

A level History Transition Work

Thanks for considering A level History. A level History is a fascinating subject and students enjoy it. However, it is a step up from GCSE History. Over the course of the A-level, you will need to commit to doing lots of independent study, lots of reading in between lessons, to research and write a 4000-word piece of coursework in your own time, and to revise for and sit 3 challenging History exams. The course is purely assessed through written work, and you will be receiving regular essays – probably in the region of 4 per half term.

This transition work has been designed with two purposes in mind:

- A) To give you a realistic idea of what A level History is going to be like
- B) To give you some useful context before starting the course.

This work may seem like a lot, but it is of a similar level to what you will be expected to do throughout your A-level. **At this stage we are not looking for perfection, but instead for evidence that you are motivated enough to be able to work on your own.** It's ok to make mistakes!



The transition work is below. All of the tasks must be fully completed. If they are not, or are not handed in on the first lesson back after the summer break, you will risk being removed from the course.



Please note – our department follows the following OCR units.. You will receive a free textbook to help you with the course so there is no need to buy your own. There are revision guides available but it is probably best to wait until September when you are 100% sure you will be taking the course.

Studying History at A-level will give you the opportunity to build upon your knowledge of the subject at GCSE, while also studying new topics in much greater depth. An A-level in History is widely respected by employers and universities alike as it requires high levels of effort, motivation and knowledge, as well as demonstrating key transferrable skills.

- **Unit 1 - The Early Stuarts and the English Revolution 1603–1660 – External exam 25% of total A-level**
- **Unit 2 - Russia 1894–1941 – External exam – 15%**
- **Unit 3 - Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries – External exam – 40%**
- **Unit 4 Coursework – Internally assessed, 20%**

Unit 1 - The Early Stuarts and the English Revolution 1603–1660

(Mr Tomlin) I have given you some extracts from a textbook on England 1625-1660. To help to build your background knowledge, please do the following:

Read the section on 'Why was the Crown quarrelling with Parliament' and 'Why were the English quarrelling about religion'. Use these to write extended answers on the following (at least a page on each):

- 'Explain why there was tension between the monarch and parliament at the start of the 17th century' (use the table at the bottom of the page to help to plan your answer)
- 'Explain why there was tension over religion at the start of the 17th century'

It would also help if you were able to do some/all of the following:

- Research the Reformation in England, and understand some of the religious changes that had happened from the 1530s to 1603 under the Tudors
- Make a factfile on Elizabeth I – she doesn't feature in our course but her shadow hangs over James I at the start of his reign.

Do some extra reading/listening on the Civil War – I can recommend the following:

Podcasts

- Cavaliercast, Revolutions by Mike Duncan (which has seasons on both the English and Russian revolution).

Reading

- Peter Ackroyd's book 'Civil War' is a readable one volume book on this entire topic.
- Jessie Child's 'The Siege of Loyalty House'. A new, and very enjoyable history of the English Civil War told through the lens of ordinary people. I listened to the audiobook and it was excellent.

Unit 2 - Russia 1894–1941

(Mr Haycock-Ivo) Using the extracts from the textbook 'Russia under Tsarism and Communism 1881-1953' read the sections on 'How was Russia governed under the Tsars?' 'The reforms of Alexander II' and 'Alexander III.'

- Use the information to create a fact file on both rulers, neither are covered by the course but their political reforms had a direct impact on the Russian Revolution.

You also need to answer the following questions in detail (about one page of A4)

- 'Explain what challenges were facing the Tsarist regime at the end of the 19th century?'
- 'Explain how Alexander II and Alexander III tried to solve the problems facing Russia in 19th century?' (This can be answered in two parts, one focusing on Alexander II and another focusing on Alexander III or as one answer. Either way it should be a page in length.)

I would also recommend reading these two History Today articles on both rulers. If you come across any terms, you do not understand I would suggest you research them and put them into a glossary, a lot of the terminology in the articles will also come up in the course.

It would also help if you did the following

I imagine Russia will be a completely new topic to most of you so I would recommend researching Russian history, particularly the history of the Tsars. I would recommend watching the documentary series 'Land of the Tsars' which is available on Youtube. This gives a good overview of the rule of the Tsars in Russia.

It would be helpful for you to understand what the terms Communism, Autocracy and Liberalism. Research those terms and create a fact file about both key terms. These are the main political ideas that the course covers.

Research the geography of Russia. Russia is a huge country, and it was even bigger in 1900. Make a list of all the modern-day countries that used to be part of Russia. There is a lot of talk about this in news recently because of the war in Ukraine.

Podcasts

Mike Duncan's series on the Russian Revolution is very in depth and accessible

Youtube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtlRJSmSm_Y – Land of the Tsars

Books

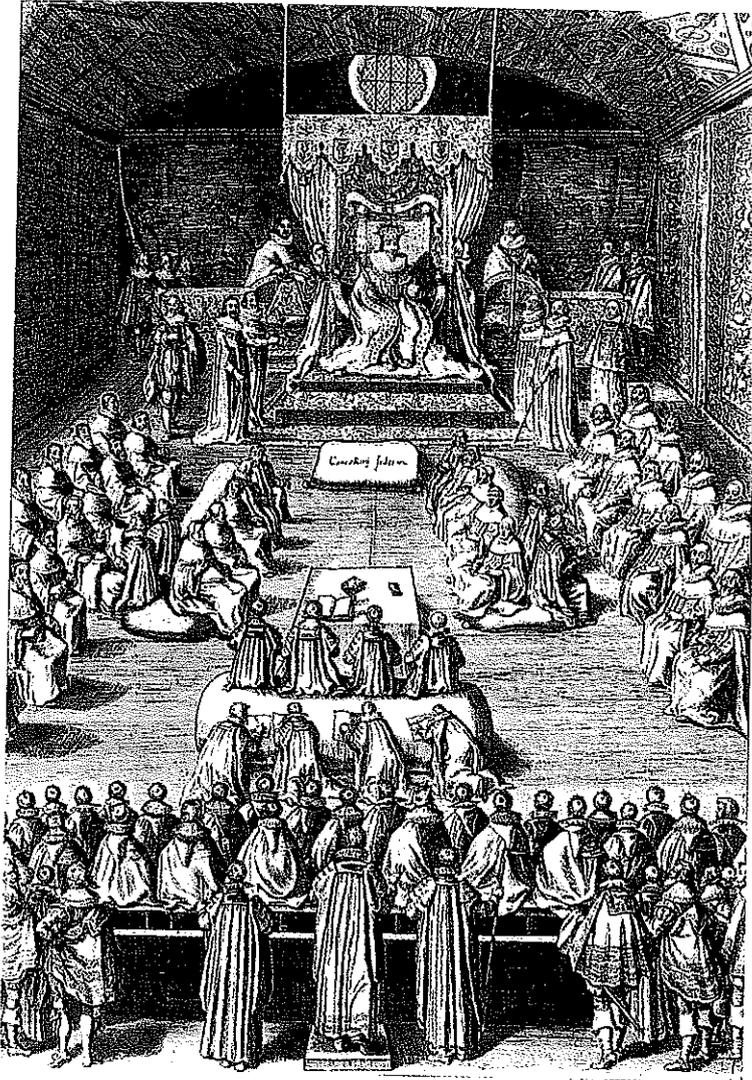
Orlando Figes book 'A people's tragedy' is considered the most comprehensive book on the Russian revolution, reading just the first few chapters will set you up well to start the course. You can also listen to the audiobook which is excellent.

'The Court of the Red Tsar' by Simon Sebag Montefiore gives you an insight into Stalin's government and how he ruled the country.

Why was the Crown quarrelling with Parliament?

By 1603 a number of issues had begun to sour relations between the Crown and Parliament. During the reign of James I (1603-25) these issues developed into a running argument between the King and the House of Commons. In 1625 Charles I succeeded to the throne at a difficult time.

■ C Crown vs Parliament



Charles I opening Parliament, 1625

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS

Both James and Charles believed in the 'Divine Right of Kings'. A king was God's **REGENT** on Earth, answerable only to divine judgement after death. In 1610 James claimed that kings were 'not only God's lieutenants upon Earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods'. Charles believed this even more strongly.

BUT Parliament believed the King had to act within the law.

ROYAL PREROGATIVE

James and Charles believed the King had the power to make decisions that were beyond the competence of Parliament:

- Foreign policy: the King was free to make and break alliances, arrange royal marriages and take England to war.
- The army was the King's army, and took its orders only from him.
- Parliament was called and dissolved at the King's pleasure. The king could 'prorogue' Parliament: interrupting its sitting for as long as he liked.
- The King appointed all judges and ministers. Ministers did not have to be chosen from Parliament, nor were members of the Privy Council answerable to Parliament.
- The King was the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. The King appointed the bishops and decided doctrine.

BUT Parliament had the privilege of freedom of speech.

