

**The Rise and Fall
of Soviet Communism:
A History of
Twentieth-Century Russia
Part I**

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The Rise and Fall of Soviet Communism: A History of Twentieth Century Russia

Scope :

The sixteen lectures in this series will help you to understand the dramatic experience of one of the world's most intriguing and important countries, Russia.

With the possible exception of Germany since its unification in 1871, the history of no modern nation has been as traumatic and controversial as Russia's. The student of that experience must confront the intellectual burden facing the serious student of any history, i.e., how to acquaint oneself with the facts while also becoming familiar with conflicting interpretations of that history. The empirical and theoretical challenges facing the student of twentieth-century Russia are all the heavier because that country has been so deeply and frequently convulsed by different (if not radically antagonistic) forces. These lectures are intended to help you master both the facts and the interpretations.

On the empirical level, the history of twentieth-century Russia has typically been divided into three periods, as follows.

1. The first period centers on the breakdown of the tsarist regime (the Russo-Japanese war and revolution of 1905), the series of events culminating in the two revolutions of 1917 (Menshevik and Bolshevik), the outbreak of Russian Civil War, the triumph of the Bolsheviks, and the birth of the Communist party-state system.
2. The second period begins with Lenin's announcement of the NEP (New Economic Policy) in the early 1920s and continues with the debates and power struggles of the early and mid-1920s, Stalin's consolidation of power in the late 1920s, the social terror of agricultural collectivization in the early 1930s, the political terror of the party purges in the late 1930s, the bloody horrors of World War II and its aftermath in the 1940s, and the death of Stalin in 1953.
3. The third and current period begins with Khrushchev's first efforts at de-Stalinization in the late 1950s and early 1960s, continues with the Brezhnev reaction from the mid-1960s until the early 1980s, and reaches its climax with Gorbachev's startling initiatives of *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the late 1980s, leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the ascendancy of Boris Yeltsin, and the current era of post-Soviet disarray.

Thus, by dividing the empirical material, we can develop a conceptual understanding of the main events of modern Russian/Soviet history by focusing on the major turning point of each era, namely the Bolshevik Revolution, Stalinism, and Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

Turning to theoretical concerns, we must consider two major interpretive views:

1. The "mainstream" view generally holds that the only real discontinuities in twentieth-century Russian history are the Bolshevik revolution and the collapse of the USSR. In this view, the entire Soviet period is essentially undifferentiated from Lenin to Stalin to Gorbachev.
2. The so-called "revisionist" view sees major continuities in Russia's history prior to the Bolshevik revolution and following Gorbachev, but major discontinuities within the Soviet period.

In general, these lectures tend toward the "mainstream" view, but they also give due account to the "revisionist" arguments. Neither interpretation has gained full acceptance for the simple reason that we are still too close in time to most of these events. Moreover, we must all appreciate from the outset the duration, complexity, and uniqueness of recorded Russian history, of which the twentieth century is but a very small part. Russia, in its vastness and diversity, has always intrigued, befuddled, and frightened "the West." Therefore, you should not be surprised that there are no easy answers to the questions raised in this lecture series.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of these lectures, you should be able to:

1. Outline the main stages in twentieth-century Russian/Soviet history, from the Revolution of 1905 to the era of Yeltsin and post-Soviet disarray.
2. Identify and place in context the most important forces (political, economic, ideological, and social) that have shaped Russian/Soviet history in this century.
3. Trace and explain both the causes and implications of the main "turning points"—*viz.*, the Bolshevik revolution, Stalinism, and Gorbachev's reforms—that have defined the main eras of Russian/Soviet twentieth-century history.
4. Summarize the interaction of internal dynamics and external influences that have created the fundamental issues of Russian/ Soviet history.
5. State and distinguish between the "mainstream" and "revisionist" interpretations of the most important events and sequences of events in Russian/Soviet history.
6. Critically appraise the basic assumptions, both implicit and explicit, guiding "mainstream" and "revisionist" approaches to Russian/Soviet history.
7. Compare and contrast the relative adequacy of "mainstream" and "revisionist" interpretations in making sense of specific events and eras in twentieth-century Russian/Soviet history.
8. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both "mainstream" and "revisionist" views in making sense of the entire sweep of Russian/Soviet history in the twentieth century.
9. Interpret events taking place in contemporary Russia from the perspective of an informed understanding of the key dynamics of the country's historical experience leading to the current era.

Lecture One

Nicholas II and the Russian Empire

Scope: This lecture sets the stage for our exploration of the tumultuous events that swept over Russia following the turn of the twentieth century. These events are important to understand because so much of our own experience has been defined by our love-hate relationship with Russia, especially during the 45-year "Cold War." To understand modern Russia, however, we must have at least a basic understanding of what preceded the Communist regime. Thus we will look back to the nineteenth-century tsarist Russia familiar to readers of Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky. We will explore the political, ethnic, and economic characteristics of Russia as it entered the twentieth century under the rule of Emperor Nicholas II.

Outline

I. Setting the Stage.

- A. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Russia was a large, multinational empire ruled by a conservative Christian (Russian Orthodox) divine-right emperor, Tsar Nicholas II.
- B. The history of Russia in the twentieth century is a story of hope and tragedy.
 - 1. There was hope that Russia would continue under the "benign" rule of the Emperor and return to its former glory. Others harbored hopes for greater social justice in the here and now.
 - 2. As we will see, the tragedy came from the devastation of World War I, the Russian Revolution of 1917, the imposition of Communist rule, the even greater bloodshed of World War II, and the dissension, disintegration, and uncertainty that overshadow post-communist Russia today.

II. Outline of the Lectures.

- A. Lectures one through four cover government and politics under Nicholas II during the early years of the twentieth century. Specific events under consideration include the following:
 - 1. The Russo-Japanese War
 - 2. The Revolution of 1905
 - 3. World War I
 - 4. Events leading to the 1917 Revolution
- B. The next set of lectures (five through nine) addresses the imposition and evolution of the Communist state, first under Lenin and then under Stalin.
- C. Lectures ten and eleven examine the military, social, economic, and political impact of World War II on the Soviet Union.
- D. Lectures twelve and thirteen chronicle the start of the Cold War, the last years of Stalin's rule, and de-Stalinization.
- E. Finally, lectures fourteen through sixteen examine events since the late 1970s, as the Soviet Union reassessed the legacy of Stalin in light of realities of the Cold War. The Soviet state finally disintegrated, generating new hopes and fears for the new Russia. Specifically, we examine the following:
 - 1. The Brezhnev regime
 - 2. The transitional regimes of Andropov and Chernenko
 - 3. Gorbachev and *perestroika*
 - 4. The collapse of the Soviet Union
 - 5. Post-communist Russia under Yeltsin

III. Nicholas II—the Theory and Practice of Autocracy.

- A. Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra were traditional divine-right rulers.
 - 1. Nicholas II was the last ruler of the 300-year-old Romanov dynasty. He succeeded his father, Alexander III, in 1894.

2. His wife, the Empress Alexandra, was the former Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt and the granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She was raised Lutheran but converted wholeheartedly to Russian Orthodoxy because of its emotive, mystical nature and its stress on salvation through suffering. She supported her husband's idea of divine right rule.
 3. Nicholas took as his models for governance the two diametrically opposed Tsars Ivan IV "The Dread" (1533-1584) and Alexei Mikhailovich "The Most Gentle" (1645-1676).
- B.** As an autocrat, Nicholas expected public deference to his wishes and decisions. In fact, society was largely deferential.
1. The Russian Code of Laws (Article I and other provisions) explicitly affirmed the absolute authority of the tsar and made it not only a civil, but also a religious, offense to flout his rule.
 2. Public order was maintained through various means: "peasant courts" in the countryside that handled minor (misdemeanor) cases; a complex judiciary to handle felonious cases; provincial governors; police agencies, including the secret police or *okhrana*; martial law in large cities (following the 1881 assassination of Alexander II); capital punishment for political criminals; and exile to Siberia or commitment to hard-labor prison camps.
 3. The use of capital punishment for political offenses under the tsars was on a much lower scale than under the Communist regimes of Lenin and Stalin. Likewise, the Siberian exiles were not necessarily as harsh as in the later periods.

IV. Russia as a Multinational State.

- A.** As the result of imperial conquests under the tsars (especially from Peter the Great on), early twentieth-century Russia was a massive nation in size, population (125-130 million), and variety of ethnic groups, languages, and religions. Three-quarters of the population was Slavic.
- B.** The "core" of the empire consisted of Great Russians, who were numerically a minority (roughly 45 percent of the total imperial population). The "periphery" consisted of other Slavs (Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Poles) and more than ninety different non-Slavic peoples.
- C.** This mixture fostered ethnic and economic tensions that led to violent confrontations between core and periphery. Among the ethnic problems were:
 1. Anti-Jewish pogroms in the Pale of Settlement (the Russian legal code enforced severe discrimination against Jews).
 2. The Finnish independence movement, 1890-1904.
 3. Unrest in Poland (which, like Finland, was nominally independent but administered by Russia), including protest movements led by Dmowski ("integral nationalism") and Pilsudski's socialism.

V. The Russian Empire and the Spread of Market Capitalism.

- A.** The basis of the agrarian economy was altered following the abolition of serfdom (1861) and the concurrent rapid expansion of railroad construction. Market forces created both opportunity and risk, fostering peasant hostility toward capitalism.
- B.** Industrial development and urbanization in Russia was not unlike that experienced in Western Europe.
 1. Russia's urban population tripled between 1850 and 1900.
 2. Further resentments were generated by the expanding gulf between the wealthy merchant elite and an impoverished laboring population.
- C.** The government's program of promoting rapid capitalist development while trying to control its social effects was at best self-contradictory.

Essential Reading:

Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 1-120.

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 15-34.

Recommended Reading:

Mark Steinberg and Vladimir Khrustalëv, *The Fall of the Romanovs*. [A wonderfully edited selection of diaries and letters by the tsar, tsarina, and figures close to the royal family.]

Lev Tolstoy, *Resurrection*. [A didactic novel that analyzes the corruption of the tsarist legal system from Tolstoy's peculiar, Christian anarchist perspective.]

Questions to Consider:

1. What policies, forces, and institutions worked to enforce political stability in Russia before 1905?
2. What policies and forces contributed to political instability in Russia before 1905?

Lecture Two

The Failure of Constitutional Government

Scope: This lecture examines the rise of organized liberal and revolutionary opposition to the conservative, divine-right rule of Nicholas II. Several events in the early years of the twentieth century caused Russia to move toward some form of representative government. One was the Russo-Japanese war, a military disaster for the tsar. Another was "Bloody Sunday," a violent clash between the authorities and labor-movement demonstrators.

As the government took steps to address citizen concerns, numerous political parties came into being. Some split into factions; some joined others in coalitions; others went out of existence. These parties represented a wide spectrum of political outlooks. Their often-similar names and nuanced political stances might seem bewildering at first. We will examine the roles of the major parties in creating the Duma, an elected bicameral legislature. However much this unprecedented step appeared to be a solution to the very real economic, social, and foreign-affairs problems facing Russia, two problems militated against the Duma's success: the conservative tendencies of Nicholas, and the lack of common ground and political experience among the newly emerged political parties. Against the backdrop of Russia's long history of autocratic rule (even older than the Romanov dynasty), so different from the experiences of contemporary Western European nations, this bold constitutional experiment had tenuous chances, at best, for success.

Outline

- I. Russia's Compromise Between Autocracy and Representative Government.
 - A. The "liberation movement" and pressure for political reform before 1905.
 - B. The impact of the Russo-Japanese War on domestic opinion.
 - C. The Petersburg labor movement; Father Gapon and "Bloody Sunday" (9 January 1905).
 - D. The Manifesto of 17 October 1905 promised the establishment of civil liberties, national elections, and a legislative assembly.
 - E. The "Fundamental Laws" of 1906 created a bicameral legislature but retained significant executive authority for the tsar. Max Weber described the post-1906 system as "pseudo-constitutional."
- II. Russian Political Parties.
 - A. Ultra-Nationalists.
 - 1. The Union of Russian People was founded in 1905 by Dr. Dubrovin. This group was promonarchist, anticonstitutionalist, anti-Semitic, and anticapitalist, and it was linked to pogroms in 1905. It was mostly an extraparlimentary party, although a few members served in the Duma.
 - 2. The Nationalist Party emerged as major force in the Third Duma (1907-1912). Its constituency was the Great Russian minority in Western peripheral provinces. It was a conservative monarchist party that defended the interests of Russian landowners and Orthodox clergy. Its membership overlapped somewhat with the Union of Russian People, although it was larger and generally less extreme politically. Neither ultranationalist group had any chance of appealing across ethnic divides.
 - B. Constitutionalist parties.
 - 1. The Union of 17 October (Octobrists) defended constitutional monarchy, private property, and a market economy. It was a minority party drawn from landed and merchant elites, but it thought of itself as Russia's future.
 - 2. The Constitutional Democrats (Kadets) was a hybrid group consisting of a less radical wing supporting British-style constitutional monarchy and a more radical wing supporting French-style republicanism and genuine representative democracy. This latter group defended egalitarian social reforms and allied at times with Russian socialist groups.
 - 3. Both the Octobrists and Kadets were political centralists. Despite their defense of civil liberties for non-Russian peoples, their view of the empire was decidedly Great Russian-centered. Kadet views on

private property and capitalism were inconsistent. Thus, neither Octobrists nor Kadets could effectively take advantage of antiempire and antimarket sentiments.

C. Agrarian revolutionaries.

1. The Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) were heirs of nineteenth-century "populists" and sought to build distinctively Russian socialism on the model of the peasant land commune. To do so, they called for elimination of the nobility, the St. Petersburg government, and market capitalism.
2. There were two SR factions. "Minimalists" favored socialization of land (involving the replacement of private with communal ownership) and gradual preparation for socialization of production (collective farming and sharing of production). "Maximalists" favored simultaneous socialization of land and production. Out of the "Maximalist" faction came many political terrorists, including the notorious SR Battle Organization.
3. The SRs appealed to the peasantry, mainly in central Russia. Their attractiveness outside central Russia was negligible. SRs considered themselves revolutionaries, but their anticapitalist stand makes it possible to call them reactionaries.

- D.** The Social Democrats were internationalist and anticapitalist. Their program was most likely to span ethnic divisions in the empire and exploit anticapitalist sentiment. However, they were hostile to the monarchy, and so could not collaborate with it. They also had contempt for the propertied elites—the nobility and merchants.

III. Conclusions.

- A.** Nicholas II's traditionalist approach to governing made him reluctant to share power with the elected Duma. The ideological extremism of Russia's political parties, their extreme heterogeneity, and their fractiousness prevented them from arriving at a *modus vivendi* with the crown. Thus, the constitutional experiment was politically unlikely to succeed.
- B.** In his book *Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu argued that a democratic regime probably cannot succeed in a large empire. The Russian liberal Chicherin argued in *On Representative Government* that the Russians were the least well prepared of all European peoples for constitutional government. Imperial Russia's failed constitutional experiment suggests that Montesquieu and Chicherin may have been right.

Essential Reading:

Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 121-194.

Recommended Reading:

Paul Miliukov, *Political Memoirs, 1905-1917*. [Useful, if sometimes dry, memoirs by a leading liberal who closely observed Duma politics.]

Geoffrey Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment*. [A shrewd account by a first-rate historian of Stolypin's attempt to collaborate with the Duma.]

Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, 2 vols. [A masterful narrative and analysis of the turmoil between 1904 and 1907 that led to the establishment of the "pseudo-constitutional system."]

Terence Emmons, *The Formation of Political Parties and the First National Election in Russia*. [A rich monograph focusing on constitutionalist parties and their electoral activity in 1906.]

