History 104: Europe from Napoleon to the Present

Concerns raised by the midterm exams:

- copying material from slides without understanding it
- poor or incomplete note taking
- not reading or understanding the Merriman text
- simply summarizing the passages on the exam

— “model answers” are posted on the website (from the main “Schedule” page). These are answers we actually received on this midterm, so it is possible to do well!

— participation counts for as much in your overall grade as one midterm (20%).

— if you do better on the next midterm than on the last one, then the first one will count for only 15% of your overall grade and the next one will count for 25%.
History 104

Europe from Napoleon to the PRESENT

9 March 2009

The Russian Revolution

Tauride Palace
St. Petersburg (Petrograd), Russia
In their *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Engels predicted that communist revolution would follow from high levels of industrialization. Yet when a self-styled “communist” revolution did actually occur in Europe, it was in the Russian Empire—a notoriously “backward” state that was home to over 150 million peasants.

Why did this happen?

With what consequences?

Why a Communist revolution in “backwards” Russia?

- Communist theory of revolution
- specifics of Russian political tradition
- social and economic context
- the Great War

With what consequences?
- Russian Revolution both follows nineteenth-century revolutionary tradition and departs from it.

- Outbreak of Civil War (1917-1923)

- “War Communism” (1918-1922) followed by much more liberal New Economic Policy (1922-1928)
Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (1848)

Industrialization increases production, but when industry is organized in capitalist terms—that is, when the means of production are owned by individuals as *private* property—then it also creates greater gaps in wealth. The rich (the *bourgeoisie* who own property) get richer, while the poor (the proletariat, who have nothing to sell but their labor power) get poorer.

Industrialization brings workers together and develops a sense of “class consciousness.” That is, workers come to understand that their poverty is *socially produced* by capitalist forms of production—it is not due to an individual failing in their character or to fate.

Eventually, the bourgeoisie’s exploitation of the urban working class (the proletariat) will become unbearable and prompt a revolution.

“Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat …by means of a revolution, makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.”

theory of communist revolution (what was supposed to happen)
Westernizers and Slavophiles in the Russian Empire

Peter the Great, 1672-1725
built new capital at St. Petersburg
introduced Dutch and British naval technology
mandated that aristocratic men shave their beards; women
should wear “French” fashions
made French and German the court languages

Slavophiles (reign of Nicholas I, 1825-1855)
denounced Europe as “corrupted” by Enlightenment
emphasis on reason
rejected European “individualism” and praised communal
organization of Russian peasants (Mir)
emphasized role of Orthodox Church

Konstantin Thon, Cathedral of Christ the Saviour,
Moscow (Russia), 1839-1860

Peterhof Palace,
near St. Petersburg (Russia), 1720s

Russian political tradition: part of Europe, or not?
Autocracy and Reform in Nineteenth-Century Russia

1825 uprising of military officers demanding constitutional government (Decembrists)

1830-31 Russian troops repress liberal, nationalist uprising in Russian “Poland”

1849 Russian troops repress 1848 Hungarian revolution

1856 Russia defeated in Crimean War (by alliance of Great Britain, France, and Ottoman Empire)

1861 20,000,000 privately owned serfs granted freedom \( (they \text{ must pay reparations to owners deprived of “property”}) \)—Alexander II’s “Great Reforms”

1881 Alexander II assassinated by members of “People’s Will” revolutionary party

Jan. 1905 petitioners asking for 8-hour work day, higher wages, and end to the Russo-Japanese War fired on by imperial troops (“Bloody Sunday”)

Oct. 1905 “October Manifesto” grants representative government (Duma)

Russian political tradition: autocracy and resistance to reform
Educated Russian Society and the Revolutionary Tradition

intelligentsia
1873-1874 “going to the people” movement

1881 “People’s Will” assassinates Alexander II

1898 Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Marxists) rejects idealization of peasantry

1903 Second Congress of Russian SDLP becomes divided between

Bolsheviks (“the majority view”)
Mensheviks (literally, “the minority”)

Boris Kustodiev, Bolsheviki (1920)

Menshevik leaders Axelrod, Martov, and Martinov
Stockholm, Sweden (1917)

Russian political tradition: revolutionary movements
Lenin and the Bolsheviks

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870-1924), son of a school inspector; his brother was executed for involvement in an assassination plot
1895-1900 exiled to Siberia
1900 adopted pseudonym “Lenin”
1906-1917 largely self-imposed exile in Zurich

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.

