

**NEXT IAS**

# HISTORY OF THE WORLD



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**History of The World**

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# WORLD HISTORY TIMELINE



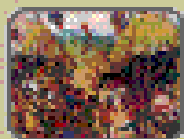
1215

Magna Carta signed by King John of England at Runnymede.



1492

Christopher Columbus begins his voyage.



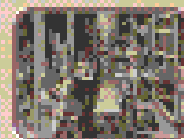
1337

Hundred Years War begins between England & France.



1347

Bubonic plague strikes across Europe.



1400

The first clock in the Church of St. Martin's first appeared in France.



1453

First printing press in the world, in Mainz, Germany.



1492

Christopher Columbus discovers America.



1498

Vasco da Gama's first voyage to India.



1500

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



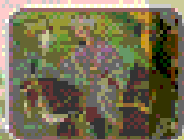
1517

First voyage to the Americas by Martin Luther.



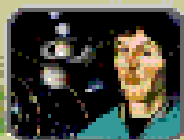
1519

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



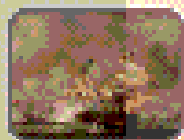
1528

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1543

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1551

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1558

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1560

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1568

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1564

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1565

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1567

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1573

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1574

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



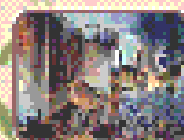
1578

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1583

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



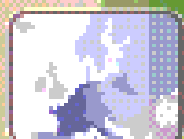
1589

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1601

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1605

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1616

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



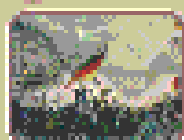
1621

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



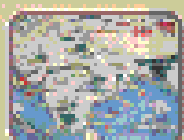
1630

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1643

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1659

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1661

First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1664

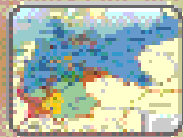
First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.



1669

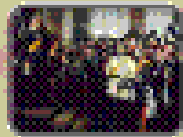
First voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus.

# WORLD HISTORY TIMELINE



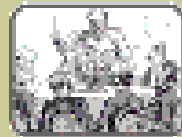
1870

United States and Mexico were independent.



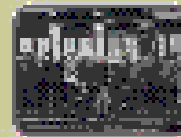
1871

Muslims were united under the Turkish flag.



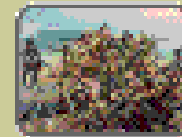
1884

Belgium signed a pact with 12 other leading European colonialists.



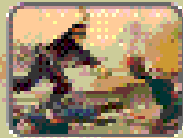
1889

United States Bank was formed.



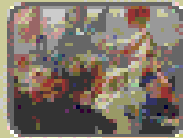
1899

Russians signed a pact with the United States.



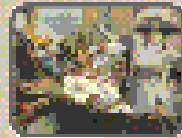
1904

Japan entered Korea.



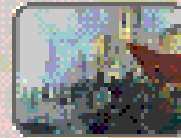
1905

John Hay's 14 Principles were adopted after the conference held in 1905.



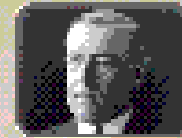
1914

Confederate States of America and the United States declared war in 1914.



1917

Russian Revolution began.



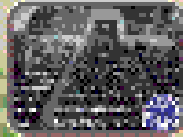
1918

US President Wilson suggested 14 principles.



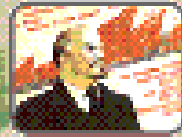
1919

Treaty of Versailles signed in 1919 after World War I.



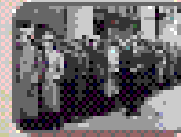
1920

League of Nations was established.



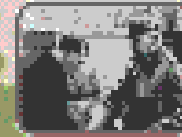
1921

New Economic Policy came into effect in Russia.



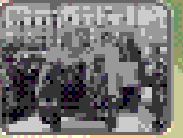
1920

Great Depression started in 1929.



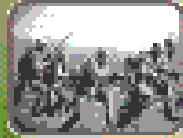
1923

Order of the Caliphate was established in Turkey.



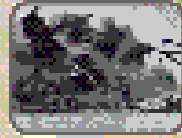
1938

Spain entered World War II.



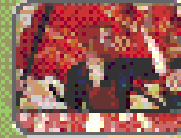
1939

World War II began.



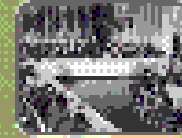
1941

Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, bringing the US into World War II.



1943

China's Nationalist Government was dissolved.



1944

United Nations Conference on International Organization.



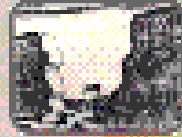
1945

World War II ended.



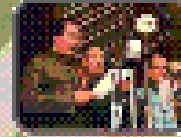
1947

India became independent.



1948

Berlin Blockade began.



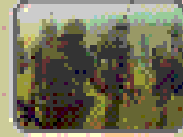
1949

People's Republic of China was established and became the world's most populous country.



1950

Korean War began.



1953

Malaya was independent.



1958

Great Britain moved to Sudan.



1962

China's Great Leap Forward.



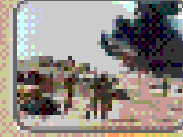
1967

Arab-Israeli War began.



1975

Portugal began its war.



1980

Iran's Islamic Revolution began with the seizure of the Shah's palace.



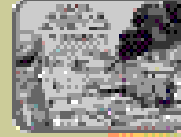
1989

Dissolution of USSR.



