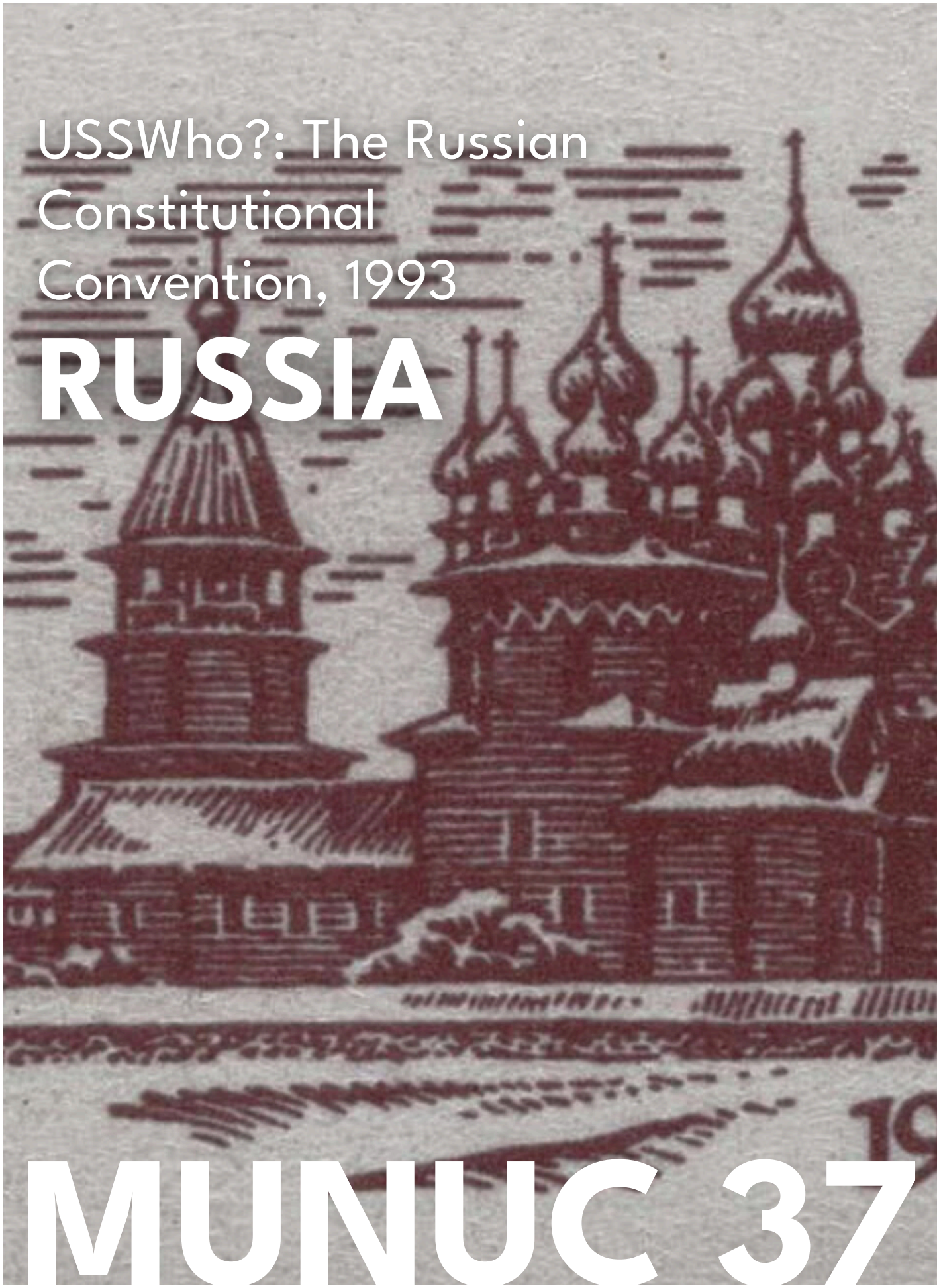

USSWho?: The Russian Constitutional Convention, 1993

RUSSIA

MUNUC 37

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

Chair Letter

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

Привет and welcome to USSWho? of MUNUC 37! My name is Zachary Leiter, and I am thrilled and honored to serve as your committee chair for this conference. My co-executives and I have crafted a novel and intriguing historical crisis for you to oversee which we hope will drive you to be thoughtful, ambitious, curious, and creative. I hope that in preparing for conference you will learn more about this critical slice of geopolitical time and about the dynamics of politics in new or weak states. Above all, I hope that in preparing for and attending the conference you can learn a little about yourself—your interests, your strengths and weaknesses, your writing and speaking style, something of your voice.

I'm originally from Washington D.C. and am now a senior at UChicago studying political science, theater, and German. I think it's clear how political science relates to MUN. Good theater, like all good art, is inherently and intentionally political. German (as a language) and Germanness (as an ethnicity) are political constructs of the last two centuries, defined and forged (for good and for bad) through regime change, revolution, and war. Everything in contemporary society—art, culture, even science—can be connected to politics, and everything political in the modern world can be connected to international relations.

I participated in model UN throughout high school and have taken great pride in organizing MUNUC committees for the past four years. I served as moderator for the International Olympic Committee in MUNUC 34 and 35 and for the International Maritime Organization in MUNUC 36. Outside of academics and MUN, I am involved in ballroom, Latin, and swing dance and am deputy managing editor of the student newspaper.

I am delighted to spend my last MUNUC serving as your chair, and I am absolutely thrilled to hear your voices and ideas in February. (I stole that last line from CD Evelyn Voss because it's a great line and true.) Be

prepared—for your personal crisis arc but also for chaos and change—Russia is in a time of upheaval, and your voice must be the one to propel the new nation forward. Viel Glück!

Sincerely,

Zachary Leiter

Chair of USSWho?: The Russia Constitutional Convention 1993

zacharyleiter@uchicago.edu

Crisis Director Letters

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

Hello, and welcome to USSWho?: The Russia Constitutional Convention, 1993 of MUNUC 37! My name is Evelyn Voss, and I am honored to serve as one of your Crisis Directors this conference. My co-executives and I have a fascinating historical stage for you to direct, and we are sincerely looking forward to hearing your ideas, discussions, and narratives within a tumultuous historical event ripe for political development. I hope you will take the opportunity not only to prepare for conference, but also to enjoy researching this era and nation. Our ultimate goal for this conference is for you to have fun, learn something new, and step out of your comfort zone whether through taking the initiative to voice your ideas or forging new connections with fellow delegates.

I am a senior at the University of Chicago studying physics, mathematics, and music. Although those topics are far removed from politics, I enjoyed being in Model UN throughout high school, and at college I have taken great pride in helping organize MUNUC committees (and sharing my love of MUN) for four years now. I served as an Executive Assistant Chair for the International Olympic Committee in MUNUC 34 and 35 and served as Chair for the International Maritime Organization in MUNUC 36. Outside of academics and MUN, I am heavily involved in multiple music organizations and a ballet organization on campus. I am primarily a vocalist and love to sing and dance whenever I get the time!

I am delighted to serve my last year at MUNUC as one of your CDs, and I am absolutely thrilled to hear your voices and ideas in February. Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns at the address in my signature. Bring your best policies and inner main character–the entire nation is waiting for you to forge the way forward, and your dais is waiting for an epic tale. You got this!

Sincerely,

Evelyn Voss

Crisis Director of USSWho?: The Russia Constitutional Convention 1993

eavoss@uchicago.edu

Dear Delegates,

Welcome! My fellow execs and I are thrilled to be hosting USSwho?: The Russia Constitutional Convention, 1993. My name is Dan Huguenin, and I will be serving as your Crisis Director this year at MUNUC. I am a fourth-year student at the University of Chicago studying political science and economics. I was born in San Francisco, but moved to Cincinnati shortly before starting college. Outside of class, I enjoy playing intramural sports, hiking, skiing, and cooking, though I enjoy eating even more.

Though this is my first time as a Crisis Director, it will be my fourth time running a MUN committee. My previous committees include a GA committee with the International Maritime Organization in 2024, and crisis committees addressing the Berlin Blockade in 1949 and simulating the Cabinet of Afghanistan in 1973. I also participated in Model UN throughout high school. As a fourth-year student, this will also be my final time at MUNUC. I have a deep interest in issues of public policy, especially those surrounding international affairs, so this committee is close to my interests. I know that I am looking forward to the conference, and I hope you will enjoy it as well.

The Russian Constitutional Convention in 1993 was a major part of one of the greatest political transformations in history. Though much was accomplished, many visions of a newfound prosperity and freedom failed to materialize. I hope that delegates will think carefully about their character's role in the convention, and how it can lead to a successful future for the Russian Federation. I believe this topic will allow delegates to address a wide range of political issues while engaging with other delegates with competing agendas. If you have any questions about the committee, do not hesitate to reach out. See you all at MUNUC!

Sincerely,

Dan Huguenin-Virchaux

Crisis Director of USSWho?: The Russia Constitutional Convention 1993

danh2@uchicago.edu

Sensitivity Statement

Dear Delegates,

We are thrilled to welcome you to USSwho?: The Russia Constitutional Convention, 1993. As the Executive Board of the Committee, we aim to guide you through a positive and fulfilling experience as delegates at MUNUC 37 this year.

History is filled with tragedies and injustices. We believe that learning about these tragedies and injustices allows us to gain insight into our contemporary society and informs our actions as we seek to make the world a better place. We acknowledge that the consequences of many historical injustices remain, and that new abuses emerge every day. As a result, it is impossible to simply avoid topics that may be upsetting. To the extent that these sensitive topics arise in committee, we expect delegates to approach them with seriousness, maturity, and empathy. Our committee takes place during a crucial time in the transition from the USSR to the Russian Federation. Committee proceedings will involve discussion of political structures, legal and economic systems, and international relations. Therefore, we wish to acknowledge the history of severe political repressions under the communist regime of the Soviet Union. Further, we wish to acknowledge the religious and ethnic diversity of the population of the Russian Federation. Though we expect delegates to remain true and honest to their assigned characters, we ask them to do so without calling for discrimination or violence against civilians in speeches or crisis notes. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions regarding appropriateness of topics in committee.

It is our responsibility as an Executive Board to ensure each delegate feels supported and respected in our committee. We have a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, intimidation, harassment, or bullying of any kind at MUNUC 37. We expect all delegates to treat each other with kindness, inclusiveness, and respect. If any problem arises, we encourage you to raise it with us, and we will do everything in our power to help resolve it.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to or pull any member of the dais to the side before, during, or after conference if you have any questions or concerns about the above (or anything else about committee policy). Thank you all in advance for your cooperation, and we look forward to seeing you at MUNUC!

Sincerely,

Zach, Evelyn, and Dan

Introduction To the Committee

June 5, 1993 — You are the delegates of the emergency Russian constitutional convention called by Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin in an effort to buttress presidential authority. Many of you were handpicked by Yeltsin himself. You represent the depth and breadth of a nation of 150 million: federal, state, and local authorities; trade unions; political parties; youth organizers; religious leaders; prominent business people. Your Russia is a shell of its former glory, stripped of its vassal states, plunged into inflation and depression, ravaged by ethnic strife and the mafia, and confronting the U.S.'s newfound hegemony.

Less than two years ago, on December 25, 1991, the red-and-yellow hammer-and-sickle of the Soviet Union was lowered from the Kremlin for the final time. That same day, Soviet Premier Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev resigned his post, peacefully leaving Boris Yeltsin to lead the Russian Federation, formerly the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist State.

The Russian Congress of People's Deputies (established in 1990 and numbering more than a thousand members) is Russia's governing legislature and supreme political body. For three years, a Congress-created Constitutional Commission has worked to rewrite the 1978 Soviet Constitution for a new, modern, republican Russia. A draft was finally approved in March of 1992. Yeltsin, estranged from many of the Commission's members and fearing the power of a supreme legislature, drafted his own constitution that same month. All attempts to reconcile differences between the two proposed documents have failed.

Yeltsin is popular—as evidenced by an April 25, 1993 national referendum asking Russians about their support for Yeltsin's leadership—but Russia remains in political limbo. So, on May 12, 1993, Yeltsin announced a national Constitutional Conference to be held less than a month later. It is an extraordinary move—circumventing the Congress's constitutional process—but a risky one. He aims to reshape Russia's government,

economy, and society. Attendance at the Constitutional Convention is by invite of the President, though some groups manage to choose their own representatives.

Those of you in this room represent 750 real life delegates. You have ten days and a rapidly collapsing nation. Failure could bring rioting or even revolution. You may choose to fight for Yeltsin or his vision, or you may use this opportunity to pursue your own personal or political aims. Regardless, the task is clear: you want this new Russian constitution to be your constitution, and you want it to be the final, lasting Russian constitution.

Committee Structure and Mechanics

As a Hybrid Committee, our conference will consist of a General Assembly (GA) portion and a Crisis Committee Portion. Thus, you will have the opportunity to participate in both styles of MUNUC conference proceedings. We understand that this premise, while very exciting, can also get a little bit confusing since the two types of committees use unique procedures and elements. We hope that this section will help to clarify proceedings, but please do not hesitate to reach out to the dais if you have any further questions on committee structure.

Part One: The Russian Constitutional Conference

This first part of the conference will constitute the General Assembly portion. As the name suggests, the main goal of these first two committee sessions is to draft and pass a new constitution fit to govern a new nation. The structure will follow that of a traditional GA committee, and by the end of the second session, delegates will have a constitution ready to be run through the trials and tribulations of the Crisis portion.

Through moderated and unmoderated discussions, delegates will negotiate terms based on their own characters' philosophies and public and private motives, acting as advocates for their unique communities, groups, and ideas. You and your fellow delegates will represent a portion of the 750 members invited to the Constitutional Conference by President Yeltsin himself. There will be regional leaders, legislative representatives, political party leaders, legal experts, and representatives of trade unions and other social organizations.[1] It is of utmost importance that delegates take the time to weigh the most essential building blocks of a nation's legislation. You will need to consider all aspects of policy-making—from the economy to foreign and domestic affairs to the

[1] ("Russia 1993", n.d.)

makeup of governmental structure itself (executive, legislative, judicial). This is an incredible opportunity for you as a delegate to promote structures that benefit the community you represent.

In building a new constitution, it is imperative that you anticipate future crises, needs, and conditions of the country. After so much political unrest, the nation is in a delicate position, and there are sure to be dissenting parties after the passage of a new constitution. Consider how future parties may aim to change the constitution, the power dynamics of your new governmental system, and how to craft a system that is as strong as it is flexible, so that it may continue to serve Russian citizens for generations.

Part Two: Delegates' New Russia

The second portion of conference will be run as a Crisis Committee. The new Russian Constitution's strengths and weaknesses will be exposed through many challenges, and you as a committee will have to work to keep crises at bay. These challenges will be announced as Crisis Breaks, where we will update you on a new issue that needs to be addressed. These breaks will be announced from the "backroom," consisting of Assistant Chairs (ACs) and your Crisis Directors. The backroom will be working to build a story weaving all of your notes and character arcs into one conference narrative. While many of your characters are not members of the official government, for the sake of continuing this conference, we will assume the broad liberty that you all continue to have influence in government or with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, although this is not historically accurate.

In Crisis, each delegate has the opportunity to build their own character arc and participate through writing notes to an AC in the backroom. These notes are written from the perspective of your character and are usually directed to a colleague, secretary, family member, friend, etc. The goal of these notes is to create a character arc, at first by building resources, relationships, and influence, and then eventually by creating a crisis break later in the committee. Crisis breaks demonstrate your active influence on the committee and crisis story arc. It is important to consider the historical context of the committee and remember that your entire arc must fit within

the last three committee sessions. Although we will not be taking notes regularly in the General Assembly sessions, we will allow for about one note per session so that you will be able to present your end-goal. This way we can have a direction to head in during the crisis portion of the committee.

Instead of resolutions, you will be passing directives in this portion of the committee. Directives are typically one to three pages and are shorter than resolutions. This is your opportunity as delegates to address crisis breaks head on with specific actions and set precedent for similar future challenges. It is important to note that while you can change your constitution from part one of the conference, you must follow the procedures outlined in said document in order to do so, therefore... make sure to include an amendment process in your constitution!

The Brief History of Russia

An Important Note On Historiography of Russia

It is essential that, before you read this background guide, you read the few paragraphs below about complexities of Russian historiography.

First, on dates. For centuries, Russia has used official calendars that are not the Grigorian Calendar used in the U.S. and most of the world—a medieval calendar, a Julian calendar, a Soviet calendar. For clarity, all dates herein are listed according to their Gregorian Calendar dates, even if they "happened" on a different day in Russia.

Second, on Russian words and names. Russian and English have different sentence structures and alphabets. You do not speak or read Russian (we assume) and we don't either, so all Russian names and terms need to be anglicized. Anglicization often produces different spellings depending on language of origin and translator (e.g. tsar vs. czar, Kiev vs. Kyiv) and these differences often develop political undertones. For clarity, Russian names and terms herein are written in the form most accessible to English speakers (e.g. Nicholas instead of Nikolai).

Third, on any confusion arising from the various wordy and vague titles of Soviet leaders. In part, this is natural governments are complicated phenomena, difficult to understand and more difficult still to distill into a historical summary. In part, however, this confusion is unnatural. It is an intentional result of the way the Soviet Union structured itself, and the way many totalitarian or authoritarian government's structure themselves. Be aware that your confusion at titles and organizational structure is in part a deliberate means of secrecy and control—building a difficult-to-decipher bureaucracy with individual actors treated as mere cogs.

Fourth, on why we've written such a long history of Russia, and why our history starts in the 9th and not the 20th century. We are subscribing to a *longue durée* view of history—history as a study of long-term historical

structures, institutions, trends, and peoples, rather than as a study of individuals. Understanding Russia's ethnic, geographic, and economic foundations is crucial for understanding serfdom, tsarist Russia, and the Orthodox Church. Understanding tsarist Russia is crucial for understanding the Russian Revolution. Understanding the Russian Revolution is crucial for understanding Lenin, who is crucial for understanding Stalin, and so on.

Therefore, we ask that you please read the entirety of this history of Russia once. The important thing is not that you can remember who the Russian leader was in 1533 (Ivan IV) but rather that you can begin to see how Russia's economic, political, and cultural landscapes shifted over time, and why they shifted. Besides, we guarantee that there are some fascinating and important pieces of Russian and world history explored below, many of which you could use as inspiration for your plotting or as the key patriotic moment in your big speech. This background guide is not quite as dense as it might at first seem.

Happy reading and notetaking!

Your Dais.

Russia Before the Soviet Union

The territory that modern-day Russia controls is vast—at over 17,000 square kilometers, Russia is almost double the size of the second largest state by land area, Canada. Consequently, late classical antiquity and the "Middle Ages" saw a great number of different peoples live in, move through, or trade in the lands that now make up the contemporary Russian Federation. Between the 4th to 9th century, these lands were most notably home to the Huns, the Goths, and the Magyars. By the 9th century, Germanic, Scandinavian, Middle Eastern, and North African traders had begun to export timber, furs, and amber from western parts of modern-day Russia.

In 882, the Viking leader Oleg moved from **Novgorod** (near modern-day **St. Petersburg**) to seize **Kiev**, a strategic site on the Dnieper River.[2] With Kiev's seizure, Oleg established the empire **Kievan Rus** and the dynasty that would rule Kievan Rus for three hundred and fifty years: the Ruriks. **Belarus**, **Ukraine**, and Russia all trace their ethnic and political origins to Kievan Rus. This is the origin story that current Russian President **Vladimir Putin** has used to justify that Belarussians, Ukrainianians, and Russians are all one and the same: Russians.[3]

In 998, Rurikid leader Prince **Vladimir the Great** converted to **Orthodox Christianity** and made it the official state religion, setting the stage for a religious Russia in the next millennium. This conversion and Vladimir's marriage to a **Byzantine** princess cemented strong relationships between Kievan Rus and the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople.[4] Kiev flourished, becoming a center of politics and culture in **Eastern Europe**. However, Kievan Rus's newfound glory was not to last.

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[2] "Russia Profile - Timeline." BBC News, April 26, 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17840446.
[3] "The Period of Mongol Invasion and Rule, 1237-1480," Russia Engages the World 1453-1825, accessed August 7, 2024, http://web-static.nypl.org/exhibitions/russia/history/mongol.html.
[4] Andrejsons, Kristaps. "Russia and Ukraine Are Trapped in Medieval Myths." *Foreign Policy*, February 6, 2022. Russia and Ukraine Are Trapped in Medieval Myths.

St. Vladimir looks out over modern-day Kiev, Ukraine[5]

In 1237, the **Mongol Empire** reached Kievan Rus. Ten years after Genghis Khan's death in 1227, the Mongols already controlled the largest empire of all time, a territory more than twice the size of the Roman Empire at its height. Kievan Rus, fragmented and declining, was no match for the invaders. By 1241, more than half of Kievan Rus's population was dead, and a majority of the former empire's cities lay in ruins.[6] Vast swaths of Russia were now part of the Empire of the Golden Horde.

Both northern territory near Novgorod and the former Kievan Rus were managed as vassal states of the Mongol Empire, run by local princes and Islamic merchants loyal to the Khan of the Golden Horde. The Tatars (as the Mongols came to be known) struggled to maintain control over their vast territory, and so allowed some

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[5] Strocchi, Enrico. *Volodymyr The Great Monument*. March 24, 2019. *Flickr*. https://www.flickr.com/photos/strocchi/32516462597.
[6] Konstantin Nossov, "The Ravage of Rus'," *Medieval Warfare* 5, no. 6 (2016): 35–41.

local institutions—in particular the Orthodox Church—to persist.[7] And, in the early 14th century, the Tatars allowed a Russian prince, **Ivan I**, to take the title Grand Prince of Moscow (or Muscovy). The contemporaneous relocation of the seat of the Russian Orthodox Church from Kiev to **Moscow** established Moscow as the new center of Russian growth.

