A Soviet propaganda poster portraying the 1905 revolution. The caption reads “Glory to the People’s Heroes of the Potemkin!”
1. What was the condition of the serfs at the end of the 19th century?

2. Who were the Bolsheviks and how did their ideas differ from those of the Mensheviks?

3. How did the Russo-Japanese War impact Russia?

4. What were the causes of the Russian Revolution?

5. How did Lenin and the Bolsheviks eventually seize power in Russia?

6. What were the nature and results of the Russian Civil War (1918-21)?

7. What was Lenin’s NEP?

8. How was the leadership of the Soviet Union transferred after the death of Lenin?

9. What was a command economy and how did it manifest itself in Stalin’s Soviet Union?

10. How was Stakhanovism an example of the New Soviet Man/Woman?

11. What were the causes, nature and results of Stalin’s purges?

12. What role did women play in Russia from 1894-1939?

13. How was propaganda used by Soviet authorities?
Background to revolutionary Russia

- Autocratic government
  - led by authoritarian Romanov dynasty
  - no parliament to limit power of tsars
  - no freedom of speech, press, or assembly
  - brutally repressed dissent
    - Decembrist Revolt (1825)
    - use of secret police
  - pogroms against Jews
  - liberal political reforms of Alexander II (1855-1881) largely overturned by reactionary Alexander III (1881-94)
Background to revolutionary Russia

Journal 90: The populists had a mystical faith in the Russian peasantry.

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Background to revolutionary Russia

• Downtrodden peasantry
  ✓ serfs had been legally emancipated by Alexander II’s 1861 decree
  ✓ despite emancipation, peasants remained largely landless and poor
  ✓ sought individual ownership of land

• Economic overview
  ✓ overwhelmingly an agricultural country
  ✓ Industrial Revolution had made slow progress in Russia
  ✓ Russia’s middle (business) class not allowed to grow and flourish
Background to revolutionary Russia

- Growth of revolutionary parties
  - ✔ People’s Will
    - ➡ radical revolutionary party
    - ➡ assassinated Alexander II (1881)
  - ✔ Social Revolutionary Party
    - ➡ populist party
    - ➡ agricultural socialists
    - ➡ used assassinations

Alexander II: Eliminated by People’s Will
Background to revolutionary Russia

• Growth of revolutionary parties (cont’d)

✓ Social Democratic Labor Party: socialist party that eventually split into two factions (1903)

⇒ Bolsheviks
  • led by Vladimir I. Lenin, who had outlined his ideas in pamphlet “What is to be Done?” (1901)
  • radicals that called for a party of professional revolutionaries to serve as the vanguard of a revolution against tsarist government

⇒ Mensheviks
  • more moderate than Bolsheviks
  • group dominated by Marxist Revisionists
Nicholas II (1894-1917)

• Background
  ✓ son of Alexander III
  ✓ kind man personally but limited by modest intelligence

• General political views
  ✓ maintained his father’s political conservatism
  ✓ unable to effectively deal with Russia’s many problems

Nicholas II: The Last Tsar of Russia
Nicholas II (1894-1917)

- Family
  - ✔ married Alexandra of Hesse (German)
  - ✔ four daughters: Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia
  - ✔ one son: Alexei (the tsarevich) suffered from hemophilia

Nicholas II and His Family:
Clockwise from top: the Empress Alexandra, Anastasia, Alexei, Tatiana, Tsar Nicholas II, Olga, and Maria. (1914)
Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)

- **Causes**
  - ✓ conflicting imperial ambitions in Manchuria & Korea
    - ➡ Russia desired another warm water port in East Asia
    - ➡ Japan sought natural resources for its expanding economy
  - ✓ glory
    - ✓ Nicholas II hoped a quick victory over Japan would bolster his popularity at home
    - ✓ Japan wished to show the strength of its military against a European power
Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)

- The War
  - Japan beat Russian military, both on land at sea
    - Russian army retreated at Battle of Mukden (1905)
    - Russian navy (Baltic and Eastern fleets) suffered heavy losses at Battle of Tsushima Straits (1905)
  - Treaty of Portsmouth (1905)
    - mediated by U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt
    - Japan’s sphere of influence in East Asia increased as Russia’s lost control over selected key areas in the region
Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)

• Results

✓ Japan proved itself to be a world-class military power

✓ realization that an Eastern power could defeat a Western power inspired anti-colonial movements throughout the world

✓ increased Russia’s domestic problems
  ➔ Tsar Nicholas II further weakened
  ➔ led to the Revolution of 1905 in Russia
Journal 91: Tsar Nicholas II regarded the mildest liberalism or democracy as un-Russian.