REGENT

Someone who rules on behalf of another.

SUBSIDIES

Tax money approved by Parliament to help the king cover the costs of government.

COMMONWEALTH

Those aspects of the kingdom of England that affected everyone or in which everyone had an interest.

ACTIVITY

Study Chart C. Then copy and complete the following table. This should help to focus your attention on the issues that were dividing King and Parliament by 1625.

ISSUES	THE KING'S VIEW	PARLIAMENT'S VIEW
The Divine Right of Kings		
Royal prerogative		
Royal Finance		
Parliament's privileges		
Impeachment		
The Church of England		

ROYAL FINANCE

Parliament expected the King to pay the costs of his household, court and government from the Crown's private income – his 'ordinary revenue'. The growing costs of government, inflation, and James I's extravagance made this more difficult without 'extraordinary revenue' – SUBSIDIES voted by Parliament.

- Therefore, the King called Parliament more frequently to ask for money.
- Parliament expected the King to explain why he needed more money.
- Parliament was learning to withhold subsidies until the King had addressed its grievances.
- Parliament's grievances were encroaching on issues that the King thought were part of his royal prerogative – for example foreign policy, the Church of England.

BUT the King believed that he had the right to raise money without Parliament's consent if he judged it necessary.

PARLIAMENT'S PRIVILEGES

By 1603 Parliament had a strong sense of its own rights.

- The King had no right to enter the chamber of the House of Commons.
- Members of Parliament enjoyed freedom from arrest during the existence of a Parliament, after which they might be called to account for what they had said or done outside the chamber. What passed between them within the House was theoretically sacrosanct, yet still there were grey areas, notably the legal standing of MPs accused of treason.
- Freedom of speech: the Crown accepted that MPs had the right to discuss matters which affected the COMMONWEALTH: things such as taxation, the Poor Law, the state of the highways, crime.

BUT the Crown defended its right to formulate policy. In 1621 James I clashed with Parliament over this. When the Commons passed a PROTESTATION criticising him for failing to respect Parliament's privileges, James was so angry that he ripped it from the Commons' Journal with his own hands. The problem was that no clear distinction could be made between the King's prerogative and Parliament's legitimate interests.

IMPEACHMENT

By the early 1620s Parliament was turning itself into a court of law by reviving the medieval process of impeachment. The House of Commons impeached the accused person, who then stood trial before the House of Lords. It was clear that Parliament would use impeachment as a way of bringing the King's ministers to account.

BUT the King said his choice of ministers was a matter of royal prerogative.

**THE COMMONS' PROTESTATION,
18 DECEMBER 1621**

The liberties of Parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subject of England; and affairs concerning the King, State, and defence of the realm and of the Church of England, and the maintenance and making of laws, and redress of grievances are proper subjects and matters of counsel and debate in Parliament.

FOCUS ROUTE

Who's who in the English Civil War? As you work through this book, you will encounter many people who had a major impact on events. At various places in the margin you will find a 'Who's who?' box, drawing your attention to a significant individual. Use the indexes of history books and search on the internet to find out more about these people. You could also try looking them up in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). Make notes on each person to create your own 'Who's who in the English Civil War?' reference list or database.

ACTIVITY

Study Chart D, The Elizabethan Settlement.

- 1 Which aspects of the Church of England were taken from Catholicism and which from Protestantism?
- 2 Why was the settlement unlikely to win over the extremists on both sides?

Why were the English quarrelling about religion?

Alongside the constitutional quarrels (see Chart C), a problem of special importance was religion. Protestants and Catholics had been fighting each other in Europe for nearly 100 years. The Church of England, dating from the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, tried to create a national church in which all but the most extreme Catholics and Protestants could worship side by side (see Chart D). By isolating the extremists, Elizabeth I had hoped to defuse dangerous religious tensions.

D The Elizabethan Settlement

Extreme Catholics called **RECUSANTS**

Extreme Protestants called **PURITANS**



To please Catholics

- Monarch is 'Governor' not 'Head'
- Bishops govern the Church
- Ministers wear vestments
- Holy Communion open to a Catholic Interpretation
- Ceremonial encouraged
- Iconoclasm discouraged
- Sign of the Cross and bowing at the name of Jesus

CHURCH OF ENGLAND
est. 1559

Founded by Acts of Parliament

- 1 **Act of Supremacy:** the monarch is 'Supreme Governor' of the Church
- 2 **Act of Uniformity:** Church services – the 'liturgy' – to conform to the *Book of Common Prayer*
- 3 **Thirty-nine Articles:** define the official beliefs – the 'doctrine' – of the Church

EPISCOPAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT

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graph TD
    M[MONARCH] --- A[ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY]
    A --- B[BISHOPS]
    B --- P[PARISH MINISTERS]
            
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To please Protestants

- The monarch rules the Church
- English Bible
- Services in English
- Holy Scripture all that is needed for salvation
- 'Justification by Faith'
- Ministers can marry
- Sermons delivered from a pulpit
- Communion tables instead of altars



PENAL LAWS

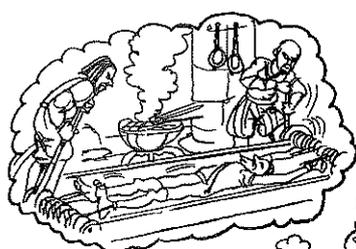
A series of laws aimed at Catholics, which imposed penalties on those who refused to attend Church of England services.

England was now a Protestant country, but some Catholics still hoped to convert England to the Catholic faith. By the time James I ascended the throne in 1603, the Crown was coming under pressure from Puritans to enforce the anti-Catholic PENAL LAWS more strictly.

The Crown's view of the religious problem was different from that of the Puritans. Elizabeth and James believed the real threat to stability came from the Puritans themselves, who threatened to drive loyal Catholics into the arms of the extremists. The Puritans saw all Catholics as potential traitors whose loyalty was already suspect. They therefore saw no risk in persecution, believing that the Crown's 'softly softly' approach was misguided and dangerous.

The Catholics themselves were divided. Most were loyal subjects. Their position was compromised by the extremists; incidents such as the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 seemed to confirm the Puritan view of the seriousness of the Catholic threat. At the heart of the Protestant nightmare (see Chart E) lay the belief that the Catholics would stop at nothing to destroy England and the Protestant faith.

E The Protestant nightmare



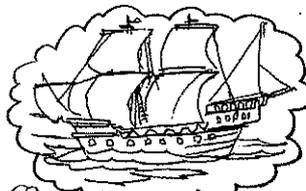
The Spanish Inquisition tortured suspected Protestants for heresy.



The Spanish Duke of Alva's army massacred civilians in the Netherlands in the 1560s.



The St Bartholomew's Massacre. In Paris in 1573 Catholics murdered 5000 Protestants in cold blood.



The Spanish Armada, 1588. Spain tried to conquer England for the Catholic faith.



Bloody Mary burned nearly 300 Protestants, 1550s.



Several Catholic plots aimed at assassinating Elizabeth I and putting a Catholic on the throne.



The Catholic Church threatened to recover all the monastic land sold by Henry VIII, property that now belonged to the gentry.



Jesuit priests



The Gunpowder Plot, 1605. Catholics tried to blow up the King and the Houses of Parliament.

Unless these religious quarrels were handled very skilfully, the Elizabethan Settlement might fail in its aim of defusing religious tensions.

Was it possible to govern England successfully despite these quarrels?

At the heart of the debate about the origins of the English Civil War lie two questions.

- 1 Was the Civil War inevitable? Was England bound to pass through a period of extraordinary violence before the problems it faced in 1603 could be resolved?
- 2 What was the Civil War about? What does it tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of English government and society at that time?

These issues underpin the main lines of enquiry of this book.

DISCUSS

Look back over pages 6-9. Do you think that the problems that existed could have been resolved peacefully?

FOCUS ROUTE

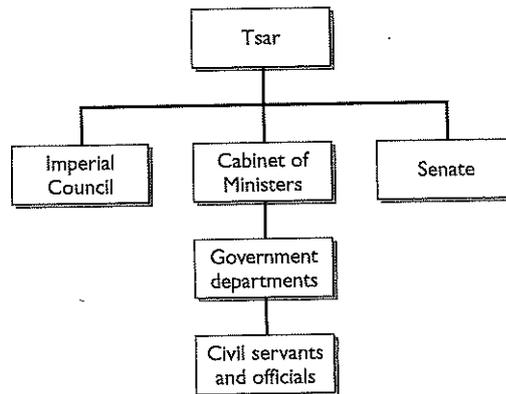
Make notes on:

- how Russia was governed by the tsars
- the three principles underpinning the tsarist system
- the importance of the role of the Orthodox Church
- the difference between the Westerners and Slavophiles.

B

How was Russia governed under the tsars?

