

Russian Revolution UPSC Notes

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was one of the most important occasions of the 19th century. It was a time of social and political turmoil during this revolution. 1917 saw two revolutions in Russia that fundamentally altered the nation. Following two revolutions, a civil war, and the abolition of the monarchy, Russia switched to a socialist system of governance.

- With a sizable population of farmers and an increasing number of industrial employees, Russia in the 1900s was one of the most extremely impoverished and least advanced industrial countries in Europe.
- Serfdom, one of the final remnants of feudalism, was still in use there. Landless farmers were compelled to work for the landowner nobles under the serfdom system.
- Although the majority of Europe had abandoned the practice by the Reformation in the late 16th century, it persisted in Russia long into the 19th.
- Serfdom wasn't officially abolished until 1861. Serfs' liberation would trigger a series of circumstances that, in the following years, would result in the Russian Revolution.

What is Russian Revolution?

In this section, one can read about the circumstances that lead to the Russian revolution. In Russia, industrialization caused the populace of cities like St. Petersburg and Moscow to quadruple, placing pressure on the cities' facilities and contributing to congestion and pollution. The working class in cities reached a new level of deprivation as a result.

- Compared to the rest of Europe, Russia experienced the Industrial Revolution much later. When it did, a plethora of political and social upheavals accompanied it.
- Overcrowding and pollution resulted from the Industrial Revolution's doubling of the population in Russia's urban centres, including St. Petersburg and Moscow. This put a strain on the cities' infrastructure. The workers in cities reached a fresh level of deprivation as a consequence.
- Long-term food shortages in the large nation were caused by decades of poor economic management and expensive wars, which could not be sustained by the population surge.
- On January 22, 1905, the Russian populace, which was primarily made up of workers, went to Tsar Nicholas II's winter palace in protest of their current circumstances. He had given the order not to fire on the unarmed throng even though he wasn't present at the time.
- However, the cops largely disregarded his directives, either as a result of miscommunication or outright ineptitude on their part.
- The military was terrified by the magnitude of the throng when they finally arrived in force. When ordered to do so, the protestors refused to disperse, and the Russian military opened fire, killing and injuring hundreds of them.
- The massacre served as the impetus for the Russian revolution of 1905, to which incensed workers responded by going on a string of devastating strikes across the nation. The strikes increased the risk that Russia's already shaky economy would collapse. Nicholas II was forced into reforms, which would become known as the October Manifesto. But in order to maintain his hold on power, he kept delaying them. He disbanded the Russian parliament, which he had promised would carry out reforms, to that end.

- The 1905 Russian revolution had no lasting effects, but Bloody Sunday had soured the Tsar's relationship with his subjects.

Causes of Russian Revolution

The czarist imperial government's pervasive malfeasance and ineffectiveness, rising discontent among peasant farmers, workers, and troops, the monarchy's level of control over the Russian Orthodox Church, and the collapse of the Imperial Russian Army during World War I were the main causes of the Russian Revolution. Let's learn in detail about the causes of the Russian Revolution here.

The Political Causes:

- The idea of the Russian revolution was born among the common people when their dreams for democracy were dashed.
- In terms of politics, the Russian people despised the autocracy of the then-ruling Tsar Nicholas II and his dishonest and antiquated policies.
- Additionally, the January 1905 Bloody Sunday slaughter increased the populace's desire to topple the Tsarist regime. The nation experienced a number of strikes in retaliation for the massacre.

The Social Causes:

- Russians were mainly working-class peasants. Only 1.5% of the population in Russia possessed a quarter of the land.
- The rural agricultural peasants were freed from serfdom in 1861, but they still had to pay the state for their redemption.
- Many peasants sometimes revolted to regain control of their estates, but they were unsuccessful. These accumulated resentments served as fuel for the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The Financial Causes:

- The Russian Revolution is thought to have been economically triggered by the country's out-of-date economy.
- Rarely did the rural poor own modern equipment and tools. Due to the country's typically chilly temperature, the growing season in Russia was just four to six months long.
- In Western Europe, where it normally lasted eight to nine months, the growing season was shorter.

About February Revolution

On March 8, 1917, the **February Revolution** got underway. It is referred to as the February Revolution since Russia at the time followed the Julian Calendar. The revolution happened on February 23, according to the Julian calendar.

People protested in the streets of St. Petersburg, the city's capital, because of ongoing food shortages.

- Russian revolution occurred on March 8, 1917. The date, according to the Julian calendar, is February 23. Soviet factory employees infected by the famine and irate protesters took to the streets of St. Petersburg.

