



History

GCSE

History B Source Pack

Russia 1905–1941

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ENQUIRY: HOW MUCH TENSION WAS THERE IN RUSSIA IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY?

- **State of Russia in 1905.**
- **Rule of Nicholas II and attempts at change through revolution and reform 1905–1915.**
- **Rasputin.**

In the big house the two women hardly manage to wash up all the crockery for the betlefolk who have just had a meal; and two peasants in dress coats are running up or down stairs serving tea, coffee, wine and water. Upstairs the table is laid; they have just finished one meal and will soon start another that will go on till at least midnight. There are some fifteen healthy men and women here and some thirty able-bodied men and women servants working for them.

Source 1 – Taken from an account by Count Leo Tolstoy

I am informed that recently in some zemstva, voices have made themselves heard from people carried away by senseless dreams about participation by members of the zemstva in the affairs of internal government: let all know that I, devoting all my strength to the welfare of the people, will uphold the principle of autocracy as firmly and as unflinchingly as my late, unforgettable father.

Source 2 – Nicholas II coronation speech, 1894

“We talked for two solid hours. He shook my hand. He wished me all the luck in the world. I went home beside myself with happiness and found a written order for dismissal lying on my desk.

Source 3 – Russian PM Counte Witte writing in 1906

“A third of Russia lives under emergency legislation. The number of the regular police and secret police are continually growing. The prisons are overcrowded with convicts and political prisoners. At no time have religious persecutions [of Jews] been so cruel as they are today. In all cities and industrial centres soldiers are employed and equipped with live ammunition to be sent out against the people. Autocracy is an outdated form of government that may suit the needs of a central African tribe but not those of the Russian people who are increasingly aware of the culture of the rest of the world”.

Source 4 – an open letter from Leo Tolstoy to the Tsar in 1902

We workers, our children, our wives and our old, helpless parents have come, Lord, to seek truth and protection from you. We are impoverished and oppressed, unbearable work is imposed on us, we are despised and not recognized as human beings. We are treated as slaves, who must bear their fate and be silent. We have suffered terrible things, but we are pressed ever deeper into the abyss of poverty, ignorance and lack of rights.

Source 5 – An extract from the petition of Father Gapon, to the Tsar, 1905

There was much activity and many reports. Fredericks came to lunch. Went for a long walk. Since yesterday all the factories and workshops in St. Petersburg have been on strike. Troops have been brought in from the surroundings to strengthen the garrison. The workers have conducted themselves calmly hitherto. Their number is estimated at 120,000. At the head of the workers' union some priest - socialist Gapon. Mirsky came in the evening with a report of the measures taken.

Source 6 – an extract from the Tsar's diary, 1905

We have but little to reduce the working day to eight hours and to provide a minimum wage of a rouble a day. Officials have taken the country into a shameful war. We working men have no say in how the taxes we paid are spent. Do not refuse to help your people. Destroy the wall between yourself and your people.

Source 7 – The demands made by Father Gapon in 1905

Reports as to the number of killed or wounded differ. Naturally, there can be no question of an exact count, and a visual estimate is very difficult. The government's report giving 96 killed and 330 wounded is obviously false, and no one believes it. According to the latest press reports, journalists handed the Minister of the Interior a list of 4,600 killed or wounded, as compiled by reporters. Of course, even this figure cannot be complete, since it would be impossible even in the day-time (let alone at night) to count all the killed and wounded in the various clashes. The victory of the autocracy over the unarmed people took a toll no smaller than did the big battles in Manchuria. No wonder the St. Petersburg workers, according to the reports of foreign correspondents, cried out to the officers that they were more successful at fighting the Russian people than they were the Japanese.

Source 8 – Vladimir Lenin: Revolutionary Days

Let those in power make no mistake about the mood of the people... never were the Russian people... so profoundly revolutionised by the actions of the government, for day by day, faith in the government is steadily waning...

Source 9 – A Russian conservative speaking in 1913

The two hostile sides stood confronting each other. The old and grey court dignitaries, keepers of etiquette and tradition, looked across in a haughty manner, though not with fear and confusion, at the 'people of the street', whom the revolution had swept into the palace and quietly whispered to on another. The other side looked across at them with no less disdain or contempt.