■ IC The structure of the tsarist state



The tsar was an autocrat, an absolute ruler, who had supreme power over his subjects. His position was underpinned by three key principles – autocracy, nationality and orthodoxy (see page 9 below). The tsar had an imperial council, made up of nobles, to advise him, and a cabinet of ministers who ran the various government departments. But they were responsible to him alone, not to a parliament or to a prime minister. They reported directly to the tsar and took instructions from him. This meant that the tsar was the fundamental pivot on which the system rested.

There was a huge bureaucracy of civil servants and officials who ran this enormous empire. It was a rigid hierarchy (orders passed down from above by superiors to lower ranks) marked by inefficiency – it took ages to get things done – and nepotism. The top ranks were dominated by the nobility. The lower ranks that had contact with the people were generally badly paid and there was a culture of corruption in which bribery was common. This, together with the arbitrary nature of decision making, undermined respect for the authorities. The bureaucracy was virtually impenetrable for ordinary citizens who rarely found that their interests were served properly.

The size and diversity of the empire made it extremely difficult to govern. The different regions of the empire were under the control of governors who had their own local bureaucracies. Poor communications meant that it was hard to get decisions from the centre carried out. The regional governors often acted like independent rulers in their own fiefdoms.

Opposition was not tolerated. Political parties were illegal. Newspapers, periodicals and books were censored. Public gatherings of more than 12 people required police permission. The government made use of an extensive secret police network, the Okhrana, to root out dissidents and people likely to cause trouble. There was a system of surveillance with agents in most institutions and in factories. People deemed to be dangerous or hostile to the regime, especially those who organised strikes and protests, were put in prison or exiled to Siberia. By 1898, nearly 300,000 had been sent to Siberia. Large scale protests, demonstrations and riots, which often broke out in times of famine, were suppressed by the army. Tsarist Russia was an oppressive and intolerant regime.

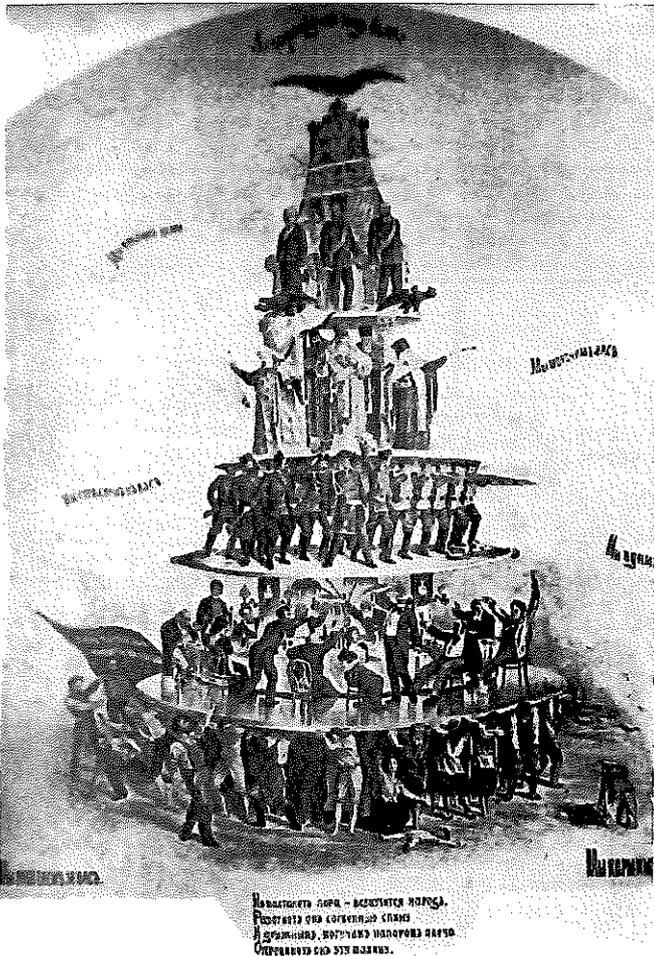
COMPETING MINISTRIES

Ministries competed with each other for control of policy, resources and the tsar's attention. The two biggest ministries were Finance and the Interior. The Ministry of Finance, with staff drawn from the fields of banking and commerce, wanted changes in society to allow enterprise and initiative to flourish. This would entail giving the middle classes more power and freedom. The Ministry of the Interior, with staff drawn from the nobility and landowners, held firm to the autocratic principle and thought Russia should be ruled by an iron hand and they resisted changes that would create a more liberal Russia. So these two ministries were often pulling against each other and this created confusion and lack of clarity in policy.

WESTERNERS VERSUS SLAVOPHILES

From the 1840s there had been a debate on the way forward for Russia. Those who looked to the West saw Russia as fundamentally like other European countries but behind them. These 'Westerners' believed they could take certain values and political and economic institutions from the West to build a stronger Russian state.

'Slavophiles', on the other hand, believed that Russia had its own rich culture transmitted by the Orthodox Church and its own communal institutions, especially the village commune, and argued that Russia should maintain its own traditions. Slavophiles rejected Western parliamentarianism and did not want the Tsar bound by a constitution.



SOURCE 1.7 A Social Democratic Party cartoon showing the social structure of the Russian state. The text reads, from top to bottom:

We rule you
 We govern you
 We fool you
 We shoot you
 We eat instead of you
 We work for you. We feed you.

The army

The army, the largest in Europe, was crucial to the survival of the tsarist regime. Most officers were from noble backgrounds. Ordinary soldiers were conscripts taken from the villages who were required to serve for seven years actively and eight in reserve. Soldiers had to be completely subservient to officers and had few rights: they were not allowed to ride in first or second class railway carriages or enter most restaurants and cafes. Pay was extremely poor and most soldiers grew their own food and lived mainly on soup, tea and bread. So far they had remained loyal to the regime. The army was used to suppressing disturbances and revolts. However, it was becoming increasingly disenchanted with being used as a police force and morale was suffering badly among officers and soldiers, most of whom were ex-peasants, who did not like having to put down peasant conflicts.

One section of the army the regime could rely on was the Cossacks. They came from the Don area of Russia and were loyal supporters of the tsar. Cossacks could be trusted to act against other peoples in the empire, including the Russians. They formed the best cavalry units in the Russian army and were feared because they could be brutal and ruthless.

Three key principles underpinning tsarist rule

1 Autocracy

As far as the tsars were concerned they had been appointed by God to lead and guide their people. Article 1 of the Fundamental Laws, 1852, makes it clear: 'The Emperor of all the Russias is an autocratic and unlimited monarch; God himself ordains that all must bow before his supreme power, not only out of fear but also out of conscience.' The autocrat could rule the country without constraints according to his own idea of duty and what was right. The tsars rejected any hint that their power rested on the consent of the people.

2 Nationality

There was a strong belief that Russians had a distinctive way of life, values, beliefs and customs that were superior to the people around them and should predominate throughout the Empire. This 'Russianness' was emphasised by the Orthodox Church and practised in the policy of Russification (see page 19). The Tsar had an obligation to preserve and strengthen national identity.

3 Orthodoxy

The Russian Orthodox Church was an offshoot of the Christian Church, which, for historical reasons, had become independent of the Pope and Rome and saw itself as the upholder of the 'true' Christian faith. It supported the divine right of the tsar to rule and exhorted believers to obey the tsar as the agent of God. The Church believed there was a mystical bond between the god-like tsar and the people - he was the father and they were the children.

THE WORLD OF THE SECRET POLICE – KONSPIRATSIA

In 1881, after the assassination of Alexander II, a nationwide police offensive led to 10,000 arrests. A decree of March 1882 allowed the police to declare any citizen subject to surveillance. A murky world of police, spies and double agents – Konspiratsia – operated in and around the big cities. In July 1881, Georgii Sudeikin was given responsibility for maintaining public order in St Petersburg. He recruited revolutionaries as double agents to gain information about terrorist attacks and sow confusion in their ranks. Sudeikin used several aliases and passports and met agents in secret locations.

