

Year 11 Bridging Project

2N History

Part 3



Part 3. The Last Tsar.

You have a choice about how you do this – any is fine.

- Print out the booklet and write in the gaps
- Download a copy and type in the gaps
- Record your answers on paper (use the same headings in your work as the page/section you are working from.)

Whichever you choose, just keep your work safe!

Extra challenge questions are optional.

The last Tsar was Nicholas II (1868-1918)

Beliefs

- Deeply influenced by his father and committed to preserving his policies
- Maintenance of autocracy – although his personality was not suited to such a strong willed role
- Rejection of constitutional monarchy ideas
- Devoutly religious – educated by Procurator of Holy Synod

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Waller: Nicholas II always lived in the shadow of his father, Alexander III, whose views he tried to uphold

Determining aspects of rule:

- Failed to develop domestic policy programme and failed to delegate power (too much for one man to deal with by this point)
- Although hardworking he had no sense of reality. Easily influenced by reactionary ministers.
- Lacked realism and meant there was no effective leadership at the top
- Indecisive – changed ministers and policies often e.g. Dismissed Witte in 1903
- Avoided calling the Council of Ministers to prevent members uniting against him and was concerned by anyone who showed initiative or expressed unconventional ideas
- Ignored disturbances by growing urban working class in towns and illegal strikes – should have seen they were striking against working conditions and wages which he could have resolved.
- Ignored councils (Zemstvas) set up by middle classes: failed to pick up on increasing disillusionment or introduce constitutional monarchy to appease liberals. Instead tried to maintain autocracy by dismissing attempts to create an 'All Zemstvo Organisation' in 1896 and purged the elected boards of the zemstva of liberals in 1900

Modernity:

Could Russia modernise to compete with other European powers? Fate of grandfather and reactionary period of father meant unlikely to reverse any of their policies. Religious education meant he was also suspicious of change = continued repressive policies.

(-) This angered intelligentsia and critics of the regime = began to challenge Tsardom.

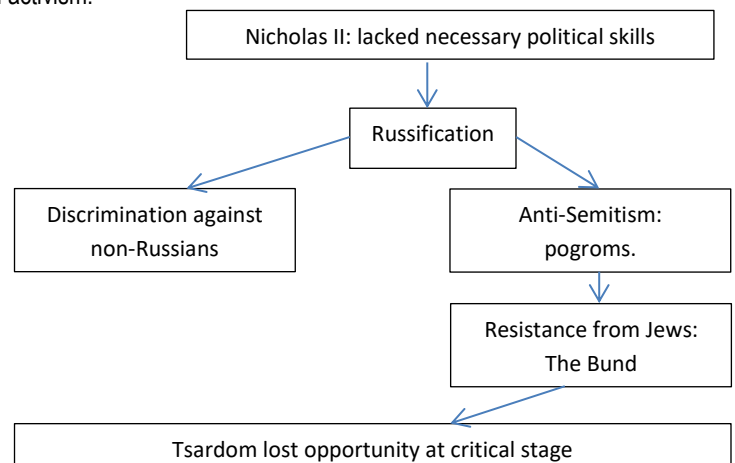
By restricting itself to nationalism and orthodoxy, Nicholas II's rule denied itself the chance to adapt successfully to a changing world.

Russification:

- Started by Alexander III → Nicholas continues it.
- Severely enforced policy to restrict influence of non-Russian national minorities by emphasising superiority of all things Russian.
- Aim = impose Russian ways on all the peoples within the empire.
- How: state interference in their education and culture – widespread, systematic.
- Impact: officials everywhere vested interest in maintaining dominance of Russian values. Nationalities who suffered most: Baltic Germans, Poles, Finns, Ukrainians.
- Anti-Semitism. Chief victim – Jews. 600 new measures introduced. Targets for scapegoating especially as they lived in ghettos/easily identifiable. Pogroms (fierce, state organised persecutions – kill, destroy property) against them – Black Hundreds used to do this. Nicholas II reign saw sharp increase in pogroms. Proof of active encouragement by Tsarist regime to terrorise Jews.
- Failings of Russification were:
 - timing – Russia needed cohesion and unity at this critical phase of development, but regime chose to treat ½ of its population as inferior or potential enemies.
 - Alienated great mass of 5 million Jews. 1890s saw large influx of Jews into various anti-Tsarist movement e.g. 1897 Jewish Union ('Bund') created against regime. Trotsky was a Jew = political activism.

