

## UNIT 2 - RUSSIA 1917-1939

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### Key Topic 1: The Collapse of the Tsarist Regime 1917

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Describe how Russia was ruled under the Tsar before the February Revolution 1917 (6)

- Russia was an autocracy- Tsar had complete power. He could appoint or sack ministers or make any other decisions without telling anyone else.
- A weak Parliament (Duma) that failed to represent the people's views.
- The Tsar used his secret police (Okhrana) to get rid of anybody who went against him. These people were usually exiled to Siberia.

Explain why the Tsar was a weak leader (8)

- He avoided making important decisions.
- In a country as huge as Russia where tasks had to be delegated (shared out) this was a problem because the Tsar tried to getting involved in everything!
- The system of autocracy (unlimited rule by one person) worked only if the Tsar was strong but Nicholas was not a strong character.
- He showed little understanding of in politics and how to run a country. For example, he appointed family members and friends to important positions. Many were incompetent and corrupt and accepted bribes.

Explain why there was a revolution in 1905? (Bloody Sunday)(8)

Causes:

- Bad harvests in 1900 and 1902.
- Russia was at war with Japan (1904-05). This was disastrous and humiliated both the Tsar and Russia. The war produced food shortages. Peasants and workers were forced to join the army.
- People were fed up of a poor life- bad working conditions and low wages.

Event:

- 200,000 people protested outside the Tsar's Winter Palace. The demonstrators wanted the war with Japan to end, better working conditions and a higher wage.
- The Tsar's soldiers fired on the crowd without warning and killed hundreds and wounded thousands.

Effects:

- Chaos spread throughout the country- There were Strikes, riots and mutiny (revolt) in the navy.
- Strikers formed Soviets- worker's council to organise strikes.
- Tsar issued the October Manifesto (1905) to stop further chaos. He promised: freedom of speech, a national parliament (Duma), an end to censorship, the right to form other political parties.

### Describe the problems of ruling Russia in 1917 (6 marks)

- Russian empire in 1917 was HUGE! (92 times as big as Britain). Its size made it hard to rule. Communications were difficult. Roads were unpaved and slow. Even the new railways only connected a fraction of the country.
- Farming methods were old-fashioned and slow.
- Population was rising so more food was needed and food shortages were common.

### Describe the key features of political parties in Russia before World War I (6 marks)

- Constitutionalists (Cadets)- Wanted a democratic style government. They wanted the Tsar's power LIMITED by a constitution and an elected parliament.
- Revolutionaries believed in the OVERTHROW of the Tsar. The largest group was the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), who believed in a revolution by the peasants.
- The Social Democrats believed in a revolution led by the workers in towns. Split into two groups.
- Bolsheviks (led by Lenin) - wanted a small party who would organise the revolution.
- Mensheviks (led by Trotsky and other leaders) - wanted a mass party and were prepared for slow change

### Explain the effects of the First World War on Russia in 1917? (8 marks)

- In 1915 the Tsar took personal command of the army. The Tsar became unpopular as Russia faced many humiliating defeats.
- The Tsar left the Tsarina in charge of Russia. Many didn't trust her (she was German) and did not like the influence Rasputin had. This made the Tsar MORE UNPOPULAR.
- There were shortages of fuel and food because workers and Farmers were sent to fight the war. This made it harder to grow enough food and keep factory production up. The army also took horses from farms which made it hard to plough the land.

### Explain why there was a revolution in Russia in February 1917? (8 marks)

#### Causes:

- Russia was at war. This caused food shortages.
- Tsar left his wife in charge- and the Tsar was out of touch with the growing anger of the people.
- Very cold winter affected food supplies to cities and towns. Prices got high and food had to be rationed- people got hungry and angry.

#### Event:

- Strikes- people began to demand food.
- The Tsar lost support and control. He ordered his soldiers to shoot at the mobs but many refused and joined the people.
- Unrest turned into revolution!
- The soldiers and workers fought together to capture the main weapons store. They fought the police. On 27-28 Feb they stormed prisons and released political prisoners.
- The Duma (government) took control and set up the Provisional Government to take over.

### Effects:

- Russia now had a Provisional Government. This meant that the new government could face opposition from revolutionaries who wanted power for themselves- Bolsheviks.
- The Petrograd Soviet issued Order No 1 to the army in Petrograd. It said the army must obey the Provisional Government, (as long as its orders agreed with those of the Petrograd Soviet.)
- The Tsar abdicated (gave up his throne) and was taken prisoner.

