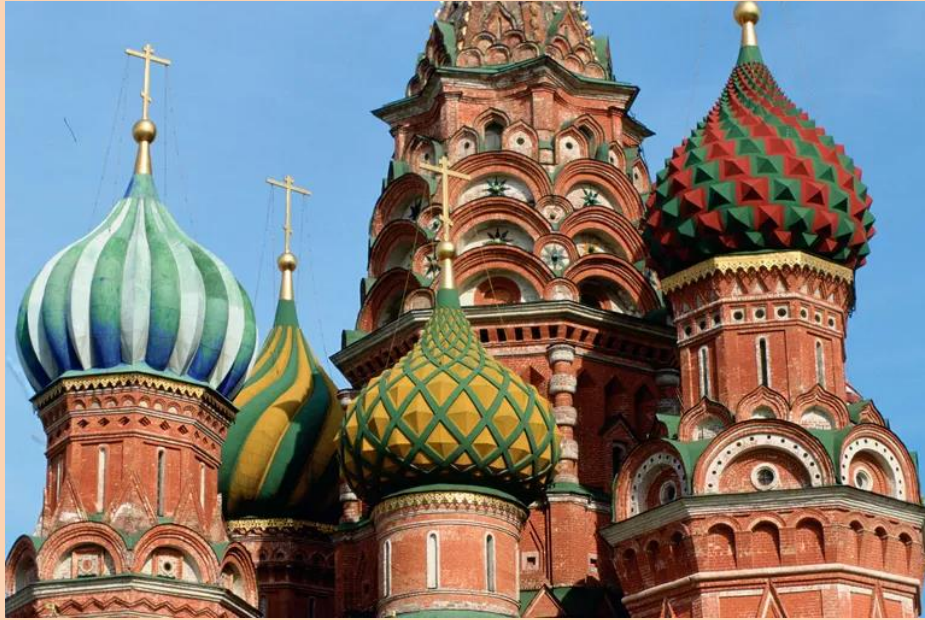


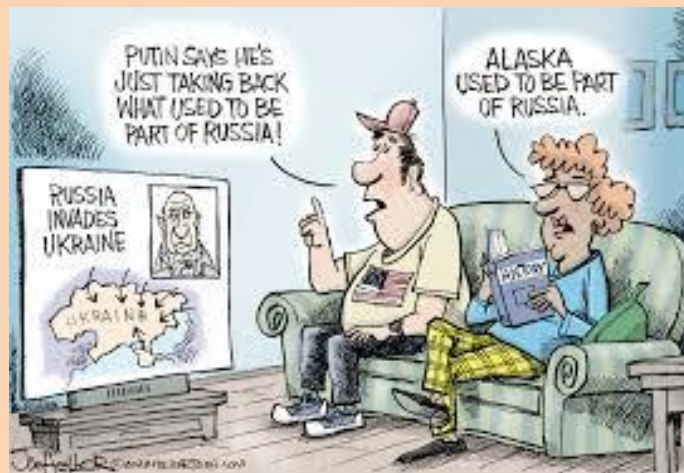
LAW AND POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Class activities*



Class 1: Jan. 12 Introduction

1. What do you know about the Soviet Union?
2. What do you know about Russia?
 - a. Politics?
 - b. Culture? Films? TV shows?
 - c. Literature
 - d. Language
 - e. Legal system
3. What about the Russian invasion of Ukraine?
4. Analyze the following cartoons:



Class 2 Sep. 15: The October Revolution of 1917



1) What are the major events leading to the Russian Revolution of October 1917?



2) What are its main causes?

3) Discuss the Bolshevik and Menshevik parties. Which group was more successful and why?

4) Who were the leaders of the Russian Revolution?

5) Explain the objectives of the communists who seized power in Russia in 1917. What kind of society did they hope to create? What methods did they use to capture power and rebuild Russia? What type of government was formed?

6) What are the main aspects of Marxist ideology? What is the base and superstructure model?

7) In what ways did Lenin modify Marxist ideology by leading the Bolsheviks to power in 1917?

8) Discuss Lenin's policies. What was the relation between the Soviet government and the peasants? What was Lenin's New Economic Policy?

9) Discuss the Soviet Union's role in World War I. What was the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk? Who signed it on behalf of the Soviet Union? Why?

10) What was the relation between the Soviet government and the Church? Why?



Read Lenin's Speech and discuss the following questions



- 1) What is the speech about?
- 2) What does Lenin think of the status of the Revolution at the time of the speech?
- 3) Why do you think that “tens of millions in money are lavished in all countries to disseminate lies and slander about the Russian revolution”? Is this still a usual practice? Why or why not?
- 4) What is Lenin's conception of the role of education in socialist Russia?
- 5) What does Lenin think about schools in bourgeois countries?
- 6) What does he mean by “education divorced from life and politics is lies and hypocrisy”?
- 7) What does Lenin mean by bourgeois democracy?

