

# **RUSSIAN REVOLUTION**

# The Romanovs



- The Romanov's were the Imperial Family of Russia
  - Imperial is essentially the same as Royal Family
  - Russia was so vast, they called themselves the Russian Empire
- The family had ruled Russia for over 300 years. It was the only family to ever rule Russia
- Czar Nicholas II, his wife- Czarina Alexandra, 4 daughters (Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia), one son Alexei
  - Alexis was the heir to the throne, but had a secret. He was a hemophiliac- meaning his blood did not clot. So? He could die from a bruise or bloody nose, etc.

# Nicholas as Czar

- Wasn't well prepared by his father to rule
- Much like Louis XVI- Nicholas was a good guy, good father, but not a good leader.
- He believed in Autocratic Rule
  - Autocrat = Absolute Monarchy

- Called, “Nicholas the Bloody” by his critics
  - Khodynka Tragedy- a stampede of ppl trying to get free stuff on his wedding day
  - Anti-Semitic Pogroms- riots aimed at attacking Jews
  - Bloody Sunday- Jan 22, 1905- a group of petitioners led by Father Gapon marched on the Winter Palace to demand better working conditions in factories
  - Someone got antsy and fired into the crowd.
  - Casualties range from 100-1,000 killed/wounded



– 1905 Revolution – included military mutinies, peasant uprisings, and urban worker strikes.

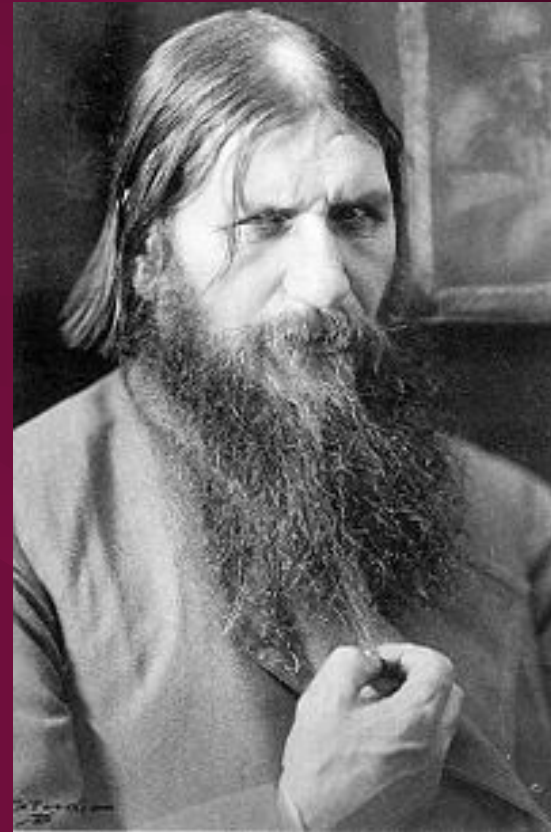
- Result- Duma (legislative body), multi-party elections, Russian Constitution of 1906 (set up limited monarchy)

– Russo-Japanese War- Fought over Korea and Manchuria.

- Japan won, with help, to the surprise of most
- Demonstrated Nicholas's shortcomings

# Rasputin- The Mad Monk

- Rasputin was a monk from eastern Russia
- He was able to calm Alexis whenever he was injured. Calming him down = slower blood pressure = less bleeding = survival of Alexei
- He, by all accounts, didn't bathe much, didn't do laundry much, always had food stuck in his beard
- He became very influential to the Imperial Family and NO ONE knew why. NOT even the extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins)



# Russia & WWI

- Czar Nicholas II hoped war would unite Russia & stop talk of revolution
- Russia declare war on Austria-Hungary in support of its ally Serbia
  - Germany then declare war on Russia
- patriotism increased rapidly



But...

- Russia was not ready for war
- Russia lacked:
  - factories/supplies
    - The factories they did have were unable to produce war materials quickly enough
  - transportation system
  - modern equipment
  - competent military leaders

# Conditions Worsen

- **1915** → Nicholas II took command of Russian military
- if Russia failed in WWI, so would Nicholas II

- Food, fuel, & other goods grew scarce
- peasants grew desperate
  - No food, no heat - anyone would be desperate

# Histeria's take on the Russian Revolution



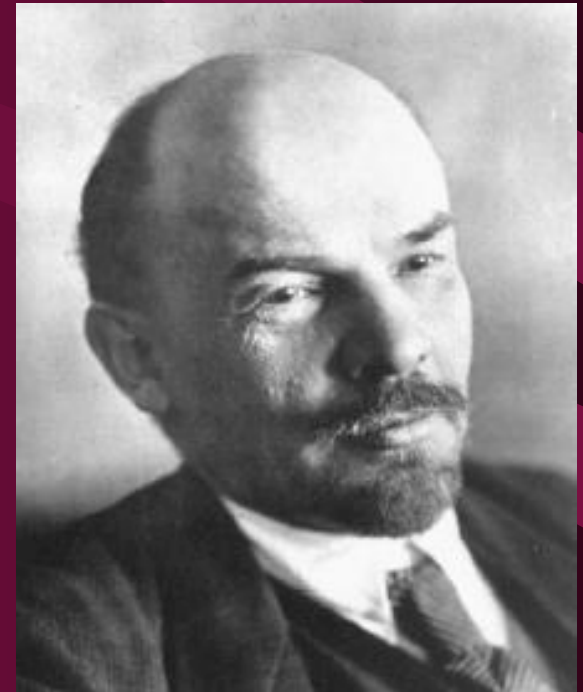
Told the workers and the peasants

\*\*Fun but not completely  
accurate

- Nicholas II went to war
  - left Czarina Alexandra in charge (unpopular). She was a German Princess. Germany is the enemy in WWI
    - Alexandra took advice from Grigory Rasputin (corrupt/immoral)
    - Rasputin was murdered by the Czar's nephew, supposedly to protect the family from Rasputin's influence
  - The situation did not improve with Rasputin's death.
  - Nicholas and Alexandra were too shy and not good leaders

