Why was Tsarism able to survive the 1905 Revolution?

1. **Weaknesses of Opponents**
   - The Revolution in 1905 had not been planned and lacked leadership.
   - A spontaneous reaction to economic/political crisis caused by failure in the Russo-Japanese War and economic depression/harvest failures.
   - Participants had a mixture of economic/political aims:
     - MCs wanted more political say.
     - Peasants were concerned about poor harvests/payments of Redemption Dues.
     - WCs were angry about inflation/unemployment/working and living conditions.
     - National minorities sought greater self-governments.
     - Revolutionary groups such as the SRs, Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks played little part in the events of 1905.
   - Catalyst was Bloody Sunday—a peaceful protest fired on by Tsarist troops.

2. **Strengths of Tsarism**
   - The Tsar used a mixture of political concession, land reform, and repression to divide its opponents.

   **Political concessions**
   - The Tsar granted the October Manifesto which allowed the setting up of a Duma (elected assembly).
   - Also granted greater freedom of speech, the right to form political groups, freedom to hold public meetings, and freedom of the press.

   Once secure, the Tsar went back on his promises with the Fundamental Laws which allowed him to rule by decree when the Duma was not in session.

   Changes to the electoral system in 1907 gave the nobility greater influence in the Duma than other groups.

   A State Council could stop laws passed by the Duma.

   Newspapers needed a licence to operate and could be closed down if critical of the regime.

   Public meetings needed prior notice and police approval.

   The Tsar was unwilling to tolerate extreme groups.

   The first two Dumas (1906-7 and Feb-June 1907) were considered too extreme and quickly closed down.

   The third Duma only lasted longer because it was more moderate (following 1907 electoral changes) and because PM Stolypin was willing to work with it. Even then, the government sometimes bypassed the Duma and ruled by decree.

   **Reforms**
   - **Land reform (Stolypin's Land Law)**
     - Stolypin wanted to create a class of 'better off' peasants who would be loyal to the existing system and increase agricultural productivity.
     - Peasants were given financial help, through the setting up of a Peasant Bank, to leave the communal system and buy their own farms.
     - Redemption dues were cancelled.
     - 1906 onwards saw a period of good harvests which helped to reduce peasant unrest.

   Reforms in health and education also went some way in appeasing the masses, e.g., Health Insurance Scheme set up for injured workers and greater access to primary school education.

   **Repression**
   - 'Stolypin's necktie'—peasants accused of riot and rebellion were brought before 'Field Courts for Civilians'.
   - 1,114 were executed 1906-7 (1907-9—5,000 executions) and thousands more were exiled to Siberia.
   - The St Petersburg Soviet was crushed and revolutionaries, such as Trotsky, jailed (Lenin fled abroad).
   - Workers' disturbances were also repressed, e.g., Lena Goldfields strike in 1912—governments sent in troops and killed 270 workers.

   **The Tsarist system also had luck on its side.**
   - The Tsarism retained the loyalty of key groups:
     - The army—troops returning from the Russo-Japanese War were loyal and were used to put down disturbances.
     - The Tsarism retained the loyalty of the nobility, bureaucracy, and the Church.

   After 1906 there was an economic recovery so much of the reasons behind the discontent in 1905 were no longer as relevant. Also, a period of good harvests so plentiful food.

Typical question: "The survival of the Tsar's regime in Russia between 1906 and 1914 was due to the weaknesses of its opponents." How far would you accept this statement?