**YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING READING AND ANSWER QUESTIONS 1-11 FULLY AND TO A GOOD STANDARD OF ENGLISH.**

**THIS WORK IS DUE FOR LESSON 1.**

**If there are any questions about this work, you can email either Sherridan or Simon.**

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**INITIAL GLOSSARY**

**Agrarian economy** – a system based on farming food and goods which are then traded

**Anarchism** – the idea that governments are unnecessary and local cooperation should replace them

**Anti-Semitism** – an attitude that discriminates against Jews and the Jewish faith

**Authoritarian** – strong leadership by an individual or group. An authoritarian government riled by one all-powerful leader is a Dictatorship

**Autocracy** – government where one person possesses unlimited power

**Bourgeoisie** – owners of ‘the means of production’, usually factory/bank/business owners

**Democracy** – government by the people, for the people, normally through elections

**Divine Right** – the belief that a ruler has the right to rule as he has been chosen by God

**Emancipate** – to set free

**Ideology** – a set of ideas or beliefs that outline how society works or should work

**Immiseration** – the process of the proletariat becoming poorer and more desperate

**Intelligentsia** – educated and enlightened members of society, influenced by western ideas

***Kulak*** – a peasant wealthy enough to own his own land & hire labour

***Mir*** – village or community

**Pogrom** – an organised attack on communities, often involving murder and destruction of property

**Proletariat** – workers who exchange their own labour for pay

**Russian Orthodox Church** – same core beliefs as Roman Catholic Church, but retains some distinct customs

**Terrorism** – use of violence to intimidate governments

**Tsar** – Emperor of Russia, sometimes written as ‘czar’

***Zemstvo (plural Zemstva)***– elected local council

**KEY POLITICAL TERMS AND IDEAS**

**Capitalism -** Economic system based on private ownership of the means of production and distribution. ***Concentrates wealth and power*** in the hands of a small group of people, at the expense of the majority. Produces inequality.

**Communism/Communists (sometimes referred to as Marxism/Marxists) -** Similar to socialism on the surface. However, Communists believe that the means of production should be ***state-controlled***, to bring the most benefit to all. Directly opposed to capitalism. Most communists have seen a seizure of power as the best way to end capitalism.

**Conservatism/Conservatives -** The wish to ***conserve* *the ‘natural order’***. The elite make natural rulers and should remain in power. Monarchy at the top, supported by the army, landowners, business owners, and the Church. The lower classes should show loyalty.

**Constitution -** Basic set of rules, from which laws and policy are made.

**Fascism/Fascists -** Characterised by: ultra-nationalism, militarism, violence, strong leadership, a belief in a glorious national heritage, anti-democratic, anti-liberal, anti-socialist, resistant to change.

**Internationalism -** Belief in the virtue of different nations/races living together in peace.

**Left Wing -** The ‘left hand side’ of the political spectrum, ranging from representative democracies, to communism.

**Liberalism/Liberals -** Belief in individual ***freedom* and *liberty*** (freedom of speech/worship/thought, etc). Committed to democracy and a representative government. Capitalism acceptable in a democracy, as long as government intervene on behalf of greater good if necessary.

**Militarism -** Admiration for strong military and militaristic imagery. Keen to use war as part of policy.

**Monarchy -** The King or Queen as head of state/government.

**Nationalism/Nationalists -** The idea that one’s nation has an identity and virtues independent of its neighbours. Extreme nationalism may lead to the belief that one’s nation is superior to others, and a desire to overcome other nations through armed struggle. Ultra-extreme nationalism often associated with racism.

**Republic -** Form of government with an elected head of state, e.g. President.

**Right Wing -** The ‘right hand side’ of the political spectrum, ranging from moderate conservatism, to fascism.

**Socialism/Socialists (sometimes referred to as Marxism/Marxists) -** Belief that the economy and society should be based on ***equality*** for all. Opposed to capitalism which places. Willing to use democracy to curb excesses of capitalism in pursuit of socialism. Popular amongst industrial workers. Karl Marx was an influential socialist thinker.