1991

Cold War ended.



2006

Lebanon War began in 2006.



2011

Arab Spring began in 2011.

**MAJOR EMPIRES (1492-1763)**

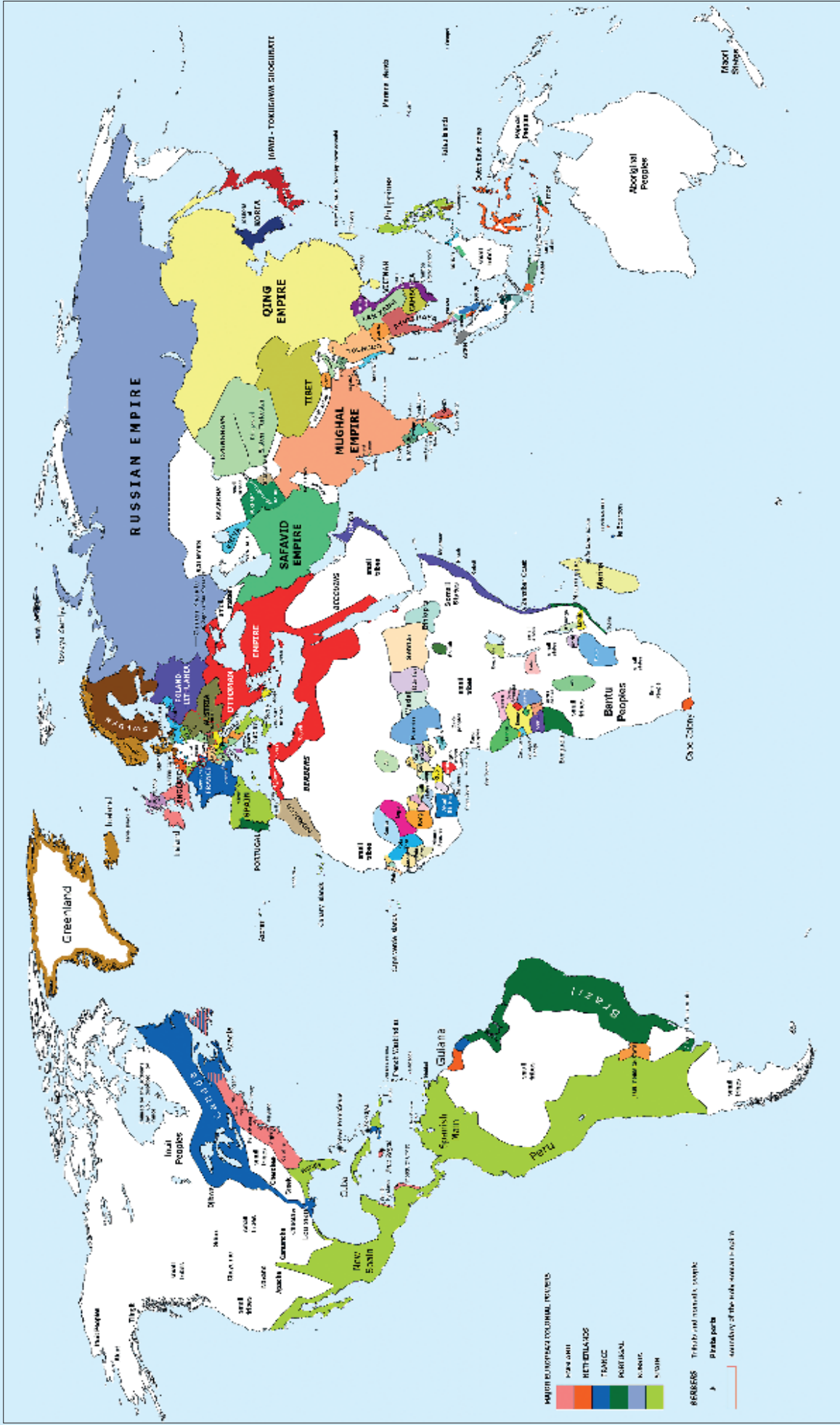
- SPANISH
- BRITISH
- FRANCE
- NETHERLANDS
- RUSSIA
- QING
- MUGHAL
- SAFAVID
- OTOMAN
- YANGON
- INDIA
- PORTUGAL
- AFRICA
- EUROPE
- ASIA
- AMERICA
- AUSTRALIA
- ANTARCTICA

**EMPIRES**

- Spanish Empire
- British Empire
- French Empire
- Dutch Empire
- Russian Empire
- Qing Empire
- Mughal Empire
- Safavid Empire
- Ottoman Empire
- Yankee Empire
- Indian Empire
- Portuguese Empire
- African Empire
- European Empire
- Asian Empire
- American Empire
- Australian Empire
- Antarctic Empire

**EMPIRES**

- Spanish Empire
- British Empire
- French Empire
- Dutch Empire
- Russian Empire
- Qing Empire
- Mughal Empire
- Safavid Empire
- Ottoman Empire
- Yankee Empire
- Indian Empire
- Portuguese Empire
- African Empire
- European Empire
- Asian Empire
- American Empire
- Australian Empire
- Antarctic Empire







# Unit

I

## Revolutions that shaped the World

1. Beginning of Modern Age .....2
2. American Revolution (1775-83) ..... 15
3. Industrial Revolution .....27
4. French Revolution (1789).....38
5. Revolutionary Movements in Europe.....53
6. Russian Revolution .....69



# CHAPTER 6

# RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

## 6.1 Introduction

Russian revolution of 1917 and its success is a watershed moment in the history of the modern world. This revolution changed the course of history in a way that not many events can claim. After the revolution, Russia emerged as a superpower within a short duration of three decades.



