Cambridge (CIE) IGCSE History

Your notes

Why Did the Tsarist Regime Collapse in 1917?

Contents

- Tsarist Russia by 1905
- The Difficulties of Ruling Russia up to 1914
- How Did the Tsar Survive the 1905 Revolution?
- Did the First World War Weaken the Tsar?
- Why was the Revolution of March 1917 Successful?

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What was Russian Society Like in 1905? - Summary

Russia in 1905 was a very **unique country with a confusing identity**. The West feared Russia's **size, ambition and isolationism** for many centuries. Its borders spanning **both Asia and Europe** meant it did not fit into either Asian or European **culture**. As a result, the way that Russians viewed Europe was very different.

Some Russians called themselves **Slavophiles**. This meant that they saw Russia as a special country that needed protection. They **distrusted Europe**, believing that it wanted to change Russia's **national identity**. An example of Russia's unique identity was how Russia measured time. **In 1905, Russia continued to use the Julian Calendar.** Many other countries had adopted the **Gregorian calendar almost 300 years earlier**. The Julian Calendar was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar. Keeping this way of measuring time showed Russia's desire to be different and **preserve its traditions**.

Other Russians were known as **Westernisers**. They **looked to Europe for inspiration** and wanted to apply this to Russia. A key Westerniser was a king, or 'tsar', called Peter the Great. In 1703, Peter built the new capital city of **St Petersburg in a Parisian style**. This differed from the old capital city of Moscow with its **Slavic** style.

Russia had **three 'pillars'** that society stood upon - **the tsar, the Orthodox Church and the Army**. Russia relied on these three **institutions** to survive. By 1905, the people started to **question and test these pillars**.

What is a Tsar?

- **Tsar is the Russian word for 'King'**
  - **A queen was called a tsarina**
- By 1905, a tsar or tsarina had ruled Russia for **nearly 300 years**
  - The **Romanov dynasty** established control over Russia in **1613**
- Tsars had many specific characteristics

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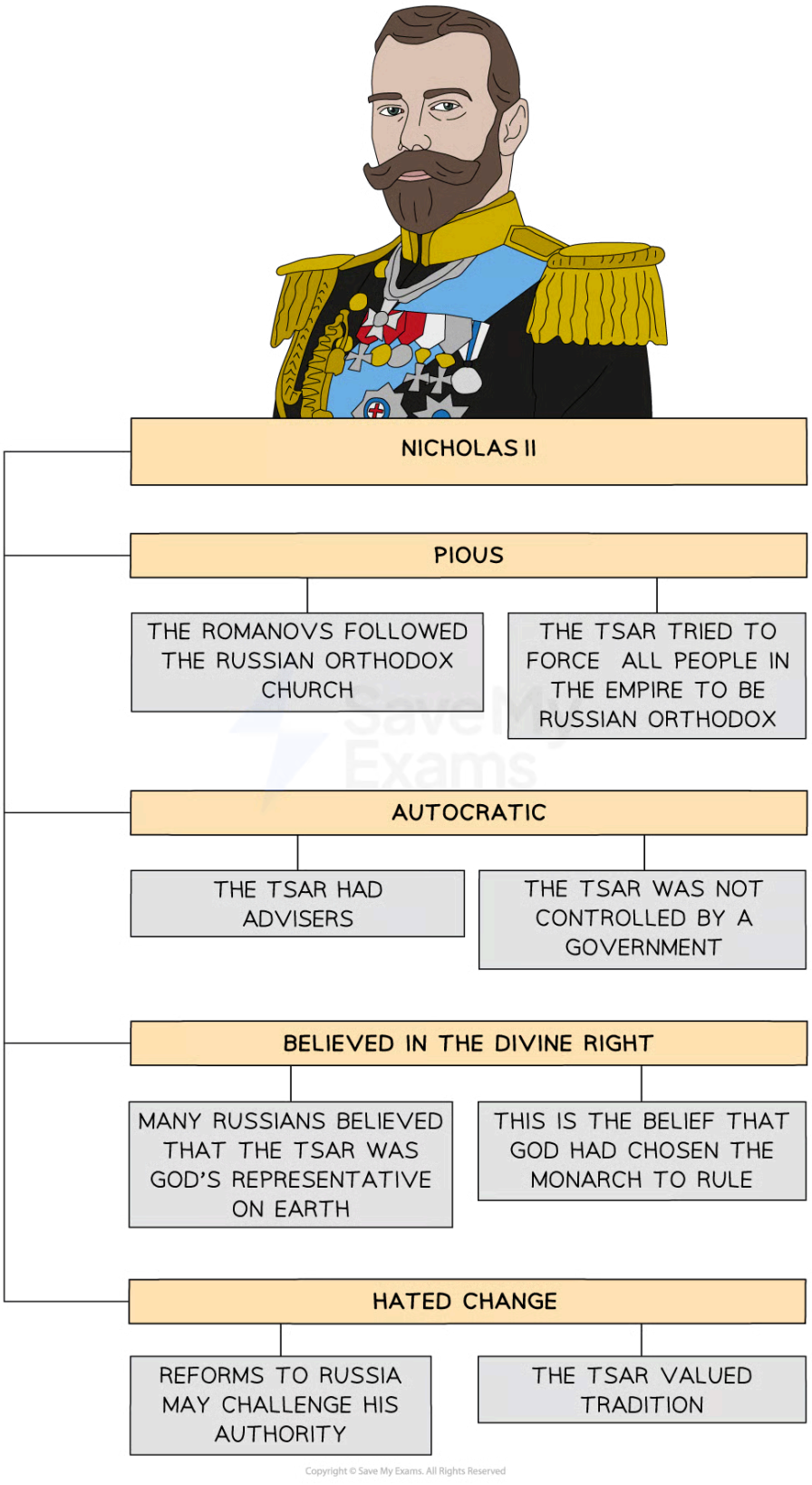

A concept map showing the beliefs and actions of a tsar

Examiner Tips and Tricks

Students often struggle to spell Russian words like 'tsar'. Keep practising the spelling of the key terms for this course until you feel more confident. You could also create a **mnemonic** for words that you find difficult. This will help you to remember the order of the letters in each word.

Your notes

Industrialisation

- For many countries, an **industrial revolution occurred in the 18th century**
  - By 1905, Britain had railways, **motorised** tractors and iron warships
  - Germany was the world's leading steel producer, exceeding Britain by 1893
- **Russia had not experienced an industrial revolution**
  - **Russia's limited industry developed in the west of the empire**
  - Russian workers did not have the skills to keep up with production in Western Europe
    - Russia developed pig iron whereas Britain and Germany produced alloys like steel
  - **Much of Russia did not have roads**
    - Russia had **begun to develop railways**, having over 30,000 miles of railway tracks

The Geography of the Russian Empire

- The Russian Empire was large
  - It was nearly **5,000 kilometres wide**
  - **It spanned Europe and Asia**
  - **Standards of living** varied significantly across the empire

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KEY:

WEST RUSSIA – RUSSIA'S KEY CITIES, MOSCOW AND ST PETERSBURG, WERE LOCATED HERE. ST PETERSBURG WAS THE CAPITAL CITY. THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION LIVED HERE

SOUTH RUSSIA – WARM AND HUMID CONDITIONS. THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION WERE MUSLIM THAN RUSSIAN ORTHODOX. THEY WERE FORCED TO CONVERT

SIBERIA – INCREDIBLY COLD WINTERS (–68℃). CROPS STRUGGLED TO GROW SO VERY FEW PEOPLE LIVED HERE. SIBERIA HAD LOTS OF PRECIOUS MINERALS BUT THE EMPIRE DID NOT HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY TO ACCESS THEM

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A map showing the climate and population of the Russian Empire

Social Backwardness

- Historians describe Russia in 1905 as a **backward country**
  - Most Russians lived in villages or ***mirs***
    - By 1905, **87% of Russia's population lived in the countryside**
    - **The Russian Empire had very few towns and cities**
- **The majority of people in Russia were peasant farmers**
  - Peasant farmers worked in agriculture using **traditional tools and methods**
  - They had previously been serfs but Tsar Alexander II freed them through the **Emancipation Edict in 1861**
    - Despite this, many peasants still lacked freedom and rights by 1905
- **There were issues with land allocation**
  - Land passed down through **generations by inheritance**

Your notes

- By 1905, family plots of land were **too small or spread around the *mir***
  - Peasants **could not use modern techniques** or equipment to farm efficiently
  - If no one inherited the land, it remained **vacant**
- **More than 60% of Russia's population were illiterate**
  - In comparison, only **3% of Britain's population** could not read

- The tsar had a limited impact on the government of *mirs*
  - Due to the size of Russia, **citizens learnt of key policies from their local Russian Orthodox Church**
    - The tsar made laws, which his officials distributed across the empire
    - **Priests would read the law out to their congregation**
    - Priests taught that the **tsar was God's representative on Earth** and that everyone should obey him
    - As a result, **the Church was essential for law enforcement**



Examiner Tips and Tricks

It is important that you fully understand what Russia was like in 1905 so you can understand the rest of the topic. Make sure you come back to this section when you study Russia under Lenin and Stalin. Consider how far Russia had developed and what had remained the same under Communist rule.



