movies: Reds, Serge Eisenstein, especially Potempkin

in order to understand the revolution of 1917, we need to look at
the Russian society that the revolution destroyed
we will see that it was not a developed industrial capitalist
society ready for a socialist transformation in the terms that
Marx suggested ---Russia before 1917 was \[not\] a society divided
into two large antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the
proletariat

1. \[Tsarist Russia\]

most backward major power in Europe--politically and economically

Russia is ruled by the Tsar who has absolute power and is
determined by the oldest heir of the Romanov family

  even nobility has no power, but are integrated into the state
bureaucracy --no parliament ---no important middle class --mass
of people are peasants, serfs until mid-19th century --after
which there is a beginning of an independent peasantry or Kulak
group with moderate wealth

  bureaucracy is corrupt and inefficient, lots of nepotism, but--
good secret police upon which the state depends --Tsar is remote
from the people and doesn't understand them

  monarchy-- idea is that everyone exists for the betterment of
the tsar --people are subjects not citizens, people serve the
state not the reverse
  no way to change the system or to influence the will of the
monarch

back to the 18th century--
Catherine the Great --called an "enlightened despot" but made
changes only to make the state more efficient, not to serve the
needs of the people
Alexander I (1801-25) institutes a constitution with a
parliament (Duma) but it is only advisory
Nicholas I (1825-55) creates "Third Section" or secret police
which is personally responsible to him

economics --extreme backwardness --most work in agriculture --
some foreign investment in 19th century (French) begins some factories -- a railroad -- by 1917 3 million workers (less than 3% of pop.) -- all advances are done through state supervision and control -- 1917 Russia is not and industrialized society

2. [Impediments to Industrialization]

- no merchant group with investing mentality, no religious influence toward capitalism; no atmosphere of profit-making; no alliance between monarchy and bourgeoisie; merchants are controlled by guilds; few sources for development of proletariat; no advanced agriculture or enclosure movement; no scientific or technical knowledge
- poor natural environment for growth -- mines are hard to exploit; country is too big for easy transport of goods; not well located for international trade
- only agent for industrialization is the state and it refused during most of the 19th century

- what about nationalism -- slavophiles identify Russian culture with anti-westernism -- anti-liberalism, anti-industrialism
- ideology is other worldly and anti-materialist -- west is the enemy -- slavophiles begin in reaction to invasion by Napoleon

1905 Russo-Japanese War -- Russia loses and is humiliated; first European power to lose war to non-European state in 300 years -- so state is weakened and revolt against it breaks out -- a sign that people will not support tsar in war

- reforms -- some reforms between 1905 and 1917
- intelligent ministers Witte and Stolypin -- understand problem of economic backwardness, invite foreign investment and start industrialization

3. [World War I]

1914 -- Russia enters war -- Tsar thinks a good short war will get people to support him better -- wrong: combo of impoverished country and revolutionary intellectuals leads to disaster
- state is brittle, held together by feudal bureaucracy
- main influence on tsar is Rasputin (medieval style magician)
Duma has no influence -- Rasputin controls army
- many in Europe see Russia as strongest power -- miss the underlying weakness
- Tsar's main motive for war is prestige -- won't give up on politics in Balkans -- won't lose face to Austria
1915 liberals in Duma want reforms, Tsar refuses
Tsar visits troops on front lines --doesn't see the suffering
Russia had suffered 4 million dead in first year of war
scandals over corruption in supplies related to Rasputin
strikes and revolts begin, Rasputin is shot
March 8, 1917 revolution begins as spontaneous protest,
without a leader

4. @UX[Revolutionary Traditions in Russia]

   long tradition of revolt involving all classes
   1. imperial guard --typical of highly centralized state
      with ruling elite in personal contact with king; no stable system
      of succession
   2. popular democratic revolts --from below and involve
      larger groups --motive is cruelty of landlords (17th century,
      Stenka Razin; 18th century Pugachov)
   3. Decembrist revolt --1825 --by noblemen -a fiasco
   4. Pestel and Union of Welfare- nobleman, but small
      disciplined organization with core of terrorists

@UX[Revolutionary Ideology]

   from Turgenev, @UX[Fathers and Sons]
   1. fathers --repentent noblemen --
      A. Herzen --liberal and socialist --influenced by
      French socialists and Hegel-- left-wing Slavophile --ideal model
      is peasant commune (mir) --thinks Russia is hope of mankind
      --thinks Russia can go to socialism without going through
      capitalism based on commune tradition
      Petrachevsky Circle --also noblemen and romantics;
      want utopia through mass education
   2. sons --professional revolutionaries, realists, advocate
      violence -- in Tsarist context become nihilists- nothing is of
      value except revolution --tend to be bohemians
      Bakhunin, Pisarev, Chernyushevsky are like this
      Nechaev-- wants small revolutionary groups, none of which
      know the whole plan of revolt, total devotion to revolution, idea
      is to provoke masses by terror

