

Why did the tsarist regime fall in 1917 essay



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1. The message of the cartoon is that the workers in Russia support the whole country - and without them Russia would collapse. It also shows that the rest of the Russians are having an easy and comfortable life at the workers expense, and that this is very unfair.

The cartoonist gets this message across by showing the workers at the bottom of the pile, which is symbolic of the Russian hierarchy, because they are the least important people. They are seen to be supporting the rest of Russia, almost as if Russia would collapse without the workers, which of course is true, as Russia relied on the working class to sustain industries and work in factories etc. Similarly, the Russian people worked because they needed the small amount of money they earned to survive - in the cartoon, the workers are holding up Russia so that they can survive, and that is the only reason. The workers do not have a choice whether they support Russia (work) or not - they will be crushed if they do not hold it up.

The cartoonist further illustrates the unfairness of the Russian hierarchy, as the cartoon depicts the Russian population in a pyramid shape. This shows that the more power, land and authority one has, the higher up the pyramid they will be, but there will be less of those people. The most power is shared by a small amount of people, whereas the least power is shared by a lot of people. The peasants and workers have barely any land, and they certainly have no power or say as to how their country should be run. On the contrary, the Tsar's family and the aristocrats have almost all the power and land, but there are very few of them. The cartoonist shows that the peasants and workers must suffer to sustain the happiness of those higher up.

This is depicted by showing the lower class (peasants and workers) suffering, and even dying at the bottom of the pyramid, whilst everyone above lives happily. You can see that the people above are living happily by looking at the cartoon - the capitalists are eating and laughing, whilst the church, and aristocrats sit around exercising their power - they are not doing any work. No one is looking down towards the lower class, to show that they do not care about them, and may not even acknowledge their existence - this shows that the workers did not get any credit for their hard work, and is very unfair. The cartoonist clearly shows the injustice in Russian society by showing a lot of people suffering for a small amount of people's benefit.

2. I think that this source is quite useful for a historian studying the attitude of the Russian army towards Tsar Nicholas II in the opening months of 1917. We know that in the opening months of 1917, there were mutinies in the army. The source clearly shows that these soldiers have mutinied, because of the banner they are holding which reads: "Down with the Monarchy" The source also suggests that a lot of people were mutinying, as although we can only see about 100 men in the photo, the edges of the photo are filled with people, which would suggest that they were part of a larger crowd. Despite this, there is one thing that would suggest otherwise: All the men seen in the photo are looking at the camera. This would suggest that they all knew they were having their photo taken, and subsequently could have posed for the camera.

This raises suspicion as to whether the 100 men we see in the photo really were part of a larger crowd - if there were only 100 men mutinying, then it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the camera could simply be

brought closer and closer to the men, until they filled the entire picture. They may have wanted to do this for several reasons. Mainly, they could have shown this picture to the Tsar (via newspapers) and hope that he would feel intimidated by the thought of so many men mutinying (as the photo gives the impression of more than 100 men mutinying, although we can only see 100), this would then hopefully cause the Tsar to take action and try to please the revolutionaries and mutinying soldiers before they had to resort to violence (they may have faced opposition in the form of soldiers which stayed loyal to the Tsar). The Photo is not useful to a historian studying the attitude of the Russian army towards Tsar Nicholas II in the opening months of 1917 because this source does not show the entire Russian army. It shows that 100 men were mutinying against the Tsar, but we cannot say what the rest of the army's attitude to the Tsar is. We know that there was a civil war in Russia from 1918-1921, which was only a year after this photo was taken.

In the civil war, some soldiers fought to get the Tsar reinstated, so obviously there were some Russians in 1917 that did not share the opinion (towards the Tsar) of the 100 men we see in the source. Therefore, we cannot assume that the entire army shared the opinions of the people we see in the source, but we can say that the attitude towards the Tsar displayed in the source was shared by a lot of other Russian soldiers, as we know that there was a mutiny in 1917 substantial enough to overthrow the Monarchy. It is not unreasonable to suggest that more soldiers than we can see in the source mutinied, in order for the fall of the Tsarist regime to be possible in 1917.

The source is not useful in the way it doesn't tell us why the soldiers we see are mutinying. We know that in Russia, soldiers mutinied because of several

factors; poor living conditions, underpay, heavy defeats, poor leadership, being forced to fire upon innocent protesters, and not having any say as to how Russia was run. The source doesn't tell us that these are the reasons for mutiny.

