

Russia: Historical Foundations



AP Comparative Government

Mr. Parker

Historic Highlights 1917-1985

1917



Russian Revolution

- Causes
 - political, economic & social
 - World War I
- Key figures
 - Nicholas II (1894-1917)
 - Alexander Kerensky
 - V.I. Lenin & the Bolsheviks
 - Lenin's interpretation of Karl Marx
 - Party was "vanguard of the people"



V.I. Lenin
Making a "peace, bread & land" speech

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1918-1921

Russian Civil War

- Reds (communists) v. Whites (anti-communist coalition)
- Trotsky and the Red Army
- Failure of Lenin's War Communism
- Reds were victorious
- Russia physically and economically destroyed by civil war



Leon Trotsky
Leader of the Red Army


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1921

Lenin's NEP

- **Lenin's New Economic Policy**—plan to rebuild destroyed Russian economy
 - allowed some elements of free enterprise capitalism (small businesses)
 - large industries remained nationalized
- **Results: successful initially, but NEP was derailed by Lenin's death (1924)**



Lenin in his office


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1924-1927

Power Struggle

- **Trotsky and Stalin battled for control of the Soviet Union**
- **Stalin won; Trotsky went into exile**
- **Economy worsened during the power struggle**



Leon Trotsky



Josef Stalin


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1928-1953

Soviet Union under Stalin

- **Pre-WWII**
 - Industrial 5-year plans (command economy)
 - Collectivization of Agriculture (command economy)
 - Great Purge Trials
- **World War II**
- **Post-WWII**
 - Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe
 - Cold War



A Soviet paper mill worker


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1958-1964

The Khrushchev Years

- “destalinization”
- Cold War
 - talked of “peaceful coexistence”
 - U2 Affair (1960)
 - Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)
- Poor relations with Communist China
- Attempted to reform the economy
- Forced to resign by the Politburo



Nikita Khrushchev
Addressing the UN's
General Assembly, 1960

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1964-1982

Period of stagnation: Leonid Brezhnev

- Declining economy
 - grain production fell; it had to be imported
 - economy and technology fell behind that of the west
 - huge amount of money spent on the military
- Brezhnev Doctrine: use force to put down revolts in Eastern Europe
 - Prague Spring (1968)
 - Poland (1970s-early 1980s)



Leonid Brezhnev


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1982-1984

Yuri Andropov: Attempts at Reform

- Attempted to revitalize Soviet economy and initiate reforms
- Poor health and death slowed reform



Yuri Andropov


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1984-1985

Konstantin Chernenko


- Return to Brezhnev-like policies: reformed movement squashed
- Died soon after taking office



Konstantin Chernenko

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Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 1985-1991



Mikhail S. Gorbachev

Background of a leader

- Born and raised on a collective farm in the north Caucasus region
- Worked at a machine-tractor factory
- Studied law, politics and agriculture
- Rose up the ranks of the Communist Party
 - Joined the Communist Party in 1952
 - Became regional party chief for Stavropol
- Became general secretary of the Communist Party upon the death of Chernenko (1985)

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Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 1985-1991

Economic reform: *perestroika*

- “Economic restructuring”
- Characteristics and goals
 - encouraged free market capitalism for small businesses
 - allowed more local and regional decision making (less Moscow-centered command economy)
 - attempted to reform failing agricultural sector
 - hoped to raise the standard of living for Soviet citizens
 - make Soviet economy more competitive
- Results: significant changes to Soviet economy and life
 - many citizens lost jobs, health insurance, and security
 - weakened the Soviet Union more than it strengthened it

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Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 1985-1991

Chernobyl Disaster 1986: World's Largest Nuclear Reactor Accident

- **Causes**
 - human error (emergency water cooling system turned off)
 - reactor (#4) had no containment structure
- **Effects**
 - 31 immediately killed and 500 hospitalized
 - radiation spread in western Soviet Union and Europe
 - thousands live with illnesses related to radiation
 - cancer
 - immune deficiency (known as “Chernobyl AIDS”)
 - Greenpeace estimates that in the 20 years since the disaster 93 million people have died resulting from Chernobyl-related cancer
- **Political results: encouraged Gorbachev to expand *glasnost***

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Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 1985-1991

Political reform: *glasnost*

- “openness”
- **Goal: Soviet government would be more open about what was happening in the country**
- **Characteristics for citizens**
 - could criticize the government
 - given more freedom of speech and press
 - greater access to foreign ideas, news, culture and products
- **Results**
 - increased Soviet criticism of Soviet society and even Gorbachev
 - hastened the process of Soviet decline

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Political reform: democratization (*demokratizatsiia*)

- **Democratization**
 - process of democratic reform
 - experimenting with some elements of democracy
- **Goal: make the government more responsive to popular sentiments**
 - competitive elections (allowed non-communists to run)
 - ended one-party rule (1990)
- **Results**
 - increased demands for self-determination in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe
 - radicals gained influence, especially those who argued Gorbachev was not changing the Soviet Union enough in terms of capitalism and democracy

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Growth of nationalism

- Gorbachev's reform movement increased nationalism in multi-ethnic Soviet Union
- Demands for self-determination
 - Within Soviet Union
 - Baltic republics (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia)
 - Ukraine
 - Belarus
 - Eastern European satellite state
- Results: one of the major factors that led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union

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Foreign Policy: "New Thinking"

