MAHIS 2.4

M. A. HISTORY

SEMESTER - II

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HISTORY OF USSR IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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Programme Name: M.A. Sem- II	**Core course: 51411 History of USSR in the 20th century**
Total Credits: 02	**Total Marks: 50**
Semester End Assessment: 25	**Internal Continuous Assessment: 25**

Course Outcome

a) To create a comprehensive understanding of the political, social, and economic developments that took place in the Soviet Union during the 20th century.
b) To analyze the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 to the collapse of theSoviet Union in 1991.
c) To understand the Soviet history, including Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Gorbachev.

MODULE I: (2 Credits)

Unit 1: Historical Setting of USSR

a) The Development of Radical Political Parties, 1892-1904, The Soviet Union

b) Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Socialist Idea

c) October Revolution of 1917 and the creation of the Soviet Union

Unit 2: The Rise and fall of the Soviet Union (1917–1991)

a) Revolution and foundation (1917–1927), Vladimir Lenin, Stalin era (1927–1953), World War II and Soviet Union

b) Cold War and Soviet Union, De-Stalinization and Khrushchev Thaw (1953–1964)

c) Glasnost (Openness) and Perestroika (Democratization) reforms (1985–1991), Dissolution and aftermath

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HISTORICAL SETTING OF USSR

Unit Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To review the circumstances that led to the Russian revolution of 1917
- To study the course of Russian society's transformation into United Soviet Socialist Republic 'USSR'
- To understand the old regime of Romanov Tsar/Czar in transition of Russia to USSR
- To analyze the stronghold of Mensheviks and Bolsheviks in Russian revolution and its transition into USSR
- To assess the impacts of Russian Revolution and USSR impacts in the global political cultures

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The historical experience of the multinational Soviet Union is varied and complex and helps illuminate contemporary events and institutions. The histories of the predecessor states of the Soviet Union-Muscovy and the Russian Empire-demonstrate some long-term trends having applicability to the Soviet period: the predominant role of the East Slavs, particularly the Russians; the dominance of the state over the individual; territorial acquisition, which continued sporadically; nationality problems, which increased as diverse peoples became subjects of the state as a result of

territorial expansion; a general xenophobia, coupled with admiration for Western ideas and technology and disruptive sporadic campaigns to adopt them; and cyclical periods of repression and reform. The death knell of the Russian Empire came in March 1917, when the people of Petrograd (present-day Leningrad) rose up in an unplanned and unorganized protest against the tsarist regime and continued their efforts until Tsar Nicholas II abdicated. His government collapsed, leaving power in the hands of an elected Duma, which formed the Provisional Government. T

1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF RADICAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN RUSSIA: 1892-1917

Changing Socio-Political Scenario in Russia:

During the 1890s, Russia's industrial development led to a significant increase in the size of the urban bourgeoisie and the working class, setting the stage for a more dynamic political atmosphere and the development of radical parties. Because much of Russia's industry was owned by the state or by foreigners, the working class was comparatively stronger and the bourgeoisie comparatively weaker than in the West. Because the nobility and the wealthy bourgeoisie were politically timid, the establishment of working-class and peasant parties preceded that of bourgeois parties. Thus, in the 1890s and early 1900s strikes and agrarian disorders prompted by abysmal living and working conditions, high taxes, and land hunger became more frequent. The bourgeoisie of various nationalities developed a host of different parties, both liberal and conservative.

Socialist parties were formed on the basis of the nationalities of their members. Russian Poles, who had suffered significant administrative and educational Russification, founded the nationalistic Polish Socialist Party in Paris in 1892. Its founders hoped that it would help reunite a divided Poland from territories held by Austria and Germany and by Russia. In 1897 the Bund was founded by Jewish workers in Russia, and it became popular in western Ukraine, Belorussia, Lithuania, and Russian Poland. In 1898 the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was formed. The Finnish Social Democrats remained separate, but the Latvians and Georgians associated themselves with the Russian Social Democrats. Armenians were inspired by both Russian and Balkan revolutionary traditions, and they operated in both Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Politically minded Muslims living in Russia tended to be attracted to the pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic movements that developed in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. Russians who fused the ideas of the old Populists and urban socialists formed Russia's largest radical movement, the United Socialist Revolutionary Party, which combined the standard Populist mix of propaganda and terrorist activities.

Vladimir I. Ulianov was the most politically talented of the revolutionary socialists. In the 1890s, he labored to wean young radicals away from populism to Marxism. Exiled from 1895 to 1899 in Siberia, where he took the name Lenin, he was the master tactician among the organizers of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. In December 1900, he founded

the newspaper Iskra (Spark). In his book What Is to Be Done? (1902), Lenin developed the theory that a newspaper published abroad could aid in organizing a centralized revolutionary party to direct the overthrow of an autocratic government. He then worked to establish a tightly organized, highly disciplined party to do so in Russia. At the Second Party Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1903, he forced the Bund to walk out, and he induced a split between his majority Bolshevik faction and the minority Menshevik faction, which believed more in worker spontaneity than in strict organizational tactics. Lenin's concept of a revolutionary party and a worker-peasant alliance owed more to Tkachev and to the People's Will than to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the developers of Marxism. Young Bolsheviks, such as Joseph V. Stalin and Nikolai I. Bukharin, looked to Lenin as their leader.

Russian Socio-Political Conditions Prior to 1905:

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the vast majority of Russia's people were agriculturists. About 85 per cent of the Russian empire's population earned their living from agriculture. This proportion was higher than in most European countries. For instance, in France and Germany the proportion was between 40 per cent and 50 per cent. In the empire, cultivators produced for the market as well as for their own needs and Russia was a major exporter of grain. Industry was found in pockets. Prominent industrial areas were St Petersburg and Moscow. Craftsmen undertook much of the production, but large factories existed alongside craft workshops. Many factories were set up in the 1890s, when Russia's railway network was extended, and foreign investment in industry increased. Coal production doubled and iron and steel output quadrupled. By the 1900s, in some areas factory workers and craftsmen were almost equal in number. Most industry was the private property of industrialists. Government supervised large factories to ensure minimum wages and limited hours of work. But factory inspectors could not prevent rules being broken. In craft units and small workshops, the working day was sometimes 15 hours, compared with 10 or 12 hours in factories. Accommodation varied from rooms to dormitories. Workers were a divided social group. Some had strong links with the villages from which they came. Others had settled in cities permanently. Workers were divided by skill. A metalworker of St. Petersburg recalled, 'Metalworkers considered themselves aristocrats among other workers. Their occupations demanded more training and skill . . .' Women made up 31 per cent of the factory labour force by 1914, but they were paid less than men (between half and three-quarters of a man's wage). Divisions among workers showed themselves in dress and manners too. Some workers formed associations to help members in times of unemployment or financial hardship, but such associations were few. Despite divisions, workers did unite to strike work (stop work) when they disagreed with employers about dismissals or work conditions. These strikes took place frequently in the textile industry during 1896-1897, and in the metal industry during 1902. In the countryside, peasants cultivated most of the land. But the nobility, the crown and the Orthodox Church owned large properties. Like workers, peasants too were divided. They were also deeply religious. But

except in a few cases, they had no respect for the Source A nobility. Nobles got their power and position through their services to the Tsar, not through local popularity. This was unlike France where, during the French Revolution in Brittany, peasants respected nobles and fought for them. In Russia, peasants wanted the land of the nobles to be given to them. Frequently, they refused to pay rent and even murdered landlords. In 1902, this occurred on a large scale in south Russia. And in 1905, such incidents took place all over Russia. Russian peasants were different from other European peasants in another way. They pooled their land together periodically and their commune (mir) divided it according to the needs of individual families.

SOCIALIST MOVEMENT AND ITS ORGANISATION IN RUSSIA

All political parties were illegal in Russia before 1914. The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was founded in 1898 by socialists who respected Marx's ideas. However, because of government policing, it had to operate as an illegal organization. It set up a newspaper, mobilized workers and organized strikes. Some Russian socialists felt that the Russian peasant custom of dividing land periodically made them natural socialists. So, peasants, not workers, would be the main force of the revolution, and Russia could become socialist more quickly than other countries. Socialists were active in the countryside through the late nineteenth century. They formed the Socialist Revolutionary Party in 1900. This party struggled for peasants' rights and demanded that land belonging to nobles be transferred to peasants. Social Democrats disagreed with Socialist Revolutionaries about peasants. Lenin felt that peasants were not one united group. Some were poor and others rich, some worked as labourers while others were capitalists who employed workers. Given this 'differentiation' within them, they could not all be part of a socialist movement. The party was divided over the strategy of organization. Vladimir Lenin (who led the Bolshevik group) thought that in a repressive society like Tsarist Russia the party should be disciplined and should control the number and quality of its members. Others (Mensheviks) thought that the party should be open to all (as in Germany).

Russia: Shifting 'Peripheries', Representation, and Cultural Diversity:

Before we enter into the intricacies of the social class formations and societal structures in Russia. We need to understand the cultural framework and social orders in Russia.

The rapidly expanding Grand Principality of Moscow formally adopted the title of the Tsardom of Russia (Russkoe tsarstvo) in 1547, before declaring itself an 'empire' (imperiia) in 1721. There, centre-periphery relations were also contested and negotiated but, in comparison to France, they were less subject to formal contracts, let alone constitutions. Notably, in various Russian principalities during the Middle Ages, local populations had enjoyed greater autonomy and more influential bodies of representation than they would for most of the early modern era. In the

medieval republics of Novgorod (1136– 1478) and Pskov (1348–1510), and in many parts of the neighbouring union of Poland-Lithuania prior to 1500, the ruling 'princes' were appointed by, and answered to, popular assemblies known as vecha (singular: veche), which included nobles as well as poor townsfolk. These forums would not hesitate to reject the decisions of their princes, or even chase them out of office. By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, however, Moscow had absorbed most rival principalities. Given Russia's developing identity as a great power, Ivan IV (the 'Terrible', 1530–1584), who reigned as the first 'Tsar' from 1547–1584, pushed for ever more centralised rule. First, governors aided by troops and administrative staff were established throughout the expanding Muscovite state. They would receive state salaries while enjoying considerable local discretion. By 1625, the realm counted 146 such governors. Second, dozens of central administrative organs known as prikazy emerged in Moscow, with some of them devoted to specific functions, such as foreign affairs, and others to territories, such as the Kazan and Siberian prikazy. These proto-ministries would maintain growing numbers of staff in both the capital and the regions, especially for the purposes of taxation, paying salaries, and for meting out justice. Centralisation, however, remained patchy and contested. The early modern periphery was an open, diverse, and transient space. As the tsardom's border was extended further and further to the east and south, it was secured by ever more fortification lines and (mainly local) military servitors. Still, beyond garrison towns, central rule remained elusive. During rebellions by the fiercely autonomous Cossacks (1667–1671 and 1773–1775), who otherwise offered military service to the tsars, central troops fought for years to re-establish control. Even after such revolts, on the 'Russian' side of the border, most issues concerning justice, finances, military service, and land use had to be negotiated between various state, religious, and local elites, usually without any written charters or representative bodies. Beyond the open border, by contrast, formal agreements played a role in defining relationships with adjacent allies, including Ukrainian Cossacks. The latter's allegiance to the Tsar, in return for autonomy, was enshrined in the 'March Articles' of 1654 (also known in Russian as the Treaty of Pereyaslav). Written agreements known by the Turkic word sherty also formalised relations with Muslim Tatar and Kalmyk nomadic leaders, defining, among other things, reciprocal monetary obligations. Muslim chieftains would receive regular payments from the Muscovite state for their services in securing the border. Ivan IV thus wrote to one of these Muslim leaders in July 1559:

> Come to us with all the people that are now with you. And we will give space to all of you on the frontier [na Ukraine] in Meshchera, where you may wander as nomads as you wish. We will owe you a great salary. ("Posol'skaia kniga: po sviaziam Rossii s Nogaiskoi ordoi, 1557-1561", in Prodolzhenie drevnei rossiiskoi vivliofiki, vol. X, St. Petersburg, 1795, pp. 48-49)

Admittedly, the borderland allies did not always feel bound by such agreements, which they saw more as temporary alliances, and continued to raid Russian settlements. It was only under Catherine II (1762–1796) that

the central grip became more tangible, after a series of reforms and territorial reorganisations which also defined the responsibilities and rights of towns, provinces, and districts. By the late eighteenth century, the empire had abolished or violently displaced most formerly autonomous formations on the frontier, including the Cossack settlements. Still, central rule remained territorialised in that many central laws were made applicable only to specific regions, such as the 'western provinces', the 'Volga region', and so on. As a result, the situation of a particular group of subjects (for example, Muslims, merchants of the first guild, or peasants on state lands) could be vastly different depending on where they lived. Administrative centralisation did not deliver legal uniformity. Territorial expansion and organisation were key to centre-periphery relations in Russia. Assemblies and popular representation were less central to the development of these relations than in France, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe. The Duma, an advisory organ with no formal powers that included between one and two dozen nobles ('boyars') from the most important families in Muscovite society, was regularly summoned to consolidate the legitimacy of, and popular support for, the Tsar's decisions. It coexisted with a larger central institution called zemskii sobor (assembly of the land), which the tsars convened every few years between 1549 and 1684 for the same reasons. Historians differ on the question of the assembly's composition but, at different times, it included boyars, provincial governors, lower gentry, Russian Orthodox clergy, townsfolk, and peasants. This central institution, however, did not systematically channel regional interests. With few exceptions (such as the Baltic provinces, which were allowed to retain their German-speaking Landtage after the Russian conquest in 1710), there were no regional assemblies or parliaments recognised by the centre. It was only in 1766 that Catherine II introduced 'noble assemblies' at the provincial and district levels and allowed them to look into local matters. In 1767–1768, she convened a Legislative Commission in Moscow and St Petersburg to produce a new legal code, with delegates representing many social groups and regions bearing instructions from those who had locally selected them. Yet, this advisory commission never produced any substantive laws or codes; it was significant mainly in that it provided the Empress with information on local concerns. The idea of three distinct 'estates' in a Western European sense (clergy, nobility, common people) fails to capture the real-life hierarchies of early modern Russia. Other categories had greater legal impact: poll-tax payers, for example, a category from which not only clergymen and higher nobility were exempted but also rich merchants and many non-Russian rural residents; lesser nobles and bureaucrats, by contrast, often had to pay this tax along with most commoners. Among the clergy and nobility, it also mattered whether someone was (Orthodox) Christian. Muslim and Buddhist nobles and 'clergy', for example, had more limited privileges while others, including the (Protestant) Baltic Germans, actually enjoyed more privileges than most Russians. As for the rural population, there were so many legal differences between Russian Orthodox and non-Orthodox peasants and between state-owned peasants and privately-owned serfs that the category of 'peasant' meant little. Cossacks and inorodtsy (literally, 'those of other descent'), a term that

captured some but not all non-Russians, formed separate legal categories altogether. Footnotes in legal texts made sure that many rights were withheld from the Jewish population. Ethno-religious differences were thus just as important as social distinctions in imperial society. Unlike many Western monarchies, the Russian Empire took pride in its cultural diversity and flaunted it wherever possible— while privileging the Russian Orthodox. Since some Russian regions had large percentages, even majorities, of non-Russians, the legal status of these communities would also shape the relationship between Moscow, St Petersburg and their various 'peripheries'. Moreover, the reality of large indigenous communities and predominantly Russian-staffed local administrations would raise the question of which 'peripheries' were also Russian 'colonies'. Eventually, the centre's advance across Eurasia along with improvements in cartography led the geographer and statesman Vasily Tatishchev (1686–1750) to give impetus in the 1730s to an intellectual debate about Russia's true centre and periphery. By selecting the Ural Mountains as the natural border between Europe and Asia, he not only divided Russia into a 'European' and an 'Asiatic' part—thereby confirming the European identity of St Petersburg's elites— but he also turned the land beyond the mountains into the empire's ultimate periphery. Talk of Russia's 'interior provinces' inside its European half would soon become commonplace. The debate on 'Russianness', however, along with extensive discussions of Russia's geographical core and peripheries, would not gather full pace until the nineteenth century.

