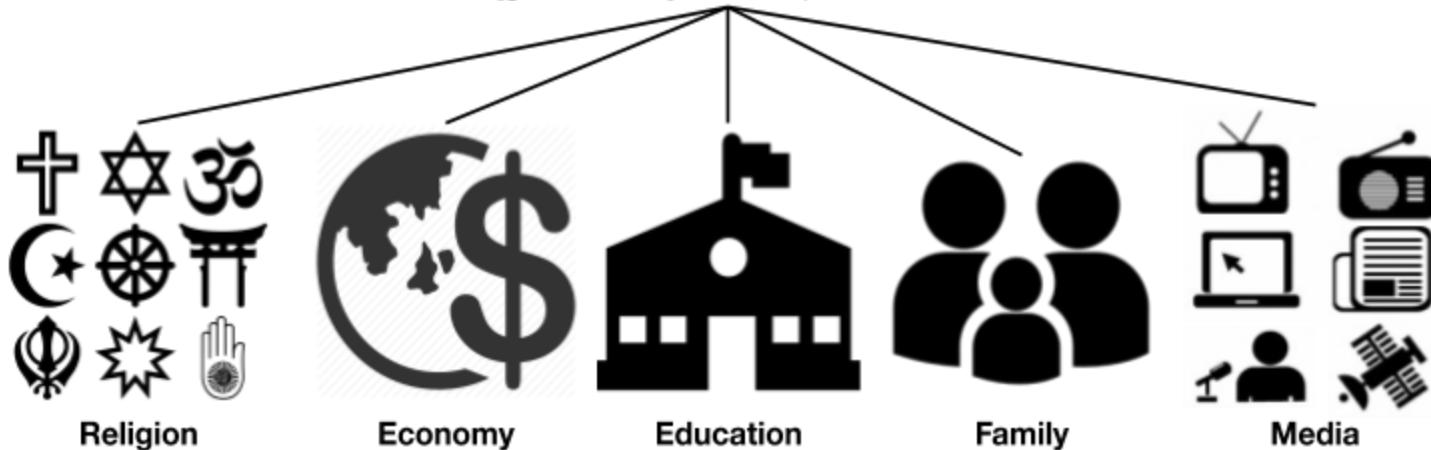
Lenin and Stalin in 1922.

[Image](#) is courtesy of wikimedia commons and is public domain

Who was Joseph Stalin? How did he rule?

Totalitarianism

State [government] has complete control over



Totalitarianism- a system of government in which one party tries to rule with complete control over every aspect of the lives of its citizen

Totalitarian Rules in History: Complete Control, Different Ideologies

There have been a number of **totalitarian** rulers in history. While they all try to run their **totalitarian states** with complete control over the people that live in them, they often have different **ideologies** [beliefs] that guide their decisions. For example, the first totalitarian ruler you will learn about, **Joseph Stalin**, was a **Communist**. He used totalitarianism to make Russia into the first state inspired by Karl Marx's ideas. **Adolf Hitler** was another totalitarian ruler. His ideology was called **fascism**. Fascists also wanted complete control over their countries, but they were opposed to Communism.

Who was Joseph Stalin?

Watch [Biography.com's Mini-Biography of Joseph Stalin](#) and answer the questions below.

- 1. What was Stalin's early life like?**
- 2. What effects did Stalin's rule have on the Soviet Union?**
- 3. Why was Stalin feared in the Soviet Union?**



How did Stalin gain, consolidate, and maintain power in the Soviet Union?

Shifting Political Alliances

Propaganda

Command Economy: Five Year
Plans

Command Economy:
Collectivization

Secret Police and Great Purges

Cultural and Ideological Control

Shifting Political Alliances To Gain Power

When Vladimir Lenin died in 1924, there were two members of the Bolshevik party popular enough to replace him: Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. Trotsky was a well known and respected leader who was in charge of the Red Army during the Russian Civil War. Stalin was a lesser known figure who had a reputation for getting whatever job he was assigned done thoroughly no matter what steps he had to take. Lenin had his doubts about both men, but was most concerned about the Stalin. In a statement before his death, he called for Stalin's removal and referred to him as "rude," "disloyal," and "capricious [unpredictable]."

After Lenin's death, Stalin allied himself with two other members of the party who were opposed to Trotsky. He tried to make Trotsky look disloyal to Lenin by misleading him about the date of the funeral, which Stalin organized, and Trotsky missed. Stalin, also publicized disagreements that Trotsky and Lenin had before Lenin's death. Eventually, Stalin and his allies expelled Trotsky from the Communist Party and exiled him.

