**Russian Revolution**

**Background - 1905 and After**

1880s and 90s and up to 1914 period of rapid industrialization with the associated dislocation etc. - still lagged far behind the west

* foreign capital began to pour into Russia
* heavy industry became a priority
* Witte balanced the budget, increased exports, decreased imports, raised indirect taxation in order to subsidize industry
* Borrowed western technology like crazy
* the rising industrialists depended partial on gov’t contracts and began to export - to the EAST
* economy began to diversify by 1914
* still heavily dependent on foreign capital
* falling further behind the west
* proletariat more densely packed than in the west

Rise of bourgeoisie and the proletariat - still a judge and hugely poor peasant population

Liberals formed the Constitutional Democratic Party in 1905 - the Kadets

Radicals formed the Social Democratic Party (SD - Marxists) and the Socialist Revolutionary (SR - populist)

From 1900 on there were frequent strikes, student protests, and peasant uprisings. Committees formed to discuss economics and politics and most of these demanded reform.

Zemtsvo - local advisory bodies - called for a constituent assembly

Large Union of Unions formed by the Kadets

January 22, 1905 Father Gapon led a peaceful protest to the Winter Palace to ask humbly for redress for their concerns. Gapon’s organization was an official or police union. The peasants were essentially Tsarists. Troops fired on the mob killing about 100-200. This added fuel the revolutionist movement.

Tsar Nicholas tried to appease the movement by granting a “consultative” assembly - strikes, riots, mutiny in the armed forces etc. continued throughout 1905

St. Petersburg organized a soviet - a large union of workers

Oct 30 Tsar issued the October Manifesto

* civil liberties
* Duma
* essentially a constitutional monarchy

Split the opposition - liberals and moderates were satisfied and the radicals were not

May, 1906 the fundamental laws were promulgated

* Tsar retained huge powers - executive, military, foreign policy, head of the church
* call and disband Duma
* veto over legislation
* could issue emergency laws when Duma was not in session to be approved by next Duma
* Duma had financial and budgetary power - circumscribed by the Tsar
* Not responsible gov’t
* Upper chamber created and was conservative in nature - half appointed by the Tsar
* Most males had some sort of a say in the election of the Duma - huge step

First Duma was both radical - land redistribution - and intractable - left and moderates fighting to the extent that legislation was difficult

Nicholas dissolved the first Duma

Second Duma was more paralyzed

Nicholas unconstitutional changed the electoral law in 1907 to get a Duma that would cooperate with the gov’t - the Octobrists replaced the Kadets as the most powerful party in the Duma - less conservative gentry and businessmen - liberals

Stolypin was the prime Minister - sought to pacify the revolutionaries and put an end o the increasing terrorism - “Stolypin Necktie” -brutal repression

His domestic policy sought to break up peasant communes and replace them with a class of independent farmers - conservative in their outlook

Superficial reforms were passed y Stolypin - fell short of fundamental reform

Radicals of both left and right were unsatisfied and both sides engaged in terrorism

In 1911, Stolypin was assassinated

The Revolutions of 1917

* Optimists believe that Imperial Russia was ruined by WWI - without it the country would have reformed before revolution
* Pessimists believe that the war provided the last push over the edge

March 8 - 11, 1917 there were riots and demonstrations in Petrograd over bread and coal shortages

Marc 10th reserve battalions of the army were sent to quell the uprising but instead joined the protesters

Nicholas was away at the front and authority in the capital collapsed and many officials went into hiding

The Duma filled the power vacuum - and on March 12 formed a provisional gov’t

* Prince George Lvov - PM
* Kadet leader - foreign affairs
* Octobrist leader - Minister of war
* SR member Kerensky - Minister of Justice

March 15 Nicholas and his son abdicated in favour of his rather Michael who abdicated the next day awaiting the decision of the assembly

The gov’t was challenged by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies - dominated until fall 1917 by moderate socialists

Petrograd Soviet (PS) moved into the Duma building on March 12 and began to assert its authority - the gov’t was in constant negotiation with the Soviet

PS issued order No. 1 on March 14

* military unit should be run by elected committees
* officers entitled to command only during tactical situations
* contributed to the demoralization, ineffectiveness and eventual collapse of the Russian Army

The All Russian Congress of Soviets called in June 1917 elected an executive committee which had more support than did the provisional gov’t

Provisional gov’t was very liberal but could not solve basic problems

* freedom of the press, religion, speech, assembly, unions
* Equal rights to minorities
* local democracy
* Independence for Poland (mostly overrun by Germans)
* Partial eight-hour working day
* Continued the war and thus the shortages remained
* No definitive land settlement
* no stop to inflation
* industrial production continued to slide

Pro. gov’t had only limited power Kerensky was revered tot as the “persuader-in-chief”

Prov. gov’t made mistakes

didn’t call for the election of a new assembly soon enough

it continued the war

**Lenin**

He arrived in Petrograd with others in the sealed train on April 16, 1917

Issued April Thesis

* bourgeois revolution had happened and the proletarian revolution was on its way
* peace - immediate treaty with Germany and AH
* bread - food distribution
* land - seizure of gentry land by the peasants

