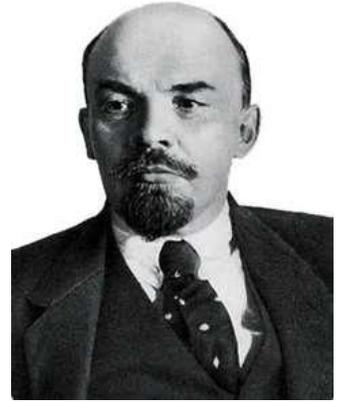


# The Russian Revolution

A revolution in Russia in 1917 ended three centuries of rule by kings called “czars.” It led to the establishment of the world’s first communist government. Communism then spread to other countries and had a major impact on international relations.

Causes, major events, and results of the Russian Revolution are given on the outline which follows. Read the information carefully, then answer the questions at the end.



## I. Causes of the Revolution

- A. People were dissatisfied with the rule of Romanov czars.
  - 1. Most people in Russia were poor peasants, called serfs, who lived and worked on land owned by aristocrats.
  - 2. Aristocrats (wealthy citizens who supported the czar) were given political power over the peasants.
  - 3. Serfs had to pay taxes to the aristocrats.
  - 4. Serfs were poorly educated, usually made to stay on the land where they were born, and sometimes forced to serve in the army.
  - 5. Nicholas II, the last Russian czar, limited the role of peasants and workers in the government.
  - 6. Student protests, peasant revolts, and worker strikes became common in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.
  - 7. Revolutionary groups were organized.
- B. The Industrial Revolution did not spread to Russia and therefore did not provide the Russian people with benefits enjoyed by Western Europeans.
- C. The Russo-Japanese War ended in a humiliating defeat for Russia. It clearly showed that rule by czars was weak and ineffective.
- D. World War I brought great suffering to the Russian people.
  - 1. The country was unprepared when attacked by Germany in 1914.
  - 2. In the middle of the war, Nicholas replaced experienced government officials with weak and unpopular men.
  - 3. Nicholas had fallen under the influence of Grigori Y. Rasputin, a hold man and adviser who he thought was saving the life of his sick son.
  - 4. The war brought shortages of food, fuel, and housing.
  - 5. Russian armies were soundly defeated on the battlefield. Nearly 2 million people lost their lives.

## II. The Revolution of 1917

- A. Shortages of bread and coal prompted riots and strikes.
- B. Soldiers sent to end the violent demonstrations sided with the protestors instead.
- C. Aristocrats and educated Russian joined the revolution against Czar Nicholas.
- D. Lacking political support, Nicholas resigned from power.
- E. The Bolsheviks (Communists) took control of the government and signed a peace treaty with Germany ending Russian involvement in World War I.
  - 1. Nikolai Lenin became the first dictator of Communist Russia. He began putting into practice ideas he had developed after studying the writings of Karl Marx.
  - 2. A civil war broke out in which the Communists (called “Reds” after the color of their flag). Defeated the Anti-Communists (“Whites”).

3. The Communists organized the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which was made up of four “union republics,” or states. The number of union republics increased during the 1920’s, 1930’s, and 1940’s.

F. Lenin died in 1924. He was succeeded to power by Joseph Stalin.

### **III. Results of the Russian Revolution**

A. The communists government took over the ownership of land, factories, mines, banks, and railroads.

B. The communist Party was the only political party allowed in the Soviet Union.

1. Lenin – the “Father of Communism” – used force and terror against his opponents.

2. In the “Great Purge” of the mid-1930’s, Stalin arrested and put to death thousands of party officials, army officers, and factory managers. He considered them “enemies of the people.” Millions of Soviet citizens were sent by the secret police to labor camps.

C. Lenin’s “New Economic Policy” (NEP) and Stalin’s “Five Year Plans” greatly improved the Soviet Economy.

1. When the Communist first seized power, the economy was on the verge of collapse. World War I, the revolution, and the civil war had taken a heavy toll.

