The 1905 Revolution; Tsar and people, 1906-1914

By the end of this spread you should be able to:
1. describe and explain the causes of the events that occurred during the 1905 Revolution
2. describe the relationship between the Tsar and his people, 1906-1914
3. assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Tsarist regime in 1914

Towards revolution

What happened?
1. In 1904-5 Russia fought Japan for control of Korea and Manchuria.
2. The Tsar expected a quick victory that would silence his critics.
3. Russia suffered a series of defeats on land and sea. Japan destroyed both its Pacific and Baltic fleets.

The war with Japan

The results
1. The Tsar became more unpopular because:
   a) the defeats humiliated Russia
   b) his government was shown to be weak and incompetent.
2. Conditions for working people became worse because of:
   a) increased prices and food shortages
   b) shortages of materials which led to factory closures and unemployment.

Bloody Sunday

The results
1. The massacre:
   a) undermined the Tsar in the eyes of many who had trusted him to help them
   b) increased support for revolutionaries
   c) sparked off a wave of riots, strikes, and murders.

The 1905 Revolution

1905
January: Strikes in St Petersburg. Many Government officials killed.
February: Assassination of Governor-General of Moscow, the Tsar’s uncle.
March: Start of peasant uprisings. Landlords murdered.
May: Non-Russian areas start to demand independence.

July-August: Strikes and peasant uprisings continue.
September: Treaty of Portsmouth ends war with Japan.
October: General strike brings country to a standstill.
The Tsar issues the October Manifesto.
Many strikers return to work.
Liberals welcome the Manifesto and end their opposition.
Revolutionary groups form Soviets (workers councils) in major cities.
December: Police and army break up the St Petersburg and Moscow Soviets.
1906
January-March: The Tsar’s forces crush remaining opposition in town and countryside.

The October Manifesto
The Tsar promised:
1. Freedom of speech and the right to form political parties.
2. A Duma, or national parliament, elected by all adults.
3. To make no new laws without the Duma’s approval.

Why did the Revolution fail?
1. The end of the war with Japan released troops to help the Tsar deal with the disturbances.
2. Despite some mutinies the armed forces stayed loyal to the Tsar.
3. The October Manifesto divided the opposition. It pleased:
   a) many workers who ended their strikes
   b) the Liberals who ended their support for the Soviets.
4. The workers’ strikes and peasants’ uprisings were not co-ordinated.

Tsar and people, 1906-1914

Broken promises
1. The voting system for the Duma was rigged to give landowners and property owners more influence than peasants and workers. Despite this the first two Dumas were left-wing.
2. The Fundamental Laws (May 1906) showed that little had changed. They announced that:
   a) the Tsar remained an autocratic ruler
   b) the Duma had no say in most areas of government
   c) it had limited power to introduce new laws.
3. When the first two Dumas (1906 and 1907) demanded reforms, the Tsar dismissed them.
4. Further changes to the electoral laws excluded Socialists. The next two Dumas were loyal to the Tsar.

Repression
Thousands of terrorists and revolutionaries are executed, exiled or imprisoned.

The rule of Stolypin
1906, the Tsar appoints Peter Stolypin as Prime Minister. Stolypin aims to achieve stability by:
1. Repressing revolutionaries
2. Introducing reforms to improve people’s lives.
3. Tsarist oppression by a revolutionary terrorist.

Results
1. Reduction in terrorism and revolutionary activity.
2. Richer peasants (kulaks) run profitable farms. This
   a) restores their loyalty to the Tsar.
   b) provides more food for the cities.
3. Some improvements for city workers but many remain discontented.
   1912-1914, frequent strikes.

The impact of Rasputin
1. Rasputin was a peasant who
   a) claimed to be a Staret, or holy man
   b) appeared able to stop the bleeding of the Tsar and Tsarina’s haemophiliac son, Alexi
   c) became a trusted member of their court and a confidant of the Tsarina, Alexandra.
2. Under his influence he grew worse because:
   a) he was known to be a drinker and womaniser
   b) after Stolypin’s death his influence over the Tsar’s political decisions increased.
   c) Rasputin’s activities

Reform
1. The countryside:
   a) Abolition of ‘peasants’ annual payments for their freedom (page 112).
   b) Peasants helped to leave their village communities, buy their own land and set up farms.
2. The cities: Health insurance scheme set up for workers.

a) brought scandal to the court
b) caused hostility which reduced people’s loyalty towards the Tsar.

1. What do the events of the 1905 Revolution tell you about the strengths of the Tsarist regime?
2. What were the immediate and long-term results of the 1905 Revolution?
3. Use pages 112-115. What economic, social and political problems faced the Tsar between 1900 and 1914? How successfully did he deal with them?