

A-LEVEL HISTORY

AT NEWCASTLE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



ALEXANDER II 1855-1881

UNIT 3: RUSSIA AND ITS RULERS 1855-1964

Topic Area	Homework Reading Complete	Homework Notes Made	Class Notes and Activities	Prefect Paragraph Complete
Alexander II's Reforms				
1850's Russia				
Serfdom				
Crimean War				
Military Reform				
Why Reform?				
Emancipation Ukase				
Wider Reform				
Opposition under Alexander II				
Rise of Marxism				
Radical Opposition				
Liberal Opposition				
Nationalist Opposition				
Response to Opposition				
Thematic Overview				

How will you use this course guide?

Each week you will be given summary notes. These will include:

- A response to each of the **KEY QUESTIONS**
- A description of each of the **KEY INDIVIDUALS**
- A definition for each of the **KEY TERMS**
- A response to each of the **STRETCH ACTIVITIES**
- A response to each of the **TEN QUESTIONS**

The exam questions provided are for revision purposes. Once we have completed the depth study area/course (for thematic essays), you will be able to produce practice responses for the questions provided.

At the back of each course guide is a thematic overview grid. Note down any evidence you find that corresponds to each key theme throughout your study of the course.

TOPIC AREA: ALEXANDER II REFORMS		10
WHY REFORM?	THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT	KEY QUESTIONS
Alexander II's Own Views Alexander was no "liberal" in the broad sense of the term. He was fully committed to maintaining the tsarist autocracy and upholding his "God-given" duties. However, he believed that part of this responsibility involved enhancing the power and prestige of Russia and restoring the country's dignity as a leading power of Europe. He accepted that Russia needed to change and believed that by granting limited freedoms and reforms, he would help to stimulate a more dynamic economy, without altering the basic political framework of his rule. Although he was mindful of the risk of extreme changes, he believed that the practical steps should be taken to lead Russia along the road towards economic modernisation. He was supported by other leading members of his family, his brother, the grand duke Constantine and his aunt the grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna. He was also surrounded by a number of "enlightened bureaucrats" who pressed for change and reform in various lines. Nicholas Alexander Milyutin, Alexander's minister for internal affairs (and brother to Dmitry, for example, was another key figure through reform and a leading voice of influence in imperial circles. Alexander's first action of his reign when he addressed the new nobility in 1856. He is reported to have said the following: There are rumours abroad that I wish to grant the peasants their freedom. This is unjust, and you may say so to everyone to right. But a feeling of hostility between the peasants and landowners does unfortunately exist, and this has already resulted in several instances of insubordination to the landowners. I am convinced that sooner or later we must come to a decision. I believe that you too, are of the same opinion as I; consequently, it is far better that this should come about from above rather than from below. Alexander's first actions on coming to power seemed to combine a determination to rule in a more enlightened manner. He released political prisoners and even pardoned those who had been involved in a plot to assassinate his father. He relaxed controls on censorship, lessened restrictions on foreign travel and university entrance, cancelled the debts of those in arrears with their taxes and restored some of the liberties of Poland and the Catholic Church. Political Considerations The incidence of peasant unrest, had steadily increased in the decade up to the Crimean War as landowners tried to drive their peasants to produce more, and protests against the military conscription escalated. There had been more than 300 separate peasant risings plus murders of landowners and bailiffs had grown more common, so threatening the social stability of the countryside.	 Why might peasant unrest cause concern for the state? How had Alexander II been influenced by individuals around him?	What do you think is the most important reason for reform?
	KEY INDIVIDUALS Alexander II Yekaterina Pavlovna Duke Constantine Nicholas Milyutin	
	KEY DEFINITIONS Autocracy Enlightened Obruk Agriculture Liberal	

1850S RUSSIA

At first glance, Russia appears to be a strong and dominant power due to its size and historical military successes. It was seen in Russia and its surrounding neighbours as a **strong 'bear'**. However, many historians do not talk of Russia in these terms. Instead they talk about a **"backwards"** Russian state due to its political, economic, and social standings.

Imperial Council of State:

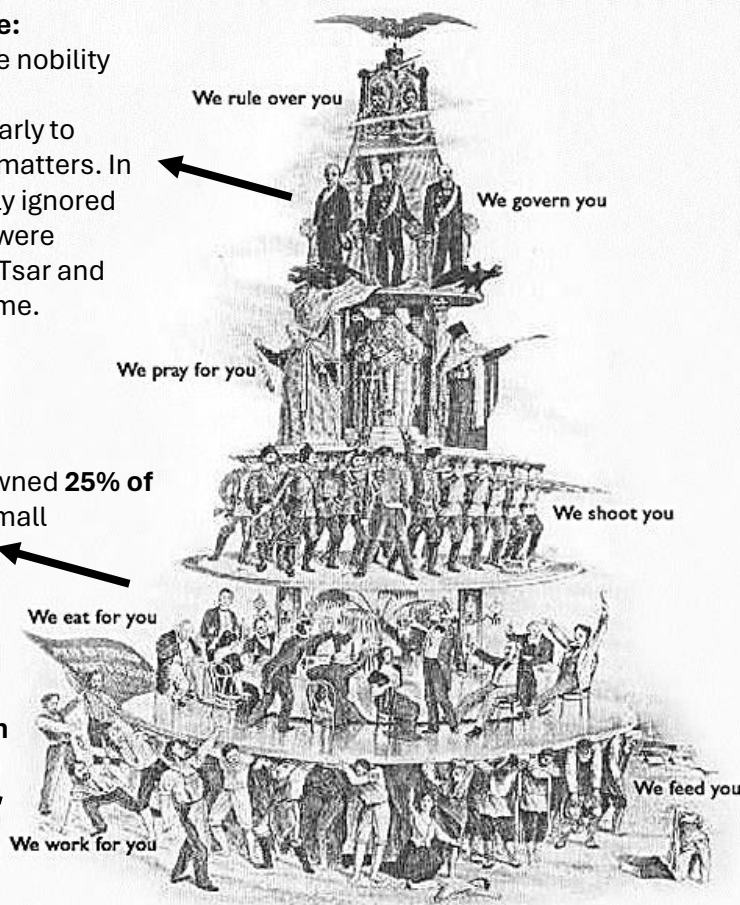
Ministers (members of the nobility selected to run **13 state departments** – met regularly to advise the Tsar on policy matters. In practice, the Tsar regularly ignored this advice. All ministers were appointed directly by the Tsar and could be sacked at any time.

Nobility:

1% of the population. Owned **25% of land.** Middle class very small

Everybody else:

Majority peasants, made up **85% of the population**

**Population of Russia by millions**

Russians	55,650,000	Caucasians	1,000,000	Finns	2,500,000
Ukrainians	22,400,000	Germans	1,800,000	Estonians	1,000,000
Poles	7,900,000	Lithuanians	1,650,000	Iranians	1,000,000
Belorussians	5,900,000	Letts	1,400,000	Asiatic	5,750,000
Jews	5,000,000	Georgians	1,350,000	Mongols	500,000
Kirghiz	4,000,000	Armenians	1,115,000	Others	200,000
Tartars	3,700,000	Romanians	1,110,000	Total	74,000,000

Pogroms

Despite the establishment of **the Pale** – Jews still faced violence in Russia. These violent attacks are known as **"pogroms"**. The word pogrom is a Russian word, which means "to destroy, to wreak havoc, to demolish violently". Most historians cite an attack in Odessa in 1821 as the first pogrom. The attacks throughout the rest of the 19th century all bore common hallmarks – such as the destruction and looting of Jewish businesses, the rape of Jewish women and the beating and murder of Jewish men. Most of these attacks were carried out with the support of the government.

