Modern History

Unit 3 – Modern nations in the 20th century
Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–1945
(World War I to the end of World War II)

Background Briefing (Week 5-8)

Topics to Cover:

- Overview of Russia in 1914 as background;
- Ideas – autocracy, Marxism, communism;
- Different experiences of individuals and groups – nobility, clergy, peasants, factory workers;
- Methods used to control them; and
- Role and impact of significant individuals – political, military, social/cultural leaders Nicholas II; Tsarina Alexandria; Rasputin; Marx; Lenin; Trotsky; Stalin; Kerensky.
NOTE:

Dates
Before 1918 Russia operated under the Julian calendar. This was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the rest of Europe (beginning in 1582). This does create confusion in texts as different dates are used for the same event.

For example with reference to the two revolutions of 1917;
- The first revolution of 1917 took place between 23 and 27 February under the Julian calendar OR 8-12 March using the Gregorian calendar.
- The second revolution of 1917 took place on 26 October according to the old calendar and 7 November using the modern calendar.

The Communists changed to the modern calendar in 1918.

Capital City
In the early 18 century the Russian capital city was established at St Petersburg on the Baltic Sea. After 1914 it was called by its Russian form Petrograd (to remove the German elements from the name) and 1924 renamed Leningrad (five days after Lenin’s death) and the name became St Petersburg again in 1991.

Task 1
Refer to the Unit 3 description and identify the key points to be covered.

Task 2
With reference to the map of Russia and p 12 in Webb list the characteristics of Russia’s geography and identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Task 3
Use the information on pp 14-15 in Webb and in Source 1.3 in this handout to create a Table summarising the Russian social structure at the beginning of the period.

Task 4
Identify the key features of Autocracy (below) and how the Tsar was able to maintain power (Source 1.11 on p. 22 in Webb).
- A system of government in which the supreme political power is concentrated in the hands of one person; the government or power of an absolute monarch.
- An autocrat needs some type of power structure to rule.
- Rely on their own personality and support from the nobles, military and priesthood to rule.
- The Romanov dynasty had progressed for 300 years based around a ruler who had complete autocratic authority over the nation.
- Implemented with a complex web of competing government, administrative, police and religious organisations.
- Even the social structure was designed to support tsarism.
- Opposition to tsarism had grown in the late 1880s and became prominent in the early 1900s through adoption of Marxist ideas by Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionary Parties.
Learning trouble spot

It is difficult to determine the size of social classes in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century. The 1897 census looks at ‘social estates’, not classes. There is no category for middle classes. The ‘merchants and honoured citizens’ category comes nearest, only 0.5 per cent of the population. The ‘urbanites’ category comprised tradesmen, shopkeepers, white collar workers and artisans. Similarly, there is no category for industrial workers. About 7 per cent of peasants lived in the towns but not all of these were factory workers. The ‘others’ category covers much of the population of Russian Central Asia. The Cossacks were categorised separately.

The social structure of tsarist Russia

The most noticeable features of Russian society at the end of the nineteenth century were the high proportion of the population, almost 80 per cent, who were peasants and the small proportion in the professional and merchant classes. The absence of a significant middle class played an important part in the development of Russia during the early twentieth century. Tsarist Russia operated a rigid social hierarchy with the royal family and nobles at the top and the peasants and workers at the bottom. Chart 1B gives some idea of the character of these different groups.
Task 5
(i) Research a definition for each of the following key terms: liberalism, socialism, Marxism and communism.
(ii) Refer to the diagram and information below and explain ‘Marx’s stages of history’.
Chart Marx's view of history. A simplified view

Stage 1. PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM
- Political: No government.
- Society: No classes. Very few commodities.

As the later nostalgic radical song claimed: 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?'

Stage 2. FEUDALISM
- Political: Some form of monarchy; usually absolute.

(Growth of trade, commerce enlarges middle class who eventually seek power to reshape society and government to give them freedom to develop their talents further.)

Stage 3. CAPITALISM
- Political: Parliamentary democracy; defending bourgeois liberal principles.
- Society: Dominant social group: Middle class (especially industrialists).

(Industry expands dramatically, thus enlarging the proletariat, the eventual 'grave-diggers' of capitalism. Capitalism produces great wealth and material goods but they are unfairly allocated, and the workers are exploited.)