Romanov Dynasty and Czar Nicholas

It also resulted in an international competition between capitalist and communist ideology.

Russia was an autocracy ruled by Romanov dynasty and Czar was Nicholas II (1894-1917). In the second decade of twentieth century Russia was the only major European power which was still ruled by an absolute monarchy. Since the success of French revolution, Europe had witnessed many revolutions against the monarchies. In that sense, Russian revolution was not a break from the past but a continuation of events which took place in Europe. Although the character of Revolution was a bit different from earlier revolutions of Europe.

## 6.2 Early Society

In the early 1900s, Russia was one of the most impoverished countries in Europe with an enormous peasantry and a growing minority of poor industrial workers.

Much of Western Europe viewed Russia as an undeveloped, backward society. The Russian Empire practiced serfdom – a form of feudalism in which landless peasants were forced to serve the land-owning nobility – well into the nineteenth century. In contrast, the practice had disappeared in most of Western Europe by the end of the Middle Ages. In

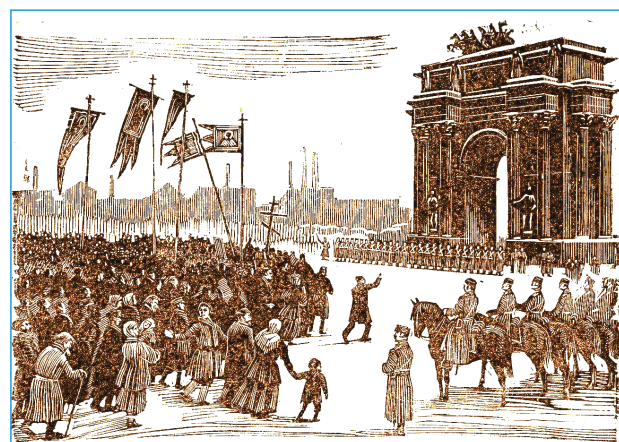
1861, the Russian Empire finally abolished serfdom. The emancipation of serfs would influence the events leading up to the Russian Revolution by giving peasants more freedom to organize.



Russian peasants and their craft jobs

## 6.3 Russian Revolution of 1905

Russia got industrialized much later than Western Europe and the United States. When it finally did, around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it brought with it immense social and political changes. Between 1890 and 1910, for example, the population of major Russian cities such as St. Petersburg and Moscow nearly doubled, resulting in overcrowding and destitute living conditions for a new class of Russian industrial workers.



Russian Revolution (1905)



When the workers' organizations were set up after industrialization began, they were dominated by the ideas of socialism. In 1883, the Russian Social Democratic Party was formed by George Plekhanov, a follower of Marx. This party along with many other socialist groups was united into the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1898. However, the party was soon split over questions of organization and policy. One group which was in minority (hence known as the Mensheviks) favoured a party of the type that existed in countries like France and Germany and participated in elections to the parliaments of their countries. The majority, known as the Bolsheviks, were convinced that in a country where no democratic rights existed and where there was no parliament, a party organized on parliamentary lines would not be effective. They favoured a party of those who would abide by the discipline of the party and work for revolution. The leader of the Bolsheviks was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, popularly known as Lenin.



Crimean War

A population boom at the end of the nineteenth century, a harsh growing season due to Russia's northern climate, and a series of costly wars—starting with the Crimean War (1854-1856)—meant frequent food shortages across the vast empire. In 1904, a war had broken out between Russia and Japan. The Russian armies had suffered reverses in the war. This had further strengthened the revolutionary movement in Russia.



Bloody Sunday Massacre (1905)

Large protests by Russian workers against the monarchy led to the Bloody Sunday massacre of 1905. Hundreds of unarmed protesters were killed or wounded by the Czar's troops. The massacre sparked the Russian revolution of 1905, during which angry workers responded with a series of crippling strikes throughout the country.

After the bloodshed of 1905, Czar Nicholas II promised the formation of a series of representative assemblies, or Dumas, to work towards reforms.

Bolsheviks	Mensheviks
Bolsheviks argued that the party must work with not just the industrial workers but also with the peasants to get them involved in the revolutionary activity.	Mensheviks had little faith in peasants cooperating in the revolutionary activity because peasants were the most conservative group in the Russian society. Thus Mensheviks were more strict followers of Marxism in terms of a purely Proletariat revolution
Bolsheviks believed that the party should be a small disciplined group of professional revolutionaries who would work full time to bring about the revolution. This should be the major criteria for membership irrespective of the applicants being from working class or peasants.	Mensheviks wanted a bigger party with membership open to all who wanted to join irrespective of the time members can devote and the level of their commitment to the activities of the organization.
They wanted an immediate start to the revolution.	Believed that the revolution cannot take place until Russia is fully industrialized and workers are in big majority over peasants. This was so because they did not expect support from the peasants.

### October Manifesto (1905)

The concessions by the Czar Nicholas II took the form of a promise named October Manifesto (1905) declaring the future intent of the Emperor which were as follows:

- Czar promised to establish an elected Parliament called Duma in Russian.
- He promised a pay hike to the workers and an improvement in the working conditions at factories.

- He promised cancellation of redemption payments by former Serfs.
- He promised greater freedom to the press.
- He promised a genuine democracy where there would be an important role of the Duma in governance of the country.