Speech at the First All-Russia Congress on Education

August 28, 1918

Congress on Education, Moscow; Published according to the text of the book

Source: Lenin's Collected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 28, 1965, pages 84-87

(All rise as Comrade Lenin appears in the hail. Stormy, prolonged applause.) Comrades, we are passing through one of the most critical, important and interesting moments of history—a moment when the world socialist revolution is in the making. It is now becoming apparent even to those who stood remote from socialist theories and forecasts that this war will not end as it began, that is, by the conclusion of peace in the usual way between the old imperialist governments. The Russian revolution has shown that the war is inevitably leading to the disintegration of capitalist society in general, that it is being converted into a war of the working people against the exploiters. Therein lies the significance of the Russian revolution.

The workers of the world feel that the cause of the Russian revolution is their own cause no matter how great the obstacles in our way, no matter how many tens of millions in money are lavished in all countries to disseminate lies and slander about the Russian revolution. Parallel with the war between the two groups of imperialists, another war is beginning everywhere, the war which the working class, inspired by the example of the Russian revolution, is declaring against its own bourgeoisie. All the signs go to show that Austria and Italy are on the verge of revolution. The old order in these countries is disintegrating rapidly. In the stronger and more stable countries such as Germany, Britain and France, the same process is going on, although in a somewhat different and less noticeable form. The collapse of the capitalist system and the capitalist war is inevitable.

The German imperialists have been unable to stifle the socialist revolution. The price Germany had to pay for crushing the revolution in Red Latvia, Finland and the Ukraine was the demoralisation of her army. The defeat of Germany on the Western front is largely due to the fact that her old army no longer exists. What the German diplomats joked about the "Russification" of the German soldiers—now turns out to be no joke at all, but the bitter truth. The spirit of protest is rising, "treason" is becoming a common thing in the German army.

On the other hand, Britain and France are making a last effort to save their own situation. They are hurling themselves on the Russian Republic and straining capitalism to breaking point. Even the bourgeois papers have to admit that a definite change of spirit has appeared among the working people: in France, the idea of "national defence" is breaking down; in Britain, the working class is denouncing the "civil truce". That means the British and French imperialists have staked their last card-and we can say with the utmost confidence that that card will be trumped. (Stormy applause.) No matter how loudly certain groups cry that the Bolsheviks are backed by a minority, they have to admit they cannot find the forces inside Russia to fight the Bolsheviks, and are compelled to resort to foreign intervention. The working class of France and Britain is thus being forced to take part in a blatant war of conquest, whose purpose is to crush the Russian revolution. That means that British and French, and, consequently, world imperialism is at its last gasp. (Stormy applause.)

We have surmounted all difficulties, even though it was hard to declare martial law again in a country where the people themselves had suppressed the war and smashed the old army, and even though it was hard to form an army in the midst of acute civil war. The army has been formed, and victory over the Czechs, the whiteguards, the landowners, the capitalists and the kulaks is assured. (Stormy applause.) The working people realise they are fighting for their own cause and not in the interests of a handful of capitalists. The Russian workers and peasants have for the first time got a chance to run the factories and dispose of the land themselves, and that experience was bound to have its effect. Our army has been formed from chosen people, from the classconscious peasants and workers. Each of them goes to the front aware that he is fighting for the destiny of the world revolution as well as the Russian revolution; for we may rest assured that the Russian revolution is only a sample, only the first step in the series of revolutions in which the war is bound to end.

Education is one of the component parts of the struggle we are now waging. We can counter hypocrisy and lies with the complete and honest truth. The war has shown plainly enough what the "will of the majority" means, a phrase used as a cover by the bourgeoisie. It has shown that a handful of plutocrats drag whole nations to the slaughter in their own interests. The belief that bourgeois democracy serves the interests of the majority has now been utterly discredited.

Our Constitution, our Soviets, which were something new to Europe, but with which we were already acquainted from the experience of the 1905 Revolution, serve as splendid agitation and propaganda material, completely exposing the lying and hypocritical nature of bourgeois democracy. We have openly proclaimed the rule of the working and exploited people and there lies the source of our strength and invincibility.

The same is true of education: the more cultured the bourgeois state, the more subtly it lied when declaring that schools could stand above politics and serve society as a whole.

In fact the schools were turned into nothing but an instrument of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. They were thoroughly imbued with the bourgeois caste spirit. Their purpose was to supply the capitalists with obedient lackeys and able workers. The war has shown that the marvels of modern technology are being used as a means of exterminating millions of workers and creating fabulous profits for the capitalists who are making fortunes out of the war. The war has been internally undermined, for we have exposed their lies by countering them with the truth. We say that our work in the sphere of education is part of the struggle for overthrowing the bourgeoisie. We publicly declare that education divorced from life and politics is lies and hypocrisy. What was the meaning of the sabotage resorted to by the best educated representatives of the old bourgeois culture? This sabotage showed better than any agitator, better than all our speeches, better than thousands of pamphlets that these people regard learning as their monopoly and have turned it into an instrument of their rule over the so-called common people. They used their education to frustrate the work of socialist construction, and came out openly against the working people.

The revolutionary struggle has been the finishing school for the Russian workers and peasants. They have seen that our system alone assures their genuine rule, they have been able to convince themselves that the state is doing everything to assist the workers and the poor peasants in completely crushing the resistance of the kulaks, the landowners and the capitalists.