Source 10 – the writings of a deputy of the Duma, published in 1925, describing the 1906 session

All classes condemn the authorities and more particularly the emperor. The present ruler has lost absolutely the love of the Russian people; whatever the future may have in store for the dynasty, the present Tsar will never again be safe in the midst of his people.

Source 11 – American consul to Russia speaks in 1906

The story of Rasputin and his clique is well known. They sent the army to the trenches without food or arms, they left them there to be slaughtered, they betrayed Rumania and deceived the Allies, they almost succeeded in delivering Russia bodily to the Germans.

Source 12 – Stanislaus de Lazovert on the Assassination of Rasputin, 29 December 1916



Source 13 –

One of the thousands of hunger stricken village communities of the time . Only charity kept the peasants alive . Of Russian's population of 125 million at the turn of the century , 97 million lived in the countryside . With unfailing regularity there was a crop failure every five years . The starving peasants abandoned their homes and went to the cities in search of subsistence . The cities were gutted with men who would work for a pittance .

**Source 14 –**

Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin (1871-1916). Caricature of Rasputin as evil personification of the Russian Ruling House

ENQUIRY: WHY WAS IT THAT THE BOLSHEVIKS ORGANISED A SUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION IN 1917?

- **Causes of 1917 revolutions – including Russia in World War I.**
- **Provisional government.**
- **Immediate aftermath of 1917 revolutions.**

Military defeats brought the masses to a clearer understanding of war - unfair distribution of foodstuffs, an immense and rapid increase in the cost of living, an inadequacy in sources of supply. Everywhere there are exceptional feelings of hostility and opposition to the government because of the unbearable burden of the war and the impossible conditions of everyday life.

Source 15 – a police report dated October 1916

Again that cursed question of shortage of artillery and rifle ammunition stands in the way of an energetic advance. If we should have three days of serious fighting, we might run out of ammunition altogether. Without new rifles, it is impossible to fill up the gaps.

Source 16 – extract from a conversation between Nicholas II and his wife, July 1915

The army had neither wagons nor horses nor first aid supplies... We visited the Warsaw station where there were about 17000 men wounded in battle. At the station we found a terrible scene: on the platform in dirt, filth and cold, on the ground, even without straw, wounded men, who filled the air with heart-rending cries, dolefully asked: "For God's sake order them to dress our wounds. For five days we have not been attended to.

Source 17 – a report from the President of the Duma

Everybody was fed up with the Tsar because they felt he was weak. When he abdicated, there was great rejoicing. Everybody thought things would be much better.

Source 18 – Margot Tracey, a Russian capitalist's daughter speaking in 1917

The situation is getting worse. Something has to be done immediately. Tomorrow is too late. The last hour has struck. The future of the country and the royal family is being decided.

Source 19 – 12 March 1917 Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, telegraphed the Tsar

Again, that fat-bellied Rodzianko has written me a load of nonsense, which I won't even bother to answer.

Source 20 - The Tsar's response to source 19

The industrial workers are very discontented because of the impossibility of obtaining goods, the endless queuing, the poor housing and the lack of fuel. All these conditions have created a desperate situation in which savage hunger riots are likely to break out.

Source 21 – A police report from 1917

Who led the February Revolution? We can answer easily enough. It was the workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin. Petrograd achieved the Revolution. The rest of the country simply followed its lead. There was no struggle anywhere except in Petrograd..

Source 22 – Leon Trotsky comments on the causes of the revolution

The provisional government should do nothing now which would break our ties with the allies. The worst thing that could happen to us would be separate peace. It would be ruinous for the Russian revolution, ruinous for international democracy.

Source 23 – a provisional government minister speaking in 1917

The Bolshevik speaker would ask the crown 'Do you need more land? do you have as much land as the landlords do? But will the Kerensky government give you land? No. never. It protects the interests of the landlords. Only our party, the Bolsheviks, will immediately give you land...'. Several times I tried to take the floor and explain that the Bolsheviks make promises which they can never fulfil. I used figures from farming statistics to prove my point; but I saw that the crowded square was unsuitable for this kind of discussion.