**THE TSARS – BACKGROUND**

**Alexander II, 1855-81**

* Nicholas II’s grandfather. Came to power shortly after Russia’s defeat in Crimean War. Strong calls for reform following military defeat.
* As a result, Alexander II:
	+ Freed the serfs (emancipation) in 1861
	+ Created the *zemstva*, elected local councils
	+ Reduced censorship & reformed law courts
	+ Began to modernise the army
	+ Took responsibility for schools away from the Church, and placed them in the hands of the *zemstvo*
* Alexander backtracked in 1865 after a failed assassination attempt. He replaced many reformist ministers with reactionaries (conservatives). Assassinated in 1881 by a terrorist group, ‘The People’s Will’

**Alexander III, 1881-1894**

* Nicholas II’s father. Opposed his father’s reforms. Wanted to preserve autocracy, whilst modernising the economy & army, in order for Russia to remain a great power.
* Many of Alexander II’s reforms were abolished or altered:
	+ Only rich or upper class children were allowed into university prep schools
	+ Women barred from universities
	+ Censorship increased
	+ *Okhrana* established, the Russian secret police – exiled, arrested, and executed political opponents
	+ *1890 Zemstvo Act* – restricted voting in *zemstvo* elections. Tsar appointed ministers who could overrule *zemstvo* decisions
	+ Land Captains, appointed by governors, could overrule the *mir’s* decisions
	+ Began ‘Russification’ – Russian language, culture and religion were promoted at the expense of non-Russian ways and customs

**Nicholas II Comes to Power, 1894**

* After years of reform and counter-reform, Russia was an empire without direction. By 1894, the economy had begun to rapidly modernise, however the Tsar was still all-powerful and democracy was almost non-existent.
* Rapid industrialisation had created new cities and urban centres, as well as a new class – the industrial worker. The old Russia – dominated by peasants and rural customs – was gradually disappearing.

 **RUSSIA IN REVOLUTION 1881-1924**

**AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY RUSSIA LAGGED BEHIND MANY OTHER EUROPEAN NATIONS. THE EXTENT OF THIS BACKWARDNESS IS OPEN TO DEBATE, BUT RUSSIA CERTAINLY POSSESSED MANY PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES.**

A. **SIZE AND COMMUNICATION**

Russia was the world’s largest country by area in 1890 – over 8 million square miles, twice as big as the USA. It stretched for over 5,000 miles from east to west, covering European and Asiatic Russia. It had approximately 129 million inhabitants in 1900.

 Size gave an impression of great strength, but this was misleading;

* Communication was a huge problem. The capital was at St Petersburg in the North, therefore communication took a considerable time. This added to government inefficiency. Lack of infrastructure – inadequate roads, insufficient railways and few navigable rivers, complicated by severe winters, worsened an already difficult situation.
* Russia was in fact an Empire. In the census of 1897 only 55.6% of the population considered themselves to be ethnically Russian. The rest comprised a variety of other nationalities, languages and cultures e.g. Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Poles, Armenians, Jews. Many of these nationalities wanted independence. In the late 19th century Tsar Alexander III began a policy of active discrimination and repression against non-Russians called **RUSSIFICATION**. This forced people to adopt the Russian language and Russian customs and ignore their own culture and traditions. Russification was a central policy of the tsarist government after 1881, and it aimed to create a single “Russian” nationality out of an Empire which contained many different national and ethnic groups. It was felt this would give Russia greater unity and strength both internally and in its foreign policy. However, the consequences of Russification were largely negative and in Finland, the Baltic Provinces and especially Poland there was considerable opposition to it. This helped to generate opposition to the Tsarist system rather than the support that had been intended.

B. **RUSSIA’S POLITICAL SYSTEM**

Russia was ruled by the Tsar. Since 1613 the Russian tsars had been members of the Romanov family. The Tsar had **ABSOLUTE POWER** and was an **ABSOLUTE MONARCH** (or he was an **AUTOCRAT** and Russia was an **AUTOCRACY**). There was no real democracy in Russia, in 1864 local government councils (**ZEMSTVO**) had been set up and had some powers over education and health, but their role was restricted. Russia was one of the only three European countries without a parliament. Nicholas II was the Tsar of Russia between 1894-1917. The Fundamental Laws of 1832 had declared;

 **“The Emperor of all the Russians is an autocratic and unlimited monarch; God himself ordains that all must bow to his supreme power, not only out of fear but also out of conscience.”**

The Tsar had advisers who helped him – the Imperial Council and a Cabinet of Ministers. However they were appointed, not elected and had advisory power in all matters of state and law.

The Orthodox Church was a very important institution in Russia. This was a very conservative institution which was totally supportive of the Tsar and his government.