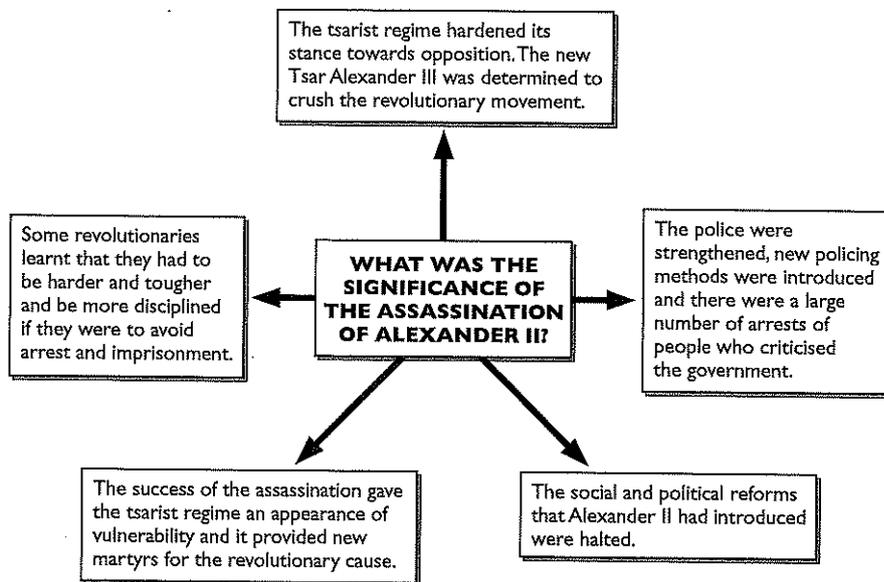
After a revolutionary had been arrested, Sudeikin had them ‘softened up’ in solitary confinement. Then, he persuaded them to become a police spy. One such person was Sergei Dagaev, a prominent member of The People’s Will. He was arrested in 1882 after an underground printing press was found in his apartment. In 1883, now a police spy, he was released by means of a staged escape. He provided the police with information that led to a wave of arrests. However, The People’s Will became suspicious and, under pressure, Dagaev confessed his guilt. As penance he was ordered to murder Sudeikin, a deed he carried out with two accomplices. Dagaev then fled the country with his wife and transformed himself into Alexander Pell, the admired professor of mathematics at the University of South Dakota in the USA. Sudeikin had paid the price for his double dealing.

The Reforms of Alexander II

The Crimean War (see page 15) had confirmed how backward Russia was in comparison, with some western European countries. To remedy this, Alexander II had introduced major reforms in Russia during his reign (1855–81).

- In 1861 he had emancipated (freed) the serfs.
- He had brought new ideas to the antiquated judicial system, including better trained independent judges, trial by jury, and Justices of the Peace who took over the judicial powers of the nobility in country districts.
- He started the process of modernising the army.
- He brought in a new form of local government – zemstva – town and district councils, which had some autonomy to manage their own affairs. The councils were elected but the vote was heavily weighted in favour of the nobles.
- He had reformed education, with primary and secondary schools open to a wider section of the population, and he gave greater independence to the universities.

Alexander was in no sense a liberal. He thought his reforms were the best way to maintain tsarist rule in Russia and prevent ‘revolution from below’. However, for many in Russia the reforms did not go far enough and in the second part of his reign he had faced mounting criticism and unrest. When he was assassinated in 1881, his son, Alexander III, decided on a different course and Russia entered a period of repression and reaction.



Alexander III

Alexander III represented the very image of an autocrat. He was 6ft 4ins tall, broad-shouldered and extremely strong. His favourite trick was to unbend horseshoes to amuse his children. When he came to the throne, he made it clear that he was going to affirm the principle of autocracy in no uncertain terms. On 29 April 1881, in *The Manifesto on Unshakable Autocracy*, he announced that the Tsar would 'rule with faith in the strength and truth of the autocratic power that we have been called upon to affirm and safeguard for the popular good from infringement.' He gave the impression of immense power and in this sense fulfilled the role of the autocrat perfectly. Unfortunately, he was limited in intellect and advised by a divided collection of ministers.

Repressive measures

Alexander III rejected his father's reforms as 'ill-advised, tantamount to revolution and pushing Russia on to the wrong road' and considered that they had contributed to his father's assassination. He 'would not grant Russia a constitution for anything on earth' and set about turning the clock back.

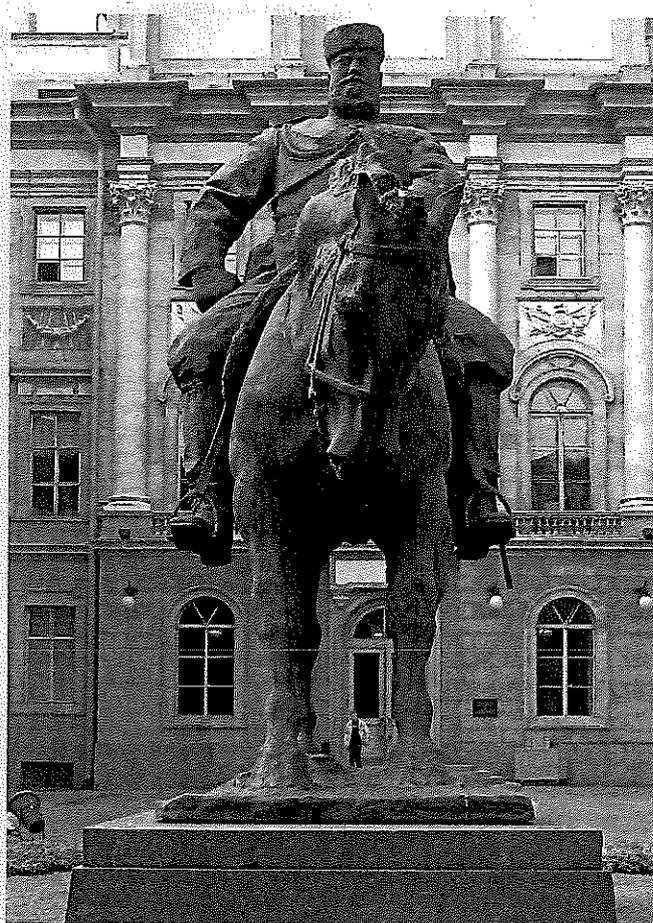
- 1 In 1881 The Statute of State Security was passed giving the government powers to:
 - a) prohibit gatherings of more than 12 people
 - b) prosecute any individual for political crimes
 - c) introduce emergency police rule where public order was threatened
 - d) set up special courts outside the legal system
 - e) close schools, universities and newspapers.

Most of these measures remained in force until 1917.

- 2 He brought in strict controls on the universities, reducing student freedom.
- 3 In 1890, the independence of the zemstva was reduced and control became more centralised. The number of people eligible to vote in elections was cut drastically. For instance, in Moscow and St Petersburg only 0.7 per cent of the population could vote.
- 4 Justices of the Peace, an important feature of the previous tsar's reforms, were abolished in 1889 and replaced in the countryside by Land Captains. These were members of the gentry chosen to control the peasants and were deeply resented.

Economic progress

A more progressive approach was adopted on the economy. Bunge, the finance minister and later Prime Minister, laid



Commissioned by Nicholas II, this statue was known as the 'Hippopotamus'. Rather than pull it down the Bolsheviks carved these lines on the pedestal:

'Their well-deserved hangman's fee
My son and sire received.
But, a spectre of ancient slavery,
I ride, through all eternity
Derided by humanity.'

down the basis for future development, encouraging railway building as an economic stimulus and using tariff protection to help several industries to grow. A factory inspectorate was introduced and peasants' redemption payments were reduced. He also established an income tax on businesses. At the end of the reign in 1892, Sergei Witte was appointed Finance Minister and took these policies forward to create the industrial boom of the 1890s (see page 15). Alexander had great faith in Witte, who in turn admired the Tsar.

The Reforms of Tsar Alexander II

Carl Peter Watts examines a set of reforms which held out the prospect of modernising Russia but whose failure paved the way for revolution.

[Carl Watts](#) | Published in [History Review Issue 32 December 1998](#)

Alexander II's 'great reforms' stand out as among the most significant events in nineteenth century Russian history. Alexander became known as the 'Tsar Liberator' because he abolished serfdom in 1861. Yet 20 years later he was assassinated by terrorists. Why did Alexander introduce a programme of reforms and why did they fail to satisfy the Russian people? This article will demonstrate that the reforms were a direct response to Russia's defeat in the Crimean War. They were intended to liberate Russian society from some of its most archaic practices, improve the economic and military efficiency of the war and preserve the existing socio-political structure by a process of modification. The essentially conservative nature of Alexander's reforms is betrayed by the continuity in policy from the reign of his predecessor Nicholas I (1825-1855). Yet this conservatism, far from guaranteeing the safety of the aristocracy, jeopardised the stability of Russia because it left a 50-year legacy of social and political dissatisfaction to Alexander's successors.

Emancipation: The Fundamental Reform

The need for reform was evident well before the reign of Alexander II. The Decembrist Revolt of 1825 occurred just as Nicholas I acceded to the throne. Although it was unsuccessful, the uprising demonstrated that the autocracy could not continue to ignore demands for reform indefinitely. The condition of the peasantry was perhaps the most prominent weakness in Russian society. The Pugachev Revolt (1773-75) had served as a reminder of the threat that a dissatisfied peasantry could represent. Nicholas I introduced a series of minor reforms which improved the conditions of state and crown peasants and which were intended to serve as a model to the dvorians (nobility) as to how they should treat their private serfs. Most landowners, however, took little notice of these measures and continue to extract feudal dues and labour services from their serfs without regard for their welfare. It is clear that Nicholas I abhorred serfdom: in 1842 he declared to the Council of State: 'There can be no doubt that serfdom in its present situation in our country is an evil...[it] cannot last forever... The only answer is thus to prepare the way for a gradual transition to a different order...' However, the conservatism of the autocracy was such that it would not compel the dvorians by abolishing serfdom unilaterally. It took the shock of Russia's disastrous performance in the Crimean War, the concomitant death of Nicholas I and the accession of Alexander II to alter the situation.