A new form of organization developed in this revolution which proved decisive in the upheaval of 1917. This was the 'Soviet', or the council of workers' representatives. Beginning as committee to conduct strikes, they became the instruments of political power. Soviets of peasants were also formed.

## Reforms Initiated by Czar

### Constitution and Duma

- At first sight, political and constitutional progress made after 1905 seemed very promising.
- The October Manifesto (1905) was the first acknowledgement by any Czar that an elected bicameral legislature had a role to play in Russia's constitutional future.
- October Manifesto served as a precursor to the Russian Empire's first constitution.
- Constitutional developments were however impeded by official conservatism.
- Nicholas II made it clear that Constitution which he had been forced to concede as a result of events of 1905 would not affect autocratic powers of the Czar.
- Duma had no real control over the functions of the executives and Czar retained the power of veto.
- Conflict between the executive and legislature did not allow first two Dumas to complete its term and they were dissolved within a short duration.
- Changes in electoral laws in 1907 (peasants and urban workers were deprived of vote) produced a less belligerent third Duma which lasted its full term (1907-12), but the fourth Duma revived the claims of the legislature against those of autocracy.
- There was also a serious absence of co-ordination between various departments of the bureaucracy.
- The principle of collective ministerial responsibility was absent and Czar continued to deal with each department individually.

### Economic Reforms

- More obvious progress was made by Russian economy between 1890 and 1914.
- Industrial growth is often regarded as the major success of the Nicholas II's reign.
- During 1890s, Russia progressed from fifth to second place among the world powers in terms of railway mileage, while her coal and steel production doubled.

- Russia adopted gold standard in 1896 which ensured direct monetary contact with the rest of the world, and took maximum advantage of the prevalent low interest rates.
- After a depression lasting from 1900 to 1905, Russia witnessed second boom during 1906-1913 with an annual growth rate of 6 per cent and a corresponding increase in foreign trade.
- Despite this Russian industrial base was small when compared with western European counterparts.

### Land Reforms

- Peter Stolypin, Prime Minister from 1906 to 1911, introduced some reforms in agriculture in a determined bid to win over peasants.
- Between 1906 and 1910 Stolypin sponsored a series of measures to dispose of the anomalies which remained from Alexander II's emancipation of serfs.
- Changes enabled peasants to substitute hereditary for repartitional land tenure.
- Other laws made credit available through the Peasant Land Bank, promoted the colonization of Siberia, and abolished redemption payments.
- Over two million peasants had successfully transferred to hereditary tenure, and there was evidence of more widespread use of new farming implements and fertilizers which resulted in higher yields. At no stage, however, did Russian agriculture even approach the efficiency of that of the West.
- Moreover, Stolypin's reforms had been highly selective, intended to create a stratum of wealthy peasants which would promote political stability and provide a consumer outlet for industry.
- By 1911 it was becoming clear that land reforms would not have the desired effect partly because of the high growth rate of peasant population and partly because of farming methods were too inefficient to support growing population adequately.
- The assassination of Stolypin in 1911 removed one the few really able Czarist minister and perhaps the only man who could have saved the monarchy.

### Social Reforms

- Some historians see in the last years of the Czarist regime an attempt to spread the social base of its support through a variety of welfare reforms. For example, in 1906 law on associations conferred basic trade union rights.
- In 1912 a scheme of health insurance was introduced. Annual expenditure on education quadrupled between 1900 and 1913.
- But in the end, it proved too little too late.

## 6.4 Precursors to 1917 Revolution

### Declining Support for Regime

There is evidence that the degree of support for autocracy actually diminished in the first decade of twentieth century. Attitude of Czar and his regime towards parliamentary institution (State Duma) even after Revolution of 1905 and October Manifesto made liberal intelligentsia less inclined to cooperate with Tsar's cabinet and bureaucracy.

### Implementation of the October Manifesto

Czar did setup Duma and redemption payments were abolished but he did not fulfil many promises he made in the October manifesto. The demands and the views of the Duma for reforms were ignored. The first two Dumas were disbanded by Czar's troops. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> Dumas completed their five-year term only because they were constituted by members who were pro-Czar. This was so because Czar had changed the voting system after disbanding the second Duma. The new voting system deprived the peasants and urban workers of their right to vote which resulted in election of conservative members from Aristocracy who were pro-Czar.

The Proletariat was permanently alienated by the reception given on 22 January 1905 to Gapon's petition, and the inadequacy of government reforms after 1906 made the factory workers an ideal target for Bolshevik propaganda.

Middle class also resented regular interferences of bureaucracy in the working of the Duma and were made more articulate by the intelligentsia.

The nobility, for centuries in the pillar of absolutism, was undergoing a crisis of its own. It no longer constituted a homogeneous class. Some of them even joined ranks with liberals in Duma out of conviction. It was a serious development for a regime which was becoming increasingly isolated from the rest of the people.



Father Gapon

#### Gapon's Petition

On Sunday, 22 January 1905 in St Petersburg, Russia, Father Georgy Gapon led an unarmed demonstration to present a petition to Czar Nicholas II. Demonstrators were fired upon by soldiers of the Imperial guards as they were marching towards winter palace. This day is also known as Bloody Sunday or Red Sunday.

### Role of World War I

Russia entered into World War I in August 1914 in support of the Serbs and their French and British allies. Militarily, imperial Russia was no match for industrialized Germany,

and Russian casualties were greater than those sustained by any nation in any previous war.

