

Chapter 18

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION

18.87 BACKGROUNDS

Study Questions

1. What reforms had been introduced in Russia under Alexander II? What policies did Alexander III pursue? With what results?
2. How did industrialization in the closing decades of the nineteenth century affect (a) the wage-earning class and (b) the capitalist class?
3. What special features characterized land ownership and the agrarian economy in Russia?
4. How did the Social Revolutionary party differ in attitudes and program from the Social Democratic Labor party?
5. Describe Lenin's personality and background. How would you evaluate his contributions to Marxism? What special factors in the Russian background affected his conception of a revolutionary party and of revolution?
6. How did Leninism accomplish the marriage of Russian revolutionary traditions with the Western doctrine of Marxism?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, Russia became more than ever before a part of European civilization.
2. The peasants were the ancient source of revolutionary disturbance in Russia.
3. The populists had a mystical faith in the Russian peasantry.
4. The Russian Marxists believed that Russia must develop capitalism, and industrial proletariat, and the modern form of class struggle before there could be any revolution.

5. The Leninist ideal of a highly disciplined party separated the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks.
6. Lenin reaffirmed Marx's basic analysis of society, reinforced certain theories of imperialism, and expanded on Marx's ideas on the role of the party.

Identifications

Pogroms	Social Revolutionary party	Social Democratic Labor party
Russification	Pobiedonostsev	<i>Mir</i>
Bolsheviks	Count Witte	Plekhanov
Mensheviks	Constitutional Democrats	Axelrod
Leninism		

18.88 THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

Study Questions

1. What signs of discontent appeared in Russia at the opening of the twentieth century? Of what significance was the war with Japan?
2. Describe the background and nature of the Revolution of 1905. What precipitated the revolution? What were the consequences? What does the illustration on p. 746 tell you about the mood of the people?
3. How did the Tsar and his advisers succeed in dividing the opposition with the October Manifesto?
4. What appeared to be the chief result of the Revolution of 1905? What was the actual result?
5. Explain the objectives and accomplishments of Stolypin. What sources of dissatisfaction persisted in the countryside despite his reforms?
6. In what direction did Russia seem to be moving by 1914, on the eve of the First World War?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. At the turn of the century, the almost simultaneous founding of three parties—the Constitutional Democrats, the Social Revolutionaries, and the Social Democrats—was clearly a sign of mounting dissatisfaction.

2. Tsar Nicholas II regarded the mildest liberalism or democracy as un-Russian.
3. The one thing that tsarism would not allow, even after 1905, was any real participation in the government by the people.
4. Stolypin's aim was to build up the propertied classes as friends of the state.
5. Despite its violence and repression, the Russian empire was moving in a western direction on the eve of the First World War.

Identifications

Nicholas II	Soviets	Duma
Father Gapon	St. Petersburg Soviet	Cadets
Bloody Sunday	October Manifesto	Peter Stolypin

18.89 THE REVOLUTION OF 1917

Study Questions

1. Why did dissatisfaction with the wartime tsarist regime emerge?
2. How was the crisis of March 1917 precipitated? What revolutionary events followed?
3. Describe the program of the Provisional Government and the obstacles it faced.
4. Explain the appeal of Lenin's program. Under what circumstances did the Bolsheviks seize power? Describe the new machinery of government.
5. What were Lenin's resolutions on peace and property?
6. What action did Lenin take with respect to the war? Why did he accept the Brest-Litovsk treaty?
7. In what sense was war communism expedient? How did war communism lead to trouble with the peasants?
8. Which groups resisted the new regime in the civil war? What role did the Allied governments play? What factors helped the Bolsheviks to triumph?

9. How might the Terror in Russia be compared with the Terror of the French Revolution? What were the net results of the Terror and civil war?
10. What do we learn from the illustrations on p 752 and 757 about popular discontent in 1917 about Trotsky and the Bolshevik party?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. The war put the tsarist regime to a test that it could not meet.
2. Although determined to establish a proletarian dictatorship, the Bolsheviks knew the importance of the Russian peasants.
3. Lenin and the Bolsheviks called for “peace, land, and bread” and for “All power to the Soviets!”
4. Lenin’s dissolution of the Constituent Assembly was a frank repudiation of majority rule in favor of class rule.
5. By the peace of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, the Bolsheviks abandoned the Russian conquests of two centuries.
6. The anti-Communist Russians represented every hue of the political spectrum from unregenerate tsarists to left-wing Social Revolutionaries.
7. The Red Army reconquered those areas of the tsarist empire which had declared their independence.
8. The Terror, along with the victories of the Red Army, helped establish the new regime.

