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To access Web Resources for this title, go to www.htav.asn.au/publications/publications/historyedrtextbook.

In each chapter of this book you will see the following icons appearing in the margins. Follow the instructions at the URL above to access these and other Web Resources on the Russian Revolution and historical thinking skills.

1. China Rising: The Revolutionary Experience
2. Liberating France: The Revolutionary Experience
3. Reinventing Russia: The Revolutionary Experience
4. Forging America: The Revolutionary Experience

The Revolutions series comprises four titles: China Rising, Liberating France, Reinventing Russia and Forging America. The series is available in print only, eBook or print/eBook bundle.

The textbooks, written by expert teachers and featuring innovative design elements, comprise a stand-alone resource for students of senior Revolutions.

The Revolutions series meaningfully incorporates historical thinking methodologies into chapter-review and other activities. See the discussion of historical thinking on p. x and in the supplementary Web Resources for this title.
Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was one of the most creative contributors to European culture.

Russia was governed autocratically by a tsar who was backed by a serf-owning gentry and ranked noble-officials. Guided by the spiritual values of Orthodox monks and by the political values of ‘enlightened despotism,’ Russia’s tsars maintained a mighty army and empire.

Then Russia faltered. Victory over Napoleon in 1812–13 endowed official Russia with too much self-esteem. (It happened again after 1945.) The Crimean War (1853–56) exposed Russia’s weaknesses. Russia’s ruling ideas, economy and society failed to evolve.

Alexander I (reigning 1800–25) and Nicholas I (r. 1825–55) liked to pretend the French Revolution had never happened, disdaining the socialisms of 1798 and 1848 as much as the liberalism of 1789, let alone the republican terror of 1793–94.

Reaction was in vogue. Russia had no citizens, only subjects; official Russia celebrated this fact. For much of the time there was no national parliament in Russia, no free press, no way to form a trade union and no elections except those for local councils.1

Alexander III (r. 1881–94) and Nicholas II (r. 1894–1917) charted this reactionary course; conservatives elsewhere, like Bismarck in Germany, had learned how to channel democracy by restricting people power.

Alexander III and Nicholas II thought theirs was the honourable policy, the truly Russian thing to do. They had followed the one tsar who had decided to emancipate the serfs and begin a path towards limited rights and elections: Alexander II, who reigned from 1855 until he was assassinated by socialist terrorists in 1881. Alexander III and Nicholas II resolved to modernise the army and the economy without following the democratic politics which had emerged in Britain and France; they became so confident in their firm hand they were even prepared to change Russia’s traditional foreign policy, ditching alliances with Habsburg and Hohenzollern autocrats in favour of joining in with democratic France and Britain. One reason for this was Russia’s hope for an empire in the Balkans.

But most people in Russia saw things differently. Traditional religious values no longer formed the basis of political aspirations. Almost everybody wanted a parliament. Most peasants wanted to own whatever village lands their landlords retained. Educated people blamed the autocracy for Russia’s backwardness. Working and housing conditions in Russian cities were the worst in Europe.

1 These institutions did exist for limited periods: national parliament (1905–15, 1918); free press (1905–06, 1917); trade unions (1905–06, 1917–18); elections (1864–1905, 1917–18).
Educated people could only see a political system stuck in the patriotic and servile values of 1812: orthodoxy, autocracy and ‘national feeling’ (imperial patriotism).

Russia’s revolutions were engendered by this mismatch of popular hopes for democracy with the rulers’ faith in order and tradition. An impassioned literature for freedom and human fulfilment emerged, one of the glories of Europe’s culture – Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Chekhov passed a torch on to Gorky, Bulgakov, Mandelstam, Babel and Pasternak. Russia’s educated people wanted to assert – following France’s example – the sovereignty of the people. But the new order most of these educated people imagined far exceeded France’s liberalism of 1789 – Russia’s liberties now had to be free and equal in law and rights. Most radical Russians thought their new society should be Socialist – free and equal in property as well as rights. They also knew that the obstinacy of their tsars would mean freedom and equality would have to be won by revolutionary force.

A dazzling new revolutionary politics of hope and dedication emerged in the very Russia which once seemed Europe’s most stable and conservative state. Russia’s revolutions made everyone in Europe take notice.

It is now your turn to take notice. This book helps you clarify where you stand politically and ethically. It investigates how Russia was re-conceptualised by the Bolsheviks and other revolutionaries in the early part of the twentieth century. Be sure to debate the human, rhetorical, economic and political dilemmas raised by the revolutions with your fellow students, and to note the continuities and changes of this tumultuous period. Read on!

Dr Adrian Jones OAM
Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology and History, La Trobe University
LAUREN PERFECT
Lauren is Head of Year 12 at Haileybury where she teaches senior History. She regularly presents lectures and online tutorials on senior Revolutions. Lauren’s acknowledgements: Thank you to my two beautiful children, Alexandra and William for their unconditional love and to my wonderful husband, Matt for his unending support. Thank you also to Scott and Tom; as always, they have been a pleasure to work with.

TOM RYAN
Tom is Head of Humanities at Woodleigh School and writer of China Rising. He regularly presents lectures and online tutorials on senior Revolutions. Tom’s acknowledgements: Thank you to my wife Simmone, whose love, support and patience was much appreciated through the many weekends and ‘holidays’ I’ve spent writing this book. Thanks also to the dedicated young comrades of my Year 12 History Revolutions classes of 2008–15 who trialled activities, asked insightful questions and gave valued feedback to help make my telling of Russia’s complicated revolutionary ‘story’ more accessible. Finally, thanks to Lauren and Scott with whom it was a pleasure to collaborate once again.

SCOTT SWEENEY
Scott is Head of Humanities and Director of International Pathways at Haileybury. He is an experienced teacher of History and Politics. Scott’s acknowledgments: Thanks to my wonderful family: Avery, Aidan, Liam and Rachel for their enduring support. Thanks also to Lauren and Tom, who have been a pleasure to work with.

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The study of Revolutions at the senior level is guided by historical thinking concepts developed by Seixas, van Drie and van Boxtel, Levesque and others.

Historical knowledge comprises both substantive knowledge, which refers to historical content or subject matter (i.e. what happened in the past?) and procedural knowledge, which refers to the process or skills involved in understanding that subject matter (i.e. what do the sources of evidence say and what should I conclude from them?). Together, substantive and procedural knowledge give students the depth of understanding required to excel in history.

Historical inquiry begins with historical questions. Students ask and are asked substantial questions about people and events from the past, including their significance and contribution to what came later. Students assess continuity and change and the different types of change that occurred. They examine the relationship between cause and consequence and consider the ethical dimensions of history. As they do this, students should be aware that they bring a twenty-first-century perspective to their studies and that their values and beliefs are not necessarily the same as those who lived in the past.

The key part of historical thinking and practice is analysing sources – primary and secondary – to reach conclusions and construct arguments. Generally speaking, primary sources indicate the historical perspectives or viewpoints of people at the time, while secondary sources indicate the historical interpretations of historians or commentators who are looking back at past events.

Historical perspectives are a reminder that people rarely share the same experience or opinions at a given point in history, while historical interpretations show how historians have different views on the importance or meaning of past events. Understanding these contrasting experiences and viewpoints is an important part of appreciating the complexity and contestability of history – one should approach the evidence with an open mind and ‘listen’ to what a source is communicating before forming a conclusion.

In this book we have included many activities designed to develop and enhance students’ substantive and procedural knowledge in history. But above all, we hope students will get swept up by the story of the Russian Revolution, as it is story-telling that lies at the heart of history.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PICTURE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


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REINVENTING RUSSIA: THE REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE XI
What were the significant causes of revolution?

How did the actions of key individuals and movements trigger the revolution?

How did social tensions and ideological conflicts contribute to the outbreak of revolution?
INTRODUCING RUSSIA

(PRE-1904)
**Economy**
- Recession (1890s): widespread unemployment
- Peasants move to towns in search of work
- Modernisation and industrialisation (1890s)
- Poor urban working conditions e.g. overcrowding

**Challenges**
- Assassination of Alexander II
- Famine (1890s)
- Pressure for political reform
- Crimean War
- Growing sense of rebellion and revolution
- Terrorism: assassination, attempted coup
- Marxism influential from late 19th century

**Politics**
- Intellectuals began to oppose tsarist autocracy

**Geography**
- Largest state in Europe
- 8000 km east to west
- 3000 km north to south
- Spanning Europe and Asia
- Eleven time zones

**Demography**
- Romanov dynasty /endash.case 300 years
- Coronation of Nicholas II (1896)
- Autocracy and absolutism
- Power often arbitrary and corrupt
- Bureaucracy
- Rural councils (zemstvos)
- Provincial governments
- Police
- Russian Orthodox Church
- Ethnicities inc. Polish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Armenian, Tatar
- Religious groups inc. Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Gregorian
- 126 million people (1897)

**Politics**
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  - 8000 km east to west
  - 3000 km north to south
- Spanning Europe and Asia
- Eleven time zones

Monarchy
- Romanov dynasty – 300 years
- Coronation of Nicholas II (1896)
- Autocracy and absolutism
- Tsar was God’s ‘representative’ on Earth
- Power often arbitrary and corrupt

Governance
- Provincial governments
- Bureaucracy
- Rural councils (zemstvos)
- Police

Demography
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- Ethnicities inc. Polish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Armenian, Tatar

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- Challenges
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  - Famine (1890s)
  - Assassination of Alexander II
  - Pressure for political reform

Politics
- Marxism influential from late 19th century
- Intellectuals began to oppose tsarist autocracy
- Growing sense of rebellion and revolution

Imperial Russia
- Tsar was God’s ‘representative’ on Earth
- Modernisation and industrialisation (1890s)
Modernisation of army.

Crimean War.

Reign of Alexander II.

Fundamental Laws of the Empire proclaimed.

'Edict of Emancipation' passed (emancipation of the serfs).

Reign of Nicholas I.

Reign of Nicholas II.

Period of political repression (The Reaction) begins (ends 1895).

Reign of Alexander III.

Reign of Ivan III, the Grand Prince of Moscow.

Reign of Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible).

Reign of Michael Romanov.

Romanov reign commences.

Russian victory over Napoleon.

Attempted coup by Decembrists.

Modernisation of army.

'Edict of Emancipation' passed (emancipation of the serfs).

Left-wing organisation the People’s Will founded.

The People’s Will assassinates Alexander II, sparking a series of 'temporary' repressive laws.

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Reign of Nicholas II.

Official coronation of Nicholas II.

National census.

Witte’s ‘great spurt’ of industrialisation begins.

National currency (rouble) placed on gold standard.

Severe recession begins.

Severe famine begins (ends 1902).

Alexander III’s Russification policy implemented.

Fundamental Laws of the Empire proclaimed.

Construction of the Trans-Siberian railway begins.

Left-wing organisation the People’s Will founded.

Communist Manifesto written.

Modernisation of army.

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Modernisation of army.

'Edict of Emancipation' passed (emancipation of the serfs).

Left-wing organisation the People’s Will founded.

The People’s Will assassinates Alexander II, sparking a series of 'temporary' repressive laws.

Reign of Nicholas II.

Period of political repression (The Reaction) begins (ends 1895).

Reign of Alexander III.

Reign of Nicholas II.

Official coronation of Nicholas II.

National census.

Witte’s ‘great spurt’ of industrialisation begins.

National currency (rouble) placed on gold standard.

Severe recession begins.

Severe famine begins (ends 1902).

Alexander III’s Russification policy implemented.

Fundamental Laws of the Empire proclaimed.

Construction of the Trans-Siberian railway begins.

Left-wing organisation the People’s Will founded.

Communist Manifesto written.
INTRODUCTION

The seeds of the Russian Revolution were planted well before 1917. The bloody events of that year were an extreme response to several centuries of inequality in Russia. The desperate measures adopted by the Bolsheviks emerged in the context of an era of violence on the international scene during the early twentieth century. In this sense they were influenced by wider political movements. But such radical methods would not have been embraced if there had not been widespread anger and discontent within Russian society over 300 years and more of autocratic rule.

The Russian Empire was proclaimed in 1721 by Peter I, also known as Peter the Great. It was an extraordinarily varied state in every respect. Physically the largest state in Europe, Russia covered diverse geographical terrain and as a result experienced extreme climate variations. The population of Imperial Russia was the largest in Europe, spanning many different nationalities and language groups. Often tensions existed between rival nationalist groups, regularly leading to hostilities. Interestingly, however, a certain level of diversity and independence was tolerated among different ethnic groups as long as they conformed to the tsar’s laws.

Imperial Russia was characterised by dynastic rule by the Romanov family, the prominence of the Russian Orthodox Church and a hierarchical social structure, most clearly seen in the system of serfdom. Royalty depended on the support of provincial governments, the bureaucracy, the Russian Orthodox Church and the police. A division existed between the privileged ruling and land-owning classes and the (mainly) impoverished rural and urban workers. The toil of the masses benefited only a select few and there was very little opportunity for social mobility.

The industrial boom of the 1890s, which saw many of Russia’s factories established, drew many peasants to the cities in search of new opportunities and an escape from famine. This provided a pool of workers for the ever-growing industrial sector, but working conditions in factories were extremely poor. This, coupled with severe overcrowding, put the major cities under stress, further compounded by the worldwide recession in the late nineteenth century which led to widespread job losses. Not surprisingly, ideas of rebellion and revolution began to emerge.

Although many sources of information were censored, European ideologies such as Marxism began to seep into Russia in the late nineteenth century. Opposition groups began to resist the tsarist system in a more organised way. The emerging intelligentsia, comprising mainly upper- and middle-class Russians, began to set a revolutionary agenda.

Despite theories of an over-arching sense of ‘oriental’ or ‘patrimonial’ despotism1 during the imperial period, there is some evidence to suggest that power was exercised in contradictory and complex ways. In other words, Russian tsars did not always have a strangle-hold over ordinary people; in some cases the power of the central government was weak and poorly organised, leading to abuse of power at the local level.2 From the 1860s, for example, local governors were able to make their own laws; this was often done in an arbitrary and self-interested manner. Similarly, ethnic minorities, though at times persecuted, enjoyed some periods of freedom from state intrusion. Thus, the politics of the imperial period should

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be seen as dynamic rather than fixed, with state power being imposed in often haphazard and contradictory ways.

SECTION A: CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

GEOGRAPHY

Russian proverb: ‘Russia is not a State, but a World.’

The Russian Empire covered a vast expanse of territory, spanning two continents – Europe and Asia – and one-sixth of the world’s surface. At its widest, the empire stretched for approximately 8000 kilometres east to west and at its longest, just over 3000 kilometres north to south. Imperial Russia extended from Poland to the Ural Mountains in Europe and from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean in Asia. Naturally, it encompassed a diverse range of physical features and vegetation. Forest covered much of the north and east, while desert and arid mountains featured in the south-east. Bitter winters plagued central and northern Russia, with temperatures as low as minus forty degrees for over six months of the year. Covering over 20 million square kilometres, eleven different time zones and five different vegetation zones, Imperial Russia was huge – while the sun was setting at the western end of the empire, it was rising in the east. Communication and defence were extremely difficult over such a large and varied terrain, posing considerable problems for the central government. The two major cities – St Petersburg (the capital) and Moscow – were positioned in European Russia, where the majority of the population lived.

