

The Russian Revolutions, 1905-1924: Brave New World?

Many believe that the 1917 Russian Revolution was the most significant event in the twentieth century, both as a rupture from the past and as a precursor of much that was to come in the twentieth century. The February Revolution of 1917 made the Russian Empire—at one stroke, in the midst of the world war—the world's most democratic state. The October Revolution of 1917, following it, was the world's first socialist revolution, and it established the world's first socialist state—the Soviet Union. Throughout the twentieth century and beyond, people have looked to it with either fear or with hope. It generated great dreams of equality and liberation—and great misery.

This course will examine the causes, course and consequences of this crucial period, for the peoples of the Soviet Union and for the world.

In some ways, the term “Russian Revolution” is in fact not entirely correct. First, there was not **one** Russian Revolution--were a series of overlapping revolutions in this period—labor, rural, nationalist, liberationist. And second, it was a revolution that was not limited to European Russia, but encompassed the entire space of Russian empire (the Caucasus, the Baltics, Poland, Central Asia), and had worldwide and global significance.

How do programs for liberation produce both new possibilities and great misery?