

Tsar nicholas ii essay sample



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To what extent was Tsar Nicholas II responsible for the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917

It was the political naivete and extreme obstinance of Tsar Nicholas II that led to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. Some aspects of the Tsar's behaviour definitely contributed to the fall of Russia, however lots of these qualities were not weaknesses in his character, but rather poor leadership qualities. Some of the causes included Tsar Nicholas II's autocratic rulership, the socio-economic changes happening at the time, famine and also the outbreak of WWI. It can be argued that Tsar Nicholas II's autocratic rulership was a main cause of the Russian Revoultion. The working and lower classes did not have any say in how the country was run, and were tired of this. However such cannot be blamed soley on the Tsar's own decisions, as aristocracy was instilled in him by his father, Alexander III. Therefore, if there were any doubts about Nicholas' belief in autocracy, they would have been put to rest. Because of this long running autocratic rulership, and the unfairness which came along with it, people were at their wits end and grabbed onto the first opportunity they saw as a chance at democracy.

This is why Lenin - who promised the people bread, peace and land was able to get such a large following in such a short period. There were other very big factors that contributed to the revolution that the Tsar had little to do with. There were massive socio-economic changes taking place. This created a new class of factory workers. The working class, mostly the peasants - who comprised of 84% of the Russian population - were moved to the city to work in factories. Little could have been done about this as products had to be manufactured in the country, as trade routes were cut off due to WWI. On

one hand, due to Tsar Nicholas II autocratic policies, there were no trade unions, to look out workers rights. For that reason living and working conditions were very bad. Workers worked for 14 hours a day and slept in overcrowded lodging houses, as illustrated by Father Gapon in 1905. On the other hand if the workers were treated better, they wouldn't have been so quick to go against the Tsar. His apathy further alienated his people.

His fatal decision to go to WW1, was a strong cause of the revolution. Furthermore he decided to take matters into his own hands by becoming Commander in Chief. He thought that his tactics, maneuvering and royal presence would win Russia the war. Unfortunately this did not go as planned, and Russia was defeated. Although they had lost the war, Nicholas as a leader had stepped up and tried to make his country victorious. It was his lack of military experience that had devastated the Russian army, not a weakness in his character. Nevertheless, Russian citizens seen this as another failure in their leader, as they suffered more losses than any other country. This damaged Russias morale. The people had, had enough.

The Winter of 1917 was a difficult period for the people of Russia. The railways which transported the food froze. People were hungry and angry. They blamed their ruler, Tsar Nicholas II for their hardships. Although famine and cold was a natural disaster, Tsar Nicholas II was partly to blame because of his incompetence as the leader. A leader of the people would have foreseen the shortage of food, because Russia was known for its extreme cold Winters. Thus food should have been stock piled or alternative transport methods should have been made to get food to the people. Lenin appealed to the people, as he promised them bread.

During the final years of his rule, Nicholas alienated most of his supporters in the upper class. They wanted reform, but the Tsar refused to create a popular government. Indeed this was a result of his political naivete. He didnt realize the extent of the situation. If he did manage to keep a united upper-class, the revoultion could have been avoided. However, even before he was made Tsar, Nicholas lived the life of an idle socialite. As he had never taken a liking to political affairs, he was underprepared to take the throne. This fact along with his stubborn belief in autocracy - explains his political naivete in many of the difficult situations he faced.