Moscow had been established in 1147 as a small backwater village on the Moskva River, hundreds of years after the founding of Kiev, Novgorod and other major regional cities. (Moskva is the phonetic spelling of the Russian name for Moscow). Over the next two hundred years, Moscow developed quickly, aided by shrewd rulers and a growing alliance with the church. **Ivan III**, who took power as Grand Prince in 1462, pursued the unification of all eastern **Slavic** and Greater Russian—Russia, Belarus, Ukraine—lands under Muscovite leadership. Ivan the Great, as he has since been labeled, was said to grow his empire even as he slept. And, in 1480, the Battle of the Ugra River established Russian sovereignty. As the Russian Presidential Library puts it, "the great stand on the Ugra" "put an end to the Tartar (sic) yoke."[8]

The new Russian state faced new challenges. Novgorod and other powerful outsider cities had been subdued, but the **Ottomans** threatened to the south (having sacked Constantinople in 1453), and **Poland** and **Lithuania** threatened to the west. Much of the new empire's lands had been ravaged by centuries of war. Ivan III sought to re-establish Moscow as a cultural and religious oasis. He integrated Orthodox ceremony into royal procedures, instituted a strict national code of laws, and invited Italian artists and architects to move to Russia.[9]

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[7] Library, The New York Public, ed. "The Period of Mongol Invasion and Rule, 1237-1480." NYPL, 2003. http://web-static.nypl.org/exhibitions/russia/history/mongol.html.
[8] "'The Great Stand on The Ugra River' Put An End to The Tartar Yoke," Presidential Library, accessed August 7, 2024, https://www.prlib.ru/en/history/619708.
[9] "Ivan III and a Muscovite Renaissance," Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, University of Oxford, 2021, https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/oxford-polyglot/2020-21/2/ivan-iii-and-muscovite-renaissance.

After decades of political turmoil, Ivan IV emerged as the empire's latest leader in 1533, lifted to power by the highest rank of Russian feudal landowners—the boyars. The boyars saw in Ivan an opportunity to stabilize and entrench Russian leadership, and proclaimed the 16-year-old the first official "tsar" of Russia. The word tsar derived from the Latin "caesar," the title used by Roman emperors.

Ivan the Terrible—as the first tsar has come to be known—devastated the Russian state over his fifty year rule, driven by alcoholism and a serious temper to wreck the Russian bureaucracy, terrorize the Russian nobility, and cripple the Russian military. After Ivan's death, political instability continued to fray the large empire just as the Russian nation was beginning to grow economically, spurred by trade with English and Dutch merchants.[10]

Stepping in to end this "Time of Troubles" was **Mikhail Romanov**. Mikhail signed peace treaties with the Swedes and the Poles in an effort to consolidate Russia's territory and strengthened Russia's diplomatic relationships with Western Europe.[11] Most notably, Mikhail was the first **Romanov** Russian tsar—this was the dynasty that would rule the nation until the Revolution of 1917.

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[10] Seton-Watson, H. , Keenan, . Edward Louis , Riasanovsky, . Nicholas V. , Wachtel, . Andrew B. , Taruskin, . Richard , Medvedkov, . Yuri V. , Vodovozov, . Sergey Arsentyevich , Lieven, . Dominic , Raeff, . Marc , Hosking, . Geoffrey Alan , Dewdney, . John C. , Medvedkov, . Olga L. , McCauley, . Martin and Hellie, . Richard. "Russia." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 6, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia.

[11] "Michael Romanov- Face of Russia: Timeline." PBS. Accessed August 7, 2024. https://www.pbs.org/weta/faceofrussia/timeline/1600/1613-45.html.

Mikhail Romanov was the first Romanov tsar of Russia[12]

The 17th century also, with its centralization of power and registration of citizenry, saw the onset of Russian serfdom. This was the system that would power—and handicap—Russia until its abolition in 1861. With its roots in peasants' feudal dependency to lords, serfdom tied many Russian peasants to the lands they worked as "serfs" and therefore enabled the sale of serfs by landowners. Landowners were not allowed to kill their serfs, but practically (though not legally) serfdom was equivalent to slavery. Serfs comprised a third of the Russian population and half of the Russian peasantry.

[12] *Engraving portrait of Mikhail Romanov 1633 - 1656*. 2022. *Wikimedia*. https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Engraving_portrait_of_Mikhail_Romanov_1633_-_1656.jpg.

This system crippled Russia's economic growth, in part because both serfs and nobles had little incentive to improve their land. What serfdom did do, however, was ensure social balance under the Russian aristocracy—nobles rarely threatened the tsar for fear of a peasant uprising, and serfs, given lifelong tenancy, tended to have neither the means nor the cause to challenge their place. Over the centuries, the few notable Russian serf uprisings were all quickly put down.

Tsar **Peter I**, or Peter the Great, who ruled Russia starting in 1682, is often seen as the face of Romanov reform. Many of Peter's reforms were geared towards modernizing what the tsar saw as a backward nation, falling behind **Western Europe**. He promoted free commerce of tradespeople, replaced the advisory council of boyars with an official Russian senate of nobles, began investment in heavy industry, and restructured the church to be subservient to the tsar. Peter even cut off the beards of many boyars and forbade them from wearing their traditional attire. In 1698, the tsar traveled to England to study shipbuilding, and on his return to Russia, established a conscription Russian army and navy.[13] From 1703 to 1712, Peter constructed a new capital for the Russian empire: **St. Petersburg**, on the banks of the Neva River near the Gulf of Finland. And, in 1721, after Peter's victory over Sweden led Russia to acquire the territory of modern-day **Latvia** and **Estonia**, the Russian senate changed Peter's title from tsar to emperor. When he died in 1725, Peter left behind a vastly different Russia.

After Peter's death, the Russian empire continued its expansion under **Catherine II** (Catherine the Great), Paul, and **Alexander**, taking in modern-day Crimea, Ukraine, **Georgia**, Belarus, **Moldova**, and parts of Poland.[14] Alexander, a young idealist, led Russia in the fight against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. When Napoleon was finally defeated in 1812, many Russian army officers returned home with ideas for the liberalization and modernization of Russia, whose economy lagged more than a century behind that of Western

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[13] "Peter the Great." Royal Museums Greenwich. Accessed September 24, 2024. https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/peter-great.
[14] "Russia Profile - Timeline." BBC News, April 26, 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17840446.

Europe. Alexander put into motion an expansive plan for public education, but, fearful of the power of Russia's nobility, found no way to free the serfs.[15]

Liberal sentiment was in Russia to stay, however, and on December 14, 1825, a group of army officers and nobility (later called **the Decembrists**) attempted to stage an uprising against the tsarist regime. Their aim was the institution of a constitutional government and the abolition of serfdom. The rebellion was easily quelled, and the central conspirators were shot, but the Decembrist Revolt would continue to serve as an inspiration to Russian dissidents for a century to follow.[16]

In 1853, Russian Tsar **Nicholas I** invaded Crimea, an Ottoman territory. Nicholas justified the move as an expansion of the Orthodox Church and saw in the Ottoman Empire's decline a perfect opportunity to grow Russia's borders and secure a southern warm water port—key to Russia's hopes of overseas empire and trade. The British and French saw an opportunity to push back against the "Russian menace" and joined the **Crimean War** on the side of the Ottomans. By 1856, after a series of brutal back-and-forth campaigns and even-more-brutal winters, the Russians had been repelled. When the mighty **Austrian Empire** threatened to intervene against Russia, Nicholas agreed to peace terms, signing the Treaty of Paris in March of 1856.[17] The war had resulted in around 250,000 Russian casualties, a disproportionate amount of whom were killed by disease. Russia had also lost 20 billion dollars in the war, adjusted for inflation. The country lay crippled.

On March 3, 1861, Tsar **Alexander II**, seeing the writing on the wall and seeking to re-energize the Russian economy, issued the **Emancipation Edict**. The Edict freed Russia's serfs, but with a series of devastating

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[15] "Alexander I." Encyclopædia Britannica, September 18, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alexander-I-emperor-of-Russia.
[16] "The Decembrist Revolt." Presidential Library of the Russian Federation, December 26, 2022. https://www.prlib.ru/en/history/619844.
[17] "Crimean War," National Army Museum, accessed September 24, 2024, https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/crimean-war.

caveats. Serfs remained tied to their land through continued labor obligations while land inventories were taken, and even then they were required to make redemption payments to receive their own land. In 1874, Alexander also instituted universal military service, a progressive measure that replaced the previous system, which had pressed peasants into long-term military service.[18] However, redemption payments kept a majority of serfs financially submerged, even as the country began to rapidly industrialize and the population boomed.[19] From 1860 to 1900, Russia's population ballooned from 74 million to 133 million. By 1910, it was 161 million. The rate of population growth was far higher in Russia than in Western Europe and Austria.[20] Russia's rapid population growth was driven largely by a post-industrial decline in death rate—a phenomenon that had previously affected Western Europe.[21]

Russia's borders continued to fluctuate. In 1864 and 1865, Russia expanded into the **Kazakh** steppes and **Central Asia**. Russia's 19th century expansion was largely eastward, driven by agricultural opportunities and the reality that to the east lay the path of least resistance. But, in 1867, seeking a post-Crimean-defeat influx of cash, Nicholas sold the Russian territories of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands to the United States. For less than two cents an acre, Alaska was now an American territory, and, adjusted for inflation, Russia was up $125 million.[22] Alexander used the proceeds to gild **St. Isaac's Cathedral** in St. Petersburg, the tallest domed structure in

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[18] Natalia Bubnova. "Ending Feudalism: The 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation of the Serfs." Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, February 18, 2011.https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2011/02/ending-feudalism-the-150th-anniversary-of-the-emancipation-of-the-serfs?lang=en&center=russia-eurasia.

[19] "Emancipation Manifesto," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed September 28, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/event/Emancipation-Manifesto.

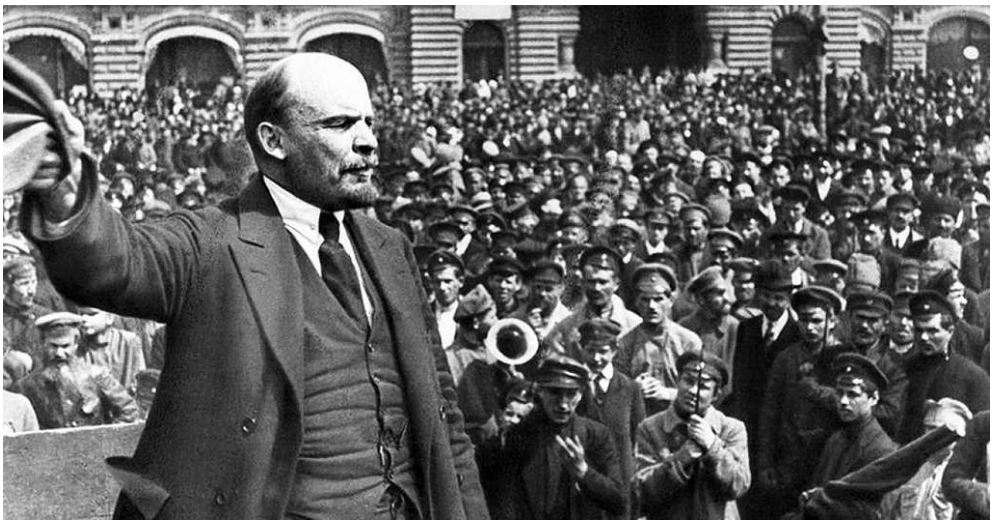
[20] Mitchell, BR. "Population of Major European Countries in the Nineteenth Century." Population of the major European countries in millions. Accessed September 22, 2024. https://dmorgan.web.wesleyan.edu/materials/population.htm.

[21] Krishan Kumar. "Population Change." In *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 2, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/topic/modernization/Population-change.

[22] "Check for the Purchase of Alaska (1868)," National Archives, March 28, 2024, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/check-for-the-purchase-of-alaska#:~:text=On%20March%2030%2C%201867%2C%20the,acquired%20nearly%20600%2C000%20square%20miles.

Russia.[23] And, in the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878, Russia seized the **Caucasus**—modern day **Armenia**, **Azerbaijan**, and **Georgia**.

Then, in 1897, Russia's marxist **Social Democratic Labour Party** was founded, carrying on the ideals of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' 1848 *Communist Manifesto*. Yet just six years later, the party split into two rival factions, the **Mensheviks** and the **Bolsheviks**. The Mensheviks, led by Julius Martov, were the less radical faction, favoring democratic measures and an alliance with Russia's liberals. The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (later known as **Vladimir Lenin**) were hard-line and focused on the party as the primary instrument of political change. Both the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks advocated the overthrow of the tsar and the end of capitalism, but the Bolsheviks were the truly violent revolutionaries.[24]



Vladimir Lenin was the leader of the revolutionary communist Bolsheviks[25]

[23] "St. Isaac's Cathedral," TMora, The Museum of Russian Art, accessed August 7, 2024, https://tmora.org/online-exhibitions/imperial-st-petersburg-architectural-visions/academy-of-fine-arts/st-isaacs-cathedral/.
[24] Cavendish, Richard. "The Bolshevik-Menshevik Split." History Today, 2003. https://www.historytoday.com/archive/months-past/bolshevik-menshevik-split.
[25] *Vladimir Lenin giving a speech*. *Picryl*. Accessed 2024. https://picryl.com/media/vladimir-lenin-giving-a-speech-d5f7e8.

In 1904, Japan met Russian encroachment into Manchuria with a declaration of war and a surprise attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur in Manchuria. After heavy casualties for both sides and a series of military defeats for the Russians, the **Russo-Japanese War** came to an end in September of 1905 with the Treaty of Portsmouth, which effectively ended Russian expansion into East Asia.[26]

National anger at Russia's losses in the Russo-Japanese War boiled over. Midway through the war, a massive crowd of peaceful protesters had gathered in front of the Tsar **Nicholas II**'s **Winter Palace** in St. Petersburg to call for aid for Russian workers. The Russian army fired into the crowd and led cavalry charges against the assembled workers; up to 200 protesters were killed in an event now known as **Bloody Sunday**. Strikes and army riots followed, as did counterrevolutionary purges and **pogroms** against Jews and socialists led by the ultra-nationalist, monarchist "**Black Hundreds**."[27]

Just two months after the Treaty of Portsmouth, the revolutionaries successfully pressured the Tsar to institute a constitutional monarchy. Nicholas also, in 1906, agreed to the institution of the Duma, the first real attempt at parliamentary government in Russia. However, these progressive measures effectively quelled the tide of revolution, and calls for democracy or even a constitutional assembly failed.

This was, nevertheless, the beginning of the end for the Russian **monarchy**, whose demise was only stalled by the authoritarian rule of Russian Prime Minister **Peter Stolypin** from 1906 to 1911. Stolypin dismissed the Duma (twice) and instituted his own system of agrarian reforms aimed at improving the economic status of Russia's peasantry, stabilizing the country's economy, and shoring up the tsarist system. Stolypin was only semi-

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[26] Office of The Historian. "The Treaty of Portsmouth and the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905." Accessed August 7, 2024. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/portsmouth-treaty.
[27] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Russian Revolution of 1905." Encyclopedia Britannica, June 14, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Revolution-of-1905.

successful, and on September 14, 1911, he was assassinated while at the theater by a revolutionary anarcho-socialist.[28]

Less than three years later, on July 28, 1914, war broke out in Europe. The Willy–Nicky correspondence, a series of telegrams exchanged between Tsar Nicholas II and his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, proved unsuccessful at staving off continental war following incendiary events in the **Balkans**.[29] Very simply put, Europe was too drawn into its system of secret alliances, and too swept up in the fervor of **militarism**, **nationalism**, and **imperialism** to avoid conflict. Austria–**Hungary** declared war on **Serbia**, who had been guaranteed protection by the Russians. Germany and the Ottoman Empire soon joined on the side of Austria–Hungary, and Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States (in 1917) on the side of Russia.

By the end of the war, two million Russian soldiers would be dead, alongside a similar number of civilians. The myth of the steamrolling Russian war machine had been fully thwarted by a long, grueling war and a series of brutal German offensives. Tsar Nicholas II had declared himself Commander in Chief of the Russian army in 1915, perhaps a final fatal mistake.[30] By the time the **Treaty of Versailles** was signed in 1918, bringing the Great War (World War I) to an end, Nicholas II and the Romanovs would be gone, and Russia as she was previously known would look fundamentally different.

The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic

World War I decreased the popularity of the already imperiled Tsar Nicholas II. In February 1917, frustrated with the ongoing conflict, rampant corruption, a sluggish economy, and severe food shortages, over

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[28] Victoria Khiterer, "Appendix. Dmitrii Bogrov and the Assassination of Stolypin," De Gruyter, March 31, 2016, https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9781618114778-018/html?lang=en.
[29] William II, German Emperor, and Emperor Of Russia Nicholas II. The Willy-Nicky correspondence, being the secret and intimate telegrams exchanged between the Kaiser and the Tsar. editeds by Bernstein, Herman New York, A.A. Knopf, 1918. Pdf. https://www.loc.gov/item/18001519/.
[30] BBC Bitesize. "Reasons for the February Revolution, 1917." Accessed August 17, 2024. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/ztyk87h/revision/3.

100,000 workers participated in a general strike in the capital city of Petrograd (St. Petersburg was renamed to this less German form in 1914) which the military governor failed to suppress despite using force. The strikers urged the Duma—Petrograd's legislative assembly—to assert itself against the Tsar and establish a democratic government. After only a few days, protesters captured the city, arresting ministers of the government. Facing immense political pressure, and with the army deployed to the front, Tsar Nicholas abdicated the throne on March 15, 1917, bringing an end to the Romanov Dynasty. The revolutionaries formed a group called the Petrograd Soviet to represent their views and organize revolutionary forces. Concerned that the Soviet might attempt to take power for itself, the Duma quickly formed its own provisional government, which sought to continue the war against Germany.

Over the rest of the year, soviets were formed in other cities. By June, frustration with the lack of food and ongoing war contributed to the radicalization of the movement. The Bolsheviks, hard-line radical revolutionaries who opposed capitalism in Russia and adhered to a Marxist doctrine, assumed majorities in the Petrograd Soviet as well as Soviets across Russia. In October, several days of street fighting placed control of the nation firmly in the hands of the Petrograd Soviet. On November 7th, the Soviet voted to make Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, both Bolsheviks, premier and foreign minister respectively.

In his first major reform, Lenin announced that all land in Russia was owned by those who worked it. This built public support for the new government among the peasantry, and provided food for the capital, but also resulted in executions of landlords. Shortly afterward, Lenin nationalized industry and banks. The Bolsheviks were also, as socialists, staunchly anti-religion, and treated the Orthodox Church with repression and ridicule.

In 1918, Trotsky directed the Russian army to pursue an armistice with Germany, a move which concerned Allied governments, who had relied on Tsarist Russia as a major ally. On March 3, Russia and Germany agreed to cease hostilities in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, bringing an end to the Russian participation in World

War I. In the treaty, Russia suffered territorial losses in Eastern Europe and the Baltics, though they recouped those losses over the ensuing decades. Though these reforms solidified Bolshevik control of government, they also alienated many in Russia.

The Bolsheviks and their secret police agency, the Cheka, cracked down on dissidents. In July of 1918, former tsar Nicholas II and his family were murdered in Yekaterinburg. And, in September, after an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Lenin, the Cheka began carrying out mass arrests of suspected political opponents, members of the old regime, and well-off citizens, who were held without charges and shot. Roughly 140,000 Russians were murdered. The Red Terror had begun.

Former Tsar Nicholas II was among the victims of the Bolshevik's Red Terror[31]

[31] *Czar Nicholas II- Public Domain Image*. *Picryl*. Accessed 2024. https://picryl.com/media/czar-nicholas-ii-a20490.

The Bolsheviks renamed themselves the Russian Communist Party, which was managed by a Secretariat, an Orgburo, and a Politburo. In 1919, Lenin also formed the Third International, or Comintern, which aimed to carry the communist revolution abroad to the industrialized West.

Notwithstanding their use of political violence, the Bolsheviks lacked much of the technical expertise needed to run a government, creating a number of early administrative problems. Ethnic separatist groups saw the opportunity to pursue their independence, and anti-Bolshevik forces organized in eastern Russia, beginning a bloody civil war.

The **Russian Civil War** pitted the Bolsheviks and their newly formed **Red Army** (commanded by Trotsky) against the so-called **White Armies**, mostly led by ethnic separatists and former officers of the tsarist state. The White Armies were also joined briefly by thousands of British, American, French, and Japanese troops fighting for the restoration of the tsar. Initial White advances in 1919 were successful in reaching the outskirts of Petrograd and Moscow, but the Red Army was better prepared, better organized, and allied with the anarchist **Black Russians**. The Red Army also outnumbered the White Armies twenty to one.[32] By 1922, the War was over, and the Red Army turned against their former allies, the Black Russians. Over four years of war, ten million Russians had died, many of them civilians, and Russia was firmly Red.