KEY QUESTIONS

What kind of social structure does Russia appear to have?

What problems might emerge from this social and political hierarchy?

Does this resemble the political and social hierarchy of any other European states in the 1850s?

What do you notice in terms of the composition of the Russian Empire?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Tsar Nicholas I

KEY DEFINITIONS

Backwards

The Pale

Pogrom

Enlightenment

Autocrat

Bureaucrats

Religion

Economy and Infrastructure

	Austria	France	Germany	Britain	Russia
1850: Output of pig iron (metric tonnes)	155,000	406,000	210,000	2,285,000	228,000
1850: Output of coal (metric tonnes)	77,000	4,434,000	5,100,000	50,200,000	300,000
1855: Length of railway (kilometres)	1,588	5,037	7,826	11,744	1,049

Russia was governed by a Tsar who was an **autocrat**. This contrasted with how many countries in the West were ruled, which was through constitutional governments of monarchies. The Tsar in 1855, Nicholas I, belonged to the Romanov family or dynasty, which had ruled since the election, in 1613, of Michael Romanov to the National Assembly. All Romanovs were raised to believe that their **authority was ordained by God** and that they were answerable only to God. All members of the government, drawn almost exclusively from the aristocracy, were appointed by the Tsar. The key government institutions of the Imperial Council of State, the Senate and the Personal Chancellery of his Imperial Majesty all appeared to have a degree of power but, ultimately, it was the Tsar who accepted or rejected the advice of ministers and who had final say over policy. To ensure this worked, especially given the vast size of the empire, many **bureaucrats** were needed: by 1855, there were around **114,000**

1. Why has Russia been described as ‘backwards’?
2. How many state departments were there in the Imperial Council of State?
3. What % of the population was made up of the nobility?
4. What % of land did the nobility own?
5. What % of the population was made up of the peasantry?
6. What was the total population of the Russian Empire?
7. What was the Pale of Settlement?
8. How many religious holidays were there per year?
9. How did Russia compare in terms of economy with Britain and France?
10. How many bureaucrats were there in 1855?

EXAM QUESTIONS

STRETCH

How can we characterise the nature of government of Russia in the 1850s?

Alexander II was known for his reform. Based upon your knowledge of Russia in the 1850s, why might he feel the need to reform?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

SERFDOM

What was Serfdom?

The population of the Russian Empire in 1858 was **74 million**, of whom nearly 85% worked on the land. Of these peasants, some **22.5 million** were serfs; that is they were the personal property of the landowners for whom they worked and on whose estates they lived. In addition, over 19 million were “state peasants” tied to the lands of the Crown. The authority of these owners was almost absolute. It extended over the allocation of land, labour dues, taxes and corporal punishment.



There were **712 outbreaks of revolt** between 1826 and 1854, half of them between 1844 and 1854. In addition to these issues of social stability, there were also increasing economic arguments in some well-informed quarters for the abolition of serfdom. As the rural population increased, and as agricultural practices in Russia slipped further behind those in western Europe, serfdom made less and less economic sense. Serf labour found it increasingly difficult to produce enough grain both to feed the local population and to provide a surplus for the landowner to put on the market. Many landowners found their debts mounting, to such an extent that, by 1860, **60% of private serfs had in fact been mortgaged out to the state.**

Year	Number of incidents of serf rebellion
1840 – 1844	138
1845 – 1849	207
1850 – 1854	141
1855 – 1858	245
1859 – 1861	180

Serfdom and industrial backwardness

While **slavophiles** stressed the importance of serfdom in the preservation of political and social stability, westerners emphasised its role as a brake upon Russia’s economic development. Essentially, although not exclusively a rural institution, serfdom placed severe restrictions upon the development in Russia of an urban middle class, and of an urban workforce. In 1833, the **total urban population was about 2 million**. Even then, most towns were market and administrative, rather than industrial centres. Russia lacked the basis for a serious industrial development on the scale of western Europe. It has been estimated that only **67,000 people were employed in the textile industry in 1830 and only 20,000 in the steel and iron industry**. The classic indication of Russia’ s industrial backwardness was the slow growth of its railways. The first train did not run between St Petersburg and Moscow until 1851.

KEY QUESTIONS

What was serfdom?
Can you summarise using the information?

Why might serf rebellion threaten the state?

How could we argue that serfdom is evidence of Russian ‘backwardness’?

What does serfdom reveal to us about the nature of government in the 1850s?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

KEY DEFINITIONS

- Slavophile
- Revolt
- Rural
- Urban

SERFDOM

Interpretation A: Roger Bartlett, *Serfdom and State Power in Imperial Russia*, *European History Quarterly* Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 29-64

The institution of serfdom has been a central and much debated feature of early modern Russian history: it has sometimes been described as Russia's 'peculiar institution', as central to the Russian experience as black slavery has been to the American. A standard view has seen it as the central cause of Russian 'backwardness'. Conversely, it has been interpreted simply as a symptom of underdevelopment. One recent Russian study, (...) defines serfdom as a corporate phenomenon encompassing all social relations in the Empire. Another Russian account has gone so far as to conclude that enserfment of the population was a necessary and inevitable condition for Russian survival on the dangerous and inhospitable north European plain.

As with all other variants of the institution, Russian serfdom was a set of relationships enforced by the judicial and coercive power of the state. Peasants' right of movement, the crucial variable, was abolished by decrees of the 1580s and 1590s which bound them to their place of residence and made them in practice dependent through being tied to the land; and the final form of full hereditary subjection was put in place by the 1649 Law Code. In its measures regarding the peasantry, the Law Code was concerned exclusively with means to ensure their subordination to their landlords, and with remedies against peasant flight and landlord harbouring of runaways: it did not provide a comprehensive definition of their legal status.

In fact, Russian serfdom as an institution was not properly defined in law before the nineteenth century. A century after the Law Code, nobles' peasants had been deprived by discrete enactments of almost all legal rights, except that killing them was forbidden. Noble owners were at least required by law in 1734 to look after their peasants in times of famine, but there were few other legal restrictions. Despite a number of notorious cases, it was not in the landowners' interest to harm their peasants: the prosperity, or at least the economic viability, of the peasantry was the guarantor of landlord well-being. Likewise, it should be borne in mind that serfdom in the strict sense did not encompass the whole of the Russian peasantry. Serfs proper belonged to noble landlords. The Orthodox Church owned monastery peasants, but its rights over them were less complete and in any event it lost them in 1764. Peter I created the category of state or treasury peasants who were administered by state officials.