- On March 11, armed forces sprang into action to put an end to the turmoil. The soldiers originally carried out orders to shoot the protesters but then opted to support their cause.
- They killed their officers and joined the uprising. The Russian Parliament quickly established a new Provisional Government led by Alexander Kerensky.
- In an effort to quell domestic turmoil, Nicholas II abdicated the throne at the same moment. Under Kerensky, Duma leaders gradually established a new administration.
- A democratic government was backed by the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet, a local body representing the city's soldiers and workers.
- As a result, Kerensky extended the conflict, which made the Russian economy worse. As a result, riots broke out, and food shortages worsened in several Russian cities.
- The army and the populace opposed his decision to escalate the conflict. The Social Revolutionaries, who were vying for power at the time, organized the soviets.
- On March 11, the troops manning St. Petersburg were summoned to put an end to the demonstrations, but despite opening fire on them, the unrest persisted.
- On March 12, the Duma, the Russian parliament, established a provisional administration. Nicholas II abdicated the throne, bringing an end to centuries of Russian family supremacy.
- A list of rights, including the freedom of speech and the ability of unions to form and go on strike, was established by the new administration led by Alexander Kerensky. In spite of this, he carried on the war with Germany despite widespread resistance.
- This action made Russia's food supply issues worse. Peasants plundered fields, and food riots broke out in the cities, fueling further unrest, which led to the February revolution.

October Revolution

Now, let us know the events of the second phase of the Russian revolution which is also known as the October revolution. Military, farmers and labourers made up the council of the new Leninist government. The Bolsheviks and their allies took over key areas of St. Petersburg, and Lenin quickly became the leader of a new administration that had been founded all over Russia. The first communist state in history was ruled by Lenin.

- November 1917 saw the Russian October Revolution. On October 25, according to the Julian calendar. On October 10, Vladimir Lenin persuaded the Bolshevik Party's top brass that it was time for another military uprising.
- In the early hours of October 25, 1917, Bolshevik soldiers subsequently took over the power plant, bank, railroad station, post office, telegraph, and important bridges.
- They quickly established a new administration with Lenin as its leader, took control of strategic areas throughout St. Petersburg, and changed their name to the "communist party." The first communist nation in history elected Lenin as its leader.
- The Bolsheviks seized Petrograd later that day, and Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky escaped. The Bolshevik army seized the Winter Palace the following day, taking over as the country's new ruler.
- Private land property was abolished as part of the Lenin Russian Revolution's conclusion, and workers took control of companies.
- Late in 1917, a civil war in Russia broke out between the Red and White groups, which were made up primarily of communists and socialists and authoritarians, businessmen, and democratic supporters.
- On July 16, 1918, the Bolsheviks murdered Nicholas and his entire family.
- The red army of Lenin would declare victory after the war's conclusion in 1923. It would open the door for the Soviet Union to emerge as a communist superpower. In the

ensuing decades, the Soviet Union would grow to be a powerful force in the events of the Cold War.

Events of the Russian Revolution

Let us look at the events of the Russian revolution here. The war was terrible for Russia because its army had not been upgraded at the same rate as Germany. It suffered far more wartime casualties than any other country. Key Russian lands had been taken by Germany, which led to increased food scarcity and economic disruption.

- In August 1914, Russia joined its allies, the Serbians, French, and British, in starting a war on the Central Powers of Austria, Germany, and Ottoman Turkey.
- Tsar Nicholas II personally travelled to take control of the army, leaving his wife, Tsarina Alexandra, in control of the government, in an effort to unite the Russian troops and people in the aftermath of the battle front's worsening state.
- The Tsarina was despised by the Russian people because of her German ancestry. Her decision to fire elected officials based on the supposed counsel of Rasputin, a contentious mystic and preacher, did not make matters any better. During the period, his power and influence over the Russian royal house were well recognised.
- On December 30, 1916, Rasputin was assassinated by nobility jealous of his power at the imperial court, but the harm had already been done. The Tsarist regime was no longer trusted by the majority of Russians. In the ensuing years, this anger would quickly develop into a full-fledged revolution.

Aftermath of Russian Revolution

Russia saw a number of political transformations as a result of the Russian revolution. It overturned the liberal Provisional Government and put an end to the nation's dictatorial regime. The Soviet Union eventually emerged until its collapse in 1991. But this battle also had a number of aftereffects.

- The Russian Revolution put an end to the Tsars' reign.
- In July 1918, the Bolsheviks put Nicholas II, his wife, children, and four servants to death.
- Under Lenin, the Communist Party was established.
- The intelligence services, or Cheka, were founded by the Bolshevik Party.
- To oversee the Russian economy, a National Council was established.
- Additionally, during the Russian Revolution, banks were nationalised.
- When Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, World War I was over.
- Farmers and factory workers were all given their own farms and factories.
- From 1918 through 1920, the Russian Civil War raged on.

Russian Revolution Summary

Numerous significant occurrences occurred during the 1917 Russian Revolution. Initially, these events changed the political, economic, and social landscape of Russia. Second, it produced a fair and inclusive society for everyone. Equal possibilities for personal growth were a guiding principle in post-revolutionary Russian society. Thirdly, many oppressed nations around the world were inspired by the Russian revolution. People saw how hard it was for regular people to fight for their freedom and better living conditions.

Last but not least, the Russian experience offered a fresh blueprint for global social liberation, economic advancement, and political change. As one may imagine, the Russian revolution was a magnificent series of occasions that had a significant impact.