During the war, the Russian Communist Party had instituted a system of "War Communism." Under War Communism, the means of all production and transportation were nationalized, a system of national forced labor was introduced, and money was replaced with a system of barter tokens. The intentional uncontrolled printing of banknotes led to inflation of a factor of 100 million; the rich and the middle class alike lost their savings completely. The Red Army found itself unable to feed its five million troops, since peasants were unwilling to sell

[32] Army Heritage Center Foundation. "Russian Civil War." Accessed August 17, 2024. https://www.armyheritage.org/soldier-stories-information/russian-civil-war/.

their crops for now-meaningless cash. Lenin sent armed detachments to villages across Russia to force peasants to hand over their food. Peasants who refused or those who were judged better-off were labeled “kulaks.”

In the aftermath of the destruction, the Bolsheviks consolidated power. Though they had fought the Revolutions and Civil War in the name of the soviets, they now vested all real power in the Party, a private organization which acted through official state institutions. This was a system of government which would be replicated repeatedly in 20th century totalitarian states.

With the nation already facing food shortages and decreased grain production, a massive drought hit Russia in the spring of 1921. The American Relief Administration stepped in to feed the masses of Russians who had resorted to eating grass and (occasionally) eachother, but five million still died. And though the War had ended, pockets of anti-communist rebels fought on.

That year, Lenin opted to abandon the policy of War Communism, instead instituting the New Economic Policy, which replaced the worthless Russian Ruble with gold chervonets. Some sectors of Russia’s command economy were also liberalized, though heavy industry and transportation remained under state control. These policies would restore Russian agriculture to pre-War levels within five years, but they came with a catch: Lenin, fearing unrest over his plan of liberalization, cracked down further on dissent. In 1922, the Cheka was abolished and replaced with the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU), which was put in charge of political repression and Russia’s system of concentration camps—the Gulag. On December 28, 1922, with Lenin’s health failing, representatives of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (communist Russia), along with Ukrainian and Belarussian representatives, met to form the Soviet Union. Lenin believed that in this new state, Russia should be supreme, though he also believed that ethnic minorities should be respected.

What Lenin believed would not matter for long. In 1924, Lenin died, and a “triumvirate” assumed control of the Politburo, Joseph Stalin among them. Leon Trotsky, by many assumed to be a natural successor to

Lenin, was too arrogant in his dealings, too public in his intentions, and too Jewish in an antisemitic time and place to take control of the Soviet Union, and he lost a power struggle to Stalin that culminated in Trotsky's eventual exile and assassination. Stalin, a somewhat dull, longtime Party member, had realized early on that Soviet power rested in Party support rather than in the public or the state. Soon, Stalin dismissed the other members of the triumvirate. By 1929, he would be the virtually unchallenged dictator of the Soviet Union.

After Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin quickly assumed control of the Soviet Union[33]

Once in power, Stalin began to move towards the Left. His government cracked down on what they saw as false peasants and richer members of the peasantry, the kulaks among them. In reality, very few of the so-called peasant **proletariat**—in whose name the Bolsheviks had fought—remained. In 1928, Stalin, feeling that the communist managing authorities had learned all they needed to know, began to purge bourgeois and the intelligentsia across Russia. In 1929, Stalin issued his **First Five-Year Plan**, intended to collectivize five million

[33] *Joseph Stalin, 1949*. 2017. *Flickr*. https://www.flickr.com/photos/144890920@N02/34951464491.

peasant households. By now, the policy towards kulaks was "liquidation." Ten million kulaks were stripped of their land and deported in a policy of "**dekulakization**."[34]

Remaining peasants were afforded grain rations far below the levels they had produced. In 1932-33, a major famine swept through Russia's grain belt, killing four to five million in Ukraine and two to three million in the Caucasus. Accompanied by a series of culturally repressive measures, dekulakization and starvation (known in Ukraine as the **Holodomor**) were undeniably tools of Stalinist genocide against Ukrainians.[35]

Both the First Five-Year Plan and 1933's Second Five-Year Plan placed a heavy stress on rapid industrialization, largely in an effort to catch up with Western states' economies. Many of the results of these plans—dams and canals among them—were undeniable, but it is difficult to accurately state how real the results of these ten years of forced labor projects were. Among other issues, the Soviet Union tended to build only on the largest of scales. And, even into the 1940s, a large majority of the Russian population remained rural.

In 1934, Stalin re-organized the Soviet secret police, renaming them the NKVD, and placing them under the control of his close allies. Over the next four years, the central feature of Soviet politics was a campaign of brutal repression against so-called "enemies of the people." With its show trials, assassinations, mass arrests, and killings, this was Stalin's Great Purge. The gulag system was expanded and an ever-increasing number of (real and imagined) "enemies" were targeted. In 1937, the Purge ramped up even further, with NKVD "troikas" sentencing people to death in absentia and then burying them in hidden mass graves. Stalin targeted the Communist Party and Red Army alongside everyone else, arresting 115 of 139 Central Committee members and executing 13 of 15

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[34] Nicolas Werth. "Dekulakisation As Mass Violence." SciencesPo, September 23, 2011. https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/dekulakisation-mass-violence.html.

[35] Minnesota , University of, ed. "Holodomor." College of Liberal Arts. Accessed September 22, 2024. https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/holodomor.

Army commanders. By 1939, five million had been arrested, with no more than ten percent surviving arrest. Toward the end of the Purge, even the early leaders of the Purge were killed. The extent of the Great Purge was so great that it actually decreased the Soviet Union's economic output, so, in 1938, Stalin installed Lavrenty Beria as head of the NKVD with orders to ramp down arrests.

For the rest of his time in power, Stalin would face no real opposition to his ideas or policies. He would also, through terror and a massive-scale false rewriting of history, develop around himself an unmatched cult of personality. He was soon, however, to face the greatest threat to his rule: the rise of Nazi Germany.

When Adolf Hitler and the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933 through (initially) democratic means and later engaged in the same post-in-power purging and repression seen in Stalinist Russia, they were seen as allies to the socialist cause. As the Marxist logic went, so-called national socialism and fascism represented an end state of capitalism, signaling a coming proletarian revolution. Such a notion was quickly proved false as the Nazis consolidated power and rapidly developed their war machine despite the Treaty of Versailles, which had limited German armament after World War I.

Stalin and the USSR—newly members of the **League of Nations**—feigned support for Western nations, promising to defend **Czechoslovakia** from German aggression in 1938, just to stand by (alongside Western nations) as the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in March of 1939.[36] French and British attempts to ally with the Soviet Union were too little, too late. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a secret **Nazi–Soviet Nonaggression Pact**. One week later, the German army invaded Poland from the West in the infamous "**blitzkrieg**," and, two weeks after that, the Soviets invaded Poland from the east. The Soviet Union also, under the Pact's protocols, received the three Baltic states, who would soon be forcibly incorporated into the

[36] Holocaust Encyclopedia. "Czechoslovakia." Accessed August 17, 2024. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/czechoslovakia.

Soviet Union as **Soviet Socialist Republics** (SSRs). But all was not as strong as it seemed for Stalin—an inconclusive Soviet invasion of **Finland** in the fall of 1939 revealed the weakness of the Red Army, still reeling from the Great Purge.

By 1941, the Nazis' rapid advance into Poland and hugely successful campaigns through the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, and into Yugoslavia and Greece had forced British troops back into England and left the European continent under Nazi and Soviet control. Russia would be the next clear target of any further Nazi aggression, but Stalin believed such an outcome was avoidable.

Then, on June 22, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa. By mid-October, the Red Army was in full retreat, and the Germans were on the doorstep of Leningrad and Moscow. Reeling from their setbacks, the Soviet Union formed an alliance with the United States and Britain, who provided the Red Army with much needed supplies. For the next two years, the two armies fought back and forth across the eastern front, often exchanging control of major Soviet cities like Kharkov. By 1944, the German army, overstretched and unprepared for a long-term war through Russian winters, had been pushed back to the edges of the Soviet Union. By spring of 1945, with the Americans and British advancing on Germany from the south and the west, the Red Army had pushed the Germans back through Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. In late April, the Red Army entered Berlin, and Hitler shot himself. Once Nazi Germany had surrendered, the Soviets, wartime allies of the United States, joined the ongoing fight against Japan, overrunning Manchuria and installing a Communist regime in North Korea.

On August 15, 1945—V-J Day—Japan surrendered, and World War II came to an end with Europe and the world looking radically different. Somewhere between 60 and 100 million had died worldwide. All of Eastern Europe had either been occupied by the Red Army (renamed in 1946 to the Soviet Army) or else had been

incorporated into the growing Soviet Union. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared in a speech that an "Iron Curtain" had descended across Europe.

In the Soviet Union alone, the death toll from World War II was between nine and eleven million military deaths and around another fourteen million civilian deaths.[37] 70,000 Russian villages had been razed, either during Operation Barbarossa, or during Stalin's "scorched earth" campaign to push the Germans back west.[38] 32,000 factories had also been destroyed, along with much of eastern Russia's fertile lands.

Though the atmosphere in post-War Russia seems to have been one of general hope, the beleaguered population were once more subjected to tightening controls on civilian life. During this period of "**High Stalinism**," the Communist Party cracked down further on all intellectuals who did not toe the party line. The result was a sort of bizarre pseudoscience and pseudohistory, which even went so far as to allege that the airplane and radio were Russian inventions.[39] Deportations of ethnic minorities (especially Germans, Tatars, and **Chechens**) also continued long after the "utility" of their purpose—to solidify Russia as part of the war effort—had elapsed.

Outside of Russia, the illusion of the Western–Soviet alliance continuing during peacetime was fading fast. In a coup in Prague 1948, a regional Soviet-backed Communist Party came to power in Czechoslovakia.[40] And, in 1949, Stalin attempted to blockade Berlin and force Western occupying powers out of the city to consolidate it under Soviet control. In the famed **Berlin Airlift**, the United States and United Kingdom began a

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[37] Research Starters: Worldwide Deaths in World War II." The National WWII Museum | New Orleans. Accessed September 22, 2024. https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/research-starters-worldwide-deaths-world-war.
[38] Davis, Mark. "How World War II Shaped Modern Russia." euronews. Accessed August 17, 2024. https://www.euronews.com/2015/05/04/how-world-war-ii-shaped-modern-russia.
[39] McCauley, M. , Dewdney, . John C. , Pipes, . Richard E. and Conquest, . Robert. "Soviet Union." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 19, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/place/Soviet-Union.
[40] The History of Czechoslovakia. "1948 Czechoslovak Coup d'état," December 8, 2018. https://scalar.usc.edu/works/dissolution-of-czechoslovakia/1948-czechoslovak-coup-dtat.

campaign of consistent air supply of food and fuel to blockaded Berlin. At the height of the Airlift, an American or British plane landed at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport every 45 seconds.[41]

During the Berlin Airlift, an American or British plane landed in blockaded Berlin every 45 seconds[42]

On May 11, 1949, Stalin lifted the blockade, but it was too late for Europe's fragile peace. During the blockade, twelve Western states—among them the U.S., U.K., France, Italy, and Canada—had formed the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**, or NATO. The aim of NATO was to block Soviet expansion and aggression in

[41] Office of the Historian, and Adam Howard, The Berlin Airlift, 1948-1949 §. Accessed 2024. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/berlin-airlift.
[42] Air Force, United States. *Berlin Airlift*. 2018. *Flickr*. https://www.flickr.com/photos/airmanmagazine/43684860525.

Europe. Under the new system, an attack against any NATO member nation would represent an attack against all member nations.[43] The **Cold War** had begun.

With the United States and the Soviet Union the world's two clear (and opposed) great powers, the Soviet Union prepared for a clash. The Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania signed their own mutual defense treaty in 1955. The so-called Warsaw Pact allowed for unified military command and a standing Soviet military presence in member states.

The race for the first nuclear bomb had already been won by the Americans, who had detonated a nuclear device at Los Alamos in July of 1945 and dropped two bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Imperial Japan in August, which combined killed upwards of 200,000 people.[44] A **Soviet Special Committee on the Atomic Bomb** chaired by Lavrentiy Beria produced its first product in 1949. On August 29, "**First Lightning**" tested a bomb in Kazakhstan with a yield (20 kilotons) roughly equivalent to the American **Trinity Test** in Los Alamos, New Mexico. By 1953, the Soviets had a **hydrogen bomb**, and one deliverable by plane, at that.[45]

Nevertheless, Stalin felt the Soviet Union to be in a weakened position relative to the United States, and so began a policy of proxy warfare abroad. When he authorized the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950, Stalin refused to provide Soviet troop support, which risked entangling the Soviet Union in a direct military confrontation with the United States. The front of Western–Soviet conflict was no longer Eastern Europe. Now, it was Korea, China, the Middle East, and South America.

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[43] Office of The Historian. "North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 1949." Accessed August 18, 2024. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato.
[44] "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Atomic Archive. Accessed September 25, 2024. https://www.atomicarchive.com/resources/documents/med/med_chp10.html.
[45] American Experience. "Soviet Tests." Accessed August 18, 2024. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/bomb-soviet-tests/.

At home, persecution of perceived political enemies continued. In the 1950s, the two groups particularly targeted were the Titoists and later the Jews. Stalin, a staunch antisemite, dropped the appearance of anti-Nazi Jewish solidarity for a new policy of Holocaust denial and executions of Jewish intellectuals. Stalin also began, in 1951, to turn against his closest allies. Many of Lavrentiy Beria's closest followers were purged. The wife of the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Vyacheslav Molotov, was imprisoned. Stalin even renamed the Russian Communist Party to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in which the Politburo was replaced by a Presidium of the Central Committee. A secret nine member Bureau of the Presidium formed in 1952 included Stalin, Beria, Stalin's assumed successor Georgy Malenkov, Marshal of the Soviet Union Nicholas Bulganin, and old-guard Party member Nikita Khruschev. Khruschev, witnessing Stalin's behavior, concluded he was no longer acting rationally. On March 5, 1953, with a new Purge in the planning, Joseph Stalin suffered a stroke and died.

In the aftermath of Stalin's death, Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, Bulganin, and Khruschev formed an unstable collective leadership body, with Malenkov as Chairman. When this system quickly broke down, Malenkov remained Prime Minister while his rival Khruschev became head of the Communist Party. Malenkov advocated amnesty for Stalin-era political prisoners and the promotion of higher living standards; Khruschev obliged, and arrested Beria, who had been plotting a coup. Beria, the former head of the NKVD, confessed to thousands of crimes, including hundreds of rapes, and was executed. In 1954, the NKVD was shut down, and the KGB (Committee of State Security) installed in its place. Where the NKVD had been an apparatus of control and suppression, the KGB leaned more toward espionage.

With Beria gone, Khruschev turned against Malenkov, opposing the latter's preferred intensive agriculture for Khruschev's preferred system of extensive agriculture. By luck (few droughts) as much as anything else, Khruschev's plan worked. Khruschev also pursued a more confrontational nuclear policy than Malenkov,

who believed in mutually assured destruction. By 1955, Malenkov was sufficiently unpopular among both the public and the party, and he was forced to resign as Prime Minister, replaced by Khruschev's puppet, Bulganin.

With his power now unchecked, Khruschev began a campaign for peace, negotiating controversial treaties with Yugoslavia and Austria, with the Soviet Army withdrawing from the latter. Khruschev also met with U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Geneva in a generally convivial summit. Khruschev remained the face of communist expansion worldwide, however, and expressed his support for communism in Burma and Afghanistan.

Domestically, Khruschev aimed at a policy of "de-Stalinization:" espousing humane socialism and attempting to confront the extent of Stalin's crimes. However, Khruschev maintained Stalinism's structures: the planned economy and the Party's control on power and society. The effect of de-Stalinization within the Eastern Bloc was dire for Moscow. Local communists yearned for separation from Stalin and the Soviet System, and the Soviet Army violently suppressed a communist uprising in Hungary in 1956. An anti-Soviet communist uprising in Poland was only narrowly avoided. Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong and Khruschev both saw themselves as ideological successors to Stalin, and a rivalry between the two men threatened relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

But popular support only mattered so much for Khruschev. When the Presidium confronted him about his leadership in 1957, Khruschev used the support of Marshal Georgy Zhukov to put down the attempted takeover. Molotov and Malenkov were removed from power, and a year later, Khruschev was named Prime Minister.

This was, arguably, the height of Nikita Khruschev and of the Soviet Union's glory. On August 26, 1967, the Soviet Union shocked the world by announcing the successful launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile. On October 4 and November 3, the Soviet Union launched the first ever satellites, Sputnik 1 and Sputnik 2, the

latter with a dog on board. In 1961, Soviet Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space. The Russians were winning the space race, and Khruschev poured huge sums into rocket development. However, he was overconfident and perhaps rash, and essentially goaded the United States into a technological confrontation that the Soviet Union had neither the funds nor the scientific manpower to win.

A year later, Khruschev's confrontational attitude toward the United States almost turned the Cold War hot during the **Cuban Missile Crisis**. U.S.–Soviet relations were already especially tense following the construction of the **Berlin Wall** by **East Germany** in 1961. In July of 1962, U.S. intelligence was alerted to the shipment of Soviet ballistic missiles to **Cuba**, a country that Khruschev had promised to defend following its Communist revolution two years prior. If launched from Cuba, such missiles could hit the Eastern Seaboard within minutes. Khruschev had wrongly believed that the U.S. would allow the shipments, but U.S. President John F. Kennedy considered options as extreme as an immediate American invasion of Cuba. He opted instead for a total naval blockade of the island. By October 8, Khruschev had capitulated, agreeing to remove all missiles back to the Soviet Union.[46] The world had narrowly avoided nuclear war.

It was the beginning of the end for Nikita Khruschev, whose political opponents seized on a perceived Soviet defeat in Cuba to paint Khruschev within the Party as weak and ineffectual. Adding to that, domestic gross national product growth, agricultural growth, and industrial output had all slowed to a crawl (for heavily disputed reasons). In October of 1964, the Presidium led by Chairman Leonid Brezhnev voted to oust Khruschev. Shortly thereafter, he was indicted on fifteen counts, many of them absurd, though accurate: of making hasty and ill-considered decisions, of regarding himself as an expert on everything he came into contact with, of being insensitive in foreign affairs, among others.

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[46] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Cuban missile crisis." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 9, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/event/Cuban-missile-crisis.

Khruschev's rule ultimately changed the direction of the Soviet Union permanently, even if Brezhnev would aim to chart a decidedly different path from his predecessor. Under Khruschev, the Soviet Union began its long and hardfought democratization and a slow westernization. It was Khruschev too, who began to strip away the Soviet bureaucracy—a crucial part of Stalinist totalitarianism but one that crippled Soviet economic growth. And it was Khruschev, perhaps the last Soviet leader to be a true believer in Communism, who initiated the collapse of the Communist Party.

Leonid Brezhnev, Communist Party First Secretary succeeding Khruschev, was aided by First Deputy Premier Aleksey Kosygin and President Nikolay Podgorny in attempting to reverse many of Khruschev's policies. (Slowly but surely, Kosygin and Podgorn would fade, and, by 1977, Brezhnev would be ruling alone.) He quietly shifted away from Khruschev's policy of ethnic tolerance toward a vision for Russian domination of the Soviet Union; in particular, under Brezhnev, the Communist Party became more Russian, and Russian culture and language were prioritized in education across the Soviet Union. Brezhnev also re-centralized power, rolled back Khruschev-era controls on tenure, and tried to revitalize Russian agriculture and heavy industry.

By this point, however, the Soviet economy was effectively so large and complex that individual socialist programs could no longer achieve the aims of any of the Soviet Union's leaders. And Russia's economy, unreformed, was floundering. Growth in all sectors except space and the military was essentially stagnant, an oil boom was being squandered, and the Soviet Union relied on large annual imports of American grain to feed much of its population. The quality of education, medical care, and social services were in decline, and the standard of living plateaued in the 1970s. The planned economy faltered, and the black market stepped in to plug the gaps, with corruption growing especially among Party officials.

Overseas, Brezhnev pursued a more interventionist foreign policy. As relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China soured, Brezhnev extended military aid to India, Pakistan, and **North**

Vietnam in an effort to curb Chinese influence. Seeking renewed influence in the Arab world, the Soviet Union began arming Egypt. Moscow toppled an East German leader—Walter Ulbricht—and replaced him with Erich Honecker, who Brezhnev believed was less likely to capitulate to West Germany. And, in August of 1968 in Czechoslovakia, where local leaders were pursuing the more democratic "**socialism with a human face**," Brezhnev led a Warsaw Pact Invasion.[47] This was the beginning of the **Brezhnev Doctrine** of a foreign policy: Moscow—and Moscow alone—decided when socialism was under threat. By 1978, communist North Vietnam had defeated South Vietnam. Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Afghanistan were all ruled by communist leaders. Soviet foreign policy under Leonid Brezhnev seemed to be working.

Leonid Brezhnev advocated a highly interventionist foreign policy[48]

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[47] Office of the Historian, "Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968," U.S. Department of State, accessed September 28, 2024, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/soviet-invasion-czechoslavkia#:~:text=On%20August%2020%2C%201968%2C%20the,unity%20of%20the%20communist%20bloc.

[48] *Leonid Brezhnev, 1972*. 2022. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonid_Brezhnev,_1972_%28color%29.png.

Overall, Brezhnev's rule also marked an easing of Cold War tensions during the "détente" period; the United States and Soviet engaged in increased trade and began the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in 1972, which recognized the infeasibility of nuclear war. In 1975, the United States and 33 European governments including the Soviet Union signed the Helsinki Accords, recognizing post-World-War-II European borders and determining that human rights in each European state were the concerns of all states. But, in 1979, fearing the rise of anti-Soviet revolutionaries in Afghanistan, Brezhnev intervened. It would prove to be the turning point for Brezhnev and the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union.

