



Dr. Blosa Science

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The Science Foundation College
Uganda East Africa
Senior one to senior six
+256 778 633 682, 753 802709
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The Russian or Bolshevik Revolution, 1917, causes, effects, successes and failures

Questions to ponder

1. "The Russian revolution 1917 was inevitable." Discuss.

(Give a brief introduction of Russian revolution of 1917. Identify and explain the causes showing their inevitability. Make a conclusion).

2. To what extent was the weakness of the Russian army/Tsar Nicholas II/provisional government responsible for the outbreak of the 1917 revolution?

(Give a brief introduction of Russian revolution of 1917. Identify and explain the how the weakness of the Russian army/Tsar Nicholas II/provisional government contributed to the outbreak of the 1917 revolution; then contribution of other factors. A clear stand point is required.)

3. Account for the success of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution

(Give a brief introduction of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Identify and explain the reasons/factors for the success of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Make a generalized conclusion).

4. Account for the downfall of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917./Account for the collapse of Tsardom in Russian by 1917.

(Give a brief introduction of Tsar Nicholas II. Identify and explain the reasons/factors for the downfall of Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarist regime in Russia by 1917. Make a conclusion).

5. To what extent did the external factors influence the downfall of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917?

(Give a brief introduction of Russian revolution of 1917. Identify and explain the how the contribution of external factors to the downfall of Tsar Nicholas II; then contribution of other factors. A clear stand point is required both in the introduction and conclusion.)

6. Explain the effects of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia./How did the 1917 Russian revolution affect Europe?

(Give a brief introduction of Russian revolution of 1917. Identify and explain the effects of the Russian revolution on Europe and Russia inclusive and then a conclusion.)

7. Why did Bolshevik take over power in Russia in 1917?

(Give a brief introduction of Bolshevik. Identify and explain the reasons for Bolshevik take over power in 1917. One can use both the causes and reasons for the success to answer the question)

Summary of the Russian or Bolshevik Revolution of 1917

The **Russian Revolution of 1917** was a pivotal event that led to the overthrow of the Tsarist regime and the establishment of Bolshevik rule under Vladimir Lenin. Here's a brief summary:

1. **February Revolution:** In February 1917, widespread protests and riots over food scarcity and economic hardship erupted in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg). The unrest led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and the formation of a provisional government.
2. **Provisional Government:** The provisional government, led initially by Georgy Lvov and later by Alexander Kerensky, attempted to continue Russia's participation in World War I. However, it faced opposition from the Petrograd Soviet, which favored Russian withdrawal from the war.
3. **October Revolution:** In October 1917 (November by the Gregorian calendar), the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, staged a nearly bloodless coup, seizing key government buildings and strategic points. The provisional government collapsed, and the Bolsheviks took control.
4. **Bolshevik Rule:** The Bolsheviks established a new government composed mainly of Bolsheviks, leading to the creation of the Soviet Union. They withdrew Russia from World War I and initiated radical social and economic reforms.

Causes of the Russian revolution 1917

The **Russian Revolution of 1917** was driven by a combination of political, social, and economic factors:

1. **Political Factors:** The autocratic rule of Tsar Nicholas II and the lack of political reforms led to widespread dissatisfaction. The Tsar's refusal to share power and his ineffective leadership contributed to the unrest.

2. **Economic Factors:** Russia's economy was struggling due to the costs of World War I, leading to food shortages, inflation, and high unemployment. The rural peasantry and urban workers faced harsh living conditions and low wages.
3. **Social Factors:** The vast social inequalities and the oppressive policies of the Tsarist regime fueled discontent among peasants, workers, and soldiers. The rapid industrialization of Russia also led to overcrowded cities and poor working conditions.
4. **Military Factors:** The Russian military suffered devastating losses during World War I, which demoralized soldiers and led to mutinies and desertions.
5. **Influence of Revolutionary Ideas:** The spread of revolutionary ideas, particularly those of Marxism, inspired many to seek radical change and overthrow the existing regime.
6. **Rasputin's Influence:** The Tsar's reliance on the mystic Rasputin to manage his ailing son's health and political affairs further eroded public confidence in his rule.
7. **The destruction of the Ukraine wheat fields** caused famine, starvation and social unrest.
8. **Failures to solve the grievances of the army which caused them to support the revolution**
9. **Unfair land policy. Landlessness** of peasants made them to support the revolution.