Questions to Consider:

1. In what sense can the "Fundamental Laws" of 1906 be characterized as a "pseudo-constitution"? Is such a characterization accurate?
2. In what ways did Russia's constellation of political parties contribute to instability in the empire after the Revolution of 1905?

Lecture Three

Russia and the First World War

Scope: World War I was a military disaster for Russia, dramatically revealing the bankruptcy of the tsarist regime and the fledgling attempt at constitutional government. Like other European nations, Russia fell victim to a series of interlinking alliances that turned a seemingly small Balkan incident into "the Great War." Further entangling Russia was the issue of support for Slavic interests. Russia's military preparedness was low compared to other countries, especially Germany. By 1916, after a series of disastrous defeats, Russia was in retreat on the central front. The use of a "scorched earth" policy reminiscent of the Napoleonic invasion created further hardship and hard feelings toward the government. Despite some success on the southwestern front and a generally improving overall Allied position in early 1917, political infighting between the tsar and Duma intensified. We will explore why the two power centers could not cooperate effectively, and how this failure led to revolution.

Outline

- I. Russia's Way to War.
 - A. Russia's foreign policy generally opposed Austrian and German aims.
 1. In 1894, Russia under Alexander III concluded a secret military alliance with France.
 2. Russian and Austrian interests collided in the Balkan crises of 1908, 1912, and 1913.
 3. There was considerable internal debate in Russia over military expansion. The "peace party," led by Prime Minister Kokovtsov, opposed war in the foreseeable future. Hardliners such as War Minister Sukhomlinov and Kadet "patriots" thought war was inevitable.
 - B. The results of treaty alliances.
 1. The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo (28 June 1914) precipitated a flurry of diplomatic activity and military mobilization across Europe.
 2. Russia wavered between limited and general mobilization. A conference between General Yanushkevich and Foreign Minister Sazonov in July led to a request for full mobilization. In a fateful meeting, Sazonov received reluctant approval from Nicholas I for general mobilization.
 3. Germany and France followed suit, and efforts to effect a peaceful resolution ended as declarations of war brought allies on both sides into armed conflict.
- II. Initial Reactions to the War.
 - A. Popular sentiment was divided. People in large cities initially favored mobilization, but the countryside showed less enthusiasm.
 - B. Leading political parties, except the Bolsheviks, supported the war.
 - C. At first, intellectuals generally supported the war (e.g., the graphic art of Moor and Mayakovsky). However, Anna Akhmatova warned that the war would devastate Russia.
 - D. These favorable reactions were predicated on the mistaken assumption that the war would be short. The Russian-French war plan failed to secure a quick victory. By 1915, the Russian army had abandoned its forward line of fortresses and arsenals. It experienced acute shortages of ammunition and fell back toward Moscow.
- III. Political Impact of the War, 1915 to 1917.
 - A. Sagging fortunes on the battlefield led to a political crisis in 1915. The Duma demanded a "ministry of confidence" (a ministry enjoying the support of the Duma leadership), but the crown refused. Some ministers sided with the Duma, but Nicholas remained obstinate. He personally assumed the position of Commander in Chief of the armed forces.
 - B. The 1916 Brusilov offensive was the last gasp of the Russian army. Initially successful against the Austrian army, the collapse of the offensive was marked by another and more severe political crisis.

1. One important symptom was the desperation and anger of Petrograd workers in 1916.
 2. As the crisis wore on, opposition to the tsar's handling of events led to numerous public statements against him and Tsarina Alexandra. Miliukov's 1916 "Stupidity Or Treason?" speech to the Duma is an important example.
- C. The plot thickened as both sides maneuvered.
1. Palace conspiracies in late 1916 and early 1917 led to the murder of the monk Rasputin, who had nearly total control over Empress Alexandra (and by extension, Tsar Nicholas II).
 2. Nicholas prorogued the new session of the Duma.
 3. The March Revolution took place in Petrograd. The new premier, Prince Lvov, and Alexander Guchkov (head of the War Office) had Nicholas II and his family arrested.
- IV. By 1917 the tsar was politically and socially isolated. In March the Duma created a provisional government, wresting power from the last Romanov tsar. The situation was, however, far from stable; revolution was imminent.

Essential Reading:

Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 195-271.

Recommended Reading:

Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front, 1914-1917*. [A political and military history of the Russian war effort, which is very good on the Russian general staff.]

Alan Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 2 vols. [The best social history of the imperial army before and during the war. An excellent supplement to Stone.]

Michael Cherniavsky, ed. *Prologue to Revolution: Notes of A. N. Iakhontov on the Secret Meetings of the Council of Ministers*. [A stunning document, revealing the brutal, almost hysterical, atmosphere inside the tsar's cabinet during the political-military crisis of 1915.]

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did Russia fight against Austria and Germany in 1914?
2. How did the war deepen Russia's political instability in Russia from early 1915 to late 1916?

Lecture Four

Lenin and the Origins of Bolshevism

Scope: To understand why the Russian Revolution became a Communist Revolution, we must explore nineteenth-century Russian intellectual and political thought. From the 1840s on, "Westernizers" and "Slavophiles" competed to define the best way to form Russian society, which was still essentially feudal and lagged far behind the West in industrialization and cultural achievement. The writings of the German idealists and others, including Karl Marx, interested the Russian intelligentsia, although many Russian thinkers remained skeptical. We will trace the parallel developments of liberal versus revolutionary movements in nineteenth-century Russia and place V.I. Lenin into this context. The lecture will discuss various themes that eventually became associated with Marxism-Leninism. By exploring the intellectual underpinnings of Leninism, we will better understand why the "great proletarian revolution" occurred not in an industrialized Western country but in agrarian and absolutist Russia.

Outline

- I. The Initial Russian Reception of Marxism.
 - A. The Russia intelligentsia was fascinated by Marx in the late 1860s. The anarchist Bakunin and the populists Lopatin and Natanson translated *Das Kapital*.
 - B. Russian populists considered Marx a critic of Western European capitalism who identified the "crippling" effects of the division of labor on industrial workers.
 - C. Marx reciprocated the interest of Russian populists in his theories. He speculated about the possibility of a "separate road" of development for Russia, as seen in his 1881 draft letters to Zasulich.
 - D. Marx had many Russian critics. Chicherin attacked *Das Kapital* in his work, *Property and State*.
- II. "Classical" Marxism in Russia.
 - A. Georgii Plekhanov became interested in Marx in the late 1870s. By 1883, he accepted Marxism as the "science of society."
 1. Plekhanov believed that Marx had successfully identified the "laws" of historical development. Class antagonism propels history through successive stages (slaveownership, feudalism, capitalism, socialism), each "transition" marked by revolution.
 2. Hence Russia would have to experience capitalism. Only at the end of the capitalist stage would successful socialist revolution become possible. Premature revolution would be disastrous.
 - B. Plekhanov distinguished between freedom and necessity in a revolutionary movement.
 1. A tradeoff exists between scientific confidence in the victory of the proletariat and the quietist implications of determinism.
 2. Determinist Marxism virtually denied the role of autonomous will as an agency of change and subtly diminished the significance of intellectuals.
 - C. Plekhanov's attitude toward art was unimaginative, hyperrealistic, and representational.
 - D. Plekhanov, like Marx himself, was hostile to religion, which he thought would be replaced by science and theater.
 - E. Much of Plekhanov's Marxism was preserved in the so-called Menshevik faction after 1903. The subsequent Communist regime adopted many of its notions.
- III. Lenin's Contribution to Russian Marxism.
 - A. Lenin's road to Marxism was shaped by family tragedy: the arrest and hanging of his brother in 1887. Lenin viscerally hated liberalism.
 - B. Lenin was an elitist who believed in the power of intellectuals to lead the masses and of a hardened professional revolutionary vanguard to point the way to socialism. He was influenced by Chernyshevsky's *What Is To Be Done?* and also by Tkachev and the People's Will.

- C. Lenin's early Marxism followed the ideas of Plekhanov in most respects.
 - 1. Lenin was a materialist; he was hostile to religion; and he had crudely reductionist ideas about art.
 - 2. He viewed Marxism as scientific guide to the future.
 - 3. However, he combined these notions with a robust theory of revolutionary will. Ultimately, his voluntarism moved him away from Plekhanov.
- D. Lenin's central idea was the role of a proletarian vanguard in guiding the revolution.
 - 1. Left to their own devices, workers are capable only of "trade-union consciousness."
 - 2. Revolutionary consciousness comes from outside, from the vanguard. This idea contained the germ of future party dictatorship.
- E. Lenin saw the revolution as an international phenomenon.
 - 1. Within Russia it would unite heretofore divided ethnic groups by uniting proletarians in a common endeavor.
 - 2. It would also be a world phenomenon. Lenin considered Russia a capitalist country, due to antagonisms between proletariat and bourgeoisie. He knew Russia was not as advanced economically as England or Germany, but he thought the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism would occur first in Russia.
- F. Lenin thought it was possible to transform a revolution against the tsarist government into a proletarian revolution. He demanded an immediate transition to socialism, to be accompanied by the destruction of the ruling elites, the imposition of proletarian dictatorship, bank seizures, nationalization of property, the destruction of markets and the money economy, and the introduction of a planned economy.
- G. Lenin's program meant civil war between proletariat and hostile social classes, a phenomenon he foresaw but whose bloodiness he underestimated.
 - 1. He did not foresee difficulties in destroying the market.
 - 2. He did not desire any division of powers in proletarian government; he saw undivided government as the essence of proletarian dictatorship.
 - 3. He expected socialism to spread rapidly to the more advanced Western Europe countries.

IV. "God-Builder" Marxists.

- A. A group of Marxists emerged in 1907 who regarded the religious impulse as inherent to human beings and who hoped to turn that impulse to the service of socialism. This group, which included such thinkers as Lunacharsky, Gorky, and Bogdanov, was sometimes labeled "God-builders."
- B. Lunacharsky saw Marxism as a "human religion."
 - 1. Marxism was a way for individual proletarians to experience the ecstasy of communion with the collective.
 - 2. The individual's contribution to socialism lives on in the collective, leading to a kind of collective immortality.
 - 3. Gorky thought that the collective will could "work miracles" and even "banish fear of death."
 - 4. Bogdanov predicted that socialist medicine might one day conquer death.
- C. Bogdanov's *Red Star* was an imaginary template of future socialist society.
 - 1. It depicted the planet Mars as a marketless society with remarkable productivity and a well-functioning planned economy.
 - 2. Bogdanov feared that socialism might fail to conquer nature; it might not banish egoism and sexual longing.
- D. Lenin criticized the "God-builders." Their "fit" in the Communist movement was uncomfortable, and their place within Bolshevism was especially uneasy.

V. Conclusions.

- A. Marxism on the eve of revolution in Russia was not a simple phenomenon. It contained several currents in mutual tension. Sometimes Russian Marxism is described as an intellectual-led mass movement, as totalitarian, or as a secular religion. Such labels might apply to particular currents or individuals, but they do not comport with the movement's complexity.
- B. The impending collapse of imperial government gave Russian Marxists a chance to persuade workers of their "wisdom," but the Mensheviks' wisdom clashed with that of the Bolsheviks, planting the seeds for future trouble.

Essential Reading:

Bogdanov, *Red Star*. [See above, IV.C.]

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* [A founding document of Russian Social Democracy, six parts tedium to one part intellectual power, but worth reading for its historical significance.]

idem., *State and Revolution*. [Written by Lenin on the eve of the October Revolution, this document was meant as a kind of guide to the destruction of the "bourgeois" state and the building of the new Communist order.]

Recommended Reading:

Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*. [A brilliant, very critical analysis of the Marxian, Engelsian, and Leninist views of freedom by the leading historian of Russian social thought.]

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the main assumptions of Russia's "classical" Marxists?
2. What were the major assumptions of Lenin and his followers?

Lecture Five

Lenin Comes to Power

Scope: This lecture will examine how a discredited, exiled social theorist was able to lead a revolutionary movement that terminated the Romanov dynasty's 300-year-long absolutist rule and established a Communist regime. We will review the sequence of events in Russia during 1917 within the context of World War I, the preceding decade of tentative progress toward representative government, and competing currents of Marxist thought regarding state transformation. We will particularly examine the Bolshevik party's role as the vanguard of the proletariat revolution.

Note: In our discussion of specific dates, you will notice that two dates often appear together, e.g., "23February/8March." The difference of dates in this and other lectures has to do with the Old Style Calendar versus the New Style. If you see only one date, it refers to the New Style Calendar.

Outline

- I. Two Political Revolutions During 1917.
 - A. The first uprising ended the autocracy, and the second brought Lenin and the Bolsheviks to power.
 - B. Both of these revolutions responded to the war, to rising social tensions, and to the disintegration of old political arrangements.
- II. The February/March Revolution and the Overthrow of the Autocracy.
 - A. The Revolution began on 23 February/8 March, when women from textile factories in the Vyborg district of Petrograd (the wartime name of St. Petersburg) staged a strike over the absence of bread.
 1. Within hours the strike spread to metallurgy factories in the same region. By the next morning, 75,000 workers were on strike.
 2. By the morning of 25 February/10 March, roughly 200,000 workers engaged in a general strike. The following day, army units that had been called in to help suppress strikers and restore order began to waver.
 3. On 27 February/12 March, the government lost control of Petrograd.
 - B. The rapid collapse of imperial control over the capital brought the cabinet's resignation, demands for genuine constitutional order and the abdication of Nicholas II.
 1. The Army High Command played a crucial role in this very murky and fluid situation.
 2. Tsar Nicholas II announced his abdication on 2/15 March, ending the Romanov dynasty's 300-year rule. Five days later, Nicholas and his family were arrested.
 - C. No political party directed the February/March revolution, although various factions jockeyed for influence. This event illustrates the difference between a "conscious" and "spontaneous" revolution.
 - D. The end of the Romanov dynasty led to a power vacuum. In Petrograd, the vacuum was filled by two competing agencies: a Provisional Government formed by the Duma, and the Petrograd Soviet.
 1. Outside the capital, the existing government apparatus and officials tried to function as a competing "parallel" or "shadow administration" took shape.
 2. Within the army and navy, the control and authority of officers associated with the imperial regime came under challenge.
- III. Ascendancy of the Provisional Government.
 - A. The new Provisional Government was dominated at first by liberals from the Octobrists and the less radical wing of Kadets. The Socialists had only a marginal presence. By late October/early November, however, Socialists and radical Kadets dominated the Provisional Government, foreshadowing the likelihood of an all-socialist government.
 - B. The Provisional Government adopted sweeping reforms, including the following:

1. Legal reforms of March/April.
 2. Laws against discrimination on ethnic/national and religious grounds.
 3. Universal suffrage for all adults, including women.
 4. Social legislation (adopted but not fully implemented).
 5. Initiation of debate over a constitutional convention.
- C. Shortcomings of the Provisional Government.
1. It failed to remove Russia from World War I.
 2. It decided not to implement social legislation.
 3. It delayed calling the constitutional convention.
- IV. The Petrograd Soviet
- A. The Petrograd Soviet was dominated at first by moderate socialists, SRs, and Mensheviks. By October, radical socialists dominated the leadership of the Petrograd Soviet. Bolsheviks and SR Maximalists (Left SRs) were in charge.
- B. The initial policy of the Petrograd Soviet.
1. The Petrograd Soviet gave limited support to the Provisional Government.
 2. SR minimalists and Mensheviks did not wish to seize power.
- C. The Soviet tried to control administration outside Petrograd.
1. The Petrograd Soviet demanded joint control over the army.
 2. Coordination of soviets outside Petrograd was undertaken by the All-Russia Congress of Soviets.
- D. Shortcomings of the Petrograd Soviet.
1. Representation within it was informal.
 2. Control was surrendered to self-appointed radicals from the various socialist parties.
- V. Lenin's Contribution to Revolution.
- A. The Bolsheviks at first played along with the Provisional Government, accepting a "dual power" arrangement. In April, Lenin pressed the party to oppose the Provisional Government and to transform "bourgeois revolution" into "proletarian revolution."
- B. Lenin consistently advocated withdrawal from the war, calling for "peace without annexations or tribute."
- C. Driven underground between July and September 1917, the Bolsheviks flirted with insurrection.
- D. The Bolsheviks planned for armed insurrection in October. Debate occurred within the party over the "legal" road to power versus seizure of power. Ultimately, Lenin's strategy of seizing power triumphed.
- E. Stages of insurrection
1. Initial Bolshevik success in the "Red triangle" (Latvia, Kronstadt, Petrograd).
 2. Creation of the Military Revolutionary Committee and the seizure of arsenals.
 3. The crucial events of 25 October/7 November led to seizure of power by Lenin's Bolshevik faction. (The Communists always referred to the Bolshevik Revolution as the "Great October Revolution," although, according to the New Style calendar, it occurred in November.)
- VI. Conclusion.
- A. 1917 witnessed two revolutions which, together, brought the disintegration of the old order and the gradual appearance of a new socialist order.
- B. Lenin made a decisive contribution to the eventual form and success of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The October Revolution*, pp. 35-56.