Worked Example

What part did religion play in the Tsarist autocracy?

4 marks

Answer:

The tsar tried to force all citizens to be Russian Orthodox (1). The Tsar relied on the support of the Church for law enforcement (1). The Church taught that the Tsar was god's representative on Earth (1). The Church read out laws to the people because many Russians were not literate (1).



Examiner Tips and Tricks



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This style of question does not require you to explain your answer. The Cambridge IGCSE gives you a point for each relevant piece of information that you write in your answer.



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Your notes

What was Nicholas II Like as a Tsar? – Summary

Nicholas II became Tsar of Russia in 1897. His father, Alexander III, was the traditional Russian tsar. Alexander III was 6 foot 4 inches tall, **patriotic** and ruled Russia through violence and fear. Nicholas II never achieved his father's approval. When his father became ill in 1897, **Nicholas feared to succeed him**. He stated:

"I am not prepared to be a tsar. I never wanted to become one. I know nothing of the business of ruling."

This statement summarises Nicholas II's **reign** well. He attempted to **copy his father's style of autocratic rule without having Alexander's natural abilities**. Nicholas ignored his advisers yet showed indecision in key moments. He was a **devout Russian Orthodox** but resorted to **repression** to maintain control. Overall, Nicholas assumed that the **divine right of kings would make his subjects obey him**. His **resistance to reform** and the changing political environment of Russia weakened his position.

People close to Nicholas took advantage of his personality. Unlike many royal marriages, Nicholas and his wife, Alexandra, truly loved each other. **Nicholas listened to Alexandra on key decisions rather than his trained advisers.** Nicholas' trust in Alexandra would contribute to his downfall. The couple's relationship with **Rasputin** made this worse.

Geographical Difficulties

- Tsar Nicholas ruled a vast empire 5,000 km wide
  - **The Ural Mountains divided the empire**
    - To the west of the Urals was the **majority of Russia's industry and population**. Nicholas lived there in St Petersburg, the country's capital city
    - To the east of the Urals was **Siberia and disputed territory that bordered China**. This was far away from Nicholas and had limited transport to West Russia
  - The empire contained **a mixture of nationalities, languages and religion**
    - Only **40% of the population was ethnic Russian**
    - Communication and legal enforcement were challenging
    - Many nationalities like the Poles wanted their independence from the empire
    - The Russian Empire forced Jewish people to live in the **Pale of Settlement**

The Largest Nationalities in the Russian Empire

Nationality	Amount of people in millions in 1897

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Russian	55.6
Ukrainian	22.4
Polish	7.9
Jewish (defined by faith)	5.0
Kirgiz/Kaisats	4.0
Tartar	3.4



Your notes



Examiner Tips and Tricks

Many other nationalities made up the Russian Empire. The exam is not testing you on knowing all of these. However, try to remember the core nationalities in the Russian Empire and how this would cause difficulties for the tsar.

Social Difficulties

- Russia had a very challenging social structure

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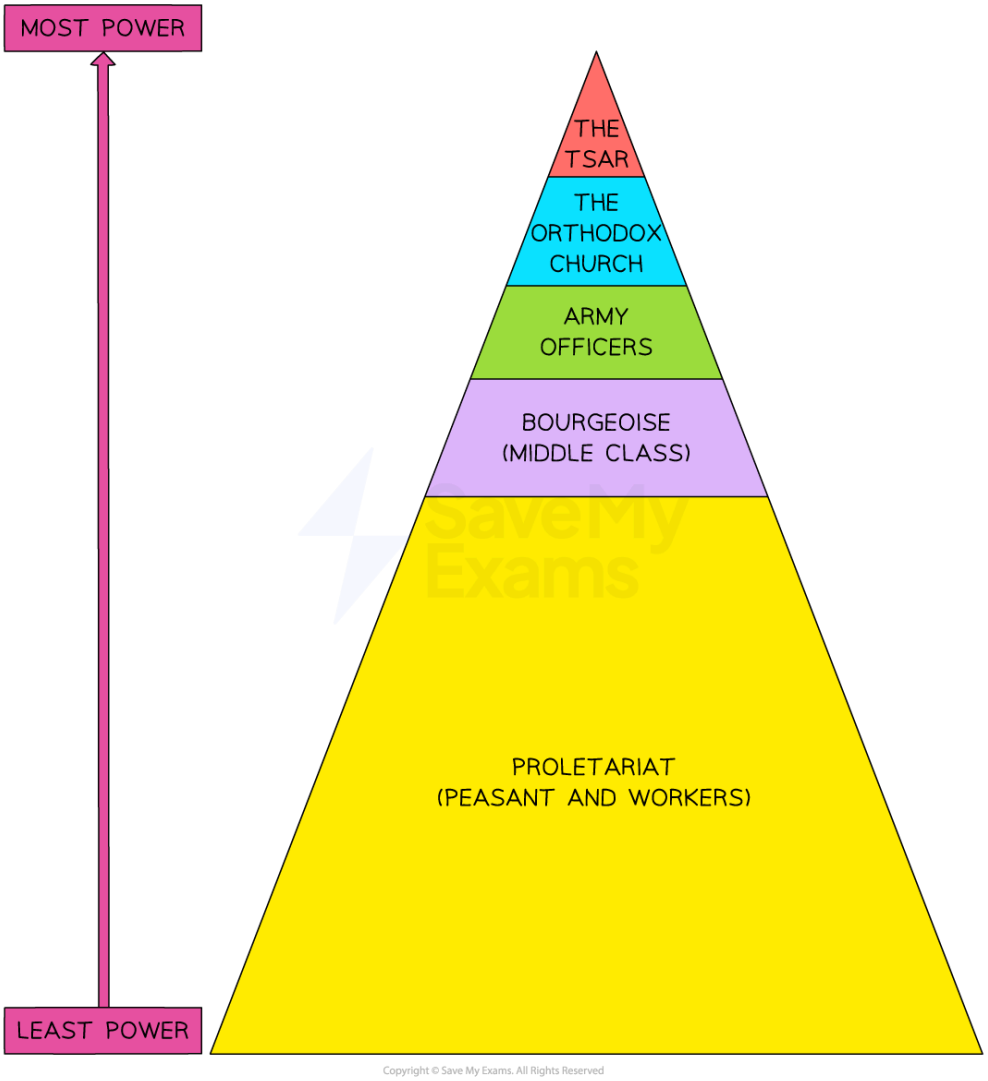

A hierarchy showing who had power in the Russian Empire

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How Did Each Social Group Challenge the Stability of the Empire?

Social group	Challenges to the Russian Empire
Peasants	Around **80% of the population** were peasants. They were poorly educated. After the **Emancipation Edict** of 1861, peasants could **buy land through the Peasant Land Bank**. However, only a small number of peasants could do this. These were called ***kulaks***. **Many peasants hated *kulaks***. The empire relied on peasants as soldiers for the army

Industrial workers	**Less than 5% of the population** worked in towns and cities. Russian cities had **terrible living conditions**. Workers lived in substandard housing with poor **sanitation**. Diseases spread rapidly, such as **cholera**. There was little that workers could do. The government had **no laws for working hours, pay or conditions**. **Trade unions** were illegal
The **bourgeoisie**	**Less than 2% of the population** but a growing class in Russia. The bourgeoise consisted of **industrialists** and business owners. They had **a lot of money but very little power**



Examiner Tips and Tricks

Students often struggle to understand the hierarchy in Russian society. Students find it useful to compare it to medieval England, where a king ruled and many people were peasants. This is exactly the same as Russia in 1905.

Economic Difficulties

- Russia experienced some development of their economy
  - Russia's Finance Minister **Sergei Witte caused the 'Great Spurt' of the 1890s**
    - Russia began the construction of the **Trans-Siberian Railway**
    - Production in **heavy industry increased**
    - **The rouble became a gold-standard currency**, which increased foreign trading
    - Witte **increased foreign investment** in Russian industry
    - Witte developed Russian **infrastructure** through building roads and **telegraph** lines
  - Russia's new industrialisation had some impact on the economy
- The economy continued to be backward
  - **Russia's economy relied on its agricultural output**
    - Peasant farmers used medieval growing techniques that were not productive
  - **Only parts of Russia had suitable conditions for arable farming**, for example, European Russia
    - These places could experience famine, which would affect the economy and the empire's food supply
  - **Russia's industry relied on 'quantity over quality'**
    - Despite investment, Russia's industry was **outdated and needed modernisation**



Your notes

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What Did Russia Produce?

