

The Russian Revolution, 1905-1945

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This eight week course traces one of the defining events of the 20th century . . . The Russian Revolution. The journey will commence with Marx's and Engel's *Communist Manifesto*, culminating with Stalin's Russia and the Soviets as one of two big winners of the Great War[1] in 1945. Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and others will be profiled along the way. Central will be the course of the Revolution, from 1905, through 1917, the Civil War, then Stalin's revolution. Objective is to foster a better of understanding of this cataclysmic political, economic and social transformation of a nation, in the course of which will move from a backward peasant economy to an atomic bomb.

Week 1: The Manifesto

In 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels produced a work that would eventually generate a political and economic challenge of the most explosive variety. This session will analyze this impactful book, the doctrine and the practitioners who brought the Manifesto to life . . . Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Bucharin, Zinoviev, Gorky . . .

Week 2: Revolution in Russia: January 1905-December 1917

The 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War; Father Gapon and the Winter Palace, January 1905; the Czar rebounds; Lenin and the Bolsheviks; Trotsky; World War I; 1916 summer offensive on the Eastern Front and disaster; Revolution, February 1917; Provisional Government; disastrous summer offensive; the Bolsheviks seize power, November 1917.

Week 3: Civil War, January 1918—1921

Felix Dzerzhinsky and the Cheka; the Red Army; the Peasantry; White Russians; Russo-Polish War, 1920-1921; foreign intervention; War Communism.

Week 4: The Communist Party of Bolshevik Russia

This session will focus on the organization and structure of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, later known as, the Communist Party. Included, too, will be an explanation of the party watchdog, the

Cheka; and, the COMINTERN or Communist International. Comparison will be made here with Saudi Arabia's network of madrassas and the spread of Wahhabism.

Week 5: Socialism in a Single Country

NEP; Party factionalism; Treaty of Rapallo, 1922; death of Lenin; Cult of Lenin; Trotsky vs. Stalin and the struggle for power. Stalin victorious.

Week 6: Stalin's Revolution

1927, Stalin began his program of collectivization of the peasantry in an effort to mold the Soviet Union in his image; followed, in turn, by his forced industrialization of the nation. He was preparing Mother Russia for the continuation of the 1914-1918 conflict. And he would purge the party of many of his old-line Bolsheviks with his merciless use of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the *Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh* or NKVD, forerunner of the KGB. Yet Stalin's employment of State Capitalism and draconian discipline would result in his becoming a totalitarian ruler.

Week 7: The Generalissimo

June 22, 1941, Adolf Hitler hurled 3,300,000 German troops against the Soviet Union. The greatest land war in modern times was on; a war which would decide the land campaign for the entire Second World War. A conflict which would help to see the transformation of the global dynamics of power; for the European colonial powers no longer dominated global affairs. A new balance of power arose to fill the void, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Week 8: Postscript

Postwar Soviet Union to Stalin's death, March 5, 1953. The impact of the Russian Revolution; and, lessons for today.

[1] What is generally characterized as the Great War, 1914-1918, is not. There is only one war, The Great War, 1914-1922; 1931-1945. After the Versailles Treaty, fighting continued: German Freikorps formations battled Poles and Czechs on Germany's eastern frontier; the Russian Civil War followed the Revolution; the Russo-Polish War, 1920; Syrians rose up against the French occupiers, 1919; Sunnis, Shias and Kurds rose up in newly minted Iraq against the British imperialists, 1920; with the 1919-1922 Turkish War for Independence, Kemal Ataturk's army evicted the British, French, Greek and Italian occupiers, as well as ending Kurdistan and Armenia.

In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria; Italy attacked Ethiopia in 1934. Events proceeded giving way to 1939 and the second chapter of the Great War was on. And in 1945, a war started by the European Powers in 1914 was not won by them. It was won by the United States and the Soviet Union. The globe's greatest industrialized, corporatized, commercialized war brought to an abrupt end, the dominance of the European Colonial Powers; giving way to the Cold War, dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union.