WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE IN CZARIST RUSSIA?

The following scene takes place in a small village near the Russian capital of Moscow.

Ivana Break: My dear husband, how was farming today?

Lifis Tuff: Great! I harvested another potato today.

Ivana Break: Excellent. Now we have ten potatoes to get us through the next three months of winter.

Lifis: True that. I just hope that we don't put on too much weight with all that extra food.

Ivana: I know. The winter is supposed to be mild. It's only going to be 10 degrees below zero instead of the usual 30 degrees below zero. So we don't even need that extra layer of winter fat.

Lifis: Word. Now remember to hide some of those potatoes otherwise Count Badenuif will raise the rent he charges for this wonderful patch of land we're on.

Ivana: I know. It's stinks that we serfs, who work so hard for our food, must give half our crops to those rotten landlords, the nobles.

Lifis: It's the Czar's fault. Ninety percent of Russia's people are serfs. Meanwhile the Czar lives in his fancy palace and actually eats meat for dinner everyday. We haven't eaten meat since Fluffy and Rover died last year. That Czar Nicolas II has everything and we have nothing.

Ivana: No doubt. Perhaps it is time that the nobles and the Czar receive a "smackdown".

Lifis: Smackdown? I'm not sure about that. But I do know that the system has got to change. We cannot allow ourselves to go on living this miserable existence.

Ivana: Bet. I'm going to speak to the other serfs in the village to see if we can do something about this. I heard that the French peasants were in a similar situation in 1789. I wonder how they straightened things out.

TWO DAYS LATER

(Knocks on the door)

No Nameski: Is this the hut of Lifis Hard and Ivana Break?
Lifis Tuff: Yes, it is

No Nameski: I am with the KGB. Come with me, both of you

Ivana: What have we done?

No Nameski: Did you not tell your neighbors that the Czar should be done away with? Did you not tell you neighbors that the nobles should be done away with?

Lifis: Yes but I ...

No Nameski: Step outside, both of you, traitors.

(TWO QUICK SHOTS ARE HEARD)

THE END

1. Who was the Russian wife? ________________________________

2. Who was the Russian farmer? ________________________________

3. What type of organization do you think the KGB is? ________________________________

4. How would you explain what a serf is? ________________________________

5. Describe one problem that serfs faced. ________________________________

6. Why were the serfs angry with the nobles? ________________________________

7. Why were the serfs angered by the Czar's lifestyle? ________________________________

8. How did the KGB know what Ivana and Lifis had said? ________________________________

9. How is the serfs "trial" different from our legal system? ________________________________

10. Is violence justified in overthrowing the Czar's rule? Why? ________________________________
Life in Russia under the Czar

I. Czarist Russia 1914
A. Czar Nicholas II (1894-1917)
   1. The last member of the Romanov dynasty to rule Russia.
   2. Entire Romanov family is executed at the beginning of the Russian Revolution

II. Social Problems under the Czar
   1. Tremendous cold and difficult farming conditions often led to hunger and starvation in Russia.
   2. Secret police was used by the Czar to crush any opposition. Use of thousands of informers kept serfs from unifying.

III. Economic Problems under the Czar
   1. Over 90% of Russian people were serfs (land-less peasants) who worked on wealthy landowners’ property and received little if any economic gains from their work.

IV. Political Problems under the Czar
   1. No freedom of speech, press, right to a trial or any basic human rights existed for serfs.
   2. Czar ruled with an “iron fist.” Serfs had no voice in influencing government policies.
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

In March, 1917, the people of Russia overthrew Czar Nicholas II. The Russian Revolution ended the rule of the Czars and set up a republic to rule Russia. Many of the causes of the Revolution of 1905 caused the March, 1917 Revolution. For example, the Russian people still wanted freedom, jobs and an education. Once again Russia was in a war. In 1917, it was World War I. Millions of Russians had been killed by the Germans. There was starvation throughout the country. Most people wanted peace. The main difference between 1905 and 1917 was that in March, 1917, the army did not support the Czar. When the Czar realized the army was no longer with him, he ABDICATED his throne. A new government was set up which promised the people of Russia new freedoms. The one mistake the new government made was to stay in World War I. When the Germans saw problems in Russia, they attacked even harder. In the summer of 1917, millions of Russians died.