Believing their Afghan allies to be under threat from Islamist and anti-communist rebels, the Soviet Union deployed 30,000 Soviet Army troops to Afghanistan in 1979. Despite this influx of military power, Islamic guerilla resistance, known as the Afghan Mujahideen, proved fierce, and the Soviet–Afghan War was soon mired in a stalemate. In 1979, U.S. President Jimmy Carter responded to the Soviet invasion with an embargo on grain exports, and Carter's successor in 1980, President Ronald Reagan, vowed a massive increase in American defense spending. By 1982, the floundering Brezhnev was dead of heart failure. His successor was former KGB Chief Yuri Andropov.

Soviet troops were able to gain control of Afghanistan's cities but lacked a foothold in rural areas. In an attempt to reduce the support base for the Mujahideen, Brezhnev instructed the Soviet presence—now more than 100,000 troops, helicopters, and tanks—to launch an extensive bombing campaign against civilians in rural areas. The campaign resulted in a refugee crisis that saw over four million Afghans flee the country into Pakistan and Iran.[49] The United States then launched a covert war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, funneling billions of dollars of Soviet-style anti-aircraft, anti-tank, and city combat weaponry into Afghanistan through Israel,

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[49] Taylor, Alan. "The Soviet War in Afghanistan, 1979-1989." *The Atlantic* . 2014. https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2014/08/the-soviet-war-in-afghanistan-1979-1989/100786/.

Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. **Operation Cyclone** was the most expensive covert operation in American history, and indicative of Reagan's vow to combat the Soviet Union on all fronts (though the CIA and Congressman Charles Wilson were the real authors of the plan). By 1989, the 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan would be summoned back across the border into Russia, leaving behind three million dead, including 15,000 soviet troops.[50] It was the first true defeat of the Soviet Army, an indication of the Soviet Union's waning power, and the state's final foreign intervention.

Domestically, things were not much better. During the late Brezhnev era, the Soviet Union ran an unsustainable deficit due in large part to the war in Afghanistan. Reagan's increased military spending had made Soviet leaders hesitant to cut back their own military spending for fear of falling further behind, and other critical sectors suffered.[51] Yuri Andropov was a cautious reformer—a full believer in the Soviet Union's system of command economics who thought what the country needed was not change so much as energy and initiative. By this point, however, the Soviet economy was in a death spiral, and it could not be saved by partial measures—Andropov was unwilling to fully abandon the planned economy and only half-heartedly pursued a withdrawal from Afghanistan. Andropov himself died in 1984, replaced by terminally-ill **Konstantin Chernenko**, Brezhnev's unsuccessful desired successor. The most notable moment of Chernenko's tenure—marked mostly by his being away or unfit—was his decision to shoot down **Korean Air Lines Flight 007**, which had crossed into Russian airspace, killing all 269 passengers and crew on board.[52] The incident resparked tensions between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, though tensions quickly subsided, and Chernenko died in 1985. After a brief and bloodless power struggle, the young but experienced **Mikhail Gorbachev** was elected General Secretary of the Communist

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[50] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," July 29, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/event/Soviet-invasion-of-Afghanistan.

[51] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Leonid Brezhnev." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 13, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Leonid-Ilich-Brezhnev.

[52] Victor Belenko. "What Really Happened to KAL Flight 007." *Reader's Digest*, January 1984. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00552R000100490002-7.pdf.

Party in 1985. He was the first Soviet leader born after the country's founding, and he would be the final Soviet leader.

Mikhail Gorbachev would prove to be one of the more transformational figures in Russia's long history. He ruled with two primary goals: to restore the Soviet Union's depressed economy and to reform the country's deeply corrupt political system. Once in power, Gorbachev replaced more than half of the Central Committee with a slate of new, moderate reformers, among them Boris Yeltsin, and introduced two new policy initiatives: glasnost and perestroika.

Glasnost, meaning openness, was a policy of liberalization. Under Gorbachev's leadership, the USSR expanded freedom of information, and for the first time in the country's history, partial criticism of the state was tolerated. On April 26, 1986, glasnost was fully tested when an explosion at the **Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant** set in motion the costliest disaster—to the tune of 700 billion dollars—in human history. Initially, Gorbachev waited eighteen days to speak about the disaster to a national audience on television. Later, he expressed little remorse at the delay, though he proposed a number of steps for international atomic energy security.[53]

Perestroika, meaning restructuring, was a series of political and economic reforms. The Soviet Union introduced multicandidate elections for some government posts, and in 1988, created a bicameral legislature known as the Congress of People's Deputies. The Congress was elected, carried substantial legislative power, and by 1989 was no longer exclusively Communist—some seats were held by regional or nationalist politicians. Further, Perestroika allowed for limited economic reforms, most notably the removal of price controls for certain goods. This was the most significant step away from state-run communism the Soviet Union had attempted to

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[53] Platt, Nicholas, 230. Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Platt) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Poindexter) § (1986). https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1981-88v05/d230.

take, but it was met with harsh opposition by moderate reformers and by bureaucrats who sought to maintain control over the national economy. Since Stalin's death, and as shown by Khruschev's removal, the central Party had lost power—which was dispersed to lower level regional party officials. These bureaucrats were able to influence the direction of the amorphous perestroika, leading to selective implementation and corruption.

Gorbachev was losing his grip on the Party, the nation, and the set of policies he had initiated. In the end, the process of democratization, demilitarization, and westernization he had set in motion would prove successful, with one casualty: the Soviet Union, whose 70 year history of command economics, secrecy, and insularity was incompatible with Gorbachev's realization of necessary change. By 1991, the Soviet Union would be no more.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union

Glasnost and Perestroika ushered in a new era of radical nationalist movements that Mikhail **Gorbachev** had not foreseen. This wave of politicized nationalism was a major catalyst for the unrest and divisions within the Communist Party that precipitated the Soviet Union's demise.[54] In 1987, Crimean Tatars held massive peaceful protests in Red Square to express a wish to win their right of return to their homeland. Armenians in **Karabakh** in Azerbaijan protested for a merger with the neighboring Republic of Armenia beginning in 1988. This eventually led to backlash by Azerbaijanis who pillaged and murdered Armenians in the industrial town of Sumgait in Karabakh. Conflicts between majority and minority nationalities would continue for years throughout Soviet controlled Moldavia (present day Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine), Georgia, and Kirghizia (present day Kyrgyzstan).[55] Anti-Soviet, pro-independence parties also began cropping up in most of the Warsaw Pact states, and in particular in the Batic states.

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[54] Beissinger, Mark R. *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet state*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
[55] Ibid.

Gorbachev's reforms allowed for elections with a multi-party system as well as a presidency, and slowly democratized the Soviet Union, leading to the collapse of the Communist party control, and eventually (though not intentionally) to the collapse of the Soviet Union as a whole. By 1989, the wave of nationalist movements had weakened Soviet control, with glasnost allowing nationalists to become explicit in their attacks on Russian superiority and calls from West Germany for free elections spreading into protests in East Germany in early November. On November 9th, 1989, the **Berlin Wall** finally fell, marking the symbolic destruction of the Iron Curtain.[56]

At the same time, political tension between old-guard Communists and pro-democracy reformists increased in Moscow when Boris Yeltsin was brought into Moscow by Gorbachev himself to run the city's party machine. Yeltsin's presence caused so much conflict that eventually he was removed from the position in late 1987 and only returned to Moscow after being elected deputy from Moscow to the Congress of People's Deputies. Tactful and spiteful, he used this position to attack Gorbachev, the Communist Party, corruption, and perestroika's failures. Yeltsin advertised a strong sense of support for Russian nationalism, complaining that the Soviet government had destroyed the Russian environment and economy in order to maintain their power over the poorer people of Russia.[57]

In 1990, the Congress of People's Deputies elected then-General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev as the new president of the Soviet Union. However, his time in office was short-lived. Facing intense criticism from both Boris Yeltsin and hard-line Communists, the former for not enacting reforms quickly enough, and the latter for moving away from Marxist principles at all, Gorbachev was on political thin ice.[58]After demanding ethnic Russian

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Riasanovsky, N. V. , Raeff, . Marc , Seton-Watson, . Hugh , McCauley, . Martin , Dewdney, . John C. , Vodovozov, . Sergey Arsentyevich , Medvedkov, . Olga L. , Medvedkov, . Yuri V. , Wachtel, . Andrew B. , Hosking, . Geoffrey Alan , Keenan, . Edward Louis , Taruskin, . Richard , Lieven, . Dominic and Hellie, . Richard. "Russia." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 1, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia.

[58] ("Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations - Office of the Historian", n.d.)

control over the RSFSR and its resources, Yeltsin and his nationalist supporters declared Russia's sovereignty in June of 1990. The now allegedly-independent Russian parliament enacted radical economic reforms and sought the dissolution of the Soviet Union.[59]

In August 1991, an attempt was made by Communist Party hard-liners known as the "gang of eight" to seize control of the Soviet Union by holding Gorbachev captive. While Gorbachev was under house arrest, the perpetrators of the coup declared that the president was ill and unable to fulfill his duties. Consequently, Soviet Vice President and gang-of-eight ally Gennady Yanayev assumed the presidential powers and began to ban protests and impose censorship on the press. The coup lacked popular support, however, and Russian President Yeltsin went to the Russian White House, where he rallied thousands of Muscovites who had gathered outside and begun to erect barricades to protest the coup. Standing atop a tank in one of the defining images of the Soviet Union's collapse, Yeltsin condemned the coup and called for an immediate general strike of workers. Within two days, under pressure from the Orthodox Church, Yeltsin, the KGB, parts of the Soviet Army, and U.S. President George H.W. Bush, the gang of eight abandoned a plan to storm the White House, released Gorbachev, and attempted to flee. They were arrested and ridiculed, a clear indicator that public support for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was dwindling.

[59] Riasanovsky, N. V. et al.

Boris Yeltsin was the ultimate victor after the unsuccessful Gang of Eight coup attempt[60]

Although unsuccessful in its original aim, the coup had serious repercussions for Gorbachev, undermining him and his political allies and demonstrating the weakened grip of the Soviet Union over member nations. The gang of eight, who had aimed to combat a push for Russian sovereignty within the Soviet Union, actually achieved the opposite: strengthening Yeltsin and his calls for a sovereign Russian state. On August 24, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as general secretary, and Yeltsin took over, a great and penultimate step toward the demise of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Outside of Russia, the Soviet Union's hold on the Soviet Republics had rapidly weakened. In 1991, Lithuania—eager to seize the moment lest another hard-line coup in Moscow prove successful—became the first Soviet Republic to challenge the Soviet Union with a declaration of independence on March 11, 1990. A week

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[60] *Boris Yeltsin 22 August 1991*. 2008. *Wikimedia*. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Boris_Yeltsin_22_August_1991-1.jpg.

later, the Lithuanians further stood their ground as they rejected a Soviet ultimatum to renounce their independence. As a result, Gorbachev issued economic sanctions, sent Soviet troops to occupy the capital city of Vilnius, and finally launched a large-scale military operation against Lithuania. However, Lithuania's cry for independence was heard and followed in December of 1991 by eleven other Soviet Republics. The game was up—the Soviet Army could perhaps put down an individual Republic's push for independence, but the Soviet Union was powerless to stop a mass exodus. On December 8, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus declared that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist and formed a loose post-Warsaw-Pact alliance: the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as president of the Soviet Union. Having lost complete control both domestically and internationally, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formally dissolved the following day.[61] Gorbachev, who had received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990 for "the leading role he played in the radical changes in East-West relations," remained outspoken and a proud patriot. But after his resignation, he largely faded from politics, launching a **Russian Federation** presidential campaign in 1996 but finishing seventh with only half a percent of the vote. He died in 2022.

The Russian Federation—formerly the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic—replaced the Soviet Union on the UN Security Council. Soviet Embassies became Russian embassies. The Soviet Army was placed under the control of the CIS (which had since expanded to include many of the former Soviet Republics), though the CIS's member states quickly developed separate national militaries. Soviet nuclear warheads remained in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, and all but Russia declared their intention to destroy their nuclear arsenals.

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[61] Office of The Historian. "The Collapse of the Soviet Union." Accessed August 18, 2024. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/collapse-soviet-union.

Yeltsin, head of the Russian Federation since the state's inception, faced a tidal wave of political and social changes and the threat of immediate economic collapse. He quickly ended **price controls** and **government subsidies** and privatized Russian industries, aiming Russia toward a quick transition to capitalism. The government under Yeltsin also implemented a voucher system, through which every Russian citizen (in theory) had the ability to invest in Russian privatization. Each citizen received a voucher worth 10,000 rubles, however, few Russians were educated on how to wisely invest the voucher sum. These initial reforms mostly failed to improve standards of living for Russian citizens, save for a small few in Moscow. Social services, previously provided through now crumbling infrastructure, collapsed, as crime and corruption continued to rise in this period of "bandit capitalism." Yeltsin's popularity, once stably high amongst the people of Russia, began to falter.[62]

In the political sphere, Yeltsin utilized a divide-and-rule strategy in order to maintain his own power and authority. This cleverly encouraged the rise of various factions, who focused their attention on attacking each other rather than Yeltsin. Determined to remain above the distractions he had created, Yeltsin declared that the presidency should remain a position free from party lines. Nevertheless, with clashes between political parties extending across the new government, Yeltsin and Ruslan Khasbulatov, the head of the new Russian Parliament, came to be at odds over who held the final say in the Russian Federation. Russia's economic crisis, seemingly without end or remedy, strained Yeltsin's grip on power and set the stage for simultaneous attempts by Khasbulatov and Yeltsin to completely rework the old system with the boldest of reforms: a new Russian constitution.

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[62] Hellie, R. , Hosking, . Geoffrey Alan , Lieven, . Dominic , Vodovozov, . Sergey Arsentyevich , McCauley, . Martin , Raeff, . Marc , Seton-Watson, . Hugh , Medvedkov, . Olga L. , Dewdney, . John C. , Medvedkov, . Yuri V. , Taruskin, . Richard , Wachtel, . Andrew B. , Riasanovsky, . Nicholas V. and Keenan, . Edward Louis. "Russia." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 25, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia.

Russia in 1993

Ethnography

In order to have a more accurate understanding of Russia's politics in 1993, it is essential to study the surrounding culture and society. We will attempt to give you a brief overview of Russia's ethnography through a few paragraphs depicting Russian culture through its lands, peoples, and arts.

Land and People

As the largest country in the world, Russia stretches over eleven time zones, a myriad of different landscapes, and over 120 ethnic groups with various religious and cultural traditions. From arctic deserts to tundra, forest zones, and a variety of bodies of water and permafrost, Russia's geographic landscapes are simultaneously relentless and brimming with resources.[63]

Ethnic Russians make up over eighty percent of the total population in Russia, with the rest comprising more than 120 ethnic groups speaking more than 100 different languages. Representation of these groups is somewhat politically incorporated in the form of 21 minority republics and 10 autonomous districts. Many ethnic groups are small, and only six groups have over a million members each (the Tatars, Ukrainians, Chuvash, Bashkir, Chechens, and Armenians). Russia's ethnic differences have frequently resulted in political repression and conflict, most notably in Chechnya and Dagestan. Over the course of the 20th century, Russian ethnic minorities have increasingly demanded autonomy or even complete sovereignty and independence.[64]

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[63] Hellie, R. , Keenan, . Edward Louis , Riasanovsky, . Nicholas V. , Vodovozov, . Sergey Arsentyevich , Seton-Watson, . Hugh , Taruskin, . Richard , Wachtel, . Andrew B. , Raeff, . Marc , Medvedkov, . Olga L. , Dewdney, . John C. , Medvedkov, . Yuri V. , Lieven, . Dominic , Hosking, . Geoffrey Alan and McCauley, . Martin. "Russia." Encyclopedia Britannica, September 25, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia.

[64] Hellie, et al. "Russia."

The Russian Orthodox Church was relentlessly targeted by the Soviet Communist Party[65]

When it comes to religion, the Russian Orthodox Church has been the dominant institution of Russia since Prince Vladimir I's reign in the 10th century. In the 20th century, however, the Bolshevik Revolution overturned much of the Church's authority. Many monks were turned out of their monasteries, and much of the Church's land was seized by the government. Being openly Christian was considered to be in direct conflict with Communist Party membership, and religious practice was heavily discouraged, especially during the purges of the 1930s. Gradually, however, Soviet crack-downs on religion subsided. During the Second World War, open expression of religion was briefly permitted, as it was perceived as opposing fascism and therefore beneficial for the war effort. And later, under glasnost in the 1980s, open practice of religion was again permitted. The dissolution of the Soviet Union shortly thereafter further aided in the normalization of open religious practice, especially by members of the Russian Orthodox Church, and other prominent branches of Christianity, most notably the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church. By the 1990s, Russian nationalist groups had reidentified the Russian Orthodox Church as a major element of Russian culture.[66]

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[65] Delso, Diego. *Catedral de Alejandro Nevsky, Tallin, Estonia, 2012*. 2012. *Wikimedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Catedral_de_Alejandro_Nevsky,_Tallin,_Estonia,_2012-08-11,_DD_46.JPG.
[66] Ibid.

Daily Life and Cultural Life

Russian arts have had great international influence as well, producing works through a long list of some the most famous authors, playwrights, and musicians of all time (e.g. Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekov, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky). [67] Russian culture developed from roots in Slavic culture in the first century, and continued growing through the Kievan (ca. 988 to 1200 A.D.) and Muscovite periods (ca. 1200 to 1700 A.D.). Modern Russian culture emerged in poetry and prose fiction in the 18th century, presenting a blend of many European genres on the Russian cultural landscape.

The Soviet era brought about new restrictions by the Soviet government on cultural expression. Despite the restrictions during the Soviet era, Russian artists, musicians, and writers continued to produce internationally renowned works throughout the 20th century. Post-World War II, involvement in the Olympic Games was a great source of national pride for the Soviet Union.

During Gorbachev's reign as General Secretary and President, freedoms brought along with glasnost and perestroika enabled the reemergence of Russian cultural expression in religion, folkways, traditions, and more. Beginning in the mid-1980s, many Russian painters gained international recognition, and later in the decade, many emigrated from their homeland as a result of their success. Musicians that had left the restrictive environment built by the Soviet Union returned to Russia, such as Mstislav Rostropovich and Vladamir Horowitz. In the beginning of the 1990s, Russian art and culture experienced a revival and flourishing thanks in large part to political democratization.[68]

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[67] Vodovozov, S. Arsentyevich , Seton-Watson, . Hugh , Medvedkov, . Yuri V. , Hellie, . Richard , Hosking, . Geoffrey Alan , McCauley, . Martin , Keenan, . Edward Louis , Lieven, . Dominic , Medvedkov, . Olga L. , Wachtel, . Andrew B. , Dewdney, . John C. , Riasanovsky, . Nicholas V. , Raeff, . Marc and Taruskin, . Richard. "Russia." Encyclopedia Britannica, September 25, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia.
[68] Ibid.

Political Structure

In 1993, the Post-Soviet Russia governmental structure is new and extremely unstable, creating a treacherous and potent political landscape within which the leaders of Russia (you!) are to work. On December 31st, 1991, the USSR officially dissolved, leaving the Russian Federation to lead the Russian people and remaining territories. Following the Soviet Union's collapse and the independence of the Russian Federation, great pressure was placed on the government of former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to save Russia from economic collapse. A failed political coup in August 1991 proved the last straw for Gorbachev's administration and ushered in Boris Yeltsin as the new President of the Russian Federation in December.[69]

The Russian Federation is currently governed by the Russian Constitution of 1978, written to incorporate many aspects of the Brezhnev Constitution adopted across the Soviet Union the year prior. Central federal authority in the new Russian Federation was held jointly by a legislative and an executive branch in a parliamentary system. During this time, the struggle for authority between the two branches of government precipitated conflicts which would climax in September 1993, when President Boris Yeltsin dissolved the Congress of People's Deputies—the democratically elected body tasked with approving the prime minister, electing the Parliament (called the Supreme Soviet), and appointing the Constitutional Court. In December 1993, a new constitution was proposed by Yeltsin outlining new specific duties and powers of the executive and legislative branches. This is the constitution that you now have the liberty of writing, somewhat from scratch.

Economic Struggles

In 1986, the first change under perestroika came when the Soviet Union allowed state-run companies to conduct international trade with greater autonomy. Two years later, the Law on State Enterprises took effect, reducing the state monitoring of managers of state-run enterprises and increasing their freedom to operate. Later,

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[69] Ibid.

the Soviet Union approved the Law on Cooperatives, which legalized small private enterprises and allowed managers of state-run enterprises to personally purchase them. However, the effects of the reforms were limited. In 1990, 90% of Soviet employees still worked in state-run enterprises, and a further 8% worked for collective farms.[70]

In 1991, the Soviet economy experienced a crisis. High social spending combined with low tax revenue led to dramatic increases in the national **deficit**. To make up the difference, the central bank issued credit and financed it by drawing from its currency reserves. However, this was not enough to alleviate the crisis, and the government of the Soviet Union **defaulted** on loan payments, undercutting their ability to borrow further. Worst of all, most prices remained fixed, and with dramatic reductions in the value of the **Ruble**, the country experienced extreme shortages.[71]

In 1988, the Soviet Union had been the world's largest command economy, with a **GDP** equivalent to 554 billion 2019 United States Dollars. By 1993, Russia's GDP was a mere $435 billion, wiping out over ten years of economic gains. Per capita income declined to only $2,931 per year, a decline of 23% from $3,778 only five years earlier.[72] Between June 1991 and June 1993, three million Russians lost their jobs. Making matters worse, in 1992 and 1993, **hyperinflation** exceeded an annual rate of 1,000%.