The very size of Imperial Russia meant that completing major projects could rarely be undertaken by anyone other than the central government – few other groups could raise the necessary funds or equipment to cover such large distances. This arguably led to a strengthening of the control of tsarist governments over the lives of ordinary people.

DEMOGRAPHY

The first census carried out in Imperial Russia in 1897 revealed a population of 126 million people, the largest population in all of Europe. Imperial Russia’s population was increasing at a rapid rate during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a population estimated at 40 million in 1815, growing to 161 million in 1910 and further expanding to 165 million in 1914. The census also indicated a diverse ethnic population, with sixty different nationalities officially recorded.

The population of the Russian Empire included Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Jews, Tatars, Kazaks, Cossacks, Germans and Armenians, among other ethnic minorities.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING RUSSIA (PRE-1904)

SOCIAL CLASSES

In 1902, Tsar Nicholas II said: ‘I conceive Russia as a landed estate, of which the proprietor is the Tsar, the administrator is the nobility, and the workers are the peasantry.’ Imperial Russians were born into a specific social class, with little opportunity for social mobility. The census of 1897 identified five general social classes, loosely defined as the ruling class, upper class, commercial class, working class and peasants. The distribution of these classes was uneven, as is the case in many societies.

Over four-fifths of the population were peasants, most of whom lacked formal education and had a low standard of living. The small proportion of working class or urban industrial workers (which grew to some extent in the early twentieth century) was similarly underprivileged. The commercial or professional middle class, which again grew a little in this period, represented a slim proportion of the overall population. This group enjoyed some wealth and opportunity. Finally, the ruling class represented the smallest class in Imperial Russia. The disparity between social classes and, more importantly, the unequal distribution of wealth and privilege, served as another potential problem for the tsarist government. There were many contradictions, in that great wealth existed alongside dire poverty, modern technology appeared in city areas but not rural areas and oppression was at different times accepted and resisted.

The conditions experienced by Russia’s industrial working class were explored by government factory inspectors during the 1800s. The following excerpts give an insight into the appalling situation of many factories:

Many of the workers in the steel mills are...literally ‘working with fire.’ For when steel is smelted, the metal is heated white-hot for stamping and rolling rails... The intensity of flaming light is undoubtedly harmful to the eyes...There are two twelve-hour shifts a day...In cloth factory no.48 which is typical of such establishments... there was no ventilation at all... Moving around these machines is extremely hazardous, and accidents could easily happen to the...[most careful of] workers."

Sergei Kravchinsky wrote in 1894 about the terrible working and living conditions of peasants:

MAPPING

Complete the tasks below using the map and information provided on previous pages.

1. Identify four geographical features unique to Russia prior to 1904.
2. Identify four factors that would have made Imperial Russia a difficult place to govern. Explain why each factor would make governing difficult.
3. The majority of Russia’s major cities and towns were located in the western part of the empire. Suggest possible reasons for this, using evidence from the map and other information.

ACTIVITY

Such daily conditions among factory workers and peasants fed into anti-government feeling in these quarters and among members of the intelligentsia.

### SOCIAL CLASSES IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Privileges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruling class</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>Tsar, Tsar’s family, Members of government: State Council of Imperial Russia, Cabinet of Ministers, Senate</td>
<td>Privileged class, Disproportionate wealth, Autocrats and rulers of Imperial Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper class</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>Nobility, Gentry, Hereditary landowners, Nobles, Wealthy merchants, Church leaders, Bureaucratic leaders, High-ranked army officials</td>
<td>High incomes and privileges, Low workload in general, Exemption from more oppressive rules, Each group tended to monitor the behaviour of its competitors, ensuring that other groups didn’t get more than their share of resources / power, A handful of trusted people were appointed by tsar to keep other groups under control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial and professional middle class</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>Small-scale manufacturers, Factory managers, Technical specialists, Clerks, White-collar workers, Educated thinkers, writers and artists, known as ‘intelligentsia’</td>
<td>Developed towards the end of the 1800s due to the growth of heavy industries in major cities and light industries in towns, Characterised by a lack of unity between different professions, Some feared protest from classes below them, Merchants [business people], especially Jewish ones, were viewed with a degree of suspicion by government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial working class</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>Urban workers</td>
<td>Growing class due to increasing industrialisation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Population concentrated in a limited number of city centres, Worked in factories that employed thousands of workers, Extremely poor working conditions, Often worked 14–15 hours a day, Earned low, but fluctuating, wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasants</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>Agricultural workforce</td>
<td>Extremely poor living and working conditions, Overcrowded and impoverished living, High rates of illiteracy, Often resistant to change, Starvation and disease a common feature of life, Financially dependent on landowners, Many reliant on subsistence farming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING RUSSIA (PRE-1904)

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Examine the representation and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify the social groups depicted in the representation.
2. Identify the message suggested by the representation.
3. Referring to parts of the representation and your own knowledge, explain the social structure of Imperial Russia in the late nineteenth century.
4. Evaluate to what extent the representation provides an accurate depiction of the social tensions in Imperial Russia prior to 1904. Refer to parts of the representation and to different interpretations of tsarist Russia.

CARTOON

Create a cartoon showing a day in the life of a typical industrial worker, peasant or factory manager in Imperial Russia in the late nineteenth century.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many Russian peasants believed that to be poor was to be virtuous.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Imperial Russia the well-to-do believed it was a sign of good breeding to be fluent in French.

The Russian social structure is analysed and mocked in this 1900 cartoon published by the Union of Russian Socialists.
THE TSARS

Tsar Nicholas II: 'Those who believe they can share in government dream senseless dreams.'

The origins of modern-day Russia lay in the sixth and seventh centuries, when groups of Slavic people moved from Eastern Europe to central Siberia. Trading centres emerged on the major rivers, until the ninth century when Scandinavian invaders established rule from Kiev. The Scandinavians were integrated into the Slavic community but were later defeated by a Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century. It was then that a city-state centred on Moscow was born. Despite having poor farming land, Moscow provided strong trading routes and was well protected by surrounding forest regions, making it an ideal centre from which to rule. Eventually Mongolian reign weakened and the first independent nation-state of Russia was established under the rule of Ivan III, the Grand Prince of Moscow (r. 1462–1505). Ivan III shared many of the beliefs of the Mongols, claiming rule over all the Russian people and demanding unconditional service to the nation-state. He established the notion of absolute autocracy, based around a central government, where the Grand Prince was landowner of all Russian territory and, above all, God’s representative on earth.

Ivan III was followed by a succession of tsars from the Romanov dynasty. The dynasty, which lasted until 1917, was characterised by limited modernisation and reform. Serfs were emancipated (freed) in 1861 and there was a ‘great spurt’ of industrialisation in 1893–1903. Despite this there was little economic or political modernisation in Russia compared with the rest of Europe and the country retained an autocratic monarchy throughout. In response, anti-tsarist sentiment thrived in various radical and liberal groups, even despite censorship, and continued to do so as the twentieth century approached. When Marxist ideals filtered into Russia and radical groups began to form an underground movement, the regime was threatened in a way it had never been before. This, coupled with internal and international crises, weakened the capacity of the ruling class to meet challenges to its authority, eventually leading to revolution in 1905 and 1917.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE

Ivan IV (r. 1543/47–1584), also called Ivan the Terrible, was the first Russian ruler to adopt the title of Tsar. He established many of the autocratic practices adopted by the Romanovs. Ruling from the religious capital, Moscow, Ivan IV established a clear partnership between the Orthodox Church and the state, a relationship that was to continue well into the Romanov era. The Church controlled the Russian education system to a large extent; consequently the system lacked scientific grounding. During Ivan’s reign the economic and political power of the nobility and landowners was severely restricted, seeing the redistribution of land to those who served the state in military or administrative roles. A new gentry was formed, as peasants became increasingly indebted to landowners, serving under contracts and paying rent through produce and service. This system eventually grew into serfdom or slavery.
MICHAEL ROMANOV

The Time of Troubles (1598–1613), a period of turbulence and confusion marked by disputed leadership, national conflict and social crisis, ended with the Russian defeat of the Poles in Moscow in 1613. Without a leader, a national assembly (zemskii sabor) was called, comprising delegates from almost every level of society. It was the Assembly’s task to select a new tsar. Michael Romanov was the chosen candidate, marking the beginning of a 300-year dynasty.

Michael Romanov was linked to the old regime of Ivan the Terrible through his marriage to his ‘good wife’ Anastacia Romanova. The Romanovs were a popular family with the masses. Michael’s grandfather, Nikita, the brother of Anastacia, had defended victims of Ivan the Terrible, while his father remained a prisoner of the Poles at the time of the zemskii sabor. Michael, at the age of sixteen, remained untouched by the Poles during their occupation of Russia and was considered to have favourable relations with the Cossacks. Romanov was crowned Tsar on 21 July 1613.

Michael Romanov continued the autocratic practices of Ivan IV, with the power of the tsar remaining virtually unlimited. In one way or another, all Russians were obliged to serve the state; the peasants through the payment of taxes and army or civil service, the landlords through similar service and merchants through financing new state industries.

PETER THE GREAT

During the early years of Romanov rule, Peter I (r. 1682–1725), Peter the Great, initiated a period of Westernisation and modernisation based on European principles. The new western capital, St Petersburg, was situated on the Baltic and was European in style. In addition to modernisation, the period of Peter’s rule was characterised by foreign wars and, subsequently, a period of economic difficulty. Much of the economic burden fell on peasants, whose situation began to worsen during this time. Conscription was extended to twenty-five years’ service – a peasant could be ordered to join the army by their landlord or the tsar. Peasant taxes also increased, as did services due to landlords. As the powers of landlords increased further, peasants were prohibited from leaving the land without permission. In short, peasants, or serfs, had become almost entirely obligated to their masters. Over time, as the situation for peasants gradually deteriorated, the standing of the landlord increased, further widening the gap between the two groups. Many peasants staged riots, but none of these led to significant reform in the short term.

The rule of the Romanov family continued until 1917.

CATHERINE THE GREAT

Following the reign of Peter the Great, Russia was to see the rule of two women, most notably Catherine II of Russia (r. 1762–1796) or Catherine the Great. Coming to the throne through a bloodless coup, Catherine succeeded her husband, Peter III, a precedent enabled by the succession of Catherine I from her husband Peter I. Catherine II’s reign was punctuated by wars, extended diplomatic relations with Western Europe and the expansion of the empire. Catherine’s achievements and progressive thinking allowed her to become one of Russia’s
best-known rulers. She is thought to have been comparatively enlightened, while retaining a firm hand over the empire. Catherine was significantly influenced by, and encouraging of, the intelligentsia, or educated class. This group was later to play an integral role in the development of reformist and revolutionary sentiment. Catherine’s reign ended in 1796 when she died from a stroke. She was succeeded by Paul I (r. 1796–1801) and later Alexander I (r. 1801–1825).

NICHOLAS I

The reign of Nicholas I, which followed the attempted coup by the Decembrists in 1825, was characterised by conservatism and rigid authority. Committed to shielding the Russian people from Western-style ideas, Nicholas enforced strict censorship, conformity and obedience to the tsar. His regime was one built on the idea of service; the landowning nobility was to serve the tsar and the peasants were to serve the landowners. Interestingly, though, Nicholas appointed a small number of trusted people to keep a check on the abuse of power by government officials.

Under Nicholas I, peasants and serfs had few opportunities for social or economic mobility. In general, peasants saw little opportunity for change and demonstrated little desire for it. Economically, Russia remained stagnant while the rest of Europe modernised. Agriculture, the most prominent form of Russian commerce, relied on outdated methods such as strip fields and common pastures, while almost all trade was instigated by foreigners.

Industry was gradually increased throughout the century, with 340 000 industrial workers in 1825 rising to 800 000 in 1856.

The influence of the Orthodox Church remained strong during this time, aided by Nicholas’ suppression of reformist ideas from outside. Despite this, the intelligentsia spread Western ideas in defiance of the secret police – the works of Herzen, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Tolstoy were circulated. A division emerged between those who supported Western influences and the so-called ‘Slavophiles’ who wanted to protect Russia’s traditional values and culture.

NICHOLAS II

Upon the death of his father (Alexander III) in 1894, Nicholas is believed to have burst into tears, sobbing to his cousin, ‘What is going to happen to me and to all of Russia? I am not prepared to be a tsar. I never wanted to become one. I know nothing of the business of ruling. I have no idea of even how to talk to the ministers.’ Nicholas’ rule was plagued by disaster from the very start, with over 1000 people killed in a surging crowd at his coronation in 1896. Nicholas believed himself to be ill-fated and, later in his rule, reflected on this early incident as being the beginning of his downfall. Despite his misgivings about becoming Tsar of All-Russia, Nicholas was a staunch advocate of autocracy. He was, as Richard Pipes suggests, ‘committed to absolutism in part because he believed himself duty-bound by his coronation oath to uphold this system, and in part because he felt convinced that the intellectuals were incapable of administering the empire.’ It was this unswerving commitment to autocratic rule that characterised the reign of the last tsar, a reign plagued by crises, challenges to authority and, finally, revolution. For some historians, such as John Hite, it
was Nicholas’ ‘weakness of will’ that led to his demise; he is described as ‘poorly educated, narrow in intellectual horizons, a wretchedly bad judge of people, isolated from Russian society... [with a] lack of grasp of the realities of the country.’ Orlando Figes, however, contends that ‘it was not a “weakness of will” that was the undoing of the last tsar but, on the contrary, a wilful determination to rule from the throne, despite the fact that he clearly lacked the necessary qualities to do so.’

Sergei Witte: The outside world should not be surprised that we have an imperfect government, but that we have a government at all. With many nationalities, many languages, and a nation largely illiterate, the marvel is that the country can be held together even by autocratic means.

As Richard Pipes put it, ‘It was as if the greatest empire in the world...were an artificial construction without organic unity, held together by wires, all of which converged in the person of the monarch.’ The tsarist system was one based on the theory of absolute authority, where the tsar (emperor), was believed to have been divinely appointed, with direct authority from God. Having unlimited executive, legislative and judicial power, the tsar’s word was law, to be questioned by no one. The Fundamental Laws of the Empire in 1832 expressed this view, describing the ‘unlimited’ and ‘autocratic’ powers of the monarch, by whom ‘God himself commands his supreme power to be obeyed.’ Traditionally, the tsar was cherished and revered by the masses, who viewed their divine ruler as their ‘little father.’

Imperial Russia remained unique in modern-day Europe, maintaining what was seen as an old-fashioned form of government in a continent shifting away from autocratic rule. In the late nineteenth century the majority of Western nations had incorporated some form of representative or democratic government. The autocratic institution in Imperial Russia remained at odds with mainstream political thought in Europe, despite the country’s involvement in many continental affairs. At the core of the system were three key bodies: the State Council of Imperial Russia (also called the Imperial Council), the Cabinet of Ministers and the Senate. The State Council was comprised of the tsar’s personal advisors. These advisors were appointed directly by the tsar and answered directly to him, reducing the legitimacy and accountability of this group. Similarly, the Cabinet of Ministers, again appointed by and responsible to the tsar alone, managed individual portfolios. In reality, members of this ‘cabinet’ worked separately in their independent departments and did not function as a group. Finally, the Senate worked to transform the will of the tsar into law.

