

THE GIANT EHAP REVIEW OUTLINE!

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The Russian Revolution

The Initial Revolution

- After 1905, Russia was a constitutional monarchy. But, because only the upper classes were allowed to vote, the conservatives pretty much dominated the Duma and blocked reforms. When the war broke out in 1914, the Duma was suspended and Tsar Nicholas II went to command the army. He left his wife (who was controlled by insane Rasputin) to run the country.
- Throughout 1916, discontent mounted to an almost intolerable level. Transportation was poor, production low, war refugees were everywhere, there were terrible food shortages – and, to make it worse, the peasants (who wanted land) and the workers were already raging mad.
- So, in March 1917 (called either the *March Revolution* or the *February Revolution*), strikers filled the streets of Petrograd (St. Petersburg) and, led by the Soviet of Workers (a groups of workers) they joined with the Duma committee and formed a provisional government. Nicholas II, who couldn't count on the army's support, was forced to abdicate.
- The provisional government was mainly moderate bourgeoisie (it was led by **Milyukov** and the only socialist was **Kerensky**, who was a social revolutionary and part of the Petrograd soviet) and it quickly established civil liberties, gave political prisoners amnesty, and stopped religious persecution. But, besides supporting the 8-hour-workday and ordering the abolition of class privileges, it left the other social issues to the constituent assembly it promised to call soon.
- The revolutionaries were actually highly divided, for Russia had many revolutionary parties, such as:
 1. **Cadets** → short for constitutional democrats, they were the most moderate of the revolutionaries and aimed for a liberal democracy.
 2. **Social Revolutionaries** → the SRs were mainly concerned with the peasants.
 3. **Social Democrats** → were the Marxists, but they were also divided between the Bolsheviks (Lenin's group) and the Mensheviks.
- The Bolsheviks (led by Lenin) wanted a hard-core, ultra-organized revolutionary group to be the vanguard of the revolution and they did not want to cooperate w/the Cadets. The Mensheviks wanted a larger party of part time revolutionaries and wanted to cooperate w/the Cadets.

The November Revolution

- While the first revolution occurred in Russia, Lenin, in exile in Switzerland, was organizing his party and formulating a new version of Marxism. Lenin stated that there was not going to be a spontaneous awakening of class consciousness (instead, the only result would be “trade union consciousness” and becoming middle class wannabes) and that an energetic party of revolutionaries was needed to divert the proletariat and take them towards the real revolution.
- In April 1917, however, the Germans (who hoped, since Lenin thought that WWI was an irrelevant civil war between the capitalists, that Lenin would disrupt the war effort) let Lenin back into Russia though a closed railroad car. He issued the *April Theses* (a masterpiece of propaganda), which supported “Peace, Land, and Bread” and “All Power to the Soviets”.
- Meanwhile, the provisional government was collapsing. There were disagreements over war policy and strikes. Kerensky became the leader, but his gov't was attacked from left (the Bolsheviks and their failed revolution in the July Days) and right (the *Kornilov Coup*). Kerensky still focused on the war, and in his attempt to get just one more great offensive (it never worked) he lost much public support.
- Because of the Kornilov Coup, Kerensky asked the left to help defend the gov't, so all the Bolsheviks were let out of prison. They won control of the Moscow and Petrograd soviets, and Trotsky was elected president of the Petrograd soviet.
- On November 6th, Lenin seized power in Petrograd and Moscow, and announced to the Congress that the Bolsheviks held power and were taking control of the armies. Although Kerensky tried to gain support, the armies were not interested in fighting for him.
- Congress approved a one-party cabinet: the Congress of Soviets replaced the parliament; they elected a Central Executive committee, which advised the cabinet. There was no real elected body – though elections were held for the constituent assembly (otherwise it would appear that the Bolsheviks were afraid of the results), it was dismissed after one day.

