

**The Russia Revolution, or:
How Not to Make a Revolution
(A Modified Billington Typology)**

Historical Problem: How to industrialize while introducing democratic institutions?

Historiographical Problem: How successful was Russia in doing so by 1914?

I. Emphasize on Long-Term Causes (1825–1914)

A. Social

1. Demographic
2. Society of Privilege
3. Russification of Subject Nationalities
4. Persecution of Jews

B. Economic

1. Agricultural Country
2. Beginnings of Industrialization
3. Semi-Colonial Status
4. Deprivation

C. Political

1. Open Repression (“Bloody Sunday”; Father George Gapon)
2. Failure in War (Crimean War 1854–55; Russo-Japanese War 1904–05)
3. Perception of Leadership as Vacillating (October Manifesto, 1905)
4. Mixed Success of Reform Measures (Sergei Witte; P. A. Stolypin)
5. Rationalization of Government (Konstantin Pobedonostsev)

D. Intellectual

1. Weak Liberal Parties (Constitutional Democrats [Kadets])
2. “Revolutionary” Groups: Socialist Revolutionaries [SRs]; Social Democrats
3. Appeal of Extremist Solutions (the “strong leader”)
4. Myth of Revolutionary Tradition and the *Okhrana* (Russian secret police) (Decembrists [1825]; assassinations of Alexander II [1881] and V. K. Plehve [1904]); execution of A. I. Ulianov [1886])

II. Conspiratorial Theories (1914–Feb. 1917)

A. Rasputin, German Plots, Protopopov, and the Masons

B. Immediate Causes of February Revolution

1. Political—belief tsar was incompetent to govern or win the war
2. Economic—food shortages; prices soared
3. Social—peasants wanted nobles’ fertile lands and woodlands

III. Spontaneity and Accident (Feb. 1917–Oct. 1917)

A. “Dual Power”

1. Provisional Government (A. F. Kerenskii) — had the authority
2. Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers — had the power

B. Return of V. I. Lenin

1. “April Theses”; “All Power to the Soviets”; “Peace, Bread, and Land”
2. Smolnyi Institute; Liteinyi Bridge

IV. “Heroic” and Inevitable (October 1917–1924)

A. Reasons for Bolshevik Success

1. Organization (Democratic Centralism; Red Army—Leon Trotsky)
2. Central Position
3. Unifying Ideology
4. Ruthless Use of Terror (Red Guards)
5. Pragmatic Leadership (Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; New Economic Policy)

Periodization of Russia During and After the Soviet Period

November 7, 1917, to May 24, 1918:

Consolidation by Bolsheviks of Successful Coup

May 24, 1918, to March 15, 1921:

Civil War and War Communism

March 15, 1921, to January 15, 1928:

New Economic Policy (NEP): Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

January 15, 1928, to June 22, 1941:

Forced Industrialization, Collectivization, Purges (Joseph Stalin)

June 22, 1941, to May 9, 1945:

World War II: The Great Patriotic War

May 9, 1945, to March 5, 1953:

The Cult of Personality

March 5, 1953, to October 16, 1964:

De-Stalinization and the Thaw (Nikita Khrushchev)

October 16, 1964, to March 11, 1985:

Period of Stagnation (Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko)

March 11, 1985, to December 25, 1991:

Glasnost, Perestroika, *demokratizatsiia*, and *novoe myshlenie* (Mikhail Gorbachev)

December 25, 1991, to the present:

“Shock Therapy”, privatization, and the legacy of Communism (Yeltsin; Putin)