Significantly, none of these bodies or individuals could restrict or question the power of the tsar; it was simply their role to enact his commands. As Alan Wood puts it, ‘a word from the Tsar was sufficient to alter, override or abolish any existing legislation or institution.’ Early Imperial Russia did not support or facilitate a parliament in any form, nor did it employ democratically-elected officials. Political parties were officially banned and protest was met with censorship, imprisonment or exile.

There is evidence to suggest that rights were granted by the tsars to groups of people, not to individuals. In other words, types of officials were allowed certain freedoms (or freedom from restrictions and punishments), and in turn these officials policed the behaviour of other groups. This situation is described by Jane Burbank as an ‘imperial rights regime.’ In general, however, the preservation of the tsarist system relied on the unique functioning of four key groups in society: the bureaucracy, provincial governments, the Russian Orthodox Church and the police.

**BUREAUCRACY**

*Russian proverb:* ‘Any stick will do to beat a thief but only a rouble will help you with an official.’

Peter the Great had attempted to modernise Russia during his reign, by introducing a civil service to coordinate and administer government services. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, this had become a corrupt and inefficient organisation. Responsible for government administration, law, police and the militia at a local and national level, the bureaucracy or civil service held the power to control almost all facets of everyday life.

The organisation was separated into fourteen different levels, each distinguished by their unique uniform — a symbol of official rank and social status. Given the prestige and considerable income that came with a post in the civil service, the bureaucrats were understandably opposed to reform, preferring to maintain their positions in the noble upper class that had been created by this institution. As Pipes explains, ‘on being admitted to the [civil] service, a Russian official swore loyalty, not to the state or the nation, but to the person of the ruler. He served entirely at the pleasure of the monarch and his own immediate superiors.’ The corrupt and inefficient nature of the bureaucracy made it virtually pointless to challenge or question the civil service, unless the claimant had connections within the organisation or had the means to pay a bribe. Arguably, during Nicholas II’s reign the bureaucracy had become strongly associated with corruption.

Almost all requests took far too long to resolve, if at all. Finally, the concept of *proizvol*, loosely translated as ‘arbitrariness’ (at the whim of the individual), made for a service of inconsistencies and inequities; again, a burden to be shouldered by ordinary people.

**PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS**

According to Figes, ‘to lovers of liberty the provincial governor was the very personification of Tsarist oppression and despotism.’ Imperial Russia was divided into ninety-six provinces (local areas), each presided over by a provincial
governor and governing body. In a similar fashion to government ministers, provincial governors were appointed by the tsar and reported directly to him. These men possessed considerable power in the day-to-day organisation of provincial areas, supported by zemstvos, the rural councils. Despite being elected bodies, often involving progressively-minded delegates, these councils were largely composed of the nobility and their actions often favoured this class.

Provincial governments were responsible for the administration of key local services, such as local police, public works, education and health. Despite being officially answerable to the Ministry of the Interior, provincial government and the governors themselves benefited from a close relationship with the imperial court. This relationship enabled them to ignore the demands of the ministers in St Petersburg, a benefit they often exercised, especially when issues were at odds with the interests of the nobility. The governors provided the central government with a connection to people living outside the main cities.

From the 1860s onwards, provincial governors were given licence to create their own laws at the local level. The idea of ‘arbitrariness’ was applied, leading to inconsistent and, often, self-interested decision-making.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Since 988 CE the Russian Orthodox Church had been the official religion of the Russian Empire. The Orthodox Church was a form of Christianity, independent from outside religious bodies since the fifteenth century. As such, it promoted a distinctly Russian character. The Church became an expression of Russian culture and was an integral organisation in the operation of autocracy throughout the empire.

Under state control from 1721, the Church was intrinsically linked with the tsar. The oath of the clergy was ‘to defend, unsparingly all the powers, rights and prerogatives belonging to the High autocracy of his Majesty.’ While the tsar could not officially intervene in matters of faith, he did, however, exert influence over the Church’s highest regulating body, the Holy Synod. The tsar appointed to the position of Procurator of the Holy Synod a secular (non-religious) person and through this avenue maintained close connections with the Church. The influence of the Church was immense, reinforcing the absolute rule of the tsar and preaching obligation, duty and service. In the late nineteenth century the Church reinforced conservative values, supporting the strict style of autocracy promoted by Tsar Nicholas II and fiercely opposing political change.

POLICE

While the national military was used for defence and repression in Imperial Russia, the tsar and his administration relied on two separate police forces. The Okhrana, the tsar’s secret police force, was designed to protect the political interests of state. The tsar relied on this group to monitor agitators, suspected enemies of the state and revolutionaries, and to deal with these groups through imprisonment, exile and, occasionally, execution. A standard police force existed for general law and order. The police were limited in numbers, therefore, in order to control the large population, severe oppressive actions were often employed. In addition to these two organisations, a group of men from the Don River region

DID YOU KNOW?

Russian Orthodox priests were able to marry, unlike their Catholic counterparts.

St Basil’s Cathedral.

near the Black Sea, the Cossacks, formed an elite military-style group, or militia. These men operated on horseback and were rewarded for their service through grants of land. They were renowned for their loyalty to the tsar.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

Throughout the nineteenth century, the autocracy was reaffirmed by successful military campaigns, most notably the Russian victory over Napoleon in 1812, which buoyed national identity and patriotism. However, partly due to the influence of the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century, autocracy was beginning to be viewed very differently throughout Europe. In turn, Western ideas began filtering into Russia, mostly through well-travelled nobles. Many of these nobles, influenced by ideas of enlightenment and revolution, sought modernisation and change in Imperial Russia, with Western ideology growing more prevalent throughout the nineteenth century. Alan Wood describes the ‘great division’ that existed between two societies in Imperial Russia: on the one hand, an ‘educated, Westernised [group]…a fully fledged, leisureed, land-and-serf-owning nobility enjoying most, if not all, of the privileges of a European aristocracy’ and, on the other hand, ‘the Russian people…the enserfed peasants, who continued to be ruthlessly exploited, fleeced and conscripted…sunk in a vast swamp of ignorance, misery, superstition and periodic famine’.¹⁵

When Alexander I died in 1825 there was confusion over who was to be his successor. His eldest son, Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, had three years earlier renounced his claim to the throne. But since this was not widely known, allegiance was sworn to him. Following subsequent investigation, Constantine’s younger brother Nicholas was pronounced the rightful successor and was affirmed as Tsar Nicholas I (r. 1825–1855). Groups such as the Decembrists, inspired by the Jacobins and French revolutionaries, emerged during this period to take advantage of the political uncertainty. Acting under the guise of defending the rightful heir to the throne – Constantine – the Decembrists attempted to overthrow the monarchy and promote political change and modernisation in Imperial Russia. The coup proved unsuccessful and was brutally suppressed by Nicholas I, who executed the leaders and exiled supporters.

NATIONAL CRISES

CRIMEAN WAR

Russian involvement in the Crimean War (1853–56) was a catalyst for the most extreme economic and political reform in Imperial Russia. The separation of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire in the mid-nineteenth century saw Slavic nationalist groups mounting a case for independence. Russia had long considered itself protector of Slavs, who were Orthodox Christians in a largely Muslim empire. The separation of the Ottoman Empire provided Nicholas I with a legitimate reason to wage war on the Turks. In reality, Imperial Russia sought to extend its influence in south-east Europe and gain control of the valuable Balkan states and Black Sea area. This was, however, to prove disastrous, as the Russian Empire found itself at war with not only Turkey, but also England and France. Plagued by poor supplies, an inefficient transport system and an uneducated and corrupt military leadership, the Crimean War was a military disaster for Russia, revealing not only the country’s military weaknesses and antiquated combat style, but also its lack of industrial and social sophistication. Added to this, the war placed enormous strain on the economy, leading the government to surrender. It became obvious to the regime that Russia needed to update its military and, in order to do this, significant industrialisation was required.

FAMINE

In 1891–92 there was a famine in Russia. While few people died directly from starvation, many died from associated disease. According to David Lilly, the tsarist government managed to prevent mass starvation and total economic collapse, but its attempt to lessen the effects of the famine through better employment failed:

One of the major impediments to efficient relief was the lack of cooperation between various ministries. The famine brought into view the corruption and inefficiency of
the government, and showed how St. Petersburg was out of touch with [most] of the country. It also exposed the dire poverty of the peasants, which could be traced back to emancipation. This famine, which pointed out the weakness of their social structure, should have been a huge warning to the government. [But] the tsarist regimes... failed to address... Russia’s massive agricultural problems [which] helped lead to the government’s downfall.¹⁷

This and other instances demonstrate that, at times of crisis, the central government’s lack of proper infrastructure and organisation made it ineffective in tackling large social problems.

REFORM AND THE ABOLITION OF SERFDOM

Sergei Witte: ‘Your Majesty has 130 million subjects. Of them, barely more than half live, the rest vegetate.’

The first step towards rapid industrialisation was for serfdom (enforced labour) to be abolished. This medieval institution was no longer valid in a nation looking to modernise and had long been an inefficient system, hindering large-scale production and preventing a potential labour force from moving to industrialised areas. The new tsar, Alexander II (r. 1855–1881), had not only inherited the economic problems of the Crimean War, but also the fallout from several peasant rebellions; this arguably left him with a responsibility, and an opportunity, to reform Russia.

In 1861 the Edict of Emancipation was presented by Alexander II. The Edict vowed to eliminate serfdom, modernise Russian agriculture and transform

¹⁷ Lilly, ‘The Russian Famine.’
Russian society. More than one-half of the peasant population, or forty million crown and private peasants, were liberated. According to the Edict, peasants were granted their own homes and patches of land, purchased by the government and redeemed by the peasants in payments over forty-nine years or paid off in service to the landlord. Peasants were forced to accept the land granted to them and immediately became responsible for the redemption payments (taxes). Instead of the peasants being indebted to landlords, they were now obliged to the mir or village commune, which had the power to redistribute land and act in the collective interests of all peasants in the village. The mir took responsibility for the collection of taxes and dues, as well as land cultivation. Peasants were now free to marry and own land in a collective with the mir. Peasants were no longer able to be bought or sold.

Despite these significant reforms, peasant hopes remained largely unfulfilled. Most were still bound to a particular plot of land, requiring permission from the Land Assembly to leave their mir. Inefficient and outdated farming techniques also continued during this time, relying on a three field system, rather than processes of crop rotation and artificial fertilisation, making farming a burdensome, rather than profitable, activity. Harsh climate, poor harvests, population increases and disease had a devastating impact on the peasant population in 1881–82. Seventeen provinces were plunged into famine by the autumn of 1881, followed by a devastating outbreak of cholera and typhus, killing half-a-million people by the end of 1892. The ineffective political response to the crisis exacerbated the situation. Rumours surfaced that the bureaucracy was withholding food deliveries until ‘statistical proof’ was given to show that people could not feed themselves. A general ill-feeling towards the regime began to sweep across the affected provinces.
SECTION A: CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

**FURTHER REFORM**

_Nikolai Tolstoy:_ 'Autocracy is a superannuated form of government that may suit the needs of a Central African tribe, but not those of the Russian people, who are increasingly assimilating the culture of the rest of the world.'

Other reforms followed in this period. Elected local bodies, zemstvos, were established, leading many to hope for a nationally-elected duma (parliament) to follow. Zemstvos were largely conservative organisations with limited power. These organisations were responsible for local reform, with the aim of joining local peasants and former landlords in productive working relationships. Under these groups primary schools were established, along with improvements in health, agricultural science and public works.

Reforms to the legal system occurred during the reign of Alexander II, including the introduction of equality for all under the law, public trial by jury and the right to a defence lawyer. However, some traces of corruption still existed within the judicial system, with government officials tried under different rules and courts than peasants. Alexander II relaxed censorship laws and reformed the education

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system, resulting in secondary education being available to a wider demographic, a luxury previously restricted to the nobility. Attempts were also made to restore the independence of universities. In 1874 the army was reorganised, reducing military service from twenty-five years to six, modernising training methods and doing away with brutal discipline practices. Alexander’s reforms, while raising hope in the general populace, did little to quell discontent. The changes preserved the tradition of a privileged official class and thus strengthened the basis of revolutionary thought.

One revolutionary group that emerged during this period was the Populists, or Narodniks. Members of the group infiltrated the general society with the aim of educating the masses. Populists believed that peasants and (to a lesser extent) industrial workers were already socialist by nature due to their communal lifestyle and felt that revolution could be achieved through education. This approach failed in the 1870s, prompting many Populists to turn to terror and assassination. It was out of this group that the revolutionary movement called the People’s Will (Narodnaya Volya) emerged.

**TERRORISM**

Founded in 1879, the People’s Will adopted terror as a weapon against the tsarist state. The group advocated the death of the tsar and government officials. In 1881 the group succeeded in assassinating Tsar Alexander II. Rather than forcing the end of autocracy, the assassination resulted in the extension of autocratic repression in a period known as ‘The Reaction.’ Alexander III reacted with a firm hand, crushing virtually all political opposition through the use of his secret police, the Okhrana. Leaders of the People’s Will were immediately executed, followers arrested and a strict regime of repression and censorship followed. Not only did Alexander III rely on the Okhrana for protection, but he also exiled his opponents to Siberia.

‘**RUSSIFICATION**’ AND THE TREATMENT OF MINORITIES

Russia was truly a multicultural and multilingual empire and to a certain extent different ethnic groups were left to their own devices on a day-to-day basis, provided they conformed to the laws of the state. Tsarist authorities, however, were concerned about the potential of different ethnic and nationalistic groups to destabilise Russia. Of particular concern was the fact that the Russian nationality accounted for less than half the total population and was the slowest growing ethnicity in the Empire.

To combat this problem Alexander III embarked upon a program of ‘Russification’ in the 1890s, a process conceived in the 1770s as a way of ensuring allegiance to the Russian state. Later the program tried to turn all peoples of the Russian Empire into ‘Great Russians,’ sharing language and culture, a process Alexander believed would enable Russia to modernise.
However, partly because of the influence of nationalist movements in Europe throughout the nineteenth century, most people identified as Poles, Jews, Lithuanians and so on, rather than as members of the Russian Empire. Despite the efforts of the central authorities, the idea of ‘Russian-ness’ was difficult to impose, as shown by the observations below:

The peasants speak the Little Russian dialect; a small group...now professes a Ukrainian identity distinct from that of the Great Russians...Were one to ask an average peasant in the Ukraine his nationality, he would answer that he is Greek Orthodox; if pressed to say whether he is a Great Russian, a Pole, or a Ukrainian, he would probably reply that he is a peasant; and if one insisted on knowing what language he spoke he would say that he talked the ‘local tongue.’ One might perhaps get him to call himself by a proper national name and say that he is ‘russkii’ [Russian], but this declaration would hardly prejudge the question of a Ukrainian relationship; he simply does not think of nationality in terms familiar to the intelligentsia. Again, if one tried to find out to what state he desires to belong – whether he wanted to be ruled by an All-Russian or a separate Ukrainian Government – one would find that in his opinion all governments alike are a nuisance, and that it would be best if the ‘Christian peasant-folk’ were left to themselves.