These soldiers could have been angry with the Tsar for personal reasons, such as: The Tsar may have neglected their starving family, or one of their relatives may have died at Bloody Sunday. This would have only been a mutiny involving a small number of soldiers, and would therefore not have reflected the views of the entire Russian army. This source is useful because we know what is being showed in the source was actually happening in 1917, and it shows a crowd of men numerous enough to fill the photo, which would suggest that they were part of a larger crowd. The usefulness of this source is limited because it does not show the entire Russian army, only 100 men are seen. We know that in 1918, some soldiers fought to reinstate the Tsar, so obviously the Tsar was liked by some sections of the army, and therefore the attitude showed towards the Tsar by the 100 men we can see in the photo did not apply to the entire Russian army. The source does not tell us why the soldiers we can see mutinying feel the way they do.

Overall, I think that this source is quite useful, as it is a photo, and a photo cannot be forged. The Tsarist regime could not possibly have been well liked if sections of the Russian army resorted to mutiny in 1917. Similarly, however, the Tsar must have been liked well enough by some sections of the Russian army to drive them to fight to reinstate the Tsar in 1918, so the opinions of the soldiers in the Russian army were mixed. This source however does tell us that large sections of the army did mutiny; as we know

that the Tsar was forced to abdicate shortly after the mutiny of the army. 3. Sources C and D agree about Tsar Nicholas II because they both say that he is not well suited to power.

In source C, the writer of the source says " He had not sought power and his personality meant that he was not very good at exercising it". In source D, it says, " His mentality and circumstances kept him wholly out of touch with the people". These two sources agree that Tsar Nicholas II was not well suited to power. Sources C and D also agree about Tsar Nicholas II because they do not blame his intelligence for his mistakes.

They both agree that he is not stupid. In source C, it says " Nicholas was not a stupid man", and in source D, it says " He was an extremely reserved man...

he was not well educated, but he had some knowledge of human nature". There is a difference between being well educated and being intelligent. One can be intelligent but not well educated, like Tsar Nicholas II. These two sources agree that Tsar Nicholas II was not stupid. Sources C and D disagree about whether the Tsar cared about his duties to Russia or not. In source C the writer says " He loved his country and served it loyally to the best of his ability".

This shows that the writer of source C does not blame Tsar Nicholas II for Russia's problems. Source D says " He did not care for anything except his wife, his son, and his daughters". This shows that the writer of source D blames the Tsar's neglect of his duties for Russia's problems. Sources C and D disagree about whether the Tsar cared about his duties to Russia or not.

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Sources C and D also disagree about whether or not the Tsar is to blame for Russia's problems. In source C, it says "[The situation] would probably have destroyed any man who sat on the throne". So source C is trying to show that it was not Tsar Nicholas II fault that bad things were happening, and that the situation was so bad that no-one would have been able to deal with it. In source D, it says " How glad I am that I need no longer attend to those tiresome interviews and sign those everlasting documents!" This shows that the Tsar could have tended to Russia's problems, but he couldn't be bothered, and would rather " Read, walk, and spend time with [his] children".

This shows that it was the Tsar's attitude that was to blame for Russia's problems and not the situation (as suggested in source C). Sources C and D agree about some things and disagree about others. They agree that Tsar Nicholas II was not well suited to power and that he was intelligent, not stupid. They disagree about whether the Tsar tried to remedy Russia's problems, or whether he cared nothing for Russia. They also disagree about whether the Tsar was to blame for Russia's problems, or whether he was unlucky and had no chance of dealing with the situation - which was something he could not control.

4. I think that source F is more reliable than source E, because source F was made to be accurate, and source E could have been exaggerated. I have come to this conclusion by evaluating the reliability of both sources. Source E is quite reliable because the painting depicts women queuing outside a bread shop. They look thin, miserable and underfed, and are waiting outside the shop even though the sign reads ' no bread today'.

.. this shows their desperation, as they are cuing even though there is no bread for sale. The painting is reliable as I know from my historical knowledge that what is depicted in the painting was actually happening around 1917 (when source E was published). Around 1917, the conditions for peasants and workers were terrible.

There were food shortages and dire living conditions due to underpay and neglect. Source F is reliable because it is a police report, and I know from my historical knowledge that police reports in Tsarist Russia were made to be accurate representations of what was actually happening. This would suggest that what is written in a police report from this time would describe to a high degree of accuracy the conditions and events that were actually happening. The first paragraph of source F is likely to be reliable because it shows that there was discontent, and we know from historical knowledge that this was actually happening in 1916. The second paragraph is reliable, as it depicts terrible food shortages, and we know from historical knowledge that this was actually happening in 1916. Source E also shows food shortages, which increases the reliability of both source E and F, as they show the same thing happening around the same time (source E was published in 1917, but it must still have taken time to be made, so the two sources both refer to the same time period).