Stage 4. SOCIALISM
- Political: Workers control the state to resist counter-revolution. 'Dictatorship of the proletariat'. As the threat diminished, so state becomes less powerful.
- Society: Becoming more equal, and class system breaking down. Wealth, goods created under capitalism now fairly distributed.

Lenin

Problems of Applying Marxism to Early Twentieth Century Russia
- Russia an example of 'uneven and combined development' (Trotsky), ie, a mixture of traditional feudal, and imported advanced elements, ie, politically still autocratic with powerful aristocracy and impoverished peasant masses, but rapid industrialisation created a growing proletariat. This did not fit into orthodox Marxist schema.
- Mass of population still peasants, a group which Marx did not consider important (as irrelevant to the socialist revolution).
- Russian bourgeoisie had not developed strongly enough to carry through the bourgeoisie revolution. They might also be frightened by the presence of a socialist-inclined proletariat, and thus be prepared to compromise with the autocracy (as the Octoberists did during the 1905 Revolution).

Lenin's Adaptation of Marxism to Russian Conditions
- Need small, disciplined party of professional revolutionaries to develop socialist consciousness in proletariat. Key issue causing split with Mensheviks 1903.
- 'Bourgeois revolution' had to be carried out by the proletariat, assisted by poor peasants, rather than by the bourgeoisie itself. Ideals developed by Lenin as a result of the experience of 1905. Trotsky developed a similar idea.
- Workers take control after they have carried out the 'bourgeois revolution', and gradually move towards socialism (with the help of foreign socialist countries).
- ie, workers should attempt to seize power, and not just wait for the bourgeoisie to accomplish the 'bourgeois revolution', the orthodox Marxist line, retained by Mensheviks.

These ideas were gradually developed by Lenin. The Bolsheviks only fully adopted them in the months before the October 1917 Revolution, which was inspired by them.
**Task 6**
Examine the revolutionary party’s below and summarise the key features of each one.

![Graph showing revolutionary parties](image)

**Task 7**
Briefly explain the role and impact of each of the following at the beginning of the period: Nicholas II; Tsarina Alexandria; Rasputin; Marx; Lenin (refer to following page); Trotsky; Stalin; Kerensky.

**Task 8**
Complete source analysis questions referring to the marking key attached.
Leadership profile – Vladimir Lenin

Portrait of a revolutionary

1870–89

- Born into a middle-class family in the province of Kazan in 1870 as Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov.
- Excelling throughout high school, with one report card reading ‘Quite talented, invariably diligent, prompt and reliable’.
- Revolutionary impulses developed after brother hanged in 1887 for assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander III.
- Was on the Tsar’s list of ‘dangerous persons’ from the age of 17 onwards.
- Managed the family farm in Samara from 1889, where he once successfully sued the neighbouring peasant family for letting their cattle walk over his crops.
- Was officially reported to the Ministry of Education while at Kazan University for ‘secretiveness, inattention and impoliteness’.
- Graduated as a lawyer.

1890–99

- Avid reading of Marx had turned him into a committed Marxist revolutionary.
- During the 1891–92 famine he was not in favour of providing aid, hoping it would ‘cause the peasant to reflect on the fundamental facts of capitalist society’ and ‘destroy his faith in the Tsar’.
- Did only two years’ paid work, 1892–94, as an assistant to a barrister. Lived off his mother’s pension, a party salary, and private supporters. Writings and newspapers brought only meagre income.

- Arrested in St Petersburg for ‘subversive activity’ in 1895.
- Exile to Siberia, 1895–99, provided the opportunity to study and write.
- Adopted the pen name ‘Lenin’ (the most famous of his 160 revolutionary aliases).
- Met and married Nadezhda Krupskaya in Siberia in July 1898, but had no children with her.

1900–09

- Released from exile in 1900 and began revolutionary newspaper called Iskra, meaning ‘Spark’, taken from a phrase used by the Decembrists of 1825, ‘a spark will start a big blaze’.
- Published What is to be done? in 1902.
- Led the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democratic Party in 1903.
- Played no role in the 1905 Revolution and only returned to St Petersburg in December.
- Exiled again from 1906 through to 1917.