	Annual production (in millions of tons)		
Year	Coal	Pig iron	Grain
1880	3.2	0.42	34
1890	5.9	0.89	36
1900	16.1	2.66	56

- The table shows that Russia relied on its agriculture

Worked Example

Describe Russia's economic problems at the beginning of the twentieth century

4 marks

Answer:

Russia relied on its agricultural output (1). Its industries were old-fashioned and needed modernisation (1). Peasants who grew crops used outdated methods of production, which were not efficient (1). Russia could experience economic issues if a part of the empire suffered from famine (1).

Examiner Tips and Tricks

For a 'Describe' question, you should aim to complete the question in **four minutes, one minute per point**. This will give you one minute to read through your answer.

Political Difficulties

- The **Fundamental Laws** of the Empire stated that:

> The Emperor of all the Russias is an autocratic and unlimited **monarch**

- In theory, the tsar had a government underneath him

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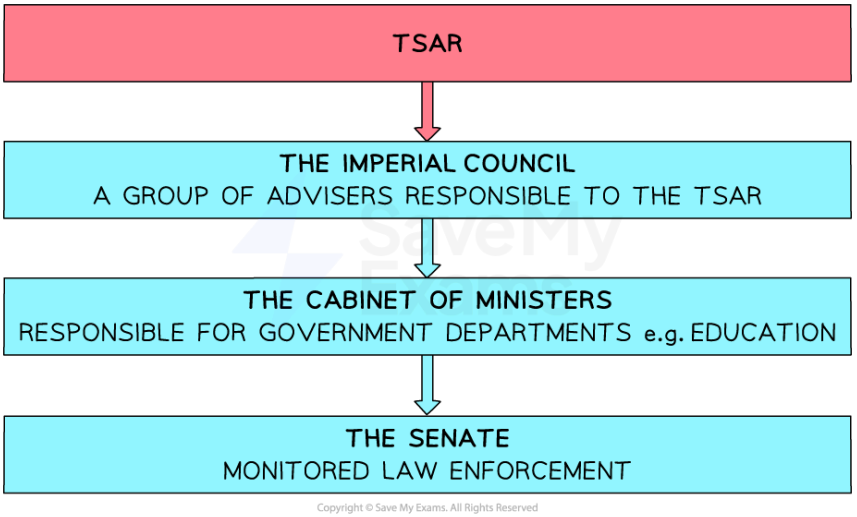

A diagram showing the government bodies in Tsarist Russia

Your notes

- The government had many weaknesses:
  - **No government bodies had any real power**
    - The tsar elected people to work in these bodies
    - Their role was only to advise or do administrative tasks
  - There was **no elected parliament or *duma***
  - The tsar did not believe his people should have the right to vote
    - The upper classes believed that the **majority of Russians were uneducated and uncivilised**
    - Tsarina Alexandra stated that the Russian people should be :

> Under the whip

- Political parties existed but were not recognised by the tsar

Political Parties before 1905

Left	Centre	Right
***Narodniks* ('Populists') –** Wanted **peasants to lead the way** in reforming Russia. Their policy to 'go to the people' by visiting peasants had little success. The terrorist section known as '**The**	The **growing middle classes** of businessmen and industrialists developed **liberal** ideas. They wanted reform but **did not want to destroy**	There was a variety of **right-wing** nationalist parties in the Russian Empire. An example of this is the **Union of the Russian People**. They

People's Will' assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881	**tsarism**. Political groups developed after 1905	were strongly **nationalist** and supported the tsar
The Social Revolutionaries (SRs) – Developed from the Populist Movement in 1901 by **Victor Chernov**. They wanted to give the urban working classes more power. The **SR split into Left and Right**, with the Left committing terrorist attacks		
The Social Democrats (SDs) – Formed in 1898 as a **Marxist** group. They wanted the people to overthrow the tsar. **In 1903, the SD split into two**. The **Mensheviks** ('Minority') were led by Martov and the **Bolsheviks** ('Majority') were led by Lenin		



Your notes

- Many ***mirs*** had a ***zemstvo* (or *zemstva* in plural)**
  - They were **rural councils**
  - The people elected their representatives
    - This was not **democratic** as a landowner's vote was worth more than a peasant's
  - The *zemstvo* had responsibilities for:
    - Education
    - Medical services
    - Public **welfare**
    - Food supplies
    - Maintaining roads
  - **Government officials initially liked the idea of *zemstva*** as they believed that:
    - It would **control the rural population** in *mirs*
    - It could **collect taxes**
  - **By 1905, *zemstva* began to demand constitutional reform**
    - Many members of the *zemstva* were middle and upper classes who wanted the right to vote



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Examiner Tips and Tricks

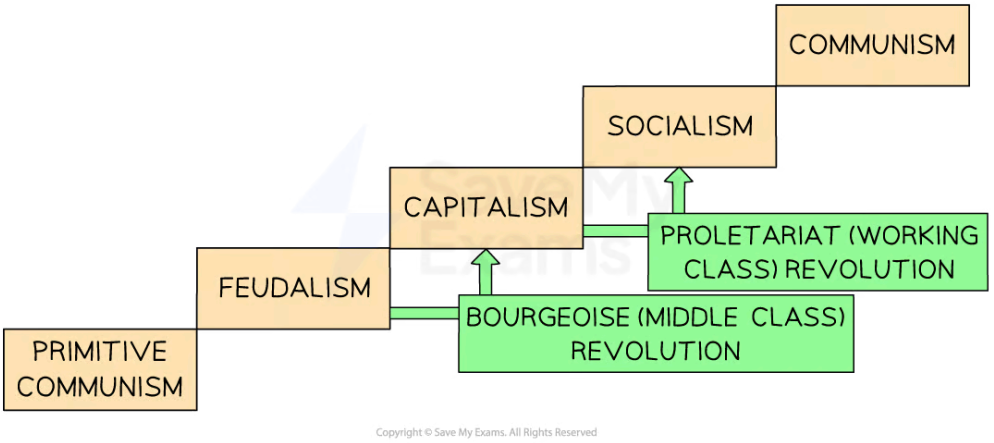
The *zemstva* and the *mir* are two different institutions. An important, usually religious, leader would oversee the *mir*. They would settle land disputes and decide if a peasant could leave the *mir*. However, **when more places developed *zemstva*, the *mir*'s power declined**. The *zemstva* were more organised and held power and wealth from its middle class representatives.

Your notes

Rise in Extremism

What is Marxism?

- **Karl Marx** was a German **philosopher**
- He and **Friedrich Engels** developed the theory of **Communism** through the books
  - **The Communist Manifesto (1848)**
    - The political and social viewpoint of Communism
  - **Das Kapital (1867)**
    - The economic viewpoint of Communism
- Marxism believed that all countries moved through **five 'stages of history'**



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A diagram showing Marx's idea about the development of all societies

Examiner Tips and Tricks

Don't confuse Communism with **socialism**. They share similar features and are both **leftist** beliefs. However, socialism has established classes, permits belief in religion and allows individuals to own their own property. True Communism has no government, no religion and no classes.

Growth of Marxism in the Russian Empire

- Plekhanov translated Marx's books into Russian in 1883
- **By the 1890s, the growth of industrialisation** led to the development of:
  - Workers' organisations
  - Illegal **trade unions**
  - Marxist discussion circles - like the **Tchaikovsky Circle**
- These **spread Marxist ideas more widely** around the Russian Empire
- The two key Marxist political parties in Russia were
  - The Mensheviks
  - The Bolsheviks



Your notes

How did the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks differ in their view of Marxism?

Mensheviks	Bolsheviks
Russia was not ready for a proletariat revolution. According to Marx, a revolution from the bourgeoisie had to occur first	Both the proletariat and bourgeoisie revolutions could happen together to **'fast-forward' to Communism**

How did the tsar fight against extremism?

