

2016

5 How significant was Tsar Nicholas II's decision to take personal control of the military as a cause of the March Revolution in 1917? Explain your answer.

YES Nicholas II failed to listen to the advice of his ministers about war, shortages, policies; Tsar personally took command of Russian Army on Eastern Front in September 1915 and so was blamed for losses and defeats; Nicholas left Tsarina in charge of government who appointed ministers unwisely with advice from unpopular Rasputin – did not listen to Duma, etc.

NO Economic problems in Russia made worse due to First World War – inflation; food and supplies had shortages and bread rationing; soldiers mutinying; peasants' land issue still unresolved; growing political opposition from the left – SRs, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks; liberals (Kadets and Octobrists) and even aristocracy turning against Tsar and the war; unemployment due to factory closures; workers had longer hours; long term causes – failure of land reforms promised in October Manifesto; failure by Tsar to support the Duma, etc.

6 How important was Lenin's role in winning the Russian Civil War? Explain your answer.

YES Lenin used War Communism to keep the Red Army supplied; state took control of industry and created command economy to fight Civil War; strict discipline of workers; no trade unions to stop industrial disputes; workers prevented from leaving towns; decreased wages; food rationing – workers and soldiers received the most; Lenin ordered Cheka to requisition food from peasants by force to feed Red Army and workers; Red Terror – use of Cheka violence and labour camps, etc.

NO White armies were not unified in their goals and Reds were; Whites were made up of many different left and right wing parties; Whites had help from USA, Britain and France which helped the Reds unify Russians; effective Bolshevik propaganda; many peasants thought life would still be better under Reds than Tsarists; role of Trotsky and organisation and discipline of Red Army; Reds had geographical advantages over the Whites, etc.

5 How significant were social and economic problems in Russia as a cause of the March 1917 Revolution? Explain your answer.

YES Food shortages were getting critical in 1917 – bread rationing; bread queues in winter of 1916 due to icing of railways led to high prices of food and fuel; shortage of male peasants as many were drafted into the Russian Army and agricultural production fell; coal and industrial materials were short and many factories closed making large numbers of workers unemployed; wages were not rising with inflation of food and fuel; workers worked longer hours; peasants still had an issue over land which had not been solved; economic backwardness continued from pre-1914, etc.

NO War had created huge numbers of casualties – over 1 million by end of 1914 and over 8 million by 1917; many soldiers died without weapons or ammunition; supplies of proper equipment failed to get to the front line including boots during the winters; Tsarist officers were blamed; Nicholas II made the mistake of heading to the Eastern front line and taking personal command – now blamed for defeats; Russia run by the German Tsarina under the unpopular influence of the monk Rasputin; Tsarina did not run government well; middle and upper classes began to abandon their support for the Tsarist regime; newspapers sent back bad news about the war; growing socialist opponents called for political change; 7 March Putilov strikes which spread into further demonstrations in Russian cities; Tsar ignored Duma's advice to sort problems at home; 12 March soldiers in Petrograd refused to fire on the crowds and some killed their officers and joined demonstrations and strike; failure of October Manifesto; survival of Tsarist autocracy, etc.

6 How important was Stalin's wish to destroy the kulaks as a reason for collectivisation? Explain your answer.

YES Kulaks were blamed for hoarding grain despite good harvests 1925–28; kulaks unwilling to accept state prices for grain – led to rationing of meat and bread; Stalin himself had been to the main grain producing areas to seize grain – production dropped and many hid supplies from the Communist Party officials; Stalin tired of the yearly struggle to get grain and blamed kulaks; kulaks viewed as a class enemy and counter-revolutionary; Stalin wished to bring socialism to the countryside and kulaks did not fit into this vision of society – ‘dekulakisation’; Stalin said ‘we have to liquidate the kulaks as a class’, etc.

NO Agriculture was still very backward in the USSR – traditional methods still being used such as strip farming with wooden ploughs; land still in the hands of private farmers; Stalin wished to mechanise agriculture with new technology such as tractors and new methods using chemical fertilisers; collective farms (Kolkhoz) and state farms (Sovkhoz) would need fewer peasants to work them so more could be used in the cities as workers to help industrialise; easier for the state to get grain from collective farms than from individual peasant families; needed to increase production rapidly to feed growing industrial towns/cities and soldiers in case of future wars; wanted to sell excess grain abroad to help fund industrialisation of Five Year Plans, etc.

5 How important was the October Manifesto in the survival of the Tsar's regime between 1905 and 1914? Explain your answer.

YES Manifesto promised state Duma which appeased liberals and moderate socialists; civil rights were given such as freedom of speech; political parties were legalised; newspapers were uncensored; violence and riots were over by 1906 in cities as many saw democracy had been achieved; increased government and Tsarist support from middle and upper classes; split the opposition, etc.