Further Domestic Policies

- Failed to develop domestic policy programme
- Discontent met with repression rather than reform e.g. Urban discontent in the cities (Ohkrana, army)
- Continued father's educational policies including crushing student demonstrations with heavy police force which radicalised students who may have been appeased with reforms



Task: Evaluation of Nicholas II

Strengths of Nicholas II

Weaknesses of Nicholas II

Extra challenge question:

How did Nicholas II compare with previous Tsars you studied in the last booklet?

In 1905, Tsar Nicholas II faced an extremely testing year – a year of revolt against him.

Look out for

- Causes of the revolt (you should have some ideas already of what people in Russia wanted to change)
- Events of the revolt
- How the Tsar managed to stop the revolt
- Changes which he made as a result of the revolt
- What the Tsar should have learnt from 1905! (but didn't!)

LONG TERM CAUSES OF THE 1905 YEAR OF REVOLT (Long term cause = problem building up for a long time)

- 1) **Discontented Working Class (proletariat)** Grievances included: long working hours, low pay, terrible living and working condition
- 2) **Peasants:** Grievances included: poverty, needed more land, high taxes. Long term disillusionment at outcomes of emancipation 1861. Suffered famines – 1899, 1901. Peasant and land banks accidentally increased debts of people. High level of tax to pay for industrialisation e.g. Trans-Siberian Rail. Years of the Red Cockerel – arson attacks by peasants against nobility/landowners (provinces where relationships were more traditional). Attacked officials, set fire to barns, seized woodland and pasture, set fire to official documents.
- 3) **Alienated Liberals and Middle Class:** Middle class liberals wanted to participate in government and wanted an elected national assembly – there was no duma (Parliament), the only elected bodies were the zemstvo which the Tsar's used Land Captains to override and electoral changes to minimise participation in. Middle class had grown and was more politicised – Great Famine 1891-2 had shown incompetence of Tsarist government resulting in voluntary organisations and the zemstva having to organise relief.
- 4) **National minorities.** Finns, Poles, Jews. Wanted independence. Wanted an end to Russification.

SHORT TERM CAUSES OF THE 1905 YEAR OF REVOLT (Short term cause = final problems which build up just before the event)

1. RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-06

War on Sea

- ❑ Dec 1904 – Port Arthur surrendered
- ❑ Tsushima (May 1905). Russian Baltic fleet was completely destroyed and 12,600 men were lost in the straits of Tsushima. The Japanese were largely unscathed by the clash



War on Land: Mukden Feb 1905: major engagement. After three weeks of intensive fighting, 85,000 Russians and 41,000 Japanese were dead or wounded. Russians were forced to pull back.

Consequences: - How did it contribute to attempted revolution of 1905?

- Series of defeats and long siege turned initial surge of patriotism in 1904 into hostility and opposition to government; lost against "inferior" nation (Japan was smaller etc.)
- Highlighted inadequacy of autocracy – weaknesses of Tsar Nicholas II highlighted as well as the problems of a lack of National Assembly (Parliament) or meritocratic/democratically elected government. All the reasons for losses could be linked back to the failings of the Tsar and government.
- Assassination of Plehve July 1904 - little mourning after and celebrations seen!
- Concessions had to be made – Mirskii (Plehve's replacement) allowed a group of zemstvo reps to meet in his private quarters 1904 for "cup of tea" but Nicholas rejected their edited version of the Assembly requests. Would only allow expansion of rights of the zemstva
- Created a genuine opposition movement –stimulated revolution and renewed cries for a National Assembly

2. IMPACT OF WITTE'S ECONOMIC REFORMS (ATTEMPTS TO RAPIDLY INDUSTRIALISE) – look back to your first booklet to remind yourself of these.

SPARK EVENT OF THE 1905 YEAR OF REVOLT (Spark event = the event which sparked the revolt to start)

SPARK EVENT – BLOODY SUNDAY 1905

Bloody Sunday was a massacre which took place in the capital, St Petersburg. The people massacred were taking part in a peaceful protest led by Father Gapon (a priest)

The demands made by Father George Gapon and the Assembly of Factory Workers.

