

The Russian Revolution(s)

SS 30-1

Consider This...

How was communism in the Soviet Union a rejection of liberalism?



Russia

Europe

Africa

India

China

Terminology

Russian Empire/Imperial Russia

The name of the empire located in Eastern Europe and North Asia prior to 1922



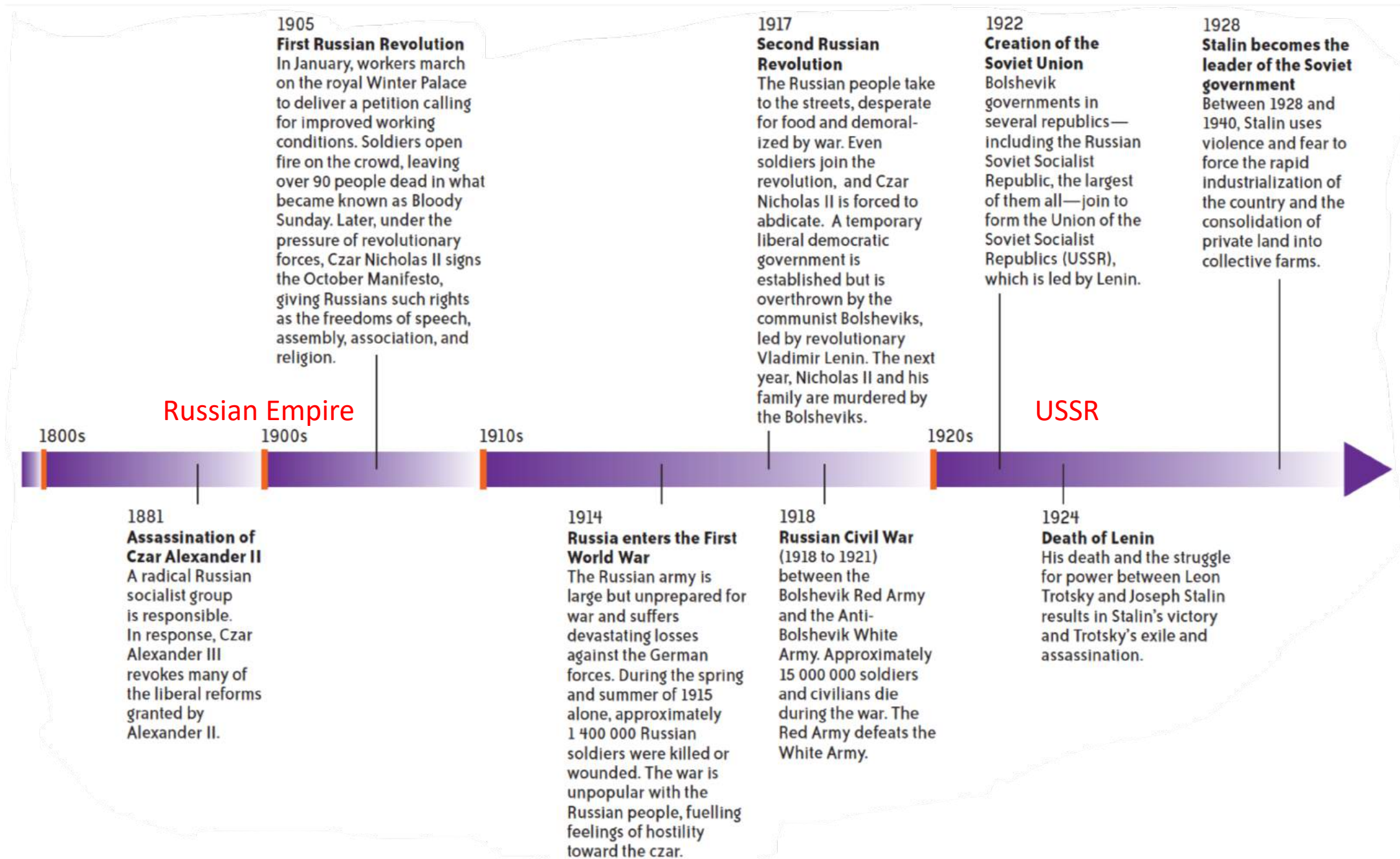
USSR (Union of Socialist Soviet Republic)/ Soviet Russia

The name used between 1922 and 1991 for the communist-led country made up of 15 republics, the largest of which was the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic



Russian Federation/Russia

Since 1992, after the various republics of the USSR had declared their independence, the largest republic, Russia, has continued as its own democratic country



Russian Empire 1721-1917



The Russian Empire was an empire that extended across Eurasia and North America from 1721, following the end of the Great Northern War, until the Republic was proclaimed by the Provisional Government that took power after the February Revolution of 1917.