New Ideas Reaching Russia 1800-1900:

The "long nineteenth century" (Eric Hobsbawm) was the century of the steam engine. Due to its amazing power, the exchange of people, goods, and ideas reached new dimensions. Installed in locomotives, the mobile steam engine became the driving force of an ever-faster journey to modernity. Railways were regarded as symbols of progress, transporting products and, so it was thought, values to the remotest peripheries and regions. Most importantly, railroads were able to transcend the obstacles of space, distance, and time. Taken together, they seemed to be a solution to one of the crucial questions of European history, beginning from the mid-nineteenth century: the integration of internal and external peripheries and their connection to economic and political centres. This chapter uses railroads and their infrastructures as a lens to discuss this decisive and ambivalent process that has shaped European history to this very day. Empirical evidence used in this chapter stems largely from three major empires that were themselves located at the European peripheries. They—the Habsburg Empire, the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire—were only partially 'European' in some eyes. As examples, they highlight the significance of 'peripheral' regions for larger developments in European history and at the same time they provide important insights into the contingent nature of centre-periphery relations.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, different and often opposing ideas of Europe thrived on the continent. Older notions of European civilisation survived or were adapted to the new times. Meanwhile,

contemporary developments such as industrialisation and the rise of nationalist movements, as well as political revolutions, had produced new ideas like a 'United States of Europe'. The development of the modern political spectrum of conservatism, liberalism and socialism over the course of the nineteenth century was closely related to these new notions of 'Europe', with each camp articulating their own vision. In the context of the rise of modern nationalist movements, pacifist ideas of 'perpetual peace' gained importance as a solution to the conflicts that the nationalist struggles generated. While much of Europe during the nineteenth century was ruled by absolute or constitutional monarchs, no part of the continent was immune from the legacy of the French Revolution of 1789. The revolution gave form to ideas such as popular sovereignty, nationalism, and liberalism. It popularised the idea of the 'people' as a legitimate (and, indeed, sovereign) political grouping and challenged traditional assumptions about the ability of monarchical and aristocratic regimes to provide good governance for all. Social movements sprang up throughout the continent during the nineteenth century to agitate for inclusion in the political nation and the expansion of (political) rights. These often internationally entangled movements could take manifold shapes: some called for an expansion of voting rights, others for women's rights and suffrage, others for the abolition of slavery and the improvement of labour rights and conditions. And since they all faced modernising states, they were all compelled to reinvent themselves in the ways they protested, especially in asking themselves the question of whether violence was an acceptable means to their political ends—and if so, to what extent?

The reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I:

General survey:

1 of 2: Alexander IAlexander I, miniature by Jean-Baptiste Isabey, c. 1814; in the collection of Mrs. Merriweather Post, Hillwood, Washington, D.C.

2 of 2: Nicholas INicholas I, detail of a watercolour by Christina Robertson, 1840; in the collection of Mrs. Merriweather Post, Hillwood, Washington, D.C.

When Alexander I came to the throne in March 1801, Russia was in a state of hostility with most of Europe, though its armies were not actually fighting; its only ally was its traditional enemy, Turkey. The new emperor quickly made peace with both France and Britain and restored normal relations with Austria. His hope that he would then be able to concentrate on internal reform was frustrated by the reopening of war with Napoleon in 1805. Defeated at Austerlitz in December 1805, the Russian armies fought Napoleon in Poland in 1806 and 1807, with Prussia as an ineffective ally. After the Treaty of Tilsit (1807), there were five years of peace, ended by Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. From the westward advance of its arms in the next two years of heavy fighting, Russia emerged as Europe's greatest land power and the first among the continental victors over Napoleon. The immense prestige achieved in these campaigns was maintained until mid-century. During this period, Russian armies fought only against weaker enemies: Persia in 1826, Turkey in 1828–29, Poland in 1830–31, and the mountaineers of the Caucasus during the 1830s and '40s. When Europe was convulsed by revolution in 1848 (see Revolutions of 1848), Russia and Great Britain alone among the great powers were unaffected, and in the summer of 1849 the tsar sent troops to crush the Hungarians in Transylvania. Russia was not loved, but it was admired and feared. To the upper classes in central Europe, Nicholas I was the stern defender of monarchical legitimacy; to democrats all over the world, he was "the gendarme of Europe" and the chief enemy of liberty. But the Crimean War (1853–56) showed that this giant had feet of clay. The vast empire was unable to mobilize, equip, and transport enough troops to defeat the medium-size French and English forces under very mediocre command. Nicholas died in the bitter knowledge of general failure.

Alexander I as a young man had longed to reform his empire and benefit his subjects. His hopes were disappointed, partly by the sheer inertia, backwardness, and vastness of his domains, partly perhaps because of defects of his own character, but also because Napoleon's aggressive enterprises diverted Alexander's attention to diplomacy and defense. Russia's abundant manpower and scanty financial resources were both consumed in war. The early years of his reign saw two short periods of attempted reform. During the first, from 1801 to 1803, the tsar took counsel with four intimate friends, who formed his so-called Unofficial Committee, with the intention of drafting ambitious reforms. In the period from 1807 to 1812, he had as his chief adviser the liberal Mikhail Speransky. Both periods produced some valuable administrative innovations, but neither initiated any basic reform. After 1815 Alexander was mainly concerned with grandiose plans for international peace; his motivation was not merely political but also religious—not to say mystical—for the years of war and national danger had aroused in him an interest in matters of faith to which, as a pupil of the 18th-century Enlightenment, he had previously been indifferent. While he was thus preoccupied with diplomacy and religion, Russia was ruled by conservatives and reactionaries, among whom the brutal but honest Gen. Aleksey Arakcheyev was outstanding. Victory in war had strengthened those who upheld the established order, serfdom and all. The mood was one of intense national pride: Orthodox Russia had defeated Napoleon, and therefore it was not only foolish but also impious to copy foreign models. Educated young Russians, who had served in the army and seen Europe, who read and spoke French and German and knew contemporary European literature, felt otherwise. Masonic lodges and secret societies flourished in the early 1820s. From their deliberations emerged a conspiracy to overthrow the government, inspired by a variety of ideas: some looked to the United States for a model, others to Jacobin France. The conspirators, known as the Decembrists because they tried to act in December 1825 when the news of Alexander I's death became known and there was uncertainty about his successor, were defeated and arrested; five were executed, and many more sentenced to various terms of imprisonment in Siberia. Nicholas I, who succeeded after his elder brother Constantine had finally refused the throne, was deeply affected by these events and set himself against any major political change, though he did not reject the idea of administrative reform. After the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe, his opposition to all change, his suspicion of even mildly liberal ideas, and his insistence on an obscurantist censorship reached their climax.

The sections that follow cover the development under Alexander I and Nicholas I of the machinery of government, of social classes and economic forces, of education and political ideas, of the relations between Russians and other peoples within the empire, and of Russian foreign policy.

Government:

The discussions of Alexander I's Unofficial Committee were part of an ongoing debate that was to remain important until the end of the imperial regime. This may be called the debate between enlightened oligarchy and enlightened autocracy. The proponents of oligarchy looked back to a somewhat idealized model of the reign of Catherine II. They wished greater power to be placed in the hands of the aristocracy for the purpose of achieving a certain balance between the monarch and the social elite, believing that both together were capable of pursuing policies that would benefit the people as a whole. Their opponents, of whom the most talented was the young count Pavel Stroganov, were against any limitation on the power of the tsar. Whereas the oligarchs wished to make the Senate an important centre of power and to have it elected by senior officials and country nobility, Stroganov maintained that if this were done the sovereign would have "his arms tied, so that he would no longer be able to carry out the plans which he had in favour of the nation." In any event, neither enlightened oligarchs nor enlightened absolutists had their way: Russia's government remained autocratic but reactionary. Alexander, however, never quite abandoned the idea of representative institutions. He encouraged Speransky to prepare in 1809 a draft constitution that included a pyramid of consultative elected bodies and a national assembly with some slight powers of legislation. In 1819 he asked Nikolay Novosiltsev, a former member of the Unofficial Committee who had made a brilliant career as a bureaucrat, to prepare another constitution, which turned out to be rather similar to the first, although somewhat more conservative and less centralist. Neither was ever implemented, though Alexander took some features of the first, notably the institution of the State Council, and used them out of their intended context.

In 1802 Alexander instituted eight government departments, or ministries, of which five were essentially new. The organization of the departments was substantially improved in 1811 by Speransky. In the 1820s the Ministry of the Interior became responsible for public order, public health, stocks of food, and the development of industry and agriculture. Inadequate funds and personnel and the dominant position of the serf-owning nobility in the countryside greatly limited the effective power of this ministry. There was no question of a formal council of ministers, or of anything corresponding to a cabinet, and there was no prime minister. A committee of ministers coordinated to some extent the affairs of the different departments, but its importance depended on circumstances and on individuals. When the tsar was abroad, the committee was in charge of internal affairs. Aleksey Arakcheyev was for a time secretary of the committee, but he did not cease to be the strongest man in Russia under the tsar when he ceased to hold this formal office. The committee had a president, but this office did not confer any significant power or prestige.

Under Nicholas I the committee of ministers continued to operate, but the individual ministers were responsible only to the emperor. The centre of power to some extent shifted into the emperor's personal chancery, which was built up into a formidable apparatus. The Third Department of the

chancery, created in July 1826, under Count Aleksandr Benckendorff, was responsible for the security police. Its head was also chief of gendarmes, and the two offices were later formally united. The task of the security force was to obtain information on the state of political opinion and to track down and repress all political activity that might be considered dangerous to the regime. The Third Department was also considered by the tsar as an instrument of justice in a broad sense, the defender of all those unjustly treated by the powerful and rich. Some of the department's reports show that there were officials who took these duties seriously, but as a whole it showed more talent for wasting time and effort and for repressing opposition and stifling opinion than for redressing the grievances of the powerless. In addition, the department was often on the worst of terms with other branches of the public service.

Russia under Alexander I and Nicholas I was ruled by its bureaucracy. The efforts of successive sovereigns after Peter the Great to establish a government service of the European type had had partial success. The Russian bureaucracy of 1850 combined some features of a central European bureaucracy of 1750 with some features of pre-Petrine Russia. One may speak of a "service ethos" and trace this back to 16th-century Muscovy. But the foundation of this ethos was, for the great majority of Russian officials, servile obedience to the tsar and not service to the state as that phrase was understood in a country such as Prussia. The notion of the state as something distinct from and superior to both ruler and ruled was incomprehensible to most government servants. Russian bureaucrats were obsessed with rank and status. Indeed, because salaries were quite meagre, this was the only incentive that the government could give. Rank was not so much a reward for efficient service as a privilege to be grasped and jealously guarded. In order to prevent able persons, especially of humble origin, from rising too quickly, great emphasis was placed on seniority. There were exceptions, and outstandingly able, cultured, and humane men did reach the top under Nicholas I, but they were few.

The rank and file of the bureaucracy was mediocre, but its numbers steadily increased, perhaps trebling in the first half of the century. It remained poorly paid. The government's poverty was caused by the underdeveloped state of the economy, by the fact that no taxes could be asked of the nobility, and by the cost of waging wars—not only the great wars but also the long colonial campaigns in the Caucasus. Government officials were badly educated. They lacked not only precise knowledge but also the sort of basic ethical training that competent officials need. They were reluctant to make decisions: responsibility was pushed higher and higher up the hierarchy, until thousands of minor matters ended on the emperor's desk. Centralization of responsibility meant slowness of decision, and delays of many years were not unusual; death often provided the answer. There were also many antiquated, discriminatory, and contradictory laws. Large categories of the population, such as Jews and members of heretical Christian sects, suffered from various legal disabilities. Since not all those discriminated against were poor and since many small officials were unable to support their families, bending or evasion of the law had its market price, and the needy official had a

supplementary source of income. Corruption of this sort existed on a mass scale. To a certain extent it was a redeeming feature of the regime: if there had been less corruption the government would have been even slower, less efficient, and more oppressive.

Social classes:

No significant changes were made in the condition of the serfs in the first half of the century. Alexander I, perhaps from fear of nobility and with the memory of his father's fate in mind, approached the problem with caution, though with a desire for reform, but first war and then diplomacy diverted him. His successor, Nicholas, disliked serfdom, but there were political hazards in eliminating it. The power of the central government extended down to the provincial governors and, more tenuously, down to the ispravnik, or chief official of the district, of which each province had several. The ispravnik was elected by the local nobility. Below the level of the district, the administration virtually ceased to operate: the sole authority was the serf owner. If serfdom were to be abolished, some other authority would have to be put in its place, and the existing bureaucratic apparatus was plainly inadequate. **The Decembrist conspiracy or Decemberist Revolt in 1825; In 1825,** the anti-tsarist discontent became a coup, led by liberal noblemen and army officers. The uprising though quickly suppressed, was the first sign of a conflict between the autocracy and the intelligentsia that was to dominate Russia through the 19th century and into the 20th. The surviving demonstrators, who called themselves Decembrists, were arrested and exiled to Siberia. In the coming years, they came to be seen as heroes among Russian revolutionaries. However, in the nineteenth century the Decemberist revolt had greatly increased the tsar's distrust of the nobility. He was determined to avoid public discussion of reform, even within the upper class.