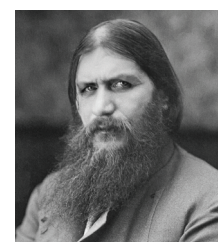
In the very first engagement with the Germans (who had sided with the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the Battle of Tannenberg, the Russian army was comprehensively beaten suffering 120,000 casualties to Germany's 20,000.

A continuing series of losses and setbacks meant that Nicholas left St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1915 to take personal control of the army. By this time Russia was sending conscripts and untrained troops to the front, with little or no equipment and fighting in an almost continual retreat. In 1916, the morale reached an all time low as the pressure of waging the war fell hardest on proletarian families, whose sons were being slaughtered at the front and who had severely suffered food and fuel shortages at home. The Tsar and the Imperial regime took the blame as civil unrest heated up to boiling point.

Failures in the war exposed weakness of the army and leadership which emboldened forces opposing autocracy. Military collapse had a disastrous effect on the country's political institutions. It provided legislature an opportunity to gain some grounds from executives. At the same time, the impact on economy was so widespread that discontent reached the point of spontaneous eruption. Events of war period emboldened the different forces which were against the autocratic Czarist regime to varying degrees.

#### Absence of Nicholas II:

Nicholas II's decision to lead forces in person had disastrous impact on the administration, creating a vacuum at the Centre which was filled by a more irrational and arbitrary autocracy in the form of Rasputin and the Empress. In her husband's absence, Czarina Alexandra began



Grigory Rasputin

firing elected officials. During this time, her controversial advisor, Grigory Rasputin, increased his influence over Russian politics and the royal Romanov family. Russian nobles who were eager to end Rasputin's influence murdered him on December 30, 1916.

By then, most Russians had lost faith in the failed leadership of the czar. Government corruption was rampant, the Russian economy remained backward and Nicholas repeatedly dissolved the Duma, the toothless Russian parliament established after the 1905 revolution, when it opposed his will.

Lack of systematic planning before the war resulted in serious shortages of commodities and contributed to hyper-inflation. Inadequate supply of raw materials and foodstuffs was largely a problem of distribution. Although there was plenty of food in the country, it did not get to the big cities in sufficient quantities, because most of



the trains were being monopolized by the military. Bread was scarce and very expensive. These shortages, along with government's decision to print paper money in vast quantities, stimulated price increases without allowing for corresponding adjustments in wages. The deteriorating standard of living inevitably fuelled popular discontent and was the most immediate factor in the February (March) Revolution of 1917.

In 1905, the Czar had the backing of the army and thus was able to save his regime. But by 1917, this backing had been severely weakened. Thus, the impact of the First World War was far greater than that of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), which had left army intact as an anti-revolutionary force. Government of the Czar was so discredited that Duma was prepared to assume the leadership of the Revolution. Pressure was put on Czar to abdicate and Nicholas II abdicated the throne on 2 March (15 March) 1917.

#### Date of the Russian Revolution

Russia followed the Julian calendar until 1 February 1918. The country then changed to the Gregorian calendar, which is followed everywhere today. The Gregorian dates are 13 days ahead of the Julian dates.

Thus, there are two set of dates for the Russian Revolution.

## 6.5 1917 Revolutions: February and October

In 1917, Russia saw two revolutions: the February Revolution and the October Revolution. While the February revolution saw the end of Czar's regime, it also established a provisional Government. The October Revolution resulted in a coup by the Bolsheviks which established a communist rule in Russia.

### Reasons for February Revolution of 1917

#### Failure of the Land Reforms

The land reforms, aimed at improving the life of peasants, did not have desired outcomes. The reforms failed as the peasant population grew more rapidly than the growth of the agricultural sector. The slow growth of the agricultural sector, coupled with inefficient farming methods failed to check food inflation. Moreover, the assassination of Peter Stolypin in 1911 removed perhaps the only man who could have saved the monarchy.

#### Government Repression

The government used secret police for rooting out revolutionaries. The government used brutal methods to

repress revolutionaries among university students and lecturers. Even the Jews suffered mass deportation from Russia. The situation was dangerous as the government had alienated three of the most important sections in society - peasants, industrial workers and the intelligentsia (educated classes). Many sections became united in opposition to Czar.

#### Revival of the Revolutionary Parties

Several revolutionary parties, especially the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks came together, resolved their differences and joined hands in their opposition to the Czar.

#### Industrial Unrest

The government programmes for workers' welfare did not end their grievances. Many industrial strikes and unrest took place from 1912 to 1914 before the First World War. The unrest started by the shooting of 270 striking gold miners in the Lena goldfields in Siberia (April 1912). In all there were over 2000 separate strikes in 1912, 2400 in 1913, and over 4000 in the first seven months of 1914, before the World War I broke out. Though there were minor improvements in workers' conditions, they were not enough to remove all the pre-1905 grievances.

#### Loss of Credibility for the Royal Family

The royal family was discredited due to a number of scandals. It was widely suspected that Nicholas II himself was a party to the murder of Peter Stolypin, who was shot by a member of the secret police in the Tsar's presence in 1911. Also, it was alleged that a priest who helped the sick child of the Czar had gained prominence in the decision making of czar due to his close proximity.

#### High Expenditure in the First World War

Russia's participation in the World War I accelerated Czar's end as the war led to high expenditure, thus worsening the economic conditions of the people. In Fact, the inefficient leadership of Czar led to a fight between the troops and the police.