It was also the case that differences of law in different regions produced practical differences in peasant status. Peasants in Russian Finland, seized by Peter I in the Great Northern War (1700–21), retained real personal freedom even when the estates on which they lived were granted to Russian nobles. The peasants of Hetman Ukraine remained technically free even after 1783, when the introduction of the poll tax caused them to be bound to their place of residence: though in this case that legislation was merely the last step in fact towards ultimate enserfment. In short, the Imperial Russian institution of serfdom, despite its extreme forms approximating to chattel slavery, and the undoubtedly severe influence that it exercised in general upon the state of the peasantry, was a flexible and variable institution, and was capable of accommodating considerable social and economic variety and change.

EXAM QUESTIONS

STRETCH

What does the interpretation suggest about serfdom in Russia?

What does the interpretation tell us about the range of experiences across Russia's empire?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

CRIMEAN WAR

THEMATIC AREA: WAR AND REVOLUTION

The Crimean War took place between **October 1853 and February 1856**. The war was between Russia on one side and Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) and the Kingdom of Sardinia on the other. The causes of the war and the reasons for conflict are really complex, but in general terms, it was about who would control the territories of the Ottoman Empire.

Why did Russia fight?

Persecuted Christians in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire looked to Russia for support.

The Ottoman Empire known as the 'Sick man of Europe' – Russia feared other foreign powers gaining an influence in the region

Why did Britain Fight?

Russian expansionism in the region would threaten British sea routes to India.

Why did France fight?

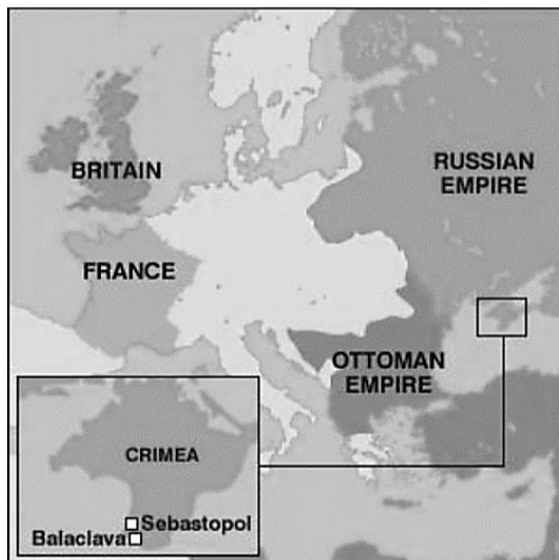
The new Emperor, Napoleon III was keen to assert influence. Tensions were heightened due to support for Catholic monks in the Ottoman in their dispute within Russian backed Orthodox monks.

All nations were confident of victory and the public appeared to be in a war-like mood. War broke out in October 1853.

The **Battle of Balacava (1854)** is a particularly famous battle of the Crimean War because it featured the Charge of the Light Brigade in which the Light Cavalry Brigade, commanded by the Earl of Cardigan, charged a heavily defended part of the battlefield. The assault was very brave, but was unsuccessful and resulted in over **70% of the men losing their lives**. Peace talks began in 1856 and the war came to an end with the signing of the **Treaty of Paris**. The Black Sea was named a neutral territory - no warships were allowed and no-one could build defences around the coast. It is estimated that more than **300,000 soldiers** were killed during the war.

INTERESTING AND USELESS FACT: The last survivor of the Crimean War was Timothy the Tortoise. Timothy was actually a female tortoise and she died in 2004 (aged about 165). She was ship's mascot on the HMS Queen which took part in the bombardment of Sevastopol.

Russian backwardness was dramatically revealed at the close of Nicholas' reign during the Crimean war (1853-56) in which an isolated Russia was opposed by the British, French, Turks and Piedmontese. The war showed Russia to be militarily inferior to the more industrialized countries of Western Europe. The Russians' weapons and military equipment proved obsolete. Russian infantry's small-arms were no match for modern West European rifles which could open fire at four times the distance of Russian antiquated handguns. The Black Sea fleet, composed of wooden sailing vessels, could not compete with the steam-propelled warships of the allies. In addition, the country's transportation system failed to serve adequately



KEY QUESTIONS

What were the causes of the Crimean War?

Why did Russia become involved in the Crimean War?

How did the Crimean war demonstrate Russian 'backwardness'?

How might the Crimean War have encouraged reform?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Napoleon III

Earl of Cardigan

KEY DEFINITIONS

Battle of Balacava

Treaty of Paris

CRIMEAN WAR

THEMATIC AREA: WAR AND REVOLUTION

the needs of the war. Unlike their stand in 1812 against Napoleon, in the Crimea the Russians were unable to defend their own territory against outside invasion.

Russia's defeats in the Crimean War seriously undermined her military prestige and dealt a severe blow to national self-esteem. They even provided grounds for talks about Nicholas having deliberately taken his own life. The catastrophe of the war underlined the pressing need for fundamental reforms. It sounded a painful alarm call and was one of the causes of the series of important internal reforms which were carried out by Nicholas's heir, Alexander II (1855-1881).



The Crimean War and the subsequent reforms of Alexander II underscored with absolute clarity, for the second time since Peter's reign, the significance of competition with the West as one of the key factors in Russian history. The entire Russian history of the past three centuries, ever since the days of Peter the Great, has been punctuated by reforms induced by the Russian government's efforts to catch up with and overtake their Western rivals.

Your Ten Questions:

1. Which countries fought in the Crimean War?
2. When did the Crimean War begin and end?
3. Why did Russia fight in the Crimean War?
4. Name a prominent battle in the Crimean War.
5. What % of men lost their lives in this battle?
6. Which Treaty brought the war to an end?
7. What was the impact of this Treaty on Russia?
8. How many soldiers lost their lives during the Crimean War?
9. What was the outcome of the war for Russia?
10. How did the war encourage reform within Russia?

EXAM QUESTIONS

The Crimean War had the greatest impact on the lives of ordinary people. How far do you agree? [25 marks]

War was the most important event in changing Russian government between 1855-1964. How far do you agree? [25 marks]

STRETCH

What were the social, political and economic impacts of the Crimean War?

How far did the Crimean war CHANGE Russia and the lives of its people?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

MILITARY REFORMS

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Military reform was a priority. Not only had the disaster of the Crimea highlighted the need for changes to traditional practices, emancipation had also removed the means of conscripting serfs to provide for the rank and file. Consequently, **Dmitry Milyutin**, the minister for war 1861-81, set about a wholesale reorganisation of the armed forces to remove abuses that had become apparent during the Crimean campaign and to create a smaller, more professional, more efficient and less expensive army.



Dmitry Milyutin: Minister of War

- Service in the army could not be given by the courts as a punishment.
- Length of service was reduced from **25 years to 15 years** (with just 6 years actually in the army and 9 years in the reserves).
- **Conscription was made compulsory** for all classes (including nobles) from the age of 20 – although education could reduce the length of service.
- **Modern weaponry** was introduced, iron-clad steamships built and strategic railways constructed so as to improve the transport of troops and provisions.

• **Military Colleges** were set up (accepting non-noble recruits) to provide better training for the officer corps. Privates could rise to officer rank by merit.

