

2015

DEPTH STUDY C: RUSSIA, 1905–41

- 5 How important was the First World War in the fall of Tsarist rule in Russia? Explain your answer. [40]
- 6 How significant was the contribution of Trotsky in preserving the Bolshevik Revolution in the period 1917–24? Explain your answer. [40]

5 How important was the First World War in the fall of Tsarist rule in Russia? Explain your answer.

Yes Entered the war on wave of nationalistic fervour; quickly became clear that Russian troops were poorly led and equipped. Defeats and resentment caused Nicholas to take charge of the army in 1916; he took blame for further defeats, losses, shortages at home, and drawing of peasant workers away from the land to go to war; hunger and working conditions, protests and revolts, troops and workers combine. Rumours re Rasputin and Tsarina, all led to March Revolution 1917 and the abdication of the Tsar etc.

No There had been opposition well before 1917. Exiled and imprisoned groups opposed the Tsar. 1905 Revolution had exposed opposition. Stolypin's reforms had some effect – necktie resented. Duma ineffective. Tsar still believed in autocracy and not inclined to compromise with middle class, workers or peasants (wanted land). All elements in place before the war started. War was the catalyst etc. [40]

6 How significant was the contribution of Trotsky in preserving the Bolshevik Revolution in the period 1917–24? Explain your answer.

Yes Pivotal figure in the November Revolution. 1917, People's Commissar for External Affairs, concluded the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which extracted Russia from war with Germany; Defence Minister from March 1918, largely responsible for Red Army's success in the Civil War. Great organiser, motivator. Seen by many as the natural successor to Lenin but too arrogant, detached and an old Menshevik.

No Work of many others, especially Lenin until 1922 – established War Communism to feed troops and workers, control production, and then New Economic Policy to increase production. Disunity among opponents during November Revolution; disunity among the Whites in the Civil War. Foreign intervention meant Bolsheviks could argue they were defending mother Russia. If his contribution was so significant, why did he not succeed Lenin? etc. [40]

Depth Study C: Russia, 1905–1941

5 How important was the 1905 Revolution to the eventual overthrow of Tsarism in Russia? Explain your answer.

- Yes** First full scale national revolt, although focused on St Petersburg; concessions in the October Manifesto pleased the middle class and could encourage more demands; undermined respect for Nicholas II, especially after he reduced powers or dismissed Dumas; defeats in Russo-Japanese war had a bearing on the revolution and its outcome – a lesson not learned in 1914, etc.
- No** By 1914, Nicholas seemed to be in full control and popular as the war broke out; his repression by troops and Okhrana and Fundamental Laws seemed to have dealt with opposition; revolutionaries in exile; Nicholas was able to ignore the Manifesto and the Dumas; Stolypin's measures for agriculture and industry alleviated some distress – if not, then the 'necktie' was available; land issue for peasants not solved; WWI and its failures were important, etc.

6 How significant in causing its downfall was the Provisional Government's decision to continue Russia's participation in the First World War? Explain your answer.

Yes Context of the Tsar's removal with military failures should have been a lesson learned; June 1917 offensive (Kerensky's idea) was a huge failure; army morale and discipline collapsed; hundreds of thousands of men deserted to join the ranks of striking workers and disgruntled peasants – a heady volatile mix; failures appear to have accentuated criticisms of other failures; grain hoarding and bread rationing; inflation, etc.

No Expect alternative reasons about the role of the Petrograd soviet, frustration at the delays of elections for a new Constituent Assembly; failure to deal with the land issue; return of revolutionaries and the attractiveness of Bolshevik propaganda and slogans; economic chaos of shortages, low wages, bread prices, etc.; Kornilov Affair ended with Bolsheviks armed and appearing to be the saviours of Russia; Bolshevik planning for the coup; roles and qualities of Lenin and Trotsky, etc.

5 How significant was the return of Lenin to Russia in March 1917 to the overthrow of the Provisional Government? Explain your answer.

