After WWI, many people in nations impacted by the Great War were willing to accept rule by totalitarian dictators who controlled all aspects of society. In the 1920s and 1930s Russia, Italy and Germany produced three of history’s most infamous totalitarian dictators shown below.

In this unit we will explore the factors that allowed these totalitarian leaders to take power and the strategies used by these totalitarian leaders to exert authority.

**Totalitarianism Definition:** A centralized government system that does not tolerate differing opinion, exercises control over the freedom, will, or thought of others; and that exercises dictatorial control over political, social, economic and emotional aspects of life. Authoritarian; Autocratic.
Totalitarianism Case Study #1: Russia

The story begins before Stalin…

In 1917 Russia will throw off 300 years of rule by the Czar and have a communist revolution.

Take notes on handout for Notebook Assignment #1:

The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Stalin
Changes Begin with the Russian Revolution of 1917

FROM Czar Nicholas II
Absolute Monarch
1894-1917

TO Vladimir Lenin
Communist leader
1917-1924

TO Josef Stalin
Totalitarian Dictator
1924-1953
300 Years of Absolute Monarchy in Russia (1613 – 1917)

- Renaissance & Enlightenment ideas never spread to Russia
- Romanov Family ruled as virtual dictators for 300 years (Tsar or Czar = Caesar)
- No legislative body, no constitution, no voice for the people that Czar had to follow
- Inequality led to periodic uprisings & revolts that were crushed violently
Russia on the eve of revolution

- **Huge & Intolerant**
  - Largest nation in world, lots of natural resources
  - Most of population poorly educated peasant farmers called *serfs*
  - Russian Orthodox Church very powerful
  - Execution of *dissidents*—those with different views, religions, ethnicities

- **Not Modern**
  - Outdated agricultural practices often led to high prices & food shortages
  - Few mechanized, modern factories
  - Lagged far behind the rest of Europe in industry
As you watch video clips, take notes about how each of the following contributed to the question above:

- **Russo-Japanese War**
- **Lack of connection with average Russians**
- **“Bloody Sunday” Massacre**
- **Dissolving of the Duma**
- **Relationship with Rasputin**
- **World War I**

*Land of Tsars Video*

**Why was Nicholas II the last Czar of Russia?**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-x4VcmHfxU (10 min)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1W1b6j8U46k&feature=related (10 min)
Bolsheviks Take Power

- The Czar steps down in March 1917
- The “provisional government” is not able to get the full support of the Russian people.
- The **Bolsheviks**, a communist radical group led by Vladimir Lenin, promises **peace, land and bread** for the poor.
- Russia, where so many suffer from food shortages, war fatigue and crushing poverty, like the idea and follow the Bolsheviks who topple the provisional government in October 1917.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-qxWWRcN-4 (6 min)

**What goal do the Bolsheviks have?**

**Marxist** inspired **Bolsheviks** wanted to replace the Czar with a communist “dictatorship of the proletariat” ruled “temporarily” by Communist Party leaders for the benefit of the common worker and farmer until a true “classless society” as Marx envisioned could be established. **Bolsheviks** want to reorganize Russia to be ruled by groups of workers called “Soviets” and not by royalty or the elite. Bolshevik slogan is “**All Power to the Soviets**”
Provisional Government Falls & Civil War Breaks Out

- Lenin assumes power and orders land distributed to peasants, control of factories to workers and begins peace talks with Germany leading to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918.

- Not all in Russia (or elsewhere) favor Bolshevik policies and a civil war begins between Bolsheviks ("Reds") and anti-Bolsheviks ("Whites" who included mainly those sympathetic to nobility and military elites). Lenin’s Cheka (secret police) execute opponents.

- Civil War lasts 3 years and leads to 15 million deaths (more than WWI)!
Red Army is victorious in Civil War by 1920, but Russia in chaos, leading to

Lenin’s Economic Reforms

New Economic Policy (NEP) 1921

Allowed some limited Capitalism

Encouraged foreign investment

Not too Marxist… Why?
Lenin’s Political Reforms

In 1922, nation became the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

Organized new government into largely self-ruling Republics

Bolsheviks rename themselves the Communist Party

By Lenin's death in 1924 USSR became a dictatorship controlled by the Communist Party, not the people
Lenin dies in 1924

Who would take his place?

Power Struggle Between Joseph Stalin & Leon Trotsky

With Stalin’s victory over Trotsky, Lenin’s goal of a “dictatorship of the proletariat,” inspired by Karl Marx, will not be achieved. Instead, Stalin will rule Russia as a Totalitarian dictator, a master of propaganda and control based on violence and fear…