Despite some determined opposition from the nobility and merchants, Alexander gave his assent to the reforms in 1874 and they were put into effect from 1875. They did, as intended, create a smaller but better-trained army and in turn reduced the very heavy government expenditure which the army had incurred. Literacy within the army began to improve, with mass army-education campaigns in the 1870s-90s, although there were still substantial numbers of illiterate peasant recruits who could not benefit from the training on offer. Furthermore, although the system was fairer, the well-to-do found substitutes to serve in their place and the officer class remained largely composed of aristocrats. It therefore remained in essence, a peasant conscript army and the problems of supply and leadership were by no means fully resolved. When the military was tested in the war against Turkey (1877-78), victory took far longer than expected. Furthermore, Russia was also to suffer defeat on land and at sea, at the hands of the Japanese in 1904-5 and again by Germany in 1914-17.

Key Debate: How far were Alexander II's reforms due to the Crimean War?

The Crimean War is often cited as being the chief reason behind reform. The causal link is based on the following observations:

- The war revealed weaknesses in the way Nicholas I had ruled; the maintenance of serfdom under strict autocratic rule did not seem to fit with staging modern warfare.
- The army was recruited from serfs who were not trained to the same standard as the professional armies of Britain and France. Also, serfs were inclined towards revolt and, given their other responsibilities, were probably not as committed as they might have been.
- Soldiers had been poorly supplied; the production of armaments and uniforms was

KEY QUESTIONS

Why might Alexander II introduce such reforms?

What were the limitations of these reforms?

To what extent were the military reforms effective?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Dmitry Milyutin

KEY DEFINITIONS

Minister for War

Military College

Conscription

Reform

MILITARY REFORMS

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Inadequate. This was a reflection on the way the economy was organised and how Russia had been slow to industrialise.

Interpretation A: Stephen J. Lee, *Russia and the USSR, 1855 -1991* (2006).

The Crimean War was both a reason for and an effect of key adjustments in Tsarist policy on autocracy. The first of these was the decisions of Alexander II, immediately after his accession in 1855, to introduced , major reforms, even though Nicholas I had generally resisted change. A key factor was Russia's poor performance in the Crimean War (1854-1856), a reflection on the recruiting system, the military leadership, the supply chain and the bureaucratic inefficiency. The result was a series of reforms, beginning with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and proceeding to the updating of local government (1864 and 1870), changes in military organisation and the recruiting system (1874) and improvements in education. Such developments were intended to strengthen , not weaken the autocratic base; they also increased Alexander II's awareness of Russia's advantages as a modernised power against its traditional rival – the Ottoman Empire.

Your Ten Questions:

1. Which war encouraged the reform of the military?
2. Who was the Russian Minister for War?
3. What could no longer be given as a punishment as a result of reform?
4. What was the length of service reduced to as a result of reform?
5. What was made compulsory for all classes?
6. What were military colleges set up to do?
7. What were the limitations of military reform?
8. When was the Russo-Turkish War?
9. When was the Russo-Japanese War?
10. To what extent were the reforms successful?

EXAM QUESTIONS

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess which interpretation is most convincing in relation to an analysis of the influence of the Crimean War on Alexander II's reforms.
[30 marks]

STRETCH

How convincing is Interpretation A regarding the reason for military reform?

What might other motivations of reform be?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

WHY REFORM?

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Alexander II's Own Views

Alexander was no “**liberal**” in the broad sense of the term. He was fully committed to maintaining the tsarist autocracy and upholding his “God-given” duties. However, he believed that part of this responsibility involved enhancing the power and prestige of Russia and restoring the country’s dignity as a leading power of Europe. He accepted that Russia needed to change and believed that by granting limited freedoms and reforms, he would help to stimulate a more dynamic economy, without altering the basic political framework of his rule. Although he was mindful of the dangers of extreme change, he believed that some practical steps could and should be taken to lead Russia along the road towards **economic modernisation**.



In this, he was supported by other leading members of his family, his brother, the grand **Duke Constantine** and his aunt the grand **Duchess Elena Pavlovna**. He was also surrounded by a number of “**enlightened bureaucrats**” who pressed for change and reform along western lines. **Nicholas Alexander Milyutin**, Alexander’s minister for internal affairs 1859-61 (and brother to Dmitry, for example, was anxious to carry through reform and had a good deal of influence in imperial circles.

Alexander set the tone of his reign when he addressed the Moscow nobility in 1856. He is reported to have said the following:

There are rumours abroad that I wish to grant the peasants their freedom; this is unjust, and you may say so to everyone to right and left; but a feeling of hostility between the peasants and landlords does unfortunately exist, and this has already resulted in several instances of insubordination to the landlords. I am convinced that sooner or later we must come to it. I believe that you too, are of the same opinion as I; consequently, it is far better that this should come about from above, rather than from below.

Alexander’s first actions on coming to power seemed to confirm his determination to rule in a more enlightened manner. He released political prisoners and even pardoned those who had been involved in a plot to assassinate his father. He relaxed controls on censorship, lessened restrictions on foreign travel and university entrance, cancelled the debts of those in arrears with their taxes and restored some of the liberties of Poland and the Catholic Church.

Political Considerations

The incidence of peasant unrest, had steadily increased in the decade up to the Crimean War as landowners had tried to drive their peasants to produce more, and protests against the military conscription escalated. There had been more than **300 separate peasant risings** plus murders of landowners and bailiffs had grown more common, so threatening the social stability of the countryside.

KEY QUESTIONS

What do you think is the most important reason for reform?

How had Alexander II been influenced by individuals around him?

Why might peasant unrest cause concern for the state?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Alexander II

Duchess Pavlovna

Duke Constantine

Nicholas Milyutin

KEY DEFINITIONS

Autocracy

Modernisation

Enlightened

Obrok

Agriculture

Liberal

WHY REFORM?

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Furthermore, the Russia social structure seemed to be doing nothing to help the nobility, on which the tsarist autocracy depended. Nobles' incomes were falling and, whilst they remained dependant on their serfs, they had no incentive or training to put their talents to other uses, for example business ventures.

Economic Considerations

There were many economic reasons why reform was necessary, but it was above all the recognition of Russia's need to catch up with the West in order to reassert her great power status that persuaded men within the ministry of internal affairs, as well as a large number of landowners, that serfdom was acting as a brake to economic progress.

Serfdom was widely seen as the principal handicap to Russia's industrialisation since it prevented the movement of workers to factories, limited capital accumulation and kept the internal market demand low. The removal of serfdom was also essential if modern methods were to be developed in agriculture, for there was no incentive for the peasant to innovate or develop their land when the landowners could take the profits of labour. It had not gone without notice that in areas where peasants were able to engage in paid work or, as in Siberia, where free peasant labour was the norm, peasants were more productive.

Changes in agricultural practices in western Europe had increased the competitiveness of the European markets, making it harder for the nobles to sell grain and make a profit. Consequently, nobles were being forced to take out mortgages on estates which had previously been owned outright by their families. By **1859, 66% of serfs had been mortgaged** as security for nobles' loans from the State Loan Bank, while peasants were also unable to pay their taxes – the Poll Tax and **obrok**. By 1855, the government had a debt of **54 million roubles**.

