



Summary

Russia experienced an incredible amount of changes in the 20th Century, with 3 revolutions, 2 world wars and 1 civil war. In the early 1900s, Tsar Nicholas II ruled with absolute power but lacked the strength/skill of earlier Tsars. He was forced to abdicate in the 1917 February Revolution, and the Provisional Government briefly took its place. Russia was briefly a democratic country until Lenin and the Bolsheviks took over in the 1917 October Revolution. A brutal civil war was fought between 1918-21, ending in Communist victory, and Russia became known as the USSR/Soviet Union. When Stalin became the leader in 1924, he made massive changes to farming with collectivisation, and industry with his Five Year Plans. He ruthlessly crushed any opposition within the USSR, sending millions to gulags. However, his changes are a crucial reason why the USSR was able to succeed in

Key Figures

Tsar Nicholas II	Nicholas Romanov was the last of the Russia Tsars. Lenin ordered the execution of Nicholas, his wife and their five children during the Civil War so they couldn't be used as leaders to unite against the Communists.
Vladimir Lenin	Lenin was the leader of the Communists during the October Revolution, and became the first Communist ruler of the USSR after winning the Russian Civil War. His body is still proudly displayed in Moscow.
Joseph Stalin	Joseph Djugashvili took the name 'Stalin' which means 'Man of Steel'. He removed all possible opposition to him across the USSR, and made massive changes to the country. He has often been called 'the Red Tsar'.

Other Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zshp2p3/revision/1>

1894 Nicholas becomes Tsar.	1905 An attempted revolution ends with minor reforms.	1914-1919 World War I. Russia suffers heavy losses.	1917 February Revolution; fall of the Tsars.	1917 October Revolution; fall of the Provisional Government.	1918-1921 The Russian Civil War ends with Communist victory. Russia becomes the USSR/Soviet Union.	1924 Lenin dies and is replaced by Stalin.	1928 Start of the Five Year Plans	1936-8 The Great Purge	1939-45 World War II.	1953 Stalin dies and is replaced by Khrushchev.
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TIMELINE



Key Vocabulary

Tsar	Title of the Russian emperor (like King or Kaiser)
Secret Police	Police that work to prevent political opposition to the government, rather than to prevent crime. They often use kidnappings, torture or executions. Nicholas, Lenin and Stalin all used these.
Provisional Government	Provisional means temporary. After the February Revolution, a group of politicians tried to make Russia a democratic country.
Democracy	A government chosen by the people through elections.
Dictatorship	A government where one person holds complete power.
Capitalism	An economy where businesses can be run for private profit.
Communism	An economy where the government controls all businesses.
Bolsheviks	The original name of Lenin's Communist Party.
Russian Civil War 1918-21	A war fought between the Reds (Communists) and the Whites (a mixture of democrats, Tsarists and foreign help from the West).
Five Year Plans	Stalin's plan to massively boost the USSR's economy by creating thousands of factories, mines and power plants.
Collectivisation	Stalin's plan to change farming from individual farms to large collectives run by the government. This caused mass starvation.
Purges	Purging opponents means to remove them from a position, have them arrested on false charges, or simply have them murdered.
Gulag	A forced labour camp where around 18 million opponents were sent to work in dangerous conditions. Around 2 million died.

Challenge

What are the similarities and differences between Stalin and Hitler's dictatorships?

How far do you agree that Stalin should be called 'the Red Tsar'?