The Tsar was helped by the army and the secret police **THE OKHRANA**. The latter were powerful and their agents infiltrated many political organisations and trade unions. The army was used to suppress any internal revolts and agitation and most large industrial towns had garrisons. In 1881, Nicholas’ predecessor Alexander III had passed a law called the **STATUTE OF STATE SECURITY** – in response to his father’s assassination. This was **REPRESSIVE** and **REACTIONARY**.

* The powers of the Okhrana had been extended.
* Press censorship was extended.
* Government controlled courts were established and more liberal judges and magistrates were sacked.

This period was known as **THE REACTION** and was a period which saw the intensification of Russification and **ANTI-SEMITISM**. Persecution of the Jews increased in the 1890’s and this was largely a result of increasing Russian nationalism. In 1882 Jews’ rights to buy property were restricted and Jews were made to live in a specified area – most of these lived in the **PALE OF SETTLEMENT**. This was an area of territory in Poland, the Ukraine and south west Russia. Jews were subjected to anti-semitism in a variety of other ways. They were forbidden to enter the military, legal or medical professions and there was a strict quota of Jews in higher education. Jews were not allowed to vote in local elections. Inevitably, many educated Jews became fiercely critical of the Tsarist regime and when revolutionary parties began to emerge at the end of the 1890’s many Jews became members. The Marxist Social Democratic Party in particular attracted a lot of Jewish members.

However anti-semitism in Russia was not merely discriminatory, it had a very violent dimension. **POGROMS** – organised violence, looting, attacks on Jews and Jewish property increased, especially in the **PALE OF SETTLEMENT**. The government frequently turned a blind eye to this and on occasions actively encouraged it. In 1902, the **OKHRANA** actually fabricated a notorious document entitled “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”. This document set out the theory of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy to subvert European nations and establish a repressive police state controlled by Jews. In 1903 there were particularly violent pogroms in Bessarabia – these were popular with many ordinary Russians who experienced considerable political, economic and social difficulties and who had little sympathy with Jews. A group of ultra conservative Russian nationalists known as “The Black Hundreds” were particularly notorious for their attacks on Jews.

**C. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN RUSSIA IN 1905: THE SITUATION IN AGRICULTURE**

Russia was essentially an agricultural country – it had an **AGRARIAN** economy. The bulk of the population – the peasants – over 82% of the population, lived and worked on the land, and most lived in poverty.

There were considerable problems associated with the land and the peasantry. The bulk of the land was owned by the Crown, the Church and the Nobility. Relatively little was owned by the peasants themselves. In 1861 by the Edict of Emancipation, serfs were freed and the state offered mortgages to peasants to enable them to buy their own land. This land was acquired from landowners who had to be paid compensation – they rarely sold their best land. The cost of land was high and therefore so was the cost of mortgages. They were taken out over long periods, therefore burdening children with repayment. These mortgage repayments were known as **REDEMPTION PAYMENTS** and were passed down from generation to generation, impoverishing families and the peasantry as a whole.

This was made worse by a number of other factors;

* There had been no agricultural revolution so agricultural methods were backwards. Strip farming prevailed, therefore little mechanisation was possible, therefore methods were inefficient. Crop rotation and diversification were not widely practised and fertilisers were often too expensive. The peasantry was uneducated, therefore stuck with the old ways.
* Most peasants belonged to a Mir (a type of commune) in which land was collectively held. Land was redistributed, according to a family’s influence or size, every 10-15 years. Therefore, there was little incentive to be innovative or efficient as your strips could at some time be taken over by someone else.
* The rural population was expanding quickly and this led to **LAND HUNGER**. Land holdings were frequently not enough to feed a family. Russia’s rural population increased in the period 1861-1913 from 74 million to 164 million. Some of these could move to the towns to become the new industrial working class but rural impoverishment increased dramatically in this period. The peasants felt that the solution was for the landowners to give them more land – they believed the land should belong to those who worked it. Obviously the landowning nobility disagreed and they faced serious problems of their own. Russian agriculture was seriously inefficient and after 1879, cheap imports of grain from the US had seriously depressed grain prices. Many Russian estates were in debt and this worsened the situation – it also meant there was no money to invest in improving the productivity and efficiency of agriculture.

By the early 20th Century there was serious rural unrest in Russia. There were serious crop failures in 1901 and in 1902 peasant rebellions broke out throughout Russia. In places like Saratov province where the governor was Peter Stolypin, arson and looting of landlords’ property was widespread. The government used its customary force to restore order and then in 1902 established the Commission on Agriculture. Stolypin was a leading member and realised there had to be some social reform for the peasantry as the agrarian system was in crisis. He was behind a series of agricultural reforms after 1905.