Identifications

Rasputin	Alexander Kerensky	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
Executive committee	General Kornilov	Cheka
Constituent Assembly	Red Army	Petrograd Soviet
November Revolution	Leon Trotsky	White terror
Congress of Soviets	Kronstadt	Provisional Government
Council of People’s Commissars	Prince Lvov	Admiral Kolchak

Map Exercises

1. Study the map in your text on p. 762–763, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Where had Russia lost territory between 1918 and 1922?
2. Using the same map noted above, can you locate and describe the areas of the tsarist empire that declared their independence and were reconquered by the Red Army?

18.90 THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Study Questions

1. Why was the problem of nationalities important in Russia? How did the tsarist regime attempt to deal with it?
2. Describe the Soviet response to the nationalities problem (a) in theory and (b) in practice.
3. Describe governmental institutions and the suffrage in the Soviet Union before 1936. What changes were made in 1936?
4. What link was there between party and government in the Soviet Union? How were decisions arrived at in the party? In what sense did the party tend to lose its original character?
5. How would you assess the social reforms introduced in the early years of the regime? How did they affect women? What message is the political poster on p. 759 meant to convey?
6. Explain the background, nature, and results of the New Economic Policy.
7. How were the revolution and its effects represented in Russian art, film, and literature?
8. What role did Stalin play in the struggle for power that took place in the years immediately following Lenin's death? What criticisms did Trotsky level at the Soviet regime in 1925 and 1926?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. The federal principle in the U.S.S.R. was designed to answer the problem of the nationalities.
2. In theory, a principle of parallelism for state and party was adopted in the Soviet Union.

3. By the 1930s, the party in the U.S.S.R. functioned as a highly disciplined leadership group.
4. “War communism” had hopelessly antagonized the peasants.
5. The New Economic Policy, which lasted from 1921 to 1927, represented a compromise with capitalism.
6. The new Soviet society was supposed to destroy traditional gender hierarchies as well as hierarchies of class and wealth.
7. Writers and artists rallied to the revolutionary cause in the early years, seeing the social upheaval as part of a wider rejection of traditional ideas and artistic forms.

Identifications

The soviet republics	Central Committee	Permanent revolution
Russian S.F.S.R.	General Secretary	Mayakovsky
Politburo	Sergei Eisenstein	Socialist realism

Map Exercise

1. Study the map on p 762–763 in your text. What does it tell you about the multinational nature of the U.S.S.R.? Can you locate the Soviet republics mentioned in the text?

18.91 STALIN: THE FIVE-YEAR PLANS AND THE PURGES

Study Questions

1. What ideas and precedents contributed to the concept of economic planning?
2. What were the objectives of the First Five-Year Plan? What kind of a system did the Soviets establish to carry out that plan?
3. Explain the origins and nature of the collectivization program in agriculture. At what cost was it accomplished? How would you summarize its net results?
4. What generalizations may be made about the growth of industry and of production under the Five-Year plans? Explain the qualifications that must be made about Soviet industrial growth.
5. How would you evaluate the effects of the Five-Year plans on Soviet society? To what extent was economic equality realized or sought? What kind of competition persisted?

6. Who were the “Stakhanovites”? How did the labor in Russia compare to the labor circles in the United States at the time?
7. Describe the purges and purge trials of the 1930s. What was their net result?
8. How do the illustrations on p. 768, 772, and 773 depict aspects of Soviet society in the 1930s?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. “Planning” or the central planning of a country’s whole economic life by government officials became the distinctive feature of Soviet economics.
2. The year 1929, not 1917, was the most memorable revolutionary year for most people in Russia.
3. Collectivization of agriculture was to make possible the success of industrialization.
4. No ten years in the history of any industrializing country ever showed such a rate of industrial growth as the decade of the first two Five-Year plans in the Soviet Union.
5. The degree of industrialization in the U.S.S.R. can easily be exaggerated.
6. Solidarity in the U.S.S.R. was purchased at the price of totalitarianism.
7. Throughout the 1930s Stalin acted peremptorily to suppress all dissent.