Source 24 – a Menshevik speaking in the Summer of 1917

The provisional government possesses no real power and its orders are executed only in so far as this is permitted by the Soviet Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which holds in its hands the most important elements of actual power, such as troops, railroads, postal and telegraph service...

Source 25 – the minister for war in a letter to General Alekseyev, March 1917

Week by week food became scarcer... one had to queue for long hours in the chill rain. Think of the poorly clad people standing on the streets of Petrograd for whole days in the Russian winter! I have listened in the bread-line, hearing the bitter discontent which from time to time burst through the miraculous good nature of the Russian crowd.

Source 26 – an American living in Petrograd in 1917

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The cause for which the people have fought has been made safe: the immediate proposal of a democratic peace, the end of land owners' rights, workers' control over production, the creation of a Soviet government. Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants.

Source 27 – the Proclamation of the Petrograd Soviet

One man went strutting around with a bronze clock perched on his shoulder; another found a plume of ostrich feathers, which he stuck in his hat. The looting was just beginning when somebody cried, 'Comrades! Don't touch anything! Don't take anything! This is the property of the People!' Immediately twenty voices were crying, 'Stop! Put everything back! Don't take anything! Property of the People!' Many hands dragged the spoilers down. Damask and tapestry were snatched from the arms of those who had them; two men took away the bronze clock. Roughly and hastily the things were crammed back in their cases, and self-appointed sentinels stood guard. It was all utterly spontaneous. Through corridors and up stair-cases the cry could be heard growing fainter and fainter in the distance, 'Revolutionary discipline! Property of the People!'

Source 28 – An account by John Reed, an American who joined the revolution

Now that the great revolution has come, one feels that however intelligent Lenin may be he begins to fade beside the genius of Trotsky.

Source 29 – A Bolshevik activist, Mikhail Uritsky, 1917



Source 30 – Storming of the Winter Palace by Red Guards. 1917

ENQUIRY: HOW IMPORTANT WAS LENIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET RUSSIA?

- **Lenin and his period in power.**
- **Successes and contributions including ways in which Bolshevik power was established and maintained.**
- **Civil War.**
- **War Communism.**

The Bourgeoisie, landholders, and all wealthy classes are making desperate efforts to undermine the revolution which is aiming to safeguard the interests of the toiling and exploited masses... the partisans of the bourgeoisie, especially the higher officials, banks clerks, etc., are sabotaging and organising strikes in order to block the government's efforts to reconstruct the state on a socialist basis. Sabotage has spread even to the food supply organisations and millions of people are threatened with famine. Special measures must be taken to fight counter-revolution and sabotage.

Source 31 – Lenin, writing in December 1917

In the villages the peasant will not give grain to the Bolsheviks because he hates them. Armed companies are sent to take grain from the peasant and every day, all over Russia, fights for grain are fought to a finish. In Petrograd, hundreds of people are dying from hunger. People are arrested daily [for criticizing] and kept in prison for months without trial.

Source 32 – The actions of the Bolshevik government, observed by a British businessman in Russia in 1918

Having surrounded the village they (the white armies)...fired a couple of volleys in the direction of the village and everyone took cover. Then the mounted soldiers entered the village, met the Bolshevik committee and put the members to death. After the execution the houses of the culprits were burned and the male population under forty-five whipped. Then the population was ordered to deliver without pay the best cattle, pigs, fowl, forage and bread for the soldiers as well as the best horses.

Source 33 – Diary of Colonel Drozdovsky, 1923. He was a White Commander

For the first time in history the working people have got control of their country. The workers of all countries are striving to achieve this objective. We in Russia have succeeded. We have thrown off the rule of the Tsar, of landlords and of capitalists. But we still have tremendous difficulties to overcome. We cannot build a new society in a day. We ask you, are you going to crush us? To help give Russia back to the landlords, the capitalists and the Tsar?

Source 34 – Red Propaganda Leaflet “Why have you come to Murmansk?”

Trotsky paid a visit to the front lines. He made a speech. We were all lifted by his energy. The situation, which had been disastrous 24 hours earlier, was improved by his coming as though by a miracle.

