

CHAPTER 5

Russian Revolution

Russian Revolution, 1905–1920s



SOURCE 5.1 Kharkov, 29 September 2014. A statue being pulled down by a crowd.

It's 29 September 2014. At night, in a public square in a European city, a small but enthusiastic crowd is straining to topple an imposing statue perched on an impressive plinth. It looks like they're being watched by a large crowd in the distance. What's interesting is that the statue depicts one of the most significant historical figures of the twentieth century. In 1963, the statue – over nine metres tall — was erected in celebration of his place in history. Now, it is about to crash to the ground.

This dramatic event is taking place in Kharkov, a large city in Ukraine, which, for most of the twentieth century was part of the Union of Soviet

Socialist Republics (USSR). And the statue is of Vladimir Lenin, the key person in the creation of the USSR which rose from the tumult of the Russian Revolution he led in 1917.

Washington Post reporter Michael Burnham is there in the square. Later, he reports how the people had the intention of 'ridding the city of Lenin once and for all' and how Ukraine's Interior Minister 'ordered the police to protect the people and not the idol' as people in the crowd sawed through the statue's bronze legs.

John Reed, an American journalist who observed the revolution in Russia in October 1917, described it in his book *Ten Days That Shook the World*. In this chapter, you'll investigate why that revolution occurred and whether it did indeed shake the world. And you'll find out why, a century later, some people were so keen to topple this statue of the most prominent revolutionary leader.

Tony Ogden

CONTEXTUAL STUDY

The road to revolution

Lenin's statue in Kharkov – and countless others like it throughout Europe – symbolise his crucial role in the Russian Revolution of 1917. There were in fact two revolutions in Russia that year, and their causes were dramatic and complex. In this contextual study, you'll go back to the origins of this revolution, which lie deep in Tsarist Russia.

5.1 What was Russian society like prior to the revolution?

The history of Russia prior to the revolution is one of **autocratic** governments and lack of personal freedom in a difficult environment. In this period, the Romanovs were the royal dynasty, providing successive **Tsars** who ruled Russia.

autocratic a political system such as a monarchy or dictatorship where the ruler is not restricted in any way by a parliament, constitution or elections

Geographical problems

Geographically, the Russian forests, grasslands, rivers, distances, and cold all contributed to difficulty in settling and governing such a large territory.

tsars autocratic hereditary rulers of Russia prior to the revolution



SOURCE 5.2 Map of the Russian Empire at the time of Nicholas II

What specific problems would the Romanovs have faced in ruling such a large country in the nineteenth century? Think about such aspects as administration, communication, security, economy, infrastructure, national identity, social cohesion. The Russian Empire included a number of now-independent countries, especially in the south and the west. Can you identify some of these countries from the map?

One of the main problems that existed in governing Russia was its sheer size; the largest country in the world, it was over twice the area of Australia. As you can see from the map, the main cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg were located in the European part, along with most of the industries and the bulk of the population. The Asian part of Russia consisted mainly of Siberia, which was sparsely populated due to the cold, distances and difficult conditions.

Social problems

At the time of the Tsars, living conditions for most people were very difficult. Communications and transport were often non-existent, especially in winter. Information took days, often weeks to arrive. Lifespans were short in the harsh conditions; even by 1900 the average life expectancy in Russia was barely 35, similar to life expectancy in medieval Europe centuries before. Famine and disease were common, and literacy rates were minimal.

feudal system a rigid class-based social system of medieval times where peasant farmers worked on lands owned by wealthy nobles

In such a harsh environment, firm autocratic rule by regional princes and kings had always been used to provide some effective government over such a vast territory. Even by 1800 Russia had not experienced the modernisation and social reforms that had occurred in much of Western Europe. There still existed a vast economic gulf between rich and poor, with the majority of people being uneducated peasant farmers, or serfs, living under a **feudal system** even after this system had disappeared from Western Europe. As in medieval Europe, social status in Russian society was based on birth, not merit.

SOURCE 5.3 *Russian nobles gambling with serfs*



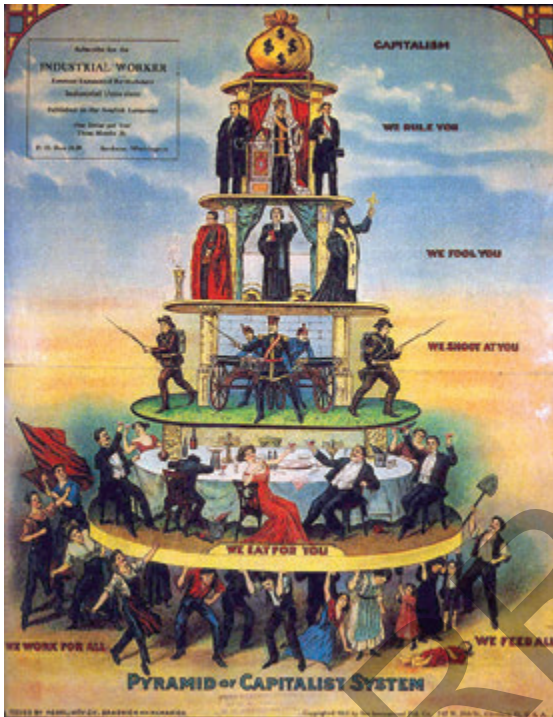
An 1854 satirical engraving by French artist Gustave Doré

Responding to the source

1. What impression has the artist given of the serfs in the cartoon, by showing them as (a) small (b) bound and (c) gagged?
2. How are the landowners portrayed? What impression might the cartoonist have been intending to convey about them?
3. What do you think might have been the overall message of the cartoon?
4. From what you know already, does this cartoon seem a fair comment on the situation of the serfs in Tsarist Russia in 1854? Explain your response.

While the plight of the serfs had continued for centuries, a new element emerged in Russian society during the nineteenth century. The following image not only depicts that new element – the industrial proletariat – but hints at the trouble ahead.

SOURCE 5.4 The unequal layers of capitalist society



Pyramid of Capitalist System, cartoon published in *Industrial Worker*, 1911

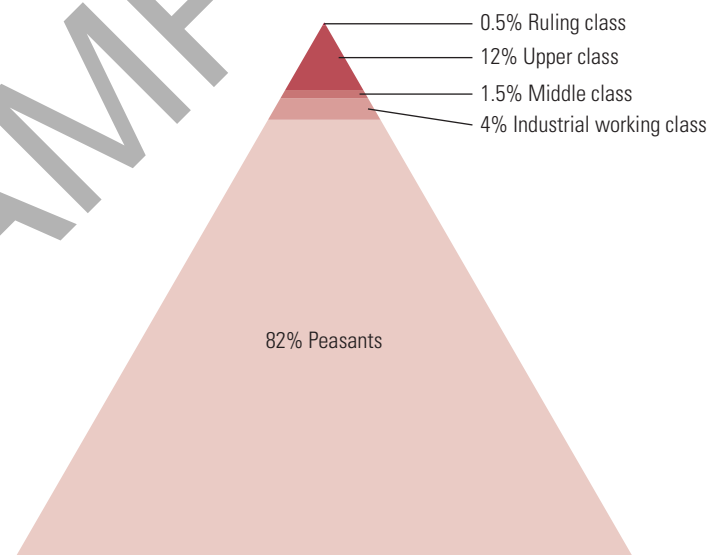
Responding to the source

1. Which social groups are represented by each level in the pyramid? What, according to the cartoonist, is the relationship between the upper four groups and the bottom group?
2. What signs of unrest has the artist depicted? What could be the grievances causing the unrest, and the possible demands of those involved? Is the flag being flown particularly significant?
3. This poster was published by the *Industrial Worker* newspaper in the USA in 1911. It is based on an original one published in Russia in 1901. What response do you think this poster intended to generate? Do you think it would get the same reaction in the USA in 1911 as in Russia in 1901? Explain your response.

The population breakdown of the main social classes in Russia at this time were as shown in the following diagram.

SOURCES 5.5 A&B Russia's social structure

A Russia's social structure according to the 1897 official census



B The members and characteristics of Russia's classes in 1911

Class	Members	Characteristics
Ruling class	Tsar (Emperor)	ruled by Divine Right
Upper class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hereditary landowning nobles wealthy merchants church leaders members of government and bureaucracy army officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> privileged, leisurely existence totally insulated from the harsh realities of life endured the rest of the population
Middle class	<p>bourgeoisie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> small business owners factory managers skilled workers clerks and white-collar workers <p>intelligentsia: educated thinkers, writers and artists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally comfortable existence economically secure but with no political rights
Industrial working class	<p>proletariat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> factory workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> worked long hours, with poor wages overcrowded housing often dangerous working conditions
Peasants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rural farm workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally illiterate and uneducated under feudalism, peasants were serfs, the property of the landowning nobles

Responding to the sources

- Which sectors of the population might have found this situation unsatisfactory? What types of changes might they have wanted?
- What avenues, if any, might have existed for achieving change?
- How might the Romanov's royal dynasty have tried to maintain order and stability? Do you get a sense that Russia was 'ripe for revolution'? Explain your response.
- Which class or classes do you think would be most likely to lead a revolution? Why?

Divine Right common belief amongst European monarchs that they were born to rule under God's will

bourgeoisie the wealthy middle class that emerged in the cities and towns after the industrial revolution; seen by Marx and Lenin as oppressors of the workers

intelligentsia the educated writers, artists and thinkers who were often responsible for new and progressive ideas

proletariat urban working class mainly consisting of factory and industrial workers

5.2 Who were the Tsars and how did they rule?

For centuries Russia was ruled by strong autocratic rulers, known as Tsars (or Czars). The first of these was the paranoid and ruthless Ivan IV, known as 'The Terrible', who established the concept of the Tsars being directly appointed by God and thus having no accountability to anyone. This concept of Divine Right was to define the rule of the Romanov dynasty, which ruled Russia from 1613 until 1917.

ACTIVITY 5.1

Who were the Tsars?

Research the Tsars of Russia, from Ivan the Terrible (ruled 1547–1584) to Alexander III (ruled 1881–1894). What sort of people were they? How did they rule? What were their achievements? Given the problems involved in ruling Russia, how successful would you say they were?

Autocratic rule

The Tsars ruled by exercising control over the main institutions of society, particularly the government, police and church. In a democracy, these institutions are all independent; in a totalitarian state like Imperial Russia these institutions were expected to carry out the will of the ruler. For instance, the Tsar's chief advisers and cabinet ministers were appointed by him and swore an oath of loyalty to the Tsar personally, not to Russia. The Tsar also suppressed dissent using a secret police force, the **Okhrana**, which kept suspected enemies of tsarism such as socialist agitators and anarchists under surveillance. The Russian Orthodox Church was under state control as well and was used to legitimise the autocratic position of the Tsar in the minds of the masses by reinforcing his Divine Right.

Okhrana Tsar's secret police; used by the Tsar to eliminate opposition

Under the Romanovs there were some attempts at reform. Alexander II's progressive Edict of Emancipation in 1861 abolished serfdom, freeing 40 million peasants from the feudal system that repressed them. Despite this reform, the Romanovs really lacked any empathy for, or understanding of, the plight of the peasants or the working class. According to Christina Robinson, the curator of some surviving Romanov family letters which provide an insight into the family's personal lives, what comes across most is the complete separation of the Tsarist family from life in everyday Russia at the time. While discontent among ordinary people mounted, the imperial children were busy visiting and receiving visits from Europe's royal families, almost all of whom were their cousins. Their letters tell stories of picnics, bicycle rides, and bear hunts.

SOURCE 5.6 Evidence of the Romanovs' personal lives

On an almost daily basis Mikhail [Nicholas' brother] goes shooting,' says Robinson, 'and he often writes to [a friend] to tell him how many bears he managed to shoot on that particular outing. They are so far detached from reality that they don't even know it.' A glance at various court menus proves the point. In the cold November 1910 in St Petersburg, when many Russians were going hungry, the royal family were having pheasant, artichoke, and asparagus for lunch, followed by fresh fruit and ice cream, sweet pastries, tea, coffee and liqueurs.

Christina Robinson, from auction house Hotel des Ventes, talking about the upcoming auction of a collection of documents from the court of Tsar Alexander III. Interview by Imogen Foulkes, 'Rare window into life of tsarist Russia', BBC News, 6 March 2012

Responding to the source

1. What evidence in this account is there that the royal family was extremely out of touch with ordinary people? What does Robinson say about how aware the Romanovs were of the 'outside world'?
2. What dangers could there be for the Romanovs in this situation?

Anarchists and terrorists

Despite the Edict of Emancipation, dissent continued to build in Russia. By the 1870s, the major groups opposing Tsarist authority included **anarchist** groups such as Zemlya i Volya (Land and Liberty) and Narodnaya Volya (People's Will). They aimed for a political assembly reflecting the democratic will of the people, and they regarded all other forms of authority as illegitimate and oppressive. As anarchists, they justified anti-Tsarist terrorism as necessary to force the Tsar into either concession or defeat. To some revolutionaries, killing the Tsar seemed a logical step in the struggle. Paradoxically, it was the reforming Tsar, Alexander II, whom Narodnaya Volya assassinated in 1881.

anarchy political belief that no form of state authority is justified and all should be resisted by any means necessary

Alexander III, however, firmly believed in his Divine Right to rule and tolerated no opposition. After executing his father's assassins, he adopted more repressive political policies in an effort to prevent further dissent. In particular, the powers of the Tsar's secret police, the Okhrana, were increased. On Alexander's death in 1894, his son Nicholas II became Tsar.



SOURCE 5.7 *The Coronation of Tsar Nicholas II at the Church of the Assumption, Moscow*, painting by an anonymous artist, oil on canvas, 1896

What overall impression do you think the artist has tried to create in this painting? What elements of the painting contribute to that impression? How has the artist conveyed the supreme importance of the Tsar? Why would there be such an emphasis on the religious aspects of the ceremony in this painting? Does this painting reinforce the sense – described earlier by Robinson – of the Romanovs being 'detached from reality'? Explain your response. How do you think this painting would be regarded by: a member of the nobility, a member of the bourgeoisie, a member of the proletariat? Explain your responses.