Your Ten Questions:

1. What were Alexander II's views regarding reform?
2. Who was Grand Duke Constantine?
3. Who was the Minister for Internal Affairs?
4. How was Alexander II influenced by individuals surrounding him?
5. How many peasant uprisings had there been prior to reform?
6. Why might peasant uprisings concern Alexander II?
7. What was happening to the income of the nobility prior to reform?
8. What was believed to be acting as a brake to economic progress?
9. What % of serfs had been mortgaged as security for the nobles' loans?
10. By 1855, what the debt of the Russian government?

EXAM QUESTIONS

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess which interpretation is most convincing in relation to the reason for Alexander II's reforms.
[30 marks]

STRETCH

Consider the political, economic, and ideological reasons for reform. Which is the most important?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

KEY QUESTIONS

What were the limitations of the Emancipation Ukase?

To what extent were the peasantry free?

What were the reasons for the introduction of the Emancipation Ukase?

How might the Emancipation Ukase have affected the Russian Empire?



The 1861 Emancipation Ukase (or decree) was a lengthy legal document which initially only applied to the privately owned serfs living on the land. Over **20 million state serfs** – who had already been released from some of their obligations before 1861 – had to wait until 1866 to receive their complete freedom. There were also a **further 7 million serfs** in different categories, for whom terms were worked out over the following years.

Key terms of emancipation act:

- Serfs released from bondage and become free men – free to marry own property, set up businesses, travel and enjoy legal rights.
- Each serf family were entitled to keep its cottage or allotment.
- Landlords would receive compensation for loss of land from the government in form of government bonds.
- Peasants required to pay “**redemption payments**” to government for land they acquired. There were to be **49 annual payments and 6% interest**.
- Freed serfs would remain within their peasant community (**mir**) until all redemption payments had been made.
- Mir distributed allotments, controlled farming, collected and paid the taxes of peasants living in their jurisdiction.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

KEY DEFINITIONS

Redemption
Payments

Mir

Decree

Emancipation

EMANCIPATION UKASE

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Timeline of Emancipation

Decree introduced introduced for privately owned serfs	Extended to 20 million state serfs	15% serfs still obligated to a landowner
1861	1866	1881

LONG AND DRAWN OUT PROCESS

Historical interpretations of the Emancipation of the Serfs

There are two main interpretations of the Emancipation:

A. As a product of Alexander's liberal ideas. The Emancipation was a humanitarian project led by Alexander out of benevolence. He challenged convention and set Russia on the path to reform.

B. As an attempt to improve social and political stability. The Emancipation was a state-directed attempt to maintain tsarist authority, which ultimately backfired. Alexander's reforms produced short and long-term political and social problems. The Emancipation led many to believe that reform was impossible inside an autocratic system.

Historical interpretations of the impact of the Emancipation

Historians have different interpretations of the impact of emancipation.

C. Emancipation was a turning point for Russia. In 'The Industrialisation of Russia 1700-1914', the historian Malcolm Falkus argues that emancipation 'removed a considerable barrier to industrial growth'. He suggests that serfdom restricted the domestic market, prevented labour mobility, stifled agricultural innovation, and most significantly encouraged attitudes that were harmful towards modernisation. On Falkus' account, emancipation led peasants to market more crops and supply industrial labour.

D. Russian society and economy were not significantly changed by the emancipation. The historian Christopher Read offers a different view in his book 'From Tsar to Soviets', arguing that the attitudes and institutions of serfdom survived emancipation. He claims that Russia 'remained essentially a serf owners' state', with peasants inefficient and hostile towards their masters, and a continuing reliance on the police and army to govern peasants.

Your Ten Questions:

1. When was the Emancipation Ukase introduced?
2. What % of the population were peasants?
3. How many serfs were there?
4. How many annual payments were to be made following emancipation?
5. What was the interest rate on these payments?
6. Where did peasants have to remain until payments had been made?
7. When was emancipation extended to 20 million state serfs?
8. By 1881, what % of serfs were still obligated to a landowner?
9. What were the motives behind the Emancipation Ukase?
10. To what extent was the Emancipation Ukase a success?

EXAM QUESTIONS

Reform and repression under Alexander II had the greatest impact upon the lives of ordinary people. How far do you agree?
[25 marks]

Using your understanding of the historical context assess which interpretation in most convincing regarding the impact of Alexander II's reforms.
[30 marks]

STRETCH

Consider the historical interpretations. Which do you find most convincing?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

WIDER REFORMS

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Local Government Reforms (1864-1870)

Key Individuals	Key Dates	Key Statistics	Key Terms
Pyotr Valuev – Minister for Internal Affairs	1864 – reforms became law 1870 – reforms extended to towns	By 1914 – 43 out of 70 provinces had a zemstva	Zemstva – local rural council Duma – local town council

Key changes

There was to be a system of elected local councils, both at district and provincial levels, known as zemstva. They were to be elected bodies, chosen through a system of “electoral colleges”. There would be separate electoral colleges for nobles, townspeople, Church and peasants, but votes would be arranged in a way that allowed the nobility to dominate. The Zemstva were to have a range of powers to make improvements to public services such as roads, schools, public health and gaols as well as to develop industrial projects. They were to administer poor relief in times of hardship.

Impact

These reforms established a degree of representative government at a local level, but the hopes of reformers that Alexander would go on to grant a representative National Assembly were not fulfilled. Nevertheless, most landowners and officials approved the limited changes. The nobility retained many of the positions of authority in these new organisations, which partly compensated them for their loss of power over their serfs and even some radicals accepted these developments as a first step on the path of change. Certainly, the zemstva were generally to prove a valuable addition to local government, not least because they were composed of men who understood the locality and its needs. They were particularly effective in the fields of education and welfare, extending and improving local provision as a matter of pride. Since they tended to be filled by liberal-minded professional people, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers and scientists, they were also able to provide a forum for the debate about and criticism of the central government and they were able to be at the forefront of demands for reform in the later 19th and 20th centuries. However, despite allowing some limited peasant representation, they were never truly “people’s assemblies” and there was a tendency for them to preserve the interests of those who sat on them.

Judicial Reforms (1864)

Key Individuals	Key Dates	Key Terms
Dmitrii Zamyatnin Minister of Justice Vera Zasulich acquitted on terrorism charges	1864 – reforms became law 1878 – Trial of Vera Zasulich	Zemstva – local rural council Volost courts – local courts elected by peasants

Before emancipation a serf had possessed very little chance of obtaining justice. He was always presumed guilty, unless proven innocent and he was given no chance to defend himself. His case was simply looked at by a judge examining written evidence, usually prepared by the landowner and police. There was no jury, no lawyers and no examination of witnesses, and the judge’s decision was final.

Key Changes

Judges were given better training and pay (so they were less open to bribery). Local crimes with magistrates dealt with minor offences and could not impose a sentence

KEY QUESTIONS

What was the social impact of reform under Alexander II?

What was the political impact of reform under Alexander II?

What was the economic impact of reform under Alexander II?

What were the limitations to reform?