The working people are thirsting for knowledge because they need it to win. Nine out of ten of the working people have realised that knowledge is a weapon in their struggle for emancipation, that their failures are due to lack of education, and that now it is up to them really to give everyone access to education. Our cause is assured because the people have themselves set about building a new, socialist Russia. They are learning from their own

experience, from their failures and mistakes, and they see how indispensable education is for the victorious conclusion of their struggle. In spite of the apparent collapse of many institutions and the jubilation of the intellectuals carrying out sabotage, we find that experience in the struggle has taught the people to take their fate into their own hands. All who really sympathise with the people, all the best teachers will come to our aid, and that is a sure pledge that the socialist cause will triumph. (Ovation.)

Class 3 Sep. 26: Stalin



- 1) Discuss Stalin's rise to power after Lenin's death.
- 2) Discuss Stalin and Trotsky's struggle. What are their major differences?
- 3) Discuss Trotsky's exile.
- 4) What was known as the Great Terror? What was the Gulag? Why did Stalin's government think this was necessary?
- 5) What was The Great Purge?
- 6) Discuss the Great Patriotic War (Великая Отечественная война). What was Leningrad's Blockade?



- 7) Discuss the outcomes of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences regarding the post-war world. What was agreed or promised?
- 8) How did the world map change after the WWII? How did the Soviet Union influence in Eastern Europe?
- 9) Discuss Stalin's Five-Year Plans and the industrialization of the Soviet Union.
- 10) What was Holodomor? Why did it happen? Is there a connection between Holodomor and today's invasion of Ukraine?



Soviet architecture and politics. Life in the Soviet Union



Discuss the following Soviet and Russian architecture styles and their political meaning and context.

- 1) Stalinka (Сталинка)



2) Khrushchyovka (Хрущёвка)



3) Seven Sisters (Сталинские высотки)



4) Brezhnevka Брежневка



5) Putinka (Путинка)



- Discuss what a kommunalka(коммуналка) is?



- Discuss food rationing in the Soviet Union



- Discuss life in modern Russia



Class 4: The Cold War



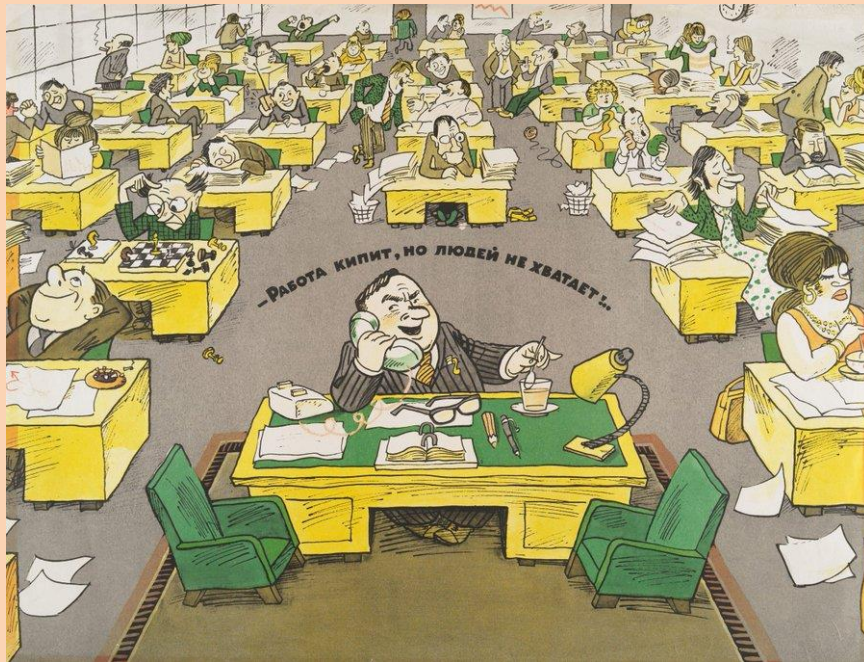
- 1) What was the Cold War?
- 2) What is Truman's doctrine? What was the Marshall Plan?
- 3) What gave rise to the Cold War?



- 4) Has a new Cold War emerged?
- 5) What was the Warsaw Pact? What about NATO?
- 6) What is the Cuban missile crisis?
- 7) What is the space race?
- 8) What is the connection between the Cold War and the space race?
- 9) Who was Khrushchev? Discuss his government.
- 10) Who was Brezhnev? Discuss his government.



- 11) Discuss bureaucracy in the Soviet Union during the Cold War. How did it affect everyday life? Give specific examples.



Law in the Soviet Union

Read and analyze the infamous art. 58 of the Soviet Penal Code.

The following questions are meant to guide your analysis.

- 1) What is the structure of the crime? In other words, what are the elements of the crime?
- 2) What is a socially dangerous act? Is it different from the social harm principle in contemporary Anglo-American law? If so, how? Give examples.
- 3) Select one crime, e.g., treason, espionage, terrorist activities, and compare it to the same or similar crime in Canadian and US Criminal Law.
- 4) Compare the Soviet notion of crime with the current notion of crime (articles. 5 & 8 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation).

Article 5. **The Principle of Guilt**

1. A person shall be brought to criminal responsibility only for those socially dangerous actions (inaction) and socially dangerous consequences in respect of which his guilt has been established.