5.3 Why was there an uprising in 1905 and what was its outcome?

Alexander Kerensky, who became leader of Russia in 1917, said about Nicholas II: 'His mentality and circumstances kept him wholly out of touch with his people. From his youth he had been trained to believe that his welfare and the welfare of Russia were one and the same thing, so that 'disloyal' workmen, peasants and students who were shot down, executed or exiled seemed to him mere monsters who must be destroyed for the sake of the country.' (Malone, 2015:19) The events of 1905 highlighted this lack of empathy.

Bloody Sunday

1905 was a momentous year in Russia. Since the 1890s, Russia had been hit by famine and economic recession. There were shortages of food and housing, and strikes were common, such as the one at a steel factory in St Petersburg in January 1905 which occurred after five workers were sacked. Virtually the whole city shut down in support and tensions were high. On the morning of 9 January, a massive protest was organised in St Petersburg by Father George Gapon, a Russian Orthodox priest and union leader. A crowd of over 20 000 men women and children marched on the Winter Palace, carrying a large framed portrait of the Tsar, as well as banners and religious icons (pictures). Along with shouts of 'death or freedom!'

the crowd also sang the Tsar's hymn, 'God Save thy People'. Their aim was to present the Tsar with a petition requesting reforms in working conditions, the right of free speech, and representation in government through democratic elections to the constituent assembly. The tone of the petition was deferential; the Tsar, after all, ruled by Divine Right and had to be treated with respect. The pressing question was how Tsar Nicholas would respond to the event which would come to be known as Bloody Sunday.

SOURCE 5.8 Gapon describes what happened as the workers approached the Winter Palace

At last we reached within two hundred paces of where the troops stood. Files of infantry barred the road, and in front of them a company of cavalry was drawn up, with their swords shining in the sun. Would they dare to touch us? For a moment we trembled, and then started forward again.

Suddenly the company of Cossacks galloped rapidly towards us with drawn swords. So, then, it was to be a massacre after all! There was no time for consideration, for making plans, or giving orders. A cry of alarm arose as the Cossacks came down upon us. I saw the swords lifted and falling, the men, women and children dropping to the earth like logs of wood, while moans, curses and shouts filled the air.

We were not more than thirty yards from the soldiers ... when suddenly, without any warning and without a moment's delay, was heard the dry crack of many rifle-shots. A little boy of ten years, who was carrying a church lantern, fell pierced by a bullet, but still held the lantern tightly and tried to rise again, when another shot struck him down. Both the [men] who had guarded me were killed, as well as those who were carrying the icons and banners; and all these emblems now lay scattered on the snow.

At last the firing ceased. I stood up with a few others who remained uninjured and looked down at the bodies that lay prostrate around me. I cried to them, "Stand up!" But they lay still. I could not at first understand. Why did they lie there? I looked again, and saw that their arms were stretched out lifelessly, and I saw the scarlet stain of blood upon the snow. Then I understood. It was horrible ... Horror crept into my heart. The thought flashed through my mind, "And this is the work of our Little Father, the Tsar." Perhaps this anger saved me, for now I knew the very truth that a new chapter was opened in the book of the history of our people ... "There is no longer any Tsar for us!" I exclaimed...

George Gapon, *The Story of My Life*, 1905

Responding to the source

1. How has Gapon attempted to inspire empathy in the reader?
2. Why do you think the military responded in this way? Why might it be hard to know the actual reason?
3. The Tsar was sometimes affectionately referred to by his subjects as 'our Little Father', which implied the protective aspect of his Divine Rule. In this context, do you think Gapon was using the term 'our Little Father' affectionately? Why do you think he used the term at all?
4. What might Gapon have meant by 'a new chapter was opened in the book of the history of our people'? In the wake of the massacre, what do you think Gapon expected would happen? How realistic do you think his expectation was? Explain your response.

SOURCE 5.9 *Bloody Sunday in St Petersburg*



Bloody Sunday in St Petersburg, Vladimir Makovsky, 1905

Responding to the source

1. What impression of Gapon (shown opening his shirt) has the artist created in the painting? How has this impression been created?
2. What attitude towards the marchers has the artist attempted to evoke? Is he trying to show sympathy, disapproval or a neutral stance? How is his attitude reflected in his painting?
3. Find out online about the artist Makovsky. Do your findings confirm the judgement you've made about his attitude?
4. Do you think this could be a completely accurate and realistic depiction of the scene? Explain your response.
5. Even if not completely accurate and realistic, could this painting still be a valuable source of evidence in your study of Bloody Sunday? Explain your response.
6. What research could you undertake to try to find out how accurate a portrayal this is?
7. Compared with an event today, why is what happened during a 1905 event probably much harder to establish? At the same time, are there potential pitfalls in modern ways of discovering 'what happened' today?
8. The painting was produced in 1905. If viewed widely at the time, might it have had a powerful political effect? Explain your response.

On 31 January 1905, the US Ambassador to Russia, Robert McCormick, wrote to the US Secretary of State John Hay. McCormick claimed that Gapon was a troublemaking revolutionary of dubious character, 'having to his record the violation of a young girl of twelve years of age', and that his real intention in leading the march was to take the Tsar hostage. McCormick defended the soldiers whom, he claimed, only fired as a last resort after the crowd had been warned to disperse.

- ◆ McCormick's claims could be true. If so, do think they alter the historical significance of Bloody Sunday? Explain. If not true, what factors might explain why McCormick would make such claims?

The cartoon you see here – from *L'Assiette au Buerre* (an illustrated French weekly satirical magazine with anarchist political leanings) – offers a comment on Bloody Sunday. Like most cartoons, it invites interpretation.

SOURCE 5.10 '... the number of malcontents is considerably diminished'

Cartoon from *L'Assiette au Buerre*, Paris, 4 February 1905. On the left stands Nicholas II saying, 'I am doing my best to reduce the number of malcontents'. The caption under the main picture says '...the number of malcontents is considerably diminished'.

Responding to the source

1. Can you identify any individual in the main cartoon? What clues give you an idea as to his identity?
2. How has the cartoonist depicted the events of Bloody Sunday here? From the way they are represented, what impression do you get of:
 - the marchers
 - the troops?
3. The Tsar and the woman protester are both holding the same object. What might this be? Why do you think they are both shown holding this?
4. What comment is the cartoonist making about the Tsar's relationship with his people? Explain your response.
5. The cartoonist has Nicholas saying, 'I am doing my best to reduce the number of malcontents'. How could that be interpreted in a way that makes Nicholas look good? How has the cartoonist given those words a negative spin by the caption under the main picture: '... the number of malcontents is considerably diminished'?
6. Nicholas probably never said these words. Is it a justifiable device for a cartoonist to put words into the mouth of the Tsar and then use those words to make a critical comment? Even if the words were invented, can the cartoon still be a fair comment on Nicholas, and a useful historical source?
7. Try to find some modern-day political cartoons that use this same technique.



War with Japan

The rest of 1905 only got worse for Nicholas. Apart from continuing riots and strikes at home, Russia ended up at war. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 was sparked by competition between Russia and Japan over Manchuria and Korea. Like most European countries at the time, Russia viewed their Asian enemy as racially inferior, technologically backward and likely to be easily beaten in war. However, Japanese tactics and technology in shipbuilding learned from the West surprised the Russians, who suffered heavy defeats on land and at sea during this conflict.

The war was ended by the Battle of Tsushima in May 1905. After sailing halfway around the world, the Russian Black Sea fleet was ambushed by the smaller but better-led and more modern Japanese fleet. Within a day, the Russians were humiliatingly defeated. Russia lost 34 ships, including seven battleships; Japan lost only three small torpedo boats. It was one of the greatest naval defeats in modern history. In Russia, the defeat was catastrophic news for the Tsar. Unrest amongst the dispirited military continued in July when sailors on the battleship *Potemkin* mutinied over poor rations and treatment by their officers.

Political opposition

Political opposition to the Tsar also increased. The main parties that formed in this period are outlined in the table below.

Party	Aims	Members	Supporters
Social Democratic Workers' Party	Revolution, inspired by the German communist philosopher Karl Marx	Bolsheviks (majority, more radical) Mensheviks (minority, more moderate)	Urban working classes
Socialist Revolutionary Party	Socialist land reform and elected representative governments	Democratic socialists	Rural peasants
Constitutional Democratic Party, or Kadets	Reform rather than revolution	Conservative middle-class democrats	Urban middle class, business owners and landowners
Octobrists	Supported the October Manifesto	Conservative monarchists loyal to the Tsar	Wealthy landowners and business owners.

communism economic system in which land, industry and other means of production are owned and controlled by the society as a whole and the total wealth of the society is distributed according to need

Bolsheviks more radical majority wing of the Social Democratic Workers' Party, led by Lenin

Mensheviks more conservative minority wing of the Social Democratic Workers' Party

October Manifesto a series of reforms reluctantly proposed by Nicholas II in October 1905 in order to end unrest and opposition to his rule

Soviets revolutionary workers' councils formed by the Bolsheviks in cities and towns all over Russia, the largest of which was the Petrograd Soviet

Duma Russian parliament

While discontent among rural peasants continued, urban unrest was increasing too. Workers became more organised, setting up councils called **Soviets** to represent them, and calling for full worker participation in an elected legislature. Workers' unions organised strikes which paralysed power and water supplies and transport. In August 1905, Nicholas convened the **Duma**, a representative congress, but this had no effect on the increasing discontent.

Nicholas' situation was depicted in the 1905 cartoon below.

SOURCE 5.11 *Nearing the End*



Nearing the End, cartoon, unknown artist, 1905

The Tsar is shown holding a baby that wears a crown labelled 'Autocracy'. He is being pursued by a huge pack of wolves.

Responding to the cartoon

1. If each wolf represents an enemy, an idea, a setback, a threat or a danger, can you put a specific name to each of these? (For example, name one 'setback' Nicholas has experienced.)
2. Note the background. What signs or symbols can you see, and what does each represent?
3. Do you think the artist is a supporter of the Tsar, an opponent, or neutral? Explain your response.

4. Why might the artist have drawn this cartoon? Who might have been the intended audience? What reaction to the cartoon might the artist have hoped for?
5. The cartoon is titled *Nearing the End*. How apt a title does that seem? Explain your response. Can you devise a more dramatic or passionate title, reflecting the hopes of either a supporter or an opponent of the Tsar?
6. From what you've learned so far, does this cartoon seem to be a fair comment on the Tsar's situation in 1905? Explain your response.

The October Manifesto

It seems that Nicholas II did indeed have a sense of 'the end' approaching. On 30 October 1905, he proclaimed the October Manifesto in an attempt to save his position in the face of continuing criticism and unrest.

The main reforms of the October Manifesto were:

- To grant all citizens the right to free speech and assembly
- To allow all citizens to vote in elections to the Duma
- To guarantee that all laws passed must have the approval of the Duma.

These reforms would probably mean big changes in Russian politics and in Nicholas's role. On 2 November 1905 in a letter to his 'dear mama', he expressed his feelings at that prospect. Before reading the letter below, consider: how do you think he would feel about these reforms?

SOURCE 5.12 Tsar Nicholas expresses his feelings about the October Manifesto

There were only two ways open: (firstly), to ... crush the rebellion by sheer force. There would be time to breathe but then, as likely as not, one would have to use force again in a few months and that would mean rivers of blood, and in the end, we should be where we had started ... and no possibility of progress achieved. The other way out would be to give the people their civil rights, freedom of speech and press, also to have all laws confirmed by a State Duma – that, of course, would be a constitution. ... in the end, invoking God's help, I signed. My dear Mama, you can't imagine what I went through before that moment; I could not explain all the circumstances which brought me to this terrible decision, which I nevertheless took quite consciously. From all over Russia they cried for it, they begged for it, and around me many – very many – held the same views.

Letter from Nicholas II to his mother, 2 November, 1905

Responding to the source

1. Did you predict that Nicholas would have these thoughts and feelings about signing the October Manifesto?
2. What factors do you think caused Nicholas to sign the manifesto, despite his reservations?
3. Do you think Nicholas's decision to sign was a wise one? Explain your response.
4. Do you think Nicholas's thoughts and feelings were a good sign for the future of Russia, or not? Explain your response.

5.4 How did the Tsar avoid a revolution after 1905?

Revolutionary activity did continue after Bloody Sunday, but it gradually seemed to lose popular support, especially after Nicholas published the October Manifesto.

Earlier, in March 1906, Nicholas had announced the new State Duma, to be elected by the people. Between 1906 and 1914 there were four elected Dumas; however, elections were manipulated to ensure these were dominated by conservatives and the Duma generally provided support for the autocratic rule of Nicholas II.

Therefore by the time of Russia's entry into World War I in 1914, Nicholas had basically managed to preserve the status quo from 1906. The war was to make a significant difference to this state of affairs. By 1914, Russia was faced with two challenges. Internationally there was the turmoil of involvement in a world war, and at home there was the continuing agitation for political change. These two challenges set the scene for the Russian revolutions of 1917.

ACTIVITY 5.2

Create a timeline

Using the text and your online research, compose a timeline of all significant events described in this contextual study, and make a note for each, explaining how it propelled or thwarted the historical development towards eventual revolution in Russia. Highlight the three events that you think most important. With a classmate, compare and discuss your timelines.

5.5 Contextual study: summing up

In this contextual study, you've examined how the geographical features of Russia created the conditions for autocratic rule, and how the Romanov Dynasty governed by Divine Right for hundreds of years. You've also seen how a strict hierarchical class structure kept the vast majority of the population repressed and exploited by a tiny but powerful ruling class.