After dealing with Trotsky, Stalin changed sides again, allying himself with party members against the two who helped him eliminate Trotsky. They were also expelled from the party. Stalin's ability to maneuver in the Soviet government gave him a great deal of control and prevented others from challenging him.

Source: "Josef Stalin," New World Encyclopedia, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Josef_Stalin



Stalin and Lenin, 1919.



Trotsky and Lenin, 1919.
[Image](#) is courtesy of wikimedia commons and is public domain

1. Who were the leading candidates for replacing Lenin as the head of the Soviet government?
2. How did Stalin eliminate the competition and gain power after Lenin's Death?

Propaganda

Propaganda is the spreading of ideas to promote a cause or damage an opposing cause. It is a specific type of message aimed at trying to influence people's opinions or behaviors actively.

Watch [this excerpt from a History Channel documentary on Stalin's use of propaganda \(12:55-end\)](#) and analyze the text and images below then answer the questions that follow.

Like Lenin, Joseph Stalin used propaganda to influence the beliefs and actions of the Russian people. In addition to putting forth their own ideas through propaganda, the Soviets censored ideas that they did not agree with, especially those that they viewed as anti-Marxists or anti-Communist. The government used radio, posters, movies, lectures, art, education, newspapers, books, and theatre to influence the opinions of Soviet citizens and to put a positive spin on the government's actions.

3. What is propaganda? What is the purpose of propaganda?

4. What forms of propaganda did Stalin's government use?

5. Each of the posters to the left show Stalin in different contexts. Taken together, how do these poster depict Stalin?

6. What were the effects of the propaganda used during Stalin's reign?



"Thank you beloved Stalin for our happy childhood."



'To the new achievements of Soviet aviation!'



"Glory to Stalin, the great architect of communism!"

Command Economy: Five Year Plans

The Russian Civil War and wartime communism had a devastating effect on the country's economy. Industrial output in 1922 was 13 percent of the output in 1914. A recovery followed under Lenin's New Economic Policy, which allowed a degree of market flexibility within the context of socialism, but Stalin stopped the NEP after Lenin's death. Under Stalin's direction, the NEP was replaced by a system called a Command Economy. In a command economy, all of the economic decisions are made by the central government. This is another example of Stalin taking total control of the Soviet Union.

Stalin thought that the Soviet Union needed to catch up with the rest of the world's industrial output and transportation technology. To do so, he created a series of "Five-Year Plans" starting in the late 1920s. These plans set high production goals for industries like mining, railroads, electric plants and manufacturers.

The Five Year plans were successful in increasing the industrial output of the Soviet Union. The country became a world leader in industrial goods (see chart above).

Production Levels in the Soviet Union (1932–1937)

Industry	1932	1937
Electricity (billion kw)	13.5	36.2
Coal (million tons)	64.4	128.0
Crude Oil (million tons)	21.4	28.5
Rolled Steel (million tons)	4.4	13.0

Source: R.W. Davies, ed., et al., *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945*, Cambridge University Press, 1994 (adapted)

7. What was the difference between Lenin's NEP and Stalin's Command economy?

8. What were the goals of the Stalin's Five Year Plans?

9. Were the Five Year Plans successful?

Command Economy: Collectivization

Stalin's government also controlled the agricultural economy. The Five Year Plans used a policy called forced collectivization which was intended to increase agricultural output from large government-owned farms created through the integration of smaller private farms. Farm owners and peasants did not have a choice. They had to give up their land and work on the new collectivized farms. Peasants were required to give up their farming equipment, livestock, produce, and even their homes to the government. It was meant to bring the peasantry under more direct political control, to facilitate the collection of taxes and provide more food for people living in Soviet cities, but collectivization also led to a drastic drop in living standards for many peasants, and caused violent reactions by the peasantry that was heavily suppressed by the Red Army. In the first years of collectivization, it was estimated that agricultural production would rise 50 percent, however, agricultural production actually dropped. Stalin blamed this unanticipated failure on kulaks (rich peasants) who resisted collectivization. (However, kulaks only made up 4 percent of the peasant population). Therefore those defined as "kulaks," "kulak helpers," and later "ex-kulaks" were ordered by Stalin to be shot, placed into Gulag labor camps, or deported to remote areas of the country, depending on the charge.