- **Censorship**
  - The government censored all forms of the arts, including Marx's works
- **The Okhrana**
  - The **secret police** in Tsarist Russia
  - The Okhrana had powers to:
    - **Investigate** Communists, socialists and trade unionists
    - Watch members of the government
    - **Arrest and torture suspects**
    - **Exile** political prisoners to Siberia

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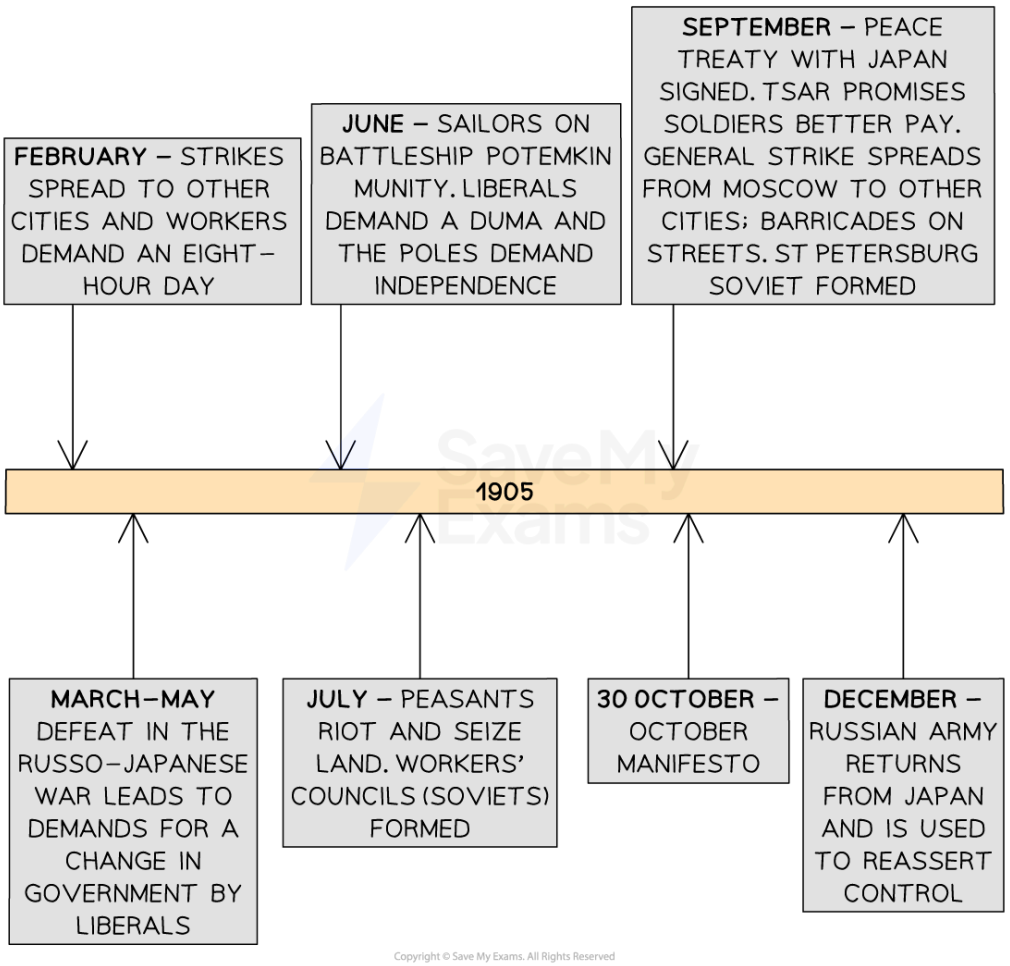
Your notes

Why was 1905 a Turning Point in Tsarist Russia – Timeline & Summary



The events of 1905 highlighted the **weakness of the tsarist regime**. This is because:

- **Japan defeated Russia in the war**. The tsar believed the Japanese were an **inferior** race to the Russians. The defeat showed that Russia was not as strong a military power as it had been
- **The tsar could no longer rely on the divine right of kings.** A growth in radical ideas and a decline in the influence of the **Orthodox Church** weakened the tsar. Tsar Nicholas II could no longer expect his people to obey him
- **The tsar had to reform.** Russian tsars used **repression** to resist reform. However, in 1905, Nicholas could not rely on his military forces. The strength of opposition to the tsar from multiple areas of society pushed Nicholas to provide some **democratic** reform. When Nicholas attempted to reverse these reforms later, he was unable to.

Many historians call this period a **revolution,** even though it did not result in the overthrow of the tsar. This shows the amount of popular opposition to the tsar and the threat it posed to Tsarist Russia.



Your notes

Causes of the 1905 Revolution

Long-term	Short-term
Economic – From 1902, there were widespread disturbances in both towns and the countryside due to **poor wages and famine**	**Russo-Japanese War –** In 1904, Russia began a conflict with Japan over **Manchuria**. The war showed that Russia's army was poorly organised and under-equipped. The important Russian military base of **Port Arthur fell to Japan in January 1905** **The war increased opposition to the tsar**. It had caused issues with the food supply. Many Russians felt humiliated at the defeat
Social – 1903 and 1904 were the **Years of the Red Cockerel** as peasants set fire to properties. **Strikes, although illegal, occurred more in towns and cities.** Non-Russian nationalities were unfairly treated by a policy called **Russification**. They wanted their independence	
Political – The working classes fell into **radical movements** that wanted to overthrow the tsar. Opposition increased in the middle classes, who wanted **constitutional reform**	**Bloody Sunday –** On **22nd January 1905**, Father Gapon led 200,000 protestors to the **Winter Palace**. He intended to hand a petition to the tsar asking for reform. The **army opened fire on protestors**, starting the revolution

Events of the 1905 Revolution

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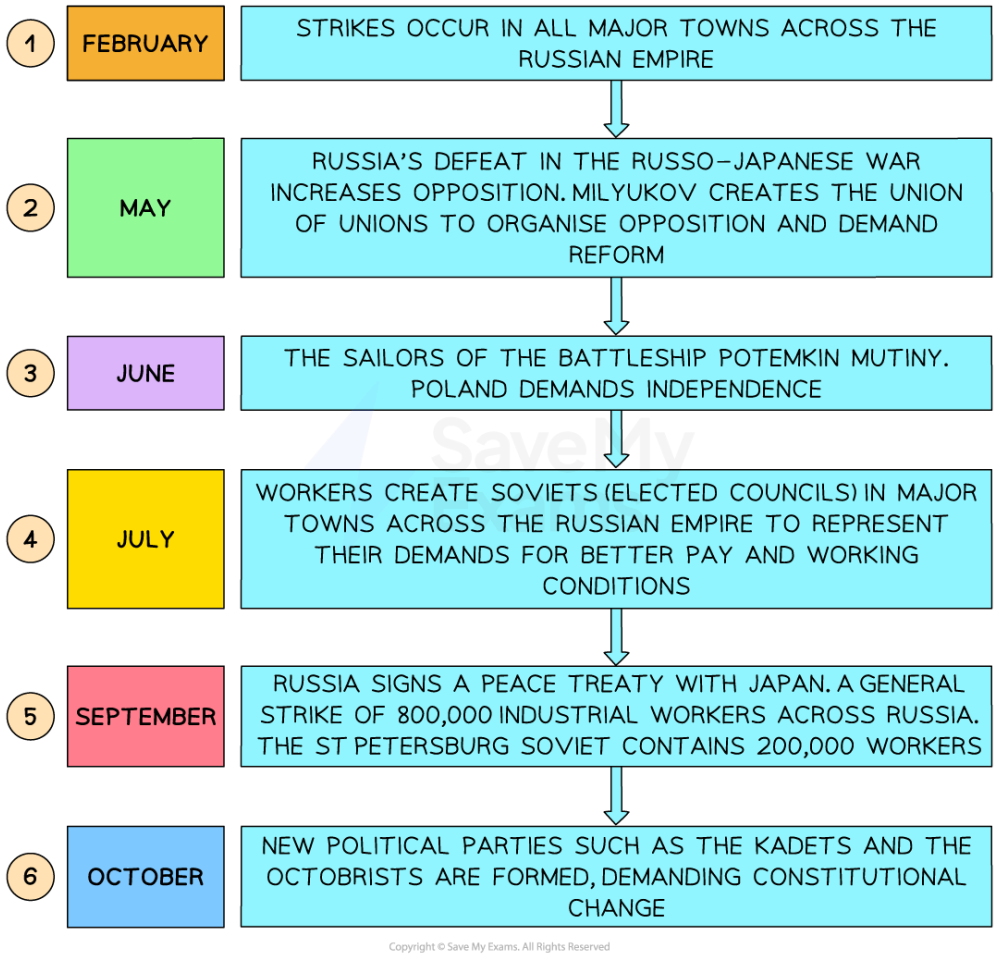


An illustration showing the key events of the 1905 Revolution

How Did Tsar Nicholas II Survive the 1905 Revolution?