What led to the reactionary turn in which Alexander II reversed some reforms?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Pyotr Valuev

Dmitrii Zamyatnin

Vera Zasulich

Alexander Golovnin

Nikolai Chernyshevsky

Mikhail von Reutern

KEY DEFINITIONS

Zemstva

Reform

Volost

Duma

Gymnazii

Indirect Tax

Tax farming

WIDER REFORMS

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

of more than one year's imprisonment. These magistrates were elected every three years by the zemstva. They were to be independent from political control. Juries were introduced to courts to encourage fairer trials. Volost courts were established to deal with "peasants leaving serf dependence". They dealt with minor offences, and judges in these courts were peasants, who had to be literate and without convictions. They were elected for three years by the peasants. Freedom of the press was extended to legal reporting, which was now to be recorded verbatim in a government newspaper called 'The Russian Courier'.

Impact

The system established was clearly much fairer and less corrupt than that known previously and helped establish the rule of law in Russia. Opening up the courts to the public was particularly popular and cases sometimes attracted large numbers. However, open courts also gave articulate lawyers an opportunity to criticise the regime and the use of the jury system could undermine government control. In 1878, for example, Vera Zasulich was acquitted of terrorism. After this it was established that political crimes and those by high ranking officials were to be tried by special procedures under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Revolutionaries were routinely dealt with by the Third Section until 1880 and still faced arbitrary arrest and trial in special courts.

Educational Reforms (1863-1864)

Key Individuals	Key Dates	Key Statistics	Key Terms
Alexander Golovnin – Minister for Education	1863 – universities given independence 1864 – authority for education given to the zemstva 1866 – reassertion of government control over education system	The number of primary schools rose from 8,000 in 1856 to 23,000 in 1880 Number of children in primary education from 400,000 to over a million. The number of students in the universities grew – from 3,600 to 10,000 by the 1870s	Zemstva local rural council Gymnazii traditional schools

While Alexander's authority emanated from his special relationship with God, While gave Russian Orthodox Church a privileged position in Russian society, the need to educate Russians in order to "catch up with the West" ran counter to the conservatism of the Church, which had been the key force in the education of Russian students in both schools and universities. The abolition of serfdom increased the need for basic literacy and numeracy among peasants trying to run their newly-acquired private small-holdings.

Key changes

In 1864, responsibility for schooling was transferred from the Church to the zemstva. Primary and secondary education was extended throughout the country – and "modern schools" established at secondary level for those who did not want the traditional classical education offered in the "gymnazii". Students could progress from both to university. Schools were declared "open to all" regardless of class and sex (allowing women to attend secondary schools for non-vocational education from 1870).

Impact

The number of primary schools rose from 8,000 in 1856 to 23,000 in 1880, and the number of children in primary education from 400,000 to over a million. However, the primary curriculum, with the aim of "strengthening religious and moral notions

EXAM QUESTIONS

Reform and repression under Alexander II had the greatest impact upon the lives of ordinary people. How far do you agree?
[25 marks]

Using your understanding of the historical context assess which interpretation in most convincing regarding the impact of Alexander II's reforms.
[30 marks]

STRETCH

Which of the reforms do you think had the greatest impact?

To what extent did the reforms address Russian 'backwardness'?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

WIDER REFORMS

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

and spreading basic knowledge” was still restricted. At secondary level students had a choice of study in classics or modern subjects, although these still largely remained the preserve of the professional and upper classes. The number of students in the universities grew – from 3,600 to 10,000 by the 1870s – but this had the side effect of increasing the number of radical and militant thinkers. Indeed, the education reforms were so “successful” that after 1866, it was deemed necessary to reassert government control.

Censorship Reform (1858-1870)

Key Individuals	Key Dates	Key Statistics
Nikolai Chernyshevsky radical author	1864 – Chernyshevsky’s “What is to be Done?” is published 1865 – new regulations introduced which loosened censorship laws 1865 – press could report on government policy for the first time 1870s – retightening of censorship laws	The numbers of books published grew from 1,020 in 1855 to 1,836 in 1864 and 10,691 by 1894.

Key changes

Foreign publications could be sold in Russia, with government approval. In 1865 the press was allowed to print editorials with comment on government policy for the first time.

Impact

The numbers of books published grew from 1,020 in 1855 to 1,836 in 1864 and 10,691 by 1894. However, editors were still subject to a degree of censorship – particularly since there were still both military and Church censors and the government was very wary of anything that suggested subversion (although sometimes they made mistakes, as when Chernyshevsky’s book, inciting peasants to rebellion was published).

Economic Reforms (1860-1878)

Key Individuals	Key Dates	Key Statistics	Key Terms
Mikhail von Reutern Minister of Finance	1860 – state bank created 1862 – municipal banks created 1869 – savings bank created	66% of government revenue still came from indirect taxation. A third of all government expenditure went on the repayment of debts	Tax farming Subsidies Indirect tax

Key changes

Tax-farming was abolished. Banks and credit facilities were extended with the establishment of a state bank in 1860, municipal banks in 1862 and a savings bank in 1869. Government subsidies were offered to enable private entrepreneurs to develop the railways.

Impact

Although slow, industrial development became noticeable under Alexander II and agriculture also enjoyed a boom. Not all of this was because of government initiative, but the framework laid down by Reutern certainly encouraged the expansion. However, Russia’s economy remained comparatively weak. The budget was not subject to public scrutiny and there was no fundamental reform of the taxation system. 66% of government revenue still came from indirect taxation. Furthermore, a third of all government expenditure went on the repayment of debts and the Russian currency – the rouble – was subject to wild variations in its value.

RANKING

For each area of reform give a ranking (10 being extremely successful) and justify your ideas

GOVERNMENT

_____ / 10

JUDICIAL

_____ / 10

EDUCATION

_____ / 10

CENSORSHIP

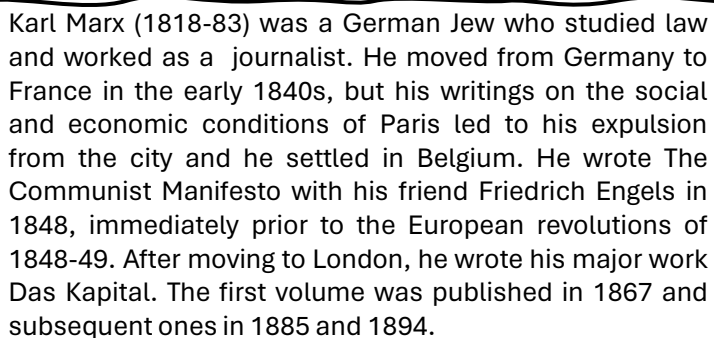
_____ / 10

ECONOMY

_____ / 10

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

KEY QUESTIONS



Stage Five: Communism. Everyone would join together for the common good. Money and government would no longer be needed and society would be classless. As all countries reached this stage the world would become stateless and competition (and wars) would cease.

Why was Marxism a threat to the autocratic regime under the Tsars?

Dictatorship

GROWTH OF RADICAL OPPOSITION

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Opposition in the reign of Alexander II largely came from the following areas:

- **Nationalists:** Wanted independence
- **Liberal Intelligentsia:** Disliked Russia's economic and social backwardness
- **Radical Marxists:** Wanted to overthrow the autocratic system

How serious was the threat of growing radical opposition to Alexander II's reign?