Predictably, there was a rise of resistance to Tsarist rule. Violent acts of terrorism led to even further repression, before the events of Bloody Sunday in 1905, military defeat by Japan, and the rise of workers' Soviets led to Nicholas II proclaiming the October Manifesto, which appeased some reformist demands. However, as you will see in the depth study, dissatisfaction with the Tsar's rule continued to increase, especially as Russia became immersed in a war against Germany.

DEPTH STUDY

To what extent were the ideals of the Russian Revolution achieved?

On 9 March 1917, a crowd of Russian exiles gathered at the railway station in Zurich, Switzerland. They were Bolshevik revolutionaries, who had been sent into exile for plotting the overthrow of the Tsarist regime. Many of them had lived abroad for years, not expecting to ever return home. However, recent events had given them hope. The previous month, the Tsar had been overthrown and a moderate Provisional Government installed in its place. Revolution was in the air.

The leader of the group was Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, who had been in exile since 1906. Along with about 30 others, including his wife Nadezhda Krupskaya, he was intending to return to Russia to lead the Bolsheviks in a second revolution, one which would overthrow the Provisional government and establish a 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' in line with Marxist theory. However, he first had to get to Russia.

Russia was at war with Germany in 1917, and the Germans, in the hope of destabilising the Russian government by encouraging further revolution, organised a special train to take Lenin and his colleagues home. As the British historian Edward Crankshaw writes, Germany saw 'in this obscure fanatic one more bacillus to let loose in tottering and exhausted Russia to spread infection'.

The journey from Switzerland involved travelling through Germany, Sweden and Finland by train, ferry and horse-drawn sled. The conditions on the train were cramped and uncomfortable. There was only one toilet and Lenin refused to tolerate his comrades smoking in the carriage. Finally, they would face an uncertain reception from the Russian border guards, who could turn them away, detain them or worse.

As they boarded the train, a group of about 100 Russians, angry that the revolutionaries were being assisted by the German enemy in a time of war, accused them of being traitors. As the historian Michael Pearson recorded, the crowd jeered, 'The Kaiser is paying for the journey... They're going to hang you... like German spies!' Lenin looked out of the window and commented to a friend, 'In three months we'll either be swinging from the gallows or we'll be in power'.

One of the most momentous homecomings in history had begun.



SOURCE 5.13 Lenin and colleagues returning to Russia, March 1917

How does the drawing match the description you've read of the journey? What impression of the group – and particularly of Lenin (in the black cap) – has the artist created? Do you think the artist sympathised with these men? The artist was Pyotr Vasilievich Vasiliev, who is easily researched on the internet. Find out about Vasiliev and whether he was on the train. Judging by his career details, why might he have drawn this scene, and how might it have been used then and in later years?

5.6 How was Tsar Nicholas overthrown?

Between 1914 and 1916, Russian involvement in World War I against Germany and a deteriorating domestic situation all but sealed the fate of Tsar Nicholas and the monarchy.

What problems confronted Tsar Nicholas in 1914?

Russia at war

When war broke out against Germany and Austria in August 1914, there was initial enthusiasm from most of the population, and as patriotism took hold, support for the Tsar rose. However, it didn't take long for the reality of Russia's unpreparedness for war to become apparent. In three key battles from August 1914 to September 1915, Russia lost 470 000 men compared to Germany's 71 200. The Russian army was poorly equipped, and many soldiers were reported to be deliberately giving themselves minor wounds in order to be sent home injured. Surrender was common; the preference of Russian troops to be captured, rather than fight to the death for the sake of their motherland, was an indication that their commitment to the conflict was rapidly diminishing.

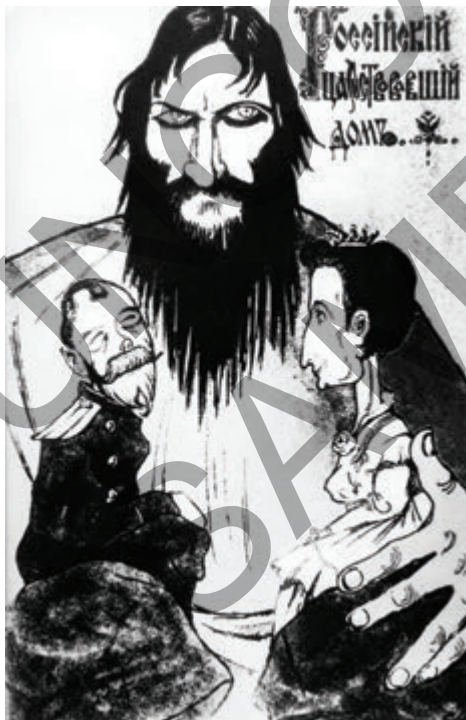
Anti-German feeling was strong in Russia during the war. The capital city, St Petersburg, was renamed Petrograd in 1914 as it sounded less German. The Tsarina Alexandra was of German descent. When Russia went to war with Germany, many Russians suspected her of having divided loyalties; some even suspected her of being a traitor. Her perceived influence over Nicholas led to suspicion and criticism and weakened the Tsar's position.

Rasputin

To make matters worse, a scandal had been brewing in the Russian royal court. It centred on the Tsarina and the mysterious Grigori Rasputin, a self-promoting peasant from Siberia who gained a reputation in some circles as a holy man with mystical powers. Through personal charisma he managed to convince the Tsarina that only he could save her son, Alexei, who suffered from haemophilia. Almost immediately after Rasputin's introduction to the royal family, rumours began to spread about the nature of his relationship with Alexandra, and his influence over the monarchs.

The following cartoon was circulated throughout Russia at the time.

SOURCE 5.14 *The Russian Tsars at home*



A cartoon from around 1916 showing Rasputin, Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra. The inscription reads *The Russian Tsars at home*

Responding to the cartoon

1. How has the cartoonist emphasised the nature of Rasputin's personality, and his role in this situation?
2. What claim about Rasputin seems to be implied by this cartoon?
3. Like most cartoons, this one is not literally accurate in its portrayal of these three people. How can these exaggerations make cartoons even more powerful in their effects on readers?
4. At the time, how might different Russians seeing this cartoon have reacted?
5. How might you discover how credible this cartoon is as evidence of Rasputin's influence on the Tsar and Tsarina?

Rasputin is such an interesting character that, as well as being the subject of many books and films, he also featured in a song! In 1978 *Rasputin*, by the German disco group Boney M, went to number one in five countries, including Australia. You can see the video clip on YouTube. It is actually reasonably historically accurate.

ACTIVITY 5.3

Rasputin

Rasputin's association with the royal family would be the gift of a lifetime today to tabloid newspapers, commercial television and social media. Research Rasputin's life and compose a posting for one of these media formats that reveals an aspect of his sensational relationship with the Romanovs. Your article could focus on his reputed magical powers, his relationship with the Tsarina, his death or some other controversial aspect.

Rasputin was eventually murdered by Russian nobles in 1915. His death removed one of the sources of discontent with the Romanovs, but there were wider issues. In Russian society people faced daily struggles to survive. Rasputin's death was unlikely to improve their standard of living.

Why did a Revolution occur in February 1917?

Social and economic problems

Of all the issues facing Russia the one that affected people the most was the lack of improvement in their daily lives. Despite token attempts at reform, people in the cities and rural areas were still facing the same problems with food, fuel, prices and living conditions.

Food shortages	Russia experienced strong harvests in 1914–16, but poor organisation and hoarding by peasants meant that the crops were not efficiently transported to the towns and cities. Food riots were common in the cities especially in winter.
Fuel shortages	Scarcity of fuel and raw materials such as coal affected industrial production and resulted in a lack of essential supplies. This fuel crisis was heightened by the freezing winter of 1916–17.
Inflation and price increases	Prices of food and goods outstripped wages due to shortages of production. The Okhrana reported to the Tsar in October 1916 that wages had risen 50 per cent, but goods between 100 per cent and 500 per cent.
Social conditions	Fuel and food shortages resulted in growing discontent, especially as unemployment grew and wages fell. The daily lives of industrial workers became increasingly desperate, resulting in increased strikes and dissent.

ACTIVITY 5.4

Problems facing the Russian people

Create an infographic that demonstrates the cause-and-effect relationship among all four of the factors described above. Can you suggest any one realistic change that might have been able to break the cycle of cause and effect? Or does the situation seem hopeless? Explain your response.

What happened next seemed almost inevitable. In February 1917, a series of strikes and protests rocked the capital city, Petrograd, driven by poor wages and food shortages. The demonstrations grew to massive numbers by 26 February. Nicholas, who was away from Petrograd at army headquarters, sent a message ordering his troops onto the streets to stop the disorder. However, this time the troops refused to fire on the people and instead joined them in their protests.

The Tsar abdicates

Provisional Government

the new government of Russia formed after the Tsar abdicated in February 1917. Never effective, it was overthrown by the Bolsheviks in October that year.

abdicated when a monarch resigns as leader of their country

During February, mutinies increased amongst the military and riots worsened. The Tsar ordered the Duma to be dismissed, blaming it for allowing the riots to occur. But some members of the Duma sided with the revolution and formed a **Provisional Government**. At the same time, soldiers and workers formed the Petrograd Soviet, which was to play an important role in events later in the year. Nicholas probably realised that all was lost when the train carrying him back to Petrograd was forced to detour by armed revolutionary soldiers. On 2 March 1917, Nicholas **abdicated**. He wrote in his diary: 'All around me there is treachery, cowardice and deceit'. The Provisional government took over the administration of Russia and the rule of the Romanov Dynasty, in power by Divine Right since 1613, had come to an end.

5.7 Why did the Bolsheviks succeed in October 1917?

With Nicholas's abdication, there were now two centres of power in Russia: the Provisional Government, comprised mainly of upper-class liberals like the Kadets, who believed in a constitutional democracy, and the Petrograd Soviet, which had become the leader of the many similar workers' councils established in cities and towns across Russia. The two groups co-existed uneasily; the Provisional Government led by Kerensky controlled the state, but real power came from the Soviet as it was seen to represent the workers, peasants and soldiers – the majority of the people.

What problems were faced by the Provisional Government?

The Provisional Government enacted a number of significant reforms between February and October 1917. Freedom of speech was declared, political prisoners were released, the Okhrana was abolished, as was the death penalty and exile to Siberia, and an eight-hour working day was introduced. It also promised to call nationwide elections for a Constituent Assembly, which would replace it as the legitimate government. However, there were also failures that contributed significantly to its lack of public support. The Provisional Government was not chosen by popular vote and did not have widespread support. Significantly, internal economic problems of inflation, food and fuel shortages, and peasant seizures of land were not dealt with effectively. Despite the escalating casualties, Kerensky also refused to withdraw Russia from the unpopular war with Germany. Lenin realised the potential for a Bolshevik-led revolution to take power from an increasingly weak and unpopular government.

Communist Manifesto the 1848 book by Marx and Engels that outlined the basic ideas of how class struggle would lead to a communist society

capitalism economic system that promotes the unrestricted growth of wealth in the hands of private individuals and companies based on market forces of supply and demand. Government intervention in the economy is disapproved of and extremes of wealth and poverty can occur

Marx, communism and the Bolsheviks

The Bolsheviks were proponents of Marxism, the idea of the German philosopher Karl Marx, who in 1848 had written the **Communist Manifesto** with Friedrich Engels. Marx believed that all history was based on a dialectical struggle (conflict between two interacting and opposing forces); in this case a series of class struggles between those who controlled production and those who did not. The following table shows how Marx believed a **capitalist** society that exploited workers would eventually disappear and be replaced by a utopian communist society where people would work according to their abilities and be paid according to their needs.

Progression of revolutionary stages according to Marx

	Feudalism	Capitalism	Dictatorship of the proletariat	Communism
Dominant class	Nobility	Bourgeoisie	Proletariat	Classless society; all are equal
Oppressed class	Peasants	Proletariat	None	
How does revolution occur to end this stage and progress to the next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban bourgeoisie develops, taking economic power from the nobility Power now based on wealth not birth Peasants move into towns for jobs, creating a class of urban workers (proletariat) in an emerging industrial economy Economy now based on money (capitalism) and labour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the Industrial Revolution develops after 1750, wealthy bourgeoisie exploits urban proletariat Proletariat's wages don't reflect the profits they enable their employers to make from their labour Gradually proletariat develops a 'revolutionary consciousness' of its own oppression and supports revolutionary change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary stage leading to communism Working class now controls means of production Bourgeoisie disappears Government redistributes wealth equally and establishes collective ownership of resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No central government or dominant class Society works on the principle of 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs', so no-one is exploited or goes without necessities Everyone works together to ensure society functions effectively Political decision-making and authority is decentralised and communal.

Marx, and also Lenin and Trotsky, believed that eventually the appeal of communism would spread and create a world-wide international movement. This was reflected in the *Communist Manifesto*, which loosely translated, finished with the slogan 'Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!'

Lenin and the Bolsheviks embraced Marxist ideas, but Lenin adapted them to suit what he believed were unique conditions in Russia, which was far less industrially developed than countries like Germany, France and Britain. **Leninism** postulated that the working classes needed a political party (the Bolsheviks) to lead them, rather than waiting for them to spontaneously develop class consciousness and push for proletarian revolution.

The Bolsheviks had little involvement in the February revolution, as most were in exile. However, as you saw in the introduction to this study, the German government enabled Lenin and the Bolshevik leaders to return to Russia in a special sealed train in April 1917. Lenin did successfully return to Petrograd and was greeted by cheering crowds. In a defining speech, he outlined his April Theses which included ending Russia's participation in the war, ending co-operation with the Provisional government,

Leninism Lenin's adaptation of Marxism to suit Russian society lacking a politically aware proletariat; rather than allowing class-based revolution to occur naturally, the Bolsheviks would actively lead this process

confiscation of all large private estates, establishing a government of Soviet workers' councils, rather than a parliamentary democracy, and promising 'peace, land, bread'.