- Nicholas used a combination of **reform and repression** to stay in control of the Russian Empire

Reform	Repression
He introduced the October **Manifesto** and adapted the **Fundamental Laws**. This was aimed to **win back the support of the middle classes**	He used the **army to suppress the strikes**. This was made easier because the working-class opposition was not united

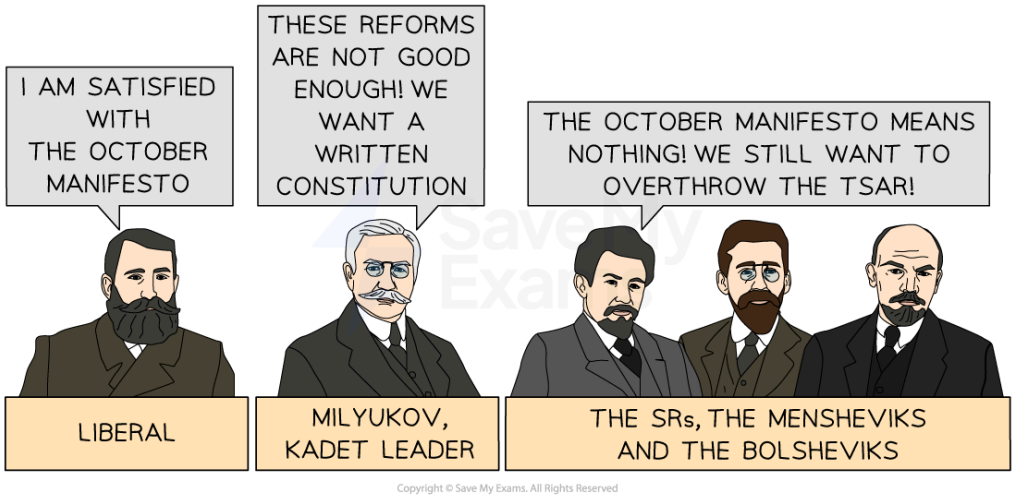
The October Manifesto and the Fundamental Laws

October Manifesto

- Witte, the prime minister of Russia, persuaded Nicholas to pass the October Manifesto

Your notes

- **The October Manifesto promised:**
  - **An elected *duma* (parliament)**
    - The *duma* would meet to pass laws
  - **More political rights** for people in the Russian Empire
    - A promise to loosen censorship
    - Freedom of speech and assembly allowed
  - **A change to the system of government**
    - The Tsar remained the head of the government and was advised by his Council of Ministers
    - The State Council was chosen by the tsar and the *zemstva*
    - **All men were allowed to vote** for their representative in the *duma*
- People reacted differently to the October Manifesto



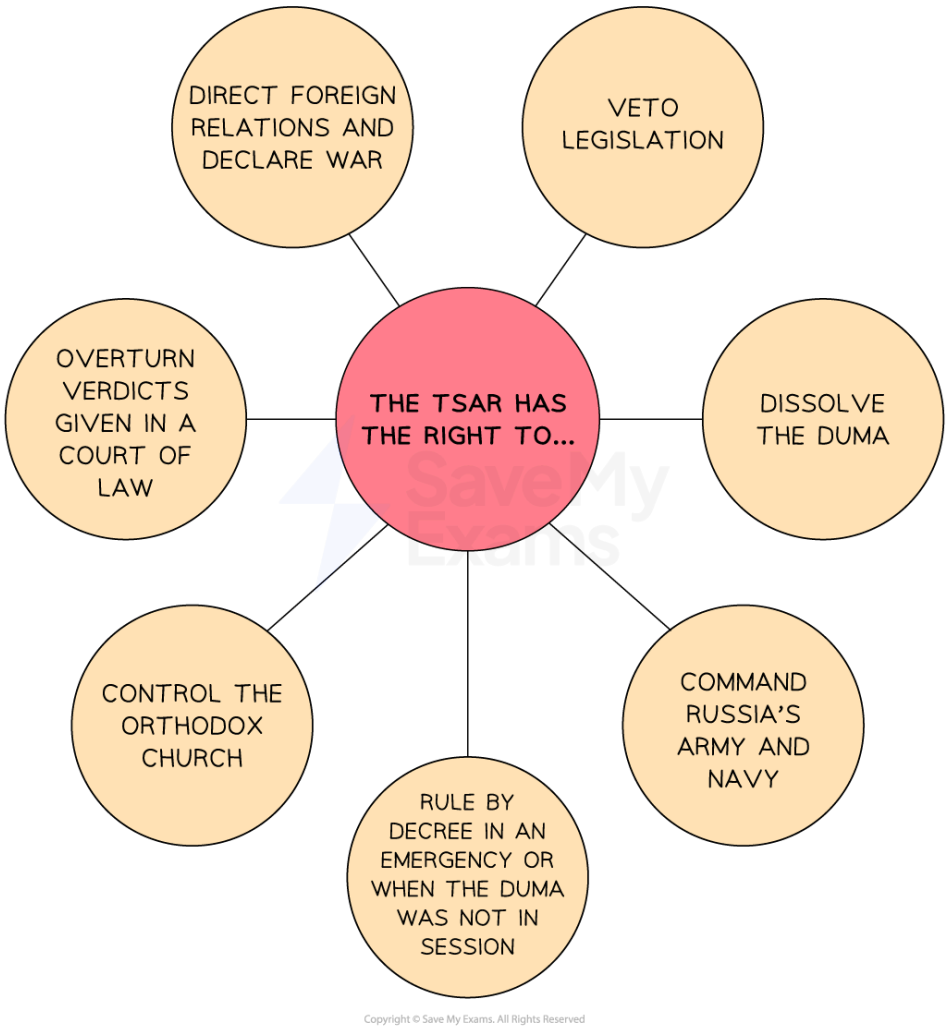
An illustration showing the different reactions to the October Manifesto

The Fundamental Laws

- **In 1906, Nicholas** adapted his Fundamental Laws
  - They confirmed the reforms promised in the October Manifesto
  - They asserted Nicholas's rights as tsar
    - This showed Nicholas's **reluctance to give up his autocratic powers**

Your notes

Your notes



A concept map showing the Tsar's Fundamental Laws. It was an attempt by Nicholas to reassert his power over the Russian Empire

The Establishment of the Duma

- The Tsar allowed **four *dumas* between 1906 and 1914**

Election Results for the Duma

Party	First *Duma* (1906)	Second *Duma* (1907)	Third *Duma* (1907–12)	Fourth *Duma* (1912–17)
Bolsheviks	Did not stand in election	Did not stand in election	19	15
Mensheviks	18	47	0	0

SRs	0	37	0	0
Kadets	182	91	54	53
Octobrists	17	42	154	95
Right-wing parties	8	10	147	154



Your notes

- **The first two *dumas* were radical**
  - They demanded the tsar make more reforms
  - Nicholas quickly closed them down
- **The third and fourth *dumas* were weak**
  - The government changed the voting laws to
    - Limit the power of peasant voters
    - Increase the number of right-wing parties in the *duma*
  - It showed the tsar's lack of commitment to making Russia democratic
    - The tsar could have used the *duma* system to create a constitutional monarchy
    - Instead, the **tsar made the *duma* powerless**. This angered many people in the empire



Examiner Tips and Tricks

Many historians argue that, if Nicholas had embraced the *duma* system, Tsarist Russia would have survived. Russia would likely have developed a government system similar to Britain. Therefore this event is important in understanding why Tsarist Russia collapsed.

Peter Stolypin

- **Tsar Nicholas chose Peter Stolypin as Prime Minister in 1906**
- Stolypin's actions as Prime Minister highlight the '**carrot and stick**' approach that the tsar used to maintain control of Russia:

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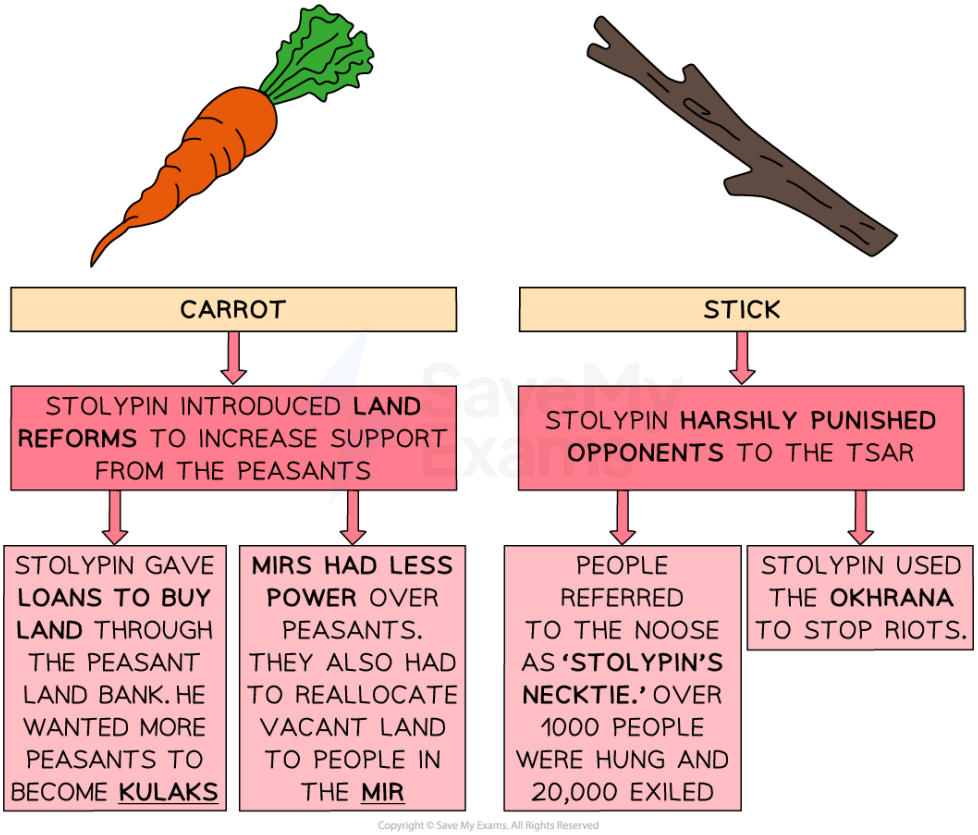

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A diagram showing the 'carrot and stick' methods Stolypin used to keep control

- **Historians argue that both methods failed in the long term**
  - There were very few *kulaks*
    - **Poorer peasants only became poorer**
  - **Workers still suffered from poor conditions**
    - Their pay after the 1905 Revolution was lower than in 1903
    - In 1912, there were strikes in Lena Goldfields which the government brutally repressed

Worked Example

Why was the October Manifesto issued in 1905?

