

## Soviet Russia Chronology

### 1904 Russo-Japanese War

1905 January 22 Bloody Sunday. 200,000 workers in a peaceful procession to the Winter Palace petition for an eight-hour day, a minimum wage of one ruble, no overtime and the calling of a Constituent Assembly. The Tsar panics and orders the troops to fire on the people. 500 are killed and thousands are wounded.

1905 June: The terrible defeat of the Russian battle fleet at the Tsushima Straits of Japan causes the sailors of the Black Sea Fleet, led by the battleship Potemkin, to mutiny. Sympathetic workers in the cities and peasants in the urban areas revolt. There is a general strike of the workers in St. Petersburg.

First Russian Revolution. Soviets created. Trotsky leads the St. Petersburg Soviet.

1905 October: Tsar proposes October Manifesto which creates a consultative assembly, the Duma.

1905 December: Tsar regains power at the end of the year, disbands the St. Petersburg Soviet. Duma established, but it is a shell of a representative assembly.

### 1914 Russia enters World War I against Germany

February, 1917 Abdication of Tsar. Revolution brings Provisional Government to power

October, 1917 Bolshevik Revolution brings Lenin and his party to power.

1918 Russia makes separate peace with Germany. Land distributed to peasantry creates many small holdings.

1918-1921 Civil War on all fronts. Trotsky organizes the Red Army. Problem of famine, "War Communism" attempts to end hoarding of grain by peasants

1922-1928 New Economic Policy. Moderate policy allowing limited capitalism. Peasants keep land. Class of capitalist landowners arises: the kulaks (word in Russian means fist.) Lenin suffers a stroke.

1923 Death of Lenin. Power struggle between Stalin and Trotsky. "Scissors" (a term coined by Trotsky) crisis reveals discrepancy between agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy. (peasants' income fell while at the same time the price for consumer/industrial goods rose exorbitantly - peasants unable to sell their produce, reverted to subsistence farming, which led to fears of famine)

1927 Trotsky exiled. Stalin gains control of Communist Party and government.

1928 Peasants refuse to deliver grain to city. Forced collectivization ensues. First Five-Year Plan for central control of the economy instituted.



1932 Rapid seizure of peasant land and livestock leads to bitter resistance. Famine ensues.

1933-34 First purge of the Communist Party (11,000 members excluded)

1933-1937 Second Five-Year Plan instituted.

1934-41. The Great Terror – Stalin's Purges. Between 1934 and 1941 an estimated 5% of the population was arrested at one time or another. An estimated 12 to 20 million (statistics are approximate) were sent to camps (Gulags) in Siberia where most died or were executed.

1934 Assassination of Kirov, leader of the Communist Party in Leningrad. (Kirov's murder was later revealed to have been a secret police plot instigated by Stalin.) Zinoviev and Kamenev (Stalin's rivals) are accused, tried and found guilty in the first of the great "show" trials carefully orchestrated for maximum effect by the secret police. Zinoviev and Kamenev "confessed" and "recanted" their party in this terrible deed. They were sentenced to 10 years and 5 years at hard labor respectively.

1936 Second "show" trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev for wrecking, sabotage and various murder plots. Both confess. Stalin promises them they will not be executed. The day after the guilty verdict they are both executed.

1937 Third "show" trial "Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre." Old Bolsheviks are accused and condemned.

1937-1941 Military Purges result in the following arrests in the branches of the service:

3 of 5 Marshals

14 of 16 Army Commanders

8 of 8 Admirals

60 of 67 Corps Commanders

138 of 199 Divisional Commanders

221 of 397 Brigade Commanders

All 11 Vice Commissars of Defense

75 of 80 Members of the Supreme Military Soviet

The result was complete un-preparedness on the part of the Soviet military when the Nazis attack in the fall of 1941...because Stalin had ordered the execution of many of his top military commanders.

Secret Police: Cheka established in 1917. In 1922 the Cheka was incorporated in the GPU (State Political Organization) as the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs.) Methods used by NKVD: torture; "conveyor" method (sleeplessness). Show trials were carefully planned and scripted in advance. "Defendants" were required to accuse themselves of a vast array of crimes.

1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact: Non-aggression treaty – Soviet Union and Germany promised to remain neutral and refrain from acts of aggression against each other if either went to war. Secret clauses provided for the partition of Poland with Germany taking the western half and the Soviet Union the eastern half (which occurred on September 1, 1939). The Pact ended with the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941.