The one important exception to the general picture of bureaucratic stagnation was the creation of the Ministry of State Domains, under Gen. Pavel Kiselev. This became an embryonic ministry of agriculture, with authority over peasants who lived on state lands. These were a little less than half the rural population: in 1858 there were 19 million state peasants and 22.5 million private serfs. Kiselev set up a system of government administration down to the village level and provided for a measure of self-government under which the mayor of the volost (a district grouping several villages or peasant communes) was elected by male householders. There was also to be a volost court for judging disputes between peasants. Kiselev planned to improve medical services, build schools, establish warehouses for stocks of food in case of crop failure, and give instruction in methods of farming. Something was done in all these fields, even if less than intended and often in a manner that provoked hostility or even violent riots; the personnel of the new ministry was no more competent than the bureaucracy as a whole.

Only minor measures were taken to benefit the serfs on private estates. Opposition to serfdom grew steadily, however, not only among persons of European outlook and independent thought but also among high officials.

It seemed not only unjust but intolerable that in a great nation men and women could be owned. Serfdom was also obviously an obstacle to economic development.

Whether serfdom was contrary to the interests of serf owners is a more complex question. Those who wished to abolish it argued that it was, since their best hope of getting the nobility to accept abolition lay in convincing them that their self-interest required it. Certainly in parts of southern Russia where the soil was fertile, labour was plentiful, and potential profits in the grain trade with Europe were high, a landowner would do better if he could replace his serfs with paid agricultural labour and be rid of obligations to those peasants whom he did not need to employ. In other regions, where the population was scanty, serfdom provided the landowner with an assured labour supply; if it were abolished, he would have to pay more for his labour force or see it melt away. In large parts of northern Russia where the land was poor, many serfs made a living from various crafts—in cottage industry or even in factories—and from their wages had to pay dues to their masters. The abolition of serfdom would deprive the serf owner of this large income and leave him with only what he could make from farming and from tenants with rather poor economic prospects. On balance, it seems likely that the short-term interests of the great majority of serf owners favoured the maintenance of serfdom, and, in any case, there is no doubt that this is what most serf owners believed.

Industry and trade made slow progress during these years. In the latter part of the 18th century, Russia had been, thanks to its Urals mines, one of the main producers of pig iron. In the next 50 years, it was left far behind by Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. In cotton textiles and sugar refining, Russia was more successful. Count Egor Frantsevich Kankrin, minister of finance from 1823 to 1844, tried to encourage Russian industry by high protective tariffs. He also set up schools and specialized institutes for the advancement of commerce, engineering, and forestry. Russia's exports of grain increased substantially, though its share of total world trade remained about the same in 1850 as in 1800. The first railways also appeared; rail traffic between St. Petersburg and Moscow was opened in 1851. The road system remained extremely inadequate, as was demonstrated in the Crimean War.

The urban population grew significantly. There were a few prosperous merchants, well protected by the government. Some centres, such as Ivanovo in central Russia, with its textile industry, had the beginnings of an industrial working class. The rest of the inhabitants of the cities consisted of small tradesmen and artisans, together with serfs living in town with their owners' permission as household servants or casual labourers.

Education and intellectual life:

Alexander I's School Statute (1804) provided for a four-tier system of schools from the primary to the university level, intended to be open to persons of all classes. Under its provisions several new universities were

founded, and gymnasiums (pre-university schools) were established in most provincial capitals. Less was done at the lower levels, for the usual reason of inadequate funds. In the latter part of Alexander's reign, education was supervised by Prince Aleksandr Nikolayevich Golitsyn, head of the Ministry of Education and Spiritual Affairs. In an effort to combat what he believed to be dangerous irreligious doctrines emanating from western Europe, Golitsyn encouraged university students to spy on their professors and on each other; those who taught unacceptable ideas were frequently dismissed or threatened with prison. Under Nicholas I there was some improvement. Count Sergey Uvarov, minister of education from 1833 to 1849, permitted a much freer intellectual atmosphere, but he also began the practice of deliberately excluding children of the lower classes from the gymnasiums and universities, a policy continued under his successors.

Nevertheless, in increasing numbers the children of minor officials, small tradesmen, and especially priests were acquiring education. Together with the already Europeanized nobility, they began to form a new cultural elite. Direct political criticism was prevented by the censorship of books and periodicals. Petty police interference made life disagreeable even for writers who were not much concerned with politics. Aleksandr Pushkin, Russia's greatest poet, got into trouble with the police for his opinions in 1824; he was also a friend of some leading Decembrists. After 1826 he lived an unhappy life in St. Petersburg, tolerated but distrusted by the authorities and producing magnificent poetry until he met his death in a duel in 1837. The writers Mikhail Lermontov and Nikolay Gogol were also objects of suspicion to the bureaucrats.

The censorship was not always efficient, and some of the censors were liberal. It became possible to express political ideas in the form of philosophical arguments and literary criticism. Thus, it was partly in intellectual periodicals and partly in discussions in the private houses of Moscow noblemen that the controversy between "Westernizers" and "Slavophiles" developed. It began with the publication of a "philosophical letter" by Pyotr Chaadayev in the periodical Teleskop in 1836. One of the most brilliant essays ever written about Russia's historical heritage, it argued that Russia belonged neither to West nor to East, neither to Europe nor to Asia:

Standing alone in the world, we have given nothing to the world, we have learnt nothing from the world, we have not added a single idea to the mass of human ideas; we have made no contribution to the progress of the human spirit, and everything that has come to us from that spirit, we have disfigured.… Today we form a gap in the intellectual order.

Nicholas declared that Chaadayev must be mad and gave orders that he should be confined to his house and regularly visited by a doctor.

It is misleading to represent the Westernizers as wishing to slavishly copy all things Western or the Slavophiles as repudiating everything European and rejecting reform. The chief Slavophiles—Aleksey S. Khomyakov, the

brothers Ivan and Pyotr Kireyevsky, the brothers Konstantin and Ivan Aksakov, and Yury Samarin—were men of deep European culture and, with one exception, bitter opponents of serfdom. Indeed, as landowners they knew more about the problems and sufferings of the serfs than many Westernizers did. The leading Westernizers—Aleksandr Herzen, Vissarion Belinsky, and Mikhail Bakunin—were for their part profoundly Russian. Belinsky was ill at ease with foreigners, and Herzen and Bakunin, despite many years' residence in France, Germany, England, and Italy, remained not only hostile to the world of European bourgeois liberalism and democracy but also strangely ignorant of it.

The difference between Westernizers and Slavophiles was essentially that between radicals and conservatives, a familiar theme in the history of most European nations. It was the difference between those who wished to pull the whole political structure down and replace it with a new building, according to their own admirable blueprints, and those who preferred to knock down some parts and repair and refurnish others, bit by bit. Another basic difference was that the Slavophiles were Orthodox Christians and the Westernizers either atheists or, like the historian T.N. Granovsky, Deists with their own personal faith. Belinsky described the Orthodox church in his famous "Letter to Gogol" (1847) as "the bulwark of the whip and the handmaid of despotism." He maintained that the Russian populace was "by its nature a profoundly atheistic people" and that it viewed the priesthood with contempt. These were but half-truths: the church was indeed subject to the government and upheld autocracy, and priests were often unpopular, but this did not mean that the peasants and a large part of the upper and middle classes were not devoted to the Orthodox faith.

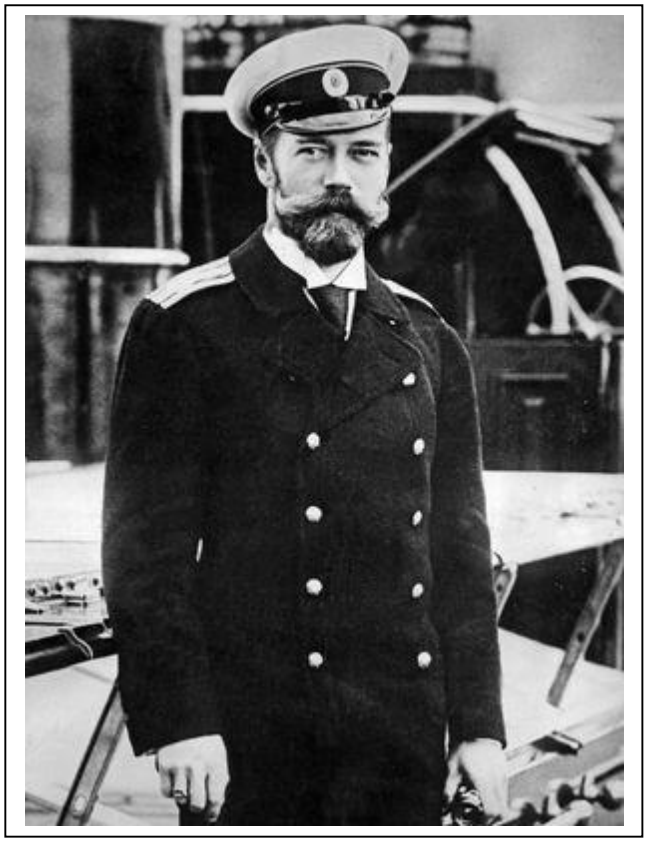
The Slavophiles idealized early Russian history. They believed that there had once been a happy partnership between tsar and people: the tsar had consulted the people through their elected spokesmen in the zemsky sobor. This had been changed by Peter the Great when he sought to copy foreign models and interposed an alien bureaucracy, staffed largely by Germans, between himself and his people. The Slavophiles held that Russia should return to the way from which it had strayed under Peter. They asked not for a legislative body of the Western type, still less for parliamentary government, but for a consultative assembly to advise the emperor. This was quite unacceptable to Nicholas, who was proud of Peter the Great and believed himself his political heir. To the Westernizers, on the other hand, Peter the Great was a symbol of radical change, not of autocracy.

Late tsarist Russia:

Sometime in the middle of the 19th century, Russia entered a phase of internal crisis that in 1917 would culminate in revolution. Its causes were not so much economic or social as political and cultural. For the sake of stability, tsarism insisted on rigid autocracy that effectively shut out the population from participation in government. At the same time, to maintain its status as a great power, it promoted industrial development and higher education, which were inherently dynamic. The result was perpetual tension between government and society, especially its educated

element, known as the intelligentsia. Of the socioeconomic causes of tsarism's ultimate collapse, the most important was rural overpopulation: tsarist Russia had the highest rate of demographic growth in Europe; in the second half of the 19th century the rural population increased by more than 50 percent. Potentially destabilizing also was the refusal of the mass of Russian peasantry, living in communes, to acknowledge the principle of private property in land.

In the late 19th century the political conflict pitted three protagonists: tsarism, the peasantry (with the working class, its subdivision), and the intelligentsia.



Nicholas II : Nicholas II, the last Russian tsar:

The tsar was absolute and unlimited in his authority, which was subject to neither constitutional restraints nor parliamentary institutions. He ruled with the help of a bureaucratic caste, subject to no external controls and above the law, and the army, one of whose main tasks was maintaining internal order. Imperial Russia developed to a greater extent than any contemporary country a powerful and ubiquitous security police. It was a crime to question the existing system or to organize for any purpose whatsoever without government permission. The system, which contained seeds of future totalitarianism, was nevertheless not rigidly enforced and was limited by the institution of private property.

Some eighty percent of the empire's population consisted of peasants. The vast majority of Russian peasants lived in communes (obshchiny), which held land in common and periodically redistributed it to member

households to allow for changes in family size. The communal organization, composed of heads of households, exercised great control over members. Communal peasants did not own their land but merely cultivated it for a period of time determined by local custom. Under these conditions they had little opportunity to develop respect for private property or any of the other qualities necessary for citizenship. Politically they tended toward primitive anarchism. To some extent this also held true for industrial workers, some two million strong at the turn of the century, most of whom came from the village.

The intelligentsia was partly liberal, partly radical, but in either case unalterably opposed to the status quo. Radical intellectuals tried in the 1860s and ’70s to stir the peasants and workers to rebellion. Having met with no response, they adopted methods of terror, which culminated in 1881 in the assassination of Emperor Alexander II. The government reacted with repressive measures that kept the revolutionaries at bay for the next two decades. In the meantime the field was left to liberal intellectuals, who in January 1904 formed the Union of Liberation, a semilegal political body committed to the struggle for democracy.

Introduction: The Age of Revolutions as the Defining Moment:

The ‘long twentieth century’ (or the period from the 1910s to the 2010s), began and ended with a series of revolutions—accompanied by violent conflicts and civil wars—from the Russian Revolution (1917), via the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the post-Soviet conflicts (various wars after 1991, up until the Donbas War, 2014-present), and the Yugoslav Wars (1991–2001). To properly understand the significance of revolutions in this period, we must briefly consider how revolution as a defining event and concept was inscribed in history during the Age of Revolutions. The Age of Revolutions—roughly spanning the era of the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Bonapartist takeover until the end of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in 1815—was the moment that both the history and historiography of revolutions took off. A revolution has since then been understood as a major “change in the way a country was governed, usually to a different political system, and often using violence or war”, as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary. The American Revolution changed the way the American territories were governed from a monarchy (under the British sovereign) to a republic, just as France cast off the Bourbon monarchy in 1789. Since then, pundits, writers, politicians, and historians have tried to make sense of the revolution (Adolphe Thiers), reject it (Edmund Burke), or take it as a blueprint for new rounds of (violent) transformations (Pyotr Kropotkin). This contested tradition of dealing with revolutions only intensified in the twentieth century. Are revolutions always a precursor to wars, and to civil wars in particular? Does revolutionary zeal automatically lead to war and terror, or could such a fallout be averted and transformed into processes of democratisation? For the German historian Thomas Nipperdey, it was Napoleon who completed the transformations that manifested with the revolutionary era, and who, with his Grande Armée unleashing a “total war”, would mark the beginning of a disastrous thread of civil wars and

revolutions that weaves through German, and European, history. Indeed, civil wars are often a logical outcome or corollary to revolutions, as “wars fought by different groups of people living in the same country” (Cambridge Dictionary). Such wars could be driven by the clash of interests that were at stake in the revolution, or that were under threat of being overrun in its course. They would moreover be inspired by the fear or prevention of impending terror, with ‘terror’ being perceived (since the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon) both as the threat of unilateral invasions and hegemonic repression by means of conquering armies and regimes, and as the threat posed by non-state groups aiming to overthrow the sitting government and upend the current state of interests and affairs.

1.3 BOLSHEVIKS AND MENSHEVIKS, SOCIALIST IDEA

In 1898, the Marxist socialists founded the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. In 1903, at its second congress held in London, the Russian Social Democratic Party split into two groups; the Bolsheviks and the Measheviks.