In 1993, the Russian government under Yeltsin decided to embrace the transition to market economics, with the goal of transitioning state run enterprises to private ownership, decontrolling prices, reducing inflation, and increasing productivity. However, the starting position—a severe recession, hyperinflation, and rising

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[70] Stanley Fischer. "Stabilization and Economic Reform in Russia." Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Accessed August 18, 2024. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/1992/01/1992a_bpea_fischer_summers_nordhaus.pdf.

[71] Aslund, Anders. *Why has Russia's economic transformation been so arduous?*. Annual World Bank, 1999.

[72] "Russia GDP 1960-2024." Accessed August 18, 2024. https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/RUS/russia/gdp-gross-domestic-product#google_vignette.

poverty—made for unpleasant tradeoffs for the Russian government. Many issues remained, including how far to go in privatizing industry, which prices, if any, should remain controlled, whether and how to reform the currency, and how to balance tradeoffs between growing the economy, balancing the budget, reducing inflation, and reducing inequality. These are all questions you will have to tackle head-on.

Crime and Violence

In the early 1990s, Russia experienced a sharp spike in criminal activity, with the crime rate increasing nearly 100% between 1985 and 1992. A chief driver of this increase was the economic collapse that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Millions of Russians lost their jobs, and due to severe shortages, many Russians feared starvation.

These conditions contributed to a dramatic increase in the crime rate, including homicides, robberies, and assaults. By 1993, there were over 25,000 homicides and attempted homicides, up from just over 10,000 in 1986. Although much of the rise was connected to organized crime and politics, the majority was not. The rise in crime was sharpest among Russia's youth, who were hardest hit by the economic downturn, earning less than their older counterparts.

Even more significant, perhaps, is the rise of Russian organized crime. During the Soviet era, organized crime was primarily centered around the abuse of power by bureaucrats in the Soviet government and the Communist party, who used their positions to favor themselves and their associates. When it became clear to Communist Party officials that their power was eroding, many chose to embezzle party funds to use for new business and criminal enterprises. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a number of organized crime organizations cropped up, engaging in rampant fraud and racketeering. This poses a challenge for privatization,

as corrupt former Soviet officials have the most financial resources to purchase state-owned assets.[73] Making matters worse, the economic collapse has led to rampant corruption, since public officials and law enforcement officers were forced to rely on bribes to make a living. This creates a difficulty for the new Russian government in trying to combat organized crime, since law enforcement agencies cannot always be counted upon to fulfill their duties.

[73] National Institute of Justice, James O Finckenauer, and Yuri A Voronin, The Threat of Russian Organized Crime § (2001). https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/187085.pdf.

A New Constitution

Informing Texts of Note

Drafting laws is a tricky business, drafting constitutions doubly so. They are crucial documents, but also fragile ones, and last on average only seventeen years![74] Even the United States Constitution, which at 235 years of age is quite an outlier globally, was actually the country's second attempt at a constitution. Given the gravity and challenge, constitution drafters often rely on existing constitutions to inform their efforts—the (short-lived) Weimar Constitution of 1919 borrowed heavily from the U.S. Constitution, for example, and the Indian Constitution of 1950 drew inspiration from republican French constitutions.

What the below constitutions should provide you, then, is inspiration and something of an outline. What sorts of things should a constitution include? How should a constitution be written? The first four constitutions discussed below were the constitutions most studied by delegates at the 1993 constitutional convention. The fifth is Boris Yeltsin's proposed constitution for the new Russian Federation. Do not feel constrained by these documents; they are merely guidelines. And don't forget that no matter how robust and prepared your constitution is, it will inevitably be challenged by the unforeseen and myriad problems that arise in modern societies. Your goal is to provide a framework from which the new government can address such problems.

Mikhail Speransky's Russian Constitutional Plan of 1809

Mikhail Speransky was born in 1772 in central Russia, the son of a priest. Thanks to his sharp intellect, Speransky became a professor of philosophy and theology by the age of 23. After studying the French Enlightenment and Emmanuel Kant under a prince's tutelage, he then rose quickly through the ranks of the Russian imperial bureaucracy. By 1808, he was one of Tsar Alexander I's closest advisors, called the "the only clear

[74] Thomas Ginsburg, Zachary Elkins, and James Melton. "The Lifespan of Written Constitutions." The University of Chicago Law School. Accessed August 18, 2024. https://www.law.uchicago.edu/news/lifespan-written-constitutions.

head in Russia" by Napoleon Bonaparte during a visit to France.[75] A year later, on the order of Alexander I, Speransky proposed his *Introduction to the Implementation of National Laws*, a bold, yet unsuccessful, constitutional plan that would come to be known as the "**Plan of 1809**."

In drafting his proposed constitution, Speransky took care to preserve the two Russian institutions with which he knew Nicholas I would refuse to part: the **autocracy** and serfdom. (It is vital, in constitution drafting, to understand what elements of a state might be inflexible or intransigent.) As contemporaneous Russian historian Nikolay Karamzin wrote, Speransky's thinking was as follows: "This work is great, but it is of such a quality that it cannot be entrusted to many. One person must be the main, true creator of the Russian Code; others can serve him only as advisers, assistants, workers ... Here unity of thought is necessary for the perfection of the parts and the whole; unity of will is necessary for success."[76]

Chiefly, Speransky's plan sought to introduce a separation of powers—in a liberal system somewhat reminiscent of the U.S. constitutional system—between central and local government, and between the three branches: **executive**, **legislative**, and **judicial**. All three branches of government were to derive their power from the tsar. That said, Speransky wrote that the constitutional monarchy should be kept in check by public opinion.[77] In his 1802 *On the Fundamental Laws of the State*, he also wrote that the powers of the monarchy needed to be limited by society—ideally by an informed and capable nobility.

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[75] Clarkson, J. Dunsmore. "Mikhail Mikhaylovich, Count Speransky." Encyclopedia Britannica, April 9, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mikhail-Mikhaylovich-Graf-Speransky.

[76] Presidential Library. "Mikhail Speransky in the Presidential Library's Collections: '... Laws without Morals Cannot Have Full Effect,'" January 12, 2019. https://www.prlib.ru/en/news/1174954#:~:text=In%201803%2C%20on%20behalf%20of,a%20supporter%20of%20the%20gradual.

[77] Wordpress. Accessed 2024. https://missionimpossiblewarandpeace.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/mikhail_speransky1.pdf.

For the legislative branch, Speransky proposed a hierarchical system of dumas, or legislative assemblies. Cantonal peasant communities would elect district dumas, which would in turn elect provincial dumas, which would finally elect the Duma of the Empire. However, voting and office-holding was tied to landowning, and the tsar also continued to possess tremendous legislative power—**legislative initiative** and an absolute veto.[78] A small advisory body known as the State Council—picked by the tsar—served as the intermediary between the autocrat and the Duma and as the tsar's legislative body.

The power of the executive branch would remain invested fully in the tsar, though Speransky aimed also to modernize the process of policy making in Russia, which at the time was conducted largely by bureaucratic tsar-aligned ministries (War, Maritime, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Interior, Finance, Commerce, National Education). The ministries were often uncertain of or overlapping in their duties, and lacked enforcement power. Under Speransky's proposed system, the ministries were to be reorganized, and the roles of individual ministries to be clearly and specifically outlined.

Mikhail Speransky also understood the interconnectedness of government and the economy, even in the early nineteenth century. To him and contemporaneous progressives, constitutional reform presupposed long term financial stability, and such stability could never be guaranteed by a weak or corruptible political system.[79] Speransky therefore proposed a **silver standard** and a free silver bank.

Speransky's bold reform plan would prove successful by fits and starts. Ministerial reform was generally accomplished, and the State Council established. Local legislatures would be a gradual product of the nineteenth

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[78] Vitaly Yu. Zakharov, Anna N. Ivanova, Irina N. Velmozhko, and Olga B. Chirikova. "Why Didn't Russia Become a Constitutional Monarchy in the XIX Century?" *Amazonia Investiga* 9, no. 25 (October 20, 2019). https://core.ac.uk/download/328005508.pdf.

[79] Pravilova, Ekaterina. *The Ruble: A Political History*. Oxford University Press, 2023.

century. An empire-wide Duma was created in 1905. None of Speransky's economic reforms would come into being. He died in 1839.

Stalin's Soviet Constitution of 1936

In the midst of his Great Purge of the 1930s, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin introduced a new Soviet constitution (technically after a period of public discussion and advisory). This was a project with two main aims: the consolidation of socialist principles and the projection of an attractive Soviet image. "The Stalin Constitution," as it quickly came to be known, would prove to be the state's longest-lasting constitution, only replaced in 1977 by Leonid Brehznev. All aspects of the constitution should be taken with several grains of salt—a number of them were mere gestures intended to disguise Stalin's true ambitions. The constitution nevertheless marked a progressive turn for the Soviet Union, especially in its implementation after Stalin's death in 1953.

The Soviet Constitution of 1936 consisted of 13 chapters and 146 articles. Under the constitution, the highest body of the Soviet Union was the legislative Supreme Soviet of the USSR, elected every four years. True power, then, resided in the newly created Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, with Stalin at its head. The country's central executive body would be the Soviet of People's Commissars of the USSR, however this body was subservient to the legislature.

Under the new system, all Soviet citizens, regardless of race or ethnicity, possessed equal protections under the law, the right to vote by private ballot, and the right to hold office as a member of the Communist Party. Citizens were guaranteed housing and financial support in old age and sickness, liberty of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. Even previous enemies of the state—like the nobility and the Kulaks—and the previously disenfranchised lishentsy—among them the clergy and private merchants—were now ostensibly equal citizens. Women were also afforded equal rights to men and guaranteed paid maternity leave.

On the occasion of the new constitution's enactment, Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda wrote that Joseph Stalin was a "genius of the new world, the wisest man of the epoch." By contrast, twentieth century Polish marxist historian Isaac Deutscher called the constitution "a veil of liberal phrases and premises over the guillotine in the background." Many of the constitution's drafters were later purged by Stalin.

You can find the full text of the Stalin Constitution here: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1936/12/05.htm

The French Fifth Republic Constitution of 1958

In the shadow of the Second World War and Vichy France, and amid the turmoil of the Algerian War of Independence (from France), French President Charles de Gaulle organized a new constitutional committee in 1958. De Gaulle, aided by Michel Debré, aimed to provide the French Republic with a more stable basis and a strengthened executive.[80] Adapted somewhat from the post-war constitution of 1946, this is the constitution that governs France to the present day.

The Fifth Republic Constitution, following in the tradition of earlier French constitutions, opens with a preamble affirming the Rights of Man. Article 1 then asserts the four founding principles of the Republic. They are indivisibility—sovereignty, equality under the law, common language—secularism, democracy, and social welfare.

Under the new constitution, executive power, exercised by the president, was increased at the expense of the Parliament (comprising the National Assembly and the less powerful Senate). In 1962, de Gaulle pushed through an amendment to the Constitution providing for direct popular election of the president.

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[80] Élysée. "The Constitution of the Fifth Republic," December 14, 2022. https://www.elysee.fr/en/french-presidency/constitution-of-4-october-1958.

Under the constitution, the president shares power with a prime minister chosen by the National Assembly. However, the National Assembly and prime minister hold considerably less power than in most other parliamentary systems. The domains of the legislature are specifically and comprehensively listed by the constitution in article 34. Additionally, the president holds the power to call referendums and the power to dissolve the legislature. (The Fifth Republic constitution was of particular interest to delegates at Yeltsin's constitutional convention because of the means by which it strengthened the presidency.)

The French judicial system includes four apex courts. The Court of Cassation is the supreme court for criminal and civil matters. The Council of State is the supreme court for administrative law. The Constitutional Council is the highest constitutional authority. A rarely-convened High Court of Justice composed of National Assembly members judges cases of high treason.

You can find the full text of the Fifth Republic Constitution here: https://www.elysee.fr/en/french-presidency/constitution-of-4-october-1958

Brezhnev's Soviet Constitution of 1977

In 1977, the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev adopted its third and final constitution, replacing the Stalin Constitution. This constitution would come to be known, similarly, as the Brezhnev Constitution; it would be the constitution that marked both the Soviet Union's supposed turn toward developed socialism and the country's genuine turn towards capitalism and the West.

In line with the turn to developed socialism, the Constitution's preamble says that the aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat have been fulfilled, and therefore that the Soviet state had become the "state of the whole people." All citizens were required constitutionally to work, perform military service, oppose corruption, and protect socialism.

In line with the Stalin Constitution, the new Brezhnev Constitution guaranteed a range of rights and liberties to all citizens: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of worship. Additionally, the Constitution guaranteed freedom of artistic work and the right to privacy, and—in line with Marxist philosophy—the right to work, the right to rest and leisure, housing, education, and care in old age or sickness. Speaking on the new constitution in *Pravda*, Brezhnev explained that "Every Soviet person should clearly realize that, in the final analysis, the chief guarantee of his rights is the might and prosperity of the homeland."[81]

The exercise of rights by citizens was not inalienable, however. It was specifically written to be only insofar as such exercise did not impede the state or the party. Freedom of speech, in particular, was limited with regards to criticism of the government until Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost. And, crucially, the Constitution provided no means for redress of the violation of rights. This is a vital part of constitution writing—in the excitement of creating law, do not forget to create enforcement mechanisms.

In 1991, with the Soviet Union's collapse, the Brezhnev Constitution was annulled.

You can find the full text of the Brezhnev Constitution here: https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/constitution/1977/constitution-ussr-1977.pdf

Boris Yeltsin's Draft Constitution of 1993

In the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the way forward for the Russian Federation was murky at best, treacherous at worst. Russia, operating with a socialist economy and the remains of a totalitarian system, was tasked with modernizing, democratizing, and westernizing. Boris Yeltsin, president of the country, favored a rapid transition aided by a strong executive. His opponents in the legislature (and among ethnic minorities and more progressive politicians) were skeptical. But the divide, as the Stockholm International Peace Research

[81] "Brezhnev on the Draft Constitution." Seventeen Moments in Soviet History, September 2, 2015. https://soviethistory.msu.edu/1980-2/our-little-father/our-little-father-texts/brezhnev-on-the-draft-constitution/.

Institute wrote at the time, was not merely legislative versus executive. It was "between those in favour of Russia setting out on the road towards normalcy and those who want her to take the road back."[82]

In defeating the gang of eight's attempted coup in 1991, Yeltsin had been supported by Chairman of the Parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov. Over the following year, however, Khasbulatov raised increasingly serious objections to Yeltsin's plans of radical reform, particularly with regards to the country's transition to a market economy. In October of 1992, Yeltsin deprived the Parliament of control of the parliamentary armed guard. A month later, members of the parliament pressured Yeltsin into dismissing two of his more radical advisors. The battle was on over the question of who held true power in the new Russia.

In December of 1992, the Parliament dismissed Yeltsin's nomination of reformer Yegor Gaidar as prime minister. Responding, Yeltsin threatened to call a referendum on the dissolution of the legislature, who, in turn, passed a series of laws limiting the power of the executive. Eventually, a compromise prime minister—Viktor Chernomyrdin—was approved, and a referendum was scheduled for April, 1993, to determine the balance of power between the executive and the legislative branches.

An attempt by the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies (which elected the Parliament) (March 10-13) to cancel the referendum proved unsuccessful, as did an attempt by the subsequent Ninth Congress to impeach Yeltsin. So, on April 25, the referendum went out as planned, and returned with a victory for the presidency: a 58 percent vote of confidence in Boris Yeltsin. Khasbulatov and Vice President Alexander Rutskoy declared the vote insignificant.

Five days later, Yeltsin released his plan for a new constitution of the Russian Federation, which was quickly denounced as unacceptable by his opponents. Among other changes, Yeltsin called for the abolition of

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[82] "Crisis in Russia: Facts and Figures, People and Data." Sipri, October 1993. https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/FS/SIPRIFS9310.pdf.

the Parliament and the Congress of People's Deputies. Their legislative replacement was to be a Federal Assembly comprising two bodies: the Council of the Federation, representing Russia's 89 constituent territories, and the 400-person State Duma, with 270 delegates elected by majority vote in districts and 130 by overall proportional vote.

But 58 percent support, though significant, was insufficient for Yeltsin's envisioned total transformation of Russia. "The Soviet model of power cannot be reformed," Yeltsin declared, finding precedence for his calls for sweeping transformation in Tsars Peter I and Alexander II. Khasbulatov, trying to speak at the same press conference, was barred from the podium and drowned out by rhythmic clapping. He later told reporters that Russia was "on the road to dictatorship."[83]

In June, Yeltsin convened a consultative Constitutional Conference, with 762 prominent and diverse Russians called to attend.

Salient Issues

In the below section, we will briefly explore a wide range of political topics, ranging from issues of domestic and foreign policy to the economy and the government structure. The goal of this section is not to be comprehensive, but rather to give you a sense of the basics of some political issues, and the arguments for or against certain stances. Our hope is that in fleshing out some of the political arguments around these topics, we can help all of you start to think through your blocs. What stances might you take? Where might you compromise? How do your positions on the issues fit into your broader arc?

Political Organization

Presidential v. parliamentary power

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[83] Sneider, Daniel. "Yeltsin Harks Back to Czars in Bid to Recast Government." *The Christian Science Monitor*. June 7, 1993.

Central to this constitutional crisis is the issue of whether central federal authority should be held by the legislature (or the prime minister) or by the president. Khasbulatov wants the former, Yeltsin the latter. Parliamentarism can allow for minority voices in government, strong representation of the people, and legitimate discourse. However, it can also lead to frequent political shifts and to the rise of extremist leadership. Presidentialism can be decisive, powerful, and quick to act in times of crisis. However, it can lead to the rise of despotism or populism.

The bureaucratic state

In the modern era, with policy-making an increasingly complex business, political leaders must rely on an administrative state to write and implement regulations. The design of the bureaucracy depends on the needs of the state and the philosophies of its politicians. There are pros and cons to maintaining an extensive bureaucracy. It improves organizational effectiveness, provides structure to the mechanisms of governing, and can (if crafted intentionally) promote democratic values in society. However, a bureaucracy can also be inflexible, slow to innovate, and slow to act.

Ensuring constitutional continuity

Ensuring constitutional continuity is one of the main aims of democratic republics like the United States—doing so allows for long-term government functioning and the maintenance of a global image. However, such permanent stability depends on the strength and adaptability of the original structure; a constitution cannot be patched over in times of crisis any more than a building with a poor foundation can be propped up. You must craft a constitution built—intended—to last decades or centuries.

The Economy

Inflation and its effects

Inflation refers to the phenomenon of rising prices across the economy. Unlike simple price changes, whereby some products get more expensive, and some products get cheaper, inflation raises prices across the board. The effect is that currency becomes less valuable, since the same amount of currency buys fewer goods. There can be many causes for inflation, but a common one is a high national deficit—whereby the government spends much more than it raises in revenue. As a result of a high deficit, governments often choose to print new money, increasing the money supply. With more currency in circulation, businesses raise prices and inflation ensues. In this sense, inflation can be thought of as a form of taxation, since people lose purchasing power in order to finance government spending. Unfortunately, combating inflation is far from straightforward. Some advocates of command economics advocate for price controls, which are laws limiting how high or low a business may charge for a certain product. Although controls keep prices in check, they frequently lead to shortages, since people are often forbidden from charging what would be needed to cover their costs, even if customers would be willing to pay. An alternative solution, favored by market advocates, would be limiting the issuance of new money, which could be accomplished by balancing the budget. However, eliminating a deficit almost always requires raising taxes or reducing public spending, both of which harm the economy. Because of this, there can be a short run tradeoff between controlling inflation and promoting economic growth or employment. Delegates should be mindful of how to manage the costs and benefits of any approach to combating inflation.

Privatization

Privatization refers to the selling of state-owned industries to private owners, a key part of a transition away from communism to capitalism. By the 1990s, the overwhelming majority of economists would agree that market economies operate more efficiently than command economies. However, the process for transitioning from one to another, and how far to go, remained controversial. For example, while privatization of industries like manufacturing, banking, and agriculture is attractive to market advocates, some industries offer greater concerns.

For example, should healthcare, education, and energy be privatized? What about transportation? While privatization may make production more efficient, many believe that certain services should be a right of all citizens. Further, some industries, such as defense production, are relevant to national defense. While privatizing them may reduce costs, some worry about leaving the production of military necessities to private actors.

There are challenges to the process of privatization as well. How can the government ensure that all Russians have a chance to buy parts of the new private industries? A strong advantage of market economies is that they provide competition between producers, which is difficult to accomplish under a communist system. To take advantage of that, industries should be sold to a variety of owners, rather than just one. However, if business expertise is concentrated, finding suitable buyers can be difficult. Further, there is a debate over whether buyers should be limited to Russian nationals or whether multinational corporations should be allowed to bid on state property. While selling to non-Russians could increase efficiency and help the economy, it risks undermining Russian interests long term and could offend nationalist sympathies.

Foreign trade

Finally, delegates must decide how much the new state should be open to foreign trade. While foreign trade offers the possibility of cheaper and more plentiful goods, some argue it prevents the development of domestic industries. Since Russia hopes to recover its status as a national economic power, the tradeoff between growing the economy and maintaining national power is a key debate.

Domestic Policy

A new ethnic or religious Russia?

The Russian Federation has a clear majority ethnic group—Russians make up three quarters of the population—and a definite majority religious group—atheists, due to Soviet persecution of religion. The question, for the new Russian leaders, is how much to build the new Russian state on a shared identity. Doing so

promises more fervent support and the possibility of political unity, but risks alienating minorities and giving credence to separatist movements.

