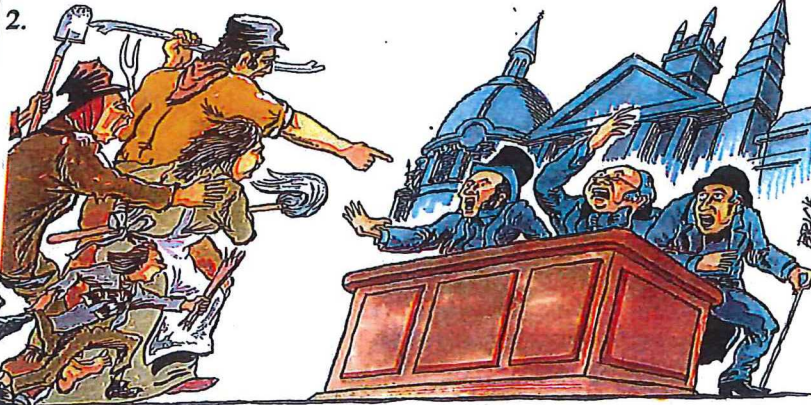
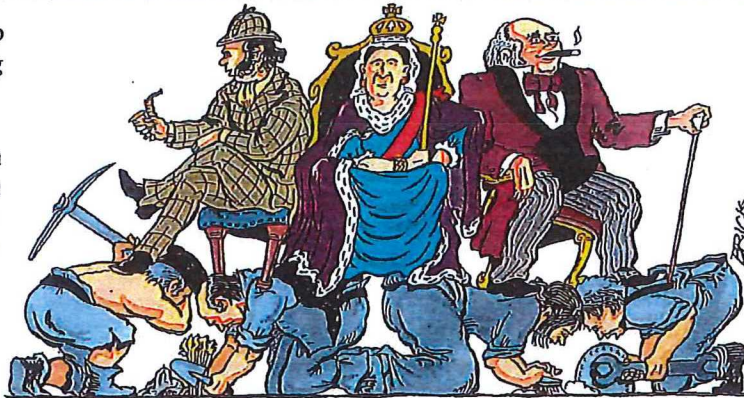


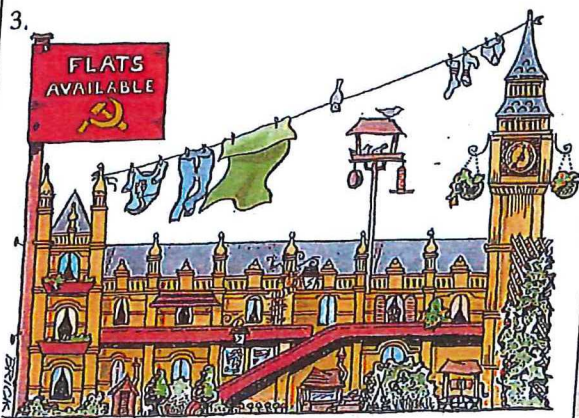
The world according to Karl Marx

Communism was the idea of Karl Marx (1818-83). He believed that one day everybody in the whole world would be a Communist. This page shows what he meant by this.

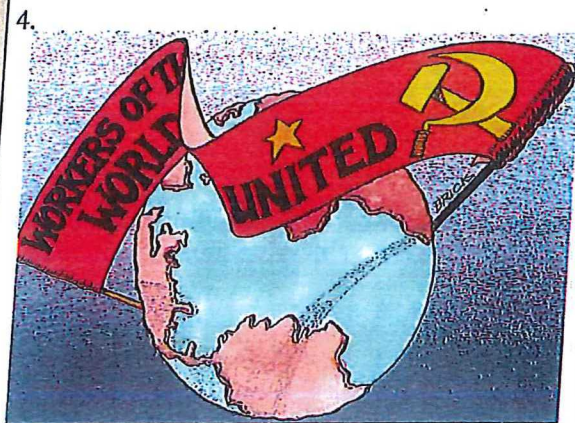
1. Industrial society is divided into two main groups. At the top is the 'ruling class' - people who own businesses and the land. At the bottom is the 'working class' - people who work in factories and on the land. In time, the workers become fed up because they remain poor no matter how hard they work. The ruling class has money and power but refuses to share them with the workers.