Instead of strengthening and stabilising the regime and earning universal acclaim as the **"Tsar Liberator"**, the reforms of Alexander drew fierce criticism from many sections of the political spectrum. The Tsar suffered the classic fate of those who try to enjoy the best of both worlds and became trapped in a cross-fire of criticism. Conservatives resented the loss of influence and privilege, while liberals became frustrated at the Tsar's refusal to take his reforms to their logical conclusion. The disappointment of conservatives and liberals alike, however, was muted by the need to rally against the more radical and revolutionary forms of opposition that developed as Alexander's reign progressed. This opposition was, in some cases, fuelled by a fierce ideological hatred of the regime, and encouraged by the freer political atmosphere created by the Tsar's reforms.

Nihilism

The most important names of the Russian left in the 1850s and 1860s were those of **Alexander Herzen** and **Nikolai Chernyshevsky**. These two figures inspired the younger generation who wanted to sweep away everything and create a new society and led to the creation of a movement that became known as "Nihilism".

The need for action was also encouraged by the works of a number of socialist intellectual thinkers, including **Mikhail Bakunin**. Bakunin has sometimes been described as an anarchist (a person who believes in no central government) because of his belief that the state crushed individual freedom and should therefore be removed. However, he was also a socialist in that he believed in the superiority of the peasant and suggested that state and private ownership of land should be replaced by collective ownership and that income should be determined by the number of hours worked. Bakunin was greatly influenced by Alexander Herzen, whom he met at university in Moscow. Like Bakunin, Herzen believed that Russia's existing social and political system had to go and that the peasant should be at the centre of a new social structure. Another influential intellectual of the period was Chernyshevsky whose radical journal **The Contemporary** had an even wider circulation among intellectuals than Herzen's *The Bell*. He also placed faith in the peasants as the revolutionary class and expressed his views in his book, **What is to be done?**, while imprisoned for his activities.

In 1862, a group of students published a manifesto, **"Young Russia"** in which they argued that revolution was the only way forward. "Young Russia" called for radical change and when, in June 1862, a series of fires in St Petersburg destroyed over **2,000 shops**, there were rumours that the radical students were responsible.



Mikhail Bakunin



Nikolai Chernyshevsky

KEY QUESTIONS

Why did Alexander II face opposition from radical and liberal groups/individuals?

To what extent did opposition under Alexander II pose a threat to autocracy?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Alexander Herzen

Nikolai
Chernyshevsky

Mikhail Bakunin

Sergei Nechayev

Pyotr Struve

Konstantin
Pobedonostsev

KEY DEFINITIONS

Radical

Liberal

Nihilism

Populism

Young Russia

Land and Liberty

Show Trial

GROWTH OF RADICAL OPPOSITION

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Populism

In **1871**, **Sergei Nechayev**, a radical of peasant extraction, who had been in exile with Bakunin in Switzerland, returned illegally to St Petersburg. Pyotr Lavrov to lead a group of around **2,000 young men and women**, mainly from the nobility and intelligentsia, in 1874, and “go to the people”. These became known as the narodniks after the Russian meaning “to the people” or in English, **Populists**.

The Populists aimed to win over the peasantry to their socialist ideas, by stirring up their resentment against their lack of land and the heavy tax burden they still carried, despite emancipation. They believed that the future of Russia depended on land redistribution and the development of the peasant commune and some even tried dressing and talking like peasants to persuade the villagers of their importance to Russian society. This “populist” movement had an almost religious zeal about it, but the romantic illusions of the young were soon shattered by scenes of peasant hostility. The peasants’ ignorance, superstition, prejudice and deep-rooted loyalty to the tsar ensured that by autumn of **1874**, **1,600 had been arrested**.

“**Land and Liberty**” was established in 1877, which was a more radical and better organised group which accepted the anarchic view of Bakunin that Russia’s land should be destroyed. Although the Populists had originally set out to win over the people in a low-key fashion, the thousands of arrests and the **show trials** which were held in 1877-78, resulted in heightened tension. Members of Land and Liberty set out to find work within the peasant communities – as doctors, teachers or workmen and to use their positions to stir up the peasants in resistance to the Tsar’s officials and state demands. However, a mixture of repression and peasant apathy made it clear that this approach was never going to achieve its aims of a revolutionary peasant uprising.

Liberal Opposition

Autocracy was viewed as a practical necessity. According to supporters of the tsarist regime such as **Konstantin Pobedonostsev** (civil service), a liberal democracy and constitutional government would have been disastrous for Russia

Westernisers: Wanted Russia to be government in a similar way to Western European democracies

Intelligentsia: Included; Educated, Law courts Disliked economic and social ‘backwardness’. Wanted further reform

Your Ten Questions:

1. Define radical opposition.
2. Which individual influenced many radical groups within Russia?
3. Give three radical groups that existed under Alexander II.
4. What was the title of Chernyshevsky’s book?
5. By 1874, how many Populists had been arrested?
6. When was Land and Liberty established?
7. What was the name of Alexander II’s secret police?
8. What is the significance of the case of Vera Zasulich?
9. What were the limitations of show trials under Alexander II?
10. What was Loris-Melikov’s constitution?

EXAM QUESTIONS

Opposition under Alexander II was the most successful in the period 1855-1964. How far do you agree?
[25 marks]

STRETCH

To what extent did reform under Alexander II lead to the rise of radical and liberal opposition?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

NATIONALISM

THEMATIC AREA: ETHNIC MINORITIES, NATIONALITIES, EMPIRE

Poland

Alexander faced ongoing difficulties with Poland – as had his predecessors. Poland had fallen under the power of the Tsars as a result of a compromise made at the **Congress of Vienna in 1815** in the aftermath of the defeat of Napoleon. Rather than allow the former independent kingdom of Poland to become part of the Russian Empire, the allies had preserved its nominal independence. However, they had allowed the **Tsar to rule as King of Poland**, this effectively combined the two states. This special status, and the vague paternalism of Alexander II, had combined to give Poland rather freer institutions than existed anywhere else in eastern Europe. Poland enjoyed a constitution, a parliament, and the use of Polish as an official language.



Europe after the Congress of Vienna, 1815 – Russia and Poland specifically identified

On the surface it appeared that the question of land reform was the most pressing of Poland's problems. Unlike the rest of the Empire, however, the demand for such reform was directly connected with the desire to re-establish Polish nationhood, a desire to which no Tsar could agree. It was nationalist demonstrations in Warsaw that set off a train of events in February 1861. In April the **Agricultural Society** was dissolved due to its links with nationalist unrest, and in demonstrations which had resulted in up to **200 people being killed**. Throughout 1862 the **Tsar's brother Constantine**, a liberal who had been given a role in defusing tensions, faced a number of assassination attempts. The Tsar did offer concessions such as the emancipation of Polish Jews and the opening of a university in Warsaw. However, an order for the conscription of Poles into the Russian army sparked further tension, and in **January 1863** an armed insurrection broke out. The rebellion was largely rural but it took nearly a year to control and was not properly over until August 1864. A strategy to contain the nationalist tensions in Poland in the longer term was established with the **Milyutin Plan of 1864**. As part of this hundreds of members of the Polish nobility were exiled to Siberia and their estates were transferred to incoming Russian officials. Polish peasants were emancipated and gained more

KEY QUESTIONS

How can we characterise relations between Russia and its Empire?