Yes Return of Lenin and other revolutionaries increased the tensions of the time; propaganda of the April Theses, demanding 'all power to the soviets', that Bolsheviks should no longer support the Provisional Government and an end to Russia's participation in the war was attractive to many; although the July Days were a set-back (Lenin fled to Finland), Lenin's return galvanised the Bolsheviks in intensity and planning for a coup, etc.

No Other factors were undermining the Provisional Government: disastrous June 1917 offensive; Provisional Government already sharing power with Petrograd Soviet; no elections organised for a new Constituent Assembly annoyed middle classes; land issues unsolved upset the peasants; strikes and deserting soldiers mixing with workers; the Kornilov Affair left the Bolsheviks armed; the army was in a state of collapse; bread rationing/starvation; grain hoarding; Trotsky as Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and creation of Military Revolutionary Committee which commanded Red Guard, etc.

6 How important was Trotsky in the establishment of Bolshevik rule to 1924? Explain your answer.

- Yes** Late convert from Mensheviks; close to Lenin; articulate and a great orator; Chairman of Petrograd Soviet in 1917; remained in Russia throughout the July Days; planned and executed the coup on the night of 6–7 November; negotiated the quick exit from the war with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; commanded the Red Army in the Russian Civil War – outstanding commander, disciplinarian and inspirational leadership; dealt with Kronstadt Mutiny, etc.
- No** Late convert and his success made him vulnerable to gossip and conspiracies by less active but ambitious members of the Politburo; his arrogance and closeness to Lenin made him increasingly vulnerable after Lenin's strokes and death; lack of a support base found him sacked as Commissar for War, internally exiled, exiled from Russia and eventually assassinated. Comparisons of Trotsky's efforts against Lenin's, Stalin's and other Bolsheviks; he negotiated at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk the loss of one third of the Russian population, loss of one third of its farmland, loss of two thirds of its coal mines and half of its heavy industry; Lenin's Decrees on Party Unity and factions more important; Kronstadt Mutiny ordered by Lenin; War Communism; Red Terror and use of Cheka; NEP re-established Bolshevik control; shutting down of Constituent Assembly 19 January 1918; execution of Tsar and family, etc.

5 How significant was War Communism in the achievement of victory by the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War? Explain your answer.

Yes Controlled the economic resources of the state; in industry factories were largely nationalised; private trade was banned; food and grain was seized from the peasant to feed town workers and troops. It was important as it enabled the government to survive the Civil War; even though it was unpopular, Whites were more hated for atrocities and foreign supporters, etc.

No It led to peasants seeing no point in working hard only to have their produce taken with no compensation; drop in production to feed only themselves led to severe food shortages and, together with droughts in 1920–21, famine and death; industry at a standstill; led to Kronstadt Rising in 1921, put down by Trotsky; led Lenin to introduce New Economic Policy – unpopular with many Bolsheviks as it introduced capitalism again. Candidates might offer as a counter argument to the above that Red Army and Trotsky were more significant; that the disunity among Whites was more significant; effective Bolshevik propaganda, etc.

6 How important was the use of fear in the achievement of Stalin's economic goals? Explain your answer.

- Yes** 'Stick' – fear of punishment played a huge role in everyday life during Stalin's rule; Gulags became a means of free labour on huge projects like the building of Magnitogorsk and the Belomor Canal – deaths on site did not matter because of an almost inexhaustible supply of soviet peoples who needed punishment; punishments for not meeting targets would mean losing job and probably housing; if found guilty of sabotage then the Gulag or death would occur; factory discipline severe, punishment for lateness or absence; internal passports and secret police prevented changing jobs or regions; purges for whatever reasons; repression of minorities who were deemed to hold back industrialisation, e.g. Islam was repressed in central Asian republics; Stalin was willing to sacrifice the traditional soviet ways of life to achieve his goals, etc.
- No** 'Carrot' – some citizens were genuinely enthusiastic about industrial developments – volunteers, especially from the young, to help build Magnitogorsk, Moscow Underground, etc. Incentives and rewards for hard work; Stakhanovites, medals, holidays, housing; some saw industrialisation was vital to catch up with the West and ensure the USSR could survive invasion; Cult of the Personality had Stalin as an omniscient, avuncular figure who would only do what was in the interests of the USSR and its people; Five Year Plans; collectivisation, etc.