By August 200 000 had joined the Bolshevik party. Groups of armed workers — the Red Guards — were also formed. Along with Leon Trotsky, the Bolshevik chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Lenin began to organise the revolution which would put the Bolsheviks in power. However, the Bolsheviks still lacked majority popular support and were outnumbered by other socialist parties in the Soviet.

Why did a Revolution occur in October 1917?

The July Days

In the summer of 1917, Russia was rocked by a wave of Bolshevik-inspired strikes and demonstrations, known as the July Days, which directly challenged the Provisional government. The military authorities set troops against the demonstrators, leaving more than 700 people killed and wounded. The failure of the uprising forced Lenin into hiding; in disguise and clean-shaven, he lived for three months in a remote forest hut and then in Finland. Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders were arrested. The riots polarised Russian politics. On the right were the conservative forces who saw Kornilov, the Commander of the Russian army, increasingly as their saviour. On the left were the Bolsheviks. Caught in the middle was the Provisional Government, led by Alexander Kerensky.

The overthrow of the Provisional Government

In September, Kerensky became alarmed that Kornilov was planning a military coup. Kerensky freed Trotsky and allowed the Red Guards to be armed to help defend Petrograd. The attack never eventuated, however the Kornilov Affair resulted in a surge of support for the Bolsheviks, who gained credibility for saving the city from a possible military takeover and a return to the pre-revolutionary order. The position of Kerensky and the Provisional Government was now critical, as support disappeared from all sides.

Reassured that the Provisional Government could no longer rely on the support of the army, Lenin and Trotsky made their move. On the night of 24 October, the Red Guards began to take control of the main locations in Petrograd. The Provisional Government, located in the Winter Palace, was lightly guarded and little resistance was shown when the Red Guards stormed the palace at 2.10 am. The Provisional Government ministers surrendered without a fight. Kerensky fled to the American embassy, where he was given protection. The Petrograd Soviet was now in control. Within a week the Bolsheviks were established as the Government of Peoples' Commissars, with Lenin as President.

ACTIVITY 5.5

The two revolutions

Construct a table to highlight the differences between the two revolutions of 1917. Use two columns, one for each revolution. Consider such categories as: aims, causes (long and short term), participants, events, results.

5.8 SOURCE-BASED INQUIRY: How did the Bolsheviks transform Russia?

Lenin and Trotsky's victory in Petrograd was only the beginning of the Bolshevik attempt to establish control over all of Russia. The problems that had beset the Provisional Government still existed, and the Bolsheviks needed some form of electoral support to legitimise their takeover. Even within the Bolshevik party there were divisions. Transforming Russia into a truly revolutionary communist state was going to be an immense task.

How did the Bolsheviks consolidate power?

Lenin first needed to ensure the Bolsheviks had the support of the majority of Soviets. The national All-Russian Congress of Soviets meeting on 26 October officially approved the new regime, giving it legitimacy amongst the workers' councils. This meant Lenin did not have to consider any coalition governments with other more moderate socialist groups, like the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. He wanted the Bolsheviks to govern alone.

SOURCE 5.15 Lenin speaking at the Congress of Soviets, the day after the storming of the Winter Palace

Lenin haranguing deputies of the 2nd Soviet Congress, Smolny Palace, St Petersburg, 1917

Responding to the source

1. Note the people present, and the physical surroundings. Does this combination symbolise the idea of proletarian revolution? Explain your response.
2. What impression of Lenin do you think the artist has created? What aspects of the painting contribute to this?
3. From the depiction of the scene, what sort of emotions or mood might there have been among the delegates at the Congress of Soviets? What might have contributed to this?
4. This painting is by an unknown artist. Do you think the artist was simply trying to record an historical event or might there be some other purpose to this painting? Explain your response.



A one-party state

Lenin responded to pressure from workers' organisations to proceed with the elections for the Constituent Assembly that the Provisional Government had promised. Just over half of the 80 million eligible Russians voted. The results of the first democratic elections ever held in Russia, in November 1917, were as follows:

Party	% of vote	no of seats
Socialist Revolutionaries	48	410
Bolsheviks	24	175
Minor parties	20	99
Kadets	5	17
Mensheviks	3	16

The majority of voters were peasants who supported the Socialist Revolutionary Party's land reform policies. Although the Bolsheviks received only a quarter of the vote nationally, they had great support from urban working-class voters. Lenin's reaction was as follows:

SOURCE 5.16 Lenin takes a dramatic step, November 1917

As long as behind the slogan 'All power to the Constituent Assembly' is concealed the slogan 'Down with the Soviets', civil war is inevitable. For nothing in the world will induce us to surrender the Soviet power. And when the Constituent Assembly revealed its readiness to postpone all the painfully urgent problems and tasks that were placed before it by the Soviets, we told the Constituent Assembly that they must not postpone for a single moment. And by the will of the Soviet power, the Constituent Assembly, which has refused to recognise the power of the people, is dissolved. The Soviet Revolutionary Republic will triumph no matter what the cost.

Lenin, as quoted in Michael Lynch, *Reaction and Revolutions: Russia 1881–1924*, 2005, p. 105

Responding to the source

1. What did Lenin do with the Constituent Assembly?
2. How did he justify this action?
3. How was this likely to affect the Bolsheviks' relationship with the other parties, especially the Socialist Revolutionaries?
4. What does this action indicate about Lenin's view of his role as leader of Russia? What does it also indicate about the Bolsheviks' hold on power at that stage?
5. How might supporters of democratic change in Russia have viewed Lenin's actions?

Land reform

Lenin also moved quickly on the issue of land reform. Recognising the popularity of the Socialist Revolutionary party's agrarian policies with the peasants, Lenin issued the Decree on Land in November 1917.

SOURCE 5.17 Lenin's Decree on Land, 8 November 1917

1. Private ownership of land shall be abolished for ever ... All land, whether state, crown, church, factory, private, public, peasant, etc. shall be confiscated without compensation and become the property of the whole people and pass into the use of those who cultivate it.
2. The right to use the land shall be accorded to all citizens of the Russian State (without distinction of sex) desiring to cultivate it by their own labour, with the help of their families, or in partnership, but only as long as they are able to cultivate it ... Peasants who, owing to old age or ill health, are permanently disabled and unable to cultivate the land personally, shall lose their rights to the use of it, but, in return, shall receive a pension from the State.

From Yuri Akhupkin (ed.), *First Decrees of Soviet Power*, 1970

Responding to the source

1. How does this land decree accord with Lenin's Communist ideology?
2. What effect would this decree have on landowners? Would they get anything in return for having their lands taken?
3. How might some elements of the decree in paragraph two be regarded as socially progressive in a Western society at that time?

4. What potential for chaos do you think the decree might create? Why?
5. Can you imagine living in a society in which all private ownership of land had been abolished? What might be (if any) the advantages and disadvantages for that society?

Ending the war with Germany

The major problem overriding any domestic reforms was the war with Germany. The human casualties and the economic drain on Russia's economy were causing great unrest and Lenin knew a peace treaty had to be signed if the Bolsheviks were to have any chance of gaining popular support. He also feared a German attack on Petrograd, and even that the Germans might form an unlikely alliance with Britain and France against the Bolsheviks to restore the monarchy (Nicholas and Alexandra, as well as the German Kaiser Wilhelm, were first cousins of Britain's King George VI!). Lenin was prepared to accept the harsh terms proposed by Germany as a means of ending the war quickly, and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed on 3 March 1918. As a result of this treaty Russia had to pay Germany three million roubles in reparations, and also gave up territory that contained:

- 17% of Russia's population (62 million people)
- 32% of its farm land
- 89% of its iron and coal reserves
- 54% of its industries
- 26% of its railways.

SOURCE 5.18 Map of Treaty of Brest-Litovsk



Responding to the source

1. What would the losses of land and raw materials mean for Russia?
2. From the map, you can see the extent of the territory that Lenin gave up. However, some sources say that he wasn't too concerned at the time with losing them, as he was confident they would return to Russia later. As a communist revolutionary, how might he have been hoping to regain these territories in the longer term?
3. What consequence would Russia's withdrawal from the war against Germany have had for the British and the French? How might this affect their relationship with the new communist government in Russia?

As it turned out, the surrender of Germany in November 1918 and the Treaty of Versailles the following year meant that the treaty of Brest-Litovsk was revoked, although Russia did not regain its lost territory.

Social reforms

The Bolsheviks introduced a number of sweeping social changes in the first few months. These included:

- Women given full legal equality to men
- Complete separation of church and state; e.g. marriage was now to be a civil ceremony
- Divorce could be easily attained by either partner
- The state provided crèches and kindergartens, to make it easier for women with children to work
- Private banks and their funds were nationalised
- Education for all to be provided by the state
- Russia's Julian calendar, which was 13 days behind the Western Gregorian calendar, was abolished on 31 January 1918. The new day therefore became 14 February instead of 1 February.

Lenin's reforms reflected Marxist principles to varying degrees. Which of these reforms seem to reflect Marxist principles? What key principle of Marxism does not seem to be mentioned explicitly in this list? Could that principle be difficult to act upon in these early days?

SOURCE 5.19 A Soviet poster from 1925: 'Each kitchen maid should learn to rule the state'.



This 1925 poster by Ilya Pavlovich Makarychev says: 'Don't stay at home in the kitchen. Get elected into the Soviets! The female worker used to be in the dark, now she's in the Soviet deciding things.'

Responding to the source

1. What is represented by the building that the woman is pointing to?
2. Why would this image and its message be socially progressive for its time?
3. In what two ways can the image of the woman in the poster and the accompanying slogan be seen to represent revolutionary ideals?

ACTIVITY 5.6

Analysing the Bolshevik reforms

Copy the table below and complete it, listing the seven reforms and indicating the probable purpose of each reform, its likely supporters and its likely opponents. Then discuss which of these reforms from a century ago would not be out of place in modern societies including Australia.

	Bolshevik reform	Probable purpose	Likely supporters	Likely opponents
1	Women given full legal equality to men			
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Political repression

Along with these reforms, the regime also introduced repressive measures against political opposition. The Kadets were banned and a state police force, the **Cheka**, was set up. The following sources give an insight into how it operated:

Cheka the Bolsheviks' secret police, used to eliminate opposition

SOURCE 5.20 An order to all Soviets, 22 February 1918

... The [Cheka] asks the [local] Soviets to proceed at once to seek out, arrest, and shoot immediately all members ... connected in one form or another with counter-revolutionary organisations ... (1) agents of enemy spies, (2) counter-revolutionary agitators, (3) speculators, (4) organisers of revolts ... against the Soviet Government, (5) those going to the Don to join the Kaledin-Kornilov band and the Polish counter-revolutionary legions, (6) buyers and sellers of arms to be used by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. All these are to be shot on the spot ... when caught red-handed in the act.

From J. Bunyan and H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1918*, 1965

SOURCE 5.21 Statement from Felix Dzerzhinsky, Commander of the Cheka, July 1918

The Cheka is not a court. The Cheka is the defence of the revolution as the Red Army is; as in the civil war the Red Army cannot stop to ask whether it may harm particular individuals, but must take into account only one thing, the victory of the revolution over the bourgeoisie, so the Cheka must defend the revolution and conquer the enemy even if its sword falls occasionally on the heads of the innocent.

E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923*, 1952

Responding to the sources

1. What do these statements tell you about the nature of the Cheka?
2. To what previous Russian organisation might it be compared?
3. What does Dzerzhinsky claim is the purpose of the Cheka?
4. Note the list of six counter-revolutionary targets in the first source, and the action the Soviets are asked to take against them. Do you think there could be a danger of this order being abused by some Soviet members? Explain your response. Could Dzerzhinsky's words add to that danger? Explain your response.
5. According to Dzerzhinsky, how far was he prepared to go in pursuing the defence of the revolution?
6. You probably think these two sources describe extraordinary, unreasonable ideas and actions. Why, at the time, might Lenin have believed they were necessary? Do you think all members of the Soviets would have approved?

The Bolsheviks' concerns about counter-revolutionaries were added to by a fresh threat that emerged, this time from outside Russia.

Why did a Civil War develop in Russia and what were its consequences?

Foreign intervention

Lenin was determined that the Bolsheviks were the only party that could lead Russia's revolutionary transition to a communist state, and then enable the international class struggle to sweep across the rest of Europe. This prospect terrified the capitalist governments of European countries, who, with victory over Germany now likely, turned their attention to the Bolshevik threat. Together with the anti-Bolshevik Russian groups that Lenin had banned or marginalised by abolishing the Constituent Assembly, they mounted a direct military challenge. Between March and December 1918, British, Czech, United States and French forces entered Russian territory to confront the Bolshevik Red Army. Some Australians were also involved.

ACTIVITY 5.7

Australian troops in Russia

The Australian army was not involved in the Russian civil war, but in 1918–19 about 150 Australian troops volunteered to serve with the British forces who had gone to Russia to assist and train the anti-Bolshevik forces. This little-known involvement resulted in two Australians, Sergeant George Pearse and Corporal Arthur Sullivan, winning the Victoria Cross, the British army's highest award for bravery.

Find out more about these men and what they did to win their awards. What motivated them to become involved in this foreign intervention in Russia so soon after the end of World War 1?

The following cartoon by the American W.A. Rogers was published in 1918. It makes a comment on why foreign intervention occurred in Russia at this time.

SOURCE 5.22 A Hospital Case



Cartoon by W.A Rogers, published in 1918

Responding to the cartoon

1. The two figures at the rear are Britain and Czechoslovakia. Who are the two at the front?
2. Which country is represented by the bear?
3. What is signified by the fact that these countries are carrying the bear on the stretcher? What are they trying to do?
4. Who are the two figures represented in the background, watching? Comment on how they are depicted in the cartoon.
5. How might this cartoon have influenced opinion of the Bolsheviks in the United States?