Source 35 – Comments of a Red Army soldier about Trotsky’s visit to the front line

We are constructing an army all over again and under fire at that... What was needed for this? It needed good commanders - a few dozen experienced fighters, a dozen or so Communists ready to make any sacrifice; boots for the bare-footed, a bath house, propaganda, food, underwear, tobacco, matches.

Source 36 – Trotsky about the making of the Red Army

Every food requisition detachment is to consist of not less than 75 men and two or three machine guns. The food requisition troop detachments shall be deployed in such a manner as to allow two or three detachments to link up quickly.

Source 37 – Red Army instruction for requisitioning grain

Our poverty and ruin are so great that we cannot at one stroke restore large-scale socialist production. We must try to satisfy the demands of the peasants who are dissatisfied and discontented. There must be some freedom to trade and freedom for the small private owner. We are now retreating, but we are doing this so we can run and leap forward more vigorously.

Source 38 – Lenin introducing the New Economic Policy at the Party Congress, 1921

After carrying out the October Revolution, the working classes hoped for freedom. But the result has been greater slavery. The bayonets, bullets and harsh commands of the Cheka - these are what the working man of Society Russia has won. The glorious emblem of the workers’ state - the hammer and sickle - has been replaced by the Communist authorities with the bayonet and the barred window. Here on Kronstadt we are making a third revolution which will free the workers and the Soviets from the Communists.

Source 39 – A statement from the Kronstadt sailors

Poor starving old Russia, Russia of primitive lighting and the meal of a crust of black bread is going to be covered by a network of electric power stations. The NEP will transform the Russian economy and rebuild a broken nation. The future is endless and beautiful.

Source 40 – A leading Bolshevik and supporter of the NEP, Bukharin in 1922

In 1925 the Soviet Commissar for Finance admitted that the pay of miners, metal workers and engine drivers was still lower than it had been before 1914. This in turn meant that workers' housing and food were poor.

Source 41 – a Soviet observer from the 1920s

We are in desperate straights. We must buy from whom we can and we must sell to whom we can. The party would have to learn to trade.

Source 42 – Lenin speaking in 1921

There wasn't any food in the country. We were down to a little bread each. Then suddenly they started the NEP. Cafes opened. Factories went back into private hands. It was Capitalism. In my eyes it was the very thing I had been fighting against... Most people supported Lenin, other said he was wrong, and many tore up their party membership cards.

Source 43 – Nikolai Izatchik, a Bolshevik, remembering the NEP in 1992

Everyone is so infinitely better off that present conditions see paradise by comparison... 250,000 private traders have migrated to Moscow since the NEP began. They crowd the restaurants where it costs \$25 a head for dinner with French wine ... and lose a thousand or so an evening at cards without turning a hair.

Source 44 – Walter Duranty, I Write As I Please (1935)

"Comrade Stalin, having become Secretary General, has unlimited authority in his hands and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution. Comrade Trotsky, on the other hand, is distinguished not only by his outstanding ability. He is personally probably the most capable man in the present Central Committee but he has displayed excessive self-assurance and preoccupation with the purely administrative side of the work"

A post-script to this document, written ten days after the original:

"Stalin is too rude, and this fault is intolerable in the office of Secretary. Therefore I propose to comrades that they find a way of removing Stalin from his post and appointing another man who is more patient, more loyal, more polite and is considerate to his comrades.

Source 45 – Lenin's Last Will and Testament

**Source 46 –**

"To have more, we must produce more. To produce more, it is necessary to know more", 1920.
Found in the collection of the Russian State Library, Moscow.



Source 47 –

“Raise higher the banner of Leninism, the banner of the international proletarian revolution”, 1932.
Found in the collection of the Russian State Library, Moscow.

ENQUIRY: WHY WAS STALIN ABLE TO PREVAIL OVER TROTSKY? / ENQUIRY: WHO GAINED AND WHO LOST UNDER STALIN?

- **Stalin's ascendancy and success over Trotsky.**
- **Establishment of a dictatorship.**
- **Cult of personality.**
- **Life in Stalin's Russia.**
- **Five Year Plans.**
- **Purges.**
- **Collectivisation.**
- **Role of women.**
- **Ethnic minorities.**

More than anything we were frightened of Trotsky seizing power, though we now know that was not the main problem. In those days Stalin was an unknown figure to us. I worked in the Kremlin and I didn't know who Stalin was, and I was a Red Commander.