### Explain why the February revolution succeeded (8 marks)

- The army joined the people bringing weapons and ammunition.
- Before this the people did not have an organised revolution (just angry demonstrations against the government).
- The suddenness of it and the way the Tsar made things worse by ordering troops to fire, were important factors.
- The army then became an important part of the Petrograd Soviet and getting the Provisional government accepted.

### Describe the weaknesses and failures of the Provisional Government (6)

- It saw itself as temporary and waited for a new government to tackle the big problems.
- It had no real power. It needed the support of the army to stay in power and get its laws carried out.
- It sent more troops to fight but the army but supplies and leadership was still poor.

### Was the Provisional Government's failure to get out of the war the most important factor in its growing unpopularity? Explain your answer (16 marks)

#### The war and its effects

- Continuing the war against the Germans made the Provisional Government unpopular. Failure to end the war worsened the food shortages in towns and cities.
- Many soldiers deserted (left) the army because Russia continued to fail in the war. Deaths increased. Mutinies (revolt) broke out in the army. There was a revolt at the Kronstadt Naval base in July.

#### Opposition groups

- The Bolsheviks became more popular. Lenin made inspiring speeches with simple slogans that workers could remember, such as 'Peace, Land, Bread' and 'All power to the Soviets.'
- The Petrograd Soviet became more and angrier with the government as it failed to solve Russia's economic problems (food shortages, high prices, poor working conditions and low wages).
- Kornilov revolt- Kerensky (leader of PG) had lost the support of the army and was relying on the Petrograd Soviet (with its strong Bolshevik influence) to run Russia. This meant real power and support was with the Petrograd Soviet.

### Mistakes made by the Provisional Government

- Because of its temporary nature, the Provisional Government would not carry out important changes. For example, it failed to give land to the peasants, which increased anger in the countryside.
- The Provisional Government allowed opposition parties to campaign in Russia, including Lenin and the Bolsheviks. This meant its enemies could openly criticise and publicise its mistakes. Bolshevik slogans such as 'peace, land and bread' showed how important it was to get Russia out of the war.

Conclusion: The war had been so unpopular and had made problems worse, this was probably the most important reason for the unpopularity of the Provisional Government. It would be hard to sort out the food shortages when Russia was fighting a war. It made the food shortages worse because trains and peasants (farmers) were used to fight the war instead of being used to produce and transport food to cities and towns.

### Explain how Bolshevik power grew before the October Revolution in 1917 (8 marks)

- Lenin was in exile in Germany during the February revolution. A month after (in April) the Tsar abdicated (gave up his throne) Lenin returned to Russia.
- Lenin's aim was to get rid of the Provisional Government with a second revolution of the working classes (factory workers).
- Lenin's views were published in the 'April Theses' 1917.
- The Bolsheviks offered 'bread, peace and land and all power to the soviets' and gained support because they offered radical change and promised to end the war.
- During July there were riots and protests the Provisional government acted like the Tsar- it sent troops to clear the streets.

### Explain the effects of the Kornilov Revolt (8)

- Kerensky (leader of PG) had to give weapons to the Bolsheviks to save his government from a military takeover. These weapons were later used by the Red Army against the Provisional Government in the October revolution.
- The PG had lost support of the army and the Bolsheviks were now the real power in Russia.
- Lenin encouraged Trotsky to prepare plans for seizing power.

## Key Topic 2: Bolshevik Takeover and Consolidation 1917-24

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### Describe the events of the Bolshevik/October Revolution (6)

- Trotsky used the Military Committee to carefully plan the revolution.
- On 16 October Lenin returned from exile and was now convinced that the time was right to overthrow the Provisional Government.
- On 24 and 25 October the Bolsheviks seized power and staged a coup d'état. They took control of the key areas of Petrograd and Moscow, including the post office, bridges, state bank and railway stations.
- Red Guards (Bolshevik armed forces) stormed the winter Palace and arrested the ministers of the Provisional Government.

### Chronology of Bolshevik take over

- 25 October: Bolsheviks take power.
- 12 November: Elections for the Constituent Assembly.
- 22 December: Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed- Russia out of the First World War.
- 5 January 1918: Constituent Assembly first meet- only 25% of members were Bolsheviks. Lenin used the Red Guard to end the meeting.
- 6 January: Red Guard stops any further meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

### Explain the effects of the October Revolution (8)

- Provisional government was finished. Bolsheviks seized power. (25 Oct 1917).
- Lenin and the Bolsheviks were now in charge in Petrograd. Set up Council of People's Commissars (CPC). This did not mean that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had total control of Russia. Not all the Soviets were run by Bolsheviks. In the countryside most peasants supported the Socialist Revolutionaries.
- 22 Dec 1917: Russia was taken out of the war. Lenin negotiated peace with the Germans (Treaty of Brest-Litovsk)
- It seemed that the Socialist Revolutionaries would win more votes than the Bolsheviks. If that would have happened Lenin would have to hand over power. So Lenin ordered the Constituent Assembly to be shut down.