Alexander II had served on the committees of inquiry into serfdom and he was acutely aware of the weakness of the Russian state. Defeat by Britain and France now demonstrated that Russia was lagging behind her European counterparts. In the autumn of 1856 Yuriy Samarin, a prominent Slavophile, articulated the concerns of political society when he wrote that 'We were defeated not by the external forces of the Western alliance but by our own internal weakness.' Criticisms of serfdom were echoing from many quarters. General Dimitry Milutin, later Minister for War (1861-1881), advised the new Tsar that reform of the Russian army was impossible while serfdom continued to exist. Only by reforming the very foundations of Russian society could effective military capacity be restored and great power status recovered. Serfdom was also condemned as economically inefficient. K. D. Kavelin, a liberal university professor, wrote a critique of serfdom in 1856 in which he observed that 'in the economic sphere, serfdom brings the whole state into an abnormal situation and gives rise to artificial phenomena in the national economy which have an unhealthy influence on the whole state organism of the state'. It was argued that serfdom impeded the emergence of a modern

capitalist economy because the existence of an inelastic labour force and the absence of a money economy retarded industrial development. It was further argued that serfdom was an inefficient and unproductive form of agriculture because, essentially, it was forced labour, and so the serfs had no incentive to do any more than subsist.

Despite these powerful arguments in favour of abolishing serfdom, it was still difficult for Alexander II to overcome the inertia of the dvorians on the issue. The Tsar had to conjure up the spectre of widespread peasant revolt in order to persuade his reticent nobles that there was no alternative to Emancipation. In a speech to the Tver nobility, he declared that 'It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait for the time when it begins to abolish itself from below.'

Emancipation: A Flawed Measure

The Edict of Emancipation was promulgated in March 1861. Serfs were freed from their feudal obligations and allotted land for their needs. Landlords received compensation from the state in the form of Treasury bonds. The peasants were then indebted to the state and obliged to make redemption payments to their obshchina (the village mir, or commune) over a 49-year period. Peasants were incredulous that they had to pay for the land which they thought belonged to them because they had always worked it. Many, believing that the real terms of the Emancipation had been concealed by their landlords, rioted in protest.

The Emancipation was certainly effected on extremely onerous terms for the peasantry. They lost, on average, 4.1 per cent of their pre-1861 agricultural holdings. In the more fertile regions of the Empire the situation was far worse, in the Steppe provinces, for instance, the figure was 23.3 per cent, and in the Ukraine peasants lost 30.8 per cent of their former land. The fundamental problem was that there was not enough good quality land available for distribution. Even the nobility failed to benefit from Emancipation, despite the care that the government had taken to protect their economic interests. The dvorians were so heavily indebted that the financial compensation received was in general swallowed up by the settlement of debts. There was, therefore, little investment in industry and agriculture following Emancipation, and the persistence of obsolete agricultural techniques exacerbated the central problem of low yield. Russia produced six hectolitres per acre of cereals at this time, compared with over nine in France and Prussia, and 14 in Britain and Holland.

Serfdom was a medieval method of social control upon which the autocracy was and nobility had become reliant. The government sought to perpetuate a similar level of control after 1861. The terms of the Emancipation dictated that local obshchina should control the movement of peasants in their district, so that those who wanted to travel more than 20 miles required an internal passport. There has been some controversy among historians over the economic effects of these restrictions. Alexander Gershenkron, for example, argued that it contributed towards the retardation of Russian economic development by preventing the emergence of a freely mobile labour force. Gershenkron also observed that the economy was affected by the diminution of peasant purchasing power as a result of the redemption payments. M.E. Falkus, however, suggested that because internal passports were issued in large numbers and, further, there were between 2 and 3 million peasants who did not have any land after Emancipation, there was a pool of available labour. Falkus also noted that because the redemption payments were spread over a long period, they were in many cases no higher than the rents which former serfs had paid to their landlords. Nevertheless, it is clear that the abolition of serfdom did not facilitate the optimum conditions for Russia's economic advancement.

Emancipation: A Humanitarian Reform?

The failure of Emancipation to achieve any real economic benefit is offset by some historians who portray the Edict as a moral improvement. M.S. Anderson, for example, contended that 'the grant of individual freedom and a minimum of civil rights to twenty million people

previously in legal bondage was the single greatest liberating measure in the whole history of Europe'. Emancipation was certainly a significant event for the Russian serf, because as a free peasant he was able to marry without the consent of a third party; he could also hold property in his own name; he was free to take action at law; and he could engage in a trade or business. Above all, he could no longer be bought or sold – and it should not be overlooked that it took four years of bloody Civil War in the United States (1861–65) to afford the American negro slave this dignity. Nevertheless, the morality of Emancipation should not be allowed to obscure the realities behind it. The injustice in Russian society had long been criticised by radical intellectuals like Radischev, Pushkin, Turgenev and Herzen; but such moral criticism had little impact on the autocracy. Certainly the Tsar was not motivated by humanitarian concerns. The real significance of the abolition of serfdom was the impetus that it gave to further reforms. Each of these reforms will now be considered in turn.

The Law

An important corollary of Emancipation was judicial reform, which became necessary as a result of the abolition of feudalism. In late-1861 Alexander II set up a committee of jurists to investigate the general principles of legal reform. The result of the committee was to work out 'those fundamental principles, the undoubted merit of which is at present recognised by science and the experience of Europe, in accordance with which Russia's judicial institutions must be reorganised. The committee identified some 25 defects in the existing system and proposed a number of radical solutions. These included the separation of judicial and administrative powers; trial by jury for criminal cases; trial of petty cases by Justices of the Peace in summary courts; the introduction of full publicity in tribunals; and the simplification of court procedure. The last of these ended the ridiculous situation where cases could sometimes last for as long as two or three decades!

The new system nevertheless suffered from numerous imperfections. There was a shortage of trained lawyers, and interference from the bureaucracy often prevented the law from being applied universally (there was no trial by jury in Poland, the western provinces or the Caucasus). Further, the existence of peasant courts negated the fundamental principle of equality before the law. Even so, the new system was far superior to the old, for there was less corruption and a sense of fairness that had been absent before the reforms, as evidenced in the famous Vera Zasulich case of 1878.

Local Government

The abolition of the patriarchal authority of the gentry in 1861 required that a new local government system be implemented. This was to occasion some of the greatest constitutional hopes of the nineteenth century, which were unsurprisingly dashed by the autocratic regime. A Commission, appointed to investigate the reorganisation of local government, decided upon a system of district and provincial *zemstva* (local assemblies). The ensuing debate over the nature and function of these organisations, however, revealed the extent of nineteenth-century Russia's backwardness. A reactionary faction of the bureaucracy headed by the Minister of Interior, P. A. Valuev, persuaded Alexander II to limit the local assemblies to being innocuous organs of the central government. Consequently, *zemstva* presidents were appointed rather than elected and the *zemstva* were not allowed to levy taxes. The preponderance of the nobility in the *zemstva* meant that they retained their local authority, which was by way of concession for the 'losses' they had endured in 1861. Nevertheless, the *zemstva* were able to operate successfully within the limited scope afforded to them, and improvements were made in the provision of local services, particularly education.

Education and Censorship

Alexander II's reign was notable for its achievements in education. Elementary education had, for centuries, been controlled largely by the Church, and the standard of teaching was

generally poor. After 1864, however, the *zemstva* became an important agency in the provision of public services. They administered local primary schools through school boards. The Ministry of Education presided over a large increase in the number of primary schools, from 8,000 in 1856 to over 23,000 in 1880. The quality of teaching in these secular schools was improved significantly. The secondary education curriculum was modernised and the number of students doubled to around 800,000 during the first decade of Alexander's reign. In 1863 Alexander also approved new statutes allowing universities to exercise administrative autonomy. Preliminary censorship was relaxed and judicial procedure substituted for administrative repression, a 'thaw' in censorship that encouraged publishing. This liberalisation was effected by Golovnin, the Minister for Education (1861–1866), but further developments to liberalise the whole system of education and censorship in Russia were precluded by assassination attempts on the Tsar in the later part of his reign.

