

CHAPTER

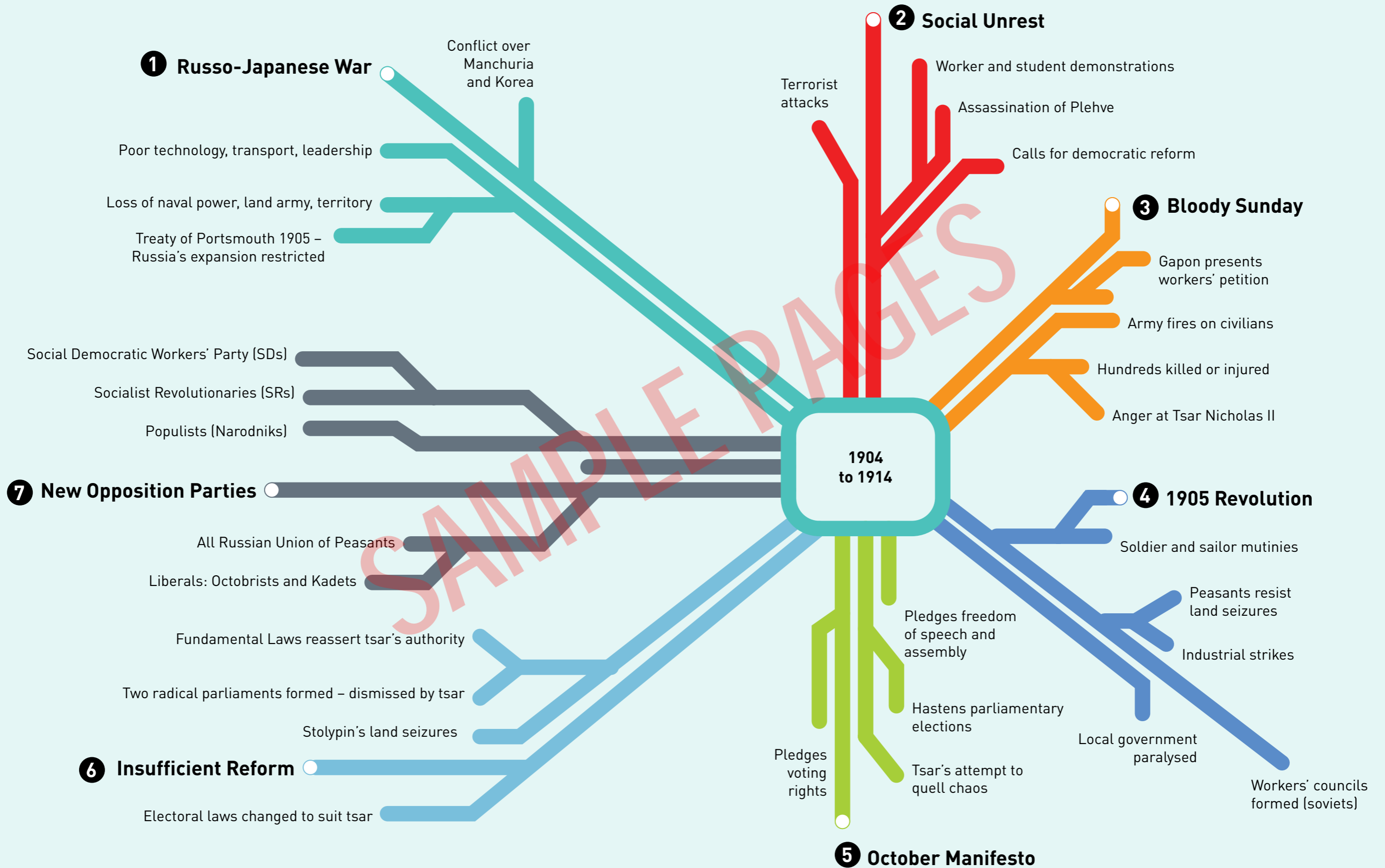
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CRISIS AND RESPONSE

(1904–1914)

SAMPLE PAGES

LAUREN PERFECT



TIMELINE

POLITICAL

POLITICAL

MILITARY

MILITARY

SOCIAL - CULTURAL

SOCIAL - CULTURAL

ECONOMIC

ECONOMIC

SAMPLE PAGES

Bolshevik and Menshevik factions formed (Social Democratic Workers' Party).

Second National Zemstvo Congress calls for Constituent Assembly.

October Manifesto issued by Nicholas II.

Kadets (Constitutional Democrats) formed.

Octobrists formed.

Moscow Soviet formed.

Stolypin appointed prime minister: agrarian reform, political repression.

First Duma (parliament) opens.

Fundamental Laws (Constitution) passed.

Prime Minister Witte dismissed.

First Duma dissolved by tsar.

Second Duma opens.

Second Duma dissolved and new electoral laws passed.

Third Duma opens (in session until 1912).

Stolypin assassinated.

Fourth Duma opens (in session until 1914).

Japanese attack on Port Arthur (Manchuria) sparks Russo-Japanese War.

Russian defeat at Liaoyang (China).

Port Arthur surrenders to Japanese.

Bloody Sunday petition and massacre

Treaty of Portsmouth signed, ending Russo-Japanese War.

Sailors mutiny on battleship *Potemkin*.

Russian defeat in Battle of Tsushima.

Russian defeat at Mukden.

Moscow uprising suppressed by force.

Laws passed to allow right to assembly and association.

Russification (cultural assimilation) revived in Finland.

Debate over materialism and atheism following publication of 'Landmark' essays (Vekhi).

Striking workers at Lena mine massacred by Imperial Army.

International Women's Day prompts meetings and demonstrations throughout Russia.

Dismissal of four workers from Putilov steel works sparks industrial action.

Major strikes in St Petersburg.

Further industrial strikes.

St Petersburg paralysed by strikes.

St Petersburg Soviet orders general strike (rejected).

Moscow's population density and death rate are around twice those of western European cities.