The key player in the Russification policy was Konstantin Pobedonostsev, chief minister from 1881 to 1905 and also Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, the highest position of supervision in the Russian Orthodox Church. A thoroughly conservative man, Pobedonostsev was a staunch advocate for autocracy and opposed any form of democratic or liberal reform. In many ways Pobedonostsev, being chief advisor to three tsars, directly prevented Imperial Russia from pursuing modernisation and reform.

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Ultimately, the Russification program led to the persecution and alienation of many ethnic minorities, with many national groups, such as Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians, responding to the program by resorting to extreme and revolutionary actions. Russian nationalist groups also emerged during the imperial period, with the propaganda of the Union of Russian People, a monarchist organisation supporting the restoration of monarchy and the persecution of Jews, paving the way for more violent action through organisations such as the Union of Russian Men and the Black Hundred gangs. In 1905 and 1906 these groups, fuelled by rampant anti-Semitism, staged pogroms (violent killings) of non-Russians in major cities. While some theorists have argued that these vigilante-style groups acted with the tacit endorsement of the tsarist government, it is now widely believed that they acted independently.

**DIAGRAM**

Create your own diagram summarising the causes of instability in Imperial Russia between c. 1896 and 1904. Include a range of political, military, social-cultural and economic factors.

**MARXISM IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA**

*Karl Marx:* 'The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

In the late nineteenth century many revolutionary groups began to emerge. Led by liberal nobles and a small, but growing, middle class, these groups viewed revolution as the only way forward for Russia. Two German authors, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, came to prominence in 1848 with their work entitled *The Communist Manifesto*. Drawing on a study of the working people of Britain to explain the sequence of human history, the work outlined a new ideology (later called Marxism) exploring the notion of history as a series of class struggles that would inevitably lead to the demise of capitalism and the rise of communism.

*The Communist Manifesto* advocated a scientific study of human society. The authors asserted that history was made up of a series of struggles between those with political power and those without. Depending on the situation, the type of struggle might change, but the ongoing conflict, the dialectic, continued. Marx and Engels argued that the final stage of the class struggle would be the industrial era. This emboldened revolutionaries in the late nineteenth century, who believed the proletariat (industrial working class) would come to challenge, and eventually overcome, the bourgeoisie (those who owned the means of production, i.e. factory owners and capitalists).

Those who supported the Marxist view were joined by other political groups who had emerged in opposition to tsarism. Groups such as the liberals and the Populists rose in prominence during the 1890s, along with smaller, more extreme groups (see Chapter 2). Supporters of Nihilism, such as students, revolutionaries and writers, resorted to terrorism during this period in an attempt to destroy the imperial regime. Splinter groups also emerged, such as the People’s Will and
the Union of Liberation, with the leaders living lives of secrecy to avoid exile to Siberia. Many of these groups and their ideas were to form the basis for the anti-tsarist political groups of the early twentieth century.

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**DOCUMENT**

**EXTRACT FROM MARX AND ENGELS, THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, 1848**

The bourgeoisie [middle and upper class] is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society…The essential conditions for the existence…of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation [increase] of capital [profit]; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry…replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition…What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat [working class] are equally inevitable [unavoidable].

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**SOURCE ANALYSIS**

Examine the extract from Marx and Engels and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify the message of the extract.
2. Analyse how the creators of the extract used language to convey a sense of crisis and to highlight structural inequalities in society.
3. Referring to the extract and using your own knowledge, explain why Marxism was significant in Russia in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.
4. Evaluate the extent to which the extract gives a full picture of inequalities in Russia prior to 1904.

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**MODERNISATION AND INDUSTRIALISATION**

**Sergei Witte:** ‘The minister of finance recognises that the customs duties fall as a particularly heavy burden upon the impoverished landowners and peasants, particularly in a year of crop failure. These imposts are a heavy sacrifice made by the entire population, and not from surplus but out of current necessity.’

While Alexander III was generally opposed to social and political reform, believing it had the potential to undermine autocracy, he was committed to modernising Russia through industrialisation. Following his death from kidney disease in 1894 and the ascension to the throne of his son Nicholas II (r. 1894–1917), this commitment was continued, along with the preservation of absolute autocracy. Since the 1870s industrialisation had been pursued as a distinct government policy and this was further enhanced in the 1890s. For the tsarist government, industrialisation was the key to promoting military growth and strength; however, the impact of rapid industrialisation was to reach far more widely than the military. The period known as the ‘great spurt’ saw substantial industrialisation take place under the guidance of Sergei Witte, minister for finance, who was presented with the task of modernising Imperial Russia in line with Western European standards.

Witte employed foreign advisors and workers to counsel him in industrial planning and techniques. His task was not only to modernise Russia but also...
to protect local industries. Witte believed that the only way he could balance this incredible task was to foster a system of state-run capitalism, whereby entrepreneurial principles were employed while the state retained overall control.

The ‘great spurt’ brought about a great deal of economic reform. Foreign capital was encouraged, to facilitate the growth of the Empire’s natural resources and the development of industry. Russia relied heavily on foreign loans to develop its economy in this way. The national currency, the rouble, was placed on the gold standard in 1897 in the hope of promoting a stable currency and, in turn, promoting foreign investment. Witte ensured foreign goods were limited on the Russian market and protected local industry through imposing hefty government tariffs. Despite enabling considerable industrial development, these reforms had many adverse impacts on ordinary Russians. With rapid modernisation came rising prices, taxes and interest rates – burdens difficult to bear for most people, particularly those in rural areas. Throughout the period of industrialisation the primary livelihood of the majority, agriculture, remained unprotected and undeveloped.

Investment in railways during the ‘great spurt’ was central to the idea of modernisation. The standout example of this progression is the Trans-Siberian railway (constructed from 1891 onwards), designed to connect the isolated regions of central and eastern Russia with the industrialised west. It was hoped this project would enable further east–west migration, bolstering the industrial workforce. The railway project remained unfinished at the outbreak of war in 1914, perhaps a stark reminder of a failed attempt to modernise a technologically unsophisticated nation.

While production and trade figures certainly indicate substantial industrial development comparable to European standards, conservative and radical opponents of Witte argued that his reforms were too dependent on foreign capital and too focussed on the development of heavy industry, ignoring the modernisation of light industry and agriculture. This was refuted by Witte, who argued that foreign capital directly enhanced Russia’s production, and thus its wealth. Whatever the case, the task of rapidly industrialising an antiquated empire that was resistant to change, within the context of preserving the institution of absolute autocracy, proved to be of great difficulty for the tsarist government.

Industrialisation throughout the 1890s came at a time of world-wide industrial boom; however, this was swiftly followed by world-wide recession, taking a significant human toll on Imperial Russia. This, combined with the failure to meet rising class expectations, led to growing public discontent with the regime; discontent that would later contribute to revolutionary action in 1905. Throughout the late nineteenth century, harsh agricultural conditions coupled with the financial burden of land ownership, following the Emancipation Edict of 1861, saw many peasants flock to the industrial centres in search of work. Many peasants had realised they could no longer bear the financial burden of life on the land, resulting in a significant rise in the urban population of Imperial Russia. This migration to the urban centres provided a ready-made industrial labour force, facilitating the desired growth of industry.

Between 1860 and 1905 the industrial labour force trebled, with this new group being employed in large-scale units in primitive factories. Very little emphasis was placed on the improvement or updating of machinery, thereby maximising profit for a newly-emerging commercial class through a low-cost labour force, while
allowing appalling conditions for the industrial workers. With the absence of legal workplace protections and the prohibition of trade unions, rapid industrialisation through the exploitation of an oppressed industrial working class was enabled.

The unsupervised and unplanned growth of these industrial centres led to severe overcrowding. Living conditions were understandably poor, with an average sixteen people living in one apartment and six people in one room in 1904. It was in these overcrowded centres that political discontent began to stir, seeing the number of military-suppressed industrial strikes grow from nineteen in 1893 to 522 in 1902. When recession hit, widespread unemployment followed. Peasant hopes for a better life, this time in the urban centres, had again been squashed, leading to a growth in social unrest that over time would develop into a revolutionary response.

**GROWTH OF POPULATION IN RUSSIA'S TWO MAIN CITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ST PETERSBURG</th>
<th>MOSCOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>928 000</td>
<td>753 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1 033 600</td>
<td>1 038 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>1 264 700</td>
<td>1 174 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1 439 600</td>
<td>1 345 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1 905 600</td>
<td>1 617 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>2 217 500</td>
<td>1 762 700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE (BASE UNIT OF 100 IN 1900)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1904</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
<th>1909</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1913</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>109.5</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>111.7</td>
<td>122.5</td>
<td>149.7</td>
<td>153.2</td>
<td>163.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GROWTH IN NATIONAL PRODUCT 1898–1913**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**ACTIVITY**

1. Create a graph to represent each of the three sets of figures above. Choose the most appropriate graph type for each set of figures.

2. Describe the trend shown in each graph and offer possible explanations for the trends.
Russia prior to 1904 was a nation characterised by traditional values and structures. A unique nation on the European continent, Russia remained the cornerstone of rule by divine right, a belief not only held by the rulers themselves but also the majority of the population. The tsarist system, dominated by the Romanov dynasty for 300 years, was underpinned by bureaucracy, provincial government, the Russian Orthodox Church and the police (both overt and secret). Although there was a great deal of power exercised by tsars, there were contradictory and inconsistent aspects of their rule; in some instances central power was weak, allowing for provincial governors to wield disproportionate influence. In this sense the tsarist system can be seen as intrusive, yet poorly organised. Such a situation meant that when crises occurred, such as the famine of 1891–92, the state had little infrastructure to deal with large social problems. Not surprisingly this fuelled further public anger.

Daily conditions for rural and industrial workers came to be untenable in the late nineteenth century, particularly as the emerging educated middle class began to highlight the inequities involved. This group, which came to be seen as the ‘intelligentsia,’ drew on democratic developments elsewhere in Europe (such as the French Revolution) to advocate reform and, eventually, revolution. Some of the more extreme groups took political advantage of the poor social and economic conditions, turning to terrorism and rebellion to further their cause. In response, the government attempted to preserve autocratic power and to maintain a sense of service to the Crown by censoring and repressing individuals who called for reform.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the period following 1904 saw a dramatic shift in the social, economic and political climate of Imperial Russia, leading it into a revolutionary situation which changed Russia, and the world, forever.
CHAPTER REVIEW

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

Using evidence from Chapter 1 and further sources, write an essay on one of the topics below. Your essay should be approx. 800 words long and include a contention, topic sentences, evidence from sources (including historical interpretations), a conclusion and a bibliography.

TOPICS

• To what extent was the Romanov regime under threat from external and internal crises by the end of 1904?
• What were the key turning points in tsarist Russia between c. 1896 and 1904?

KEY IDEAS – PRESENTATION

Using evidence from Chapter 1 and further sources, give a five-minute presentation on one of the following key ideas that emerged in Imperial Russia prior to 1904:

• Russification
• Abolition of serfdom
• Political reform
• Modernisation and industrialisation
• Marxism.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES – IMAGE GALLERY

Create a gallery of approximately ten images of a diverse range of people in Imperial Russia prior to 1904. Images may be photographic or artistic. For each image, note down the caption/description, year of publication, book or website in which it was published and the creator of the image (if available).

FURTHER READING


A detailed, thoughtful and well-written student textbook.


A textbook that gives a good overview of the revolution. Particularly useful for its wide range of primary source documents.


This study analyses the evolution of the Russian state from the ninth century to the 1880s and its unique role in managing Russian society.


Pipes addresses the enigmas of Russia’s seventy-year enthrallment with communism. A succinct and lively account. One of the the key questions addressed is “Why did tsarism fail?”


A short account of the revolution that is accessible to students.


A lucid and concise account. Accessible reading for students. The overview of historians’ debates is useful.
CRISIS AND RESPONSE

(1904–1914)
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1. **Russo-Japanese War**
   - Conflict over Manchuria and Korea
   - Poor technology, transport, leadership
   - Loss of naval power, land army, territory
   - Treaty of Portsmouth 1905 – Russia’s expansion restricted

7. **New Opposition Parties**
   - Social Democratic Workers’ Party (SDs)
   - Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs)
   - Populists (Narodniks)

6. **Insufficient Reform**
   - Electoral laws changed to suit tsar

...
**Social Unrest**

- Worker and student demonstrations
- Assassination of Plehve
- Calls for democratic reform

**Bloody Sunday**

- Gapon presents workers' petition
- Army fires on civilians
- Hundreds killed or injured
- Anger at Tsar Nicholas II

**1905 Revolution**

- Soldier and sailor mutinies
- Peasants resist land seizures
- Industrial strikes
- Local government paralysed
- Workers’ councils formed (soviets)

**October Manifesto**

- Pledges freedom of speech and assembly
- Hastens parliamentary elections
- Tsar’s attempt to quell chaos
- Pledges voting rights
- Insufficient Reform
- New Opposition Parties
- Russo-Japanese War
- Poor technology, transport, leadership
- Loss of naval power, land army, territory
- Conflict over Manchuria and Korea
- Treaty of Portsmouth 1905 – Russia’s expansion restricted
- Assassination of Plehve
- Calls for democratic reform
- Terrorist attacks
- Worker and student demonstrations
- Gapon presents workers’ petition
- Army fires on civilians
- Hundreds killed or injured
- Anger at Tsar Nicholas II
- Workers’ councils formed (soviets)

**1904 to 1914**
Bolshevik and Menshevik factions formed (Social Democratic Workers’ Party).

Second National Zemstvo Congress calls for Constituent Assembly.

October Manifesto issued by Nicholas II.

Moscow Soviet formed.

Kadets (Constitutional Democrats) formed.

Octobrists formed.


Russian defeat at Liaoyang (China).

Russian defeat to Japanese.

Port Arthur surrenders to Japanese.

Bloody Sunday petition and massacre

Treaty of Portsmouth signed, ending Russo-Japanese War.

Sailors mutiny on battleship Potemkin.

Russian defeat in Battle of Tsushima.

Russian defeat at Mukden.

Further industrial strikes.

Major strikes in St Petersburg.

St Petersburg paralysed by strikes.

Dismissal of four workers from Putilov steel works sparks industrial action.
1906:
- Stolypin appointed prime minister: agrarian reform, political repression.
- First Duma (parliament) opens.
- Fundamental Laws (Constitution) passed.
- Prime Minister Witte dismissed.

1907:
- First Duma dissolved by tsar.
- Second Duma opens.
- Second Duma dissolved and new electoral laws passed.
- Third Duma opens (in session until 1912).
- Stolypin assassinated.
- Fourth Duma opens (in session until 1914).

1911:
- Moscow uprising suppressed by force.
- Striking workers at Lena mine massacred by Imperial Army.
- Laws passed to allow right to assembly and association.
- Russification (cultural assimilation) revived in Finland.
- Debate over materialism and atheism following publication of ‘Landmark’ essays (Vekhi).
- Moscow’s population density and death rate are around twice those of western European cities.