The Military

Military reform was a priority for Alexander's government, and it was military considerations which had done most to convince the bureaucracy of the need to abolish serfdom. General Dmitry Miliutin advised the Tsar that reform of Russia's armed forces was not possible as long as serfdom persisted. Further, it was evidently desirable that the modern soldier should have at least a basic education, equipping him with initiative and intelligence in a military context. Only by introducing these measures would Russian military be able to fight on equal terms with Western forces in any future conflict. As Minister for War (1861–1881), Miliutin introduced a series of radical reforms which were aimed at improving the efficiency and fairness of the Russian military system. The intention to create a more professional army ended the practice of using the military as a penal institution, and convicts were therefore no longer allowed to serve with the colours. In order to improve morale, the number of offences for which capital punishment could be imposed reduced, and corporal punishment was abolished (as it was also in civilian life). The general reduction in the length of service from 25 to 15 years, of which only seven were completed with the regular army and eight with the reserve, also did much to improve morale. Miliutin significantly altered the methods of conscription. Military liability was extended to all social classes, with reductions in the length of service for volunteers graded reductions according to the level of education attained by the individual. Miliutin encountered opposition from the nobility, who resented the infringement of their class privileges, and from the merchant class, who could no longer purchase exemption from military service. These objections were at odds with the logic of the reforms, however, and Miliutin's proposals therefore became law in 1875.

Administrative improvements included a comprehensive review of Russian Military Code, a review of military courts procedure, decentralisation of command to regional staff, and a greater emphasis on the functions and status of the General Staff (the post of Chief of the General Staff was created in 1865) military's fighting efficiency was augmented by a process of re-equipment with modern weapons, greater emphasis on military engineering including the construction of strategic railways for faster mobilisation, and improvements in medical facilities. Perhaps most importantly, the officer corps now received proper training. The success of these reforms was qualified by Russia's military performance against Turkey in 1877. Although Russia defeated her adversary, it took longer than expected – and the opponent was a decaying Eastern nation, not an industrialised European power. Nevertheless, Russia's participation at the Congress of Berlin (1878) demonstrated that she had successfully recovered her international position.

Economic Policy

The abolition of serfdom, as noted above, failed to stimulate the Russian economy on a great scale. The government, however, recognised the need for further measures and there were financial reforms during Alexander's reign that did facilitate economic growth. Reutern, the Minister of Finance, created a unified Treasury and centralised departmental accounts to improve government audits. In 1862 a public budget was introduced, and in 1863 a system of

government excise was established. Yet none of these measures managed to improve the government's financial situation, and up to one third of its annual expenditure was consumed by debt. This was in large measure a result of the failure, to achieve a successful stabilisation of the Russian currency, a problem inherited from Nicholas I's Minister of Finance, Count Kanakin. Indeed, it was not until Witte conformed to the Western practice in the 1890s, and placed Russia on the gold standard, that the situation was alleviated.

Railway construction, financed through an increasing number of credit institutions, was a key element in Reutern's economic policy. The growth in railways helped to link the grain producing areas with towns and cities and Russian ports, thereby contributing to the promotion of exports, as shown in the tables above and below. The government played a key role in engineering this boom in the economy, in contrast to the non-interventionism of Western governments.

The Impact of Alexander II's Reforms

Significant though the reforms of Alexander II were, they failed to create popular support for the Tsarist regime. In 1862, Alexander granted Poland limited autonomy, but the Poles were traditionally hostile to the Russian Empire and in 1863 they rebelled. The Polish Revolt was countered with repression, the orthodox policy of Tsarist autocracy. In 1866, Karakazov, a former student of the University of Kazan, fired a pistol shot at the Tsar. This unsuccessful attempt on Alexander's life resulted in the replacement of Golovnin, the Minister of Education, by the conservative Dimitry Tolstoy, who acted to restrict access to university education.

Russian intellectuals interpreted Alexander's reforms as an attempt to perpetuate the existing political system. Historical opinion has for the most part agreed with this assessment. Florinsky, for example, has suggested that the reforms were nothing more than 'halfhearted concessions on the part of those who (with some exceptions) hated to see the disappearance of the old order and tried to save as much of it as circumstances would allow'. The response of the Russian intelligentsia was the Populist 'going to the people' in 1874. When this failed, propaganda gave way to terrorism, which culminated in the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. Although it did not achieve its objective of igniting a revolution in Russia, Populism was nevertheless significant. It made a start in developing the political consciousness of the people and its terrorist actions inspired later insurrectionists. The Social Revolutionaries, descendants of Populism, were the most important insurgent group at the turn of the century.

Conclusion

When Alexander II became Tsar in 1855, the Russian state was in desperate need of fundamental reform. The programme of reforms introduced by him was radical in comparison with previous Russian experience, but it did not go far enough. The government's commitment to modernise Russia through a process of westernisation was moderated by its concern to perpetuate the interests of its ruling social class. This approach alienated the Russian intelligentsia and, in so doing, undermined the stability of the regime, compelling it to rely on repression for its preservation. This strategy succeeded for some time, but in the long term it was likely to achieve precisely the opposite of its intended effect.

Alexander III of Russia

The calm and stability of the Tsar in 1881 meant no new dawn for Russia, but an era of Counter-Reform, writes W. Bruce Lincoln.

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'The nightmare that weighed over Russia for so many years had at last been lifted....

An overwhelming weight had fallen from our shoulders. Reaction was at an end. The dawn of the New Russia was at hand.'

These were the words with which Vera Figner, one of the young terrorists who assassinated the Emperor Alexander II on March 1st, 1881, described her reaction to his death. Yet, Vera Figner's ecstatic optimism could not have been farther off the mark; the assassinated Emperor was succeeded by his son, Alexander III, and with him came the last great surge of social and political reaction that Russia was to know during the Imperial period of her history.

Russia embarked upon what is often regarded as the 'Era of Counter-Reforms' in which the Great Reforms, that had heralded her efforts at social and political reconstruction in the decade after the Crimean War, were in varying degrees eroded. Censorship became more rigid, driving numbers of progressive and moderate journals and periodicals out of existence, while access to education for Russia's lower classes was sharply curtailed on the grounds that Russians should be educated in accordance with their social station.

As Alexander III's Minister of Public Instruction, I. D. Delianov, wrote a few years later, all but the most rudimentary education was dangerous for children of lower class origin because it bred in them 'contempt for parents, dissatisfaction with their own station, and bitterness toward the... inevitable inequality in the financial position of various social groups'.

Yet the reign of Alexander III also saw considerable progress, though not of the sort that Russia's revolutionaries had envisaged. Alexander III and his advisers achieved much economic progress, and it was during his reign that Russia's first great industrial boom began. Russia's rail network, which her Emperor and his planners had first begun to develop in earnest in the 1870s, was greatly expanded during Alexander III's reign.

The Empire's heavy industry grew rapidly during these years as well and, by the time of Alexander's death in 1894, Russia had fully entered the age of the Industrial Revolution. Alexander III's reign thus was marked by reaction, designed to crush the social and political turmoil which Russia had known in the 1870s, while, at the same time, industry flourished and was fostered by all branches of the government, especially the ministries of Finance and Interior.

Alexander III had not been born to rule Russia, however. Born on February 26th, 1845, he was the second son of Alexander II and his Empress Maria Aleksandrovna. He therefore received the traditional education of a Russian Grand Duke; he was not at first trained in the science of statecraft, but in the art of military command. His early education thus subjected Alexander to all the rigid influences that were so much a part of the Russian military establishment, for the unyielding militarism, so pervasive in the lives of young Russian Grand Dukes ever since the accession of Paul I in the late eighteenth century, was still very much in evidence at the Russian Court during his childhood years.

Alexander III's childhood spanned the last decade of the Nicholas system in Russia. It saw the repression that set in as a reaction to the revolutions of 1848 in western Europe, and the great mobilization of Russia's cumbersome military forces to meet the western Allies' challenge in the Crimean War. These events would leave a lasting mark upon his character. More than any Russian monarch since Nicholas I, Alexander believed in the precepts of Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality', laid down by Nicholas's Minister of Public Instruction, S. S. Uvarov, as the model to which Russian life should conform. And, like Nicholas I, Alexander stressed autocracy as the most important element in Uvarov's trilogy.

It was not until he had passed his twentieth birthday, in 1865, that Alexander ceased being simply another Grand Duke and became Heir Apparent. In that year, his elder brother, Grand Duke Nikolai Aleksandrovich, died of consumption, and Alexander, who at best regarded himself as simply a 'conscientious regimental commander', replaced him as heir to the Russian throne. He was awkward, unimaginative, and, as time would prove, a mediocre army commander.

One contemporary, the British correspondent Dillon, described him as being 'built like a butcher, powerful and extremely muscular. In his youth, he could straighten horseshoes with his bare hands and smash in doors with his shoulders. His body was huge and unwieldy, and his movements clumsy, partly the result of his almost morbid shyness.'

But like his grandfather Nicholas I, Alexander was consumed by a sense of duty and a conviction that fate or, in his view, the hand of God, had singled him out to rule Russia. The following year, this sense of duty led him to marry his brother's fiancée, the Princess Dagmar of Denmark, because state policy required it, though the marriage proved a happy one and his wife, who assumed the Russian name of Maria Fedorovna, a woman to whom he was devotedly faithful throughout his life.