2. Under Communists control, the USSR developed into one of the world’s leading industrial nations.

D. The Bolsheviks thought the Russian Revolution of 1917 would lead to revolution in other countries.

1. Russian communist established the “Comintern” (Communist International), an organization of Communist Parties around the world.

2. But Stalin eventually disbanded the Comintern when attempts to spark revolutions elsewhere failed.

E. Communists governments were set up in several countries in Europe and Asia following World War II.

1. The Soviet Union refused to withdraw from nations in Eastern Europe that it occupied during the Red Army’s campaign against Germany near the end of the Second World War.

a. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and East Germany became Russian “satellites” with communist governments loyal to the Soviet Union.

b. This was the first even in the “Cold War,” a period that brought international tension and the threat of war between the Soviet Union and the United States.

2. Local Communists took over the governments of Yugoslavia, Albania, and North Vietnam.

3. Communist forces defeated the Nationalists in a civil war in China.

4. Communist governments were established in North Korea, Cambodia, South Vietnam, Mongolia, Albania, Yugoslavia, and Cuba.

F. An early goal of communism was the worldwide overthrow of “capitalism,; the private ownership – instead of government ownership – of factories, farms, and businesses.

G. Communist countries today tend to be more interested in their own future than in the spread of communism to other parts of the world.

H. As a general rule, communist and non-communist countries now lean toward “peaceful co-existence.”

## Communism in the Soviet Union

The statements which follow describe the political, economic, and social aspects of life under the communist system of government in the former Soviet Union.

- All power was in the hands of the Communist Party.
- In elections, voter could only choose among candidate nominated by the Communist Party.
- The government, instead of private individuals, owned factories, farms, natural resources, and transportation facilities.
- Only a small percentage of the people were given membership in the Communist Party.
- Radio, television, and newspapers were strictly controlled by the government.
- Soviet citizens were allowed to own homes and buy books, radios, and other consumer goods.
- The amount and variety of consumer goods was limited by what the government decided to produce.
- The government decided what prices should be charged for goods and services.
- Workers on “state farms” were paid by the government.
- Workers on “collective farms” received a share of the profits on what was produced.
- Labor unions had no control over wages and could not go on strike
- Education and medical services were free.
- Many families could not afford a car.
- A smaller gap existed between rich and poor in the Soviet Union than in the United States.
- Schools emphasized science, mathematics, and languages.
- Travel to other countries was restricted.
- Citizen could be punished for criticizing the leader of the Communist Party.
- Religious worship was discouraged.
- Women were given equal job opportunities with men
- Children were taught that communism was the best form of government.

## Thought Questions

In order of importance to you, list **3 advantages** of living in the former Soviet Union under a communist system of government.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

In order of importance to you, list **3 disadvantages** of living in the former Soviet Union.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

## Multiple Choice

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Most Russians of the late 1800's and early 1900's were:  
A. Serfs.  
B. aristocrats.  
C. migratory farmers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "Romanov" was the name of:  
A. a revolutionary leader.  
B. a political party.  
C. the Russian Royal Family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Before the Revolution of 1917, serfs:  
A. owned their own land.  
B. had a voice in the government.  
C. were poor tax-paying peasants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the years leading up to the revolution:  
A. the czar made many reforms.  
B. all citizens were given the right to vote.  
C. student protests, peasant revolts, and worker strikes took place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The last Russian czar was:  
A. Ivan the Terrible.  
B. Grigori Rasputin.  
C. Nicholas II.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Russo-Japanese War:  
A. won for Russia new territories in the Far East.  
B. exposed the weak leadership of the czar.  
C. resulted in the immediate overthrow of Nicholas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Which of the following did **not** happen during World War I?  
A. the Russian army lost many battles and the people suffered greatly  
B. Nicholas replaced experienced government officials with weak and unpopular men.  
C. Rasputin became the dictator of Russia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. By the end of World War I:  
A. Nicholas was overthrown in the Russian Revolution.  
B. aristocrats had fled the country.  
C. Joseph Stalin had seized power.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The Russian Revolution of 1917 ended with the government under the control of the:  
A. Bolsheviks.  
B. czar.  
C. Germans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Bolsheviks were:  
A. Communists.  
B. Anti-Communists.  
C. officers in the Red Army