6 marks

Partial answer:

The October Manifesto was issued to stop the disorder that had spread through Russia in 1905 (1). There was widespread violence in the countryside and the main cities were hit by a series of strikes. By September 1905, there were 800,000 workers

Your notes

on strike (1). Therefore, the tsar had to release the October Manifesto. It helped to stop the violence across Russia by gaining the support of key political parties and giving the impression of reform (1).



Your notes



Examiner Tips and Tricks

In Paper One, 'explain why' questions are worth either six or ten marks. For full marks in this question, an examiner is looking for **two fully explained reasons** as to why the tsar released the October Manifesto. Use the PEE structure in your answer:

- **P –** Make a **p**oint about the question
- **E –** Use **e**vidence that supports the point that you have made
- **E – E**xplain why this evidence made the tsar release the Manifesto. Avoid repeating the point again. Explain how this factor made the tsar have to reform, rather than repress.

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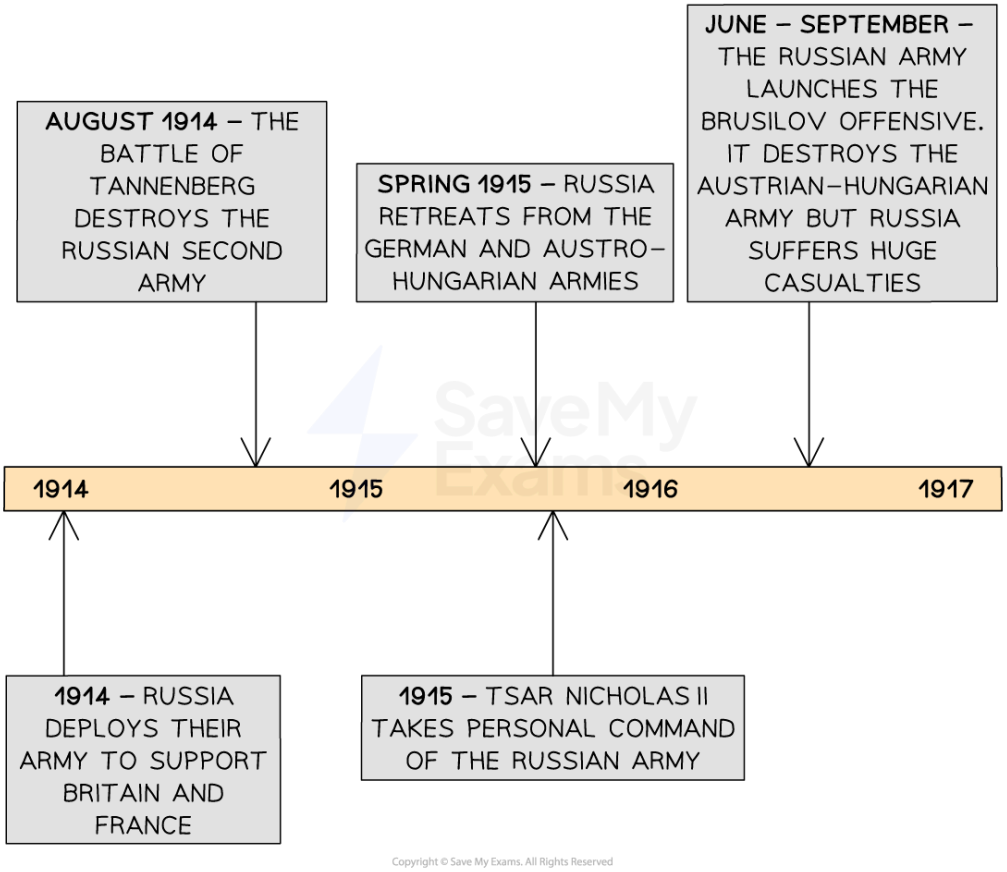
How did the First World War Lead to the Collapse of Tsarist Russia? – Timeline & Summary



In 1913, Tsar Nicholas II's position looked secure. Nicholas survived the 1905 Revolution and continued to use his repressive measures against his people. **The Russian economy had improved.** 1913 was also a significant year. Nicholas celebrated the tercentenary **of the Romanov dynasty**. Millions across the Empire celebrated the event and Nicholas stated "my people love me". However, in four years, Tsarist Russia would no longer exist.

Some historians argue that the First World War played a significant role in the end of Tsarist Russia. The First World War, which relied on twentieth-century technology, showed **Russia's economic backwardness**. **The empire was unprepared for war.** It is estimated that 800,000 men in the Russian Army did not have rifles. Russian factories could only produce 13,000 rounds of bullets a day. **By 1916, over 1.7 million Russians had died in the conflict.** Millions of Russian soldiers, most of them peasants, deserted from the front lines.

The Home Front of the Russian Empire could not cope with the pressures of war. **Food shortages and taxes caused anger and strikes.** The tsar did not cope with the crisis. In 1915,

he had placed the army under his personal command. This created a power vacuum **in Petrograd that allowed more strikes to occur**. By 1917, the Russian Army was failing and the Russian Empire was close to collapse.

The conflict also brought shame to the Romanovs. **Tsarina Alexandra was German.** Many people began to dislike the German influence on Russia. This became so extreme that Nicholas renamed **St Petersburg, which had Germanic roots, to Petrograd in 1914**. However, the actions of the Tsarina would disgust the aristocrats and turn more people against tsarism.


Your notes

Military Defeats and Desertion

- The Russian Empire entered the First World War enthusiastically
  - Russia mobilised an **army of 5.3 million** people in ten days
  - Patriotism was high
- Russia's first military campaigns were unsuccessful:

Battle	Date	Why was this battle a failure for Russia?
Tannenberg	August 1914	The battle was a significant victory for Germany. Over **30,000 Russian soldiers were killed** or injured. It stopped Russia's advance into East Prussia
Masurian Lakes	September 1914	**Russia lost 125,000 men and 150 artillery guns**. Germany forced the Russian Army to withdraw from East Prussia

- By 1915, the German Army had soldiers in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia
  - There were countries that were parts of the Russian Empire

The Brusilov Offensive

- By 1916, there had been some improvements to the Russian war effort
  - **Military supplies to the Eastern Front improved**
  - The tsar appointed **General Brusilov**, a talented military commander, to formulate a counter-offensive
- Brusilov launched an attack on the Austro-Hungarian Army in June 1916
  - It was the largest Russian attack in the First World War
- The Brusilov Offensive was a **short-term success that caused long-term damage** to the Russian Empire

Short-term gain	Long-term damage

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The Austro-Hungarian army lost 1.5 million men	The Russian Army lost 500,000 soldiers
Russia gained 25,000 square kilometres of territory	The cost of the victory turned many Russians against the First World War



Your notes



Examiner Tips and Tricks

The Brusilov Offensive is a key turning point for Russia in the First World War. Despite the campaign being a victory for the Russian Army, it caused a significant amount of destruction to the soldiers and the Home Front.

Desertion

- The Russian Army had a significant problem with desertion
  - Conscripted **peasants** made up a significant amount of the Russian Army
  - Many soldiers were **untrained and not prepared for war**
- By 1916, the number of deserters increased dramatically
  - Historians estimate that over **one million soldiers had deserted** the Russian Army by 1917

How did Russia's military campaign impact Tsarist Russia?