Source 48 – Leonid Orlovsky reflecting in 1992

Stalin's secretary relates that he had the habit of walking up and down his office, puffing on his pipe, then buzzing for his assistant to give a sharp command; remove such and such a secretary of a provincial committee and replace him with so and so.

Source 49 – Anton Anotov-Ovseyenko speaking in 1980

What were the results of the Five-Year Plan in four years?

- We did not have an iron and steel industry. Now we have one.
- We did not have a machine tool industry. Now we have one.
- We did not have a modern chemicals industry. Now we have one.
- We did not have a big industry for producing agricultural machinery. Now we have one.

Source 50 – Stalin speaking about the five year plan, 1932

Throughout history Russia has been beaten again and again because she was backward... All have beaten her because of her military, industrial and agricultural backwardness. She was beaten because people have been able to get away with it. If you are backward and weak, then you are in the wrong and may be beaten and enslaved. But if you are powerful, people must be aware of you.

Source 51 – Stalin speaking in 1931

We are fifty to one hundred years behind the advanced countries. Either we make good the difference in ten years or they will crush us.

Source 52 – Stalin speaking in 1931

We got so dirty and we were such young things, small, slender, fragile. But we had our orders to build the metro and we wanted to do it more than anything else. We wore our miners' overalls with such style. My feet were size four and the boots were elevens. But there was such enthusiasm.

Source 53 – a female worker interviews in 1990 remembers building the Moscow underground

What is the way out of the food problem? The way out is to turn the small and scattered peasant farms, gradually but surely, into large farms based on common, co-operative, collective cultivation of the land. There is no other way out.

Source 54 – Stalin speaking in 1927

At the end of the conference, a tribute to Comrade Stalin was called for. Of course, everyone leapt to his feet. However, who would dare to be the first to stop – after all, NKVD men were in the hall waiting to see who quit first. And in that obscure hall, unknown to the Leader, the applause went on – 6, 7, 8 minutes! They couldn't stop now till they collapsed of heart attacks! Aware of the falsity of the situation, after 11 minutes, the director of the paper factory sat down in his seat. And, oh, a miracle took place! Everyone else stopped dead and sat down. That, however, was how they found who the independent people were. And that was how they set about eliminating them. They easily pasted 10 years in a labour camp on him.

Source 55 – Solzhenitsyn, writing about a Communist Party meeting in 1938

I plead guilty to being one of the leaders of this 'Bloc of Rightists and Trotskyites.' I plead guilty to the sum total of crimes committed by this counter-revolutionary organization, whether or not I knew of, whether or not I took part in, any particular act...For three months I refused to say anything. Then I began to testify. Why? Because while in prison I made a reevaluation of my entire past. For you ask yourself: "If you must die, what are you dying for?"

Source 56 – Nikolai Bukharin's Last Plea to the court in 1938

An old wench waited for two hours to get in a bus. Bus after bus came full and she couldn't squeeze herself in. When she finally managed to crawl in, she wiped her forehead, and said, "Finally, glory to God!"

The driver said, "Mother, you must not say that. You must say 'Glory to comrade Stalin.'"

"Excuse me, comrade," the woman said. "I'm just a backward old woman. I'll say from now on as you told me."

After a while, she said, "Excuse me, comrade, I am old and stupid. What shall I say if, God forbid, Stalin dies?"

"Oh, mother, then you shall say, "Glory to God!"

Source 57 – An anti-Stalin joke told in the thirties

Whoever said that Soviet literature contains only real images is profoundly mistaken. The themes are dictated by the Party. The Party deals harshly with anybody who tries to depict the real state of affairs in their literature. Is it not a fact that all of you now reading these lines saw people dying in the streets in 1932? People, swollen with hunger and foaming at the mouth, lying in their death throes in the streets... Does our literature show any of these horrors, which make your hair stand on end? No.

Source 58 – a protest note from 1935 found in a college



Source 59 –

"Work well, so that comrade Stalin will say thank you!", 1949.
Found in the collection of the Russian State Library, Moscow.

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