Contributions of the Russian army to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1917

1. **Military Failures:** Russia's poor performance in World War I, including significant military losses and inadequate supplies, demoralized soldiers and eroded support for the Tsarist regime.
2. **Mutinies and Desertions:** The harsh conditions and ineffective leadership led to widespread mutinies and desertions among Russian troops. Soldiers began to sympathize with revolutionary ideas and joined the protests against the Tsar.
3. **Order No. 1:** Issued by the Petrograd Soviet on March 1, 1917, this order allowed soldiers to form committees and take control of arms and munitions, effectively undermining military discipline and authority.
4. **Support for Revolution:** Many soldiers, disillusioned with the war and the Tsar's rule, actively supported the revolution and joined the Bolsheviks in overthrowing the provisional government.
5. **Failures to solve the grievances of the army** such ill equipment, low pay caused them to turn against government and support the revolution
6. **Forces recruitment/conscription** led to poor agricultural harvest leading to social unrest.
7. **Failure to make reforms in the army** led to widespread dissatisfaction in the army.
8. **Corruption and embezzlement** in the army led to massive loss of army resources causing economic strains in the army.
9. **Nepotism** caused a decline in professionalism of the military.

Contributions of Tsar Nicholas II to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1917

Tsar Nicholas II's actions and policies significantly contributed to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1917:

1. **Autocratic Rule:** Nicholas II's refusal to share power and his insistence on maintaining absolute authority alienated many segments of Russian society.
2. **Poor Leadership:** His indecisiveness and lack of political acumen made him an ineffective leader, unable to address the pressing issues facing the country.
3. **Economic Mismanagement:** His failure to implement necessary economic reforms led to widespread poverty, food shortages, and economic instability.
4. **Military Failures:** Russia's poor performance in World War I, exacerbated by Nicholas's decision to take personal command of the army, demoralized soldiers and the general population.
5. **Social Unrest:** His policies and the resulting economic hardships fueled social unrest, leading to strikes, protests, and eventually the February Revolution.
6. **Reliance on ill-advice of the wife and Rasputin.** This led to many failures such reckless appointment and dismissal of government officials.
7. **Political oppression.** Tsar Nicholas II arrested, imprisoned without trial and sometimes killed his political opponents causing unpopularity of his regime.
8. **Involvement in failed Russian-Japanese war of 1905** reduced his popularity.
9. **Failure to fight corruption.** This led to economic difficulties of the Russian empire making provision of social services difficult leading the outbreak of the revolution
10. **Censorship of the press and a ban on political gatherings** ruined his reputation.
11. **Religious intolerance.** Only Orthodox Christianity was accepted forcing people of other beliefs to resent his government.
12. He granted amnesty to political exiles such Vladimir Lenin and these turned against his government in 1917.

Contributions of the provisional government to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1917

The **Provisional Government** of Russia, which took power after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in March 1917, contributed to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in several ways:

1. **Failure to Address Key Issues:** The Provisional Government struggled to address the pressing issues of food shortages, economic instability, and military failures, leading to widespread dissatisfaction.
2. **Continuation of World War I:** Despite popular demand for an end to Russia's involvement in World War I, the Provisional Government chose to continue the war effort, further straining resources and morale.
3. **Lack of Political Reforms:** The government's inability to implement significant political reforms and its failure to establish a clear path to democracy alienated many segments of the population.

4. **Dual Authority:** The existence of the dual authority between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet created confusion and power struggles, undermining effective governance.
5. **Kerensky's Leadership:** Alexander Kerensky's leadership was seen as indecisive and ineffective, contributing to the loss of confidence in the government.
6. **The provisional government failed to implement land reforms** which contributed to its unpopularity.
7. **The provisional government failed to counter the propaganda of Bolshevik.**
8. **The provisional government failed to improve the working conditions of factory workers and military men**
9. **The provision government failed to overcome economic hardships** such as inflation, food shortage and poor wages.
10. He granted amnesty to political exiles such Vladimir Lenin and these turned against his government in 1917.