**Marxist-Leninism**

Modified the writings of Marx and Engels to fit Russian situation and changing nature of world politics

Role of the Party

small, strong, centralized group of revolutionaries was needed

differed from Mensheviks who favoured a broader assembly of people

Peasants

* Marx doubted that peasants could be revolutionary - he required industrial capitalsim before rev was possible and the peasantry had little experience with industrial capitalism
* Lenin believed that if properly led by the party and the proletariat, peasants could be revolutionary

Imperialism

* wrote book – *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* tried to bring Marxism up-to-date with the intense colonial rivalry which helped lead to WWI
* he believed that once capitalist monopolies began to move around the globe - imperialism was the result
* capitalism strained the markets and resources of the mother country (an inherent contradiction of capitalism) and the natural result was for capitalists to look for overseas markets and resources
* capitalists used the power of the state to help accomplish this - hence colonial rivalries
* the export of capital becomes more important than the export of goods
* international alliances and counter alliances are the result
* Lenin described the dying days of capitalism as days of gigantic conflicts - hind sight given that he wrote the book in 1916
* thus he believed that the proletariat and the colonial peoples were natural allies

Marxist-Leninism was very intolerant - came from the scientific nature of it - those who opposed it were seen to be demonstrably wrong

Ruthlessness was also and ear mark - ethics belonged to the superstructure-the consequence of class reality - only when fundamental economic change occurred would there be a change in the morality of the world - until then (the victory of communism) no holds were barred

**Meanwhile Back in Petrograd . . .**

Popular disturbances continued - forced Lvov to shuffle cabinet in mid May and include more socialists - Kerensky took Navy and war portfolios

Gov’t promised a defensive war but first had to drive invaders out - Brusilov offensive

National minorities became more vocal

July 3 Krondstad Rebellion - demanded Soviets take power

* Some view this as Lenin’s first attempt to gain power
* Not likely according to Anthony Wood as Lenin was in Finland
* Bolsheviks split onthe rebellion

Collapse of Brusilov offensive and continued shortages led to July Days - 16th to 18th

soldiers, sailors, mobs tried to take over Petrograd

* led by Bolsheviks
* Lenin didn’t support it - not in complete control of Bolsheviks
* rebellion collapsed when it wasn’t endorsed by the Petrograd Soviet and not all army units supported it
* Bolsheviks were accused of German connections
* Lenin and leaders fled to Finland - directed Bolsheviks from there
* Lvov resigned and Kerensky became Prime Minister

New cabinet did little good

Prov. Gov’t called State Conference of 2,000 leading citizens etc. - nothing accomplished

Right Wing rallied around General Kornilov - Commander-in-Chief

Kornilov Affair

* Kornilov and Kerensky sent loyal troops to Petrograd to break the power of the Soviet
* Kerensky then betrayed Kornilov and appealed to the people to “save the revolution” from Kornilov
* People sprang to the defense of Petrograd Sept 9-14
* Bolsheviks gained from episode - their leaders were let out of jail and their supporters were armed to defend the capital
* affair split left and right irrevocably
* military deteriorated even further - murder of officers and whole units deserted

By June there was 41 Bolshevik newspapers in circulation

Bolsheviks were getting money from Germany

Using this money and connections in the army Lenin began creating the Red Guards in June - 10,000 by July

Bolsheviks captured a majority of the Petrograd Soviet on Sept 13 and in the Moscow Soviet a week later - Trotsky was the Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet

Workers organizations at the local level sprang up

* militias
* Soviets
* Unions now represented 2.75 million workers
* Factory committees supervised appointments
* peasants beginning to help themselves to land - anarchy

All Russian Congress of Soviets still dominated by moderate socialists - Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries

**Bolshevik Seizure of Power**

Lenin urged seizure of power

Belived that all of Europe (Especially Germany was onthe verge of Revolution)

He slipped into Petrograd and convinced the party there that he was right - huge gamble 10 Oct

Kemenev and Zinoviev opposed the take over

Trotsky was instrumental in the take over -

* PS set up committee to defend the capital in case of German advance
* perfect cover for takeover
* Oct 21 -Petrograd garrison took this committee as their command
* distributed weapons to Red Guards
* Planned take over to coincide with Second All Russian Congress of Soviets

Kerensky ordered cruiser Aurora to put to sea - countermanded by military committee

On Nov 7 (Oct 25 old style) Red Guards occupied key points

Bolshevik led soldiers from Petrograd garrison and Kronstadt naval base as well as workers Red Guards stormed the Winter Place and arrested members of the Prov. Gov’t and declared themselves the gov’t - Kerensky escaped a few hours before

Bolsheviks now had a majority in the All Russian Congress - Kemenev took the chair

26 Oct Lenin proclaimed the new socialist order

Council of People’s Commissars (Ministers) - All Bolsheviks

* Trotsky - Foreign Affairs
* Stalin - Nationalities
* Rykov - Interior