—Palmer Chapter 91 • pp. 728-33—

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Revolution of 1905

• Causes

✓ Russian losses in Russo-Japanese War
✓ general dissatisfaction of Russian population
✓ Bloody Sunday (22 January 1905)
  ➡ peaceful demonstration in St. Petersburg, led by Father Georgi Gapon
  ➡ demonstrators hoped to present a petition to the tsar calling for improved rights for workers
  ➡ Tsar’s troops fired on demonstrators; over 1000 killed
Revolution of 1905

- Event
  - ✓ rioting and strikes in St. Petersburg, Moscow and other cities
  - ✓ peasants burned crops
  - ✓ famous mutiny on the Russian battleship, Potemkin
  - ✓ pogroms against Jewish communities (Nicholas II had blamed Jews for most of the rioting)

Sergei Eisenstein
Mutiny inspired his monumental film “Battleship Potemkin” (1925)
• Results

✓ Tsar signed October Manifesto
⇒ established Duma as legislative body
⇒ granted basic civil liberties
⇒ established universal manhood suffrage
⇒ allowed political parties to exist
✓ violent revolutionaries (such as the Bolsheviks) forced into exile

Nicholas II
Survived the Revolution of 1905
Stolypin Reforms (1906-1911)

- Economic
  - increased rate of industrialization
  - agrarian reform: allowed some peasants to own land
- Military: strengthened army & navy
- Political
  - drove out radical revolutionaries by holding military tribunals with swift executions ("Stolypin’s necktie")
  - weakened the Duma by reforming the voting system to favor the government and aristocracy

Pyotr Stolypin
Nicholas II’s chief minister was assassinated in 1911
Grigori Rasputin

• Background
  ✓ Siberian mystic and faith healer
  ✓ known as the “mad monk”
  ✓ liked women, food and alcohol but not fond of basic hygiene

• Rasputin and the royals
  ✓ Nicholas II and Alexandra believed Rasputin was able to ease son’s pain caused by hemophilia
  ✓ ability to relieve the pain resulted in Rasputin’s increased influence at court
  ✓ Rasputin regarded suspiciously by government, aristocracy and society
Journal 92/A: The war put the tsarist regime to a test it could not meet.

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Russia & the Great War (1914-1918)

• Along with France and Britain, Russia went to war with Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire in 1914

• Russian military did not fare well in war
  ✓ Russian troops poorly led and supplied
  ✓ Germans had more advanced industrial base and better trained soldiers
  ✓ Russia lost key battles
    ➡ Tannenberg (1914)
    ➡ Forced to retreat from Poland (1915)
Russia & the Great War (1914-1918)

- War exacerbated problems at home for Nicholas II and Russia
  - **morale**
    - almost 2 million Russian soldiers killed in war
    - losses weakened Russian support of war
  - **economic**
    - country gripped by inflation
    - food shortages prevalent in cities
    - harsh working conditions
    - “land hungry” peasants wanted more individual ownership of land
War exacerbated problems at home for Nicholas II and Russia (cont’d)

**political**

- Rasputin increased his influence at court (until he was murdered in 1916)
- with support from conservatives, the Duma was suspended twice during the war; created political tension as it appeared the tsarist government was attempting to wipe out liberalism
- middle class unhappy about the mismanagement of the war and demanded more say in government
- war provided an opportunity for violent revolutionaries to stir anti-tsarist sentiments
- soviets (workers’ councils) increased their influence as voice of working class
Russian Revolution: March 1917

• Petrograd Food Riots
  ✔ food shortages—made worse by ration cards and price controls—led to civil unrest
  ✔ pressured by the Petrograd Soviet, Duma formed a provisional government
    ➡ overwhelmingly a moderate group
    ➡ allowed one moderate socialist, Alexander Kerensky, to join the provisional government
    ➡ called for the abdication of Nicholas II