Type of Government

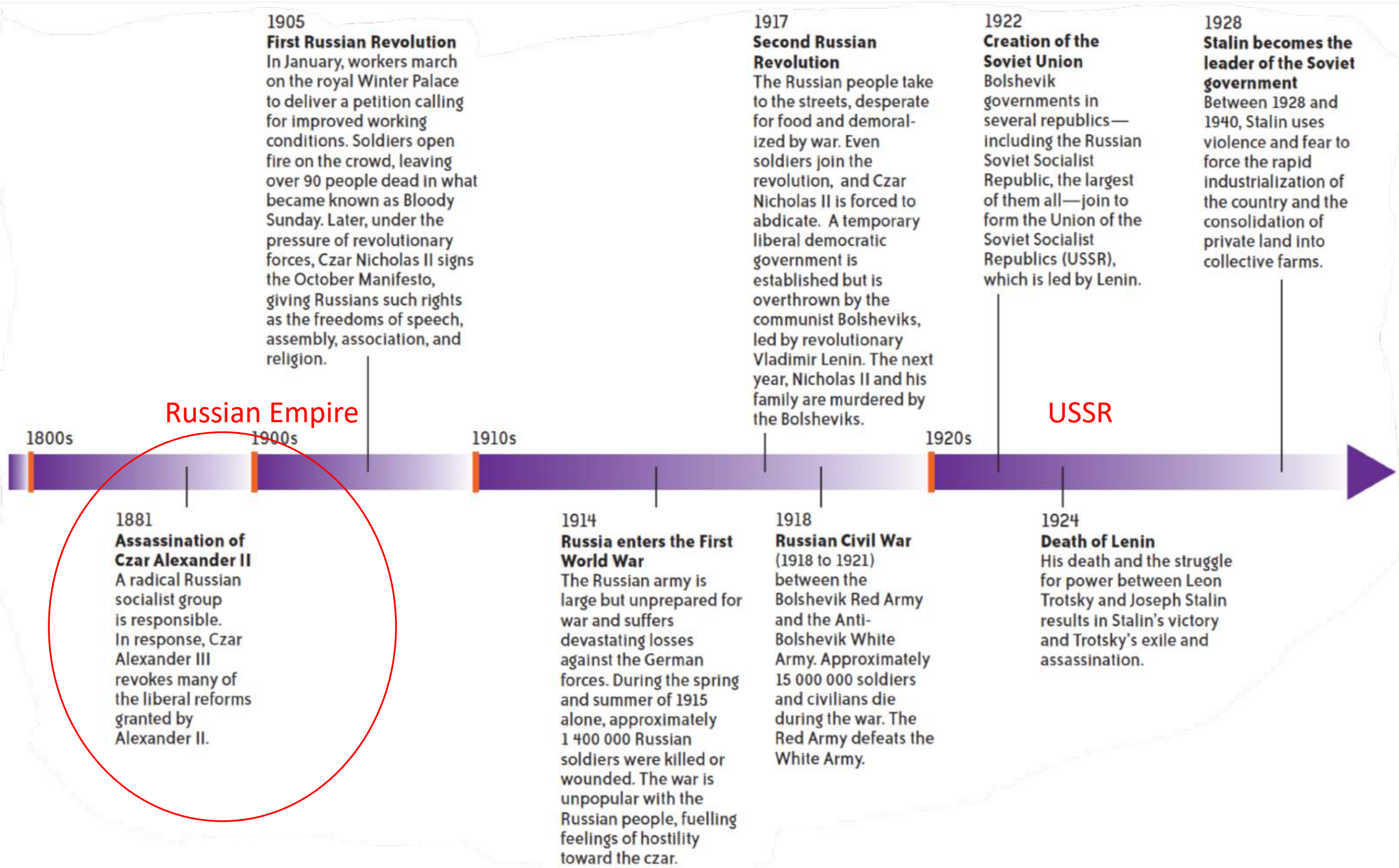
- Tsarist Autocracy
- Autocracy
- Absolute Monarchy
- Constitutional monarchy
- Dual monarchy

Russian Revolution and the Beginning of Communism in the Soviet Union

By the 1800s, Russia was far less industrialized than Western Europe.

Due in part to its vast size and focus on subsistence agriculture (in which people farm only what they need to survive), Russia was slow to develop economically. Poverty was widespread, especially among the Russian serfs, or peasants, who worked for the landowning nobility.