Beginning in 1866, Alexander began to study Russia's past so as to prepare himself to better direct her future. In this effort, his studies during the winter of 1865-1866 with the great Russian historian S. M. Solov'ev were particularly significant. Although by that time Solov'ev had rejected his earlier leanings toward Slavophilism (he later characterised the Slavophiles' idealisation of Russia's past as 'Buddhism in the science of history'), he still retained, as Professor Mazouz has pointed out, 'his faith in religious and political messianism of Russia'.

To Solov'ev, Russia's history represented a vast and intricate tapestry which he sought to portray in his life's work, a twenty-nine volume history of his homeland. Heavily influenced by Hegel and the historian, von Ranke, he saw the state and nation as being inseparably linked and, to an important extent, viewed Russia's history as being the history of her government.

For a man of Alexander's straightforward and uncomplex views, who was generally incapable of abstract thought, it was but a small step from Solov'ev's more sophisticated theories of Russia's national development to the simplistic conclusion that autocracy had played the major role in Russia's past, that the autocrat personified Russia, and that he must play the central part in her present and future. Alexander soon came to see what he regarded as the weakening of autocracy brought on by the Great Reforms of the 1860s, as a central ingredient in Russia's social and political turmoil of the 1870s.

He therefore developed what the historian Florinsky once characterised as 'an instinctive elemental attachment to the idea of the unfettered supremacy of the crown, interpreted as the mainstay of the Empire and the very essence of Russia's historical tradition'. It would be the Russian Emperor and, by extension, his chosen advisers, who would direct Russia to new heights of greatness, and it would be the Emperor, through his paternal understanding of Russia's masses, who would guide their lives in their own best interests which he, rather than they, was best able to identify. As Constantine Pobedonostsev, the man who became Alexander III's closest adviser, argued, his Emperor was a true Russian who knew his people and their needs.

if Solov'ev had taught Alexander about Russia's past, others were to fill his mind with a vision of Russia's future at which the historian's belief in Russia's political and religious messianism had faded. By the 1870s, he had already fallen somewhat under the spell of pan-Slav ideas, especially those espoused by the Slavophile Ivan Aksakov. But, again, he took from Aksakov's doctrines only a crudely formulated Russian chauvinism; for he had little sympathy with the nationalistic strivings of other Slavic peoples.

As he noted in 1881 on a memorandum from his Ambassador to Berlin, P. A. Saburov, 'We can have no policy except one that is purely Russian and national'. For Alexander, panslavism would never be more than a means for furthering Russian nationalistic aims, and he sought to use the demands of other Slavic peoples for independence from the Ottoman or Habsburg Empires to foster Russian goals in the Balkans and Central Europe.

If Alexander had little sympathy for the pan-Slav doctrines that fostered the aspirations of other Slavs for independence, he had even less use for the romantic Slavophile dream of reviving the old Russian institution of the *zemskii sobor* (assembly of the land), which Muscovite Tsars had summoned from time to time for advice and consultation. Slavophiles, among them Ivan Aksakov, saw the *zemskii sobor* as an embodiment of the union between autocrat and people; to Alexander, it smacked of constitutionalism or, at the very least, a dangerous erosion of the autocrat's undivided power to rule Russia.

As his closest adviser and mentor, Constantine Pobedonostsev wrote to him as early as 1876, 'this [i.e. a constitution] is a lie, and God forbid that a true Russian shall see the day when this lie will become an accomplished fact'. Pobedonostsev's was a view that Alexander fervently shared.

Pobedonostsev most clearly articulated the principles upon which Alexander based his government's policies. Whatever the romantic and idealistic young terrorists who had assassinated his father might have expected, their dreams were rudely dashed almost immediately. In a manifesto drafted by Pobedonostsev, Alexander declared in late April, 1881, that he was convinced he had been 'called upon to maintain and defend, for the good of the people, the power of autocracy and that, as Emperor, he had "complete faith in the strength and truth of absolute power"'.

Thus, during the thirteen years in which he ruled Russia, Alexander jealously defended the autocrat's absolute power; he gave no ear to any call for popular participation, no matter how limited, in state affairs; and he sought to strengthen and extend Great Russian culture throughout his Empire. As a result, national minority groups throughout his domains were subjected to a firm and pervasive policy of Russification designed to erase or, at the very least, erode, their ethnic and cultural identities. In Alexander's view, all subjects of the Russian Emperor should be Russian in terms of language, culture, and outlook.

Alexander III thus came to the throne on March 1st, 1881, with his political views firmly established. The decade of social and political upheaval through which Russia had just passed and, more immediately, the assassination of his father on the very day he had signed a new programme of reforms proposed by his chief minister Count M. T. Loris-Melikov, convinced him of the absolute need to be firm and unyielding on all social and political issues. Two major problems confronted him on the day of his accession: the terrorists had to be dealt with and, perhaps even more important in the long term, he must decide the fate of Count Loris-Melikov's reform proposals.

Alexander dealt with both matters resolutely. Terrorist conspirators were quickly arrested during the first days of his reign; five were executed, and a number of others condemned to long terms of exile or imprisonment. So thorough were the arrests made by the Emperor's agents that, with the exception of one very feeble attempt upon his life (for which Lenin's elder brother Alexander was executed), there were no revolutionary stirrings in Russia for a decade. The revolutionary groups that remained in Russia were destroyed; those that had gone abroad were forced to remain in exile throughout most of his reign.

For Russia's radical intelligentsia, an era of 'small deeds', focused mainly upon such prosaic and unheroic undertakings as educating the peasant masses in district schoolhouses, had begun. What Nicholas II would later characterize as their 'senseless dreams of the participation of... representatives in the affairs of central administration' would not again find sympathy in any notable stratum of Russian society before the early twentieth century.

Not only his ruthless suppression of all revolutionary groups, but also the manner in which Alexander dealt with Loris-Melikov's reform proposals was significant in relegating the 'senseless dreams' of Russia's revolutionary and liberal elements to the innermost recesses of their hearts.

On March 8th, just a week after his accession, Russia's new Emperor summoned his father's closest counsellors to discuss Count Loris-Melikov's plans. The result was a foregone conclusion. Alexander rejected Loris-Melikov's modest proposal for consultations by the central government with elected representatives of Russian society. Pobedonostsev had argued that the adoption of the proposal would have meant *Finis Russiæ*; and Alexander agreed.

Alexander's rejection of Count Loris-Melikov's reform plans also brought a significant shift in the composition of the Imperial cabinet. Loris-Melikov and Minister of Finance A. A. Abaza resigned the moment that Alexander made clear his intention to 'defend, for the good of the people, against all assaults' the full power of autocracy. Soon afterwards, Russia's progressive and very able Minister of War, General Count Dmitrii Milutin, and Alexander's uncle, the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich, went into retirement; all were replaced by men chosen by Pobedonostsev.

Within a few months after Alexander's accession, it was clear that the 'Era of Counter-Reforms' had begun. By early 1882, the Ministry of Interior was headed by the reactionary Count Dmitrii Tolstoi; the Ministry of Public Instruction by I. D. Delliandov, a close friend of Tolstoi and Pobedonostsev; and the Ministry of War by the reactionary General P. S. Vannovskii. And, over them all, firm in his position as Alexander III's closest confidant, hovered the ever-present figure of Pobedonostsev, Supreme Procurator of the Holy Synod.

Once Count Loris-Melikov's reform proposals had been rejected, Alexander and his new ministers set about the task of restoring the full power of autocracy by imposing restrictions upon the reforms promulgated during the 1860s. Alexander and Pobedonostsev believed that these so-called Great Reforms were the chief cause of the social and political upheavals that Russia had since suffered.

First, they turned to the matter of press censorship, an area of state policy in which Alexander II had generally been quite lenient. As early as October, 1880, Pobedonostsev had warned Alexander that 'the government should not allow control of the press to slip from its hands.

... To entrust it [i.e. censorship] to the courts [as Count Loris-Melikov proposes] would give the press unbridled license.' In order to ensure full control of the press by state authorities, Alexander had Minister of Interior Count Tolstoi draft a series of 'provisional' rules in August, 1882, which remained in effect until the beginning of the twentieth century.

Most important, newspapers and journals were subjected to preliminary censorship under conditions that most periodicals found almost impossible to meet; and a committee headed by Pobedonostsev himself was granted the arbitrary power to suspend the publication of any periodical and prevent its publishers and editors from future publishing ventures.

Pobedonostsev's protege, Mikhail Kaikov, extolled these measures as creating a virtually free press in Russia because 'what is not contrary to the law and institutions of the country, what does not offend public morality, and what is not deceit and incitement to violence, can be, and is, expressed in the press with complete independence'. In effect, however, only those

officials that reflected the views of Alexander and his advisers were regarded as fully meeting those conditions.

