Rise of Communism in Russia

Karl Marx

•Focus on struggle between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’

•Communist Manifesto

•“Workers of the World Unite!”

Communism the Idea

•Class struggle was inevitable and would lead to the creation of a classless society in which all wealth and property would be owned by the community as a whole.

•Marx believed the industrial working class would rise spontaneously to overthrow capitalism

•Never actually happened!

Communism Reality

•Government owns the means of production and a small group of people make economic decisions.

•Often at least some private ownership.

Russia in 1914

•Czar Nicholas is the absolute monarch and is unpopular.

•Russia does poorly in WWI. Soldiers do not have what they need and many die.

Monarchy Collapses

•Workers go on strike and the czar is forced to abdicate.

•Abdicate: formally say he will not be czar anymore.

•Tell your partner two reasons the Russians are upset and protesting.

Provisional Government

•Temporary government

•Decide to stay in the war. Big Mistake!

•Bolsheviks (Communists) overthrow the provisional government.

•They promise “Peace, Land, and Bread”

Communist Soviet Union

•Idea: All political power, resources, and means of production would belong to workers and peasants.

•Reality: The Communist party reigned and used the army and secret police to enforce its will.

Lenin

•First Communist leader

•Wanted to use Marx’s ideas in Russia.

•Dies in 1924

Power Struggle

•Very involved in Bolshevik Revolution

•Very intelligent good speaker

•Lenin’s right hand man.

•Not involved in Revolution but quickly moved up the ranks in Communist party.

•Not a talented speaker but very shrewd

Winner: Stalin

•1924 he becomes leader.

•Wanted to turn Russia into a modern industrial power.

•Creates totalitarian state. Government controls every aspect of citizen’s lives.

Loser: Trotsky

•Is kicked out of the Communist Party by Stalin.

•Stalin has him assassinated.

Totalitarian State

•Dictator: ruler who has complete control.

•Terror:

–secret police

–censorship (controlling what ideas are spread)

–labor camps.

•Great Purge: Stalin executes anyone he thinks is against him.

Propaganda

•Spreading ideas to promote a certain cause or damage an opposing cause.

Collectivization

•Government owns all farm land and people work on the ‘collectives’ or large government farms.

•Farmers resisted and Stalin reacted brutally.

•Famine in which 5-8 million died in Ukraine alone.

Where the Russians Better Off?

•The lives of peasants did not really improve. Still just barely getting by.

•Live in fear.

•Huge famine

•Soviet Union eventually collapses.