Factors that led to the success of Bolshevik Revolution/Reasons why the Bolsheviks were able to take power in 1917

The success of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 can be attributed to several key factors:

1. **Economic Hardship:** Widespread poverty, food shortages, and economic instability created a fertile ground for revolutionary ideas.
2. **Failure of the Provisional Government:** The Provisional Government's inability to address key issues like land reform, food supply, and continuation of World War I led to widespread disillusionment.
3. **Military Failures:** The Russian military's poor performance in World War I and the resulting demoralization of soldiers contributed to the Bolsheviks' appeal.
4. **Support from Workers and Soldiers:** The Bolsheviks gained significant support from urban workers and soldiers who were dissatisfied with the current regime.
5. **Leadership of Lenin:** Vladimir Lenin's leadership and strategic decisions, including his April Theses and calls for "Peace, Land, and Bread," resonated with the masses.
6. **Weakness of Opposition:** The lack of a strong, unified opposition allowed the Bolsheviks to consolidate power more easily.
7. **Failure of the Provisional Government:** The Provisional Government's inability to address key issues like land reform, food supply, and continuation of World War I led to widespread disillusionment.
8. **The political amnesty offered to the political dissidents by the provisional government later turned against it.**
9. **Failure of the provisional government to control Bolshevik propaganda.**

Positive effects of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution of 1917

The **Bolshevik Revolution of 1917** had several notable successes:

1. **Overthrow of the Tsarist Regime:** The revolution led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, ending centuries of autocratic rule in Russia.
2. **Establishment of Soviet Power:** The Bolsheviks successfully seized power and established a new government based on socialist principles.
3. **Land Reforms:** The redistribution of land to peasants was a significant achievement, addressing one of the major grievances of the rural population.
4. **Withdrawal from World War I:** The Bolsheviks negotiated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which ended Russia's involvement in World War I, allowing the new government to focus on internal issues.
5. **Social and Economic Reforms:** The Bolsheviks implemented various social and economic reforms aimed at improving the lives of workers and peasants, including labor rights and social welfare programs.

The effects of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia and Europe

Effects in Russia:

1. **End of Tsarist Rule:** The revolution led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and the end of centuries of imperial rule.
2. **Establishment of Soviet Power:** The Bolsheviks established a new government based on socialist principles, leading to the creation of the Soviet Union.
3. **Economic and Social Reforms:** The Bolsheviks implemented radical reforms, including land redistribution to peasants and labor rights for workers.
4. **Civil War:** The revolution sparked the Russian Civil War (1917-1923), resulting in significant loss of life and further economic hardship.
5. **Isolation:** Initially, the new Soviet government faced international isolation and economic sanctions from Western powers.

Effects in Europe:

1. **Spread of Communist Ideology:** The success of the Bolshevik Revolution inspired communist movements across Europe, leading to the formation of communist parties in various countries.
2. **Fear of Communism:** The revolution instilled fear in European governments, leading to crackdowns on socialist and communist activities.
3. **Impact on World War I:** Russia's withdrawal from World War I following the revolution altered the dynamics of the war and influenced post-war treaties.
4. **Rise of Fascism:** The instability and fear of communism contributed to the rise of fascist movements in countries like Italy and Germany as a reaction against socialist ideologies.
5. **The effects of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia and Europe**

Negative effects of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia and Europe

The **Bolshevik Revolution of 1917** had several negative effects, both in Russia and beyond:

In Russia:

1. **Civil War:** The revolution led to a brutal civil war (1917-1923) between the Bolsheviks (Reds) and their opponents (Whites), resulting in significant loss of life and widespread destruction.
2. **Economic Hardship:** The early years of Bolshevik rule saw mass shortages, hyperinflation, and economic instability. The economy suffered from the disruption of trade and the collapse of traditional industries.
3. **Political Repression:** The Bolsheviks established a one-party state and used the secret police (Cheka) to suppress dissent, leading to widespread political repression and loss of civil liberties.
4. **Famines:** The economic policies and the civil war contributed to severe famines, most notably the Russian famine of 1921-1922, which caused millions of deaths.
5. **Loss of Territory:** The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed in 1918, resulted in significant territorial losses for Russia, ceding large areas to Germany and its allies.

In Europe:

1. **Spread of Fear:** The success of the Bolshevik Revolution instilled fear of communism in European governments, leading to crackdowns on socialist and communist movements.
2. **Rise of Fascism:** The instability and fear of communism contributed to the rise of fascist movements in countries like Italy and Germany as a reaction against socialist ideologies.
3. **International Isolation:** The new Soviet government faced international isolation and economic sanctions from Western powers, which hindered its ability to trade and develop economically.

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