2. Objective imputation, that is criminal responsibility for innocent injury, shall not be allowed.

Article 8. **Grounds for Criminal Responsibility**

The commission of a deed containing all the elements of a crime, provided for by this Code, shall be the grounds for criminal responsibility

SOVIET UNION PENAL CODE

State Crimes

1. Counterrevolutionary Crimes

58-1. "Counterrevolutionary" is understood as any action directed toward the overthrow, subversion, or weakening of the power of worker-peasant councils or of their chosen (according to the Constitution of the USSR and constitutions of union republics) worker-peasant government of the USSR, union and autonomous republics, or toward the subversion or weakening of the external security of the USSR and the fundamental economic, political, and national gains of the proletarian revolution.

In consideration of the international solidarity of interests of all workers, acts are likewise considered "counterrevolutionary" when they are directed at any other workers' government, even if not part of the USSR.

58-1a. Treason to the motherland, i.e. acts done by citizens of the USSR in damage to the military power of the USSR, its national sovereignty, or the inviolability of its territory, such as: espionage, betrayal of military or state secrets, crossing to the side of the enemy, flight (by surface or air) abroad, shall be punishable by--

the supreme measure of criminal punishment-- shooting with confiscation of all property, or with mitigating circumstances-- deprivation of liberty for a term of 10 years with confiscation of all property.

58-1b. The same crimes, perpetrated by military personnel, are punishable by the supreme measure of criminal punishment--

shooting with confiscation of all property [20 July 1934 (SU No 30, Art. 173)]

58-1v. In case of flight (by surface or air) across the border by a military member, the adult members of his family, if they in any way aided the preparation or carrying-out of treason, or only knew about it and failed to report it to authorities, shall be punishable by--
deprivation of liberty for a term of 5 to 10 years, with confiscation of all property.

Remaining adult members of the family of the traitor, living together with him or as his dependents at the moment of the perpetration of the crime, shall be deprived of voting rights and exiled to remote districts of Siberia for 5 years. [20 July 1934 (SU No 30, art 173)]

58-1. Failure by a military member to denounce preparations or the carrying-out of treason shall be punishable by--

deprivation of liberty for 10 years.

Such failure to denounce by other citizens (not military) shall be punished according to [article 58-12](#). [20 July 1934 (SU No 30, art. 173)]

58-2. Armed uprising or incursion with counterrevolutionary purposes on Soviet territory by armed bands, seizure of power in the center or areas with the same purposes, or, in particular, with the purpose of forcibly severing from the USSR and an individual union republic, any part of its territory, or of breaking agreements between the USSR and foreign states, shall be punishable by--

the supreme measure of social defense-- shooting, or proclamation as an enemy of the workers, with confiscation of property and with deprivation of citizenship of the union republic, and likewise of citizenship of the Soviet Union and perpetual expulsion beyond the borders of the USSR, with the allowance under extenuating circumstances of reduction to deprivation of liberty for a term of no less than three years, with confiscation of all or part of one's property [6 Jun 1927 (SU No 49, art 330)].

58-3. Dealings for counterrevolutionary purposes with a foreign state or its individual representatives, and likewise aiding by whatever means a foreign state, engaged in war with the USSR, or conducting against the USSR a struggle by means of intervention or blockade, shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in [article 58-2](#) of this code. [6 July 1927 (SU No 49, art 333)]

58-4. The offering of whatever kind of aid to that part of the international bourgeoisie, which, not recognizing the equal rights of a Communist system replacing a Capitalist system, exerts itself for its overthrow, and likewise to public groups and organizations, being under the influence of or directly organized by that bourgeoisie, in the carrying out of hostile activities toward the USSR, shall be punishable by--

deprivation of liberty for a term not less than three years with confiscation of all or part of one's property, with an increase, in especially aggravating circumstances, up to the supreme measure of social defense-- shooting or declaration to be an enemy of the workers, with deprivation of citizenship of one's union republic, and, likewise, citizenship of the USSR and expulsion beyond the borders of the USSR forever, with confiscation of property. [6 June 1927 (SU NO 49, art. 330)].

58-5. Adherence to a foreign state or any public groups in it, by means of relations with its representatives, use of false documents or other means, toward a declaration of war, armed intervention in the affairs of the USSR or other unfriendly actions, eg: blockade, seizure of state property of the USSR or of union republics, the breaking of diplomatic relations, the breaking of treaties concluded with the USSR, etc., shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in [article 58-2](#) of this code. [6 June 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)]

58-6. Espionage, i.e., the transmittal, seizure, or collection, with the purpose of transmittal, of information, being a specially kept state secret due to its content, to foreign governments, counterrevolutionary organizations, and private individuals, shall be punishable by-- deprivation of liberty for a term not less than three years, with confiscation of all or part of one's property, or in those cases where the espionage brought or could bring especially severe consequences for the interests of the USSR-- the supreme measure of social defense-- shooting or proclamation as an enemy of the workers with deprivation of citizenship of one's union republic and, likewise, of citizenship of the USSR and expulsion beyond the borders of the USSR forever with confiscation of property.