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Communists Russia's first dictator was:  
A. Karl Marx.  
B. Joseph Stalin.  
C. Nikolai Lenin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. After the Russian civil war of 1918-1920, the country's official name was changed to:  
A. Soviet Russia.  
B. Communist Russia.  
C. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. In a communist state, the government:  
A. is a democracy.  
B. Allows private ownership of farms, factories, and the means of production.  
C. owns land, factories, mines, banks, and railroads.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Which of the following is **not** true about Lenin?  
A. he used the New Economic Policy to improve the Soviet Union's economy.  
B. he developed the principles of modern communism after studying the writings of Karl Marx.  
C. he opposed the Bolsheviks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Joseph Stalin:  
A. was the "Father of Communism"  
B. used the "great Purge" to eliminate political opposition.  
C. was the leader of the "Reds" in the Russian civil war.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The "Comintern" was:  
A. the name given to a series of 5-year economic plans.  
B. an international organization of Communist Parties.  
C. the Russian secret police.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The Soviet Union had:  
A. one political party.  
B. two political parties.  
C. an unlimited number of parties.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Under the Communists, the Soviet Union:  
A. became a leading industrial nation.  
B. stood for freedom and individual rights.  
C. spread capitalism to other nations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. The first event of the "Cold War" was:  
A. a Communist victory in the Chinese civil war.  
B. the setting up of communist governments in Mongolia, Cambodia, and Vietnam.  
C. the establishment of Russian "satellites" in Eastern Europe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Communist and non-communist countries today:  
A. are still very much involved in the Cold War.  
B. refuse to trade or communicate with each other.  
C. have generally learned to get along with each other despite having different political and economic systems.

## THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

### Causes of the Revolution

Which of the following helped bring about the Russian Revolution? Answer **Yes** or **No**.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Peasants and workers, who formed the largest group of people in Russia, had not political power.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ Peasants were poorly educated, usually made to stay on the land where they were born, and sometime forced to serve in the army.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Unlike Western Europeans, the Russian people did not enjoy the advantages of the Industrial Revolution.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ World War I brought severe shortages of food, fuel, and housing.
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ While Russian armies were suffering heavy losses on the battlefield; Czar Nicholas replaced experienced government officials with weak and unpopular men.

### The Revolution of 1917

Which of the following events took place during the Revolution? Answer **Yes** or **No**.

- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ Three centuries of rule by czars came to an end when Nicholas resigned.
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_ The United States sent troops to Russia to fight the Bolsheviks.
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_ Russia signed a peace treaty with Germany and withdrew from the First World War.
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_ Nikolai Lenin Failed in his attempt to establish a communist government in Russia.
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_ Russia cam to be known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

### Communism in the Soviet Union

Which of the following are descriptions of Soviet life under the communist system of government? Answer **Yes** or **No**.

- 11) \_\_\_\_\_ In election, voters choose between candidates nominated by two different political parties.
- 12) \_\_\_\_\_ Private individuals own the factories, farms, natural resources, and transportation facilities.
- 13) \_\_\_\_\_ Radio, television, and newspapers are strictly controlled by the government.
- 14) \_\_\_\_\_ The amount and variety of consumer goods is limited by what the government decides to produce.
- 15) \_\_\_\_\_ Workers who belong to labor unions have the right to go on strike for higher pay.
- 16) \_\_\_\_\_ Education and medical services are free.
- 17) \_\_\_\_\_ In the Soviet Union, most people are either very rich or very poor, with few people in between.
- 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Citizens have the right to criticize their leaders and speak out against government policies.
- 19) \_\_\_\_\_ Women do not enjoy the same job opportunities as men.
- 20) \_\_\_\_\_ Children are taught that communism is the best form of government.