Eventually, the workers become so fed up that they start a revolution. Its aim is to make things more equal. Money and power are to be shared between everybody. Different classes will no longer exist. There are two phases in the revolution. First the workers take control of government and work out how best to share out money and power.



Second, as things become more equal, there is no need for government. People share things without being told to do so. This is Communism.



A successful revolution in one country leads to revolutions in other countries. The result is a world revolution followed by world Communism.

The Russian revolution

Until 1917 Russia was ruled by the Tsar, a monarch with absolute power. Supporters of the Tsar claimed that he was a ruler chosen by God and was the 'little father of the people'.

In the early 20th century opponents of Tsarist rule began to question his right to rule. After Russia was defeated in a war against Japan in 1905, there were demonstrations and it seemed that the Tsar would be overthrown. The Tsar avoided this by promising to set up a Parliament.

Although a Parliament was set up, the Tsar refused to listen to its demands. This soon led to discontent. Opponents claimed that the Tsar was out of touch, uncaring and unable to understand the problems of ordinary people. When the First World War broke out in 1914 the Tsar hoped that success in the war would bring him popularity. In fact the war led to revolution and his downfall.

Source B The Tsar



The last Tsar, Nicholas II

The Tsar is the source of all our misfortunes. He is incapable of steering the ship of state into a quiet harbour. This is what he thinks, 'I do as I please and what I please is good. If ordinary people do not understand it, that is because they are ordinary mortals whereas I was appointed by God.'

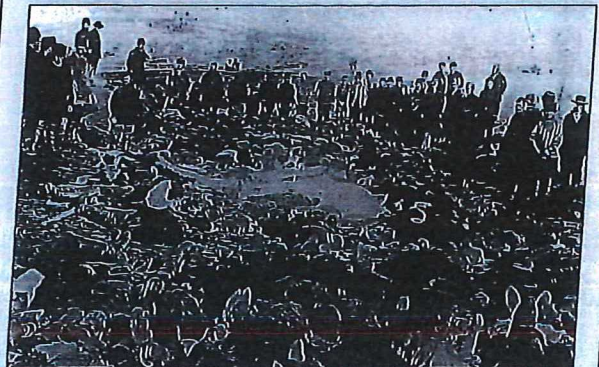
Witte, the Tsar's Finance Minister between 1892 and 1903

Source A The peasants



The majority of Russians were poor peasants. This picture shows how poor they were. These peasants do not have enough food for their animals, so they are feeding them with thatch off their roof. Many peasants wanted to own enough land to feed their family and animals properly. But most land was owned by rich aristocrats who lived off the rents paid by the peasants.

Source C The workers



Industrialisation began much later in Russia than in Western Europe. Working conditions in new industrial towns were hard. Pay was very low. Although strikes and demonstrations were illegal, they often took place. The result of one strike is shown above. The strikers were shot by the Tsar's soldiers. This made many workers bitter.

Number of strikes 1910-17

1910	8	1914* (Aug-Dec)	61
1911	24	1915	819
1912	300	1916	1167
1913	1034	1917	1330
1914* (Jan-July)	1560		

* Russia entered the war in August 1914.

Before the First World War the Tsar had been able to rely on the support of the army. The soldiers obeyed the Tsar even if he ordered them to shoot demonstrators. But when the First World War broke out, many new soldiers were recruited. Most were peasants. At first these soldiers remained loyal. But soon things began to go wrong. The German soldiers were better equipped and trained than the Russians. The Russian army was defeated in several battles. In 1915 the Tsar made the decision to take command of the army personally. As a result he was blamed for Russia's defeats. By 1917 many soldiers were no longer prepared to obey him.