To what extent was nationalist opposition successful under Alexander II?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Grand Duke Constantine

KEY DEFINITIONS

Congress of Vienna

Russification

Agricultural Society

Polish Revolt

Milyutin Plan

Diet

NATIONALISM

THEMATIC AREA: ETHNIC MINORITIES, NATIONALITIES, EMPIRE

favourable terms than their Russian counterparts had done in 1861. Rural councils, similar to the zemstvo, were also established and contained members of a broader section of Polish society.

Finland

Under the tsars, national minorities within the Empire were controlled using a mixture of repression and reform along with the policy of Russification. Finland demanded a separate Finnish **Parliament (Diet) in 1863** and a constitution in 1865. Alexander II conceded to both demands. It was not until the rule of Nicholas II that Finland was fully integrated into the Russian Empire and **Russified**.

Ukraine

Although nationalism was not the same force as it was in Poland, the Ukrainians looked to build a separate cultural identity as reflected in literature and the arts in general. In response, Alexander II **issued decrees (1863 and 1876)** which forbade the publication and import of books written in Ukrainian and implemented the policy of Russification

Jewish Population

Jewish people were a unique group in that they did not have a homeland in the Russian Empire. Before the time of Alexander II, an artificial place of settlement had been **established (the Pale of Settlement)** but this was restrictive for Jewish people. Alexander II therefore allowed members of the Pale to migrate to other regions. Posed very little threat.

Your Ten Questions:

1. Define nationalist opposition.
2. Define Russification.
3. When was the Polish Revolt?
4. Which two demands did Alexander II concede to in Finland?
5. What did Alexander II forbid the publication of in Ukraine?
6. When were these decrees issued?
7. What was the name of the artificial place of settlement for the Jewish population?
8. What did Alexander II allow the Jewish population to do?
9. When was the Congress of Vienna?
10. Which Plan was established following the Polish Revolt?

EXAM QUESTIONS

Nationalities experienced greater change under the Tsars than they did under the Communist rulers. How far do you agree? [25 marks]

STRETCH

To what extent do you think Tsar Alexander II neglected ethnic minorities, nationalities and the empire?

Does the term 'Tsar Liberator' apply when we consider the Empire?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

After his appointment as Head of the Tsarist secret police – the **Third Section** – **Pyotr Shuvalov** worked to strengthen the police and stepped up the activities of the Third Section who were responsible for rooting out subversion and opposition. Meanwhile, the new **Minister for Justice Konstantin Pahlen** ensured that the judicial system made an example of those accused of political agitation. Even radicals who fled the country and settled in Switzerland or Germany were liable to be tracked down by the Third Section and recalled to face justice.

Pahlen held open **show trials**, which members of the public were invited to witness, with the intention of deterring others from similar activity, but the whole experiment backfired. The **“Trial of 50”** and the **“Trial of 193”** in 1877-78, both set up to prosecute those arrested for involvement in revolutionary populist activities, were a resounding failure for the minister. At the latter, **153 of the 193** defendants were acquitted and the others received only light sentences from a sympathetic jury.

The passionate speeches given by the defence were reported word for word in the press and this gave the revolutionaries plenty of publicity. The government was made to appear incompetent, so, in 1878, it was announced that political crimes would be transferred from civil courts to the military, where cases could be heard and sentences passed, in secret.

The late 1870s proved a time of political crisis in Russia as in **the Russo-Turkish war** of 1877-78, the military failed to bring a swift victory and a poor harvest, resulting in famine in 1879-80, was coupled with the beginnings of an industrial recession. Searches and arrests were stepped up and new governor-generals were created in 1879 with emergency powers to prosecute in military courts and exile political offenders. In 1879 and again in February 1880 there were further attempts on the Tsar's life. Alexander was severely shaken by these demonstrations of disloyalty and decided to set up a commission **under General Loris-Melikov** to investigate how best to reduce revolutionary activity.

Loris-Melikov made some immediate ministerial changes and instituted a series of concessions, such as the release of political prisoners, the relaxation of censorship and the removal of the salt-tax and a lifting of restrictions on the zemstva. The Third Section was also abolished and its powers transferred to the regular police, although a special section which became known as **the Okhrana** was created, and soon became just as feared and oppressive.

Loris-Melikov produced **a report in 1880**, designed to meet the demands of the zemstva for an extension of representative government at national level. It considered the inclusion of elected representatives of the nobility, of the zemstva, and of the town governments in the discussions of the drafts of some state decrees. The project became known as **“Loris-Melikov's Constitution”**.

Alexander II signed the report in the morning of March 13, 1881 and called for a meeting of the Council of Ministers to discuss the document. The same day the Tsar was killed by a bomb planted by the **Peoples Will**.

KEY QUESTIONS

To what extent did Tsar Alexander II deal with opposition effectively?

What was the Third Section and how was it used to deal with opposition?

What was the purpose of show trials?

What was Loris-Melikov's constitution?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Pyotr Shuvalov

Konstantin Pahlen

General Loris-Melikov

Vera Zasulich

Alexei Bogogyubov

General Trepov

KEY DEFINITIONS

Third Section

Okhrana

People's Will

Show Trials

RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION

THEMATIC AREA: NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

The Case of Vera Zasulich, 1878

Vera Zasulich (1849-1919) was the daughter of an impoverished noble who became involved in radical politics. Her trial, in 1878, followed others a year earlier, when the government had tried to make an example of those arrested for revolutionary activity. The trials were widely and sensationally reported by the free press and provided a platform for the radicals to air their actions in public. In July 1877, a political prisoner, **Alexei Bogogyubov** refused to remove his cap in the presence of **General Trepov**, the Governor of St Petersburg. In retaliation, Trepov ordered Bogolyubov to be flogged with sticks, which outraged the revolutionaries and sympathetic members of the intelligentsia. A group of six revolutionaries plotted to kill Trepov but Zasulich acted first. She shot and seriously wounded him but at her widely publicised trial, despite her obvious guilt, a sympathetic jury found her not guilty in an attempt to stand up to the authorities. She fled before she could be rearrested and went on to become a Populist.



Your Ten Questions:

1. Name Alexander II's secret police.
2. Who was the leader of the secret police under Alexander II?
3. When were the Trials of the 50 and 193?
4. How many defendants during the Trial of the 193 were acquitted?
5. Where were court cases transferred to in order to avoid sympathetic juries?
6. When was Loris-Melikov's constitution created?
7. How did Alexander II lose his position as Tsar?
8. When was the case of Vera Zasulich heard?
9. Who was the Minister for Justice under Alexander II?
10. Who were the People's Will?

EXAM QUESTIONS

Under the Tsars, opposition was dealt with effectively as opposed to opposition under the Communist leaders. How far do you agree? [25 marks]

STRETCH

Explain the significance of the case of Vera Zasulich. What does the case reveal to us as historians about the response to opposition under Alexander II?

SUMMARY NOTES

Notes Due:

Notes Completed:

FOR EACH KEY THEME NOTE DOWN ANY RELEVANT EVIDENCE

NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

WAR AND REVOLUTION

ETHNIC MINORITIES, ETHNICITIES, NATIONALITIES, EMPIRE AND SATELLITE STATES