The movement is, in its essence, an international movement.

The national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. …
[E]mancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes vast political and organizational duties …At this point, we wish to state that only a party guided by the most advanced theory can fulfill the role of vanguard fighter.

Lenin, What is to be Done? 1902

Belousov, We Will Take a Different Path—Lenin and his mother
Industrialization in the Russian Empire, 1880s-1914

huge factories (in or near St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Ukrainian Donbass)

8-9% annual growth in 1880s
fastest growing European economy, 1900-1914

very high levels of foreign investment

3 million urban industrial workers by 1914
Russia and the First World War

“Down with high prices!*
Down with hunger!
Bread for the workers!
Down with the war!”

demands of women protesters,
Petrograd, February-March 1917

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Russian military losses</th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>1,500,000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
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total by end of 1916:
3,600,000 dead or seriously wounded
2,100,000 prisoners of war

“I order you to bring these disorders to an end. They cannot be permitted during wartime.”

Nicholas II (from Military Headquarters), 1917

* prices for basic necessities had more then tripled since 1914, while wages remained constant
RUSSIA TO MAKE NEW TREATY WITH UNITED STATES; WILL END JEWS’ DISABILITIES Finland's Historic Rights to be Fully Restored and New Constitution Granted. WOMAN SUFFRAGE LIKELY
headline of New York Times March 1917

Feb.-March 1917 massive protests in Petrograd; troops refuse to fire on protesters

1 March Nicholas II abdicates

Provisional Government and Soviets both claim power

Lenin’s April Theses call for end to “imperialist” war; rejection of parliamentary government; national confiscation of landed estates

July Days street demonstrations in support of Soviets

August “Kornilov Affair”-threat of military coup against Soviets

Sept. 5-9 Petrograd and Moscow soviets support Bolshevik program: “Peace, Land, Bread”

October Bolsheviks, claiming to defend Soviet, take power

“Russian Revolution” is two revolutions
Russian Civil War, 1917-1922

Red Army: over 5,000,000 men
(mainly peasant draftees)
50,000 officers from former Imperial Army

White Armies – many distinct armies
supported by Britain, USA, Japan

“Only the close cooperation of worker and peasant
will save Russia from desperation and hunger”
Civil War poster

American, British, Canadian troops
Denekin’s Army
fall 1919

Japanese and US troops

“Great Siberian Ice March”, Jan-March 1920
(retreat of White Army led by Vladimir Kappel)

farthest advance of Admiral
Kolchak’s White Army, summer 1919
Trotsky = Lev Davidovich Bronstein  
(1879, Ukraine-1940, Mexico)  
1898-1900 jailed for political opinions  
1900-1902 exiled to Siberia  
1902-1904 in London  
1905-1906 returns to Russia; jailed; exiled  
1907-1914 lived in Vienna  
1914-1917 in Switzerland  

"Be on Guard!"—poster signed “Trotsky,” 1921  
1917-1918 People’s Commisar for Foreign Affairs  
1918-1920 Commisar of War, organizes Red Army  
1925 forced to resign as War Commisar  
1928-1940; exile; assassinated in Mexico

War: Civil War
"The similarity of the last Romanov couple to the French royal pair of the epoch of the Great Revolution is very obvious. . . . Although separated from each other by five quarter centuries, the tzar and the king were at certain moments like two actors playing the same rôle. A passive, patient, vindictive treachery was the distinctive trait of both. . .

Certain elements of similarity of course are accidental… Infinitely more important are those traits of character which have been grafted, or more directly imposed on a person by the mighty force of conditions, and which throw a sharp light on the relation of personality and the objective factors in history.”