### Explain why the October Revolution was a success? (8)

The Bolshevik revolution succeeded because it was a well organised coup.

- Lenin urged the Bolsheviks to lead a revolution in October.
- The Provisional Government failed to disarm (take weapons away) the Red Guard after arming them to deal with the Kornilov revolt.
- The Provisional Government was too unpopular to have enough loyal troops to protect it. It simply collapsed as soon as it was challenged.
- The Provisional Government did not act against the threat in time. It completely misjudged the danger. Rumours of a revolt to overthrow the government had been in the air since the July Days.

- The takeover was well organised by Trotsky. He organised the Red Guard, volunteers from the army, the navy and the factories to work together to a careful plan. Key places were seized such as the railway stations, canals, main bridges and the telegraph station.

#### What was the main reason for the success of the Bolshevik/October Revolution (16)

- Lenin's leadership- Lenin knew it was important to act fast.
- Lenin had popular slogans like 'peace, bread and land' that made the Bolshevik party popular (by October in had 800,000 members) so they had plenty of support. At least half the army supported them, as did the sailors at the naval base in Kronstadt near Petrograd.
- Trotsky's organisation- carefully timed events so that the Bolshevik takeover happened when the Congress was meeting.
- The Provisional Government were very unpopular. Very few in the army supported Kerensky. He had no choice but to go into hiding.
- The Red Guard- Assisted in the takeover. The Bolsheviks also had help from the Military Committee, army units in the Petrograd, volunteers and workers.
- The Red Guards faced little opposition- most people seemed to have taken little notice of what was happening.

#### Explain how the Bolsheviks changed Russian society in 1917 (8)

- Council of People's Commissars replaced Provisional Government (under Lenin's control).
- The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Russia made peace with the Germans.
- The war was over but many were angry about how much Lenin had given away. Russia lost some of its best farming land and areas with important coal and iron resources, it also lost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of its population. Russia also had to pay 300 million roubles compensation.
- Communist economy- Factories were handed over to the Workers Committees and land (taken away from church) was shared out by the peasants.
- Communist laws- religion was banned, 8 hour working day, as well as unemployment pay.
- Bolshevik Red Guards closed down the Constituent Assembly. Lenin became a dictator.
- Secret police-Cheka was set up and was allowed to arrest without trial. Political opponents were imprisoned and murdered.

#### Explain why a Civil War broke out in 1918? (8)

- War broke out between the Bolsheviks and the different groups that wanted to overthrow them.
- The Bolsheviks took power as the Communist party and had shut down the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks had outlawed all political opposition. The Social Revolutionaries (SRs) and Cadets accused the Bolsheviks of seizing power by force and demanding a re-calling of the Assembly.
- Starvation worsened after the Brest-Litovsk treaty when Ukraine was lost. Ukraine was the main provider of grain for Russia.

### Describe the different opponents of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War (6 marks)

- The Whites- the name for those who opposed the Bolsheviks (the Reds).
- The Greens- those who fought the Bolsheviks as groups seeking independence from Russia- (national minorities e.g Georgians).

### The largest groups of the Whites were:

- Kerensky (leader of Provisional Government) and the troops he raised after fleeing Petrograd on 25 October.
- Kornilov (General of the army) and volunteer army- who wanted the Tsar back.
- Russia's allies from the war (Britain, France, USA) who were angry at Russia's exit from the war.
- The Czech Legion- soldier's who had been in the Tsar's army.

### Describe the Key features of War Communism (6)

- Policy Lenin adopted to bring the economy completely under government control, to help win the civil war, and to destroy all opposition to Communism. War Communism meant the needs of the army always came first.

The main features of war communism were:

- Private trading was banned. Peasants could no longer sell their extra food for profit but had to give it to the government.
- Factories with more than ten workers were nationalised. This meant that the state now owned factories.
- The government had total control of banks, money and prices. Rapid inflation (high prices) left money valueless. People exchanged goods rather than using money.