- "New Thinking"
 - rethinking of international relations in nonmilitary terms
 - emphasized cooperation, not competition with the West
- Eased Cold War tensions with the United States
 - dialogues with US President Reagan and British Prime Minister Thatcher
 - nuclear disarmament treaties (ex. Moscow Treaty 1988)
- Soviet Union pulled out of unpopular Afghan War (1979-89)
- Allowed Eastern European states to overthrow communist governments and declare independence from Soviet sphere

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Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 1985-1991

Collapse of the Soviet Union and Fall of Gorbachev

- Failure of *perestroika*
- Soviet Constitutional Reform (late 1980s-1991)
 - formation of the Congress of People's Deputies (legislative body)
 - loss of one-party rule
- Growth of nationalism and self-determination
- Failed 1991 coup d' état: attempt by hard-line communist to oust Gorbachev and return Soviet authority to former days
- Leadership of Boris Yeltsin
- The final days of the Soviet Union
 - Baltic states, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine declared independence
 - Gorbachev resigned and Soviet Union dissolved itself (12/1991)

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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999



Boris N. Yeltsin

As leader of the Russian Republic, 1991-93

- **Elected president of Russian Republic, 1991** (first popularly elected official in Russian history)
- **Yeltsin's goals**
 - make Russia democratic
 - make Russia capitalistic
- **Given Russia's history, challenges were extraordinary and difficult to meet**

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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999

The 1993 Rebellion: A Background of Conflict

- **Power struggle:** Conflict between Yeltsin and the Russian parliament. Yeltsin was given extraordinary powers. Parliament wanted to reduce his power.
 - Yeltsin could issue decrees which had the power of law
 - Yeltsin could appoint heads of regional governments
 - Yeltsin declared himself to be prime minister
- **Economic reform:** Yeltsin wanted to initiate radical economic conversion to capitalism: "shock therapy"; opponents wanted to bring about more gradual change.

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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999

The 1993 Rebellion: The Event

- **Immediate causes**
 - Parliament attempted to impeach Yeltsin
 - Yeltsin dissolved parliament
- **The Revolt**
 - many key Parliamentary leaders barricaded themselves into the parliament building (the "White House"), attacked a nearby radio station, and declared their own president (Alexander Rutskoi)
 - legislators exchanged gunfire with Moscow police
- **Yeltsin's response**
 - cut off electricity and water supply
 - military supported Yeltsin, stormed the parliament and forced the legislators to surrender; 100 killed
 - proposed a new constitution

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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999
<p>The 1993 Constitution: Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-presidential system • Asymmetrical federal system • Extremely powerful president <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – head of state – names prime minister (must be approved by Duma) – appoints government ministers (cabinet) – introduces policy – appoints the commander-in-chief of the military – issues decrees – can temporarily suspend civil freedoms
<small>Russia: Historical Foundations</small>


Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999
<p>The 1993 Constitution: Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicameral legislature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Duma (lower house) – Federation Council (upper house) • Yeltsin had the proposed 1993 Constitution approved by a referendum (plebiscite)—December 1993 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 58.4% approved the constitution – 54.8% turned out to vote
<small>Russia: Historical Foundations</small>

Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999
<p>Conflict in Chechnya (1994-present)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background on Chechnya <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – region in southwestern Russia – growth of Chechen nationalism: different language, religion, and culture than Russia – Chechnya demanded greater autonomy from Russian state – Yeltsin's desire to keep Chechnya as an integral part of Russia • First Chechen War (1994-96) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – bloody warfare, much of it in the Chechen capital Grozny – failure of Russia to win demonstrated the ineptness of the Russian military – Yeltsin lost popularity at home – war ended in a truce, but resumed later
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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999

1996 Presidential Election: Background

- Yeltsin was predicted to lose the election
 - Unpopular war in Chechnya
 - Discontent due to unpaid wages and pensions among state employees (like teachers)
 - Perceived as an overweight drunk
- Communists, led by Gennadii Zyuganov, were expected to win (based on the victory of the Communist Party in the 1995 parliamentary elections)



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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999

1996 Presidential Election: The Campaigns

- Yeltsin
 - portrayed himself as a reformer and a stabilizing force
 - sought to win the youth vote (used MTV-like campaign ads)
 - personal: lost 20 lbs.; appeared in active settings
 - ended the war in Chechnya; Paid state workers
 - turned the election into a campaign against going back to communism
- Zyuganov
 - took advantage of the well organized communist party apparatus
 - sought to gain the support of the right wing nationalists (all but wacko Zhirinovsky invited to join)
 - gave confused message regarding property
 - unlike Yeltsin, did not effectively use the media

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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999

1996 Presidential Election: The Elections

- Round 1 (69.8% voter turnout)
 - Yeltsin 35%
 - Zyuganov 32%
- Round 2 (68.9% voter turnout)
 - Yeltsin 53.8%
 - Zyuganov 40.31%

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Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999
<p>The 1998 Crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political crisis<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Parliament and Yeltsin disagreed over Yeltsin's nominations of prime ministers- Parliament attempted to impeach Yeltsin- continued corruption in government• Economic crisis<ul style="list-style-type: none">- difficulty in the transition to capitalism- lack of economic security in Russian life (employment, health care, pensions)- Shortage of food and fuel- devaluation of the Russian ruble (the currency)• Yeltsin's declining health: heart trouble, heavy eating and drinking
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