

I. Why did the tsarist regime collapse in 1917?

- How well did the tsarist regime deal with the difficulties of ruling Russia up to 1914?
 - *Russian society*
 - The Tsar could not be voted in or out, just inherited from the Romanov family. He was an Autocrat and had absolute power. The Tsar appointed family and friends to high roles.
 - The Church made up roughly 1/4 of population. High church officials were wealthy and influential. The Clergy's job was to tell people the Tsar was appointed by god - This legitimated the tsars authority.
 - The Aristocrats were loyal to the Tsar and worked as government officials, they made up 1/4 of population but owned large estates and areas of land in which peasant worked.
 - The working class and peasants were very open to exploitation and made up 80% of pop. They had no voice and their own separate legal system. They had primitive farming methods but without them Russia would fall apart.
 - The middle class were capitalists and were unhappy with tsar and peasants were unhappy with them.
 - Trade unions and Political parties were banned.
 - Industry was growing so workers had to work harder and in very bad conditions.
 - *Tsarist regime*
 - The tsarist regime used the Okhrana, army and police to keep control.
 - Because the people had no voice the Tsar was disliked by many.
 - Poor conditions often led to strikes and demonstrations - The Tsar would order army to fire to maintain control (Bloody Sunday).
 - After Bloody Sunday the Tsar established the Duma in 1906 (Tsar dismissed Duma).
 - The Okhrana was also reestablished to spy on people.
 - After 1905 Russia changed as pressure built up.
 - ...Not very well, the tsarist regime often responded with force or stricter ways e.g Okhrana. The tsarist regime attempted to respond 'nicer' with the duma however this was ignored - making it worse.
- How well did the Tsar survive the 1905 revolution?
 - *Causes of the revolution*
 - Manchuria - Russia refused to recognise Japanese rights in Manchuria, Japan attacked port arthur. After a war Russia surrendered Port Arthur (after 2 major land defeats and 3 warships damaged). Soldiers had poor supplies and far from home. These events caused riots.
 - Russia's director of imperial police, Plehve was killed by terrorist bomb as anger grew.
 - Bloody Sunday - Priest led 150,000 on a peaceful march to winter palace to deliver petition (saying they wanted a duma and constitution). In minutes 200 killed and 800 wounded. Strike began.
 - The dismissal of duma.
 - General growing anger due to living conditions and no voice.
 - Wage cuts, Famine, unemployment.

Commented [1]: BOLD = Key events and things mentioned later - so easier to find when looking for specifics.

Commented [2]: underlined = Names - dates - good things to remember

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- They were not supposed to stay in power that long but the economic crisis meant elections were impossible.
- Did not really get on with the soviets or the revolutionaries.
- They 'inherited' a dying Russia.
- There was a lack of unity amongst them.
- Laws were passed that gave hope for a new Russia but current issues were not addressed.
- Mostly middle class.
- Their authority collapsed by the second half of 1917.

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- A conspiracy came about, about it being a terrorist attack involving Trotsky trying to kill Stalin.
- Kamenev and Zinoviev were immediately arrested on false charges of terrorism, given 10 and 15 years in prison.
- This murder gave Stalin's police the excuse to make mass arrests and executions.
- It was estimated that by 1941 up to 6 million people had been shot or died in captivity.
- However now it is almost certain that Kirov was killed on Stalin's orders.
- In 1934 at the party congress Kirov had more votes than Stalin and he had received a longer applause.
- Kirov was tipped as a future leader.
- Kirov had criticised Stalin's methods of control including collectivisation.
- After this assassination Stalin could claim the need to purge the communist party and allowed him to claim the need for new emergency decrees.
- Around 20% of the communist party were sacked in this way.
- Many arrested and some shot, the majority were imprisoned for 10 years of hard labour.
- *The show trials*
 - A show trial is a highly publicised trial in which the verdict is fake and usually a false confession is given.
 - They were often pre-planned.
 - During Stalin's show trials, most people were tried for conspiring against the government.
 - They all "confessed" to their crime after facing brutal interrogation methods.
 - Speaking out at a trial would mean death to families and friends.
 - These trials sent the message that opposition would not be tolerated.
- *The Gulag*
 - Was the network of labour camps that grew during the 1930s to accommodate for victims of the purges or collectivisation.
 - Mostly in Siberia.
 - About 25 million ordinary Russians were sent to the gulag where perhaps half of them died.
 - Such convicts had to construct railways and dams in Arctic Russia.
 - The conditions were so bad many did not survive.
- *Stalin's emergency decrees:*
 - The NKVD (The communist party's secret police) were made responsible for trials of 'crimes against the state'. This meant the whole police force, labour camps and border guards came under the control of the NKVD.
 - No witnesses or appeals were allowed in the treason trials.
 - Use of torture was legalised.
 - 12 year olds could be tried.
 - Failure to inform the NKVD of traitors could lead to a 20 year prison sentence.
- *Why?*
 - It allowed him to remove oppositions and enemies, with an "excuse".
 - It brought fear and discouraged people from going against Stalin.
 - It ensured unions against him could not be formed.
 - It meant the party only consisted of his true supporters and no "Trotskyites" were in the party.
 - Collectivisation had been a failure and food was rationed right up until 1935.
 - It allowed Stalin to avoid responsibility for his economic failures.

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