Russian Revolution Notes:

Causes of the Revolution:

The Russian involvement in the Russo-Japanese War, and its ensuing lose brought embarrassment to the country and also decimated its economy. In response to the perceived incompetence of the Russian Tsar and the shortage of food and work, the loss of the war led to the Revolution of 1905 that was quickly put down. Besides the embarrassment and perceived incompetence of the government after the Russo-Japanese war, the citizens of Russia were desperately hungry and landless. Russia relied on an agrarian economy that was outdated and inefficient.

The small farming communes had trouble providing enough food for the country, creating massive food shortages. Factory workers also had to endure long hours, low pay, and horrible working conditions. Strikes for improved situations were often ignored or suppressed.

Wartime inflation also caused prices to inflate, causing the already scarce food and goods supply to be unaffordable. Most peasants did not own the land they farmed, causing more resentment towards the government. The losses and casualties during World War I led people to believe Tsar Nicholas II was incompetent. Due to his son, Alexei’s hemophilia the questionable Rasputin was called on to heal him. Russian citizens distrusted Nicholas’s wife and Rasputin to run the country while the Tsar fought the war.

Revolution:

On February 28, 1917 Tsar Nicholas II was asked to abdicate the throne. A provisional government took over, led by Alexander Kerensky. The new government supported the war, upsetting the army and the country. Kerensky ordered the arrest of the Bolshevik party, for its anti-war protests. Lenin led the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution under the slogans “Peace, Land, Bread!” and “All power to the Soviets!”

Lenin was elected the head of the Bolshevik party and led the new Russian government through a civil war against all of its anti-communist enemies. The Reds, or Bolsheviks, defeated the Whites, or anti-communists.
Lenin’s New Economic Plan (NEP):

Lenin wanted to accomplish specific goals with his NEP. They were:
- Reduce mandatory food offerings from peasants
- Regulate supply and production (limited capitalism)
- Generate money to industrialize
- Secure Russia for communism

Stalin:

Stalin rose to power through the use of political alliances to pit his enemies against each other. He would align with one group to discredit another, and then separate himself from that group to discredit it. Stalin became the head of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in 1928. He believed in “Communism in one country,” instead of Lenin’s idea to spread communism abroad. He changed Lenin’s NEP to his own Five-Year Plan that designated the desired goals for the Russian economy for the next five years.