1903 JUL AUG 1904 FEB 8 AUG DEC 20 1905 JAN 7 8 9 10 FEB APR MAY 14 JUN 14 SEP 5 OCT 12 14 17 18 NOV 21 DEC 6 8 1906 MAR 4 APR 23 27 JUN JUL 8 1907 FEB 20 JUN 3 NOV 7 1908 1909 1911 SEP 1 1912 APR 4 NOV 15 1913 MAR 21

1903 1904 1905 1906 1907 1911 1912 1913



Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin.

INTRODUCTION

The new century brought with it new hopes in Russia. The tsarist government sought to expand its sphere of influence further east into Asia. Initially a plan for economic expansion, Russia's penetration into the Far East was also a product of 'the spirit of imperialism of the age,'¹ sparking conflict with other ambitious nations in the region. Japan, a rising power, resisted the eastern push, culminating in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05.

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

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

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

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

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

The period 1904–14 saw the beginnings of an era marked by violence and terror on the international stage. This era, which Peter Holquist called an 'epoch of

violence,'² was characterised by colonial expansionism and repression in several countries. It was in this context that revolutionary movements developed in Russia, arguably influencing the extreme nature of their methods.

RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR (1904–05)

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

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

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

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

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

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



RUSSIAN POSTCARDS OF WAR WITH JAPAN

'RUSSIA IN CRISIS' VIDEO



DID YOU KNOW?

The Baltic Fleet took eight months to sail around the world and join the conflict in the Russo-Japanese War. The Fleet nearly sparked a war with England when it sank a group of fishing boats off Scotland. They mistook the fishing boats for Japanese torpedo boats!

1 Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (Vintage Books: New York, 1991), 12.

2 Peter Holquist, 'Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence 1905–21' *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 3 (Summer, 2003): 627–52.



A wounded Russian soldier is carried from the front down to the hospital in Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War.



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

DOMESTIC IMPACTS OF THE WAR

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

The effect on Russia of its war with Japan was far-reaching at a time of great social unrest. While some have reported that the minister of the interior, Vyacheslav Plehve, encouraged the tsar to actively provoke 'a little victorious war to stem the

revolution,³ it has been suggested by Richard Pipes that 'the origins of the Russo-Japanese conflict have long been distorted by the self-serving accounts of Sergei Witte.'⁴ Pipes argues that Witte himself bore a great deal of the blame for the war through his vigorous economic policy in the Far East. He also suggests that while Nicholas II wished to avoid conflict with Japan, a sentiment supported by some of his ministers, he was encouraged by people such as General Kuropatkin, Minister of War, to engage in a short war in order to win an easy victory and boost national pride in a time of crisis. Whether the reasons for war stemmed from the government's desire to expand the empire and secure an ice-free port, or from the hope for a distraction from internal crisis, the results were disastrous. While the mainstream of Russian society was initially drawn together in patriotic enthusiasm, the population grew disenchanted as news of the humiliating land and sea defeats reached Russia. Instead of diverting public attention from the dire economic and social situation, the war highlighted Russia's poor technological infrastructure (basic equipment and services).

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

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

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

This liberal approach inspired the holding of a public congress addressing both zemstvo affairs and national issues, including proposals for a constitution. (Until that point zemstvos were limited in scope, being restricted to local, rather than national, issues.)⁵ Plans were made for the congress to be held in early November. However, upon learning of the plans to discuss a constitution, Mirskii suggested the meetings be held in private. The congress was preceded on 17 September by a secret meeting in Paris between various oppositional groups, such as the Union of Liberation and the Socialist Revolutionaries. Known as the Paris Conference, the meeting proposed a united front against autocracy. The national Zemstvo Conference then met unofficially in St Petersburg on 6–9 November 1904, effectively serving as the first national assembly in Russian history. Under the guise of dinners and banquets, the group engaged in political meetings to discuss democratic possibilities. It was this group that called for a constitution, among other reforms.

3 Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891–1924*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 168.

4 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 12.

5 Julia Ulyannikova, 'Continuity and Change in the Russian Revolution,' HTAV Conference paper, Melbourne, February 2008.



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



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

The Russians: 'How can a fellow fight, troubled internally as I am? For goodness' sake, give me some of your peace pills!'

The Mikado: 'Not so fast my friend, these pills are worth one hundred million guineas a box, and you must pay, pay, pay!'

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

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

1. What message is conveyed by each representation?
2. What symbols are used to express a point of view in each representation?
3. Which side of the conflict is portrayed as being in a superior position in both representations? Explain your answer.
4. To what extent do the two representations give an accurate depiction of the Russo-Japanese War?

Mirskii presented the proposed reforms to Nicholas II, who rejected most of them. He proclaimed to Witte, 'I shall never, under any circumstances, agree to the representative form of government because I consider it harmful to the people whom God has entrusted to my care.'⁶ On 12 December the tsar's decree was passed, strengthening the rule of law, easing restrictions on the press and expanding the rights of the zemstvos. A parliamentary body, however, was not approved. It was an opportunity missed and tensions continued to mount.

SHORT RESPONSE

Using three or four points and citing evidence, explain how Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War fuelled revolutionary sentiment in 1904–05.

ACTIVITY

BLOODY SUNDAY, 1905

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

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

Falling wages, coupled with the rising cost of living, increased discontent in the major cities. Between October 1903 and October 1904, real wages had decreased by up to one quarter,⁷ while industrial recession, terrible working conditions and poor harvests led to growing worker restlessness. The situation escalated in December 1904 when four workers from the Putilov steel works, the largest industrial factory in St Petersburg, were dismissed, leading masses from that plant to strike in support of their fellow workers. By early January 1905 the number of industrial workers on strike had swelled to 120 000,⁸ leading to the first chapter of the Russian Revolution, an event that was to become known as 'Bloody Sunday.'