**1905
First Russian Revolution**
In January, workers march on the royal Winter Palace to deliver a petition calling for improved working conditions. Soldiers open fire on the crowd, leaving over 90 people dead in what became known as Bloody Sunday. Later, under the pressure of revolutionary forces, Czar Nicholas II signs the October Manifesto, giving Russians such rights as the freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and religion.

**1917
Second Russian Revolution**
The Russian people take to the streets, desperate for food and demoralized by war. Even soldiers join the revolution, and Czar Nicholas II is forced to abdicate. A temporary liberal democratic government is established but is overthrown by the communist Bolsheviks, led by revolutionary Vladimir Lenin. The next year, Nicholas II and his family are murdered by the Bolsheviks.

**1922
Creation of the Soviet Union**
Bolshevik governments in several republics—including the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, the largest of them all—join to form the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which is led by Lenin.

**1928
Stalin becomes the leader of the Soviet government**
Between 1928 and 1940, Stalin uses violence and fear to force the rapid industrialization of the country and the consolidation of private land into collective farms.

Russian Empire

USSR

1800s

1900s

1910s

1920s

**1881
Assassination of Czar Alexander II**
A radical Russian socialist group is responsible. In response, Czar Alexander III revokes many of the liberal reforms granted by Alexander II.

**1914
Russia enters the First World War**
The Russian army is large but unprepared for war and suffers devastating losses against the German forces. During the spring and summer of 1915 alone, approximately 1 400 000 Russian soldiers were killed or wounded. The war is unpopular with the Russian people, fuelling feelings of hostility toward the czar.

**1918
Russian Civil War (1918 to 1921)**
between the Bolshevik Red Army and the Anti-Bolshevik White Army. Approximately 15 000 000 soldiers and civilians die during the war. The Red Army defeats the White Army.

**1924
Death of Lenin**
His death and the struggle for power between Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin results in Stalin's victory and Trotsky's exile and assassination.

Czar Alexander II (1855-1881)

During this time, Russia was ruled by a powerful monarch called a czar. The czar had complete control over the social, political, and economic aspects of the country.

- Czar/Tsar (pronounced like zaar) = Absolute Monarch
- What do we know about absolute monarchs from other periods of European history?



Czar Alexander II (1855-1881)

In 1861, Czar Alexander II finally freed the serfs, and, over the next 20 years, he introduced a series of liberal reforms:

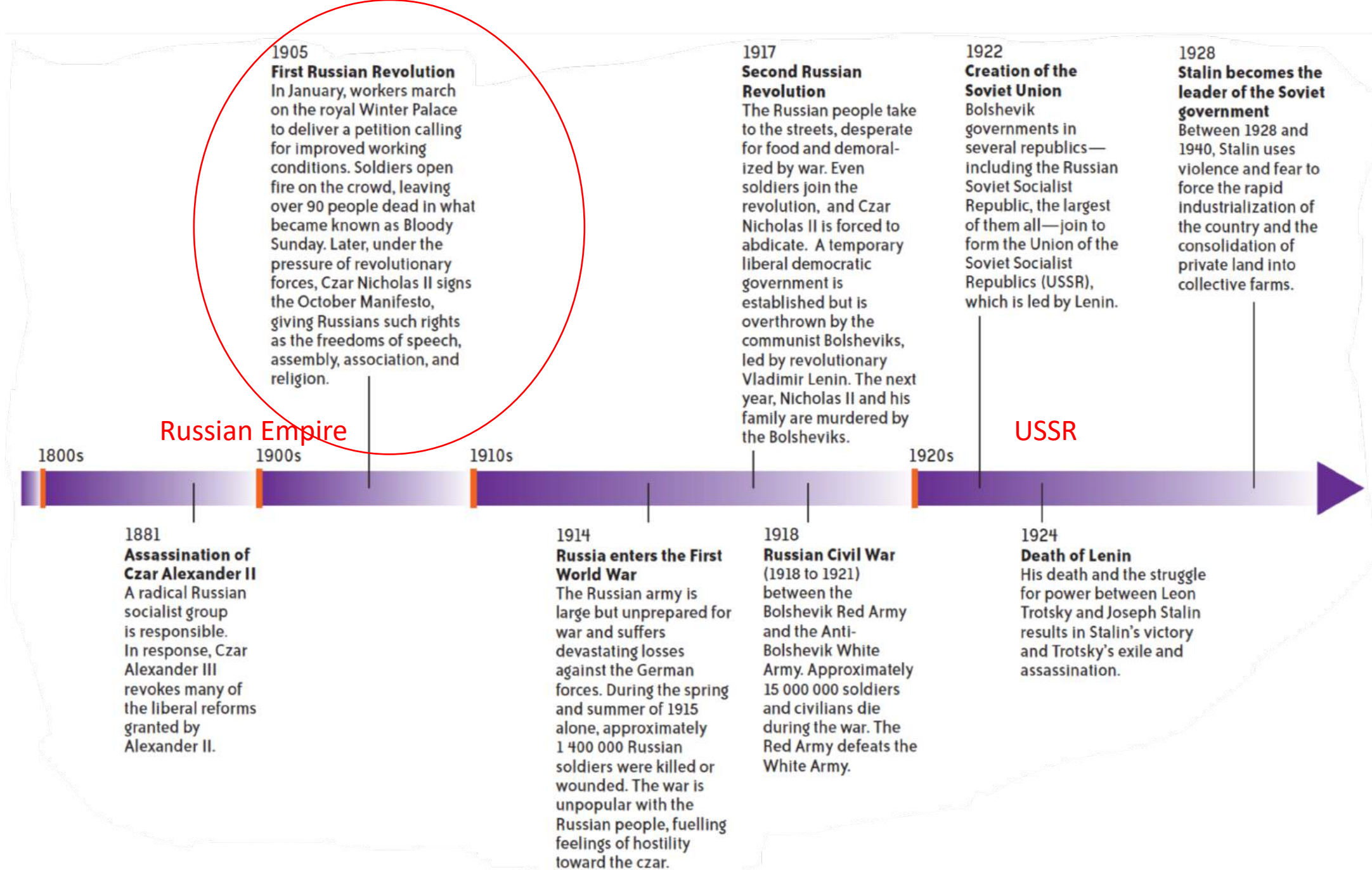
1. Emancipation Edict: all serfs living in Russia are free