Pipes, pp. 195-271.

Recommended Reading:

Tsutosi Hasegawa, *The February Revolution: Petrograd 1917*. [The best book in any language on the overthrow of the imperial government.]

Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*. [A lively book that mixes good social history of the Petrograd working class with careful political analysis.]

John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World*. [An eyewitness account of the October Revolution written by the American romantic leftist/journalist; high on drama and closely observed street scenes but rather superficial otherwise.]

Nikolai Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution, 1917: A Personal Record*. [Actually much better than John Reed on every score: very penetrating on the behavior of the Petrograd Soviet and surprisingly good on the Bolsheviks.]

Questions to Consider:

1. What was "dual power," and how did it come into existence?
2. Why did the Provisional Government survive for such a short period?

Lecture Six

Lenin and the Making of a Bolshevik State

Scope: This lecture examines the aftermath of the October Revolution, in which the Bolsheviks seized power from the other parties in the Provisional Government. As the Bolsheviks attempted to consolidate their power and launch a Socialist-Communist state, they faced intense military opposition from opponents within Russia, strong centrifugal nationalistic forces in non-Russian parts of the Russian empire, and foreign intervention. Despite overwhelming odds, Lenin and the Bolsheviks prevailed thanks to ruthless party discipline, a fatal lack of coordination on the part of their opponents, and considerable good luck. We will study the main events of the Russian Civil War and the reasons for the Bolsheviks' success, as well as the impact of this struggle on the future course of the new Soviet Union.

Outline

I. Civil War.

- A. The strong risk of civil war was implicit in Bolshevik policy.
- B. The Bolsheviks faced numerous opponents within the Russian empire.
 - 1. In southern Russia, anti-Bolshevik forces crystallized in December 1917 around army generals Kornilov, Alexeev, and Denikin.
 - 2. In the Siberian region, anti-Bolsheviks crystallized around the Czech legions, the SRs, and Admiral Kolchak.
 - 3. In the White Sea region, anti-Bolsheviks followed General Miller, and in the Baltic region they followed General Yudenich and emerging national leaders.
 - 4. Despite their large numbers, these anti-Bolshevik factions never fully united or coordinated their efforts.
- C. The anti-Bolshevik forces were compromised by foreign intervention.
 - 1. The British, French, Germans, Japanese, and Americans all became involved in anti-Bolshevik activity.
 - 2. This foreign assistance enabled the Bolsheviks to portray themselves as socialist patriots. They used propaganda effectively (e.g., they issued posters depicted "fortress Russia as besieged socialist motherland").
- D. Non-Russian nationalism was a major factor in the Russian Civil War.
 - 1. The desire for territorial independence was manifest throughout the imperial "periphery," sometimes benefiting the anti-Bolshevik forces and sometimes not.
 - 2. Integral nationalism was often undercut by class struggle and Bolshevik "internationalism."
- E. The Bolsheviks' eventual victory resulted from various factors: unified territory, ideological cohesion, and the use of terror.
- F. The Russian Civil War exacted a very high price, especially in view of the significant losses suffered by Russia in World War I.
 - 1. Several million Russians died.
 - 2. Physical devastation was widespread, and agricultural production fell sharply.

II. Bolshevik Policies, 1917-1921.

- A. The gradual imposition of "partocracy."
 - 1. The Bolshevik *fait accompli* was presented to the Second Congress of Soviets.
 - 2. Party leaders were appointed to executive posts with retroactive Soviet approval.
 - 3. The Soviet established the Council of People's Commissars, under formal control of Central Executive Committee of the Soviet. Both bodies were dominated by the Bolsheviks and Left SRs.

4. Real power was vested in the Bolshevik party Central Committee, not in the supposedly representative Soviet or the government as such.
 5. Lenin was the chair of the Council of People's Commissars, but his stature derived from his authority in his party's Central Committee.
- B.** The next step was the suppression of "bourgeois democracy."
1. Mensheviks and SRs opposed Bolshevik policies and control and walked out of the Soviet, prompting the Bolsheviks to forge a temporary alliance with Left SRs.
 2. The Bolsheviks shut down the "bourgeois" press and arrested the Kadet leadership.
 3. One month after the October Revolution, Lenin created a secret political police force—the Extraordinary Commission for the Suppression of Counterrevolution or "Cheka"—to conduct a terror campaign against political enemies of the party.
 4. A vigorous debate ensued over elections to the forthcoming constitutional convention.
 5. Following their defeat in balloting for the constitutional convention, the Bolsheviks dismissed the convention in January 1918. Lenin redefined "democracy" as it applied to Russia.
 6. Repression continued with the establishment of an embryonic system of concentration camps. The "Red Terror" reached its height in the fall of 1918.
- C.** The Bolsheviks moved rapidly to abolish the market and launch the first "state capitalist" phase of economic transformation to socialism.
1. The steps included an immediate seizure of the banks and gradual establishment of control over money, followed by formal nationalization of the banking system in December 1917.
 2. Some crucial industries were nationalized at once, but most remained in private control until June 1918. Since private industry depended on banks, the state (or rather the Bolsheviks) had effective control over the market system.
 3. The government permitted trade unions and elected factory committees to exist until June 1918, partly because Bolsheviks controlled most union boards. Even in the revolution's earliest days, the Bolsheviks opposed trade unionism not subject to party control.
 4. The Bolsheviks encouraged peasant land seizures as a necessary part of class warfare against the landed nobility and merchant elites. Finally, private ownership of land was abolished in February 1918.
- D.** The abolition of the market continued under the second "war Communist" phase.
1. On 28 June, 1918, the government decreed the nationalization of industry and several other measures constituting "war communism."
 2. "War communism" involved the formal end of independent trade unions, forcible grain requisitioning, seizure of private housing by public institutions, the establishment of local collectives, dispossession of family properties, redistribution of housing space, and destruction of the old monetary system.
 3. War communism persisted from June 1918 until March 1921. It was viewed as a stage in the transition to socialism.
- E.** The nationality problem re-defined.
1. Initially, Lenin supported the principle of unconditional national self-determination. Any nation might freely choose to secede from the Russian empire. Poland, Finland and Ukraine all seceded in 1917.
 2. Rapid disintegration of the old imperial fabric brought a reexamination of self-determination. Lenin now defined self-determination according to the will of organized workers in a particular ethnic group. A decision by the organized workers to affiliate with Bolshevism was interpreted as a call by the nation for inclusion in a socialist state.
 3. During the Russian Civil War, vast regions were reincorporated into the new regime. Much of the old Russian empire was reconfigured as a new Soviet empire.
 4. As with the pre-Revolutionary empire, the Soviet empire grew from the core outward, starting with the consolidation of Bolshevik power within the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] itself. In legal terms, the Russian Federation acquired international status by negotiating, signing, and ratifying the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 (which ended the war with Germany and the Central

Powers) and by promulgating its own constitution in July 1918. *De facto* the RSFSR was not secure until the end of the civil war.

- a. During the civil war, a series of bilateral treaties bound the RSFSR with other soviet republics: first, the Ukraine and Belorussia, then Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.
- b. In December 1922, these republics were affiliated under the terms of the so-called Union Treaty. The Union constitution was ratified in January 1924. Superficially, the Soviet Union resembled a federation in which the constituent republics held substantial authority. The legal terms of the Union Treaty and constitution were less important than the fact of party control exercised from Moscow.

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 57-120.

Recommended Reading:

Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime*. [A very controversial book, sharply criticized by some historians for its polemic against the Bolsheviks, but a book that is also brilliant and indispensable. Read especially pp. 3-165 on the civil war; and pp. 337-368 on the assault against religion.]

W. Bruce Lincoln, *Red Victory*. [A perceptive, morally-sensitive, well-researched narrative of the civil war; sometimes difficult to follow because the events themselves are so complex.]

Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921*. [An intellectually engaged, sympathetic portrait of the Kronstadt rebels by a leading historian of anarchism and socialism.]

Evgenii Zamiatin, *We*. [A famous anti-utopian novel. Zamiatin's "United State" eerily resembles the socialist paradise about which some Bolsheviks dreamt.]

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the Bolsheviks win the civil war?
2. After seizing power, did the Bolsheviks immediately attempt to institute socialism in Russia?

Lecture Seven

The Twenties

Scope: The 1920s were crucial years for the young Soviet Union. The civil war and famine wreaked much bloodshed and devastation, and the new regime attempted to remake Russian society along Marxist-Leninist lines. This lecture will review and place in context the key developments of the 1920s. These include counter-revolutionary rebellions against Soviet rule, the Volga famine of 1920-1921, the New Economic Policy (NEP), confrontation with the Russian Orthodox Church and religion in general, and the succession crisis brought on by Lenin's stroke and ensuing death in 1924.

Outline

- I. An Overview of the 1920s.**
 - A.** The 1920s are sometimes portrayed as the "golden age" of Soviet communism, characterized by cultural vitality, utopian dreams, relative peace, and "market socialism."
 - B.** The Twenties are also portrayed as an alternative model or face of communism. This interpretation rests on a peculiar reading of the New Economic Policy and the intentions of the Communist leadership.
- II. The Crisis of 1921-1922.**
 - A.** The Kronstadt sailors' rebellion of winter 1920-1921.
 - 1. Sailors in the Red Navy garrison at Kronstadt rose against Bolshevik policies, asserting that socialism should respect the popular will as expressed in local soviets and that all socialist parties should be allowed to participate in Soviet elections.
 - 2. The Kronstadt rebellion was rapidly crushed in March 1921.
 - 3. This uprising frightened Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders, leading them to impose even more repressive measures to stamp out opposition to the party.
 - B.** Peasant rebellions.
 - 1. Numerous peasant protests broke out late in the civil war and immediately afterward, directed against food requisitioning and the presence of Soviet institutions in the countryside. The largest was the Tambov peasant rebellion (Antonov uprising) of 1920-1921.
 - 2. At the height of these uprisings, roughly forty thousand peasants fought against Soviet authorities. This was classic guerrilla warfare, which the regular army could not suppress. The government resorted to hostage-taking and even threatened the use of poison gas. The uprisings were not suppressed until June 1921, and Antonov was killed in 1922.
 - C.** The Volga famine of 1921-1922 has not been well understood. The historian Richard Pipes has called it "the greatest human disaster in European history until then, other than those caused by war, since the Black Death."
- III. The Government's Response.**
 - A.** The New Economic Policy (NEP) was promulgated in March 1921.
 - 1. This policy was intended to provide temporary "breathing space" for the Bolsheviks.
 - 2. Its goal was the elimination of food requisitioning and the anti-market campaign of "war communism," and the encouragement of grain production by (re)creation of a limited market economy.
 - 3. Nonetheless, the state retained control of the "commanding heights" in economic policy and planning.
 - 4. The NEP allowed limited private economic activity in cities and in the service sector.
 - 5. Until 1928, the NEP achieved its main objectives, but at the cost of a painful ideological retreat in economic policy.
 - B.** The NEP was accompanied by the tightening of other ideological controls.
 - 1. A prime example is the "anti-factionalism" rule, which forbade intraparty debate once the "party line" was determined. This rule was intended to prohibit opposition within the Communist Party.

2. Confrontation with the Orthodox Church. By 1922, relations between the Bolsheviks and the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Tikhon, resembled a "cold war." The government used the famine as a pretext for all-out war against the Church, which it excoriated for not handing over consecrated vessels to the government for famine relief. Patriarch Tikhon was placed under house arrest, and numerous bishops and priests were arrested and even executed. The government broke popular resistance to its antireligious policy.
 3. This attack on the Church's hierarchy was accompanied by other antireligious initiatives: ridicule of religious beliefs and the closure, confiscation, or destruction of church buildings (e.g., the infamous dynamiting of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in 1931).
 4. In addition to attacks on the predominant (formerly state) religion, the Communists also attacked Jewish religious practices. In 1922, many synagogues were closed or confiscated for government use, and Torah scrolls were forcibly removed from their sacred repositories. The previous government ban on the use of the Hebrew language was rigorously enforced.
- C. Despite ideological control within the party and the assault on religion, there was limited freedom in literature and the arts (e.g., Pilnyak's short stories, Mayakovsky's *Bedbug*, etc.).

IV. Succession Crisis.

- A. The first stage of this crisis corresponded to Lenin's gradual incapacitation between May 1922 and January 1924..
1. Lenin suffered a stroke in May 1922. He seemed to recover but then suffered a second and more serious stroke in December 1922, followed by another in March 1923 that left him unable to speak.
 2. Written after the second stroke, Lenin's "Testament" contained assessments of leading Bolsheviks and criticisms of government and party bureaucracy and backwardness. Lenin suggested in this document that Stalin should be removed as party secretary.
 3. Lenin died in January 1924 and was immediately apotheosized.
- B. Intraparty maneuvering for power between January 1924 and December 1928 marked the second stage of the crisis.
1. Lenin's lingering illness and then death created a power vacuum. Trotsky was the only other leader with stature to rival Lenin's, creating animosity with potential rivals. A complex series of political maneuvers followed. Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Bukharin failed to share power or agree on a single successor to Lenin as *primus inter pares*.
 2. Josef Stalin emerged as Lenin's successor. He had been a professional revolutionary since 1898, and his association with Lenin and the Bolsheviks dated from at least 1905. He was characterized as rude, crude, and ruthless (cf. Tucker's psychological interpretation of Stalin).
 3. Stalin was close to Lenin in his understanding of NEP, proletarian dictatorship, "democratic centralism," and revolutionary maximalism.
 4. The "triumvirate" of Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev eliminated Trotsky's influence (and later Trotsky himself). Stalin then eliminated his two associates and gained full control of the party, which he held for the next thirty years.

V. Conclusion.

We can view the 1920s as a "breathing space" and as a "turning point where history failed to turn." This decade witnessed the survival of the fledgling Communist movement from the struggles of the Russian civil war, famines, peasant uprisings, foreign intervention, and economic chaos, as well as attendant social dislocations. Lenin's death, which occurred just as new Communist policies were being implemented, precipitated a power struggle that ended with the emergence of Josef Stalin as party chief. The late 1920s marks the start of the Stalin era of Russian history.

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 119-150.

Volkogonov, *Stalin. Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 3-158.

Recommended Reading:

Boris Bazhanov, *Avec Staline dans le Kremlin*. [This little book by Stalin's former personal secretary speaks volumes about the personality of the future Soviet leader; it is one of the first exposés of Stalin.]

Stephen Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*. [A very fine biography of Stalin's rival, Nikolai Bukharin, and an implicit indictment of the "cold-war" school of historians whose descriptions of the Bolsheviks as monolithic and dictatorial Cohen finds wrong-headed.]

Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*. [A clever, not always persuasive description of Lenin's efforts to save the Bolshevik party and Soviet government from bureaucratism, antidemocratic tendencies and Stalin.]

Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*. [A wonderful, surprising book on the posthumous cult of Lenin. Not to be missed.]

Questions to Consider:

1. Can the early 1920s rightly be characterized as the "golden age" of Soviet communism? If so, why? Also, provide a countervailing view, with support for your answer.
2. What was the significance of the prolonged succession crisis that ensued following Lenin's illness in May 1922?

Lecture Eight

Stalin and the "Second October Revolution"

Scope: This lecture examines the transformation of the Soviet economy under Stalin's Five-Year Plan, promulgated in 1927. The effectiveness of Soviet central planning was undermined by Russia's economic woes and the NEP, which clashed with tightly controlled state planning. We will trace how Stalin's Five-Year Plan became a fixture of Soviet rule after 1928, and we will study in particular the effect of forcible nationalization of production and distribution on various sectors of Russian society, especially the rural sector.

Outline

- I. The First Five-Year Plan in Industry.
 - A. Rudiments of state planning had existed earlier (e.g., GosPlan). In 1927-1928, the party and government prepared economic "targets" for the following five years.
 1. This decision presaged the termination of the NEP.
 2. Stalin played a central role in revising the targets upward.
 - B. The first Five-Year Plan was put into effect in October 1928 following the Fifteenth Party Congress.
 1. It included global targets (e.g., industrial output would rise by 250 percent) and more specific enterprise targets (e.g., pig iron production would be tripled and electrical power generation quadrupled).
 2. Meeting such targets required the rapid construction of large new factories, power-generating plants, railroads, canals, and other industrial and civil engineering infrastructure projects.
 3. Stalin himself discussed the philosophy of the Five-Year Plan at the Sixteenth Party Congress (1930).
 - C. The government assigned nearly half of its budget to sixty gargantuan projects.
 1. Some of these projects (e.g., the Dnepr dam, the Turk-Siberian railroad, and the Magnitogorsk factory city) succeeded.
 2. Others were disasters (e.g., the White Sea canal), involving forced labor and large-scale waste.
 - D. Belief, *Realpolitik*, and coercion combined in a strange, potent mixture.
 1. Rapid development was expected to produce unprecedented happiness.
 2. Stalin argued that the USSR must do in ten years what it took a century to accomplish elsewhere in terms of industrialization and modernization.
 3. To not support (or even appear not to support) this Five-Year Plan effort was to invite disaster. The government began criminal trials aimed at "wreckers" (e.g., the Industrial Party trial of 1930 and the Menshevik trial of 1931). Their crimes were portrayed as tantamount to antirevolutionary treason, and many of the accused were convicted and executed.
 - E. The significance of the first Five-Year Plan.
 1. It "set in stone" the principle of long-term, central government control of economic planning in all sectors.
 2. It engendered chaos in certain sectors.
 3. It invited the falsification of output, with the result that statistical reports were not reliable or even plausible. These reports were nevertheless published as evidence of the achievement or exceeding of (unrealistic) goals.
 4. In economic terms, the Five-Year Plan involved a trade-off between consumption and capital investment. This dichotomy plagued the Soviet economy until the end of Soviet rule sixty years later.

II. The Collectivization of Agriculture.

- A. Another Stalinist goal was the creation of enormous rural collectives (*kolkhozi*) wherein labor would be assigned according to rational socialist planning, and farming would be mechanized to put agriculture on a more productive footing.
- B. This goal entailed transfer of draft animals and tools from private to collective ownership.
- C. This move incurred intense opposition. Collectivization required the use of force and the liquidation of the *kulaki* (rich peasants) as a class.
 - 1. This notion was drawn from Lenin's theory of village social stratification.
 - 2. Lenin's theory underestimated the egalitarianism of Russian communes and misunderstood the demographic patterns of village life.
 - 3. The antikulak campaign enabled the party to strike at other enemies: priests and rabbis, remnants of the former nobility, White Guard veterans, peasants with relatives abroad, Esperantists, and any real or presumed opponents of the party.
- D. Agricultural uniformity was imposed. Collectivization across the USSR entailed imposition of collective farming on nations in which communal cooperation or agriculture itself were alien.
 - 1. In the Ukraine, communal tenure was less developed and individual household farming more common than in Russia proper.
 - 2. In Kazakhstan, settled agriculture was still relatively uncommon.
 - 3. From the party's perspective, collectivization could be used as a screen for eliminating national particularism within the USSR.
- E. In practice, the collectivization campaign required:
 - 1. Identification of kulaks at village level and their forcible removal.
 - 2. Formal village assent to collectivization.
 - 3. Because both these steps met with substantial resistance, the party had to use large-scale coercion, including the use of Red Army units, security police, and workers' detachments.
 - 4. The security organs employed units of varying nationality to impose collectivization or "dekulakification." The party used a strategy of ethnic division and conquest. The Passport Law of 1932 resulted in fixing peasants in their villages.
- F. The greatest test of collectivization policy was in the Ukraine. In 1932-1933 Stalin sealed Ukrainian borders and confiscated grain. The result was "terror famine," which subjected Ukrainians to malnutrition, starvation, and even reported cannibalism. The "terror famine" killed perhaps five million (according to Robert Conquest).

III. Conclusion.

- A. Collectivization ensured Soviet control of the countryside for the foreseeable future. It created, in effect, a "second serfdom" for the peasantry at tremendous cost in lives and agricultural production.
- B. Collectivization and concurrent rapid industrialization ended the "breathing space" of the NEP and marked a return to the rigorous anti-market strategies of war communism. It ended the earlier flirtation with capitalism and free (or at least freer) market economies.
- C. Collectivization and state-coordinated industrialization virtually demolished national economic particularism in the USSR.
- D. Although the enforced "successes" of these policies appeared to be a personal triumph for Stalin, dangers were inherent in the massive social dislocations engendered by the ruthless implementation of unpopular measures.

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 149-182.

Recommended Reading:

Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*. [A devastating analysis of agricultural collectivization, dekulakification, and the 1932-1933 Ukrainian "terror famine." The perspective is unrelentingly hostile to Stalin and the entire Soviet leadership, the tone is sometimes shrill, and the death figures may or may not be accurate; nevertheless, the book is well-done and generally persuasive on one of the great tragedies in human history.]

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants. Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization*. [A splendid social history, based on vast reading in printed and archival sources, by the *doyenne* of social historians of the USSR].

Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization*. [A detailed, archivally rich social history of the city Magnitogorsk during the thirties.]

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago Two*. pp. 80-120. [A short history of the Baltic-White Sea Canal project, unsparingly and harrowingly detailed.]

Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933. Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, 3 vols. (Testimony of eyewitnesses to the famine. Summaries of each interview in English; original languages include English, Russian, Ukrainian. For those who want a sense of a horrific event, a "must read.")

Questions to Consider:

1. Analyze the impact of the First Five-Year Plan on Soviet industry.
2. Analyze the impact of collectivization on the Soviet peasantry.

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Essential

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Additional readings are suggested in the notes for each chapter. Suggestions for additional readings can be found in the bibliographies of the books listed here. Be certain to check publication dates. In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, a wealth of new material has been made available to researchers, resulting in new understanding of the Soviet period. Thus, while books published in the West during Communist rule in Russia may be reliable, some contain outdated or even erroneous information and assessments.

Timeline

This timeline contains the dates of key events relating to the history of twentieth century Russia. Obviously, given the number and complexity of events that occurred, especially during the 1917 Revolution and its aftermath, this timeline does not contain every event, even though some could be considered important.

To provide context and continuity, the timeline begins in the nineteenth century and concludes with the early 1930s. In Part II, the timeline will continue from the early 1930s to the fall of the Communist regime and beyond to 1996, when these lectures were taped.

Many history books use two dates for events in Russian history. Dates prior to 14 February 1918 are in Old Style (shown as O.S. in history books), or Julian calendar dates. Russia adopted the Julian calendar in 1699, whereas other European countries followed the New Style (N.S. or Gregorian) calendar from 1582 forward. There was an initial ten-day difference between the two calendars (Julian date lagging the Gregorian date) in the seventeenth century, with an additional one-day lag in each succeeding century. Thus, by the twentieth century, there was a thirteen-day difference. This can sometimes cause confusion. For example, many Western historians date the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917, whereas it is commonly called the "Great October Revolution" by Communist historians. This timeline uses months and dates based on the Julian calendar until the switchover to the Gregorian on 14 February 1918.

1825	.....	Decembrist movement suppressed.
1873-1874	.....	"To the people" (<i>narodniki</i>) movement
1878-1879	.....	"Land and Freedom" and "Peoples' Will" movements founded.
1 March 1881	.....	Tsar Alexander II assassinated.
1881-1894	.....	Reign of Tsar Alexander III.
1883	.....	"Liberation of Labor" (the first Russian Marxist organization) is founded in Geneva.
1893/1894	.....	Secret Franco-Russian military alliance.
1894-1917	.....	Reign of Tsar Nicholas II.
1898	.....	Russian Social Democratic Labor Party founded.
1903	.....	Social Democrats split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.
1904-1905	.....	Russo-Japanese War.
Oct. 1905	.....	General strike in Russia.
Oct./Dec. 1905	.....	Soviet of Workers' Deputies created in St. Petersburg.
Oct. 1905	.....	Manifesto of October 17; Russia becomes a constitutional monarchy.
April 1906	.....	First Duma convened.
June 1914	.....	Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria assassinated in Sarajevo.
July 1914	.....	Russia begins military mobilization.
Aug. 1914	.....	World War I begins.
Aug. 1915	.....	Emperor Nicholas assumes command of armed forces.
Feb. 1917	.....	Rioting begins in Petrograd.
27 Feb. 1917	.....	Duma prorogued by Emperor; Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies formed.
2 March 1917	.....	Nicholas II abdicates.
2 March 1917	.....	Provisional Government formed.
May-June 1917	.....	First All-Russian Congresses of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

3-4 July 1917	.....	Unsuccessful Bolshevik uprising in Petrograd; Lenin leaves Russia for Finland; Bolshevik leaders arrested.
July/Aug. 1917	.....	Second Provisional Government formed.
25 Oct. 1917	.....	Kerensky (head of third coalition government) leaves Petrograd.
26 Oct. 1917	.....	Provisional Government arrested; Russian ("Great October") Revolution begins.
2 Nov. 1917	.....	"Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia."
7 Dec. 1917	.....	Cheka (secret police) established.
5 Jan. 1918	.....	Constituent Assembly meets and is dispersed.
1918-1921	.....	Civil War (Reds versus Whites) and "war communism." Key events include Kronstadt sailors' rebellion (1920), peasant uprisings (1920-21), Volga famine (1921-22).
3 March 1918	.....	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk takes Russia out of World War I.
July 1918	.....	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) adopts constitution.
Feb. 1921	.....	GosPlan adopted (first formal economic plan under Communists).
March 1921	.....	New Economic Policy (NEP) relaxes "war communism" in response to peasant revolts and Volga famine.
May 1922	.....	Lenin suffers first stroke, beginning a power struggle for eventual succession.
28 Dec. 1922	.....	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) formed.
21 Jan. 1924	.....	Lenin dies; four-way struggle between Trotsky, Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev begins in earnest; Stalin eventually emerges as uncontested leader of Soviet Union.
31 Jan. 1924	.....	Constitution of USSR adopted.
Oct. 1928	.....	First Five-Year Plan (completed December 1932); massive industrialization and modernization begins under centralized government planning and targets/quotas for production.
1929-1930	.....	Agricultural collectivization and elimination of kulaks and other opponents of Communist economic and social plans.
1933-1937	.....	Second Five-Year Plan.

**The Rise and Fall
of Soviet Communism:
A History of
Twentieth-Century Russia
Part II**

Professor Gary M. Hamburg



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Lecture Nine

Stalin and the "Great Terror"

Scope: Stalin's emergence as party leader, and his imposition of the first Five-Year Plan, and forced collectivization, evoked considerable opposition. Stalin responded with a campaign of repression, known as the "Great Terror," in which he purged the party and army of his real or perceived opponents. This lecture examines the growth of political opposition and Stalin's response to it, which included the assassination of his main rival, Sergei Kirov, and the introduction of repressive decrees eliminating judicial safeguards. Mass arrests were followed by a series of "show trials" in which the accused were forced to confess their guilt. Most were speedily executed or shipped off to a system of concentration camps described by Alexander Solshenitzyn as the "Gulag Archipelago." Although Russia's experience of state repression of opponents did not begin with the Communists, Stalin's "Great Terror" was unprecedented in its scope and its dramatic impact on Russia's society and psyche.

Outline

- I. Collectivization of Agriculture Unsettled the Party and Generated "Submerged" Opposition.
 - A. The so-called Ryutin "platform" of 1932 represented one effort to stem Stalin's policies.
 1. Ryutin called for "uncollectivizing" agriculture and shifting the focus of the economy away from industrialization and toward the retail, consumer, and agricultural sectors.
 2. The GPU (successor to the Cheka) became involved, precipitating a debate over capital punishment for party members who did not accept party goals.
 - B. Other worrisome events included the 1932 Kremlin banquet scandal and the suicide of Stalin's wife.
 - C. The intelligentsia reacted to the situation (e.g., Osip Mandelshtam's 1933 poem).
 - D. A new Party Central Committee was elected at the Seventeenth Party Congress (1934).
 1. The Congress was numerically dominated by Old Bolsheviks and party veterans of the civil war period.
 2. More than 100 of the 1,225 delegates struck Stalin's name from the ballot, while only three struck the name of Leningrad party secretary Sergei Kirov (according to Tucker's estimate). Volkogonov estimates that "nearly 300" struck Stalin's name.
 3. Tucker attributed this opposition to a group of regional party secretaries supported by Stalin's close associate, Ordzhonikidze.
 4. Rumors of Stalin's replacement by Kirov circulated so widely that Kirov was forced to deny that he aspired to replace Stalin.
 - E. Stalin concluded that he must purge the party to eliminate his opponents.
 1. This conclusion is supported by Stalin's patronage network, by the secret police, and by younger cadres who stood to be promoted.
 2. The purges were not instituted and conducted solely by Stalin. His determination to eliminate opponents was a necessary but not sufficient precondition for the horror that ensued.
- II. The Kirov Assassination.
 - A. Kirov was murdered outside Leningrad Party Headquarters on 1 December 1934 by party member Nikolaev. The circumstances are murky, but they strongly suggest that Stalin planned the murder. Evidence supporting this view includes the following:
 1. The transfer of police functionary Zaporozhets from Moscow to Leningrad prior to the assassination.
 2. The previous arrest and release of Nikolaev, despite material evidence that he had stalked Kirov.
 3. The fact that the murder occurred inside Leningrad Party Headquarters at a time when the external security guards were "outsiders" from Moscow.
 4. A "cover-up" of the plot, including the murder of inconvenient witnesses.

5. Finally, circumstantial details suggest Stalin's foreknowledge of events.
- B.** The decrees of December 1934.
1. The Order of 1 December stipulated speedy investigation and execution of sentences in cases of terrorism against the state.
 2. According to Robert Tucker, the Order of 5 December required investigations to be concluded in ten days, cases to be heard without participation of the accused, sentences to be irrevocable, and capital punishment to be carried out immediately.
 3. These orders gave police the power to arrest and punish without any effective judicial check. Tucker compares the effect of the December Decrees to the Nazi "Enabling Act" of 1934, which gave Hitler sweeping powers.
- C.** Almost immediately after the shooting, Nikolaev's act was blamed on Leningrad party leaders Zinoviev, Kamenev, and thirteen others. Two trials were held *in camera*, and several executions followed. Zinoviev and Kamenev were not brought to trial until 1936.
- D.** In 1935 an estimated 40,000 Leningraders were arrested.