Transmittal, seizure, or collection for purpose of transmittal of economic information, not consisting by its content of specially preserved state secrets, but not subject to publication either due to direct legal prohibition, or due to the decision of the management of the department, institution, or enterprise, whether for a reward or for free, to organizations and persons listed above, shall be punishable by--

deprivation of liberty for a term up to three years. [6 June 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)].

58-7. The undermining of state production, transport, trade, monetary relations or the credit system, or likewise cooperation, done with counterrevolutionary purposes, by means of corresponding use of state institutions and enterprises or impeding their normal activity, and likewise use of state institutions and enterprises or impeding their activity, done in the interests of former owners or interested capitalist organizations, shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in [article 58-2](#) of this code. [6 June 1927 (SU no 49, art. 330)].

58-8. The perpetration of terrorist acts, directed against representatives of Soviet authority or activists of revolutionary worker's and peasants' organizations, and participation in the performance of such acts, even by persons not belonging to a counterrevolutionary organization, shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in [article 58-2](#) of this code. [6 June 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)].

58-9. Destruction or damage with a counterrevolutionary purpose by explosion, arson, or other means of railroad or other routes and means of transportation, means of public communication, water conduits, public depots and other structures, or state and community property, shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in [art. 58-2](#) of this code. [6 June 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)].

58-10. Propaganda or agitation, containing a call for the overthrow, subversion, or weakening of Soviet authority or for the carrying out of other counterrevolutionary crimes (art. 58-2 to 58-9 of this code), and likewise the distribution or preparation or keeping of literature of this nature shall be punishable by--

deprivation of liberty for a term not less than six months.

The same actions during mass disturbances, or with the use of religious or nationalist prejudices of the masses, or in a war situation, or in areas proclaimed to be in a war situation, shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in [art. 58-2](#) of this code. [6 June 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)].

58-11. Any type of organizational activity, directed toward the preparation or carrying out of crimes indicated in this chapter, and likewise participation in an organization, formed for the preparation or carrying out of one of the crimes indicated in this chapter, shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in the corresponding articles of this code. [6 June 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)].

58-12. Failure to denounce a counterrevolutionary crime, reliably known to be in preparation or carried out, shall be punishable by--

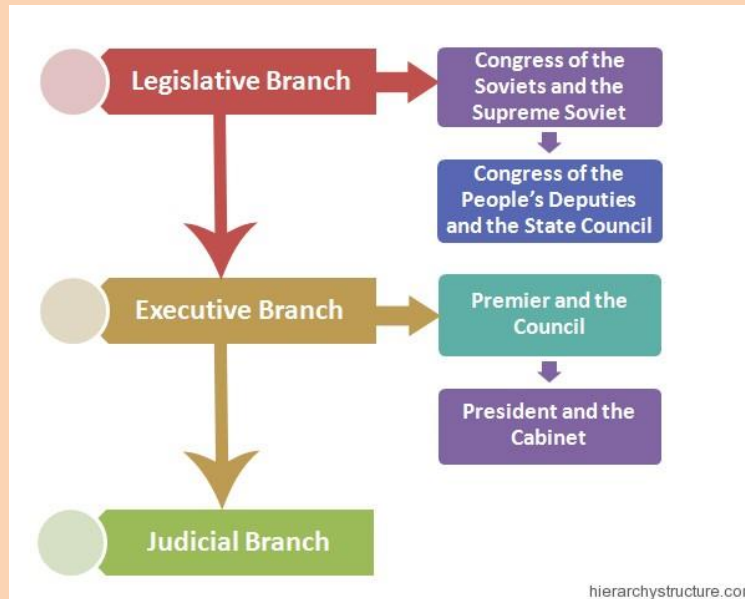
deprivation of liberty for a term not less than six months. [6 June 1927 (SU no 49, art. 330)]

58-13. Active participation or active fighting against the working class and revolutionary movement, manifested in a responsible or secret position in the tsarist regime, or with counterrevolutionary governments in a period of civil war, shall be punishable by--

measures of social defense, indicated in [art. 58-2](#) of this code. [6 June 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)].

58-14. Counterrevolutionary sabotage, ie. conscious failure to perform some defined duties or intentionally negligent fulfillment of them, with the special purpose of weakening the authority of the government and functioning of the state apparatus, shall be punishable by-- deprivation of liberty for a term not less than one year, with confiscation of all or part of one's property, with an increase, in especially aggravating circumstances, to the supreme measure of social defense--shooting, with confiscation of property. [6 Jun 1927 (SU No 49, art. 330)].







Classes 5 Oct 6: Perestroika, glasnost, and the fall of the Soviet Union



- Discuss the Solidarity movement in Poland
- Who was Lech Walesa?
- Why did Gorbachev express support for Walesa's government?
- Why did communist governments fall in Europe?

- What is glasnost?
- What is perestroika?
- What was the economy like in the late 1980's and 90's in the USSR? What about Soviet military power at that time?
- What changes did Gorbachev introduce?
- Why and how was the Berlin Wall torn down? What did the fall of the Berlin Wall mean for Germany and the rest of the communist world?
- Who was Yeltsin?
- Discuss the coup of August 1991. Why did it fail?
- How did the Soviet Union collapse? Why do you think the Soviet Union collapsed? What factors contributed to the collapse?
- What was the role of the United States and Pope John Paul II in the collapse of the Soviet Union?
- How did the new Russian oligarchy begin?
- Do an online research on Boris Berezovsky and discuss his business and political life.