• Russian troops began to withdraw support for the tsar

• Abdication of Tsar Nicholas II (17 March 1917)
“The Great World Revolution finally began on Thursday morning, 23 February, 1917, in Petrograd’s Vyborg district. A group of housewives had been waiting in vain to buy bread. It was the first mild day after three months of bitter cold. The women grew unruly. There were a few minor disturbances, and then the workers from the nearby factories joined in. That same afternoon, 100,000 workers, women and children marched on Nevsky Prospect, chanting slogans such as ‘Bread!’ and ‘Down with the czar!’ Two days later, on Saturday, 25 February, the city was shut down by a general strike. The Cossaks were called in against the strikers. When the cavalrymen had assembled for the charge on Nevsky Prospect, a young girl left the crowd, walked up to the commanding officer and, amid a breathless silence, handed him a bouquet of red roses. The man smiled, accepted the roses and bowed. A thundering cheer went up from both demonstrators and soldiers. ‘Our fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers are crying for bread,’ a young soldier shouted. ‘Are we going to kill them?’ This would not be another 1905. Czar Nicholas II’s fate was sealed. On 2 March, he abdicated, leaving the throne to his younger brother, Grand Duke Michael. The next day, Michael decided not to accept. That was the end of the Romanov dynasty, which had been in power for more than three centuries.”

Established a timetable for elections to a Constituent Assembly

✓ franchise: universal manhood suffrage

✓ election scheduled to be held in December 1917 and resulting assembly was to convene in January 1918

✓ Constituent Assembly was to replace the provisional government as the legitimate government of Russia

Prince L’vov
First leader of Provisional Government
• Continued Russian participation in world war
• Called for land distribution
• Allowed some freedom of speech, press and assembly
• Alexander Kerensky
  ✓ moderate socialist
  ✓ rose to become most powerful person in government
Journal 92/B: Lenin and the Bolsheviks called for “Peace, land and bread” and for “All power to the Soviets!”.

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Russian Revolution: Provisional Government

- Problems of the Provisional Government
  - War continued to go poorly
  - Peasants unhappy about lack of land distribution
  - Workers believed the provisional government was ignoring their needs
  - Political and economic climate fueled revolutionary activity

Lenin promising “Peace, land & bread” in Petrograd
Russian Revolution: November Revolution

- Bolsheviks gained power in Petrograd

✓ Petrograd Soviet and local troops supported Lenin

✓ Bolsheviks seized control of strategic places: railway lines, telephone exchanges and electric power plants

✓ Kerensky and the provisional government fled from the Winter Palace in Petrograd

- Bolsheviks also gained control of Moscow.

Kerensky: Maybe Stanford would be a better fit
Journal 92/C: Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not bring about the Russian Revolution. They captured it after it had begun. They boarded the ship in midstream.

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Downfall of the Constituent Assembly

- Constituent Assembly convened (Jan. 1918)
- Lenin dissolved the Assembly and refused to recognize its authority
  - Bolsheviks had gained 9 million votes (of 36 million) but the more moderate parties fared better
  - Lenin’s troops enforced the dissolution
- Bolsheviks later renamed themselves the Communist Party

Source: adapted from Radkey study results
Wikipedia

SRP (41%)
Bolsheviks (24%)
Kadets (5%)
Mensheviks (3%)
Others (27%)

Others: figure includes 39 separate parties
“It was at [Lenin’s] feverish insistence that his followers undertook the armed coup in November, and later, transmuted into Communists, abandoned their lingering democratic ‘superstitions’ and turned Russia into a one-party state. As the ruler of that state, Lenin enunciated what would become the pervasive characteristics of Soviet society and communism: a system of ‘class justice’ licensing the use of terror, and excluding by implication any rights of the individual against the state; priority of industrialization over consumer needs; and sponsorship of revolutionary movements abroad. Add to his tasks running a regime that at times seemed on the verge of collapse, and controlling ambitious and contentious subordinates such as Trotsky and Stalin, and one is not surprised that in his followers’ eyes, Lenin often appeared as a veritable miracle worker.”

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918)

- Peace treaty signed between the Communists (Bolsheviks) and Germany and its allies

- Russia forced to give up a huge tract of land in the western part of the country

- Lenin believed he could not consolidate control over the rest of Russia while also fighting Germany and Austria.