1910–17

- Began a relationship with the young and enthusiastic Inessa Armand in Paris from 1910, forming an accepted trio with Lenin’s wife.
- Began a daily newspaper called Pravda, meaning ‘Truth’ in 1912.
- Badly shaken by his mother’s death in July 1916.
- Returned to Petrograd in April 1917 after the February Revolution and then initiated the Bolshevik takeover of October 1917.
Unit 3 – Modern nations in the 20th century

Unit description

This unit examines the characteristics of modern nations in the 20th century; the crises that confronted nations, their responses to these crises and the different paths nations have taken to fulfil their goals. Students study the characteristics of one nation. Students investigate crises that challenged the stability of government, the path of development that was taken and the social, economic and political order that was either established or maintained. Students examine the ways in which the nation dealt with internal divisions and external threats. They emerge with a deeper understanding of the character of a modern nation. The key conceptual understandings covered in this unit are the reliability and usefulness of evidence; cause and effect; continuity and change; significance; empathy; contestability; and changing representations and interpretations.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this unit, students:

- understand the characteristics of modern nations, the internal divisions and external threats that they encountered, and the different experiences of individuals and groups within those nations;
- understand the significance of the changes experienced by modern nations and the different paths of development they have taken;
- apply key concepts as part of an historical inquiry, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy, perspectives and contestability; and
- use historical skills to investigate the history of selected nations, frame questions for research, determine the reliability and usefulness of sources and evidence, explore different interpretations of the past, and use a range of evidence to analyse interpretations and representations, and communicate historical arguments.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below. This is the examinable content.

Historical Skills

The following skills will be developed during this unit.

Chronology, terms and concepts:

- identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, continuity and change over time; and
- use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding.
Historical questions and research:
• formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues;
• frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry;
• identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of primary and secondary sources; and
• practise ethical scholarship when conducting research.

Analysis and use of sources:
• identify the origin, purpose and context of historical sources;
• analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an historical argument; and
• evaluate the reliability, usefulness and contestable nature of sources to develop informed judgements that support an historical argument.

Perspectives and interpretations:
• analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past
• evaluate critically different historical interpretations of the past, how they evolved, and how they are shaped by the historian’s perspective
• evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions

Explanation and communication:
• develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to support and refute arguments;
• communicate historical understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to the purpose and audience; and
• apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding:
Students study one of the following electives, which is to be taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.
• Australia 1918–1955 (the end of World War I to the ALP Split)
• Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–1945 (World War I to the end of World War II)
• China 1935–1989 (the Long March to the Tiananmen Massacre)

The impact of the following forces should be considered, where appropriate, throughout the unit:
• economic
• external forces/international relations
• ideas
• leadership
• political
• social/cultural.
Elective 2: Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–1945 (World War I to the end of World War II):

- an overview of Russia in 1914 as background for more intensive study of the period;
- the significant ideas of the period, including autocracy, Marxism, communism, Leninism, Stalinism, and collectivisation;
- the internal divisions and crises within Russian society, including the impact of World War I; the causes, events and outcomes of the February and October Revolutions in 1917;
- the initial reforms and decrees of the Bolsheviks; the opposition to the Bolsheviks; the Brest-Litovsk Treaty; the civil war and the reasons for the Bolshevik victory;
- the significance of the struggle of Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky for power and the reasons for the success of Stalin;
- the changes that transformed Russia, including War Communism; the New Economic Policy; the creation of the USSR; the Five Year Plans and how they contributed to state control of the economy, forced rural collectivisation, state-created famine and the modernisation of the Soviet Union;
- the social/cultural impact of Bolshevism and Stalin’s Cultural Revolution to 1945, including women, nationalities, youth and education (Komsomol), the arts (including Social Realism) and religion;
- the different experiences of individuals and groups in the period to 1945, including nobility, the clergy, peasants and factory workers; and the methods the regime employed to control them, including mobilisation and propaganda, repression, the Purges and the Great Terror;
- the impact of World War II and the methods that enabled the USSR to secure victory; and
- the role and impact of significant individuals in the period, including political, military and social/cultural leaders.
Source Analysis Question #1

Note: Need to refer to relevant supporting evidence from the sources.

(a) Compare and contrast the messages of Sources 1 and 2. (4 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference to the messages in Source 1 and Source 2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of comparison of the message(s) in Source 1 and Source 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of contrast of the message in Source 1 and Source 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
Look for the message of each of the sources. Evidence should be sourced from the documents themselves to support the message.