NO By December 1905, the Russian Army had returned and the Tsar could re-establish order by force; St Petersburg Soviet closed down; riots from peasants and workers were crushed; 1906 Fundamental Law reasserted Tsarist autocracy – the Duma had no powers to pass laws, no financial powers, could not appoint ministers and could be dissolved by the Tsar; elections favoured the nobility; third Duma 1907–12 was very conservative; use of Okhrana and informers; 1906 Stolypin appointed Prime Minister – authoritarian rule 'Stolypin's necktie'; 1914 declaration of war increased patriotism, etc.

6 How significant were Lenin's April Theses as a reason for Bolshevik success by November 1917? Explain your answer.

- YES** Lenin's leadership and April Theses had united Bolshevik leaders under the slogans of 'Peace, Bread, Land'; only socialist party to refuse to cooperate with Provisional Government; 'All power to the soviets' was popular with workers, soldiers and sailors; promised land to peasants; Kerensky's Summer Offensive had increased opposition to the war – only the Bolsheviks had called for an immediate end to the war; Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries continued to call for a defensive war; Bolshevik membership increased by August 1917 to take control of Petrograd Soviet and Moscow Soviet.
- NO** Provisional Government continued the war which led to continued food and fuel shortages; land issue was not solved by the Provisional Government – they would wait until election of a Constituent Assembly after the war; Provisional Government increasingly viewed as liberal and counter-revolutionary by many radical socialists in major cities; Petrograd Soviet issued Soviet Order Number One in March 1917 which gave them effective control over the military, communications and postal service; failure of Summer Offensive launched by Kerensky; Kornilov was appointed by Kerensky in July 1917 and promised to support him in restoring order and the authority of officers; this made Kerensky look as though he was betraying the gains of the March Revolution; Provisional Government and Soviets more polarised and support for Kerensky's government decreased; Kerensky lost his nerve as Petrograd panicked and armed Bolshevik Red Guard; Kornilov's troops were persuaded by Bolsheviks to abandon the coup; demonstrated how Provisional Government was dependant on support from soviets; propaganda victory for Bolsheviks; Red Guard kept their rifles; Petrograd and Moscow soviets under Bolshevik leadership by September 1917; Trotsky also effective Bolshevik leader and chairman of Petrograd Soviet; Trotsky effectively organised seizure of power when Lenin returns from Finland, etc.

5 How significant was the decision to continue the war as a reason for the collapse of the Provisional Government by November 1917? Explain your answer.

Yes July offensive launched by Kerensky, so clear blame for disaster laid with Provisional Government; offensive was a disaster for Russian military; soldiers began to desert the front line; increased food shortages and fuel remained in short supply; many Russians turned against the war completely which played into Bolshevik hands who promised an end to the war; Provisional Government losing popularity (many moderate socialists such as the SRs had supported only a defensive war) – the left gained dominance in the Soviets, etc.

No Provisional Government had not solved the land issue with peasants; peasants were taking land for themselves; Petrograd Soviet had dual power with Provisional Government – Soviet Order No. 1 gave the Soviet control over troops, railways and communications; increased Marxist control over Soviets as problems got worse – Trotsky elected Chairman of Petrograd Soviet October 8th – Military Revolutionary Committee formed to take over power from Provisional Government; Bolshevik majorities in Moscow and Petrograd Soviet after attempted coup by Kornilov; strong leadership when Lenin returned from Finland; Bolshevik slogans of 'Peace, Bread, Land' and 'All power to the Soviets' led to increased Bolshevik support, etc.

6 How important was the need to defend communism in the Soviet Union as a reason for the Five-Year Plans? Explain your answer.

Yes (Ideologically) In 1928, USSR economically backwards compared to many Western powers and smaller nations in Europe – capitalism seen as a superior economic system compared with socialism/communism; Stalin wished to demonstrate the successes and superiority of communism and ‘Socialism in one country’; Soviets were not invited to join the League of Nations (until 1934) and viewed as untrustworthy by capitalist nations; (Militarily) Stalin needed to build up armaments to defend USSR from possible attack from Nazi Germany post-1933 – new industrial areas built east of Moscow, etc.

No Stalin wished to become less dependent on Western industrial goods; heavy industry like iron and steel still only at pre-war levels; electrification still not completed to build modern factories; railways needed to be built to improve links between urban and rural areas; new industries were needed such as chemical and metallurgy; Five-Year Plans meant to improve agricultural output as well as industrial output to feed the towns, sell grain and prevent famines – tractors were needed to modernise farming methods; lack of modern machinery, especially in the countryside to increase grain production; surplus grain to be sold abroad to buy in machinery and specialists; Stalin wanted to move on from NEP, etc.