#### October Revolution (1917)

Russians expected the autocracy of the tsarist system to be replaced by a democratic republic with an elected parliament. The Duma, struggling to take control, established a provisional government with Prince George Lvov as prime minister.

Alexander Kerensky, a moderate socialist, replaced George Lvov in July but the new government was unable to bring stability. Consequently, on the night of 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1917 a second revolution took place, in which the Bolsheviks came to power. The failures of the provisional government

led to the October Revolution. Some of the reasons are as under:

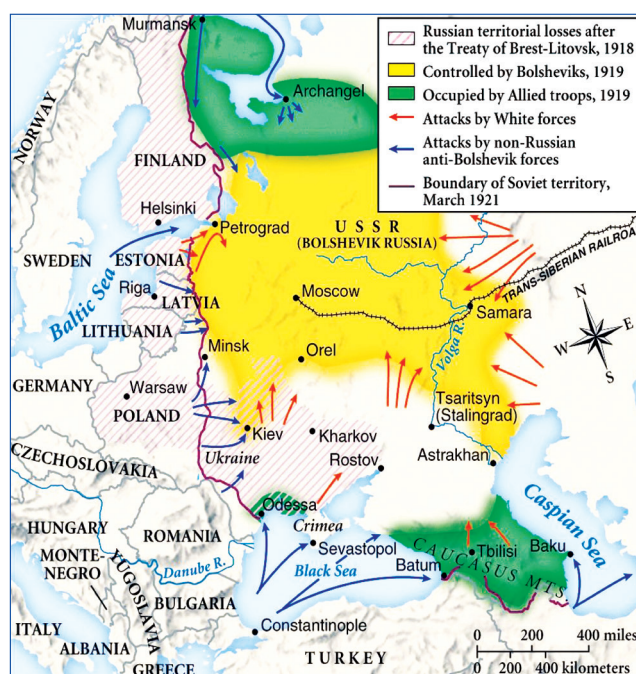


October Revolution (1917)

### Reasons for October Revolution

- The government's decision to continue in the World War I despite several losses in key battles made it lose popular support.
- The provisional government delayed the elections, which it had promised, for a Constituent Assembly (parliament) that would frame a new constitution. The government stated that the election was not possible in the middle of a war when several million troops were away fighting.
- The provisional government also did not fulfill its promise of redistributing the land from large estates among the peasants. Consequently, some peasants started to seize land from landlords. The Bolsheviks, meanwhile used the discontent among peasants to win their support by offering attractive reforms to bring the masses in their support.
- The rise of Soviets reduced the government's authority. The government had to share power with the Petrograd soviet, an elected committee of soldiers' and workers' representatives, which tried to govern the city. Other soviets appeared in Moscow and all the provincial cities. As the Petrograd soviet ordered all soldiers to obey only the soviet, it was clear that the provisional government began to lose army's support.
- As Lenin returned from exile in Switzerland April 1917 with the German help, he demanded, in his April Theses, that the Bolsheviks should cease to support the provisional government. He urged that all power should be taken by the soviets, and that Russia should withdraw from the World War.
- General Kornilov, the army commander-in-chief, viewed the Bolsheviks as traitors and decided to send troops towards Petrograd. However, many soldiers mutinied and Kerensky ordered the Kornilov's arrest. After this,

the public opinion swung in the favour of Soviets. The Kornilov affair embarrassed the government and increased the popularity of the Bolsheviks.



## 6.6 Significance of Russian Revolution

- Russian revolution was the first successful communist revolution in any part of the world.
- It provided a platform to showcase efficacy of the Marxist ideas in practice. It also helped in popularizing the communist/Marxist ideas all around the world. Soon many communist parties started operating in different parts of the world.
- It also gave rise to an intense ideological fight between capitalism and communism which later developed into intense cold war after the end of Second World War.
- It also resulted in the exclusion of communist Russia from the world order for over a decade because till 1933 communist Russia was not recognized by many Western European countries.
- It also gave birth to an intense civil war during initial years of inception of communist Russia.
- Fear of communism also helped Hitler in his initial years to gain power in Germany. This fear of Communism and desire to use Hitler against any future aggression by Communist Russia was also a factor in the policy of appeasement followed by Western Democratic Countries in respect of Nazi Germany.

## Consequences

- The overthrow of autocracy and the destruction of the aristocracy and the power of the church were the first achievements of the Russian Revolution.
- The Czarist Empire was transformed into a new state called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R) for short Soviet Union.
- The policies of the new state were to be directed to the realization of the old socialist ideal, 'from each according to his capacity, to each according to his work'.
- Private property in the means of production was abolished and the motive of private profit was eliminated from the system of production.
- Economic planning by the state was adopted to build a technologically advanced economy at a faster rate and to eliminate glaring inequalities in society.
- Right to work: Work became an essential requirement for every person and there was no unearned income to live on. The right to work became a constitutional right and it became the duty of the state to provide employment to every individual.
- Education of the entire people was given a high priority.
- The equality of all the nationalities in the U.S.S.R. was recognized in the constitution framed in 1924 and later in 1936.
- The constitution gave the republics formed by the nationalities' autonomy to develop their languages and culture. These developments were particularly significant for the Asian republics of USSR which were much more backward than the European parts.
- Within a few years of the revolution, the Soviet Union emerged as a major power in the world.
- The social and economic systems that began to be built there was hailed by many as the beginning of a new civilization while others called it an evil system.