Father Georgiy Gapon, 'a renegade priest with police connections,'⁹ was the central figure in the 1905 revolution. Born to a peasant family in rural Russia, Gapon was prohibited from attending university due to minor involvement with revolutionary groups. He trained as a priest and worked with the underprivileged in St Petersburg (mainly with worker and convict groups). In 1904 Gapon established the Assembly of Russian Factory Workers, a group designed to support local workers and pursue industrial reform. This body was actively encouraged by the Ministry for the Interior, as it was a vehicle for channelling worker discontent away from other politically-motivated organisations emerging in the major cities. At the end of 1904 this group had 6000 to 8000 members¹⁰ and its founder had established himself as a prominent member of the St Petersburg workers' community.

Gapon planned to approach Nicholas II on Sunday 9 January 1905 to present him with a petition outlining the grievances of the people of St Petersburg. The workers and their families would march peacefully to the tsar's home in St Petersburg, the Winter Palace, and present him with their petition begging for political, economic and social reform. In preparation, Gapon is reported to have sent letters to the tsar and the minister for the interior, Mirskii, informing them of the march. Even though the tsar had left St Petersburg for his country home, there is a suggestion that Gapon believed the tsar would return to meet his people.

⁶ Cited in Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 172.

⁷ Michael Bucklow and Glenn Russell, *Russia: Why Revolution?* (Melbourne: Longman, 1996), 67.

⁸ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books: 1996), 38.

⁹ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), 32.

¹⁰ Bucklow and Russell, *Russia: Why Revolution?*, 67.



The tsar's soldiers shoot strikers during Bloody Sunday, St Petersburg, January 1905.

On Saturday 8 January, Gapon met with the justice minister, Muraviev, who in turn met with Mirskii, the police department and the chief of staff of the troops, to consider what action the government would take. The tsar is said to have learnt of the proposed march by nightfall. Troops were sent in to reinforce the garrison.

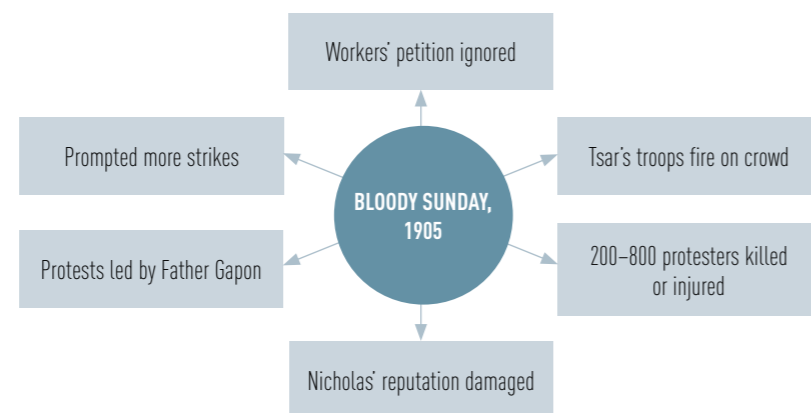
At approximately 10.00 the following morning workers and their families began to gather at four meeting points on the outskirts of St Petersburg. Up to 150 000 people marched peacefully in columns towards the Winter Palace, a procession which, according

to Figes, 'formed something more like a religious procession than a workers' demonstration.'¹¹ Led by Father Gapon, the crowd carried religious icons and sang hymns. The gathering hoped to present the tsar with a petition for improved conditions for workers.

Leading one of the columns, Gapon carried a crucifix and behind him travelled a portrait of the tsar and a banner proclaiming, 'Soldiers do not shoot at the people!'¹² The crowd, however, never made it to the Winter Palace. There was panic in police ranks and the peaceful protestors were fired on and charged at as they approached their destination. It is reported that a few warning shots were fired, followed by direct shots at the crowd. Soon, forty people lay dead.¹³

Similar scenes were played out in other areas of the city, most violently at Nevsky Prospekt, where cavalry and cannons blocked the entrance to Palace Square, leading to further deaths and casualties. Journalists at the time wrote of up to 4600 people being either killed or wounded by tsarist troops and Cossack cavalry.¹⁴ More recent estimates suggest up to 200 killed and 800 injured.¹⁵

Although Nicholas II was not present at the time, and did not directly order the troops to fire on civilians, he was held responsible for Bloody Sunday. The official history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) says, 'On that day the workers received a bloody lesson. It was their faith in the tsar that was riddled by bullets on that day.'¹⁶ Instead of 'Little Father,' the tsar came to be known as 'Nicholas the Bloody.'



11 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 173.

12 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 176.

13 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 25.

14 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 25.

15 Cited in Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 25.

16 Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *History of the CPSU (Short Course)* (International Publishers Co., 1939), 58.

DOCUMENT

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

Sovereign!

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

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

¹⁷ 'Petition Prepared for Presentation to Nicholas II January 9, 1905 (Bloody Sunday),' Documents in Russian History, http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Workers%27_Petition%2C_January_9th%2C_1905_%28Bloody_Sunday%29.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