10. What was collectivization?

11. How did collectivization effect peasants?

12. Was collectivization successful?



Children digging up frozen potatoes on a collective farm, 1933.

[Image](#) is courtesy of wikimedia commons and is public domain

Command Economy: Collectivization

Holodomor: Forced Famine in Ukraine, 1932-1933

Many historians assert that the disruption caused by collectivization was largely responsible for major famines. One such famine occurred during 1932–1933 in Ukraine and the Kuban region. It is now known as the Holodomor (meaning, “hunger-extermination” in Ukrainian). Stephane Courtois' Black Book of Communism and other sources document that during the Holodomor all grain was taken from areas that did not meet production targets set by Stalin's Five Year Plans. This event included the next year's seed grain, leaving the peasants with nothing to eat. They were forced to remain in these starving areas. Sales of train tickets were halted and the Soviet government created barriers and obstacles to prevent people from fleeing the starving areas.

According to a BBC article in 2013, entire villages were wiped out as a result of Stalin's punishment of Ukraine and in some regions the death rate reached one-third. Yale University historian Timothy Snyder estimates that 3.3 million people died as a result of the Holodomor.

13. What was the Holodomor?

14. Why did so many people die during the Holodomor?



Government workers seizing grain from peasants who hid it in a graveyard to prevent it from being taken in Ukraine, 1930.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:EMAN_archive_75113_Seizing_grain_from_kulaks.jpg



Starved peasants on a street in Kharkiv, Ukraine during the Holodomor, 1933.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:EMAN_archive_75113_Seizing_grain_from_kulaks.jpg

Secret Police and Great Purges

Watch [this excerpt from a History Channel documentary on Stalin's Purges and Use of Terror](#) (start- 12:54) and read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

No reference to Joseph Stalin can be made without referring to his unmatched ability to use his intelligence services and the secret police. Though the Soviet secret police, the NKVD had already evolved into an arm of state-sanctioned murder under Lenin, Stalin took the use of such forces to a new level in order to solidify his hold on power and eliminate all enemies, real or perceived. Stalin also vastly increased the foreign espionage [the practice of spying] activities of Soviet secret police and foreign intelligence. Under his guiding hand, Soviet intelligence forces began to set up intelligence networks in most of the major nations of the world, including Germany, Great Britain, France, Japan, and the United States. One of the best early examples of Stalin's ability to integrate secret police and foreign espionage came in 1940, when he gave approval to the secret police to have Leon Trotsky assassinated in Mexico.

Stalin consolidated near-absolute power in the 1930s with a Great Purge of the party, justified as an attempt to expel 'opportunists' and 'counter-revolutionary infiltrators.' Those targeted by the purge were often expelled from the party, however more severe measures ranged from banishment to the Gulag labor camps to execution after trials.

No segment of society was left untouched during the purges. Article 58 of the legal code, listing prohibited "anti-Soviet activities," was interpreted and applied in the broadest manner. People would inform on others arbitrarily [randomly and without reason], to attempt to redeem themselves, out of envy and plain dislike, or to gain some revenge or benefits. A worker would report on his boss, son on his father, and a young man on his brother. The flimsiest reasons were often enough to brand someone an "Enemy of the People," starting the cycle of public persecution and abuse, often proceeding to interrogation, torture and deportation, if not death.

In parallel with the purges, efforts were made to rewrite the history in Soviet textbooks and other propaganda materials. Notable people that were executed were removed from the texts and photographs as though they never existed. Gradually, the history of revolution was transformed to a story about just two key characters: Lenin and Stalin.

15. What is espionage? How did Stalin use it?

16. What was the purpose of Stalin's Great Purges?

17. What effects did Stalin's purges have on Soviet society?

18. What was a gulag? What was the purpose of gulags?

19. If you were accused of being "anti-Soviet" what could happen?



The top image includes, Nikolai Yezhov, once head of the NKVD, who was executed by Stalin's secret police. The bottom image was censored after Yezhov fell out of favor with Stalin. This was common practice in Soviet Russia.

Cultural and Ideological Control

In Stalin's Soviet Union, the government attempted to control the ideas and culture that its citizens were exposed to.

Science

In science, only ideas that did not contradict Marxism, Leninism, or Stalin's beliefs were explored. The study of evolution, for example, was prohibited because it did not support Marx's ideas of human development. Other sciences that could benefit the state were well funded and flourished. For instance, the Soviets made great leaps in computer, weapons, and rocket technology. They were the first country in space, launching a rocket called Sputnik in 1957.