Leon Trotsky (R) at Brest-Litovsk, 1918
Russian Losses from T. of Brest-Litovsk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>of arable land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>of average crop yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>of railway system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>of manufacturing industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73%</td>
<td>of iron industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>of coal fields</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Russian Losses from T. of Brest-Litovsk

Journal 92/D: By the peace of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, the Bolsheviks abandoned Russian conquests of two centuries.

—Palmer Chapter 92 • pp. 733-42—

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
“We shall not enter into the kingdom of socialism in white gloves on a polished floor.”

Leon Trotsky
(1879-1940)
Russian Civil War (1918-21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reds (Communists or Bolsheviks)</th>
<th>Whites (anti-Communists)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Goal: defeat anti-Communists and expand Bolshevik control over Russia</td>
<td>• Goal: defeat Communists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gained peasant support by offering land reform</td>
<td>• Whites made up of anti-Bolsheviks of many political persuasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trotsky led Red Army</td>
<td>✓ royalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Used so-called “Red Terror”</td>
<td>✓ moderates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ murdered Nicholas II and family</td>
<td>✓ Mensheviks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ established concentration camps</td>
<td>• White military assisted by foreign countries: Japan, Britain, France, Czechoslovakia and the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implemented “war communism”</td>
<td>✓ largest industries nationalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ largest industries nationalized</td>
<td>✓ most industries controlled by workers’ committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Russian Civil War (1918-21)

Journal 92/E: The Terror succeeded in its purpose.

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Russian Civil War (1918-21) Results

- Reds defeated Whites
  - Reds more organized and unified than Whites
  - Red Army more effective than disunited White forces

- Russia economically destroyed
  - Famine and destruction were harsh consequences of civil war
  - "War communism" failed to reform economy

Red propaganda: Trotsky slays the capitalist dragon

AP European History • Russia 1894-1939 • J.F. Walters & G. W. Whitton
Journal 93: The New Economic Policy, which lasted from 1921 to 1927, represented a compromise with capitalism.
The New Economic Policy (1921)

- New Economic Policy (NEP): Lenin’s plan to reform Russian economy following devastating revolution and civil war

- Characteristics of the NEP
  - allowed limited free market capitalism, notably in small business
  - largest industries remained nationalized
  - allowed some farmers to own their own land
    - boosted agriculture and relieved famine
    - popular with farmers, especially kulaks (Ukrainian peasant proprietors)

- Long term goal: Use NEP to jump start the economy, preparing it for an eventual return to communism

- NEP’s success cut short by Lenin’s death and resulting power struggle
Alexandra Kollontai

- **Background**
  - ✓ Menshevik turned Bolshevik; leading figure in the Bolshevik Revolution
  - ✓ appointed People’s Commissar for Social Welfare (1917)

- **Accomplishments**
  - ✓ Wrote “Communism and the Family” (1920)
    - ➡ argued that capitalism had destroyed the family by forcing women into the “double burden” (responsibilities at job & home)
    - ➡ called for political, social & economic equality between men and women
    - ➡ called for a Revolutionary Family Structure (composed of both the “New Soviet Man” & the “New Soviet Woman”) that would include state-sponsored child care and domestic help; also sought collective kitchens and restaurants
  - ✓ established the Zhenotdel (Women’s Department) in 1919: worked to improve the lives of Soviet women through improving literacy and educating women on alcoholism, child abuse and health care
Proclamation of U.S.S.R.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union)

Note: capital city moved to Moscow
Lenin’s Decline & Demise

- Lenin’s health deteriorated
  - ✓ victim of two assassination attempts (including one by Fanny Kaplan), one of which left a bullet lodged in his neck; suffered at least three strokes
  - ✓ Lenin died, 1924

- After Lenin’s death
  - ✓ Petrograd renamed Leningrad
  - ✓ Lenin’s body embalmed and displayed in Moscow’s Red Square
  - ✓ After death, Lenin regarded with cult-like reverence

AP European History • Russia 1894-1939 • J.F. Walters & G. W. Whitton
Video Profile: Lenin
Video Spotlight: “Battleship Potemkin”
Power Struggle (1924-28)

Leon Trotsky

"permanent revolution"