The following were two fundamental points of difference between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks:

a. Mensheviks Bourgeois Democratic Republic versus Proletariate Dictatorship Bolsheviks:

i. The Mensheviks firmly believed in, and upheld, the doctrine of George Plekhanow, that is, the overthrow of the Tsarist monarchy must be followed by the establishment of a bourgeois democratic republic as a transitory stage for the ultimate establishment of socialism.

ii. The Bolsheviks, under the brilliant leadership of Lenin, out right rejected the transitory stage of Bourgeois democratic republic; instead of that, they strongly advocated that the overthrow of the Tsarist monarchy must be succeeded immediately by the proletariat dictatorship, without the transitory stage of a home rule or a democratic republic. They assailed the democratic republic as an "implacable enemy".

iii. The Mensheviks were, thus, evolutionary and were led by Martov, whereas the Bolsheviks were revolutionary, radical and violent and were led by Lenin, supported by Stalin.

b. Democratic Method:

Another significant point of distinction between the two parties was in the matter of party administration.

i. The Mensheviks advocated the democratic method, that is, the right of the rank and file to take active part in the task of framing policies.

ii. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, favoured authoritarian centralism. However, the entire course of the Russian revolution of 1917, was hard hit by the nature of the Bolshevik doctrine, which ultimately determined the shape and character of the Soviet State.

In 1905, the industrial workers of St. Petersburg and Moscow formed the Soviet-a Council of Workers' Deputies representing the factories of the given city. It were these Soviets which played a pivotal role in the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia.

1.4 OCTOBER REVOLUTION OF 1917

The October Revolution, also known as the Bolshevik Revolution, was a pivotal event in Russian history that occurred on November 7, 1917 (October 25 by the old Julian calendar). It involved the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, who overthrew the Provisional Government and established the world's first communist state. This revolution marked a significant shift in Russia's political landscape and had far-reaching consequences.

Key aspects of the October Revolution:

Second Revolution:

It was the second major phase of the larger Russian Revolution of 1917, following the February Revolution which had overthrown the Tsarist regime.

Bolshevik Leadership:

Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who advocated for socialist principles, led the revolution.

Seizure of Power:

The Bolsheviks, with the support of Red Guards and sailors, seized control of key government buildings and the Winter Palace in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg), where the Provisional Government was based.

Establishment of a Soviet State:

After the revolution, the Bolsheviks established the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the first communist state in the world.

Impact:

The October Revolution led to the Russian Civil War, the end of the Tsarist dynasty, and the creation of the Soviet Union. It also inspired revolutionary movements around the world.

The October Revolution, also known as the Great October Socialist Revolution (in Soviet historiography), October coup, Bolshevik coup, or Bolshevik revolution, was the second of two revolutions in Russia in 1917. It was led by Vladimir Lenin's Bolsheviks as part of the broader

Russian Revolution of 1917–1923. It began through an insurrection in Petrograd (now Saint Petersburg) on 7 November 1917 [O.S. 25 October]. It was the precipitating event of the Russian Civil War. The initial stage of the October Revolution, which involved the assault on Petrograd, occurred largely without any casualties.

The October Revolution followed and capitalized on the February Revolution earlier that year, which had led to the abdication of Nicholas II and the creation of the Russian Provisional Government. The provisional government, led by Alexander Kerensky, had taken power after Grand Duke Michael, the younger brother of Nicholas II, declined to take power. During this time, urban workers began to organize into councils (soviets) wherein revolutionaries criticized the provisional government and its actions. The provisional government remained unpopular, especially because it was continuing to fight in World War I, and had ruled with an iron fist throughout mid-1917 (including killing hundreds of protesters in the July Days). It declared the Russian Republic on 1 [N.S. 14] September 1917.

The situation grew critical in late 1917 as the Directorate, led by the left-wing Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs), controlled the government. The far-left Bolsheviks were deeply unhappy with the government, and began spreading calls for a military uprising. On 10 [N.S. 23] October 1917, the Petrograd Soviet, led by Leon Trotsky, voted to back a military uprising. On 24 October [N.S. 6 November], the government closed numerous newspapers and closed Petrograd, attempting to forestall the revolution; minor armed skirmishes ensued. The next day, a full-scale uprising erupted as a fleet of Bolshevik sailors entered the harbor and tens of thousands of soldiers rose up in support of the Bolsheviks. Bolshevik Red Guards under the Military-Revolutionary Committee began to occupy government buildings. In the early morning of 26 October [N.S. 8 November], they captured the Winter Palace — the seat of the Provisional government located in Petrograd, then capital of Russia.

As the revolution was not universally recognized, the country descended into civil war, which lasted until late 1922 and led to the creation of the Soviet Union. The historiography of the event has varied. The victorious Soviet Union viewed it as a validation of its ideology and the triumph of the working class over capitalism. On the other hand, the western allies later intervened against the Bolsheviks in the civil war. The Revolution inspired many cultural works and ignited communist movements globally. October Revolution Day was a public holiday in the Soviet Union, marking its key role in the state's founding, and many communist parties around the world still celebrate it.

Etymology:

Despite occurring in November of the Gregorian calendar, the event is most commonly known as the "October Revolution" because at the time Russia still used the Julian calendar. The event is sometimes known as the "November Revolution", after the Soviet Union modernized its calendar.

To avoid confusion, both O.S. and N.S. dates have been given for events. For more details see Old Style and New Style dates. It was sometimes known as the Bolshevik Revolution, or the Communist Revolution. Initially the event was referred to as the "October coup" or the "Uprising of the 3rd", as seen in contemporary documents, for example in the first editions of Lenin's complete works.

Background:

The Russian revolution of 1917 ranks as the greatest revolution in the history of mankind. The consequences of the revolution were immense. It affected at least two beginning of another.

World War I had seen the principles of nationalism and democracy triumph in Central Europe. But in Russia it led to a revolution which shook Russian society to its very foundations. It caused not only the political structure but also the social order to collapse in ruins.

Russia until 1917, was an autocratic and despotic monarchy. Socially, economically, politically and even militarily she was lagging behind all major European countries. As regards the cause of the revolution there were many and similar in many respects to those of the French revolution of the 18th century.

The revolution took place in two phases. The political phase took place in February (March) 1917, and it sealed the fate of autocracy: the social phase or the Bolshevik revolution followed in October (November) 1917, and it brought into existence the first Worker's Republic.

I. Nature of the February Revolution (1917):

Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution:

The February Revolution of 1917 was essentially democratic in spirit. This was reflected by the nature and activities of the Provisional Government, that was established after the Tsarist Regime had been overthrown. The Provisional Government was led under the chairmanship of Prince George Lvov, a liberal big landlord, a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party. The first thing that the Provisional Government did was the proclamation of the freedom of association of the press, and of religion, and liberation of thousands of political prisoners. It at once removed the ban on political exiles. It conferred complete autonomy on Finland, and assured to extend it to Poland. It promised that very soon a National Constituent Assembly would be elected by universal manhood suffrage to frame a Constitution for Russia on a permanent basis. There was rejoicing all over Western Europe, and also in the U.S.A. that the ancient Tsarist autocratic regime has overthrown, and in its place a democratic government had been established. Thus, at the outset, the February Revolution of 1917 in Russia was democratic in nature. In May, power byer, Prince Lvov was succeeded by a radical, Alexander Kerensky, who promised immediate, radical reforms within Russia.

CAUSES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OCTOBER 1917:

Revolutions are not made; they come. A revolution is as natural a growth as an oak. It comes out of the past. Its foundations are laid far back. The Russian Revolution was caused by the economic, social, and political order, the roots of which were deeply embedded in the ancient autocratic Tsarist regime in the soil of Russia. This order caused alarming dissatisfaction to a breaking point all over the Russian empire. Let us now briefly examine the various factors and forces that led to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

I. Economic Causes of the Revolution:

The seeds of the Russian revolution lay in Russia's backward, decadent economic life. In spite of economic and industrial progress registered at the turn of the twentieth century, Russia remained basically a poor, backward, and wretched country in relation to her population, her vast territorial expanse, and the economic potential available with her. This resulted in acute mass poverty, misery and grinding exploitation of the masses.

1. Russian backward and decadent Agriculture:

Russia was basically an agricultural country but highly backward and decadent. When the whole of Western Europe had adopted improved methods and scientific techniques of farming, the Russian peasant farmers were desperately striving with their primitive tools to draw a livelihood from the soil. Most of the farmers did not even have their own tools and horses to draw the plough and had to hire them from the nobles at exorbitant rates. The per acre agricultural production in Russia in 1913, was the lowest in Europe and except China in India the lowest in the world. The Tsars and the nobles gave no incentives to the peasants to improve the techniques of agriculture. On the contrary, they discouraged enterprising farmers from employing better tools and improved techniques of production. Famines were frequent. For example a severe famines occurred in 1891. Russia had immense potentialities for boosting agricultural production but those who wielded economic power, wanted the backward agriculture to continue as it was, so that they could continue the exploitation of the peasantry. However, whenever the peasant tried to better his farming by introducing some new innovations, the Tsarist officials often frowned at it.

2. Serfdom:

Until 1861, most of the peasants were tied down to the land as 'serfs' and could be bought and sold like any other commodity. Serfdom was painful and depressing. The master could them make work as domestic servants, or could drive them to factories or mines, where they had to sweat for long hours for the master's profit. Cruel masters flogged them severely and interfered in their personal and family matters. Serfs lived on their master's whims. They could not marry or leave the estates without their master's consent. Serfs, who tried to escape, were pursued, brought back

and severely punished. The prosperity of a noble was measured in terms of how many serfs he had. The emancipation Decree issued by Tsar Alexander II in 1861, had freed 40 million peasants from serfdom. Therefore, in Russian history, he came to be known as ' Tsar the Liberator'. But this was illusory, as the peasants were bound to the village (Commune), which they could not live without the police permission.

3. Heavy Rates of Taxes and Land- Revenue:

The village, the province, and the state collected heavy land revenue, and imposed crushing direct and indirect taxes which made "the Russian village a spectacle of poverty, hunger, disease and deaths."

4. Unequal distribution of Land and Wealth:

About 60 percent of Russia's agricultural land was owned by the big landlords, the imperial family, and the monasteries, who represented hardly 10 percent of the Russian population. About 70 percent of her peasants owned less than 10 acres of land. In 1913, there were 17 million harrows and 10 million wooden archaic ploughs for 17 million farms. Poor agricultural production and unjust distribution of land resulted in unfair distribution of wealth, which caused great discontent among the peasants. Soon, violent revolts of the peasants began in the rural areas.

5. Russian Industry:

Before the Emancipation Decree of 1861, Russian industrial progress was hampered by the feudal structure of economy. But after Emancipation industry was marked by the "creéping character of development, and its ‘sudden flashes of activity’. After 1890 Russia outstripped many Western countries in the rate of growth of the most important basic industries, viz., iron, steel and coal. Even then, Russia was industrially a highly backward country. In 1913, the iron production of Russia was 20 per cent of the French, 19 per cent of the German, 9 per cent of the American production and her production of coal in comparison to population was 20 per cent of the French, 7 per cent of the German, 4 per cent ofthe U.S.A. and 3 per cent of the British production. In the field of railway construction, there was only 500 kilometers of railway in the whole of Russia in 1850; however, in 1914, great progress was registered, and the number shot up to 73,000 kilometres. Even then it was 25 per cent of the U.S.A. and 8 per cent of the British and the German railways.

6. Penetration of foreign capital:

Further, the Russian economy was characterised by the penetration of foreign capital to very great extent. In 1914, one-third of the total capital of Russia represented foreign investment which controlled 45 per cent of her oil production, 54 per cent of her iron, 50 per cent of her chemical industry and 74 per cent of her coal production. Further, as much as 60 per cent of the capital of the 6 prominent banks, which controlled nearly 72 per cent of all banking capital and 50 per cent of all bank deposits in Russia, was foreign investment. Thus, the Russian economy was

fundamentally dependent on foreign capital, and it was highly feudal and agrarian in character with a very low technical level.

7. Exploitation of Factory workers:

With the growth of transport in industries in Russia, the number of the proletariat went on increasing. There was a need to introduce labour-welfare legislations. But this was not done. The Tsarist government did not take necessary steps to prevent the exploitation of workers. The position of the workers was very pathetic. They had to work on low salaries and live in unhygienic conditions. These urban workers were receptive to a growing variety of new social and cultural influences. The disgruntled workers established trade unions and agitated for getting their grievances redressed. But the Tsars tried to ruthlessly suppress the trade-union movement. The political parties like the RSDLP championed the cause of the workers. From 1903, strikes, demonstration, slogans and violent clashes with the police became frequent. The workers played the most vital role in the 1917 revolution in Russia.

II. Social Causes of the Revolution:

1. Ill-balanced social structure:

The economic conditions created an ill-balanced social structure. The Russian social structure, in respect of education, medical relief, public health and morality, was "full of tensions and therefore tended to disintegrate". In 1914, there were hardly 20,000 doctors for a population of 17 crores, and more than 27 per cent of children died before attaining the age of 5 years. In the field of edcation, the Tsars purposely followed a negative policy in the belief that ignorance and illiteracy would hinder the course of revolt and revolution; and, therefore, in 1913, only 23 per cent of the school age children were at school, and expenditure on education per head was not more than one-sixth to one-eighth of that in Germany, Britain or France. About 75 per cent of the total population was illiterate.

2. Cruel and inhumane system of flogging:

Finally the Russian social life became unspeakably miserable, cruel, inhumane, and wretched by the system of flogging that prevailed there. According to Baron Hauxthansen: "Amongst the Russians, all social power makes itself respected by blows which do not change either affection or friendship. Every one deals blows, the father beats his son, the husband beats his wife, the territorial lord or his attendent the peasant, without their resulting from it any bitterness or revenge. The backs of the Russians are ever accustomed to blows."

3. Barbarous punishments:

The cruelties and barbarous punishments that were inflicted upon them made them totally indifferent and cold to human dignity. According to Dr. Damodaran Kurup, they were born in inhuman conditions, grew up under the shadow of a barbarous tyranny and faced the world knowing nothing

about the human side of life. Even the Orthodox Church was an easy tool in the hands of the Tsars.

III. Political Causes of the Revolution:

1. Russia -A Politically Enslaved State:

Against such economic anaemia and an ill-balanced social structure, coupled with bottomless poverty, the people had no legal right of redress. In a parliamentary form of government, if the people are suppressed and oppressed by the government, the government can be overthrown by constitutional means through the ballot box. (However in the absence of such a government, the only course of action left is popular uprising and revolt) This is exactly what happened in Russia because the Tsarist government was autocratic and barbarous to its very core. In 1902, Lenin characterised Russia as "politically enslaved state in which 999 out of 1,000 of the population are corrupted to the marrow of their bones by political subservience." The practice of slitting the nostrils and running the gauntlet were the chief barbarous methods of punishment for the Tsar's disobedient subjects. Every serious political offender was exiled to Siberia or Caucasus. Commenting on the Tsarist terror after 1905, Masaryk thus remarked:

"It may be said without fear of exaggeration that during the white terror, the fear of death ceased to exist. It had been driven away by pogroms (tortures and liquidation), by the death sentences of the court-martials and field court-martials, by arrests and martyrisations in the prison and on the road to Siberia, by the extremities of cruelty and torture, by the frequency of suicide in the prisons, by illness, epidemic disease and famine."