1912:
- St Petersburg Soviet orders general strike (rejected).
- Fundamental Laws (Constitution) passed.
- First Duma opens.
- Second Duma opens.

1913:
- October Manifesto issued by Nicholas II.
- Octobrists formed.
- Moscow Soviet formed.
- Second Duma dissolved and new electoral laws passed.
- Debate over materialism and atheism following publication of ‘Landmark’ essays (Vekhi).

1912:
- Second Duma dissolved and new electoral laws passed.
INTRODUCTION

The new century brought with it new hopes in Russia. The tsarist government sought to expand its sphere of influence further east into Asia. Initially a plan for economic expansion, Russia’s penetration into the Far East was also a product of ‘the spirit of imperialism of the age,’ sparking conflict with other ambitious nations in the region. Japan, a rising power, resisted the eastern push, culminating in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05.

The war was a disaster for Russia. The country was soundly defeated by Japan and news of the dismal and embarrassing failure further provoked tensions throughout Russia. The defeat reflected poorly on Tsar Nicholas II and his regime, sparking political unrest and economic crisis. This unrest was initially felt in the industrial centres of St Petersburg and Moscow, where a growing working class, which was suffering the effects of rapid modernisation, latched onto the calls for democratic reform.

Tensions boiled over in January 1905, when masses of peaceful protesters, led by Father Georgiy Gapon, marched to the Winter Palace to present their grievances and proposals for reform to Nicholas II. The brutal reaction to this protest, ‘Bloody Sunday,’ was to spark a chain of unprecedented events. Widespread discontent in the urban centres soon spread to the countryside, with a variety of groups expressing dissatisfaction with the tsar. Sailors and returning soldiers from the Russo-Japanese War mutinied, much of the countryside was plunged into disarray and industrial action in the major cities continued, culminating in a general strike in Petrograd in October 1905.

At this time the soviets (workers’ councils) were beginning to exert considerable power. The soviets were dominated by the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Social Democratic Workers’ Party and other radical groups. The combined strength of these groups forced the tsar to consider reform. Nicholas announced his ‘October Manifesto’ in 1905, which led to the introduction of a duma (parliament) the following year; some reformist groups were reassured by this while others remained defiant. Such divisions between gradualist and radical elements reduced the effectiveness of the anti-tsarist movement overall.

When the Fundamental State Laws were passed in April 1906, these served to reassert the tsar as the supreme power. Nevertheless, elections were held and, despite its restricted nature, a radical duma was formed, only to be swiftly dismissed by the tsar. This was to be repeated with the Second Duma and it was not until electoral laws were changed in 1907, to favour the more conservative parties, that tsar-approved dumas were able to serve their full five-year terms.

In 1906, Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin (1862–1911) introduced a series of agrarian (agricultural) reforms. The measures were designed to give peasants smallholdings of land with which to make a living, and thus create a class of profit-minded and conservative peasants. The reforms, however, failed to disperse the growing sense of anger among peasants and others. Stolypin’s assassination in 1911 sent a clear message of continued discontent and radical sentiment to Russian authorities.

The period 1904–14 saw the beginnings of an era marked by violence and terror on the international stage. This era, which Peter Holquist called an ‘epoch of
violence,’2 was characterised by colonial expansionism and repression in several countries. It was in this context that revolutionary movements developed in Russia, arguably influencing the extreme nature of their methods.

RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR (1904–05)

Tsar Nicholas II: ‘The Japanese are infidels. The might of Holy Russia will crush them.’

At the turn of the century Imperial Russia, like many European powers, sought to expand its empire. Of particular interest was land to the east, especially China and Korea. The Trans-Siberian railway was a direct move to expand towards this area, laying the infrastructure to connect western and eastern Russia.

Japan, a rising Asian power, was also looking to expand its empire and had recently succeeded in its territorial war with China. At the end of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), the European powers — Russia, Germany and France — intervened in the peace negotiations, hoping to gain benefits for themselves. This ‘triple intervention,’ as it became known, resulted in Russia convincing Japan to relinquish its hold in Manchuria (north-east China) in return for payment. Russia and Japan had long been engaged in disputes over this territory and tensions began to escalate in the region. Subsequently, Russia gained permission from China to build a railway across Manchuria. In 1898 Russia secured a twenty-five year lease on the Liaodong Peninsula and, with it, permission to extend the railway to Port Arthur. In 1903 Russia annexed Manchuria. The region was now on the brink of war.

In an attempt to prevent conflict, Japan proposed the creation of well-defined spheres of influence; it suggested that in return for recognition of the Russian presence in Manchuria, Russia should recognise Japan’s influence in Korea. Upon Russia’s rejection of the plan, Japan broke off diplomatic negotiations in February 1904. Japan had recently signed the Anglo-Japanese alliance (1902) with Britain, which ensured the European superpower would not come to Russia’s aid in a conflict. Through rapid western modernisation initiated by Emperor Meiji (1852–1912), Japan had built a strong military and naval force. The country was well positioned for war.

On 8 February 1904, Japanese Admiral Togo sent a naval fleet to the Korean harbour of Chemulpo (Inchon) to disperse Russian ships stationed there, signalling the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War. A Japanese siege on Port Arthur soon followed, as nine Japanese destroyers sank much of the Russian fleet and forced the evacuation of the remainder of the Russian ships. Port Arthur eventually surrendered to the Japanese in January 1905 after months of seemingly futile fighting and a loss of approximately 31 000 Russian men. In a crushing blow to the Russians, the tsar’s land army was defeated by the Japanese at the Battle of Mukden in February 1905. Approximately 90 000 men were lost. In May the Russian Baltic Fleet was defeated in less than twenty-four hours in the Battle of Tsushima, destroying Russia’s naval power.

When the Russian public learned of the humiliating defeats in Asia, they reacted with anger, heightening an already tense situation in a nation in the midst of crisis. The situation in Russia, coupled with Japanese war-weariness, saw

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diplomatic negotiations commence in mid-1905, resulting in US mediation and an agreement to sign an armistice. The Treaty of Portsmouth was signed in September 1905, officially ending the conflict. Japan retained control of Port Arthur and maintained Korea in its ‘sphere of influence.’ Russia was forced to evacuate Manchuria and cede the Liaodong Peninsula, as well as the southern half of Sakhalin, to Japan. On account of the diplomatic skills of Sergei Witte, Russia escaped having to pay compensation for its involvement in the war.

DOMESTIC IMPACTS OF THE WAR

Russian soldier: ‘The Japanese are giving it to us with shells; we’re giving it to them with icons.’

The effect on Russia of its war with Japan was far-reaching at a time of great social unrest. While some have reported that the minister of the interior, Vyacheslav Plehve, encouraged the tsar to actively provoke ‘a little victorious war to stem the
rebellion,' it has been suggested by Richard Pipes that ‘the origins of the Russo-Japanese conflict have long been distorted by the self-serving accounts of Sergei Witte.’ Pipes argues that Witte himself bore a great deal of the blame for the war through his vigorous economic policy in the Far East. He also suggests that while Nicholas II wished to avoid conflict with Japan, a sentiment supported by some of his ministers, he was encouraged by people such as General Kuropatkin, Minister of War, to engage in a short war in order to win an easy victory and boost national pride in a time of crisis. Whether the reasons for war stemmed from the government’s desire to expand the empire and secure an ice-free port, or from the hope for a distraction from internal crisis, the results were disastrous. While the mainstream of Russian society was initially drawn together in patriotic enthusiasm, the population grew disenchanted as news of the humiliating land and sea defeats reached Russia. Instead of diverting public attention from the dire economic and social situation, the war highlighted Russia’s poor technological infrastructure (basic equipment and services).

It became clear to ordinary Russians that their country was seriously under-equipped for military engagement, with its ineffective and ill-informed military leadership and inadequate supplies, largely due to the unsuccessful transport system. (The pride of the nation, the Trans-Siberian railway, lay incomplete in some sections and sabotaged in others, being of little assistance to a fledgling military force.) In the ensuing social, political and economic upheaval, which included terrorist attacks, student demonstrations and worker strikes, the liberal and radical movements gained ground. This resulted in domestic revolution before the war had even finished.

On 15 July 1904, Plehve was assassinated. As mentioned above, Plehve was regarded as the driving force behind Russia’s involvement in a war with Japan and, as a consequence, was greatly disliked. Responsibility for the killing appears to have sat with members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Combat Organisation (the SR terrorist branch). The move was applauded by many.

Upon Plehve’s death, his post was filled by Prince P.D. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, who was quick to adopt a more liberal approach to politics. It was his belief that in order to effectively govern Russia, both state and society must respect and trust each other. Mirskii’s appointment was generally well accepted, since he relaxed censorship, abolished corporal punishment and restored some prominent members of local government boards (zemstvos) to their posts.

This liberal approach inspired the holding of a public congress addressing both zemstvo affairs and national issues, including proposals for a constitution. (Until that point zemstvos were limited in scope, being restricted to local, rather than national, issues.) Plans were made for the congress to be held in early November. However, upon learning of the plans to discuss a constitution, Mirskii suggested the meetings be held in private. The congress was preceded on 17 September by a secret meeting in Paris between various oppositional groups, such as the Union of Liberation and the Socialist Revolutionaries. Known as the Paris Conference, the meeting proposed a united front against autocracy. The national Zemstvo Conference then met unofficially in St Petersburg on 6–9 November 1904, effectively serving as the first national assembly in Russian history. Under the guise of dinners and banquets, the group engaged in political meetings to discuss democratic possibilities. It was this group that called for a constitution, among other reforms.

4 Pipes, The Russian Revolution, 12.
SECTION A: CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

CARTOON 1 (above): “Japan — “I Seem to have some allies.”” Caption (not pictured) reads: “The war was marked by several accidents to Russian warships, which were blown up by their own mines. Another of Japan’s allies was old Boreas [The North Wind], who froze thousands of Russians to death.”

CARTOON 2 (left): “His Internal Troubles,” Melbourne Punch, 16 March 1905. Caption (not pictured) reads:

The Russians: “How can a fellow fight, troubled internally as I am? For goodness’ sake, give me some of your peace pills!”
The Mikado: “Not so fast my friend, these pills are worth one hundred million guineas a box, and you must pay, pay, pay!”

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at Cartoons 1 and 2, which both refer to the Russo-Japanese War. Then complete the tasks below.

1. What message is conveyed by each representation?
2. What symbols are used to express a point of view in each representation?
3. Which side of the conflict is portrayed as being in a superior position in both representations? Explain your answer.
4. To what extent do the two representations give an accurate depiction of the Russo-Japanese War?
Mirskii presented the proposed reforms to Nicholas II, who rejected most of them. He proclaimed to Witte, ‘I shall never, under any circumstances, agree to the representative form of government because I consider it harmful to the people whom God has entrusted to my care.’ On 12 December the tsar’s decree was passed, strengthening the rule of law, easing restrictions on the press and expanding the rights of the zemstvos. A parliamentary body, however, was not approved. It was an opportunity missed and tensions continued to mount.

BLOODY SUNDAY, 1905

Father Georgiy Gapon: ‘There is no God any longer. There is no Tsar.’

Throughout the early stages of the new century three main groups emerged in opposition to the tsarist regime: the reformist middle class, the peasants and the industrial workers. It was the latter group that would play an integral role in the development of revolution in Russia.

Falling wages, coupled with the rising cost of living, increased discontent in the major cities. Between October 1903 and October 1904, real wages had decreased by up to one quarter, while industrial recession, terrible working conditions and poor harvests led to growing worker restlessness. The situation escalated in December 1904 when four workers from the Putilov steel works, the largest industrial factory in St Petersburg, were dismissed, leading masses from that plant to strike in support of their fellow workers. By early January 1905 the number of industrial workers on strike had swelled to 120,000, leading to the first chapter of the Russian Revolution, an event that was to become known as ‘Bloody Sunday’.

Father Georgiy Gapon, ‘a renegade priest with police connections,’ was the central figure in the 1905 revolution. Born to a peasant family in rural Russia, Gapon was prohibited from attending university due to minor involvement with revolutionary groups. He trained as a priest and worked with the underprivileged in St Petersburg (mainly with worker and convict groups). In 1904 Gapon established the Assembly of Russian Factory Workers, a group designed to support local workers and pursue industrial reform. This body was actively encouraged by the Ministry for the Interior, as it was a vehicle for channelling worker discontent away from other politically-motivated organisations emerging in the major cities. At the end of 1904 this group had 6000 to 8000 members and its founder had established himself as a prominent member of the St Petersburg workers’ community.

Gapon planned to approach Nicholas II on Sunday 9 January 1905 to present him with a petition outlining the grievances of the people of St Petersburg. The workers and their families would march peacefully to the tsar’s home in St Petersburg, the Winter Palace, and present him with their petition begging for political, economic and social reform. In preparation, Gapon is reported to have sent letters to the tsar and the minister for the interior, Mirskii, informing them of the march. Even though the tsar had left St Petersburg for his country home, there is a suggestion that Gapon believed the tsar would return to meet his people.
On Saturday 8 January, Gapon met with the justice minister, Muraviev, who in turn met with Mirskii, the police department and the chief of staff of the troops, to consider what action the government would take. The tsar is said to have learnt of the proposed march by nightfall. Troops were sent in to reinforce the garrison.

At approximately 10.00 the following morning workers and their families began to gather at four meeting points on the outskirts of St Petersburg. Up to 150 000 people marched peacefully in columns towards the Winter Palace, a procession which, according to Figes, ‘formed something more like a religious procession than a workers’ demonstration.’

Led by Father Gapon, the crowd carried religious icons and sang hymns. The gathering hoped to present the tsar with a petition for improved conditions for workers.

Leading one of the columns, Gapon carried a crucifix and behind him travelled a portrait of the tsar and a banner proclaiming, ‘Soldiers do not shoot at the people!’ The crowd, however, never made it to the Winter Palace. There was panic in police ranks and the peaceful protestors were fired on and charged at as they approached their destination. It is reported that a few warning shots were fired, followed by direct shots at the crowd. Soon, forty people lay dead.

Similar scenes were played out in other areas of the city, most violently at Nevsky Prospekt, where cavalry and cannons blocked the entrance to Palace Square, leading to further deaths and casualties. Journalists at the time wrote of up to 4600 people being either killed or wounded by tsarist troops and Cossack cavalry. More recent estimates suggest up to 200 killed and 800 injured.

Although Nicholas II was not present at the time, and did not directly order the troops to fire on civilians, he was held responsible for Bloody Sunday. The official history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) says, ‘On that day the workers received a bloody lesson. It was their faith in the tsar that was riddled by bullets on that day.’ Instead of ‘Little Father,’ the tsar came to be known as ‘Nicholas the Bloody.’
DOCUMENT

PETITION PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION TO NICHOLAS II (JANUARY 9, 1905)

Sovereign!