Josef Stalin

"socialism in one country"
Trotsky after the Power Struggle

Trotsky: Exiled in 1929

Trotsky: Expired in 1940
Josef Stalin (1928-1953)
“The Soviet Union was kind of an anti-America—a subcontinental empire, but decidedly illiberal. Stalin preached equality but built a centralized economy by forcibly transporting millions of his comrades around his empire and locking another million in gulags. Ideologically suspect ethnic groups and class enemies (often the same thing) were purged. And unlike the failing capitalist economies, the successful Soviet Union did let 10 million of its subjects starve. Yet Stalin was clearly doing something right, for while capitalist industry collapsed between 1928 and 1937, Soviet output quadrupled. ‘I have seen the future, and it works,’ the journalist Lincoln Steffens famously told his fellow Americans after visiting the Soviet Union.”

Stalin’s Command Economy

*Journal 94/A*: Economic planning became the distinctive feature of Soviet economics.

---Palmer Chapter 94 • pp. 749-58---

*Directions*: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Stalin’s Command Economy

- Industrial Five-Year Plans: Basics
  - ✔ goal: make the Soviet Union a leading industrial power
  - ✔ state-guided economy
  - ✔ established quota system for production
  - ✔ focused on heavy industries such as coal, steel, railway, etc.
  - ✔ Gosplan: bureaucratic agency that oversaw the five-year plans (central planning)
  - ✔ 1st Five-Year Plan: began in 1928

Soviet paper mill worker
Stalin’s Command Economy

- Industrial Five-Year Plans: Issues
  - ✓ problem: shortage of labor in cities
    - ➡ use of labor camps (Gulag: penal system) not uncommon
    - ➡ led Stalin to collectivization of agriculture (see later notes)
  - ✓ problem: few consumer products for citizens
  - ✓ challenge: enthusiasm for central planning required constant stream of government-sponsored propaganda

“Help Building the Gigantic Factories”
S. Mirzoyan and A. Ivanon, 1929
Stalin’s Command Economy

- Industrial Five-Year Plans: Assessment
  - Soviet industrial economy expanded rapidly (in terms of % growth)
    - first two five-year plans especially successful
  - disclaimer: Soviet production figures were very low before Stalin
  - narrowed the gap between the Soviet economy and the industrial economies of the West

Soviet Pig Iron Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pig Iron (Millions of tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'24</td>
<td></td>
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<td>'26</td>
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<td>'36</td>
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<tr>
<td>'38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stalin’s Command Economy

Journal 94/B: Collectivization of agriculture was to make possible the success of industrialization.

—Palmer Chapter 94 • pp. 749-58—

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Stalin’s Command Economy

• Collectivization of Agriculture: Basics

✓ make Soviet agriculture productive enough to feed its own population

✓ make Soviet agriculture so efficient that a surplus of labor would be created; extra labor could then be transplanted to the cities for work in industrial five-year plans

A Soviet propaganda poster in which the woman proclaims, “Comrade, come join our kolkhoz [collective farm]” (1930)
Stalin’s Command Economy

- Collectivization of Agriculture: Methods
  - ✓ state-guided economy (central planning)
  - ✓ individual ownership of land replaced with collective farms (kolkhozy)
  - ✓ increased use of tractors and other mechanized farm equipment through “Machine Tractor Stations”
  - ✓ Stalin’s “First Commandment” of Collectivization: the collective farm first supplies the state and then the people

  ➡ if grain quotas were not met, many peasants were obligated to surrender their seed grain for next year’s crop (or it was confiscated by the state)

  ➡ watchtowers were built so that the Soviet state could make sure that peasants were not hiding food
Stalin’s Command Economy

- Collectivization of Agriculture: Assessment

✓ Failed economically

► not popular among farmers, especially Ukrainian *kulaks*: peasants viewed collectivization as a “second serfdom”

► few (if any) incentives to produce

► central planners did not provide enough spare parts to repair broken farm equipment

✓ led to increased fear, disruption, destruction and death

► Ukrainian Holocaust: Stalin killed some approximately 3-7 million (estimated) perceived resistors to collectivization (millions were *kulaks*)

► many peasants forcefully transplanted to cities or forced to work on major infrastructure projects (such as the White Sea Canal)
Stalin’s Command Economy