Class 6: October 20: Test



Class 7: Putin and the Russian Federation



- 1) Who is Putin? Discuss his early life. What did he study?
- 2) How and when did he rise to power?
- 3) Discuss his presidency. How did he change Russia? What is his main achievement?
- 4) Discuss the second Chechnya war. What did it mean for Putin? What was his strategy? Was he successful? Why or why not? What were the implications of this war for the US, France, UK, Spain, and other Western states?
- 5) How did Putin consolidate constitutional power? What was his strategy to remain in power?
- 6) Discuss the Russia-NATO relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union. What is/was the Russian-NATO Council (RNC)?

7) Discuss the 2008 Georgia war. Why did it happen? What is its connection with the Ukraine conflict?



Class 7 Oct. 27: The Russia-Ukraine conflict



Discussion questions

1. What happened in Crimea in 2014? Why? Was Russia's annexation of Crimea legal under international law? Why or why not?
2. What is the war in /demilitarization and de-nazification of/ Ukraine about?
3. Who is Zelenski?
4. Discuss major developments in Ukraine since the collapse of the Soviet Union: (i) foreign debt; (ii) the 1996 Constitution; (iii) Yanukovich.
5. What is the connection between the first Trump impeachment and the war in Ukraine? What is Joe and Hunter Biden's involvement in Ukraine?
6. What are Russia's arguments for invading Ukraine? What do you think of these arguments?
7. How did the U.S. respond to the crisis? Why? Has it been effective? What about other Western countries? Are Western's sanctions legal under international law? What about domestic law?
8. What are the everyday implications of the sanctions in Canada?
9. Are Russia's military operations legal under International Law?
10. What similarities and differences do you see between the Ukraine crisis and the Cold War? Are Russia and the West headed toward a new Cold War?
11. Should Ukraine become a member of NATO? Why or why not? What would this mean for Russia?
12. Should Ukraine become a member of the EU? Why or why not?
13. What are Russian's demands to end the crisis? Do you think the current negotiations can end the conflict?
14. Read the following article. According to the Pope, what is the origin of the Russia-Ukraine conflict? What does he mean by the following statement? We need to move away from the usual Little Red Riding Hood pattern, in that Little Red Riding Hood was good and the wolf was the bad one

Pope Francis says Ukraine war was ‘perhaps somehow provoked’

Pontiff condemns ‘cruelty’ of Russian troops while warning against perception of conflict as good v evil

Pope Francis: ‘We do not see the whole drama unfolding behind this war, which was, perhaps, somehow either provoked or not prevented.’ Photograph: Claudio Peri/EPA

Angela Giuffrida

Tue 14 Jun 2022 12.20 BST

Pope Francis has said Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine was “perhaps somehow provoked” as he recalled a conversation in the run-up to the war in which he was warned Nato was “barking at the gates of Russia”.

In an interview with the Jesuit magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica*, conducted last month and published on Tuesday, the pontiff condemned the “ferocity and cruelty of the Russian troops” while warning against what he said was a fairytale perception of the conflict as good versus evil. “We need to move away from the usual Little Red Riding Hood pattern, in that Little Red Riding Hood was good and the wolf was the bad one,” he said. “Something global is emerging and the elements are very much entwined.”

Francis added that a couple of months before the war he met a head of state, who he did not identify but described as “a wise man who speaks little, a very wise man indeed ... He told me that he was very worried about how Nato was moving. I asked him why, and he replied: ‘They are barking at the gates of Russia. They don’t understand that the Russians are imperial and can’t have any foreign power getting close to them.’”

He added: “We do not see the whole drama unfolding behind this war, which was, perhaps, somehow either provoked or not prevented.”

Shortly before the invasion, Vladimir Putin had demanded Nato rule out allowing Ukraine, which borders Russia, into the military alliance.

The pope said he was not “pro-Putin” and that it would be “simplistic and wrong to say such a thing”. He also said Russia had “miscalculated” the war. “It is also true that the Russians thought it would all be over in a week. They encountered a brave people, a people who are struggling to survive and who have a history of struggle.”

On Tuesday morning, the pontiff published a message saying the invasion of Ukraine was a violation of a country’s right to self-determination.

“The war in Ukraine has now been added to the regional wars that for years have taken a heavy toll of death and destruction,” he said in a message for the Roman Catholic church’s World Day of the Poor, which will be marked in November. “Yet here the situation is even more complex due to the direct intervention of a ‘superpower’ aimed at imposing its own will in violation of the principle of the self-determination of peoples.”