We, workers and inhabitants of the city of St. Petersburg, members of various sosloviiia (estates of the realm), our wives, children, and helpless old parents, have come to you, Sovereign, to seek justice and protection. We are impoverished and oppressed, we are burdened with work, and insulted. We are treated not like humans [but] like slaves who must suffer a bitter fate and keep silent. And we have suffered, but we only get pushed deeper and deeper into a gulf of misery, ignorance, and lack of rights. Despotism and arbitrariness are suffocating us, we are gasping for breath. Sovereign, we have no strength left. We have reached the limit of our patience. We have come to that terrible moment when it is better to die than to continue unbearable sufferings.

And so we left our work and declared to our employers that we will not return to work until they meet our demands. We do not ask much; we only want that without which life is hard labor and eternal suffering. Our first request was that our employers discuss our needs together with us. But they refused to do this; they denied us the right to speak about our needs, on the grounds that the law does not provide us with such a right. Also unlawful were our other requests: to reduce the working day to eight hours; for them to set wages together with us and by agreement with us; to examine our disputes with lower-level factory administrators; to increase the wages of unskilled workers and women to one ruble per day; to abolish overtime work; to provide medical care attentively and without insult; to build shops so that it is possible to work there and not face death from the awful drafts, rain and snow.17

SOURCE ANALYSIS


ACTIVITY

1. Draw up a table with the following headings and fill it in.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL GRIEVANCES RAISED IN PETITION</th>
<th>SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF INJUSTICE CITED</th>
<th>PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE USED BY PETITIONERS</th>
<th>SOCIAL GROUPS REPRESENTED BY PETITION</th>
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2. What picture emerges from the petition about daily life in Russia in 1905? How did people’s working conditions and political rights differ from those experienced in Australia today?
SECTION A: CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

Death as Czar [Tsar] of All the Russias, 1905.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at the cartoon *Death as Czar of All the Russias* and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify the message of the representation as conveyed by symbols and other visual elements.
2. Explain how the representation may have been influenced by the events of 1905 in Russia.
3. Referring to parts of the representation and using your own knowledge, explain why Bloody Sunday, 1905 was a revolutionary turning point in Russia.
CHAPTER 2: CRISIS AND RESPONSE (1904–1914)

DOCUMENTS: ACCOUNTS OF BLOODY SUNDAY

EXTRACT 1: FATHER GEORGIY GAPON, THE STORY OF MY LIFE, 1906

...I turned rapidly to the crowd and shouted to them to lie down, and I also stretched myself on the ground. As we lay thus another volley was fired, and another, and yet another, till it seemed as though the shooting was continuous...A little boy of ten years, who was carrying a church lantern, fell pierced by a bullet, but still held the lantern tightly and tried to rise again, when another struck him down.

...At last the firing ceased...Horror crept into my heart. The thought flashed through my mind, ‘And this is the work of our Little Father, the Tsar.’ Perhaps this anger saved me...a new chapter was opened in the book of the history of our people... ‘There is no longer any tsar for us!’ I exclaimed.18

EXTRACT 2: ST PETERSBURG CORRESPONDENT OF LE MATIN (PARIS NEWSPAPER)

The soldiers of the Preobrazhensky regiment, without any summons to disperse, shoot down the unfortunate people as if they were playing at bloodshed. Several hundred fall; more than a hundred and fifty are killed. They are almost all children, women, and young people. It is terrible. Blood flows on all sides. At 5 o’clock the crowd is driven back, cut down and repelled on all sides. The people, terror-stricken, fly in every direction. Scared women and children slip, fall, rise to their feet, only to fall again farther on. At this moment a sharp word of command is heard and the victims fall en masse. There had been no disturbances to speak of. The whole crowd is unarmed and has not uttered a single threat.

As I proceeded, there were everywhere troops and Cossacks. Successive discharges of musketry shoot down on all sides the terrorized mob. The soldiers aim at the people’s heads and the victims are frightfully disfigured. A woman falls almost at my side. A little farther on I slip on a piece of human brain. Before me is a child of eight years whose face is no longer human. Its mother is kneeling in tears over its corpse. The wounded, as they drag themselves along, leave streams of blood on the snow.19

EXTRACT 3: GOVERNMENT REPORT ON EVENTS OF 8–9 JANUARY 1905

...On the morning of January 8...the priest Gapon prepared and distributed a petition from the workers addressed to the sovereign, in which rude demands of a political nature were expressed along with wishes for changes in working conditions...the majority of workers were led astray concerning the purpose of the summons to Palace Square.

The fanatical preaching of the priest Gapon, forgetful of the sanctity of his calling, and the criminal agitation of persons of evil intent excited the workers to such an extent that on January 9 they began heading in great throngs towards the centre of the city. In some places bloody clashes took place between them and the troops, in consequence of the stubborn refusal of the crowd to obey the command to disperse, and sometimes even in consequence of attacks upon the troops.20

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Read the accounts above of Bloody Sunday, 1905 and complete the tasks below.

1. To what extent do the three extracts agree on what happened on 9 January 1905? What might account for the different perspectives on the event?

2. How might the lives of members of the crowd been changed by Bloody Sunday?

3. As a class, debate the following statement: ‘Despite the tragedy of 9 January 1905, there were some positive consequences of Bloody Sunday.’

THE 1905 REVOLUTION

Tsar Nicholas II: ‘Rioting and disturbances in the capitals and in many localities of Our Empire fill Our heart with great and heavy grief.’

Bloody Sunday had a crippling effect on the tsarist government, demonstrating for the first time widespread contempt for the regime. The autocracy was soon on the verge of collapse, as domestic and external events continued to punish an already fragile state. Bloody Sunday sparked further industrial action, seeing 400,000 workers strike in January alone. News of the Russian defeat in the battle of Tsushima filtered home in May 1905, followed by a series of disturbances across the country.

Terrorism soon spread to rural areas, with peasants lashing out against government officials and landlords. Fearing the government would seize the property of peasants unable to repay mortgages, they seized the estates, crops and livestock of landowners, experiencing very little opposition as the lack of troops and isolated locations made it difficult for landlords to retaliate. By October, local government was paralysed. Minority groups throughout the empire took the opportunity to launch campaigns for independence or equality, such as Georgians, Poles and Jews.

Julia Ulyannikova points out an interesting contradiction. The central government, while in some ways enjoying excessive power, was weak and poorly organised at the local level, meaning that crises such as those of 1905 were handled badly – emergency measures had to be found because there was no proper process to guide the authorities. Having operated to a large extent on the arbitrary whims of governors, many local governments were corrupt and ineffectual, meaning that good information did not come their way in time to avert crises. Similarly, because the rights of minority groups had been suppressed for so long, such groups were able to take advantage of the chaos and demand autonomy when the system was at its most vulnerable.

The troops returning from Manchuria mutinied on their arrival home, taking control of the Trans-Siberian railway for some weeks. Despite the tsar’s troops being able to eventually control the situation, the discontent had spread to yet another group. Mutinies continued in the tsar’s military and navy, no more obvious than on the legendary battleship Potemkin in June. The crew of the Prince Potemkin battleship stationed in Odessa on the Black Sea mutinied on 14 June, murdering their officers and deserting their squadron, sailing out of Russian waters for Romania. Russian defeat and the end of the Russo-Japanese War had certainly exacerbated the situation.

Robert Service writes that at this stage ‘the monarchy’s fate hung by a thread.’ War defeat had in many ways united the anti-tsarist forces. Sergei Witte feared the
sailors and soldiers would join the revolution, further threatening the government. Luckily for the tsar, at this point the revolutionaries were far too scattered and disunited in their cause to mount a serious challenge.

The outraged reaction to Bloody Sunday spread through universities around the country. Students went on strike in large numbers, turning campuses into ‘centres of political agitation’; in Moscow University alone over 3000 students staged a rally, burning a portrait of the tsar and hanging red flags from the buildings. The political fervour spread to some secondary schools and theological academies. On 18 March the authorities ordered all institutions of higher learning closed for the remainder of the academic year.

Throughout 1905 industrial strikes spread from the centre in St Petersburg to other major cities and towns. The prominence of opposition groups continued to grow and, spurred on by the Second National Congress of Zemstvos, professional unions organised themselves into a national alliance, the Union of Unions. This body provided the intelligentsia with connections to ordinary working people. Led by liberal politician Pavel Milyukov, the group demanded a Constituent Assembly (previously called for by the zemstvos) and voting rights for all. This paved the way for other organisations, such as the Constitutional Democratic Party, or Kadets (principally made up of middle-class liberals), to seek representation in government.

Also emerging during this period were the workers’ councils, or soviets. These groups developed in the major cities, especially St Petersburg and Moscow, and by the end of 1905 approximately eighty soviets had been formed. Despite being originally designed to represent the rights of workers, the soviets were soon recognised by parties such as the Socialist Revolutionaries as a potential power base. Leon Trotsky, a Menshevik (more moderate faction of the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party), became the vice chairman of the St Petersburg Soviet, which called for a National General Strike.

THE TSAR’S OCTOBER MANIFESTO

Empress Marie Fedorovna Romanov (wife of Alexander III): ’I’m sure that the only man who can help you now and be useful is Witte.’

October 1905 saw widespread industrial action as printers and bakers downed tools, supported by factory, railway, post, telegraph and bank workers, civil servants, teachers and even the Imperial Ballet dancers. By 14 October the economies of both Moscow and St Petersburg were paralysed and the cities ground to a halt. A spontaneous action by the masses had forced Nicholas II into a position where he needed to act swiftly. The tsar, facing the potential collapse of his regime, needed to make concessions and he looked to his advisor, the former finance minister, Count Sergei Witte, for the solution. Witte, recently returned from negotiating peace with the Japanese, reported to the tsar that significant reform was required in order to bring peace to the nation. He suggested that the State Council must be considerably improved and, above all, the tsar must provide the right for the people to elect members of government. Severe repression must be ended in all matters, excluding those that significantly threatened the
SECTION A: CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

DOCUMENT

OCTOBER MANIFESTO, 1905

We, Nicholas II, By the Grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., proclaim to all Our loyal subjects:

Rioting and disturbances in the capitals [i.e. St. Petersburg and the old capital, Moscow] and in many localities of Our Empire fill Our heart with great and heavy grief. The well-being of the Russian Sovereign is inseparable from the well-being of the nation, and the nation’s sorrow is his sorrow. The disturbances that have taken place may cause grave tension in the nation and may threaten the integrity and unity of Our state.

By the great vow of service as tsar We are obliged to use every resource of wisdom and of Our authority to bring a speedy end to unrest that is dangerous to Our state. We have ordered the responsible authorities to take measures to terminate direct manifestations of disorder, lawlessness, and violence and to protect peaceful people who quietly seek to fulfill their duties. To carry out successfully the general measures that we have conceived to restore peace to the life of the state, We believe that it is essential to coordinate activities at the highest level of government.

We require the government dutifully to execute our unshakeable will:

(1.) To grant to the population the essential foundations of civil freedom, based on the principles of genuine inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.

(2.) Without postponing the scheduled elections to the State Duma, to admit to participation in the duma (insofar as possible in the short time that remains before it is scheduled to convene) of all those classes of the population that now are completely deprived of voting rights; and to leave the further development of a general statute on elections to the future legislative order.

(3.) To establish as an unbreakable rule that no law shall take effect without confirmation by the State Duma and that the elected representatives of the people shall be guaranteed the opportunity to participate in the supervision of the legality of the actions of Our appointed officials.

We summon all loyal sons of Russia to remember their duties toward their country, to assist in terminating the unprecedented unrest now prevailing, and together with Us to make every effort to restore peace and tranquility to Our native land.

Given at Peterhof the 17th of October in the 1905th year of Our Lord and of Our reign the eleventh.

Nicholas


ACTIVITY

Read the extract from Nicholas II’s October Manifesto, 1905 and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify two signs of social upheaval referred to in the extract.
2. Identify two examples of emotive language used by Nicholas to persuade.
3. In your own words, explain the meaning of the three reforms listed in the manifesto.
4. Identify the obligations of the Russian people outlined in the document.
5. Discuss the significance of the October Manifesto. What did the manifesto suggest about the ways in which tsarist Russia was changing?
RESPONSES TO THE OCTOBER MANIFESTO

Leon Trotsky: 'We have been given a constitution, but absolutism remains... everything is given and nothing is given.'

REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS

The October Manifesto paved the way for a future where the power lay not with an autocratic ruler, but in a working relationship between a legislative duma and the tsar. This, coupled with the promise of a liberalisation of censorship and a gradual unlocking of land, gave the 1905 reforms the potential to appeal to many. Despite this, the manifesto received a mixed reception. While some groups saw it as an important step in the right direction, paving the way for further reform, others doubted it would ever come into practice. The manifesto divided the liberals, seeing the Octobrists accept the reform, while the Constitutional Democrats (Kadets) pursued further concessions. To the government it seemed that revolution had been avoided and the divide between the various liberal and revolutionary factions had been widened.

The greatest opposition to the October Manifesto came from the St Petersburg Soviet. The Soviet saw the manifesto as ‘a fraud on the people, a trick of the Tsar to gain some sort of respite in which to lull the credulous and to win time to rally his forces and then to strike at the revolution.’28 Having gained considerable influence during the General Strike, the Soviet felt able to encourage further revolutionary action and did this by calling for the General Strike to continue. Workers, however, returned to work, buoyed by the possibility of reform and unable to shoulder the economic burden of being on strike.

Following the arrest of its chairman, Nosar, the St Petersburg Soviet responded with an armed uprising. Two-hundred-and-sixty deputies, approximately half the membership, were arrested on 3 December.29 The Moscow Soviet called a strike on 6 December that crippled the city. After troops were sent from St Petersburg the strike was ended on 18 December, limiting the influence of the Soviet. Over 1000 people lost their lives in the Moscow uprising.30 Following this the St Petersburg Soviet headquarters were stormed and key figures were arrested, including Trotsky.
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS
Even though industrial workers were able to bring the central cities and towns to a standstill simply by stopping work, many were disengaged from the push for political reform and revolution, preoccupied with daily social and economic concerns. In general they wanted specific improvements such as an eight-hour working day, an elected workers’ council and better medical services. Despite the work of the Social Democrats and, more directly, the soviets, workers largely remained focused on immediate economic reform. Wider political propaganda of the revolutionaries, such as calls for a ‘constituent assembly’ or a ‘socialist proletarian revolution,’ did little to interest them. Many could not afford to answer the call for another general strike. The St Petersburg and Moscow soviets had lost much of their influence over the industrial workers, a significant benefit for the tsar.

PEASANTS
Like industrial workers, peasants remained largely disengaged from the push for political reform. They too wished for immediate change, however, their interest lay, largely, in gaining land and having lower taxes. Although there were a few radicalised peasants, they were often isolated and poorly coordinated. While it can be argued that the October Manifesto provided little for the peasants, it did offer hope for a limited recoup of land. Peasants pursued the idea of getting landlords to leave the country areas and sell their holdings, cheaply, to peasants. This led to some violent confrontations, which the tsar contained with the use of floggings and firing squads. Despite these repressive techniques the peasants were, to a certain extent, appeased by the October Manifesto, with land redemption payments for 1905 halved and later cancelled altogether. Fewer land seizures occurred, leading the peasants to pin their hopes on the duma.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
Create an infographic or cartoon showing what each of the following characters might have said about the October Manifesto:

- Aleksandr, an Octobrist
- Anna, an industrial worker from Moscow
- Pyotr, a Kadet
- Viktor, a member of the St Petersburg Soviet
- Irina, a peasant from Samara.
CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1905 REVOLUTION

Leon Trotsky: ‘Although with a few broken ribs, tsarism came out of the experience of 1905 alive and strong enough.’

