The Russian Revolution attempted to destroy the existing political and social structure and replace it with one based on social and economic equality.
Lenin’s program:

All private ownership of land is abolished and immediately without compensation. All landowner’s estates and all land belonging to the crown, to monasteries, church lands with their livestock and...property...are transferred to the disposition of the township land committees.” -Lenin, 10/26/17

Land and factories were seized and given to the peasants and workers, respectively. Millions of Russians gained power that they never had, but this power did not ensure that good times lay ahead...
Lenin’s vision of workers’ government

- “Democratic Centralism” tried to combine two opposing forms of party leadership: democracy, which allowed for free and open discussion, and central control, which ensured party unity and discipline.
- To oppose the new government was considered treason.
- The government was “not debating society” but an institution for replacing capitalism with a more just society.
- “Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich, That is the democracy of capitalist society.”
Structure of governance under Lenin

- True democracy cannot exist in a society of class inequality.

- Rules for the Central Committee and Bolsheviks
  
  1. All directing bodies of the Party, from top to bottom, shall be elected;
  2. That Party bodies shall give periodical accounts of their activities to their respective Party organizations;
  3. That there shall be strict Party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority;
  4. That all decisions of higher bodies shall be absolutely binding on lower bodies and on all Party members. Top=“vanguard”
Russian Civil War 1918-1920

- **White Army**
  - Some supported the return of the czar (emperor)
  - Some wanted an elected government
  - All opposed Lenin’s approach

- **Red Army**
  - Made up of Bolsheviks’ and their supporters
  - Commanded by Leon Trotsky
Russian Civil War 1918-1920

- 14 million Russians died
- Famine followed civil war
- Worldwide flu epidemic
- In the end, the Red Army crushed the White Army and its allies.
Results of World War I

- Bolsheviks signed a truce with Germany to stop all fighting and begin peace talks.
- March 1918: Russia and Germany signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which stated that Russia would surrender a large part of its territory to German and its allies providing that the war would end.
Fixing the Bankrupt Economy

- Economy / trade / production down
- Lenin’s “New Economic Policy”
  - Peasants allowed to sell surplus.
  - Government kept control of major industries, banks, and means of communication.
  - Some small factories, businesses operate under private ownership
- By 1928, Russia’s farms and factories were producing as much as they had before WWI.
Lenin’s Successor

- Assassination attempts
- Mental strains of leading a revolution, governing a country, and fighting a civil war.
- Strokes: May ‘22, December ‘22, and March ‘23
- Dies January, 1924
Trotsky or Stalin?
Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin on “Permanent Revolution” (Trotsky) vs. “Revolution in One Country” (Stalin)

- Lenin: "We always staked our play upon an international revolution...In one country it is impossible to accomplish such a work as a socialist revolution."

- Stalin came to argue that the strength of Soviet socialism could be used as a model and source of support for revolutionaries worldwide.

- Destruction of the Soviet experiment, supporters of Stalin argued, would hurt the cause of revolution everywhere.