Art and Literature

Art and literature that glorified Stalin and the state was encouraged, but those writers and artists whose creations were critical of the government were punished, often arrested, fined, sent to a gulag, or executed. During Stalin's reign the official and lasting style of Socialist Realism was established for painting, sculpture, music, drama and literature.

Stalin took a personal interest in shaping Soviet culture, sometimes in surprising ways. For example, Mikhail Bulgakov was driven to poverty and despair; yet, after a personal appeal to Stalin, he was allowed to continue working. His play, *The Days of the Turbins*, with its sympathetic treatment of an anti-Bolshevik family caught up in the Civil War, was finally staged, apparently also on Stalin's intervention, and began a decades-long uninterrupted run at the Moscow Arts Theater.

Religion

Stalin's role in the fortunes of the Russian Orthodox Church is complex. Continuous persecution in the 1930s resulted in its near-extinction: by 1939, active parishes numbered in the low hundreds (down from 54,000 in 1917), many churches had been leveled or used as clubs, offices, storage space, or as museums. Ceremonial artifacts and vessels were confiscated. Religious icons were burned. Tens of thousands of priests and other religious leaders were persecuted. Many nuns were said to have been raped. During World War II, however, the Church was allowed a revival (winter 1941-1942) as a patriotic organization. Thousands of parishes were reactivated, until a further round of suppression took place during Khrushchev's rule.

Many religions popular in the ethnic regions of the Soviet Union including the Roman Catholic Church, Uniats, Baptists, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, etc. underwent ordeals similar to the Orthodox churches. Thousands of clergy were persecuted, and hundreds of churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, sacred monuments, monasteries and other religious buildings were razed.

20. What impact did Stalin and the Soviet government have on science and the arts?

21. Why might the Soviet government have persecuted the Russian Orthodox Church?



Example of a Socialist Realism statue depicting the strength of the worker and peasant.



Soviet anti-religious poster, reading "Ban Religious Holidays!" from 1924.

U.S.S.R. under Stalin



- 1924, Joseph Stalin became leader & ruled w/ terror & brutality (until 1953)
- Abolished NEP & established **command economy** (where gov't makes all basic economic decisions, production & prices) to achieve equality & prosperity for all & goal was to modernize & industrialize.
- Launched series of **five-year plans** to socialize & industrialize U.S.S.R (to increase heavy industry & farm output)
 - 1st in 1929, called for industrial output to increase by 250%. workers worked long hours for low wages. Stalin declared the plan a success in 1932, reality economy didn't grow that fast
 - 2nd in 1933, encouraged heavy industry (steel) & was very successful by 1938
- **Collectivization** (peasant lands taken & incorporated into large gov't-owned farms) to produce surplus to feed factory workers & export— peasants resisted & resulted in famine (millions of death in Ukraine 1932-33)



U.S.S.R. under Stalin

- Created a **totalitarian state**- one party dictatorship that regulated every aspect of life (economy, arts, religion) through terror & secret police
- Launched the **Great Purge**- accused, imprisoned, & executed millions of gov't officials of disloyalty & treason
 - Some were exiled to labor camps (gulags)



Propaganda: Stalin- Cult of Personality



TOTALITARISM

Ideology

- sets goals of the state
- glorifies aims of the state
- justifies government actions

State Control of Individuals

- demands loyalty
- denies basic liberties
- expects personal sacrifice for the good of the state

Methods of Enforcement

- police terror
- indoctrination
- censorship
- persecution

Dynamic Leader

- unites people
- symbolizes government
- encourages popular support through force of will

