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Russian Revolution 1917

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With Russia being under the “Romanov Dynasty”¹, for 300 years, the eventual collapse of this Dynasty led to the rise of political power of the Bolsheviks in 1917. The Russian Revolution begins in February of 1917 when Nicholas II takes responsibility for the Russian military during World War I. However, the most notable aspects of the Russian Revolution take place during October of 1917, when the Bolshevik’s start seizing power of the country. The shift of power lead to a clash of ideologies, splitting the country, with the side of the Bolsheviks and the “Whites”. The most substantial consequences of the Russian Revolution were, the civil war that quickly ensued after 1918, a rapidly evolving economy, along with the instillation of Communism leaving long lasting effects on the country. During 1918, the civil war commenced, and was a clash of ideologies between the Reds (Bolsheviks and proposed Communist ideas) versus the Whites, whom had wanted to keep the old ideologies such as Monarchy. What followed shortly after was the NEP², which stood for “New Economic Policy”. Which led to Russia under Lenin not imposing Communism radically. After Lenin’s passage, Stalin came to power, and instilled “Industrialization and Collectivization”, the economy for the Soviet Union evolved at a rapid rate. While Communism had been the official political ideology for the country when the Bolsheviks took full control of the country in 1918, it had the longest lasting consequences on the country. Communism was still the dominating political belief in Russia.

¹ Glenn Eldon Curtis, “Russia: a country study.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1998). Accessed April 08, 2017, <https://cdn.loc.gov/master/frd/frdcsty/ru/russiaincountrystu00curt/russiaincountrystu00curt.pdf>.

² Qualls, Karl D., "The Russian Revolutions: The Impact and Limitations of Western Influence" (2003). Dickinson College Faculty Publications. Paper 8. http://scholar.dickinson.edu/faculty_publications/8. 19

The civil war in 1918 happened between the Red Army (Bolsheviks), and the White Army (anti-Bolsheviks along with foreign allies). The Bolsheviks saw this war as a class war in the domestic and international sense. To clarify, they saw it as the Russian proletariat against Russian bourgeoisie³. The Bolsheviks were victorious in 1920. However, the consequences of the war were drastic, it left the Russian society polarized, the economy was ruined. It at the time was flourishing off of agriculture work, by the end of the civil war, the agricultural production was barely reaching half of the output during the first World War, industrial production was smothered into a small portion of what it was just before the war⁴. Another consequence of the civil war was that it “militarized the revolutionary political culture of the Bolshevik movement”⁵. Which in turn created a society that could use threats and physical violence if the administration thought it was a necessary action to do so.

After the civil war, with the economy being left in shambles. Towns were empty, along with industries being halted to a standstill. In an effort to revitalize a dead economy, different Russian economic policies were enforced, which caused great changes for the Russian population. Lenin, the political leader at the time, issued the NEP. While this policy was influenced by Marxism, the policy had one distinct twist, which allowed for capitalism. Individuals could own businesses and factories, while the state-owned transportation,

³ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “The Russian revolution, Second ed.” (Oxford: New York, 2001). Accessed April 07, 2017, http://mrreynoldsclasses.weebly.com/uploads/1/7/2/5/17254072/the_russian_revolution_-_sheila_fitzpatrick.pdf.

⁴ Glenn Eldon Curtis, “Russia: a country study.” (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1998). Accessed April 08, 2017, <https://cdn.loc.gov/master/frd/frdcsty/ru/russiaincountrystu00curt/russiaincountrystu00curt.pdf>.

