**Russian Revolution**
**Causes**: Throughout the **19th** **century**, Russian **Czars** attempted to **westernize** and industrialize, without also importing French Revolution liberal ideas.  They were mostly unsuccessful, and many Russian liberals called for reform.  In response, the Czars became harsh and oppressive.  A **rigid social class system** added to this problem by denying the majority peasant class most basic rights.  The peasant class, composed of both farmers and urban workers, were mostly poor, overworked, and hungry, which would lead them to support liberal ideas that promised better living conditions.

A small revolution in **1905** forced **Czar Nicholas II** to enact some minor reforms, however, these did not last.  Finally, as Russia suffered through many defeats during **World War I**, and the country faced **shortages** in **food**, **fuel** and **housing**, the people began to revolt.  The czar was forced from power in **March of 1917**, and a **provisional** **government** was setup.  In **November**, after this government had been slow in reacting to the country's problems, a group known as the **Bolsheviks**, took control of the country.  This is known as the Bolshevik or **Communist Revolution**, as the Bolsheviks, led by **Vladimir Lenin**, later renamed themselves Communists.

**Effects**:  Russia became the first country to base its government on the writings of **Karl Marx**. By **1922**, Lenin and the Communists had retaken most of the old Russian Empire and renamed it the **Soviet Union**.  Lenin instituted the **New Economic Policy** where government controlled most banks and industry, but did allow some private ownership.  This allowed the Soviet economy to slowly recover from the effects of the Czars and World War I.

Under **Josef Stalin**, the Soviet Union switched to a **Command Economy**, which gives control of all property and means of production to the government.  Furthermore, a command economy focuses on building up industry, and produces few consumer products.  This often resulted in shortages throughout the Soviet Union.  While Stalin's **Five Year Plans** did much for rebuilding the Soviet economy after **World War II**, his policy of farm **collectivization**, where peasants lived collectively on **government owned farms**, often resulted in widespread **famine** as many peasants resisted this policy.