III. The Great Terror.

- A.** The show trials of 1936-1938.
1. Prominent party officials testified in open court that they were guilty of conspiracy to kill Kirov and Stalin, counterrevolutionary activity, Trotskyism, and espionage for foreign governments.
 2. The police laboriously prepared these cases, often with the use of physical coercion.
 3. The trials presented both a psychological and political puzzle to observers. Some accepted the self-incriminating testimony at face value, while others guessed that the trials were Stalinist puppet theatre. Arthur Koestler advanced the theory of the "twisted soul."
- B.** Mass arrests and Stalin's responsibility.
1. Stalin and the police concocted proscription lists. According to Volkogonov, Stalin personally approved on 12 December 1938 the execution of 3,167 people.
 2. Moral responsibility for these purges, however, goes far beyond Stalin himself. The so-called "pyramid of terror" employed guilt by association, quota systems, and the encouragement of denunciations.
 3. Volkogonov estimated that between 4.5 million and 5.5 million arrests were made from 1936 and 1938, and that between 800,000 and 900,000 death sentences were handed down.
 4. Purges had a "local flavor" (Getty) and were not directed at every step from Moscow.
 5. There seemed to be little resistance to arrests. Ginzburg suggests that, at some level, people believed government propaganda. Another explanation may be the impossibility of political organization, given the extent of Stalin's and his henchmen's power.
- C.** The state prison and labor camp systems were efficient and cruel.
1. Volkogonov calculated the capacity of the prison system at 750,000 and of the forced labor camps at between 2.1 and 2.5 million.
 2. Prisons mixed inhumane and humane elements (cf, Ginzburg, Solzhenitsyn).
 3. Ostensibly, the camps were supposed to reeducate and rehabilitate prisoners. In fact, they were punitive.
 4. The worst camps are said to have been in the Kolyma region in northeastern USSR. According to Robert Conquest, three million people died there during the Stalinist period. The most harrowing camp memoirs include Shalamov's *Kolyma Tales* and Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and his famous *Gulag Archipelago*.

IV. Comparisons With Nazism.

- A.** There have been bitter ideological debates over the term "totalitarianism" as applied to Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia.

1. Proponents of this term point to the following similarities: the existence of the *Führerprinzip* in both countries; mass mobilization by governing parties against so-called "enemies"; and reliance on state terror to eliminate opposition and rid the nation of "undesirable elements."
 2. Opponents of the term point to the ideological differences between National Socialism in Germany and Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism in Soviet Russia. They also cite the uniqueness of the Holocaust.
- B.** There are some useful, albeit elementary, comparisons.
1. Both the Nazis and Stalinists destroyed the autonomous private sphere and abolished legal protections for citizens.
 2. Both systems used power ruthlessly to suppress opposition.
 3. The barbed wire of death camps became a symbol of both regimes.

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 183-204.

Recommended Reading:

Anna Akhmatova, "Requiem," in *Selected Poems*.

Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*. [A masterful work of the imagination written at the height of Stalin's *Walpurgisnacht*.]

Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror*. [An exacting analysis of Stalin's role in the purges of the 1930s; in some ways recent archival revelations have confirmed more than amended its findings.]

Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind*.

Nadezhda Mandelshtam, *Hope Against Hope & Hope Abandoned*. [One of the greatest memoirs of this century and an especially trenchant look at Russian literary and political culture during the purges.]

Dmitry Shostakovich, *Fifth Symphony* [Shostakovich's attempt to capture the purges musically, in all their discordance and sadness; heartrending.]

Robert Tucker, *Stalin in Power, 1928-1941*. [A major biography of Stalin that examines the dictator's psyche to explain the purges. The book makes too much of the conceit that Stalin saw himself as a new tsar, but worth reading.]

Volkogonov, *Stalin. Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 159-342.

Questions to Consider:

1. What evidence suggests that Stalin planned the 1934 assassination of Sergei Kirov? What was the significance of the assassination?
2. To what degree can Stalin be held solely and personally responsible for the "Great Terror"?

Lecture Ten

Stalin, Hitler, and the Road to War

Scope: Two competing political parties emerged to take control of Russia and Germany during the 1920s and 1930s. Although arguably impelled by different historical, philosophical, and social forces, both National Socialism and Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism displayed many similarities. Germany and Russia were longstanding enemies, having fought most recently in World War I, when the Germans decisively defeated Russian armies in a series of catastrophic battles. Although the Bolsheviks negotiated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk as a way to advance their aims, the treaty was nonetheless a humiliation, though perhaps not to the extent that the Versailles treaty humiliated the Germans. It remained to be seen which system—national socialism or fascism—would dominate Europe. The Spanish Civil War was a preliminary round for the coming (inevitable) cataclysm. This lecture compares and contrasts Hitler and Stalin, and it explores the causes of conflict between Germany and Soviet Russia in World War II.

Outline

I. Nazi Ideology and the Soviet Union.

A. The central axiom of Nazism was German racial superiority.

1. This axiom meant the elimination of Jews in Europe (cf., Hilberg, Goldhagen). Because the Soviet Union had a substantial Jewish population (2.7 million), this axiom had direct implications.
2. Nazi racial theory extended to Slavic peoples as well. The Nazis considered Slavs *Untermenschen* (subhumans). The Nazis drew distinctions among the Slavic peoples: Ukrainians and Croats were considered "auxiliary" peoples capable of assisting the Germans. Russians were regarded as fit for slavery in the short run and deserving of elimination in the long run.
3. The Nazis concluded from the Germans' alleged racial superiority that they should possess *Lebensraum* ("living room") in the East (cf., the historical German *drang nach Osten*). Germans would colonize Ukraine and Russia.
4. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (written in 1924) explicitly demanded territory in the East. The unpublished *Second Book* and Hitler's 1937 memorandum to his generals indicated that war was the means to achieve these goals.

B. Soviet policy toward the Nazis was inconsistent.

1. Before 1933 the Soviets generally followed a pro-German policy rooted in Soviet Russia's self-interest as an outcast nation.
2. The Soviets were hostile to the German Social Democrats and instructed the German Communists to work against them, even if this meant a Nazi political victory. Tucker has accused Stalin of having "abetted the Nazi revolution." The first Soviet diplomatic contacts with the Nazis sought rapprochement.
3. Bukharin and the exiled Trotsky sharply criticized Stalin's friendly policy toward Hitler.
4. From May 1934 to summer 1939, the Soviets supported a "popular front" against the Nazis.
5. In August 1939 the Soviets performed an ideological *volte face*, signing a nonaggression pact with Germany.

C. The Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939.

1. In formal terms, the pact was a ten-year nonaggression agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union.
2. The pact included secret protocols providing for the partition of Poland along the Vistula River and the division of Europe into Soviet and German spheres. (Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Bessarabia fell to the Soviets, and everything to the west fell to the Germans.) Neither signatory was to question the disposition of the other's sphere of influence. Subsequently, this division was modified at Stalin's suggestion to divide Poland at the Curzon line and add Lithuania to the Soviet sphere.

3. The nonaggression pact marked the abandonment of the "popular front" policy; it devastated the world communist movement; and it gave implied Soviet consent to the beginning of the European war just a few weeks later.

II. Policies in the Soviet "Sphere of Influence."

A. Poland.

1. The Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east on 17 September 1939, hastening the end of Polish resistance to the Nazi *blitzkrieg* from the west.
2. Soviet occupiers engaged in "class warfare" in the Polish zone, involving mass arrests of intellectuals, property owners, priests, and government officials (the number of arrests is variously estimated at between 1 million and 1.5 million and the number of deaths at approximately 270,000).
3. Soviet-style administration was immediately established in the conquered territory in Poland.

B. The Baltic states.

1. The Soviets followed a strategy of "absorption by stages" (N. Tolstoy)
2. The Estonians were compelled to permit the establishment of Soviet air and naval bases by 28 September 1939.
3. The Latvians signed a military base treaty on 5 October.
4. Threatened with invasion, the Lithuanians signed a similar agreement on 10 October 1939.
5. In June 1940, the Soviet Union demanded the establishment of "people's governments" in the independent Baltic states, and its troops later invaded to ensure that these governments were established.
6. Some 2 percent of the combined populations of the Baltic states were deported.

C. Finland.

1. The USSR wanted to trade territory from Soviet Karelia for the Karelian isthmus and to lease the Hango and Petsamo ports.
2. Finnish refusal led to Soviet provocation in late November 1939, followed by war.
3. The "Winter War" lasted until March 1940. Although the Soviets officially won, their casualties were five times higher than those suffered by the Finns. Hitler drew the (erroneous) conclusion that the Soviet Red Army was extremely weak.

- D. Ultimately, the Soviet policy was a bad one. They lost "buffer zones" that had separated them from a powerful potential foe.

III. Interpretations of the Soviet Preparations for War Against Germany.

A. The postwar Soviet interpretation.

1. Without the Nazi-Soviet pact, Hitler would have invaded first Poland and then the USSR. The British and French would have watched the USSR's defeat.
2. Stalin correctly calculated that the Nazi-Soviet pact would lead to a German war with Britain and France. He miscalculated the speed of the German victory in the West, and hence the timetable for Soviet war preparations. Nevertheless, the pact bought precious time for the Soviet Union.

B. Nekrich and Geller's interpretation.

1. A Soviet agreement with Britain and France might have forestalled the Nazi invasion of Poland and indefinitely delayed the war in Europe.
2. This interpretation holds that the Soviet leadership "trusted" Hitler. The Soviets assumed that they could prevent Nazi invasion by punctiliously observing the Nazi-Soviet pact (cf., Molotov's report of 1 August 1940 on "eliminating all friction in Soviet-German relations").
3. The Soviets actually aided the German advance by complying with the economic provisions of the Nazi-Soviet pact.
4. The Soviets squandered the time bought by the Nazi-Soviet pact on their "frivolous" aggression against Finland.

5. They ignored many warnings of impending Nazi invasion (cf., Sorge, Churchill, and Sumner Wells).
- C. Operation "Barbarossa" (the massive German invasion against Russia, which commenced on 22 June 1941) caught the Soviets unprepared to respond.
 1. Stalin assumed that any attack would be rebuffed.
 2. Some historians compare the surprise, speed, and damage of this attack with the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor.
 3. The German advance pushed the unprepared Russian forces back quickly. The Germans captured hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops.

IV. Conclusion.

In retrospect, Soviet prewar diplomacy—epitomized by the German-Soviet nonaggression pact—was unprincipled and even criminal.

- A. It resulted in the forcible annexation of sovereign nations (the Baltic states).
- B. It generated a false sense of security for which the Russian people paid dearly when the Germans abrogated the treaty and invaded in June 1941.

Essential Reading:

Volkogonov, *Stalin. Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 343-496.

Recommended Reading:

Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr M. Nekrich, *Utopia in Power. The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present*, pp. 316-369. [Before becoming *persona non grata* in the Soviet historical establishment, Nekrich was a distinguished diplomatic historian and critic of Stalin's prewar foreign policy. The account of the Nazi-Soviet pact and its consequences is tendentious at moments, but probably sound in the main points.]

Tucker, *Stalin in Power*, pp. 338-365, 479-525. [A short attempt to explain the twists and turns in Stalin's attitude toward fascism and Nazism; an interesting, but still speculative account of the Nazi-Soviet pact.]

Suggested Reading:

Nikolai Tolstoy, *Stalin's Secret War*. [An inquiry into Stalin's conduct from August 1939 to June 1941. Tolstoy is interested in the Soviet-occupation zone in Poland, in the Sovietization of the Baltic states, and the Winter War against Finland, among many other topics].

Questions to Consider:

1. What was Hitler's view of the USSR as a political entity and of the Russians as a people? Did Nazi ideology offer any prospect for accommodating the continued existence of the Soviet Union?
2. Why did Stalin sign the Nazi-Soviet pact?

Lecture Eleven

The USSR at War

Outline

- I. Two Strategic Phases of the German invasion of Russia in World War II.
 - A. The first phase ran from 22 June 1941 to 31 January 1943.
 - 1. Initial German advances (aimed at Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev along a several-hundred-mile front) were almost unopposed. The German forces captured Kiev, besieged Leningrad, and stalled at Smolensk, though they still threatened Moscow.
 - 2. Soviet defensive lines began to firm up by late fall 1941. A Soviet counteroffensive on the outskirts of Moscow, together with the onset of winter, kept German forces from capturing the capital.
 - 3. In 1942, the Germans altered their initial plan and decided to concentrate on a new axis. The decisive battle on this front was fought at Stalingrad from September 1942 to January 1943. The Nazi army was ground down and its remnants surrendered.
 - B. The second phase ran from February 1943 to 9 May 1945.
 - 1. Following their decisive victory at Stalingrad, Soviet forces assumed the offensive and made steady advances. In July-August 1943, the Soviets routed the Germans in the massive tank battle of Kursk.
 - 2. By spring 1944, the Red Army had expelled German forces from the Soviet Union.
 - 3. Soviet forces prevailed in central Poland during the period August 1944-January 1945.
 - 4. The Soviet advance toward Berlin was completed in May 1945.
 - C. The Soviet Union suffered immense destruction and loss of life in World War II. Some illustrative figures are as follows:
 - 1. 700 cities and more than 1700 towns in the invasion zone were destroyed.
 - 2. 70,000 villages were destroyed.
 - 3. More than 30,000 major factories in the invasion zone were destroyed.
 - 4. According to Barber and Harrison, nineteen million civilians and nine million soldiers died (roughly 4.7 million in POW camps, and an equal number in battle).
- II. The Barbarous Character of War.
 - A. German forces engaged in "ethnic cleansing."
 - 1. The Holocaust commenced on Soviet territory with the March 1941 order to kill Communists and Jews among Soviet POWs in the impending "Barbarossa" invasion.
 - 2. This order was to be carried out by four *Einsatzgruppen*. These units followed regular army invaders in June 1941 and carried out mass executions, such as the murders at Babi Yar, outside of Kiev in September/October 1941.
 - 3. By the end of 1942, approximately 1.4 million Soviet Jews had been killed.
 - 4. "Ghettoization" proceeded simultaneously. Bauer estimates that there were 130 ghettos on occupied Soviet territory. Grossman and Ehrenburg provide additional testimony on this aspect of German policy in occupied Russia.
 - B. The siege of Leningrad, August 1941-January 1944.
 - 1. Hitler intended to destroy this important (and symbolic) city and starve out its inhabitants. This plan led to a siege that lasted nearly three years.
 - 2. The ordeal began in the winter of 1941-1942. Mass starvation occurred, despite rationing of food. The thousands of dead were buried in mass graves. The siege of Stalingrad is filled with stories of remarkable fortitude and heroism, and also of horrible incivility (cf., Kochina).
 - 3. Death totals in the siege of Leningrad alone (1 million) exceeded total British and U.S. casualties for the entire war.

C. The Battle of Stalingrad.

1. This battle saw the widespread use of tanks and massive, unrelenting artillery engagements, plus fierce hand-to-hand fighting.
2. German casualties included 150,000 dead, 50,000 wounded, and 90,000 prisoners. Soviet casualties were far higher.
3. Most of the German prisoners were never heard from again.

D. Nazi mistreatment of Soviet POWs.

1. Soviet POWs were kept on a virtual starvation diet and subjected to extremely unsanitary conditions in POW camps, resulting in high incidence of disease and inordinately high casualties suffered off the battlefield.
2. Soviet POWs in later phases of the war were forced to do hard labor to support the German war effort.
3. The general Nazi policy was suspicion of Soviet POWs, leading to refusals of collaboration.