2. Peasants' and Workers' Revolts:

All this resulted in the peasants' and workers' uprisings and revolts whose number multiplied from 248 in 1858-60 to 7,000 in 1905 and 13,000 in 1910-14, accompanied with terrorist activities of the revolutionaries such as throwing of the bombs, and retaliation of the government by using bullets without stint against the assassins and other revolutionaries. Between 1900 and 1914, strikes by industrial workers became the order of the day, although they were illegal and were treated as mutiny, and the strikers were shot dead. The Tsarist government was ruthless, autocratic and repressive.

Although Tsar Nicholas II had granted his people a Parliament, known as the Duma, with limited powers, it was reactionary, irresponsible, and an instrument of the Tsars. The nobles had enjoyed unlimited powers. Russia, in the world of Lenin, was a military despotism embellished with parliamentary forms..

IV. The Growing Dissatisfaction and Infiltration of the Marxist Ideas:

1. Ever increasing hatred for the Tsarist Regime:

The signs and symptoms of revolution were becoming manifest on all sides. The Tsarist governments terrors in the shape of imprisonment, exile, censorship, spying and torture, and also the industrial workers grievances of low wages, long hours of work, horrible working and living conditions, generated in the minds of the people an ever increasing hatred for the Tsarist regime.

2. Lack of Bourgeois an Intellectual classes:

The Russian society failed to produce the bourgeois or the capitalist class or the class intellectuals strong enough to lead the people to overthrow the Tsarist autocratic regime and thus to perform the historic duty. The growing dissatisfaction in the masses, therefore, made them highly receptive to the Marxist ideas that were infiltrating into Russia. Foreign troops can be stopped, but not ideas.

3. Infiltration of Marxist ideas:

Despite the best and continuous efforts of the Tsars "to save the minds of their subjects from being "polluted" by ideas of liberalism, constitutionalism, nationalism, democracy, liberty, equality and fraternity, revolutionary Marxist ideas fired the imagination of the Russian people, and fully prepared them for a revolutionary march against their ruthless and autocratic Tsarist regime.

4. Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

In 1898, the Marxist socialists founded the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. In 1903, at its second congress held in London, the Russian Social Democratic Party split into two groups; the Bolsheviks and the Measheviks.

The following were two fundamental points of difference between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks:

a. Mensheviks Bourgeois Democratic Republic versus Proletariate Dictatorship Bolsheviks:

i. The Mensheviks firmly believed in, and upheld, the doctrine of George Plekhanow, that is, the overthrow of the Tsarist monarchy must be followed by the establishment of a bourgeois democratic republic as a transitory stage for the ultimate establishment of socialism.

ii. The Bolsheviks, under the brilliant leadership of Lenin, out right rejected the transitory stage of Bourgeois democratic republic; instead of that, they strongly advocated that the overthrow of the Tsarist monarchy must be succeeded immediately by the proletariat dictatorship, without the transitory stage of a home rule or a

democratic republic. They assailed the democratic republic as an "implacable enemy".

iii. The Mensheviks were, thus, evolutionary and were led by Martov, whereas the Bolsheviks were revolutionary, radical and violent and were led by Lenin, supported by Stalin.

b. Democratic Method:

Another significant point of distinction between the two parties was in the matter of party administration.

i The Mensheviks advocated the democratic method, that is, the right of the rank and file to take active part in the task of framing policies.

ii. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, favoured authoritarian centralism. However, the entire course of the Russian revolution of 1917, was hard hit by the nature of the Bolshevik doctrine, which ultimately determined the shape and character of the Soviet State.

In 1905, the industrial workers of St. Petersburg and Moscow formed the Soviet-a Council of Workers' Deputies representing the factories of the given city. It were these Soviets which played a pivotal role in the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia.

V. Defeat and Disgrace in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905):

The Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) added fuel to the fire. It was a war between Russia, a giant occidental country and Japana dwarf oriental State, in which the latter inflicted a crushing defeat upon the former. This aroused the passions of the masses in Russia against the Tsarist regime. The people ascribed Russia's utter defeat and national disgrace on the battleground to the Tsarist regime, which failed to have a well-trained well-drilled, and well armed troops and fleet against Japanese. They, therefore, demanded an immediate overthrow of the Tsarist autocratic regime.

VI. Experience from the Revolution of 1905:

Although the Revolution of 1905 failed to realise its objective, it was significant in the sense that it taught the people of Russia the art of organising themselves against rotten, stubborn, wholly corrupt and incorrigible Tsarist regime, which for centuries together had been treating most cruelly and mercilessly the people of the Russian empire. The Revolution of 1905 gave to the people a lot of experience in the field of popular uprisings against the Tsarist government. As a result of it, the Tsar was forced to agree to call a Duma (or Parliament) to advise the Government.

VII. Demoralisation of Russia in the First World War (1914-1917):

The First World War set the ball of revolution rolling. Although the country was wholly ill-prepared, even then the Tsar entered the war on the

side of the Allies. As Louis XVI was under the complete influence of Queen Marie Antoinette, Tsar Nicholas II was under the villainous influence of the Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovia Nicholas, who, in turn, was under the complete sway of the notorious so-called monk, Rasputin.

Lack of ammunition and equipment, poor transport facilities incompetent leadership, administrative corruption, excessive interference of the Tsarina, treason in high ranks-all of them created crisis after crisis. Prices of all kinds of commodities, articles, and goods shot up. Foreign loans, taxes, and inflation provided further impetus to rising prices, and caused general discontent. Everything became scarce. In 1915, Russia had to import 100 per cent of her cars and lorries, 70 per cent of her guns and shells, and 60 per cent of the rifles. "The shortage of rifles was so great that a considerate percentage of men had to wait unarmed until they could pick the rifles of their fallen comrades."

VIII. Persecution of National Minorities:

1. National Minorities' Alliance:

Disaffection had developed among national minorities in Tsarist Russia. As early as September, 1904, representatives of six organizations of national minorities viz. Finland, Poland, Georgia, Armenia, and Latvia entered into an alliance with the Union of Liberation and the Socialist Revolutionaries against absolutism of Tsar. The alliance bound the member orgnizations:

a. to work for the overthrow of the autocracy of the Tsar;

b. to establish a representative government; and

c. to safeguard the interests and rights of national minorities.

2. Demand for National Autonomy:

There were sixty to seventy representatives of national minorities like Polish, Ukrainian, Latvian, and others in the first Duma which was called after the Revolution of 1905. They worked together for national autonomy and were inclined towards political and economic radicalism.The law of June 3, 1907, substantially reduced the representation of national minorities both in the Third and Fourth Dumas. This naturally caused great resentment among national minorities.

3. Act of 1911 in favour of Russian Nationalities:

In 1911, an Act was passed; which not only disfranchised the Jews but also separated voters into electoral colleges based on nationalities so as to assure the predominance of the Russian nationality.

4. The Policy of Russification and Administrative Centralization:

The government of the Tsar followed the policy of Russification and administrative centralization among national minorities. Instruction in Ukrainian schools was imparted in Russian and the Tsar's government was

hostile towards the Ukrainian national movement. The same was the case with Polish provinces. The law of June 17, 1910, in violation of the Finnish Constitution, was enacted and promulgated without the approval of the Finns. These incursions upon the liberties of Finns embittered and antagonized the law-abiding and freedom-loving Finns.

5. Disaffection and Separatist Tendencies among the National Minorities:

Thus, the persecution of national minorities like Finns, Poles,Ukrainians, and others caused great disaffection and bred separatist tendencies among them, which prepared a fertile ground for subversive propaganda and let loose disruptive forces.All these factors were jointly responsible for an all-round corruption, disorder, and incompetence at home, accompanied with great military setback and demoralisation at the front.

"Thus Russia was a heap of dry match-sticks and the fire was to be lighted by a mere rub which was there." The Revolution began with demonstrations and general strikes by the workers, and attack of the Kulaks by the peasants in February, 1917.

COURSE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

February-March Revolution of 1917:

I. It began in Petrograd:

Street demonstrations, strikes, peasant revolts, and mutinies had been taking place sporadically throughout the autumn and winter of 1916-17, but it is generally accepted that the February Revolution of 1917 began on International Women's Day, February 23, 1917. That day was marked by serious bread riots that broke out among the Petrograd workers.

The revolutionary drama began on February 24, when the huge crowds of workers in Vyborg attacked the police while the regiment of Cossacks observed a neutrality. February 25th witnessed a general strike in Petrograd. This was followed by the Tsar's orders to General Khabalov, commander of the Petrograd garrison, to suppress the disorders by the use of force. On February 26, a Sunday, General Khabalov ordered the police to fire on the workers and reported to the Tsar that the situation was under control. However, to the great astonishment of General Khabalov and the Tsar,by the evening of 28th February, the Petrograd garrison had already joined the workers in the Revolution; and by the morning of February 28, Petrograd was entirely in revolutionary hands.

II. Leadership of the Revolution:

i. Provisional committee of Duma and Petrograd Soviet:

The February Revolution was the spontaneous outbreak of a multitude of workers and peasants. The revolutionary parties did not play direct role in the making of the Revolution. In fact, the evolution looked to leadership from the bodies which existence almost simultaneously on February,

27th." The first of these was a Provisional committee of the Duma (i.e. Parliament) which represented all the parties in the fourth Duma barring the extreme right-wing and the Bolsheviks: The second body was the Provisional Executive Committee of the Betrogral Soviet (i.e.committee) of Workers' Duputies. It was organised in the Tauride Palace on the pattern of the Petersburg Soviet, which had played a glorious role in the Revolution of 1905 was like its predecessor, 'a non-party organisation' elected by factory workers. Social-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks being all represented in it. The real power of the Revolution, in guiding the armed workers and soldiers came to be vested on the second body which was renamed the "Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Deputie" on March 2, 1917.

ii. Abdication of Nicholas II, and Death of Tsarism (March 2, 1917):

February 28th witnessed the arrest of the Tsarist Ministers and the appointment of Commissars in their place by the Duma Committee. To the great astonishment of the Tsar, the troops, on arriving are the capital, mutinied on March 1, 1917. There was, now great demand from every quarter for Tsar's abdication.

The Tsar, finally, in consultation with his generals, signed on March 3, 1917, a document of abdication in favour of his son with Grand Duke Michael as his regent. However, the document of abdication served as a death warrant of Tsarism. To put in Trotsky's words: "The country had so radically vomitted up the monarchy that it could never crawl down the people's throat again". On March 4, when the Duma Committee approached Grand Dutch Michael to accept the Crown, he refused saying that he would accept the Crown only from a Constituent Assembly. Thus, ended the Russian monarchical tradition. All the members of the imperial family remained under house arrest at Tsaskoye Selo until they were removed first to Tobolsk and then to Yekaterinburg, where they were assassinated on July 16, 1918.

NATURE OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION (1917):

I. Dictatorship of Bolsheviks:

The term "Proletariat" is here used to mean the working class and particularly the urban working class. The term "Bourgeoisie" refers to the capitalist class, while "Petty Bourgeoisie" refers to the middle classes, such as small merchants, clerks, professionals, etc.

The Provisional Government of Kerensky was overthrown by the October Revolution, engineered by the Bolsheviks or Communists under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. The October Revolution claimed to be essentially "proletarian" in nature. It liquidated the power of the nobles, the clergy and the bourgeoisie, and on the ruins of which it established the dictatorship of the Proletariat. Although the Bolsheviks claimed to invest power into the hands of the proletariat, the power actually came to be monopolised by a few astute leaders of the Bolshevik's Party in Russia like Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin. They acted for all practical purposes as iron

dictators of Russia. No political party, except the Bolshevik's Party, was allowed to function in the country. All opposition was most ruthlessly and savagely repressed and eliminated. Soviet Russia became a one-party totalitarian state.

According to Prof. Lousil L. Synder, "the new political structure of the Soviet Union was rigidly oriented around despotism, mass discipline, fanaticism, terror and propaganda all distingushed by a bitter, implacable hatred of the capitalist world. Leninist-Stalinist ideology erased the slate of the past, and introduced a new idea of man and society, denouncing the cultural humanism of the West is an outmoded expression of a decadent bourgeois world."

Lenin claimed that "Soviet power was a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic." He was dead against the monstrous individual liberty, "that precious ideal which it has been the aim of Western democracies to preserve by never allowing exclusive and unconditional power to accrue for an unlimited period to any one party or section of the population."

Western democracy no doubt is bourgeois-capitalist, according to communist standards, but it at least curbs political power, guarantees the free, unhampered expression of responsible political opinion, which is unthinkable in the communist society, wherein all power is concentrated in the hands of the Communist Party in the name of the proletariat.

II. Its International Character:

Once the Revolution was solidified in Russia, it threw a powerful bait and drew millions of inhabitants of Eastern Europe into its orbit, overwhelmed China and is attracting millions in South East Asia and the Middle East. It believes in the unity of workers of the world and world-revolutionary communism.

According to Dr. M. G. Gupta, "other revolutions (like the American, or the French) had come to terms with their environment; the Russian Revolution has not, for it is still going on and continues to display the dynamics that has converted a feudal, backward and decade state into a major centre of world power.....The motor that drives it may have slowed a little, but the mechanism still churns up the living body of society in a manner unheard of in earlier revoltions."

The Russian Revolution of October 1917, observes Dr. M. G Gupta, "is perhaps the most important single event of world history, incomparable in its scope, dimensions, its fundamenalism, dynamism, and its immediate repercussions with any revolutions preceding or following it. It threw out a powerful challenge to the manifold aspects of the Western values, the principles of trade, the theories of Government, the framework of institution, the rules of international conduct and the technique of diplomacy, believed in the unity of workers of the world and world-revolutionary communism.

PROBLEMS OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

1. Coalition Provisional Government:

By March 3, 1917 a Coalition Government under the premiereship of Prince George Lvov, came into being. Milyukov was placed in charge of foreign affairs. Guchkov of the War Ministry and Kerenshy, a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Society, became the new Minister of Justice. Thus, it was the Mensheviks who, at0 first, profited most by the February Revolution. This Provisional Government, which became the "legal successor" of the Tsarist government, soon came to be recognised by the outside world including the Allied Powers, and continued the First World War in accordance with the agreements and pacts made by the Tsarist Government with the Allied Powers.

2 Soviets of Workers and Soldier's Deputies:

However, the writ of the self-constituted Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies came to be recognised by an ever increasing number of workers and soldiers. This fact which gave it a position of authority, no one could ignore; and "this was the-practical and almost accidental basis of the so called dual powers set by the February Revolution"

The example of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was followed by the setting up of the Soviets in Moscow and in other big cities and later on, in country districts. This, later on, led to the summoning of the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the end of March, 1917.