Source D Russia and World War I



Russian soldiers deserting

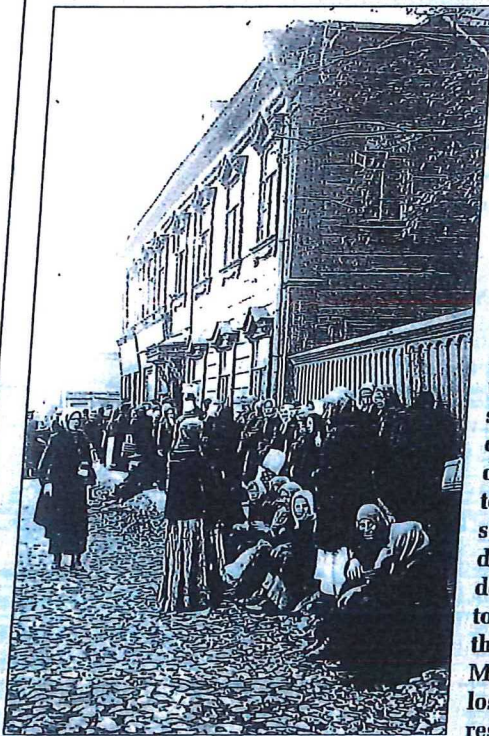
Size of army		Casualties by 1917	
1913	1.4 million	Dead	0.8 million
1914	6.5 million	Wounded	4.6 million
1917	15.4 million	Captured	3.3 million

In December 1914 Russia had 4.7 million rifles to issue to 6.5 million soldiers on the front line.

The close relations between the factory workers of Petrograd (capital of Russia) and the army is disturbing, not to say revolutionary. There is a high cost of living and a shortage of foodstuffs in the towns. The soldiers' wives are the first to suffer. This is made known to the army by soldiers returning from leave.

Police Department Report, October 1916

Source E The February revolution



Women queuing for bread in Petrograd, 1917

On February 23rd 1917, International Women's Day, women in Petrograd demonstrated about food shortages. Workers went on strike and joined them. Over the next week the demonstration turned into a revolution. When the Tsar ordered soldiers to shoot the demonstrators, some did but most refused to open fire. Many soldiers joined the demonstrators in demanding an end to Tsarist rule. By the beginning of March the Tsar had lost control. He resigned.

Activities

- Using the sources on these pages make a list of reasons why there was a revolution in Russia in February 1917.
 - Would you describe each reason as 'short term' or 'long term'? Explain your answers.
- What evidence is there in Sources A and C to support Witte's view of the Tsar in Source B?
- Using Sources C, D and E describe the impact of World War I on Russia.
- Suppose you were a Russian soldier who disobeyed orders in February 1917 (Source E). Write a letter to the Tsar explaining what you did and why.

Communist victory, October 1917

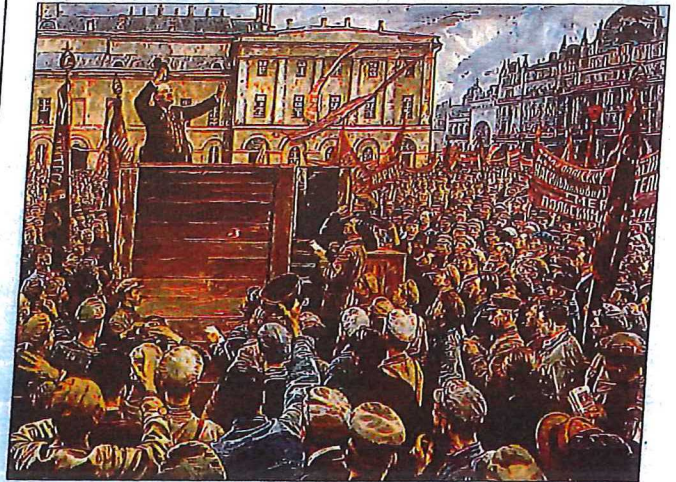
The February revolution was not planned. It happened because enough people (especially soldiers) were so fed up with the Tsar that they were able to force him to resign. Without the support of his soldiers the Tsar had no power. Although the revolution was not planned, many groups had been working for revolution for many years. One of these groups was the Communist Party (set up in 1898). Although the Tsar had banned the Party, Communists met in secret and continued to spread the ideas of Karl Marx (see Focus). When war broke out in 1914 the Communist Party was the only group to argue that Russia should not join in. By 1917, after Russia's defeats, this policy was very popular.