5 How important to the Russian people was the introduction of Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921? Explain your answer.

Yes After the deprivations of War Communism, which was hated by the peasants, and the Kronstadt Rebellion in 1921, Lenin allowed, as a temporary measure, the New Economic Policy. This allowed peasants to keep surplus produce after paying tax representing part of the surplus; re-introduced private trade and incentives; food production increased; small industries and trade in their products and some private ownership allowed; economy began to recover and good progress made in the electrification of industry (a pet project of Lenin's); by the end of 1927, Russians were, on average, better off than they had been since 1924 etc.

No It was anti-communist and disliked as it introduced capitalist systems like incentives, bonuses, piece rates; it brought old managers back to industry; Kamenev and Zinoviev disliked it as they believed it encouraged the development of the kulak class of peasants who would be hostile to communism; it was abandoned after Lenin's death when Stalin introduced Five Year Plans and collectivisation; heavy industries such as coal, iron and steel, together with banking transport and power, remained under government control; Nepmen etc.

6 How important to the establishment of Stalin's rule was his Cult of Personality? Explain your answer.

- Yes** Created propaganda to make Stalin and his government popular; he was the creation of this and was 'the dictator of the people'; history was re-written to make Lenin and Stalin the only heroes of the revolution; education was organised to prevent independent thought and to make people believe in Stalin; Young Pioneers; Stalin was seen to be omniscient, omnipresent, avuncular, firm, decisive, successful; art and literature controlled; Soviet people deluged with portraits, photos, statues of Stalin; roads, streets, squares, towns named after Stalin; poets, playwrights and musicians wrote works praising Stalin and to please him (Shostakovich wrote an opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* – praised at first by critics but disliked by Stalin so the composer was condemned); music monitored by NKVD; demonstrations, rallies and marches in favour of Stalin etc.
- No** Stalin had other systems to enforce his rule (carrot and stick approach); fear – punishments, imprisonment, gulags, show trials, death; encouragements – rewards of medals, health care, housing, holidays, Stakhanovites; Some genuinely eager to support communism and Stalin – volunteers for major projects like Magnitogorsk, Moscow Underground; new constitution in 1936 to give free elections and free speech to the Soviet people but only communist candidates allowed and all publications were censored; failed to suppress Orthodox Church and allowed it during the war to maintain morale; Socialism in One Country; collectivisation and Five Year Plans; defeat of rivals in the CPSU e.g. Trotsky, Kamenev, Bukharin etc.

5 How important was Bolshevik agitation in the fall of the Provisional Government in 1917? Explain your answer.

- Yes** The return of Lenin and other Bolsheviks in April meant they were able to use the anger over shortages, land issue, the war with propaganda and catchy slogans – Peace, Land, Bread; outstanding speeches by Lenin and Trotsky caught the mood and stirred up criticism; urged abandonment of war, refusal to recognise the Provisional Government, demanding all power to the soviets – Bolsheviks acquired increasing control of Petrograd and Moscow Soviets – Trotsky made Chairman of Petrograd Soviet in October; worked as a partner to the Provisional Government; context of economic chaos exploited by the Bolsheviks; only party to speak openly about making a separate peace treaty with Germany; Bolsheviks exploited worker and troop discontent etc.
- No** June offensive a disaster (Kerensky's idea); collapse of morale and discipline at the front; deserters joined the ranks of angry workers; Petrograd Soviet ordered troops only to obey the soviet – Provisional Government could no longer rely on the army; peasants had started to seize land from landlords; July Days were a blow to Bolsheviks – Lenin fled, some in jail; Kornilov Affair meant Bolsheviks released from jail and armed to resist; Bolsheviks looked heroes and kept weapons; middle class upset by no elections for a Constituent Assembly; Bolsheviks in the minority –later Constituent Assembly results; food shortages; inflation etc.