3. Bolsheviks in Minority and in the State of Confusion:

The Boslsheviks were in a minority in the Soviets and were in a state of confusion, for, all their chief leaders were in exile abroad or in Siberia.

On March 11, 1917, they issued a manifesto, demanding "Down with, the Czarist Monarchy" and "Long live the Democratic Republic". Pravda, the Bolsheiks literary mouthpiece, which was repressed at the beginning of the War, resumed publication on March 18, 1917 in Petrograd. Its editors condemed the Provisional. Government as "a government of the capitalists and landlords," and repeated the slogan "Turn the imperialist war into civil war for the liberation of the people from the yoke of the ruling classes." Soon thereafter, the senior leaders of he Bolsheviks, viz, Kamenev, Sverdlow, Stalin and Muranov, returned from Siberia to Petrograd and gave the right direction to the party.

THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION OF 25TH OCTOBER (7TH NOVEMBER) 1917

The February Revolution was local in character. It took place only in Petrograd and the whole country was not affected by it. It was mainly a bourgeois revolution of the Mensheviks. The failure of the provisional government in fulfilling the demands and aspirations of majority people led to the Bolshevik Revolution under the leadership of Lenin.

I. Causes of the Bolshevik Revolution:

(1) The Provisional Government was weak and unstable.

(2) The exploitation of the masses continued.

(3) The Provisional Government was not in touch with the common people.

(4) Growing conflict between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet.

(5) Continued participation of Russia in the First World War caused great sufferings to soldiers in particular and the people of Russia in general. The war made the Provisional Government unpopular among the people. The Bolsheviks condemned it as an imperialist war.

(6) Provisional Government lost control on the army.

(7) Two reforms introduced by the Provisional government proved to be a boon for the Bolsheviks and a curse for the Provisional Government. Firstly, they released all the political prisoners from jail and deportation. As a result, different Bolshevik leaders like Lenin, Stalin, Kamenev, Bukharin etc., reappeared in Petrograd. Secondly, they granted the freedom of expression to all the citizens of Russia. As a result, "Pravda", the mouthpiece of the Bolshevik party, which was banned during the Tsarist Period, now started reappearing from March 18 1917 from Petrograd. Its editors denounced the Provisional Government, criticized it to be the government of the capitalists and landlords, and appealed the people to turn the World War into a Civil War to liberate the nation from the yoke of the Provisional Government. Naturally, the popularity and strength of the Bolshevik Party went on mounting.

II. Role of Lenin in the Bolshevik Revolution:

Lenin (1870-1924):

Lenin was born on 22 April 1870 in the Volga Valley at Simbirsk (Now Ulyanovsk). His original name was Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov. He was the third of six children born to Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov and Maria Alexandrovna Blank. His father was a schoolmaster, who ultimately rose to the position of Director of Schools for the whole of Simbrisk. When Lenin was 17, his elder brother Alexander, while a university student, joined the Populist group and took part in a plot to assassinate Tsar Alexander II. Therefore, he was executed in 1887 during the time of Tsar Alexander III. This event inculcated revolutionary ideas on Lenin's mind. In the same year, Lenin joined the university of Kazan as a law student, where he accepted Marxism as his guide and in December 1887, he was expelled from the university and a little later from the city of Kazan itself for his active participation in the student gathering. However, he obtained his degree in law in 1891 as external student from the university of St.

Petersburg. By 1893, he came to be recognized as an authority on Marxism. In 1895, he went to Switzerland to meet G.V. Plekhanov, the most illustrious Marxist in Geneva, who had founded there an institution to teach Marxism to Russian revolutionaries. On returning to Russia, Lenin organized the league of struggle for the liberation of the Working Class. However, while he was distributing revolutionary leaflets to factory workers on the night of 20 December 1895, he was arrested and imprisoned for about 14 months; and later on in 1897, he was exiled to Siberia for three years. There he was joined by Nadezhda Krupskaya, who became his life partner on 22 July 1898. Having completed his term of exile in 1900, he started a weekly called "Iskra" i.e. (The Spark) and a theoretical journal named "Zarya" i.e. (The Dawn). These periodicals were to be published abroad and smuggled into Russia. In 1902, he wrote a book called "What is to be done" in which he strongly advocated revolutionary doctrine and revolutionary organization, 'The World in Transition' (1914-1919).

He further advocated the need of a party of professional revolutionaries who must be bound together by military discipline to prove a match to the police. He believed that with such a party, one could turn the whole of Russia upside down. He brought about the combination of the proletariat and the peasantry against the capitalists and landlords. The Russian Revolution of 1905, failed to offer Lenin a chance for translating his revolutionary plans into reality. From 1905 to 1917, he travelled at Finland, Stockholm, London, Switzerland, Paris and Austria. In 1916, he wrote a book titled "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism".

When the Menshevik Revolution broke out in February 1917, Lenin was in Switzerland, He was unable to return to Russia without crossing the enemy territory. Therefore, he requested the German Government to reach him to Russia. The Germans reached him safely to Petrograd on 16 April 1917 in a sealed train along with other Russian socialists. The motive of Germany behind this was to create chaos in Russia, so that she may withdraw from the First World War. Once Lenin reached Petrograd, he took the charge of the revolutionary movement. He reorganized his Bolshevik Party and denounced the bourgeois Provisional Government. He saw in that government an obstacle to his cherished desire of converting Russia into a Socialist country. Hence he told the people that the country did not require a parliamentary Republic or a Bourgeois Democracy, what the country needed the most was the government of the Soviet of Workers', soldiers' and farmhands deputies. The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 was engineered under the able and brilliant leadership of Lenin.

The very next day of his returning to Petrograd, Lenin placed his famous April Theses before the conference of the Soviets. It was fully based on Marxism.

Lenin's April Theses was so radical that even staunch Bolshevik leaders like Stalin and Kamenev opposed it. They charged Lenin of being an anarchist and out of touch with the realities in Russia. However, Lenin

was fully convinced that his programme was right and only it could save Russia. Through public meetings and speeches, Lenin began to present his programme before the workers and peasants. The programme offering food to the hungry, land to the peasants and peace to the nation, greatly appealed to the hearts of the Russian people and they spontaneously supported Lenin. Naturally, the Bolshevik Party also had to ultimately approve it. Thenceforth, all the programmes of the Bolshevik Party were drawn on the basis of Lenin's April Theses.

Leon Trotsky, who was in exile at New York, returned to Petrograd in May 1917. The strength and popularity of the Bolshevik Party began to increase when Lenin's ability was supplemented by Trotsky's oratory. As Lenin became the main leader of the Bolshevik Party, the position of the Provisional Government became shaky. People openly opposed government's policy of continuing Russian participation in the First World War. Denouncing the government, the workers and soldiers started demonstrations against the government in the streets of Petrograd. So, the Provisional Government became panicky. Owing to the failure in the Galician Campaign, Prince George Lvov's Government resigned on July 8 21st 1917. Alexander Kerensky became the new Prime Minister. His cabinet had 11 members of the Socialist Party and 7 others.

In the mean time, peasants uprisings reached their climax during September and October, and soldiers deserted the war front in great numbers. The German troops defeated Russia and marched towards Petrograd. Therefore, Kerensky decided to shift the Russian capital from Petrograd to Moscow. But the Bolsheviks opposed this decision. They demanded that the government should either withdraw from the War and should immediately start negotiations with Germany or should step down and let the Bolsheviks rule. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had been making all the required preparations for an armed insurrection against the Kerensky Government. It formed the Military Revolutionary Committee under the leadership of Leon Trotsky. Kerensky's Government's attempts to suppress the military preparations of the Bolsheviks for an armed insurrection came to naught.

On October 24, the sailors of cruiser "aurora", anchored in the Neva opposite the Winter Palace, refused to obey the orders of the Government and instead put themselves at the disposal of the MRC. In the night of October 24, under the orders of Lenin and Trotsky, the Red Guards occupied railway stations, bridges, the State Bank, the telephone exchange, the central Post and telegraph Office, and other public buildings, without any opposition and bloodshed, because most of the were at the disposal of the insurgents. The city's electric power plant was occupied and power supply to government buildings was cut off. On October 24, Kerensky declared a state of emergency in the state. On October 25, the emergency meeting of the troops of the coalition cabinet was held into the Winter Palace. The Red Guards besieged the Winter Palace at six p.m. and issued an ultimatum to the government to surrender within half an hour, failing which the Winter Palace would be bombarded. The Bolsheviks waited till 9.00 p.m. Finally, when two bombshells hit the

palace, all the ministers surrendered and Kerensky fled to USA. On October 26, all ministers were arrested in the Winter Palace and were marched to the fortress of Peter and Paul, where they were put to death. Thus, the October Revolution was successful without much bloodshed.

III. Establishment of the Soviet Government:

The second session of the all Russian Congress of Soviets was convened on October 25, 1917 at Smolny at 10.45 P.M. It was composed of 650 deputies, of whom 390 were Bolsheviks. All power was transferred to the Soviets. The Congress passed three important decrees. Namely, (1) to start immediate efforts for the termination of the War and to make peace. (2) Introducing radical land-reforms, which would nationalize all agricultural land and authorized the Russian peasantry to forcibly confiscate privately owned lands, and (3) setting up the council of People's Commissars, i.e. "Sovanarkom". Accordingly, the Congress elected a fifteen member cabinet under the chairmanship of Lenin. In it, Trotsky became the Commissar for foreign affairs and Stalin became the Commissar for the National Minorities. The Congress also elected the Central Executive Committee consisting of 101 members. Moreover, there was the Politburo of the Bolshevik Party. Thus, came into existence the first Soviet Government in Russia under Proletarian Dictatorship.

Although in theory the Proletarian Dictatorship was established, in actual practice all the power was concentrated in the hands of few Bolshevik leaders. Although superficially the Bolsheviks created a show that the October Revolution is engaged as per the orders of the Petrograd Soviet, actually the Bolsheviks were using the soviet only as a shield and the Revolution was launched keeping in view the interests of the Bolshevik Party. Since the October Revolution was staged with the help of the Soviet and since the Soviet comprised of the representatives of various parties, many people were of the opinion that the new government should be coalition government. But the Bolsheviks did not want a coalition government. They wanted only a One Party Government of the Bolshevik Party and they wanted the Soviet to be a mere puppet in their hands.

EFFECTS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1917 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION:

The 1917 Russian Revolution was an epoch making event. It radically transtormed the human life not only in Russia but also all over the world. The Revolution had far reaching and long lasting effects both on Russia as well as on the world. It threw a powerful challenge to the existing norms of diplomacy, socio economic institutions and values in the Western world.

The main effects of the Revolution are as follows:

1. Practical Demonstration of the Marxian Philosophy:

Till 1917, Marxism was regarded only as a philosophy, ideology or theory. Nobody expected that it would be implemented into real life. But, the

1917 revolution showed that Marxism was not merely a philosophy, but it could be the way of living. For the first time in history, the Scientific Socialist ideology of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, as interpreted by Lenin, were applied to the Russian Government and socio-economic policies. A New Soviet man and society were sought to be created bidding good-bye to centuries old and anachronistic feudal social system.

2. A Powerful Challenge to the Western Culture:

The Bolsheviks repudiated the traditional framework as well as the traditional standards of internal and international policies. The Bolshevik Revolution had thrown out a powerful challenge to the various values and ideals of Western culture, the fundamental principles of trade and industry, the established systems of government, the social, economic, and political institutions," and the methods of diplomacy. It offered an alternative to capitalism. It set up standards for a new way of living and thinking.

3. Great Progress:

The Revolution pulled Russia out of her backwardness and put her on the road to modernity and dynamic progress. It not only overthrew the outdated, autocratic and ruthless old Tsarist Regime, but it also liquidated the power of the clergy, nobility and the bourgeoisie. It also brought about great social, political and economic changes, and thereby provided the basic conditions for the emergence of Soviet Russia as a great power.

4. Workers of the World, 'Unite':

The 1917 revolution created a new awakening and sensation among the Industrial workers all over the world. "The Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains, but they have the world to win." The establishment of the Third Communist International (Comintern) further encouraged the labouring people all over the world to stand united against the capitalist class. The concept that the working classes had no fatherland or motherland and that the problems of depressed people all over the world were the same, resulted in extra-territorial loyalties all over the world. In order to keep away Communism from their countries, many capitalist governments awarded a number of concessions and brought legislations, which benefited the industrial workers. Thus, the Russian Revolution indirectly helped the betterment of workers all over the world. Establishment of the dignity of labour was an important achievement of the Revolution. Work became an essential requirement tor every man, as there was no unearned income to live on. The idea spread by the Russian Revolution "He who does not work shall not eat" became widespread adding a new dignity

5. Forced the Imperialist Countries to part with Colonies:

The Revolution has virtually shaken and awakened the colonial peoples from ignorance, and injected into their blood a new consciousness of their political rights and the principle of self determination of the people. The rapid spread of Communism created great fear in the minds of the

imperialist powers in the Western countries. They suspected that Communism might cover the whole world. So, they granted independence to countries like India, Indonesia and Indochina. According to Marx, a nation, which enslaves another nation, can never be free. Along with political independence, they demanded social and economic justice.

6. International Significance:

Even the countries, which had capitalist systems of economy, also began to recognize that for democracy to be real, political equality is not enough without social and economic equality. The idea of economic planning by the state to improve the conditions of the people was accepted. The growing popularity of socialism also helped to mitigate discriminations based on race, colour and sex. The spread of socialist ideas also helped in promoting internationalism. The nations, at least in theory, began to accept the idea that their relations with other nations should go farther than merely promoting their narrow self-interest. Many problems, which were considered national, began to be looked upon as concerns of the world as a whole.

7. Other Countries inspired by the Communist Revolution:

The Third Communist International (Comintern) was established in 1919 to spread Communism throughout the world. A number of countries from Asia, Europe and Latin America, which were weak, backward, exploited or ruled by autocratic rulers, were greatly impressed by the success of the Communist Revolution. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Poland and East Germany in Europe, Mongolia, North Korea, China and Vietnam in Asia, and Cuba, Chile and Peru in Latin America were inspired by the Communist Revolution in Russia. In several other countries, Communist parties were established and were affiliated to the Comintern. The Third Communist International was the forum for promoting revolutions on an international scale. Common questions of interest were discussed and common policies were suggested from this forum ‘The World’ in Transition’ (1914- 1919).

8. Economic Impact:

The 1917 Russian Revolution was not merely a political revolution, but it was mainly a socio-economic revolution. It brought about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of Russia. The weak, backward, agrarian, feudal Russid economy was transtormed into an advanced, sel-suficient industrialized economy Agricultural and industrial production went up, foreign trade flourished, standard of living improved, labour-productivity increased, the gross national income increased, unemployment was practically eliminated, class distinctions were wiped out and cities became more homogeneous. Stalin's Economic Planning provided a model of development not only for the underdeveloped and developing countries but also for the advanced countries.