@UX[Russian Marxists]

reject terrorist methods of Nechaev
1880s Marxism enters Russian revolutionary tradition as
western influence --but problem --Marx hadn't applied ideas to
Russia, a non-capitalist society
@UX[Plekhanov]- first Marxist in Russia --capitalism must come
before socialism, if not there will be a dictatorship
work to educate masses to overthrow Tsar
thinks Russia is becoming capitalist and revolution will
come when workers are in majority — determinist view — revolt
will be gradual process, won through elections in parliament
@UX[Menshevik] position
@UX[Voluntarists] -- can have socialism without going through
capitalism — this is difficult to argue within Marxist theory
Trotsky — opposed anarchist terrorism and determinism
revolution had to be democratic and have mass support
opposed to elite party at first
idea of @UX[permanent revolution] — international in
scope — revolt is possible only if Europe has socialism, then
Russia can participate with aid from west

Lenin — brother killed by Tsarist police, leads life of
professional revolutionary, underground — great skills as
political tactician and organizer — more of an activist than an
intellectual but does both — argues that workers are not ready
for revolution and thinks that socialism cannot come through
democratic politics — so wants party with disciplined cadre to
lead revolutionary state — argues for democratic centralism:
dictatorship that represents the people's interests
@UX[Bolshevik] position

5. @UX[Revolutions of 1917]

almost without a fight tsar is defeated, no bloodshed, army
goes over to revolution
@UX[Provisional Government] established: out of existing Duma
had little effective power, and no social base — mostly
liberals (Cadets, Octobrists) — failure shows that it is had to
have liberal, middle class government in pre-industrial society,
says Trotsky — within provisional government there is conflict
over viability of parliamentary democracy —
other groups in gov't are Social Revolutionaries
(moderates), Mensheviks and Bolsheviks

liberals take over old bureaucracy and government remains
intact

@UX[Soviets] are formed spontaneously as a popular
organization throughout Russia — councils of workers
Petrograd soviet is central unit hence
@UX[Dual Government] exists two parallel institutions, but Petrograd soviet has more popular support than Provisional Government

power shifts to Soviet from the beginning and its leadership is Marxist --they join in Provisional Government, moving it to the left

Provisional Government cannot work-- deep weaknesses
1. sharing authority with soviets
2. its temporary in nature, but its faced with substantial problems like war, starvation, etc.
3. pressure of Allies on gov't to remain in war to help fight Germany even though war is not popular in Russia

Summer, 1917 --groups organized to overthrow Provisional gov't on left- Bolsheviks
on right- monarchists and Generals
@UX[either outcome, means dictatorship]

Miliukov --dominates provisional gov't for first two months --mistakes lead to crisis in April --policies in include continuing war and making secret treaties for Russian expansion, army and soviets oppose these treaties --without tact, he asserts old Tsarist war aims --people enraged, begin demonstrations he is outsted and more right wing coalition takes over with Kerensky at the top

Kerensky --from Social Revolutionary Party, a liberal mistakes --pushes army into offensive with great losses loses control and popularity
July uprising --army and sailors riot, Bolsheviks suppressed with Trotsky in jail, Lenin escapes to Finland

Kornilov Affair --in August, 1917 attempts military coup d'etat, patriotic ruthless tsarist who wants to become dictator
Kerensky appoints him as head of army, troops mutiny instead of backing coup
Kerensky has change to make peace with Germany and refuses peasants riot, army disintegrates, workers move to back Bolsheviks

@UX[October Revolution]

by september, provisional government lost control of Russia
Lenin's "April Theses" -- Russia could go directly to socialism, peace with Germany, all power to Soviets, land to the peasants -- very effective strategy

Bolsheviks are now the only organized group in Russia which is determined to take control of the government

Lenin shaped the party and Trotsky had popular support as President of the Petrograd Soviet

Oct. 23 Trotsky wins over troops in Peter-Paul fortress
these take over the power stations and the ship Aurora
Oct. 24 seize key points without resistance
Oct. 25 Winter Palace seized by storm

takeover is in one city and gets support from rest of country

6. [The Civil War 1918-21]

Counter Revolution begins immediately -- resistance to Bolsheviks in Ukraine and other places
March 1918 -- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
Russia forfeits some of its richest lands so attain peace and center struggle against tsarists

Social Revolutionary party goes into opposition
non-Russian minorities try to break with Lenin's gov't
Estonia, Latvia, Caucaes -- Germany gives them support
by end of 1918 Soviet borders are back to those of Muscovite state of 17th century
after 1918 American, British, Czeck and French armies intervene against Lenin -- Reds are surrounded by armed enemies -- but opposition is not united
Bolsheviks maintain unity

Reasons for Intervention
1. prevent Germans from getting supplies
* 2. beginning of Cold War -- capitalist nations fear
Bolshevization of Europe -- hence Cold War started by West
3. large investments in Tsarist Russia

the fighting
south -- Coassaks aided by British and French
north -- White Army headed by Miller with British aid and in Baltic Yudenik's army
east -- Siberia -- largest counterrevolutionary force
Czech army joins Social Revolutionaries and monarchists with British aid

Trotsky builds huge, disciplined Red Army after the disintegration of discipline at the outset of the revolution uses Tsarist officers who have experience

by 1920 Reds are on the offense in Poland, but get pushed back

1921 --counterrevolutionaries are defeated and Reds have solid control of Russia --civil war shows that Russian people will fight for Bolshevik leadership

@END(VERBATIM)