**Theme:** Change—Collapse of Government (January 2013)

The sudden death of a ruler, a defeat in war, or a successful revolution has often led to the collapse of a government. Political, social, and economic changes have occurred as a result of the collapse of a government.

**Task:** Select two situations where the collapse of a government has led to significant changes in a country or region, and for each

* Describe the historical circumstances that led to the collapse of a government
* Discuss the political, social, and/or economic changes that occurred as a result of the collapse of that government

You may use any situation from your study of global history and geography in which the collapse of a government led to significant changes in a country or region. Some suggestions you might wish to consider include collapse of the Roman Empire**, collapse of Louis XVI’s government**, collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate, **collapse of Czar Nicholas II’s government**, collapse of the Ottoman Empire, collapse of the Nationalist government in China [Guomindang], collapse of Batista’s government in Cuba, fall of Reza Pahlavi’s government in Iran, breakup of Yugoslavia, and collapse of the Soviet Union.

**Collapse of Louis XVI**

* *Describe the historical circumstances that led to the collapse of a government*
	+ Economic
		- Unequal tax structure
			* Only 3rd estate paid taxes
			* Louis could not order changes to the tax code, needed the Estates General to approve them
		- France was bankrupt
			* Louis XIV built Versailles which bankrupted the French treasury
			* Not enough tax revenue
		- American Revolution
			* Louis XVI got France involved in the American Revolution which cost a substantial amount of money
	+ Social
		- Estate System
			* France was divided into 3 estates (social classes)
				+ Based on birth
				+ No mobility
			* 1st estate – clergy
			* 2nd estate – nobles
			* 3rd estate – peasants
				+ Bourgeoisie – wealthy peasants who were oppressed because they were members of the 3rd estate – wanted more influence
		- Shortage of food
			* Due to poor harvests and inflation the majority of peasants in France were starving
	+ Political
		- Absolute government
			* Louis XVI did not have to consult advisors before making a decision
				+ Could spend money in any matter he saw fit
		- Estates General
			* Legislative branch in the French government that only met at the will of the king – had not met for 175 years.
			* Louis XVI called them to change the tax code to have the 1st and 2nd estates pay taxes as well
				+ He did not give them an agenda
				+ Fighting began over voting processes

3rd estate wanted voting by head not estate

They were constantly outvoted by the 1st and 2nd estates with voting by estate

* *Discuss the political, social, and/or economic changes that occurred as a result of the collapse of that government*
	+ 3rd estate refused to participate in the Estates General until the voting changes were made
		- Took the Tennis Court Oath – stay on king’s tennis court until he agrees tot heir demands
	+ King was forced to sign the Declaration of the Rights of Man and a new constitution – guaranteeing rights to citizens – ended the absolute monarchy
	+ People were not satisfied by the king’s changes and demanded more severe changes
		- Led to Reign of Terror
	+ Robespierre wanted to create a Republic of Virtue and killed all enemies of the revolution – including King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette
	+ After Robespierre – the Directory (5 man council) came into power, sought Napoleon’s help to rule
	+ Napoleon
		- Created the Napoleonic Code
		- A Meritocracy
		- Allowed peasants to keep lands taken when the nobility fled
		- Eventually became a dictator –and crowned himself emperor
			* Did not support legislative assemblies

**Collapse of Czar Nicholas II’s government**

* *Describe the historical circumstances that led to the collapse of a government*
	+ Economic
		- Russia did not go through the Renaissance due to the Mongolian occupation
		- Peter the Great’s attempts at gradual modernization failed
			* Russia was forced to modernize quickly
				+ Led to many problems – poor working conditions, unfair working hours and wages
	+ Social
		- Russia ended feudalism in the late 1800s but did not give the peasants land
			* Majority were homeless and starving
		- Poor harvests led to increasing unhappiness
		- Bloody Sunday – peaceful protest on the Tsar’s winter palace led to the death’s of many people – bond with the Tsar was broken
			* Peasants felt abandoned by their Little Father
		- People resented not having a say in their government
	+ Political
		- Poor leadership of Tsar Nicholas II
			* Inept ruler – make poor decisions
			* Repeatedly dismissed the Duma (legislature) without making any changes
			* Russo-Japanese War – 1st time an Asian nation beat a European nation
			* Left his wife in charge of Russia while he visited the frontlines of WWI
				+ She was influenced by Rasputin (medical man) to put his supporters into power – weakened the monarchy
* *Discuss the political, social, and/or economic changes that occurred as a result of the collapse of that government*
	+ 1917 – Tsar was overthrown by Marxist revolutionaries who supported adopting communism
		- Led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks
			* Lenin campaigned on the idea of peace, land, and bread
				+ Would end WWI
				+ Redistribute land
				+ Provide food to people
			* Small group of people ruled Russia with absolute power
				+ Called Soviets
			* Began the New Economic Policy – included capitalist ideas to try to jump start the Russian economy
		- Stalin takes over after Lenin’s death
			* Command economy – government controls all means of production
			* Great Purge – eliminated all opposition
			* No political rights.