The third paragraph of source F is also reliable as it depicts discontent and lack of confidence from the Russian people - we know that this was happening from historical knowledge. Both the sources show food shortages and discontent. As they both show the same things, they are equally reliable. Source E is unreliable because it is a painting and is therefore susceptible to

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artistic exaggeration. If adding snow on the ground, and a sign saying “ No bread today” will make the painting better, then the artist may do so, it doesn't necessarily show the absolute truth.

5. The first reason why these sources give different views of the influence of Rasputin over the Tsar and Tsarina is because they were produced for different reasons. Source G was produced in 1916, by opposition to the Tsar. The purpose of the cartoon is to stir up discontent amongst ordinary Russians.

The cartoon tries to suggest that the Tsar and Tsarina were heavily influenced by Rasputin. The cartoon shows this by depicting the Tsar and Tsarina in the palm of Rasputin's hand, almost as if they are his puppets, and he can control them. This would create a feeling of discontent, as it would make ordinary Russians believe that a dirty, ragged tramp (Rasputin) was in fact controlling Russia. This is why the cartoon shows this - because the opposition want to stir up discontent for the Tsar and his regime.

Source H, was produced after the revolution. We know this as it is an extract from the book ' before the revolution' - it must have been written after the revolution for the author to have known that there was to be a revolution. Because this source is looking back at an event in the past, there is less reason for the author to want to make anything up. Source H was written to be an accurate historical account of what was happening.

Source H gives a different view of Rasputin than source G, because source G was trying to affect the opinions of people at the time (in 1916) by showing a distorted view of the relationship between ' the Russian Tsars' and Rasputin.

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On the other hand, source H is taken from a book written after the revolution and therefore the purpose of the source was to give a historically accurate view of what was actually happening at the time. Because of the differences in the reasons these two sources were produced, these sources give different views on the influence of Rasputin over the Tsar and Tsarina. The second reason why these sources give different views about the influence of Rasputin is because the sources were written with different amounts of information available to them. Source G is a cartoon produced by opposition to the Tsar, and it portrays the Tsar and Tsarina being controlled by Rasputin. He is bigger, and higher up than them, which is trying to show that he has more power than they do.

The Tsar and Tsarina look helpless, in a trance, and almost hypnotised. As this cartoon was produced by opposition to the Tsar, there would be no way that they would be able to have had access to any of the Tsar's palaces or mansions, in order for the truth about Rasputin's influence to be discovered. They would not know the truth, so the cartoon would only be speculation. Imagine if the cartoonist who drew source G had had access to source H - they would know that the Tsar was not actually under the influence of Rasputin - as source G would suggest.

Source H is a historical account of Rasputin's influence, written after the period it depicts, and therefore the writer would have access to more information than the cartoonist of source G. This would result in source H being more accurate than source G, and they would therefore show different views of the influence of Rasputin. Source G suggests that Rasputin controls the Tsar and the Tsarina (they are both sitting on his knee), whereas source

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H suggests that Rasputin only had control over the Tsarina. This is shown by the quote: ' Why don't you do what Our Friend [Rasputin] has advised...

? ; I wrote to you that he did not want so-and-so appointed as a minister, but you have done so. This is what you always do.' This shows that the Tsarina is affected by Rasputin, as she seems annoyed when the Tsar doesn't do what Rasputin advises. As the Tsar was believed to be ' appointed by God', for the Tsarina to dispute the Tsar's decisions and give preference to Rasputin, was a clear sign that she was under the influence of Rasputin. Sources G and H show different views on the influence of Rasputin because source G was made by opposition to the Tsar and was designed to show a distorted view on how much control Rasputin had over the Tsar and the Tsarina.

Source H was written to be a historically accurate account of the relationship between the Tsars and Rasputin. Sources G and H also show different views on the influence of Rasputin because the writers of the two sources would have had access to different amounts of information. Source G was produced by opposition to the Tsar and therefore they would not have been allowed to enter the Tsar's palaces in order for the truth about Rasputin's influence to be discovered. Source G is therefore speculation, as the writer would not truly know whether what is seen in source G was accurate or not. Source H was written after the event, and so the writer had access to much more information than the cartoonist of source G.

This means that source H is much more accurate than source G, and subsequently they show different views of Rasputin's influence over the Tsar and Tsarina.