III. Collaborators Real and Imagined.

- A.** The Nazi invasion was welcomed in certain places, especially the Baltic states and the Ukraine. (Recall from lecture ten that the Nazis viewed certain Slavic peoples as being useful to them; the Baltic states wished to gain their independence from the forced Soviet takeover.)
- B.** The Germans tried to use anti-Stalinist émigrés and prisoners of war to fight against the Red Army. General Andrei Vlasov was placed in command of this anti-Soviet army, which numbered perhaps 100,000 men. The force was not used to any significant military effect.
- C.** The Soviets relocated real and potential collaborators of the Nazis.
1. In August 1941, Volga Germans were forcibly removed to Siberia and Central Asia. (Compare this with U.S. relocation of Japanese to internment camps.)
 2. Later in the war (1943-1944), Soviet authorities forcibly relocated Crimean Tatars and members of five other nationalities (Balkars, Chechens, Ingushi, Kalmyks, Karachai) out of the Caucasus, which was the target of German military operations.
 3. Other peoples, especially Ukrainians and Georgians, were exiled to Siberia.
 4. Soviet authorities assumed that repatriated POWs had collaborated with the enemy. Many were summarily executed, and many more were imprisoned in the Soviet Gulag (cf., Solzhenitzyn).

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 261-295.

Recommended:

Catherine Andreyev, *Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement*. [A book on the controversial Soviet general who organized a Russian army to fight against Soviet power; worth reading if only to see how an able historian tackles an explosive topic.]

Barber and Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front*.

John Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad; The Road to Berlin*. [The best military history of the German-Soviet front; goes far beyond narrow military matters to a broad understanding of the war and its traumatic consequences.]

John Garrard, *The Bones of Berdiche: The Life and Fate of Vasily Grossman*. [A biography of the well-known Jewish writer Vasily Grossman and his exposé of the Holocaust on Soviet territory; helps the reader understand a side of the Soviet war experience too little examined in textbooks.]

Kochina, *Blockade Diary*. [A powerful book on the experience of one Leningrad family; it cannot be read without tears.]

Harrison Salisbury, *The Nine Hundred Days*. [A moving, even epic book on the siege of Leningrad and the response of Leningraders to their fate.]

Elena Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*. [An abridged translation of memoirs by a leading Soviet general and political figure.]

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was the war on the Soviet front so destructive?
2. What evidence can be adduced to support the proposition that the Soviet Union was principally, if not solely, responsible for defeating Nazism?

Lecture Twelve

Stalin's Last Years

Scope: World War II was the worst of the numerous cataclysms that Russia had suffered since the Bolshevik revolution: the Russian civil war in the early 1920s, famines in the 1920s and 1930s, the Stalinist "terror," and forced collectivization. As one of the victorious allies at the end of World War II, the Soviet Union amassed a larger empire than even the tsars had assembled, but its new client states did not willingly accept imposition of Communist governments. It soon became evident that the USSR would not maintain the wartime level of cooperation with the Western nations, whom it distrusted and came to see as enemies. At home, the Communist leadership's wartime appeal to rally around "Mother Russia" was not likely to sustain loyalty to a repressive government after the Axis powers had been defeated. The Soviet Union faced the daunting task of rebuilding itself economically and sustaining its Socialist experiment. At the same time, it sought to achieve superpower status by developing a nuclear weapons capability.

Outline

I. The First Postwar Crises.

- A. First, the Soviet Union had to repatriate POWs and reintegrate demobilized soldiers.
 - 1. Forcible repatriations were conducted under terms of the Yalta agreement.
 - 2. By 1953 nearly 5.5 million Soviets had been repatriated, of whom some 3.2 million were civilians.
 - 3. Of these, 2.3 million were POWs. More than half of the repatriated Soviets suffered punishment, and 20 percent received death sentences. Only 20 percent actually returned to their homes.
 - 4. Roughly 4 million Europeans were repatriated from the USSR; the conditions of Soviet DP (Displaced Persons) camps have been described by Primo Levi.
 - 5. Soviet soldiers were returned to assigned duties and were forbidden to return immediately to their homes. This policy prevented "ideological contamination" of the villages and provided ready manpower for labor-intensive tasks.
 - 6. Many of the soldiers suffered physical and psychological traumas (cf., Lurii).
- B. The Baltic states and Western Ukraine were integrated into the USSR.
 - 1. The Communist Party tried to impose collectivization in the Baltic states. Voluntary collectivization was resisted in Estonia and Latvia, while active partisan warfare occurred in Lithuania.
 - 2. Nationalists established an underground army in western Ukraine in 1944. The number of partisans has been estimated at more than 10,000. These partisans actually controlled the countryside in 1945-1946.
 - 3. The famine of 1946-1948 increased Ukrainian hostility to Soviet rule. Stalin refused to send relief shipments of food (cf., Khrushchev).
 - a. In 1948, Nikita Khrushchev proposed to extend the prison camp system for Ukrainian opponents of collectivization.
 - b. Between 1944 and 1951, the Uniate church was slowly destroyed.
 - c. Nekrich estimated that 300,000 Ukrainians were deported by 1950.
- C. The failure of Soviet agriculture.
 - 1. A devastating drought in the summer of 1946 led to a severe food shortfall.
 - 2. Another harvest shortfall in 1948 led to the Lysenko experiment.
 - 3. The Soviet system of agricultural production experienced structural problems in addition to weather problems. One limitation was demographic—an absence of army-age males.
 - 4. Collective farms had low levels of productivity. Yields per hectare were six percent below 1913 levels and ten percent below levels of the NEP in the 1920s.
 - 5. Peasant incomes were also low. Collective farmers worked 60 days to purchase one kilogram of butter (Nekrich, Geller).

6. The government did not respond adequately to the worsening situation. Centralizing agricultural production and expanding the size of collective farms did not materially improve the situation.
- D. Urban living standards also declined.
1. Wartime destruction of housing space meant that the remaining apartments were overcrowded; the average space per inhabitant was 4.5-5 square meters.
 2. Food shortfalls brought price inflation; real wages in the 1945-1948 period were 35-40 percent below NEP levels.
 3. Formal bread rationing persisted until the late 1950s.
 4. The government engaged in a crash building program, which in Moscow took the form of a "monumental city" of prestige buildings and a "minimal city" for workers. Many buildings were without necessary services. Colton estimates that perhaps 30 percent of Moscow was without sewage.
 5. This project provided some relief, but it underscored the failure of the Soviet system to improve substantially the living conditions of its citizens.

II. Politics in Stalin's Last Years.

- A. The Soviet Union was an "insecure" great power.
1. Following the war, Communist regimes were established in the Eastern European countries that the Red Army had occupied during its drive to Berlin.
 2. Sovietization ensued in Poland and East Germany. In Czechoslovakia, Eduard Beneš led resistance to Soviet control. In Yugoslavia, Communist rule was imposed only after a bitter civil war.
 3. Communist regimes took over elsewhere, notably in China and North Korea. This led to a sense of strategic superiority and historical inevitability.
 4. There were reverses (e.g., the Berlin airlift) as the Americans and their allies took steps to counter this wave of Communist advance.
- B. Cold War rivalry with the United States.
1. Soviet rulers perceived the American atomic weapon capability as a threat to the USSR.
 2. The Soviet Union decided in the summer of 1947 not to participate in the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe. This decision was based on ideological hostility to capitalism and signaled that the Soviets would put national rivalry ahead of broad international cooperation.
 3. The Soviets viewed the development of a nuclear capability as a top priority. They conducted an atomic bomb test in September 1949 and developed a hydrogen bomb by 1953.
 4. The Soviet Union's growing nuclear arsenal gradually diminished its insecurity and gave it superpower status.
- C. Internal politics, 1945-1953.
1. A small cadre ran the Soviet Union—Stalin, Zhdanov, Malenkov, Molotov, Beria, Bulganin, Kuznetsov, Kaganovich, and Khrushchev.
 2. From 1946 to 1948, Zhdanov championed aggressive Great Russian nationalism, ideological discipline, and repression of independent artists (Akhmatova, Zoshchenko, Shostakovich, and Eisenshtein).
 3. From 1949 to 1953 there was open anti-Semitism in Russia, commencing with an "anticosmopolitan campaign" and concluding with the "doctor's plot." Historians continue to investigate a rumored general purge of Soviet Jews.

III. Conclusions.

- A. At Stalin's death, the USSR was a superpower, the undisputed leader among Communist states, and the paradigmatic anticapitalist state.
- B. The Soviet system was less democratic than ever before; its government depended on force to maintain itself in power.
1. It was unable to supply the material needs of its population.
 2. It had to fight bitter national secessionist struggles on its periphery.

- C. Upon Stalin's death, the popular mood was mixed: a god had died, but a cruel, implacable god.

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 296-325.

Recommended Reading:

Joseph Brodsky, *Less Than One*. [The title essay is a memoir of Brodsky's youth in postwar Leningrad; one of the finest essays on the period when war-torn Leningrad was a truly proletarian city.]

Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 2 vols. [Dictated into a tape recorder, then transcribed, these memoirs are an invaluable, if not wholly trustworthy source; Khrushchev's energy and temperament come through nicely in the translation.]

David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair*. [On the bizarre episode when a charlatan took virtual control over Soviet biological science.]

Abram Tertz (Andrei Siniavsky), *Goodnight!* [Semi-memoir/semi-fiction, this book is Siniavsky's intrepid attempt to come to terms with Stalin.]

Volkogonov, *Stalin. Triumph and Tragedy*, pp. 497-581.

Questions to Consider:

1. What immediate difficulties did the USSR confront in the wake of World War II? Did the government devise rational policies to deal with these difficulties?
2. To what extent can the Cold War be attributed to Soviet insecurity—particularly, Soviet fear of U.S. aggression? To what extent was Soviet ideology responsible for the Cold War?

Lecture Thirteen

De-Stalinization

Scope: Just as Lenin's death sparked a succession crisis that led to the regime of Josef Stalin, Stalin's death sparked a similar succession crisis. As the main players maneuvered and constructed their power bases, some became subject to removal and even death. "De-Stalinization" began with Nikita Khrushchev's famous "secret" speech to the Twentieth Party Congress denouncing Stalin's policies. The struggle persisted until 1964, when Khrushchev himself was removed from power. It could be argued that Stalin's ghost hovered over the Soviet Union long after that, as the Communists leaders struggled to come to grips with his legacy while fighting the "Cold War" with the United States and its allies. This lecture will trace the process of "thawing" and "freezing" that characterized these post-Stalin years.

Outline

I. The Khrushchev Years, 1953-1964.

A. The succession crisis, 1953-1954.

1. Khrushchev had worked his way up through the Communist hierarchy and was one of the few people (along with Zhdanov, Malenkov, Molotov, Beria, Bulganin, Kuznetsov, and Kaganovich) who actually ran the Soviet Union under Stalin. His main opponent was Lavrentii Beria (Minister of the Interior and head of the KGB), who was removed from his posts in June 1953.
2. Beria was removed in order to reestablish party superiority over the secret police and create space for "normal" politics.
3. Beria's arrest involved cooperation between the party and leaders of the armed forces (especially Zhukov).
4. Beria was tried *in absentia* in December 1953 and quickly executed.
5. In 1954, some of Beria's associates (Abakumov, Riumin, et. al) were put on trial. This period saw a repeat of the 1930s Stalinist purges, although on a much-reduced scale.
6. These purges substantially weakened the Stalinist faction. The party leadership disagreed over how to proceed. Malenkov and Molotov opposed public trials, while Khrushchev argued strongly in favor of publicity. Khrushchev's victory led to Malenkov's resignation in 1954.

B. Struggle over de-Stalinization, 1954-1957.

1. Initially, the government allowed wider latitude to writers (Ehrenburg).
2. Khrushchev argued in 1955 for enforcing legality in the operation of the prison camp system.
3. His "secret speech" to the Twentieth Party Congress (February 1956) was a key event in the "de-Stalinization" campaign. In this speech, Khrushchev urged the rehabilitation of Stalin's purge victims; he attacked Stalin for military blunders in 1941 and 1942; and he denounced the deportations of "collaborating" peoples during the war.
4. Although the "secret speech" achieved limited de-Stalinization, it avoided several key issues, such as the fate of Stalin's nonparty victims and questions of broader responsibility for policies and decisions carried out during his regime.
5. On the other hand, it did result in the release of several million political prisoners in 1957, and it prompted greater questioning of the party (cf., Bukovsky).
6. The "secret speech" was also accompanied by foreign policy changes, especially the new doctrine of "peaceful coexistence" with the West and the acceptance of multinational communism. (Two salient examples were rapprochement with Yugoslavia and approval of the Polish road to socialism.)
7. Hungarian events opened the door for a Stalinist counterattack.
8. An abortive attempt to remove Khrushchev as First Party Secretary took place in June 1957. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (a governmental body) voted 8-4 to oust him. He appealed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party (which, he argued, was the only party organ that could strip him of power). The Central Committee voted to reverse the Presidium decision.

9. Following this vote of confidence, Khrushchev ousted his opponents Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich and rewarded supporters like Zhukov. Unlike Stalin, he did not purge or execute his opponents, but instead appointed them to minor posts. Khrushchev assumed the top government and party positions (prime minister and party general secretary), just as Stalin had done.

C. Round Two of the struggle over de-Stalinization, 1957-1964.

1. Between 1957 and 1961, little more was heard about Stalin's crimes.
2. The party pursued a "harder" ideological line (as shown by its treatment of Nobel laureate Boris Pasternak in 1958). The "thaw" was over.
3. Nonetheless, Khrushchev pushed broader de-Stalinization at the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961. He asserted that Stalin's policies had claimed millions of victims, ordered the removal of Stalin's body from the Lenin mausoleum, and announced plans for a monument to Stalin's victims. Authorities permitted the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in 1962.
4. Khrushchev's abortive reforms included the division of the Party into agrarian and industrial sectors and the biannual replacement of one-third of the delegates to the Supreme Soviet. Other party officials resisted these reforms.
5. In October 1964, Nikita Khrushchev was ousted as prime minister and Party First Secretary. He was not jailed or executed, but instead was allowed to retire.

II. The Brezhnev Years, 1964-1982.

- A. Party-sponsored de-Stalinization ended under the new leaders, especially after Leonid Brezhnev assumed full powers from his partner Alexei Kosygin.
- B. Key events in this period of reaction included the trial of Brodsky in 1964, the revision of textbooks in 1966 to make them more favorable to Stalin, the crushing of the "Spring Uprising" in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the erection of a monument to Stalin in Red Square in 1970, the use of psychiatric clinics to punish dissidents (1970), the arrest and expulsion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn in 1974, and renewed hostility toward Soviet Jewry.

Essential Reading:

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 326-445.

Recommended Reading:

Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter*. [In my mind, the finest memoir by a Soviet dissident of the post-Stalin period].

Roy and Zhores Medvedev, *Khrushchev. The Years in Power*. [A sympathetic but not uncritical view of Khrushchev's reforms and their failure by two reformist Communists].

Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs*. [An indispensable source on the Soviet hydrogen bomb project, the position of Soviet scientists with a conscience, politics, and the origins of the Soviet human rights movement].

Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*. [Oddly, this book remains the best portrait of Russian life under Brezhnev; perhaps the key is the author's uncanny ability to see the variety of opinions and characters under the rather stolid surface that Russians can sometimes present.]

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Calf Butts the Oak*. [A memoir focusing on the Soviet literary establishment during the Khrushchev era, revealing the limits of the politically possible in the late 1950s/early 1960s.]

Julia Voznesenskaya, *The Women's Decameron*. [Women's lives, women's difficulties compellingly told by an important writer, not widely known in the West.]

Adam's Rib. [Film set in the early 1980s, dealing with the lives of three Soviet women of different generations; my favorite Soviet film.]

Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent did Khrushchev succeed in de-Stalinizing Soviet politics?
2. To what extent can the Brezhnev years from 1964 to 1982 accurately be characterized as a partial return to Stalinism?