The rise of oligarchs and the Russian mafia

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, organized crime has flourished; oligarchs and mafia leaders are now among the most powerful people in Russia. Catering to these gangsters—a sort of illicit nouveau riche—would bolster the power of the new Russian regime, and might even aid in overall economic growth. But it would betray a true transition to capitalism, and could cut against the image of democratization and stabilization Yeltsin has sought to project.

Regional administrative autonomy

Russia is a vast nation, and its many regional and local political divisions are hinted at by the abundance of territorial leaders present at the Constitutional Convention. Where the Soviet Union's promise of autonomy for SSRs was a myth until the final years of the empire, the Russian Federation now faces the option of granting regional autonomy—either partially or completely. Doing so would allow for more adaptive and representative policy-making, but weakens central power, and could stand in the way of a potential Russian resurgence on the international stage.

Foreign Policy

NATO and the E.U.

The Soviet Union is no longer, and the Cold War is over; the Warsaw Pact, consequently, has been dismantled. But NATO—relic of the 1940s and bastion of Western strength—lives on, and the creation of the European Union has been agreed upon. For Russian international relations theorists, there's a legitimate question. Can these institutions promote democracy and European integration, and if so, should Russia seek to join them?

Or, are they indicators of a zero-sum game, and a mere continuation of the Cold War's bloc politics and security dilemmas?

The "near-abroad"

The near-abroad is the breadth of post-Soviet states that surround the Russian Federation. They are largely supporters of Russia—so long as the new Russia refutes its ties to Soviet authority—and are hugely important if Russia is to maintain any semblance of its former global influence. The dilemma, now, is to what extent Russia should involve itself in their affairs. Meddling promotes common political aims but threatens good will, which is dependent on mutual respect for sovereignty. Taking a step back allows the near-abroad to pursue its own interests, but that risks the diminishing of Russia's sway across Europe.

Confronting U.S. hegemony

The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the world's sole superpower. Russia is now at a crossroads: should it seek to fill the void left by the Soviet Union's slow collapse and aim to challenge the United States in the near future? Or must Russia resign itself to a changed world order, where the world's largest country turns inwards to focus, first and foremost, on domestic politics? Complicating the matter further, Communist China has been strengthening its relationship with the United States, and might fancy the Soviet's lost geopolitical throne.

Russia's nuclear arsenal

When the Soviet banner lowered for the final time, 3,200 strategic nuclear warheads—many of them on ICBMs—remained in the arsenal of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. They are now in the process of being transferred to the Russian Federation, as 14 out of 15 former Soviet republics have vowed denuclearization. The notable exception? Russia, who is also in possession of 22,000 tactical nuclear weapons and is now faced with a difficult decision. Should they maintain their stockpile, even after the end of the Cold War? Doing so would

project strength internationally, but it also puts the scattered warheads at great risk of falling into the hands of criminals... or worse... terrorists.

Character Biographies

Representatives of the President Boris Yeltsin

Yegor Timurovich Gaigar, Former Prime Minister of Russia

Yegor Gaidar was born in Moscow in 1956. He attended the University of Moscow and, after graduation, joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, writing for Pravda and eventually becoming an advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin during perestroika. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gaidar served as Yeltsin's minister of finance from 1991 to 1992, and then as acting prime minister of the Russian Federation in 1992, before he was rejected as too radical by the Congress of People's Deputies. Gaidar advocates shock therapy, at all costs. His radical free market positions—against all subsidies and for rapid privatization and price deregulation—have rendered him massively unpopular in a country struggling to make ends meet. Gaidar has called himself an "economic kamikaze" on a mission to liberalize the old Soviet system.

Alexander Vladimirovich Rutskoy, Vice President of Russia

Alexander Rutskoy was born in the Ukrainian SSR in 1947. He worked as an aircraft mechanic before joining the Soviet Army in 1966. While in the military, Rutskoy attended the Yuri Gagarin Air Force Academy, and, in 1980, he was sent to Afghanistan as an air attack regiment commander in the 40th Army. During the war, his aircraft was shot down three times, and the third time, Rutskoy was briefly held as a Pakistani POW. For his bravery during the war, he was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union in 1988, and, two years later, he was elected a people's deputy and a member of the Supreme Soviet. A prominent if contentious member of the Communist Party in the late 1980s, Rutskoy was selected by Boris Yeltsin as his Russian vice presidential running mate in 1991, the position in which he currently serves. Rutskoy has, however, come to frequently oppose Yeltsin on economic, foreign policy, and corruption issues. Rutskoy believes in the possibility of democratic communist

revival and is an ally of Chairman of the Parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov. Both men see in Yeltsin the beginnings of autocracy.

Dmitri Antonovich Volkogonov, Historian and Advisor To Yeltsin

Dmitri Volkogonov was born in Eastern Siberia in 1928. His parents were both killed during Stalin's purges, so Volkogonov entered the Red Army at the age of 17. He later transferred to the Soviet Army's propaganda department, where he wrote pamphlets on psychological warfare; however, he struggled privately with doubts about the ethics of the Soviet system. As a Colonel-General of the Army and a valued member of the Communist Party, Volkogonov had access to vast Soviet archives, which he used to write a biography of Stalin published in 1983. After the collapse of the gang of eight coup attempt, Volkogonov became a defense advisor to Yeltsin. He has fully broken out of the "chimera of Bolshevik ideology" and is working on damning biographies of Vladimir Lenin and of Soviet participation in World War II. He opposes Russian domination of ethnic-minority areas. He is popular among U.S. officials but unpopular among the military, who see him as having betrayed Russia.

Alexander Nikolayevich Yakovlev, Advisor To Mikhail Gorbachev

Alexander Yakovlev was born near Moscow in 1923. Yakovlev joined the Soviet Navy during World War II in 1941 and the Communist Party in 1944. Though he soon attended the Higher Party School in Moscow, Yakovlev later lost some of his communist zeal after witnessing deportations and hearing Nikita Khruschev's Secret Speech. Yakovlev served as the Communist Party's Director of Ideology and Propaganda from 1969 to 1973, and then until 1983 as the Soviet Ambassador to Canada. Yakovlev, a strong advocate of non-intervention, became a close advisor to Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev and a key voice in planning perestroika and glasnost. Pushed out of Soviet leadership by hardline communists, Yakovlev now leads President Yeltsin's Commission for

the Rehabilitation of Victims of Soviet Political Repression. He is now a staunch supporter of democracy—he's a bit of a self-contradictory enigma—but feels a deep pessimism about the outlook for Russia's long-term future.

Representatives of the Prime Minister's Government

Viktor Stepanovich Chernomyrdin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Prime Minister of Russia

Viktor Chernomyrdin was born in southern Russia in 1938. After working for several years as an oil refinery mechanic, he joined the Communist Party, and by 1973 had risen to a position in the Party's heavy industry program. Chernomyrdin spent the following decade as deputy minister and then minister for natural gas industries in the Soviet Union. Consequently, in 1989, he was named the head of the Soviet Union's first state-owned corporate enterprise: Gazprom, formerly the Ministry of the Gas Industry. In May of 1992, Chernomyrdin was appointed by Boris Yeltsin as deputy prime minister for fuel and energy under Yegor Gaidar, and, in December, he was confirmed as prime minister by the Congress of People's Deputies—the ultimate compromise candidate. Chernomyrdin is well-connected and has been tasked by Yeltsin with determining what of the Soviet welfare system can be salvaged.

Mikhail Alexandrovich Fedotov, Minister of Press and Information

Mikhail Fedotov was born in Moscow in 1949. He attended the Moscow State University Law School but was briefly expelled for participating in human rights protests. After his eventual graduation, Fedotov worked for the newspapers Vechernyaya Moskva and Socialist Industry and as a professor at the Moscow State Law School. While teaching in the 1980s, Fedotov organized and led the Student Research Laboratory of State Studies Problems to gauge public opinion on glasnost and perestroika. From 1990 until 1992, he served as Russia's deputy minister of press and mass media, and since 1992, he has been Russia's minister of press and information. He is a strong advocate of human rights, journalistic ethics, free elections, and continued de-Stalinization.

Vladimir Petrovich Kuramin, Oil and Gas Development Administrator

Vladimir Kuramin was born in southern Russia in 1937. He attended the Saratov State Automobile and Road Institute and after graduation worked as a construction foreman. By 1970, Kuramin was head of the construction department of the Communist Party's Tyumen Regional Committee and from 1974 until 1981 he served as Tyumen region director of the Soviet Ministry of Construction of Oil and Gas Resources. Following that, Kuramin served in the Soviet West Siberian Oil and Gas Development Department and the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy. Since 1992, he has led the Russian State Committee for Socio-Economic Development of the North. Kuramin remains a committed communist and a strong advocate for workers' rights and land development.

Yuri Ilyich Skuratov, Lawyer and Yeltsin Ally

Yuri Skuratov was born in Russian Mongolia in 1952. He attended the Sverdlovsk Law Institute and after graduation worked as a police battalion chief and a law professor. In the 1980s, Skuratov was a dean of the Sverdlovsk Law Institute and later worked in the propaganda and legislative departments of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. From 1991 until earlier this year, he was senior legal consultant to Vadim Bakatin, the head of the Soviet Interrepublican Security Service, and Viktor Barannikov, the Russian Minister of Security. Skuratov currently serves as director of the Russian Prosecutor General's Office Institute for Strengthening Legality and Law and Order. Skuratov is a close ally of Boris Yeltsin, seen by many as a rising star in the spheres of Russian security and law.

People's Deputies of the Russian Federation

Ruslan Imranovich Khasbulatov, Chairman of the Parliament

Ruslan Khasbulatov was born in Chechnya in 1942. As part of Soviet deportations of Chechens, Khasbulatov was resettled to the Kazakh SSR as a child. He attended the Moscow State University Law School

and after graduation worked at the Moscow Institute of National Economy for more than a decade. During perestroika, Khasbulatov worked as a social development assistant for the Soviet Council of Ministers, and, in 1990, he was elected a people's deputy from Chechnya on a platform of true federalism, self-determination, and democratization. Since 1991, Khasbulatov has served as chairman of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation, a position that has put him directly at odds with Boris Yeltsin in the ongoing dispute over whether ultimate democratic power should reside with the executive or the legislature. However, he was a vital ally of Yeltsin during the gang of eight coup attempt, and has agreed to attend the constitutional convention despite Yeltsin's repeated dismissals of the Parliament's draft constitutions.

Sergey Adamovich Kovalev, Human Rights Activist

Sergey Kovalev was born in the Ukrainian SSR in 1930. He attended Moscow State University and after graduation worked as a biophysicist, opposing the Soviet Union's favored Lamarckism. Starting in 1968, he was one of fourteen prominent dissidents who collaborated on the samizdat publication Chronicle of Current Events, which highlighted civil and human right abuses in the Soviet Union. Kovalev was arrested in 1974 for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and served ten years, before returning to Moscow in 1987 during Mikhail Gorbachev's liberalization of the Soviet system. In January of 1991, he co authored the Declaration of Human and Civil Rights in Russia, and he now serves as the Russian Federation's Human Rights Commissioner. Kovalev has been a People's Deputy since 1990, and is a strong advocate for self-determination of minority groups within the Russian Federation.

Vladimir Petrovich Lukin, Ambassador To the United States

Vladimir Lukin was born in Siberia in 1937. He attended the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute and after graduation worked as a Russian labor historian. From 1968 until 1987, Lukin was the Head of Far Eastern Policy at the Soviet Academy of Science's Institute of the US and Canada. Afterwards, he worked in the Soviet

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and, in 1990, Lukin was elected a people's deputy and a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. He voted to terminate the Soviet Union in December of 1991, but later called the state's collapse "a tragedy." He currently serves as Russia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States and as the Russian observer to the Organization of American States.

Justices of Russia's Highest Courts

Ernest Mikhaylovich Ametistov, Constitutional Court Justice

Ernest Ametistov was born in Leningrad in 1934. Ametistov attended the Moscow State University Law School and after graduation worked at the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of the International Labor Movement and Institute of Soviet State Construction and Legislation. He believes firmly in the primacy of international law and human rights law and is a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group, Russia's first human rights organization founded in 1976. Ametistov has served as a Justice of the Constitutional Court since 1991. The Constitutional Court has eleven judges and is the highest body of constitutional review in the Russian Federation. Ametistov, a liberal and an optimist, strongly opposes politicization of the judiciary and state sponsored violence.

Nikolai Vasilyevich Vitruk, Constitutional Court Deputy Chairman

Nikolai Vitruk was born in Siberia in 1937. He attended Tomsk State University Law School and after graduation, joined the faculty as a legal theorist and historian. From 1966 to 1971, Vitruk was a member of the Ukrainian SSR's delegation to the UN Commision on Human Rights, before joining the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of State and Law. While there, he participated in the drafting of the Brezhnev Constitution. Vitruk served in the Ministry of Internal Affairs from 1981 until 1991, when he was elected a justice of the Constitutional Court, who elected him their deputy chairman. The Constitutional Court has eleven judges and

is the highest body of constitutional review in the Russian Federation. Vitruk is an advocate of supreme presidential authority.

Authorities of Moscow, and St. Petersburg, and the Republics

Kirsan Nikolayevich Ilyumzhinov, President of the Republic of Kalmykia

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov was born in Kalmykia in 1962. He was a chess prodigy and Kalmykian national champion at fourteen before joining the Soviet Army and then attending the Moscow State Institute of Foreign Relations. Between 1989 and 1993, Ilyumzhinov worked in automobile manufacturing. In April, he was elected president of the Republic of Kalmykia at the age of 31 on a platform promising cash for every voter and a mobile phone for every shepherd. Kalmykia is a small North Caucasus constituent Republic. Ilyumzhinov is a believer in alien abductions, compulsory chess education, and extra-sensory communication. He speaks between four and seven languages and strongly advocates for Buddhism, communism, and wealthy politicians.

Yuri Mikhaylovich Luzhkov, Mayor of Moscow

Yuri Luzhkov was born in Moscow in 1936. He attended the Gubkin Academy of Oil and Gas and after graduation worked at the Research and Development Institute of Plastics. Luzhkov worked his way up the chemical industry and joined the Soviet Chemical Industry Ministry in 1986. A year later, he was appointed first deputy chairman of the Moscow city government. Luzhkov was named deputy mayor in 1990 and has been Moscow's mayor since 1992. He is strong-willed and a fierce advocate of Moscow's right to manage its own affairs. Luzhkov is a socially conservative Russian nationalist, and is considered to be something of a populist and Stalinist.

Magomedali Magomedovich Magomedov, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Dagestan

Magomedali Magomedov was born in Dagestan in 1930. He attended the Dagestan Teachers Institute and after graduation worked as a school administrator. In 1968, Magomedov graduated from the Dagestan Institute of Agriculture, and, in 1975, he was appointed the Communist Party's head of agriculture for Dagestan. From 1983 until 1987, Magomedov served as chairman of the Council of Ministers of Dagestan; since 1990, he has served as chairman of the republic's Supreme Council. Dagestan is a very ethnically heterogeneous constituent republic of the Russian Federation located in the North Caucasus. Magomedov has been praised for efforts at compromise between ethnic and religious groups in Dagestan and for his push for modernization in the region, but he's also faced accusations of corruption and nepotism from countless journalists.

Anatoly Aleksandrovich Sobchak, Chairman of the Constitutional Assembly and Mayor of St. Petersburg

Anatoly Sobchak was born in eastern Russia in 1937. Sobchak attended Leningrad State University and after graduation worked as a somewhat-anti-Soviet lawyer and professor. In 1989, Sobchak was elected a Soviet people's deputy, and he quickly became an ally of Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. That same year, Sobchak served as chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on the Investigation of the Events of April 9, 1989 in Tbilisi, Georgia. As he rose to become a senior advisor to Boris Yeltsin, Sobchak was also elected chairman of the Leningrad City Council. In 1991, he was elected mayor of the city, simultaneously re-named St. Petersburg. Under his leadership, St. Petersburg has regained its historical glamor. But there are also rumors that Sobchak is getting blackmailed over compromising materials from his time as KGB overseer at Leningrad State University. The alleged blackmailer... Mayor's Deputy Vladimir Putin.

Political Party Leaders

Anatoly Grigorievich Golov, Social Democratic Party

Anatoly Golov was born in Moscow in 1946. He attended the Leningrad State University School of Mathematics and Mechanics and after graduation taught aeromechanics and hydromechanics there and at Peter the Great Saint Petersburg Polytechnic University. In the 1980s, Golov worked at the Engineering and Economics Institute and at the Social Information Agency. During that time, he became active in the Leningrad Perestroika Society, and, since 1990, he has served on the Leningrad City Council. Golov participated in the founding of the Social Democratic Party of Russia, which supports "the creation of a civil society of social democracy." Golov is currently the party's chairman, and advocates for a higher minimum wage, housing access, and consumer rights.

Vladimir Nikolaevich Lysenko, Republican Party

Vladimir Lysenko was born in the Ukrainian SSR in 1956. He attended Moscow State University and after graduation taught political science at the Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI). While at MAI, Lysenko became active in politics, and, in 1987, he founded the "Memorial" Society to study Soviet political repression. Under perestroika, he became a central figure in the Democratic Platform—a Communist Party internal opposition. In 1990, Lysenko left the Communist Party to found the Republican Party of Russia. He has been a people's deputy since 1990, and is a staunch anti-communist who describes himself as having progressed from a communist to a social democrat to a liberal. Lysenko is an ally of Boris Yeltsin but is not a Russian nationalist.

Gennady Ivanovich Sklyar, Socialist Party of Workers

Gennady Sklyar was born in the Uzbek SSR in 1952. He attended the Rostov Institute of Agricultural Engineering and after graduation worked as a design engineer and a local Communist Youth League leader. Sklyar joined the Communist Party in 1980 and worked his way up to Communist first secretary of Obninsk by 1990. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, he was one of a handful of politicians to aim to unify the left-wing

parties of the Russian Federation under a socialist mantle. Since 1992, he has served as a co-chair of the Russian Socialist Party of Workers. He is a committed Russian nationalist.

Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovsky, Liberal Democratic Party

Vladimir Zhirinovsky was born Vladimir Eidelstein in Almaty, Kazakh SSR in 1946. His father Volf Eidelstein was a Ukrainian Jew, and many of Zhriniovsky's relatives were killed in the Holocaust, but after Volf left Vladimir and his mother to emigrate to Israel in 1949, Zhrinovsky proclaimed himself a proud Orthodox Christian Russian. He attended Moscow State University and after graduation studied at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism before serving in the Soviet Army. In the 1980s, Zhrinovsky was a minor Russian politician, and, in 1989 (aided by the KGB), he founded the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union, the first officially sanctioned Soviet opposition party. Zhirinovsky finished third in the Russian presidential election of 1991 with a platform that promised free vodka and underwear for all. In 1992, Zhirinovksy allied his conservative party with the extreme right-wing French National Front. Zhirinovsky is neo-fascist, ultra-nationalist, anti-Zionist, and anti-Western. He has advocated arming Russians against migrating birds to eradicate bird flu and supports summary executions and tactical nuclear weapons use. The Guardian called Zhirinovksy a "boorish... licensed court jester."

Economic, Cultural, Religious, and Intellectual Leaders

Kakha Bendukidze, Businessman

Kakha Bendukidze was born in Tbilisi, Georgian SSR in 1956. Bendukidze attended Tbilisi State University and Moscow State University and after graduation worked as a microbiologist and molecular geneticist. In 1987, he started his own business, Bioprocess, to manufacture biochemicals for scientific research. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bendukidze bought heavy machinery company Uralmash, becoming one of a number of investors across Russia to become rich off post-Soviet privatization. He is a Georgian nationalist and a committed libertarian who supports deregulation, privatization, and a flat tax rate.

Vsevolod Leonidovich Bogdanov, Journalist

Vsevolod Bogdanov was born in northern Russia in 1944. He attended the Leningrad State University Journalism School and after graduation worked at Arkhangelsk Radio. From 1969 until 1980, Bogdanov worked at the Communist Party's regional newspaper, Magadanskaya Pravda, eventually being promoted to deputy-editor-in-chief. He became director of periodical publications at the Soviet State Committee for Publishing in 1986 and general director of central television at the Soviet State Committee for Television in 1989. Since 1992, Bogdanov has served as chairman of the Union of Journalists of Russia. He is a strong proponent of press freedom, though the Union of Journalists of Russia has been accused of conforming to authority and of abusing press credentials.

Fyodor Mikhaylovich Burlatsky, Political Scientist

Fyodor Burlatsky was born in Kiev, Ukrainian SSR in 1927. He attended the Tashkent Law Institute and the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of Law and after graduation worked as a secretary of the presidium of the Academy of Sciences. In the 1960s, Burlatsky worked within the Communist Party and Pravda, where, working as a political columnist, he was banned from the press for ten years in 1967 for writing a column against censorship of theater. He later worked at the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Sociological Research, and, from 1971 until 1989, he was the Communist Party's director of Marxist-Leninist philosophy at the Institute of Social Sciences. He is currently a visiting professor at Oxford and an advocate for peace, international cooperation, and education on democratic values.