(b) Evaluate the usefulness, in terms of strengths and weaknesses, of Sources 1 and 2 as representations of ? (5 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide an example of a strength and weakness of Source 1 as a representation of ?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an example of a strength and weakness of Source 2 as a representation of ?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the usefulness of the sources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
Higher marks should be awarded to candidates who look at both the strengths and weaknesses of the sources provided in terms of how they represent ?

(c) Explain the historical context of Source 3. (4 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the focus of the source</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline the causes or events that led to the focus of the source</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide specific details for the focus of the source, Dates/events/people/places/ideas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
This question is concerned with the historical context in which the source is located. The answer must concentrate on what is in the source and relevance/significance.
(d) Identify and account for the authors’ perspectives in Sources 3 and 4 regarding ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of the perspective of Source 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of the perspective of Source 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of the perspectives in relation to the question asked.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This may include discussion of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bias</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
The last part of the question ‘regarding’. Students must consider the perspectives of the sources in terms of the theme/force of the document study.
To do this:
• Articulate the perspectives from which the sources were constructed or analyse reasons for the perspective (purpose/motive/place/and time)
• Use evidence of the perspective from the source
• Identify how the author shows the perspective in the source

(e) Evaluate the extent to which the four sources give an accurate insight into the significance of ? in the USA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of the different aspects of ? that are shown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of aspects of ? that have been omitted</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the extent to which the sources reflect ?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
The intent is not to have a list of what has been omitted, rather students need to focus on what the documents tell them about ? in the context studied and why it may have been significant to highlight that. Students should include their own knowledge of the source studied to support their point of view as well as the sources provided.
Source Analysis Question #2

Note: Need to refer to relevant supporting evidence from the sources.

(a) Explain the historical context of Source 1. Include relevant events, people and ideas depicted or represented in the source. (4 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the focus of the source</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline the causes or event that led to the focus of the source</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides specific details of the focus of the source, events/people/ideas/dates/places</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This question is concerned with the historical context in which the source is located. The answer must focus on what is in the source, and provide the surrounding 'picture' for that source.

(b) Compare and contrast the purpose of Source 1 and 2. (5 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of the purpose of source 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of the purpose of source 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of elements of comparison and contrast between the two sources</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This question focuses on the reasons for the construction of the sources, and what they hope to achieve. You need to:
- Identify the issue/event/subject of each source
- Identify the message of the sources
- Identify the likely purpose for which the source was constructed (or, in the case of a photograph, how the source might have been used)
- Use evidence from the source to support the response

Explain how they compare (are similar) and contrast (are different) in terms of their purpose

A strong answer will integrate their comparisons and contrasts with the discussion of their purpose
(c) Explain the message of Source 3.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explains the message of the source</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlines the message of the source</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies an aspect of the message of the source</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

*Look for the message of the source.*

**To do this:**
- Read all the elements of the source (title/author/date/location)
- Identify the issue/event/subject
- Identify the representation or opinion being expressed
- Provide evidence from the source to support the response

(d) Identify how and discuss why Sources 3 and 4 are contestable.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of element/s of contestability for source 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of the reasons for that contestability</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of element/s of contestability for source 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of the reasons for that contestability</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

*Need to*
- Demonstrate an understanding on what can make a source contestable, whether it provides a certain interpretation of events for which other interpretations exist; or whether the type of source provides an incomplete or suggestive picture which can be disputed.

*Need to identify in each source argument/s, biases or perspectives that can be disputed*  
*They then need to articulate the nature of that dispute by referring to alternative arguments or viewpoints on that aspect*
(e) Using your knowledge for the whole period of study, evaluate the importance of the themes, ideas and/or events represented in the four sources.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of the themes/ideas/events</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement of the themes/ideas/events with the themes/issues/events of the broader historical context of the time. Need to demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge of the time period</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the themes/ideas/events in relation to those of the broader historical context</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare and/or contrast what is in the sources with the other themes/ideas/events of the time period</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
1. This question does not require reiteration of the messages in the sources
2. Evaluate the importance of the theme/idea/event in relation to how they are represented in the sources, relates to the other themes/ideas/events of the whole period.

**To do this:**
- Identify the themes/ideas/events in the sources
- Evaluate the importance of what is shown in the sources by using evidence from the sources and the whole historical period
- Refer to the long and/or short term effects of the theme/idea/event
- Need to demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge for the whole period.

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