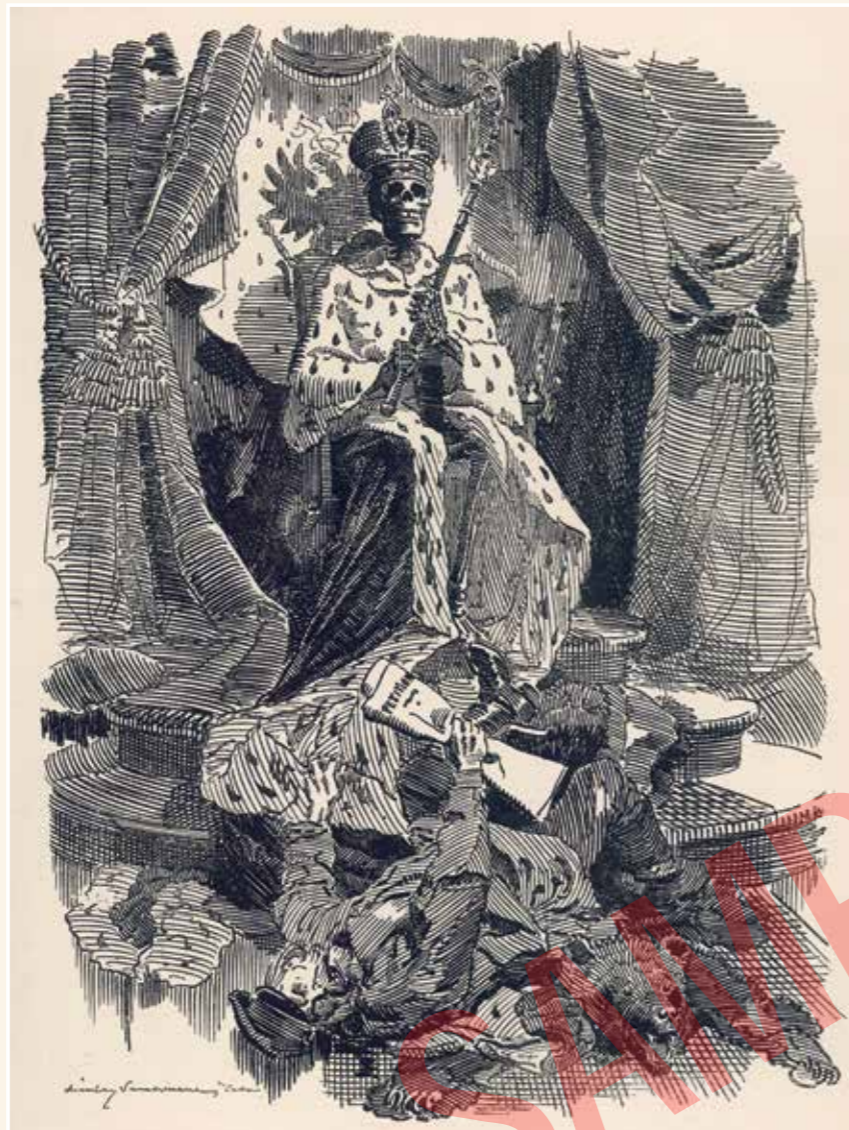
ACTIVITY

Read the extract 'Petition Prepared for Presentation to Nicholas II' and complete the tasks below.

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

GENERAL GRIEVANCES RAISED IN PETITION	SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF INJUSTICE CITED	PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE USED BY PETITIONERS	SOCIAL GROUPS REPRESENTED BY PETITION

2. What picture emerges from the petition about daily life in Russia in 1905? How did people's working conditions and political rights differ from those experienced in Australia today?



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

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

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

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

DOCUMENTS: ACCOUNTS OF BLOODY SUNDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁸ Georgei Gapon, *The Story of My Life* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1906).

¹⁹ James H. Robinson and Charles A. Beard, eds., *Readings in Modern European History*, vol. 2 (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1908), 375.

²⁰ Cited in George Vernadsky, ed., *A Source Book for Russian History From Early Times to 1917*, vol. 1–3 (London: Yale University Press, 1972), 743.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

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

1. To what extent do the three extracts agree on what happened on 9 January 1905? What might account for the different perspectives on the event?
2. How might the lives of members of the crowd been changed by Bloody Sunday?
3. As a class, debate the following statement: 'Despite the tragedy of 9 January 1905, there were some positive consequences of Bloody Sunday.'

ACTIVITY

DID YOU KNOW?

The 1925 film *Battleship Potemkin*, directed by Sergei Eisenstein, was named the greatest film of all time at the World's Fair in Brussels in 1958.

THE 1905 REVOLUTION

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

Bloody Sunday had a crippling effect on the tsarist government, demonstrating for the first time widespread contempt for the regime. The autocracy was soon on the verge of collapse, as domestic and external events continued to punish an already fragile state. Bloody Sunday sparked further industrial action, seeing 400 000 workers strike in January alone.²¹ News of the Russian defeat in the battle of Tsushima filtered home in May 1905, followed by a series of disturbances across the country.

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



Mutiny on the warship *Kniaz-Potemkin*, June 1905.

Julia Ulyannikova points out an interesting contradiction. The central government, while in some ways enjoying excessive power, was weak and poorly organised at the local level, meaning that crises such as those of 1905 were handled badly – emergency measures had to be found because there was no proper process to guide the authorities.²² Having operated to a large extent on the arbitrary whims of governors, many local governments were corrupt and ineffectual, meaning that good information did not come their

way in time to avert crises. Similarly, because the rights of minority groups had been suppressed for so long, such groups were able to take advantage of the chaos and demand autonomy when the system was at its most vulnerable.

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

Robert Service writes that at this stage 'the monarchy's fate hung by a thread.'²³ War defeat had in many ways united the anti-tsarist forces. Sergei Witte feared the

sailors and soldiers would join the revolution, further threatening the government. Luckily for the tsar, at this point the revolutionaries were far too scattered and disunited in their cause to mount a serious challenge.

The outraged reaction to Bloody Sunday spread through universities around the country. Students went on strike in large numbers, turning campuses into 'centres of political agitation'; in Moscow University alone over 3000 students staged a rally,²⁴ burning a portrait of the tsar and hanging red flags from the buildings. The political fervour spread to some secondary schools and theological academies. On 18 March the authorities ordered all institutions of higher learning closed for the remainder of the academic year.

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

Also emerging during this period were the workers' councils, or soviets. These groups developed in the major cities, especially St Petersburg and Moscow, and by the end of 1905 approximately eighty soviets had been formed.²⁵ Despite being originally designed to represent the rights of workers, the soviets were soon recognised by parties such as the Socialist Revolutionaries as a potential power base. Leon Trotsky, a Menshevik (more moderate faction of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party), became the vice chairman of the St Petersburg Soviet, which called for a National General Strike.

THE TSAR'S OCTOBER MANIFESTO

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

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



HISTORICAL
INTERPRETATIONS
ACTIVITY

²¹ Bucklow and Russell, *Russia: Why Revolution?*, 76.