Aside from restricting the press and limiting access to higher education to all but the upper classes, three particularly important decrees comprised the core of the counter-reforms that Alexander and his ministers imposed upon Russia, although they came only towards the end of his first decade on the throne. First came the Statute on Land Captains of 1889, followed by the *Zemstvo* Act of 1890, and the Municipal Government Act of 1892.

The first of these decrees imposed much more stringent state controls upon the institutions of peasant local self-government introduced by the Great Reforms by bringing a new type of official - the Land Captain - into the countryside. Land Captains were to be appointed by the Minister of Interior from lists of candidates chosen by the provincial nobility and approved by the provincial governor, and these men usually were selected from the conservative hereditary aristocracy.

As the historian Florinsky observed, the result of this new decree was that 'a sham of self-government [in the peasant villages] was preserved, yet peasant Russia was actually ruled by petty officials drawn from the midst of the landed nobility and controlled by the Minister of the Interior'.

Intensified bureaucratic control and administrative centralization were the means by which Alexander and his advisers sought to restore to the autocracy some of its arbitrary power eroded by the Great Reforms. This process was carried further with the *Zemstvo* Act of 1890 by which the Russian government sought to bring under the direct control of the central bureaucracy the elective district and provincial organizations (*zemstva*) created in 1864.

Both appointed and elective *zemstvo* officials now had to be confirmed by provincial governors, and the Minister of Interior was given the power to review all *zemstvo* decisions and remove from office any *zemstvo* official whose decisions displeased the central government. The same principles were applied to elective municipal officials by the Municipal Government Act of 1892. In both cases, the electorate was significantly reduced from what it had been during the 1870s and, at the insistence of Pobedonostsev, Jews were completely disenfranchised.

Indeed, Russia's Jews occupied a prominent place in Alexander's thoughts throughout his reign. Given his fervent nationalism and rigid orthodoxy, it could hardly have been otherwise. 'We must not forget', he once wrote, 'that it was the Jews who crucified Our Lord and spilled His precious blood.' Like their master, a number of imperial ministers, especially Count Dmitrii Tolstoi and Pobedonostsev, were violent anti-semites, as was much of public opinion in Russia.

During the 1880s and early 1890s, Alexander and Pobedonostsev utilized these sentiments to launch a vicious campaign against Russia's Jews. The new reign opened with a wave of pogroms against Jews in southern Russia as the authorities stirred anti-semitic passions among Russians by publicizing the fact that a young Jewish woman, Gesia Helfmann, had been among the terrorists who had plotted the assassination of Alexander II.

During the spring and summer of 1891, Russia witnessed more than one hundred such anti-Jewish riots in which the authorities generally took no action to defend Jews against attack. Alexander's only response to these vicious persecutions was to impose more restrictions upon the Empire's Jewry despite the fact that *The Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire* already contained well over six hundred anti-Jewish decrees.

Largely at the urging of Pobedonostsev, Alexander and his ministers proceeded to limit further Jews' access to education, narrowed the area of the Empire in which they were allowed to reside (in Moscow alone some 20,000 Jewish artisans and tradesmen were forced to leave the city), and excluded them from all participation in local governmental affairs.

Finally, in 1893, Alexander decreed that it was a criminal offence for Jews to bear Christian names. Such persecutions at the hands of the Emperor and his advisers caused a mass exodus of Jews from Russia, and also drove numbers of others into the resurgent revolutionary movement in the 1890s.

If the virulent anti-semitism of Alexander and his advisers drove thousands of Jews from Russia, their extreme chauvinism had the somewhat similar effect of further alienating national minorities in the Empire from their Russian rulers. Throughout the nineteenth century, a number of nationalist movements had been growing within the Russian Empire, although, with the exception of Russian Poland, these movements had at first been largely cultural in emphasis. Alexander's policies toward these groups turned them toward a more violent course, and also spurred some of them to demand political independence rather than cultural autonomy.

Because he believed that all subjects of the Russian Emperor should be Russian in language, culture, and outlook, Alexander launched an aggressive campaign against all national minority groups in the Russian Empire. A programme of Russification already had been undertaken in Poland under Alexander II; his son intensified it, and applied its precepts not only to the Poles but to their fellow Slavs, the Ukrainians, Russia's Baltic Provinces - present-day Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia - were also subjected to a firm policy of Russification, as were the populations of Armenia and Georgia.

In all cases, Russian was made the language of local administration as well as the language of instruction in the local schools; and the authorities undertook concentrated campaigns to convert native populaces to Orthodoxy, while persecuting non-Orthodox religions. Certainly tolerance of national minorities had never been a state policy in Russia; but the chauvinism and prejudice of Alexander and his ministers even by Russian standards was extreme.

Yet, although Alexander III's reign was a time of oppression and reaction in social and political matters, it saw notable progress in the Empire's national economy, especially in the industrial sector. Most of this development was confined to heavy industry (the only exception being the textile industry), because the Empire's peasants were still quite self-sufficient, and there was little in the way of a mass market for consumer goods.

In the heavy industrial sector, railroad construction boomed and, in turn, stimulated the production of coal, iron, and steel, as the political tranquility of Alexander's Russia attracted large quantities of foreign capital and a considerable number of technicians. Mainly due to the efforts of John Hughes, an Englishman, the vast coal deposits of the Donets Basin were opened at this time, as well as the iron ore resources of Krivoi Rog. As a result, Russian coal production rose from 3,610,000 tons in 1880 to some 17,959,750 tons by 1900. The growth figures for iron, oil, and steel during the same period were similarly impressive.

If Alexander's domestic programme was designed to impose a regime of political order and social stability upon Russia, his foreign policy sought to achieve much the same end. With the exception of limited military campaigns in Central Asia, Alexander's reign was a time of peace for Russia, for neither he, nor his cautious and reserved Foreign Minister, N. K. Giers, sought to achieve grand designs abroad.

Russia required peace as she embarked upon an ambitious programme of industrial development; a stable, harmonious atmosphere was an essential requirement for attracting the vast sums of foreign investment that Russian industry required. Alexander and Giers provided just such an environment in which Russian industry could flourish by following a cautious and reserved policy abroad.

Alexander's reign brought important changes in Russia's international policies nonetheless. Although the *Dreikaiserbund*, the alliance between Russia, Germany, and Austria, was renewed during the first months of his reign, Alexander and his Foreign Minister soon turned Russian policy toward another course as the latter years of the 1880s brought a deterioration in the relations between Russia and Germany.

Conflicts over Germany's increased tariff on Russian grain imports were one important reason for the growing rift between the two powers. Germany's renewal of the Triple Alliance with Austria and Italy, and her refusal to renew the so-called 'reinsurance treaty' of 1887 with Russia, were others. Alexander and Giers sought new allies and, despite the Emperor's apprehensions about France as a hotbed of revolution, Russia ultimately settled upon an alliance with France, in August, 1892, to offset the growing influence of Germany in Central European affairs.

When he entered into an alliance with France in the summer of 1892, Alexander had been on Russia's throne for more than a decade, and during that time Russia had known no foreign wars. At home, as we have seen, the Empire's industry showed dramatic development, and the social tensions and political turmoil that had characterized the 1860s and 1870s seemed to have disappeared.

The revolutionary forces in Russia were in total disarray; their organizations had been destroyed, their leaders imprisoned, exiled to Siberia, or forced to live abroad; and order reigned supreme in Russia. To be sure, the situation was far from ideal. Factory workers suffered all of the social trauma and economic difficulties usually associated with the first stages of the Industrial Revolution in any country.

And the Russian peasants, their meagre resources stretched to the breaking point by the economic policies of Alexander and his ministers, died by the tens of thousands in the great famine of 1891. But even these catastrophes had not disturbed the tranquility of Alexander's Russia.

This pleasing picture of calm and stability was due, in large measure, to Alexander's policies and personality. Everything about him suggested strength. He was not plagued by self-doubt, and never questioned that his major purpose was other than to maintain the full strength of autocracy. To his mind, Russia required a firm hand to guide her along the only proper path of development - that dictated by Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality - which he and his mentor Pobedonostsev had chosen; indeed, for him there could have been no other.

But once his hand slipped from Russia's helm, it rapidly became clear how very illusory the calm of Alexander's Russia had been. On October 20th, 1894, Alexander III died of nephritis, and with him ended the last period of stability that Imperial Russia would ever know. Alexander's son, Nicholas II, was far less assertive than his father, nor did he possess his father's singleness of purpose.

Soon, Russia was torn by war in the Far East, revolution, war in Europe, and, again, revolution as all those cataclysmic upheavals, which Alexander had managed to avoid, fell upon her in the course of a few years. Just more than two decades after Alexander's death, Tsarist Russia would be no more; and the Romanovs were driven from the Russian throne. A new regime, dedicated to different ideals, but sharing Alexander's sense of purpose, began the task of instituting a new order in Russia.