**The Russian Revolutions**

(adapted transcript from the video)

The year was 1914. World War I had begun, and Russia was at war with Germany. The working class and the peasants make up the Russian Army. However, they were not well-equipped or trained for the battles to come.

In 1917, millions of Russians had been either killed or wounded. The Russian people were angry at Tsar Nicolas II for getting Russia into a war and several other reasons including the Tsar taking personal command of the army, Rasputin’s power over the Royal Family, food shortages and growing political opposition.

The first revolution came about in February 1917 on the Julian Calendar in Petrograd, which was the capital of imperial Russia. Demonstrators protested about the lack of bread due to rationing and were soon joined by striking workers. The Army was called upon to suppress the uprising. Several protesters were shot and killed by the soldiers – however many refused to open fire; the Army too, it seemed, had mutinied against the Tsar.

The Petrograd Soviet was the city council for workers and soldiers. Now more and more workers and soldiers elected people to it in order to represent their demands. The Tsar abdicated, bringing an end to the Tsarist autocracy; and a new government took over, run by two political parties – the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government.

**The Bolshevik Revolution**

The Provisional government was also unpopular: it made the decision to remain in the war and failed to give land to the peasants. Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks were a faction of the Marxist Russian social democratic Labour party and eventually became the Communist party of the Soviet Union. He had a simple slogan which would appeal to the people and the Petrograd Soviet: **Peace, Bread and Land** (**Peace** for the end of Russia’s involvement in World War I, **Bread** for solving food shortages and **Land** which would go to the peasants). He also stated “**All Power to the Soviets**” meaning that he would seize power in the name of the Soviet.

On November 6 and 7, 1917 (or October 24 and 25 on the Julian Calendar) the Bolsheviks led by Lenin launched a coup d’état against the Provisional Government – they stormed the Winter Palace and arrested the Provisional Government – putting themselves in charge of Russia’s government. After the Revolution, Bolshevik government exited the war by signing a peace treaty with Germany, called the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. A civil War would erupt in 1918 by those who were against the new Bolshevik government – the White Army and the Bolshevik themselves (the Red Army).

Question: to what extent can it be said George Orwell’s Animal Farm is inspired from the 1917 Russian revolutions?

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