Alexander Isaakovich Gelman, Playwright

Alexander Gelman was born in Romania in 1933. During the Holocaust, his family was deported to a ghetto in Transnistria; of fourteen people deported, only Alexander and his father survived until liberation. Gelman attended the Lviv Military-Political School and after graduation served for six years as a senior lieutenant in Sevastopol and Kamchatka. In the 1960s, he worked as a machine operator, a dispatcher, and a newspaper

writer. In the 1970s, he lived in Leningrad as a playwright, and, in 1978, Gelman moved to Moscow to collaborate with the famed Moscow Art Theatre. Between 1989 and 1991, he was a people's deputy. He is a member of the Russian Union of Playwrights and the Russian Union of Cinematographers. Gelman's plays are largely topical industrial dramas, many of them parables about Soviet life. Several of his plays have been performed outside of Russia or transformed into films. He is an anti-communist and proponent of liberalization and does not believe Boris Yeltsin can truly adopt Mikhail Gorbachev's mantle of reform.

Marina Vladimirovna Kudimova, Poet

Marina Kudimova was born in western Russia in 1953. Kudimova was a poet from a young age and attended the Tambov Pedagogical Institute. Many of her poems were published in the magazine Literary Georgia, and her first book of poems, List of Reasons, was published in 1982. Subsequent books of poems titled Just a Little Thing, Oblast, and Arys-Pole were published in 1987, 1989, and 1990 respectively. She is the representative of the Union of Russian Writers at this convention. Kudimova sees her work, and literature more broadly, as an opportunity to probe Russia's soul. She is a fervent nationalist.

Vladimir Nikolaevich Kudryavtsev, Vice President of the National Academy of Sciences

Vladimir Kudryavtsev was born in Moscow in 1923. He attended the Central Asian Industrial Institute and after graduation served in the Soviet Army in Iran during World War II. Kudryavtsev then studied at the Military Law Academy and became a professor of criminal law there. He worked at the Soviet Union Supreme Court from 1960 until 1963, when he joined the Soviet Prosecutor General's Office. In 1973, Kudryavtsev became director of the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of State and Law; since 1988 he has been vice-president of the Academy, renamed the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1991. Kudryavtsev also serves as vice-president of the Association of Soviet Lawyers and president of the Russian Society for Solidarity and

Cooperation of the Peoples of Asia and Africa. He is well respected in the Russian Federation. He believes in a strong executive.

Pastor Mikhail Petrovich Kulakov, Russian Seventh-day Adventist Church

Mikhail Kulakov was born in Leningrad in 1927. In 1935, his father, a Seventh-Day Adventist pastor, was exiled to Siberia for his religion. Kulakov attended the Ivanovno Art School, and, after graduation, he was baptized into the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. In 1948, he was arrested for his religion and sentenced to five years of hard labor. Kulakov was ordained as a minister in 1958 and spent much of the 1960s moving across the Soviet Union fleeing Communist persecution of Adventists. Finally, in 1970, Kulakov became the first Russian Seventh-Day Adventist able to leave the country to attend the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists held in the U.S.; since then, he has worked tirelessly to unify Seventh-Day Adventist churches within the Soviet Union. Kulakov is now president of the Euro-Asian division of the global Adventist Church. Since 1990, he has also been president of the Russian branch of the International Association for Religious Freedom. He is a lauded Bible scholar and translator and a strong advocate for peace, civil liberties, and religious tolerance.

Boris Grigorievich Misnik, Mining Union Leader

Boris Misnik was born in far northern Russia in 1938. He attended the Leningrad Institute of Water Transport Engineers and after graduation worked as an engineer at the Krasnoyarsk River Port. Starting in 1964, Misnik worked his way up the ranks of engineers there and in Monchegorsk, and, since 1991, he has served as chairman of the Mining and Metallurgical Trade Union of Russia. He is a member of the Russian United Democratic Party Yabloko, who see themselves as the democratic opposition to Boris Yeltsin. Misnik is particularly passionate about workers rights and interested in arctic circle development, and he has ambitions of higher office.

Rabbi Adolf Solomonovich Shaevich, Chief Rabbi of Russia

Adolf Shaevich was born in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in 1937. He was born into a fairly secular family and worked as a mechanic and engineer before moving to Moscow in 1972 looking for meaning in life. Local employers were wary of hiring a Jew, so Shaevich entered the yeshiva at the Moscow Choral Synagogue. A year later, with the aid of Arthur Schneier, a rabbi from New York, he enrolled at the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary; he was ordained in 1980. Returning to Moscow, Shaevich became deputy of the Moscow Choral Synagogue, and, since 1983, he has been chief rabbi of the Synagogue and Chief Rabbi of Moscow. After the creation of the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia was created in 1993, Shaevich was elected chief rabbi of Russia.

Glossary (alphabetical)

A

Afghan Mujahideen — Jihadist militant group that fought against the Soviet Union in the Soviet-Afghan War (1978-1989). Anti-communist, pro-Islamic. Backed by the United States in Operation Cyclone.

Afghanistan — Large Central Asian nation, independent since 1926. Invaded by the Soviet Army between 1978 and 1989. Invaded by the U.S. in 2001. Under the control of the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban since 2021.

Albania — Small Balkan nation, independent since 1912. A communist Eastern Bloc state between 1946 and 1991.

Alexander I — Early 19th century Russian tsar who fought against Napoleonic France. Instituted a plan for national public education.

Alexander II — Also known as Alexander the Liberator. Late 19th century Russian tsar who freed Russia's serfs with the Emancipation Edict of 1861. Also instituted universal military service.

Andropov, Yuri — Leader of the Soviet Union from 1982 until his death in 1984. Sought unsuccessfully to eliminate corruption and inefficiency. Saw Cold War tensions worsen. Brought young reformers including Mikhail Gorbachev into Soviet leadership.

Armenia — Small Caucasus nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991.

Austria — Small Central European nation, independent since 1945. Formerly the central state of the powerful Austrian and Austro-Hungarian Empires in the 19th century.

Autocracy — System of government where total power is held by a singular ruler, or autocrat, with control over the exercise of civil liberties in society.

Azerbaijan — Small Caucasus nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991.

B

Balkans — Mountainous European subregion. Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia. By some definitions, also Greece and Turkey.

Belarus — Small Eastern European nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991. One of three countries (alongside Russia and Ukraine) that traces its origins to Kievan Rus.

Beria, Lavrentiy — Head of Stalin's NKVD from 1938 to 1946. Serial rapist of NKVD victims. Organized the Katyn Massacre and Red Army purges. Oversaw the Soviet atomic bomb project. Briefly held

power after Stalin's death with Vyacheslav Molotov and Georgy Malenkov, before a coup led by Nikita Khruschev and Georgy Zhukov arrested and executed Beria in 1953.

Berlin Airlift — Following the Soviet Blockade of West Berlin in 1948, a 323-day period where the United States and United Kingdom flew supplies to West Berliners. Western forces flew over Berlin more than 250,000 times during the period, which eventually forced the Soviets to end the Blockade.

Berlin Wall — A massive concrete barrier built by the German Democratic Republic between 1961 and 1989, encircling East Berlin and preventing movement into West Berlin. The fall of the wall between 1989 and 1994 was a symbol for the possibility of post-Cold-War reunification.

Black Hundreds — Violent early 20th century monarchist, ultra-nationalist counter-revolutionary group.

Black Russians — Also known as the Black Guards. Anarchist armed forces allied with the Red Army in the Russian Civil War. Purged by Vladimir Lenin after 1921.

Blitzkrieg — Literally meaning "lightning war." Military strategy involving rapid, overwhelming armored and infantry advances. Used extensively in Nazi Germany's European campaigns in 1939 and 1940.

Bloody Sunday — January 22, 1905. Thousands of unarmed demonstrators led by Father Georgy Gapon gathered in front of the Winter Palace to call for the tsar to aid Russian workers. The Russian army, many on horseback, fired into the crowd, killing up to 200 people. One of a series of events that forced the tsar to agree to some progressive demands later in 1905.

Bolsheviks — One of two factions that the RSDLP split into in 1903. Led by Vladimir Lenin. Advocated the overthrow of the tsar and the end of capitalism through revolution, violence, and allegiance to the party. Seized power in Russia during the October Revolution of 1917. Later became the Russian Communist Party.

Boyars — Under Feudalism, the highest rank of nobility in Russia and much of Eastern Europe.

Brezhnev Constitution — Soviet constitution from 1977 until the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991. Model for the RSFSR Constitution of 1978.

Brezhnev Doctrine — Soviet foreign policy under Leonid Brezhnev that held that any threat to socialist rule in the Eastern Bloc was a threat to the entire bloc, and therefore justified invasion. Justified the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Brezhnev, Leonid — Leader of the Soviet Union from 1964 to 1982. Took power after ousting Nikita Khruschev. Advocated Russian domination of the Soviet Union and re-centralization of power. Opposed to de-Stalinization. Hugely increased military spending as part of an interventionist foreign policy (despite the beginning of SALT talks).

Budget deficit — When money spent exceeds revenue during a given period.

Bulgaria — Small Balkan nation, independent since 1908. A communist Eastern Bloc state between 1946 and 1991.

Bulganin, Nicholas — Soviet Union premier from 1955 to 1958. Formerly a member of the Central Committee, a high-level Red Army politician, and a member of the Politburo. Initially a puppet of Nikita Khruschev before his dismissal by Khruschev alongside Vyacheslav Molotov.

Bureaucracy — System of government organization where decisions are made by a large group of unelected officials.

Byzantine Empire — Eastern Roman Empire, centered in Constantinople. 5th century to 1453.

C

Capitalism — Economic system based on private ownership of the means of production. Largely a construct of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Catherine II — Also known as Catherine the Great. Late 18th century Russian empress inspired by the Enlightenment who expanded the Russian empire into Crimea, Poland, and Alaska.

The Caucasus — Mountainous European and Asian subregion. Armenian, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and part of southern Russia.

Central Asia — Asian subregion. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Central Committee — Full name is the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The leading body of the Party, though true power oscillated between the Central Committee and the Politburo.

Chechnya — Full name is the Chechen Republic. Caucasian republic of the Russian Federation following the First and Second Chechen Wars in the 1990s. Ethnically distinct from Russia.

Cheka — First Soviet secret police organization from 1917 to 1922. 200,000 personnel. Conducted the Red Terror, killing 50,000 to 200,000. Replaced by the State Political Directorate.

Chernenko, Konstantin — Leader of the Soviet Union from 1984 until his death in 1985. Ally of Leonid Brezhnev. Due to poor health, largely unable to fulfill official duties. Made the decision to shoot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007.

Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant — In Ukraine. Site of the worst nuclear disaster in history. In 1984, following a catastrophic explosion and meltdown, emergency response, mitigation, and cleanup measures cost $700 million and used more than a million workers. 30 killed.

Chernomyrdin, Viktor — Prime minister of Russia between 1992 and 1998. Something of a compromise candidate, but a close ally of Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Cold War — Period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, the Western Bloc and Eastern Bloc, that began in 1947 and ended in 1991. There was no direct large-scale fighting, thus the name "Cold War," however, the two superpowers supported opposing sides in proxy wars in Asia, the Middle East, Central America, and South America.

Command economy — Also known as a planned economy (there are minor differences, but they're not important for us here). Economic system where the distribution of goods and services is in accordance with an economy-wide plan, as opposed to being in accordance with market forces. Commonly used in socialist states.

Commonwealth of Independent States — Abbreviated as CIS. Regional intergovernmental organization formed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 by Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. Encourages economic, political, and military cooperation. Now has nine member organizations following Ukraine's exit in 2014.

Communist Party of the Soviet Union — Abbreviated as CPSU. Previously the Russian Communist Party. Ruling party of the one-party Soviet Union from its inception until 1990. Founded by Bolshevik Vladimir Lenin. Marxist-Leninist.

Congress of People's Deputies — Government institution in the Russian SFR and the Russian Federation from 1990 until 1993, when it was dissolved by Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Popularly elected. Approved the prime minister, elected the Supreme Council (Parliament), and appointed the Constitutional Court.

Constitutional monarchy — Political system where a ruling monarch is bound to act within a set of laws. Instituted in Russia from 1905 to 1917.

Crimea — Peninsula on the Black Sea. Annexed by the Russian Empire from the Ottoman Empire in 1783. The geographic and strategic center of the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856 between Russia, the Ottoman Empire, France, and the United Kingdom. A Soviet state under the Bolsheviks. Subject to a genocide under Joseph Stalin. Transferred to Ukraine in 1954. Annexed by Russia in 2014.

Crimean War — 1853 to 1856 war fought over Crimea following a Russian invasion of Ottoman territory. France and the United Kingdom joined the war on the side of the Ottomans. Resulted in 250,000 Russian casualties and the refutation of Russia's southward push.

Cuba — Small Caribbean nation. Independent since 1902, under communist control since 1961.

Cuban Missile Crisis — Standoff over Soviet placement of nuclear ballistic missiles on Cuba in 1962. Resolved by John F. Kennedy, Fidel Castro, and Nikita Khruschev with Soviet nuclear withdrawal and an American guarantee never to invade Cuba. Likely the closest the Cold War got to Nuclear War.

Czechoslovakia — Large former Central European state, established in 1918. All parts annexed or Nazi-aligned during World War II. From 1948 to 1989, a communist Eastern Bloc state. Peacefully split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1992.

D

The Decembrists — Group of army officers and nobility who staged an unsuccessful uprising against the tsarist regime in 1825. Aimed for a constitutional government and the abolition of serfdom. An inspiration for later generations of Russian revolutionaries.

Default — The failure of a government to pay off its national debt as deadlines elapse.

Despotism — Form of government where a single individual or entity rules with absolute power.

De-Stalinization — Series of Soviet political reforms under Nikita Khruschev in the 1950s and 1960s in an attempt to free the country from Stalinism and Joseph Stalin's cult of personality. Monuments and memorials removed. Prisoner amnesty, Gulag reform, and Purge victim rehabilitation. Dekulakization — Soviet campaign of arrests, deportations and executions of kulaks between 1919 and 1933. Classified as "liquidation" after 1929. Ten million kulaks were stripped of their land and deported, resulting in between half a million and five million deaths.

Developed socialism — According to Marxism, a stage of class development characterized by a socialist state of the whole people. Alleged by the Soviet Union to have been achieved in 1961, and never otherwise alleged by socialist states.

Duma — The Russian term for a legislative assembly. City dumas existed in Russia beginning in the 18th century, and an Imperial State Duma was formed by Tsar Nicholas II in 1906. Dissolved repeatedly over the next few years, and permanently in 1917. Reformed in 1993 as the lower legislative house of the Russian Federation.

E

East Germany — Also known as the German Democratic Republic, GDR, or DDR (German abbreviation). Eastern Bloc descendant of the German Reich encompassing the former Soviet occupied zones. Ceased to exist in 1990 when its five states and East Berlin joined West Germany.

Eastern Bloc — Coalition of communist states aligned with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Among others, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, China, Cuba, Nicaragua.

Eastern Europe —European subregion. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Romania. By some definitions, also Balkan, Baltic, and Caucasus nations.

Emancipation Edict — 1861 decree that abolished serfdom in Russia. However, serfs were still bound to their land as laborers while land inventories were taken, and many were forced to pay redemption payments for decades to get their own land.

Estonia —Small Baltic nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991.

Ethnography — Branch of anthropology that focuses on the study of cultures and their development.

Executive branch — The part of the government responsible for execution and enforcement of law.

Extensive agriculture — Agricultural system characterized by small levels of inputs (capital, labor, fertilizer) relative to land.

European Union — Abbreviated as EU. Supranational political and economic union of European nations established in 1993. Russia is not a member.

F

Fascism — Far-right, authoritarian, militarist, collectivist, ultra-nationalist political ideology. Fascism generally supports the utility of political violence. Notable examples of fascist states include Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler and the Kingdom of Italy under Benito Mussolini.

Feudalism — The dominant social system in Medieval Europe and Russia from the 9th century through the 16th. Obligations of three estates (nobility, clergy, and peasantry) tied to each other by relationships involving land, labor, and service.

Fifth Republic Constitution — French constitution since its adoption under President Charles de Gaulle in 1958. Increased executive power at the expense of the legislature.

Finland — Large Nordic nation, independent since 1917. Fought a series of wars against the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany over its sovereignty.

First Five-Year Plan — Soviet economic system under Joseph Stalin from 1929 to 1933. Focused on rapid industrialization and forced collectivization of agriculture.

First Lightning — First Soviet nuclear test, on August 29, 1949, with the RDS-1 device. Detonated in Kazakhstan. Yield roughly equivalent to the American Trinity Test.

G

Gagarin, Yuri — First person in space on April 12, 1961. Soviet Cosmonaut.

Gaidar, Yegor — Acting prime minister of the Russian Federation in 1992, before his rejection as a radical by Parliament. Advocated shock therapy at all costs.

Gang of Eight — Full name is the State Committee on the State of Emergency. Self-proclaimed political body who held Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev hostage from August 19 to 21, 1991 in an attempted coup. Hard-line communists. Arrested after dissolving and fleeing under pressure from Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the international community.

Georgia — Small Caucasus nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991.

Great Purge — Also known as the Great Terror. Period of Stalin's consolidation of power from 1934 to 1939, which saw assassinations, mass arrests, mass killings, mass deportations, and the use of NKVD troikas. Targeted political opponents of Stalin, Trotskyites, Old Bolsheviks, Party leadership, the Red Army, the intelligentsia, kulaks, and ethnic minorities, among others. Carried out in part by Lavrentiy Beria and Vyacheslav Molotov. Resulted in deaths of between 700,000 and 5 million people and the removal of all opposition to Stalin's leadership.

Gross domestic product — Abbreviated as GDP. The total value of goods and services produced by a country.

Gross national product — Abbreviated as GNP. The total value of goods and services produced by a country's residents. Differs from GDP in that goods and services do not need to be produced within the country's borders.

Glasnost — Gorbachev's 1980s reforms aimed at decreasing political censorship and increasing government transparency.

Gold standard — Monetary system where currency is tied to a fixed weight of gold.

Gorbachev, Mikhail — Last General Secretary of the CPSU from 1985 to the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991. Marxist who became a social democrat. Pursued policies of Perestroika and Glasnost. Withdrew troops from the Soviet–Afghan War. Engaged with U.S. President Ronald Reagan in strategic nuclear arms reduction. Vocal critic of later Russian Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. Nobel Peace Prize recipient and largely praised in the West.

Government subsidies — Also known as incentives. Government expenditure for individuals, households, or businesses to allow viability in the market. Examples include tax incentives and low-interest loans.

Gulag — Soviet system of forced labor camps between 1923 and 1961. Tool of political repression and Stalinist control. More than 18 million prisoners passed through the Gulag, with around 2 million of them dying within. Dismantled by Nikita Khruschev as part of the process of de-Stalinization.

H

Hegemony — Regional or global military, economic, and political dominance of a single state.

Helsinki Accords — Resolution to improve relations between the East and the West signed by the United States, Canada, and all European nations (except Andorra and Albania) in 1975. Recognized post-World-War-II

European borders. Determined that human rights in individual European states were the concern of all European states.

Hitler, Adolf — Dictator of Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945 through World War II and the Holocaust.

The Holocaust — Genocide of European Jews between 1941 and 1945 by Nazi Germany and its collaborators. Systematic killing of six million people, largely through mass shootings and poison gas in extermination camps. The culmination of Nazi Germany's systemic antisemitism. Sometimes also refers to Nazi genocide campaigns against other religious, ethnic, and political groups, homosexuals, and the disabled.

The Holodomor — Also known as the Ukrainian famine. Man-made famine of Soviet grain-producing regions in 1932 and 1933. Resulted in four to five million deaths in Ukraine and two to three million deaths in the Caucasus. Largely categorized as a genocide.

Hungary — Small Central European nation, formerly a member of the Eastern Bloc, fully independent since 1989. Formerly a central state of the powerful Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th century.

Hydrogen Bomb — Also known as an H-Bomb, thermonuclear weapon, or fusion bomb. Second generation of nuclear weapons design.

I

Imperialism — The theory and practice of developed (often Western) states extending their hard (or soft) power into the spheres of other states. Focused on hegemony and empire. Often involving colonialism. Largely a construct of the 19th century.

Inflation — The devaluation of currency over time, generally naturally. Caused by an increase in prices of goods and services and the consequent decline in money's purchasing value. Hyperinflation refers to inflation at rates over 50 percent per month.

Intensive agriculture — Agricultural system characterized by higher levels of input and output per land area and a low fallow ratio.

Intercontinental ballistic missile — Abbreviated as ICBM. Guided missile delivered from one continent to another with a (usually nuclear) payload.

Iron Curtain — Political metaphor for the separation of Soviet or Soviet-aligned states from NATO or neutral states in Europe. Later referred to the physical four thousand mile barrier that separated East from West and included mine fields, watch towers, fences and the Berlin Wall.

Ivan I — First Grand Prince of Muscovy in the early 14th century. Relocated the Orthodox Church from Kiev to Moscow.

Ivan III — Also known as Ivan the Great. 15th century Grand Prince of Moscow who pursued the unification of Eastern Europe under Muscovite control and defeated the Mongols.

Ivan IV — Also known as Ivan the Terrible. 16th century Grand Prince of Moscow who was lifted to power by the boyars. First official tsar of Russia. Wrecked the Russian state and terrorized the Russian nobility.

J

Joint State Political Directorate — Abbreviated as the OGPU. Replacing the Cheka, the Soviet secret police from 1923 to 1934. Operated the gulag, persecuted political opponents, and enabled forced collectivization of agriculture.

Judicial branch — The part of the government responsible for interpreting and applying the law.

K

Karabakh — Region in Azerbaijan and Armenia that has been the center of repeated conflict and ethnic strife.

Kazakhstan — Large Central Asian nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991.

Khasbulatov, Ruslan — Chairman of the Russian Parliament during the constitutional crisis of 1993.