6 How significant was collectivisation in modernising the Soviet economy? Explain your answer.

Yes Small farms merged into larger units; death knell to kulaks who owned land – Stalin saw the class as an enemy of the state; Kulaks victimised; meant peasants lost holdings; had to learn to use tractors, fertilisers and combine harvesters; Stalin needed workers in industry so more efficient farming would release workers for town and still produce more grain; impact on village life and society; grain sold abroad to finance purchase of foreign technology; by 1937 over 90% of land collectivised; mechanisation eventually led to increased grain production in 1937 etc.

No Some peasants refused to join collective farms – taken to labour camps or shot; peasants killed their animals or burnt crops rather than hand them over to the state; any underproduction was blamed on the peasants and produce taken nevertheless; grain production less in 1932 than it had been in 1928; famine in many areas, especially in the Ukraine; one and three quarter million tons of grain sold abroad while five million peasants died of starvation; some say Stalin welcomed famine as, together with ten million kulaks, it helped to break peasant resistance; so many animals killed that it took to 1953 to get back to 1928 production; candidates could well argue that it was the Five Year Plans and production of heavy goods that modernised the Soviet economy; expect answers that show the ‘upside’ of Stakhanovites and young volunteers and the ‘downside’ of fear and gulags; Socialism in One Country; fear of future war with Germany etc.

5 How significant was the Kornilov Affair, August 1917, in the fall of the Provisional Government? Explain your answer.

- Yes** Kornilov – army commander in chief, decided to move against the Petrograd Soviet in August; soldiers mutinied and Kornilov arrested; Bolsheviks had been hit by Provisional government's attacks in the 'July Days' – Lenin fled and others imprisoned; Bolsheviks let out from prison and armed to face the threat – Bolsheviks were seen as saviours of the Revolution – Bolshevik membership increases (approx. 200 000 by October); stayed out of prison and kept arms; the affair, therefore, encouraged the November seizure of power etc.
- No** More important were the other areas of dissatisfaction – continuation of the war, actions and propaganda of Bolsheviks (Peace, Land, Bread), deserters and strikers united in cities; shortages of food and fuel; increasing domination of the Petrograd Soviet by the Bolsheviks – Trotsky chairman in October; middle class wanted elections and a fairer system of government; organisation and single purpose of Bolsheviks; there appeared to be no change from the time the Tsar was in power – no elections planned for a Constituent Assembly; the Provisional Government was undergoing terrible problems due to the failure of the June Offensive; land issues not solved and peasants were grabbing farm land from the nobility; return of exiles like Lenin and other leaders etc.

6 How important were the purges of the 1930s to Stalin's control of the USSR? Explain your answer.

Yes First sign of purges came in 1928 when Stalin accused engineers in the Donbass mining district of sabotage and in 1931 former Mensheviks were put on trial; main purges came after death of Kirov in Leningrad, 1934; Stalin probably had him killed and used his death to purge the Party of Stalin's opponents; Show Trials – Kamenev and Zinoviev, and then Bukharin in 1938 – all confessed to being traitors; about 500 000 charged with anti-Soviet activities, sent to gulags or shot; Trotsky assassinated in 1940; army was purged of 25 000 officers – impact when Hitler invaded; teachers, engineers, managers and workers all disappeared – usually at night; torture and threats to family; 18 million sent to camps by the end of 1937, 10 million died; Stalin's paranoia – purged anyone who might be a threat to him or his will; stopped independent thinking; almost every family had at least one member arrested; fear breeds control etc.

No There were other methods of control: 'Cult of Personality' made him appear omniscient – overseer of the country's welfare; photos, pictures, statues, street and town names; propaganda and control of all forms of art, literature and music; youth brainwashed in Young Pioneers; education – history re-written; the new constitution of 1936 was supposed to give free elections and freedom of speech but only Party members could stand and the press was controlled; religious worship was banned – people encouraged to worship Stalin instead; some were very enthusiastic for Stalin and communism –volunteers for major projects; rewards for hard work – Stakhanovites etc.