The cartoon highlighted Western attempts to 'rescue' Russia. But the Western nations had wider concerns. In May 1919, Zinoviev, a Bolshevik, had predicted that 'Old Europe is rushing towards revolution at breakneck speed. In a twelve-month, we shall have forgotten that there was ever a struggle for communism in Europe, for all of Europe will be Communist'. Such predictions provoked a period of heightened fear in the West of communism in 1918–19. The military intervention in Russia was one reflection of that fear. Another was the following illustration by the artist Adrien Barrière, which appeared during the French elections in 1919.

SOURCE 5.23 Anti-communist election poster, France 1919



Anti-communist election poster, France 1919. The slogan says: 'How to vote against Bolshevism?'

Responding to the source

1. Explain three ways in which the colour red could be interpreted as having a particular meaning or significance in this poster.
2. What physical aspects of the Bolshevik figure help to depict him as wild and dangerous?
3. What does the depiction of the dagger between the teeth imply about the nature of the Bolshevik figure?
4. Do you think this poster would make people more likely to vote against socialist parties in the election? Is there any way it might be counter-productive?

Reds v Whites

The foreign intervention was generally ineffective. Western nations were reluctant to commit to a full-scale offensive as the long war against Germany was drawing to a close. By 1919 most foreign forces had withdrawn and the conflict had become an internal one between the Bolsheviks and their opponents. At stake was the survival of the revolution. The Reds were the communist Red Army, led by Trotsky. The Whites comprised the traditional conservative forces in Russia, such as peasants, landowners and various middle- and upper-class groups, as well as political parties like the Socialist Revolutionaries who wanted to defeat the new Soviet government. They were led by officers from the former Russian army. The Whites were supported by military forces of varying strength from many Western countries and Japan, although foreign intervention mainly took the form of financial aid and supplies.

SOURCE 5.24 A Bolshevik civil war poster



The capitalists unleashing their dogs. The names on the dogs are Denikin, Kolchak and Yudenich, all White army generals.

Responding to the cartoon

1. Who or what do the men on the right represent? How can you tell this?
2. What message is the cartoon trying to put across? Does this message make it an obviously Bolshevik poster?
3. How has the artist accentuated the character of the three men, and of the three dogs?
4. This type of poster art is an example of propaganda. Based on this example, what do you think the features are of propaganda art?
5. Who might be the intended audience for this poster? What do you think the Bolsheviks were trying to achieve through the publication of this poster, especially considering the circumstances at the time?
6. Suggest some artistic changes that could turn this poster into White/anti-Bolshevik propaganda. What new title would you then give the poster?

Against the threat from the Whites, Trotsky saw the very survival of the revolution at stake. He toured the front lines on an armoured train, constantly encouraging the troops with speeches and propaganda, and enforcing discipline. He became the figurehead of resistance for the Red Army, a vital role that helped win the war.

SOURCES 5.25 A&B Trotsky and the Red Guards

A Photograph of Trotsky addressing Red Guards during the Civil War



B Silent film footage of Trotsky addressing members of the Red Guard in 1919



Go to the Interactive Textbook and watch the video (duration 00:17) before answering the questions below.

Responding to the source

1. What impression do you get of Trotsky's leadership style from these sources? Is there any significance in his appearance and where he is standing in relation to the troops in the video?
2. Do the stances and expressions of the assembled people in the photograph give any sense of what they think and feel about Trotsky and his words? Explain your response.
3. Compare the uniforms of Trotsky himself, the officers (the men closest to Trotsky in the video) and the assembled soldiers. Unlike the uniforms of most countries in World War I there is little to tell the different ranks apart. Why would this be the case in the Red Army?
4. To enforce discipline, Trotsky had deserters executed and enforced other harsh punishments. Why do you think he still retained the support of the troops?

Execution of the Tsar

One problem Lenin had to confront was what to do with the Romanovs. After Tsar Nicholas' abdication, he and his family had been held under guard at various locations near Petrograd, but with the possible approach of the White forces Lenin had them moved to the town of Ekaterinburg, further inland. By July 1918 the Whites began to approach Ekaterinburg itself. The risk of the royal family being freed and becoming a rallying point for the anti-Bolshevik forces was too great. At 10.30 pm on 16 July the Tsar and his family were wakened and taken to the cellar of the building where they were being held captive, on the pretext of being moved to another location. There were eleven in the Tsar's group: himself, the Tsarina, their four daughters and their son, their family doctor, their cook, a servant and a maid. They were met in the room by an armed local detachment of Cheka, led by Yakov Yurovsky. In 1934, in a speech at a political reunion, Yurovsky recounted what happened next.

SOURCE 5.26 Yurovsky's account of the execution of the Romanovs

I said to Nicholas approximately this: His royal and close relatives inside the country and abroad were trying to save him, but the Soviet of Workers' Deputies resolved to shoot them. He asked "What?" and turned toward Alexei. At that moment I shot him and killed him outright. He did not get time to face us to get an answer. At that moment disorganised, not orderly firing began. The room was small, but everybody could come in and carry out the shooting according to the set order. But many shot through the doorway. Bullets began to ricochet because the wall was brick. Moreover, the firing intensified when the victims' shouts arose. I managed to stop the firing but with great difficulty.

... When the firing stopped, it turned out that the daughters, Alexandra and, it seems, Demidova and Alexei too, were alive. I think they had fallen from fear or maybe intentionally, and so they were alive. Then we proceeded to finish the shooting. (Previously I had suggested shooting at the heart to avoid a lot of blood). Alexei remained sitting petrified. I killed him. They shot the daughters but did not kill them. Then Yermakov resorted to a bayonet, but that did not work either. Finally they killed them by shooting them in the head.

Moshein, R. 2018, 'Murder of the Imperial Family - The executioner Yurovsky's account', Alexander Palace Time Machine

Responding to the source

1. Why would Lenin have been so concerned about the Tsar being freed during the Civil War?
2. Give a reason why Lenin could have wanted the news of the Tsar's execution to be (a) made public and (b) kept quiet.
3. The execution of the Tsar's family ended up being chaotic. Could this indicate something about (a) the planning of the executions (b) the room chosen for the executions (c) the expertise of the Cheka who carried out the killings (d) their extraordinary task – i.e.: murdering the Tsar, his wife and their children (e) any doubts, reluctance or fears on the part of the Cheka executioners?
4. Given the horror and brutality of this event, comment on the tone of the report given by Yurovsky. Could this suggest he had qualities valued in a Cheka officer? Explain. Can you imagine Yurovsky describing the scene quite differently to a close friend or family? Explain your response.
5. It turned out that there was an unexpected and extraordinary reason why the executioners had such difficulty killing the women of the royal family. Find out online at Alexander Palace Time Machine where you can read Yurovsky's complete account.

Three years after the executions, the French artist Sarmat produced this dramatic painting of the event.

SOURCE 5.27 Execution of the Tsar at Ekaterinburg



Execution of the Tsar at Ekaterinburg by the French artist, S. Sarmat, c. 1921

Responding to the source

1. What elements in this painting are corroborated by the account of the murders given by Yurovsky (in 1934) in the previous source?
2. Does the painting suggest where the artist's sympathies (if any) might lie? Explain your response.

News of the murder of Nicholas and his family caused outrage and shock around the world; most of the royal families of Europe were related to the Romanovs, and there were fears that similar events could happen in their countries. It increased the urgency of foreign intervention in Russia to help bring down the Bolshevik regime. In turn, that provoked an extreme reaction by the Bolsheviks.

Red Terror

The activities of the Cheka were given full rein after an assassination attempt on Lenin in August 1918 by a Socialist Revolutionary. This convinced Lenin that counter-revolutionary forces were still fully operational and dangerous, and needed to be repressed. A policy of Red Terror was implemented where any perceived enemy of the state could be arrested or executed without trial. A Bolshevik newspaper claimed there would be revenge for the attempt on Lenin's life: 'Without mercy, without sparing, we will kill our enemies in scores of hundreds. Let them be thousands; let them drown themselves in their own blood. For the blood of Lenin ... let there be floods of the blood of the bourgeois – more blood, as much as possible.' (Malone, 2015:207).

The Red Terror was matched by the White Terror, as both sides in the civil war committed atrocities. Both soldiers and civilians were victims on both sides. Peasants in particular suffered as their food supplies were often taken. Execution without trial was routine. Prisoners were scalped, skinned, boiled, buried alive, rolled in spiked barrels, eaten alive by rats and otherwise tortured. Rapes, mass shootings and hangings were commonplace. Whole villages were sometimes wiped out. As the war progressed, the terror became more indiscriminate on both sides, and members of all classes were frequently targeted, often on the flimsiest of pretexts. The purpose of the Red Terror campaign was to eliminate possible counter-revolutionary groups, but its main effect was to terrify any potential opposition into submission. Hundreds of thousands died as a direct result.

SOURCE 5.28 A Bolshevik propaganda poster from the civil war



The text says 'Retreating, the Whites are burning crops'.

Responding to the cartoon

1. Describe the contrast between the civilians on the left and the military personnel on the right. What do you think the artist intended his audience to think and feel about each group? Who do you think that audience would be?
2. Who is the person standing next to the White general? Why might he have been included in the poster?
3. What features make this image propaganda rather than just depiction?
4. Search online to find out whether a scene such as this could have occurred in Russia at that time.
5. In 1920, posters were an effective means of making public statements and communicating messages to influence a wide audience. How and why are posters used today in Australia? Do you think they can be effective? Do they use similar graphic techniques?

War Communism and the Reds' victory

Even greater loss of life resulted from the economic policies imposed by the Bolsheviks during the civil war. These policies were collectively known as **War Communism**. The disastrous losses of farmland and industry in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had created food shortages, a problem exacerbated by conscription of peasants and labourers and the forced confiscation of food as the civil war intensified. All production was directed towards the war effort. Private trade and business were banned, as the state took over all aspects of the economy. The result was an economic disaster, as food production collapsed, and famine set in. It is estimated that 95 per cent of the ten million deaths during the civil war were as a result of starvation and disease. There were reports of cannibalism from some areas, but these were suppressed in the press.

War Communism policy that directed all economic production towards serving the revolution's survival during the civil war

SOURCES 5.29 A–C Effects of War Communism

A Bodies of famine victims are carried away in carts, 1921



B The population of Petrograd 1914–20

Year	City population in millions	Births per thousand of population	Deaths per thousand of population
1914	2.2	25	21
1917	2.5	18	25
1918	1.5	15	44
1919	0.8	15.5	81.5
1920	0.6	12	95

From L.A. and L. M. Vasilievski, *Kniga o golode*, 1922, pp. 64–65

C A historian comments on War Communism

There is no word of strong enough force to use when one comes to the situation in Russia in those years. Total industrial output fell to around 20 per cent of prewar levels ... Total output of finished products in 1921 was 16 per cent of 1912 levels. Production in key sectors was down to around 29 per cent in mining, 36 per cent in oil, less than 10 per cent in the metal industries, 7 per cent in cotton textiles, 34 per cent in wool. Transport [mainly rail and river] also collapsed to about 20 per cent of the pre-war level. Agricultural production ... surpluses became smaller and smaller. The grain harvest in 1921 was only 48 per cent of the 1913 figure.

Christopher Read, *From Tsar to Soviets: The Russian People and their Revolution 1917–1921*, 1996, p. 192

Responding to the sources

1. Photographs can have a much more powerful impact than written descriptions. What aspects of this photo make it a powerful image? What does this source indicate about the nature and extent of the famine of 1920–22?
2. Explain what Source 5.29B indicates about the main effect of war communism on the city of Petrograd from 1917–1920, compared with 1914.
3. Write a paragraph using these three sources to describe the effects of War Communism on Russia. Highlight any strengths and possible inadequacies of these particular sources.

ACTIVITY 5.8

Discussing the morality of War Communism

The Bolshevik leaders considered War Communism both necessary and regrettable.

Discuss the questions below in small groups and then share as a class:

1. What Bolshevik goal would cause them to say that War Communism was necessary?
2. What might have happened to the Bolsheviks, to Russia and to the Russian people if the Bolsheviks had not enacted War Communism?
3. Could that make War Communism not just necessary, but morally defensible?
4. Can the Bolshevik goal of defeating enemies justify morally the consequent deaths of millions of Russians through privation and famine?
5. Could the alternative outcome – victory of the White forces – have been a more morally acceptable outcome?
6. Is it easier to make that decision with the benefit of hindsight, compared with at the time?
7. Does history suggest that political goals – including admirable ones — and moral outcomes can sometimes be in conflict?
8. How difficult is it to answer these questions? What further research might help you respond?

During 1920 the Reds progressively defeated the White armies, and foreign powers withdrew their support. By early 1921 the war was over.

SOURCES 5.30 A&B The Red victory

A A historian sums up the reason for the Reds' victory

Much was due to the driving initiative, the disciplined order and the ruthlessness of the Bolsheviks themselves. They possessed in Lenin a leader of great strength and astuteness, and in Trotsky an organiser of extraordinary capacity. The policy of terror subdued opposition and aided their cause, but the victory was not due to terrorism. The Bolsheviks were faced by a motley array of oppositionists, who had little in common. It was difficult to maintain effective co-operation between socialist revolutionary leaders and army generals of the old regime. There was little co-operation of policy or strategy between the White leaders, and this lack of unity was to prove fatal to the counter-revolutionary cause.

Gordon Greenwood, *The Modern World*, 1973

B A propaganda poster from 1920



Тов. Ленин Очищает
Землю от Нечисти.

Comrade Lenin Cleanses the Earth of Filth

Responding to the sources

1. According to Greenwood, what factors on each of the Red and White sides contributed to the result of the war? What does he believe was the major reason for the Red victory?
2. With reference to details in the cartoon, what does this poster suggest about the role of Lenin in the war?

- Who or what do the four figures being swept away represent? How were they affected by the 1917 revolutions and their aftermath?
- What might be the implication of Lenin's being depicted standing on a globe?
- By 1920, when the poster was published, how much of the poster's message had come true?
- What were the probable intended audiences and intentions of each of these two sources?