Lecture Fourteen

Gorbachev and *Perestroika*

Scope: This lecture will examine what, in retrospect, was the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union. Following the ouster of Nikita Khrushchev in 1964, the Soviet leadership devolved peacefully into a shared-power arrangement between Alexei Kosygin (chairman of the Council of Ministers) and Leonid Brezhnev (first party secretary). By 1966, Brezhnev assumed the position of general secretary and gradually eclipsed Kosygin, who nonetheless stayed on as premier. The Brezhnev years saw an end to "Stalin-bashing" and an intensification of the Cold War, which clashed somewhat with Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence" policy. While it is unclear how peaceful this coexistence really was, the Soviet Union under Brezhnev certainly became a more proactive and ominous force in the geopolitical and military arenas. It was a bellicose superpower that appeared to threaten not only its neighbors but also more distant countries, either directly or through military surrogates such as Cuba. However, the Soviet system could not prevail in the intensified competition with the West, and its fatal structural flaws became apparent at the very time that the Soviets seemed most in the ascendancy.

Outline

- I. Background to Perestroika: The Brezhnev Years.
 - A. The Brezhnev years (1964-1982) witnessed the apogee of Soviet power abroad.
 1. During this period, the Soviet military (especially the navy) expanded in size and capability. The Soviets reached what they considered to be military parity with the U.S.
 2. Concurrently, the Soviet sphere of influence apparently stabilized. The so-called "Brezhnev Doctrine" stated that the Soviet Union could intervene in the affairs of any Soviet bloc nation in which Communist rule was threatened by liberalization or democratization. The Soviets invoked this doctrine to justify their invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.
 3. The Soviets asserted their power in Africa and southwest Asia, important areas from which to project political and military power to counter Western influence. The Soviets supported Marxist rebels in Angola by underwriting large-scale Cuban involvement in the fighting. They took a more direct role with a massive invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.
 - B. The Brezhnev years also witnessed the "atrophy of true belief" in Communism.
 1. Dissenters seemed to have surprising latitude (Sakharov).
 2. It became seemingly more possible to live a private life ("internal émigrés").
 3. The postwar generation showed a marked cynicism about politics as the horrors and sacrifices of World War II receded and as young people became more aware of events and conditions in the West.
 - C. Although the Brezhnev years marked the last hurrah of men who had started their careers under Stalin and is remembered as a hard-line and reactionary period, there were also indirect advances in the ongoing process of de-Stalinization.
 1. The regime pledged commitment to "stability of personnel" and collective rule (as opposed to a "cult of personality"). This was accompanied by debate over expanding participation in government.
 2. Overall, the Sovietization of nationalities was ineffective; national feeling was revived in the border republics that had non-Russian ethnic and religious composition.
 3. Economic issues—including a growing awareness of the need for market stimulus—encouraged de-Stalinization. Heavy outlays for military production were seen to degrade living standards for Soviet citizens, which were already low compared to those of Western Europe and the United States.

II. Two Failed Attempts to Revive Party Morale.

- A. Yuri Andropov (November 1982-February 1984) was the longtime head of the KGB when he became general secretary following Brezhnev's death. Because of his advanced age and short tenure in office, he did not profoundly change things.
 - 1. Andropov challenged "stability of personnel" and opposed Brezhnev's "old guard" (even though he was 69 years old when he took over). He conducted an anticorruption campaign in 1982-1983.
 - 2. Andropov sponsored the younger generation of Communist Party functionaries, but although he achieved partial turnover in party personnel, he died before generational change could be completed.
 - 3. Andropov has sometimes been erroneously described as reformer (cf., Medvedev, Doder). He did not pursue systemic changes, and in any case his tenure was too short to have any long-term impact.
 - 4. Andropov did not modify the nationality policy, thus leaving this nagging question unresolved.
 - 5. Finally, he campaigned against market influences and focused on "work discipline" and fighting alcoholism. Both of these programs failed.
- B. Following Andropov's death, the 73-year-old Konstantin Chernenko was elected general secretary, a post he held for just one year (March 1984-March 1985).
 - 1. Chernenko ended Andropov's challenge to the higher-level party *nomenklatura*, halted the anticorruption drive (he himself was part of the Dnepropetrovsk *mafia*), and extended the campaign against dissent (e.g., threats against Roy Medvedev, revival of Stalinist laws against foreigners).
 - 2. Like Andropov, he opposed systemic reform.
 - 3. Chernenko continued Brezhnev's nationality policy.
 - 4. He paid lip service to anticapitalism.
- C. Andropov and Chernenko both continued to confront the capitalist West.
 - 1. Both continued the war in Afghanistan, mirroring the Soviet Union in its own "Vietnam." The war brought world-wide condemnation and was extremely unpopular at home as casualties mounted.
 - 2. The mid-1980s were a low point in postwar U.S.-Soviet relations (e.g., the shoot-down of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 off Sakhalin in 1983).

III. The Advent of Mikhail Gorbachev.

- A. Following Chernenko's sudden death, the relatively young (54-year-old) Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary. We will divide his tenure into two periods: the first *perestroika* (1985-1988), and the second (or radical) *perestroika*. His background is as follows.
 - 1. Born in 1931, Gorbachev was not a member of the Brezhnev cohort of "old-guard" Stalinists.
 - 2. His paternal grandfather was a victim of Stalin, spending nine years in a forced labor camp in the gulag.
 - 3. Gorbachev entered Moscow University in 1950 to study law and the history of political thought, and he joined the Communist Party in 1951. At this point, he was a Stalinist.
 - 4. Under the influence of Nikita Khrushchev, he abandoned Stalinism and in 1970 joined the Andropov patronage network.
 - 5. Gorbachev offers a very interesting personality study. He was intelligent, well-spoken, shrewd, self-confident to the point of arrogance (but not ruthless), and energetic. An effective networker, he was a "scold" who still maintained faith in socialism, someone who wanted to make changes more by improvisation than through ideology.
- B. The first *perestroika* was a response to the "stagnation" of the mid-1980s.
 - 1. Gorbachev introduced many economic reforms, including a reduced role for central planners, price-setting by negotiation, self-financing of enterprises, and limited entrepreneurial freedom in the service sector.
 - 2. In addition, he initiated limited democratization, including freedom for workers to criticize management, experiments with elections of factory management, and multicandidate local party elections.
 - 3. This somewhat unprecedented program was internally contradictory.

Essential Reading:

Stephen F. Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917*. [Written in 1984, at the very outset of the Gorbachev period, this book by a well-known commentator on the Soviet experience delves into Stalinization and de-Stalinization against the larger background of the Bolshevik revolution and its historic path. Short, readable and useful, even though events have moved rapidly on since its appearance.]

Robert V. Daniels, ed., *Soviet Communism from Reform to Collapse*. [One of the D.C. Heath series "Problems in European Civilization," this 1995 anthology presents readable essays by top Western and Russian scholars on the post-Brezhnev era, with emphasis on Gorbachev and Yeltsin. It covers the personalities, problems, and philosophies that drove the Soviet Union out of existence.]

Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 446-501.

Robert C. Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind: Stalinism and Post-Stalin Change*. [An older book (1971) but nonetheless useful for a discussion of how the Soviet mindset was viewed by the West during the mid-Brezhnev era. As the subtitle suggests, the ten essays in the book focus on the phenomenon of Stalinism and how his successors handled his legacy.]

Recommended Reading:

Dusko Doder, *Shadows and Whispers*. [A first-rate journalist with long experience in the USSR analyzes the transition from Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko to Gorbachev.]

Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika*. [Gorbachev's explanation of *perestroika* to a mostly Western audience; by turns, very interesting and remarkably dull.] Francine du Plessix-Gray, *Soviet Women: Walking the Tightrope* [The book presents the reactions of several intelligent Soviet women to *perestroika*; the reactions are conditioned by the difficult, even heroic lives they lead.]

The film *Repentance*. [Shot by a Georgian director in the Brezhnev era, the film was not released until the late 1980s; it caused a sensation because it was viewed as reflecting Gorbachev's personal condemnation of Stalinism. Incidentally, Gorbachev's ally, Soviet foreign minister Edward Shevardnadze, took a personal interest in the film's release.]

Questions to Consider:

1. Discuss the political significance of the Andropov-Chernenko "interlude" between Brezhnev and Gorbachev.
2. What was the economic and political significance of Gorbachev's first *perestroika* proposals?

Lecture Fifteen

The Disintegration of the USSR

Scope: This lecture continues our examination of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms. The reforms marked the apparent abandonment of decades of Soviet policies and rhetoric as the regime sought to make Russian society responsive to the significant internal and external problems that now faced it. *Perestroika* extended to foreign policy as well as internal and economic affairs. Although the reforms were introduced relatively slowly, they soon accelerated as the Soviet Union entered the second phase of radical *perestroika*. Associated with *perestroika* was the *glasnost* ("openness") movement, which brought liberalization and greater freedom for artists, writers, and individual citizens. The Communist Party was also restructured. The changes introduced during these years reflected in their scope and rapidity those introduced between 1917 and 1922, at the very start of the Soviet Communist experiment.

Outline

- I. First *Perestroika* Reforms in Response to Vexing Structural Problems in Soviet Society and Government.
 - A. Gorbachev had two main justifications for the first *perestroika*.
 1. It was a necessary response to economic stagnation.
 2. It also signaled a necessary return to "true Leninism" (or, said another way, the final abandonment of Stalinism). Gorbachev called for a revitalization of the Communist Party at all levels, restoration of party control over events, and a "revolution from above."
 3. Many observers found these justifications ideologically troubling.
 - B. *Perestroika* encompassed "new thinking" in both domestic and foreign policy.
 1. Gorbachev sought to mitigate tensions with the United States resulting from, e.g., the invasion of Afghanistan. In late 1985 he and President Reagan met for a summit conference in Geneva.
 2. The success of Gorbachev's domestic policy required at least a reduction in the Cold War arms race, if not its termination.
 - C. The first *perestroika* had significant effects.
 1. The central ministries and "hardliners" stoutly resisted giving up their powers and implementing reform.
 2. On the other side, the "paper" devolution of authority brought pressure for real change, such as "real results" in the economy, greater political autonomy in the republics, and broader democratization.
 - D. In 1988 the Soviet Union faced a basic decision following three years of tantalizing experimentation and flirtation with reform.
 1. It had to decide whether or not to engage in fundamental restructuring.
 2. But restructuring could not occur in the form Gorbachev had originally proposed. Real restructuring would require far-reaching political democratization and genuine devolution of authority to national republics. Faced with this choice, Gorbachev launched the second, or radical, *perestroika*, which ran from 1988 to 1990.
- II. Radical *Perestroika*.
 - A. This period saw numerous economic reforms.
 1. For the first time, the government published accurate official statistics.
 2. Long-term land leases were extended to collective farms and families. Entrepreneurship (although not private ownership) was introduced to foster local "self-sufficiency."
 3. Limited private entrepreneurship appeared in the form of licensing of cooperatives (of which there were some 75,000 by early 1989), assent to "conspicuous consumption" (i.e., more emphasis on consumer goods), and a campaign against speculators.
 4. The formal transition to enterprise self-financing remained a "paper" reform due to state consumption. It also led to rapid inflation and economic dislocation.

5. In the summer of 1990, Gorbachev pondered (and approved in principal) an economic "shock" plan involving a "500-day" transition to a "socialist market economy." This "Shatalin plan" was abandoned in September 1990.
- B. Political reforms were also significant.**
1. Between 1988 and 1991, there was a wide extension of *glasnost*, as reflected in the gradual lifting of censorship, official toleration of anti-Stalinist literature (e.g., Volkogonov's biography of Stalin, Abuladze's *Repentance*, and selective publication of Solzhentsyn's works).
 2. In 1987 the government began to give permission for the organization of "informal groups." By 1989, about 60,000 such groups existed. Some supported radical *perestroika* (e.g., "Democratic Perestroika" and "Memorial"), while others (e.g., *Pamyat'*) had divergent political goals.
 3. Reforms of the Communist Party began in 1988, highlighted by competitive elections to fill local party positions, use of the secret ballot, and an age limit for party service (65, even for Politburo members).
 4. The formal end of the Communist monopoly on political life came with the January 1990 abrogation of Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution.
 5. Reforms of local and republican soviets started in 1988. As with Party elections, multicandidate and secret-ballot elections were to be the norm. Voters (not the party alone) had the right to nominate candidates.
 6. Another key reform (1988-1989) involved the All-Union Legislature. This bicameral body consisted of a lower chamber (Congress of People's Deputies) elected by organizations and the populace at large, and an upper chamber (Supreme Soviet) elected by the Congress of People's Deputies. Its main functions were to elect a chairman and frame legislation. The Supreme Soviet itself elected the Committee on Constitutional Oversight.
 7. The office of president was established in 1990 and was assumed by Gorbachev. This office had immense powers, including rule by decree in case of emergencies.
- C. Summary: the political character of radical *perestroika*.**
1. The Gorbachev *perestroika* reforms indicated the primacy of politics over the economy.
 2. The reforms were an immense gamble, putting into question the prestige of the office of party general secretary and the power of the state to lead society.
 3. *Perestroika* threatened the cohesion of the USSR. Its success depended to a large extent on the political maturity of the Soviet citizenry (which had no direct experience or historical precedent for even this level of self-governance) and the good will of the capitalist states.

Essential Reading:

Robert V. Daniels, ed., *Soviet Communism from Reform to Collapse*. [One of the D.C. Heath series "Problems in European Civilization," this 1995 anthology presents readable essays by top Western and Russian scholars on the post-Brezhnev era, with emphasis on Gorbachev and Yeltsin. It covers the personalities, problems and philosophies that drove the Soviet Union out of existence. It contains a very good bibliography for further readings.]

Recommended Reading:

Jack Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire. The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. [Matlock is perhaps the most able diplomat to serve as ambassador to the USSR since George Kennan; his book is a gold mine of information, a compelling analysis, and a pleasure to read.]

David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*, New York: Random House, 1993. [Good coverage of the terminal phase of *perestroika*.]

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *How to Rebuild Russia*. [Written before the disintegration of the USSR but seeing that process as inevitable, this book raises the question of Russia's fate *after* the end of Communism. As good a place as any to begin thinking about the Russian question.]

Questions to Consider:

1. Characterize Gorbachev's radical *perestroika* policies. What was he attempting to accomplish? To what extent did the policies succeed?
2. Why did the questions of market reform and nationality loom so large in the disintegration of the Soviet Union?

Lecture Sixteen

Rebirth of Russia or the Rebirth of the USSR?

Scope: In this final lecture we will discuss the results of Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms, which were intended to strengthen the ability of the Party and government to control necessary changes in the economy and social structure. The *perestroika* process was soon overtaken by *uskoreniye* (the "acceleration" of economic and social development) as events seemingly took on a life of their own. As experimentation with democracy increased, some wanted to push it farther and faster, while others want to roll back the reforms. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's restive captive nations and republics, sensing their best chance, exerted their own pressures for self-determination. These conflicting forces led to rapid destabilization and disintegration. In his efforts to reform and modernize communism, Gorbachev sealed its eventual doom not only in the Soviet Union but ultimately in every other country where it was installed (with the exception of North Korea, China, and Cuba). The Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist philosophies that had underlain Socialist revolution in Russia were repudiated and discredited. Russia thus entered into a new era, with unpredictable results for itself and the world.