## Impact

- The Russian Revolution had a decisive impact on the history of the twentieth century.
- The revolution and its consequences remains a living topic, attitudes towards it being woven into the fabric of liberal capitalist self-justification and into socialist ideas of all varieties, not least the shrill polemics of radical groups which trace their lineage back to one form of Bolshevism or another.
- The revolution that Lenin led marked one of the most radical turning points in Russia's history: it affected economics, social and political structure, international relations, and most any other benchmark by which one might measure a revolution.
- Although, the new government would prove to be at least as repressive as the one it replaced, the country's

new rulers were drawn largely from the intellectual and working classes rather than from the aristocracy – which meant a considerable change in direction for Russia.

## Economic Impact

- The Russian Revolution radically altered Russia's economic structure.
- It meant an end of private property, and the change to ownership of all property by the state.
- It also established the control of workers over industries.
- There was an introduction of centralised economy keeping in mind the needs of the whole country, especially the working people.
- Through a centralised economy they sought to guarantee a much faster pace of economic development and the fruits of that development to a vast majority of the people.
- Through it, they sought to prevent an anarchy in production, and also avoid wastage.
- The First Five Year Plan, however was introduced much later but planning was an important contribution of Russian Revolution to the world.
- The Decree of Land envisaged the immediate abolition of landed estates (including crown, monastery, and church lands) and their transfer to the peasantry for hereditary use.
- Small private farms however still existed there.

## Social Impact

- The Russian Revolution also destroyed the roots of social inequality.
- It laid the foundations of a classless society.
- The new social set-up was formed on the basis of equality, justice and Communism.
- "Everyone according to his ability and everyone according to his work" was the principle that was followed now.
- It narrowed the gap between the salaries of the workers and the owners of the factories.
- A step of tremendous significance was the publication of the Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia by the constitution.
- These included, among others, the right to self-determination, an eight-hour working day, and insurance against unemployment.
- It also guaranteed certain social benefits to all citizens, such as free medical care, free and equal education for all, equal access to culture and cultural advancement.



- All this was gradually made available to the people as production and infrastructure for these provisions were being simultaneously created.
- The roles of Russian women have changed drastically because of the revolution.
- The women were given more freedom and therefore were successful in achieving independence followed by a higher standing in society.
- Before the 1917 revolution, women were treated to be beneath men in almost every aspect in life.
- However, due to active women's right movements, and more opportunities the war gave them, women were finally able to declare their independence and be appreciated as individuals.
- The Bolsheviks came to power with the idea of liberation of women and transformation of the family.
- They were able to equalize women's legal status with men's by reforming certain laws such as the Code on Marriage, the Family, and Guardianship ratified in October 1918 which allows both spouses were to retain the right to their own property and earnings, grant children born outside wedlock the same rights as those born within, and made divorce available upon request.
- Equality for women was also envisaged in the constitution. There was a provision for six-month maternity leave, crèches and public canteens at places of work.
- All this was aimed at making possible greater participation of women in public life. These measures had a great impact on capitalist societies.
- In order to meet the challenges of the socialist society, they were also forced to grant certain welfare schemes. In fact, the concept of a welfare state in the west was a direct response to the Russian Revolution.
- The Revolution also separated religion from politics. Religion was made a purely private affair.
- No religious education was imparted in the educational institutions and no public utility was given in the name of religion.

### Political Impact

- The Russian Revolution resulted in the establishment of a state of the working people embodied in the notion of 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.
- It was recognized that the opponents of the revolution could still harm the interests of the people.
- The Russian Revolution was in fact immediately followed by the intervention of many other countries on the side of Russian nobility and bourgeoisie against the revolution and workers of Russia.

- Therefore, it was essential, for some time, to have a political system dominated by the working class.
- But this state was much more democratic than the states of bourgeois countries because it guaranteed the rule of the majority (i.e. workers) over a minority which held civil liberties in the pre-revolutionary Russia.
- Thus bourgeois democracy was thus to be transformed into socialist democracy.

### Global Impact

The Bolshevik revolution was by no means a specifically "Russian" phenomenon. As Lenin was later to put it, Bolshevism had become "World Bolshevism" by virtue of its revolutionary tactics, theory and program. By indicating the "right road of escape from the horrors of war and imperialism... Bolshevism can serve as a model of tactics for all." The "proletariat, the soldiers and peasants lined up against the bourgeoisie." This was the essence of the Russian Revolution. The October revolution of 1917 was not a coup conducted by a secretive and elitist band. Above all, the revolution was about the mobilization of the mass of ordinary Russians – workers, soldiers and peasants – in a struggle to change their world. That is the most important legacy of the Russian revolution. The greatest historian of the revolution, and one of its most important participants, Leon Trotsky, described the significance of revolution as: "The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events".

In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business – kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists etc. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new regime. Whether this is good or bad we leave to the judgment of moralists. We ourselves will take the facts as they are given by the objective course of development. The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny." Passivity gave way to self-activity. As historian Marc Ferro put it, "the citizens of the new Russia, having overthrown Tsardom, were in a state of permanent mobilization." "All Russia," wrote Sukhanov, "was constantly demonstrating in those days."

**In International Relations:** The Russian Revolution represented an important landmark in international relations. The Bolsheviks abolished all the old secret treaties signed by the autocracy and the Provisional

Government with different countries. It was increasingly being felt that the people should have the right to know what their rulers are doing and the people of any country should have the right to influence the foreign policy of their country through debate and intervention.