There were a number of motivations behind these reforms;

* Rising population, poor production and bad harvests could lead to famine. This inevitably led to revolt which threatened the government.
* The sale of grain was a key source of government income. The government needed to maximise its income as it had huge obligations e.g. the upkeep of the army and industrialisation.

D. **THE INDUSTRIAL SITUATION IN RUSSIA IN 1905**

By the 1880’s Russian industry was well behind the industries of other countries such as Germany, France and Great Britain. The implications of this for Russia were extremely serious. New technology not only helped industrialisation and therefore future prosperity, it also vastly improved the military capacity and strength of a nation. Thus if Russia could not industrialise and modernise effectively her own security and therefore her status as a world power would be seriously compromised.

However, an industrial revolution of the kind that had taken place in Great Britain or Germany was impossible in Russia for a number of social and economic reasons;

* Despite the Edict of Emancipation of 1861, serfdom had held back the Russian economy and its consequences were still apparent.
* Russia was vast and infrastructure was poor. Industrialisation would require huge investment and other organisational resources the country did not possess.
* Because there was a low level of industrialisation there was no significant educated, entrepreneurial middle class.
* The tsarist government and ruling classes were very afraid of the political consequences of an increase in the working classes.

Thus by 1880 there was no coherent strategy for modernisation. Overspending on the Russian military and a depression in agricultural prices (the government’s chief export) created further problems. Grain exports were increased in the late 1880’s but this was done at the expense of the peasantry.

In 1891-2 the government’s policies combined with over population and difficult weather led to a massive famine in which almost 2 million Russians died. The government’s attempts at relief were ineffective and this led to massive public protest and criticism of the government and its policies. Political opposition increased.

The Tsar promoted **SERGEI WITTE** who was given the responsibility for pushing through rapid industrialisation. He borrowed huge amounts of money from France to help finance his projects. Inevitably taxation increased – another burden on the already impoverished peasantry and working classes. New infrastructure was created, most notably the Trans-Siberian Railway – railways were an essential part of the modernisation plan as both natural resources transported over huge distances. Witte tried to introduce some beneficial social policies e.g. A factory inspectorate in 1882 and the limitation of working hours to 11½ hours. He even allowed the formation of some trade unions. This was done as it was recognised that in the first phase of industrialisation, conditions for workers are often severe. Great progress was made but the social and economic cost was high. By 1900 20% of the entire national budget was required merely to service the loans – significantly, this was considerably more than the government spent on education which was not a priority – unlike other more progressive European nations.

However the industrial boom of the 1890s, known as the **Great Spurt**, ended at the beginning of the 1900s because of a world- wide **trade recession**. The consequences of this for all countries, but especially Russia were serious. This recession led to wage cuts, unemployment, strikes and lock outs. Conditions which were frequently appalling, deteriorated even more as workers were plunged into poverty. The reaction of the tsarist government was authoritarian and troops were used against strikers. This violence and unwillingness to listen to grievances or do anything constructive about the hardship faced by many workers turned many strikes into political protests – a potentially dangerous development. There were also significant protests in the universities.

Some trade unions were encouraged but the government always sought to infiltrate these with agents. The government encouraged the **Black Hundreds** – a movement which was intensely loyal to the monarchy and which intimidated workers and attacked them. Anti-semitism was encouraged to deflect attention away from the government and its inadequacies. The government did not undertake any fundamental programme of reform to improve the situation of the working classes.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What problems did the size of Russia create for the tsar’s governments?
2. Explain why the Tsar could be described as an autocrat or an absolute monarch.
3. Explain why the Tsar’s government could be described as repressive and reactionary.
4. Why was Russification introduced and why was it unpopular with the ethnic nationalities of the Russian Empire?
5. What was the significance of the Edict of Emancipation of 1861?
6. What were redemption payments? How did they help to impoverish families, rather than improve their circumstances?
7. Explain 3 factors that helped to contribute to the backward nature of Russian agriculture, & explain why this was a problem for the government.
8. What were the serious implications of Russia’s industrial backwardness for the tsarist government?
9. What were the advantages and disadvantages of Witte’s industrial policies?
10. How would you characterise the attitude of the tsarist government to the industrial working classes? (Give reasons for your answer).
11. What role did anti-Semitism play in political and social unrest in Russia in the early 20th century?