# The Bolsheviks

- small Marxist group
  - Marxist- believers in the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx
- wanted to change life in Russia
- Leader = Vladimir Lenin
- goal = overthrow czar, create a communist state- **a system is which there would be no economic classes or private**



# Vladimir Lenin

- Born in Russia, his brother had been hanged after plotting to kill the czar- influencing Vladimir to hate the czar
- Was arrested & sent to Siberia (1897) for his revolutionary ideas then went to Switzerland
- Lenin believed in Karl Marx's writings adapting them to Russia. (Marx believed the industrial working class-proletariat- would overthrow the capitalism) Russia didn't have this class. Lenin envisioned a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (or an elite group of the proletariat). He named this group Bolsheviks- meaning majority even though they weren't the majority

- if czar was overthrown, industrial workers could govern Russia
- Marx believed all of human history was us vs. them
  - the have's vs. the have not's
  - the bourgeoisie vs the proletariat
  - those that own the means of production vs. the workers
  - The rich vs. the poor
- Theoretically, if a Marxist Revolution took place, the result would be 'everyone works, everyone owns a part of the place of employment, everyone gets what they need. There would be no need for 'government'
- Although no communist revolution has succeed like this- they all turn into dictatorships



# Revolution Begins

- **March 8, 1917** → Petrograd, Russia
- unhappy citizens marched
- police & soldiers were sympathetic
- the Duma (Russia's legislature) defied Nicholas II
- **March 15, 1917** → Nicholas II forced to abdicate

# Temporary Government

- Duma established temporary government
  - Aleksandr Kerensky was leader
- many Russians didn't like this government
  - They stayed in WWI for example
- Bolsheviks wanted basic changes
  - Lenin was still leader

# Bolshevik Revolution

- **mid-1917** → Kerensky's government still fighting Central Powers in WWI
- Russian army was weak & collapsed
- **November 1917** → Bolshevik Red Guard attacked Kerensky's government
  - Kerensky & others try to fight back, but eventually flee the country
    - Kerensky dies in 1970 in the US

- Lenin established radical communist program
  - private ownership = illegal
  - land redistributed to peasants
- Lenin does NOT believe the Russian people can live without a government- he doesn't trust them to do the right thing
  - He creates what he calls the Dictatorship of the Proletariat – which is an oxymoron – if proletariat is the workers, how do you have a dictatorship of workers?
  - Lenin sets up a dictatorship under the guise of something else. Yep, he lies to gain support

# After the Revolution

- Lenin wanted to end involvement in war
- Leon Trotsky was sent to negotiate with Central Powers- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
- Russia lost much land to Central Powers because of lack of strong military
  - This land later becomes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Belarus, & Ukraine

# Civil War

- Some Russians disliked the negotiations & their results
- Opponents of Bolsheviks = “White Army”
  - army leaders
  - political opponents
  - wealthy Russians
  - Some wanted to return Czar to the throne

\*France & United States supported White Army

## Civil War

- **Lasted 3 years**
- **Both sides burned villages, killed civilians**
- **Lenin had the Czar's family assassinated, took control of industry, severely restricted the church**
- **Secret police (Cheka) arrested anyone considered an 'enemy of the revolution' also set up forced labor camps**
- **'War Communism'- Communists took over banks, mines, factories, & railroads. Forced peasants to deliver almost all of their crops to cities & army. Some were drafted into military or factory work**

# Assassination of Imperial Family

- Since his abdication, the Imperial Family had been under house arrest.
- They (the family and a few servants, plus the dog) were moved to Yekaterinburg
- When the White Army was getting close, Lenin 'ordered' the execution of the family
- They were awoken in the middle of the night- taken downstairs, shot by firing squad, stabbed- because the bullets bounced off the girls and Alexei
- Then buried, dug up, burned or had acid poured on them, reburied, not found until 1990s- reburied and canonized as saints in the Russian Orthodox Church



# Civil War Ends

- Red Army vs. White Army
  - fighting & famine cost millions of lives
- **late 1920** → Bolsheviks triumph
- **1921** → New Economic Policy: plan permitting some capitalist activity

# the Soviet Union

- **1922** → economy begun to improve
- **1922** → Russia reunited with neighboring lands that had belonged to Russian Empire
- became Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union

- Setup an elected legislature, called the Supreme Soviet, gave everyone over 18 the right to vote, all political power, resources, & means of production would belong to workers & peasants
- In reality the Communist party controlled everything using the army & secret police to enforce its will.

# Joseph Stalin

- Takes over after Lenin dies
  - Trotsky was Lenin's choice- he fled to Mexico only to be assassinated 20 years later on Stalin's order
- Purges- Stalin 'gets rid of' any and all opposition (people are killed, disappear, or sent to camps in Siberia)- estimated 20 million die of the purges and his policies
- More on Stalin later ;)