A contemporary Ukrainian children’s song

Father Stalin, look at this  Daddy and mommy are in the kolkhoz
Collective farming is just bliss  The poor child cries as alone he goes
The hut’s in ruins, the barn’s all sagged  There’s no bread and there’s no fat
All the horses broken nags  The party’s ended all of that
And on the hut a hammer and sickle  Seek not the gentle nor the mild
And in the hut death and famine  A father’s eaten his own child
No cows left, no pigs at all  The party man he beats and stamps
Just your picture on the wall  And sends us to Siberian camps

—as quoted in Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin

AP European History • Russia 1894-1939 • J.F. Walters & G. W. Whitton
Aleksei Stakhanov

✓ Soviet coal miner
✓ broke a record for amount of coal mined in one day (1935)
  ➡ legend: mined 14x his quota
  ➡ reality: team of coal miners assisted Stakhanov to maximize his productivity
✓ made a national hero to celebrate the “superiority” of the Soviet system and its workers
  ➡ newspaper articles & photos
  ➡ posters & billboards
✓ Stakhanov’s feat led to Stakhanovism
New Soviet Man/Woman: Stakhanovism

- Stakhanovism
  - everyone was challenged to break records in their own jobs: “be like Stakhanov” and be a “Stakhanovite”
  - Exceptional workers could be awarded “Hero of Socialist Labor” status by the Soviet government
  - workers and farmers as heroes and celebrities (compare to the heroes of Western Europe)
  - propaganda to fuel enthusiasm for Five-Year Plans and Collectivization
Stalin’s Great Terror: The Purges

Journal 94/C: The degree of industrialization in the USSR can easily be exaggerated. Solidarity in the USSR was purchased at the price of totalitarianism.

Directions: Using sentences or detailed bulleted notes, identify & explain the evidence Palmer uses to support the thesis listed above.
Stalin’s Great Terror: The Purges

• Causes & Goals

✓ Stalin’s purges began after the assassination of an important Communist Party member and rival in 1934 (Sergei Kirov)

✓ Stalin feared he would be overthrown or assassinated

✓ Stalin sought to eliminate enemies and potential threats to his power

✓ Stalin wanted to consolidate power in government

Stalin: When he wasn’t looking over his shoulder
Stalin’s Great Terror: The Purges

• The Great Purge Trials (1936-39)

✓ Stalin’s enemies put on trial (be they perceived or real) for treason and other state-related crimes

⇒ “Old Bolsheviks”: long-time members of the Communist Party who knew Lenin

⇒ supporters of Trotsky (accused of Trotskyism)

⇒ top generals in the military

✓ Accused confessed to treason in open court

⇒ no physical sign of physical abuse

⇒ psychological torture employed

✓ KGB arrested many other “counterrevolutionaries”
Stalin’s Great Terror: The Purges

• Results

✓ Stalin further consolidated power: totalitarianism

✓ Almost all the “Old Bolsheviks” were eliminated

✓ Stalin destroyed the top brass in Soviet military

 ➡ would have negative ramifications as Stalin had to deal with Hitler and Germany’s growing military might

 ➡ led Stalin to forge a non-aggression pact with Germany (1939) in order to buy the Soviet Union rebuilding time

✓ Fear for Soviet citizens
“The terror of the 1930s was, of course, a nightmare phenomenon which nevertheless actually happened. And, like all nightmares, its reasons and its meaning are difficult to unravel or interpret. For millions it meant, of course, imprisonment, torture, execution, or the living death of exile in the charnel-house of Stalin’s concentration camps, damningly immortalized in Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* (GULag is the Russian abbreviation for the Main Prison Camp Administration, a department of the NKVD’s empire). The stark horror of the camps is captured in their description by one of the survivors as ‘Auschwitz without the ovens.’ The ranks of the victims are legion.

For the Communist Party, the terror meant an almost complete change of personnel, the physical annihilation of the ‘Old Bolsheviks’ and their replacement by a whole new generation of reliable, unquestioning and unimaginative sycophants who owed their lives and their careers to their willingness to step into dead men’s shoes. They were a different breed of Communists from the heroes of the Revolution, creatures of Stalin who had been unnaturally selected through a process of the survival of the dullest.”

Stalin’s Soviet Union: Video Profile
Sources

- Wikipedia.com (en.wikipedia.com).