Khruschev, Nikita — Leader of the Soviet Union from 1953 until 1964. Took power after Joseph Stalin's death after a power struggle with Lavrentiy Beria and Georgy Malenkov. Denounced Stalin's crimes and instituted a policy of de-Stalinization. Oversaw the early Soviet space program and early nuclear talks with the United States. Discredited by the Cuban Missile Crisis, and removed from office by Leonid Brezhnev and the Kremlin.

Kiev — Also known as Kyiv. The capital of modern-day Ukraine. Also the capital of the 9th through 12th century empire Kievan Rus.

Kievan Rus — The 9th through 12th century empire, centered in Kiev, to which Ukrainians, Belarusssians, and Russians trace their ethnic and political origins. Ruled by the Ruriks.

Korean Air Lines Flight 007 — Korean Air flight from Anchorage, Alaska to Seoul, South Korea shot down by air-to-air missiles after accidentally entering Soviet airspace on September 1, 1983. 269 killed, including a U.S. congressman.

The Kremlin — Also known as the Moscow Kremlin. Complex of palaces, cathedrals, and walls within Moscow that served as the royal residence of the Russian Emperor and now serves as the official residence of the Russian president. Used as a metonym for the Russian government and previously for the Soviet government.

Kulaks — Known as Kurkul in Ukrainian. Class of supposedly "wealthier" peasants, largely Ukrainian. Used against peasants who withheld grain from the Red Army during the Russian Revolution. Viewed as "class enemies"by Lenin and "liquidated" by Stalin, leading to between one and six million deaths.

L

Latvia—Small Baltic nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991.

League of Nations — First worldwide intergovernmental organization with the aim of maintaining world peace. Established in 1920 by the Paris Peace Conference. Transitioned into the United Nations in 1946. Designed by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, but never joined by the United States, and only briefly joined by the Soviet Union, Japan, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Legislative branch — The part of the government responsible for writing laws.

Legislative initiative — The constitutionally defined power to introduce legislation. Generally restricted to (some) members of the legislature or the executive or both.

Lenin, Vladimir — Born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov. Leader of the Bolsheviks and first Leader of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1924 and the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1924. Redistributed land and nationalized banks and large scale industry. Withdrew Russia from World War I, defeated socialist opposition in the Russian revolution, and undertook the "Red Terror," killing or imprisoning thousands of "enemies" of the party. Drafted the "New Economic Policy" in 1921 to revive Russia's post-war economy. Died in 1924. Namesake of Marxism-Leninism and Leningrad and revered posthumously in the Soviet Union.

Lishentsy — A class of disenfranchised people created by Vladimir Lenin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union between 1918 and 1936. Included private merchants, the clergy, and the mentally ill, among others. Abolished by the Stalin Constitution.

Lithuania — Small Baltic nation, formerly a Soviet state, and the first to break away, declaring independence in 1990.

M

Malenkov, Georgy — Briefly Stalin's successor as leader of the Soviet Union in 1953. Surpassed in power by Nikita Khruschev, and removed as premier in 1955. Formerly involved in the Orgburo, aircraft and missile production, and the Politburo. Advocated peaceful existence with the United States and an economic focus on consumer goods.

Manchuria — Asian subregion. Parts of northeastern China, Mongolia, and the Russian Far-East.

Marxism — Political and economic philosophy originating in the 19th century works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Focused on explanations of social phenomena rooted in material conditions, economic class, and a deterministic view of history. Generally leftist.

Means of production — Land, labor, and capital. What enable production within a society.

Mensheviks — One of two factions that the RSDLP split into in 1903. Led by Julius Martov. Advocated the overthrow of the tsar and the end of capitalism through democratic measures and an alliance with Russia's liberals.

Militarism — Belief that a state should maintain a strong and aggressive military capacity in order to pursue national interests. Often also glorification of the military. Largely a construct of the 20th century.

Moldova — Small Eastern European nation, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991.

Monarchy — System of government where one individual serves as head of state for life or until abdication. Often hereditary.

Mongol Empire — Also known as the Empire of the Golden Horde or the Tatars. Largest contiguous empire in history. 13th and 14th centuries primarily. Occupied much of southern Russia.

Moscow — Also known as Muscovy or Moskva. Russia's largest city and capital from the 14th century until 1712 and again after 1918. Home to the Red Square and the Kremlin. Russia's political center.

Mutually assured destruction — National security doctrine that holds that the use of nuclear weapons by one power against another nuclear power with defense capabilities would result in the annihilation of both parties. Form of Nash Equilibrium.

N

National Socialism — Also known as Nazism. Far-right totalitarian ideology practiced by Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945. Form of ultra-racist, ultra-nationalist fascism. Collectivist more than socialist. Disdainful of liberal or parliamentary democracy.

Nationalism — Belief that a particular nation should be congruent to the state in which it resides, or possess its own state. Largely a construct of the 20th century.

NATO — Full name is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Military alliance of Western states founded in 1949, during the Berlin Blockade, as a check on the threat of the Soviet Union. Under the Treaty, member states maintain high defense spending levels and promise mutual protection. The Russian Federation is not a member.

Nazi Germany — Officially known as the Greater German Third Reich. German state between 1933 and 1945 under the totalitarian rule of Führer Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist (Nazi) Party. Primary aggressor of World War II; conquered most of Europe. Oversaw the Holocaust—the genocide of six million

Jews— and the genocides of Romani people, Slavs, homosexuals, and others in Nazi German territory. Removed from power by Allied occupation of Germany in 1945.

Nazi–Soviet Nonaggression Pact — Also known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Secret Nazi–Soviet treaty signed on August 23, 1939 to partition the states of Central and Eastern Europe between the two powers. Enabled the joint invasion of Poland in September, which began World War II. Terminated on June 22, 1941 by the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa.

Near-abroad — Russian nationalist term referring to the republics that replaced the Soviet states, not including the Russian Federation.

New Economic Policy — Russian economic system from 1922 to 1928 that aimed to introduce a mixed economy. Some liberalization. Agriculture largely rebounded to pre-Russian Revolution levels.

Nicholas I — 19th century Russian tsar who fought the Crimean War.

Nicholas II — Final Romanov and Russian tsar who ruled from 1894 to 1917. Supported economic and political reform, but also committed to autocracy. Repressed political opponents and blamed for pogroms, Bloody Sunday, and Russia's performance in the Russo-Japanese War. "Nicky" of World War I's ill-fated Willy–Nicky Telegrams. Abdicated in 1917 and executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918.

NKVD — Full name is the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Soviet intelligence and secret police organization, succeeding the OGPU, from 1934 to 1946, when it was replaced by the KGB. Carried out Stalin's Great Purge and foreign assassinations such as that of Leon Trotsky. From 1938 to 1946 headed by Lavrentiy Beria.

North Vietnam — Full name is the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Small former Southeast Asian nation. Independent since 1954 as a communist member of the Eastern Bloc. Victorious over the Western-backed

South Vietnam in the Vietnam War (1955-1975), resulting in the unification of Vietnam in 1976 as Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Novgorod — One of the oldest cities in Russia, dating to the ninth century. Near St. Petersburg.

O

Operation Barbarossa — Invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 and 1942 by Nazi Germany and the Axis powers, violating the 1939 Nazi–Soviet Nonaggression Pact. Largest and costliest land invasion in human history, with ten million combatants and eight million casualties. Failure despite initial success marked the turning point of Nazi Germany's World War II prospects.

Operation Cyclone — United States CIA operation to fund and arm the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet Army during the Soviet–Afghan War. Most expensive covert operation in history.

Orgburo — Full name is the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Subservient to the Politburo, and entrusted with organizational decision-making. Discontinued in 1952.

Orthodox Christianity — The primary religious denomination in Russia and Eastern Europe. Brought to the region in the 10th century. 230 million members. No central authority.

Ottoman Empire — Also known as the Turkish Empire. Major empire centered in Constantinople (Istanbul). 14th century to 1922.

P

Parliamentarianism — System of government where the executive head of government derives democratic legitimacy from their ability to command the support of the legislature. Generally multi-party, with a consensus of elected representatives electing the head of government.

People's Republic of China — Abbreviated as PRC. Massive Asian nation, independent since 1949. One-party state governed by the Communist Party of China.

Perestroika — Literally meaning "restructuring." Series of reforms enacted by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev between 1985 and 1991. Intended to integrate western economic ideals into the Soviet Union's planned economy. Exacerbated existing shortages and led to political and social tensions across the Soviet Union.

Peter I — Also known as Peter the Great. Russian tsar at the turn of the eighteenth century who enacted a series of reforms. Promoted free commerce, invested in heavy industry, centralized the church, and opposed the boyars. Formed Russia's conscription military. Built St. Petersburg. First Russian tsar to use the title of emperor.

Petrograd Soviet — The workers' and soldiers' council set up in Petrograd after the Tsar's abdication in 1917. Somewhat in opposition to Petrograd's existing Duma.

Plan of 1809 — Full name is the Introduction to the Implementation of National Laws. Early nineteenth century plan by Russian reformer Mikhail Speransky to modernize the country's political and economic systems and introduce federalism and a separation of powers.

Pogrom — A violent riot aimed at ethnic massacre or expulsion, usually of Jews. Relatively common in the Russian Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Poland — Large Central European nation, formerly a member of the Eastern Bloc, independent since 1989. Particularly devastated by Nazi occupation.

Politburo — Full name is the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Known as the Presidium from 1952 to 1966. Highest political body of the CPSU and a de-facto collective presidency.

Populism — Political philosophy that emphasizes the “people” as opposed by the “elites.”

Pravda — Official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party.

Presidium of the Supreme Soviet — The highest standing body of state authority in the Soviet Union. Elected by the Supreme Soviet. From 1936 to 1977, the collective head of state.

Price controls — Restrictions set and enforced by a government on the price of goods and services which can be charged in the market. Price ceilings or price floors. Examples include the minimum wage and rent controls.

Proxy war — A war where one or more belligerents are non-state actors supported by external third-party states. Frequently employed by the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Putin, Vladimir — Russian President since 2000. Formerly a KGB intelligence officer.

Q

R

Reagan, Ronald — Republican president of the United States from 1981 to 1989. Escalated the U.S.—Soviet arms race, moving the Cold War out of the détente period.

Recession — Significant, widespread, long-term decline in overall economic strength and activity.

Red Army — Full name is the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army. Founded in 1918 by Leon Trotsky to fight the Russian Civil War. Largest land force in World War II. Renamed to the Soviet Army in 1946.

Red Square — Largest square in Moscow, next to the Kremlin. Historic site of many executions, protests, marches, and speeches.

Red Terror — Brutal campaign of political repression and executions carried out by the Cheka between 1918 and 1922. Modeled on the French Revolution Reign of Terror. 50,000 to 600,000 killed.

Referendum — A direct vote on a specific proposal by citizens of a state or region.

Romania — Balkan nation, independent since 1877. An Axis state between 1941 and 1944. Communist Eastern Bloc state between 1947 and 1991.

Romanov — The dynasty that ruled Russia from 1613 until 1917.

Romanov, Mikhail — Early 17th century Russian tsar. Ended the "Time of Troubles" by strengthening ties with Western Europe and brokering peace treaties with Sweden and Poland. First Romanov tsar.

Rubles — Russian currency since 1993, and previously the Soviet currency since 1922. 1 Ruble is worth 100 kopeks.

Russian Civil War — Civil war between the Bolshevik Red Army, led by Leon Trotsky, and the White Armies, led by ethnic separatists and former tsarist officers, between 1917 and 1922. Red Army supported by the Black Russians. White Armies supported by the U.K. and U.S. Decisive victory by the Red Army marked the end of the Russian Revolution and the firm establishment of the Soviet Union. Seven to 12 million total casualties.

Russian Federation — Massive Eastern European and Asian nation, independent since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Formerly the RSFSR.

Russian Parliament — Russian legislative body after the state's establishment in 1991. Dissolved by Boris Yeltsin in the 1993 constitutional crisis.

Russian Soviet Federative Social Republic — Abbreviated as RSFSR. Largest constituent republic of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1991. Capital is Moscow. Renamed the Russian Federation in 1992.

Russian White House — Full name is the House of the Government of the Russian Federation. Building in Moscow which serves as the offices of the Russian Government and the Russian President. Center of focus during the 1991 coup attempt. Badly damaged during the 1993 constitutional crisis.

Russo-Japanese War — 1904 to 1905 war between Russia and Japan caused by Russian encroachment into Manchuria. Heavy casualties for both sides, military defeats for the Russians, and a largely Japanese-favoring American-brokered treaty led to widespread revolutionary and anti-tsarist sentiment in Russia. Also marked the end of Russian expansion into East Asia.

Rutskoy, Alexander — Soviet military hero and Boris Yeltsin's vice president of Russia between 1991 and 1993.

S

Saint Isaac's Cathedral — Major cathedral and cultural attraction in St. Petersburg. Largest domed building in Russia and fourth largest in Europe.

Saint Petersburg — Or St. Petersburg. The second largest city in Russia and the Russian capital from its completion in 1712 under Tsar Peter I until 1918. Renamed Petrograd in 1914. Renamed Leningrad after Vladimir Lenin between 1924 and 1991. Russia's cultural center.

Scandinavia — European subregion. Denmark, Norway, Sweden. By some definitions also Iceland and Finland.

Secretariat — Full name is Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Responsible for management and day-to-day operations of the CPSU.

Serbia — Small Balkan nation, formerly a part of Yugoslavia, independent since 2006.

Serfdom — Feudal or post-feudal social system in Russia from the 17th century until its abolition in 1861. Tied many peasants to the land they worked as "serfs" and enabled the sale of serfs by landowners. Practically, though not legally, a form of slavery. By the system's abolition, more than a third of Russia's population were serfs.

Silver standard — Monetary system where currency is tied to a fixed weight of silver.

Slavs — Ethnically, peoples who speak slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, Serbian, Bulgarian, etc.) Predominantly live in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Southeastern Europe.

Social Democratic Labour Party — SDLP or RSDLP (Russian) for short. Russian Marxist party founded as a union of socialist groups in 1897. Split into the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks in 1903.

Socialism with a human face — Slogan of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's moderate reform push in 1968. Democratization, modernization, and liberalization. Ended by the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 21, 1968.

Soviet — A socialist workers' council.

Soviet Socialist Republics — The national administrative units of the Soviet Union. Over time there existed between four and 21.

Soviet Special Committee on the Atomic Bomb — Soviet nuclear research and development project between 1942 and 1949. Headed by Lavrentiy Beria. Culminated in the First Lightning test, subsequently scaled up.

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks — Abbreviated as SALT. Two rounds of conferences and corresponding treaties between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1969 and 1979. SALT 1 resulted in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. SALT 2 was abandoned because of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan.

The Space Race — Cold-War-era competition between the United States and the Soviet Union over spaceflight capacity. Origins in ballistic missile testing. Led to the first man-made satellites, space probes to the Moon and Mars, low Earth orbit spaceflight, and human spaceflight to the moon. The Soviet Union developed

an early lead through Sputnik 1 and Yuri Gagarin's spaceflight, but soon lost that lead to the United States thanks to the Apollo program.

Speransky, Mikhail — Early nineteenth century reformist advisor to Russian tsar Nicholas I. Often referred to as the "father of Russian liberalism." His Plan of 1809 aimed at modernizing the country's political and economic systems and introducing federalism and a separation of powers.

Sputnik 1 — First man-made satellite to orbit the earth. Launched by the Soviet Union in 1957. Massive international event.

Stalin Constitution — Soviet Constitution between 1936 and 1977. Centralized power in the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Introduced a wide range of civil rights reforms and protections which largely went ignored during the Great Purge. Longest lasting Soviet constitution.

Stalin, Joseph — Leader of the Soviet Union from 1924 until his death in 1953, governing as dictator beginning in 1929. Marxist—Leninist totalitarian. Created a central command economy through rapid industrialization and forced collectivization of agriculture. Instituted the Great Purge (and a number of other purges), developed the Gulag, led the Soviet Union in World War II, and presided over the development of Russia's first nuclear weapons. Developed a massive cult of personality. Succeeded by Nikita Khruschev, who denounced Stalin and instituted a system of de-Stalinization. Responsible for the deaths of somewhere between nine and 20 million people.

Stalinism — The Soviet Union's ideology and means of governing under Joseph Stalin, between 1927 and 1953. Totalitarianism, rapid industrialization, forced collectivization of agriculture. Focus on class conflict and the Soviet Union's role in promulgating communism. Massively repressive. Pseudoscientific and rewrote history. Under Nikita Khruschev's leadership in the 1950s and 60s, the Soviet Union underwent a period of de-Stalinization to shake off the influence of Stalinism.

Stolypin, Peter — Prime minister of Russia from 1906 to 1911 who aimed to reform Russia's agrarian system and bolster the monarchy. Assassinated by an anarcho-socialist in 1911.

Supreme Soviet — Permanent legislature and supreme government institution of the RSFSR and later the Russian Federation until its abolition by President Boris Yeltsin during the constitutional crisis of 1993.

T

Tactical nuclear weapons — Smaller nuclear weapons designed to be used on a battlefield in combat, contrasted with strategic nuclear weapons. Have never been used.

Tatar — a member of a Turkic people descendant of the Tartars who ruled central Asia in the 14th century.

Third International — Also known as the Communist International or Comintern. CPSU organization that advocated global communism. 1919 to 1943.

Titoism — Communist political philosophy deriving from Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito. Focused on broad Yugoslav identity, workers' self-management, and separation from the Soviet Union. Titoists purged by Joseph Stalin in the 1940s and 50s.

Totalitarianism — Political system that functions as an extreme form of authoritarianism. Dictator and state control public and private spheres and outlaw opposition. Fixed worldview and charismatic leader. Examples include Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany or Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union.

Treaty of Versailles — Peace treaty signed in June of 1919 that formally ended World War I. Signed between Germany and the Allied Powers, chiefly the United States, the British Empire, and France. Russia not present.

Trinity Test — First ever nuclear detonation, on July 16, 1945, with an implosion-design plutonium bomb. Detonated in New Mexico as part of the American Manhattan Project, overseen by the U.S. Army and J. Robert Oppenheimer. Same design as the "Fat Man" bomb detonated over Nagasaki, Imperial Japan, on August 9, 1945.

Troikas — Literally meaning groups of three. NKVD extrajudicial bodies that conducted secret show trials and sentenced people to death in absentia during Stalin's Great Purge.

Trotsky, Leon — Bolshevik second-in-command to Vladimir Lenin. Supporter of Proletarian Internationalism. Founded the Red Army. Opposed the New Economic Policy. Prominent critic of Joseph Stalin. Deported in 1929. Assassinated by a Stalinist agent in Mexico in 1940.

Tsar — Sometimes anglicized as czar. The title used by Russian (and other Eastern European) monarchs from 1547 to 1721 or 1917. Derived from the Latin caesar used by Roman emperors.

U

Ukraine — Large Eastern European republic, formerly a Soviet state, independent since 1991. One of three countries (alongside Russia and Ukraine) that traces its origins to Kievan Rus. Particularly devastated by Nazi occupation and Stalin's campaign of starvation.

V

V-J Day — An abbreviation of Victory over Japan Day. August 15, 1945. The date of Imperial Japan's surrender to the Allies, bringing World War II to an end.

Vladimir the Great — 10th century prince of Kievan Rus who brought Orthodox Christianity to Russia.

W

War communism — Soviet Russian economic and political system from 1918 to 1921. Means of production nationalized and forced labor instituted. Massive intentional inflation. Largely responsible for the Russian famine of 1921-22. Replaced by Lenin's New Economic Policy.

Warsaw Pact — Full name is the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. Collective defense organization formed in 1955 between the Soviet Union and seven Eastern Bloc states. Established as a counterweight to NATO of the Western Bloc. Invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968. Dissolved in 1991.

West Germany — Also known as the Federal Republic of Germany, FRG, or BDR (German abbreviation). Western Bloc descendant of the German Reich encompassing the former British, American, and French occupied zones. Expanded to include East Germany in 1990.

Western Bloc — Coalition of capitalist states aligned with the United States during the Cold War. Among others, the UK, West Germany, France, Japan, South Korea, Pakistan.

Western Europe — European subregion. France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Holland. By some definitions also the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, and Scandinavia.

White Armies — Also known as the White Guard. Armed forces of the anti-Bolshevik movement in the Russian Civil War. Outnumbered 20 to 1 and defeated.

Winter Palace — Massive palace in St. Petersburg that served as the official residence of the Romanov dynasty from 1732 until 1917.

X

Y

Yanayev, Gennady — Leader of the Gang of Eight and brief Vice President of the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev. Arrested after the coup's failure.

Yekaterinburg — Industrial city in Siberia. Fourth largest city in Russia.

Yeltsin, Boris — First President of Russia from 1991 to 1999. Initially a supporter of Mikhail Gorbachev, but considered perestroika reforms too moderate. Nationalist who led the transition of the RSFSR into the independent Russian Federation. Transitioned Russia's command economy into a market economy. Called a constitutional convention in 1993...

Yugoslavia — Large former Balkan state, established in 1918. Occupied by Nazi Germany between 1941 and 1943. From 1945 to 1992 a communist Eastern Bloc state. Broke up in a series of wars in the 1980s with some participants later tried for war crimes and genocide.

Z

Zedong, Mao — Leader of Communist China from 1943 to 1976. Defeated the Kuomintang in 1946 to unify China. Launched the Great Leap Forward, which resulted in the deaths of 30 to 45 million due to mass famine, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Aligned with Stalin, opposed to Khruschev.

Zhukov, Georgy — Soviet Army general who led Soviet forces to victory at the Battle of Stalingrad and the siege of Leningrad. Political ally of Nikita Khruschev.

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