Another group was trying to take control of Russia. They were called the BOLSHEVIKS. Bolsheviks were Russian communists who believed in the ideas of Karl Marx. The leader of the Bolsheviks was Vladimir Ulianov, known in the west as Nikolai Lenin. Lenin demanded "PEACE, LAND AND BREAD" for the Russian people. Soon, many Russians started to listen to him. As winter came, conditions in Russia got even worse. In November, 1917, Lenin and the Bolsheviks made their move. In one night they SEIZED the government of Russia. The world's first communist country came into existence.

QUESTIONS:
1. List three rays the Revolution of 1905 was like the Revolution in March, 1917.

2. Why was the March, 1917 Revolution a “success”?

3. What did Lenin mean by "Peace, Land and Bread?"

4. If you lived in Russia in 1917, would you have supported Lenin? Explain your answer.
Why Was Lenin Successful In Ruling Russia?

In 1917, Vladimir Lenin and members of the Bolshevik (Communist) Party took control of the Russian Government. They faced many difficult problems. What would you have done in each situation? Circle your answer and explain WHY you chose that answer.

1. The Czar (Nicholas II) and his wife are in jail but still have many supporters in Russian society. What should Lenin do about the Czar and family?
   - a. Leave them in jail.
   - b. Kill them
   The reason why is:

2. Russia has been faced with food shortages and increasing poverty for many years. Over 80% of Russians work for large wealthy farmers yet still do not get enough to eat. What should Lenin do about this?
   - a. Ignore the problems of the poor and hungry
   - b. Take land from the Church and wealthy nobles and give it to the poor and hungry so that they can feed themselves
   The reason why is:

3. Since entering WWI, Russia has suffered the loss of many lives as well as billions of dollars in wartime expenses. What should Lenin do about this?
   - a. Keep fighting Germany until Russia wins
   - b. Sign a peace treaty with Germany and lose Russian territory in exchange for peace.
   The reason why is:

4. A large number of Russians are still loyal to the Czar. Other Russians who aren't loyal to the Czar, still don't support Lenin's policies. What should Lenin do about this?
   - a. Ignore those who don't support him
   - b. Jail and execute those who don't support him.
   The reason why is:

5. Lenin wants to make Russia more powerful by slowly replacing their farm economy with factories and industrialization. This will be very expensive and most Russians are too poor to pay the taxes needed for Lenin's program. What should Lenin do?
   - a. Make the poor pay the taxes anyway
   - b. Take all the wealth from the rich and use it to build factories/industries.
   The reason why is:
What Are the Basic Beliefs of Communism?

**Document #1**

“All businesses must be taken out of the hands of private individuals. The owners of the means of production (Bourgeoisie) exploit and abuse their workers (proletariat). The Bourgeoisie use their workers to make enormous profits for themselves while their employees get nothing for their labor. The government, in the name of the people, must take over all businesses and industries. Only then will the proletariat receive equal pay and be treated fairly and humanely. This is the foundation of Communism.”

- Karl Marx, Das Capital

Based on this document, how will communism solve the problems of working people?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Document #2**

Does the graph below support Marx’s Communist beliefs? Why?

- Weekly Salaries at McDonald's

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
1. Which class of society would be more likely to oppose communism; the Bourgeoisie or the Proletariat? ________________ because ________________________________

2. “Business owners are too greedy and refuse to pay their workers a reasonable salary.”
This speaker probably believes in the economic system of _____________________________
I agree / disagree with this statement because ________________________________

3. “I risked my life savings when I started my business and I worked hard and took many risks in order to become successful. I deserve to make much more than my workers.”
This speaker believes in the economic system of ________________________________
I agree / disagree with this statement because ________________________________

4. “In order to gain justice and a decent life for the working people (85% of the population), violence, including killing the wealthy business owners is justified.”
This speaker believes in the economic system of ________________________________
I agree / disagree with this statement because ________________________________

Based on this document, what method would be used to replace the old system of capitalism? ________________________________