²² Ulyannikova, 'Continuity and Change in the Russian Revolution.'

²³ Robert Service, *The Russian Revolution 1900–1927* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 14.

²⁴ Figs, *A People's Tragedy*, 181.

²⁵ Bucklow and Russell, *Russia: Why Revolution?*, 76.

26 Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*, 41.

state and the tsar must adopt a policy of sincerity and ‘freedom.’²⁶ Witte drafted the October Manifesto with Minister for Education Alexi Obolensky, which outlined these key reforms. He persuaded Nicholas to accept these terms and the document was issued on 17 October 1905.

DOCUMENT

OCTOBER MANIFESTO, 1905

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

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

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

We require the government dutifully to execute our unshakeable will:

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

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

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

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

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

Nicholas²⁷

27 ‘Manifesto of October 17th, 1905,’ Documents in Russian History, http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Manifesto_of_October_17th%2C_1905.

ACTIVITY SOURCE ANALYSIS

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

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

RESPONSES TO THE OCTOBER MANIFESTO

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

REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS

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

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

Following the arrest of its chairman, Nosar, the St Petersburg Soviet responded with an armed uprising. Two-hundred-and-sixty deputies, approximately half the membership, were arrested on 3 December.²⁹ The Moscow Soviet called a strike on 6 December that crippled the city. After troops were sent from St Petersburg the strike was ended on 18 December, limiting the influence of the Soviet. Over 1000 people lost their lives in the Moscow uprising.³⁰ Following this the St Petersburg Soviet headquarters were stormed and key figures were arrested, including Trotsky.

The Release. An optimistic view of the October Manifesto, published in *Punch*, 8 November 1905.



28 Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *History of the CPSU*, 79.

29 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 49.

30 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 450.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1905 REVOLUTION

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

The tsarist regime emerged out of 1905 in many ways unscathed in the short term, despite a significant war loss, the rise of unions, crippling industrial action and the surfacing of key opposition groups. Sheila Fitzpatrick contends that the political outcome of the 1905 Revolution was 'ambiguous and in some ways unsatisfactory to all concerned,'³¹ an argument furthered by Richard Pipes who highlights both the achievements and failures of key movements such as socialists, liberals, conservatives and even the government itself. While it conceded, the government did take a decisive stand, in many ways reasserting itself as a firm authority. In the process of concession, the regime managed to divide opposition groups and send a clear message to those who attempted to undermine the government that all challenges would be met with repression. The government realised that so long as they retained the loyalty of the military, which was ensured after initial mutinies subsided, protest could be withstood. The government also secured the allegiance of counter-revolutionary forces, such as wealthy landowners, high clergymen and many professionals.

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

³¹ Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, 34.

DOCUMENT

LEON TROTSKY, *THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION*, 1930

The Russo-Japanese War had made tsarism totter...The workers had organised independently of the bourgeoisie in the soviets. Peasant uprisings to seize the land occurred throughout the country. Not only the peasants, but also the revolutionary parts of the army tended towards the soviets. However, all the revolutionary forces were then going into action for the first time, lacking experience and confidence. The liberals backed away from the revolution exactly at the moment when it became clear that to shake tsardom would not be enough, it must be overthrown. This sharp break of the bourgeoisie with the people, in which the bourgeoisie carried with it considerable circles of the democratic intelligentsia, made it easier for the monarch to differentiate within the army, separating out the loyal units and to make a bloody settlement with the workers and peasants. Although with a few broken ribs, tsarism came out of the experience of 1905 alive and strong enough.³²

³² 'The History of the Russian Revolution,' Leon Trotsky, trans. Max Eastman, www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1930/hrr/.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sergei Witte, chief architect of the October Manifesto, admitted that while he drafted the reform he did not care for it. First and foremost he was loyal to the tsar: 'I have a constitution in my head, but as to my heart, I spit on it.'

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Even though industrial workers were able to bring the central cities and towns to a standstill simply by stopping work, many were disengaged from the push for political reform and revolution, preoccupied with daily social and economic concerns. In general they wanted specific improvements such as an eight-hour working day, an elected workers' council and better medical services. Despite the work of the Social Democrats and, more directly, the soviets, workers largely remained focused on immediate economic reform. Wider political propaganda of the revolutionaries, such as calls for a 'constituent assembly' or a 'socialist proletarian revolution,' did little to interest them. Many could not afford to answer the call for another general strike. The St Petersburg and Moscow soviets had lost much of their influence over the industrial workers, a significant benefit for the tsar.



Russian labourers awaiting work.

PEASANTS

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

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

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

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



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

EMERGING REFORMISTS AND REVOLUTIONARIES

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

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

I) POPULISTS (NARODNIKS)

POPULISTS	
Established	1870s
Members and support base	Peasants (<i>Narod</i> means 'the people')
Leadership	From middle and upper classes
Platform / methods	Called for a peasant-based revolution Believed the future of Russia lay in the hands of the peasant class and looked to them to take the lead in revolutionary action Felt it was the duty of the leadership to educate the masses and heighten their understanding of their potential as revolutionaries Attempted to educate the masses (this was largely unsuccessful) Main terrorist action: the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II by the People's Will (see Chapter 1)
Legacy	Evolved into the Socialist Revolutionary Party

II) SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES (SRs)



SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES	
Established	Emerged out of Populist movement in 1890s 1901 saw Viktor Chernov (editor of the party's newspaper) form and lead the national Socialist Revolutionary Party
Members and support base	Peasants the largest support base, but urban working class also represented
Leadership	Intelligentsia developed the theoretical base Led by Viktor Chernov and later Alexander Kerensky (who became prime minister in 1917)
Platform / methods	Primarily fought for land ownership for peasants Advocated violence to overthrow tsar Left faction called for a socialist state based on the peasants' commune Believed capitalism would not make progress in Russia Did not believe in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by a proletariat class Believed Russia could evolve into a socialist society without a class war The promise of land proved the key ingredient for maintaining peasant support
Legacy	Remained the revolutionary group with the largest following until the Bolsheviks outlawed the party

A split emerged between the Maximalists (left-wing) and the Revolutionaries (right-wing) within the Socialist Revolutionaries group. The Maximalists engaged in terrorist-style activity and acts of 'economic terror',³³ threatening and assassinating landlords and factory owners. The Revolutionaries were more moderate, prepared to cooperate with others to bring about immediate improvements.