### Explain the effects of War Communism on Russia (8)

- War Communism made food shortages in the towns and cities worse because the Red Army was always given priority for food and often there wasn't enough for the towns. It supplied the Red Army with food and enabled the victory over the Whites.
- Peasants did not like the idea of giving up produce to the state, and so grew less and bred fewer animals. Food shortages got worse.
- The Kronstadt Naval Rebellion 1921: Thousands of sailors protested and objected to the way the Communist Party (the Bolsheviks were now called Communists) was taking power away from the Soviets. Lenin realised he had to change policy. In March 1921, Lenin abandoned War Communism and introduced the New Economic Policy.
- Food shortages became famine. People were dying from starvation (in some areas cannibalism broke out.)

### Describe the key features of the New Economic Policy (NEP) (6)

- It was intended by Lenin to mainly meet Russia's urgent need for food.
- Money was re-introduced, with a new coinage. Workers were paid wages again. There was a new state bank.

- The state stopped taking crops from the peasants. If they grew more food than they needed, they could sell it at a profit for themselves. But they had to pay the state 10% of that profit in tax, paid in crops.
- The State kept control of the big industries (coal and steel) but factories of under 20 workers could be privately owned and run to make a profit.
- Moved away from communism towards capitalism. Trotsky and others criticised this policy.

#### Explain the effects of the New Economic Policy (NEP) (8)

- Agricultural production went up. Peasants began growing more crops.
- Factory production went up too. This led to more goods being manufactured.
- The return of money for wages and allowing small scale profit helped the economy.

#### Explain why the Bolsheviks were able to win the Civil War (8)

They won because of a mixture of their strengths and the weaknesses of the Whites.

#### Red's strengths

- The Reds controlled the cities and central areas with good communications.
- War Communism supplied the Red Army which meant that all necessary resources were poured into the army.
- Trotsky was a very successful leader of the Red Army. He made inspiring speeches, gave out tobacco and other luxuries. He executed men whose loyalty he doubted.

#### White's weaknesses

- The Whites were thousands of miles apart and were disunited. They spent most of their time arguing and their attacks were never coordinated.
- The Whites had trouble getting enough soldiers. They had to conscript peasants, who did not really want the old regime of the Tsar back again.
- The Whites did not treat their troops well. When they began to lose, many of their units deserted and joined the Red Army.
- Foreign support was very half-hearted and only increased support for the Communists.

#### Explain the effects of the Civil War in Russia (8)

- At the end of the civil war Russia was DEVASTATED- Damaged land, property, road and rail links and telegraph lines.
- Civilian casualties meant that skilled and professional workers left the country to live somewhere safer. Moscow's population fell by half.
- The country had been at war since 1914 and the Civil War continued a war time economy. The Civil War had all the bad effects of the First World War- shortages of food and fuel, army casualties, loss of workers in towns.
- Crop production reduced. Prices had risen, money was worthless.
- In 1920 a drought hit and crops dried up in the fields. Many people felt the civil war had brought this, too. It had certainly made things worse.

Explain how Stalin managed to overcome his rivals in power by 1929 (8)

- He got rid of his rivals. He made Trotsky less popular by making him miss Lenin's funeral (gave him the wrong date) and he made him lose his important job.
- He put himself in a powerful position as General Secretary of the Party- he had the power to give jobs, so people supported him.
- He was clever and an excellent organiser and planner. He made sure his work kept in Moscow, close to Lenin. He spoke on Lenin's funeral. This made people think Stalin was the closest to Lenin. He stopped Lenin's Testament being read to the Congress of Soviets. He used rumours and accusations of disloyalty to the Communist Party.

Describe the key features of the terror under Stalin (6)

- Stalin expanded the powers of the OGPU (Unified State Political Administration-secret police).
- System of labour camps had grown.
- Stalin began a series of purges (to get rid of his opponents). Those purged were either executed, exiled to labour camps (the Gulag), or exiled to abroad. The purges were so harsh between 1936 and 1938 they were known as the great terror.

Explain why the purges took place (8)

- By 1934, Stalin feared opposition to himself and the state.
- He began a series of 'purges'-moves to wipe out his enemies.
- He wanted to raise production in farming and industry and sabotage (deliberate act to destroy) by political opponents were purged to set things right.

Describe the key features of the purges (6)

- Members of the Politburo, Communist Party, teachers, armed forces, even the secret police were purged.
- In 1936 show trials began. These were not fair trials but aimed to wipe out any disloyalty.
- Some were shot others sent to the Gulag.