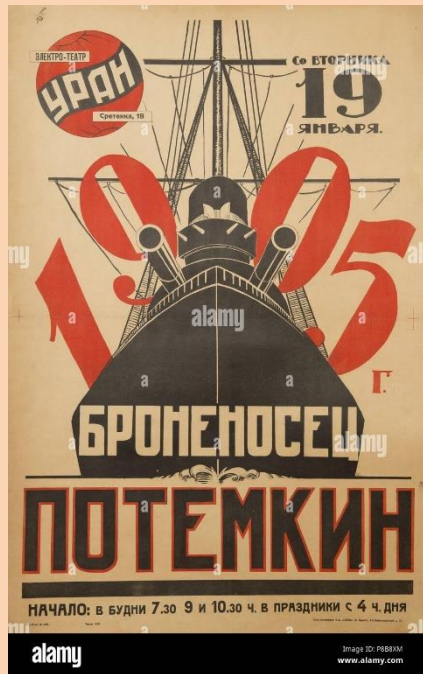
Class 9 Nov. 10: Russian and Soviet culture: films

Select one of the following films. The following questions are meant to guide your presentation.

- 1) What is the plot of the film?
- 2) Who directed the film? Who is the director?
- 3) When was the film made? What was the government's policy about films in that period?
How does the film reflect that period?
- 4) What is the significance of the film in the Soviet Union or Russian Federation.
- 5) What kind of society does the film depict?



Soviet and Russian films



- Sergei Eisenstein’s Battleship Potemkin (1925).
- October: Ten Days That Shook the World (1927).
- Ballad of a Soldier (1959).
- The Diamond Arm (1969).
- Solaris (1972).
- The Irony of Fate (1976)
- Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears (1980)
- Little Vera (1988).
- Burnt by the Sun (1994)
- Paradise (2016)



Class 10. Nov. 17 Russia in the news



Do an online search of current news dealing with Russia not discussed before in class, i.e., not about the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Summarize the articles and critically analyze them. Present them to the whole class.

Discussion questions



Read the articles and discuss the following questions

- 1) Describe and analyze the current law banning propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations. Who, if any, it intends to protect?
- 2) Why did the Russian government pass this law?
- 3) What are the implications of this law?
- 4) Why does the Russian government want to extend it to cover adults?

5) Are you familiar with the so called “Don’t Say Gay Act” adopted in Florida, USA?

Compare it to the existing Russian law.

6) What do you think about the prohibition against same sex marriage in Russia? Why does the Russian government refuse to permit same sex marriage?

In 2013, the law banning "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" was passed by Russia’s Federal Assembly and signed into law by President Vladimir Putin. Under the guise of protecting children from "homosexual propaganda," the law imposes fines or jail time on citizens who disseminate information that may cause a "distorted understanding" that LGBT and heterosexual relationships are "socially equivalent." The fines are significantly higher if such information is distributed through the media or Internet.

MOSCOW (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday Russia would not legalize gay marriage as long as he was in the Kremlin.

He made clear he would not allow the traditional notion of mother and father to be subverted by what he called “parent number 1” and “parent number 2”.

“As far as ‘parent number 1’ and ‘parent number 2’ goes, I’ve already spoken publicly about this and I’ll repeat it again: as long as I’m president this will not happen. There will be dad and mum,” Putin said.

During his two decades in power, Putin has closely aligned himself with the Orthodox Church and sought to distance Russia from liberal Western values, including attitudes toward homosexuality and gender fluidity.

He made the comments as he met a state commission to discuss changes to Russia’s constitution.

The commission was set up last month after Putin announced sweeping changes to Russia’s political system that are widely seen as being designed to help him extend his grip on power after his scheduled departure from office in 2024.

Other proposals have since been put forward and Putin was asked to comment on a proposal to add a line in the constitution defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

“We need only to think in what phrases and where to do this,” he replied.

In separate comments during the meeting, Putin said he backed an idea to make it unconstitutional for Russia to give away any part of its territory, a move likely to irritate Japan and Ukraine that have land disputes with Moscow.

Russia annexed the peninsula of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and has been in a decades-long dispute with Tokyo over ownership of a chain of islands in the Pacific that Moscow seized from Japan at the end of World War Two.

Russia and Japan have been holding talks on the latter dispute which has prevented the countries formally signing a peace treaty after World War Two.

“We have talks under way with our partners on certain questions, but I like the idea itself,” Putin said. “So let’s instruct the lawyers, ask them to formulate this in the right way.”

Russia proposes extending ‘gay propaganda’ law to all adults

Under proposed changes to law, any event or act regarded as an attempt to promote homosexuality could incur a fine.

Russian law enforcement officers block participants in the LGBTQ rally 'X St.Petersburg Pride' in central Saint Petersburg, Russia in 2019 [File: Anton Vaganov/Reuters]

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Russian lawmakers have proposed extending a ban on the promotion of “non-traditional” sexual relationships among minors to now include adults as well, a senior legislator has said. Russia’s existing “gay propaganda” law, passed in 2013, has been used to stop gay pride marches and detain LGBTQ rights activists.

Under the proposed changes to the law, any event or act regarded as an attempt to promote homosexuality could incur a fine.

Authorities say they are defending morality in the face of what they argue are un-Russian liberal values promoted by the West. Human rights activists say the law has been broadly applied to intimidate Russia’s LGBTQ community.

“We propose to generally extend the ban on such propaganda regardless of the age of the audience (offline, in the media, on the internet, social networks and online cinemas),” the head

of the State Duma’s information committee, Alexander Khinshtein, said on his Telegram social media channel on Monday.