- (1) An 8-hour day and freedom to organize trade unions.
- (2) Improved working conditions, free medical aid, higher wages for women workers.
- (3) Elections to be held for a constituent assembly by universal, equal and secret suffrage.
- (4) Freedom of speech, press, association and religion.
- (5) An end to the war with Japan.



Why demonstrate and what happened?

- War with Japan provoked internal unrest and economic problems – when Port Arthur finally surrendered to the Japanese forces it disrupted the economy, driving up food prices and forcing factory closures
- Conditions in the cities and industrial discontent – no trade unions allowed, long working hours, low wages, sanitation, living conditions (barracks), at mercy of factory owners.
- Father Gapon led a procession of unemployed and disgruntled St Petersburg anxious for jobs, decent wages, and shorter hours. 150,000 involved
- It was not spontaneous but its nature was peaceful – to ask the Tsar for support (petition to their 'little Father', Tsar Nicholas II) – banners, hymns
- They had absolute faith in the Tsar to improve the workers' lot
- Unbeknownst to the workers, Nicholas II was at his palace in Tsarskoye Selo, some 25 miles south of the capital.
- As several thousand workers approached the Winter Palace, officers called out the palace's security garrison to guard its entry points. As the workers approached, the soldiers opened fire on the crowd. It is not known whether an order was given, whether soldiers fired spontaneously or if they were reacting to aggression.
- The number of victims is also unclear. Government sources declared that 96 were killed, eyewitnesses suggested in excess of 200, while reports and propaganda from revolutionary groups claimed even higher figures
- Estimated 200 killed, 800 wounded by Cossack reaction
- Destroys 'father' image → workers see him attack them rather than help them, impacts on loyalty towards Tsar → anger
- Reaction of Liberals and radicals in response – began to push to gain what they wanted and saw this as an opportunity

Watch this clip about Bloody Sunday: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Jxzolu4Vbo>

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER BLOODY SUNDAY?

Different parts of Russia spontaneously erupted into a year of revolt before the Tsar was able to regain control completely.

- In many areas of the countryside, peasants started revolts – some attacked their landlords' estates and burned feudal records
- In major towns workers went on strike
- Workers and peasants set up their own councils – soviets – to make their own decisions.
- The St Petersburg Soviet had a lot of influence in the city: Trotsky (later a leading Bolshevik) was an important figure there
- Nationalists began demonstrations in demand of independence for their regions

Immediate aftermath of Bloody Sunday - Struggle between:

1. Authorities desperate to keep order and regain control
2. Demands of Liberals anxious to keep control of the movement for reform
3. Radical revolutionaries determined to press home their advantages
4. Nationalist groups who saw an opportunity to exert independence

Inhumanity of the regime seemed to give the people a common sense of grievance to all unite behind (workers, peasants, middle class liberals)

The massacre gave coherence to a growing wave of uncoordinated protests around Russia.

→ made them much more dangerous to the regime as one force.

WHY WAS THE TSAR ABLE TO REASSERT CONTROL DURING 1905?

Shortcomings of revolutionaries

- United in enemy, divided in desired outcome – Mensheviks and Bolsheviks differed in views and tactics, which differed from the Liberals, which differed from the two wings of the Social Revolutionaries. Unable to work together
- Not prepared for revolution at this time. Had not expected it and caught unaware. Spontaneous uprising that came as a result of Bloody Sunday was something they jumped onto as it was already taking hold and therefore struggled to direct it as they hoped to.
- Workers and peasants were not revolutionaries – hard to direct and organise.
- Lenin not in the country at the time

Once Liberals and peasants were bought off, could exploit this

WHY WAS THE TSAR ABLE TO REASSERT CONTROL DURING 1905?

The granting of Concessions - the October Manifesto (Oct 1905) and Redemption announcement (Nov 1905)

- October Manifesto – appeased (pleased) Liberals – promise of creation of a Legislative Duma (a Parliament that would make laws) Promised range of civil rights, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and legalising of trade unions. The Liberals' appetite for reform was satisfied (temporarily at least).
- October Manifesto - Promise of trade union legalisation bought off less radical workers.
- Divide and conquer – now the Liberals were bought off, that was one less group to oppose the Tsar and began to reduce extent of threat of remaining groups
- The government ended 'redemption' payments made by peasants to buy off their land. This appeased peasantry = yet another group who now no longer posed a threat – just left radical workers and revolutionary groups.