Communist Russia

- First, the Communists declared that land, livestock, and farm equipment belonged to the state but could be temporarily held by peasants. They also stated that no peasant was to work for hire, and that committees of the poor would supervise the allocation of land. There would be worker's committees controlling the factories, and all ranks were abolished. People's tribunals were established as well.
- In the next few months, everything was nationalized: railroads, banks, foreign trade, etc. A new secret police, the *Cheka* was established as well.
- **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** → in February 1918 Russia just stopped fighting, and in March Russia surrendered to the harsh Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which forced Russia to surrender more than one million square miles of territory to Germany. The communists tolerated the harsh terms because they felt that a revolution would soon occur in Germany as well.
- In July, Russia was declared a federation and political power was given to the local soviets, organized by occupation and elected by universal suffrage. The soviets elected delegates, who elected more delegates, up until the all-Russia Congress. The Communist party was not mentioned, but it really ran the show, for its Central Committee elected the Politburo, which shared power with the Council of People's Commissars (but in reality it was all the Politburo).
- **Red/White Civil War** → then, from 1918 to 1921, there was a brutal civil war of Communists vs. Everyone Else. Since the troops weren't committed to fighting the Bolsheviks, the Red Army won out, but at enormous cost (the policy of *War Communism*, which was stealing food from the peasants to feed the cities, caused agriculture to drop to 1/5th of its former level). After the civil war, there was the Communist-run *Red Terror*.
- Then, rising discontent caused Lenin to introduce the *NEP (New Economic Policy)*, which is Bukharin's pet project. The NEP is basically a retreat back to capitalism (private enterprise was encouraged, only enterprises with 60+ people were state-run, peasants allowed to grow and sell their own grain). IT WORKS!

Stalin's Rise to Power

- So all is going well until Lenin gets a stroke in 1923. Now there is a power vacuum in the party, and all five other members of the Politburo wonder who will fill it. The candidates are:
 1. **Leon Trotsky** → commander in chief of the army, and secretary of state.
 2. **Gregory Zinoviev** → leader of the *Comintern* (spreading the Rev to other countries).
 3. **Les Kamenev** → chief of staff.
 4. **Nikolai Bukharin** → chief of propaganda (a little more conservative, NEP).
 5. **Joseph Stalin** → considered by far the least talented, not a great thinker or speaker, did nothing during the Revolution or Civil War. So, he is made the Secretary of the Party.
- They see the parallels to the FR, and they are all wondering who Napoleon will be. Everyone thinks it will be Trotsky who they dislike as he joined the party late and is not trusted.
- So Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev form a STOP TROTSKY movement. They also form a Lenin Cult (a Cult of Personality), which turns Lenin into a God of Communism. Trotsky hates this, since he knows Lenin wasn't infallible. But Stalin and co. use the Lenin Cult to prove all the times that Trotsky was supposedly wrong (whenever he disagreed with Lenin).
- On his deathbed, Lenin realizes what Stalin is doing and writes in his will that Stalin should be expelled. But when they open the will, Kamenev and Zinoviev leap to Stalin's defense and say (believe it or don't) that *this one time* Lenin made a mistake, and vote to suppress the will and win.
- Meanwhile, several ideological debates continue:
 1. **NEP vs. Collectivization** → while Bukharin wants to keep the NEP permanently, Trotsky wants to start collectivization (instead of small private farms, big state run farms). Stalin sides with Bukharin as a pretext to attack Trotsky.
 2. **Permanent Revolution vs. Socialism in One Country** → since Trotsky wants to spread the Revolution throughout Europe, Stalin states he wants to focus on Russia.
- By 1925, Trotsky is forced to step down from the army (he could have pulled a coup d'etat, but he hated dictatorship, as it was against his principles) and is exiled by 1927.

Russia Under Stalin

- A new term, *totalitarianism*, was invented to describe Stalin's control over Russia (and Hitler's over Germany, etc.). Stalin controlled everything: education, propaganda...
- In the 1920s he made his enemies look bad in the history book, and then in the 1950s he wiped them out of the books altogether. He assassinated Trotsky in Mexico City to prevent him from telling the truth about the oppressive nature of his regime.
- After eliminating Trotsky Stalin moved against Kamenev and Zinoviev. He kicked them out of the party and replaced them with loyal supporters. In 1927, Stalin attacks Bukharin and proposes collectivization (as his own idea, of course). Bukharin (finally) gets the idea. Then in 1928, Stalin proclaims that he is "the Lenin of today" and turns himself into a living God of Communism. A new Cult of Personality is born.

- **Collectivization** → a.k.a. the First Five Year Plan (1928 to 1932). Peasants were forced off their land or whole villages were destroyed. Then, they were forced onto state run farms. Although it was absolutely brutal, it worked! Industry grew tremendously. Still, agriculture declined.
- Then, Stalin began a series of purges after the assassination of **Serge Kirov** (a popular Stalinist who was actually killed on Stalin's orders as a pretext and also b/c he was becoming too popular). He used the NKVD – in a series of show trials he had all the old Bolsheviks (anyone who was around at the Revolution) “confess” to crimes against the state – Bukharin, Zinoviev, all the army officers, etc.