- **Tsar Nicholas took personal command of the Russian Army in 1915**
  - Nicholas had no military experience
  - The people could blame Russia's military defeats on the tsar
- Defeats lowered morale
  - Many Russians were supportive of the war in 1914
  - The amount of casualties **turned people against the war effort**
    - The war disproportionately impacted peasants more than any other classes

Economic Impacts

- By 1914, Russia had improved its economy
  - Russia had the **largest gold reserve in Europe**
  - Russia was the **fourth-largest economy**
- The First World War destroyed Russia's economic stability

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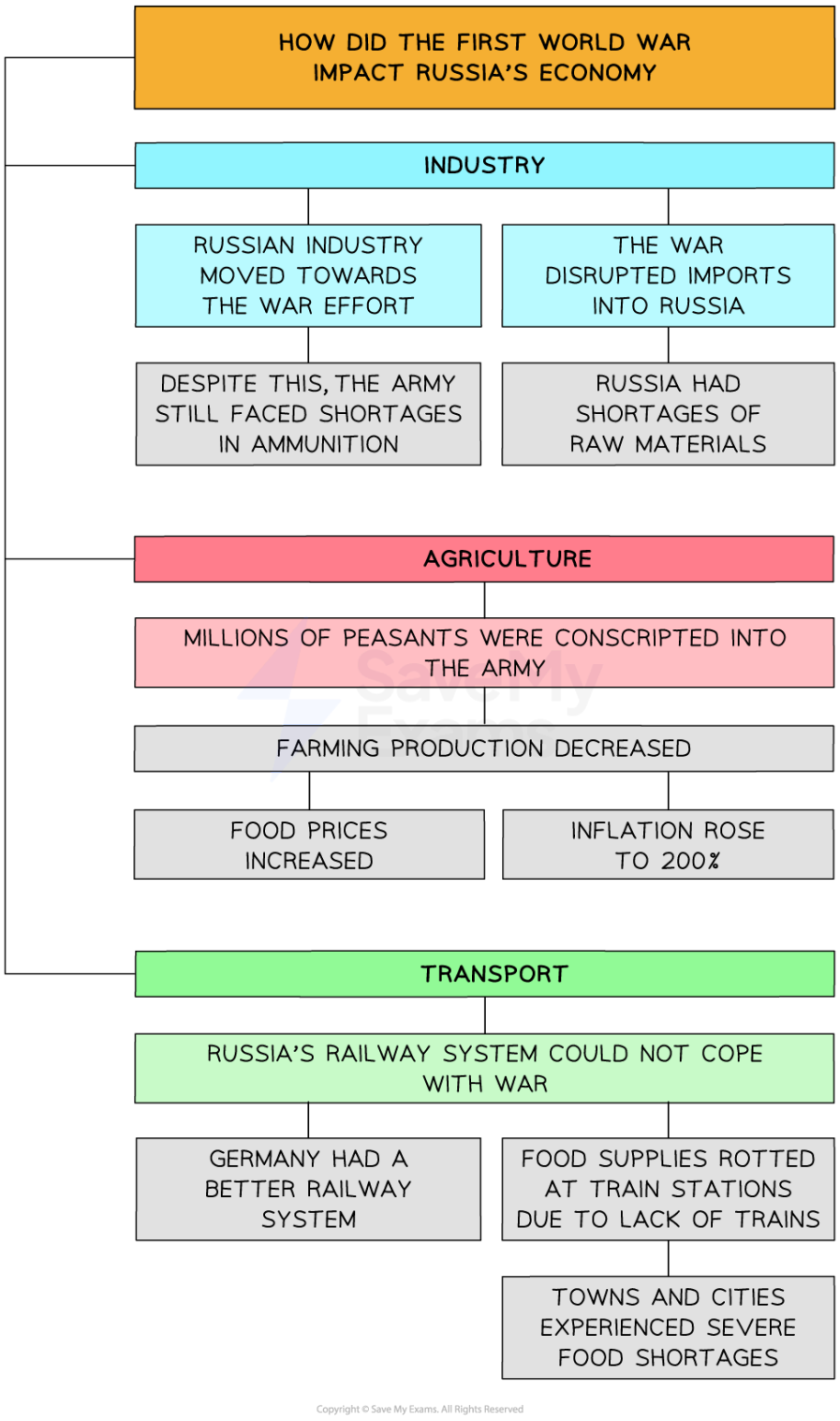

A concept map showing the impact of the First World War on Russia's economy

How Did the Economy in the First World War Impact Tsarist Russia?

- Inflation caused **workers' real wages to fall**

Your notes

- Many workers **could not afford to buy food**
  - This caused **food riots** in towns and cities
- Unemployment increased
  - By 1917, there were over **1,300 strikes** to support the poor and unemployed
- The government did not support widows and orphans
  - Many people did not receive war-related pensions



Examiner Tips and Tricks

A question could ask you how important the economic failures were to the downfall of Tsar Nicholas II. This factor caused the working classes, which accounted for 80% of Russia's population, to turn against the regime. This made it more likely that Nicholas would fail to keep control.

Rasputin and the Governing of Russia

- Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra had five children
  - **They only had one son.** His name was Alexei
  - **Alexei had** haemophilia
    - Alexei's medical condition was **kept secret from the Russian people**. Nicholas did not want Alexei, the heir to the throne, to appear weak
- Due to Alexei's illness, **Rasputin became essential but damaging** to the Romanovs

Who was Rasputin?



Your notes

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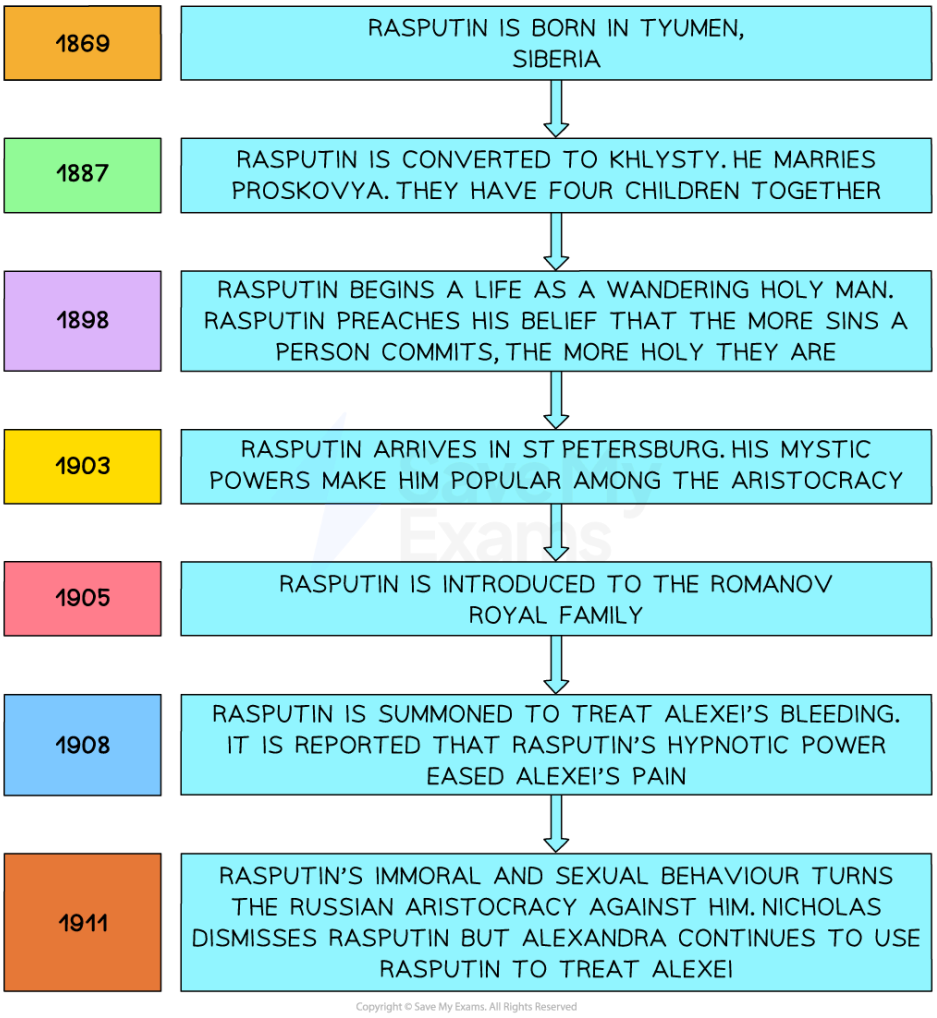

A flow diagram showing how Rasputin became important to the Romanovs

How did Rasputin impact Tsarist Russia?

- When Nicholas took personal command of the Russian Army, he left Alexandra in charge of Russia
  - **Alexandra used Rasputin as her adviser**
    - This government made **poor decisions**
    - They **dismissed many ministers**
- Alexandra's association with Rasputin ruined her reputation
  - Many people believed that **Rasputin was Alexandra's lover**
    - Many opponents like the Bolsheviks used this as propaganda to turn the people against Tsarism
    - Historians believe that this **rumour is untrue**
- The tsarist government lost support of **key 'pillars' of Russia**

Your notes

- The Orthodox Church **gave less support** to the tsar due to Rasputin
  - Rasputin's religious practices conflicted with Russian Orthodoxy
- Russian aristocrats **murdered Rasputin in December 1916**



An anti-monarchist piece of propaganda in Russia during the First World War. It depicts Rasputin as a puppet master playing with Tsar Nicholas and Tsarina Alexandra

Your notes

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Worked Example

How important was the First World War in the downfall of Tsar Nicholas II? Explain your answer

10 marks

Partial answer:

The First World War was the most important cause of the downfall of Tsar Nicholas II as it worsened the political issues within Russia (1). In 1915, Nicholas II assumed command of the army on the Eastern Front (1). This linked the tsar to the country's military failures and massive casualties. Therefore, he had to take full responsibility for Russia's failures on the battlefield, showing his weakness as a leader (1)



Examiner Tips and Tricks

A strong response for this Paper One Depth Study question needs to **examine both sides of the argument**. The next paragraph would explain another factor that caused the downfall of Nicholas. You could use the 1905 Revolution as an example of how Nicholas was failing before the First World War. Continue to use a clear **PEE structure** as shown above.