Despite the victory in the civil war, the communists still had many problems to overcome. The effects of War Communism had not been confined just to civilians; in March 1921, the sailors at the Kronstadt naval base near Petrograd mutinied, demanding an end to food shortages as well as a more democratic government. These sailors had previously fought for the Bolsheviks in the revolution, now they were challenging the communist state. The revolt was put down by the Red Army with the leaders executed or fleeing to Finland, but the Kronstadt uprising was symptomatic of dissatisfaction with Lenin's policies from within the party itself. The revolution was still far from universally popular.

The New Economic Policy

In March 1921, Lenin faced not only the Kronstadt mutiny but continued peasant revolts against grain requisitioning and unrest from urban workers dissatisfied with food shortages and lack of democracy.

SOURCE 5.31 A historian comments on the situation in 1921

As the urban food crisis deepened and more and more workers went on strike, it became clear that the Bolsheviks were facing a revolutionary situation. Lenin was thrown into panic: 'We are barely holding on,' he acknowledged in March. The peasant wars, he told the opening session of the Tenth Party Congress on 8 March, were 'far more dangerous than all of the Denikins, Yudeniches and Kolchaks put together.' Together with the strikes and the Kronstadt mutiny of March, they would force the Congress to abandon finally the widely hated policies of War Communism and restore free trade under the [New Economic Policy (NEP)]. Having defeated the Whites, who were backed by no fewer than eight Western powers, the Bolsheviks surrendered to the peasantry.

New Economic Policy (NEP) policy that allowed re-introduction of private enterprise after the civil war

Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 1996, p. 758

Responding to the source

- What tactics did Lenin unsuccessfully employ against the peasants?
- Who were the 'Denikins, Yudeniches and Kolchaks' that he refers to (mentioned earlier)?
- The New Economic Policy (NEP) restored some private ownership of farms and other enterprises. What might that mean in practical terms for the various sectors of the Russian population?

While the government kept control of the banks, transport systems and major heavy industries, under the NEP state control of the economy was relaxed and significant amounts of private enterprise were allowed. Grain requisitioning from peasants was ended; they were now taxed a small proportion of their crops but were allowed to sell the remainder on the open market. As a result, a new class of wealthy peasants appeared, known as **Kulaks**. Free market trade was permitted again and privately owned small businesses were permitted to make profits. Food rationing was also abolished. Despite the

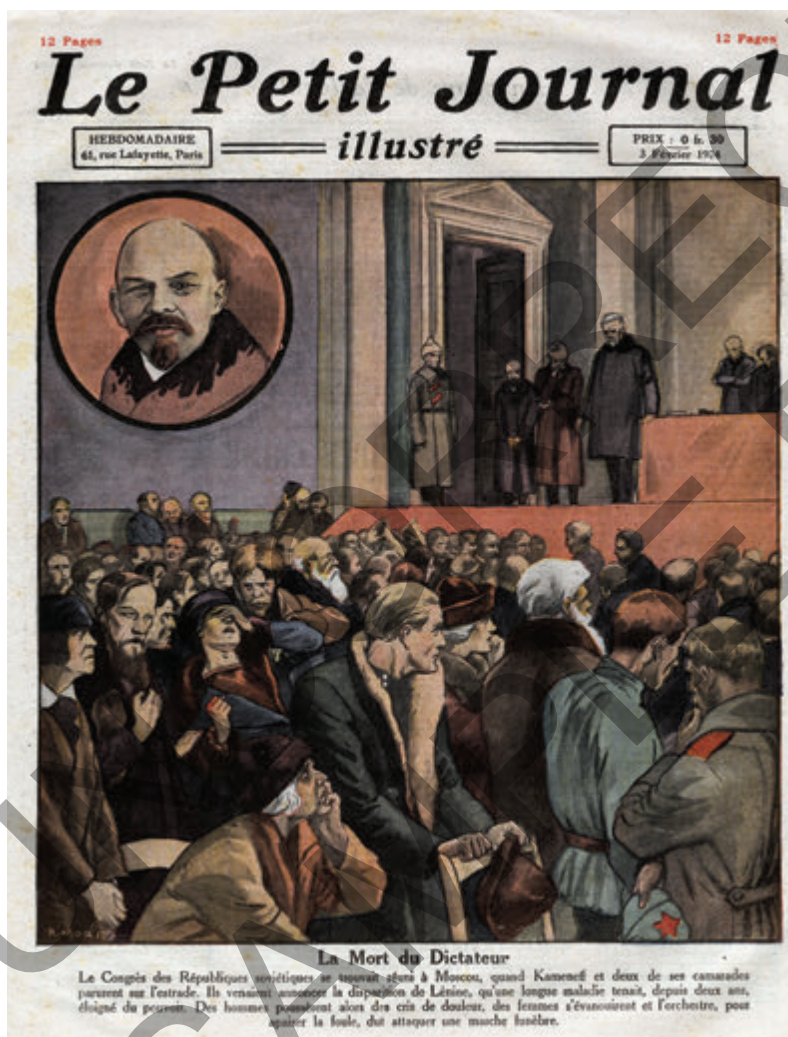
Kulaks wealthier peasants who benefited from the New Economic Policy; later persecuted by Stalin as they resisted collectivisation

improvement in the economy, many Bolsheviks opposed the NEP on ideological grounds; however, the policy remained until replaced by Stalin's first five-year plan in 1927.

How had Russia changed under Lenin by 1924?

In 1922, Lenin established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, or Soviet Union), consisting of Russia and six former provinces of the Russian empire. By then, political opposition had been abolished, a massive centralised state bureaucracy was implementing Soviet policy, and the Cheka's successor, the OGPU, was enforcing control. Then, in January 1924, Lenin died following a stroke. The Communist Party was the unchallenged authority in the USSR. But Lenin's death ignited a struggle for leadership of the party between Trotsky, who was Lenin's choice as successor, and Josef Stalin.

SOURCE 5.32 A French newspaper reports *The dictator's death*



Front page of *Le Petit Journal*, 3 February 1924. The caption below the illustration reads: 'The Congress of Soviet Republics was meeting in Moscow, when Kamenev and two of his comrades appeared on the platform. They came to announce the passing of Lenin, who had been ill for the last two years, and away from power. Men screamed in anguish, women fainted and the orchestra, to settle the crowd, had to strike up a funeral march'.

Responding to the source

1. What impression does the French paper give of the reaction in Russia to Lenin's death? How might his death have been reported in the United States or Britain?
2. Note the term *Dictateur* (dictator). Given the appearance and tone of this source, do you think that word was used in the pejorative sense common today, or as a more neutral descriptor? Explain your response.
3. Why do you think there was such an apparent outpouring of grief in Russia at Lenin's death when his deeds had resulted in so much tragedy?
4. Might there have been a wide variety of reactions to the news of Lenin's death within the Russian population? Explain your response.

It's interesting to ask what had been achieved by the time Lenin died. In Source 5.33A you can see a poster published in 1918, a year after the Bolshevik revolution. Also read a historian's description of the USSR in 1924 in Source 5.33B.

SOURCES 5.33 A&B After the revolution

A Soviet poster commemorating the first anniversary of the revolution



The inscription at the top says, 'Workers of the world, unite!' and the one at the bottom says 'The Year of Proletarian Dictatorship, October 1917 – October 1918'

B A historian comments on Lenin's response to problems facing the new Russia

The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 was the new beginning for a Russia with the same old problems. Just because Lenin – a fresh, adaptable, reforming leader – had replaced the Tsar did not mean that the new society was as utopian as Marx's theory of communism predicted. In fact, Lenin inherited a nation under severe torment that also faced new problems restricting the success of the introduction of **socialism**. Certainly, the initial promise of social and political change by the Bolshevik Party was endangered by the democracy of socialism, civil war, economic breakdown and internal dissent. In these times of crisis, the new communist government's responses were unsurprisingly authoritarian, involving the introduction of stringent policies of social control.

socialism political and economic theory which proposes that the means of producing, distributing and exchanging goods and services should be owned and regulated by the community or state

Richard Malone, *Analysing the Russian Revolution* 3rd ed., 2015, p. 291

Responding to the two sources

- In the poster, what is the significance of these features:
 - The two characters and their tools
 - The items lying scattered at their feet
 - The landscape, and the people and other features in it
 - The different uses of the colour red.
- Do you think this poster is a depiction of Russia in October 1918, a vision of a future Russia, or a combination of the two? Explain your response.
- Who could have been the intended audience of this poster? What response might the artist have hoped for?
- To what extent are Malone's terms 'the new beginning' and 'initial promise' reflected in the poster?
- To what extent does the poster reflect Malone's list of dangers confronting the Bolsheviks, and the Bolsheviks' authoritarian responses?
- During the years 1918–1924, what might many Russians have thought when they looked again at the 1918 poster? Would their thoughts have been changing over that period? Explain your response.

ACTIVITY 5.9

Make a social media account documenting the Russian Revolution.

Have a look at the web sites *Project 1917* and *#1917LIVE* and then create your own (simulated) Facebook, Twitter or Instagram feed for an event of the Russian Revolution. You can work in pairs or small groups to create profiles for different real or fictional characters (e.g. peasants, revolutionaries etc.).

5.9 How did Stalin transform Russia after Lenin's death?

Lenin wanted Trotsky to succeed him; he had a less favourable view of Stalin. This was clearly evident from letters Lenin wrote in 1922 assessing the qualities of the leadership contenders. Lenin wrote:

Comrade Stalin, having become Secretary-General, has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands – and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution. Comrade Trotsky, on the other hand ... has already proved [his] outstanding ability. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present Central Committee.... Stalin is too rude, and this defect ... becomes intolerable in a Secretary-General.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Letter to the Congress of Soviets, 24 December 1922.

Stalin v Trotsky

Stalin, a skilful and ruthless politician, emerged as the sole leader of the Communist Party after Lenin's death. Despite Trotsky's close association with Lenin during the revolution and his renowned leadership of the Red Army during the civil war, his outspoken criticism of some Party members made him unpopular.

Trotsky and Stalin differed ideologically on the future of the revolution. Trotsky's belief was that the USSR had a duty to push forward with spreading the communist ideal to workers around the world. Stalin, on the other hand, argued for a policy of 'socialism in one country', that is, concentrating on building up the USSR's economy and military so that it was able to become a major world power able to withstand foreign aggression.

Stalin's talent for political manipulation saw Trotsky expelled from the Party in 1927, and eventually sent into exile in Europe and later to Mexico, where he was murdered by a Stalinist agent in 1940. By 1929 Stalin had effectively removed all his political opponents and was unchallenged as leader. Through the use of terror, censorship and propaganda Stalin created a totalitarian dictatorship, in which he was effectively worshipped as the saviour of the Soviet Union and Lenin's spiritual successor.

SOURCES 5.34 A&B Rewriting history

The two photographs below show the same scene: Lenin addressing troops in Moscow in 1920. The original image shows Trotsky and Kamenev, both rivals of Stalin, standing on the steps at the lower right of the platform. The second photo was issued in 1927.

A Original photos of Lenin addressing troops in Moscow, 1920



B 1927 adjusted photo of Lenin addressing troops in Moscow, 1920



Responding to the sources

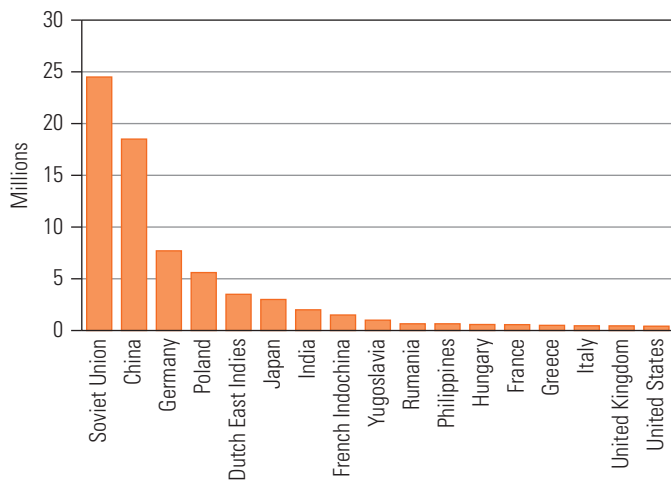
1. Compare the two photographs. What has changed?
2. How can you account for this difference? Who might have done this and why?
3. What lesson is there in this about using photographs as sources of historical evidence?
4. Historians know that Stalin was responsible for the doctored photograph. But could you make a case for the other photograph being the doctored one and, if so, who could be responsible?
5. If you search online for terms like 'Stalin doctored images' etc. you will find many other examples of this sort of activity. It was a main theme in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which described a Stalinist-like state in the fictitious country of Oceania, where the state was controlled by Big Brother. Is it more or less likely for history to be rewritten like this today? Can you think of any other examples of this happening? Can the current phenomenon of 'fake news' be compared with this Russian case from 1927?

Economic reforms

In order to increase Soviet industrial output and military strength while at the same time increasing agricultural output, Stalin implemented a series of five-year plans. The First Five-Year Plan from 1928–32 marked the end of the NEP and private ownership and called for the collectivisation of peasant farms by the state. Opposition to this policy from the wealthier peasants, or Kulaks, resulted in Stalin having most of them arrested or executed. As a result, from 1932–34 a devastating famine resulted, with millions of deaths. However, by 1936 it was estimated that 90 per cent of farms had been collectivised.