Russia’s parliamentary speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said last week that since Russia had quit the Council of Europe human rights watchdog after invading Ukraine, it would now be able to ban the promotion of “non-traditional values”.

“Demands to legalise same-sex marriages in Russia are a thing of the past,” Volodin said.

“Attempts to impose alien values on our society have failed.”

Homosexuality was a criminal offence in Russia until 1993 and was classed as a mental illness until 1999.

President Vladimir Putin has aligned himself closely with the Orthodox Church – which rejects same-sex relationships – and has made its social conservatism part of a narrative of Russian political and cultural revival that is now also being used to help justify the invasion of Ukraine.

A new constitution enacted in 2020 that extended presidential term limits also defines marriage exclusively as the union of a man and a woman.

In a ranking of Europe’s most LGBTQ-friendly nations in this year’s “Rainbow Europe” index compiled by ILGA-Europe, Russia came third from last.



Discuss Putin’s Speech at the Valdai Discussion Club. What do you think about Putin’s ideas?

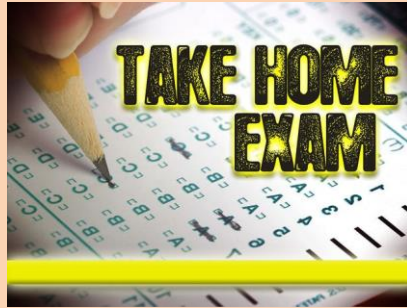
“Looking at what is happening in a number of Western countries, we are amazed to see the domestic practices, which we, fortunately, have left, I hope, in the distant past. The fight for

equality and against discrimination has turned into aggressive dogmatism bordering on absurdity, when the works of the great authors of the past – such as Shakespeare – are no longer taught at schools or universities, because their ideas are believed to be backward. The classics are declared backward and ignorant of the importance of gender or race. In Hollywood memos are distributed about proper storytelling and how many characters of what colour or gender should be in a movie. This is even worse than the agitprop department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.”

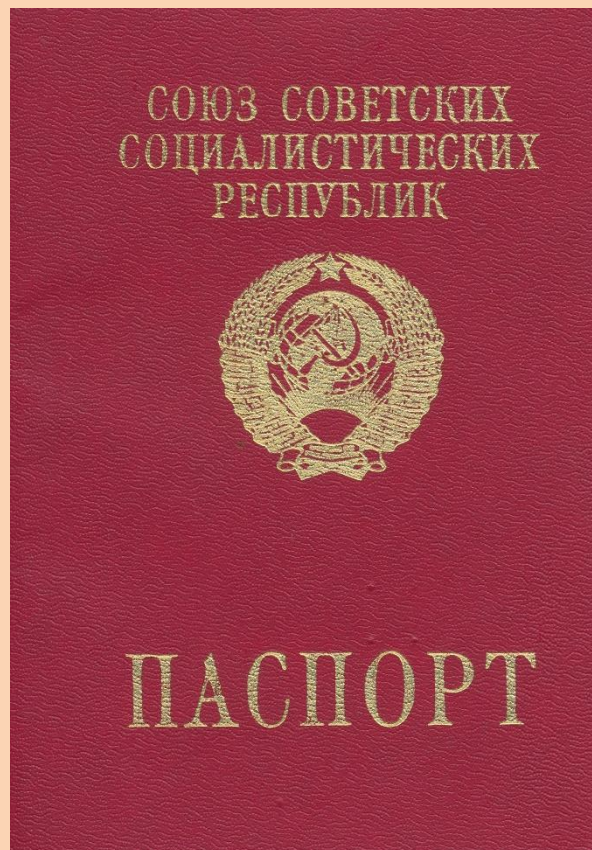
“Countering acts of racism is a necessary and noble cause, but the new ‘cancel culture’ has turned it into ‘reverse discrimination’ that is, reverse racism. The obsessive emphasis on race is further dividing people, when the real fighters for civil rights dreamed precisely about erasing differences and refusing to divide people by skin colour.”

“Zealots of these new approaches even go so far as to want to abolish these concepts altogether. Anyone who dares mention that men and women actually exist, which is a biological fact, risk being ostracised. “Parent number one” and “parent number two,” “birthing parent” instead of “mother,” and “human milk” replacing “breastmilk” because it might upset the people who are unsure about their own gender. I repeat, this is nothing new; in the 1920s, the so-called Soviet Kulturtraegers also invented some newspeak believing they were creating a new consciousness and changing values that way. And, as I have already said, they made such a mess it still makes one shudder at times. Not to mention some truly monstrous things when children are taught from an early age that a boy can easily become a girl and vice versa. That is, the teachers actually impose on them a choice we all supposedly have. They do so while shutting the parents out of the process and forcing the child to make decisions that can upend their entire life.”

Class 11 Nov 24: Review and feedback Distribution of final take-home



Class 12 Dec. 1: Submission of final take-home





*** TRIGGER WARNINGS**



Some materials in this course may be sensitive. Course materials, including lectures, class activities, hypotheticals, scenarios, examples, court cases, and films shown in class, may have mature content, including violent, sexual, and strong language content.

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