You would then need to write a **conclusion explaining how important the First World War was to Nicholas' downfall**. Remember to use phrases like '**fully**' or '**partially**' to explain your opinion.



Your notes

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Your notes

Was the March Revolution Inevitable? - Summary

Historians debate whether it was inevitable that the tsar would abdicate in March 1917. A significant factor was the First World War. The conflict created **poor conditions** in Russia. **Food and fuel shortages caused mass protests in Moscow and Petrograd.** With a proper government, these issues may have been solvable. However, Tsar Nicholas' command of the army left Russia without a leader. Tsarina Alexandra and Rasputin ran a **chaotic government** with multiple changes of ministers. **Local needs were not being met.** The ***zemstva* took more responsibility** than the government for the health and safety of the Russian people.

Some historians argue that the First World War only dictated the timing of the March Revolution. They argue that **Tsarist Russia had unresolvable issues**. The misuse of the army, the empire's economic backwardness and the mix of nationalities would cause a revolution eventually. **The First World War sped up when this revolution would occur.**



Examiner Tips and Tricks

Students often get confused with the terms '**St Petersburg**' **and** '**Petrograd**'. Before 1914, students should refer to Russia's capital city in an exam question as St Petersburg. After 1914, students should use the term 'Petrograd' in their answers.

Events of the March 1917 Revolution

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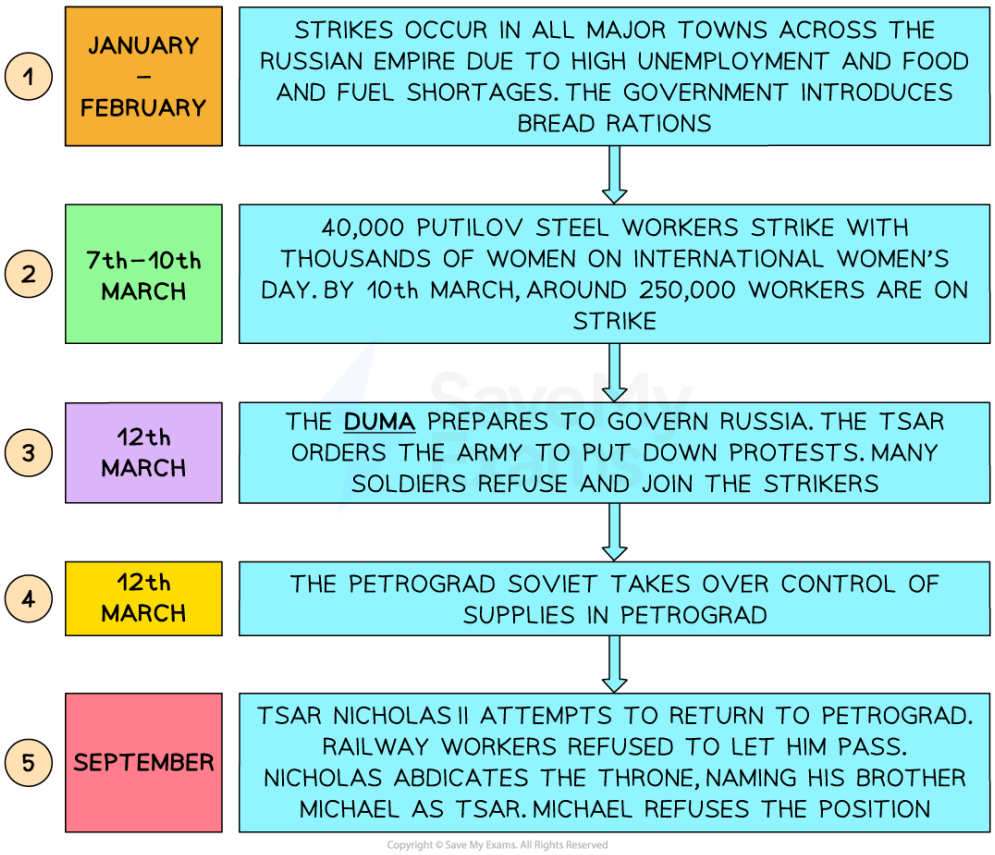

An illustration showing the key events of the March 1917 Revolution

Your notes

Worked Example

Describe what happened in Russia in March 1917

4 marks

Answer:

In Petrograd, thousands of women and workers went on strike (1). Many Russians were unhappy with bread rationing and high unemployment (1). The Petrograd Soviet took control of supplies (1). On 15th March, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated (1).

Examiner Tips and Tricks

For a 'Describe' question, you should aim to complete the question in **four minutes, one minute per point**. This will give you one minute to read through your answer.

Popular Support

- The March 1917 Revolution is known as a '**revolution from below**'
  - This means that the workers caused the revolution to happen
- The revolution had popular support because:
  - The First World War had caused **fuel and food shortages**
    - The people felt like they had no choice but to protest
  - Russia suffered **huge** casualties in the First World War
    - People felt less patriotic
    - They did not support the tsar's decisions as Head of the Army
  - **People began to turn against the Romanovs**
    - Tsarina Alexandra was called the 'German Princess'
  - **Industrial workers were less religious**
    - There was a lower belief in the Divine Rights of Kings. They were less afraid to challenge the tsar's authority
    - **More workers turned to the Marxist parties**
  - Twp groups could govern Russia instead of the tsar. These were:
    - The *duma* - supported by the **middle classes**
    - The Soviets - supported by the **workers and the military**



Your notes

Military Support

- The **Russian Army** was a significant 'pillar' for the tsar
  - Nicholas II over-relied on the army to suppress protests as he had done in 1905
- **The First World War turned the army against Tsar Nicholas**
  - They did not respect the tsar's military leadership
- Without the army, the tsar lost his power
  - He could not use his autocratic **power without the threat of violence**
  - Any future government would need the support of the army to rule
  - **Many soldiers joined the Soviets**, increasing their power in Russia

Soviet Support

- After Nicholas' abdication, there was confusion about who would rule Russia
  - **Nicholas' brother refused the position, ending 300 years of the Romanov dynasty**
  - Both the *duma* and the Petrograd Soviet wanted power

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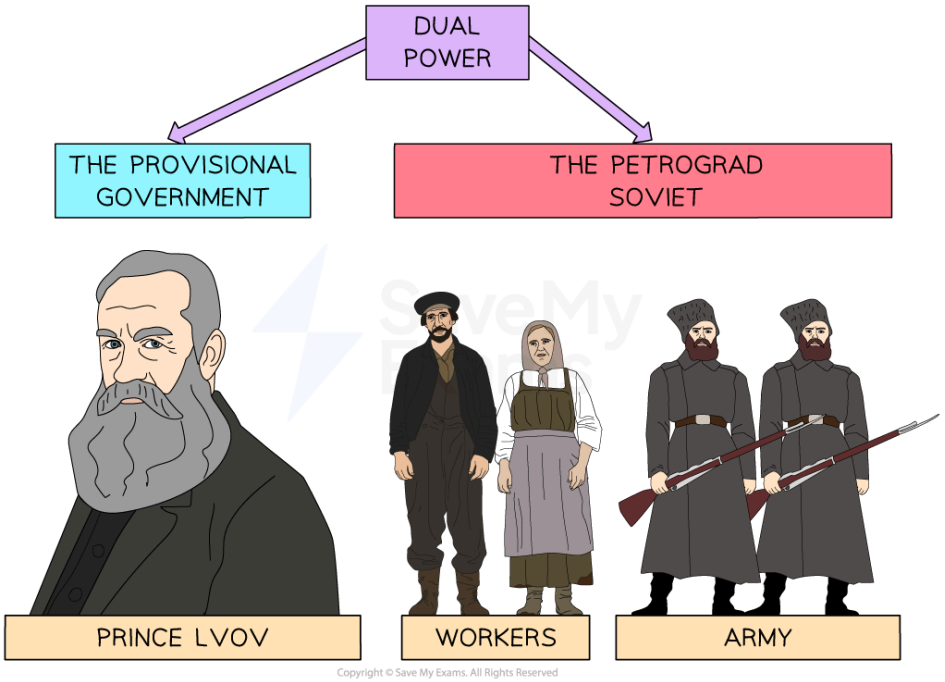
- After the March 1917 Revolution, a system of **Dual Power** replaced the Tsarist government



An illustration showing the concept of Dual Power

- Both government bodies needed the other
  - The Provisional Government needed the **Petrograd Soviet for their influence over the Army and workers**
  - The Petrograd Soviet needed the **Provisional Government for their influence over the middle classes**

Examiner Tips and Tricks

Students often get confused between the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government. Try to remember that:

- The Provisional Government represented the *duma*
- The Petrograd Soviet represented the workers

Your notes