4.2 Communist Revolutions
Russian Revolution
Russia Before the Revolution

- Russia was an agricultural nation through the 1800’s, and did not really industrialize
- Serfdom was still widespread
- There was a large income gap between the wealthy landowners (Boyers) and the poor

“Burlaks on Volga”
In many ways, the life of the Russian serf was still very medieval.
Farm workers in Germany same time period
What does this slide show?

The Tsar, the Priest and the Rich Man on the Shoulders of the Laboring People, colored lithograph by A. Apsit, 1918.
Artists depicted a similar situation prior to the French Revolution
"It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait until the serfs begin to liberate themselves from below."

- Serfdom abolished in 1861
  - Conditions for peasants still poor
  - Lived in communes
- Czar’s maintained absolute control
- In 1914, Czar Nicholas made the decision to go to war (WWI) against Germany
Czar Nicholas II and his son Alexei
Rasputin

- While Nicholas joined his army at the front, the Czarina was in control of Russia.
- She was heavily influenced by her friend Rasputin.
- He was a self-proclaimed holy man and visionary, and his counsel was usually bad.
- In Dec. 1916, three aristocrats had him killed because of his excessive and problematic influence.
- Today, he would be a great Halloween costume…

Rasputin died only after having eaten poisoned cakes, drinking poisoned wine, getting shot three times (including in the head), and then getting bound and thrown in a river. Forensic evidence showed that he had inhaled water.
February Revolution
1917 (first of two revolutions)

• Riots and strikes forced Nicholas to abdicate the throne in the midst of war.
• Russia was left with a power vacuum…
  – Soviet (workers unions & soldiers) and the DUMA attempted to share power
Problems with the February Revolution

1. Liberal Democracy (Weak government)
2. Stayed in WWI

communists continue to meet in groups called soviets
The Germans sent Lenin back to Russia...why?
October Revolution- 1917
“Lenin Takes Control”- Communist Revolution

Promising “Peace, Land and Bread,” the Bolshevik revolution had wide appeal to a large number of Russians

• Peace- Leaving WWI
• Land- Breaking up big farms and distributing land
• Bread- economic prosperity
What happened to the Romanovs?
The treaty of Brest-Litovsk, gave Germany a lot of Russian territory angering many Russians.

In the summer of 1918-1921 Lenin’s opponents organized a counter-revolution—Resulting in Civil War.

**Civil War**

- **Red Army**
  - Led by General Leon Trotsky
  - Communists
  - Supported Lenin
  - Successfully defended Petrograd

- **White Army**
  - Led by Lavr Kornilev
  - Anti-communist
  - Counter-Revolutionaries
  - Supported the Czar
Communism- Marxism, Leninism, etc
So What IS communism- a harder question to answer than you would think

- According to Karl Marx a communist society is run by the factory workers (proletariat) who work and share resources. This happens on a WORLD scale, and there will be no need for government or armies.

- According to Karl, socialism is the stepping stone to communism. Small Socialist revolutions had to happen before the "communist" revolution was complete.

Karl was writing back in Germany in 1847.
Comparing Economic Systems
You need a notebook

Key Economic Words-
Surplus- what you have beyond what you need
Incentive- motivation to produce a surplus
Redistribution- The act of taking a surplus (ex. Taxing or requisitioning)
Safety net- Systems in place to protect those who do not produce a surplus
Capitalism

Those with Capital have total freedom to make/keep profit

Classic Oversimplified Example

You are in a capitalist classroom. There is zero group work. If you work hard to get good grades you pass. If you do not work hard and you fail, you will be kicked out of school. Teacher may or may not provide you with study guides or review material.

Who controls the system? The Capitalists

Pros? High level of incentive for work → high levels of production → surplus wealth

Cons? No safety net for workers
Not truly equal
War Time Communism

ALL SURPLUS goods will be taken to benefit the army/city

You are in a classroom. All students are expected to do their schoolwork, however there will only be one grade given out for the whole class. To make sure that everyone passes we will take the average of the total class grade and give it to everyone.

Who is in control of the economy?  The Government

• Pros?  An (attempt) to create safety net for all

• Cons?  Low incentive to work → lack of production → no surplus for redistribution

Fails to create a safety net
What happened to War time Communism? – It ended with the war
• In 1922 the war is over
• “enemies of the revolution” were severely punished
• Lenin changed the name of Russia to the USSR, or the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* and moved the capital to Moscow
• He changed the name of the Bolshevik party to the Communist party.
New Economic Policy

- State maintained control of heavy industry (only)
- A heavy government tax allows for social services

**Pros?**
- More incentive than in War Time Communism
- More safety net than Capitalism

**Cons?**
- Less incentive than capitalism
### Retail/Restaurant

- Make $100,000 (beyond investment)

### Electricity

- Does not make profit; employees work for government and get paid by government
- Government takes $50,000
- You either take 50,000 in a salary, or re-invest it in your business
- Government uses grain to feed poor, sells leftovers at cheap prices
- Government uses profit to expand services, pay for things like electricity
- Government supplies as many people as it can with electricity either for free or below market cost
New Economic Policy is a Mixed Market (A mixture of Socialist and Capitalist practices)

True capitalism
No taxation
No safety laws
No government owned businesses

True socialism
Tax ALL Surplus
Workers dictate working conditions
Workers own all industry

Profits are taxed
and/or
there are workers safety laws
and/or
The government owns certain sectors of the economy
Reminder Marx thought that a communist state would have no government but that workers would work together without one
Sooooo what is communism then?

• At its core; communism/socialism is an economic theory that believes in wealth redistribution

• Wealth redistribution is the idea that it is good to take some wealth from those who have it and give it to those who need it
• Socialism
  • According to Marx ➔ stepping stone to communism
  • Commonly used as “economic ideals” or Marx like Redistribution of Wealth without the subsequent political philosophies

• Communism
  • According to Marx ➔ Final stage (post-revolutionary utopia)
  • Commonly used as the more political implications (violent revolutions, also used to imply Leninist style communist governments.
Just as the Economy Was Getting Better

.....Lenin dies of a stroke
Chinese Revolution
Prior to revolution

Warlords Control China

Warlord Era (1912-1920)

Red = One kind of warlord
Blue = Different kind of warlord
4 Groups want to control China

- Students (May 4th Movement)
- Communist under Mao Zedong
- Warlords
- Nationalists (Guomindang) first led by Sut Yet Sen then by Chang Kaishek
Weird Alliances and a couple of decades of Fighting

- Nationalist and Communists vs. Warlords (1920-1934ish)
- Nationalists vs. Communists (1934-1940ish)
- Long March 1934 (a communist retreat from Nationalist Persecution)
• Nationalists and Communist vs. Japanese (invasion) (1940-1946)
• Nationalist vs. Communists (1946-1951)
Communist Victory in 1951
Why did the Communists ultimately win?

• Mao Zedong’s troops were better behaved
• The communists used guerilla tactics as opposed to traditional tactics
Blue line = Guomindang Retreat
Kuomintang Territory

Red = Warlord Groups