After the February revolution a group of unelected politicians announced that they had formed a 'provisional government' which would take charge until a new political system could be agreed upon. The Communists were the only group to oppose the provisional government. Between May and October support for the Communists grew rapidly. By October they were able to overthrow the provisional government and set up a new Communist government. This is known as the 'October revolution'.

Activities

1. Look at the sources on this page.
 - a) Why did the Communists gain support after February 1917?
 - b) Why was there a second revolution in October 1917?
 - c) How did the second revolution differ from the first?
2. Use the Focus and sources on this page to explain the aims of the Communists after February 1917.

Source A Lenin



In May 1917 the leader of the Communists, Lenin, returned from exile. This picture shows him arriving in Petrograd. On his arrival he made a speech calling for a second revolution and promising 'peace, bread and land'.

Source B The provisional government

Promises after February revolution

1. To end the war.
2. To solve food shortages.
3. To hold elections.
4. To give land to the peasants.

Actions by October

1. The war continued. No peace was made.
2. Food shortages continued.
3. No elections were held.
4. No land was given to the peasants.

Source C The October revolution

On October 24th armed Communists marched to the headquarters of the provisional government, arrested members of the government and set up a new government. During the next few weeks the following actions were taken.

1. The war with Germany was ended and a peace treaty made.
2. Soldiers were sent to find food and bring it to the towns.
3. Peasants were given ownership of land.
4. The death penalty was abolished.
5. Women were given equal rights to men.
6. The workers were given control of factories.
7. All political parties (except the Communist Party) were banned.
8. Newspapers opposed to the Communists were banned.

The 'Red' threat

Although the Communists had the support of many people when they seized power in October 1917, they also had many opponents. Some opponents supported the Tsar or the provisional government. Some supported other political parties. The Communists became known as the 'Reds' (because of the colour of their flag). Their opponents became known as the 'Whites' (because most came from an area known as 'White Russia').

In March 1918 the Communists signed a peace treaty with Germany. This meant the end of Russia's involvement in the First World War. But it did not mean an end to fighting in Russia. The Whites took up arms against the Reds in 1918 and a civil war began. It was won by the Communists in 1922.

Britain, France, the USA and Japan all sent soldiers to help the Whites. They did this because they were angry that the Communists had made peace with Germany and because they were scared that the Russian revolution would spread to other countries.

Source A Attempted revolutions 1918-23



Distribution of guns to German Communists during the attempted revolution in November 1918

After October 1917 Russian Communist leaders sent letters to Communists in other countries urging them to overthrow their governments. Between 1918 and 1923 there were attempted revolutions in Germany, Hungary, Italy and Bulgaria. All failed because soldiers refused to join the revolution.

Source B

Communists everywhere! Support every revolutionary movement. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. **WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES UNITE!**

K. Marx and F. Engels, 'The Communist Manifesto', 1872

The world Communist revolution has begun.

Pravda (the Russian Communist newspaper), January 1919

Source C Comintern



In 1919 Comintern (Communist International) was set up by the Russian Communists to encourage world revolution. Comintern gave money to Communist Parties abroad and provided arms and advisers. This poster was produced by Comintern in 1920.

Activities

1. Look at the Focus and the sources on this page.
 - a) Explain why foreign governments were scared that the Russian revolution would spread to other countries.
 - b) Explain why foreign governments sent soldiers to Russia to fight against the Communists in the civil war.
 - c) Suppose that you were one of the Russian Communist leaders in 1917. Write one of the letters mentioned in Source A. Explain in your letter what you hope to achieve.