War with Germany

Other Five-Year Plans from 1933–37 and in 1938–41 saw great increases in industrial output and electrification. The benefits of this industrialisation were proven when Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941, resulting in the bloodiest conflict of all of World War II. This conflict on the Eastern Front was known as the Great Patriotic War in the USSR, which reflected the fact that the very survival of the country was at stake. Hitler saw the conquest of the USSR as a priority, as he considered it populated by non-Aryan *untermenschen*, or sub-humans, such as Slavs and Jews. Communism, as a supposedly international class-based ideology, was also intrinsically opposed to the nationalist, race-based ideology of Fascism. However, despite rapid German initial gains, once winter set in, the Soviets fought back and eventually turned the tide of the war. Some of the worst atrocities of the war were committed by the Nazis on the Eastern Front. Ethnic cleansing was openly practised. The city of St Petersburg, by then known as Leningrad, was besieged



SOURCE 5.35 Total military and civilian deaths in World War II, by country

other being the United States. Over the next fifty years, these two nations would compete for world economic and political supremacy during the Cold War. On his death in 1953, Stalin was remembered as a national hero by millions of Russians, and as a tyrant by many others. His legacy of industrial development and war time victory over Germany was tempered by the millions of deaths incurred by famine and repression during his rule. For many on the political left, Stalin was also responsible for ensuring that socialism itself was widely regarded as 'guilty by association' with totalitarian communism. Particularly in Western nations, socialism was regarded as not just an economic system which redistributed wealth in a democracy to alleviate inequality; it was now associated, especially by liberal and right-wing politicians, with political dictatorship and the repression of individual rights.

5.10 Depth study: summing up

There is no doubt that for most Russians their standard of living by 1953 had improved from 1917. The industrial development of the 1930s and immediate post-war years ensured that consumer goods and the basics of modern living were more widely available, even if well below Western standards. Russia developed rapidly from a backward, semi-feudal economy with a predominantly illiterate population to one of the world's superpowers, with free public healthcare and education, and great advancements in science, including putting the first satellite into orbit in 1957 and the first human into space in 1961. Along the way, some elements of Marxist ideology were lost; the goal of a classless society based on genuine participatory decision-making was never attained. Instead, a strong, centralised one-party government, a tightly controlled society and a lack of individual rights became the foundations of the soviet state.

ACTIVITY 5.10

To what extent were the ideals of the Russian Revolution achieved?

Discuss or write responses to the following:

1. What do you consider were the ideals of the Russian Revolution? To what extent were they sustained through the period of Stalin's rule? What factors influenced the extent to which they were sustained?
2. Were the differences in the lives of the Russian people between Tsarist rule prior to 1917 and Communist government afterwards significant enough to justify the events of the revolutionary period?

for two and a half years in a deliberate effort to starve its inhabitants to death; over a million citizens died and cases of cannibalism were reported.

Popular culture has largely ignored the role of the USSR in defeating Nazi Germany in World War II. While you see plenty of books and movies from the British and American perspectives, the importance of the conflict on the Eastern Front is often not appreciated. The graph in Source 5.35 shows just how disastrously the war affected the Soviet Union.

As a comparison, Australian war deaths were about 40 500.

Stalin's legacy

With the defeat of Germany in 1945, Stalin was now the leader of one of the world's two superpowers, the

CONCLUDING STUDY

The legacy of the Russian Revolution

Today, more than a century after the Russian Revolution, it's worth asking why the revolution of 1917 is significant historically, and whether its impact is still felt in today's world. US author John Reed, in *Russia in 1917*, famously claimed that the Bolshevik revolution 'shook the world'. In the following pages, you'll examine whether that 'shaking' continued in the years and decades after 1917.

5.11 What was the Soviet Union's place in the world after 1945?

Already in this chapter you've seen the powerful outcomes of the Bolshevik revolution. Most dramatic was the creation by Stalin of a highly authoritarian dictatorship that used terror tactics to impose its political will, its economic programs and its social policies on the Russian people. However, after Germany's defeat in 1945 the Soviet Union was one of two world superpowers, along with the United States, with unprecedented influence over the rest of the world.

The Iron Curtain and the Cold War

In March 1946 former British prime minister Winston Churchill, describing post-war Europe, coined a memorable phrase: 'From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent'. In his speech, Churchill was describing a dramatic consequence of World War II. The 'iron curtain' referred to the division between Western Europe and the Soviet-controlled states to the east. It represented graphically the division and tension that became known as the Cold War. During the Cold War, from approximately 1947–1991, the Soviet Union and the USA competed for power and influence around the globe. This conflict is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 15 of this book; however, the map below shows how Europe was divided during the Cold War.

SOURCE 5.36 Map of Europe during the Cold War



Responding to the map

1. Look at the scale of distances on this map. How would the proximity of the rival sides make the situation in Europe even more tense?
2. Where do you think the Soviet Union would be most concerned with keeping a strong occupying force? Why?
3. Yugoslavia, although communist, remained non-aligned during the Cold War, under its strong leader, Josip Tito. Research Tito and see how and why he defied Stalin.
4. Some of the countries in the Eastern Bloc (Warsaw Pact) broke up into separate independent nations after the Cold War ended. Can you identify two countries on this map, other than the Soviet Union, that no longer exist? What countries replaced them?

Communism and Australia

The Cold War significantly affected Australia. Our foreign policy, which closely tied us to the United States under the ANZUS pact, reflected a singular obsession with the domino theory, where successive countries would fall to communism as it spread throughout South-East Asia, eventually reaching Australia. China, which became communist in 1949, replaced Japan as the source of the new 'yellow peril', combining a perceived political and racial threat to Australia. Under the prime ministership of Robert Menzies (1949–1965) Australian forces fought communism in the Korean War (1950–53), the Malayan Emergency (1950–63) and the Vietnam War (1965–72). At home, an almost paranoid fear of communist espionage (or 'Reds under the bed') led to Menzies trying — unsuccessfully — to ban the Australian Communist Party in a referendum in 1951. Opposition to this by the Australian Labor Party and its leader H.V. Evatt led to accusations of the ALP being sympathetic to communists; this was reinforced by the presence of communists in some trade unions. In 1955 the ALP split over the issue of communism, and this kept it out of government federally until 1972.

ACTIVITY 5.11

How did communism affect Australia during the Cold War?

1. Research the ways in which Australia has been affected by communism in its foreign policy and in domestic politics.
 - a. In foreign policy, what was Australia's role in the conflicts in Korea, Malaya and Vietnam? What were ANZUS and SEATO? What was our position on the Moscow Olympics boycott?
 - b. Domestically, research the following: the 1951 referendum, the ALP split of 1955, the DLP, the Petrov Affair.

5.12 What caused the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991?

For much of the post-1945 period – while Cold War tensions waxed and waned – little changed politically within the USSR. After Stalin's death in 1953, successive Soviet leaders Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko had made little effort to alter the status quo. However, the ascension to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 saw momentous changes in the way the USSR was governed.

Gorbachev's reforms

By this time the Soviet Union was in economic crisis, with severe shortages of consumer goods resulting from high levels of spending on arms to match the United States under President Ronald Reagan. In 1985 Gorbachev introduced *perestroika*, a series of reforms that restructured the whole Soviet economy by encouraging private enterprises. He also instigated *glasnost*, which allowed open criticism of the government. Dramatically, in March 1990, Gorbachev allowed the formation of political parties other than the Communist Party for the first time since 1922.

These radical moves by Gorbachev encouraged popular pressure for similar reforms in Eastern European countries under Soviet rule. In 1989 there was a series of revolutions which overthrew communist regimes in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, symbolised particularly by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany. Gorbachev's reforms also stirred independence movements amongst many national minorities within the USSR, such as in Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Chechnya and Ukraine, all of which declared their independence from the Soviet Union during 1990. Gorbachev, despite introducing political and economic freedoms, had set in motion a chain of events that had led to the end of the Soviet Union after 75 years. In December 1991 Gorbachev resigned, and the Soviet Union officially ceased to exist, breaking up into Russia and fifteen separate independent countries.

Reaction in the West

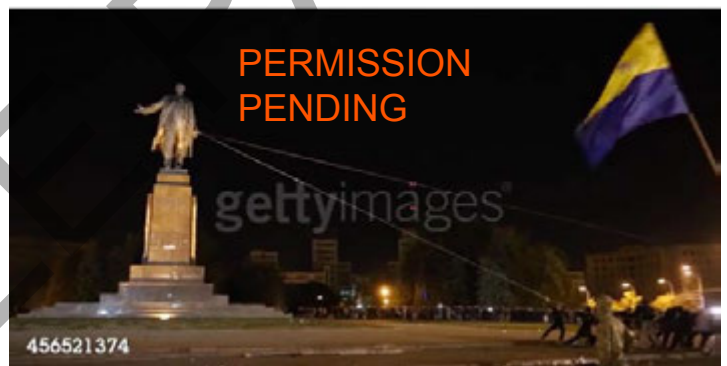
The events of 1989–1990 were as revolutionary in their own way as those of 1917; sudden and unexpected, they saw popular uprisings overthrowing repressive autocratic regimes in a quest for greater freedom and better living conditions. Many Westerners could hardly believe what they were seeing, as long-established checkpoints were opened and the Berlin Wall was literally torn down and broken up by cheering crowds on live television.

Remember the first page of this chapter, with the photo of the statue being pulled down in Ukraine. After the fall of the Soviet Union there were many such events in former Soviet territories, as newly independent populations celebrated the end of repressive totalitarian rule. Statues of Lenin were removed, decapitated, or derisively changed into representations of other figures, such as Darth Vader.

Protesters in the former East German city of Schwerin have battled for more than two years against municipal authorities to remove one of the last Lenin statues standing in Germany: a 13-foot-tall memorial erected in 1985 in front of a Soviet-style apartment block. In Nowa Huta, a suburb of Krakow, Poland, once known as 'the ideal socialist town,' locals at a 2014 art festival raised a fluorescent green Lenin poised in the act of urination near where a Lenin statue was torn down in 1989. In Ukraine, about 100 Lenin monuments have been removed in the last couple of years, commencing with a Lenin statue in Kiev toppled ... in 2014. Even a Lenin sculpture in a central Moscow courtyard was a recent victim of decapitation.

SOURCE 5.37 Joshua Hammer, 'Vladimir Lenin's Return Journey to Russia Changed the World Forever', *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 2017

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union was seen by the USA as a victory, a vindication of the American way and the infallibility of capitalism. The role of Gorbachev's reforms and internal factors were generally ignored in favour of a



SOURCE 5.38 The Interactive Textbook contains a video showing a statue of Lenin being toppled in Freedom Square, Kharkov, Ukraine's second-largest city, on 29 September 2014. Watch the video (duration 00:58) and then answer the following questions. How would you describe the reactions of the crowd after the statue fell? What historical events might have contributed to this depth of emotion? Interestingly, the following morning saw a starkly different scene in Freedom Square. Pro-Russian members of the public and others offended by the way the statue had been torn down, began to scrub off graffiti and place flowers on the granite pedestal to show their respect for the former Soviet icon. Why might Lenin's legacy mean so much to these people?

simplistic belief in the triumph of good over evil. American President George Bush proclaimed in January 1991 that America had won the Cold War, and that a New World Order had emerged with the United States as the world's only superpower. American media proclaimed an ideological and moral victory. 'We Won!' exclaimed the editorial of *The Wall Street Journal* on 24 May 1989.

Even popular songs celebrated the events. In 1991, 'Right Here, Right Now', by the British group Jesus Jones, included the lines 'I saw the decade in, when it seemed/ the world could change at the blink of an eye' and 'There is no other place I want to be/ Right here, right now/ Watching the world wake up from history'.

Indeed, the world did seem to change 'at the blink of an eye' in 1989. It seemed clear that people across the soviet bloc had risen against the oppressive regimes that Stalin had imposed across the states of Eastern Europe. At a deeper level, there was a sense that the events of 1945–1989 had discredited communism and given it a bad name, equating it with political dictatorship, social conformity, lack of freedom and violent suppression of dissent. Marx's vision of a socialist utopia, it seems, had transformed into George Orwell's 1948 dystopian *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the smallest details of people's lives were monitored by Big Brother, and anyone who even had thoughts against the state quickly disappeared.

This bleak picture prompted a significant question: could socialism still have anything to offer, or was it now consigned to the ideological dustbin of history?

5.13 Russia today: the new tsar

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia was led firstly by Boris Yeltsin (1991–1999), whose leadership was compromised by ill-health and alcoholism, and then by Vladimir Putin (since 2000). Under Putin, Russia's economy has improved significantly, and the standard of living has risen for most Russians. However, Putin has been criticised for eroding human rights and freedom of expression, including controlling the media and repressing political opponents, and developing a personality cult glorifying his image as a man of action. Russia has also become strongly nationalistic, showing an increasing intent to stand up to what it sees as threats from the West, and also increasing its armed forces as a show of strength. In recent years Russia used military force to suppress independence movements in the state of Chechnya and to annexe the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. It also sent forces to support President Assad in the Syrian conflict.



seems to be objecting to being compared to an 'old Soviet ruler'. Do you think the cartoonist is suggesting that Putin resembles both Stalin and an imperial Tsar? How can you tell this from the cartoon? If so, what shared ideas, beliefs and/or actions could the cartoonist be criticising? What point is the cartoonist probably making by depicting the bear? How might this cartoon be regarded differently by readers in the United States and Russia? Why?

Only Stalin has ruled Russia for longer than Putin. However, Putin has little in common with the Bolsheviks ideologically. He has encouraged a favourable view of the pre-revolutionary imperial era and, despite Western comparisons with Stalin, he has also drawn comparisons with other autocrats.