The early years of the century saw the Left SRs dominate through terrorist activity, seeing over 2000 assassinations between the years 1901 to 1905.³⁴ Key assassinations included Minister of the Interior Plehve and Nicholas II's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei. These actions did little to appeal to the people and saw the moderate Socialist Revolutionaries gain more influence after the events of 1905. The following year saw major developments within the party, with professionals and trade unions lending their support to the party, including the All Russian Union of Peasants established in 1905 following the October Manifesto.

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

³³ Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 148.

³⁴ Michael Lynch, *Reaction and Revolutions: Russia 1881–1924* (Oxford: Hodder and Stoughton, 2000), 37.

DID YOU KNOW?

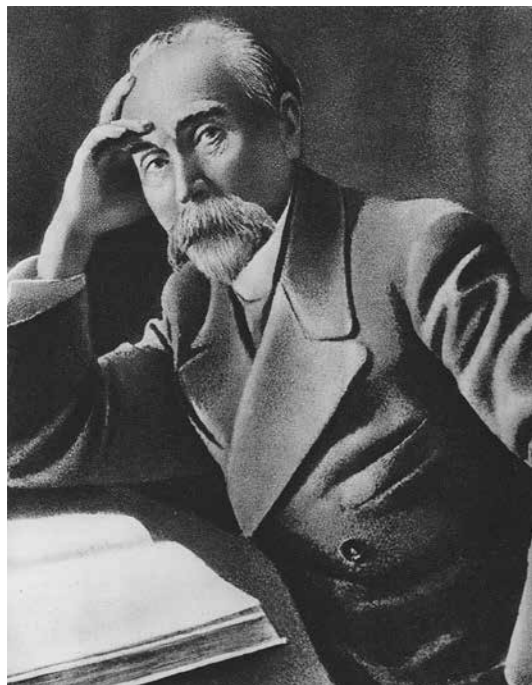
The pseudonym 'Lenin' was most likely derived from the River Lena in Siberia. He first used it in 1901.



III) SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WORKERS' PARTY (SDs)

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WORKERS' PARTY (OR 'ALL RUSSIAN DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY')	
Established	1898
Members and support base	Marxist party Industrial working class
Leadership	Intelligentsia developed theoretical base Key leaders: Lenin, Plekhanov, Martov
Platform / methods	The group believed that the 'great spurt' of the 1890s led to the creation of an industrial working class, thus placing Russia in a perfect position for revolution All revolutionary hopes directed firmly at industrial working class, not peasants Initially committed to Marxist idea of class war, believing that industrialisation would create a proletariat class that would be capable of carrying out socialist revolution
Legacy	Division into two factions: Bolsheviks and Mensheviks October Revolution 1917

Plekhanov.



In 1893 the first Russian Marxist group was formed by George Plekhanov. Known as the 'father of Russian Marxism,' Plekhanov was the first to translate Marx's teachings into Russian. Proving to be too theoretical in his leadership, Plekhanov lost support. Thereupon, the editor of the party's newspaper, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, or Lenin (his revolutionary pseudonym), took centre stage in voicing his opinions about the future of the party, most notably regarding the issue of leadership. Lenin had produced his watershed pamphlet *What is to be Done?* in 1902, which urged the group to adopt a methodical and professional approach to ideology and action. The text was to become, according to Figes, 'the founding text of international Leninism.'³⁵

Lenin argued that membership of the party should be 'confined' to people who had been 'trained in the art of combating the political police' and were 'professionally engaged in revolutionary activity.' He argued that a limited group of dedicated professional revolutionaries was the key to success, drawing on a scientific analysis of socialism to highlight the natural path of a socialist revolution. He firmly

believed that Marx and Engels had defined the true path of a socialist revolution and that Russia needed only to put this theory into action. Lenin also argued that only those truly informed individuals, the revolutionary intelligentsia, were capable of leading such a revolution and it was the role of the masses, the workers and Marxist supporters, to be guided by them.

³⁵ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 150.

DOCUMENT

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

I assert:

- 1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organization of leaders maintaining continuity;
- 2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously ... into the struggle, forming the basis of the movement and participating in it, the more urgent the need for such an organization, and the more solid this organization must be (for it is much easier for demagogues to side track the more backward sections of the masses);
- 3) that such an organization must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity;
- 4) that in an autocratic state, the more we confine the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and to have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to wipe out such an organization, and
- 5) the greater will be the number of people of the working class and of the other classes of society who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it...³⁶

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

ACTIVITY SOURCE ANALYSIS

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

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

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks (SDs)

The titles 'Menshevik' and 'Bolshevik' emerged from the Second Party Congress in 1903. Throughout the congress Lenin provoked confrontation, challenging the notion of who had a right to party membership, whilst also challenging the leader, Plekhanov. Tensions continued to mount, seeing Lenin and Martov divided in opinion. The congress had been forced into an impossible situation and a decision needed to be made. A vote was taken to resolve the issue and as a result the party split into two factions; Lenin and his supporters became the Bolsheviks (*Bolshinstvo* meaning majority), while the opposition group, Martov and his supporters became known as the Mensheviks (*Menshinstvo* meaning minority). Despite the titles, votes actually produced fairly even results; however, after a subsequent vote had returned a favourable result for Lenin, he proclaimed it was he and his supporters who were the majority. Ironically, as the revolution drew nearer it was the Mensheviks who outnumbered the Bolsheviks. The adoption of these names, forever branding the Mensheviks as a minority party, was a move Figes considers to be 'very foolish'³⁷ and was in years to come a distinct disadvantage for the Mensheviks.