Modern Technology

- mass communication to spread propaganda
- advanced military weapons

Dictatorship and One-Party Rule

- exercises absolute authority
- dominates the government

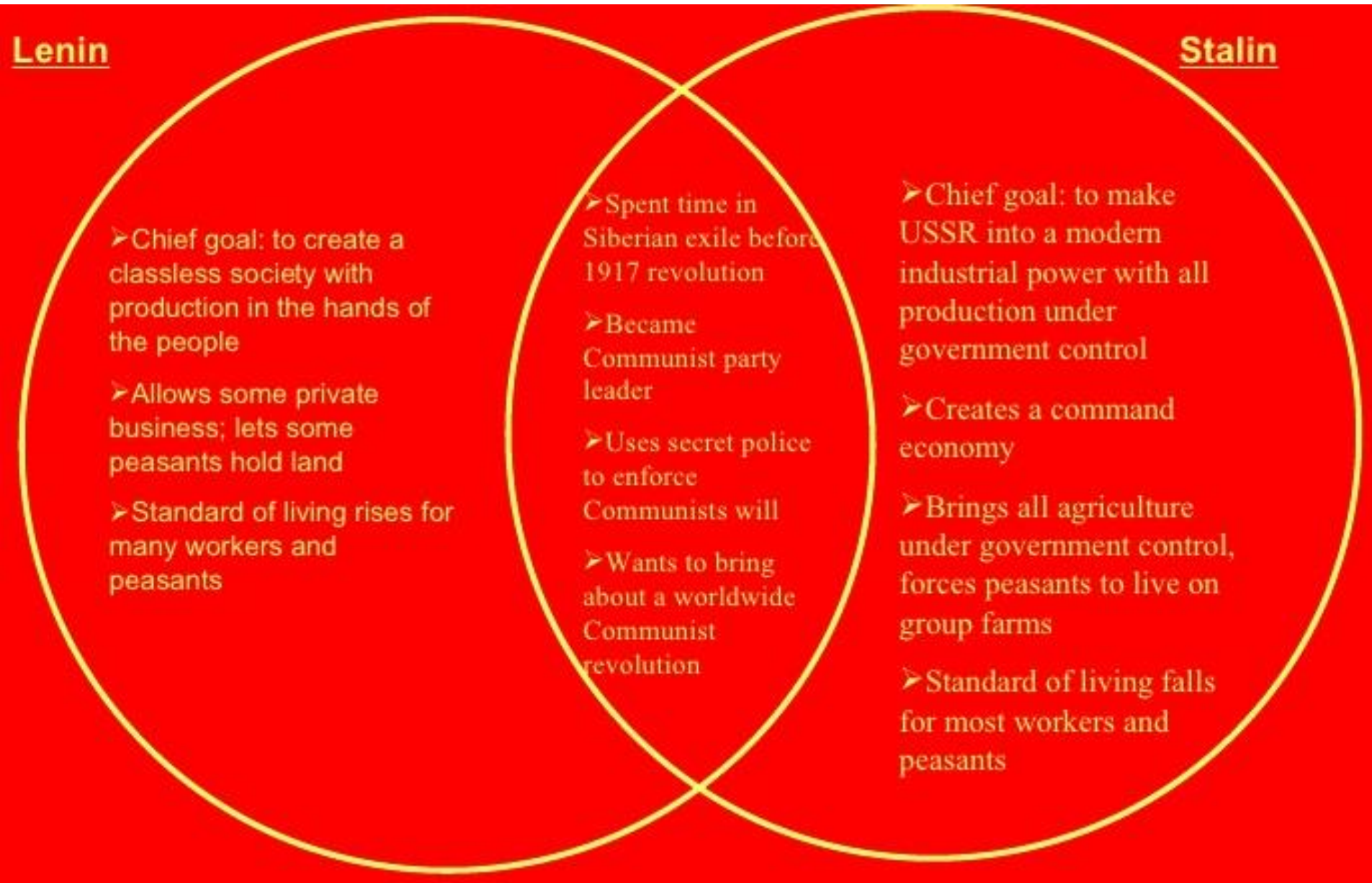
State Control of Society

- business
- labor
- housing
- education
- religion
- the arts
- personal life
- youth groups

Life in a Totalitarian State

Economics	Politics	Arts	Religion	Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth of industry• Growth of military• Low standard of living• Shortage of foods and consumer goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-Party dictatorship• Total government control of citizens• Total government control of industry and agriculture• Use of propaganda to win government support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Censorship of books, music, art• Purpose of all art to praise communism• Observation of artists, writers, and musicians by secret police	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government war on religion• Takeover of house of worship• Secret police control religious worship• Communist ideals replace religious ideals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fear of secret police• An upper class of Communist party members• Free education and health care• Public transportation and recreation• Jobs for women

First Leader of the Soviet Union



Russian Revolution (Bolsheviks, 1917)



Causes

- Absolute Monarch (Czar)
- Russo-Japanese War and WWI
- Bloody Sunday, 1905
- Poor peasants
- Lack of Industrialization
- Rise of Communists (Bolsheviks)

Effects

- Creation of a communist state (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
- Persecution of Dissenters
- Lenin's New Economic Policy (some private ownership) → Stalin's Five Year Plan (collectives and increased industrialization)
- Totalitarian State