9. Russia emerged as a Super Power:

Till 1917, Russia was a weak and backward country. But the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, transformed a poverty-stricken, feudal Tsarist Russia into a super World Power under the brilliant leadership and guidance of Lenin and Stalin. Russia, which had been defeated in the Crimean war, Russo-Japanese war and the First World War, emerged victorious in the Second World War. Russia played the most vital role in defeating Germany and liberating the East European countries from the clutches of Nazi Germany. After the Second World War, the Victorious Russia emerged as a Super Power just next to the USA.

10. Beginning of the Cold War:

With the rise and success of Communism in Russia and its spread in other countries, a conflict started between Capitalism and Communism. This ideological conflict between Communism and Capitalism is called the Cold War. Both Communist Russia on one side, and Capitalist England and America on the other side were trying their best to spread their respective ideology and trying to win over maximum countries to their side.

11. Totalitarian Dictatorship:

Although, the Bolsheviks claimed to invest power into the hands of the proletariat, actually the power was monopolized by few leaders of the Bolshevik Farty such as Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. They acted as Iron Dictators of Russia. No political party except the Bolshevik party was allowed to function in the country. All opposition was ruthlessly crushed. Soviet Russia became a One Party Totalitarian State.

12. Suppression of Religious Freedom:

The Russians were religious minded people and were the followers of the Great Eastern Church. But Marxism preached, "Religion is opium". Therefore, the Bolsheviks ruthlessly suppressed all religious freedom.

13. An Endless Revolution:

The Russian Revolutionaries argued that the Glorious Revolution in England of 1688, the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789 continued to have their effect only for a particular period of time. But, the Bolshevik revolution is a continuous everlasting process, as long as exploitation, , backwardness , torture , capitalism and autocracy prevail in any part of the world.

1.5 THE CREATION OF THE SOVIET UNION

The European powers assembled in Congress at Berlin in June 1878. I The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), commonly known as the Soviet Union, was formed in 1922 through the unification of several Soviet Socialist Republics, primarily stemming from the former Russian

Empire. The initial republics included Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. This union was formalized by the signing of the Treaty on the Creation of the USSR.

Key Events and Processes:

1. Russian Revolution (1917):

The Bolsheviks, a radical left-wing revolutionary group, overthrew the Tsarist regime, leading to the establishment of a Soviet government.

2. Establishment of Socialist Republics:

Following the revolution, four republics were established on the territory of the former Russian Empire: the Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republics.

3. Formation of the USSR (1922):

On December 30, 1922, these republics signed the Treaty on the Creation of the USSR, officially establishing the Union.

4. Constitutional Framework:

The union's existence was further formalized by the adoption of the Soviet Constitution in 1924.

5. Initial Leaders:

Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks and founder of the Soviet Union, served as the first chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. After Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin assumed power and effectively ruled as a dictator.

1.6 SUMMARY

Before World War I, Russia was not only one of the largest countries in the world, but also one of the so-called Powers. Nearly 4/5 of the population consisted of peasants and the people were economically and culturally backward. Economic conditions were unsatisfactory, because industrial development was slow and in agriculture farmers still used traditional methods of cultivation. Taxes were very high. The military had become weak due to corruption and inefficient management.

Politically, Russia had a monarchical system of government and was ruled by the Romonov Tsars. They were despotic rulers and the people had no rights. After the defeat of Russia by the Japanese in 1904. The Russians revolted but they were ruthlessly put down. Though the Duma was summoned, in practice it had no power, the conditions prevailing in the country inspired revolutionary movements of which the Social Democrats and the Social Revolutionaries were important.

The Tsar and his advisors, the bureaucracy, the military officers and the feudal elements were opposed to reforms. So, when the country involved

itself in World War I, the weak autocracy collapsed. Two Revolutions broke out-the February Revolution and October Revolution of 1917,

The February revolution saw the Mensheviks the leader of the provisional Government. The October revolution saw the Bolsheviks in power with Lenin as the leader. The Bolsheviks introduced a Socialism system of government. Lenin dealt with the Civil War effectively and also withdrew from the first World War. However, his initial economic reforms were not so successful. He then introduced the New Economic Policy with a partial return to capitalism.

The Revolution had a deep impact on many countries of the world. It challenged the traditional economic, political and social systems.

1.7 QUESTIONS FOR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the growth of Radical Political Parties in Russia.
2. Write a note on Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.
3. Analyse the social, political and economic causes of the Russian Revolution.
4. Describe the role played by Lenin in the Bolshevik Revolution, 1917.
5. Assess the significance and results of the Russian Revolution.
6. Examine the stages in the creation of the Soviet Union.

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2

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION (1917-1991)

Unit Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To review the circumstances that led to the foundation of Soviet Union
- To understand the role played by the Leaders of USSR in Soviet Russia
- To analyze the consequences of the Cold War on politics of USSR and the world
- To study the courses of Cold War and disintegration of USSR
- To assess the impacts of Cold War and disintegration of USSR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Union, born from the Bolshevik Revolution in 1922, rose to become a global superpower, eventually collapsing in 1991 due to a complex mix of internal and external pressures. Its rise was marked by the establishment of a one-party state under the Communist Party, followed

by periods of intense centralization and totalitarianism under leaders like Stalin. The Soviet Union's fall was precipitated by economic stagnation, the rise of nationalist movements, and the failure of reform efforts under Gorbachev.

2.2 REVOLUTION AND FOUNDATION (1917-1927)

THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION OF 25TH OCTOBER (7TH NOVEMBER) 1917:

The February Revolution was local in character. It took place only in Petrograd and the whole country was not affected by it. It was mainly a bourgeois revolution of the Mensheviks. The failure of the provisional government in fulfilling the demands and aspirations of majority people led to the Bolshevik Revolution under the leadership of Lenin.

I. Causes of the Bolshevik Revolution:

(1) The Provisional Government was weak and unstable.

(2) The exploitation of the masses continued.

(3) The Provisional Government was not in touch with the common people.

(4) Growing conflict between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet.

(5) Continued participation of Russia in the First World War caused great sufferings to soldiers in particular and the people of Russia in general. The war made the Provisional Government unpopular among the people. The Bolsheviks condemned it as an imperialist war.

(6) Provisional Government lost control on the army.

(7) Two reforms introduced by the Provisional government proved to be a boon for the Bolsheviks and a curse for the Provisional Government. Firstly, they released all the political prisoners from jail and deportation. As a result, different Bolshevik leaders like Lenin, Stalin, Kamenev, Bukharin etc., reappeared in Petrograd. Secondly, they granted the freedom of expression to all the citizens of Russia. As a result, "Pravda", the mouthpiece of the Bolshevik party, which was banned during the Tsarist Period, now started reappearing from March 18 1917 from Petrograd. Its editors denounced the Provisional Government, criticized it to be the government of the capitalists and landlords, and appealed the people to turn the World War into a Civil War to liberate the nation from the yoke of the Provisional Government. Naturally, the popularity and strength of the Bolshevik Party went on mounting.

II. Role of Lenin in the Bolshevik Revolution:

Lenin (1870-1924):

Lenin was born on 22 April 1870 in the Volga Valley at Simbirsk (Now Ulyanovsk). His original name was Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov. He was the third of six children born to Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov and Maria Alexandrovna Blank. His father was a schoolmaster, who ultimately rose to the position of Director of Schools for the whole of Simbrisk. When Lenin was 17, his elder brother Alexander, while a university student, joined the Populist group and took part in a plot to assassinate Tsar Alexander II. Therefore, he was executed in 1887 during the time of Tsar Alexander III. This event inculcated revolutionary ideas on Lenin's mind. In the same year, Lenin joined the university of Kazan as a law student, where he accepted Marxism as his guide and in December 1887, he was expelled from the university and a little later from the city of Kazan itself for his active participation in the student gathering. However, he obtained his degree in law in 1891 as external student from the university of St. Petersburg. By 1893, he came to be recognized as an authority on Marxism. In 1895, he went to Switzerland to meet G.V. Plekhanov, the most illustrious Marxist in Geneva, who had founded there an institution to teach Marxism to Russian revolutionaries. On returning to Russia, Lenin organized the league of struggle for the liberation of the Working Class. However, while he was distributing revolutionary leaflets to factory workers on the night of 20 December 1895, he was arrested and imprisoned for about 14 months; and later on in 1897, he was exiled to Siberia for three years. There he was joined by Nadezhda Krupskaya, who became his life partner on 22 July 1898. Having completed his term of exile in 1900, he started a weekly called "Iskra" i.e. (The Spark) and a theoretical journal named "Zarya" i.e. (The Dawn). These periodicals were to be published abroad and smuggled into Russia. In 1902, he wrote a book called "What is to be done" in which he strongly advocated revolutionary doctrine and revolutionary organization, ‘The World in Transition’ (1914-1919).

He further advocated the need of a party of professional revolutionaries who must be bound together by military discipline to prove a match to the police. He believed that with such a party, one could turn the whole of Russia upside down. He brought about the combination of the proletariat and the peasantry against the capitalists and landlords. The Russian Revolution of 1905, failed to offer Lenin a chance for translating his revolutionary plans into reality. From 1905 to 1917, he travelled at Finland, Stockholm, London, Switzerland, Paris and Austria. In 1916, he wrote a book titled "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism".

When the Menshevik Revolution broke out in February 1917, Lenin was in Switzerland, He was unable to return to Russia without crossing the enemy territory. Therefore, he requested the German Government to reach him to Russia. The Germans reached him safely to Petrograd on 16 April 1917 in a sealed train along with other Russian socialists. The motive of Germany behind this was to create chaos in Russia, so that she may

withdraw from the First World War. Once Lenin reached Petrograd, he took the charge of the revolutionary movement. He reorganized his Bolshevik Party and denounced the bourgeois Provisional Government. He saw in that government an obstacle to his cherished desire of converting Russia into a Socialist country. Hence he told the people that the country did not require a parliamentary Republic or a Bourgeois Democracy, what the country needed the most was the government of the Soviet of Workers', soldiers' and farmhands deputies. The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 was engineered under the able and brilliant leadership of Lenin.

The very next day of his returning to Petrograd, Lenin placed his famous April Theses before the conference of the Soviets. It was fully based on Marxism.

Lenin's April Theses was so radical that even staunch Bolshevik leaders like Stalin and Kamenev opposed it. They charged Lenin of being an anarchist and out of touch with the realities in Russia. However, Lenin was fully convinced that his programme was right and only it could save Russia. Through public meetings and speeches, Lenin began to present his programme before the workers and peasants. The programme offering food to the hungry, land to the peasants and peace to the nation, greatly appealed to the hearts of the Russian people and they spontaneously supported Lenin. Naturally, the Bolshevik Party also had to ultimately approve it. Thenceforth, all the programmes of the Bolshevik Party were drawn on the basis of Lenin's April Theses.

Leon Trotsky, who was in exile at New York, returned to Petrograd in May 1917. The strength and popularity of the Bolshevik Party began to increase when Lenin's ability was supplemented by Trotsky's oratory. As Lenin became the main leader of the Bolshevik Party, the position of the Provisional Government became shaky. People openly opposed government's policy of continuing Russian participation in the First World War. Denouncing the government, the workers and soldiers started demonstrations against the government in the streets of Petrograd. So, the Provisional Government became panicky. Owing to the failure in the Galician Campaign, Prince George Lvov's Government resigned on July 8 21st 1917. Alexander Kerensky became the new Prime Minister. His cabinet had 11 members of the Socialist Party and 7 others.

In the mean time, peasants uprisings reached their climax during September and October, and soldiers deserted the war front in great numbers. The German troops defeated Russia and marched towards Petrograd. Therefore, Kerensky decided to shift the Russian capital from Petrograd to Moscow. But the Bolsheviks opposed this decision. They demanded that the government should either withdraw from the War and should immediately start negotiations with Germany or should step down and let the Bolsheviks rule. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had been making all the required preparations for an armed insurrection against the Kerensky Government. It formed the Military Revolutionary Committee under the leadership of Leon Trotsky. Kerensky's

Government's attempts to suppress the military preparations of the Bolsheviks for an armed insurrection came to naught.

On October 24, the sailors of cruiser "aurora", anchored in the Neva opposite the Winter Palace, refused to obey the orders of the Government and instead put themselves at the disposal of the MRC. In the night of October 24, under the orders of Lenin and Trotsky, the Red Guards occupied railway stations, bridges, the State Bank, the telephone exchange, the central Post and telegraph Office, and other public buildings, without any opposition and bloodshed, because most of the were at the disposal of the insurgents. The city's electric power plant was occupied and power supply to government buildings was cut off. On October 24, Kerensky declared a state of emergency in the state. On October 25, the emergency meeting of the troops of the coalition cabinet was held into the Winter Palace. The Red Guards besieged the Winter Palace at six p.m. and issued an ultimatum to the government to surrender within half an hour, failing which the Winter Palace would be bombarded. The Bolsheviks waited till 9.00 p.m. Finally, when two bombshells hit the palace, all the ministers surrendered and Kerensky fled to USA. On October 26, all ministers were arrested in the Winter Palace and were marched to the fortress of Peter and Paul, where they were put to death. Thus, the October Revolution was successful without much bloodshed.

2.3 VLADIMIR LENIN, STALIN ERA (1927-1953), WORLD WAR II AND SOVIET UNION

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov[b] (22 April [O.S. 10 April] 1870 – 21 January 1924), better known as Vladimir Lenin,[c] was a Russian revolutionary, politician and political theorist. He was the first head of government of Soviet Russia from 1917 until his death in 1924, and of the Soviet Union from 1922 until his death. As the founder and leader of the Bolsheviks, Lenin led the October Revolution which established the world's first socialist state. His government won the Russian Civil War and created a one-party state under the Communist Party. Ideologically a Marxist, his developments to the ideology are called Leninism.

Born into a middle-class family in Simbirsk in the Russian Empire, Lenin embraced revolutionary socialist politics after his brother was executed in 1887 for plotting to assassinate the tsar. He was expelled from Kazan Imperial University for participating in student protests, and earned a law degree before moving to Saint Petersburg in 1893 and becoming a prominent Marxist activist. In 1897, Lenin was arrested and exiled to Siberia for three years, after which he moved to Western Europe and became a leading figure in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. In 1903, the party split between Lenin's Bolshevik faction and the Mensheviks, with Lenin advocating for a vanguard party to lead the proletariat in overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism. Lenin briefly returned to Russia during the Revolution of 1905, and during the First World War campaigned for its transformation into a Europe-wide proletarian revolution. After the February Revolution of 1917 ousted Tsar

Nicholas II, Lenin returned to Russia and played a leading role in the October Revolution, in which the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government.