- Result = cheap sources of labour for factories

2. Zemstvos: local governments that included representatives from all classes

- Result = these representatives made decisions on such things as taxation and education.

3. Other Reforms: abolished capital punishment, reformation of courts, limited powers of the secret police, gave press greater freedom, reorganized the military



The Rise of Socialism

As with other countries that experienced industrialization, the gap between the rich and the poor widened. The people of the working class, employed by the growing number of factories and other businesses, were often treated poorly and were overworked in terrible conditions. By the turn of the 20th century, many Russians felt that the treatment of the working class was unfair. Some found inspiration for change in the pages of *The Communist Manifesto* and in the ideas of Marxism.

What similarities/differences do you anticipate with in relation with other movements we've studied so far?

SDLP

In 1898, a group of Marxists decided to form the **Socialist Democratic Labour Party (SDLP)**, but the Russian czar banned the political group.

The members of the SDLP were forced into exile in other European countries, but they kept up their revolutionary spirit by working on an illegal newspaper called *Iskra* (Spark). Among the members of the SDLP were **Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Joseph Stalin.**



The reforms, however, did not go far enough for a number of small revolutionary socialist groups. They wanted immediate change.

Members of one radical group, the **People's Will**, attempted to assassinate Czar Alexander II several times, and finally succeeded in 1881.

After the assassination, many of the czar's liberal reforms were reversed, and the freedoms of the Russian people were greatly restricted by the new czar, Alexander III. However, industrialization continued.

Bloody Sunday



Despite the exile of many socialist activists, unrest grew among the people of Russia.

In January 1905, the people of Saint Petersburg marched to Czar Nicholas III's Winter Palace to demand food and better working conditions. As this large group arrived at the palace gates, it was met by the czar's soldiers, who opened fire on the crowd, causing hundreds of people to lie dead or dying. The day became known as Bloody Sunday.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGM8n2Iq6Wc> **a movie scene depiction, not real!*