Explain the effects of the purges (8)

- They created an atmosphere of fear and suspicion. This strengthened obedience to the state but also increased resentment.
- Took away people's trust in the justice system.
- Killed about a million people and sent about 7 million people to prison. This meant that the state lost useful people at all levels. A lot of skilled workers were removed from industry so factory production was reduced.
- Produced a govt and a party almost totally created by Stalin and those loyal to him.

Describe the key features of Stalinist Propaganda 1928-38 (6)

- Stalinist Propaganda was everywhere, even in schools.
- The state used censorship to make sure that nothing publications said anything that was anti-Soviet or anti-Stalin. Textbooks had to be state approved (textbooks praised Stalin and criticised Trotsky).
- Each new policy like collectivisation or the Five Year Plans came with its own propaganda campaign.
- Stalin was regularly photographed with smiling children or workers to show how popular he was.

Explain why censorship was important to the Stalinist state (8)

- Stalin thought it was very important to control opposition. He did not think he could do this if there was freedom of speech so he allowed a policy of censorship.
- Stalin was able to present himself as Lenin's favourite although this was not the truth.
- Stalin's policy of collectivisation was made to look more successful.

Explain how Stalin's methods of keeping control changed over the years 1924-38 (8)

- At first Stalin had to be quite careful. He just moved against Trotsky.
- Once he was in a more strong position (1928), he started to be more extreme.
- Used the secret police to spy on people and then sent terror squads into the countryside.
- In 1934- he began the purges in the Politburo.
- In 1936- he started show trials- any criticism of Stalin could get you arrested.

Explain how collectivisation changed farming in the 1930s (8)

- Changed to one big farm, farmed by several families instead of small individual farms.
- Used modern technology like tractors, these were provided by the state instead of working in a traditional way.
- Peasants had production targets for their crops, before they had grown what they wanted and as much as they wanted.

Explain why peasants objected to collectivisation (8)

- Because of the revolution peasants had gained their own land. Under the NEP peasants could sell their extra crops and make a profit. So they opposed collectivisation because it threatened their independence.
- Collectivisation was forced on the peasants. The peasants reacted by killing livestock and burning crops. Many peasants were sent to labour camps.
- Peasants disliked being told what to grow and what animals to breed.
- They did not want to work set hours or be fined if they did not obey the rules.

Explain the effects of collectivisation on the people of the Soviet Union (8)

- It made the people of Russia rebel because they were forced to obey the rules. Peasant resentment increased across the countryside. They did not try and learn how to use the new machinery.
- It produced starvation because peasants burnt their crops and slaughtered their livestock. 3 million people starved during the famine.
- It made state control of food easier. The state now kept and gave out the extra food stocks.

Describe the key features of industrialisation in the USSR in the 1930s (6)

- They had Five Year Plans, which were production targets for the whole country.
- It set high targets for tractors and combine harvesters.
- Propaganda was used to encourage production targets. The state planning committee for the Five Year Plans (Gosplan) publicised achievements of excellent workers who achieved more than their targets (e.g Alexi Stakhanov).

Was the lack of skilled workers the main reason for the problems of industrialisation? (16)

Lack of skilled workers

Many workers were not properly trained. So everything, from tractors a factory made were often poor in quality. Machinery was often faulty. There was a lot of wasted machinery.

Production targets

Targets were constantly reviewed, this made real planning much more difficult.

### The Stakanhovite movement

Stakanovite workers were sent to factories to encourage production and to explain new production methods and ways of working more efficiently. Competitions encouraged workers to work fast and focus on quantity not quality.

### The reward system

Workers were aiming for high productivity (which was rewarded, not good quality work).

### Explain the effects of the revolution on the lives of women in the USSR (8)

- The new government passed laws that were all about equality. So women could vote on the same basis as men, and got equal pay for the same work.
- They got help with going to work to- there were nurseries (free childcare) and canteens (fed parents at work) and laundries.
- Even though there was not enough help as there were long waiting lists. This was a huge change from their lives before the revolution where there was no help provided at all.

### Was the Stakanovite movement the main reason for the rapid expansion of Soviet industry in the 1930s? (16)

#### The Stakanovite movement

This encouraged others to work to reach the highest production targets. New techniques and ways of working were explained. Workers who did better were rewarded. Hard work paid off.

#### Gosplan

Set/organised the targets to ensure progress was made quickly. Because everyone had targets everyone could try and beat them. Organised nurseries to be built so women could work.

#### The First-Five-Year Plan

Set targets for basic industries such as iron, steel, coal, oil and electricity. Important because it prioritised the key industries and set targets. These industries helped to develop other industries later.

#### The Role of Women

Women were needed to work in the growing number of factories. They helped meet the desperate need for workers.