Bought off easily. Probably due to.....

Bought off by these and then repressed after = reasserted power

Use of repression to crush opposition

- Due to concessions like October Manifesto, by Nov-Dec 1905 the workers were the only major group still opposing the Tsar which made rebellions easier to crush.
- Force was used against workers on strike: 'fire no blanks, and spare no bullets' in forcing workers back into factories
- Black Hundreds - rounded up and flogged peasants, attacked revolutionaries leading to 300 arrested incl. Trotsky, students and nationalist groups such as Poles and Jews
- Army – some troops had been recalled from Russo-Japanese war to help crush opposition. Used against Dec 1905 strikers = 1000 dead, many Bolsheviks surrendered, Menshevik Trotsky was arrested. Lenin arrived just in time to witness the flames of gutted council buildings set ablaze by government troops.

Fundamental Laws 1906 and Duma

- The Tsar quickly undid the concessions granted to regain further control
- Fundamental Laws introduced as a limit on October Manifesto – stated no law could come into force without the Tsar's approval = disabled some of powers of proposed Duma. Re-stated that the Tsar ruled by autocracy.
- During the course of the Duma experiment 1906-1914, Tsar managed to increasingly paralyse the powers of the Duma and limit how far they could challenge his rule. He was able to dissolve them if they posed any threat (first, second duma), Stolypin altered electoral franchise in time for 3rd Duma which increased nobility numbers elected (known as a Duma of Lords and Lackeys) and so they begin to approve more and more of the Tsar's ministers' reforms.

Nature and aims of the revolution

- Readiness of the Liberals and peasants to accept the government's political and economic bribes indicated that neither of these groups were genuinely ready for revolution.
- Army, despite disasters in war, remained largely loyal and returned home to crush soviets.
- Was this ever genuinely an attempt at revolution or just a backlash against grievances that, when addressed by the Tsar (or so he made it seem), fizzled out? All they wanted was concessions to help them solve their discontent?

Task: Evaluation of 1905 – complete this table

Summarise the causes of the 1905 Year of Revolt	
What happened on Bloody Sunday?	
How did revolt spread after Bloody Sunday?	
What promises were made in the October Manifesto? Summarise other means used to reestablish order and crush the revolt	
How did the Tsar go back on the October Manifesto with the Fundamental Laws?	

Extra challenge questions.

1. Some historians believe Father Gapon was actually working for the Tsarist police as a 'provocateur' – find out more: <https://seanmunger.com/2014/01/22/bloody-sundays-father-gapon-the-agent-who-provocateured-too-much/>
2. What could Tsar Nicholas II have learnt from 1905 to prevent a repeat of this uprising?

1906-1917 – the end of Nicholas II's rule

After the 1905 year of revolt, the Tsar reasserted his autocratic control. He hired a tough new minister, Stolypin, to crack down on revolutionaries and control the dumas.

However the causes of the 1905 revolt had not been resolved and conditions were made far, far worse by the arrival of the First World War in 1914.

A. Economic and social discontent

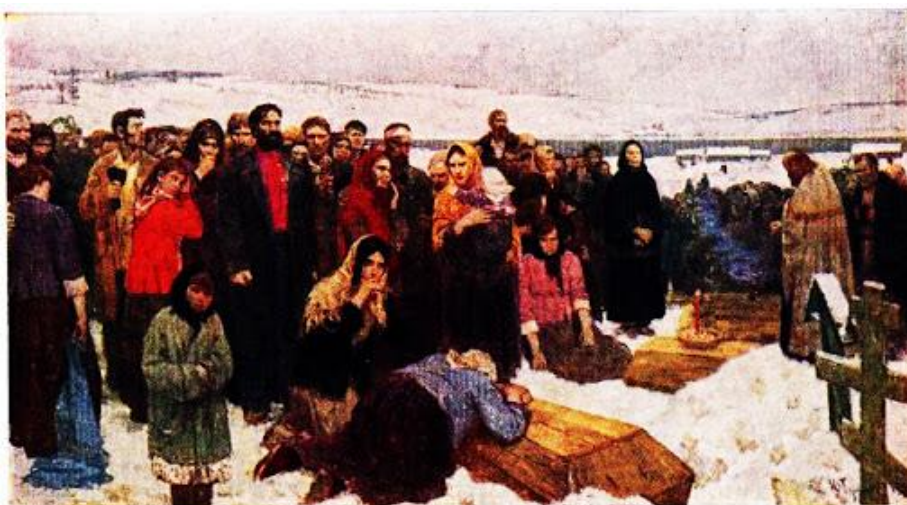
Working conditions continued to be harsh and this contributed to support for revolutionaries. Any attempt to ask for change was dealt with harshly. One of the most extreme examples is what happened at the Lena Goldfields in 1912.