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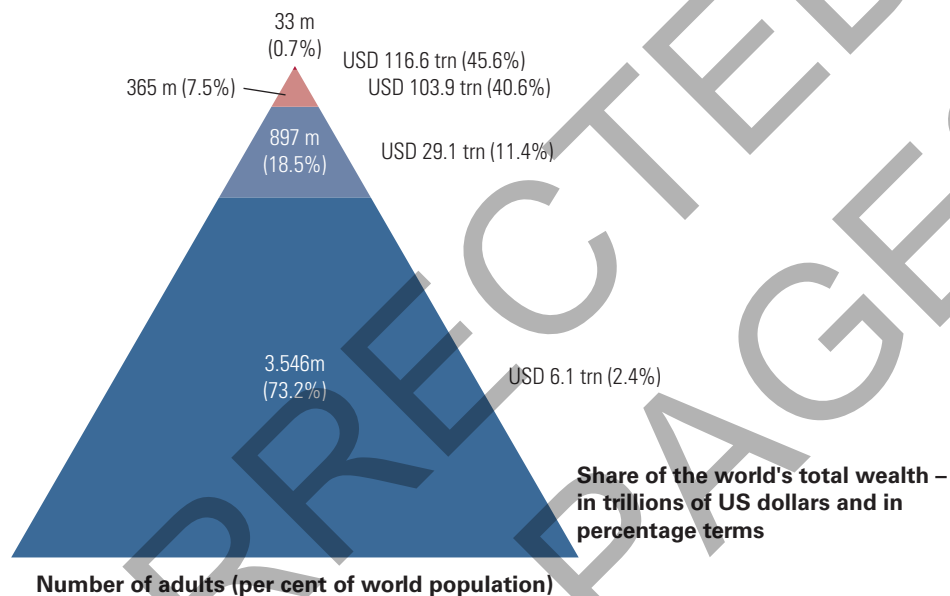
5.14 Are the ideals of the Russian Revolution still relevant in today's world?

Since the end of the Cold War, living standards in most Western democracies have generally risen enough to prevent serious questioning of the capitalist system. The discrediting of communism and socialism because of Stalin's dictatorship also significantly lessened the likelihood of socialist governments being elected in Western democracies. However, the attraction of socialism has not entirely disappeared.

Inequalities in wealth and power

The American academic Matthew S. Hirshberg believes that the causes of leftist revolutionary movements in the past have not been eliminated, and that 'even if the communist label goes entirely out of fashion (and it hasn't yet), there will be those who advocate socialist alternatives to liberal capitalism as long as there are vast inequalities in wealth and power'. The 'vast inequalities in wealth and power' that Hirshberg speaks of can be seen in the following wealth pyramid:

SOURCE 5.40 The Global Wealth Pyramid



This diagram is based on 2016 data from Credit Suisse Research. It shows how the world's total wealth is divided up amongst the population.

Responding to the source

1. According to this source, what per cent of the world's population has about 86% of the world's total wealth? What per cent of population has less than 14% of the world's wealth?
2. Compare this source with Source 5.5 in the contextual study at the beginning of this chapter. Can you draw any comparisons?

Throughout the world, not just in the West, but also in the rising economies of China and India, extreme wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. As well, newly-emerging middle classes (an estimated 200 million people in China) enjoy Western-style consumerism even while the bulk of the population lives very simply with many experiencing poverty.

In September 2011 a popular movement called Occupy Wall Street (a reference to the street along which most of the New York financial district is located) set up camps and held marches to protest about income inequality in the US. Their slogan 'We are the 99%' was specifically chosen to draw attention to the wealth gap between the wealthiest 1% and the rest of the population. The following report examined some aspects of the protest.

SOURCE 5.41 Occupy Wall Street

The Meaning of Occupy Wall Street

MATT SCHIAVENZA

The Occupy Wall Street movement has its base in Zuccotti Park, a small square dwarfed by the surrounding buildings of Lower Manhattan's financial district. I visited on Saturday evening, eager to see for myself what the *New York Times* has described as a 'diffuse and leaderless convocation of activists against greed, corporate influence, gross social inequality and other nasty by-products of wayward capitalism...'

Almost immediately, I could tell Occupy Wall Street isn't a rigidly organized political movement. Amid signs criticizing ... Wall Street, the banks and capitalism in general, I spotted a smattering of other activists agitating for feminism, veganism and for the emancipation of Palestine. At first, the scene ... resembled a caricature of leftist activism, complete with long-haired, hirsute revellers dancing hypnotically to the sounds of a bongo drum.

Yet a closer look revealed that this was no ordinary protest crowd. Walking along the perimeter of the park, I spoke to Sean, a clean-cut man in his late thirties sitting quietly to one side.

'I'm a blue-collar guy, an electrician,' he told me, 'This is the first protest movement that I've ever been involved with.' He adjusted his sign, which in neat letters explained his situation. He was out of work and had two children. 'Things just aren't working,' he said. 'The system is broken.'

He wasn't the only one who thought so. Around the corner, a small group of recent University of Connecticut graduates had written their student loan debt amount on cardboard placards. Other signs cited the declining middle class. Still others mourned the American dream as an aspiration they felt only pertained to certain parts of the population.

What Occupy Wall Street signifies is this: for a significant chunk of the American population, life is not getting better and hasn't been for a long time. Over the past thirty years the American middle-class has been told that the wealth generated in the country would improve their lives, but this has not happened. Instead, the conspicuously rich have accrued the lion's share of the wealth, benefiting from friendly politicians who view them ... as the creators of the country's prosperity.

Matt Schiavenza, 'The Meaning of Occupy Wall Street', *The Morningside Post*, 10 December 2011

Responding to the source

1. The writer's first impression was that the protest seemed like 'a caricature of leftist activism'. What does he mean by that?
2. What made him realise that this was 'no ordinary protest crowd'? What sort of grievances were there that he hadn't expected?
3. How would you define the main concern of the Occupy Wall Street movement?
4. In what way can politicians be held responsible for many of the problems facing the American middle class?

In recent years some politicians on the left have begun to openly criticise income inequality and have even campaigned on the issue. Bernie Sanders in the US, Jeremy Corbyn in Britain, and Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand have all publicly condemned aspects of capitalism that produce economic disadvantage for the majority of people. Soon after becoming Prime Minister in 2017, Jacinda Ardern indicated her concern with inequality in New Zealand, while in his address to the British Labour Party conference in September 2017,

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn spoke of how he wanted his party to be ‘a modern, progressive socialist party’.

SOURCES 5.42 A&B Politicians criticise income inequality

A ‘Capitalism has failed’: Jacinta Ardern signals a major economic policy shift, 22 October 2017

In her first televised interview [New Zealand Prime Minister] Jacinda Ardern said homelessness and poverty were proof that capitalism had failed New Zealanders on low incomes.

‘If you have hundreds of thousands of children living in homes without enough to survive, that’s a blatant failure. What else could you describe it as?’ Ms Ardern told TV3’s *The Nation*. ‘When you have a market economy, it all comes down to whether or not you acknowledge where the market has failed and where intervention is required. Has it failed our people in recent times? Yes. Wages are not keeping up with inflation and how can you claim you’ve been successful when you have growth at roughly 3 per cent, but you have the worst homelessness in the developed world? ... My view is there is a role for us to play where we are being much more proactive and intervening where there are signs the market is failing our people.’

Ms Ardern’s shift in economic policy may put further tension on the relationship between the Australian and New Zealand governments, given that the administration of Malcolm Turnbull is attempting to pursue a more classically free-market agenda.

Jackson Stiles, ‘Capitalism has failed’: Jacinda Ardern signals a major economic policy shift’, *The New Daily*, 22 October 2017

B ‘For the many, not the few’: Jeremy Corbyn addresses the British Labour Party, 27 September 2017

Now is the time that government took a more active role in restructuring our economy. Now is the time that corporate boardrooms were held accountable for their actions. And now is the time that we developed a new model of economic management to replace the failed dogmas of neo-liberalism ... That is why Labour is looking not just to repair the damage done by austerity but to transform our economy with a new and dynamic role for the public sector particularly where the private sector has evidently failed.... This is central to our socialism for the twenty-first century, for the many not the few.

Jeremy Corbyn, keynote speech to the British Labour Party Conference, 27 September 2017

Responding to the sources

1. What criticisms are being made of the capitalist system by both Ardern and Corbyn?
2. What do they propose is the solution to these failures?
3. Why might it be particularly difficult for political leaders to implement policies like these in modern Western capitalist societies?
4. Do you think statements like these are likely to have widespread appeal today? Explain your response.

Have we reached 'the end of history'?

In 1993, in the wake of the collapse of the USSR, Francis Fukuyama wrote his bestseller *The End of History and the Last Man*. He extended the Marxist/Hegelian concept of history as a 'dialectal struggle' between competing forces. Marx had predicted that the classless society that emerged from the struggle between exploitative capitalism and the oppressed proletariat would be the final stage in the dialectic. But Fukuyama claimed that an ensuing dialectic was between state communism (as in the USSR and China) and free market, democratic capitalism (as in the USA and similar countries). With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR, Fukuyama claimed that there was no longer a dialectical struggle – and therefore we had reached the end of history. He claimed that all states – including former Soviet states – were being incorporated within the free market, global economy, and would also become more democratic as time passed. Developments in Eastern Europe and even in China seemed to support that thesis. Fukuyama later revised his thesis, acknowledging that there were new dialectics emerging in the world – for example, between the people who benefit from the new globalised, free-market economy and those who are disadvantaged. More recently, the struggle between Western democracies and rising Islamist forces has been portrayed as a new dialectic. Samuel Huntington proposed a thesis along those lines in his in his controversial 1996 book *The Clash of Civilisations*.

- ◆ Do other items in this concluding study suggest the existence of a 'dialectical struggle' in today's world – for example, global wealth; Occupy Wall Street; the ideas of Jacinda Ardern and Jeremy Corbyn?

ACTIVITY 5.12

Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four

George Orwell's short novel *Animal Farm* is an allegorical account of the Russian Revolution. Read it and see if you can identify the characters and events that are represented in the story. Do you think these are accurate depictions? What were Orwell's political beliefs? What might have been Orwell's purpose in writing this story? Orwell also wrote the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in which the main character struggles to resist the oppression of a Stalinist-like state. Find out what it has to say and why it was important.

ACTIVITY 5.13

Communism around the world

Since the Russian Revolution over 20 countries have had communist governments at some point, mostly since 1945. However, the only communist countries today (based on Marxist-Leninist ideas) are China, Laos, Vietnam and Cuba. North Korea is also a communist state, but it has its own ideology based on loyalty to its founder Kim Il-sung and his successors.

ACTIVITY 5.13 continued

1. Locate these countries on a map.
2. Research how these countries became communist. What events were involved? What successes and struggles did they face? What roles did individuals play?

For decades after the Russian Revolution, governments in developed Western countries including the USA, Britain and Australia were afraid of communist revolutions occurring. Why did this never happen? To what extent were communist or socialist ideas adopted or influential in these countries?

ACTIVITY 5.14

Take a position on an attitude scale

This chapter introduced the socialist concept of a society based on equality of outcome. That is quite different from modern societies around the world, including Australian society. Recently, as this chapter points out, socialist ideas have been put forward increasingly by some prominent politicians.

Look at the attitude scale found below and choose a point on the scale. Think about why you chose that point. Next, find a classmate who chose a quite different position. Discuss your choices and your reasons. Then join a class discussion of this topic.

The best society is one based on **equality of opportunity**, which values individual freedom, competition, attainment and reward. This results in different classes in terms of wealth, status, material well-being, access to services, and influence.

The best society is one based on **equality of outcome**, which values dignity, cooperation and community. All people are essentially the same in terms of wealth, status, material well-being, access to services, and influence.

.....
strongly agree

agree

not sure

agree

strongly agree

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Contextual study: The road to revolution

- For centuries Russia was ruled by strong autocratic rulers, known as Tsars.
- Living conditions for most people in Russia were very difficult.
- In January 1905 thousands of protesters in St Petersburg, organised by Father George Gapon, were fired upon by soldiers.
- In the October Manifesto of 1905, Nicholas II promised greater rights to citizens, but in the ensuing years the Tsar failed to change his autocratic approach significantly.

Depth study: To what extent were the ideals of the Russian Revolution achieved?

- There was initial Russian patriotism when World War I broke out.
- In February 1917, there were mutinies in the military, and riots in the civilian population.
- Nicholas II abdicated and the Provisional Government, formed by members of the Duma, was in charge.
- Soldiers and workers formed the Petrograd Soviet.
- In March 1917, Lenin and other Bolshevik revolutionaries returned to Russia.
- Lenin and Trotsky (chairman of Petrograd Soviet) led the October Revolution with a coup in Petrograd.
- Lenin introduced repressive measures against political opposition, led land and social reform, and withdrew Russia from World War I.
- Capitalist governments of other countries tried, unsuccessfully, to challenge the Bolshevik regime.
- There was conflict between the Reds (Trotsky's Red Army) and the Whites (traditional conservative forces).
- A policy of Red Terror was implemented, where any perceived enemy of the state could be arrested or executed without trial.
- War Communism was a policy that directed all economic production towards serving the revolution's survival in the civil war.
- In 1922, Lenin established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, or Soviet Union).
- Lenin died in 1924; he had wanted Trotsky to succeed him, but Stalin took over, and created a totalitarian dictatorship.
- Stalin introduced a series of Five-Year Plans, which saw the end of private ownership, the collectivisation of peasant farms, and increases in industrial output and electrification.
- The standard of living had improved from 1917, but the Marxist goal of a classless society was never attained.

Concluding study: The legacy of the Russian Revolution

- The term Iron Curtain referred to the division between Western Europe and the Soviet-controlled states to the east.
- In 1985 Gorbachev introduced *perestroika* (encouraging private enterprise) and *glasnost* (which allowed open criticism of the government).
- In 1989 communist regimes in many countries behind the Iron Curtain were overthrown in revolutions, symbolised particularly by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany.
- In December 1991 Gorbachev resigned, and the Soviet Union officially ceased to exist.
- Vladimir Putin has been the Russian leader since 2000. The economy and standard of living have improved, but Putin has been criticised on human rights grounds, and Russia has become strongly nationalistic.
- Since the end of the Cold War, living standards in most Western democracies have generally risen enough to prevent serious questioning of the capitalist system. However, the attraction of socialism has not entirely disappeared.

GO

Review questions, QCAA-style assessments and recommended reading are available as downloadable Word files.

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