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



LENIN'S 'WHAT IS TO BE DONE?'

³⁷ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 152.

IV) LIBERALS: OCTOBRISTS AND KADETS

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

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

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

OCTOBRISTS	
Established	1905, in response to Nicholas II's October Manifesto
Members and support base	Moderates loyal to the tsar Commercial and land-owning classes
Leadership	Key leaders: Alexander Guchkov and Mikhail Rodzianko (Guchkov served in the Provisional Government in 1917)
Platform / methods	Wanted preservation of tsarism Supported the October Manifesto and the creation of a дума Progress should be pursued through peace and law and order, not violence Argued for tsarism in conjunction with a legislative дума
Legacy	Influenced dumast to pursue genuine reform Members later served in the Provisional Government

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

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



DIAGRAM

Complete a more detailed diagram or concept map which visually represents the similarities and differences between the Bolshevik SDs, Menshevik SDs, Socialist Revolutionaries, Kadets and Octobrists between 1904 and 1914.

ACTIVITY

THE DUMAS

Tsar Nicholas II: 'Curse the Duma. It's all Witte's fault.'

In accordance with the October Manifesto of 1905, Russia entered a new period of parliamentary government. Between 1906 and 1917 Russia was ruled by a combination of the tsar as God's representative on earth and the дума as the representative of the people. Alan Wood describes the new era in Russia as being 'a period of uneasy and ambiguous experimentation with quasi-constitutional politics.'³⁸ Following the abolition of censorship on 24 November, new electoral laws were passed on 11 December, whereby all men over the age of twenty-five were eligible to vote indirectly (i.e. to elect someone to vote on their behalf at a higher level), but only landowners with estates exceeding 200 hectares were

³⁸ Alan Wood, *The Origins of the Russian Revolution 1861–1917*, 3rd edition (Routledge: London, 2003), 34.

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

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

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

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

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

39 Bucklow and Russell, *Russia: Why Revolution?*, 87.

40 Bucklow and Russell, *Russia: Why Revolution?*, 87.

41 Cited in Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 154.

42 Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, 34.

FUNDAMENTAL STATE LAWS



DOCUMENT

FUNDAMENTAL LAWS, 1906

1. The Russian State is one and indivisible....
3. The Russian language is the general language of the state, and its use is compulsory in the army, the navy and state and public institutions....
4. The All-Russian Emperor possesses the supreme autocratic power. Not only fear and conscience, but God himself, commands obedience to his authority.
5. The person of the Sovereign Emperor is sacred and inviolable...
8. The sovereign emperor possesses the initiative in all legislative matters. The Fundamental Laws may be subject to revision in the State Council and State Duma only on His initiative. The sovereign emperor ratifies the laws. No law can come into force without his approval. . . .
9. The Sovereign Emperor approves laws; and without his approval no legislative measure can become law.
10. The Sovereign Emperor possesses the administrative power in its totality throughout the entire Russian state...
12. The sovereign emperor takes charge of all the external relations of the Russian State. He determines the direction of Russia's foreign policy. . . .
13. The Sovereign Emperor alone declares war, concludes peace, and negotiates treaties with foreign states.
14. The sovereign emperor is the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army and navy.
15. The sovereign emperor appoints and dismisses the Chairman the Council of Ministers and individual Ministers...'⁴³

43 'Russian Fundamental Laws, 1906,' Royal Russia and Gilbert's Royal Books, www.angelfire.com/pa/ImperialRussian/royalty/russia/rfl.html.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read Nicholas II's Fundamental Laws, 1906 and complete the tasks below.

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

SHORT RESPONSE

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

rejecting 'the very principles of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government.'⁴⁴ Despite this, Russians were generally enthusiastic to vote and the elections produced a largely peasant-based body, with some radical representatives (despite the boycott). Having said this, the Fundamental Laws significantly undermined the role of the *duma*, seeing it become over time significantly more conservative than imagined, a far cry from the constitutional monarchy many reformists had in mind. Despite this, throughout its incarnation the *duma* was a

44 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 156.

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

FIRST DUMA: APRIL–JULY 1906

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

Tsar Nicholas II's opening speech before the two chambers in the Winter Palace (1906).



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

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

⁴⁵ Bucklow and Russell, *Russia: Why Revolution?*, 87.

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

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

SECOND DUMA: FEBRUARY–JUNE 1907

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

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

THIRD DUMA: NOVEMBER 1907–JUNE 1912

The hope of real reform was further shattered when, on the same day, sweeping changes were made to the electoral system by Stolypin, who acted while the duma was not in session. Voting was suspended in districts where, according to the tsar, the population 'had not yet reached sufficient levels of civic development'⁴⁶ and further change to the system occurred, greatly restricting the franchise (right to vote). This move violated the constitution and was, thereby, illegal. In essence, the number of deputies from peasant, urban worker, small landowning and national minority backgrounds was drastically reduced, while the number from the landed gentry was greatly increased. The new laws were complex, but their objective was



PHOTOGRAPHS OF
IMPERIAL DUMA

DID YOU KNOW?

Stolypin said of his land reforms: 'The government has placed its wager, not on the needy and the drunken, but on the sturdy and the strong.'

⁴⁶ Margot Morcombe and Mark Fielding, *The Spirit of Change: Russia in Revolution* (Sydney: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 55.

STOLYPIN: REPRESSION AND REFORM

Pyotr Stolypin (1862–1911) became known for his far-reaching land reforms and ruthless tactics after the 1905 revolution. His first political job was as a provincial governor. He quickly climbed the ranks by improving peasant welfare and suppressing rural rebellions. Nicholas II appointed him minister of the interior in 1906 and, soon after, prime minister. As prime minister, Stolypin set about suppressing revolutionary groups and reducing the social discontent that fuelled them. His guiding principle was ‘suppression first and then, and only then, reform.’⁵³ A committed monarchist, he set about protecting the tsar from revolution.