The tsarist regime emerged out of 1905 in many ways unscathed in the short term, despite a significant war loss, the rise of unions, crippling industrial action and the surfacing of key opposition groups. Sheila Fitzpatrick contends that the political outcome of the 1905 Revolution was ‘ambiguous and in some ways unsatisfactory to all concerned,’ an argument furthered by Richard Pipes who highlights both the achievements and failures of key movements such as socialists, liberals, conservatives and even the government itself. While it conceded, the government did take a decisive stand, in many ways reasserting itself as a firm authority. In the process of concession, the regime managed to divide opposition groups and send a clear message to those who attempted to undermine the government that all challenges would be met with repression. The government realised that so long as they retained the loyalty of the military, which was ensured after initial mutinies subsided, protest could be withstood. The government also secured the allegiance of counter-revolutionary forces, such as wealthy landowners, high clergymen and many professionals.

Whether the events of 1905 actually constitute a revolution remains a topic of some debate. While it certainly resulted in reform, the extent to which this reform actually benefited the people of Russia in the long term is contentious, especially when subsequent reform passed in 1906 is explored. In light of these changes, the duma in actuality did not curb the tsar’s powers. The revolution of 1905 also lacked the participation of key revolutionary leaders, most notably Lenin, Martov, Trotsky, Plekhanov and Chernov, all of whom were in exile at that time.

DOCUMENT

LEON TROTSKY, THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, 1930

The Russo-Japanese War had made tsarism totter... The workers had organised independently of the bourgeoisie in the soviets. Peasant uprisings to seize the land occurred throughout the country. Not only the peasants, but also the revolutionary parts of the army tended towards the soviets. However, all the revolutionary forces were then going into action for the first time, lacking experience and confidence. The liberals backed away from the revolution exactly at the moment when it became clear that to shake tsardom would not be enough, it must be overthrown. This sharp break of the bourgeoisie with the people, in which the bourgeoisie carried with it considerable circles of the democratic intelligentsia, made it easier for the monarch to differentiate within the army, separating out the loyal units and to make a bloody settlement with the workers and peasants. Although with a few broken ribs, tsarism came out of the experience of 1905 alive and strong enough.


31 Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 34.
Prior to the October Manifesto in 1905 all political parties were illegal. As a result, opposition groups were forced into hiding and met either in secret or abroad. Many were radical in nature. Since the groups differed widely in ideology and practice, there tended to be suspicion, rivalry and even hostility between them. Key groups such as the Socialist Revolutionary Party and the Social Democratic Workers’ Party were at loggerheads, rather than presenting a united front against the tsar. The upheaval in 1905 allowed existing political parties and emerging groups to surface. Institutions such as soviets and the Peasants Union gave a voice to previously-marginalised people. For the first time in Russian history, there was genuine pressure being exerted on the tsarist system.

**EMERGING REFORMISTS AND REVOLUTIONARIES**

*The Captain’s Daughter, Aleksandr Pushkin:* ‘God defend you from the sight of a Russian rebellion in all its ruthless stupidity. Those who meditate in our country impossible revolutions, are either young and do not know our people, or are hard-hearted folk, who rate the lives of others cheap, and care nothing for their own necks.’

After 1905, many reformist and revolutionary groups began to gain influence in the community. Many of these had been around for some time. The main groups, their programs and support bases are outlined below.

**I) POPULISTS (NARODNIKS)**

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II) SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES (SRs)

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<tr>
<td>Established</td>
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<td>1901 saw Viktor Chernov (editor of the party's newspaper) form and lead the national Socialist Revolutionary Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members and support base</td>
<td>Peasants the largest support base, but urban working class also represented</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Intelligentsia developed the theoretical base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Led by Viktor Chernov and later Alexander Kerensky (who became prime minister in 1917)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform / methods</td>
<td>Primarily fought for land ownership for peasants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocated violence to overthrow tsar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Left faction called for a socialist state based on the peasants' commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Believed capitalism would not make progress in Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did not believe in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by a proletariat class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Believed Russia could evolve into a socialist society without a class war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The promise of land proved the key ingredient for maintaining peasant support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacy</td>
<td>Remained the revolutionary group with the largest following until the Bolsheviks outlawed the party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A split emerged between the Maximalists (left-wing) and the Revolutionaries (right-wing) within the Socialist Revolutionaries group. The Maximalists engaged in terrorist-style activity and acts of ‘economic terror,’ threatening and assassinating landlords and factory owners. The Revolutionaries were more moderate, prepared to cooperate with others to bring about immediate improvements.

The early years of the century saw the Left SRs dominate through terrorist activity, seeing over 2000 assassinations between the years 1901 to 1905. Key assassinations included Minister of the Interior Plehve and Nicholas II’s uncle, Grand Duke Sergei. These actions did little to appeal to the people and saw the moderate Socialist Revolutionaries gain more influence after the events of 1905. The following year saw major developments within the party, with professionals and trade unions lending their support to the party, including the All Russian Union of Peasants established in 1905 following the October Manifesto.

At the First Party Congress in 1906 the left faction of the SRs broke off, while the more moderate right claimed the party’s platform was unworkable. This resulted in radical splinter groups emerging in 1906.

III) SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WORKERS’ PARTY (SDs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WORKERS’ PARTY (OR ‘ALL RUSSIAN DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members and support base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Platform / methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legacy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In 1893 the first Russian Marxist group was formed by George Plekhanov. Known as the ‘father of Russian Marxism,’ Plekhanov was the first to translate Marx’s teachings into Russian. Proving to be too theoretical in his leadership, Plekhanov lost support. Thereupon, the editor of the party’s newspaper, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, or Lenin (his revolutionary pseudonym), took centre stage in voicing his opinions about the future of the party, most notably regarding the issue of leadership. Lenin had produced his watershed pamphlet *What is to be Done?’ in 1902, which urged the group to adopt a methodical and professional approach to ideology and action. The text was to become, according to Figes, ‘the founding text of international Leninism.’

Lenin argued that membership of the party should be ‘confined’ to people who had been ‘trained in the art of combating the political police’ and were ‘professionally engaged in revolutionary activity.’ He argued that a limited group of dedicated professional revolutionaries was the key to success, drawing on a scientific analysis of socialism to highlight the natural path of a socialist revolution. He firmly believed that Marx and Engels had defined the true path of a socialist revolution and that Russia needed only to put this theory into action. Lenin also argued that only those truly informed individuals, the revolutionary intelligentsia, were capable of leading such a revolution and it was the role of the masses, the workers and Marxist supporters, to be guided by them.

DID YOU KNOW?
The pseudonym ‘Lenin’ was most likely derived from the River Lena in Siberia. He first used it in 1901.

The titles ‘Menshevik’ and ‘Bolshevik’ emerged from the Second Party Congress in 1903. Throughout the congress Lenin provoked confrontation, challenging the notion of who had a right to party membership, whilst also challenging the leader, Plehakov. Tensions continued to mount, seeing Lenin and Martov divided in opinion. The congress had been forced into an impossible situation and a decision needed to be made. A vote was taken to resolve the issue and as a result the party split into two factions; Lenin and his supporters became the Bolsheviks (*Bolshinstvo* meaning majority), while the opposition group, Martov and his supporters became known as the Mensheviks (*Menshinstvo* meaning minority). Despite the titles, votes actually produced fairly even results; however, after a subsequent vote had returned a favourable result for Lenin, he proclaimed it was he and his supporters who were the majority. Ironically, as the revolution drew nearer it was the Mensheviks who outnumbered the Bolsheviks. The adoption of these names, forever branding the Mensheviks as a minority party, was a move Figes considers to be ‘very foolish’ and was in years to come a distinct disadvantage for the Mensheviks.

By 1905 the two groups were moving in opposing directions and in 1912 they officially separated. Ideological and practical differences became increasingly apparent, seeing the two groups become bitter rivals as the years progressed.

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ACTIVITY

Read the extract from Lenin’s *What is to be Done?* and complete the tasks below.

1. List the actions Lenin suggests the Social Democratic Workers’ Party (SDs) must take.
2. To what extent did Lenin’s view differ from the path the SDs had previously taken? Use evidence to support your answer.
3. Discuss the significance of Lenin’s pamphlet in changing the structure of the SDs.

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**VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, 1902.**

I assert:

1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organization of leaders maintaining continuity;

2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously ... into the struggle, forming the basis of the movement and participating in it, the more urgent the need for such an organization, and the more solid this organization must be (for it is much easier for demagogues to side track the more backward sections of the masses);

3) that such an organization must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity;

4) that in an autocratic state, the more we confine the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and to have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to wipe out such an organization, and

5) the greater will be the number of people of the working class and of the other classes of society who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it...

---

36 V.I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?*, first published by Dietz, Stuttgart, March 1902.

37 Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, 152.
IV) LIBERALS: OCTOBRISTS AND KADETS

The liberals were mainly left-leaning intellectuals. Led by the progressive middle class, liberals believed in political and social reform rather than a violent overthrow of the tsarist system. In their philosophical outlook the liberals differed from the radicals, in that they did not share the belief that human beings and society could be perfected. In much of their strategy and tactics, however, they were similar to radicals. The liberals followed a radical social program, pursuing the redistribution of land and comprehensive social welfare. They also used the threat of revolution to their advantage, pressuring the monarchy for political concessions, suggesting it to be a far better alternative than suffering at the hands of the revolutionaries.

Emerging during the industrial growth of the 1890s, the liberals included those in the urban areas such as the ambitious class of industrialists, lawyers and financiers, while in the rural areas, those pursuing land reform supported the liberal cause. Often this group would incorporate a nationalistic element, with ethnic minorities using the group as a vehicle through which to seek independence. The two main sources of the liberal movement were the zemstvos (rural councils) and the intelligentsia. The zemstvos functioned as an elected franchise on a district and provincial level and represented mostly the landed gentry. Although considered by the monarchy to be supportive, the zemstvos were prohibited from forming a national organisation, as the monarchy believed they may begin to resemble a national parliament. While most deputies elected to zemstvos tended to be hostile to the autocracy and bureaucratic rule, they did remain opposed to revolution. From the 1890s onwards the role of zemstvos was restricted, forcing the bodies at times to resort to ‘informal’ national consultations rather than meeting openly.

Two main political parties emerged out of the liberal movement, the Octobrists and the Kadets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCTOBRISTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established</td>
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<td>Members and support base</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<td>Platform / methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legacy</td>
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</table>
**KADETS (CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established</th>
<th>October 1905</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members and support base</td>
<td>Progressive landlords, small industrial entrepreneurs, professionals and academics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Leadership        | Liberal intelligentsia  
Key leader: Paul Milyukov, who served in the Provisional Government in 1917 |
| Platform / methods | Pursued a constitutional monarchy where the powers of the tsar would be restricted by a constituent, or national, assembly  
Sought reforms such as equality, civil rights, free speech, land redemption payments, recognition of unions, the right to strike and universal education |
| Legacy            | Largest of all liberal parties  
The first major opposition voice to tsarism in the duma  
Leader in forming the Provisional Government following the February Revolution of 1917 |

In the Russian context, the revolutionary parties sat in the following order on the political spectrum:

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**THE DUMAS**

**Tsar Nicholas II:** ‘Curse the Duma. It’s all Witte’s fault.’

In accordance with the October Manifesto of 1905, Russia entered a new period of parliamentary government. Between 1906 and 1917 Russia was ruled by a combination of the tsar as God’s representative on earth and the duma as the representative of the people. Alan Wood describes the new era in Russia as being ‘a period of uneasy and ambiguous experimentation with quasi-constitutional politics.’ Following the abolition of censorship on 24 November, new electoral laws were passed on 11 December, whereby all men over the age of twenty-five were eligible to vote indirectly (i.e. to elect someone to vote on their behalf at a higher level), but only landowners with estates exceeding 200 hectares were eligible to vote directly.

---

eligible to vote directly.\textsuperscript{39} Peasants were required to vote indirectly in three stages, where they would elect delegates to vote on their behalf at higher levels. Other prominent groups in Russian society, however, were excluded, such as factory workers from businesses employing fewer than fifty employees, building labourers and tradesmen. This meant that over sixty per cent of the urban working population was ineligible,\textsuperscript{40} making universal suffrage a distant hope.

Despite being the instigator of the initial reforms, Prime Minister Sergei Witte grew ambivalent about the idea of a representative duma. The tsar began to lose faith in his formerly trusted advisor, signalling that Witte’s time in government was drawing to a close. Witte’s last successful action was to negotiate a loan from France, ensuring funding for local law and order. He resigned from his post on 22 April 1906 and was replaced by Ivan Goremykin. Meanwhile, Minister of the Interior Pyotr Durnovo embarked upon a series of strict policies, aggressively working to counter social revolutionary action and control the press. Durnovo was soon to be replaced by Pyotr Stolypin. It was during these early months of 1906 that the tsar issued laws upgrading the State Council of Imperial Russia, an advisory board to work in conjunction with the duma, creating a 198-member upper chamber of parliament comprising one-half of members appointed directly by the tsar and the other half elected representatives from wealthy noble, church and zemstvo assemblies. Not surprisingly, it was a conservative body, which agreed with the tsar on most significant issues. It was here that Nicholas first failed to honour promises made in the October Manifesto, which clearly outlined only one legislative body, the duma.

Despite making provisions for a legislative duma, the tsar’s reforms in no way altered his commitment to autocratic rule. He considered the duma to be a consultative, rather than legislative body, saying to the minister of war, ‘I created the Duma, not to be directed by it, but to be advised.’\textsuperscript{41} His views were again reiterated in the Fundamental Laws of 23 April 1906. As it was designed as a constitutional charter, the drafters were careful to omit the word ‘constitution’ from the document, reflecting Nicholas’ belief that Russia was still an autocracy.\textsuperscript{42} The Fundamental Laws reiterated the tsar’s supreme power, stating that all laws required his approval in order to be passed and allowing him to appoint his own ministers, to be accountable to him and not the duma. The tsar retained complete control over foreign affairs, military supervision, states of emergency and so on. These laws also cemented the shared authority of the duma and imperial council, stating that both houses of parliament, each sitting for a term of five years, needed to be in agreement for all laws to be passed.

With the tsar retaining such significant powers and each law requiring his direct approval, the duma exerted very little legislative influence. Article 87 stated that when the duma was not in session or under ‘exceptional circumstances’ the tsar held the power to legislate on his own, providing the decision received approval from the duma within two months. The latter part of the process, however, was often overlooked and, naturally, once passed, laws became very difficult to overturn.

