



Mains Practice Question

Q. Could Russia have avoided revolution in 1917? How far was the revolution successful in fulfilling its promises? (150 words)

16 May, 2022 GS Paper 1 History

Approach:

- Briefly describe the event
- Mention the social, political and economic circumstances leading to the revolution
- Mention the consequences of the Revolution in Russia
- Conclude with its significance in World History

Answer:

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was one of the most explosive political events of the twentieth century. The violent revolution marked the end of the Romanov dynasty and centuries of Russian Imperial rule.

Was the revolution inevitable?

While the revolutionary events took place within a few short months, social unrest in Russia had been simmering for decades.

- In the early 1900s, Russia was one of the most impoverished countries in Europe with an enormous peasantry and a growing minority of poor industrial workers.
- By 1917 the bond between the Tsar and most of the Russian people had been broken. Governmental corruption and inefficiency were rampant. The Tsar's reactionary policies, including the occasional dissolution of the Duma, or Russian parliament, added fuel to the fire.
- But it was the government's inefficient conduct in World War I, which proved to be the final straw.

By 1917, the Romanov monarchy was decaying quickly, but its emperors may have saved themselves had they not missed repeated chances to reform.

What the revolution yielded?

After the Great October Revolution, the hopes of the Russians did not completely materialize into tangible outcomes- to the extent that one of the foremost leaders of the revolution, Leon Trotsky, wrote a book years later titled, "The Revolution Betrayed".

- Although, some social changes came thick and fast, like equal status for men and women, the legalisation of abortion, communal facilities for childcare to allow women to work, decriminalization of homosexuality, and free education.
- But it wasn't long before when the country plunged into a Civil War, and Bolsheviks began to resort to coercion in order to get things done and to stay in power.
- The Army was used to enforce the procurement of grain from peasants who were thought to have surpluses.
- After the death of Lenin in 1924, Russia was transformed into a totalitarian system, with Stalin at helm, widespread starvation imposed collectivization, gulag-forced labour system, political purges

became the reality of the day.

When it happened, the Great October Revolution produced global hysteria, untamed enthusiasm and hope about the possibility of the creation of heaven on Earth (a new utopia). It signified a natural culmination of the inevitable march of history towards human freedom and social order devoid of exploitation.

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