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

Stolypin’s program remained largely unfulfilled. The reluctance and inexperience of peasants made land distribution and new farming methods difficult to implement. Land shortages, high building costs, poor irrigation and inefficient transport made Stolypin’s aims virtually unattainable. He did, however, succeed in pacifying rural Russians and

raising their living standards overall. Historian Richard Pipes suggests that among Stolypin’s achievements was his ability to offer ‘a sense of national purpose and hope’ after the traumas of 1905; most of Stolypin’s social and political reforms, however, remained ‘on paper.’⁵⁴

Accompanying land reforms were severe acts of repression. Stolypin introduced a network of military tribunals in 1906 which processed cases without investigation or delay. Between August 1906 and April 1907, 1144 people were executed by these courts and a further 2000 by ordinary courts.⁵⁵



Pyotr Stolypin.

Stolypin also censored the press and conducted searches, arrests and surveillance of universities and liberal activists. He enraged reformists and radicals by dismissing the Second Duma and revising the electoral system single-handedly.

Stolypin gained support from some moderate groups, such as the Octobrists and the Union of Russian People. Hence he was able to further his land reforms, reintroduce ‘Russification’ in Finland and extend the zemstvo system into Poland. He was seen by many as an abuser of the constitution, perhaps explaining his assassination in September 1911. Dmitry Bogrov, a revolutionary, fatally shot Stolypin on 1 September 1911. It is widely thought that, in any case, the tsar had lost faith in his prime minister and was looking for a chance to end Stolypin’s post. As one duma member said, Stolypin ‘died politically long before his physical death.’⁵⁶

53 Lynch, *Reaction and Revolutions*, 23.
 54 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 190.
 55 Darby, *Tsarism to Bolshevism*, 45.
 56 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 190.

DID YOU KNOW?

Stolypin’s favourite method of execution, hanging, was nicknamed ‘the Stolypin necktie.’

clear. Now only one in six males was entitled to vote,⁴⁷ with one per cent of the population now responsible for electing 300 out of the 441 deputies.⁴⁸

The result was exactly what the tsar and Stolypin had hoped for, a more conservative and compliant duma, dominated by right-wing parties willing to work with the prime minister. Stolypin considered this new group to be composed of ‘responsible and statesmanlike people’⁴⁹ and was able to further pursue his land reform without the opposition of the duma. The body did, however, continue to be a forum for political discussion and proposal, most importantly raising the political consciousness and awareness of the wider community. For Nicholas, the existence of the duma continued to serve as a message to the European superpowers Britain and France, with whom Russia was now allied, that Russia was a modern nation committed to constitutional monarchy. It is for these reasons that the Third Duma was permitted to serve its full five-year term.

FOURTH DUMA: NOVEMBER 1912–AUGUST 1914

The term of the Fourth Duma was plagued by mounting tensions and crises, most notably the assassination of Prime Minister Stolypin in 1911. Arguably the most conservative of the dumas, the body was tested by radical protests, to which it responded repressively. The workers’ movement began to resurface, prompted



The duma in session, 1917.

by the massacre of 500 miners from the Lena Goldfields in Siberia in 1912. The miners, demanding better pay and conditions, were brutally massacred by government forces, highlighting the growing reactionary methods of the tsar. Over the following two years, three-million workers staged 9000 strikes.⁵⁰ Many moderate deputies in the duma tired of the reactionary approach of the tsar and began to voice their concerns, in some cases even forecasting the breakdown of parliamentary government in Russia.

Historians have long debated the successes and failures of the constitutional period in Russia. While

the Stalin-sponsored *History of the CPSU* says the dumas were nothing more than ‘an impotent appendage of tsardom,’⁵¹ most Western historians contend that the dumas played an integral role in provoking debate, pursuing reform and, to some extent, awakening the political consciousnesses of the masses. Having said this, when considering the events of 1917, some historians lament the fact that, though they were not without their achievements, the four dumas of Nicholas II constituted a wasted opportunity that did not present itself again.⁵²

ACTIVITY

FACT FILE

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

- Start and end date
- Party in majority
- Reforms introduced
- Problems or controversies
- Legacies.

47 Lynch, *Reaction and Revolutions*, 52.
 48 Graham Darby, *The Russian Revolution: Tsarism to Bolshevism 1861–1924*, (Melbourne: Longman, 2004), 47.
 49 Figs, *A People’s Tragedy*, 225.
 50 Figs, *A People’s Tragedy*, 245.
 51 Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *History of the CPSU*, 88.
 52 Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, 153.

CONCLUSION

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

Many important groups emerged during this period, such as the Octobrists and Kadets on the moderate side and the Socialist Revolutionaries

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

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

CHAPTER REVIEW

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE – SHORT RESPONSE

Using three or four points, explain the causes and consequences of one of the following events between 1904 and 1914:

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

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Read the historians' views below about the events of 1905 and complete the tasks that follow:

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

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

KEY PLAYERS – PRESENTATION

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

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



CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

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

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

KEY IDEAS – SHORT RESPONSE

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

FURTHER READING

Lynch, Michael. *Reaction and Revolutions: Russia 1894–1924, Third Edition*. London: Hodder Murray, 2005.

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

Oxley, Peter. *Russia 1855–1991: From Tsars to Commissars*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001.

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

Ponomarev, B. N. et al. *A Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970.

A standard Soviet analysis. Follows the official Party line.

Schapiro, Leonard. *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. London: Methuen and Co., 1974.

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

Service, Robert. *The Russian Revolution 1900–1927*. New York: Palgrave, 1999.

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

Shukman, Harold (ed.). *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1988.

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

Ulam, Adam. *Lenin and the Bolsheviks*. London: Fontana Library, 1969.

A detailed account of the Bolshevik Party and its founder.

White, James D. *Lenin: The Practice and Theory of Revolution*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

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