5 How important was Rasputin as a cause of growing opposition to Tsarist rule in Russia? Explain your answer.

Yes Rasputin from a peasant background and mistrusted by aristocracy; linked to sexual deviancy; Tsarina, convinced he was sent by God to protect the Tsarovich, gave him an important position of influence at court due to his ability to control Alexei's haemophilia; Tsar censored newspaper reports about Rasputin; Tsar lost support of Duma over this; Tsar forced to support Rasputin due to Tsarina; during WWI, Tsarina left in charge of Russia and appointed ministers based on Rasputin's advice – led to even conservative support for Tsarism to drop; fired good and effective ministers – led to deterioration in the cities; cartoons ridiculed them – Tsar blamed for leaving them in charge, etc.

No Other factors more important – First World War going badly (huge defeats and loss of life) and Tsar blamed as he commanded forces on the Eastern Front; failures to make political reforms led to opposition from liberals and middle class in Duma; living and working conditions in cities – food and fuel shortages; socialist opposition from SRs and Social Democrats (Mensheviks and Bolsheviks); peasants and land issue not solved; already opposition since 1905 Revolution, etc.

6 How significant was the New Economic Policy as a reason for the introduction of Stalin's Five-Year Plans? Explain your answer.

Yes NEP was only supposed to be a temporary return to capitalism after the excesses of War Communism during the Civil War; Stalin saw NEP as incompatible with socialist ideas; wanted to create socialism in one country; NEP had led to growth in the number of class enemies – kulaks and Nepmen; NEP had led to a split in the Party between left and right; NEP failing to modernise economy fast enough, etc.

No Stalin wanted personal control over the economy; part of the creation of a totalitarian state; Stalin wanted to modernise Russia's economy more rapidly to catch up with the West; to create a showpiece for communism in the world; prepare for future conflict with capitalist enemies; wished to achieve self-sufficiency and less dependent on Western manufactured goods; to establish Stalin's credentials as leader; to improve standards of living, etc.

5 How significant was the Kronstadt Rebellion as a cause of Lenin's introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921? Explain your answer.

- Yes** March 1921 sailors at Kronstadt naval base staged an uprising based on strong anti-Communist Party sentiment; Kronstadt sailors were well known in 1917 Revolutions and well trained, elite troops; Lenin worried about the uprising sparking off another revolution against Communist rule; Lenin shocked by rebellion as 'Red Kronstadters' had been strong supporters of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and now wished to oppose them – Lenin said the rebellion was “the flash that lit up reality”; social, political and economic consequences of Russian Civil War had made them oppose Lenin's dictatorial rule; Kronstadt sailors' demands included freeing of socialists, civil rights and new elections, etc.
- No** War Communism, by 1921, had ruined the economy; industrial output lower than pre-WWI levels; grain production under half of 1913 levels; crime and black market in the towns and cities was rife (Bagmen); forced grain requisitioning and use of Cheka under Red Terror had seen many perish; famine killed around 5 million; US aid embarrassed Soviet government, etc.

6 How important was propaganda in allowing Stalin to control the USSR? Explain your answer.

- Yes** State controlled propaganda allowed Stalin to create a 'cult of personality'; huge propaganda campaign in the 1930s and '40s via posters, films, radio, books and newspapers to push government view; writers and artists censored heavily; 'socialist realism' in art and culture glorified Soviet man and the revolutions; 1932 rigid education programme introduced that rewrote much of Russian history to suit Stalin; Stalin doctored photos, paintings and pictures so children knew little about historical enemies of Stalin such as Trotsky; political youth groups spread propaganda – Octobrists and Pioneers; posters, parades and media praised Stalin as 'god-like' and the heir of Lenin, etc.
- No** Stalin's USSR a totalitarian police state – all aspects of people's lives monitored; use of OGPU then NVKD to purge opposition; use of labour camps; show trials from 1936–38; Great Purges begin with murder of Kirov in 1934 – ordinary people, party members, army, NVKD all branded bourgeois and counter-revolutionary by Stalin; Zinoviev and Kamenev executed; 90 out of 139 Central Committee shot; 5 out of 11 Politburo of 1934 dead; arrests of many Soviet people were without trial; informers used by secret police; attacks on Russian Orthodox Church increased in 1930 – religious pictures burnt and churches smashed; bishops and priests arrested; Stalin stamped his personal ideology on USSR through collectivisation and Five Year Plans; some improvements in life of workers and peasants in collectives such as access to healthcare and child care; USSR survived WWII due to Stalin's forced industrialisation, etc.