Outline

- I. The Last Phase of *Perestroika*: The Crisis of 1990-1991.
 - A. Radical *perestroika* had immediate and dramatic impact.
 1. Economic reforms failed to improve living standards. They set the stage for Boris Yeltsin's market proposals.
 2. The policy of *Glasnost* (which revealed hitherto unknown events to the Russian- and Soviet-bloc people) and political chaos made national secessions likely.
 3. Political reforms led to Russia's first democratic elections since 1917. The question of divided government was on the ballot. This election destroyed state unity based on force, as had been the norm since the Russian Revolution.
 - B. The dissolution of the Soviet Union occurred relatively rapidly in 1991.
 1. The party orthodox or "hardliners" opposed marketization and other reforms, warning against the dangers of radical political change. The security police opposed decentralization of authority.
 2. Boris Yeltsin was elected president of the Russian republic in June 1991.
 3. Gorbachev's cabinet attempted a coup d'état in August 1991. This was an ill-planned, irresolute attempt to block a possible return to the old order by Yeltsin. Gorbachev was compromised by the putschists.
 4. Yeltsin's public resistance undermined the old elites and Gorbachev.
 5. In December 1991, there was a second, abortive coup d'état attempt. On 18 December 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was dissolved and replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
- II. The Superficial Rebirth of "Russia" Following the End of the Soviet Union.
 - A. This rebirth was seen in the revival of *arcana imperii*.
 1. The old prerevolutionary names were restored to streets and cities. Leningrad once again became St. Petersburg.
 2. The government rebuilt some imperial monuments, e.g., the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.
 3. The "Hammer and Sickle" flag was replaced by the old Russian flag.
 4. Political groups appropriated old symbols.
 - B. Concurrently, there was an effort to revitalize Russian traditions.
 1. There was widespread interest in a Russian "national philosophy" that had nothing to do with Bolshevism.

2. Concurrently, there was an effort to "reinvent" old institutions such as the *zemstvo*, a form of rural representative assembly dating to the 16th century under Ivan IV (the "Dread") and continuing up to the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution) and even talk about "constituent assembly" perhaps reminiscent of another feature, the *zemskii sobor*.
3. No less a figure than Solzhenitsyn attempted to answer the "Russian question" in *How to Rebuild Russia*.

III. Boris Yeltsin as a National Leader After the Open Elections and the Autumn Coup Attempt.

- A. Yeltsin's personality is an interesting study.
 1. He has been described as feisty and combative (a "bantam rooster"), contemptuous of opponents, decisive (but with the instincts of a riverboat gambler, as in the August coup), occasionally reclusive, sometimes self-destructive (he has an alcohol problem), and, above all, ambitious.
 2. These qualities were effective for a time.
- B. Yeltsin is not a principled "democrat" in the Western sense of the word.
 1. His formation was entirely in the Communist Party. He was born in 1931 and began his party apprenticeship in 1961 (during the Khrushchev era). He rose through the ranks under Brezhnev and then Gorbachev.
 2. Many of his policies were far from democratic. He instituted rule by decree for one year in Russia, and later he requested the renewal of these decree powers. He ordered the use of tanks against the Russian Parliament in October 1993, and he launched the war in Chechnya to quash the independence movement. Finally, he created the "presidential security service."

IV. Russia should be seen as a "post-imperial empire."

- A. The first phase of Yeltsin's nationality policy.
 1. Yeltsin sought to preserve the integrity of the former Soviet republics.
 2. He experimented with a voluntary confederation of Russia, the Ukraine, and Belarus (the Confederation of Independent States) in 1991.
 3. He avoided an early temptation to meddle with the "periphery" of ethnically non-Russian republics.
 4. He made accommodations with non-Russians inside Russia.
- B. The second phase of Yeltsin's nationality policy.
 1. This period was marked by a much more active policy on the periphery (e.g., subtle interventions in the Georgian conflicts).
 2. Yeltsin sought voluntary re-unification, on looser terms, with former Soviet republics (e.g., signing of bilateral treaties with Belarus and other states in 1995-1996).
 3. He tried to reestablish Moscow's authority and end the process of national disintegration in Russia.
 4. Yeltsin's actions against the breakaway Chechen "rebels" illustrate this increased activism. This armed conflict had overtones of the Soviets' ill-fated Afghanistan venture in the 1980s.
 5. The effect of the second phase of the nationalities policy was to reassert specifically Russian interests and encourage a renewed "imperial mentality" among the elites.

V. The Problem of Capitalism.

- A. Following Yeltsin's election as president, the Russian government grappled with conversion to a Western-style market-based economy. This was veritable *terra incognita* for a country that had just endured nearly 70 years of state control over the economy.
 1. A first step was Vice-Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar's decontrol of prices in January 1992.
 2. A special working group appointed by President Yeltsin and headed by Gaidar made the ruble fully convertible to Western currencies in 1992.
 3. Significant steps in the privatization campaign included the voluntary privatization of apartments (summer 1992), the issuance of "privatization vouchers" (September 1992), and an attempt to break up collective farms.

4. Among the negative consequences of the Gaidar reforms were the destruction of essential parts of the planned economy (because the reforms were motivated more by political than by economic considerations), a poor record of compliance (perhaps due to the gradual implementation), rapid growth of unemployment and an even more rapid growth of inflation, and the creation of a wild private market of indeterminable size.
- B. The development of "mafia capitalism" between 1991 and 1996 illustrated the problems facing the economic transition and the Gaidar reforms in particular.
 1. Organized crime syndicates (or "mafias") existed prior to the collapse of the USSR.
 2. The absence of a strong legal system allowed the mafias to flourish and operate with impunity.
 3. Mafia "protection" was often in the interest of individual politicians, who served as front men for organized crime bosses. There was an unholy alliance of banks, private armies, and politicians willing to take advantage of the economic confusion.
- C. All this turmoil extracted a significant social cost.
 1. Price decontrol and "mafia capitalism" created big winners and big losers. Among the losers were state workers who were not paid their wages, pensioners and young families who were devastated by inflation, and other workers who lost their jobs and, in some cases, their homes.
 2. At the same time, the "winners" lived a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption.

VI. Conclusion

- A. As conditions in Russia since 1991 illustrate, the combination of authoritarian habits, an imperial mentality, and antimarket sentiments constitutes a volatile political brew. Given Russia's lack of meaningful experience with true representative government and a free-market economy, prospects for a democratic, pluralist, and capitalist Russia along the lines of the leading Western nations are uncertain as the 1990s draw to a close.
- B. Russia was an unlikely incubator for a proletarian revolution. It remained subject to an authoritarian regime until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Its twentieth-century history has been characterized by almost constant change; stunning military calamities in three wars (four if one counts Afghanistan); expansion of borders to create a new Russian empire, almost unimaginable loss of life due to famine and self-imposed disasters such as the Russian civil war, forced collectivization, and the "Great Terror"; and dramatic—even heroic—accomplishments in industrializing and achieving superpower status.
- C. Given Russia's size and military power, events there are very important to America and the entire world. To the extent that Russia has been America's sworn enemy during the past fifty years, the so-called "American Century" was also the "Russian Century."

Essential Reading:

Robert V. Daniels, ed., *Soviet Communism from Reform to Collapse*. [one of the D.C. Heath series "Problems in European Civilization," this 1995 anthology presents readable essays by top Western and Russian scholars on the post-Brezhnev era, with emphasis on Gorbachev and Yeltsin. It covers the personalities, problems, and philosophies that drove the Soviet Union out of existence.]

Recommended Reading:

Steele, *Eternal Russia. Yeltsin, Gorbachev and the Mirage of Democracy*.

Boris Yeltsin, *Against the Grain & The Struggle for Russia*. [Installments of Yeltsin's memoirs; the first gives a clear picture of his life in the Communist party from his new post-Communist perspective, the second analyzes his Russian presidency.

Burned by the Sun. [A portrait of one day during the Stalinist 1930s, this film shows what a contemporary director can do with a contentious theme when afforded complete artistic liberty; a frightening film whose existence and integrity are somehow heartening.]

Questions to Consider:

1. Characterize Boris Yeltsin's tenure as Russian president from 1991 to 1996. To what extent could Yeltsin accurately be described as a "democrat"?
2. What were the chief objectives of Russian economic policy in the post-Soviet era? Were these policies any more (or any less) successful than Gorbachev's *perestroika* policies? Why or why not?

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There are additional readings suggested in the annotated notes for each chapter. One of the best places to check for further readings is in the bibliographies of the books listed herein. Be certain to check publication dates. In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, a wealth of new material has been made available to researchers, resulting in new understanding of the Soviet period. Thus, while books published in the West during Communist rule in Russia may be reliable, some may contain outdated or even erroneous information and assessments.

Additionally, publications such as *Foreign Policy*, *New York Review of Books*, *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Christian Science Monitor* frequently print in-depth analytical articles by top scholars about events in Russia and other Eastern European countries emerging from Communist rule.

Timeline

This timeline contains the dates of key events relating to the history of twentieth-century Russia, from the early 1930s to 1996. It begins with the second Five-Year Plan and concludes with the Yeltsin presidency as it stood in 1996, when these lectures were taped.

1933-1937	.....	Second Five-Year Plan in effect.
16 Nov. 1933	.....	United States officially recognizes the USSR.
1 Dec. 1934	.....	Kirov assassinated; December Decrees mark start of Stalin's final consolidation of power.
May 1935	.....	The USSR signs mutual assistance pacts with France and Czechoslovakia.
Aug. 1935	.....	Stalin's chief political rivals Kamenev and Zinoviev and their supporters are put on trial; start of "show trials" and purges.
1936-1938	.....	"The Great Terror" devastates Party and Red Army leadership through mass arrests, executions, and imprisonment of suspected opponents to Stalinist rule.
Jan. 1938-Dec. 1942	.....	Third Five-Year Plan in effect.
March 1939	.....	Eighteenth Party Congress held.
23 Aug. 1939	.....	Soviet-German nonaggression treaty signed.
17 Sept. 1939	.....	Germany invades Poland, starting World War II.
Sept. 1939	.....	Poland is partitioned between Germany and Russia in accordance with their secret agreement.
Sept.-Oct. 1939	.....	Baltic nations of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania are invaded by the Red Army and forced to accept Communist regimes controlled by Moscow (they are incorporated into USSR in August 1940).
Nov. 1939-March 1940	.....	Russo-Finnish war; Finns forced to accept a Karelo-Finnish republic incorporated into the Soviet Union.
Aug. 1940	.....	The exiled Bolshevik leader Trotsky is murdered in Mexico City.
22 June 1941	.....	Germany invades Russia (Operation Barbarossa), opening a two-front war.
Nov. 1941	.....	German drive against Moscow stalls short of its goal as winter sets in.
Aug. 1942-Feb. 1943	.....	Battle of Stalingrad; Russia defeats Germany's southern thrust, destroying or capturing an entire invading German army.
Aug. 1943	.....	Last major German offensive stopped at Kursk.
28 Nov.-1 Dec. 1943	.....	Teheran Conference of Big Three (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin) to set Allied war aims.
Feb. 1944	.....	Two-and-a-half year siege of Leningrad lifted.
Feb. 1945	.....	Yalta Conference discusses postwar administration of Europe and reparations from Germany.
2 May 1945	.....	Soviet forces enter Berlin.
17 July-2 Aug. 1945	.....	Potsdam Conference sets out aims for concluding war against Japan and finalizing affairs in conquered Germany.
2 Sept. 1945	.....	Japan surrenders; USSR gains Far Eastern territory as result of short (one-month) war against Japan.
1946-1950	.....	Fourth Five-Year Plan in effect.
1947-1949	.....	Communist regimes are installed in Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Albania (the "Iron Curtain" comes down across Europe).
June 1948-May 1949	.....	The Berlin Blockade and Allied Airlift take place.

23 Sept. 1949	.....	Soviets explode their first atomic bomb.
1951-1955	.....	Fifth Five-Year Plan in effect.
Oct. 1952	.....	Nineteenth Party Congress convenes (party reorganization; membership of Presidium of the Central Committee enlarges and replaces Politburo).
5 March 1953	.....	Stalin dies, sparking maneuvering for succession.
Aug. 1953	.....	Soviet Union explodes its first hydrogen bomb.
Sept. 1953	.....	Nikita Khrushchev ascends to position of First Secretary.
Dec. 1953	.....	Lavrentii Beria (head of secret police) executed.
1956-1958	.....	Sixth Five-Year Plan in effect (terminated early).
Feb. 1956	.....	Twentieth Party Congress (Khrushchev denounces Stalin).
Oct.-Nov. 1956	.....	Soviet Army suppresses uprising in Hungary.
Oct. 1957	.....	Soviets launch the world's first artificial satellite, "Sputnik," starting the "space race" with the U.S.
1958-1965	.....	Seven-Year Plan implemented.
Jan. 1959	.....	Twenty-First Party Congress convenes.
Oct. 1962	.....	Cuban Missile Crisis (Khrushchev forced to stop intermediate range missiles to Fidel Castro).
15 Oct. 1969	.....	Khrushchev ousted from office; two-man rule Party Secretary Brezhnev and Prime Minister Kosygin instituted.
March-April 1966	.....	Twenty-Third Party Congress (Politburo reinstituted, Brezhnev consolidates power, Seven-Year Plan terminated, and Eighth Five-Year Plan launched).
Nov. 1967	.....	Fiftieth Anniversary of "Great October Revolution."
Aug. 1968	.....	Soviet Army suppresses liberalization movement in Czechoslovakia.
1968-1982	.....	Continuation of Cold War; USSR opposes U.S. role in Vietnam; supports wars of national liberation in Asia, Africa, Latin America by using surrogate forces; continues heavy militarization program, including dramatic build-up and deployment of naval forces. Period of high tension between USSR and the West.
Dec. 1979	.....	Soviets invade Afghanistan.
Nov. 1982	.....	Leonid Brezhnev dies and is succeeded by Yuri Andropov.
Feb. 1984	.....	Andropov dies and is succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko.
March 1985	.....	Chernenko dies and is succeeded by Mikhail Gorbachev; beginning of <i>perestroika</i> .
Feb. 1986	.....	Twenty-Seventh Party Congress.
April 1986	.....	Gorbachev announces <i>glasnost</i> .
Jan. 1987	.....	Gorbachev begins democratization.
Oct. 1988	.....	After beating back a conservative challenge in the so-called "September Revolution," Gorbachev becomes chairman of the Supreme Soviet.
Oct.-Dec. 1989	.....	Anti-Communist revolutions break out in eastern Europe.
Dec. 1989	.....	Gorbachev and President Bush meet at Malta; <i>de facto</i> end of Cold War.
Feb./March 1990	.....	Communist Party gives up its monopoly of political and governmental power; Gorbachev elected president by Supreme Soviet; republics hold elections for parliaments.
March-May 1990	.....	Baltic republics declare independence.

May 1990	.....	Boris Yeltsin is made chairman of the Supreme Soviet.
July 1990	.....	Twenty-Eighth Party Congress; Yeltsin leaves party.
Aug.-Sept. 1990	.....	Gorbachev launches 500 Days economic reform plan (<i>uskoriniye</i>).
June 1991	.....	First free elections in Russian history. Boris Yeltsin elected President of the Russian Republic.
July 1991	.....	Beleaguered and discredited Party tries to launch a new program.
19-21 Aug. 1991	.....	Attempted coup; Communist Party leadership broken up.
Nov. 1991	.....	President Yeltsin gets emergency powers.
8 Dec. 1991	.....	The USSR officially is disestablished, and the Commonwealth of Independent States is established.
1992	.....	Under the "Gaidar Plan," Yeltsin decontrols prices, attempts to make the ruble fully convertible to Western currencies; inflation runs rampant. Mafia capitalism becomes widespread; many people lose jobs, go homeless as the economy moves to a market basis.
Sept. 1993	.....	Yeltsin dissolves the Russian parliament and puts down resistance to his administration.
Dec. 1993	.....	New elections; new Russian constitution adopted.
1993-1996	.....	Yeltsin attempts to deal with nationalities issues (e.g., military intervention in Chechnya), economic, and foreign policy areas. Yeltsin remains in power, but Communists and conservative nationalists make attempts to increase their influence. Yeltsin's health and alcohol problem pose risks to his effective continuation of power.