Identifications

First Five-Year Plan	Second Five-Year Plan	Rightists
Gosplan	Stakhanovite	Collective farm
Constitution of 1936	Purge trials	Kulaks
Serge Kirov	Machine Tractor Stations	Trotskyist

18.92 THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF COMMUNISM, 1919–1939

Study Questions

1. How was international socialism affected (a) by the First World War and (b) by the Russian Revolution?

2. What events led to the founding of the Third International? What role did the Russian party play in its creation and operation?
3. What did Lenin's Twenty-One Points program for admission to the Comintern entail?
4. Explain the stages through which the Comintern passed in the years following its inception.

Key Discussion Sentences

1. In the First World War the socialists in every Western country proved their national loyalty.
2. Lenin believed that the Russian Revolution was only a local phase of a world revolution.
3. The mass of European socialists remained wedded to gradual, peaceable, and parliamentary methods.
4. The Comintern was not an assemblage of humanitarians engaged in welfare work; it was a weapon for revolution, organized by revolutionaries who knew how to seize power by revolutionary methods.
5. It was not through the Comintern that the U.S.S.R. exerted its greatest global influence but rather through its very existence.

Identifications

Revisionism	Zinoviev	Zimmerwald program
Twenty-One Points	Zimmerwald Left	Social Democrats
Popular fronts	First International	Second International
Third International		

GENERAL ESSAY QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 18

1. How would you compare the Russian Revolution of 1917 with the French Revolution of 1789? What similarities and differences stand out?
2. In what sense is it accurate to say that Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not cause the Russian Revolution but captured it after it had begun? How would you compare the two revolutions in Russia in the year 1917?
3. In what direction was Russia heading economically on the eve of the First World War? What was the Soviet economy like on the eve of the Second World War? How did this

come about? What weaknesses were there in the economy?

4. Discuss the international impact of the Russian Revolution from 1917 to the Second World War. What appeal did it have in various parts of the world? Why did it lose its claim to leadership of oppressed peoples?

GENERAL DISCUSSION PASSAGES FOR CHAPTER 18

1. The Russian Revolution of 1917 can be compared in its historical magnitude with the French Revolution of 1789. (p. 735)
2. The Russian Revolution, like all great revolutions, originated in a totality of previous history, in diverse local causes, and in the prolonged dissatisfaction of many kinds of people. (p. 737)
3. The Russian Revolution not only produced communism and hence fascism in Europe but also added strength to the emerging anticolonial movements in Asia and elsewhere. (p. 736)
4. The other traditional source of revolutionary disturbance lay among the intelligentsia. Revolutionary intelligentsia (as distinguished from those who were simply liberal or progressive) held a violent contempt for the Russian empire and yearned for a catastrophic overthrow of the tsardom. (p. 739)
5. Genius has been called the faculty for everlasting concentration upon one thing. Lenin said his one-time close associate Axelrod, “for twenty-four hours of the day is taken up with the revolution, has no thoughts but thoughts of revolution, and even in his sleep dreams of nothing but revolution.” (p. 741)
6. Leninism accomplished the marriage of Russian revolutionary traditions with the Western doctrine of Marxism. It was an improbable marriage, whose momentous offspring was to be communism. (p. 744)
7. Although determined to establish a proletarian dictatorship, the Bolsheviks knew the importance of the Russian peasants. The millions of acres belonging to the large estates that were now expropriated provided a base of peasant support for the new regime without which it could hardly have survived. (p. 753-754)
8. With the purges, Stalin rid himself of all possible rivals for his own position. (p. 774)
9. Of all enemies the Communists hated the socialists most, reserving for them even stronger epithets than they bestowed upon capitalists and imperialists. (p. 776)

10. Marxism was no longer merely a theory; there was an actual society, embracing a sixth of the globe, which called itself Marxist. (p. 777)
11. Some believed that something like Soviet results might be obtained without the use of Soviet methods. (p. 777)
12. Colonial and formerly colonial peoples, especially in Asia, were particularly impressed by the achievement of the U.S.S.R., which had shown how a traditional society could modernize without falling under the influence of foreign capital or foreign guidance. (p. 777)
13. By the late 1980s the U.S.S.R. was no longer an innovative society, and many people both within the Soviet Union and in the former colonial world came to believe that it could not adapt to modern social realities. (p. 777-778)
14. The revelation from within the Soviet Union itself of the persecution and deaths of tens of millions of innocent victims, along with the restiveness of its own nationalities, undermined its role as leader of oppressed peoples elsewhere. (p. 778)