Fall Of Teh House Of Romanov Essay, Research Paper

The Ruin of the Romanov Regency

The Romanov family, a great and prestigious lineage, ruled over Russia from 1613 to 1917. Although it had, in the past, overcome all types of dilemmas, the Romanov family was to fall, at last, in 1917 with the resignation of Tsar Nicholas the Second.

After the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, the Russian army was severely weakened and, as a result, the Russian government was forced to endure the restraints of a cautious foreign policy. As it was necessary for the Russian army to rebuild itself before Russia could again be considered as great a power as it had been, most of Russia’s efforts had to concentrated within the country. For assistance in rebuilding its power, Russia received loans from France, which strengthened their alliance.

After having been defeated in the Russo-Japanese war, Russia no longer had much influence in East Asia and therefore turned its efforts to the Balkan states where an unstable situation was developing with the weakening of the Habsburg monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. The Russian foreign minister, Aleksandr Petrovich Izvolsky, failed to consummate a deal with Austria over the control of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This resulted in Austria taking control of those two Balkan states; this national humiliation caused Ivolsky to resign.

Because Russia had, for a long time, had a policy of protecting its Slavic ?brothers’, the Assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in June of 1914 and the ensuing demand by Austria of Serbia put Russia in a difficult situation. It could not very well back down to Austrian demands again (as it had in the Bosnia-Herzegovina affair), and yet to not give in would mean to set the two sets of alliances at odds (the Triple Entente against the Triple Alliance) and to put Europe at war. But, in accordance with the beliefs of the time, Russia decided in favour of the war in hopes that their power would be extended and solidified in the Balkans.

At first it seemed as if the war would only reinforce support for the Russian monarchy: the Duma (a governmental assembly which had members opposed to the monarchy) was suspended for months and the country united under Tsar Nicholas and his wife, Alexandra, to support the Russian armies. The social organization of Russia diversified so as to account for the changes brought about by war and this developed a new sense of purpose for the Russian people. But soon, the entry of Turkey into the war on Germany’s side meant that Russia no longer had access to supplies through the Dardanelles. This change created a great rise in power of the Duma which wished the monarchy to be more in tune with the needs of the populace. The Duma had new ideas about how to deal with the shortage of supplies and other war-time troubles. Eventually a Progressive Party was formed, a party which called for a partly elected (as opposed to appointed) government, the emancipation of minorities, the autonomy of Poland and the democratization of the government. Tsar Nicholas did not entertain these views, however, and decided that the best way to deal with the war was to take command of the Russian armies himself.

By taking command, Nicholas was forced to leave Moscow so as to be closer to the Western front with Germany. This left him cut off from the government, and, with no idea as to the proceedings of the government, Tsar Nicholas made constant ministerial changes, partly under the guidance of Alexandra and Rasputin. Despite these shortcomings, however, Nicholas improved the situation in the west and managed to stabilize the Baltic and Polish fronts.

The government, having struggled for years with its finances, and being no longer supported by France, began to have serious financial trouble. That, combined with the food shortage, caused a huge rise in inflation which workers’ wages could not keep up to. The workers began striking during the summer of 1915, these strikes escalated and eventually targeted on the Putilov Armament and St. Petersburg in January of 1917. In retaliation to these strikes, the government arrested all members of a group affiliated with these strikes, the Central War Industries Committee.

In February of 1917 the revolution began, at first in the food lines of Moscow, but it spread rapidly and found a catalyst when government troops refused to quell the uprising. The revolutionists and the soldiers worked together to form the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, a recreation of the political institution which had been in place in 1905. Eventually the St. Petersburg soviet and the Duma formed the Provisional Government. On the second of March, the news reached the Tsar Nicholas who was stranded in a train. Tsar Nicholas gloriously ended his reign over Russia by dictating his abdication to the emissaries of the Provisional Government and thus brought and end to the ancient Romanov dynasty.

This abdication, however, was not the end of the Romanov family: it still held quite a bit of power in the Russian government. To completely absolve the Romanovs of their power, the Bolsheviks imprisoned them and, at 2:30 on July 17th, 1918 in Yekaterinburg, murdered them. The Romanovs and a few servants were led into a basement under the pretense of having their picture taken: instead, they were lined up and shot execution-style by eleven guards who then took the bodies and burned them. This brutal murder was very popular in the public eye and many rumours surfaced about whether or not any of the Romanov family members had survived. This murder was the true end of the Romanov family.