Lenin's government abolished private ownership of land, nationalised major industry and banks, withdrew from the war by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and promoted world revolution through the Communist International. The Bolsheviks initially shared power with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, but during the Russian Civil War centralised power in the Communist Party and suppressed opposition in the Red Terror, in which tens of thousands were killed or imprisoned. Responding to famine and popular uprisings, Lenin reversed his policy of war communism in 1921 and stabilised the economy with the New Economic Policy. The Red Army defeated numerous anti-Bolshevik and separatist armies in the civil war, after which some of the non-Russian nations which had broken away from the empire were reunited in the Soviet Union in 1922; others, notably Poland, gained independence. Lenin suffered three debilitating strokes in 1922 and 1923 before his death in 1924, beginning a power struggle which ended in Joseph Stalin's rise to power.

Lenin was the posthumous subject of a pervasive personality cult within the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991. Under Stalin, he became an ideological figurehead of Marxism–Leninism and a prominent influence over the international communist movement. A controversial and highly divisive figure, Lenin is praised by his supporters for establishing a revolutionary government which took steps towards socialism, while his critics accuse him of establishing a dictatorship which oversaw mass killings and political repression against the anti-revolution forces. Today, he is widely considered one of the most significant and influential figures of the 20th century.

Stalin Era (1927-53):

The history of the Soviet Union between 1927 and 1953, commonly referred to as the Stalin Era or the Stalinist Era, covers the period in Soviet history from the establishment of Stalinism through victory in the Second World War and down to the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953. Stalin sought to destroy his enemies while transforming Soviet society with central planning, in particular through the forced collectivization of agriculture and rapid development of heavy industry. Stalin consolidated his power within the party and the state and fostered an extensive cult of personality. Soviet secret-police and the mass-mobilization of the Communist Party served as Stalin's major tools in molding Soviet society. Stalin's methods in achieving his goals, which included party purges, ethnic cleansings, political repression of the general population, and forced collectivization, led to millions of deaths: in Gulag labor camps and during famine.

World War II, known as "the Great Patriotic War" by Soviet historians, devastated much of the USSR, with about one out of every three World War II deaths representing a citizen of the Soviet Union. In the course of World War II, the Soviet Union's armies occupied Eastern Europe, where

they established or supported Communist puppet governments. By 1949, the Cold War had started between the Western Bloc and the Eastern (Soviet) Bloc, with the Warsaw Pact (created 1955) pitched against NATO (created 1949) in Europe. After 1945, Stalin did not directly engage in any wars, continuing his totalitarian rule until his death in 1953.

Soviet state's development:

The mobilization of resources by state planning expanded the country's industrial base. From 1928 to 1932, pig iron output, necessary for further development of the industrial infrastructure rose from 3.3 million to 6.2 million tons per year. Coal production, a basic fuel of modern economies and Stalinist industrialization, rose from 35.4 million to 64 million tons, and the output of iron ore rose from 5.7 million to 19 million tons. A number of industrial complexes such as Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk, the Moscow and Gorky automobile plants, the Ural Mountains and Kramatorsk heavy machinery plants, and Kharkiv, Stalingrad and Chelyabinsk tractor plants had been built or were under construction.

In real terms, the workers' standards of living tended to drop, rather than rise during industrialization. Stalin's laws to "tighten work discipline" made the situation worse: e.g., a 1932 change to the RSFSR labor law code enabled firing workers who had been absent without a reason from the workplace for just one day. Being fired accordingly meant losing "the right to use ration and commodity cards" as well as the "loss of the right to use an apartment″ and even blacklisted for new employment which altogether meant a threat of starving. Those measures, however, were not fully enforced, as managers were hard-pressed to replace these workers. In contrast, the 1938 legislation, which introduced labor books, followed by major revisions of the labor law, was enforced. For example, being absent or even 20 minutes late were grounds for becoming fired; managers who failed to enforce these laws faced criminal prosecution. Later, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, 26 June 1940 "On the Transfer to the Eight-Hour Working Day, the Seven-day Work Week, and on the Prohibition of Unauthorized Departure by Laborers and Office Workers from Factories and Offices" replaced the 1938 revisions with obligatory criminal penalties for quitting a job (2–4 months imprisonment), for being late 20 minutes (6 months of probation and pay confiscation of 25 per cent), etc.

Based on these figures, the Soviet government declared that the Five Year Industrial Production Plan had been fulfilled by 93.7% in only four years, while parts devoted to the heavy industry parts were fulfilled by 108%. Stalin in December 1932 declared the plan success to the Central Committee since increases in the output of coal and iron would fuel future development.

During the Second Five-Year Plan (1933–1937), on the basis of the huge investment during the first plan, the industry expanded extremely rapidly and nearly reached the plan's targets. By 1937, coal output was 127

million tons, pig iron 14.5 million tons, and there had been very rapid development of the armaments industry.

While making a massive leap in industrial capacity, the First Five Year Plan was extremely harsh on industrial workers; quotas were difficult to fulfill, requiring that miners put in 16- to 18-hour workdays.[10] Failure to fulfill quotas could result in treason charges.[11] Working conditions were poor, even hazardous. Due to the allocation of resources for the industry along with decreasing productivity since collectivization, a famine occurred. In the construction of the industrial complexes, inmates of Gulag camps were used as expendable resources. But conditions improved rapidly during the second plan. Throughout the 1930s, industrialization was combined with a rapid expansion of technical and engineering education as well as increasing emphasis on munitions.

From 1921 until 1954, the police state operated at high intensity, seeking out anyone accused of sabotaging the system. The estimated numbers vary greatly. Perhaps, 3.7 million people were sentenced for alleged counter-revolutionary crimes, including 600,000 sentenced to death, 2.4 million sentenced to labor camps, and 700,000 sentenced to expatriation. Stalinist repression reached its peak during the Great Purge of 1937–1938, which removed many skilled managers and experts and considerably slowed industrial production in 1937.

World War II and Soviet Union:

After the Munich Agreement, the Soviet Union pursued a rapprochement with Nazi Germany. On 23 August 1939, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Germany which included a secret protocol that divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence, anticipating potential "territorial and political rearrangements" of these countries. Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, starting World War II. The Soviets invaded eastern Poland on 17 September. Following the Winter War with Finland, the Soviets were ceded territories by Finland. This was followed by annexations of the Baltic states and parts of Romania.

On 22 June 1941, Adolf Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, an invasion of the Soviet Union with the largest invasion force in history, leading to some of the largest battles and most horrific atrocities. This offensive comprised three army groups. The city of Leningrad was besieged while other major cities fell to the Germans. Despite initial successes, the German offensive ground to a halt in the Battle of Moscow, and the Soviets launched a counteroffensive, pushing the Germans back. The failure of Operation Barbarossa reversed the fortunes of Germany, and Stalin was confident that the Allied war machine would eventually defeat Germany. The Soviet Union repulsed Axis attacks, such as in the Battle of Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk, which marked a turning point in the war. The Western Allies provided support to the Soviets in the form of Lend-Lease as well as air and naval support. Stalin met with Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Tehran Conference and

discussed a two-front war against Germany and the future of Europe after the war. The Soviets launched successful offensives to regain territorial losses and began a push to Berlin. The Germans unconditionally surrendered in May 1945 after Berlin fell.

The bulk of Soviet fighting took place on the Eastern Front—including the Continuation War with Finland—but it also invaded Iran in August 1941 with the British. The Soviets later entered the war against Japan in August 1945, which began with an invasion of Manchuria. They had border conflicts with Japan up to 1939 before signing a non-aggression pact in 1941. Stalin had agreed with the Western Allies to enter the war against Japan at the Tehran Conference in 1943 and at the Yalta Conference in February 1945 once Germany was defeated. The entry of the Soviet Union in the war against Japan along with the atomic bombings by the United States led to Japan's surrender, marking the end of World War II.

The Soviet Union suffered the greatest number of casualties in the war, losing more than 20 million citizens, about a third of all World War II casualties. The full demographic loss to the Soviet people was even greater. The German General aimed to create more Lebensraum (lit. 'living space') for Germany through extermination. An estimated 3.5 million Soviet prisoners of war died in German captivity as a result of deliberate mistreatment and atrocities, and millions of civilians, including Soviet Jews, were killed in the Holocaust. However, at the cost of a large sacrifice, the Soviet Union emerged as a global superpower. The Soviets installed dependent communist governments in Eastern Europe, and tensions with the United States and the Western allies grew to what became known as the Cold War.

2.4 COLD WAR AND SOVIET UNION, DE-STALINIZATION AND KHRUSHCHEV THAW

The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, lasting from the late 1940s to the early 1990s. It wasn't a direct military conflict but a rivalry characterized by ideological clashes, espionage, proxy wars, and an arms race, with the Soviet Union as a key player in this rivalry.

Key aspects of the Cold War and its relationship with the Soviet Union:

Ideological Conflict:

The Cold War was rooted in the clash between communism (the Soviet Union's ideology) and capitalism (the United States' ideology), shaping their political and economic systems.

Arms Race:

The development of nuclear weapons led to a constant arms race between the superpowers, with both sides striving for military dominance.

Proxy Wars:

The Cold War saw conflicts in various parts of the world, where the US and the Soviet Union supported opposing sides, like in Korea and Vietnam.

Espionage and Propaganda:

Both sides engaged in espionage and propaganda efforts to gather information and influence public opinion.

Space Race:

The launch of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite by the Soviets, spurred the Space Race, where both countries competed to achieve advancements in space technology.

Collapse of the Soviet Union:

Internal economic problems, political reforms, and the rise of nationalist movements contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, effectively ending the Cold War.

The Soviet Union's role during the Cold War:

Leading the Eastern Bloc:

The Soviet Union spearheaded the Eastern Bloc, a group of communist countries that were allied with the USSR.

Propaganda and Influence:

The USSR used propaganda and influence to spread its ideology and gain support for its political goals.

Maintaining its Sphere of Influence:

The Soviet Union sought to maintain its influence over Eastern Europe, often using military force when necessary, like in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Economic Stagnation:

The USSR's centrally planned economy struggled to keep up with the West, leading to economic stagnation and inefficiency.

The Cold War was a defining feature of the second half of the 20th century, shaping international relations and leaving a lasting legacy on global politics.

DESTALINISATION AND KRUSHCHEV THAW:

De-Stalinization refers to the series of political reforms and shifts in Soviet policy after Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, spearheaded by Nikita Khrushchev. It involved dismantling Stalin's cult of personality, reviewing

his policies, and addressing some of the repressions and abuses that occurred under his rule.

Challenging Stalin's Legacy:

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956 was a crucial turning point, publicly criticizing Stalin's authoritarianism and the excesses of his rule.

Releasing Prisoners:

De-Stalinization involved releasing prisoners from the Gulags (Soviet forced labor camps).

Freedom of Expression:

The period also saw an easing of restrictions on freedom of expression and a greater openness in the arts and culture according.

Impact on Eastern Europe:

De-Stalinization had significant consequences in Eastern Europe, where it contributed to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 which was ultimately suppressed by the Soviet military.

"Silent De-Stalinization":

A period of "silent de-Stalinization" also occurred between 1953 and 1955, where revisions of Stalin's policies were implemented in secret, often without explanation.

2.5 GLASNOST (OPENNESS) AND PERESTROIKA (DEMOCRATIZATION) REFORMS (1985-1991)

Glasnost and Perestroika were two crucial reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union in the 1980s, aiming to revitalize the country's economy and political system. Glasnost, meaning "openness" in English, focused on increasing transparency and allowing for more freedom of speech and information. Perestroika, meaning "restructuring," focused on reforming the Soviet economy, moving towards a more market-oriented system.

Glasnost:

Definition:

Glasnost translated as "openness" in English, referring to a significant increase in individual freedom of expression in political and social aspects of life in the Soviet Union.

Goals:

The policy aimed to increase transparency in government institutions, allowing citizens to discuss problems and potential solutions openly.

Impact:

Glasnost loosened state censorship of the media, encouraging a more open and less controlled environment for information.

Perestroika:

Definition:

Perestroika, meaning "restructuring," was a policy of reforming the economic and political system of the Soviet Union.

Goals:

The goal was to restructure the Soviet political and financial system, aiming to make the economy more efficient.

Impact:

Perestroika involved loosening price controls, encouraging entrepreneurship and limited private businesses, and easing the purchase of imported goods.

Together, Glasnost and Perestroika were intended to create a more democratic and market-oriented Soviet Union, with the hope of revitalizing its stagnant economy and political system.

2.6 DISSOLUTION OF USSR AND AFTERMATH

The Soviet Union dissolved on December 26, 1991, officially ending the existence of the state as a sovereign entity and subject of international law. This marked the end of the Cold War and had profound geopolitical consequences. The collapse was triggered by a combination of internal factors like economic stagnation and political reforms, as well as external pressures from the Cold War.

Key factors leading to the dissolution:

Economic Stagnation:

The Soviet economy struggled to compete with Western nations, leading to shortages and low living standards.

Political Reforms:

Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, including Perestroika (economic restructuring) and Glasnost (openness), unintentionally weakened the central government's control and fueled separatist movements.

Ethnic Nationalism:

The dissolution of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a surge of nationalist sentiment in the Soviet republics, as they sought independence from Moscow.

The Cold War:

The end of the Cold War and the decline in the perceived threat from the United States contributed to the weakening of the Soviet Union's military and political influence.

Failed Coup:

A failed coup attempt in August 1991 by hardliners against Gorbachev further destabilized the situation and ultimately weakened the central government's authority.

Declaration of Independence:

The republics, including Russia, declared their independence, leading to the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union.

AFTERMATH

End of the Cold War:

The collapse of the Soviet Union ended the Cold War, a long period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

New Geopolitical Landscape:

The dissolution led to the emergence of new independent states, changing the global political landscape.

Economic Transition:

The former Soviet republics faced economic challenges as they transitioned from centrally planned economies to market economies.

Military and Security Implications:

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to a reduction in military spending and a shift in global security dynamics.

In essence, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was a complex event driven by a combination of internal and external factors, ultimately leading to the end of the Cold War and a new era of global politics.

2.7 SUMMARY

The USSR had far reaching effects on the politics of Europe. Its rise was marked by the establishment of a one-party state under the Communist Party, followed by periods of intense centralization and totalitarianism under leaders like Stalin. The Soviet Union's fall was precipitated by economic stagnation, the rise of nationalist movements, and the failure of reform efforts under Gorbachev.

2.8 QUESTIONS FOR SELF-STUDY

1. Write a detailed note on the October Revolution of 1917.
2. Examine the role of Lenin in the foundation of the Soviet Union.
3. Explain the key events of the Stalin Era.
4. Analyze World War II and Soviet Union.
5. Discuss the Cold War and Soviet Union
6. Assess the process of Destalinization.
7. What is Glasnost and Perestroika?
8. Explain the dissolution of the Soviet Union

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