**Rise of Socialism:** The Revolution marked the beginning of the decline of imperialism and the rise of socialism. As the first successful socialist revolution, the Russian Revolution was bound to have repercussions for the future. The world as a whole was sure to feel the onset of the completely new type of social and economic system. The Communist International or Comintern, organized on the lines of First and Second International, was the means of promoting revolutions on an international scale. The revolution ended the domination and exploitation of the peasants by the landlords. It made possible to uplift the material and cultural standards of life of the working people. It helped to destroy the old exploitative and oppressive state machinery dominated by the minority of capitalists and landlords and replaced it by a new type of state-dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin and Trotsky said that the goal of socialism in Russia would not be realized without the success of the world proletariat in other countries, e.g. without German Revolution. The Bolsheviks recognized the right to self-determination including the right to succession of all the oppressed nationalities inhabiting the boundaries of the Tsarist Empire and made them equal partners in socialist construction and overcoming social and economic backwardness.

**National Movements:** The Russian Revolution inspired all over the world, the struggles of the colonial people and nations for independence from the Western imperialist countries. The Indian National Movement, for example, was profoundly affected by the November Revolution. It gathered momentum and a certain direction from the Russian Revolution. The revolution acted as a catalytic agent who transformed the national movements all over the world to assume a definite shape and thus facilitated the early shattering of the stranglehold of the Western imperial power over Asia and Africa, the two continents, where their imperial supremacy was most widespread and most oppressive. By rendering active material and political assistance in anti-imperialist struggles, the revolution had greatly contributed in bringing the downfall of imperialism.

## 6.7 Comparing the Revolutions

- In its immediate and long-term effects, the Russian Revolution was more like the French Revolution than the American Revolution.
- The American Revolution expanded English political ideas into a constitutional government that built on many existing structures.
- In contrast, both the French and Russian revolutions attempted to destroy existing social and political structures.
- Revolutionaries in France and Russia used violence and terror to control people.
- France eventually became a constitutional monarchy, but the Russian Revolution established a totalitarian state that lasted for decades.

## 6.8 Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a movement that endorsed equality, though more economically than politically. This revolution was in part a ripple caused by the Industrial Revolution. Industrialization sharply divided society into the owners and the workers, with the latter comprising the majority of the population.

This division influenced Marx's principles of socialism, which in turn inspired the Russian Revolution. In its effort to reject economic despotism, the revolution set hopes of equality for all those in the world who felt dis-empowered by capitalism. Today, the Western economy remains heavily capitalist; the fundamental ideas of the Russian Revolution are still followed by those who believe that a redistribution of economic power is necessary for the well-being of the working people.

The 1917 Russian revolution was powerful in spreading socialist ideas and astonishing in its scope of immediate impact, but ultimately it was a failed attempt at a political and economic reform. The socialist ideals could not be achieved in practice and the communist Soviet government was dissolved in less than a century. Furthermore, in spite of the reactionary wave created by the 1917 revolution that extended until 1923, no other Marxist movement was successful in achieving or keeping real power.

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### TRY THIS MAINS PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

1. The New Economic Policy – 1921 of Lenin had influenced the policies adopted by India soon after independence. Evaluate. (2014)



**Russian Revolution (1905)**

- Industrialisation in Russia
- Overcrowding and destitute living conditions for industrial workers
- Growth of socialism and formation of workers organisations
- Population boom
- Food shortage due to wars and harsh weather
- Russian defeat in Russo-Japan war 1904-05
- Blood Sunday Massacre (1905)

**Reasons****October Manifesto (1905)**

- Promised to establish an elected Parliament called Duma in Russian.
- Promised a pay hike for the workers and an improvement in the working conditions at factories
- Promised cancellation of redemption payments by former Serfs.
- Promised greater freedom to the press.
- Promised a genuine democracy with an important role for the Duma in governance of the country.

**February Revolution (1917)**

- Failure of the land reforms.
- Government repression.
- Revival of the revolutionary parties.
- Industrial unrest.
- Loss of credibility for the Royal Family.
- High Expenditure in the First World War.

**Reasons****October Revolution (1917)**

- Government's decision to continue in the World War I
- Delayed elections.
- Failure to fulfill the promise of redistributing land from large estates among the peasants
- The rise of Soviets reduced the government's authority.
- Lenin demanded that all power should be taken by the soviets.
- General Kornilov's decision to send troops towards Petrograd.

**Reasons****Russian Revolution (1917)**

- Overthrow of autocracy & destruction of aristocracy & the power of the church.
- The Czarist Empire was transformed into a new state called U.S.S.R.
- Abolition of Private property in the means of production.
- Economic planning was adopted by the state.
- Right to work became a constitutional right.
- Equality of all the nationalities in the U S S.R. was recognized.
- The Soviet Union emerged as a major power in the world.

**Consequences****IMPACT OF RUSSIAN REVOLUTION (1917)****Economic**

- End of private property
- Ownership of all property by the state
- Centralised Planning of the economy
- Established the control of workers over industries.

**Political**

- Resulted in establishment of a state of working people
- Established a political system dominated by working class.
- The state was much more democratic

**Social**

- Destroyed the roots of social inequality.
- Laid the foundations of a classless society.
- Narrowed disparity in salaries of workers and owners.
- The roles of Russian women changed drastically.

**Global**

- Marked the beginning of decline of imperialism and rise of socialism.
- Inspired the colonial people for independence from the imperialist countries.