⁵ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “The Russian revolution, Second ed.” (Oxford: New York, 2001). Accessed April 07, 2017, http://mrreynoldsclasses.weebly.com/uploads/1/7/2/5/17254072/the_russian_revolution_-_sheila_fitzpatrick.pdf.

communication, and more belongings of that nature. The idea behind the Russian Revolution was to eradicate capitalism, but this policy was proven to be successful, as it brought greater productivity and greater production. When Lenin passed away in early 1924, Stalin took power and proposed the idea of “Socialism in one country”⁶. He named this strategy the “Five-Year Plan”. During the NEP, it left the Soviet Union with a “rural surplus population”, this led to the idea of carrying the surplus to the industries of the cities. Stalin achieved this goal with “collectivization”⁷. This policy was ruthless, it forced migration (to the cities), high taxation to rural areas, along with compulsory requisitions. This policy was chaotic for the population. It removed the ability for peasants to collect goods, sell their goods after paying their tax for said good. The Five-Year Plan removed the capitalism that was left in the NEP, and this left major consequences. By the 1930s, the peasants could no longer use the benefits of the NEP, and were hungry. This also led to farmers being executed, along with their livestock being slaughtered, and left to rot, rather than being consumed. This led to Russia looking more like the product that the revolution was based on, which was Marxism. However, this Marxism was heavily interpreted by Stalin, and these economic changes brought a lot of suffering to the people whom were not in a position of power in an underdeveloped country.

⁶ Qualls, Karl D., "The Russian Revolutions: The Impact and Limitations of Western Influence" (2003). Dickinson College Faculty

Publications. Paper 8. http://scholar.dickinson.edu/faculty_publications/8. 19

⁷ Qualls, Karl D., "The Russian Revolutions: The Impact and Limitations of Western Influence" (2003). Dickinson College Faculty

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Stalin was the central piece to propagate, and solidify Russia's ties with communism. His take on Marx's ideas were that communism and socialism could be established in one country, therefore isolating said country from the rest of the world. Communism, outlasted Stalin, and was present up until 1989, which saw the dismantling of the communist parties and ideologies to lead the country⁸. With this radical change in ideology, it brought partial democracy to the political system that was running the Soviet Union. While communism was one of the first changes brought by the Russian Revolution, it was definitely the longest consequence out of the aftermath that was wrought by the Russian Revolution in 1917. The consequences with communism were never addressed by Karl Marx, as it is an ideology that is utopian, and only works in theory. Communism left the citizens unfree, as well with political elections that were lacking in democratic accountability. The economy was also inferior to surrounding countries. Other countries in Asia were developing on a technological scale more rapidly than the Soviet Union⁹. One of the biggest issues that came with communism for its citizens was the fact that the reward for quality products were low, and the punishment for failure was high. This led to a population that was infested with an alcoholism, and a slow economy with many flaws to its system.

⁸ Archie Brown, "The rise and fall of communism" (New York: Ecco Press, 2011). Accessed April 09, 2017, <http://www.usislam.org/pdf/The-Rise-and-Fall-of-Communism.pdf>.

⁹ Archie Brown, "The rise and fall of communism" (New York: Ecco Press, 2011). Accessed April 09, 2017, <http://www.usislam.org/pdf/The-Rise-and-Fall-of-Communism.pdf>.

¹⁰ Fernholz, Elizabeth M. "The Russian Revolution of 1917." The Russian Revolution of 1917. Accessed April 05, 2017. <http://academic.mu.edu/meissnerd/russian-rev.htm>.

The Russian Revolution in 1917, is one of the most important events of the 20th century¹⁰. Without it, the world would be in a much different place than it is now. The world saw to the fullest extent as to how communism can tear apart a nation through three significant consequences: The civil war that emerged whom was a war between those that favoured communism, and those that opposed, a rapidly evolving economy that brutalized its citizens, and a political ideology that dominated the country for 72 year. The Russian Revolution in 1917 marked an end to the Romanov Dynasty that had control to the Russian Empire for 300 years, and gave birth to a new country that shocked the world with its way of functioning. The Russian Revolution gave us a new perspective on how to run a country, and even to this day the repercussions can still be felt today in other countries.

"Thirty Years of America's Drug War a Chronology," PBS, , accessed December 13, 2017, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/cron/>.

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