This is an extract from a website libcom.org

Discontent in the goldfields was high, and a strike broke out spontaneously on February 29 1912 with hundreds of workers walking out at the Andreyevsky field after being issued rancid meat at the company store, reportedly made from horse penises.

Joined by some 6000 workers from other fields by mid-March, the strike in the region was total and production at the Lenzoloto had ground to a halt. A strike committee was set up, and demands were established; a 30% wage increase, elimination of fines, the 8-hour day, and an improvement of food issued at the stores. Initially disposed to negotiate with the miners, talks eventually broke down on March 22. Possibly under pressure from the government, the Lenzoloto directors resolved to end the strike quickly and troops were sent from the town of Kirensk, some 200 miles away.

The arrival of the troops saw the swift arrest of the entire strike committee in the early hours of April 17 in Bodaybo. A march was organised the same day, and by mid afternoon about 2500 workers were marching to the local prosecutor's office to demand their immediate release. Met by a thick line of soldiers under the command of a gendarmerie officer, Captain Treshchenkov, near the Naderzhinsky field, the unarmed marchers were fired upon. When the shooting had ended, over 500 men lay dead or wounded, with at least 250 believed to have been killed.



B. Political reasons: loss of support for the Tsar

Crucially, the Tsar lost support from the middle classes and aristocracy – the people he most relied on for loyalty. There were many reasons for this:

- He was dismissive of ministers, not listening to them properly, changing his mind when he heard a new argument
- He rejected offers from liberal middle classes to share the burden of government
- He did not work well with the Duma. He dismissed it when it wanted change. This frustrated the liberals who wanted to work with the Tsar through a duma.
- He allowed Rasputin to exert a major influence over his family and court. Rasputin was a monk who appeared to have the ability to heal Nicholas and Alexandra's only son – Alexis – when he suffered from his haemophilia. However Rasputin (in the middle of this picture) was a scandalous figure, accused of rape and holding orgies. There were rumours that he was having an affair with the Tsar's wife. Although there is no evidence of this, the Tsar was damaged by the rumour and the aristocracy resented the fact that Rasputin's opinions were considered more important than theirs.



C. Military reasons.

Before the 1905 Year of Revolt, the Russo-Japanese War had exposed the weaknesses of the Tsarist government. The same happened – but on a much larger scale – when war broke out across Europe in 1914. Russia was part of the Triple Entente with Britain and France and joined the war against Germany and Austro-Hungary. However the Tsarist system simply could not cope. The system of government was not geared to fight a war on such a large scale.

- The transport system broke down under the strain of supplying Russia's vast army – 12 million men.
- Agriculture could not keep up with the demand for food with so many peasants conscripted into the army.
- There were terrible shortages in cities as there were not enough trains to distribute food.
- Factories in the newly industrialised country could not keep up with the demands of uniform and ammunition for their vast army.
- The Tsar left the capital to personally lead the troops as Commander in Chief – without the necessary military experience – leaving government in the hands of his (German) wife and Rasputin ...
- The Tsar seemed increasingly out of touch. When he visited the troops, he took them religious icons and blessed them: they needed boots and rifles.



By February 1917 popular discontent had grown to such a pitch that a wave of demonstrations turned into a revolution. The Tsar was forced to admit he had lost control of his country and his people and he abdicated (gave up his throne.) 300 years of Romanov rule had come to an end.

Task: Problems facing the Tsar by 1917.

Summarise the three problems (Economic/Social; Political; Military) on a spider diagram.

Extra challenge question. How could you argue that the First World War was the most important of these problems?