The *First* Russian Revolution

January 1905

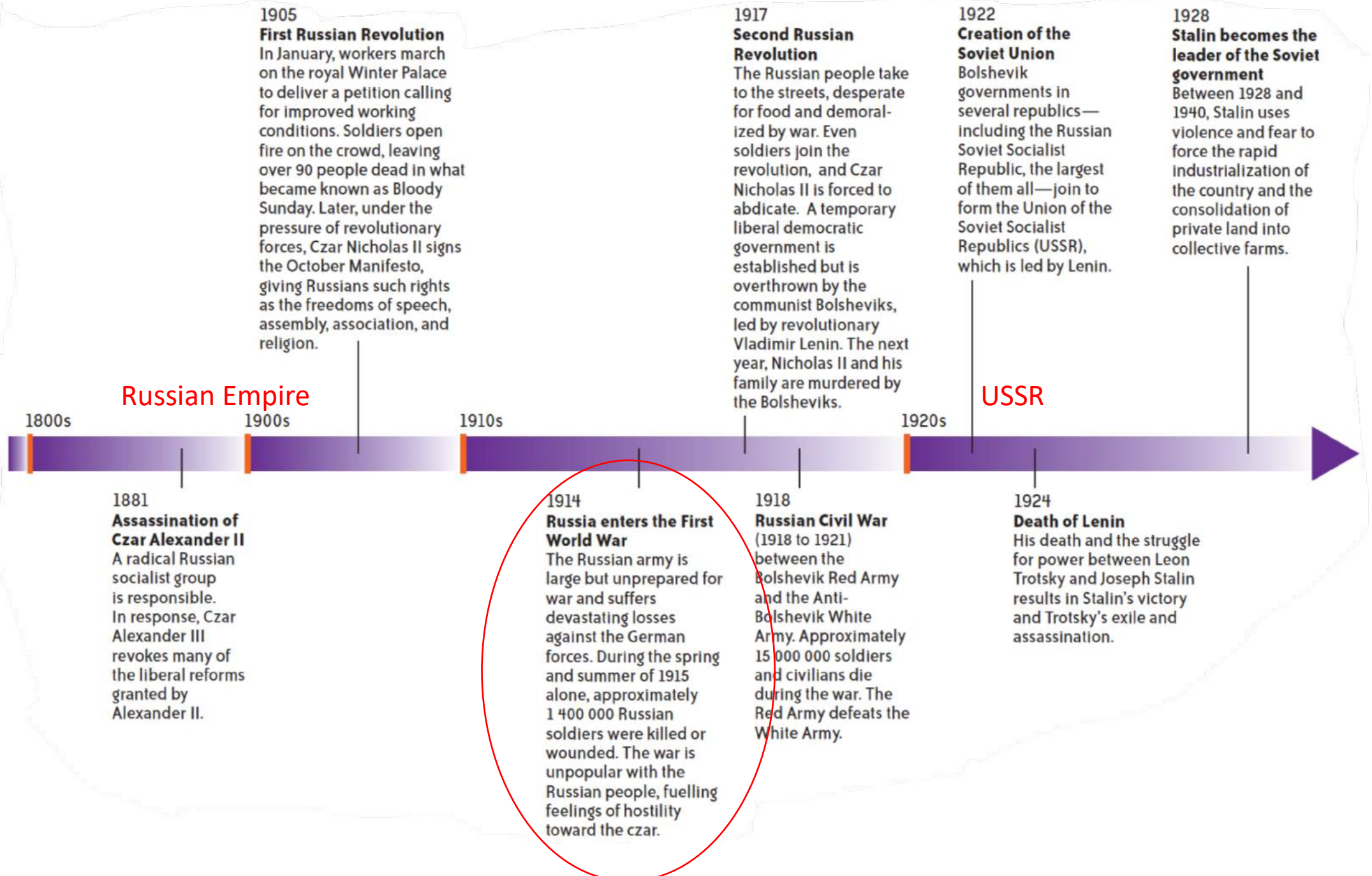
- March on the Winter Palace
- Bloody Sunday
- Mass strikes across the country



October 1905

- Growing pressure from the people
- Czar Nicholas II allows an assembly of the people's representatives
- St Petersburg Soviet (council) was formed.
- It calls for a general strike and encouraged people to refuse to pay their taxes.
- Czar Nicholas II signs the October Manifesto, allowing the formation of political parties and giving the people of Russia basic civil rights, such as the freedoms of speech and religion.

The events of 1905, referred to as the first Russian Revolution, increased the popularity of socialism, setting the stage for the Revolution of 1917, the abdication of the czar, the civil war, and the establishment of the first communist country in the world.



The *Second* Russian Revolution

1917

- Years of oppression
- Frustration with the government
- Injustice and social inequality



Russia in WW1

- Heavy losses (land & people)
- Lack of equipment (due to slow industrialization)
- Food shortages

Dissidents start returning to Russia

(a person who opposes official policy, especially that of an authoritarian state)



Calls for reform and revolution intensify

February/March

- Royal family removed from power
- Workers rise up
- Provisional government



October/November

- Provisional government falls
- Socialist / Marxist take power
- Bolshevik Revolution
- Promised “Land, Peace, Bread”



Leninism