The first elections for the duma began in late February 1906, with most of them being complete by mid-April. Unions and political parties were made legal on 4 March. Prior to the elections, all political parties left of the Kadets, including the Socialist Revolutionaries and Social Democrats, officially boycotted the elections,
REINVENTING RUSSIA: THE REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER 2: CRISIS AND RESPONSE (1904–1914)

rejecting ‘the very principles of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government.’ Despite this, Russians were generally enthusiastic to vote and the elections produced a largely peasant-based body, with some radical representatives (despite the boycott). Having said this, the Fundamental Laws significantly undermined the role of the duma, seeing it become over time significantly more conservative than imagined, a far cry from the constitutional monarchy many reformists had in mind. Despite this, throughout its incarnation the duma was a

DOCUMENT

FUNDAMENTAL LAWS, 1906

1. The Russian State is one and indivisible....
3. The Russian language is the general language of the state, and its use is compulsory in the army, the navy and state and public institutions....
4. The All-Russian Emperor possesses the supreme autocratic power. Not only fear and conscience, but God himself, commands obedience to his authority.
5. The person of the Sovereign Emperor is sacred and inviolable...
8. The sovereign emperor possesses the initiative in all legislative matters. The Fundamental Laws may be subject to revision in the State Council and State Duma only on His initiative. The sovereign emperor ratifies the laws. No law can come into force without his approval. . . .
9. The Sovereign Emperor approves laws; and without his approval no legislative measure can become law.
10. The Sovereign Emperor possesses the administrative power in its totality throughout the entire Russian state...
12. The sovereign emperor takes charge of all the external relations of the Russian State. He determines the direction of Russia’s foreign policy. . . .
13. The Sovereign Emperor alone declares war, concludes peace, and negotiates treaties with foreign states.
14. The sovereign emperor is the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army and navy.
15. The sovereign emperor appoints and dismisses the Chairman the Council of Ministers and individual Ministers....

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read Nicholas II’s Fundamental Laws, 1906 and complete the tasks below.
1. Identify two powers of the sovereign emperor (tsar) that are stated in the extract.
2. Identify two government positions the sovereign emperor has the power to appoint and dismiss, as stated in the extract.
3. Quoting from the extract and using your own knowledge, explain the social and political causes of the enactment of the Fundamental Laws.
4. Evaluate to what extent the extract provides a complete and accurate depiction of the causes of revolutionary sentiment in Russia in 1905–06. In your response refer to different historical interpretations of the period.

SHORT RESPONSE

In three or four points, respond to the following topic: ‘Nicholas II’s Fundamental Laws completely undermined his October Manifesto.’ Do you agree?

ACTIVITIES

Pipes, The Russian Revolution, 156.
central forum for critique of the regime, with parliamentary privilege (immunity from legal proceedings) and the right to question ministers. The duma became a training ground for people who later took positions of responsibility in the Provisional Government of 1917.

FIRST DUMA: APRIL–JULY 1906
The First Duma opened on 27 April in an elaborate ceremony designed to impress the deputies who had been elected into the body. The ceremony did exactly the opposite, serving only to highlight the vast gap between rich and poor in Russian society; the opulence of the imperial monarch being compared to the destitution of the majority of the population.

Peasants held a large majority of the deputy positions, totalling thirty-eight per cent, while the Kadets were the largest political party, accounting for thirty-seven per cent of the seats.\(^45\) These two groups formed a coalition, seeing the Kadets sponsor an ‘Address to the Throne,’ pursuing rights for the people. They demanded the following:

- freedom to strike
- freedom to publicly assemble
- the abolition of capital punishment

• political amnesty
• the abolition of the State Council of Imperial Russia
• significant reform to the civil service
• ministerial responsibility to be handed to the duma
• universal and direct voting
• universal and free education
• the seizure of large estates and redistribution to the peasants
• more equitable distribution of the tax burden.

Nicholas found these demands unacceptable, seeing them as openly anti-government. The First Duma was dissolved after only seventy-three days. Two-hundred deputies, mostly Kadets, staged an appeal, encouraging people to refrain from paying taxes and refusing orders to enlist. Violence broke out across the nation and the government acted decisively, appointing Pyotr Stolypin as prime minister. A second duma was promised for February the next year.

SECOND DUMA: FEBRUARY–JUNE 1907
Having hoped for a more conservative body, the government was shocked to find that the Second Duma was more radical than its predecessor. This time the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats participated in the elections, realising the potential for the duma to fuel anti-tsarist sentiment. The Second Duma was greatly divided ideologically, with deputies ranging from Socialist Revolutionaries to monarchists, with even a few poor peasants thrown in. It was near-impossible for the tsar and prime minister to work with such a disparate group, despite Stolypin’s commitment to make it work.

Following disturbances throughout April and May, including the duma openly criticising the administration of the military, the tsar sought to dissolve the group and, more importantly, to gain a more docile duma for the future. After it became obvious that the body would not support Stolypin’s proposed land reforms and that deputies wanted to nationalise land, the Second Duma’s time was limited. The tsar and prime minister were given a perfect opportunity to dissolve it following the arrest of a Social Democrat who had allegedly planned to overthrow the regime. The duma was dissolved on 3 June. Nicholas stated that the decision was made on account of the irresponsible and obstructive behaviour of representatives. The public responded to the closure of the duma in a mostly quiet manner; there were few arrests.

THIRD DUMA: NOVEMBER 1907–JUNE 1912
The hope of real reform was further shattered when, on the same day, sweeping changes were made to the electoral system by Stolypin, who acted while the duma was not in session. Voting was suspended in districts where, according to the tsar, the population ‘had not yet reached sufficient levels of civic development’ and further change to the system occurred, greatly restricting the franchise (right to vote). This move violated the constitution and was, thereby, illegal. In essence, the number of deputies from peasant, urban worker, small landowning and national minority backgrounds was drastically reduced, while the number from the landed gentry was greatly increased. The new laws were complex, but their objective was

clear. Now only one in six males was entitled to vote, with one per cent of the population now responsible for electing 300 out of the 441 deputies.

The result was exactly what the tsar and Stolypin had hoped for, a more conservative and compliant duma, dominated by right-wing parties willing to work with the prime minister. Stolypin considered this new group to be composed of ‘responsible and statesmanlike people’ and was able to further pursue his land reform without the opposition of the duma. The body did, however, continue to be a forum for political discussion and proposal, most importantly raising the political consciousness and awareness of the wider community. For Nicholas, the existence of the duma continued to serve as a message to the European superpowers Britain and France, with whom Russia was now allied, that Russia was a modern nation committed to constitutional monarchy. It is for these reasons that the Third Duma was permitted to serve its full five-year term.

FOURTH DUMA: NOVEMBER 1912–AUGUST 1914

The term of the Fourth Duma was plagued by mounting tensions and crises, most notably the assassination of Prime Minister Stolypin in 1911. Arguably the most conservative of the dumas, the body was tested by radical protests, to which it responded repressively. The workers’ movement began to resurface, prompted by the massacre of 500 miners from the Lena Goldfields in Siberia in 1912. The miners, demanding better pay and conditions, were brutally massacred by government forces, highlighting the growing reactionary methods of the tsar. Over the following two years, three-million workers staged 9000 strikes. Many moderate deputies in the duma tired of the reactionary approach of the tsar and began to voice their concerns, in some cases even forecasting the breakdown of parliamentary government in Russia.

Historians have long debated the successes and failures of the constitutional period in Russia. While the Stalin-sponsored *History of the CPSU* says the dumas were nothing more than ‘an impotent appendage of tsardom,’ most Western historians contend that the dumas played an integral role in provoking debate, pursuing reform and, to some extent, awakening the political consciousneses of the masses. Having said this, when considering the events of 1917, some historians lament the fact that, though they were not without their achievements, the four dumas of Nicholas II constituted a wasted opportunity that did not present itself again.

**FACT FILE**

Construct a table, list or graphic showing the following facts for each of the four dumas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>FACT FILE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Start and end date</td>
<td>• Problems or controversies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Party in majority</td>
<td>• Legacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reforms introduced</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

47 Lynch, Reaction and Revolutions, 52.
Pyotr Stolypin (1862–1911) became known for his far-reaching land reforms and ruthless tactics after the 1905 revolution. His first political job was as a provincial governor. He quickly climbed the ranks by improving peasant welfare and suppressing rural rebellions. Nicholas II appointed him minister of the interior in 1906 and, soon after, prime minister. As prime minister, Stolypin set about suppressing revolutionary groups and reducing the social discontent that fuelled them. His guiding principle was ‘suppression first and then, and only then, reform.’ A committed monarchist, he set about protecting the tsar from revolution.

Stolypin focused on the ‘rural crisis,’ land shortages and rural overpopulation, which had been exacerbated by a series of poor harvests. His land reforms, issued while the duma was not in session, were set down by executive decree in November 1906. His aim was to transform peasants into a class of independent landowners that would serve as a loyal and conservative class – a barrier to revolution, rather than a catalyst. Stolypin planned to replace village communes with private land ownership and to give peasants more rights in selecting zemstvo members. Under his system, peasants were allowed to leave the mir (village commune) and sell land shares or claim single plots of land. Land taxes were halted from 1 January 1907, depriving the mir of financial power. The result was mixed. Some peasants, especially those in western regions, were able to get more land and adopt modern (Western European) farming methods. Others were left out of the process. This was largely due to the policy of redistributing, rather than expanding, land ownership, thus forcing many peasants to look for work in cities, further exacerbating stresses from Witte’s industrial reforms.

Stolypin’s program remained largely unfulfilled. The reluctance and inexperience of peasants made land distribution and new farming methods difficult to implement. Land shortages, high building costs, poor irrigation and inefficient transport made Stolypin’s aims virtually unattainable. He did, however, succeed in pacifying rural Russians and raising their living standards overall. Historian Richard Pipes suggests that among Stolypin’s achievements was his ability to offer ‘a sense of national purpose and hope’ after the traumas of 1905; most of Stolypin’s social and political reforms, however, remained ‘on paper.’

 Accompanying land reforms were severe acts of repression. Stolypin introduced a network of military tribunals in 1906 which processed cases without investigation or delay. Between August 1906 and April 1907, 1144 people were executed by these courts and a further 2000 by ordinary courts.

Stolypin also censored the press and conducted searches, arrests and surveillance of universities and liberal activists. He enraged reformists and radicals by dismissing the Second Duma and revising the electoral system single-handed. Stolypin gained support from some moderate groups, such as the Octobrists and the Union of Russian People. Hence he was able to further his land reforms, reintroduce ‘Russification’ in Finland and extend the zemstvo system into Poland. He was seen by many as an abuser of the constitution, perhaps explaining his assassination in September 1911. Dmitry Bogrov, a revolutionary, fatally shot Stolypin on 1 September 1911. It is widely thought that, in any case, the tsar had lost faith in his prime minister and was looking for a chance to end Stolypin’s post. As one duma member said, Stolypin ‘died politically long before his physical death.’

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53 Lynch, Reaction and Revolutions, 23.
54 Pipes, The Russian Revolution, 190.
55 Darby, Tsarism to Bolshevism, 45.
56 Pipes, The Russian Revolution, 190.
The period 1904–14 saw a series of crises hit Russia, crises which were met with a variety of reformist and repressive acts from the government of Tsar Nicholas II. The humiliating defeat of the Russo-Japanese War added to anti-tsarist sentiment, and prompted Father Gapon’s protest march, which was brutally extinguished on Bloody Sunday, 1905. The ensuing revolution around the country saw major strikes, peasant seizures of land and acts of terror directed at landowners. The state bureaucracy was shown to be weak and ill-informed, based as it was on arbitrary and corrupt practices. The police and military were unable to control the situation. Nicholas, however, was able to appease the masses, at least in the short term, by setting up a parliamentary system – duma – which allowed for limited popular representation. Autocratic methods remained, however, as seen in the Fundamental Laws and Stolypin’s system of court-martial executions, among other actions.

Many important groups emerged during this period, such as the Octobrists and Kadets on the moderate side and the Socialist Revolutionaries and Social Democrats on the radical side. Due to Nicholas’ successful employment of reform and repression, it was difficult for such organisations to mount a united and effective campaign to overthrow the regime. Revolutionary sentiment, however, simmered just below the surface, ready to seize any opportunity to challenge the tsar. It was the potential for such action that most worried Nicholas, as he remained devoted to the notion of autocratic rule.

Perhaps the most significant factor to emerge out of this period was the people’s perception of the tsar. The almost mystical union that had previously existed between the tsar and his subjects was forever broken. Ironically, it was the creation of the duma, which saved Nicholas in the short term, that allowed his enemies to mount an effective challenge to tsarism. Despite the dissolution of several dumas, the parliaments were to some extent a check on royal power and a place where opposition parties could be heard. This gave strength to the movement that was to lead to all-out revolution in 1917.
CHAPTER REVIEW

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE – SHORT RESPONSE
Using three or four points, explain the causes and consequences of one of the following events between 1904 and 1914:

- The Russo-Japanese War
- Bloody Sunday
- Reform attempts (e.g. October Manifesto, the dumas)
- Limits to reform (e.g. Fundamental Laws, dissolution of the Second Duma).

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS
Read the historians’ views below about the events of 1905 and complete the tasks that follow:

- Richard Pipes: ‘In the end [after the 1905 revolution], Russia had gained nothing more than a breathing spell.’
- Orlando Figes: ‘Although the regime succeeded in restoring order, it could not hope to put the clock back. 1905 had changed society for good. Many of the younger comrades of 1905 were the elders of 1917. They were inspired by its memory and instructed by its lessons.’
- Communist Party of the Soviet Union: ‘The streets of St Petersburg [on 9 January 1905] ran with workers’ blood...On that day the workers received a bloody lesson. It was their faith in the Tsar that was riddled by bullets on that day. They came to realise that they could win their rights only by struggle.’

1. Compare and contrast the three interpretations of Russia in 1905.
2. Explain which of the three quotes you find most informative/accurate and why. Do they all seem to be equally objective?

KEY PLAYERS – PRESENTATION
Give a presentation on the contribution of one of the following individuals or popular movements to the 1905 revolution:

- Tsar Nicholas II
- Count Sergei Witte
- Father Gapon and the Bloody Sunday petitioners
- Pyotr Stolypin
- Lenin and the Bolshevik SDs
- Alexander Kerensky, Viktor Chernov and the SRs.
**CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY**

Write an essay on the topic below. Your essay should be completed in approximately 60 minutes and include a brief introduction, 2–3 short paragraphs and a conclusion.

*Topic: ‘1905 was not a true revolution.’ Do you agree?*

**KEY IDEAS – SHORT RESPONSE**

Using three or four points, analyse Lenin’s ideas and attitudes about Russia by 1914 and how he wished to change society.

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**FURTHER READING**


An accessible student textbook. Influenced by Richard Pipes, whom the author considers to be ‘the leading contemporary authority on modern Russian history.’


A very detailed textbook with an outstanding overview of modern Russia. An excellent place to start further research.


A standard Soviet analysis. Follows the official Party line.


Written in meticulous detail. Schapiro is an interesting and influential historian.


Concise and accessible to students. Makes useful reference to debates over historical interpretations.


Highly recommended. Many leading historians have contributed to this monumental work. An excellent resource for research tasks.


A detailed account of the Bolshevik Party and its founder.


White’s biography gives a thorough analysis of Lenin’s political ideas and actions.